

### Three

## The Lens of The Anima And What It Sees

John Ryan Haule

[www.jrhaule.net](http://www.jrhaule.net)

I have been describing a Jungian approach to Romantic Love, now, for two hours without even *mentioning* the most obvious of Jung's concepts, anima and animus. I find the general understanding of anima and animus obscures the nature of erotic love. Avoiding the words in order to remain faithful to the spirit of Jung, I've tried to keep to the facts of experience -- the *unitive* dimension of Eros (the Love Potion) and its *distancing* component (the Naked Sword). In the process, I have hinted at a reinterpretation of two fundamental Jungian ideas, persona and Self.

Now it's time to let you in on my intentions. I think that one of the real drawbacks of Jungian psychology is its almost single-minded determination to explain everything in terms of my unique and separate psyche. All the dynamics between ego, persona, shadow, anima, and Self are described *intra*-psychically -- that is as forces that are seeking balance within a single, more-or-less isolated human soul. It does a very good job of this. I have no quarrel with the doctrine as far as it goes. But it only accounts for *me*. It has nothing to say about *us*.

Here's the central contradiction. Everything Jung learned about the human psyche, and everything all of us do in our consulting rooms, requires the interaction of at least *two* psyches. Analysis is an interpersonal project. But our language for it has a solipsistic flavor. We have a rich vocabulary for describing *intra*-psychic events; but we stumble and flounder when we wish to speak of *inter*-psychic processes -- even though everything we *do* is inter-psychic. I've been bothered by this inherent contradiction between what we do and what we say for many years, and it's one of the reasons I've fastened on Romantic Love as a paradigm for rethinking the Jungian project. Like analysis itself, the experience of Romantic Love never occurs without a deep involvement between *two* psyches.

The standard doctrine of anima and animus illustrates the problem very nicely. We say that when we fall in love we project our unconscious contra-sexual component onto our partner, and this invests our beloved with numinous significance. We leave the realm of the merely personal and the boringly everyday and enter an archetypal arena in which we are god and goddess to one another. So far so good. This even seems to be an inter-psychic theory -- if we stop at this point.

But the theory goes on. It says that insofar as we have projected our own unconscious material onto our partner, we do not see her for the unique individual she is. We are blinded by our projection. True enough, there has to be some "fit" between our projection and the person of our beloved. There has to be a "hook" on which we "hang" the projection. But the projection itself, the anima or the animus, distorts our perception of the person who means more to us than all the world. It is an illusion, a falsification.

No doubt it is gratifying to be a goddess intimately involved with a god. But eventually

another more sobering truth will come out. The day will surely come when one or both of us becomes dissatisfied with this illusion. We will complain that we are misunderstood. Or our beloved will react with rage to the confinement in which our projection imprisons her. She is not the woman we want to believe she is. There's a whole lot more to her. She feels that she has become nothing but our sexual object or our gratifying fancy. If we cannot see her for who she is, she wants to be rid of us.

This sounds like a typical course of events, and Jungian psychology is prepared with an explanation. We have not been relating to our beloved at all, but only to the projection we have hung upon her. Our anima or animus has been nothing but a mask which hides our beloved from our sight. Now comes the hard part. We have to "withdraw the projection" in order to see her for who she is.

As soon as we begin speaking of "withdrawing the projection," however, we revert to our solipsistic, intra-psychic language. The person of our beloved -- who she is in herself -- is left entirely out of account. "Withdrawing the projection" takes me back to my own, private individuation project. I'm now given the task of seeing what this archetypal image of a woman or a man has to do with *my* psychology. It's time for me to withdraw from the illusion and distortion of a human relationship based upon projection and have a confrontation with my own unconscious material. It's time for "inner work." Projection is a distortion and therefore a mistake of possibly even neurotic dimensions. But it is also an opportunity. For projection is always the arena wherein we catch our unconscious dynamics in action and are provided with the challenge of coming to terms with ourselves.

There is a tremendous amount of value in this Jungian doctrine. It takes seriously the naïveté of our conscious assumptions and wisely puts us on the track of our own wholeness. It surely addresses the issues more adequately than does the persona field inhabited by most of our American psychotherapists -- who will say that we have simply fallen in love with the wrong person. We've got to get out of this relationship and find someone better suited to us. "Find another girl and marry her."

Jungian psychology is much wiser and deeper than this. But what about my beloved? What happens to her while I withdraw into the hermetic efforts of my inner confrontation? If she is no more than the occasion for my grappling with my unconscious, we are not describing *relationship* at all. We've slipped into extreme solipsism in which relationship -- the deep and extended encounter between two psyches -- is merely an "epiphenomenon" of internal psychic dynamics.

Alternately, we may imagine that our partner, too, has been shocked into an internal struggle. Perhaps each of us finds our own analyst and separately pursues a private goal of greater wholeness. Sometimes this actually happens. Both parties do a sizable piece of "inner work" and eventually return to their relationship much better equipped to avoid their old projection habits.

We like to think they'll live happily ever after -- even though no one ever does. But let's be as optimistic as possible. Let's assume they have a successful marriage, enjoy one another as life-companions, have a satisfying sex life, and -- at the end -- have themselves buried side-by-side beneath a rosebush in honor of Tristan and Isolde.

Does any of the magic of Layla and Majnun remain for them, once they have "withdrawn the projection"? Do the birds cease to sing their messages of love? Will it ever occur to them to say that they are but the veil that hides the face of Layla? Will they ever be madder than a thousand Majnuns? What happens to the archetypal and numinous, once it's no longer flying in the air between them? --when, in their sagging middle-age, they tool through the mall in their Volvo?

The persona field has an answer for this. Romantic Love is a short-lived affair, an interval of delicious madness which, unfortunate as it may seem at the time, will be out-grown as the partners learn to join forces, facing the everyday details of their hectic and ephemeral joint life with maturity and responsibility. When the thrill is gone, something more sober takes over. According to this view, the numinous and archetypal constitutes a gratifying fling whose purpose is to seduce us into playing the game of the nuclear family. Even the great twentieth-century philosopher of Erotic Love, Julius Evola, says that Eros is incompatible with marriage -- which he sees as characterized by a kind of "sentimental affection." If the tumult of Eros has to give way to placid sentiments recommended by the persona field, it's no wonder we recoil from that smug formula "withdrawing the projection." Keep your old Volvo, I'll take a Miata!

I have another objection to the standard doctrine of anima and animus. If projecting them means that we are masking one another, conjuring up a fanciful and illusory *folie à deux*, dealing in falsifications rather than the truth, what are we to make of all those marvelous synchronicities, when we read one another's minds and telephoned at just the right moment? Are these not real and significant events? Do they not demonstrate that -- however incompletely and sporadically -- we *are* in accurate communication? And right from the *moment* we fell in love? Does Majnun not *see* the face of Layla? Not just the jut of her nose and the limpidity of her eye, but does he not see *who* she is? Perhaps he hasn't the faintest idea whether she can cook, whether she lives in chaos or compulsive order, whether she's in the habit of replacing the cap on the toothpaste tube. But doesn't he know her more *essentially* than that? Does he not know what makes her tick?

When we drink the Love Potion with another, we are surely blinded to the hectic and ephemeral, the sober details of everyday life. But what impresses us most is that we see more deeply and essentially than ever before. Entering the self field is an originary experience. Communication is immediate, vivid, and deeply confirming. We feel seen and understood, and our beloved agrees. The distortion is not here. It is somewhere else. For, if we remember what it's like in the first tumultuous weeks or months of a powerful erotic relationship, we know that there are moments of truth that take our breath away. Sometimes they're flattering, and sometimes humiliating. But there's no doubt that deep realities have been uncovered. If we're honest with ourselves, however, we'll also recall embarrassing moments of shocking misunderstanding. Some, we are able to dismiss as innocent stumbles, aggravated by our nervousness and the fear that we may be in over our heads. Others are more insulting, bring us up short, make us want to flee or fight.

It won't do to characterize Romantic Love as covering our beloved with the deceptive mask of our anima or animus. Too much is going on for that. Much -- perhaps all -- that goes on in the self field will never be shown to be false. The doctrine of anima-projection declares that love is always blind. It may indeed be blind in several ways, but it's also clear-sighted.

When we learn to "breathe water," when we "become river head to foot," we come to see with the eyes of the fish -- Jung's pre-eminent image for the Self, and Rumi's model for the subtle life of the self field. When Romantic Love is nothing but projection, and projection masks and hides our beloved, we are attending only to those clumsy land-lubbing creatures who merely get their muzzles wet. We become those clever bears who bash the salmon up out of their subtle river and snarf them down to support a lumbering life-style.

What about *fana'*? What about that sublime "passing away" from our power-driven strategizing in the hectic life of the persona field? How can our narrow and one-sided ego be annihilated for the sake of *baqa'*, the discovery of our greater Being, if all is premised on illusion? How do I "pass away" *through* my beloved, when she is hidden behind a mask of my own neurotic devising? Does not the prospect of our transforming *fana'* shimmer before our eyes immediately upon swallowing the Potion? Is this not our first and lasting hint of the truth to which our erotic involvement is guiding us? No doubt we remain ignorant in these first sublime moments of the obstacles that lie before us, temptations to abort the disturbing prospect of annihilation -- of dissolving into the *we*. Drinking the Love Potion is a dangerous and tricky affair. But it opens our eyes to a visionary Truth akin to what alchemists called the *albedo* -- that shimmering glimpse of the goal of the work, seen in the light of the moon. We see truly, even though a great deal of work has still to be done.

The Jungian theory of anima projection and its withdrawal presents us with a false dichotomy. It implies that in the beginning all is blindness, and in the end all is sight. If we attend carefully to our experience, however, we see that this is not true. In the beginning our eyes are opened and we see in a powerful and new way. We may be drawn to false conclusions and unrealistic scenarios for the future. But the flashes of rightness in our initial vision are confirmed in the end. A painful refining process has to take place through the agency of the Naked Sword, if we are to become Majnun and not Heathcliff. But Heathcliff, too, was *right* when he declared that Catherine Earnshaw was his *life* and his *soul*. His mistake was to try to *posses* her -- to bash her up onto the bank where he could snarf her down. It never dawned on him that he was to "pass away" *through* her.

I have combed the *Collected Works* in search of a passage to give us some hint of what Jung meant by "withdrawing the projection" -- apart from dispelling the illusion of the anima-mask. I found only one, at the beginning of the chapter on "The Mana Personality" in *Two Essays* (CW 7, ¶ 374-377). He describes it as

. . . the conquest of the anima as an autonomous complex, and her transformation into a function of relationship between the conscious and the unconscious. With the attainment of this goal it becomes possible to disengage the ego from all its entanglements with collectivity [that is, the persona field] and the collective unconscious. Through this process the anima forfeits the daemonic power of an autonomous complex: she can no longer exercise the power of possession, since she is depotentiated. She is no longer the guardian of treasures unknown; no longer Kundry, daemonic Messenger of the Grail, half divine and half animal; no longer is the soul to be called "Mistress," but a psychological function of an intuitive nature, akin to what the primitives mean when they say, "He has gone into the forest to talk with the spirits" or "My snake spoke with me" or, in the mythological language of infancy, "A little bird told me."

Those of my readers who know Rider Haggard's description of "She-who-must-be-obeyed" will surely recall the magical power of this personality. "She" is a mana-personality, a being full of some occult and bewitching quality (*mana*), endowed with magical knowledge and power. All these attributes naturally have their source in the naïve projection of an unconscious

self-knowledge which, expressed in less poetic terms, would run somewhat as follows: "I recognize that there is some psychic factor active in me which eludes my conscious will in the most incredible manner. It can put extraordinary ideas into my head, induce in me unwanted and unwelcome moods and emotions, lead me to astonishing actions for which I can accept no responsibility, upset my relations with other people in a very irritating way, etc. I feel powerless against this fact and, what is worse, I am in love with it, so that all I can do is marvel." (Poets often call this the "artistic temperament," unpoetical folk excuse themselves in other ways.)

Now when the anima loses her mana, what becomes of it? Clearly the man who has mastered the anima acquires her mana, in accordance with the primitive belief that when a man kills the mana-person he assimilates his mana into his own body.

Well then: who is it that has integrated the anima? Obviously the conscious ego, and therefore the ego has taken over the mana. Thus the ego becomes a mana-personality. But the mana-personality is a dominant of the collective unconscious, the well-known archetype of the mighty man in the form of hero, chief, magician, medicine-man, saint, the ruler of men and spirits, the friend of God.

This is an exciting and vivid passage, but not a model of clarity. To unravel what Jung is saying, we have to recall the central argument of *Two Essays*, which Jung alludes to here in the second sentence. Individuation is a process of differentiating oneself from the *two* collectivities: that of the persona field and that of the collective unconscious. We must establish a living relationship with these two domains, but not be absorbed by either of them. He says nothing about what the *persona* field contributes to anima possession -- although the example of Heathcliff gives us a hint of this -- the aim of incorporating the woman who carries our anima projection into our persona strategies.

Most of the passage describes the archetypal power, or *mana*, of the anima and how it takes away the personal autonomy and free decision power of our ego. What he says about feeling powerless in the face of the anima's occult and bewitching *mana*, which overwhelms me with ideas and emotions that are simultaneously unwelcome and yet so compelling I can't give them up -- all this we know quite well.

But how do we get out of this predicament? What does it mean to withdraw the projection? This is where the passage becomes confusing, for Jung gives us two quite different answers and doesn't take pains to keep them separate. He gives the more satisfactory solution in the first sentence: *to withdraw the projection means to transform the anima "into a function of relationship between the conscious and the unconscious."* The anima then becomes "*a psychological function of an intuitive nature, akin to what the primitives mean when they say, 'He has gone into the forest to talk with the spirits.'*" He might well be describing Majnun.

Thus, the first and better solution to the problem of anima projection means that I detach the unconscious image which masks my beloved and bring it back inside, where it ceases to be an image for me to worship. It ceases even to be the object of my meditation. It is no longer even an image. Instead, it becomes transparent, a kind of channel for intuition that puts me into reliable touch with archetypal realities that are greater than I am and which have important things to say to me -- like the birds that sang for Majnun and Layla.

No doubt you've noticed, here, that there's no talk of the person of my beloved. She's evidently merely an occasion to provoke me into doing my "inner work." We've slipped into

solipsism again. But a truly new idea is articulated. The anima -- or animus -- becomes a "function of relationship" and a channel for intuition. Anima and animus are no longer functioning as masks, but have become something more like lenses to bring intuitive reality into focus.

For me, this is the essential meaning of anima and animus, and I will develop the metaphor of the lens at some length in a moment. But first let's deal with Jung's second solution to the problem of withdrawing the projection. In the last two paragraphs, he tells us that it is possible for my ego to become inflated with the *mana*, the archetypal energy that formerly belonged to my anima, so that I come to identify with the great man, the hero, the saint, the shaman. Obviously this is a dangerous, near-psychotic, and probably short-lived attack of grandiosity. Very likely an enantiodromia will follow, and I will become powerless and depressed. If individuation is to take place, the *mana* -- or psychic energy -- has to leave the ego and take up its rightful place in the Self. Jung begins describing this process six paragraphs after the passage I read to you, in ¶382, and finally makes it explicit in ¶399.

By this round-about argument, he brings us back to the first solution, again. The anima is a lens which brings intuitive realities into focus; and these realities belong to the Self. It is a mistake to attribute them to our beloved and no less erroneous to attribute them to our own ego. The anima is a lens to bring the Self into focus.

This is a very powerful formulation, and it comes close to describing the phenomenology of Romantic Love, as I have been articulating it. Take *fana'*, for example. When the anima ceases to be a mask which hides my beloved and becomes the lens that brings my Self into focus, my identity is radically altered. My ego gives up its implicit and unexamined claim to be the center of my existence; and I establish a living relationship with my greater Being. My old ego-centered attitude has passed away (*fana'*) and I have been immeasurably but humbly enlarged (*baqa'*).

But still the old Jungian solipsism has not been vanquished. There is no more mention of my beloved. I'm getting carried away by my own private individuation project. The woman I thought "I loved with a love that is greater than love" has fallen entirely out of consideration. A process that started out as a deep, transforming encounter with another human soul has led me back into myself. Love has become no more than an epiphenomenon of the internal dynamics of individuation.

What's the solution to this problem? Is erotic love nothing but a passing fancy? Does it have to give way to the "sentimental affection" of a bourgeois marriage? Am I forever condemned to my Volvo station wagon? And what about all the truthful and accurate impressions I derived of my beloved in the first moments after we drank the Potion? Wasn't I seeing *her* through the lens of my anima even then, and not just hiding her behind the mask of my complex?

I think the answer to these problems -- the accurate phenomenological account of what happens in Romantic Love -- is to be found in the metaphor of the lens. The lens brings my beloved into focus, and it brings my Self into focus. It does both things at once. For in the originary experience when I see my beloved's *essential* being and know what makes her tick -- in that same moment I also know myself more essentially than I have ever done before.

As long as we inhabit a Cartesian world where I exist in absolute separation from you, we have to devise artificial means for bridging the gulf that divides us so that we can communicate. It seems a contradiction to say that a single lens can bring these two disparate realities into focus at once. Jung avoids this apparent contradiction by ignoring the person of my beloved. He leaves us with the impression that love begins in interpersonal blindness and leads onward to solipsistic sight. I no longer see my beloved, I see my Self. There's no doubt that this constitutes a real accomplishment. But love, relationship, the interpersonal -- or if you prefer, the transpersonal -- is lost. We are no longer speaking of two psyches, but only of one. The Love Potion has become a mere memory of the past; and the Naked Sword is all that remains.

I'm not willing to repudiate the Love Potion and that originary experience of inter-psychic oneness. However blind my love madness has been, I cannot overlook those powerful impressions I had right from the beginning that I knew my beloved more essentially than I had ever known anyone before -- or the synchronistic experiences that confirmed that my beloved and I had established a deep and accurate connection. Even after the Naked Sword of separation has made it impossible for us to meet, these magical and occult communications may continue. We will each know when the other is depressed, elated, or obsessed with our relationship -- at least occasionally.

Not content with solipsistic *impressions*, I've pursued them. I've compared notes with former lovers and learned that my emotional life and theirs manifests a striking parallelism. A woman I was involved with thirty years ago can *still* send me a silent message to call her on the telephone. She becomes angry when I don't do so. Evidently distance is no problem, as we live on opposite coasts. Others have called me, precisely at moments when something in my present life has reminded me of powerful moments that occurred in connection with them years before -- sometimes joyous, more often painful. Women have told me that they are still in emotional connection with ex-husbands. They know when the man they haven't seen in years has fallen into one of his characteristic funks. They may even intuit quite accurately what has occasioned that funk.

All this reminds me of those well-known stories of how mothers remain in emotional contact with their children after they have left home. How do they know the moment their son has died in a war, days before the Department of the Army knocks on their door? And how is that they also sometimes know that despite the Army's best intentions, the announcement of their son's death is in error, that he continues to live?

In order to comprehend all these events that are unknown and ridiculed by the Cartesian assumptions of our Western persona field, we have to postulate that a deep unity binds us with one another -- a unity that lies outside the frame of common sense reality. How do our pets know that we are about to leave on a trip without them? Do they not follow close to our heels for a day or so before we leave? Even our cats bear a hang-dog look as they stretch out in front of the door, hoping to keep us home or to be taken along with us. Some twenty years ago, Tompkins and Bird (in *The Secret Life of Plants*) published the results of electrical conductivity experiments on house plants and discovered what appears to be something like an emotional connection between the plants and their owners -- even when the owners were away from home.

Such data as this make it inconceivable that we are not in deep emotional connection with one another, even if we generally ignore or overlook the evidence. My experience with dream-groups and with group supervision of analytic candidates has shown me again and again that the group very soon establishes a creative sort of *participation mystique*, as though a single psyche is directing us all, speaking now through one of us and now another. The uncanny accuracy by which our various impressions are organized and revealed suggests that we are being guided by some spirit of unity. It has none of the political correctness, polite evasions, and paranoid fear of rejection that characterizes the persona field; but it seems to be a force-field all the same. It's deeper, more essential, in fact "originary" in its manifestations. I call it the self field.

At bottom, we are one. Our efforts to develop an independent ego-existence induce us to overlook this oneness, for it is dangerous. Our precarious ego-identity is constantly in danger of dissolution -- and far more completely than Jung's experience in Africa, where he escaped radical egolessness but suffered several days of diarrhea.

In the last decade or so, psychology has begun to speak in terms of field theory. It is only the most recent academic discipline to do so. Events that cannot be explained from the viewpoint of Cartesian subject/object dichotomizing seem to have forced psychology to follow the example of physics.

In its own twentieth century crisis of unknowing, modern physics has gravitated to the image of "field" to account for sub-atomic events that can no longer be understood on the Newtonian analogy of ricocheting billiard-balls. Thus there is a magnetic field, a gravity field, an electron/positron field, and so on, each understood as a polarity of forces describing a "cloud of probabilities." This vague region only becomes "specified" as a "particle" with a definite location or velocity when an experiment is performed which forces the "cloud" to "collapse" into a specific event.

Rupert Sheldrake has extended the metaphor to include the processes of biology and consciousness. His "morphic fields" determine, for example, the embryological process whereby a cell of a *general* type becomes "specified" as a neuron or a liver cell for the future chick or child. In Sheldrake's view, every organism is comprised of a hierarchy of morphic fields, each organizing all the lower-order fields. His theory bears a strong resemblance to the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead. For Sheldrake, particle fields govern the components of the atom; these are in turn organized by atomic fields, molecular fields, cellular fields, and so on. Cells are organized by tissue fields, tissues by the fields of specific organs, like the liver or the brain; and the full complement of our organs is harmoniously governed by the morphic field of the whole organism. But fields do not stop there. They also organize consciousness -- very much as Jung's postulate of the archetypes claims that our psychic life is organized by invisible factors.

Jung speaks of how the leaf-cutter ant and the yucca moth "know" how to recognize the right moment for their highly complicated mating rituals. Because the adult insect lives such a short life, there is never any possibility to *learn* this behavior from other individuals. He calls the archetypes in-born capacities for apprehending the right conditions and guiding our behavior.

Sheldrake is intrigued by how an English bird, the blue tit, learned almost overnight to steal milk from bottles left on door-steps at dawn. Knowledge of milk-stealing spread not only all over England, but even across the sea in Holland -- despite the fact that these birds can't fly that far. Even more remarkably, the birds were deprived of milk bottles throughout the Second World War, during which generations of blue tits were born and died who'd never experienced milk-stealing. Yet when the milk bottles reappeared on door-steps at the end of the war, the practice was resumed. How do they know these things? How do they stay in unconscious contact with one another over such great distances and gaps of time? Sheldrake thinks they tap into established "morphic fields." Jung calls them archetypes.

In similar manner, I postulate that the persona is not simply a mask we don for social purposes, but a field of ideas and assumptions that influences our thinking, feeling, and behavior much the way iron filings arrange themselves above a magnet. The persona field is a powerful emotional/ideational force that sets the conditions of my participation in society. *My* persona is the strategy that I pursue to negotiate these field-like realities. It is the realm of collective consciousness, characterized by social activity, belonging, and alienation. It affects our politicians, our news media, our academics, and our net surfers. It affects everyone of us more strongly than we care to admit.

There is another oneness as well. I call it the self field. In this conception, *my* Self is not merely the morphic field that organizes my personality at a deep and comprehensive level. It is also my participation in the oneness of humanity, and even humanity's oneness with the natural world. It is the self field that I encounter when I meet my Layla or my Majnun. The transpersonal oneness of the self field is the source of that originary experience by which we become Adam and Eve, Isis and Osiris, Orpheus and Euridice.

The anima and the animus are the lens which brings the self *field* into focus. The lens of the anima doesn't look in two directions at once, focusing simultaneously on my isolated Self and the isolated Self of my beloved. Rather our two Selves participate in the oneness of our *we*, the originary unity out of which our ephemeral Cartesian egos have been differentiated. To drink the Love Potion means to have our eyes opened to this oneness that pre-exists our meeting, and even pre-exists the formation of our ego-identities. Our anima and animus come into play not primarily in the form of mask-like images by which we hide one another from sight, but rather as lenses onto this unitary field. The synchronicities that astonish us and confirm our deep connection stem from this originary oneness -- the self field which generally escapes our notice as we go about our hectic and ephemeral lives, negotiating our survival strategies in the persona field.

Erotic love seems to deepen and ground our ephemeral existence, precisely because it brings unmistakably to our awareness the deep unity in which we are all sharing all of the time. The fiction of our independent existence as egos is necessary for survival, and the self field threatens this ephemeral and fragile life in the domain of space and time. We have to keep these greater realities at bay. But as we conduct our one-sided ego-centered existence in the world of the everyday, inevitably we feel a vague longing for something more substantial, something more ultimate, something that will satisfy us wholly. When we meet our Layla or our Majnun, the bottom drops out of the ephemeral world we've taken for granted and the originary ground of our existence is revealed. We are embedded in the field of the Self, like an unformed particle in the electron/positron field. The uncertain cloud of probabilities

collapses at the moment of our meeting, and the formerly invisible self field becomes the focus of our attention.

The illusion that I cannot live without my Catherine Earnshaw is a false conclusion, but an understandable one. For, like Heathcliff, I remain ignorant of the self field that grounds my existence so wonderfully until the day I lay eyes on my Cathy. In that moment, my anima emerges from the shadows and becomes the lens that brings the self field into view. Now that I know of this reality, what I cannot live without is my lively sense of being rooted in that ground of personal existence, my oneness with all creation. Drinking the Love Potion with my Cathy has brought us both into focus, as standing on that common ground of oneness. I sense *my* wholeness; I sense *ours*; and I catch sight of the greater field in which we have our joint Being.

This one little move is all we *need* to open up Jungian psychology to the greater reality of interpersonal dynamics. We can even keep our Cartesian egos. What we have to see is that our isolated sense of subjectivity is grounded in a pair of unities -- that of the persona field and that of the self field. Individuation means differentiating ourselves from these two collective *fields* while maintaining a living relationship with both of them. Falling in love is that moment when our anima or animus comes into play for us as a lens. Like finding a Corinthian capital on a busy twentieth century street, the lens of our anima enables us to transcend time, and returns us to the originary world before egos had developed, to that time before time, *in illo tempore*, as Eliade never tires of reminding us.

But: what, you will ask, about that old Jungian doctrine of the anima-mask? Have I not agreed that this traditional teaching has a lot of practical truth value for us? Isn't it true that sometimes what seems to start out as Romantic Love turns out to be a private illusion, a self-deceiving infatuation? Aren't raw youths prone to fall in love with movie stars and teachers and even classmates who are not only unaffected but even refuse to give them the time of day? Aren't these undeniable proof that the anima image may indeed function as a mask to keep us locked in a private, neurotic fancy?

Yes, indeed. And it also happens when a real relationship has begun -- when two people have drunk the Potion and are mutually involved. In such a case, when I become attached to a particular image of my beloved, my attention has been distracted from the self field, and my anima ceases for a time to function as a lens. I've caught sight of a rainbow colored salmon in the subtle river of the self field, and become obsessed with bashing it up onto the bank where I can make it part of my lumbering life in the everyday world of the persona field. The anima or animus becomes a deceiving mask only when I've lost sight of the self field. Only when the lens becomes occluded. Only when I'm caught in one of my habitual complexes.

Obviously this happens often enough, and much of the work of a long-term erotic relationship has to do with letting go of those literalized and rigid images. In this sense, the lens of my anima might be thought of on the model of a movie-projector lens. I only get to know my beloved in her wholeness, when I do not stand in the way of the myriad images that manifest her many facets. An image becomes a mask only when I cling to it and resist the flow of life. The metaphor of anima and animus as lens opens up the experience of Romantic Love in several directions. Allowing the many facets of my beloved to pass by my gaze without attaching myself to any one of them, is the very model of yogic meditation. I

maintain my one-pointed gaze, and neither resist nor cling to any of the images or emotions that come before me.

Romantic Love may also describe the dynamics of a relationship of mutuality, not only in the first weeks or months after drinking the Potion, but over the long haul as well. Even in my sagging middle age, when my lover and I have been married for decades, my anima can continue to be a lens. My partner and I can still focus on our self-field unity, with all the numinosity and synchronicity that attend to that originary realm. Even on our thirtieth anniversary, we can still claim in all honesty to be madder than a thousand Majnuns, for what still transpires between us on the plain of the self field always epitomizes madness for conventional attitudes. When Majnun says that he is but the veil that hides the face of Layla, what he means is that his ego is an ephemeral illusion, a mere veil, before the self-field reality of his oneness with his beloved. Those who have the eyes of the anima to see will know this.

If anima and animus are understood to be lenses onto the self field, we find ourselves in a good position to understand the experience of Jelaluddin Rumi, Teresa of Avila and Ignatius of Loyola, who began their search for God in the halls of Venus. Having become acquainted with the lens that brings the self field into focus, they were able to go beyond the confessor who came last year in a brown habit and this year in a black robe. Bringing the deeper reality into focus, and not becoming stuck on any particular image, they saw through the shapes of the bottles and contemplated the wine of divine love. For the self field is not limited to my essential being and yours; but the greater Self that comes to presence is also Khidr, the Holy Ghost, atman, and the Tao. It is no accident that mystics the world over have used the analogy of erotic love to describe their love affair with God.

Many of the alchemists worked with a *soror mystica*, a mystical sister, for precisely this reason. They gave one another the lens of the anima and animus so as to focus on the field where lead can become gold through the erotic agency of Mercurius. The philosopher's stone is an image of the self field.

Shamans, too, have learned to see through the lens of the anima and animus. Their healing work requires, as Eliade says, that they have become experts in *soul*. They diagnose their patients by entering the self field, where they see in an essential manner so as to know when the soul is missing and how it may be restored. Anima and animus are the lens by which they see into this deeper oneness of the realm of the soul. Their spirit guides and instructors are often beings of the opposite gender.

When the anima and animus are a lens onto the self field and the persona is our strategy for negotiating the field of collective consciousness, Jungian psychology is opened up to the interpersonal dynamics by which it gathers its data and performs the work of analysis. Intra-psychic dynamics are not compromised. We can still talk that language when it suits us -- when we wish to understand what is going on within a single individual. But now we also have the tools to talk about what goes on *between* us when we relate to one another. We don't have to forget the person of our beloved when we discuss the transformations of Romantic love.