

IMAGINATION AND THE *MUNDUS IMAGINALIS*

JANET KAYLO

To enter into a discussion of the imagination is to attempt to transgress the boundaries of both the sensible and the intellectual categories, and to plant an exposition within a realm identified as much by what it lacks as by what it contains. The imaginal, generally, is understood as lacking concrete reality—even, perhaps, containing within it a disavowal or indifference to the laws of worldly things. From Plato's cave to the dawn of the Renaissance, products of the imagination have suffered overwhelming disapproval—except in the case of artistic, creative work. Paradoxically, however, it is within the imaginal that each of us can discover the *freedom* necessary to deepen, to clarify, and to 'en-soul' our physical, lived-experience.¹

Mundus imaginalis is a term borrowed from Islamic Studies scholar Henry Corbin, and arises out of the imaginal essence implicit in a particular sect of Sufism—specifically illustrated by Corbin through the life and work of Sufi master Ibn 'Arabi.² As the term itself lends a

Janet Kaylo has an M.A. in Jungian and Post Jungian Studies, University of Essex, Colchester, England. She is a Movement Analyst, Senior Dance Movement Therapist, and Somatic Movement Therapist, and is the founder/director of Laban/Bartenieff and Somatic Studies International—a certifying body for professional training in Movement Analysis and Bodymind Practice. She spearheaded the first full-time, 2-year M.A. in Dance Movement Therapy in Britain, at Goldsmiths University of London, within the subject area of Art Psychotherapy. Other journal publications include "The Phenomenological Body and Analytical Psychology" (*Harvest*), and "The Body in Phenomenology and Movement Observation."

particularly over-arching significance to a realm which is constituted solely by (and in) the imagination, the *mundus imaginalis* can provide an ontic framework within which to place psychotherapy's experiential work which occurs in an explicit, or implied, imaginal field. This field is defined by Brooke in *Jung and Phenomenology* as follows:

The imaginal realm, or *mundus imaginalis* . . . , is not an 'inner world' projected into the relationship by the patient or analyst; it is rather that psychic reality which envelops both people present and which structures their mutual presence.³

From this description, one could suggest that the shared psychic reality, or imaginal field, between therapist and patient(s) is contained within the activation of an archetypal or pre-existing structure such as that termed and described by Corbin as the *mundus imaginalis*.

After a brief appraisal of imagination's development in Western thought, I will present it here as an experience which defines itself as distinct from other mental acts, drawing from Edward S. Casey's work establishing for imagining a phenomenological base.⁴ Secondly, I will explore the imaginal as a worldview in Corbin's *mundus imaginalis*. Thirdly, given imagination's uncertain position in the history of Western thought, I will seek to identify how these two presentations further situate and support the imaginal referred to in Jungian and post-Jungian contexts. I would like to propose here that the philosophical work of Casey and the theological work of Corbin *together* provide a broader supportive framework for granting primacy and credibility to imagining as an intentional act, not simply in pragmatic psychological terms, but as a reality within the psyche, which exists in its own right.

THE ACT OF IMAGINATION

Imagination, though easy to experience, is very difficult to capture for scrutiny and investigation. In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's classical formulation of imagination as "a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of which we are scarcely ever conscious"⁵ betrays imagination's crucial yet castigated position within a hierarchy of discernible human faculties defined in Western philosophy.

Imagination is ultimately ephemeral—which we discover when we try to *speak* of it—and this elusive quality renders it equally resistant

to conceptual specification of any precise kind. Much like describing an experience of our bodies in motion, where we must return to the moving itself to communicate something about it, when working with imagination, we must continually re-imagine (or conjure up anew) a particular image in order to keep it before us as we describe it.

According to Casey's critical, phenomenological study, though it may seem to resemble observation, imagining cannot actually be classified as such, because imagining never reveals in the imaginal object more than what we "explicitly or implicitly know *about* it."⁶ Additionally, the imaginal is apprehended in its entirety—unlike objects of perception—and does not linger for another perspective or view outside of the act of imagining. Though this alone would render it an unlikely subject for a careful, detailed inquiry, Casey nonetheless set out to provide an accurate description of imagining as it presents itself in one's own experience. What are imagining's features? Its limitations? What elements can we discover which all imaginings share? In this way, he hopes to distinguish imagining from other mental acts, whose invariant aspects differ from remembering, perceptual illusion, hallucination, or delusion.

Though for Plato the imaginal was only an imitation or reflection cast by the perceived world, and even with that, to be regarded with suspicion,⁷ Aristotle afforded the imaginal a higher position, located between perception and intellect as a vital requirement for the latter; stating that "the soul never thinks without an image."⁸ After Aristotle, imagination was assigned a mediatory role—lying as it did between sensible perception and intellectual ideation—and continued as such for over 1,000 years, locked between these assumed primordial dualities which served as the foundation for Western metaphysics.⁹

At the dawn of the Renaissance, the work of hermetic philosophers such as Bruno, Ficino, and Paracelsus radically revised imaging and creativity by locating them *within* the human condition itself. Indeed, for Bruno, imaging both preceded and created reason, and was a vital part of the basis of his hermetic worldview. Though his work was repressed by the Church, and Bruno and numerous others were burned at the stake for heresy, subtle movement began with the hermetics' work in the Renaissance away from the transcendence of metaphysics, and toward a humanistic psychology of creativity.¹⁰

Still, despite the hermetics' developments in philosophy, imagination's intermediary position continued into the 18th century in the work of Hume and Locke, reinforced further by Kant's distinguishing two specific kinds of imagining: *reproductive imagination*, which connects with memory and perception, and *productive imagination*, which is very near conceptual thinking. Kant referred to imagination as a 'third thing', homogenous with both the *category* and the *appearance* (understanding and sensibility), and found imagination's function in synthesis, which connected understanding and perceiving by means of the *transcendental schema* that resulted from productive imagination. Most significantly, Kant gave Western philosophy an *a priori* imagination and proclaimed it indispensable to all knowledge. After him—and perhaps in rebellion to the hierarchy of his categories—Romantic thinkers such as Schelling, Fichte, and Novalis allowed the productive imagination the highest seat in mental faculties. In the hands of the Romantics' "wild enthusiasms," imagination became "a mesmeric term that meant so much in general ... it came to mean very little in particular."¹¹

Between the Romantics' forays and developments in the 20th century, Collingwood added to definitions of the act of imagination a sense of attention or awareness, which transforms sense data into a new form of feeling. Examples of this he described in experiences of art, wherein, for example, the noises of the orchestra are transformed into the sounds of a symphony, or individual notes become the melody of a song. This occurs, he said, through a reproduction of creative imagination, without which we cannot share in the artist's original creation.¹² Could not this conscious attention, which involves ourselves *and* that to which we attend, also extend itself to any object of the material world? This was a question which continued well into the 20th century in philosophical inquiry.

As distinctions between the inner and the outer eroded in 20th century thought, Sartre turned his attention to the 19th century work of Brentano—who became preoccupied by consciousness as focused on a fictitious or non-existent object. Did these objects exist by virtue of our consciousness, and in what way did they exist which differed with the existence of objects of the natural world? Brentano asserted that consciousness was that which was directed onto objects, in the subjective form of what he termed *intentionality*. Following on from

Brentano's conclusions of individual consciousness and intentionality, Husserl continued further to declare not only the objects of perception, but also the people who perceived them, all as objects together in the material world.

Sartre's exposure to Brentano and Husserl created in him a great state of enthusiasm and he returned to France determined to fight against what he called the *digestive* and *regurgitative* philosophy, and to proclaim instead this new revolutionary philosophy of knowledge. What he saw as Phenomenology's ground-breaking way of thinking he described as "a movement of fleeing itself, a sliding beyond itself... floating in the malodorous brine of the mind" With this new philosophy, subjective reactions were merely ways of discovering the world. For Sartre, Husserl had "restored things to their horror and their charm ... [and] restored to us the world of artists and prophets"¹³

EIDETIC TRAITS OF IMAGINATION

Casey's phenomenological study of imagining answers a need for a philosophical investigation of the singular and specific features present in the act of imagination itself. Though perhaps of necessity, lacking in the Jungian imagining as *poesis*, this study provides a decisive set of parameters for understanding imagination's limitations, as well as imagining's unequalled capacities in the realm of freedom, success, and pure possibility. In this exposition, imagining is seen as a unique, non-derivative phenomena of its own, as it "... remains master in its own house, displaying an autonomous action that is without parallel in perception"¹⁴ For Casey, imagining *stakes out* 'freedom of mind,' and in its spontaneity is experienced as *autogenous*: that is it *initiates itself*.¹⁵

Using the method of phenomenological reduction, Casey recounts particular experiences of his own attentive imagination—described in unmodified detail. These accounts reveal six traits distinguishable to imagining proper, and are reported by him in the following order: spontaneity and controlledness; self-evidence and self-containedness; indeterminacy and pure possibility. In each imagining, the first two occur throughout, but cannot occur simultaneously. All 'imagining' experiences reported could be classified as one or the other: spontaneous in arising on its own, unsolicited; and controlled in the will or volition exerted both generally and at specific moments of directing the imaginative process.

As self-evident and self-contained, imagining's act or content does not refer to any other act or content; and each is contained in its own self-enclosed unit. Whereas the former pair of traits delimits imaginative experience, closing it in upon itself, the traits of indeterminacy and pure possibility *open out* the experience "endowing it with a fluidity and freedom"¹⁶ within the limits of its self-containedness and self-evidence. As is not the case with an object of perception—which possesses considerable determinacy of detail—the imaginative objects are seen against a backdrop which is vague and indefinite, lacking determinacy specifically. The imaginal objects themselves are also presented with indefinite details of content, which exemplifies the openness resulting from indeterminacy. Pure possibility exists in the lack of restrictions upon the imagined objects and the imagining experience itself—that is, it is not constrained by what would be real or existent. Casey reports on this trait as follows: "[t]he latitude introduced by the factor of pure possibility brings with it a sense of endlessness—of open development, which is limited only by the particular content of a given presentation."¹⁷

Casey places imagination within the realm of *intentionality*: determining, thereby, that it contains both an *act phase* (wherein all intentional objects are inexistent as with the act phase in other mental faculties), and an *object phase* which suggests that there is, indeed, an *object* upon which imagination acts. The 'world frame' in which these imaginings occur provides an "immediately surrounding zone of presentation"¹⁸—each of which carries its own situatedness, and does not persist beyond the act of imagining. Whereas objects of perception contain an enduring quality, objects of imagination appear always as a context, with a blurred and vague imaginal margin at its borders. In this way, the world which imagining presents is a realm in no way comparable to the perceived world. Through its unique world frame is established an imaginal space and time, and this enables each specific item and content to occupy a particular position in its presentation.¹⁹

Seen as a form of intentionality, imagination is at one with the mind of the imaginer. Within Casey's phenomenological study, he finds that "[n]owhere else within the spectrum of mental acts do we discover such complete concrescence of mind with the products of its own activity."²⁰ Further, imagining's combination of indeterminacy and intentionality lend it the additional character of cursory, moment-to-moment

interest—perhaps even more so than perceived objects of our attention. Were imagining's vagueness to vanish, the imaginer would find her/himself no longer imagining, but perceiving, remembering, or hallucinating instead.

In summary, whether continuous or discontinuous with other mental acts, imagining both clearly belongs to and is expressly for the imaginer alone; its delimitations include preconditions such as indeterminacy and pure possibility; and it demonstrates innate—*a priori*—sources beyond perception itself. "But what is this queer experience?"²¹ And what could be the sources from which it springs?

THE MUNDUS IMAGINALIS

The world Henry Corbin reveals for us, in his studies of Islamic Sufism, is a world itself which holds imagination as 'an absolutely basic function' through which its real and *objective* existence is perceived.²² Corbin cites Phenomenology to support the value of intentionality as implicit in the knowledge of an object; with the further hope that a mere parenthetical understanding of such (imaginative) intentions might progress to actual acceptance of the imaginative function as a particular view of the world.

For the Spiritualists spoken of in Corbin's work, there exists a three-fold world consisting of a universe apprehended by the intellect, one perceived by the senses, and a third intermediate world "of Idea-Images [*sic*], of archetypal figures, of subtle [*sic*] substances, of 'immaterial matter.'"²³ In this third realm, the spiritual informs body, the body becomes spiritual; and symbolic histories appear in their *true reality*. In this world reside the *Animae coelestes* (or what in a Christian tradition one might call Angels): in a state of Pure Imagination [*sic*], their world is the realm of symbolic knowledge, availed of by human beings through the organ of Imagination [*sic*]. The Sufi's *ta' wil*—which carries a thing back to its symbolic principle—reveals a psychology built on a spirit of symbolic exegesis, and one, furthermore, which requires no ecclesiastic or external authority for mediation or validation. Rather, a person's *ta' wil*—or essential symbolic understanding—is determined by one's ability to inhabit the threefold world, which transmutes everything visible into symbols, and includes "the intuition of an essence or person in an Image which partakes neither of universal logic nor of sense perception...."²⁴

As we have seen in Casey's phenomenological description of the imaginal, the *Animae coelestes* are for the individual alone, and bestowed upon that individual the power of his/her own symbolic revelation. By virtue of an "investiture with a theophanic function whose organ is the active Imagination, an archetype . . .,"²⁵ individuals are endowed with both a physical and a subtle body aspect, including the heart—whose focus is creative spiritual energy—which lies at the center of one's subtle physiology. Very much like Jung's transcendent function, in the theophanic function (which is mediated by the imagination), a transcendence occurs that extends a thing beyond the one-sided view of the material body, imbuing the conscious with features of the unconscious—or imbuing the material with a spiritual principle.

Symbolism in the Sufi's *ta' wil* is formulated through the imagination; just as symbol formation occurs spontaneously in the Jungian practice of Active Imagination.²⁶ That Jung discovered strikingly similar value and active use for the imagination through his own personal explorations within it is perhaps testament both to imagination's autogenous, mediating power and to its autonomous, archetypally-rooted character.

An imaginal worldview, then, contains a simultaneously two-fold dimension in which exists, inseparably, physical manifestation and its archetypal representation. Corbin explains these interweaving relationships as follows:

... because there is Imagination there is *ta' wil*; because there is *ta' wil* there is symbolism; and because there is symbolism beings have two dimensions²⁷

For those Sufis of the *Fedeli d'amore*, the experience of love dedicated to something of earthly existence is necessary for initiation of divine love. As the two are inseparable, knowledge of the relationship between them is found in the quality of meaning (*ta' wil*), discovered through the Pure Intelligence of Active Imagination [*sic*]:

It is because revealed being is Imagination that we require a hermeneutics of the forms manifested in it, that is to say, a *ta' wil* which carries them back (as the etymology of the word indicates) to their true reality.²⁸

Therefore, if 'revealed being' is imagination, then the only way to know the world is to grant the imagination a primary role in that

knowing. Through the practice of Active Imagination, Corbin explains, consciousness is awakened to the true nature of the world as apparitional, thereby enabling consciousness to transcend its data, create new theophanies, and maintain a continuous ascent.²⁹ Imagination acts here (as with Kant) as a third thing, an agent of synthesis: now bringing together complementary opposites (such as physical and spiritual, creator and created) which, when manifested in a vision or epiphany, unite in a *mysterium coniunctionis*.³⁰ And, as there exists for each sentient being an archetypal correlate of infinite possible variations, unity and plurality is preserved simultaneously. Corbin describes this interdependence with the following dictum: "... if we fail to grasp this twofold dimension simultaneously, we lose the reality both of the person and of the symbol."³¹ Therefore, to experience the archetypal aspect of one's being is to know one's 'Angel', and thus to know oneself.

For Corbin's Sufi sages, the imaginal world is a pre-existing, intermediate archetypal dimension, intelligible only through an *act of being* which is an expression of its presence. The effect of this creative energy produced by the concentration of the imagination is *theophanic prayer*—that is, a dialogue between the archetypal (or God) and man. Leaving the *where* of outer appearances which veil the hidden, inner realities, we enter the world of subtle bodies that create their own non-temporal, non-spatial contexts as a mode of "being in suspense."³² It is in the *mundus imaginalis*, where consciousness and its object are inseparable, that we discover the following:

archetypal images of individual and singular things [which are] pre-existent and pre-ordained in relation to the sensible world ... the intermediary world where the spirits dwell ... and [where] the forms of our thoughts and desires, of our presentiments and of our behaviour and of all the works accomplished on earth subsist.³³

As a parallel to Casey's phenomenological reduction, we see in Corbin's *mundus imaginalis* a thorough application of imagining's six eidetic factors; though specifically, here, experienced as a means of identifying the *true nature* of individual reality. Can Corbin's explanations of the imaginal 'reality' lived by his Sufi sages survive—even partially—transplanting into a psychological and secular world?

According to Corbin, in the world of Ibn 'Arabi there exists for each individual the same imaginative faculty as that for the Sufi sages, differentiated only by the gnostic's potential for manifestation of the imaginal into the material world.³⁴ The gnostic's manifestation is actualized through *himmā*: a mysterious power of the heart, which includes the "force of an intention so powerful as to project and realize (*essentiate*) a being external to the being who conceives the intention...."³⁵ In other words, the Sufi sages were able, through the intention present within the purity of the heart, to manifest an at least temporary materialization of the imaginal object.

The envelopment of this *unconditional imagination*, in which all human imagination is contained, Corbin considers "our guarantee that the intentions arising from the creative power of the heart as an independent being *sui generis* are not vain fictions."³⁶ For every individual, Corbin explains, imagination as an active power also "guides, anticipates, [and] molds sense perception; [which is] why it transmutes sensory data into symbols."³⁷

Perhaps Jung's *religious attitude* toward the psyche can assist further in transporting Corbin's descriptions of the sacred Sufi world into a psychological world of archetypal images.³⁸ For when constricting imagination to its phenomenological reduction, Casey still discovers archetypal structuring within its contexts and spontaneous irruptions,³⁹ and, as seen below, credits Jung for granting imagination both an autonomous function and an active use through which genuine insight begins to become real:

Such insight is not only into oneself, but at the same time into the archetypal constants that subtend the self. For the aim of active imagination is at once personal and extrapersonal; or more exactly, by taking us more deeply into ourselves it brings us into contact with what is more than ourselves. This 'more' refers to archetypes, which lend lasting shape and structure to what would otherwise be a sheer 'chaotic assortment of images.'⁴⁰

In a summary provided by Mary Warnock in *Imagination and Time*, imagination's *function* is seen to "produce depth as well as clarity, and to make us aware of our own feelings ... through the contemplation of the objects brought before us."⁴¹ Even in a secular world, then, we could posit that an act of being which is an expression of imagination's presence, would consider the *mundus imaginalis*—that is, the realm of

active contemplation of the imaginal—a basic hermeneutics for understanding one's relationship with the world.

HILLMAN AND JUNG

Hillman draws extensively on the vision presented by Corbin's *mundus imaginalis*, and attributes to Jung a life's work dedicated to bringing soul into the world of things. Soul, Hillman describes as "the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream image, *fantasy*—that mode which recognizes all realities as primarily symbolic or metaphorical."⁴² Hillman sees soul through imagination as a *perspective* which is reflective, mediating between ourselves and events, an inner place or ongoing presence, "a factor independent of the events in which we are immersed."⁴³ With this perspective, he favors living with the images rather than taming or spoiling them as they are *bodied* and grounded in their own imaginal detail.⁴⁴ Further, Hillman presupposes that through "penetrating vision of imagination [we perceive] those fundamental fantasies that animate all of life."⁴⁵ His Archetypal Psychology refers to seeking out images in the events themselves, which give rise to *value* and a full range of experience. And he does this from the same poetic basis of mind which is fundamental to Jung.

Jung utilized *poesis* as a mode of thinking and representing psychic processes, and considered the psyche, or *esse in anima*, to hold the balance between the *idea* and the *thing*: "What would the idea amount to if the psyche did not provide its living value?"⁴⁶ The reality in ourselves, our psychic reality, Jung assigned to an autonomous activity which he saw as a vital, continually creative act of *fantasy*.⁴⁷

Fantasy, therefore, seems to me the clearest expression of the specific activity of the psyche. It is, preeminently, the creative activity from which the answers to all unanswerable questions come; it is the mother of all possibilities, where, like all psychological opposites, the inner and the outer worlds are joined together in living union. Fantasy it was and ever is which fashions the bridge between the irreconcilable claims of subject and object, introversion and extroversion. In fantasy alone both mechanisms are united.⁴⁸

For Jung, imagining mediates between subject and object, as inner and outer worlds come together in psychic images. Imagination,

therefore, carries a position of primacy in creating our sense of psychic reality. Between the conscious world of the ego and the world of objects, psychic images point us beyond the subjective and toward something as yet unknown.⁴⁹

Though Jung's valorizing of the image pointed towards a poetic basis of mind, he did not, according to Avens, fully develop it himself.⁵⁰ Perhaps this is due partly to the fact that as Jung transgressed his own Kantian epistemology, he failed to locate himself accurately beyond it. It has, thus, been left for post-Jungians to either remain within the *a priori* organizing structure of the archetypes, or to choose to move fully towards the unknown life of the imaginal: in other words, to focus specifically on the *symbolic* appearance of the image or to move towards the images *themselves*.

A SHARED SPACE IN THE IMAGINAL REALM

Both classical Jungians and 'post' Jungians utilize the image as a particular and apt selection by the psyche meant to "express what it intends" from all images available in an individual's experience.⁵¹ Some post-Jungians have extended this process to the framework of a *field*, which is created by *sharing* and *opening* to imaginal value. Within this imaginal field, potent images are drawn forward and accessed by both therapist and client. As Schwartz-Salant describes it, this field "becomes a presence that both people are inside of and simultaneously observers of,"⁵² reaffirming what Patricia Berry calls the "full democracy of [an] image... belong[ing] to the body politic"⁵³ Processes that take place in this field include both the personal and the collective unconscious of both people, and require a suspension of judgment regarding what belongs to whom. Finally, what is taking place between them can be felt as a third thing—both subjective and objective—and is held in a "mystery of containment"⁵⁴ Such a 'presencing' within a *participation mystique*, can lead to a *coniunctio*, or to the vibration of (Jung's) *bilateral point*; while creating for analyst and analysand the formation of kinship libido; or constellate a mild hypnotic state.⁵⁵

This state, as an 'intense personal relationship between people,' can also occur within what Kohut defined as empathy, or *vicarious introspection*; and support further "a [particular] mode of observation attuned to the inner life of man."⁵⁶ Within this empathic attitude, as suggested by Samuels, experiences of 'reflective and embodied

countertransference' might be looked upon in the same spirit as Corbin's visions which occur in the *mundus imaginalis*,⁷ as here, too, they appear without sensory stimuli or intellectual formulation. In the case of embodied countertransference, the analyst's body becomes less literal—a subtle body or *being in suspense*—and the *mundus imaginalis* functions as the "linking factor between patient and analyst."⁵⁸

Corbin describes the organ which perceives the *mundus imaginalis* as 'imaginative consciousness,'⁵⁹ lying as such between external life and internal reality. As both philosopher and scholar, Corbin beckons us toward this realm of *nonwhere*; which has its parallel in Heidegger's *Being*, Winnicott's *area of illusion*, and Jung's *esse in anima*. Existing within imaginative consciousness, the *mundus imaginalis* offers an autonomous, autogenous opportunity for contemplating the soul in our images of the world.

EPILOGUE

In addition to imaginal constellations between one patient and one analyst, I would like to propose that these states of shared visions and imagination can occur with multiple participants: in my own experience, as one dance movement therapist 'witnessing' and facilitating several members of a therapy group moving together. Collective and personal imaginal constellations are here possible, with the *mundus imaginalis* operating as the linking factor among participants, as well as between participants and myself as therapist. A *glittering*, living imaginal world is entered into through a particular way of moving and being, which is simultaneously creating and responding to the creation of images. This is possible particularly when imagination is allowed to develop, encouraged and unhindered, by way of *its own immediate knowledge and spontaneous exploration*. Movement work within such an imaginal field includes creating a precondition of internalized, sensitized bodily focus; for example, beginning through a personal body imaging or imaginal journey into the unseen body landscape within. This requires the establishment of a 'safe' physical space, and includes a high degree of physical attunement (a specifically physicalized form of Kohut's empathy), between the therapist and the movers present. Through highlighting proprioceptive and interoceptive, awareness—while initially limiting contact with external stimuli—movers are drawn into an area where images and the body vibrate or

“shimmer” together (a condition alluded to by Samuels).⁶⁰ One moves from within the images which spontaneously and indeterminately arise: the moving and the imaging creating and evolving through and with each other, as a state of *bodymind* which includes conscious and nonjudgmental participation with the imaginal through moving and exploring simultaneously.

These evolving movement developments continue to unfold within a space contained by our attention to the imaginal—made immediate and *real* through the act of being within it—and gives rise to synchronicities which occur between my intermittent suggestions and the unconsciously arising, body/mind-imaging taking place for the movers within the room. As with Schwartz-Salant’s imaginal field, both personal and collective images are generated within this moving *presencing* we are all simultaneously inside and observers of.

These group movement experiences differ slightly from traditional Active Imagination in one-to-one verbal or dance movement therapy, as the images are not named or necessarily post-reflectively symbolized—nor are they seen as metaphors for something else. Rather, the pre-reflective experience of moving *in the image* is given the first priority of meaning presented: that is, the experience of *being with* the imaginal is the work with the image. The moving and the image together are more than metaphor: they are the ‘meaning’.

Additionally, the relationship between the guidance I might give to the movers, and what a mover is imagining, is fluidly interwoven within nonlinear, nonverbal, kinesthetic impressions; and individuals feel moved *together* through their own individually appearing images, as though occupying the same world with differing meanings available within it.

These sessions are drawn toward closure as the imaging/movement begins to decelerate for the group as a whole, as a result of individual images appearing with less distinct features. Bodily movement at this point transforms into more subtle and internalized expressions of presence, and my suggestions then take the form of bringing closure to the experience, while encouraging participants to reflect or remember, just prior to leaving the ‘world’ of the images themselves. This transition from perceiving and moving in the imaginal world, to re-awakening to the sensible world is often experienced in a manner similar to waking from a deeply moving dream—though one could consider there is

greater resonance in the physical body and in our waking consciousness with the experiences that have occurred there. Additionally, descriptions and reflections which take place after this experience are considered of *secondary* significance to the primacy of the imaginal experiences themselves.

Within the varied imaginal possibilities mentioned throughout this paper, a vital disposition, nonetheless, remains with them all. That is, a belief in the images before us, and an imaginative attention to the hints and subtle communications exchanged through senses other than those of the ears or the eyes only. Hillman’s suggestion that we practice “Jung’s technique with Corbin’s vision”⁶¹ is possible only by way of an act of being which is an expression of imagination’s presence. This act of being is also the Sufi’s *ta’ wil*—an intention which carries a thing back to its symbolic meanings. As reflective imagination, it reveals an otherwise hidden psychic field, and provides a hermeneutics of the forms experienced in one’s world. When we look to imaginative consciousness as a form of *intentionality*, the ineffable presence of the *Animae coelestes*—or the synchronicities of the *mundus imaginalis*—begin shimmering in waiting to be experientially revealed.

NOTES

1. My operational definition of imagining and imaginal includes maintaining a self-reflective point of view, and would exclude what Jung distinguished differently as ‘mere flights of fancy’.
2. Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone: Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabi*, (Princeton: Princeton/Bollingen, [1969], 1998).
3. Roger Brooke, *Jung and Phenomenology* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 83.
4. Edward S. Casey, *Imagining* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976).
5. Quoted in Casey, 4.
6. *Ibid.*, 7-8.
7. See *ibid.*, 16.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Paul Kugler, “Psychic Imaging: a bridge between subject and object,” in Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 74-75.

10. Kugler, 76.
11. Casey, 17-18.
12. Mary Warnock, *Imagination and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 47.
13. As quoted in Warnock, 51. Sartre's near-contemporary, Merleau-Ponty, claimed that inquiries into the causes for why we perceive what we do as implicitly *real* were meaningless, as "[a]ll the qualities we ascribe to objects spring into existence as we perceive them" (Warnock, 68). It is not without import to note that the work of both Freud and Jung began within this philosophical climate of experiential and subjective inquiry.
14. Casey, 173.
15. *Ibid.*, 68.
16. *Ibid.*, 37.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, 50.
19. *Ibid.*, 51.
20. *Ibid.*, 102.
21. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1967), 215. The rest of the quote goes as follows: "Of course it is not queerer than any other; it simply differs in kind from those experiences which we regard as the most fundamental ones, our sense impressions, for instance."
22. Corbin, 3.
23. *Ibid.*, 4.
24. *Ibid.*, 13.
25. *Ibid.*, 100.
26. Jung discovered Active Imagination during the years 1913-1916, following his break with Freud. As described by Joan Chodorow in *Jung on Active Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1997, 2), during this time he experienced intense inner confusion, fears, and overwhelming moods, and began to engage with impulses and images arising from his unconscious, returning to the imaginative spirit of his childhood. He then remembered a childhood nightmare which connected to the loss of his religious attitude, which he could then see as posing both *the problematic* and a *possible solution* to it. His fantasies, unleashed, occurred in "an incessant stream," and he began to differentiate between a process of unconscious merging, and symbolic expression while maintaining a

self-reflective point of view.

27. Corbin, 209.
28. *Ibid.*, 208.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Jung's first professional paper on Active Imagination was written in 1916 and titled "The Transcendent Function." In his early attempts to understand the transcendent function, he explained an innate dynamic process "that unites opposite positions in the psyche ... by drawing polarized energies into a common channel, resulting in a new symbolic position which contains both perspectives." Chodorow, 4. One can easily see here another parallel between the Sufi's transcendent theology and use of the imaginal realm, with Jung's searching for a religious attitude toward the psyche and use of symbolic representation through active use of the imagination.
31. Corbin, 100.
32. *Ibid.*, 9.
33. *Ibid.*, 8.
34. *Ibid.*, 223.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, 80.
38. This attitude would include the psyche's teleological nature and spontaneous symbol formation in the dynamic process of the transcendent function.
39. Casey, xiii.
40. *Ibid.*, 214.
41. As quoted in Warnock, 82. This statement of Mary Warnock's in itself serves to advance imagination as an illuminating agent when employed by any subject in an act of contemplation on any object—that is, when focused upon specifically as an aspect of intentionality.
42. James Hillman, *Revisioning Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), x.
43. *Ibid.*, xvi.
44. Thomas Moore (ed.), *A Blue Fire: The Essential James Hillman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 8.
45. *Ibid.*, 9-16.
46. C.G. Jung, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, rev. trans. R.F.C. Hull, Vol. 6 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), § 77.

47. Distinctions between active and passive fantasy, active imagination, and the transcendent function occurred later in Jung's work. Early terms he utilized for this therapeutic method which employed conscious use of the imagination included: 'picture method', 'active fantasy', 'trancing', 'visioning', and 'technique of descent', to cite a few. Chodorow, 3.

48. C.G. Jung, § 78. Jung's *psychic reality* can be seen as a parallel to Corbin's definitions of the *Mundus Imaginalis*. Both terms are understood to utilize the organ of creative fantasy or imagination for their unveiling.

49. Kugler, 84.

50. Roberts Avens, "Imagination in Jung and Hillman," in Renos K. Papadopoulos (ed.), *Carl Gustav Jung: Critical Assessments*, Vol IV (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 264. First published Dallas: Spring Publications.

51. Michael Vannoy Adams, "The archetypal school," in Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jung* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 105.

52. Nathan Schwartz-Salant, *The Mystery of Human Relationships* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 5.

53. Quoted in Avens, 262.

54. Schwartz-Salant, 6.

55. *Ibid.*, 11-13.

56. Quoted in Andrew Samuels, "Countertransference, the *Mundus Imaginalis* and a Research Project," *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, Vol. 30, 1985, 50.

57. *Ibid.*, 52.

58. *Ibid.*, 60.

59. Corbin, "Mundus Imaginalis or the imaginary and the Imaginal," *Spring*, 1972, 2.

60. Samuels, 61.

61. James Hillman (ed.), *Facing the Gods* (Irving, Texas: Spring Publications, 1980), 19.