



Homage to James Hillman

Dear friends and colleagues.

James Hillman, honorary president of Pantheatre, its main inspirational figure and a very dear friend, passed away on October 27, 2011, at his home in Connecticut, and, as I mentioned in the announcement shortly after his death, it took me some time to find the appropriate form to pay tribute and express my gratitude for what his work has meant to me, and for his personal generosity towards Pantheatre. I chose to do so through an open letter addressed to my friends and fellow artists and to all those who work and study with Pantheatre.

I found myself writing this open letter in French, somewhat to my surprise, since my exchanges with James Hillman were, of course, en English. I was addressing firstly my French friends and colleagues, especially those closest to Pantheatre with whom we were working at the time in Paris, and who were clearly struck by the importance Linda Wise and I gave to this loss. In turn, we were impressed by their warmth and interest, and by their wish to find out more about James Hillman, whose work is much less well-known and available in France than in Anglo-Saxon countries, or in Italy or even in Spain. The French post-war intelligenzia built up a tradition of suspicion against the work of C.G. Jung which hampered the reception of James Hillman's ideas and his commentaries on C.G. Jung's proposals. Attitudes have changed in the last years and the artists we work with in France are clearly very interested in the ideas behind Pantheatre's proposals, especially James Hillman's and, by implication, those of C.J. Jung.

This controversial historical background gave me the opportunity to be as clear and, in a sense, as transparent as possible on my and Pantheatre's debt to James Hillman, and through him, to Jungian thought. I only studied in depth the writings of C.J. Jung after meeting James Hillman and I did it through his reading of C.J. Jung. This also means that this English version of my Homage to James Hillman cannot be simply a translation of the French. Not only are James Hillman's writings much better known and available in English-speaking countries, but a large majority of my English-speaking friends are well-versed in his ideas; in fact many were his students, some, his closest collaborators. What you will read now is not so much an English translation as an adaptation of the original open letter in French.

James Hillman made regular appearances in the balcony of my imaginary theatre where a handful of my ideal spectators took seat to observe rehearsals and watch performances. This homage starts, as is appropriate for such a great philosopher of the imagination, with an invocation of the characters who made an appearance in recent performances and who, to some degree, owe their existence to James Hillman : the six Milanese Medeas, the beautiful Jewish lady who hid the posters of the Budapest Nazi raids under her living room carpet; the dancer who had secret talks with a shiny, hairless Russian devil; the fluorescent lady lover of Steppenwolf; the Neapolitan courtesan so in love with Vesuvius; the

alcoholic clown who started aggressing children – and their mothers; the feminist siren; the nine worthy women; Marsyas, singing all-out rock and roll; Bluebeard's Pulcinella mad wife; Marie-Antoinette, the immigrant queen and her Pierrot pianist; the Beirut widow visiting her husband's tomb in Hecate's graveyard; the little witch who gleefully sings out of tune; the American brat who followed Ronald Reagan in his Alzheimer's descent to hell¹.

The artists who performed these figures were naturally prominent among those who asked me the two questions I answer in this *Homage to James Hillman*:

Why was his work so important to me?

How to approach it - especially from Pantheatre's the point of view?

This is therefore also an act of transmission: the intended letter has become an article of some fifteen pages where I present the major landmarks of James Hillman's work, how I came upon it, the key impact points it had on my artistic and philosophical journey, and, of course, on Pantheatre's training and creation processes. This letter is also "open" in that I will continue to complete it, especially the footnote references and Internet links².

James Hillman was, as I mentioned above, particularly generous with Pantheatre; the word that comes to mind is the Greek notion of *charis* and two qualities that derive from it, which James Hillman brought remarkably together: *charisma* and *caritas* - qualities that reflected his capacity to exercise his exceptional intelligence with *grandeur d'âme*, soul magnanimity, i.e. kindness of heart. He himself defined the spirit of heartfelt *charis* in one of his keynote lectures at the Eranos conferences: *The Thought of the Heart* (1979). Contemporary theatre performances still resound with the echoes of Antonin Artaud's desperate screams and of what he termed *theatre of cruelty* and we cannot bypass the schism they create: the mix of revolutionary love for humanity and the terrible, mad, dark realisations, as well as the ritual and imagistic forms of theatre he dreamed of. James Hillman offered one of the most insightful and balanced models that confront the figures that move in the shadows of cruelty. He had an exceptionally poised attitude and sense of consideration for everything that presented itself to his gaze, a gaze of rare sagacity: a quality of attention and humanity he had no doubt honed during his years as an analyst.

During a visit in May 2011 to the Manhattan loft where he and his wife, Margot, stayed - he was already seriously ill - he asked me what aspects of his work had interested me so much. His question took me by surprise: the answer seemed so obvious to me. I realized we had known each other for over thirty years - and that during those thirty years he had written over a dozen books and addressed an impressive array of topics and audiences. For my part, I had taken his ideas on board, so to speak, as I had encountered them in the early eighties, and had used them as inspiration in all kinds of artistic enterprises. And so I answered his Manhattan question with a list of words: imagination, image-making, *anima*, psyche, the dramaturgy of dreams, his reflections on narration... My list could have been a long one. I left out, for instance, his reflections on emotion, which had been the title of the 2010 *Myth and Theatre Festival*, and the theme of his doctoral dissertation in 1960!³

¹ Video presentations of these performances are on <http://www.pantheatre.com/8-videos.html>

² Contributions are welcome, especially in order to complete the references to French translations, presented on http://www.pantheatre.com/pdf/1-James_hillman.pdf. Also, I often quote authors or artists without giving references because today we have available Internet search engines to learn about their bibliographies.

³ *Emotion: a comprehensive phenomenology of theories and their meanings for therapy*, 1960. The Myth and Theatre Festival (created in 1987) is presented on : <http://www.pantheatre.com/gb/2-MT-gb.html>

In 1979 I first wrote to James Hillman to ask for permission to quote from his book *Pan and the Nightmare* in a performance I was devising: *Calling for Pan*. Initial contacts were with him, with Rafael Lopez-Pedraza⁴ and with Professor Charles Boer. All three visited Malérargues soon after. At the time Malérargues was the home of a rather disoriented and isolated community of artists, deep in the Cevennes Southern France countryside. Years of exchanges and friendship followed. One reason for the perdurance of these exchanges was the importance James Hillman gave to imagination, to fiction and to the artistic process in psychotherapy. It was one of his main differences with the clinical tendencies in psychotherapy, even among the Jungian community. It must be pointed out that he was an exceptional writer - one of the greatest artists of thought and of its expression I have known.

In the summer of 1980 I literally locked myself up with his book: *The Dream and the Underworld*. It was during a holiday in Corsica and I had to be dragged away from it to the beach! I was astounded by the mindscape James Hillman presented on the nature and function of dreams. For an artist whose horizon had been fundamentally one of baroque aesthetics – especially in its oniric dimensions - I found a cultural world-view I immediately recognized as the one I had been searching for, and to which I clearly felt I belonged. I also discovered the cultural work I had to do in order to catch up and, as it were, actually make myself at home. All of the references and associations I had looked for during my Fine Arts and Art History studies were there, and many more, supporting a psychological and mythological vision of the imagination of astonishing cultural dimensions and wealth. For someone who had chosen theatre as his means of artistic expression, this book was a magical manual!

Following are some examples of working themes that are directly related to the intellectual horizon James Hillman presents in this book - themes that those of you who have worked with me on choreographic theatre will recognize straight away.

- The shift away from a subjective, psychologically realistic theatre, towards one in which we contemplate the dream and not (necessarily) the dreamer.
- The status of the ego – what James Hillman also calls “the imaginal ego” - in a choreographic theatre landscape, and the philosophy of priorities between subject, object, project.
- The notion of *antagonism* and the dramaturgical strategies used to ‘set-up’ the protagonist in order to actually free him/her - and the text - from authorial versions and protagonistic responsibilities.
- How to lure and subvert the dramatic ‘missionary’ role of the actor-hero-herald. How to turn his or her ‘mission’ upside down, and create a different ‘under-standing’ – what we call the “sub-mission” within a post-tragic theatre.
- Fundamentally: how to define the mythological geography of the stage itself. The term “underworld” refers to the pagan hells, the kingdom of Hades and of the dead – the ultimate metaphorical, and in a sense, ‘theatrical’ realm.
- The conception of the stage and of its choreographic networks as *context*, through which the interpretation of the texts (and of dreams?) takes place – an ‘imaginal’ procedure which has led to our current working motto: “if you find your place you will find your voice”.

James Hillman’s book gave me the foundations for a theatrical hermeneutics. But, having stated this, *The Dream and the Underworld* is only one of the four books which I consider to be the pillars of his work⁵. I could cite as many references and working links to Pantheatre from each of the three other books, not to

⁴ Rafael Lopez-Pedraza passed away in January 2011. See our homage on <http://www.pantheatre.com/pdf/1-rafael-lopez-pedraza.pdf>.

⁵ The four books I consider to be the pillars of James Hillman’s work, written in the 70s and 80s are :

Re-visioning Psychology – 1975.
The Dream and the Underworld - 1979
The Myth of Analysis – 1983
Healing Fictions - 1983

mention those he wrote before and after *The Dream and the Underworld*, or his many lectures, including the magisterial ones he delivered at the Eranos conferences in Ascona, Switzerland.

An important note here: James Hillman was the founding figure of what he titled *archetypal psychology*. He also used at times the title of *imaginal psychology*, by affinity with the thought of Henri Corbin, the French philosopher, specialist of Iranian Sufism and Shiite gnosis, whom he met at Eranos. James Hillman was director of studies at the Jung Institute in Zurich until 1975, and the fact that he named his work “archetypal psychology” emphasizes the founding importance he gave to the concept of archetype in the work of C.G. Jung. I make this aside because today the concept of archetype has become all-pervading; it has passed into everyday language and especially into pop-psychology where anything of importance tends to become “archetypal”... It is in fact a demanding cultural notion which belongs to the predominance in the first half of the 20th century of comparative thinking – especially in the area of comparative religious studies, an important historical moment which is not necessarily my intellectual landscape. Rather than speaking of archetypes I prefer to take my courage in both hands and speak directly of the gods and goddesses, that is, of the “figured-out” archetypes, either the nucleic images from which the archetypes are abstracted, or, inversely, the archetypes as the emotional *nebulae* out of which the imaged gods emerged - were “invented.” James Hillman has also spoken of “mythological psychology” and of “alchemical psychology” to mark his preference for a figurative and metaphorically differentiated approach to theology⁶, one that invites the anecdotic idiosyncrasy implied by the notion of image: something that is central to his philosophy of the imagination. He thereby distinguishes his approach from symbolic, linguistic, structural and generally more abstract forms of thinking.

Many of you know the story of the exchanges between Pantheatre and James Hillman. They are documented on the site www.pantheatre.com and we will be adding further archive material. Some of you met him in theatre laboratories, heard him lecture or harangue, sometimes fiercely, the participants. He trained us in *imaginal criticism*, in what he described as “seeing through”: sharpening the psychological and metaphorical gaze that can “see through” the opacity and inevitable opinionations of any artistic creation or of any dream for that matter, in order to ‘figure out’ the archetypal undercurrents, the driving figures (divinities) and their narrative argumentations (myths). James Hillman turned mainly to the Mediterranean deities of the Greco-roman pantheon and to the often subterranean trail of paganism in Western psyche and art, leading to its great “re-birth” during the Italian Renaissance. The city of Florence actually honoured James Hillman for his work on the Renaissance. In many ways James Hillman, American, of Jewish origin, trained in Zurich with C.G. Jung, became a Florentine aristocrat.

As the heart of this homage I wish to address what I consider to be the most influential figure in James Hillman’s mindscape, a figure he elucidates and elaborates by gathering and organizing the intuitive flashes of insight scattered throughout the work of C.G. Jung. It is the figure of *anima*. He does this principally in his book: *Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion*, 1985, where he displays all the finesse of his analytical mind, of his mytho-poetic tact - his exceptional ability to recognize and think image – and to place himself at the psychic interface where ideas, images and emotions meet – the *locus imaginalis* where figuration crystallizes.

In many ways the mythological figure of *anima* emerges after that of Psyche, who is herself a late-comer in Mediterranean mythology: Psyche makes her main appearance with Apuleius in the 2nd century AD under terrible hardship due to the relentless, and sometimes homicidal opposition of Aphrodite. The notion and the history of *anima* are later still and less easily located. James Hillman summons her to figure out, reflect and organize the phenomenology of that *locus* we call imagination - the “image factory”. I consider the “anatomical” dialogues James Hillman establishes with the notion of *anima* as exemplary and essential for those of us who work, precisely, in a *locus imaginalis* called theatre: the stage

⁶ A special mention here of the theological dialogues between James Hillman and David Miller whose book *Christs* inspired one of Pantheatre’s early performance titled *Poesis* with poems by Wallace Stevens.

as the place for metamorphosis, where ideas are transformed into images, where images give body to ideas - a meeting place between text and context, between speech and emotion, between voice, gesture and music. One of the crucial tasks that James Hillman undertakes is to differentiate the personifications of Anima, Psyche and Aphrodite, and of their corollaries, their dominant “moods” landscapes (in French: *états d’âme* - states of soul, of *anima*): beauty, eroticism, consciousness, spirituality, sentimentality, seduction, melancholy, animosities, opinions... The figure of *anima* is particularly busy in these ‘moodscapes’, along with what is considered to be her male counterpart, the notion of *animus*. I will come back to this gendered duality, and address as well the predominance of feminine figures in such a mythological census⁷.

I wish to make it clear at this junction that these are my conclusive priorities, which apply first and foremost to an artistic “methodology.” I do not claim to know if James Hillman would have agreed with my point of view and choice of priorities in his work. My committed stand is the following: the notion of *anima* refers to the mythical figure, “the personified notion” in terms of the cultural and neurobiological factor that calls up and filters emotionally the primary choices of imagination. *Anima* fashions and colours both the morphology and the thinking bias of images, i.e. the compelling trends, the “character” of the psyche, of Psyche. It is mainly under *anima* influence that the figures which inhabit our passionate substrates arise and take shape, the figures that rule for instance our thinking or our ideologies. I give this “anatomical” description of the notion and of the dynamics of *anima* by analogy to the artistic process, and particularly in the context of live-performances, the physical and emotional ambit in which images rise and organize themselves.

I hope it is becoming clear why I give such importance to James Hillman’s *anima* mode of reflecting – a mode of thinking about thinking which stays as close as possible to the emotional “live” impact of the performance-dream, following in the steps of C.J. Jung’s advice to “stick to the image” and not to move to interpretations too soon. James Hillman describes his essay on *anima* as the “anatomy of a personified notion”. Calling upon the notion of “anatomy” brings *soma* into the picture, which is especially relevant to what we call “giving body to fiction”: acting out and performance as *realization* (“do you realize what you are doing?”) - i.e. the expressive anatomy of acting.

The move to “personify” a notion alludes to a process James Hillman posits as essential to mythical image-making: the process of *personification*⁸. This process is central to choreographic theatre; I tend to speak especially of “figuring out”, which includes, of course, fictional figures like those mentioned at the beginning of this homage. *Anima* is the mediating factor/figure through whom we can “figure out” what drives our choices: the roots of our emotional urgencies, the relational qualities of our moves, their tact and (*imp*)pertinence⁹, the cultural relativity and psychological awareness of a performance. *Anima* perception is what I place at the heart of artistic practice and criticism. Psyche makes the choices under *anima* influence - I will return to this below. There is, moreover, a great cultural pleasure, a “fabulous

⁷ The anima / animus duality is a ‘classic’ Jungian theory, psychologically brilliant and founded on rich speculative traditions, but, like many Jungian concepts, it has to some extent been intellectually diluted by its very popularity. I should mention here the impressive use French writer Anna Grieve makes of it in her recent book: *Les Trois corbeaux, ou la science du mal dans les contes merveilleux* (Editions Imago, 2010). The Three Ravens, or the science of evil in fairy tales – not yet translated into English. See: <http://www.pantheatre.com/gb/2-LE11-gb.html>

⁸ James Hillman describes two basic operations of mythic imagination: personification and pathologizing - the latter being one of the principal enterprises in his “re-visioning” of psychology. The aim is not so much to cure, or to interpret, but to seize the dynamics of imagination – its imagines agentes (its active-acting images.) He does this particularly in his *Re-Visioning Psychology*.

⁹ I have always been struck by the use of “play” in theatre. In English it is linked mainly with plot construction. In French, with the fact of acting itself (“le jeu de l’acteur”). My definition of improvisation is: “imps at work”: an impulse is a shove by an imp. It casts a playful light on “imp” words like “impossible”, “impressive”, and many others – but it also beckons us into tricky militant psychology territories – well beyond impish ludicity. Currently the question I ask is: “Are you vodou or are you dada? Or are you just haha?” See www.pantheatre.com/gb/2-Sy12-gb.html

sensuality" in the use of such a model of perception-thinking, which is what James Hillman calls aesthetics.

There are two other important persons, a philosopher and an artist, whose work and proposals can be linked to an "anatomical" approach to *anima*, and whose corporal/poetical visions many of us have studied and even followed; both turn to the notion of *voice* as a root metaphor. I refer firstly to Roy Hart¹⁰, whose philosophy and practice of the voice made a literal bridge to anatomy: the practice of *singing* was for him the "anatomical" principle of, precisely, *animation*. To a great degree his very life was a working dialogue between voice and *anima*. One of his favourite quotes was: "the voice is the muscle of the soul" – of special relevance here, since "soul" and *anima* have direct semantic kinships.

The other reference is Jacques Derrida and his use of the notion of *voice*. He does not, as far as I know, refer to the figure of *anima*; he did invent the neologism *animot*, soul-word, and homonym of *animaux*, animals. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben has given an indirect definition that I appreciate particularly: "Listening to the voice in speech is what thinking is all about". A considerable number of parallels have been made in recent years between James Hillman's model of thought and Jacques Derrida's, related mainly to their methodologies, comparing especially James Hillman's *seeing through* with Jacques Derrida's *deconstruction*. James Hillman clearly resisted the comparisons; although he had a special affection for France - he studied at the Sorbonne at the time of existentialist Saint Germain des Près – but he distrusted thoroughly what he called the French Cartesian "bug". I mention Roy Hart and Jacques Derrida by poetic analogy because both, as does James Hillman, take us to a figured territory that straddles logical philosophy and poetic speculation - an area too complex to call only on an "anatomy" that is formal, rational, linguistic, structural or even psychoanalytic.

Through the mythology of *anima* James Hillman has given us the tools to reflect on two other principles, two phenomenologies crucial to the artistic ethos of my generation, and thus to what Pantheatre proposes: the notions of *femininity* and of *shamanism*. The quest for femininity was one of the great crusades of the 60s and 70s - pre-feminist. It was a revolutionary upsurge, both political and artistic, with a strong dose of anarchistic rage - but it was definitely 'testosterone' dominated. The figure of *anima* is, of course, eminently feminine. Its mythology re-emerges and takes shape in the late Middle Ages, especially with the figures of Beatrice in Dante and of Laura in Petrarch. This is the woman-figure who appears in the ivory tower of courtly love. She becomes an artistic *soror* in the Renaissance, the muse of Romanticism. Nevertheless, in this scheme, the poet remains a man: the woman-figure stays sublimated in the balcony of inspiration. James Hillman's reflections on the mythology of *anima* are contemporary with the colossal repositioning that feminism had to operate in order to confront the patriarchal patterns of our societies. I wish to underline the "mythological" take on these historical facts because they belong to a territory where the "anatomic" behaviour of *anima* can become terribly passionate, especially if faced with gendered identification : *anima* can enter violently rebellious moods when she is identified with the historical status of women, a violence stemming from her need to differentiate between myth and reality, a need to redefine the relationships between mythology, gender identity and socio-political reality. The title of a recent book by Giulia Sissa comes to mind: *L'Âme est un corps de femme* (The Soul is a Woman's Body)¹¹. *Anima* can turn into *animosity* when there is too literal a comparative gender opposition.

The necessity to confront and think the tensions between *anima* and femininity and to differentiate their mythological dynamics, I consider to be possibly the most complex and challenging factor in artistic criticism today. The subject itself of a performance does not have to do literally with *anima* and woman, or with man / woman relationships. *Anima* reveals the emotional tone and hence the qualitative values in

¹⁰ For those who are not acquainted with the work of Roy Hart, see <http://www.pantheatre.com/gb/1-roy-hart-gb.html>

¹¹ Giulia Sissa has published another remarkable book on these subjects : *Sex and Sensuality in the Ancient World*, 2008.

the choices and in the treatment of a subject, the affective tone and the passions of *logos* as it faces and comments images. *Anima* is the emotional body moving (animating) cultural biases: I place awareness of *anima* at the heart of artistic intelligence. To sense and think in terms of *anima* allows us not only to “figure out” our erotic choices - a ‘performative’ area where we expect *anima* to be influential - but also the emotional, or call them “archetypal”, configurations behind political or ideological discourses. Such critical connections between art, politics and eroticism establish a psychological and cultural interdependence of exceptional richness; these are the scores James Hillman played and commented with virtuoso touch. To tackle such scores one needs great tact, whether the artistic move is made in sensual veneration or in aggressive iconoclasm. It requires ethical consciousness and cultural know-how, so as not to fall into *anima* shortcuts, valuable as they can be, such as: “tell me who you desire and I will tell you what your thinking is worth”, or into the use of reductive oppositional thinking between male and female. One has to move way beyond “*anima* is the woman in man.” Elaborate *anima*-thinking asks for cultural relativity, intellectual complexity, critical compassion (*grandeur d’âme*.) This was the legacy James Hillman left us.

I turn now to the second “phenomenology”: the attraction the shamanic model exerts on contemporary performance art¹². In an exchange last year with James Hillman I expressed how struck I had been during a visit to Salvador de Bahia, in Brazil, to see dancers and actors who were working with us, involved in *Candomblé* rituals and practising trance figurations of their pantheon’s deities. James Hillman guessed my thoughts; he said: “It takes shamanistic moves to sidestep the control of the Western rational mind”, and he added something like: “Good luck to you, artists!” This remark and the tone in which he made it contain the kernel of why this homage is centred on his understanding of *anima*. James Hillman provides a frame for our cultural fascination towards the shamanic model which involves highly intuitive acting-out with often risky social and political implications, proposals that seem to stem from personal reactions: ethical-anatomical (the famous: “I feel it in my body”), leading often to disconcerting, provocative initiatives that seek the “medicinal” in art¹³. James Hillman said something I consider crucial in our laboratories: it is the ideas that need therapy, more than the persons.

Critics who equate shaman with charlatan can make facile use of the Jungian opposition between *anima* and *animus* and say that those who think of themselves as shamans are possessed by their *animus*: charismatic hysterias, authoritarian poses, pseudo-logical opinions, ethno-spiritual delusions, etc. These caricatures do not diminish the value - and the courage - of such moves: they can comment in depth and even counter the reasonable restrictions imposed on art; they present, in fact, a mirror which, out of necessity, can call on histrionics but which is absolutely essential to the breathing and freedom of imagination. But, if the shamanic mirror wants to be a tool for consciousness, it needs constant polishing and cultural critical work. This includes dealing with the impact of *animus* voices on *anima*’s moods, voices that can put terrible pressure and take over intellectually the rise of images. Sometimes *animus* wants to reconfigure the imagination and adjust it to its interpretative schemes, reducing its polyphony in such a way that it can be explained univoquely (one voice). Sometimes *anima* is reduced to an erotic ornament: under the pressure of obtuse dialectical arguments it can lose its means, its confidence in the imaginative (and erotic) processes. She then gives up the polysemy of images, and, faced with accusations of irrationality or emotional excesses, she can lapse into aggressive, depressive, repressive

¹² Some twenty years ago I used to militantly oppose the shamanic model in theatre; I resisted for instance the para-theatrical proposals of Jerzy Grotowski. My positions stemmed to some extent from a lecture Professor Charles Boer gave to the Pantheatre circle in the mid-eighties titled “The Actor of Three Brothers”, referring to the drawing described usually as “The Sorcerer of Trois Frères,” (sorcerer is here a euphemism for shaman), at the Trois Frères cave in Southern France. I was resisting a model placed as superior to that of the actor and of the theatrical act. I also resisted the use of “performance art”, especially in Anglo-Saxon circles, as distinct and somewhere, also, as superior to the theatrical act. Today, after the death of James Hillman, it’s time to move on to serious syntheses.

¹³ French Nobel Prize J. M. G. Le Clezio put it this way: “One day we may realize that there was no art but only medicine” - in, Hai-Skira Flammarion, 1971.

hysterical moods¹⁴. The quality of an artistic proposal can be gleaned from the interplay between the mythological forces we call female and male, figured out in their complexity by the concepts of *anima* and *animus*. This is of course, and I repeat, a mythological “explanation”, a cultural figuration, a fictional ontology, perhaps even an ontology of fiction. Through his characterizations of the notion of *anima*, James Hillman offers us a model of figurative thinking for the *mise en abyme* of theatre’s enterprise, a model that needs *charis*, insight and compassion, in its contemplation of the *soma* of soul.

Anima. An Anatomy of a Personified Notion was published in 1985, and in many ways it brought to a close what I have called James Hillman’s Florentine period. This is a simplification, of course, because he remained (also) Florentine up to the last day. When I first contacted him in the early 80’s he had left Europe. He had actually finished a cycle of teaching in Dallas, Texas, and was settling in Connecticut. James Hillman renewed with his American identity. By analogy to an artistic trajectory, I would say that he had established the foundations of his work and was moving on to *performance*, that is to say: from that time on, his books addressed specific contemporary socio-politically topics, engaging not only general world issues but often quite specifically American ones. He was clearly questioning the impact his ideas could have on the way that juggernaut called the United States throws its weight about. How could he best use his ideas and his public personality? The books he wrote after 1985, varied in styles and tackled highly contrasted themes:

- *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy - And the World's Getting Worse* (1993) written with journalist writer Michael Ventura. A provocative blog-like pamphlet, addressing among other things, the repression of politics in American psychotherapy: well-off Americans went to their therapists but did not vote, and politics was not discussed in the sessions which is the very definition of a repressed subject in analysis! The casual and very American tone was a shock to many of those who followed him for his Florentine finesse and reserve.
- *Kinds of Power* (1995) - reflections on the work ethics of multinational corporations and on the transfer of power from politics to economics. With the current “crisis” we are fully there!
- *The Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling* (1996) - which was number one in the New York Times’ essays list. This was James Hillman’s bestseller. It followed closely the big success of his friend and student Thomas Moore’ book *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life*. James Hillman told me his editor had practically demanded the use the word “soul” in the title.
- *The Force of Character. And the Lasting Life* (2000) - a very strong essay, lucid almost to the point of harshness, on old age and approaching death. I must re- read it in the light of the days spent with him before his death.
- *A Terrible Love of War* (2004). In the preface, James Hillman expresses his own perplexity at the fact that what would probably be his last book was dedicated to war.

I can not say I was directly influenced by the writings of James Hillman after 1985. I had found by then my intellectual horizon thanks to him and I had also taken his ideas into performance. I created *Calling for Pan*, the founding performance of Pantheatre, in 1981. It meant on the other hand that I read his books with even more pleasure and interest, observing how he implemented his conception of mythology and especially how he put into perspective contemporary trends of thought, be they sociological, political, aesthetic. In order to be politically effective, he wanted to reach as wide an audience as possible, and to some extent to popularize his work. He did not always succeed. His thinking was often too subtle, too erudite or too strong, as in *Kinds of Power*, where he draws parallels between the search for productivity

¹⁴ One of the artistic contexts in which the shamanic spirit manifests itself actively today is the "trans" context: transgender, transsexual. It is often through outrage that non-conformist freedom can be conquered; and it often carries a quality of affect and a social intelligence that can shift sclerosed borderlines.

in some multinational corporations with that of the Kapos of the Nazi concentration camps: how to be effective without asking questions about the nature or purpose of the enterprise.

In the late 80's we had a premonitory exchange during a theatre laboratory. I was probably a bit sharp with some musical proposals made during an improvisation, very likely asking for a more austere approach and less sentimentality. He compared me *a contrario* to Bruce Springsteen! We were maximum one hundred participants in a performance laboratory, and one could argue it was an intensely engaged elite, possibly influential in the arts. But Bruce Springsteen performed for thousands of spectators at every concert! I took note, but it was also clear to me that James Hillman was questioning his own political responsibility in relation to the body of ideas that he had assembled. By seeking public exposure – he was invited, for instance, to the very popular American television program of Oprah Winfrey – he also attracted all sorts of critical remarks and jealousies.

During the 90s, James Hillman asked me to be his assistant at some of the large gatherings organized by the Men's Movement. I accompanied him, the first time, during a lecture tour of the United States which ended with a five-day retreat in the Mendocino Red Pines forest, north of San Francisco¹⁵. He had been invited by the poet Robert Bly, figurehead and leader of the famous Men's Movement, which at the time was at its peak in the United States, and especially in California. Robert Bly was a controversial figure, passionately committed, with rather old-fashioned patriarchal values, but of great generosity (for example, he gave himself the task for each poem he wrote to translate another one by a foreign poet!) And he certainly knew how to throw his weight around with his white hair and six feet tall. James Hillman looked bantam-weight next to him. Moreover, at the Mendocino retreat, many participants had no idea of who James Hillman was: some *shrink* invited by Robert Bly. I watched him rehearse, so to speak, his Bruce Springsteen. He actually said to me: “instead of an hour with a patient, I do the equivalent but with several hundred men.” His speeches on the Greek virgin goddesses, for example, on the feminist rage associated with them at the time, were impressive ethical and, of course, mythological lessons.

Sonu Shamdasani¹⁶ reports James Hillman as saying during one of their last dialogues: “I am like a seagull; I swoop down and pick things up from everywhere.” In this tribute I am obviously not making an exhaustive inventory of the treasures amassed by this exceptionally keen and mobile seagull¹⁷, but here are a few “loose ends”. The first: his exchanges with German philosopher and psychotherapist, Wolfgang Giegerich, who studied with him and who criticized James Hillman for iconodulic excess, that is to say, for an excessive worship of images and of ‘imaginal’ affect. The title of a collection of essays by Wolfgang Giegerich is eloquent in this respect: *The Soul Always Thinks*. Within the hillmanian landscape, such criticism applies even more to the way I implement James Hillman’s ideas in Pantheatre since I find the strongest inspiration in his poietic form of thinking and in how he conveys it in his rhetoric. There is a paradox here in that James Hillman criticized me for precisely this, some twenty years ago: “Too many images, where are the ideas?” I do not know how much he made me change tack, or if he would consider

¹⁵ Here is a summary of how I saw the Men's Movement: according to Robert Bly, who became its figurehead, he initially responded to the moral and psychological distress of heterosexual married men, especially in California, in the late 80s, who were caught between the claims (and historical accusations) of the feminist and of the gay movement. Robert Bly said, bluntly, that these men had lost their fierceness - and had become floor mops. It is easy to imagine the antagonism and the caricatures this position gave rise to at the time! I observed from the wings, as it were, invited by James Hillman, and I must express my serious respect for Robert Bly, for his arguments, for his dynamism and for his empathy with the men of all backgrounds that gathered with him.

¹⁶ Sonu Shamadasani, historian of psychology, editor of de C.G. Jung’s Red Book, is one of Pantheatre’s close friends and advisors. See : <http://www.pantheatre.com/1-collaborateurs-professeurs-fr.html> and <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/histmed/people/academics/shamdasani>

¹⁷ In the context of choreographic theater, mobility is one of the main requirements: I am referring, of course, not only to physical dexterity but maybe more to presence of mind – what contemporary English means by “making a move”. That said, James Hillman began tap dancing in his 60s and impressed us all: he drifted above the ground like that other figure he often wrote about: the eternal child. See: Puer Papers, 1979, reprinted in SENEX & PUER, Uniform Edition Vol. 3, Spring Publications, 2005.

that I stuck to my convictions as to what a theatre performance entails, but, for sure, it influenced me and I had to think long and deep about it. The density of this essay (and the time it has taken me to write it!) pledge for the impact of his remarks.

I must admit that in his exchanges with Wolfgang Giegerich whom I would qualify as an extreme artist of German Hegelian philosophical reasoning, it is the invocation of myth that inspired me. The figurative synthesis between idea and image rises naturally and inevitably when a mythical figure is invoked. I fantasized for instance a performance on Truth (of all theatrical themes!) from the way Wolfgang Giegerich used the virgin goddess Artemis as a figuration of truth in the famous and terrible episode of Actaeon. Moreover: inevitably I saw such images come up in recent productions - especially in the series of solos entitled *Folies à Deux*¹⁸.

Among the treasures of "loose ends" that James Hillman collected, two of my favourites are his articles on Alchemy and those on animals. Alchemy, first, 'rediscovered' in the early twentieth century by C.G. Jung in that he saw in Alchemy a tradition of philosophical speculation on the deepest psycho-dynamics of human nature, and thus an historical antecedent of the theories of psychoanalysis and of his own metapsychology. To put it in a nutshell: alchemy understood as a tradition of speculation on the relationship between matter and imagination, and on the way humanity applies its ideals in the transformation of matter, particularly with regard to sexuality.

If I were to apply the notion of "performance" to the writings of James Hillman it would be to his alchemical essays which are, for me, and perhaps for this very reason, the pinnacle of his work¹⁹. I would call these articles "complex" - as we speak of an "industrial complex", or, according to the etymology of *cum-plexus*: an assemblage of folds and layers, of metaphoric strata, of archetypal knots, and hence: poetic complexes. This view of complexity could well serve as another definition of performance, a definition to which I adhere willingly. Sometimes James Hillman's alchemical texts are a distillation of psycho-poetic speculations, as, for example, his thoughts on silver and the white earth, or on alchemical blue. At other times, James Hillman uses an alchemical tincture in order to detect undercurrents in major civilization trends, as he did, for instance, in his lecture on the eviction of yellow from Christian alchemy, from modernity and from analytical thinking. He saw the dismissal of *citrinitas* (citric and 'critical' yellow, not to be confused with golden yellow), and therefore the eviction of *krisis*, doubt and failure, from these enterprises which then become ideologies of progress or even of redemption. James Hillman turns to the alchemical treaties anterior to the double grip of Christianity and of modern science that resulted from the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, that is to say, a poetic, qualitative, nonlinear form of thought: alchemy as the art of imagination and not as an esoteric discipline of spiritual progress, or as pre-scientific gibberish.

In terms of performance, James Hillman's alchemical artfulness can be seen in the way he can transmute ideas into images, or the reverse; in his way of displacing fixed points of views and allowing references, interpretations, projections and transferences to shift meanings and directions. His sense of alchemy brings out both the polysemy and the unique impact of a particular image; it ignites the emotional spark in the synthesis of image and thought. I would say, and this is the theatrical analogy I wish to underline: the emotionally meaningful spark that flies out when an image-idea *regarde* (looks at and concerns) the viewer.

The essays on animals, at present, and a souvenir perhaps from James Hillman's first visit to Malérargues in the South of France. We were a small group visiting a neighbouring farm, watching a pen where a very large sow was suckling a dozen piglets. James Hillman began to describe the scene: the pink piglets, the

¹⁸ See: <http://www.pantheatre.com/8-videos.html>

¹⁹ Linda Wise and I intend to devise for summer of 2012 a performance homage to James Hillman based on his alchemical writings. See <http://www.pantheatre.com/3-performances-hillman.html>

nude skins, the physical promiscuity, the prevalence of fleshiness, the mud, the greedy muzzles, the noise of the suckling, etc... I later discovered that James Hillman collected dreams in which animals appeared. There is so much to say here, starting with the arresting orthographic vicinity between *anima* and *animal* - I will return to this below - and also by the fact that the mythological anatomy of Great Pan, the patron god of Pantheatre, is half-human, half-animal. I actually chose Pan because his epiphanies happened at the border between animal instinct and imaginative impulse. When James Hillman speaks of an animal image, an animal in a dream for instance, one feels he is touching the divine - a pagan divine, of course, and its genesis from animals, from their otherness, their in tuneness, or even the perfection in their way of being in the world. Consider, for instance, their representations in ancient Egypt, perhaps the main cradle - African - of Mediterranean mythological imagination.

James Hillman often made the link between animal and image - he spoke of the image as "animal of the imagination." The correspondences here between his proposals and Pantheatre's work are very marked: this is an area where his ideas particularly inspired and emboldened my work. Among my favourite definitions of the actor is: "an animal of image," and when asked to define the purpose of the training I impart in Pantheatre, I often chose: "to cultivate the instinct of image", that is, to form the artist-actor as instinctual agent of and in image. Performers are immersed in image: their bodies and voices are an integral part of it. Theirs is an intrinsic vision, from within, and their role is to act instinctively in the service of the image so as to enhance its metaphorical richness and make it as complex as possible. To cultivate one's instinct of image is to instruct and train one's cultural reflexes, sharpen one's psychological mobility, one's capacity for association and therefore for metaphorical perception.

To finish, I would like to return to the mythology of *anima* and invoke its cosmic dimensions, those to which James Hillman alludes when he invokes the concept of *anima mundi*. *Anima mundi*, the soul of the world, is a platonic construct that James Hillman envisions mainly following to the readings of Plato made by Neo-Platonist philosophers like Proclus and Plotinus, by Italian Renaissance thinkers such as Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, and later by Romantic poets. I have always been particularly attentive to James Hillman's mentions of the notion of *anima mundi* because I felt this figure was a central referent in his philosophical vision. There was perplexity and maybe even some resistance on my part to what I at first perceived as a tendency towards platonic abstract, if not mystical referents. In my imaginary geography of the Italian Renaissance I tend to be more Venetian than Florentine - and Baroque Venetian at that. There is also today, among those concerned with ecological issues, concerns which James Hillman certainly shared, something like sentimental adulation for the way he invoked *anima mundi*.

I would say that James Hillman's references to *anima mundi* are mainly concerned with the links between the notion of world soul and beauty. It is important, here, to be clear about what is implied by these terms. James Hillman wrote extensively, for example, on Aphrodite and on beauty as seen through this goddess' mythological 'filters' - as did also one of his colleagues: Ginette Paris. They emphasize the link between *cosmic* and *cosmetic*: for Aphrodite, "cosmetic" beauty, embellishment and the artifices that enhance beauty are a contribution to the beauty of world, an embellishment of the cosmos - and therefore cosmic in that sense. These mythological invocations and what I have called "filters" can be translated literally, especially in artistic procedures, and systematized into mythological aestheticisms with stylistic choices and ethical priorities. With Aphrodite, it can be the emphasis on beauty as pleasure, for instance. Conversely, the art world can go through periods of dogmatic exclusion of such 'divine' proclivities, rejecting, for instance, Aphrodite's tendency to value ornamentation, prettiness, sensuality and pleasure. Such exclusions amount to artistic fundamentalism and in a sense to "falling" into religious stands by excluding a deity. Today I would posit that beauty, especially from an artistic perspective, is closely linked to tolerance, to diversity, to otherness - to open-mindedness - and that it springs from an informed appreciation of different worldviews, and of how each god and goddess shapes our perception and

choices – each one with his or her particular vision and way of being in the world, and therefore each one with its own performance of alterity.

Anima mundi, in this reading, is the figure that embraces and encompasses this diversity and welcomes us into the world as it is given to us to live. I see her as cosmic because of the dimensions of her mythical scope and shine, something like the omnipresent eye of Yahweh in biblical mythology, but instead of ‘keeping an eye’ on us morally, she gives us the beauty of the world to share. And it is a gift that we humans take more and more for granted in the way we intervene, transform and make use of matter. I am referring, of course, to macrocosmic, especially ecological and demographic interventions, where the impoverishment of diversity is seen by many as a vital loss of soul. In this regard, I am more pessimistic than James Hillman seemed to be. His sense of enchantment was extremely lucid and open-minded; he drew pleasure and joy from his vision of the world, and presented it with formidable conviction and generosity as when he performed what I have called his “Bruce Springsteen.” He confronted the state of the world through a committed reading of *anima mundi*, through his comments on the cultural, emotional and erotic balance of the world in the late 20th century. Of course there was political traction in his vulgarisation of the notion of *anima mundi*: he wanted his voice to be heard and to take responsibility for his gifts as a thinker and as an orator.

In this regard, I was very impressed, arrested even, by the way he faced his own death. Sometimes I found it difficult to follow him, as is often the case when friends accompany a loved one who is dying – and, certainly, it was painful to see him go. Where I embrace his thinking and possibly join him, is in the joy and pleasure at making a contribution to the world’s soul through artistic creation. This happens when artistic gestures open horizons, when they question and comment human behaviour, ideals and delusions: when artists take position and hold their place at the crossroads of aesthetical and ethical demands, and can produce images of concordance or of discord. There is a possibility then of enhancing the understanding of what *anima mundi* implies, even if the challenge seems awesome, or the prelude of a tragic loss. Artistic contributions are made primarily on a microcosmic scale, stemming from human intimacy, but they can infiltrate and influence attitudes facing macrocosmic dimensions, especially political. By dwelling in this ethical / esthetical fulcrum, by staging and acting out, performance can acquire an ‘animistic’ tone and dialogue with the world’s *anima*. Furthermore and since we are in fiction, I consider it is our duty to be radical, to go as far as possible in artistic realization and critical figuration, in the mutations we propose of our perception of death, sexuality, pleasure, power, and the major themes through which we ‘work’ on nature – on its *anima*. I see our task as one of going beyond ideals and ideologies, beyond death even, in order to interact with the *anima mundi* and maybe glean from her where she beckons us, and what she has to say about our way of considering and using matter, anatomy, biology, and all that she offers us to live and enjoy.

When facing this anima panorama, the figure whose tracks I try follow as closely as possible, in devising performances and in teaching, is Psyche. This is where James Hillman was an exceptional guide. He renewed for me the meaning of psychology. Psyche is at the forefront of our human quest: she is the adventurer, the figurehead who seeks out, invents or inverts behaviours, she, as it were, ‘goes at’ anima; she sets off the mutations in our relationships to *anima mundi*. Two main voices influence Psyche’s choices: that of *anima*, placed as central to this homage, and who is somehow correct in thinking she is ‘the daughter’, and therefore the voice of *anima mundi*. The other is the *animus*, whose voice believes it can think and reason out *anima mundi*, be her spokesperson and thereby also her voice. Psyche’s caprice which stems from her way of listening to these voices is, however, a divine principle - as are Pan’s panic moves or the hermetic insights of Hermes. To follow Psyche is a demiurgic dimension in the artistic enterprise and the reason we must exercise maximum modesty and cultural relativity to launch our enterprises with maximum risk and ambition. My definition of *anima mundi* then becomes: the theatre of Psyche, of her moves, achievements and failures – the baroque would say *theatrum mundi* – or, to bring

together as many of these strands as possible: *anima mundi* as the stage where the human project is played out, between *anima*, *animus* and animal - the scenes where Psyche makes imagination matter.

According to the friends present when James Hillman passed away, *anima* and *animal* were among his last words; they could not tell clearly which of the two he was uttering - and this, after he had explicitly articulated his gratitude and his farewell to the animal that had carried him all his life, that is, his body, who, this time, could go no further.

It is up to us now to tune into the echoes of his voice, to carry on developing the sagacity of his psychological thinking and to continue to cultivate his *anima* sensitivity, and, as image-makers, to devise performances in which his voice and his values can become manifest so that others can hear, think and vibrate to them.

Thank you - and good bye James.

Paris, December 24, 2011