

Myth, Enchantment and Psychological Astrology

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Abstract: James Hillman's archetypal psychology aimed to take psyche out of the consulting room and back to the cosmos, through cultivation of a mythical consciousness that recognises all reality as symbolic and metaphorical. A life-long lover of astrology, Hillman has been identified as a reformer from within psychological astrology, with his archetypal perspective offering potential for a re-enchanting expression of the subject. However, earlier varieties of psychological astrology, which have been labelled as disenchanting, show a strong concern with mythology. This paper examines what difference there is, if any, in the role and function of mythology in different twentieth-century psychological astrologies and the relationship between such use and characterisations of (dis)enchantment.

Introduction

Patrick Curry defines astrology as including 'any practice or belief that centred on interpreting the human or terrestrial meaning of the stars'.¹ Astrology looks to the sky for meaning and inspiration; in doing so it seeks answers from a sky that communicates, that speaks and talks. As twentieth-century astrologer Dane Rudhyar wrote 'the same sky speaks to us in every individual chart'.² Astrology may therefore be conceived as a practice concerned with the 'speaking sky'. It is also concerned with sky mythology, where mythology may be defined as metaphorical and poetic stories which begin to offer answers to questions about the universe and

¹ Patrick Curry, *Prophecy and Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), p.4.

² Dane Rudhyar, 'The Birth Chart as a Celestial Message', address to the American Federation of Astrologers, 1976, www.khaldea.com/rudhyar/astroarticles/celestialmessage.shtml, [accessed 12 May 2018].

the relationship of human beings to it.³ As the psychologist James Hillman (1926-2011) noted, astrology ‘depends upon images taken from the heavens’ and ‘invokes a polytheistic, mythic, poetic, metaphoric sense of what is fatefully real’.⁴

In the twentieth century, a form of astrology known as psychological astrology developed. This was principally influenced by the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961).⁵ This tradition is associated with astrologers such as Dane Rudhyar (1895-1985), Liz Greene (1946-), Stephen Arroyo (1946-), Howard Sasportas (1948-1992) and other astrologers of similar inclination, often those associated with the Centre for Psychological Astrology which was established by Greene and Sasportas in the early 1980s.⁶ These astrologers focused on the birth horoscope, using it as a means of revealing an individual’s innate psychological dynamics and, through astrological forecasting techniques, as a way of understanding the individual’s psychological development or ‘individuation’ over time. For the purposes of this paper I shall refer to this tradition as ‘core psychological astrology’.

Psychological astrology developed over the twentieth century, a period which, in terms of esoteric thought, has been identified as one of re-enchantment in the West.⁷ This paper aims to contribute to that debate, as to whether a period of disenchantment indeed gave way to re-enchantment, by examining whether there are different uses and functions of mythology in two broad types of psychological astrology, one enchanting and the other disenchanting. It takes its inspiration from Patrick Curry’s suggestion of the possibility of a re-enchantment of psychological astrology through the work of James Hillman.⁸ The implication of Curry’s analysis is that core psychological astrology is disenchanting. This paper begins by

³ Kenneth McLeish, ‘Introduction’ to Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Vol. I (London: The Folio Society, 1998), p.11.

⁴ James Hillman, ‘Heaven Retains Within Its Sphere Half of All Bodes and Maladies’, at www.springpub.com/astro, accessed 1.1.2001, p.1.

⁵ Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology Volume II* (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 251; Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.72; Lindsay Radermacher, ‘The Role of Dialogue in Astrological Divination’ (MPhil Thesis, University of Kent, 2011), p.14.

⁶ Anon, ‘History’, www.cpalondon.com/history.html [accessed 1 April 2017].

⁷ Christopher Partridge, *The Re-Enchantment of the West, Vol. 1* (London: t&t Clark, 2004), p.1.

⁸ Roy Willis and Patrick Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture: Pulling Down the Moon* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), pp.72-75.

discussing Curry's analysis, drawing out in particular how the implications of this might lead to a hypothesis on the differing roles of mythology within Hillman's psychological astrology and the core tradition. The paper then discusses the part played by mythology in Hillman's archetypal psychology and how this feeds through to his views on astrology, considers the role of mythology in the core tradition of psychological astrology, revisits the question of enchantment in the context of the use and function of mythology in relation to these two broad strands of psychological astrology, and also whether psychological astrology may sometimes be enchanting and sometimes disenchanting.

Curry's assessment of psychological astrology and enchantment

In *Astrology, Science and Culture*, Patrick Curry writes:

In a fascinating new development *within* psychological astrology, James Hillman has recently suggested applying the pluralism he has been developing within archetypal psychology since the 1980s. This involves a significant break with the monistic emphases of Jung... in such an astrology, each planetary deity would receive its due without any attempt – virtually a reflex, among astrologers no less than anyone else – to arrive at an overarching meta-principle which would magically accommodate all differences and reconcile all conflicts... this here Hillman has started... thus has real potential for re-enchantment within, and probably beyond, psychological astrology.⁹

Curry juxtaposes Hillman's astrology with that of existing psychological astrologers who he implicitly equates with the 'monistic' emphasis which he argues is found in the work of Carl Jung. But what might Curry mean by this? The answer lies in his discussion surrounding this particular passage. This commentary identifies Jung's 'archetype of the Self' as relating to the astrological Sun.¹⁰ This archetype of the Self is the core archetype underlying Jung's theory, and is his name for the potential of each person to find total integration of the personality.¹¹ The process of attaining this integrated state Jung called individuation, which he defined

⁹ Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.75.

¹⁰ Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.75.

¹¹ C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, 2nd ed., trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge, 2008), para.634.

as the gradual assimilation of unconscious contents into consciousness.¹² The suggestion is therefore that the core tradition of psychological astrology follows Jung in its overemphasis on individuation and the archetype of the Self. This overemphasis then shows itself in astrological terms by the dominance of the astrological Sun and the development of the personality through the overarching principle of the Sun, whilst the other planets play a lesser role and are seen as less important.

Curry also raises the question of disenchantment and enchantment. The most famous theorist of disenchantment, Max Weber, identified it as a consequence of increasing rationalisation and intellectualisation with the result that, as he wrote, 'no mysterious forces come into play, but that all things can be mastered by calculation'.¹³ Taking a similar view, Curry asserts that disenchantment is connected with monotheism, with universal truth, with anything repeatable or predictable.¹⁴ He also regards an emphasis on integration and unity such as found in the process of individuation (translated astrologically as the Sun) as 'a tacit valuing of monotheism', and therefore disenchanting.¹⁵ In contrast, his view of enchantment is of 'wonder' which 'cannot be repeatable or calculated'.¹⁶ Enchantment, for Curry, cannot be predicted, and which recognises pluralism and relativism. Curry's assertion is that Hillman's variety of astrology satisfies the characteristics of enchantment. This, according to Curry, is a 'significant break with the monistic emphases of Jung... and a move toward a genuine (and uncomfortably agonistic) pluralism'.¹⁷ Curry sees in Hillman's astrology the possibility that 'each planetary deity would receive its due'.¹⁸ In contrast, he asserts, psychological astrology (in the form I characterise as 'core' psychological astrology) over emphasises the astrological Sun and is consequently monistic. It also posits the 'birth-chart as a map of the psyche', with psychological dynamics represented by the planetary pattern at birth.¹⁹ It is thereby linked to 'science' in the broadest sense of the world i.e. empirical claims which are in theory testable and

¹² Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, para 490..

¹³ Max Weber, *Essays on Sociology*, edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 2009), p.139.

¹⁴ Patrick Curry, 'Enchantment and Modernity' *PAN: Philosophy, Activism, Nature*, Issue no. 12, 2012, pp. 76- 89.

¹⁵ Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.75.

¹⁶ Curry, 'Enchantment and Modernity', p.76-77.

¹⁷ Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.75.

¹⁸ Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.75.

¹⁹ Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.74.

repeatable.²⁰ For these reasons, according to Curry, it may be labelled disenchanting.

Two types of psychological astrology?

Inspired by Curry's analysis, it may be asserted that there are two types of psychological astrology, which in Curry's terms are divided by the question of enchantment. One (Hillman's) is enchanting and the other (core psychological astrology) is disenchanting. The question I am addressing in this paper is whether this two-fold split is justifiable when the role of mythology is considered. An initial analysis might suggest that it is. Robert Segal has argued that Hillman's use of mythology represents a radical departure from that of Jung.²¹ According to Segal, Jung saw mythology as a means of exploring the unconscious; ultimately, mythology can therefore be reduced to psychological concepts.²² In *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung wrote that 'mythological man':

perceived the unconscious in all the adversities and contrarities of external nature without ever suspecting he was gazing at the paradoxical background of his own consciousness.²³

Mythology for Jung is therefore important in that it reveals information about the nature of the human psyche. In contrast, Segal argues that for Hillman, psychology is irreducibly mythological.²⁴ Hillman wrote:

Mythology is a psychology of antiquity. Psychology is a mythology of modernity. The ancients had no psychology, properly speaking, but they had myths, the speculative tellings about humans in relation with more-than-human forces and images.²⁵

²⁰ Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.74.

²¹ Robert Segal, *Jung on Mythology* (London: Routledge, p.1998), p.44.

²² Segal, *Jung on Mythology*, p.45.

²³ Carl Gustav Jung, *Collected Works Volume 5*, 2nd Edition, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge, 1967), p.260.

²⁴ Segal, *Jung on Mythology*, p.45.

²⁵ Hillman, *The Dream and the Underworld* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1979). p.23.

Hillman agreed with Jung that mythology revealed psychology but whilst Jung reduced mythology to psychological concepts, Hillman stayed with mythology, arguing that it was psychology that is the unrequired concept, it being a mythology of modernity.

A second point of differentiation in Segal's analysis is a focus on particular types of myths.²⁶ Whilst Jungians, he claims, are particularly enamoured by 'hero' mythology, these stories being easily adapted to ideas of psychological development and progress, Hillman and his followers have downplayed the striving hero and his development in favour of myths such as the playful 'puer' or receptive anima, which are not directly concerned with overall development. In this way they deliberately avoid mythology which is associated primarily with ideas of development and integration, these being seen as monistic in nature.²⁷

Combining Segal's work on the different approaches to mythology found in Hillman and Jung with Curry's analysis on the two varieties of psychological astrology, suggests that they each use mythology in a different manner. On the one hand, there is Hillman's enchanting psychological astrology, which, given Hillman's view of mythology, does not permit mythology to be reduced to psychology and which downplays hero mythology. On the other hand, there is the core tradition of psychological astrology, which is disenchanting, and which reduces mythology to psychology and prioritises hero mythology.

James Hillman and Archetypal Psychology

James Hillman was a qualified Jungian analyst, who went on to become Director of Studies at the Jung Institute in Zurich.²⁸ His origins, like those of core psychological astrologers, are therefore very much Jungian. He, however, emphasised particular facets of Jung's thinking, and his development of Jung's thought eventually led to a new School of Jungian psychology, which has come to be known as 'Archetypal Psychology' and which grew through the late 1960s and 1970s.²⁹

Archetypal Psychology is not principally concerned with archetypes, Jung's name for the structural form of a related set of ideas, but with

²⁶ Segal, *Jung on Mythology*, pp.44-45.

²⁷ Segal, *Jung on Mythology*, pp.44-45.

²⁸ Michel Vannoy Adams, 'The archetypal school' in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung* edited by Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp.107-124.

²⁹ Adams, 'The archetypal school', p.108-110.

archetypal images.³⁰ Its central purpose is to cultivate ‘mythical consciousness’ and through doing so deepen a sense of soul, ‘soul-making’ in Hillman’s phrase, borrowed from the poet John Keats.³¹ By soul Hillman means ‘a perspective rather than a substance, a viewpoint toward things rather than a thing itself’; this perspective ‘mediates events and makes differences between ourselves and everything that happens’ and is the ‘unknown component which makes meaning possible’.³² Archetypal psychology was described by Hillman as follows:

a way of living, a way of seeing, a way of hearing, a way of responding, a way of sensing the Gods in the world, the way the Greeks did when they went to the theatre.³³

Archetypal psychology thus sees the gods everywhere in the world. By gods, Hillman usually means the Greek gods, as these are the ones he is most familiar with, and the ones he regards as foundational to western consciousness. To practise archetypal psychology is to therefore adopt a perspective that engages with the realm of the imagination, which includes the persons of mythology. According to Hillman, this is a polytheistic perspective:

Gods are real. And these Gods are everywhere, in all aspects of existence, all aspects of human life. In this Greek view – and “Greece,” as we have seen, refers to the polytheistic imagination – there is no place, no act, no moment where they are not.³⁴

Central to Hillman’s thought therefore, is the idea that the Greek gods, who we meet in mythology, are alive and well on a certain level of being. The gods of mythology however cannot be reduced to keywords, so it is not correct to say that beauty is Venus or vehemence is Mars, for,

³⁰ Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, p.4; Adams, ‘The archetypal school’, p.107.

³¹ James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper, 1992), p.1.

³² Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, p.xvi.

³³ James Hillman and Sonu Shamdasani, *Lament of the Dead: Psychology after Jung’s Red Book* (London: Norton, 2013), p.195.

³⁴ Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, p.2.

polytheistic psychology can't speak straight on, one-to-one. Rather, they are to be imagined as suggestive perspectives towards writing and reading clinical accounts and toward listening to the language of the patient.³⁵

The only way to meet the gods in archetypal psychology is to imagine them and engage with them as imaginal persons. The imaginal, as defined by Henri Corbin, is the realm in which we encounter images, or archetypes, which emerge from the divine.³⁶ Hillman's view is that mythology cannot be reduced to psychology but that mythology is psychology itself. Mythology is seen by Hillman as having great therapeutic value through its ability to organise fantasy through the psychological patterning within; these are 'archetypal modes of experiencing'.³⁷ In its embrace of mythology and pursuit of mythical consciousness, archetypal or polytheistic psychology embraces a variety of ways of existing and soul-making, 'freeing individuation from stereo-types of an ego on the road to a Self'.³⁸ In its proclaimed philosophy therefore, archetypal psychology values polytheism and downplays ideas of individuation as a journey of progress towards the Self. Instead, the journey is concerned with deepening multiple aspects of the soul.

James Hillman and astrology

Astrological and mythological references are prevalent in much of Hillman's work. He rarely however clearly addressed the subject of astrology. An exception to this is found in his 1997 lecture, 'Heaven Retains Within Its Sphere Half of All Bodies and Maladies'.³⁹ In this lecture, Hillman affirmed his fifty-year interest in astrology, and outlined his view of it as an innately archetypal art-form, a way of reflecting psychologically:

Quite simply for me, astrology returns events to the Gods. It depends upon images taken from the heavens. It invokes a polytheistic, mythic, poetic, metaphoric sense of what is fatefully real... it forces us to imagine and to think in complex

³⁵ James Hillman, *Healing Fiction* (Putnam, CT: Spring, 2009), p.23.

³⁶ Henri Corbin, 'Mundus Imaginalis: the Imaginary and the Imaginal', *Spring*, 1972, pp. 1-19

³⁷ James Hillman, *Loose Ends* (New York: Spring, 1975), p.3.

³⁸ Hillman, *Loose Ends*, p.6.

³⁹ James Hillman, 'Heaven Retains Within Its Sphere Half of All Bodies and Maladies', at www.springpub.com/astro [accessed 1.1.2001].

psychological terms. It is polytheistic and thus runs counter to the dominant mind of Western history.⁴⁰

What is important for Hillman about astrology is its ability to inspire complex psychological reflection through images taken from the heavens, such as those represented in the zodiac constellations and by the mythology surrounding the planets. No particular planet is prioritised in Hillman's astrology. The concept underlying his psychology and astrology is that of soul-deepening; the astrological Sun is no more important to this process than any other planet. Hillman does not follow Jung's emphasis on individuation, in fact, he describes this as a 'developmental fantasy' and laments the overemphasis on Hero mythology within Jungian psychology which he sees as leading to inflated egos.⁴¹ Neither is Hillman interested in astrology as an empirical science. He argues that the link with chronological time found in much astrological interpretation is part of 'theurgic mumbo-jumbo'.⁴² The ritual of casting a chart for a particular moment of birth is exactly that, a ritual, rather than a necessity driven by empirical astrological laws. In Hillman's view astrology cannot predict, but is a rich and image-laden vehicle for psychological reflection.⁴³ For Hillman it provides a means of experiencing the mythological consciousness at the heart of archetypal psychology. For these reasons it is clear why Curry identifies Hillman's astrology as containing the possibility of enchantment, for Hillman asserts its association with polytheism, and as having no power to predict. It therefore fulfils Curry's definition of enchantment as that which embraces pluralism, polytheism and which is not repeatable or predictable.

Hillman's explicit commitment to a form of astrology which does not work on necessary laws is less certain however when the content of his popular book *The Soul's Code* is examined.⁴⁴ In this work Hillman argues that we can look to the Platonic 'Myth of Er' as a theory of the soul's innate patterning.⁴⁵ This story, found in book ten of Plato's *Republic*, recounts the

⁴⁰ Hillman, 'Heaven Retains', p.1.

⁴¹ Hillman, *Loose Ends*, p.143; James Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, edited by Thomas Moore (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), p.32.

⁴² Hillman, 'Heaven Retains', p.2.

⁴³ Hillman, 'Heaven Retains', p.2.

⁴⁴ James Hillman, *The Soul's Code* (London: Bantam, 1996).

⁴⁵ Hillman, *The Soul's Code*, p.7.

soul's choice of a life prior to birth.⁴⁶ This process contributes to the soul having an innate form and destiny. In Hillman's words,

The soul of each of us is given a unique daimon before we are born, and it has selected an image or pattern that we live on earth.⁴⁷

By *daimon* Hillman clarifies that he means the soul-image which accompanies each individual to Earth and which may be regarded as the carrier of individual destiny.⁴⁸ In his 'Heaven Retains' lecture on astrology, Hillman, in discussing the importance of place of birth for both soul and astrology, refers listeners to *The Soul's Code*.⁴⁹ The implication is that the pattern of the particular birth chart says something about the innate soul-image. As such, the soul-image is fixed and readable from the astrological chart. This equation of birth-chart and soul pattern is exactly that found in core psychological astrology, for example in texts by Dane Rudhyar and Stephen Arroyo, who both overtly equate the soul's innate patterning with the patterning of the cosmos.⁵⁰ Thus, when *The Soul's Code* is combined with Hillman's wider astrological comments, his view of astrology actually seems very close to that of the core tradition of psychological astrology. Furthermore, both Nick Campion and Patrick Curry argue that Plato's philosophy, both in the Myth of Er and in the *Timaeus*, provides a rationale for the astrology still in use today.⁵¹ This includes core psychological astrology. Given that Hillman's lecture on astrology references his ideas in *The Soul's Code*, which is itself based on the Myth of Er, it is reasonable to infer that this myth is also a founding rationale for his own views on astrology. Far from being a new innovation therefore, when the underlying mythology for Hillman's psychological astrology is examined, it begins to have very similar origins to the core tradition.

Mythology within 'core' psychological astrology

⁴⁶ Plato, *Republic*, Volume 2. Translated by Paul Shorey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), X.614-621

⁴⁷ Hillman, *The Soul's Code*, p.8.

⁴⁸ Hillman, *The Soul's Code*, p.8.

⁴⁹ Hillman, 'Heaven Retains', p.2.

⁵⁰ Stephen Arroyo, *Astrology, Psychology and the Four Elements* (California: CRCS, 1975), pp.24-25; Dane Rudhyar, *The Astrology of Personality* (Santa Fe, NM: Aurora, 1991), p.xi.

⁵¹ Nicholas Campion, *A History of Western Astrology* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), pp.162-163; Curry, *Astrology, Science and Culture*, p.73.

There are two main ways mythology is used within the core tradition of psychological astrology. Liz Greene summarises these when she says:

Mythic themes may be used to deepen our understanding of astrological symbols such as Pluto, and to help us to travel imaginative roads into experiences of inner life which are inaccessible to a more rational or empiric approach.⁵²

The first of these utilises mythology as a means of expanding the interpretation of astrological placements, whilst the second involves engaging with mythology in order to go on an inner journey. These two uses will each be discussed in turn.

As an example of how mythology is used to support the interpretation of astrological symbols in the core tradition of psychological astrology, Howard Sasportas' method for understanding the astrological Mercury may be considered. In 'Tricksters, Thieves and Magicians', Sasportas discusses the Homeric hymn to Hermes which shows Hermes as restless and mischievous: being bored Hermes then turns to theft and deception.⁵³ Sasportas takes such qualities and uses them to interpret the astrological Mercury: 'wherever Mercury shows up in the chart is where we are prone to restlessness, where we need variety, change and room to move'.⁵⁴ So wherever astrological Mercury lies in an individual's chart, this is where the person exhibits restlessness and the potential for mischief and deception. Melanie Reinhart takes a similar approach in examining the myths concerning the centaur Chiron in order to interpret the astrological Chiron (a planetoid discovered in 1977).⁵⁵ In mythology, Chiron suffers an accidental wound to his thigh, which forever after causes him pain.⁵⁶

⁵² Liz Greene, *Astrology of Fate* (York Beach, ME: Weiser), p.166.

⁵³ Howard Sasportas, 'Tricksters, Thieves and Magicians', in *The Inner Planets*, Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1993), p.4; Hesiod, *The Homeric Hymns and Homeric, including 'Works and Days' and 'Theogonis'*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White, (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1917), pp, 362-405

⁵⁴ Sasportas, 'Tricksters, Thieves and Magicians', p.5.

⁵⁵ Melanie Reinhart, *Saturn, Chiron and the Centaurs* (London: CPA, 2002), p.126.

⁵⁶ Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths II* (London: The Folio Society, 1998), p.435.

Extrapolating from this, Reinhart argues that wherever astrological Chiron lies in each chart represents a wound in the psyche that will never heal, but which provides a source of wisdom and maturity that can only come through a recognition of life's unfairness.⁵⁷

For core psychological astrologers Sasportas and Reinhart, mythology is used as a way to extract astrological interpretations. The mythology is important only to the extent it provides material for the interpretation. Once the initial meaning is extracted, the mythology is no longer required. What matters, after all, is how to interpret the astrological placement. However, despite James Hillman's assertion that mythology is not reduced within archetypal psychology, Hillman himself uses this sort of astrological interpretation, inspired from mythological stories and traits of mythological beings. In discussing his own Gemini ascendant, which is ruled by the planet Mercury (Greek = Hermes), Hillman appeals to Hermes-like qualities:

Here I stand, in all my maladies and body – the vacillation of character, the distracted divided attention, the duplicity, the funny torture of seeing both sides and struggling with oppositions, nervous, charming and impatient, both, the quick tongue of deceit that formulates life like a journalist or a preacher, before it is lived, the high-strung sensibility...⁵⁸

Hillman was therefore quite comfortable with this type of astrological interpretation. In this regard, Hillman's astrology and the core tradition are not distinguishable.

The second use of mythology in core psychological astrology is to assist with imaginal journeys into a particular astrological principle. Richard Idemon exemplifies this approach:

The astrological chart is a living mythos, a living process. The task of the astrologer or the astrological counsellor is to bring the mythical content of the chart out into the open.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Reinhart, *Saturn, Chiron and the Centaurs*, p.127.

⁵⁸ Hillman, 'Heaven Retains', p.3.

⁵⁹ Richard Idemon, *Through the Looking Glass* (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1992), p.4.

The idea of the birth or astrological chart being something to engage with on the imaginal level, through exploring the symbols through the imagination, is entirely in accord with archetypal psychology's therapeutic approach, which is described as 'active imagination, dialogues, encounters with figures'.⁶⁰ In this second use of mythology, Hillman's psychological astrology and core psychological astrology do not exhibit discernible differences.

Psychological astrology and hero mythology

The concept that hero myths display a uniform plot, usually involving some form of trauma at birth, assistance from animals or strangers, trials and difficulties which expose the hero's flaws, and ultimately growth to become a national hero have been very attractive to Jungians.⁶¹ The classic Jungian treatment is Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, which outlines the stages generally found in the many different hero myths prevalent in human cultures.⁶² As suggested earlier, Hillman was reluctant to embrace hero mythology.⁶³ This observation is born out in his writings, in which he asserts his belief that, contrary to Jungian opinion, hero mythology is not the secret myth to the development of human consciousness.⁶⁴ Since his psychological astrology is closely related to archetypal psychology, it can be supposed that hero mythology is not a particularly important part of it. The situation in core psychological astrology is less clear. There is evidence of enthusiasm for hero mythology, but it is not always the case of a simple equation of such mythology with a 'monistic' perspective, i.e., an equation of the hero myth with individuation and the astrological Sun.

Hero mythology entered psychological astrology in Liz Greene's 1978 work *Relating*, in which she identified it with the Sun:

The sun may be considered a reflection of the same principle which is expressed as the Hero. The Hero's Quest is the same journey that is expressed through the symbolism of the birth

⁶⁰ Hillman and Shamdasani, *Lament of the Dead*, p.80.

⁶¹ Robert Segal, *Jung on Mythology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1998).

⁶² Robert Segal, *Theorizing about Myth*, (Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), p.120; Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (London: Fontana, 1993).

⁶³ Segal, *Jung on Mythology*, p.45; Adams, 'The archetypal school', p.117.

⁶⁴ Hillman, *A Blue Fire*, p.32.

chart... we might say also that the sun in the horoscope is a symbol of the urge within the individual to recognise that life force or centre of which his conscious ego, his personal "I", is a reflection.⁶⁵

The hero's quest as shown in mythology is therefore seen as a means of viewing the entire journey of the individual towards psychological development, which is best shown in the development of the astrological Sun. In *The Astrology of Fate*, Greene asserted that it is hero mythology which is that most relevant to human development:

Of all the multiplicity of mythic tales, stretching from sublime stories of the creation of the universe to the ridiculous and comic escapades of the trickster and the fool, one mythic theme is most relevant to human development, and that is the tale of the hero.⁶⁶

Core psychological astrology is therefore first and foremost concerned with human development and therefore mythology concerning human development, such as hero mythology, is the most relevant. However, a simple equation of hero mythology with individuation and the astrological Sun and hence monistic, disenchanted astrology is difficult to maintain for several reasons.

Firstly, not all core psychological astrology texts discussing the astrological Sun refer to hero mythology. In Greene's *Apollo's Chariot*, there is no explicit mention of hero mythology or individuation. The Sun's features are discussed widely, and the exposition of the meaning of the Sun includes plenty of mythological material, albeit not heroic. Apollo is explored as the God of Light, of healing, of divination and prophecy and of music amongst other attributes, rather than as a heroic figure.⁶⁷

Secondly, even where hero mythology is promoted, there is recognition that this is not a single mythic description applying to a linear process of human development and paralleled by movements in the astrological chart. Instead, this is one myth which may come into play at various points:

⁶⁵ Liz Greene, *Relating* (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1978), p.31.

⁶⁶ Greene, *Astrology of Fate*, p.170.

⁶⁷ Liz Greene, *Apollo's Chariot* (London: CPA, 2001), p.11.

The hero myth does not occur once in our lives, but repeats itself over and over on many levels, this difficult process of return follows every act of creation and triumphant self-actualisation.⁶⁸

Thirdly, although psychological astrologers do often embrace individuation or a similar-sounding process of psychological development, they also embrace Jung's equation of individuation with the alchemical journey, which does not simply involve the astrological Sun. Jung spent years investigating alchemy and came to the conclusion it was really concerned with psychological processes and its imagery an expression of individual psychological development.⁶⁹ The pinnacle of this development is the alchemical 'coniunctio', which is imagined as a blending and coming together of the Sun and Moon.⁷⁰ Greene and Sasportas declare their agreement with Jung that alchemy is akin to individuation:

The alchemical work and the hero's journey are two different images for the same process, which moves along in stages, some of action and movement and some of gestation and waiting.⁷¹

The heroic journey and individuation, given their equation with the alchemical work, therefore involve at least the Sun and Moon in equal measure, rather than just the Sun.

Fourthly, individuation itself is not simply described as a linear, heroic journey. Traditionally, Jungian individuation has two stages, the first stage is like a heroic quest, where the individual frees themselves from the unconscious.⁷² But the second stage is a return across the threshold to embrace the unconscious and is a preparation for death. Jung also made it very clear that individuation is no linear process but is a spiral around the centre, 'the unconscious process moves spiral-wise around a centre,

⁶⁸ Liz Greene, 'The Hero with a Thousand Faces: The Sun and the Development of Consciousness' in *The Luminaries* by Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1992), p.101.

⁶⁹ C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 2nd Edition (London: Routledge, 2010).

⁷⁰ Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, p.330.

⁷¹ Greene and Sasportas, 'The Coniunctio', in *The Luminaries*, Liz Greene and Howard Sasportas (York Beach ME: Weiser, 1992), p.192.

⁷² Carl Gustav Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, pp.275-355.

gradually getting closer'.⁷³ This spiralling process is similar to the idea of 'soul-deepening', the process underlying Hillman's psychological astrology.

Fifthly, psychological astrologers display mythological diversity, embracing not only hero mythology but many other myths, and many of these, along with all the planets, are often brought in to ideas of an individual's psychological development. This mythological diversity is further discussed below.

Psychological astrology and mythological diversity

In the *Astrology of Fate*, Greene describes myths applying to each sign of the zodiac, suggesting that the myths for each sign might relate to those who have the sign prominent in their birth-chart. This does not simply mean the Sun, but could also be another major chart factor such as the Moon or Ascendant, or a number of planets in one particular zodiac sign. As she writes:

Several different mythic characters inhabit the domain of one astrological sign, and a drama is enacted, sometimes tragic, sometimes comic, but always teleological.⁷⁴

This gives a vast range of circumstances in which a particular set of myths might apply. Equally, even should that circumstance arise, it is uncertain how an individual might react:

There are so many myths, and the individual transforms or combines or cooks these myriad different themes into an individual broth that cannot really be delineated in a few sentences by even the wisest of astrologers.⁷⁵

For example, taking the sign of Aries, some of the myths that might apply are those involving Ares-Mars, the War God, the tales of Jason and the Golden Fleece, and myths involving rams. While, for Cancer, crab mythology, stories of the Hydra and myths involving the idea of world parents could apply.⁷⁶ Yet not knowing which of these applies or how the

⁷³ Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, p.217.

⁷⁴ Greene, *Astrology of Fate*, p.169; for a discussion of the Ascendant see Melanie Reinhart, *Incarnation* (London: CPA Press, 1997), p.20-23.

⁷⁵ Greene, *Astrology of Fate*, p.174.

⁷⁶ Greene, *Astrology of Fate*, pp.176-266.

individual will react makes any sort of prediction or repetition of mythology within astrological interpretation virtually impossible.

A second example of mythological diversity may be taken from Erin Sullivan who relates Saturn to a range of myths and mythic images such as Kronos as the child-eater, myths of the Golden age, Father Time, the Grim Reaper, the Wise Old Man, the Good King and the Taskmaster.⁷⁷ She also relates Saturn to the individuation process, having an important role in individual development. In mythological terms therefore, Saturn may sometimes be the embodiment of death and hard labour, and sometimes bring the harvest or the wisdom of old age. The astrologer does not know which of these meanings may apply, nor how the mythological theme relates to the individual in question and their stage of individuation.

A third example is found in Melanie Reinhart's work on the astrological meaning of the planetoid Chiron. Chiron mythology covers anything to do with centaurs, his work as mentor of all the heroes, and the wounded healer mythology already discussed.⁷⁸ Chiron is also related to the individual journey. Thus astrological Chiron could mean a vast variety of things, bringing in complex tales of heroes, many centaur tales or themes as well as the wounded healer idea.

Each astrological planet or zodiac sign contains a wealth of possible mythological images behind it, some heroic, some not. What is consistent however, is that it is impossible to predict in advance which of the plethora of mythological meanings may apply, and highly unlikely that any one application is repeated in the future. As such, the use of mythology is far from disenchanting, as it is unpredictable. On the contrary, the plurality and uncertain nature of the interpretation instead suggests that the use of mythology is enchanting. The individuation journey also involves several planets and not just the Sun. Thus, core psychological astrology is not unduly focused on the Sun and monistic in emphasis and is not therefore well-described by Curry's conception of disenchantment. In its pluralistic emphasis on many different planets contributing to the individual journey, it partakes of some of Curry's characteristics of enchantment.

Concluding remarks

Psychological astrology, as a phenomenon of the twentieth century, provides material which contributes to a wider discussion on the potential re-enchantment in the West. This paper has examined the claim of Patrick

⁷⁷ Erin Sullivan, *Saturn in Transit* (York Beach, ME: Weiser, 2000), pp.1-5.

⁷⁸ Melanie Reinhart, *Chiron and the Healing Journey* (London: Arkana, 1998), pp.19-32.

Curry that there are two forms of psychological astrology, one enchanting and one disenchanting, with James Hillman's astrology offering the possibility of a 're-enchantment' of astrology. For Curry, disenchantment is monotheistic, universally true, repeatable and predictable. Enchantment is the opposite of this, being polytheistic, relatively true, unrepeatable and unpredictable. I have examined the claim of difference by considering the use and function of mythology in the two alleged versions of astrology. Hillman's psychological astrology, being heavily intertwined with his archetypal psychology, in theory exists for the promotion of mythological consciousness and soul deepening. In contrast, on the surface, core psychological astrology places greater weight on traditional interpretations of Jung, focusing on psychological development and growth, with mythology a tool in service to the exploration of the unconscious and the individuation process.

However, both forms of psychological astrology have the same foundational mythology, in Plato's Myth of Er. Both also exhibit very similar uses of mythology in practice – firstly using mythology to amplify meanings and inspire astrological interpretation and secondly using imaginal journeys into mythology to deepen understanding of astrological symbols. Hero mythology is a possible point of diversion. But Hillman's rejection of hero myths as monistic and all about the conquering ego is simplistic and fails to recognise the thousand faces of the hero. Psychological astrology's embrace of hero mythology is also ambivalent and not always equated with individuation or the Sun. Whilst hero mythology is a popular theme, the mythological diversity within core psychological astrology is plentiful. And even hero mythology is not applied to just the Sun, but at least the Sun and Moon or sometimes even Saturn and Chiron if individuation and the individual journey are seen as synonyms for the heroic quest. Furthermore, the soul-deepening underlying Hillman's archetypal psychology and conception of astrology is very similar to the spiralling process of individuation at the heart of Jung's thinking and the core tradition of psychological astrology.

All in all, there is very little to separate the two forms of psychological astrology when the use and function of mythology is considered. Far from Hillman's psychological astrology offering a 're-enchantment' it is more correctly seen as a continuation of the core tradition of psychological astrology, albeit with some subtle differences in expression, for example in the language used (soul rather than Self, soul deepening rather than individuation). Instead, different versions of psychological astrology may be considered to be enchanting.