



Maieutic Psychagogy (MP)

MP is soul guidance that is using the wisdom of one's soul in our day to day lived lives. For me this is an earthed guidance from the ground of our being and is profoundly different to 'spiritual guidance' which is guidance from without to higher causes and courses. The former is grounded incarnate and embodied the latter is ethereal, dis-incarnate and disembodied with the body considered pejoratively as needing to be sloughed off in order to reach the 'higher' chakras or levels of consciousness.

MP is a [psycho-therapeutic](#) method of influencing behaviour by suggesting desirable life goals. In a more spiritual context, it can mean **guidance from the soul**. Psychagogy is considered to be the archaic predecessor of modern [psychology](#). The role and exact expression of psychagogy has shifted throughout history, but its beginnings can be dated back to the time of [Socrates](#) and [Plato](#). Psychagogic methods were implemented by such groups as the [Stoics](#), [Epicureans](#), and [Cynics](#). The method was also eventually adopted by [Paul the Apostle](#) (also known as [Saul of Tarsus](#)), [James](#), as well as other early Christian thinkers. Enduring well into the 20th century, psychagogy began to influence and be influenced by other psychological disciplines. Eventually the term *psychagogy* itself died out during the 1970s and 1980s.

Ancient Greek Psychagogy The psychagogy of [Ancient Greece](#), also known as maieutic psychagogy, involved [Socrates](#) (or another advanced teacher) helping a participant to give birth to realities from within the participant himself.

- [Maieutic](#): from [midwife](#), one who helps in the delivery of new life
- Psychagogy: from Greek, psûchê (soul) and agogê (transport)

Within the ancient Greek tradition, psychagogy was viewed as the art of influencing the soul by the means of rhetoric. [Plato](#) believed that the human soul possesses latent knowledge, which could be brought out and elucidated by a specific type of discourse which he called [dialectic](#): a bringing to birth from the depths of a person's higher being. He believed that a higher consciousness was needed in order to do this, and the result would bring forth a literal

enlightenment and a furthered understanding of human nature. Here we see ‘real magic’ of the Shaman of Wicca whereby through the flash of ‘intuitive illumination’ thus bringing something new genuinely from within and thus one’s own yet evoked via dialectic from without. **This is Magic.**

Plato also believed that only a prepared student can be involved in this process, and that **the only way to prepare a student was to have them learn by praxis based on dialectic¹ philosophising i.e. by doing and discussing** i.e. having your baby or helping someone else have one. The process of maieutic psychagogy **cannot be transmitted through writing**, since it requires that a person actually experience the dynamically unfolding procedure. Dialectic took place in public areas as well as private ones, as can be seen in many of Plato's works (such as [Phaedo](#), [Meno](#), [Phaedrus](#) and [Theaetetus](#)). Socrates is often recorded in these works as using Socrates’s process of dialectic to bring the ideas of others into being, acting as a sort of soul guide (also known as a psychagogue a Hermes like figure). *In Plato's [Theaetetus](#) Socrates equates himself to a midwife, helping to bring the thoughts of others to light through his words.*

Modern-day equivalents we see in Creation Spirituality and its relative the New Men’s Movement, e.g. Fox (2008). Over the past generation the former, along with another of its relative’s, liberation theology, these have rooted out of the Catholic Church for instance esp. Pope Cardinal Ratzinger who was in charge of the section of the Vatican responsible for the ‘Inquisition’.

The Enlightenment cut off the Black Madonna and thus cuts off our link to Psychagogy - so what does the BM represent (according to Fox)

The Black Madonna calls us to the darkness and to depth. Darkness is something we need to get used to again — the 'Enlightenment' has deceived us into being afraid of the dark and value being distant from it. Light switches are illusory. They feed the notion that we can 'master nature' (Descartes's false promise) and overcome all darkness with a flick of our finger. pg. 233.

She takes us down to our basic chakras the first chakra represents our relationship to the whole (first chakra picks up the sound vibrations from the whole cosmos), our sexuality (second chakra), and our indignation, anger and moral outrage (third chakra). (p. 234). The Enlightenment cut off these three chakras and in effect lobotomised Western humanity.

Further our Black Madonna honours the Earth and represents ecology and environmental concerns. Mother Earth is named by her very presence. Mother Earth is dark and fecund and busy birthing. So is the Black Madonna. pg. 234.

In our dialectic the Black Madonna is the grounded antithesis so that the enlightenment prevents us from accessing this grounded wisdom, even seeing it as sinful or worse ‘irrational’. And in a sense the Enlightenment is correct the Black Madonna is intuitive, direct, sauvage, pre-cognitive and thus non- rational (rather than ir-rational). The Midwife, the Maieutic Black Madonna reminds us of this loss and the need to re-connect same.

So in conclusion Maieutic Psychagogy involves Socrates (or other advanced teacher) helping another participant to give birth to realities from within him. Plato believed that the human soul possesses latent knowledge, which could be brought out and elucidated by a special kind

¹ Here the Dialectic in a Platonic sense has three dimensions e.g. thesis (cognitive), anti-thesis (Black Madonna), and (this is where Psychagogy comes in) synthesis which is the leadership of the Soul (anti-thesis).

of interchange which he called dialectic--a bringing to birth from the depths of a person's higher being. The maieutic art of Plato's Socrates involved his drawing his interlocutors into stating and reflecting upon the implications of their uncritically held opinions and their joint examination of these opinions to see if they were stillborn or viable.

'Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born *between people* collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction.'
Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*

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1100words over two pages (assembled from various sources as listed below).

References

Fox, M. (2008). *The Hidden Spirituality of Men: Ten Metaphors to Awaken the Sacred Masculine*. Novato, California: New World Library. 300pgs equiv.

Sources

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychagogy>

http://www.hermes-press.com/platonic_dialectic.htm