

Philosophy of the Human Heart

Alison Farmer

Antioch University, Seattle

The Spiritual Psychology of the Human Heart

Spring 2009

Randy Morris

Philosophy of the Human Heart

Using the heart as an organ of perception and seeing it as a meeting place of body, soul and spirit leads us into a forgotten world. It is a world full of emotions, an immersion into an ocean of feeling states that are both within us and without us. By learning how to re-connect with the feeling states of our heart, we learn to think through the heart. When we begin to think through the heart rather than our mind, soul development occurs. As our emotional intelligence strengthens we are able to connect with the soul of the world, the "Anima Mundi. Perceiving the world through the heart gives us a poetic holistic lens born out of intuition and the feminine point of consciousness. The heart is the seat of imagination, beauty and love. All three contain soul properties that can connect us with the soul of the world and bring healing.

Our non-linear Nature has always had soul, but by the time Newton died all assumptions of nature had changed. Once seen as a sensuous, animate world, her living nature retreated to the interior of our beings as the outside world pronounced her dead. What Newton left out of his world was "Life". The way to restore soul to the world is by changing our perception of her and the heart is a natural organ that can enable us to see the soul that still exists outside of us. The poet John Keats said, the world is the place of soul making" (Buhner, 2004, p. 244). Through the incredible organ of the heart we can learn to communicate again with an animate world and communicate with her as our ancestors once did. Our modern world has become abstracted and dissected, materialistic and narcissistic. We are an ill nation walking around with disconnected deteriorated souls which are intimately connected and reflecting the anima mundi. Our own health and that of the planet requires us to wake up our souls, and learn how to

nurture and cultivate them. Traditional analysis is missing soul, but looking to the heart and through the heart can help us reconnect to it. To look through the heart we must first begin by looking into it so that we can begin to see it as a living breathing feeling organ and not just a pump.

Physiology of the Human Heart

The heart got its crippling metaphor of a pump because everything in the heart is designed to make the blood circulate. What this metaphor leaves out is "Life", as the blood spins in continues spirals of life. With each pulse of blood, imperceptible essential feelings travel into the physically intangible terrain of our being. "The healthy life of the soul depends, as does the circulation, on continual movement, on the ability to flow out and gather in" (Holdrege, p. 17). In an embryo the wall of the heart is formed as early as 10 days by a still water zone caught between two blood streams. These blood streams flow in (Diastole) and out (Systole) of the heart. She relaxes and fills with blood then contracts and pushes the blood into the lungs and body. Both movements occur successively, but so harmoniously and rhythmically that they appear to happen together. The pulse of the heart is powerful enough to entrain other life pulses in its vicinity. Studies have shown these tiny mystery pulse cells will continue to live and beat if removed from the heart and placed next to another. And when a heart recipient takes new procession of a used organ, the heart will not only start beating on its own, it will bring the personality of the donor with it. The heart is a whole lot more than a pump.

The heart is like a second brain and has its own intelligence. It is an extremely sensitive organ that communicates in image and feeling. Complex emotions are created

through subtle combinations of four basic ones: mad, sad, glad and scared (Buhner, 2004, p. 93). As a sense organ it perceives and makes adaptive changes to: "blood pressure, viscosity, warmth and biochemical composition"(Holdrege, p. 14). The heart and brain have a direct connection to each other and are in constant communication. Sixty percent of the heart is neurons and it emits an energy field (Torus) similar in shape to the earth itself. The hearts electromagnetic field is 5000 times larger than the brain. We can communicate with the world through this silent electromagnetic energy as everything has an electrical impulse. This field is holographic to the whole, "the field of the heart contains within it everything you are, everything that is within you. Every thought you have, every unmet desire, psychological need, and wound" (Buhner, 2004, p. 245). This magical image is not unlike William Blake being able to see the world in a grain of sand (Pearce, *The Triune Heart*, p. 59). Heart coherence brings the waves of the body into alignment with the heart. This coherence will also allow for the emergence of more complex emotional functions. At the moment the modern world favors our brains as the primary organ. This brings incoherence and confusion as we often chose to ignore the heart in our many choices not trusting it over our "better" judgment.

The pre-suppositions we hold in our brain through conditioning trap us into a narrow vision and determine what we see. By feeling our way through the world and using our heart as the primary sense organ, a different reality can begin to open up and a "super sensory knowledge" tapped into that can guide us intuitively forward. Goethe sais, "the senses do no deceive, judgment deceives (Buhner, 2004, p. 233). Following a spiritual sensory knowledge brings trust and courage and many new possibilities as soul is fed and grown. The journey will not always be light and fun and may include many

trips to the underworld and illness but you will become more "whole" in the process. Richard Sardello looks at illness as a reflection of the state of the world and says "illness can be a call to soul. Eliminating it, rather than listening to it, obliterates the presence of soul" (Sardello, 2004, p. 99). He sees health as one side of the polarity of health and illness and both as necessary. Taking a soul based approach to health can help us learn from, rather than purely eradicate the diseases and epidemics that consume modern society. James Lynch sees heartless communication as a disease epidemic, and notes the vascular dance that goes on with non-toxic talk is necessary to maintaining a healthy emotional and physical state (Lynch, 2000, pp. 24-27). For Sardello, every disease has an archetypal background, every violent act holds a message literalized and diseases should be milked for all their imaginary worth. "Imaginary" as in the sense of soul/spirit communication not our common fantasy understanding of the imagination. Everything comes through our imagination. I feel embracing it along with the awe felt in beauty and the compassion and gratitude that come with love are key to restoring the soul. All three are intertwined with one another and inseparable, but I will try to capture their magical soul qualities one at a time through the thoughts of others.

Imagination

Soul is the imaginative possibilities of our nature. I believe Imagination and Soul are the same thing. Learning to see and sense from the heart moves us into imagination, a poetic mode of perceiving and feeling. This aesthetic response to the world "ties the individual soul immediately with the world soul" (Hillman, 1992, p. 105) and takes us back centuries to a time we were united. By using the imagination we are

able to synthesize the many opposites that divide our world and transform them into something new. James Hillman's view of the imagination is the one I feel most drawn to, the one that dissolves my heart in its own water. He sees the heart as the seat of the Imagination and says the heart "is not so much the place of personal feeling as it is the place of true imagining, the vera imaginatio that reflects the imaginal world in the microcosmic world of the heart. Feelings stir as images move" (Hillman, 1992, p. 28). Hillman thinks that when we personalize the heart the imagination is driven into exile, a world of sexual fantasy and subjectivity (Hillman, 1992, p. 29). He views the heart as a sentient organ with an eye, and the imagination moves mysteriously with love at the seat of it and all through it. This "intelligence of the heart" reveals a terrain of images and imaginal thought, essences of reality presented by the imaginal to the imagination (Hillman, 1992, p. 28). By thinking through your heart you are able to simultaneously know and love by means of imagining. Your heart thinks with the passionate spirit of "Himma", and the figures of imagination have substance and become real. "Himma presents the images of the heart as essentially, though intimately, real; yet the reality of its persons is independent of my person (Hillman, 1992, p. 73)". Hillman paints a green Himma heart whitening in enlightenment, the wall down the middle being necessary for the circulation of its imagination and response contents (Hillman, 1992, p. 72). I like to equate following and flowing with your Imagination as taking your soul path, an intuitive spiritual journey full of directive signs and symbols.

"When we fall in love, we begin to imagine; and when we begin to imagine we fall in love"

(Hillman, 1992, p. 9)

Beauty

Soul sees the beauty of our nature, and there is beauty where ever soul appears. I believe Beauty and Soul are the same thing. "The soul is born in beauty and feeds on beauty, requires beauty for its life" (Hillman, 1992, p. 39). Beauty is the appearance of the anima mundi and it is this aisthesis by which we know the world (Hillman, 1992, p. 113). Aisthesis means to breath in or take in the world, the wonder, shock amazement of it (Hillman, 1992, p. 107) and appreciation is the key to it (Hillman, 1992, p. 119). It is a sensuous reaction to what you see. By seeing through your heart you take in the world and it becomes coated in a luster. Each particular event has its own clarity, its own brightness. The mere appearance of things in the form they appear is beauty itself - each event has its own smile. Hillman sees Beauty as "an epistemological necessity; it is the way which the Gods touch our senses, reach or heart, and attract us into life" (Hillman, 1992, p. 45). Beauty is one of those directive sign posts that appear when you use imaginal thought. It can be our intuitive guide towards the things that are good for us making soul-making a "self-steering process through aesthetic reflexes". Hillman says, "we possess beauty when we are true to our own being" (Hillman, 1992, p. 59). The natural repulsion to ugliness can help us run away from things that may lead us the wrong way as ugliness goes over to another order. The fifteen-century philosopher Marsilio Ficina captures this intuitive path well when he suggested that; "every one turn toward the mystery of his own nature the way a sunflower turns toward the sun" (Pearsall, p. 173).

Rudolf Steiner has developed an imagination of art and beauty with what he calls "reverse ritual". This elevates these actions to the spiritual realms. "Thus beauty

concerns elevating the senses to the imaginal realms" and each of the arts elevates a particular sensory realm. "Beauty is the sensory world wearing the garment of the divine" and artists produce works of creation by "uplifting the world into the sphere of the divine" (Sardello, 2004, pp. 185-187). As an intuitive artist, this view holds much truth for me. Margaret Mead said "Art is the language that is the language of the heart, that is the language of the emotional structure" (Pearce, 1999). When the soul of the world retreated inside of us, it has been the artists profession to reveal it's predicament to us. To the poets and painters the world has never been dead. Francis Bacon (1909-1992), a painter that mobilized a kind of energizing despair, regularly "proclaimed his allegiance to primal drives as the only credible substitute for meaning in a hostile universe". His paintings are full of energy but dark, "objectifying the subjective ordeal of perishing bodies that harbor immortal longings" (Schjeldahl, 2009, p. 82). He builds tension between life mediated by received images and life suffered in the flesh. Bacon identified with the visceral sorcery of paint and complained that "Hardly anyone really feels about painting: they read things into it". When I visited the Metropolitan Museum in New York it was two of Frances Bacons paintings that took my breath away.

Love

"When we fall in love, we begin to imagine; and when we begin to imagine we fall in love"

(Hillman, 1992, p. 9)

Soul heals our nature with love. I believe Love and Soul are the same thing. Hillman sees love being of spirit, it quickens "the soul to its images in the heart" (Hillman, 1992, p. 28). With some Hillman Himma therapy we are able to see the world

alluring us with her smile. We begin to be filled with love and gratitude as we learn to trust this new feeling imaging world as 'real' and let ourselves be guided by it. Love is one of the greatest examples of the power of our heart. "Falling in love causes a tremendous expansion of the heart", a flood of DHEA, testosterone and hormones (Buhner, 2004, p. 109). Love literally "moves the flesh, it pushes matter around - as the blushing and palpitations experienced by lovers arrest" (Dossey, 1993, p. 109). One of the most powerful experiences of falling in love is entraining, when one's own heart falls into "energetic synchronization with another heart" (Pearsall, p. 176). Two hearts beat as one, as the qualities of nurturing, connecting and integrating are felt. "Us" takes over from you and me in this powerful seduction. This synchronization activates the cellular memories of the shared primal infantile paradise of a watery womb. Stephen Buhner likes to think of our heart field as a pool of water mirroring everything. As we drown in a sea of love "we can often feel the energy flowing between ourselves and our lover..... because loving is more an affair of the heart than the head" (Pearsall, pp. 177-178). Love has the power to heal and hurt as there is a tidal systolic/diastolic nature to love. Emotional conflict can cause a "limbic" tango of blood flooding to many organs (Pearsall, p. 185).

Larry Dossey has investigated the power of prayer and found "Love" to be a powerful healing emotion and intimately related to health. Dossey looked at many studies of non-localized healing which pointed to love being a kind of exalted unspecialized telepathy that connects distant organisms through empathy. "Empathy compassion and love seem to form a literal bond - a resonance or glue between living things" (Dossey, 1993, p. 111). This bond is able to transcend space and fuel healing.

Dossey concludes that undirected prayer fueled with love, empathy and gratitude has powerful healing properties that can cross great distances. "Love occupies a majestic place in healing. Lying outside space and time, it is a living tissue of reality, a bond that unites all" (Dossey, 1993, p. 117).

Commutating with the heart

The idea of telepathic communication not dependant on distance is still not totally understood and still questioned. However, proof of the powerful electromagnetic field, the "Torus" surrounding our heart gives us a physical theory to support communication of information through energy. The torus is visible to light waves and there are now pictures of it radiating out some twelve to fifteen feet beyond the body. Our hearts are in constant dialogue with numerous other electromagnetic fields that fill our world. Our emotional response to the world experience changes the nature of these fields. These "fields can act on our physical health both positively and negatively on a cellular level" (Pearce, *The Triune Heart*, p. 63). During entrainment cells can be lifted from chaos to order. "A coherent heart affects the brain wave pattern not only of the person achieving coherence, but also of any person with whom it comes into contact" (Buhner, 2004, p. 109). Heart coherence can be obtained by thinking imaginal thoughts of beauty, love and caring through the heart's mind. This empathetic energy has powerful healing properties and can be carried electromagnetically in our bodies and into the world as our torus connects with other energy fields.

Much of our world is covered in water, a strong electromagnetic carrier, and our own bodies are 60% water. Dr. Emoto, a Japanese researcher, has been able to

capture the changing expressions of water and has proved that thoughts and feelings can affect our physical reality. "He found that water from clear springs and water that has been exposed to loving words shows brilliant, complex, and colorful snowflake patterns" (C. Norman Shealy, 2004). Thoughts are able to travel great distances as they are non-local. In healing the best outcomes are dependent on the emotional state of the healer and love and compassion seems to be the key.

Conclusion

"I am certain of nothing but the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination" ~ John Keats
(Hillman, 1992, p. 60)

Simon of Taibutheh, an East Syrian writer, physician and mystic who died around 680AD, argued; knowledge "could be acquired only through a combination of the senses of the body and the faculties of the soul" (Cowan, 2007, p. 52). He also trod a "delicate line between the spiritual and the corporeal, between the body and the mind. At no time did he wish to raise one above the other" (Cowan, 2007, p. 54). This captures a nice balance for me. There is a constant communication between heart and brain and they can help each other discern the truth. The question is which end to start at. For years the western mind has been the predominant organ and we often ignore the hearts desires. The hearts intelligence acts in interest of well-being, "sending the brain's emotional system an intuitive prompt for appropriate behavior. Intellect, however, can function independently from the heart - that is, without intelligence - and can take over the circuitry and block our heart's more subtle signals" (Pearce, The Triune Heart, p. 67). We need to get back to seeing the world through our heart first and using the brain

only as a secondary organ to verify information. We need to let our seeing be shaped by the phenomenon itself and then use our brains to unravel the truth by constantly returning and comparing to the initial feelings. There is truth in feelings and we just have to remember how to feel, we need to learn how to feel the world like Bacon felt a painting. Taibutheh cultivated a form of double vision, one looking inward the other looking out, he saw that knowledge was implanted in nature as there is a "connection between natural intelligence and what he termed the "intelligence of the One" (Cowan, 2007, p. 54) and it is this knowledge that can rejuvenate the heart. I think he talks here about the intimate connection and communication between our own soul capacities that know the world through an animal like sensing, and the anima mundi.

Hillman likes to imagine the anima mundi as a soul-spark that presents itself in everything through its visible form and I resonate with this image. By seeing through the heart we begin to cultivate the dying aspects of our being that hold soul properties. The sensory intelligence brings imaginal thought and lights those inner sparks, firing up our passion for life. Our expanded passionate heart sees beauty and love in the world lit up like an illuminated neon welcome sign. All three feed of and fuel each other, the world becomes rich and colorful viewed through their lenses. A self-perpetuated circle of healing begins to take place as the imagination, love and beauty grow inside and outside you. Perceiving from the heart enables you to perceive interior qualities of the outer world. It restores the soul to the world, giving the power back to the anima mundi, and our intimate connection with her. It puts a psychic reality back into our objective world and animates her beauty sensuously through the imagination.

"When we fall in love, we begin to imagine; and when we begin to imagine we fall in love"- Hillman

References

- Buhner, S. (2004). *The Secret Teachings of Plants*. Rochester, Vermont: Bear & Company.
- C. Norman Shealy, M. P. (2004). *What the Bleep Do We know!?* Retrieved 05 21, 2009, from What the Bleep: <http://www.whatthebleep.com/crystals/>
- Cowan, J. (2007). *A Mapmaker's Dream*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Dossey, L. (1993). *Healing Worlds*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.
- Hillman, J. (1992). *The thought of the Heart and Soul of the World*. Putnam CT: Spring Publications Inc.
- Holdrege, C. The Heart: A Pulsing and Perceptive Center. In C. Holdrege, *The Dynamic Heart and Circulation*. AWSNA.
- Lynch, J. (2000). Intimacy: American Style. In J. Lynch, *A Cry Unheard*. Baltimore: Baners Books.
- Pearce, J. C. (1999, Vol 5 Journal of Family Life). An Interview with Joseph Chilton Pearce. (C. M. Debus, Interviewer)
- Pearce, J. C. The Triune Heart. In J. C. Pearce, *The Biology of Transcendence*. Rochester Vermont: Park Street Press.
- Pearsall, P. The Lustful Brain and the Loving Heart. In P. Pearsall, *The Heart's Code*. New York: Broadway Books.
- Sardello, R. (2004). *Facing the World with Soul*. Great Barrington: Lindisfarne Books.
- Schjeldahl, P. (2009, 06 01). Rough Stuff. *The New Yorker* .