The Child in Relationship: An Expression of Wholeness

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Chapter 4
The Child in Relationship:
An Expression of Wholeness

In literature the archetypal child is not portrayed in isolation, but in the context of a mutually supportive relationship with a mentor. According to Jungian psychology, the on-going process of individuation requires a balance of opposite qualities such as those associated with the child and the adult. The symbiotic relationship of the protege and mentor, therefore, serves as a metaphor of personal integration.

The love between a child and an adult can be so dynamic that it exerts a metaphoric effect on both partners. While the nurturing love of an adult may guide a child to maturity, the charismatic love of a child may lead an adult to renewal. The union of the protege and mentor catalyzes growth that would not be possible for either party alone. Jung identifies mutual transformation as a distinguishing characteristic of the archetype of the child. The popular motif of the archetypal transformation of the protege and mentor prevails in stories such as *Silas Marner*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *Anne of Green Gables*.

In *Silas Marner*, for example, helpless Eppie needs the guidance of Silas in order to grow into a responsible young woman, while the compulsive recluse needs the vivacious child in order to embrace life. That Eppie matures into a well-adjusted person is incredible in light of the genetic predisposition that she inherits from her biological parents. Not only had her mother been a drug-addicted wretch, but her father is an insecure coward. One wonders what the outcome of Eppie’s life
might have been if she had not been rescued by Silas Marner while she was still in her formative years.

Under Silas's tutelage Eppie develops into a wholesome youngster. She delights in playing games with Silas as he works at his loom. Eppie romps through the countryside enjoying the beauties of nature. The robust toddler cultivates a love of flowers and an affinity for pets. As she grows, Eppie matures into a responsible woman who manages the house and attends to Silas's needs.

At the same time Silas needs Eppie in order to save himself from the unhealthy lifestyle that had been destroying him. No longer does Silas Marner sit continuously indoors working frenetically at his loom, but Eppie calls him outdoors to the healthy sunshine. He is physically invigorated by their recreation in the meadows looking for herbs and admiring flowers. Subsequently, Silas recovers from his chronic problem of cataleptic seizures. He begins to feel healthier and to look better. A ruddy hue colors his pallid complexion. His improved physical appearance is indicative of his psychological regeneration. George Eliot describes how, “His large brown eyes seem to have gathered a longer vision, as is the way of eyes that have been shortsighted in early life, and they have a less vague, a more answering look” (140; ch. 16).

Both Silas and Eppie come to recognize the blessing that each of them has been for the other. Silas tells Eppie how desolate he had been until she came into his life, while Eppie says: “‘If it hadn’t been for you, they’d have taken me to the workhouse, and there’d have been nobody to love me.’” (Eliot 168; ch.19). Silas tries to convince Eppie that it was she who changed the direction of his life. “‘If you hadn’t been sent to save me, I should ha’ gone to the grave in my misery’” (Eliot 168; ch. 19).

The lives of Jim and Huckleberry Finn are also transformed by virtue
of their relationship. As Jim watches over Huck, he has time to reflect on his role as parent. He remembers an incident when he had hit his little girl for not closing a door, only to discover later that the child was deaf. Now Jim is filled with remorse for his error and resolves to repent for it. Therefore, Jim treats Huck with greater sensitivity than he has ever extended to his own child. In addition, Jim determines that once he is free, he will steal his children out of slavery and make amends for the past.

During the course of their journey together Huck grows in respect for Jim, while Jim grows in respect for himself. On the morning after a heavy fog Huck tricks Jim into believing that it had merely been a dream. When Huck jokingly shows Jim the residual debris deposited by the storm, Jim is indignant for having been duped. The critic, Leo Marx, points out that the slave's expression of anger is a sign of his "transformation. On the raft he was an individual, man enough to denounce Huck when Huck made him the victim of a practical joke" (218).

When Jim confronts Huck with how offended he was by the mean trick, Huckleberry Finn is forced to re-assess his mischievous penchant for playing practical jokes at other people's expense. Huck feels so ashamed for having hurt Jim's feelings that he swallows his pride and apologizes. Lionel Trilling cites the apology of Huckleberry Finn as the turning point in Huck's "moral testing and development" (48). The positive influence that Jim exerts on Huckleberry enables him to develop into a sensitive person.

Now Jim and Huck stand on equal footing as human beings. No longer are they separated by distinctions of black and white, adult and child. The reader rejoices at Jim's newly found courage and Huck's newly acquired humility. Ultimately, Jim is freed from the restraints of slavery and Huck is liberated from servitude to social mores.
In *Anne of Green Gables* also the protege and mentor are the means of mutual transformation for each other. As the impetuous Anne is tempered by the sobering influence of Marilla, the rigid spinster is mellowed by the lively spirit of the little redhead. Anne’s very arrival at Green Gables is unsettling because the Cuthberts had requested a boy from the orphan asylum to help Matthew with the farm work. In Marilla’s mind there is no reason to keep a girl. Marilla says: “‘What good would she be to us?’” to which Matthew’s immediate response is: “‘We might be some good to her’” (Montgomery 32; ch. 3). That interchange at the opening of the book proves to be prophetic in terms of the transforming impact that they have on one another.

When Marilla agrees to keep Anne, it is with the intention of reforming the girl. Marilla embarks on a campaign to curb Anne’s daydreaming and to train her in the practical arts of cooking and sewing. Marilla’s no-nonsense approach helps Anne to achieve that needed balance in her life. The softening of Anne’s ebullient temperament is accompanied by the toning down of Anne’s fiery red hair to a subdued shade of auburn. Her freckles begin to fade and Anne develops into an attractive young lady. George Parker concludes that “Anne’s transformation from ugly duckling to comely maiden leads to a compromise between the private world of her imagination and the genteel, practical world around her” (14).

In spite of Marilla’s unyielding personality, Anne Shirley mellows the spinster. In fact, Marilla admits within the first twenty-four hours of Anne’s presence at the Cuthberts’ household that she feels as if the child is “‘casting a spell’” (Montgomery 40; ch. 4) over her. The first of a series of endearing moments between Anne and Marilla occurs after Marilla forces the out-spoken child to apologize to Rachel Lynde for her impetuous behavior. As Anne and Marilla walk home together from Mrs. Lynde’s house, they hold hands with each other. Their clasped
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hands symbolize the connection that develops between them. The author, L. M. Montgomery, comments on the significance of their holding hands in saying: "Something warm and pleasant welled up in Marilla’s heart at touch of that thin little hand in her own—a throb of maternity that she had missed, perhaps" (81; ch. 10).

The most evident indication of Marilla’s change of heart occurs with the incident of the missing brooch. Because Anne is the last one to have seen it, Marilla automatically assumes that Anne is responsible for its loss. Marilla declares that Anne will be confined to her room until she confesses. Anne decides on an expedient course of action and confesses to the crime of which she is innocent so that she can attend the long-awaited picnic. Much to her consternation Marilla discovers the amethyst brooch in her lace shawl. Proud Marilla must acknowledge that she has falsely accused and punished the innocent girl. The Marilla whom the reader encountered at the beginning of the story would never have humbled herself to apologize to the child, but now Marilla is pushed to the point at which she must practice what she preaches. Truly this is a new Marilla who apologizes to Anne.

'I was wrong—I see that now. I shouldn’t have doubted your word when I’d never know you to tell a story. Of course, it wasn’t right for you to confess to a thing you hadn’t done.... But I drove you to it. So if you’ll forgive me, Anne I’ll forgive you and we’ll start square again.' (Montgomery 108; ch. 14).

Marilla’s reformation occurs as she recognizes that she is not so perfect and Anne is not so wanting. A pattern surfaces showing that Anne’s fiascos are invariably not a result of her clumsiness, but Marilla’s carelessness. For example, Anne gets Diana Barry drunk because Marilla mistakenly placed wine in the cupboard where the raspberry cordial is ordinarily stored. In another instance, Anne nearly poisons the minister’s wife because Marilla put anodyne liniment in the bottle labelled “Best Vanilla.” Without Anne, Marilla would never have recognized her own weakness and grown into new levels of strength.
The child and the adult are such an integral part of each other’s lives that they become inseparable companions. The archetypal connection of the child and the adult is represented in the faithfulness that they extend to one another. This is clearly the case in classic relationships like those of Eppie and Silas, Huck and Jim, and Anne and Marilla.

The bond between Eppie and Silas Marner is so intimate that the author declares: “There was love between him and the child that blent them into one” (Eliot 136; ch. 14). Nevertheless, adversity threatens that relationship when Godfrey Cass discloses that he is Eppie’s biological father. Godfrey presents his case in an attempt to re-claim his daughter. Naturally, Silas challenges Godfrey as to why he had not acknowledged his fatherhood when Eppie was a baby. Silas proclaims that to take Eppie from him at this point would be like taking “‘the heart out o’ my body’” (Eliot 173; ch. 19). Furthermore, Silas defends his claim on Eppie by telling Godfrey that, “‘you’ve no right to her!... Your coming now and saying ‘I’m her father,’ doesn’t alter the feelings inside us. It’s me she’s been calling her father ever since she could say the word.’” (Eliot 173; ch. 19). Silas’s panic mounts as he declares that Eppie and he have become like two in one flesh: “‘we eat o’ the same bit, and drink o’ the same cup, and think o’ the same things from one day’s end to another.... You’d cut us i’ two’” (Eliot 173; ch. 19).

Although a battle ensues between the biological and surrogate fathers, both of them realize that the ultimate decision rests with Eppie. In a poignant scene Eppie clasps Silas’s hand and tells the Cass’s that she cannot leave Silas. She states adamantly: “‘I should have no delight i’ life any more if I was forced to go away from my father.... I can’t think o’ no happiness without him.... I’ll cleave to him as long as he lives, and nobody shall ever come between him and me’” (Eliot 175; ch. 19).

Not even marriage can separate Eppie from Silas. When Aaron Winthrop proposes to Eppie, she agrees with the proviso that Silas will
live with them. At their wedding Eppie shares her love with both Aaron and Silas. "One hand was on her husband's arm, and with the other she clasped the hand of her father Silas" (Eliot 183; conclusion).

As Eppie defines her relationship with Silas by her decision to remain with him, Huck Finn also proves his relationship to Jim by his decision to remain faithful to him. Both of them ultimately decide to commit themselves to the mentors who have reared them. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Huck and Jim develop such a strong bond that they cannot be parted from one another. In imploring Huck not to turn him in, Jim is actually asking the boy to make a commitment to him. The black man reminds the white boy that once he has given his word, he must keep his promise. Huck acquiesces: "'I'll stick to it. Honest injun, I will. People would call me a low-down Abolitionist and despise me for keeping mum—but that don't make no difference. I ain't a-going to tell'" (Twain 55; ch. 8). Huck proves himself faithful to his commitment. When he learns that a search party is on the way, Huck alerts the runaway slave.

The crisis that precipitates Huck's moral dilemma occurs when Huck and Jim become separated. Huck panics as he discovers that Jim has been taken into captivity. The poor boy cannot imagine life without the man who has become a father to him. As Huck tries to decide whether he should steal Jim out of slavery, he sees Jim's face before him. He remembers how good Jim always was and he hears Jim telling him that he was the best friend he ever had. Huck must decide where his loyalty lies. Should he follow the dictates of society that say he should return the slave to his owner or should he follow the mandate of his conscience and help Jim to safety? The voice of inner wisdom prevails and Huck decides that he will be faithful to Jim. Huckleberry Finn risks legal punishment and the threat of hell rather than abandon the slave who has become his devoted friend.
Similarly, the relationship that develops between Anne of Green Gables and Marilla is so intimate that they cannot bear the prospects of being separated from one another. Only three weeks after Anne’s arrival Marilla admits: “I can’t imagine the place without her’” (Montgomery 94; ch. 12). On the first anniversary of Anne’s coming to Green Gables Anne exclaims that her arrival was the turning point of her life, while Marilla “wondered how she could have lived before Anne came to Green Gables” (Montgomery 170; ch. 20) Although Marilla’s strait-laced personality inhibits her from being demonstrative, she, nevertheless, feels a deep-seated affection for the girl. “She had an uneasy feeling that it was rather sinful to set one’s heart so intensely on any human creature as she had set hers on Anne” (Montgomery 247; ch. 30).

The depth of Marilla’s feelings surfaces at times of crisis. Marilla suffers utter panic when Anne is carried home to her after her accident on the ridge-pole. “At that moment Marilla had a revelation. In the sudden stab of fear that pierced to her very heart she realized what Anne had come to mean to her. She would have admitted that she liked Anne—nay, that she was very fond of Anne. But now she knew as she hurried wildly down the slope that Anne was dearer to her than anything on earth” (Montgomery 192; ch. 23).

As Anne and Marilla grow closer, the fear of being separated intensifies. Anne’s excursion to visit Diana Barry’s Aunt Josephine occasions Anne’s first departure from home. While Anne exclaims unequivocally that returning home has been the best part of the journey, Marilla acknowledges how empty she has felt during Anne’s absence. Marilla tells Anne: “It’s been fearful lonesome here without you, and I never put in four longer days’” (Montgomery 245; ch. 29).

Both Anne and Marilla suffer separation anxiety while they make preparations for Anne to go away to school. As Marilla gets a new
wardrobe ready for the girl, Anne says: “I don’t believe you ought to be so kind to me—it’s making it harder every day for me to go away’” (Montgomery 285; ch. 34). Meanwhile, the stoic spinster is moved to tears just imagining how lonely she will be without her. When Anne actually departs for Queens, Marilla is more miserable than she has ever been in her life. In a desperate attempt to distract herself, “Marilla plunged fiercely into unnecessary work and kept at it all day long with the bitterest kind of a heartache—the ache that burns and gnaws and cannot wash itself away in ready tears...” [Marilla] wept for her girl in a passion of sobs that appalled her when she grew calm enough to reflect how very wicked it must be to take on so about a sinful fellow creature” (Montgomery 287; ch. 34).

At the time of Matthew’s death Marilla clings affectionately to Arme. In their sorrow they feel closer than ever. Marilla says: “‘We’ve got each other, Anne. I don’t know what I’d do if you weren’t here.... I love you as dear as if you were my own flesh and blood’” (Montgomery 308; ch. 37). Even though Anne wins a college scholarship, she willingly forfeits it in order to remain with Marilla at Green Gables. A novel like Anne of Green Gables portrays the bonding of the child and adult as a means of expressing the integrity that is of the very essence of the archetypal child.

Not only is the archetypal child depicted in relationship with a significant adult, but in the social context of an extended community. Union between two people, as between husband and wife, energizes each and gives life to others. The archetypal relationship of the child and the adult is so dynamic that the child savior generates a spirit of camaraderie within the whole community. As part of a circular movement,
societies, and these in turn provide climates favorable to the development of wholeness in persons (Grant, Thompson and Clarke 183–84).

Indeed, the mission of the child savior is directed outward toward other people and the common good. Thus, the archetypal pattern in stories such as *Anne of Green Gables*, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *Heidi*, and *Pollyanna* traces the journey of the child beyond the home to the extended community.

Anne Shirley has a magnetic appeal that captivates the citizens of Green Gables. In her inimitable way Anne creates a unique bond with people and resonates with them as “kindred spirits.” She engenders meaningful associations with a variety of personages, ranging from the timid Diana Barry to her irascible Aunt Josephine.

Anne becomes so attached to Diana Barry, her “bosom friend,” that she weeps bitterly just imagining how she will feel when the time eventually comes for them to be parted. Anne’s vitality brings out the hidden talent in Diana. In time Anne becomes like a member of the Barry family. When little Minnie May becomes seriously ill with the croup, Anne comes to the rescue. The doctor marvels: “‘That little red-headed girl they have over at Cuthbert’s is as smart as they make ’em. I tell you she saved that baby’s life, for it would have been too late by the time I got her. She seems to have a skill and presence of mind perfectly wonderful in a child of her age’” (Montgomery 150; ch. 18).

In unprecedented style the charming Anne Shirley impresses the ill-tempered Josephine Barry. Never before has Diana’s maiden aunt been so entertained as she is by Anne’s dramatic apology for having jumped into the bed on top of her. It seems to delight Miss Barry that someone approaches her like a human being. Just because Aunt Josephine acts like an ogre does not mean that she likes to be treated like one. On account of Anne, Josephine Barry extends her visit. Years later after Anne has grown to maturity, Josephine Barry still values her friendship
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with “Anne-girl.” The contrary spinster admits that “she makes me love her and I like people who make me love them. It saves me so much trouble in making myself love them” (Montgomery 296; ch. 35).

Like Anne of Green Gables, Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm makes a startling impact on the community. “She had always been straining to make the outward world conform to her inward dreams.... She was a lifegiver, altering the whole scheme of any picture... by contributing new values” (Wiggin 283; ch. 25). Miraculously, Rebecca mellows cantankerous Aunt Miranda and encourages timorous Aunt Jane. Because she is such a gifted student, Rebecca brings joy and satisfaction to her teacher, Miss Maxwell.

Little Miss Randall becomes connected with everyone in the vicinity. “It was she who ran to the shed door to take the dish to the ‘meat man’ or ‘fish man’; she who knew the family histories of the itinerant fruit vendors and tin peddlers; she who was asked to take supper or pass the night with children in neighboring villages” (Wiggin 177; ch. 16). Rebecca Rowena is like a little missionary giving help to the needy. Not only does Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm work tirelessly, but she involves everyone else in her projects. When the soap company sponsors a contest, Rebecca enlists the help of her schoolmates in order to sell enough soap to win the prize for a poor family. In the process Rebecca charms “Mr. Aladdin” into buying three hundred bars of soap to help the cause and converts him into a veritable Good Samaritan.

Johanna Spyri’s Heidi also extends a charismatic influence on the world around her. When Heidi goes to live on the Alm, she not only brings new life to her grandfather, but to their neighbors on the mountain. She befriends the goatherd, Peter, along with his mother and grandmother. Likewise, while she stays in Frankfurt, Heidi imparts joy to all who are part of the Sesemanns’ household. She becomes a dear friend of the crippled Klara as well as her lovely grandmother and the
kindly Dr. Classen.

What Heidi gains from her advantaged city friends she uses to enrich her disadvantaged country friends. After Heidi learns to read from Klara's grandmother, she teaches the illiterate Peter to read and entertains his blind grandmother by reading to her. When the Sesemanns offer to give Heidi anything she wants, she only requests that they supply Peter's grandmother with a comfortable bed, a warm shawl, and soft rolls.

Heidi not only transforms the lives of those around her, but she creates a network connecting them to one another. Visits from the friends Heidi made at the Sesemanns's provide opportunities for the city residents and the mountaineers to become friendly with one another. When Dr. Classen comes to the Alm, he and Grandfather enjoy each other's company. The doctor is amazed by the Alm uncle's extensive knowledge of the healing powers of mountain herbs. Just visiting with Heidi and her grandfather eases the pain of the doctor who is grieving the death of his daughter. Afterward, Dr. Classen purchases a house to share with Heidi and the Alm uncle. Both Dr. Classen and Mr. Sesemann promise the elderly grandfather that they will always provide for Heidi and treat her like a member of the family.

A miraculous event occurs when the crippled Klara Sesemann vacations at the Alm. With some assistance from Peter, Heidi teaches Klara to walk. It is interesting that Peter is enlisted to support Klara because the boy had been jealous that Klara was taking Heidi away from him. By bringing them together Heidi facilitates both Klara's physical healing and Peter's psychological healing. The image of the two children supporting Klara is indeed a touching picture of community.

What is amazing is the way in which Heidi becomes a link connecting the previously separate worlds of the country and the city. Heidi generates a sense of community so pervasive that it unites her poor
friends from the Swiss mountainside and her wealthy friends from the German city into one, big, happy family.

The archetypal spirit of the child savior is also evident in the story of Pollyanna. Pollyanna transforms the lives of people in the town of Beldingsville by teaching them to play the "glad game." At the end of the book while Pollyanna is lying in bed paralyzed from a motor-car accident, several people come forward to tell their stories of how the "glad girl" has changed their lives. Pollyanna’s influence extends to just about everyone in the town, ranging from a woman of ill-repute to the minister from the local parish. The woman of questionable morals promises that she and her man will rectify their lives. Milly Snow reports that her invalid mother has had a change of attitude on account of Pollyanna and is cheerfully knitting for sick children. John Pendleton who was formerly a bitter and lonely man credits Pollyanna with renewing his life. In fact, Pollyanna has been instrumental in arranging Mr. Pendleton’s adoption of the orphan boy, Johnny Bean. Pollyanna uplifts the heart and soul of the depressed minister by telling him how her father who was also a minister found consolation in the eight hundred "rejoicing texts" that he found in the Bible.

Dr. Chilton describes how Pollyanna’s invigorating spirit has been like a tonic to a host of patients. In response to a nurse’s inquiry about the ingredients of Pollyanna’s wonder-working tonic, Dr. Chilton says that it seems to be "‘an overwhelming, unquenchable gladness for everything that has happened or is going to happen..., ‘just being glad’... I wish I could prescribe her—and bring her—as I would a box of pills—though if there gets to be many of her in the world, you and I might as well go to ribbon-selling and ditch-digging for all the money we’d get out of nursing and doctoring’" (Porter 108-09; ch. 15).

Pollyanna’s greatest feat, however, is in reuniting Dr. Chilton and Aunt Polly. Although they were once fond of one another, they have
been estranged for years. When Aunt Polly finally agrees to admit Dr. Chilton to Pollyanna's case, Dr. Chilton secures the help of a medical colleague who is able to cure Pollyanna's paralysis. As a result Pollyanna is physically healed, while Aunt Polly and Dr. Chilton are psychologically restored. Then, the book ends on the promising note that they will "live happily ever after."

In a variety of stories it is evident that the magnetic charm of the archetypal child generates a sense of integrity in all relationships. Not only is the mentor the beneficiary of the child's invigorating spirit, but everyone in the community seems renewed as a result of the child's presence among them. Somehow, the charisma of the child savior spirals outward in a dynamic movement that draws people together in a true spirit of camaraderie.