

**Concrete Insight:
Art, the Unconscious, and Transformative Spontaneity**

by
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B.A., University of Victoria, 2005
B.A., University of Toronto, 1991

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ABSTRACT

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My thesis draws connections among Herbert Read's aesthetics, his anarchism, and Carl Jung's aesthetic theory. I discuss Jung's concept of *individuation* and its importance in his theory of the creative process of life. He distinguished between *personalistic* and *archetypal* art, and argued that the latter embodies primordial symbols that are inherently meaningful. Archetypal art, he believed, symbolizes unconscious knowledge, which can promote self-awareness and impact on society, if an individual is able to discern its relevance and integrate this into an ethical lifestyle. Jung emphasized the importance of rational discernment and ethical choices along with free creativity. I show how Read used these Jungian concepts to explain aspects of his aesthetic and political emphasis on freedom. According to Read, art creates reality and as such it is both personally transformative and socially activist: he believed that aesthetics are a mechanism of the natural world, and that art is a unique type of cognition that manifests new forms. Art communicates new versions of reality because perception is holistic, allowing people to perceive both the essence inherent in forms and the relationships among them. Further, I consider Read's belief that cognition and society are both organic, and should be allowed to evolve naturally. Therefore, according to Read, society must be anarchist so that creative freedom and aesthetic consciousness can be adequately supported. Finally, I conclude by highlighting the pivotal role of creative freedom in Jung's and Read's theories of personal and social change. I illustrate that Jung and Read concurred that the unique individual is the site of transformation, living out the organically creative nature of life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Carl Jung's Aesthetic Theory	16
The creative process of life	17
The integration of the unconscious	19
Art and individuation	21
The individual as the site of transformation	26
Chapter Two: Herbert Read's Aesthetic Theory	30
Consciousness, form, and aesthetics	31
Art and individuation	35
The individual as the site of transformation	37
Aesthetic education	40
Chapter Three: Herbert Read's Anarchist Synthesis	45
Pacifism and freedom	46
The organic evolution of society	48
Anarchist order	51
Anarchist ethics	54
Art, freedom, and evolution	56
The individual as the site of transformation	59
Conclusion	65
Bibliography	69

INTRODUCTION

The aesthetic theory of British modernist Herbert Read has elements in common with the philosophy of Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, and these areas of overlap explain important aspects of Read's definition of anarchism. Within the large body of Read's writing on social and political issues, his aesthetic philosophy, and in particular his notion of transformative creativity, provides the point of reconciliation for his dual anarchist emphases on individual autonomy and social cohesion. Read and Jung shared the belief that art can contribute to a healthy, peaceful society, and that artistic practice that integrates free creativity with lived experience can promote greater self-awareness. They agreed that the arts, including visual arts, poetry, music, and dance, can express types of mental experience and feeling of which we would otherwise remain partially or wholly unaware. Through art, we are able to know ourselves better, to communicate with others about our inner experiences, and to contribute to the evolution of society. My thesis traces the discussion of these processes in Jung's philosophy, Read's aesthetics, and the pacifist anarchism that Read espoused.

The notion of the *unconscious* and its creative function is central to Jung's aesthetic theory and his concept of the transformative process of life. Jung wrote, "From the living fountain of instinct flows everything that is creative; the unconscious is the very source of the creative impulse."¹ Jung argued that the mind contains both conscious and unconscious aspects that must integrate with each other. Because the unconscious is by definition unknown, it cannot easily be related to consciousness, and this sheds light on the important role for what Jung called *archetypal art* in augmenting

¹ C.G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 8, H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, eds., (New York: Bollingen Foundation, Inc. and Pantheon Books, 1954), 157.

conscious attitudes.² He explained that *archetypal creativity* originates in our unconscious, and results in art that is symbolic and supra-personal.³ This symbolic art renders the unconscious aspects of the mind observable, and if we discern their meaning and integrate it into our lives, this can transform our conscious understanding.

Read used some of these Jungian concepts to describe the role for art in the organic growth of human consciousness and peaceful social systems. He developed Jung's theories of creativity and perception, arguing that art is the exact correlate of consciousness:

“There are many varieties of spontaneous activity with archetypal significance, but the most effective on the symbolic level is the work of art; it is essentially a ‘concrete insight’ into the reality of an existing situation.”⁴

According to Read, the artist creates using objective form: a visual configuration of colours, shapes, masses, or movements is always an object that is accessible to sensation or thought. Whatever object the artist creates, though, refers to a state of consciousness. He believed that consciousness does not exist apart from the object we are conscious of, so consciousness is dependent upon form. Because archetypal art is a particularly meaning-laden form, it affects consciousness most powerfully.

Read's aesthetic theory is closely tied to his ideas about the type of anarchist society that can support creativity. Art and society, he argued, are linked through the ability of art to reveal the truth and thereby fuel social transformation. A work of art makes visible and comprehensible an individual's insight into reality. Through art,

² I discuss such fundamental Jungian concepts more fully in Chapter One.

³ C.G. Jung, *The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 15, H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, and W. McGuire, eds., (New York: Bollingen Foundation, Inc., and Princeton University Press, 1966), 75, 93.

⁴ Herbert Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown: Towards an Aesthetic Philosophy*, (New York: Horizon Press, 1960), 190; Elsewhere Read defined art as a “sensuous quality.” Herbert Read, *Education for Peace*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950), 29.

concepts and emotions are rendered in physical forms that can then become the subject of criticism and discernment. Art that reveals what was previously unknown is psychologically revolutionary, and this has ramifications for society.⁵ As artists express newly emerging awareness they serve as agents of change, but, Read argued, their artistic production requires freedom: anarchism supports this by allowing for ongoing transformation.⁶

Although little existing literature focuses specifically on the link between Jung and Read, research exists on relevant aspects of their social and aesthetic philosophies. Rather than conveying a general overview of the extensive writing by and about Jung and Read to date, I have read the existing literature in terms of how it relates to creativity, spontaneity, and transformation. I treat Jung more like a philosopher than a psychoanalyst, and I target those aspects of Read's theory that relate most directly to Jungian ideas and to creative freedom. Jung's philosophy is vast and multifaceted, but I focus largely on aspects that pertain to the spontaneous nature of creativity. Similarly, Read's theory and art criticism spans major genres and disciplines, but I attend to a consistent thread in his writing, the relevance of art for transformation.

By treating Jung as a philosopher rather than a psychoanalyst, I engage with work done by Jungian scholars who target the philosophical aspects of his theory. In an effort to clarify the philosophical basis of Jung's psychology, Marian Pauson has analysed Jung's contribution to speculative philosophy.⁷ She explains how the development of a healthy, complex personality depends upon the individual's ability to find meaning, which she equates with the process of psychological integration that Jung called *individuation*. Pauson argues that Jung's philosophy of creativity is based on the

⁵ Read described the artist as the "upsetter" of the established order. Herbert Read, *Art and Alienation: the Role of the Artist in Society*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), 24.

⁶ Herbert Read, *Anarchy and Order*, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1954), 58.

⁷ Marian L. Pauson, *Jung the Philosopher*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), xiii, 51.

symbology of the unconscious, the Taoist practice of avoiding rigid control, and the conviction that individuals have the capacity to change. Ira Progoff contributes to the body of work on Jungian philosophy in *The Symbolic and the Real* and *Jung's Psychology and its Social Meaning*, in which he highlights the Jungian link between the personal psyche and the historical context.⁸ Progoff emphasizes the spiritual basis of Jung's psychology, contrasts analytical and intuitive understanding, and speaks of psychological integration as inherent in the teleological, organic process of the mind.⁹ These spiritual aspects are important for the present study: they link the individual's search for meaning with the propensity of the psyche and society to evolve.

Because much in the existing literature on modernism equates psychology with Freudian psychoanalysis, research into Jung's contribution is valuable for my privileging of Jungian overtones in Read's theory. In *Creative Man* Erich Neumann discusses the radicality of Jung's overturning of the narrow confines of a psychology based on individual and familial determinants.¹⁰ Jung broke with Freud's negative emphasis on repression, and instead promoted the individual as a creative force with vital roles for healing and for making meaning. He emphasized individual creative freedom and the unity of human nature and culture.

Building on these concepts, David Johnston's "The Evolution of Consciousness and the Individuation Process" emphasizes the Jungian importance of balancing and integrating daily life around the *Self*, which has a transformative effect on one's

⁸ Ira Progoff, *The Symbolic and the Real*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), 24, 37; Ira Progoff, *Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1953), xiv, 6.

⁹ Progoff, *Ibid.*, ii, 50, 288.

¹⁰ Erich Neumann, *Creative Man*, (Bollingen Series LXI.2), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 246.

nature.¹¹ In this way the commonplace is imbued with greater meaning, and our everyday lives become the impetus and the vessels for heuristic transformation.

Johnston defines the Jungian concept of *individuation*, and traces Jung's, and others', discussions of the historical evolution of consciousness, ideas that he returns to in unpublished essays on the role of art in life. This relates to my close study of how Read and Jung explain organic evolution, the socially engaged individual, and transformations in consciousness.

Although academic studies have targeted certain aspects of Jungian theory with reference to art, my research addresses a paucity of scholarship on an all-embracing Jungian aesthetic. Jung himself does not systematically outline an over-arching aesthetic theory, but Morris Philipson makes a groundbreaking attempt to describe just such a unitary Jungian aesthetic. Philipson's close reading of Jung's work allows him to argue, in "C.G. Jung's Theory of Symbolism as a Contribution to Aesthetics," that Jung's concept of the symbol links aesthetics and epistemology with individual psychology.¹² Philipson discusses Jung's concepts of the transcendent function of symbols, the dual nature of rational and irrational symbolic interpretation, and the distinction between signs and symbols. He considers the symbolizing function of the unconscious to be fundamental to Jung's description of psychological integration. However, while he supports Jung's belief in the fundamental importance of artistic creativity, Philipson argues that Jung's theory of symbolism fails to circumvent the limitations of a potentially

¹¹ David Johnston, "The Evolution of Consciousness and the Individuation Process," (Diss. Pacifica Graduate Institute, 1996), ii, 20; David Johnston, "The Way of Art: The Aesthetic View of Life and Individuation," (www.davidbear.com, 1997), 19.

¹² Morris H. Philipson, "C.G. Jung's Theory of Symbolism as a Contribution to Aesthetics," (Diss. Columbia University, 1959), 150, 169.

reductive treatment of archetypes.¹³ I engage with this research by examining those theories of Jung's that are specifically directed to the problem of aesthetics.

The psychic significance of artworks and the creative process discussed by Philipson is central to my thesis. This concept is supported by recent scholarship that applies aspects of Jungian aesthetic theory to specific fields, such as theatre, personality typology, and the concept of the numinous. John Barkley explores how Jung's psychology and aesthetic theory are shaped by a teleological assumption, and highlights the Jungian notion that art compensates for individual and social imbalance.¹⁴ Barkley explores the ontological function of art with reference to the work of Canadian artist Roland Poulin, whose theatre presents images that relate to Poulin's own individuation process. Other work on Jungian individuation, by Daniel Hoy, responds to Jung's assertion that his main interest is not the treatment of neurosis, but rather the exploration of the numinous, or spiritual.¹⁵ Hoy chronicles numinous experiences that are characteristic of the individuation process and shows that they result in meaningful archetypal symbols. Creativity is also a theme for Young-Woon Ko, who relates aspects of Jungian philosophy to the Taoist text *I Ching*, which he describes in detail. Jung was interested in Taoism, and Ko shows its relevance for the Jungian idea that synchronous events can reveal unconscious motivation from which meaning can potentially be discerned.¹⁶ In "Creativity and Psychological Types" Elizabeth Hartzell discusses the creative process in terms of extraversion and introversion, and details the cases of eight

¹³ Philipson, vii; Another study of Jungian symbolism is by Donald Mayo, "Carl G. Jung: A Solution to the Problem of Aesthetic Experience," (Diss. American University, 1988), 76.

¹⁴ John R. Barkley, "The Development and Application of a Jungian Aesthetic: Art as Ontophany in the Transition of a Quaternarian Paradigm: a Jungian Interpretation of the Work of Roland Poulin," (Diss. Carleton University, 2002), i.

¹⁵ Daniel J. Hoy, "The Concept of the Numinous in Jungian Psychotherapy," (Diss. Boston University School of Education, 1979), i.

¹⁶ Young Woon Ko, "Synchronicity and Creativity: A Comparison Between C.G. Jung and the Book of Changes," (Diss. Vanderbilt University, 2004), 291.

artists who represent the Jungian cognitive types: feeling, thinking, sensation, and intuition.¹⁷ Although this body of scholarship offers valuable insight into aspects of Jung's theory, my thesis addresses the need to synthesize Jung's aesthetic theory and show its individual and social implications, as well as its relevance to Read's aesthetics.

The themes of creativity and transformation that I highlight in Jungian philosophy are also central to Read's theory. My research has benefited from previous work on the interplay among Read's theories. In her paper on Herbert Read and Paul Goodman, Carissa Honeywell defines Herbert Read as a new anarchist, arguing that he is part of a later twentieth-century Anglo-American tradition that relies heavily on sociology and psychology.¹⁸ Honeywell argues that Read's sympathy with romanticism explains his promotion of independent ethical behaviour, and his privileging of intuition and spontaneity in both art and social relationships. According to Honeywell, Read's aesthetic and anarchist theories are linked by his theory of form: good aesthetic form relates to good moral form, and these create appropriate social form. Jack Miller, in "Herbert Read's Philosophy of Art," argues that Read's aesthetic theory is a coherent system because it contains a clear definition of art, provides a basis for criticism, and explains how art relates to the psyche and to society.¹⁹ Bonita Whitely defines Herbert Read's creativity as a trinity comprised of uniqueness, authenticity, and wholeheartedness.²⁰ Read's political thought has been outlined by William Reichert, who addresses Read's discussions of social alienation and non-elitist art, issues that

¹⁷ Elizabeth Hartzell, "Creativity and Psychological Type," (Diss. Pacifica Graduate Institute, 1998), 5.

¹⁸ Carissa Honeywell, "Anarchism and Romanticism in the work of Herbert Read and Paul Goodman," (Political Studies Association, University of Sheffield, (<http://www.psa.ac.uk>, 2004), 1.

¹⁹ Jack E. Miller, "Herbert Read's Philosophy of Art," (Diss. Tulane University, 1980), 13.

²⁰ Bonita Whitely, "Authentic creativity: Intensively conscious individuals wholeheartedly participating in responsive and responsible constructions of their world(s)," (Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1999), 77, 103.

pertain to my treatment of Read's ideas about freedom.²¹ In particular Reichert highlights people's innate capacity for cooperation, arguing that art and education are at the centre of what he calls Read's utopian strategy. In a short chapter on Read, R.P. Blackmur discusses Read's poetry and criticism, his definition of such key concepts as reason and imagination, and his belief in "direct apprehension" of an object by "the whole mind."²² These aspects of his thought relate to my discussion of Read's concepts of aesthetic perception and organic change.

My thesis is not biographical, but draws on foundational studies that provide information on Read's life. In a biographical series published for the British Council, Francis Berry calls Read the most distinguished art critic and historian alive in his lifetime.²³ He claims that Read was a poet at heart, and that all his various roles grew out of his desire, as a poet, to comprehend modern existence. Another biography that embraces the complexity of Read's life, aesthetics, and political philosophy is James King's *The Last Modern*.²⁴ King builds on personal interviews and a wide reading of archival material to outline Read's literary output and his unfolding aesthetic theory, interwoven with personal and professional history. The equally well researched *The Stream and the Source* was written by a long-term friend of Read's, George Woodcock.²⁵ Claiming to have been too close to Read to write a personal biography, he

²¹ William O. Reichert, "The Anarchist Thought of Herbert Read: Politics and Aesthetics." (Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New York, Sept. 3-6, 1981), 31.

²² R.P. Blackmur, "Notes on the Criticism of Herbert Read," *Outsider at the Heart of Things*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 1989, 19.

²³ "On a modest estimate Read must be accounted as one of the most interesting and penetrating minds of our time. (...) He will come to be seen as one of its most formative." Francis Berry, "Herbert Read," in *Writers and their Work*, No. 45, Bonamy Dobrée, ed., (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1961), 5, 40.

²⁴ James King, *The Last Modern, A Life of Herbert Read*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), 5.

²⁵ George Woodcock, *Herbert Read: The Stream and the Source*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 11, 292.

focuses instead on Read's works, delineating what he calls an intellectual biography. He characterizes Read as true to his own vision, philosophically profound, and uniquely insightful about his own time. These biographies provide a useful background on Read as a person and some of the forces that shaped his thought.

Because I focus on the transformative capacity of creative freedom, I am particularly interested in scholarship on the Radian link between psychology and art theory. Richard Wasson's "Herbert Read: Contemporary Romantic Humanist" discusses the visionary quality of Read's criticism, poetry, and prose through the lens of Read's defence of humanism and romanticism, and what Wasson calls Read's poetic sensibility.²⁶ Wasson argues that the thematic coherence of Read's aesthetic theory becomes apparent when considered in the light of the mid-20th-century romantic-classic debate. He outlines the development of Read's "aesthetic politics" combining ideas about ethics, organic unity, and Jungian typology. In addition he describes Read's explanation for the psychological closeness between an artist and an audience as related to the modern classical movement's inherent romanticism. John Keel provides a biography of Read's life and a useful overview of his criticism, before drawing on Read's theory to argue that aesthetic activity should be at the centre of contemporary education curricula.²⁷ His thorough research illustrates how Read's "psychology of art" supports the fundamental relationship between artistic production and human nature. Michael Paraskos, in "The Elephant and the Beetles," explains the critical context of the period, calls attention to the recurring themes of idealism and wholeness in Read's life and work, and contrasts his pluralistic definition of modernism with Clement Greenberg's

²⁶ Richard H. Wasson, "Herbert Read: Contemporary Romantic Humanist," (Diss. University of Wisconsin, 1962), xii, 12.

²⁷ John Keel, "The Writings of Sir Herbert Read and the Curricular Implications – the Aesthetic Education of Man," (Diss. University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), 290, 458.

monolithic one.²⁸ Of particular relevance to my studies is his discussion of Read's interest in psychology.

My interest in tying together Read's theories on art, psychology, and society led me to publications that combine topics ranging from Read's poetry to his anarchism. *Herbert Read: A Memorial Symposium*, edited by Robin Skelton, is a collection of responses to Read's ideas and life by people he knew and influenced.²⁹ In addition it contains a useful checklist of the material in the Herbert Read Archive at the University of Victoria, Canada. An introduction to Herbert Read's legacy edited by Henry Treece focuses on Read's poetry and his philosophy of art.³⁰ Two contributions to this volume mention Read's interest in psychoanalytic theory. J.F. Hendry writes of Read's emphasis on the individual experience of truth, which, according to Read, can be accessed through the innocence that the artist or philosopher possesses.³¹ H.W. Hauserman argues that the concept of reason, defined as intuitive introspection, is central to Read's aesthetic and political theory.³² He also emphasizes the symbolic value of art, explains the circumstances surrounding Read's initial use of psychoanalytic categories for literary criticism, and discusses the poetic Radian concept of "the emotional apprehension of thought." The Jungian focus of my thesis also benefits from a more recent publication, *Herbert Read: A British Vision of World Art*, in which Benedict Read mentions Herbert Read's use of a psychological framework for literary criticism, and his participation in

²⁸ Michael Paraskos, "The Elephant and the Beetles: the Aesthetic Theory of Herbert Read," (Diss. University of Nottingham, 2005), 18, 52.

²⁹ Robin Skelton, ed., *Herbert Read: A Memorial Symposium*, (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1969), 192.

³⁰ Henry Treece, ed., *Herbert Read, An Introduction to His Work by Various Hands*, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1944), 8.

³¹ This relates to Read's notion of the "innocent eye." J.F. Hendry, "The Philosophy of Herbert Read," *Ibid.*, 114.

³² "Poetry to Read means the emotional apprehension of thought and thus of reality. The more reason is embodied in a poem the greater its value. Of course reason, in this connection, must not be taken for discursive rationality but for intuitive introspection." H.W. Hausermann, "The Development of Herbert Read," *Ibid.*, 66.

the Jungian Eranos lectures.³³ He highlights Read's argument that aesthetic education is fundamental to psychological integration, and his theory that the image precedes the intellectual concept.

An important contribution to Read studies has been made by Michael Paraskos's *Re-reading Read*, which includes chapters on Read's anarchism, literary criticism, and his writing on sculpture and art.³⁴ Paraskos argues that Read's development of a consistent theory of art was closely linked to his transition from classicism to romanticism. With relevance for my thesis, Paraskos considers psychoanalysis one of Read's major influences, and singles out Jung's concept of individuation, defined as the reconciliation of dialectical tension. Elsewhere in this book Jason Harding describes the reception of Read's efforts to introduce psychological concepts into literary and art criticism.³⁵ His view is that Read tended not to adequately differentiate among the theories of Freud, Jung, and Adler, an opinion that supports my assertion that Read superimposed Jungian concepts onto other theories of psychology. In a chapter on Read's aesthetic politics, Dana Ward traces the roots of Read's interest in anarchism and ethics, and their fruition in his notion of progress as an interplay between individuals and groups.³⁶ Allan Antliff, in "Open Form and the Abstract Imperative," argues that just as abstract art reflects a politics of resistance, the contemporary anarchist avant-garde reveals Read's legacy, particularly the link between open artistic practice and the anarchist *organicism* that

³³ Benedict Read and David Thistlewood, eds., *Herbert Read, A British Vision of World Art*, (Leeds: Leeds City Art Galleries, 1993), 15-16.

³⁴ Michael Paraskos, ed., *Re-reading Read: New Views on Herbert Read*, (London: Freedom Press, 2007), 6.

³⁵ Jason Harding, "Herbert Read and the Psychological Method in Criticism," *Ibid.*

³⁶ Dana Ward, "Art and Anarchy: Herbert Read's Aesthetic Politics," *Ibid.*

Read defined.³⁷ Addressing Read's legacy with reference to modernism, Jerry Zaslove shows that Read shared with T.J. Clark and T.W. Adorno the belief that modernity is characterized by dissolution and multiplicity. Further, he argues, their explanation of how art can impact society rests on a "radical contextualism" that in Read's case links anarchism, modern art, and "cognitive autonomy."³⁸ Elsewhere Zaslove discusses connections among Read's literature, anarchism, and aesthetic theory.³⁹ Zaslove links Read's defence of psychoanalytic criticism to his belief in the emancipatory power of the poem, the image, and the individual, which I will argue has relevance for Read's support of anarchism.

Among major Read scholars, David Thistlewood is particularly pertinent to my research, as he specifically targets Read's use of psychoanalytical concepts. His book *Herbert Read: Formlessness and Form* is a biographical account of the development of key concepts in Read's aesthetic theory, including the social and biological necessity of creativity.⁴⁰ In addition, Thistlewood contributed to *Herbert Read Reassessed*, edited by David Goodway, which seeks to re-evaluate Read's principal areas of work.⁴¹ Thistlewood argues that Readian aesthetics does not have either a purely stylistic or socio-cultural basis: rather, it describes an organic process that mediates between inner and outer worlds, idealism and practicality, and intentionality and ethics. Thistlewood believes that the psychological foundations of Read's thought at first combined Freudian

³⁷ Allan Antliff, "Open Form and the Abstract Imperative: Herbert Read and Contemporary Anarchist Art," *Ibid.*

³⁸ Jerry Zaslove, "Herbert Read as Touchstone for Anarcho-Modernism – Aura, Breeding Grounds, Polemic, Prophecy," *Ibid.*

³⁹ Jerald Zaslove, "We Shall Act: We Shall Build: The Nomadism of Herbert Read and the Thirties Legacy of a Vanished Envoy of Modernism," in *Recharting the Thirties*, Patrick Quinn, ed., (London: Associated Universities Presses, 1996), 21, 24.

⁴⁰ David Thistlewood, *Herbert Read, Formlessness and Form*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 7.

⁴¹ David Thistlewood, "Herbert Read's Organic Aesthetic II, 1950-1968," in *Herbert Read Reassessed*, David Goodway, ed., (Liverpool: Liverpool Press, 1998), 233, 234.

and Jungian elements but that it shifted toward a Jungian conception. While there is evidence of Read's shift from Freudian to Jungian concepts, I concur with John Doheny, who argues that Read misread Freud and superimposed onto Freudian motifs the Jungian ideas that better suited Read's aesthetic theory.⁴² Evidence of this is Read's willingness to support diverse artistic styles, a practice that related to his belief that art reveals the transformative nature of the *Self*, a Jungian concept, not a Freudian one.⁴³

Paul Gibbard, in *To Hell with Culture*, raises issues that my thesis aims to address.⁴⁴ Gibbard begins by discussing how Read's ideas about art were influenced by an anarchist aesthetic debate: while Kropotkin and Proudhon favoured an overtly social purpose for art, Bakunin believed that the free artist counteracts tyranny by drawing attention to the unique individual. Gibbard goes on to explain that Read's anarchist aesthetic rests on the belief that the revolutionary task of art is to expose social stagnation and break down social forms. Art performs these functions, in Gibbard's interpretation of Read's theory, through its dual elements, the formal and the variable, derived from natural forms and from artistic inclinations. Gibbard highlights Read's belief in the potential of art to dissolve established notions of reality, and the even greater revolutionary potential of education through art. However, Gibbard questions the capacity of Read's aesthetic to combine freedom, anarchism, self-realization, and psychology. Gibbard writes,

⁴² John R. Doheny, "Herbert Read's Use of Sigmund Freud," *Ibid.*, 72.

⁴³ According to Jung, Freud derived his understanding of the unconscious from the symptomology of neuroses and therefore incorrectly defined it as repressive and largely personalistic. In contrast, the Jungian concept of the *Self* refers to an orientation toward healing, wisdom, and communication. Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 179.

⁴⁴ Paul Gibbard, "Herbert Read and the Anarchist Aesthetic," in *To Hell with Culture*, 'Anarchism and Twentieth Century British Literature', H. Gustav Klaus and Stephen Knight, eds. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), 102-104.

“While Read subscribes to the anarchist idea of positive freedom, he does not initially seem to link personality, freedom, and artistic creation together in a distinctly anarchist way. (...) In turning to the notion of the unconscious, Read seems to leave little room for traditional anarchist notions of self-development or self-realization through art.”⁴⁵

My thesis responds to Gibbard’s scholarship by arguing that it is Read’s acceptance of a Jungian conception of the unconscious in particular that explains his dual support for anarchism and psychology. Read’s use of Jung’s idea of an indeterminate source of creativity dovetailed with Read’s emphasis on artistic freedom: organically evolving creativity requires artistic freedom and non-dogmatic community.

My discussion of these examples in the existing literature on Jung and Read indicates the scope for further exploring their notions of free creativity. Although I have described the current state of the literature, my thesis is based on my own close reading of Jung’s and Read’s work. I write as an art historian interested in theory, not as a representative of the rich fields of philosophy or psychology. I explore the connections between Read and Jung, particularly their belief that artistic creativity is rooted in the unconscious, that this supports personal self-development, and that the psychologically integrated individual expresses both autonomy and social cooperation. I posit that Read’s integrative social-aesthetic theory is acausal in a Jungian sense and that this anti-determinism relates to Read’s anarchist politics and art theory. My thesis charts, in the aesthetic and social philosophies of Jung and Read, the concepts of spontaneity and creativity, and the ramifications of these for the individual and society.

⁴⁵ “While Read subscribes to the anarchist idea of positive freedom (not just the absence of constraint but a condition in which the individual is fully able to realize his or her authentic self), he does not initially seem to link personality, freedom, and artistic creation together in a distinctly anarchist way. (...) Making use of Freudian theory, Read locates the source of artistic creation in the unconscious (...) In turning to the notion of the unconscious, Read seems to leave little place for traditional anarchist notions of self-development or self-realization through art. However, this element does gradually emerge in his writings, and achieves perhaps its fullest expression in his theory of education through art.” Gibbard, 102.

The organization of my thesis focuses the connection between Jungian psychology and Readian anarchism in Read's aesthetic theory. In Chapter One I discuss Jung's concepts of the unconscious, his distinction between the sign and the symbol, and his definitions of *personalistic* and *archetypal* art. The ability of the unconscious to remain autonomous from consciousness explains the symbol-making function of dreams, synchronicity and art. I highlight Jung's belief that art can play an important role in the ongoing creative process of living, and I discuss the implications of this for society. I relate these ideas to Read's aesthetic theory in Chapter Two, particularly in terms of the role of creativity in the process of psychological integration. Read asserted that holistic aesthetic cognition would allow a person to experience natural, harmonious patterns which would then influence his personality and his social relationships. I also begin to explore the relevance of Read's aesthetics with regard to peace and anarchism, themes I address more fully in Chapter Three. Here I outline Read's description of an anarchist society characterized by peace, mutualism, organic growth, and the use of functional temporary agreements. Further, I highlight, within his concept of the peaceful anarchist society, the centrality of creative freedom and freedom of development. Finally, in the Conclusion, I reiterate the importance of spontaneity for Jung's and Read's philosophies of individual self-awareness and social transformation.

CHAPTER ONE:

Carl Jung's Aesthetic Theory

Jung's ideas about the role of art relate to his concept of the creative nature of life itself. The creative process is inherent in human consciousness and in life events; an individual assumes the role of co-creator as he proceeds towards increased self-awareness. According to Jung, the purpose of life is to *individuate*, that is, to overcome the one-sidedness of the conscious attitude and become more aware of our multifaceted nature.⁴⁶ Jung defined *individuation* as the process by which a person becomes “a psychological in-dividual, that is, a separate, indivisible unity or whole.”⁴⁷ He further explained individuation as the coming-to-be of the *Self*, in which a person eschews egocentrism and integrates wisdom to become a well-rounded personality.⁴⁸ This process centres on a facet of the psyche that Jung called the *Self*, an inner quality that promotes spiritual development or psychological health within the complexity of the individual, and is sometimes referred to as self-actualization.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ “This, after all, is the main point, that we should make ourselves aware of our unconscious compensation and thus overcome the one-sidedness and inadequacy of the conscious attitude.” (...) “In speaking of the ‘degree of spiritual development’ of a personality, I do not wish to imply an especially rich or magnanimous nature. (...) I mean, rather, a certain complexity of mind or nature, comparable to a gem with many facets as opposed to the simple cube.” C.G. Jung, *The Development of Personality, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 17, H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, eds., (New York: Bollingen Foundation, Inc. and Pantheon Books, 1954), 164, 194.

⁴⁷ C.G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 9, Part 1, H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, eds., (New York: Bollingen Foundation, Inc. and Pantheon Books, 1959), 275.

⁴⁸ Jung called individuation “the climax of a concentrated spiritual and psychic effort,” and emphasized that it must include an awareness of unconscious effects on daily life. Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 210, 226, 290.

⁴⁹ Arthur S. Reber, *Dictionary of Psychology*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 676.

In this chapter I set creative freedom and art within the broader context of what Jung called the creative life process. I outline core Jungian concepts such as the *archetype*, and the conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind.⁵⁰ Individuation is central to the integration of the conscious with the unconscious, and I explain the relevance of this for art. I discuss Jung's distinction between signs and symbols in light of his belief that symbol-laden *archetypal* art can deepen the artist's and the observer's insight. Finally, I explain Jung's assertions that free artistic expression, combined with rational discernment and ethical behaviour, can transform the individual and society.

The creative process of life

In the lifelong process of individuation, creativity plays an important role in concretizing unconscious thoughts and feelings, which can then become the subject of reflection. According to Jung, a person must use rational discernment to integrate the products of creative freedom into an ethical lifestyle, thereby playing the role of co-creator along with other, impersonal forces. Art, synchronicity, and dream images are important aspects of a person's lifelong creative process because they function as access points for new information from the unconscious, beyond the scope of conscious control. Creativity, when it is in Jung's words, "not falsified by any conscious purpose," can ameliorate the short-sighted conscious attitude.⁵¹ Jung believed that dreams may parallel and augment a person's conscious mind. Dreams can reveal repressed attitudes, unconscious wishes, and profound insight, and if their relevance for

⁵⁰ For an explanation of key Jungian terms, see Johnston, "Evolution of Consciousness," 23.

⁵¹ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 255; for a discussion of the process of expressing the unconscious, see Erich Neumann, *Art and the Creative Unconscious*, (Bollingen Series LXI. Princeton: Bollingen Foundation, Inc., and Princeton University Press, 1974), 161; Although it is possible to speak of Jungian theories of creativity, he warned that creativity is very mysterious. "The secret of creativeness, like that of the freedom of the will, is a transcendental problem which the psychologist cannot answer but can only describe." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 100.

one's life is discerned, they can promote self-awareness.⁵² Synchronicity, too, Jung asserted, compensates for the conscious attitude by revealing the machinations of the unconscious. Jung defined synchronicity as a "falling together in time" and a "psychically conditioned relativity of space and time," indicating not meaningless simultaneous occurrences, but the coincidence of causally-unrelated events or psychic states that have a similar meaning.⁵³ These coincidences are not examples of cause and effect, but rather can be read for subjective meaning. By virtue of operating beyond the control of the ego, both dream images and synchronistic events give voice to the unconscious.⁵⁴ Similarly, Jung was interested in the role that art plays in offering material manifestations of inner, psychological processes. He wrote that psychology cannot penetrate the secret processes of creativity, but that art both represents and triggers psychological activity, and as such it permits us a glimpse of our unconscious motivations.⁵⁵ When a person makes art, he may be moved to include images, lines, or colours that do not seem immediately relevant; Jung would argue that these may represent meaning of which the artist is otherwise unaware, but which he can discern if

⁵² On Jungian dream theory, Read noted, "The dream is not an isolated event: it is part of a continuous unconscious mental process which by chance we interrupt, and succeed in bringing to consciousness." Herbert Read, Herbert Read Archive, University of Victoria, Canada, (H.R. 27/4), 15; Read also compared dreams to artistic creativity. Read to Kathleen Raine, April 9, 1968, *Ibid*.

⁵³ "Synchronicity means the simultaneous occurrence of a certain psychic state with one or more external events which appear as meaningful parallels to the momentary subjective state." "It cannot be a question of cause and effect (...) 'Synchronicity' designates a hypothetical factor equal in rank to causality as a principle of explanation." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 435, 441; for a description of Jung's "acausal connecting principle" see Ko, 63.

⁵⁴ For further explanations of synchronicity see Mary Ann Mattoon, *Jungian Psychology in Perspective*, (New York: The Free Press, 1981), 140; and Ira Progoff, *Jung, Synchronicity, and Human Destiny*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1973), 10; The Jungian practice of *active imagination* can also function as a dialogue with the unconscious. See Barbara Hannah, *Encounters with the Soul: Active Imagination as developed by C.G. Jung*, (SIGO Press, Santa Monica, CA, 1981), 3.

⁵⁵ "We can nowhere grasp the nature of the psyche *per se*, but can meet it only in its various manifestations." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 85.

he looks critically at himself and his attitudes. Jung believed that art can play an important role in the creative life process, in which free creativity, discernment, and personal responsibility can bring about a transformation in insight. I return to this argument in more detail after outlining several core Jungian concepts.

The integration of the unconscious

In order to grasp Jung's aesthetic theory, it is necessary to understand his concepts of the conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind, because he believes that it is the unconscious that produces the symbols that make up significant artistic forms. He explained that the conscious is more concerned with the present, while the unconscious on the other hand focuses on and reacts to constant, universal conditions.⁵⁶ The personal unconscious is related to personal experiences, and it is not the focus of Jung's aesthetic theory. It contains anything a person has forgotten or repressed, and anything unknowingly or subliminally experienced. Whereas the personal unconscious is connected with actual experience through, for example, memories, moods, and attitudes, the contents of the collective unconscious have a broader scope than personal experience.⁵⁷ Jung argued that the collective unconscious is timeless, pertaining to modern humanity's inherent connection with our primal past, to intuition about the future, and to our shared experiences of human nature. The unconscious, then, is the source of instincts, or *archetypes*, which Jung defined as the forms and categories that

⁵⁶ "The unconscious is not simply the unknown, it is rather the unknown *psychic*. (...) The unconscious depicts an extremely fluid state of affairs." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 152, 158, 179, 185; on the unconscious see Mattoon, 34.

⁵⁷ C.G. Jung, *Civilization in Transition, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 10, H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, and W. McGuire, eds., (New York: Bollingen Foundation, Inc., and Princeton University Press, 1964), 9; People "carry with us as part of our psychic constitution the traces of collective experience." Herbert Read, "Carl Gustav Jung," *The Cult of Sincerity*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 125.

shape our thoughts.⁵⁸ Jung explained that an archetype is not a particular thought or entity, but rather a structure of thought, or a pattern of perception. He wrote, “There are no inborn ideas, but there are inborn possibilities of ideas.”⁵⁹ He believed that these archetypal patterns of thought and behaviour have built up slowly over millennia, the “psychic residua of innumerable experiences” that allow people to respond instinctually to types of experience.⁶⁰ The archetypes are older than humankind itself, but they are also active and vital, in that they constantly affect our lives.

Although unknown to our conscious minds, the unconscious is, according to Jung, a rich storehouse of wisdom.⁶¹ Because the instincts of the unconscious represent ancient survival skills and because the unconscious has access to a wider range of information than the conscious mind, it is able to compensate for the narrow scope of consciousness. The contents and behaviour of the unconscious are morally neutral, but benefit the individual and society by imparting a deeper meaning and a broader focus.⁶² The conscious mind is limited in its scope, but because the unconscious is autonomous

⁵⁸ For a discussion of how Jung came to believe in the existence of the archetypes of the unconscious, see Carl A. Meier, *Jung's Analytical Psychology and Religion*, (London and Amsterdam: Feffer and Sons Inc., 1977), 22.

⁵⁹ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 81; Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 158; Besides the word “archetypes” Jung, following Burkhardt, called them “primordial images.” Herbert Read, *Selected Writings: Poetry and Criticism*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 116.

⁶⁰ “Just as his instincts compel man to a specifically human mode of existence, so the archetypes force his ways of perception and apprehension into specifically human patterns.” (...) The archetypes “are not just relics or vestiges of earlier modes of functioning; they are the ever-present and biologically necessary regulators of the instinctual sphere.” Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 133, 201.

⁶¹ “The unconscious is not just evil by nature, it is also the source of the highest good: not only dark but also light, not only bestial, semi-human and demonic, but superhuman, spiritual, and in the classical sense of the word, divine.” Jung in Jolande Jacobi and R.F.C. Hull, eds., *C.G. Jung: Psychological Reflections*, (Princeton: Bollingen Foundation and Princeton University Press, 1953), 248.

⁶² “In itself, an archetype is neither good nor evil. Whether it will be conducive to good or evil is determined, knowingly or unknowingly, by the conscious attitude.” Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 104.

it is free to add whatever is missing from the conscious attitude, and this can balance the individual and society.

In Jungian theory, allowing for the unconscious to play an important role in the creative life process promotes the synthesis of the conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind, an occurrence that is integral to individuation. The conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche are incongruous, yet the movement toward psychological transformation through individuation requires that they combine to form a whole. Jung called the assimilation of the conscious and unconscious into each other a “mutual penetration.”⁶³ In order for the conscious and unconscious to be able to come together, they must both be free to contribute to individuation and the life process.

Art and individuation

The goal of Jungian analysis is to support individuation by considering the interaction between the conscious and unconscious in the light of the *analysand's*, or client's, life. In Jungian therapy the analyst and analysand take as their starting point images that appear in the analysand's dreams or artwork. The process involves a discussion about personal associations, emotional responses, and mythical symbols, with the intention of discovering the relevance of these images for the analysand's life process.⁶⁴ The major task is then to bring this understanding into life through ethical

⁶³ Jung, C.G., *The Practice of Psychotherapy, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 16, H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, eds., (New York: Bollingen Foundation, Inc. and Pantheon Books, 1954), 152; “Consciousness should defend its reason and protect itself, and the chaotic life of the unconscious should be given the chance of having its way too – as much of it as we can stand. This means open conflict and open collaboration at once.” Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9.1, 287, 289.

⁶⁴ This is possible because a symbol is more like a *tendency* than a fixed meaning. Progoff, *Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning*, xiv; Just as our minds are unique, our versions of archetypes are also unique. Because only the dreamer can possibly know what a dream means, the analyst only assists but does not force the interpretation process. C.G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, (London: Aldus Press Ltd., 1961), 38, 57.

action. For Jung, ethics is not subsumed under aesthetics. Rather, the aesthetic process serves as just one of several steps toward integrating ones' *shadow* characteristics and becoming more complex, more individuated.⁶⁵

The conundrum of how the conscious and unconscious will integrate during individuation points to the important role for art and its communicative, symbol-making aspect. Its ability to function independently makes the creative unconscious important in the process of spiritual and mental transformation. Because the archetypes of the unconscious are more like behaviour patterns than like physical objects, it is difficult to observe them until they are on the threshold of consciousness. Jung wrote that "the archetype is a psychoid factor that belongs to the invisible end of the psychic spectrum."⁶⁶ The existence and nature of archetypes, however, can be discovered through the images that derive from them, and this indicates the function of art in bringing information and concepts into consciousness. Jung posited that we should be able to observe the process of psychological integration in spite of the conscious mind's attempts to interfere and negate deep psychological growth.⁶⁷ Describing the suspension of conscious judgment during the spontaneous creative process, Jung wrote

⁶⁵ According to Jung, self-knowledge depends upon becoming increasingly conscious of the presence of what he called the shadow, the positive and negative aspects of oneself that we are often unconscious of. Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 124, 138, 140; "Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the denser it is. (...) If it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it never gets corrected." Jung in Jacobi, 219, 240; "Jung's psychological view of life requires the confrontation of the world – cosmic and social – by the individual who has struggled with the psychic contents that are within himself to find his own essential nature." Progoff, *Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning*, 13, 159.

⁶⁶ "Archetypes, so far as we can observe and experience them at all, manifest themselves only through their ability to organize images and ideas and this is always an unconscious process which cannot be detected until afterwards." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 213.

⁶⁷ "The key is this, we must be able to let things happen in the psyche. (...) Consciousness is forever interfering, helping, correcting, negating, and never leaving the simple growth of the psychic processes in peace." Jung quoted in Herbert Read, *Education through Art*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1943), 192.

that the artist or poet's "conscious mind stands amazed and *empty*" while thoughts and images from the unconscious flood into awareness.⁶⁸

Central to Jung's aesthetic theory is the need for this free creativity that allows for the unconscious formation of meaningful, symbolic forms, words, and actions.⁶⁹ Speaking of unconscious creativity, Jung wrote, "with the hand that guides the crayon or brush, the foot that executes the dance-step, with the eye and the ear, with the word and the thought: an unconscious *a priori* precipitates itself into plastic form."⁷⁰ According to Jung, the archetypal *image* represents the *meaning* of the instinct, so archetypal images provide evidence of the irrepresentable basic forms that they depend upon. Jung defined the art that contains these meaningful images as archetypal and symbolic.

Jung distinguished between signs and symbols on the basis of whether they refer to a known or an unknown subject. Whereas *signs* refer to what we already know, and pertain to intentionally created images in art, Jung defined the *symbol* as "an expression of something real, but unknown."⁷¹ A symbol is not an allegory that points to something familiar; it conveys meaning that is actually beyond our current level of

⁶⁸ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 66, 73, 87; Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9.1, 281.

⁶⁹ In a letter to Read, Jung wrote of art's ability to provide an unimpeded view of the unconscious. (Fiction is) a "legitimate and authentic offspring of the unconscious mind and thus provides me with unadulterated information about the things that transcend the conscious mind." Jung, correspondence with Read, December 17, 1948, Herbert Read Archive, University of Victoria, (HR/CGJ-12, 48.72).

⁷⁰ "When we examine these images more closely we find that in each of them there is a little piece of human psychology and human fate." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 81, 201, 204; for an example of these Jungian concepts applied in the history of art and civilization, see José A. Arguelles, *The Transformative Vision, Reflections on the Nature and History of Human Expression*, (London: Shambala, 1975), 2, 58, 104.

⁷¹ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 76, 94; "I attribute an as it were indefinite content to these relatively fixed symbols. Yet if their content were not indefinite, they would not be symbols at all, but signs or symptoms." Jung went on to criticize Freud's definition of symbols as elastic, vague, and actually a misnomer for signs. Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, 156; Jung explained that there is so much variation in the way people's unconscious minds operate that symbols defy classification. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, 38, 57; for more on the Jungian distinction between signs and symbols see Philipson, 15.

comprehension. A symbol expresses an idea just below the threshold of consciousness that we are incapable of communicating in a normal, direct way. Symbols have no fixed, known content, and must be intuitively comprehended. Jung argued that in its essence a symbol contains conscious and unconscious aspects, or what he called the rational and the irrational.⁷²

In Jungian theory, art is significant particularly *because* it can have relevance beyond the intentional and the personal: it can remain independent of manipulation by the ego.⁷³ According to Jung, although the artist as a person can be understood partly in terms of social and biological factors, these do not illuminate the deeper meaning of the artwork or the artistic process, the relevance of which is independent of socio-biological determinants. The meaning and symbols of a work of art “inhere within it,” although their relevance must be discerned by the individual.⁷⁴

Similar to the distinction between sign and symbol, Jung distinguished between the *personalistic* and the *archetypal* modes of artistic creation, only the latter being relevant to individuation and social change.⁷⁵ Both processes may produce interesting art, but only the archetypal mode can radically transform individuals and society by

⁷² Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9.1, 289; Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 18.

⁷³ “A work of art is supra-personal.” Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 71.

⁷⁴ Jung believed that although the artwork and the artist are related, they can never really explain each other. “A psychology with a purely biological orientation cannot be applied to a work of art or man as creator. A purely causalistic psychology is only able to reduce every human individual to a member of the species *Homo Sapiens*.” *Ibid.*, 15, 86.

⁷⁵ Personalistic art “is a conscious product designed to have the effect intended, and works belonging to this class nowhere overstep the limits of comprehension.” *Ibid.*, 75. For a comparison of archetypal and personalistic art on the basis of method and subject matter see Philipson, 104; In using the terms *personalistic* and *archetypal* for the modes of art, I am following a note by the editors, among whom was Herbert Read. The note explained that they revised the terminology in order to reflect Jung’s intention to contrast these two types of psychological material and artistic processes. Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 89.

bringing new knowledge from the unconscious into awareness.⁷⁶ Conversely, the personalistic mode would simply reapply known entities. In this case, the artist has specific aims, and within the constraints of his ability, he attempts to force his materials to comply with his conscious goals. The personalistic mode is inspired by material from everyday life. Although this art may relate to the general human condition, it does not offer a new viewpoint. Its subject matter always has a basically understandable quality, representing what Jung called “the psychic foreground of life.”⁷⁷

While personalistic art results in images that relate to personal attitudes, archetypal art offers new insight. Jung explained that it was the archetypal mode that interested him, and that the question we should ask of art is “what primordial image lies behind it?”⁷⁸ Just as Jung defined the unconscious as autonomous, so he believed that the archetypal creative process could be described as having a life of its own. This creative process seems to insist on its own forms, contrary to conscious intentions. With archetypal art the artist is subordinate to the creative process, and this produces unintended effects. The poet or artist, like the reader or viewer, gains new knowledge from the finished artwork, as if he were seeing it for the first time. In Jung’s words, the poet’s “pen writes things that his mind contemplates with amazement.”⁷⁹ Jung described the visionary quality of archetypal art. “The material for artistic expression is no longer familiar. It is something strange that derives its existence from the hinterland of man’s mind, as if it had emerged from the abyss of pre-human ages.”⁸⁰ During the uncontrolled creative process, true symbols appear which afford the most poignant and

⁷⁶ For more on art and new awareness, see Leonard Shlain, *Art and Physics: Parallel Visions in Space, Time, and Light*, (New York: William Morrow, 1991), 220.

⁷⁷ Speaking of personalistic art, Jung said, “We can leave this kind of art without injury and without regret to the purgative methods employed by Freud.” Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 80, 90; for the Freudian method see Philipson, 162.

⁷⁸ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 80.

⁷⁹ “The unborn work in the psyche of the artist is a force of nature.” *Ibid.*, 15, 72-75.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

direct indicators of that which is missing from consciousness. Suggesting solutions that may not be semantically acceptable and offering visions of what has never before been experienced, this archetypal, symbolic art has a radically transformative effect. In Jung's poetic words, "The primordial experiences rend from top to bottom the curtain upon which is painted the picture of an ordered world, and allow a glimpse into the unfathomable abyss of the unborn and of things yet to be."⁸¹

The individual as the site of transformation

For Jung, the transformative effect of the creative unconscious is the key to the personal and social significance of art. Jung explained how individuation affects the individual, both in his inner essence and in terms of his relationship with society. As the individual becomes more whole and complex, he becomes distinguishable from societal norms. However, he does not become separate from society; while being distinct from the norm, he is increasingly connected with humanity in general through the experience of self-acceptance and the compassion that arises as a result. Jung wrote, "Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself."⁸²

According to Jung, the creative individual must fight against the modern state's tendency towards reducing a person's sense of individuality. Under the influence of scientific rationalism, mass-minded bureaucracies consider the multi-faceted individual to be a mere social unit, a statistical average.⁸³ The danger, Jung explained, is that when

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 90; "The unconscious contains all those creative forces which lead man onwards to new developments, new forms, and new goals. (...) It adds to consciousness everything that has been excluded by the drying up of the springs of intuition and by the fixed pursuit of a single goal." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 18.

⁸² Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 226; for the distinction between individuation and individualism see Jacobi, 177.

⁸³ "Under the influence of scientific assumptions, not only the psyche but the individual man, and indeed, all individual events whatsoever suffer a levelling down and a process of blurring that distorts the picture of reality into a conceptual average. We ought not to

the individual combines with the mass, he renders himself obsolete. When the state loses sight of individuals' complexity and capability, it attempts to assume moral responsibility, and this reduces the scope for individuals to affect society. Jung argued that when the individual's moral responsibility is replaced by state policy, the goal and meaning of life ceases to be individual development, and becomes instead the ability to fit in with the status quo. He said that people whose decisions are governed by social, political and religious conventions do not so much exercise a *way* of life as a *method* of life.⁸⁴ This kind of social adaptation towards the collective is detrimental to the mental and emotional wholeness of the individual, who should instead try to withstand "the dead weight of the mass, with its everlasting convention and habit."⁸⁵

Both individuation and comprehension can occur only at the level of the individual, so it is the individual who carries the moral responsibility for society and humankind.⁸⁶ Jung described this task of freeing oneself from group mentality as a constant search for the Self.⁸⁷ Because the union of conscious and unconscious elements during individuation brings about new attitudes that result in different behaviour, this personal process can instigate a transformation in the relationships and communities that make up society.⁸⁸

underestimate the psychological effect of the statistical world-picture." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 252, 253.

⁸⁴ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, 174; "The social goal is attained only at the cost of a diminution of personality." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, 395; on alienation see Ira Progoff, *Depth Psychology and Modern Man*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), 64.

⁸⁵ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol.17, 175.

⁸⁶ "The psychologist believes firmly in the individual as the sole carrier of mind and life." (...) "Only a change in the attitude of the individual can bring about a renewal in the spirit of nations. Everything begins with the individual." Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 27, 225.

⁸⁷ "Each person must struggle through to find the light for himself. (...) The modern personality is forced to live *in search*, in search of self, psychologically, spiritually, and historically." Progoff, *Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning*, 13.

⁸⁸ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9.1, 289; see also Progoff, *Depth Psychology*, 72.

The archetypal creative process is socially relevant because the artistic manifestations of the unconscious compensate not only for a particular artist, but also for socially prevalent conscious attitudes.⁸⁹ This has the effect of balancing otherwise dangerously biased social norms.⁹⁰ Jung believed that every era has its own bias, and that in contrast to this, the artist expresses the unspoken desires of his time: his symbols point to ways to fulfil both personal and social needs. The artist meets the psychic needs of his society by serving as a vehicle for compensatory symbolic images from the unconscious which act on other members of society.⁹¹ By giving shape to an archetype, the artist is working with symbols that can counteract societal and epochal blind-spots; and because the artist does this in the language of the present, he renders these symbolic messages more widely accessible and palatable. As Jung explained, a symbol is the image that relates most directly to the unknown. Hence, symbolic images that draw on the unconscious tend to point to the most direct compensation for socially-prevalent attitudes. Creative freedom characterizes the mental states and the activities that allow people to transcend the present. The symbolic nature of archetypal art challenges our habitual opinions. According to Jung, art does this because it is based in the symbols of the Janus-faced unconscious, which both contains the preconscious world and anticipates the future.⁹²

⁸⁹ “Peoples and times, like individuals, have their own characteristic tendencies and attitudes. (...) Very many psychic elements that could play their part in life are denied the right to exist because they are incompatible with the general attitude.” Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 82-83.

⁹⁰ “One-sidedness and dogmatism harbour in themselves the gravest dangers.” *Ibid.*, 85, 98; for a Jungian treatment of how art relates to its epoch, see Neumann, *Art and the Creative Unconscious*, 108-109.

⁹¹ “Whenever conscious life becomes one-sided or adopts a false attitude, these images instinctively rise to the surface in dreams and in the visions of artists and seems to restore the psychic balance, whether of the individual or of the epoch.” Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 104-105; see also Proffoff, *Symbolic and the Real*, 22.

⁹² Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9.1, 279.

While consciousness may be limited by the spirit of an era, the creative process allows an individual to step beyond the bounds of conscious motivation. Through art we can allow the unconscious a greater role in the life process, and discern important sources of meaning. Jung wrote “therein lies the social significance of art: it is constantly at work educating the spirit of our age, making it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life.”⁹³ Jung’s aesthetic theory emphasizes the individual as co-creator of a process that links creativity with ethics, and symbolic interpretation with timeless qualities in human nature.⁹⁴ This transformative function of creative freedom reveals the relevance of Jung’s theory for Read: the artistic process is part of the process of nature; creativity is transcendent; the individual is the site of transformation which in turn affects society; and spontaneity is an important part of the creative process that brings symbolic forms into reality.

⁹³ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 82-83; for examples, see Hartzell, 40.

⁹⁴ The history of the world is “a gigantic summation from these hidden sources in individuals.” Jung in Jacobi, 156.

CHAPTER TWO:

Herbert Read's Aesthetic Theory

At the foundation of Read's aesthetic theory is the belief that art not only contains meaning, but actually creates it. Like Jung, he argued that art brings into the physical world images that relate to concepts and emotions that would otherwise be imperceptible and incommunicable. Read defined aesthetic cognition as the psychological component of sensation, a function of the physical world deriving directly from what he called "the facts of art".⁹⁵ According to Read, life itself is aesthetic. Just as the ability to perceive is inherent in the human body, Read believed that perception naturally has an aesthetic element.⁹⁶ He defined the aesthetic function as the propensity of the human mind to instinctively find patterns and order in what we perceive. As such, the aesthetic process is required for perception and cognition. Read argued that perception precedes consciousness, and aesthetic activity precedes any other coherent intellectual activity. Consciousness can only take shape through the symbols that represent reality, and representation brings unconscious concepts and experiences into consciousness. In these ways, according to Read, art is consciousness-expanding, and our survival depends on it. He wrote, "Art has remained key to our survival from the dawn of human culture."⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 28, 49; Read, *Education for Peace*, 94.

⁹⁶ "Below the level of consciousness, a wider and deeper chaos seeks the harmony and stability of the aesthetic pattern." (...) "Experience only falls into shape and becomes memorable and utilizable in the degree that it falls into artistic shape." (...) "We seek conformity with the organic laws of nature and the cosmic laws of matter." Read, *Education through Art*, 15, 193; Herbert Read, *Icon and Idea, The Function of Art in the Development of Human Consciousness*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), 88.

⁹⁷ "It is still the activity by means of which our sensation is kept alert, our imagination kept vivid, our power of reasoning kept keen." Read, *Icon and Idea*, 32.

In this chapter I detail Read's theory that form precedes consciousness, as natural patterns shape our cognition. I discuss Read's argument that aesthetic perception and art are manifestations of nature, and his conclusion from this that what he called *aesthetic cognition* promotes insight and harmony. I then outline his reasons for emphasizing *aesthetic education*, a subject that has repercussions for the issues of pacifism, anarchism, and psychology that I later return to.

Consciousness, form, and aesthetics

Discussing how consciousness relates to the physical world, Read argued that we become conscious of our own existence by relating to perceived forms. Essentially, we discover all that exists through the formal properties of our physical environment.⁹⁸ Read believed that aesthetics, perception, and consciousness are so tightly interwoven that it is possible to say that consciousness itself is form-based.⁹⁹ Forms exist before consciousness, and because we live as physical beings in a physical universe, the forms that we perceive shape our thoughts. We think *of* forms and *in* forms, so, Read said, thought arises as imagery.¹⁰⁰

Read argued that life itself is the relationships among forms.¹⁰¹ Colour, brightness, space, and motion are all aspects of our environment that we perceive as

⁹⁸ Read, *Poetry and Criticism*, 383.

⁹⁹ For an alternative but related discussion of the origins and structure of consciousness, see Johnston, "Evolution of Consciousness," 123.

¹⁰⁰ "The manifested shape is the node from which in due course ideas spring." Read, *Art and Alienation*, 26; Read, "What we call natural life is in effect a relationship between forms, so inexorable that without it this natural life would not exist." Herbert Read, *The Origins of Form in Art*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1965), 7-8, 85; Read, *Education for Peace*, 97.

¹⁰¹ According to Read the concept of form is made up of both physical form and its essence. Even the absence of form, "chaos and dark nothingness," falls under the definition of form. Read, *Origins*, 92. In this regard, for Read's debt to science and to A.N. Whitehead, see Herbert Read, *The Innocent Eye*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947), 257-259.

patterns. These physical patterns give rise to patterns of thought and human experience. According to Read, since form exists prior to human experience, consciousness of form is attained from the natural environment. Nature provides the material for perception, is the object of consciousness, and shapes our patterns of cognisance. We know life through nature, and the process whereby we become conscious of our own existence is a natural process. Perception is dependent upon form, form is equated with natural life, and aesthetic perception is a natural response to form; so, Read argued, the aesthetic function is not a principle, but a natural mechanism.¹⁰²

Read's emphasis on the centrality of art to psychological and social life is based on his belief that aesthetics is a physical mode of cognition.¹⁰³ The crucial role that art plays for the individual and society is due to its being a *unique* type of cognition, an alternative to logic. Read linked art to perceptual experience, as opposed to abstract thinking, and argued that art can serve as "a true and final cognition; an entirely original and absolutely independent mental activity."¹⁰⁴ Read believed that there are two distinct modes of intelligence, the logical and the aesthetic, and that it is the aesthetic that offers valuable insight.¹⁰⁵ The virtue of the aesthetic function is that it is based in and fosters personal contact with the physical world. Whereas logic can distract one away from the physical world into abstract concepts, aesthetics promotes the experiencing of immediate reality. Because its focus is reality, Read argued,

¹⁰² Read, *Education through Art*, 14.

¹⁰³ "It is only in so far as the artist establishes symbols for the representation of reality that mind, as a structure of thought, can take shape." Read, *Icon and Idea*, 53, 88.

¹⁰⁴ In this regard Read concurred with the theory of Conrad Fiedler, and alluded to Friedrich Schelling, Friedrich Schiller, Johann Goethe and the poet Friedrich Holderlin. Read, *Icon and Idea*, 17; Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 40, 43; Art is the mental faculty without which none of the other graces of mankind would have come into existence." For Read's affinity with Susanne Langer's notion of non-discursive thought, see Herbert Read, *Art and the Evolution of Man*, (London: Freedom Press, 1951), 33, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Read's intention was to "redeem art from the secondary and trivial role ascribed to it by traditional philosophy and to make it the primary instrument of our cognition." Read, *Origins*, 8; Read, *Poetry and Criticism*, 385; Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 134.

aesthetic cognition helps us refine our sensibility and enhance our comprehension of the nature of our existence.¹⁰⁶

Art is not decorative or additional according to Read, but rather it is a manifestation of the organic nature of the universe. Read wrote, “Art is no mere lustre on the hard surface of reality. It is the finest tone of our vitality, the very echo of the organic rhythm of the universe.”¹⁰⁷ In Read’s theory, aesthetics represents not just a type of thought, but an opening into areas of consciousness that are not accessible to logic.¹⁰⁸ Because the forms used in art are derived from nature, they are able to communicate in a non-linguistic way: Read said that in making art we pour our psychic content like jelly into naturally existing shapes.¹⁰⁹ The artist uses psychologically-loaded forms to represent logically inexpressible areas of consciousness or experience. This is how art creates reality: it communicates phenomena that are beyond the scope of language, and it produces in physical form what would otherwise be unknown or non-representable.¹¹⁰

Art, being inherently linked to form and nature, serves as a vehicle for the mind to construct and renew its version of existence. Read’s theory is that all art is derived from natural forms; consciousness itself is a result of natural processes; art refers to either the conscious or the unconscious, both of which are products of nature; and

¹⁰⁶ “A work of art is an organization of sensation rather than a mode of representation.” Read, *Origins*, 31; for a non-Readian view on the cognitive function of art see James Young, *Art and Knowledge*, (London: Routledge, 2001) 17.

¹⁰⁷ Herbert Read, *To Hell with Culture, and Other Essays on Art and Society*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 91; “It must be obvious that the world of experience is in some way apprehended, and valuable truths expressed about the nature of reality, by the world’s greatest artists.” Read, *Icon and Idea*, 33, 89;.

¹⁰⁸ Read, *Icon and Idea*, 126; for a reproduction of Read’s diagram of the mind, see Thistlewood, “Organic Aesthetic II”, 237.

¹⁰⁹ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 61, 99, 157.

¹¹⁰ Art “presents to intellectual attention glimpses into the vast, hidden reservoir of intuition.” David Thistlewood, “Herbert Read’s Aesthetic Theorizing, 1914-1952,” in *Art History*, 2, (3), 1979, 341.

symbolic art communicates information that would otherwise not exist in the conscious realm. Hence, based on Read's concepts it can be concluded that art *is* reality, *points* to reality, *symbolizes* reality, and *creates* reality.

The reason that art can communicate awareness of ourselves and reality beyond the art object is, according to Read, because perception is holistic. An organism as a whole experiences its environment as a whole. What Read called the "organic mode of attention" is a focus on the form and essence of whatever we perceive, and this leads to "organic reciprocity," synergy between the organism and the environment.¹¹¹ Perception is always multi-directional; that is, it relates the object to what exists beyond the object, and the perceived to the imperceptible. Because of this, according to Read, formal relationships within and among artworks unconsciously symbolize the universe itself.¹¹²

Just as perception includes both a physical aspect and a psychological or aesthetic element, art contains both formal and non-formal elements. Art communicates meaning because its formal aspects represent its non-material subject. The belief that material forms correspond to something non-material allowed Read to define art as that which contains essence, or as the "plastic materialization of insight."¹¹³ As people engage in aesthetic perception or artistic creation we are participating in a symbolically charged activity in which essence and physical existence are inseparable. Read explained that symbolic art relates to a concomitant mental state, "an emotion, a mood,

¹¹¹ Read, *Education through Art*, 195; Read, *Art and Alienation*, 73; Read noted Henri Focillon's argument that there is no distinction between life and art. Read, *Origins*, 7-8.

¹¹² For more on this idea as the "life force" see Reichert, 10.

¹¹³ Art combines form, derived from the organic world, with principles originating in the human mind and corresponding to "some inner necessity." The shapes, colours, sounds or other forms in art are the physical counterparts of numinous aspects of reality. Read, *Origins*, 70, 82; Read, *Education through Art*, 33; Read, *Art and Alienation*, 35; This relates to Read's discussion of symbolic and non-symbolic images. He wrote that non-discursive images have no aesthetic appeal because they are no different from all other visual and sensory stimulus. Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 57; Read, *Icon and Idea*, 64; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 156.

an idea, or an intuition; in brief, the realization of a state of consciousness.”¹¹⁴ It is therefore the presence of the numinous, or essence, that makes art a mode of cognition.

Art and individuation

The interrelations of art and cognition, form and essence, reality and the numinous, and individualism and freedom pertain to Read’s interest in Jungian philosophy, specifically his descriptions of artistic creation as psychological work.¹¹⁵ Read’s understanding of the numinous aspect of art is very similar to the Jungian concept of the archetype.¹¹⁶ Read wrote, “The forms of art are only significant in so far as they are archetypal.”¹¹⁷ The Jungian concept of unconscious sources of art informs Read’s discussion of artistic processes and the need for creative freedom.

Echoing the Jungian distinction between personalistic and archetypal art, Read explained that there are important distinctions between processes for which the artist is consciously responsible, and those in which the artist is a passive instrument.¹¹⁸ He argued that the unconscious is dynamic and purposive, that spontaneous artistic

¹¹⁴ The art object, according to Read, is the “objective correlative” of the related condition of consciousness. He wrote that this related to the Jungian notion that the disciplined artist attend to the “purification of his meaning, on the presentation of an exact symbol.” Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 26.

¹¹⁵ Artistic genius is “the capacity to work in psychological material.” Read, *To Hell*, 7; for an example of an artist’s undertaking to depict his own individuation, see Barkley, 20.

¹¹⁶ If Read seems to have been influenced by the ideas of Emmanuel Kant, this may have been in part through Jung. For Jung’s debt to Kant see Mayo, 108, 117; for a discussion of Kant’s categories of the *phenomenal* and *noumenal* see Edward Henning, *Creativity in Art and Science*, (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, and Indiana Press, 1987), 73; for Jung’s ideas of the numinous as the “energy transforming element of the archetypal symbol,” and the effects of this for the shadow and individuation see Hoy, ii, 27.

¹¹⁷ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 61, 75; Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 71; From these concepts, Read argued that symbolic art symbolizes *creativity* itself. In Ernst Cassirer’s words, “The image becomes for the spirit a pure expression of its own creative power.” Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 114; For a discussion of the *determined* versus the *unpredictable* in art, see Thistlewood, *Formlessness and Form*, 147.

¹¹⁸ “The artist is merely a channel whose only function is to transmit the forces of nature into the forms of art.” (...) “We do not credit the midwife for the child.” Read, *Origins*, 14; Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 199.

creativity circumvents logic, and that the artistically valid symbols are those that, “rise fully armed from the depths of the unconscious.”¹¹⁹ The artist is a conduit for material from the unconscious, and in this way art transforms the unconscious from instinct into form. Because art does not simply reflect reality but actually creates new reality by transforming the unconscious into a perceptible form that promotes self-awareness, Read argued that art is a constructive act through which we explore the Self.¹²⁰

Read attributed the spontaneous, dynamic quality of creativity to Jungian concepts of individuation, which Read defined as a process in which the Self is redefined and deepened in significance.¹²¹ He saw individuation as a symbol-making process of organic development, at the core of which is creativity. He further linked this to a humanism in which individual instincts are reconciled with universal archetypes in what he called “a consciously realized enlightenment.”¹²² Like Jung, Read believed that individuation causes the unique aspects of an individual to become personally and socially integrated. Through individuation, the archetype renders art personally meaningful, but also socially significant.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 70; Read, *Icon and Idea*, 119; “(Jung) meant to indicate that apart from the results of unconscious activity which can be explained in terms of ordinary associative processes, and by reference to the past history of the patient, there are other results which seem to depend on a state of receptivity in the unconscious greater than any known to conscious mental activity.” Read, Herbert Read Archive, University of Victoria, Canada, (H.R. 27/4), 6.

¹²⁰ According to Read, “to explore the frontiers of the self is a constructive act.” Read, *Icon and Idea*, 128; for a Jungian discussion of this see Proggoff, *Symbolic and the Real*, 92.

¹²¹ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 189; Individuation is “the only means of bringing peace of mind to the individual and, by species of contagion, of affecting other people with the same degree of equanimity.” Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 127; for more on Read’s interest in the creative process see Wasson, 77; and Keel, 209.

¹²² Read linked individuation to humanism and to “a new totality figure” capable of rising above both egotism and evil. Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 189-192; Read discussed Hegel’s conception of creativity as “the progressive reconciliation of the unique with the universal.” Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 24.

The individual as the site of transformation

Each individual has these two aspects, the personal and the social, and psychological integration is beneficial to both.¹²³ At the individual level, the unconscious offers up information that can transform the conscious mind. The individual transforms the universal unconscious through his own creative process, and this has social relevance because all of humanity has access to the unconscious. When an individual creates archetypal images that other people respond to consciously or unconsciously, individual art contributes to others' individuation processes, and this can reduce social alienation. Read defined social alienation as the process whereby the unique reality of the individual becomes indistinguishable, as the bureaucracy administers a population by treating each unique, complex individual as a theoretical unit. Read argued that forcing the individual to comply with laws that pertain to a statistical norm and preclude complexity, suppresses individuals' creativity and spontaneity. The result of repressing one's individuality and forcing oneself to comply with mass-thinking, he believed, is alienation from inner, transformative self-knowledge. If we identify with the socially prevalent mentality, it is at the expense of contact with the unconscious and with creativity.¹²⁴

Read explained that the atrophy of cultural values in materialistic civilization destroys the expression of creativity and meaning, or what he called, "the gracious

¹²³ With regard to the inseparable aspects of the individual and the universal, Read noted Benedetto Croce's discussion of Giambattista Vico's philosophy of history and his theory of "imaginative expression:" "Individuality is nothing but the concreteness of the universal, and every individual action, simply because it is individual, is supra-individual." Croce in Read, *Ibid.*, 25, 224.

¹²⁴ Read wrote that some artists unfortunately relinquish their personal choice and adopt the pervasive artistic idiom in common with the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit of the times. Read, *Origins*, 20; for a Jungian discussion of the social repercussions of the tension between individual and group consciousness see V.W. Odajnyk, *Jung and Politics*, (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1976), 7.

spontaneity of our activities.”¹²⁵ Read’s theory posits that transformation and the organic evolution of consciousness are inherent in human nature, and that to suppress them brings about, in his words, the “disintegration of the personality.”¹²⁶ So, social alienation is *caused by* a bureaucratically enforced reduction in aesthetic perception, and *promotes* a further atrophy of aesthetic cognition.

According to Read, the way to avoid inadvertently trading one’s complex personality for identification with a group is by affirming one’s individual reality.¹²⁷ By doing so Read believed, as did Jung, that the freely creative individual can inspire social change. Through individuation a person embraces his uniqueness, and this sets him apart from the amorphous statistical norm. However, the person who individuates is not excluded from society; rather he becomes distinct from the *undifferentiated* quality of mass thinking.¹²⁸ The unique personality is particularly valuable for society by virtue of being unpredictable. Because the process of individuation develops in unforeseeable ways, it brings the unknown into reality through the individual, and in turn reinvigorates society.

Art provides a way for the unique individual not only to gain awareness but also to communicate his experience to society. This is possible because art can reveal the reality that convention renders invisible. Art renders concepts, emotions, and intuited symbols in physical form, and it thereby both communicates the artist’s experience of

¹²⁵ Read, *Icon and Idea*, 138.

¹²⁶ Read, *Education Through Art*, 201; for Read’s explanation of the Jungian concept of the “psychic origins of social conflicts” see Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 125.

¹²⁷ However, this is not a call for lunacy but a foundation of responsibility. Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 261.

¹²⁸ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 101; Read distinguished between individuality and individualism, as had Jung. Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 79; for a discussion of how individuation relates to community, see Johnston, “Evolution of Consciousness,” 10.

life and creates new objects that augment other people's knowledge.¹²⁹ Read argued that the social role of art is to transcend habit, to expand the limits of understanding, to "press forward into the whole of the eternal world and the soul."¹³⁰

In this way, the archetypal work of art is more than a knee-jerk social compensation, because it is a statement about reality. This is the *effect* of art rather than a *prescription* for appropriate art: it is important to remember that Read had a critique of dogmatic art, instead characterizing art as an "unpolitical manifestation of the human spirit."¹³¹ This makes artists key to Read's concept of the "politics of the unpolitical," the politics of those who are non-egotistically socially engaged.¹³² The work of art is always a personal creation, but the individual exists within a broader community. Because art has this dual social and personal connection, Read believed that even personal artistic creation is socially activist, and can reduce the isolating effects of alienation.¹³³ The idea that art can have positive effects on the individual and society led Read to consider the kind of society that is conducive to artistic creativity.

¹²⁹ Read wrote of the work of art "as thought itself, as absolute realism, a process of nature accepted as a fact." Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 26, 146; For Read's use of the work of Ernst Cassirer see Read, *Icon and Idea*, 128; for a discussion of the link between imagination and the unconscious, see Geoffrey Hargreaves, "Herbert Read as Poet: An Exploration of the Divided Self," (Diss. University of Victoria, 1973), 100.

¹³⁰ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 28; Read, *Icon and Idea*, 39; for Read's discussion of Hegel's notion that the function of art is to "bring to consciousness the highest interests of the mind" see Read, *Art and Evolution*, 47.

¹³¹ Art "in its essence is independent of politics." Read, *To Hell*, x, xii; Read wrote that it is repressive to claim that a feeling should be expressed in a certain form. Read, *Icon and Idea*, 91; Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 92; "The final object of criticism is the criticism of dogma." Read in Blackmur, 14.

¹³² "Every attitude that is more than egotistic is to that extent social, and a social attitude is a political attitude." Read, *To Hell*, 38, 47.

¹³³ Read quoted Joanna Field's idea of art as "contemplative action." Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 105; Read quoted Tolstoy, "A work of art destroys in the consciousness of the recipient the separation between himself and the artist, but also between himself and all those whose minds receive this work of art." Tolstoy in Read, *Ibid.*, 201.

Aesthetic education

The question of how to ameliorate possible negative aspects of a personality led Read to emphasize the importance of an aesthetic education that could predispose humankind toward peace.¹³⁴ He thought that because we become conscious of our existence in the world through our senses, education should primarily involve the physical senses, rather than mental abstraction. Read believed that the aesthetic disciplines should be the foundation of all aspects of knowledge and education.¹³⁵ Further, because form precedes idea in the development of consciousness, this pattern should be reflected in an educational system that makes sensory perception and creative imagination the bases of learning. Read's theory of aesthetic education includes all modes of self-expression, literary, musical, aural, and others, but allows for a personal learning from and about reality through the senses.

Perception and aesthetic cognition are as valid as logic, in Read's view. Both logical and aesthetic modes aim, he argued, to develop consciousness of reality: one through intellectual concepts and the other through symbolic forms. Logic and scientific knowledge are not in themselves detrimental according to Read; what he disparaged was the overemphasis on reason, and the privileging of science as the only possible basis for knowledge.¹³⁶ He explained that modern educators preparing students for technological society focus on logic and memorization but ignore the very sources of inspiration that science, art, and other disciplines depend upon.¹³⁷ Read believed that

¹³⁴ In arguing for the centrality of virtue and morality, Read referred to Plato's goals for education as the establishment in the mind of courage, purity, justice and wisdom. Read, *Education for Peace*, 42; Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 232; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 187; Jung argued for a system of "sane education." Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 135.

¹³⁵ Read, *Education for Peace*, 23, 55; Read, *Icon and Idea*, 5; Read, *Education through Art*, 10; for the contribution of Read's son John see King, 216.

¹³⁶ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 171; Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 16.

¹³⁷ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 12, 43; Read, *Poetry and Criticism*, 384; "An education through art is not necessarily anti-scientific, for science itself depends on the

logic and technology do not adequately represent the full human experience, but instead provide only a “limited number of symbols.”¹³⁸ Sublimating our aesthetic cognition into a non-aesthetic type of discourse denies us non-logical knowledge and communication, depriving us of the half of reality that is complementary to logic.

Read traced the sense of alienation in modern society to the suppression, through social convention or authoritarian coercion, of aesthetic activity and spontaneous creativity. He described how the insecurity characteristic of alienation is exacerbated by modern industrial society’s development away from aesthetic creativity, which in turn leads to the dissociation of feeling from action.¹³⁹ He argued that while logical education is based on specific, dogmatic concepts of the universe, aesthetic education, by contrast, combines perception, feeling, reason, and concrete sensation, promoting in the individual a healthier and more unique experience of reality.

Because Read believed that human consciousness and ultimately our intelligence and ethics are based on our individual experience of the world, he hoped that an aesthetic education would support people’s understanding of reality. It was Read’s conviction that only holistic aesthetic cognition can unify the conceptual level with the instinctive, harmonious experience of nature, and his educational theory

clear manifestation of concrete sensuous phenomena.” Read, *Art and Alienation*, 26; for a Jungian discussion of the modern mind, see Johnston, “Evolution and Consciousness,” 42, 192.

¹³⁸ “The empirical status of the work of art has been ignored by our technological age.” “Educators habitually consider perceptual activity inferior if it does not lead to clear concepts dominating perception. (...) To remain at the stage of perception rather than to pass on to the stage of abstraction (...) means to keep open other roads that also arrive at cognition.” *Ibid.*, 29, 31, 40; Read, *Education Through Art*, 194; Read quoted Langer, “Intelligence is not restricted to discursive forms. The mind develops, and apprehends reality, as much by imagination and dream, by myth and ritual, by art, in short, as by practical intelligence.” Langer in Read, *Art and Evolution*, 47.

¹³⁹ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 133, 136; Read, *Art and Alienation*, 13, 201. For a discussion of Jungian artistic practice that attempts to bridge this gap see Barkley, 51.

reflects this.¹⁴⁰ His contention was that through the aesthetic mode of cognition a person perceives naturally occurring harmonious forms; likewise, a system of aesthetic education, based on concrete experience, would allow harmonious behaviour to become naturally ingrained.¹⁴¹ Read posited that the senses naturally and intuitively perceive form, proportion, harmony, integrity, and wholeness. Through art the physiological reflexes of the individual gradually become accustomed to harmonious movements and images, providing a corporeal experience of harmony that permeates the individual's disposition.

Only a holistic system, according to Read, could encourage the integration of the personality in the Jungian sense.¹⁴² Imaginative, artistic activity allows the mind to order its conception of reality: only when this personal process of discovering harmonious patterns is allowed to gradually and unconsciously take place can the individual find psychological health. Education, in order to allow for individual and social transformation, must accept people's fundamental diversity and encompass individual experiences of complexity. Read argued that aesthetic education, which allows for the experience and expression of thoughts, feelings, and intuition not otherwise communicated, would foster both individualism and social integration.

¹⁴⁰ "Science, philosophy and religion only serve an ontogenetic or evolutionary purpose in so far as they continue to be nurtured and invigorated by activities that are sensuous and aesthetic." Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 99.

¹⁴¹ Read believed that this kind of education would promote the experience of the harmony inherent in the "morphology of the natural world," and would lead to psychological health. Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 200; This method aims to provide a "concrete sensuous awareness of the harmony and rhythm which enter into the constitution of all living things." Read, *Education through Art*, 7-8, 69, 191.

¹⁴² Read explained that his *Education through Art* emphasizes individuation and that the purpose of education is the concurrent development of "uniqueness" and "social consciousness." Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 90; Read's educational theory relates to the Jungian process of balancing the rational and intuitive faculties. Progoff, *Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning*, 50.

Read's theory is that when education avoids didacticism, the student recognizes the patterns in life, art, society, and ethics; as a result of this insight he notices the patterns in his own experience, from which, in accordance with his personality, he constructs his own unique perspective. According to Read, through a non-dogmatic education based on the "aesthetic comprehension of the world," each person finds his own individual view of reality.¹⁴³ Read explained that this aesthetic focus encourages self-reflection, individuation, and self-responsibility because it allows for the natural process whereby the individual inevitably "prepares for himself a law."¹⁴⁴

An education that supports sensitivity to the physical world encourages the person to focus on reality, brings about the genuine experience of emotions, and allows for unique, non-dogmatic problem solving.¹⁴⁵ In terms of unique ways of seeing, thinking, inventing, and communicating, Read argued, as had Jung, that individual uniqueness was of great benefit to humanity as a whole.¹⁴⁶ Consequently, aesthetic education would facilitate not only personal individuation but also social integration and development. Read was explicit about the revolutionary nature of promoting aesthetic cognition and spontaneous creativity, which would prepare people for imaginative self-expression and non-conformity:

¹⁴³ Read, *Education for Peace*, 64; Natural harmonious patterns must be "perceived afresh by each nascent sensibility" and not didactically forced upon the person. Read, *Education through Art*, 8-9, 306-307.

¹⁴⁴ "Independence, freedom, law, and art – these are all implicit in aesthetic education." Read, *Education for Peace*, 56; Read thought that a system of education should (...) recognize the *genetic priority* of moral virtue and not attempt to inculcate intellectual virtue until the child is ready to receive it. Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 199.

¹⁴⁵ So, according to Read, idealistic solutions are not an escape from reality, but a response to reality. Read, *Education through Art*, 302; Kropotkin, too, favoured an integrated educational system that would promote manual as well as analytical learning. George Woodcock, "The Scientific Contribution of Peter Kropotkin," *The Writer and Politics*, (London: Porcupine Press, 1948), 91,101.

¹⁴⁶ Read, *Education through Art*, vii, 5.

“I believe that there is only one way of saving our civilization and that is by so reforming its constituent societies that the concrete sensuous phenomena of art are once more spontaneously manifested in our daily lives. I have called this reform *education through art*. But what I have not sufficiently emphasized is the revolutionary nature of the remedy.”¹⁴⁷

Art plays a fundamental role in communication and in the evolution of consciousness. Aesthetic cognition, through which a person can relate action to feeling and reality to ideals, leads to self-responsibility and to new forms of social organization. However, Read cautioned that this kind of artistic activity and education will only be possible if we refrain from war. This explains Read’s appreciation for anarchism: aesthetic perception both contributes to peace and requires peace, and anarchism, according to him, is the best guarantor of peace.

¹⁴⁷ An education through art “does not fit human beings for the mindless and mechanical actions of modern industry; it does not reconcile them to a leisure devoid of constructive purpose; it does not leave them satisfied with passive entertainment. It aims to create ‘stir and growth’ everywhere, to substitute for conformity and imitation in each citizen an endowment of imaginative power in a kind ‘perfectly unborrowed and his own’.” Read, *Art and Alienation*, 26.

CHAPTER THREE:

Herbert Read's Anarchist Synthesis

Read's interest in anarchism derives from his belief that it is the only political system that can support creative freedom and freedom of development. Transformation, he explained, is part of our organic nature, and it can best be served by a social system that promotes peace and allows for change. Individual transformation occurs through individuation, which is supported by aesthetic cognition and the expression of unconscious symbols; this requires free creativity, which presupposes freedom from the anxiety created by the bureaucratic state. According to Read, no system other than anarchism attempts to improve the relationship between the individual and society. Read posited that anarchism implies pacifism and that this is necessary for the creation of what he called a "cooperative commonwealth."¹⁴⁸ To this end, Read called for peace, as the basis of social transformation: "peace in our time and an end to the exploitation of man by man."¹⁴⁹

In previous chapters I discussed self-awareness and the transformative role of art, first with regard to the Jungian idea of the creative life process and then in terms of Read's ideas about aesthetic cognition. In the present chapter I relate art and consciousness to organic evolution and the anarchist practices of self-responsibility and ethical social organization. I begin by describing Read's pacifism, which is integral to his discussion of the synergy between free creativity and harmonious society. This is

¹⁴⁸ Read, *Education for Peace*, 107-108, 114; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 63, 102.

¹⁴⁹ "The re-emergence of transcendental forces so long frustrated by the expansion of competitive instincts, by crude materialism or by the elimination of human sympathy from the processes of thought; a moral healthiness which is affirmative, and not an inhibition of all vitality; a sense of personal freedom and a consequent responsibility for the endowment of one's own fate with values; all these changes are involved as groundwork for a new civilization." Read, *Education for Peace*, 58.

closely related to Read's theory of *organicism*, the naturally evolving processes of communication, decision making, and social formation. In light of the interplay between freedom and organic evolution, I consider the social organization that Read's anarchism supports. A discussion of anarchist organization leads inevitably to the question of ethical behaviour, which traditional anarchists explained in terms of *mutual aid*. Following this I relate psychology and artistic creativity to anarchist organic societies, and find parallels between anarchism and Jungian philosophy. Then I briefly mention scholarly paths that I have not taken in my current research, before I sum up Read/Jung convergences, and relate them to creative freedom.

Pacifism and freedom

The issue of war and peace was a major focus of Read's, and his faith in anarchism and pacifism was strengthened after WWI, when he was deeply disappointed by the state of post-war Europe.¹⁵⁰ Read argued that a major reason that we should avoid war, even war against a tyranny, is that war creates its own skewed momentum which then precludes the return to peace. Read believed that all wars are wars against life itself, and that a true pacifist should be motivated by absolute respect for human life.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ "The experience was for me one of overwhelming horror, and in 1919 I left the army a more convinced pacifist than ever." (...) "We had fought for peace, for a decent world; we found (...) not one voice openly declaring itself for a world free from the faults that had led us into the horrors of a world war." Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 75, 110, 121.

¹⁵¹ According to Read, once a pacifist transfers his projected aggression from the general (for example, militarism) to the particular (for example, German militarism) he has lost the "principle that should guide all his thoughts and actions, which is absolute respect for human life. Preventive wars, defensive wars – all wars are (...) wars against life, against love." Read, *Education for Peace*, 19.

Read was convinced that only anarchism could promote peace, by circumventing abusive power structures: systems designed to control always deteriorate, and the only way to create peace is by being peaceful.¹⁵² He believed that war will exist as long as the state exists, because the modern government is a tool of force. States govern by repression, by the promotion of economic disenfranchisement and moral inhibition, and they perpetuate this misuse of power through war. Modern democracies, he felt, fail to achieve the individual freedoms that they may intend to protect. Indeed, he perceived, the state, by claiming control over people's lives, contradicts the goal of freedom for its citizens. This is why war does not achieve what it promises: it is culturally counterproductive because it fails to produce freedom itself.¹⁵³

Only an anarchist society can create the economic, ethical, and psychological conditions that are conducive to a "peaceful mentality," Read argued.¹⁵⁴ Anarchism implies reliance on the creative instinct as opposed to the destructive instinct: in order to reduce violence in society, people must make the effort to become at peace with ourselves. Read explained that each individual has to overcome the propensity for hatred and resentment that our culture has conditioned us to accept, and instead face the subjective causes of judgment and condemnation. According to him, each person must recognize his own aggressiveness, and abstain from the tendency to judge others that amounts to "an incipient act of war."¹⁵⁵ Read acknowledged that the alternative to abusing power required self-discipline and sacrifice, but he argued that the most

¹⁵² For a discussion of anarchist definitions of power see Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 61. I would argue that although state power has a repressive function, traditional and Readian definitions allow for power as a creative force.

¹⁵³ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 82; Herbert Read, *The Philosophy of Anarchism*, (London: Freedom Press, 1940), 18.

¹⁵⁴ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 121.

¹⁵⁵ "Revolution carried out by force leaves force in command. (...) But revolutionary anarchism (...) is pacific." *Ibid.*, 31; "Only by refusing to offer effective resistance to evil can we escape evil." Read, *Education for Peace*, 5, 11.

effective way to undertake a revolution in society was to create new habits of behaviour.¹⁵⁶

On the issue of how to overcome violence, Read drew on Jungian concepts of the activist quality of love, and quoted Jung's statement, "Where love stops, power begins, and violence."¹⁵⁷ He explained that Jung's idea of the Self pertains to one's entirety, stretching from the animal to the divine aspects of life; Read believed that the shared experience of the Self could provide the basis for compassion and brotherly love. Read and Jung agreed that culture and spirituality are integral to human civilization, and that we must become responsible for our own aggression in order to transform our communities. Peace, like love, does not infer a state of inactivity, but rather a state of organic growth that promotes psychological health: in conditions of peace, Read wrote, the human psyche unfolds like a growing flower.¹⁵⁸

The organic evolution of society

Read argued that both society and art exist as a function of humankind's innate creative energy: society and art are forms that symbolize our ideas and intentions. One creative process takes place in the artist's mind and the other in the body politic.

¹⁵⁶ "The rational opponent to war will fight against his instinct to fight." "Revolt, it will be said, implies violence, but this is an outmoded, an incompetent conception of revolt. The most effective form of revolt in this violent world is non-violence." "Habits haphazardly transform laws. If new habits were inspired by ideals, the consequent change in laws would be historically coherent. A revolt would have taken place." Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 26, 27, 115, 216.

¹⁵⁷ Jung was referring to the *abuse* of power. Read quoted Tolstoy on love. "The only answer is: love all, love the source of love, love love, love God. Love, not for the sake of the loved one, nor for oneself, but for love's sake. (...) Live so as in all things to remember first of all, not to swerve from love." Tolstoy in Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 209, 216, 217; for Read's definition of love see Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 139.

¹⁵⁸ Read noted that peace, in ancient literature and in early translations of the Bible into English, was always referred to in an active sense, indicating that it is a positive condition that has to be created and maintained, and not a state of inaction or passivity. Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 223, 227.

Society exists as a product of our instinct to create the forms that reflect our inner essence. Read wrote that we create “civilization, politics, history, and art as the bird does its song.”¹⁵⁹ Individualism can clearly be associated with freedom, but society too can be considered a product of free choice. According to Read, a society should be considered a living entity, and should be allowed to evolve:

“The whole case for anarchism rests on a general assumption, that the right kind of society is an organic being, not that it is analogous to an organic being, but that it *is* one, a living structure with appetites and digestions, instincts and passions, intelligence and reason.”¹⁶⁰

If the existence of society can be attributed to our creative nature, and if consciousness results from natural processes during conditions of freedom, the society that would most suit the development of consciousness is the one that most reflects and accommodates personal experience of our creativity. Nature continuously transcends itself; society, as a human construct, exists in order to evolve. Read explained that the progressive force of social evolution was the poetic imagination, a teleological instinct that naturally and organically creates new realms of consciousness. Individuals and the group contribute to each other’s evolution as individuals’ “creative acts of perception” ultimately change the consciousness and organization of the whole group.¹⁶¹

Discussing how freedom relates to society, Read explained that the concept *liberty* implies the existence of social relationships, and that communication and creativity make freedom meaningful.¹⁶² According to Read, the fact that we are social creatures has aided our mental alertness and kept us “biologically viable;” so the free

¹⁵⁹ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 18, 156; for more on the development of civilization see Johnston, “Evolution of Consciousness,” 149.

¹⁶⁰ Read, *Poetry and Criticism*, 323; Read, *Philosophy of Anarchism*, 28; “The state should be conceived as a vital organism, its limbs articulated, its functions determined and its forms proliferated by the natural mode of living, (...) never uniformity.” Read, *Education through Art*, 4.

¹⁶¹ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 23; for more on Read’s thoughts about how psychology relates to his concept of the poetic imagination see Hausermann, 61.

¹⁶² For a description of Read’s concept of liberty as conservative see Wasson, 401.

individual and the peaceful society benefit from each other.¹⁶³ Because communication is the basis for living in communities, practicing mutual aid, and adapting as a society, there is a supportive symbiosis among the individual, the community, and the ongoing process of adaptation. Culture, then, is teleological, and consciousness itself is closely linked to cultural development.

Embracing the dynamic interplay between the free individual and a freely created society would represent evolutionary progress. Because anarchism embraces the freedom necessary for transformation, it offers a way of healing social alienation. In contrast to authoritarian government, which detracts from people's capacity to respond to changing needs and conditions, Read envisaged a social organization based on equality and freedom that would continually modify itself in order to reflect the choices of its creative citizens.¹⁶⁴ A society free to evolve would adapt to the changing conditions, interests, and ideals of the people who comprise it.

According to Read, the life of the community, if it is not constrained by rigid social and political conformity, will be self-regulating like all other organic entities. In this way anarchism would counteract modern alienation and the reduction in individual responsibility that result from the state's increasing imposition of authority. Whereas the bureaucratic state apparatus enforces uniformity and essentially legislates against human complexity, Read argued that anarchist organic society would be flexible enough to support differentiation: the essence of society should be in "individualism, variety, and organic differentiation."¹⁶⁵ Freedom and spontaneity are inherent in nature so they naturally also exist in human matters, and pacifist anarchism reaffirms this natural freedom to evolve.

¹⁶³ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 95; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 184.

¹⁶⁴ Read argued that crime and competition are symptoms of social illness but that a free society will find conditions of healthy equilibrium. Read, *Philosophy of Anarchism*, 28.

¹⁶⁵ Read, *Education through Art*, 4; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 200.

Anarchist order

Although freedom is a key feature of anarchism, expressed as a decentralization of authority, naturally this does not imply the absence of organization. Drawing on the ideas of Proudhon, Read explained, “Anarchism means a society without an *arkhos*, without a ruler. It does not mean a society without law, and therefore it does not mean a society without order.”¹⁶⁶ The issue of how to integrate personal freedom with social order led some anarchists to consider a system of self-imposed laws. Proudhon and Bakunin, for example, espoused the idea of remaining free by submitting only to laws of one’s choice.¹⁶⁷ With overtones of his belief in organicism, Read linked this to the ability to respond appropriately to shifting conditions and called it “creative self-command.”¹⁶⁸

To explain his version of anarchism, characterized by organically evolving social relationships, Read drew on Rousseau’s concept of natural law, particularly his emphasis on naturally evolving harmony.¹⁶⁹ Read referred to the simplicity of the laws of nature as

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 134; For Read’s list of the essential features of a natural society, see Herbert Read, *The Contrary Experience*, (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1963), 65, 66 and Read, *To Hell*, 48; Some anarchists have argued that although the creation of state authority is to be avoided, some type of freely chosen direct self-government may be acceptable, as long as it is commensurate with individual free choice, and in keeping with natural law. Robert Paul Wolff, *In Defence of Anarchism*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), 23, 88, 103.

¹⁶⁷ George Woodcock, “Proudhon and His Mutualist Theories,” *The Writer and Politics*, (London: The Porcupine Press, 1948), 51; Michael Bakunin, *God and the State*, (Bombay, India: Modern Publishers, Indore, 1946), 6; See also Clifford Harper, *Anarchy*, (London: Camden Press, 1987), 45, 49.

¹⁶⁸ Read, *Education for Peace*, 61, 71; Wolff attempts to logically prove the existence of inherent freedom. He discusses Kant’s contention that moral autonomy is a combination of freedom and responsibility, and argues that because a person expresses moral decisions to himself as imperatives, he is self-legislating and autonomous. Wolff, 17; for a discussion of administration as a natural outgrowth of community, see Harper, 133.

¹⁶⁹ Read was interested in Rousseau’s concept that law and liberty would be “two aspects of the same reality.” Rousseau believed that people’s appreciation of the harmony in natural law would render them incapable of either establishing or enduring a tyranny. Read,

a metaphor for how harmonious society could be if it functioned naturally. He argued that what he called *realistic rationalism* would arise in social relationships based on the natural order of the physical world and would be characterized, as is nature, by an emphasis on freedom. Read believed that if people lived by the true laws of nature instead of the dictates of a corrupt authority, both the individual and the society would benefit.¹⁷⁰

Read acknowledged that what he called anarchism, Rousseau had called true democracy.¹⁷¹ They both believed that freedom is so fundamental that the continuance of civilization will prove the existence of individual liberties.¹⁷² However, while Read shared Rousseau's emphasis on individual liberty, he differed from Rousseau on the issue of how social structures would accommodate free will. He criticized the Rousseauian social contract, which required the surrender of individual independence to the law and the state, which were to function as expressions of the "general will" and as guarantors of a limited degree of liberty. Read's concept of modern anarchism highlighted the replacement of the state with principles of fairness and reason.¹⁷³ In this way, he believed, universal, natural freedom can replace the artificial forms of government that function to perpetuate themselves and the class hierarchy that supports them.

Anarchism, Read explained, with its appreciation for human variety and individual freedom, allows for various levels of freely chosen social organization.

Philosophy of Anarchism, 17, 130; For a discussion of the discourse on rights, see Peyman Vahabzadeh, *Articulated Experiences: Toward a Radical Phenomenology of Contemporary Social Movements*, (Albany: State University of New York Press), 2003, 110.

¹⁷⁰ Read, *Poetry and Criticism*, 315.

¹⁷¹ "If what Rousseau calls an aristocratic form of government is more or less identical with modern democracy, what he calls democracy is more or less identical with the modern theory of anarchism." Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 130.

¹⁷² "Libertarianism will be a living doctrine as long as our civilization survives, for on our liberty depends the life of our civilization." *Ibid.*, 84, 132, 157, 181.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 129; This quality of reason he defined as "the widest evidence of the senses and of all processes and instincts, (...) the sum total of awareness." Read in Blackmur, 18.

People have different priorities and needs, but anarchist concepts of social freedom assume the reconciliation of these various, possibly conflicting, tendencies. Whereas the authoritarian idea of society implies the use of force to impose policies, under anarchism divergent priorities would be integrated through personal agreements.¹⁷⁴ Read believed that an important task of anarchism was to highlight alternatives to rigid institutional organization. In particular he emphasized the natural forces of self-adjustment operating in small groups.¹⁷⁵

In keeping with this idea of dynamic, flexible social relationships, and in contrast to the Rousseauian emphasis on the permanent delegation of authority to the state, anarchism conceives of the temporary delegation of authority. This is done for a specific purpose or function, following which the organ of authority is disbanded. In this way, Read explained, the functional contract could supersede the social contract. This would allow for local associations and common interest groups to replace the state, and for common-sense arbitration to take the place of the justice system. Such a system would be based on principles of justice that are superior to common and statute law, allowing equity to supersede statutory law.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ “The libertarian has no need of rule because he has achieved a subjective harmony reflected in personal integrity and social unity.” Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 130; for an anarchist discussion of spontaneous organization see Colin Ward, “The Theory of Spontaneous Order,” *Anarchy in Action*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1973), 28.

¹⁷⁵ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 14; Read credited in part the camaraderie of the army for his belief in self-regulating small groups. “The sense of unity and of unanimity might explain (my) instinctive beliefs in small independent units of production, in guild socialism, in anarchism, in a complete rejection of any ideal that compromised human freedom.” Read, *Contrary Experience*, 65, 66; Read, *Philosophy of Anarchism*, 27; Read, *Poetry and Criticism*, 314; Read’s appreciation for small scale organization has a clear predecessor in Proudhon’s. Woodcock, “Proudhon,” 43, 51.

¹⁷⁶ “Just as the judge in equity is supposed to appeal to universal principles of reason (...) the arbiter in an anarchist community will appeal to these same principles as determined by philosophy and common sense.” Read, *Philosophy of Anarchism*, 16-19, 28; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 133.

Whereas Rousseau rejected democracy as “too perfect,” Read felt that humankind is ready to live in a society free from the constraints of an authoritarian government. He believed that for ethical and economic reasons, hierarchies should be replaced with what he described as “a relationship of egalitarian cooperation.”¹⁷⁷ Although economics are important, what is more fundamental, Read argued, is our overriding sense of human solidarity. It is this awareness of connectedness, more than the necessities of economics or security, which allows us to live in community.

Anarchist ethics

Just as life, society, the individual, and creativity are dynamic, Read argued that morality is dynamic. In the anarchist conception, morality means mutuality, not obedience to commands. It denotes sympathetic social relationships and organizations characterized by compassion, flexibility, and shared ideals. Read explained that the kind of anarchism that would support individual freedom and diversity is characterized by respect for the preservation of life and a distinction between *dialectical* strife and *lethal* strife.¹⁷⁸

If we distinguish organic from entrenched forms of social organization, it becomes apparent that many human needs can best be served through systems of mutual aid, systems that give rise to ethical behaviour.¹⁷⁹ Read believed that our existential situation eventually leads us to act freely but with compassion: freedom, in a

¹⁷⁷ “We must prefer the values of freedom and equality above all other values – above personal wealth, technical power, and nationalism.” Read, *Philosophy of Anarchism*, 5; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 92, 155; for a discussion of how egalitarian cooperation relates to Read’s aesthetic education see Keel, 371.

¹⁷⁸ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 163, 209; For a clarification of the definition of ethics in the light of post-structuralist anarchism, see May, 62, 123, 139.

¹⁷⁹ Read contrasted such concepts as freedom and liberty, culture and civilization, community and state, on the basis of mutual aid versus state power. *Ibid.*, 219; For Jung’s ideas on the relationship between freedom and inherent morality see Jacobi, 214.

free society, naturally grows into a sense of responsibility and results in a desire to help others. Read's anarchist ideas of mutual aid and individual responsibility relate to earlier anarchist discussions of morality, particularly by Tolstoy, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin.¹⁸⁰ In Kropotkin's view, mutuality is linked to the awareness that one's wellbeing is interdependent with that of all other members of society, an understanding that leads to an acceptance of equal rights, and to the active practice of what he called *social magnanimity*.¹⁸¹ Proudhon's vision of a functioning milieu of overlapping interconnections relies on the core concepts of the integrity of the individual and the accepted burden of personal responsibility. Woodcock describes this as "the almost religious attitude towards freedom and mutual trust of the anarchist."¹⁸²

According to Read, mutual aid plays a foundational role in ethics because mutualism, consciousness, and ethical sense are all co-occurring aspects of evolution. He linked mutual aid to a healthy mentality, and believed that humanity's shared experience of evolution through cooperation prompts us to subordinate our egoistic attitudes in order to participate in a community.¹⁸³ The existence of society is based on

¹⁸⁰ George Woodcock, *Civil Disobedience*, (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1966), 49; For a critique of the anarchism of Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin see Richard Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 108.

¹⁸¹ Kropotkin argued that when we do more for others than justice requires we are following a primal instinct to care for each other, and that this "principle of generosity" is "superior to mere equivalence, or equity, and more conducive to happiness." Kropotkin in Woodcock, "Kropotkin," 110; Read, *Origins*, 155; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 123; for a discussion of how moral self-determination involves both freedom and responsibility see Wolff, 12, 17.

¹⁸² Proudhon believed that social morality occurs naturally, and from this he concluded that liberty would create equity, and that private agreements would reflect individuals' intentions. He argued that people should develop our own systems of mutual aid in direct opposition to the state, which would thereby become less powerful. Woodcock, "Proudhon," 47.

¹⁸³ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 133; Read, *Forms*, 92; Kropotkin argued that human evolution depended upon cooperation and that we have an innate ability to shape our social life around voluntary cooperation. In Kropotkin's words, neither manipulative science nor authoritarian government "could weed out the feeling of human solidarity,

the innate need for interdependence, but this, too, fluctuates. Read emphasized the scope for varying degrees of participation in anarchist communities, explaining that anarchism allows for organization and mutual aid to the extent that individuals *seek* them. In the system of mutual aid, the initiative is with the individual to interact with others as much as he chooses to. Read conceived of mutuality as a type of creative power and related this to both the Nietzschean “will to power” and the Kropotkinian “will to mutuality.”¹⁸⁴

Art, freedom, and evolution

Read linked art with his anarchist conception of organic society in terms of their shared embodiment of the spontaneous expression of meaning. Society and art reflect natural forms and human nature, and they embody our evolving consciousness. This relationship between natural forms and consciousness pertains to art’s ability to communicate the numinous, or divine.¹⁸⁵ Jung and Read shared an understanding of how art and spirituality are integrally related, and how the numinous, in art and religion, relates to the symbolic power of art and its impact on psychological and social evolution. Read allowed for religion as a conduit to self-knowledge and a practical motivation for peaceful behaviour, as had earlier anarchists.¹⁸⁶ However, Read and Jung distinguished organized religion from the personal religious experience. Read cited examples from the history of civilization to argue that religion, psychology, and

deeply lodged in men’s understanding and heart, because it has been nurtured by all our preceding evolution.” Kropotkin, in Woodcock, “Kropotkin,” 104.

¹⁸⁴ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 17, 214; for a current discussion of Nietzsche see Lewis Call, *Postmodern Anarchism*, (New York: Lexington Books, 2002), 31.

¹⁸⁵ “An artist in relation to morals is more commonly known as a mystic.” Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 261; It is possible that when he says numinous, Read sometimes means that which expresses the *divine*, and sometimes the *essence*. For a discussion of Read’s ideas about the “inner aspects of art” see Keel, 157.

¹⁸⁶ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 122; Read, *Contrary Experience*, 272; Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 133.

art can be virtually synonymous, and that they are all integral to organic social processes. Religion is closely associated with art, ritual has an aesthetic element, and art visually represents inner states. Both religion and art are motivated by the deep human instinct to express meaning. Read drew on Jungian psychology to argue that intense creative experience occurs at the same level of the unconscious as does mysticism.¹⁸⁷ It followed from this, according to Read, that a society that values meaning would support the creative freedom that deepens our experience of life.

An important aspect of Read's social theory is the understanding that anarchist society can serve the needs both for community and for creative withdrawal. He contrasted this with modern society, in which collectivizing and universalizing effects threaten the solitude necessary for artistic creation. Read felt that although governments may at times patronize culture, they are averse to individuals' withdrawal from the social contract, seeing this as a denial of the principle of collectivism. He argued that the social and governmental structures of modern society, designed to exercise power, tend to inhibit creativity. According to Read, in the "immense artless machine" of modern society there is little support for subjectivity or individual creative vision, and "to expect art to flourish is to expect steel to bud with roses."¹⁸⁸ He believed that artists need to be free from the burden of mass standards and that the scope for creative activity could be more adequately protected by a non-capitalist society. He explained that in order to be free to produce art that rises above convention and the profit motive, artists must be supported by a conducive community: "every reason – historical,

¹⁸⁷ Read noted the "essentially aesthetic nature of religious ritual" and the "dependence of religion on art for the visualization of its subjective concepts." Read, *Poetry and Criticism*, 320; Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 176; Read's definition of human reason has been explained as mystical and religious, a kind of insight that bridges the senses with the capacity to think. Hausermann, 69.

¹⁸⁸ According to Read, all creative people need anarchism because they need freedom for subjectivity, freedom from the burden of mass opinions. Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 147, 228.

economic, and psychological – points to the fact that art is only healthy in a communal type of society, where all modes of life, all senses and all faculties, function freely and harmoniously.”¹⁸⁹ Because the poet’s existence depends on tranquillity and withdrawal for creative production, Read believed, peace is the natural right of the poet. He argued that in contrast to authoritarian society, anarchism, free of bureaucracy, will cause neither the disintegration of the personality nor the social alienation that suppresses individual creative spontaneity.

Anarchism is necessary, in Read’s conception, because creativity requires freedom. Because art pertains to the free creation of symbolic forms and to the expression of ideas and feelings that relate to the individual and society, artists must be free from fear of repression. The freedom to revolt against the present is integral to the evolving natural processes through which social, artistic, and cognitive forms develop. Read argued that human progress should be measured by the intensity and richness of experience, by a deeper understanding of the nature of existence, and by individual differentiation, all of which depend upon freedom of thought and freedom of expression.¹⁹⁰

For Read, freedom -- freedom “to become what one is” -- implies action. Freedom is not only the absence of inhibition, but is also a positive, formative force, the freedom to shape events. People use this positive freedom to create new forms and ideas through art, individuation, and the creative process of life. In Read’s anarchist philosophy, freedom in art refers to the freedom to function organically within a healthy system. On the important interplay between art, the personal, and the social he wrote, “Art, in its innermost nature, is an expression of the spontaneous instincts, and

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 72-73; Read, *To Hell*, 8-9.

¹⁹⁰ “It is only in the degree that the slave is emancipated and the personality differentiated that we can speak of progress.” Read, *Philosophy of Anarchism*, 8-9; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 157.

its vitality depends on its freedom to contribute to the evolutionary process of life itself.”¹⁹¹ Read’s anarchist conception is that the freely creative individual would both be nourished by the community and contribute to it. As Read explained, such freedom implies responsibility but not legal obligation, and integration but not subjugation.

Organic growth in nature and the life process itself, in Read’s view, proves that freedom is an inherent quality of nature. Biological and social evolution both require freedom and prove its existence. Read argued that freedom is a fundamental characteristic of life that manifests as spontaneity. In Read’s words, “Our law is given in nature. Because we are so adapted, freedom becomes a perfectly real and vivid principle, a habit to which we are preconditioned.”¹⁹² Freedom characterizes artistic and social creativity, and the individual’s impulse to transcend the restraints of the present.

The individual as the site of transformation

The individual can be considered the site of transformation for reasons that pertain to anarchism, pacifism, aesthetics, ethics, and the evolution of the psyche and society. Read’s understanding of the Jungian notion of the unconscious relates to his ideas about personal initiative, individual complexity, and transformative creativity both in the individual and in ethical social relations. According to Jung, only the individual who is free to think and act can realize personal and social transformation. On the historical impact of the individual, Jung wrote, “In the last analysis, the essential thing is the life of the individual. Here alone do great transformations take place.”¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ (However) “because of historical intellectual developments, the artist has been excluded from the life of the community and production, and in Marxist societies, for example, he has been reduced to an exponent of ideology.” *Ibid.*, 162, 222.

¹⁹² Read, *Education for Peace*, 117; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 156.

¹⁹³ Jung said that it is civil dissent that provides hope for a better future, but that he feared the contrary “destruction of the individual and the increase of the fiction we call the State.” Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 85.

The interplay of creative freedom, ethical behaviour, and transformative art explains how Read could rely on concepts of psychology while remaining committed to anarchist development. As discussed above, Gibbard has noted that it is difficult to explain how Read's use of psychology can accommodate the traditional anarchist emphasis on the freedom for self-realization and artistic creativity. If Read's concept of the unconscious had been purely Freudian, the connections between psychology, art, and anarchism would have been dubious.¹⁹⁴ Anarchist notions of free creativity can not be supported by the Freudian characterization of artistic creation as repressed, perverse, and neurotic.¹⁹⁵ However, in light of Jungian notions of symbolic communication, ethical self-responsibility, and the co-creative life process, it is possible to see how Read relates psychology to anarchism through transformative acts of creativity and what he called the meaningful *lived experience*.¹⁹⁶

Through his notion of lived experience, Read, like anarchists before him, linked anarchism to creativity, morality, and spirituality, all of which have counterparts in Jungian philosophy.¹⁹⁷ Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin saw meaningful human society evolving naturally, in Kropotkin's words, "just as the growth of a flower, or the

¹⁹⁴ "Freud's work is restricted to the principle of causality. (...) Jung does not deny this causal principle, but he says that it is inadequate to explain all the facts. In his view we live and work, day by day, according to the principle of directed aim or purpose. (...) We are drawn onwards and our actions are significant for a future we cannot foresee. (...) In other words, life has a meaning as well as an explanation; a meaning, however, that we can never finally discover, for it is being extended all the time by the process of evolution." Read, Herbert Read Archive, University of Victoria, (H.R. 27/4), 8.

¹⁹⁵ However, Jung, unlike Freud, had a positive attitude toward neuroses that stemmed from his belief in the transformative power of the individual: "Neurosis is thus nothing less than an individual attempt, however unsuccessful, to solve a universal problem. The apparently individual conflict reveals a universal conflict in his environment and epoch." Jung in Jacobi, 150.

¹⁹⁶ *Lived experience* relates artistic creativity to the "psycho-physical experiencing of life." Hausermann, 58.

¹⁹⁷ Read wrote that Jung was like a prophet who pointed the way out of nihilism. Read, *Contrary Experience*, 69.

evolution of societies of bees.”¹⁹⁸ Read related this organic creative instinct to a spiritual experience of life, as had Jung. Read combined ideas about art, anarchism and psychology to argue that life must be ordered in such a way that the individual can live naturally, “attending to what is within.”¹⁹⁹ He wrote that aesthetics, morality and practicality should be united in actual behaviour, “in the deed which is the work of art, in the deed which is an inspired moral act.”²⁰⁰ As we have seen, Read believed that art both concretizes meaning and supports transformation, while aesthetic perception promotes a harmonious experience of reality. His aesthetic theory, therefore, in its reliance on peaceful, meaningful transformation through archetypal artistic symbols, determines his political theory, with its emphasis on the peace and freedom conducive to spontaneity and creativity.

The link between anarchist thought and Jung is supported by the scholarship of George Woodcock, who has argued that anarchists anticipated psychology, particularly the Jungian theory of the collective unconscious. Like Tolstoy’s religious motivation for non-violence and Bakunin’s natural spiritualism, Kropotkin’s ideas of social involvement emphasized the capacity for society to reflect shared human meaning. Kropotkin called for a person to be guided not only by love, but by “the perception of his oneness with every human being.”²⁰¹ Woodcock has posited that Proudhon anticipated the Jungian concept of the collective unconscious when he explained that a sense of love, truth, beauty, dignity, and moral well-being are “secreted” within the individual, but “knowable

¹⁹⁸ “Man is a part of nature, as his personal and social life is a natural phenomenon.” Kropotkin in Woodcock, “Kropotkin,” 89.

¹⁹⁹ Read, *Contrary Experience*, 207.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 350; Read came to believe that principles of aesthetics could be applied to ethics. “A valid analogy existed between the order of the universe, the order of art, and the order of conduct.” Read, *Cult of Sincerity*, 260.

²⁰¹ Kropotkin in Woodcock, “Kropotkin,” 105.

to all people.”²⁰² Proudhon argued that it is this inner “faculty” that allows for peaceful relationships and the perfectibility of the human spirit through social life. This prefigures the Jungian theory that the individual and life itself act on each other, making the individual a co-creator in the life process.

The Readian interplay between anarchism and art is informed by these earlier anarchist discussions of how religion and psychology discover meaning. Art brings the spiritual, or meaningful, into physical form, and in this way it contributes to the evolution of the individual and society. Read implies the spiritual dimension of the archetype in his discussion of the socialist element in religion and the mystical strain in anarchism.²⁰³ Jung was explicit about the spiritual nature of the unconscious and the numinous quality of art; and Read’s aesthetic beliefs take on an increasingly spiritual component as they become more Jungian.²⁰⁴ It is particularly this spiritual, or meaningful, element that makes Jungian philosophy so pertinent to Read’s anarchism.

Read’s pacifist anarchism embodies the belief that aesthetic perception and ethical behaviour can promote self-awareness and meaningful existence; and his description of the interrelated forces for change is supported by Jungian philosophy. Jung and Read were convinced of the close connection between ethics, reason, and creative freedom, and the importance of these for individual and social transformation. Read built on Kropotkin’s theory that human consciousness and imagination evolve into moral values and social cooperation.²⁰⁵ Read believed that crime, or “diseases of

²⁰² Proudhon in George Woodcock, ed., *The Anarchist Reader*, (Hassocks, UK: Harvester Press Ltd., 1977), 19-20.

²⁰³ Read argued for the capacity of religion to provide a sense of communal connection, and called the archetypes “complex psychological factors that give cohesion to a society.” Read, *Poetry and Criticism*, 319-320.

²⁰⁴ King, 287; “Of all the major depth psychologists, Jung stands out as the only one who has interpreted the unconscious in terms of the *spiritual* nature of man.” Proffoff, *Jung’s Psychology and Its Social Meaning*, 288.

²⁰⁵ Kropotkin, in Woodcock, “Kropotkin,” 105.

the spirit,” would be naturally overcome through the “direct communion” with reality that is fundamental to aesthetic perception.²⁰⁶ Jung and Read concurred that aesthetics, ethics, and individual self-responsibility are integral to the health of the individual and society. However, while Read thought that ethics would follow naturally from aesthetics, Jung emphasized that ethical behaviour would have to be intentionally applied to a rational discernment of the unconscious symbols that arise during the aesthetic experience.²⁰⁷ Both Jung and Read articulated the role for art and creative freedom in the complex interplay between the individual and humanity that Jung called individuation and Read referred to as the “socialization of the unique.”²⁰⁸

This idea of encouraging the socialization of what is unique provides an explanation for Read’s support of diverse artistic movements, and indicates scope for further research on the connections among Read, Jung, and art. Drawing on ideas related to spirituality, psychology, and art, Read argued that civilization depends upon culture, and that modern society must “find a new vision or perish.”²⁰⁹ Although Read believed that “great art” should not “exploit horror”, in a letter to Jung he explained that one of the intentions of modern art is to destroy “the image of perfection” in order to release creative unconscious energy.²¹⁰ Jung warned that of course not all releases of energy are beneficial, and that art criticism has an important role to play in applying rational discernment to the products of the unconscious.²¹¹ Read took the task of art

²⁰⁶ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 108.

²⁰⁷ For more on Jungian concepts of the aesthetic and ethic natures see Johnston, “Evolution of Consciousness,” 150.

²⁰⁸ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 189-190.

²⁰⁹ Read, *Education for Peace*, 44; Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 92.

²¹⁰ King, 233, 294; see Johnston’s critique of Read’s discussion of beauty and ugliness in art. Johnston, “Way of Art,” 14.

²¹¹ Philipson explains the capacity for art criticism to disseminate the symbolic meaning of art. Philipson, 169; for example, for a Jungian discussion of the art of Chagall and da Vinci see Neumann, *Art and the Creative Unconscious*, 3, 135; and for a Jungian inspired treatment of art by Cezanne, Manet and others see Shlain, 129, 320.

criticism very seriously. According to his biographer, “The business of defending a plurality of modernisms was a serious, even a religious endeavour.”²¹² I posit that Read’s support for diverse art forms was informed by his knowledge of Jungian philosophy and his commitment to the role of art in transformation; a fruitful area of future research would examine this philosophical connection with reference to specific art movements. Jung’s aesthetic theory and its emphasis on the creative purposiveness of the universal but indeterminate psyche epitomizes a shift away from the modern mechanistic, rationalistic view;²¹³ and this can explain the attraction of Jung’s theories for the anarchist organicist Read.

Creative freedom and spontaneity are at the core of Read and Jung’s notions of the creative life process that is informed by the transformative vitality of numinous symbols. Both Read and Jung understood the crucial interplay among organic development, creative freedom, the artistic communication of new awareness, and the ethical responsibility of the free individual. Read used Jungian concepts to describe the beliefs that art has an effect on personality; that aesthetics harmonize the psyche and social relationships; and that individual freedom promotes the artistic expression that deepens self-awareness and ameliorates social alienation. Read’s understanding of the Jungian concept of an indeterminate source of creativity allowed him to link art with personal initiative, individual complexity, and transformative creativity in both the psyche and in ethical behaviour. A key belief shared by Jung and Read was their emphasis on the capacity of the individual to transcend the historical epoch by creatively setting his own standards, which they considered both a right and a duty.²¹⁴

²¹² King, 129; Doheny, 78.

²¹³ Progoff, *Jung’s Philosophy and its Social Meaning*, 51-52.

²¹⁴ “The individual has a right, indeed a duty, to set up and apply his own standard of value.” (...) We must “break with tradition, experiment with life, and determine what value and meaning things have in themselves.” Jung in Jacobi, 230, 242.

CONCLUSION

I conclude by highlighting the transformative role of spontaneity, or creative freedom, an integral aspect of Read's aesthetics and his anarchism, and of the Jungian concept of evolving self-awareness. As we have seen, Read highlighted spontaneity as particularly relevant to anarchism, education, and the role of art in individuation: he wrote that the essence of an anarchist society is people's spontaneous association into groups that support mutual aid; he argued that the most appropriate educational system is one that encourages "natural creative spontaneity;" and, explaining that individuation cannot occur through logical reasoning, he quoted Jung's assertion that symbols are produced spontaneously.²¹⁵ On the importance of spontaneity to art and society Read wrote,

"The more one considers the problems of life – problems of society, of culture, of art and ethics – the more the conviction grows that the secret lies within the concept of spontaneity."²¹⁶

Read defined freedom as inherent, "germinatively at work in all living things as spontaneity and autoplacticity."²¹⁷ He argued that every organism has this instinct to behave spontaneously in a way that secures the most freedom. People seek the freedom to experience the realm of the unknown and to thereby transform ourselves. For this reason, Read explained, freedom, perception, and transformation have their value, not as theoretical constructs, but as mechanisms in the establishment of consciousness.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ "It is only education in its widest sense, as guided growth, encouraged expansion, tender upbringing, that can secure that life is lived in all its natural creative spontaneity, in all its sensuousness, emotion and intellectual fullness." Read, *Education through Art*, 200; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 132, 157; "One is dependent on symbols which make the irrational union of opposites possible. They are produced spontaneously by the unconscious, and amplified by the conscious mind." Jung in Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 191.

²¹⁶ Read, *Education for Peace*, 80.

²¹⁷ Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 181.

²¹⁸ Read drew on Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy. Read, *Icon and Idea*, 88.

Read posited, then, that if art promotes individuation and social cohesion, and if the capacity for organic transformation is inherent in people and in society, the optimal society would be a peaceful one that naturally supports creativity and self-awareness. Because a pacifist anarchist society would be organic enough to accommodate art and creativity, Read argued, it would support humanity's transformation and bring about, to quote Wordsworth, "joy in widest commonality spread."²¹⁹ Initiating this type of positive social development, Read believed, required an ingrained harmonious temperament, fostered by a type of creative education that emphasized the aesthetic mode of perception. He contended that modern civilization could avert meaninglessness, competitiveness, and war if people promoted an emphasis on the aesthetic experience of life, on education through art, and on self-awareness, creativity, and cooperation. According to Read, art both necessitates peace, mutualism, and anarchism; and promotes the self-awareness integral to peaceful society.

Spontaneity in the artistic creation of symbolic forms is at the core of the ongoing dialogue between the individual and society. Free creativity is experienced as personal and unique, but the artistic process of creating and communicating meaning-laden forms reflects these developing insights back to other individuals. In this way free artistic creativity effects both individual and social transformation. Read and Jung placed great importance on the role of the creative individual, and the consequent necessity of artistic freedom.²²⁰ They agreed that a forward-thinking society must support individual creativity because it is only the individual who can transform himself, the psyche, and society.

²¹⁹ William Wordsworth quoted in Read, *Poetry and Criticism*, 386.

²²⁰ It is because "art is such an *individual* act of creation that it demands freedom for its perfection – freedom of mind and freedom of person." Read, *To Hell*, 89.

Indeed, art, which Read defined as “the spontaneous emergence of psychic energy,” can play an important role in these organic processes of transformation. On the transformative capacity of art, Read wrote:

“It has always seemed that art is an ‘epiphenomenon,’ something that arises as a consequence of a prevailing economy, but I believe that this is a basic error. The aesthetic activity is, on the contrary, a formative process with direct effect both on individual psychology and on social organization.”²²¹

The transformative power of art relates to the aesthetic mode of cognition, through which form is spontaneously associated with its meaning. In a process that Read identified as the *organic mode of attention*, aesthetic cognition creates perceptions of reality that are unique and insightful.²²² Art concretizes this insight in physical form, linking aesthetics to the organic process whereby nature, including human nature, transforms.²²³ The notions of spontaneity and creative freedom that are integral to Read’s aesthetics and anarchism are closely associated with organic elements in the Jungian description of self-realization, and the Jungian theory of archetypal artistic production.²²⁴ As Jung explained, when the artist spontaneously chooses the most poignantly symbolic forms, new information is communicated. In conditions of artistic freedom the conscious mind then discerns the Self, as the unconscious mind naturally betrays its existence through numinous art forms. In freely created art we can discern knowledge that was previously unconscious, and this can be integrated into the co-creative life process. The creative individual develops new self-awareness which affects his attitudes and relationships, and ultimately, his society.

²²¹ Read, *Art and Alienation*, 7.

²²² *Ibid.*, 195.

²²³ Read, *The Forms of Things Unknown*, 63.

²²⁴ “The human mind follows the principle inherent in its own essence; and, as we find it to be through all of nature, this principle is that it realize itself, integrate itself, become whole in relation to its potentialities.” Progoff, *Jung’s Psychology and Its Social Meaning*, vii.

Read and Jung concurred that art concretizes meaning and sensations; and by expressing the unconscious, it is evolutionary. Archetypal art allows for the spontaneous emergence of new forms of consciousness which, when discerned and integrated, promote individual and social change. Spontaneity provides an opening for archetypal images to enter consciousness, rendering symbolic art fundamental to the question of how the individual overcomes the inertia of the present. Because art can contain the spontaneous eruption of unconscious knowledge, the gap between the present and the future is bridged, not by concepts, but by art. It is the element of spontaneity that renders art not a pre-determined epiphenomenon, but the site in which the individual transcends the present. Emphasizing the transformative nature of the individual's creative journey, Read called art "an adventure into the unknown," while Jung wrote that the unconscious contents in art are like "bridges thrown out towards an unseen shore."²²⁵

²²⁵ Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 75-76; Read, *Anarchy and Order*, 124.

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