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ART 355: Survey of Art Therapy

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Critical Reflection #1

Throughout the existence of humans, we have always found significance within the circle. It is witnessed everywhere in the natural world, from the sun, to the planets, to mountains- the circle has been used by many different cultures to explain their beginnings. It is used in various religious/cultural rituals and ceremonies to forge a connection with the inner self or to their gods. Looking at a circle through different perspectives brings to light how prominent it really is in our lives, and can even explain why we are so drawn to the symbol of the circle or the wheel. There are many similarities in how the circle is interpreted, even if they vary. There is often a focus on the center and [circular] cycles, as something can develop from the center and go outwards, or can constantly change forms in cycles.

Mandalas are used differently in many practices, but with similar thought processes. They are often used for meditation and prayer purposes, which guides a person to self-reflection and unity of the inner self and the personality. According to Fincher (1991), “the mandala serves as a map of inner reality that guides and supports the psychological development of those wishing to advance in spiritual awareness” (ch. 1, p. 13). I agree with this concept due to the accumulation of evidence proving its success in different circumstances. Jung’s process of individuation draws back to this by using the mandala with patients and providing results of personal growth and one’s relationship with the Self. If the mandala was not effective in guiding people to personal and spiritual growth, so many different cultures, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, would not implement it in their practices.

Reference

Fincher, S. (1991). *Creating mandalas: For insight, healing, and self-expression*. Chapter 1

Mandala: A reflection of the self (pp.1-18).