Toward an Archetypal Imagination

I

EARLY IN *Psychological Types* Jung is driven to posit fantasy, and more particularly "creative fantasy," as a way of resolving the philosophical antinomies present in the work of Abelard and Schiller. Rejecting Abelard's conceptualism and Schiller's rational will as the proper "mediating standpoint," Jung sees in fantasy a way to conjoin the antinomical notions in question—realism and nominalism in Abelard's case, sensation and thought in Schiller's. It is in this austerely philosophical context that Jung introduces fantasy as a *tertium quid* that is capable of mediating between contradictory concepts:

> This autonomous activity of the psyche, which can be explained neither as a reflex action to sensory stimuli nor as the executive organ of eternal ideas, is, like every vital process, a continually creative act.[1]

In this inaugural statement, Jung stresses two characteristics of fantasy: its autonomy and its creativity. Its autonomy stems from its being "the mother of all possibilities," and its creativity is linked with its role in the formation of symbols.[2] But fantasy is held to be much more even than this. Its activity, not being limited to creativity as such, pervades all psychic acts and is not merely one psychological operation among others. As "the direct expression of psychic life," fantasy draws together and mediates between every aspect of psyche.[3] It is the universal solvent of mind.

As discussed in *Psychological Types,* fantasy may take at least three different forms: voluntary, passive, and active. Fantasy that is produced voluntarily as a mere concoction of conscious elements is dismissed as "an artificial experiment of purely theoretical interest" (CW 6, ¶711). Jung is primarily concerned with the other two types of fantasy, in both of which there is "an irruption of unconscious contents into consciousness" (ibid.).

The way this irruption is treated by the human subject determines whether the fantasy will be passive or active. If we are supine before the inrushing material, then the fantasy is a passive one, and we are in the position of the dreamer or the psychotic. But there is a different way of confronting the upsurge of unconscious contents in fantasy. Instead of allowing ourselves to be overcome, we can attempt to alter the course of the ongoing experience by becoming the agents of fantasy rather than its victims. The use of such active fantasy as a means of containing and guiding material emanating from the unconscious forms a prototype for what came to be called "active imagination."[4]

For it became increasingly clear to Jung that he could no longer confine his attention to fantasy alone. Under the impact of the alchemists' distinction between *phantasia* and *imaginatio,* he began to restrict the term "fantasy" (*Phantasie*) to what is merely "a subjective figment of the mind" (*CW* 13, ¶207n17). Imagination (*Einbildungskraft, Imagination*), in contrast, is said to be "an image-making, form-giving, creative activity" (ibid., ¶207n18). A genuinely active imagination epitomizes this creative activity and thus usurps the role that had formerly been given to fantasy alone:

> . . . fantasy is mere nonsense, a phantasm, a fleeting impression; but imagination is active, purposeful creation. . . . A fantasy is more or less your own invention, and remains on the surface of personal things and conscious expectations. But active imagination, as the term denotes, means that the images have a life of their own and that the symbolic events develop according to their own logic.[5]

As a way of "coming to terms with the unconscious," of "having it out with the unconscious," active imagination involves a two-part process which Jung describes as "synthetic":[6] (i) a general movement from the unconscious to consciousness—a progressive move which, in Freud's terminology, would be from primary to secondary processes. Synthesis here implies a change in psychic level or, more exactly, a change in the kind of awareness with which psychic contents are apprehended. In Jung's words, it is a matter of "releasing unconscious [contents] and letting them come into the conscious mind" (*CW* 7, ¶342). (ii) Subsequent elaboration and unfolding—in this case, the synthesis proceeds primarily at the conscious level as the contents delivered in the first synthesis are expanded and unfolded to reveal aspects which had not been apparent initially. These aspects are now focused upon and developed as the imaginative act proceeds. To be sure, the unconscious is still present as a motivating factor and as a source of new images. But it is kept in the background as one focuses on what is brought within the range of consciousness. Jung's instructions are to "give [the emerging content] your special attention, concentrate on it, and observe its alterations objectively. . . . Follow the subsequent transformations . . . attentively and carefully" (*CW* 14, ¶749).[7]

The activity proper of active imagination occurs during the elaborational phase: here "the passive process becomes an action" (*CW* 14, ¶706). Instead of merely contemplating the display of flowing images, the subject enters into dramatization or, more precisely, *self*-dramatization. The imaginer, from having been a mere spectator of his or her own unconsciously projected images taken as a form of "interior entertainment," becomes the dramaturge of his or her own psychic creations. In describing this culminating stage of active imagining, Jung revealingly adopts theatrical terminology:

> The piece that is being played does not want merely to be watched impartially, it wants to compel [the imaginer's] *participation*. If [the imaginer] understands that his own drama is being performed on this inner stage, he cannot remain indifferent to the plot and its denouement. (Ibid.; my italics)

By "participation" Jung does not mean acting out or concretizing the imagined drama: "we must not concretize our fantasies" (*CW* 7, ¶352). Nor does he call for psychodrama or guided daydreams under the tutelage of a mentor or a group. His recommendation is more subtle than this. As his choice of descriptive terms hints, the sense of participation involved in active imagination is akin to that of the playgoer in watching a moving stage drama. There is an imaginative merging of the spectator's self with one or more of the figures on the stage. At the same time, and as a precondition, there is what Coleridge called a "willing suspension of disbelief," that is, a bracketing of belief in the empirical reality of what is taking place: in short, the drama is a "drama of the psyche."[8]

Even though Jung is suspicious of what he denigrates as the "merely aesthetic" dimensions of active imagination, repeatedly warning that an overriding aesthetic concern undermines the experience itself, his description of the quasi-histrionic aspect of active imagining exhibits a shrewd insight into the cathartic and transformative effects of theatrical performances. Still more significantly, he draws on the same analogy with regard to the reality-sense which is involved in active imagination:

> If you recognize 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, and it is *as real as you—as a psychic entity—are real.* (*CW* 14, ¶753; my italics)

As distinguished from voluntary fantasy or non-hallucinatory passive fantasy, the sense of reality is no longer that of mere possibility, of what might be. Yet, as distinguished from passive fantasy that is hallucinatory or from sensory perception, the reality-character is not of an overflowing

plenitude or external presence. Rather, in active imagination we have to do with a distinctively psychical reality. But what kind of reality is this?

"The real," says Jung, "is what works" (CW 7, ¶353), and this efficacy of the real obtains no less in the psychological than in the perceptual or practical realm. Psychologically speaking, to "work" means to have an effect on one's psyche—to change it in some essential way. Something that is posited as merely possible will have no such transforming effect; it will not "work" psychologically and hence lacks genuine psychical reality. In Jung's view, it requires active imagination to convert the purely possible—the merely fantasied, the aesthetically contemplated—into the psychically real: active imagining "invests the bare fantasy with an element of reality, which lends it greater weight and greater driving power" (CW 16, ¶106). Accordingly, the specific function of dramatization in active imagining is to give to apprehended content the effective force which it lacks as the object of voluntary or passive fantasy. As dramatized, this content comes alive and comes to influence, by a kind of counterforce, the imaginer himself or herself: "if this crucial operation is not carried out, all the changes are left to the flow of images, and you yourself remain unchanged" (CW 14, ¶753).

Yet the ultimate source of psychical reality is found not in anything the imaginer himself or herself can do but in the primordial images or archetypes which inform and preform his or her imaginative activity. Archetypes, proclaims Jung, are "psychical realities, real because they work" (CW 7, ¶151). And they work, or have effect, precisely by structuring and subtending the specific imagistic contents which the active imaginer puts into dramatic form. For we do not experience archetypes themselves—that is, archetypes as *Dingen an sich*—but only their expressions in concrete images. In other words, active imagination is "a kind of spontaneous amplification of archetypes"[9]—a means for unleashing their prolific potentialities. To imagine actively is to make archetypal patterns psychically real: actual and effectual in the psychic life of the imaginer.

II

The above account of Jung's evolving theories of fantasy and imagination, far from pretending to be definitive, is meant only to serve as the prelude to a problem which confronts any form of archetypal psychology. Let us grant for the moment that imagination in its active form is capable of initiating experiences of archetypal significance,[10] leaving aside the question (to be treated in section III below) as to whether such imagination is to be regarded as the ultimate form of imagining. The more pressing problem takes the following form. What is to introduce and maintain *order* within the experiences induced by active imagining? What is the organizing principle for such experiences? Jung's own response is well-known:

"There are certain collective unconscious conditions which act as regulators and stimulators of creative [i.e., imaginative] activity and which call forth corresponding formations by availing themselves of the existing conscious material" (CW 8, ¶403). These conditions are, of course, the archetypes themselves, which act as regulative conditions for a specific imagined content by providing this content with a typological framework. Jung's own writings are a testament to this regulative function of archetypes, illustrating how dreams and fantasies lose their initially diffuse character when subsumed under various archetypal dominants. Yet, convincing as this demonstration is, what regulates the regulators? How do archetypes, which impart patterns to particular imagined contents, themselves form an ordered pattern? If there is a danger of endless and shapeless promiscuity at the level of images—a level which always tends to revert to the chaos of passive fantasy—is there not a comparable danger at the archetypal level itself?

One might be tempted at this point to respond by simply asking, so what? Why *not* infinite proliferation at every level? But if such proliferation were in fact the case, then we could neither refer to nor experience anything at all. A minimum of order is essential for any experience to be intelligible—that is, for it to cohere as *an* experience—no matter how seemingly formless it may appear at first. This principle of minimal ordering applies no less to the archetypal level than it does to everyday empirical experience: a complete absence of order at any level would eliminate the very possibility of experience at that level.

If the necessity of an at least minimal ordering of all experience is admitted, then we are in a position to discuss the specific problem of patterning among archetypes. How are archetypes ordered among themselves? This question, which arises from reflection on Jung's account of active imagination, concerns what we may call *archetypal topography*. By "topography" is meant a mapping of *topoi*, of places or sites. In archetypal topography, it is a matter of determining where archetypes are to be located in relation to each other and thus of what groupings they form. The importance of this task is affirmed by James Hillman in a statement which stands as a prolegomenon to the whole problematic with which we are here concerned:

> The discipline of imagination asks "where" [not "how" or "why"]; and by asking "where" and fantasying in terms of place, the psyche enlarges its interiority, the space by which it carries meaning.[11]

In pursuit of an adequate conception of archetypal topography, I shall divide this part of the essay into two subsections. In the first, I shall take up the position of those persons for whom the ultimate topography is to be conceived in terms of the specific structure of fourness. The second attends to alternative schemes which involve the positing of more complex configurations with more than four members. In both instances, however,

we shall be dealing with ways of mapping the placescape of an imagination which is active and alive with archetypes. Thus we are seeking to discover how the general domain of archetypal space has been delineated and thereby to furnish a preliminary answer to the question of how archetypes are arranged among themselves.[12]

(i) *Fourness.* A four-figured pattern represents what is no doubt the most persistent and stable of archetypal arrangements, as the squat and stolid immobility of a regular four-sided polygon graphically suggests. The co-presence of four factors—especially when these factors are equivalent or at least countervailing—brings with it actual or potential characteristics of balance, solidity, and regularity as well as connotations of lastingness and totality. This is the case whether we are speaking of the four seasons, the four directions, or the four quarters of the heavens—or even of what Schopenhauer called "the four-fold root of the principle of sufficient reason." Hence it is not surprising that a number of those who have investigated archetypal groupings come up with a four-part configuration as their preferred pattern. We shall consider three cases in point: Jung himself, Bachelard, and Heidegger.

(a) *Jung.* Jung's special concern with fourness is too familiar to demand detailed discussion.[13] From his early isolation of four psychological functions to his later studies in mandala symbolism, *marriage quaternio* figures, and the psychology of transference, he found his conviction as to the archetypal ultimacy of a "quaternary system of orientation" (*CW* 13, ¶207) continually reinforced. Yet the most striking confirmation of the apparent universality of the four-part schema came through Jung's inquiries into alchemy. In medieval and Renaissance alchemy, he wrote, are "collected, as in a reservoir, the most enduring and most important mythologems of the ancient world" (*CW* 13, ¶353). These mythologems or archetypes cluster into groups of four at every important juncture in the alchemical imagination, whether it is a question of basic elements, of sensible qualities such as colors, or of the parts, limbs, and emanations of the mysterious Anthropos (*CW* 12, ¶¶333–35; *CW* 13, ¶215). In Jung's view, everything of significance that was attributed by alchemists to the cosmos is equally valid for the psyche, which unwittingly projects its own nature on external nature: "figures and laws were dimly perceived and attributed to matter although they really belonged to the psyche" (*CW* 12, ¶332). Therefore, if matter is apprehended as quaternary in character, this must mean that the psyche is similarly structured into four orientating faculties (each of which corresponds to a specific function type): *phantasia, imaginatio, speculatio,* and *agnata fides* (cf. *CW* 13, ¶¶206–12). Further, since for Jung the psyche comes to its highest realization in imaginative activity, imagination itself must be tetradic in nature. This follows from Jung's declaration that "the alchemical operation [which typically involves four stages] seems to us the equivalent of the psychological process of active imagination" (*CW* 14, ¶749; cf. ibid., ¶446). Yet it is a curious fact that Jung did not

follow his own lead in this regard. Notably lacking in his writings is an explicit analysis of active imagination in terms of fourfoldness which his research into alchemy and other areas had shown to be fundamental. As we have seen, active imagination is instead described as a continuously unfolding procedure, with no hint of division into fourfold aspects, phases, or types.[14]

(b) *Bachelard.* It took the genius of Gaston Bachelard to suggest how this gap in Jung's theorizing might be filled. Bachelard, who was also a student of alchemy, noticed the striking analogy between the four ancient elements and the four medieval humors. Rejecting the theory of humors as an adequate basis for understanding poetic creativity, he opted for the notion of a material imagination which has precisely four types, each corresponding to one of the original four elements. Bachelard proceeded to spell out in evocative detail the character and primary modalities of each type of material imagining as it expresses itself in poetry. The result, which he considered to be at once psychoanalytical and phenomenological, provides us with a panoply of perspectives on the poetic imagination in action. He advances the thesis that the reader's material imagination—which is to be distinguished from the formal imagination that operates in understanding mathematics and natural science—contains *in nuce* four types of elemental imagining, but that in fact it will resonate most fully when confronted with literary images featuring just one or two preferred elements. Correspondingly, a poet's imagination will tend to express itself in terms of certain elements and not others: Poe's imagining is basically aqueous, E. T. A. Hoffmann's pyric, Shelley's aerial, and Rilke's telluric.

Suggestive and nuanced as Bachelard's analyses are, they are founded almost entirely on the experiences of reading and (to a lesser extent) of writing poetry. It is significant that when, following the publication of a series of books on material imagination,[15] Bachelard widened his horizons to a cosmic scale, he tended to replace imagination by revery as the central psychic experience, without showing the exact relationship between the two. Is revery a mode of imagining, or is it the other way around? On the basis of Bachelard's eloquent but elusive "poetics of revery," we cannot say which is the right relation. All that can be said for certain is that the earlier stress on material imagination as a fourfold psychic process has given way to an emphasis on revery and the cosmic.[16]

(c) *Heidegger.* Heidegger's horizons are cosmic too, but he manages to offer a more convincing system of archetypal classification. He does this without being influenced by Jung and within the context of ontology, not psychology. His aim in many of his later essays is to provide a "topology of Being," an explication (*Er-örterung*) of Being in terms of its primary loci or places of appearance, its "clearings." Being appears in, and through, "things," even the simplest physical things such as a jug of wine or a pair of shoes. In each case, the thing in question is interpretable in terms of four primary categories, which together form a permanent tetrad (*das*

Geviert). The categories or "members" of the tetrad are gods, men, earth, and sky. In this loose unity, each individual member expresses or reflects the three others in a perpetual mirror-game of mutual compresence.

The advantage of Heidegger's schema is that, though remaining four-fold in structure, it is more comprehensive than the specific tetralogy proposed by Bachelard. Thus the four ancient elements, which formed the exclusive basis for Bachelard's analysis, are subsumed under just two of Heidegger's *topoi:* air and fire under "sky," earth and water under "earth," as we can see in the following characteristic statement:

> The earth is that which bears and serves; it flourishes and fructifies, extended in the form of rock and water, opening itself as plant and animal. . . . the sky is the arched course of the sun, the march of the moon in its various phases, the brilliant movement of the stars, the seasons of the year and the decline of day, the obscurity and clarity of night, the amenity and severity of the atmosphere, the flight of clouds, and the blue depth of the aether.[17]

What is remarkable in this gnomic utterance is that not only are the four elements accounted for, but much else besides: animals, sun, moon, aether. Such themes fascinated the alchemists as well, and we can read Heidegger's musings on *das Geviert* as a modern correlate of an alchemical compendium. For Heidegger included, in addition to sky and earth, two other essential factors: man and gods. Just as the alchemists made Mercurius and other specific deities intrinsic to the alchemical process, so Heidegger does not fail to make gods (conceived precisely as messengers and thus as Mercurial figures) and men (understood as mortals, whose being is a being-toward-death) an integral part of the round-dance (*der Reigen*) performed by the foursome as an interpenetrating whole. The movement of this round-dance is isomorphic with alchemical distillation and sublimation, and in its uroboric circularity it recalls the cyclical movements of the alchemical *iteratio* that are so essential to the completion of the process.

Conspicuously lacking in the medieval alchemists' and in Heidegger's quaternary archetypology is an explicit acknowledgment of the role of the imaginal psyche as an independent factor. It is true that in alchemical treatises *imaginatio*, an act of meditation which is located in the heart (itself conceived as the seat of the soul), is invoked and is even "a key that opens the door to the secret of the *opus*" (*CW* 12, ¶400); and it is also true that Heidegger makes imaginative meditating, in the specific form of *Gelassenheit* or "letting be," crucial to the full realization of *das Geviert*. But Heidegger and the alchemists—albeit in extremely divergent ways—both fail to consider the imaginal psyche of fundamental importance in their cosmic concerns. Whatever the reasons for this omission—in the one case, it may be due to an attempt to eliminate all traces of humanism, in the other to

an unwitting projection of the psychic factor—it remains a serious short-coming. If an archetypal topography is to be well-grounded, it must make explicit reference to a specifically psychical element and not allow this element to be a mere object of inference. Otherwise, the result is a one-sided affair, favoring cosmos over psyche. In their common stress on the cosmic, Heidegger and the alchemists—and Bachelard as well, especially in his last stage—exhibit their deafness to Jung's profound warning:

> The psychoid form underlying any archetypal image retains its character at all stages of development, though empirically it is capable of endless variations. (*CW* 13, ¶350)

It is not a matter of reducing archetypes to this psychoid form but of recognizing the strictly coeval status of psyche and cosmos. *Both* are essential: neither can be eliminated from an adequate archetypal analysis.[18] Archetypes, then, have a foundation equally in psyche—which is to say in imagination, for "image *is* psyche" (*CW* 13, ¶75)—and in the material world; and this is the case whatever their ultimate configuration may be.[19] So far, we have been treating theories in which this configuration is held to be tetradic. Are other patterns possible?

(ii) *Polyadic Patterns.* Not only are other patterns possible. They are *necessary.* Archetypes are simply too diverse and too manifold to be containable within any single kind of pattern, no matter how capacious or flexible it might be. The inadequacy of a given archetypal pattern does not stem from its lack of unifying power. We have just seen that Heidegger's tetrad of man, sky, earth, and gods is quite encompassing in character. It exhibits the truth of Jung's remark that a quaternity "always expresses a totality" (*CW* 13, ¶207). But it is neither unity nor totality that is at issue here. What is at issue is precisely the multiplicity of archetypes and, in particular, how this multiplicity resolves itself into ordered groupings in imaginal space. For this, we need a different kind of model. In Heidegger's schema, all the gods are lumped together under the one generic heading of "gods." But will the gods allow themselves to be classed together in such indiscriminate indifference? Are there not intrinsic differences between individual gods as well as between different groups of gods? And does such differentiation not tell us something essential about an archetypally alert imagination?

Even into this largely uncharted area of questioning, Jung once again leads the way. At one point in his "Septem Sermones ad Mortuos" he begins with a foreseeable adulation of the quadriform character of gods: "Four is the number of the principal gods, as four is the number of the world's measurements." But he continues in a quite unexpected manner:

> The multiplicity of the gods correspondeth to the multiplicity of man. Numberless gods await the human state. Numberless gods have been

men. Man shareth in the nature of the gods. . . . Measureless is the movement of both.[20]

Not only does this passage uphold the continuity between cosmos and psyche, but it does so precisely by recognizing the multiplicity of archetypal figures, a multiplicity which refuses to be reduced to—or even to be symbolized by—a fourfold arrangement. Thus Jung himself suggests how one might move beyond the numerolatry of which he has been accused by unsympathetic critics.[21]

Moreover, to make this move toward the multiple does not in any way diminish or undermine the role of imagination. For imagining, as inherently polymorphous in its appetites and actions, is the protean psychic faculty par excellence. As Henri Corbin writes, "to recognize the plurality that attaches to the Imagination is neither to devaluate it nor to negate it, but on the contrary to establish it."[22] The combined influence of Corbin and of Jung is evident in writings of Hillman, who is even more emphatic on this point:

> Archetypes would correspond to divine imaginal forms used as Aristotelian or Kantian conceptual categories. Rather than logical or scientific laws, mythical structures would provide the *a priori* structures within the caverns and the dens of the immeasurable imagination.[23]

The immeasurability of imagination at this level corresponds to the immeasurability of the gods, and vice-versa, for it is precisely through imagination that access to deities becomes possible.[24] Furthermore, Hillman, following Plotinus and Jung, holds that imagination is immeasurable in the specific sense that it is not numerable: it is "innumerably full of innumerable kinds of things . . . this third person, this imaginal region of the psyche does not submit to numbering."[25] This important statement calls for two comments. First, to say outright that archetypes or gods *cannot* be numbered is to prejudge the issue. There is no a priori reason why they cannot be given numerical attributes or, for that matter, still other quantitative characteristics. What should be stressed, however, is that any such numbering, though possible, will always be partial and provisional, for no single numerical schema can claim to be definitive. In other words, gods or archetypes may be numerable in particular groupings—e.g., in given mythical situations—while in the end being both numberless (i.e., inexhaustible by any finite set of numbers) and immeasurable (in the sense of not being finally determinable by means of quantitative determination).

Secondly, and more generally, we may say that the sheer multiplicity of phenomena of a given kind does not preclude their being arranged (or arranging themselves) into significant clusters, whether these clusters have a specifically numerical character or not. If so, this means that archetypal topography is a viable, and not a merely chimerical or desperate, undertaking. Despite the measureless multiplicity of archetypes, they (or, rather, various groups of them) may be found to occupy locations on an imaginary grid: locations which, though not fixed in the sense of being bound to a precise locus in an objective and public space and time, are nevertheless determinate and meaningful in relation to *other* imaginal positions. The gods, though assuredly not situated in relation to the sensible perceived world (between the two there is an absolute and unmeasurable difference), are still locatable intrasystemically, that is, in relation to each other. But to assert this is only to offer support for Hillman's own claim that archetypal psychology must "assume from the beginning that there is a place for everything, that everything can belong to one God or another."[26] There *is* a place for everything—for everything of archetypal significance.

Archetypal topography may be a risky pursuit, prone to errancy (though not, strictly speaking, to error), but it is a justifiable one if there are—indeed, *must* be—"transcendental topics" (in Kant's term) for all archetypal dominants. And this enterprise is to be carried out precisely by delineating and denominating mini-systems of archetypes. Each such system will contain a finite (but not necessarily specified) number of members, each of which derives its symbolic meaning from two factors: (1) its own intrinsic, auto-iconic (i.e., self-resembling, non-repeatable) nuclear signification; (2) its relationship with the other members of the mini-system in question (which is how its locus in imaginal space is determined). This is to grant to French structuralism that diacritical differences—that is, sheerly differential relations—between terms can be crucial. But it is at the same time to retain the terms themselves as indispensable nodes or terminal points with their own unique and inalienable significations. That such a conception of archetypal topography is not of merely theoretical interest can best be shown by a brief consideration of two exemplary cases.

(a) The first is to be found in Gilbert Durand's comprehensive treatise *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*. Durand shows how groups of archetypes cluster around schemata determined ultimately by certain dominant reflexes and gestures. The resultant archetypal patterns are "well-defined and relatively stable,"[27] for every archetype can be classified in accordance with its precise position in one of two enormous collective units or "regimes," the nocturnal and the diurnal. These regimes are mutually exclusive of one another and yet jointly exhaustive of all archetypal structures. Any given structure—say, that of Promethean ascent—will have its *own* intrinsic signification ("ascent" remains a singular and directly describable *trajet*) while at the same time acquiring certain other properties from its relationship with *different* structures in the same sector of the same regime (e.g., from the association of Promethean ascent with images of height and of solar light). Thus both principles (1) and (2) as indicated above are at work in Durand's classificatory system: there is a core-meaning ("ascent") along with intrasystemic determinations by coordinate factors (height, the sun).[28] Moreover, although in Durand's overall project of

"general archetypology" there are two, and only two, great regimes, the individual structures within each regime are numberless in the sense that there is no limit to the amount of particular structures that can be incorporated into a given group or subgroup inside a given regime. Yet the internal complexity of the system of classification ensures that this system is not merely accommodating and all-inclusive but also a means of locating archetypal structures in relation to each other. In other words, Durand's general archetypology is a genuine archetypal topography, a mapping of the primary *topoi* of the imaginal realm. The system is a system not only for classifying but for *finding* archetypal structures—for discovering and recognizing such structures within that "gigantic net" which is traced by archetypal topography.[29]

(b) In Frances Yates's *The Art of Memory* we find a quite different system proposed in a brilliant discussion of Guilio Camillo's "memory theater," which Yates regards as a quintessential expression of Renaissance psychology and cosmology.[30] In this instance, individual archetypal structures are arranged in two kinds of general regime: the regime of astral bodies and that of the successive stages of creation. Each regime is in turn divided into seven distinct subgroups, which correspond to the seven divine astral bodies and to the seven stages of creation. Thus specified, the two regimes are superimposed on each other, thereby forming a single cross-classificatory system with a powerful combinatory effect. Both of the primary types of classification, that of the astral gods and that of the stages of creation, serve to constellate a vast range of mythological material, which appears in the form of diverse epithetic images occupying determinate "seats" within each row of the memory theater.

This way of organizing pagan, Christian, and Cabalist lore was intended not just to improve one's powers of memory but to *provide places* for a mass of archetypal figures that would otherwise remain homeless and unrelated to each other. By becoming related to one another within the imaginal space of Camillo's theater, these figures gained a talismanic potency which stemmed, according to the Hermetic tradition that inspired the theater's design, from the magical influences of the astral bodies. Each of these celestial beings represents an archetypal dominant and is characterized, among other things, by a specific affective quality: Jupiter by tranquility, Mars by anger, Saturn by melancholy. Such an affective quality traverses and thus helps to collect together the whole series of diverse images that is arranged under each astral body. The quality is immediately intelligible—or, more exactly, psychologically recognizable—by itself, but it is made all the more meaningful through its differences from other astral-affective qualities: Saturnian melancholy becomes all the more efficaciously emblematic—hence valuable for the magical purposes to which the memory theater was to be put—by its contrast with Jovian tranquility. This contrast is heightened by use of the same image—say, Juno and the clouds—in different astral series and at different levels of the same series. Such intra-

systemic complexity serves to specify archetypal dominants to a rare degree of precision and, above all, to provide for these dominants' appropriate places in the total scheme of things. Without the space to enter further into this fascinating blend of the classical art of memory with Hermetic and Cabalist currents in the Italian Renaissance, I want to stress only that Camillo's richly imaginative archetypal topography embodies the same two fundamental elements which would, I believe, be found to lie at the basis of any thorough charting of archetypal locations: a nuclear term (e.g., a name designating a given astral-affective quality) with its own semantic depth—a "shimmering symbol," as Jung called it (*CW* 13, ¶199)—together with a network of internal relations which gives this nuclear term a determinable locus in imaginal space.

III

Even if the case for the possibility of an archetypal topography can be made—and its actuality shown by reference to already existing models of archetypological classification—one might well wonder what all of this has to do with imagination, and especially with active imagination as described by Jung. Do the results of two such disparate inquiries as have been presented in sections I and II above have any significant relationship to each other? It is my conviction that active imagination and archetypal topography are in fact quite closely related, though not in the way that one might at first suppose. In order to show this, I shall sketch a somewhat more comprehensive picture of imagination than is found in Jung's writings on the subject. In particular, I shall distinguish among three types of imaginative experience, for each of which there is a different method of analysis. The types in question are conscious, everyday imagining; active imagination as depicted by Jung; and what we may call an archetypal or visionary imagination. The corresponding modes of analysis are phenomenology, depth psychology, and archetypal topography. In what follows, I shall say something about each type of imagining and the most appropriate approach to it.

(i) *Conscious Imagining.* This is the everyday phenomenon with which we are all familiar from its pervasive presence in the daytime world. It includes everything from flickering fancies to daydreams and reveries: all that Jung would range under voluntary and passive (but non-hallucinatory) fantasies. As distinguished from what happens in active imagination—which may nonetheless borrow its material content from diurnal fantasies—in ordinary conscious imagining we do not normally attempt to extend or deepen what flits before our bemused minds. Since fleetingness characterizes much of this garden-variety imagining, an analysis is called for which is at once cautious and objective. Phenomenology, using its primary procedure of "bracketing," provides in my view the most promis-

ing procedure for investigating this most elusive and ephemeral of psychic phenomena.[31]

The portrait which emerges from a phenomenology of imagination is that of a self-circumscribed and yet self-transparent act—one which is autonomous at its own level of experience, a level dominated by the imaginer's ego. This ego is capable of continuously controlling the course of imaginative experience. It is able to originate this experience by merely intending to do so—only rarely is such an intention thwarted—and may terminate the experience just as effortlessly. If an imagined object or event appears spontaneously, it is subject to immediate modification so as to accord with the imaginer's wishes. Moreover, there can be no mistaking of imagined content: whatever presents itself to the imagining ego *is* as it appears and cannot be other than it appears. Nothing corresponding to perceptual illusion (i.e., mistaking the identity or specific qualities of something actually given in perceptual experience) or to hallucination (i.e., mistakenly believing in the perceived presence of something that is not given in perceptual experience at all) takes place in conscious imagining. Instead, what appears appears with complete self-evidence, and this is true even if the character or structure of the imaginative appearance is radically indeterminate.

To the extent that conscious imagining is inherently controllable and its products unmistakable and self-evident, the imagining ego comes to savor an unobstructed, Apollonic freedom. Like Kierkegaard's "aesthetic man," the ego dwells in the realm of pure possibility where anything is or can become possible or, more exactly, where whatever is imaginable is possible and vice versa. In this realm, to be possible *is* to be; and since it is imagination that envisages what is possible, it becomes the arbiter of experience, determining and directing its course.

But this exhilarating freedom is as shallow as it is short-lived. As Kierkegaard saw with psychological acumen, a surfeit of imaginative possibilities may result in a peculiar form of breakdown, "the despair of infinitude."[32] Even more to the point, the freedom enjoyed by the self-controlling imaginal ego is psychologically illusory. As the very evanescence of everyday imagining attests, it is a freedom without foundation in the larger and less controllable life of psyche as a whole. The freefloating and rootless character of much conscious imagining indicates a need for reconnecting, like Antaeus, with stable sources of psychic strength. If this reconnection is not effected, the danger is that of sudden collapse—a collapse into the very opposite of what the conscious ego had come to expect. Instead of self-willed omnipotence, this ego finds itself overwhelmed by imaginal shapes and forces which it can no longer orchestrate. The ostensibly unlimited freedom of ego-dominated conscious imagining—its self-assured success—gives way to a state of unfreedom as the vengeful unconscious, heretofore neglected or suppressed, reclaims its rights. In other words, conscious control cedes to usurpation by the unconscious in a reversal that

represents an *enantiodromia* of mind. In place of the fleeting fantasies of everyday egoic imagining, there is now the *fascinosum* of forms emanating from, and variously personifying, unconscious regions of mentation.

It is at this critical juncture that, as Corbin suggests, "it may be advisable to free . . . the Imagination from the parentheses within which a purely phenomenological interpretation encloses it."[33] For if a phenomenological account of conscious imagining shows the ego at an apogee of self-created autonomy, it would be a mistake to equate such an ego with mind *in toto*: egoic imagining is not equivalent to *all* imagining. In fact, such imagining itself leads, almost inexorably, to a different kind of imagining. And, just as we are now forced to acknowledge a new type of imaginative experience, so we must seek for a new way to describe this experience.

(ii) *Active Imagination.* The new world of imagination thus opened up— a world manifested in the personified figures of the unconscious, in nightmares, in toxic states, in psychopathology—is the province of depth psychology, the examination of psyche in its profundity. Present here is a second type of imaginative experience which is subject to at least two basic kinds of analysis in depth. On the one hand, a Freudian technique such as free association (which itself involves imagining) leads back to the remembered or reconstructed past of early childhood, with the distinct implication that all significant imagining represents the hallucinatory fulfillment of certain prototypical infantile wishes. In this perspective, depth psychology becomes a movement *à rebours*, traversing the recent past toward that primordial past (itself constituted partly or wholly by fantasy) which contains the secret of all present imagining. On the other hand, Jungian analysis leads out from one's stock of personal memories and fantasies into the *memoriae* belonging to a realm that is prepersonal in character. "Active imagination," as we have seen, names both the method for realizing this ec-centric movement and the experience of what the movement reveals. In imagining in this active way, an element of control remains present— not to confirm the ego in its self-appointed sovereignty, but to ensure that the unfolding of a given imaginative sequence is followed through as fully as possible. For in active imagining we are no longer marginally engaged in an evanescing activity of sheer ego-consciousness—or, for that matter, propelled backward by the magnet of repressed wishes—but taken up in a movement that is "dramatic" in the most pregnant sense of the term. No longer do we entertain or lull ourselves with what is merely possible and purely private. Nor do we allow ourselves to be overcome by the oppressive opposite of conscious imagining, that is, by passive fantasies of hallucinatory force. Instead, we enter into the drama of the psyche itself by participating in what is psychically real, in what is capable of changing us in some basic way.

Such imagining, though neither hallucinatory nor delusional, is *active* because we are ourselves the actors in the psychical play that is produced through the forceful elaboration of fantasies that might otherwise remain

merely passive. In this process of self-dramatization, we come up against entities and events which derive, not from the fickle freedom of the conscious ego—not even from the constraint of a personal unconscious—but from the genuine autonomy of an objective, impersonal psyche. For we are experiencing neither the projections of an idle revery nor the personifications of petulant passions. Rather, in active imagining we confront the *dramatis personae* of a different proscenium of experience altogether. Or more exactly, such apparitional figures guide us, if we are willing to follow them, toward a different kind of imaginative experience through "a movement [born] out of the suspension between opposites, a living birth that leads to a new level of being, a new situation" (*CW* 8, ¶189). There is nothing self-contained about this new kind of imagining, which is disclosing and not enclosing in character.

Therefore, if active imagining begins with a procedure of concerted elaboration of fantasies, it ends with a breakthrough into the disclosure of a world which is not of our own making. And if this is the outcome, we cannot claim that active imagining is itself the ultimate kind of imagining. Crucial as it is, it remains, in Corbin's words, "an intermediary, a mediatrix."[34] In short, we must move beyond both ordinary and active imagining, and hence also beyond both phenomenology and depth psychology as methods for analyzing the imaginal component of human experience.

(iii) *Archetypal Imagination.* But where does such a move move us to? This is the appropriate question, for it is a matter of specifying the proper *place* of this last type of imaginative experience, the experience of an archetypal or visionary imagination. This place is "the place of . . . visions, the scene on which visionary events and symbolic histories *appear* in their true reality."[35] It is important to recognize that the "visions" in question need not be expressly theophanic in nature. The visionary imagination is potentially present at every level of human experience. It can be found in the imaginative transformation of even the most mundane object into a denizen of the *mundus imaginalis*, as in Kathleen Raine's description of the visionary transmutation of a simple vase of flowers before which she was seated or in her accounts of Blake's visions (for which a prototype is "to see a World in a Grain of Sand").[36]

Such en-visioning must not be confused with hallucinating, though certain hallucinatory states may prepare for or even induce imaginative visions. In full-blown hallucination, a demonstrably false claim is made concerning what is *perceived*—say, that I am now seeing a certain quasi-perceptual object, a 'knife,' when I am not in fact seeing any such object. In hallucinating, a would-be perception is substituted for an actual perception. From this point of view, having a genuine, non-hallucinatory vision is even comparable to conscious imagining: both are non-corrigible experiences which do not admit of verification *or* falsification by reference to the perceived world. But the analogy ceases here, for in visionary im-

agining I do not regard what I imagine as purely possible. Nor do I treat it as psychically real in the dramatic and dramatized form which is found in active imagination proper. Instead, I take the content of the experience to be psychically real in a sense that encompasses and yet transcends both perceptual and self-dramatized realities. Such imagining "posits real being"[37]—real *imaginal* being—but in such a way as to surpass the empirical existence characterizing the objects of natural science as well as the strictly subjective existence pertaining to those purely personal experiences that form the focus of so much psychological analysis.

The activity of archetypal imagining moves not only beyond ordinary conscious imagining by constellating contents from the personal and collective unconscious—as occurs in active imagining—but also beyond active imagination itself. As we have seen, it is the quasi-histrionic aspect of active imagining that allows the imaginer to become an active participant in his or her own imaginative projects—a participation which is noticeably absent from the spectatorial stance of revery or daydream. But self-dramatization, while a source of psychic strength and self-insight, is at the same time delimiting. It keeps the scene of imaginative action confined to the immediate vicinity of the imaginer's personal sphere of concern, with all that this implies of the particular and the peculiar, and may end up as an introverted method of ego-building. The story that is told through imaginative projections, personifications, and identifications is the story of the imaginer himself or herself—hence its potential value in therapy, but also its limitation and its danger.

Yet the stories spun out in active imagining are more than personal in signification, even if they owe their original attractive power to some profoundly personal *retentissement*. These stories are not only self-enactments: they dramatize and sensuously embody what is other than purely personal, what is extrapersonal. They are trying to tell us something not just about ourselves but about the archetypal dominants upon which they themselves are founded. The paradox is that active imagination, though permitting a first glance into this extrapersonal domain, is not adequate by itself as a means of exploring the entire domain. The core of active imagining remains, in Jung's words, "a method of introspection for observing the stream of interior images" (*CW* 9, i, ¶319). It is true that these images are latently rich in archetypal meaning, but to enter the archetypal region itself, an archetypal or visionary imagination is required which by its very nature transcends active imagining.

Because of this transcending movement—not to be confused with Jung's "transcendent function," which remains at the level of active imagination—it is tempting to speak with Corbin of visionary imagining as "magical." But if it is magical, it is not merely in Sartre's sense of escaping all causal explanation.[38] Rather, it is a magical act in the spirit of what Paracelsus called "true imagination" (*Imaginatio vera*), which transmutes gross mat-

ter into subtle, immaterial bodies; or in the sense of the hermetic psychology of imagination to be found in Pico della Mirandola, Ficino, and Bruno, for all of whom images were talismanic presences of the demonic.[39]

In any event, the aspect of visionary imagination which is of most concern to us is not its exact modus operandi—of this we know little—but its proper plane of experience. This plane is that of archetypal structures themselves, not in their separate imagistic fulgurations but in their joint con-figurations. If Jung is right in claiming that we do not know an archetype in itself, this is true only in the strict sense that we do not know *an* archetype by itself alone—that is, as a strictly singular entity. Instead, through visionary imagination we come to know *archetypes*—in the plural, always and only in the plural. For in the experience of visionary imagining we do not encounter individually isolated archetypes. Archetypal topography, the method which discloses the order inherent in the content of such imagining, reveals the presence of whole clusters of archetypes; and it is within these groupings alone that individual archetypes can be experienced and known. It is not accidental, then, that a visionary imagination is capable of disclosing a crowded canvas of angels or demons, planetary gods or supra-celestial beings. As Dürer put it, "he who wants to create dreamwork must make a mixture of all things."[40]

IV

A genuinely archetypal imagination, which is by no means easy to achieve, presents us with three paradoxes. An exploration of these will bring this chapter to its conclusion.

(i) The first paradox arises from two conflicting tendencies. (a) On the one hand, archetypal imagining represents the advent of a certain kind of consciousness, not the naive and shallow consciousness of an empirically determined and oriented awareness, but a more disciplined consciousness which may take at least two forms. First, the visionary state involves heightened awareness, a form of attention differing both from attention to the merely mundane and from the attention involved in dreaming. Second, to perform a topographical analysis of archetypes requires an act of intellection which is in itself an acute form of consciousness. If the first form of heightened consciousness—the peculiar attentiveness of the visionary state—is an activity of psyche, the second form (that required in archetypal topography as such) is an activity of intellect, hence of spirit. (b) On the other hand, although consciousness is thus enhanced in both of these respects—in soul and in spirit, its two basic modes of manifestation—*what* we come to experience in archetypal imagining is no longer of the character of, or based in, consciousness. The content that we come to experience is rooted outside of human consciousness, whether this consciousness presents itself in the form of the ego or in the more expansive

format of the self. Therefore, just at the point when personal consciousness has reached its psychical zenith, psyche itself is surpassed. The impersonal, the nonhuman, is met with.[41]

There is no name for what is now imagined visionarily other than the names given to it—names that are themselves always plural in form—in folklore, in classical Greek mythology, in the symbols of dreams. If it is true, as Hillman suggests, that it is "through the imagination that man has access to the Gods,"[42] this access is attained only through a genuinely archetypal imagination, and, further, the deities reached in this way are named conjointly. To recognize this is not to revert to nominalism, for the names in question convey presences—they *are* presences. They are numinal, not nominal, names, each of which makes a sign to us from within the confraternity formed from all affiliated names. Through the numinosity of naming, we have to do with what Corbin calls the "archetypal essences, the eternal hexeities of Names."[43]

(ii) The second paradox follows closely upon the heels of the first. The latter, as we have just seen, combines the necessity of specific acts of consciousness with entry into a domain that is extraconscious and even extrahuman. Despite the ultimacy of this domain with regard to archetypal imagination—providing as it does the proper placescape of archetypal configurations—it is nonetheless not the most ultimate region of human experience. In particular, it is not ultimate from an ontological standpoint: it is not the culminating sphere of being. The further paradox, then, is that what is archetypally adequate is ontologically inadequate. (Which is not to deny that the converse may also be true: what is ontologically adequate is archetypally inadequate.) For the realm of archetypes, the "eighth clime" of the theosophers of Islam, is not to be mistaken for what the same theosophers call "the sphere of spheres," the sphere that encloses the cosmos as a whole.[44] This "supreme sphere" is the arena of Ideas, the eternal exemplars that give to the universe its formal character, a character at once original and final. These Ideas are not so much Names as Forms in the Platonic sense. Forms are ontologically ultimate, providing not only meaning but *being* to all that is.

It is true that archetypes also furnish meaning and being; but archetypal meaning is inseparable from the images in which it is embodied (hence this meaning is always expressed metaphorically), and being at the archetypal level takes the form of psychical reality. In contrast, the meaning of Forms cannot be exhausted by metaphorical expressions; as conceptual, such meaning cannot be condensed into images but remains the object of thought, the aim of what Aristotle called "active intellect." And the scope of Forms extends to the cosmos in its entirety and not only to that sector designated "Psyche." This is why the ultimate Form, the Form of Forms, must be the One. As Plotinus saw, only the One can bring together, within the compass of a single concept, the multiplicity of the many. Moreover, the inherent manyness of both the empirical and the archetypal worlds

calls for the concept of a oneness which, while preserving this manyness, allows it to be thought under the aegis of unity. Instead of dominating from above in a topheavy manner, the Form of Forms is itself ingredient in and necessary to all multiplicities, serving as their essential conceptual correlate. In fact, multiplicities are found on all three levels: empirical, archetypal, and formal. But only at the last level does the specific multiplicity that is present—i.e., that of the Forms themselves—imply a unity that encompasses *every* kind of multiplicity. This unity remains, of course, formal and thus does not inhibit in any way the multifariousness present at any given level. Only when a unity is proposed *too soon* does it have an inhibiting effect, as occurs when a strictly Newtonian 'Nature' is posited as the unity of the empirical world or a monotheistic 'God' as the unity of the gods. Hence the most radical pluralism is not only compatible with oneness but even requires an open ontological One to ensure that unification does not occur precipitously or pointlessly. As Rafael López-Pedraza has observed, "the many *contains* the unity of the one *without losing* the possibilities of the many."[45] To put it differently: the many is related to the One in such a way as not to lose its inherent manyness.

Reflection on the above two paradoxes suggests this schematic structure:

Region of Being	Physis	Psyche	Spirit
Human Capacity	sensory perception; memory; ordinary imagining insofar as it merely replicates what is perceived	ordinary and active imagining insofar as they move us beyond the empirical realm; above all, archetypal imagining as the envisioning of clusters of archetypes	active intellect or the ability to grasp Forms as ultimate conceptual categories
Type of World	the empirical world of determinate loci in an objective space and time	the imaginal world: (a) as personified in the contents of the unconscious; (b) as dramatized in active imagination; (c) as a self-presenting domain of apparitional figures	the world of Ideas or Forms, including the Form of Forms or the One: all that is intelligible in a strictly conceptual sense

Despite its fastidious character, such a structure may help to make sense of the repeated claim of philosophers and theosophists alike that the imaginal exists midway between the sensible and the intelligible and that, as a consequence, imagination itself is irrevocably *intermediate* in status. Yet this very claim leads to still another paradox.

(iii) This paradox may be expressed in the form of a question: if im-

agination is intermediate in status, does it not become an act whose merely mediatory function is all too easily replaceable by other mediating acts? In order to answer this question, it needs to be pointed out, first of all, that the intermediacy of imagination has been an ongoing and largely unchallenged assumption within Western epistemology since the Greeks. Aristotle's cautious observations in his *De Anima*, Kant's sober speculations in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, and Collingwood's elegant account in *The Principles of Art* represent three remarkably continuous cases in point. Western philosophers would for the most part agree with the theosophers' judgment that imagination "has a mediating role *par excellence*."[46] Yet it must be acknowledged that for most Western thinkers—though Collingwood, along with his Romantic precursors, is in this regard an exception—the assigning of an intermediate position to imagining has been a way, not of magnifying, but of denigrating and even of denying its powers. When Sartre speaks of imagining as "degraded knowing" (*savoir dégradé*),[47] he is articulating an inbred bias against imagination whose most virulent expression is found in the seventeenth-century Cartesian reaction to the Renaissance exaltation of the magical powers of imagining. Most post-Cartesian philosophers—and those psychologists who simply follow suit—would concur with Pascal's classic complaint that imagination is "the mistress of falsehood and error."[48]

The condemnation of imagination as cognitively dangerous arises in the context of theories of knowledge which restrict valid cognition to the survey of sensible particulars. Yet if such a stringent conception of cognition were to be enlarged, imagination's intermediate position would no longer count against it. For imagining would then be granted its *own* cognitive value, its own specific way of knowing—a way of knowing which might culminate in what I have termed archetypal topography. Further, imagination might become an essential point of access not only to archetypes but also to Ideas. Certain, if not all, Ideas might be best approached through imaginative activity, much as Plato considered myth to be the most accessible approach to Forms and Vico thought metaphor indispensable to the grasp of concepts.

If imagination is indeed intermediate in these crucial ways, it does not deserve the wholesale censure which it has received from so many Western philosophers. Though intermed*iate*, it need not be only intermedi*ary*, a mere "mediating representation" in Kant's demeaning term.[49] If imagination mediates, it does so in a distinctive and irreplaceable manner. This is above all true of an archetypal imagination, which provides a necessary and unique *medium* within which archetypal realities come to be reflected in the form of vibrant images. Archetypal imagining as a *via media* is uneliminable insofar as it supplies structure to what is psychically real. As genuinely intermediate, it surpasses sensible particularity while foreshadowing strictly formal or ideational modes of being. It offers both a way *out* of the snares of sensationalism and a way *toward* a sphere of be-

ing that is ontologically ultimate. Paradoxically penultimate, the archetypal imagination upon which our entire analysis has been converging should not be taken as the concluding phase in the movement of mind as such. For mind knows no conclusion and is as unending as the application of an archetype or the scope of an Idea.

<p style="text-align:center">❧❦❧</p>

I shall not attempt on this occasion to resolve any of the above paradoxes. Unlike certain other paradoxes which the phenomenon of imagination presents—e.g., the conjunction of controllability and spontaneity—these paradoxes do not admit of easy explication, much less of direct dissolution. In other words, they are paradoxes which can, and perhaps *should*, be left standing just as they are. For as they are, they point to something profoundly characteristic of human imagining. This is that our very efforts to actualize, in the fullest possible way, what Jung called "the psyche's capacity for imaginative realization" (*CW* 13, ¶216) land us in a world which is neither perceptual nor conceptual in nature—nor, for that matter, merely imaginary in the derogatory sense of unreal. This intermediate world is an imaginal world, teeming with transmuted substances, subtilized sensuous forms, and legions of figures each with a proper place within the endlessly variegated topography of the *mundus imaginalis*. It is a world no longer human—or at least not exclusively or primarily human. It is *another* world, with *another* kind of reality, to which we have access through active imagination but which we explore by the exercise of an archetypal imagination. It is with reference to this world that Rimbaud said that "one must be, must make himself, a seer,"[50] for we come to know it only through the enactment of an authentically visionary imagination.

In its polymorphous and polyvalent profusion, imagination itself effects the dialectical movement that has been traced in this essay. Imagining changes character or type as it is embodied and realized in different regions of experience. We have witnessed a movement from a quotidian consciousness, in which the ego is pridefully capable of controlling its imagining and yet riding for a fall; to a state of being stunned by an avenging unconscious, though eventually coping with it by means of active imagining; and finally to an experience of an archetypally structured world, which is at once the fulfillment of a visionary imagination and an opening to a region of Forms. Though dialectical, this movement is not Hegelian in character, for the final stage is not simply the synthesis of the preceding stages. The dialectic is a sheerly qualitative dialectic of consciousness with no prearranged progress and no assured success. There is only a sense of radically shifting modes of awareness as the mind migrates from the nameless and nonfixed nature of conscious imagining, through the singularly named and potently personified contents of passive and active imagining,

to the collectively named Names—to the archetypes, to the gods—of a luminously visionary imagination. This route is neither a mystical *via negativa* nor a philosophical royal road. Nor is it the only itinerary which the course of human imagining may take. But it does serve to mark off three critical way-stations by means of which imagination—that "link of links" as Bruno called it, stressing its ineluctable intermediate character—charts the soul's odyssey through the Medi-terranean multiplicity of the psychically real.

1. C. G. Jung, *Collected Works*, vol. 6: *Psychological Types*, trans. H. G. Baynes and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 52, ¶78. Subsequent references to Jung's writings will be designated *CW*, followed by volume and paragraph numbers.

2. Cf. ibid., ¶¶78, 187.

3. Ibid., ¶722. Cf. also the statement at ¶433: "It is not a special faculty, since it can come into play in all the basic forms of psychic activity."

4. For the history of this term in Jung's writings, see R. F. C. Hull, "Bibliographical Notes on Active Imagination in the Works of C. G. Jung," *Spring* 1971: 115–20.

5. C. G. Jung, *Analytical Psychology* (New York: Vintage, 1970), p. 192.

6. Concerning the synthetic character of active imagination, Jung says: "The images and symbols of the unconscious yield their distinctive values only when subjected to a synthetic mode of treatment" (*CW* 7, ¶122).

7. There is a striking similarity between active imagination and the phenomenological technique of free variation in imagination. Jung's very terms—"alteration," "transformation"—point to a procedure in which "the material is continually varied and increased until a kind of condensation of motifs into more or less stereotyped symbols takes place" (*CW* 8, ¶173). Although free variation as described by Edmund Husserl is more systematic in character—since it involves varying each and every feature in an attempt to exhaust all possible variations—still the respective aims of the two methods are not so disparate as might be supposed. In free variation, an *eidos* or essence is sought. This *eidos* is the invariant factor in the variations which have been performed by means of imagination: it is what cannot be "imagined away," what keeps intruding itself. Similarly, Jung conceived archetypes—the ultimate, if not the immediate, objects of active imagination—as "constant, autonomous factors," as preformed patterns which keep emerging through all of the vicissitudes of active imaginings (cf. *CW* 9, ii, chap. 3). These "dominants" are given an explicitly a priori status by Jung, who mentions Kant in this connection: "the basic images and forms of imagination have in a way more resemblance to Kant's table of a priori categories . . . than to the scurrilities, circumstantialities, whims, and tricks of our personal minds" (*CW* 3, ¶527). Kant is also the philosophical patron of Husserl, and we might say that Jung and Husserl join forces precisely in their common concern for what is invariant or categorial. In the end, both provide a "transcendental" account of the conditions of possibility for certain kinds of experience. This is the case even though, as we shall see in section III below, the kinds of imaginative experience for which their respective methods are most appropriate differ decidedly in character. (There is also the difference that conditions of possibility are in Jung's view strictly unconscious; thus he speaks of "the unconscious a priori" which "precipitates itself into plastic form" (*CW* 8, ¶402). For Husserl, in contrast, the eidetic realm of the a priori is attainable by a conscious, albeit transcendental, ego. For Husserl's notions of free variation and the transcendental ego, see *Ideas*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson [London: Allen & Unwin, 1958], sec. 3–4, 23, and 49–50.)