

**Insighting into an Image: An Annotated Abridgment of James
Hillman's "Image-Sense" (Version 1)
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Book Notes V09BN**

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CONTENTS:

Image in archetypal psychology; distinction between image and empirical perception
Insighting vs. literal perception; seeing through and hearing into
Dreams and images retraining senses; intuiting images vs. knowing about images
Importance of mode of perceiving content; Dante example
Dreams as images made of imagination; intuiting a priori categories of imagination
Imagination lacks sense language; insufficiency of concepts for understanding dreams; twisting language into secondary sense
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Dual nature of sense; critique of splitting sense data from meaning
Second sensing; as basis for image-making
Image reveals hidden modalities of being
Image as multivalent; warning against restricting image to a single interpretation

BOOKS /ARTICLES QUOTED FROM OR REFERENCED:

- James Hillman, "Image-Sense" in *Spring 1979: An Annual of Archetypal Psychology and Jungian Thought*
- Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*

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RETYPE AND REFORMATTED by IT 2022

NOTES:

- **RETYPE AD PAPER presented in class (V09BN).**
- This is **1982 07/05b, Insighting into an Image Paper (Version 1), and the second entry associated with this date. 1982 07/05a = Astrology; Horoscope-Verdi Class. 1982 07/05c = Insighting into an Image Paper (Version 2).**
- This document is an abridgment of, and quotes extensively without attribution, “Image-Sense,” an article by James Hillman in *Spring 1979: An Annual of Archetypal Psychology and Jungian Thought* (pp. 130-143). There are a few annotations and additions by AD scattered throughout, but they have not been marked out.
- This retyped paper incorporates student and AD handwritten edits. To see the actual handwritten edits please refer to the Scan File.
- This paper is read at the beginning of WG Class 1982 0705a Astrology; Horoscope-Verdi and also read and discussed in WG Class 1982 0710a Astrology; Theory.
- All spelling, capitalization, and punctuation corrected, all abbreviations and numbers spelled out. Parts of the paper that were unclear have been edited to conform to the article as published.

INSIGHTING INTO AN IMAGE: AN ANNOTATED ABRIDGMENT OF JAMES HILLMAN'S "IMAGE-SENSE" (VERSION 1)

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What we mean by an image cannot be gotten to by sense perception, taken in the usual sense of empirical perception. Images are not optical pictures, even if they are like pictures. We do not literally see images or hear metaphors, for here we are speaking rather of insighting which is a seeing through or a hearing into, and these two appearing together as a single fact. By confusing our usual sense language and (looks like: function) dreams and images are retraining the senses themselves, that is, they are liberating the senses from the conceptual constraints which are decisive in their performance, even deciding what the object must be. So the dream attempts to rearrange the senses' operation. And this retraining of the senses by the image is to train our eye and ear out of their habitual modes of sense perceiving, so that we could read the image and hear the psyche speaking. We are not talking about training in terms of *knowing about* images, but rather *intuiting* images. The senses and the mode of conscious understanding based on them are taken for granted. In psychology they are given new kinds of content to work with, but *the mode of perceiving the content*, and this is all important, is left unquestioned (for example in the standard interpretation of dream symbols). Our simplistic belief in this functioning may perhaps be illustrated by having the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, Dante's dream, interpreted by a mathematician. (Blake as explained by Hume.) Whereas in truth Dante's dream is trying to break the habit of consciousness acquired through sense functioning and retrain it. Dreams don't make sense, because sense doesn't make dreams. Dreams are images made of imagination. To go at the imagination straight away through sense perception is incorrect. It forces the image into hallucination, or loses it as illusion. We can and do intuit a priori categories of imagination and make some sense of them without having to sense them in the simple perceptual meaning of sensation.

Now imagination has no sense language of its own. Concepts do not present themselves as images, or have images as their first reference; they are equally valid for other sorts of events. But the dream comes in its own terms, just as life, and imagination can speak of itself without borrowed terms, and furthermore concepts are neither sufficient or necessary for making sense of dreams. When imagination does use language it must twist it into a secondary sense. Running is non-entity for us until we can hear the word visually, for example, the faucet is running, or it is sheerly conceptual as when it becomes particularized into 'running towards', etc. Now imagination as understood may be essentially different from the other faculties, like believing, thinking, etc. It is more likely an operation that works within the others, and which is found through the others, perhaps their ground. So we never seem to catch imagination operating on its own, and we can never precisely circumscribe a place for it -- because it works behind, through, within, on, below. An image is a specific mood, scene or context, (category of imagination) (manifest or perceived (looks like: world)) and the factors which help determine the mode of weaving these three are the aspects translated into language as prepositions. They specify the mode of relations, the structure of events; they are the invisible and subtle joints which articulate the internal positioning of the image, how it is woven together. And the three above are held in the subtle net of a primal image; they can be discovered in substantial things, or in actions, but it is really the prepositions which subtilize symbol by dissolving the substantial universality into a specific pattern or image. Now this is what's important, the shift in seeing, from what is seen and heard, to the way in which it inheres in intuiting the image or working of P.I. [Productive Imagination], and image is not what you see, but the

way you see. So imagination may be conceived of as the subtle sensing of the underlying prepositional relation among events, objects, etc. These prepositions do not have to be written out in words.

So it comes to this; we sense the subtlety of images by means of prepositions or aspects, their overtones and undersense. Looking into these aspects is like looking into behind, listening for and hearing through. The sense of empirical images is a composite of the gross sensations of nouns and verbs, adjectives, etc., and the subtle sensations of their relations. The composition is preformed¹ by the prepositions, and when we leave the primal image, the psychological functions which were not inherently opposed to each other within that realm get differentiated. In other words, when we stay within the imagining mind, and its engagement with an image, then all the functions take place together and throughout, i.e., synesthesia. The imagination remains in the world of sense, and takes this same world from a different angle. We can use our double understanding of the simple word 'sense' which means both concrete and physical, directly tangible, and also meaning, direction, invisibly mental. Now when you split sense data from meaning, you are splitting perception from intuition, soul from body. Only a soulless psychology can speak of sense data apart from the image in which the data is presented. Whereas perception includes the living breath of the soul. Now these two meanings of sense can be distinguished as two, yet maintain them together in a single act so that there is a second sensing going on whenever your simple animal sensing is going on, both at once. One may not impugn to things an only natural, or face, value; this is the naturalistic fallacy, and we won't discuss that. But insofar as everything manifest is suspect, second sensing is possible, and the activity of sensing implications is basic to image-making. And this act of second sensing, or metaphorical insight is not paranoid, that is, this act does not dissolve what is there, that is, the image, into what is not there, the meaning. For by keeping the significance right within the "sense data" of the image, the second sense embedded in the first, we avoid the literalization of meaning, or a systematic interpretation. For the image reveals certain aspects of reality which defy any other means of knowledge, and they are not irresponsible creations of the psyche; they respond to a need and fulfill a function, that of bringing to life the most hidden modalities of being. Images by their very structure are multivalent and the mind makes use of images to grasp the ultimate realities. The images as such are a whole bundle of meanings, and not any *one* of its meanings, nor one alone of its many frames of reference. To translate an image into a concrete terminology, by restricting it to any one of its frames of reference, is to annul it.

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¹ In Hillman's "Image-Sense," the word here is "performed." When this paper was read in class, the term used was "preformed," and it was explained as such by the student reading the paper, so the editors decided to leave the term as "preformed."