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**Examining the New Polytheism:  
A Critical Assessment of the Concepts of Self  
and Gender Archetypal Psychology**

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by

**Marc V. Fonda**  
052799

Ph.D. Dissertation  
Department of Religious Studies  
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Marc V. Fonda, Ottawa, Canada, 1995



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UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA  
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

## **Examining the New Polytheism: A Critical Assessment of the Concepts of Self and Gender in Archetypal Psychology**

The hypothesis of this dissertation is that an alternative notion of selfhood is emerging in disparate areas of contemporary thought. This postmodern idea of selfhood may be seen as a reaction to traditional paradigms of human agency found in western mythology and theology, rationalist philosophy and psychology, and scientific positivism. It is not properly a new notion of selfhood insofar as many of the characteristics of self that are brought forward can be found in the history of ideas such as Romanticism and Neo-platonism.

This alternate notion of selfhood emerges in two distinct areas of postmodern thought: archetypal psychology and contemporary feminist scholarship in religion. A critical assessment of archetypal psychology as informed by contemporary feminist theory is a necessary outcome of this investigation into an emerging concept of self in contemporary thought. One conclusion reached is that archetypal psychology is weak in its means of accounting for the body in how it theorizes about selfhood. Nonetheless, archetypal psychology and contemporary feminist thought can be seen as characterizing contemporary ideas of selfhood as follows: it is not singular or monotheistic but diverse and polytheistic; it is more than merely rational--it is also based in the imagination; it demands the re-sacralization of both the body and the material world; it denies the belief that self is separated and autonomous, advocating the perspective that self communes with and is connected to the things and beings of the world; and, finally, it is not static, but is in the process of becoming what it will.

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## **I: Introduction: Archetypal Psychology, Gender, and Self**

The main focus of my dissertation is to examine the emerging articulation of two disparate expressions of selfhood in the postmodern west: archetypal psychology and contemporary feminist theorists. The examination of this alternative idea of self involves: first of all, a tentative analysis of a "postmodern" idea of self that can be found in the thought of both James Hillman (therapist, writer, one time Director of Studies at the Zürich Jung Institute, and creator of archetypal psychology) and the feminists to whom shall I refer; which allows for, second, a critical assessment of archetypal psychology informed by contemporary feminist theory and thought about religion.

The latter case, a critical dialogue between archetypal psychology and contemporary feminist thought about religion, can not only help to demonstrate some of the shortcomings found in archetypal psychology, it also points to some colourful ideas with which archetypal psychology as well as contemporary feminist thought about religion might deepen and enrich their respective palates. This is to say that, a critical look at archetypal psychology informed by contemporary feminist theory can reveal some difficulties overlooked by Hillman. Yet, for all the difficulties a feminist-informed eye can reveal of archetypal psychology, I have found a profound confluence of ideas between archetypal psychology and certain contemporary feminist scholars. For this reason, it is possible to conclude that the insights one may gain from either archetypal psychology or contemporary feminist thought about religion, respectively, can be of use to both parties in expanding their particular visions.

In the former case, the attempt to map out an idea of an emerging "postmodern" idea of self provides further insights into the attitudes held by archetypal psychology and contemporary feminist thought about religion when regarding self, religion, and gender. The comparison of ideas of self found in archetypal psychology and contemporary feminist thought about religion not only demonstrates a context for their concerns--i.e., what I call the postmodern genre--it also allows for deeper insight into some of the difficulties found in Hillman's theories. Because both

Hillman and the feminists I refer to herein are involved at some level in the articulation of an alternative concept of self, they necessarily must be at odds at least with certain parts of the modern concept of the Self.

## **II: Definitions: Soul, The Aesthetic Response, and Polytheism**

There are three concepts that Hillman uses that need some introduction, they include: soul, the aesthetic response, and polytheism. Each of these ideas are central to Hillman's psychology and each is closely related to the another. Consequently, it is necessary to not only characterize them, but also to map out their relations to one another. For Hillman, soul is, without doubt, the most pivotal aspect of archetypal psychology. Soul is a mediating principle functioning between mind and body, subjective and objective, imaginal and rational, to name a few instances. Soul is the means through which the relationship between such dichotomies are funnelled, experienced, and felt. In this sense, soul provides meaning to the tangible world and to the metaphysical world; soul animates things by mythologizing them, by conferring meaning.

For Hillman, soul functions through images and feelings. It is the images, myths, and stories of individuals and societies that constitute the soul's language. But there is more to soul. Soul functions not only to mediate experience, or to speak with a language to images and impressions, it also operates through an aesthetic response of what it perceives. Because Hillman locates soul physiognomically in the metaphorical heart, it is also understood to function through the language of the heart: our feelings. The soul's aesthetic function is one of feeling--it responds to the things that affect it. By feeling the world, so to speak, both inside and outside of oneself, the soul's aesthetic response confers meaning, value, and more to the many things it encounters. Hence, soul refers to the religious, more so than the mere word play "soul" makes on the psychological term "psyche."

This theistic aspect of soul is also reflected in Hillman's other notion: polytheism. Polytheism is inherently a religious term. It is for this reason that Hillman adopts it in an effort to re-vision psychology's approach to soul, or self. Consequently, polytheism has a political

function insofar as it subverts what Hillman generally characterizes as monotheistic psychology. A monotheistic psychology is one that finds part of its intellectual heritage ultimately in Christian theology, which claims that, that just as god is monotheistic, so must humanity by nature be singular. (It must be noted, however, that the depiction of Christianity throughout this dissertation reflects, on the one hand, Hillman's attitude towards Christianity and, on the other hand, this colouring is also characteristic of much feminist theorization about Christianity.) This is a perspective that has eventually found its way into medical and scientific approaches to the psyche. Such approaches neglect the possibility that which is deviant from the norm--the monotheistic ideal--may have any value. To be glib, it is a perspective that claims there is only one position from which we might properly live.

For Hillman, a monotheistic paradigm for psychology is less a statement about the phenomenology of soul than it is a reflection of a specific ideology. To Hillman, the soul is more than what can be represented by a monotheistic model of the psyche. There are many faces to soul; and, there is no demonstrated reason to assume that those visages which do not fit the norm are all pathological and require cure. Thus, by impressing upon us the polyvalent aspects of the soul, Hillman opens space for the re-examination and re-valuation of many aspects to human cognition, whether or not they are categorized as abnormal, pathological, mythological, scientific, or rational. Polytheism, taken in tandem with the imaginal capacities of the soul, places all ideas, ideologies, mythologies, and sciences on a level playing-field: they are all products of the human imagination.

A polytheistic soul is given space to allow free reign for the aesthetic response. Opening up our understandings of the soul allows us to realize that the rationalist attitude is not necessarily all there is of value and meaning in our lives. There are so many things that we may experience in so many different ways that it would be absurd to claim, therefore, that we are monotheistic in nature. Furthermore, the call for a polytheistic psychology suggests, as already noted, a political statement. A polytheistic psychology calls for the re-examination of psychological paradigms for their negative modernist and Christian influences. It is a suggestion

to move beyond the Modern view, to open ourselves up to new vistas of perception and expression. Finally, the reemergence of the idea of polytheism can be seen as a timely event in the contemporary West. In a world that is rapidly becoming more and more multicultural, in a world in which the multidisciplinary approach is becoming more and more prevalent, the idea of polytheism becomes all the more meaningful and relevant.

### **III: Contexts: The New Polytheism, a Postmodern Genre**

The pages following serve to provide the reader with a sample of the concerns that appear in the body of the text. They function, first, to presage the polytheistic perspective that I examine when I analyze archetypal psychology and, second, to familiarize the reader with the concerns said to characterize the postmodern critique of the modern idea of the Self. I turn now to a characterization of David Miller's 'new' polytheism to provide a more detailed representation of polytheistic expressions in contemporary Western thought.

The 'new' polytheism is no longer new. Written twenty years ago, David L. Miller's *The New Polytheism: Rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses* described a growing tendency in Western individuals to reject the traditional singular, or monotheistic perspective that structures their world and, I expect, their ideas of selfhood. Miller suggested that a paradigm shift is emerging in regard to how we perceive our relationship to the world, ourselves, and each other. To Miller, the abandonment of traditional paradigms based in the single-mindedness characteristic of Enlightenment philosophy, science, and theology was being met with a radical expression of diversity reflecting an emerging ethos characteristic of the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

According to Miller, when we attend to the rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses, when we begin to see polytheistically, we are free to validate "the radical plurality of the self."<sup>2</sup> What Miller suggests is that polytheism is a social reality and a philosophical condition. The social

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<sup>1</sup> David Miller. *The New Polytheism: The Rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

reality and the philosophical condition to which he refers is one that is experienced by humans when we recognize that *truth* cannot be articulated or thought about through a "single grammar."<sup>3</sup> Psychologically, polytheism is described as a radical experience of equally real but mutually exclusive aspects of the self. In such experiences, suggests Miller, "personal identity cannot seem to be fixed."<sup>4</sup> Hence we begin to understand what Miller means by polytheism: it refers to "social, philosophical, and psychological manifestations of plurality in everyday life because behind them is a *religious* situation."<sup>5</sup>

In religions, polytheism refers to a practice and a form of behaviour. In theology, however, the term 'polytheism' is a model used to explain a religious system based upon certain practices and behaviours. For this reason Miller considers polytheism a social philosophy and a psychological perspective.<sup>6</sup> To Miller, the notion that the philosophical and the psychological are religious suggests that the goddesses and gods are the names of powers or forces that have some form of autonomy and are not necessarily conditioned or affected by society. If they were so conditioned, Miller believes, the paradigms and symbols that allow us to account for, express, and celebrate these multiple aspects of our reality would otherwise seem fragmented and anarchic.<sup>7</sup> That is, if such symbols and images were not open to interpretation, they would, then,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 5. Miller is quick to point out, however, that this polytheistic state of being is not pathological in nature but rather bestows some sort of survival value to an individual.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 5f. I must disagree with Miller about these two points. In regard to the former, to state that the powers and forces can affect society but cannot be affected by society is absurd. This attitude is one that is characteristic of Jungian metaphysics, which, in its attempt to bestow transcendence to archetypes, ignores the fact that humans influence one another and the world about us. Naomi Goldenberg, in *Returning Words to Flesh: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Resurrection of the Body* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990.), notes that classical Jungian theory asks us to settle for mystification rather than seriously considering that "archetypes are facts of the mind, not of a transcendent reality. They are soft facts, conditioned facts. They change when minds change." (103) Thus Jungian metaphysics "hampers our ability to think clearly and effectively about psychological and social problems." (97)

In regard to Miller's latter point, I argue that if society can and does affect our perception of the powers or aspects of our personalities that we metaphorically call the gods and goddesses,

be subject to manipulation.

In contrast to monotheistic thinking, Miller describes polytheistic thinking as a feeling for the deep, abiding, urgent, and exciting tension that arises when, through a radical experience of the plurality of both social and psychological life, one discovers that a monotheistic, or singular, outlook is not adequate in helping to understand the nature of real meaning.<sup>8</sup> What Miller suggests is that monotheistic thinking "fails a people in a time when experience becomes self-consciously pluralistic, radically both/and."<sup>9</sup> A monotheistic style of thought, then, is one that operates according to fixed principles and is controlled by an either/or logic. It supports a "sort of fanaticism about rationalism...which forcibly suppresses feelings and institutions expressed in concrete images and symbolized in the telling of stories."<sup>10</sup>

Monotheism, for Miller, is the result of a specific evolution in consciousness that came to perceive itself in a certain way: abstracted, speculative, formalized, literal, and linear.<sup>11</sup> Monotheistic thinking can be characterized as a style of thought that searches for essences, literal representations, and rationalism as opposed to being satisfied with feelings, intuitions, and images. Thus, Miller suggests that the Nietzschean death of God refers to the demise of monotheistic ways of thinking and speaking about God as well as about being human in the Western world.

This death of God, claims Miller, is the death of the single-minded, one-dimensional

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then it must follow that, as society changes, the means of expressing these metaphors must also change to some degree. Now, whether or not fragmentation and anarchism necessarily follows is another question--a question of continuity. If, on the one hand, we were to perceive any change in the metaphorical expression of these aspects as a threat to the continuity of the status quo, we may assume that Miller is correct. Whereas, if we choose to see such alterations in the means of metaphorically representing these powers as an inevitable part of the continuous development of a society, then they must function for that society in some way and hence they are not necessarily fragmented or anarchic. Rather, the most we can say is that they have been altered from their original manifestation.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 27.

norm of a civilization that is predominantly monotheistic. To Miller, the release followed by the death of such a god offers humanity the chance to re-discover dimensions out of our past history.<sup>12</sup> But the death of God is accompanied by a frightening sense of a 'loss of centre.' Psychologically, the loss of centre experienced in the contemporary west makes us feel lost and uncertain. The resulting backlash is such that it makes one grasp for any external "centre of value" no matter how superficial. The intensity of the feeling one receives from such objects of value can be heightened and may lend a superficially religious air to society's new moralities and rituals.<sup>13</sup>

What Miller observes in *The New Polytheism* is twofold. First, there is a spirit of subversion that is actively confronting the monotheistic world view--i.e., one that is based in modern paradigms and Christian theology. This subversion of the monotheistic world includes, according to Miller, the modern tendency to dichotomize science and religion as two distinct arenas of experience, and forms of thought. Second, Miller suggests that there is an emergence of a social movement that advocates an alternate paradigm regarding human agency based in insights Modernity ascribed to both the religious and psychological realms. Yet, it is a paradigm that is not constantly at war with monotheism but includes it. A polytheistic perspective gains its strength from the ability to consider all angles of our imaginations.

The paradigm that Miller sees emerging is a polytheistic one<sup>14</sup> and he considers the ultimate expression of polytheism in Western culture to be the Greek pantheon. Miller thinks this is the case because much of Western musings has roots in Greek thought, which was a philosophy based on ideas, categories, and concepts in polytheism.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, these Greek

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 16-24.

<sup>14</sup> Miller notes that although we may only be gripped by the story of one god or goddess at a time, we must be polytheistic in order to speak about that god or goddess "since the story may involve marriages with other Gods, parentage by still others, offspring of Godlings and maiden Goddesses." Ibid., 33.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., ix.

ideas, concepts, and categories were originally imagined as Gods and Goddesses as well as its formal structures of thought, which emerged from the narrative process in mythic tales. To Miller, this *"implies that polytheism lurks in a thinking that thinks itself monotheistic--that is, thinks itself governed by a single principle of being and by a univocal logic that will lead to Truth in the singular."*<sup>16</sup> In fact, Miller finds it surprising that no one has made the connection that, because Greek philosophy is based in a polytheistic religion, and since Christian theology is rooted in Greek philosophy, then it must be the case that the roots of Christian theology are polytheistic. That is, Christian theology is a way of "thinking and speaking about Jesus which uses categories, ideas, concepts, structures of thought, and logic which are ultimately stories of the Gods and Goddesses."<sup>17</sup> In this sense, we might conclude that the Christian expression of divinity is polytheistic at root, having its roots in pre-socratic thought, Plato, and Plotinus.

What Miller implies is that as long as long as Greek thinking has as much influence on contemporary Western thought, imagination, logic, and phantasy as it does, then the contemporary world is necessarily polytheistic.<sup>18</sup> Still, modern thought is comparatively dead and Miller believes that this is due to the fact that it lacks the excitement and compulsion to move one's heart (a loss of the appreciation of a sense of the aesthetic and narrative resulting from the over-reification characteristic of the scientific paradigm).<sup>19</sup> Science and rationalism has removed from us any compulsion and lack the earthiness of the old polytheisms. "Thus," writes Miller, "our new polytheism is without a language, a mode of articulation by which it can understand itself."<sup>20</sup> By "banishing the vague", we have leached from life and language "the feeling in the thinking that makes life lively."<sup>21</sup>

In the above, we find one expression of disappointment with the traditional means

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 40. My emphasis.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

through which we understand humanity and the world. Miller notes a crisis in terms of the legacy of Enlightenment world views insofar as empiricism and scientific rationalism have removed from human society a great deal of its imagination, fantasy, intuition, and feelings. This crisis also speaks to one consequence of embracing a polytheistic view point: there can no longer be any grand narratives per se. These characteristics of the west's contemporary epistemological crisis are important aspects of my argument. It is the subversion of such grand narratives, metaphors, or cosmologies that make the necessary space available for a polytheistic viewpoint. Furthermore, a polytheistic perspective must take into account and value equally all the faces presented by the psyche--both the normative and the marginalized.

Polytheism is, as we have seen, one of the chief metaphors employed by Hillman when re-visioning psychology. This understanding of polytheism can be seen as a postmodern response to the modern, or monotheistic perspective that I shall demonstrate has a number of consequence for the idea of self emerging in both contemporary feminist thought about religion and archetypal psychology. The polytheistic self and the post-patriarchal, connective self, are two expressions of the postmodern sensibility.

Most people agree that the postmodern debate involves what is known as deconstruction. Deconstruction is a postmodern exercise insofar as its objects of criticism include the metanarratives and categories of modern thought and Christian theology. Deconstruction, for Jean-François Lyotard, amounts to the de-legitimation of all knowledge. He writes:

postmodernism as it is generally understood involves a radical break, both with dominant culture and aesthetic, and with a rather different moment of socioeconomic organization against which its structural novelties and innovations are measured: a new social and economic moment (or even system), which has previously been called media society, the 'society of the spectacle' (Guy Debord), consumer society (or the 'société de consommation'), the 'bureaucratic society of controlled consumption' (Henri Lefebvre), or 'postindustrial society' (Daniel Bell).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Jean-François Lyotard. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984 [1979]), vii.

For Lyotard, postmodernity designates the state of western culture following the transformations of the nineteenth century which have drastically altered the precepts of science, literature, and the arts.<sup>23</sup> The Modern world view, in contrast, designates "any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse," which makes some kind of appeal to a grand narrative such as the 'dialectics of the Spirit,' the 'hermeneutic of meaning,' 'the emancipation of the rational subject.'<sup>24</sup>

Thus a nutshell definition of postmodernity, according to Lyotard, is "incredulity toward metanarratives."<sup>25</sup> As Lyotard puts it, metanarratives are models which have been posited as grand cosmological theories through which the entire universe is understood as explainable based in a specific ideology characterized by such metaphors as the Christian god, scientific methodology, logical positivism, and patriarchy, to name a few. It is not the disappearance of these metanarratives that is of critical interest. On the contrary, what is of interest is the recognition that such metanarratives have gone underground, as it were, functioning unconsciously as the basis of our thoughts about as well as our means of acting in the world.<sup>26</sup>

Scott Lash, in comparison, characterizes the deconstructive enterprise as one that differentiates between categories of thought and fields of inquiry. Lasch characterizes modernization as "a process of the differentiation and autonomization of the 'de-limited fields' (*champs restreints*) - i.e. the legal, political, intellectual, artistic, academic, cultural, and religious fields - from the more general 'field of power'."<sup>27</sup> He argues that modernization can only take place through struggle between orthodox and the non-orthodox forms of knowledge. "The battles of heterodoxy against orthodoxy are not just for changes," he writes, "but for the autonomization of a given field from the field of power."<sup>28</sup> This is to say that modernization is

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., xxiii.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., xxiv.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., xii.

<sup>27</sup> Scott Lasch. *Sociology of Postmodernism*. (New York: Routledge, 1989), 262.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

characterizable as a period in which there was a struggle to differentiate a variety of fields of speculation as well as to grant them the authority of autonomy.<sup>29</sup> For him, post-modernization, in contrast to Lyotard, refers to "a process of de-differentiation and a reversal of autonomization."<sup>30</sup> Rather than continue to divide the world into more categories of thought, postmodernity represents a collapse of the boundaries of meaning--by challenging the legitimacy of various fields of knowledge, it is possible to challenge their claims to autonomy."<sup>31</sup> This collapse of such differentiated fields involves all areas of thought, including the struggle for change in ideas about human agency that originated in modernity.<sup>32</sup>

Both Lyotard and Lasch suggest, then, that the collapse of the master-narratives of modernist thought finds its roots in a style of ideation belonging to specific aspects of christian theology: monotheism (as identified by archetypal psychology) and patriarchy (as associated with feminist critiques). Richard Tarnas notes just this in *The Passion of the Western Mind*. In this book, Tarnas not only provides a synopsis of major trends in western thought, he also provides an excellent characterization of what he calls the postmodern mind--including such deconstructive concerns as Lyotard's 'de-legitimation' and Lasch's 'de-differentiation.' Furthermore, Tarnas recognizes the romantic characteristic of many postmodern thinkers, including feminist thought in general and Hillman's archetypal psychology in specific.

As Tarnas puts it, it is a characteristic of postmodernity that there is "the lack of firm ground for a world view. Both inner and outer realities have become unfathomably ramified, multidimensional, malleable, and unbounded--bringing a spur to courage and creativity, yet also a potentially debilitating anxiety in the face of unending relativism, and existential finitude."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Lasch writes this: "Full modernity or complete modernism presupposes the absolute autonomy of fields. This never in fact takes place, in that the fields are always sites of struggle for the stake of more or less autonomization." (Ibid., 263.)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Lasch, in fact, writes this: "If modernization means the differentiation of fields, postmodernization means at least the partial collapse of some fields into other fields. Ibid., 252.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Tarnas. *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that Have Shaped our World View*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 398.

In a strict sense, then, there is no "postmodern world view" per se or even the possibility of one. For Tarnas, the postmodern paradigm is "by its nature fundamentally subversive of all paradigms" because at its core there is the realization that reality is "at once multiple, local and temporal, and without demonstrable foundation."<sup>34</sup> Consequently, postmodernity makes the claim that any monistic perspective or any grand cosmological theory cannot be sustained without producing "empirical falsification and intellectual authoritarianism."<sup>35</sup>

Like Miller, Lasch, Lyotard, and Tarnas seem to indicate that postmodernity represents a social movement which has come to question the universal legitimacy of knowledge. This challenge to the authority of the traditional narratives of science, rationalism, and aesthetics to name a few instances, is brought about as a consequence of the psychological age. We have come to realize that both science and myth "are composed sets of statements; the statements are 'moves' made by the players within the framework of generally applicable rules; these rules are specific to each particular kind of knowledge, and the 'moves' judged to be 'good' in one cannot be of the same type as those judged 'good' in another, unless it happens that way by chance."<sup>36</sup> This is to say that, contemporary thought has come to recognize 'scientific progress' does not necessarily proceed in a rational manner with any inherent logic (Kuhn).

The recognition of the fundamentally imaginal nature of all discourses, whether they be scientific or theological in nature, results in not only a challenge to the authority of such narratives, but also places all knowledge on a level playing-field. All thought is, in this sense, radically relativized. This state of affairs, however, is not necessarily nihilistic. Tarnas notes one aspect of postmodernity that attests to this assertion: a spirit of reintegration, or the re-emergence of Romanticism in western thought.

A further result of postmodernity appears in how we understand aesthetics. Lasch claims that postmodernity began with the onset of the end of an aesthetics of representation and

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 401.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, 27.

formalism.<sup>37</sup> Postmodernity embodies an understanding of aesthetics that emerges from a Freudian unconscious space which "(i) permits condensation and other contradictions; (ii) permits the mobility of cathectic energies and hence displacement; and which (iii) severs temporality from rule-boundedness."<sup>38</sup> Postmodern aesthetics is called figural. It is considered to be a "doctrine which opposes the subordination of the image to the dictates of narrative meaning or representation; to language like rule-bound formalisms... [or] to the dictates of capitalism and the law of value."<sup>39</sup> Postmodern aesthetic sensibility draws on the "uncoded and semicoded libido in the unconscious to produce a literature and fine arts that breaks with the formalism of modernity."<sup>40</sup> It reaches past such abstractions as language "to the real, the material, to sensation...."<sup>41</sup> Postmodern aesthetics is thus thought to be based in the libido and "operates from a position of sensation."<sup>42</sup> The further postmodern art is from representation, the higher its affective appeal.<sup>43</sup>

We might say, then, that Lasch's characterization of postmodern aesthetics is one that challenges the tradition of differentiating between the conscious and the unconscious, between language and image, between cool rationality and passionate feeling. By referring to the Freudian unconscious, the postmodern aesthetic suggests that modernity's style of representation is something that is based in rules that restrict the flow of ideas and affects. Postmodernity's metaphorical emphasis on the unconscious helps to provide space for contemplating our imaginative natures as well as providing an unprecedented potential for legitimating the imagination. Hence, postmodern aesthetics, insofar as its approach is influenced by the unconscious, is based in a cultural paradigm of de-differentiation.<sup>44</sup> This paradigm challenges

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<sup>37</sup> Lasch, *Sociology of Postmodernism*, 118.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 179.

the autonomy and primacy of the rational mind; it suggests that there is no strict differentiation *per se* between rationality and fantasy or, by extension, self and other.

To Tarnas, if the task of the modern world view was to move towards human freedom, autonomy from nature, toward individuation from the collective, then it may well be the task of the postmodern mind to find a means of reconciling the separated, autonomous individual with what Tarnas calls the "universal matrix." That is, "the universal and the individual are reconciled. The suffering, alienation, and death are now comprehended as necessary for birth, for creation of the self: *O Felix Culpa*."<sup>45</sup>

The creation of self that Tarnas speaks of is to be found in a "participatory conception" of the cosmos which suggests that "nature's unfolding truth emerges only with the active participation of the human mind. Nature's reality is not merely phenomenal, nor is it independent and objective; rather, it is something that comes into being through the very act of human cognition."<sup>46</sup> From this point of view, nature impregnates everything and the human mind is an "expression of nature's essential being."<sup>47</sup>

The recourse to nature, to a participatory relationship with the world, is something that is indicative of the Romanticism found in some areas of postmodern thought. Tarnas notes that the old spirit of Romanticism has "reemerged with new vigor."<sup>48</sup> In contrast to the deconstructive impulse, Tarnas claims that as much as postmodernity implies unmasking it also engenders a tendency towards "radical integration and reconciliation."<sup>49</sup> For Tarnas, because thoughtful postmodern individuals are faced with a differentiated and problematic intellectual situation, they are engaged in the "task of evolving a flexible set of premises and perspectives that would not reduce or suppress the complexity and multiplicity of human realities, yet could also serve to

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<sup>45</sup> Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 433.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 407.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

mediate, integrate, and clarify."<sup>50</sup>

As can be imagined, the disintegrative and integrative characteristics of postmodern thought demand the re-evaluation of selfhood as it has been conceived in the western world. Rather than continue to understand self as separated from nature, postmodern models of self are based in a notion of our connectedness or participation with the world.<sup>51</sup> Rather than continue to divide the world and self into the conceptual categories formed by Enlightenment thought, postmodernity brings about the collapse of such categories as the rational and the nonrational, consciousness and unconsciousness, imagination and language. Furthermore, the challenge to the means of legitimating knowledge has brought about tremendous challenges to such traditional cultural edifices such as the church, the state, the university.

Postmodern thought may also be characterized as being in the process of realizing that self can be considered a religious category. That self can constitute a religious category is evident when one considers the fact that nearly all religious systems have some concept about what constitutes a human being, both physically and metaphysically, whether that system employs the terms soul, anima, psyche, atman, or spirit, to name a few instances. Moreover, Tarnas points out that the cultural and intellectual role of religion has also been radically altered by postmodern thought. Religion, he claims, has been "drastically affected by the secularizing and pluralistic developments of the modern age, but while in most respects the influence of institutionalized religion has continued to decline, the religious sensibility itself seems to have been revitalized by the newly ambitious intellectual circumstances of the postmodern era."<sup>52</sup> He claims that there has been an increase in spiritual autonomy as well as the development of new forms of religions orientation as a result of the deinstitutionalization of traditional spirituality.<sup>53</sup>

According to Tarnas, the postmodern thinker recognizes religion "as a fundamental human activity in which every society and every individual symbolically engages the ultimate

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 409.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 434.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 403.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 403.

nature of being."<sup>54</sup> Like Miller's comments in *The New Polytheism*, to Tarnas the Nietzschean death of God represents the attempt to re-conceive self "as permitting the emergence of a more authentic experience of the numinous, a larger sense of deity."<sup>55</sup> Rather than continue to repress the feminine, the natural, the *anima mundi*, the postmodern west is developing a theory of *participation mystique* with nature, with the soul of the world, "of the community of being, of the all-pervading, of mystery and ambiguity, of imagination, emotion, instinct, body, nature, woman."<sup>56</sup> This is the Romantic thrust of postmodernity.<sup>57</sup>

For postmodern thinkers, it is the things we learn from the stories of various religious systems in our musings on the activities of the gods and goddesses that "requires of us that we seek to take into account their pertinence to our involvements with one another and to our relation to the natural world, and not only to our inner lives."<sup>58</sup> It is through our many various experiences of self and through reflection upon such experiences that we learn to re-connect (as suggested by the Latin *religio*) to the communities around and within us. This, I believe, is a means of bringing the sacred back to the human being. This is also why self must be considered a religious category.

Following the characterizations of the postmodern genre as provided by Lyotard, Lasch, and Tarnas, we may conclude that Hillman belongs to the postmodern genre. He not only challenges the legitimation of such traditional areas of thought such as psychology and implicitly self, he also advocates the collapse of such rigidly dualistic boundaries as self and other, or what is conscious and unconscious. Furthermore, we can find in archetypal psychology aspects of

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 404.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 442.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Tarnas characterizes postmodern Romanticism as follows: "In contrast to the scientist's quest for general laws defining a single objective reality, the Romantic gloried in the unbounded multiplicity of realities pressing in on his subjective awareness, and in the complex uniqueness of each object, event, and experience presented to his soul. Truth discovered in divergent perspectives was valued above the monolithic and univocal ideal of empirical science." (Ibid., 368.)

<sup>58</sup> Christine Downing, *Gods in our Midst*. (New York: Crossroads, 1993), 22.

Tarnas's romantic impulse: emphasis on the role of imagination, on the sacred, on community, and on participation in the world.

The postmodernity of Hillman's work has already been remarked upon by several authors: Bernie Neville, in "The Charms of Hermes: Hillman, Lyotard, and the Postmodern Condition," notes that any one familiar with Hillman is familiar with the postmodern condition.<sup>59</sup> Neville claims postmodernity is characterized as that "which challenges the supremacy of reason and the logic of materialism, [and] points to the paradoxes and ambiguities which are characteristic of post-rationalist thought..."<sup>60</sup> Neville finds Hillman's focus on images, relativism, multi-perspectivism, as well as "complexification and constant self deconstruction" to belong to postmodern thought. He writes: "the postmodern mind's mode of dealing with reality is inclined to be aesthetic rather than rational, more comfortable dealing with images than with ideas, inclined also to give direct subjective (even mystical) experience a validity that it seems to have lost some time ago."<sup>61</sup>

What Neville brings to our attention is the aesthetic challenges of postmodernity, as noted by Lasch, which is a decisive aspect to Hillman's psychology. Archetypal psychology is a psychology of the soul, which resides in the heart. As noted, Hillman believes that it is the soul's spontaneous response to the images presented to it that moves the heart, that brings aesthetic and affective value to the world. Neville's comments recall Tarnas' observation about the integrative or Romantic tendencies of postmodernity. Neville writes: "Hillman avoids such nihilism (of postmodernity) by insisting that all perspectives are to be fully valued."<sup>62</sup>

Richard Tarnas also notes that Hillman's thought is postmodern in nature. He writes that the work of James Hillman articulates a "postmodern" perspective in regard to the recognition of "the primacy of the psyche and the imagination, and the irreducible psychic reality and potency of

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<sup>59</sup> Bernie Neville. "The Charms of Hermes: Hillman, Lyotard, and the Postmodern Condition." *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 37(2):337.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 339.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 352.

the archetypes, but, unlike Jung, largely avoiding metaphysical or theological statements in favour of a full measure of psyche in all its endless and rich ambiguity."<sup>63</sup> For Tarnas, it had to be the "fate and burden of depth psychology" to mediate "the modern mind's access to archetypal forces and realities that reconnect the individual self with the world, dissolving the dualistic world view."<sup>64</sup> This, as I shall demonstrate, is what Hillman attempts to do.

Feminist thought, too, is considered by most scholars to be postmodern. Tarnas writes: "postmodern critical thought has encouraged a vigorous rejection of the entire Western intellectual "canon" as long defined and privileged by a more or less exclusively male, white, European elite."<sup>65</sup> Tarnas believes contemporary feminist thought to be postmodern insofar as it is not only subversive of all paradigms, but demonstrates the aforementioned romantic impulse. He, in fact, suggests that "Nowhere is this dynamic tension between the deconstructive and the integrative is more dramatically in evidence than in the rapidly expanding body of work produced by women informed by feminism."<sup>66</sup> Tarnas believes that when feminism is considered as a whole, we will find that its particular perspective has "brought forth perhaps the most vigorous, subtle and radically critical analysis of conventional intellectual and cultural assumptions in all of contemporary scholarship."<sup>67</sup>

One consequence of such feminist scholarship has been the deconstruction and the reconception of traditional oppositions and dualisms, thus allowing "the contemporary mind to consider less-dichotomized perspectives that could not have been envisioned within previous interpretative frameworks."<sup>68</sup> Here we have the suggestion that some aspects of feminist

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<sup>63</sup> Tarnas, *Passion of the Western Mind*, 425.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 432.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 407.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* Naomi Goldenberg inadvertently agrees with Tarnas over this point. She thinks that postmodern thought has much to contribute to the de-mystification of traditional categories of thought. She notes that deconstruction, rather than further devastating the postmodern condition, will serve to continually remind us of "the human lives and human limits behind all the theories that have ever been thought." (24) To continue to mystify western philosophy, she continues,

scholarship is romantic in nature. Rosemary Radford Ruether also notes that there is a romantic movement in contemporary feminist thought about religion. In *Sexism and God-Talk*, Ruether offers a typology of feminist thought about religion. In this typology she characterizes romantic feminism as finding its definition of femaleness (of self) in what she calls "spiritual femininity, that is, intuitive spirituality, altruism, emotional sensitivity...."<sup>69</sup> What Ruether notes is that a romantic impulse can be found in some areas of contemporary feminist scholarship about religion.

Because both archetypal psychology and contemporary feminist thought can be characterized as postmodern (they both evidence the deconstructive and the reconstructive impulses), I believe it is appropriate that they converse over the issue of self. This is so because not only is Hillman interested in re-defining how we approach the human psyche and self, many contemporary feminists are also seriously concerned with achieving a vision of selfhood that escapes the bindings of traditional, patriarchal categories of thought.

Several key points have emerged from this characterization of the postmodern genre: first, in contrast with modern epistemologies which are characterized as pertaining to autonomous, grand-narratives based in realism and representation, in rationalism and positivism, all representing the style of grand-narrative found in Christian, or monotheistic, discourse; it is an enterprise that emphasizes the individual and social construction of self through imaginative process. Hillman differentiates himself from these epistemologies: the metanarratives he contests are those that belong to the monotheistic consciousness; for the feminist scholars, to whom I refer, the metanarratives being contested are those that lead to a sense of self as

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will not provide us the contact with one another that we need. "We must see these theories as man-made in order to assess them properly and to give us practice in looking at one another." (24) Once we can see through our theories, she implies, it may become possible to re-imagine the world in such a way as to ameliorate many of the problems that beset us today. Naomi Goldenberg, *Returning Words to Flesh: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Resurrection of the Body*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990).

<sup>69</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983) 104.

separated--christianity and patriarchy.

Second, there is a romantic impulse in postmodern thought (this is an idea confirmed by Tarnas). After all is said and done, the deconstructive approach leaves much to be desired. It is the re-emergence of romantic sensibilities that brings to the ruins left by deconstruction the mortar with which a new structure may be built. This romantic impulse is evident, furthermore, in the postmodern aesthetic sensibility. For Lasch, postmodern aesthetics refers to an appreciation of the Freudian dream space. A reinvigorated aesthetic appreciation of the realm of imagination brings with it a break from the formalism of Modernity, it refers to the unknown, that which has yet to be discovered.

Even though all these characteristics will become apparent over the course of the text, it is not necessary to constantly point out their specific postmodern character--this might prove too distracting. Furthermore, it might take something away from the style of thought represented by the various persons to whom I refer. I leave the discovery of the postmodern characteristics of Hillman and the various feminist scholars of religion to the readers and to the conclusion, where I will revisit the idea of a postmodern self in a tentative exercise of identifying its primary characteristics. What I offer is a description of two separate, yet confluent, expressions of postmodern thought about selfhood. In characterizing the postmodern idea of self, I assess archetypal psychology with a critical eye informed by feminist thought.

In order to explore the development of contemporary ideas of selfhood, it is necessary to outline archetypal psychology's critique of traditional psychology as suffering from such biases as enlightenment theology, philosophy, and science (Chapters One and Two). Hillman is a good guide in this enterprise. This leads to a critique of the Self in contemporary feminist thought about religion (Chapter Three). Catherine Keller's *From a Broken Web*, is a good example of a feminist analysis of selfhood which is critical of the same areas of thought as is Hillman: theology, philosophy, and psychology. Chapter Four looks at Hillman's position on the mind-body separation in the light of contemporary feminist insight. Chapter Five serves to tie together the common critiques and perspectives found in both archetypal psychology and contemporary

feminist scholarship, as representative of the postmodern genre.

Finally, a definition of the term self in the context of this dissertation is in order. When I write 'Self' or 'the Self' I am referring to the reified, singular, separated, and static self that emerged as a result of modern paradigms and Enlightenment thought. In comparison, I also employ the word 'self.' Self, with the small 's', refers to that sense of self that I argue is emerging in contemporary western society. Furthermore, this spelling of self is often used in place of Hillman's preferred word when referring to human agency: soul. For Hillman, soul implies many more things than the objectified Self of Modernity. Soul includes the mysterious and the religious. For Hillman, soul suggests that there is much more to the psyche than the purely rational agent of ego-based psychologies.

For Hillman, the modern idea of Self he contests is one that he often characterizes as monotheistic. For feminist theorists, the contested idea of self is characterized as one based in patriarchy and, for certain individuals, Christianity. In response to the respective critiques of the monotheistic and the Christian idea of self, we find Hillman speaking about human agency as inherently polytheistic and feminists speaking about human agency in post-patriarchal or post-christian terms. The titles of these alternate ideas of self may differ, the techniques may diverge, but the two images of this post-modern self are compatible.

## Chapter One: Archetypal Theory and the Construction of Self

### I: The Imaginal Self

James Hillman's work is helpful in articulating an alternate understanding of self--particularly in regard to contemporary psychological conceptions of selfhood. Although it is my contention that Hillman challenges traditional understandings of the self and therefore can be helpful for other work of this nature, his archetypal psychology is not as concerned with such issues as immanence and patriarchy as are many contemporary feminist thinkers.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, as a psychologist Hillman is primarily concerned with the psyche rather than the body. For this reason his primary interest is in the soul and the means through which it expresses itself.

Hillman holds that everything that affects an individual or a community is first and foremost psychological in nature.<sup>2</sup> He understands the workings of the mind as central to all experience. All empirically experienced sensations must be filtered through the mind. Furthermore, all conceptual categories are products of not just individual imagination but of a consensual imagination that has developed over time as a result of myriad factors--religious, psychological, mythical, scientific, and artistic. Hence, to Hillman, all activities, all thought, all experiences are necessarily psychological in nature. By not dichotomizing the unconscious and the conscious, as is the case in orthodox Freudian thought and academic psychology for instance, Hillman builds a platform from which he can observe psychological activities as originating in fantasy--imagining, day dreaming, and fancying--without being restricted to the notion that fantasy is unconscious behaviour and has no connection to the external or 'real' world. Stated

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<sup>1</sup> Although I am introducing a problematic inherent in Hillman's thought, it is not within the scope of this chapter to deal with areas of contention between Hillman and contemporary feminist thinkers about religion. This chapter is designed to outline archetypal psychology with an eye to pointing out how Hillman may be understood as articulating an alternate notion of self.

<sup>2</sup> James Hillman & Michael Ventura. *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse*. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 62.

differently, we might say that all that is psychological is necessarily based in fantasy. If there is no distinction between the activities of the unconscious and the conscious, there is no reason to assume that the activities of the unconscious, generally characterized as neurotic or fantastic<sup>3</sup>, are significantly different from those activities of the conscious mind.<sup>4</sup>

The implications of Hillman's perspective are profound. His viewpoint allows us to understand human activity as being intrinsically imaginal, or fantasy-based. This is to suggest that all ideologies or belief systems, for example, are an articulation of a specific fantasy that has roots in the culture in which it was formed. This is precisely the outlook that Hillman uses to challenge traditional psychology and Western assumptions about notions of self and ego. He understands the Western view of ego to be one that is steeped in its cultural preferences--upon its forms of thought that have a historical specificity and have managed to enter into the mainstream of western conceptions of philosophy, theology, science, poetics, and aesthetics.

To Hillman, as the West understands it, the Self can be characterized as autonomous, monocentric, and in need of perfection. Hillman deconstructs such assumptions and finds that the root of western conceptions of the Self is buried in Christianity and in the positivism of the Enlightenment. Hillman, in fact, "has presented a psychology without a theory of Self, hardly mentioning the word, except to criticize it as a Senex term that maintains Jungian orthodoxy bound over to Christian theology."<sup>5</sup> Instead of self, Hillman generally prefers to use soul as the root metaphor for psychology. He believes that depth psychology implies 'going in deep' into the

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<sup>3</sup> In Hillman's thought, there is a distinction made between fantasy and phantasy. The former is said to refer to imagining, daydreaming, and fancying in such a way as to be equated with neurotic day dreaming. The latter is said to refer to the "imaginative activity that underlies all thought and feeling" and which has its roots in biological processes and symbolic elaboration. Charles Rycroft. *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*. (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977 [1968]), 118.

<sup>4</sup> James Hillman. *Re-Visioning Psychology*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 70.

Charles Rycroft also argues that there is no reason to suppose that there is a fundamental difference between the activities of unconscious and conscious ideation. See: "Symbolism and its Relationship to the Primary and Secondary Processes," (*Imagination and Reality*. New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1968), 42-58.

<sup>5</sup> James Hillman. "How Jewish is Archetypal Psychology?" *Spring* 1992 53:121-130.

soul, in order to penetrate into that which is hidden. Hence, we learn about soul by penetrating into the depths; this very process also makes soul.<sup>6</sup>

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to characterize what Hillman means when he uses the term 'soul.' In *Archetypal Psychology*, Hillman claims that the primary metaphor of psychology must be soul as the word 'psychology' means the "reason or speech or intelligible account of the soul."<sup>7</sup> This is to say that psychology must not only find a logos of the soul, it must also be able to recover the world as "a place of soul."<sup>8</sup> To Hillman, soul refers to a perspective rather than a substance. That is, he understands the soul's primary activity to be imagining. The soul, he claims, is constituted by images which are self-generated by the soul itself.<sup>9</sup>

Hillman understands soul to refer to an ambiguous concept that permits the release of its full connotative powers. It has a religious concern that leads to the deepening of events into experiences by making use of the "imaginative possibilities in our natures."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, he notes that one does not see an image; rather, one sees by means of images, which are said to be more than merely subjective. He says that "an image is given by the imagination and can only be perceived by an act of imagining."<sup>11</sup> Hence the distinction lies in the way that an image is responded to and worked, which is through imaginative and metaphorical means rather than the literal and fanciful. From this viewpoint, imaginative activity is understood to be fecund and capable of animating or re-sacralizing the world.<sup>12</sup>

Hillman uses the notion of soul as a root metaphor for psychology as an attempt to broaden psychology's cultural horizon in regard to human agency or subjectivity. The notion of

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<sup>6</sup> James Hillman. *The Dream and the Underworld*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 25.

<sup>7</sup> James Hillman. *Archetypal Psychology: A Brief Account*. (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988 [1983]), 17. Hillman also points out the soul is used interchangeably with psyche, anima, and Seele.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

soul functions, he claims, to remove psychology from its literalized notion of selfhood. Hence, Hillman gives psychology a tool with which it can begin to recognize the depths and religious implications of the human condition. Soul brings to the fore the profundity of the sacred, the mysterious, and the ambivalent aspects of the human condition.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, Hillman informs us, there are three barriers to such a perspective on the soul: materialism, oppositionalism, and Christianity. Materialism, he claims, is a modality of consciousness that connects all psychic activities to material causes. The soul's images are placed in the service of tangible things only, or they are materialized into a personalized realm. Consequently, materialism views the soul's feelings as irrational and discards them as pathological.<sup>14</sup> Materialism finds its way into considerations of the soul through academic psychology's intellectual heritage, including positivism as well as its correlates (medical science and rationalism). Oppositionalism, in contrast, represents the Enlightenment habit of thinking in terms of oppositions or dualities. Hillman claims that it is necessary to deconstruct such habits of thought by shifting the oppositions so that we might be less caught up in them and find out to which archetypal perspective such 'isms' belong.<sup>15</sup> To Hillman, the perspective to which oppositionalism belongs is the Promethean or herculean ego, the reality tester, the villain that literalizes the imaginal.<sup>16</sup> The way to overcome oppositionalism is to abandon ego consciousness, whose very definition is a literal mode of seeing, knowing, and ordering. We must abandon this perspective, Hillman continues, as the ontological basis of psychology and as the primary metaphor of many philosophies.<sup>17</sup> Finally, Christianity is also understood to impede a paradigm for a psychology based in soul. To Hillman, Christ stands in the way of soul since his mission included the annulment of the underworld--the denigration of the dark world of the

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<sup>13</sup> Idea gleaned in casual conversation with Henry R. Leyenhorst, February 23, 1994. See also Hillman's *The Dream and the Underworld*.

<sup>14</sup> Hillman, *The Dream and the Underworld*, 69-73.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 82; 111-112.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

unconscious. This is a mission that exchanges soul for spirit, hence the defeat of the underworld is the defeat of soul or the loss of soul. The unconscious is equated with the devil, while consciousness is identified with Jesus. Furthermore, the soul, as it is personalized and interiorized by Augustine, is such that one's behaviour, one's thoughts, and one's imaginings are subject to the Christian God. It is this God who alone determines whether one has earned the privilege of entry into God's 'grace.' This is to say that the Christianized idea of soul operates as a means of institutionalizing human behaviour and thought. For this reason Christianity has become a tool used to crush Hillman's notion of a soul that imagines irrepressibly.<sup>18</sup>

Because images and imagination embody both the subjective and the objective, the human and the divine, they cannot be resolved by a one sided interpretation or personalistic reduction without losing the in-between world of the soul. Therefore, the subjective must be extended to include the impersonal, to include mythical parallels. For Hillman, soul must be able to negotiate the ambiguity of human life. It need not categorize or analyze its symptoms but encounter such fantasies from an imaginative perspective. Hence Hillman's soul can be characterized in two ways: as life-soul, it has multiple and various associations with body parts and the emotions; and, as psyche-soul, it is equivalent with and manifests as shadow, as a death image, and as the dream soul.<sup>19</sup> This is to say that for Hillman the soul must be considered to be diverse or multiple in nature as well as reflective of an ontological mode that escapes the bindings of the ego, or developmental psychology's fantasy of what constitutes a human being. Soul must be able to reflect the ambivalence and ambiguity that is characteristic of a psyche that imagines irrepressibly as well as to be understood as reflecting human states of being other than the merely rational or conscious.

It is psychology's inability to leave such space for the soul in its examination of the human condition that is ultimately detrimental. The tendency to theorize about self in opposition, materialistically, and from a strictly Christian doctrinal perspective, comprises

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 85-90.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 100-104.

psychology's dominant fantasy of the psyche. As noted, Hillman thinks that western psychology is a fantasy system based upon other fantasy systems or myths about humanity. Western psychology, he claims, is directly influenced by the Christian bias towards monotheism, the Cartesian belief that the world is dead, and a positivistic approach to the psyche that sprang from the ground of psychology's once fertile medical heritage. It is one task of this chapter to outline Hillman's criticisms of the traditional psychological approach to the self or psyche.

## **II: The Fantasies at the Root of Psychology: Medicine, Philosophy, and Christian Theology**

James Hillman's critique of traditional western psychology involves several considerations, all of which have to do with its fantasy of self, or the paradigm of self held by traditional psychology. Hillman regards traditional western psychology's fantasies of the patient and, hence, its means of treating the patient, as being informed by its intellectual heritage. The influence that medical science has had on psychology, for instance, is one that insists that what is not normal is pathological and, therefore, must be cured. The medical approach, Hillman demonstrates, is itself influenced by two streams of thought which are mediated by the figure of Descartes: positivism and Christian theology. Hillman finds much in Cartesian thought that is objectionable in terms of how we understand humanity. In this section, I will outline Hillman's subversion of traditional psychotherapy by taking into account its practices as they are informed by medicine, Cartesian philosophy, and Christianity.

Hillman has maintained a running engagement with psychology as early as his 1964 *Suicide and the Soul*. In this book Hillman criticizes psychology for its literal approach to such events as suicide. He suggests that as a result of psychology's medical legacy, academic psychology approaches the patient as a doctor would: seeing suffering as pathology that is in need of a cure, as opposed to experiences that need to be lived and explored. The soul, Hillman informs us, is not to be approached in the manner that medicine works with the body--it is not a

mechanical wonder.<sup>20</sup> Hillman returns to the theme of speaking to analysts about analysis in *Insearch* (1967). This book is directed toward analysts who practice from the pastoral perspective. Hillman is adamant that pastoral counsellors remain in the position of *imitatio christi* rather than imitate the secular stances of medical psychology.<sup>21</sup> Instead of emphasizing the medical or scientific aspects of therapy, Hillman suggests that soul--of both the analysand and the minister struggling with his calling--should be the primary concern of pastoral counsellors, for people come to their ministers with a different set of problems than they take to their therapists.<sup>22</sup> This implies, of course, that Hillman is more interested in the numinous, mysterious, or religious side of the soul as opposed to the purely rational and curative emphasis of academic psychology.

During the 1970s Hillman continued his critique of traditional psychology in *The Myth of Analysis* (1972) and *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975). In *The Myth of Analysis*, Hillman attempts to further deconstruct or deliteralize psychology's dogmas and doctrines. He claims that the attitude of curing sickness and the practice of making diagnoses are not only inappropriate but are also on the wrong track for soul-making.<sup>23</sup> He concludes that such problems endemic to psychology indicate that it may be necessary to re-think psychological work as it has been constituted.<sup>24</sup> Hillman asks whether psychology itself is ill, and concludes that the language of psychology insults the soul. That is, he believes that psychology, by suffering from the malaise of literalism, makes the soul 'dis-eased' through the sterile practice of categorizing and labelling things--a practice inherited by psychology from Enlightenment positivism and secularism.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, Hillman thinks that mental illness should no longer be talked about as pathology. Rather, taking his cue from Neo-Platonism, Hillman suggests that we approach the soul and

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<sup>20</sup> James Hillman. *Suicide and the Soul*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 24-60.

<sup>21</sup> James Hillman. *Insearch: Psychology and Religion*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), 43-48.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-55.

<sup>23</sup> James Hillman. *The Myth of Analysis*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 120ff.

psychological work from a perspective of myth so that it may become possible to once more reunite the secular with the profane, and behaviour with its mythical meaning.<sup>26</sup> Hence we find emphasis on a paradigm of self based in soul and the imagination as opposed to the rational ego of positivism.

In *Re-Visioning Psychology* the emphasis is on procedures which help to make soul. He begins by suggesting that 'personification' be employed to return life or sacredness to the objects of the imagination as well as to challenge the accepted opposition between 'living subjects' and 'dead objects.' Personification, he concludes, is an epistemology of the heart, it is a "thought mode of feeling" which must not be judged to be inferior because it allows for profound insights into one's "psychological reality."<sup>27</sup> Hillman also re-visions what is meant by pathologizing. He suggests that psychopathology is a state of being, an activity that implies snarled communications, a disrupted social nexus, or frustrated spiritual fulfilment. From this perspective, pathologizing constitutes an ontology of the soul.<sup>28</sup> Rather than understand pathology from the scientific perspective of the medical model, Hillman wants psychology to understand pathology in a manner similar to what Freud was getting at in *The Psychopathology of Every Day Life*: that symptoms are part of the regular speech of the soul. To approach the soul's language from the curative perspective is tantamount to cutting off part of the soul itself. Hillman, therefore, concludes that psychotherapy is a "killing game" insofar as it annihilates one side of the soul.<sup>29</sup> He claims that psychology must begin to psychologize itself--it must learn to see through, to reflect upon its nature, structure, and purpose. If psychology cannot deconstruct its own tools, it risks remaining caught up in their intrinsic literalisms. Psychology must be allowed the free reign to reflect upon itself as an open-ended process of ideation.<sup>30</sup> Finally, Hillman suggests 'dehumanization' as one means of working to remove the humanistic biases

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 190-200.

<sup>27</sup> James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 1-33.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 56-57.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 70-76.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 145-160.

intrinsic to psychology. According to Hillman, psychology must focus on soul and not on what it considers to be human. This is to say that what psychologists consider to be moral or correct is not necessarily what is in the psyche. Rather than view the soul morally, Hillman wants moralisms to be investigated psychologically to see what they say about and to the soul.<sup>31</sup>

Hillman's battle with psychology became more intense during the 1980s. In *Healing Fiction* (1983) he deliteralizes psychology by pointing out that, first, the very act of healing is fictional and, second, that fictions constitute healing.<sup>32</sup> He notes that our reality is created by our fictions and that consciousness of these fictions allows "creative access to and participation in the poetics or making of our psyche."<sup>33</sup> Our sicknesses are rooted in our fictions and understanding such fictions allows for 'healing.' Hillman then confronts the 'fathers' of modern depth psychology (Freud, Jung, and Adler) and concludes that each are authors who separately helped to develop a new literary genre--a style of writing that oscillates between the humanities and medical science.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, Hillman de-literalizes psychology by suggesting that the entire notion of therapy as a scientific discipline is itself fictional. He returns the discipline to its roots in fantasy, imagination, and dream, thus helping to remove psychology from its ostentatious and unnecessary claims of scientific status.

In the *Thought of the Heart* (1984), Hillman began to outline what he has only recently emphasized as a further paradigm for psychology to consider: aesthetics. By pointing out that contemporary musing on the heart, such as the personal-feeling and Christianized morality of the heart of Augustine or the mechanized heart of Harvey, are detrimental to a psychology based in soul. Instead, Hillman suggests that we return to the heart of the Lion, the heart's emotional and imaginal spontaneity as represented by our animal natures. He emphasizes that the literal, rational, and secular aspects of traditional psychology are unhelpful in understanding soul. Hillman suggests that in order to make soul we must find a way to imagine not only our hearts,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 160-170.

<sup>32</sup> James Hillman. *Healing Fiction*. (USA: Station Hill, 1983), ix.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 16ff.

but our entire world in a manner other than the purely rational, the mechanical, as well as the secular.

In the 1989 article "From Mirror to Window: Curing Psychoanalysis of its Narcissism," Hillman suggests that narcissism is an iatrogenic disorder endemic to depth psychology. He states that the "epidemic diagnosis 'narcissism' states that the condition is already endemic to the psychology that makes the diagnosis."<sup>35</sup> He believes that psychology sees narcissism because it sees narcissistically. By deconstructing the roots of narcissism (its romantic idealization of love objects, the opposition between bourgeois society and the inner self, the imprisonment of the self during analysis, and the tendency for analysis to perpetuate itself) it may become possible to free soul from narcissistic self-reflection and open up other vistas of imagining--the implication being that, because individualized therapy is inherently narcissistic, it separates people from one another. In this article we can find the beginnings of a shift in emphasis for archetypal psychology: from the individual to the communal. In the following pages I will take into account this recent emphasis on the communal aspects of soul. It is at this point that any chronological survey of Hillman's running engagement with psychology will be discarded in favour of a less linear and more literary approach.

In his most recent book, *We've had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse* (1992) Hillman continues to portray psychology as restrictive, oppressive, and supportive of a repressive status quo. Psychology is thus understood to be something that encourages mediocrity.<sup>36</sup> First of all, Hillman is highly critical of the developmental strain to which American psychology adheres. To Hillman, developmental psychology contends that one's history is causal (i.e., it happened to me in childhood and that is why I am the way I am). The result of this perspective is that we tend to keep the things that affect us most locked up deep inside of ourselves, presuming that if something traumatic happened in childhood it must

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<sup>35</sup> James Hillman. "From Mirror to Window: Curing Psychoanalysis of its Narcissism." *Spring* 1989: 62-75.

<sup>36</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 151.

necessarily continue to influence one's life from there on. Furthermore, we are incapable of imagining that anything outside of our past or outside of our own specific life can affect us traumatically or otherwise. Consequently, we cut ourselves off from any notion that the world can affect us and that we can affect it.<sup>37</sup>

Such a fantasy of humanity, as Hillman points out, ultimately leads to the expression of what has been called the 'inner child' in contemporary popular psychology. To Hillman, psychology's emphasis on the inner child is disempowering. Because we concentrate on the abuses we suffered as children, we disempower ourselves in regard to making a difference in our own contemporary lives and in the political world.<sup>38</sup> We must not, however, understand this position as indicating that Hillman blatantly disregards one's childhood experiences of abuse, fears, and traumas. Rather, he wants to point out that "therapy makes it even more devastating *by the way it thinks about it*. It isn't just the trauma that does the damage, it's remembering traumatically."<sup>39</sup> Hillman suggests that the more one remembers traumatically, the more one remains a victim in one's own memory. This serves to keep one in the position of the abused child, because one's memories are locked in the child-victim's view. In a sense, one enters into an imaginal world when remembering one's childhood experiences, not just a traumatic world.<sup>40</sup> Hence, concludes Hillman, it is the memory of the event that really causes the trauma. Thus the logical conclusion of his position about childhood experiences is that it is not only the original traumatic occurrence that is important, but also what one's memory does with it, and what our culture's imagination says about it.<sup>41</sup>

What Hillman suggests is that psychology must "cast out the child." Beginning in the 1970s, Hillman pointed out that therapy must deal with the inherent confusion in our society in respect to actual childhood and our almost obsessive fantasy of the child: the emphasis on youth

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 27.

as the ideal state of being in the West, and the notion that in childhood are found all the events that will affect our lives for evermore. Since our understanding of the child and the state of childhood are not actual, Hillman suggests that we must comprehend more of the workings of the child fantasy in order to understand western society properly. Thus it becomes necessary to question what it is in psychology's child motif that projects so vividly and draws such fantasies onto itself as, for instance, the necessity of violent separation from the mother or the abandonment of the child.<sup>42</sup> The notion of the inner child is subject to the same criticisms as is humanistic psychology--it pays attention only to the "precious, delicate, utterly vulnerable" aspects of the child. What of, Hillman asks, the child as being stubborn, as being the survivor, as being introverted to name a few alternatives.<sup>43</sup> The notion of the inner child is said to function as a form of selective remembering--it "is in effect to substitute *a fictional character* for ourselves."<sup>44</sup> The result is that a lot of memories that do not fit into this character are repressed, transformed, or otherwise altered and ultimately become inconsequential.<sup>45</sup>

Hillman suggests that because of the child fantasy, in our culture in general and in psychology in particular, regression has become attractive. That is, from a distance we can recognize the 'angelic side' of the child. It is through the fantasy of abandonment, for instance, that the child is permitted to regress away from society and into nature. Such regression, Hillman informs us, allows the notion of the Herculean hero, or developmental psychology's ego-centric "I," to enter the picture. As the counterpoint to the child, the hero is that which leads the regressed, re-natured child back to the 'civilized' world. That is, the hero is said to help the child

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<sup>42</sup> James Hillman. "Abandoning the Child," *Loose Ends*. (Zürich: Spring Publications, 1975), 8-16.

<sup>43</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 71f. The danger of the inner child ideology, as Michael Ventura points out, is that it "exaggerates both their vulnerability and their powerlessness, and denigrates a lot of good survival skills as "symptoms"." It ignores the viciousness and destructiveness of children as well as several other kinds of behaviour innate to children.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

'grow.'<sup>46</sup> Under the hero's tutelage the child grows today in a very specific manner dictated by specific forms of psychology that operate on the basis of a specific fantasy of humanity and its relations to one another and to the world. This is a fantasy of growth or childhood development that such feminists as Keller and Chodorow characterize as involving matrophobic strife, as we shall see in Chapter Three.

Hillman, however, has a problem with the traditional western notion of growth. Not only is the connection between growth and the hero problematic, growth also denies a child his or her pathologies and fantasies.<sup>47</sup> The notion of growth assumes that one must be nurtured in such a way as to fit into society, and to leave childishness--including the propensity to imagine--behind.<sup>48</sup> The growth metaphor, Hillman believes, leaves one in a constant state of failure. It is an idealized image of soul that is impossible to achieve; it is an idealized fantasy that leads to an understanding of self as separate. Stated differently, the fantasy of the child disallows any possibility of process; it would keep one's soul in stasis--a condition resulting from a belief in our idea of the causality that emerges from the events of one's childhood. In other words, growth suggests that nothing of oneself will remain the same, yet must be the same because what happened to a person as a child still affects that person today.

Yet there are parts of the psyche that are absolutely changeless<sup>49</sup> and it is one of the tasks of therapy, as Hillman sees it, to distinguish between those aspects of one's psyche that are changeable and those that are not. The fantasy of growth, Hillman proclaims, does not take into account the changeless.<sup>50</sup> On the contrary, "Growth offers salvation from what developmental theory has dogmatically declared to be our basic nature, the helpless and hope-filled state called

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<sup>46</sup> Hillman, "Abandoning the Child," 18.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 70. Hillman suggests a methodological approach that views life lived backwards. That is, he would have psychology view in "the mirror of childhood the traits, the wounds, and the wonders, but it [psychology must] see[...] them as fundamentally *uncaused* even if they are performed by actor-like parents and siblings and teachers (and violators) in the drama I call my life." (70)

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>49</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 8f.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

'my inner child'....[To Hillman] *Growth equals secular salvation.*"<sup>51</sup> In this way we may draw Hillman into this conclusion: that growth or maturation in Western society suggests a violent separation from one's status as a child and from one's mother who represents childhood.<sup>52</sup> The fantasy alluded to here is one that believes that the child in stasis is unwell and requires a cure of some sort or another. We can see, therefore, that the notion of growth goes hand in hand with the need to heal that which is considered to be inferior or pathological. Hillman argues that psychology should imagine growth less as a linear process and more as *changes in patterns of significance and imagery.*<sup>53</sup> By over-emphasizing childhood experiences, we leave out too much in the consideration of our lives and may mislead ourselves altogether. Instead of seeing human development in such linear terms as "a" leading to "b," it might be preferable to perceive growth as a cyclical and multiple appreciation of each of our stories about ourselves and about society as they arise and gain significance, only to fade and possibly return another time.

The fantasy of the child and its growth is as much a means of maintaining the psychotherapy trade, notes Hillman, as it is a means of providing the help that one lacks in today's society.<sup>54</sup> Although the notion of growth enters into psychology as a result of its medical legacy,<sup>55</sup> analysis must encourage a fantasy of growth that leads one toward the non-standard and eccentric and away from such notions as adaptability and coping.<sup>56</sup> For learning to cope with our society's dysfunctions only serves to make us more dysfunctional.<sup>57</sup> For this reason, Hillman declares that psychotherapy is "be-numbing": it is a form of sedation that calms us down

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 70 [My emphasis].

<sup>52</sup> Hillman points out that the growth fantasy also makes the assumption that the child exists in sin (i.e., original sin) and must be removed from such a state. For Hillman "Psychology does not notice that its constructs and interpretations have become dogmatic expressions of a fantasy, so that psychology no longer can reflect the actual psyche in conditions that bespeak neither hoping nor growing and are neither natural nor whole." (Hillman, "Abandoning the Child", 27.)

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 29 [My emphasis].

<sup>54</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 24-25.

<sup>55</sup> Hillman, *Suicide and the Soul*, 160.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>57</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 205.

from the stress and anxiety caused by a dysfunctional world.<sup>58</sup> It is of utmost importance to escape the normalization of soul brought about by psychology's uncritical acceptance of its intellectual heritage. We must be critical of the dominant fantasy of the Self in order to instigate change. This is Hillman's way of pointing out that the traditional psychological paradigm used to understand the Self and its vicissitudes no longer functions harmoniously with how self is now being perceived in contemporary thought.

Hillman claims that psychology's medical influence has been devastating to how we presently understand psyche. For example, if the root metaphor of medicine is the continuation of life at all costs, then it is impossible for depth psychology to approach the notion of suicide from any perspective other than the literal. Medical training biases therapists against any metaphorical understanding of the expression of death and its symptoms.<sup>59</sup> Yet because an analyst's main concern is the physical health of the individual, it is forever impossible to approach the soul in a manner that is sensitive to its ways of speaking and being. The purely physical approach is thus one of prevention, not understanding. Hillman writes: *"If an analyst wants to understand something going on in the soul, he [sic] may never proceed in an attitude of prevention."*<sup>60</sup> Instead, analysts must learn to approach the soul with an attitude that promotes reflection, not the need for a cure. Rather than approach the soul from the dialectics of medicine, which intends to cure the 'abnormal,'<sup>61</sup> psychology must learn to deal with symptoms as experiences and not as objects to be discarded. By altering its perception of symptoms, it becomes possible for us to understand that symptoms are things to be lived with, not to be cured. For to cure one's symptoms, Hillman believes, is to take away the soul's means of communicating its dissatisfaction with its relations to the world.

If we would understand what is going on in the soul, Hillman notes, we should never approach it from attitudes of explanation and prevention. Rather, our approach must be one of

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 151f.

<sup>59</sup> Hillman, *Suicide and the Soul*, 19.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 48. Italics in original.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 140ff.

confirmation and understanding. We must listen with a metaphorical ear that allows our own participation in order to approach soul with compassion.<sup>62</sup> Medicine, the natural sciences, and theology, in contrast, have a differing approach. This approach is fixed or literalized insofar as there are no grey areas, only black and white.<sup>63</sup> As a result of the medical model's influence on psychology, the healer as hero is the root metaphor for psychological practice. Thus, death and decay must be fought at all costs. Yet Hillman points out that medicine and psychology must remember that "*suffering is normal health*,"<sup>64</sup> that those characteristics which do not fit the accepted understandings and practices of traditional depth psychology should not automatically be assumed deviant or pathological and in need of a cure, of needing surgical removal from the self.

The medical model, however, would tell us what is healthy. When we are told this, we are really being told what is right to think and feel.<sup>65</sup> It is the uncritical acceptance of the legitimacy of the medical model that has led psychology to adopt an all-pervading perspective of selfhood that ultimately institutionalizes our understanding of what it means to be human. Without critical reflection on the ideas given to psychology from medicine and positivism, for example, psychologists help to perpetuate what has become a dogmatic expression of the human condition as something that needs a radical cure. Consequently, the fantasy of mental health is now policed by medical professionals and has been infused into all aspects of the community. Hillman's criticisms of the medical model recognize that "we cannot recover soul from its alienation in professional therapy until we have a vision of pathologizing which [sic] does not require professional treatment in the first place."<sup>66</sup> If all illness is at root a fantasy, we need a therapy that will treat fantasy by focusing on fantasy, not illness. That is, it is through imaginative, not clinical, thinking that we find the way into fantasy. Fantasy cannot be

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 130. Italics in original.

<sup>65</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 77.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 78.

approached from a one-sided, literalistic view that not only neglects but also denigrates perspectives that are different from the accepted paradigm. Hillman argues that we must never take any of the soul's contents literally.<sup>67</sup> For this reason "a medical model for understanding pathologizing begs the question, since the medical model is itself a result of the primary process of pathologizing."<sup>68</sup> In other words, the medical model is itself the result of a fantasy, a fantasy that only allows for the literal understanding of a person's or a society's symptoms, while disregarding any possibility of appreciating the metaphorical contents of soul and body.

It is the clinical biases of psychology that are ultimately dehumanizing. The practice of applying simple models to complex conditions "twists nature [in]to a prefabricated frame. It is a pathological bias."<sup>69</sup> Something as complex as the symptomatic expression of suicide, for instance, requires a model more complex than the causality of medical science and developmental psychology. Instead of confusing pain with suffering and applying collective standards to all cases, analysts must expose their norms, which have been derived from medical training, to critical assessment. Analysts must remember that no single way of being fits a statistical norm.<sup>70</sup>

Hillman points out that ideals and norms are a means of comprehending pathologizing,<sup>71</sup> but are not to be taken as a means of measuring it. Indeed, such notions as ideals and norms are themselves the result of pathologizing and must be recognized as belonging to a specific fantasy. For this reason an individual cannot even provide a norm for himself or herself. Because there is so much differentiation in the imaginal realm, in the psyche's activities, there can be no fundamental principles. Hence "no single perspective can embrace psychological life,"<sup>72</sup> and

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>69</sup> Hillman, *Suicide and the Soul*, 130.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>71</sup> Pathologizing is a term introduced by Hillman to refer to the "psyche's autonomous ability to create illness, morbidity, disorder, abnormality, and suffering in any aspect of its behavior and to experience and imagine life through this deformed and afflicted perspective." *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 57.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 87f.

norms are delusions prescribed by incomplete and insensitive attempts to apply collective standards to the psyche.<sup>73</sup> The idea that there is no fundamental or essential principle to the soul's activities is crucial to the critique of traditional understandings of selfhood and for comprehending Hillman's call for an appreciation of the inherent diversity which characterizes soul and community.

If the unconscious is an operative factor in every soul, then we can say that pathologizing is an "inherent aspect of the interior personality."<sup>74</sup> Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* demonstrates that pathology is not merely reflective of a special crisis situation, but rather that it is a part of everyday life. Yet clinical psychology, which sees literally, would make us all individually responsible for our afflictions. Based upon a causal model, clinical psychology (with the exception of object relations theory) does not permit the idea that we exist in relation to ourselves, to others, to myths, to images, or to archetypes.<sup>75</sup> An excellent example of how therapy literalizes symptoms can be found in Hillman's various discussions about clinical diagnoses. Diagnoses, he argues, act as a means of not only categorizing individuals but also as a way of telling a person what they are and how they are supposed to behave.<sup>76</sup> In effect, diagnoses lead to the institutionalization of self. Consequently we no longer speak of self, but *the Self*. Diagnoses refer to a known, and ignore the unknown.

If, indeed, diagnoses function as such, it becomes apparent that the language of psychology insults the soul by demanding that all that is acceptable, all that is normal, is all that can be known and all that is rational. Yet we know that the soul is composed of more than what is considered normal, rational, or even non-pathological. Consequently, clinical language cuts us

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<sup>73</sup> See Hillman's *Egalitarian Typologies Versus the Perception of the Unique*. Eranos Lecture Series 4. (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1980). In this book Hillman argues against the appropriateness of using typologies in psychology. To Hillman, typologies are a way of fixing individuals into simplistic categories, while ignoring the complexity and uniqueness of each individual.

<sup>74</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 70.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>76</sup> James Hillman, *Suicide and the Soul*, 140ff.

off from the richness and depths within ourselves. Clinical language makes us ill, because it is itself ill.<sup>77</sup> To Hillman it is the medical and positivistic heritage of psychology that deadens its language. That is, psychology follows the lead of the natural sciences in the drive to label and fix everything in existence.<sup>78</sup> In this way, specialized terminologies remove soul from the world. Moreover, Hillman notes that the upsurge in the use of the term "psyche" brought about a downswing in the usage of the word "soul." As a result, psychoanalysis brought soul back into psychology, but it has conceived of soul as having full and autonomous power.<sup>79</sup> In other words, psychotherapy, by bringing soul back into the light, has closed its eyes about what it is. What Hillman refers to is depth psychology's strict belief that soul can be found only in human beings. By constricting soul to the Cartesian notion of the human interior, psychology has removed soul from its rightful place in the world<sup>80</sup>--an issue we will return to in the next chapter during the discussion about *anima mundi*, the world soul.

Hillman argues that medicine for the last four hundred years has continuously rendered the body ever more dead. It is now imagined to be a machine with parts--a further criticism of the Cartesian paradigm of self that some feminists exposed as resulting in the anaesthetizing of the physical world and the human body.<sup>81</sup> As a result of the mechanization of the body, in tandem with the other Cartesian proclamation that rational consciousness is all, we have created a world in which individuals must necessarily exist in isolation while being embedded in inanimate physical surroundings. All things in the world, not just the human body, have been made dead to us, thus we have no real sense of connection to the world any longer.<sup>82</sup> Our objectifying consciousness and our objectifying perspectives make the world and all its

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<sup>77</sup> James Hillman, *The Myth of Analysis*, 121f.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> See, for instance, Catherine Keller's *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism and Self*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986); Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978); and, Carol P. Christ's *Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess*. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987).

<sup>82</sup> James Hillman. *Inter Views*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), 131.

components objects. Hence, states Hillman, it is necessary to reanimate, to re-sacralize the world and the things in it so that we can enter into conversation, enter into connection with the world which surrounds us.<sup>83</sup>

Yet because we have personalized the soul, compressing it all into the human being, there is no place for soul outside humanity in the Cartesian fantasy of the world. The result is the swelling of the 'I' characteristic of the ego-centricity of developmental psychology and the heroic ego. Consequently, we see ego consciousness as the only form of consciousness, as the only state of being available to us short of insanity.<sup>84</sup> Hillman, however, wants to return soul to the world. He wants to find the soul in the everyday, physical world surrounding us. He would have us reject the Cartesian roots of depth psychological notions that claim the world is dead and that the only remaining animated thing is the metaphysical.<sup>85</sup> Hillman claims the following: first, because we find soul in pathology, and, second, there must necessarily be as much soul in the world as there is in each of us and, finally, the world is just as 'soulful' as we are. It is Hillman's contention that we must stop viewing the physical world as a dead entity--a perspective that is the result of the philosophizing of Descartes and others.<sup>86</sup>

Hillman argues that therapy is a means of depriving the world of soul. Moreover, he suggests that therapy, "by emphasizing the inner soul and ignoring the outer soul, supports the decline of the actual world."<sup>87</sup> R. D. Laing agrees with this assessment by suggesting that we are supposed to keep our imaginations inside of us. Laing also notes that we are considered odd at best if we insist that which is being imagined is going on outside our brains. That is, if our musings are not shared we are considered to be suffering from some form of psychosis.<sup>88</sup> Hillman's point is that by emphasizing the journey to the interior, psychology maintains the

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>84</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 48.

<sup>85</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 4.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>88</sup> R.D. Laing. *Self and Others*. (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1969 [1961]), 34.

Cartesian view that the world outside consists of dead material and that, in contrast, the world inside is alive. In this way therapy cuts us off from others. It destroys any sense of community with our surroundings and our ability to reach out to others. Consequently, psychotherapy relies over much on intimate personal relationships as the means by which we can satiate all our desires, needs, and outrages. But this is not enough. We need a community, one that is also political in nature, one that makes sense, and one that makes the world matter.<sup>89</sup>

Hillman points out that "Every psychological system rests upon a metapsychology, a set of implicit assumptions about the nature of the soul."<sup>90</sup> Much of psychology's metaphysics is said to be based upon a set of nineteenth century scientific assumptions. But more of it, as previously mentioned, is influenced by Christian theology. Hillman notes that the unity fantasy of Christian monotheism is another disaster for modern psychotherapy.<sup>91</sup> The notion of unity, in effect, gives rise to ideas of domination--i.e., dominating the other, marginalized aspects of our selves. Hillman is adamant that we cannot continue to understand self or soul in terms of structures based on unity and centring. "The [unitary] self idea doesn't get us out of the trap,"<sup>92</sup> he writes. Rather the idea of a unitary self closes the door just as we would escape. Hillman claims that he is not against either Christianity or self but rather "that to work with psychic realities in your life you just can't put the new wine back into old bottles."<sup>93</sup> Because the psyche can no longer be kept in old containers forged by Christianity, there is necessarily a "recrudescence and ebullition of individual fantasy, of pagan myth, [and] of the anima."<sup>94</sup> This statement is one that appropriately summarizes the sentiments lurking behind the emergence of an alternate understanding of self in postmodern western society.

Still, as noted, psychology has its roots in Protestantism and no matter which way it turns,

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<sup>89</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 12-13.

<sup>90</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 200.

<sup>91</sup> Hillman, *Inter Views*, 82.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>94</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 219.

it cannot leave this heritage. Thus, notes Hillman, a culture that believes that its God is dead must produce a psychology that has no gods.<sup>95</sup> "By refusing the fantastic nature of our lives, ourselves as metaphors and images made by soul, we have each become fastened into a constant forced literalism, ourselves as real, the Gods dead."<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, the refusal to see ourselves as anything but 'real' is an obstacle that prevents us from psychologizing ourselves. "For should we see through, we should shatter the prime literalism, the humanistic illusion in regard to every sense of reality other than the psychic."<sup>97</sup> That is, to see through the claim that all that is real is the rational, psychical, and the metaphysical, is tantamount to giving the physical world its due and recognizing that there are other aspects to reality than that which traditional theology bequeaths to western society and modern psychology.

To move towards a renaissance of psychology means recognizing primarily "the death of psychology's God and the consequent death in the soul of psychology as a viable carrier of soul-making."<sup>98</sup> It seems logical to conclude, as would Hillman, that it is necessary to reintroduce soul and divinity into our ways of speaking the logos of the psyche. Academic, statistical psychology must necessarily take into account the numinous if it would take into account soul as it now appears, not as theology and science have historically claimed it to be.

The above summary of Hillman's critical perspective on traditional psychology, provides a context for a look at his proposed "polytheistic psychology" as an alternate paradigm for psychology to locate its thinking about selfhood, the human condition, or, as Hillman prefers, the soul, since an alternate psychology necessarily offers an alternate perspective of self.

### **III: Polytheism as an Alternate Paradigm for Psychology**

In "Psychology: Monotheistic or Polytheistic," Hillman furthers his argument against the

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 221.

undue influence of the Christian paradigm of self, divinity, and cosmos in modern psychology.<sup>99</sup> He begins by pointing out that the tension between monotheism and polytheism represents a basic split in Jungian psychology. Which fantasy, he asks, is it that governs our view of self? For many, Hillman continues, notions of unity, integration, and individuation seem to represent an advance over multiplicity and diversity.<sup>100</sup> We know that in the history of western thought, particularly in such areas as the history of religions and cultures, monotheism has been considered superior insofar as it was believed to mark a higher level of spiritual, cultural, and intellectual development than did polytheism. It does not follow, however, that from polytheism must evolve a more purified *Weltanschauung* characterizable as monotheism. Yet western suppositions still suffer from a bias that refuses to recognize that perspectives other than monotheism reflect differences in temperaments rather than stages of development.<sup>101</sup>

Hillman tells us that "some people everywhere are by temperament monotheistic; they have a monotheistic psychology."<sup>102</sup> This is typified in comments one can find here and there in which certain people claim that they cannot exist in a pluralistic world. By referring to Paul Radin's criticisms of monotheism, Hillman points out that all monotheisms have sprung from the ranks of the "eminently religious"--that is, an intellectually elite group of theoretical thinkers such as Christian trained scientists, philosophers, and theologians, who share a common temperament. The influence of such persons upon culture is said to be stubborn and effective. Monotheistic individuals are characterized as picturing the world only as a unified whole. This may explain Jung's propensity to see the world in terms of the unified, individuated self. Furthermore, Hillman claims that the monotheistic fantasy is strong in our culture because it is a theological equivalent of what is believed to be a more complete, integrated, and numinous

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<sup>99</sup> James Hillman. "Psychology: Monotheistic or Polytheistic?" (*Spring* 1971, New York: Spring Publications, 1971), 193-208.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 193f.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*

psychic condition.<sup>103</sup> Hillman notes Radin's argument that monotheism has not been the triumph of a unifying principle over a disruptive one. Furthermore, the persistence of monotheism does not necessarily demonstrate its superiority over polytheism or even its victory in the history of ideas. Both monotheism and polytheism are two differing attitudes toward divinity, which have existed alongside one another for centuries.<sup>104</sup>

Jung's approach to psychology and self is biased by the perspective of his time which "put monotheism on top in the name of integration."<sup>105</sup> After looking at the evidence, Hillman concludes that "Jung's hypothesis may be more an expression of the theological temperament" as opposed to a statement of psychic reality.<sup>106</sup> This conclusion prompts Hillman to declare that we must keep such ideas as individual development and cultural development distinct. That is, we cannot assume an equation between the presence of monotheistic stages of development and the Self stage of Jung's individuation. Hillman writes:

It is nowhere established (despite Erich Neumann) that the stages of religious thought...necessarily parallel stages of individual consciousness....Moreover, according to Radin, we should not think in developmental terms at all about the kinds of religions. Culture and religion do not move upwards from the many to the one, from disorder to order, from Babel to Jahweh: monotheism is not identical with superiority except within its own Anschauung."<sup>107</sup>

Therefore, Hillman postulates, if the so-called superiority of monotheism is in question, we must also question monotheistic models of self.<sup>108</sup> To Hillman it is imperative that we be less concerned about stages of development in religions or self, and more interested in understanding why it is that we see the world from such perspectives. Hence, Hillman concludes that we must suspend monotheism both psychologically and theologically. Furthermore, we must cease our monotheistic desires for utopia and integration as well as the Jungian fantasy of

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103 Ibid.

104 Ibid., 194-195.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid., 196.

individuation.<sup>109</sup>

As a result of these conclusions, Hillman suggests that we employ a polytheistic paradigm in our psychological understandings of soul. Polytheism, he notes, was first employed by Jung as a means of characterizing the objective psyche which he believed to consist of a multiplicity of partial personalities.<sup>110</sup> Hillman further accounts for a polytheistic paradigm with the following statement:

By providing a divine background of personages and powers for each complex, it [a polytheistic psychology] would aim less at gathering them into a unity and more at integrating each fragment according to its own principle, giving each God [and Goddess] its due over that proportion of consciousness, that symptom, complex, fantasy which calls for an archetypal background. It would accept the multiplicity of voices...without insisting upon unifying them into one figure, and accept too the dissociation process into diversity as equal in value to the coagulation process into unity. The pagan Gods and Goddesses would be restored to the psychological domain.<sup>111</sup>

Focus on the many and the different, as opposed to the one and the same, Hillman informs us, would also allow for a variety of perspectives from which we could look at the psyche. Interest in polytheism, he claims, will "likely produce more insights into emotions, images and relationships even if it be less encouraging for a theology of evolutionary wholeness."<sup>112</sup> That is, from the polytheistic perspective, there would be no preferred positions and that "when the idea of progress through hierarchical stages is suspended, there will be more tolerance for the non-growth, non-upward and non-ordered components of the psyche....We may then discover that many of the judgments which have previously been called psychological were rather theological."<sup>113</sup>

Hillman informs us, however, that the notion of wholeness differs in theology when compared to psychology. Theologically, wholeness refers to the one in relation to God;

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

psychologically wholeness suggests everything--"all the phenomena as phenomena, things as they present themselves."<sup>114</sup> In human terms, wholeness refers theologically to the degree of approximation to the ideal of unity and psychologically to "being what one is as one is."<sup>115</sup> Thus from the view point of doctrinal Christianity, the proliferation of cults in the Hellenistic period always seemed a degeneration. But if this proliferation of cults is viewed psychologically, in terms of complexes and many forms of being, we could understand the psychic fragmentation supposedly typical of our times as the return of the repressed, "bringing [with it] a return of psychological polytheism."<sup>116</sup> As Hillman puts it: "Babel may be a religious decline from one point of view but it may also be a psychological improvement since through the many tongues complete psychological reality is being reflected."<sup>117</sup>

Hillman notes that when our models of self are governed by a monotheistic psychology, every Self fantasy is necessarily a "prisoner for Christ." Stated otherwise, every way we have of understanding Self must find its meaning ultimately on the one path towards the integration and unity represented by the Christian, monotheistic God. Hillman claims that although science and clinical pragmatism were once the main enemies of the psyche, the major threat to the psyche's freedom of symbol formation today comes from another direction: Christianity. This is the faded Christianity of modernity that is dressed in the guise of a theology of self in its attempt to claim the soul as exclusively its own.<sup>118</sup> What is needed, Hillman implies, is a means of apprehending the soul that allows for its diversity of expression, and a psychology based in a polytheistic paradigm can do just this.

One of the most important aspects of a polytheistic paradigm for psychology is the implication for the sacred. The re-sacralization of our means of speaking about the human condition and the physical world are well served by polytheism. There is a felt need in the de-

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 203f.

souled, excessively rational and material contemporary world to find a kind of meaning that is analogous to the sacred, as opposed to the mere exchange of information. For Hillman, religions are not defined by the presence of Gods and Goddesses, but rather in terms of observances or the binding of events to one or many instances of numinosity, of that which moves the soul. For all the questions this definition of religion brings up, we must understand that Hillman is not so concerned whether monotheism or polytheism is better or worse (an opposition inherent in the monotheistic bias). Rather it is a question whether

Polytheistic psychology has room for the preferential enactment of any particular myth in a style of life....And [this suggests that] even the myths may change in a life, and the soul serve in its time many Gods. Polytheistic psychology would not suspend the commandment to have "no other Gods before me," but would extend that commandment for each mode of consciousness....No one model would be "before" another, since in polytheism the possibilities of existence are not jealous to the point of excluding each other.<sup>119</sup>

To Hillman, polytheism offers a style of consciousness that disallows the strict separation of psychology and religion. As I see it, Hillman's polytheistic psychology can help repudiate other separations such as the mind from the body, rationalism from unconsciousness, self from the other, the animated and unanimated. Hillman believes that the two, religion and psychology, are assumed by one another.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, with the soul as the root metaphor of a polytheistic psychology, religious concerns are automatically acknowledged. That is, if analysis leads one to the "dark center" from which it is difficult to make the distinction between the unconscious and God, then it is impossible for the therapist to not be involved with religious problems.<sup>121</sup>

By reclaiming the religious background of the soul, it becomes possible to reclaim the value and meaningfulness provided by our imaginations, myths, stories, and physical experiences. Rather than submitting ourselves to traditional world views that negate the importance of our imaginations and experiences, we are empowered to find value where it had

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 201.

<sup>120</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 168f.

<sup>121</sup> Hillman, *Insearch*, 54.

previously been denied. For David Miller, polytheism allows a person to experience himself or herself as many different and yet coextensive selves, "each of which is felt to have autonomous power."<sup>122</sup> Miller also cautions us not to take a polytheistic state of mind as something that is pathological, but rather as something that has some "survival value" for the individual.<sup>123</sup>

In contrast to polytheism, Miller claims that monotheism appeared as an evolution of a self-consciousness that spoke about itself in a certain way: abstract, rational, formal, logical, and speculative styles of thought.<sup>124</sup> Still, as in Hillman's appropriation of Radin, we find Miller claiming that the monotheistic style of thought--the rational--is but one style of ideation available to us. Miller, like Hillman, would have us learn to appreciate anew forms of thought other than the rational. He would have us value the mystical, the intuitive, and the imaginative--all activities of a polytheistic self that re-sacralizes the world surrounding it.<sup>125</sup>

There are two questions related to this issue that must arise at some point. Why turn to polytheism? And, why does Hillman emphasize the Greek polytheistic pantheon over any other assembly of gods? In answering the former question I remind the reader that archetypal psychology relies upon a model of soul that is variegated, with multiple connections both psychically and physically. The soul is seen as diverse or heterogeneous as opposed to being singular, separated, and homogenized. In sum, Hillman considers polytheism the most accurate model of humanity's innately diverse psychology: a model based in polytheism provides much more space for the expression of the marginal or the aspects of a person that are not of the ego. Second, archetypal psychology is the heir of polytheistic attitudes derived from Greek, Renaissance, and Romantic thought: all styles of thought that considered the human situation as one that reflects the diversity and the imaginative potentialities of the world. Furthermore, archetypal psychology's social, political, and psychiatric critique focuses on the hero-myth of

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<sup>122</sup> David Miller. *The New Polytheism: Rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 5.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 36-37.

secular humanism--i.e., the monotheistic bias that requires the identification of the Self from a singular viewpoint. Finally, a polytheistic psychology provides a multi-dimensional background from which the diverse psyche can be apprehended with sensitivity.<sup>126</sup>

In answering the latter question--Why turn to Greece?--Hillman suggests that "when the monotheism of consciousness is no longer able to deny the existence of fragmentary autonomous systems and no longer able to deal with our actual psychic state, then there arises the fantasy of returning to Greek polytheism."<sup>127</sup> As we are already aware, Hillman believes that monotheistic ego-consciousness suits "the consciousness of an era or of an individual sense that its survival is best served by an archetypal pattern of heroism and unity"<sup>128</sup>--which, presumably, we have left. Yet the psyche, whether it is in crisis or not, has other fantasies of itself. Hebraic monotheism is not the only way to discuss the psyche: there is futurism, turning to the East, or the noble savage. Still, such alternatives are perceived by Hillman to be less satisfying than the fantasy of Greece because they are not a part of the West's historical consciousness and the images that affect Western individuals. This is the reason why Hillman advocates a "return to Greece." He claims that "Greece provides a polycentric pattern of the most richly elaborated polytheisms of all cultures, and so is able to hold the chaos of the secondary personalities and autonomous impulses of a field, a time, or an individual."<sup>129</sup> It is through Greece that the West's images are derived, he claims, and that it is through Greece that we may find the means of imagining self that are not so far removed from our own experiences as to leave us floundering in a sea of half-understood metaphors and musings.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 32-34.

<sup>127</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 27.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>130</sup> Hillman's (and Miller) demand that the west must adopt the Greek polytheistic pantheon for a polytheistic psychology is one area of contention that needs to be examined. Some feminists and members of a variety of new religious movements that adopt polytheism as part of their world view have problems with exclusively sanctioning the greek pantheon. For Starhawk, the issues resides in the fact that the Greek pantheon we know are familiar with has a basis in the written word. For Starhawk, the fact that the Greek pantheon comes to us via a tradition of

It must be noted, however, that for all Hillman's insistence that psychology include the numinous in its conversations with the soul, a distinction is maintained between archetypal psychology and religion. Hillman sees Greek myth less as a religion and more as a psychological metaphor. He writes that "Greece becomes the multiple magnifying mirror in which the psyche can recognize its persons and processes in configurations which are larger than life but which bear on the life of our secondary personalities."<sup>131</sup> Hillman suggests that by understanding the personified archetypes to be Gods and Goddesses, they become more than instinctual patterns or structures that are believed to order the psyche as it is found in traditional forms of depth psychology. Instead, we can learn to recognize them as persons, each with a separate personality or mode of being. Finally, we can come to realize that our lives contain a diversity of relationships with archetypes.<sup>132</sup> To Hillman, it is through the imagination of Greece, for instance, that we can animate, personify, and enter into dialogue with the 'partial personalities' that range about in each soul. It is through the imagination that the contents of our souls take on form and come to have meaning. Thus a further task for psychology, Hillman concludes, is being at home in the imaginal. That is, psychology must be able to deal with the "differentiation of the

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literacy tells us that it emerged out of patriarchal social praxis involving patterns of warfare and heroic consciousness (she believes that goddess centered societies were defeated by the time of the invention of written language). Because of the paternity of the Greek cultural background at the material level, Starhawk suggests, the recourse to the gods and goddesses of ancient Greek myth leave little space for women (and men) who are attempting to reimagine selfhood as other than represented by patriarchy. (Starhawk. *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority, and Mystery*. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987), 105f). Margot Adler, author of *Drawing Down the Moon*, is also critical of Miller and Hillman's exclusion of other polytheistic pantheons. Adler notes that many neo-pagans diverge with Miller and Hillman regarding the belief that it is inappropriate to adopt other form of polytheism than the Greek. Both Miller and Hillman may be right when they note that Greek thought has been influential in the west. Yet, to exclude such polytheistic traditions, for instance, as the Nordic, the Welsh, the Celtic, the Germanic, the African for African Americans, and Native traditions for Amerindians does an injustice to, first, a polytheistic perspective that has 'no preferred positions,' and, second, to these other facets of the menage of western society's cultural heritage. (Margot Adler. *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 24ff).

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 35.

imaginal, discovering its laws, its configurations and moods of discourse, its psychological necessities."<sup>133</sup> Until we know these things, we are forced to call the soul's activities 'pathology,' which condemn "the imagination to sickness and the persons of it to making their appearances mainly through pathological manifestations."<sup>134</sup>

In the last few pages I have outlined Hillman's critique of traditional psychology and his call for the formation of a polytheistic paradigm when considering self. To use Hillman's terms, the fantasy of monotheism is no longer capable of containing the self as it is experienced today. To this apparent paradigm crisis in contemporary psychology's approach to self, Hillman offers another fantasy: the aesthetic response, or "thought of the heart." It is through the logos of the psyche, the language of the soul that we find a second means of approaching human social and psychic activity in a manner that is less restrictive than the literal, rational, monotheistic, and strictly scientific techniques. To Hillman, imagining is the primary activity of the soul. Furthermore, the soul is located in the heart--the heart of the lion, the heart of animal passions, the heart of spontaneity. This is the heart of our feelings and it is through our feelings, our reactions to the both psychic and worldly events that the soul makes itself heard.

In the next chapter, following the discussion of polytheism, I will investigate Hillman's emphasis on fantasy and imagination as the primary activity of the soul, as the soul's language. I contend that before it is possible to articulate an alternate notion of self, we must first be able to imagine it, to develop a language that respects the workings of the soul. But imagination alone is not enough. The question as to how imagination and soul work together must also be explored. Hence, this chapter will end where the next begins--with an examination of a second paradigm that Hillman offers psychology: aesthetics. To Hillman it is aesthetics, both beauty and ugliness, that moves the heart which is the seat of the soul. More importantly, however, is Hillman's aesthetic paradigm operates partially to ground the abstract nature of much of archetypal psychology. By imagining the soul as being seated in the heart--the naive, feeling heart of

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

primitive nature--Hillman locates the soul firmly in the human body. Hence, Hillman's understanding of the soul is that it is not something removed from our physical natures, but is something intimately involved and interconnected both to the human body and is the physical world as *anima mundi*, the Neo-platonic idea of the world soul.

## Chapter Two: Imagination and Aesthetics: The Language of the Soul

As pointed out in Chapter One, Hillman is critical of psychology's traditional means of confronting imagination and fantasy. He claims that if we accept predetermined approaches, our understanding of imagination and fantasy will also be predetermined and, hence, we will become biased against the world of imagination. Hillman suggests that the more attuned and experienced we become with the imaginative side of the personality, "the less threatening is the irrational, the less the necessity for repression, and therefore the less actual pathology acted out in literal, daily events."<sup>1</sup> Because psychology does not recognize that its constructs and interpretations have "become dogmatic expressions of a fantasy," it cannot speak about the psyche in any way that does not imply growth or wholeness.<sup>2</sup> Instead, all psychology can do is promote conformity--conformity to ideas about development, to singularity or wholeness, and to the literal or rational concept of mind.

To Hillman, such conformity is tantamount to giving up one's freedom to imagine. He writes: "If we are willing to accept internal controls upon the imagination, we will have succumbed already in soul to the same authoritarianism that would dominate the body politic."<sup>3</sup> Hillman insists that our relations to images must be one that gives them full credit; the imaginal, the realm of the soul as we saw earlier, "does not mean [the] literal re-institution of idolatry but rather restoring the image in our sight--not so much in *what* we see but in the *way* we see it."<sup>4</sup> Thus we must give up our egocentricity, "that capital *I* appearing in the monotheism of consciousness (Jung), in monotheistic science and metaphysics, and in the root of all: the monotheism of Christian humanism with its tolerance for but one historical, unique divine

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<sup>1</sup> James Hillman. "A Note on Story." *Loose Ends: Primary papers in Archetypal Psychology*. (New York: Psring Publications, 1975), 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>3</sup> James Hillman. *Re-Visioning Psychology*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 39.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

personification."<sup>5</sup> To Hillman we must "dethrone the dominant fantasy ruling our view of the world as ultimately a unity....It also means that we would abandon a notion of our personality as ultimately a unity of self."<sup>6</sup> By doing this we may find ourselves no longer alone in our subjectivity. Furthermore, the notion of self as separate and purely rational will no longer provide the only model upon which our houses are built.

Hillman's approach to the imagination and fantasy has been informed by such thinkers as Edward Casey and Henri Corbin. From Casey, Hillman gains a phenomenology of the imagination and from Corbin Hillman adopts the notion of the *mundus imaginalis*, the imaginal world. This will then be followed by a discussion of an aesthetic paradigm that Hillman suggests psychology adopt--i.e., aesthetics grossly understood as the response of the heart to what is presented to it. For Hillman, the heart, as the seat of the soul, thinks aesthetically; it is the heart that allows us to feel the world and interact in a meaningful way. I follow with a discussion of the role of community and a sense of meaningful connection to the *anima mundi*, the Neoplatonic idea of the world soul.

### I: The Imaginal Field: Casey and Corbin

Hillman's appreciation of the role of imagination in the project of re-articulating selfhood indicates an emerging understanding of subjectivity that is deeper and richer than that provided by Enlightenment metaphors of mechanism and rationalism. For Hillman, the imagination is the primary activity of the soul. Starting with the Jungian notion that "image *is* psyche,"<sup>7</sup> Hillman writes that "the soul is constituted of images, [and] that the soul is primarily an imagining activity...."<sup>8</sup> From this perspective, soul is understood to be the source of images--dream, fantasy,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Jung, *The Collected Works*. Volume 13. Translated by R.C.F. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), paragraph 75. (Cited in Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988, 6).

<sup>8</sup> James Hillman. *Archetypal Psychology: A Brief Account*. (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988, [1983]), 6.

and the poetic response. Furthermore, image-making is thought to be a self-generating activity of the soul. For Hillman, the imagination and image are all; there is nothing to which they can be reduced.

Although images are considered the primary data of the soul, they are not necessarily visual--i.e., they need neither be visually seen nor need they be heard as in the case of a poetic passage. To Hillman "such notions of "visibility" tend to literalize images as distinct events to be presented to the senses."<sup>9</sup> For this reason Hillman emphasizes that images are not something that a person sees, but rather a perspective, the way one sees. Consequently, an image experienced through the imagining perspective "can only be perceived by an act of imagining."<sup>10</sup>

That an image can only be perceived by an act of imagining leads Hillman to suggest that images are independent of the subjective imagination which perceives them. He suggests that images are much more than limited to subjectivity, they are shared at least insofar as they do enter the public sphere. This is to say that like dream images, which come and go as they will, the imaginal, the field of images are "undetermined by personal psychodynamics."<sup>11</sup> It appears that Hillman suggests that there is more to our imagination than the mere subjective exercise of one's personal imaginative capabilities. Because Hillman indicates that soul is structured by an expanded idea of imagination much like poetic language, dreams, and images are, he claims that "one is never beyond the subjectivism given with the soul's native dominants of fantasy structures."<sup>12</sup> This is to say that such "fantasy structures dominate our subjective perspectives and organize them into 'stances'."<sup>13</sup> What emerges in this picture of the imagination as more than the merely subjective is the idea that imagination is somehow shared, it works interactively in both subjective and objective experience.

A further characteristic of imagination is expressed by the idea that images provide an

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

"ontological mode of locating the archetypes of the psyche, as the fundamental structures of the imagination or as fundamentally imaginative phenomena that are transcendent to the world of sense in their *value* if not their appearance."<sup>14</sup> Their value, he concludes, lies in their "theophanic natures" and in their "virtuality or potentiality which is always ontologically more than actuality and its limits."<sup>15</sup> What does this mean? Hillman suggests that the value found in images is in regard to how they present the gods, to us not so much as concrete appearances but rather in what the deities represent to us as metaphors constructed by human imagination. Hence, a field of images belonging to a specific cultural situation represents a way of being in which certain images or archetypes help to not only structure the soul but also to model social reality. In one sense we might conclude that Hillman is saying images can be seen as being involved in the social construction of self. But, he insists that some images are 'impersonal' and 'transcendent,' which suggests that they structure the soul but the soul cannot structure such 'impersonal' and 'transcendent' images. I am moved to question, however, that if it is true that Western society's patterns of thought are so influenced by Greek thought as Hillman and Miller claim, could we not argue that the ideals, the images, the values implied by our Grecian intellectual and religious heritage could function as such 'impersonal' and 'transcendent' forces? Could it not be that these images are impersonal and transcendent merely because they have been part of a particular culture for so long? Does Hillman mean to say that such images are impersonal and transcendent because they are *a priori* to the human condition?

These questions are important because Hillman never makes explicit what he means when he declares images to be timeless and transcendent. In fact, he neatly avoids Jung's problematic assertions that archetypes are 'instinctual'<sup>16</sup> by emphasizing the phenomenal image over speculation about a "non-presented archetype per se."<sup>17</sup> Rather than concerning himself with genetics, Hillman concentrates on how images "offer... an affective relationship" which

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 11-15.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 13.

demands a response --"moral, erotic, intellectual, aesthetic"--as well as their capacity to bear messages to those who experience and work with the images presented to them.<sup>18</sup> There is nothing in this that does not suggest that Hillman's archetypal images are not constructed by human imagination at both the individual and the societal levels. In fact, an argument can be made (and probably should be made) from the perspective of archetypal psychology about how social and personal realities help construct 'archetypal' images as much as how such images help to influence our perspective of the world.

Nonetheless, Hillman believes that images, like the gods and goddesses of archetypal psychology, are autonomous and operate according to their own will and their own structures. By recognizing that images operate on their own accord, with their own rhythm, in their own contexts, we may come to understand that "the mind is in the imagination rather than the imagination in the mind."<sup>19</sup> This assertion that the mind is in the imagination, rather than the imagination in the mind, is profound albeit ambiguous. It requires us to understand the concept of mind and the various ways that mind is structured by myths and philosophies, for instance, as something that is not only rooted but also located in the imagination. We need to learn to see the mind as something that is constructed by the images presented to us through our heartfelt connection to Hillman's *anima mundi*. Yet we are left with the conundrum raised by the philosophical difficulties that are brought out by the differentiation of the rational and the imagination. Certain strands of Western philosophy, rationalism in particular, have for the last few hundred years been uncomfortable with giving the imaginative capacity the elevated respect that has been given to the rational capacity of human cognition.

A survey of psychological and philosophical approaches to the imagination can help to illustrate this point. Edward Casey, in *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, notes that in the West there has been a tendency not to take the imagination seriously.<sup>20</sup> This is a result of the

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>20</sup> Edward Casey. *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 7.

nebulous character of the imagination which "renders it resistant to conceptual specification of a precise sort."<sup>21</sup> This is to say that an imagined object does not remain present as a perceived object would. Therefore, we are required to constantly re-imagine the imaginal object in order to keep it within our mental gaze.<sup>22</sup>

Casey also points out that there is a great deal of confusion about what we mean when we use the word imagination. Imagination sometimes refers to perceptual illusions, "where we mistake one perceived object for another"; at other times it is used in reference to hallucinations--there is no perceived object to begin with yet nonetheless a hallucinated object is taken to be real; and, finally, imagination is used to refer to a fantasy or delusion of persecution.<sup>23</sup> These attitudes towards the imagination all reflect the notion that there is something faulty involved in imaginative apprehension.

Casey also points out specific psychological approaches to imagination. First, there is the associationist approach. This approach has a basis in cognitive and behavioral psychology which excludes a distinction between imagination and other mental acts. All higher mental acts, including imagination, must obey the laws of association: contiguity and resemblance. That is, the imagination can only work through association with objects already apprehended and must represent things through some resemblance to the perceived object.<sup>24</sup>

A second psychological approach is Freud's. Although Casey claims that Freud in one sense distinguishes between imagination on the one hand and fantasy and hallucination on the other, Freudianism regards all such acts as wish fulfillment via the mechanisms of the primary process. Consequently, imagination, fantasy, and hallucination are grouped together as various ways of providing sublimated satisfactions for basic wishes. Furthermore, any autonomy given to imagination is secondary in nature--that is, it is structurally dependent upon the autonomy of the primary process. Hence there is no real way to distinguish between imagining and

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 10.

hallucination, for instance, in Freudian thought.<sup>25</sup>

A third approach, exemplified by developmental psychology and espoused by such individuals as Piaget, attempts to subsume imagination under the symbolizing powers of the mind. It becomes an aid to symbolizing which is regarded as a transitional stage in a child's development and as such is denigrated as a mental activity not necessary in later life. Developmental psychology, then, appears to be the least interested in the human capacity of imagination.<sup>26</sup>

Not content with a mere analysis of psychology's attitudes towards imagination, Casey also identifies two basic philosophical approaches: 1) confusion with allied mental acts--fantasy, memory, and hallucination--as well as with non-normal mental acts; and, 2) denial of its importance. Hence, Casey concludes that philosophical approaches see the imagination as 1) something that needs to be either subordinated or as an activity to be overcome; 2) as a mediator between perception and intellect which is even made necessary to the latter--the idea that the soul never thinks without an image; or, 3) as superordinate (as in German Romanticism) such that imagining is seen to be "primary creative capacity of the human mind--not only in art."<sup>27</sup> Yet, as Casey cautions, such approaches as that represented by German Romanticism have always tended towards exhortation and enthusiasm rather than toward a "deepened understanding of the activity of imagining itself".<sup>28</sup>

After discussing the psychological and philosophical approaches to imagination, Casey comes to this conclusion: so long as the mind is understood as a "mere processor of perceptions or as a graduated series of successively higher functions, imagination will be denied a genuinely distinctive role of its own."<sup>29</sup> "What is needed," he continues, "is an approach that respects essential, and not merely contingent, differences between mental acts and that attempts to

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 19.

account for each in its own right and without recourse to a preestablished hierarchy of acts."<sup>30</sup> Therefore, we must remain open to the "*multiplicity of the mental*" while refusing any hierarchical structure, seeing, instead, "only a proliferation of unforclosable possibilities."<sup>31</sup> Imagination must be understood as non-derivative and as a "phenomenon to be evaluated on its own terms."<sup>32</sup> As we can see, Casey advocates a method of investigating the imagination which dovetails nicely with Hillman's epistemological dictum: "stick to the image." Casey, in fact, claims that what is needed is a "scrupulous account of imagination [which] is the reporting of examples in an unmodified form and precisely as they present themselves to the imaginer."<sup>33</sup>

Robert Avens agrees with Casey regarding the philosophical approaches to imagination. In "Heidegger and Archetypal Psychology," Avens not only favourably compares Hillman with Heidegger, he also points out that the Enlightenment's representational theory of truth has led to "usurpation of all light and intelligibility by reason."<sup>34</sup> Avens understands Western metaphysics as something that conceives imagination at best to be a handmaiden to reason. "What has been forgotten in this process," he writes, "is that neither reason (spirit) nor things (matter) can have their proper place in the scheme of reality without first being rooted in something (a thing-of-some-sort) that is common to both."<sup>35</sup> This forgotten 'something' is what Avens identifies as an "ontologically prior relation between the physical and the spiritual, thing and man [sic], i.e. the soul without which all these opposites are nothing more than artificial abstractions."<sup>36</sup>

Avens also points out that a more recent approach to the psyche has been to separate

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>34</sup> Robert Avens. "Heidegger and Archetypal Psychology." *International Philosophical Quarterly*. June 1982 22(2):186. It is interesting to note that Avens makes the favourable comparison between Hillman and Heidegger on the basis of both men's approaches to the non-rational aspects of the psyche: soul and imagination. (183) Avens writes: "it is precisely this insight into the complicity of all thinking with a residual non-rational substrate that make possible a genuine dialogue between Heidegger and archetypal psychology." (184)

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

consciousness from the unconscious. This has resulted in the stigmatization of the imagination, fantasy, and dream as unconscious.<sup>37</sup> Because Hillman attempts to deinstitutionalize the association of unconscious and non-rational and the imaginal, Avens understands Hillman, like Heidegger, to argue for the end of the tradition of reason as it is embedded in the West and a return to the pre-socratics. That is, Hillman is thought to ground personal life in the impersonal and the non-human as opposed to the personalistic and humanist biases of Modern psychology.<sup>38</sup> Hence Avens notes that, for archetypal psychology, the unconscious is no longer a "container filled with 'unknowable' archetypes but mainly a tool for deepening, interiorizing the psychic imagery."<sup>39</sup> This is what I understand Hillman to mean when he refers to the archetypes as being eminently personalized as the gods and goddesses.

What Avens and Casey bring to the conversation is the consideration that we must learn to approach soul or self from a perspective that does not insist on hierarchizing consciousness and the unconscious, rational and imaginative thought, the noetic and the imaginal. This is something that Hillman is attempting to do when he positions the soul as the root metaphor for psychology. With soul as the basis of psychological theorization, we find it is possible to reassess the relationship between imagination and rationality. Soul, as we know, is considered by Hillman to encompass more than the rational and the non-rational. It is something connected to *anima mundi* through an affective relationship. Furthermore, Hillman's emphasis on a polytheistic model for psychology responds to Casey's call for a psychology that pays heed to the 'multiplicity of the mental.'

Because archetypal psychology is freed from the need to strive to control and guide images, of the need to codify the psyche, its approach to the imagination and images is one that permits us to begin to deinstitutionalize self. Rather than continuing to be imprisoned in the materialistic imagination of Cartesian subjectivity, excessive Enlightenment rationalism, and

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 188-189.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 191.

Christian theology, archetypal psychology offers an alternative perspective that has a basis in Romantic thought. By avoiding the scientific, literalistic, and narrow focus of traditional understandings of the psyche's dynamics, archetypal psychology views the deep recesses of the soul as places from which the soul speaks about itself.

Furthermore, Hillman thinks that the Cartesian ego is a direct result of human imagination: it was originally created by Descartes' own imagination. For this reason, archetypal psychology is able to make the claim that whatever the soul imagines has as much a claim to legitimacy as does the heroic ego or that which it imagines. As Hillman puts it, "Archetypal psychology examines the judgments about the image imagistically, regarding them as its further specifications and as psychological statements not to be taken literally from a spiritual...purely noetic, vantage point detached from the context of the image judged."<sup>40</sup> Hence, archetypal psychology "sticks to the image" because it is the primary datum of the soul.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, we might conclude that because images and the imagination are no longer considered to be in the mind, we find that, as a product of human imagination, every image, every ideology, and every myth is potentially as valid as any other.

Archetypal psychology approaches the imagination as the basis of soul. For this reason it is never right to confront the soul and its images from a literal perspective. As we know, Hillman insists that any language that would speak to the soul must speak with the grammar of the soul: image, symbol, myth, and dream. Furthermore, because archetypal psychology "starts neither in the physiology of the brain, the structure of language, the organization of society, nor the analysis of behaviour, but in the process of imagination,"<sup>42</sup> its use of the imagination as the starting place to investigate the psyche demands that we acknowledge that all ways of looking at the world are primarily imaginative in nature.

This is a perspective that allows us to look at Enlightenment and modern notions of

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<sup>40</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, xi.

subjectivity as things that have a basis in specific fantasies. This viewpoint is one that relativizes Enlightenment claims to authority in regard to defining self. Once we understand the Modern world view as having emerged from the imagination of specific persons in specific temporal and spatial contexts, we understand that its claims to an authoritative expression of self and cosmos are not necessarily more valid than any other. Furthermore, we also learn that it is acceptable to base our own understandings of self and cosmos in other fantasy systems, myths, and imaginations. As Hillman reminds us: "The most fecund approach to the study of the mind is thus through its highest imaginal responses where the images are most fully released and elaborated."<sup>43</sup>

According to Hillman, the basis of archetypal psychology's understanding of the imagination comes from Henri Corbin's notion of the *mundus imaginalis*. Corbin, considered the "second immediate father of archetypal psychology,"<sup>44</sup> characterizes the *mundus imaginalis* as a distinct field of 'imaginative realities' that requires methods and tools of investigation different from those of the empirical as well as the spiritual world. Hence the *mundus imaginalis* is theorized as a means of locating the archetypes, considered to be fundamental structures of the soul, which are "transcendent to the world of sense in their *value* if not their appearance."<sup>45</sup> As noted, the value of images lies in their theophanic nature and in their potentiality "which is always ontologically more than actuality and its limits."<sup>46</sup> Hence the *mundus imaginalis* provides a "cosmic grounding" when needed that is different from such bases as "biological instinct, eternal forms, numbers, linguistics and social transmission, biochemical reactions, genetic coding, etc."<sup>47</sup>

For Hillman, a consideration more important than an ontological location of archetypes appears in a "double move" made by Corbin: "(a) that the fundamental nature of the archetype is

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<sup>43</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 10.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 3. Jung is, of course, the first immediate father of Hillman's archetypal psychology.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

accessible to the imagination first and first presents itself as image, so that (b) the entire procedure of archetypal psychology as a method is imaginative."<sup>48</sup> Hence archetypal psychology "must be rhetorical and poetic, its reasoning not logical" and its therapeutic aim being "neither social adaption nor personalistic individualizing but rather a work in service of restoration of the patient to imaginal realities."<sup>49</sup> The aim of therapy, then, is the cultivation of the soul.

In this regard, the *mundus imaginalis* is considered to represent that state of mediation that is connected to visionary experiences. This is so because there are no direct sensory stimuli involved in the imaginal act, just as there are no direct sensory experiences involved in visionary events.<sup>50</sup> Hillman refers to Corbin's comment that the imaginal field is one that requires "methods and perceptual facilities different from the spiritual world beyond it or the empirical world of usual sense perception and naive formulation."<sup>51</sup> This is to say that, in following Corbin, Hillman argues that the way into the imagination requires something more than what is traditionally required by theology, philosophy, and empiricism--i.e., faith, logic, morals, or empirical sensations are not the desired means of apprehending the imaginal.

Even if there is a connection between the *mundus imaginalis* and visionary experiences, this is not to say that the imaginal is strictly mystical in nature. Andrew Samuels notes the imaginal also operates as a means of allowing communication between people because it plays a role in symbolizing reality.<sup>52</sup> To Corbin, as Samuels informs us, the *mundus imaginalis* is a "fully objective real world with equivalents for everything existing in the sensible world without being perceptible by the senses."<sup>53</sup> Consequently, Samuels concludes that the *mundus imaginalis* presupposes a "pre-existing environment for images that are produced relevantly and spontaneously. Images pertaining to one person crop up in the experience of another person

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48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Andrew Samuels, *The Plural Psyche: Personality, Morality and the Father*. London: Routledge, 1989), 163.

51 Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 3.

52 Samuels, *The Plural Psyche*, 163.

53 Ibid.

because, on the imaginal level of reality, all images pertain to both."<sup>54</sup> There are two conclusions we can draw from Samuels: one, that the imaginal field is a pre-extant space in which images operate inasmuch as Samuels finds the *mundus imaginalis* a "pre-existing environment" for images. This is to say that, the imaginal field acts as some sort of intermediary, it is the space which is already present when images are produced, it is the space where images emerge. Second, images and objects in the imaginal field are both personal and transpersonal. Such images and objects appear in an imaginal field that reaches past subjective, or internal, experience into objective, or external experience.

For Edward Casey, the content of imaginative experience is psychically real in the sense that it "encompasses and transcends both perceptual and self-dramatized realities."<sup>55</sup> Thus, imagining posits "real being" in such a way as to surpass "the empirical existence characterizing the objects of natural science as well as the strictly subjective existence pertaining to those purely personal experiences that form the focus of so much psychological analysis."<sup>56</sup> Hence, Casey argues that the content of our imaginative experiences is rooted "outside of human consciousness" whether we identify consciousness as ego or the Self. "Therefore, just at the point where personal consciousness has reached its physical zenith, psyche itself is surpassed."<sup>57</sup> We surpass the understanding that imagination is primarily subjective: it is also transpersonal. Hence, the imaginal field is the space at which the personal encounters the transpersonal. Casey also allows for the conclusion that the imaginal is a space from which images present themselves to human apprehension, and that the imaginal operates as a mediator between the personal and the transpersonal.

This notion of the *mundus imaginalis*, the imaginal as a space, is something that recalls Hillman's tripartite model of human agency. As we know, Hillman posits the soul, the seat of the imagination, as an intermediary between mind and body as well as between person and world. In

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>55</sup> Edward Casey. "Towards an Archetypal Imagination." *Spring 1974*: 21.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 23.

this sense, the imaginal operates as a tertium between not only the personal unconscious and a person's consciousness, but also as a mediatrix between the personal and the impersonal, the individual and the world, the *anima mundi*. For Thomas Moore, this tripartite construction of the human being places soul "midway between understanding and unconsciousness."<sup>58</sup> I understand this to suggest that the soul, or the imaginal, operates as that space that colors first the perception and then the cognition of the things we apprehend.

Casey notes that the notion of the imagination as a mediator "has been an ongoing and largely unchallenged assumption within Western epistemology since the Greeks."<sup>59</sup> One consequence of not challenging this epistemological assumption, as Casey informs us, is that this intermediary characteristic most often has been a means of denigrating the efficacy of imagination.<sup>60</sup> This state of affairs is the result of a certain style of theorizing about knowledge that restricts valid forms of cognition to the "survey of sensible particulars."<sup>61</sup> Casey suggests, however, that if we enlarge this notion of cognition to include the possibility that imagination is also as valid as 'sensible particulars,' then the imaginal will be granted "its own cognitive value, its own specific way of knowing."<sup>62</sup>

To Hillman, the soul is the *via regia* into the world. Imagination and feeling are the means by which we come to apprehend and connect ourselves with those objects, persons, images that surround us. Casey informs us that the notion of the *mundus imaginalis* as an intermediary represents an "intermediate world...teeming with transmuted substances, stylized sensuous forms, and legions of figures each with a proper place....It is a world no longer human-- or at least not exclusively or primarily human. It is *another* world, with *another* kind of reality...."<sup>63</sup> For Richard Avens, in comparison, Hillman's notion of the soul as transhuman

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<sup>58</sup> Thomas Moore. *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life*. (San Francisco: HarperPrennial, 1992), xiii.

<sup>59</sup> Casey, "Towards an Archetypal Imagination," 26.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 27.

refers to a "realm of *between* or *metaxy*" and has the primary function of connecting "the human with the non-human world or, in the terms of the later Heidegger, to integrate earth and sky, the gods and mortals."<sup>64</sup>

As I pointed out in Chapter One, Hillman, like Jung, believes that everything we know and feel, everything we say and write is fantasy-based, or derives from psychic images that inhabit this in-between world of the imagination.<sup>65</sup> Hillman, however, employs the concept of fantasy images in a poetic sense, i.e., images are considered to be the "basic givens of psychic life, self-originating, inventive, spontaneous, complete, and organized in archetypal patterns."<sup>66</sup> Thus fantasy images are "both the raw materials and finished products of the psyche, and are the privileged mode of access to knowledge of the soul. Nothing is more primary."<sup>67</sup> That is, all human activities proceed from a fantasy image. From this perspective, Hillman can and does conclude that humanity is psychological first and foremost. This suggests, of course, that Hillman's psychology of the soul is based upon the logos of the image and the process of imagination. In this sense it is understood that the image takes precedence over the physical: "first imagination then perception; first fantasy then reality."<sup>68</sup> Hence, image-making is considered to be the "royal road" to soul-making and it is another task of psychology to be at home in the imaginal. It must be able to deal with the "differentiation of the imaginal, discovering its laws, its configurations and moods of discourse, its psychological necessities."<sup>69</sup> Until we know these things, we are forced to call the soul's activities 'pathologies,' which "condemns the imagination to sickness and the persons of it to making their appearances mainly through pathological manifestations."<sup>70</sup>

If psychology and society, however, refuse the fantastic nature of our lives and if they

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<sup>64</sup> Avens, "Heidegger and Archetypal Psychology," 185.

<sup>65</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, xi.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

refuse the notion that their understanding of self is based in the metaphors and images fashioned by soul, then we "become fastened into a constant forced literalism, ourselves as real, the Gods dead."<sup>71</sup> If we are able properly to apprehend the fantastic side to our natures, Hillman continues, we must be able to shatter the illusion of psychic literalism, of egocentricity, of heroic consciousness, and of a Self separated from itself and the world. In fact, Hillman points out that any style of consciousness that is based on the hero and egocentricity will give credit to problems and devalue fantasy. By denigrating fantasy, psychology presents them as problems to be solved. Making and solving problems, Hillman writes, "reinforces the defensive literalistic screen against fantasies."<sup>72</sup> Most people fall into the literalistic fallacy because it is easier to believe in the truth of facts than it is to believe in the truth of images.<sup>73</sup> By refusing images their due, Western society limits the possibility of creating, of imagining, and of acting upon alternate realities. By neglecting the imagination, I believe, we not only literalize soul, we also institutionalize self. That is, by refusing to recognize the role of the imagination in social institutions and perspectives, we set up norms of behaviour and being, we develop styles of discourse that institutionalize experience, and we consider any deviation to be abnormal, ill, or false. For this reason it is necessary for society to usurp the literalistic, unified fantasy of the Self that pervades the West. In fact, Hillman notes that we must "dethrone the dominant fantasy ruling our view of the world as ultimately a unity....It also means that we would abandon a notion of our personality as ultimately a unity of the self."<sup>74</sup>

Dethroning the dominant fantasy of a unified Self is precisely what Hillman has attempted to do through his work as an analyst who speaks about analysis to analysts. Hillman points out that unity is itself a fantasy goal. It is not an empirical reality and, therefore, not a part

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>73</sup> Hillman writes the following: "As truths are the fictions of the rational, so fictions are the truths of the imaginal." Ibid., 152.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 41.

of the material world.<sup>75</sup> If the soul is paradoxical in nature, then it must be understood to be diverse and not isolated from the world that surrounds it. Hillman suggests that in order to make soul, it is absolutely necessary to get away from theories of an autonomous, self-enclosed individual. Soul-making, he argues, need not be identified with introversion or the denial of the physical world. "You make soul by living life," he writes, "not by retreating from the world into the 'inner work' or beyond the world in spiritual disciplines and meditation...."<sup>76</sup>

If fantasy images are, as Hillman suggests, the basis of consciousness, we must turn to them for basic understanding of the human soul. Therefore, "becoming conscious" now would mean becoming aware of fantasies and the recognition of them everywhere and not merely a 'fantasy world' separated from 'reality.' Consequently, "fantasy images now become the instrumental mode of perceiving and insighting."<sup>77</sup> This is to say that rather than analyzing images, we must learn to analyze by means of such fantasies. But, as Hillman informs us, many psychologists have yet to leave behind the Cartesian split between the inner and the outer, the living and the dead.<sup>78</sup> One of the tasks of psychology and psychotherapists, therefore, is to help make the tangible and intangible things of the psyche felt.<sup>79</sup> Stated differently, it is necessary to allow that which makes up the psyche, including the physical world, to enter the community reflected in one's soul, to allow them to matter and not just be matter. This is precisely where aesthetics as a paradigm for psychology enters the picture.

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<sup>75</sup> When I refer to the material world I do so as to indicate the empirical, physical, corporeal, and tangible world in which we are embedded. Furthermore, it is this mundane, physical world to which Hillman claims the soul reacts; it is to the mundane world that the aesthetic response, the thought of the heart, refers.

<sup>76</sup> James Hillman & Michael Ventura. *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse*. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 50.

<sup>77</sup> James Hillman. *Anima: Anatomy of a Personified Notion*. (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1985), 95.

<sup>78</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 51.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

## II: Aesthetics: The Road to Soul-Making

As I have noted, a polytheistic perspective is not the only paradigm that Hillman offers psychology. In his most recent publication, *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse*, Hillman makes explicit that which he had implicitly addressed in his previous works: that psychology should also approach the soul through an aesthetic mode.<sup>80</sup> Psychology's adoption of an artistic or aesthetic approach to psyche does not necessarily mean that psychology and psychologists should approach soul literally as art or as artists, but rather that psychology should approach the psyche from a perspective which appreciates the imagination, beauty or ugliness, and the passion characteristic of the arts and aesthetics. Hillman suggests this paradigm because it satisfies three requirements: "First, art *forms* madness rather than represses it. Second, the arts often act as the sensitive antennae of social justice and moral outrage, keeping the soul awake to hypocrisy, cant, suppression, and jingoism. And third, the fundamental enemy of all art is mediocrity."<sup>81</sup>

To Hillman, the connection between soul and things is found in symptoms. Pathology, he claims, always leads us to new unknowns; objects in the world are animated by one's symptoms, by one's imaginings of the world. Thus, he notes that our "suspicions and [...] precautionary rituals announce that [the 'I that] I am [is] living in an animated world."<sup>82</sup> This appreciation of the aesthetic, of an animate world suggests a sense of appreciating the natural world as if one were embedded in it in a way similar to Catherine Keller's notion of the connected self which will be explored in Chapter Three. For Hillman, symptoms bring the physical world into the psychic world, they demonstrate the connection between the physical and the spiritual. Hillman points out that symptoms emerge not only from the material cause of things but also out of their formal cause. He writes that "...we are being harmed as much by the form of things as by their

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<sup>80</sup> Hillman writes the following: "I've been straining for decades to push psychology over into art, to recognize psychology as an art form rather than a science or a medicine or an education, because the soul is inherently imaginative." *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 154.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

material, where form means the *aesthetic quality*."<sup>83</sup> If it is the case that the form of things is what is affecting us, then it must be the task of therapy to notice noxious forms.

A consciousness of form or aesthetic consciousness, Hillman argues, would make us aware of how we are assaulted by thoughtless ideas in things, i.e., by poor aesthetics. By paying attention to form, Hillman claims, we can bring back a positive aesthetics that help to enhance the world in which we live and the self that we imagine. One consequence of reimagining therapy as an aesthetic activity is that the clinical hierarchy, which places depth therapists on top and art therapists at the bottom, will be turned upside down. "Everything to do with forming--speech, theater, dress, athletics, movement, gesture--would become indications of improvement rather than insight, understanding, emotional balance, and relating."<sup>84</sup> Thus therapeutic work would embrace the task of de-anaesthetizing, of awakening, of lifting the state of psychic numbness indicative of our times. An aesthetic approach would put life back into the world, it would re-animate the physical, re-sacralize the world. If this does not happen, Hillman continues, therapy will remain Victorian in nature. It will continue to be stuck in its nineteenth-century model of moral individualism and maintain its intrinsic distrust and denigration of the physical world. "Each time therapy suggests for a client to make a commitment or decision in order to promote "maturity" and "control", Hillman writes, "the heroic ego resurrects--the grim jawed, determined puritan for whom the pleasure principle is a dragon to be slain."<sup>85</sup>

In *Re-Visioning Psychology* and elsewhere, Hillman makes it plain that so-called pathological symptoms can be understood in the context of "the whole psychic field" as assertions against the notion of a central authority and the individuality of parts. In other words, pathology can be understood to challenge the status quo, egocentricity, and the monotheistic perspective.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, many symptoms belong to the body politic, not only to the individual patient. "Maybe the system has to be brought into line with the symptoms," Hillman

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>86</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 25.

muses, "so that the system no longer functions as a repression of soul, forcing the soul to rebel in order to be noticed."<sup>87</sup> The middle ground over which this is to take place is the arts. It is in the arts, Hillman notes, that symptoms can be understood as that which informs soul, that drives the psyche to the edge away from the normalcy and mediocrity of traditional notions of selfhood.<sup>88</sup> To Hillman, the primary activity of humanity is in imagination--not in building communities, cities, or in using tools, but rather in imagining their possibilities. We imagine irrepressibly, he claims, and those musings that are repressed return as symptoms "so that our symptoms are actually the irrepressible imagination breaking through our mediocrity."<sup>89</sup> This is one reason why in Hillman's thought it is through our pathologies that we find our salvation. Hillman argues that if the soul is seen from an aesthetic or poetic starting point, therapists will be forced to view the individual from a perspective rooted in an aesthetics of pathology, not from a viewpoint based in preprocessed and statistical norms.<sup>90</sup> Hence, the political role of therapy is to work with the pathological unrest in the body politic. The implication is, of course, that if this is the case, then compliance with normalization subverts therapy's political task and institutionalizes selfhood while ignoring the problems inherent in the paradigms of traditional psychology. By not adhering to the task of depth therapy, which has been understood to be one of freeing the analysand from the restrictions of societal and personal life, psychologists run the risk of reaffirming and, hence, institutionalizing the human condition as based in a specific norm, that forecloses the possibility of any modification. In telling people that they are 'O.K.,' therapists reduce the analytical challenge to know oneself in favor of covering us over with a mask of normalcy and submission. In other words: "If therapy imagines its task to be that of helping people cope (and not protest), to adapt (and not rebel), to normalize their oddity, and to accept themselves "and work within your situation; make it work for you" (rather than refuse the

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<sup>87</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 154.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 155.

unacceptable), then therapy is collaborating with what the state wants: docile plebs."<sup>91</sup> Therapy is thus a mechanism of social adaptation, of the institutionalization of self. It is compliance with the rules of the system and "as long as therapy is engaged in adaptation, it is denying the raging lust and animal appetites that claim life is worth living."<sup>92</sup> It denies us the freedom to rebel, to protest, to say that what is offered is not what I want.

Hillman claims that it is in the addictions of our times that we learn that the needs we have are not being cared for by this "white bread society." Even so, addictions cannot provide the means of finding soul, but they do offer the possibility of doing so. Hence, he concludes, our system is "hell-bent on stamping out everything extreme, especially the extremes of pleasure, which come closest to fulfilling desire."<sup>93</sup> An example of this need to expunge self of sources of pleasure is found in Freud's hypothesis of a pleasure-unpleasure principle which suggests that maturity emerges as one learns to defer the gratification that the non-rational and the somatic aspects which the psyche brings to one's attention.

Such theories, it could be argued, function to placate our understandings of what is happening to each of us when the rational "I" is not dominating the psyche. Because such ideas dominate psychotherapy, Hillman makes the following statement: "I want theories that blow the mind, as art can, not settle our minds. And the value of a psychological theory lies in its capacity to open the mind, take the top of your head off like a good poem or voice in a song."<sup>94</sup> What this implies is that which is eccentric, deviant, marginal, and so on is that which "rattles the cage" of the institutionalized self. Things that 'blow the mind' like art can and must challenge the accepted ways of perceiving and expressing the human condition. If we are to alter traditional

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 69. Hillman also points this out in *The Dream and the Underworld* where he writes that "imagination works by deforming and forming at one and the same moment." That is, imagination works by pathologizing the world. It is the absurdity, fright, and delight caused by images that tear us free of our familiar, codified thoughts and memories of the world and ourselves. (James Hillman. *The Dream and the Underworld*, New York: Harper and Row, 1979, 128).

understandings of selfhood, we must begin to theorize, to imagine the world from positions that are subversive of and are located far from the centre of accepted discourse or traditional fantasies of self and cosmos. To neglect to do so is to run the risk of accepting the same old psychological dogmas and be complicit in re-affirming traditional understandings of the human psyche. The call for re-visioning traditional psychological thought implies that it has become necessary to look at those aspects of humanity that have traditionally been neglected, vilified, and marginalized in order to be able to draw out and articulate an alternate idea of self. What may be emerging is an idea of selfhood that responds to the anomalies of the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm that is causing such dissatisfaction in the postmodern West.

Hillman would have archetypal psychology look to the mythical possibilities of such dissatisfactions. Archetypal psychology understands the *mythos/pathos* connection as a means of finding "the God in the disease."<sup>95</sup> To Hillman it is the eye attuned to pathologies, the eye of the artist-analyst, that helps to prevent the "phenomena of the soul from being naively understood as merely natural."<sup>96</sup> In this respect archetypal psychology is close to the antipsychiatry of Thomas Szasz and R.D. Laing, which regards "'abnormal' conditions as existentially human and hence fundamentally normal."<sup>97</sup> But archetypal psychology is said to make three further moves: first, it analyzes the 'normalizing' perspective of psychology and finds that it is 'abnormal' or pathological in its own way; second, "unlike Szasz and Laing, archetypal psychology maintains the real existence of psychopathology as such, as inherent to psychic reality"--it neither denies it nor attempts to locate pathology outside the soul;<sup>98</sup> and, third, it recognizes that pathology, because it is inherent to soul, is also necessary.<sup>99</sup>

Because pathology and fantasy are natural to psyche, fantasy or imagination is perhaps the most appropriate way to approach the language of the psyche. For Hillman, the fantasy in which

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<sup>95</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 40f.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

a problem is set "tells more about the way the problem is constructed and how it can be transformed (reconstructed) than does any attempt at analyzing the problem in its own terms."<sup>100</sup> The figures of the imagination, the images that make up the polytheistic psyche, are considered to be neither merely parts of the personality nor internal projections. Instead, they are given their due as independent beings. As psychical entities, images, which are neither metaphysical nor physical, are "'as real as you"<sup>101</sup>

Another move of archetypal psychology has been to focus on the "sensate world of perceptual objects and habitual forms" in order to lead to the "recuperation of the *anima mundi* or soul of the world by scrutinizing the face of the world as aesthetic physiognomy."<sup>102</sup> That is, archetypal psychology calls for the proper attention to our interactions with the external world, both psychologically and aesthetically, as carriers of soul in the attempt to return value and meaningfulness to a world that Enlightenment thought proclaimed to be lifeless and purely materialistic. This move takes therapy out of the consulting room in which two individuals privately sit face to face. Archetypal psychology now would take on "the larger task of re-imagining the public world within which the patient lives. This notion of therapy attempts to realize the poetic basis of mind in actuality, as an imaginative aesthetic response."<sup>103</sup>

It is in *The Thought of the Heart* that Hillman's argument for the necessity of returning aesthetics to psychology first emerges in a comprehensive way. He writes that "We are led already to see that a full depth psychology expressing the nature of psyche must also be a depth aesthetics. Further, if we would recuperate the lost soul, which is after all the main aim of all depth psychologies, we must recover our lost aesthetic reactions, our sense of beauty."<sup>104</sup> Hillman notes that psychology has ignored the role of beauty and ugliness by reducing aesthetics

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> James Hillman, *The Thought of the Heart*. Eranos Lecture Series 2. (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1981), 26.

to diagnostic attributes. Yet, he argues, beauty, for instance, must be given its due in psychological work, otherwise the soul's means of realization are crippled.<sup>105</sup> Beauty, as Hillman defines it, is the "supreme theophany, [the] divine self-revelation" of the soul.<sup>106</sup> Beauty is the manifestation of the soul and appears wherever soul appears. Furthermore it is not an attribute of something. Rather it is an epistemological necessity that reflects the ways through which we are touched by the gods and goddesses--i.e., through our imaginings and our feelings. Moreover, beauty is also an ontological necessity insofar as it grounds the sensate particularity of the world; it is the impetus that employs the senses to ground ourselves in the physical world.<sup>107</sup> It is through an aesthetic approach that the soul and its imaginative activities are returned from the unreality of the metaphysical realm. This is so, Hillman suggests, because our spontaneous, aesthetic reactions are the responses of our feelings which are located in the heart--the physical, immediate, and mundane side of our lives.

To Hillman, the heart is the organ that perceives beauty, and that which perceives the sacred. Rather than respond to images in terms of values and morality, Hillman would have us apprehend images according to the heart's response. It is in our heart's or our soul's response to "what is presented to the senses"<sup>108</sup> that we find the significance of images. Aesthetic reactions are responses to the many faces of beauty and ugliness. Moral responsibility is said to begin in these responses of delight or disgust--thus morality can be understood to consist of spontaneous judgments made by the heart. Hence the question of evil, like ugliness, refers primarily to the anaesthetized heart--a heart which experiences no reaction to what it faces. Such an anaesthetized heart turns the variegated sensuous faces of the world into monotony, sameness, and oneness. This is the "desert of modernity".<sup>109</sup>

The preceding paragraph outlines an examination of one fantasy of the heart--an

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105 Ibid., 26.

106 Ibid., 28.

107 Ibid., 29.

108 Ibid., 36.

109 Ibid., 40f.

imagination that can be characterized as Romantic in nature. Yet Hillman points out that there are several other imaginations of the heart that have influenced psychology in the past and still do so today. These imaginations include the Heart of Augustine and the Heart of Harvey. The Augustinian heart, as Hillman portrays it, has affected psychology most profoundly. It is described as the heart that is the core of being, that is intimacy, that is the 'real self.' It is the heart in which one's personal truth resides, it is the heart of the emotions, the place of *Angst*, conflict, *Gemüt*, and leisure. To Hillman, this heart is the heart of the Christian imagination, not the heart of the Hebrews, the Persians, or the Greeks. Hillman feels that the emphasis of this Christianized heart in psychology has been devastating. He writes:

By personalizing the heart and locating there the word of God, the imagination is driven into exile. Its place is usurped by dogma, by images already revealed. Imagination is driven into the lower exile of sexual fantasy, the upper exile of metaphysical conception, or the outer exile of objective data, none of which reside in the heart and all of which seem heartless, mere instinct, sheer speculation, brute fact. When imagination is driven out there remains only subjectivity--the heart of Augustine.<sup>110</sup>

The issue, then, surrounds the confessional mode in which we are compelled to interpret all our feelings through the subjectivism of the Augustinian heart. When we enter the confessional mode of being in relation to the heart, Hillman suggests, we are required to struggle to find the true 'me' hidden in the closet of one's personal feelings. It becomes a matter of accounting for events experienced rather than accounting for experiencing. The result is the dissociation of our tendency to identify with our experiences, something confession is said to reinforce. Thus our experience of ourselves must necessarily be understood in relation to Augustine's God and to the notion of the secret seat of the soul which is the heart.<sup>111</sup> It is this imagination of the heart that biases psychology to understand the soul in terms that presuppose there is a hidden self in each of us that is more 'real' or 'true' than the selves we experience daily. This fantasy of the heart

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 20-23.

claims that all manifestations of self that do not fall within Augustine's imagination of God and soul are necessarily false, deviant, and must be ultimately rejected.

The Heart of Harvey, by contrast, is one that furthers the mechanization of the physical body. This means of imagining the heart comes from the seventeenth century manuscript, "An Anatomical Dissertation Concerning the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals." This heart, Hillman informs us, is imagined as a prince in a kingdom that rules all. This heart is thought of as the original foundation from which all power is derived. Nonetheless, Harvey's Heart differs fundamentally from the heart of Augustine and that of beauty in that Harvey's heart is one of visible demonstration: it is the heart of mechanics, it is the heart of hydraulics, the heart of the scientific imagination of the seventeenth century. As such, the images of Harvey's heart consist of such notions as hardness, smallness, muscular tenseness, and as an over-stressed pumping machine. It is the heart that can be held in one's hand, it is the literal heart of the scientific imagination, and it is the heart of biology and medicine.

Hillman believes that this transformation of the heart into a mechanical wonder was a necessary precondition for the transfiguration of western culture into an industrially based economy. Thus this metaphor of the heart includes intimations of the machine, spare and interchangeable parts, which reflect the Enlightenment fascination with mechanization and scientific categorization. Today, all we carry in our breasts is the dead, soulless heart of Harvey's scientific imagination.<sup>112</sup> Such an imagination of the heart could only contribute to the fantasy of the psyche as composed primarily of chemical reactions and of material substances. If the body has been mechanized, then medical science might conclude that an effective means of dealing with its diseases is to replace deteriorated parts, to keep it running properly, and occasionally to give it a 'tune-up.' Through this fantasy of the human being, our hearts, our bodies, and our souls, too, are imagined and reduced to dead, mechanical wonders that can be mapped with the intent of eventually re-engineering them to run better.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 11-14.

For Hillman, then, the recovery of the imaginal first requires the recovery of its organ: "the heart, and its kind of philosophy."<sup>113</sup> Yet the education of one's heart and of one's feelings has had no real place in modern society.<sup>114</sup> Hillman asks where the heart is to go to become educated? He notes that the emphasis on the rational mind makes us less able to cope with feelings--the spontaneous response of the heart to that which is presented to its aesthetic senses--because thinking and feeling seem to develop more or less at the expense of the other.<sup>115</sup> To Hillman, "feeling requires an *education through faith*; it begins to function only when we can trust it to function and allow it its errors."<sup>116</sup> Consequently, we must learn to lift the repression weighing down our feelings, learn to trust our feelings, and be courageous psychologically in order to allow the soul the necessary fortitude and determination to encounter itself and the surrounding world.<sup>117</sup> For "the thought of the heart is physiognomic. To perceive it must imagine....the heart's thought personifies, ensouls, and animates the world."<sup>118</sup>

As noted, Hillman turns to the heart as a metaphor for the seat of our imagination.<sup>119</sup> The heart that Hillman is speaking of is neither the heart of mechanism, nor the heart of christianity, but the heart of the animal, the feeling heart of Michelangelo's *immagine del cuor*.<sup>120</sup> The understanding that the heart is the seat of the imagination permits us to come to a deeper appreciation of the role that soul has in imagination. In other words, imagining is

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>114</sup> Thomas Moore agrees with Hillman: he writes that "religion and theology show us the mysteries and the rites that inform every piece of modern life. Without education in these fields we are mistakenly led to believe that the world is as secular as it appears to eighteenth-century Enlightenment eyes. As a result of this secular philosophy, the divine is met only in our personal psychological and physical illnesses....Therefore, a revival of the world view known as *anima mundi* is essential for the renewal of psychology and for genuine care of the soul." Moore, *Care of the Soul*, 282.

<sup>115</sup> James Hillman. "The Feeling Function." *Lectures on Jung's Typology*. With Marie-Louise von Franz. (New York: Spring Publications, 1972), 130.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Hillman, *Thought of the Heart*, 28.

<sup>119</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 7.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

understood to be an aesthetic activity that addresses itself directly to human feeling, for, as Hillman reminds us, images always imply context, mood, and scene.<sup>121</sup>

This particular emphasis on imagining as an activity of both aesthetics and feeling can be seen as further evidence that one of the things in which Hillman is involved is a struggle against the rationalistic bias of contemporary systems of thought about self and subjectivity. Rather than confront the imagination from an instrumental standpoint, archetypal psychology would approach the imagination from a more egalitarian perspective. That is, when images are understood to be irreducible, there is no attempt to gain control over them. By allowing images and imagination to speak for and of themselves, by understanding the imagination to be a way of seeing rather than something seen, there is no aspiration to dominate images and force them to conform to preconceived notions of psyche and reality.

Images are thus allowed to speak for themselves, rather than being codified into a predefined, literalized system of apprehension. It cannot be emphasized enough that by responding to and working with images as metaphorical and significant, rather than from a perspective that would literalize or call them fanciful, we are allowed to understand the soul's activities, imagination and image making, as fecund,<sup>122</sup> providing meaning, and as worthy of our appreciation and participation. Furthermore, in recognizing the inherent value of images, we not only bring meaning to them, but also to those things which they embody: our lives and the material world. Hillman claims that this perspective allows us to evade the trap inherent in much of western psychology that claims there is a "true" self or imagination as opposed to a "false" self or imagination, i.e., between the real and the not-real. Hence, images are no longer approached from a position that presumes they have an intrinsic moral value.<sup>123</sup> Rather, images are valued for their ability to evoke feeling, elaboration, speculation, and transformation.

Hillman believes that the language of traditional academic psychology insults the soul's

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 8.

capacity to feel. It makes us ill, he says, because it is itself ill.<sup>124</sup> He points out that the language of academia or the language of television are what we have been taught is the correct expression of experience and thought.<sup>125</sup> We have been trained to believe in the objectivity and scientific validity of academic language and thought. The same is true in regard to the communicative role that television plays in western society. Yet, as Hillman has argued, all perspectives about the world are based in fantasy, and who is to say that one fantasy is less fantastic or less real than another? Furthermore, the root fantasies of traditional Western discourses about self and human experience are ultimately dehumanizing. That is, the roots of medical psychology and rational-materialist philosophy are found in the notion that each person is radically separated from the body, from the community, from the so-called non-rational, and from the aesthetic response to one's feelings. Such means of speaking, that assume objectivity is the index of reality have established a status quo in which self is imagined to be singular, separated, and the only animated or valued thing existing in an otherwise dead world. Because there is an epistemological crisis in regard to how self is now perceived and spoken about, it is presently more necessary than perhaps ever before not only to re-imagine self but also to reform the languages and discourses we use to articulate self.

Hillman claims that Confucius suggested "the reform of society begins in the reform of its language." In this light Hillman suggests that "so long as therapy does not attend to language, which I contend it cannot do..., therapy cannot reform our society as it intends. In fact, therapy contributes to the decline of the civilization whose reform begins in the reform of language."<sup>126</sup> Moreover, Hillman argues that therapy actually invites barbarians--those who cannot speak the language of their culture.<sup>127</sup> In fact, many of the words that therapists use to characterize people involve a naive perspective on society. Such words as those found in various psychological

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<sup>124</sup> James Hillman, *The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 121.

<sup>125</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 141.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

typologies are now generally considered to be taboo because of their racist and sexist connotations as well as their inability to account for the diversity of humanity and the uniqueness of individual persons. Rather than approach language through a metaphorical or aesthetically attuned ear, an ear that hears and appreciates many levels of meaning, Hillman bemoans the scientific approach which has preferred so-called objective or literalistic language that classifies people in scientific, non-human, mechanistic or dehumanizing categories. Consequently, our perception of others has moved from such notions of a lower race, birth, and regions to the idea of a low body.<sup>128</sup> That is, through the nominalist appropriation of language, Cartesian notions of the world have reduced our aesthetic appreciation of and our feelings about the world and the human body as is indicated by the Harvian metaphor of the heart. As Hillman puts it: "clearly the simplification of words aids the reduction to types."<sup>129</sup> The reduction of language also leads to literalism. Literalism is said to prevent the appreciation of mystery and uniqueness by limiting the "multiple ambiguity of meanings to one definition."<sup>130</sup> It would classify and absolutize all the mysteries that make up life and make it more interesting and meaningful. To Hillman, literalism is the natural result of the tendency of monotheistic consciousness to demand singleness of meaning. It is this monotheism of meaning, he suggests, that hardens the heart, the seat of the imagination, and keeps us from entering into the mystery of fantasy.<sup>131</sup> Literalism, however, refers also to what Hillman calls logophobia: the fear that words might harbour reality. Logophobia is a consequent of nominalism which has been instrumental in depersonalizing our world. To nominalists, words have no inherent substance of their own. Consequently, the nominalist idea of language has devastated the psyche by "insisting that big words were labels given by the mind, with only subjective reality."<sup>132</sup> The belief was that "only madmen were

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128 James Hillman. *Egalitarian Typologies Versus the Perception of the Unique*. Eranos Lecture Series 4. (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1986), 9.

129 Ibid., 10.

130 Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 149.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid., 6.

supposed to see the figments of the mind as real, and [furthermore] the content of madness has become defined in part by the subjects nominalism has rejected."<sup>133</sup> What nominalism fears most is that words might become personified.<sup>134</sup>

Because the nominalist perspective has been so influential in the human sciences, Hillman calls for a new 'angelology of words.' That is, Hillman wants us to learn to have faith in words again. He argues that words must become like angels in that they must bear meaningful messages once more--messages that evoke an aesthetic response, a response of the heart instead of the mind. We must recognize that words are carriers of soul between people, and that they have an invisible power over us.<sup>135</sup> Hillman points out, however, that it is not an issue of finding new terms to replace the old ones as much as it is a matter of seeing the old terms differently. We must shift away from nominalism and realism, he argues, and move toward a metaphorical or heartfelt way of speaking.<sup>136</sup> In fact, Hillman suggests that "By treating the words we use as ambiguities, seeing them again as metaphors, we restore to them their original mystery."<sup>137</sup> In other words, Hillman wants us to reject the deadened, monotheistic, and literal ways of speaking in preference for living, polytheistic, and metaphorical forms of discourse--a style of discourse that puts life back into the world and the soul's heart. We must develop a language that can adequately speak about and to a psyche that has many faces. "The psyche is not only multiple," Hillman writes, "it is a communion of many persons, each with its specific needs, fears, longings, styles and languages."<sup>138</sup> A rhetorical style of speaking is repetitious, Hillman informs us, because "the way of the soul...is the way of the circle."<sup>139</sup> Academic language is death to the rhetoric of the soul because it cannot hear the meaning behind the words that it uses. It denies that the language we use is multi-layered and multi-determined, providing a

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>136</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 42.

<sup>137</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 150.

<sup>138</sup> James Hillman & Thomas Moore. *A Blue Fire*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 37.

<sup>139</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 212.

variety of meanings and contexts. Academic language insists that there is one way and only one way, a straight-and-narrow fantasy of how to speak about the world and, by extension, soul.

The circular fashion of speaking that the soul employs, Hillman notes, is also the way our symptoms speak. The soul's main concern is not in discriminating or formulating definitions, "but with shaping the imagination itself into words."<sup>140</sup> Thus, Hillman believes, we must bring back the magic inherent in verbal imagination "and the therapeutic incantational power of words."<sup>141</sup> Rhetoric is method, he claims, yet it is the fashion of academic psychology to use a language that is soul killing. This is a language that has inherited the deadening capacities of nominalism and scientific materialism.<sup>142</sup> If we would engage a diverse psyche, our words must allow for a variety of ways for speaking about our imaginings of self and world. It is the metaphorical nature of mythical terms, for instance, that cannot be literalized because a sense of the fantastic is built into them, for they are open to multiple interpretations. Words adequate to the soul must be able to see through themselves. Hillman writes that "a good term must inherently imply that it is not literal."<sup>143</sup> What he suggests is that we need to substitute a more literary way of speaking and understanding self and the world for the clinical and scientific language of psychology and science. He would trade "mathematical exactness for imaginative precision," the literal, scientific approach for artistic understanding. He claims that the scientific approach to psychological investigation "and the reliance upon socio-psychological testing instead of moral-characterological scrutiny" have contributed to the decline of our "psychological perception of the individual person, and thus to our age of psychopathology."<sup>144</sup> That is, the reified and objectified approach to the world has been superimposed onto humanity and other living things, reducing the living to the dead and resulting in the anaesthetization of humanity and the surrounding world.

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>143</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 41.

<sup>144</sup> Hillman, *Egalitarian Typologies*, 41.

As I see it, the importance of Hillman's exposition of these fantasies of the heart and the languages of each is found in the power that imagination has to influence our perception of humanity, divinity, and the cosmos. In the metaphors of the Augustinian and Harvian hearts we find two different yet intermixed imaginations of humanity: that humans are subject to the morality of Augustine's God and that the physical body is a mechanical wonder that has spare parts that can be removed and, sometimes, replaced. Both of these styles of imagining self have been instrumental in the development of modern psychology; both have contributed to the notion of the separated or autonomous human being; both have led to the objectification and mechanization of the ways we speak about the world, the soul, and the body; and, hence, both have been detrimental to community. That is, one result of the notion that all of us are subject to the moral will of a transcendent, non-physical being and that we are in some way validated by this same transcendent entity, is that we find ourselves further removed from the physical world in which we exist, as well as from our physical manifestations which permit human interaction and community. Furthermore, an imagination of humanity as machines cannot provide the sensitivity, compassion, and understanding--the heart--reserved for life and living creatures that is found in communities of living beings.

### **III: From Soul to Community: Returning Heart and Soul to the World**

How does Hillman make the move from soul and heart into community and the world? This is an important question for those concerned with re-visioning the human condition in contemporary western thought. For the traditional notion of the Self is something that is separated not only from its feelings but also from the community of living beings and the world in general. Although Hillman has only recently begun to address these problems systematically, it is possible to find such considerations in his earlier works. The subject-object dichotomy characteristic of modernity can be addressed in Hillman's discussion of the role of the heart and feelings. Hillman, as we have seen, suggests that the seat of the soul is in the heart. Furthermore, it is the thought of the heart in relation to the images found in both the soul and the world that

bring a meaningful response--a feeling response.

To Hillman, feeling has its own rationality--something that is generally denied in traditional psychology. Feeling is a psychic process that evaluates, is always in motion, and gives or receives feeling tones. Therefore, feeling serves to connect the subject to the object (by imparting value) and object to subject (by receiving it within the subjective value system). Consequently, feeling is understood as implying relation, or connection of the soul to the events of the world and the world to the events of the soul. In this way feelings are often identified as "the function of relationship."<sup>145</sup> Consequently, one uses the heart to perceive the unique, to perceive a soul immediately in the person before one's eyes, as concrete and present.<sup>146</sup> This is another way of saying that soul, contrary to spirit, concerns itself with the mundane, the physical, the physiognomic, that soul is rooted firmly in the actual world.

Contrary to traditional therapy's concern with personal feelings and the concurrent reduction of images to feelings, Hillman, in re-considering feeling, attempts to release therapy "from the inevitable narrowing into personalism by the identification of soul with feeling."<sup>147</sup> Such personalism, Hillman informs us, not only perpetuates "the Cartesian division of ensouled subject/lifeless object" but also "fosters the delusion of ownership of emotion."<sup>148</sup> To Hillman, the "narrowing, monocentric effect upon consciousness" of personalism supports the monotheistic bias of psychology to identify the ego with its experiences. That is, when emotions and feelings are considered primary by psychologists, images must play a secondary role: "they are considered to be derivative and descriptive of feelings."<sup>149</sup> Archetypal psychology, by contrast, reverses the relation of images and emotions: "feelings as considered to be... 'divine influxes,' accompanying, qualifying, and energizing images. They are not merely personal but belong to imaginal reality, the reality of the image, and help make the image felt as a specific

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<sup>145</sup> Hillman, "The Feeling Function," 90.

<sup>146</sup> Hillman, *Egalitarian Typologies*, 3.

<sup>147</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 47.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

value."<sup>150</sup> This implies that "any event experienced as an image is at once animated, emotionalized, and placed in the realm of value."<sup>151</sup> Consequently, we are brought to the conclusion that feelings are within us as much as we are in feelings. That the soul residing in the world causes us to feel as much as our own personalized soul may.

Finding soul in the world is also not an entirely new task for archetypal psychology. One can find intimations of the world soul in Hillman's early works. In "An Essay on Pan," Hillman notes that fantasy, the activity of the soul, is also physical. This is another way of saying the activities of psyche are the same in both the unconscious and the conscious minds, for dreams and rational thought are both based in human imagination and fantasy. But there is a more important consideration: one cannot be in the physical world without demonstrating the archetypal or the imaginal. We might conclude that imaginative behaviour and physical behaviour exist in a symbiotic relationship. Yet this union of fantasy and behaviour suggests that there is no objective behaviour as such, which allows for the conclusion there is no strict division between subjective and objective worlds.<sup>152</sup> Although there are early indications of the lack any division between the internal and the external in archetypal psychology, it is in the late 1980s that the task of relating the personal soul to the *anima mundi* emerges as a prominent theme in Hillman's thought.

Always attempting to free psychology from its repressive and restrictive intellectual inheritance, Hillman, in "From Mirror to Window: Curing psychoanalysis of its Narcissism," suggests that the way out of psychology's romanticism is the turn to what is left out: "the unidealized, the immediate given, actual world of urbane and mundane things."<sup>153</sup> In this article, Hillman admits to a long-standing misunderstanding of Keats' phrase: "Call the world, if

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> James Hillman. "An Essay on Pan." *Pan and the Nightmare*. With W.H. Roscher. (New York: Spring Publications, 1972), xxxix.

<sup>153</sup> James Hillman. "From Mirror to Window: Curing Psychoanalysis of its Narcissism." *Spring* 1989 (49):68.

you will, a vale of soul-making. Then you will find out the use of the world'.<sup>154</sup> Hillman originally had understood this phrase as a suggestion to use the world in order to make one's own soul. Hillman now considers such work a "narcissistic enterprise." Instead, he turns this narcissistic approach to the world on its head. He now claims that one is to go through the world in order to make its soul, thereby making our own.<sup>155</sup> We are to participate in the world--the living world, living in the world, and the world living in us. We are to "re-spect, in-spect all of its perspectives."<sup>156</sup> When we are 'in' the world, he concludes, "we find the via regia of soul-making."<sup>157</sup>

To Hillman worldliness implies "working on the world, in the world, for the world as the path of soul making."<sup>158</sup> This suggests that the means to make soul is through participation in the world. The notion of *anima mundi* suggests, to Hillman, that one of the tasks of psychology "is to hear the psyche speaking through all things of the world, thereby recovering the world as a place of soul."<sup>159</sup> Rather than continuing to emphasize the journey inwards (a task which helps to maintain the Cartesian view that the world outside consists of dead objects and the world inside is alive), we must look to the physical world in order for us to feel connections with others and with the cosmos itself.<sup>160</sup>

For Hillman, the call to make soul "does not have to be away from the world or rest on a theory of self-enclosed individuals."<sup>161</sup> In other words, soul-making need not be identified with introversion or the denial of the physical world or, we might also conclude, the body itself. Hillman writes: "you make soul by living life, not by retreating from the world into the 'inner work' or beyond the world in spiritual disciplines...."<sup>162</sup>

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154 Ibid., 70.

155 Ibid.

156 Ibid., 71.

157 Ibid.

158 James Hillman, "How Jewish is Archetypal Psychology?" *Spring* 1992, 53:129.

159 Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 16.

160 Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 12.

161 Ibid., 50.

162 Ibid.

This suggests that Hillman understands the need to give meaning back to the physical world, to encourage his readers to find value in the idea of immanence, in our attachments to the physical world. To Hillman, the neglect of the environment, "the body of the world," is involved in our personal insanity. Because it is necessary to work toward the restoration of the world's body which "must be restored to health, for in that body is also the world's soul."<sup>163</sup> Psychiatry, if it would work to help individual souls, must be involved in the compassionate healing of the world's soul. If psychology is to help soul, it must account for the gestalt, the physical and worldly context in which souls reside.<sup>164</sup>

In order to do this, Hillman claims, psychology must first find a logos of the soul--one based in metaphor, image, fantasy, and feeling--and then learn to listen to the psyche. If, he continues, the psyche is understood as related to *anima mundi*, the Neo-platonic world soul, psyche can be heard speaking through the world, an idea which will allow us to recover "the world as a place of soul."<sup>165</sup> This idea suggests that Modern western attitudes towards the mystery of the world, the fecund aspects of mundane things must be re-evaluated in order for us to reimagine selfhood and to make soul.

An image-based therapy must be "extended into the sensate world of perceptual objects and habitual forms--buildings, bureaucratic systems, conventional language, transportation, urban environment, food, education."<sup>166</sup> Such a project, he claims, "has no less ambition than the recuperation of the *anima mundi*...."<sup>167</sup> A recuperation of the soul of the world is accomplished by examining the forms of the world as aesthetic physiognomy, as the heart-felt reaction of the outward appearances of the world. Hence, archetypal psychology makes a move which calls for a vision of therapy which is much more than just an "encounter of two persons in private and

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>164</sup> Still, Hillman can be criticized for not emphasizing the body's role in all of this. He needs to make the connection that soul-making not only occurs in the world but also in the body.

<sup>165</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 16.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 47.

takes on the larger task of re-imagining the public world within which the patient lives."<sup>168</sup> In other words the task of therapy becomes one of realizing "the poetic basis of mind in actuality, as an imaginative, aesthetic response."<sup>169</sup> The intent is to extend "the notion of the 'psychological' to the aesthetic and the notion of therapy" from the hours spent in the consulting room so that it is recognized as a continual imaginative activity in the world.

For Hillman, the liberation of therapy from the consulting room requires that we re-evaluate psychology's identification of the individual with emotion--an idea which has characterized all schools of psychotherapy since Freud. Hillman would release "therapy, and psychology itself, from the inevitable narrowing into personalism occasioned by the identification of soul with feeling."<sup>170</sup> His argument against the confessional mode of therapy is already familiar. To Hillman, this confessional mode of therapy places the psyche under a monotheistic umbrella which brings with it singleness of expression, imagination, and self. Furthermore, he notes that the personalized confessional mode of therapy perpetuates "the Cartesian division of ensouled subject/lifeless object" which "fosters the delusion of ownership of emotion, as belonging to the *proprium*."<sup>171</sup> According to Hillman the "intensified singleness

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 48. Hillman gets the idea of the *proprium* from Gordon Allport's Terry Lectures *Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955). For Allport personality is part of our sense of self. It includes "habits and skills, matters of fact and cultural values, that seldom or never seem warm and important. But personality includes what is warm and important also--all the regions of our life that we regard as peculiarly ours, and for the time being I suggest we call the *proprium*. The *proprium* includes all aspects of personality that make for inward unity." (40) The *proprium* is said to consist of eight interrelated aspects to our sense of what makes who we are, including: bodily sense or coenesthesia--which provides an anchor to our sense of self; self identity--awareness of one's existence, identity and actions; ego enhancement--self assertion and the emotions of self-satisfaction and pride; ego-extension--characterized as an extension of a sense of self by identifying with the objects making up our world, animate or inanimate; the rational agent in which the ego "has the property of synthesizing inner needs and outer reality;" self image, of which there are two forms: how one perceives oneself now, and how one would like to be; the ego ideal, propiate striving or motivation that is based in the ego's attempts at achievement in regard to the future; the knower, "...a cognizing self--a knower, that transcends all other functions

that emotions bring, their narrowing monocentric effect on consciousness, gives support to the already monotheistic tendency of the ego to appropriate and identify with their [emotional] experiences."<sup>172</sup> What is more, "when emotion and feeling are conceived as primary, images play a secondary role. They are considered to be derivative and descriptive of feelings."<sup>173</sup>

By developing a logos of the soul--images and feelings--it becomes possible to hear the soul speak through the world. It is through our felt connections to such images that we feel our connection to the soul in the world, to the *anima mundi*. In this sense images return meaning and value to the world, and a polytheistic psychology that is based in images and aesthetic responses is directly concerned with this activity. It is through the images of the world and our imagining the world, Hillman suggests, that world is revealed to our aesthetic responses, thus connecting us to the physical world.

By better accounting for our feelings in regard to the world we can turn our gaze from the interior, narcissistic tendencies of psychopathology and connect our feelings to life, to *anima mundi*.<sup>174</sup> It is the heart's passionate thoughts as opposed to the "cool thoughts about cold reality" of the mind (which is said to be the basis of traditional western psychology), that Hillman would have us re-evaluate.<sup>175</sup> For Hillman it is imperative that we begin to approach the soul from a perspective that accounts for our feelings that relates us to the world and body and gives the meaning and value.

As noted, a recent move for archetypal psychology has been to extend its area of consideration to the physical world of "perceptual objects and habitual forms." This move is one

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of the proprium and holds them in view...." (41-50) For Allport the interaction of all eight aspects of the self are involved in self-actualization, or becoming and, hence, increases the breadth of learning. (58) I am not sure why Hillman refers to the proprium in this regard. Perhaps Hillman must consider such notions as a 'cognizing self,' which oversees all aspects of personality too similar to the rationalistic ideal of humanism and developmental psychology. Furthermore, this proprium overemphasizes the mythological theme of the hero, or Senex.

<sup>172</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 48.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Moore, *Care of the Soul*, 135.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 158.

that lends a great deal of potential to the future of archetypal psychology. It offers the possibility of removing itself even further from the traditional Jungian ethos which is primarily concerned with the objects of the personal psyche over the objects in and the events of the world. By extending the notion of soul to the physical world in the form of the Neo-Platonic idea of the *anima mundi*, Hillman has opened a new vista for investigation that, for instance, can help in re-imagining the role played by the body in our understanding of selfhood--a concern of primary interest to many feminists.

Hillman's early (1967) approach to the body is similar to his approach to dreams: we are to befriend the body in order to develop the necessary intimacy with our self that activates our imagination.<sup>176</sup> Such intimacy might, for instance, empower us to imaginatively consider and re-vision the metaphors we use to speak about the heart. When we are incapable of such intimacy, Hillman continues, we cannot mend the mind-body split and we run the risk of sliding into the Kantian mistake of overvaluing mental events.<sup>177</sup> For Hillman, the "resurrection of this flesh, from a psychological point of view, refers to the transformation of flesh into body, parallel to the transformation of egoistic will and rationality."<sup>178</sup> That is, the reconsideration of the body generated by archetypal psychology is one that transforms the body as object, the body as *materia*, the dreaded body into a body which is sacred, valued positively, and contains a multitude of meanings. This attitude toward the body parallels archetypal psychology's revaluation of the psyche as something that is not essentially rational or subject to ego control but rather sees the rational and ego as merely parts of soul. So, "instead of the usual notion of psyche in body," Hillman muses, "the body...is in the psyche. The world itself is a psychic body; and our bodies as we move, stand, look, pause, turn, and sit are performing an activity of psychic reflection, an activity we formerly considered only mentally possible in the mirror of

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<sup>176</sup> James Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1967), 124.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

introspection."<sup>179</sup>

To Hillman, the notion that the body is psyche brings about a change in the way we conceive individuality: "individuality is within community and takes its definition from community...Individuality is therefore more visible within the estranged separateness and close similarity, for instance, of family than in trying to be 'different' from family."<sup>180</sup> This is to say that one finds his or her individuality because he or she is indivisible from the communities in which he or she takes part. Hence, individuality comes to connote "in connection," "in communion," existing within a community rather than in the isolation characteristic of psychology's idealized "heroic consciousness."

Because therapy's definition of the Self, as pointed out in Chapter One, comes from the Protestant and the Oriental traditions, "Self is [imagined to be] the interiorization of the invisible God beyond."<sup>181</sup> Hillman would rather imagine or redefine self as the interiorization of community. He believes that if we make this move, we must necessarily see self and the world differently. For

if the self were defined as the interiorization of community, then the boundaries between me and another would be much less sure. I would be with myself when I am with others. I would not be with myself when I'm walking alone or meditating or in my room imagining or working on my dreams. In fact, I would be estranged from myself.<sup>182</sup>

From such a perspective, "other" would not merely imply other people, "because community, as I see it, is something more ecological, or at least animistic."<sup>183</sup> The description of community as

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<sup>179</sup> Hillman, "From Mirror to Window", 71.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>181</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 40. I would point out that in this case Hillman begins to use the term 'self'. This is a new move in his thought, and it is one that he neglects to explain sufficiently in his most recent work. Upon contacting him for clarification, I received an apologetic refusal to do so--he had his own projects and deadlines. The only clue Hillman could give me was to be careful of defining the characteristics of self, lest I involve myself in a 'Senex' activity of categorizing and literalizing.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

"ecological" suggests that Hillman has a conception of community that involves the environment in which we live, and, one that is "animistic," that it is animated, meaningful, and contains soul. This is a conceptualization of community that is a necessary consequent of archetypal psychology's emphasis on aesthetics, polytheism,<sup>184</sup> and *anima mundi*. Hence, our perspective would not be a case of Descartes' cogito: rather, one is because one is in community.<sup>185</sup> Instead of saying 'I think, therefore I am,' we might proudly proclaim, "we interact, therefore we are."

Yet there is a tendency in the West to imagine community in terms of socialism and communism--things that bring to the fore the horrifying fantasy of fascism. Hillman wonders

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184 Before entering into a discussion of Hillman's thoughts about the relationship between polytheism and community, there are a couple of criticisms that need to be considered. First, Kenneth Lambert, in "Reflections on a Critique of Hillman's Approach to the Dream by W.A. Sheiburne," wonders whether the individuals that Hillman identifies as having a monotheistic temperament actually exist. Lambert believes they may be "'men of straw,' invented, perhaps, out of Hillman's provocative style to give us a jolt, lest deep down there could be more of the heroic-ego in all of us than we would like to admit." (Kenneth Lambert. "Reflections on a Critique of Hillman's Approach to the Dream by W.A. Sheiburne." *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 1984 29(1): 61-62).

This is an interesting comment. It plays on our awareness of Hillman's emphasis on the soul as primarily imaginative in nature. Lambert could be read as trivializing the heroic ego as a part of Hillman's imagination. It may well be that Hillman has overemphasized the role of the heroic ego, but in light of Keller's deconstruction of the separated self in regard to psychotherapy, theology, and philosophy it is hard not to be moved by the possibility that the monotheistic hero is not merely a 'man of straw.' Although it may be an ideal or a metaphor belonging to imagination, literature, myth, and symbol, it still influences how we conceive ourselves.

A second critique of Hillman's thoughts about polytheism comes from Bernie Neville in "The Charms of Hermes: Hillman, Lyotard, and the Postmodern Condition" in which he writes "Unfortunately, we are somewhat unpractised in polytheism. We don't know how to acknowledge all the squabbling gods together....When one god lets us down we tend to redirect all our worship to another." Although Neville may be right in claiming that we do not really understand polytheism as a culture, there is no reason to assume that we do not need such perspectives in our lives (Neville, in fact, suggests that polytheism is something we desperately need in contemporary society). The idea of polytheism can, for instance, provide a road into the understanding that we are not separated, that there are more things in the world than the monotheistic ego or god, and that we are connected to one another and not separated by a vast sea of metaphysical nothingness. (Bernie Neville. "The Charms of Hermes: Hillman, Lyotard, and the Postmodern Condition." *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 37(2):351).

185 Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 40.

why it is that we do not use other images of community that encourage individuality within the group, rather than requiring conformity to some idealized form. There are, he declares, images of "self as community that aren't totalitarian and in which individuality is respected."<sup>186</sup> Furthermore, we must also avoid oppositional imaginations of self as being part of a mindless cog or of a self in absolute control of its existence. These kinds of fantasies, Hillman says, "keep us afraid of community. [They] lock[...] us up...[and we see ourselves as] separate selves all alone and longing for connection. In fact, the idea of surrendering to the fascist mob is the result of the *separated self*"<sup>187</sup>--something that Keller passionately speaks about in *From a Broken Web*, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Hillman believes that it is necessary to think of community in an altogether different way. Community is not a mob. Rather, as he puts it, "Community to me means simply the actual little system in which you are situated, sometimes in your office, sometimes at home with your furniture and your food and cat, sometimes talking in the hall with the people in 14-B. In each case your actual self, just as it is in each situation, a self *among*, not a self apart."<sup>188</sup> For this reason, Hillman claims that it is "absolutely necessary for our spiritual life today to have community where we actually live."<sup>189</sup>

As noted, it is no longer sufficient for those of us living in the contemporary west to see ourselves as separated from nature, separated from each other, and separated from community. For Thomas Moore, a writer on archetypal psychology, "the psyche is not only multiple, it is a communion of many persons, each with specific needs, fears, longings, styles and languages. The many persons echo the many gods who define the worlds that underline what appears to be a unified human being."<sup>190</sup> One of the soul's strongest needs is for community. Yet community from the soul's point of view is different from community in its social forms. Moore writes that

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Hillman & Moore, *A Blue Fire*, 39.

"soul yearns for attachment, for variety in personality, for intimacy and particularity. So it is these qualities in community that the soul seeks out, and not likemindedness and conformity."<sup>191</sup>

To Moore, as with Hillman, the way to resolve our lack of community is found in not merely joining organizations "but by living through feelings of relatedness--to other people, to nature, to society, to the world as a whole. Relatedness is sign of the soul."<sup>192</sup> Hence we find Moore agreeing with Hillman in suggesting that by admitting into the soul the inner and outer persons of the communities in which we are located, we come to understand community as serving as an impetus to the emergence of a sense of belonging in our lives.<sup>193</sup> It is by locating in the soul an interiorized community and by locating the soul in an exterior community of animated things, that we give a sense of sacredness or fecundity to self as something founded in relationship as opposed to separation. Community, as it is depicted here, then, helps to further the deinstitutionalization of self while it breaks the distinction between interior and exterior, self and other, secular and sacred.

Andrew Samuels also notes that archetypal psychology is about relationship. He writes: "Hillman has produced a psychology that speaks directly of ordinary, human personal relationships, especially the childhood ones that it apparently eschews as its subject matter."<sup>194</sup> To Samuels "*the psychology of the soul turns out to be about relationship.*"<sup>195</sup> If soul is indeed the means of connecting not only mind and body but also individual and world, and if polytheism gives space and value to all the things in the world and in the imagination, then we must conclude that archetypal psychology's fantasy necessarily includes community and relationship.

In the preceding paragraphs, we find that Hillman is continuing his critique of traditional psychology. He points out that most psychologists have yet to have left behind the traditional

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<sup>191</sup> Moore, *Care of the Soul*, 92.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>194</sup> Samuels, *The Plural Psyche*, 17.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

modern paradigm of the human condition as requiring separation and individuation as opposed to being embedded in an interrelated community made up of soul, body, and world. Hillman, as is demonstrated in Chapter One, has always taken a critical, even subversive approach to the notion of the unitary self, yet it is only in his most recent work that the idea of community has become predominant. As suggested above, this move towards community can be seen in his reaction to the concept of individuation--what Hillman calls a literalized Jungian fantasy of the process of unifying the Self; individuation is considered a process that may ultimately result in the reification of Self. To Hillman, the only way to justify using the word individuation today is to extend its meaning so that it refers to the "individuation of each moment in life, each action, each relationship, and each thing."<sup>196</sup>

Individuation, Hillman claims, must no longer reflect the inner journey that draws one away from the world, that takes concern away from the environment. By rejecting the traditional Jungian notion of individuation, we are beginning to be able to actualize the potential of the world. Thus a revised notion of individuation "begins with noticing, paying attention to the specifics of what is actually there so that it can become fully what it is. This is simply what therapy has been doing all along, only that its attention has been held exclusively to humans."<sup>197</sup> Individuation, to many therapists, as Hillman points out, has traditionally reflected the belief that one's life will have more integrity if one is "whole" or made to be such. In my opinion, the basis of this fantasy of wholeness is found in the belief that we are born unified and our passage through life fragments or destroys that sense of unification--a theological bias in psychology which I suggest has roots in the belief in the theological doctrine of original sin. A consequent of this fantasy is that we must find a way of recuperating our sense of wholeness. But, Hillman asks, what if we were not born whole? Furthermore, "what if the quality of wholeness is not located in the individual but in a **community** that includes the environment?"<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Hillman & Ventura, *Hundred Years of Psychotherapy*, 52.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 76.

With the exception of those following objects relations theory, therapists tend to ignore community. Hillman argues that "the basic frame of therapy is to withdraw from all of that, not to have 'dual relationships'."<sup>199</sup> In other words, the feelings involved in friendships are not supposed to even enter the sterile patient-analyst relationship. This means that therapy no longer speaks about love or eros; it is no longer a conversation about a real relationship. Nonetheless, it is one of psychotherapy's traditional tasks to bring love back into the world. Yet, the way that this is done almost always depends upon the Western fantasy of romantic love, in the heterosexual sense. But, as Hillman argues, this notion of romantic love serves the purpose of separating a couple from their community. If the invention of "romantic love" cuts us off from community, he argues, and if therapy deals with that relationship in such a way as to help cut you off from each other, then we could say that the notion of a personal relationship is a symptom of our separated culture. Hillman suggests, for instance, that our obsessive sexual fantasies come straight from Descartes. He writes that "Because Descartes, the good Jesuit-trained Christian that he was, declared to Western civilization that only human persons have souls,"<sup>200</sup> there are no souls to be found anywhere else. "And, since love always seeks soul, you've got to have a 'significant other,' as psychology calls it."<sup>201</sup>

Yet the West's popular images of the perfect man and woman are always found in an isolated setting. A setting of dead objects, of a de-souled world.<sup>202</sup> Hillman claims that "sex addictions," as they have been called, are the end result of the Cartesian imagination: sex addictions are the soul trying to get out and love something other than itself; sex addictions are

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>202</sup> Hillman notes that we are taught to believe that romantic love offers us salvation from this isolation. Yet this is not to be the case, because as soon as a couple pair off in the Western fantasy of romantic love, they separate themselves from the rest of community. Thus, Hillman argues that "intimacy means anticommunity. And if the self means, as I define it, the interiorization of community, then finding the one and only, the significant other, only reinforces individualism." (Ibid., 180).

the soul attempting to find love in a predominantly dead world.<sup>203</sup> He suggests that the West's excessively marketed desire for sexual gratification "is the drive in the human, not only for a significant other, which makes it too personal and Christian, but for communion with something wider. With the community itself, the soul."<sup>204</sup> Hillman notes that we are not isolated selves, it is the notion of individualism that makes us feel separated.<sup>205</sup> To Hillman this is the importance of community. He claims that it is necessary for the therapeutic enterprise to learn a language that communicates with the world--a language that allows therapists to imagine and approach all life as being embedded in and connected to the world. That is, there is a need to develop a language that includes the community, a language that makes community rather than fragments it,<sup>206</sup> a language that makes community of the soul. For Hillman, "psychology has to recognize community because the psyche *is* a community."<sup>207</sup> We cannot separate the soul in the individual from the soul in others and in the environment.<sup>208</sup>

By making a connection between soul and *anima mundi*, Hillman makes it possible to imagine selfhood anew in a similar manner to feminist concerns regarding a self that feels its connections to the external world. To provide a bridge between archetypal psychology and the thoughts of certain contemporary feminist thinkers about religion, in regard to selfhood and spirituality, it is necessary to outline some feminist criticisms of traditional paradigms of self, including such notions as the unified or separated self, Christian monotheistic biases in interpreting selfhood, the emphasis on the mind-body separation, as well as the excessive rationality of Enlightenment thought. If the critiques between Hillman and contemporary feminist thinkers are compatible, it is possible to initiate efficacious dialogue in regard to selfhood between archetypal psychology and contemporary feminist thought.

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203 Ibid., 178.

204 Ibid.

205 Ibid., 179.

206 Ibid.

207 Ibid., 84.

208 Ibid., 53.

## **Chapter Three: The Feminist Critique of the Separated Self**

In the last two chapters, I outlined both Hillman's critique of traditional psychology and the paradigms or perspectives to which he suggests psychologists turn. Hillman is critical of psychology's adoption of theological assumptions, Enlightenment rationalism, and medical science, to name a few instances. As a counterfoil to these problematic presuppositions, Hillman suggests that psychology begin not only to deconstruct traditional paradigms but also turn to such alternate notions as polytheism, aesthetics and feeling, soul, and imagination.

In the following chapter, I sketch Catherine Keller's critique of what she calls the separated self. This will be complemented with the thought of other contemporary feminist theorists in order to help flesh out Keller's deconstruction of traditional western notions of selfhood. The basis of much of feminist criticism about self, or human agency, is centered around the separation of the mind and body in traditional western philosophy, theology, and psychology.

### **I: The Feminist Critique of the Separation of the Mind and Body Split as a Basis of Selfhood**

If the postmodern perspective can be characterized as subversive of all traditional paradigms<sup>1</sup>, we might easily presume that one battleground of such subversion can be found in how those of us in the West conceive of self. For if accepted paradigms about the world or the cosmos are being vigorously questioned, we must presume that a concurrent examination of the status of what constitutes the human is also taking place. There are many people who have written about selfhood in the last fifty years. This may be the result of the sense of fragmentation, anxiety, or alienation that has been found to be characteristic of our times. But there is more involved in any re-evaluation of accepted ideas about the world and self, than a

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Tarnas. *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that have Shaped our World View*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 398.

sense of alienation characteristic of any era. Traditional paradigms about selfhood, as, for instance, the unified Self, are increasingly understood as being incapable of solving problems that have emerged as a result of this paradigm's inability to formulate an adequate explanation for the observed facts that have appeared subsequent to its inception.<sup>2</sup>

There are many different persons involved in addressing the inconsistencies that are appearing in how Western thought typically conceives of self. Such persons include psychologists, like James Hillman, who would re-vision psychology in such a way as to liberate it from its basis in Christian theology, western philosophy, and scientific materialism; others include feminists theorists, like Catherine Keller, who are very much involved in re-examining traditional expressions of selfhood, in order to find a means of self-expression not subjected to the masculine musing of traditional thought. This is a problematic that Hillman tends to neglect in his attempt to 're-vision psychology.' Hillman tends to ignore feminist concerns about the patriarchal nature of traditional thought. His lack of concern regarding gender issues betrays a certain inability to take into account the gender politics inherent to psychology and self.

One of the major areas of concern in the feminist critique of the traditional Cartesian-Newtonian expression of selfhood is found in the separation of the mind from the body and this is an issue that Hillman never approaches satisfactorily. A consequence of the western tradition's disposition to separate the mind from the body is the appearance of anomalies in traditional

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<sup>2</sup> I refer, of course, to Thomas Kuhn's thoughts about paradigm shifts as found in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). Kuhn suggests that a successful paradigm shift requires that an alternate idea must be present and seem to be able to solve some "outstanding and generally recognized problem" and must "promise to preserve a relatively large part of the concrete problem-solving ability" that the previous paradigm accrued to the field of study. (168) There are five further characteristics to paradigm shifts: 1) a community of thinkers must reject its 'time-honoured theory' in favour of another approach incompatible with it; 2) this produces a consequent shift in the problems available to that community and the standards by which the community determines whether or not a problem is valid; 3) the alternate theory must be sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group away from the competition; 4) the theory must be sufficiently open-ended so as to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve; and, 5) ideational revolutions must transform the intellectual imagination in ways that need be described as a 'transformation of the world within which the scientific work was done.' (5-10).

means of speaking about self. Nonetheless, many contemporary feminist thinkers about religion evidence similar critiques of such traditional paradigms of Self as are found in archetypal psychology. Keller's criticisms of the consequences that Enlightenment thought has brought to the western world's means of articulating selfhood are a good illustration of this kind of critique. Keller characterizes the western ethos as one that is rooted in the mind-body split and the subsequent disregard of the material world, that has been traditionally associated with women. Keller suggests that the roots of this split can be found in warrior-hero of myths reaching back as far as ancient Sumeria, Greece, and as recent as Jewish and Christian dogma.

Keller's analysis of the history of western philosophy indicates several instances in which the physical world and the human body are denigrated and vilified. Keller's discussion will be supplemented by examining Starhawk's (a feminist theorist, practising pagan, and psychotherapist) exegesis of the myths and rituals belonging to the Mesopotamian region during the late Bronze age. To Keller and Starhawk, the onset of the separation of the mind and the body and the associated vilification of women was accompanied by the beginnings of a patriarchal society based in warfare that swept over the mediterranean region during the Bronze age.

### **I.i: Separation in Western Traditions: The Philosophical Roots**

For Keller, traditional paradigms about the self reflect the notion that humanity is separated in nature. She relates such traditional ideas about humanity to the notion of the "separate self". The separate self, she informs us, is an understanding of self that is rooted in the radical separation of mind and body.<sup>3</sup> This paradigm of self results in all kinds of separations or dualistic perspectives of the cosmos. For instance, we are all familiar with such dualistic categories as self and other, conscious and unconscious, male and female, East and West, us and

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<sup>3</sup> Catherine Keller. *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 1. For example, Keller writes this of the west's traditional understanding of self: "for our culture it is separation which prepares the way for selfhood."

them.

Keller suggests that the paradigm of the separated self is rooted in our very language. She notes that the Latin root of self, 'se', means "on one's own."<sup>4</sup> More importantly, writes Keller, "separation and sexism have functioned together as the most fundamental self-shaping assumptions of our culture...." and that any subject is known only through its clear division from everything else. Furthermore, men by nature and by right "exercise the primary prerogatives of civilization...."<sup>5</sup> In other words, Keller suggests that it seems to be the case that separation has become a primary aspect of western civilization--it permeates how we apprehend, conceive, and formulate our world.

From this point of view, it is reasonable to expect that the feminist agenda concerning self is postmodern insofar as it contests the traditional philosophical dissociation of mind and body. Furthermore, it also challenges the legitimacy of this separation and, hence, suggests a means to re-think the relation between the mind and the body. That is, much of contemporary feminist thought involves an attempt to articulate a notion of selfhood based in the body and our connection to others, rather than in the separation implied by western culture's ideal of autonomy. For this sense of self to emerge, claims Keller, it is necessary to turn to a perspective that allows us to think about the connection, rather than the separation, of the mind and body. Yet connection is something that is considered to be threatening to the politics of the traditional, male society based in separation.<sup>6</sup> Because of the lack of consideration of the possibility of a connective notion of traditional patriarchal ideas of selfhood, women's self definition (which is considered 'soluble') is "more or less equivalent to psychosocial bondage."<sup>7</sup> A consequence of this deficiency may be that women are required to find a means of developing a sense of

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> This need not be the case as Keller points out when she writes: "The unique integrity of a focused individuality, traditionally linked to the independence of a clearly demarcated ego, represents an irrefutable value, indeed a touchstone for any liberating theory of interrelation." (Ibid., 2.)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 3.

individuality that was previously only expected of and available to men. Yet this may not be the answer. It is not given that the separated self is in fact empowering for women, let alone for men.

What Keller calls the separative self is based upon the ideal of the warrior hero of the western world. It is this warrior hero that defines what it is to be a man.<sup>8</sup> This view of the hero is a critique of Joseph Campbell's notion of the monomyth. In *From a Broken Web*, in fact, Keller takes Campbell to task for the ahistoricism and oversimplification of "his Jungian derived" monomyth as well as his categorization of all "religious and cultural history under his dramatic dialectic of two world orders, that of the original mother myths and that of the conquering heroes with their supreme father."<sup>9</sup> Like Hillman, Keller recognizes that this perspective on selfhood and masculinity represented by the hero finds its heritage in Homer and has roots that reach into later antiquity.

Unlike Hillman, however, Keller posits the masculine ideal as constituting the basis of self in traditional western psychology, philosophy, and theology. The warrior hero, as she informs us, is also philosophically derived from "the separate, self-enclosed subject, remaining self identical throughout its exploits in time."<sup>10</sup> The hero's essence is not affected by its relationships. Instead, the hero is ever attempting to free itself from such bonds. As Keller puts it "intimacy, emotion and the influence of the Other arouse its worst anxieties, for somehow it must keep relation external to its own being, its `self'."<sup>11</sup> A result of this perspective is that the heroic, male self finds its identity in its separation from both the physical world and from the Other. In this way, suggests Keller, the separated self is based upon self denial or self doubt. The Cartesian ego, the separated self *par excellence*, is a concept that was also forged in the depths of self-doubt. That is, this ego is based in the West's self-doubt as to the importance of the physical as opposed to the metaphysical, of body as opposed to mind, of self as opposed to

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

other.<sup>12</sup>

To Keller, the economy of the separated self is twofold: first, the separative self conceives of itself as its own property; and, second, man's self possession requires the possession of the other, i.e., that women be his property.<sup>13</sup> This perspective draws one to the conclusion that a woman's self is "no self of her own, and thus a false, an owned, self, somehow not quite a self at all."<sup>14</sup> For Keller, women who settle for such prefabricated self definitions, women who define themselves through a lack of self possession, collaborate in a form of self-deception typical of the separated male self. Such women, she claims, foster in the warrior hero a "covert dependency" upon them "by which he sustains his sense of independence."<sup>15</sup> Such women have a sense of self that Keller characterizes as 'soluble.' This soluble self of the 'classical dyad,' Keller argues, complements and completes the separated self. The soluble self reflects women's "tendency to dissolve emotionally and devotionally into the other...." The soluble self represents the woman who waits for the male hero to come and bring her joy.

For Keller, the woman who complies with this dyadic relationship is coopted and becomes a "male identified" woman, because she "appends to her female emotional base the anxieties of the traditionally masculine-separative self."<sup>16</sup> Such anxieties include a fear of dependency which appears as excessive individualism, autonomy, and refusal to take part in community.<sup>17</sup> It is no wonder, Keller muses, that concepts of transcendence are so appealing to women.<sup>18</sup> The belief in the possibility of escaping such psycho-social self bondage must appear liberating to women who lack a sense of self. Yet such expectations of escape are also illusory.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 9-11.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 13-16.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 17. What I understand Keller to mean by this is that the escapism inherent in transcendental imaginations must appeal to women who are bound to men in such a co-dependent manner as characterized by the maiden who anxiously awaits the return of her warrior-hero to bring her riches and joy ever after.

Christian or transcendent channels of liberation, Keller writes, "have been shaped and controlled for millennia by males" and can thus only provide androcentric perspectives on transcendence.<sup>19</sup> In other words, such masculine notions of transcendence not only separate the self from community and the mind from the body, they function to produce a co-dependent society in which men are dependent upon dependent women. The result is a situation in which women have neither possession nor control of themselves, both physically and socially.

According to Keller, it is only through the possession and the oppression of the Other that the separative self can truly feel in possession of himself. By projecting both the threats and comforts of connection onto women, men fill their lack of relation and interconnection with the world.<sup>20</sup> In other words, the hero needs to posit a submissive other in order to make up for the lack and despair resulting from the fact that he may be no one. This implies that the "self-identity of the separative ego is in fact a self-deception. It is philosophically 'superfluous' because it is existentially a hoax."<sup>21</sup> In other words, because the separative self is only related to the other in an external fashion, it can define what is good only in terms of what is separated from the whole.

Emphasis on the separation of the mind from the body is one of the presuppositions that we can find at the root of Christian concepts of good and evil. Like Hillman, Keller points out that Christian theology can cast light on our conceptions of self. She writes: "the traditional perfections of God read like a catalogue of the heroic ego's ideals for himself...."<sup>22</sup> Keller emphasizes this point when she writes that

the politics of individualism is not accidentally sprung from a theology of sheer transcendence. Both express the power plays of patriarchal masculinity, a masculinity that we begin to suspect of a chronic separatism. The virtually uninterrupted maleness of the metaphors of God coalesces with the equally unbroken masculinity of the normative "human" subject. For they are created in

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 38.

each other's image....Man mirrors the immutable transcendence of his God.<sup>23</sup>

Hence, we might conclude that the separative self is at a double loss: it must project its sphere of immanence onto woman below him, and his sphere of transcendence onto God above him.<sup>24</sup> Consequently the separative self separates from himself two of the most fundamental aspects of humanity--body and mind (soul).

Keller turns to the thoughts of Aristotle to further elucidate the separative self. Aristotle, she informs us, conceived of the male as normative and the female as an aberration of that norm.<sup>25</sup> As a deviation from the male, women are considered monstrosities. This initiates a situation in which the hero is required to emancipate himself from the mother or the female other. Keller understands this to be a matricidal impulse in the heroic consciousness. She puts it this way:

A pervasive fearfulness, a sense of threat, motivates the heroic psyche, resembling what existentialism universalizes as *angst*. Converting this ontological anxiety into particularized fears--such as fear of this monster--affords momentary relief by triumph over a specific cause....it is by "killing" the monster that the male establishes her monstrosity and his heroism. But as monster she is *his* symptom, *his* dread and *his* monstrosity. Yet she is also symbol of the lost selfhood of which her one time power was an outer sign.<sup>26</sup>

What this suggests is that consciousness is taken to be masculine in the sense that it is understood to be heroic, insofar as consciousness is matricidal and ego-centred. In other words, separative consciousness must in its self definition reject physicality and it must do this in an heroic, violent way. It is a characteristic of the monomyth, Keller observes, that order or "'harmony' is

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 43f.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. That is, that a man, in relation to his God, is forced to position himself in the role of a woman under a man.

<sup>25</sup> Keller points out that Aristotle believed a child receives soul from his father, which is the formal cause that engenders humanity, and from his mother comes the body. To Aristotle, Keller informs us, the soul is active and the body passive, inert matter. In the case of a female fetus, the girl receives no soul from the father and only the body from the mother. Thus, because women lack this "soul material," they are considered to be a deviation from the norm represented by men and are thus thought to be "monsters". (Ibid., 48-50).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 61f.

established at the cost of violence."<sup>27</sup> Thus we can conclude with Keller that the separative self must perceive the Other "as an object, an opponent, in order to become *itself*; the transformation of women and other aliens into monsters illustrates all too well this process of oppositional transcendence."<sup>28</sup>

As we can see, that there is much at the roots of traditional western philosophy that is objectionable to contemporary feminist concerns is illustrated by Keller's criticisms of the West's tendency towards separation. To Keller, it is evident that the separation intrinsic to western philosophy has reached a point from which it is no longer possible to proceed to investigate self without denying or denigrating the physical world, while elevating the metaphysical. Still, a critique of a 'separative' paradigm of self in philosophy is not enough to indicate that there is a shift in western conceptions of selfhood that are now emerging. For this reason I feel it is necessary also to consider the criticism of theological and psychological<sup>29</sup> notions of the self from the feminist perspective.

### **I.ii: Separation in Western Traditions: Mythological and Theological Roots**

Keller believes that the turn of events in Sumeria around the time that writing was invented would later help to constitute western consciousness and instill the notion of separation in our cultural practices. The story of the onset of separative styles of consciousness cogently and effectively, has been re-imagined from a number of perspectives, and Starhawk's examination of the Marriage of Innana, the Epic of Gilgamesh, and the Enuma Elish (which Keller also examines in a second example) are no exception. In her exegesis of these myths, Starhawk suggests that there was a shift in how self, sexuality, and society were perceived and administered.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>29</sup> In the following pages I will use the terms theological and psychological in their broadest and most generalized sense. Theology alludes to the dogmatic logos referring to a Divine nature of the cosmos, while psychology refers to a logos of the soul or psyche.

In *Dreaming the Dark*, Starhawk suggests that there was a shift from one style of consciousness to another during the Bronze age.<sup>30</sup> She believes that during this period, humanity shifted from matrilocal, earth-centred, goddess based religious cultures to the urban, patriarchal, and conquest oriented cultures we know today.<sup>31</sup> To Starhawk, this was the onset of the 'culture of estrangement'--a culture which removed value from things that were considered not essentially human, which led to the ultimate exploitation of specific groups of people and the physical world. Yet, as Starhawk says, there was a deeper consequence to this paradigm shift: "Inherent value," she writes, "humanness, is reserved for certain classes, races, for the male sex; [and] their power-over others is thus legitimated [even today]."<sup>32</sup> Another contemporary feminist scholar about religion, Carol Christ, agrees with the assessment that it was during the bronze age that male Gods rose in prominence over female Goddesses. She also notes that this change in the status of such gendered divinities often occurred through murder or, as Keller sees it, matricide.<sup>33</sup>

Starhawk continues her argument in *Truth or Dare*<sup>34</sup> by providing an exegesis of three myths from the Bronze Age. These three myths--the Marriage of Innana, the Epic of Gilgamesh, and the Enuma Elish--are presented as a means of demonstrating the postulated shift from matriarchal to patriarchal cultural systems in Sumerian society. Intrinsic to Starhawk's concerns is what she calls "an ontological shift" that describes how Sumerian culture allowed for and encouraged the appearance of the authoritarian mode of domination that is present in the modern West.

The Marriage of Innana is generally considered to be a description of the Sumerian year end festival. Consequently the Marriage of Innana is understood today as a ritual that was

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<sup>30</sup> Starhawk. *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 5.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Carol Christ. *Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess*. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987), 88.

<sup>34</sup> Starhawk. *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority, and Mystery*. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987).

employed to insure the fertility of the regions surrounding Sumeria for the coming year. Starhawk's description of the Marriage of Innana, however, produces an alternate interpretation. To Starhawk, the Marriage of Innana reveals an ontology that provides us with a drastically different understanding of what it means to be a woman in particular and a person in general. First of all, a woman is understood as not deriving her sense of self worth via the man. Rather "it is she who celebrates her own being, who finds herself beautiful in her own eyes, and who lives in a world in which there is no conceivable reason why she should hesitate to express and rejoice in that beauty."<sup>35</sup> It is women themselves who appreciate their appearance, not men who dictate it. Second, although the marriage described is heterosexual in nature, there is also a description of "woman's erotic celebration of each other."<sup>36</sup> This implies, as Starhawk suggests, that in Sumerian society there may have been a more fluid concept of sexuality than there is in the modern west. It is an understanding of sexuality that celebrates its ability to give pleasure and to renew life. There is no suggestion of male erotic power as we understand it today--linked as it is with aggression, violence, and domination.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, we might expect that there was no radical separation of the mind and the body in Sumerian culture that allows for the exploitation of the physical world and the human body as there is in contemporary western society.

The account of the marriage of Innana that is available to us, Starhawk believes, reveals a culture that believed the physical world was alive. Furthermore, this notion of immanence also pertained to humanity and the human body. Merlin Stone informs us that the marriage of Innana reveals that the estimation of the role of the goddess and of women "was certainly much higher in the early Sumerian city-state than it subsequently became...."<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, there seems to be an understanding of the importance of the connection between self and other, between self and the world, and between self and the cosmos. Although the account of the activities of the marriage may appear to be an instance of what Frazer calls 'sympathetic magic,' there is no doubt

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Merlin Stone. *When God was a Woman*. (New York: The Dial Press, 1976), p. 39.

that there is exposed in it a cultural situation which Starhawk considers to be radically different from the separative ethics of today.

"With [the Epic of] Gilgamesh," however, "we move out of the realm of myth, the stories that link us to the great rounds of birth, death, and renewal; and into the epic, tales that recount the deeds of the hero, the war leader, [and] the great man."<sup>39</sup> Yet The Epic of Gilgamesh is an old enough story that we can find remnants of the older cultural order "and," as Starhawk puts it, "of the dissatisfactions and disruptions brought by the new dominion."<sup>40</sup> The period referred to by the Epic of Gilgamesh, Starhawk believes, is the one in which the practice of kingship was initially institutionalized in the western world. That is, this is when the warrior hero became the norm of humanity and the domination of others a fact of life. It is in the Epic, she claims, that we find an altered perspective of the erotic, one that is already far removed from that represented in the Marriage of Innana. Sexuality is no longer considered to be the source of fertility, joy, and abundance. "Now it is linked in the same breath with war and conquest. Sex has become the prerogative of the ruler."<sup>41</sup> Hence the major changes in the role of women reflected in the Epic of Gilgamesh centre around the limitation of women's ability to engage in economic activities and inheritance, in the notion of the lineage of children, and in the prevalent attitudes towards rape and abortion.<sup>42</sup>

It is through the seduction of Enkidu that we learn of this differing view of sexuality. Sexuality is now used to separate the "wildman," the natural man, from nature. Union with a woman is thus considered to be a means of robbing men of their power.<sup>43</sup> But this is not all that is revealed by the Epic. We also find alongside the onset of kingship and the destruction of the natural man a "reshaping of the human psyche in a mold of obedience to authority."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Starhawk, *Truth or Dare*, 49.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>42</sup> Stone, *When God was a Woman*, 59.

<sup>43</sup> Starhawk, *Truth or Dare*, 50.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 51.

According to Starhawk, war became part of the male realm not because men are intrinsically better at warfare, but rather, in her own words, "because societies that adopted patriarchy, the social system based on the principle of hierarchal rule, proved most effective at maximizing power."<sup>45</sup> From that perspective, one result of the onset of warfare was the reinforcement of class divisions--foot soldiers vs. charioteers, the mass vs. the nobility--and "as warfare became chronic, Sumerian society was restructured in the image of war. Myth, epic, religion, and customs changed to perpetuate a new ideology of control."<sup>46</sup> According to this view, social emphasis was placed on the notion of the comradeship of warriors, which brings about a loss of self value insofar as individual action in war could lead to the ruin of all. The result is that patriarchy induces insecurity by etching into the psyche the need to live up to qualities such as unquestioning obedience which are better left to such idealized images as the warrior gods.<sup>47</sup>

To Starhawk, the ideology of war is based on contempt for women. Indeed, the denigration of women is still a common part of military training today;<sup>48</sup> yet at the same time that women are vilified, they are also considered to be the prizes of war. The result of this denigration is the victimization of women.<sup>49</sup> One consequence of such dehumanizing practices

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> James McBride in "War, Battering and Other Sports: The Gulf Between American Men and Women" (unpublished paper presented at the 1991 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Kansas City) takes up this issue. He says that the practice of demonizing or feminizing the 'enemy' is still used today as a means of separating out the enemy. By turning the enemy into a demonized object, it is no longer necessary to treat this object as a human being. McBride's phenomenology of this activity is as follows: initially a division is made between what is considered to be the 'ingroup' and the 'outgroup;' consequently the former attributes stereotypic and homogeneous characteristics to the latter, which are usually described as racially hereditary. Through this process the 'ingroup' assures itself of its racial purity by projecting its "own weaknesses onto the outgroup" and seeks its destruction. Furthermore, the 'outgroup' is also considered to be "mythically guilty" and this requires what McBride calls "ritual purification." (9-10)

<sup>49</sup> Starhawk, *Truth or Dare*, 54.

is the objectification of women's bodies.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, warfare in Sumeria "institutionalized slavery, which made all women vulnerable, for any woman could be captured in war, and women could also be sold as slaves by their husbands and fathers to pay debts."<sup>51</sup> Along with war came rape. Rape helped to transform the erotic from the "source of life-renewing energy to the reward of violence and brutality."<sup>52</sup>

According to Starhawk, it is in Enuma Elish that we find a further demonization of women and a continuing disregard of the physical body. Starhawk believes that in this story woman, as represented by Tiamat, is "turned into something bearing no resemblance to our common being. War [thus] demands the creation of an "other" who is different, inhuman."<sup>53</sup> Following a similar argument, for Keller the destruction of Tiamat is the destruction of the immanent and the destruction of the body. Her death through violence by one of her (great-grand)sons, Marduk, returns us to the leitmotif of matricide.<sup>54</sup> As Starhawk puts it, in Tiamat's dismemberment the world is dismembered. That is: "the living body of the Goddess has been torn apart: the patriarchal world, the world of hierarchy, racism, and domination, the world in which we still live today, exists literally within the pulsating remains of her corpse."<sup>55</sup> It is through the mutilation of Tiamat, Starhawk believes, that a new psychic reality was created. Society was shaped in terms of "power-over" and the self was thus reshaped to fit its institutions.<sup>56</sup> But there is more to it than this. Starhawk suggests that Tiamat was executed for exercising free choice--the ability to choose her own lovers and consorts as well as the freedom to refuse the demands of her male counterparts. Thus, Starhawk concludes, "female will and

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<sup>50</sup> This is reminiscent Keller's discussion of Aristotle's conceptions of women as monster, i.e., women no longer belong to the social order, they are now objects to be possessed and used by men as the gods would use and possess man.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>54</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 73.

<sup>55</sup> Starhawk, *Truth or Dare*, 63.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 65.

autonomy has become a crime."<sup>57</sup>

In the *Enuma Elish*, Starhawk continues, we find the roots of a paradigm of self, as reflected by the divinities, that involves the domination of others. As suggested previously by Keller, the domination of one person or group by another is a result of the radical separation of self and other, which is informed by the radical separation of the mind and the body. This mind-body separation, as we will soon learn, has led to the denigration of the physical world, a world which has been traditionally considered to be represented by women, while men are relegated to the so-called purity of the metaphysical world.

When Keller discusses the implications of the *Enuma Elish* for women, selfhood, and the body, she claims that this text expresses a phobia of the mother that is turned into matricidal aggression. This ultimately results in the almost universal association of destruction preceding creation.<sup>58</sup> Referring to Paul Ricoeur, Keller notes that through the *Enuma Elish* a cycle of myths that require the continual vanquishing of the enemy is born.<sup>59</sup> This is a theology of war in which the primordial enemy is a woman and her destruction does not accidentally coincide with the onset of patriarchy.<sup>60</sup> This suggests to Keller that the destruction of Tiamat represents the destruction of respect for women and the body as well as the usurpation of a tradition based in immanence by one which upholds transcendence as a model for divinity. Hence, every self that has emerged through the paradigm we are criticizing "posits the Other as an object, an opponent, in order to become *itself*," the transformation of women and other aliens into monsters illustrates all too well this process of oppositional transcendence."<sup>61</sup> Keller concludes with the following suggestion: if the goddess precedes the primacy of the male deity, just as the mother precedes the development of consciousness in her child, then from the perspective of separation the

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>58</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 75f.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 79.

patriarchal self can be understood to have been born through violence and isolation.<sup>62</sup>

The Marriage of Innana is taken by both Starhawk and Keller as the point in western history at which the separative paradigm of self emerged. This paradigm of self took from the warrior ideal a "separative-matricidal impulse" that "eliminates, decapitates and manipulates whatever it excludes from the tense panoply of its own limits."<sup>63</sup>

Supposing that there is a theological link between Sumerian cultures and the later biblical cultures which are the basis of contemporary western society,<sup>64</sup> Keller notes that, in Christian creationism, the word takes the place of these things necessary for the creation of the world in the Enuma Elish--the warrior's weapons and the woman's womb.<sup>65</sup>

Another author, working from the perspective of a psychoanalyst and literary critic, provides an interesting bridge between Sumeria and both Judaic and Christian cultures. In *Powers of Horror*, Julia Kristeva examines the abjection of women's physicality found in both the Hebrew and the Christian Bibles. She begins by noting that "biblical impurity is permeated with the tradition of defilement; in that sense, it *points to* but does not *signify* an autonomous force that *can* be threatening for [the] divine agency."<sup>66</sup> Kristeva argues that this 'autonomous force' is historically rooted "in the cathexis of the maternal function--mother, women, reproduction."<sup>67</sup> That is, the "biblical test" lies in subordinating maternal power to the symbolic order represented by divine Law, given by the Logos of God. True to her interests in semiotics, Kristeva suggests that biblical impurity always lies in the attempt to make logical that which departs from the order of things. The attempt to make order of things is a feat that results in the inscription of "the demonic in a more abstract and also more moral register as a potential for guilt

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>64</sup> Merlin Stone notes that Goddess religion and female kinship systems were closely related in the Ancient Near East. (*When God was a Woman*, 58).

<sup>65</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 81.

<sup>66</sup> Julia Kristeva. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. (Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 90.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 91.

and sin."<sup>68</sup> In other words, the attempt, indeed, the need to render a rationale of the cosmos reifies the other and this reification vilifies that which is different. Consequently women are denigrated for their deviation from the spiritual (understood here as male) norm.

Beginning with the Hebrew Bible, Kristeva claims that there are three main categories of abomination in Judaism: "1) food taboos; 2) corporeal alteration and its climax, death; and, 3) the feminine body and incest."<sup>69</sup> Each form of abomination is considered to be a state of being that is separated from the divine. Thus each form of abomination "in the last analysis relate[s...] to fusion with the mother. The pure/impure mechanism testifies to the harsh combat of Judaism, which in order to constitute itself, must wage against paganism and its maternal cults."<sup>70</sup> The struggle for autonomy carries with it the brunt of the battle we all go through in our attempts to separate ourselves from our mothers and to enter into maturity or, in Kristeva's words, "to become a speaking subject and/or subject to the Law",<sup>71</sup> i.e., society.

Kristeva refers to circumcision as an example of the pervasiveness of the need to separate the self from the maternal. Circumcision functions to separate one from what is considered the maternal, or "feminine impurity and defilement; it stands instead of sacrifice, meaning not only that it replaces it but is its equivalent--a sign of the alliance with God."<sup>72</sup> That is, the male carves on his own sex the separation from "the other sex, [the] impure, [the] defiled."<sup>73</sup> Such an overly determined repetition of the act of separation (initially symbolized by severing the umbilical cord) implies that circumcision duplicates and displaces the "preeminent separation, which is that from the mother."<sup>74</sup>

Kristeva takes this notion of matrophobic strife and the apparent need of separation from the mother further. She claims that such rituals as circumcision and the dietary laws of Leviticus

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

12 are a means of screening the Judaic need to separate itself not only from their physical mothers but also from the spiritual mother represented by the archaic Mother Goddess "who actually haunted the imagination of a nation at war with the surrounding polytheism."<sup>75</sup> This attempt to separate oneself from the mother--both the physical and the spiritual mother--may be at the roots of later religious intolerance found in the West. That is, the denigration of the body as compared to the mind as found in the roots of western mythologies may constitute part of the model that has been used to justify the objectification and intolerance of perspectives native to women and other groups not considered part of the norm.

Confronted with such attitudes toward the feminine and the maternal, one cannot help recognizing the possibility of finding in Judaism a connection to Keller's observations of matricidal tendencies found in Sumerian theology. When a culture is so obsessed with its purity that it would physically mutilate its 'privileged (male) members' in order to separate them from the 'defilement that is woman', the matricidal tendencies in that culture become overwhelmingly obvious. In this way, abjection in Biblical cultures can be understood as being part of a system of meaning in which prohibitions, when they depart from the logic demanded by separation, blended "with the maternal [are thought of] as [an] unclean and improper coalescence, as undifferentiated power and threat, a defilement to be cut off."<sup>76</sup>

Kristeva claims that in the Christian Bible the maternal body is somewhat reconciled with the norm, but what is kept is the notion of sinning flesh. It is over this point that Christianity further elaborates this dichotomization of the self--the split between inside and outside, subject and object.<sup>77</sup> This is a separation that becomes instrumental in later, more contemporary, perspectives on the self.

The split between subject and object appears in the form of an introjection of the spirit insofar as the physical world is rejected as 'impure' and the spiritual as 'pure.' The result is that

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 117.

the body is "jettisoned from the spirit; as a condition that is impossible [i.e., the impossibility of measuring up to the bodily perfection of Christ], irreconcilable, and, by that very token, real."<sup>78</sup> The consequence of this is the domination of the spirit over the body, the pure over the impure.

This radical separation of body and spirit is also found in Christian asceticism in which sin or bodily evil "guides one along the straightest paths of superego spirituality,"<sup>79</sup> or the spirituality of the father. Even if the sin of the flesh belongs to both sexes, Kristeva concludes, "its root and basic representation is nothing other than feminine temptation. That was already stated in *Ecclesiasticus*: 'sin originated with woman and because of her we all perish'."<sup>80</sup>

Through the above considerations, Kristeva argues that in biblical traditions there is a "fantasy of an archaic force, on the near side of separation, unconscious, tempting us to the point of losing our differences, our speech, our life...."<sup>81</sup> There is in such styles of thought, to use Keller's words, a culture of separation that is based on an unnatural fear of the body in general and the mother's body in particular. Hence we can find in biblical literature evidence of not only matriphobic tendencies but also matricidal ones. It seems evident that, given the political situation in which patriarchy and religion in the ancient Near East evolved, there was an unnatural fear of the power of the matriarchal religions indigenous to the era. The Judaic God is said to be a jealous one, yet, as Elaine Pagels points out, "of whom would he be jealous?"<sup>82</sup>

The vilification of woman and the body inherent to Christian theology is analyzed in Keller's reflections on Augustine and Aquinas. Augustine, Keller informs us, bases his conception of self on the Platonic tradition. We have already encountered that tradition's understanding of the physical nature of women in Aristotle's 'monsters.' Consequently in Augustine's thought we find the western fear of self division and an obsessive need to find

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 126. The passage can be found in *Ecclesiasticus* 25:24.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>82</sup> Elaine H. Pagels. "What Became of God the Mother?" in *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*. Edited by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), 113.

unity.<sup>83</sup> This fear of self division, as we have learned, is a result of the ethics of separation. That is, because man has separated himself from his emotions, his body, and his community, he discovers the fear of incompleteness. This fear of incompleteness, Keller believes, is the root of the obsession to find wholeness that pervades the western psyche. As has been argued previously, it then falls upon women, who incarnate the soluble self, to provide the necessary support to alleviate the separative ego's anxieties.

The sense of wholeness that Augustine gave to the West, however, is bought at the price of dissociation from the past, the future, from the diversity of life, and from the community in which one lives. To Keller, Augustine "cannot distinguish between the fragmentation wrought by the separative ego and the complex plurality that is arguably the only real alternative to fragmentation."<sup>84</sup> What we see in this description is a stance based in the anti-plurality that is characteristic of a monistic and monotheistic world view that Christianity embraces. Even if the post-biblical image of the trinity may be seen to be an attempt to compensate for the "momentum of monolithic thinking," it is not a description of the relationship between the son and his father, let alone of the interrelation of the three figures of Christian divinity. Keller believes that Augustine's perspective and the resulting Christian dogma of the trinity serve to repress something that might undermine the conceptual essence of patriarchy: i.e., the relational implications of the Trinity's personhood.<sup>85</sup> This is a familiar theme echoed in archetypal psychology, which advocates a polytheistic paradigm for self as well as being critical of the reliance upon the problem of imagining oneself through the Heart of Augustine.

Keller observes that this repression of the relational implications of the trinity is augmented by certain theological notions which claim God is not complex but simple, not in process but in stasis. That is, the Christian idea of God is based upon the notion that nothing simple is changeable. Such ideas demonstrate, as Keller points out, that God can never have any

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<sup>83</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 164.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 166f.

real relations to the various manifestations of his self. To Keller this suggests that the Christian conception of the Godhead is reflective of the patriarchal conception of selfhood. That is, the trinity is based upon all male imagery.<sup>86</sup> If it is the case that human selves are created in the images of their gods and goddesses, which are themselves created by these same selves, it is only natural to assume that the unity of the Christian self imitate the substantial oneness of the Christian God<sup>87</sup>--a God who is separate, controlling, transcendent, and male. Keller writes: We can see once again that the bad faith of androcentric imagery "works indivisibly" with the metaphysics of separate selfhood. Idols of control take the place of cosmic connectivity....The Father's absence results in the "death of God"--Nietzschean, Freudian, Marxian, or merely apathetic--for which the patriarchal dynamics operating within the matricidal infrastructure had long prepared. Echoing the absence of the preoedipal father, which gives rise to the psychology of separation, Western theology subsumed the possibility of multiple interrelation under the simplicity of separation.<sup>88</sup>

Although Augustine prepared the way for the western self, steeped as it is in individualism and individuality, it took the work of Thomas Aquinas to set the stage for the final theological and philosophical blow that led to the radical mind-body dichotomy we know today. Even though the Thomist description of the soul does in a sense presuppose connections among all creatures in the cosmos, it also "represents the triumph of substantialism."<sup>89</sup> Keller informs us that in the Thomist scheme of things we find a further reference to Aristotelian metaphysics. Hence, all connections among differing "substances"<sup>90</sup> are said to be the result of accidents--the

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 167f. Compare this comment to Mary Daly's statement suggesting that "the three divine persons" of the trinity is the West's paradigmatic model of the pseudoterm person. This basis of western personhood, claims Daly, excludes all notion of a female presence. Therefore, she concludes, the Christian godhead functions to de-sacralize or reify women as persons. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), 37f.

<sup>87</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 172.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 171-172.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>90</sup> Keller notes that "substance" as used by Aristotle and Aquinas have two basic characteristics: 1) it is capable of separate existence, and 2) that "substance is a determinate particular thing."

same kind of accidents that made women "monsters" for Aristotle. What is meant by accidents, in this instance, is that the connection between different souls is something that has nothing to do with their essences. That is, connection to others is something that is external to the Thomist soul's natural condition--separation. Hence, Keller comes to this conclusion: "Separability, or independence--not being "in" something else in Aristotle's sense--[thus] quietly lodges itself in Christian metaphysics."<sup>91</sup> It is at this point that we find the stage set for the most devastating philosophical twist to the plot to separate the mind from the body--Descartes' cogito.

It is Descartes, Keller notes, who ultimately separated the unity of the mind and body that was tenuously established by Augustine and Aquinas. Descartes separated the world into two substances: *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, the material body and the 'thinking thing,' which is identified with the soul and considered to be essentially rational. Keller believes that through the identification of the thinking thing with the reflexive self "we now encounter for the first time in [western] conceptual history the fully substantial self--the self-objectified self, autonomous and so fundamentally separated from everything, beginning with his own body."<sup>92</sup> Yet it became necessary to introduce God in order to connect the differing moments of existence belonging to the same ego. Hence God is conceived of as a third substance, the only one that truly can be absolutely independent. Consequently, it is God who eventually became the means of making the connection between mind and body.<sup>93</sup> That is, it is only through a patriarchal, transcendent, and matricidal god that we are permitted to find this connection. The consequence of such a radical separation of the mind and the body, coupled with a over-valuation of the spiritual aspect, is that the body and those who represent it (women) are vilified and abjected. Not only is there an exclusion of women from the society of men, there also is a separation of the self (the spiritual) from the self (the physical).

This final blow to the theological conception of self struck by Descartes has since

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(Ibid., 173.)

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 174.

resulted in what can be considered the excessive rationalism of western society. When the mind is considered to be the only true, pure aspect of the human creature, the body is left at the wayside. It is this self-objectified self, this obsessively rational agent is the mind that ultimately influences the modern West's *Weltanschauung* and, in particular, finds its way into its psychology. Keller's argument demonstrates the depth and range of the feminist critique and implicates western psychology as being steeped in inadequate phraseology.

### **I.iii: Separation in Western Traditions: The Psychology of Separatism**

Western psychology has been greatly influenced by the Cartesian perspective of humanity. Descartes, however, is not the only influence on traditional western psychology. Psychology has, in fact, an intellectual lineage that reaches back into the depths of western thought; in part, it is the progeny of Christian theology.<sup>94</sup> For this reason we can find in the so-called "fathers" of modern psychology the kinds of assumptions that are characteristic of the separative self. In the following section, I will summarize Keller's thoughts regarding how separatist ethics and perspectives have invaded Freudian and Jungian psychology. In both cases, we can find the assumption that psychological maturation requires the separation of the individual from his or her mother, a separation Keller believes to be rooted in the original mind-body separation of western thought. Keller's critique of Jungian psychology in particular will demonstrate how acute this problem is felt to be in contemporary society and, thus, may be the basis of a paradigm shift in how self is conceived.

It is Keller's contention that Freud's psychology, especially as it is revealed in the response to Romain Rolland's notion of the "oceanic feeling" in *Civilization and its Discontents*, is representative of the separatist perspective.<sup>95</sup> Keller claims that Freud's response to the "oceanic feeling" indicates he had no real idea of the profundity of this kind of connection to others and to his own self. To Keller, Freud's belief that an infant's experience of primary

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<sup>94</sup> See James Hillman's *The Myth of Analysis*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).

<sup>95</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 96.

narcissism is not only a result of the special relationship that only a child traditionally has with his or her mother but also is the cause of this 'oceanic feeling.' This belief suggests that for Freud's representation of the separative self such "limitless narcissism" represents a primal threat to the integrity of the ego. In other words, it is the threat of regression into the mother or into the mother goddess and polytheism that signals an unholy or unhealthy dissolution of the separative ego.<sup>96</sup>

Freud, Keller admits, did not invent the separative ego, but he did provide it a new descriptive context and demonstrated that for the ego to exist at all it must first develop. Such ego development ostensibly requires the support of cultural practice. To Keller the result of Freud's insistence on ego development is that his thesis "undermines any static, Cartesian dualism" in which the ego is assumed "to presuppose...the substantial human subject."<sup>97</sup> That is, the id is said to exist prior to the ego and continues to exist even after the ego's emergence is initiated by exposure to the external world.

Except when one is an infant or when one is in love, Keller continues, the Freudian ego is separated from the external world. It is only in these two circumstances that this feeling of

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 94. I want to point out the problematic nature of Keller's understanding of Freud's treatment of the 'oceanic feeling.' First of all, Freud, in *Civilization and its Discontents*, does admit that he cannot find this feeling of an "indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole" in himself, but does not deny that this feeling, which is of a 'primary nature,' may be present in others. What Freud is concerned with is merely whether this feeling can be rightly considered "the *fons et origo* of the whole need for religion." Freud points out that such a feeling may, in fact, be the result of the ego fooling itself into perceiving that it is indeed separated from the external world as well as the unconscious. Freud then points out that "the boundaries of the ego are not constant." Furthermore, as the ego develops it does not necessarily lose that primary feeling of its connection to the world (5) and can be brought to light once more since what is learned once can never be wholly forgotten. Furthermore, he never makes the connection between the 'oceanic feeling' and the mother, but rather claims that it is the desire for the father that brings about this feeling of connection, a feeling which is permanently sustained by "a fear of the superior power of Fate" and the "need for a father's protection." Sigmund Freud. *Civilization and its Discontents*. Translated by Joan Riviere. Revised and edited by James Strachey. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1982) 2-9.

<sup>97</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 96.

interconnection, that this oceanic feeling is permitted to appear.<sup>98</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that it is only through being in love that western society sanctions this exception to the "normal (manly) state of ego autonomy."<sup>99</sup> To Keller such sanctions of heterosexual love assure male dominance and the further denigration of women.<sup>100</sup>

Freud's admitted inability to understand Rolland's oceanic feeling, Keller argues, is a result of the threat it posed for his psychology. This lack of understanding coupled with the problems caused by the perceived need of a sharp demarcation between the external and the internal worlds, constitute a contradiction in Freud's metapsychological thought. That is, Freud's psychology is confounded by the heroic warrior that must separate pleasure from unpleasure, inner from outer, reality from phantasy. Keller notes that it is exactly the immanent characteristics of the Self that are separated out of the ego. The result is that feelings of expansiveness are relegated to such realms of ecstasy as are found in creative endeavours and mysticism. This is said to be celebrated in Freudian explanations of religious experiences, which claim that they ultimately refer to the "nostalgia of infantile unconsciousness."<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, Keller believes that Freud's concession that in the ego is found a small residue of a more inclusive feeling or intimate bond between the id and the world is a confession of a "massive loss, indeed loss of self, enforced by normalcy: we forfeit the intimate sense of interconnection with the world and a plenitude of vital feeling, only to gain an egocentered dualism of the self and other."<sup>102</sup> Consequently, maturity for Freud is understood to appear only in conjunction with separation--separation from the mother and from the internal world. Thus connectivity is considered to be threatening to civilization. Paradoxically, however, the Freudian ego is a result

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 97. Here we can find a divergence between Keller and Hillman. Keller misses the point regarding Hillman's criticism that romantic love operates more as a mechanism of separation than connection. While it is true that people in love make strong connections with one another, Keller does not see that such situations, as they are idealized in the West, tend to function to separate the couple from the rest of the community in which they live.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 99f.

of the internalization of those persons who represent its ego ideals--i.e., the introjection of images or imagos representing those important persons in one's life. Furthermore, Freud's comments on the mass psyche<sup>103</sup> suggest that the egos of those persons in a group are indeed interconnected. Hence Keller concludes her critique of Freud by noting that the "clues point toward a dynamic of interconnection by cumulative incorporation, both individually and historically. They stand in tension with Freud's assumption of separate ego feeling, but especially with the ego ideals of the culture whose unconscious he seeks to describe."<sup>104</sup>

Keller's critique of Jungian psychology, in contrast, is considerably less generous. Although in Jung we find a psychology that is matrifocal in nature, as compared to Freud's patrifocal perspective, Jung's preoccupation with finding wholeness and achieving individuation also requires, Keller argues, a matricidal impulse.<sup>105</sup> "His theory," she writes, "supports our suspicion that the matricidal symbolism not only expresses but provokes the Western development of a separate and andromorphic ego."<sup>106</sup> That is, "the whole self at which individuation aims requires ultimate reconciliation...with the slaughtered mother",<sup>107</sup> even if the individuation process presupposes an ego defined by separation from the mother.

Referring to Jung's *Symbols of Transformation*, Keller indicates how Jung came to the conclusion that the achievement of psychological maturity requires the dismemberment of the mother, symbolized by dragons or serpents. This, she notes, is reminiscent of the foul deed performed by Marduk in the Enuma Elish. It is only through the slaughter of the "monster," known as woman, that the hero established the world. In psychological parlance, symbols of dragons and serpents refer to the unconscious. Thus the maturation of the warrior-identified self

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<sup>103</sup> See: Sigmund Freud's *Group Psychology* (*The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Vol. 18. Translated by James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1968), and *Totem and Taboo*. (*The Standard Edition*.... Vol. 13. Translated by James Strachey. London: the Hogarth Press, 1953).

<sup>104</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 101.

<sup>105</sup> Keller writes: "Whereas the matricide is itself repressed in the Freudian scheme, it takes center stage in Jung's thought." (*Ibid.*, 106).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

requires that ego-consciousness be freed from the grip of the "deadly" unconscious. "Deadly," writes Keller, "presumably because it prevents the emergence of conscious individuality."<sup>108</sup>

Unfortunately, this destructive deed is ultimately ineffectual and thus must be performed again and again. But, as Keller informs us, "we might argue that there the deeper misfortune lies in the need for the mother to serve as a scapegoat for the hostility, opposition and disconnection by which the heroic ego develops. For this mythic drama inexorably plays itself out in the domain of literal relationships."<sup>109</sup> Even if Jung manages to avoid considering the consequences of such actions, he demonstrates the force that images have in our daily activities. "In other words," Keller writes, "symbolic, psychic matricide conspires with interpersonal and social misogyny."<sup>110</sup> It appears evident to Keller, therefore, that Jung helps to reveal the deep structures of "matriphobic strife" underlying western civilization and the West's conceptions of selfhood.

Keller also finds a parallel to the separate and soluble selves in Jungian theory. In Jung's description of the anima and animus we find a constellation of "oppositional dyads" which function to project onto the other the unrealized and disposed potentialities of the self. Keller writes:

projection of the man's anima onto a woman causes her to bear the burden of those traits he ought to develop in and for himself, but has repressed because of their "femininity". For example, though he is in fact every bit as dependent, vulnerable or sexual as a woman, if he does not "rescue" such Andromeda traits in himself, he will try to keep the actual woman in a captive state of dependency upon him, her femininity at his disposal. By projection he expels unwelcome, female-associated traits from his own ego.<sup>111</sup>

Projection, as such, operates as a mechanism of exclusion; it is a means of forcing the abjected or the undesirable outside of oneself. By placing undesirable characteristics on the shoulders of another, the separative ego objectifies the Other. Once objectified, there is little to keep from

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 110.

vilifying and exploiting the Other, while forcing it into obedience and dependency.

Like Freud, Jung characterizes the ego in terms that represent women's psyches in a negative way. Both render descriptive truths about the male psyche normative and both the Jungian and Freudian perspective are psychologically androcentric. Both Jung and Freud understand ego development as requiring emerging consciousness to radically separate itself from the mother. Both also claim that the development of woman's ego does not require such a high degree of separation from the mother. A result of this perspective is that women are denigrated and considered lacking in moral scruples, strength of will, and autonomy. Women are described by these two 'fathers' of psychology as deficient and merely possessing such traits as emotionalism, connectivity, awareness of physicality, and so on. In a word, women are conceived as "monsters," who deviate from the masculine norm of selfhood.

Archetypal psychology could extend its critique of the institutionalization of self by examining such gender issues more closely. A psychology that is based in fantasy and images needs to take into account the means through which soul and self are constructed not only in regard to their psychological, religious, or philosophical basis but also in regard to how the masculine norm has been fantasized and elevated.

## **II: The Solution: Defeating the Separated Hero**

The feminist style of criticizing traditional ideas of self in western thought is alternate from but compatible with Hillman's archetypal psychology. Keller demonstrates that the tradition of separating the masculine from the feminine as well as mind from body is at the root of the separated self and its correlate, the soluble self. Moreover, Keller suggests that the tradition of separation reaches perhaps as far back as the late Bronze age, was evident in ancient Greece, entered both Jewish and Christian theology, and finally roosted in modern thought as cartesian-informed philosophy and depth psychology.

Although Keller successfully describes the problems inherent to an understanding of self that is conceived as separated, she suggests an alternative to separation: connection. Keller

would have feminists reject models of self based in separation in preference for what can be called a romantic paradigm of a Self that understands the individual as interconnected to others and to the world. I have previously characterized this so-called 'connective self' as an understanding of self that refuses the divisions found in the mind-body split, the division of self from other, and the separation of women from men.

Keller provides her readers with a possible corrective to some of the problems found in the separated self. She relies upon the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead to make the following point: if we would re-conceive self, we must debunk the traditional belief that self is a static entity, which is fully constituted at birth (Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas). Criticizing the separate self's need to find permanence, Keller contends that such mistaken needs cut the self off from the "instreaming universe." The Self thus exaggerates its connections to the past as a reference point for a sense of permanent self-identity. It is this need for a point of permanent identity, part of the crisis emerging from the Cartesian paradigm that claims that the only permanent thing in the cosmos is a static God, which dissolves the need for connection, spontaneity, and feeling. Such a perspective, she writes, "prepares the way for the self-encapsulated self" that is rigidly bound to its past and projects its future in order to posit a homogeneity of self over time.<sup>112</sup> What this perspective demands is a domination of the self. Such domination is the "age-old alternative to connection."<sup>113</sup> This is a denial of both relations and feelings and thus requires external manipulation<sup>114</sup>--presumably by the static, yet permanent God of Christianity.

From process philosophy Keller borrows the notion that all reality is interconnected and that every individual is present in every other individual. But the means of recognizing such connection depends upon another so-called weakness of women: feeling. In process thought, an individual is never static, he or she is always moving from one moment to another. In other

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 196-199.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

words, individuals constantly become who they are. This implies, to Keller, that "actual entities are events, not substances."<sup>115</sup> That is, each individual is in a process by which he or she 'feels' the world or intuits his or her connection to the surrounding world. In this way, argues Keller, "Process philosophy...is an entire metaphor for feeling."<sup>116</sup> 'Feeling' in this case does not refer to the emotions or affective states, rather it alludes to a means of "direct connections between actual experiences."<sup>117</sup>

Such an "empathic continuum" or sense of feeling, Keller notes, helps us achieve the experience of radical relatedness. This radical relatedness is something that we have already seen in Hillman's thoughts about the physiognomic role of the heart and in what Keller refers to as the "doctrine of internal relations." This doctrine, Keller informs us, originated within the monist context of absolute idealism, according to which all relations refer to an Absolute. Yet, as Keller notes, Whitehead refuses any notion of a monistic absolute, because he understands the universe to be essentially pluralistic. Any one individual is situated among the many other individuals, who together constitute "the complex compositions of feeling that are the actual entities."<sup>118</sup> Thus, internal relatedness, in this instance, means that all things are part of the experiencing individual. Keller quotes Whitehead as saying the following: "Every actual entity is present in every other actual entity."<sup>119</sup> From this perspective we see that any self can not possibly exist without participating with every other self in some way.

To Keller, a description of a "connected, permeable ego ascribed to female children" fits what Whitehead calls the "actual entity" much more closely than does "the rigid and clearly delineated male ego",<sup>120</sup> as it is traditionally conceived. Yet Keller points out that it is not only

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>119</sup> Quoted from Whitehead's *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. Edited by D.R. Griffin and D.W. Sheiburne. (New York: Free Press, 1978), 50. Found in Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 184.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 189.

women whose integrity must be connective. That is, connectivity is something that reaches beyond any "specifically feminine mode of relation."<sup>121</sup> Keller continues to argue this with the following statement: "The relational self is bound up with the 'female' in only one important way: women are less likely under the conditions of patriarchy to have repressed the fluidity and connectivity of which all persons consist."<sup>122</sup> Indeed, it is the case that the patriarchal need for control disallows the ability to distinguish connection from conformity and it is because of this that any consideration of self cannot be considered to be apolitical.<sup>123</sup> For Keller, the separative self politicizes Self against what it most fears: "a collective sameness, a proscription of difference, a prohibition against wandering. It projects this fear onto women. Matrophobia, we recall, is the fear of a conformist collectivity."<sup>124</sup> Hence, Keller concludes, it is necessary to dissolve such notions of an enduring, permanent Self in order to move beyond "the static status of self-enclosed subjects and their metaphysical sexism."<sup>125</sup>

Like Hillman, Keller argues that the heroic ego, or the separative self, cannot tolerate multiple images within itself. The image of a separative divinity, she says, collaborates with the metaphysics of "the independent substance" to bring about the modern, divided individual.<sup>126</sup> Because the monotheist world view attempts to overcome fragmentation and division and because it conveys itself as competitive exclusion, it could only turn against any prior mother. That is, it had to do away with the competition that is the feminine. As Keller writes: "Quite naturally, the human imitates its image of the divine. But quite unnaturally, antinaturally--with heroic artifice--the divine became the male alone."<sup>127</sup> The oneness of the heroic ego is "exclusivity in excess." It recapitulates, as Keller puts it, "the separative-matricidal impulse of the hero: it eliminates, decapitates and manipulates whatever it excludes from the tense panoply

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 199.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 204.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>126</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 86.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 88.

of its own limits."<sup>128</sup> It is the individual without content. Yet when we demythologize the transcendent presuppositions that are the basis of this heroic perspective, "we are already reclaiming the values of immanence..."<sup>129</sup> To Keller, as with Hillman, an appreciation of plurality may break the deadlock of the heroic ego ideal, forcing us to come to the realization that we are not simply one, not simply autonomous. Because the heroic ego conquers and denies the many in the name of transcendental oneness, because this ego is in the image of men, and because women tend to have a more complex and pluralistic psyche, the splintering of the one into the many may seem less desirable for women than the accomplishment of integrity. Yet, as Keller argues, "integrity is the project of a pluralistic personality."<sup>130</sup> Polymorphic integrity, she believes, has to do with a relation to our own emotions: "It is through emotions that the primal feelings for the preceding selves and worlds flow into my awareness..."<sup>131</sup>

Keller outlines two "intertwining dimensions of multiplicity," which are as follows: there are many selves that are made up of the fabric of many persons, places, animals, (that which we introject) and that one's many selves make up "the necklace of experiences that make up my personal history from birth to now."<sup>132</sup> If we acknowledge the presence and influence of our experiences of many selves, "they become part of the community of my psyche" working together "to produce the integration of a greater complexity of feeling."<sup>133</sup> In this way we can understand integrity to mean "an integrity of radical inclusion." I am not simply one, not simply monodimensional, I am many ones and each moment integrates the many ones of the cosmos surrounding me. "Integrity," Keller writes, "unbreaks the brokenness by weaving the fragments into a new--if provisional--whole. Not multiplicity, but the refusal of multiplicity, fragments."<sup>134</sup> For these reasons Keller advocates that we turn to "post-patriarchal religion."

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128 Ibid.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid., 226.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid., 227.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid., 228.

Like Hillman, Keller believes that spiritual systems that have removed themselves from the politics and ideologies of the separative, patriarchal (monotheistic) perspective allow for a multifocal, or polytheistic, vision. "Reconnection," she writes, "requires polyscopic discernment. We can no more mobilize the divine element in the universe in the form of a single name, a single sex, a single code, creed or cult, than we can freeze the fluid transformations of the universe."<sup>135</sup> Keller concludes that a sense of connection, a sense of community, can be found in diversity or polytheism and an 'empathic continuum' or, as Hillman puts it, the thought of the heart.

Although Keller's appropriation of process thought is an important consideration for the emergence of an alternate notion of self in postmodern thought, I do not believe that it comprises a sufficient or effective basis for theorizing about a connective notion of selfhood. A consideration of the self in process can make a difference in how we conceive of self as something that is constantly being formed, instead of being destined to remain the same throughout one's life. Furthermore, Keller's understanding of self in process is open to questions regarding multiplicity. How, for instance, are we to infer that a self in process necessarily implies a self with many different faces? How are we to account for the way that feelings make up the epistemological practice and ontological status of a self in process? And, what are the implications of process as it is depicted: does Keller use process to suggest growth and maturation?

In her 1989 article, "Feminist Ethics of Inseparability",<sup>136</sup> Keller advocates the need to develop an "intuition of interconnection." This is an issue first brought to light in *From a Broken Web*. Because we cannot experience everything at once, Keller suggests, we must rely upon intuition to allow us "to glimpse the unseen interrelatedness of all things."<sup>137</sup> Like Hillman,

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 250.

<sup>136</sup> Catherine Keller. "Feminist Ethics of Inseparability." *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*. Edited by Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 256-266.

<sup>137</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 158.

Keller suggests that it is through feeling that we are enabled to directly experience the world and our connections to it. Such an intuition would permit individuals to gain the experience that "I *am* the complex unity of feeling that rises up at this moment in response to my feelings of the plural [nature of the] world."<sup>138</sup> Such an "empathic continuum," Keller notes, helps people to come to an experience of the radical relatedness, already seen in the "doctrine of internal relations." This doctrine, as Keller informs us, originated within the monist context of absolute idealism, according to which all relations refer to an absolute. Yet, Keller refuses any notion of a monistic absolute, because she (in following Whitehead) understands the universe as being essentially plural. Any one person is situated among many other people, and this intimation is reinforced through "the complex compositions of feeling" that make up actual persons.<sup>139</sup> This is to say that it is the experiences conveyed by our ability to feel things that connect, or will re-connect us to others. Thus, internal relatedness means, here, that everything experienced either subjectively or objectively is part of the interrelated individual. That is, if we surmise that there is no real distinction between subject and object, mind and body, then we can come to an understanding of self as something that is not separated from the world and from others.

The problem with Keller's presentation of an intuition of interconnection is the absence of any concrete examples of such interconnection. In her review of *Weaving the Visions*, Carol LeMasters takes Keller to task over this very issue. LeMasters, in fact, finds Keller's article, "Feminism and the Ethic of Inseparability," the most disturbing in the entire anthology,<sup>140</sup> partly because of the importance of Keller's article in regard to the possibility that "connectedness" has become an indisputable tenet of feminist theological faith as expounded in *Weaving the Visions*.

Keller's notion of connectedness is based predominantly upon the psychological thought of Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan, who are not, however, without their critics. In

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Carol LeMasters. "Unhealthy Uniformities." *Women's Review of Books*. 1989, 7(1):15-16.

agreement with Keller, LeMasters notes that the psychological inability "to separate presents a serious problem for many women, feminists and nonfeminists alike. There may be an inherent problem in talking about the virtues of elusive boundaries with people who are still learning how to claim boundaries at all."<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, LeMasters concludes that it may be "'connectedness' that makes it difficult for women to accept diversity within community. Keller acknowledges the possible dangers, but gives no specific examples as to what form such an "'ethic of inseparability' might take or what struggles will be required."<sup>142</sup>

It may be that when women are socialized to be soluble, as opposed to separative, they find it difficult to see past the connections and accept diversity. In fact LeMasters has this to say about the ideal of diversity in feminist considerations of self: "The call to accept diversity is never really tested because the writers [of *Weaving the Visions*] never really clash. It is easy to affirm difference if the conflicts are never too carefully delineated, if the minorities are carefully selected, and if the authors ultimately all agree."<sup>143</sup>

In the above discussion of the shortcomings of Keller's 'ethic of inseparability,' we find a critical assessment of the call for a paradigm of self that is rooted in connection, as opposed to separation. LeMasters, however, is not only critical of Keller's approach to self. She points out that the uncritical acceptance of such notions as interconnection, nurturance, and relationality is problematic for feminist theorizations about self in general. In fact, she notes that when interconnection, nurturance, and relationality "begin to be accepted uncritically as spiritual values, feminist theology runs the risk of becoming as formulaic and abstract as the patriarchal theological writings it vehemently opposes."<sup>144</sup>

Although the ethic of relationality differs from traditional Christian morality in significant ways,<sup>145</sup> LeMasters finds the images and the terminology in *Weaving the Visions* to be so

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>145</sup> The ways that the ethic of relationality differ from Christian morality is threefold: "first,

repetitive as to become predictable, causing them to lose their transformative power. "Words like 'connectedness' and 'nurturance'," she writes, "tend to lose their meaning on the fiftieth or sixtieth occurrence. And while the writers declare they are not looking for a single truth, the reader senses in them a need for coherence and an avoidance of blatant contradiction."<sup>146</sup>

If the kinds of feminist theorizations about self as found in *Weaving the Visions* are, indeed, as wanting as LeMasters suggests, then feminists must continue to think about and write about self in such a way as to ameliorate the shortcomings of the contemporary state of feminist thought regarding selfhood. In such a situation, it may become necessary for feminists to look again at self in order to articulate a more comprehensive notion of the status of the human being as interconnected, diverse, and embodied.

Feminists have often appropriated the thoughts of male theorists (Keller's usages of Whitehead's process philosophy, for instance) to make their arguments. Although many feminists are primarily interested in articulating a notion of selfhood that escapes the prison of patriarchal thought and categories, there are men who have made similar criticisms about self. James Hillman may be one thinker to whom those feminists concerned with the articulation of an alternate notion of self can turn to find a means to help enrich their thought about self as called for by LeMasters. However, contemporary feminist insight into religion, self, and culture can also help to expose and flesh out some of the weak areas of Hillman's thought.

The next chapter will investigate the possibility that feminist insight into selfhood can help archetypal psychology articulate a more comprehensive view of self as well as more effective criticisms of traditional psychotherapy. Hillman, as we know, has produced a substantial amount of thought about self or, as he would say about soul, which takes into account the intrinsic diversity feminists attribute to humanity. He advocates a polytheistic paradigm for

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ethics are seen as contextual rather than absolute....Second, ethics arise from love of life, not abnegation of it....[And] Third, feminist theologians seek to incorporate into their spirituality those aspects of humanity which are most taboo to women and which religions have generally ignored: sexuality and rage." (ibid.)

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 16.

psychological investigation of the soul, as opposed to a monotheistic one. This polytheistic paradigm taken in tandem with the primacy of the imaginal field permits us to place all ideologies on a level ground. This means that we must equally value contemporary feminist thought as has been the case for traditional patriarchal perspectives.

To Hillman, polytheism represents a more accurate model of humanity than does the narrow, singular, and literal perspective of monotheism that permeates traditional notions of the world and selfhood. Polytheism as a paradigm for psychology provides a critique of a traditional psychology that has its roots in such totalizing fantasies as materialism, oppositionalism, and Christianity. Furthermore, polytheism articulates an alternate notion of human being that not only allows but also encourages an understanding of self based in diversity, multiplicity, and relatedness. But the polytheistic paradigm for psychology is not all that Hillman provides. He is also interested in the role that feelings, community, religion, and aesthetics play in the construction of self. These are all issues he has in common with much of contemporary feminist thought about religion. We find that Hillman's target of attack, monotheism as found in Christian and Jewish sources, to be the same as that of the feminist theorists considered herein. Furthermore, Keller, et al, argue for a perspective that values our multiplicity and feelings.

Keller's critique of the roots of the separate Self and Hillman's criticisms of psychology are indeed compatible. Both find problems with the singular or monotheistic model of selfhood that has evolved from Christian theology, western philosophy, and traditional psychology. Both suggest as an alternative to such radical separation a paradigm of self that can be characterized as being polytheistic, located in community, that finds its relations to the world through feeling or the aesthetic response, and is based in an understanding of the psyche as something that is grounded in the imaginal.

## **Chapter Four: The Mind-Body Problematic in Archetypal Psychology: Toward a Semiotic Imagination**

It is possible to critically assess James Hillman's thought by employing feminist insight to look at an idea of self that is emerging in the postmodern West. I suggest that not only can archetypal psychology benefit from feminist insights, but also that archetypal psychology in turn has some value for those contemporary feminist thinkers, who are concerned with re-conceiving selfhood in light of postmodern criticisms of traditional, modern paradigms of self.

Looking deeper into the congruences between Hillman's thought and contemporary feminist thinkers, some areas of contention will arise, which can be approached so as to show how archetypal psychology could benefit from further dialogue and theorizing regarding such feminist concerns, for instance, as the social construction of self, the role of the mind-body separation in western thought, and the problematic nature of a psychology of imagination that lacks epistemological sophistication. Julia Kristeva (a French psychoanalyst and literary critic, whose work as a feminist occasionally has been under fire) is a most useful witness in that regard. Kristeva's assessment of the body's role in the production of poetic language, or the imagination, could be seen as one means by which archetypal psychology can look into theorizing about imagination as based in the body. By doing this, archetypal psychology may be able to present a richer epistemological foundation from which it can theorize about imagination.

### **I: The Problematic of Selfhood as Indicated by the Mind-Body Separation**

According to Hillman and Keller who theorize about *anima mundi* and Whitehead's 'emphatic continuum' respectively, because modern paradigms of the Self remove all value and life from the physical world, Western thought has found instituted a separation between physical being and the mind as well as the relation of self to other and to the physical world. Consequently, in the thought of the persons considered in the following pages, I will find an emphasis on returning sacredness to the body, on giving meaning back to the physical world. In doing so we will further encounter one of the major issues for women who are struggling to

articulate an alternate notion of selfhood that responds to the mind-body separation intrinsic to traditional paradigms of human agency.

Many feminists believe it is imperative that we learn to see the human body and the physical world in a new way: as something sacred. This is so for the reason that many contemporary feminist thinkers are deeply concerned with developing a vision of selfhood that is based in their lived experiences as physical beings.<sup>1</sup> By critically examining feminist concerns surrounding the physical body, I intend not only to indicate some of the short comings of archetypal psychology in regard to the body, but also to show that it is, indeed, possible for Hillman's approach to the body be improved and enriched through conversation with feminists regarding the role of the body in the construction of self.

Feminists who are occupied with the role of one's physically lived experiences as embodied individuals are also concerned with the way that the female body in particular is imagined by traditional forms of thought. One of the emphases of feminist scholarship is the articulation of a notion of selfhood that is free of the reification and objectification of patriarchal perspectives, which place women on a pedestal of male desire and hatred. Consequently, in the thought of each of the feminist theorists considered, we can find a great deal of emphasis placed on the need to re-imagine the body in ways that alleviate or escape the trap of such patriarchal desire and vilification. Yet this issue regarding the normative (male) imagination of the female body in particular as well as the human body in general is something that James Hillman tends to neglect in his attempt to 're-vision' psychology.

As was demonstrated in Chapter Three, many of Hillman's ideas easily align themselves with feminist discourse about the re-imagination of self. Hillman is highly critical of the

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<sup>1</sup> This point is made by Carol Christ in *Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987) in which she suggests that the emergence of Goddess symbols in contemporary culture reflects the emerging power of women today, the celebration of the female body, and the acceptance of humanity's connectedness to nature. To Christ, these are three issues which have been constantly denied in Western religions and must consequently be addressed. (156).

consequences of those modern paradigms which separate rationality from non-rationality, the poetic from the literal, self from community. In his polytheistic and aesthetic paradigms for psychology, Hillman presents a space in which the richness of the many and the different can be more fully appreciated. Hillman shows us that our ideas of self are rooted in a variety of related systems of thought that tend towards the exclusion of those things that contradict the modern self's interests. Yet, when he exposes this exclusionary tendency in modernity's discourses about self, he neglects sufficiently to emphasize the consequences of the mind-body dualism. Hillman, in fact, makes scant reference to the body (although in both *The Thought of the Heart* and *Suicide and the Soul* he alternatively speaks about certain metaphors of the heart or bemoans psychology's medical heritage in regard to its literalistic understanding of the body as a mechanical thing).

Furthermore, in *Suicide and the Soul*, Hillman is highly critical of medical science's tendency to literalize all aspects of humanity, whether they are of the material or immaterial realms. This tendency toward literalization is something that is also identified as having its roots in the Cartesian paradigm. For Hillman, a literal understanding of the psyche and, I assume, the body must lead to the institutionalization of self. As we know, Hillman's polytheistic and aesthetic re-visioning of psychology is intended to help in opening up our selves to the value of the myriad of relations experienced in the world. He advocates a paradigm for psychology that evades the monotheistic biases, or monocular vision, of traditional psychology which have emerged as a result of the admixture of Christian theology, Cartesian metaphysics, and scientific materialism, and soul.

One of the most explicit statements Hillman makes in regard to the body's role in archetypal psychology can be found in *Re-Visioning Psychology*. Hillman writes that soul is distinguishable from the body, because soul cannot be identified with any literal representation or perspective. That is, soul is considered to be distinct from body in regard to any attempt to develop a literal understanding of one's physical nature. Yet, he claims, as soon as the body is realized to contain a "subtle body--a fantasy system of complexes, symptoms, tastes, influences

and relations, zones of delight, pathologized images, trapped insights--then body and soul lose their borders, neither more literal or metaphorical than the other."<sup>2</sup>

In light of this indistinguishability of body and soul (brought about by the breakdown of the legitimacy of the division between mind and body, its related hierarchy, and the differentiation of mind and body as experiential aspects of human existence), we might say that Hillman is attempting to deinstitutionalize the separation of mind and body as is found in much of modern thought. As we can see, this point is a subtle one. Hillman argues that so long as we make no literalistic claims about a 'body' or about a 'soul,' there is really no distinction between the two. "Remember: the enemy is the literal," writes Hillman, "and the literal is not the concrete flesh but the negligence of the vision that concrete flesh is a magnificent citadel of metaphors."<sup>3</sup>

Taken at face value, the decision to understand any distinction between the soul and the body as belonging to a literalistic perspective is not one that is necessarily at odds with the feminist call to re-sacralize the body. The question does arise, however, as to how it is that Hillman will reconcile imagination with physical reality. Naomi Goldenberg makes explicit this point when she notes that both Jungian and post-Jungian thought tend to place more value on such "mystical abstractions" as archetypes and imagination than on the experience of real people. Furthermore, she informs us that Jungian and post-Jungian thought "is led to disdain the literal in favour of the imaginal, to favour what it terms psyche over body and even over human."<sup>4</sup>

I must agree that it is hard not to be suspicious of Hillman's perspective on the body in light of Goldenberg's critique. Anyone who considers all world views as belonging to one or another fantasy system, which has its roots in some metaphor or another, must be ambiguously, if not ambivalently, related to his or her experience of physical reality. But, I am left with the question: how *are* we to approach the mind-body split if not through imagination and language? Our bodily experience is something that must be translated at least into language, which is, itself,

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<sup>2</sup> James Hillman. *Re-Visioning Psychology*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 174.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Naomi Goldenberg. *Returning Words to Flesh: Feminism, Psychoanalysis and the Resurrection of the Body*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 88.

dependent upon our cultural imagination.

Goldenberg suggests that the separation of the mind and the body, the transcendent and the immanent, is an experiential matter. Furthermore, she suggests that although no philosophical system "can really change the experiential illusion that the mind and body are separate," what we can change is "our adherence to theories that are based in the illusion of the mind-body dualism--theories that disparage bodily life and that keep us from understanding the bodily origin of thought."<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Moore, notes that "We can't just 'think' ourselves through it [the mind-body dualism], because thinking is part of the problem. What we need is a way out of dualistic attitudes, we need a third possibility, and that third is soul."<sup>6</sup> Although Hillman claims that the soul is concerned with the mundane and physical worlds, he never takes the step of theorizing this concern with the mundane as referring to not only the external world but also to the human body. He does not seem to make the connection, as does Moore, that through soul "the body is...expressed in its richest and most expressive form. In the body, we see the soul articulated in gesture, dress, movement, shape, physiognomy, temperature, skin eruptions, tics, diseases--in countless expressive forms."<sup>7</sup> I submit that Hillman needs to account better for the body in such a way as to allow the soul's native activity, imagining, to give the body poetic weight, to confer to the body meaning and value.

I understand Hillman to suggest that any means of discussing the body is necessarily removed from our immediate bodily experiences. In this regard soul and imagining are posited as something that operate between bodily or physical experience and our cognition of that experience. The imagination, as pointed out in Chapter Two, could be called a space, an imaginal field, between the apprehension of an (internal or external) experience and our cognition of that experience. It is the space that gives such experiences meaning. Perhaps

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Moore. *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life*. (San Francisco: HarperPrennial, 1992), xiii.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 155.

Hillman's tripartite conception of soul connecting mind and body is something that can help hasten abandonment of theories or metaphors that denigrate bodily experience.

Yet, like Goldenberg, Moore notes that we are perhaps "the only culture to regard the body with such poverty of imagination. Ours is also the only time in our own history to chase the mystery away from the body."<sup>8</sup> The habit of imagining the body mechanically, for instance, drives the soul's poetry underground "so that we experience the body as an instrument and see its poetics only in illness."<sup>9</sup> Similarly to Goldenberg, Moore suggests that in order to alleviate the problems caused by the mind-body split, it is necessary to use our imaginations to develop an alternate means of articulating our experience of our bodies and the world. That is, we must find a set of mediums that are not subject to traditional ways of imagining and speaking about bodily experience and the physical world.

Hence, we might conclude that if we would 'heal' the mind-body split, we must put soul between the two. By establishing soul between spirit and body we prevent the "two from becoming extreme caricatures of themselves. The cure [sic] for materialism, then, would be to find concrete ways of getting soul back into our spiritual [or religious] practices, our intellectual life, and our emotional and physical engagements with the world."<sup>10</sup> From this perspective we might conclude that archetypal psychology can respond positively to Goldenberg's recommendation that we find means of theorizing about humanity that evade such dualistic patterns of thought. By positing a notion of soul as something indispensable to and distinct from both mind and body, we may be provided a means of speaking about humanity that avoids dualistic divisions in favour of a more comprehensive and complex design. Consequently, this tripartite scheme is something that can be understood as reflecting Hillman's emphasis on the need for psychology to adopt a polytheistic paradigm.

According to Hillman, as we have seen, a person is said to be connected to the world

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 232.

through soul. Hence, the physical world can be understood as being part of that which makes up and illuminates my soul, as much as I am part of that which makes up the world's soul.<sup>11</sup> This idea of the interconnection between souls is made problematic when we remember that Hillman conceives of self as a Neo-Platonic, tripartite entity: soul, mind, and body.<sup>12</sup> That is, Hillman holds that the soul operates as a *tertium* between mind and body. It operates as a mediating principle. Although Hillman admits that this tripartite scheme is a departure from the traditional dualism of western perspectives on self, it is a viewpoint that still insists on a strict division between mind and body. Placing the soul as an intermediary between mind and body, or mind and world, for that matter, does nothing to dissolve the traditional division which separates mind and body and, as a result of such separation, tends to elevate the one to the detriment of the other.

I remain suspicious of this tripartite formulation of selfhood for the simple reason that it is so difficult for us to detach ourselves from the forms of thought prevalent in our culture. Even though Hillman's tripartite model of humanity has the potential of helping to dislodge entrenched dispositions that claim unity and singularity are the sole models for selfhood, I cannot help but remain suspicious that archetypal psychology gives the body the dirty end of the stick once more. To suggest that a metaphysical entity, as the soul is traditionally thought to be, is the mediator between the physical and the metaphysical is tantamount to giving precedence to the latter to the detriment of the former. Furthermore, such categories as matter, soul, and mind are themselves metaphysical.

This problem is not alleviated, moreover, when Hillman claims that soul is not an entity but a perspective. Perspectives, by their nature, are dependent upon imagination and mind and are, consequently, just as transient and non-material as is the mind. In Hillman's tripartite model, the separation between mind and body is still maintained, albeit it has now become a relationship that is mediated by soul. Furthermore, this mediation between mind and body by soul recalls

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<sup>11</sup> James Hillman. *Archetypal Psychology: A Brief Account*. (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1983),

<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

Descartes' account of God's role in the world: mediating between minds of separated and autonomous thinking beings. I question this construction insofar as it simply assumes that Hillman may merely be replacing god with soul. Although I do not believe this to be the case, it does place into question archetypal psychology's self-critical faculty.

Although David Miller finds it necessary to apologize for this difficulty in Hillman's thought (he notes that fantasy is rooted in the physical--i.e., just as behaviour is based in fantasy, so is fantasy based in behaviour),<sup>13</sup> I must agree with Goldenberg when she protests that Hillman must make explicit that when he is speaking of symbols, fantasies, and imagination, he is speaking of physical experiences and bodily feelings understood imaginatively (i.e., visually, aurally, and so on) while being related to the world.<sup>14</sup> (Hillman attempts to get around this problem by positing that an individual's soul is intimately connected with the world soul or the *anima mundi*.)

Starting from this Neo-platonic notion that the individual soul is intimately connected to the world soul, Hillman claims that "what is true of one [...] is true of both."<sup>15</sup> This connection of world soul to individual souls makes Hillman's approach to the body and the physical world even more ambiguous. When he claims that the things in the world enable us to express self or soul, he suggests that *esse in anima* (being in soul or a soulful existence) is something inherently tied to the world. Yet, because he claims that the soul operates through images, I cannot help but wonder whether Hillman is suggesting that our musings, our imaginings about the world soul and individual souls are more desirable than rooting oneself firmly in the physical world.

Goldenberg, however, applauds Hillman's approach to the body, particularly when compared to Jung. She notes that Hillman is much more interested in grounding the images or archetypes of his psychology in the physical,<sup>16</sup> a departure from Jung who looked more towards

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<sup>13</sup> David Miller. *The New Polytheism: Rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses*. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974), 55.

<sup>14</sup> Goldenberg, *Returning Words to Flesh*, 89.

<sup>15</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Goldenberg, *Returning Words to Flesh*, 110.

the transcendent origins of the archetypes. She informs us that Hillman's rich and complex style not only engages the reader on many levels, it also avoids much of the inhumanity of modern scientific prose. Also his emphasis on using animals as models for people prompt us to be more physical and less spiritual as well as reminding us of our own animal natures. Finally, Goldenberg approves of Hillman's emphasis that our environment is created by ourselves: "He works on understanding the *anima mundi*...on seeing our world as a place ensouled."<sup>17</sup>

Yet as much as Hillman does right in regard to the body, Goldenberg also points out he does wrong. She writes: "he is right...to criticize psychology for being bad psychology, for taking poor account of people. I think he is wrong, though, to urge psychology to depart from people."<sup>18</sup> What Goldenberg refers to is Hillman's notion of dehumanizing, of placing the psyche above the human. This emphasis on dehumanizing is made most explicit in *Re-Visioning Psychology* in which an entire section is devoted to discussing the need to avoid the humanistic bias in traditional psychological approaches to soul. Yet I understand Hillman's recent move towards community as potentially providing a corrective in regards to his thoughts about dehumanization--at least insofar as when one talks about humanity as existing in community, one is not denigrating humanity but celebrating the role that people play in finding soul in the world as well as in making individual souls.

By making his understanding of imagination as being rooted in the physical world more explicit, Hillman might avoid criticism in regard to the ambiguous nature toward the mind-body dichotomy. Hillman's "imagination" could then be understood as "the activity of the soul which is, in itself, [significantly] grounded in bodily experiences."<sup>19</sup> Hence, the perspective provided for by the Neo-platonic proclamation that the world soul is connected to individuals' souls and vice versa would become one that is less based in metaphysical speculation and more in physical experience, less of a theory and more of a reality.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 109-110.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

This attitude is one that Christine Downing (the one feminist thinker considered in this dissertation who is most closely aligned to Hillman in her thought) adopts, as can be seen when she notes that the development of a "poetics of the psyche has led me inevitably now to engage in composing a poetics of the body."<sup>20</sup> To Downing, the process of writing about the one involves the other, because we are always "imagining our bodies, responding to them through culturally inherited images, and then reimagining them."<sup>21</sup> For Downing, a poetics of the body must be a way of creating or recreating the body. Because we have "no access to some 'real,' pre-cultural, before language, before experience, body" it is difficult "not to identify our images with 'reality,' not to let them harden" and become literal and singular.<sup>22</sup>

Yet Hillman rarely emphasizes the body's role in fantasy or in the imagination. He offers no real epistemological method for archetypal psychology except to say that one learns "by experience."<sup>23</sup> In other words, the soul, and not the body (or both for that matter), is said to learn by "searching for itself in whatever ideas come to it...."<sup>24</sup> Because Hillman rarely engages his readers in a discussion about the role that the body plays in imagination, and because he puts forward no epistemological structure to describe how the imagination develops and works in relation to our physical natures, I remain suspicious of his attitude toward the body. At the very least we can say that Hillman neglects the role that the body plays in the emergence of self and he tends to neglect the role that one's body and the external, physical world plays in the construction of self.

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<sup>20</sup> Christine Downing. *Women's Mysteries: Toward a Poetics of Gender*. (New York: Crossroads, 1992), 75.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 122. The full passage is as follows: "Since psychological ideas, of insights as I have sometimes called them, reflect soul, the question of comprehending them turns to one's relation with soul and how the soul learns. The answer to this has always been "by experience," which is tantamount to turning the question back on itself, since one of the main activities of the soul as we defined them at the beginning of this book is precisely the changing of "events into experiences"."

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Like most psychologists of a Jungian mold caught up in what Goldenberg calls "mystical abstractions," it appears that Hillman is weak in his ability to consider the importance of the body in individual imagination, and possibly in such social fantasies as myth, science, and philosophy. This conclusion is demonstrated by Hillman's attitude toward critical perspectives that are based in gender issues--which seem to necessarily involve considerations pertaining to the body. Hillman believes that such approaches tend to narrow one's perspective rather than helping to expand it. He writes:

Feminism and femininity is a disparate topic. I steer clear of it. Once you see the whole world in terms of gender you close your mind in a set of blinders, caught in a pair of opposites, and you lose the particular person, like you, in front of me, who happens to be of the female gender. People, you, are far more than female or male. I lose you, the person there, if I reduce you to a supposed feminine essence.<sup>25</sup>

I have a problem with this assessment, as does Christine Downing. Downing notes that we have "to get past our literalism around gender, to admit that 'man' and 'woman' are fictive terms, images, which *hide* and reveal. To accept gender as *made*, as a *poesis*, means to see it as always still in the process of being made and remade."<sup>26</sup> I believe that Hillman's attitude regarding gender potentially closes down the possibility he might gain some insight from concerns brought to light by feminist thought, for instance, about the role of gender in one's psychic and physical experiences.

Hillman might gain, for example, from Starhawk's reliance upon contemporary feminist imaginings of the Goddess as one means of escaping models of self that place man, via God, outside of the material, of nature, and of body.<sup>27</sup> By using an immanent divinity as a model for speaking about an alternative notion of humanity, Starhawk suggests that it is possible to engender styles of theorizing or forms of spiritual practice that show a deep respect for

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<sup>25</sup> James Hillman. *Inter Views*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), 70.

<sup>26</sup> Downing, *Women's Mysteries*, 34.

<sup>27</sup> Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religions of the Great Goddess*. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 23.

humanity's physical nature and the world.<sup>28</sup> Another feminist that Hillman might turn to for insight about the body is Carol Christ. Christ claims that the two fundamentals of feminist religious expression--that the earth is holy and that women's experience provides insight into the divine<sup>29</sup>--suggest that women's experience of spiritual concerns are inherently tied up with their experiences of physical reality.

Because Hillman is not informed by feminist writing, he is consequently not as attuned as are women to the importance of the body, of body image, of patriarchal imaginations of female bodies in particular and the of human body in general, in regard to the construction of self. Although Hillman claims that such bodily aspects of self or soul are based in the individual's or in the culture's imagination of physicality, he must realize that such fantasies affect us all in very real, not necessarily imaginative ways. I submit that Hillman's archetypal psychology could well do with a thorough investigation of not only western society's imaginations about the body, but also the body's involvement in how we imagine.

## **II: Bodily Imagination: Kristeva's Semiotic vis-à-vis Hillman's Imaginal**

Both Freudian and Jungian styles of psychotherapy can be understood as being primarily concerned with the human imagination. Both emphasize the role of fantasy in the aetiology of psychic events; both note the preponderance of the fantastic in our everyday lives. Yet, it has been characteristic of the Jungian ethos not to emphasize the role of the body in one's psychic life. Perhaps by demonstrating the similarity of views about imagination represented by Hillman and Kristeva, it may become possible for a real meeting to occur between these two distinct fantasies about the human psyche.

What I find interesting about Hillman's notion of soul as imaginal space is the connection that can be made with other styles of depth psychology which are less concerned with Jungian "mystical abstractions," as Goldenberg puts it. The styles of depth psychology to which I refer

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Christ, *Laughter of Aphrodite*, ix.

are psychoanalytic, a form of psychologizing that has always been strongly rooted in the human body. We know that Hillman is not interested in locating the imaginal field in instincts, biology, linguistics, and social transmission theories. Yet, I think that regardless of the validity of archetypal psychology's locating the imagination in the transpersonal and the transtemporal, it would be wrong, from a polytheistic perspective, to neglect any other perspective that might give us insight into the functioning of the imagination. I think that archetypal psychology cannot help gain from such investigations into certain areas of thought which Hillman wants to ignore.

In this next section I intend to make a comparison between Hillman's imaginal space and Kristeva's semiotic chora. By demonstrating a parallel between Hillman's imaginal and Kristeva's semiotic I can do two things: first, I can develop a tentative means of locating imaginative activities in physiological processes in a way that does not negate the immediacy of the transpersonal realm (understood here as the social or the real) of the imagination; and, second, I can begin to pave a road upon which adherents of both psychoanalytic and Jungian depth psychology might be enabled to speak on common ground. If it is possible to locate both psychoanalysis and archetypal psychology (or even analytical psychology) as fields of study that are primarily concerned with the imaginative possibilities of human nature, then it becomes appropriate for the two streams of thought to share their insights, which might allow both to deepen their understanding of both cultural and personal psychic activity.

That it is possible to point out similarities between Hillman and psychoanalytic thinkers is not difficult to imagine, for psychoanalysis as it was formed after Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* has been focused on the imaginative capacities of the human psyche. Although it is not within the scope of this dissertation to make systematic comparisons and contrasts between archetypal psychology and psychoanalysis, I would like to point out something of direct concern for both styles of psychotherapy: the notion of an imaginal space.

To begin with, Andrew Samuels notes that the *mundus imaginalis* has similar properties

to Winnicott's "third area" or potential space.<sup>30</sup> My understanding of Winnicott's potential space is that it is a space of imagination in which certain introjected and projected objects are constantly exchanged in the never ending desire to return oneself to the memory of a paradisaical relation to the mother when one was an infant. It is a space of imagination that relates the personal and internal to that which is transpersonal and external. As Samuels puts it, this third area is the "area of the psyche that lies between external life and internal reality but both contribute to it."<sup>31</sup> In other words, Winnicott's third area is the mediator between self and world, conscious and unconscious, personal and impersonal.

Bringing Winnicott into the discussion demonstrates that some thinkers have found a similarity between archetypal psychology and certain psychoanalytic perspectives; this strengthens the proposition that Kristeva's semiotic *chora* is similar to Hillman's imaginal. Kristeva herself recognizes a similarity between Winnicott's potential space and the semiotic. On the one hand, she notes that in writing, as a creative activity, we find a referent that is beyond the language in which it is manifested. This referent is the body as it is experienced through the primary processes, the semiotic space, or Winnicott's potential space.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Kristeva suggests that Winnicott's notion of a potential space, "elaborated by a 'transitional object,' describes the necessary conditions for semiotic functioning, imaginative work, and the transition to language acquisition."<sup>33</sup>

Before entering into a characterization of Kristeva's semiotic *chora*, it is necessary briefly to recapitulate Hillman's conception of the imaginal field. He notes, first, that that which is imaginal is not necessarily visual in nature--it can involve any form of sense perception as well

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<sup>30</sup> Andrew Samuels. *The Plural Psyche: Personality, Morality and the Father*. (London: Routledge, 1989), 167.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>32</sup> Julia Kristeva. "How Does One Speak to Literature?" *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Edited by Leon S. Roudiez. Translated by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 102.

<sup>33</sup> Julia Kristeva. "Place Names." *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Edited by Leon S. Roudiez. Translated by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 286.

as language, music, or art. Second, the work of the imagination is autonomous--it is neither dependent upon conscious intention nor unconscious fantasizing. Next, the imaginal field is both transpersonal and transtemporal--that is, the imaginal operates both within the personal psyche as well as in the *anima mundi*, the soul of the world. Consequently, the imaginal is not dependent upon any one specific time or place. Further, the imaginal field acts as a mediator between unconscious apprehension and conscious cognition, between mind and body, as well as self and other. Also, the imaginal field represents a way of being, an "ontological mode," which suggests that the imagination is not in the mind, but that the mind is in imagination. Moreover, the value found in the imaginal is in its "theophanic nature." That is, it is the physiognomic response of the heart, a spontaneous affective reaction which bestows value to the images presented to the soul. The imaginal is anti-institutional insofar as it speaks in a language of the heart, a non-rational language. The imaginal is polytheistic insofar as the multitude of images or instances of imagining are all to be understood as meaningful or fecund. Finally, the logic of the imaginal is something other than rational discourse, theological dogma, or scientific theory.

A further point I would like to re-visit has to do with Hillman's epistemology. As noted earlier, Hillman's only real mention of epistemology is to say that one learns by experience. Still, if Hillman's epistemology of the imagination is one that is based in phenomenology,<sup>34</sup> then to say that one learns by experience is an appropriate, even if insufficient way of describing things. For Hillman, an epistemology of the imaginal is one based in the poetic and metaphorical, the aesthetic and affective as opposed to the literal and strictly rational.

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<sup>34</sup> That Hillman is a phenomenologist is, first, noted by Robert Avens in "Heidegger and Archetypal Psychology" who calls Hillman a phenomenologist because he allows images to tell us what they are. Hence, for Avens an archetypal hermeneutic involves altering the language of reason and philosophy into the speech of the soul as well as adopting the soul's point of view on all things. (*International Philosophical Quarterly*, June 1982 2(2):192-195. Furthermore, we know that Hillman refers to Edward Casey's work on the imagination, which albeit theoretical, is predominantly phenomenological in nature. Casey, in fact, has written a book on imagination that has as its title *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*. The book provides just this: a fascinating phenomenological survey of the activity of imagining. (See pages 34-232 of *Imagining*).

This style of epistemology is what Hillman calls the thought of the heart. Yet his notions about the thought of the heart do little to approach the heart's own physiognomic characteristics. It is the intent of the following pages to outline an understanding of imagining that may provide some further inroads into an understanding of the imagination as at least interacting with, if not rooted in, one's body. For if we are indeed irrepressible imaginers, then in all our experiences with imagining we should be able to identify certain instances that might initiate this activity. Furthermore, since we exist in a physical body, who is to assume that the body has nothing to do with how imagining works? As a polytheistic thinker, it would be wrong to exclude any perspective that has the potential of shedding light on anything; and, for Hillman, the imaginal is of utmost importance.

Kristeva's semiotic project is one that parallels Freud's discussion in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. She, like Freud, is interested in showing how the instincts, the censored, and the forgotten disrupt and influence language and imagination.<sup>35</sup> Kristeva, however, goes further than did Freud. She not only outlines how one's somatic or physical activities can influence how we speak and what we say, she also shows how different literary genres provide different means of understanding self. Her interest is in revealing the subversive activities of the author. To Kristeva, the writer "experiments with the limits of identity, producing texts where the law does not exist outside language. A playful language therefore gives rise to a law that is overturned, violated and pulverized, a law upheld only to allow a polyvalent, polylogical sense of play that sets the being of the law ablaze in a peaceful, relaxing void."<sup>36</sup> Rather than submit one's self-definition to mono-dimensional, unitary, and monological perspectives, the modern author is said to follow a dialogical mode of speaking in which a person is always constituted as being inscribed in at least two discourses as opposed to merely one.

In "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," Julia Kristeva produces for the reader's consideration a

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<sup>35</sup> Julia Kristeva. *Language the Unknown: An Introduction into Linguistics*. Translated by Anne M. Menke. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 328.

<sup>36</sup> Julia Kristeva. "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident," *The Kristeva Reader*. Edited by Toril Moi. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 195.

typology of discourses.<sup>37</sup> Through this typology, Kristeva distinguishes between the monological and the dialogical as discourses through which one can speak of self and the cosmos. The monological discourses that she speaks of include the following: 1) the representative mode of *description* and *narration* characteristic of the epic; 2) historical discourse; and, 3) scientific discourse.<sup>38</sup> Each type of monological discourse, Kristeva suggests, is dominated by a singular notion, entity, or perspective. As Kristeva informs us, "In all three, the subject both assumes and submits to the rule of 1 (god)."<sup>39</sup> That is, like Hillman, Kristeva finds such forms of discourse to be fixed and limited by their singularity. Thus, as Kristeva points out, the possibility of dialogue inherent to these forms of narrative is under a strict prohibition, a censor, that causes such monological discourses to refuse to turn back on themselves, or to enter into dialogue with themselves.<sup>40</sup>

Dialogism as a linguistic complex implies two things: that there is at least a double or ambivalent aspect to language and an alternative logic to that offered by the monologue. With this in mind, Kristeva claims we can outline a new approach to texts: we can accept the word "dialogism" as representing the relationship between the differing discursive elements found within a sentence or narrative structure. This indicates what Kristeva suggests is a becoming that opposes the level of "continuity and substance." That is, dialogism suggests the recognized relationship among differing elements of a narrative that places meaning in a state of flux or

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<sup>37</sup> The term "discourse" as Kristeva uses it in this article is defined, according to Bakhtin, as "language appropriated by the individual as a practice." That is, a discourse constitutes a usage of language that reflects a specific ideological perspective and is thus constrained by this perspective. See Kristeva's "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," *The Kristeva Reader*. Edited by Troil Moi. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 67.

<sup>38</sup> I find it interesting that Kristeva finds a basis of similarity between the epic, which is usually associated with myth, and scientific discourse. Most treatises that deal with these two genres characterize them as being separated by an impassable gulf: for Jung myth is based in an unconscious logic and science in another rationality; for Susanne Langer myth belongs to a creative logic and science to a discursive logic. As we shall see the reason that Kristeva finds the parallel between the epic and scientific discourse is that they both submit to a monological unity or entity.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 76-77.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

process.

Semantics, thus, is constantly subject to change and reinterpretation.<sup>41</sup> This provides, as Kristeva points out, a new logic based on analogy and nonexclusive opposition, rather than monological levels of causality and identification. This new logic, the "transfinite" as Kristeva puts it, suggests a poetic sequence that is not causally deduced on the basis of the Aristotelian chain, i.e., as prohibited or limited by scientific, monological, or theological discourses.<sup>42</sup> Instead of being attenuated by such mono-dimensional notions as God, scientific methodology, and the "law of the father," dialogism is subject to at least two different perspectives through which we can speak about the world.

It is through this notion of dialogism that we find a reference to the diversity implied by Hillman's emphasis on the polytheistic model when considering self. For it is through the transformation of such singular perspectives as scientific methodology and Enlightenment theology, both heirs to Cartesian based paradigms, that a more diversified style of discourse may emerge in western society. Furthermore, we find the emphasis on the role that the non-rational plays in signification. That the non-rational character of human imagination and cognition must necessarily find its way into the statements of poets, children, and psychotics. Kristeva says, like Hillman, that the rational, the monological is not poetic language: it is not the language of the soul.

To Kristeva, the departure from the "Cartesian subject's" transcendental-rational ego is inaugurated by opening it up to a dialectic in which syntactical and categorical understanding is but a fecund part of the process of signification.<sup>43</sup> That is, modern notions of subjectivity are surpassed when we come to the realization that all forms of thought--rational or non-rational--are

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<sup>41</sup> In fact Kristeva in *Language the Unknown* suggests that the variety of linguistic theories that have emerged over time each reflect a specific interpretation of semantics and the purpose of language. (See the "Introduction to Linguistics," 3-5 and "Conclusion," 325-329).

<sup>42</sup> Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," 71f.

<sup>43</sup> Julia Kristeva. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Translated by Margaret Waller. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 30.

but single aspects of the continuum of mental functioning that includes imagination and perception. For this reason Kristeva, like Keller, believes that the 'speaking subject' is "a subject in process/on trial [sujet en procès]."<sup>44</sup> Like text, the speaking subject is involved in the transformation of society's rules and "the possibility of [the disruption of] semantic and/or grammatical categorical interpretation."<sup>45</sup>

What we find here is the suggestion that there is more to the writer than self-directed, conscious motivations and imaginations. It is in the idea of "poetic language" that the subversion of the singularity of the rational subject most readily appears: poetic language refers to "the infinite possibilities of language, and [that] all other language acts are merely partial realizations of the possibilities inherent in poetic language."<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, Kristeva demonstrates "how closely their [poets' and novelists'] writing practice parallels the logic of the unconscious, drive-ridden and dark as it may be; such a practice thus assumes that privilege of communicating regression and jouissance. In the final analysis, as an anarchic revolt (even though it openly advocated neither freedom nor profit) against a society that extols material goods and profits."<sup>47</sup> It is the shattering of discourse that comes out of the semiotic space, the imaginative space, that "reveals that linguistic change constitutes change in the *status of the subject*"<sup>48</sup> in the writer's relation to the body, to others, and to the physical world. Poetic discourse also shows that "normalized language is just one of the ways of articulating the signifying process that encompasses the body, the material referent, and language itself."<sup>49</sup> Similarly to Hillman's images, Kristeva's poetic language is considered to function autonomously--it is neither dependent upon intentional consciousness nor the personal since all language is, in a sense, transpersonal.

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44 Ibid., 37.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., 2.

47 Ibid., 3.

48 Ibid., 15.

49 Ibid.

The only way to escape the prohibitions on imagination and writing brought about by the monologue, as Kristeva sees it, is through the imagery of poetic language. Kristeva also points out that it is only through poetic logic that we can find a discourse that includes this double or multiple aspect of human subjectivity.<sup>50</sup> That is, "by adopting a dream logic, [self] transgresses rules of linguistic code and social morality as well."<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, Kristeva argues that through the development of the poetics of the novel as a form of literature, the subversion of social law came into practice in the Western world.

Kristeva wants to theorize writing from within the subjective sphere of the writer. In the subjective sphere, the writer not only maintains his or her status as a subject in process, he or she also indicates the role that the non-rational plays in the construction of a subversive text. That is, we may understand Kristeva as suggesting that the rational is that which society deems acceptable, and thus constitutes its laws. This is a move that helps to remove the writer from the subjective sphere in a way similar to Hillman emphasis on the transpersonal character of the imagination. That is, Kristeva notes that any text which disrupts the rules of language must in some way be non-rational or imaginal insofar as it refuses to toe the political lines drawn by normal discourse.<sup>52</sup> For Kristeva, when the speaking subject is no longer considered a transcendental ego, or the heroic ego, but rather a subject in process and in relation, and when "deep structures or at least transformational rules are disturbed," the possibility of semantic or grammatical reinterpretation or transformation appears.<sup>53</sup> Kristeva suggests, that through imaginative activities, we find the possibility of developing alternative ways of conceiving self.

Before proceeding into a discussion of the somatic effects on the linguistic realm, we will make a brief excursion into the literary components which are related to the novel and help give

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<sup>50</sup> Throughout "Word, Dialogue, and Novel" Kristeva relies upon the insights of Mikhail Bakhtin.

<sup>51</sup> Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel", 70.

<sup>52</sup> Julia Kristeva. "Introduction." *The Kristeva Reader*. Edited by Toril Moi. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 9.

<sup>53</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 37.

it its "polyphonic" structure. Most closely related to the novel is "carnavalesque discourse." The two, the novel and the carnivalesque, together make up what is called "Menippean discourse."<sup>54</sup> Because the carnivalesque disputes the laws of language that are based upon a hierarchal authority, God and society, it is understood as being dialogical, rebellious and the only place that language can escape the "law."<sup>55</sup> The carnivalesque is that form of discourse which permits language to reach "its 'potential infinity'...where prohibitions (representation, 'monologism') and their transgressions (dream, body, 'dialogism') coexist."<sup>56</sup> It is the space, the place at which language is allowed free expression outside of the prohibitions of the univocal "law," or the status quo of a society that is represented by traditional discourses through which the cosmos and self is articulated. The carnivalesque is described as being ambivalent, anti-Christian, and anti-rationalist. It is a subversive text and is said to have roots in Socratic dialogue which is characterized as being in opposition to any "official monologism claiming to possess a ready-made truth."<sup>57</sup>

The carnivalesque, like the novel, is rooted in Menippean discourse. As Kristeva informs us, Menippean discourse includes all literary genres whose purpose is to denote the writer's distance from his or her own and other texts. It is a discourse that transcends prohibitions and censure. It is multiple in terms of style and tone and, when working in concert with the dialogical word as represented by the sign, it is a form of expression that authoritarian societies find impossible to exploit.<sup>58</sup> From this perspective Menippean discourse is also ambivalent, i.e., it is the focus of two tendencies in western literature: the premise of realism and a refusal to define a psychic universe (this latter aspect is said to relate Menippean dialogue with the dream

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<sup>54</sup> Menippean discourse can be characterized as any genre that involves itself in social criticism, particularly satire.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 79. In this instance the law refers to the norms and rules of society as they are manifested in the language. That is, language as social practice is comprised of a hierarchy of codes that are sanctioned and adhered to by society.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

realm).<sup>59</sup>

Menippean discourse, however, does not contain theological monologism, rather "the "tyranny" that it is subjected to is...its own structure, constructing and understanding itself through itself."<sup>60</sup> That is, Menippean discourse is not subjected to the repression of a monological unity, as Kristeva puts it, but rather is subjected to its own interpretations of itself. Hence we see the presence of the aforementioned ambivalence or the dialogical in language also appear in Menippean discourse. It is this ambivalence that plays such an important role in the novel.

Kristeva notes that "the modern polyphonic novel embraces the effort of European thought to break out of the framework of causally determined identical substances and head toward another modality of thought that proceeds through dialogue...."<sup>61</sup> For this reason it is not surprising that the novel as a literary genre has generally been held to be inferior or subversive. Yet it is this dialogism that places philosophical problems "*within* language as a correlation of texts," as a means of reading and writing that is anti-institutional insofar that it is multiple and subversive by nature.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, we can say that the polyvalent and multi-determined poetic word follows a logic that exceeds that of codified language and comes into being only in the margins of recognized culture.<sup>63</sup> The roots of the poetic word are found in carnivalesque discourse, which "breaks

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 85-86.

<sup>62</sup> In fact Kristeva states that "more than binarism, dialogism may well become the basis of our time's intellectual structure" (Ibid., 86). Furthermore, the importance of dialogue and ambivalence in literature leads Kristeva to conclude that poetic language is double, because it belongs both within the space of the text itself as well as within the space surrounding texts. (Ibid., 65).

<sup>63</sup> This statement begs the question whether all words understood subsequent to the onset of the modern meaning of 'sign' may be poetic. That is, the poetic word cannot belong to any single kind of discourse and, in fact, every exercise of language can partake of the poetic function," which can at once be emotive, cognitive, phatic, and metalingual. (Kristeva, *Language the Unknown*, 287-288).

through the laws of a language censored by grammar and semantics and, at the same time, is a social and political protest. There is no equivalence, but rather, identity between challenging official linguistic codes and challenging official law."<sup>64</sup> Analysis of the poetic word locates it in a specific centre of humanistic analysis--"at the intersection of *language* (the true practice of thought) with *space*...."<sup>65</sup> Thus the study of a poetic word implies its articulation is investigated in terms of its connection to other words in a sentence.<sup>66</sup> This is then followed by an examination of the same kinds of "functions or relationships at the articulatory level of larger sequences."<sup>67</sup>

Poetic language may be viewed from the level of Freud's parapraxes in terms of slips. Kristeva, however, extrapolates from this perspective in an attempt to find the same kinds of disturbances in a larger context--the novel for instance. This, in a sense, is Kristeva's understanding of the semiotic. Semiotics, she claims, is the place where we question ourselves about our fundamental conceptions which are depicted through language. The deconstruction of traditionally held beliefs about language has led to the realization that it is neither acceptable to understand discourse as belonging to one system nor does discourse suggest that a language belongs to a single linguistic family, "but instead as a plurality of signifying systems of which each is a layer of a vast whole."<sup>68</sup> Language as it is understood by semiotics deals with all forms of communication. The activities of imagination are included in such deliberations.

To continue with the discussion of semiotics, we might say that the basic assumption behind Kristeva's semiotic project is that it is possible to demonstrate that any "*evolution of literary genres is an unconscious exteriorization of linguistic structures at their different*

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<sup>64</sup> Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," 65.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> This is an intellectual endeavour that is influenced by Freud's contention in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* and *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In both of these texts Freud indicates that language and dream are constantly disrupted by the instincts and the repressed, i.e., by the body.

<sup>67</sup> Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel", 65.

<sup>68</sup> Kristeva, *Language the Unknown*, 296.

levels."<sup>69</sup> Kristeva believes that it is in art and literature that we find the revelation of a

specific *practice*, crystallized in a mode of production with highly diversified and multiplied manifestations. It weaves into language (or other 'signifying materials') the complex relations of a subject caught between 'nature' and culture' [sic] between the immemorial ideological and scientific *tradition*, henceforth available, and the *present*, between *desire* and the *law*, the body, language and 'metalanguage'.<sup>70</sup>

Within linguistic structures we find the speaking subject caught between instinctual drives and social practice; he or she is located "within a language that is today divided into often incommunicable multiple systems: a Tower of Babel that literature specifically breaks open, refashions, and inscribes in a new series of perpetual contradictions."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," 66.

<sup>70</sup> Kristeva, "How Does One Speak to Literature," 97.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

According to Kristeva, this is the subject of the Christian ethos. Like Hillman, she concludes that the capitalistic emphasis on productivity and the domination of communication has resulted in the mechanization and repression of unknown aspects of the self.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, western society has placed its members in an ambivalent position in terms of the relationship between the body and social practice. The 'unknown aspects' referred to are posited as the drives. Hence, it is one of Kristeva's intentions to demonstrate how the semiotic or somatic disrupts and alters linguistic and imaginative practices. She sees all language chains as being linked to both the speaker's body and to social history,<sup>73</sup> which is to say that they are both personal and transpersonal. Yet it is only in the avant garde literature of the late Enlightenment that Kristeva finds writing that is indicative of the disruption of the semiotic.<sup>74</sup>

The semiotic chora denotes what is essentially a fluid and provisional form of articulation that is "constituted by movements and ephemeral stases."<sup>75</sup> The chora is said to be analogous to the vocal or kinetic rhythms of vocal play. As such it brings vocal play into relation with the symbolic, or the socialized body. Although the chora is thought to be nourishing and maternal, it is "not unified in an ordered whole" because the ego or consciousness, as it is understood through Enlightenment models, is not part of it. Instead the chora is a type of meaning "in which the linguistic sign is not yet articulated as the absence of an object and as the distinction between the

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 96-97.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>74</sup> Paul Smith provides one criticism of Kristeva's attitude toward literature. In *Discerning the Subject*, he accuses Kristeva of championing avant garde literature. I think, however, that we can take Smith's critique somewhat further. Not only does Kristeva idealize contemporary literature, she may also exaggerate the profundity and all-inclusiveness of the monological, or what I am calling "epic consciousness." Surely, I suggest, there were individuals who belonged to the world of the epic (the roots of epic consciousness, as I understand it, must necessarily reach back into the beginnings of Western culture) that were also poets. Thus, if a poet is, by definition, one who is in close proximity to the semiotic, then any poet, no matter when or how he or she lived, is able to subvert language and, hence, our understanding of self. My point is that, we cannot definitively say that "epic consciousness" and "novelistic consciousness" are mutually exclusive--they must co-exist in some form of interrelationship and at all times. (Paul Smith. *Discerning the Subject*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 126).

<sup>75</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 25.

real and the symbolic."<sup>76</sup> Hence the chora is distinguishable from accepted linguistic praxis that depends on language as a system of signification.<sup>77</sup> Because the semiotic chora is kinetic and appears before the sign is established, "it is not, therefore, cognitive in the sense of being assumed by a knowing, already constituted subject."<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, because the semiotic is based in the body, it is related to the drives which function to orient one to the mother's body and are, thus, ambiguous insofar as the drives simultaneously assimilate and destruct. For this reason the mother's, or the maternal, body functions to mediate the "symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic *chora*" which, because it is related to the instincts or drives, "is on the path of destruction, aggressivity, and death."<sup>79</sup> In this way, the semiotic articulates a continuum among the drives, vocalizations, and society's ideologies.<sup>80</sup>

Now, the semiotic cannot be taken to be separate from the symbolic realm, the realm of words as signs, just as the non-rational is not strictly separated from the rational. Both are interactive insofar as both influence and are in opposition to one another. As Kristeva notes

Language as a social practice necessarily presupposes these two dispositions, though combined in different ways to constitute *types of discourse*, types of signifying practices. Scientific discourse, for example, aspiring to the status of metalanguage, tends to reduce as much as possible the semiotic component.<sup>81</sup>

The opposite is the case for poetic language. As semiotic,<sup>82</sup> the poetic word's symbolic function pushes at the boundaries of social practice and thus violates certain grammatical rules while maintaining its presence. The symbolic function in poetic language persists for two reasons: 1) it is the limit of an internal bipolarity, because a "multiple and sometimes even incomprehensible"

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>81</sup> Julia Kristeva. "From One Identity to Another," *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Edited by Leon S. Roudiez; translated by Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 134.

<sup>82</sup> That is, semiotic refers the realm of the instincts, the forgotten, dreams, fantasies, psychosis, and the infant.

notion is disclosed; and, 2) the semiotic processes themselves, "far from being set adrift...set up a new formal construct: a new so-called formal or ideological "writer's universe," the never-finished, undefined production of a new space of signification."<sup>83</sup> That is, the ideas expressed through the symbolic function of the poetic word are multifaceted and yet belong to an ideological perspective. The symbolic function posits a "signifying apparatus" which sees itself as positioned between "sense and nonsense between *language* and *rhythms*, and between the symbolic and the semiotic."<sup>84</sup>

Because the semiotic functions as a means of combining images and words, it is always present when the symbolic order breaks down. This is because the semiotic is already somatic, even before it enters into social and historical realms. But the semiotic, as a signifying practice, always comes "to us after the symbolic thesis, after the symbolic break, and can be analyzed in psychoanalytic discourse as well as in so-called "artistic" practice."<sup>85</sup> As artistic practice, the disruption of the symbolic order indicates that "text is a practice that can be compared to political revolution: the one brings about in the subject what the other introduces in society."<sup>86</sup> As artistic practice, therefore, text can help to "blow our minds," to transform our understandings of self and society. In this way text brings about an affective reaction as, for instance, a symbolic death and subsequent metamorphosis of self and society.

In Kristeva's epistemology, the semiotic is based in the drives and 'pulsions,' or instincts, of the physical body and thus precedes the establishment of the sign. This instinctual character of the semiotic suggests that "it [the semiotic] is not, therefore, cognitive in the sense of being assumed by a knowing, already constituted subject."<sup>87</sup> Because the semiotic involves instinctual drives, it is the place of scission and mediation. The semiotic articulates a continuum among

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 134-135.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 68.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 27.

one's drives, one's vocalizations, and the symbols of one's society.<sup>88</sup> The semiotic is that which mediates between the imaginal and the rational, between the mind and body, and between self and other.

Semiotic violence, as Kristeva puts it, breaks the walls of the symbolic order and tends to dissolve the logical order as it has been construed by traditional world views. It is by disrupting the borders of the logical, by positing itself on the edges of the human and social, that "the subject crosses the border of the symbolic and reaches the semiotic...which is on the other side of the social frontier."<sup>89</sup> By reaching the semiotic one enters into the imaginal field and can potentially disrupt the normalization or the institutionalization of self.

To Kristeva, poetic language opens up the ambiguous, ambivalent, and multivalent characters of language--"a feature that univocal, rational, scientific discourse tends to hide."<sup>90</sup> This implies considerable consequences for notions of self. That is, scientific discourses, for instance, could not but base the Self upon a 'transcendental ego'--a univocal, monological thing or entity. Kristeva theorizes, however, that because of the heterogeneous or the semiotic aspects of self, it has no fixed identity *per se*. Thus such monological perspectives which would fix identity are ultimately invalid.<sup>91</sup>

Although poetic language can be studied in terms of its meaning and sign, to do so would run the risk of reducing it to the phenomenological perspective or to a literal reading, which will fail to see what there is in poetic language that causes it to depart from the sign and from the notion of a 'transcendental ego,' in order to use literature to destroy and renew social order.<sup>92</sup> Kristeva postulates that within poetic language resides "a heterogeneousness to meaning and signification."<sup>93</sup> This heterogeneousness can be found in the "first echolalias of infants" as

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>90</sup> Kristeva, "From One Identity to Another", 135.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 133.

rhythms and intonations predating linguistic units proper and in the rhythms and pulsions of psychotic language. This heterogeneity operates through and produces in poetic language "musical" and "nonsense effects" that destroy accepted beliefs and significations.<sup>94</sup>

This heterogeneity is indispensable but it is not a practice of meaning, it uses "no sign, no predication, no signified object and therefore no operating consciousness of a transcendental ego."<sup>95</sup> This signifying space is the semiotic: it points to "a *distinctiveness* admitting of an uncertain and indeterminate articulation because it does not yet refer (for young children) or no longer refers (in psychotic discourse) to a signified object..."<sup>96</sup> But in all cases, I might add, it refers to the role that the somatic, or the physical body, plays in the articulation of the imaginal, the subsequent alteration of language and, hence, social order and selfhood.

Because of the connection between poetic language and the semiotic, represented by the infant and the psychotic, Kristeva understands language as having a referent beyond that of language itself. In this way, writing is understood to represent the semiotic constitution of the self--it is manifested in the body, the primary processes, in Winnicott's potential space, and in Hillman's imaginal--all places of creation, imagination, and play. What this all suggests is that there is a physical or, as Kristeva puts it, a maternal basis to writing<sup>97</sup> and imagining, which supports my supposition that archetypal psychology might benefit from a dialogue with feminist thought. This physical or maternal basis to writing and imagining can be understood to refer to the situation of the child while it is still *infans* (not speaking). It is the state of being indicative of the non-speaking infant in relation to a mother and the mother's body that characterizes the semiotic disposition; it is an ontological condition that is thought to be pre-linguistic and instinctual in character and which leads to imaginative innovation in terms of genre and self understanding.<sup>98</sup> Thus the rediscovery of the somatic aspects of language is to "discover the

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94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Kristeva, "How Does One Speak to Literature," 102.

98 Ibid., 104.

voiced breath that fastens us to an undifferentiated mother, to a mother who later...is altered into *maternal language*,"<sup>99</sup> or a "mother-tongue."

What Kristeva suggests may be involved in reaching into the semiotic is the reactivation of the experience of early childhood and the crisis of entering into the realm of language--a sort of second birth from the semiotic into the symbolic. This 'second birth' allows the speaking subject to align himself or herself with the oral, anal, and genital stages and "to function within a complete gamut of the body, language, and the symbolic."<sup>100</sup> Hence the author becomes an innovator of genre and ideas. Such an innovator, then, "would be that child that doesn't forget."<sup>101</sup>

Because of this maternal, material aspect to the semiotic (i.e., that it has a pre-linguistic referent), it is able to exceed the laws of a society, of an ideology, of a philosophy, or of a cosmology. It seems to me to be obvious, then, that this implies that there is a subversive aspect to the semiotic chora itself. That is, there is something within imagination and language, as typified by remarks as to the workings of the novel, that would demolish social codes and institutions. Because words are ambivalent and because of the double aspect to language, writing breaks the speaker into multiple selves, on which are inscribed not only "the original-paternal law, but other laws that can enunciate themselves differently" using such pronouns as "I," "you," "he," and "she." <sup>102</sup>

It is through the multiple and unnamable places of meaning occupied by the subject outside of the law of systematized language that the topos of "*One Subject*" of understanding is exceeded. Furthermore, this is the point at which harsh criticism of ideologies and social rules are generated.<sup>103</sup> By rejecting the "name" outside of the experience of the semiotic, maternal

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<sup>99</sup> Julia Kristeva. "The Novel as Polylogue," *The Kristeva Reader*. Edited by Toril Moi. Translated by Seán Hand. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 195.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Kristeva, "How Does One Speak to Literature?", 113.

<sup>103</sup> I would like to point out Paul Smith's approach to Kristeva's semiotic project. Rather than rejecting her thoughts out of hand for seemingly essentializing motherhood, or for forcing

space, one leaves the realm of language proper (in the literal sense) and enters a metaphorical relationship involved as it is with materiality and "accomplishes in each writing[,] according to a specific topos, a sentence always in the process of becoming."<sup>104</sup> The conclusion, then, is that writing is an activity of eros, it is the work of the heart. It is the articulation of a desire for one's own language, in order to find a means of articulating one's imaginings and expressing an idea of self.

It is within poetic language that this desire for one's own language is articulated. Like Hillman, Kristeva informs us that poetic language is an "unsettling process--when not an outright destruction--of the identity of meaning and speaking subject, and consequently, of transcendence or, by derivation, of 'religious sensibility.' Thus it accompanies 'crises within social structures and institutions--the moments of their mutation, evolution, revolution, of disarray'."<sup>105</sup>

Poetic language stems from the "archaisms of the semiotic body" and thus has a referent in the maternal body while "language as symbolic function constitutes itself at the cost of repressing instinctual drives and continuous relation to the mother."<sup>106</sup> Yet the subject of poetic language

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feminine expression into the realm of psychosis, Smith suggests that Kristeva's early work is sufficient for political ends. In terms of feminist practice, Kristeva's work has been: "enormously useful...in its attempt to demystify and counteract the structures and effects of masculinist power. Her linking of the semiotic to the cultural construction and repression of the "feminine" by dint of its relation to the maternal body has enabled some feminist thinking to critique the historical logic of masculine privilege without conflating "the feminine" with "female subjects." (130) Smith, conversely, finds Kristeva's current thinking (since 1988) to be "retrogressive in the sense that it returns to a very familiar kind of ideology of subjectivity." (130) Even if she has not abandoned the notion of subject-in-process (constructed, as it were, between the symbolic and the semiotic), she has altered the significance of this perspective by re-positioning within it a form of "liberal humanism which defends art and dissidence over other social practice and contestation." (130) That is, we can understand Kristeva to have expressed her disinclination to continue to engage in the kinds of social and collective struggles for which her work has been useful. Nonetheless, Smith points out that Kristeva still remains "by far the most sophisticated attempt in the current discourses of the human sciences to account for and encourage active human agency...Kristeva's work has been and might still be more useful for helping to demystify and counter the logic of capitalist patriarchy than her characterization of feminism as 'the latest power-seeking ideology' would suggest." (Smith, *Discerning the Subject*, 131.)

<sup>104</sup> Kristeva, "How Does One Speak to Literature?", 114.

<sup>105</sup> Kristeva, "From One Identity to Another", 125.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

maintains itself "at the cost of reactivating this repressed instinctual maternal element."<sup>107</sup> In other words, the author is positioned within a dialogical, ambivalent space between the semiotic and the symbolic. As a result of this dialogical space, the poet is forever struggling with the attempt to express lived experience through ways other than the institutionalizing and codifying means provided by society.

In contrast to the connection between the semiotic and the maternal is the connection with the death drives, or the asocial drives. This is so insofar as any disruption of text is considered a result of the destruction of the present symbolic order. This is said to make way for a kind of second birth. As Kristeva puts it

Subject to death but also to rebirth, his [the artist's] function becomes harnessed, immobilized, represented, and idealized by religious systems (most explicitly by Christianity), which shelter him [sic] in their temples, pagodas, mosques, and churches. *Through themes, ideologies, and social meanings, the artist introduces into the symbolic order an asocial drive, one not yet harnessed by the thetic.*<sup>108</sup>

As the semioticization of the symbolic--the return to that imaginative space that we have been talking about--it is art that brings jouissance (play, emotion, feeling, pleasure) and meaningfulness back into language, along with social disruption. Hence, it is through imagination, the semiotic, or art that the unity of the individual in the social realm is threatened. Religion and science would institutionalize the imagination and its expressions by denying that language, via the semiotic, brings jouissance, the non-rational, to the fore of our experiences of self. Art, in contrast, denies this break by resisting the notion that jouissance must be the same as nature--as opposed to culture--and delirium--as opposed to rationality.<sup>109</sup>

Hence, any revolution founded on imagination and poetic language suggests that the physical disruption of traditional discourses about self is a political activity. Its aim is the "radical transformation of social structures."<sup>110</sup> To Kristeva it is necessary to by-pass the materiality of

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 79.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 104.

language so that "revolutionary practice" can locate "the signifying practice within the social realm." This implies that the dynamics of such revolutionary practices also bring about a complete change in all structures of signification. Kristeva's poetic language like Hillman's imaginal language, then, helps constitute an art, a craft used to shape consciousness. Kristeva's semiotic refers to that space that Hillman's imaginal reflects insofar that both the semiotic or imaginal describe the interface between imagination and expression and, consequently, allude to a pre-linguistic space from which the subversion of the traditional social order is begun.

### **III: Discussion: Imagination Theorized from the Body**

In Julia Kristeva's semiotic chora we find some parallels to Hillman's imaginal field. The chora, as a mobile and provisional space of articulation, is that which brings imaginative play to the level of the social body.<sup>111</sup> According to Kristeva, the semiotic is related to the physical body in general and to the maternal body in specific. This is so insofar as it is the semiotic, that space symbolized by the infant-mother relationship, that helps to provide the impetus to disrupt the accepted norms of a society's means of articulating self and world.<sup>112</sup> In other words, it is in Hillman's imaginal and Kristeva's semiotic chora that we find a means to "blow our minds" and transform traditional means of articulating self. In this sense the semiotic and the imaginal function in a mode similar to Hillman's understanding of aesthetics: it is spontaneous, affective, and provides meaningful connections to the world.

For Kristeva, the semiotic chora, or the imaginative space, produces 'texts' that are outside of the law of society. The 'language' of the semiotic chora is the language of poetry--metaphor, image, symbol, play, heart, and eros. It is a language that is intimately tied up in one's bodily life. Poetic language, whether it emerges from Hillman's imaginal or Kristeva's semiotic, thus has a theophanic value, it is value from the spontaneous responses tied to its aesthetic appeal to the heart.

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 27.

Furthermore, the semiotic, like the imaginal, is involved in structuring the psyche. But Kristeva's connection of the semiotic with the body implies something that Hillman attributes to the imaginal: it can lead to the disruption of the normal, the de-institutionalization or delegitimation of modern notions of the Self. It is the drives and the 'pulsions' of the somatic, Kristeva argues, that influence, break open the rational, and disturb traditional logic in such a way as to constitute an artistic practice, an affective response to the world.

We also find in Kristeva's chora the intimation that there can be no real distinction between the functioning of the mind and the body, as well as between consciousness and the unconscious. Because Kristeva rejects the differentiation between the unconscious and consciousness as well as the imaginal or poetic from the rational, the distinction between imagination and language must also be blurred. Instead, it seems that all we can speak of is a division in terms of the themes and styles of imagining and writing. The two activities, imagining and writing, are intrinsically interrelated and can never really be separated, even when one is speaking of language as a digitized system of conveying meaning. This last point suggests the postmodern style of aesthetics that is based in the unconscious.

It is in the processes leading up to and including the act of writing that imagination and writing work together in an attempt to express an understanding of self that is rooted in one's own experiences, as a physical being embedded in an imaginal or social context. Therefore, if we would change our ways of portraying self and world, we must alter not only our means of imagining but also of representing (speaking and writing about) self and the world. As Hillman puts it, the soul speaks rhetorically and, consequently, any discussion of the soul must be metaphorical.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, because various fantasy structures dominate our perspective of subjectivity,

The perspective of soul is inseparable from the manner of speaking of soul, a manner that evokes soul, brings it to life, and persuades us into a psychological perspective. In its concern with rhetoric, archetypal psychology has relied upon

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<sup>113</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 19.

poetic devices to expound its vision, all the while working at 'seeing through' the mechanistic and personalistic metaphors employed by other psychologies so as to recover soul from these literalisms.<sup>114</sup>

It is the thought forms of the separated self, the literal, scientific world view that binds us to our language; and, language limits our imaginations. This is precisely what postmodern approaches to imagination and language bring into question. Consequently, we are led to the conclusion that the metaphors employed by the Enlightenment world view reinforce modernity's privileged perspective and constrict, or limit the possibilities of our imaginations.<sup>115</sup>

From this perspective we can understand the writing subject as an entity that includes both consciousness and unconsciousness. Furthermore, the writing subject also includes the non-conscious, that is, that "domain not subject to repressions but not within the reach of consciousness either. This is an area covered by the notion of a dominant ideology: the whole system of myths and prejudices that gives our view of our society and our place in it a specific orientation."<sup>116</sup> This is to say that if the starting point of an analysis of self is the text and nothing but the text, then literature can be examined from an analytical perspective similar to dream interpretation. This picture of the dynamics involved in writing, in the activities of the writing subject, then, allows us to understand every means of articulating the world and self as something that contains more than conscious, rational intentions.

The imaginal field that Hillman refers to, I submit, implies a style of being that is congruent with Kristeva's semiotic chora. The imaginal as a mediating agency is that which allows for communicability with self as well as with others: it is a pre-existing environment in which images appear. Furthermore, in both Hillman and Kristeva we can find the presumption that our imagination has a basis in a transtemporal and transpersonal foundation. We have already encountered Hillman's claims that the soul operates as a mediator between the mind and the body, as well as the personal and the transpersonal. For Kristeva, this notion of the imaginal

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>115</sup> Starhawk. *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 25.

<sup>116</sup> Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 8.

field as a space of intermediation is found in the relation that the semiotic has with the experience of the infant-mother relationship in which the mother represents society and language and the infant creative activity and the subversion of rules. Hence, we might conclude that the semiotic mediates between the rational and the non-rational or consciousness and unconsciousness, between mind and body, and, perhaps most importantly for Hillman, between self and the world. It is the status of the infant as a non-speaking individual that places it firmly in the imaginal field, in an ontological mode of being that cannot yet be characterized as discursive, normalized, or societal.

For Hillman, the primary function of imagination is to bring value back to soul and the world. It is the transformative capacity of imagination that is important. What now needs to be emphasized, however, is that because the imaginal field is thought to be accessible through the soul's language--metaphor, image--it must be understood via something other than the language of strict rationality and logic. Hence, Hillman's imaginal, like Kristeva's semiotic, refers to something that is imagined to be prediscursive in nature, something that is based in a more "authentic" way of being, often idealized as the child who has yet to have entered into society, and who, by learning to speak, learns to express society's rules.

Two sets of consequences emerge from this parallel between Hillman's imaginal field and Kristeva's semiotic chora: on the one hand, we can make the supposition that the means of expressing the soul's activity--imagining--is found in poetic language (i.e., metaphor and image); and, on the other hand, we find that the activities of the imagination are not limited to the mental sphere, just as they are not merely personal. For Kristeva, it is the body's behaviours, it is the embodiment of one's instincts or semiotic 'pulsions,' that disrupt rational language or ideation with artistic practice. It is through the somatic that at least part of the semiotic operates. Consequently, in both Hillman's and Kristeva's thoughts about the imaginal and the semiotic, respectively, we find a subversive approach to the Enlightenment's imperialism of the mind, or the institutionalization of self. This subversive activity is located at the roots of both Hillman's and Kristeva's concerns about imagination and the disruption of society as represented by rational

or literal language.

## Chapter Five: Selfhood in a Postmodern Context

In the final pages of *The New Polytheism*, David Miller makes several predictions as to the future of what he calls a 'polytheistic theology.'<sup>1</sup> Miller's predictions in the context of contemporary styles of thought about self shed light upon the confluence of thought explored above: different thinkers are sharing an emerging style of thought, which may be characterized as postmodern. We can juxtapose Miller's predictions about a polytheistic perspective to Richard Tarnas' characterization of postmodernity as both disintegrative and reintegrative, so as to help build a tentative picture of a phenomenology of the idea of soul or self.

According to Richard Tarnas, the modern self as proclaimed by Descartes, was conceived as a "fully separate, self-defining entity, for whom its rational self-awareness was absolutely primary--doubting everything but itself, setting itself in opposition not only to traditional authorities but to the world, as subject against object, as a thinking, observing, measuring, manipulating being, fully distinct from an objective God and an external nature."<sup>2</sup> The outcome of the separation of the rational subject and the material world is modern science, "including science's capacity for rendering certain knowledge of the world and for making man 'master and possessor of nature'."<sup>3</sup> For Tarnas, Descartes' vision of the cosmos and humanity's role in it perceives "science, progress, reason, epistemological certainty, and human identity...[as] all inextricably connected with each other and with the conception of an objective, mechanistic

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<sup>1</sup> I personally do not like the phrase 'polytheistic theology.' I consider this phrase a redundant misnomer. First, it is redundant because 'polytheism' implicitly refers to the religious as well as the variegated nature of the divine. To add 'theology' is to state again that we are dealing with the religious. Furthermore, this phrase is a misnomer simply because the word theology specifically refers to the word of the one Christian God, not goddess, or many different divinities. In light of the fact that the term 'Theology' had not yet been coined, it is unfair to criticize Miller for misogyny. Still, 'theology' does an injustice to the perspectives being developed by feminists. For these reasons I opt to use the term 'polytheistic perspective,' or any other such combination that reflects an attitude, a viewpoint, or a style of thought.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Tarnas. *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that Have Shaped our World View*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 408.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

universe."<sup>4</sup> Upon this synthesis was founded the paradigmatic character of the modern mind.

The paradigmatic style of the modern mind, according to Tarnas, is one that has expunged the cosmos of all the human and spiritual properties which had previously been projected on it.<sup>5</sup> The world became a neutral, sterile, and material place in which "no dialogue with nature was possible--whether through magic, mysticism, or divinely--certified authority. Only the impersonal employment of man's critical and empirically-based intellect could attain an objective understanding of nature."<sup>6</sup> Modern western culture is one of radical differentiation (as Scott Lasch would put it) of the world, human nature, and knowledge and the subsequent institutionalization of certain Christian and scientific biases.

It was during this time, Tarnas notes, that the modern mind, with the exception of the Romantics, rejected the "Renaissance's fascination with ancient myth as an autonomous dimension of existence."<sup>7</sup> For the modern mind, the ancient gods took on roles as literary characters, artistic images, and useful metaphors with no claim to ontological reality. It was a climate in which the subjective, the spiritual, the mythological, and the imaginal were rejected in favour of the objective, the secular, the scientific, and the rational mind. It was a climate in which western thought responded to the challenges of secular humanism.<sup>8</sup> Hence the modern ideal of self took on a specific character that

gradually but finally [made a] radical shift of psychological allegiance from God to man [sic], from dependence to independence, from otherworldliness to this world, from the transcendent to the empirical, from myth and belief to reason and fact, from universals to particulars, from a supernaturally determined static cosmos to a naturally determined evolving cosmos, and from a fallen humanity to an advancing one.<sup>9</sup>

There was a "new sense of human dignity and power that inevitably moved man [sic] towards his

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 296ff.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 319.

[sic] secular self."<sup>10</sup> When Tarnas states that modernity "brought a massive shift in the psychological vector of perceived authority,"<sup>11</sup> he suggests that the modern Self increasingly located this power in the present and mundane world; but, it also brought with it increasing epistemological and psychological fragmentation in our understanding of our relationship to the world and to others.

Tarnas' description of postmodern understandings of mind and self is divergent from the modern one. Tarnas characterizes the postmodern mind "as an open-ended, indeterminate set of attitudes that has been shaped by a great diversity of intellectual and cultural currents" including pragmatism, existentialism, Marxism, and psychoanalysis as well as "feminism, hermeneutics, deconstruction, and postempiricist philosophy of science, to cite only a few of the more prominent."<sup>12</sup> Yet for all the diversity there have emerged several common themes, which include: "the appreciation of the plasticity and constant change of reality and knowledge, a stress on the priority of concrete experience over fixed abstract principles, and a conviction that no single a priori thought system should govern belief or investigation."<sup>13</sup> In all of this there is the recognition that human knowledge is subjectively determined by a variety of factors; "objective essences, or things-in-themselves, are neither accessible nor positable; and that the value of all truths and assumptions must be continually subjected to direct testing."<sup>14</sup> This, in a proverbial nutshell, characterizes Tarnas' disintegrative character of the postmodern mind.

Confronted with such a difficult and varied intellectual climate, the postmodern challenge requires the development of a cultural vision with some degree of universal appeal which will also bring with it "authentic and fruitful coherence out of the present fragmentation," as well as provide the undergirding for the construction of new perspectives and possibilities as we

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 320.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 395.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

proceed into the next millennium.<sup>15</sup> If "the evolution of the western mind has been driven," as Tarnas puts it, "by a heroic impulse to forge an autonomous rational human self by separating it from the primordial unity with nature,"<sup>16</sup> then we can conclude that "the masculinity of the Western mind has been pervasive and fundamental, in both men and women, affecting every aspect of Western thought, determining its most basic conception of the human being and the human role in the world."<sup>17</sup> For Tarnas the evolution of the western mind is predicated upon the "repression of the feminine--on the repression of undifferentiated unitary consciousness, of the *participation mystique* with nature: a progressive denial of the *anima mundi*, of the soul of the world, of the community of being, of the all-pervading, of mystery and ambiguity, of imagination, emotion, instinct, body, nature, woman."<sup>18</sup>

For Tarnas, then, the crisis of the modern mind is a masculine crisis. Tarnas believes, however, that the resolution of this crisis is already underway. This resolution is visible

in the tremendous emergence of the feminine in our culture: visible not only in the rise of feminism, the growing empowerment of women, and the widespread opening up to feminine values by both men and women, and not only in the rapid burgeoning of women's scholarship and gender-sensitive perspectives in virtually every intellectual discipline, but also in the increasing sense of unity with the planet and all forms of nature on it, in the increasing awareness of the ecological and the growing reaction against political and corporate policies supporting the domination and exploitation of the environment, in the growing embrace of the human community, in the accelerating collapse of long-standing political and ideological barriers separating the world's peoples, in the deepening recognition of the value and necessity of partnership, pluralism, and the interplay of many perspectives.<sup>19</sup>

Tarnas recognizes not only the role of feminist thought but also the universality of those things generally characterized as feminine in nature: imagination and intuition, the unconscious, and the body. As we know, Tarnas claims that there is more than the disintegrative at work in the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 409.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 441.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 442.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

postmodern intellectual milieu. The above quotation expresses Tarnas' understanding of the postmodern contrast to deconstruction: reintegration is seen as a re-emerging style of western Romanticism. But postmodern reintegration is also visible in "the widespread urge to reconnect with the body, the emotions, the unconscious, the imagination and intuition, in the new concern with the mystery of childbirth and the dignity of the maternal, in the growing recognition of an immanent intelligence in nature, in the broad popularity of the Gaia hypothesis."<sup>20</sup> It is the return to a felt appreciation of our relations to the world, others, and our selves that responds to the deconstruction, or Lyotard's de-legitimation, of modern institutions or thought.

To Tarnas, this reintegrative character refers to more than compensation. It is not merely a case of a return of the repressed. Instead, Tarnas believes this return to nature always has been the underlying goal of Western intellectual and spiritual evolution, because the underlying passion of the Western mind has been to "reunite with its ground of being."<sup>21</sup> Tarnas suggests that, first, the Western mind had to differentiate itself from the feminine and, then, rediscover it and reunite with it. "And that reunion can now occur on a new and profoundly different level from that of primordial unconscious unity," he concludes, "for the long evolution of human consciousness has prepared it to be capable at last of embracing the ground and matrix of its own being freely and consciously."<sup>22</sup> Hence, Tarnas claims that the great challenge of our time is for the masculine to see through and overcome its "hubris and one-sidedness...to choose to enter into a fundamentally new relationship of mutuality with the feminine in all forms."<sup>23</sup> He writes that this is the great challenge that the Western mind "has been slowly preparing itself to meet for its entire existence."<sup>24</sup>

This view that the western mind has been moving inevitably towards a reconciliation with the feminine is a thought-provoking statement. I am not sure, however, that I agree with all the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 442-443.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 443.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 444.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

implications of Tarnas' over-arching model of Hegelian dialectal synthesis when examining the history of ideas. I do agree, however, that the position that an open-minded engagement with the feminine will result with cultural, religious, and psychological change is characteristic of the thinkers reviewed in this dissertation. The need to reassess the feminine, moreover, fits well into Tarnas' schema of disintegration and reintegration as well as into Keller's view of the history of the separated self: in the past the matriarchal perspective had been rejected in favour of the patriarchal; patriarchy went along its own course and built the walls of its own institutions and myths of autonomy, separation, and, for Keller, matricide. Finally, according to Tarnas, it now appears that masculine Western consciousness needs to recover what has been delegated and denigrated as belonging to the feminine as symbol--feeling, imagination, connection, and community.

This idea of the reintegration of the feminine principle is also found in both Miller and, as we shall see shortly, Hillman's view of polytheism and the direction of contemporary thought. When Miller lists the characteristics of a 'polytheistic theology,' he twice claims that such a perspective will have to do with the feminine: it will be "a feminine theology [sic]" in the manner of the goddess; and, it will resemble the form of the furies in its radical femininity.<sup>25</sup> Miller appears to have predicted Tarnas' criterion of reconciling the feminine insofar as Miller claims a polytheistic perspective will not only reintegrate the feminine and the goddess, it will also practice iconoclasm--a third characteristic of the polytheistic outlook. In the iconoclasm and the reintegration of the radical feminine, we find Miller anticipating the so-called 'postmodern condition'--Lyotard's de-legitimation, Lasch's de-differentiation, and Tarnas' disintegration. I hesitate to make a direct correlation between the reintegration of the feminine with the deconstructive character of postmodern thought. Still, I believe that in general the feminist critique of society has done more to challenge our myths than most other contemporary intellectual movements or forms of social praxis. In this light, I place the feminine

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<sup>25</sup> David Miller. *The New Polytheism: Rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses*. New York: (Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974), 73-74.

characteristics of a polytheistic perspective under Tarnas' disintegrative aspect of postmodern culture, while reserving the knowledge that many issues brought forward by feminist thought are also reintegrative in character.

There is, however, more to the disintegrative character of a polytheistic perspective than Miller's prediction of radical femininity and iconoclasm. Miller also notes that a 'polytheistic theology' will be accompanied by three other characteristics: it will be analytical in the sense of knowing oneself; it will be political insofar as it revises power structures; and, it will be existential insofar as it transcends the death of God.<sup>26</sup> These disintegrative characteristics of a polytheistic perspective all apply to the attitude taken by the feminist theorists reviewed in Chapters Three and Four. I explained that polytheism is an attitude characteristic of feminist theory. I also noted the emphasis on the goddess as a metaphorical means of radically challenging the icons of western male consciousness and the practice of symbolic matricide in myth, theology, and psychology. With Kristeva, moreover, I demonstrated an iconoclastic perspective that challenges such literary conventions as the "monologue" (one way of speaking about the world) through the notion of a playful and bodily semiotic disruption of text and genre, allowing for the emergence of a "polylogue," or many ways of speaking. All of the feminist theorists to whom I refer analyze Western culture in an attempt to deconstruct old patterns of thinking, while allowing themselves a voice of their own. They challenge the power structures of Western thought and praxis: political, social, psychological, and spiritual. Finally, they all understand that the Nietzschean death of God has provided the necessary means of reimagining the human existential situation as something that is multi-determined, connected, empathic, experiential, and dynamic. It seems that for Keller, Kristeva, and the others, the death of God, as both Miller and Tarnas read Nietzsche<sup>27</sup>, has been necessary for the rebirth of the gods and

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>27</sup> Both Miller and Tarnas refer to Nietzsche's death of God as the opportunity for a re-visioning of our sense of reality and divinity. Miller writes this: "When released from the tyrannical imperialism of monotheism by the death of God, man has the opportunity of discovering new dimensions hidden in the depths of reality's history." (Ibid., 3). For Tarnas, the death of God

goddesses, of other modes of being, and of a new paradigm about human nature.

Hillman's polytheistic perspective is iconoclastic and also embodies the analytical, political, and existential characteristics predicted by Miller. These features are all evident in Hillman's critique of psychology's mythic and intellectual heritage. What is unclear from how I have presented Hillman thus far, however, is his relation to the feminine. I noted that Hillman 'steers away' from feminism because he feels it would narrow the imaginal vision to a specific set of concerns and problems. It would be unfair, however, to assume that Hillman is unconcerned with the kinds of things that Tarnas, Miller, Keller, Kristeva, and other feminist theorists believe are characteristic of a post-patriarchal, polytheistic perspective. These characteristics include aesthetics and the thought of the heart, community, and the Neo-Platonic concept of *anima mundi* which suggests the connections among soul, self, other, and the physical world.

Hillman, in fact, anticipates the necessity of assimilating those psychological characteristics that traditionally have been stereotyped as feminine and inferior. In the final essay in *The Myth of Analysis*, he states that it is all well and good to theorize about the future of our world view, but if there is not a corresponding change in attitude "in regard to the material part of man [sic] himself, which has, as Jung says, always been associated in our tradition with the feminine"<sup>28</sup> there can be no change in the western worldview. "The transformation of our worldview," he concludes, "necessitates the transformation of the view of the feminine."<sup>29</sup>

Hillman represents this change in consciousness as turning from Apollo to Dionysus-- from a rationalizing, masculine consciousness to a feminine (or bisexual), intuitive consciousness. For Hillman, a Dionysian style of consciousness is a "structure [that] offers an

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permits "the emergence of a more authentic experience of the numinous, a larger sense of deity." Religion is consequently "recognized as a fundamental human activity in which every society and individual symbolically interprets and engages the ultimate nature of being." (Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 404).

<sup>28</sup> James Hillman. *The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 216.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

end to misogyny."<sup>30</sup> He argues that by re-visioning what we traditionally consider to constitute female inferiority, we might learn that female inferiority is more a statement of myth than it is one of biology. The recourse to a Dionysian styled consciousness--one that is bisexual in its awareness of human nature--from the Apollonian consciousness--the rational, scientific, and theological monologue--is one that will initiate the emergence of a new structure of consciousness.<sup>31</sup> This 'new structure of consciousness' may be "less hierarchal and without self-divisive polarities....rather than superimposed levels [of hierarchy], we might speak of polycentricity, of circulation and rotation, of the comings and goings of flow."<sup>32</sup> In the Dionysian "structure[,] all positions are occasionally inferior, and no positions are ever finally inferior. In this kind of structure, inferiority in this sense would come to an end."<sup>33</sup> Hillman concludes that although the notion of female inferiority and the roots of misogyny rest in a transpersonal and transtemporal myth, in the sense that this myth has persisted in the minds of Western individuals for millennia. Such perspectives of female inferiority, according to Hillman, can be overcome by incorporating Dionysian participation, of the idea of consciousness as "knowing together."<sup>34</sup> It is necessary to release the concretization of the abysmal side of masculine fantasies about the female body and psyche in order for there to be a genuine renovation of consciousness, community, politics, and society.<sup>35</sup>

Yet, as pointed out in the Chapters Three and Four, Hillman misses out on the point that the masculine ideal traditionally has been the norm of selfhood in western thought. Moreover, the call to integrate a Dionysian consciousness over a rationalizing Apollonian one, may be matriphobic. That is, in suggesting the 'bisexual' model of Dionysian styles of consciousness, Hillman returns to an alternative but definitely masculine conception of consciousness as

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 287.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 295.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 282.

represented by another male member of the greek pantheon. If Hillman would reinvest the so-called feminine characteristics of human consciousness, it might be desirable to suggest a model of consciousness that more directly reflects femininity.

Nonetheless, we find Hillman, like Miller and Tarnas, agreeing that the influence of the feminine is a necessary aspect of contemporary thought. Miller and Tarnas, as well as most feminist thinkers, believe that the work of feminism is a necessary part of the disintegration of traditional thought. Hillman, however, is less direct. While denying some of the efficacy of feminist perspectives, he nonetheless affirms the necessity for there to be some form of reconciliation for all of society between the stereotypes of femininity as inferior and stereotypes of masculinity, traditionally seen superior but now recognized as problematic. While some feminists may wince at Hillman's bisexual metaphor for the reconciliation of the feminine, we discover in it a reflection of Tarnas' second characteristic of the postmodern condition: the thrust towards reintegration. Like Keller, Starhawk, Chodorow, and other feminist thinkers, Hillman would also reintegrate into all of us those psychological characteristics traditionally identified as feminine.

To feminist theorists, polytheism allows for the necessary space for woman's voices to be heard and felt. Hence, we might ask, if a polytheistic perspective is not a fad, what is it? One answer is provided by Miller: it will involve the re-mythologization of culture and tradition. This is without a doubt one of the characteristics of the postmodern self, which, according to Tarnas, is highly aware of its involvement in the construction of consensual reality.<sup>36</sup> In the attempt to re-imagine paradigms of human nature, Hillman and the feminist theorists to whom I refer are involved in the in re-mythologization<sup>37</sup> of Western culture's ideas of what it means to

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<sup>36</sup> Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 407.

<sup>37</sup> Robert W. Brockway, in *Myth from the Ice Age to Mickey Mouse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), notes that like paradigms, myths are founded on the best available evidence at any given time, and "are discredited when the evidence no longer sustains them." Brockway also suggests this: when a specific myth no longer functions as a efficient theory or cosmology for a society, new ones rise to attention. Like Kuhn, Brockway claims that these 'new' myths were already present as cultural artifacts because they emerged out of the old myths:

be human: how we relate to ourselves, to others, and to the world. They all claim that it is no longer necessary to see ourselves and our relations in a monotheistic or patriarchal light. There are other ways of looking at the world and ourselves as connected and not only as separated, as feeling and not merely rational, as body and not only mind, as sacred and meaningful rather than merely secular and without value when divorced from a transcendent God.

Richard Tarnas also notes that the re-mythologization of culture is a necessary option for our times. He claims that the postmodern human challenge "is to engage that world view or set of perspectives which brings forth the valuable, life enhancing consequences."<sup>38</sup> Hence, Tarnas claims that the 'human predicament' is "regarded as the human adventure: the challenge of being, *in potentia*, a radically self-defining entity--not in the context of a no-exit box of the secular existentialist, which unconsciously assumed specific a priori metaphysical limits, but in a universe that is genuinely open."<sup>39</sup> This is to say that postmodern humans must "choose among a multiplicity of potentially viable options" and the options chosen will affect both our myths and understanding the nature of reality and of the nature of the choosing subject.<sup>40</sup>

Tarnas' comments about altering the nature of our understanding about reality refers to a further prediction Miller makes about a polytheistic attitude: it will involve an aesthetic recreation. This is a characteristic of postmodernity that was first presented in the Introduction. Scott Lasch, if we recall, notes that a postmodern aesthetics will involve the end of aesthetics understood as representationalism and formalism in favour of adopting an image-bound, figural, affective, sensual, and unconscious understanding and praxis of aesthetics.<sup>41</sup> The importance of aesthetics, or the thought of the heart, in archetypal psychology has become evident over the course of this dissertation. Hillman, in fact, argues that depth psychology adopts a perspective

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"first as modifications and revisions, and ultimately as independent species, something new and different." (79).

<sup>38</sup> Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 406.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Scott Lasch, *Sociology of Postmodernism*. (New York: Routledge, 1989), 99; 118.

that is based in the aesthetic response. Because his psychology is bound to images, it accounts for the imaginal nature of our being. Archetypal psychology accounts for the feelings of the heart caused by the images presented to it; it accounts for how we relate, affect, and are affected by the world.

In Chapter Four, we found that Julia Kristeva also evidences a similar perspective about aesthetics, when speaking about poetic discourse. For Kristeva, the imagination emerges from a unconscious space of semi-coded libido and disrupts the rule-bound, conscious, and rational sphere of being. There is the abandonment of the monologue, of an aesthetics of the one, in favour of recognizing the psycho-somatic intrusion of a multitude of playful and semiconscious impressions. The emphasis is not on forms and representation, but rather on sensuality, the imaginal, and the emotional response to that which is presented to the mind's eye. But, as pointed out in Chapter Four, Hillman's epistemology in regard to the body's role in human imagining lacks a certain degree of sophistication. Julia Kristeva's semiotic chora provides insight for archetypal psychology into the epistemological significance of the human body when it comes to living in and acting out the fantasies of western imagination. Making a bridge between psychoanalytic forms of thought to Hillman's Jungian-based psychology brings out similarities in how the imagination is regarded by both trends of thought as a prediscursive space from which images flow and disrupt normative social praxis and cultural myths. Both Hillman (via Edward Casey and Henri Corbin) and Kristeva find in the imagination or the semiotic chora the potential for the re-imagination of the human condition and western society.

Miller's characterization of a polytheistic perspective as involving re-mythologization of culture and tradition and an aesthetic recreation implies two further predictions: the role of religion will not be a dogmatic one and there will be a cultural correlation of the religious and the cultural, the sacred and the secular, the infinite and the finite.<sup>42</sup> For Tarnas, in comparison, the role of religion in the postmodern world will be one that is "recognized as a fundamental human

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<sup>42</sup> Miller, *The New Polytheism*, 73.

activity in which every society and individual symbolically interprets and engages the ultimate nature of being."<sup>43</sup> One consequence of the postmodern collapse of meaning is "an emerging awareness of an individual's self-responsibility and capacity for creative innovation and self-transformation in his or her existential and spiritual response to life."<sup>44</sup> Not only has the postmodern mind eroded the efficacy of religious institutions, there has also been a concurrent increase in emphasis on experiential spiritual autonomy and the emergence of new forms of religion as a result of the deinstitutionalization of traditional understandings of spirituality.<sup>45</sup> Tarnas suggests that, in postmodern religious praxis, dogmatism is exchanged for individual experience.

This non-dogmatic polytheistic perspective holds for much of feminist scholarship about religion. Many feminists have expressed their disappointment with traditional religious systems as being outdated, narrow-minded, dogmatic, hierarchal, patriarchal, and divorced from the realm of individual religious experience. Consequently, feminists such as Starhawk and Christ, turn to the goddess as a means of expressing a renewed understanding of religion. Goddess religions, we are informed, are not characterized by dominance and hierarchy. They are not religions of dogma, but of myth, poetry, feeling, and imagination. Newly-formed Goddess religions emphasize the need to allow for the play of signification in order to experience the many sides of the world, the goddess, and human nature.

Hillman's psychology is also not dogmatic. He disparages the literalism and nominalism at the roots of traditional psychological discourses. The dogmatic monotheism of psychology, resulting from the Christian influences on our understandings of the soul, must be met with a dynamic perspective that accounts for the many-sidedness of the human psyche. We find recourse to soul, image, imagination, and poetry in archetypal psychology as well as an attempt to open up new vistas of insight. A polytheistic psychology based in an aesthetic response cannot

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<sup>43</sup> Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 404.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 403.

hold to any literal or dogmatic view of the soul and the world. Kristeva's attitude, in comparison, is similar to Hillman's. She claims that the poetic word does not ascribe to the law of the one, to the monologue. She finds in the human psyche many different voices that constantly and continually disrupt and subvert dogmatic perspectives about humanity and the world. When Kristeva claims that the modern novel and the contemporary mind speak in terms of a polylogue, she is claiming that there is no one, dogmatic vision that is adequate to express the varieties of the human psyche, of the semiotic chora, or the imaginal world.

Miller's latter characteristic of a polytheistic perspective, a correlation of sacred and secular, most clearly aligns itself with Tarnas' idea of postmodern reintegration and Lasch's notion of the de-differentiation of various fields of thought and cultural institutions that had been dichotomized by the modern mind. It is in Hillman's recourse to the Neo-Platonic idea of the *anima mundi* that we find one obvious correlation of the sacred and the secular, the meaningful and the mundane. By rediscovering the correlation of soul in the world to our souls, it becomes possible to collapse the boundaries between sacred and secular, self and other, conscious and unconscious, rational and imaginal, as well as psychology and art. Hillman understands that all cultural and religious artifacts are themselves the product of the same imaginal activities of the human mind. This idea challenges the divisions which that same mind had constructed.

The postmodern mind, Tarnas suggests, understands such dichotomies as not necessarily representing discrete separations in reality, but rather as referring to a specific style of experiencing the world. Some feminist theorists also demonstrate this correlation of the sacred and secular. They also emphasize the need to discover the sacred in what had formerly been considered the secular: the material world, human feelings, and the body. There is a sense of connection to and community with the mundane things that make up this world. By placing value on such material and 'inferior' aspects of human and physical nature, it becomes possible to see the sacred in our everyday activities, the changes of our bodies and the seasons, and in our relation to the divine.

Many feminists also evidence a further characteristic of a polytheistic perspective as

provided by Miller: body consciousness.<sup>46</sup> If, as Tarnas puts it, "the underlying ethos [of postmodern thought] is one of dissembling established structures, deflating pretension, exploding beliefs, [and] unmasking appearances...";<sup>47</sup> one thing that has been addressed is our consciousness of the human body. The concern shown by feminists over the human body is perhaps unprecedented in contemporary thought. Feminists have continually deconstructed patriarchal fantasies about the body in general, and the female body in particular. Many of the feminist theorists referred to in this dissertation challenge the association of women's bodies with carnality, weakness, dominance, and passive sexuality. Keller and Starhawk, for instance, postulate that the origins of male domination of women and their bodies originated through prehistoric Aryan invasions which overran a predominately matriarchal, occidental culture. On another level, Downing<sup>48</sup> calls for the need to develop a poetics of the body in order for all people in general, and women in specific, to reclaim their bodies in ways that escape the trappings of science, medicine, theology, and myth.

For Hillman, the role of a body consciousness is still vague. He, as noted, speaks about body in terms of its relations to soul, which is a non-material thing. Although his psychology does not adequately approach the body, he indicates that our personal imagination of body has roots in specific cultural imaginations: the inferiority of women, their carnal nature, as possession, or as feeling. He also notes that the only way to change such fantasies is to become conscious of the things that have been attributed to the female as body. Such a consciousness, Hillman claims, would affect the body as well. "It would become a body consciousness, giving the experience of a somatized awareness of self in concrete actual behaviour. This would in turn transform that old frustration of reflection divided from action, where consciousness is conceived mainly in terms of speech and mind, giving over the unconscious to the body and its 'actings-

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<sup>46</sup> Miller, *The New Polytheism*, 75.

<sup>47</sup> Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 401.

<sup>48</sup> Christine Downing, *Women's Mysteries: Toward a Poetics of Gender*. (New York: Crossroads, 1992).

out."<sup>49</sup> Still, as is noted in Chapters Three and Four, the mediatory role that Hillman gives the soul leaves the body's position in doubt. The emphasis of the soul as a mediator between the mind and body, self and other, individual and world is one that places another metaphysical thing over and above the human body and the physical world. It is, therefore, incumbent upon archetypal psychology to demythologize its over-reliance upon such 'mystical abstractions' as soul and begin to account better for the real, physical aspects of our lives.

For Miller, a polytheistic perspective is one that pays heed to the stories of the gods; it is a perspective of the word in the sense of Hermes, the trickster who operates comfortably in both the conscious and unconscious realms; it is said to be dancing and playful; and, it refers to story and narrative. Each of these points recalls my comparisons of Hillman's ideas about the imagination to Kristeva's semiotic chora. In Chapter Four, I indicate that Kristeva's polylogue is one that accounts for the many kinds of stories that make up the narrative position of the polyphonic novel. For Hillman, this approach is similar to listening to the imaginative stories of the Gods and Goddesses to gain insight into the multi-valence of human nature, cognition, and activities. Kristeva emphasizes the playfulness and dance of words in such genres as the carnivalesque and Menippean discourses, recalling Hillman's depiction of the imagination as operating in a playful manner, dancing around from one metaphor to another. In both instances we receive the impression that a polytheistic perspective uses words as does Hermes, the trickster. The imagination and the poetic word function as intermediaries, between the lines as it were, passing between the underworld and the overworld, unconsciousness and consciousness, to bring to light new ideas from the many perspectives available to any one person.

For both Hillman and Kristeva, a polytheistic perspective is also one that challenges the hubris of nominalism and literalism. As such, polytheism provides space for many voices to be heard, rather than dictating that one and only one voice is valid, legitimate, and, as it is strictly rational. This is to say, with Tarnas, that the postmodern attitude understands that "all human

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<sup>49</sup> Hillman, *The Myth of Analysis*, 285.

understanding is interpretation, and no interpretation is final."<sup>50</sup>

To Tarnas, feminism and a polytheistic perspective operate to confront established categories which sustain separations and dualism. By deconstructing and re-conceiving such categories of thought, the contemporary mind is permitted to consider less-dichotomized perspectives that would not have been conceived within former paradigms.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, Tarnas claims that it had to be the 'fate and burden' of depth psychology--especially post-Jungian depth psychology--to help "reveal and dissolve" the dualistic world view.<sup>52</sup> Hence a further development in western thought which has encouraged the integrative tendencies of the postmodern perspective "has been an epistemological rethinking of the nature of the imagination...."<sup>53</sup> The literalism characteristic of the modern mind has given way to greater appreciation of "the multidimensional nature of reality, the many-sidedness of the human spirit, and the multivalent, symbolically mediated nature of human knowledge and experience."<sup>54</sup> Reality is thus understood not to refer to a "solid, self-contained given," as the modern sensibility of literalism suggests. Rather, reality is understood to be "a fluid, unfolding process, an 'open universe' continually affected and molded by one's actions and beliefs....one is always necessarily in reality....it must in some sense be hewed out by means of the human mind and imagination, which themselves are already enmeshed in that which they seek to understand and affect."<sup>55</sup> For Tarnas the postmodern human being is neither divorced from physical reality nor the body, both of which, he claims, make up the "background and condition of every cognitive act."<sup>56</sup> This suggests, that for Tarnas, the postmodern self is not a passive reflector of reality but rather interacts in and with it. Soul is in a process of participating in the world. Postmodernity is representative of a style of rethinking the human condition that permits an understanding of the

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<sup>50</sup> Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*, 397.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 408.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 432.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 405.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 407.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 396.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

interactive process involving imagination, feelings, self, others, and the world. Such a style of re-examining knowledge involves a certain degree of re-mythologizing the interaction between the world and self.

The above comments brings us to two further characteristics of Miller's 'polytheistic theology': it will be based in intuition and feeling; and, in a deepened understanding of process.<sup>57</sup> Like Hillman, Catherine Keller claims that feeling is not reducible to any emotion that refers to affective states; it is not something that we can name like anger or happiness. Rather, feeling is considered an analogy referring to every actual thing or being in the universe. It is an analogy that refers to how we 'feel,' or intuit, our connections to one another and to the world in which we live. In Keller's understanding, feeling is not differentiated and categorized in the same manner as are characteristic of modern epistemologies about self. Thus, Keller concludes, feeling "directly opposes the entire tradition of philosophical rationalism as well as scientific mechanism"<sup>58</sup> and, I might add, monotheistic theology. It is the fall of the modern, monotheistic world view that raises the problematic of separating our relations to the world. Monotheism and patriarchal religions advocate the belief that all relations must refer to a naive idea of the Absolute--i.e., to that which is separated and transcendent to this world. Polytheism, in contrast, finds no single absolute providing, instead, many ways of relating to the world.

Keller argues that the relations between models of divinity, such as the absolute god of monotheistic western religions and its human correlate, the heroic ego, collaborate with immaterial substances and bring about a vision of the modern Self divided against both itself and the world in which it is embedded.<sup>59</sup> Yet, an immanent perspective, or model of selfhood characterizable as 'embodied soulfulness,' can be understood through the notion that our exterior boundaries do not separate us from the world but connect us, despite the claims of the Cartesian-rationalist paradigm, through an imaginative and heartfelt response. For Keller, the body cannot

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<sup>57</sup> Miller, *The New Polytheism*, 73; 72.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>59</sup> Catherine Keller, *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism and Self*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 86.

be separated from soul. Like Hillman, she writes "as soul is embodied, body is ensouled....It is precisely in embodiment that the many are becoming one and the outer becoming inner."<sup>60</sup>

As we know, Keller's concept of the separated self is linked to Nancy Chodorow's work. Chodorow writes that "the basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world, the basic masculine sense of self is separate."<sup>61</sup> Men are encouraged to deny their feelings because feelings and intuition are considered something that betokens weaknesses. In contrast, this understanding of a connection between feelings and weaknesses suggests a state of being which women are encouraged to cultivate. Hillman also claims that it is necessary for all of us to reclaim those feelings and intuitions which have been stereotyped as belonging to women. When juxtaposed with Keller's appropriation of process philosophy, Hillman's emphasis on an aesthetic response to the world reinforces the suggestion that a feeling soul is a soul in process.

The need for the soul to reintegrate feelings was put forward for two reasons: the role of our feelings must be reconsidered for the simple reason that traditional psychology has neglected subjective and nonrational psychic events for too long. The second reason is less apparent. Hillman's usage of the metaphor of the heart as the seat of the soul and the aesthetic response may also prove beneficial for finding a *via regia* into a deepened appreciation of the body for archetypal psychology. By locating the soul in the heart which feels its relations to the world, archetypal psychology provides itself with a means of further developing its understanding of the

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>61</sup> Nancy Chodorow. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 169. For Chodorow, masculine personality, the normative model of self in traditional psychotherapy, "comes to be defined more in terms of denial or relation and connection (and denial of femininity), whereas feminine personality comes to include a fundamental definition of self in relationship. Thus, relational abilities and preoccupations have been extended in women's development and curtailed in men's." (Ibid.)

A second psychologist that many feminists rely upon is Jean Baker Miller. In *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986) Miller notes that we must keep in mind that such "feelings are common and inevitable to all, even though our cultural tradition unrealistically expects men to discard rather than to acknowledge them." (29.) We find in the feminist emphasis on relation the suggestion that feelings must be better accounted for when speaking about the affiliations that make up people's lives.

role that the body plays in imagination. If the heart is seen as the seat of the soul, then it may become possible for archetypal psychology to locate the imagination as acting in and through the body.

Hillman's concept of the heart, a fixture in his "magnificent citadel of metaphors," can act as the basis for what Christine Downing calls a "poetics of the body." By expanding the play of meanings and experience surrounding the spontaneous act of feeling, archetypal psychology can promote a deeper appreciation of our connectedness to the world and, hence, the human body. This suggests the possibility that there is essentially no real distinction between the body of the world and the human body. By feeling our connections, by attuning ourselves to the affective interconnection we have with the world and with body, we are enabled to appreciate anew a re-sacralized physical reality. For Hillman, it is imperative that we make an empathic connection between the human body and the body of the world. It is the onslaught of Christian politics and the Cartesian means of managing the Self that resulted in the predicament that "Nature no longer spoke to us...."<sup>62</sup> Hence, understanding the soul requires the recognition that it exists in relation to itself and the surrounding world: it is in communion with an animated and changing, not dead and static, world.

The postmodern call to re-inspirit, or animate, the world does just this: it is a call to refuse to continue to see the physical as radically separated from the metaphysical, to refuse to continue to understand the physical world as being degenerate, and to refuse to understand self as separated from others and from the world. In this regard, the usefulness of Hillman's adoption of *anima mundi* can not be overstated. It not only provides a way to understand the physical world as meaningful or sacred, his reading of *anima mundi* can be extended to speak about the human body in a way similar to the body of the world. Hillman must make the connection more explicit that, because soul mediates among the body, *anima mundi*, and the tangible world, *the individual soul is to the body, as anima mundi is to the material world*. The way that soul is depicted as

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<sup>62</sup> James Hillman. *A Blue Fire* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 97.

interacting with the world must be applied to the way that the body is contemplated. Hillman must make a comparable poetics of the body, when he suggests a poetics of the world.

From the above, we might conclude that according to both Hillman<sup>63</sup> and Keller,<sup>64</sup> an exclusive approach to self such as the separated self, or the heroic ego, has resulted in the marginalization of all other aspects of the psyche that do not conform to the idealized norm of singularity, rationalism, and autonomy. Furthermore, the apparent need to exclude all other, non-rational aspects of the psyche is, I submit, another symptom of Keller's separated self. Not only are the rational aspects of selfhood separated from the so-called non-rational, the Self is also traditionally conceived as being static and unchanging--an accurate reflection of Enlightenment theology, philosophy, and psychology. A polytheistic perspective that is in process, Miller predicts, will be characterizable as a "shape-shifter with no substance."<sup>65</sup> We have to remember this lack of substance as an important point.

Kristeva's position regarding process and the significance of feelings in the experience and practice of process, are found in her concept of the writer in process. Kristeva's theorizes about the semiotic disruption of text, as she locates the subject as existing in a state of process. It is in the dialogism of the modern polyphonic novel that we find the writer interacting with and relating to differing elements of various narratives that make meaningful the flow of the imagination in the process of speaking and writing. It is poetic language and artistic practice that provides the means of disrupting the static subject through play, process, metaphor, and imagination. In this sense, a subject in process is not only multi-determined, but also connected to the world through psycho-somatic 'intrusions' into what is considered the normal state of being: the rational, separated monologue. The artist who introduces such an asocial drive into a society, an asocial drive not yet subjected to the stasis resulting from the rule-boundedness of normative society, permits the instigation of an 'unsettling process' that challenges the identity of

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<sup>63</sup> James Hillman. *Re-Visioning Psychology*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 2.

<sup>64</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*. See Chapters Two and Three.

<sup>65</sup> Miller, *The New Polytheism*, 73.

the speaking self and consequently provides a religious sensibility, by furnishing a sense of meaning for the ever-changing character of a embodied soul.

Hillman, in contrast, never makes any explicit statements about process. This is especially so in regard to self or soul. We can, however, draw some conclusions based on implicit meanings in his comments about polytheism, soul-making, and the aesthetic response. First, by advocating a polytheistic psychology as opposed to one based in monotheistic paradigms such as Christian theology, rational science, and literalism, we find archetypal psychology implicitly theorizes about a self in process. If it is indeed the case that we cannot claim there is only one way of being human, it is absurd to believe that the soul is static. To argue against the monotheistic bias of modern psychology, is to argue against the bias that claims just as the God of Christianity is singular and static, so must self be. Second, when Hillman speaks about soul-making, he claims that the very act of soul-making is imagining,<sup>66</sup> and we are all constantly in the process of imagining. The very idea of making-soul intrinsically implies an activity, a process. Soul-making is something that takes place constantly in the world and in the imagination.

In regard to Hillman's emphasis on the thought of the heart, or the aesthetic response, a soul that feels its way through the world (to borrow a phrase from Keller) relates to and finds meaning in a world that must continue to move along in a never-ending process. Hillman would make soul by providing space for soul in any event occurring in the world. He writes: "the artificial tension between soul and world, private and public, interior and exterior thus disappears when the soul as *anima mundi*, and its making, is located in the world."<sup>67</sup> A feeling soul is one that makes its way through the events of the world. Finally, if a feeling soul is not thought of as being in process, how can we say that one's feelings are evoked at different times by different events and images?

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<sup>66</sup> James Hillman. *Archetypal Psychology: A Brief Account*. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988, [1983]), 27.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

When Miller refers to the idea of process, he suggests that this idea will emerge from the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. Whitehead, as we know, furnishes Keller with her comments about the idea of a self in process. As both Hillman and Tarnas suggest, Keller asserts that soul is related to the world because it feels the world. She posits an entire metaphor of feeling based in Whitehead's process philosophy and William James' psychology to imply that our "individual realities," our perspectives on the universe, issue from our feelings. If each person is in a process by which he or she 'feels' the world, then each individual embodies the world through the process of feeling their relations to it.<sup>68</sup> Like Hillman, Keller finds feelings emanating from the world: we are as much in feelings as they are in us. Hence, she writes, "To become is to *feel* one's way into being."<sup>69</sup>

Keller is critical of the separated self's need to cut itself off from the surrounding world. Philosophically, this is neither a mere appraisal of separation from the perspective of interconnection or community, nor is it merely an analysis of the heroic ego's denial of the feelings that connect it to the world and its body. Rather, it is a critique of the Cartesian paradigm that claims that self, like the Christian conception of God, is static and unchanging. According to Keller, the notion of stasis results in a perspective of selfhood that rigidly posits its own homogeneity and demands a measure of control over itself.<sup>70</sup> The call for such a rigid homogeneity of self can be understood as a monotheistic tendency which refuses to allow for the possibility of change coming from within self, as well as the possibility of external entities and objects affecting oneself. Naomi Goldenberg agrees with this assessment, when she writes that "any contemporary form of monotheism can only lend approval to the standardization and homogenization of human experience."<sup>71</sup> We might say, then, that contemporary forms of monotheism are not characteristic of the style of thought belonging to a postmodern polytheistic

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<sup>68</sup> Keller, *From a Broken Web*, 182.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 196-199.

<sup>71</sup> Naomi Goldenberg. *Returning Words to Flesh: Feminism, Psychoanalysis and the Resurrection of the Body*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 17.

perspective.

As Keller points out, in Whitehead's process thought, the individual is understood as becoming something other than he or she previously was. Because one is constantly becoming something other than he or she was, Keller concludes, individuals are events and not substances.<sup>72</sup> This is to say that soul must now be re-imagined as something that is not a personal possession, but an event that is in process and interacts with the world. Keller's distinction between substance and entity may be compared to one Hillman makes when he notes that soul is not a substance but an attitude that turns events into experiences.<sup>73</sup> For Hillman, feelings are no longer taken as strictly personal, but are understood to belong to "imaginal reality, the reality of the image, to help make the image felt as a specific value."<sup>74</sup> Hence feelings are considered as complex as the images that contain them: images do not represent feelings, "but feelings are inherent to images."<sup>75</sup> To Hillman this means that "any event experienced as an image is at once animated, emotionalized, and placed in the realm of value."<sup>76</sup> Hence therapy must return personal feelings to the images that hold them. In so doing, Hillman argues, we can return value and meaning to the world.

If we can state that the soul is not a static thing or substance but rather, events in process, as Miller and Tarnas predict and as Keller, Kristeva, and Hillman indicate, then we find a significant change in the way that selfhood is being conceived in contemporary thought. We find the emergence of a genre of thought that is re-visioning human nature. Soul, in this genre, is no longer imagined as either the reified or the objectified thing we find in Christian theology (that, according to Keller, reaches back to Aristotle via Aquinas and Augustine). Soul is no longer thought of as a static and unchanging entity as is symbolized by the gods of Christianity,

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 182. This is an important distinction. First, it provides a perspective on soul that need no longer objectify, institutionalize, and reify human nature. Second, "substance" implies things that do not change, while "events" suggests things that come and go.

<sup>73</sup> Hillman, *Archetypal Psychology*, 16.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

monotheistic psychology, and rational science. As an active player in the world, self is an event that 'feels' its way through the many meaningful manifestations of the world. We might, therefore, begin to talk about self or soul as a verb,<sup>77</sup> as a process of making soul, rather than being a soul, or the Self, as Hillman's literalists would have it. To think about self as a verb brings home the point that self is not a thing, or an entity, but an activity of making soul. Furthermore, to think of self in terms of being a noun not only gives it an illusion of substance but allows us the belief that it can be a possession. What can be possessed can also be dominated, attenuated, and institutionalized by ideological whim. Consequently, to theorize about soul as a verb helps to remove us from such habits of thought which reify and objectify self as singular, static, or unfeeling.<sup>78</sup>

This dynamic, postmodern concept of soul is one that responds to the world through an imaginal process, through 'the thought of the heart.' For Hillman, Kristeva, Starhawk, Keller and other feminist thinkers, it is one's feelings that not only connect the soul, as an event, to the world, but gives meaning to the events that make soul. For Hillman, as we know, the imagination and aesthetic response, as the response of the intermediary function of the soul, turns soulful events into experiences and, hence, bestows meaning on the world. Making soul is feeling the events of the 'instreaming universe,' which circulate from individual to culture and back. The postmodern soul may be characterized tentatively as one that is both embodied and yet without substance; it is multi-determined or polytheistic. The postmodern understanding of self is that it feels its way through the world, while conferring meaning to the events it encounters, and, consequently, turns such events into experiences by giving them value and meaning.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Idea gleaned from a conversation with Marie-Françoise Guédon, October 1994.

<sup>78</sup> There is some precedence for the idea of soul as a verb in Hillman's thought. If the soul's native activity is to imagine, and if we should stop viewing images as nouns, as Hillman points out in "Image Sense" (*Spring: An Annual of Archetypal Psychology and Jungian Thought*. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1979: 130-143.) and "Further Notes on Images" (*Spring: An Annual of Archetypal Psychology and Jungian Thought*. Dallas: Spring Publications, 1978: 152-182.), then we are left with verbs, adverbs, and adjectives as methods for viewing images and, hence, soul.

<sup>79</sup> This description of the postmodern soul, I must note, is not stated in an attempt to outline any

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developmental or evolutionary schema of selfhood.

## Conclusion: Summary of Contents

This dissertation demonstrates that different contemporary researchers are developing a new style or genre of thinking about the human condition. The common characteristics of the postmodern self or soul that have emerged over the course of the discussion are as follows: self is considered inherently religious in character; soul is polytheistic rather than monotheistic; self is embodied yet insubstantial; soul works through images, metaphor, and poetry rather than through symbols, literalism and rationality; self is feeling rather than not; soul interacts with or is in community--it is embedded in the physical world rather than separate and transcendent; soul functions to mediate between mind and body, self and other, and self and world; and, soul involves a process of continual becoming as opposed to being unchangeable and existing in stasis.

This highly fluid, phenomenological understanding of selfhood accounts for the imaginative participation of each and every individual in his or her experience of the sacred as humanity, culture, and world. Yet, for western thought to account fully for the human imaginative capabilities in the construction of self, it is necessary to delve deeper into the significance of the human body and its role in how we both experience and imagine the world and our relations to it. This, along with many of other concerns brought to light from feminist scholarship, is one road for future investigation that Hillman might embark upon as the millennium comes to an end.

Yet, this alternate idea of selfhood that is emerging in contemporary thought is not a new one. The reason I am not claiming that there is a *new* paradigm emerging in regard to how the West perceives self is because the ideas represented by polytheism are not new. In fact, the reliance upon the Greek pantheon, for instance, is a suggestion to look back into history and find an alternate means of apprehending the intrinsic diversity of the contemporary world. Furthermore, just because Miller claims that the West's 'new' polytheism is without a language does not mean that it cannot be expressed. On the contrary, it must begin as a tentative and exploratory exercise that must probe "the new worlds that emerge as our old world goes to

pieces."<sup>1</sup>

The structure of this dissertation is as follows: Chapter One characterizes Hillman's archetypal psychology as 1) subversive of traditional psychological approaches to the psyche by 2) attending to the imaginative activities of the soul and 3) advocating a paradigm for psychology based in polytheism. Soul, Hillman claims, is constituted and generated by images. Psychology, as a logos of the soul, must better apprehend the imaginative and religious depths of human agency. Images produced by the soul can only be properly apprehended by means of the imagination, whereas a rationalistic and positivistic approach only attenuates the possibilities of soul. Hillman's call for psychology to adopt a polytheistic paradigm subverts modern ideas of the unified, whole, individuated, and integrated self. Polytheism grants space for and embraces all those areas of mental activity traditionally neglected by psychological investigation because they were considered hallucinatory or pathological. For Hillman, the rationalist and monotheistic ideal found in psychology must be suspended in order to allow for the restoration of the gods and goddesses in the psychological domain. What Hillman calls for is a postmodern psychology insofar as he advocates a psychology with no preferred positions that bring about a hierarchy of ideas and approaches. He insists on a non-growth, non-ordered view of the psyche and finds the means to achieve this through Greek polytheism, Neo-platonism, and Renaissance thought.

For Hillman it is imperative to dethrone the dominant fantasies that rule our world view: rationalism, materialism, and monotheism. Part of his subversion of such dominant fantasies includes the notion of a unified self. In Chapter Two, these issues are explored further by an examination of the phenomenology of imagination (Casey) and the *mundus imaginalis* (Corbin). From Casey and Corbin, Hillman gains the perspective that the imagination is fundamental to all ideation, that it mediates between the individual and the world; the imagination is that agency which connects us to ourselves and to others in such a way as to confer value and meaning. Advocating an imaginal psychology also brings to the fore the need to consider our emotional

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<sup>1</sup> David Miller. *The New Polytheism: the Rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 76.

responses, the thought of the heart or an appreciation of aesthetics, when confronted by the images constituting individual souls and the world soul. The world is animated, given value, and meaning through art and the aesthetic response to what is presented to the soul. It is through the thought of the heart that we bring soul to the world, that we feel the interconnection and community represented by Hillman's usage of the Neo-platonic idea of *anima mundi*.

In Chapter Three, I examine contemporary feminist thought about religion in order to indicate the compatibility between feminist theorization and archetypal psychology in regard to their criticisms of the modern paradigm of the (separated) self. Furthermore, I indicate the similarity of vision in re-imagining selfhood in the postmodern west found in the thought of Hillman and the feminists reviewed herein. In examining the feminist position, I point out a critique of traditional psychology, philosophy, mythology, and theology that evinces a trend of separation when regarding human agency. The traditional model of self is identified as 'separated.' The description of the separated self traces the history of separation, the domination of women, the denigration of the material world, and the rationalistic bias that insists that the rational is all that is not pathological in the psyche. Like Hillman, the feminists referred to suggest, as a counterfoil to such styles of theorizing self, a postmodern idea of self that is based in our feelings, our physical natures, and our connections to the things and beings of the world.

In Chapter Four, I critically examine Hillman's attitude toward the body vis-à-vis the feminist critique of the mind-body separation. I point out his attempt to ameliorate the such dualistic categories through the Neo-platonic idea that soul operates as a mediator between the mind and the body. Hence, he claims that humans, rather than being divided between mind and body, are a tripartite entity. For all this, however, I conclude that Hillman's elevation of the soul as a mediator leaves the body's position in doubt. Soul, I claim, is just as intangible and metaphysical a thing as is the mind. I call for Hillman to re-evaluate how he imagines the role of the body in the soul's activities.

From this perspective, I then look at Julia Kristeva's ideas about semiotics. She suggests that the imagination is constantly under the influence of the somatic disruption of linguistic usage

and imaginative practice. Semiotic disruption produces such practices of signification as those which lead to the subversion of the status quo, the invention of an alternate genre of speaking about the human status, and the rejection of the monologue or singular, unified perspective. In this sense, Kristeva's semiotic is the root of social criticism, it is a work of eros, of the heart. The body's role in our imaginative facilities is, thus, solidified. For Kristeva, like Hillman, the imagination operates as an aesthetic response, it is polylogical, and in process. But unlike Hillman, Kristeva provides a way to see the imagination as more firmly located in and affected by bodily processes.

The common characteristics of this emerging postmodern concept of self are outlined in Chapter Five. Archetypal psychology and contemporary feminist thought can be seen as characterizing contemporary ideas of selfhood as follows: it is not singular or monotheistic but diverse and polytheistic; it is more than merely rational--it is also based in the imagination; it demands the re-sacralization of both the body and the material world; it denies the belief that self is separated and autonomous, advocating, instead, the perspective that self communes with and is connected to the things and beings of the world; and, finally, it is not static, but is in the process of becoming what it will.

The claim that a polytheistic perspective is in process refers to two final characteristics David Miller ascribes to a 'polytheistic theology': "it will be a theology of the spirit"--like the flight of a multicolored butterfly--and a "theology of radical hope"--in the nature of Demeter and Persephone.<sup>2</sup> As a theology of the spirit, the postmodern soul is allowed space for understanding and theorizing its relations to physical and psychic reality as something that is polytheistic, imaginative, and intimately involved in its own self-definition and self-alteration. As a 'theology of hope,' a polytheistic perspective responds to Richard Tarnas' criterion of reintegration. It is the hope of the romantic drive of postmodern thought to be able to alter our understanding of what constitutes human nature. It is a perspective of hope that claims we, like Demeter and

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<sup>2</sup> Miller, *The New Polytheism*, 73-75.

Persephone, must wait out the winter of the modern Self, in order for the blossoming of a new sense of soul to emerge in spring.

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