

In the picture

Incorporating visual language into type

John Baldock



Psychic energy can not be captured by words alone

In the Summer 2003 issue of the Bulletin of Psychological Type, Dick Thompson discussed the various ways of looking at the functions used in attitude.

In response, John Baldock highlights the key role that visual language can play in unlocking individual gifts.

Words crystallize thought but a crystal is not fluid. Psychic energy is fluid, all-pervading, dynamic, and cannot be captured by words alone. Only **visual language**, from the brain's right hemisphere, has the fluidity to express the nuances of meaning so vital to communication.

According to type theory, everyone is an artist. Even the scrawls and flourishes of an individual's signature are the graphic reflection of their hardwired 'genetic code', which can be decoded by the MBTI.

Learning to think visually is dependent on a correct diagnosis of true type. This is not an all-or-nothing proposition: it relies on an ongoing sensitivity to the resonance within the individual that coincides with their hard-wiring: that is, their personality type.

If the MBTI's extended working-out in the world is not to become unbalanced and moribund, then, in the spirit of Carl Jung's integration of opposites, the type community must incorporate *visual language* with verbal language. Unless that happens, the potential glory of type will go the same way as religion, and become cemented in dogma.

Visual language can reinvigorate type dynamics by contributing to the whole-of-brain debate, thus applying the most appropriate thinking system to the task at hand. Visual language is also recreational, and thus it can be used to integrate shadow elements in a fun way, returning type dynamics to a sophisticated sense of play. This contacts the child within, as an antidote to the pomposity of a type world ruled by academics.

Recreational pursuits are creative. We need to extend the concept of visual language beyond drawing and painting, pictures and graphics to include gardening, decorating, wood turning, dressmaking, boating, hunting, equestrian, chess and card games.

An emphasis on a rational approach that minimises opinion and prejudice will help to produce a co-operative approach and a healing atmosphere. The MBTI, true type and personality models provide a framework for

observing how dynamic psychic energy flows, and how it is absorbed by the individual into a unique outcome, or product, that is extraverted into the world.

Thus play comes to be work, and work becomes energised - a far cry from present corporate work practices.

In order to focus recreational pursuits on type and individuation, it is best if they can be concretised in material substance - paint and clay; photography; heat, light and sound; or language and metaphor.

The visual arts are excellent for this, as each personal image becomes a moment of becoming. This leads, over time, to a unique style or way of doing things that hastens the process of individuation. Many clients at my art school, Alpha Studios, reach individuation at ages between 20 and 30, and thus have the rest of their lives to apply their unique products in the world.

Here I define *individuation* as wholeness, in the sense that type preferences have become integrated into cooperative line-ups, allowing a free flow of psychic energy with minimum blockages.

At that stage, the process has not yet extended to the complete integration of the eight function-attitudes - that can take a lifetime. The process is dynamic. Each day, each image, each recreation, each product contributes to a moment of becoming: that is, becoming yourself and claiming a birthright of perfection.

The main criterion is that the process be rational, scientific and focussed. Jung and the MBTI are paramount in the process, where thinking and development are holistic, integrated and concretised - not in dogma, but in material substance that provides for reflection on the moment of becoming.

Visual language must play its part, not be sidelined by the academic community's over-reliance on verbal communication. Throughout the Western world, the results of that dumbing-down of the process have been catastrophic. Alpha Studios maintains a tradition of *Education*

Through Art, where visual language is central to the process.

Further, such visual language as is allowed to survive is ad hoc and irrational, the province of the marginalised, and totally dependent on opinion and prejudice. At Alpha Studios we uphold the tradition in a rational and scientific way. We use the MBTI to indicate each individual's hard-wired 'genetic code' of function-attitudes, *Se*, *Si*, *Ne*, *Ni*, *Te*, *Ti*, *Fe* and *Fi* - the only unique and vital path to individuation.

Creativity can be developed only from the inside out

Creativity comes from within, not without. No one can teach creativity as an outcome of visual language from the outside in. Creativity, as linked to visual language, can be developed only from the inside out.

A rational, scientific model is useful to focus the creative process, because individuals must be aware of boundaries within which they are energised. Remove the rational but fluid boundaries and the individual is awash in an antagonistic freedom that stresses, causing the depression endemic in Western civilisation.

The MBTI allows the individual to best determine how psychic energy is used, in four ways, namely

- to *energise*
- to *collect data*
- to *make decisions*, and, finally
- to *birth a product*.

The uniqueness of this product comes from the hard-wired genetic code of the function-attitudes. Isabel Myers ordered these functions as dominant, auxiliary, tertiary and inferior, citing the dominant in consciousness and the other three in unconsciousness.

In the production of visual images leading to visual language, this is a

good first step for the beginner. A *beginner* is an individual who, through conditioning, has allowed their manipulation of visual language to fall into disuse. As I stated earlier, all people who sign their name are potential artists.

Using Isabel Myers's model, we give the dominant a name. For example:

Ni	possibilities
Ne	patterns
Si	procedure
Se	environment
Ti	categories
Te	organise
Fi	personal
Fe	harmony

(For the sake of this article, these words have been chosen at random. In real life, a simple word-association test will disclose the best-fit words for each individual.)

Take *Ni* 'possibility', for example.

An INTJ will approach each mark as a sign that has the possibility of becoming a personal symbol that contains the power of direct communication. Watercolour has the fluidity and spontaneity to rapidly produce a set of symbols that need only organising or design to assemble into a final unique product. An INTJ would be energised by that process; an ISTJ would be stressed.

When the functions are grouped into the perceiving-judging pairs - the building blocks of 'type DNA' - combined words may assist with the visualisation process. For example:

Se Ti	environmental rhythm ... <i>a forest stream</i>
Se Fi	personal detail ... <i>the blue hat</i>
Ne Ti	wave patterns ... <i>boats</i>
Ne Fi	personal patterns ... <i>a busy street</i>
Si Te	organising stability ... <i>building a house</i>

Si Fe harmonious procedures ... *decorating*

Ni Te organising possibilities ... *water flow*

Ni Fe harmonious possibilities ... *dreaming*

These word responses work best in one- to-one client situations combining art or visual language with psychotherapy. At this basic stage, they work merely as a focus for visualising.

This left-hemisphere, verbal approach has obvious limitations, which are removed or unblocked when conscious use of the right hemisphere establishes spatial concepts through sight, sound, smell, touch and hearing.

Take *sight* as an example. We are very amenable to colour. It could be said we are colour beings: psychics can see auras, and even some colour-blind people can imagine colours. Each day a different colour can be visualised. We might, for example, imagine these colour concepts for the function-attitudes:

Ni	blue mauve
Ne	yellow green
Si	brown red
Se	yellow red
Ti	orange blue
Te	violet yellow
Fi	sky blue
Fe	pink mauve

For the less-confident making a tentative start to painting, combining words and colours is a good first step. Using water-colour in a random way, allowing colours to mix and spread, works in a similar way to a shaman throwing bones to interpret spirits. The flow of water will determine the force, direction, flow of psychic energy to make a communicative arrangement.

A story may be pertinent here:

A client who believed she was of Italian descent discovered late in life she had been adopted. Determined to

locate her biological parents, she came to Alpha Studios because she felt compelled to learn painting.

Using the process I have described here, she combined verbal with visual attachment to her dominant attitude function. Out of the random arrangement of watercolour, African animals emerged with great clarity, rhinos and elephants especially. She had never been to Africa and declared no great interest in animals.

After three months and dozens of African pictures, she located her biological father, a Boer in South Africa. Immediately the animal pictures stopped and she became an expert in still life.

According to Jung, there is no magic or mystery in this. The client had simply synthesised psychic energy, through material substance, into a moment of becoming, very much like a dream. In fact, at Alpha Studios we make a waking dream which conveys powerful communicative symbols.

The potential richness for communication that connects with visual literacy can be extended by the use of a rational and scientific **model for creativity**.

True visual communication has not been well served by the fashion-conscious arts industry, which tries to keep the power to itself through its refusal to dialogue with science on a sustainable level. There are many fields that would benefit from dialogue with visual communicators, not least psychology. The MBTI is not well served by verbal language alone.

After establishing a visual and focussed awareness of how the *dominant function* expresses itself in pictures, our next step is to integrate all four preferences into a cooperative line-up through recreation.

← Ni ← Te ← Fi ← Se ←

Some diagrams will be useful here.

Figure 1 uses a symbol of an iceberg, one-tenth above water, for the relationship in the psyche between the conscious and unconscious.

We can then use a mining analogy to explain the role of function-attitudes in the creative process.

Figure 2 illustrates the importance of the inferior function in the creative process, especially in personal creativity. Deep in the unconscious lies the 'Treasure House' of the psyche. Here lies data not readily accessible to consciousness.

INTJ is used as an example. Ni has the primary role of negotiating with Shadow elements, thus allowing Se to extract data from the Treasure House. This is passed to Fi for decisions, and then on to Te and Ni.

In fact, the perceiving-judging pairs work in unison on the extractive and refining process. Thus, according to this model, personal creativity brings new knowledge and anew product to light in the world.

Unfortunately, the process is more complicated than that. The only way a product can be brought into the world is through an extraverted function. In the case of INTJ, for example, the product is brought into the world through the auxiliary function, Te (Figure 3a).

It is essential to humanise this process. Visual language cannot cope with the abstraction of letters, signs that contain no essential energy. Converting signs to the power of personal symbols goes to the most basic mode of left hemisphere words:

Ni possibilities delegates Se 'environment' to extract Key data from the Treasure House, after negotiating with Shadow.

Se 'environment' then passes to Fi 'personal', who passes to Te 'organising', who extraverts the refined and unique product into the world.

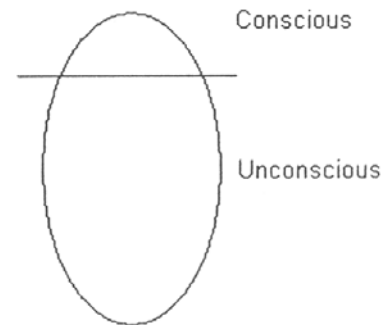


Figure 1: The human psyche

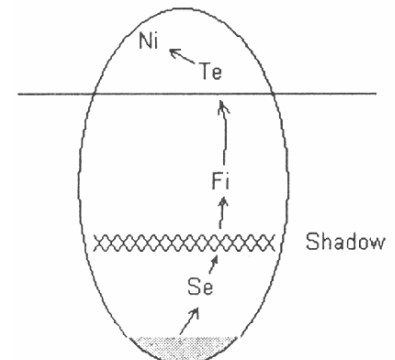


Figure 2: The 'Treasure House'

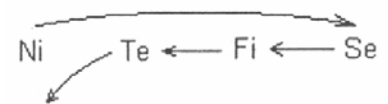


Figure 3a: INTJ

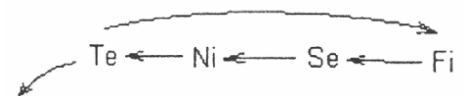


Figure 3b: ENTJ

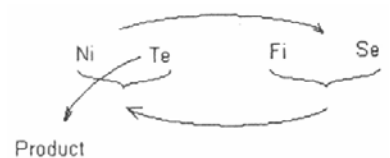


Figure 4a: Introversion - INTJ



Figure 4b: Extraversion - ENTJ

It remains the responsibility of each introverted type to maintain the 1-2-3-4 order I otherwise the now-powerful auxiliary could easily become number one.

Extraverted types have no such problem, as they extravert through their dominant. In the case of ENTJ, a product is brought into the world through the dominant function, T (Figure 3b).

As explained previously, the process is simplified when the perceiving-judging pairs are used with word combinations, as shown in Figures 4a (INTJ) and 4b (ENTJ).

Left-hemisphere thinking is abstract and linear. In visual communication, where spatial thinking is paramount, it is always better to use right-hemisphere thinking. Individuation requires manipulation of space, because Jung demands an answer to the spatial question, 'How do I situate myself in this set of circumstances?'

For an example, I will again use colour I because most people respond to colour in an emotional way. (Again I emphasise that the colours used here are arbitrary, whereas in real life they resonate within an individual.)

Blue/mauve delegates to yellow red, which now extracts new data from the Treasure House of the psyche and passes to sky blue, who passes to violet yellow. The process is dynamic, with colour nuance changing from day to day.

Colour use is obviously dependent on experience and practice, but an analogy can be made with driving. If the dominant left hemisphere is turned off by the use of music and right-hemisphere thinking is employed, spatial control is improved, and driving becomes safer and more enjoyable.

When all of the sense perceptions are employed, gathered data becomes rich and replete with personal symbols. Like the dream, these need to be brought to the highest levels of consciousness.

Working with adults, I see steep learning curves when the motivation for personal meaning sets in. The painting

now speaks with an authority based on energy, and the judging of painting is now based on mirroring energy. The individual has the means to replace reaction with response, setting in place the right position for maximum energy flow and avoiding depression.

This is the essence of personal creativity, able to birth a fully-realised and integrated personality into the world. The world may see a transformation of the individual, now replacing depression with energy. This is a worthwhile goal - the dynamic wave that type should be travelling, each now fully realised and informed.

I see this phenomenon working on a day-to-day basis. With case studies of over one thousand clients, the evidence shows individuals individuating at 30 years of age, thus having a long productive future to place their unique product into the world, be it image or object, idea or personality.

At Alpha Studios we call this new being (now being themselves according to birth-right) a *Creativist*, because they work in a state of integration according to each's hard-wired genetic code.

References

- Myers, Isabel Briggs 1980, *Gifts Differing*, Palo Alto, CA' Consulting Psychologist Press.
Thompson, Henry L (Dick) 2003, 'The evolution of the function-attitudes', *Bulletin of Psychological Type* 26:3, 36-39.

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