

Scumbag Sewer Rats

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**AN ARCHETYPAL UNDERSTANDING OF
CRIMINALIZED DRUG ADDICTS**

by

John E. Smethers, Ph.D.

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Scumbag Sewer Rats: An Archetypal Understanding of Criminalized Drug Addicts

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY DAUGHTER

LYNDA

FOREWORD

Most people separate alcoholism from drug addiction, workaholism, sex addiction, gambling, and overeating, etc. With that in mind, let's proceed with a short discussion on addictive behavior apart from the premise of this book. Does our parents' addictive behavior teach *us* addictive behavior? Is addictive behavior physiologically determined or genetic? Has society, through the media, contributed its share of the blame? Do our peers influence us? Is addictive behavior a result of coping mechanisms? Are we solely responsible for our own actions and behavior? Or, is it a combination of these—plus more. Most scholars in the field agree that it is a combination. Some researchers emphasize one over the others. It is my contention that there are *more* causes and dynamics going on than those discussed in this foreword.

Addictive behavior in parents often begets addictive behavior in their offspring. If a child grows up in a family in which one parent is an addict, the child is likely to develop an addiction. If both parents are addicts, the child's chances of addiction increases. Subsequently, the generational cycle of addiction continues. When adult children of addicts seek relationships, it is usually with people who are similar to them. This search doesn't usually happen on a conscious level. It is what Freud called 'repetition compulsion'.

It has been argued that the tendency toward addiction is biological, inherited genetically, or is a result of chemical imbalances. Cohen (1988) notes that "it is easy to postulate that the reinforcement centers in the ventral teg mentum, the locus ceruleus, the mediolateral frontal cortex, or the nucleus accumbens have an inborn deficiency of catecholamines or that the receptors are hyposensitive. Alternatively, perhaps the endogenous opioids are congenitally in short supply, or the delta opioid receptor is deficient in quantity or quality. Will diagnoses like 'hypoendorphism' or 'opioid receptor insufficiency' or 'hypodopaminosis' ever be made with reliability?" (p. 57). I wouldn't count on it.

Research reported by Kinney and Leaton (1995) suggests that heredity isn't as simple as was previously believed. At conception, we receive a unique set of genetic material—internal instructions that guide growth and development. These instructions set limits in the form of predispositions. The outcome will depend on unique life circumstances and the environment. Some people remain thin without effort and others put on weight easily (p. 80). This example of a genetic predisposition for weight-gain suggests that there is a genetic predisposition for addiction. How can we really know? The best that science can come up with is based on probability. Combined with life circumstances, addictive behavior is likely, which is giving credence to nature *and* nurture rather than nature *or* nurture. To complicate matters, the media among other causal factors, contributes its share of influence.

No one escapes the media's power to promote excess. Big business sell both gluttony and dieting, smoking, eroticism and an exaggerated need for the work ethic. Television commercials convey messages that encourage addictions in its audience. The commercial of a lady who puts her hand to her pain-wrinkled forehead and complains "Oh, this terrible headache," is generally seen in the next scene chipper and happy, thanking a miraculous wonder drug. Billboards with the Marlboro Man or Joe Camel have done their part in influencing us. Other influential media, directed at youth, is the glamorization of reckless lifestyles in movies. Kids grow up in a sea of advertising. Pre-adolescents see and hear beer and wine commercials exhorting them to drink before they are old enough. It can hardly be denied that the overall effect of advertisements is to glamorize whatever it is being sold, whether it is cigarettes, alcohol or over-the-counter medication, and to encourage the idea that what is being advertised will make them feel better or enhance their lives in some way.

It appears that life events may be mediating factors in the development of mental and emotional illnesses in general, and drug abuse in particular. What if dad's brother died? What if dad lost his job? What if dad had to serve a jail sentence? What if mom was an only child—not having the large-family experience, then grew up and had five children? What if she was a full-time housewife, belonged to the PTA, held a part-time job, and was expected to participate in civic activities? Could addictive behavior be a coping mechanism for life events such as dad's, and stress such as mom's? In Bratter and Forrest, Litz (1979) reported that within a group of alcoholics and nonalcoholics, the alcoholic group reported the impact of stress to a higher level than the nonalcoholic group (p. 77). These results can apply to pre

alcoholic men and women also, creating a need to relieve stress. “It calms me down. It helps my nerves. It helps me unwind after a hard day.” This explanation, says Kenny and Leaton (1995), can be viewed as the *anxiety thesis*. Partially a derivative of Freud’s work, he stated that during times of anxiety and stress, people look to the past for things that worked for them. Theoretically, he proposed, the security of mom’s breast as an infant can later influence the use of the mouth for eating, smoking and drinking disorders (p. 6).

During puberty and early adolescence there is a need for identity. Young people want to break from their parents. They fall into close associations with peers, and those peers have a profound influence. Peer pressure can also come from the workplace. Bratter and Forrest state that adolescent and occupational research both suggest that drinking is a learned behavior, and that it is learned from those who have the most social influence on the subject. To be included in certain subcultures, it is necessary to drink or use drugs (p. 14). Those who later develop drinking problems are likely to have started using alcohol at an earlier age than is typical for the general population. Also, the presence of a heavy-drinking partner has been found to increase both the amount and rate at which alcohol is consumed. Similar results in the number and rate of cigarettes smoked have been obtained from smokers exposed to a high-rate smoking friend as opposed to a low-rate smoking friend (p. 15).

Many members of 12-step programs claim that influences are only suggestive—it was *they* who made a voluntarily decision to drink or use drugs. Nobody twisted their arm and made them drink it. It is their contention that they alone are responsible for their actions. Suggested causes, to them, are excuses that gave them permission to drink or use drugs. In one of the stories in back of the *Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous* (1991), a woman states, “the mental twists that led up to my drinking began many years before I ever took a drink, for I am one of those whose history proves conclusively that my drinking was a symptom of a deeper trouble.” (p. 544).

These theories, et al, are what prevailing literature proposes as the causes and conditions of addiction. But I have come to believe that the term ‘addiction’ - especially in the early stages - is a misnomer when applied to all substance abusers. This is because most people who are thought of as addicts are not actually physically addicted, as the heroin *addict* is—most of them have what I have termed an *addictive mind-set and lifestyle*. What follows in Chapter One are depth psychological perspectives, and we’ll explore more causal explanations for the *addictive mind-set and lifestyle* in Chapter Three.

Anyone who wants to know the human psyche will learn next to nothing from experimental psychology. He would be better advised to put away his scholar's gown, bid farewell to his study, and wander with human heart through the world. There, in the horrors of prisons, lunatic asylums and hospitals, in drab suburban pubs, in brothels and gambling-hells [sic], in the salons of the elegant, the Stock Exchanges, Socialist meetings, churches, revivalist gatherings and ecstatic sects, through love and hate, through the experience of passion in every form in his own body, he would reap richer stores of knowledge than textbooks a foot thick could give him, and he will know how to doctor the sick with real knowledge of the human soul

C.G. Jung

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW

The orientation of this book is depth psychological. Depth psychology is a tradition initiated by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and elaborated on by others, including James Hillman with his archetypal re-visioning of psychology, as well as the phenomenological schools of thought. The spirit of depth psychology is nourished by an understanding of and a participation with literature, mythology, spirituality and alchemy, as well as Eastern traditions and quantum physics.

Depth psychologist James Hillman is the founder of archetypal psychology, which is an understanding of human nature through the archetypes (*arche* means first, *typos* means mold or pattern)—or symbolic patterns. Depth psychology started with psychoanalysis. Under the rubric of depth psychology are psychodynamic psychology, analytical psychology, ego psychology, individual psychology, feminine psychology, *archetypal* psychology, transpersonal psychology, alchemical psychology, ecopsychology, terrapsychology, and liberation psychology, just to name a few. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious is an amalgamation of archetypes (that can be thought of as a gene pool of behavioral patterns in the psyche). Examples of archetypes include the martyr, the good mother or the bad father, the entrepreneur, and the criminal, to name a few. Before going into an *understanding of the lived experiences* of criminalized drug addicts through the archetypes, let's first briefly explore other depth psychological perspectives.

Woodman (1982) is convinced that the same problem is at the root of all addictions. The problem being different in each individual. The problem, whatever that may be, presents itself differently in different people (p. 9). Overeating, alcoholism, gambling, sex, drug addiction, etc., are all likely symptoms of an underlying cause. There are many

causes, such as those discussed in the foreword—some proven and some theoretical, but others may never be known, and still more should be further investigated.

“Many of us, regardless of gender,” says Woodman, “are addicted because we have been driven to specialization and perfection by our patriarchal culture. Obsession is at the root of perfection. An obsession is a persistent or recurrent idea, usually strongly tinged with emotion, and frequently involving an urge toward some kind of action, the whole mental situation being pathological” (p. 10). The roots of fear can also be pathological.

Without going into the many causes of fear, it must be considered a legitimate reason to lean on something for emotional support. If not properly bonded, for example, fear will most likely manifest in some way. This fear being unconscious, there is not a way to intervene. “The mother,” says Woodman, “who is in this situation herself because of her own heritage, cannot give her baby the strong bonding to the earth that the mother grounded in her own instincts can” (p. 61). Fear is often anger in disguise, and anger often produces rebellious conduct.

Rebellion encompasses various types of behavior, which include criminality and addiction. Substance abusers are characteristically thought of as rebellious. What causes rebellion? A patriarchal society can cause rebellious behavior in women. Authority figures often create rebelliousness in both men and women. In contrast, recovery can be viewed as a form of rebellion against addiction. Therefore, rebellion does not have to be negative. Rebellion can result in healing. This form of rebellion is spiritual, and spirituality is an entity that needs to be developed. Addicts who personify the *puer aeternus* (eternal lad in Latin) and the trickster archetypes that we’ll be elaborating on later, are typically rebellious individuals. Sometimes we can even rebel against ourselves.

Approximately a month before I was released from prison, I weighed more than I had in my entire life. Not knowing anything about fat, carbohydrates, or portion control, I started fast-walking around the prison yard *per diem*, every day. While I managed not to gain any more weight, I didn’t lose any either. When I was released, I continued walking—usually ten miles a day. I didn’t gain any more weight and I may have even lost a little. It was my *fantasy* to be slim and again have a size thirty waistline. My reason for wanting to lose weight was to improve my chances with women—a fantasy.

Most of us have mental arguments with ourselves when we’re trying to make a decision. When my head suggested that I adopt a

healthy lifestyle, I resisted because it would be too much work. I said to myself, “Self, I wouldn’t have enough time; besides, exercising for health purposes would mean exercising and changing the way I eat permanently. All I want to do is lose some weight.” My other self countered by saying “only thirty to forty-five minutes a day is all that is required.” This dialogue in my head went back and forth until I finally lost the argument and continued doing what I was doing with minimal results.

It was much later that I came to realize that exercise and eating right is about physical expression, being healthy, feeling good, and longevity (imagination), and not about looking good (fantasy). How many exercise regimens fall by the wayside because the exerciser’s motives was in the way because of a *fantasy*, rather than *imagination*?

Before becoming familiar with Imaginal Dialogues and Jung’s concept of active imagination, I spent a lot of time talking to myself (out loud, I might add) when I was alone—usually at home or driving in my car. I still do this, but I have learned to apply this in a different way and benefit from it. These conversations are between me and someone else, usually someone I know. I am usually trying to convince someone, let’s say my friend Jack, to accept my point of view about something; therefore, I have two people in my head in dialogue, and both of them have a point of view.

Previously, my description of this behavior was that I was just talking to myself. When this voice answered me, it was not my friend, the human Jack. It was my *image* of him. It was the Jack *in me* that answered. I then needed to place Jack in a didactic position, and allow him to argue his case. My friend Jack is very argumentative, so I had to really think in order to be able to replicate what he would say if he was really there. This process required nurturing, and I finally mastered it. Often I have to lose an argument to Jack to learn something. I don’t always use Jack’s image, sometimes it’s Rich, and sometimes others. It depends on the issue. I also tried visualizing different images to represent Rich or Jack—rather than my visual image of them as people. Apparently, the “I” has very little control over the spontaneous thoughts and images that pop up. I am often able to accept Jack’s and Rich’s positions, or that of others, in order to come to the best conclusion. This is a form of active imagination called imaginal dialogues.

Prior to recovery, my *external* locus of control placed the blame for everything that happened to me—out there: she made me do it; if the cops would stop harassing me; if only, and I shoulda, woulda, coulda. In order to develop an *internal* locus of control, we all need to learn to

ask ourselves what part we have played in it? whatever “it” is. Questioning our motives by using imaginal dialogues like I do with Jack and Rich, is a depth psychological practice that anyone can employ for any number of reasons.

Freud wrote of a similar method. He said that when he writes, he often used questions to challenge his own points. He answered the questions, then did it again, and again. By making sure there were not any other questions that could weaken his argument, the point he was making was strengthened and reinforced.

In Jungian psychology, active imagination is a way of assimilating unconscious material such as dreams and fantasies through various forms of self-expression. The object of active imagination is to give a unique voice to the personality’s archetypal structures, such as the *puer* and trickster and especially the shadow, that are normally not heard, thereby establishing a line of communication between our conscious ego and the unconscious. Even when the end products, such as drawing, painting, writing, sculpture, dance, music, etc., are not interpreted (like dreams in Jungian psychology often are), something still happens between creator and his or her creation that contributes to a transformation of consciousness. Jung’s contributions aren’t given the attention that say, Freud’s has, but I find them much more intriguing and useful than Freud’s.

Part of a letter to Carl Jung published by the cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill Wilson (1984), told Jung how the message reached Bill at the low point of his own alcoholism; the letter described his own spiritual awakening, the subsequent founding of A.A. and the spiritual experiences of its many thousands of members. As Bill put it: “This concept proved to be the foundation of such success as Alcoholics Anonymous has since achieved. This has made conversion experience . . . available on an almost wholesale basis.” (p. 383).

Better known as the dark side of human nature, the shadow archetype is the primitive and usually unwelcome side of personality that derives from our animal forbears. Unconsciously we can sometimes project the shadow onto other people. Here is an example by Johnson (1991):

A young Japanese girl in a small village became pregnant. The villagers pressed her to name the father. After many angry words, she finally confessed. “It’s the priest,” she said. The villagers confronted the priest. “Ah so,” was all he said. For months the people were down on the priest. Then a young man who had been away returned and asked to marry the girl. He was

the father of the child. The girl accused the priest to protect him. The villagers then apologized to the priest. "Ah so," he said (p. 38).

The girl projected her shadow onto the priest and the villagers. The wise priest kept silent and the problem worked out well for everyone concerned. This example demonstrates the shadow in an environmental setting. Johnson also demonstrates this on a personal level using Marie Antoinette:

The bored queen decided she wanted to touch something of the earth and ordered milk cows so she could become a milkmaid. After the cows' arrival she found this distasteful and changed her mind. The Queen's original impulse was correct: she needed something to balance the formality of her court. If she would have continued as a milkmaid, the history of France might have been different. Instead she was beheaded (p. 54).

Marie tried to balance her highly refined life with some peasant task, but she didn't see it through. If the shadow operates in the form of the addictive cycle for years of one's life, then stops through the recovery process, the constructive lifestyle afterwards can be a very rewarding experience for the individual and the *Village*; therefore, society and the addict can benefit from the shadow.

Spiritual experiences can be life changing and Jung's contribution has since changed the lives of thousands of people. Oracular guidance is also a spiritual experience. Oracular consciousness has to be developed over time; therefore, if enough time isn't devoted in developing it, what may be interpreted as oracular guidance may in reality be some other unknown influence.

"Give me a sign, God!" How often have people, in one way or another, sought guidance in this manner? A trigger for addictive behavior can be pulled by stress or life events resulting in looking to the divine for guidance. This trigger might also be pulled by seeking oracular guidance. Skafté (1997) says, to receive an oracle is to receive guidance, knowledge, or illumination from a mysterious source beyond the personal self (p. 3). Skafté proposes that 'the shadow' may appear in unexpected places when the oracle is sought (p. 136). Personality traits and genetic idiosyncracies are omnipresent, as is the dark side of our psyche. Relying too much on oracular guidance could lead to a road that isn't conducive to spiritual needs. Something as unlikely as a bird flying into a neighborhood tavern, could set into motion a possible

solution for a problem. Taking the bird's flight as an oracular signpost, a recovering addict might enter the tavern and find an old drinking buddy he hasn't seen in a long time. Thinking the oracle has again provided guidance, a relapse could follow. The justification for an addict to relapse is often irrational, and he certainly wouldn't admit that he followed a bird into a bar for a solution to a problem.

The personal unconscious, Jung (1959) describes as containing lost memories, painful ideas that are repressed (i.e. forgotten on purpose), subliminal perceptions, by which are meant sense-perceptions that were not strong enough to reach consciousness, and finally, contents that are not yet ripe for consciousness (p. 65). The collective unconscious may be thought of as an impersonal or transpersonal unconscious because, as Jung says, "it is detached from anything personal and is entirely universal, and because its contents can be found everywhere, which is naturally not the case with personal contents" (p. 65). A more simple definition of the collective unconscious, as previously mentioned, is thinking of it as a gene pool of behavioral patterns in the psyche; therefore, this theory is contradictory to John Locke's theory of *tabula rasa*—that of being brought into the world with a clean slate before it receives the impressions gained from experience. Said yet another way, Jungian psychology postulates an objective psyche, or collective unconscious, made up of forms, molds, and energies that serve as blueprints for common and universal human experiences. These are the archetypes.

Whether it is the more widely accepted stimuli discussed in the foreword, or the stimuli gleaned from depth psychology, or a combination of each, there are considerably more dynamics involved when it comes to addiction; therefore, depth psychological perspectives should be investigated more vigorously. A spiritual awakening like that of which Jung proposed to Bill Wilson, can lead to recovery, wiser choices, and a chance to become a more self-actualized human being.

As Hillman (1997) points out, the primary rhetoric of archetypal psychology is myth. This move toward mythical accounts as a psychological language locates psychology in the cultural imagination. Secondly, these myths are themselves metaphors, so that by relying on myths as its primary rhetoric, archetypal psychology grounds itself in a fantasy that cannot be taken historically, physically, literally (p. 28). Therefore, the archetypes cannot be proven anymore than dreams can. How can they, they're unconscious?

What follows is an exploration of two archetypes to understand the

criminalized drug addict. These two patterns are the *puer aeternus*, and the trickster—a prominent figure in many world mythologies. This exploration argues that these archetypes are very familiar when we read about the flighty *puer* (pronounced poo-air) or the uninhibited trickster, we are bound to recognize behavioral patterns that remind us of people we know or are at least familiar with. Since these archetypes are primarily personified by males, we won't elaborate on the small percentage of women who fall into this category. The reasons will become evident.

The past offers a profound resource to prove that culture, as much as individuals, moves through predictable stages of development that mirror the course of natural evolution. Drug addiction and criminality also go through a developmental process. Though there isn't a specific, predictable evolution or developmental process for addiction that can be applied to all addicts, there is a prototype. Often addictive and criminal behavior evolve at the same time. Criminalized drug addicts for the most part, start evolving from habilitated pre-teens, to the stripling experimentation of adolescence, and on to the puerile behavior of adulthood, and finally into criminal activities, which is when they start personifying the trickster archetype. Indicating how an archetypal *understanding* of this evolution can illuminate the developmental history of drug use and criminal activity, is not to propose that socio or psychopathic criminal behavior is only in accord with the *puer* and trickster archetypes. We'll be exploring the world of the criminal mind in the following chapter.

However, *understanding the lived experiences* of criminalized drug addicts through the archetypes is the crux of this book. Don't we have a proclivity toward *understanding* when we root for the downtrodden, or for a likeable outlaw in a movie, such as *Harry Tracy—Desperado*, starring Bruce Dern (which is based on a true story, by the way). With the movie *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* with Clint Eastwood and Jeff Bridges, the audience finds themselves wanting the robbers to get away with their crime. Of course, screenwriters and directors may tend to present some characters more sympathetically than others, but still it evokes *understanding* in the audience—we often identify with them. Jesse James was a folk hero, and so was the mythical Robin Hood. During the American Civil War, hero worship was bestowed on guerrilla fighters such as John Singleton Mosby, John Hunt Morgan, and Quantrill who were not only puerile and wily tricksters, but outright killers. More conducive to substance use is the sympathetic treatment of the high-flying *puerile*

behavior of Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper in *Easy Rider*. We in the audience are drawn to their foot-loose and free-wheeling lifestyle.

It is worth considering what can be learned about *criminalized* drug addicts that is different from the usual theoretical and statistical studies done on drug addicts in general, as discussed in the foreword to this book. Can a depth psychological perspective—specifically the archetypes in criminalized drug addicts, help us to better *understand their lived experiences*? Will this *understanding* of criminalized drug addicts help us to determine why they don't respond well to treatment, and why their recidivism rates are so high for prison and recovery? And what are the ramifications of criminalized drug addicts being viewed as, and viewing themselves as dirty, lying, cheating, scumbag sewer rats?

We will examine the lived experiences of drug addicts who have become criminalized, in varying degrees of misdemeanor and felony. As one who was once a criminalized drug and alcohol addict, I can attest that drug addicts believe that they are, and that they are viewed by others as dirty, rotten, lying, scumbag sewer rats, which suggests that a self-fulfilling prophecy could have causal implications.

To be sure, many criminalized drug addicts think of themselves within these cultural stereotypes. At a deeper level however, the lived experience of being a drug addict may be something quite different, and indeed, may vary from person to person. Certainly, many drug addicts seem to view themselves as victims; others may simply live in a minute-to-minute expediency as they search for their next bag; and some may even consider themselves to be misguided human beings who plan on quitting eventually.

It is common for adolescents or young men who think of themselves as hip, slick and cool, to start drinking and using drugs. Before they experiment with drugs, they usually don't have the motivation to indulge in criminal activity. Of course, poverty, bad parental role models, and a pressing need for cash can trigger criminal indulgence in anybody—criminal activity isn't restricted to only drug addicts. But most of these types of men will eventually succumb to drug use through association, if for no other reason that dealing drugs is good money. There are exceptions, but for the most part, it is a misconception (a myth) that drug dealers don't use their own products.

It is also difficult for many clean and sober addicts to change the con-artist ways they developed while they were using—conniving, lying, stealing, womanizing, and not being responsible or accountable for their actions. Just staying away from addictive substances isn't

enough, so a majority of recovering drug addicts will repeat the same old behaviors and expect different results, which usually ends in relapse.

These individuals often start associating with their old buddies, hanging out in bars, and going to other hangouts. Many of them, such as speed and coke addicts, are accustomed to fast cash, fast women, and a fast lifestyle. It's very difficult for them to stay clean and sober. The same goes for the robbing and burglarizing night life of heroin addicts. These varied forms of criminal lifestyles are all they know. Drugs and alcohol offer a comfort zone they've been in, usually for the better part of their lives.

As one who spent many years with what I call an *addictive mind-set and lifestyle*, and associating with many criminalized drug addicts, I don't believe they are interested in causal explanations. They are too preoccupied with lying, cheating, and manipulating to satisfy the urgency of their next bag.

Generally speaking, drug addicts even lie when it would behoove them to tell the truth. For example, when a parole or probation officer asks them if they've been using drugs, most of them will instinctively lie even when telling the truth would be more likely to result in avoiding a violation of their parole or probation. Their lying will usually get them violated sooner than the dirty test.

Additionally, criminalized addicts often choose jail over treatment programs because the slammer is familiar; a place where they won't be expected to give up a lifestyle they've become accustomed to and comfortable with. Many addicts continue this compulsive behavior even though they suspect or even know that their reckless ways can lead to jails, institutions, and death.

If we consider the social problems that addicts cause, we cannot help but notice the financial and emotional grief that they inflict upon others. Not only do addicts cost taxpayers an astronomical amount of money, such as for medical care and for funding prisons, they also contribute considerably to the high morbidity and mortality in the culture due to viruses such as hepatitis B, C and HIV.

Many drug addicts hurt the ones they love the most, often by ripping off family members to buy drugs. How many families have learned the hard way that enabling addictive behavior by allowing an addicted family member to live with them most always ends with the stolen belongings of the family becoming profit for the fences (those who buy stolen property).

Burns (1999) integrates Jungian psychology and AA using

archetypal psychology in the treatment of alcoholism. He explains that merging archetypal psychology with twelve-step treatment has improved results at a lower cost. Burns explains that for us the principle door to the image is story. We use art, music, sports, and poetry, but the life story related in a gathering of people [such as meetings] with a similar experience provides the most economic access to the image. Sometimes we need to be reminded that the story is the fiction of the moment, the necessary illusion and *is* not the image, but *reveals* the image. Unfortunately the tendency is to interpret story, destroying both the story and the image. When a story session becomes boring that is generally what is happening (p. 19).

In Chapter Six, I include this often more-effective mode of elucidation; story—at least parts of my story, and some stories of others with the real-life component of dialogue between criminalized drug addicts. Personal experience through story is a valid research and reference tool. Qualitative researchers insist that qualitative methods are more appropriate than quantitative methods, allowing subjective knowledge. Knowledge gleaned from stories, whether fiction or otherwise, is a form of subjective knowledge. Academia is also recognizing that the personal experience of felons is proving to be a valuable teaching asset, thereby making it possible for this population to contribute to society rather than taking from it. However, there are those quantitative researchers who will forever discredit qualitative methods because of its lack of scientific reliability and validity.

Quantum physicists however, have shown that accurate measurement can only be accomplished by including the effect an observer has on the object being measured. Said another way, we distort nature by excluding ourselves from the equation. Not including the effect our very presence has on nature is itself unscientific. It is a distortion of nature that produces a false representation of the real world.

In an article in the *New York Times*, Warren St. John (2003, August 9) discusses the role of ex-convict criminologist, professor Stephen C. Richards at Northern Kentucky University, saying that the time these professors spent as prison inmates adds special insight to their research and their teaching (A 13-15). My experience as an inmate in jails and prison, coupled with my background of addiction, adds a worthy component to the theoretical orientation of this book. However, my addictive mind-set and lifestyle and criminal background has been a disadvantage, rather than an advantage, in my repeated attempts to teach classes at colleges and universities.

We will never know how many addicts stopped their dope-fiend ways and lived out the rest of their lives as productive citizens—statistics are vague and negligible, as well as ever-changing. There are very few people whose lives have not been touched in some way by addicts, and the problems they cause to themselves are all too obvious.

Many people in middle-class and upper-class society visualize alcoholics as they are often depicted on popular media—derelicts stumbling down the street with brown paper bags in their hands. They often see drug addicts as thin, gaunt creeps with pale skin and scraggly hair, hanging out in alleys with tracks on their arms, lying around with dirty outfits (syringes) surrounding them. Within these stereotypes, addicts are thought of as degenerate, slothful, dishonest, hedonistic, and stupid *Scumbag Sewer Rats*.

Dishonest and hedonistic? Yes. Degenerate? Sometimes; but how can addicts be thought of as slothful when they will stop at nothing to get what they want—they are highly motivated when they want to be. And how can they be thought of as stupid and still have the creative intelligence that I will periodically discuss throughout this work?

The Alanon and Naranon programs are designed to help the families of addicts. According to the big book of Alcoholic's Anonymous (2001), the entire family is, to some extent, ill (p. 122). Family members will repeatedly give money to, lie for, and make excuses for their addicted relatives, mistakenly thinking that they're helping them. Regardless of the blinders that family members wear, most of them have a stereotypical image of drug addicts that certainly doesn't fit the image they have of their addicted kin. "Not my son!" Denial is obviously not restricted only to drug and alcohol addicts.

Recovery for extrinsic purposes, such as a nudge from the judge (12-step meetings or treatment), a spouse threatening to leave, or job security is rarely conducive to a lasting and productive recovery. Proclaiming themselves as hope-to-die dope fiends generally negates any and all attempts at intrinsic recovery. Most of these confirmed addicts are professionals at feigning recovery—even convincing themselves—for a while.

Why did they start using to begin with? The causes of drug addiction are uncertain, controversial, and many, as discussed earlier. Some scholars believe that addiction is a search for spiritual transformation. According to Corbett (1996), many symptoms such as addictions or sexual perversions, which were previously thought to be the result of intrapsychic conflict, and in theological literature thought to be "sinful," can now be seen to be attempts to counteract the sense

of internal emptiness or chaos (p. 148).

William James (1958) refers to the consciousness produced by intoxicants and anaesthetics, especially by alcohol. He said the sway of alcohol over mankind is unquestionably due to its power to stimulate the mystical faculties of human nature (p. 324).

Weil (1972) states that the ubiquity of drug use is so striking that it must represent a basic human appetite. Weil also suggests that altering consciousness is innate. Perhaps the internal need to release inhibitions, be devious, act crazy, fight, gamble, chase women, lie, cheat and steal, is also an innate need to alter consciousness (p. 17). Maybe some people are destined to live by organizing principles that we are unaware of. There may be far more than we would like to admit that we simply don't know or *understand*. Perhaps many of our present theories are wrong.

During the course of this book, I will use my own developmental experience, first as a fledgling *puer* drinking on weekends and later experimenting with drugs, to becoming a criminalized drug addict. Often I will use mythology and examples from the lives of other criminalized drug addicts, and some experiences of famous people to illustrate that the addictive mind-set and lifestyle isn't limited to the lower socioeconomic classes. The archetypes do not discriminate and neither do drugs, alcohol, and criminality.