

Prison Dog-Training Programs:
A Jungian Perspective

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Abstract

Prison Dog-Training Programs: A Jungian Conceptualization

by

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Prisons in the United States are implementing prison dog-training programs (PDPs) in which incarcerated people take care of and train canines for a variety of service-oriented tasks and purposes. It is striking that these PDPs report successful outcomes within a prison system where effective and cost-efficient rehabilitation programs are often lacking. One of the most intriguing aspects of PDPs is the undeniably positive influences they provide for incarcerated persons' mental and behavioral health, even though these programs were not necessarily designed to produce specific therapeutic outcomes. PDPs have also been shown to initiate a process of individual transformation and reduce recidivism. This hermeneutic phenomenological study used a depth psychological framework to understand the lived experience of incarcerated trainers through a Jungian conceptualization emerging directly from the incarcerated trainers' own words. The findings of this study support a rehabilitative approach to corrections, as they suggest that programs such as PDPs activate a process of genuine psychological transformation that offers a renewal of the personality through meaning, purpose, and loving connections, both within the prison itself and in the greater community. From a Jungian perspective, this transformation of identity is consistently constellated in PDPs through the living archetypal pattern inherent in the ancient human-canine bond, with the dog acting as a living symbol of transformation that guides the individuation process.

Keywords: prison dog-training program, prison rehabilitation, correctional rehabilitation, prison-based intervention, inmate rehabilitation, canine-assisted rehabilitation, human–animal bond, wounded healer archetype, individuation, identity transformation

Dedication

To Everett Lawson Smith, Jr.

Acknowledgments

Looking in the back where the planets end. The dedication page, it begins...

— Song lyrics by Bright Eyes

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We're all make-believe gods like the Wizard of Oz

“Name the animals, let there be light”

— Song lyrics by Bright Eyes

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Chapter 1:

Overview and Background of Prison Dog-Training Programs

Introduction to the Topic

Dogs, meaningfully referred to as *man's best friend*, have experienced a co-evolving relationship with humans that extends for millennia. This special bond has been acknowledged as far back as 2700 B.C.E. in the oldest written story, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which is traced to ancient Mesopotamia (Mark, 2019). In this epic poem, a dog is depicted as the companion of the goddess Inanna, which elevated the camaraderie of canines into the sacred, mythical, and archetypal realms. As suggested by the poem, this remarkable proclivity between dogs and humans has had a profound impact on the human psyche throughout history. Jeff MacGregor (2020), *Smithsonian Magazine's* Writer-at-Large, adeptly illustrated humankind's age-old connection with canines:

From cave painting to *The Odyssey* to *The Call of the Wild*, the dog is inescapable in human art and culture. Anubis or Argos, Bau or Xolotl, Rin Tin Tin or Marmaduke, from the religious to the secular, Cerberus to Snoopy, from the Egyptians and the Sumerians and the Aztecs to the canine stunt coordinators of Hollywood, the dog is everywhere with us, in us and around us. As a symbol of courage or loyalty, as metaphor and avatar, as a bad dog, mad dog, "release the hounds" evil, or as a screenwriter's shorthand for goodness, the dog is tightly woven into our stories. (para. 32)

Perhaps because of this significant and enduring propensity, the intuitive understanding of the human-canine bond is now being studied and documented scientifically (Beetz & Schöfmann-Crawford, 2019; Odendaal, 2000; Odendaal & Meintjes, 2003; Parish-Plass

& Pfeiffer, 2019), and the research has demonstrated that this unique relationship positively impacts both psychological and physiological health in humans.

This healing phenomenon, generated by the human–canine bond, is the focus of research in the field of human–animal interactions, a model concept that is comprised of related subfields such as animal-assisted therapy. Studies by human-animal interaction researchers Cheryl Krause-Parello et al. (2019) on the therapeutic roles of animals have shown optimistic outcomes across a range of populations, “including children with histories of sexual abuse, college-aged students experiencing stress, older adults, patients living with chronic or terminal illness, and individuals who have experienced additional challenges and/or other forms of trauma” (p. 337). In the last decade, dogs have been challenged with new roles in society, and the outcomes of their performance are being studied with meaningful veracity.

Relatedly, prisons and jails throughout the United States are implementing prison dog-training programs (PDPs) in which incarcerated people take care of and train dogs to assist community members with disabilities or special needs and to rehabilitate dogs to prepare them for adoption in the community. A 2018 publication by Tyler Han et al., a research team at the Institute for Human-Animal Connection, approximated that 250 PDPs were operating within 47 states in the United States. The positive results of these PDPs strongly suggest that a noteworthy healing power is created within this extraordinary relationship between dogs and humans, but related scientific studies are limited and, therefore, the reported benefits of these PDPs are primarily anecdotal. Published documentation has shown a diverse range of encouraging outcomes, including improvement in the behavioral and mental health of the incarcerated dog trainers, a

decrease in recidivism of PDP participants, increased vocational opportunities for the participants upon release, positive impacts within the culture of the prison, and improvements in the relationships between the correctional officers and the incarcerated dog trainers (Cooke & Farrington, 2016). Moreover, favorable results are experienced by the rescue dogs who are enrolled in the PDPs, as well as the recipients of the trained canine graduates, and these programs also offer a unique opportunity for the local community to develop a positive perception of their incarcerated neighbors.

As a growing number of programs connect incarcerated people with dogs, PDPs are flourishing and becoming increasingly popular in custodial settings across the country (Han et al., 2018). Furthermore, there are a wide range of diverse program structures and goals within the various PDPs. For example, in these programs, inmate trainers may train shelter-sourced puppies to become highly specialized service and working canines or rehabilitate rescue dogs that may have been abused (e.g., greyhounds used in competitive racing) to teach them basic obedience and socialization skills, which enhances the animals' adoptability. Additionally, some of these initiatives simply involve community members sending their "problem dogs" to the prison for rudimentary obedience training. Mary Renck Jalongo (2019b), a collaborator with the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution in teaching incarcerated trainers of service dogs, recounted several specific objectives of these PDPs:

They have trained dogs for diverse roles such as: detecting explosives, locating invasive species (e.g., termites, bed bugs), identifying disease in small tissue samples, alerting/responding to seizures, serving as companions for children with Autism, supporting military veterans with PTSD [posttraumatic stress disorder],

and providing balance/support when walking for people with mobility issues.

(p. 265)

While involved in the PDPs, incarcerated participants simultaneously develop dog-training skills, and some even acquire related vocational expertise as animal groomers or veterinarian technicians.

For example, the correctional system of Louisiana—a state that leads the country in incarceration rates—has been exploring and initiating strategies such as PDPs to improve the environment and outcomes of its incarcerated residents (Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections [LA DPS&C], n.d.). The LA DPS&C (n.d) reported that it participates in innovative collaborations for the purpose of supporting and promoting “a number of programs with a dual purpose of rehabilitating people in prison and animals. These programs teach responsibility, compassion, and discipline and give both person and animal second chances in life. (Second Chances section, para. 1)

According to the LA DPS&C, the From the Big House to Your House program has implemented PDPs within correctional facilities throughout Louisiana. These initiatives have grown in popularity, and more than 500 dogs have graduated from these programs since its inception in 2022. As a result, service animals have been placed with “adults and children who suffer from PTSD, depression, autism, and traumatic brain injury” (para. 4). Assessments of these programs show that when incarcerated persons participate in the training of service animals to assist others in need, positive outcomes are fostered, such as the development of a personal sense of purpose, involvement in the social engagement that these programs promote, and opportunities to master a new range of vocational skills. Furthermore, the LA DPS&C’s analysis of the From the Big House to Your House

program found that the benefits for participants included “increased self-esteem, confidence, possible job-career opportunity, training skills, communication skills, assessment skills, following instructions, [and] unconditional caring” (para. 5).

The profound impacts of these PDPs for incarcerated people in Louisiana are even more significant because of the state’s historically controversial, corrupt, and punitive prison system and its legacy of mass incarceration. Statistically speaking, in addition to having the highest rates of incarcerated people, Louisiana has been ranked as one of the most highly punitive justice systems in the nation (American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana, n.d.). Notably, one of the largest maximum-security prisons in the country, the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola (often shortened to Angola), is possibly the most infamous prison in Louisiana—and arguably within the entire southeastern region of the United States (Rideau, 2010)—with a long-standing reputation as “America’s bloodiest prison” (Louisiana State Penitentiary Museum Foundation, n.d.-a, About the Penitentiary section, para. 1).

Originally, the plot of land where the prison was constructed was the site of multiple slave plantations (Louisiana State Penitentiary Museum Foundation, n.d.-b). Jamey Boudreaux, who is executive director of the Louisiana-Mississippi Hospice and adjunct professor at the Tulane University Master of Social Work program, routinely brought students to visit the Angola prison inmate-run hospice facility as a part of a course he has instructed on death, dying, and illness. Boudreaux elaborated on the history of the prison:

Angola was a cesspool of violence. Originally, it was a slave plantation—not only a slave plantation, it was a plantation that bred slaves and sold them out, and they

bred slaves in order to sell slaves. And it was actually three plantations, and when the United States ended slavery with the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War, those three plantations continued to breed slaves for the Caribbean market. And while you couldn't sell slaves in the United States, you could still sell in the Caribbean and South America. And so, they were continuing the practice of breeding and selling slaves, and the federal government forced the state of Louisiana to do something about this—this was in 1889. So, 25 years after the Civil War, Louisiana finally put a stop to it, and they bought the three plantations, and they turned them into their state penitentiary. And so, you can think from origins like a slave plantation into corrections, you can imagine what the conditions were like. It continued to grow—most of the incarcerated population was African American, even though African Americans only make up about 12 to 13%, about maybe a third now, of the population in Louisiana. (I think it's less than that.) They were accounting for over like 60 to 70% of the incarcerated population, and a lot of that was based upon Jim Crow laws as well as “three strikes you're out” [law], and the war on drugs. (personal communication, August 30, 2023)

Considering the lingering impressions of the site's oppressive history, perhaps the current inmates' psyches have continued to be adversely affected by the multigenerational trauma that occurred on the Angola prison site. As a working farm today, and as its moniker insinuates, the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola is still a place wrought with a multiplicity of cultural and racial complexes. Because so many social justice issues affect incarcerated populations throughout the United States, a national conversation has

materialized that focuses on implementing reforms and rehabilitative programs to improve the circumstances of this demographic (Subramanian et al., 2026).

In general, incarcerated persons are confined within highly controlled settings—like Angola—that are isolated from supportive human relationships as well as opportunities to access environmental sources of nurturance found in the natural world (Rideau, 2010; Woodfox, 2019). According to the United States Department of Justice, “a total of 1,230,100 persons were held in state or federal prisons across the United States at year end 2022” (as cited in Carson & Kluckow, 2024, p. 5). Each day, these incarcerated individuals must navigate an environment where they are forcibly disconnected from nature, often enduring prolonged periods of isolation (Cloud et al., 2023). A simple and heartfelt recollection by Albert Woodfox (2019), a formerly incarcerated person who survived solitary confinement for almost 44 years in Angola Prison (for a crime he did not commit), touched on this theme:

Everyone always asks me if we had windows in solitary confinement. . . . Once I had a cell that looked out on a forest and I could see birds and skunks and various animals but eventually they bulldozed the trees to move the forest back for security reasons. Another time, for a brief while, I had a window in my cell. It didn't make me feel any less confined but I could open and close it myself. I kept my window open when it rained, for the freshness. (p. 183)

The impact of lacking a functional relationship with the simple elements of nature, including natural light, plant life, and animals, is a significant component that is often unacknowledged when seeking to better understand the psychology of incarcerated people.

Within penal settings such as the Louisiana State Penitentiary, the presence of animals and working dogs is not unusual, and Angola has traditionally utilized canines throughout its existence—but not always in a therapeutic approach. Journalist Fred Conrad (2019) stated that in the past, the dogs at Angola have been weaponized against the inmates and used as instruments of control to “patrol the prison’s borders, sniff for narcotics, [and] search for escapees” (para. 1). This complicated historical relationship between dogs and Angola included a project in which a previous warden began crossbreeding wolves and dogs with the expectation of creating a superior animal that would aggressively hunt down escaped inmates (Fields, 2012). This experimental breeding of hybrid wolf-dogs was discontinued when the warden discovered that wolves were more likely to run away from an escapee than to pursue and attack them. Journalist Gary Fields (2012) reported that, in response to staffing budget cuts, these hybrid canines were still being used to patrol the prison borders at night and act as “a strong psychological deterrent” (para. 7) to inmates considering escape.

Today, the complex relationship between the prisoners and the dogs in Angola continues to evolve. The Prisoners Assisting Warriors Service (PAWS) program is a PDP that was introduced into the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola in July 2017 as part of an initiative to promote rehabilitation and prison reform (Conrad, 2019). PAWS offers program participants the opportunity to train rescued canines to become service dogs for veterans with PTSD, and during their 1-year training period, the chosen rescue animals remain with their assigned volunteer trainers 24 hours a day, even sleeping in crates next to the incarcerated persons’ beds. The extensive instruction provided by the trainers prepares the canines to assist their future veteran owners with ordinary household

activities as well as major challenges like nightmares, seizures, and panic attacks. By the time the dogs graduate from the PAWS program, they will have learned to obey more than 30 commands and complete simple tasks, such as picking up items off the ground and turning lights on and off (Conrad, 2019; NBC News, 2019). Education reporter Elyse Carmosino (2022) cited the certification results of the canines involved in the year-long training process:

In 2019, PAWS boasted a certification success rate of about 75%—much higher than most service dog programs, which tend to hover closer to 40 or 50%, according to a 2021 report by service dog training nonprofit Atlas Assistance Dogs. (para. 15)

These impressive statistics demonstrate the successes that the participant trainers often achieve within these PDPs. Once their certification is attained, these service dogs, who would ordinarily be costly to purchase, are offered to military veterans free of charge, and the program itself operates without any cost to taxpayers.

Timothy Gray, a veteran recipient of a service animal that was trained by an incarcerated person within Angola's PAWS program, acknowledged the healing and numinous aspects of the bond between human and dog when he stated, "To me, 'dog' is 'God' spelled backward; the closest thing you can get to God's love is a dog" (as cited in Toohey, 2019, para. 19). As this praise implies, the program's well-adjusted and skilled canine graduates are beloved and appreciated by their veteran recipients.

Correspondingly, the incarcerated participants seem to gain self-worth and a new understanding of the impacts of their prior actions, which often evolves into a more philanthropic outlook toward society at large. Bone, a volunteer in the PAWS program at

Angola, expressed this when he stated, “I can train this dog to help a veteran and save a life. . . . I’m here for a bad crime, I can’t go back and change that. The only thing I can do is pay it forward” (as cited in Portier, 2018, para. 17). The transformational impacts of engaging in compassionate and altruistic behaviors and the consequential shifts in perspective, along with physiological changes that result from the human–canine bond, are important and unique aspects of PDPs and may be contributing factors that lead to the dramatic decrease in recidivism rates for those who participate in these programs.

The presence of these service dogs in training at Angola has demonstrated an added benefit of improving the culture of the prison itself, as the canines have been attending inmate mental health group sessions and visiting those in the prison hospital and hospice services (Conrad, 2019). In 2019, journalist Grace Toohey reported,

Angola Warden Darrel Vannoy said he can see the difference the dogs are making around the prison. Right now, only about a dozen dogs are in the program, but as the program expands, Vannoy hopes to keep some of the trained dogs at the prison to support and give comfort to those inmates who could benefit, like those with disciplinary issues or mental illness. (para. 16)

Regularly incorporating the PAWS program canine participants into other services of the prison (e.g., hospice, hospital facility, and group mental health sessions) is a meaningful contingency that permits physical touch for the most vulnerable populations in the prison and promotes the positive impacts of supporting and assisting others in need. Regarding relaxed contact between animals and people, psychologist Risë VanFleet (2019), founder of the Family Enhancement & Play Therapy Center, stated, “It allows them to touch, explore, teach, and respond to the animal. Touch, in particular, is important to social

animals—both human and non-human” (p. 200). Experiencing this sense of touch is a unique occurrence because it is otherwise not permitted; in most penal settings, there are mandates against prisoners engaging in or comforting one another with physical contact; however, as the potential opportunities within the human–canine bond in the penitentiary continue to expand, and as the PAWS training program grows in popularity among those who are incarcerated, the impacts ripple throughout the overall culture of the prison.

In general, prisons have been reported to be stressful environments by both incarcerated people and prison administration employees, and the long-term negative effects of this duress are thoroughly documented (Bierie, 2012). Relatedly, involved in social workers Nancy Parish-Plass and Jessica Pfeiffer (2019) reported, “It is now well-accepted that prolonged stress in general, and especially developmental trauma, causes major damage to the neurological system and leads to a lack of integration between parts of the system” (p. 127). Because of the inherent stress in prisons, the environment is likely to lead to an increase in cortisol, the stress hormone, along with a decrease in oxytocin, the hormone that inhibits stress and activates social connection. An added advantage of PDPs is that the participants are offered the opportunity to develop a safe and loving relationship with the rescue dogs during the time in which the canines live with their incarcerated trainers, which introduces the capacity for affect regulation through social engagement and internal safety. Parish-Plass and Pfeiffer, proponents of animal-assisted psychotherapy, speculated,

Perhaps the presence of the animal, in a supportive safe atmosphere, subdues the limbic activation (Porges, 2003), dampening the stress response system of the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal (HPA) axis (cortisol) and fight/flight mechanism

(Porges, 2015a), thus allowing for the immobilization without fear and social engagement behaviors. (p. 148)

As research conducted by psychologist Andrea Beetz and Ira Schöfmann-Crawford (2019) found, promoting human–animal interactions in prisons could facilitate improved neuroendocrine changes within those who are exposed to the animals, as “contact with dogs, particularly familiar dogs, increases the level of the hormone oxytocin and the neurotransmitter dopamine” (pp. 101–102). Studies have shown that an increase in both the neurotransmitter dopamine and the hormone oxytocin may enhance feelings of compassion, empathy, connection, and trust; furthermore, oxytocin has been shown to play an important role in interpersonal connections while diminishing anxiety and overarousal levels. When dogs are living within the incarcerated population, those who encounter the animals are therefore likely to benefit from the neurobiological impacts that human–animal interactions can generate.

While incarcerated participants care for rescue dogs, they may also enjoy positive opportunities that involve playing with the animals. In Angola, for example, PAWS participants and their dogs gather weekly in an outdoor environment to learn new training techniques taught by correctional officers who are kind and respectful, but these group settings also provide opportunities for social engagement, recreation, and play (Dateline NBC, 2019). Referring to the consequence of engaging the care and play circuitry through such interactions, psychotherapist Terry Marks-Tarlow (2012) stated, “Porges’s hierarchy of arousal and response sheds light on how the care and play circuits go hand in hand for mammals” (p. 371). Because of the continuous opportunities for eye contact, physical connection, and social engagement between the canines and incarcerated dog

trainers, the care circuitry of the human individual is stimulated, which creates a physiological platform for these play circuits to activate, and this leads to opportunities for healing and growth within the participants. Parish-Plass and Pfeiffer (2019) have supported these claims that play with animals has been found to be therapeutic in “decreasing anxiety, facilitating the therapeutic alliance, facilitating play and flexibility through neural plasticity, and increasing the ability of mentalization” (p. 165). This ability to mentalize, or understand one’s own mental state as well as the mental state of others, is correlated with a stable sense of self and can lead to improved impulse control. Enhanced self-regulation thus offers another healing opportunity derived from canine–human relationships in PDPs.

As demonstrated by these examples, the altruistic and compassionate aspects of PDP programs are multilayered and extensive. Fundamentally, the ultimate goal of PAWS, in particular, is to assist veterans with PTSD, but the consequences of the process that leads to that outcome result in stimulating, compassionate interactions for the incarcerated trainer in their relationships with their dogs, other incarcerated people in the prison (whether a participant in the program or not), and correctional officers, all while concurrently rescuing these vulnerable animals. This endorsement of implementing altruistic behavior by focusing on helping the veteran recipients of the service dog as well as other inmates in prison who are in the hospital, engaged in the death and dying process and/or suffering emotionally, is an important mechanism that supports the positive outcomes of these programs because it results in constructive neurological effects. A “consequence of the stimulation of altruistic behavior of the orbital and medial prefrontal cortex (ompfc)” is that “the ompfc is able to regulate the amygdala and other subcortical

structures allowing proximity to caretakers and loved ones to modulate our anxiety and fears” (Cozolino, 2017, as cited in Parish-Plass & Pfeiffer, 2019, p. 164). The transformational physiological impacts of engaging in compassionate and altruistic behaviors, and the resulting shifts in perspective, are an important and distinguishing aspect of PDPs. This remarkable effect may be one of the reasons for the dramatic decrease in recidivism rates for those who participate in these PDPs. Because a reduction in recidivism suggests that those released have achieved a successful integration into the greater community, this result would be considered a consummate outcome of the implementation of PDPs.

In several published articles, documentary short films, and local media-based interviews that feature participants from the PAWS program in Angola as well as many other PDPs throughout the country, the incarcerated trainers have consistently reported that, because of their involvement in the dog-training programs, they are developing a stronger sense of empowerment and self-worth (NBC News, 2019; Peltz & Gandhir, 2016; Portier, 2018; Rousseau, 2018). Furthermore, many PDP participants who have been interviewed about the impact of participating in PDPs have pointed out that they are now giving back to society in a positive way; not only have their activities within the PDPs created a renewed sense of meaning and purpose, but their newly acquired vocational skills of training dogs have also provided a segue for them to reenter society. These anecdotal self-reports, coupled with the few available qualitative studies, have collectively provided evidence supporting PDPs’ success in fostering deep psychological transformation.

Researcher's Relationship to the Topic

While I was studying Jungian psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute, my husband and I adopted Daisy Bear—the funniest and sweetest dog that I have ever met. She is a good girl/bad girl who exudes heart-opening joy and has brought multifaceted and fun-loving play into our lives (see Figure 1). As my husband and I have trained Daisy—day by day—our relationship and understanding of each other has deepened. This special connection that we have with Daisy Bear has inspired me to focus my dissertation on better understanding the human–canine bonding phenomenon and its potential for healing.

Figure 1

Daisy Bear



Note. Photographs by Catherine Smith, 2024

When I discovered that some correctional institutions offer programs in which incarcerated people live with and train dogs, I quickly became fascinated by the poetic beauty of these rehabilitative programs that promote transformational processes for all involved; metaphorically speaking, these “discarded” dogs and “forgotten” humans contribute to society in meaningful ways through PDPs. Furthermore, I am amazed by the chain reactions that ripple out from these programs, as inmates generate consequential

impacts that ease suffering within vulnerable populations in the local community from behind prison bars.

Research Problem and Question

Although PDPs are becoming increasingly popular in prisons and jails, and new programs that instruct incarcerated persons in how to train dogs continue to emerge, there is a notable lack of empirical research exploring the lived experience of incarcerated individuals who participate in these programs. Extensive research offers a wealth of information highlighting the benefits of the human–canine bond for people with PTSD and other psychological and physical conditions, but significantly fewer studies have investigated the impacts that human–animal interactions can have on the lived experience of incarcerated people, specifically.

This gap in research arises from several diverse factors, including the inherent difficulties of conducting studies within correctional facilities and the persistent public perception that prisons are designed solely to be punitive rather than rehabilitative. Such a research deficit is problematic for many reasons. Furthermore, although the current literature does demonstrate the social, physiological, behavioral, and emotional benefits of PDPs, research has yet to examine these programs through a Jungian lens to uncover the unconscious processes that lead to the consistently observed transformations in participants, as evidenced by the significant reductions in recidivism rates among PDP participants across the country (Han et al., 2023).

A conceptualization based on the ideas of depth psychologist Carl G. Jung (1875-1961) has the potential to contribute to the growing research by providing critical insights into the phenomenology of the incarcerated trainers, as well as the archetypal patterns,

symbols, themes, and motifs that are being activated within PDPs. This research of these programs—and the irrefutable positive outcomes—is intended to fuel the campaign to improve rehabilitation programming within the nation’s prison system. This qualitative research study thus employed a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology to answer the following question: What is a Jungian conceptualization of the lived experience of incarcerated trainers in PDPs based within the United States?

Chapter 2:

Literature Review

This literature review examines the multifaceted ways in which the human–canine bond has impacted humanity—historically, relationally, physiologically, psychologically, and mythically. As a foundational overview, the review first provides a chronological and detailed account of the origins of the canine species, along with the development of the human–canine bond. The historical process of interspecies co-evolution and its impacts is then examined with reference to a number of diverse and interrelated fields to illuminate the development of this complex relationship as feral wolves evolved into domesticated dogs. Next, a focus on PDPs describes the current operation of programs throughout the United States through a review of the related research. In the third and final section, a depth psychological exploration of the dog as an archetypal image, symbol, and instinctual healing force within the psyche is followed by an overview of the human–canine bond within mythology, dreams, folklore, fairy tales, and contemporary literature.

The Human–Canine Bond

Simply stated, the *human–canine bond* is described as the special relationship between a person and a dog. Although a straightforward definition, this is a complex connection that, despite extensive and ongoing research in a variety of fields, is not yet fully understood (Payne et al., 2015). Moschell Coffey, Managing Director of The Good Dog Foundation in New York City, succinctly expressed her perspective on this bond when she stated that “dogs help people heal” (TEDx Talks, 2013, 2:01). The American Veterinary Medical Association (n.d.) supported this declaration when asserting,

The human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors considered essential to the health and wellbeing of both. This bond is beneficial to the mental, physical, and social health of people and animals. (para. 2)

According to science news reporter Michael Casey (2015), scientific studies have proposed that this alliance between people and dogs has existed for thousands of years (para. 2), but the definitive starting point of the human–canine bond remains shrouded in mystery. James Serpell (2015), director of the Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, supported the determination that there is an enduring emotional bond between dogs and humans and referenced “archeological evidence” that “suggests that human emotional attachments for animals may be of considerable antiquity” (p. 2). There are, however, a number of theories that propose answers to the questions of how, why, when, and where the modern human–dog relationship developed.

Science and environment journalist Elyse DeFranco (2022) sought to better understand the ancient origins of the domesticated dog and approached this endeavor by considering the mythology and historical literature as it relates to the dog as a symbol. In her research, DeFranco found that

our [humans’] penchant for mythologizing canine companions may be just as ancient as our relationship with them, so d’Huy [a historian of the College of France] is turning to these stories in a bid to shed more light on the history of dog domestication. (para. 3)

Summarizing her findings, DeFranco stated, “The mythological travel route parallels a proposed path of dog domestication borne out by genetic and fossil evidence. ‘This was a surprise,’ [historian Julien] d’Huy says. He was fascinated that dogs and our mythology about them migrated together” (paras. 7–8).

Solving this origin mystery has captured the attention of some of the greatest academic minds. Evolutionary biologist Greger Larson, for example, has attempted to answer the questions of when and how this special interspecies friendship between dogs and humans emerged (Chinn, 2020). In particular, he has gained notoriety for his research on the origin of the domestication of wolves. In a film that featured Larson on the subject, he asserted, “The formation of a close relationship between people and wolves led to dogs because that’s what dogs are—they are an emergent property of a very close relationship between wolf populations and human populations” (Chinn, 2020, 14:41). Within this documentary, the writer/director Peter Chinn (2020) also proposed that humans encountered wolves thousands of years ago, and the resulting interaction was transformative: “Archaeological evidence shows that 40,000 years ago modern humans began moving into northern Eurasia, replacing the Neanderthals who came before them, and apparently initiating a transformation in the wolves they encountered” (14:41). Correspondingly, bioarchaeology researchers Angela Perri et al. (2021) argued that “dogs were the earliest animal domesticated, and the only species that entered into a domestic relationship with people during the Pleistocene” (para. 2). These discoveries shed light on the ancient beginnings of this interspecies relationship.

According to Jeffrey Stevens (2023), director of the Canine Cognition and Human Interaction Lab at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, “to understand the canine-human

bond, we must understand the dog's origin story," and he estimated that "dogs diverged from a common ancestor with wolves (*Canis lupus*) between 15,000 to 30,000 years ago" (p. 2). In researching the origins of canine domestication, animal behavior scientists Gwendolyn Wirobski et al. (2023) outlined two theories of how wolf domestication may have evolved. The first is

the *commensal scavenger* hypothesis (also referred to as *self-domestication* hypothesis; originally coined by Lorenz, 1950, and later elaborated by Coppinger & Coppinger, 2001) suggests that a founder group of bolder, less fearful wolves approached human encampments to scavenge left-over meat and remains from kills. Gradually, those wolves further lost their fear of humans. (p. 12)

As an alternative theory to self-domestication, Wirobski et al. stated, "The second idea which has been suggested is the *cross-species adoption* hypothesis . . . also referred to as *pet-keeping* hypothesis. . . . It relies mainly on the observation of pet keeping practices among recent hunter-gatherer societies" (p. 12). Science writer Brian Handwerk (2018) explained that this "theory argues that early humans somehow captured wolf pups, kept them as pets, and gradually domesticated them" (para. 17).

Conversely, not all experts have agreed with this idea of human-initiated domestication. Perri, for example, stated, "I don't know that many hunter gatherers would have had the time or patience to deal with a wolf pup and I don't know why they would want to" (as cited in Pallardy, 2021, para. 5). The self-domestication theory of wolves has thus become more widely accepted, in part due to the hypotheses presented in recent studies. In this more current model, wolves initiated the relationship with humans, as anthrozoologist John Bradshaw (2011) explained: "With no prior experience in

domestication, humans are unlikely to have deliberately begun the process of domesticating wolves; a much more probable scenario is that the wolves themselves started the process” (p. 46).

Naturalist Mark Derr, author of the 2011 book, *How the Dog Became the Dog: From Wolves to Our Best Friends*, has not been completely satisfied with either of these deductions (Davies, 2011). Derr summarized his ideas, which are based on recent genetic and archeological research:

Our ancestors likely followed behind wolves as they hunted for game on the trail. Wolves, in turn, learned to wait for scraps from bipedal hunters—who were far more accurate with their rudimentary weapons than the wolves were with their teeth. (as cited in Davies, 2011, para. 6)

Furthermore, Derr proposed, “The dog is an evolutionary inevitability that, as soon as wolves and humans met on the trail of big game, they started traveling together and they have been at it ever since” (as cited in Davies, 2011, 2:15). Derr believed that as these dog-like wolves began to connect with their human counterparts, they also became more isolated from the untamed wolf populations. He explained,

What I am suggesting is that the dog emerged from a group of wolves, who were basically dog-like—who were sociable to humans, who would interact with them, hunt with them, travel with them and ultimately began to reproduce in their presence. (Davies, 2011, 4:10)

As this detached pack naturally started to in-breed, leading to genetic mutations, these dog-like wolves ultimately evolved into the domesticated canines that are prevalent in modern times.

In 2017, an interdisciplinary team of scientists published a breakthrough study, and their findings identified the markers for the gene mutation that is believed to account for canines' friendliness, capacity for social bonding, and desire to interact with humans, which are appealing characteristics of modern-day domesticated dogs (vonHoldt, Shuldiner, Koch, et al., 2017). In an article about this discovery, vonHoldt, the team's lead researcher, stated, "These structural variants could explain a huge shift in a behavioral profile—that you go from being a wolf-like, aloof creature, to something that's obsessed with a human" (as cited in Rogers, 2017, Doggie DNA section, para. 6). An additional notable finding of the study showed that there are "commonalities in the genetic architecture of Williams-Beuren syndrome and canine tameness" (Makhijani, 2017, para. 5). In a news release, vonHoldt explained, "It was the remarkable similarity between the behavioral presentation of Williams-Beuren syndrome and the friendliness of domesticated dogs that suggested to us that there may be similarities in the genetic architecture of the two phenotypes" (as cited in Makhijani, 2017, para. 4). Typically, humans diagnosed with Williams-Beuren syndrome (WBS) exhibit "a variety of symptoms that include intense and indiscriminate sociability" (Gorman, 2017, para. 4) or "an overly friendly, affectionate, engaging, and socially disinhibited personality" (Järvinen et al., 2013, "Gregarious personality" section, para. 1). Correspondingly, a 2017 study demonstrated that "structural variants in *GTF21* and *GTF21RD1*, genes previously implicated in the behavioral phenotype of patients with WBS and contained within the WBS locus, contribute to extreme sociability in dogs" (vonHoldt, Shuldiner, Koch, et al., 2017, p. 1).

As a result of the findings that some wolves inherited heightened sociability, new theories of how and why dog domestication may have occurred have been postulated. The consequences of these genetic mutations among some wolves were summarized as “providing them new benefits, like the ability to scavenge for food near human civilizations, helping them survive and reproduce” (vonHoldt, Shuliner, & Udell, 2017, para. 3). Relatedly, journalist Pooja Makhijani (2017) has also suggested,

Unlike previous research which suggests that, during the process of domestication, dogs were selected for a set of cognitive abilities, particularly an ability to discern gesture and voice, vonHoldt and Shuldiner’s research posits that dogs were instead selected for their tendency to seek human companionship. (Survival of the Friendliest section, para. 2)

Many scientists have therefore concluded that the dog’s predisposition toward friendliness has been a key factor in the canine species’ evolutionary success. vonHoldt, Shuldiner, and Udell (2017) deduced that “many of their offspring would also have inherited these mutations, possibly increasing their friendliness towards humans until the day that humans began keeping these early dogs as pets” (para. 3).

Duke University has been studying the dog’s propensity toward friendliness and its impacts on the human–canine bond. According to Brian Hare, founder of the Canine Cognition Center at Duke University, who has lectured extensively as an expert on this topic,

the answer to their evolution and their success is found in friendliness. “Dogs have remarkable social genius,” Hare said, they are able to understand communicative gestures and in return communicate with humans in a way that not

even one of our closest genetic relatives, the Bonobo, can. (Livingston, 2021, para. 5)

In their book *Survival of the Friendliest*, Hare and science writer Vanessa Woods (2020b) argued that this same trait of friendliness, which is so prevalent in the domesticated dog, is what has also distinguished *Homo sapiens* from other species and has contributed to human survival as well. Hare and Woods defined friendliness as a capacity for a particular form of cooperative communication that enables organisms to work together toward a common goal. This special interaction, which is evident in everyday exchanges between people, is also present within the human–canine relationship. A typical example of this would be when a dog seeks help from a human when attempting to solve a problem, such as looking for a lost ball. Handwerk (2018) further discussed this phenomenon: “While dogs and children react to the same social cues, dogs were actually better at determining which actions were strictly necessary to solve a problem, like retrieving food from a container, and ignoring extraneous ‘bad advice’” (para. 35). Moreover, Hare and Woods (2020a) argued that both *Homo sapiens* and canines have experienced the same process of self-domestication, which is evolutionarily intertwined with this propensity toward friendliness, and that this unique behavior trait evolved through a process of self-domestication. Succinctly, Hare and Woods asserted, “Domestication over the generations does not, as was once thought, decrease intelligence; it increases friendliness” (para. 11).

Domestication syndrome was coined to describe the physical and physiological changes that result within a species during this evolutionary process, and this theory has been widely accepted by scientists as an important contributing factor in the development

of the human–canine bond (Hare & Woods, 2020a). According to Hare and Woods (2020a), research of this phenomenon has revealed distinguishing characteristics:

This pattern of changes—called the domestication syndrome—can show up in the shape of the face, the size of the teeth, and the pigmentation of different body parts or hair, and it can include changes to hormones, reproductive cycles, and the nervous system. (para. 7)

One of the most notable discoveries within these studies was that the self-domestication syndrome “can increase a species’ ability to coordinate and communicate with others” (para. 12), a critical component of the “survival of the friendliest” (p. 1) theory, proposed by the authors, and the same mechanism within the human–canine bond that led untamed wolves to become domesticated dogs.

In a similar approach, *the selection for neoteny* is a proposed model suggesting that juvenile features (i.e., characteristics that activate in others the desire to nurture and take care of them) in a human or animal are naturally selected over time, which results in a more evolutionarily robust species, as animal ecologist Allan Beck (2014) explained: “The idea that juvenile features encourage compassion and discourage aggression or predation may have its own evolutionary basis” (p. 33). The development of features that activate a desire to nurture and the extraordinary capacity of the canine to understand human gestures and use eye contact as a means to communicate with people (which mimics children’s development as they learn language and begin to engage socially) are not the only noteworthy findings within the human–canine bond. Evan MacLean, founder and Director of the Arizona Canine Cognition Center, and Hare (2015) speculated that

endearing canine behaviors such as eye gazing actually activate the human bonding and attachment system. They reported that their

findings suggest not only an interspecies effect of oxytocin, but also the exciting possibility of a feedback loop—that is, shifts in oxytocin concentration in a dog might elicit similar changes in a human and vice versa—just as is seen when a mother bonds with her infant. (p. 281)

Informally known as the “love hormone,” this organic biological substance has been described as “a hormone that’s produced in the hypothalamus and released into the bloodstream by the pituitary gland . . . [and], like endorphins or serotonin, . . . a type of hormone in your body that promotes positive feelings” (LeWine , 2023, para. 1). When dogs activate this oxytocin feedback loop in humans, both parties experience an increase in the hormone secretion, which, in turn, contributes to mutual feelings of well-being (MacLean & Hare, 2015).

Furthermore, Bowlby’s attachment theory has been applied to the human–canine bond to explain the psychological implications of these physiological mechanisms associated with the oxytocin feedback loop between dog and human. Describing an “attachment bond” as “a close, emotional relationship between two individuals,” veterinary scientists Elyssa Payne et al. (2015, p. 72) discussed some findings of this research: “The dog–human dyad is believed to involve attachment bonds similar to those that characterize human caregiver–infant relationships. Dogs have shown behaviors indicative of an attachment relationship, defined according to Bowlby” (p. 72). Some scholars have taken this idea a step further and identified the companion animal within the human–canine relationship as a transitional object, a concept that has been

borrowed from Donald W. Winnicott, a pioneering psychoanalyst in the fields of object relations theory and developmental psychology. Jennifer Putney (2013), a leader in behavioral health education and research, likewise explored the human–animal bond through a relational ecology lens, bridging numerous frameworks such as the growth task model of development, object relations, liminality, and deep ecology. According to Putney, the human–animal relationship is especially important while “navigating transitions and losses, which can be described as liminal periods” (p. 64) in one’s lifespan. Putney defined this liminal period as “a gap, a crack, a transition, or an in between time when one is in a psychosocial space that consists of loss, tension, and presence on a threshold between here and there” (p. 64). She thus argued that from an object relations perspective, companion animals fulfill the role of attachment figures.

MacGregor (2020) explored new research currently underway at several prominent universities that identifies the ways the canine is a mirror for humankind. The hinging premise was that, by studying relationships with dogs, humankind can be better understood. Because of identical correlations between *Homo sapiens* and canines, Hare and Woods (2020b) were convinced that, by studying dogs’ cognition, humans could actually better understand their own species. MacGregor (2020) agreed when he stated, “It turns out studying dogs to find out how they learn can teach you and me what it means to be human” (para. 6). Pointing to efforts to better understand the intricacies of trust, for example, MacGregor cited Duke University researchers who have raised puppies and observed the way these dogs form bonds to identify more effective methods for nurturing, socializing, and parenting human children. Moreover, he referred to ongoing work at

Duke University and Yale University in the field of canine cognition research that has also answered questions about attachment as it relates to the human–canine bond.

In another approach, specialists in animal-assisted mental health interventions Ann Howie et al. (2019) explored the “three primary, respected theories that help to explain the strong transformative qualities of human–canine bond: biophilia, social support, and attachment” (p. 303). The authors argued that although each of these three perspectives involves different but crucial aspects of the bond that develops between human and dog, they also work together complementarily to contribute to a more complete understanding of this bonding behavior. Beetz and Schöfmann-Crawford (2019) proposed similar theories that support the healing mechanisms in the human–canine bond, which include biophilia, the experiential versus verbal symbolic system, motivation, activation of the oxytocin system, social support and caregiving, and distraction and mindfulness. Furthermore, Howie et al. (2019) shared views with the German biologist Jakob von Uexküll, who coined the term *unwelt* and defined this as the “phenomenal world or the self-world of the animal” (p. 302), which develops in response to environmental factors the animal encounters. This theory suggests that the dog’s ability to understand human emotions and words and “respond positively to our attention” are the key mechanisms that generate the deep emotional connections that exist between the two within the human–canine bond (p. 302).

Relatedly, current ideas in ecopsychology have offered a corresponding perspective on the relationship between humanity and the natural world by focusing on the importance of nurturing a healthy relationship with the Earth and the animals who inhabit it as an essential factor in developing emotional, physical, and spiritual health and

well-being (Roszak et al., 1995). Taking a depth psychological approach, founder of archetypal psychology James Hillman (2008) used the metaphor of the *dog* to address the complex challenges facing modern society to heal the human relationship with the earth:

Nature is in the doghouse, an outcast from our corporate, capitalist, consumerized, commodified cosmos, despite Al Gore, the Sierra Club, Earth Island, the Green movement. . . . In response to this hard fact of rejection of nature—trees, soils, oceans, rivers, creatures—has come a soft idealization and sentimentalism to retrieve the dog and take it back into the family lap. (p. 150)

In other words, scholars in the fields of depth psychology and ecopsychology have argued that humanity cannot truly live a balanced, healthy, and happy existence while the natural world is degenerating and plummeting toward an ecological crisis.

The recognition of the undeniable connection between the outer and inner worlds has always been acknowledged in the field of depth psychology, and there is support for constructing a theoretical perspective that incorporates ecological concerns within a psychological framework (Hillman, 1995). Hillman (1995) elaborated on this concept:

The idea that depth psychology merges with ecology translates to mean that to understand the ills of the soul today we turn to the ills of the world, its suffering. . . . Treatment of the inner requires attention to the outer. . . . Besides entering the world with its psychological eye, it would let the world enter its province, admitting that airs, waters, and places play as large a role in the problems psychology faces as do moods, relationships, and memories. (pp. xxi–xxii)

Ecopsychologists Mary-Jayne Rust and David Key (2009) agreed with this perspective when they described ecotherapy as a field that “explores our human relationship with the

rest of nature in psychological terms” (para. 3). Depth psychology and ecopsychology thus align when psychological approaches expand beyond the walls of the clinical office and reach into the natural world, acknowledging an ecological consciousness and its interplay within the personal and collective.

Innovative applications of ecopsychology are also being implemented within the walls of prison facilities as healing mechanisms. For example, environmental social science researcher David Kidner (2007) referred to Peter Kahn’s review of studies, which found that even viewing “natural landscapes promote a sense of physiological well-being; that prison inmates whose cells looked out onto nearby farmlands and forests needed less healthcare services than incarcerated people whose cells looked out onto the prison yard” (p. 129), demonstrating that increased connections with nature can lead to healing effects for those living in such facilities. This observation supports the anecdotal findings that PDPs initiated in penal environments are producing consistently successful outcomes, in part because of the healing benefits of the natural world and the connections formed between incarcerated people and dogs.

The psychological dangers and negative outcomes of living in a state of disconnection with the natural world have also been explored within both depth psychology and ecopsychology. Theodore Roszak (1995), the founder of ecopsychology, expanded on this theoretical framework:

There’s a cliché that runs through the environmental movement—including ecopsychology—that has to do with people being “alienated” from nature. But the alienation is usually treated as a subtle, long-term, psychological process—which

overlooks the fact that simple coercion has been very effective in divorcing some people from nature. (para. 6)

This assertion is perceptively relevant when considering the implications for incarcerated individuals, an unambiguously overlooked population within society, who are in a setting where nature is, for the most part, forcibly removed. PDPs are unique programs that connect incarcerated people with nature by integrating dogs into the prison system.

Prison Dog-Training Programs

Centuries ago, John Locke (1632–1704) “advocated the keeping of pets to encourage children to develop empathy and a sense of responsibility for others” (Serpell, 2015, p. 3), and therefore, the English philosopher and physician is recognized as the originator of the practice of using animals in a therapeutic capacity. Gennifer Furst (2019), who published the first timeline of the evolution of the therapeutic use of the human–canine bond within the context of correctional settings in the United States, maintained that the “first documented example of human-animal interaction in a carceral facility actually dates back to America’s first modern prison—Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, opened in 1829” (p. 22). Moreover, Furst also related socially critical novelist Charles Dickens’s impressions after touring this prison: “In this oppressive facility, Dickens described coming upon a cell with ‘one man who was allowed, as an indulgence, to keep rabbits’” (p. 22). Furst also identified other similar programs within the United States: “Formal programs in which incarcerated people worked with animals date back to the prison farms of the late 1800s,” and “the history of sanctioned therapeutic animal programs in carceral facilities . . . started with the maximum-security psychiatric patients at Lima State Hospital in Ohio” (p. 22). Over a century later, the

“first official prison DTP [dog training program] was implemented by Sister Pauline Quinn in 1981 at the Washington Corrections Center for Women, a maximum-security prison in Tacoma, Washington” (p. 22). Thus, since 1829, dogs and inmates have been partnering in penal settings within the United States.

Veterinarian Earl O. Strimble (2003) described a wide range of benefits that these PDPs generate when implemented within correctional facilities: psychological rehabilitation of those participating in the program, overarching positive change in the environment of the prison, life-enhancing skills (e.g., vocational opportunities) for incarcerated people upon release, improved outcomes for rescued animals and those the animals are trained to assist, and a reduction in recidivism (which contributes to the high costs of operating prisons). Because of these positive results, Strimble asserted that these programs should be further developed and expanded into other facilities and that state and federal funding should be applied toward studying these programs to address the limited scientific research on their outcomes.

Relatedly, psychology scholar Kaitlyn Swyers (2014) identified the untapped opportunities of PDPs to improve the widespread mental health crisis that can be traced back to the mass deinstitutionalization that occurred in the mid-20th century, when mental hospitals were closed and the former patients were then criminalized. She claimed, “These factors amongst many others have led to prisons ultimately becoming the new mental health system” (p. 3). Although incarcerated people have often reported symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and stress, Swyers argued that many mental health diagnoses within penal institutions remain undocumented and unacknowledged. Swyers further suggested that PDPs are a cost-effective intervention for improving the mental

health of incarcerated people but acknowledged that empirical research on the effectiveness of prison animal programs is limited. The author also stated that anecdotal reports on the outcomes of these programs do exist and include “lower recidivism rates, increased self-esteem, trust and self-confidence, decreased loneliness, and gaining marketable skills and education” (p. 8). To substantiate these claims, Swyers detailed current research findings from the limited empirical studies available to demonstrate the positive impacts of PDP participation on recidivism, disciplinary misconduct, and emotional, psychological, and socio-behavioral conduct.

Strimple (2003) identified the tension between a rehabilitative versus punitive approach to corrections and argued that applying a punitive approach to corrections contributes to the lack of research in rehabilitation prison programs. Swyers (2014) agreed with these claims and added that, as prisons have shifted from rehabilitative to punitive institutions, the animal-assisted interventions therein became community service-oriented rather than intended to promote the prisoners’ rehabilitation. Writer Charles Larson (2016) speculated about the cultural motivations driving the American shift to punitive incarceration: “Forgiveness is a hard sell for most people in the United States, perhaps for most people in the West. Our trigger response is for vengeance, for punishment—getting even with those who harmed us” (para. 9). Nevertheless, research of both approaches in prison settings have found that punitive methods are less effective as “other countries and institutions with the best outcomes emphasize empathy, forgiveness, and community support,” including “Nordic countries that have the lowest recidivism rates in the world” (Jalongo, 2019a, p. 11). Because PDPs innately employ positivity,

they lead to positive outcomes and even generate a more optimistic association of prisons and incarcerated people within the communities in which the institutions are located.

Not all PDPs are the same, however. Han et al. (2018) argued that a variety of factors have impacted the research and development of best practices and standardization within PDPs. One of the main challenges has been inconsistencies in the structures of these programs because they are all uniquely designed and implemented by individual facilities to achieve specific applications, methods, and objectives. Han et al. have thus advocated for the development of standard guidelines for PDPs to ensure their safe and successful implementation into correctional institutions for both the dogs and the incarcerated trainers. Additionally, Han et al. reported that the number of PDPs across the United States is unknown because there are no existing requirements for registering these programs. They also acknowledged that the challenges associated with the lack of sufficient research are further complicated by each prison's need to develop their own unique protocols and methodologies to meet their specific objectives. Han et al. did, however, identify three consistent overarching program designs across the United States: basic obedience training, socialization, and service dog training.

A key component of the success of the PDPs is directly related to the connection that is forged between the dogs and those who are incarcerated (Larkin, 2018). To better understand the consequences of this relationship, the research must first consider the self-identity of the inmate as they are acclimating to living within the prison setting. To that end, Yvonne Jewkes (2005), an expert in criminology, sought to "explore further some of the 'micro-aspects' of social life within a wider context of the organizational and institutional structures of prison" (p. 366). She proposed, for example, that receiving a

life sentence “disrupts the lifecourse and forcibly suspends future expectations” (p. 366). This event ultimately impacts the sense of self (i.e., self-identity) and relationships with others, and the loss of control generates a liminal state that may become chronic within the prison setting. In fact, Jewkes suggested that the inmate’s internal reaction to this occurrence can mirror that of receiving a diagnosis of a chronic illness.

Within this interpretation, the process of acclimating to incarceration is compared to a rite of passage because of the undeniable ways it affects the social aspects of experience and influences the individual’s sense of meaning in life (Jewkes, 2005, p. 366). Relatedly, Jewkes (2005) cited ethnographer and folklorist Arnold van Gennep, who was known for his observations on cultural rites of passage:

Van Gennep uses the terms *separation, liminality and reintegration* to denote the stages through which a lifecourse transition is made. In other words, in order to change status, . . . the individual must be separated from their previous position within the social structure; they must then occupy a liminal space which disengages them from both their past and future roles, before finally being incorporated into a new, relatively stable and well-defined position in society. (p. 374)

Moreover, Jewkes deduced that “uncertainty, vulnerability, chaos, and danger” are found in liminal spaces, and that the presence of these characteristics, along with the “pain and humiliation” of the experience, provide an opportunity for change and “new possibilities” (p. 375).

In other words, because of the passage through liminal space, Jewkes (2005) stated that prisoners are forced to “reconstruct their narratives of self” (p. 375). The

author also examined the “creation of ‘redemptive narratives’ strategies of resistance and empowerment that allow the incarcerated person to form entirely new, ‘unspoiled’ identities independent of their past or present circumstances” (pp. 375–376). In conclusion, Jewkes argued, “It is only by becoming liminal that individuals are able to construct new narratives of self” (p. 376) and added that these states are “transformative” (p. 376) in nature. Engagement in PDPs, which opens opportunities for incarcerated trainers to transform their self-identity within the prison setting, may further promote this psychological process. To build on this line of research, this study uses Jungian analysis to explore the underlying processes of transformation that are leading to the reduction in recidivism and these new narratives of self that are constructed by the dog trainers in PDPs.

The Archetypal Human–Canine Bond in Myth, Dream, Literature, and Depth Psychology

Jung (1948/1969a) significantly influenced the field of psychology when he introduced the novel concept of the collective unconscious, a layer of the psyche that is shared by all and exists beneath the personal unconscious. Jung considered the collective unconscious as consisting of both inborn natural instincts and universal patterns and forms called *archetypes* (pp. 133–138). He described these archetypes as “typical modes of apprehension” and emphasized that “*wherever we meet with uniform and regularly recurring modes of apprehension we are dealing with an archetype, no matter whether its mythological character is recognized or not*” (pp. 137–138). Essentially, he stated that archetypal forms guide thought patterns from deep within the psyche beneath conscious awareness.

To further distinguish between these two unique components of the collective unconscious (i.e., instincts and archetypes), Jung (1948/1969a) described instincts as “*typical modes of action*” and added, “*Wherever we meet with uniformity and regularly recurring modes of action and reaction we are dealing with instinct, no matter whether it is associated with a conscious motive or not*” (p. 135). Furthermore, when expounding on the nuanced relationship existing between the archetypes and instincts, he stated,

In my view it is impossible to say which comes first—apprehension of the situation, or the impulse to act. It seems to me that both are aspects of the same vital activity, which we have to think of as two distinct processes simply for the purpose of better understanding. (p. 138)

In essence, Jung proposed that the distinction between these two inborn properties is that the instincts are typical modes of *action*, whereas the archetypes are typical modes of *apprehension*, but at the same time, they embody different aspects of the totality of the collective unconscious.

In his book *Cosmos and Psyche*, cultural historian and astrologer Richard Tarnas (2006) explored archetypal forces in relationship to both the individual human psyche and civilization overall when he described them as “innate symbolic forms and psychological dispositions that unconsciously structure and impel human behavior and experience at both the personal and collective level” (p. 57). Tarnas then more definitively explained that archetypes are “self-portraits of the instincts and render human experience meaningful according to certain timeless and universal patterns or forms” (p. 57). Similarly, Jungian analyst and theorist Marie-Louise von Franz (2012/2023) adeptly offered a succinct, descriptive summary to clarify this concept of the archetypes:

“An archetypal image is not to be thought of as merely a static image, for it is always at the same time a complete typical process including other images in a specific way” (p. 3). Making the important distinction that the archetypal image is dynamic and alive, von Franz stated, “Every archetype is a relatively closed energetic system, the energetic stream of which runs through all aspects of the collective unconscious” (p. 3). She explained further that an archetype is “a specific psychic impulse, producing its effect like a single ray of radiation, and at the same time a whole magnetic field expanding in all directions” (p. 3). In conclusion, von Franz emphasized the collective element of the archetypes and underlined their interconnectedness when she stated, “The stream of psychic energy of a ‘system,’ an archetype, actually runs through all other archetypes as well” (p. 3). The relationship between the instincts and archetypal patterns in the collective unconscious as well as their interplay with the individual and society are therefore acknowledged as vitally important within a depth psychological framework when seeking to understand the psychology of an individual or group.

In a more thorough analysis, Jung (1928/1969) distinguished between a symbol and sign when he ascertained that a symbol has a transformational impact on the psyche, whereas a sign has a rather superficial effect (p. 45). He also associated the symbol with the libido, which, along with its numinosity, fuels the power to transform: “I have called a symbol that converts energy a ‘libido analogue.’ By this I mean an idea that can give equivalent expression to the libido and canalize it into a form different from the original one” (p. 48).

Jung (1948/1969a) further commented on the importance of the symbol through the concept of the primordial image: “The primordial image might suitably be described

as the *instinct's perception of itself*, or as the self-portrait of the instinct, in exactly the same way as consciousness is an inward perception of the objective life-process" (pp. 136–137). In an exploration of this special relationship, He addressed this connection between the personal and the archetypal by explaining that there are layers within the unconscious, and the top layer holds repressed personal material that could be conscious but is not. About the latter, Jung stated, "The rationally explicable unconscious, which consists of material that has been made unconscious artificially, as it were, is only a top layer, and . . . underneath is an absolute unconscious which has nothing to do with our personal experience" (p. 148). He elaborated on the "absolute unconscious," which "would then be a psychic activity which goes on independently of the conscious mind and is not dependent even on the upper layers of the unconscious, untouched—and perhaps untouchable—by personal experience" (p. 148); thus, according to Jung, the archetypal and instinctual layers of the collective unconscious will process through patterns that cannot be controlled by a person or the ego.

Psychiatrist and Jungian analyst Eleanora Woloy (2013) further clarified these observations by reiterating Jung's declaration that as "organizing principles," archetypes must "have a numinous effect, that is, a richness and fullness of meaning that is felt in the images" (p. 23), in order to bring about transformation in the psyche. According to Woloy, Jung defined *numinosity* as a characteristic that "provides a shift, or change, in psychic energy [libido] so that new meaning can come into consciousness" (p. 24) and thus brings about change.

Within this framework, Jung (1952/1967b) wrote about the symbolic meaning of certain animals, including dogs, as theriomorphic (having an animal form) symbols in

dreams. Jungian psychology holds that when analyzing dreams, “the whole drama takes place in the individual’s own psyche” (p. 328). This means that the people and places symbolized in a dream represent different aspects of the dreamer, and thus, “the imagos are activated and varied in every possible manner by an energy which likewise pertains to the individual; it derives from the sphere of instinct and expresses itself as instinctually” (p. 328). Jung specifically discussed dog dream images when he stated,

This dynamism is represented in dreams by theriomorphic symbols. All the lions, bulls, dogs, and snakes that populate our dreams represent an undifferentiated and as yet untamed libido, which at the same time forms part of the human personality and can therefore fittingly be described as the *anthropoid psyche*. (p. 328)

Jung therefore surmised that particular symbols, including those of animals, are associated with potentialities and life force that have yet to be realized consciously and integrated into the personality. These undifferentiated instincts are often discovered through the theriomorphic dream images that can then be engaged through a symbolic inner process such as active imagination—a cornerstone of depth psychology.

Correspondingly, Jungian analyst and theorist Barbara Hannah (2006) asserted that the dog as a dream image may express itself within the following continuum of positive or negative aspects when it emerges into consciousness:

1. a symbol of the loyal friend and its opposite, the betrayer; 2. a symbol of the guide and the hunter; 3. a symbol of the watchdog and its opposite, the thief; 4. a symbol of healer versus the dog as the devourer of corpses. (p. 57)

To illustrate this idea, Hannah categorized the symbolic nature of the canine by providing discourses on these four aspects of the archetypal patterns associated with the dog and

highlighted the tension of the opposites within each polarity. In other words, the dog as an archetypal image is an innate pattern that is engaged with and touching all the other archetypes while simultaneously remaining unique in its particular essence.

In an analysis of this depth psychological approach in the foreword to Hannah's (2006) *The Archetypal Symbolism of Animals*, series editor Emmanuel Kennedy-Xypolitas (2006) pointed out that Hannah examined "both the positive and negative sides of these animals as archetypal images and emphasizes that we have the choice of experiencing either side of the archetype" (pp. viii–ix). Subsequently, Kennedy-Xypolitas conceptualized an even deeper clarification of Hannah's argument: "In the light of consciousness, archetypal images of animals are positive and helpful, and how our animal nature can become the psychic source of renewal and natural wholeness" (p. ix). This positive image is accompanied by Kennedy-Xypolitas's warning that "if allowed to go off on their own into the unconscious, then the archetypal images—and forces—of animals become negative and destructive, bringing chaos and war" (p. ix). From this perspective, the dog as an archetypal image is therefore not a simplistic, one-dimensional symbol; rather, the canine's expression and particular meaning must be experienced and approached uniquely, because this meaning is based on the individual psychology of the dreamer, which will determine the specific aspect of the dog that is constellated and awakened within the psyche.

Relatedly, in his book, *Animal Presences*, Hillman (2008) linked the instincts and archetypes of the collective unconscious with human behavior and psychology: "Each kind of animal backs a style of human behavior," and instinctually, they "live in the human psyche transmitting behavior patterns" (p. 144). Kennedy-Xypolitas (2006)

supported Hillman's assertion and argued, "The study of the symbolism of animals is indeed a great need of our age, for—broadly speaking—animals represent [various aspects of] instincts, and our time is notoriously badly divorced from its instincts" (p. vii), an observation alluding to the principle that connecting with animals and nature facilitates integration and expression of the instinctual elements that reside deep in the collective unconscious.

Hannah (2006) fostered these ideas and linked the role the instincts and archetypes play in the individuation process when stating,

We could say that all instincts serve the process of individuation in some form or other, that this goal is common to them all, and that their negative aspects are only constellated when we are not serving this goal ourselves. (p. 123)

Kennedy-Xypolitas (2006) alluded to this innate connection of animals with the archetypal realm when he emphasized "the importance of being on good terms with the animal within us" (p. ix), and added, "Animals live much more in contact with a 'secret' order within nature itself and—far more than man—live closely connected with the 'absolute knowledge' of the unconscious" (p. viii). Furthermore, he reinforced this idea when arguing that "Jung felt that the animal was sublime, that it was indeed the 'divine' side of the human psyche" (p. viii). Jung (2002) himself confirmed this sentiment: "Although I admired science in the conventional way, I also saw it giving rise to alienation and aberration from God's world, as leading to degeneration which animals were not capable of. Animals were dear and faithful, unchanging, and trustworthy" (p. 30). Jung thus affirmed the unadulterated, instinctual nature of animals that allows them to remain close to the unconscious. Additionally, the instinctual and archetypal

bonds between humans and canines are deeply rooted within the collective unconscious, evidenced through the recurring motifs of dogs in myths, fairy tales, dreams, and other imaginings.

Since ancient times, beliefs about mythology related to dogs have often been positively associated with restorative powers (Stuckey, 2006). Ilse Fuhr, a specialist in Mesopotamian iconography, explained that “healers might have used body parts of dogs in their treatments” (as cited in Stuckey, 2006, p. 1). Hannah’s (2006) recitation of a popular French proverb, “The tongue of a dog can be used as medicine” (p. 86), emphasized that, throughout antiquity, much of the healing skills of the canine were associated with the lick of the animal’s tongue. Hannah also captured this curative theme by stating, “It’s clear that if healing is represented by a dog [in a dream], it would mean that we must look for a cure in a humble place, as if we actually submitted ourselves to being licked by a dog” (p. 87). This sentiment ties together the symbolic nuances of the dog as healer as well as the type of healing with which the dog is connected.

With a focus on the art and culture of the Ancient Near East, archeologist Tallay Ornan (2004) identified evidence that this interpretation of the dog’s healing lick existed in ancient Mesopotamia and was even connected with worship of the healing goddess Gula:

When depicted non-anthropomorphically, Gula was replaced by the image of a dog, which was thus transformed from being an attribute—an object or animal that accompanies a deity—to being a divine symbol—an object or animal that substitutes for a human-shaped deity. (p. 20)

Encyclopedist Joshua J. Mark (2017b) explained that Gula was “the Sumerian goddess of healing and patroness of doctors, healing arts, and medical practices . . . [and] is referenced as a great goddess of health and well-being” (para. 1). Furthermore, Gula was also considered a creator goddess, as “after the Great Flood . . . is said to have breathed life into the new creatures made by the gods to animate them . . . [and] through this act, and her care for humans afterwards, she was considered a kind of Mother Goddess” (para. 23). This complex deity, Gula, powerfully held the tension of the opposites within her symbolism, acting as a healer while also being known to cause harm. As Mark stated, this “goddess is almost as frequently invoked in curses as she is in healing. She was thought to be able to bring earthquakes and storms when she was angered” (para. 19). Gula is thus an example of the dual nature of light and dark comingling in an archetypal form.

According to Ornan (2004), “people thought to appease . . . [Gula] through worship at her temples where dogs roamed freely about and were well cared for as her sacred companions” (para. 21). Classical studies scholar Stephan Bertman (2005) expanded on this supposition about Gula: “Her sacred animal was the dog and ceramic models of dogs were dedicated to her at her sanctuaries by those who had been blessed by her tender mercies” (p. 119). Ornan (2004) proposed that, within this culture’s worship, an artistic portrayal of the dog “functions as a divine symbol” (p. 14), and Mark (2017a) documented the discovery of a related well-known artifact: “The famous Nimrud Dogs, ceramic statuettes found in the 1950’s at the city of Nimrud, are among the best-known examples of amuletic figures dedicated to Gula” (para. 22). These five figurines were excavated within an archeological dig at the site of this ancient Mesopotamian city.

Ornan (2004) speculated that the cult of Gula is likely the predecessor to traditional Greek beliefs related to the worship of the gods Apollo and Asclepius, who were also associated with the dog's divine role and restorative powers (p. 18). Hannah (2006) acknowledged that the "most famous example is undoubtedly the cult of Asclepius" (p. 95). Specifically, the temples associated with Asclepius and his father Apollo were known to house licking dogs who acted as healers, but Ornan (2004) argued, "It is possible that the allusions to dogs in the cult of Asklepios originated in the worship of [Gula] the Mesopotamian goddess of healing" (p. 18). Corroborating details about Gula's roots, sourced from another academic scholar, were shared by Ornan:

B. Halpern has even suggested that the cult of Gula was transmitted via the coastal city of Ashkelon, where a huge fifth-century BCE dog cemetery was uncovered, and that the very name of the Greek god derives from the name of that city. (p. 18)

In his research, Mark (2017b) discovered that Gula was also associated with an even more ancient divine predecessor, "a Sumerian deity known as Bau (or Baba), goddess of dogs" and that "people noticed that when dogs licked their sores, they seemed to heal faster. . . . Dogs became associated with healing and Bau transformed into a healing deity" (para. 4). This discovery supports the Jungian assertion that the collective unconscious consists of archetypal patterns and forms that promote instinctual reactions. Jung (1948/1969a) explained, "Just as it may be asked whether man possesses many instincts or only a few, so we must also raise the still unbroached question of whether he possesses many or a few primordial forms, or archetypes, of psychic reaction" (p. 135).

Because they are universal in nature, these primordial images—such as the healing dog motif—are identified throughout human history.

Other unearthed early effigies of dogs that appear to be licking are assumed to be associated with healing practices, as Jarrett Lobell (2018), editor of *Archeology Magazine*, published by the Archeological Institute of America, described one such discovery: “The dog is depicted with its tongue protruding—either panting, or, says Adams, perhaps more likely, licking. . . . Representations of licking dogs are very rare and they are often associated with healing” (para. 2). In fact, this widespread association of dogs as healers has been found within many countries’ cultures, including Bohemia, France, Jamaica, Portugal, and Scotland (Hannah, 2006, p. 86).

According to Hannah (2006), Jung subscribed to the positive power of the canine’s licking behavior: “Jung usually takes spittle as ‘soul substance,’ a psychic substance, or essence. Therefore, we might say that the dog really massages us with the essence of its soul when it licks us” (p. 87). Ornan (2004) built upon this “attribution of the dog to a healing goddess” within a scientific framework when he explained that “the saliva of canines, like that of other mammals, has medicinal properties which work like antibiotics” (p. 18). Clarifying the significance of this medicinal discovery, she wrote, “Since the dog was a domesticated animal especially close to man, this trait was probably recognized very early on, and the animal was thus included in the worship of various healing deities” (p. 18).

This perspective is complemented with additional mythic context provided by Hillman’s (2008) focus on the archaic correlation between the canine and healing, because the dog was considered “sacred to Asclepius, the healer who worked the line

between life and death” (p. 159). Further, in his studies on this figure in ancient Greece, Hillman found that in “temples of healing, to see or be touched in a dream by a dog was to be healed. The dog was the god in animal form” (p. 159). Importantly, Hannah (2006) emphasized the mythic significance of this connection between the “healing dog” and the wounded healer archetype: “Asclepius—educated by the famous centaur, Chiron—is the legendary god of medicine, and with him his father’s fierce wolf becomes the healing dog” (p. 85). This assertion demonstrates the connection between the integration of shadow elements symbolized by the imagery of the fierce wolf and the healing dog residing together within the wounded healer motif.

Significantly, Chiron has been considered a symbol of the wounded healer archetype (Daneault, 2008). Although physician Serge Daneault (2008) provided a modern conceptualization of the wounded healer archetype and affirmed that the “notion of the wounded healer dates back to antiquity [and] Plato, the father of Western philosophy” (p. 1218), he attributed the identification of this concept and its introduction into modern psychology to Jung, who, in 1951, expressed the belief that “disease of the soul could be the best possible form of training for a healer” (p. 1219). Daneault provided additional details about the origins of Chiron’s healing capacity: “The Greek gods Apollo and Artemis taught medicine to Chiron”; however, “Chiron was wounded by an arrow from Heracles’ bow. He did not die (because gods are immortal) . . . [but] instead . . . suffered excruciating pain for the rest of his eternal days” (pp. 1218–1219). According to the mythology, it was because of his grievous wound that Chiron became known as a legendary healer in ancient Greece” (p. 1219).

Chiron eventually adopted an orphaned child, Esculapius (the Roman counterpart to Asclepius), who became his apprentice, and then “taught him everything he knew about the healing arts. It was thus that Esculapius became one of the two founding fathers of Western medicine” (Daneault, 2008, p. 1219). Varying mythological versions have been recorded regarding the early days of Asclepius and his pivotal encounters with canines. Mark Cartwright (2013), a historian, shared a unique account of his origins:

Asclepius (or Asklepios) was a demigod hero as he was the son of divine Apollo, and his mother was the mortal Koronis from Thessaly, . . . In some accounts, Koronis abandoned her child near Epidaurus in shame for his illegitimacy and left the baby to be looked after by a goat and a dog” (Asclepius in Mythology section, paras. 1–2)

This myth thus shows an archetypal connection between the dog, healing arts, the orphan, and the wounded healer archetype.

Chiron, the centaur who rescued and raised the abandoned Asclepius as his own, illustrates an important element often found in the hero journey motif: the hero receiving supernatural assistance at a pivotal moment (Hart, 1965). Jungian analyst Joseph Henderson (1964) described such a mythological scenario when stating that “the early weakness of the hero is balanced by the appearance of strong ‘tutelary’ figures—or guardians—who enable him to perform the superhuman tasks that he cannot accomplish unaided” (p. 101). One such example was when “Achilles had Cheiron, the wise Centaur, as his tutor” (p. 101). As these mythologies illustrate, motifs associated with resurrection, sacrifice, and redemption as aspects of the healing process have been associated with dogs since ancient times.

Relatedly, Asclepius was killed by Zeus with a thunderbolt, and Cartwright (2013) assessed the motive behind this violent event:

The father of the gods saw Asclepius and his art of healing as a threat to the eternal division between humanity and the gods, especially following rumors that Asclepius' healing powers were so formidable that he could even raise the dead. (Asclepius in Mythology section, para. 3)

Hannah's (2006) comments on Jung's assertion regarding Asclepius's father complex and the dual nature of the archetypes, especially as this relates to canines, are worth noting: "Jung pointed out to me that it is very important that the wolf is the animal of Asclepius's father, Apollo" (p. 85). Apollo is a consummate example of an image that embodies both positive qualities and dangerous qualities, as explained by Hannah:

As Apollo is regarded as such a shining and positive figure, it gives us quite a shock to find him connected with a wild and dangerous wolf, showing again the dual nature of the gods with which we are always confronted. (p. 85)

These ancient texts connect the wolf with the animal nature in humans as it demonstrates these raw, instinctual tendencies that have been relegated to the shadow.

In his works, Jung further elaborated on this theme and correlated it with the Eros principle (i.e., community and relationality) in tension with humans' animal nature, while highlighting the importance of the integration of both for a healthy, well-rounded individual. Jung (1943/1966) stated, for instance, that a human "thrives only when spirit and instinct are in right harmony. If one or the other aspect is lacking . . . , the result is injury or at least a lopsidedness that may easily veer towards pathological" (p. 28). He again demonstrated his dedication to integrating the tension of the opposites as he

continued: “Too much of the animal distorts the civilized man, too much civilization makes sick animals. This dilemma reveals the vast uncertainty that Eros holds for man” (p. 28).

Jung’s (1943/1966) postulation aptly illustrates the intersectionality within domestication, wildness, instincts, humans’ animal nature, and the Eros principle. For Jung, the integration and expansion of the psyche to encompass the fullness of each of these poles within the personality was seen as significant for individuation. Jungian analyst Joan Chodorow (1997) described this Jungian concept as well: “[Jung] found that there was an inborn dynamic process that unties opposite positions within the psyche. It draws polarized energies into a common channel, resulting in a new symbolic position which contains both perspectives” (p. 4). Ultimately, this phenomenon is mirrored in the archetype of the Self—the wholeness within which the opposites are integrated.

In addition to being associated with the wounded healer archetype, Asclepius was also tied to the archetype of the Orphan, as previously mentioned (Cartwright, 2013). Considering the orphan within the context of literature and storytelling, writer Abi Wurdeman (2022) pointed out that this character is “massively popular” (para. 1). As illustrated by the account of Asclepius, Wurdeman affirmed that these themes were categorically “shaped by a history of abandonment, neglect, and non-belonging” (para. 3). She also observed that this orphan character “has a backstory defined by trauma, abandonment, abuse, or neglect . . . [and is] typically positioned as an outsider, forced to grow up quickly and fend for themselves” (para. 10). When the orphan enters the storyline, “we often catch them at a crossroads. Usually, this crossroads comes about when a new development lands them in an unfamiliar situation” (para. 12).

Conversely, Wurdeman (2022) then explored the shadow aspect identified in situations where “childhood trauma can have the opposite effect. An orphan might withdraw from the world that rejects them. They might want vengeance for their suffering,” and in these cases, “the orphan becomes the villain” (para. 18). Congruently, Hannah (2006) declared that “the dog on earth actually has a good nose for the criminal, that is, for someone who has deviated too far from his own pattern” (p. 80), a thought-provoking way to conceptualize the nature of a criminal.

A contemporary example of a complex narrative that has woven together the archetypes of orphan and wounded healer with a heroic dog and criminals—all within the context of a heroine’s journey of individuation—is *Annie* (Huston, 1982), a story about a young girl and her dog, Sandy. In addition to its production as a blockbuster film, “ANNIE is a Broadway musical based upon the newspaper strip Little Orphan Annie, created by Harold Gray in 1924. . . . The comic appealed to adults with political commentary directed towards organized labor, the New Deal, communism, and unethical businessmen” (Cole, 2013, para. 1). From a Jungian perspective, this tale features Sandy, the dog, who might be seen as serving a multifaceted symbol of loyal companion, best friend, protector, and wounded healer, all while supporting Annie’s individuation process and acting as a guide through liminal spaces and life transitions. Discussing a parallel archetypal pattern that anthropomorphizes the dog’s instinctive abilities, von Franz (2012/2023) described an “animal drive that needs and wants to be integrated represents a hidden strain of the hero, namely his complimentary instinctive side. Its integration brings the hero’s realization of himself into real life” (p. 127). Serendipitously, this

dynamic is well represented within the relationship between the main characters, Annie and Sandy, in the popular musical and film production.

Similarly, the “little dog” Toto exemplifies several archetypal symbolic aspects within the cherished story of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (Baum, 1900). Hercigonja (2020) theorized that “a perfect example of the trickster archetype in Baum’s book is Dorothy’s dog Toto. It appears as a catalyst for a long-awaited change for our heroine” (p. 27). In her analysis of the story for her graduate thesis, Ines Hercigonja asserted that when Toto leads Dorothy and her companions along the yellow brick road on their journey to the magical land of Oz, the dog is acting as “a symbol of our inner voice that guides us and directs us down the right path” (p. 57). This canine is therefore not only the force that initiates the transformation but also the loyal companion and ally of the heroine on her epic individuation journey, acting as a guide through the process.

In countless cultures throughout the world, the companionable relationship between dog and human as “man’s best friend” has long been esteemed (Bertrand, 2009). In fact, the motif of dogs accompanying hunters was so popular in ancient times that the Greeks assigned this imagery to star constellations (Currens et al., 2014). The Canis Major star constellation, for example, represents a hunting dog, Laelaps, as originally documented in Greek mythology:

Zeus solves the paradox of the giant Teumessian fox, which had the power to never be caught, and Laelaps, the magical hound that always caught its prey, by changing them into constellations (Canis major and Canis minor) where their battle could play out for eternity. (para. 1)

The prominent placement of a symbolic canine within honored constellations of the galaxy's stars, blazing across the night sky, is bold evidence of the importance the dog played in ancient cultures and demonstrates the timelessness and value of this alliance.

Certainly, canines have been recognized for their unwavering loyalty and extraordinary heroic actions, but their distant ancestors were even credited with having mystical powers and otherworldly connections with deities (Mark, 2017c). Mark (2017c) affirmed that "the Egyptians were among the earliest people to recognize the value of the dog and show their appreciation for its particular skills and talents" (para. 1). Medieval studies scholar Vedran Bileta (2023) proclaimed that "dogs in ancient Egypt played a paramount role in their owners' lives. They were guards, pets, and symbols of the gods. The dog was then, as now, man's best friend" (para. 1).

Furthermore, Egyptian dogs were valued within ancient civilizations for the intimate companionship and guidance they offered their human counterparts both in life and in death. According to Bileta (2023), "the human-dog bond extended beyond this world and into the afterlife. Mummified dogs were buried with their owners or sometimes in their own coffins. In addition, dogs occupied an important place in ancient Egyptian religion" (para. 2). In fact, dogs were often associated with assisting humans through the death and rebirth process by acting as guides, as Hannah (2006) maintained: "Coming to the dog as a guide to the beyond, we find that the material is endless and comes from all over the world" (p. 75).

In her discourse on the archetypal symbolism of the canine, Hannah (2006) described this animal in its role as helpful guide: "One of the best known aspects of the dog in mythology is the dog as guide of souls who accompanies us to the other world.

Sometimes he is known to guide us in this world as well” (p. 71). She indicated that this guiding instinct is especially beneficial when deciding the best direction to take during defining moments in life:

Only an animal with a loving heart, such as a dog, can guide us in these dark places. It is the point where you have to give up everything that you have learned and go, guided only by your instinct. (p. 77)

Because of the dog’s age-old familiarity with humans, Hannah purported that the dog is able to excel as a guide for humanity, as both species have co-evolved together and are able to communicate and understand each other. When considering this closeness between humans and dogs, Hannah declared,

The dog as guide can find the way with his highly developed sense of smell when none of our senses are of any use, and he is so related to man through thousands of years of domestication that he will guide him, whereas other animals with this acute sense of smell will not. (p. 76)

From a depth psychological perspective, Hannah suggested that the bond between humans and dogs is not merely a result of co-evolution but is a deeper archetypal relationship that is rooted in the collective unconscious, because dogs as companions and guides have served as symbols of the primal aspects of intuition.

Possibly the most well-known animal guide into the afterlife was Anubis from Egyptian mythology, which Egyptologist Geraldine Pinch (2004) described as “a seated black jackal or as a man with the head of a jackal or wild dog” (p. 104). Mark (2016) illustrated this same creature and discussed the significant role that Anubis held within the ancient Egyptian culture as

the Egyptian god of mummification, funerary rites, guardian of tombs, and guide to the afterlife as well as the patron god of lost souls and the helpless. He is one of the oldest gods of Egypt. (paras. 1–3)

Often depicted within his role as the god of mummification, Anubis was credited with inventing embalming, a mummification process that was designed “to help the deceased pass smoothly into the Afterlife” (Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, n.d., para. 1).

In Egyptian lore, Anubis not only responsible for personally escorting the dead into the afterlife but would also judge the lives of the deceased to determine the trajectory of their final destination, as literary scholar and critic Lorena Stookey (2004) explained: “The jackal-headed god Anubis is the psychopomp who leads the souls of the dead to the Scales of Justice where their hearts are weighed” (p. 200). Stookey’s use of the word *psychopomp* is significant in this context. According to the *Oxford Reference Dictionary*, the concept of a *psychopomp* was derived from ancient mythology, “from the Greek word *psychopompos*, [meaning] conductor of souls”; thus, this creature was known as the “one who conducts souls to the other world after death” (Oxford University Press, n.d., def. 1). Notably, “in his later role as the ‘conductor of souls,’ [Anubis] was sometimes identified by the Greco-Roman world with the Greek Hermes in the composite deity Hermanubis” (Britannica Editors, n.d.-a, para. 2). This is significant as it explores the archetypal pattern as it emerged within and intermingled with other mythologies around the world.

Much of the information known about the mythology of the distinguished canine Anubis is gleaned from the ancient *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, which, as Pinch (2004) explained, “was not the central holy book of Egyptian religion. It was just one of a series of manuals composed to assist the spirits of the elite dead to achieve and maintain a full

afterlife” (p. 26). As these ancient writings have revealed, “Anubis’s other job was to stand in the Hall of the Two Truths and weigh the hearts of people seeking judgment” (Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, n.d., para. 2). Stookey (2004) described the details of this procedure: “Anubis places an ostrich feather from the headdress of Maat, the goddess of truth and justice, on one side of the scale” (p. 200). The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum (n.d.) offered additional details about the scales of justice that Anubis would use to judge recently deceased souls:

The human heart was balanced on the scale against Ma’at’s feather of truth. If the heart weighed more than the feather, the person’s identity would essentially cease to exist: the hybrid deity Ammit would eat the heart, and the soul would be destroyed. But if the heart weighed the same as the feather, the deceased would pass through the underworld (Duat) and into the Afterlife. (para. 3)

Because the Egyptians believed in the goddess Ma’at, who represented “order, peace, and balance, death was regarded as importantly as life . . . [and] Anubis was a major part of the transition from life to death and back to life again” (para. 4). Moreover, Mark (2016) stated that Anubis, in the spirit of promoting the principles of Ma’at, “was especially concerned with controlling the impulses of those who sought to sow disorder or aligned themselves with chaos” (para. 8), demonstrating that balance was of primary concern within this belief system.

In addition to Anubis, a number of other jackal-headed canine-gods were revered within the Egyptian pantheon. As Egyptologist and museum curator Terry Wilfong (2015) explained, “the jackal gods most often worked together on behalf of the dead, pooling their powers and particular talents for the most effective protection they could

provide. In embalming scenes, we see Anubis embalming and Duamutef protecting internal organs” (p. 45). The author continued with additional details about a second, relatively unknown but more visible dog-god: “Although Anubis is the best known of the jackal gods, Duamutef may be the one that we most often see. His jackal head features on one of the most quintessentially Egyptian artifacts, the canopic jar” (p. 37). The canopic jar was used in the embalming process, which Anubis was credited with creating, to store the internal organs that Duamutef was ordained to protect.

According to Wilfong (2015), another jackal-headed Egyptian deity, Wepwawet, meaning “opener of the ways,” was also respected for his role as guide and was “frequently paired with Anubis in connection with protecting the dead” (p. 33). As such, Wepwawet “led the deceased through the frequently dangerous paths of the afterlife, clearing the way to the final judgment of the dead” (p. 33). Wilfong further explored the association of Wepwawet and Anubis: “On his own, Wepwawet often appears as a standing jackal or standing jackal-headed god; when he and Anubis are paired in funerary art, the two gods are typically shown as identical seated jackals facing each other” (p. 33). In his historical research, Wilfong also identified the various types of canines that populated the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman Empires: “The Greeks and Romans often called these animals dogs or wolves. Wolves were not present in Egypt, although Egyptians certainly had domestic dogs as pets, work animals, and wild strays” (p. 12). Unlike the actual canines that lived in ancient Egypt, these celebrated jackal-gods were depicted as having predominantly black coloring.

Wilfong (2015) explained that the Egyptians colored the dog-gods black for symbolic reasons rather than to accurately depict existing animals, stating that they

most closely resemble jackals in form and size (the golden jackal, *Canis aureus*, being the jackal known to the ancient Egyptians), but the black coloring typical of the sacred animal does not appear in any jackal found in ancient Egypt. (p. 12)

Regarding the significance of the animal's coloring Mark (2016) agreed that "the color black was chosen for its symbolism, not because Egyptian dogs or jackals were black," and added, "Black symbolized the decay of the body as well as the fertile soil of the Nile River Valley which represented regeneration and life" (para. 3). The association with these creatures and death is evidenced by the burial remains that represent the significance of the psychopomp in ancient Egyptian culture: "The powerful black canine, then, was the protector of the dead who made sure they received their due rights in burial and stood by them in the life after death to assist their resurrection" (para. 3). According to both Mark and Wilfong (2015), this iteration of the black dog motif had a unique meaning within Egyptian culture.

Moreover, Bileta (2023) revealed that these animals of ancient Egypt were "so-called 'pariah dogs,' wild canines and strays of mixed breeds" that "often hunted around the outskirts of a settlement or necropolis" (para. 7). Correspondingly, religion and spirituality scholar Cassandra Eason (2007) elaborated on the perceptions of these untamed creatures within the culture of ancient Egypt: "The most fearsome and yet protective creatures was the jackal, a predatory wild dog who came from the desert in search of prey and who consumed the bodies of those who had died in the desert, animal or human" (p. 12). Prevalent in varying roles in the community, these dogs "were often seen around the tombs in the Valley of the Kings and Queens and their nocturnal howling was interpreted as protection of the deceased. Some jackals were tamed and became

fierce guard dogs” (p. 12). The jackal’s association with this role is not accidental, as this species of canine was “associated with death, because they lurked around cemeteries and would eat decomposing flesh. Therefore, by making Anubis the patron deity of jackals, the Egyptians hoped to protect the bodies from being devoured” (Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, n.d., para. 2).

Moreover, Cornish Bard Yowann Byghan (2020) associated the Egyptian jackal with another, more modern canine species, the coyote. He wrote, “The jackal is the general Eurasian and African equivalent of the American coyote, which is also called the American jackal. The coyote has been a symbol in many cultures of a trickster archetype” (p. 32). In exploring the archetypal role of this canine, Hannah (2006) delved into the multifaceted aspects and perceptions surrounding the coyote, noting that

tribes even regard [the coyote] as the creator and cultural hero. But here, as elsewhere in North America, he is a highly tricky creator, always up to mischief and using his powers to a great extent for his own amusement. (p. 72)

Relatedly, Hannah explored the tension between the dog as a helpful guide and “the dog as a mis-leader or trickster” (p. 71) and added that “the trickster element, although it is a kind of embryonic consciousness, bids us to beware of too blind a confidence in our dog instinct” (p. 89). Furthermore, Hannah emphasized the importance of tapping into this intuitive instinct but cautioned, “To let it lead us consciously is a totally different thing from allowing it to possess us. The latter is always the result of a confidence that is blind” (p. 89). These reflections urge the individual to seek a conscious relationship with the “dog instinct” that resides in the human psyche.

Another peculiar proclivity of mythological dogs is their recurring—and powerful—connection with storms, lightning, and thunder (Britannica Editors, n.d.-c; Cotterell, 2003; Kerkhof, 2023). One example is Seth, a well-known god in Egyptian mythology often depicted with a human body and the head of a dog or jackal, who was designated as the “master of storms” and associated with the “disorder and warfare” of nature-based phenomena (Britannica Editors, n.d.-c, para. 3). Seth is described as “a sky god, lord of the desert, master of storms, disorder, and warfare—in general, a trickster . . . [who] embodied the necessary and creative element of violence and disorder within the ordered world” (para. 4). Similarly, ancient civilizations scholar Arther Cotterell (2003) documented a traditional Philippine story in which the god of thunder, Kadaklan, “lives in the sky with his faithful dog Kimat, the lightning” (p. 245), illustrating, again, a mythic representation of the human–canine bond. Xolotl, an ancient Aztec god, is another canine deity who was associated with lightning and fire:

Associated with several aspects related to death, transformation, and the evening star, . . . Xolotl was often depicted as a canine figure, such as a dog or a wolf, with distinctive physical features like a skeletal appearance, reversed feet, and an elongated nose. (Kerkhof, 2023, paras. 1–2)

Xolotl was said to be a companion of Quetzalcóatl, an important Aztec deity who would descend “to the underground hell of Mictlan to gather the bones of the ancient dead. Those bones he anointed with his own blood, giving birth to the men who inhabit the present universe” (Britannica Editors, n.d.-b, para. 3). This story encompasses both the creator motif and the aspect of the dog in his role as psychopomp and guide, as he was revered for providing guidance in the underworld.

The ancient Greek mythological canine Cerberus also had connections with storms and inclement weather, as evidenced “in the sixth canto of the *Inferno* [where] Dante depicts the punishment of the gluttonous. They are represented as lying in the mire under a continuous heavy storm of hail and snow” (Savage, 1951, p. 405). This scene becomes even more terrifying when imagining that “three-headed Cerberus keeps barking over them and rending them apart” (p. 405). Moreover, in the sixth level of hell, Cerberus was not only in the middle of a forceful storm, rendering punishment upon the gluttonous by ripping them apart, but his mouths were also full of slime:

Cerberus should be familiar to the readers of Homer and Virgil. In those works Cerberus had to be placated with some delicacy in each of its mouths. In contrast, Virgil fills each mouth with some dirty slime which is more fitting for the guardian of the gluttons. (“Summary and analysis Canto VI,” n.d., para. 8)

This juxtaposition between delicacies and slime that Cerberus consumed is a significant metaphor for understanding the contrasting ways that an individual feeds the symbolic Cerberus aspect in their own psychology.

Throughout antiquity and within many world mythologies, dogs were frequently depicted in another protective and leading role—as threshold guardian (Hillman, 2008). Most notably within Greek mythology, Cerberus acted as a canine threshold guardian who stood at the gate to the underworld of Hades. In this custodial role, Cerberus was responsible for determining who could pass through the gateway between the land of the living and the land of the dead. In a poetic sentiment, Hillman (2008) pointed out that “the ghost of Cerberus in every dog provides its archetypal urge to guard and protect” (p. 159). Classics scholar Peter Meineck (2023) explained that “the idea of the kind of

creature that inhabits entrances to sacred places is something that we find in lots and lots of world mythology” (“The Origins” section, para. 3). English classicist J. P. Postgate (1905) described Cerberus, “the dog of Hades,” as “properly double or two-headed,” attributing this “dual personality . . . to his descent from the two dogs of Yama” from Indian mythology (p. 412). The author also stated that “the prevailing Greek conception was that of a triple monster” (p. 412). Classics scholar Avi Kapach (n.d.) noted, however, that ancient sources offered conflicting accounts of Cerberus’s appearance, as Hesiod, in the 8th or 7th century B.C.E., gave him “one hundred heads” (para. 1), whereas more recent sources limited him to “just three heads, with snakes along his mane and back, and a snake tail” (Appearance and Abilities section, para. 1). The impressions created by this canine/serpentine creature have survived for thousands of years and even impacted scientific minds, as evidenced by the names of several snake species derived from the mythical creature Cerberus.

Regardless of the specific appearance, classical studies scholar Marie-Claire Beaulieu believed that Cerberus was so frightening “because it turned familiar associations of a beloved companion on its head” (Liu, 2023, Is the Mythical Dog Cerberus Evil? section, para. 1). According to Beatrice Groves (2017), an expert on literary allusion, Cerberus’s symbolic nature as a threshold guardian represented “the absolute nature of death and the unknowability of what lies beyond the grave,” and with his “six eyes” and “three slavering mouths,” the mystical canine ensured that “none can get past him and back into the light” (p. 34). Some scholars (e.g., Hannah, 2006) have argued that details like Cerberus’s three heads may also hold metaphorical significance, possibly symbolizing an underworldly parallel to the Christian Holy Trinity.

The figurative connection of Cerberus to serpents, with its multifaceted implications, is notable. Postgate (1905) described the snakes as “an essential feature of the Cerberus concept, its snaky character as evidenced by the serpent’s heads, which in art and literature alike rose from the dog’s necks and back” (p. 412). Cerberus’s snakes were not simply an ornamental feature, as they were capable of serpentine movement. Perhaps this anomaly occurred because Cerberus’s origins stem from a viper parentage, as science journalist Katie Liu (2023) explained: “Born from the monstrous, multi-headed Typhon and the serpent-woman Echidna, Cerberus was among the primordial monsters predating humanity” (Cerberus: The 3 Headed Dog section, para. 1). These snakes “navigated tricky in-betweens, for their ability to slither under and above the ground” (para. 19), another correlation with the trickery and liminal states that are credited to the mythological creature.

Even Jung (1952/1967b) weighed in on the subject and directly addressed the junction of the snake and canine motifs with a discourse on Hecate that connected her with Cerberus and “the pillory where criminals were scourged” (p. 370). Jung explained the dynamic relationship between Hecate and dogs when he stated that as “the deadly mother, her attributes are dogs” and that “as guardian of the gate of Hades and as the triple bodied goddess of dogs, she is more or less identical with Cerberus, Heracles was really bringing the vanquished mother of death to the upper world” (p. 369). Hecate is thus associated with both liminal spaces such as “dedicated junctions of three roads, forked roads, and crossroads” and the death-rebirth motif:

Where the roads branch off or meet, dog-sacrifices were offered to her, and there too were thrown the bodies of the executed: the sacrifice occurs at the point of

union where the roads *cross* and enter into one another, thereby symbolizing the union of opposites. (p. 371)

Moreover, Jung clarified that German classicist Erwin Rohde called him “the second Cerberus, akin to the jackal-headed Anubis of the Egyptians. The dog and the underworld serpent are identical” (p. 372). Additionally, the symbolism of “snakes and dogs” as “guardians of the treasure” (p. 372) are motifs closely associated with shadow integration as a key component of individuation.

Before the influx of Christianity, the Greek concept of the underworld was a place of “neutrality” rather than a destination where torment dominated, as Meineck (2004) explained: “Most Greeks believed that when dead their spirit, or psyche, was escorted by Hermes down to the realm of Hades, where they crossed the river Styx and wandered as shades in dark eternity” (p. 41). There was no value judgment of good or bad in the afterlife for ordinary humans: “Only divine sinners were punished, such as the miscreant Titans, who suffered eternal torments” (p. 41). In fact, at the lowest level in the underworld, Tartarus was not only a place but also a deity “referred to as . . . the god who rules over the prison pit situated at the lowest point of the Earth. As a primordial force, Tartarus is viewed as the pit itself” (Lockett, 2024, Tartarus in Greek Mythology section, para. 2). Over time, the conceptualization of this idea evolved to include mortal imprisonment, as “Tartarus is not only a prison for monsters and defeated gods, but also where the souls of mortals considered to be the most wicked received divine punishment” (Tartarus in Later Mythologies section, para. 4). The most famous example of those imprisoned within Tartarus are the Titans, who threatened the throne of Zeus.

Although Cerberus was a terrifying guardian to this underworld, mythic accounts narrated tales of mortal heroes who were able to pass by the canine guardian at the gate to successfully enter and exit the world of the dead (Liu, 2023); for example, Liu (2023) recounted the story of Heracles overpowering Cerberus and taking him up to the “world above” as part of a task he was assigned (Cerberus vs. Hercules section, para. 2). On the way, Cerberus drooled, as dogs often do, and his toxic slobber caused the poisonous plant wolfsbane to spring from the ground. At the conclusion of this story, Cerberus was permitted to return to his position at the entrance of the underworld to resume his responsibilities.

Hillman (2008) described the “twelfth labor” (p. 159) of Heracles (i.e., Hercules) as a task whereby the mythological hero brought Cerberus, “the Hound of Hell, Hades’s guardian dog,” aboveground with only his bare hands (p. 159). According to Hillman, this difficult and otherworldly task also had deep symbolic and spiritual implications:

To wrestle this terrifying creature into daylight means more than overcoming death and hell as in the Christian example of Jesus’s descent, which aimed to do away with the underworld and overcome death (1 Cor. 15:55). Hercules’s struggle is also about the dog. (p. 159)

Hillman thereupon asserted that this incident between Heracles and Cerberus is symbolic of the “death-loving propensity” (p. 159) in the human psyche. He explained that typically, Heracles executed the monsters he encountered, but he did not kill Cerberus. Instead, Heracles symbolically demonstrated a lesson for a wise approach to facing death—arguably the most primal psychological fear—by ‘bringing to heel’ the unconscious fear of death through successfully integrating this material into

consciousness. Including the encounter with Heracles, writer–illustrator Jay Lopez (2021) summarized several additional stories in which Cerberus, in his role as gatekeeper of the threshold, was outmaneuvered by a mortal: “The three occasions Cerberus was tricked by visitors of Hades were when: Heracles did it with strength alone, Orpheus with his music, and the Sybil of Cumae with a honey-cake” (p. 5). These popular themes were portrayed in artwork centuries later, and each depict a unique approach to entrance into the unconscious.

Applying a depth psychological lens to the canine Cerberus as it manifests in the human psyche, Hannah (2006) maintained that the animal is symbolic of the anger instinct and therefore argued, “If we repress the instincts, if we neglect to give them their meat, then they become a very angry watchdog between us and the unconscious and we cannot get in” (p. 82). She explained in more detail that it “is the Cerberus aspect, the aspect of something neglected that then bars our way into the unconscious, and there is really no chance of getting through until the anger instinct is appeased with the honey cake” (p. 83). In an even deeper dive, she continued:

Jung often says that when our problems are darkest we cannot decide consciously. It is always the instinct that has to decide (unless we prefer an arbitrary, one-sided solution that is not really a solution at all, but merely a repression of one side or the other). (p. 83)

Noting Jung’s encouragement to extend warmth when relating to the inner world, Hannah stated, “If hostile, the dog instinct must be appeased. . . . We have to ‘bribe’ our instinct a little to let us do it” (p. 83). The approach of offering something sweet (i.e., the honey-

cake or beautiful music) to the Cerberus aspect in the psyche represents the opposite of Heracles's approach, which involved straightforward brute force.

When confronting Cerberus, individual and cultural complexes correlating with differing approaches are evident in the diverse responses of heroes such as Heracles, Orpheus, and Sybil of Cumae (Lopez, 2021). Jungian analysts Thomas Singer and Catherine Kaplinsky (2010) described cultural complexes as “the hand that fate has dealt us” and noted that “how we play the hand that fate has dealt us and what we do with our personal and cultural complexes determines who we become as individuals, groups and societies” (p. 35). Thus, the individual's relationship with the Cerberus aspect is impacted by culture as well as by one's personal disposition.

In ancient Greece, the journeys of heroes were significant, as Meineck (2004) explained: “The Greeks worshipped their heroes rather like Christian saints, housing their remains in shrines and creating rites that accentuated their heroic status” (p. 55). Expanding on this hero's journey motif, Meineck added that “Greek heroes . . . represent young men at the cusp of manhood going through rites of initiation” and portrayed this transition by “leaving the world of . . . [the] mother to enter the realm of adult male society” (p. 55). Jung (1952/1967c) also pointed out that these heroes serve as the “finest of all symbols of the libido” because they embody a figure who “passes from joy to sorrow, from sorrow to joy, and, like the sun, now stands high at the zenith and now is plunged into darkest night, only to rise again in new splendour” (p. 171). When Meineck (2004) asserted that “Oedipus is a hero despite his terrible past” and that “the greatest of all mythological heroes is Heracles” (p. 55), she emphasized that heroes are remembered and revered for having experiences that were larger than life—both positive and negative.

Moreover, Henderson (1964) suggested that “the hero myths vary enormously in detail, but the more closely one examines them, the more one sees that structurally they are very similar” (p. 101), and indicated that an opposing motif may be present:

There are other hero myths in which the hero gives in to the monster. A familiar type is that of Jonah and the whale, in which the hero is swallowed by a sea monster that carries him on a night sea journey. (p. 110)

In such myths, “the hero goes into darkness, which represents a kind of death” (p. 110), a motif that can be contrasted with the hero in a Heracles-styled solar hero pattern.

Relatedly, Hannah (2006) stated that this contrasting hero motif has also been closely associated with the dog, and to illustrate this point, she analyzed a Russian legend:

[The story] has traces of the dog ancestor myths that we shall see are very common, that is, the motif of exceptional people who have been captive in a dog’s stomach (similar to Jonah and the whale). It also suggests the night sea journey in a very primitive form. But here the dog and not the hero takes all the action. (pp. 62–63)

These varied depictions of heroes engulfed by darkness, only to emerge renewed, are a compelling metaphor for the process of psychological transformation within PDPs.

As a Jungian theorist, von Franz (2012/2023) expanded on identifying archetypal patterns such as the hero’s journey by focusing on the expression of archetypes in literary works, specifically as motifs within myth, folklore, and even fairytales. Jung (1951/1968a) also supported this approach: “Myths and fairytales give expression to unconscious processes, and their retelling causes the processes to come alive again and be recollected, thereby re-establishing the connection between conscious and unconscious”

(p. 180). As illustrated herein, a dog as a companion of the hero on his epic journey is a common mythological theme that is found in legends throughout the world.

A more contemporary example of a canine companion to a hero is portrayed in the literary character of *Old Yeller* (Gipson, 1956; Stevenson, 1957). This beloved dog engaged in the human–canine bond and idealistically epitomized the ‘man’s best friend’ motif. Essentially, *Old Yeller* is a coming-of-age story, set in 1869, in which Travis, a 14-year-old Texan boy, begrudgingly befriends a stray dog who shows up and refuses to be shooed away. Old Yeller has arrived shortly after Travis’s father departed for a 600-mile cattle drive, which has left the young adolescent boy facing new responsibilities as the ‘man of the house’ in his father’s absence. As Travis overcomes each challenge, Old Yeller stands by his side as a loyal protector—a clear illustration of this dynamic role of the human–canine bond.

In the story’s climax, Old Yeller contracts rabies during a wolf attack, while he is protecting the family, and Travis is forced to shoot him (Gipson, 1956; Stevenson, 1957). Henderson (1964) described the heroic myth in which a dog, much like Old Yeller, is often characterized as a companion and guide:

Their special role suggests that the essential function of the heroic myth is the development of the individual’s ego-consciousness—his awareness of his own strengths and weaknesses—in a manner that will equip him for the arduous tasks with which life confronts him. (p. 101)

This marks the beginning of the journey itself, as “once the individual has passed his initial test and can enter the mature phase of life, the hero myth loses its relevance. The hero’s symbolic death becomes, as it were, the achievement of that maturity” (p. 101). An

analysis of the story of *Old Yeller* reveals a number of archetypal patterns and aspects of the dog's role—as guide, healer, companion, and harbinger to life's profound trials and transformations—for the hero on his journey of psychological development.

Paradoxically, in his novel, Fred Gipson (1956) introduced a shadow aspect of the dog as a symbol when Old Yeller contracts the dreaded rabies virus. This correlation of dogs with rabies has been a prolonged symbolic theme throughout recorded history, as Hannah (2006) explained: “We must remember that before the discovery that rabies was the result of a virus and could be developed in any warm-blooded animal. . . . It was thought that the dog was the personification of rabies” (pp. 81–82). This particular connection has been prevalent in the dog's association with darkness, madness, and death. Relatedly, Hannah connected the Greek goddess Hecate and her hounds with rabies and the madness that hydrophobia causes: “It was said that she [Hecate] was approaching when the distant howling of dogs was heard. . . . Hecate's dogs were connected with the Furies, who are supposed to bring madness” (p. 81).

It is also worth mentioning that Hannah (2006) highlighted the practice of black dogs being ritualistically sacrificed to Hecate, and Jung (1952/1967b) also contributed to the literature on this mythological topic:

Hecate is a real spook-goddess of night and phantoms, a nightmare; she is sometimes shown riding a horse, and in Hesiod she is counted the patron goddess of riders. . . . As the “spirit-mother” she sends madness, the moonsickness. This idea is perfectly sensible, because most forms of lunacy consist of affections which amount to an invasion by the unconscious and an inundation of the conscious mind. (pp. 369–370)

Although Hecate was known as a mysterious underworld goddess whose mythological characteristics have shifted over time, she was almost always associated with liminality, crossroads, magic, madness, the death-rebirth cycle, the night—and black dogs, her hounds.

In Jung's writings on alchemy, the theme of rabies and madness was present and closely tied to the image of the *mad dog*—a symbol in alchemy that represented the uncontrollable and chaotic forces of the unconscious, the unintegrated instincts that could become destructive to the point of instigating a psychosis if the ego became overwhelmed by them. In *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, for example, Jung (1955–1956/1970c) devoted an entire section, “The Dog,” to the canine and its multifaceted symbology within alchemy (pp. 146–160). Therein, he discussed the concept of the mad dog as a representation of the untamed, instinctual, and disordering nature that must be confronted as an essential part of the alchemical process called the *nigredo*. Moreover, Jung illuminated additional descriptions associated with the dog in his exploration of alchemical symbolism by interpreting the figure of the dog as an embodiment of Mercurius (and the hermaphrodite). Also, in an alchemical interpretation, he symbolically connected the dog with the moon when “the dark, dangerous, rabid dog changes into an eagle at the time of the plenilunium . . . [whereby] his darkness disappears and he becomes a solar animal” (p. 155), another amplification that supports the canine's connection with the shadow archetype and the solar hero. To expand upon this imagery, Jung borrowed from an ancient text:

Hermes said, My son, take a Corascene dog and an Armenian bitch, join them together, and they will beget a dog of celestial hue, and if ever he is thirsty, give

him sea water to drink: for he will guard your friend, and he will guard you from your enemy, and he will help you wherever you may be, always being with you, in this world and the next. And by dog and bitch, Hermes meant things which preserve bodies from burning and from the heat of the fire. (p. 147)

As referenced above, this selection linked the dog with both the burning and heat of the fire within the *nigredo* stage of the alchemical process as well as the potential for healing and support and uses the human–canine bond as a symbolic metaphor to describe the associated psychological state.

During Jung's (1967, 1951/1968b, 1968, 1955–1956/1970a) career, he became more focused on the processes of alchemical transmutation as a symbolic representation of psychological transformation and discussed them in remarkable detail within numerous volumes of his *Collected Works*. Jung eventually asserted that these ancient practices were the most accurate metaphorical expressions that he had discovered during his comprehensive studies to better understand unconscious psychological processes at work in individuation. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) provided the traditional definition of *alchemy* as “a medieval chemical science and speculative philosophy aiming to achieve the transmutation of the base metals into gold, the discovery of a universal cure for disease, and the discovery of a means of indefinitely prolonging life” (def. 1). While acknowledging that medieval and Renaissance alchemists were literally working to transform base metals into gold through science and chemistry, Jung (1943/1968) viewed alchemy as a rich and complex symbolic system that offered a map for understanding the processes of the unconscious mind and skillfully engaging with them consciously.

In his works, Jungian analyst Edward Edinger expanded on Jung's efforts to decode the symbolic language of alchemy as it relates to psychotherapy, psychological transformation, and individuation. In *The Anatomy of the Psyche* (1985), he reiterated that "the alchemical process has three stages: *nigredo*, *albedo*, and *rubedo*: the blackening, the whitening, and the reddening" and that "the *nigredo* or blackening . . . includes the operation called *mortification*" (p. 147). The latter is a key concept that focused on an ego death that is necessary for rebirth, as Edinger explained:

Mortification is the most negative operation in alchemy. It has to do with darkness, defeat, torture, mutilation, death, and rotting. However, these dark images often lead over to highly positive ones—growth, resurrection, rebirth—but the hallmark of *mortificatio* is the color black. (p. 148)

He then indicated the connection between the overlapping and reoccurring themes of *nigredo* and the wounded healer archetype, Chiron, when he stated, "The birth of the healing power from the *nigredo* belongs to the archetype of the wounded healer" (p. 164). Quoting the classical scholar Károly Kerényi to support this claim and define the healing power within the *nigredo*, Edinger wrote, "The myth refers psychologically to the capacity 'to be at home in the darkness of suffering and there find germs of light and recovery with which, as though enchanted, to bring forth the Asklepios, the sunlike healer'" (p. 165). He thus confirmed that the confrontation of the shadow and suffering through that confrontation are necessary for genuine psychological transformation and mark an important stage in the individuation process.

When examining the shadow aspect of the dog archetype, Hillman (2008) linked the canine to a melancholy mindset: "In depression, the mind goes on a hunt to find a

cause, digs up old bones that have been chewed many times before—past sins, omissions, and regrets” (p. 145). He expanded this metaphor with additional details: “Like a dog, the mind chases its own tail, obsessively seizes on a misery, shakes it like a terrier, and won’t let go—compulsive repetition of complaint, like a dog barking and barking long after the postman has passed” (p. 145). In the context of referring to “depressive doggedness” (p. 151), Hillman shared a well-known story about how Winston Churchill would famously refer to his depression as “the black dog” (as cited in Hillman, 2008, p. 158). Byghan (2020) elaborated, saying, “The black dog is a metaphor for depression in the modern life—Winston Churchill often complained of being followed by ‘The Black Dog’” (p. 22).

Edinger (1985) further supported this correlation with alchemical symbolism when he stated, “In psychological terms blackness refers to the shadow” (p. 149). Correspondingly, Hillman (2008) listed other common idioms that use canines to symbolize human behaviors and feelings within a downtrodden shadowy context:

“the hangdog look”; “dog-tired”; “you cannot teach an old dog new tricks”; “a dog smells his own dirt first”; “it’s easy to find a stick to beat a dog”; “dog-eat-dog”; “the dog returns to its own vomit”; “helping lame dogs over stiles”; “if you lie down with dogs, you will end up with fleas”; “thrown to the dogs”; “scratch like a dog at the door till it opens”; etc. (p. 152)

Expressions such as these illustrate the correlation between the shadow and the dog, even within everyday language.

Furthermore, the shadow aspects of the dog archetype have been documented and identified in literature throughout world history when this animal appeared as phantom

dogs, mythological canines, hell hounds, and werewolves—to name a few (Hoge, 2016). Hillman (2008) supported this correlation: “The dog’s association with the underworld and death occurs widely in folklore, in stories of revenants, hauntings, and uncanny intuitions, and in the myths of many cultures” (p. 158).

Hillman’s (2008) analysis also associated the shadow of the dog image with cynicism, uncleanness, death, and the underworld. While acknowledging the influence culture has on this ageless theme, literary scholar Charles Hoge (2016) noted that the “phantom dog lurk[s] as far back as Cerberus in Greek mythology,” later “to appear in packs in accompaniment with the Wild Hunt throughout medieval sources,” and eventually shifting in the post-medieval era into the “avenging hell hound” (p. 71). By the 19th century, the motif had “solidif[ied] into the solitary semi-corporeal haunter of lonely paths” (p. 72), and Hoge described this phantom dog as “a liminal entity” that “presents itself as a domesticated animal with no attachment to domestication; the phantom dog *belongs to nobody*” (p. 71).

In these cases, the human–canine bond receded into the shadow, while themes such as authority, obedience, wildness, mastery, autonomy, domestication, misuse of power, vengeance, and individualization in relationship with society created tension within this motif (Hoge, 2016). Hoge (2016) went on to describe fear-inducing outcomes that occurred in chance encounters with such sinister beasts: “A prominent feature of the phantom-animal phenomenon involves the danger invoked by anyone who speaks to the creature; death seems to come quickly to those who acknowledge the phantom by speaking directly to it” (p. 75). Moreover, the dog’s affiliation with death and the afterlife is found in numerous mythologies, but notably, Hoge associated the phantom dog’s

connection to “places of death,” including “sites of murders and executions” (p. 74).

Relevant to this discussion, a British folktale, written by Luke Hutton (1638), shared a black dog motif that was famous within the notorious Newgate Prison.

A London jail that was known for its horrific conditions, such as overcrowding, disease, public hangings, corruption, and famine, “Newgate Prison was finally demolished in 1904, ending its seven-hundred-year reign as the blackest hole in London” (E. Bradshaw, n.d., para. 11), but during the prison’s existence, the suffering experienced there was quite dismal. Describing the plight of incarcerated women, historian Ben Johnson (n.d.) reported, “The women’s area was equally as appalling, crowded with half naked women, drunk, sometimes deranged, in leg irons and often with their children in tow” (para. 3). According to historian Edward Bradshaw (n.d.), “Public executions were discontinued in the 1860s, and were moved inside the yard of the prison itself” (para. 10), and Johnson (n.d.) added, “To understand the scale of capital punishment at Newgate Prison, it is said that between 1790 and 1902 over one thousand people were put to death there alone” (para. 5). This punitive attitude and approach to corrections is an archetypal pattern that has been replayed around the world throughout history.

Conceivably, to understand the psychology of those incarcerated inside the walls of Newgate Prison there are many layers of *phantom images*, a concept devised by Jungian analyst Sam Kimbles (2014), to consider:

We have to first admit that an aspect of their very origin as complexes seems to be in the rather painful experiences of nonrecognition. The original problem reflected in the operation of a group process is sometimes less how we are seen

but how we are *not seen*. We all sooner or later fail to be mirrored; that is, our legitimacy is ignored. (p. 27)

In his book, *Phantom Narratives: The Unseen Contributions of Culture of Psyche*, Kimbles underscored the impacts and devastation of dismissed relevance, arguably an ongoing experience of the incarcerated throughout history. He also remarked on broader settings that may have contained phantom narratives: “In cultural complexes, we may think in terms of phantoms as images of group life that reflect the specific dynamics operating in groups and individuals through various social attitudes and structures that are alive in current events” (p. 20). Emphasizing the context of the individual or group, he noted, “All of this occurs within a cultural setting of political, economic, and institutional power structures that privileges certain groups over others” (p. 20). Moreover, Alexis Easley and Scott (2013), in the introduction to their anthology of Victorian werewolf fiction, identified overlays within the expression of archetypal patterns and their interplay between individual and cultural complexes over time—a concept that is relevant and important to consider when attempting to understand the phenomenology of those who are incarcerated.

Not surprisingly, Newgate Prison was the setting of a phantom-dog encounter within the previously mentioned ancient English folktale described in detail by E. Bradshaw (n.d.): “A severe famine . . . gripped the land during the reign of Henry III. It was said that conditions inside became so desperate that prisoners found themselves driven to cannibalism to stay alive” (para. 3). These dire conditions led to a desperate and gruesome murder within the prison walls that served as the inciting incident that conjured up the shadow dog:

The story goes that a scholar was incarcerated amongst the despairing inmates, who wasted little time in overpowering and then devouring the helpless man. But this turned out to be a mistake, for the scholar had been imprisoned for crimes of witchcraft against the king and the state. Sure enough, so the story goes, his death was followed by the appearance of a monstrous coal-black dog who stalked the guilty prisoners within the slimy dark of the prison, killing each until a small few managed to escape, driven mad with fear. The dog's work however was not yet done; the beast hunted down each man, and thus revenged its master from beyond the grave. (paras. 3–5)

E. Bradshaw speculated that the appearance of this dark presence could be interpreted as a physical manifestation of the horrible conditions inside the jail, and the folktale likely served as a cautionary tale to youngsters to encourage them to avoid “the wrong side of the law” (para. 5). This folktale connects the motif and themes of prisons, the shadow dog, the supernatural, cannibalism, and death.

In his research on the “spectral canine,” writer and cultural critic Adam Zmarzinski (2020) argued that “the werewolf is a personification of . . . the wild wolf hidden in the guise of a domesticated dog” (p. 46). Related to this concept, Jung (1943/1966) discussed animal nature within humankind:

The growth of culture consists, as we know, in a progressive subjugation of the animal in man. It is a process of domestication which cannot be accomplished without rebellion on the part of the animal nature that thirsts for freedom. From time to time there passes as it were a wave of frenzy through the ranks of men too long constrained within the limitations of their culture. (p. 19)

Within a psychological framework, according to Zmarzinski (2020), the black dog image is a representation of the wolf inside a human and “derives [from] the concept of the shadow,” which is “a Jungian idea that an unconscious part of the psyche does not identify with the human but with the other, the dark side of being, from the werewolf” (p. 48). Not surprisingly, the werewolf motif is an ageless theme that can be found throughout many mythologies and folktales, and its confrontation is associated with the Jungian concept of the integration of the shadow.

Notably, Zmarzinski (2020) made the distinction that although the dog is “taking refuge in the wildness of the wolf, . . . nature is made whole in the form of the humanoid beast. . . . The werewolf is a personified rebellion against the domesticated self, but it is also the toying with remaining feral” (p. 46). When Hillman (2008) examined the association between the wolf and the modern-day domesticated dog, he ascertained that the latter’s disposition has much to do with “submission and mastery” (p. 148) and warned that, under the right circumstances, the “snarl and growl” (p. 155) of the wolf would emerge, and as the hair rises on the dog’s back, this shadow of their ancestry also arises. Relatedly, while exploring themes of chaos on the edge of change, science fiction researcher Amy Ransom (2015) asserted, “The werewolf offers a ready made metaphor for anxiety about change; a shapeshifter, the werewolf obviously crosses the boundaries of animal and human, a figure, in Bynum’s words, of ‘fear of new identities, fear of boundary crossing’” (p. 255).

In their research on the werewolf motif, Easley and Scott (2013) concluded that the creature symbolizes transformation because of its transition and liminality. They explained that “the metamorphosis from human to wolf is an ancient motif . . . throughout

the world, wherever wolves have existed” (p. vii). In fact, early depictions of the werewolf can be found in the archaic poem, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, and educator Craig Thomson (2023) described the werewolf’s appearance therein: “A shepherd falls in love with the goddess of love, Ishtar, who transforms him into a wolf when she grows tired of his affection” (1:16). Another literary example is the character of Lycaon from ancient Greek mythology, and in this story, “King Lycaon was transformed into a wolf by Zeus, after he attempted to trick the god into eating human flesh” (1:53). Thomson also mentioned that as “Catholicism spread through Europe, werewolves became increasingly linked to magic, sorcery, and pagan belief. By the sixteenth century, many people struggled separating werewolf fiction from fact” (2:04). Here again are the themes of cannibalism, the supernatural, and the wolf—the shadow canine—within the human psyche.

During the 1500s, “accused werewolves” were publicly executed alongside witches (Hernández, 2022, para. 7), a shocking display that certainly made a lasting impression on its audience. One notorious case, which personifies the problem of evil and shadow possession, was reported in 1589 in Germany when a man named Peter Stump was accused of turning into a werewolf and committing crimes such as murder and cannibalism while in that state (para. 1). “Of the 16 people he murdered, 13 were children,” with his own son being one of the victims (para. 1). In addition to allegedly devouring his child’s brain, Stump also “admitted to having had sexual relations with his daughter and with a succubus (i.e., a demon in the guise of a beautiful woman)” (para. 1). Providing cultural context for the event, journalist Isabel Hernández (2022) wrote, “Of

all other that ever lived, none was comparable unto this Hellhound,' an account of his execution stated" (para. 1).

Thomson (2023) also outlined the details of this story: "In his confession, Peter [Stump] claimed that the devil had given him a magic girdle, which allowed him to transform into a wolf and perform his horrific acts" (0:25). After being captured, Stump's execution was nearly as gruesome as his deeds, according to court records, but his case was not the only one. Multiple accounts of French serial killers, also claiming to be werewolves, were documented in close succession during this same period of the early 16th century. Specifically, Pierre Burgot, Michel Verdun, and Giles Garnier were labeled as werewolves, and because of their vile actions (i.e., serial killings and torture), they were convicted at trial and executed (History.com Editors, n.d., para. 5).

In his book, *Psyche and the Sacred*, while reflecting on these violent historical events, Jungian analyst Lionel Corbett (2020) raised the rhetorical question: "When the inquisition burned 'witches' in the belief this was necessary to save the witches' souls, were these men evil or just ignorant, fearful, superstitious, and unconscious?" (p. 126). Corbett then inquired, "If we judge them to be evil, what criteria are we using to make this judgement?" (p. 126), and followed this by presenting another provocative issue: "How are they different from dangerous wild animals, poisonous snakes, or earthquakes?" (p. 126). He addressed these queries by arguing that "part of the difficulty is that good and evil are notoriously difficult to define in absolute terms" and warned against the distraction of "becoming tangled in the question of whether evil is absolute or relative" and instead urged taking a psychological approach to help "us to find an individual response to the problem" of the evil that is inherent in human nature

(pp. 126–127). He also asserted that it is the responsibility of the individual to find and initiate a solution to successfully integrate this shadow material in a personal and unique way and cautioned that “the depth psychological attempt to *understand* evil must not be seen as an attempt to *justify* evil, or to make it any less evil” (p. 127). Psychologically speaking, Corbett reaffirmed the Jungian concept that the realm of evil resides in the archetype of the shadow and that personal shadow integration is essential to individuation.

According to Jungian analyst Murray Stein (1998), “Every ego has a shadow. This is unavoidable. In adapting to and coping with the world, the ego, quite unwittingly, employs the shadow to carry out unsavory operations that it could not perform without falling into a moral conflict” (p. 107). The reality that everyone holds the shadow and, correspondingly, the capacity for evil acts—even such extreme acts as committing murder—must therefore be confronted. The criminal is unique in that they pass the threshold, a place that Cerberus would metaphorically reside, into acting out these potentialities into the physical world.

Jung (1943/1966) further elaborated on the dangers of repressing these darker aspects of the psyche when he wrote, “It is true that psychoanalysis makes the animal instincts conscious, though not, as many would have it, with a view to giving them boundless freedom, but rather to incorporating them in a purposeful whole” (p. 26). Indicating that this integration of the instinctual nature leads one toward a place of empowerment through wholeness, he added that it is in “all circumstances an advantage to be in full possession of one’s personality, otherwise the repressed elements will only crop up as a hindrance elsewhere, not just at some unimportant point, but the very spot

where we are most sensitive” (p. 26). Jung further stated that if ignored, the shadow side will arise in the most inconvenient areas and forms and asserted, “If people can be educated to see the shadow-side of their nature clearly, it may be hoped that they will also learn to understand and love their fellow men better” (p. 26). Elaborating on the societal benefit of each individual integrating their own personal shadow, Jung wrote,

A little less hypocrisy and a little more self-knowledge can only have good results in respect for our neighbor; for we are all too prone to transfer to our fellows the injustice and violence we inflict upon our own natures. (p. 26)

These shadow elements thus hold both potential and danger, and from an archetypal standpoint, the dog—who is comfortable in these shadow places—seems the perfect match to companion incarcerated people through the underworld of prison and guide a heroic process of alchemical transformation and individuation within such dark spaces.

As alluded to previously, the werewolf is an enduring canine-related image that symbolizes the psychological concept of *shadow possession* (Thomson, 2023). Thomson (2023) examined the underpinnings of the archetypal shadow—the existence of evil in the human psyche—noting that “these stories explored the fears about the darker side of human nature, including taboos such as cannibalism and murder” (1:47). Zmarzinski (2020) recalled Jung’s assertion that the human response to these behaviors is typically to banish this awareness through shadow projection—a process of othering in which “humanity scapegoats this savagery onto the ghostly and uncanny—in all its definitions” (p. 48). Related to this concept, Jung said,

All that is in any way out of the ordinary and that therefore disturbs, frightens or astonishes [man], he ascribes what we should call a supernatural origin. For him, .

. . these things are not supernatural; on the contrary, they belong to his world of experience. (as cited in Zmarzlinski, 2020, p. 48)

Regardless of how unthinkable these behaviors may be, the capacity for evil acts inherent in the human psyche must eventually be confronted, both individually and collectively. Jung (1932/1976) also addressed this aspect of the human psyche in his essay, “Crime and the Soul” (pp. 343–346), where he explored how and why criminal behavior manifests in the individual and society. Asserting that “far more crime, cruelty, and horror occur in the human soul than in the external world,” he wrote, “The soul of the criminal, as manifested in his deeds, often affords an insight into the deepest psychological processes of humanity in general” (p. 345). This statement implies that the criminal acts out their dark thoughts in the external world, and although most people may imagine doing the same deeds the criminal actually does, their ideas are not acted upon but rather held within the “human soul,” thus, the criminal is guilty of acting out the shadow in a state of identification with the shadow, or *shadow possession*.

In their detailed anthology on werewolf fiction as a symbol of shadow possession, Easley and Scott (2013) analyzed the ebb and flow of the werewolf’s presence as following similar patterns. They reported that “the werewolf . . . [was] a popular figure in British and French literature of the Middle Ages” (p. vii). Although this specter existed during the same time as the infamous European witch trials, the theme of “the werewolf became nearly extinct in the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (p. vii); however, “during the nineteenth century . . . [they] made a dramatic resurgence” (p. vii), The appearance and disappearance of this image may be a reflection of the underlying group psyche found within cultural literature.

In more modern times, a psychiatric condition whereby an individual believes they can physically transform into a wolf is clinically labeled “lycanthropy,” a term derived from the Greek word *lykos*, meaning “wolf,” and *anthropos*, meaning “human” (Fischer, 2022, para. 3). Still, today, the werewolf legend lives on. In the state of Louisiana, for instance, a strong cultural belief in werewolves persists as a result of the influence of the Cajun residents who emigrated to Louisiana from French regions of Canada (Louisiana State University, 2020). The *loup-garou* (Fr., “werewolf”) has played a surprisingly prominent role in this community, although the Cajun accent has transformed the original French word into the variant *rougarou* (0:01).

This Cajun folklore is evocative of the traditional werewolf of the 1500s, as described by folklorist Carolyn Ware: “The rougarou is a very old idea or belief about people who can change shape. It is referring to a human that transforms into a creature, often a dog or a wolf” (Louisiana State University, 2020, 0:01). Ware further detailed the roots of this supernatural folklore:

This is probably unique to Louisiana—sometimes it is a white dog. . . . There were stories about the rougarou as early as the early 1500s. Our version that we hear in Louisiana has roots in France and French Canada, so it probably came to Canada and then Louisiana with the displaced people there. (0:17)

Ware commented that rumors of this entity’s existence occasionally have been known to generate mistrust among neighbors and that perhaps the tradition is passed on to the next generation in the guise of a cautionary tale for young children to curb unwanted behavior.

An image of the rougarou through the eyes of renowned New Orleans artist George Rodrigue was introduced into contemporary art and culture with his recurring

depictions of the *Blue Dog* (Mangus, 2009). This iteration of the rougarou motif was inspired by the stories Rodrigue’s mother told him throughout his childhood to discourage him from misbehaving. In her version, “the *loup-garou* was more of a crazy wolf or ghost dog that lurked in cemeteries and sugar cane fields” (para. 4), and she would even share stories about the creature to encourage good behavior, “tell[ing] him that if he wasn’t good today, the *loup-garou* would get him tonight” (para. 4). Because the image so completely captured Rodrigue’s imagination, he painted *Blue Dog* portraits (see Figure 2) almost exclusively in the latter years of his life.

Figure 2

Daisy Bear Posing With One of Rodrigue’s Blue Dog Portraits



Note. Photograph by Catherine Smith, 2025.

Summary

In conclusion, this literature review has illustrated the dog’s noteworthy relationship with humans as the two have co-evolved together over the many millennia of their shared history (Davies, 2011; Hare & Woods, 2020a, 2020b; Howie et al. 2019). In this context, the canine has been shown to have a profound physiological, emotional, and mythic impact on the human psyche (Hannah, 2006; Hillman, 2008). Jung (1954/1969) explained the value found in the integration of instinct:

Absorption into the instinctual sphere . . . does not and cannot lead to conscious realization and assimilation of instinct, because consciousness struggles in a regular panic against being swallowed up in the primitivity and unconsciousness of sheer instinctuality. This fear is the eternal burden of the hero-myth and the theme of countless taboos. The closer one comes to the instinct-world, the more violent is the urge to shy away from it and to rescue the light of consciousness from the murks of the sultry abyss. Psychologically, however, the archetype as an image of instinct is a spiritual goal toward which the whole nature of man strives; it is the sea to which all rivers wend their way, the prize which the hero wrests from the fight with the dragon. (p. 212)

Throughout history, the dog has been the guide, healer, trickster, threshold guardian, protector, and companion of the hero through the confrontation with the shadow (Hannah, 2006). This study's methodology was therefore applied as described in the following chapter to the research with the intention of showing how the dog appears to be the perfect archetypal match to accompany incarcerated people on their individuation journey toward psychological wholeness.

Chapter 3:

Methodology and Procedures

Research Approach

This qualitative research study employed a hermeneutic phenomenological and depth psychological approach to explore the lived experience of incarcerated trainers in PDPs across the United States using a hermeneutic method of analysis. The phenomenological method centered on the incarcerated trainers' perceptions and acknowledged their voices as key epistemological sources for assessing the impact of their participation in PDPs. The phenomenological approach also facilitated comprehension of the incarcerated trainers' lived experience within the unique social and cultural context of the prison environment. Furthermore, this method facilitated a deep interpretation of the individuals' narratives as it captured the symbolic aspects of their lived experiences through a Jungian lens.

In their analysis of research methods, psychologists Jonathan Smith and Pnina Shinebourne (2012) emphasized the importance of considering social context, stating that "researchers use the term *lived experience* to encompass the embodied, socio-culturally and historically situated person who inhabits an intentionally interpreted and meaningful lived world" (p. 181). Recognizing the social dynamics that shape personal experiences, particularly within the confined and regimented environment of prison, provides a comprehensive approach to defining the phenomenology of participating in PDPs. This study thus views reality as a subjective concept that is continuously being reinterpreted through an evolving personal perception that is inevitably shaped by individual contextual influences. Furthermore, this study aimed to move beyond surface-level

descriptions to unearth archetypal patterns, symbols, themes, and motifs present within the preexisting media interviews with incarcerated individuals participating in PDP programs.

Research Methodology

Hermeneutic phenomenology was implemented as the research methodology for this study. Because this approach focuses on textual interpretation, it is a well-suited design for working with preexisting media interviews (which were used to source PDP participants' experiences). Hermeneutics expert Richard Palmer (1969) stated that "a theory of understanding is most relevant to hermeneutics when it takes lived experience, the event of understanding, as its starting point" (p. 68). By focusing on the incarcerated persons' verbal descriptions of their own experiences and the meanings they ascribed to them, this study highlights the voices and experiences of incarcerated individuals—a population historically underrepresented and systematically silenced.

Research Procedures

Data Collection

Because this hermeneutic phenomenological study aimed to provide insight into the lived experience of incarcerated trainers within PDPs across the United States, the research methodology involved compiling personal accounts of incarcerated trainers by locating, reviewing, and transcribing interviews from media outlets featuring PDPs. The following chapter analyzes six audiovisual recordings that depict interviews with 12 participants who were facilitated training in PDPs in six different states throughout the United States from 2014 to 2021. The videos are sourced from YouTube, an Internet-based platform that publicly publishes videos online. These particular recordings were

uploaded by various media outlets to publicize several PDPs, and active participants were interviewed as a portion of the larger video productions.

The selection criteria for the videos required that the footage was filmed in a prison with incarcerated dog trainers who were actively participating in a PDP during the time the recording was made. To ensure that the perspectives of incarcerated trainers were inclusive, efforts have been made to (a) choose and review a diverse selection of interviews with PDP participants in several geographical locations across the country; (2) consider a number of different program structures; and (3) use transcripts that represent varying demographics within PDPs, including different ages, genders, ethnic backgrounds, and types of offenses.

The recorded narrative accounts of PDP participants were transcribed verbatim so that every word they stated in the videos is included. These six videos are presented one at a time but in no particular order, and the presentation of the inmate trainers' transcripts follows the flow that is depicted in each video. Only direct quotations and statements from the PDP participants have been extracted from the videos for analysis; interviewer questions, narration, or other nontrainer dialogue are excluded from the study; however, text is included in brackets within the transcript to provide necessary context when needed. All inmate trainer dialogue from each video is included in the data set.

Ethical Considerations

Although the videos are publicly available online, efforts have been made to protect the privacy of the incarcerated trainers. Specifically, identifying information has been removed from the transcripts, and names are replaced with pseudonyms. For example, the letter-number combinations of T1, T2, T3, and so on are used to identify the

12 individuals' transcripts, and these identifiers are assigned to each trainer. These pseudonyms have been applied throughout the dissertation, and a secure and separate record linking these labels to the actual identities of the interviewees (when provided in the YouTube video) was maintained and shared with the dissertation committee. To anonymize the identities of the participants, the links to the videos are not included in the printed copy of the dissertation.

Data Analysis

The circular process of analyzing the data with this methodology was described by health sciences researchers Lesley Dibley et al. (2020): "While it is given as a series of phases or steps, it is an ongoing, non-linear, circular, and iterative process of questioning, writing, and thinking, in which data is instrumental to accessing understanding" (p. 118). The following specific stages of this hermeneutic phenomenological methodology, as outlined by Dibley et al. (p. 119), were applied to this study:

- Beginning phase of examining first text (incarcerated trainers' transcripts and videos with notes on nonverbal expressions)
- Writing interpretative summaries and identifying emergent themes
- Continuing on with each transcript, distilling themes, and coalescing similarities in common themes and shared practices
- Dwelling in the data
- Reading along with the philosophy to aid thinking and questioning
- Thinking/analyzing in a hermeneutic circle, examining the parts and whole of each text, back and forth, with the philosophical underpinnings

- Using meditative thinking regarding the stories, questioning, and thinking to provide a bubbling up of the patterns and themes that interpret the experience
- Rendering an interpretation or fusion of horizons (participant and researchers; i.e., incarcerated trainers, Jung, and the researcher)

Another strength of this research design and methodology lies in its openness to multiple interpretations—a flexibility that acknowledges that there can be various valid understandings of an experience—which allowed for a more inclusive and multifaceted exploration of PDPs’ impact.

A depth psychological approach guided this inquiry through its focus and value on the unconscious aspects of the psyche as valid and important sources of knowledge. By using a Jungian lens to conceptualize the interpretative analysis, this study sought to uncover universal archetypal themes that arose from incarcerated trainers’ spoken words and form a Jungian-based perspective of the lived experience of incarcerated individuals—through their own words—as participants in PDPs in the United States.

Prior to and during the interpretative process, each video was viewed multiple times to develop an understanding of the content provided by the individual, as well as the context of the PDP and the correctional facility. Next, the video excerpts of the PDP participants’ portion of dialogue were transcribed verbatim to construct exact records of their verbal explanations. The data collected from the incarcerated trainers’ words and nonverbal cues in the video transcripts were then analyzed and interpreted through a Jungian framework that allowed for the exploration of themes such as individuation, alchemy, shadow work, archetypal patterns, symbolic imagery, and so on. By drawing on Jung’s *Collected Works* and von Franz’s *Collected Works*, along with other relevant

publications based in contemporary Jungian theory, this study illuminates unconscious material that was present in the PDP participants' interviews with special attention given to symbols, metaphors, patterns, themes, and motifs that are repeated throughout the various interviews.

Researcher's Reflexivity

Hermeneutic phenomenology encourages the researcher's own self-awareness by promoting reflection on preconceptions and biases and how these might influence the interpretation process. Although early phenomenological studies attempted to obtain impartial results by removing researcher bias from the study, new versions of this approach acknowledge the impossibility of completely eliminating the influence of the researcher (Smith et al., 2022). The design of this study promoted transparency of biases to help ensure that the final interpretation, which was impacted by my perspective and lived experience, remained faithfully grounded in the incarcerated trainers' expressed experiences. This research design thus offered a robust framework for delving into the depths of the incarcerated trainers' experiences, while also acknowledging the interpretative nature of the methodology.

Chapter 4:

PDP Participant Transcripts and Analysis

Transcript Content

The verbatim transcripts of PDP participants are presented in this chapter. Each of these transcribed narrations are followed by a brief description of the context of the respective prison and an explanation of the corresponding PDP's mission. Subsequently, an overview then dissects the transcript according to psychological themes and connects them to a summary of Jungian concepts. Lastly, the transcript is analyzed in a detailed, interpretative summary that describes the phenomenology of the individual incarcerated trainer within a Jungian framework.

Video One: T1

T1 (Video One) Transcript.

This is my pup that lives with me right now. I'll have him anywhere between 12 to 20 weeks, and he's been here for 2 weeks. With Auggie, I get up at 6 o'clock in the morning, and we go potty. I come in; I feed him. It gives us a reason to bond. You know, we have to learn how to work together with the staff to be able to raise healthy puppies. You know, everyone has to be in agreement and be on the same page because they have to come out, let us out. If the dogs are sick, they have to be, they have to respond quickly to it. So, it just teaches us all to work as a team in a community, instead of "us against them." I'm a lifer, and I, there's no way for me to repay the debt for the harm that I've done to society, but this gives me an opportunity to make some kind of amends. We can help put out dogs that will go out there and potentially save a life.

Context of T1 Setting. This PDP operates in an all-female, maximum-, medium-, and minimum-security prison in which inmates teach puppies who will become highly trained service dogs and will be adopted nationwide to benefit children and veterans with disabilities.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T1. Table 1 correlates the T1 transcript and Jungian concepts.

Table 1

Thematic Analysis of Transcript T1

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>This is my pup that lives with me right now. I'll have him anywhere between 12 to 20 weeks, and he's been here for two weeks.</i>	Open-hearted connection, oxytocin-loop, and attachment bonding	Eros principle, nurturing mother archetype, and orphan archetype
<i>With Auggie, I get up at 6 o'clock in the morning and we go potty, I come in: I feed him.</i>	Routine, structured, disciplined, and goal-oriented	Logos and Eros principles, nurturing mother archetype and structured father archetype, and parental complexes
<i>It gives us a reason to bond.</i>	Human–canine bond, oxytocin loop, and relationship	Eros and Logos principles and transcendent function
<i>I'm a lifer.</i>	Identity	Motif of wounded healer (an archetypal wound that never heals)
<i>There's no way for me to repay the debt for the harm that I've done to society, but this gives me an opportunity to make some kind of amends. We can help put out dogs that will go out there and potentially save a life.</i>	Making amends, restitution, and rehabilitation	Motif of wounded healer and redemption

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T1 Applying Jungian Concepts. This video began with T1 holding an adorable white puppy, and she appeared calm and embodied in the present moment as she introduced the dog: “This is my pup that lives with me right now. I’ll have him anywhere between 12 to 20 weeks, and he’s been here for two weeks.” This initial scene exuded the nurturing mother archetype and Eros principle as T1 engaged with the young animal with maternal pride and a gleam in her eye. This heartwarming demonstration of the numinous quality within the relational power of the human–canine bond is almost palpable on the video recording.

Next, this Eros scene was complimented and balanced by the Logos principle (i.e., the structured, ordered, and goal-oriented aspect of the psyche), symbolized in T1’s subsequent statement: “With Auggie, I get up at 6 o’clock in the morning and we go potty. I come in; I feed him.” In this situation, T1 integrated her own capacity to nurture and love (both the dogs and herself) through the training process as she provided a balance of nurturance and routine. Over time, this repetitive engagement would allow her psyche to instinctually move toward stability and expansion through ego development and shadow integration. This phenomenon is described by Jung (1951/1968c):

If it has been believed hitherto that the human shadow was the source of all evil, it can now be ascertained on closer investigation that the unconscious man, that is, his shadow, does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc. (p. 266)

As T1 discovered new capacities through her relationship with the dog, such as the resolve to work hard and persevere, she began to realize previously unconscious

potentialities within her personality. Thus, T1 expanded toward wholeness through participation in the PDP and the process of individuation began within the prison.

The statement that follows, “It gives us a *reason to bond*,” encapsulates Logos (i.e., reason) coming into union with Eros (i.e., connection and relationality), demonstrating the transcendent function. This sublimation and integration of both Eros and Logos principles, as demanded of T1 by the PDP, is an example of the transcendent function in action—an essential component of the individuation process. Jung (1958/1969) claimed that the transcendent function occurs when something new is born through the union and harmonizing of opposites within the psyche by holding both poles of the opposites, such as both sides of an archetype—the light and the dark in consciousness—simultaneously. In T1’s case, the transcendent function is demonstrated through the union of opposites that were constellated within the subject’s psyche as she nurtured and disciplined the animals.

The individuation process also involves synchronistic events that happen in the outer world (Stein, 2006). Stein (2006) explored and defined the principle of individuation in his works:

Obviously, whatever the images for individuation may be, they have to be understood as metaphors for a psychological process that takes place within a space that is not literal. But this space *cannot* be described adequately as purely inner and mental, either. This is the paradox. (p. 142)

The objective psyche, found in relation to the archetypal ego or a mythopoetic perspective, is the space where “individuation proceeds as much by synchronicity—a union of inner psychic images and meanings and outer persons and events—as it does by

causal sequences of events and outcomes” (p. 142). Stein further elaborated on the phenomenon by stating, “The space of individuation, therefore, is complex, even paradoxical. Individuation needs, and uses, the *whole* world for its various operations of separation and union” (p. 142). This process is also evident in the synchronistic opportunity to participate in a PDP.

The community aspect is critically important as a multifaceted component of the phenomenology of individuation within a prison setting. For example, T1 highlighted the way the inmates and guards unified and began collaborating together through the shared symbol of the dogs and the PDP:

You know, we have to learn how to work together with the staff to be able to raise healthy puppies. You know, everyone has to be in agreement and be on the same page because they [the staff] have to come out, [to] let us out. If the dogs are sick, they have to be, they have to respond quickly to it. So, it just teaches us all to work as a team in a community instead of “us against them.”

In this instance, the puppy acted as a symbol of transformation that served a unifying function that bridged the opposites (i.e., guards and prisoners) and caused them to “come out” of their stations and cells and come together as a team.

The psychological development and expansion of T1 is then juxtaposed with the confinement and finality of the statement: “I’m a lifer.” In the video, T1 exhibited a calm demeanor as she made this profound comment that indicated that she will spend the rest of her life in jail. Furthermore, she seemed to have accepted her fate as well as developed meaning within her circumstances of living in confinement in the prison setting. This is reminiscent of Jung’s (1951/1968c) observation about difficult situations: “Suffering,

whether it be Christ's passion or the suffering of the world, remains the same as before. Stupidity, sin, sickness, old age, and death continue to form the dark foil that sets off the joyful splendor of life" (p. 267). This underscores that the transcendent function—the union of the opposites—is an important component of facilitating a move into acceptance when faced with suffering, and this acceptance was displayed by T1 during her interview as she embodied resilience.

Although during T1's previous shadow possession she had acted out her capacity for murder (as shared by the narrator in the video), she was nevertheless successful in facing her past and growing by finding heartfelt connections and meaning through her involvement in the PDP. T1 reflected,

There's no way for me to repay the debt for the harm that I've done to society, but this gives me an opportunity to make some kind of amends. We can help put out dogs that will go out there and potentially save a life.

As suggested in Jung's (1951/1968c) writings, a confrontation with the shadow is illustrated as T1 took responsibility for her past actions and engaged in a process of developing self-awareness and insight that is an essential component of individuation. Regarding "those concepts and archetypes which manifest themselves in the course of any psychological treatment that penetrates at all deeply," Jung remarked,

The first of these is the SHADOW, that hidden, repressed, for the most part inferior and guilt-laden personality whose ultimate ramifications reach back into the realm of our animal ancestors and so comprise the whole historical aspect of the unconscious. (p. 266)

Just as Jung emphasized the integration of both the positive and the negative shadow, T1 discovered that she was not *only* evil when she demonstrated through the PDP that she also possessed the aptitude for nurturing and training dogs for a greater purpose. Stein (1998) stated, “Jung holds that opposites are united in the psyche through the intervention of a ‘third thing.’ A conflict between opposites—persona and shadow, for example—can be regarded as an individuation crisis, an opportunity to grow through integration” (p. 123). When T1 was able to sublimate and integrate both her negative and positive shadow, this union of opposites therefore constellated a new identity for her—as a dog trainer. The darkness of the prison thus mingled with the joy of the human–canine connection as a dynamic backdrop for T1’s individuation process.

This stark reality of T1’s lifetime prison sentence is also suggestive of the archetypal imagery that is personified by the wounded healer and Greek mythological creature Chiron (Greene, 2023). This perpetually unhealed wound, however, is a motif that, when integrated, promotes the development of compassion and redemption. Such an opportunity for redemption and renewal is especially important for T1 because it demonstrates that she was capable of creating meaning within her circumstances and has shown the capacity to grow beyond her shame. Moreover, T1 has transformed her wound into an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of children and veterans with disabilities living in her community. Consequently, T1 has put compassion into action and embodied altruistic intention.

Ultimately, a life driven by compassion and the desire to make a positive impact in the world was an outcome of T1’s participation in the PDP and her relationship with the canines that she trained to become service animals within the greater collective. As

she underwent transformative psychological experiences in the PDP, T1 moved in and out of light and dark aspects of psyche, companioned by her dog.

Video One: T2

T2 Video Transcript.

It gave me purpose, something I really never had, and it just, I mean, who wouldn't love these guys [referring to the puppy T2 is holding in the video]? But it taught me discipline, it taught me a responsibility, and it just, it gave me things that I wasn't getting anywhere else.

Context of T2 Setting. This PDP operates in an all-female, maximum-, medium-, and minimum-security prison in which inmates teach puppies who will become highly trained service dogs and will be adopted nationwide to benefit children and veterans with disabilities.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T2. Table 2 correlates the T2 transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 2

Thematic Analysis of Transcript T2

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>It gave me purpose, something I really never had</i>	Empowerment, meaning, and purpose	Ego-Self axis
<i>And it just, I mean, who wouldn't love these guys? [referring to the puppy T2 is holding in the video]</i>	Human–canine bond and love	Eros

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>But it taught me discipline, it taught me a responsibility</i>	Training relationship with the dog leading to healing related to discipline, order, structure, connection, being seen, and an open-hearted relationship	Logos
<i>And it just, it gave me things that I wasn't getting anywhere else.</i>	Lack of resources and neglect	Shadow integration, transcendent function, and individuation

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T2 Applying Jungian Concepts. In

T2's few statements, she emphasized the positive psychological impact of finding purpose within the PDP: "It gave me purpose, something I really never had." This statement points toward some intangible but meaningful element that, through reflection, she could see was heretofore missing from her lived experience. When looking back over the individuation process, it is not uncommon for the individual to state that something indescribable was missing—this wording is often used to explain the phenomenology of the unconscious when it is demanding expansion and psychological movement toward greater authenticity and internal alignment inherent in the unifying archetype of the Self (Jung, 1951/1968d).

Although in a dark and grim situation, T2's instinct and intuition were still intact, demonstrated by her ability to perceive the available opportunities for meaning and purpose in prison that led her toward the PDP, a vital *life-line*. From a Jungian perspective, this newfound purpose in life is often associated with effectively communicating with the unconscious. As Jung (1916/1966) explained, "the construction of 'life-lines' reveals to consciousness the ever-changing direction of the currents of

libido” (p. 294). Jung also emphasized the fluid, flexible, and temporary nature of the life-line, “for life does not follow straight lines whose course can be predicted far in advance. ‘All truth is crooked,’ says Nietzsche” (p. 294). This description of the living nature of the libido is followed by details regarding how to understand the movements of this life-force energy: “These life-lines, therefore, are never general principles or universally accepted ideals, but points of view and attitudes that have a provisional value” (p. 294). Jung then explained the indications that signify a life-line course change may be occurring: “A decline in vital intensity, a noticeable loss of libido, or, on the contrary, an upsurge of feeling indicate the moment when one line has been quitted and a new line begins, or rather ought to begin” (p. 294). T2’s narrative indicated that the PDP provided an opportunity for her libido to begin moving toward the dog as a symbol of transformation; thus, the PDP became a life-line and an important aspect of her individuation process.

Consequently, T2 successfully followed a life-line offered by the unconscious and, through the relationship with her dog, was able to engage with her life in a vital and meaningful way. She became responsible for another being and developed the capacity to work through challenges to finish important tasks. When following this life-line, Jung (1916/1966) encouraged developing a working relationship with the unconscious, which he described as “an art, a technique, a science of psychological life ” (p. 295) and then expounded upon this approach:

The true end of analysis is reached when the patient has gained an adequate knowledge of the methods by which he can maintain contact with the unconscious, and he has acquired a psychological understanding sufficient for

him to discern the direction of his life-line at the moment. Without this his conscious mind will not be able to follow the currents of the libido and consciously sustain the individuality he has achieved. (p. 295)

Through her participation in the PDP, T2 integrated previously undeveloped aspects of her psyche. She discovered new parts of herself and engaged inner resources.

Jung (1916/1966) maintained that “analysis . . . is by no means a therapeutic method of which the medical professional holds a monopoly” (p. 295) and that the processes of individuation are available to everyone. T2 provides an example of individuation occurring as a natural process within a prison setting. Relatedly, the psychological importance of an incarcerated person acquiring a conscious connection with meaning and purpose, as described by T2, was also a core concept developed by psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl (1946/1992) in his book, *Man’s Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*. Based on firsthand experiences while in a concentration camp, Frankl asserted that the prisoners there who embodied a strong purpose or a meaningful reason to live were more likely to survive than those who had lost hope and meaning in life. During his imprisonment, Frankl focused on his connection to meaning through his commitment to survive so that he could publish his theory of logotherapy, as he realized he was the only one who could share his wisdom with the world. Others in the camp had their own unique motivations that inspired them to endure (e.g., being a father to a son), but Frankl argued that when a prisoner lost connection with meaning and purpose, the individual would soon succumb to the harsh circumstances.

The next sentiment that T2 expressed illustrates the meaningful relationship between dogs and humans that is at the heart of the success of the PDPs: “And it just, I

mean, who wouldn't love these guys [referring to the puppy she is holding in the video]?" This moment between T2 and her dog points toward the human–canine bond—a living archetypal pattern that constellates love, oxytocin, and connection. In this way, the Eros principle of relationality, belonging, self-worth, self-value, and love (all of which are needed resources within the harsh environment of prison) were accessed through participation in the PDP. When perceived psychologically, this bonding phenomenon could also be interpreted through T2's projection onto the dog, who acted as a symbolic container in which she could access her own repressed feelings of love and connection. This human–canine relationship resourced her with new opportunities to feel and express love.

In the next section, T2 referred to the effects she experienced because of her involvement in the opposite, but complementary, goal-oriented (i.e., Logos) approach to training her dog: "It taught me discipline, it taught me a responsibility." These qualities of discipline and responsibility that were embodied through participating in the PDP can be interpreted through the lens of the father archetype. As various aspects of the father complex were constellated within the prison setting and were integrated by T2, she began to build a connection with her own psychological traits of inner structure and self-discipline through the routine and structure of the PDP. Here a process of integration resulted in a new relationship with structure and routine for T2. Through this integration, she became more internally stabilized as she provided discipline and structure for the dogs.

The next portion of T2's account expands on how aspects of the parental complexes had been unintegrated prior to her involvement with the PDP. She reflected,

“It just, it gave me things that I wasn’t getting anywhere else,” which supports the interpretation that many new skills and internal resources were accessed by T2 through her involvement in training the dogs. This is an example of the compensatory function of the unconscious, which asserts that life will offer opportunities to integrate underdeveloped inner aspects. Moreover, this is also an illustration of the transcendent function, in which Eros and Logos came together to create a new experience (i.e., a new relationship with the Self that manifests through a felt sense of wholeness). T2 thus showed that exterior forces in life can offer synchronistic opportunities to integrate what is needed for healing (Jung, 1952/1969).

The experiences T2 shared about her involvement in the PDP appear to be deeply symbolic on many levels. As she cared for and instructed dogs, she was possibly integrating and healing the parental (i.e., mother and father) complexes through different aspects of the PDP (i.e., caring for, nurturing, disciplining, and training the dog). In other words, as T2 nurtured and took responsibility for the dogs, she was also simultaneously learning to love, nurture, and take care of herself.

What started as participation in a program to give back to the community became a corresponding inner journey through which T2 discovered a sense of purpose that had been missing from her life before the PDP. Participation in the program initiated a union of the opposites (i.e., Eros and Logos, as well as the archetypal mother and father), setting the stage for an opportunity to engage the transcendent function. In brief, this transcript is an illustration of resourcing, expansion, and positive shadow integration through the embodiment of meaning and purpose, which was initiated and guided by the

dog (as a living symbol) that resulted in T2 accessing new internal resources through her participation in the PDP.

Video Two: T3

T3 Video Transcript.

After committing a crime, being in here, you sit around, and you just think about, like, how bad things are, how bad of a person I am for being in this predicament. You sometimes feel like everybody looks at you as, like, being condemned. Once I got the dog, and got into the program, it's like things were better; it's just like a whole different outlook. I look forward to things now; I look forward to getting up and doing things with them. I don't really think about, you know, being in here as, like, a bad thing anymore. Once I started working with the dogs and seeing, like, how smart they are and how they respond to you with the proper training and skills that you show them, it amazed me. Just knowing that potentially, one day, I can have a dog that's helping somebody out in so many ways, and that I took part in bringing that all together, it makes me almost feel like a proud dad.

Context of T3 Setting. This PDP operates in an all-male, medium-security prison and teaches inmates to train rescue dogs to become service animals for wounded veterans.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T3. Table 3 correlates the T3 transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 3*Thematic Analysis of Transcript T3*

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>After committing a crime, being in here, you sit around, and you just think about, like, how bad things are, how bad of a person I am for being in this predicament.</i>	Depression, shame, guilt, loneliness, self-judgment, withdrawal, isolation, negative self-talk, rumination, and stagnation	Confrontation with the shadow archetype, <i>nigredo</i> , <i>prima materia</i> , orphan archetype, and mad dog
<i>You sometimes feel like everybody looks at you as, like, being condemned.</i>	Shame, rejection, and outcasted by society	Scapegoat for collective shadow and prisoner as symbol
<i>Once I got the dog, and got into the program, it's like things were better; it's just like a whole different outlook. I look forward to things now; I look forward to getting up and doing things with them. I don't really think about, you know, being in here as, like, a bad thing anymore.</i>	Hope, new beginning, and reengagement with life	Rescue dog and PDP as symbols of redemption and healing that libido moves forward out of regression toward individuation, alchemical whitening stage, archetype of the Self, rebirth, and wounded healer motif
<i>Once I started working with the dogs and seeing, like, how smart they are and how they respond to you with the proper training and skills that you show them, it amazed me.</i>	Training relationship with the dog leading to healing related to discipline, order, structure, connection, being seen, and open-hearted relationship	Healing the Eros principle (i.e., connection, being seen, and open-hearted relationship), individuation with ego development related to integration of shadow material associated with the father archetype (i.e., "makes me feel like a proud dad"), discipline, order, structure, ego-Self axis, and numinous experience of the relationship

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>Just knowing that potentially, one day, I can have a dog that's helping somebody out in so many ways, and that I took part in bringing that all together, it makes me feel like a proud dad.</i>	Connection with a sense of meaning and purpose (i.e., with the dog, PDP, recipient of the service animal, and community) and parenting skills	Self archetype, ego-Self axis, individuation, reddening phase of alchemy, Eros, symbols of transformation (i.e., dog and recipient of service animal), wounded healer motif, hero's journey, instinctual healing, and father complex
<i>And that I took part in bringing that all together.</i>	Connection to something greater with meaning and purpose, ability to make a positive contribution, and improved self-esteem	Numinous experience, individuation process, wounded healer, reddening phase of alchemy, Self archetype, and new connection with collective (no longer a shadow holder)

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T3 Applying Jungian Concepts. The narration of T3 was spoken from inside a prison cell, and his bleak outlook seemed unsurmountable when he stated, “After committing a crime, being in here, you sit around, and you just think about, like, how bad things are, how bad of a person I am for being in this predicament.” As implied by T3’s statement, his initial frame of mind—adjusting to the reality of imprisonment—was overcome with depression, rumination, and hopelessness (the essence of the first alchemical stage known as the *nigredo*). This psychological state can be interpreted as a symbolic descent into the desolation of a meaningless existence, isolated within incarceration.

Right away, T3 began by describing himself in a cell ruminating—an obvious symbolic image of containment. More subtly, the trainer was also contained within the PDP as well as within the sacred container of the relationship between T3 and the dog. These varying layers of containment were all “nested” within the larger container of the

prison itself, much like a Matryoshka doll set. The symbolism of a *temenos*, a concept extensively explored by Jung (1935/1976), is evident in the introduction and throughout the transcript as the environment of the prison, and the jail cell acts as the setting for T3's individuation process and shadow integration processes. This "picture" demonstrates what Jung called "an attempt at self-cure. It brings all the disparate elements into the light, and it also tries to put them together into that vessel" (p. 178). For T3, the consolidation and integration of material sourced from a fragmented mental state united a consciousness of wholeness within a sturdy container. Jung defined such an event:

This idea of a receptacle is an archetypal idea. You find it everywhere, and it is one of the central motifs of unconscious pictures. It is the idea of the magic circle which is drawn round something that has to be prevented from escaping or protected against hostile influences. (p. 178)

Within the *temenos* of his cell, T3 was involved in a process of circumambulation—mentally going over and over reflections on his life and his choices.

T3's initial declaration, "After committing a crime, being in here, you sit around, and you just think about, like, how bad things are, how bad of a person I am for being in this predicament," along with his next statement, "You sometimes feel like everybody looks at you as, like, being condemned," insinuate that this self-persecution was intensified by his awareness of society's tendency to project the collective shadow onto certain individuals and groups, including prisoners. Historically, the practice of public executions of prisoners was intermingled with the symbolic and ritual practice of scapegoating to purge the collective shadow when it became too big to contain, as described by Jungian analyst Liz Greene (2023): "The Scapegoat was often chosen

because of a physical deformity or disability, or because of having previously committed a crime, or simply because of perceived ‘differences’” (p. 229). Hannah (2006) also acknowledged this bias, stating, “It’s a disturbing archetypal pattern, but it seems that communities have always felt some chosen individual, especially holy or especially hated or both, should carry the collective burden of evil” (p. 229). From a mythopoetic perspective, prisons can be considered holding places of the collective shadow and, as such, they become a living archetypal image that embodies a numinous quality, a liminal space, similar in many ways to the underworld found in mythology. Sitting in a cell, day after day, T3 had to face his own personal shadow material as well as the collective projections that are affixed to prisoners by society.

Explaining shadow integration, Jung (1943/1968) said, “The contents of the personal unconscious (i.e., the shadow) are indistinguishably merged with the archetypal contents of the collective unconscious and drag the latter with them when the shadow is brought into consciousness” (p. 32). In further analyzing this concept by explaining, Jung (1936/1968) cautioned, “We must not underestimate the devastating effect of getting lost in the chaos, even if we know that it is the *sine qua non* of any re-generation of the spirit and the personality” (p. 74). These profound statements introduce the theme of regeneration and the seed of rebirth that germinates from the shadow material, which offers hope that even in the most desperate circumstances, there are opportunities for meaning-making and individuation.

This motif of a descent into the underworld was also adeptly described by von Franz (1987/2024) as “a symbolic or archetypal situation with which every encounter with the unconscious begins, namely, the complete breakdown of former activities, of the

goal in life and, in some form, of the flow of one's life energy" (pp. 29–30). von Franz shared how Jung depicted the emergence of this death/rebirth pattern: "Suddenly everything gets stuck; we are blocked and stuck in a neurotic situation, and in this moment our life energy is dammed up, only to break through with the revelation of an archetypal image" (p. 30). As Jung (1943/1968) stated, the process of individuation and psychological transformation often begins with an uninvited "encounter with the dark half of the personality, or 'shadow,' which comes of its own accord" (p. 31). As described above, the introduction of an archetypal image can initiate a process of psychological transformation and renewal. This is illustrated by T3's depiction of the dog gently guiding and companioning him on his individuation journey.

Concurrently, this process of individuation has also been interpreted through the symbolic language of alchemy, a metaphor that Jung (1943/1968) studied and developed within psychology. As he explained, "what the symbolism of alchemy expresses is the whole problem of the evolution of personality described above, the so-called individuation process" (p. 35). For instance, the state of mind of suffering described by T3 can be associated with the *nigredo* phase of the alchemical process. Expanding on the characteristics of this concept, Jung (1955–1956/1970a) wrote, "Confrontation with the shadow produces at first a dead balance; a standstill that hampers moral decisions and makes convictions, ineffective or even impossible. Everything becomes doubtful, which is why the alchemists called this stage *nigredo*, *tenebrositas*, chaos, melancholia" (p. 497). Jung built upon this concept as he continued: "It is right that the magnum opus should begin at this point, for it is indeed a well-nigh unanswerable question how one is to confront reality in this torn and divided state" (pp. 497–498).

The *nigredo* can be interpreted as a death process, during which the old self, thought forms, unconscious belief systems, and sense of identity are broken down so that something new can emerge. Although this transformation process is inevitably torturous, a dramatic change in T3's perspective can be definitively detected as the transcript continues. His words described his inner experience as he moved out of the *nigredo* and into the whitening phase of purification and integration:

Once I got the dog, and got into the program, it's like things were better; it's just like a whole different outlook. I look forward to things now; I look forward to getting up and doing things with them. I don't really think about, you know, being in here as, like, a bad thing anymore.

According to Jung (1955–1956/1970b), this movement through the *nigredo* and into the next stage of the alchemical process is an act of grace, as “it repeats the miracle of the phoenix, of transformation and rebirth (the transformation of the *nigredo* into the *albedo*, of unconsciousness into ‘illumination’)” (p. 77). This radical shift in T3's sense of himself, interpreted as the transition into the *albedo* (i.e., whitening) phase, is also intimately connected to shadow integration, as Jung explained (1950/1976a): “Becoming conscious of an unconscious content amounts to its integration in the conscious psyche and is therefore a *coiunctio Solis et Lunae*. This process of integration is one of the most important, helpful factors in modern psychotherapy” (p. 752). Here, Jung has characterized the *albedo* as a type of psychological breakthrough that arises when the individual's suffering is transformed through a process of purification and integration, which, in T3's case, is facilitated by participation in the PDP and the human–canine bond.

Within the conceptual model of “the phenomenon of the *transference*” (Jung (1950/1976a, p. 753), the dog companion, as well as the PDP, represent symbolic archetypal images that become transference objects upon which unconscious material is projected; thus, psychologically, the dog can be interpreted as a living symbol of transformation. Over time, the integration of these projections progresses as they are slowly withdrawn and stabilized within the conscious awareness of the individual. The statement from T3 that follows, “Once I started working with the dogs and seeing, like, how smart they are and how they respond to you with the proper training and skills that you show them, it amazed me,” suggests the surfacing of a fresh awareness that has a numinous quality, signaled by the descriptive term “amazed.” Regarding such special revelations, Jung (1954/1969) wrote,

The archetypes have, when they appear, a distinctly numinous character which can only be described as “spiritual,” if “magical” is too strong a word. . . . In its effects it is anything but unambiguous. It can be healing or destructive, but never indifferent. (p. 205)

For Jung, numinosity was an essential element in any genuine process of psychological transformation.

This transformation of T3’s identity, which seemed to emerge slowly over time, also suggests that he may have been attempting to integrate material associated with qualities such as responsibility, creativity, purpose, and internal structures of stability. Supervising the dog may have allowed T3 to integrate characteristics like these, which are related to the father complex, as his statement implies: “Just knowing that potentially, one day, I can have a dog that’s helping somebody out in so many ways, and that I took

part in bringing that all together, it makes me almost feel like a proud dad.” This process of caring for and training the canine likely activated the development of patience and emotional regulation, which are an important counterbalance to the qualities of the negative father complex that is pervasive throughout the prison environment. Within the penal setting, the symbolism of the archetypal father is evident in an array of dominating characteristics such as authoritativeness, rigidity, coldness, punishment, misuse of personal power, control, and an obvious lack of Eros. Through the human–canine bond, T3’s consciousness thus eventually embodied a new relationship with power, authority, discipline, and self-efficacy that the integrated father complex offers. Relatedly, the sentiment above also seems to allude to the return phase of the hero motif, in which the hero has overcome almost insurmountable obstacles and returns to where he started with new wisdom to share with the collective (Campbell, 2004).

Simultaneously, this section of T3’s transcript could be interpreted as corresponding to the reddening phase of the alchemical process in which an inner state of wholeness and unification sets the foundation for an emerging relationship with the Self—the beginning and end of individuation. As the themes of redemption and rebirth emerged, the dog also offered renewed connections—the instincts, the power principle, the Eros principle, and the collective. This motif of rebirth may have been introduced when the presence of canines in the prison softened this harsh space by reintroducing their human counterparts to the natural and instinctual world. Then, by demonstrating unconditional love to T3, the canine activated the Eros principle through a renewed capacity for relationality and open-hearted connectedness.

Additionally, through T3's participation in the PDP, a new relationship with incarceration was fostered. When finding oneself in a prison environment—with its unique demands and potential safety issues—connecting with a dog through a PDP may be supportive and grounding. This insight supports the finding that the oxytocin loop (MacLean & Hare, 2015) and the physiological aspects of the Eros principle are naturally activated within the human–canine bond. Consequently, within the *temenos* of the PDP, both T3 and the dog were eventually able to grow and develop new skills filled with meaning and life purpose within the container of the PDP. When Jung (1935/1976) described the symbolism of the mandala, he said it “has exactly this meaning of a holy place, a *temenos*, to protect the center” (p. 178), which he then identified as “a symbol which is one of the most important motifs in the objectification of unconscious images. It is a means of protecting the center of the personality from being drawn out and from being influenced from outside” (pp. 178–179). The sacred container is essential within the practice of alchemy, and it must be strong enough to withstand the fire of the *nigredo* without breaking. Ultimately, T3 was no longer only holding the collective shadow projection but had developed into more of a whole human individual—experiencing both dark and light aspects of himself.

In summary, T3's transcript, interpreted through a Jungian lens, presents a personalized description of an individuation process that was taking place inside prison walls, guided by the human–canine bond. The PDP and 1-year training relationship with the rescue dog can be understood metaphorically as a container—a sacred *temenos*—within which the alchemical process of transformation was able to take place. In this symbolic context, the canine became a bridge between the conscious and the

unconscious, guiding T3 into ego-strengthening activities that developed his capacity for routine, patience, responsibility, commitment, and so on, which led him toward an evolving sense of meaning and purpose and away from a place of despair. Through this opportunity to teach service dogs to assist wounded veterans, T3 also gained a vocational skill to apply upon release.

Moreover, the process of shadow integration experienced by T3 while training the dogs was mirrored in the canine as well. These four-footed trainees are often brought from rescue shelters, and within these challenging circumstances, they, too, learn new skills on their own journeys to become service animals, alongside the inmates within the prison environment (Larkin, 2017). Conclusively, the eventual outcome of T3 realizing his potential for positive impacts through his behaviors, and his amazement at this revelation, highlights the numinous quality that is at the heart of the human–canine bond.

Video Two: T4

T4 Video Transcript.

It kind of shined a light; like, I can do a lot in here, you know? I feel like I achieved something, like I did something—something that most people probably not gonna get a chance to do. This right here is gonna probably be the most positive thing you can do within my situation, you know? And I just thought a lot about all of the good that's gonna come out of the dog. This dog is gonna become more than the program. He's gonna do more than just what's written down on the pieces of paper and all that. This dog is gonna essentially change someone's life, and that, that right there was, it was beautiful.

Context of T4 Setting. This PDP operates in an all-male, level-three, medium-security prison and teaches inmates to train rescue dogs to become service animals for wounded veterans.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T4. Table 4 correlates the T4 transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 4

Thematic Analysis of Transcript T4

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>It kind of shined a light; like, I can do a lot in here, you know?</i>	Realization, new awareness, opportunity, hope, meaning, and illumination	Self archetype, ego-Self axis, philosopher's stone, integration of wholeness, and unconscious material becoming conscious
<i>I feel like I achieved something, like I did something— something that most people probably not gonna get a chance to do. This right here is gonna probably be the most positive thing that you can do within my situation, you know?</i>	Connection with a sense of meaning and purpose, positive self-regard, and improved self-esteem	Motif of redemption, individuation, whitening and reddening stages of alchemy, hero's journey, and wounded healer archetype
<i>And I just thought a lot about all of the good that's gonna come out of the dog.</i>	Meditation on a positive life-affirming image (i.e., life-enhancing rumination)	Healing power of the human–canine bond and dog as numinous symbol—activating strong processes of projection (onto the dog of his own potential)

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>This dog is gonna become more than the program. He's gonna do more than just what's written down on the pieces of paper and all that. This dog is gonna essentially change someone's life, and that, that right there was, it was beautiful.</i>	Awe, surprise, reverence of beauty, and connection with nature	Dog as numinous and unifying/redemptive symbol, and wounded healer archetype—inmate trainer, rescue dog, and recipient of dog (each acting from the wounded healer pattern), and projection of T4's healing potential onto the dog

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T4 Applying Jungian Concepts. As this transcript commenced, the speaker opened with the image of light. This illumination was implied by T4's statement: "It kind of shined a light; like, I can do a lot in here, you know? I feel like I achieved something." Based on the connotation of T4's introduction, he seemed to have had a breakthrough and successfully moved through and exited the darkness of the *nigredo* stage in alchemy (i.e., the confrontation with the shadow in individuation) and entered into a subsequent stage of alchemy, the *albedo* (i.e., whitening). Jung (1950/1976a) proposed that the opposites begin to integrate within the *nigredo* phase, and something new, such as a different identity or perspective, is born in the *albedo*: "In this condition [the *nigredo*], the elements are fighting each other. Here Mercurius plays the role of the *prima materia*, the transforming substance" (p. 752). Subsequently, "the procedures in the next phase have the purpose of illuminating the darkness by a union of the opposed elements. This leads to the *albedo* (whitening), which is compared to the sunrise or to the full moon" (p. 752). This collective and archetypal image of light—as a symbol—is associated with hope, redemption, and renewal. This common motif often appears after a period of darkness, when the individual is able to

escape the chaos of the *nigredo*, and the ego successfully integrates unconscious content through a process of illumination.

Moreover, Jung (1952/1967d) described the image of shining light as a symbol that interpreted as an archetypal pattern associated with numinosity and an awareness of the archetype of Self—the inner image of wholeness that is both the center and circumference of the psyche—which is often symbolized as a circle. Discussing this connection between light, circles, and the archetype of the Self, Jung posited, “The discord into which the human soul has fallen can be harmoniously resolved through the sun as a natural object which knows no inner conflict. The sun is not only beneficial, but also destructive” (p. 121). Here, Jung was again emphasizing the tension of the opposites and hinting toward its integration. He specified that

it shines equally on the just and the unjust, and allows useful creatures to flourish as well as the harmful. Therefore, the sun is perfectly suited to represent the visible God of this world, i.e., the creative power of our own soul, which we call libido, and whose nature it is to bring forth the useful and the harmful, the good and the bad. (p. 121)

His words beautifully and skillfully demonstrate that light imagery illuminates the symbolic nature of the Self archetype and discloses its relationship with the libido (i.e., personal creative energy), which can be used for both “good” and “bad.” In the same sense, T4 had shifted his focus and determination to benefit others as well as himself through his relationship with the dog and the mission of the PDP to train service animals for wounded veterans.

Relatedly, T4's transcript implies the integration of the positive shadow, a lesser-known process in individuation that mirrors the integration of the dark shadow. Through this positive shadow integration, unrealized potentialities and gifts within the personality are accessed and embodied (Jung, 1958/1969). Specifically, the light may represent the integration of this positive shadow, which involves a conscious relationship with unrealized, disowned, or undervalued potentialities of the psyche, such as empathy, leadership, and/or a capacity for meaning-making. Because the symbol of light can be interpreted as being associated with these capabilities, the shining light in this example may be related to T4's conscious realization of and ability to embody his own positive qualities and the unrealized potential of his current life situation. As Jung (1958/1969) taught, individuation is not only about confronting the dark shadow but also about integrating the buried potentialities, capacities, and gifts—essential components when moving toward a state of wholeness. In the context of this transcript, the symbolic aspects of this metaphorical light can also be interpreted as an experience of psychological expansion.

When T4 continued with the observation, "I feel . . . like I did something—something that most people probably not gonna get a chance to do," he was expressing feelings of a sense of achievement, confidence, and positive self-esteem that can be associated with ego strengthening, endurance, and the application of an ongoing personal effort toward reaching a goal—qualities that are exemplified by T4 within the constraining and difficult situation of imprisonment. The insinuation of personal achievement that ascends from this excerpt demonstrates a process of individuation as a natural process that can occur in any circumstance, no matter how dire the conditions. In

this case, even prison had the potential to become a container for individuation and provided life-affirming opportunities in which meaning and purpose were able to be found, followed, and fulfilled.

T4's next statement, "This right here is gonna probably be the most positive thing that you can do within my situation, you know?" invites the listener or reader to consider these thoughts within the mythopoetic frame of the wounded healer, as it is woven throughout the narrative. Greene (2023) explained the origins and details of this mythology, concluding that "Chiron has become the archetypal figure of the Wounded Healer who develops compassion and the power to help the suffering of others because of his own poisoned wound" (p. 5). As this section of T4's transcript illustrates, this theme of unavoidable and ongoing suffering leads to a death and rebirth process that allows the transformed individual to acquire the compassion that lays the foundation for the desire to assist in the alleviation of the suffering of others.

In the next passage, T4's comments about the dog suggest that the animal itself had become a living symbol of the Self—a projection that bridges redemption and a path to healing for T4, the rescue dog, and the veteran recipient of the trained canine:

I just thought a lot about all of the good that's gonna come out of the dog. This dog is gonna become more than the program. He's gonna do more than just what's written down on the pieces of paper and all that. This dog is gonna essentially change someone's life, and that, that this right there was, it was beautiful.

When considering the dog as symbol in this context, a number of archetypal roles emerge: guide, guardian, companion, redeemer, and wounded healer. Relatedly, Jung

(1964/1976) wrote about the ways that the “archetypes appear in practical experience. In the first case they appear in their original form—they are images and at the same time emotions. One can speak of an archetype only when these two aspects coincide” (p. 257). The distinction is portrayed more vibrantly in Jung’s theorizing about symbolism: “When there is only an image, it is merely a word-picture, like a corpuscle with no electric charge. It is then of little consequence, just a word and nothing more” (p. 257); however, if there is a living quality and “if the image is charged with numinosity, that is, with psychic energy, then it becomes dynamic and will produce consequences” (p. 257).

Further emphasizing the importance of avoiding the misunderstanding that the intellectual conceptualization of an archetype and the actual existence of the archetype are one and the same, Jung (1964/1976) stated,

It is a great mistake in practice to treat an archetype as if it were a mere name, word, or concept. It is far more than that: it is a piece of life, an image connected to the living individual by the bridge of emotion. The word alone is a mere abstraction, an exchangeable coin in intellectual commerce. But the archetype is a living matter. (p. 257)

In mythology, for example, when dogs undertook the roles of guide, guardian, and companion through the darkness of the underworld, they were known as psychopomps (Jung, 1943/1968). In these ancient settings, the canine was not just a furry best friend, frolicking along with the hero, and in this modern context, the dogs in the PDP are not ordinary rescue dogs of an inconsequential prison program designated to mark time. On the contrary, in both cases, the animals’ roles were elevated through amplification, meaningful healing, and deep symbolism, and the PDP acts as a transformative conduit

that results in far-reaching effects of changed lives—including those living outside of the prison walls.

In retrospect, throughout this narrative, T4's experience also illustrates the importance of the ego as explained by von Franz (1972/2024), who outlined Jung's emphasis on "carefully preserving the integrity of the 'little light' of ego-consciousness" (p. 42). She related that "Jung never tired of stressing the importance of understanding and realizing the significance of this little light, indeed he found in it the ultimate meaning of our existence" (p. 42). Later, Jung "studied the way in which individuals adapt to their environment with their 'little light,' the ego, ... [and] discovered that one could divide these attempts at adaptation into four basic forms of psychic activity or psychological function" (p. 42). Additionally, T4's transcript illustrates the activation of and engagement with the four prominent ego functions identified by Jung. As reiterated by von Franz, quoting Jung,

the four functions provide a sort of basic orientation for the ego in the chaos of appearances. "*Sensation* (i.e., sense perception) tells you something exists; *thinking* tells you what it is; *feeling* tells you whether it is agreeable or not; and *intuition* tells you whence it comes and where it is going." (p. 43)

As shown in Table 5, T4's words suggest that personally experienced and was able to develop and integrate each of these ego functions through his experiences training the dog in the PDP.

Table 5*Ego Function Excerpts of T4*

Ego function	Excerpt
Sensation	“It kind of shined a light; like, I can do a lot in here, you know.”
Thinking	“And I just thought a lot about all of the good that’s gonna come out of the dog.”
Feeling	“I feel like I achieved something, like I did something—something that most people probably not gonna get a chance to do.”
Intuition	“And I just thought a lot about all of the good that’s gonna come out of the dog.”

Furthermore, the four functions, as outlined by Jung, are interwoven into the PDP experience in additional coinciding ways: sensation (handling the dog), thinking (learning new skills), feeling (experiencing emotion through the oxytocin loop because of the encounter with the dog; MacLean & Hare, 2015), and intuition (a deep knowing related to the dog’s needs and purpose; von Franz, 1972/2024).

Symbolically, the numinosity of this entire experience, which T4 described as “beautiful,” led to an awe-inspiring, transforming force that T4 recognized and linked with the underlying patterns that allowed this inner metamorphosis to occur. This evolving individuation process, which was driven by the human–canine bond and participation in the PDP, illustrates the transformative power and redemptive potential, even in the most harsh and extreme setting of a penitentiary. This numinous encounter in the penal environment, where T4 was managing the horrors of imprisonment, is interconnected with deep meaningful relationships and connections; thus, the prison (i.e., something terrible and difficult) is able to coexist with wonder, beauty, luminosity, and wholeness.

In summary, T4's transcript demonstrates an example of the transcendent function—a unifying mechanism in the psyche that joins consciousness and the unconscious and allows the capacity to hold the tension of the opposites (e.g., both the beauty of the PDP and dog with the terrors of prison), allowing a new experience to be born. Relatedly, Jung (1929/1947) shared his expertise on this matter:

In the meantime, I had learned to see that the greatest and most important problems of life are all fundamentally insoluble. They must be so, because they express the necessary polarity inherent in every self-regulating system. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. (p. 89)

Serendipitously, Jung's observation is also evocative of the wounded healer (also embodied by T4), as this figure's medicine and compassionate gifts result from cultivating a healthy relationship with the inevitable suffering of mankind. Ultimately, the integration of this *prima materia* cultivated hope and redemption when it incited T4 to develop compassionate wisdom after realizing that he had the ability to create positive change in the community where he was living from prison.

Video Three: T5

T5 Video Transcript.

Stop. Enough [speaking to the dog]. When you study dog behavior, light bulbs start going off in your head about yourself and about your family, and about everything that applies to everything on this planet. *Pax, yes* [speaking to the dog]. They have an unwanted behavior, you want to change it in increments, and then you start applying that to yourself. Once you show a dog, this is what I want from you, they want nothing more than to do that. And it's, you know, I want to, I want to be like that one day. I

want to be that, but . . . I'm sorry. You're here, and you put up a lot of walls 'cuz you don't want to be hurt. I kind of just keep my head down, and you just go from one place to the next. And then I came down here, and I started out as a trainer, and everything changed. I have 9 more years, and I'm definitely gonna continue this. The industry is like . . . I can't even believe how explosive it is right now. It's very exciting and encouraging, and knowing you are going to have a spot in the community—and that's huge, that's huge.

Context of T5 Setting. This PDP operates in an all-female facility with minimum, medium, and closed levels of security. In this setting, unwanted canines from animal shelters—often in danger of being euthanized—are rescued and trained as service dogs to assist persons with disabilities. In addition to the training program, the PDP also provides grooming and kennel services for pet owners from the surrounding community.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T5. Table 6 correlates the T5 transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 6

Thematic Analysis of Transcript T5

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>When you study dog behavior, light bulbs start going off in your head about yourself and about your family, and about everything that applies to everything on this planet.</i>	Personal reflection and new awareness	Unconscious integration, collective unconscious, archetypal patterns, transcendent function, and anima mundi

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>They have an unwanted behavior, you want to change it in increments, and then you start applying that to yourself.</i>	Behavior modification, self-reflection, training, dedication, perseverance, and responsibility	Individuation, ego development, projection, Eros, and alchemical transmutation of psychological contents over time
<i>Once you show a dog, this is what I want from you, they want nothing more than to do that. And it's, you know, I want to, I want to be like that one day. I want to be that, but. . . I'm sorry.</i>	Sadness, regret, shame, guilt, and projection onto dog as ideal (i.e., idealization transference)	Invitation for integration of shadow material, idealization transference, awareness of human internal conflict, and complex theory
<i>You're here, and you put up a lot of walls 'cuz you don't want to be hurt. I kind of just keep my head down, and you just go from one place to the next.</i>	Shutdown, trauma and nervous system dysregulation (i.e., dorsal vagal shutdown)	<i>Nigredo</i> , suppression of feeling function, and orphan archetype
<i>And then I came down here, and I started out as a trainer, and everything changed.</i>	Healing aspect of human–canine bond and relationship while training a dog in the PDP	Ego development, ego-Self axis, individuation, synchronicity, and whitening phase of alchemy
<i>I have 9 more years, and I'm definitely gonna continue this. The industry is like . . . I can't even believe how explosive it is right now. It's very exciting and encouraging, and knowing you are going to have a spot in the community—and that's huge, that's huge.</i>	Hope for the future, belonging, new identity, and vocational skills	The hero's return, redemption, collective psyche, and belonging

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T5 Applying Jungian Concepts. At the beginning of the transcript, T5 perceptively stated, “When you study dog behavior, light bulbs start going off in your head about yourself, and about your family, and about

everything that applies to everything on this planet.” With a breath of deep wisdom, T5 shared that the skills and knowledge she had acquired while training dogs were instrumental in helping her develop a new understanding of her personal, internal, and family dynamics. Pertinently, Stein (1998) stated,

Jung had always held that projections are created by the unconscious and not by the ego. We are not responsible for our projections, only for not becoming conscious of them, taking them back, or analyzing them. They occur spontaneously and create a view of the world and of reality that is based on unconscious images and structures rather than on tested perceptions of reality. (pp. 141–142)

Concurrently, this statement implies that T5 had acquired a new awareness of the collective unconscious by identifying and making conscious the underlying universal patterns that were shaping her life.

Through her own individuation process, which was initiated in the PDP, T5 was offered the opportunity to become aware of and consciously disengage from unconscious patterns that had led her toward suffering. As Jung (1958/1969) explained, “the secret participation of the unconscious is everywhere present without our having to search for it, but as it remains unconscious we never really know what is going on or what to expect” (p. 79). He continued, describing the effects of unconscious processes: “What we are searching for is a way to make conscious those contents which are about to influence our actions, so that the secret interference of the unconscious and its unpleasant consequences can be avoided” (p. 79). Likewise, T5 demonstrated an insightful recognition of the opportunity to disengage from a fate of playing out archetypal patterns unconsciously.

In this case, as “light bulbs start going off,” she was able to make connections between her own instinctual and archetypal patterns, which accompanies processes of integration and sublimation. Moreover, when the collective unconscious is activated by life events, Jung (1948/1969b) labeled this as an occurrence “which we call a ‘constellation,’ . . . [a] term [that] simply expresses the fact that the outward situation releases a psychic process in which certain contents gather together and prepare for action” (p. 94). One could thus presume that, for T5, training dogs constellated a process of embodied individuation.

The immediate reference to light bulbs in T5’s transcript (“light bulbs start going off in your head about yourself, and about your family, and about everything that applies to everything on this planet”) can also be interpreted as an image of the *albedo* stage of alchemy, when insights begin to emerge and unconscious material breaks through into consciousness. Jung (1950/1976b) engaged archetypal images as embodiments of the universal patterns of life and argued, “As the archetypes are instinctive, inborn forms of psychic behavior, they exert a powerful influence on the psychic processes” (p. 658). Moreover, he emphasized the importance of meaning-making in this process:

It is not simply a matter of rescuing the natural instincts (this seems to have been Freud’s particular preoccupation), but of making contact again with the archetypal functions that set bounds to the instincts and give them form and meaning. For this purpose a knowledge of the archetypes is indispensable. (pp. 658–659)

This realm of instincts and archetypal patterns (e.g., the collective unconscious) serendipitously aligns with T5’s description.

This concept of the constellation of psychic processes mentioned earlier is closely related to complex theory. Coincidentally, in this psychological model, the way of integrating a complex is exactly as T5 described her experience in the content that follows: “They have an unwanted behavior, you want to change it in increments, and then you start applying that to yourself.” As in this example, the material, emotion, and archetypal core that drives a complex can only be integrated slowly over time and includes a process of inquiry involving both the internal and external worlds. Significantly, because there are numerous correlations between the transcript material and this Jungian concept, training a dog could become a metaphor for such a psychological process.

T5 next stated,

Once you show a dog, this is what I want from you, they want nothing more than to do that. And it’s, you know, I want to, I want to be like that one day. I want to be that . . . but I’m sorry.

In this statement, she acknowledged that animals naturally follow these archetypal patterns and instinctual inclinations with an innocent loyalty. In the same context, she recognized that humans have a unique capacity for self-reflection as well as an ability to override the instinctual nature through personal free will, which can interrupt and shift those impulses and patterns. Cautioning against resisting these unconscious instincts, Jung (1950/1976b) wrote,

The advantage of “free” will is indeed so obvious that the civilized man is easily persuaded to leave his whole life to the guidance of consciousness, and to fight

against the unconscious as something hostile, or else dismiss it as a negligible factor. (p. 658)

Furthermore, he noted that it is a natural response to fear the unconscious and its potential hostility, which is repressed and suppressed, and “because of this, . . . [one] is in danger of losing all contact with the world of instinct—a danger that is still further increased by . . . living an urban existence in what seems to be a purely man-made environment” (p. 658). This is an important consideration when considering T5’s experience in prison, and the dog acts as a bridge into that world of instinct within this setting.

Simultaneously, T5 seemed to be highlighting the role of the dog as a guide and, as such, was tapping into correlating concepts von Franz (1952/2021) described: “In fact, the helpful animal represents a wisdom that is vastly superior to human reason, that acts as a guide. In antiquity, the psychopomp Hermes carried this role” (p. 217). This relinquishment of the power of personal will and its shortcomings as it relates to the ability to influence patterns of the collective unconscious, once they have become constellated, is deep psychological work that was occurring within T5 as she developed a relationship with the unconscious while training the canine and allowing the dog to guide the way back to the instincts.

In that same excerpt, T5 expressed the sentiment, “I want to be that, but . . . I’m sorry.” This content and the palpable emotion she showed strongly suggests that T5 had a complex that she was in the process of integrating. (Possibly, this could be the shadow complex, because a distinct tone of shame accompanied her confession, and the narrator had just shared information about her murder conviction.) Due to her awareness level and display of persistent sadness, the integration process therefore may not yet have been

completed (at the time of this recording). Jung (1948/1969b) described such a quandary: “Everyone knows nowadays that people ‘have complexes.’ What is not so well known, though far more important theoretically, is that complexes can *have us*” (p. 96). He built upon this by declaring, “The existence of complexes throws serious doubt on the naive assumption of the unity of consciousness, which is equated with ‘psyche,’ and on the supremacy of the will” (p. 96). This statement actually is significant because “every constellation of a complex postulates a disturbed state of consciousness. The unity of consciousness is disrupted and the intentions of the will are impeded or made impossible” (p. 96). When T5 briefly apologized toward the end of this section, theoretically, she may have been overwhelmed, as she acknowledged the gravity of her past behavior, which probably wounded her personal identity as she integrated and sublimated her shadow.

T5 immediately followed the latter remark by expressing a desire to advance beyond her current situation. Here, T5 touched on the psychological difficulty of having an ego that is identified or *possessed by a complex*—a phenomenon that can last for several minutes or extend throughout a lifetime; for example, one can become identified (possessed) by the shadow or any other complex, as illustrated by Jung (1948/1969b):

Today we can take it as moderately certain that complexes are in fact “splinter psyches.” The aetiology of their origin is frequently a so-called trauma, an emotional shock or some such thing that splits off a bit of the psyche. (p. 98)

Postulating the source of such a mindset, Jung said, “Certainly one of the commonest causes is a moral conflict, which ultimately derives from the apparent impossibility of affirming the whole of our nature” (p. 98); thus, even in brief moments, when a complex takes over the ego, this can feel like a major moral defeat. Eventually, this process can

generate inner conflict when oppositional complexes are constellated and the opportunity to hold the tension of the opposites is presented through the transcendent function.

Such was the case with T5 when she integrated her shadow of criminal behavior and her positive attributes that developed through acting as a skillful and loving dog trainer while participating in the PDP. As a result, a new sense of self and identity, which included the opposites, emerged and was realized. Simultaneously, the wounded healer archetype was embodied by T5 when she incorporated the shadow wound into a life-giving experience, a foundational aspect of this archetypal pattern of transformation that healed both the canine (a wounded healer) and the animal's recipient.

As T5 described her involvement in the PDP, she elaborated on her tendency to emotionally shut down because of the challenges of living in a prison: "You're here, and you put up a lot of walls 'cuz you don't want to be hurt. I kind of just keep my head down, and you just go from one place to the next." As she continued, however, T5 insinuated that she was receiving psychological and physiological benefits from engaging in the human-canine bond: "And then I came down here, and I started out as a trainer, and everything changed." As these statements illustrate, T5's psychological state distinctly shifted through her relationship with the dogs in the training program, probably in part because engaging with animals has been shown to support nervous system regulation by activating the oxytocin loop (an important physiological benefit to underscore; Beetz et al., 2012). This positive impact is significant because a dysregulated nervous system cannot heal and grow. As T5's nervous system came back into balance through the human-canine bond, the Eros principle was also integrated through the safe emotional connections with the dog and other individuals in the PDP.

Furthermore, T5's strong statement that "everything changed" (in her lived experience) demonstrates the powerful transformation she underwent within the program because of these factors. Overall, the process points toward a numinous experience occurring when T5 transitioned from robotically moving from one place to the next, in a constant state of fragmented disengagement, to becoming transformed by a relationship with a dog and discovering a meaningful inner journey and a newfound sense of meaning and purpose while living in prison. This section of the transcript also highlights an important and unique benefit of the PDPs: they offer inmate participants an elevated, respected place in society upon their release because of their emergence with a new identity/persona and vocational skills as a dog trainer. The PDPs capacity to constellate (i.e., initiate) a psychic process of rebirth and regeneration—on both individual and societal levels—is personally revolutionary, according to T5:

I have 9 more years, and I'm definitely gonna continue this. The industry is like I can't even believe how explosive it is right now. It's very exciting and encouraging, and knowing you are going to have a spot in the community—and that's huge, that's huge.

The typical inhospitable reception, labeling, and negative attitude of the larger community toward prisoners can make their reentry into society quite difficult. Often, recidivism occurs when former inmates revert to their prior behaviors because they lack the support to forge a new path forward (Frankel & DePoy, 2021). Only genuine transformation is able to overcome the challenges associated with life outside of the prison walls, and the rebirth of the new self into the community is a motif of renewal.

Video Four: T6**T6 Video Transcript.**

The goal of the program is really just to domesticate them, to get them used to living with people. They've been around 400 dogs their whole life, so all they do is they race, they sleep in kennels. They're not used to being around people, so just kind of getting them used to that, getting used to be loved on, teaching them how to sit, lay, you know, how to leave things alone.

Context of T6 Setting. This PDP operates in a male-only prison that teaches nonviolent offenders to rehabilitate abused greyhounds, who have been retired from racing, so they can be placed in permanent homes.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T6. Table 7 correlates the transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 7*Thematic Analysis of Transcript T6*

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>The goal of the program is really just to domesticate them, to get them used to living with people.</i>	Domestication for reentry into society (both dog and dog trainer) and relationship skills building	Wounded healer, synchronicity, and mirroring that they are both in the same situation (the dog and the trainer)
<i>They've been around 400 dogs their whole life, so all they do is they race, they sleep in kennels.</i>	Trauma, abuse of animals as a psychopathic behavior, and impact of environment when growing up	Greyhounds on a process of individuation

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>They're not used to being around people, so just kind of getting them used to that, getting used to be loved on</i>	Developing a relationship with the dog	Taming the mad dog, Kalsched's (1996) work on the self-care system and the tendency to push away from the resource due to trauma, and the orphan archetype
<i>Teaching them how to sit, lay, you know, how to leave things alone.</i>	Training the dog	Ego development, routine, structure, discipline, integrated father archetype, and wounded healer

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T6 Applying Jungian Concepts. In his transcript, T6 began the narration by focusing on the goal of the PDP and explaining the abusive backgrounds that the greyhounds had survived. In his role, he was tasked with helping the dogs learn to have a relationship with humans and overcome their trauma so they could heal, avoid isolation, reintegrate into society, and become household pets during their retirement. He explained, "The goal of the program is really just to domesticate them, to get them used to living with people. They've been around 400 dogs their whole life, so all they do is they race, they sleep in kennels." Congruently, the impact that abuse has had on the retired greyhounds, with the resulting themes of trauma, injured instincts, and domestication, were not only relevant to the canines, but those same motifs were also mirrored in T6's lived experience as he guided the greyhounds through a parallel progression that would culminate in their reintegration into society. In other words, just as the canines were being domesticated in the PDP, the programs of the correctional institution were designed to rehabilitate T6 so he could adapt to living in society at large. There are also symbolic correlations between the imagery of the dogs in the kennels and the cells that house the trainers, as well as the monotony, forced

participation, and obligatory expectations of existing in highly controlled environments (for both dog racing and the prison system). T6's sentiment is thus quite profound when considered through a lens of transference and projection. The PDP becomes a third relational space that supports these processes, as T6 and the greyhounds mirrored each other within complex layers of metaphors.

As he continued, T6 explained that a major hurdle for the greyhounds' healing was overcoming the trauma that they had endured as racing dogs. As he conveyed, "they're not used to being around people, so just kind of getting them used to that, getting used to be loved on." Socializing, trusting, and bonding with humans is directly related to the healing process T6 described. Learning to develop relationships by breaking down fear-based and protective survival reactions is an important component of trauma processing, as discussed at length in Jungian analyst Donald Kalsched's (1996) work on healing early relational trauma. In his book, *The Inner World of Trauma*, Kalsched explained that the inner, protective, self-care system of the individual who has experienced early childhood trauma can cause the person to react counterintuitively when faced with integrating and opening up to a missing positive resource such as love or safety. Kalsched (2013) introduced the metaphor of an autoimmune disorder of the soul to describe this phenomenon and discussed how it develops when the archetypal self-care system (which is supposed to protect the vulnerable aspects of the psyche from harm) actually begins to attack the very resources that the individual is craving—such as love, connection, and play—because they feel vulnerable.

Similarly, the greyhounds in the program initially resisted accepting love, connection, and care because they were not accustomed to positive human attention and

relationality. Within the context of the PDP, however, when T6 trained the greyhounds and engaged in an Eros-driven relational process, ego strengthening and trauma repair were actualized for both the greyhound *and* the inmate trainer. This combination of building a loving relationship and having routine, structure, and discipline (a temenos) seemed to set the stage for the individuation process for both the greyhounds and T6. Coincidentally, as the dogs began to trust and open up to healing, so did the inmate trainer.

Amazingly, this process of healing trauma and softening the protective system is supported by research on the neurobiology of the human–canine bond in which the oxytocin loop is activated in both humans and dogs (MacLean & Hare, 2015). The nervous systems of both beings begin to co-regulate, and their emotional barriers lower because of consistent acts of care, connection, and routine. Such was the case with this PDP participant and his greyhound students. With the help of the trainer, the canines traveled on a parallel journey of individuation through the dog training program, which offered opportunities for co-regulation and rewiring of the nervous system as well as greater access to physical and emotional states of safety and restoration.

T6 may have shared a psychology similar to the greyhounds (i.e., hypervigilant and on guard), and as the trainer nurtured and rehabilitated the dogs, he was also caring for the wounded and guarded parts of himself. While T6 guided the greyhounds to safety and well-being, both the trainer and the dogs thus embodied the wounded healer archetype, because each had psychic wounds that were actively healing one another. This occurred because each helped the other to integrate both Eros and will to power. As proposed by Jung (1943/1966),

Eros is a questionable fellow and will always remain so, whatever the legislation of the future may have to say about it. He belongs on one side to man's primordial animal nature which will endure as long as man has an animal body. (p. 28)

He also described the connection between spirit and instinct: "On the other side he [Eros] is related to the highest forms of spirit. But he thrives only when spirit and instinct are in right harmony" (p. 28). An imbalance in these areas of the psyche is detrimental, according to Jung:

If one or the other aspect is lacking to him, the result is injury or at least a lopsidedness that may easily veer towards pathological. Too much of the animal distorts the civilized man, too much civilization makes sick animals. (p. 28)

T6 was thus able to tend to and heal his own wounded instinctual nature within himself by being in a relationship with and becoming involved in the healing process of the wounded instinctual nature of the greyhounds.

In a Jungian sense, projection may have played a role in this restoration, as T6 was healing the traumatized aspects of himself while offering wellness to the canines. At the same time, as the dogs learned to be relational, the trainer also began to engage with society in a new, more productive way. Incidentally, it was documented that these greyhounds had been physically abused and neglected, but T6 may also have carried his own history of trauma or, at the very least, experienced systemic trauma from being incarcerated. T6 thus became a kind of fatherly guide as he shared nurturance, acts of love, and care while assisting dogs in their transition from a survival-driven instinctual life into an embodied, safe, and relational one. This same transformation may have simultaneously taken place inside of T6, and his personal wounds developed into sources

of compassion and empathy as he embodied the wounded healer. The pathways toward wholeness became clearer as the self-care system that once kept him isolated began to soften through the love shared with canines. This mutual “domestication” ultimately became redemptive as both the greyhounds and T6 connected through an open-hearted and loving relationship.

For T6, processing trauma by developing internal safety and permitting an emotion such as love, even though this can trigger apprehension, helped him to build up his own confidence while the corresponding ego strengthening and development grew. Indirectly, T6 referred to the importance of ego development and strengthening when concluding that he was “teaching them how to sit, lay, you know, how to leave things alone.” This illustrates the transcendent function at work in the PDP as structure, responsibility, and order enter the dynamic. This kind of environment allowed for ego development within T6.

Video Four: T7

T7 Video Transcript.

I pretty much kept to myself in prison, you know. I talked to a few people and things, but so, when they talked about this program, I was one of the first ones to sign up. I signed up for it real quick. I was glad I was accepted for it because I didn't have a lot of time left to go through a lot of dogs. So, I am thankful I got the opportunity.

Context of T7 Setting. This PDP operates in a male-only prison that teaches nonviolent offenders to rehabilitate abused greyhounds, who have been retired from racing, so they can be placed in permanent homes.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T7. Table 8 correlates the transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 8

Thematic Analysis of Transcript T7

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>I pretty much kept to myself in prison, you know. I talked to a few people and things.</i>	Isolation and shutdown	<i>Nigredo</i>
<i>But so, when they talked about this program, I was one of the first ones to sign up. I signed up for it real quick.</i>	Action stage of change	Libido moving toward an external object that holds symbolic significance, serendipitous event, community engagement, and Eros principle
<i>I was glad I was accepted for it because I didn't have a lot of time left to go through a lot of dogs. So, I am thankful I got the opportunity.</i>	Belonging and connection	Redemption and initiation into hero's journey

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T7 Applying Jungian Concepts. In the beginning phases of the individuation process (illustrated metaphorically in Jungian literature as retreating into a cave, descending downward, experiencing a time of isolation and gestation, or being swallowed by a whale) consciousness turns inward. Similarly, T7 was becoming more isolated from others, as captured in his statement: “I pretty much kept to myself in prison, you know.” Jung (1955–1956/1970a) poetically described this psychological state when he declared, “Hence, we immediately find ourselves in darkness, in the *nigredo*, for the *arcanum*, the mystery, is dark” (p. 519). Because it is

such a dark and difficult place, the penitentiary setting can be interpreted symbolically as the *nigredo* itself.

As he continued, Jung (1955–1956/1970a) expounded upon this emerging process of individuation: “Self-knowledge is an adventure that carries us unexpectedly far and deep. Even a moderately comprehensive knowledge of the shadow can cause a good deal of confusion and mental darkness” (p. 520). Emphasizing that an authentic process of individuation includes the individual and their relationship with the collective, Jung asserted,

Nobody can know himself and differentiate himself from his neighbor if he has a distorted picture of him, just as no one can understand his neighbor if he had no relationship to himself. The one conditions the other and the two processes go hand in hand. (p. 520)

Relatedly, T7 was describing the natural tendency to isolate, withdraw, and protect oneself when in a harsh and cold environment such as a prison. This sad and lonely existence started to change after he met and began to invest in a rewarding relationship with the dogs he was training in the PDP. In this situation, the motif of transformation and rebirth within the context of an individuation process is very apparent as the canines guided T7 into developing the ability to access his own confidence and heart-opening connections.

Next, T7 stated, “

I talked to a few people and things, but so, when they talked about this program, I was one of the first ones to sign up. I signed up for it real quick. . . . I am thankful I got the opportunity.

Although the sentiment of the entire transcript exudes a dichotomous tension between the speaker's inclination toward isolation and his desire for reintegration, redemption, and renewal, the above explanation reveals T7's creative impulse to move out of "the cave" and into community engagement. The individuation process is reflected in T7's drive to leave the remote isolation and gravitate toward a position where he would experience greater wholeness and integration through engagement with the community.

These new feelings of gratitude, belonging, and self-worth that T7 experienced in the human–canine bond, comingling with the despair, sorrow, and horrors of prison, were brought together as a direct result of his participation in the PDP and are analogous with Jung's (1952/1967c) description of the hero's path of transformation symbolized by the sun:

Just as the sun, by its own motion and in accordance with its own inner law, climbs from morn till noon, crosses the meridian and goes its downward way towards evening, leaving its radiance behind it, and finally plunges into all-enveloping night, so man sets his course by immutable laws and, his journey over, sinks into darkness, to rise again in his children and begin the cycle anew. The symbolic transition from sun to man is easily made. (p. 171)

Just as this passage illuminates Jung's view of the psyche as cyclical in nature, T7's journey poetically mirrored this circular movement from the dark night of hibernation and withdrawal to the "zenith" of unconditional love and meaning through his relationship with his dog-in-training.

Correspondingly, this new connection with the PDP and the greyhounds also served as an impetus to reawaken T7's stagnant psychic energy (i.e., libido). This

metamorphosis and redirection of the libido toward a meaningful and altruistic engagement evolved into personal renewal as T7 transformed from the “demon” state of isolation and boredom into the more “heroic” mindset of confidence, connection, and purpose. Ultimately, T7 rose “again in new splendour” (Jung, 1952/1967c, p. 171) because he had found a new purpose and hope in becoming a dog trainer, as reflected in his saying, “I’m glad I was accepted for it because I didn’t have a lot of time left to go through a lot of dogs. So, I am thankful I got the opportunity.” The dog thus played a significant role as loyal companion, healer, and guide to T7.

This narrative account can also be interpreted symbolically, as T7 became an embodiment of the hero archetype, who is called to rise from his descent (i.e., the underworld of imprisonment) through the individuation process. Concurrently, T7’s dog-in-training symbolizes the animal companion often found in hero myths aiding the protagonist on his journey. An example mentioned earlier is the story of the hero Heracles, wherein he engaged the mythological dog, Cerberus (Jung, 1952/1967a). This mythopoetic perspective unveils multilayered symbolic elements that can be applied to T7’s real-life situation. In an amplification of the transcript, the prison could represent a kind of psychological underworld for T7, as the narrative began with a descent into hibernation that mirrored Heracles’s journey into the underworld, where he was tested and eventually grew and individuated. Moreover, the prison cell could also be symbolic of an alchemical vessel that provided both the space and container in which T7’s psyche was able to undergo a transformation. Relatedly, the dog took on the same role as Cerberus, and when this figure appeared in the mythological tale, he was guarding the

entrance to the underworld, a symbolic picture that also represents the gatekeeping of the unconscious realm.

When Jung (1952/1967a) elaborated on the individual's longing to bring unconscious material into consciousness by creating a metaphor that combined the hero motif with a lunar body, he also referenced the well-known encounter of Heracles wrestling Cerberus from his station at the gate and carrying him up into the light:

The paralysis of progressive energy has in truth some very disagreeable aspects. It seems like an unwelcome accident or a positive catastrophe, which one would naturally rather avoid. In most cases the conscious personality rises up against the assault of the unconscious and resists its demands, which, it is clearly felt, are directed not only against all the weak spots in the man's character, but also against his chief virtue (the differentiated function and the ideal). It is evident from the myths of Heracles and Gilgamesh that this assault can become the source of energy for an heroic conflict. (pp. 300–301)

Consequently, T7's journey from emotional hibernation to renewed purpose mirrors Jung's analysis of the hero myth.

In the hero myth, there is a much deeper psychological process occurring within the psyche as one's consciousness goes through a process of individuation. In the transcript, the dogs in the PDP can be interpreted as having acted as a trusted guide on T7's heroic journey. As training progressed, T7 was able to learn about himself and the dogs, and this integration of unconscious material can be interpreted as a renewal of the personality. Within their partnership and mutual process of healing in the training program, the dog embodied the healing power in the natural world that assisted T7 in

reconnecting with his emotions as he bridged the gap and tapped into himself in a new, deeper way, as evidenced by T7's rediscovery of purpose.

As a canine, the greyhound has inherently presented the natural and instinctual aspects of life that the overly conscious mind may have lost touch with, guided the consciousness as it navigated this awakening, and grounded the mind to protect it from becoming lost and disoriented. The human–animal bond, fostered by the PDP's rehabilitation focus, along with the training process allowed T7 to connect with his own instinctual nature and supported his quest for psychological wholeness or individuation, which granted him a new purpose and an opportunity to develop an altruistic orientation toward life, while also experiencing meaning and purpose in helping the greyhounds heal their trauma and reintegrate into society as pets.

In this role, the dog also served as a living primordial symbol, an element that brings about transformation or healing in the psyche for T7 in his individuation process. Jung (1950/1969) explained this connection:

The legend has the following meaning: Anyone who gets into that cave, that is to say the cave which everyone has in himself, or into the darkness that lies behind consciousness will find himself involved in an—at first—unconscious process of transformation. By penetrating into the unconscious he makes the connection his unconscious contents. This may result in a momentous change of personality in the positive or negative sense. (p. 135)

The timing of the implementation of the PDP into the prison where T7 resided can be interpreted as a serendipitous occurrence and opportunity to heal that he took actionable steps to engage in and personally experience. At the same time, the psychic energy of the

libido was also affected. This beautiful metamorphosis of the libido moving inward and then outward again toward the living symbol of the dog thus appears to have transpired within T7 during his engagement in the PDP.

The natural death–rebirth cycle that occurs during individuation was adeptly illustrated by T7’s account and was also explored by Jung (1936/1968):

It is rewarding to watch patiently the silent happenings in the soul, and the most and the best happens when it is not regulated from outside and above. I readily admit that I have such a great respect for what happens in the human soul that I would be afraid of disturbing and distorting the silent operation of nature by clumsy interference. (p. 102)

Amazingly, this natural and mysterious process of rebirth and renewal were even available in prison. In T7’s case, psychological renewal was constellated through engagement with the PDP. Moreover, as T7 responded to the call of his soul and engaged this synchronistic opportunity for renewal, he began moving out of stagnation and into a more engaged and creative psychological state.

Video Four: T8

T8 Video Transcript.

They’re the oldest, oldest breed of dogs. They’re the only dog mentioned in the Bible. Egyptians used to worship them, and they’d actually, there’s the Egyptian god named Anubis, which is a greyhound. And they’d be buried with, the Egyptian kings would be buried with their greyhounds when they, when they passed away. So, they’re, you know, real interesting dogs.

Context of T8 Setting. This PDP operates in a male-only prison that teaches nonviolent offenders to rehabilitate abused greyhounds, who have been retired from racing, so they can be placed in permanent homes.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T8. Table 9 correlates the transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 9

Thematic Analysis of Transcript T8

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>They're the oldest, oldest breed of dogs. They're the only dog mentioned in the Bible. Egyptians used to worship them.</i>	Amplification	Collective unconscious, amplification of Bible passage Proverbs 30:29–31, amplification of Egyptian mythology, and the religious instinct
<i>And they'd be actually, there's the Egyptian god named Anubis, which is a greyhound.</i>	Projection	The numinous and amplification of dog as Anubis in Egyptian mythology
<i>And they'd be buried with, the Egyptian kings would be buried with their greyhounds when they, when they passed away.</i>	Symbolic nature of the dog as a guide and psychopomp	Collective unconscious, dog as guide through the liminal underworld of life in prison, and dog as guide and companion of the hero/heroine through the individuation process
<i>So, they're, you know, real interesting dogs.</i>	Mental stimulation and a capacity for symbolic thinking and engagement with life	Holding a mythopoetic perspective or developing an archetypal eye, meaning, and purpose

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T8 Applying Jungian Concepts. This transcript opened with T8's insight into the greyhound breed's historic, mythic, and symbolic significance: "They're the oldest, oldest breed of dogs. They're the only dog

mentioned in the Bible. Egyptians used to worship them.” This statement from T8 about the greyhound’s dynamic significance as an archetypal image illustrates a profound example of amplification and demonstrates the value and importance of the human–canine bond in the psychology of humans. In the middle of T8’s passage, when he asserted that the greyhound is mentioned in the Bible, he was likely referring to the passage in Proverbs 30:29–31 of the *King James Bible* (1769/2017):

Proverbs 30: (29) There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going: (30) A lion which is the strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any; (31) A greyhound; an he goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up.

According to early English Methodist minister Joseph Benson’s (n.d.) commentary on the Bible, Proverbs 30:31 highlights the agile nature and speed of the greyhound and the dog’s usefulness as a guide on journeys and in work-related settings. This amplification could also be viewed as a correlation to concepts that T8 seemed to be learning in the PDP (i.e., navigating life with the guidance of dogs). This amplification supports the interpretation that the dog embodied an archetypal counterpart that was able to guide the PDP participant on his individuation path, and that the liminal space of the prison environment is one in which the dogs were comfortable and able to adapt to and thrive in.

The next section of the transcript includes a statement that hints at the numinosity of the relationship between T8 and the greyhound, and this is represented by his amplification of the dog imagery within the mythology of the ancient civilization of Egypt: “Egyptians used to worship them, and they’d actually, there’s the Egyptian god named Anubis, which is a greyhound.” Jung (1952/1967b) provided further amplification

of Anubis when he postulated that a connection existed between Cerberus and Anubis as guardians of the cycles of death and rebirth and introduced the theme of sacrifice within liminal spaces. Coalescing these varied and dynamic archetypal motifs and themes, he wrote,

In olden times, the dragon in the cave who represented the devouring mother had to be propitiated with human sacrifices, later with gifts. Hence, the Attic [Ancient Greek] custom of giving the dead man the . . . honey-cakes . . . with which to pacify the hound of hell, the three-headed monster guarding the door to the underworld. A substitute for the gifts seems to have been the obolus given to Charon, which is why Rohde calls him the second Cerberus, akin to the jackal-headed Anubis of the Egyptians. (p. 372)

This research into metaphor brings together important themes to consider when exploring PDPs from a Jungian perspective.

Furthermore, the liminality of prison is illuminated in the connection of Hecate and the dog: “Where the roads *cross* and enter into one another, thereby symbolizing the union of the opposites, there is the ‘mother,’ the object and epitome of all union” (Jung, 1952/1967b, p. 371). Jung (1952/1967b) also indicated that the temenos, the symbolic container, is connected with Cerberus:

The temenos of Gaia, the fissure and the well, can easily be understood as the door of life and death, “past which man’s steps have ever flinching trod,” sacrificing there his obolus or his *πελαβοί* instead of his body, just as Heracles pacified Cerberus with the honey-cakes. (p. 371)

T8's transcript thus exemplifies the argument, proposed by Jung, that holding a mythopoetic perspective is a natural human capacity, and amplifying experiences through symbolic thinking can add depth and meaning to life.

In his statement, "And they'd be buried with, the Egyptian kings would be buried with their greyhounds when they, when they passed away," T8 referred to the historic Egyptian practice of burying the dog alongside their deceased, royal companion, an indication that the human-canine relationship and bond was highly valued in that society. This mention demonstrates T8's capacity for and engagement with symbolic thinking as he underscored the role of the dog as an important icon in that ancient culture and the collective unconscious.

The technique of amplification is also used in depth psychology to understand the symbolic meaning of dream images as they relate to the collective unconscious. Regarding canines, von Franz (1952/2023) explained, "Psychologically speaking, the dog is an unknown part of man's psyche—like all symbols, it is its own best expression" (p. 126). Von Franz developed this idea through her amplification of the dog as a symbol:

If we wish to circumscribe its meaning, we recall that in antiquity the dog was regarded as a guarantor of eternal life. Think of Cerberus, the watchdog of Hades, or the images of dogs on antique Roman graves. In Egyptian mythology, the jackal-headed god Anubis is a guide into the underworld, and he is said to have gathered together the dismembered body of Osiris. The Egyptian priests who performed the rites of mummification were dressed as an Anubis figure. In Greece, the dog belongs to the God of healing, Asclepius, because he knows how to cure himself by eating grass. (p. 126)

Elaborating on the special relationship between the dog instinct and human psychology, von Franz wrote, “Of all animals, the dog is the most completely adapted to people and reacts most strongly to moods. Dogs copy man, and they understand what is expected of them” (p. 126). This passage highlights the symbolic connections between a dynamic array of motifs that are present within the archetypal pattern of the human–canine bond and range from dog as guide and healer to the hound of hell at the other end of the spectrum.

Because of their close relationships with humans, dogs usually have very positive associations as friend, guardian, guide, and so on, but can also be viewed as a potential source of “frenzy or madness, according to von Franz (2012/2023, p. 126). She explained that hydrophobia was attributed directly to dogs in the past, as the canine has long been feared and thought to carry disease and pestilence, especially when the source of rabies was unknown. She also argued that “dogs are the essence of relationship” (p. 126), a statement that suggests why the canine is able to initiate and guide the activation of the Eros principle in the psyches of PDP participants; hence, the dual nature of the dog is alive in the symbolic image.

T8’s transcript also suggests that he had access to a mythopoetic perspective and could express the language of the unconscious, as he understood the significance of the archetypal pattern of the dog in the role of psychopomp and guide through liminal space and into the underworld. Furthermore, these suppositions support the argument that the human–canine bond is indeed archetypal and that the healing that occurs in the PDPs is a natural consequence of that pattern. This sentiment may also be an interpretative way of

considering the dogs' participatory role within the PDP, as the content of T8's transcript implies.

In the final segment, T8 concluded with a comment that suggests that interacting with dogs in the PDP has been mentally stimulating: "So, they're, you know, real interesting dogs." This admission implies that T8 enjoyed cognitive contemplation and that the challenges of learning a new skill (i.e., the dog-training process) may have become an important resource for mental stimulation while in prison.

Video Five: T9

T9 Video Transcript.

The program here means a lot to me. I love working with the dogs every day; I love teaching the ladies new things about the dog team; I love having my dog every day—helps me get through with my time. I committed a crime 11 and a half years ago. I'm here for home invasions. I've been sentenced to 14 years. When my dogs leave, it really My first dog did break my heart when he left. Now, I'm okay with it because I know where they're going—they're going to be with somebody else to help somebody, a recipient who needs the dog.

Context of T9 Setting. This PDP operates in a female prison, and this nonprofit canine training program provides service animals to adults and children; veterans with disabilities; and professionals working in health care, criminal justice, and educational facilities.

Thematic Analysis of T9. Table 10 correlates the transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 10*Thematic Analysis of Transcript T9*

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>The program here means a lot to me.</i>	Sense of meaning and purpose	Individuation and ego-Self axis
<i>I love working with the dogs every day; I love teaching the ladies new things about the dog team; I love having my dog every day—helps me get through with my time.</i>	Community in prison and positive outcomes of participating in a PDP and experiencing the human–canine bond	Eros principle and numinous connection in the human–canine bond
<i>I committed a crime 11 and a half years ago. I'm here for home invasions. I've been sentenced to 14 years.</i>	Criminal behavior and sentencing, guilt, sadness, and regret	Shadow and <i>nigredo</i>
<i>When my dogs leave, it really. . . . My first dog did break my heart when he left.</i>	Grief and loss	Archetype of sacrifice
<i>Now, I'm okay with it because I know where they're going—they're going to be with somebody else to help somebody, a recipient who needs the dog.</i>	Acceptance and meaning, transpersonal orientation, and altruism	Archetype of renewal and wounded healer and orphan archetypes

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T9 Applying Jungian Concepts. Right

away, T9 clearly stated how the PDP was consequential in her life: “The program here means a lot to me.” The importance of having a sense of meaning and purpose in one’s life was acknowledged by Jung, as expounded upon by Corbett (2024):

Jung clearly emphasizes an “archetype of meaning” (CW 9i, paras, 66, 79), appearing as an archetypal figure in the form of imagery such as the Wise Old Man (ibid., para. 682), who represents “the archetype of the spirit, who

symbolizes the pre-existent meaning hidden in the chaos of life” (CW 9i, para. 74). Meaning that arises from this kind of archetypal source rather than the personal psyche carries more numinosity than personal levels of meaning. (pp. 101–102)

This meaning, according to T9, was derived from the canines and the PDP, as implied by the explanation that immediately followed: “I love working with the dogs every day; I love teaching the ladies new things about the dog team; I love having my dog every day—helps me get through with my time.” T9 thus acknowledged how the PDP and the relationship with her dog were therapeutic and strengthened her ability to cope with her everyday circumstances in the prison.

Correspondingly, the paramount importance of accessing meaning and purpose for the psychology of the prisoner is a key concept also found in Frankl’s (1946/1992) logotherapy framework, as he explained:

According to logotherapy, this striving to find a meaning in one’s life is the primary motivational force in man. That is why I speak of the *will to meaning* in contrast to the pleasure principle (or, as we could also term it, the *will to pleasure*) on which Freudian psychoanalysis is centered, as well as in contrast to the *will to power* on which Adlerian psychology, using the term “striving for superiority,” is focused. (p. 99)

This recognition of such meaning, connection, and love is juxtaposed with T9’s next statement: “I committed a crime 11 and a half years ago—I’m here for home invasions; I’ve been sentenced to 14 years.” While T9 was speaking in the video, she became visibly emotional, and her dog tenderly nuzzled her arm as she wiped the tears away. The

regret and grief associated with those crimes is likely related to the shadow aspects of T9's personality that had taken over during those past actions (shadow possession), and in this segment, T9 described how she has been serving time in relation to those crimes.

This reflection on the confrontation with the shadow then segued into a recognition of the grief and heartbreak that T9 had also experienced when a previous dog had completed and exited the PDP: "When my dogs leave, it really. . . . My first dog did break my heart when he left." The emotion expressed by T9 as she discussed the most difficult aspect of the program—when the dogs graduate—was intense. Anyone who has developed a close bond with an animal would certainly sympathize with the difficulty of having such a "heart-breaking" experience.

As she continued, T9 described how she immediately began training a new dog after her first one graduated, and this impact was then followed by a fresh perspective that eventually emerged as a result of her continued participation in the PDP: "Now, I'm okay with it because I know where they're going—they're going to be with somebody else to help somebody, a recipient who needs the dog." Describing such provocative experiences and the importance of sacrifice as an aspect of transformation, von Franz (1972/2024) stated, "In an act of sacrifice, therefore, the ego, with its natural egotistical claims, decides against itself, to the extent that it subordinates itself to an authority which is *higher* than itself" (p. 214). She implied that the psychological sacrifice includes an ego death: "This authority is the principle of individuation, or the Self, which emerges in the act of sacrifice because it forces the ego from within to subordinate position" (p. 214). Ultimately, the ego death sets the stage for individuation and offers opportunity for a conscious experience of the wholeness of the personality. Von Franz asserted, "The

central significance of the sacrifice for the ego now becomes clear: it is *the* possibility for the ego to experience the superior presence and reality of the Self' (pp. 214–215). The dog's leaving for a new and special purpose—to be of service for someone in need—generated meaning for T9, which allowed this excruciatingly painful separation from the dog to be tolerable.

Ultimately, the cyclical process of accepting and training new dogs to become successful graduates helped T9 arrive at a place where she was able to accept that challenging aspect of the program. This shows that T9's capacity to grow beyond her own grief was awakened in her psyche and that she can benefit others by showing compassion and care. T9's pain was thus transformed into wisdom and meaning, as described by von Franz's (1972/2024) analysis of Jung's thought on these circumstances:

The act of sacrifice means that I am giving up something which belongs to *me*; the more valuable the gift and the more the sacrifice is made without any thought of receiving something in return, the more it becomes a gift of myself, since we are unconsciously identified with possessions which are important to us. "*If you can give yourself, it proves that you possess yourself.*" (p. 214)

T9's move through grief and loss into acceptance and meaning profoundly implies that the dog in the human–canine relationship was a companion guiding in her development, while she was simultaneously guiding the animal's learning process. When this coalesced, a field state activated through which the dog, as a symbol of transformation, became alive.

Video Five: T10**T10 Video Transcript.**

I think the puppy program itself has taught me more the unconditional love that I always look for in my life. If you want to try out for the [PDP], you put in a request to recreation to Mr. ----, the rec specialist. We try out, and they hand you a dog, and you go through, like, some basic commands, and they see how their dog responds to you. And there might be about 150 women, like, how I tried, and like, 22 of us made it. I know that, unfortunately, like I said, I made a lot of bad choices in my life. My mom always instilled with me that you should always do something that you love, and I didn't realize how much . . . I've always loved animals, but I didn't realize how much they could impact my life. I, I wish I could show you, just by taking my dog and walking out on the compound, that, if you're, even if you're not a part of the program, what it does for the women on the compound. They can be struggling with issues at home and just learning to deal with the mistakes that they made in their life, and they see a dog, and it's like you just see it, like, wipe away. Sometimes even just being able to interact with our dogs mean the world to these girls. I've had, I hate it. . . It's crazy to say, but I've had some of my best moments of my life here, being part of the [PDP].

Context of T10 Setting. This PDP operates in an all-female prison, and this nonprofit canine training program provides service animals to adults and children; veterans with disabilities; and professionals working in health care, criminal justice, and educational facilities.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T10. Table 11 correlates the transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 11

Thematic Analysis of Transcript T10

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>I think the puppy program itself has taught me more the unconditional love that I always look for in my life.</i>	Connection, relationality, and love	Eros principle and redemption
<i>If you want to try out for the [PDP], you put in a request to recreation to Mr. ----, the rec specialist. We try out, and they hand you a dog, and you go through, like, some basic commands, and they see how their dog responds to you. And there might be about 150 women, like, how I tried, and like, 22 of us made it.</i>	Feeling special and grateful about being chosen	Synchronicity
<i>I know that, unfortunately, like I said, I made a lot of bad choices in my life. My mom always instilled with me that you should always do something that you love, and I didn't realize how much . . . I've always loved animals, but I didn't realize how much they could impact my life.</i>	Learning and growing and realizing vocation and meaningful work	Mother complex, ego-Self axis, and unconscious material becoming conscious (shadow integration)
<i>I, I wish I could show you, just by taking my dog and walking out on the compound, that, if you're, even if you're not a part of the program, what it does for the women on the compound. They can be struggling with issues at home and just learning to deal with the mistakes that</i>	Inherent healing in the human–canine bond	Nurturing mother archetype

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>they made in their life, and they see a dog, and it's like you just see it, like, wipe away. Sometimes even just being able to interact with our dogs mean the world to these girls.</i>		
<i>I've had, I hate it. . . . It's crazy to say, but I've had some of my best moments of my life here, being part of the [PDP].</i>	Contentment and acceptance of life's circumstances	Will to meaning and ego-Self axis

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T10 Applying Jungian Concepts. T10

began with a statement about the unconditional love she has felt for the dogs in the PDP:

"I think the puppy program itself has taught me more the unconditional love that I always look for in my life." An interpretation of this statement could indicate that T10 had a history of feeling *conditional* love until she engaged with the dogs in the PDP; thus, the activation of the Eros principle of relationality and connection with the program dogs is an important aspect of this experience. Explaining kind of phenomenon in alchemical terms, Edinger (1985) wrote,

These images tell us that love and/or lust are agents of *solutio*. This corresponds to the fact that a particular psychic problem or stage of development often remains arrested or stuck until the patient falls in love. Then abruptly the problem is dissolved. Although new complications appear, life has begun to flow again. It has been liquified. (p. 55)

Unconditional love such as this was an essential component that helped activate T10's process of transformation.

Von Franz (2023) discussed this motif in Jung's work when she clarified the connection between the philosopher's stone, the Self archetype, love, synchronicity, and suffering: "The alchemical stone (the *lapis*) symbolizes something that can never be lost or dissolved, something eternal that some alchemists compared to the mystical experience of God within one's own soul" (p. 223). She further indicated the prospective aspect of suffering when she stated, "It usually takes prolonged suffering to burn away all the superfluous psychic elements concealing the stone" (p. 232) and continued by describing the philosopher's stone in relationship to the Self archetype:

The fact that the this highest and most frequent symbol of the Self is an object of inorganic matter points to yet another field of inquiry and speculation: that is, the still unknown relationship between what we call the unconscious psyche and what we call "matter." (p. 223)

T10's new relationship with the dogs and PDP offered her an opportunity to move toward her inner wholeness as she began to express her capacity for unconditional love inside the prison environment.

The connection and love that is generated by the human–canine bond in a PDP is, however, a limited resource within the prison. According to T10, it is only available to the inmates who qualify to volunteer in these dog training positions:

If you want to try out for the [PDP], you put in a request to recreation to Mr. ----, the rec specialist. We try out, and they hand you a dog, and you go through, like, some basic commands, and they see how their dog responds to you. And there might be about 150 women, like, how I tried, and like, 22 of us made it.

Here, T10 acknowledged the restricted opportunities for participation in the program; moreover, she expressed a sense of gratitude and pride because she was selected for the PDP, and this opportunity led to the healing experience of belonging and connection.

In a miraculous way, T10 was able to access resources in her environment that would support her development and allow her individuation process to move forward. As indicated earlier, Jung (1952/1969) wrote extensively about a field of meaning that connects inner and outer experiences. He asserted, “I am therefore using the general concept of synchronicity in the special sense of a coincidence in time of two or more causally unrelated events which have the same or a similar meaning” (p. 441). T10’s experience can be interpreted as showing that her inner world was open and ready for the benefits offered by the PDP. Auspiciously, the external world colluded to provide that opportunity for T10, even though she believed it would almost be impossible, but as an example of a synchronistic event, her inner world was reflected through the opportunity to participate in the PDP. As she continued, T10 acknowledged her past shadow-related behaviors and actions: “I know that, unfortunately, like I said, I made a lot of bad choices in my life.” This statement could also be interpreted through the lens of synchronicity, as her inner world was, again, mirrored by the outer world when she found herself in prison.

The next statements by T10 connect three major themes—her mother’s advice, her love of animals, and the impact of training the puppies in the PDP: “My mom always instilled with me that you should always do something that you love, and I didn’t realize how much I’ve always loved animals, but I didn’t realize how much they could impact my life.” This segment revolves around the concepts of the integration of the parental complexes (specifically, the mother complex, in this case), which correspond to

the Eros principle, because many aspects of the mother archetype are intimately connected with specific qualities of nurturance and expressions of love, as the mother complex is thought to be carried as an internal blueprint for relationality. These expressions of affection and support were activated in T10's psyche as she trained and nurtured the dogs, and thus, the mother complex was being addressed through the relationship with the dog.

Integrating material related to the mother complex also enabled T10 to nurture and take care of herself, as she recalled that she moved from self-destructive choices (e.g., decisions that led to incarceration) to actualizing a vocation based on a true calling (e.g., engagement with animals). It was also apparent that she was able to make a positive impact on the other women in the prison compound by easing their emotional distress—an embodiment of the nurturing and caring aspect of the mother archetype.

Jung (1952/1967b) described the libido as being dynamic and associated with life-force energy, and as such, it is the driving force. He explained that it “is therefore tied to definite forms or states. It appears as the *intensity* of impulses, affects, activities, and so on. But these phenomenon are never impersonal; they manifest themselves like parts of the personality” (p. 328). Jung added that “the complexes . . . too behave like parts of the personality” (p. 328). He further connected the libido with humans' animal nature:

It is the anthropoid psyche which will not fit into the rational pattern of culture—or only very unsatisfactorily and with extreme reluctance—and resists cultural development to the utmost. It is as though its libido were constantly striving back to the original unconscious state of untamed savagery. (pp. 328–329)

This cyclical process then returns to the mother archetype, as Jung explained: “The road of regression leads back to childhood and finally, in a manner of speaking, into the mother’s body” (p. 328). The integration and sublimation of the mother complex through participation in the PDP thus enabled T10 to nurture and take care of herself better as she participated in the program and cared for the dogs.

According to Jung (1952/1967b), essential elements of the individuation process involve a confrontation with the psychic material that is associated with the parental complexes. He wrote,

In reality the whole drama takes place in the individuals’ own psyche, where the “parents” are not the parents at all but only their imagos: they are representations which have arisen from the conjunction of parental peculiarities with the individual disposition of the child. (p. 328)

As he continued discussing this concept, he pointed to the underlying psychic energy of libido that enlivens and activates images: “The imagos are activated and varied in every possible manner by an energy which likewise pertains to the individual; it derives from the sphere of instinct and expresses itself instinctually” (p. 328). Jung was thus stating that the human instinctual nature is complex, as he further explained, “This dynamism is represented in dreams by theriomorphic symbols. All the lions, bulls, dogs, and snakes that populate our dreams represent an undifferentiated and as yet untamed libido” (p. 328). Furthermore, as the instincts are integrated, the libido “at the same time forms part of the human personality and can therefore fittingly be described as the *anthropid pscvyhe*” (p. 328). It could therefore be that when the parental complexes are confronted in the individuation process, a return to an individual’s own natural pattern is initiated

through a process that integrates the authentic material interjected by the parents, while, simultaneously, the individual releases that which does not fit with the individual's authenticity. In this instance, T10 identified an aspect of the mother complex that she had integrated because this was in alignment with her deepest self—including her love of dogs and animals—as she progressed through her own process of individuation.

The section that follows comprises a poignant account in which T10 embodied both the nurturing mother archetype and the wounded healer archetypal pattern:

I, I wish I could show you, just by taking my dog and walking out on the compound, that, if you're, even if you're not a part of the program, what it does for the women on the compound. They can be struggling with issues at home and just learning to deal with the mistakes that they made in their life, and they see a dog, and it's like you just see it, like, wipe away. Sometimes even just being able to interact with our dogs mean the world to these girls.

According to her testimonial, T10 had been nurturing not only the dogs she worked with but also the other inmates in the greater community of the prison. As a wounded healer, she was able to positively impact these women by easing their emotional distress as she shared the human–canine bond with them—another community-oriented embodiment of the nurturing and caring aspects of the mother archetype.

The transcript ends with a profound—and almost unbelievable—concluding statement by T10: “I’ve had, I hate it. . . . It’s crazy to say, but I’ve had some of my best moments of my life here, being part of the [PDP].” This declaration underscores the value of living a life in which unconditional love is blended with meaning and purpose, an experience T10 discovered in the PDP. Through this opportunity, T10 was able to shift

her persona (i.e., outward facing mask) from prisoner to dog trainer and PDP participant.

This is a beautiful acknowledgement of the healing potentialities that T10 had come to realize in the most unusual of places (i.e., prison).

Video Five: T11

T11 Video Transcript.

To be able to do something good with your life and not feel like your time is wasted, laying around in a bed doing nothing. Okay, well, we start at 5:30 and go out to go to the bathroom for the first time, but around 8 o'clock, I come to work (I work at recreation), so he comes to work with me. And we first start out with some walking to burn up some of that energy and work on some focus training. Like, we're trying to get him to make sure he pays attention. *Achilles, Good boy. That's right* [speaking to the dog]. He has to look at me when I say his name, so we worked on that. Then I give him some pool time—he loves water. Then he'll do some kennel time, and then we'll start, kind of, the process over again in the afternoon. It's, it's a wonderful feeling, though, when you know they're leaving, and they're going to work, they're going to do something. It's not like they're leaving, they're just leaving—it's like they leave with a purpose, so I'm excited. When I find out my dogs are leaving, I get excited.

Context of T11 Setting. This PDP operates in an all-female prison, and this nonprofit canine training program provides service animals to adults and children; veterans with disabilities; and professionals working in health care, criminal justice, and educational facilities.

Thematic Analysis Overview of T11. Table 12 correlates the transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 12*Thematic Analysis of Transcript T11*

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>To be able to do something good with your life and not feel like your time is wasted, laying around in a bed doing nothing.</i>	Engagement, meaning, and purpose as opposed to stagnation and meaninglessness	Ego-Self axis and individuation
<i>Okay, well, we start at 5:30 and go out to go to the bathroom for the first time, but around 8 o'clock, I come to work (I work at recreation), so he comes to work with me. And we first start out with some walking to burn up some of that energy and work on some focus training. Like, we're trying to get him to make sure he pays attention. He has to look at me when I say his name, so we worked on that. Then I give him some pool time—he loves water. Then he'll do some kennel time, and then we'll start, kind of, the process over again in the afternoon.</i>	Routine, order, containment, and focused training over time	Cyclical nature of healing, spiral, Saturn, whitening, and purification of alchemy
<i>Achilles, Good boy. That's right.</i>	Mythological name	Amplification
<i>It's, it's a wonderful feeling, though, when you know they're leaving, and they're going to work, they're going to do something. It's not like they're leaving, they're just leaving—it's like they leave with a purpose, so I'm excited.</i>	Confidence, positive emotional states, accomplishment, and reframing	Sacrifice, wounded healer, <i>rubedo</i> of alchemy, and both dog and trainer engaging processes of transformation and renewal

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>When I find out my dogs are leaving, I get excited.</i>		

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T11 Applying Jungian Concepts.

T11's transcript commenced with her emphasizing the importance of meaning and purpose as a necessary component for her sense of wholeness and well-being: "To be able to do something good with your life and not feel like your time is wasted, laying around in a bed doing nothing." When she expressed this human desire to have the freedom, capacity, and opportunity to make life meaningful, T11 acknowledged the depression and futility that stagnation and stuckness tend to produce.

This declaration is followed by a detailed explanation that emphasizes T11's value of the routine and order of the PDP schedule:

Okay, well, we start at 5:30 and go out to go to the bathroom for the first time, but around 8 o'clock, I come to work (I work at recreation), so he comes to work with me. And we first start out with some walking to burn up some of that energy and work on some focus training. Like, we're trying to get him to make sure he pays attention. He has to look at me when I say his name, so we worked on that. Then I give him some pool time—he loves water. Then he'll do some kennel time, and then we'll start, kind of, the process over again in the afternoon.

In T11's daily life, these routine activities appear to have led to progression and forward movement. In Jungian terms, the engagement with self-discipline, play during pool time, and relationality may have activated and strengthened undeveloped functions and aspects of T11's ego.

Relatedly, this content illustrates the four psychological functions that Jung (1921/1971) explored in his works. These psychological functions were classified in four basic categories: thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition. According to von Franz (1972/1924), *thinking* is a rational function focused on logic and analysis; *feeling* is also rational but is more concerned with subjective values and emotional impact; *sensation* is an irrational function that perceives tangible reality through the senses; and *intuition*, also irrational, perceives possibilities and patterns. These functions typically work in pairs (i.e., thinking–feeling and sensation–intuition) and can be either extraverted or introverted.

Of these ways of knowing (i.e., thinking, feeling, sensation, and intuition), one of the functions usually becomes more developed (*differentiated*) and is primarily used by an individual as a means of adaptation (Jung, 1921/1971). Its opposite function typically remains unused and, thus, less developed (*inferior*), while remaining within the personal unconscious; for example, when someone is more prone to thinking, feeling may be the inferior function. Through the individuation process, however, the capacity to feel (also Eros) becomes integrated and sublimated into both consciousness and daily life. Jung (1921/1976) explained this latter process:

Through the act of deliverance what was inert and dead comes to life; in psychological terms, the functions that have lain fallow and unfertile, and were unused, repressed, undervalued, despised, etc., suddenly burst forth and begin to live. It is precisely the least valued function that enables life, which was threatened with extinction by the differentiated function, to continue. (p. 378)

Because a person has more awareness of the differentiated function, Jung identified it as most often used, and through this function, an individual adapts to and interacts with the world. Due to its dominance, an overreliance on this function and a one-sidedness in the personality often develops. Jung indicated that the differentiated function can also be influenced by culture and environment, which may be especially important when seeking to understand the lived experience of a prisoner. Those who are incarcerated may, for example, repress the Eros principle and adopt a hardened persona because they dwell in a place where exhibiting toughness is important for safety purposes, and opportunities to openly and sincerely engage with others are rare.

In T11's case, she had developed the reactive response of hibernating and shutting down, and this was being overly used as an adaptive coping mechanism. Moreover, when the synchronistic expansion of the PDP introduced the dog to T11, the humble and healing canine embodied the living symbol and provided his partner with an opportunity to access the archetypal energies of renewal and transformation. Consequently, the inferior function of feeling (i.e., opening up and connecting through the ventral vagal state of safety and connection; (Porges, 2022) was activated by the introduction of the animal and served to balance T11's personality, which had been shut down. In fact, when T11 participated in the PDP, all of the four functions appear to have been engaged. For instance, while T11 enacted her differentiated function of *thinking*, as she pondered her circumstances, the emotional engagement with the dog developed her *feeling* function. Simultaneously, while the hands-on nature of dog training encouraged *sensation*, planning for the dog's future role engaged *intuition*. By activating these various functions, the PDP could contribute to a more balanced psychological state that aligned

with Jung's concept of individuation and, therefore, potentially aid in T11's rehabilitation and personal growth.

The next words, which T11 directed toward her dog, metaphorically introduce the motif of archetypal wounds that will not heal (i.e., Achilles's heel) and, therefore, create new layers of interpretation and symbolism within the transcript. For T11, the unhealable wound could also be related to the certainty that the dog will eventually graduate from and leave the program, which will be a painful loss for T11. Because this outcome has been sublimated and integrated as an inevitable part of the process, T11 has accepted it and given it a purpose:

It's, it's a wonderful feeling, though, when you know they're leaving, and they're going to work, they're going to do something. It's not like they're leaving, they're just leaving—it's like they leave with a purpose, so I'm excited. When I find out my dogs are leaving, I get excited.

Ultimately, T11's transcript shows the power of transformation when a psychic wound is integrated and honored and, as in this case, the symbolic sacrifice becomes the road map home to peace in an imperfect world.

Overall, T11's experience embodies the hope found in the possibility of renewal. Jung (1936/1968) described such a pivotal epiphany:

The symbolism of the rites of renewal, if taken seriously, points far beyond the merely archaic and infantile to man's innate psychic disposition, which is the result and deposit of all ancestral life right down to the animal level—hence the ancestor and animal symbolism. (pp. 134–137)

Jung then argued that, psychologically speaking, these rites of renewal are made possible through the relationship between the unconscious and conscious. He stated, “The rites are attempts to abolish the separation between the conscious mind and the unconscious, the real source of life, and to bring about a reunion of the individual with the native soil of his inherited, instinctive make-up” (p. 137). T11 thus moved out of a life that she perceived as having no value or significance into a meaningful, loving, and engaged existence in which she was connected with the canines and community of the PDP. This transformative development caused a renewal of her personality, even while living in prison.

Concurrently, this transcript can also be clearly interpreted through the lens of alchemy. As T11 moved from stagnation and fragmentation, she began to comprehend new realizations and awareness and, eventually, entered a state of mastery whereby the tension of the opposites could be tolerated. To clarify such a process of psychological transformation, von Franz (1952/2021) applied the metaphor of alchemy by first focusing on each stage and associating it with a color. She noted, “Particularly in the symbolic representations of medieval alchemy, in which the process usually goes through three stages, these colors appear together” (pp. 332–333). She then explained the essence of each alchemical stage of transformation as

the *nigredo*, the blackness, a symbol of utter destruction and dissolution in the unconscious; the *albedo*, the white, a state of cleansing, purification, and transfiguration, and new innocence and receptivity; and the *rubedo*, redness, a symbol of active and lively re-emergence. (p. 333)

Based on this alchemical analogy, at the beginning of the transcript, T11 is within the *nigredo* stage; the statements that follow, which explain the daily schedule, routine, and training process, could be associated with the purification of the *albedo* stage; and the final comment about T11's excitement when her dogs graduate (rather than feeling grief and sadness about the loss) could be viewed as the realization and embodiment of the *rubedo*. Thus, a genuine transformation is amplified by viewing T11's true-life events through the lens of alchemy.

Video Six: T12

Transcript for T12.

The program means everything to me. This is actually the only thing I, I care about. You come to prison; you learn not to care about things. You can't care about anything—what you eat, what you wear, being naked, being beat—you have to stop caring about everything. Now, I have a dog. It's nice to feel human again; it's nice to have a connection again. It's allowed me a chance to open up and, and to have, have a connection to something. It's just a dog, but it allows me to have acts of, of husbandry in my life again. Once they find somebody for him to go to, they're gonna give me a handful of skills, specifically, to train for that person. Once he has those skills, and he'll respond to that person, I lose my boy. Donovan's [the dog's name] gonna make somebody's life better, so, yeah, I'm losing him. But like, like I said, in my, my time up (I'm an ex-service member), and now, I wear this different uniform that comes with shame, but 15 years ago, you know, I would have stood shoulder to shoulder fighting with him [a reference to the veteran who is receiving the prison-trained service dog], and I can't do that anymore, but now that his fighting is, is just about over, I can, I can

send a dog out to help him out. I can't go, I can't go fight with him anymore, but I can help him after the fact. Everybody just assumes that we're the tough, silent, hold everything in, but I'm a farmer, I'm a family man. I, I now have something to put emotion into, and that, that's huge.

Context of T12 Setting. This PDP operates in an all-male, maximum-security prison and provides assistance dogs to wounded veterans and children with autism.

Thematic Analysis of T12. Table 13 correlates the T12 transcript with Jungian concepts.

Table 13

Thematic Analysis of Transcript T12

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>The program means everything to me. This is actually the only thing I, I care about. You come to prison; you learn not to care about things. You can't care about anything—what you eat, what you wear, being naked, being beat—you have to stop caring about everything.</i>	Healing power of being involved in a PDP, finding something meaningful and worthwhile in life, and shutting down as a way of coping with the prison environment—dissociation	Archetype of the Self, ego-Self axis, <i>nigredo</i> , and the shadow of prison
<i>Now, I have a dog. It's nice to feel human again; it's nice to have a connection again. It's allowed me a chance to open up and, and to have, have a connection to something.</i>	Importance of connection for humans physiologically	Healing the Eros principle

Transcript excerpt	Psychological manifestation	Interpretation/ Jungian concept
<i>It's just a dog, but it allows me to have acts of, of husbandry in my life again.</i>	Healing power of human–canine bond	Steward and caretaker of Earth, collective unconscious, and dog as a guide to connection
<i>Once they find somebody for him to go to, they're gonna give me a handful of skills, specifically, to train for that person. Once he has those skills, and he'll respond to that person, I lose my boy. Donovan's [the dog's name] gonna make somebody's life better, so, yeah, I'm losing him.</i>	Endings, grief, loss, meaning, and mixed feelings	Sacrifice and redemption
<i>But like, like I said, in my, my time up (I'm an ex-service member), and now, I wear this different uniform that comes with shame, but 15 years ago, you know, I would have stood shoulder to shoulder fighting with him [a reference to the veteran who is receiving the prison-trained service dog], and I can't do that anymore, but now that his fighting is, is just about over, I can, I can send a dog out to help him out, I can't go, I can't go fight with him anymore, but I can help him after the fact.</i>	Change in identity, grief in loss of warrior self, awareness of current-day opportunities and what can be done now, shame, and loss	Archetype of warrior, inmate, orphan and wounded healer; new identity as helping through the relationship with the dog
<i>Everybody just assumes that we're the tough, silent, hold everything in, but I'm a farmer, I'm a family man. I, I now have something to put emotion into, and that, that's huge.</i>	Multiplicity of the psyche that is acknowledged by neuroscience, identity and identity formation, and ability to nurture and express more parts of self	Individuation, integration, healing of Eros principle, caretaker archetype

Interpretative Summary of Transcript T12 Applying Jungian Concepts. In the transcript, T12 opened with a profound statement that essentially encompassed the challenges of traversing the liminal space of entering into prison and successfully moving toward an embodied and meaningful life experience while living in these circumstances.

The program means everything to me. This is actually the only thing I, I care about. You come to prison; you learn not to care about things. You can't care about anything—what you eat, what you wear, being naked, being beat—you have to stop caring about everything.

This narrative also suggests that the entrance into the penal system is often associated with trauma, as T12 described his coping mechanism of learning *not to care about things*, which helped him cope with his new life circumstances. Further, Frankl (1946/1992) suggested that when individuals encounter *avoidable* suffering, they should change their circumstances, but when one is faced with *unavoidable* suffering, the “will to meaning” is the instinct that will lead to survival. Referencing conditions he observed during his imprisonment, he wrote,

Apathy, the blunting of the emotions and the feeling that one could not care anymore, were the symptoms arising during the second stage of the prisoner's psychological reactions, and which eventually made him insensitive to the daily and hourly beatings. By means of this insensibility the prisoner soon surrounded himself with a very necessary protective shell. (p. 23)

This description is akin to the Jungian conceptualization of *the cave*, symbolic of a state of inner retreat that is often symbolized as a descent into the underworld and is akin to

the *nigredo* stage in alchemy and the night sea journey (Jung, 1950/1969). According to Jung (1950/1969), “the cave is the place of rebirth, that secret cavity in which one is shut up in order to be incubated and renewed” (p. 135); thus, within the *protective shell*, the individual is sheltered from experiencing the fullness of overwhelming external pressures and unconscious material.

T12’s statement is also intimately linked with Frankl’s (1946/1992) theory of logotherapy. According to Frankl, when prisoners in the camps lost connection with meaning and purpose, they would soon perish, for this is the life-saving context that allows humans to endure unbearable suffering and survive it. Frankl described the phenomenology of the psychology of the prisoner, which he derived from his own experiences in concentration camps in World War II. He theorized that those who are imprisoned must connect with the “will to meaning” (p. 101) to successfully endure inhumane circumstances. Correspondingly, when T12 stated that the PDP is “the only thing . . . I care about,” this indicated that he had accessed a sense of meaning and purpose and, therefore, had penetrated that “protective shell” to resurrect his emotions from a dormant and shut-down state into an embodied engagement with his environment.

T12 then, distinctly identifying the catalyst for igniting a change in his experience, he said, “Now, I have a dog. It’s nice to feel human again; it’s nice to have a connection again. It’s allowed me a chance to open up and, and to have, have a connection to something.” This experience of connection is foundational in the field of relational psychotherapy, and its tenets emphasize the importance of interpersonal relationships by identifying these connections as paramount sources of healing.

According to Patricia DeYoung (2015), a practitioner of the modality, “the central idea of

relational psychotherapy is that the patterns of our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, whether healthy or unhealthy, are directly related to the patterns of our interpersonal relationships” (p. 11). Moreover, when T12 stated, “It’s just a dog, but it allows me to have acts of, of husbandry in my life again,” he was acknowledging the relational benefits of engagement with nature and animals. He also seemed to be insinuating that even an ordinary experience, like a connection with an animal, can have enormous consequences.

These sentiments are followed by T12’s admitted realization that the relationship with his dog companion will eventually end:

Once they find somebody for him to go to, they’re gonna give me a handful of skills, specifically, to train for that person. Once he has those skills, and he’ll respond to that person, I lose my boy. Donovan’s [the dog’s name] gonna make somebody’s life better, so, yeah, I’m losing him.

This statement conveys several complexities: sadness and grief blended with meaning, purpose, and the motif of sacrifice. This theme of sacrifice for an altruistic intention was also touched upon by Frankl (1946/1992), as he related it to the concept of individuation when he asserted that humanity has a choice to step out of a powerful collective pattern:

We who lived in the concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in numbers, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way. (p. 66)

Because of the difficult circumstances Frankl endured, his authority on such a topic is valued and respected, and he clearly asserted that the psychology of the incarcerated person is unique and worthy of research and attention.

In T12's next statement, he illustrated his own individuation process and personal growth as he resolved his own inner fragmentation and conflict through integration and sublimation while participating in the PDP:

But like, like I said, in my, my time up (I'm an ex-service member), and now, I wear this different uniform that comes with shame, but 15 years ago, you know, I would have stood shoulder to shoulder fighting with him [a reference to the veteran who is receiving the prison-trained service dog], and I can't do that anymore, but now that his fighting is, is just about over, I can, I can send a dog out to help him out, I can't go, I can't go fight with him anymore, but I can help him after the fact.

This part of the transcript illuminates multiple complex layers within T12's personality. Stein (2006) explained that although the persona is commonly known as the mask that one wears for the outside world, it is also a structure of the psyche that automatically and unconsciously shifts to adapt to the subtleties of the present situation. He also pointed out that the individuation process involves separating one's identification with the persona and the outside world, on the one hand, and the identification with the archetypal images of the inner world on the other, as if cleaning both sides of a mirror, so that what is perceived is not clouded by the biases of the one who is perceiving.

In T12's case, his persona was affected because he was living in a prison setting. With the shadow influencing the disowned aspects of the self, which are both positive

and negative, T12 discussed a shift in his identity from warrior (as a former soldier) to prisoner (his current status); however, an individuation process appears to have been initiated and guided by the PDP because it offered T12 the opportunity to shed shame and create meaning. After describing the shift that took place in his life, from a positive identity as a service member to the shameful identity of a criminal, T12 acknowledged the loss of his former life but then rotated to the way he had created new meaning and purpose by supporting his previous community through training dogs in the PDP.

In T12's concluding statements, the presence of Eros was represented in his discussion of husbandry, and a new identity emerged in his connection to meaning and purpose and expansion through the PDP: "Everybody just assumes that we're the tough, silent, hold everything in, but I'm a farmer, I'm a family man. I, I now have something to put emotion into, and that, that's huge." Here, T12 also contrasted society's perceived persona of the prisoner as one-dimensional by sharing complex and multilayered aspects of himself that he was able to express through the PDP. Even as T12 recognized the projection that the culture in the United States thrusts upon criminals and inmates, he also acknowledged that participation in the PDP met an emotional deficit he was lacking. The uniqueness of such an individuation process was explained by von Franz (1972/2024):

In the same way, what Jung called the individuation process is an *experience* that is by no means restricted to the context of Jungian therapy. This path to maturity is followed naturally by many people, either alone or supported within the framework of traditional spiritual values. (p. 68)

In his individuation journey, T12 was able to access the Eros principle of love and relationality and begin integrating positive shadow elements within the routine/relationality of training the dog.

Chapter 5:

Interpretive Summary of Data Set

Description of Interpretive Process

This chapter presents an interpretative summary of the entire data set by interweaving the 12 transcripts that were discussed in Chapter 4 and outlining shared themes, motifs, and archetypal patterns that emerged from the transcripts when viewed as a whole. In this chapter, excerpts from the transcripts are highlighted and organized according to the Jungian concepts that they illustrate. As a result, seven different Jungian themes, which point toward the unconscious dynamics at play within the phenomenology of the PDP participants, were selected. Each of these sections begins with an interpretative summary that is followed by a table that groups direct quotes from the transcripts according to the Jungian themes to demonstrate the overall view of how the group as a whole correlates with that concept.

The first six sections are analyzed together, and quotes are not duplicated throughout this portion of the material. In the seventh section, all of the transcripts are analyzed again, as a whole, through a Jungian lens of the alchemical process as a metaphor for psychological transformation. As before, quotes are not duplicated within this section of the chapter. All seven concepts that were exemplified by the PDP participants' transcripts are listed below to provide an overview and to orient the reader to the chapter's flow:

- Individuation
- Confrontation With the Shadow and Integration
- The Orphan Archetype and Redemption

- The Transcendent Function and the Union of Opposites
- The Wounded Healer Archetype, Sacrifice, and Engagement With the Collective
- Symbolism of the Dog, Amplification, and the Collective Unconscious
- The Alchemical Process: Featuring the *Nigredo*, *Albedo*, and *Rubedo*

Individuation

The theme of individuation, a central concept in Jungian psychology, emerged throughout the transcripts. The individuation process in the transcripts was initiated by participation in the PDPs and the human–canine bond. According to Jung (1951/1968d), individuation is a process by which the individual’s consciousness shifts away from identification with the persona (outward-facing mask) and the archetypal themes and images of the inner world and shifts toward the archetype of Self (the archetype of wholeness)—which is both the center and the circumference of the psyche—through a process of integration and sublimation. About this process, Jung wrote,

I have discussed the wider effects of the integration of unconscious contents elsewhere and can therefore omit going into details here. I should only like to mention that the more numerous and the more significant the unconscious contents which are assimilated to the ego, the closer the approximation of the ego to the self, even though this approximation must be a never-ending process.

(p. 23)

In the transcripts, the development of a connection between the Self and the ego is evidenced by the participants’ increased sense of meaning and purpose, vitality, and

creative engagement, both personally and with the collective. An example of this is demonstrated when T9 stated,

The program here means a lot to me. I love working with the dogs every day; I love teaching the ladies new things about the dog team; I love having my dog every day—helps me get through with my time.

This process of aligning the ego with the deeper Self was conceptualized by Edinger (1972), in his book, *Ego and Archetype*, as the ego-Self axis. This concept is associated with both an increased sense of meaning, purpose, and self-understanding and an ego death as the conscious mind surrenders to the integration process; thus, the motif of sacrifice is an aspect of individuation. Essentially, Jung's analytical psychology is centered around making this relationship between the Self and the ego (the unconscious and conscious) increasingly more available in daily life through processes of inner dialogue and synchronicities.

Individuation is a numinous, meaningful, and natural phenomenon that will spontaneously occur when the right conditions are met. This experience of realizing and consciously supporting the Self by riding the waves of the libido toward symbols of transformation is accompanied by access to a new perspective and identity. This is depicted in T3's description of events:

Once I got the dog, and got into the program, it's like things were better; it's just like a whole different outlook. I look forward to things now; I look forward to getting up and doing things with them. I don't really think about, you know, being in here as, like, a bad thing anymore.

In summary, individuation is a process of movement from fragmentation toward a unified center of the personality and a more integrated internal experience. The numinous and mysterious center of the personality—the Self—is a guiding force that leads the individual toward the wholeness inherent in their psyche through a process of integration and expansion. The Self is almost impossible to define through words, but it has its own *telos* (i.e., purpose and goals) that may be unknown to the conscious mind and may revolt it. Although the *telos* is unknown to the consciousness, it is aligned with something deeper and transpersonal, as expressed by T7's transcript: "I pretty much kept to myself in prison, you know. I talked to a few people and things, but so, when they talked about this program, I was one of the first ones to sign up." This 'calling' to involvement in the PDP could be interpreted as the Self pressing on the personality and inviting the movement of a blocked individuation process.

As individuation progresses through involvement in the PDP, unconscious material is made conscious and integrated. This is symbolized in T1's transcript through the imagery of light pointing toward new realizations and psychological breakthroughs:

It kind of shined a light; like, I can do a lot in here, you know? I feel like I achieved something like I did something—something that most people probably not gonna get a chance to do. This right here is gonna probably be the most positive thing you can do within my situation, you know?

This statement depicts the realization that individuation is always possible, and that the ego is able to expand and integrate new aspects of the personality, even within a physically restrictive and confining environment like a brick-and-mortar prison. The ego-Self axis and the capacity to create meaning and purpose that makes living worthwhile—

despite the surroundings—were thus constellated through participation in PDPs.

Consequently, participation in the PDPs activated an individuation process in which the dog trainers' fragmented psyches were able to organize around a more integrated center through the living symbol of the dog.

In Table 14, the transcript excerpts related to this topic are listed in the order in which they appeared in Chapter 4.

Table 14

Individuation Within the Transcripts

Transcript	Quotes
T2	It gave me purpose, something I really never had.
T3	Once I got the dog, and got into the program, it's like things were better; it's just like a whole different outlook. I look forward to things now; I look forward to getting up and doing things with them. I don't really think about, you know, being in here as, like, a bad thing anymore.
T4	It kind of shined a light; like, I can do a lot in here, you know? I feel like I achieved something, like I did something—something that most people probably not gonna get a chance to do. This right here is gonna probably be the most positive thing you can do within my situation, you know?
T7	I pretty much kept to myself in prison, you know? I talked to a few people and things, but so, when they talked about this program, I was one of the first ones to sign up.
T9	The program here means a lot to me. I love working with the dogs every day; I love teaching the ladies new things about the dog team; I love having my dog every day—helps me get through with my time.
T10	I've had, I hate it. . . . It's crazy to say, but I've had some of my best moments of my life here, being part of the [PDP].
T11	To be able to do something good with your life and not feel like your time is wasted, laying around in a bed doing nothing.
T12	The program means everything to me. This is actually the only thing I, I care about. . . . Now, I have a dog. It's nice to feel human again; it's nice to have a connection again. It's allowed me a chance to open up and, and to have, have a connection to something.

Confrontation With the Shadow and Integration

A confrontation with the shadow marked the beginning stage of the individuation process for many of the PDP participants. In each case, there was a shared theme in which the shadow complex had overtaken the ego. Shadow possession is a Jungian concept that is important to take into account when considering the actions of the PDP participants that resulted in prison sentences; for example, this integration of the shadow was implied by T10's self-aware statement: "I know that, unfortunately, like I said, I made a lot of bad choices in my life." Relatedly, according to T3's transcript, being sent to prison was associated with a confrontation of his negative shadow and the disowned parts of himself:

After committing a crime, being in here, you sit around, and you just think about, like, how bad things are, how bad of a person I am for being in this predicament.

You sometimes feel like everybody looks at you as, like, being condemned.

In the process of individuation, the confrontation with the shadow causes the ego to begin to shift toward balance and self-awareness as the abandoned and outcast aspects of the personality are integrated. This progression involves perceiving consciously that which was previously acted out unconsciously (i.e., of making "bad choices") and examining that behavior with awareness, producing a new realization of potential consequences and initiating a transformation when the individual faces, acknowledges, and accepts this material by taking responsibility and initiating change.

As illustrated by the transcripts, this process began after the inmates were sentenced to prison and, in that setting, were forced to face the despised parts of self, especially because they had no freedom to escape or leave the situation. This experience

of facing and integrating the shadow material has been metaphorically described as eating the shadow (Bly, 1988), whereby the individual gains access to a great deal of psychic energy that was unavailable before. This experience also entails integrating unrealized potentials and gifts—positive shadow material. Through participation in the PDP, the dogs guided their trainers to discover both negative and positive shadow material and to access potentialities that were dormant before the PDP.

Transcript excerpts related to this concept are listed in Table 15 in the order in which they appeared in the previous chapter.

Table 15

Confrontation With the Shadow and Integration Within the Transcripts

Transcript	Quotes
T3	After committing a crime, being in here, you sit around, and you just think about, like, how bad things are, how bad of a person I am for being in this predicament. You sometimes feel like everybody looks at you as, like, being condemned.
T5	You're here, and you put up a lot of walls 'cuz you don't want to be hurt. I kind of just keep my head down, and you just go from one place to the next. And then I came down here, and I started out as a trainer, and everything changed. . . . They have an unwanted behavior, you want to change it in increments, and then you start applying that to yourself. Once you show a dog, this is what I want from you, they want nothing more than to do that. And it's, you know, I want to be like that one day. I want to be that, but I'm sorry.
T6	They're not used to being around people, so just kind of getting them used to that, getting used to be loved on, teaching them how to sit, lay, you know, how to leave things alone.
T9	I committed a crime 11 and a half years ago. I'm here for home invasions. I've been sentenced to 14 years.
T10	I know that, unfortunately, like I said, I made a lot of bad choices in my life.
T12	You come to prison; you learn not to care about things. You can't care about anything—what you eat, what you wear, being naked, being beat—you have to stop caring about everything.

The Orphan Archetype and Redemption

The themes associated with the orphan archetype, such as neglect, abandonment, and lack of belonging, permeate a number of the transcripts and create tension in the motif of individuation. There are many layers through which the orphan archetype and the theme of exile and belonging could be developed; however, in a psychological sense, the orphan could refer to the abandoned and neglected parts of the PDP participants, whereas belonging would be the internal system that welcomes those forgotten pieces of the self with a nurturing and loving holding. This is shown in T3's statement: "Just knowing that potentially, one day, I can have a dog that's helping somebody out in so many ways and that I took part in bringing that all together." While participating in the PDP, the inmate trainers' connection with the dog and the physiological benefits derived from that attachment bond and oxytocin loop thus can prime the system to allow the attachment bond to occur, creating a foundation in which shadow material can be integrated in a safe and regulated container. This safety (generated by the oxytocin loop) sets the stage for participants' discovery of their depth of personality, and through this human-canine relationship, self-acceptance increases by knowing that their PDP work is making a meaningful difference in the lives of people living with disabilities.

The vocational benefits of the PDPs may be directly linked with the reduction in recidivism for its participants because involvement in the program contributes to the formation of not only a marketable skill but also a new identity—a shift from outcast "orphan" prisoner to valued dog trainer—as T5 explained:

I have 9 more years, and I'm definitely gonna continue this. The industry is like .

. . . I can't even believe how explosive it is right now. It's very exciting and encouraging, and knowing you are going to have a spot in the community—and that's huge, that's huge.

This theme of the orphan archetype also applies symbolically to the individuation process of the rescue dogs, who are placed in permanent homes (as service dogs) upon graduating from the program and leaving the prisons (orphanage). T6 demonstrated this view: “The goal of the program is really just to domesticate them, to get them used to living with people. They've been around 400 dogs their whole life, so all they do is they race, they sleep in kennels.” The motifs of individuation, renewal, and belonging thus reverberate through the dog shelter, the prison, and the community of veterans or individuals with disabilities who receive the dogs.

The transcript excerpts related to this theme are listed in Table 16 in the order in which they appeared in Chapter 4.

Table 16

The Orphan Archetype and Redemption Within the Transcripts

Transcript	Quotes
T3	Just knowing that potentially, one day, I can have a dog that's helping somebody out in so many ways and that I took part in bringing that all together.
T5	I have 9 more years, and I'm definitely gonna continue this. The industry is like . . . I can't even believe how explosive it is right now. It's very exciting and encouraging, and knowing you are going to have a spot in the community, and that's huge—That's huge.
T6	The goal of the program is really just to domesticate them, to get them used to living with people. They've been around 400 dogs their whole life, so all they do is they race, they sleep in kennels.
T7	I signed up for it real quick. I was glad I was accepted. I was glad I was accepted for it because I didn't have a lot of time left to go through a lot of dogs. So, I am thankful I got the opportunity.

Transcript	Quotes
T10	If you want to try out for the [PDP], you put in a request to recreation to Mr. ----, the rec specialist. We try out, and they hand you a dog, and you go through, like, some basic commands, and they see how their dog responds to you. And there might be about 150 women, like, how I tried, and like, 22 of us made it.
T12	Everybody just assumes that we're the tough, silent, hold everything in, but I'm a farmer, I'm a family man, I, I now have something to put emotion into, and that, that's huge.

The Transcendent Function and the Union of Opposites

Indications that the transcendent function and an inner union of opposites were attained by the PDP participants are woven throughout many of the transcripts. Jung (1958/1969) explored the transcendent function, which “arises from the union of conscious and unconscious contents” (p. 69), and the psyche’s ability to hold the tension of the opposites. Within these participants’ accounts, evidence of the transcendent function is most notable as the integration of the opposites of Eros and Logos, which occurred through this union of loving relationship with structured discipline. Clearly, T2 demonstrated these principles when she stated, “And it just, I mean, who wouldn’t love these guys. But it taught me discipline, it taught me a responsibility, and it just, it gave me things that I wasn’t getting anywhere else,” as did T1, when she said, “With Auggie, I get up at 6 o’clock in the morning, and we go potty. I come in; I feed him. It gives us a reason to bond.” In both of these examples, having a reason (Logos) to bond (Eros) was facilitated through training the dogs with both structured discipline and a nurturing connection. Within this perspective, the dog acts as a living symbol, and this balancing of the inner principles of structure and receptivity is integral to the individuation process. Themes related to *hope* (symbolized by the dog), along with *hopelessness* (symbolized by the prison) were also present in the transcripts.

Another area in which the transcendent function was evident was within the integration of the parental complexes; for example, T10 commented, “My mom always instilled in me that you should always do something that you love, and I didn’t realize how much . . . I’ve always loved animals, but I didn’t realize how much they could impact my life.” Recognizably, training and caring for a dog requires a similar mindset as that which is needed to provide adequately for a human child, so it is likely that the mother and father complexes would become constellated while establishing a similar learning environment and emotional bond with the dogs, as demonstrated by T3’s comment: “It makes me almost feel like a proud dad.” This admission suggests that the trainer developed a positive feeling of accomplishment and integrated previously underdeveloped aspects of the father complex, while teaching the dog and watching the animal succeed in the mission of the PDP. The excerpts related to these principles are listed in Table 17.

Table 17

The Transcendent Function Within the Transcripts

Transcript	Quotes
T1	This is my pup that lives with me right now. I’ll have him anywhere between 12 to 20 weeks, and he’s been here for two weeks. With Auggie, I get up at 6 o’clock in the morning, and we go potty. I come in; I feed him. It gives us a reason to bond. . . . You know, we have to learn how to work together with the staff to be able to raise healthy puppies. You know, everyone has to be in agreement and be on the same page because they have to come out, let us out. If the dogs are sick, they have to be, they have to respond quickly to it. So, it just teaches us all to work as a team in a community, instead of “us against them.”
T2	And it just, I mean, who wouldn’t love these guys [referring to the puppy T2 is holding in the video]? But it taught me discipline, it taught me a responsibility, and it just, it gave me things that I wasn’t getting anywhere else.

Transcript	Quotes
T3	Once I started working with the dogs and seeing, like, how smart they are and how they respond to you with the proper training and skills that you show them, it amazed me. . . . It makes me almost feel like a proud dad.
T10	My mom always instilled in me that you should always do something that you love, and I didn't realize how much I've always loved animals, but I didn't realize how much they could impact my life.
T11	Okay, well, we start at 5:30 and goes out to go to the bathroom for the first time, but around 8 o'clock, I come to work (I work at recreation), so he comes to work with me. And we first start out with some walking to burn up some of that energy and work on some focus training. Like, we're trying to get him to make sure he pays attention. He has to look at me when I say his name, so we worked on that. Then I give him some pool time—he loves water. Then he'll do some kennel time, and then we'll start, kind of, the process over again in the afternoon.

The Wounded Healer Archetype, Sacrifice, and Engagement With the Collective

The archetypal pattern of the wounded healer is at the heart of the PDP programs and is evident in their mission statements, as they promote empathy and compassion through engagement with the collective through sacrifice. The dynamic of the wounded healer concept is personified in T12's account as he shared the impact of his PDP participation while training dogs for veterans with PTSD:

Once they find somebody for him to go to, they're gonna give me a handful of skills, specifically, to train for that person. Once he has those skills, and he'll respond to that person, I lose my boy. Donovan's [the dog's name] gonna make somebody's life better, so, yeah, I'm losing him, but like, like I said, in my, my time up (I'm an ex-service member), and now, I wear this different uniform that comes with shame, but 15 years ago, you know, I would have stood shoulder to shoulder fighting with him (referencing in the video the veteran that is receiving the prison trained service dog), and I can't do that anymore, but now that his

fighting is, is just about over, I can, I can send a dog out to help him out, I can't go, I can't go fight with him anymore, but I can help him after the fact.

This transcript embodies several of the highlighted concepts: a sacrifice; the connection to the community outside of the prison; the development of empathy, compassion, and altruistic intention; and a process of new identity formation. Within this interpretation, the rescue dog, the veteran recipient of the service dog, and the PDP participant all engage the archetypal pattern of the wounded healer through the meaningful relationship between them.

Additionally, the impact that the PDP and the dogs had on the penal environment was also discussed by T10, as the participant and her canine trainee brought healing to the larger prison community within the penitentiary:

I, I wish I could show you, just by taking my dog and walking out on the compound, that, if you're, even if you're not a part of the program, what it does for the women on the compound. They can be struggling with issues at home and just learning to deal with the mistakes that they made in their life, and they see a dog, and it's like you just see it, like, wipe away. Sometimes even just being able to interact with our dogs mean the world to these girls.

These healing impacts the PDP has on the prison at large even extends to the relationship with the correctional officers, as evidenced by T1 (in a quote borrowed from the transcendent function section) when she stated, "So, it just teaches us all to work as a team in a community, instead of 'us against them.'" This new perspective and relationship between the inmates and the correctional officers emerged as a result of the

officers and the prisoners working together for the good of the PDP, the dogs, and their recipients. The transcript excerpts related to this theme are listed in Table 18.

Table 18

The Wounded Healer Archetype Within the Transcripts

Transcript	Quotes
T1	I'm a lifer, and I, there's no way for me to repay the debt for the harm that I've done to society, but this gives me an opportunity to make some kind of amends, We can help put out dogs that will go out there and potentially save a life.
T4	And I just thought a lot about all of the good that's gonna come out of the dog. This dog is gonna become more than the program. He's gonna do more than just what's written down on the pieces of paper and all that. This dog is gonna essentially change someone's life, and that, that this right there was, it was beautiful.
T9	When my dogs leave it, really. . . . My first dog did break my heart when he left. Now, I'm okay with it because I know where they're going—they're going to be with somebody else to help somebody, a recipient who needs the dog.
T10	I, I wish I could show you, just by taking my dog and walking out on the compound, that, if you're, even if you're not a part of the program, what it does for the women on the compound. They can be struggling with issues at home and just learning to deal with the mistakes that they made in their life, and they see a dog, and it's like you just see it, like, wipe away. Sometimes even just being able to interact with our dogs mean the world to these girls.
T11	It's, it's a wonderful feeling, though, when you know they're leaving, and they're going to work, they're going to do something. It's not like they're leaving, they're just leaving. It's like they leave with a purpose, so I'm excited. When I find out my dogs are leaving, I get excited.
T12	Once they find somebody for him to go to, they're gonna give me a handful of skills, specifically, to train for that person. Once he has those skills, and he'll respond to that person, I lose my boy. Donovan's [the dog's name] gonna make somebody's life better, so, yeah, I'm losing him, but like, like I said, in my, my time up (I'm an ex-service member), and now, I wear this different uniform that comes with shame, but 15 years ago, you know, I would have stood shoulder to shoulder fighting with him (referencing in the video the veteran that is receiving the prison trained service dog), and I can't do that anymore, but now that his fighting is, is

Transcript	Quotes
	just about over, I can, I can send a dog out to help him out, I can't go, I can't go fight with him anymore, but I can help him after the fact.

Symbolism of the Dog, Amplification, and the Collective Unconscious

Throughout many of the transcripts, there is a solid undertone supporting the symbolic and archetypal nature of the dog in which the canine assumed the roles of healer, guide, child, companion, protector, shadow holder, trickster. Dogs in mythology have been amplified as psychopomps and guides who accompany the hero/heroine through the death–rebirth–death process, as T8 inferred: “There’s the Egyptian god named Anubis, which is a greyhound.” Amplification is an important aspect of Jungian psychology, as it is through the development of symbolic thinking that the individual is able to achieve a relationship with the collective unconscious (von Franz, 2023). Specifically, the dog, as a living symbol, contains numinous material that is beyond language and acts as a bridge between the conscious and unconscious.

The capacity for symbolic thinking thus enriches the journey of individuation and deepens insight into archetypal patterns that are being constellated. This consciousness offers the gift of choice; otherwise, the archetypal and instinctual patterns of the collective unconscious are unconsciously followed and enacted. Because of the canines’ archetypal endowment, they are exceptionally suited to companion incarcerated people as they adapt to the metaphorical underworld of prison and engage the inner journey of individuation within a carceral setting. The transcript excerpts related to this theme are listed in Table 19.

Table 19*Amplification of Dog Symbolism Within the Transcripts*

Transcript	Quotes
T8	They're the oldest, oldest breed of dogs. They're the only dog mentioned in the Bible. Egyptians used to worship them, and they'd actually, there's the Egyptian god named Anubis, which is a greyhound. And they'd be buried with, the Egyptian kings would be buried with their greyhounds when they, when they passed away. So they're, you know, real interesting dogs.

The Alchemical Process: Featuring the *Nigredo*, *Albedo*, and *Rubedo*

After analyzing the transcripts through a Jungian lens, this chapter now offers a fresh interpretation that focuses on alchemy and demonstrates that the transcripts also simultaneously follow the stages of the alchemical process. Much like the individuation process, Jung (1943/1968) promoted alchemy as a metaphor for psychological transformation: “The concepts of alchemy and the individuation process are matters that seem to lie very far apart, so that the imagination finds it impossible at first to conceive of any bridge between them” (p. 3). For the purposes of this study, the complex and detailed alchemical process is distilled into three main stages: the *nigredo*, the *albedo*, and the *rubedo*.

In general terms, the *nigredo* is the stage of dissolution and chaos, during which the individual experiences an ego death and faces the shadow. This is illustrated in T9's comment: “I committed a crime 11 and a half years ago. I'm here for home invasions. I've been sentenced to 14 years.” Next, the *albedo* is a stage of purification and psychological breakthroughs, as demonstrated by T5's account:

When you study dog behavior, light bulbs start going off in your head about yourself, and about your family, and about everything that applies to everything

on this planet. . . . And then I came down here, and I started out as a trainer, and everything changed.

Finally, the *rubedo* is a stage in which a new identity, perspective, or psychological transformation is integrated and anchored in the psyche, as shown in T1's description of herself and her new mission:

I'm a lifer, and I, there's no way for me to repay the debt for the harm that I've done to society, but this gives me an opportunity to make some kind of amends.

We can help put out dogs that will go out there and potentially save a life.

The progression of each of the transcripts seems to follow this arc along the alchemical stages. The following three tables (Tables 20–22) each list transcript excerpts related to this trio of key alchemical themes.

Table 20

Examples of the Alchemical Process of Nigredo Within the Transcripts

Transcript	Quotes
T3	After committing a crime, being in here, you sit around, and you just think about, like, how bad things are, how bad of a person I am for being in this predicament. You sometimes feel like everybody looks at you as, like, being condemned.
T5	They have an unwanted behavior, you want to change it in increments, and then you start applying that to yourself. Once you show a dog—this is what I want from you—they want nothing more than to do that. And it's, you know, I want to be like that one day. I want to be that, but I'm sorry. You're here, and you put up a lot of walls 'cuz you don't want to be hurt. I kind of just keep my head down, and you just go from one place to the next.
T6	The goal of the program is really just to domesticate them, to get them used to living with people. They've been around 400 dogs their whole life, so all they do is they race, they sleep in kennels.
T7	I pretty much kept to myself in prison, you know. I talked to a few people and things

Transcript	Quotes
T9	I committed a crime 11 and a half years ago. I'm here for home invasions. I've been sentenced to 14 years.
T12	The program means everything to me. This is actually the only thing I, I care about. You come to prison; you learn not to care about things. You can't care about anything—what you eat, what you wear, being naked, being beat—you have to stop caring about everything.

Table 21

Examples of the Alchemical Process of Albedo Within the Transcripts

Transcript	Quotes
T1	This is my pup that lives with me right now. I'll have him anywhere between 12 to 20 weeks, and he's been here for two weeks. With Auggie, I get up at 6 o'clock in the morning, and we go potty. I come in; I feed him. It gives us a reason to bond. You know, we have to learn how to work together with the staff to be able to raise healthy puppies. You know, everyone has to be in agreement and be on the same page because they have to come out, let us out. If the dogs are sick, they have to be, they have to respond quickly to it. So, it just teaches us all to work as a team in a community, instead of "us against them."
T2	It gave me purpose, something I really never had, and It just, I mean, who wouldn't love these guys [referring to the puppy T2 is holding in the video]? But it taught me discipline, it taught me a responsibility, and it just, it gave me things that I wasn't getting anywhere else.
T3	Once I got the dog, and got into the program, it's like things were better; it's just like a whole different outlook. I look forward to things now; I look forward to getting up and doing things with them. I don't really think about, you know, being in here as, like, a bad thing anymore. Once I started working with the dogs and seeing, like, how smart they are and how they respond to you with the proper training and skills that you show them, it amazed me.
T4	It kind of shined a light; like, I can do a lot in here, you know. I feel like I achieved something like I did something—something that most people probably not gonna get a chance to do. This right here is gonna probably be the most positive thing you can do within my situation, you know? And I just thought a lot about all of the good that's gonna come out of the dog.

Transcript	Quotes
T5	When you study dog behavior, light bulbs start going off in your head about yourself, and about your family, and about everything that applies to everything on this planet. . . . And then I came down here, and I started out as a trainer, and everything changed.
T6	They're not used to being around people, so just kind of getting them used to that, getting used to be loved on, teaching them how to sit, lay, you know, how to leave things alone.
T7	but so, when they talked about this program, I was one of the first ones to sign up. I signed up for it real quick. I was glad I was accepted. I was glad I was accepted for it because I didn't have a lot of time left to go through a lot of dogs. So, I am thankful I got the opportunity.
T9	The program here means a lot to me. I love working with the dogs every day; I love teaching the ladies new things about the dog team; I love having my dog every day—helps me get through with my time.
T10	I think the puppy program itself has taught me more the unconditional love that I always look for in my life. If you want to try out for the [PDP], you put in a request to recreation to Mr. ----, the rec specialist. We try out, and they hand you a dog, and you go through, like, some basic commands, and they see how their dog responds to you. And there might be about 150 women, like, how I tried, and like, 22 of us made it. I know that, unfortunately, like I said, I made a lot of bad choices in my life. My mom always instilled with me that you should always do something that you love, and I didn't realize how much...I've always loved animals, but I didn't realize how much they could impact my life.
T11	To be able to do something good with your life and not feel like your time is wasted, laying around in a bed doing nothing. Okay, well, we start at 5:30 and goes out to go to the bathroom for the first time, but around 8 o'clock, I come to work (I work at recreation), so he comes to work with me. And we first start out with some walking to burn up some of that energy and work on some focus training. Like, we're trying to get him to make sure he pays attention. Achilles, Good boy. That's right [speaking to the dog]. He has to look at me when I say his name, so we worked on that. Then I give him some pool time—he loves water. Then he'll do some kennel time, and then we'll start, kind of, the process over again in the afternoon.

Transcript	Quotes
T12	The program means everything to me. This is actually the only thing I, I care about. Now, I have a dog. It's nice to feel human again; it's nice to have a connection again. It's allowed me a chance to open up and, and to have, have a connection to something. It's just a dog, but it allows me to have acts of, of husbandry in my life again. Once they find somebody for him to go to, they're gonna give me a handful of skills, specifically, to train for that person. Once he has those skills, and he'll respond to that person, I lose my boy.

Table 22*Examples of the Alchemical Process of Rubedo Within the Transcripts*

Transcript	Quotes
T1	I'm a lifer, and I, there's no way for me to repay the debt for the harm that I've done to society, but this gives me an opportunity to make some kind of amends. We can help put out dogs that will go out there and potentially save a life.
T3	Just knowing that potentially, one day, I can have a dog that's helping somebody out in so many ways and that I took part in bringing that all together, it makes me almost feel like a proud dad.
T4	This dog is gonna become more than the program. He's gonna do more than just what's written down on the pieces of paper and all that. This dog is gonna essentially change someone's life, and that, that this right there was, it was beautiful.
T5	And then I came down here, and I started out as a trainer, and everything changed. I have 9 more years, and I'm definitely gonna continue this. The industry is like . . . I can't even believe how explosive it is right now. It's very exciting and encouraging, and knowing you are going to have a spot in the community—and that's huge, that's huge.
T8	They're the oldest, oldest breed of dogs. They're the only dog mentioned in the Bible. Egyptians used to worship them, and they'd actually, there's the Egyptian god named Anubis, which is a greyhound. And they'd be buried with, the Egyptian kings would be buried with their greyhounds when they, when they passed away. So, they're, you know, real interesting dogs.
T9	When my dogs leave it, really. . . . My first dog did break my heart when he left. Now, I'm okay with it because I know where they're going—they're going to be with somebody else to help somebody, a recipient who needs the dog.

Transcript	Quotes
T10	I, I wish I could show you, just by taking my dog and walking out on the compound, that, if you're, even if you're not a part of the program, what it does for the women on the compound. They can be struggling with issues at home and just learning to deal with the mistakes that they made in their life, and they see a dog, and it's like you just see it, like, wipe away. Sometimes even just being able to interact with our dogs mean the world to these girls. I've had, I hate it. . . . It's crazy to say, but I've had some of my best moments of my life here, being part of the [PDP].
T11	It's, it's a wonderful feeling, though, when you know they're leaving, and they're going to work, they're going to do something. It's not like they're leaving, they're just leaving—it's like they leave with a purpose, so I'm excited. When I find out my dogs are leaving, I get excited.
T12	Donovan's [the dog's name] gonna make somebody's life better, so, yeah, I'm losing him. But like, like I said, in my, my time up (I'm an ex-service member), and now, I wear this different uniform that comes with shame, but 15 years ago, you know, I would have stood shoulder to shoulder fighting with him [a reference in the video to the veteran who is receiving the prison-trained service dog], and I can't do that anymore, but now that his fighting is, is just about over, I can, I can send a dog out to help him out. I can't go, I can't go fight with him anymore, but I can help him after the fact. Everybody just assumes that we're the tough, silent, hold everything in, but I'm a farmer, I'm a family man. I, I now have something to put emotion into, and that, that's huge.

Summary of Interpretive Process

Jungian theory offers a rich perspective through which to understand the underlying and unconscious psychological dynamics that are at play within the phenomenological lived experience of PDP participants. Processes of individuation and alchemical transmutation are evidenced throughout the transcripts, and both the dog and PDP act as symbolic containers through which genuine psychological transformation is achieved for the participants. Overall, the transcripts described movement from a fragmented and divided state into a more integrated, engaged, and meaningful experience for the participants while they were living in prison. This new identity of dog trainer

offered hope and redemption, as the PDP participants would be able to reenter society with a marketable skill and the confidence to begin anew.

Chapter 5:

Summary and Conclusions

Summary of the Findings

In general, the findings of this study support a rehabilitative approach to corrections as they suggest that programs such as PDPs activate a process of genuine psychological transformation that offers a connection with meaning, purpose, and loving relationships. From an archetypal standpoint, the dog is the consummate match to companion incarcerated people within the dark underworld of prison by guiding them through this heroic journey of transformation and individuation toward meaning, purpose, and connection within incarceration.

Additionally, this study demonstrates that PDPs contain and activate processes involving key components of the individuation process (e.g., shadow integration, the transcendent function, ego development, and engagement with the collective), which translates into psychic movement leading toward psychological wholeness through the relationship with the dog as a symbol of transformation. Within the PDPs, the dynamic, interrelated components—activation of the archetypal pattern of healing, inherent within the human–canine bond; awakening of the libido, through the living symbol of the dog; and a combination of routine/discipline (Logos) with altruism/relationality (Eros), which develops compassion while integrating ego-strengthening perseverance and routine—provide an embodied opportunity for new identity formation and sense of Self within the containment of prison. From a Jungian perspective, the archetypal pattern of the wounded healer is activated as psychic poison is transformed into medicine, and a positive sense of

self and meaning is achieved through altruistic intention and connection with the greater community.

This study clearly demonstrates that individuation processes are occurring in prison settings and that applying a Jungian perspective can offer insight into the design of rehabilitation programming and the evaluation of such programs in correctional institutions. Furthermore, these findings confirm the value of providing opportunities for incarcerated people to engage with nature, as rehabilitative programs that have a component grounded in engaging the natural world in the healing process seem to possess impressive potentialities for this population.

Overview of the Methodology and Procedures

The focus of this qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenological research was to better understand the lived experience of PDP participants, incarcerated in the United States, by interpreting their own words within a Jungian frame. The study used a depth psychological approach and applied Jungian concepts that illuminate the unconscious processes transpiring within individuals involved in PDPs while they live with, train, and rehabilitate dogs to become support animals for community members with disabilities. The project was born of a desire to research PDPs after learning about the reduction in recidivism for the inmate trainers; thus, my intention was to add to the knowledge base of research at the intersection of depth psychology, rehabilitation programs in corrections, and ecopsychology.

The study design connected phenomenology with hermeneutics, and the data set included 12 video transcripts of PDP participant interviews that were publicly available online. (This methodology was alternatively implemented when challenges of gaining

permissions for in-person interviews were encountered.) Furthermore, this design safeguards this protected population by eliminating the possibility of causing unintentional harm or hardship for research participants while maintaining a hermeneutic methodology that included an interpretative analysis of the PDP participants' own words to uncover the unconscious processes and archetypal themes and motifs that were constellated as an outcome of PDP participation.

Limitations of the Study

There are a few limitations in this study, such as the small sample size of PDP participants as well as the inability to directly interview the inmate trainers. Because of the latter, there was no opportunity to follow-up with the individuals, ask additional questions, or seek clarification about the trainers' dialogue. Additionally, bias was introduced into the interpretations of the PDP trainers' words because only portions of the subjects' dialogue were included in the videos, as they were edited for television by the organizations that uploaded the videos. My lack of direct communication with the dog trainers directly increased researcher bias as my own lived experiences were inevitably injected into the interpretations; however, I always attempted to engage objectively, reasonably, and intentionally with the video content.

Moreover, because this research is specific to a Jungian perspective, this study focused primarily on the *psychological* outcomes of PDP participation. Other important considerations such as the *physiological* and *vocational* effects, which would be examined in a more extensive analysis, were therefore not included.

Implications for Future Research

As this study illustrates, PDPs are powerful healing mechanisms that are making a positive impact by decreasing recidivism and improving the lived experience of participants within prisons across the United States. They also produce positive outcomes for rescue dogs and their recipients once they graduate. These programs are understudied and underfunded. To build on this current study, future research should include first-person interviews with PDP participants, the development of cross-program comparisons to determine if the specific program designs or mission statements influence recidivism rates, and follow-up interviews with PDP participants (both those who are in prison for life and those who are released) to track ongoing progress. Further research could also provide an assessment of the impacts of the vocational training and opportunities offered through dog training, which should be considered as a contributing factor to the reduction of recidivism associated with PDPs.

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