

Shrink Rap Radio #235 – April 25, 2010, Using Alchemical Archetypes in Jungian Analysis

David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Monika Wikman, PhD

(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Jill Ebsworth)

Excerpt: *Genuine relationships with the depths of being often come with initiatory experiences that are rather dark and difficult and these initiatory experiences really open us—we can't rely on ego function in the same way, we can't rely on our normal way of going and we're stopped in our tracks and challenged, and oftentimes really don't know the way, a bit like in Dante's Inferno—“Abandon All Hope Ye Who Enter Here”—there can be moments in a life that are so deeply dark that to find that in fact when the light of the ego cannot light the way, that something deeper in the unconscious, something deeper in the strata of the human soul can be accessed that shows the birth of a new light, a new consciousness, and a new way of integrating the Self and a life and of a way of living.*

Introduction: That was the voice of my guest, Jungian Analyst Dr. Monika Wikman, speaking about the use of alchemical archetypes in psychotherapy. Monika Wikman, Ph.D. is a Jungian analyst, and author of “Pregnant Darkness: Alchemy and the Rebirth of Consciousness,” and various articles in Jungian psychology journals. Monika obtained her BA from the University of California San Diego and her doctorate from the California School of Professional Psychology in San Diego, where her research took her deep into the study of the dreams of people with terminal cancer. After teaching graduate students at California State University, Los Angeles, she graduated as a diplomat from the Jung-Von Franz Center for Depth Psychology in Zürich. She lectures internationally on mythology and symbolism, dreams and wellness, alchemy and creativity. In private practice as a Jungian Analyst, she lives along a creek and under the starry skies of New Mexico with horses, dogs, and friends. Now here's the interview:

Dr. Dave: Dr. Monika Wikman, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Dr. Wikman: Thank you, Dr. Dave.

Dr. Dave: I'm very excited to have you as a guest—you come highly recommended by John Kavanaugh, one of my listeners, in Ireland.

Dr. Wikman: Yes, he's such a good poet and such a good soul—I'm glad he introduced us.

Dr. Dave: Well, me too, and I hope to get to know him a bit better down the line. Now you're a qualified Jungian Analyst practising in New Mexico, and I believe you were originally trained as a psychologist. At what point in your life did you discover you were drawn to the Jungian approach?

Dr. Wikman: Well, that of course, is the lodestar of a question, Dr. Dave, I would have to say, ah, for many of us who get called in this direction, it's something that's in there from the start. But what woke it up, uh, was right after finishing undergraduate psychology and a Bachelor's degree and a Bachelor's in Spanish literature, was really trying to decide, "What really is my vocation? What's really the calling? Where do I find the interest, and passion, curiosity, and where are the unending doors that would open in terms of what would be interesting to me?"

Dr. Dave: Well, those are great questions.

Dr. Wikman: (*laughs*) that I think each of us has to ask with vocation, don't we? It was right at that moment that Answer to Job landed on my little desk, in my little hands—at twenty, I think at, uh, twenty-two, and I felt the earth quake under my feet and I felt my spiritual roots from childhood and the spirituality of my parents and their own seeking and their interest in dreams and Jung and their time at the Pecos Monastery in New Mexico where they had their own real awakening with spirituality and the unconscious, and suddenly my world-view was changing and I knew, I knew then that something was calling me towards psychology and towards Jung and Jung's work and a different relationship with the powers that be and with the unconscious and it was at that moment that I really got called in, but the initiation really started once I was in analysis, and then, then as we say, "holy hell broke loose".

Dr. Dave: Uh HUH—now, not everyone—all of my listeners might not know that Answer to Job was written by Jung, and do you recall sort of what the thesis of that was and how that spoke to you?

Dr. Wikman: Boy, the way that Jung held that question about God and the devil torturing poor dear Job and what poor Job's fate was as he hung there between these different forces—where Jung went with it was so moving to me and it reminds me of Guggenbühl-Craig's lines too, and I think it's really where Jung was headed with Answer to Job, which was that it isn't necessarily that God was speaking directly and that we needed to listen so linearly to what was happening to Job and get some direct mental answer, but just that the divine was revealing itself, and that at the bottom of our experiences for good and for difficult that somehow at the bottom of it that the divine is revealing itself, and that touched me so deeply, it helped me embrace all experiences in my own life and experiences in the world soul as well as in my own family and loved ones; it had some kind of encompassing embrace of the totality of life in it that that just changed my world view..

Dr. Dave: mmm

Dr. Wikman: ...from dualistic thinking.

Dr. Dave: Wow. Now I understand that you did your training program with The Research and Training Centre for Depth Psychology According to Carl Jung and M. L. von Franz, in Zürich, Switzerland, which is quite a mouthful, and I hadn't previously heard of this center. How did you learn about them, and what did that training consist of?

Dr. Wikman: I found out about the group through Marie-Louise von Franz—I had written to her about the research project that I’d been doing at the medical center in San Diego on the dreams of cancer patients and was wondering just where she would recommend that I go to train, ‘cause I really felt that after my PhD I really wanted to go on and train, and she had told me about this group that had formed and it is a unique and very fresh, organically connected-to-the-psyche group and I owe the world to that, to the group of analysts that head that program and do that training—it takes only so many students—very few—and meets in a communal sort of way twice a year in a convent up in the Swiss Alps, and it has at the heart of its training the connection to the religious function of Jung’s work around—and von Franz’s work—around this same theme I guess that we just mentioned here a moment ago of discovering the divine transforming in the human soul and in humanity in general and in the world soul as well and all of nature, and they’re very dedicated to that as the fundamental core, not training quote “analysts”, not training “psychologists” —they have that as part of the curriculum—people have to fulfill that—but the training they do is really to the heart of the religious function, and that touched my heart and soul so much I was just—I found home when I stumbled upon this through von Franz’s words.

Dr. Dave: And is this where you went through your personal analysis that you alluded to earlier, or had you done that previously?

Dr. Wikman: I had done that previously, and then also during the program I went on to do further analysis with another analyst in Santa Fe after many years of analysis prior to that and so then I did mentorship relationships with the analysts there at the Zentrum. They are based on the mentorship model—von Franz advised them what she thought would work better for training and part of that was this mentorship model which I wholeheartedly agreed with and so it’s sticking with the heart of the religious function and creativity, and the generativity, creativity of each person, staying true to the myth of what is unfolding in each being; you then embark upon the mission of discovering what, you know—where alchemical creativity happens for you, and then the mentorship model ends up helping you have analysts that help that along.

Dr. Dave: OK, and I take it that this center, it’s not the Jung Institute that many people will have heard of in Zürich —it’s a separate institution.

Dr. Wikman: Right—there are now three in Zürich.

Dr. Dave: Really.

Dr. Wikman: Yes, there are three in Zürich, this was the first one that took off from the original institute in Küsnacht, and now we have another one that has done that as well and all three have their merits and are unique, unique spirits and unique connections of why people would train at each one.

Dr. Dave: Now you mentioned that you had done research on the dreams of cancer patients—I wasn’t aware of that, and that wasn’t on my list of things to ask you about, but it sounds so intriguing—can you tell us a little bit about that?

Dr. Wikman: Ah, yes, I...when you asked sort of how did I come to discover Jung and find my own path and my own vocation really, after that I stumbled into of course, a very deep initiation with the unconscious and my own vocation became quite clear I think through the archetype of Chiron, the wounded healer, diving into my own wound and this happens to many many, many souls in different traditions, it's what initiates healers and artists and shamans and therapists and it was initiating me deeply through the process also of coming down with ovarian cancer, so I had stage four ovarian cancer for a number of years, and the work with the psyche *really* helped me get into the hows and the whys and the relationship with it and the relationship with the unconscious and in the end with great grace, and with gratitude I do say this, I had a spontaneous healing and it left.

Dr. Dave: Wow.

Dr. Wikman: It just left my body—I had a series of visions, after they told me I had two weeks to live and four years of dealing with it I had a, was blessed to have, uh, the psyche opened to the psychoidal realms and a series of visions come and the next day there was no cancer in my body at all and this is twenty-five years later and no cancer and I'm very very grateful, and so I knew that the process of working with cancer and dreams for myself was the medium that was helping me heal, and I was, of course, not doing that in a vacuum—I had an analyst who was helping me too and another analyst later, but what I realized in my own little Chiron journey was that the ways in which we are working with our own wound we then come out to the world and help others in the world heal. I knew that I would go on to do dream work with people, but I also really wanted to research the dreams of cancer patients to see if I could look into that phenomenon and see the psyche intensifying itself and trying to help individuals and in fact that was true. Now von Franz's work On Dreams and Death had just come out, which is seminal work, looking into the archetypal phenomenon surrounding death and I wrote to her about my project and then began culling dreams from cancer patients at the Medical Center in San Diego and also through San Diego hospice, and the study looked at fifteen hundred dreams and I had two groups—it was an empirical study that looked at I think it was over eleven hundred dreams—oh I think it was fifteen hundred dreams, actually, and it had thirty people in each group, the control group and then also the people who had cancer with a terminal prognosis, and the patterns that appeared in the dreams were quite illuminating—the intensification of the psyche—more dreams including the different elements—fire, air, earth, and water—and initiatory dreams, dreams that had some numinous resonance, that's a whole entire conversation we could have, but, uh, very moving to have gone back to the medical center that I was at when I was treated—they very generously let me in the door to do the study and then out of that came talks that I've done through the years in different places, different countries, on the dreams of the dying.

Dr. Dave: Well, we may have to have, schedule another interview (*laughs*)

Dr. Wikman: (*laughs*)

Dr. Dave: because I've just discovered a rich vein here that definitely needs mining, but since it's not really where I had intended to go, I am going to postpone further exploration of that very interesting work; I really do look forward to learning more. I've been reading your book

Pregnant Darkness: Alchemy and the Rebirth of Consciousness, which I find to be very deep and poetic, and I'm guessing that the title "Pregnant Darkness" might say something about your attitude toward the dark times and dark troubles that your clients bring into therapy. Can you comment on that?

Dr. Wikman: Yes, it actually takes me to what von Franz had said once and alluded to a number of times, and I really feel it in my own heart as well, which is that genuine relationships with the depths of being often come with initiatory experiences that are rather dark and difficult and that these initiatory experiences really open us—we can't rely on ego function in the same way, we can't rely on our normal way of going and we're stopped in our tracks and challenged, and oftentimes really don't know the way, a bit like in Dante's Inferno—"Abandon All Hope Ye Who Enter Here"—there can be moments in a life that are so deeply dark that to find that in fact when the light of the ego cannot light the way, that something deeper in the unconscious, something deeper in the strata of the human soul can be accessed that shows the birth of a new light, a new consciousness, and a new way of integrating the self and a life and of a way of living. So "pregnant darkness" for me really was the title, yes, Dr. Dave, that does speak to what I see people often come in with on the threshold of dealing with something that is quite deep and difficult, and where the light of the ego isn't enough.

Dr. Dave: Yes. And the subtitle of your book is "Alchemy and the Rebirth of Consciousness"—alchemy had pretty much disappeared from Western thought other than as a quaint, misguided pre-scientific approach, I believe, until Jung resurrected it. Can you take us through how Jung came to rediscover this medieval science or pre-science, and what significance he saw in it—and I know that's a big topic.

Dr. Wikman: (*laughing*) It's a very big topic, and I do think there are numerous people who'd be so more capable of answering it, but my sensibilities about that, if we read Memories, Dreams and Reflections, of course, now The Red Book is out, and it's so deeply clear how Jung's own relationship with the unconscious opened and opened and opened and opened so deeply—the Spirit of the Depths as we see in The Red Book—he's speaking with the Spirit of the Depths versus the Spirit of the Times, and as he goes with the deep dialogue with the Spirit of the Depths it takes him into the depths, it takes him into stratas [sic] of consciousness that are so beyond the ordinary consciousness of everyday life, and when he found his way down into those depths certain patterns kept appearing and certain motifs and certain imagery kept appearing and, of course, you know, dear Jung, how his own journey—not knowing if he was going mad, the process went so deep, and he had to leave so much room for the exploration of what was coming, so when he happened upon some documents that were from the alchemical tradition he knew he found home, because suddenly he recognized these deep, archaic archetypal patterns inside the imagery of the alchemists, and then he realized that those patterns of course were in his own dreams, they were in his clients' dreams, and that it was speaking from a bedrock of the psyche so profoundly deep that he knew he had truly found home, and then all the rest of his writings—of course, this informs what he is doing, uh, he sees then these patterns of initiation, he sees that—you know it's a bit like loving the study of anything organic that—for example botanists, ecologists, you study something that's a living, growing reality—Jung was in that—he was not sitting in the mind making mental constructs about things that he was hypothesizing,

although he certainly had a phenomenologist side—he, and he had a scientific side that certainly could come out with terms and ideas—it was not coming from a shallow place, it was coming from this deep initiation and from how profoundly, uniquely he could go in with a lens to allow the unconscious to reveal itself, to reveal its own nature, like a botanist would, like an ecologist would, watching a migration pattern of birds or a living stream and all its changes—he was watching the phenomenon of a living psyche, and in doing that, these mythologems and imagery appeared and so then when he saw alchemy of course he found home because they were on to the same reality. You know, we have a lot in the world these days about post-modernism, and a post-modernism that has in a way a sort of acidity to it, it's this thesis that nothing has meaning because everything is language, and this acidity is so in a way—it's only necessary for dimensions of consciousness and thought forms where things have gotten too coagulated and dried out, but in the psyche, the psyche finds its own languages over and over again, language is a living reality, imagery's a living reality about these profound, living mysteries that exist in the bedrock underneath our lives. And, so, I guess I mentioned post-modernism because this has come in around where Jung speaks in certain terms and in certain ways and the language then dries out. However, however, Jung goes much deeper than the terms he's left us with, much, much deeper, and alchemy tracks that. Alchemy is the poetic, living reality of the psyche showing itself. So, oftentimes you get someone in deep work—sorry, Dr. Dave, I'm not letting you get a work in edge-wise here—

Dr. Dave: That's ok (*laughs*)—I love listening to you.

Dr. Wikman: (*laughs*) Well, you sort of got me launched here—for example, someone walks in my door or the door of someone else connected to depth psychology, and what we want to listen for is that stone dropping down into the well of their own being, and the way *their* dreams are coming forth, that are speaking *their* living mysteries, and where do *they* sit in their own transformative processes, and what wants to arrive to help them. And so you're listening with an ear into the depths of the psyche for the organic ways the psyche itself is moving and wants to assist this being that is growing, I mean, the psyche itself is growing each one of us, so of course we look down into the roots of that—the whole art is listening *in* to the depths to hear what is moving, and what is changing, what resources of energy want to be accessed and so when we think of pregnant darkness in alchemy, and each person's journey, then the tapping into what they're dreaming, what they're living, everything we live is also part of our dream, everything we create, everything, you know, we're up to is part of the dream—you listen in to what the dream, the dreaming phenomenon is happening, and then the poetic living imagery that's alive speaks to where on the map a person is, and alchemy has a remarkable way of speaking to the bones of the anatomy of the psyche. Edward Edinger's book, many of your listeners may know, tracks these different patterns in a lovely way—I highly recommend, for those who are interested, looking at Edinger's book [The Anatomy of the Psyche](#)—it shows these patterns in motion, so for example, *Calcinatio* is one of the alchemical stages, and this is when the fire of transformation is burning the old things up, and the ego may feel that it is no longer allowed to have access to energy, language, life relations, and such in the same way anymore and the dreams will be full of imagery that show something is burning up, it's taking it down to the ash, it's taking it down to original essence, so sometimes a dreamer, for someone who you know is struggling with something, you can help them by giving them a sensibility about, “Well, listen, this is

sounding a lot like the phase of *Dissolutio*, where everything dissolves”, and you can in a way learn to rest in the process of the Tao, of life moving and transforming one, and alchemy helps with the imagery around that. That is what...

Dr. Dave: You're providing them with a sort of map so that they know that somebody's been on this terrain before, and that there's a sense of where it's going. Now, most people who've heard of alchemy have heard that it was about a sort of misguided attempt to turn lead into gold, but Jung saw it not as the literal transformation of lead into gold but as a metaphorical system for understanding the transformation of consciousness—do I have that right?

Dr. Wikman: Yes, absolutely, that's exact.

Dr. Dave: ...and so the question arises: psychological transformation from what to what?

Dr. Wikman: (*laughs*) Good point—good point. Well, I think where you were starting with the question and then I'm going to make sure we get back to that—we started the question around Jung and alchemy and certain alchemists who were in the concrete wish to turn lead into gold—yes, it's absolutely true. There were also though ancient alchemists who knew the art they were up to was not the exacts alone of lead to gold.

Dr. Dave: I've wondered about that; whether any of them knew at all, whether all of them knew—I've really wondered about that.

Dr. Wikman: Yes, there really was—and I would say is—because it is an ongoing reality now—a mystical tradition where they're exchanging secrets of the trade to the transmutations that are happening, and symbolic, spiritual, psychological, emotional, energetic transmutations and so Jung liked particularly Gerhard Dorn and many alchemists he very much researched, but Dorn he brings to the fore again and again because Dorn has the symbolic, spiritual components to the work articulated quite beautifully, so you'll see in Jung's work he does go to that quite strongly. So, the second part of your question was...

Dr. Dave: Ah, transformation from what to what. (*laughs*)

Dr. Wikman: Yes, exactly, very good (*laughs*)—so the alchemists speak about lead to gold symbolically is the dense to the subtle, and dense is also sometimes what is fixed or what is stuck or what is un-individuated, unenlightened, it's unconscious, it's in an undifferentiated form, so you think about, for example, any growing marriage that works to take certain patterns that start at the beginning through falling in love and then falling into all the difficulties and complexes and stuck places—if you work with that, the alchemist would say that's the *prima materia*, the first material that you start with—you need the *prima materia* which we were talking about as lead—they also talked about it as shit, and taking what is, you know, stinky and primal and undifferentiated, and how valuable that is in the process to then move toward a more subtle refinement, something individuated and reunited with its source. So, a higher refinement of love in a relationship could be part of this, but inside an individual's psyche it's the same thing—you start with an undifferentiated state and as the work goes on something more and more differentiated starts to really emerge, so your

sensibilities, your sense of judgement, your sense of refinement, your own ability to differentiate the world around you and the world inside, the ability to know your own emotions, read them, work with them, to know when a complex hits you by storm, or when you're taken over by something, or to read the tides of what you're being drawn to in life, your own lenses of perception really differentiate as we move more toward the gold and of the perspective. However, I would not want to make this sound too linear because of course the original morass of difficulty and chaos is a reality of the psyche—we're not trying to make any life too neat and tidy nor the psyche too neat and tidy. Chaos is quite important and valuable in and of itself and to be respected.

Dr. Dave: Mmm-hmm

Dr. Wikman: It's just that as we watch the dream processes in ourselves and life processes and individuation processes something is moving along toward more and more differentiation.

Dr. Dave: OK, that's very helpful. Now, Hermes/Mercury plays an important role in your writing and is an archetypal figure who plays a key role in alchemy, so tell us a bit about Hermes and his significance.

Dr. Wikman: Well, Hermes/Mercury, yes, he's definitely one of the archetypes fundamental to alchemy. Interestingly, when you research alchemy there is a sister self to that too, who shows up as interestingly Hecate/Artemis and in my book I speak a little bit about that—let's stay with Hermes/Mercury. In mythology Mercury/Hermes is a messenger god who can descend to the underworld and also go to the overworld, the heavenly, celestial realms, and also reside on the earth realms—he's one of the descending and ascending archetypal energies and Hermes/Mercury is a trickster too, but also we think of Hermes as a god of insights and often is depicted as the guide of souls, but he's a shifty character not to be a thousand percent trusted—one must get a relationship to him—there are dark Hermes energies and then there are the lighter ones. Every archetype has its light and dark side, so in working with that energy, in working with that archetype one comes to really find that out. But as the god of the alchemists, the insight and the transmutations, the ability to have a lens of perception that looks into different dimensions and different realms—we think of Mercury very much as part of that. And of course we think of Mercury as an actual, you know, substance—it is mercurial—we say that to mean somethings that move shape and shift shape, to shape-shift and change, and transmute—so it's a transmutation that is in that archetype too that is so important. It's not about things becoming fixed and staying fixed. Now you don't want things to be too mercurial—as well we can have a bit too much of that energy too, we need fixity as well, but nonetheless in terms of Mercury and alchemy it is thought of to be the god of insight and, um, which leads alchemists actually to a relationship to Sophia, to Wisdom, and this is when even the alchemist's own consciousness and our own consciousness is differentiated enough that we're moving to more and more of the archetype of Sophia, the Goddess of Wisdom, the embodiment of wisdom, the personification of wisdom. There are beautiful depictions in alchemy of showing the alchemist reaching a certain part of the journey where finally he is in this beautiful arbor and he's eating these gorgeous fruits, and it's called the Arbor of Wisdom, where he's eating the fruit of the work,

and the fruit of that is delicious, life-sustaining wisdom. That's where Mercury leads, ultimately and ideally.

Dr. Dave: OK. We've been talking about archetypes, and that might be a new concept to some of our listeners—I know it's not new to many, but how would you describe or define the idea of an archetype?

Dr. Wikman: *(laughs)*

Dr. Dave: *(laughs)* I know, that's not an easy question.

Dr. Wikman: *(laughs)* No, it's a very, very good question. Well, you know this ties in I think with what we were speaking about a moment ago with Jung and The Red Book and his own initiation journey, and we'd say too [the] initiation journey of ancient shamans, current shamanic people, that when your initiation experience in the inner worlds and the many worlds goes so deeply that you come up against an energy that's not personally human—it is a constellation of energies that has its own integrity and its own distinguished distinctness and then when people get together to speak with each other they start to realize, “Well listen, I've encountered that!” So, for example, we were talking about pregnant darkness and we mentioned Dante's Inferno—poets through the ages have been tapping into the alchemical darkness and the quote “gods of the underworld”—you know, we use mythology and poetry as a fluid way to try to try to describe these archetypal experiences and energies because, honestly, linear language doesn't quite do it.

Dr. Dave: Mmm-hmm

Dr. Wikman: So, many fields throughout time have been describing and bringing forth archetypes—look at Shakespeare's work—you see it immediately—think of the Fool in Shakespeare's work...

Dr. Dave: Yes

Dr. Wikman: ...the divine fool—isn't it amazing the wisdom that comes through the Fool?

Dr. Dave: Yes, yes

Dr. Wikman: *(laughs)* Now I would say...although we go to Greek mythology and we'll see certain names and languages for these archetypal energies, but anything you look at that has enough depth, you're looking into these archetypal energies. So, I would definitely say if we stayed with Shakespeare we'd see all the archetypes that he was tapping into and could describe and show us on stage. I'm always amazed with his wisdom—I'm just amazed with his genius.

Dr. Dave: Yes, me too.

Dr. Wikman: *(inaudible)*

Dr. Dave: Me too, yeah.

Dr. Wikman: So, I think I am more—you mentioned at the very beginning of this, Dr. Dave, that I tend to be, to come more from the poetic end, and I do go with that. We can though, for example, if we all remember back to Jean Shinoda Bolen's work coming out, which was really seminal in terms of people thinking about the archetypes, and our own lives: The Gods in Everyman, The Goddesses in Every Woman, do you remember when those books came out?

Dr. Dave: Yeah, yes, I do!

Dr. Wikman: Yes, well, she was trying to really use Greek mythology to describe these archetypes and look for the patterns in our lives, and many other authors, many other beautiful women authors since then have used that as a springboard to also speak to archetypes in our own lives and so that's using Greek mythology as one way to do it, but if you think, "What is the informing archetype under anyone's life or vocation, what did you love as a child, how did your curiosity, interest, passion develop", and you can see then also in one's work that you get drawn to—for example, poets—it's very clear that you know the archetypal energy of the poet, so the lenses of perception, the subtle listening, the curiosity in the field of being and new language coming in—this would be you know more toward the poet archetype, and then if we take someone who has the healer then it's the field of self and other and different systems that they would learn, and healers, many many sorts—their passion goes in through different dimensions—they're attracted and they have different archetypal energies that inform them, and I would particularly love to watch the archetypal energy that flows through different healers, so for example, Chinese medicine—Chinese medicine is so interesting, the way that the practitioner is drawn to the archetypal elemental medium, the fire, earth, air, water, ether, and looking for different ways to track this in the body, and this is a certain kind of investigatory scientific archetypal intelligence, it's looking at it in a certain way, I guess what I'm trying to do is to say this, to answer this without getting too concrete. I think if we look at each life we can see these ancient rooted patterns that are transpersonal, they go beyond each life yet inform life in different ways, so for example, different people in your own life, I'm sure, Dr. Dave, if you looked you could start to—and you probably do this—you look and realize well, "What are the archetypal patterns that are informing that life, what is their guiding star, what's their legend they're living, what's their personal myth that's fulfilling itself?" This takes us to I think what von Franz says, and I think this is a good way to try to look into what archetypes are at any time—she says, "Even if we are unconscious of it, the god lives in the vessel of our soul, of our psyche, as in the jar of Osiris, or that of the Grail. It is up to us to pay attention and to allow the development of that which within us seeks to fulfill itself." So again, it's up to us to pay attention, each of us, to then pay attention and allow the development of "that which within us seeks to fulfill itself", *that* is where we discover what archetypal energies are seeking to fulfill themselves through us. What, how do you—where's your curiosity reach from, what do you love, where's your passion come from, where's your bliss—if we think of Joseph Campbell's language for it—something within us seeks to fulfill itself and it does it through different archetypal patterns, so knowing the archetypes that are in our lives and what they

are seeking to, how they're seeking to fulfill themselves, is very important. Now, in your own life, you probably have a number of these—it started in childhood...

Dr. Dave: Well, you know, one that I relate to is—we were speaking earlier about the Wise Fool, and, uh, a good friend of mine, one of my very best friends—we jokingly refer to me as a “Fool Professor”—you know, one can become a Full Professor—that’s my title, “f-u-l-l”, but somehow it feels more appropriate to be the “F-o-o-l” Professor.

Dr. Wikman: *(laughs)* Perfect

Dr. Dave: *(laughs)*

Dr. Wikman: Perfect. Perfect. Perfect. Well, you know, when you embody that, Dr. Dave, then you're interested too in the horizon where things are coming in new and it's the risk-taking energy, too, to *not* know...

Dr. Dave: Yes

Dr. Wikman: Yeah

Dr. Dave: Yeah, there's a profound sense of *not* knowing *(laughs)*

Dr. Wikman: and there sits I think the roots of any quote “true vocation”—where do we learn, where's our interest and our curiosity, and to always live on that event horizon, and the Fool Professor does that—and of course, your work with interviewing each one of us—*(laughs)*—you're doing that, you're playfully engaging exactly that.

Dr. Dave: Yeah—thank you. Now, in your writing, and earlier in the conversation you used the word “psychoid”, and I think we sort of have a sense of what “psyche” refers to, but what do you mean by “the psychoid”?

Dr. Wikman: *(laughs)* Well, speaking of the “Fool Professor”, you like this experienced fool wandered into I think the lodestar question here—it does make me really laugh. That one, I would really refer to the very dynamic work of Jeff Raff, Jeffrey Raff and he has a book on Jung and the alchemical imagination—it's called Jung and the Alchemical Imagination and...

Dr. Dave: Is that spelled “R-a-t-h?”

Dr. Wikman: Actually, R-a-f-f.

Dr. Dave: OK

Dr. Wikman: Jeffery Raff—R-a-f-f. And it's Jung and the Alchemical Imagination, and in terms of Jungians that I have known, and I do know and very much love Jeff, and Jeff's work, but truly, Jungians through time since Jung who have helped really enrich the tradition

of Jung's work—Jung was onto this reality of the psychoid most definitely—Jeffery Raff's work I think explores it and draws it out in a very experiential way, the best of anyone I know, and the psychoid is a very difficult thing to talk about, but in a way it's a place, as far as I experience it—we were talking about maps earlier—you may know that there's an exquisite image of—that comes from an alchemist Flamel, and it's a thirteenth-century woodcut, and it shows the alchemist—many people have found this and discovered this and used that in their work and I very much enjoy it—many people, many of your listeners have probably seen it on the web—it's an alchemist who's sitting in a, this depiction of the night sky, ...looking, ah, sitting close to the earth and looking out to the many realms and he has his head poked out beyond one realm and he's looking into the regions beyond the known stars and beyond the fixed stars, beyond the sky and stars that we know, looking into the realms that go beyond that. That is a depiction of looking into the unknown so profoundly that we're looking into the psychoidal realm. I think that physics is now doing that—we're talking about the nine parallel dimensions of reality, ah, so in the psychoid exists levels and dimensions of the mysteries that are absolutely infinite—I think why we Jungians—and some of us—some do not, but some of us find it helpful to hold onto Jung's term the psychoid—is because there are experiences that we can have where what is happening is so beyond the known that it helps to really picture, like that wood-cut of Flamel, that we're looking into regions that are quite beyond. So, Jeffery Raff's work I would really direct listeners to for more help with that. In a way I think what we were speaking around a moment ago about the acidity of post-modernism as it tries to dissolve everything—what is really knowable, and it has this sense that, it's a thesis that nothing has meaning because everything is language—well, I, it's trying to dissolve language—and when we talk about the psyche, and even when we talk about archetypes we can tend to think we know what we are talking about a little too much. These are profound energetic, transpersonal, non-temporal mysteries, beyond time-space that are also pressing themselves into time-space. And so I think when we use the term psychoid we are trying to step outside anything of known language. But I would have to say there is so much more to that that I should have Jeffery Raff have an interview with you.

Dr. Dave: OK, OK...

Dr. Wikman: (*laughs*)

Dr. Dave: that sounds like a...like that might be a good idea as well. Now you've mentioned a couple of the stages or processes, alchemical ones—can you take us through—you've mentioned *Calcinatio* and *Solutio*—can you kind of take us through the main stages, and I understand that there's no single, definite list...

Dr. Wikman: Sure

Dr. Dave: but there might be six or seven that are sort of widely recognized—maybe you can take us through those stages or processes as you understand them.

Dr. Wikman: Sure, sure. Let's do take a look at that. So, first of all I think probably that one of the best ways to ground that is to think of an actual person in an actual process that they're involved in...

Dr. Dave: Oh, good—and if you can relate any of this to your psychotherapeutic process, ah, practice, because I know you give clinical examples in your book—that would be super cool.

Dr. Wikman: (*laughs*) Ok great, well I think honestly if we don't it all starts to fly away—this is... something that really is occurring and happening within human beings, and so let's say someone walks in the door of a depth psychologist's, a psychotherapist's office, a Jungian analyst's office and you're going to want to be listening to, you know, "Well, what alchemical processes are operating here?" Oftentimes someone will come in in a depression, or an agitation, or even an agitated depression, where, you know, it's finally time to seek help, you know, the light's gone out, I can't find my own way, I'd like to get new perspective, and so you'll see something where the ego is a bit penned, or a grief process so deep for example, a loss of the old way, whether it's a marriage, or it's a child or it's a profession—the energy's gone out of the current way—then suddenly one is embarking on some, you know, important journey with the unknown, and so I would say at that point we often see *Dissolutio*, the dissolving of the old. Grief is a real carrier of the alchemical process of *Dissolutio*, and in *Dissolutio* the sadness, loss, grief, deep feeling often hits one and you can't attach to and hold and embody life in the old same ways. So, I would say, that's a very very important one. It also dissolves old constellations in the psyche, it dissolves old identities, think about mid-life crisis—very often it begins with the profound sense of feeling lost or a grief that the old way doesn't have energy so you want to be able to follow the grief—the grief is an agent of change, it's telling us the energy's not in the old and that there's a releasing to go through in order to find the next source of energy, so...

Dr. Dave: So the deep wisdom about that stage then is, while it feels awful to go through it, and one experiences loss and it just feels like utter disaster, at the same time it potentially harkens change that could be positive.

Dr. Wikman: Absolutely. In fact, great question Dr. Dave, what you'll see in the dreams that start to appear too and then experiences, you see water—literally water—there'll be sometimes the dangerous side of water—tidal waves, floods, a dam breaking, a sense of drowning [sic], there could be an ordeal by water, but there also can be other images that start to appear, like a baptism in water,

Dr. Dave: mmm!

Dr. Wikman: something that has a salvific, revivifying quality that's showing up in the water scenes—and I'm not seeing that just with the dreams, this is of course something then one is energetically experiencing, that going through the ordeal by water, by *Dissolutio*, by dissolving of the old, that something is getting reborn. It is ultimately, it can turn into—it depends on of course the work each of us do—it's never a given—it depends on our own relationship to the powers that be and how we do step by step but it can turn into the redeeming waters of the unconscious, where's there's a baptism and a new self that's getting born, a cleansing and a nakedness too that can come out of it, bliss, and a sense of moisture too, something feels humid that once was dry, your life energy is supple again.

Dr. Dave: Ok. Well, let's move on to some of the other stages.

46:59 Dr. Wikman: OK. That's *Solutio*—ok, so if we go to—I mentioned *Calcinatio* earlier why don't we go back to that too. So, I mentioned dreams because of course dreams help us drop in to take a look at, that is the way of the dream really that we look through with alchemy or it can be people's paintings—they paint their dreams—anything you paint can be dream-like—it's the energy of the unconscious that shows, the unconscious that comes through the body process, many ways to tap the unconscious and these alchemical processes. So, with *Calcinatio*, of course that has behind it the image of fire, and sometimes people will then...it comes into question one's relationship to fire—some people will have for example a manic process that's going on, the fire's too high, and they need to learn to deal with fire, in fact all of alchemy really is the art of dealing with fire and then fire we think of as concentration, energy, attention, passion, and, uh, but if you're going through the *Calcinatio* stage then where, what your passion is about, how you dedicate it, where it's going and how does it serve the larger good of your being and the world—that comes into question. So people who have manic experiences or addictive experiences—that's *Calcinatio* gone awry.

Dr. Dave: Mmm

Dr. Wikman: So what you want to see is how to help in the **calcinatic** experience, it's frustration, it's frustration of the way the instinctual pattern has been wanting to live its way out through something addictive—if it doesn't serve the larger good of the human being and of their place in the world and the world-pool, so then again it's gone awry. So, with addictions then you go into frustration—that's an experience of *Calcinatio*—there's a cleansing that can happen in this too, this fire, sometimes people will get into a very profound creative process in *Calcinatio* where the fire is asking them to create and generate images from within themselves and that's part of *Calcinatio*. Sometimes dreams will pick up on the image of fire and a funeral pyre is often part of this. Now a funeral pyre is actually very important—it can be a remarkably positive image because it shows what the old thing that is dying. In *Calcinatio* what is dying wants to be thrown on the fire of transformation, you have to find out what are the old patterns and throw 'em on there and literally make the sacrifice—very important to this line of work is sacrifice—without conscious sacrifice this kind of work cannot happen. Jung was completely the one who held the candle to the sway—anyone reading The Red Book sees Jung's *Calcinatio*, sees—he makes the conscious sacrifice of his outer identity—he lets his teaching at the ETH go as a sacrifice, and he lets his status as President of the Psychoanalytic Society at that time—he lets that go, he lets go his relationship with Freud—he makes many conscious sacrifices so that he can get a different relationship with the creative fire. And the creative fire goes all the way down into the soul—this is *Calcinatio*—conscious sacrifice helps us get a different relationship with the creativity within us and the creative fire, and this is simple too, in every life if you find yourself doing things that don't have energy anymore, or that are not where the energy belongs, is going, if you make the sacrifice and reorganize your life, you're working with *Calcinatio* so that you can serve the fire within you better, so the funeral pyre image comes up in *Calcinatio* as a very profound image—take a look at what ought to be dying and let it die...

Dr. Dave: Mmm-hmm

Dr. Wikman: ...and then get a better relationship with, you know, the fire that's within you and dedicate yourself, devote yourself, to what the most fruitful life is, with the creative fire that you live with, so this is another image—I'll be—*(laughing)* obviously I could speak at length about *Calcinatio*...

Dr. Dave: *(laughs)*

Dr. Wikman: So, rage, anger, desire, frustration, are all part of this process too. Ash is another image that comes up in dreams and experiences of *Calcinatio*—that's usually when it's burned all the way through—ash is a very profoundly helpful image to have coming through—it shows you're coming all the way through what wanted to die off. So, I hope that's helped you a little bit with *Calcinatio*—any question on that, does that...

Dr. Dave: No, no, that's wonderful. Is there another one that comes to mind?

Dr. Wikman: Sure, we can happily move to another, let's see, let's go to *Coagulatio*—it's actually one of my favorites. *Coagulatio*—so you can see behind these terms are elemental forces, so with *Solutio* we have the water element, and *Calcinatio* is fire—*Coagulatio* is earth. Many intuitive people often need a good relationship to *Coagulatio*. *Coagulatio* is where things gel and become real in time and space, and so in *Coagulatio* process—now there is also the negative to each of these and the positive to each of these. In *Solutio* one can start to drown [sic] in the grief, that's a *Solutio* process that's going awry, right, so you've got to help someone out of the grief so it becomes a rebirth for them.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Dr. Wikman: Yeah, right, and then with *Calcinatio* it's similar too—the fire can become too much. One learns, one has to do as the alchemists say regulation of the flame: turn the process, the heat, down. This is true of mania, it's true of addictions, it's true of many things. So in *Calcinatio* it's to learn to regulate the flame so you're not on the negative side of that archetypal energy. The same is true with *Coagulatio*—sometimes people get into a negative *Coagulatio* experience and that is getting stuck in the mud; things are too fixed in one's life and one's stuck in the mundane or the concrete, and I would actually say the concrete—concretism is the shadow of *Coagulatio*. So what we were speaking about earlier with post-modernism thought is trying to deal with fixity that happens through *Coagulatio* when thought-forms get too fixed, when language no longer holds the dynamic mystery that it is, that's working with the negative side of *Coagulatio*. So the positive side of *Coagulatio* is when you have a creative idea and you manage to actually dedicate yourself to time and space and bring it into time and space, not let it be an idea. Many of us intuitives, if we get to our death-beds and looking back on our lives, we will all wish that we'd had a good relationship to *Coagulatio*, we wish that...

Dr. Dave: Mmm hmm!

Dr. Wikman: And I think you, Dr. Dave, have a good relationship with that. *(laughs)*

Dr. Dave: *(laughs)* Thank you.

Dr. Wikman: *(laughs)* Yes, you do a lot that brings things into time-space. So a poet, for example, that lives only with the musings and never really can get the words down and let the poem fully form and can say the poem is finished now I can share it with friends and family or even publish it, see *Coagulatio* helps it come into time/space, and many people suffer from not having a good relationship to *Coagulatio*—you’ll see this in very gifted, intuitive people—they have the air, fire elements going strong, but the earth is not, so with *Coagulatio* also the body and our relationships to the body are very much part of this—we can think of the body as actually fixed and of course it is so not fixed—we take the body for granted mind-blowingly: it is a giant, giant mystery, in fact, most of us know hardly anything about the processes that are happening in our body while they’re happening. So, people who get into doing cranio-sacral work, or acupuncture, oriental medicine—these art-forms are alchemical art-forms that are taking the shadow side of *Coagulatio* and are bringing them through to, from that “dense” we were talking about earlier, into subtlety, the subtlety of energies, and the subtlety of intelligences within the body. That is a beautiful way to work, I think, in the *Coagulatio* mysteries. The archetype behind *Coagulatio* we think of as Saturn, as Saturn helps things become more fixed. A moment ago we were talking about the spirit Mercurius, as the mercurial energy that is mutable and it’s always moving; we need Saturn fixity, that is the polarity archetype to Mercury, and Saturn helps things come into time and space and with wisdom, and actually, interestingly, Saturn is the archetype that is related both to lead and to gold, so we cannot just be human beings having spiritual experiences without letting what is informing us come into this world too, more and more in more refined ways. What Jung and von Franz speak about, and I think this has to do with *Coagulatio* and then I promise I’ll stop here...

Dr. Dave: *(laughs)*

Dr. Wikman: ...but you get me on a roll and I can’t stop, but... von Franz, I think if there was one prayer bead of her work that I go back to time and time again, it’s where she speaks to the fact that the latent Self, capital “S” Self, the Higher Self, the latent Self, that we all come into life having some connection to as children, the latent Self that exists beyond time/space—the older we get and as ego function happens and everything, but what’s wanting to happen in individuation is for the latent Self to come into the manifest world, come into *this* world. So that means it wants to pick up differentiated, committed, devoted ways that were helping that energy come into this world through us, through our gifts or our talents, our interests

Dr. Dave: mmm

Dr. Wikman: our curiosities, through our love—think about the mothers—I think about this often—I have work with many young mothers, for them, it sounds like such high-falutin’ language, you know, “the latent Self coming into the manifest Self, and the manifest world”, well what does that mean? Well, think about a mother day to day—if she had her heart on being a parent and her curiosity, interest, love is there and it means the world to her and her soul, to mother, then the differentiated way that she’s learning to mother, recognize the soul

of these beings and their own essences and help those essences come into the world, where she learns to work with her own shadow, where she learns to work with discipline—all of that required *Coagulatio*, it requires paying attention to time/space, to what's happening moment to moment and everything we're doing and work with what's happening right there—that's part of *Coagulatio*.

Dr. Dave: Now, I presume that in working with that young mother, you would not say, “Well, what you need is more *Coagulatio*”...

Dr. Wikman: (*laughs*) No, I would not, you're right. It makes me giggle, that's very funny, yeah, I would not.

Dr. Dave: Well, there's actually a serious intent behind that observation or that question, which is, so much of the Jungian approach is, you know, as you describe it, sort of “way out there”, way up in the ethereal realms, and poetic, and metaphorical and so on, which, in this age in which we find ourselves of evidence-based practice, evidence-based psychotherapies and so on, that gets to be kind of very literal and concrete, some people have trouble latching onto that or to the significance, and what I like about you is that you're moving, and you're able to move back and forth between both of those realms, kind of the further reaches of metaphor and poetry and so on and inner experience, but also to bring it concretely into your therapeutic work.

Dr. Wikman: Well, thank you, thank you, Dr. Dave, and I think that—what is that old statement that we probably all grew up on, that has to do with, if you're so much off in heaven you're of no earthly good, I forget how it actually goes,

Dr. Dave: (*laughs*)

Dr. Wikman: but I think you're pointing to that, I think you're really pointing to that, and this is true for anyone with a lot of intuition, definitely I think Jungian work at its best is not afraid of *Coagulatio*, in fact knows the numinosity of these mysteries we're talking about, is in time/space in everything we're seeing and everything we're doing and everything that lives and everything that we are. So we don't have to disappear from this world to touch it, in fact these other realms we're talking about are informing this realm all the time. So you asking, you know, would you mention this to a mother, would you say these words, and no, of course not. However, wanting to give her a sense of the incredible, soulful value of exactly what she's doing as she is wrestling it out when she gets overly angry, for example, with a child and gets possessed by, you know, maybe even a very negative Mother archetype that comes from her own wound or her own childhood. If that's happening we wouldn't want her to get lost in the language of the ideas, we'd want her to get the help to be able to realign so that once she's in moment-to-moment with her child she can in fact feel herself able, **her conscience** not to be stuck and be able to have choice. and the ability to choose—that's a sign that the ego is getting stronger, and that's the whole point, the ego has to be agile and strong so it can choose how to be in the flow with all of these energies and be in our quote “ordinary lives”—I put that in quotes because they're not so ordinary, really.

Dr. Dave: Mmm hmm.

Dr. Wikman: *(laughs)*

Dr. Dave: Yeah. On your website I notice that you offer both Jungian analysis and psychotherapy, you know, as somewhat different categories. How would the two differ?

Dr. Wikman: Oh, I think that's a really good question, uh, I think this takes us back to the images of botany—I actually started in college loving botany first, and then ended up with psychology and Spanish literature, but I think Jung—so much there is a natural scientist in him too, looking in on the phenomenon of what is happening in front of one, that is—this is very, very important for all of us mental health practitioners. When someone walks into our office, where are they, what do they really need, what language is going to be the one that works with them, what medium, do they need some cognitive, you know, skills, do they need to look at some dreams. What do they actually need to help them along on their journey, and then, how far into the process with you do they really need to go? And at what level? So that takes a lot of listening, like a natural scientist, and that comes from listening to their dreams, listening to what they're saying, what are their energetic commitment, what do they want out of it? So to me all of that goes behind trying to help someone decide how much contact with working with me they are going to need or want. And, now sometimes they'll say they don't want or need much, and then they're sitting more on Jungian psychotherapy end of the continuum—fine—maybe even Jungian counselling is going on, and that is enough for them. One does not need to pull others in and initiate them—it's not about that—it's more paying attention to what is nature itself asking for within them. Now sometimes someone will come in wanting very little, and that's fine, but then a process will kick off in them that's quite big, life for example will deal some very heavy blows, or a process from within of creativity is calling, or a change in vocation, or something shows up that they're going to need a deeper process, more contact, and a deeper commitment, a deeper vessel. That would tend toward what I would think of as Jungian analysis.

Dr. Dave: OK

Dr. Wikman: And I like both, I don't have a bias...

Dr. Dave: Yeah

Dr. Wikman: ...whatever one needs.

Dr. Dave: Well, for therapists and potential therapists listening to this interview, what would be your advice? How can they learn more both personally and in terms of practical application of these ideas, which might strike some as very fuzzy or overly mystical—how does somebody begin to move in this direction, in terms of a profession?

Dr. Wikman: Yes, that's true. Well, let's see, I think that for a therapist to want to move in this direction, I think it would be that their curiosity and interest for what they're looking at, that their own lenses of perception want to deepen or grow, if they have the curiosity for the

lenses of perception to look at the people they're working with in different ways—that, that would be reason to pick up the torch and try to do some study and move more toward it—but it would not [be?] about becoming more fuzzy or all of that getting confusing because that could be the *massa confusa* that no-one needs, but for example, to look at the archetypal energies that are inside each person they see, how would they understand the archetypes that they're looking at getting expressed in each life that they're looking at as therapists, ah, that can be very helpful to do, so, I think, as I really feel it myself and I believe it is true for the therapist, most of the therapists, is that we're on a Chiron journey with that archetype, that means the wounded healer journey. Deal with it with themselves first—look into the archetypes within themselves, find out about that and discover *that* more—once *that's* going on then the curiosity about who they're working with and what archetypal movements are going on and what might be a help to people that they work with becomes clearer. So for themselves, if they follow what they're, to discover more what's within them, and find books and other mediums to do that, I would really recommend that as the way to weigh in, and of course, I'm sure you would understand, that I will pitch my own book a little here (*laughs*)

Dr. Dave: Sure!

Dr. Wikman: If therapists were to pick up my book and to go ahead and take a look at—they can pick up any chapter at all and look at the clinical pieces of what someone might come in with, and a dream that might be there, and the pieces of the practical help that go along with that, that might be a help too in terms of looking at their own clients that way, but I think their own discovery process with their own dreams and the archetypes within them is a help. Now there are many mediums, as we know, that try to play with and look at archetypal phenomenon in each incarnation, and people probably have different means to doing that—some people maybe have had a Tarot reading before and looked at the archetypes of Tarot; some people may have looked into astrology and thought about the archetypes of astrology for looking into their own incarnation, for what they embody—but whatever sparks their imagination about the archetypes that they're carrying—Jean Bolen's book I mentioned earlier, she's a good friend of mine, her book Goddesses in Every Woman, Gods in Every Man, as a way also for the first time even to look into archetypes; Ginette Paris' book, Pagan Meditations, has images in there too about the archetypes that I think is a good help too for how they appear in each life—those might be places to start.

Dr. Dave: Well, you've given us a rich menu (*laughs*) to explore here, and so Dr. Monika Wikman, I want to thank you for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

Dr. Wikman: Thank you Dr. Dave, I have completely enjoyed it, I've completely enjoyed you—thank *you*.

Dr. Dave: I hope you enjoyed this interview with Dr. Monika Wikman and found it as instructive as I did. I really admire her ability to fly high, to go deep, to speak in the language of metaphor and poetry, and at the same time to bring all of herself, her wisdom, and her personal experience into the psychotherapeutic interaction in as grounded and practical a way

as each individual case might demand. Of course, I've not been in psychotherapy with her, but this is very much the sense I have of her, both from this interview and our prior phone conversations. I think I'll be using her as my go-to Jungian analyst in future interviews, so don't be surprised if you hear her voice here again. I think she has so much to offer us. Now if you're interested to learn more about her book and her practice, she has a website at www.monikawikman.com. Monika is spelled "Monika" and Wikman is spelled "Wikman".