



*Lösung, ee." der Geburtstags Aufgabe*

Variation II, 1924, Paul Klee

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# Between Jung and Hillman<sup>i</sup>

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## ABSTRACT:

James Hillman's role in the history of Jungian psychology is considered in the context of Jung's original vision for depth psychology and in terms of Hillman's international interdisciplinary influence. The bridge between Jung's ideas and those of Hillman is examined in light of Hillman's perspectival approach to the psyche, his notion of "soul-making" and its relation to individuation, and his use of the term "archetypal."

## KEY WORDS:

archetypal, soul-making, imaginal, *anima mundi*, mythos

Since C. G. Jung's death in 1961 few if any Jungian theorists have approached the preeminence of James Hillman. For those who early on embraced Hillman's work, this assessment may well have been made at any point during the past three to four decades. For others, Hillman's approach has been considered too great a departure from Jung's main thrust, making such an assessment debatable at best. In either case the recent death of this unquestionably innovative psychologist invites us to look again at his contribution to our field, particularly at how his key understandings relate to and diverge from those of Jung. In doing so we may find ourselves inclined to revision the psychology of the man who dedicated his life to revisioning psychology.

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## To Begin

There can be little question about James Hillman's range. He authored works on analysis, religion, emotion, suicide, dreaming, war, aging, and character, power, fate and calling, to name but a few of the subjects he addressed. In dedicated essays he engaged a multitude of mythic figures and configurations: The Great Mother, the Earth Mother, the Bad Mother, the Child, *senex* and *puer*, Hermes, Hestia, Aphrodite, the Hero, Hades, Dionysus, Ananke among them. Along the way he overlapped the concerns of psychology with interests in architecture, ecology, literature, and art, often imbedding these interests in commentaries on contemporary events. His twenty plus books have been translated into just as many languages, and his ideas have had an even greater impact in far-flung nations like Italy, Japan, and Brazil than here in the United States.

The scope of Hillman's work mirrors the polytheistic emphasis that anchored his critique of classical Jungian thought and became the basis of his archetypal psychology, an outcome of conversations with a small circle of analysts in Zürich, particularly Patricia Berry and Rafael Lopez-Pedraza. It also reflects the roaming *puer* spirit he named within his calling and that stands in part behind his method. Yet beneath these more apparent proclivities lies a largely overlooked capacity that made such wide-ranging interests and dexterity of mind possible: James Hillman was able to forge many different intellectual and psychological alliances. He befriended many ideas, forming his psychology with input from other disciplines. Both his critical eye and his fluid imagination grew out of this more basic habit of intelligence.

Hillman pushed hard against some aspects of Jungian thought while passionately embracing others and eventually described Jung as archetypal psychology's "first immediate father" (2004, p. 14). However, quite unlike other innovative renderings of the field—Fordham's concern with early development and détente with psychoanalysis, Neumann's psychological phylogeny or von Franz's extended understanding of fairytales, alchemy and physics—Hillman sought to put his understanding of the psyche on other footings, especially those with ties to the humanities. Further, he omitted appeals to science and empiricism. In this manner he established several points of orientation beyond the immediate Freud-Jung tradition. For example, archetypal psychology leaned into the Neoplatonic tradition of Renaissance writers like Vico and Ficino and mostly dodged the Germanic influence of

Kant, Schopenhauer, and Goethe. It also cultivated a primarily imaginal rather than analytical or even symbolical orientation, drawing heavily upon the writings of Henri Corbin, subsequently named the “second father” of the approach (ibid., p. 15). Even more foundational to Hillman’s enterprise was the ancient Greek tradition—not only its mythology but also its reflections on self-knowledge, which he would trace back to Heraclitus. Thus, one foot may have landed in Zürich, but the other foot moved around—from Dublin to Paris, Florence to Athens. Beyond being an American who spent a quarter century in Europe, his mind managed to cross the Swiss border in multiple directions.

Although Hillman’s weight would shift from time to time, his inside foot remained planted on Jungian soil; the conversation with Jung’s ideas and with analytical psychology went on until the end. However, this insider-outsider position

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combined with the mixed theoretical orientation and mercurial style has confounded observers and made assessments of Hillman’s contribution difficult.

To cut through this unsettling and contentious role in the history of Jungian thought we need to draw out two pervasive lines of thought, which form something akin to the latitude and longitude of Hillman’s world: First, he emphasized making conscious the archetypal roots and cultural-historical baggage of psychological concepts and theories. Prominent examples of this are his view of the ego as a recapitulation of the hero myth, the Self as a hangover of Christian theology, and the grip of the mother complex on most psychologies. Second, he took psychology beyond the consulting room and recovered a sense of psyche in the world at large. He walked psychopathology out into the town square and took inner life past its literal connotation into an interiorizing movement that revealed the soul quality of events and things.

In putting psychology itself on the couch, Hillman (1972) spared neither his Jungian training nor his own inclinations.<sup>ii</sup> He often referred to his work as a therapy of ideas or as an application of “psychology to psychology” (p. 40). And yet he did this therapy in a distinctively Jungian way, examining theories through mythic and cultural patterns. He began his first major work, *The Myth of Analy-*

sis (1972), by asking “what fathers psychology?” and proceeded to explore the myth of Eros and Psyche as a vital source of field-orienting metaphors (p. 11ff). Archetypal reflection on psychological perspectives could reveal unexamined assumptions as well as sources of renewal. If notions such as redeeming, ordering, transcending, centering, normalizing, curing, diagnosis, or progress went unchecked, psychology could be unconsciously caught in religious, medical, and utilitarian back-stories, spinning its wheels in some cultural complex. He was thus constantly questioning rarified, abstracted principles, pulling them back to into the fragmenting and fictional character of the soul’s own ground. Moreover, as his *Revisioning Psychology* (1975) made clear, he wanted to revitalize psychological thought at a time when body, feeling, and experience had all but turned thinking into a dirty word. Indeed, nothing provoked him more than displays of lazy thought, vast generalizations, or cliché-ridden formulations.

In looking beyond the therapy room, while appearing to go against the grain, Hillman was running with a well established if largely neglected stream of depth psychological inquiry. Both Freud and Jung commented at length on social themes, which were also taken up by respective followers, especially Erich Fromm on the psychoanalytic side and writers like Jaffé, Progoff, Neumann, and Whitmont on the Jungian side. For Hillman, even more primary than this application of psychological insight to culture was the project of reversing the psychic deadening of the world and recovering a sense of the *anima mundi*, which he couched in terms of “that particular soul-spark, that seminal image, which offers itself through each thing in its visible form” (1982, p. 101). Whereas psychology in general and Jungians in particular were giving almost exclusive emphasis to working on the psyche from inside out, Hillman often reversed the procedure, attending to neurotic and psychopathic ingredients in society.

Archetypal psychology was establishing its own horizons. Yet within what often appeared as an unraveling and remolding of Jung’s ideas one thing is clear, and this forms the backbone of Hillman’s contribution to Jungian thought: Between the old man of Zürich and this restless American “son” lay a commitment to the archetypal basis of being; they both undertook a recollection of the gods. Jung set off on his own distinctive path by placing Freudian theories of the mother in the hands of the maternal archetype. He then went on to explore universal patterns of typology behind different theoretical leanings. He rooted his

key findings in comparative religion and spent more than a decade planting psychological concepts in the soil of medieval alchemy. At key points along the way he affirmed and reaffirmed the psyche's preference for a mythological way of thinking, and he spent most of his final years relating the modern search for meaning to the breakdown of Christian myth. For both Jung and Hillman the human condition revealed itself within a psychic reality that is grounded in divine drama, and the differences that emerge between them can only be measured against this most fertile common ground. While Jung may have referred to it as the collective unconscious or objective psyche and Hillman came to think of it as the archetypal imagination, both men understood the psyche as a mythic unfolding and understood psychology as a logos that must reconstitute this mythos.

### Finding a Baseline

James Hillman's contribution to depth psychology is not so easily written into the history of the field because it's entwined with the problem of orthodoxy and heterodoxy in Jungian thought. Jung's famous aversion to Freud's dogmatic style, his admonitions about the unconscious remaining unknown, his statements about his psychology being a working hypothesis, as well as his resistance to establishing training institutes, all provide his followers with cautionary tales. The very notion of an "orthodox Jungian" opposes the attitude Jung tried to cultivate. In spite of this, the essential tenets of Jung's psychology and their application have been matters of continual debate, and a half-century of Jungian history has been dotted with institutional splits. What makes an analyst, a writer or a thinker "Jungian" seems to be sandwiched somewhere between the open nature of the founder's thought and the too often closed character of institutional life.

Before his step into the spotlight translating *Liber Novus (The Red Book)*, the Jung historian Sonu Shamdasani, in his volume *Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology* (2003), wrote that "Jung did not intend to form a particular school of psychotherapy" but intended to develop a "general psychology," of which "practical analysis" would be only a part. He says further:

The establishment of complex psychology (Jung's original term for his perspective) was to enable the reformation of the humanities and revitalize contemporary religions. The history of Jungian psychology has in part consisted in a radical and unacknowledged diminution of Jung's goal. (p. 15)

Establishing this baseline is important in situating Hillman's work in the history of Jungian thought. Beyond Jung's ongoing concern with cultural phenomena and his constant attempt to tie psychology to the wisdom of the past, Shamdasani forces us to acknowledge that psychotherapy was neither the sole nor primary focus of his psychology. Along such lines, Hillman's project to move psychology beyond the bounds of the consulting room and root it in the humani-

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ties rather than the sciences resonates with Jung's original intention for the field. Yet among many Jungians—in marked contrast to this understanding—a major rationale for putting Hillman's perspective aside has been either its critique of psychotherapy or its perceived lack of clinical relevance.

Overviews of Jungian psychology reflect this situation. In his 1985 book, *Jung and the Post-Jungians*, Andrew Samuels produced the now well-known rubric that separated Jungian psychology into three main schools: classical, developmental, and archetypal. He then placed various analysts and writers in theoretical clusters, suggesting something of a spectrum, without placing hard boundaries between these schools. However, in 1998, Samuels revised this assessment, dropping Hillman's archetypal psychology from his schema, stating it has “either been integrated or eliminated *as a clinical entity*—perhaps a bit of both” (1998, p. 21, italics mine). Samuels then proceeded to add two wings to the remaining duo, suggesting that the London developmental Jungians now have a decidedly psychoanalytic (Freudian) wing, while the Zürich classical school has developed a fundamentalist wing. But in this new schema archetypal psychology no longer warranted its own standing. A further example of this tendency is Thomas Kirsch's *The Jungians: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (2000), wherein the author indicates his intention at the start to forego the movement's “intellectual history” and focus on “social and political developments” (p. xii). His outlook mirrors that of Samuels and provides a meticulously researched history of Jungian training organizations. Alongside a dozen other key analysts, Hillman is given a dedicated couple of paragraphs, focusing on his early and somewhat controversial history before leaving Zürich.

Such assessments of trends in Jungian psychology, emphasizing clinical work and training institute politics, are distorted on two counts: They not only tend to absent Jung's overall outlook and application of his own psychology, they don't account for the way Jungian perspectives are disseminated or engaged in other settings, such as academia. They may describe the direction of Jung institutes very well, but they don't accurately portray the broader world of Jungian thought. To cut to the chase: In most overviews of the field, archetypal psychology's international, interdisciplinary following and Hillman's broader contribution to psychological and cultural discourse have been overlooked. His prominence has been shrouded, and the relation of Hillman's work to the spirit and substance of Jung's vision has been obscured.

By vivid contrast, outside the confines of Jungian institutional life another picture is apparent. Organizations for scholarship such as the International Association of Jungian Studies and centers of learning like Pacifica Graduate Institute and The Dallas Institute of the Humanities hold Hillman's work as a primary source of discussion and reference. In dedicated monographs his work has been placed alongside that of Heidegger, Whitehead, Freud, and of course, Jung.<sup>iii</sup> Through the teaching and writing of Edward Casey (Yale and Stony Brook Universities), David Miller (Syracuse University), Hayao Kawai (Kyoto International Research Center for Japanese Studies), Ginette Paris (University of Quebec and Pacifica Graduate Institute), David Tacey (La Trobe University, Melbourne), Roberts Avens (Iona College) and David Rosen (Texas A & M University) to name a few, Hillman's ideas have been channeled into several other disciplines. Few Jungian writers have come close to finding this kind of traction in the academic world, nor created a substantive or original enough body of work to do so.

The wider cultural reception for Hillman's writings has been equally impressive: After Jung, Hillman has been the only Jungian to give the prestigious Terry Lectures at Yale, and his resulting work, *Revisioning Psychology* (1975), was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. He was awarded the Medal of the Presidency in Italy and named among the *Utne Reader's* 100 most important thinkers in America. Hillman's work with the Men's Movement and his *New York Times* best selling work, *The Soul's Code* (1996a) brought his ideas into the national spotlight. After publishing an anthology of Hillman's writings, *A Blue Fire* (1989), Thomas Moore went on to widely disseminate archetypal perspective with his own best



seller, *Care of the Soul* (1992). Later in his life, Hillman appeared in a number of documentaries, including several BBC productions and the theatrical release, *The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour*. At either the scholarly or cultural level, no other Jungian has been as widely read or made such inroads into disciplines beyond depth psychology.

### **Perspective and Structure**

When Jungian psychology is not confined by institutional and clinical definitions, Hillman's preeminence becomes hard to dispute. Nonetheless, a stumbling block for arriving at this assessment is the matter of how far archetypal psychology departs from classical Jungian concepts. Whereas there can be little question Hillman left parts of Jung's understanding behind, misunderstandings of his approach and terminology may be responsible for exacerbating this divide. And at the very heart of these misunderstandings is his shift from a psychodynamic to a *perspectival* approach to the psyche.

When the psyche is perceived through the separation of conscious and unconscious, special conditions, techniques and tools are needed to get from one side to the other. Psychic material arises from the unconscious or sinks down into the unconscious and a whole psychodynamic apparatus is required to track the movement. This mode of perception reflects the starting point of depth psychology. Freud and Jung came into a world that had reduced the psyche to the rational mind and had underestimated or dismissed emotion and instinct. While psychoanalysis opened the door to what had been split off, Jung came to realize that a loss of symbolic thinking compounded the situation. For without a conscious faculty for symbols and images the deeper reaches of the unconscious remain foreign and unruly, generating never-ending battles between a reasonable ego and an untamable id. Beyond the solution of sublimation, Jung heralded the transformative power of symbolic experience. He revived awareness of the in-between realm where myth, religion, and art had always bridged the upper and lower reaches of the psyche. In the end, Freud and Jung parted ways over the nature of this psychic borderland. Wrapped up with Jung's major insight into the archetypal basis of psychic life was the equally vital understanding that symbols could overcome psychic splits and redirect human instinct. And he began to glean a deeper intelligence at work in this process.

Hillman doubled down on this territory in between conscious and uncon-

scious, recognizing it as the realm of Platonic *metaxy*, the place where soul was made. As his work developed, the conceptual landmarks and mapping of the psyche began to matter less than the sensibilities and attitudes he detected at the base of Jung's work. Structure and concept receded just as metaphor and myth expanded to fill the resulting space. By the time of *Revisioning Psychology* Hillman was peeling the scientific Jung away from the mythopoetic Jung and augmenting the latter with a series of new terms and cultural-historical amplifications. To be sure, Jung (1965) had already tilted his psychology in this direction:

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"Myth is the natural and indispensable intermediate stage between unconscious and conscious cognition" (p. 311); "no science will ever replace myth, and a myth cannot be made out of any science" (ibid., p. 340). For Hillman, the resultant aim was not to map or even describe the psyche, but to explore psychological thought and vision while staying close to the psyche's native tongue.

The core of this project was a sustained attack on literalism and positivism as well as an attempt to overcome the Cartesian divisions that Jung's psychology had sought to transcend even while such divisions haunted its formulations. Hillman's move beyond psychotherapy must be placed in this context: Rather than a disinterest in what came into the consulting room he had a profound interest in what was being left out as medicine and science prolonged the divisions of inner/outer, mind/body, and psyche/world. Indeed he continued to insist upon the primacy of psychopathology, without which psychology succumbs to paradigms of human potential, spirituality and self-help style ego empowerment. When things go wrong or "fall apart," as he says, we're drawn into the psychic depths. So depth psychology in particular must stay close to the appearance of pathos, which cannot be separated from soul. Yet, he argued, it need not bind psychopathology to the clinical vision, for the *metaxy* extended beyond this: Rotten politics and ruined estuaries can depress us right alongside a midlife crisis. Town centers can be manic, buildings paranoid or schizoid, and institutions may display a range of character disorders. Corporations can dissociate and landscapes can be raped and traumatized. We don't

need to take “inner” literally; we can also look outside with an interiorizing vision. Psyche appears in these places too. Overcoming the split between inner and outer in this way was a pivot point for Hillman’s psychology of perspective.

By describing soul as that which lives “between us and events, between the doer and the deed” (p. xvi), Hillman (1975) didn’t leave behind instincts, emotions and complexes; he just underscored how these dimensions inhabit the psychic field in which all things stand in relation to one another. Cultivating this middle realm left a swinging door between conscious and unconscious, so that known and unknown,

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upper and lower, light and shadow remained in constant contact. Applying a therapeutic eye to the pathologized world also alleviated or at least nursed the acute psychic pain of the personal realm. Here it is important for Jungians to realize that Jung’s individual versus collective trope was aimed at avoiding the numbing, sometimes inflating impact of collectivization not at the expense of community and certainly not at the sense of connection to one’s surroundings.

The notion of a psychology of psychology already implies an emphasis on the approach taken rather than on the thing considered. Our habit is to describe the psyche as something we observe—dreams enter consciousness, emotions are released, projections are recollected, and so on. For Jung, such descriptions of psychic contents and their movements aimed to correct the widespread undervaluing of inner life and give substance to the reality of the psyche. Repeated observations result in descriptions of the salient features of an inner realm, just as an explorer charts an unknown region or an archeologist uncovers buried artifacts. Both these spatial metaphors pervaded the early history of the field. But Jung also understood that what we perceive is inextricably bound up with the way we look.

Hillman’s work highlighted this manner in which perception and knowledge betray psychological patterns, showing how stances are determined by images and their associated fantasies. More than anything else, he addressed the way psychological understanding depends on different modes of imagination. A depression may be imagined medically, poetically, mythically, or spiritually and will seem like a different phenomenon in each case. The idea of an inner landscape can either

be translated into abstract terrain like ego, persona and shadow or it can invite further images—fathomless oceans, dry deserts, enchanted forests. One of Hillman's (2005) pivotal essays approached the difference between spirit and soul in terms of "peaks and vales" (pp. 71*ff.*), allowing images of bright mountaintops and shadowy ravines to convey the psychological contrast. The pure, rarified air of spiritual practice, he argued, was a vastly different pursuit compared to trekking through the lowlands of soul. In such a manner, whether psychological life was approached spiritually or soulfully made a great deal of difference.

For Hillman it always came back to working with the fantasies and images that shape our perceptions. It is here that we can put our hands on the very way we imagine life into being. What occurs between us and events is where he glimpses soul, taking his cue from Jung (1971): "The psyche creates reality everyday. The only expression I can say for this activity is fantasy" (p. 52, par. 78). Spliced with Jung's (1967) equation, "image is psyche" (p. 50, par. 75), Hillman's version of making the unconscious conscious is to become aware of the way our psychic glasses create reality. At times, even seasoned Jungians are tripped up by this emphasis because they retreat to the visual connotation of the term "image." But, as Hillman has reiterated and a careful reading of Jung confirms, "image" describes the most primary and irreducible psychological form and may exhibit an emotional, auditory, sensate, or ideational character.<sup>iv</sup> So-called raw emotions or bodily sensations become images as soon as they are psychically registered. Feelings become images as soon as any significant awareness of them occurs. A feeling of sadness or loneliness becomes an image as soon as recognition or reflection takes place and the kind of sadness or loneliness and the context of its arising is apparent. An image is, essentially, a piece of imagining. Once consciously held and considered, the fantasy that surrounds and connects images is also revealed. A careful consideration of images leads us more deeply into an appreciation of Edward Casey's insight that "an image is not what one sees but the way in which one sees" (Hillman, 2004, pp. 18-19). Hillman's approach becomes a work on those images—with, on, and through the imagination. He wrote, "the aim of therapy is the development of a sense of soul, the middle ground of psychic realities, and the method of therapy is the cultivation of the imagination" (ibid., p. 15). Such cultivation may well take place in analysis, but its roots and implications extend far beyond the business of individual psychotherapy. Soul, *metaxy*, is recovered as the realm of imagining.

In considering the key role of Hermes in psychological modes of thought, we get a glimpse of this understanding at work. Jung had earlier invited this connection. In a revealing passage where he emphasizes the point that we don't invent the gods, but "the gods came first," and that we "must derive our psychic conditions from these figures," Jung (1967) also wrote: "From this standpoint Christ appears as the archetype of consciousness and *Mercurius as the archetype of the unconscious*" (p. 247, paras. 298-299, italics added). The unconscious is apprehended through Hermes-Mercurius, the god of communication, interpretation, borders and thresholds. Any understanding or perspective that makes room for Hermes will remain fluid and keep the unconscious close at hand. And so, fittingly, reading Hillman is often accompanied by the feeling of quicksilver running through one's fingers. In *Revisioning Psychology* (1975) he deliberately supplies no examples of what he's talking about. Historical and mythological amplifications of ideas abound, but no clinical examples and no descriptions of technique are given. His writings as well as his method wander all over the map, borrowing a little from here and a little from there in the same way Hermes builds his lyre to charm Apollo.

Hillman essentially argued: If the realms of psychic life may only be traversed by the unpredictable and hard-to-catch Hermes, then perhaps one's overall approach to psychology should follow his rhythm. Then one might catch that fleeting intuition, bad omen or other communication "from the unconscious" and grow more comfortable in the liminal spaces and borderlands over which this god presides. In his paper, "Notes on Opportunism," (2005), he wrote:

The mercurial opportunist, having no fixed position, no sense of being at the center, keeps his eye on the door, the thresholds where transiciencies pass over from statement to implication, from fact to supposition, from report to fantasy. Mercurius is messenger of the Gods, so he must be able to hear their messages in what ever is said. (p. 101)

Following the mercurial path, Hillman's psychology aims to cultivate a thoroughly imaginal way of knowing, from the start attuning our awareness to the language of the deep psyche. When writing on the cusp of his traditional training and his new approach, in a short section of *The Myth of Analysis* (1972) called "Toward an Imaginal Ego," he set out this aim, situating it in the context of what Jungian analysis ultimately attempts to do:

The idea of an imaginal ego gives conceptual form to what actually happens in Jungian psychotherapy, where adaptation to the unconscious, or *memoria*, is reflected in the changed ego personality of the analyzed person. His adaptation is primarily to “psychic reality” (Jung), to the “imaginal world” (Corbin). (p. 185)

Realizing that one’s orientation and attitude determine the relationship with the rest of the psyche, Hillman constantly asked: What is the most fitting perspective? What is the best way to see the gods at work within the complexes and callings of psychological life?

### Individuation and Soul-making

Jung’s notion of individuation takes depth psychology’s basic imperative to make the unconscious conscious and reveals how individual purpose and meaning grow out of the process. This incremental revelation of personal calling and character expands comprehension of one’s unique place in the universal drama of humanity. So the process continually engages the question of how one’s particular situation relates to larger archetypal patterns of existence. Jung often wrote of this as a natural process, but he equally understood it is constantly thwarted by practical demands and social imperatives. For most, it requires special conditions and directed effort, which his psychology aimed to describe. In this way his method of supporting this process has become wrapped up in our understanding of it; working with dreams, sorting through complexes, wrestling with fantasy life and withdrawing projections are activities that pave the path of individuation.

In bridging into Hillman’s notion of soul-making we can begin by noting that although Jung relied on such introspective methods, he came to describe the objective psyche—to which we must eventually forge a relation—as something that surrounds us on all sides—inner and outer. In *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1946) he writes:

No, the collective unconscious is anything but an encapsulated personal system; it is sheer objectivity, as wide as the world and open to all the world. There I am the object of every subject, in complete reversal of my ordinary consciousness, where I am always the subject that has an object. There I am utterly one with the world, so much a part of it that I forget all too easily who I really am. “Lost in oneself” is a good way of describ-

ing this state. But this self is the world, if only a consciousness could see it. That is why we must know who we are. (p. 22, para. 46)

The phrase “if only consciousness could see it” is the key one. Together with the reflection, “I am the object of every subject,” we’re ushered into the terrain Hillman attempted to revivify. The term “soul-making” is taken from Keats, who wrote, “Call the world if you please, ‘The Vale of Soul-making.’ Then you will find the use of the world.” (Hillman, 2004, p. 38). For Hillman, as for Keats, the world offers soul, if only we have the eyes to see. This is the basis of his description of soul as “a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint toward things rather than a thing itself” (1975, p. xvi)—a viewpoint that depends above all else on the capacity to deliteralize.

Jung’s own work moved carefully yet pointedly in the direction of understanding and recovering this soul-world relationship. The dedicated exploration of alchemy, dialogues with physicist Wolfgang Pauli, studies of synchronicity, and the concern with spirit and matter are all geared in this direction. Jung also, by temperament, conveyed a highly developed sense of the animated world: conversations with the rock he sat on as a boy; addressing misbehaving pots and pans at his Bollingen retreat; releasing figures through stone-carving. He wrote about the modern world with an acute awareness of this inner-outer overlap: “Dragons are in our day great machines, cars, big guns, these are archetypes now, simply new terms for old things” (Jung, 2002, p. 147), and elsewhere: “Our fearsome gods have only changed their names: they now rhyme with –ism” (Jung, 1966, p. 204, para. 326). Meredith Sabini’s remarkable anthology of Jung’s nature writings (Jung, 2002) leaves us with little doubt that he understood psyche and nature to be inextricably woven. For Jung then, the psyche is not just found “within.” However, the psychodynamic approach and Cartesian character of his scientific inclinations often obscured this understanding.

Soul-making picks up the thread of Jung’s more expansive perceptions of psychic reality. It occurs with the appearance of metaphoric possibility, which deepens and opens to meaning. This can certainly be in art or journaling or active imagination, just as Jung described. However, it might just as well take place in cooking, making a garden, in a heartfelt conversation, or working on a tennis stroke. Rituals of all types invite it, and it may be as embodied and gestural as it is mindful. While opportunities for it are pervasive, it is not indiscriminate. We are drawn

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into soul-making when the imagination glimpses something knocking at the door. Then the door must be opened and the visitor greeted with curiosity and regard. So it implies a certain level of engagement, musing, and nursing the moment along. It is not mere daydreaming or idle fantasy, but a crafting. If in individuation the method is to attend to what comes to us from the unconscious, in soul-making the method is extended beyond the special circumstances of self-reflection, dreaming and active imagination into all aspects of life that generate imaginative sparks of a certain magnitude.

Conjoining this awakening to psychic reality, Jung and Hillman both embraced an unfolding of the personality and a slow revelation of deep character within which one discerns a calling, even a sense of fate, especially looking at life in retrospect. *Amor fati* is certainly one place where individuation and soul-making dovetail. Yet whereas soul-making sounds very open ended, individuation is often presented in a more directed, goal-oriented way, especially when joined to notions of unifying and wholeness. No doubt people do, on occasion, have numinous experiences and dreams that indicate a deeper center or a central archetype. But the intimation, even preconception of an ordering factor can often overshadow the particularities and context of these events. Love of one's fate comes down to how well one embraces specific events, and the question Hillman asks is what modes of perception are best suited to nurse along this moment-to-moment unfolding?

In discussing such matters he was apt to use the analogy of a pearl necklace, where the focus is on the pearls, not the string. As he saw it, the problem with orienting psychology to the string—the direction and destination of the process—is the risk of overlooking the pearls. “Strings” attract the heroic ego, which loves to know where it's going and likes to navigate by the will, above and beyond life's specific gifts and challenges and their own archetypal backgrounds. Soul-making aims to forget the string and stay with the pearls. It stays with what captures the imagination and trusts



that overall purposeful will reveal and take care of itself. The need for overarching meaning or conception thus fades into the background; the string becomes a secondary consideration in light of life's multiple spheres of concern.

We position ourselves in the soul-making process by becoming artisans of the imagination, refining the craft of psychically hosting the circumstances and events that come our way. The masterwork lies within the crafting itself, not the overall outcome. By attending to moments when soul appears—"care of the soul" as Thomas Moore (1992) suggested—each detail gains significance and offers more fecundity and depth. A sense of continuity or cohesion is a by-product of the moment-to-moment faith in the psyche, without need of a psychological blueprint or image of the whole. This idea is not at all alien to other notions of what actually feeds the psyche. In practical psychotherapy it is often advised to forget the patient's history, diagnosis, and distant goals in order to focus on the creation of experience and insight in each session, understanding that "the whole" will inevitably be implicated in the area of immediate concern. Soul-making extends this principle into all aspects of existence.

In simple terms, the overall canvas of life may depend far more upon our commitment and presence to each brush stroke than on our envisioning of the big picture or our own hand at work. So, from Corbin, Hillman takes the idea that what actually individuates is not "us," but our passions, talents, and places of wounding. Our complexes need to shake off their infantile associations and find their deeper, more mature role in our character. If we turn our attention to what is going on in these particularities and peculiarities, then it's the parts that undergo change, and the personality becomes a rich, multidimensional canvas. It is in this spirit that Hillman (1975) uses the provocative term "dehumanizing" as a synonym for soul-making (pp. 165*ff*), radically countering the egocentric and humanistic reduction apparent in much psychological discourse.

Though the accents are different, both individuation and soul-making share the goal of overcoming egoic ways of life. Individuation emphasizes the process of becoming through the differentiation and integration of the parts of our psyche, largely discerned through introspective processes. It has overtones of a spiritual quest, promising to shift our conception of life from personal pursuit to transpersonal purpose. Soul-making emphasizes engagement with whatever takes on psychic significance, building the instinctive religiosity of the psyche into

the ebb and flow of existence. On the other side of literal reality, through the metaphoric and mythopoetic potential in perception, it discerns the play of the gods in all things and our points of entry into that divine drama.

### "Archetypes" and "Archetypal"

There are several areas of Jung's work with archetypes that help illuminate Hillman's style of archetypal discourse. In the first instance, archetypes announce their presence with a certain ambience, not only with universal content or form. This ambience may or may not relate to overt mythic or religious motifs or to other culturally significant and recurring iconography. Although much attention is paid to the history of symbolic patterns in establishing the archetypal pedigree of dream images and artistic expressions, detecting the presence of an archetype in no way depends on making these connections. The most direct and undeniable indication of an archetype is its psychic import, often accompanied by a felt sense or intuition of universal or transpersonal significance. To this qualitative dimension of archetypal events we can add another more specific way in which Jung (1960) described archetypes—as "typical modes of apprehension" (p. 137, para. 280). Archetypes shape what we encounter by shaping our perception of that encounter. This notion returns us to Hillman's emphasis on perspective. We may see gods and monsters in our dreams but we also see via these inner figures—perceiving beauty via Aphrodite, strife via Ares, mishap via Coyote. When looking at the world through Medusa's eyes, life petrifies. Among the Australian aboriginals, the Dreaming and the landscape are indivisible. Landscape is known and navigated via myth, which is a consciously cultivated mode of apprehension. In adding together these two understandings, the qualitative and the apprehensive, we can do no better than Jung (1960), who wrote and himself highlighted the following: "*Wherever we meet with uniform and regularly occurring modes of apprehension we are dealing with an archetype, no matter whether its mythological character is recognized or not.*" (pp. 137-138, para. 280).

Hillman wanted to track the psychic intensities and archetypal patterns in our perspectives—our modes of apprehending inner and outer life. Running with Jung's core insight that archetypes structure experience from the ground up, Hillman took the archetypal shaping of the imagination as axiomatic. If, as Jung described, the objective psyche is "as wide as the world and open to all the world," then archetypal patterns are also pervasive, present as something akin to

energy fields, bending and molding all psychic realities.

Hillman's more expansive use of the term "archetypal" is confusing to many Jungians, who often want to preserve it for experiences that have a quasi-spiritual quality. Jung used Otto's term "numinous"—the encounter with the *mysterium tremendum*—to describe those moments when something archetypal comes crashing into awareness. The intense charge and profound otherness of these experiences certainly conveys the divine nature and sacred quality of archetypal forms. But it also tends to harden the idea of archetypes residing in the basement of the psyche or dropping from heaven rather than pervading and constantly shaping existence. If, as Jung put forth, archetypes shape our complexes and the dynamics of psychic life, then they're always running in the background. So we are always enacting mythic dramas and continually being caught in age-old conflicts—if only we have the eyes to see. So for Hillman, taking the express elevator to the collective unconscious wasn't the only way to meet the gods. Scratch the surface of anything that really matters, that really holds psychological significance, and you'll find some piece of the universal story. You know it by the feel, by the emotional gravity, which is given with how events sit in the imagination.

On the flip side of this archetypal sensibility, which smells the animal instinct or soul person in everyday images, is the formulaic reversion to well-known archetypes, which may come with a busload of religious iconography and mythic motifs but have no psychic gravity. Forgetting Jung's insight that the archetype per se was unknowable, archetypes are labeled, categorized, and turned into stereotypes. In this way the very question of whether something is or isn't an archetype can be a trap, just as the hasty sorting of dream images into familiar baskets like shadow, *anima/animus*, and the Self can become a mere intellectual exercise. When, as Jung said, there are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life, the naming and labeling of archetypes can lead us right out of their archetypal potential and into a system of staid symbols. Just like the Buddha, if you see an "archetype" on the road, its demise may be indicated.

An important departure point for archetypal psychology, especially in approaching suffering, is Jung's (1967) statement: "The Gods have become diseases; Zeus no longer rules Olympus but rather the solar plexus, and produces curious specimens for the doctor's consulting room" (p. 37, para. 54). For Hillman (1975), sufferings may be understood as "a series of nutshells, one inside the other:

within the affliction is a complex, within the complex an archetype, which in turn refers to a God. Afflictions point to Gods” (p. 104). We can discover the god within the disease by working on personal complexes until the universal core of the problem becomes apparent. Or we can, from the start, build this archetypal idea into

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*... the whole attitude to the problem begins  
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our perspective and host our wounds as if a hidden god resides there. Then the whole attitude to the problem begins with a mythic-archetypal premise—an opening to the divine gift and healing potential within the affliction. When there’s a god in what ails us, we imagine into it very differently.

Hillman took the collective unconscious as an unconsciousness of the collectivity (universality) within all occurrences that beg for attention. Jung broke ground on this insight by exploring the character of the archetypal mother, and showing how she stands right behind one’s actual mother, arranging our emotional responses according to universal patterns. He went on to realize that healing and meaning arise when the personal and the archetypal are connected, which often adds a missing element to the situation and also alleviates the acutely personal nature of the problem. But Hillman essentially asked, why wait for the Great Mother to show up in a big dream? Why not work the personal in terms of the archetypal from the start, seeing mothering from the Great Mother’s standpoint, seeing through our personal yearnings and smotherings to her endless bounty and terrifying appetite?

When the personal is apprehended through the archetypal our expanded vision becomes a more robust psychic container. If the downturns, obsessions, anxieties, and other ailments are woven into the nature of soul, if our sufferings are recollections of the gods, and healing has to do with their recognition, the therapeutic question becomes how to bleed on the appropriate altar (Hillman, 1975) or perform the fitting ritual. Such notions are conversant with Jung’s idea of converting neurotic suffering into conscious, meaningful suffering. Very often psychotherapy struggles mightily to alleviate primary afflictions, which seem to come and go of their own accord—fatefully. Instead, the work turns to altering the secondary overlay of self-persecution and dissociation that accompanies the prob-

lem, such as overcoming the naïve view of a life devoid of wounding or the search for creativity divorced from emotional trial. Or it turns to the question of hidden intent, which only surfaces when the hero learns to face the underworld. The focus moves to the story in which the suffering is cast and the story then moves the focus within the suffering. Psychic discord is an invitation for a deeper story—a “healing fiction,” as Hillman (1983a) called it. Such fictions heal by rendering circumstantial peculiarity into archetypal significance, bringing dignity, depth and mystery to the otherwise default cult of mechanistic personalism.

### In the End

There are many Jungians, including analysts, writers and academics, who have little trouble strolling across the bridge connecting Jung and Hillman. Others have either deliberately dismissed Hillman’s work or simply put it aside, thinking it too intellectual or, as discussed here, lacking in overt clinical application. In a few cases, following some encounter with his fierce and critical style, a more personal barrier has been erected. Many simply can’t fathom the deconstruction of the ego, the disregard for the Self, or the assault on dream interpretation, all of which may seem central to Jung’s view. However, Hillman’s work need not be assessed on these grounds. It can be approached in terms of its own aim to make soul and open up imaginative possibilities. Most specifically it might be considered in terms of the most basic goal of Jung’s thought—expanding an awareness of psychic reality and one’s particular place in that reality.

In the final pages of *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung (1965) talks about the inner certainties and uncertainties of his life, putting a surprising emphasis on the latter. He describes himself as a man who “once dipped a hatful of water from a stream” (p. 355) and goes on to express a multitude of mixed feelings. But he qualifies it all by saying, “the more uncertain I have felt about myself, the more there has grown up in me a feeling of kinship with all things” (*ibid.*, p. 359). Earlier in the book, describing being “in the midst of my true life” at Bollingen, he wrote:

At times I feel as if I am spread out over the landscape and inside things, and am myself living in every tree, in the splashing of the waves, in the clouds and the animals that come and go, in the procession of the seasons. (*ibid.*, pp. 225-226)

Putting aside the carefully explored corridors of interiority, Jung wanted to rest his retrospection on the vivid feeling of *anima mundi*—the soulful bonding with his surroundings. In that final chapter he also talks about the “daimon” at length, but leaves all conceptual ideas, especially the ultimate orientation point of his own psychology, the Self, aside. His preferred mode of discourse, in what he knew to be his final word on his own life, is poetic and metaphorical; it is archetypal rather than analytical.

Hillman believed psychology should appeal to the need for beauty just as much as the quest for understanding, arguing persuasively in the piece “Thought of the Heart” (1982) that psychological ideas must address aesthetic and sensual dimen-

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sions too. He was a son who didn't just follow in the father's footsteps. Rather, he entered the father's vision then extended and reimagined it while staying close to his own Ares-fueled, puer-inspired daimon. He attacked whatever was pushed too far one way and then stood on the side of the dismissed with the same over-correcting force as the returning repressed. For those lounging in the recliner of psychological thought, he came along and kicked the back of the chair. He refused to be cool-headed. His work honors Jung's resistance to discipleship and Jungianism and embraces the imperative that each person follow his or her own way. Not everyone employing Jung's ideas is called to rework the concepts or extend the perspective, but a critical approach to his thought and a capacity to place phenomenon before theory are fitting goals for all Jungians. Not everyone can follow Hillman head first into the underworld, a place where day world conceptions are constantly given back to the imagination, but every step of his dance is not necessary to appreciate the vitality of his movement and add flexibility to the psychological routine.

Hillman was iconoclastic, sensitive to mind grooves, intolerant of dogma and reactive to clichés—which he could smell a mile away. He understood the soul loves insight and loathes codification. Avoiding repeated recipes, he marinated psychology in rich metaphorical and poetic amplifications and nourished the soul by

attracting and opening the imagination. In radically underscoring Jung's distinctive attitude toward the psyche, in working with the shadow even as it appears within Jungian theory, and in extending the vision of psychology and psychopathology out onto the sidewalk, Hillman's work has both deepened and sharpened the leading edge of Jungian ideas. He kept the conversation lively. As he said in the book *Inter Views* (1983b), his approach "twists" the theory, and "twisting may be a way to be both a Jungian and an individual thinker. At least that's how I imagine what I do" (p. 27). Although we may debate different pathways to soul-making or individuation, it's hard to argue with Jung (1959) when he says, "Were it not for the leaping and twinkling of the soul, man would rot away in his greatest passion—idleness . . . to have soul is the whole venture of life . . ." (p. 27, para. 56). This is Hillman's Jung.

## Notes

- <sup>i</sup> An earlier version of this paper was first delivered to the C. G. Jung Society of Seattle, February 12, 2010. Following James Hillman's death, October 27, 2011, it has been amended and extended for publication here.
- <sup>ii</sup> Hillman wrote at length on his affinity with the *puer* (2005), discussed his anger and martial traits (1983, pp. 146-147), the influence of his Jewish heritage (1992), and his calling to polytheistic perspectives (1996b).
- <sup>iii</sup> See Roberts Avens, *The New Gnosis: Heidegger, Hillman and Angels*; David Ray Griffin (Ed.), *Archetypal Process: Self and Divine in Whitehead, Jung and Hillman*; Robert H. Davis, *Freud, Jung and Hillman: Three Depth Psychologies in Context*.
- <sup>iv</sup> See *CW* Vol. 8, p. 322 [para. 607ff.]. Here and in other places, Jung makes clear he uses the term "image" to indicate a general representation of psychic contents.

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