

'IMAGINAL RESPONSE':

AN ADAPTATION OF JUNG'S 'ACTIVE IMAGINATION'

INTO A MODE OF RESPONDING TO ARCHETYPAL IMAGES

IN SHAKESPEARE'S "HAMLET".

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'Those images that yet  
Fresh images beget.'

W.B. Yeats

'Byzantium'

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This thesis follows the standard structure of a psychological dissertation. The first chapter introduces 'imaginal response', offering an outline of this enquiry, its aims and procedures. The second chapter reviews the literature relevant to this subject, and offers a theoretical/conceptual basis for this enquiry. The third chapter describes the methodology of the practical application of 'imaginal response', and the fourth chapter offers a collation and analysis of the 'results' of this 'application'. Finally, in the fifth chapter, these results are discussed and some conclusions offered.

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This enquiry is concerned with a specific use of the imagination as a mode of responding to textual images. Called 'imaginal response', it adapts Jung's technique of 'active imagination' and offers a method of responding to archetypal images in a literary text. At the centre of this enquiry is the practical application of 'imaginal response' with a number of experimentees, and a collation of their 'responses' to specific textual images from Hamlet. From an analysis of this material the enquiry attempts to develop some understanding of the response process from both a Reader-Response and a Jungian perspective. It also explores a theoretical premise for 'imaginal response', in order to examine what foundation it has in both Reader-response theory and Jungian archetypal theory.

As an application of archetypal theory to literary response, this enquiry attempts to bridge two fields, to form an interdisciplinary connection. As a result, 'imaginal response' cannot be fully appreciated from either a solely literary or a solely psychological perspective. Thus, although the enquiry is directed towards readers with a basic understanding of Jungian archetypal theory, its perimeters also embrace the field of literary appreciation, in particular the recently developed area of 'Reader-response'.

### 1.1. 'Imaginal Response': A 'Reader-Response' Perspective

'Imaginal Response' aims to develop an awareness of an imaginative mode of textual response. It is a mode of response which may enable the 'reader'<sup>1</sup> to become more consciously aware of a normally subliminal reading process, in that it focusses the 'reader's' attention on the images and associated feelings, emotions or sensations that may be evoked by the text. 'Imaginal response' differs from other more analytic modes of literary response in that it allows a textual image to be experienced without any conscious attempt at verbal interpretation or analysis of the text. Indeed it concentrates upon an imaginative rather than intellectual experience of a textual image.

Central to 'imaginal response' is the theory that a textual image conveys a meaning and evokes a response in an imaginative mode that is not dependent upon conscious verbal interpretation. It is argued that an image best conveys its 'meaning' in imagistic form, and therefore any mode of response that primarily involves a translation into a non-imagistic, i.e. verbal mode, deprives that image of a fundamental quality, thereby limiting the depth and intensity of response.

Thus the argument for 'imaginal response' is that by concentrating on the imaginative affect of the textual image, it is thereby possible to achieve a greater conscious awareness of what that image has the potential to communicate. It is conscious awareness because an imaginative response is normally present but only at the threshold of consciousness, and is often repressed into the unconscious in favour of a verbal, analytic approach.

The aim of 'imaginal response' is to offer a mode of response particularly appropriate for the appreciation of textual images, and then to relate the 'results' of its application to the 'normal reading process'. Thus the experimentees' 'imaginal response-work' provides a phenomenological basis from which to discuss the imaginative dynamics of the 'normal' reading process. This discussion can be related to the different perspectives on the reading process offered by the present reader-response debate.

However, in presenting an analysis of the imaginal reading process, this enquiry also intends to explore an alternative to the primarily intellectual and analytic orientation that appears to dominate contemporary literary theory. 'Imaginal response' offers a non-analytic approach, valuing a 'reader's' imaginative, sensory and feeling responses to a textual image. Hopefully, 'imaginal response' may thus facilitate and indeed encourage the participation of these primarily non-verbal faculties in the process of literary studies.

Furthermore, 'imaginal response' aims to move from a theoretical towards an experiential emphasis in literary studies. 'Imaginal response' is primarily a technique for using the imagination to experience a textual image. Rather than a theory, it offers a methodology of response, in which the 'reader's' imaginative experience of a textual image is of central importance. 'Imaginal response' thus aims to transpose literary studies from a 'lecture' into a 'workshop' environment, placing the 'reader's' fully-felt experience of a text above any theoretical analysis.

## 1.2. 'Imaginal Response': An Archetypal Perspective

As has been suggested, 'imaginal response' also needs to be viewed from a psychological perspective. Central to this dimension of the enquiry is the fact that 'imaginal response' is specifically concerned with responding to archetypal images in a text. This is not to deny the value of responding imaginatively to non-archetypal images, which could indeed be a subject for future study. However, one of the main aims of this enquiry is to explore the psychological possibilities of using archetypal textual images in conjunction with Jung's technique of 'active imagination'.

Jung developed 'active imagination' as a means for an individual to experience and explore his/her inner world of images, and in particular the archetypal images of the collective unconscious. The 'collective unconscious' is Jung's term for the universal psychic structure that exists within each individual, and is indeed the foundation of an individual's personal psychic structure. As a starting point for this imaginative exploration, Jung suggests an individual's dream or fantasy image. What are the possibilities for 'active imagination' if the starting point is not an individual's personal image, but an archetypal textual image? Could a 'reader' experience and explore the world of the archetypes via such an image?

According to Jung, an archetypal image in a work of art is not merely the product of the conscious mind of the artist or author, nor does it derive solely from his/her personal unconscious. Such an image is rather the manifestation of an archetypal image which exists in the



collective unconscious. If then, as Jung suggests, the archetypal images of the collective unconscious exist within each individual, is it not possible for a 'reader' to imaginatively experience within him/herself not only the archetypal textual image, but also the archetypal image itself, of which the textual image is the manifestation? In other words, is it possible for a 'reader' to experience within the depths of his/her own psyche the archetypal image which is the core of the textual image?

Henry Corbin, the French phenomenologist and a follower of Jung, describes 'active' or 'creative imagination'<sup>2</sup> as the appropriate faculty with which to perceive and experience the interior symbolic world of archetypal images. Furthermore, he understands 'active imagination' to be a method of returning from a sensory, manifest image to its unmanifest essence in the symbolic interior. Thus, through the process of 'active imagination' may not a reader retrace the textual image to its symbolic essence, to the archetypal image within? Following this argument, may not archetypal textual images be used as 'gateways' to the archetypal world within, 'gateways' through which a 'reader' may experience and explore the collective unconscious, the symbolic foundations of his/her own psyche? Furthermore, if such imaginal response work is continued over a period of time, is it possible for a 'reader' to become familiar with this interior world and indeed form a creative relationship with it?

The foremost psychological aim of this enquiry is to explore the potential of imaginal response-work as a means of: (i) directly experiencing the archetypal images of the collective unconscious, and through these images (ii) forming a creative relationship with the numinous world of the collective unconscious. The importance of such a relationship will also necessarily be discussed.

The process of 'imaginal response' is concerned with an imaginative experience of an archetypal textual image, and Jungian psychology provides a conceptual structure with which to analyse the psychological dynamics of such an experience. This combination of an imaginative and an analytic approach has in itself a psychological significance, creating what the alchemists termed a conjunctio oppositorum. It is a 'union of opposites' which is central to this whole study.

### 1.3. 'Imaginal Response' as an Original Contribution

As a prelude to this enquiry, a thorough study was made of the available literature in the fields of Jungian Psychology and literary response theory, as well as Dissertations Abstracts International and Psychological Abstracts. This revealed that there has been no previous study of the use of 'active imagination' in conjunction with archetypal textual images. Indeed, the idea of either adapting 'active imagination' into a mode of 'reader-response', or of exploring a primarily imaginative mode of 'reader-response', has not been suggested.

## Notes to Chapter One

1. 'Reader' and 'Reading Process' are placed in inverted commas when they refer to the process of 'imaginal response'. As is shown in the methodology of 'imaginal response' (pp. 111-113), an imaginal 'reading' of a textual image differs from the ordinary process of reading in that the text is read to the participant, who has his/her eyes closed.
  
2. H. Corbin Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi  
pp. 186-90

## Chapter Two

### A THEORETICAL PREMISE TO 'IMAGINAL RESPONSE'

## 2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to explore a theoretical premise to 'imaginal response'. 'Imaginal response' bridges the two fields of literary theory and archetypal psychology, therefore it is these two different disciplines that can provide 'imaginal response' with a theoretical foundation.

'Imaginal response' is an adaptation of Jung's 'active imagination' into a mode of 'reader-response'. It is a specific use of the imagination as a mode of responding to archetypal textual images. Firstly it will be necessary to determine what is to be understood by an 'archetypal textual image', and how such an image may be recognised. Secondly, the dynamic of an archetypal textual image will be explored in contrast to that of an 'ordinary', i.e. non-archetypal textual image. Thirdly, as the language of the archetypal world is primarily images, the limitations of verbal language in exploring archetypal imagery will be discussed. Fourthly, because the perception and experience of an archetypal textual image necessitates a specific use of the imagination, this use of the imagination will be explored from an historical perspective, commencing with Plato and ending with Jung and James Hillman. Fifthly, a critical orientation towards an archetypal textual image will be examined, and contemporary reader-response theory offered as an appropriate critical context. Sixthly, the whole methodology of 'active imagination' and how it may be developed into a mode of 'reader-response' will be examined from a Jungian perspective. Seventh, and finally, this chapter will look at the 'attitude' required for imaginal response-work; the degree of respect and responsibility that is needed in order to work creatively with archetypal images.

## 2.2 An Archetypal Textual Image

What is to be understood by an 'archetypal textual image', and how does it differ from an 'ordinary', non-archetypal textual image?

In order to pursue this question, it is first necessary to examine what is meant by an 'ordinary' textual image.

### 2.2.1. A Definition of a Textual Image

What is understood by the term 'imagery' in a text is not unanimously agreed upon.<sup>1</sup> At one end of the spectrum, the term 'imagery' can be used to mean only similes or metaphors. An image can also be regarded as a 'picture in words', relating to anything that is visually descriptive. Furthermore, rather than just visual, it can be used to include anything that triggers an impression on any of the five senses. Caroline Spurgeon, in her book on Shakespeare's imagery, expands the possibilities of an image even more, and asks her readers to think of it as

... connotating any and every imaginative picture  
or other experience, which may have come to the  
poet, not only through any of the senses, but through  
his mind and emotions as well.<sup>1</sup>

The 'imaginative picture or other experience' referred to here suggests the possibility of an image as the triggering of an emotive response. In this sense, it could be extended to the cumulative effect of the disease images in Hamlet; while at the other extreme it would include the single word 'Hyperion' and all that it evokes in Hamlet's description of his father.

Ivor Richards, in Principles of Literary Criticism, looks closely at what constitutes an image in a text, and he distinguishes between 'tied' and 'free imagery'. 'Tied images' are very closely connected to the 'visual sensations of the printed words'; and for Richards, the chief of these 'tied images' are

the auditory image - the sound of the words in the mind's ear - and the image of articulation - the feel in the lips, mouth and throat, of what the words would be like to speak.<sup>2</sup>

He further suggests that these two forms of 'tied images' might be called 'verbal images' in that they are

images of words and not of things words stand for, and in their being in very close connection with the visual sensations of the printed words.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to 'tied images', Richards' 'free images' relate to what the words stand for, to their 'meaning'. Visual images, or 'pictures in the mind's eye' are the most familiar form of free imagery. However, any other emotion or sensation which relates to the meaning of the words would also be a free image. An example of the latter could be the smell evoked by the line

In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed.<sup>4</sup>

Richards is aware that individual readers differ most widely in the free imagery which they experience in response to the same text. An image is an effect triggered by a text, as opposed to an objective phenomenon, and therefore, as the effect of a text will be individual for each reader, so too will the imagery which is experienced.



While Richards arrived at his idea of 'verbal images' within the context of literary studies, Paul Kugler, working in the field of archetypal psychology, developed a similar concept of a 'sound-image' or 'acoustic image'.<sup>5</sup> Kugler's work is based upon Jung's early 'Association Experiments'.<sup>6</sup> Here Jung himself refers to the term 'acoustic image' only in a footnote,<sup>7</sup> because he differentiates words from images;

In attempting the classification of acoustic-verbal associations one must never forget that one is not examining images but their verbal symbols.<sup>8</sup>

Kugler, however, does not acknowledge this distinction, but rather values a 'linguistic image'<sup>9</sup> and he explores in some detail its phonetic properties.<sup>10</sup> In particular, Kugler stresses the importance of the 'acoustic-image' in relation to the function of the imagination, stressing that the imagination's

mode of operation is sonorous, acoustic, phonetic,  
there is an innate connection between logos and image,  
between word and fantasy, that words are fantasies in  
sound!<sup>11</sup>

Richards appears to give a subjective value to 'free images,' whilst his 'tied images,' including 'auditory images', are given a more objective value. This reflects the fact that his 'tied images', as 'images of words, and not of the things words stand for,' are generally perceived through what Joseph Addison describes as 'Primary Imagination' in which 'objects are before our eyes'.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, 'free images', in relating to what the words stand for, are realised through the process of 'Secondary Imagination' in which objects not 'actually before the

'Eye' are perceived in the mind. 'Free images' will, therefore, more fully reflect the subjective stance of the reader than 'tied images', and be more relative.

However, there are some occasions when 'tied images' are perceived through the 'Secondary Imagination', for example, when we remember or compose a line of verse not being spoken out loud. And Kugler, ascribing a dominantly subjective, fantasy value to 'acoustic images', firmly links the 'sound image' to the process of 'Secondary Imagination'. I would argue that as the perception of a textual image involves the process of 'Secondary Imagination' it cannot but reflect the subjective nature of this faculty. What this amounts to is that as a textual image is an imaginative impression within the reader, it can only be defined through its subjective, imaginative effect. Thus, although the above delineations offer some possibilities for recognising what constitutes a textual image, ultimately, only that which is imaginatively realised as an image is an image. Any theoretical awareness of a textual image is thus necessarily based upon a subjective response.

#### 2.2.2. The Difference Between an 'Archetypal' and an 'Ordinary' Textual Image.

What is the difference between an ordinary and an archetypal textual image? If, as I have suggested, a textual image can only be defined through its subjective imaginative effect, then an archetypal textual image is that image which is able to effect a particular quality of response, an archetypal response. 'Archetypal' and 'archetype' are used throughout this enquiry in a specifically Jungian sense. This

is not to be confused with what is implied by Northrop Frye and other contemporary critics, for whom an 'archetype' is simply a recurring unit or literature, 'which may be large (e.g. a plot) or small (e.g. an image)'.<sup>13</sup>

### 2.2.3. A Definition of Jung's Term 'Archetype'

It is impossible to give an exact definition of what Jung meant by an 'archetype'. Jung stresses that it is 'irrepresentable' and 'indefinable', and furthermore:

It seems to me probable that the real nature of  
an archetype is not capable of being made conscious.<sup>14</sup>

Like the Sphinx, an archetype will always remain a profound riddle for our conscious minds, for it dwells in the unfathomable depths of the collective unconscious. The 'collective unconscious', or 'objective psyche' is that dimension of the unconscious that is of an a priori character, as distinct from the 'personal unconscious' which is merely the repository of personal, repressed material. The collective unconscious is a world of metaphor and symbol and an archetype reflects these qualities; thus

Not for a moment dare we succumb to the illusion that  
an archetype can be finally explained and disposed of.  
Even the best attempts at explanations are more or less  
successful translations into another metaphoric language.<sup>15</sup>

It is only with an awareness of its inevitable limitations that a definition or explanation of an archetype may be attempted.

The term 'archetype', which Jung introduced in 1919, he notes as first

occurring in Philo<sup>16</sup>

for after the pattern of a single Mind, even the Mind of the Universe as an archetype, the mind in each of those who successively came into being was moulded<sup>17</sup>

and in the Corpus Hermeticum II

The Good is the archetypal Light<sup>18</sup>

It also occurs later in Dionysius the Areopagite:

That the seal is not entire and the same in all the printed copies ... is not due to the seal itself ... but the difference of the substances which share it makes the impressions of the one, entire, identical archetype to be different.<sup>19</sup>

and

They call Him ... an Archetypal stone.<sup>20</sup>

In all these instances 'archetype' is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic ideal form. As a word to describe the contents of the collective unconscious

this term is apposite and helpful, because it tells us that we are dealing with archaic or - I would say - primordial types, this is, with universal images that have existed since the remotest times.<sup>21</sup>

Jung's actual theory of 'archetypes' underwent several changes and developments as his understanding of the unconscious grew.

In 1912 he wrote about the 'primordial images'<sup>22</sup> of the collective unconscious. By 'primordial images' Jung then meant all the mythological and fairy-tale motifs which

reappear through the world and throughout history.<sup>23</sup> In

1917 he referred to these 'primordial images' as

'dominants' of the collective unconscious.<sup>24</sup> Then, in 1919, in Instinct and the Unconscious Jung first used the term 'archetype', describing the 'archetypes' as the 'a priori determinants of all psychic processes'.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, he began to draw a distinction between the 'archetype as such (an sich)' and the 'archetypal' or 'primordial image'. The 'archetype as such' is non-perceptible, incapable of being made conscious, but

it has effects which enable us to visualise it,  
namely the archetypal image.<sup>26</sup>

Like another twentieth-century 'discovery', sub-atomic particles, archetypes are visible only in their effects.

Only when an archetype comes into contact with the conscious mind does it create an 'effect', and thus begin to emerge from the primal darkness of the collective psyche. Without material existence in itself it becomes, so to speak, 'clothed' by the light of consciousness and appears as an archetypal image. Thus an archetype

is an invisible 'nodal point in the psyche',<sup>27</sup> which through an encounter with individual consciousness expresses itself in the form of an archetypal or primordial image. The universality of these images reflects the a priori nature of the archetypes.

Archetypes are, by definition, factors and motifs that arrange the psychic elements into certain images, characterised as archetypal, but in such a way that they can be recognised only from the effects they produce. They exist pre-consciously, and presumably they form

the structural dominants of the psyche in general. They may be compared to the invisible presence of the crystal lattice in a saturated solution. As a priori conditioning factors, they represent a special, psychological instance of the biological 'pattern of behaviour' which gives all living organisms their specific qualities. Archetypes may then be understood as forming the invisible pattern that underlies life itself. They are

Inherited possibilities of representation ... channels, predispositions, river-beds into which the water of life has dug deep ... the hidden organisers of representations; they are the 'primordial pattern' underlying the invisible order of the unconscious psyche.<sup>28</sup>

Yet an archetype is not to be understood as merely a possible 'form', a static 'pattern', for they are dynamic and alive

Archetypes were and still are living psychic forces that demand to be taken seriously.<sup>29</sup>

An archetype may, therefore, be best appreciated as both a potential pattern and a dynamic numinous force.

The term archetype is not meant to denote an inherited idea, but rather an inherited mode of psychic functioning, corresponding to the inborn way in which the chick emerges from the egg, the bird builds its nest, a certain kind of wasp stings the motor ganglion of the caterpillar, and eels find their way to the Bermudas. In other words, it is a 'pattern of behaviour'. This aspect of the archetype is the biological one ...

But the picture changes at once when looked at from the inside, that is, from within the realm of the subjective psyche. Here the archetype presents itself as numinous, that is, it appears as an experience of fundamental importance. Whenever it clothes itself in the appropriate symbols, which is not always the case, it puts the individual into a state of possessedness, the consequences of which may be incalculable.<sup>30</sup>

As a 'pattern' underlying life, the archetype has similarities with the Platonic 'eidos' or 'Idea'. Like the Platonic Idea, the archetype has a transcendent quality and 'precedes all conscious experience.'<sup>31</sup> But whilst the 'Ideas' are inherently immutable, the archetypes have a dynamic and numinous quality:

The archetype is not just an inactive form  
but a real force charged with a specific energy.<sup>32</sup>

It is the living, dynamic quality of the archetype that is least appreciated. Too often the archetype is understood as merely a structuring pattern, or at worst an intellectual concept.

Since so many people have chosen to treat archetypes as if they were part of a mechanical system that can be learnt by rote, it is essential to insist that they are not mere names, or even philosophical concepts.<sup>33</sup>

For Jung, an archetype was a powerful living entity for which he had the greatest respect

They are everything one could wish for or fear in a  
a psychic "Thou".<sup>34</sup>

#### 2.2.3.1. A Summary of Jung's Term 'Archetype'

The archetypes are numinous and dynamic forces or entities which form the structural patterns of the psyche. Preconscious, they are the great formative principles which have an ordering effect on the psychic process and thus on the experience of life itself. Irrepresentable in themselves, they are made visible through their effects, namely archetypal images. It is, therefore, through the archetypal images of the collective unconscious that the individual may have the most direct access to the archetypes themselves.

#### 2.2.4. Defining An Archetypal Image

An archetypal image is the effect of an archetype; and from that archetype it derives a quality of universality and also a certain psychic energy or 'numinosity'. The word 'numinosity' derives from 'numinosum', Rudolf Otto's term (in his Idea of the Holy) for 'the inexpressible, mysterious, terrifying and directly experienced'<sup>35</sup> influence of the divine. The numinosity of an archetypal image is its dynamic affect on the individual, the mysterious, enigmatic and yet also deeply impressive 'message' it conveys. This is no rational or verbal 'message', but rather an inexpressible felt experience unique for each individual. Numinosity is not objectively discernable, it is a quality of the subjective experience of an archetypal image.

For an image to be archetypal, it must be both universal and numinous, yet an image only becomes numinous through its relationship to the individual observer. Just as an archetype per se only becomes visible



through its relationship to the conscious mind, so is an image only realised as archetypal through its relationship to the individual. Therefore, whether an image is experienced as archetypal depends essentially upon the attitude of the observer, on the quality and nature of the approach which he/she brings to the image. An archetypal image is both an image and a numinous force; and the latter may only be experienced subjectively, usually in the form of a powerful emotion. This is why Jung insisted that the experience of an archetype is of both an image and an emotion. He further explains archetypal images as

pieces of life itself - images that are integrally connected to the living individual by the bridge of the emotions.<sup>36</sup>

Because an image is archetypal through its 'connection', its relationship to the living individual, an archetypal image cannot be objectively defined. Indeed, just as an archetype per se cannot be exactly defined, so too an archetypal image is something 'whose very nature makes it incapable of precise definition'. Furthermore, an archetypal image is a product of the collective unconscious, which is the province of metaphor and ambiguity:

The unconscious represents the metaphorical and the source of metaphors.<sup>37</sup>

Any attempt to verbally define an archetypal image would be, in effect, to limit its ambiguity and thus restrict it. Added to this, an archetypal image is a psychological fact, and as such it cannot be grasped by intellectual analysis:

An intellectual grasp of a psychological fact produces no more than a concept, and that concept is no more than a name.<sup>38</sup>

This enquiry is concerned with a specific form of an archetypal image, namely, an archetypal image experienced in a literary text - an archetypal textual image - and rather than attempt any exact definition, it will examine how such an image may be recognised.

#### 2.2.5. Recognising an Archetypal Textual Image

How may an archetypal textual image be recognised? Is it possible to recognise an archetypal textual image except through the nature of the response which it evokes?

As with an 'ordinary' textual image, an archetypal textual image is not limited to a particular form of expression. It can be either a metaphorical figure, a single cumulative descriptive image, a character or a dramatic situation. On one level, a whole literary work could be realised as a single archetypal image, though generally it would be seen as a series of archetypal images forming an archetypal or mythic pattern. However, for the practical purposes of this enquiry, it is necessary to concentrate upon verbal images of just a few lines.

##### 2.2.5.1. Recognising an Archetypal Textual Image by its Universality

As an expression of the collective psyche of humanity, an archetypal image contains an objectively discernable quality of universality. Jung explains this by suggesting that the collective psyche, or collective unconscious

is simply the psychic expression of the identity of brain structure irrespective of all racial differences.

This explains the analogy, sometimes even identity, between various myth-motifs, and symbols, and the possibility of human beings making themselves understood. The various lines of psychic development start from one common stock whose roots reach back into all the strata of the past.<sup>39</sup>

Jung's research showed that the same images appear in the myths and dreams of mankind, regardless of temporal or cultural barriers. The Swiss clerk's hallucination of the sun's phallus and the liturgy of the Mithraic cult describing the tube hanging down from the solar disc,<sup>40</sup> seem to have no logical, linear connection. However, both are shown as originating in the same a-temporal, a-spatial reality.

Thus, an archetypal image can be objectively recognised by its universal, mythic quality. For example, according to Jung, royalty, e.g. a king, queen, prince or princess, immediately suggest an archetypal possibility. Also indicative is a recognisable mythic figure, for example Priam and Pyrrhus in the players' rendition of Priam's slaughter in Hamlet.<sup>41</sup> Myths can be regarded as the enactment of an archetype, (Kathleen Raine defines myth as 'the expression of archetypal imagery'.<sup>42</sup>) They are the archetypal dreams of a culture, and so an awareness of an image's mythic origin suggests that it may have an archetypal quality. Therefore, an image that is identified as symbolic or religious could be seen as potentially archetypal. An example is a chalice or dove as a Christian symbol. The mother dove image of the Queen's final speech to Hamlet in the graveyard scene has an obvious archetypal quality:

Anon, as patient as the female dove

When that her golden couplets are disclos'd ...<sup>43</sup>

This is given further poignancy when associated with a quotation from one of the Eucharistic Prayers in The Acts of Thomas which worships the Holy Ghost in female form;

Come holy dove,

Which hast brought forth the twin nestlings;

Come secret mother ...<sup>44</sup>

Although the Syriac text of the Apocryphal Acts of Thomas was only translated into English in 1871, the Greek version, together with Latin and other translations was very popular in Europe in the Middle Ages. The similarity of Shakespeare's image with that from the Eucharistic Prayers may point to imitatio, but it also reinforces the archetypal implications of Shakespeare's image. For, not only does Gertrude's speech contain the symbol of the dove, but 'the golden couplets' echo the 'twin nestling,' and Jung describes 'the appearance of a pair of doves' as having a particular archetypal significance;

The appearance of a pair of doves points to the imminent marriage of the filius regius and to the dissolution of the opposites as a result of this union.<sup>45</sup>

The meaning of this quotation and its relevance to Hamlet will be explored in detail later. At present, it is offered solely to illustrate the archetypal possibilities of a particular textual image.

#### 2.2.5.2. Recognising an Archetypal Textual Image by its Affect

But although any image that is discovered to have a symbolic or religious predecessor has an archetypal potential, an archetypal image is primarily realised through its affect. Originating in the collective psyche of humanity, it is able to evoke a profound depth of response in the

individual. It can lift the individual out of the personal sphere and connect him/her with what is beyond the personal. It is in this sense that Jung writes:

Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices; he enthrals and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and transitory into the realm of the ever-enduring. He transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, evokes in us all those beneficent forces that ever and anon have enabled humanity to find a refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night.<sup>46</sup>

That Hamlet is a profoundly archetypal drama does not depend upon a profusion of images that one can recognise as having mythic or symbolic origins, but rather on the quality of response it evokes. Its archetypal significance is reflected in the way it has affected audiences across the barriers of time and culture. The volume of critical response to Hamlet over the years, and the amount of recent research in China and Japan provides evidence of this. Such a universality of response points to a universality of content. However, the true archetypal quality of an image, or pattern of images forming a literary work, can only be recognised through an individual subjective experience. It does not become real unless individually realised.

To identify definitively an image as archetypal demands a full recognition of its affect. Among images, only an archetypal image has the ability to translate an individual from the personal to the universal. This is

not a conscious effect, an expanded rational frame of reference, but a wholly felt experience. Through the image's effect on the individual he is able to experience a universal, symbolic dimension of reality.

#### 2.2.5.3. Summary - Recognising a Textual Image as Archetypal

A textual image may be objectively recognised as archetypal through its universal symbolic quality. However, a definitive identification of a textual image as archetypal must be dependent upon its subjective, imaginative affect, for, among images, only an archetypal image has the ability to evoke an experience of the universal realm of the collective unconscious.

### 2.3. The Dynamic of an Archetypal Textual Image

For an archetypal textual image to evoke an experience of the collective unconscious, it must have a particular dynamic that differs from that of an 'ordinary' textual image. What is the dynamic of an archetypal textual image, and how is this reflected in an experience of the same?

#### 2.3.1. An Archetypal Textual Image as a Signifier for an Inner Image

It would be consistent with Jung to argue that an archetypal textual image, unlike an 'ordinary' textual image, does not originate from the physical plane of sense perception; neither is it a signifier for something in our temporal world. Rather, it comes from and points back to the collective unconscious. Jung describes how the creative process

'translates' an image from the collective psyche into 'the language of the present', thus allowing the contemporary man to return to his symbolic depths;

The creative process, so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in the elaborating and shaping of this image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the artist translates it into the language of the present, and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life.<sup>47</sup>

The 'deepest springs of life' are in the collective unconscious. This is a world of archetypal images that exists within each individual, and is realised through the faculty of the imagination, whether in dreams or in waking consciousness. An archetypal textual image may be read as a signifier for an image in this inner world.

### 2.3.2. Henry Corbin's Term for the Collective Unconscious

Henry Corbin, the French phenomenologist, discovered in his work on Islamic theological philosophy, a similar notion of an inner symbolic reality, 'alam-i-mithal'. As this world is realised through the faculty of the imagination, and in order to escape the derogatory connotations of the word 'imaginary', he termed this plane of existence the 'mundus imaginalis'<sup>48</sup> or world of the imaginal. Corbin's work is post-Jungian, and the word 'imaginal' was never used by Jung himself. However, it has been adopted by James Hillman and his school of Archetypal Psychology to describe the interior world of images. As will be discussed in the following section, Hillman's use of 'imaginal' does not fully reflect Corbin's description of the mundus imaginalis as a separate ontological reality. Throughout this thesis my use of the word 'imaginal' follows Corbin rather than Hillman's adaptation.

### 2.3.2.1. Jung and Hillman: Analytical and Archetypal Psychology

James Hillman has self-consciously adopted the term 'archetypal psychology' to refer to his post-Jungian school of psychology. 'Archetypal Psychology' develops certain aspects of Jungian thought, in particular Jung's work on archetypal imagery and the world of the collective unconscious. Yet, at the same time, Hillman consciously distances himself from 'Analytical Psychology', the term Jung gave to his school of psychology.

Hillman follows Jung's primary concern with the imagery of the unconscious, arguing that

Fantasy images are both the raw materials and finished products of the psyche, and they are the privileged mode of access to knowledge of soul. Nothing is more primary. 49

Hillman presents soul and psyche as synonymous, a duality that is not altogether present in Jung, because the German word 'Seele' implies both simultaneously.<sup>50</sup> Hillman's concern is with deepening our awareness of the soul. Thus, for Hillman, 'depth psychology' concerns archetypal images, which he describes as:

the deepest patterns of psychic functioning, the roots of the soul governing the perspectives we have of ourselves and the world. 51

Hillman's psychology emphasises the determining role archetypal patterning has upon our conscious and unconscious functioning. Like Jung, he attaches great importance to myth, which he regards as the 'primary and irreducible language of these archetypal patterns'.<sup>52</sup>



However, Hillman argues against the emphasis analytical psychology gives to the process of analysing the images of the unconscious. He sees images as a product of the soul with their own psychic reality, not merely as signs or symbols to be interpreted. Thus, rather than interpreting the images experienced in dreams or fantasies, the individual should be encouraged to enter this world of images, which Corbin termed the 'imaginal'.

Corbin, one of Hillman's major influences, describes the imaginal as a distinct ontological reality that has its own means of perception, namely the imagination.<sup>53</sup> Just as we perceive the empirical world through the five senses, so the imaginal is perceived through the faculty of the imagination. Thus, archetypal psychology, which places primary value on a deepening experience of the archetypal realm of the soul, moves away from a psychology based upon analysis, towards an approach that emphasises the function of the imagination. The therapeutic aim of Hillman's school of psychology is to reconnect the individual with the world of the imaginal through the 'cultivation of imagination'.<sup>54</sup>

This thesis has been titled 'Imaginal Response' because it follows the primacy Hillman attaches to the imaginative experience of archetypal imagery, and it stresses that these images need to be appreciated as imaginal realities existing in their own ontological world. However, there are certain fundamental ideas concerning Hillman's understanding of archetypal images that this thesis refutes, and prefers instead the more orthodox stance of Jung and the school of analytical psychology.

As already discussed, Jung developed the important distinction between the archetype per se and the archetypal image. This is an idea not unique to Jung, for it is also present in Islamic Sufi metaphysics. In Sufi metaphysics the process of divine emanation from the Absolute Unity, the One, to the multiplicity of created forms goes through two intermediate stages, the World of the Archetypes (a'yan thabitah) and the World of Symbols ('alam-i-mithal). The World of Symbols corresponds to the world of archetypal images, the mundus imaginalis. However, although Hillman acknowledges a debt to Sufi metaphysics through the importance he attaches to Corbin's work,<sup>55</sup> he states that archetypal psychology

rigorously refuses even to speculate about a non-presented archetype per se.<sup>56</sup>

Hillman also makes the claim that 'any image can be considered archetypal'.<sup>57</sup> In Hillman's psychology a car, a paper bag, even the remains of yesterday's dinner, can become archetypal if viewed from the correct imaginative perspective. This is an understanding of archetypal imagery which I believe runs contrary to Jung's notion of an archetypal image as the dynamic and numinous effect of the archetype per se. Both Jung and Corbin understand archetypal images as symbolic realities that exist in a particular psychological dimension which is distinct from that of the empirical world of sense perception. Although Hillman uses Corbin's term 'imaginal', he does not fully acknowledge that the imaginal and its imagery exist separately from the world of sense perception. Furthermore, to suggest that the individual has, through his imaginative function, the ability to make any image archetypal,

gives individual consciousness a degree of autonomous power that is not concurrent with the ideas of Jung or Corbin. Archetypal images require the correct imaginative attitude in order for their archetypal dimension to be experienced, but this is not to say that the imagination can realize any image as archetypal.

Archetypal psychology attempts to connect the individual with the imaginal world of archetypal imagery, a world which primarily expresses itself through the language of myth. Hillman attaches particular importance to Greek mythology and its polytheistic pantheon which he regards as presenting a truer picture of the psyche than the monotheistic Judaeo-Christian culture. He rejects the primacy Jung attached to the archetype of the Self and its expression in mandala imagery:

The only possible inferiority for an archetypal psychology would be the concentration on one centre alone - ego or self or one God - which must by definition fail to represent the entire range of archetypal forms.<sup>58</sup>

In rejecting the primacy of the Self, which Hillman considers merely one of the many archetypes of the psyche, Hillman appears to overlook the evidence of many different religious and mystical traditions which refer to man's divine consciousness as his supreme attribute. In Sufism this is referred to as 'The Man of Light' or the 'Perfect Nature'. In alchemy the symbol of the lapis or philosopher's stone refers to this central archetype. And long before the birth of Christ the supremacy of the Atman or Self was sung in the Upanishads:

The Self is lesser than the least, greater than the greatest. He lives in all hearts.<sup>59</sup>

The Self is a psychological reality and yet it stands outside the manifold patterns of creation 'unchanging among the changing'. 'Lesser than the least and greater than the greatest' the Self contains within Itself all the archetypes of the collective unconscious, just as the Atman, identical with Brahman, contains within it all worlds.

Hillman rejects the idea of archetypal images emanating from the 'higher level' of the archetype per se, similarly he appears to reject the notion of an all embracing One from which emanates the multiplicity of the polytheistic pantheon. One God can have many attributes, and the central archetype of the Self contain a diversity of archetypal images. We need not return to Greek polytheism, but rather offer a psychology that integrates the many with the One. In mandala symbolism the many and diverse aspects of the psyche are contained within an integrated pattern.

This thesis recognizes the importance Hillman gives to an imaginative mode of communication between the imaginal world and individual consciousness. At the same time many of Hillman's ideas are rejected. This thesis argues towards integrating an imaginative and analytic methodology when working with archetypal images<sup>60</sup>, aiming, as has been suggested, towards a conjunctio oppositorum, a 'union of opposites'.

### 2.3.3. An Archetypal Image is Evoked by a Text

A textual portrayal of an archetypal image can connect a receptive individual with that symbol in the imaginal interior. Even without any conscious mode of response, the inner archetypal image can be evoked by the exterior text. This response is achieved through the latter's 'reverberations' (a word used by Gaston Bachelard to describe the dynamic affect of a poetic image<sup>61</sup>).

Archetypes per se 'are living psychic forces'.<sup>62</sup> Thus, as the manifestation and vehicle of an archetype, an archetypal image is a nucleus of psychic energy. This is also true of an archetypal textual image, which is a particular 'elaboration' of an archetypal image. If the individual is receptive and responsive, the effect/affect of this energy will be to make him/her aware of the interior world. Just as a plucked guitar string resonates an unplucked one, so the archetypal 'reverberations' of the text will touch similar depths within the individual. Moreover, this need not be a conscious process. The image may be experienced as a feeling, a depth of meaning or a particular quality within the response.

### 2.3.4. The Lack of Duality between Text and Archetypal Image

However, the idea of a text evoking an inner image suggests a duality that is to some degree misleading. For, although the text is a 'translation' of an inner archetypal image into a verbal form, it is not altogether true to infer that there is an inherent separation between text and archetypal image. If one argues, as Jung's understanding

of the affect of primordial images in literature would suggest, that a work of art can embody a living symbol, and not just a sign or signifier for that image in the imaginal, then it follows that a textual expression of an archetypal image must exist both in the sensory and in the symbolic dimension, both in the manifest work of art, and at the same time on an inner imaginal level.

The difference and yet lack of duality between text and archetypal image is best understood by analogy. An archetypal image is the visible expression of an archetype per se, which is itself irrepresentable. As we have seen, Jung compares the archetype to the invisible presence of a crystal lattice within a saturated solution. Just as the crystal lattice is not separate from the saturated solution, so the archetype is not separate from the archetypal image. This analogy also holds for illustrating the difference between the inner 'imaginal' archetypal image and its expression in a work of art, whether the written word, the words spoken on stage, the painting or the film etc.. In the work of art, the inner image manifests itself; and thus the text is different and yet not separate from the archetypal image.

#### 2.3.5. The Perception and Experience of an Archetypal Image are the Same

In approaching the imaginal, one should understand further the distinction between images relating to the sensory world and the images of the imaginal. The sensible image is a 'signifier' for the object perceived; the image in one's mind is not the chair, it merely signifies the chair. But in the imaginal there is no sensory object, there is only the image.

Therefore, there is no duality; the imaginal image is not a signifier, nor indeed is it a product of the mind; rather, the image is the thing perceived. Moreover, to perceive an image imaginally is to experience it. Because it is an inner reality, within the one who perceives, there is not the separation between the perceiver and that which is perceived which exists in a tempo-spatial dimension. It is for this reason that perception and experience are the same.

If the perception and inner experience of an archetypal image are necessarily simultaneous, then there can be no objective or distanced perception of such an image. As suggested, an objectively perceived image may appear to have archetypal potential, but for an image to be realised as archetypal it must be perceived and experienced within the psyche of the individual. For this reason, a subjective, fully-felt experience of an archetypal image is a central part of any imaginal response-work.

#### 2.3.6. An Archetypal Textual Image as both a Verbal Structure and a Psychic Phenomenon

An archetypal textual image is the manifestation of an inner archetypal image. As such, it is both a verbal structure and yet also a psychic phenomenon; the verbal structure is, so to speak, the 'flesh' by which the imaginal symbol becomes visible in the sensible world.

The individual 'reader' can realise a textual image as a dynamic archetypal reality through his/her subjective response. And yet, like any textual image, an archetypal textual image first appears to the

'reader' as a verbal structure. In the usual process of reading the verbal structure is experienced as signifying a particular image which is often an image of something in the sensible world. For example, the textual image

sleeping in my orchard

A serpent stung me<sup>63</sup>

can be identified as a person sleeping in his garden being stung by a serpent. This appreciation of the text as signifying a particular physical phenomenon is an initial process of 'identification' or 'symbolization' which David Bleich, the reader-response theorist, refers to as the 'response'. Bleich distinguishes 'identification' from 'interpretation'. In the latter, the initial symbolization is conceptualized in a process of 'resymbolization'.<sup>64</sup> Bleich's 'interpretation' is an attempt to understand the 'response', to determine its significance. In this particular example, the process of resymbolization or 'interpretation' would be towards understanding the meaning of the person sleeping in the garden being stung by the serpent. This 'meaning' could be in the context of the whole play, or indeed in the context of the subjective world of the reader. In either case, this process of 'interpretation' moves away from the initial experience of the image, and often places that image within a larger, conceptual context.

However, Bleich overlooks the fact that the 'identification' of a verbal structure may itself involve a degree of interpretation, especially if the signifier is a homophone or homomorph of another signifier which has to be 'refused', or indeed if the text allows one signifier to be



identified in two different ways. Consider the textual image:

Here thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?  
Follow my mother.

39 V ii 330-3

The word 'union' can be identified as referring either to Claudius's forthcoming union with death, or to the 'union' (pearl) which Claudius threw in the cup of wine 'And in the cup a union shall he throw'. Does not Bleich's initial process of symbolization here involve interpretation as the reader identifies these two separate meanings, and either refuses one, or accepts both? The reading process cannot be so clearly delineated as Bleich would suggest.

However, Bleich's differentiation of symbolization and resymbolization is helpful in appreciating the reading of an archetypal textual image. For the textual image to be experienced as an imaginal phenomenon, the 'reading process' does not continue from symbolization to resymbolization. For although an 'interpretation' of the image of the serpent stinging the sleeping king could recognise its similarity to the myth of the Garden of Eden, and thus understand it as having archetypal potential, the textual image can only be realised as archetypal through a subjective, fully-felt response. For the numinous quality of an archetypal image to be experienced, there must be no 'interpretation' in Bleich's sense. The emphasis is placed on the initial experience of the textual image.

It is very difficult to determine the actual dynamics of an archetypal response in relation to the process of symbolization. It can be argued

that the verbal structure needs to be symbolized prior to any deeper response. It can also be argued that as the archetypal image exists within, and not separate from, the verbal structure, the image can be experienced as an archetypal phenomenon simultaneous to the process of symbolization. Possibly the very sound of the words is the 'reverberations' which evoke the inner, imaginal image. What Richards refers to as the 'tied imagery', the sound of the words in the mind's ear, and the feel of the words in the lips, mouth and throat, could be the 'trigger' of an archetypal response. This is what Kugler suggests when he states that

The 'deep' archetypal meaning of a word is  
the ... acoustic image.<sup>65</sup>

If this is so, and if the 'tied' or 'acoustic' images are experienced prior to the process of symbolization, then the imaginal experience of a textual image could, in fact, come before the process of symbolization. However, these are questions that must at present be left open. It is enough to appreciate that an archetypal textual image is both a signifier of a physical phenomenon and also an imaginal reality, a numinous archetypal image. In an archetypal textual image, these two levels of perception co-exist.

### 2.3.7. The Meaning of an Archetypal Textual Image

#### 2.3.7.1. Two Approaches to Meaning: 'Interpretive' and 'Existential'

Any consideration of the meaning of an archetypal textual image must appreciate the image from the two different perspectives outlined above:

the textual image as a signifier for something in the sensible world, and the textual image as an imaginal phenomenon. Each 'perspective' demands a different approach to 'meaning', and to differentiate between the two I will refer to the former as 'interpretive meaning' and the latter as 'existential meaning'.

'Interpretive meaning' is the more familiar approach to meaning; it is an attempt to determine 'what' the image means. An analytic mode, it moves away from the primary experience of the text, paraphrasing it into a verbal and intellectually coherent structure. As such, it relates to Freud's 'secondary process': the state in which the mind is self-critical, logical and rational. An 'interpretive' approach to meaning involves a process of secondary perception, a resymbolization that Bleich refers to as 'interpretation'.

However, an archetypal image cannot be verbally interpreted. It is both an image and a numinous force; and its 'meaning' derives from its subjective affect upon the individual. Rather than having a specific 'interpretive meaning', the affect of the archetype is 'meaningful'.

Huston Smith, the contemporary American philosopher, designates this type of meaning as 'existential'; it is 'the kind we have in mind when we say something is meaningful'.<sup>66</sup> An existential approach to meaning is purely subjective and involves a process of 'primary perception', in which, as in Freud's 'primary process', the critical and analytic faculties of the mind are dropped.

#### 2.3.7.2. The 'Existential Meaning' of an Archetypal Textual Image

The 'existential meaning' of an archetypal textual image derives from the

subjective affect of the inner archetypal image. This 'affect' is directly related to the archetype per se which is the psychic 'core' of the particular image. An archetype per se is a determinant of meaning, it 'gives meaning,' it does not have a conceptual meaning. The imaginal affect of an archetypal textual image is to give meaning to that which is individual. The archetypes and their images are eternal and universal and can offer that depth of perspective to our perception and experience of an ephemeral world. They can give symbolic significance to our temporal existence. A textual image that connects an individual to that which is eternal and universal is fundamentally 'meaningful'.

However, it is very difficult to define or verbalise the way in which the imaginal experience of a textual image is meaningful, or to quantify 'how meaningful'. One possible way of determining the existential meaning is to consider the 'intensity' of the experience of the image, the 'intensity' of response. It is through the 'intensity' of the experience that the individual may determine how much he/she was affected, and thus how meaningful the image is. Yet determining the existential meaning of an image solely through the intensity of its affect is limiting, in as much as it places emphasis upon determining 'how much' it is meaningful, i.e. a quantitative approach, without giving similar attention to the 'quality' of meaning, i.e. the kind of way in which the image is meaningful. Furthermore, Huston Smith describes the quality of meaning as 'fundamental';

for it is their qualitative components that make values, meanings and purposes important.<sup>68</sup>

But the difficulty in determining the quality of meaning is that quality itself is immeasurable. As Huston Smith explains:

Being a subjective experience, it cannot be laid out on a public chopping block; being a subjective experience it cannot be dissected even introspectively. In consequence, it is 'refractory to measurement' - not just provisionally, but in principle.<sup>69</sup>

At present, 'intensity' remains the only determinant of an existential meaning. We are able to say that the subjective experience of a textual image is 'slightly' or 'very' meaningful. But we lack the vocabulary and apparatus to communicate an existential meaning with any precision.

Whatever the difficulties, an archetypal textual image requires an approach to meaning that is unequivocally subjective. It is the experience of the image and its meaningfulness to the individual that is of prime importance. The emphasis thus lies on the side of Sissy Jupe in Hard Times, who supposed that the statistics of poverty and starvation were meaningless, as only one's lived predicament has real meaning:

"I thought it must be just as hard upon those who starved whether the others were a million or a million million."<sup>70</sup>

An archetypal textual image will have an individual, existential meaning for each 'reader'.

### 2.3.7.3. The Imaginal Meaning of an Archetypal Textual Image

However, just as the archetypes per se paradoxically exist inseparable as well as separable from their manifestation as an archetypal image, so, at a different 'level' each archetypal textual image does have its own particular meaning independent of any individual 'reader'. This is its meaning as an imaginal reality in its own ontological world. This concept of meaning can only be fully understood through experience, but it is best understood as relating to the psychic energy of the image, in as much as each archetypal textual image has its own particular psychic energy dependent upon the archetype of which it is the visible 'effect'. Jung suggests that this psychic energy differs from physical energy in that it is essentially qualitative and not quantitative.<sup>71</sup> However, for our purpose it is only necessary to assert that an archetypal textual image possesses a particular meaning that may be understood as its quality of psychic energy.

### 2.3.8. Summary: The Dynamic of an Archetypal Textual Image

An archetypal textual image may be experienced both as words in a text and also as numinous archetypal images in the imaginal interior. Furthermore, it is the textual image as an imaginal phenomenon, as the creative manifestation of an archetype, that gives it its particular dynamic, a dynamic very different to that of a non-archetypal, 'ordinary' textual image. For whilst an 'ordinary' textual image can only signify something other than itself, an archetypal textual image can evoke itself as a numinous archetypal image within the psyche of a receptive reader. Moreover, as the perception of an archetypal textual image is

also a fully-felt experience of an image in the imaginal, and indeed of an archetype per se, so an archetypal textual image can offer that depth of experience. Through the textual image an individual can experience the 'deepest springs of life' which are the archetypes of the collective unconscious. However, this dynamic potential of an archetypal textual image requires a particular approach to the meaning of such an image. As an imaginal phenomenon, an archetypal textual image is essentially 'meaningful' rather than having a specific 'interpretive meaning'. It requires an 'existential' perspective that considers 'how much' and 'in what way' the subjective experience of the image is meaningful. And yet, at the same time, an archetypal textual image does have a specific 'imaginal meaning' that is best understood as its quality of psychic energy.

#### 2.4. Subjectivity and the Experience of an Archetypal Textual Image.

##### 2.4.1. The Importance of the 'Feeling Tone' and 'Feeling Function'.

A textual image can only be perceived as archetypal through its subjective imaginative affect. In contrast to the supposed objectivity of much textual analysis, an archetypal textual image requires subjective involvement, for only then can the archetypal dimension of the image be realised. An important aspect of this subjective involvement is a recognition of the 'feeling tone' of the archetype.

Those who do not realise the special feeling tone of the archetype end with nothing more than a jumble of mythological concepts, which can be strung together to show that everything means anything - or nothing at all.<sup>72</sup>

It is through the 'feeling tone' that the psychic reality of an archetypal textual image is experienced and valued.

Every psychic process has a value quality attached to it, namely its feeling tone. This indicates the degree to which the subject is 'affected' by the process and how much it means to him (in so far as it reaches consciousness at all). It is through the affect that the subject becomes involved and so comes to feel the whole weight of reality. The difference amounts roughly to that between a severe illness which one reads about in a text book and a real illness which one has. In psychology one possesses nothing unless one has experienced it in reality.<sup>73</sup>

The realisation of the 'feeling tone' of an archetypal image requires the appropriate mode of perception, the appropriate 'function of consciousness', namely the 'feeling function'.

Jung differentiated four functions of consciousness: thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. He defined them very succinctly:

These four functional types correspond to the obvious means by which consciousness obtains its orientation to experience. Sensation (i.e. sense perception) tells you that something exists; thinking tells you what it is; feeling tells you whether it is agreeable or not; and intuition tells you whence it comes and where it is going.<sup>74</sup>

In these four different ways the ego takes in and 'assimilates the



material coming from without and within'.<sup>75</sup> Feeling has to do with the expression of value which we give to that which we experience. It is a subjective value judgement, and as such appears the opposite of thinking, which has presented itself, since Descartes, as the objective connecting of ideas in order to arrive at a general concept or understanding. In 'Two Kinds of Thinking' Jung describes this 'objective' mode of thinking as 'directed thinking or ... thinking in words';<sup>76</sup> and he compares it with 'mythological thinking' which is non-directed, but rather associative.<sup>77</sup> In order to distinguish between these two modes of thought, I will hereafter refer to 'objective' verbal thinking as 'directed thinking'.

However, whether any mode of thinking is truly objective is questionable, in so far as our thought process is almost always subject to previous judgements, conscious and unconscious. Indeed, it could be argued that any process that involves an individual will necessarily have a subjective dimension. Possibly only conceptual thinking about the external world may be regarded as 'objective', for example when we reason that a light switch works because it connects together an electric circuit.

But, as we have seen, the full appreciation of an archetypal image necessitates involvement as opposed to an objective stance. It also requires that we give subjective value to the experience of the image, that we appreciate the feeling it evokes. If the archetypal image is experienced via the feeling function, these conditions can be fulfilled. Through the feeling function there can be an effective communication between the conscious mind and the archetypal world. In this way, James Hillman describes the feeling function as:

a via regia to the unconscious, not only in our

personal lives but to the larger archetypal dominants that make their impersonal claims upon us through feeling.<sup>78</sup>

Experienced through the feeling function, an archetypal textual image can be a 'via regia' to the primordial layers of the psyche. It can effect a relationship between the conscious ego and the psychic structures that determine both the unconscious and the conscious functioning, for the archetypes are, as it were, the hidden foundations of the conscious mind.<sup>79</sup>

#### 2.4.1.1. The Feeling Function and the Limitations of Language

The feeling function is needed in order to experience the psyche and to appreciate the existential meaning of its images. Yet, to even ask a question, the first step in any enquiry, inhibits feeling. A feeling as such is not easily verbalised. The feeling function is the opposite of the thinking function, and the dominance of the latter in our culture has resulted in an undeveloped feeling function. This is particularly true in the case of any academic or scientific pursuit. As a result, any precise verbal examination of feeling is found to be wanting. As Hillman comments:

We cannot lose sight of the fact that any contemporary discussion of the feeling function and what it feels like will always bear the confusion of our language and culture where imprecise feeling and undisciplined emotion reign.<sup>80</sup>

#### 2.4.2. Body Response and the Experience of an Archetypal Textual Image

One area of subjective archetypal affect left unexplored by Jung is that of 'body response'. For some individuals an archetypal experience is felt not as an emotive force so much as a body response, or kinaesthetic image. Whilst sensory experiences normally tell us about the external, sensory world, they can also indicate the surfacing of an inner, psychological dynamic. In the form of a kinaesthetic image, a feeling can be experienced as a bodily sensation, and in this sense it links the 'feeling' and 'sensation function'. As a 'sensation' it tells<sup>81</sup> you 'that something exists' and often pleasant or unpleasant, it can indicate whether something 'is agreeable or not'.<sup>82</sup>

The correlation between kinaesthetic images and psychological states is a vast field, and although a focus for some recent studies,<sup>83</sup> there has been little work offering an archetypal perspective. However, without exploring kinaesthetic language in more detail, it is important to recognise this indication of psychological affect; for through a kinaesthetic response an archetypal experience can be realised as a psychic reality.

#### 2.4.3. Jung's Emphasis on Subjectivity and its Epistemological Foundation

Central to Jung's exploration of archetypal imagery is the emphasis he places on the subjective involvement of the individual. Archetypal images 'gain life and meaning' only in 'their relationship to the living individual'. It is through its subjective affect, whether as a feeling-tone or a kinaesthetic image, that an image is fully realized as archetypal.

Jung's study of archetypal imagery was based partly on his clinical work, but more significantly on his own subjective experience, which he records in Memories, Dreams, Reflections. Most important was Jung's 'Confrontation with the Unconscious', in which he descended into his inner world and made a relationship with the archetypal figures he found there. Of particular importance was the figure Philemon. In his fantasies Jung held conversations with Philemon, and it was Philemon who taught him 'psychic objectivity, the reality of the psyche'<sup>84</sup>. Although Philemon was a figure of Jung's fantasy, he also had a life of his own:

He confronted me in an objective manner, and I understood that there is something in me which can say things which I do not know and do not intend, things which may even be directed against me.<sup>85</sup>

Jung's experiences with Philemon, as well as other archetypal figures, taught him that only through one's own inner experience

can one realize the objectivity of the archetypal world. His inner images had an 'objective' reality, in the sense that they had a life of their own; and it was his experience of these inner images that formed the basis of all his work:

The years which I was pursuing my inner images were the most important in my life - in them everything essential was decided. It all began then; the later details were only supplements and clarifications of the material that burst forth from the unconscious, and at first swamped me. It was the prima materia for a lifetime's work.<sup>86</sup>

However, although the emphasis Jung places on subjectivity in his investigation of archetypal numinous images is founded on his own experiences, the theory of archetypes he developed was based on firm epistemological ground. From the age of 17 Jung had been impressed by Kant. Kant had looked deeply into the problem of how the human mind can know with certainty, and he had wrestled with the paradox that subjective, 'private' knowledge can have validity in philosophical and ordinary discourse.

According to Kant, anything we know of the world comes through our perception. This makes knowledge subjective, in that the mind of the knower limited his experience. He used the term phenomena, or 'appearances', for this empirical world of which we can have relative knowledge. But, he reasoned, an appearance entails that reality of which it is an appearance, and that reality he termed the noumena. And, he asked, what was it that gave order to the randomly perceived

impressions? Events occur in space and time, and yet space and time are not in themselves empirical objects, but rather forms in which these objects and events take place. In addition, how can pure sensation differentiate a unity from a plurality and make other such distinctions? To answer these problems, Kant proposed the concept of 'intuition', the means by which our minds order the sense data. He claimed that some rule making apparatus of collating sense data is an indispensable condition of all meaningful experience. The forms of this intuition, then, would be a priori, not sequentially, but logically, prior, i.e. necessary to have any meaningful experience whatsoever. Altogether he defines three aspects to the single act of knowing an object:

What first must be given - with a view to the a priori knowledge of all objects - is the manifold of pure intuition; the second factor involved is the synthesis of this manifold by means of the imagination. But even this does not yet yield knowledge. The concepts which give unity to this pure synthesis, and which consists solely in the representation of this necessary synthetic unity, furnish the third requisite for the knowledge of an object; and they rest on the understanding.<sup>87</sup>

From these 'pure concepts of understanding' Kant chose the Aristotelian term 'categories':

...the [Aristotelian] categories are neither self-thought first principles a priori of our knowledge, nor derived from experience, but subjective dispositions of thought, implanted in us from the first moment of our existence, and so ordered by our Creator that their employment is in complete harmony with the laws of nature in accordance with which experience proceeds - a kind of preformation-system of pure reason.<sup>88</sup>

Thus our phenomenal experience is inherently structured along the lines of eternally existing patterns of meaning - and from this comes the possibility of valid knowledge and a community of discourse. In this way the subjective/objective paradox is solved.

Jung integrated Kant's ideas on thinking into the field of contemporary psychology, rejecting at the outset, as did Kant, Locke's concept of the mind as a tabula rasa.

the mind cannot be a tabula rasa, for epistemological criticism shows us that certain categories of thinking are given a priori; they are antecedent to all experience and appear with the first act of thought, of which they are its preformed determinants. What Kant demonstrated in respect of logical thinking is true of the psyche. The psyche is no more a tabula rasa to begin with than is the mind proper (the thinking area)<sup>89</sup>

Moreover, Jung sees the mind, or intellect, not as an independent function that operates in isolation from the rest of the human being. It is 'a psychic function dependent upon the conditions of the psyche as a whole'<sup>90</sup>.

Kant's categories were 'eternally existing patterns of meaning' that provided a universal element making intersubjective significance possible. Similarly, Jung gave an objective<sup>92</sup> value to individual archetypal experiences through the process of 'amplification', comparing the individual experiences with the collective imaginings of mythology and the ancient scriptures. Much of his work concerns such elaborations; for example in Symbols of Transformation, the fantasies of

Miss Miller are given objective value through detailed association with Christian, Hindu, Greek and Egyptian symbolism. It is these associations that can determine whether a individual, subjective experience is part of a collective, mythic pattern, has an archetypal, objective dimension.

But whatever the epistemological arguments concerning subjectivity, Jung's clinical work presented him with a very real need for acknowledging the subjective nature of an archetypal experience. An archetypal image can overwhelm an individual with a powerful, numinous experience of the divine. It is only too easy to dismiss the subjective element, and interpret the experience as absolute reality:

If I have a vision of Christ, this is far from proving that is was Christ, as we know only too well from our psychiatric practice.<sup>93</sup>

Here lies the danger of 'inflation', in which an individual can become so identified with an archetypal experience that it possesses him<sup>94</sup>. An awareness of the subjective nature of an archetypal experience is a necessary guard against identifying with the experience.

## 2.5. Language and the Imaginal

### 2.5.1. The Limitations of Verbal Language

Whilst our understanding of kinaesthetic language is in its infancy, the difficulties encountered in any attempt to verbalise the feelings highlight the whole problem of verbal language in relation to the imaginal.



For not only is it difficult to verbalise feelings, but the whole structure of our verbal language, with its divisions between subject, verb and object is inappropriate to the very nature of the imaginal, where there is no such division.

As an example of the limitations of verbal language, the following quotation is a verbal transcription of a particular imaginal experience of an archetypal textual image:

Goblet of pearly white thick substance which I have  
to swallow unwillingly. Feeling of terrible  
heaviness fills my body.

The verbal language suggests that the goblet is separate from the individual, and from the act of swallowing. There is also the implication of a separation of the individual from her body, which is 'filled' with a 'feeling of terrible heaviness'. However, in an imaginal experience such separations do not exist. To perceive an archetypal image is to experience a part of oneself; furthermore, the image does not exist as an archetypal reality apart from the process of perception. An archetypal image is both an image and a numinous feeling, and the latter does not exist apart from the individual's perception and experience of the image. It is the individual's experience of the image that makes it archetypal. If the above transcription is of an archetypal experience, as I understand it to be, then the 'I' persona, the 'goblet', the 'pearly white substance,' the act of 'swallowing', the 'feeling of terrible heaviness' and the 'body' are all part of the individual, and indeed part of the process of perception. They do not exist as an archetypal image except as one integral response and experience. In an experience of the imaginal, subject, verb and object are inseparable.

It is worth mentioning that a similar limitation of verbal language has become evident in describing recent scientific field theories, where the task of articulation requires that a vision of a dynamic, mutually interacting field be represented through a medium that is inherently linear, fragmented and unidirectional. <sup>95</sup>

There is not the space to examine in detail the similarities between developments in particle physics and archetypal psychology, except to mention that both offer a view of 'reality' that unites 'subject' and 'object', 'observer' and 'observed' into an inter-acting, interdependent whole.

However, the verbalisation of an imaginal experience is not only limited by the structure of language, it is also limited by vocabulary. Verbal language has evolved in order to express a tempo-spatial world, and if there is little vocabulary for describing emotions and feelings, there is less, if any, appropriate to the imaginal.

Throughout this enquiry I am continually aware of the limitations of verbal language in relation to the imaginal. It is difficult to verbalise feelings, and the whole structure of our verbal language is inappropriate to an experience of the imaginal. But more fundamental is the simple fact that the language of the imaginal is not words but images.

#### 2.5.2 Images as the Language of the Imaginal

The imaginal is a world of images, and its language is images. When it

speaks to us either in dreams or in imaginative fantasies, its mode of communication is primarily images. Furthermore,

The imaginal resists being known except in its own terms. Image requires image, image evokes image.<sup>96</sup>

David Miller, in discussing how to relate to archetypal images, emphasises the importance of 'listening for the likeness'.<sup>97</sup> The imaginal is best explored through imaginative associations. Whilst an intellectual concept requires a logical, linear chain of signification, so as to be understood within a sequential train of thought, the imaginal is clearly not suited to such a linear process. To quote Gilbert Durand:

Having abolished the chronology of time and the three dimensionality of space, the image is not bound by linear thinking and bivalent logical sequences. It relates on the basis of analogies, or even better said, of homologies ...<sup>98</sup>

In terms of an archetypal textual image these 'analogies' or 'homologies' can be read as imaginative associations. These associations can be either from the individual imagination, or from the collective imaginings of mythology.

Unconsciously explored through dreams, the inner world of archetypal images is best consciously explored through the faculty of the imagination and the language of images. Moreover, an archetypal textual image can function as a doorway to this inner world; it has the potential to translate an individual from the personal to the universal; it offers an experience of the imaginal. However, such an experience of the

imaginal necessitates a special use of the imagination for perceiving and experiencing this symbolic dimension. What then is the historical tradition for using the imagination in this particular way?

## 2.6. An Historical Perspective on Western Attitudes towards the Imagination as the Faculty for Perceiving the World of the Imaginal

"Imagination" is defined by the O.E.D. as:

the act of imagining, of forming a mental concept  
of what is not actually present to the senses.

But as a faculty for translating an archetypal literary image into an inner imaginal experience the imagination can be understood as functioning within the context of an hierarchical structure of existence, a metaphor originating in Plato. The 'lowest level' of this structure would be the world of sensory perception, while the imaginal would occupy a 'higher level'. The imagination is then seen as a faculty able to translate an individual from the world of sensory perception to a contemplation of a higher level of reality, the imaginal. Through the imagination one makes the 'ascent' from the physical to the imaginal level.

### 2.6.1. An Hierarchical Structure for the Imagination: its Origins in Plato and Plotinus, and Development by the Neo-Platonists

In Western thought, the idea of the ascent from sensory perception to a higher level of reality has its origins in Plato, and was crystallised in Neo-Platonic thought as an hierarchical structure which begins in the

One or the Good. From the One proceeds The Intelligence, and from The Intelligence proceeds The Soul. The lowest of the four levels of existence is the sensory world. Plato's 'Ideas' and 'Forms' belong to the level of The Intelligence, and might be considered as analogous to Jung's archetypes. The soul in physical incarnation has descended from above and retains a memory of the 'Forms'. In Phaedrus, Plato describes how the intermediate position of the soul, between the sensory world and the ideal 'Forms' gives it the potential to see a unity within the multiplicity of sense impressions. Its awareness of this unity is a process that derives from its recollection of the reality it knew before its incarnation.<sup>99</sup> Through the memories of the soul, a man can ascend from sensory perception to a perception of the 'Ideas' and 'Forms' that underlie the created world. It is the intermediate position of the soul which facilitates this ascent.

Plotinus, developing Platonic theory, also saw the soul as occupying an intermediate rank:

what comes after it is this world and what is before  
it is the contemplation of real being.<sup>100</sup>

Moreover, he linked the soul with the imagination. Rather than possessing objects, the soul possesses images, and its faculty of apprehension is the imagination, which Plotinus describes as occupying a place between the senses and the world of the spirit. It is the imaginative faculty of the soul that translates the sensible world into the images of the soul's intermediate realm. It is in this sense that Plotinus saw a sensitive soul as an imaginative soul.<sup>101</sup>

The Neo-Platonists of the Renaissance incorporated this faculty of the

imagination into the Art of Memory. It was developed into a system for realising the 'causes' of the sensible world. Camillo, discussing the placing of objects in his Memory Theatre says:

This high and incomparable placing not only performs the offices of conserving for us the things, words and acts which we confide to it, so that we may find them at once whenever we need them, but also gives us true wisdom from whose founts we come to the knowledge of things from their causes and not from their effects.<sup>102</sup>

By way of systematic placing of the images of sensory objects within an imaginary symbolic structure, these objects bear a relation to the images of particular planetary gods. In psychological language, the objects of the sensible world are in apposition to their archetypal origins in the imaginal.

#### 2.6.2. The Imagination in 18th Century Literary Theory

However, in the development of Western Civilisation after the Renaissance, the increasing importance attached to the 'real' world of the senses and the abstract world of intellectual thought has been at the cost of the imaginal world of the soul. Descartes, with his stress on a rational view dominated by the perceptions of the senses, denies the imagination its function of realising the symbolic level of reality which was previously seen as the true foundation of the physical world. For Descartes, the discovery of truth was dependent upon splitting the mind from the body, the mind withdrawing 'itself from the senses'. For then

the mind ... enabled easily to distinguish what pertains to itself, that is, to the intellectual nature, from what is to be referred to the body.<sup>103</sup>

This 'withdrawing' of the mind from the body may allow for the 'objective' 'discovery of truth', but it also created a duality in which there is no place for the intermediate realm of the imagination. It is at this point that the imaginal becomes merely 'imaginary', a figment of the imagination that has no place in a scientific pursuit of truth.

Furthermore, the Cartesian emphasis on scientific proof led to a perception of reality dominated by the physical level verifiable by the senses. In the Middle Ages, physical existence was seen as fundamentally symbolic of a higher reality. But by the eighteenth century, this mode of perception had largely disappeared. This period still accepted the Great Chain of Being, the hierarchical structure of the universe composed of an infinite number of links from the lowest, meanest link of existence to the highest possible form of creation. But the emphasis was not, however, on man perceiving his life in terms of a higher level of reality, but rather that each level of creation should remain in its particular place and not seek to transcend it. As Alexander Pope expresses it:

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)  
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;  
No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,  
But what his nature and his state can bear.<sup>104</sup>

For Pope 'mankind' was limited to an experience of the sensory world. In this he followed John Locke's notion that man is born a tabula rasa, and that following this the mind has only two sources: information received from the five senses and reflections upon this information. Thus, for Pope as for Locke, there is nothing in the 'nature' of man that does not originate in an experience of the sensory world.

In the Spectator (July 7th, 1711) Addison does describe a belief in the soul's ascent of the levels, but unlike the Platonic theory, this is not to be attempted whilst still in the sensory world. He refers it to life after death in 'a more friendly climate, where they [souls] may spread and flourish to all eternity.'

Thus the Platonic theory of the ascent of the soul is displaced, and the imagination loses its intermediate position linking the temporal with the spiritual. Instead of being seen as a faculty that enables man to realise a higher imaginal world, it is now regarded merely as a subjective figment of the mind.

Addison distinguishes between the 'Primary' and 'Secondary Pleasures of the Imagination'. While the 'Primary Pleasures ... proceed from such objects as are before our eyes', the 'Secondary Pleasures' are when

the Objects are not actually before the Eye, but are called up into our Memories, or form'd into agreeable Visions of Things that are either Absent or Fictitious.'<sup>105</sup>

For Addison the images 'called up into our Memories' do not come from the symbolic world of 'Ideas' and 'Forms', but only from the external world of the senses:

We cannot indeed have a single image in the fancy that did not make its first entry through the sight: but we have the power of retaining, altering and compounding those images which we have once received, into all the variety of pictures and vision that are most agreeable to the imagination.<sup>106</sup>



He uses 'fancy' and 'imagination' as synonymous; and the ability of this faculty is but to 'retain, alter and compound' images that have originated in the exterior world of the senses. Functioning only in relation to the physical world, the imagination is no longer a tool to perceive a higher dimension; it is merely a means for pleasure and entertainment;

... for by this faculty a man in a dungeon is capable of entertaining himself with scenes and landscapes more beautiful than any that can be found in the whole compass of nature.<sup>107</sup>

The imagination's pleasure-giving capability and its use for the man in the dungeon is not to be denied or disparaged, but, to continue with Addison's allusion, it could be regarded as a minor attribute of a faculty able to free man from the prison of purely sensory perception. In losing the symbolic quality of the imagination, in other words, its ability to perceive the unity in the multiplicity of sense impressions, the key into another realm of reality was lost. Man became more firmly locked on the physical level of existence.

### 2.6.3. A Platonic Approach to the Imagination Re-established by the Romantic Poets

The nineteenth century saw the continuation of a Cartesian view of reality, based solely on analytic thought and the perceptions of the senses. It was for Samuel Taylor Coleridge to re-establish for English Literature a Platonic approach to the imagination. In Biographia Literaria Chap. X, he re-defined 'fancy' and 'imagination', and in so doing restored the imagination to its former status. Addison's understanding of

imagination is closer to Coleridge's Fancy, merely an associative process which 'must receive all its material ready made from the law of association.'

In defining the imagination, Coleridge distinguishes between the 'Primary Imagination' as 'a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM' and the 'Secondary Imagination' which can be considered as the poetic imagination. This follows the distinction between the 'Primary' and the 'Secondary Pleasures of the Imagination' made by Addison. But rather than just 'retaining, altering and compounding' as in Addison's description of the 'Secondary Imagination', Coleridge's poetic imagination 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or when this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealise and to unify.' 108

For Coleridge, the imagination is a unitive function and relates us to a symbolic mode of apprehension. It is the imagination that allows us to realise objects of sense as symbolic: to see 'a translucence ... of the universal in the general; above all ... the eternal through and in the temporal'.<sup>109</sup> He returned the imagination to its intermediate position between the eternal and the temporal, and thus re-established its ability to reveal the eternal forms of things. Giving the following quotation from the poem Nosce te ipsum by the Elizabethan poet, Sir John Davies:

Thus doth she, when from universal states  
She doth abstract the universal kind;

Coleridge suggests that: 'his words may with slight alteration be applied, and even more appropriately to the poetic imagination.' 110

While the scientific search for universal laws was being governed by analysis, a process of splitting up and dividing, Coleridge presented the imagination as a unitive means of perceiving what is universal and eternal.

William Blake also saw the imagination as a means of returning from the temporal to the eternal;

The Human Imagination ... throwing off the temporal  
that the eternal might be established.<sup>111</sup>

Through his visionary experiences he gained a real understanding of the nature of the 'mundus imaginalis':

This world of Imagination is the world of Eternity ...  
This world of Imagination is Infinite and Eternal, whereas  
the world of Generation, or Vegetation is Finite and  
Temporal. There Exists in that Eternal World the  
Permanent Realities of Every Thing which we see reflected  
in this Vegetable Glass of Nature.<sup>112</sup>

This can be read as the world of archetypal images, in Blake's words 'ever Existent Images'; and the imagination is the mode of perception given to man to experience this different level of reality.

Percy Bysshe Shelley understood the imagination as a faculty for consciously realising what is eternal. For him

Poetry in a general way may be defined to be 'the  
expression of the imagination.'<sup>113</sup>

and a poem is

the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth ...

the creation of actions according to the unchangeable forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the Creator, which is itself the image of all other minds.<sup>114</sup>

Through the poetic imagination the images that express the eternal, unchanging essence of life are realised. In saying that a poem is such an 'image of life ...' Shelley describes a poem in Platonic terms that I have already equated with Jung's idea of an archetypal image. Through this particular use of the imagination a poet can realise an archetypal image in the form of a poem.

These nineteenth century poets understood the vital function of the imagination as a means of access to a symbolic archetypal reality that lies behind what is physically manifest. This faculty offers a depth of meaning to the sensory world that is not available if the physical is regarded as the only ontologically verifiable level of existence. The nineteenth century artists offered a creative alternative to the dominance of Cartesian duality. In this period, while the prodigious rewards of science appeared to have endorsed a solely material view of reality, an imaginal perspective was also being developed in the newly-found field of depth psychology.

#### 2.6.4. Images and the Imagination in the Psychologies of Freud and Jung

Sigmund Freud realised the importance of images in the functioning of the unconscious:

thinking in pictures approximates more closely to unconscious processes than does thinking in words and is unquestionably older than the latter.<sup>115</sup>

and he developed his technique of free association of images as a method of imaginatively exploring the unconscious. But Freud primarily believed in Locke's assumption that the mind is originally tabula rasa and that its contents derive from the impressions of the external world. For Freud, the images of the unconscious did not exist as living realities in their own imaginal world, they were only a symptom of something else, and the unconscious merely a repository of repressed desires. Freud did acknowledge the existence of an 'archaic heritage', of features in the unconscious that extend back beyond the childhood of the individual into a 'phylogenetic childhood'.<sup>116</sup> But even here, the implication is that this heritage has its origins in the external world.

Jung, however, proposed that the inner images neither derive solely from the external world, nor belong only to the personal unconscious. He suggested that these images may also belong to a 'collective unconscious' that underlies the personal unconscious. Furthermore, this collective unconscious is an interior world with its own ontological reality, formed of primordial or archetypal images which are common to all humanity. This interior world of images expresses itself and is realised through the faculty of the imagination. The usual imaginative experience of these images is in dreams or visions, though also the artist has the ability to express the images of this primal world.

#### 2.6.5. Jung's 'Active Imagination' and its Foundation in Alchemy

Jung not only understood the ability of the imagination to experience the inner symbolic world, he also developed a technique of 'active imagination' to explore it consciously. In contrast to the dream state

where the imaginal world is experienced completely at the unconscious level, in 'active imagination' the individual consciously encounters the imaginal, and is able to consciously participate with its figures. The methodology of 'active imagination' will be examined in detail later, but briefly the technique begins with the individual concentrating upon a dream or fantasy image, or a mood, which he/she allows to develop into a chain of associated fantasies which gradually take on a dramatic character. It is important for the individual to appreciate that this inner drama is a real psychic process that is actually happening to him/her. Then, rather than merely remaining a passive observer of this inner drama, the conscious ego of the individual should participate on the inner stage. In this way, the individual actively enters into the imaginal world, and is able to form a real rapprochement with the figures of the unconscious.

Jung evolved 'active imagination' from his own personal encounters with the collective unconscious,<sup>117</sup> but he subsequently grounded this technique in his discovery of the use of the imagination in alchemy. He regarded the true alchemical 'Opus' as being concerned with the realisation and integration of the contents of the unconscious rather than with the transformation of base matter into gold. He appreciated the 'elixir' and the 'lapis' as symbolic rather than physical realities. What the alchemist was working with in his retorts and crucibles was not so much chemical substances as 'the contents of his unconscious which he had (un)wittingly projected onto the unknown chemistry of matter.'

What he sees in matter, or thinks he can see,  
is chiefly the data of his own unconscious  
psyche which he is projecting onto it.<sup>118</sup>

This realisation of unconscious realities through imaginative projection Jung sees as being

the equivalent of the psychological process of active imagination.<sup>119</sup>

The alchemical 'Imaginatio' he describes as:

the active evocation of (inner) images, secundam naturam, an authentic feat of thought or ideation, which does not spin aimless or groundless fantasies 'into the blue' - does not, that is to say, just play with its objects, but tries to grasp inner facts and portray them in images true to their nature.<sup>120</sup>

Interpreting the use of the imagination in the alchemical tradition to serve twentieth century depth psychology, Jung stresses the importance of the 'active evocation' that distinguishes 'Imaginatio' from 'Phantasia' 'an insubstantial thought'.<sup>121</sup> We can see here a similarity with Coleridge's distinction between 'Fancy' and 'Imagination'. This particular use of the imagination appears to be a knowledge that, like an underground stream, has been discovered and used creatively at various times throughout our Western tradition, without necessarily having a visible continuity.

#### 2.6.6. Corbin's Islamic Source for 'Active Imagination'

Jung discovered in alchemy a Western source for the use of the imagination to make conscious the inner psychic world. Similarly, Corbin discovered a pre-Cartesian source in Islam. In his research into the eleventh century Persian physician-philosopher-mystic Avicenna, and the Spanish-

born Arab theologian and mystic Ibn'Arabi, Corbin found similar use of the imagination to realise an inner symbolic reality. Corbin termed this symbolic dimension the 'mundus imaginalis', and its images and symbols are the archetypal images as expressed in Islamic theological philosophy. He stresses the ontological reality of this imaginal world and assumes the objectivity of its symbols:

In speaking of this full and autonomous reality, we could equally well speak of the objectivity of the world of symbols, simply upon condition of not understanding the word in the sense in which the object is posed as exterior to natural consciousness of the sensible and physical world. Contrary to naturalistic interpretations and those inspired by Freudian psychoanalysis, which tend to 'explain' myths and symbols by reducing them to sublimations of biological contents, the spontaneous flowering of symbols should appear to be as corresponding to a fundamental psychic structure, and eo-ipso as revealing to us not arbitrary and 'fanciful' forms but well-founded and permanent contents corresponding to this permanent structure .. They reveal to the mind a region no less 'objective' than the sensible world. Their spontaneity is so far from being arbitrary that it exhibits striking recurrences in cultures far apart in time and space, recurrences that no filiation through historical causality could explain to us.<sup>122</sup>

Like Plotinus, Corbin equates this symbolic plane with the plane of the soul, and sees the 'active' or 'creative imagination' as the means of transmuting the sensible reality into the symbolic realm of the soul.



As a 'bridge' or 'intermediary' between the world of Mystery ('alam al-ghayb) and the world of Visibility ('alam al-shahadat)' <sup>123</sup> the 'active imagination' causes the symbolic essence of a material form to be perceived, and thus allows the Platonic ascent from the physical to a higher level of reality. From the sensory perception of the physical world there is an ascent to an imaginative perception of the symbolic world of the soul. A detailed description of this 'imaginative ascent' is contained in Corbin's Avicenna and the Visionary Recitals. For present purposes, it is necessary only to give evidence of an historical foundation for an imaginative response that enables a real experience of the imaginal. Just as in alchemy 'Imaginatio' allowed a physical, chemical process to be transmuted into an experience of inner images, in this Islamic system, 'active imagination' functions as the organ of metamorphosis, transmuting the sensible into the symbolic, and vice versa.

Jung's archetypes belong to the depths of the psyche. Corbin's Islamic symbols are realised through an ascent to the soul. But whether the metaphor is of above or below, we may posit the same imaginal reality. An equally appropriate visual metaphor is that of individual consciousness as a small circle enclosed by a larger circle of the collective psyche or soul. The main point of each metaphor is the process of 'journeying' from, or transferring our consciousness from, the smaller circle to the larger. However, any metaphor is always misleading when trying to discuss a level of reality beyond our verbal language.

#### 2.6.7. Hillman's Imaginative Perspective on the Soul and Psyche

James Hillman draws together the ideas of Jung and Corbin, and stresses the imaginal, symbolic quality of the psyche or soul.

Hillman is very conscious of the dangers of defining the soul in terms that would deny it its imaginal nature. He thus interprets it as

a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint  
124  
rather than the thing itself.

It is through the archetypes of the collective unconscious, the symbols of the soul, that life acquires an archetypal, symbolic quality. The soul offers a depth of meaning to life, allows one to perceive that which is eternal and universal in the evanescence of the temporal world.

As a definition of the soul, Hillman offers:

the imaginative possibility in our natures, the  
experiencing through reflective speculation, dream  
image and fantasy - that mode which recognizes all  
realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical. 125

The journey into the soul, this archetypal world, can be achieved through the active imagination. This faculty is considered as a function of the soul, and thus to experience our full imaginal potential is to realise the soul. The very exercise of this faculty of 'active imagination' causes one to enter into the dimension of the soul. It would therefore follow that an imaginal experience of an archetypal textual image involves a response in the depths of the psyche, on the level of the soul.

Up till now, literary studies have assumed that creative imagination is solely the sphere of the writer; present reader-response theory firmly places the reader within the sphere of creativity. What is then needed is to explore a mode of imaginal perception that allows

this creative response in the reader, allows an archetypal textual image to be experienced at the imaginal level of reality.

## 2.7. A Critical Orientation Towards an Archetypal Textual Image

If an archetypal textual image exists as a numinous image in the imaginal, then we have within us the imaginative function with which to realise this archetypal dimension of the textual image. But how may this be developed into a methodology of imaginal perception, indeed into a mode of textual response? Furthermore, is there an appropriate literary context for responding to an archetypal textual image?

### 2.7.1. The Importance of an Appropriate Mode of Response

Any attempted response to an archetypal textual image must begin with an awareness of the importance of its archetypal dimension. According to Jung, the archetypal images are the decisive factors in life. It is the archetypal images that condition the fate of humanity.

Our personal psychology is just a thin skin, a ripple on the ocean of collective psychology. The powerful factor, the factor which changes our whole life, which changes the surface of our known world, which makes history, is collective psychology, and collective psychology moves according to laws entirely different to those of our consciousness. The archetypes are the great decisive factors, they bring about real changes, and not our practical reasoning and practical intellect ... The archetypal images decide the fate of man. 126

Our relationship to and understanding of these images is an integral part of that fate. Therefore a mode of literary perception that can offer a closer communion between our conscious understanding and the archetypal world is of significance. If a textual image is able to offer such a communion, it is important to discover the appropriate mode of response.

Too easily can an attempted response to an archetypal textual image be guided by 'directed thought' and its language; then the image can reveal neither its dynamic energy nor its symbolic dimension. The door into the imaginal remains closed; the imaginal cannot reveal itself as a living reality within the individual. The dominance of a 'directed' intellectual approach to our schooling (a reflection of our Western infatuation with the intellect), has thus tended to deny these images their archetypal potential. But if we can discover a mode of imaginal perception, then that door may be opened; an archetypal textual image becomes an opening onto a different level of reality. In responding to an archetypal textual image the emphasis must lie not so much on what is seen (an attempt to analyse), but on the way we look; a mode of response.

#### 2.7.2. An 'Innocent' Reading of the Text

One argument could be for an 'innocent' reading of the text. A total innocence of reading is not, of course, possible. The reader can never be without inherited experiences, feelings, etc., let alone inherited concepts. But if the reader refrains from conscious critical participation, textual image could evoke imaginal image without the interference of 'directed thought'. However, education has so conditioned us to search for conceptual understanding, that it would need a process of 'unlearning' for such an innocence of 'directed' response to be possible. Moreover,

and most important, the non-participation of consciousness in the process of response does not allow the image evoked to be made conscious. The individual would feel the affect of the textual image, feel the internal 'reverberations,' but the inner image might not cross the threshold of consciousness. It would be felt rather than known; or if the image were perceived, it would not be valued and thus its meaning would not be integrated into consciousness.

We had the experience but missed the meaning. <sup>127</sup>

For an external textual image to be fully realised as a meaningful archetypal reality, a conscious participation in the process of response is paramount.

### 2.7.3. 'Reader-Response' as an Appropriate Theoretical Context

If a textual image may only be realised as archetypal through a conscious awareness of its imaginative, or imaginal, affect, then a theoretical context is required that validates such a subjective 'reading' of a text. Reader-response theory offers such a context.

Reader-response theory reflects the twentieth-century paradigm shift from theories based upon the primacy of substance to theories based upon the primacy of relations. This shift from substance to relations may be seen in fields as diverse as linguistics and sub-atomic physics. Saussure revolutionised the field of modern linguistics by insisting that 'language is a system of relations, not a system of substances';<sup>128</sup> and relativity, Einstein's fundamental contribution to sub-atomic physics, derives essentially from the philosophical analysis which insists that there is not a fact and an observer, but a joining of the two in an observation ...

Just as sub-atomic physics has dissolved the idea of the objective observer, the separation of 'fact' and observer, so reader-response theory refutes the idea of the objective reader, the separation of text and reader. 'Reader-response' considers not the text as separate from the reader, but rather the joining of the two in a reading. Thus in 'reader-response' the emphasis shifts from 'what I am reading', the text as object, to 'how I am reading,' the relationship between text and reader. If 'how I am reading' is of primary concern in 'reader-response', then significance is placed upon the stance of consciousness and also the stance of the unconscious of the reader; for it is both the conscious and the unconscious mind of the reader that influences his/her attitude and inter-relationship with the text. If these two factors are recognised as influencing the reading process, then the reading will be necessarily subjective. In refuting the idea of the 'objective reader', reader-response theory offers this enquiry a theoretical stance for exploring a subjective, imaginal 'reading' of an archetypal textual image.

However, present reader-response theory focusses upon a reader's verbal response to a text, while an imaginal mode of response is primarily concerned with the non-verbal, subjective affect of a textual image. Therefore, to differentiate this mode of response from other, primarily verbal modes, I have termed it 'imaginal response'.

#### 2.7.4. 'Reader-Response' in the Context of Anglo-American Critical Theory

Within the context of Anglo-American critical theory, the reader-response movement may be seen as moving away from the New Criticism with its

emphasis on the objectivity of the text. In particular, reader-response theory refutes the influential statement issued by Wimsatt and Beardsley in 'The Affective Fallacy' (1949)

The Affective Fallacy is a confusion between the poem and its results (what it is and what it does) ... It begins by trying to derive the standards of criticism from the psychological effects of the poem and ends in impressionism and relativism. The outcome ... is that the poem itself, as an object of specifically critical judgement tends to disappear. <sup>130</sup>

'Reader-response', rejecting the objectivist assumptions of the New Criticism, is concerned with the effect of a text, with 'what it does'. Thus its theorists offer various perspectives on the dynamic between text and reader, and analyse both conscious and unconscious reading strategies. As 'reader-response' developed, so the reader emerged into 'critical prominence' in that

instead of being seen as instrumental to the understanding of the text, the reader's activity is declared to be identical with the text and therefore becomes itself the source of all literary value. If literature is what happens when we read, its value depends on the value of the reading process. <sup>131</sup>

In replacing the text as the 'sole object of critical judgement', with a concern for the reading process itself, 'reader-response' moves into an area that is both larger and more fluid. The two poles of the text and the reader and their interaction become the subject of critical attention; and once the reading process is perceived as dynamic, psychology points to complexities and unknown depths in the reader. Thus, just as subatomic

physics has replaced the notion of a causal quantifiable universe with an often acausal and unmeasurable series of interactions, 'reader-response' takes Anglo-American critical theory away from the stability of an objective text into similarly unpredictable areas. Indeed reader-response theory itself 'is not a conceptually unified critical position',<sup>132</sup> rather it is composed of a variety of different perspectives on the reading process, ranging from Stanley Fish's semiotic approach to 'how readers make meaning' to Norman Holland's psychoanalytic stance.

2.7.5. Four Reader-Response Theorists: Stanley Fish, David Bleich, Norman Holland and Wolfgang Iser

Stanley Fish was probably the first theorist since I.A. Richards to give the reader a central role in literary studies. Fish's approach is to consider the temporal progress of the reader, slowing down the normal reading process so as to make

an analysis of the developing responses of the reader  
in relation to the words as they succeed one another in  
time.<sup>133</sup>

In his analysis of the reading experience Fish explores how meaning does not reside in the text per se, but rather in the 'event' of reading. Fish's 'meaning' necessitates the creative participation of the reader. It is a temporal and experiential phenomenon. He thus makes the important step

of removing the text from the centre of critical attention  
and replacing it with the reader's cognitive activity.<sup>134</sup>

For Fish the objective text is illusory in comparison to the reader whose activity determines meaning. In fact, Fish's 'texts' are written by his readers.



However, Fish's reader is not a free agent, but rather a member of an 'interpretive community,' by which he means certain reading and interpretive conventions that his readers hold in common. Thus, although Fish considers 'how readers make meaning,' he also implies that these 'readers' are 'made' by certain modes of perception. For Fish it is these 'interpretive communities' that ultimately determine both reader and text;

meanings are the property neither of fixed and stable texts nor of free and independent readers but of interpretive communities that are responsible both for the shape of a reader's activities and for the texts those activities produce.<sup>135</sup>

David Bleich, like Fish, is concerned with 'the reader's cognitive activity', but he offers his own perspective on the reading process. In Subjective Criticism Bleich explores the 'subjective paradigm' that he regards as central to understanding the dynamics of response. As has already been mentioned, he sees the meaning of a text as being experienced through a cognitive process of 'symbolization' or 'response' and 'resymbolization' or 'interpretation'. Any such 'response' and 'interpretation' he regards as being necessarily subjective, reflecting the 'personality orientation of the reader at that time.'<sup>136</sup> Like Fish, Bleich's reader belongs to an 'interpretive community', but whereas Fish's 'communities' are composed of reading and interpretive conventions, Bleich's 'community' has a pedagogic rather than semiotic basis, 'reflecting a set of local choices, motives and interests in knowledge'.<sup>137</sup> Bleich's text is not determined by the community, only by the meaning it acquires in the process of response.

It has been argued (see above p.31 ) that Bleich's process of 'symbolization' and 'resymbolization' may not in actuality be so clearly delineated as he would suggest. Nevertheless, it does provide a helpful model for differentiating different stages of the subjective dynamics of the reading process.

While Fish and Bleich focus upon the reader's cognitive activity, Norman Holland offers a psychoanalytic perspective to the reading process. For Holland, people's response to texts reflects their psychological patterning. Holland sees this 'patterning' in Freudian terms of defensive strategies and fantasy gratification, thus

Each reader, in effect, recreates the work in terms of his own identity theme. First he shapes it so it will pass through the network of his adaptive and defensive strategies for coping with the world. Second he re-creates from it the particular kind of fantasy and gratification he responds to.

Finally, a third modality completes the individual's re-creation of his identity or life-style from the literary work. Fantasies that boldly represent the desires of the adult or the more bizarre imaginings of the child will ordinarily arouse guilt and anxiety. Thus we usually feel a need to transform raw fantasy into a total experience of esthetic, moral, intellectual, or social coherence and significance.<sup>138</sup>

Holland regards this process of defense-fantasy-transformation (which he encapsulates in the acronym 'DEFT') as determining the dynamics of response.

Thus reading has a fundamentally subjective and subliminal dimension in which the identity of the reader is recreated. Looking beyond the cognitive activity of the mind, Holland suggests that any search for unity in a text or interpretation will be determined by the psychological identity of the reader, and he arrives at the idea that 'interpretation is a function of identity.'<sup>139</sup>

Among reader-response theorists, Wolfgang Iser looks most closely at the function of the imagination in the response process. He sees the imagination as the meeting point of the structured text and the subjectivity of the reader. For Iser the text is comprised of 'gaps' or 'blanks' that need to be filled by the reader. Iser's 'gaps' refer to the 'fundamental asymmetry between text and reader'.<sup>140</sup> Just as in interpersonal relations we fill in our perception of the other with personal projections, so too do we project in our reading. It is this need to project, to 'fill the gaps' that creates the communication between reader and text:

Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins. The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves.<sup>141</sup>

However, Iser considers that the reader's projections are to some degree controlled by the structure of the text. The implicit is controlled by the explicit.

According to Iser, the meaning of a text is also the product of an imaginative dynamic between the two poles of text and reader. Iser sees meaning as 'imagistic in character ... the meaning can only be grasped as an image.'<sup>142</sup> and this image is an effect produced by the

merging of reader and text. Experiential in nature, meaning is not an objective phenomenon, but an effect that 'depends upon the participation of the reader'.<sup>143</sup> Iser also acknowledges the limitations of an explanatory style of interpretation, as any such exposition will necessarily dull the immediate effect of the text.

Iser's work is based solely on an analysis of prose fiction, the 'images' he explores are ideational rather than pictorial, and his concern is with a conscious and not subliminal reading process; nevertheless, he offers a valuable perspective on the importance of the imagination as the mediator between text and reader.

This outline of four reader-response perspectives is not meant as a survey of reader-response theory, but rather it points to the movement's concern with an analysis of the reading process.

#### 2.7.6. 'Imaginal Response' in Relation to Contemporary Reader-Response Theory

'Imaginal response' is also concerned with the 'reading process' and with what a text 'does'. Furthermore, as a textual image may only be experienced as archetypal through the attitude of the 'reader', then the 'value' of a textual image is directly dependent upon the 'reading process'. As in Iser's theory of response, the 'meaning' of an archetypal textual image is experienced through the imagination, for which the participation of the reader is important (see section 2.8.1.3. following). Fish's argument that 'readers make meaning' is fully applicable to 'imaginal response,' where the primary concern is with the 'existential meaning' of a textual image. 'How much' and 'in what way' a textual image is

meaningful is entirely dependent upon the response of the 'reader'.

However, whilst a consideration of the 'existential meaning' of a text is central to 'imaginal response,' this is an area of textual meaning and response that present reader-response theory has not examined in any detail. Robert Crossman, in "Do Readers Make Meaning," touches on this aspect of meaning when he considers three different senses of the word 'meaning.' He differentiates between 'meaning' as a synonym for 'intention' - "if you take my meaning" - 'meaning' as the common understanding of a word - "ice 'means' frozen water" - and finally, 'meaning' as 'an individual's subjective valuing of something' - "it means a lot to me" -. This final sense of meaning is what I have referred to as 'existential.'

Crossman elaborates on the 'existential meaning' of a text in so far as to quote Ezra Pound's statement about a particular poem being

meaningless unless one has drifted into a certain vein  
of thought<sup>144</sup>

but he does not explore in any more detail this aspect of meaning, or how it is experienced in a text. Rather he concerns himself with 'interpretation', suggesting that we all make meaning 'as interpreters, as readers'. 'Interpretation' is what Bleich refers to as 'resymbolization,' and what I have referred to as an 'interpretive' approach to meaning. As I have argued, interpretation is essentially analytic, and is very different to an 'existential' approach to meaning.

Throughout reader-response criticism the primary approach to meaning is 'interpretive.' Fish discusses 'interpretive strategies' and 'interpretive

communities,' Bleich, 'response' and 'interpretation', and Holland arrives at the statement 'interpretation is a function of identity.' Although Iser argues against 'the traditional expository style of interpretation' <sup>145</sup> and describes 'meaning as effect', his approach to meaning remains <sup>145</sup> analytic and ideational. <sup>146</sup> Neither Iser, nor any other critic, examines 'existential' meaning in any detail.

Just as 'imaginal response' is not primarily concerned with an 'interpretive,' analytic approach to meaning, so it is not primarily concerned with the 'reader's' 'secondary perception'. It focusses rather on his/her 'primary' and often unconscious processes. Like Holland, the orientation is psychological, yet, unlike Holland, the main direction is not psychoanalytic. For although an analysis of the psychological affect/effect of a textual image is not discarded, 'imaginal response' focusses on promoting a non-analytic approach. In 'imaginal response' the 'reader's' attention is directed towards being aware and attentive of the imaginal affect of a text, towards being sensitive to the feelings, emotions, visual images, kinaesthetic, auditory and other sensory images that may be evoked in the 'primary perception' of the text.

Like other reader-response perspectives, 'imaginal response' rejects the ideas presented by Wimsatt and Beardsley in the "Affective Fallacy"; and yet it progresses beyond contemporary reader-response theory in its concern for a full and detailed appreciation of the actual 'affect' produced by a text. Furthermore, in its focus on an 'existential' rather than 'interpretive' approach to meaning, and its emphasis on an imaginal experience rather than an analysis of a reading process, it is able to offer a new direction to reader-response-work, and indeed to literary studies as a whole.

## 2.8. A Methodology of 'Imaginal Response'

As I have already explained, 'imaginal response' is a mode of responding to an archetypal textual image so that the archetypal dimension of the textual image may be perceived and experienced. This necessitates a specific use of the imagination as the appropriate function for perceiving and experiencing the textual image as an imaginal phenomenon. But an archetypal textual image may also be explored through its 'mythic associations,' and further through 'directed' analysis. Jungian psychology offers a conceptual context for this process of analysis, thus allowing the imaginal experience of the archetypal image to be conceptually understood and integrated into the conscious mind as far as is possible.

However, of primary importance is the imaginal experience of the textual image. In his technique of 'active imagination' Jung developed a method of consciously experiencing and exploring the inner imaginal world. The purpose of this enquiry is to show that 'active imagination' can be adapted into a mode of 'reader-response', and thus provide an archetypal textual image with an appropriate mode of perception. But, before exploring 'active imagination' as a mode of 'reader-response', it is necessary to examine the methodology of Jung's 'active imagination'.

### 2.8.1. Jung's Technique of 'Active Imagination'

#### 2.8.1.1. Jung's Recipe

Jung's psychological technique of 'active imagination' is a process, whereby, starting with a product of the unconscious, a dream or fantasy

image or a mood, an individual may return to that inner world and consciously experience and participate with its symbolic figures. As already stated, Jung derived 'active imagination' from his own experience, and he then found parallels to it in the alchemical process of 'Imaginatio'. Translating this alchemical process he provides a twentieth century 'recipe':

Take the unconscious in one of its handiest forms, say a spontaneous fantasy, a dream, an irrational mood, an affect, or something of the kind, and operate with it. Give it your special attention, concentrate on it and observe its alterations objectively. Spare no effort to devote yourself to this task, follow the subsequent transformations of the spontaneous fantasy attentively and carefully. Above all, don't let anything from outside, that does not belong, get into it, for the fantasy image has "everything it needs." In this way one is certain of not interfering by conscious caprice and of giving the unconscious a free hand. <sup>147</sup>

#### 2.8.1.2. Different Methods for Commencing the Imaginative Process

Since Jung the technique of 'active imagination' has been developed and systemised. In a recent study, Inner Work, Robert Johnson differentiates between five different ways of commencing the imaginative process, different methods 'for inviting the figures of the unconscious to come to the surface and make contact'. Johnson suggests that the 'purest' form of 'active imagination' is to simply clear the mind of all thoughts of the external world and to wait 'with an alert and attentive attitude,



to see who or what will appear'. However, Johnson notes that many people are not suited to a method of pure receptivity, and he offers other alternatives;

1. Using your Fantasies

Harnessing fantasy is a way of converting passive fantasy into Active Imagination. In its simplest form you look at the fantasies that have been going through your mind today and you choose an image, an inner person or a situation. Then you go to that place and that person and use it as the starting place for Active Imagination.

2. Visiting Symbolic Places

One very simple way ... is to go to a place in your imagination, and start exploring to see whom you meet there. Usually when you do this, your imagination will take you to the inner place that you need to go and connect you to the inner persons that you need to meet.

3. Using Personifications

... If you have some affect that is following you around and dogging your steps, some mood that you can't shake off, this gives you a strong hint as to where you should start your dialogue with the unconscious. Go into your imagination and say: "Who is the one inside me who is depressed today? Where are you? What do you look like? Please take some form I can see and come up and talk with me. I want to know who you are and what you want".

4. Dialoguing with Dream Figures

... One goes back to a dream in imagination and enters into dialogue with the characters there. One can pick out a specific person in the dream that one feels the need to

talk with. One can speak specifically with a single dream figure or return to the situation in the dream and take up the whole encounter where the dream left off.<sup>148</sup>

'Using your Fantasies', 'Dialoguing with Dream Figures', and 'Using Personifications' clearly relate respectively to Jung's 'fantasy', 'a dream' and 'an irrational mood, an affect'. 'Clearing the mind' and 'Visiting Symbolic Places' would appear to be additions to Jung's 'recipe'.

Whatever the initial method used, Johnson follows Jung in insisting that once the imaginative process has begun, it is important not to be distracted by other images or fantasy material, not to let 'anything from outside, that does not belong, get into it'.

In order to do a true act of imagination, it is necessary to stick with the image that we start with, stay with the situation until there is some kind of resolution. Once one has encountered a particular image or started a dialogue with it, it is important to continue from there and not allow oneself to be distracted by other images or fantasy material that may jump into the mind and compete with the Active Imagination.<sup>149</sup>

In 'active imagination' the process, once begun, should be like a sealed alchemical vessel, for only if nothing from 'outside' interferes can there be a real rapprochement with the unconscious.

#### 2.8.1.3. The Importance of Participation

An essential part of 'active imagination' is one's conscious participation

in the imaginative process. In contrast to ordinary, passive fantasy or daydreaming, 'active imagination' demands that the individual consciously takes part in the inner imaginative drama; this is why it is called 'active'. In 'active imagination' the ego actually goes into the imaginal world, where it 'walks and talks, confronts and argues, makes friends with or fights the persons it finds there'.<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, it is not 'active' unless one participates with one's feelings, emotions or body response; it must be a fully-felt experience. It is through participating in this way that one realises that the imaginative process is real. For although 'active imagination' is a symbolic experience, it is still a real psychic experience that is happening to the participant. Jung stresses that unless the individual realises that a real psychic process is happening to him/her, he/she will remain fundamentally unaffected and nothing happens:

So long as he simply looks at the pictures he is like the foolish Parsifal, who forgot to ask the vital question because he was not aware of his own participation in the event. Then if the flow of images ceases, next to nothing has happened even though the process is repeated a thousand times. But if you recognise your own involvement you yourself must enter into the process with your personal reactions just as if you were one of the fantasy figures, or rather, as if the drama being enacted before your eyes were real. It is a psychic fact that this fantasy is happening, it is as real as you - a psychic entity - are real. If this crucial operation is not carried out, all the changes are left to the flow of images, and you yourself remain unchanged.<sup>151</sup>

Through actually participating in the inner imaginative drama there can be a real rapprochement with the unconscious. The conscious ego and the unconscious are able to communicate with each other, to enter into a dialogue. As a result, the relationship between the ego and the unconscious alters, and there is the possibility for real psychological change.

Only through a fully-felt imaginal participation with the unconscious can its images be experienced as psychic realities. Through the process of 'active imagination' the conscious ego is able to experience the dynamic and numinous quality of the archetypal images; and moreover, through these images, experience the archetypes themselves. It is through this imaginal rapprochement with the unconscious that the archetypes per se can be experienced as dynamic living realities.

The importance of perceiving the archetypes through the process of 'active imagination' is that then the experience of these powerful entities - the ancient world worshipped them as Gods - need not be totally overwhelming. The active participation of consciousness acts as a counter-balance to the numinous force of the archetype, thus

By means of 'active imagination' we are put in a position of advantage, for we can then make the discovery of the archetype without sinking back into the instinctual sphere, which would only lead to blank unconsciousness.<sup>152</sup>

#### 2.8.1.4. Writing Down the Imaginative Experience

Finally, it is very important that the inner imaginative drama is

written down at the time of occurrence. All inner dialogue can be transcribed verbatim; however, the verbalisation of other imaginal happenings will necessarily be limiting, just as the transcription of a dream is but a poor paraphrase. It is also, of course, susceptible to unconscious censorship. But despite these limitations it is important that the imaginal happening is written down. This can be seen as a major protection against the 'active imagination' turning into just another passive fantasy. The writing helps the individual to focus on what he/she is doing, and not wander off into day-dreams.

Furthermore, as 'active imagination' involves ego consciousness encountering the ambiguous and often deceptive world of the unconscious, where 'one thing is never one thing', it is very necessary that the inner drama is fixed in writing.

It is very important to fix this whole procedure in writing at the time of its occurrence, for then you have ocular evidence that will effectively counteract the ever-ready tendency to self-deception. <sup>153</sup>

Through being verbally fixed, the imaginal experience is more readily acknowledged and easily understood by the conscious mind. It enables the participant to record, as accurately as possible, what is experienced, said and done, so that the whole experience can be remembered and digested afterwards.

#### 2.8.2. 'Active Imagination' Developed into a Mode of 'Reader-Response'

In the process of 'active imagination' Jung suggests that one first fixes a dream or fantasy image in the mind by concentrating the attention on it. Associations are then allowed to develop, all of which must be

carefully noted down. If this is to be adapted for use with a textual image ideally there should be two individuals, one of whom reads the textual image, the other who responds. (It is, of course, possible to use a tape-recorder in place of the reader). Jung's 'dream or fantasy image' is already an inner image; the textual image needs to be evoked as an inner image. So the participant needs to have eyes closed and to be wholly receptive. The attention must be focussed within and the mind and feelings as empty and as clear as possible. The more cluttered the mind, the less space there is for the textual image to be imaginally perceived. The more intrusive the feelings, the less chance for the image to be emotively experienced as an archetypal reality. Those who have much experience of meditation or image-work are able to empty themselves of thoughts and feelings. However, any simple relaxation technique, e.g. breathing deeply for a few moments, will help the participant to acquire a calmer, more empty state.

In perceiving the 'read' text as an inner image, the participant should be attentive not only to the inner visual image, but also to any feelings, emotions or sensations evoked. It is unlikely that the inner visual image will appear as an exact mirror of the text, for this is already a subjective response. Literal 'objective perception' does not exist, and this mode of imaginal perception particularly evokes subjective participation. Perceived through the faculty of the imagination, the text evokes associations. However 'blank' the receptive mind, this inner image can best be understood not as a copy, but as an 'echo' or 'resonance' of the text. It is read as the initial association.

If we follow Jung's technique, further associations may develop. As opposed to Freud's 'free associations' that eventually move away from the

initial image, the further associations must centre on the initial image, so to speak, 'stick to the image'. This can be effected by staying with the initial feeling or body response; in this way the participant remains centred at the original nucleus of psychic energy that is the archetypal textual image. The associations thus 'circulate' around the archetypal image, amplifying and elaborating it from different aspects, exploring different 'facets' of the original image.

If these further associations do develop, the participant should be receptive to any such changes, and allow them to continue until it is felt that the process is complete.

In practice, I have discovered that, as opposed to Jung's 'active imagination', there are often no such further developments, that the initial association is often complete in itself. Furthermore, I found that participants had little difficulty in determining when the imaginal response to a particular textual image was complete.

Just as in 'active imagination', the full participation of the individual in the process of 'imaginal response' is important. If there is no fully-felt participation then the archetypal dimension of the textual image cannot be experienced, there is no true imaginal perception, or indeed 'imaginal response'. Unfortunately, the practical application of 'imaginal response' revealed many instances where the response 'participant' did not fully participate in the response process. See Chapter Five, Section Three, 'Actor or Observer? Involvement in Imaginal Response-Work' for a full discussion of this question.

Finally, when the participant feels that the inner process has ended, then, as in 'active imagination' this process is to be noted down, all

the feelings, emotions, sensations and images, etc. are to be transcribed as accurately as possible. As already discussed, such a translation of an imaginal experience into a verbal language is limiting but necessary.

### 2.3.3. The Mythic Amplification of an Archetypal Textual Image

Although an archetypal textual image can only be realised as an imaginal phenomenon through the function of 'active' or 'creative imagination', the archetypal significance of a particular textual image can also be explored through its mythic associations. A myth, as suggested above, is the enactment of an archetype. As the dreams or collective imaginings of a culture, they embody the language of the collective psyche. Exploring the mythic background of a textual image is a means of amplifying it with its own imaginal language, and framing it within its archetypal context.

However, it must be understood that any attempt to discern a mythic frame will reflect the stance of consciousness of whoever is presenting the exegesis. The illusion of the objective observer is, as suggested above, now firmly displaced by recent research into sub-atomic physics. Capra writes:

My conscious decision about how to observe say an  
electron will determine the electron's properties  
to some extent.<sup>154</sup>

If the observation of the very building blocks of the physical world is recognised as being subjective, then subjectivity is inevitable in determining an archetypal pattern which frames a textual image.

For example, the numerous and varied critical responses to Hamlet reveal



more about the play's ability to reflect the critic than about the objective value of any one response. Indeed, C.S.Lewis suggested that critics were only depicting themselves when they were depicting Hamlet.<sup>155</sup> But from an archetypal perspective, such subjectivity is not a defect, as it portrays the involvement that is necessary for an archetypal image to be meaningful. What is important is the recognition of the subjective nature of one's response.

It should also be appreciated that as the archetypes are the psychic foundation of the conscious mind, they will directly influence their own exploration. The stance of consciousness which explores the archetypal world is ultimately determined by the archetypes themselves. Thus one is not merely looking at an imaginal world, but at the very foundation of one's perception and cognition. The enquiring mind is exploring a mirror in which the roots of its enquiry are reflected.

Furthermore, it is important to realise that even in the process of mythic amplification, the exploration is not of something separate or external but of one's own inner imaginal reality, that of the psyche or soul. Working with an image through mythic association, we can become familiar with this imaginal world. In myth, the archetypes express themselves. Here are the dynamics of their imaginal world. We can learn the language of the archetypes and listen to their stories.

To perceive a particular mythic frame to a textual image is to give the image an archetypal context. More important is the value of this mythic frame to the individual observer, for it can be read as his/her own mythic pattern, one that is dominant in his/her individual psyche. Just as the

alchemists projected their psychic contents onto the alchemical process, so the individual will project his own particular mythic reality on and around the image. It will become a focus for that which is archetypally important for him. Thus a stage has been erected for his inner figures to enact their roles. They have been given a means to express themselves. In this way a mythic approach allows archetypal patterns to emerge into consciousness. An individual can reconnect with dominant psychic patterns; but now there is some conscious awareness of the factors that underlie the psyche and thus his/her whole life and world - for

their [the archetypes] figures and images express not only a view of the world, but something of the very nature of the human being as such; they reflect man's elemental contact with the world.<sup>156</sup>

#### 2.8.4. The Effect of Imaginal Associations on the Conscious Mind

An archetypal textual image can be explored through imaginal associations. These associations can arise from individual 'Imaginatio', the use of 'active imagination' adapted into a mode of 'reader-response', or they can arise from the collective imaginings of mythology. These two approaches can be seen as complementary modes of textual response. Both allow for a textual image to be appreciated in its own imaginal language; and whilst the first mode, 'Imaginatio', allows for the subjective experience of an archetypal image and of the archetype per se, the second, mythic mode, enables a textual image to be given an archetypal context, a mythic background.

In both these approaches the conscious mind of the participant is able to gain familiarity with the archetypes and their images. But whilst

for the conscious mind to gain an awareness of its archetypal foundations is of psychological importance, it may not always be welcome. For the effect of this awareness can be regarded as similar to Copernicus's discovery of the earth orbiting the sun; it is equally threatening and heretical to an ego-dominated consciousness and its suppositions of autonomy. An individual becomes aware that the ego, the personal identity, the 'I', is not self determining. Not only is he/she influenced by the personal unconscious, by repressed personal experiences and unrealised or unacceptable personal qualities, but there exists also the influence of the vaster domain of the collective unconscious and its archetypal forces. Both the inner and outer world of the individual can be read as a stage on which the archetypes enact their personified roles.

#### 2.8.4.1. The Archetypes and Individuality

To a much greater degree than is commonly appreciated, we are 'in the hands of the Gods', those primordial forces that were once depicted in ancient mythologies, and are now mainly experienced in dreams. To become conscious of these forces would suggest a loss of individuality, yet paradoxically, the reverse is true. It was the Gods that gave direction to men's lives. It is the archetypes that give our individual existence its significance. As already suggested, archetypes are determinants of meaning. In relating to its archetypal foundations, individual life becomes more meaningful. Furthermore, Jung defines individuality as:

that which is unique in the combination of collective elements of the persona and its manifestations. 156a

and surely our individuality and personal lives will gain a deeper significance when we appreciate the collective elements that so influence us.

The present attraction of astrology is, I would suggest, not merely a desire to read 'the future in the instant', but also reflects the individual's interest in the collective dominants that help to form the individual self. In astrology, these 'dominants' are seen as the planets and houses of the horoscope that combine to make an individual 'chart'. The individual often finds a personal situation more meaningful when he/she appreciates the collective forces, or 'stars', that appear to precipitate or be the underlying cause of that situation. Whether seen in the heavens or in the images of the unconscious, the archetypes are the factors that combine to make us our individual selves. Any profound awareness of our individual self means a recognition of our origins in the collective unconscious. And as our personal existence takes on an archetypal perspective, so we become not just the playthings of the Gods, but an integral and meaningful part of their cosmic drama.

#### 2.8.5. The Integration of an Imaginal and an Analytic Mode of Response

Both 'active imagination' and mythic amplification present a mode of responding to an archetypal textual image through imaginal association. This appears to be a type of thinking which is very different to that of logical thought. But is it the only mode of thought appropriate to archetypal image work? Does the full appreciation of an archetypal textual image also require a non-imaginal mode of response, a more logical perspective? Moreover, can an imaginal and an analytic perspective be integrated into a mode of 'imaginal response'; is such a 'coincidentia oppositorum' possible?

##### 2.8.5.1. Jung's Two Types of Thinking

In Symbols of Transformation Jung distinguished between two types of

thinking, which, as we have seen, he called 'mythological thinking' and 'directed thinking'. In a recent book, Archetypes, Dr. Anthony Stevens marries Jung's distinction with the findings of neurophysiological research; the latter has differentiated between the left and right cerebral hemisphere of the brain, and revealed that each hemisphere has a distinct mode of perception and thought; thus empirically corroborating Jung's idea. The thinking process of the 'left hemisphere' can be equated with Jung's 'directed thinking'. It is logical and allows for thinking in words; it also develops with the acquisition of language; it is analytic, and allows for abstract thought. Fundamentally directed towards the outside world, it is the development of this mode of thought that has resulted in the achievements of science and technology.

The thinking process of the right hemisphere is related to Jung's 'mythological thinking'. It is holistic rather than analytic; it does not attempt to dissect or rationalise; rather than thinking in words, it thinks in images; and as opposed to the active, idea-forming process of the rational mode, is primarily receptive, 'observing the change and development of its images'. It allows for the formation of symbols, and as such, for a symbolic relationship to life. It can be seen at work in dreaming, or in the progression of fantasies. As the thinking process of the unconscious, it is the elder of the two modes. It is fundamentally subjective, pre-verbal and mythological. Jung gives an example of its functioning, and also compares its 'goal' with that of 'directed thought':

The activity of the earliest classical mind was in the highest degree artistic, the goal of its interest does not seem to have been to understand the world as objectively and accurately as possible, but how to

adapt it aesthetically to subjective fantasies and  
157  
expectations.

However, this mythic mode of thinking has been suppressed in Western civilization by the increasing dominance of directed thought. 'Mythological thought' has been devalued and for the majority it exists unrecognised in the unconscious, expressing itself only in dreams, fantasies and vague feelings. That mythic thinking can be so suppressed has recently been corroborated by the neurological discovery that the left hemisphere can repress or inhibit the activities, and especially the emotionally-toned activities, of the right hemisphere.  
158

To become aware of the dynamic affect of an archetypal image, and to appreciate its meaning, this mode of thinking is indispensable. Our mythic, non-analytic, imaginal thinking process, and particularly its feeling quality, must no longer remain repressed in the unconscious. What is suggested is a harmonious inter-relationship between the two hemispheres, the two types of thinking, an attitude of integration rather than separation between 'directed' and 'mythological thinking'. This would lead to a fuller and more conscious understanding of the symbolic quality of our inner and outer worlds.

2.8.5.1.1. The Use of the Terms 'Imaginal Mind' and 'Rational Mind',  
'Primary' and 'Secondary'

One of the difficulties in this enquiry is that there are at present no generally accepted terms offering a precise distinction between the two hemispheres of the brain and their different modes of thinking. Therefore, I will hereafter refer to the right hemisphere as the 'imaginal

mind', its mode of thinking as 'imaginal' or 'mythic', and the left hemisphere as the 'rational mind', its mode of thinking as 'directed'. In relation to Freud's 'primary' and 'secondary process', and the idea of 'primary' and 'secondary perception' discussed earlier, the mode of perception of the 'imaginal mind' is 'primary', and that of the 'rational mind' is 'secondary'. When in inverted commas, the terms 'primary' and 'secondary' will refer specifically to the different processes of the two sides of the brain.

#### 2.3.5.2. The 'Transcendent Function' Formed from the Integration of an Imaginal and an Analytic Mode of Response

In his essay 'The Transcendent Function' Jung identifies two principal ways of working with the unconscious:

One is the way of creative formulation, the other  
the way of understanding.<sup>159</sup>

and he further suggests that:

aesthetic or creative formulation needs understanding  
of meaning, and understanding needs aesthetic  
formulation. The two supplement each other to  
form the transcendent function.<sup>160</sup>

By the term 'creative formulation' Jung was referring in particular to drawing, painting or sculpture. However, if the process of forming imaginal associations is appreciated as a 'creative' use of the imagination, it is also a 'way of creative formulation'. and as such needs 'understanding'.

'Creative formulation' and 'understanding' may be directly related to

Jung's 'Two Types of Thinking', the former to the 'mythic', 'right-brain' process, the latter to its 'directed', 'left-brain' counterpart. However, in 'The Transcendent Function' Jung not only suggests that these two processes complement each other, but that they 'supplement each other' to form a third principle, which he termed 'the transcendent function'.

#### 2.8.5.2.1. The 'Transcendent Function'.

The 'transcendent function' is Jung's term for the function which mediates opposites and facilitates a transition from one psychological attitude or condition to another.

The transcendent function represents a linkage between real and imaginary, or rational and irrational data, thus bridging the gulf between  
CONSCIOUSNESS and the UNCONSCIOUS.<sup>161</sup>

Jung describes it as

A natural process, a manifestation of the energy  
that springs from the tension of opposites.<sup>162</sup>

In any psychological process the formation of the 'transcendent function', creating a bridge between consciousness and the unconscious, is of great importance.

#### 2.8.5.3. An Analytic Approach to an Archetypal Textual Image

The archetypal dimension of a textual image can only be experienced in the unconscious of the participant. To this purpose 'active imagination' may be developed into a mode of 'reader-response'. Furthermore, through



mythic amplification the archetypal nature of the image may be imaginably explored. Both these modes of response act mainly through images and the feeling function, or body response, and are the first steps towards a conscious realisation of the meaning 'impacted' in an archetypal textual image. But for this 'meaning' to be more fully realised, it is necessary to translate it into the language of the rational mind. For, if the experience remains understood solely in imaginal terms, it cannot be fully integrated. At some point the subjective experience of an archetypal image benefits by being 'interpreted', or 'analysed', so as to become an integral part of our conscious logical functioning.

It must first, however, be stressed that an archetypal experience can never fully be understood by the conscious mind. Jung suggested that the real nature of an archetype is 'transcendent' and not capable of being made conscious. Any appreciation of its effect, whether in 'mythic' or 'directed thought', will be incomplete. There are aspects of the collective unconscious which are so deep, so ancient, that to individual consciousness they will always remain mysterious and unfathomable.

If imaginal thought can appreciate only a part of the archetypal experience, a translation into verbal thought will necessarily be even more limiting. Any translation cannot be achieved without some loss. This is even more true of a translation from an imaginal into a 'directed', verbal mode of thought. The verbal is the more conscious mode, and the further the perception of an archetypal experience is distanced from its archetypal origins, the less it can be appreciated.

But once one is aware of the limitations of a verbal approach to an archetypal experience, full use can be made of an analytic perspective on

the psyche. From his own experience and understanding of the collective unconscious, Jung offers an appropriate method and language to describe the individual relationship to this inner world. He proposed 'interpretation', suggesting a vocabulary for unconscious processes, particularly those expressed in dreams and myths. He offers this vocabulary in a semi-scientific language, using defined terms such as 'animus', 'anima', 'shadow', 'Self' and 'individuation'. 'Analysis', 'interpretation' and 'definition' in themselves suggest a solely 'left hemisphere', 'directed' approach. But central to Jung's work is the idea of the 'coincidentia oppositorum', the integration of the opposites, the conscious and unconscious processes.

Jung states that archetypes are 'not mere names, or even philosophical concepts'.<sup>163</sup> They must first be subjectively experienced through emotionally charged images. Defined without giving due recognition to their affect, you

end with nothing more than a jumble of mythological concepts, which can be strung together to show that everything means anything, or nothing at all.<sup>164</sup>

However, if one remains true to the individual 'felt' experience of the image, Jungian interpretation offers a valuable method of analysis.

#### 2.3.5.4. Jungian Analysis Offers a 'Secondary' Amplification of Textual and Response Images

In this exploration of an archetypal textual image there is the initial textual image and its imaginal associations, developed either through 'active imagination' or mythic amplification. A Jungian reading of

both the textual image and its associations offers these images a rational perspective, and so places the archetypal experience within a conceptual framework. The imaginal experience is thus given a meaning and value that can be appreciated by the conscious, conceptual mind.

If the happenings of the psyche are given a conceptual value, the 'rational mind' will not be so tempted to repress their mythic significance. This suggests that a Jungian analysis can be understood as a further amplification of the original archetypal experience; an amplification that can allow the 'rational mind' to participate in this experience.

The full experience of the imaginal can never be conceptually comprehended, just as for mythic thinking, logic and sequential thought will always remain fundamentally foreign. However, the ultimate goal would be for the two types of thinking, the two hemispheres of the brain, rather than being continually at variance, to function in a creative inter-relationship. This inter-relationship would allow the symbolic world of the unconscious to be, as far as possible, integrated into our conscious life.

A Jungian analysis places an individual image within a psychological framework. This is a framework that attempts to delineate the structure and dynamics of the psyche. The individual image can thus be read as an integral part of a larger pattern. Similarly, the imaginal experience itself can be understood not as an isolated phenomenon, but as having a meaningful place within this pattern.

It is important to remember that we are discussing not only intellectual ideas but psychological experiences. An archetypal response may well

involve a deepening awareness of the psyche and thus the possibility for psychological growth. A Jungian perspective can place an individual imaginal experience within a larger psychological process which Jung termed 'individuation'.

#### 2.8.5.4.1. 'Individuation'

'Individuation' is Jung's term for the individual's journey towards psychological wholeness. Fundamentally, it is a natural developmental 'process immanent in every living organism'.<sup>165</sup> With specific regard to human beings, two main forms of individuation may be distinguished:

1. The natural process, occurring more or less autonomously and without the participation of consciousness, and
2. The 'artificial' process, aided for instance by [psychological] analysis, developed by definite methods and experienced consciously.<sup>166</sup>

It goes without saying that there are any number of intermediate stages between '1' and '2', but for the present purpose we are specifically concerned with a conscious awareness of this psychological process, and the possibility of aiding it through imaginal response-work.

The individuation process is the maturation of the psyche and it includes the 'general integration of unconscious contents that are capable of becoming conscious'. This process of integration

does not follow a straight line, nor does it always lead onwards and upwards. The course it follows is rather "stadial", consisting of progress and regress,

flux and stagnation in alternating sequence.

Only when we glance back over a long stretch of the way can we notice the development ... Jung spoke of it as a "labyrinthine" path, and said that the longest way is at the same time the shortest.<sup>167</sup>

Once more it is apparent how the inner world of the psyche is neither a logical nor a linear dimension. However, even though the path of individuation is labyrinthine, the integration of the unconscious does follow certain basic steps. Individuation necessitates a confrontation with the 'shadow', Jung's term for the sum of our repressed qualities, what he succinctly defines as 'the thing a person has no wish to be'.<sup>168</sup> Following the confrontation with and acknowledgement of the shadow, there is the encounter with the 'anima' or 'animus', the contrasexual part of the individual psyche. The anima is the 'inner figure of a woman held by a man' and the animus 'the figure of man ... in a woman's psyche'.<sup>169</sup> The anima and animus are then able to act as psychopompi, or guides of the soul, and as such are instruments of individuation, guiding the individual into the depths of the psyche where other archetypal figures may be encountered. Important among these other figures are the Wise Old Man and Wise Old Woman, personifications of the 'Self' or central archetype of wholeness, which Jung understood to be the God-image in man. The ultimate, though rarely achieved, 'goal' of individuation would be a conscious realisation of the Self.

A Jungian reading of an individual archetypal textual image can allow the imaginal perception and experience of it - they are the same - to be recognised as being a part of this psychological journey. Similarly,

an imaginal association can be understood within an appropriate conceptual frame of reference, allowing the meaning of its archetypal dynamic to be more consciously appreciated. In offering a conceptual framework for the existential meaning of an archetypal experience, a Jungian analysis makes possible the union of an interpretive and existential approach to the meaning of an image, and so the union of a 'directed' and 'mythic' mode of thinking. Within the framework of Jungian psychology, such a union of opposites is indeed possible.

#### 2.8.5.5. An Analytic and Imaginal Approach United in a Methodology of Response

The union of an analytic and imaginal perspective is theoretically possible and moreover desirable. But what is a practical methodology of 'imaginal response' that allows for such a union?

In his method for the interpretation of dreams, Jung first considered the personal associations of the dream images, and then by way of mythic amplification he connected the dream with universal imagery. Combining these personal and universal approaches he was often able to offer an interpretation that revealed the universal or archetypal patterns underlying personal experience.

Jung's method can be applied to 'imaginal response'. However, dreams are first experienced in the unconscious, and it is of primary importance to 'imaginal response' that the textual image be experienced as an imaginal phenomenon. This may be achieved through the use of 'active imagination' adapted into a mode of 'reader-response', and a methodology for the same has already been discussed (see pp.73-81). Therefore, the

first step in 'imaginal response' must be the application of such a methodology. Moreover, as a method of individual imaginative association, this use of the imagination can also be seen as a mode of 'personal association'. Then, following this primary imaginal association, both the text and the response images can be amplified by mythic, historical and cultural parallels, in order to clarify the metaphorical content of the imagery. This places the imagery within a universal context, which then allows for the most complete interpretation of the imagery in a verbal, conceptual form.

A methodology of 'imaginal response' could then read as follows:

1. Participants are asked to close their eyes, relax and be aware of their breathing for a few moments. Then they are asked to imagine a large white circle on a black background, like a doorway, then to pass through the doorway into the black space - this is a simple technique to clear the mind and concentrate the imaginal perception.
2. Participants are asked to listen to the words and allow an image to form without any conscious directive as to what that image should be. It is important to assume that neither any particular image, nor indeed any image at all, will necessarily be imaginally perceived. (In the process of my enquiry there have been occasions when there was nothing perceived.)
3. Each image is read out twice. (The practical application of 'imaginal response' was begun with the reading out of each image just once, but at the request of the participants this was changed to twice.)
4. Participants should be aware of any feeling, emotion or sensation

experienced. These can be of any nature, kinesthetic, auditory, or indeed relate to any of the senses. For some participants the primary imaginal experience need not be visual. The 'image' can be a feeling, body response, etc.. Participants are also asked to be aware of the 'intensity' of their response, although it is acknowledged that any evaluation of the same may be difficult.

5. If an image is experienced, participants should allow it to develop or change, at the same time remaining with the original feeling, emotion, sensation. The imaginal 'happening' should not only be observed, but participated in as fully as possible.

6. At this stage in the process of 'imaginal response' it is important to try to avoid any interpretation, any conscious seeking for 'meanings' of the images perceived, as this will interfere with the imaginal perception. (Ideally, there should be an elimination of any critical attention.) The emphasis throughout this imaginal stage is on awareness and attentiveness rather than interpretive thought or judgement.

7. Finally, when the imaginal perception appears complete, participants are asked to note down the image(s) and feelings, etc. that were evoked. Participants are asked to describe their responses in the following manner:

1. Feelings, emotions or sensations experienced
2. Intensity of affect
3. Images perceived

8. Then the participants are again asked to imagine the white circle on



the black background, and to return through the circle, thus completing the imaginal process. Then they can open their eyes.

In the practical application of 'imaginal response' each session involves the response to between five and eight textual images. Thus, after writing down the image(s), feelings etc., participants are asked to close their eyes and wait for the reading of the next textual image. Only when the session of five to eight images is complete, are they asked to again imagine the white circle on the black background, to return through the circle and open their eyes.

Following this process of imaginal perception and association, both the text and the response images can be 'interpreted' from a Jungian perspective. Jung himself did not delineate his method of interpretation, which can be considered to be more an 'art' than a definable 'technique'. However, Jungian interpretation does include a number of specific points : <sup>169a</sup>

1. Interpretation should bring something new to consciousness, and should neither reiterate nor moralize.

2. Interpretation must take into account the personal context of the individual's life, and his psycho-biographical experience. These and the influence of his social milieu are arrived at by the process of association.

3. Symbolic imagery can be enhanced by comparisons with typical cultural, historical and mythological motifs. These relate the imaginal experience to the collective unconscious. Such comparisons involve the process of 'amplification'.

4. Interpreters are admonished to 'stick to the image', to stay as close as possible to the imaginal experience. Personal association and amplification are seen as ways of making the original imaginal experience more available and meaningful.

5. The ultimate test of an interpretation is whether it 'clicks', i.e. whether the individual instinctively feels it to be correct. A 'correct' interpretation enables a shift in the attitude of consciousness.

'Imaginal Response', like the more orthodox process of Jungian interpretation, is delineated by a therapeutic situation. The participant(s) and the (group) leader sit in a room as insulated as possible from external disturbance. There is also, for practical purposes, a time limit fixed for each session. The therapeutic situation is also reflected in the non-judgemental attitude that must underlie any process that involves working with the unconscious. No imaginal response is deemed better or worse than another<sup>170</sup>. The criteria for a 'successful' interpretation is that it 'clicks' with the individual and thus 'brings something new to consciousness'. However, the opposite does not apply: i.e. an interpretation which does not 'click' is not deemed unsuccessful, for the very process of valuing and exploring the possible significance of an imaginal experience helps to bridge the gap<sup>171</sup> between consciousness and the unconscious.

#### 2.8.6. Examples of Imaginal Response-work and Interpretation

Central to this enquiry is the practical application of the methodology of 'imaginal response' outlined above. This was conducted with a number

of experimentees, and in the Appendix is a collation of their imaginal responses transcribed as suggested above (para. 7. p.107). Chapter 4.5. offers a Jungian interpretation of all the textual images used in this enquiry. In Chapter 4.6 one experimentee's responses are interpreted in depth, and in Chapter 5 a number of other experimentees' responses are also interpreted.

One of the aims of this thesis is to explore the potential of 'imaginal response' as a means of experiencing the archetypal dimension of an archetypal textual image. Therefore, particular emphasis is placed upon response-work that points to such an experience having taken place. However, although some readers might want an evaluation of the individual response images, and thus a means of evaluating the practice of imaginal response, no such evaluation is given. This reflects the non-judgemental, non-directive stance that is central to the response process, just as it is central to the Jungian analytic encounter. Within the analytic encounter what is considered as paramount is the dynamic of communication between the unconscious and the conscious mind. It is this rapprochement<sup>e</sup> that immeasurably speeds up the 'natural' process of individuation: it can be likened to adding a catalyst to a chemical solution. Thus the value of an interpretation is that it allows the conscious mind to participate in a process that would otherwise remain primarily unconscious.

The unconscious is older and wiser than consciousness; its horizons far outdistance the limited perspective of the ego. It is the unconscious psyche with its central archetype of the Self that takes the individual along the path of individuation:

As the process deepens one realizes more and more that insights come by grace and that development occurs not by the will of the ego but by the urge to development from the Self.<sup>172</sup>

The dynamics of the unconscious can often appear both paradoxical and disturbing to ego consciousness; and any attempt to 'judge' the images that arise from the depths can easily limit or impede individuation. The primary purpose in experiencing and working with these images is to 'tune in' to this inner source of guidance, and allow the deep unfolding of the psyche to take place with minimum resistance.

## 2.9. The Attitude Required for Imaginal Response-Work

Having outlined the methodology for imaginal response-work, it is finally necessary to ask: is there a specific attitude that archetypal image work requires?

### 2.9.1. The Importance of Respect

The archetypes and their images are dynamic centres of psychic energy which are the structural determinants of our psyche. Even when first encountered as words on a page, an archetypal image is a living psychic reality. Therefore, an archetypal textual image, like any archetypal image, is best approached with respect.

Unlike most intellectual concepts, an archetypal image is not a product of ego-consciousness; it belongs to a different level of reality. In more primitive times, the archetypes were seen as gods, and revered as such. This reverence was very sound and we should learn from it.

The primitive attitude of natural piety may be considered

superstitious and misplaced when applied to the external world; however, it is instinctive wisdom when applied to the inner psychic world ... The archetypal energy forms of the collective unconscious ... are suprapersonal energies most aptly described as deities. Hence they must be approached with a religious attitude. Failure to do so is an act of hybris which does not recognise the existence of any power other than the will of the ego.<sup>173</sup>

As the expression of a 'deity', an archetypal image requires similar reverence. It has the potential to lift us out of our temporal existence into an imaginal, suprapersonal realm. It can also produce an affect of defamiliarisation, as the individual reaches beyond the limitations of ego consciousness. However, if one approaches the image with some desire to obtain information for the power purposes of the ego, one is not respecting the image; one limits it, and thus denies its ability to reveal a full imaginal meaning.

#### 2.9.2. The Danger of 'Inflation'

Furthermore, there is an even worse danger for those who encounter an archetype without the 'wisdom of humility'. Jung called this 'inflation', when the ego becomes identified with the archetype itself. In the worst cases, the archetype can, in fact, assimilate the ego. Edward Edinger writes:

This is a disaster for the conscious personality. It undergoes a regression and lives out unconsciously the fate of the particular mythological image with which it is identified.<sup>174</sup>

Edinger is here referring to the character of Ahab in Herman Melville's Moby-Dick. Edinger sees the white whale as a symbol for the supra-personal or sacred aspect of man's own instinctual self, which is also the primordial unconscious psyche. Ahab lacks the appropriate respect for the whale, and this is his hybris that leads inevitably to his downfall. Seeking revenge on Moby-Dick for the loss of his leg, Ahab becomes so identified with the whale that finally he, his boat and all his crew, save one, are destroyed. Killed by Moby-Dick, Ahab is symbolically assimilated by the instinctual self, and so he returns to the ocean, the primordial waters of the unconscious psyche.

If Ahab offers an example from literature of the ego becoming identified with an archetype, a real-life example is Marilyn Monroe. She may be best understood as someone invaded, indeed possessed by, the archetype of the 'Love Goddess', Aphrodite. The world related to Marilyn in an archetypal way. Without awareness of the mythological label of 'Aphrodite', America simply regarded her as its sex symbol and as a 'Love Goddess'. However, the tragedy of Marilyn Monroe was that she was so possessed by the power of this archetype, and inflated by it, that she was unable to find meaning in her personal life. 'Embodying Aphrodite, how could she be expected to see men in any position other than prone, in adoration?'<sup>175</sup> And so, unfulfilled by personal relationships, she passed from 'one sordid affair into another, and ... finally to suicide'.<sup>176</sup> Yet even after her death, the continuing stream of books on Marilyn Monroe testifies to the power of the archetype.

In archetypal image-work, a new dimension is being explored, so there is the potential for the wondrous and unexpected. But for this to be fruitful the right attitude is essential. If one meets a unicorn one should

not try to cut off the horn for its magical properties, but rather greet the wondrous animal with respect. Similarly, in fairy tales, the stepdaughter who greets the gnomes or old woman with kindness is rewarded with magical gifts; the daughter who seeks these figures of the unconscious for personal greed receives only a curse.

### 2.9.3. Ethical Responsibility in Archetypal Image-Work

In working with archetypal images, is an attitude of respect enough, or is it only the beginning of the process? Jung stresses the importance of understanding and realising the images in actual life; they must be integrated into consciousness. Having opened the door into this realm of the psyche and glimpsed its strange riches, it is a great mistake to think that this door can be simply closed again. To do this 'conjugates up the negative effects of the unconscious'.<sup>177</sup> A certain psychic energy has been released through the encounter with the image. It is best if it can be fully experienced through working with the image; it can thus be integrated into consciousness. But a part of this process of integration is a certain ethical responsibility the individual has to take towards these images of the unconscious. The primordial world of the unconscious is numinous, dynamic but essentially amoral. Jung's point of view is that humanity holds a specific role in relation to the unconscious: to contribute the act of consciousness and the point of view of morality in its highest sense. In the unconscious nothing is good or bad, it is the discrimination of consciousness that takes an ethical stance. As Hamlet philosophically remarks

there is nothing either good or bad but thinking  
178  
makes it so.

If an archetypal image is to be integrated into consciousness, the individual must be prepared to take an ethical stance, take moral responsibility. Jung suggests that a failure to do this can fragment the individual:

It is equally a grave mistake to think that it is enough to gain some understanding of these images and that knowledge can here make a halt. Insight into them must be converted into an ethical obligation. Not to do so is to fall prey to the power principle, and this produces dangerous effects which are destructive not only to others but even to the knower. The images of the unconscious place a great responsibility upon a man. Failure to understand them, or a shirking of ethical responsibility, deprives him of his wholeness and imposes a painful fragmentation upon his life.<sup>179</sup>

As an example of the responsibility required towards the images of the unconscious, I recall the dream of a woman in which there were two cages full of birds, and the birds were drinking water from a barrel and then falling down dead. Such a dream needs not only to be consciously understood, it also places a certain responsibility upon the individual; for if the birds are understood as images of her aspirations and intuitions, which the dreamer recognised, why then are they caged, not free to fly, and worse still, why are they dying? Surely such birds should drink from the living waters of life and not from some stagnant barrel. In fact, the woman did take responsibility for the dream, and tried to change her relationship with these inner birds. She tried to free her aspirations from a certain rigid, conditioned outlook on life, which the dream had allowed her to recognise.



Imaginal response-work is very different to dream-work in that the imaginal experience is directly related to a text, and thus the images perceived are not solely the product of the participant's personal psyche. If a text describes the murder of King Hamlet and the participant perceives it within, the act of the murder is not his/her responsibility, as it might be in a dream. However, the individual must still participate with an attitude of ethical responsibility. The 'correct' attitude is very difficult to define, but nonetheless it must not be overlooked. It is particularly important as 'imaginal response' is concerned not so much with the images of the personal unconscious, as with the archetypes and their images.

The archetypes and their images belong to the amoral depths of the collective unconscious. Like lions in the jungle, they are awesome but impersonal forces of nature, each following nature's amoral and impersonal laws. It is for the consciousness of the individual to add the dimension of ethical, human values to these numinous entities. Then the energy of the unconscious may be integrated beneficially, rather than swamping or distorting consciousness with raw power.

#### 2.9.4. Different Degrees of Understanding and Responsibility

This enquiry has been directed towards a mode of appreciating an archetypal textual image as fully as possible. For an archetypal textual image to be fully realised, for its dynamic energy to be integrated into consciousness, complete dedication to the work is necessary. Not only does the textual image need to be imaginally experienced as an archetypal reality, but this experience should be consciously understood. These two processes take place through individual imaginative association, mythic amplification and psychological interpretation. Furthermore,

the imaginal image needs not only to be understood, but also integrated into the conscious life of the individual, for which an attitude of ethical responsibility is essential.

However, I would argue that the degree and nature of 'understanding' and 'ethical responsibility' may be different for each individual. Jung insisted that an archetypal image must be understood in relationship to the life of the individual; and it follows that the nature of understanding should be determined by the individual. Similarly, as regards responsibility, it is also for the individual to determine what is appropriate; to determine what for him/her is the 'ethical and human thing to do'.

An archetype can never be altogether consciously understood; it is for each individual to understand it as consciously as is personally relevant. There is understanding through mythic thought, and there is understanding through verbal thought. A verbal understanding of the archetypal significance of a textual image allows that image to be more consciously realised. Furthermore, with each mode there are different degrees of understanding. I would argue that it is the right of an individual to determine the appropriate degree of understanding. For some it could be that a mythic mode of appreciation is enough, whilst for others there is need of a more conscious analytic perspective. And degrees of responsibility will also differ. For some, it is enough merely to accept the existence of an inner imaginal world, while for others an imaginal experience may demand a conscious confrontation with inner figures such as the 'shadow'.

In practice, it would seem that these are decisions which are not often

consciously made; rather it just happens that the individual is responsive to a certain degree of involvement, understanding and ethical responsibility. What is important is that we learn to form our own individual relationship with these archetypes of the collective unconscious. More primitive people understood the fate of mankind as being determined by their relationship with these 'gods'. Could it not be that our relationship to these archetypes might determine the fate of our world?

1. The term 'image' is itself notoriously difficult to define.
1. Caroline Spurgeon Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us p. 5
2. I.A. Richards Principles of Literary Criticism p. 91
3. *ibid.* p. 93
4. Hamlet III iv 92
5. P. Kugler The Alchemy of Discourse p. 89
6. C.G. Jung CW2 Part 1
7. *ibid.* para. 29n
8. *ibid.* para. 25
9. P. Kugler *op.cit.* p. 13
10. *ibid.* Chap. 1 & 5
11. *ibid.* p. 17
12. For Addison's 'Primary' and 'Secondary Imagination' see below p. 49
13. J.P. Celli 'The Uses of the Term 'Archetype' in Contemporary  
Literary Criticism' Dis. Abstracts International 305A 1975
14. C.G. Jung CW8 para. 6 & 9
15. C.G. Jung CW9i para. 271
16. In 'Instinct and the Unconscious' CW8 para. 275 Jung states that  
the idea 'archetype' was borrowed from St. Augustine. Later, in  
a letter to Victor White, 24 September 1948, he acknowledges this  
to be erroneous, and mentions the 'earliest use of the word ...  
occurs in Philo: De Opificio Mundi, 1.' C.G. Jung Collected  
Letters I p. 507
17. On the Creation Chapter 23. Loeb Edition, vol. 1, p. 55
18. Hermetica ed. Scott I p. 141
19. Dionysus On the Divine Names tr. C.E. Holt p. 72
20. Jung appears to have missed one instance of the word which is older  
than the example he cites from the Corpus Hermeticum and possibly

as old as Philo. It is from the Poimandres, Corpus Hermeticum I

You have seen in your mind the archetypal form, which  
is prior to the beginning of things.

Hermetica ed. Scott, I, pp. 116-7

21. C.G. Jung CW9i para. 5
22. C.G. Jung CW5 para. 223
23. For example, the image of the virgin birth is incorporated in innumerable myths and folk tales. Beside the story of Christ, it appears in the tale of the Buddha, who entered his mother's womb in the shape of a milk white elephant. In the Aztec story of Coatlicue, 'She of the Serpent-woven Skirt' was approached by a god in the form of a ball of feathers (Joseph Campell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 266.).  
Indeed, the image reappears with such 'striking uniformity of the main contours', that Campell notes that:  
the early Christian missionaries were forced to think that the devil himself must be throwing up mockeries of their teaching wherever they set their hand. (ibid. p. 264)
24. C.G. Jung CW7 para. 102
25. C.G. Jung CW8 para. 270
26. ibid. para. 417
27. C.G. Jung quoted by Jacobi in Complex, Archetype, Symbol p. 35
28. Jolande Jacobi op. cit. p. 52
29. ibid. para 266

30. C.G. Jung introduction to Women's Mysteries by Esther Harding  
p. ix ff.
31. Jolande Jacobi op. cit. p. 50
32. C.G. Jung Memories, Dreams, Reflections p. 385
33. C.G. Jung Man and His Symbols p. 96
34. C.G. Jung Psychological Reflections ed. Jolande Jacobi p. 43
35. C.G. Jung Memories, Dreams, Reflections p. 415
36. C.G. Jung Man and His Symbols p. 96
37. J. Hillman The Myth of Analysis p. 174
38. C.G. Jung CW9ii para. 60
39. C.G. Jung CW13 para. 11
40. C.G. Jung CW5 para. 151-4
41. Hamlet II ii 445-514
42. Kathleen Raine Defending Ancient Springs p. 126

The word 'myth' has been given a variety of meanings. The O.E.D., reflecting a rationalistic approach, defines myth as

A purely fictitious narrative, usually involving supernatural persons, actions, or events, and embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena.

Myths can be read as the stories of the supernatural world, and often they are the foundation of people's religious beliefs, as for example the creation myth and the story of the Garden of Eden which lie at the basis of the Christian/Judaic heritage. But a more dynamic aspect of myth is suggested by Joseph Campbell, one of the foremost twentieth century authorities on myths, who describes myth as 'the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation'

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(the Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 13). He stresses the spiritual aspect of myth, 'Myths are clues to the spiritual potentials of the human life' (The Power of Myth, p. 5). The spiritual quality of myth is explored by Ken Wilber who suggests that because God or Truth is indescribable, we use myth to form images about the Imageless (The Spectrum of Conscious p. 113). Wilber quotes Coomaraswami 'Myth embodies the nearest approach to absolute truth that can be stated in words' (Hinduism and Buddhism, p. 33).

If myths can be read as imaging spiritual realities that cannot be described literally, psychology explores how such spiritual realities manifest within the psyche. Jung writes 'Myths are original revelations of the pre-conscious psyche, involuntary statements about psychic happenings' (CW9i, para. 261). Jungian psychology offers an archetypal approach to myth. A Jungian definition, which echoes that of Kathleen Raine, is given in A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis: 'Myths are stories of archetypal encounters' (p. 95).

The Jungian process of mythic amplification seeks to connect personal dream or fantasy images with mythic imagery, and thus relate the personal to the archetypal. The same process can also be used to explore the archetypal nature of a text. In my reading of Hamlet in Chapter Four (P. 166 ff), mythic amplification is used. For example, the image of the old King Hamlet, poisoned whilst asleep in his orchard, is related to the Garden of Eden



myth (see. p. 186). Mythic amplification is also used in exploring participants' response images. For example, Karen's image of 'Medusa's head of snakes' is explored in reference to the myth's portrayal of the head's ability of turning the individual to stone (see. p. 272), and what that might signify psychologically. The myth of Persephone being pulled into the underworld is related both to the imagery of Ophelia's drowning (p. 225) and then later to Karen's response imagery of 'Young woman sucked down a hole into a huge cavern, like the bowels of the earth - 'Hell' (p. 286). The archetypal implications of the Persephone myth offer a valuable insight into Karen's psychological processes.

43. Hamlet V i 281-2
44. Acts of Thomas in Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations  
trans A. Walker 1870 p. 416. Quoted by C.G. Jung CW5 para. 561
45. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 185
46. C.G. Jung CW15 para. 129
47. *ibid.* para. 130
48. Henry Corbin 'Mundus Imaginalis' Spring 1972 p. 1
49. J. Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology, p. xi
50. See C.G. Jung CW 12 para. 9n for editor's comment on translating 'Seele', and the distinction between Psyche and Soul in the English translation of Jung's Collected Works.
51. J. Hillman, *op. cit.* p. xiii.
52. J. Hillman, Archetypal Psychology, p. 3.
53. See below p. 57.

54. J. Hillman, op. cit. p. 4.
55. In particular Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi.
56. J. Hillman, op. cit. p. 13.
57. ibid. p. 13.
58. J. Hillman, The Myth of Analysis, p. 287.
59. Katha Upanishad trans. W.B. Yeats, p. 31.
60. See pp. 95 ff.
61. G. Bachelard The Poetics of Space p. xx
62. C.G. Jung CW91 para. 266
63. Hamlet i v 35-6
64. D. Bleith 'Epistemological Assumptions in the Study of Response'  
in Reader Response Criticism ed. Jane Tompkins p. 134  
& Jane Tompkins 'An Introduction to Reader-Response Criticism'  
ibid. p. xx
65. P. Kugler The Alchemy of Discourse p. 95
66. H. Smith Beyond the Post Modern Mind p. 111
67. ibid. p. 112
68. ibid. p. 112
69. ibid. p. 67
70. C. Dickens Hard Times Penguin ed. 1969 p. 97
71. C.G. Jung CW8 para. 441
72. C.G. Jung Man and His Symbols p. 96. By 'feeling tone' Jung  
means the quality of feeling or emotional affect, in this case  
experienced through the subjective encounter with an archetypal  
image.
73. C.G. Jung CW91i para. 61
74. C.G. Jung Man and His Symbols p. 61
75. Jolande Jacobi The way of Individuation p. 35

76. C.G. Jung CW5 para. 17
77. *ibid.* para. 18
78. J. Hillman 'The Feeling Function' in Jung's Typology p. 81
79. C.G. Jung CW10 para 656
80. J. Hillman *op. cit.* p. 83
81. C.G. Jung Man and His Symbols p. 61
82. See note 81 above
83. For example: Arnold Mindell Dreambody and Working with the Dreaming Body
84. C.G. Jung, Memories, Dreams Reflections, p. 208. Confusion can arise from Jung's two different uses of the term 'objective psyche'. Firstly he used it, as in this instance, to denote the reality of the psyche, that it has 'a life of its own'. Secondly, he used the term 'to indicate that certain contents of the psyche are of an objective rather than personal or subjective nature. In this regard he equated the objective psyche with the collective unconscious (C.W. 7, para. 103n)' (A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis, pp.100-101).
85. C.G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 208
86. *ibid.* p. 225
87. I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, p. 112
88. *ibid.* p. 174
89. C.G. Jung, C.W. 6, para 512
90. C.G. Jung, C.W. 11, para. 766

92. See note 84 above. In this instance 'objective' reflects the second usage of the term 'objective psyche': the collective as opposed to the personal unconscious.
93. C.G. Jung, Letter to Bernhard Lang, June 1957, Letters, Vol. 2, p. 377.
94. See below, pp. 101-2.
95. Katherine Hayes The Cosmic Web p. 59
96. Mary Watkins Waking Dreams p. 99
97. D. Miller 'Red Riding Hood and Mother Rea' in Facing the Gods ed. J. Hillman p. 97
98. G. Durand 'Exploration of the Imaginal' Spring 1971 p. 90
99. Plato Phaedrus Plato Vol. 1 (loeb Edition) p. 481
100. Plotinus trans. A.H. Armstrong Vol 4 p. 419
- 101 E.W. Warren 'Imagination in Plotinus' Classical Quarterly 16 p. 277
102. Francis Yates The Art of Memory p. 143
103. R. Descartes Discourses on Method p. 91
104. A. Pope Essay on Man 1 11. 189-192
105. J. Addison The Spectator June 21 1712
106. *ibid.*
107. *ibid.*
108. S.T Coleridge Biographia Literaria Bk 1 p. 296
109. S.T. Coleridge The Statesman's Manual Appendix B
110. S.T. Coleridge Biographia Literaria Bk 2 p. 12
111. W. Blake 'A Vision of the Last Judgement' Blake Complete Writings ed. G. Keynes p. 606
112. *ibid.* p. 605
113. P.B. Shelley Literary and Philosophical Criticism p. 121

114. *ibid.* p. 128
115. Quoted by Mary Watkins Waking Dreams p. 38
116. Freud The Interpretation of Dreams p. 699
117. C.G. Jung Memories, Dreams, Reflections Chap. VI  
'Confrontation with the Unconscious'
118. C.G. Jung CW12 para. 332
119. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 749
120. C.G. Jung CW12 para 219
121. *ibid.* para. 219
122. H. Corbin Avicenna and the Visionary Recital p. 259
123. H. Corbin Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn'Arabi p. 189
124. J. Hillman Archetypal Psychology p. 16
125. J. Hillman Re-Visioning Psychology p. xx
126. C.G. Jung Psychological Reflections ed. J. Jacobi p. 39
127. T.S. Eliot 'The Dry Salvages' l. 93
128. P. Kugler The Alchemy of Discourse p. 36
129. J. Bronowski The Common Sense of Science pp. 83-4
130. W.K. Wimsatt The Verbal Icon p. 21
131. Jane Tompkins ed. Reader-Response Criticism p. xvi
132. Jane Tompkins *op. cit.* p. ix
133. S. Fish 'Literature in the Reader' Reader-Response Criticism p. 85
134. S. Fish Is There a Text in this Class? p. 27
135. *ibid.* p. 322
136. D. Bleich 'Epistemological Assumptions in the Study of Response'  
Reader-Response Criticism ed. Jane Tompkins p. 142

137. *ibid.* p. 158
138. Jane Tompkins *ibid.* p. xix
139. N. Holland 'Unity Identity Text Self' *ibid.*  
p. 123
140. W. Iser The Act of Reading p. 167
141. *ibid.* p. 169
142. *ibid.* pp. 8-9
143. *ibid.* p. 10
144. R. Crossman 'Do Readers Make Meaning' The Reader in the Text
145. ed. Susan Suleiman p. 153
146. W. Iser The Act of Reading p. 10  
For example, see Iser's examination of the character of Parson Adams  
in Fielding's Joseph Andrews (The Act of Reading pp. 214-219).  
Iser's reader is shown as filling the gaps with an ideational  
meaning that is dependent upon an analysis of a number of characters.
147. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 749
148. R.A. Johnson Inner Work pp. 168-171
149. *ibid.* p. 180
150. *ibid.* p. 140
151. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 753
152. C.G. Jung CW8 para. 414
153. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 706
154. F. Capra The Turning Point p. 77
155. C.S. Lewis Hamlet; The Prince or The Poem?
156. Ira Progoff Jung Psychology and its Social Meaning (N.Y.  
Dialogue House Library 1985), p. 282. Referred to by I. Avens  
Imagination is Reality p. 51
- 15 6a. C.G. Jung CW7 para. 519

157. C.G. Jung CW5 para. 24
158. See A. Stevens Archetypes p. 265. The two hemispheres of the brain are joined by the 'corpus callosum' which is a bundle of nerve fibres. It is via the corpus callosum that the left hemisphere can repress or inhibit the right hemisphere.
159. C.G. Jung CW8 para. 172
160. *ibid.* para. 177
161. A. Samuels A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis p. 150
162. C.G. Jung CW7 para. 121
163. C.G. Jung Man and His Symbols p. 96
164. *ibid.* p. 96
165. Jolande Jacobi The Way of Individuation p. 15
166. *ibid.* p. 15
167. *ibid.* p. 34
168. C.G. Jung CW16 para. 470
169. A. Samuels *op. cit.* p. 23
- 169a. These points have been adapted from *ibid.* pp. 84-5
170. See below p. 125
171. See below p. 126, quotation from J. Hillman about valuing the products of the soul.
172. E. Edinger Anatomy of the Psyche p. 6
173. E. Edinger Melville's Moby Dick A Jungian Commentary p. 77
174. *ibid.* p. 77
175. E. Whitmont The Symbolic Quest p. 100
176. *ibid.* p. 100
177. C.G. Jung Memories, Dreams, Reflections p. 218
178. Hamlet 11 ii 250
179. C.G. Jung *op. cit.*, p. 218

### Chapter Three

#### THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF 'IMAGINAL RESPONSE'



### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to describe the methodology of the imaginal response-work which forms the core of this whole enquiry. For, just as a textual image cannot be realised as archetypal from a theoretical perspective, but needs to be imaginally experienced, so too an experiential approach is central to this study of 'imaginal response'. To this effect the practical application of 'imaginal response' was conducted with a number of participants. These participants were drawn from two different sources: a meditation group which I attend and a third-year reader-response seminar group at the Polytechnic of North London.

Firstly, the actual selection and arrangement of the archetypal textual images used in this enquiry will be discussed. Secondly, the differences between the two groups of participants will be examined with reference to a questionnaire which they all answered. These differences required 'imaginal response' to be presented within two different contexts, a psychological context, and a 'reader-response' context. Fourthly, then, these two different contexts for 'imaginal response' will be described; followed by, fifthly, a description of the methodology of their actual imaginal response-work.

I have argued that an imaginal mode of textual response is best complemented by a Jungian analysis of the text and the response images. In this enquiry the response images are compiled from the participants' transcriptions of their imaginal experiences, the 'writing down' of their responses. But for reasons that will be explained, the application of analysis concentrates upon the text rather than the response

images, and is, in effect, a personal Jungian reading of all the archetypal textual images used in the practice of 'imaginal response'. Sixthly then, this chapter will outline the reasons and focus for this analysis. However, this enquiry also offers examples of analysis of participants' response-work, and one participant's responses are analysed in some depth. The seventh and final section in Chapter Three describes the methodology for this 'in depth' analysis.

### 3.1.1. The Use of the Term 'Textual Image' and 'Response Image'

In the previous chapter it was argued that a textual image, and in particular an archetypal textual image, is an imaginative impression within the reader, triggered by a text. Thus, any textual image is a subjective response to a text.

However, in the practice of 'imaginal response', the image triggered by the text is often quite different to that suggested by the initial symbolization of the 'normal' reading process. For example, in the 'normal' reading process, the textual words

Now Hamlet, hear,  
'Tis given out that sleeping in my orchard  
A serpent stung me.

1 v 34-6

suggest an image of someone asleep in a garden being stung by a serpent. However, in the imaginal response process the perceived images greatly vary (see Appendix pp.7-9), and there is not necessarily a sleeping figure, nor indeed a snake. Frank's perceived image indicates the possible disparity between a 'normal' and 'imaginal' response image:

## Frank

Marlon Brando looking male, sitting in sunny Italian courtyard in Bath Chair suddenly slumps forward. No other movement or creatures except raven sitting in tree watch curiously.

In order to differentiate between a 'normal' and 'imaginal' textual image, I will refer to the former as a 'textual image', or 'archetypal textual image' (in the case of words that have archetypal implications), and the latter as a 'response image'.

### 3.2. Selection and Arrangement of the Archetypal Textual Images Used in this Enquiry

#### 3.2.1. Selection of Text

The practical application of 'imaginal response' requires a number of textual images which are, as far as one can be sure, archetypal. In order to allow continuity and depth in the response-work, it was decided to select these images from a single literary text. This would enable the participants to remain with a particular archetypal theme, as expressed in a single text.

Shakespeare's Hamlet was chosen as the text from which the archetypal textual images were selected. This particular text was chosen, because, within the field of English Literature it can be argued to be a text which is undeniably archetypal. Jungian writings on Hamlet point to its

archetypal nature. Laurens Van Der Post suggests that Hamlet is a collective myth that explores the organic problem at the core of the English-speaking world: that the English spirit is 'unconsciously female dominated'<sup>1</sup>. Van Der Post notes how the damage done to Hamlet is through his own feminine aspect, 'even the instrument of the symbolic murder of the greater father, his own natural royalty, is the poison which in myth, legend and history has always been regarded as a singularly feminine weapon of destruction'<sup>2</sup>. A. Aronson, exploring how Shakespeare gives a human face to a psychological archetype, also focuses on the play's portrayal of the eternal feminine<sup>3</sup>. He sees Prince Hamlet's relationship with his mother as an entanglement with Hecate, the dark aspect of the Great Mother. James Driscoll sees Prince Hamlet's quest as a journey to self-knowledge which echoes the archetypal descent into Hades<sup>4</sup>. His withdrawal into melancholy is a journey beyond the rational world, symbolized by the Danish court, into the abyss of the unconscious. But only by facing the negative mother archetype, imaged in his obsession with Gertrude's sexual depravity, can Hamlet 'slay the dragon' and come to know his inner self.<sup>5</sup> James Kirsch, after making a detailed Jungian analysis of the play<sup>6</sup> also sees Hamlet's relationship with his mother as the major archetypal theme. Kirsch relates the prince's fascination with his mother, to the archetype of the 'coniunctio' 'which is always experienced as incest and therefore sinful'<sup>7</sup>.

Whilst the above examples of Jungian research offer objective reasons for the selection of Hamlet, there was also a subjective dimension to this 'choice'. At the time when I was looking for a suitable archetypal

text I had been studying and teaching Hamlet for a number of years. It was a play that I found profoundly fascinating. In particular, its imaging of the incestuous return to the Mother, and the confrontation with the dark aspect of the feminine archetype, reflected a powerful personal myth. Like many others, I read my own archetypal story in the drama of Prince Hamlet. As I discovered later, working with Hamlet allowed me to explore in depth my own myth. It provided a stage on which I could project the archetypal drama of my inner self. In this sense it could be true to say that as much as I chose Hamlet, it chose me.

### 3.2.2. Selection of Textual Images

The actual selection of archetypal textual images has been more of a personal choice than reflecting other Jungian readings of the play. The reason for this is although the different Jungian readings of Hamlet present the play within an archetypal context, their concern is more with a psychological analysis of Prince Hamlet as an individual, than a detailed consideration of the play's archetypal imagery.

The actual images which I offered for response-work I considered as archetypal on two accounts: firstly, my own archetypal reading of the play, and secondly, their imaginal affect upon myself. My archetypal reading of the images, which is given in the next chapter, determined their universal, symbolic quality. However, as an image can only be definitively identified as archetypal through its numinous affect, the selection necessitated a subjective evaluation. This involved placing

myself in a semi-meditative state, and being receptive to the feeling-tone evoked by reading different images throughout the text. The subjective response to these images was not visual, but rather a quality, or intensity of feeling. I selected those images that evoked the deepest, strongest response. Because this process was so difficult to verbalise, I made no attempt to record it. Moreover, what is central to this enquiry is not what these textual images imaginably evoke in me, but rather what they are able to evoke in others. The enquiry does not aim to offer an imaginal reading of Hamlet, but to explore a technique of responding to archetypal textual images.

### 3.2.3. Alternative Texts Containing Archetypal Imagery

The textual images used in this enquiry were chosen from Hamlet, but there are many other texts which appear to contain archetypal imagery suitable for imaginal response-work. Full evaluation of such images requires an awareness of their subjective, numinous affect, however, their mythic, symbolic quality points to an archetypal dimension. The great classical texts such as Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, appear to be rich in archetypal imagery. Helen Luke, pointing to the archetypal nature of The Odyssey, writes:

It is perhaps the greatest story in western literature of a man's journey in search of his feminine soul and the dangers he must face from the rejected feeling values of the unconscious.<sup>8</sup>

Dante's Divine Comedy and Goethe's Faust are also profoundly archetypal. Both begin with a state of alienation, Dante lost in a murky wood, while Goethe's Faust is living in penury, feeling his soul imprisoned. Such a

state of alienation, which is also imaged in Hamlet, often prefigures the 'night sea journey' into the depths of the unconscious. The Divine Comedy images this archetypal quest, ending with Dante's vision of the white celestial rose, a mandala image of the Self. Jung comments how during this journey the anima is transformed, and Beatrice is 'exalted into the heavenly, mystical figure of the Mother of God'<sup>9</sup>. Jung notes how this same transformation 'also happens to Faust, who ascends from Gretchen to Helen to the Mother of God'<sup>10</sup>. Faust was of particular fascination to Jung, who explored the significance of much of its imagery. He understood the figure Mephistopheles as a constellation of the archetypal image of Mercurius. Mercurius is the agent of inner transformation, but also presents the danger of inflation, which befell Faust through his lust for power<sup>11</sup>.

However, although these texts may be full of archetypal images, to work with them requires a fluency in their particular language. If, as has been suggested, the archetypal nature of a textual image relates to some degree to the acoustic image<sup>12</sup>, then it is arguable as to whether this is captured in a translation.

The actual methodology of 'imaginal response' makes it more accessible for verse than for prose. Prose is often profoundly archetypal, for example Melville's Moby Dick<sup>13</sup>, or the powerful presentation of the animus-figure, Heathcliff, in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights<sup>14</sup>. But the imagery of prose is expressed in longer passages which are often related to a particular character developed through the course of the book. 'Imaginal response' functions better with short passages in which

the imagery is more condensed<sup>15</sup>. Thus verse provides the best material for imaginal response-work, and I will offer a few examples from the field of English literature.

Not only Hamlet, but other plays of Shakespeare present a source of archetypal imagery. A recent study of The Tempst, Prospero's Island, explores its archetypal significance. Ariel's famous song:

Full fathom five thy father lies;  
Of his bones are coral made;  
Those are pearls that were his eyes:  
Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.  
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell.<sup>16</sup>

can be read as an archetypal image describing the psychological transformation of 'the patriarchal Logos, the masculine dominant',<sup>17</sup>.

Henry Vaughan's poem, 'The World', describes the interrelationship of time and eternity. Jung noted how this relationship is often imaged by a circle, as is reflected in the circle of the calendar.<sup>18</sup> Vaughan's poem begins with such a mandala image:

I saw Eternity the other night  
Like a great Ring of pure and endless light,  
All calm, as it was bright,  
And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years  
Driv'n by the spheres  
Like a vast shadow mov'd. In which the world  
And all her train were hurl'd.



Coleridge's two great poems, 'Kubla Khan' and The Rime of the Ancient Mariner have an archetypal dimension which Maud Bodkin has explored<sup>19</sup>. Maud Bodkin suggests that 'Kubla Khan' images the archetypal polarity of Paradise and Hades. She associates Coleridge's image of 'caverns measureless to man' with Milton's fallen angels who fall from 'the etereal sky' to 'the bottomless pit', and also to the caverns of the underworld that Plato images in the Phaedo. Moreover she points to the psychological symbolism of the underworld as 'a life of elemental feeling, from which..the higher socialized life must not be completely shut off, or it turns dull and arid.'<sup>20</sup> The opening of 'Kubla Khan' presents a powerful archetypal image of the river of creativity flowing through the unconscious:

In Xanadu did KUBLA KHAN  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where ALPH, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.

T.S. Eliot offers an example of a twentieth century poet whose work has a strong archetypal dimension. 'The Wasteland' is rich in symbolic references, and it also has a deeply disturbing quality, as, for example in the following image:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow  
out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,  
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water.<sup>21</sup>

Edinger, commenting on the archetypal significance of this image, relates it to

the individual and collective alienation that is characteristic of our time. The "heap of broken images" surely refers to the traditional religious symbols that have lost their meaning. We live in a desert and cannot find the source of life-giving water. The mountains - originally the place where man met God - have nothing but dry sterile thunder without rain.<sup>22</sup>

But Edinger also suggests that 'the experience of alienation is a necessary prelude to an awareness of the Self'.<sup>23</sup> The final lines of Eliot's last major poem, The Four Quartets, image the coniunctio of the rose, a feminine symbol of the purity and the heart, with the masculine fire of the spirit. It is a symbol of spiritual completion:

And all shall be well and  
All manner of things shall be well  
When the tongues of flame are in-folded  
Into the crowned knot of fire  
And the fire and the rose are one.<sup>24</sup>

These examples illustrate how archetypal textual imagery can be found in all periods of literature, but they are also evidence of the symbolic dimension common to such imagery.

#### 3.2.4 Arrangement of Textual Images

Altogether fifty-five textual images from Hamlet were selected, and these were arranged into a series of nine imaginal response sessions, with between five and eight images in each session. Eight was considered to be the maximum number of textual images that participants could easily respond to in any one session, and in general the participants agreed this to be so.

Each session focussed on a particular character in Hamlet. The textual images would be spoken by that character and be self-reflective, or they would be spoken by another but with specific reference to that character. For example, in the session that focussed upon Gertrude, some of the images are Gertrude's description of herself, whilst some are spoken by Prince Hamlet but refer directly to Gertrude.

Finally, in two sessions the textual images formed one particular speech; one of which was Gertrude's description of the drowning of Ophelia (IV vii 165-182), and the other was Hamlet's 'To be, or not to be' speech (III i 56-88). In both these instances the whole speech was split into a number of different textual images, five in the first and eight in the second, in order to explore the methodology of 'imaginal response' in relation to passages of some length.

### 3.2.5. The Subjective Nature of This Selection and Arrangement of Textual Images

This selection and arrangement of textual images is inevitably subjective, yet this need not be regarded as a defect, but rather as a statement of psychological realism. As already mentioned, the 'objective observer' is now regarded as an illusion, and sub-atomic physics acknowledges that the person conducting an experiment will influence both the nature of the experiment and its results. This will also be true of any psychological study, where the conscious and unconscious psyche of the one conducting the experiment likewise influences the way the experiment is set up, affects its results and strongly influences any analysis: 'The objective idea we find in a pattern of data is also the subjective idea by means of which we see the data' <sup>25</sup>. When exploring the world of the psyche, in which subjective experiences are the object of study, one is particularly confronted by the urobouric nature of the investigation.

An epistemological approach to subjectivity has already been explored in relation to Jung and Kant <sup>26</sup>. The mind can be understood as a 'psychic function' that will necessarily reflect the subjective stance of the individual. This is most obviously apparent in the way the mind filters information dependent upon its subjective preferences: we only see what we want to see. The colloquial truism 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' is an illustration of this principle.

Hillman explores the role unconscious fantasies have in our observations. He comments that fantasy 'especially intervenes where exact knowledge is lacking', then 'We see what we believe and prove our beliefs with what we see'<sup>27</sup>. Hillman gives examples of seventeenth century conception theories and embryology that shows the 'fantasy factor affecting not merely theory-forming but the observational data, the evidence of the senses':

That genius, William Harvey, after famous dissections upon the uteri of the does of King Charles, came to the "conclusion that semen could not enter the uterus and was therefore was not necessary for conception." Buffon;s experiments produced as their main result the impossible "discovery" of sperm in the liquor folliculi of the ovaries of nonimpregnated female animals. Male seed was produced even by females!<sup>28</sup>

Hillman suggests that such fantasies need not be merely 'misapprehensions', but may reflect certain mythemes. In the case of the above example he gives the image of the coniunctio, the inner union of masculine and feminine. If seventeenth century embryology allowed for the projection of fantasies, sub-atomic physics provides a contemporary stage. For example, David Bohm's Holographic Principle, which suggests that each piece, or particle, contains the whole, reflects an archetypal mandala image which Blake poetically expressed as 'To see the world in a grain of sand'. However, the difference between seventeenth century embryology and contemporary physics is that some leading scientists today are aware that they are projecting inner images into their observations. They are aware of the interrelationship of the

inner and outer. Wolfgang Pauli goes so far as to say that the purpose of science seems to be 'a matching of inner images preexistent in the human psyche with external objects and their behaviour'<sup>29</sup>. Thus an epistemology is being developed which acknowledges, indeed values the participation of the psyche of the 'observer'.

Such participation is inevitable, particularly in a psychological investigation which presents us with vast areas of the unknown on which we can project our fantasies. But is such projection to be considered 'subjective' or 'objective'? Jung describes the collective unconscious as the 'objective psyche', because it has an existence independent of the individual. Thus, participation that reflects the images of the collective unconscious has an underlying objectivity:

the soul of the perceiver and that which is perceived are subject to an order thought to be objective<sup>30</sup>.

However, the personal unconscious is of a subjective nature, and its participation cannot be considered objective. Yet this is only a theoretical stance, because there is no distinct line dividing the personal and the collective unconscious. The nature of the unconscious is amorphous rather than differentiated. Jung himself was very aware of the difficulties in trying to define the reality of the collective unconscious:

I am trying to use words to describe something whose nature makes it incapable of precise definition.<sup>31</sup>

There is a distinction between the personal and the collective unconscious, but it is of a different quality to the linear mode of differentiation we use in relating to the world of sense perception. In

the unconscious 'one thing is never one thing', and it is more correct to say that the collective psyche interpenetrates the personal unconscious.

Not only is there no distinct differentiation between the personal and collective unconscious, but our subjective patterns and fantasies have as their foundation the archetypal patterns of the collective unconscious. Hillman argues that psychological consciousness is an awareness of the mythic dimension that underlies our whole life. In fact, not only does the archetypal world determine our subjective fantasies, it also determines our modes of thought. The archetypal world as the foundation of our psychic structure is also the foundation of consciousness, and this will be reflected in any act of consciousness:

Prior to any knowledge are the psychic premises that make knowledge possible at all<sup>32</sup>.

A subjective dimension of any investigation is unavoidable, yet what appears to be subjective and arbitrary also has an underlying objectivity: it reflects the archetypal structure of our psyche. It is not helpful to understand the psyche from only one model, for, just as in the story of the blind men and the elephant, the world of the unconscious is best approached from different perspectives. From one perspective subjective and objective are opposites, whilst from another perspective what is subjective will necessarily reflect its origins in the archetypal world.

What is important is that subjectivity is acknowledged, for then any limitations caused by the subjective stance can be allowed for, and so contained.<sup>33</sup> The moment I argue that a subjective opinion is objective truth I am then taking an absolutist stance that can only be seen as arbitrary. Jung was particularly aware of the danger of such an attitude concerning inner experiences in which an individual declares that his numinous experience "is God". An awareness of one's own subjectivity is a safeguard against any dogmatic stance.



### 3.3. The Two Different Sources for the Imaginal Response Participants

The response-work that provides the imaginal material for this enquiry was conducted with participants drawn from two different sources.

The first source was a Sufi meditation group which I attend. This group has a strong Jungian orientation, part of which is working with dreams, interpreting individuals' dreams from a Jungian perspective. I discussed my enquiry with several of the group whom I thought might be interested in its psychological potential, and a number of them volunteered. Overall, I worked with fourteen of them on an individual basis, and five completed a course of ten sessions. The remaining nine 'dropped out' after one or two sessions, primarily due to a lack of interest in the project.

The second source was a third-year reader-response seminar group at the Polytechnic of North London. I was introduced to this group by their lecturer, and, giving a brief description of the reader-response aspect of my enquiry, I asked for volunteer participants. I worked with these students over a five-week period, and the attendance fluctuated: the first session attracting six students, while the last session had only three. Overall, there was an average of four students participating, and two attended regularly throughout the five-week period. Those who stopped attending did not give any reasons.

#### 3.3.1. The Questionnaire Given to All Participants

Before commencing the imaginal response-work, all the participants were asked to complete a simple questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire was to determine whether there were major differences between the two groups of participants that might have a bearing on their imaginal response work.

The following questions were asked:

1. Knowledge of Hamlet;
2. Experience of any form of meditation;
3. Experience of any form of therapy/analysis/dream work;
4. Do you practice any form of creative art work  
(writing, painting, dance, etc.)?
5. Is there any other experience you have had that may  
relate to your imaginal perception (ability to concen-  
trate on inner images)?

Without giving all their answers in detail, a quick survey does reveal a division between the two 'sources';

Those drawn from the meditation group professed to little knowledge of Hamlet. There was, however, one exception in Wendy, whose 'probably very good' knowledge of Hamlet is evident in her response-work. Those from the meditation group answered positively to question (2); furthermore, the majority had experienced 'therapy/analysis/dream work', and, apart from Frank, they also practised some form of 'creative art work'. Only Donovan gave a positive answer to question (5).

All the participants from the reader-response seminar group professed to a good knowledge of Hamlet, but none answered to having any experience of meditation, and only Suzanne answered to having any experience of 'therapy/analysis/dream work' which she described as 'Counselling therapy with role play'. A few gave positive answers to question (4); all replied negatively to (5).

These answers indicate an obvious division of experience between the two groups of participants, as would most likely be reflected in their

response-work. However, my concern was not with a detailed analysis of the differences between the two groups, but with presenting 'imaginal response' within a framework to which the participants would be receptive; and to this purpose I found their answers to questions (3) to be of primary importance.

As already mentioned, participants from the meditation group had a certain familiarity with Jungian psychology and dream-work, and were interested in the psychological potential of 'imaginal response'. Furthermore, the questionnaire revealed that the majority had had some personal experience of therapy or analysis. For these participants 'imaginal response' was best presented within a psychological context. However, apart from Suzanne, the reader-response students were without such experience, and thus required a non-psychological context to 'imaginal response', which was best supplied by reader-response theory. 'Imaginal response' was therefore presented within two different contexts.

### 3.4. Two Contexts for 'Imaginal Response'

#### 3.4.1. A Psychological Context

Participants drawn from the Sufi meditation group were interested in 'imaginal response' from a psychological perspective; furthermore, they all had a basic understanding of Jungian concepts and the symbolic function of unconscious imagery. In differing degrees they were familiar with the imaginal world, and interested in the possibility for psychological growth that it offers. They were therefore receptive to the self-reflective potential of image-work, and open to explore the personal and archetypal significance of their response imagery. More-

over, not only were these participants experienced in working with their own unconscious imagery in a self-analytic situation, they were also supported by the meditation group which contains others able to offer skilled psychological support. If their unconscious presented these participants with contents which they found disturbing and difficult to integrate, then help was readily available.

This psychological background allowed 'imaginal response' to be presented as a method of experiencing, via a textual image, the personal and the collective unconscious. The archetypal textual image was appreciated as being a nucleus of psychic energy, able to evoke both personal and archetypal associations; and imaginal perception valued as the appropriate faculty for experiencing the archetypal world. Thus a series of imaginal response sessions could be understood as a possible way to form a creative relationship with the archetypal world.

Participants from the meditation group worked on an individual basis. This allowed space for associations to be explored, and the meaning of imaginal experience to be discussed. Thus participants were aware that they had the opportunity to give a psychological perspective to the personal and the archetypal implications of their response-work. In practice, both personal and archetypal associations were often explored and Chapter Five offers a detailed analysis of some archetypal associations. Participants' analyses of personal associations were confidential and therefore not recorded. At a later date, a series of response sessions was conducted with one participant who agreed for the full analysis of her associations to be recorded and included in this enquiry (see Sections 3.7 & 4.6). However, an example of a response from a meditation group participant is here offered to show how the

content of an imaginal association may point towards fruitful discussion.

- Participants were asked to describe their responses in the following manner;

1. Emotions, feelings or sensations experienced
2. Intensity of affect
3. Images perceived

All responses are recorded verbatim -

Response to 'Claudius, Image 8'<sup>34</sup>;

Frank

1. First anger then sadness. Movement of awareness from abdominal to chest areas.
2. Quite strong.
3. My mother is in one of two twin beds next to another. I am on the other. I am 12 or so. She is too busy for me, putting bets on horses on TV over the phone. Listening to radio, avoiding contact with her needy brat, yet at the same time have no sense of blame. It had to be that way.

For Frank, and other participants, discussing and analysing such responses could allow the imaginal experience to be more fully understood and so integrated into consciousness. The value of an analytic approach to unconscious contents has already been discussed, and this group of participants could be made aware of the psychological potential of integrating an analytic and an imaginal response. For not only does this 'coincidentia oppositorum' lead to a greater conscious awareness of unconscious processes, but it also results in the formation

of the 'transcendent function'.

The 'transcendent function' bridges the gap between consciousness and the unconscious. Such a 'bridge' may also be realised by the participant forming a lasting relationship with the archetypal world. If 'imaginal response' makes possible the experience of the archetypal world, then, over a series of response sessions the participant may develop such a relationship. Moreover, with participants who are familiar with Jung's concept of the archetypal world as a dynamic reality existing in the depths of the psyche, the possibility of forming a relationship with it can be discussed.

Furthermore, if 'active imagination' is accepted as the appropriate faculty for perceiving the realm of the archetypes, then this relationship may be explored imaginally. For this purpose a tenth and final session was held in which participants from the meditation group, rather than working with textual images, were taken on a 'guided fantasy-journey'.<sup>35</sup> With slight variations this fantasy-journey was the same for each participant. The complete text of one journey is given below.

## The Journey

Close your eyes and relax yourself ... be aware of your breathing ...

In front of you, you see a circular entrance to a tunnel, black, round and large enough to walk into. You walk into the tunnel and you are aware that it is slowly sloping downwards ... and you walk slowly down this tunnel; this dark tunnel going downwards ... you feel your way down this dark tunnel that slopes downwards deeper and deeper; and you walk deeper and deeper ... You are aware that you are going down and down and down ... and in front of you in the distance, in the far distance you see a light at the end of the tunnel ... and you walk slowly down, down towards it, and the light gets brighter and brighter ... You are still walking down, down, deep inside yourself ... deep, deep inside yourself ... and you come to the end of the tunnel ... And you find that you are in a clearing in a forest ... and there is grass on the ground ... and its a circular clearing, and at the edge of the clearing there are the tall trees of the forest ... tall, tall trees of the forest ... You are happy to be in this clearing, it is a wonderful space to be ... In the middle of the clearing is a plain wooden table with a bench ... and you go and sit at the table on the bench and look around you in the clearing ... and it is a good place to be here ... You have made it yourself this clearing, somehow you have created this clearing ... You sit quietly at the table in the silence and peace of the clearing ... Yet you are aware that among the trees there are beings, there are shapes ... and you ask them to come out, come out from behind the trees ... where they have been for so long, where they have been since the beginning of time ... And you ask them to come out ...

because these are the beings you have been working with over the months ... over the weeks you have been getting to know them; you have created this space so that they can come out from behind the trees, right into the light ... They have been in the darkness amongst the trees for a very long time ... and it is time for them now to come out into the light ... and they need you to ask them to come out ... They need you to tell them that you want them to come out ... that you want to see them and you want to greet them, and to thank them for everything that they have done for you ... because they have changed your life ... Somewhere they have touched something ... You have got to know them and to love them ... and they need to be loved ... they need to be loved by a human being; ... and they have waited so long for this ... since the beginning of time they have waited and waited ... You ask them to come out, to come out into the clearing ... and to dance with you ... because in their dance they will tell you a story; ... they will tell you their story ... and you watch them come out in their shapes and their forms ... and you watch them hold hands and dance... And their dance is full of meaning ... and in their dance they are telling you what you should now do ... Their dance is their song to you ... Their dance is their way of communicating ... You have been working with them and this work must continue ... They cannot now go back into the forest, you have called them out ... you have called them into the light, and they will tell you how ... in their dance and their song ... how to love them, how to go on being with them in love ... And in front of you on the table in the clearing is a piece of paper and a pen ... and you must write what they tell you ... And they will tell you in their own way and in their own words ... and you must write what comes to you ... It is their greeting to you ... And when you have written what they have to



say to you, you will see that in the clearing, beside the table there is a ladder ... beside the table there is a ladder going up into the sky ... And you get up from the chair and you climb the ladder, up through the clearing, up into the sky ... And you see the beings with whom you have been working staying in the clearing looking up at you and you wave to them ... to say that although I am going I will always be with you ... we have come to know one another; ... and I will listen to what you have said to me, and I will love you ... And you slowly climb up the ladder leaving them ... and you climb up, climb up the ladder out of the clearing ... climbing up the ladder you have made ... and then, after climbing up the ladder you find yourself in an attic room in a city ... and in front of you is a window ... and the window is open. And through the window comes a bird ... and in the beak of this bird, this bird which is coming to you ... in the beak of this bird there is a piece of white paper ... and you take it out of its beak and you open it and write down what it says on this piece of paper ...

When you have written this down you may open your eyes.

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In their responses, which are recorded in the next chapter, participants noted: 1. The message from the 'beings of the forest'; 2. What was written on the piece of paper in the bird's beak.

#### 3.4.1.2. A Brief Interpretation of the 'Guided Fantasy-Journey'

This 'guided fantasy-journey' is given as a way of completing the imaginal

response-work. Without attempting a detailed analysis of this 'journey', it may be presented as an imaginal exploration of the unconscious. The 'clearing in the forest' is the clearing in the unconscious created through the response-work, and the 'beings among the trees' could be the archetypes themselves, which appear as images when they come out into the light of consciousness. (According to Jung the archetypes themselves are incapable of being perceived per se, but may only be realised through their effect/affect on consciousness, when they are experienced as images.) The 'ladder' images the bridge or connection which remains between the world of the archetypes and that of consciousness, 'the attic room in a city', to which the participant returns. The 'ladder' can therefore be read as the 'transcendent function' formed through the response-work.

Thus, in making this journey, the participant may come to consciously appreciate the relationship formed with the archetypal, and realise that this relationship need not end with the final session. Moreover, the 'message' from the 'beings' signifies the two-way nature of this relationship; for, in forming such a 'bridge' the archetypal world is able to communicate with the participant. The value of such communication should be evident in the responses recorded in the Appendix.

However, is such an imaginal journey suited to those who do not appreciate the imaginal as an ontological reality or the archetypal realm as a dynamic, living reality. Such individuals would find the value of the 'journey' difficult to accept; it would appear more of an insignificant fantasy than a real imaginal meeting with primordial entities. The appropriate recognition and respect for the 'beings amongst the trees', and indeed for the whole exercise would not be forthcoming, and thus

the 'journey' a travesty of its real function.

### 3.4.2. A Reader-Response Context for 'Imaginal Response'

The 'fantasy journey' and a Jungian approach to the response-work limits participants to those who appreciate the reality of the imaginal and its archetypal inhabitants. Furthermore, this approach was developed for participants interested in the psychological significance of their imaginal associations, and familiar with the concepts of Jungian psychology. But does 'imaginal response' necessarily require such a psychological orientation, or may it be presented within a non-Jungian context? 'Reader-response' offers 'imaginal response' the context of recent literary studies.

A third-year reader-response seminar group was an opportunity for 'imaginal response' to be practised by participants with a minimal knowledge of Jungian psychology. 'Imaginal response' was introduced as a mode of textual response rather than as having psychological potential. The essence of this introduction was given in a 'handout' discussed at the beginning of the first session. It outlines a 'reader-response' approach to 'imaginal response'.

#### Imaginal Response: A Mode of Reader-Response

'Imaginal response' aims to develop an awareness of an imaginative mode of literary response. It is a mode of response which enables the 'reader' to become more consciously aware of his/her response to images in a text by way of their imaginative affect, through the images and associated feelings, emotions or sensations that they

may evoke. 'Imaginal response' contrasts other more analytic modes of literary response in that it allows a textual image to be experienced without any attempt at verbal interpretation or analysis of the text. Indeed it concentrates on an imaginative rather than an intellectual experience of the textual image. Emphasis is also placed on the feelings, emotions or sensations experienced by the 'reader'.

Central to 'imaginal response' is the theory that a textual image conveys a meaning and evokes a response in an imaginative mode that is not dependent upon verbal interpretation. It is argued that an image best conveys its 'meaning' in imagistic form, and therefore any mode of response that primarily involves a translation into a non-imagistic - i.e. verbal mode - deprives that image of a fundamental quality, thereby limiting the depth and intensity of response. For example, the textual image

Nay, but to live

In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,  
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
Over the nasty sty!

111 iv 91-4<sup>36</sup>

may be given a verbal 'meaning' such as 'Hamlet's evocative portrayal of his mother's sexual over-indulgence'.<sup>37</sup> But does any such verbal exposition value the subjective intensity of response which this image may evoke in the 'reader'; the feelings, emotions or sensations which it may convey? The argument for 'imaginal response' is that by concentrating on the imaginative affect of the textual image, it is thereby possible

to achieve a greater conscious awareness of what the image has the potential to communicate. It is conscious awareness because an imaginative response is normally present but only at the threshold of consciousness, and is often repressed into the unconscious in favour of a verbal, analytic approach. However, as 'imaginal response' concentrates upon what is primarily non-verbal, it is best appreciated through experience rather than theory. It is a response technique rather than a critical theory. What is paramount for this mode of response perception is for the participants to value their own 'imaginal experience' without criticism or judgement, and to regard each imaginal response as equally valid. Finally, during the response work, participants should 'think' as little as possible, should be receptive rather than critical.

Through the practical experience of 'imaginal response', reader-response students are able to gain a familiarity with its dynamics, without necessarily understanding its psychological premise. Furthermore, the actual participation in imaginal response-work enables students to work with their creative image-making process, a 'right-brain' function often neglected and repressed by the dominance of the more analytic and logical 'left-brain' thought process. Consequently, 'imaginal response' offers a valuable alternative to the traditional 'left-brain' emphasis of an academic education.

If these students consider 'imaginal response' as offering an amplification of the imaginal dynamic of the 'normal' reading process, then their responses can be discussed in relation to a variety of theoretical perspectives on the reading process, for example Iser's

theory of the reader 'filling the gaps'. A number of these response theories will be examined in Chapter Five, but the imaginal response sessions can provide an opportunity for students to explore such theories with reference to their own experiential response material. Rather than any conceptualised reader, Fish's 'Informed Reader' or Iser's 'Implied Reader', students are offered their own subjective, response dynamic.

'Imaginal response' is presented as a mode of 'reader-response' and practised within that context. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to confront these students with the psychological dynamics of their response-work; and their actual responses are best appreciated without stressing their often unconscious origins. A specific example of this is Mike's responses to a series of four textual images, two of which will be examined in Chapter Five. Mike's responses to these four textual images contained a repeated feeling of 'danger' and 'fear'; the former occurs in each of the four responses, the latter in two. Whilst it could be argued that these feelings were solely a 'conscious' response to the textual images, their 'unrelatedness'<sup>38</sup> to the textual image, and the fact that no other participant recorded such feelings, points to Mike's unconscious as their most likely origin. This suggests that the response-work touched unconscious contents which Mike associated with 'fear' and especially 'danger', possibly reflecting a defensive strategy against unacknowledged pain. His four responses are as follows:

1. Response to 'Hamlet 1, image 2'

Mike

1. Despair turning to fear

2. Mild

3. A heavy undergrowth dank green in colour.

Impenetrable. A sense of something dangerous behind it.

2. Response to 'Hamlet 1, image 3'

Mike

1. Despair, leading to fear

2. Medium

3. A barren empty landscape - rocky with distant mountains - threatening white clouds rolling into view and seem about to compass all. What follows this? Danger again. I don't understand why the clouds are white.

3. Response to 'Hamlet 1, image 4'

Mike

1. Danger

2. Medium

3. Melancholy (an indefinable darkness) is immediately above an egg. My mind is drawn to what may be in the egg - danger again - A very threatening 'unknown' image.

4. Response to 'Hamlet 1, image 5'

Mike

1. Danger

2. Medium/Strong

3. A tide of black stickiness coming in upon me.

A psychological context to the response-work would allow Mike to explore the feelings evoked by the textual images, in particular the repeated feeling of 'danger'. He might then be able to discover the associations that evoked this feeling of danger, indeed whether it is a defense against deeper, more painful feelings. Possibly he could reach the unconscious contents which are the source of the 'danger'. Although such work can be very fruitful, it should not be undertaken lightly, as defensive strategies are not without purpose. Mike's 'fear' and 'danger' may be an important warning of unconscious material, very possibly pain, which he is unable to assimilate. Thus, to explore these feelings and their source would require the support of an analyst, a therapist or some other professional expertise. If Mike were to be confronted with the unconscious origin of these feelings without both the framework and the desire to explore them, the effect would probably be negative; at least some sense of unease or insecurity would result. And if 'imaginal response' is then regarded as a destabilising influence, the whole process may be rejected, together with any creative effect it would have produced.

However, if the students' imaginal responses are valued without judgement, solely as individual responses to a textual image, then any unconscious contents included in that response will also be valued. Therefore, within a seminar situation the group and 'group-leader' or 'teacher' play an important role. For if the imaginal responses are shared within a group in which there are no criteria for judgement, but only mutual interest and appreciation, this will have a beneficial effect on the students' attitude to the images arising from their own unconscious, and consequently on their attitude to the unconscious itself. Furthermore, within a group situation the role of the 'leader' or



'teacher' is of paramount importance, for his/her attitude will be the focus for both the group and the student sharing a response image.

Hillman, in discussing the value of a non-interpretive response to a dream, stresses the importance of the listener's attitude;

Through his attitude alone he can affirm and recognise this product of the soul, thereby giving value and importance to the soul itself, to its creative, symbolic awe-inspiring function. Is this not to bless the soul, for what a blessing this is for the psyche and its dream - and for the dreamer -  
- to be affirmed and recognised in this way.<sup>39</sup>

What Hillman writes of the dream and the dreamer is equally applicable to the response image and the imaginer, for in 'imaginal response' the participant too may see the images of the soul.

A response image does not need to be psychologically analysed for its unconscious contents to be valued and for the psyche itself to be appreciated. Thus 'reader-response' offers a valid context for 'imaginal response'. The students may regard their response images from a phenomenological perspective and remain unconscious of their psychological dimension. But this does not negate the imaginal process, rather it makes 'imaginal response' available to those who are not students of psychology, and indeed it may offer a creative escape from the 'left-brain' imbalance of an academic education.

### 3.5. The Methodology for an Imaginal Mode of Response was the Same for All Participants

Whether presented within a psychological or a reader-response context, and whether or not the response images were analysed or just shared, the actual methodology for the imaginal mode of response was the same for all participants. A complete methodology for 'imaginal response' uniting an imaginal and an analytic mode, has already been given and the imaginal mode is described in section 2.8.. (pp. 106-9)

In the actual practice of this imaginal mode of response, all that needs to be added to the above methodology is that the participants were given a form on which to record their responses. This form, an example of which is in the appendix (pp. 180-1), asks the participants to record their responses to the different textual images under the headings:

1. Emotion, feeling, sensation
2. Intensity
3. Imaginal image and any developments

The form was handed out at the beginning of each session and collected at the end. Participants did not alter their transcriptions after 'returning through the circle', i.e. after they had completed describing their response to the final textual image.

#### 3.5.1. Collating the Imaginal Responses

A collation of these imaginal responses is given in the Appendix. In collating these responses I did not include the work of all the participants, but rather selected those from the meditation group who completed the course of ten sessions, and those reader-response students who attended two or more sessions. The reason for this selection is that it allows for a certain continuity in examining the responses.

### 3.6. An Analytic Mode of Response; a Jungian Reading of the Textual Images

Ideally, the practice of 'imaginal response' should involve the integration of an imaginal and an analytic mode of response, and the value of such a 'coincidentia oppositorum' has already been discussed. The compilation of participants' imaginal responses should therefore be balanced by an analysis of both textual and response images.

In Chapter Four an analysis of one participant's response images is offered, and Chapter Five analyses examples of other participant's responses; but it is unrealistic to attempt a complete analysis of all the response images evoked in this enquiry. However, if the response image is read as an amplification of the textual image, an analysis of the textual images could form the basis for a Jungian reading of the responses. Therefore, in Chapter Four, a complete analysis of the textual rather than the response images is offered.

Whilst the imaginal responses were evoked in others, this Jungian reading is necessarily my own. Although ideal, it would be unrealistic to expect participants to make their own Jungian analysis of either the text or their responses; they would hardly have either the time or the detailed knowledge of both Hamlet and Jungian psychology. I have made a personal study of Hamlet over a number of years, in particular explored work on the imagery of Hamlet, as well as mythological perspectives on the play. During this time, my own Jungian reading of Hamlet has evolved.

Furthermore, although there are other Jungian readings of Hamlet,<sup>40</sup> offering valid perspectives on the play, they are not so directed towards the particular images used in this enquiry. As already mentioned, their orientation is towards analysing Prince Hamlet as an individual, 'placing him in the analyst's chair', while my concern is with the archetypal implications of the play and its images. Prince Hamlet's individuation is, indeed, central to my reading, but in its archetypal rather than personal qualities. For example, the focus on Gertrude is not as a personal mother, but as an image of a feminine archetype.

The analysis of the textual images is not offered as a definitive archetypal reading of Hamlet. As with all such psychological 'interpretation' it is the inevitable projection of an individual myth. It may then be accepted solely as an example of a Jungian amplification of the text, a possible analytic complement to an imaginal association. But if the reader finds its arguments admissible, then it may be valued as a meaningful analysis. As with the interpretation of dreams, it is for the individual to determine the personal validity of a particular analysis.

Finally, as the textual images reflect central archetypal themes, some repetition in the analysis of the individual images is unavoidable.

### 3.7. An Analysis of One Participant's Response-Work

Following a preliminary examination of the response-work offered in the Appendix, it became apparent that a number of these response images reflected personal associations. Indeed, when conducting the response sessions with individuals from the meditation group the possible origins of some personal associations were explored. But such exploration, being confidential, is not included in this enquiry. However, I decided that it would be valuable to offer an in-depth analysis of one individual's response-work, and Karen, a member of our meditation group, was interested in the project. She attended a number of response sessions, and together we discussed her imaginal associations in as much depth as possible. This discussion was tape-recorded, and Karen agreed for its contents to be written up.

Karen is a highly articulate individual, with a good knowledge of Jungian psychology, as well as being interested in understanding her own psychological dynamics. I was very fortunate to have a participant able to so fully articulate her associations. However, we were both surprised at the outcome of this response-work, as neither had expected it to evoke such dominant personal and archetypal patterns.

The methodology for the response sessions was simply to follow the normal process of 'imaginal response' (see section 3.5.) and then to discuss any imaginal associations that did not appear to relate directly to the textual image.

Initially we intended to complete the course of ten response sessions, but the occurrence of a dream (see pp. 309-311 ) suggested that it would be better to finish after five sessions.

### NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. L. Van Der Post Jung and the Story of Our Time, p. 88
2. *ibid.* p. 88
3. A. Aronson Psyche and Symbol in Shakespeare, p. 236
4. J. Driscoll Identity in Shakespearean Drama, p. 52
5. *ibid.* p. 58
6. J. Kirsch Shakespeare's Royal Self
7. *ibid.* p. 182
8. Helen Luke Old Age, p. 5
9. C.G. Jung C.W.7 para 377
10. *ibid.* para. 378
11. Marie-Louise Von Franz C.G. Jung: His Myth in our Time, p. 212
12. See above p. 37
13. See above p. 113
14. See Barabara Hannah, Striving Towards Wholeness, chapter 10
15. Adapting the methodology of 'imaginal response' for prose passages could be a subject for future research.
16. The Tempest I ii 399-405
17. Noel Cobb Prospero's Island, p. 84
18. C.G. Jung C.W.12 para 318.
19. Maud Bodkin Archetypal Patterns in Poetry
21. *ibid.* p. 112
22. E. Edinger Ego and Archetype, p. 48
23. *ibid.*, p. 48
24. T.S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding' ll. 255-9
25. J. Hillman Re-Visioning Psychology, p. 126

26. See above, 2.4.3.
27. J. Hillman, The Myth of Analysis, p. 221
28. *ibid.* p. 222
29. V. Pauli, 'The Influence of Archetypal Ideas on the Scientific Theories of Kepler', in Jung and Pauli, Synchronicity, an Acausal Connecting Principle, p. 152
30. *ibid.* p. 152
31. C.G. Jung, Man and His Symbols, p. 96
32. J. Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology, p. 131
33. See below 5.6. for the limitations of this enquiry.
34. This, and all following references to textual images refer to the collection of textual and response images in the Appendix.
35. The relationship of this 'guided fantasy journey' to Jung's Active Imagination and the work of Assagioli and also the Shamanic tradition is briefly discussed in 5.4..
36. All textual images, unless stated, are from Hamlet ed. H. Jenkins (The Arden Shakespeare).
37. This 'meaning' is offered only for the sake of argument. More 'imagistic' verbal interpretations are, of course, possible, but could not be compared to a subjective imaginative experience of the textual image.
38. It might be argued that in the case of the third response Mike's feeling of 'danger' was directly related to the textual image:

There's something in his soul

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood.

II i 165-6

In this image Claudius expresses his anxiety and possible feelings



of danger about Hamlet's melancholy withdrawal, and the possibility of Hamlet plotting against him. However, the nature of Mike's response, including his description of it as a 'very threatening unknown image' would suggest a partly unconscious source for his feeling of 'danger'.

39. J . Hillman Insearch p. 63

40. See section 3.2.1..

## Chapter Four

### 'IMAGINAL RESPONSE' - THE RESULTS

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter offers the results and an analysis of the practical application of 'imaginal response'. Following this introduction, section two compiles the participants' imaginal responses to the archetypal textual images, which section three analyses from a number of different perspectives. The fourth section records the results of the 'guided fantasy-journey' of the five participants from the meditation group. However, as this section together with section two is composed of participants' response material, rather than my own work, these two compilations of results are placed in the Appendix. The fifth section offers a brief archetypal reading of Hamlet, followed by a Jungian analysis of all the archetypal textual images used in this enquiry. The sixth and final section offers an analysis of a number of responses from one participant. This analysis, based on detailed discussion with the participant, explores the personal and archetypal nature of her imaginal associations.

#### 4.2. A Collation of Imaginal Response-Work

See Appendix.

#### 4.3. Analysis of Participants' Response-Work

In this section, the participants' response-work, given in the Appendix, is analysed from a number of different perspectives. But before offering this analysis, its subjective nature is acknowledged; any such analysis is essentially a personal reading of the response-work.

Participants from the meditation group, Group A, each responded to 55 textual images, with the exception of Yael, who responded to 54.

Reader-response students, Group B, attended differing numbers of sessions, and responded to the following number of textual images:

Mike: 26

Suzanne: 23

Andrew: 20

Victoria: 17

Sarah: 14

- In the following analyses, the numbers given in brackets refer to the page numbering of the Appendix -

4.3.1. Analysis of Responses where no Feeling/Emotion/Sensation Response was Recorded

This analysis records the occasions when participants recorded no feeling/emotion/sensation response. It also gives the number of these instances as a percentage of the total number of responses recorded by each participant.

Group A

Frank: (3, 7, 18, 36, 45, 66, 69, 76, 80, 84, 92, 96, 100, 105, 109, 143, 145, 169, 171) = 19 responses: 34%

Nomi: (53, 76, 88, 109, 130, 132, 143, 167, 171) = 9 responses: 16.4%

Yael: (5) = 1 response: 1.9%

Wendy: (77) = 1 response: 1.8%

Donovan: nil responses: 0%

Group B

Victoria: (62, 75, 95, 118, 121) = 5 responses: 29%

Mike: (20, 43, 47, 51, 62, 74, 82) = 7 responses: 26.9%

Andrew: (27, 44, 78, 82) = 4 responses: 20%

Sarah: (3, 9, 20) = 3 responses: 21.4%

Suzanne: (43, 55, 74) = 3 responses: 13%

#### 4.3.2. The Response Image as a Homophone or Homomorph of the Textual Image

An analysis of the response-work reveals the occurrence of homophones and homomorphs in the relationship between text and response images.

In the following analysis the homophones and homomorphs are grouped according to the individual 'readers'. The textual word is followed by the response word, and the homophones that are also homomorphs are given first. There appear to be no homomorphs that were not also homophones.

Group X: Homophones that are also homomorphs

Group Y: Homophones

Frank

X: offence/fence(23), trifling/bowl of trifle(69), Hamlet the Dane/Great Dane (155), mere madness/Lake Mere (159).

Y: envious sliver/sliver of ice (96), things rank/Thomas the Tank (113), To be/Toby jug (129), will/hill (138), Dane/rain (155), Ossa/Osso, Make Ossa mozzarella (157).

Group X: 4 associations, Group Y: 7 associations.

Donovan

X: celestial bed/bed of roses (54).

Y: like/lake (19), rain/range (33), tinct/clanked (64), askant/ice skates (89), dew/barbecued (110), grows/hoes (114), fly to others/flowers (142), bear those ills/remove clothes ...wounds (bare) (146)<sup>†</sup>, abhorred/organ (148).

Group X: 1 association, Group Y: 9 associations.

Nomi

X: sty/flies (66), grows ...gross/goat (113), pale cast/plaster..casting (143), canker of our nature/placenta uprooted from my centre (164).

Group Y: 4 associations.

Suzanne

X: bark'd/barking (20), deed/sheaf of papers(like legal document, deed) (26)<sup>†</sup>, O wretched state/Mrs Thatcher dressed in black ('state' as equivalent to 'country') (38)<sup>†</sup>, thy union/a procession of people shouting and waving banners (trade union) (51)<sup>†</sup>.

Group X: 4 associations.



Yael

Y: rough hew/sewing (163), spots/clots (64).

Group Y: 2 associations.

Victoria

Y: enseamed bed/bed with steam rising (68).

Group Y: 1 association.

+ In these instances the homophone is not directly recorded by the 'reader', but rather the response points to a likely homophone (given in brackets) as an 'intermediate association', i.e. an association that takes place between the text and the recorded image.

### 4.3.3. Characteristics of Individual 'Readers'

The following analysis looks at individual patterns of response, and discovers that each of the 'readers' expresses individual characteristics. These characteristics vary from a high number of homophone associations to the repetition of a particular feeling or colour image.

#### Group A

##### Nomi

More 'memories' than other 'readers': (28, 71, 100, 105, 113, 125, 141, 147, 152, 164).

##### Frank

High number of homophones and homomorphs; X: 4 assoc., Y: 7 assoc.,

'Fatalistic' posture adopted in a number of responses, for example:

'It had to be that way' (49), others: (4, 71, 80, 138, 164).

Possible personal projection (28, 49, 63, 80, 84, 86, 109).

High incidence of lack of 'feeling' response: 34.5%

Little record of 'intensity': 'Mild' (4, 10, 21, 24, 128, 155, 157)

'Gentle' (40), 'Strong' (49, 138), 'Very Strong' (119). No 'intensity' recorded in 44 responses.

##### Yael

High incidence of 'sensation', smell, sound etc., for example: 'smell of dust and make-up' (24), others: (8, 28, 33, 50, 61, 70, 85, 87, 120, 126, 129, 148, 153, 165).

Israeli background: 'Cherub means cabbage in Hebrew' (54), 'Arab market'

(76), 'Arab village' (81).

### Donovan

Dominant feature is transformation of images, for example: 'king becomes a column of smoke' (41), others: (2, 5, 15, 25, 33, 51, 54, 64, 70, 77, 87, 93, 97, 148, 158, 163, 165, 170, 172).

Many circular images, or movement in circles, revolving, for example: 'whirls round and round faster and faster' (41), others: (22, 85, 87, 89, 126, 146, 163, 168, 172).

High number of homophones: X: 1 assoc., Y: 9 assoc..

Most developed use of 'active imagination' of all 'readers' in that Donovan allows the initial response image to develop and change more often and further than the others.

### Wendy

Dominance of 'feeling' in responses, for example: 'Then a feeling of wickedness and evil in the depths of our being' (11), others: (11, 37, 61, 72, 110, 114, 120, 137, 154).

Feeling of 'sadness': (4, 11, 25, 61, 120, 153, 160, 170).

Refers to the 'pain of life', for example: 'the aches and pains and distress of life' (89), others: (110, 114).

Frequent self projection/identification with characters, for example:

'Defeat - regret - shunning hypocrisy (me I'm made of it). (25), others: (50, 64, 85, 87, 89, 110, 114, 117, 123, 168).

Frequent commentary upon characters, for example: 'How could she have done it - how could she have been so misguided, stupid.' (41), others: (77, 81, 137, 140, 149, 151, 156, 166). Response recorded as 'Not very strong as I can't remember who said it to whom' (66) suggests that strength of response may relate to knowledge of text.

## Group B

### Suzanne

More memories/personal associations than others in Group B: (3, 26, 30, 47).

High number of homophones for Group B: X: 4 assoc..

Political associations, for example: 'Mrs Thatcher dressed in black' (38), also: (51).

Image of 'Venus' repeated: (55, 59).

Response images appear to be more detailed than others in Group B.

### Mike

'Danger' repeated: (9, 12, 23, 107, 118, 121, 124).

'Nausea' repeated: (26, 30, 55, 65, 68, 78).

'Fear' repeated: (34, 115, 118).

'Claustrophobia' repeated: (38, 68).

### Andrew

'Sadness' repeated: (23, 48, 94).

'Sad' repeated: (52, 62).

Image of old, sick woman repeated: (52, 59).

### Victoria

Dominance of colours, especially 'red': 'brown', 'purple', 'red', 'white', 'green' (56), 'red colours again' (59), 'red and orange' (62), 'white' 'black' (65), 'red', 'yellow', 'blue' (75), 'red berries' (115), 'yellow' (118), 'red' 'black' (124).

### Sarah

'Coldness' repeated: (6, 17).

'Cold': (23)

#### 4.3.4. 'Reader's' Differing Imaginal Amplifications

This final analysis looks at how the same textual word(s) evoked differing imaginal associations. In particular it explores;

1. How a specific textual word(s) may evoke differing images, or indeed no obvious imaginal association.
2. How the 'background' for common response images may differ. The term 'background' is here used to refer to the visually descriptive context supplied by a 'reader' to a particular textual word(s). For example, in response to 'Claudius, Image 2', Yael experienced the textual 'harlot' as 'An ageing woman in a small dressing room in a theatre, sitting in front of the mirror, looking at her face'. 'In a small dressing room in a theatre, sitting in front of the mirror, looking at her face' is given as the 'background' for the harlot figure.

Note: This analysis is only offered as an indication of the possible relationship between the text and the response images (see The Limitations of this Analysis, p. 164 ). It is presented with particular relevance to Ingarden and Iser's work on how a reader 'fills the gaps' in the process of reading (Chapter 5.2.8. pp. 356-64 ).

#### The Following Textual Images and Response Images have been Analysed:

To explore (1): 'The Ghost, Image 3', 'Gertrude, Images 3 & 5', 'Prince Hamlet 1, Image 4'.

To explore (1) & (2): 'Claudius, Image 2', 'Ophelia, Image 3', 'Ophelia's Drowning, Image 1'.

The analysis gives the textual image, and then the associations evoked by the particular textual word(s).

Now, Hamlet, hear,  
'Tis given out that sleeping in my orchard  
A serpent stung me.

1 v 34-6

1. 'Serpent':

Nomi and Yael: 'the snake'.

Donovan: 'giant sized cobra with teeth', Suzanne: 'adder', Sarah: 'serpent insignificant ... became a large plastic blow-up snake', Mike: 'sleeping serpent'.

Wendy and Frank: no snake.

2. 'me', known by all readers to be (the ghost of ) King Hamlet.

Yael and Mike: 'a king' and 'the king'.

Sarah: 'king ... insignificant', Wendy: 'A king in a large velvet robe and crown at first very much as the player king, and then the pleasant father (as in father son)', Suzanne: 'Dark crowned figure, a man dressed in black ... The ghost of the king', Frank: 'Marlon Brando looking male', Donovan: 'Young male', Nomi: personal identification 'me'.

3. 'My orchard':

Nomi: 'grass blades', Yael: 'grass ... rustle of leaves ... high grass ... (nor) the birds', Mike: 'on the grass beneath a tree',

Suzanne: 'Orchard behind, Van Gogh type of trees', Sarah: 'Bright orchard'.

Frank: 'sunny Italian courtyard'.

Donovan and Wendy: no orchard.

#### 4. 'Stung me'

Yael: '(the snake) slithers near, and as quick as lightening, stings him and disappears in the high grass', Mike: '(serpent) ... wakes and moves to sting', Nomi: 'Burning sensation in my ear, the pain wakes me and then overwhelms me', Donovan: '(giant sized cobra with teeth) seizes him around his pelvis ... he is to be eaten and gone', Suzanne: '(The adder) comes down, attacks the ghost's neck, winds itself around his body', Frank: '(Marlon Brando looking male) ... suddenly slumps forward.'

Wendy and Sarah: no stinging.

#### 5. 'Sleeping'

Nomi: '(pain) wakes me', Frank: 'sitting ... in Bath Chair', Yael: 'sleeping', Donovan: 'trusted the night', Mike: 'sleeping (serpent)', Wendy, Suzanne, Sarah: no sleeping.

Heaven's face does glow  
O'er this solidity and compound mass  
With trisful visage, as against the doom,  
Is thought sick at the act.

lll iv 47-51

1. 'Heaven's face'

Nomi: 'big pale moon', Frank: 'moon on a dark sky and yet with  
sun's radiance with a face in the middle of it, benign'.

Donovan: 'heaven is on a wide horizon'.

Wendy: 'the infinite', Mike: 'a large bearded head and shoulders  
peer down benignly from a white cloud', Victoria: 'Sun, at the same  
time a mask with eyes cut out and a red and orange light glowing through  
it'.

Andrew and Yael: no obvious association with 'Heaven's face'.



Nay, but to live  
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,  
            Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
Over the nasty sty!

lll iv 91-4

Note: Wendy offered no imaginal response to this textual image, possibly due to repression. Her feeling response 'confusion' suggests that the image disturbed her.

1. 'enseamed bed';

Frank: 'A dishevelled bed with the covers half off ... many sperm patches',

Yael: 'The sheets are crumpled (motel).' Andrew: 'a dirty bed',

Victoria: 'A bed with steam rising off it',

Nomi, Donovan and Mike: no image of a bed.

2. 'rank sweat';

Nomi: 'strong smell of warm leather like in a tannery', Frank: 'Reeks of

sex', Yael: 'Smell of unaired room, cheap heavy perfume plus smell of

sleep', Andrew: (in feeling/emotion/sensation section) 'Smell - very

unpleasant - cold sweat', Victoria: 'something sour and sweet'.

Donovan and Mike: no smell.

3. 'making love';

Donovan: 'fornicating', Mike: 'copulation'.

No other specific responses to 'making love' except possibly Frank: 'reeks of sex.'

4. 'sty':

Frank: 'sweet baby pigs', Victoria: 'Pigs running around'.

No other response images relating to pigs.

Prince Hamlet 1, Image 4

There's something in his soul

O'er which his melancholy sits on brood

lll i 165-6

1. 'sits on brood':

Nomi: 'the bird (owl) sitting over the nest,' Frank: 'I am a hen on top of a mountain of eggs', Yael: 'A black vulture sitting on a rock, ugly bald head between its shoulders', Donovan: 'He sits on a huge egg', Suzanne: 'sitting on a stone which is about to hatch', Mike: '... is immediately above an egg', Victoria: 'A hen sitting on an egg'. Wendy: no 'egg' association, only 'unable to move'.

2. 'melancholy': these associations are often adjectives evocative of melancholy:

Nomi: 'bottomless, dark ... smothered ... heavy black', Yael: 'black vulture' (vulture as a melancholy-looking bird), Wendy: entire image may be related to melancholy, Suzanne: 'darkness', Mike: 'Melancholy (an indefinable darkness)',

Frank, Donovan & Victoria: no dark or melancholy associations.

The Harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word.

111 i 51-3

1. 'Harlot':

Nomi: 'Fellini-type woman', Frank: 'A fat old woman, kind of Mae West type', Yael: 'An ageing woman', Suzanne: 'Tired looking prostitute', Sarah: 'a woman', Mike: 'a woman ... grinning in an obviously sexually inviting way'.

Donovan and Wendy: no individual figure.

2. 'beautied with plast'ring art':

Frank: 'applying rouge and powder to her face', Wendy: 'raddled ugly face under paint', Suzanne: 'vividly painted face', Sarah: 'face ... covered in bright, gaudy make-up', Mike: 'wearing heavy make-up'  
Yael: 'Slowly she takes off (cleans) her face of all the colours'  
Nomi: 'graffitti on wall behind her'  
Donovan: 'Man with paint brush paints over it' (?)

3. Setting for 'Harlot' although not appearing in text:

Frank: 'sitting at a dressing table with three mirrors in centre of dusty large backstage space in theatre', Yael: 'in a small dressing room in a theatre, sitting in front of the mirror, looking at her face'.  
Suzanne: 'Victorian back streets, not much colour', Nomi: 'graffitti on wall behind her' (?)  
Wendy, Sarah, Mike, Donovan: no such definite 'setting'.

For if the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog, being a good  
Kissing carrion -

11 ii 181-2

1. 'dead dog';

Frank, Yael, Donovan and Victoria: 'dead dog',

Nomi: 'a dog's body', Suzanne: 'large black Labrador', Mike: 'still  
identifiable carcass of a dog', Wendy: 'a sheep',

Andrew: no dog or animal.

2. 'maggots';

Frank, Donovan, Wendy, Suzanne, Mike and Victoria: 'maggots'

Nomi: 'sound of flies', Yael: 'white worms',

Andrew: no maggots.

3. 'the sun';

Suzanne and Victoria: 'the sun',

Yael: 'hot sun', Donovan: 'sun's bottom', Wendy: 'sun, here a pun  
on son', Andrew: 'heavy burning sun which looks black against the sky',

Nomi: 'hot day', Mike: 'brighly lit',

Frank: no 'sun', possibly 'desert' association with 'sun'.

4. Background to image of dog:

Nomi: 'lying on the path', Frank: 'in the desert', Yael: 'the empty  
dusty street of an Arab market', Wendy: 'Australia', Victoria: 'lying  
in the street'.

Donovan, Suzanne and Mike: no specific background, Andrew: no dog.

Ophelia's Drowning, Image 1

There is a willow grows askant the brook

That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream.

1V vii 165-6

1. 'a willow':

Nomi, Frank, Mike and Andrew: 'A willow tree',

Yael: 'a willow', Suzanne: 'willow', Victoria: 'weeping willow',

Wendy: 'the tree', Donovan: no image of tree or willow.

2. 'his hoary leaves':

Nomi: 'frost on the leaves', Victoria: 'frosty-day-leaves frosted white',

Frank: 'leaves reflected', Wendy: 'not many leaves, pollarded, trailing one leafy strand over the brook', Suzanne: 'the only leaves there are on the branches nearest the water', Andrew: 'it is male' (association with 'his'). Yael, Donovan & Mike: no apparent association.

3. 'glassy stream':

Nomi: 'ice covered stream', Frank: 'the water', Donovan: 'glassy lake',

Wendy: 'brook, slow flowing, brown in its depths', Suzanne: 'fast moving stream, grey but clear', Mike: 'still water', Victoria: 'water of a stream ... part of stream not running starts giving appearance of stillness', Yael & Andrew: no stream.

4. Background to willow and stream:

Frank: 'a sweeping lawn', Yael: 'a small wooden bridge, on which a woman with a baby in a pram are passing slowly', Wendy: 'a flower-dotted

meadow where I used to play as a child. Children playing in the stream', Suzanne; 'willow on the left bank, nearest me', Nomi, Donovan, Mike Andrew and Victoria; no such obvious 'background'.

### The Limitations of this Analysis

This analysis, in differentiating parts of a response evoked by specific textual word(s), is offered with some limitations, in that it is often inappropriate, if not impossible to isolate parts of either a textual or response image. For example; is it appropriate to separate the response image of 'harlot' ('Claudius, Image 2') from the 'backgrounds' given her, or from her 'make-up'? Was the 'grass' in the responses of Nomi, Mike and Yael ('The Ghost, Image 3') evoked by the word 'serpent' or 'orchard'? Did the image of 'grass' appear because snakes are usually associated with, seen in grass, or because orchards have grass? And does Andrew's image 'a dirty bed' ('Gertrude, Image 5') relate solely to the text's 'enseamed bed', or is 'dirty' a subjective response to the whole textual image of sexual copulation? All these responses may be more fully appreciated undissected, and as a response to the complete textual image.

Although translated by the participants into a linear verbal form, an imaginal response is not necessarily a sequential process, and is thus not easily dissected. It is more meaningful to appreciate the response as a single imaginal form evoked by a particular textual image. Rather than presenting any exact correlation, this analysis is offered to indicate how particular textual word(s) appear to be elaborated, or 'filled in', in individual ways.

#### 4.4. The Results of the Guided Fantasy-Journey

See Appendix.

#### 4.5. An Archetypal Reading of the Textual Image from Hamlet Used in the Imaginal Response Sessions

##### 4.5.1. An Archetypal Outline of Hamlet

Hamlet's father is presented as an heroic figure. He first appears in

the very armour he had on

When he th'ambitious Norway combated ...<sup>1</sup>

The hero archetype who defeats his foe in single combat, King Hamlet however cannot be considered an astute ruler. Polonius, a fool rather than a wise man, was his councillor of state; but more significantly, he seems to have been totally unaware of his brother's scheming. Furthermore, despite his son's idealised portrait of him as Hyperion, he is not the image of perfection. As the ghost, he is paying for his sins:

confin'd to fast in fires

Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature

Are burnt and purg'd away.<sup>2</sup>

Seen in this context, he does not embody the godlike characteristics of the hero figure, whom Jung considered to be an archetype of the Self.<sup>3</sup> His mortal rather than divine qualities suggest rather the heroic aspect of man's ego-consciousness. The creation of ego-consciousness necessitates a separation from the instinctual world of the senses. In order to gain a certain degree of autonomous freedom, the ego must deliver itself from the demands of man's instinctual nature. This is the role of the hero who fights the dragon of the unconscious, the monster from the sea, whose struggle frees the ego-consciousness from the deadly grip of the unconscious.



Although Hamlet the king is not portrayed as fighting dragons or monsters, he nevertheless represents this aspect of ego-consciousness which is reinforced by his role as Hamlet's father. According to Jung, the father is:

the representative of the spirit, whose function it is to oppose pure instinctuality.<sup>4</sup>

'Spirit' is here that which strives towards consciousness, and is thus in direct opposition to the unconscious pull of the instincts. It is the paternal law, embodied, for example, in the Ten Commandments given to Moses, which thwarts the individual from following the desires of his instinctual self. Man's sexuality is one of the strongest of his instinctual drives, and the counterpart of King Hamlet as Hyperion is his brother Claudius as a satyr. The satyr, as a lecherous half-man, half-beast, is a perfect symbol for man's unbridled instinctuality. The heroic separation from the instincts of the unconscious is vital for the existence of individual ego-consciousness. However, this separation is sometimes carried too far. In this case, the individual loses life energy. Without a relationship with one's instincts, there is no real relationship with life. The individual becomes crystallised, his life stagnant. This is the situation personified by King Hamlet.

There are indications in the text to support this reading of Prince Hamlet's father. As mentioned above, he appears to be totally unaware of the activities of his brother. From a Jungian perspective, Claudius may be understood as personifying the 'shadow', what Jung defines as:

the 'negative' side of the personality, the sum of all those unpleasant qualities we like to hide, together with the insufficiently developed functions and contents of the personal unconscious.<sup>5</sup>

Appositely described as a 'satyr', Claudius is the instinctual side of King Hamlet, rejected and repressed into the unconscious. The heroic ego, longing for the promethean heights of consciousness, denies that aspect of itself which belongs to the earth, and thus becomes unconscious of its activities. There is a similar archetypal pattern in The Tempest, in which Prospero, Duke of Milan, retires to his library, unaware of the intrigues of his shadow brother, Antonio. Prospero's desire for higher consciousness, the pursuit of 'secret studies', meant the neglect of the shadow. Prospero lost his dukedom, King Hamlet his life. Such neglect of the shadow, such rejection of the lower for the higher, is fatal.

There is also a symbolic implication to the setting of King Hamlet's murder:

'Tis given out that sleeping in my orchard  
A serpent stung me.<sup>6</sup>

This is repeated a few lines later when the ghost describes the actual crime:

Sleeping within my orchard  
My custom always of the afternoon,<sup>7</sup>

'My orchard' and the presence of the serpent has strong mythic associations with the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden was the paradise of pure instinctual life unburdened by consciousness, the knowledge of good and evil. It is the garden of the natural man, where man lived in unconscious harmony with his surroundings. In this orchard, significantly 'my orchard', the king is asleep. He is unaware of the instinctual world within him, unaware of his natural self. It is because he is asleep that the serpent stings him, that his brother poisons him.

The unrecognised, rejected shadow does not remain dormant. Within the unconscious it gathers psychic energy, and waits for the right moment to dominate ego-consciousness. When the ego is least suspecting, where it is most unaware, there the shadow strikes. It was while sleeping in his orchard that the satyr brother of King Hamlet stung him to death. It was the serpent, symbol of the psychic energy of the unconscious, that stung him. According to Jung

the snake is the representative of the world of instinct.<sup>8</sup>

It is thus in the apposite form of a serpent that the repressed instinctual self forces itself into consciousness. To do this it must destroy that aspect of the ego which had denied it. The heroic King Hamlet must be killed. It is only then that the instinctual self can be acknowledged.

Seen in this light, the murder of King Hamlet acquires a profound archetypal significance. The relationship between Claudius and Gertrude can also be understood from a psychological perspective. Claudius, as the shadow side of King Hamlet, embodies his repressed instinctual desires. But Gertrude is the instinctual world itself. While the masculine is equated with individual consciousness, the world of the ego, the feminine represents the mysterious unconscious psyche, the home of the instincts.

Until her son confronts her, Gertrude appears unaware of anything untoward in her relationship with Claudius. She seems sincere when she asks the prince:

What have I done that thou dar'st wag thy tongue  
In noise so rude against me?<sup>9</sup>

This reflects her 'unconsciousness'; and places her in direct contrast to Claudius, whom the play has just shown trying to pray for repentance. Her crime is not so serious as Claudius' murder. However, these words coming so soon after Claudius' struggle with his conscience suggests that she lacks this individual quality of consciousness. It is for Hamlet to make her see 'her black and grained spots'. Alone, she is incapable of such awareness. Not only do both Claudius and Gertrude enact the repressed instinctual nature of King Hamlet, but they represent a union of opposites.

It is the energy drawn from its union with the instinctual depths that gives the shadow the potency to break into consciousness. In the form of Claudius, the shadow destroys the previous pattern of ego-consciousness and rules. However, only through the aid of the instinctual psyche does it achieve this power. Claudius acknowledges this at the beginning of his first speech, and grants Gertrude equal position:

Therefore our sometimes sister, now our queen  
Th'imperial jointress to this warlike state.<sup>10</sup>

Just as it was King Hamlet's split from the instinctual unconscious that caused him to be asleep and vulnerable, the union of the shadow with the feminine psyche actually gave it the power to dominate. Claudius' reference to 'our sometime sister now our queen' also makes clear the incestuous nature of their marriage. Hamlet stresses this at the end of the play in his final address to Claudius:

Here thou incestuous murd'rous damned Dane,<sup>11</sup>

Whatever the social laws concerning marriage and incest, as seen from a psychological perspective, their relationship has an incestuous quality. Jung deepened our understanding of incest, showing it to have

a symbolic rather than merely physical dimension. He describes it as a union of opposites which at the same time have a similar quality:

Incest is simply the union of like with like;<sup>12</sup>

Claudius and Gertrude, masculine and feminine, king and queen, both personify man's instinctual nature.

The symbolic reading of these figures and their relationships describes the archetypal situation which Prince Hamlet inherits. The ghost, upon telling Prince Hamlet of the murder, brings this archetypal predicament into the prince's consciousness, and in demanding revenge, forces him to confront it. Prince Hamlet is thus faced with the task of confronting the shadow principle, the rejected instinctual self. Outwardly, this is dramatised in his relationship with Claudius, leading to his killing of his uncle in the duel scene. Inwardly, it is expressed in all his negative feelings about himself. Confronting the shadow also involves facing the dark aspect of the feminine, partly personified by Gertrude's sexuality. The opposite of the caring, nurturing aspect of the feminine, her sexuality belongs to the dark, instinctual world of the unconscious.

The archetypal drama of the play thus begins with the duality of the conscious and the unconscious, the ego and the shadow, also masculine and feminine, heaven and earth, spirit and matter. The psychic split between these opposites is expressed in Prince Hamlet's first speech, even before the ghost's revelations. The physical world is rejected:

O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew.<sup>13</sup>

significance of the ghost's call to 'not forget', and his insistence on revenge. Having made the prince aware of the real Claudius, the ghost commits him to act, to confront this shadow. For Hamlet, this is no easy task, because primarily it also involves confronting the dark instinctual feminine. However, by the fifth act he has confronted his mother, and the dark aspect of the feminine is symbolically redeemed. Now he is ready to act. He has proclaimed himself 'Hamlet the Dane', accepted his full responsibility and now he must vanquish Claudius. Indeed, he understands that not to confront the shadow is to participate in its evil, it is 'to be damned'.

#### Image 8

Here, thou incestuous, murd'rous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion. Is thy union here?  
Follow thy mother.

V ii 330-3

Hamlet finally confronts his uncle, and forces him to drink his own poison. The verbal confrontation is important, as it is 'the moment of truth'. Hamlet directly proclaims the true nature of Claudius. Here there is no cover of 'painted words', but a conscious confrontation with the shadow. It is significant that he first accuses Claudius of the incestuous marriage with his mother. This is what has most hurt Hamlet. It is because of their union, both sexual and social, that Hamlet's confrontation with Claudius has necessitated a confrontation with his mother. From an archetypal perspective, their marriage is

and in the same speech the father image is described as the godlike 'Hyperion' as opposed to the bestial 'satyr'.

Prince Hamlet's feelings about Claudius are overshadowed by the difficulties that he has in carrying out his revenge. This evokes feelings of inadequacy and failure; but even these feelings become dominated by his confrontation with the dark side of the feminine. It is the frailty of woman, his mother's betrayal, which appears to cause him the most distress. More than the crime of his uncle, it is the instinctual sexuality of his mother which horrifies him:

Nay, but to live  
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,  
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
Over the nasty sty!<sup>14</sup>

This 'nasty sty' is the realm of the archetypal feminine, the Great Mother, of whom the pig is a primitive emblem.<sup>15</sup> Hamlet has to confront the Great Mother, with all her Dionysian sexuality. This is the archetypal feminine, the instinctual unconscious, from which the heroic ego won its independence, and of which conscious man has lived in such fear ever since. It includes the terrible, instinctual forces that can overpower his conscious, moral judgement, as has been seen throughout the history of mankind. Hamlet experiences the instinctual feminine as his mother's lust. It has destroyed his idealised view of life and love. One example of this is how his romantic love for 'the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia', is replaced by feelings of corruption. Beauty cannot remain chaste, nor can we escape our original sin. Only in a nunnery can Ophelia remain secure from the corruption of the world; yet as a pun for brothel,

'nunnery' also includes the idea of sexual depravity. Hamlet's conception of life and love has become dominated by the instincts from which his father sought to escape.

For Hamlet, this instinctual world is linked with his personal shadow. This shadow is his own human failings, and a realisation of the difficulties of life. He says to Ophelia:

What should such fellows as I do crawling between  
earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all, believe  
none of us.<sup>16</sup>

Jung describes how the assimilation of the shadow can create this effect:

Assimilation of the shadow gives man a body, so to speak; the animal sphere of instinct, as well as the primitive or archaic psyche, emerge into the zone of consciousness and can no longer be repressed by fictions and illusions. In this way man becomes for himself the difficult problem he really is.<sup>17</sup>

Accepting his shadow, Hamlet becomes aware that he has both Hyperion and the satyr within him. He is, in truth, 'between earth and heaven'. The duality which his father rejected is his. He has 'acquired a body', contacted his instinctual self, and thus the sin and corruption it causes. Instead of the fiction of romance, there is the reality of copulation and sin. Rather than beautified phrases, he says to Ophelia:

Why, wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?<sup>18</sup>

The serpent which stung his father has also destroyed his Eden, a world of romantic illusion.

It is important to understand here the link between the individual shadow



and the instinctual world of the feminine. The action of the personal shadow figure, Claudius, forces Hamlet to assimilate a deeper darkness, the dark side of the Great Mother, the instinctual feminine. From the shadow comes the unacknowledged personal instinctual desire, whether for power or sex. This is predominantly the desire of the ego. From the archetypal feminine comes the impersonal instinct, the sex drive itself. It does not belong to the ego. In fact, its indiscriminate, impersonal quality makes it the archetypal opposite of masculine ego-consciousness. What upsets Hamlet, and what he cannot understand, is that his mother's sexual appetite is so indiscriminate:

Have you eyes?

Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed

And batten on this moor?<sup>19</sup>

The animal metaphors used here serve to emphasise the impersonal, bestial quality of the queen's instinctual drive. Hamlet's horror at his mother's sexuality is the horror of individual consciousness faced with the impersonal, unchained power of nature.

Ernest Jones and others have made us aware of the Oedipal myth in Hamlet. The suggestion is that Hamlet finds it difficult to kill his uncle because Claudius is enacting his own incestuous desires towards his mother. However, an archetypal reading of this myth offers a different perspective. I have suggested that Hamlet's fascination and yet horror at his mother's sexuality is because it symbolises the instinctual world rejected by his father. The existence of a separate ego-consciousness necessitates a separation from the Great Mother. But the development of consciousness does not end with the existence of the ego. Indeed, a continued emphasis on ego-consciousness becomes life denying.

Separated from his instinctual roots, the individual becomes imprisoned in the confines of the ego. This is the very opposite of the autonomous freedom promised by the development of individual consciousness. The only way for this predicament to be redeemed, for there to be wholeness, is a return to the instinctual unconscious, an incestuous coupling with the Great Mother. This is Hamlet's journey. He cannot become conscious of his instinctual nature unless he makes the incestuous return to the mother.

Hamlet's 'incestuous relationship' with his mother reaches its dramatic climax in Act III scene iv, when he confronts her with the fruits of her sexuality. Condemning her 'act' with verbal daggers, he forces her into conscious awareness:

Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul,  
And there I see such black and grained spots  
As will not leave their tinct.<sup>20</sup>

If this scene is understood from an archetypal perspective, then consciousness is being brought to the instinctual unconscious. In the figure of Hamlet, individual consciousness, with its criteria of good and bad, light and dark, is here confronting the instinctual world. This confrontation forces the mother, the unconscious feminine, to see herself. Alone, Gertrude is unable to become conscious. Even after Hamlet's first tirade against her, condemning her 'act' as one

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
And sets a blister there,<sup>21</sup>

she doesn't know to what 'act' he is referring,

Aye me, what act

That roars so loud and thunders in the index?<sup>22</sup>

But Hamlet continues, and his words are finally the mirror in which Gertrude can see herself. The ability to see oneself is the beginning of individual consciousness. Reflection implies conscious awareness. Furthermore, it is only through reflection that an individual can safely encounter the overwhelming energy of the instincts. The myth of Medusa portrays this. It is the mirror of his shield that allows Theseus to see the snake-covered head of Medusa and not be turned to stone. The reflective power of consciousness is necessary to confront the serpent world of the instincts. Hamlet's confrontation is the mirror which allows individual consciousness to enter the impersonal world of the instincts.

The importance of a conscious integration of one's instinctual self is portrayed in the contrast of Laertes with Hamlet. Laertes' reaction to his father's death is purely instinctual. Seeking revenge he arrives at court. But driven solely by instinct there has been no conscious deliberation as to who was his father's killer, and so mistakenly he almost attacks Claudius, 'thou vile king'. This may be seen as instinctual wisdom, in that Claudius is the real villain whom Prince Hamlet intended to kill, 'Is it the King?', and is in many ways responsible for Polonius' murder. But Laertes is unable to make use of such instinctual wisdom, in that the instinctual world has overwhelmed him, as is symbolically described in the words of the messenger who announces his arrival to the king:

The ocean, overpowering of his list

Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste

Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,  
O'bears your officers.<sup>23</sup>

The ocean, a symbol for the collective unconscious, the realm of the instincts, is breaking through the barriers of consciousness, flooding the land. If this occurs the instincts are a cause of danger rather than wisdom. Indeed, for Laertes all higher considerations are lost

Vows to the blackest devil!

Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit!

I dare damnation!<sup>24</sup>

Such is the danger of man's instinctual nature. It can drown all that is noble and 'spiritual' in him, its darkness overwhelms the light.

Hamlet may see the image of his cause reflected in Laertes' desire for revenge, but there is a vital distinction between the two. In Hamlet, the instinctual world is confronted and made conscious. He may despise his delay in revenging his father but, unlike Laertes, he is not overpowered by the forces of the unconscious.

Hamlet's 'incestuous relationship' with his mother describes the descent of consciousness back into the realm of the Great Mother. A part of man's instinctual nature can thus be made conscious. Just as the archetypes are incapable of being made conscious, so the whole of the instinctual unconscious cannot become conscious. However, the queen's awareness of her 'sin' shows the appearance of conscious discrimination in the realm of the instincts. What this means, in effect, is the transformation of the feminine. Rather than being despised and rejected, the feminine can be loved, heaven and earth brought together. In the graveyard scene, Hamlet can declaim his love for the dead Ophelia, whom

before he had rejected. And in saying what he will do for her, he symbolically brings heaven and earth together;

And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
Make Ossa like a wart.<sup>25</sup>

The split between masculine and feminine, heaven and earth, which he inherited from his father, has been redeemed. And with this comes Gertrude's beautiful speech;

Anon, as patient as the female dove  
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd  
His silence will sit drooping.<sup>26</sup>

The full significance of these words will be examined in detail later (see pp. 256-7). It is sufficient to realise here, that as a symbol of the Holy Ghost in feminine form, the female dove describes the highest form of the feminine, of the mother image. The incestuous coupling with the mother can thus achieve the transformation of the feminine. Rather than being an image of betrayal and bestial sexuality, the image here is of the Feminine Spirit of God.

The transformation of the feminine is an integral part of the union of opposites. Heaven and earth are united, instinct infused with spirit. Life then becomes whole rather than divided. Hamlet expresses this with an awareness of a divine pattern to life;

There's a divinity that shapes our ends  
Rough hew them how we will - <sup>27</sup>

The conjunction is the union of the above and the below, the eternal and the temporal. These opposites are thus experienced as forming a unity. No longer is there the great divide between life and death. Previously, Hamlet saw these two in opposition: 'To be, or not to be'; now there is not such great distinction

If it be now, 'tis not to come;  
if it be not to come, it will be now; if  
it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness  
is all.<sup>28</sup>

Those who regard the death of Prince Hamlet as tragic in a negative sense fail to appreciate what he is here saying. For Hamlet, life and death are seen as one, all that matters is 'the readiness'. Such awareness suggests that he is indeed ready. The rejected feminine, the instinctual world, has been consciously confronted and redeemed. He has performed the real task set by his father. The psychic split has been healed. Furthermore, through this process a new level of consciousness has been attained. Hamlet can now be seen as a symbol of the Self in which all the opposites are united. A potential wholeness has been realised.

There has been much critical debate as to why Hamlet delays in carrying out his revenge against Claudius. From an archetypal perspective, the killing of Claudius symbolises freedom from the influence of the shadow. For this to be accomplished, an aspect of the instinctual psyche must become consciously integrated. In the figure of Laertes there is all the fury of revenge without any conscious awareness of the instincts. He thus becomes a shadow figure himself. He is prepared

To cut his throat i'th'church<sup>29</sup>

and fight a duel with a poisoned rapier. In fact, Claudius is able to manipulate Laertes for his own ends.

If the killing of Claudius is to symbolise complete freedom from the shadow, the inner work must already have been accomplished. Otherwise, like Laertes, Hamlet would just become another figure dominated by the dark, instinctual unconscious. Furthermore, freedom from the shadow necessitates a new centre of consciousness, one that is beyond the ego. The ego cannot exist without its dark brother; only in transcending these opposites can one be beyond the influence of the shadow. This transcendent centre of consciousness is the Self. For Claudius, as the shadow, to die, there must have been a union of opposites, a realisation of the Self. If this is so, Hamlet's death is now symbolically inevitable; it is the final statement of his completion. He is free from the conflicting world of opposites.

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#### 4.5.2. An Archetypal Reading of the Textual Images



Session One: The Ghost

Image 1

But two months dead - nay - not so much, not two -  
So excellent a king, that was to this  
Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother  
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly.

1 ii 138-142

Describing his dead father, Prince Hamlet compares him with Claudius. He likens his father to 'Hyperion', his uncle to 'a satyr'. Hyperion means 'dweller on high'. He was also a Titan, son of Gaea and Uranus, the Earth and her son, Heaven. Hyperion was father to Helios, the sun. In his punning upon 'son' and 'sun' (1 ii 67, & 11 ii 184) Hamlet associates himself with the sun, and this has a symbolic significance. The sun, bringer of light, is the symbol of man's consciousness; and the prince's archetypal role in Hamlet is the carrier of a greater conscious awareness than existed in his father's time. However, central to this particular textual image is the duality of Hyperion and a satyr. As already suggested, Claudius is the shadow figure for King Hamlet. A satyr is half man, half beast. Claudius represents the bestial, instinctual aspect of the personality, rejected and repressed by the ego. This duality reflects the archetypal split between spirit and instinct, heaven and earth, that is Prince Hamlet's inheritance. This is the split which he must redeem. However, in this image, the prince reinforces the separation, eulogizing his father's loving care for his mother. His description of his father's 'loving' has a symbolic dimension which is less positive. The 'winds of heaven' can be understood as the wind of

the spirit, the masculine spirit of God. The king did not allow this wind of the spirit to 'visit her face too roughly'. In other words, he did not allow the full force of the spirit to touch the face of the feminine. The masculine spirit is the bringer of consciousness and the king did not allow the face of the feminine to be made fully conscious, he denied the union of masculine and feminine. How often is a man's supposed 'loving protection' of a woman in fact a denial, because the man cannot cope with the true nature of a woman? A man seeks to 'protect' a woman, because in so doing he denies her the power of her instinctual feminine self. He can neither consciously confront it, live with it, integrate it, nor can he bear to see the real face of a woman. Such is King Hamlet's love for Gertrude. As 'Hyperion', 'dweller on high', his is the realm of heaven, his is the spirit of consciousness. But it is a heaven, a consciousness, which he keeps from touching the feminine 'too roughly'. The full force of consciousness, which is not gentle, lighting up the face of the feminine, would be too much for him. He would be forced to recognise the potency of the feminine world.

Image 2

I am thy father's spirit,  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purg'd away.

1 v 9-13

These words of the ghost refute Prince Hamlet's idealised conception of his father. Rather than as a divine figure or perfect man, the king is here presented as an ordinary, sinful man, paying for his crimes in purgatory. In this scene the ghost's description of his murder makes the prince painfully aware of the dual nature of man, and later, he has to accept his own human failings. The death of the king is the archetypal enactment of the death of an heroic ideal. As an ideal, it involved the denial of the shadow, the dark, sinful side of human nature. Now the shadow side is made conscious and the ideal is destroyed.

### Image 3

Now, Hamlet, hear.

'Tis given out that sleeping in my orchard  
A serpent stung me.

1 v 34-6

This image may be read as a symbolic portrayal of the king's death. Earlier it was suggested that the serpent in the orchard echoes the Garden of Eden myth, and that the king asleep in his orchard depicts the fact that he is unconscious of the natural, instinctual world. In this orchard, the serpent represents the energy of the repressed instinctual psyche. Thus King Hamlet's instinctual self and its passions cannot forever be denied;

The rejection of the unconscious usually has unfortunate results; its instinctive forces, if persistently disregarded, rise up in opposition.<sup>30</sup>

As a mythological example, Jung refers here to the nymph Chryse. When her advances were rejected by Philoctetes, she changed into a venomous snake, and bit him. King Hamlet's instinctual self is the serpent which bit him. The serpent has always had a dual significance. It stands for 'the power that heals as well as corrupts';<sup>31</sup> it is the devil, the destructive force of man's ungovernable passions. But it is also a symbol for wisdom<sup>32</sup> and healing, for it carries the instinctual knowledge and life force of the unconscious. In Hamlet the serpent acts through the figure of Claudius. In Claudius is seen the archetypal dual role of the serpent. As a shadow figure, he represents the weak

side of King Hamlet, the unconscious, unacknowledged desires. But at the same time, these desires are healthily instinctive and necessary for a higher consciousness. In his action Claudius kills the king, and is the cause of 'something rotten in the state of Denmark'; yet this action makes Hamlet conscious of the instinctual psyche and so ultimately able to redeem the rejected feminine self inherited from his father. Jung describes the importance of this role of the shadow;

Only through his shadow has he [man] a relationship to the serpent in its dual meaning.<sup>33</sup>

Although, throughout the play, Claudius is portrayed in a negative light, it is important to realise that from an archetypal perspective he also plays a positive role.

4

Sleeping in my orchard  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,

5

And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leprous distilment, whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body,  
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset  
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood.

6

So did it mine  
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,  
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust  
All my smooth body.

1 v 59 - 73

This passage, which has been divided into three separate images, describes in realistic detail the same murder symbolically expressed in Image 3. It portrays the same archetypal situation, the death of the ego, poisoned by the instinctual energy of the unconscious. There are, however, a few details worth analysing, since they add to our understanding of the event.

The king is poisoned 'with juice of cursed hebenon'. 'Hebenon' would seem to be a fictitious poison, though its derivation is possibly parallel to the German word for 'yew', which is a very real poison. But whatever the true derivation of the word, it can be associated with the goddess Hebe, goddess of spring and youth. It is appropriate that the poison which kills King Hamlet echoes this goddess of spring and the natural awakening of sexuality. The goddess Hebe then is the awakening of the natural, instinctual energy of life denied by the king.

Poisons as such have a feminine significance. Neumann writes that poison belongs to the domain of the feminine archetype:

As goddess of the food-giving plants, herbs and fruits,  
she numinously transforms these basic elements into  
intoxicants and poisons.<sup>34</sup>

In Hamlet, the use of poison dramatically contrasts its masculine opposite, the sword. While poison worked secretly, in the hidden way of the feminine, the sword is the direct, visible dealer of death. It is the energy of the instinctual feminine which ends the rule of the masculine ego, symbolised by King Hamlet. That poison has a transformative quality is suggested by its association here with 'quicksilver' (1. 66). Just as poison is a transformation of the natural world of



plants and herbs, so quicksilver is a poison that can itself transform. Quicksilver is mercury, which for the alchemists symbolised the Spirit Mercurius. Mercurius is strongly associated with the serpent, and the god Mercury is usually depicted with two serpents entwining his staff. Jung understood Mercurius as the alchemical name for what he termed 'the Self'; as such, it is paradoxically both the transforming agent and the final state of transformation. In psychological terms, it is the Self which individuates itself, which effects the process of individuation. In Hamlet, Mercurius is the instinctual energy of the psyche which brings the psyche into consciousness.

If one accepts the alchemical symbolism of quicksilver, then the ghost's image alludes to a process of psychological transformation. The poison of Claudius and the sting of the serpent are both the natural energy of the eternal feminine that begins the reconciliation of opposites by first destroying the existing structure of ego-consciousness.

## Session Two: Claudius

### Image 1

but know, thou noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown.

1 v 38 - 41

In this image, the serpent is linked directly with Claudius, who is now the king. The archetypal image of the serpent stinging King Hamlet is repeated, and again it carries the same significance. However, the image that the serpent 'now wears his crown' stresses that it is the instinctual psyche which now rules the individual.

### Image 2

The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word.

111 i 51 - 3

Claudius's pretence, the 'cover-up' of his murder, is likened to the harlot covering the ugly reality of her face with make-up. This presents the deceptive nature of the shadow. In as much as the shadow belongs to the unconscious, its actions do not take place in the full light of consciousness. The world of the shadow is one of darkness and deceit, rather than conscious confrontation. In contrast to the heroic combat of King Hamlet and Norway, the shadow dominates through intrigue and pretence. So often the shadow 'covers-up' its actions,

justifying them with 'painted words' and valid reasons, rather than presenting them in the harsh glare of consciousness. If it is not just 'somebody else's fault', then there are always good arguments to hide the real nature of the shadow's deeds. The dark side of our personality hides its face, disguises its actions, with all the subtelety of a great trickster.

So in this image Shakespeare associates the deception of the shadow with the cheek of the harlot. The harlot is a symbol of the dark side of the feminine, which rather than show its true face, offers a deceptive appearance. In fairy tales she is the witch who appears as a seductively beautiful maiden. In Greek mythology, they are the Sirens enchanting men with their beautiful singing, only to lure them to their death. What this association implies is that not only the instinctual desires enacted by Claudius, but also the very process of pretence, have their origins in the dark side of the feminine. The shadow as part of the unconscious has direct access to the deceptive art of the feminine psyche; its skill in weaving a tissue of deceit comes from the dark side of the feminine, the seductive enchantress. It is because of this skill that the shadow so easily seduces and deceives us, hiding its real face behind a web of half truths and lies.

Image 3

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't -  
A brother's murder.

lll iii 36 - 8

Describing his murder as 'rank' and 'it smells', Claudius is associating it with the world of the senses. Furthermore, he places this smell in relationship to 'heaven'. The senses belong to the world of matter, and are in archetypal opposition to the heavenly world of the spirit. Jung, however, understood the opposing principles of spirit and matter as being the dual aspects of one whole. He suggests that 'neither can exist without the other'.<sup>35</sup> Amplifying this archetypal duality is the dominant metaphor in this image, 'the primal eldest curse'. In committing the first murder, Cain embodies the shadow principle, the dark brother. In Answer to Job, Jung identifies Cain with Satan, the dark principle, who is yet also one of the sons of God.<sup>36</sup> It is important to realise that the two brothers, the light and the dark, Abel and Cain, embody the opposing aspects of the one God, the wholeness. Similarly, in murdering King Hamlet, Claudius is but acting out his archetypal role as the principle of darkness. And, although in direct opposition to his brother, they are a necessary duality. Just as light cannot exist without darkness, so the ego cannot exist without its shadow.

#### Image 4

What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
To wash it white as snow?

lll iiii 43 - 46

Rain is that which falls from heaven to earth, and is associated in The Merchant of Venice with God's mercy.<sup>37</sup> It is the union of heaven and earth, the mercy of God falling to earth, which can redeem Claudius's crime, 'wash it white as snow'. 'White as snow' as an image of purification has biblical echoes (Psalm 51:7; Isaiah 1:18), but it also has the quality of the natural world at its purest. A snow-covered landscape evokes a feeling of natural purity which is unequaled. The action of the shadow is that of the natural, instinctual, but dark, unconscious side of man. Its purification takes place through the participation of heaven. This can be understood as the source of divine mercy, that which forgives, cleanses man's sins. However, from a psychological perspective, heaven symbolises the spirit of consciousness. It is the conscious integration of the shadow that transmutes, purifies it. It no longer remains unconscious, dark. Here alchemical symbolism offers an interesting reading of Shakespeare's imagery. In alchemy the initial state is called the 'nigredo' or blackness;<sup>38</sup> and this corresponds to the unconscious shadow. In the process of alchemical transformation the 'nigredo' is followed by 'the washing' which can lead directly to 'the whitening'; the latter corresponds to the purification of the shadow. This alchemical symbolism offers an amplification of a psychological reading. It is the process of working

with the shadow, whether projected into the retorts of the alchemists,  
or as a conscious self- analysis, that effects the purification.

Image 5

O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
O limed soul that struggling to be free  
Art more engaged.

111 iii. 67 - 9

This image describes the soul as a bird, caught, unable to fly, because of Claudius' murder of the king. Claudius, satyr brother of King Hamlet, acts out the king's repressed instinctual drives, but in a negative way, through murder and deceit. Although it is the action of Claudius that will force Hamlet into a greater awareness, on its own the action of the shadow is negative. In Christian terms, the action of the shadow is the 'sinning' that separates man from God; and the archetypal shadow figure is Satan. In the figure of Cain, enacting the first murder, Claudius is in fact associated with Satan. Claudius, unable to repent, unable to pray, is separated from that which is eternal and divine. Symbolically, he is trapped on earth, unable to fly, to reach heaven.

From a psychological perspective it is the shadow which traps man. Because he is unconscious of his shadow, man is not able to free himself from his instinctual drives. It pulls him into the world of matter. It governs him without his knowing it. Through disciplining one's instinctual desires or drives, a certain degree of autonomous freedom can be achieved. Finally, however, one's instinctual self cannot be

ruled through repression. King Hamlet, rejecting his instinctual nature, ultimately allowed it to dominate. Only through conscious integration can man be free from the satyr within, the animal self and its desires. To consciously accept the shadow, and the transmutation which this effect, frees man from the 'birdlime' of his shadow. Only then is he able to fly, to regain his original wings.<sup>39</sup>

In this image, the wings of the soul are caught. Claudius, embodying the dark side of the personality, is unable to redeem himself, for it would be a denial of his essential nature. His struggles can only result in the soul being 'more engag'd'.

#### Image 6

A murderer and a villain,  
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe  
Of your precedent lord, a vice of kings,  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole  
And put it in his pocket -

A king of shreds and patches -

111 iv 96-101, 103

Hamlet is here describing his uncle as an archetypal villain, confederate of Satan. As a 'vice' he is the devil's henchman of the morality plays. Furthermore, 'A king of shreds and patches' suggests the parti-coloured dress of the Vice.



Image 7

And is't not to be damned  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?

V ii 66-70

A canker is a spreading sore. It is a natural and yet at the same time corruptive growth. As such, it is an apposite image for Claudius, who embodies an aspect of King Hamlet's natural, instinctual self. The shadow is a natural and yet corruptive phenomenon; if left unacknowledged its corruption will spread. A similar quality of the shadow is expressed earlier in the play in the image:

'tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely.

I ii 135-7

Here Hamlet is describing the world of King Claudius, whose 'rank' 'offence' allowed him to possess both the kingdom and Hamlet's mother. Then, Prince Hamlet wished to escape this corrupted world:

O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,

I ii 129-30

However, in the course of the play, Hamlet's attitude changes. The ghost reveals to the prince Claudius's crime, and Hamlet swears to 'remember'. Once the shadow is made conscious, the individual must not forget. He becomes responsible for remembering the real nature of the shadow, and also for acting. This is to be understood both as the

the union of opposites, which are at the same time both akin. Claudius and Gertrude both enact man's instinctual drives. But the energy, the potency of the shadow, is drawn from its union with the dark forces of the feminine psyche. Thus the shadow cannot be tackled in isolation,<sup>40</sup> it demands a descent into the realm of the Great Mother. The unconscious fusion of the shadow with the mother archetype is the most poisonous truth for Hamlet. But to understand this link is vital if the shadow is to lose its potency. This is why it is so necessary for Hamlet to confront Claudius with the truth of his incestuous marriage. He also confronts Claudius with the murder of his father, the act which brought about the process of revenge; and in calling him 'damned' Prince Hamlet proclaims the real dark nature of the shadow. Within the duality of light and dark the shadow carries the principle of darkness; it is the symbolic province of Satan and evil, the realm of the damned. But Claudius is also called 'Dane', just as Prince Hamlet and his father carry the same title. Whether light or dark, Hyperion or a satyr, the two brothers are integral parts of a whole - they belong together - and Prince Hamlet, who has acknowledged this duality within himself, is 'Hamlet the Dane'.

The shadow on its own cannot make itself conscious. Claudius could only acknowledge his crime in secret to himself. In this one line, Hamlet has brought the true nature of the shadow into consciousness. Made fully conscious, the shadow is no longer the dark unknown; as such it ceases to exist. This is the death of the shadow.

Hamlet's final question to his uncle is 'Is thy union here?' The Arden edition of Hamlet gives two possible interpretations for 'union': it could refer to the king's marriage, 'of which the poisoned cup becomes

the symbol'; and also to the 'union', the pearl placed in the poisoned cup, for a union is a pearl of the finest quality, 'such as might be in a royal crown'. Understood archetypally, there is both a marriage and a pearl, but they are symbolic. In the language of the psyche, death always refers to a process of change, of transformation. The shadow does not 'die' in the sense of it being obliterated. Its darkness is transformed, and there is a 'marriage', a process of union as it is integrated into the whole psyche. The death of the shadow means that there is no longer a dark autonomous force attempting to dominate. There is no longer the conflict of the shadow acting against man's higher nature. Rather, there is complete union and complete harmony. The light and dark brothers become a united whole. Furthermore, if there is complete integration, the twin brothers are united with the wife/sister/brother. This is the final 'conjunctio' of the alchemists: a psychological union of masculine and feminine which takes place not in unconscious darkness but through conscious integration. This 'conjunctio' the alchemists called the 'treasure hard to attain', or 'the pearl of great price'.

The pearl of great price is an alchemical symbol for the Self. This is the final 'union' which has been attained. The death of the shadow means its integration into a larger whole. This larger psychic whole is the Self.

Session Three: Gertrude

### Image 1

But virtue, as it never will be mov'd,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So lust, though to a radiant angel link'd  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed  
And prey on garbage.

1 i 53-57

The duality which runs throughout the play is expressed here in sexual terms, in the opposition of virtue and lust. The two brothers are the symbolic embodiment of the opposing realms of heaven and earth. King Hamlet identifies himself as a 'radiant angel', whose sexual relationship with Gertrude takes place in 'a celestial bed'; Claudius he describes as 'garbage'. In fact, this is an imaginably appropriate description of the shadow. Garbage is something which is thrown out, rejected, and such is the nature of the shadow; the latter is 'refuse', that which is refused, unacknowledged.

In this image Gertrude is identified with 'lust', and is accused of being indiscriminate in her sexual appetite. Not satisfied with King Hamlet's 'celestial bed', she needs have an affair with Claudius, here imaged as 'prey on garbage'. 'Prey' has animal associations, and suggests that her relationship with Claudius has a bestial quality. However, if lust is simply unbridled desire, then it is to be understood as the unrestricted libido, the instinctual energy of life without conscious restraints; as such it has an animal quality, but not in a negative sense. It is just the life force of nature and the natural man, without the restrictions and conflicts caused by consciousness and discrimina-

tion. It is the experience of life in the symbolic Garden of Eden, an unconscious world before the knowledge of good and evil.

Gertrude's archetypal role is the personification of the instinctual feminine psyche. This is the unconscious world of the 'natural man'. It is the domain of the Great Mother, and is the instinctual source of all life. However, in this unconscious realm of the psyche there is no discrimination, no division between good and evil. Here the libido flows without restrictions. Although for King Hamlet the duality of heaven and earth, the contrast between he and his brother, is a dominant reality, for Gertrude there is no such division, for within the unconscious feminine psyche all life is one.

'Virtue' implies consciousness and free choice. Without the choice between good and bad there can be no virtue; rather there is 'lust'. Until consciousness enters the unconscious instinctual world there can be no choice, no virtue, only lust.

Later in the play, this happens: Hamlet confronts Gertrude, makes her aware of her 'black and grained spots'. She is then forced to differentiate between the two brothers, and told to restrain her sexual appetite, not to sleep with Claudius. But at this moment, the ghost's accusations are inappropriate. While from King Hamlet's perspective, that of ego-consciousness, lust is derogatory, it merely describes the natural energy of life untouched by consciousness.

Image 2

Such an act

That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,  
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose  
From the fair forehead of an innocent love  
And sets a blister there.

111 iv 40-44

In this image, Hamlet is confronting Gertrude with her 'act' of infidelity, her affair with Claudius. It is first worth noting that even after this tirade Gertrude remains ignorant, unconscious of any wrong doing:

Ay me, what act

That roars so loud and thunders in the index?

111 iv 51-2

As suggested in relation to the previous image, this 'act' which is so negative from the perspective of consciousness, is a natural expression of man's instinctual self. Before there was the knowledge of good and evil, there was no sin.

Hamlet, however, presents the viewpoint of consciousness. As such, he sees her 'act' as negative, indeed destructive. The ideal feminine qualities of modesty and virtue are distorted. The rose, an emblem of ideal love, is exchanged for a blister, suggestive of whores who were branded on the forehead. Hamlet's imagery is archetypally correct. Gertrude's instinctual act, her unrestrained sexuality, has destroyed an idealised world, that of King Hamlet. The very nature of 'ideal love' is

a denial of reality, where perfection cannot exist. This ideal exists as a creation of the masculine, as a perception of the feminine in which only innocence, modesty and chastity are admitted. As a masculine fantasy, it denies the sensual side of the feminine; the dark, instinctual feminine is so denied and repressed that the passion and power of the libido are excluded. Gertrude's instinctual sexuality destroys this illusion; and for Prince Hamlet, his mother becomes a whore. For the masculine, the image of the whore embodies the unrestricted sexuality of the dark side of the feminine.

It is appropriate to remember that Christ embraced both Mary the virgin mother, and Mary the whore. Within the whole both aspects of the feminine, both Marys, are included. It is only from the limited perspective of the ego that the one should be revered and the other excluded. Yet this is the pattern that Prince Hamlet has inherited from his father. His mother's 'act' destroyed not only his idea of a perfect mother, but also the possibility of an ideal, romantic love. Once the dark side of the feminine has been made conscious, there can be no such fantasy.



### Image 3

Heaven's face does glow  
O'er this solidity and compound mass  
With tristful visage, as against the doom,  
Is thought-sick at the act.

111 iv 47-51

Once again heaven is in contrast to earth, 'this solidity and compound mass'. The vocabulary used here to describe the earth evokes a feeling of physical density. It is a dense world of matter that is being sadly observed by the face of heaven. And the queen's 'act' is made to epitomise the guilt of this world; on account of her act heaven looks sadly down. This is a fallen world, and the queen's act the fall. Hers is the sin of mankind from the beginning to the end of time, 'as against the doom'. With these images the prince gives his mother's 'act' archetypal significance. It embodies the whole fallen nature of man. This is the descent from innocence and perfection, from a heavenly ideal, into corruption and sin. Psychologically, this means a realisation of one's instinctual nature; symbolically, it is a fall from heaven to earth, into the dense realm of matter.

Jung associated the world of matter and nature with the feminine principle:

Since time immemorial the feminine principle has  
stood for nature and matter - Mater Natura.<sup>41</sup>

The fall from heavenly perfection is due to an inclusion of the feminine principle. The queen's 'act', an expression of the feminine principle, of man's instinctual nature, necessarily destroys an ideal, just as it

embraces the reality of the world. The guilt and sadness come from a feeling of lost perfection; but now there is a greater wholeness; the physical, instinctual feminine is not excluded.

Image 4

Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul,  
And there I see such black and grained spots  
As will not leave their tinct.

111 iv 89-91

The archetypal significance of this image has already been discussed (see p. 175). It is the arrival of consciousness into the dark domain of the instinctual psyche. Gertrude is made aware of her 'crime' and with conscious awareness comes the knowledge of good and evil and the need for discrimination.

Image 5

Nay, but to live  
In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,  
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
Over the nasty sty!

111 iv 91-94

This is Gertrude's act, the full expression of her instinctual sexuality.

The archetypal richness of this image can be appreciated from an examination of the diction. 'Rank' is the word used by Claudius to describe his 'offence', and so the two deeds are linked together. Both are an expression of the same instinctual nature. But the physical squalor of Gertrude and Claudius's sex life is not limited to sweat. 'Enseamed' means saturated with animal fat, grease. Not only is this disgustingly suggestive of sexual squalor, it also stresses the bestial level of their sexual enjoyment. What it suggests is that their 'making love', rather than involving love, is simply the gratification of an animal instinct.

That such pure instinctual satisfaction belongs to the archetypal feminine is reflected in the second two lines. Sexuality has always been linked with fertility which is the domain of the Great Mother, and Shakespeare's images evoke this association. 'Stew'd', playing on the word 'stew' as a brothel, evokes the image of the whore, the dark side of the feminine. 'Honeying' suggests both the sweet platitudes of love making, and the stickiness of the enseamed bed. But honey is also associated with the Great Mother. Neumann records that honey, as the purest product of organic nature was sacrificed in ancient times to the earth goddess.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the bee was regarded as a symbol of the feminine potency of nature. He also notes a custom recorded by Heraclides in which the participants carry cakes made of honey and sesame in the shape of the female sex organ; and also a Hindu marriage custom of daubing the woman's genitals with honey.

If bees and honey image the feminine archetype, then so does the image of the 'nasty sty'. The immediate impression is one of animal squalor reinforcing the feeling of bestial sexuality. However, further examina-

tion reveals the associations of the pig with the Great Mother. The pig, as already quoted from Neumann, symbolises the female, 'the fruitful and receptive womb'. It belongs to the earth, and like honey, was associated with the female genitals.

What Shakespeare's image evokes is not merely the squalor of bestial copulation, but the association of such animal sexuality with the feminine archetype, the Great Mother. Hamlet's confrontation with his mother and her sexuality is thus a confrontation with the Great Mother herself.

## Session Four: Ophelia

The first scene of the play is a scene of great beauty and pathos. It is a scene of a young girl, Ophelia, who is the daughter of a nobleman, and who is in love with a young man, Hamlet. She is a very beautiful girl, and she is very kind and gentle. She is also very intelligent and very brave. She is a very good friend to Hamlet, and she is very loyal to him. She is a very good daughter to her father, and she is very obedient to him. She is a very good sister to her brother, and she is very loving to him. She is a very good friend to her friends, and she is very helpful to them. She is a very good person, and she is a very good example for everyone.

Image 1

For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,  
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,  
A violet in the youth of primy nature,  
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,  
The perfume and suppliance of a minute,  
No more.

1 ii 5-10

This image introduces the love of Hamlet for Ophelia, but as seen through the eyes of her brother, Laertes. It is evocative of springtime, and its flowers, quick to blossom, only to fade as fast. Violets usually associated with faithfulness in love, are here only 'sweet, not lasting'. Laertes' prophecy is correct; Hamlet's love for Ophelia does not appear to be lasting; and when Ophelia offers flowers in her madness, there are no violets left - 'they all withered when my father died'. Whatever the full significance of this association, Ophelia's relationship with Hamlet is introduced as a natural but transient flowering of love.

## Image 2

To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautiful Ophelia -

Doubt that the stars are fire,

Doubt that the sun doth move,

Doubt truth to be a liar,

But never doubt I love.

ll ii 109, 115-118

This love letter may be considered as a parody of a typical Elizabethan love address. However, it can also be read as a valid expression of Hamlet's love for an idealised Ophelia. As 'the celestial and my soul's idol' she is an ideal rather than real woman. And the images are also heavenly. No earthly reality appears to intrude upon his vision. However, such idealisation is a dangerous blindness to the physical, instinctual side of woman. Shakespeare explores the dangers inherent in this attitude in Othello. Othello, the innocent Moor sees Desdemona as his 'soul's joy'. For him, she is not so much a real woman as 'the divinity of love'. This is a fantasy most cruelly shattered by Iago's suggestion that, like all Venetian women she has a dark side, that of sexual deception. In Othello this possibility leads to the murder of Desdemona and the suicide of Othello. In Hamlet the Prince's love for his 'soul's idol' is destroyed when he sees the dark side of the feminine in Gertrude's affair with Claudius. Once the ghost reveals their adulterous relationship,<sup>42</sup> Hamlet's vision of a celestial woman is finally shattered. It is the mother who first carries the archetypal image of the feminine. Thus, such instinctual sexuality, such deception in his mother, makes impossible the idealised figure which he projects onto Ophelia.

In Jungian terminology, Ophelia is an 'anima figure' for Prince Hamlet. The anima is the feminine side of the man's psyche; she is his 'eternal image of the woman', the feminine archetype. A personification of his feminine psyche, or soul, she is his 'soul-image'. Since this image belongs to the man's unconscious, it is primarily experienced as a projection. As mentioned, the first carrier of this projection is usually the mother; and later it is projected onto those women who arouse the feelings in a positive or negative manner. The anima, like the feminine, has a positive or negative side. With Hamlet this feminine archetype is foremost embodied by his mother. But due to the repression of the dark aspect of the feminine archetype, initially only a positive anima figure is acknowledged. This is the anima figure enacted by Ophelia. She is his 'soul's idol', and offers an idealised picture of his feminine psyche; she embodies only the positive, 'celestial' qualities of the feminine. However, like the moon, the feminine has a dark side, and it cannot forever be ignored;

the baying of Hecate is always there, whether it sound  
from near or from far.<sup>44</sup>

Hecate is a dark goddess of the Underworld, and it is her face which Hamlet sees in his mother's sexual treachery. After this painful recognition, Hamlet's conception of his mother and the feminine archetype changes. 'The most beautified Ophelia' is not able to carry this deeper and darker anima. No longer can she be his soul image.

Significantly, Ophelia appears in the play without a mother. It is as if she herself is cut off from her own deeper feminine self, her own archetypal mother. She seems isolated in a masculine world, surrounded by the advice of father and brother and unable to rely on her



own feelings, her own instinctual nature. As the daughter of King Hamlet's councilor of state, she reflects that King's alienation from the Great Mother. She is a suitable feminine figure for a prince who is as blind and alienated as his father. But once the prince has seen the dark face of the feminine, he can see only the fragility of her innocence and chastity, and so orders her to 'a nunnery'.

### Image 3

For if the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog, being  
a good kissing carrion -

ll ii 181-2

It was an ancient idea that the sun creates new life from dead matter. But here the sun can be read as the masculine principle, while the 'dead dog' and 'carrion' is the feminine. As animal flesh they image the world of nature; it is a negative aspect of mother nature - that of death, as opposed to her life-giving and nurturing side. The Great Mother embodies both life and death. In Indian mythology her dark aspect is personified in Kali, the bringer of destruction and death; she is also called the 'black mother'.

From the union of the sun (symbol of masculine consciousness) with this dark mother comes life, but a life of corruption, imaged as 'maggots'. An awareness of the dark side of the feminine means a recognition of the corruption inherent in man. To recognise one's instinctual nature is a recognition that one is 'fallen', that one is a child of Adam and Eve.

This image portrays Hamlet's growing awareness of his own inherent corruption, and the corruption in all life. As he is soon to exclaim to Ophelia;

Why, wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?<sup>45</sup>

As son to Hyperion, Hamlet can be considered as analogous to Helios, the sun. This image evokes his own union with the dark mother. The awareness of his mother's fallen nature means a confrontation with the corruption of life, and also a recognition that he is part of it. This reading is amplified by a secondary meaning of 'carrion'. Not only does it mean 'dead flesh', but also 'live flesh, and especially flesh contemptuously regarded as available for sexual pleasure'.<sup>46</sup> Once again, the dark feminine carries the image of the whore - the carrion good for kissing.

#### Image 4

Have you a daughter?

I have, my lord.

Let her not walk i'th'sun. Conception is a blessing,  
but as your daughter may conceive - friend, look to't.

11 ii 182-185

Ophelia has become identified with the 'dead dog' or the 'good kissing carrion'. If the sun breeds maggots in other carrion, it can do the same with her. Whether 'th'sun' figuratively implies the world of the court as opposed to the contemplative cloister, or is seen as a symbol

of the Prince himself, Ophelia is no longer presented as an idealised figure. Previously a 'soul's idol', she is now flesh good for kissing. Hamlet's awareness of the dark side of his anima means that she is now associated with corruption and suggestive of a whore.

'Conception' has a dual meaning. It means both pregnancy and the power of thought or understanding. As Hamlet has become only too aware, true understanding leads to insight into the corruption of life. In the case of Ophelia, this could be a revelation of her father's scheming nature; such are the 'maggots' which would be bred. Similarly, physical conception is a blessing in that life becomes creative and fruitful; and yet what is being born but only more sinners? This is the paradox which Hamlet is beginning to face. There are two sides to the Great Mother: she is both creative and destructive; she brings forth and nurtures and she destroys. Furthermore, the very instinctual energies that create new life can corrupt what has been created. Sexual desire is the energy of creation, and yet for Prince Hamlet it is the foremost example of a corruptive force. The mother and the whore are but two aspects of the one great archetype.

For Hamlet, the natural world of corruption and flesh is symbolised by his mother's instinctual sexuality. However, this is essentially his own dark feminine psyche from which he recoils. The emotive quality of this image portrays the revulsion which Hamlet feels towards his instinctual nature and his physical self. He is dominated by the odour of corruption, seen in the wriggling maggots. He is yet to fully accept and to transform the dark mother within.

From an archetypal perspective, this image is not merely the product of

'far gone' madness, or an 'antic disposition'. Rather it expresses those aspects of the dark mother and what she can evoke in the consciousness of man.

### Image 5

Get thee to a nunnery. Why, wouldst thou be a breeder  
of sinners?

111 i 121-122

This image contains the opposition of purity and corruption, chastity and childbearing. Inside a nunnery Ophelia can remain chaste and pure, and escape the role of a mother, 'a breeder of sinners'. And while it is a theologically dogmatically correct statement that except for Christ, all born of woman are sinners, such an image primarily reflects Hamlet's psychological state. Confronted by the bestial nature of his mother's sexuality, he sees childbearing solely as an expression of that animal instinct. Moreover, this 'breeding' procreates children, who are born into this instinctual world of the flesh and cannot escape its corruption.

Hamlet is so dominated by the darkness of his instinctual self that he cannot recognise its positive, life-fulfilling qualities. The dynamic force of instinct is the life energy itself. To reject one's instinctual nature is to reject life. In demanding that Ophelia go to a nunnery, Hamlet is denying her the possibility of experiencing her instinctual self, either sexually or as a mother. Earlier, he had symbolically associated Ophelia with the daughter of Jephthah, Judge of Israel, who before being sacrificed by her father, bewailed her virginity. Later,

a song of the mad Ophelia will echo this same theme as it fancifully describes the seduction she never experienced. Although a nunnery may keep her chaste and pure, it is life denying. Here again, Shakespeare images the dual effect of man's instinctual nature. While the instincts carry the energy of life, at the same time they can corrupt, evoke what is bestial in man.

However, through a secondary meaning of 'nunnery', this image has more complex associations. 'Nunnery' was sometimes used in Elizabethan slang as an ironic term for a brothel. So Ophelia becomes identified with a whore. What this portrays is the confusion within Hamlet as to the nature of his anima. As a figure of idealised purity, Ophelia must not be contaminated by the corruption of the world. She must remain a 'celestial' figure. And yet, at the same time, his anima has begun to develop a darker, earthier quality. In his mother he has glimpsed the dark, instinctual face of the feminine, and this is about to be projected onto Ophelia. Inevitably for the prince, there is ambiguity and confusion as she is seen to belong to both cloister and brothel.

In this ambiguity the opposites exist and, despite the confusion of the prince, what is seen is a single image which contains their duality. The light and the dark anima exist together; the single image expresses both sides of the archetypal whole.<sup>47</sup> This is an important step towards the reconciliation of opposites, towards their marriage and eventually, the transformation of the feminine.

Image 6

I have heard of your paintings well enough. God  
hath given you one face and you make yourselves another.  
You jig and amble and you lisp, you nickname God's creatures  
and make your wantonness your ignorance.

111 i 144-7

At the deepest level, this image portrays Maya herself, the woman who is the dance of illusion. She it is who creates the illusion which we perceive as the world. Jung describes Maya as an aspect of the anima;

she is the great illusionist, the seductress who draws him into life with her Maya - and not only into life's reasonable and useful aspects, but into its frightful paradoxes and ambivalences where good and evil, success and ruin, hope and despair counterbalance each other.<sup>48</sup>

She is the archetypal seductress whom Hamlet has projected onto Ophelia. For the prince Ophelia has become a figure of ambivalence, as the possible dual implications of 'nunnery' suggested. And here she enacts both 'wantonness' and 'ignorance'. But more predominantly she is a figure of deception, creating a false face for herself and new names for God's creatures. Such deception comes from the anima's ability to project contents of the unconscious onto the external world. This is what Jung calls the 'projection-making factor'. The real world vanishes, its face covered by the paintings of unconscious projections. The external world thus carries the contents of our own psyche, and as such we are drawn into it, seduced by it.

Session Five: The Drowning of Ophelia

Image 1

There is a willow grows askant the brook  
That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream.

Image 2

Therewith fantastic garlands did she make  
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies and long purples,  
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,  
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.

Image 3

There on the pendant boughs her crownet weeds  
Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook.

Image 4

Her clothes spread wide,  
And mermaid like awhile they bore her up,  
Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds,  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and indued  
Unto that element.



Image 5

But long it could not be  
Till that her garments heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.

lv vii 165-182

Gertrude's description of Ophelia's drowning is a powerfully archetypal image. It symbolically portrays the dissolution of Ophelia as an anima figure; her return into the waters of the unconscious. The 'celestial' Ophelia cannot contain the more comprehensive picture of the feminine now realised by Hamlet.

Even though he may ambiguously allude to her place as being in a 'nunnery' and refer to her 'wantonness', she is really not a suitable figure to embrace the darker side of the feminine. She does, in fact, reflect an idealised state of innocence which Hamlet has grown beyond, and so must go back to the unconscious from which as an anima figure she arose.

Like Venus born from the water, the anima is the personification of the feminine psyche. In human form, she rises into consciousness. But if a new awareness grows of the feminine psyche which this figure is unable to bear, then the anima will dissolve back into her element, later to be reborn in a different form.

The details with which Shakespeare images Ophelia's drowning symbolically amplify her dissolution. A weeping willow is associated with forsaken love and is thus emblematic of Ophelia's state. However, the willow is

also an enchanted tree sacred to the Moon Goddess, Hecate. It is Hecate herself, dark Goddess of the Underworld, who actually dissolves the idealised figure of Ophelia. Hamlet's understanding of his feminine self has grown to include its archetypal darkness, and it is this darkness which dissolves Ophelia back into the unconscious. But it is to a 'brook' that Ophelia returns; not to some stagnant pool, but the flowing water of life. Ophelia's chastity and her surrender to her father's will symbolised a denial of the feminine self and the instinctual flow of life. Only after the death of her father can she express her own feelings, bewail her virginity, her forsaken love. But in these mad laments she has already begun the process of dissolution. Her madness reflects the dissolving of consciousness, the immersion into the unconscious. In her drowning this is completed and, as such, it is a return to the instinctual flow of life. The anima returns to the flow, which as a masculine crystallised ideal, it was denied. Furthermore, her association with flowers at the moment of her drowning points towards rebirth, a symbolic rebirth: for drowning is both a death and also a baptism. In alchemy, water was thought of as the womb, and drowning as a return to the womb for rebirth. Only when the idealised anima has been dissolved can the complete feminine be born into consciousness.

Ophelia's role as an anima figure is amplified by her association with a mermaid. According to Jung, the mermaid corresponds directly to the anima. The great kinship between the anima and the water that is the unconscious is here clearly expressed. Her fish's tail images the fact that although personified into a human form the anima can never be made fully conscious. However much the anima is projected into consciousness, part of her will remain unknown, for the waters of the unconscious are her real home. Shakespeare's description of Ophelia as:

like a creature native and indued  
Unto that element.<sup>49</sup>

may be read as referring to this. The anima rises from the water, it is her element and there she returns 'To muddy death'.

This final image of 'muddy death' again suggests the idea of transformation and rebirth. Mud symbolises:

The receptive earth impregnated by the fertilising  
waters, the source and potential of fertility and growth.<sup>50</sup>

With her crown of wild flowers Ophelia goes to her death, a death which can also be a birth. The sexual connotations of 'long purples' combined with this symbolic reading of mud adds to our understanding of this archetypal process. The death of a 'cold maid' is the loss of her chastity. She loses the ideal of innocence and purity, taking on a deeper and darker aspect of the feminine - that of the 'receptive earth impregnated by the fertilising waters of life'. What is death to the maid is the depths of her feminine creative instincts, and this can only be realised through the loss of her virginity. Creativity and life can only come from the depths, and the depths are the dark unknown.

This whole image of Ophelia's drowning has strong echoes of the Rape of Persephone, who is carried off by Hades whilst gathering flowers, and is forced to spend half the year underground. Here is a clear allusion to the dual nature of the feminine, the light and the dark. For half the year, Persephone can be the maiden Kore, virgin daughter of Demeter; but also for half the year she must be wife of Hades, and Queen of the Underworld. The virgin and the mother are the archetypal poles of the Eternal Feminine, and it is in the Underworld that Persephone realises

her maternal self. Outwitted by Hades, she bites into a pomegranate and eats seven of its seeds. The pomegranate is a symbol of marriage, and thus Persephone's union with Hades becomes indissoluble. Neumann, however, looks more closely at the significance of this fruit;

The redness of the pomegranate symbolises the woman's womb, the abundance of seeds its fertility.<sup>51</sup>

The rape of Persephone is consummated, she is no longer a maiden but becomes both wife and mother. The descent into Hades is the transformation of the maiden. In the dark depths of the earth she realises the maternal, fruitful aspect of the Feminine. As such, she symbolises the creativity of nature, the seed that is planted in the earth and germinates in its darkness. But for only half the year does Persephone remain as Queen of the Underworld; for the other half, she returns to be the daughter of Demeter. Both mother and daughter are reunited, and together they symbolise the two poles of the Eternal Woman, the mother and the virgin. However, as Persephone has realised her maternal self she is, in fact, identical with the mother. In her, the maiden and the mother are one. As such she personifies the dual aspects of the feminine archetype, which Christianity unites in Mary the Virgin Mother.

The rape of the maiden, the loss of innocence and the descent to the Underworld do not mean a denial of the maiden. Rather, it allows for both poles of the Feminine to be united. When Persephone returns she is both maiden and mother.

Ophelia may be understood as the virgin aspect of the Eternal Feminine. Her drowning, her return to the unconscious, is necessary to realise the

instinctual, maternal side of the archetype. Yet finally, these two poles of the Feminine are seen as one whole. This I believe to be the archetypal significance of Gertrude's image, spoken after Ophelia's burial;

Anon, as patient as the female dove  
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,  
His silence will sit drooping.<sup>52</sup>

As already mentioned, the 'female dove' corresponds to the feminine Spirit of God. This is the transformation of the feminine archetype, whose dual aspects are recognised as the 'golden couplets'. The acceptance and integration of the dark as well as the light side of the Feminine, the Queen of the Underworld as well as the Kore maiden, is what effects this transformation. But her dual aspects, the virgin and the mother, remain, no longer in opposition but in harmony as 'golden couplets', their golden colour symbolising that they, too, are transformed. Ophelia's drowning is an important part of the realisation of the two poles of the Archetypal Feminine. It is a death that leads to the birth of the golden couplets of the female dove, to the final transformation of the Feminine.

Session Six: Prince Hamlet 1

Image 1

Oh that this too too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew.

1 ii 129-130  
(The Macmillan Shakespeare)<sup>53</sup>

Hamlet, longing to escape the confines of the flesh, images its dissolution into the heavenly substance, dew. The polarities of heaven and earth are symbolically evoked, but rather than any reconciliation of these opposites, Hamlet rejects the dense world of the flesh. Indeed, the word 'flesh' does not carry the meaning of simply the human body, but since the third century has meant 'the world in a moral sense as opposed to the spirit'.<sup>54</sup> Thus Hamlet's rejection of 'flesh' reflects his father's rejection of the feminine principle, which Jung associated with the world of nature and matter.

Within our Christian culture 'flesh' has acquired negative associations, as being the place of man's instinctual desires. The Catechism asks us to renounce

the sinful lusts of the flesh.<sup>55</sup>

and St. Paul writes:

Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill  
the lusts thereof.<sup>56</sup>

However appropriate it may be to exhort man to deny the desires of his instinctual nature, a total denial inevitably results in a psychological split between spirit and matter, the masculine and feminine aspects of

man. Hamlet's desire to escape the flesh can be read as a denial of his own instinctual self; and it is the redemption of this feminine aspect that is to be his most difficult task.

## Image 2

O God! God!

How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't, ah fie, 'tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed: things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely.

1 ii 132-137

The emptiness which Hamlet here feels towards 'the uses of this world' suggests that his libido has left the conscious world and sunk back into the maternal depths which are the source of life. The incestuous return to the mother has begun, but as yet it is not a conscious journey into the dark instinctual realm. There is therefore the psychological danger that the libido will get stuck in the maternal womb, and then the upper world remain as nothing but a shadow. However, for Prince Hamlet, the ghost's revelations and demand for revenge will change this unconscious regression into a conscious, heroic descent into the dark maternal depths. But in this image there is no such conscious challenge, only a melancholic withdrawal.

The garden is a symbol for tamed and ordered nature. It is the natural creativity of the earth, the instinctual forces of life, controlled by



conscious discrimination. But the garden which is Hamlet's world has been neglected and so possessed by weeds. His father denied his feminine, instinctual self, which so neglected, grew to seed; it has now become dominated by the shadow. Claudius personifies that which is 'rank and gross in nature', the negative expression of man's instinctual drives. Later he will refer to his act of murder as 'rank';

Oh my offence is rank, it smells to heaven.<sup>57</sup>

If the shadow is left unacknowledged it will grow, feeding on the energy of the unconscious. This weed-filled garden is the archetypal predicament which Prince Hamlet has inherited. It is the world from which he withdraws.

The appropriateness of this image is that it portrays the psychological fact that the shadow is a part of man's natural self. Furthermore, as the weeds grow, nurtured by mother earth, so the shadow is nurtured by the instinctual forces of the Great Mother. For her energy to be fully beneficial, the shadow must be attended to. There must be a continual process of observance, and 'weeding', as undesirable aspects of the personality are acknowledged and confronted. If this does not happen, the shadow can slowly come to dominate. Although Hamlet's garden is one of neglect, it also images an abundance of life. The garden which 'grows to seed' from the perspective of the gardener is undesirable. Even so, this image also evokes the fertility of nature. What was denied by King Hamlet is the instinctual energy of life. If repressed, this will express itself through the shadow as a negative corruptive force, though it ever remains the creative, life-giving energy of the Great Mother.

### Image 3

I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all my custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'er hanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.

11 ii 295-303

Again Hamlet images the withdrawal of his libido from the external world. He describes his life as without vitality; he sees the earth as 'sterile', the heavens 'a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours'. Rather than as a mere negation, this image may be read as a stage in an alchemical/psychological process. 'A foul and pestilent congregation of vapours' suggests the stage of 'Putrefactio', which is associated with stench and bad odours. Putrefaction is the rotting that breaks down dead bodies. Just as the King must die for a new conscious dominant or spiritual principle to be born, so the old structure of consciousness needs to break up before a new one comes into being.

This image contains the now familiar pair of heaven and earth. The 'sterile' earth can be read as the archetypal wasteland, the desolation that must precede any new birth. As in the cycle of nature, the energy withdraws into the maternal depths, leaving the surface barren and infertile. In describing the earth as a 'promontory' Hamlet evokes an image of the sea all but surrounding the land. These are the waters of the

unconscious into which his libido has descended. Because of this descent into the unconscious, the structure of the conscious ego disintegrates. This conscious structure is the masculine, heavenly principle, which for the Prince is now in the process of putrefaction.

Image 4

There's something in his soul  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood.

111 i 165-6

Claudius is anxious, possibly sensing Hamlet's brooding revenge and the plot he is soon to hatch with the help of the players. However, this image may also be read symbolically, with Claudius unwittingly alluding to Hamlet's inner journey.

'Melancholy', or 'melancholia', is not just associated with fashionable Renaissance lovers, but is also identified with the alchemical state of 'nigredo'. The 'nigredo' refers to a psychological withdrawal from the conscious world into the dark chaos of the unconscious. Hamlet's 'melancholy' alludes to the fact that his attention has begun to be focussed within; he has withdrawn from the outer to the inner world. This is the domain of the archetypes, the eternal world of the psyche, or 'soul'. Here his melancholy plays a positive part, it 'sits on brood'. Jung relates the process of 'brooding' to the initial stages of the Opus:

The attention given to the unconscious has the  
effect of incubation, a brooding over the slow fire

needed in the initial stages of the work ...

It is really as if attention warmed the unconscious and activated it, thereby breaking down the barriers that separated it from consciousness.<sup>58</sup>

The energy which is withdrawn into the unconscious is needed to hatch the egg, the symbol of potential wholeness and new birth. This wholeness will be the Self, the union of conscious and unconscious which is also the pre-existent, transcendent centre of consciousness. As an egg, it has always existed in the depths of the psyche; but it needs the incestuous return, this inner concentration of energy, in order to be hatched and to become conscious.

#### Image 5

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,  
Confederate season, else no creature seeing,  
Thou mixture rank of midnight weeds collected,  
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,  
Thy natural magic and dire property  
On wholesome life usurps immediately.

111 ii 249-54

These are the words of Lucianus, about to murder the player-king. In this speech and subsequent mime action: 'pour poison in the sleepers' ears', Claudius is finally confronted with his crime, the murder of the sleeping king. Although primarily a portrait of his uncle, Lucianus is introduced by the Prince as

This suggests that Hamlet is associating both his uncle and himself with this figure.

Psychologically, what is enacted with this speech is the confrontation with the shadow. However, the shadow is not separate from oneself. Its midnight world is one's own unconscious darkness. Prince Hamlet, as his father's son and as the one entrusted with the secret of the ghost, is the carrier of the spirit of consciousness. In the association of both Hamlet and his uncle with Lucianus, there is a relationship between the spirit of consciousness and the shadow. Symbolically, the light of consciousness is entering into the unconscious, where it can make visible the dark side of the personality. But not only does the individual become aware of his shadow side, but in that light the shadow is able to see itself, which, in the darkness of the unconscious, it cannot do. It is as if the light of consciousness upon entering the underworld, acts as a mirror in which the shadow can see its own face. In the figure of Lucianus are contained both these aspects: Hamlet's identification with his own shadow and Claudius's mirrored image of his own dark self when confronted by the player.

The shadow is dangerous because it is unrecognised, unknown. It was King Hamlet's innocence as to his brother's designs that made him vulnerable. In The Tempest a similar ignorance caused Prospero to lose his kingdom to the 'evil nature' of his brother. The 'defeat' of the shadow is effected through first becoming conscious of it and being able to recognise it. Here confrontation is necessary, because the shadow can only be seen and recognised if it is directly confronted. Other than this, it's 'shadowy', elusive nature makes it unobservable.



may be identified with dark instinctual powers of the unconscious, that same serpent which stung the sleeping King Hamlet. This is the instinctual energy of the natural, animal self in man, and Hecate is frequently called 'Mistress of Wild Animals'.

This animal energy can overwhelm man's conscious ego, and reduce him to the level of a beast. In Ovid's Metamorphosis it is with Hecate's help that Circe transformed Picus's men into beasts. And Denmark has suffered a similar fate; Hyperion has been poisoned and a satyr king rules. In both cases, what caused this situation was a rejection of the feminine. Picus rejected the advances of Circe, who with her wild animals personifies the feminine instinctual psyche. King Hamlet denied this same feminine archetype.

If the animal, instinctual energy within man is rejected, it is denied a conscious channel of expression. It will, therefore, manifest through the unconscious aspect of the personality, which is the shadow, and express itself in a negative manner. Allied with the repressed instinctual psyche, the shadow then has the power to overwhelm ego consciousness, for it acts not merely with the energy of the personality, but with the formidable dynamism of the instincts. This is the situation portrayed in Hamlet, where the union of the shadow with the instinctual psyche is symbolised in the affair and then incestuous marriage of Claudius and Gertrude. The significance of Hamlet calling their marriage 'incestuous' was examined earlier, and it was suggested that both partners enact man's instinctual energy. As a marriage of 'like with like', it may also be seen as a marriage of unconscious with unconscious: the unconscious personality with the unconscious instinctual psyche.

For Prince Hamlet, Denmark ruled by Claudius and Gertrude was a world imaged as 'an unweeded garden', possessed by 'things rank and gross in nature'. In this speech of Lucianus, these images are repeated. His poison is a 'mixture rank of midnight weeds collected'; here again the 'weeds' symbolise the dark, natural forces within man, the 'natural magic' of the Goddess. However, if this speech is to be understood as not just a reflection of Claudius, but as also referring to Hamlet, why is he praying to Hecate? Rather than a prayer to a Greek Goddess, he is, in fact, addressing his own dark, instinctual self. Evoking the feminine archetype of darkness, he is consciously relating to that which has been neglected.

It is relevant here to refer to a dream which Jung reported.<sup>62</sup> In this dream there was a white magician who addressed the dreamer at considerable length, but the dreamer only retained the closing words: 'And for this we need the help of the black magician', for in the dream it was the black magician who had found the lost keys of paradise, though he didn't know what to do with them. Jung interprets<sup>63</sup> these keys of paradise as those which open the way to individuation. The black magician corresponds to the descent into darkness.

For Hamlet, the Goddess of the Underworld herself holds the keys to free him from the rule of the shadow, and thus to open the way towards individuation. The Prince must evoke the same archetype as killed his father; her poison can now act as antidote. The difference between himself and his father is that his father was stung 'whilst sleeping', but he has consciously evoked Hecate. In the process of individuation, it is the conscious descent into darkness, the conscious relationship with the instinctual psyche that is all important.



In Hamlet, confrontation with the shadow necessitates relating to the instinctual psyche, because it is from here that the shadow draws its power. It will only be when Hamlet has integrated and redeemed his dark, feminine self that he can finally free both Denmark and himself from the rule of Claudius.

### Image 6

'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot-blood,  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on.

111 iii 379-382

The midnight world of Lucianus is by now embraced by Hamlet in his own words. This is the 'witching time', the time of the dark side of the feminine. In this hour 'churchyards yawn', suggesting an opening between the surface world of consciousness, and the underworld. Through this opening 'hell itself breathes out/Contagion to this world'. The dark forces of the unconscious 'breathe' into 'this world', the conscious world. Normally, this would be considered as being negative, but in the context of Hamlet it is an important step towards healing the split between the conscious and the instinctual unconscious.

'Now could I drink hot blood' might be read as the words of the traditional revenge character. But 'hot blood' is also the blood of life, which

Hamlet is integrating in the image of drinking. In describing the alchemical Opus, Jung writes of the significance of blood:

In this state of 'whiteness' one does not live in the true sense of the word, it is a sort of abstract, ideal state. In order to make it come alive it must have 'blood' it must have what the alchemists call the rubedo, the 'redness' of life. Only the total experience of being can transform this state of albedo (whiteness) into a fully human mode of existence. Blood alone can reanimate a glorious state of consciousness in which the last trace of blackness is dissolved, in which the devil no longer has an autonomous existence but rejoins the profound unity of the human psyche.<sup>64</sup>

It is not suggested that Hamlet has reached this final stage of completion, but rather that he is at an earlier corresponding state in the spiral path of individuation. Having inherited the idealised consciousness of his father, he needs the 'redness of life' to become more complete, to live more fully. Furthermore, Hamlet's image echoes the connection Jung makes between the blood of life and the devil, or hell. But although Claudius carries the stamp of Satan, for Hamlet hell is more the domain of Hecate. His primal darkness is that within his mother, it is the Goddess rather than the devil. The words that follow this image give evidence to this;

Soft, now to my mother.<sup>65</sup>

In Hamlet's predicament Shakespeare goes beyond the patriarchal world of Christianity, where the primal division is between the masculine opposites of Christ and the Devil. Satan, in the shadow figure of Claudius, is not

excluded from Hamlet's opus, but the Prince must redeem the greater split between the masculine and feminine, the archetypes of the Father and the Mother. For in drinking the 'hot blood' of Hecate's hell, Hamlet is imaging a unity between 'this world', the conscious world of the Father, and the instinctual source of life, the Great Mother herself.

Session Seven: Prince Hamlet, 'To Be, Or Not To Be'

TO BE, OR NOT TO BE

Image 1

To be, or not to be, that is the question;  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
And by opposing end them.

Image 2

To die - to sleep,  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished.

Image 3

To die, to sleep;  
To sleep, perchance to dream - ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause - there's the respect  
That makes clamity of so long life.

Image 4

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
Th'oppressors wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin?

Image 5

Who would fardels bare,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,

Image 6

And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?

Image 7

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.

Image 8

And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry  
And lose the name of action.

lll i 56-88

In this interior debate, Hamlet describes himself as caught between the polarities of life and death - 'To be, or not to be'. Furthermore, he sees himself as having free will to choose between this world with its pain and suffering - 'The thousand natural shocks', and the unknown world of death. However, the very process of thinking - 'the pale cast of thought', appears to deny Hamlet the ability to act with any 'resolution'. The debate thus ends without any choice being made, either for life or death. The Prince is still caught between this duality.

The world of duality is the world of the ego. This is most evident in the development of the child. Initially, it lives in complete oneness with the Self, in what Neumann calls the original uroboric state.<sup>66</sup> Ideally, this oneness is experienced externally in a feeling of oneness with life and the mother. However, as the ego develops there is a separation from the Self, often experienced as a separation between the

individual self and the outside world, or between child and mother. Thus the baby leaves the paradise of oneness for the duality of the ego. Only on the level of the Self can this original oneness again be experienced.

What is understood as 'free-will' is the ego's ability for self-determination. The opposition of life and death is the primal duality encountered by the ego, and its most fundamental choice could only be between these opposites. It is this choice which Hamlet debates. However, in debating it he becomes unable to choose. He does not decide to accept life, but rather condemns his inability to take 'action'.

But is the ego, in fact, able to make such a fundamental choice? Later Hamlet proposes a different view:

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will - 67

Here he describes man's final destiny as being beyond the scope of the ego. The ego's free-will is but the ability to 'rough-hew'. The 'divinity' can be understood as the dimension of the Self, which, in contrast to the ego, is beyond the opposition of life and death. Only the Self can determine the moment of death, as only the Self has vision of a greater pattern in which life and death are not in opposition, but belong together as interrelated parts of a whole. Hamlet's famous debate does not finally reflect his ability to choose between 'a weary life' and death, but rather that being caught between this opposition he mentally vacillates between the two. He still views life from the perspective of the ego and its belief in its own free will. It is only later, after he has encountered death in the graveyard scene, that he understands how life and death belong together, and that it is not for him to choose



between them but rather to accept his destiny as part of a divine plan;

There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow ...

... Let be.<sup>68</sup>

Missing  
page/pages

Session Eight: Prince Hamlet 111

Image 1

Gravedigger: This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Hamlet: This?

Gravedigger: E'en that.

Hamlet: Alas, poor Yorick. I know him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath bore me on his back a thousand times, and now - how abhorred in my imagination it is. My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chop fallen.

V i 174-186

Holding Yorick's skull, Hamlet reflects upon mortality. Such a contemplation on death belongs to the Renaissance tradition of 'memento mori'. But it can also be seen as an encounter with the archetypal duality of life and death, the primal pair of opposites.

To reflect on death can lead one to view life under the aspect of eternity ... In fact, the origin and growth of consciousness seems to be connected uniquely with the experience of death. Perhaps the first pair of opposites to penetrate the dawning awareness of primitive humans was the contrast between the living and the dead. Probably it is only a mortal creature that is capable of consciousness. Our mortality is our greatest and our ultimate weakness.<sup>69</sup>

To contemplate death is to contemplate life and the transience of matter, or our physical selves. Death is the domain of Kali, the dark goddess of destruction. For Hamlet, the graveyard scene is an encounter with Kali, who is often portrayed with a necklace of skulls. He has confronted his personal mother, his own dark instinctual self; now he meditates upon that primal darkness, death. His 'memento mori' can, therefore, be read as a personal confrontation with the dark side of the Feminine Archetype. The Feminine gives birth and nurtures, and the Feminine destroys. This is the basic duality of the world of matter, these are the two sides of the Great Mother. If the feminine world of matter is to be embraced, the individual must accept both life and death. If life is to be embraced, death must be embraced. This 'memento mori' can then be understood as a reconciliation of 'To be or not to be'; a realisation that life and death belong together.

But to contemplate death is to contemplate eternity. Death is the ultimate physical reality, and yet also the moment of transformation into spirit. Here matter turns into its polar opposite,<sup>70</sup> and the feminine archetype is transmuted. In Hamlet this is symbolically expressed at the end of the graveyard scene in the image of the mother dove, the feminine spirit of God. For Prince Hamlet, the descent into the dark maternal depths necessitates facing death. Here he not only confronts his personal mortality in the figure of Yorick, but he transmutes the Goddess herself. The dark mother becomes the mother dove. In his opus the individual not only transforms himself, but the archetypes themselves are transmuted.

Image 2

Now get you to my lady's chamber and tell her, let her  
paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come.

l i 186-188

Earlier I related such 'paintings' to the seduction of the anima and  
the illusion of 'Maya'. There is the dance of illusion we call life  
and yet behind it always lies the skull of death. Both are aspects of  
the Eternal Feminine.

Image 3

Hold off the earth awhile,  
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.

Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,  
T'o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus.

V i 242-6 <sup>71</sup>

Image 5

And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,  
Make Ossa like a wart.

V i 275-8

The first image belongs to Laertes, the second to Hamlet; but both refer to the Ossa - Pelion myth, and are best read as a complimentary pair.

In these two images, Hamlet and Laertes divide the Ossa-Pelion myth, just as they share Ophelia's body, and later are to kill each other with the same exchanged weapons. From the perspective of this myth, these

images describe something more than just wild ranting. In the distant proto-myth, Otos and Ephialtes are twin sons of Poseidon. Seeking to war against the gods and seize Hera and Artemis, they pile Ossa on Olympus and Pelion on Ossa. In one story Apollo kills them; in another, they pursue Artemis, who leads them to an island. On this island, she takes the form of a white deer, stands between them and then disappears so that their hurled javelins kill each other at the same moment.

Laertes and Hamlet can be seen as these twin brothers, seeking to join earth to heaven. As sons of Poseidon, they embody the forces of the sea, the instinctual unconscious. This is a moment of madness as, just stirred by the burial of Ophelia, the forces of rage and grief break through the bounds of reason. In this moment, heaven and earth are united as the unconscious bursts into the conscious mind. But the myth adds a deeper perspective to this situation. The twin brothers, as sons of Poseidon, are half-Gods, but they are not full immortals. To wage war with the Olympians may be considered an act of inflation; the ego swamped by the unconscious has identified with its divine power. But although in the myth these twin brothers are undifferentiated, in Hamlet there is a great difference between Laertes and Hamlet. Laertes can be read as a shadow figure for Hamlet. Laertes has been referred to as one driven by the instinct for revenge, but without the deliberation of consciousness. Interestingly, Claudius associated him with Lamord, the French horseman who is so at one with his horse

As he had been incorps'd and demi-natur'd  
With the brave beast.<sup>72</sup>

Jung refers to the horse as a libido-symbol, representing man's animal instinctual energy.<sup>73</sup> This association is here appropriate, for Laertes



is united with his instinctual desire for revenge. However, without the reflective powers of consciousness, this desire overwhelms him, and Shakespeare introduces his return with the symbolic image of 'the ocean overpeering of his list'.<sup>74</sup> Possessed by the desire for revenge, he becomes a victim of inflation, ready to defy God: 'to dare damnation'.

In contrast, Hamlet's major opus has been a conscious encounter with his instinctual self. He can be criticised for his 'delay', but not for allowing his passions to overwhelm him. Thus, whilst the images of Pelion and Ossa both portray a union of heaven and earth, of the conscious and unconscious, there is an important distinction between the first and the second. For the shadow twin Laertes, this union is the result of a consciousness overwhelmed and possessed by the instinctual unconscious. He is ruled by his revenge and easily manipulated by Claudius, whose treacherous designs he enacts, until he dies, caught in his own 'foul practice'. But for Prince Hamlet this union images a creative reconciliation of the split between heaven and earth - a split inherited from his father. Symbolically, it is at this moment, after Laertes' image of Pelion, and before his reference to Ossa, that he assumes his royal title, himself announcing:

This is I,

Hamlet the Dane. 75

In contrast to Laertes, Hamlet now has a greater sense of personal identity. He is the ruler and not the ruled.

Image 4

What is he whose grief  
Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow  
Conjures the wand'ring stars and makes them stand  
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,  
Hamlet the Dane.

V i 247-252

Hamlet is reacting against the 'grief' of Laertes, dramatically expressed in 'Image 3'. However, the imagery here belongs more to the Prince than to Laertes. It is Hamlet, and not Laertes, who 'Conjures the wand'ring stars' as for the first time he proclaims his royal name, 'Hamlet the Dane'. The imagery of the stars places his royal role in a cosmic setting, suggesting that he has now taken on his father's archetypal role as ruler. Whilst for his father it was a heavenly position as 'Hyperion' divorced from the 'satyr' instinctual earth, for the Prince these instinctual depths have not been avoided. Furthermore, just as a complete embrace of matter can transmute it into spirit, for Prince Hamlet it was his descent to the feminine depths that realised the stars.

Image 6

This is mere madness,  
And thus awhile the fit will work on him.  
Anon, as patient as the female dove  
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,  
His silence will sit drooping.

V i 279-283

This image has already been analysed in some detail, but despite the repetition, a full analysis is offered.

There is a Eucharistic prayer in The Acts of Thomas which worships the Holy Ghost in female form:

Come holy dove,  
Which hast brought forth the twin nestlings;  
Come secret mother ... 76

The similarity between this apocryphal text and Shakespeare's image 'twin nestlings' echoing 'golden couplets', may, I have suggested, point to plagiarism and yet also have archetypal implications. The 'female dove' as 'secret mother' of the Feminine Spirit of God, is the highest form of the Feminine, of the mother image. Significantly spoken by Hamlet's own mother, this image suggests the transformation of the negative mother image. And on a certain level Gertrude herself may be understood as transformed. Hamlet's 'madness', his descent into the unconscious, has 'worked on him'. He now accepts his father's archetypal role as ruler, 'Hamlet the Dane', and the mother image is integrated, transformed.

From the 'female dove' are born 'golden couplets'. 'Golden' suggests an alchemical completion: the lead, the base metal, has been turned into gold. The 'couplets' are the harmony of the opposites, the duality of heaven and earth, conscious and unconscious that has been in such dominant opposition until now. Through the transformation of the feminine archetype this conflicting duality has been reborn into harmony. Jung comments:

The appearance of a pair of doves points to the imminent marriage of the filius regius and to the dissolution of the opposites as a result of the union.<sup>77</sup>

From the graveyard is to be born a unity, a marriage that will both embrace and transcend the duality. This can only be the Self.

'Couplets' also has poetic associations. Could there be a witty reminder that this transformation has been realised in verse? Just as the prince's 'madness' was versified, so may not the newly born unity also be reflected in the verse? If the inner, archetypal drama is enacted in language, the words too will embody this new transformation. However, as Gertrude describes, the final transformation will be into 'silence'. Traditionally, the Self, man's transcendent centre, cannot be described in words:

The name that can be named is not the eternal name.<sup>78</sup>

and

Those who know do not talk.<sup>79</sup>

Hamlet's final words are

- the rest is silence.

Session Nine: Prince Hamlet 1V

Image 1

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them how we will -

V ii 10-11

Earlier, Fortune had been 'a strumpet'. Now, Hamlet sees a design in the universe that is divine. Although related to his personal destiny - his escape from death in England - in this image Hamlet places mankind within a cosmic frame. Above and below, heaven and earth, are seen as inter-related and there is a sense of harmony. Is this new perspective of Hamlet related to the 'golden couplets' of the dove? The polarity and conflict of opposites that has so haunted the Prince has been transformed into the recognition of a larger dimension. Psychologically, this suggests an awareness of the Self in which all opposites are united. 'Rough hew them how we will' describes the activities of the ego, which can be associated with man's 'free will'. But embracing the ego and its limited ability for self determination is the Self, the psychic totality which is also our divine centre, the God within which guides our personal destiny.

Image 2

And isn't to be damn'd  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?

V ii 68-70

- In order to ascertain how a participant's response to a specific textual image might vary at different times, this image was used in two separate imaginal response sessions - 80

An analysis of this image has already been offered. However, in relation to this group of images which refer directly to Prince Hamlet, and which can be read as imaging aspects of his individuation, a further amplification of this particular image is now offered.

Hamlet may be criticised for his delay in killing Claudius. Indeed he has rebuked himself, comparing himself unfavourably with both the player and Fortinbras. But for the shadow to be fully vanquished, a conscious realisation of the instinctual psyche in which it is rooted is vital. Laertes did not deliberate or delay, and so became possessed by the unconscious. For the prince revenge has been a far slower process. It has involved not only Claudius, the personal shadow inherited from his father, but also the dark side of the feminine to which the shadow is married. Once this feminine archetype is consciously encountered and transformed, then the shadow no longer draws its power from these depths. It is only when this is accomplished that the shadow is fully conquered. Understood in a different way, the shadow can only be defeated from the perspective of the Self. The ego cannot exist without

a shadow. To deal with the shadow solely from the perspective of the ego is impossible. If one aspect of the shadow is vanquished, another will appear. If Hamlet is to fully defeat Claudius, there must be an awareness of the Self; and this in fact is what has happened.

That the transformation of the instinctual psyche and the realisation of the Self are, in fact, synonymous, is beautifully portrayed in the 'Bulls' or 'Oxherding Pictures' of Zen Buddhism. In this famous series of ten pictures, the path to enlightenment is outlined. It begins with 'The Search for the Bull'. The Bull is then found and caught, and the fifth picture is 'Taming the Bull', the sixth 'Riding the Bull Home'. Later the Bull and then the Self are transcended, and the eighth picture is that of an empty circle. But what concerns us here is the image of the Bull as a symbol for both the instinctual psyche and the Self. In picture four, the youth 'catches the ox' which must then be trained. Marvin Spiegelman has made a Jungian analysis of these pictures, and here he comments:

It is our own animal nature that must be tamed and trained, taught and civilised ... But the thing that the youth (and we) have gotten our hands upon is the Self, after all, and it is the Self as well as our Self. What we have gotten our hands on is the unconscious animal nature of God Himself! It is that in Him which is also unruly, primitive, unconscious, as Jung has shown so powerfully in his work, particularly in Answer to Job. We face the paradox that the Self, God, is in all nature, is nature, and partakes both of its great beauty and harmony and also of its horror, disharmony and wild disregard. It is the divine in us, indeed, that needs transforming, but is, at last, the divine itself.<sup>81</sup>



In his descent to the instinctual depths Hamlet goes beyond the ego, to an encounter with the dark side of the Self. The transformation of this darkness is his major opus. As Spiegelman comments, it is a transformation of the instinctual nature of God, and it is this which results in the realisation of the Self.

### Image 3

There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow.  
If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come,  
it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come.  
The readiness is all.

V ii 215-218

Hamlet has confronted death in the graveyard scene, and he no longer sees life and death as conflicting opposites. The two are but integral parts of a whole, and in this speech they carry equal weight. Neither is there any raging against fate; rather, in echoing the Gospel of Matthew, Hamlet sees even the death of a sparrow as included in the design of God. Accepting his own inevitable death, he surrenders himself to this larger design. Whatever his forebodings, he does not avoid the duel, but would rather 'Let be'. Hamlet sees death, not from the perspective of the physical body, nor from the ego where it is indeed 'the end', but rather from the perspective of the Self, which embraces both life and death. Then death is but a stage of transition and all that matters is 'the readiness'. This is an idea that Shakespeare will echo in King Lear, in Edgar's words to his father, Gloucester:

Men must endure

Their going hence even as their coming hither;

Ripeness is all.<sup>82</sup>

That Prince Hamlet is 'ready' or 'ripe' is implied by his acceptance of death, and his appreciation of a larger design than is visible to the ego. Hamlet has come to be aware of that in him which is beyond the ego; it is his journey to the depths of the instinctual psyche that has brought him to the Self and has made him 'ready'.

Those who see Hamlet's death as in any way negative have not appreciated this speech. In accepting his own death Hamlet is accepting life in its most profound sense. He has realised a mode of existence that is not centred in the ego and thus dependent upon this temporal world. His life is now centred in the Self, where life and death are one.

Image 4

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

V ii 364-5

Hamlet is dead. He has revenged his father's murder. Claudius, along with Gertrude and Laertes, lie dead. Hamlet's work is complete. He has given his dying voice to Fortinbras, and is indeed ready. In this image Horatio's 'flights of angels' suggests the 'ars morendi' convention of the soul being received out of the mouth of the dying by the Good Angel who flies up to heaven with it. From an archetypal perspective,

the soul and the Self are here synonomous, both describe man's transcendent essence. Hamlet's death images the final and complete transition from the temporal world of the ego to the eternal dimension of the Self.

### Image 5

Let four captains  
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,  
For he was likely, had he been put on,  
To have prov'd most royal; and for his passage,  
The soldier's music and the rite of war  
Speak loudly for him.

V ii 400-405

Hamlet's body is carried off with due ceremony. The four captains can be read as a symbol of the quaternio, reflecting the psychological completion realised by the Prince. But more obvious is Fortinbras's acknowledgement of his royalty, along with his standing as a soldier. His has been an inner battle, and as W.B. Yeats remarks:

Why should we honour those who die on the field  
of battle? A man may show as reckless a courage  
in entering into the abyss of himself.<sup>83</sup>

His inner quest into the abyss has been Hamlet's greatest adventure and most difficult task. The final action of revenge, the death of Claudius, is but the culmination of an inner process. The ghost's demand meant not just the killing of one man, but a total confrontation with the shadow, and a descent into the dark instinctual depths of the psyche.

The words of G. M. Hopkins are a most fitting epitaph for the Prince;

God's most deep decree

Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me.<sup>84</sup>

#### 4.6. An Analysis of the Imaginal Associations in Karen's Response-Work

In Section 3.7. it was suggested that the response images evoked in the sessions often reflected personal associations. In order to explore this area, Karen agreed to attend a number of response-work sessions, and to discuss her associations in depth. The following analysis illustrates the potential of integrating an imaginal with an analytic approach.

Not all of Karen's response-work is recorded here, rather it is a selection designed to illustrate an analysis of personal and archetypal associations. The 'Associations' and 'Commentary' were the product of our recorded discussions, written up after each session, which Karen has read through and agreed with. Thus, each of the following analyses of her imaginal responses reflects the understanding of her responses reached at that particular point in the response sessions. The first two recorded images, 'The Ghost, Image 1' and 'Claudius, Image 2' are discussed with reference to the associations of individual response images, under the heading of 'Associations'. However, as the response sessions progressed, and certain imaginal and psychological patterns became apparent, the discussion focussed more on the overall significance of the response images. These later analyses are offered under the heading 'Commentary'.

Furthermore, as these patterns became evident in later response sessions, some of the images of the earlier sessions could be seen as relating to patterns that were not perceived at the time. For example, the image of 'whore' in 'Claudius, Image 5' may be retrospectively seen as belonging to a dominant psychological pattern rather than just reflecting an Amsterdam memory. However, I have decided to leave each analysis as reflecting the discussion recorded during the session the particular response image was evoked.

- 'Single quotation marks' refer to Karen's response images, "double quotation marks" to her recorded remarks -

## The Ghost, Image 1

1. Cold, darkness, icy cold. Bitterness

2. Distant, far gone place

3. Baby - born yet dead with crown. In oak grove.

Mother - blue grey - wild, holds out hands for child.

Cannot reach it. Wind, moonless night. Death, emptiness.

Darkness.

### Associations:

'Baby' - Karen remembered that the first image, which was not recorded, was of a foetus, two months old. 'Two months dead' evoked a memory of an abortion and also a miscarriage: "That desperate feeling when a mother loses her child ... that tragedy that can only happen to a mother." In this way the image of the mother, holding out her hands for the child is linked with the dead baby.

'Crown' - relates to 'king' in the text, but also to Jungian concept of 'the Self' - the baby is the divine child: "there was something very pure about it, almost like the eternal child ... pure... beautiful golden baby."

'Oak grove' - a place of holy protection.

'Mother - blue grey - wild' associated with her own mother: "My image of my mother is wild ... she is an hysterical, neurotic woman."

The 'baby' appears to be associated not only with a personal experience of an abortion and a miscarriage, but also with a symbolic 'baby'. The 'baby' is herself, her true self, dead "not in the sense of having lived and died, but in the sense of having never lived." The 'mother' is

related to both the external, real mother, but also part of her feminine nature; "all that negative femininity within myself, the wild, destructive woman." In the protective 'oak grove' her true self, which is associated with the divine child within, is protected from the negative feminine. Separated from this aspect of the feminine there is the possibility that the 'baby' can come to life.

Karen was at this time undergoing an experience of psychologically separating herself from her mother. Thus the response image could suggest that once she is separate and thus protected from the mother and the negative feminine, she is ready to come to life, and live as her true self, a true self which is associated with the Self or divine child.

#### Claudius, Image 2

1. Half mockery (whore) half despair, regret (Pilate)
2. Medium
3. Image of laughing whore, flaunting with soldiers, pans to whore on a hill, laughing with others at man (Jesus) being crucified. Behind crowd, Pilate regretting his words. Jesus is not so vivid. More, the crowd, soldiers, street (common folk) feeling, juxtaposed with regal dilemma of responsibility.

#### Associations

'Harlot' - "brought up image of Mary Magdalene" (though not recorded above).

'Harlot's cheek' - "immediately conjures up the image of the way a whore

turns her cheek, she is mocking ... trying to attract ... the way whores do it, they turn their cheek to turn a man on, but in a mocking way, because it is all a game for them ... 90% of the time they are mocking the men that are falling for them."

Harlots mock men "and the ultimate mockery of man was the way they laughed at Jesus on the cross."

These associations relate to real-life experience of living in the red-light district of Amsterdam. The religious imagery reflects a strong Christian upbringing.

'Harlot' is associated with the idea of sin. This evokes the image of Jesus who suffered for the sins of mankind; "Whore represents all the sins of mankind and Jesus is suffering for them."

'The deed' is associated with Pilate - "doesn't Pilate say something 'I wash my hands of this deed'?"

'My most painted word' is associated with Pilate and the crowd's condemnation of Jesus - "It is the result of his words that denounce Jesus to death. It is his words that result in that most fundamental of deaths."

### Summary

The combination of an experience of living in a red-light district and a strong Christian upbringing appear to have evoked this response image. The mockery of the whore, both in the act of turning her cheek in an enticing manner, and in her whole attitude to men, becomes associated with the crowd mocking Christ at the crucifixion. This association seems caused partly by the image of Mary Magdalene and also by the whole concept of 'sin' evoked by the image of the 'harlot'. The words 'deed' and 'word' are, in this context, associated with Pilate's unjust condemnation of Christ, his false, or 'painted words' that cause the ultimate 'deed', the crucifixion.



## Gertrude, Image 2

1. -

2. Medium

3. Figure, whom I feel is innocent, puts head on block.

Executioner cuts head off. Pans to crowd. Is French Revolution. Figure was a young girl, blonde, dressed in blue. As Executioner holds up head it turns into Medussa's head of snakes, and all the crowd, which was laughing, is turned to stone, cursed by their own acts.

### Commentary

This response image produced no immediately apparent associations, and indeed the whole image puzzled Karen. However, further discussion did reveal meaningful associations, and an 'interpretation' of this response which is best offered in the form of a commentary.

The image of the girl being executed appeared to be evoked primarily by the textual word 'act', Gertrude's act of sexual betrayal. Gertrude's act is associated in the text with that of a whore, as the 'rose', an emblem of ideal love, is exchanged for a 'blister', suggestive of whores who were branded on the forehead.

The association of the whore, and the response image's portrayal of an execution with a laughing crowd was associated with Karen's response to 'Claudius, Image 2', discussed above. In both responses there is a similar portrayal of an 'unjust' execution, with a 'laughing crowd'. The presence of the 'whore', whether in the response (Claudius, Image 1) or the text (Gertrude, Image 2) provides a sexual context to this image.

In these two response images there is someone 'innocent' being killed, and for Karen this innocence is 'something holy' in conflict with her instinctual self. The idea of being killed in this context evoked the association that "For many years I was a groupie, and I led a very base sexual life". This sexual context was further emphasised when I asked Karen for her associations of being mocked or laughed at by a crowd:

A lot of mockery in the past ... like when I was ten and I was at a 'very nice' girl's school, all the kids in the school decided they were going to strip me naked, so they all took my clothes off and threw them round the playground and I was running after them in little green knickers. Then I went and put my gym slip on and they took that off. They never did that to anyone else.

A 'crowd' can carry the symbolic meaning of the instinctual self, as crowd's often function instinctively; Jung notes that

the total psyche emerging from the group is  
below the level of the individual psyche.

If it is a very large group, the collective psyche  
will be more like the psyche of an animal.<sup>85</sup>

This negative aspect of crowd psychology was only too evident in the French Revolution, which began with high ideals and ended with mob rule and bestial slaughter. Karen's response, 'Is French Revolution', historically amplifies the instinctual danger of a crowd..

Thus, if Karen's response images are read as symbolic statements, these two responses describe an 'innocent' or 'holy' aspect of herself being killed by her sensual, instinctual self. This situation appears to have

been 'acted out' in real life situations, whether as a child in the playground, or as a 'groupie'; Karen's choice of vocabulary in this latter instance reflects her psychological situation, she became one of the 'group' or 'crowd', her individual self swamped by collective sexual instincts. However, in both response images there is a contrast, not only between the innocent individual and the crowd, but also the acts of the crowd and the idea of 'responsibility' (Claudius, Image 1) and retribution, the crowd being 'cursed by their own acts' (Gertrude, Image 2). Both the 'responsibility' and the 'curse' suggest a moral stance within Karen; she was not totally swamped by her amoral instinctual self. It would appear that the textual image of Gertrude's 'act' evoked in Karen an underlying psychological pattern. Her response image of 'Medusa's head of snakes' adds an archetypal dimension to this situation. Medusa represents the instinctual psyche, as is imaged in the snakes 'the snake is the representative of the world of instincts'. The image of the crowd being turned to stone by Medusa's head refers to the myth of Medusa whose head had this property. Medusa symbolises the terrifying depths of the psyche, the realm of the Terrible Great Goddess. Encountered without the reflective stance of consciousness, (mythically imaged as the shield of Perseus,) this terrible abyss is fatal to the individual, is indeed petrifying.

However, in Karen's response image it is interesting to note that it is the laughing crowd that is petrified. Furthermore, Medusa is here a transformation of the 'innocent ... young girl'. What this suggests for Karen is that the killing of her own innocence by the crowd transformed her 'innocent' self into a Medusa figure, which in turn worked its retribution on the crowd. Psychologically this suggests that the encounter with the Terrible Mother, the depths of her instinctual self,

finally released Karen from the power of the mocking crowd. It is here appropriate to remember that Medusa is not only a 'belle dame sans merci' or witch, but also images the 'medium priestess or healer'.<sup>86</sup> And this has a personal relevance for Karen, who, since her time as a 'groupie' has discovered her ability as a healer. Her descent into the abyss, experienced both in the outer and inner world, connected her with her deep feminine power of healing. The innocent figure may have been slain by the instinctual 'serpent', but the positive side of the serpent, its attributes of wisdom and healing, have been assimilated.

Hamlet's encounter with the Terrible Mother, imaged for him in Gertrude's sensuality, resulted in the death of his own innocence, and also the drowning of his idealised, virgin Ophelia. However, these deaths, the latter confronted in the graveyard scene, resulted in a transformation of the feminine. Karen appears to have trod a similar archetypal path of death and transformation, in which, like Hamlet, sexuality and the image of the 'whore' played a dominant role.

#### Gertrude, Image 4

1. Recognition/identification with image - sadness
2. Vivid
3. Characterless face - like mask - go through eyes.  
Face giant monster, first serpent then dragon-like, firey,  
full of poison, base. Rises up, roars. Just watch it.

#### Commentary

The textual image portrays Gertrude's forced confrontation with her 'act'.

Karen's response images the archetypal significance of this confrontation, as Gertrude's 'act' is the work of the instinctual 'serpent', the 'fiery' 'dragon' of sensuality and passion that inhabits the depths of the psyche. The serpent's 'poison' also has an archetypal meaning in that poison belongs to the domain of the feminine archetype;<sup>87</sup> it was this 'poison' that killed King Hamlet. However, for Karen this serpent/dragon has both a personal and an archetypal significance in that in her destructive and yet transformative encounter with her instinctual depths she met this dragon; thus in her response she writes: 'recognition/identification with image'. Like Gertrude, Karen has faced the darkness of her instinctual self, and like Gertrude these depths were encountered through the dark side of her sexuality. Thus in Karen the same archetypal drama as imaged in Hamlet has been played out.

#### Gertrude, Image 5

1. Deep humiliation, regret
2. -
3. Memory of most 'instinctual' sexual moment when base sexuality took over. Feel part of me was raped by this act.

#### Commentary

Karen's response to this image of Gertrude's sexual behaviour links a personal memory with the text, thus reinforcing the connection between the archetypal drama of Hamlet and her personal life. Hamlet is describing a situation of bestial sexuality, which is symbolically

associated with the Great Mother (see above p.237 ). This textual image evoked in Karen a similarly 'instinctual' sexual moment. At this 'moment' Karen, like Gertrude, was in the power of the Great Mother, but unlike Gertrude she offers a perspective on the event: 'Feel part of me was raped'. Here Karen plays both the instinctual Feminine, Gertrude, and the consciousness of Hamlet. She reflects upon herself, just as Hamlet reflects upon his mother.

However, the image 'part of me was raped' also echoes Karen's other imagery of the innocent one being destroyed by the crowd. In this instance there is no external 'crowd' but 'base sexuality'; the innocent and the instinctual are both experienced within. Thus in this response image a personal experience of sexual destruction is acknowledged as having a wholly inner dynamic, the instinctual self 'raping' the innocent self.

Finally, it is interesting how in Karen the different parts of Gertrude, Prince Hamlet and possibly Ophelia are contained. Karen plays Gertrude with her experience of her sexuality and instinctual depths; but whilst it needed Prince Hamlet to confront Gertrude with her 'act', to make her conscious of the serpent within, Karen has been able to confront herself. She has seen the darkness of her own serpent. She has enacted both her instinctual self and the consciousness that observes. The moral stance noted earlier is evidence of this consciousness, a part of Karen not swamped, not destroyed. Similarly, whilst it appears to have been Hamlet rather than Gertrude who is the one transformed in the play, I have suggested that Karen herself underwent a process of transformation from Medusa the witch to Medusa the healer, from being dominated by the crowd, to petrifying the crowd. Lastly, I would offer that the 'innocent

... young girl' in Karen's response to 'Image 2' is suggestive of Ophelia. If, as I have suggested, Hamlet's knowledge of his mother's sensual nature resulted in his rejection of Ophelia and thus her death, then Karen also contains within her the innocent virgin drowned by her sexuality. Ophelia drowned and an innocent victim dying amidst the mocking crowd; both image the end of a youthful purity, but also both point to a process of transformation, in which the deeper wisdom of the Eternal Feminine is integrated into consciousness.

#### Ophelia, Image 1

1. As of painting
2. -
3. Picture by Max Beckmann 2 Harlequins and Monkey.

#### Commentary

Karen's description of this painting is an amplification of the response given above. It can also be read as a further association; her memory and description will necessarily include a subjective element associated with her response to the textual image.

"The painting is of two harlequins and a monkey, and they are going to a party, celebrating Fasching, a German festival. But in fact the painting is all about God's justice and injustice. The male harlequin is pointing up to heaven, the way he has his hands is a classic symbolism of Jesus pointing to heaven saying (to God)

'You're supposed to sort this situation out, this is the injustice you have created (God's injustice)'. Basically this picture is also about the animal nature within, which has taken over the painter. Beckmann was also abhorred by what was going on at the beginning of the war, and how God wasn't doing anything to stop it; how all the evil forces have taken over. 'Where are you God?' is basically the theme of the painting."

Karen described this image as being evoked by the textual words 'toy' - "the monkey is holding a toy monkey" - and 'fashion', which evoked the acoustic association 'Fasching'.

This response contains two archetypal themes that have been repeated in Karen's associations. The idea of injustice, present in 'Claudius, Image 1', the crucifixion, and also 'Gertrude, Image 2', the execution of the innocent young girl, in this response is placed firmly within a Christian context with the symbolism of Jesus pointing to God. However, Karen's reference to 'the animal nature within' includes the theme of sensuality which has dominated her response-work, particularly in the image of the whore. Furthermore, the reference to the war and 'all the evil forces' relates the animal or instinctual nature to the dark collective forces of the unconscious. What Karen has personally experienced as her dark, instinctual 'serpent' is here placed in a collective context. Without exploring in any depth the psychological dynamics of the Second World War, the war can be understood as an 'uprising of the unconscious, destructive forces of the collective psyche',<sup>88</sup> consciousness flooded by the dark instinctual dragon of the underworld. The same bestial, instinctual forces that turned the French Revolution from idealism to



slaughter, ravaged all of Europe. Karen's response again amplifies a personal dynamic with a collective, archetypal image; and again this image contains the dualism of the innocent, the Jesus symbolism, with the sensual, the 'monkey' of man's animal nature.

To return to the textual image, was Karen's response image, with all the archetypal implications suggested above, evoked solely by the acoustic association 'fashion/Fasching' and the textual word 'toy'? The textual image describes Laertes warning Ophelia against Prince Hamlet's insincerity and 'unmastered importunity', an importunity that might lose Ophelia her 'chaste treasure'. Further discussion revealed that Karen's own early experiences of her sexuality, including the loss of her virginity, was in casual liaisons:

I waited till I was eighteen when I left home and slept with the first Frenchman I met. That was the way the whole thing went, it became a casual thing. Sex had been made so big, it had to be something special, that I couldn't cope with it ... the only time I ever felt beautiful, when I felt wanted, was when I was in bed with someone, and I was in a world where people were sleeping with everybody ... everybody was sleeping with everybody, you didn't even know their names. The whole world that I was in you didn't get to know anybody first, you got to know them after ..... sex first and talk after. Then afterwards when I read The Woman's Room, and I remember reading the end of the book, where a girl has been raped by a black guy (at that time I was sleeping with a lot of black men), and the policemen say to the girl who is waiting with her mother 'Come on, everyone knows that every

little white princess likes a bit of black meat'.

I threw up for a week having read that line because it suddenly brought it all onto me that that was how I was looked at ... It got to the stage when I felt that if I didn't give myself sexually I would never be wanted, but in fact I never was wanted, except sexually. It all depended on how good you were in bed not whether you were a nice person.

This discussion reflects a strong personal association between textual and response image. Laertes' fear for Ophelia was realised in Karen's own experience, where instinct violated innocence. The ideal, "sex ... had to be something special", was beyond her, so its opposite, "casual sex" was lived. This split between ideal and instinct repeated throughout Karen's response-work, is again evident. Furthermore, I would suggest that the phrase "every little princess likes a bit of black meat" evoked such a powerful reaction in Karen not only because it "brought it all onto me that that was how I was looked at", but also because the contrasting images of the "white princess" and the "bit of black meat" triggered a dominant archetypal pattern. The idealised, innocent "white princess" and the dark, instinctual "black meat" reflect two conflicting aspects within Karen, which this phrase brought painfully close to consciousness.

Moreover, just as in Karen's response to 'Gertrude, Image 2', the 'innocent ... young girl' was executed by the instinctual forces imaged by the French Revolution, so was a similar psychological dynamic played out in Karen's description of her own sex life. The 'crowd' laughing at the

execution was experienced as the force of the collective, "everybody was sleeping with everybody". Just as Karen was stripped in the playground by all the schoolchildren, so too was she stripped of her innocence by the sexual attitude of the collective.

Karen's response-work and its personal associations suggest a dominant archetypal pattern evident both in her inner imagery and her life experiences. It reveals a split between the ideal, 'innocent' or 'holy' part of herself, and her instinctual self. It is a split that appears to have determined a series of very painful experiences, and in many ways appears to have dominated her life.

#### Ophelia, Image 5

1. Deep sadness and pain
2. Very strong
3. Young girl, stripped naked, arms outstretched. Scene is from behind the 'forces', figures that attack her. She is innocent. Condemned by these figures. Tortured in body and soul. See her eyes. The horror of approaching figure - her knowing she is right yet condemned, attacked. Cast out. Rejected.

#### Commentary

The archetypal reading of this textual image (see above pp. 218-9) stresses the duality of purity and corruption. For Hamlet, only in the spiritual

haven of a nunnery can Ophelia escape the corruption of the instinctual world of the flesh. Yet there is also ambiguity in the secondary meaning of 'nunnery' as a brothel in Elizabethan slang. Thus this image both separates the 'holy' from the instinctual, and yet also brings them both together - just as the light and dark aspects of the feminine exist together.

Karen's response again images a crucifixion; 'arms outstretched' - this time of a 'young girl ... innocent', echoing the innocent young girl executed by the French Revolution. 'Stripped naked' echoes Karen's memory of herself in the playground, as does the feeling of being 'Cast out. Rejected'; however, here the figures that attack her are not schoolgirls, but 'the forces', strongly suggestive of the dark instinctual forces that have so often attacked her 'innocent' self, the pure and chaste 'young girl'. Thus these 'forces' image her own instincts, just as the 'innocent' 'young girl' images a part of her. Karen's response, like the text, brings together the dark and light aspects of the feminine, the conflicting sides of her own nature.

However, as important as the imagery are the feelings Karen described. The 'affect' of this textual image was 'very strong', and the 'feelings' were 'deep sadness and pain'. There is also the feeling of 'horror', being 'condemned', 'Cast out. Rejected'. This textual image deeply affected Karen, she cried and it must have touched something very deep - presumably a 'deep sadness and pain'. When asked if it related to any specific incident or memory, Karen replied:

"It goes deeper than that, it goes much deeper ... She could in fact be very young, very young indeed ... Very

young inside and yet she has a female body, older ...  
There's nothing she can do to stop these forces coming  
towards her, she knows it's her death; and she can't get  
away ... She's innocent but she can't get away from these  
forces that are coming to destroy her."

- This was all said with very strong emotion -

The deep feeling appears related to the fact that "she" is "very young inside" and yet has a woman's body; and also to the fact that "she can't get away". This suggests that Karen's deep pain is associated with her inability to escape her instincts, instincts that "are coming to destroy" the very young, innocent part of herself. It is as if her woman's body evokes the forces that come to destroy the young girl, and her inability to escape this "death" is deeply painful. This is an archetypal drama enacted within every woman who loses her 'innocence' through her awakening sexuality, and it is mythologically imaged in the rape of Persephone (see above pp. 253-5'). But why is this 'rite of passage' so profoundly painful for Karen? Why is she 'Tortured in body and soul'? This colloquial phrase describes a deep anguish, but may also point to its cause, for whilst 'body' can be read as imaging her woman's body, 'soul' images the innocent young girl within. Just as Ophelia was a soul figure for Prince Hamlet - 'my soul's idol' - so is the 'young girl' a soul figure for Karen. What Karen feels was condemned and attacked was not just an innocent girl, but her very soul, the pure, holy part within herself. Thus is the girl imaged as 'arms outstretched' reflecting the crucified Christ. In her split between 'purity' and instinct, Karen's instinctual self seemed to be destroying her soul, and there appeared to be no possible escape. But what is interesting is that the phrase

'Tortured in body and soul' suggests that not only is the soul figure tortured, but so also is her instinctual body. The split between the two tortures both the 'attacker' and the 'attacked'. It is because the innocent girl has been idealised into carrying the soul figure that there appears no reconciliation between 'body' and 'soul'. However, as the myth of Persephone suggests, this reconciliation takes place through rape and a descent into the underworld, during which time there is desolation as the world suffers winter. Only through this transformation can the two poles of the woman, the light and the dark, the virgin and the instinctual, be united. The attack, the rape, cannot be avoided, but neither the soul, nor the virgin is destroyed. Rather the woman is transformed in the underworld of the instincts, and a reconciliation of the opposites takes place. For a woman the 'conjunctio oppositorum' takes place through experiencing the depths of her feminine self.

#### Ophelia, Image 6

1. Desperate need to prove innocence - futility against prejudice and aggression
2. Strong
3. Literally Hamlet and Ophelia. He casting her as a whore, main sensation is Ophelia desperate in her innocence unable to persuade him otherwise, falls back into Image 5 (above). 'They' calling her whore etc. (shouting), her inability to prove them wrong and words will not stifle their prejudice.

## Commentary

The significance of this response image is in its repetition of the theme of 'innocence', and the defencelessness of the 'innocent' against her aggressors. Again there is a conflict between the individual, oppressed innocent, here personified as Ophelia, and forces of 'aggression'.

Ophelia is first condemned by Prince Hamlet, directly reflecting the textual image, but then the response image falls back into Karen's underlying pattern, and the individual figure of Hamlet is replaced by the collective 'forces' of the previous response image. Once again the innocent girl is defenceless against these 'forces' who condemn her as a whore.

The image of the 'whore' is thus seen as belonging to the collective 'forces'; it is 'They' who project that image onto the otherwise innocent Ophelia. In relation to Karen's own psychological pattern, this repeats the idea of the 'innocent girl' being destroyed by the more powerful instincts which force her into the role of the 'whore'. Ophelia 'desperate' reflects Karen's own feelings of despair at her defencelessness against this collective condemnation, and also its effect; for in her real-life experience she bowed to this pressure and lived "a very base sexual life".

### Ophelia's Drowning, Image 2

1. Beauty turning to fear
2. Vivid, very brightly coloured
3. Beautiful maiden, covered in flowers, walking in

field - full, full, full of flowers. Colours of all hues.  
At 'dead men's fingers' some of the flowers rise up like  
hands and start to tear the clothes off the maiden. A  
white bull charges from behind her, she is caught by the  
hands as the bull approaches.

### Commentary

Karen's response here relates to the sexual implications of the text (see above p. 257). Ophelia, in her madness has bewailed her virginity, and her drowning has archetypal echoes of the rape of Persephone. In this textual image the association of the 'long purples' which have a phallic connotation - 'a grosser name' - with chaste or 'cold maids' and death - 'dead men's fingers' - point to the rape that is the death of the chaste maid. Karen's response images the maiden being stripped by these 'dead men's fingers', repeating the image of the 'innocent' child in the playground. Karen related the image to being sexually abused as a child:

"Well, it has happened quite a lot ... I think I had them  
all ripped off when I was abused when I was five."

The bull has a phallic symbolism, it is the 'masculine principle in nature',<sup>89</sup> and in Karen's response the bull 'charges from behind her', suggesting that this phallic energy comes from the unconscious. Karen acknowledged the sexual element in her response:

"That was very sexual, the clothes are ripped, you feel  
like the bull's going to rape her".

Once again the textual image evoked an underlying sexual pattern within Karen, a pattern that relates to an early experience of sexual abuse, and



a later feeling of being raped. However, in this response image the fact that the bull is 'white' suggests that male sexual energy is not perceived as a dark, shadow force. White images purity, and Zeus came to Io in the form of a white bull. Thus, although there is the dominant pattern of the 'maiden' in the 'hands' of unconscious sexual forces, and an accompanying 'fear', the 'white bull' suggests that the masculine principle is experienced at an archetypal level as a divine force.

#### Ophelia's Drowning, Image 5

1. Horror, sadness
2. Strong
3. Young woman sucked down a hole into a huge cavern, like the bowels of the earth - 'Hell'. Full of lecherous beings, lascivious, drooling, ugly monsters. She is frightened. They entice her, try to call her into their world. She looks behind and around for help. Sees a golden light way up high and a voice sings to her. She knows that that is the way out but the image fades before she moves towards it.

#### Commentary

The 'muddy death' of Ophelia here evokes images highly suggestive of the rape of Persephone, except that Pluto is replaced by 'lecherous beings'. For Karen, the innocent maid is always the victim of a group, not an individual seducer. The 'lascivious, ugly, drooling monsters' personify

the instinctual forces that pursue her.

The response images an escape from the underworld and its 'lecherous' inhabitants - 'a golden light way up high'. This 'golden light' can be read as the pure world of the soul, here contrasted with the instinctual underworld. Just as the 'innocent girl' who embodies Karen's 'soul image' (see above p.314), is placed in opposition to the 'whore', so the instinctual lower world is in opposition to the golden world 'up high'. Within Karen 'above' and 'below' are deeply divided; her instinctual self is yet to be realised as the prima materia of the soul.

At this stage in her imaginal response sessions Karen had a dream that appeared to have a significant relationship to her response-work. I offer both her recording and her interpretation of this dream.

#### Dream

I am journeying with Llewellyn.. We go into the jungle. Then we come to a wide open space, which is a protected area, like a very large cage. Inside are two animals - like wolves or cats. I know they are very wild, very dangerous. They have animal, but also human qualities. They are stripped of fur, only flesh remains, can see sinews, muscles etc.. Their 'hide' is gone. Llewellyn shows me how to feed the animal with my own flesh. I feed it me, yet at the same time I am gradually eating it. Very strange. I am now remarkably in control of this wild beast.

Space now becomes (or at some point becomes) a room.

Llewellyn thinks maybe the beast has left its mark in the room, which would be very good, but then realise it's only urine. At one stage the beast stands on hind legs and urinates. It is wearing boots (similar to mine). I know it can think and talk. Talk to Llewellyn about, taking it to the sports centre for training. All this time I am eating it, slowly digesting it. I am eating a hind leg, yet it is still alive and whole. Remarkable rapport between the animal and me, because I know it could have killed me but it can't any more. The Beast is under control now.

#### Interpretation

In the series of imaginal response sessions on Hamlet Llewellyn and I have been working on - he has been helping me to become conscious of - the instincts, specifically the sexual ones. I feel that this dream symbolises that journey and encounter with the Great Beast Within.

The jungle is obviously the unconscious and the protected space the domain of the instincts. The animal is no longer hidden behind its fur, it is stripped bare and revealed for what it is 'its very flesh laid bare'.

Often Llewellyn had talked about how I appear to have been taken over by the unconscious and the instincts and forced to live them out physically. I had understood on

an intellectual level, but deep within I 'didn't get it'. The dream is a very vivid statement, confirmation that this is what has happened and the work that is taking place to transform the beast. Llewellyn can only show me how to control the process by physically enacting the same process with his animal in front of me. The beast cannot be starved, it is too wild and dangerous for that - repression would lead to a volcanic situation where the beast would do all to make itself known. The highest act is to feed it with myself. Could this be showing me how the animal at first devoured me and that I have to re-experience this in order to control it? Then I feed on it, the process is reversed or completed. The animal is no longer separate, it becomes a part of me, I take it into myself. I learn to recognise it and digest it, yet it remains whole, integral. That the beast has not left its mark but only urinated is a puzzle really, because part of me feels that urinating is leaving its mark. I really don't know the significance of this part of the dream. That it stands in my boots is clear; it is a part of myself.

Training the beast is exactly what I feel I am doing, so that it is under control - no longer so wild, dangerous and destructive.

I woke up feeling that this was a very significant and remarkable dream; a loud and clear statement which helped me to consciously realise the inner process that is taking place.

## Commentary

Karen's dream and interpretation offer further amplification of the personal psychological dynamic of her response-work. In the 'protected space' provided by the response sessions + she appears to have been imaginably re-experiencing the way her instinctual self has often dominated her, how she has 'fed' her own instinctual beast; and in confronting this she has begun to eat and digest the beast itself. Digesting the animal she integrates it, and thus develops the 'remarkable rapport between animal and me'. Integrated, it can no longer dominate her. I would read the beast 'urinating' as the beast defining its territory, and it is of great psychological importance that one becomes conscious of where the instincts belong, what is their 'territory'. Also the beast itself is becoming conscious, 'it can think and talk', and the arrival of consciousness in the instinctual world is very significant, as is the fact that Karen thinks of 'training' it.

When reading this dream I wondered whether Karen would in fact want to continue with the response-work sessions. The dream images a change in Karen's relationship with her instinctual self, there was a 'remarkable rapport' and 'The Beast is under control now'. Previously frightened by the power of her instincts - they were the 'crowd' mocking at the execution, the serpent in the depths - Karen is now mistress of the Beast. The response sessions had taken Karen on an imaginal journey into the jungle, and the dream suggested to me that this journey had been completed; any further response sessions might then seem a travesty, or possibly muddy the image that had risen clear from the depths. I put this to Karen, and she acknowledged that she felt a resistance to any more response-work, a resistance that had not been present in any of the other sessions. So

we agreed to discontinue; it is always better not to push the unconscious. These sessions had had a powerful psychological affect/effect on Karen, and I did not wish to continue merely for the purpose of my own records.

+ Reading the 'protected space' in the dream as referring to the protected psychological environment provided by the response sessions is the only instance I am at variance with Karen's interpretation. I suggested this reading to Karen, and she agreed with it.

### Summary

This analysis of Karen's response-work began by looking at the personal significance of individual imaginal associations. These associations showed the participation of personal memories in the process of response, for example the aborted foetus in 'The Ghost, Image 1', or the laughing whore from the red-light district of Amsterdam, 'Claudius, Image 2'. However, as the response-work progressed it became apparent that the textual images were not just evoking isolated memories or unconscious associations, but a particular psychological pattern that appeared to dominate Karen's inner and outer life experiences. This 'pattern' was imaginally expressed by a young girl executed in the French Revolution ('Gertrude, Image 2') or attacked by forces ('Ophelia, Image 5'), or enticed by drooling ugly monsters ('Ophelia's Drowning, Image 5'). These images reflect an inner psychological dynamic of the innocent girl within Karen being attacked by the forces of her instinctual self, particularly her sexual drive; a 'dynamic' that appears to have become manifest in a number of real-life experiences, from when she was sexually molested as a child, then stripped in the playground, and later led 'a very base

sexual life'.

Moreover, our analysis suggests that this personal pattern may be related to the archetypal pattern mythologically imaged in the Rape of Persephone, the forced descent into the underworld of the instincts that changes the innocent maiden, Kore, into the Earth Mother herself. Karen's experiences point to a re-enactment of this archetypal theme, the descent into the instinctual darkness transforming the maiden, or innocent girl, into the Medusa figure, the one who carries the wisdom and healing of the feminine depths. Thus Karen's response-work contains both personal and archetypal associations. Furthermore, her dream points to the potential of 'imaginal response' to provide a 'protected space' in which dominant psychological patterns, personal and archetypal, can be made conscious, re-experienced and thus integrated. Karen was able to become aware of how a particular pattern had exerted so dominant an influence on her life, and in imaginally encountering this dynamic she was able to form a rapprochement with her instinctual self. She was able to encounter and tame a threatening monster, and thus effect a process of psychological transformation.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Hamlet 1 i 63-4
2. ibid. 1 v 11-13
3. C.G. Jung CW5 para. 516
4. C.G. Jung CW5 para. 396
5. C.G. Jung CW7 para. 103n
6. Hamlet 1 v 35-6
7. ibid. 1 v 59-60
8. C.G. Jung CW5 para. 615
9. Hamlet 111 iv 39-40
10. ibid. 1 ii 8-9
11. ibid. v ii 330
12. C.G. Jung Psychology of the Transference p. 56
13. Hamlet 1 ii 129-130
14. ibid. 111 iv 91-4
15. E. Neumann The Origins and History of Consciousness p. 85  
Neumann here notes that 'the most primitive and ancient of the pig associations is with the female genitals, which even in Greek and Latin were called 'pig''.
16. Hamlet 111 i 128-130
17. C.G. Jung op. cit. p. 77
18. Hamlet 111 i 121-122
19. ibid. 111 iv 65-68
20. ibid. 111 iv 89-91
21. ibid. 111 iv 41-44
22. ibid. 111 iv 51-52
23. ibid. 1v v 99-103



24. *ibid.* IV v 131-133
25. *ibid.* V i 275-279
26. *ibid.* V i 281-283
27. *ibid.* V ii 10-11
28. *ibid.* V ii 216-218
29. *ibid.* IV viii 125
30. C.G. Jung CW5 para. 450
31. C.G. Jung CW9ii para. 402
32. Jesus told his disciples 'Be ye therefore wise as serpents'.  
Matthew 10:16 (King James Version)
33. C.G. Jung CW9ii para. 402
34. E. Neumann The Great Mother p. 286
35. C.G. Jung CW9i para. 197
36. C.G. Jung CW11 para. 619
37. The quality of mercy is not strained  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath.  
  

The Merchant of Venice (ed. John Russell Brown  
Arden Edition)  
IV i 180-2
38. See C.G. Jung CW12 para. 334
39. The image of man regaining the wings of his soul is used by Plato in the Phaedo. It is 'as a result of some mishap' that the soul loses its wings and falls to earth. There the individual must strive to regrow them, and thus achieve his original freedom.
40. Jung describes how the 'nigredo', the darkness of the unconscious, 'contains in the first place the inferior personality, the shadow. This changes into the feminine figure that is immediately behind it, as it were, and controls it: the anima'. (CW14 para. 646). Thus the shadow cannot be tackled separately from the feminine archetype,

the instinctual psyche.

41. C.G. Jung Word and Image p. 211
42. E. Neumann The Great Mother p. 265 & 6
43. The ghost describes Claudius as 'that adulterous beast', and following Bradley (Shakespearean Tragedy p. 134); Jenkins (Hamlet Arden Edition p. 456); and Dover Wilson (What Happens in Hamlet Appendix A pp. 292-4), I understand that the queen's infidelity is here implied.
44. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 216
45. Hamlet III i 121-2
46. *ibid.* note to II ii 182 (Arden Edition)
47. Jung notes that in alchemy the anima is personified as both 'the chaste bride and whore'. CW14 para. 422
48. C.G. Jung CW9i para. 24
49. Hamlet IV vii 178-9
50. J.C. Cooper An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Symbols p. 110
51. E. Neumann The Great Mother p. 308
52. Hamlet V i 281-3
53. This is the one occasion where I have used other than the Arden Edition of Hamlet. The Arden editor prefers 'sullied' to 'solid'; and whilst I have no personal preference, I found that 'sullied' presented some difficulties in the response work. The students professed that they were used to read 'solid' and were therefore confused by 'sullied'. This mental confusion impeded their capacity for imaginal response, which requires a minimum of mental interference. From an archetypal perspective, both 'sullied' and 'solid' evoke a negative feeling towards the feminine principle, the world of matter.
54. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 354
55. The Book of Common Prayer

56. Holy Bible King James Version Romans XlIII 14
57. Hamlet III iii 36
58. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 180
59. Hamlet III ii 239
60. The Tempest (ed. Frank Kermode, Arden Edition) V i 275-6
61. A. Aronson Psyche and Symbol in Shakespeare p. 229
62. C.G. Jung CW9i para. 71
63. *ibid.* para. 73-5
64. C.G. Jung C.G. Jung Speaking pp. 228 f. Quoted by E. Edinger  
Anatomy of the Psyche p. 147
65. Hamlet III iii 383
66. E. Neumann The Great Mother p. 42, referred to by E. Edinger  
Ego and Archetype p.6
67. Hamlet V ii 10-11
68. *ibid.* V ii 215 6; 220
69. E. Edinger Anatomy of the Psyche p. 168
70. That a final understanding of matter is an awareness of spirit is also  
being reflected in the discoveries of sub-atomic physics. The  
behaviour of sub-atomic particles is so far removed from the world  
of our senses that it seems closer to the world of spirit. It led  
Francois Mauriac to remark 'What this professor says is far more  
incredible than what we poor Christians believe!' (Quoted by  
Huston Smith Forgotten Truth p. 107).
71. I have not included the stage direction 'Leaps in the grave' because  
in imaginal response-work I was concerned with the imaginal impact  
of Shakespeare's spoken language, and participants advised me that  
the stage directions detracted from its impact.
72. Hamlet IV vii 86-7

73. C.G. Jung CW5 para. 421
74. Hamlet IV v 99
75. ibid. V i 250-1
76. C.G. Jung CW5 para 561
77. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 185
78. Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching translated by Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English  
Chapter 1
79. ibid. Chapter 56
80. It was ascertained that the responses did vary, indeed participants might perceive very different images as Nomi's two responses to this textual image illustrate:

First response:

Nomi

1. Fearful fascination
2. -
3. A kind of truffle-like growth growing larger, but underground. I watch in horrified fascination as it spreads up, breaking out into the air through the grass.

Second response:

Nomi

1. Guilt, pain
2. Quite strong
3. All those things that lead me astray at the moment. Memory of placenta being as it were uprooted from my centre and pulled out by the doctor. The pain of that and the fury at being distracted from being with O..

81. M. Spiegelman Buddhism and Jungian Psychology p. 60

82. King Lear (Arden Edition) V iii 9-11
83. W.B. Yeats. Quoted by Maynard Mack in 'The World of Hamlet',  
Hamlet Casebook ed. John Jump p. 107
84. G.M. Hopkins 'I wake and feel the fell of dark not day'
85. C.G. Jung CW9i para. 225
86. E. Whitmont Return of the Goddess p. 141
87. See above p. 189
88. C.G. Jung CW7 para. 150
89. J.C. Cooper An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols  
p. 26

## Chapter Five

### A DISCUSSION OF THE 'RESULTS'

### 5.1. Introduction

This final chapter offers a discussion of the 'results' and analysis given in Chapter Four, with the aim of gaining some understanding of the dynamics of 'imaginal response', and what it may have to offer to the fields of literary theory and archetypal psychology.

Following this introduction, the second and major section explores the dynamics of 'imaginal response' from the twin perspectives of psychology and reader-response theory. It begins by examining 'readers'' individual patterns of response in relation to Holland's theory of the reader recreating his/her own identity in the process of reading. Fish's idea of 'Interpretive Communities' is then discussed with reference to the subjective participation of the two groups of 'readers'. The 'reader' is further seen as participating subliminally, as responses involve an often unconscious 'reaction'. The participation of the 'reader's' unconscious is then discussed in relation to acoustic associations, with particular reference to Jung and Kugler, the latter postulating an archetypal dimension to such associations. Following this, archetypal imaginal associations are explored in more detail, and their relationship to the 'reader's' experience of the archetype per se considered. The discussion then examines the psychological importance of appreciating both the imaginal language of the unconscious and also a Jungian analytic approach to response images. Finally, a literary perspective on the imaginal interaction between reader and text is offered through reference to the work of Ingarden and Iser, focussing particularly on how an imaginal

'reader' 'fills the gaps' in a text, and relating Ingarden's distinction between 'active' and 'passive reading' to the process of 'imaginal response'.

Following Ingarden's distinction between 'active' and 'passive reading', Section Three explores the active involvement of the imaginal 'reader'. It attempts to determine whether the 'readers' were 'actors' or 'observers' in their imaginal drama. Whether such involvement may be learnt, and moreover taught, will also be discussed.

Section Four offers a brief discussion of the 'results' of the 'guided fantasy journey'. Section Five summarises what 'imaginal response' may have to offer to the fields of literary theory and archetypal psychology. Finally, in Section Six the limitations of this enquiry are discussed together with suggestions for further research.

## 5.2. The Dynamics of 'Imaginal Response': a Psychological and Literary Discussion

### 5.2.1. Introduction

The methodology for an imaginal mode of response is, in itself very simple, and does not need to be theoretically understood in order to be practised. The reading of a textual image evokes an inner image. This inner image is different for each individual. Even a cursory study of the collation of response images reveals each response to be unique. So what is the actual inner process that is taking place, and how does this relate to the 'normal' reading process? Is it possible to distinguish between



different types of imaginal response? And what is the cumulative subliminal effect of such response-work? Perhaps this last question is not one that can be answered at this stage of our knowledge, but may be posed to suggest what is at stake.

#### 5.2.2. 'Imaginal Response' in Relation to the 'Normal' Reading Process

'Imaginal response' focuses on the imaginal dynamic of the reading process. In 'normal' reading, this dynamic would appear to take place at or just below the threshold of consciousness, and, as I have suggested, may be repressed into the unconscious in favour of a cognitive, analytic approach. By focussing on the imaginative dynamic a particular aspect of the reading process can be brought closer to our conscious attention. Just as Fish's analysis of reading slows down the reading process in order to make his

analysis of the developing responses of the reader in  
relation to the words as they succeed one another in time<sup>1</sup>

so too 'imaginal response' slows down the imaginal dynamic by focussing the reader's attention on his/her responses to selected textual images. Yet whether the often subliminal imaginal dynamic of the 'normal' reading process is actually the same cannot at this stage be proven. Indeed, it can be argued that any method that involves consciously focussing on a particular dynamic necessarily alters that dynamic. Thus 'imaginal response' may be best appreciated as an amplification of the 'normal' dynamic. Nevertheless, the following analyses of participants' imaginal response-work is offered as a reflection on the subliminal, imaginal dynamic of the 'normal' reading process.

### 5.2.3. Individual Patterns of Response and Norman Holland

If a cursory study of the response-work reveals each response to be unique, then a detailed analysis distinguishes individual patterns of response. These patterns, outlined above in Chapter 4.2., range from Yael's high incidence of 'sensation', to Donovan's dominant feature being the 'transformation' of his images, for example 'king becomes a column of smoke', and Victoria's unusually high incidence of colours in her response imagery, especially the colour 'red'. Each of the participants had distinctly individual patterns in his/her responses, and undoubtedly there are further patterns which my analysis has not discovered.

The appearance of such individual characteristics supports Holland's argument that the reader replicates him/herself in the process of reading. The participants' individual response patterns suggest that an imaginal reading of a text will reflect individual characteristics of the 'reader'. However, Holland sees these characteristics in terms of a fixed 'identity theme'. This notion of an 'identity theme' is borrowed from the Freudian psychologist Hanz Lichtenstein. It relates to the primary imprint of the mother and is invariant. Holland describes it as

an unchanging essence, a "personality" or "character" that permeates the millions of ego choices that constitute the visible human ... one central, unifying pattern in that life which is the invariant sameness, the "identity theme" of the individual living it.<sup>2</sup>

Holland's notion of a fixed 'identity theme' is questionable because it denies the possibility of a reading reflecting any psychological change or growth in the reader. That such change and growth can take place is

central to Jung's concept of 'individuation', in which the structure of the ego and personality alters as unconscious contents are assimilated. Indeed, it has been suggested that an imaginal mode of response may in itself offer the possibility for psychological change; in allowing unconscious contents to surface and be integrated, the ego structure of the 'reader' could alter in the very process of reading.

But, although Holland's 'identity theme' is limited by its Freudian context, could not this notion of a 'central, unifying pattern' point beyond the ego to the possibility of an archetypal rather than personal identity theme being reflected in the reading dynamic? This is a conjecture which will be discussed later in relation to Karen's response imagery.

Finally, is there in fact an 'unchanging essence' within the reader that is beyond any identifiable pattern and yet underlies the reading activity? Jung's concept of the Self refers to such an 'unchanging essence', but how it manifests in the life of the individual, or indeed in any reading process, at this stage cannot be answered.

Not only is Holland's Freudian perspective limiting in the fixed 'identity' it gives the reader, but also in the way Holland's reader expresses this identity. For Holland's reader reads 'deftly', to use his own acronym, recreating the work in terms of his own defensive strategies and fantasy drives, and finally transforming subconscious material into a socially acceptable form. These are 'adaptive strategies' through which Holland's reader internalises a text and 'then derives from it fantasies of the particular kind that yield him pleasure'.<sup>3</sup> However, the analysis of the response-work suggests that Holland offers only a limited perspective on how the 'reader' recreates his/her own identity. Few of the individual

patterns of response easily 'fit into' Holland's Freudian framework with its emphasis on a derivation of pleasure.

For some individuals particular feelings appeared to be repeated; for Mike, 'danger', 'nausea', 'fear' and 'claustrophobia', while both Wendy and Andrew had repeated feelings of 'sadness'. It has been suggested that Mike's feelings of 'danger' and 'fear' may reflect defensive strategies, and it could be argued that Wendy and Andrew's 'sadness' is a defense against a deeper pain. But it is debatable as to whether these feelings relate to 'fantasy drives' or 'yield pleasure'. What I would suggest is that the process of imaginal response evoked certain dominant feelings or patterns of feeling, a process which was not necessarily pleasurable. In fact, for Mike the imaginal experience was at one instance so unpleasant that he repressed any response to the next textual image.

The identity of the imaginal 'reader' may not be fixed, nor the response material fully support Holland's 'deft' reading process, but there is evidence of 'reading' reflecting a participant's identity. In particular, the responses of both Wendy and Frank illustrate the projection<sup>4</sup> of a personal identity theme. For Wendy, this self-projection is linked with an identification with the characters in the text. For example, in her response to

Get thee to a nunnery. Why, wouldst thou be a breeder  
Of sinners? 111 i 121-2

Wendy completely identifies with Ophelia

Is that all I'm worth - after all this, after battling  
trying, striving, coming back time after weary time to

try again - it's come to nothing, it's the end of the end and there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Hamlet never wanted me - it was a diversion, I was wrong to think he did. It's all hopeless and pointless and there's nothing now - just dark sadness.

The feelings that Wendy here projects onto Ophelia reflect a quality of self deprecation that runs throughout much of her response-work, as for example in her response to

The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,  
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it  
Than is my deed to my most painted word.

111 i 51-3

Wendy

1. Sadness, my sadness. I would like the painted cheek to be the real thing
2. -
3. Defeat - regret - shunning hypocrisy (me, I'm made of it) feeling sadness at the reality of raddled ugly face under paint.

Wendy's response here suggests a degree of self-projection as she identifies with the hypocrisy of Claudius. Moreover, a personal knowledge of Wendy's character reinforces the suggestion that she is projecting aspects of her own lack of self worth onto the text. This dynamic is repeated in her response to 'Gertrude, Image 4', when she experiences 'Just my own feelings of failure and ruin and guilt etc.'.

If Wendy's mode of self-projection is highly emotive, Frank's responses

exhibit a more detached, less 'feeling orientated' type of self-projection. For example, 'Gertrude, Image 4' evokes, as for Wendy, a feeling of 'guilt', but otherwise no self condemnation, but rather a detached and critical comment, reflecting a self awareness of his relationship to his mother;

Frank

1. Guilt (and the thought that I hadn't included Mummy before the image was read)
2. -
3. Me standing before mother telling her that if I looked at myself closely and judgementslly I wouldn't like myself as I would be doing it in part from what I would imagine to be her viewpoint.

Interestingly, another incidence of self-projection in Frank's response-work also involves his relationship to his mother. The 'images' he recorded in response to 'Claudius, Image 8' were;

My mother is in one of two twin beds next to one another. I am on the other. I am 12 or so. She is too busy for me, putting bets on horses on TV over the phone. Listening to the radio, avoiding contact with her needy brat, yet at the same time, have no sense of blame. It had to be that way.

Other instances of self-projection in Frank's responses look back at his relationship with his brother ('Claudius, Image 3'), at his relationship with 'H' ('Ophelia, Image 4' & 'Ophelia, Image 5'), and one instance reflects a self awareness of 'all my little games and shaming ways.' ('Ophelia, Image 6'). However, in contrast to Wendy's responses, Frank

does not give any evidence of identifying with the characters of the play. Rather, he simply projects himself into the imaginal space provided by this method of response. Even in their mode of self-projection, Wendy and Frank express their individuality.

These examples of self-projection are very particular instances of a 'reading' reflecting the 'reader', or to adapt Holland's phrase, a response being 'a function of identity'. But Frank expresses his identity not only when he projects himself as an identifiable figure, but also in a fatalistic posture he repeatedly adopts. One example of Frank's fatalism has already been given in his response to 'Claudius, Image 8', where he comments on his imaginal relationship to his 'too busy' mother as 'It had to be that way'. Other examples of this fatalistic stance are: 'The Ghost, Image 2': '... as he must suffer his sins, so is likely shall I, without consciously being able to control it, i.e. an issue of fate.'; 'Prince Hamlet IV, Image 2': 'He is condemned to this existence for how long he knows not.'; 'The Ghost, Image 5': 'knowing a figure must come and pour poison in my ear and yet wanting to do nothing to stop it as my tenure as king is over;'; 'Ophelia, Image 4': '... just as he bore a daughter in his way, so shall she in hers'. Frank even projects his fatalism onto the relationship between the sun and the moon: 'Ophelia, Image 2': 'The sun tells the moon that this relationship is fixed and immutable, but that they will never get any closer than they are. Held and repelled by gravitational power.' This repeated fatalism does not appear in any other participant's response-work, and it can therefore be argued that it is primarily Frank's projection. Moreover, Frank's fatalism in these examples is predominantly related to the suffering of human existence - he was ignored by his mother because 'it had to be', 'he must suffer his sins, so is likely shall I', 'he is

condemned'. Even the idea of childbirth ('Ophelia, Image 4') is not a cause for joy, as the father has negative associations 'like Orson Wells in 'Touch of Evil' i.e. really bloated', and the pregnant 'H' is 'staked out in the desert', hardly an image evocative of happiness. Frank's fatalism appears to reflect a negative attitude towards life.

However, it could also be argued that this fatalism relates to themes within Hamlet, as the play can easily be read as projecting a picture of life as suffering. Prince Hamlet does not view life as joyful, but rather full of 'the heart ache and the thousand natural shocks/That flesh is heir to;'. Indeed, is not Hamlet's own perspective on life at times one of negative fatalism, only through suicide can man escape 'the whips and scorns of time', and he himself cannot even undertake this 'action'? Is then Frank's fatalism a response to that of Prince Hamlet, or is it purely a projection of his own perception of existence? Or could it be that in the imaginal space Frank's fatalism meets that within Hamlet, the text mirrors the reader, allowing an identity theme within Frank to be imaginally realised?

For Wendy the text evokes her own feelings of a lack of self-worth, for Frank a fatalistic posture towards life. Both attitudes have a fundamentally negative element, seeing life as a cause for sadness or suffering. Furthermore, as these attitudes are repeated they may represent a defensive strategy, repressing a deeper, personal pain. But whether or not defensive, this negative element could reflect the participants' own life experiences, or it could reflect an aspect of the text; more probably, the dynamics of response combine reader and text; the text being a pattern onto which similar patterns in the reader can be projected. Holland describes this process, saying how:



As readers, each of us will bring different kinds of external information to bear. Each of us will seek out particular themes that concern him.<sup>5</sup>

But whilst Holland sees the identity of the reader expressing itself solely in the choice of 'themes', this enquiry reveals that 'readers' not only perceive themes that concern them, but also experience these themes in an individual manner. Wendy's experience of herself and the text is highly emotive; her responses, whether or not they visibly involve self-projection, are predominantly feeling oriented. Indeed, many of the 'images' she records are feelings, for example her response to:

O that this too too solid flesh would melt,

Thaw and resolve itself into a dew.

1 ii 129-30 (The Macmillan Shakespeare)

Wendy

1. Strong feeling of sadness

2. -

3. The feeling of surrender to a deep, sad quietness and stillness. Melting into the brown safe-place with resignation - to peace and no more striving and responsibility and pain, to nothingness (a bit like the one inside but sad too).

Frank's responses, however, may be noted both for the lack of 'intensity' recorded and for the high incidence of a lack of feeling response - in 35% of his responses he did not record any feeling. This difference between Frank and Wendy could be related to Jung's 'Four Types', his distinction between 'Feeling, Thinking, Sensation and Intuitive' types.

Following this categorization Wendy would be a 'feeling type', whilst it could be argued that Frank was more a 'thinking type'. Frank expresses his fatalistic stance with an ideational quality appropriate to a thinking type. This quality is also expressed elsewhere, for example in response to 'Prince Hamlet, Image 5':

The baby knows everything but can communicate nothing.  
He knows that there is an inverse relationship between  
communication and knowledge.

or 'Ophelia, Image 6':

A dismembered voice booms out to me in the desert saying  
that it can see through all my little games and shaming  
ways to Machiavellian ambitions that lie behind and which  
in turn conceal a purity of innocence.

Perhaps Frank's lack of 'feeling' and 'intensity' reflects a defensive strategy, a desire to distance himself from the affect of the textual images, but it could also relate to him as a 'thinking type'. Jung places the 'thinking type' in opposition to the 'feeling type', and suggests that the dominant function has the tendency to repress its opposite. Thus a 'thinking type' will tend to repress his/her feeling response, which could easily apply to Frank.

If Wendy and Frank express an identity as 'feeling' or 'thinking' 'types' in their mode of imaginal expression, how does this relate to other participants? Can they be so easily categorized? I have already noted patterns of feeling response in Mike and Andrew. Does this imply that they too are 'feeling types'? At this early stage of exploring the dynamics of 'imaginal response' I am unable to offer any definite conclusions. The only other participant whose response-work suggests a definite

categorization is Yael. Her high incidence of sensation orientated responses, whether smell: 'Smell of unaired room, cheap heavy perfume plus smell of sleep' (Gertrude, Image 5), sound: 'a single bird is crying' ('Gertrude, Image 3'), or touch: 'heat of the sun but also a gentle wind' ('Prince Hamlet'1, Image 4'), points distinctly to her as a 'sensation type'.

In order to explore more fully Jung's 'Four Types' and how they express themselves in the imaginal dynamics of the reading process, it would be necessary to conduct a further study with a larger number of participants focussed specifically on this question. At present, I am only able to state that it appears that response-work may very possibly reflect the 'type' of 'reader'. Frank, and especially Wendy and Yael's responses give evidence to this. But this does imply that readers may express their individuality in their 'mode' or 'style' of response, as much as in regard to any particular thematic content. Moreover, although this is particularly evident in a response process that focusses on an imaginal rather than interpretive perspective, it cannot be disregarded with reference to the latter. Thus I propose that we should consider 'styles' of response to the same degree as present Reader-Response theory considers ideational 'contents'. Readers recreate their identity in a variety of modes, some of which may be related as much to Jung's 'Four Types' as to any personality structure suggested by Holland.

#### 5.2.4. The Two Groups of Participants as 'Interpretive Communities'

In discussing individual patterns of response, the examples have mainly been drawn from the first group of participants, those from the meditation group. This is because the response-work of this first group was more

easily differentiated into individual response-patterns, as a cursory study of the 'readers' characteristics outlined in Section 4.3 will reveal. There are a number of possible reasons for this distinction between the two groups of participants.

Participants from the meditation group attended more response sessions than the Polytechnic students - all those from the meditation group attended nine sessions, responding to 55 images altogether, whilst the Polytechnic students attended from two to five sessions, responding to from 14 (Sarah) to 26 (Mike) images. The more response-work recorded, the easier it is to distinguish patterns of response. Indeed Mike's work, which involved responding to more textual images than other Polytechnic students, offered the most easily distinguishable patterns among his group.

However, it could also be argued that the third year Polytechnic students have, during their degree course, been taught to focus on reading a text as objectively as possible. 'Reader-response', which acknowledges the subjective element of the reading process, is only one element of their programme. The majority of other literary courses reject reader-response's subjectivist assumptions, and, offering predominantly interpretive perspectives, train the students to be as 'objective' as possible. Thus, these students have very probably been conditioned to repress subjectivity in their reading, which will necessarily limit the degree to which their response-work will express their individuality. Participants from the meditation group, not in the process of being schooled in this manner, are less likely to so repress their individuality.

Moreover, whilst the majority of literary courses may encourage an objective

perspective, the meditation group with its Jungian psychological orientation, actively encourages an introverted, subjective perspective. Individuals engaged in this process are encouraged to realise and express their own individual characteristics. There is not the space to explore this process in any detail, but rather to assert that there may be a definite contrast between the two groups of participants; the Polytechnic students being conditioned to repress their subjectivity in favour of an 'objective' reading of a text, and those from the meditation group being encouraged to explore their subjective world and express their individuality.

Both Fish and Bleich discuss the question of 'interpretive communities' in relation to the reading process. Although their 'communities' differ (Fish's 'community' being semiotically structured, relating to reading strategies and interpretive conventions, whilst Bleich's 'community' is pedagogic, reflecting shared interest in knowledge) each critic sees the process of response as to some degree determined by a 'community' to which the reader belongs. My analysis of individual patterns of imaginal response may also support the idea of a 'reader's' 'community' influencing the response process. 'Imaginal response' has been practised with participants from two differing groups or 'communities', and it is suggested that participants from the meditation 'community' may be more predisposed to express their individuality in their response-work than participants from the Polytechnic 'community'.

However, because of the difference in the number of response sessions attended by these two groups, the more easily differentiated individual patterns of the meditation group cannot be offered as conclusive evidence of the differing perspectives of the two 'communities'. A more conclusive

approach would require that a larger number of participants all take part in an equal number of response sessions. Yet it could still be argued that any such analysis of participant's response-work would in itself be too subjective to be offered as 'proof'. For example, my appreciation of individual characteristics in the response-work would necessarily be influenced by any personal knowledge of the participants, and some of those from the mediation group I know well. An alternative could be for someone with no personal knowledge of any of the participants to conduct the analysis - but this is an area for possible future research. At this present stage I can only propose the idea of a community of 'readers' reflecting neither a semiotic nor a pedagogic orientation, but rather a psychological distinction between 'readers' encouraged to express their own subjectivity and individuality, and those conditioned towards a more objective stance.

#### 5.2.5. The Participation of the Unconscious

Participants may express their individuality in the patterns or individual characteristics that repeat throughout their response-work. However, participants' individuality is also evident in the subjective nature of single responses. Subjectivity in response-work is most apparent when the process of imaginal association points to the participation of the unconscious.

Consider Frank's response to the following textual image:

Textual Image:

Now, Hamlet, hear.

'Tis given out that sleeping in my orchard

A serpent stung me.

1 v 34-6

Response Image:

Frank

1. -

2. -

3. Marlon Brando looking male sitting in sunny Italian courtyard in Bath Chair suddenly slumps forward. No other movement or creatures, except raven sitting in tree watching curiously.

If we look at Frank's response solely in the context of an experience of the text, there is an immediate problem. From where did Frank's 'raven sitting in a tree watching curiously' originate? The text gives no hint of a raven, and indeed no other 'readers' perceived a raven in response to this textual image. A possible supposition is that the raven is a product of Frank's unconscious.

Throughout this imaginal response-work there is witness to the possible participation of the unconscious in that images are evoked that bear no obvious relationship to the textual image. Sometimes, as with Frank's raven, there is just the inclusion of a single figure or image that has an apparent unrelatedness to the textual image. Another example of this is Yael's response to

There is a willow grows askant the brook

That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream.

lv vii 165-6

### Yael

1. The murmuring of small ripples as they meet the pillars of the bridge. Peaceful
2. Medium to weak intensity
3. A willow covers partly a small wooden bridge, on which a woman with a baby in a pram are passing slowly.

The 'small wooden bridge, on which a woman with a baby in a pram are passing slowly', does not appear in the text. Yet Yael 'saw' it, and furthermore, 'heard' the 'murmuring of small ripples as they meet the pillars of the bridge'. Interestingly, throughout her responses to images describing Ophelia's drowning, Yael saw a bridge across the river. Moreover, until we discussed her responses, she was not aware of any unrelatedness between what she had perceived and the textual images.

At other times, the response appears to be almost entirely unrelated to the textual image. An example is Yael's response to

Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul,  
And there I see such black and grained spots  
As will not leave their tinct.

111 iv 89-91

### Yael

1. Gloom, heaviness
2. Strong
3. A raw cow liver covered with flour - the blood and the flour mixed together into a mess. Clots of flour.

Yael's 'clots' may echo, both visually and acoustically, the text's 'spots',



but otherwise her response, with its central image of a 'raw cow liver covered with flour', appears unrelated to the textual image.

As Freud noted (see above p. <sup>63</sup>), thinking in images is closer to the processes of the unconscious than thinking in words. And according to Jung the psyche consists essentially of images:

Every psychic process is an image and an imagining.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, an imaginal mode allows the unconscious to express itself in its own language. Frank's raven, Yael's bridge and baby in the pram and her raw cow liver can be considered as the responses of the participant's unconscious to the textual image. And, although one can attempt to analyse these response images, translate their 'meaning' into a more conceptual form, one can also learn to become conversant with the language of the unconscious, become sensitive to an imaginal mode of communication. It is possible to learn to appreciate an image as its imaginal self without the need of verbal analysis;

Once one can remain with the image, the image itself can teach and disclose its nature and its world through its own being.<sup>7</sup>

This is the posture adopted by Hillman and his followers, which the participants' response-work would seem to support. However, this enquiry has argued that ideally there should be an integration of an imaginal and an analytic approach, a 'coincidentia oppositorum'.

#### 5.2.5.1. The Participation of the Unconscious Encouraged by Appreciating the Feelings, Emotions, Sensations of a Response

The participation of the unconscious may be further encouraged by the

'reader' appreciating the feelings, emotions, sensations etc. which are experienced in a response. The participants' experience of 'despair', 'fear', 'peace', 'claustrophobia', 'nausea' or a 'burning sensation' may often have an unconscious origin. Evoked by the text, these feelings are subjective, and can be understood as previously existing predominantly in the unconscious. A particular example of this was evident in Mike's response to the image:

For if the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog, being a good  
Kissing carrion.

11 ii 181-2

Mike

1. Nausea
2. Strong
3. Maggots crawling around the still indefinable carcase of a dog. It is brightly lit and I can almost smell and feel it.

(Dogs running in roads and the fear that they might get killed is a very strong personal fear).

He had a strong sensation of nausea, but the intensity of his response is further indicated by the fact that he could 'almost smell and feel it'. This quality of sensation was not evident in his other responses. It appears that the textual image evoked from his unconscious a personal phobia, a fear that dogs running in the roads might get killed. The feeling quality of his response was not rational, there was no dog running in the road, but rather due to a subliminal association. The text evoked feelings that appeared to be just below the threshold of consciousness. If they were deeper in the unconscious it is unlikely

that Mike would have so easily linked the feeling to his phobia about dogs in the street. Nevertheless, the feelings here evoked were so disturbing for Mike that he repressed any response to the following textual image. For his next response Mike simply stated;

Previous image was so unpleasant that this image was repressed.

Mike's reaction was easily traced to its origin. However, in most cases the reaction evoked by the text is not so easily traceable to a particular phobia or cause. Mike's own response-work suggests a number of unconscious feelings repeatedly evoked: 'danger', 'nausea', 'fear' and 'claustrophobia'. Their particular origin could not be traced without exploring their associations in depth, which was not appropriate to the seminar situation. Possibly these feelings exist deeper in Mike's unconscious than his phobia about dogs. Moreover, his feelings, as well as those of other participants, had a strength and intensity that surprised the individual, which in itself suggests that they have an unconscious origin.

In giving the feeling, emotion and sensation aspect of a response due recognition, the participation of the unconscious is encouraged. Furthermore, in appreciating these elements, participants become more sensitive to that area, to the affect of a text; and in doing so they become more sensitive and receptive to the expressions of the unconscious. Thus 'readers' are encouraged to become aware of an area of response that in the 'normal' reading process takes place only at a subliminal level.

#### 5.2.5.2. The Participation of the Unconscious Evokes a 'Reaction' Rather Than a 'Response'

Mike's association quoted above emphasises the quality of 'reaction' that

may be found in this use of 'active imagination'; for, in encountering the participant's psyche the textual image may often evoke a subjective reaction. Indeed, participants' associations may often be considered as more a 'reaction' than a 'response'. The O.E.D. defines 'response' as

1. An answer, a reply, or
  - b. an action or feeling which answers to some feeling or influence.

'Reaction' is defined as

1. Repulsion or resistance exerted by a body in opposition to the impact or pressure of another body.

An imaginal association is rarely just an 'answer'; rather, involving the participants's psyche, it often reflects an encounter with an unconscious resistance or complex. For our personal unconscious is not a virgin land, empty of resistances, but rather it is the home of the 'shadow' and many repressed aspects of the individual that are in opposition to the conscious ego. In encouraging the participation of the unconscious, imaginal perception may evoke these resistances, and engage the participant in a reaction rather than a response.

That reading involves a process of psychological reaction has already been explored in some depth by Holland, in his analysis of the function of defensive strategies and fantasy drives in the dynamics of response. However, as I have already suggested, the imaginal response-work indicates 'reactions' that are not necessarily either defensive or pleasurable. Indeed, Mike's reaction to the 'dead dog' is a particular example of an unpleasant reaction that appears to have gone beyond his defensive strategies into an area of painful feelings, as may also be true of the other feelings,

'danger', 'nausea', 'fear' etc. repeatedly evoked within him. The following imaginal association also points to textual 'reaction' going beyond defensive strategies, bringing painful feelings etc. across the threshold of consciousness.

Textual Image:

And is't not to be damned  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?

V ii 63-70

Response

Nomi

1. Guilt, pain
2. Quite strong
3. All those things that lead me astray at the moment. Memory of placenta being as it were uprooted from my centre and pulled out by the doctor. The pain of that and fury at being distracted from being with O..

Nomi's 'reaction' to this textual image brought into consciousness a painful experience she had when her child was born; as well as a feeling of 'guilt' at being led 'astray'.

5.2.5.3. The Participation of the Unconscious Explored Through Karen's Associations

The above examples point to the participant's unconscious 'reacting' or 'responding' to the textual image. In order to explore this unconscious

dynamic in more depth I worked with Karen for a number of sessions (see above Section 4.6), and we consciously focussed on the participation of her unconscious in the process of response, looking closely at the possible origins of her imaginal associations.

Karen's first response image involved a number of personal associations. 'But two months dead' evoked the image of a 'Baby - born yet dead with crown', and in discussing this association Karen remembered that in fact the very first image evoked, which was not recorded, was of a foetus, two months old. The text's 'two months dead' had evoked a memory of an abortion and also a miscarriage. Interestingly she initially repressed this first association, possibly because it was so painful. She later described the feeling associated with this memory:

That desperate feeling when a mother loses her  
child ... that tragedy that can only happen to a mother.

Thus the textual image evoked a subjective association, a memory stored in the unconscious that was painful enough for her to at first repress it.

The same textual image also evoked an image associated with her mother. Her response recorded 'Mother - blue grey - wild, holds out hands for child. Cannot reach it.' Karen associated 'Mother - blue grey - wild' with her own mother: "My image of my mother is wild ... she is an hysterical, neurotic woman". But her response image was associated with a deeper unconscious dynamic in that Karen saw the 'baby - born yet dead with crown' as representing her true self, dead "not in the sense of having lived and died, but in the sense of having never lived". Furthermore, the mother unable to reach the child was associated with a psychological separation from the mother which Karen was undergoing at that time.

For, only when separate from her physical mother and also the part of her feminine nature the mother represents, "all that negative femininity within myself, the wild destructive mother", did Karen feel she would be able to exist as her true self, the 'baby ... with crown'.

In this sense Karen's response image is related to an important psychological dynamic that only became apparent when the associations were discussed. This suggests that the response process involved the participation of the unconscious, evoking subjective and predominantly subliminal associations, whether of a painful abortion and miscarriage, or of a progress towards individuation through a separation from the mother.

Karen's response-work offers further examples of the text evoking subjective associations. The 'harlot's cheek' in 'Claudius, Image 2' evoked the image of a laughing whore, which Karen amplified by associating it with her experience of prostitutes in the red-light district of Amsterdam, and the way they turn their cheek "mocking ... trying to attract". This same textual image also evoked the image of Jesus being crucified, with Pilate regretting his words. Karen associated this religious scene with her strong Christian upbringing. Another textual image, 'Gertrude, Image 5', evoked a very powerful personal association:

Memory of most 'instinctual' sexual moment when base sexuality took over. Feel part of me was raped by this act.

Karen's discussion of her response-work pointed to individual response images having a subjective element. This subjectivity crosses the threshold of consciousness as an imaginal association, but it is through the process of analysis and discussion that the nature of the association

is made fully conscious. In fact, as Karen's pattern of response-work and their associations developed, our discussion revealed that the textual images were evoking a dominant unconscious dynamic in which the pure or 'innocent girl' within Karen was attacked or 'executed' by the powerful collective forces of her instinctual self, in particular her sexual instincts.

Karen's response-work expressed this unconscious dynamic in a variety of imaginal forms. In 'Gertrude, Image 2' an 'innocent ... young girl' was executed in the 'French Revolution'; in 'Gertrude, Image 4' Karen associated the 'giant monster, first serpent then dragon-like, firey, full of poison, base' with the darkness of her own instinctual self; 'Gertrude, Image 5' associates Hamlet's description of his mother's sexual activity with an actual incident in which Karen's 'base sexuality took over'; in 'Ophelia, Image 1' Karen relates her response-image of Max Beckman's Two Harlequins and Monkey with the animal nature within man taking over both the painter and also the German people at the beginning of the Second World War; 'Ophelia, Image 5' images a 'Young girl, stripped naked' attacked by 'forces'; and finally 'Ophelia's Drowning, Image 5' images a 'young woman sucked down a hole into a huge cavern ... full of lecherous beings ... They entice her!.

Each of these associations can be read as an imaginal amplification of a particular sexual theme. Furthermore, our discussion not only revealed this theme, it also brought out in Karen a number of life situations in which this psychological dynamic appeared to have manifested. These situations included an early experience of sexual abuse, being stripped in the school playground, and later leading a base sexual life as a 'groupie'. Thus Karen's responses to the text reflected a subjective



life-theme so powerful that it appeared to dominate at times not only her unconscious but also her conscious life.

The textual images evoked a psychological pattern within Karen, first in imaginal form then translated through the process of our discussion into the more conscious mode of psychological language. In Chapter Two, Section 8.5., the importance of integrating an imaginal with an analytic mode of response was discussed, and Karen's response-work may be offered as evidence of this. Without discussing her responses the underlying pattern would not have been discerned, nor its psychological significance been made conscious. The value of this work was reflected in a dream of Karen's (recorded above, together with her interpretation pp. 319-21). In her dream Karen is on a journey with me, when, in a protected space, she meets a cage with wild animals. In the dream I show her how to feed the animal with her flesh and then

I feed it me, yet at the same time I am gradually eating  
it ... I am now remarkably in control of this wild beast.

In her interpretation Karen comments how the response sessions have been helping her become conscious of 'the instincts, specifically the sexual ones'. In particular she describes how an idea previously only 'understood on an intellectual level' was fully realised. This suggests the importance of experiential, rather than just intellectual understanding.

Karen's imaginal experiences combined with our discussion allowed a psychological idea to be more fully understood. This is evidence of the limitations of a solely intellectual approach to the unconscious, and it also points to the psychological potential of 'imaginal response'.

Karen identifies the dream animal(s) as imagining her instincts, and suggests

that

The highest act would be to feed it with myself. Could this be showing me how the animal at first devoured me and that I have to re-experience this in order to control it? Then I feed on it, the process is reversed or completed. The animal is no longer separate, it becomes a part of me, I take it into myself.

Following Karen's interpretation I would suggest that the response-work had allowed her to imaginally act out her experience of her 'wild animal' or instinctual self. In the 'protected space' of the response sessions Karen was able to re-experience how she had 'fed' her instincts, allowed the 'animal' to devour her, and in these imaginal experiences and our discussions she became conscious of this dynamic, and thus 'ate' or 'digested' the animal. And most important for Karen, through this process the animal was controlled.

The psychological pattern imaged in Karen's response-work and enacted in her life is analogous to Holland's 'identity theme'. But this response-work, both imaginal and analytic, not only shows 'reading' as a 'function of identity', it also shows the possibility for 'imaginal response' to effect psychological change. And, as already suggested, such psychological change questions Holland's notion of the reader having a fixed identity.

The imaginal response process allows a psychological dynamic to be realised first as an imaginal experience, rather than just as an intellectual concept, and then through analysis to be more consciously understood. It is important to stress that the imaginal experience needs to come first,

because, as stated in Chapter Two, the 'full experience of the imaginal can never be conceptually comprehended,<sup>8</sup> and as Karen herself commented, she 'didn't get it' when explained as an intellectual idea, only when she had imaginally experienced her 'animal' was she able to 'eat' and thus integrate it. Thus, through 'imaginal response', an unconscious dynamic may be integrated, 'digested', and so transformed. Karen's response-work offers only one example of how this process may take place, and many more examples would be needed to substantiate this potential for 'imaginal response'. However, it does offer an as yet unexplored area linking psychology and literary texts.

Finally, Karen's work is an important confirmation of an idea central to this whole enquiry: namely that, compared to an analytic, 'secondary' mode of response, an imaginal mode, as a 'primary process', allows for a greater awareness of the unconscious dynamics of the reading process, a fuller understanding of any unconscious material triggered by a text.

#### 5.2.5.4. Acoustic Associations and the Participation of the Unconscious

Karen's response-image of Max Beckman's Two Harlequins and a Monkey, reflects her particular psychological pattern (see above p. 309), but its relationship to the textual image bears analysis. In discussing this response Karen revealed that it appeared to be evoked primarily by the two textual words 'fashion' and 'toy'. The latter word she associated with the fact that the monkey in the picture is "holding a toy monkey". But the former word 'fashion' seemed more central to the response in evoking an acoustic association 'Fasching'; she describes the picture as "two harlequins and a monkey ... going to a party, celebrating Fasching,"

a German festival". How evident are acoustic associations in other participants' response-work, and are they also linked to the participation of the unconscious?

The analysis of participants' response-work revealed numerous other acoustic associations. Sometimes these acoustic images are homophones that are also homomorphs, for example Frank's 'trifling/bowl of trifle', Donovan's 'celestial bed/bed of roses'; though this latter response can also be read as a witty colloquial comment on the idea of a 'celestial bed'. Suzanne's associations offer examples of an 'intermediate',<sup>9</sup> homophonic and homomorphic association: 'O wretched state/Mrs Thatcher dressed in black' (Mrs Thatcher as representative of the 'state' or 'country') and 'thy union/a procession of people shouting and waving banners' (trades union). These two particular associations also have political connotations, suggesting a subliminal political dimension to Suzanne's 'reading'.

Other acoustic images are just homophones, for example: Nomi's 'canker of our nature/placenta uprooted from my centre' and Victoria's 'enseamed bed/bed with steam rising'. An 'intermediate' acoustic association is evident in Donovan's 'bear those ills/remove clothes ... wounds' (bare). Interestingly there appeared no homomorphs that are also homophones. This may reflect the fact that the textual images were read out loud to the 'readers', and were thus experienced aurally. Possibly when a text is read silently, homomorph associations that are not homophones may occur, but this cannot be explored in this enquiry.

In The Interpretation of Dreams Freud considers acoustic associations in the form of puns, and he notes the tendency of the unconscious to make acoustic associations in dreams, referring to 'oriental 'dream books'' as

evidence of this tendency. These 'dream books'

base the greater number of their interpretations of dream-elements upon similarity of sound and resemblance between words.<sup>10</sup>

However, a more thorough study of acoustic associations and unconscious processes was made by Jung in his 'Studies in Word Association'.<sup>11</sup> In these experiments Jung discovered that the lower the level of attention, whether through tiredness or just boredom, the greater the number of phonetic associations. From these observations he concluded that

Under normal conditions sound associations are continually opposed by inhibitions ... There will always be a certain tendency to suppress the sounds; the slighter the distraction of attention the stronger this tendency will be, but the greater the distraction is, the weaker it will be. With increasing distraction the reaction will be more and more influenced by sound, till finally only sound is associated.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, any mode of response that distracts the conscious attention of the 'reader' will increase the tendency for acoustic association. This would be true of the meditative, relaxed posture adopted in 'imaginal response'. And of particular relevance to 'imaginal response' is Jung's observation that

The tendency to form a meaningful association, which derives from the stimulus concept, inhibits sound associations.<sup>13</sup>

Thus the critical focus on making conceptually meaningful, indeed interpretive associations in reading a text, will 'inhibit sound association',

whilst 'imaginal response's' non-rational perspective will more freely allow such associations.

Following his study, Jung observes that the

subconscious associative process takes place through similarities of image and sound.<sup>14</sup>

However, is the reverse inference also true, that the acoustic associations observed in 'imaginal response' necessarily take place in the 'readers'' unconscious? Indeed, is the very phenomenon of acoustic associations an indication of the participation of the unconscious in the response process?

A number of 'readers'' acoustic associations have a subjective element, for example; Karen's 'Fasching' association is linked with her unconscious dynamic, Nomi's 'placenta uprooted from my centre' relates to a painful personal experience, and Suzanne's two 'intermediate' associations quoted above suggest a subliminal political theme. However, in other responses a personal unconscious element is not so apparent, for example Victoria's 'bed with steam rising' or Frank's 'bowl of trifle'. Whether Jung's argument implies that all these associations are evoked in the 'readers'' unconscious, can only at present be left unanswered.

Thus, this enquiry offers evidence of the occurrence of acoustic associations in the subliminal reading process, and the work of Freud and Jung suggests that the choice of association may reflect an unconscious patterning within the reader. However, it would require a further, more detailed study to explore the mechanism by which these associations are selected.

If the choice of associations reflects the reader's unconscious patterning, may it not also reflect the archetypal patterns of the collective unconscious, particularly in an imaginal 'reading' of an archetypal textual image?

In The Alchemy of Discourse Kugler expands Jung's ideas about acoustic associations into the field of archetypal studies. Studying clusters of words that relate to a single archetypal core, for example: flowers, carnations, violets and the defloration fantasy, carnal, violation, defloration etc.; Kugler comes to the conclusion that

archetypal image meanings cluster round elemental units of sound<sup>15</sup>.

Kugler expands Jung's idea of the psyche 'consisting essentially of images' to include acoustic images and translates Jung's 'Image and meaning are identical',<sup>16</sup> into

The 'deep' archetypal meaning is the physiognomic and acoustic image.<sup>17</sup>

He also explores the idea that the archetypal depths of the unconscious may be structured phonetically. If patterns of archetypal imagery form the structure of the collective unconscious, and these archetypal images have a phonetic dimension, it would follow that the collective unconscious could have a phonetic patterning. This gives an archetypal and acoustic dimension to Lacan's statement: 'The unconscious is structured like a language.'<sup>18</sup>

The significance of Kugler's work for 'imaginal response' is that it points to the possibility of 'readers'' acoustic associations having an archetypal dimension. Furthermore, in encouraging, rather than inhibiting the tendency for acoustic associations, 'imaginal response' may facilitate a deeper experience of the 'archetypal meaning' of a textual image. As to whether my 'readers'' acoustic associations are archetypal is not apparent, indeed, a number of them, for example: Frank's 'Dane/rain' or Donovan's 'tinct/clanked' would seem to lack any such quality. Nevertheless, just as Jung's work indicates that in not inhibiting acoustic associations, the unconscious may participate more fully; so Kugler suggest that this may allow a fuller appreciation of archetypal images.

#### 5.2.6. Archetypal Associations in Imaginal Response-Work

Kugler's work on acoustic associations implies the possibility of a 'reader's' imaginal associations having an archetypal quality. However, whilst the acoustic associations recorded do not offer firm evidence of being archetypal, there are other imaginal associations that definitely may be considered as archetypal.

##### 5.2.6.1. The Rape of Persephone in Karen's Response Images

Karen's imaginal associations points to the participation of a personal unconscious dynamic. However, underlying this personal theme is an archetypal dimension to her associations. The archetypal theme mythologically imaged in the Rape of Persephone, was re-enacted in her imaginal experiences. The Rape of Persephone describes the transformation of the innocent maiden, the Kore, through a forced descent into the instinctual depths of the underworld. Carried off by Hades, the virginal Persephone realises the dark depths of the feminine, the dimension of Hecate; and in these depths the maiden becomes mother, having eaten of the fruits of the pomegranate. Then, even when she returns to the surface she must always acknowledge the depths within, returning to Hades for half of each year.

Karen's response images focus on the first part of this story, the rape of



the maiden. This is imaged in the innocent girl being executed, her head turning into 'Medusa's head of snakes' ('Gertrude, Image 2'), in the 'Young girl, stripped naked' attacked by 'figures', and more particularly in her response to the final image of Ophelia's Drowning ('Ophelia's Drowning, Image 5'). Karen records;

Young woman sucked down a hole into a huge cavern, like the bowels of the earth. 'Hell'. Full of lecherous beings, lascivious, drooling, ugly monsters ...

As I commented on this response;

The 'muddy death' of Ophelia here evokes images highly suggestive of the Rape of Persephone, except that Hades is replaced by 'lecherous beings'. For Karen, the innocent maid is always the victim of a group, not an individual seducer.

In my archetypal readings of Hamlet I associated the drowning of Ophelia with the Rape of Persephone; the virginal Ophelia with her 'crownnet' of flowers, drowned, echoes Persephone abducted into depths whilst gathering flowers. Ophelia's death reflects the first part of the myth, the rape or 'death' of the maiden, and this is the element of the myth that appears most important for Karen. In the play the transformation of the feminine takes place in the graveyard scene (see p. 289). For Karen, this transformation is only hinted at in the Medusa figure ('Gertrude, Image 2'); possibly she is yet to fully realise this inner metamorphosis.

The archetypal dimension of Karen's images can be read as reflecting an archetypal theme within the text. However, the association of the Persephone myth with Karen's personal unconscious dynamic points beyond

the text. It suggests that the archetypal images in the text evoked a similar archetypal pattern within Karen, one of great personal significance. This indicates the possibility of a 'reading' reflecting an archetypal rather than a purely personal 'identity theme'.

It would be consistent with Jung and Hillman to propose that each of us has an individual myth or dominant archetypal theme. This may be understood as a particular archetypal configuration that appears predominant in an individual's life events and in any interpretation or meaning he or she may give to these events. For most individuals, their governing archetypal patterns is only revealed through analytic work, and in her book Puer Aeternus, Marie-Louise von Franz gives examples of patients whose lives were dominated by the myth of the Puer. For the purposes of this study it is only necessary to acknowledge that such influencing patterns exist, and indeed I have already noted that my reading of Hamlet will have been influenced by my personal myth.

A 'reader's' archetypal patterns would belong to a deeper psychic structure than that of Holland's 'identity theme'. It is not determined by the ego or personality structure, and may therefore be more enduring than any ego identity. However, Karen's associations focus on the first part of the Persephone myth, the rape of the maiden rather than her transformation into womanhood. This points to the possibility of an individual being identified with a part of a myth, but it also suggests the idea of movement within an archetypal theme. If, as I have proposed, the rape rather than the transformation of the feminine is more important for Karen because 'she is yet to fully realise this inner metamorphosis', might not her archetypal emphasis shift if and when this transformation is fully realised? Although this idea cannot at present be supported by

further evidence, it is offered as a possibility, and moreover, one that further questions Holland's notion of an invariant identity theme.

Among the participants Karen's response-work is unique in its being so dominated by an identifiable psychological pattern, and moreover, a pattern that relates to a particular archetypal theme. Frank's work hints at a fatalistic stance, Wendy and Andrew's at a feeling of sadness, but, given the limited amount of work that could be done with them, their associations did not reveal so dominant a personal and archetypal theme. Nevertheless, just as examples of participants' work (Mike's fear about dogs, Nomi's memory of O's birth) pointed to the participation of the personal unconscious in the process of response, so too is there evidence of an archetypal dimension to some of their response images.

#### 5.2.6.2. Archetypal Associations that Evoke an Essential Quality of the Textual Image

A certain disparity between textual and response images, Frank's 'raven', Yael's 'bridge and baby in a pram', Karen's 'Baby - born yet dead', suggests the participation of the unconscious - the textual image evokes an unconscious association. There are responses, however, where imaginal association, rather than creating a disparity, has the potential to evoke an essential quality of the textual image. An example is Yael's response to Hamlet's

I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my  
mirth, forgone all my custom of exercises; and indeed it  
goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame  
the earth seems to me a sterile promontory, this most

excellent canopy of air, look you, this brave o'erhanging  
firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,  
why it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent  
congregation of vapours.

11 ii 295-303

Yael

1. Despair, no hope, weariness
2. -
3. A small factory town air dense with soot, people  
rushing to uninspiring jobs, wearing long black-grey  
coats, faces down, not looking up.

The text's 'foul and pestilent congregation of vapours' not only evokes an 'air dense with soot', but the association is more profound. The very quality of Hamlet's depression has been translated into an urban image. Even the details of Yael's response are apposite; the colour of the men's coats, 'black-grey' adds to the feeling of depression, as does 'faces down'; that it is 'a small factory town' evokes an appropriate feeling of insignificance. The 'air dense with soot' points more to the nineteenth century or early twentieth century, than to a contemporary factory town. The coats of the men 'long black-grey' similarly suggest a previous era, though they could also reflect Yael's Jewish/Israeli background, as long dark coats are the uniform of the orthodox Jews, much in evidence in Israel. However, we are not discussing an historical but an imaginal representation, in which Yael's 'factory' imagery evokes a depressive atmosphere, similar to that portrayed by Dickens in Hard Times. Yael's response may be a personal paraphrase of the text, but it also has a collective significance.

Three responses to an image from the session on Gertrude further illustrate the imaginal's potential to evoke the essence of a textual image. The textual image is Hamlet's exclamation to his mother:

Nay, but to live

In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,  
Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love  
Over the nasty sty.

111 iv 91-4

The responses:

Yael

1. Emptiness, hollowness
2. Rather strong
3. Smell of unaired room, cheap heavy perfume plus smell of sleep. The sheets are crumpled. Motel.

Nomi

1. Sensual mingled with slight disgust
2. Strong
3. Curiously sensual feeling, strong smell of warm leather like in a tannery. Kind of wallowing sensation. Hot acrid and flies, millions of flies.

Donovan

1. Disgust
2. Strong
3. Vast crowd of horrible swollen rats, crawling over one another, fighting, fornicating - they will not cease.

This is far below any usual human possibility of  
terrible behaviour.

Yael has translated Shakespeare's image into a contemporary setting, a 'motel'. Although the similarities between the text and the response are obvious, the sensations experienced: 'smell of unaired room, cheap heavy perfume plus smell of sleep', do not directly originate in the text. The image evoked for her has its own distinct quality, and I find that it amplifies the textual image, making an imaginal statement about the emptiness and hollowness of purely physical sex.

If Yael's response conveys emptiness and hollowness, for Nomi the text evoked the sensuality of sex. The 'warm leather', the 'wallowing' and the 'flies' are her own personal expression of the sensual sexuality that Shakespeare is describing. As images they do not appear in the text, but it would be incorrect to deny their appropriateness. Unlike her 'placenta ... uprooted from my centre', they do not just have a personal significance. They do, in fact, evoke an essential quality of the image, which Nomi experienced as 'sensual mingled with slight disgust'.

For Donovan, the human beings have become rats, 'horrible swollen rats'. Hamlet's disgust at his mother's lustful copulation has become an impersonal, mass-animal fornication. Donovan's comment, 'This is far below any human possibility of terrible behaviour' could be read as a footnote to the textual image. Again, the association does not move away from the text into the purely personal unconscious, evoking images that have significance only for the participant; rather the 'reader' grasps a fundamental meaning of the textual image. Thus, although each is necessarily the 'reader's' own paraphrase of the text, the images of these

responses carry a collective as well as personal significance.

#### 5.2.6.3. Archetypal Association Explored Through Jungian Analysis

A different perspective on the archetypal nature of an imaginal response is evident in the following responses to the Ghost's description of his own poisoning:

And in the porches of my ears did pour  
The leprous distilment, whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man  
That swift as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body,  
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset  
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood.

1 v 63-70

#### Nomi

1. Horror
2. Strong
3. Like a gothic cathedral with many external decorations slowly disintegrating under acid rain, crumbling images then blood flowing from the statues inside, flowing out through the doorway and coagulating.

#### Frank

1. Serenity of fatalism, mild physical waves of shuddering

2. -

3. Lying on the ground, knowing a figure must come and pour poison in my ear and yet wanting to do nothing to stop it as my tenure as king is over; and knowing that myself to be killed in this way will bring great spiritual reward. A kind of total surrender.

#### Donovan

1. Satisfaction then fulfilment
2. Strong
3. Man on cross, crucified; silver streams flow in body, which becomes all silver. Finally two ends of the cross become wings and he flies above, free.

Before analysing these responses it must be stated that none of these participants had made any particular study of Hamlet. Their actual knowledge of the text they described as 'fair' 'poor' and 'fair' respectively. Furthermore, I only discussed the possible archetypal implications of the images after the imaginal response-work.

A cursory study of the textual image suggests that what is being described is simply the horrific poisoning of the sleeping King Hamlet. Indeed, a number of other responses echoed this implication of the image. Mike's response is one example:

#### Mike

1. Intense pain followed by suffocation
2. Strong
3. Drowning in a heavy curd-like substance which



prevented breathing. The blanket of liquid at first seems light and liquid, but on contact is gum-like and cloying.

Mike's response suggests an intense experience of a liquid poisonous substance. It relates clearly and directly to the ghost's description of his poisoning.

However, an archetypal reading of the play can imply that this image carries other implications. In Chapter Four I outlined my own archetypal reading of Hamlet, together with a detailed study of the images with which I worked. I will therefore only offer here a very brief account of the archetypal implications of this particular image.

King Hamlet is the image of the 'heroic ego' which has separated itself from the instinctual natural world. It is a masculine aspect of consciousness which has repressed and denied its instinctual shadow side, together with losing its awareness of the whole instinctual feminine psyche. The 'serpent' which kills King Hamlet is his shadow brother Claudius. If man's instinctual self is repressed it may eventually express itself in a manner destructive to the ego consciousness which has denied it. This is the archetypal situation imaged in the poisoning of King Hamlet. However, although destructive to the ego consciousness, this action of the instinctual self can result in man's greater conscious awareness. Just as the action of the serpent in the Garden of Eden brought the knowledge of good and evil, so the action of the serpent in Elsinore brings greater conscious awareness to Prince Hamlet. The resultant remarriage of his mother forces him to become aware of her dark, instinctual/sexual side. Furthermore, the revelations of the ghost make Prince

Hamlet aware of the real nature of his uncle. The Prince becomes aware of the dark, instinctual aspect of life, and of himself, as many of his speeches reveal. Thus, the death of King Hamlet, although it appears negative, has a positive archetypal significance. An ideal, heroic consciousness is destroyed by its shadow, but that results in a greater conscious awareness. There is the potential for the shadow to be confronted, the instinctual self integrated into consciousness.

If the textual image is really an archetypal image, an imaginal perception of that image can realise it as an archetypal experience. Thus, in this case, the participant can experience the poisoning of the king not merely as a negative, destructive act, but as having a transformative quality. Imaginally perceived, the image can be experienced as the destruction of ego consciousness leading to a greater awareness of man's whole self.

The transformative quality of this archetypal image becomes evident in Frank and Donovan's responses. Frank simply states: 'knowing myself to be killed in this way will bring great spiritual reward.' Identifying with the ghost, Frank is offering an amplification of the textual image that relates to an archetypal rather than literal reading. For Donovan, the response was 'Satisfaction and Fulfilment', again seemingly at variance with a literal reading of the text. The Christian symbolism of the cross, and the transformation of the cross into wings on which the man flies free, gives a spiritual dimension to the king's poisoning. It suggests the freedom from the confines of the world of the ego, of which the poisoning of the king is an archetypal portent. In Jungian terminology, the Self, the spiritual centre of man, can only be realised through the metaphorical death of the ego as the centre of consciousness.

Both these responses embrace this spiritual dimension contained in the archetypal image.

Nomi's response does not appear to offer the spiritually transformative quality of Frank and Donovan's images. However, her perception of the king's poisoning as a Gothic cathedral disintegrating bears analysis. The Gothic perspective was a spiritual yearning upwards, as is so beautifully expressed in the soaring arches and columns of their cathedrals. The Gothic concern was for the heights, the vertical dimension, always looking upwards towards heaven. Within a Gothic cathedral the individual cannot help having his eyes, his whole attention, drawn upwards. This can be seen as a symbolic expression of the heroic ideal, the longing for perfection. But this orientation upwards can only be made at the cost of the horizontal dimension. Looking always at the heavens the earth is rejected. From an archetypal perspective, this means that the feminine principle, which since time immemorial has stood for 'nature and matter - Mater Natura',<sup>19</sup> - is rejected. The Gothic cathedral, with its vertical soaring, thus symbolises the heroic ego, its striving upwards away from the earth and its instinctual demands.

If this symbolic association between the Gothic cathedral and the heroic ego is accepted, Nomi's image of the Gothic cathedral disintegrating captures the archetypal significance of the death of the king. Furthermore, in her image blood is released from the cathedral's crumbling statues. Blood can be read as a symbol for life. There comes the point when the separation of the ego from its instinctual roots becomes life denying. It is the natural, instinctual self that carries the life energy of man. In Hamlet the Prince's father is asleep in his orchard;

and if we are to understand the Player King as a reflection of King Hamlet, even before his poisoning the king is sick and dying:

Faith, I must leave thee love, and shortly too;  
20  
My operant powers their functions leave to do;

The death of the heroic ego can thus allow instinctual life to flow again. In Nomi's response, the 'images', that which has become crystallised and rigid, 'crumble', and thus the blood of life can flow.

What we are looking at is an imaginal response's potential to experience and indeed to amplify an archetypal image. But what is here significant is that the images which these individuals perceived suggest a quality of response beyond their conscious understanding. They had no prior knowledge of an archetypal reading of the text. Also, it was only when the response work was complete and their responses were discussed, that the archetypal significance of their images was appreciated. This points to a level of understanding which does not belong to the conscious mind. The images derive not from logical analysis, but imaginal association.

This quality of archetypal association is evident in other responses. An example is Ruth and Andrew's responses to Claudius' speech:

O wretched state! O bosom black as death!  
O limed soul that struggling to be free  
Art more engaged!

111 iii 67-9

Ruth

1. Desperation
2. Strong

3. A wretched man encased in a square block of lime with just his shoulders arm and head free, pleading for help.

Andrew

1. Pity, hopelessness
2. Strong
3. A black figure in a cage, with a series of larger cages surrounding each.

Like a chinese-box effect they stretch to infinity.

Ruth was an individual with whom I worked for only three sessions, so her responses are not collated with those who completed the course. Andrew was a polytechnic reader-response student. Both their responses suggest the image of a figure trapped in a cube. For Ruth it is 'a wretched man encased in a square block of lime'. For Andrew there is 'a black figure in a cage', and the 'chinese-box effect' evokes the form of a cube, or cuboid structure. The textual image, describing the soul as a bird, trapped, unable to fly, has already been explored from a Jungian perspective (see pp. 223-4). The soul, caught in the quicklime of the shadow, is trapped on earth, unable to realise its heavenly nature.

The archetypal symbol for the earth is the square or cube, in contrast to the circle or sphere of heaven. Jung notes that:

In Plato the quaternity takes the form of a cube, which he correlates with earth. Lu Pu-wei says: 'Heaven's way is round, earth's way is square'.<sup>21</sup>

In imaging a figure trapped in a cube or cuboid, both Ruth and Andrew are

perceiving the archetypal essence of the textual image. It is a symbolic expression of the action of the shadow, which traps man within the confines of the temporal earth. In Jung 's Red Book, the illustrated folio describing his own inner experiences, there is an illustration titled 'Meeting with the Shadow' (fig. 1). This is a picture of an animal-faced, hatted and caped figure cornered in a cube-like construction composed of many smaller squares. What I find significant here is the suggested relationship between the shadow and the cube or square. Assuming the collective unconscious is a world of images, is what we psychologically define as the shadow and its actions, a figure trapped in a cube?



Fig. 1

5.2.6.4. Archetypal Association and the Imaginal Understanding which comes from the Unconscious

Whether or not an imaginal shadow is trapped in a cube, we see here how an imaginal response can amplify an archetypal image. In fact, these examples show how imaginal associations can deepen our perception of an image's archetypal significance, allowing a textual image to be appreciated in an imaginal, rather than analytic mode. And as Mary Watkins writes:

Image requires image. Image evokes image.<sup>22</sup>

The image of a figure trapped in a cube exhibits an imaginal understanding of the archetypal nature of Shakespeare's image. It is also a symbolic statement about the nature of the shadow. Moreover, this is a mode of understanding that is not dependent upon a 'conscious' study of the text or a profound knowledge of Jungian psychology. This was not the case in any of these instances. Our attitude towards thinking has become so dominated by a verbal, analytic approach that we have forgotten that there is another mode of thinking, one that belongs to the unconscious. This is imaginal thought, thinking in images.

Another example of the value of an imaginal mode of perception is Donovan's response to Gertrude's speech:

This is mere madness,  
And thus awhile the fit will work on him.  
Anon, as patient as the female dove  
When that her golden couplets are disclos'd,  
His silence will sit drooping.

V 1 279-283

Donovan

1. Satisfaction in the strength of gentleness
2. Very strong
3. A huge hen in a hammock which is swung by a maiden gently, the hen sits up, flies ... now a large seabird, disappears into a red and orange sunset over the sea. Maiden unhooks hammock from tree, folds it tenderly, takes it into the house, lays it in a linen cupboard, closes cupboard door, kneels, prays to it in gratitude.

This speech by Gertrude has already been explored in some detail (see pp. 283-7), and its central archetypal image, the 'female dove', interpreted as a symbol for the Feminine Spirit of God, the highest form of the feminine, of the mother image. In Donovan's response, the images are feminine: 'A huge hen', 'a maiden'. There is also a spiritual quality in his response: the maiden 'kneels', 'prays'. Furthermore, if the sun is read symbolically, 'our father the sun', the image of the seabird disappearing into a sunset over the sea suggests a spiritual integration, the individual returning to the source. But what is the significance of the hammock? It is from the hammock that the bird flies, and it is to the hammock that the maiden prays. When discussing this image some understanding began to evolve. The tactile, sensation quality of the image reveals its archetypal significance. Soft and yielding, yet all-embracing, it expresses the essence of the Eternal Feminine. Its shape, whether seen in the image of a valley or of a womb, is that of the feminine. Swung in a hammock, one is like a baby rocked by the mother. Rendered impersonal, it is the archetypal feminine principle: the feminine without the limitation of a personal form. It is neither an abstract symbol, nor purely iconographic, as the holy dove has become.



Rather it is as ordinary as the Eternal Feminine, which people know and experience in their depths. The image of a hammock conveys as a tangible experience the essential qualities of the Feminine Spirit of God. The depth of perception that this association reveals is very profound. I believe it could only arise from an experience of Shakespeare's image as an archetypal reality. Only Donovan's experience of the Eternal Feminine within himself could account for the quality of his imaginal perception.

This gives further evidence that an imaginal response can evoke a depth of perception that does not originate in the conscious mind. As in the two previous sets of responses, Donovan was not consciously aware of the psychological significance of either the textual image or of his own response. Yet the imagery of these responses does show a symbolic understanding of the archetypal essence of the textual image. Nomi's Gothic cathedral disintegrating, Andrew's black figure in a cage and Donovan's hammock, if read symbolically, amplify an archetypal reading of the text. This all points to a mode of understanding which is very different from that of rational thought.

Symbolic or imaginal thinking is what Jung describes as 'mythical thinking' as opposed to 'directed thinking'. This corresponds to Freud's 'primary' as opposed to 'secondary process'. Earlier (see pp. 76-7) I outlined the significance Jung attributes to 'mythical thinking', and suggested its importance in the process of imaginal response. I believe that these examples testify to the potential of 'mythical thinking'. Andrew neither had any knowledge of Jungian psychology, nor any conscious understanding of the symbolism of the cube; yet his image of a black figure in a cage conveys a deep imaginal perception of Shakespeare's

archetypal image.

Just as it is not dependent upon a conscious study of the text, mythical thinking does not demand a learnt vocabulary of theoretical framework. It relies rather upon the symbolic dimension, the collective unconscious, which presents us with a language of symbols and images. This language offers a mode of communication between the archetypal world and individual consciousness. 'Imaginal response', in providing a framework for mythical thought, allows the archetypal world to communicate with the individual in its own language.

Earlier the idea of 'interpretive communities' was discussed in relation to 'imaginal response' and whether the two groups of participants should be considered as different 'communities'. However, if 'imaginal response' offers a mode of communication using the symbolic language of the collective unconscious, then it presents us with a universal 'community' of 'readers'. This is a community that is determined neither by 'reading strategies' (Fish), nor shared 'interests in knowledge' (Bleich); it is the community of all humanity. 'Imaginal response' necessarily requires an adequate knowledge of the language of the text, and also a receptivity to the symbols and images of the unconscious. And, whilst it will be argued in the following section that a knowledge of Jungian Psychology may allow an imaginal experience to be more consciously understood, an imaginal appreciation of a text does not require that the 'reader' belong to a specialised community. Therefore, although Fish and Bleich's concept of reading being determined by a particular 'community of readers' may be correct at a certain 'level of reading', for example an interpretive,

analytic reading, this enquiry suggest that such limitation is not present in the imaginal appreciation of a text. But whilst this imaginal process is not limited to a specialized 'community', it is limited to the 'reading' of archetypal textual images. For only an archetypal image can present a 'reader' with the universal language of the collective unconscious. It is the presence of archetypal images in a text that enables this type, or 'level' of 'reading' to take place.

#### 5.2.6.5. Archetypal Associations and the Experience of the Archetypal World

An archetypal textual image is dynamic manifestation of a living psychic force. 'Imaginal response' allows an archetypal textual image to be perceived and experienced (in the imaginal these are synonymous) as a dynamic force within the collective unconscious. But is there any evidence in the response-work that such an experience actually takes place?

In discussing Karen's responses, the archetypal theme of the Rape of Persephone was shown to underlie a series of response images, which also had a strong subjective element. Following this, it could be argued that the subjective dimension of an archetypal theme evident in her work points to a fully-felt experience of the world of the imaginal. Jung stresses that archetypal images

gain life and meaning when you try to take into account

their numinosity i.e. their relationship to the living individual.<sup>23</sup>

For Karen, the archetypal theme of the Rape of Persephone was experienced as personally meaningful. She was able to see the role it had played in her own life.

A similar combination of archetypal and personal associations can be seen in Donovan's response just quoted. Discussing with Donovan his image of a 'hammock' revealed personal associations. It was his personal experience of lying in a hammock that suggested its tactile significance, its all-embracing quality. A subjective element is also apparent in Frank's response to the Ghost's description of his poisoning. Frank's 'serenity of fatalism' echoes a subjective fatalistic stance that runs throughout his response-work.

It is the subjective element of these archetypal associations that indicates an experience of an archetypal image. But there are other responses with a discernable archetypal dimension which lack so obvious a subjective element, for example Nomi's 'Gothic cathedral', Ruth and Andrew's cuboid images. The archetypal nature of these associations, and the fact that they express an imaginal understanding of the archetypal essence of the text, suggest an experience of an archetypal image. But for the archetypal world to come to life these participants need to acknowledge that the response has a subjective meaning. In this context, an existential approach to meaning, as outlined earlier, has further significance. Rather than any collective interpretation, it is what makes the image meaningful for the individual 'reader' that is all important. If Nomi, Ruth and Andrew 'discover why and in what fashion',<sup>24</sup> their images are meaningful, then the archetypal world can 'come to life'.

However, does the acknowledgement of the subjective meaning of a response necessarily require rational understanding? In order to experience an archetypal image, does Frank need to be consciously aware of his fatalistic stance, Nomi to fully consciously appreciate what the crumbling cathedral images mean to her? Or can the meaningfulness of an image be recognised subliminally?

Jung stresses that an awareness of the 'feeling tone' (the feeling, emotion, intensity etc.) of an archetypal image is paramount, as it is this which indicates the 'degree to which the subject is affected by the [psychic] process and how much it means to him.'<sup>25</sup> It is this recognition of the affect of the experience (which I have suggested also includes any body response) that integrates the archetypal image as a living reality and not just a mythological concept. This would indicate that in being aware of a felt response, the 'reader' is aware of what it means to him/her, and thus acknowledges the subjective element of the response. Essentially, the 'feeling-tone' or body response may be considered as the primary, subjective element in a response. It would then follow that an archetypal image can be experienced without necessarily fully consciously appreciating the 'existential meaning' of a response, as long as it was 'fully felt'. But if the participant does not recognise any 'feeling-tone' or body response, as for example in the majority of Frank's responses, it is unlikely that there is any real experience of an archetypal image.

Thus, if a response includes both an archetypal association and a 'feeling-tone' or body response, one may posit the possibility of an experience of an archetypal image. However, as the archetypal world itself is resistant to any precise definition, this whole 'answer' cannot be offered as conclusive. Yet, what is more definite is that although an archetypal image

may be experienced via the 'primary process', a 'secondary', analytic approach can allow an archetypal experience to be more fully integrated, the archetypal world itself to be better appreciated.

#### 5.2.7. Imaginal Communication and the Value of an Analytic Approach

The collective unconscious and its archetypal contents cannot be understood solely from the perspective of ego consciousness. More ancient than historical man, the collective unconscious is like the primordial ocean out of which individual life arose. No more can the logical concepts of the ego contain the collective unconscious, than the first man contain the ocean. In order to understand the archetypal world as far as we are able, we must remember that it is a living reality and allow it to communicate in its own language. We just need to be receptive to the images and symbols that arise from the unconscious. And although there can be no empirical proof, I offer that 'imaginal response' allows such communication to take place, a form of imaginal dialogue between the 'reader' and the archetypal world. Thus archetypal textual images can bring us into a conscious relationship with the psychic factors that determine the very pattern of our existence.

However, our conscious, rational minds should not be excluded from this relationship. Here is the function of a psychological language. It is able to form a conceptual framework to help the conscious mind understand, as far as it is able, the archetypal world. In the context of an imaginal response an analytic 'interpretation' can help the individual understand the meaning of a specific archetypal experience.

Translated into a psychological language, either single images or whole imaginal responses can be given a conceptual meaning. For example: the 'cube' understood as a symbol of the earth, the material world; Donovan's 'hammock', like the mother dove, an expression of the feminine spirit; Nomi's Gothic cathedral with its crumbling statues and flowing blood, the death of the 'heroic ego' that allows the instinctual life to flow again; and in the case of Karen's responses, a whole series of images were related to her experience of her instinctual self. In this way the images are intellectually conceptualized. Placed within a psychological framework, the 'rational mind' can appreciate them, not as isolated images, but as a part of man's psychic structure.

If the 'rational mind' accepts these images, understands them as belonging to a conceptual framework, it will be in sympathy with the process of imaginal perception. Rather than rejecting the images as meaningless, and thus without value, it can interpret them and in this way increase its understanding of the psyche. The tendency of the 'rational mind' to devalue and even reject a process because it uses a symbolic language which it does not understand has been only too evident in the western attitude to the science of alchemy. From the 'century of enlightenment' up to our present times, alchemy has been regarded as, at best, 'a primitive precursor of modern chemistry',<sup>26</sup> and at worst a sham, professing to make gold from lead. Even Jung's first comment on an alchemical text was 'Good Lord, what nonsense'. Later Jung rescued the significance of alchemy after perceiving a psychological meaning in alchemy's imaginal language.

If, as has been suggested, the left hemisphere of the brain can actually repress the workings of the right side, the place of imaginal thought, it is vital for the 'rational mind' to value its 'mythical' partner. Only by working with the co-operation, even if not full understanding, of 'directed thought', can the potential of our imaginal perception be realised. A Jungian psychological language can allow the 'rational mind' to work creatively with the images of the collective unconscious; and in connecting the 'rational' with the 'imaginal mind', the primordial wisdom of the archetypes can be integrated into conscious life. The individual can begin to live in creative relationship with the symbolic world of the psyche, and as Jung comments:



It is only possible to live the fullest life when we are in harmony with these symbols, wisdom is a return to them.<sup>27</sup>

It is this complementary relationship between the conscious and the unconscious that makes possible individual transformation. As a result of this union the spectrum of consciousness may be gradually enlarged, as hitherto unconscious material is assimilated. Karen's response-work and dream offer evidence of this transformative potential in 'imaginal response'; an unconscious dynamic was made conscious - a beast eaten and thus controlled.

#### 5.2.8. Ingarden, Iser and the Imaginal Interaction between Text and Reader

This discussion has so far explored a primarily psychological perspective on the imaginal interaction between text and 'reader'. But a more literary orientation is now offered through reference to the work of Ingarden and Iser.

Roman Ingarden, distinguishing between the 'intentional formation' of the text and its 'concretization' by the individual reader, sees the latter as dependent upon the consciousness of the reader. The experiential realization, or 'concretization' of a 'literary work of art' takes place through the reader 'filling in' the 'places of indeterminacy' which exist in the structure of the text.<sup>28</sup> Ingarden's 'indeterminacy' refers to the fact that a text does not fully describe its intentional object, whose concretization takes place as the reader adds the necessary details. Thus the 'filling in' can be of descriptive details, of a scene or a character, or an ideational attitude; a philosophical stance, a moral judgement etc..

Iser, developing Ingarden's ideas, sees the reading process as an interaction between the two poles of text and reader. The author's text is full of 'gaps', 'blanks' and 'indeterminacies' which must be filled by the reader; however, Iser sees the process by which these 'gaps' etc. are filled as determined not solely by the subjective stance of the reader, but also by patterns within the text. But, although Iser's 'gaps' and 'blanks' are described as referring to the 'fundamental asymmetry between text and reader',<sup>29</sup> what actually constitutes such 'gaps' and 'blanks' remains undifferentiated; a satisfactory definition is given neither in The Implied Reader nor The Act of Reading. This lack of definition, apparently intentional,<sup>30</sup> together with the fact that he never clearly defines the process by which the structure of the text controls the participation of the reader, makes it difficult to describe Iser's concept of the imaginative interaction between text and reader in any detail. I can therefore only attempt to outline how Iser's ideas relate to the imaginative dynamic of the reading process.

Iser recognises the importance of the imagination in the reading process, arguing the meaning of the text comes to life as a dynamic effect in the imagination of the reader. The text is a pattern or structure which the ideational process of the reader transforms into an experiential event. As the ideational process will reflect the subjective stance of the reader, the conscious and unconscious material evoked by the author's text, so will each reading be individual;

two people gazing at the night sky may both be looking at the same collection of stars, but one will see the image of a plough, and the other will make out a dipper. The "stars" in a literary text are fixed; the lines that join them are variable.<sup>31</sup>

Thus Iser's reader can fill the 'gaps' in a text with fantasies or conceptual perspectives developed in the course of reading.

Iser illustrates this process with examples drawn mainly from eighteenth century novels, in particular the works of Henry Fielding. In these examples Iser explores how the reader perceives the characters and their implications through a 'process of image-building' and so produces

a sequence of images that eventually results in his  
[the reader] constituting the meaning of the text.<sup>32</sup>

However, Iser's focus on novels and their characters, together with his concern for an ideational process of image-building that is directed towards realising a conceptual meaning of a text overlooks an area of imaginative interaction that is of central importance to 'imaginal response'.

As already argued, 'imaginal response' is primarily concerned with an 'existential' rather than an 'interpretive' or conceptual approach to meaning. Furthermore, the images developed by the 'reader' are predominantly visually descriptive rather than ideational. Finally, the imaginal response process has a different temporal character to the reading of novels, and the imaginal response 'image building' is more instantaneous. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, Iser's approach to the imaginative interaction between text and reader offers a suitable theoretical perspective from which to explore the creativity of the imaginal response participant.

In 'imaginal response' participants were asked to record, as faithfully as possible, their imaginative experiences of specific textual images.

Thus, although their recorded responses are necessarily but a descriptive paraphrase of their actual imaginal experiences, they may be offered as evidence of the way these individual 'readers' 'fill the gaps'.

To this purpose, the participants' response-work was analysed to explore:

1. How a specific textual word(s) may evoke differing images, or indeed no obvious imaginal association.
2. How 'readers'' 'backgrounds' for common response images may differ.

This analysis, given in Chapter Four, shows individual 'readers' adding their own sensory, and in some cases, ideational details to the textual word(s). For example, in 'The Ghost, Image 3' the textual 'serpent' was experienced in different ways:

Nomi and Yael: 'the snake', Donovan: 'giant sized cobra with teeth', Suzanne: 'adder', Sarah: 'serpent insignificant ... became a large plastic blow-up snake', Mike: 'sleeping serpent';

Wendy and Frank did not record any serpent or snake, an omission that can be read as creating a gap by 'blanking out' a part of the text.

Another example in which readers can be seen to be creatively developing, or omitting, a particular textual word, is 'harlot' in 'Claudius, Image 2':

Nomi: 'Fellini-type woman', Frank: 'A fat old woman, kind of Mae West type', Yael: 'An aging woman', Suzanne: 'Tired looking prostitute', Sarah: 'a woman' Mike: 'a woman ... grinning in an obviously sexually inviting way'.

Two participants, Donovan and Wendy, saw no individual figure, again suggesting a 'blinking out'. Whether Frank and Wendy in the former example and Donovan and Wendy in the latter actually repressed that particular textual word cannot be known, only admitted as a possible 'reaction'. However, such omissions do suggest an area of 'indeterminacy' left unexplored by Iser; here the 'blank' is in the dynamic of response rather than the structure of the text.

These two examples illustrate how a particular textual word may be 'filled in' or 'blanked out' by the 'reader'. But the response-work also shows how 'readers' can 'fill in' their own 'background' to a text. For example the 'harlot' was given a descriptive setting by a number of participants:

Frank: 'sitting at a dressing table with three mirrors in centre of large dusty backstage space in theatre',

Yael: 'in small dressing room in a theatre, sitting in front of the mirror, looking at her face', Suzanne:

'Victorian back streets, not much colour'.

The other participants did not record any such definite setting, but these descriptive images show the reader creatively elaborating on the textual 'harlot'.

The non-conceptual orientation of the imaginal response process makes it more likely that 'gaps' are 'filled' by descriptive images than ideational contents; nevertheless, there are some examples of the latter. In response to 'Gertrude, Image 5' Donovan comments: 'This is far below any usual possibility of terrible behaviour', and Frank records: ('Prince Hamlet IV, Image 5') 'The baby knows everything but can communicate

nothing. He knows that there is an inverse relationship between communication and knowledge'. Perhaps in the 'normal' reading process, there is a greater ideational emphasis. But to what degree may the ideational 'gap filling' take place at a subliminal as well as conscious level? Arguably the analytic nature of ideational thought requires a more conscious orientation than imagistic 'filling'.

For Iser, communication in literature takes place as the reader is 'drawn into' the events by supplying what is not explicit. In 'filling' the intentional text into an experiential event, an interaction takes place which Iser regards as the essential process of communication. This process is controlled by both the reader and the text, as unlike Fish, Iser does not see 'filling the blanks' as being solely determined by the reader, but also structured by the 'blanks ... arising out of the text.'<sup>33</sup>

However, the imaginal response-work offers more evidence of the controlling role of the 'reader' than of a controlling text. Participants' differing elaborations of specific textual images, how word(s) are 'filled in', 'left blank', given or not given a 'background' illustrates the control of the 'reader'. Indeed the very fact that some 'readers' 'blank out' the same textual words that other 'readers' 'fill in' is firm evidence of such 'control'. How far the text may control the 'reader' is more difficult to distinguish.

Nevertheless, the very fact that a high proportion of 'readers' chose to elaborate a particular textual word, for example 'harlot' ('Claudius, Image 2'), whilst ignoring other words as central to the cognitive meaning of the image, for example 'deed', points to a determining text. In this case it could be argued that the 'harlot' comes earlier in the 'reading'

of the image, and thus attracts the attention of the participant. But in response to

There's something in his soul  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood.

111 i 165-7

the word most elaborated is 'brood'. Does 'brood' have a greater imaginal impact than either 'soul' or 'melancholy', because it is more easily visualized, or because it relates to archetypal mother imagery, just as 'harlot' may have an evocative influence because it portrays a feminine archetype?

This evidence of particular textual word(s) having a greater impact on the 'reader', or being 'foregrounded', can be seen in the context of Michael Riffaterre's study of stylistic devices.<sup>34</sup> Riffaterre argues that it is the stylistic devices within the text that arrest the attention of the reader. Therefore, in order to explore these devices he focusses on those stylistic phenomena that have evoked responses from various types of readers. Furthermore, he concerns himself not with the content of these responses, but rather with the notion that

they [the responses] pinpoint in the verbal sequence the location of the devices that trigger them.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the repeatedly aroused attention of various readers becomes

an objective criterion for the existence of its [the response's] stylistic stimulus.<sup>36</sup>

Riffaterre's various types of readers, who include French poets, critics, translators, and students, are encompassed by his concept of a theoretical 'superreader'. He sees the 'superreader' as a means of escaping the

subjectivist limitations of an individual reading; and he works upon the premise that

Each point of the text that holds up the superreader is tentatively considered a component of the poetic structure.<sup>37</sup>

Supported by a detailed analysis of a 'superreader's' reactions to Baudelaire's 'Les Chats', he examines what linguistic features most arrest the attention. He sees the primary stylistic device as one of surprise and contrast;

The stylistic content is a linguistic pattern suddenly broken by an element which was unpredictable, and the contrast resulting from this influence is the 'stylistic stimulus'.<sup>38</sup>

The objectivist assumptions of Riffaterre's concept of a 'superreader' are essentially flawed in that he overlooks the subjectivity of any selection of readers and their responses.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, his work reflects a notion of textual objectivity that is firmly rejected by this enquiry. Although Riffaterre does show how certain features in a text attract greater attention, are 'foregrounded', he argues that this is because of stylistic devices, particularly those causing surprise and contrast, whereas participants' response-work indicates the possibility of an imaginal, archetypal dimension to 'foregrounding'.

Participants' imaginal 'foregrounding' suggests that an archetypal dimension in the text may be one way that the text affects the interaction of the 'reader'; but how may the text then control this imaginal interaction, influence the actual process of imaginal association by which the 'gaps' are 'filled'?



In a number of responses the imaginal associations, although necessarily subjective, also have an objective dimension, in that they may be appreciated by others. For example, the different elaborations of 'harlot' and her 'backgrounds' do not carry meaning only for their creator; in the response sessions all the participants enjoyed the other participants' different elaborations. I would suggest that these associations, usually subliminal in the 'normal' reading process, take place at or near the threshold of consciousness. Furthermore, evoked by the text, they are also to some degree controlled by it, in that they do not digress too far from a shared cognitive reading of the text: the description of the 'harlot' remain centred on the shared meaning of 'harlot' as a prostitute.

However, there are other associations which bear little apparent relationship to the text. These associations which vary from a single image, Frank's raven, to a whole response, Karen's memory of 'most 'instinctual' sexual moment', have been considered as an unconscious 'reaction' to the text. They would seem to take place in the personal unconscious, and although triggered by the text are determined mainly by subjective patterns.

But this enquiry noted archetypal as well as personal associations. These associations carry a collective significance, and can be regarded as taking place within the collective rather than personal unconscious; they are therefore determined by archetypal rather than subjective patterns. Nomi's 'Gothic cathedral' and Ruth and Andrew's cuboid images were offered as evidence of this, while acoustic associations present an area for further study.

Kugler describes one aspect of an archetypal image as a cluster of acoustically associated words. It would follow that if a 'reader'

experiences the archetypal nature of a textual image, the associations evoked may be influenced by this 'cluster'. In this sense the phonetic textual image may have a determining influence on the choice of associations, reflecting an archetypal structure of acoustic associations. Whilst the response-work offers examples of acoustic associations, there is, as yet, no firm evidence of their being archetypal. Nevertheless, this study of archetypal patterns of response is in its infancy and Kugler's work indicates one area in which the textual word(s) can influence the choice of associations.

Determined by differing degrees of interaction between text and 'reader', 'imaginal response' associations appear to take place in different psychological 'spaces': at or near the threshold of consciousness, in the personal unconscious, and in the collective unconscious. But as the unconscious is not a spatial reality, this metaphor is in some ways misleading. Furthermore, the psyche is amorphous and undifferentiated. There is not even a distinct line dividing our conscious and unconscious minds. Our perception of the external world is coloured by unconscious feelings and associations. Still less is there any definite division between the personal and collective unconscious. Indeed, for an archetype to be experienced it must be related to our personal, subjective world. The personal mother is the carrier of the collective mother, and our relationship to the one influences our relationship to the other. Therefore, to say that an association takes place either at the threshold of consciousness, or in the personal or collective unconscious is not empirically accurate, but rather offered to indicate different possible 'depths' of response, differing modes of imaginal interaction.

If the dynamics of response evident in 'imaginal response' are echoed,

although subliminally, in the 'normal' reading process, then the interactions that realise Iser's 'intentional text' take place not only in the conscious mind, but also at different 'depths' within the psyche of the reader; reflecting different forms of imaginal and rational, or 'primary' and 'secondary' participation.

Ingarden, differentiating between 'Passive and Active Reading',<sup>40</sup> examines the process of 'Secondary' participation. In 'passive reading' the reader is purely receptive, understanding the text 'sentence by sentence' without actively thinking about the ideas developed in the text. In 'active reading' the reader intellectually interacts with the text, relating not just to the meaning of each sentence, but to the ideas that are being developed.

If we think a sentence actively, we attend, not to the meaning, but to what is determined or thought through it or in it.<sup>41</sup>

It is through this 'secondary' interaction that Ingarden's reader becomes the 'cocreator of the literary work of art'.<sup>42</sup> But this enquiry has revealed a primary process of interaction, in which the reader is a 'cocreator' through his/her imaginal associations.

Ingarden's 'passive' and 'active' reading is limited by focussing on 'secondary' interaction. Nevertheless, his 'active' 'passive' distinction can be adapted to differentiate between readers who engage in a fully-felt interaction with the text, and those whose reading is more distanced. This enquiry argues that an experience of the archetypal dimension of a text requires the 'reader' to actively participate in the imaginal process. If the 'reader' remains passive as an observer, there can be no archetypal

experience, 'nothing happens'. The participation of the 'reader' in 'imaginal response' will be explored in detail in the following section, but the 'active imaginal reader' has important implications for the 'normal' reading process. For only if the reader engages in a fully-felt interaction with the text, is there the possibility for the reading experience to be archetypal.

### 5.3. Actor or Observer? Involvement in Imaginal Response-Work

#### 5.3.1. Introduction

In his description of 'active imagination', Jung stresses the importance of involvement in the interior drama (see p. 65 ). Only through entering, as one's real self, into the drama, is there any rapprochement with the unconscious; only then do the archetypes become living realities. But how does this relate to the practical application of 'imaginal response'? Are individuals always able to wilfully involve themselves in their imaginal drama; and is one able to determine whether this involvement takes place? Furthermore, is imaginal involvement a skill that can be learnt and moreover taught?

#### 5.3.2. Indications of Imaginal Involvement

'Imaginal response' differs from 'active imagination' in that the starting point is a textual image rather than a dream or fantasy image of one's own. Moreover, unlike 'active imagination', there is no chain of fantasy ideas that develops into a dramatic action. The initial imaginal association is often a dramatic image in itself, it is unusual for it to develop into a sequence of any great length. This has been the evidence so far,

as a cursory study of the collation of response images will reveal. Furthermore, the individual participant<sup>43</sup> is not often visible as an actor on the imaginal stage. Yet, to say that no involvement takes place would be incorrect. This enquiry indicates that the individual may indeed be deeply affected by the imaginal experience. Whatever the difficulties in describing the nature or degree of this 'affect', it nevertheless indicates that the individual is involved in the inner drama.

In the process of 'filling the gaps' the reader, according to Iser, is 'drawn into' an interaction with the text. In the previous section it was suggested that this 'interaction' can be 'primary' or 'secondary', and furthermore 'passive' or 'active'. In 'passive reading', the involvement of the reader remains subliminal, whilst in 'active reading' the reader consciously interacts with the text.

In order to enter as one's 'real self' into the inner drama, 'imaginal response' requires an 'active reader': one who is consciously aware of his/her involvement. One indication of this involvement is the feeling-tone or 'sensation' quality of a response. In acknowledging the feeling, emotion or body response, the 'reader' acknowledges his/her imaginal interaction; it becomes consciously manifest. In 'imaginal response' participants were asked to record (1) Feelings, emotions and sensations, and (2) Intensity of affect; i.e. whether the affect was perceived as 'weak', 'medium' or 'strong' etc. in comparison with the participant's other responses. As already argued (see p. 39), the more intense the affect, the more meaningful the imaginal experience, the greater the involvement.

If these categories are accepted as valid indications of involvement, then many of the response examples would point to some degree of involve-

ment. However, there are responses in which neither feelings, emotions sensations, nor intensity of response was recorded. Does this imply that there was no real involvement, that the individual remained an observer of the imaginal drama?

Alan was an individual who appeared to remain an observer throughout the two sessions he attended. The images he perceived were visual, but without feeling tone or intensity. He described the imaginal experience as being 'like watching a play or film' which he found interesting without being personally meaningful. This would support Jung's understanding that if the individual merely observes the process it does not move him and so nothing actually happens to him:

So long as he simply looks at the pictures he is like the foolish Parsifal, who forgot to ask the vital question because he was not aware of his own participation in the action. Then, if the flow of images ceases, next to nothing has happened even though the process is repeated a thousand times.<sup>44</sup>

For Alan, a lack of feeling or intensity reflected an acknowledged lack of involvement, and yet there were other responses in which a feeling response and the role of observer were combined. Consider Nomi's response to the textual image

'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on.

111 iii 379-382

Response;

Nomi

1. Nausea
2. Strong but observer (slight resistance to image)
3. Stanley Spencer type image of gravestones with their lids opening and then characters and images of the film I saw last night, Absolute Beginners, barrage of sound and violence, razors, knives, broken bottles, nauseating.

In this response Nomi noted a feeling of 'nausea' and a 'strong' intensity; yet she also noted that she was an observer. Her role of observer is associated with her 'slight resistance to image'. Such resistance, very possibly triggered by her unpleasant memory of a film, could easily restrict her imaginal movement.

However, Nomi's response indicates that although it may be valid to surmise that the greater the feeling-tone etc. and intensity, the more involved the participant is likely to be, neither can be offered as an exact indication.

5.3.3. Is Imaginal Involvement Influenced by the 'Reader' or the Text?

What is it that influences whether an individual is involved in the imaginal drama? The two dominant variants are the individual and the textual image. Alan remained an observer throughout sixteen different imaginal responses. This points to the individual as the influencing factor. However, Frank's involvement appeared to vary. He rarely

recorded any intensity of affect, and often noted neither feeling, emotion nor sensation. Throughout the session on 'Ophelia's Drowning' he was aware of remaining an observer of the interior images. Yet, at other times there was a high level of involvement, as for example, in the following response:

Textual image:

There's something in his soul  
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood.

111 i 165-6

Response:

Frank

1. Pleasant
2. Very strong
3. I am a hen on top of a mountain of eggs.  
As I breathe in a new egg forms in my heart  
and as I breathe out it moves down the alimentary canal, and out of my bottom to join the others.

This response suggests that Frank is not an observer, but rather is involved in the psychic drama; 'something has happened'.

It has been suggested that Frank's lack of 'feeling' and 'intensity' could reflect either a defensive strategy or his role as a 'thinking type'. Is Frank 'strongly affected' because his experience of this image is 'pleasant' and thus does not require a defensive strategy? But in response to 'Claudius, Image 3' Frank is 'quite strongly affected' while the feeling is 'First anger then sadness'. Only one other image evoked



a 'strong' affect: 'To be, or not to be', Image 5' where the feeling was 'Cold becoming warm'. Why these particular textual images had a 'strong' affect on Frank is difficult to determine.

However, can one deduce that imaginal involvement is influenced by the textual image? In this enquiry there has not been one specific textual image in response to which all the participants appeared uninvolved. Yet there are indications that particular images may evoke an involvement or a resistance in the 'reader'. The textual image that evoked the strongest affect in Karen was

Get thee to a nunnery. Why, wouldst thou be a breeder  
Of sinners?

111 i 121-2

The 'very strong' intensity of Karen's response has been related to a conflict between purity and sexual instinct here mirrored by the text. This textual image evoked a painful but intense affect through its personal and archetypal associations. Karen did not defend herself against the pain evoked by the text, but rather allowed herself to fully experience it as 'Deep sadness and pain'. In contrast, Mike's painful association about dogs being killed in the street evoked a resistance, though to the following textual image; whilst Nomi's unpleasant memories of a film can be linked with her 'resistance to image'. Therefore, if a textual image relates to the personal history of the 'reader', or indeed a dominant archetypal pattern, it can evoke painful associations. And, depending on whether the 'reader' allows or defends against the pain, the image can evoke involvement or resistance. Furthermore, it need not be only painful associations that influence the 'reader's' involvement. Frank's 'Very strong affect' may reflect the 'Pleasant' feeling, and it is not unknown for pleasurable feelings to evoke a resistance, possible because of a deeper pain.

#### 5.3.4. Text and Reader May Not Be Considered as Independent

Just as Iser sees the poles of text and reader as controlling the way the 'gaps' are filled, so these two poles appear to influence the 'reader's' imaginal involvement. However, is it not invalid to consider 'text' and 'reader' independently? The perceived text reflects the conscious and unconscious stance of the 'reader'. Furthermore, 'imaginal response' particularly allows unconscious associations to colour the perception of the textual image. With such 'conditioned perception' the influencing factor is not the 'reader' or 'text' but their inter-relationship.

It was suggested that Alan's role as observer throughout sixteen different responses pointed to the individual here influencing imaginal involvement. But if the inter-relationship of 'text' and 'reader' is accepted as a basic premise, this suggestion must then be considered as invalid.

Another example of the individual playing the role of observer is Frank in his responses to the image-series of 'Ophelia's Drowning'. At the beginning of this session he stated that he was in an unreceptive mood. This 'mood' appears to have been reflected in his lack of imaginal involvement throughout the session. In his response to each of the five textual images he noted down that he was an 'observer'. Yet again, is it valid to imply that his 'mood' rather than specific textual images was the main influencing factor? Frank's role as observer for each of these five responses may have been influenced by his 'conditioned perception' of the individual images. But might not Frank have been in an unreceptive 'mood' because he knew that the images for that session were concerned with 'Ophelia's Drowning'? Was his 'mood' thus an unconscious resistance to working with a certain archetypal situation, in this case the drowning

or 'dissolution' of an anima figure?<sup>45</sup> Such predetermined moods are not unknown to the therapist (and although they can never be proved or disproved, they may present a further variant on that which may influence the imaginal role of the individual).

These different influencing factors cannot easily be empirically examined, for they are predominantly unconscious and therefore exhibit the ambiguous, fluid and amorphous characteristics of the psyche. Furthermore, experimental repetition, the foundation of an empirical enquiry, is not suited to the realm of the psyche. Experimental repetition is based upon the tacit assumption that 'actual and possible repetitions of an experiment do not essentially modify the resulting data'. This hypothesis might be valid for the realm of physics but not for the psyche

since it is well known that repetition very quickly reduces the 'charge' of psychic energy - in other words, affective participation is reduced. The application of probability theory to psychological phenomena is therefore ... inappropriate both logically and empirically.<sup>46</sup>

However, despite the inability to examine these 'influencing factors' in any empirical mode, they are causal in that they are the effect of certain conscious or unconscious conditions.

There is another possible inter-relationship between 'text' and 'reader' and the role of the 'reader' which is not causal. This is the 'phenomenon of synchronicity'.

#### 5.3.5. 'Synchronicity' in Imaginal Response-Work

'Synchronicity' is a term coined by Jung to designate a meaningful but acausal connection between events. It particularly refers to the connection between inner and outer events when the connection

appears not to be a causal one, that of cause and effect, but rather of relative simultaneity and the same meaning for the individual who has the experience.<sup>47</sup>

Giving examples of synchronicity, Jung often refers to a dream motif or fantasy image appearing in the material environment. He writes of a young woman telling him a dream in which she was given a golden scarab; at the same time he heard a tapping on the window; a scarabaeid beetle was trying to get into the room.<sup>48</sup> Jung understood such synchronistic phenomena to appear

with special frequency in certain situations in which an archetype is activated in the unconscious of the individual concerned.<sup>49</sup>

In these instances of synchronicity, the duality of inner and outer, psyche and matter appear to be eliminated. Synchronicity's particular significance in imaginal response-work is that it presents an even deeper unity of 'reader' and 'text' than already suggested. Not only are 'reader' and 'text' related through the 'conditioned perception' of the reader, but also the textual image itself may be synchronistically connected with the specific psychic state of the individual at that moment. The 'meaning' of the textual image and the 'mood' of the individual may

have an acausal connection.

Furthermore, if Jung's association of a synchronistic phenomenon with the activation of an archetype is accepted, such connections may then well occur in imaginal response-work. When working with archetypal images 'imaginal response' may often involve the activation of an archetype. Indeed, the experience of the archetypes is a central facet of this work. A synchronistic relationship between psyche and matter may, of course, be expressed in a number of ways; a connection between 'reader' and 'text' is just one possibility. However, it is worth taking account of this possibility.

As a conclusion to this passage on synchronicity, I would describe an incident that occurred the morning after it was written. During a casual conversation (in a sauna!) I mentioned to an actor acquaintance that I was writing a thesis on Jungian Psychology and Shakespeare. His response was 'Ah, you mean synchronicity. That is what they have in common isn't it?' He was referring to the many 'meaningful coincidences' that are a dramatic part of Shakespeare's plays. However, it needs only to be said that of all the people with whom I have ever discussed this work, he is the only one to have mentioned synchronicity!

#### 5.3.6 Can Imaginal Involvement be Learnt?

This research suggests that the individual is able to become more involved in his/her imaginal drama, and further that this specific 'skill' can be learnt. However, there are immediate problems in proving this, since no empirical standards exist by which to determine the 'level' of involve-

ment, and thus to appreciate whether involvement increases. Rather than attempting to offer any conclusive 'proof', assessments of individuals' response-work remain the only available evidence.

Of the individuals who have participated in this imaginal response-work, Donovan was the most experienced in working with the imagination. He had ten years Jungian analysis, which involved painting dream-imagery, and also had experience of various shamanistic fantasy journeys. Specific responses of his have already been examined, in particular his archetypal response to the image of the 'female dove'. What is unusual here and elsewhere in his responses is an ability to develop the initially perceived image into an imaginal sequence that often exhibits a profoundly archetypal quality. More than the other participants, his responses consistently exhibit an 'archetypal depth of response' pointing to a high degree of imaginal involvement. For a full appreciation of Donovan's response imagery, and how it relates to that of other individuals the separate collection of imaginal responses should be studied. Here there is only space for two examples which are offered without any individual comment.

Textual image:

And isn't to be damned  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil?

v ii 68-70

Response:

Donovan

1. Curiosity leads to action and fulfilment
2. Very strong

3. Cancerous flower becomes a sea anemone (flower). I put my index finger in, exploring. Anemone muscle starts to close. I'm afraid, but I finally let my body be drawn in, taken. All of me goes far underground. Lovely! I swim most happily in a nice underground river, and it can be forever so.

Textual image:

There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all.

V ii 215-8

Response:

Donovan

1. Satisfaction, completion
2. Very strong
3. A sparrow falls from a tree, hits ground and becomes a just born wren. I go to it, make a circle round it with my arms loving it. I pop it into my mouth, swallow it, digest it. It emerges from my penis (or womb?) as a big snake which tows me off into the sea.

It may be argued that the quality of Donovan's responses originates in an imaginative aptitude, as well as reflecting a certain psychological

disposition, and to some extent this is undeniable. He admits to being highly imaginative as a child, but he also describes his imaginative ability as having developed through practice. As with other faculties, might not 'creative imagination' and the specific involvement it requires, be developed through practice, just as it may suffer through neglect?

Donovan's ability for imaginal involvement developed over many years, but Mike professed no such previous practice. Initially he did not find the imaginal process easy. This was particularly evident towards the end of the second session, when in response to a textual image he simply stated:

I found the imaginal process confusing and difficult  
and therefore no image was perceived.

Mike attended a series of five imaginal response sessions, and over this period the quality of his response-work changed. Although many of his early responses involved a feeling-tone content, and often registered a 'strong' intensity, the perceived images do suggest a degree of detachment. They have an impersonal quality, relating directly to the text rather than including personal associations. However, in the later sessions unconscious associations were more apparent, pointing to a higher degree of involvement.

To illustrate Mike's deepening imaginal involvement, four examples are given, two from his first and two from his final session: -

#### First Session

Textual image:

Now Hamlet, hear.



'Tis given out that sleeping in my orchard  
A serpent stung me.

1 iv 34-6

Response:

Mike

1. Danger, unease
2. Very slight
3. A sleeping serpent on the grass beneath a tree wakes and moves to sting the king who lies nearby.

Textual image:

Sleeping within my orchard  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,

1 iv 59-62

Response:

Mike

1. Danger/threatening
2. Moderate
3. The king sleeping on a low bed in an orchard on a hot afternoon. His brother creeps towards him with a bottle of poison. The image follows the play's plot and the poison is poured into the king's ear.

Fifth Session

Textual image;

O God! God!

How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fie on't, ah fie, 'tis an unweeded garden  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely.

1 ii 132-7

Response:

Mike

1. Despair turning to fear
2. Mild
3. A heavy undergrowth dank green in colour,  
impenetrable. A sense of something dangerous  
behind it.

Textual image;

I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all  
my mirth, foregone all my custom of exercises; and  
indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that  
this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile  
promontory, this most excellent canopy the air,  
look you, this brave o'er hanging firmament, this  
majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it  
appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent  
congregation of vapours.

11 ii 295-303

Response;

Mike

1. Despair, leading to fear
2. Medium
3. A barren empty landscape - rocky with distant mountains - threatening white clouds roll into view and seem to encompass all. What follows this? Danger again! I don't understand why the clouds are white.

The response images from the first session closely follow the textual image, indeed Mike noted as much in the second example. But in the later examples the response images do not so closely mirror the text. Yet more significant is the repeated idea of 'danger' which does not appear to originate in the textual image. Earlier it was suggested that such 'unrelatedness' between response and text indicates the participation of the unconscious. Furthermore, in the analysis of the characteristics of individual 'readers' Mike's most dominant pattern was the repetition of 'danger', possibly reflecting a defensive strategy against unconscious contents triggered during the response process. Throughout his five response sessions Mike recorded 'danger' seven times, of which three were in the final session. Thus these later responses indicate the surfacing of Mike's most immediate psychological pattern, which is in itself a possible defense against deeper unconscious contents. It could be argued that the particular images of the final session triggered unconscious contents and defensive patterns. Nevertheless, Mike's later responses point to a greater degree of involvement than is evident in his earlier response-work.

Finally, I offer two responses by Camilla, one from her first and one from her second response session. Camilla was a Polytechnic student who attended only two sessions and her responses are not given in the Appendix.

### First Session

Textual image:

I am thy father's spirit,  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burn't and purg'd away.

1 v 9-13

Response:

#### Camilla

1. Awe; but desperately trying to suppress my thought process from working out and trying to remember the plot of Hamlet
2. Medium
3. A castle turret with a white figure - influenced by a production of the play I have seen.

### Second Session

Textual image:

And is't not to be damned  
To let this canker of our nature come  
In further evil? v ii 66-70

Response:

Camilla

1. Disgust at canker
2. Strong
3. I think of a maggot ridden apple - which takes me back to when I was a little girl and my cousin and I would raid her apple tree, frequently, I suppose finding maggoty apples.

The first example shows Camilla's 'thought process' disturbing her imaginal perception. This is an example of a conditioned 'secondary' response, here a concern to 'work out the plot', limiting the 'reader's' imaginal involvement. However, in the second session there is no such disturbance. Furthermore, the personal associations, the memory of herself as a little girl etc., suggest a degree of subjective involvement that is not present in the first response. In these two sessions Camilla appears to have developed her imaginal involvement both through freeing herself of a conditioned 'secondary' response, and allowing subjective associations to surface. This suggests that the 'reader' may need to develop an initial skill of focussing on 'primary' rather than 'secondary' processes.

Camilla over a period of two sessions, and Mike over a period of five sessions appear to have developed their ability to involve themselves in their imaginal drama. For Donovan, this was an ability developed over many years. Through practice each individual learnt to deepen his/her imaginal involvement, offering evidence of a skill that may indeed be acquired.

### 5.3.7. Can Imaginal Involvement be Taught?

Imaginal involvement is central to imaginal response-work. If it is a skill that can be learnt, may it not then be taught?

There is no indication that Donovan, Mike or Camilla deepened their imaginal involvement through being 'taught' in any specific sense. At the beginning of the response sessions the importance of this involvement was discussed, together with the need to focus on an imaginal rather than analytic mode of response, but no actual technique to facilitate this whole process was offered. This would suggest that we are looking at a skill that was developed through practice rather than taught.

But what are the psychological dynamics of this developing involvement? Without phenomenological evidence, the following ideas are offered as a hypotheses.

An essential part of becoming more involved in one's imaginal drama is to become familiar with the imaginal world. The imaginal then ceases to be a totally foreign dimension from which the imager needs to distance him/herself, but rather becomes a place of welcome discovery. The imaginal must ever remain unexpected, an unknown destination, because its world is the unconscious psyche. There can be no uniform ventures into the imaginal, which is like the ever-changing sea with its moods and unplumbable depths, rather than the recognizable land of consciousness. But as the sailor learns to be at home with the sea, so the imager learns the ways of the imaginal. He/she becomes receptive to its moods and demands; does not resist the possible pain or pleasure it may bring. And because past pain often remains repressed into the unconscious, any

journey into the psyche may encounter it. Thus, through experience, the attitude to the imaginal changes from defensiveness to acceptance;

One comes to a place where one is no longer out of one's element when one is with an image. Though one is not synonymous totally with the imaginal one has a home there as elsewhere. One does not continue as an Englishman in Africa, but rather is changed by the imaginal. Going into the imaginal becomes not a matter of preserving oneself in a foreign land but rather of returning home.<sup>50</sup>

Surely such an attitude is the secret of imaginal involvement, for only then is the individual able to enter and experience this inner world, to transform and be transformed by it.<sup>51</sup> Imaginal involvement cannot be taught, but it can be learnt.

#### 5.4. The Guided Fantasy Journey: a Brief Discussion

The Appendix records the 'results' of the five participants' 'guided fantasy-journey', and no individual analysis of these 'results' will be offered since they best 'speak for themselves'. However, these results are evidence of the involvement of the individual in this imaginal process, as they did not merely 'look at the pictures' but entered into a dialogue with the imaginal figures. Furthermore, each individual found his/her 'message' from the 'beings' very meaningful, again suggesting a deep imaginal involvement.

These 'fantasy journeys' differ from Jung's 'Active Imagination' in that they are 'guided' rather than being an individual and spontaneous encounter with unconscious images. As a 'guided fantasy-journey' this process is

closer to the guided visualizations outlined by Roberto Assagioli<sup>52</sup> and practised by his school of Psychosynthesis, and it also has similarities to the fantasy journeys used within the Shamanic tradition. Working within this tradition the shaman can guide the individual on an imaginal journey to meet his/her 'sacred animal', and form a creative and lasting relationship with this primal power.<sup>53</sup>

If, as Assagioli and the shaman, Arnold Keyserling,<sup>54</sup> would suggest, such fantasy-journeys offer a real experience of the imaginal, then my participants' 'results' indicate that each individual was able to receive a meaningful communication from the archetypal<sup>1</sup> world, and thus to have formed a meaningful relationship with its primordial inhabitants. Therefore, these 'journeys' may be read as an imaginal verification of the potential of imaginal response-work to allow 'readers' to form a real bridge of communication and establish a real relationship with the archetypal world. Moreover, this relationship need not end with the final response session: a clearing has been made in the forest, the beings have come out from among the trees and have communicated with the individual, and finally the ladder remains, linking each participant with the realm of the archetypes. It is, of course, for each individual participant to determine how to make best use of this relationship, how best to use this ladder.

#### 5.5. 'Imaginal Response': Its Contribution to 'Reader Response' and Archetypal Psychology

This enquiry has explored 'imaginal response' from the twin perspectives



of reader-response theory and archetypal studies , and it has been suggested that 'imaginal response' can contribute to these two fields of study.

#### 5.5.1. Contribution to 'Reader-Response'

If 'imaginal response' is accepted as an amplification of the imaginal dynamic of the 'normal' reading process, then this enquiry offers a phenomenological perspective on a number of reader-response theories.

Individual 'readers'' patterns of response-work support Holland's theory of the reader replicating him/herself in the process of reading. However, whilst Holland focusses on ideational responses, there is evidence of the 'reader's' individuality expressing itself in 'styles' of response. That some of these 'styles' may be related to Jung's 'Four Types' is suggested as an area for future research. Some responses also support Holland's theory of defensive reading strategies, and many indicate an unconscious 'reaction' to the text. However, the response-work looks beyond Holland's Freudian orientation, giving evidence of responses which do not defend against unconscious contents, but rather suggest their often painful surfacing. The analysis of Karen's imaginal associations offers specific confirmation of this.

This enquiry also offers phenomenological support of Ingarden and Iser's theories of the reader 'filling the gaps', showing how imaginal associations, imagistic, acoustic and ideational, amplify textual word(s). Iser's response process is given a further dimension by the suggestion that the interaction between reader and text that evokes these associations may take place in different psychological 'spaces': at or near the

threshold of consciousness, in the personal unconscious or in the collective unconscious. Moreover, whilst Iser sees the interaction of 'filling the gaps' as controlled by both reader and text, it is suggested that the 'depth' of the interaction may to some degree determine how reader and text influence the choice of imaginal association.

Relating Fish and Bleich's ideas of 'Interpretive Communities' to imaginal response 'readers' indicates that the subliminal reading process may be determined as much by the reader's openness to subjective associations as his/her belonging to any semiotic (Fish) or pedagogic (Bleich) community. Furthermore, the phenomena of archetypal associations presents a universal imaginal language, which depends on the reader's receptivity, rather than any specialized community.

Finally, the work of Jung and Kugler on 'acoustic images' is given a literary context, pointing to the probable subliminal occurrence of acoustic associations in the 'normal' reading process. However, Kugler's argument for an archetypal dimension to acoustic associations, although not rejected, is not supported by the response material.

As important as its contribution to the present reader-response debate, is this enquiry's presentation of a primarily non-analytic, imaginal mode of textual response. Not only does this enable students to become aware of a normally subliminal response process, but it also provides an opportunity for an experiential rather than theoretical focus in their studies. During the Polytechnic response sessions, these third year students voiced their appreciation of this experiential dimension, which valued their individual feeling, sensation and imagistic response above any theoretical

analysis. Furthermore, the imaginal response-work encouraged them to work with and develop their 'mythological' mode of thinking, a 'right-brain' function often neglected and repressed by the dominance of the more analytic and verbal 'left-brain' emphasis of an academic education.

#### 5.5.2. Contribution to Archetypal Psychology

The foremost contribution that 'imaginal response' has to make in the field of archetypal psychology is in integrating the work of Jung, Hillman and others with a study of the imaginal affect of archetypal textual images. Recent work in archetypal psychology has discussed the imaginal importance of literature, but as yet there has been no detailed or experiential study in this area.

Chapter One offers a theoretical analysis of the dynamics of archetypal textual images and their relationship to the archetypal world. The evidence of the 'results' suggests that a receptive 'reader' may experience the archetypal dimension of these textual images:

Whilst this may happen subliminally in the normal reading process, through adapting Jung's 'active imagination' into a mode of textual response, the 'reader' is able to 'actively' participate in an archetypal experience; and, according to Jung, such 'active' participation is of great psychological importance. The feeling-tone and body responses recorded by 'readers' can be seen as evidence of this fully-felt participation.

This enquiry also offers evidence of an imaginal level of communication

between the archetypal image and the participant, in which, through the universal language of the collective unconscious, the participant is able to gain a degree of imaginal understanding of the nature of a specific archetypal dynamic. Examples of this are Nomi's experience of the Gothic cathedral with its crumbling statues, Ruth and Andrew's cuboid images. Moreover, this imaginal understanding is not dependent upon any conscious psychological knowledge.

However, there is evidence that Jungian psychology does offer a means of consciously understanding an imaginal experience. The work with Karen indicates the importance of an imaginal experience of a psychological dynamic; it allowed her, in her own words, to 'get it', but a psychological discussion enabled her to more fully understand this particular dynamic.

Karen's work is evidence of 'imaginal response' having the potential to effect psychological transformation. An imaginal response to textual images can evoke personal and archetypal unconscious contents, which the participant may then be able to assimilate. In Karen's case her instinctual 'beast' was 'eaten and thus controlled'. However, this is an area that further study needs to elaborate and confirm.

Finally, is there any evidence that imaginal response participants were able to form a relationship with the archetypal world? If this guided fantasy-journeys can be taken as imaginal evidence, then 'imaginal response' offers psychology a bridge uniting the archetypal world world of individual consciousness.

## 5.6. The Limitations of this Enquiry

This enquiry has explored an imaginal mode of reader-response from a literary and psychological perspective in order to gain some understanding of the imaginal dynamics of the 'normal' reading process, and in particular the dynamics of archetypal textual images. However, just as this enquiry has firmly dismissed the idea of the 'objective reader', so too can it in no way be regarded as an objective assessment of an imaginal reading process.

The core of this enquiry is the methodology for the application of 'imaginal response', which has been amplified both theoretically and experientially. Such amplification is necessarily subjective. My personal inclinations and prejudices influenced my choice of reading and the assimilation of what I read. Following this, my stance of consciousness influenced the theoretical perspective which was developed from this literature.

The practical application of 'imaginal response' was subjective not only in the textual images chosen and arranged, but also in the individuals attracted to participate. If someone else were to offer imaginal response sessions it is most likely that they would attract different participants from the same two sources. And, just as the analysand's dreams reflect the analyst - for the Freudian analyst one has Freudian dream, for the Jungian, Jungian dreams - so too the participants' imaginal response-work will necessarily to some degree reflect the 'leader'. Furthermore, just as the analysis of Hamlet has been offered as the inevitable projection of a personal myth, so too will any analysis of the 'results' reflect a personal viewpoint. My stance (conscious and

unconscious), will be reflected in how I look, what I see, and how I interpret what I see.

For example, I have been aware of how a particular personal limitation has itself limited the scope of this enquiry. As already discussed, Jung differentiated four 'functions' of consciousness: thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition; and whilst individuals have one or two of these functions easily accessible, at least one remains 'inferior', predominantly unconscious. In my case the 'inferior function' is sensation, and thus I have not been able to deeply explore 'imaginal response' from this perspective. Whilst I have suggested that participants be receptive to any sensations, kinaesthetic images etc. evoked by a textual image, I have not examined this element of their response-work in any more detail. It would require someone more consciously in touch with their sensation function to pursue this further, and thus allow 'sensation types' of 'readers' to appreciate their responses more fully.

One cannot escape the subjective nature of any enquiry, but it is important that this 'limitation' is acknowledged. Moreover, just as reader and text are interdependent, so too will any 'reading' of this enquiry reflect you, the reader.

### 5.7. Suggestions for Further Research

This enquiry initiates 'imaginal response', and any further application of this mode of response may well add to our understanding of its dynamics of both 'reader-response' and Jungian psychology. In bridging these two

disciplines, 'imaginal response' opens a whole area for future study.

Here are a number of questions that might be explored, the first three have already been briefly discussed.

1. How do participants' responses reflect Jung's 'Four Types'?
2. What is the relationship between archetypal images and acoustic associations (cf. Kugler's work)?
3. How could it be shown whether 'imaginal response' has the potential to effect psychological transformation? Would further in-depth analyses, as conducted with Karen reveal similar indications of transformation?
4. What is the effect of using other textual images in 'imaginal response'? Are some texts more suitable for imaginal response-work, and indeed should there be any differentiation of some texts as being more suitable?
5. What is the difference between practising 'imaginal response' within a group or an individual situation? How might the group unconscious affect participants' response-work?
6. Is it possible to explore the cumulative affect of the textual images 'read' in any one session, or indeed in a series of sessions?
7. How might participants' response-work develop over a greater number of sessions? And how might their relationship to the archetypes develop over a longer period of response-work?

Finally, as 'imaginal response' is primarily an experiential method of responding to archetypal textual images, any further research is best made through participants' imaginal response-work, whether 'guided' by myself or another. Moreover, as others will be able to offer their own individual perspective on understanding and appreciating 'imaginal response',

it is hoped that they will be attracted to this work. One of the aims of this enquiry is to have presented 'imaginal response' in a way that both enables and encourages others to practise it. Moreover, it is only through individual experience that 'imaginal response' may be fully appreciated and understood, for, 'as is well known, one understands nothing psychological unless one has experienced it oneself'.<sup>56</sup>



NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. S. Fish Is There a Text in this Class? p. 27
2. N. Holland 'Unity Identity Text Self' Reader-Response Criticism  
p. 121
3. ibid. p.125
4. The word 'projection' is not used here in its psychological sense of a projection of unconscious contents, but rather in the sense of a projection of a certain ego-identification with the text. This is best illustrated by the examples given.
5. N. Holland 'Unity Identity Text Self' Reader-Response Criticism  
p. 123
6. C.G. Jung Psychological Reflections p. 10
7. Mary Watkins Waking Dreams p. 102
8. See above p. 92
9. For a definition of an 'intermediate' association, see above p. 151
10. S. Freud The Interpretation of Dreams pp. 172-3
11. C.G. Jung CW2
12. ibid. para. 450
13. ibid. para. 451
14. ibid. para. 451
15. P. Kugler The Alchemy of Discourse p. 25
16. C.G. Jung CW8 para. 402
17. P. Kugler op. cit. p. 95
18. J. Lacan The Language of the Self, trans. A. Wilden, p. 32
19. C.G. Jung Word and Image p. 211
20. Hamlet 111 ii 168-9
21. C.G. Jung CW11 para. 247a

22. Mary Watkins op. cit. p. 99
23. C.G. Jung Man and His Symbols p. 98
24. ibid. p. 96
25. See Chapter Two, note 72
26. T. Burkhardt Alchemy p. 7
27. C.G. Jung Psychological Reflections p. 47
28. R. Ingarden The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art pp. 13-14
29. W. Iser The Act of Reading p. 167
30. See R. Holub Reception Theory p. 93, quoting Iser, from  
Rainer Warning (ed.) Rezeptionsästhetik: Theorie und Praxis  
(Munich: Fink, 1975) p. 335

I share the opinion that indeterminacy is an extremely undifferentiated category and is therefore at best a universal communication theory. To define it, however, would eliminate it as a universal that determines communication.

Holub comments:

The same evidently holds true for the communicate unit that governs indeterminacy, the gap or blank.

31. W. Iser The Implied Reader p. 282
32. W. Iser The Act of Reading p. 141
33. ibid. p. 170
34. M. Riffaterre, 'Criteria for Style Analysis', Word vol. 15  
1959, pp. 154-174, & 'Describing Poetic Structures: Two Approaches  
to Baudelaire's "Les Chats"', Yale French Studies, 36 & 37, 1966  
pp. 200-242.
35. M. Riffaterre 'Describing Poetic Structures', Yale French Studies  
1966 p. 215.

36. M. Riffaterre, 'Criteria for Style Analysis' Word 1959 p. 163
37. M. Riffaterre, 'Describing Poetic Structures' Yale French Studies 1966 p. 215
38. M. Riffaterre, 'Criteria for Style Analysis' Word 1959 p.171
39. In fact Riffaterre's 'superreader' does not feature in his later work The Semiotics of Poetry (1978)
40. R. Ingarden op. cit. pp. 37-41
41. ibid. p. 40
42. ibid. p. 41
43. Throughout this enquiry the word 'participant' has been used to refer to an imaginal response 'reader'. The very process of 'imaginal response' necessitates some degree of participation. However, 'participant' is not used here to imply that the individual is a participant rather than an observer of their imaginal drama. In order to avoid such confusion 'involve' and 'involvement' have been used to describe this specific form of imaginal participation.
44. C.G. Jung CW14 para. 753
45. For a full analysis of these images see pp. 223-7
46. Marie-Louise von Franz Number and Time p. 223
47. Marie-Louise von Franz C.G. Jung, His Myth in Our Time p. 237
48. C.G. Jung CW8 para. 843
49. Marie-Louise von Franz op. cit. p. 237
50. Mary Watkins Waking Dreams p. 118
51. Not only can the imaginal 'reader' transform the personal psyche, but also the collective can be transformed. For, just as the experience of an archetype by the conscious self means a transformation of the individual, so too the archetype itself is transformed through contact with consciousness. Working with archetypal images is always a two-way process.

52. R. Assagioli Psychosynthesis pp. 145-151
53. From an unpublished lecture by Arnold Keyserling, given at the Wrekin Trust, Mystics and Scientists 7th Conference, 6-8 April 1984.
54. See note 53 above
55. In particular the work of Patricia Berry, J. Hillman and R. Lockhart
56. C.G. Jung CW7 para. 343

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