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IN SEARCH OF HOME: HILLMAN'S ARCHETYPAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE THERAPEUTIC PROCESS OF AN ADULT PATIENT

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Abstract

The case study method was used to trace the therapeutic process of a 23 year old woman, over a period of 12 sessions. The focus of the study was her issue with abandonment which emerged as the central theme in therapy. Hillman's archetypal approach was used as a framework in understanding the process and resolution of her feelings of abandonment.

According to Hillman, the therapy process activates the archetypal abandoned child. For a successful therapeutic outcome the process of de-literalisation must occur in order for the patient to move from literal acting out to symbolic containment. Core moments in the therapeutic process were used, together with an interpretation from Hillman's approach, to illustrate the various themes around the issue of abandonment.

The present case study illustrates how the theory in this area was relevant in practice with this particular case.

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Introduction

The present case study is a descriptive-dialogic case study method.

The case material is used to illustrate the therapeutic process of a 23-year-old woman, and is examined from the theoretical stance of James Hillman. In particular, his approach to abandonment and de-literalisation are utilised to understand this particular case.

The aim of the study is two-fold. Firstly, it aims at illustrating the usefulness of Hillman's theory to the process of psychotherapy. Secondly, it traces the patient's therapeutic movement from polarising archetypes and literally enacting them in relationships, to symbolically holding them internally. The therapeutic milieu, together with the patient's ability to mourn, through tears, provided the arena for the restitution between imaginal figures and the resolution of abandonment.

The presentation of this thesis is as follows: In Chapter one a review of the case study method is outlined in order to situate the present case in the broader context of this method.

In Chapter two, Hillman's theoretical concepts which were considered relevant to an understanding of the present case are reviewed. The usefulness of Hillman's perspective is also addressed.

In Chapter three, the therapy case is presented to illustrate both an interpretation from Hillman's perspective and the patient's resolution of feelings of abandonment.

In conclusion, Chapter four includes a discussion of the therapeutic process and how this can be understood from Hillman's perspective.

CHAPTER 1

The Case Study Method

"A psychological case-study method is an account of a person in a situation. Of course, there is usually something interesting or problematic about the person, the situation or the relationship between them" (Bromley, 1986, p.1).

Unlike a life history, a case study usually deals with a fairly short segment or episode in the person's life. Its interest lies in it either being critical or informative. As Bromley (1986) points out, it is a reconstruction and interpretation of an episode in one person's life. It is not an exhaustive description in that the investigator is selectively addressing some issues and ignoring others that are not seen to be relevant to the situation under investigation.

A case study is an interpretation of how and why a person acts as he/she does in a given situation. It usually includes a certain amount of historical information which is not necessarily connected to the present situation, and care should be taken not to allow the life history to bias one's assessment of the person's behaviour.

The usual aim of the case study method is to find a solution to the problem experienced by the person. This should include a follow-up to establish the effectiveness of the intervention applied. However, other purposes include a demonstration of typical or representative behaviours or to illustrate a range of phenomena.

The common feature of all case studies is that they are always on a single individual and are natural events occurring in the real world. Each calls for a set of observations of the person together with a commentary on the significance of those observations. A clear conceptual framework is thus utilised to organise and interpret data collection.

The method of quantitative group comparisons, although widely used, has little significance to the clinical practitioner as the findings are about performances in groups rather than individuals (Edwards, 1990). Single case studies have been utilised since the beginning of the century to gain knowledge about individuals and their internal dynamics.

As noted by Edwards (1990), there are a number of reasons why the utility of case studies by the

psychotherapist are important and necessary. "The first is that therapists have privileged access to fundamental data about human life and experience which is not easily obtainable in other ways" (Edwards, 1990, p.7). The reasoning is that the therapy context allows the patient to verbalise and explore feelings, thoughts and issues that are not usually explored in the daily context of the person's life.

Secondly, the professional context, which includes objective evaluation through supervision, peer discussion and conferences, aids in critical analysis and conceptualisation of the patient's dynamics.

Thirdly, every new case is unique and thus requires systematic observation and conceptualisation. Therefore psychotherapists are applied scientists who also use frameworks of existing knowledge in order to analyse and solve problems with the individual patients with whom they work.

The case study method is idiographic in that individual cases are examined in depth. Thus, it does not use statistical inference. Validity of this method is gained through the process of 'analytic generalisation'. Yin (1964, in Edwards, 1990) suggests that this means

that validity is estimated on the basis of analysis, rather than the representativeness of events.

Through rigorous discipline and a disciplined reliance on theory, the case study method can be used to generalise about real-life human problems more effectively than the more experimental methods of enquiry (Bromley, 1986, p.286). To enhance internal and external validity the following procedure has generally been utilised to build up the theory of case law:

1. Careful procedures have been established for collecting and substantiating evidence.
2. Alternative explanations and theories need to be explored.
3. Cases should be sought which allow for evaluation between alternative theories (Edwards, 1990, p.23).

Edwards (1990) notes that the case study method maintains external validity by investigating persons and events in as close as possible to the natural context. Thus the problem of laboratory research is avoided with its artificial context and an inability to generalise findings externally.

By reliance on case law theory and logical inference,

internal validity may be enhanced in the case study method.

Edwards (1990, p.17ff) discusses the various types of case study methods. It should be noted that these represent a continuum rather than exclusive categories, and specific case studies may have characteristics of more than one type. Each will be outlined briefly.

1. Exploratory-descriptive case study

This type of study is essentially exploratory in that its function is to open up an in-depth understanding of something that is only superficially known. The aim is to provide a rich, in-depth description of an individual without a desire to generalise the findings to other cases. The phenomena are approached with as little preconceptions as possible, the emphasis being, rather, on allowing the phenomena to speak for themselves. The foundations of clinical practice are based on this type of study.

2. Descriptive-dialogic case study

Again the emphasis is on description of a phenomenon. In this type of study the case is not regarded as unique in that it is seen to embody general principles of existing theory. It can also

be utilised to debate conflictual areas in existing theory. Thus it may represent an early phase in the process of constructing a theory.

3. Theoretical-heuristic case study

The interest of this type of study lies in either developing or testing existing theory. Because the focus is on testing the adequacy of existing theory, cases have to be carefully selected. Therefore the researcher selects the case according to the theoretical goals of the study.

4. Clinical or test case-study

This type of study is selected to provide a test of a theoretical proposition. Therefore it can only be used once there is a well-developed and operationalised theory in the particular area of interest.

Two other types of case study which do not fit into the exploratory/theory development continuum are as follows:

5. Illustrative/didactic case study

This type of study is used to both illustrate and teach specific theoretical principles. It is also used to develop theory through providing evidence for "the generality and validity of case law" (Edwards, 1990, p.22).

6. Working case study

This method uses existing theory to solve practical problems without expecting to influence the theory in any way.

1.1 Procedure

Permission was obtained from the patient to use her clinical material for the purpose of this study. The identifying data is disguised in order to respect the patient's confidentiality. Detailed notes of the twelve sessions were made immediately after each session. These sessions were supervised on a weekly basis throughout the course of therapy. This supervision aided in finding the theoretical focus for the present study.

The theoretical focus used in the present study is the work of James Hillman. His ideas on the process of de-literalisation and the abandoned child motif are outlined as a means of conceptualising how literal events may be translated into meaning. Furthermore, they are used in an analysis of the present case material.

The patient's initial reasons for entering therapy, as well as some historical detail, have been included in

order that the reader has some background and can formulate some ideas of the patient before commencing with the outline of therapy.

In the presentation of this case study the focus is on presenting core moments in the therapeutic process. These are used to illustrate how an archetypal perspective could be useful in understanding the material presented.

The format of the course of therapy is as follows: A heading titled Theme will include the relevant therapy material, as well as the session in which it occurred. Each theme will be followed by an interpretation from an Hillman perspective. This section will be headed Interpretation.

The aim is to show how the unfolding themes could be understood using Hillman's approach to interpretation. This does not mean that this is the only possible approach and that other methods of interpretation could not make sense of the present material. However, it does at least show that an archetypal interpretation can be used with the present case.

In the final section headed discussion, I will firstly

discuss changes that occurred in Sasha's behaviour and attitudes, and secondly I will discuss the value of Hillman's theoretical perspective in terms of the present investigation.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The section that follows is a literature review outlining James Hillman's approach to psychotherapy, de-literalisation as a symbolic process, the abandoned child motif and other archetypal figures accompanying it. The reasons for focussing on these particular areas are as follows:

Hillman's approach to depth psychology, although based on the work of Jung, generally differs from the mainstream traditional theoretical models. Therefore it is felt that a brief outline of this approach is necessary.

The present case study shows the usefulness of using Hillman's approach in understanding the process of therapy. He sees de-literalisation as the way the patient moves and changes in the course of therapy. Thus, an understanding of this process is essential in the present case.

In terms of Hillman's perspective, the central themes that emerged were the abandoned child and other

archetypes accompanying it. An understanding of the nature of these is necessary in reviewing the current material.

2.1 Hillman's approach to psychotherapy

Hillman (1975) believes that the case history, although fictional, is so often taken as excessively literal, in that facts and events are seen to be concrete. What he suggests is crucial to a good therapeutic prognosis, is the ability to tell stories and allow the imaginative aspect of personality to express itself. He argues that people who had fairy-tales in childhood are usually better able to relate to images of obscenity, cruelty and grotesqueness which spontaneously occur in dreams, myths and fantasies. Therefore if one is accepting and open to the imaginative realms, pathological images have a symbolic place for expression. Where rationalisation and reason are considered superior to the imaginative sides of personality, these pathological images are seen as threatening and unacceptable. The danger here, is that they may be denied and repressed. When this occurs they may be literally acted out in day-to-day life and are then pathological. An example of this would be projection onto others of what is seen as bad, unacceptable and denied in oneself.

Psychotherapy, from this point of view, is seen as the collaborative rewriting of the case history into a new story. Effective therapy is seen to depend upon taking events and creating a new fiction or taking the story onwards.

Fantasy is viewed by Hillman (1985) as the most important force of life and moves away from the rational and conscious towards unconscious and soul. Thus, this approach is against a linear view of seeing events as literal, and leans towards subjectivity, feeling and soul. Traditionally, psychotherapy is ego-centred and concerned with strengthening the ego. This approach, on the other hand, is soul-centred and concerned with "soul-making" (Hillman, 1985, p.26). He notes that when events are relaid there is less emphasis on the why or how and more emphasis on what is being told and who is the archetypal imaginal figure in the telling (Hillman, 1985, p.34).

2.2 De-literalisation

Soul-making is seen as the intention of the psyche (rather than human subject) to realise the images and individuate the imaginal reality (Hillman, 1985, p.27). Soul-making is also referred to as 'imaging', which is

described as hearing and seeing through the events to the images that lie beyond (Hillman, 1985, p.27). Hillman equates soul-making with de-literalising which is: "...that psychological attitude which suspiciously disallows the naive and given level of events in order to search out their shadowy, metaphorical significance for soul" (Hillman, 1985, p.27). De-literalisation, then, attempts at moving beyond the concrete and rational towards the subjective and expression of soul. Hillman (1985) suggests that for this process to occur, emphasis is directed towards the dream, mythology and those subjective behaviours usually considered as unacceptable and childish such as: tears; displays of vulnerability; stubbornness and other such 'primitive' behaviours. By allowing the process of de-literalisation to occur, all that is repressed, unacceptable and literally acted out in pathological ways, can be internalised by finding expression through dreams, images and story. What then occurs is a change from literally acting out in relation to others, to creative and honest relating.

Initially, this is done through the enactment of 'primitive' behaviours. Through this, feelings begin to emerge, which allow for a return to soul. Soul-making searches for the imaginal, which in turn offers a

symbolic place to house that which is considered to be childish and unacceptable.

In conclusion, an understanding of the de-literalisation process allows clinicians to assist patients in finding symbolic ways to contain the previously uncontainable, through emphasis on dreams, myths and fantasy.

2.3 The archetypal child motif

Because depth therapy, from this viewpoint, is seen as the process of moving away from events towards their images, it therefore necessitates a regression towards the archetypal child motif:

"...the regressed condition that no-one wants can also be directly prompted in psychotherapy. For here is a haven, to creep out of hiding: here one may show one's unwanted, unlovable, ugly concealments and one's huge hopes. These feelings have been given appropriate psychological names: infantile desires, self-destructive fantasies, omnipotent cravings, archaic impulses. But in deriding these names we ought not to forget... that always these childish pathological conditions contain futurity" (Hillman, 1975, p.19).

In archetypal psychology each archetype is seen to contain the opposite in its shadow. Therefore, with regression the opposite would be futurity. Clinically this is significant because what is suggested is that the way forward is gained through going backwards.

Therefore futurity is gained through returning to the neglected image of the abandoned child. In other words, for psychic growth to occur, it is essential to allow regression to the psychic abandoned child. With this return one begins to experience all the feelings mentioned in Hillman's quote. Through experiencing and finding symbolic expression for these, one begins to move forward.

Before discussing the child motif in more detail, it is essential to discuss literal concepts surrounding the child as these have an effect on the archetypal image. Hillman (1975) discusses the difficulties with the concepts of child and childhood as historically they have been literalised from an adult perspective and polarised into versions that are either idealised or devalued. An example of the former is the idea of child as innocent, all good and with no perversity, whereas the latter equates it with all that is perverse and unacceptable. The problem with the notion of childhood still remains because we still get caught up with the ideal of actual children as we need to literalise our fantasy of what child means.

Initially, Freud, who analysed adult patients, believed that neurosis was due to repressed memories from

childhood. He later abandoned this idea and suggested that a fantasy child was at play and that events were not literal memories being retold. What is of note is that he remained firm in his belief that analysis was always analysis of the fantasy child (Hillman, 1975).

Again the notion of imaging or de-literalisation is needed to understand the child motif. Jung suggests that it is essential to abandon one's concrete idea of the child and see it instead as a means to express a psychic fact that cannot be formulated in an easier manner (Hillman, 1975).

"Clearly some realm of the psyche is being personified by the child and carried by the child for the adult" (Hillman, 1975, p.8). What this quote emphasises and what is further assumed is that the reader will view the discussion on the child motif as imaginal possibility and not literal actuality. Once this is established, one can pursue the motif which projects itself vividly and draws the imaginal towards itself.

Jung states:

"The 'child' is all that is abandoned and exposed and at the same time divinely powerful; the insignificant dubious beginnings and the triumphant end. The 'eternal child' in man is an indescribable experience, an incongruity, a handicap, and a divine prerogative: an

imponderable that determines the ultimate worth or worthlessness of a personality" (Jung, 1954, in Hillman, 1975, p.11).

Both Freud and Jung extended the idea of the child as creative. Jung further included such ideas as heroic, invincible, futurity, hermaphroditism and abandonment. Hillman included the poor simple orphan of the psyche and society. He further included outcast and, referring to the gospels, the ideas of child as associated with the irrational and soul as opposed to learning, rationale and matters of the mind.

Hillman (1975) proposed that the general theme of the abandoned child becomes privately subjective once it is enacted and this alters singular consciousness with regard to the child. Through this enactment one begins to subjectively feel this child. Instead of projecting onto actual childhood what is either idealised or devalued, one begins to feel the dual nature of the child and all that it embodies. What emerges are all the possibilities for growth and individuation, as well as the many limitations of being dependent and unable to venture out. One is faced with its omnipotent fantasies but also with hopeless surrender. What then arises is a new consciousness about the child motif.

2.3.1 Enactment of the child motif

Initially abandonment may occur in dreams. The usual response of the dreamer's ego is to resolve to take better care of the psychic abandoned child. Hillman (1975) proposes standing in all parts of the dream. His reasoning is that by focusing on the ego and responsibility, the parent motif may be strengthened at the expense of the child motif. This strengthening of the consciousness may obliterate subjective feelings of neglect and abandonment which further distances us from the child.

Historically, what is seen as fundamentally wrong has been placed onto the child. Children are not taken for what they are and are continually being initiated through ceremonies such as baptism, and the various ceremonies initiating the child out of childhood into adolescence. The function of these ceremonies appears to be to prevent regression and offer repression in its place. As Hillman points out, regression is simply a return to the child archetype.

Because the archetypal child is part of the psyche, this necessitates it always being with and part of us. When it is repressed and denied it is literally acted out. A

place where this usually occurs is in intimate relationships and, more so, in marriage. Marriage offers the abandoned child in each party a sanctuary, as finding home, being at home and heading home are emotions belonging to the child. Often marriages are full of emotionalism or stifled into social norms, both being attempts to repress and contain the abandoned child. Imagination, which also belongs to the child, is lost in these attempts at stifling it (Hillman, 1975, p.15).

2.3.2 Fantasies surrounding the child

Some of the fantasies that belong to the child are as follows: independence, growth, stasis, origin, creativity and futurity. Each of these will be briefly discussed.

Fantasy of independence

The idea of the child evokes the image of moving - out of childhood towards independence. Therefore a regression to the child is also seen as a desire to move forward. In other words, abandonment to the child is a necessary condition for the process of individuation.

As noted by Hillman, the abandoned child is never alone.

He says: "...child does not represent solitary self, but a psychic condition in need and cared for by animals, nurses, foster parents...its essence is dependent" (Hillman, 1975, p.26). He suggests that independence does not necessarily literally mean that, but could also mean broadening areas of dependency by being sensitive to one's needs for help and support.

Hillman notes that by being in the fantasy of independence, one is also nurturing the fantasy of dependence, even if secretly so, because what is presented to the world always has its opposite as its shadow.

Fantasy of growth

The notion of growth appears fundamental to any psychological school, whether to learn to trust, to learn to be independent, or to have a better quality of life. What is suggested is that the growth fantasy appeals to the child rather than the staid adult with cynical beliefs. What is of note is that the realm of psychology turns to the child in order to understand the adult. It blames the adult for repressing the child and thus psychological thought could be seen as childish in being too optimistic and too simple. When this occurs we turn away from the child back into the world of the

adult, for a while, until this archetype is again needed to take us forward.

The static child

As mentioned previously, the discussion of the child motif always involves growth, but what is important to note is that the child archetype is always static. When we return to it, it is still the child and personifies that which will never grow up. Hillman uses the notion of the Gods to emphasise this point. Child Zeus and Dionysos do not grow, it is one of their faces - not stages. They do not leave the child behind to become mature but the face of the child remains with them never to grow. However much we want to save the child from abandonment, we cannot because when we return to this psychic condition, we again face its abandonment.

Fantasy of origins

When exploring the fantasy of origins, the archetypal child returns in such fantasies as the primal scene and birth traumas. Belief in settling the sources of our origins distils the anxiety but does not really settle the problem since sources of origins are more a fantasy than a literal reality. The child is using the imaginal in its investigation and when the imaginal reconstructs beginnings, the archetypal urge is satisfied, anxiety is dissipated, and the archetypal child has found home.

Fantasy of creativity

Play, originality, spontaneity and the imaginative are all positive attributes used to express the child. The problem is that they are almost held in reverie without acknowledging that imagination and creativity are also disciplined and require work (Hillman, 1975). Thus creativity doesn't need to remain only in the realm of childhood but needs to be used by the adult in order to live creatively.

Fantasies of futurity

Our hopes for the future also belong to our archetypal child. Because the child is impatient, very often the hopes become goals and then the fantasy becomes literalised. "A goal, from the psychological point of view, is a final cause in Aristotle's sense of 'that for the sake of which'..., the child is never absent: We feel him in our hoping. But then he gets abandoned by throwing himself forward into goal, fantasies, hopes literalised" (Hillman, 1975, p.34).

Psychology speaks of goals which it assumes it has taken, empirically, from the psyche. Examples of these are personality synthesis, wholeness, individuation and self. Hillman (1975) notes that we should separate spontaneous images of completion from literalisation

into goals. For example: literally placing futurity into the future is as foolish as literally taking an efficient cause and placing it into the past. Therefore by literally fixing on goals, we have taken the imaginal hope and literalised it into a goal. Then we have become possessed by the goal rather than us possessing the fantasy. In other words, we have fallen into its power (goal) and are held in its grip and therefore cannot move forward.

2.4 Archetypes accompanying the child

As mentioned previously, the child never returns alone. The archetypes that will be discussed in this paper are 'the mother', 'the nurse' and 'the rescuer' (saviour). Although there are others, these particular motifs are relevant in the present case study.

Hillman (1975) describes the mother as always being too much, expecting too much and being obsessed with how things will end. Everything is exaggerated and expectations are impossible.

The nurse, on the other hand, is non personal - the one who binds up and protects and does not go beyond these matter-of-fact needs: "There is care with little

hoping" (Hillman, 1975, p.37). The nurse, then, accepts the child in its weakness and woundedness and expects nothing.

The child may also return with a saviour or rescuer. The demand here is that the rescuer rescues the child from its abandoned state. In clinical terms, very often this is projected onto the therapist. It should be noted that the cry can never be cured, as the abandoned child is always there as an archetypal necessity: "...the abandoned child is a mythological motif, it stands as a permanent psychological reality, not to be cured but to be enacted" (Hillman, 1975, p.42).

Hillman (1975) notes that by carrying the child with us it is never repressed. We need to go back to the archetypal child to find the abandoned powers of the imaginal reality. In repressing this we become abandoned to rationalised fantasies which take us nowhere.

2.5 The usefulness of Hillman's theory for clinical practitioners

The general aim of depth psychotherapy is to assist the patient from pathologically acting out in his/her environment and therefore attaining the ability to live

more creatively. An understanding of the process of de-literalisation, as outlined by Hillman, may assist the clinician in helping the patient move from a literal manifestation to the symbolic ability to internally hold and creatively use images.

The process also offers clinicians a positive way of viewing these behaviours which are usually referred to as 'infantile'. It is an empathic view that sees beyond the overt to the covert meaning for soul. However, although empathic, it is also pragmatic:

"For all its emphasis on the individualised soul, archetypal psychology sets this soul and its making squarely in the world. And it does not seek a way out of or beyond the world toward redemption, or mystical transcendence because the way through the world is more difficult to find than the way beyond it" (Hillman, 1985, p.26).

Therefore although it acknowledges subjectivity, it avoids being omnipotent and salvational by literally believing in such concepts as wholeness, individuation, etc.

In the course of depth psychotherapy, archetypes will generally emerge. Through an understanding of these phenomena, clinicians are more able to view these as the search for possibility and meaning, rather than pathological literalities to be cured.

Each individual may display a different constellation of images. But because depth psychotherapy encourages regression, the archetypal child tends to emerge with most patients. Hillman provides a rich and detailed account of this motif. Furthermore many depth therapies view therapy as a curing of this child, and thus again, a repression. Hillman, on the other hand, pragmatically views it as being an archetypal necessity that never leaves us. He poses ways to avoid its repression and carry its face and potential with us throughout life.

In conclusion, Hillman's work offers practitioners a useful, but rich way of understanding and working with the process of therapy.

CHAPTER 3

Presentation of the Therapy Case

The present case will be used to show how through the process of de-literalisation, the patient moves from literally polarising archetypes within her relationship to others, to internalising them - thus finding a home for her "abandoned child".

3.1 Clinical material

The patient is a 23-year-old woman who, for the purposes of this paper, will be known as Sasha. Sasha, a final year Social Work student, is an attractive young woman with a well-rounded body which appears full, rather than plump. Two years before starting therapy with me, she had referred herself to the clinic and she had had about 34 therapy sessions. When her therapist left town she was in crisis. Because of a confidentiality issue we started therapy only three months later. The patient was graduating at the end of the year and she knew that the therapy was limited to 12 sessions.

To present a fuller picture of the patient, an exposé of her presenting problem will also be included.

Presenting problem

Sasha initially presented at the clinic with feelings of being overwhelmed by life. Her initial description was as follows: "The breaking up of a five year relationship with my boyfriend started it all. Since then I have lost my footing in this world and feel helpless and ineffective in my decisions and choices. I have lost faith in my ability to cope as an independent woman and all this is affecting my sleep and work."

Sasha reported that in the past, she had coped, and that she had a clear understanding of how and why things happened. At the time of starting therapy, she felt that she had lost her ability for clarity and everything seemed to be out of control. She said that she had failed her recent exams - and she had never failed an exam before. She also felt that her judgement was impaired and gave a recent scooter accident as an example of this.

Her two reasons for presently wanting therapy were the unresolved feelings over a recent abortion and ambivalent feelings towards her boyfriend, David, who would have been the father. David was living overseas when she found out that she was pregnant. He made financial arrangements for her to join him and get an abortion there.

Because of her Catholicism, Sasha had extreme moral difficulty with the decision to have an abortion. She felt that, given her present circumstances, it was the right decision, but she was experiencing sadness and guilt over the abortion.

At the time of the abortion and after, she had to arrange the practical issues and support David emotionally, whereas she herself was feeling in dire need of being taken care of practically, as well as emotionally. Sasha reported that on her arrival David had not organised a place for her to stay and relied on her to organise practicalities. She spoke about David ignoring feelings about the abortion and just talking about his difficulties in living in a new country. To this, Sasha said that she felt she was always good at taking care of others, but was unable to allow others to take care of her. She identifies this as her general pattern of relating and as being problematic.

Our initial meeting was just before a week's vacation and we arranged to meet twice weekly after the vacation until the end of year exams started.

Background information

Mother is divorced and remarried. Sasha describes her as a strong, capable woman who is hardened to pain.

Their relationship is reportedly very good, especially since Sasha had left home. Further probing revealed feelings of needing to protect her mother as she had had a very hard life. Sasha was conceived out of wedlock and her mother had felt pressured to marry her father. However, Sasha was adamant that her mother had really wanted her. She said: "She has proved through her actions that my sister and I are the best things that happened to her."

Father was described as idealising her and she was his favourite. She said that he had become an alcoholic while she was quite young. She vaguely remembers his binges, but said that he would always make attempts at reparation by buying his family expensive presents.

Sasha said that he had physically abused his wife when he was drunk and that she had finally taken the children and left him when Sasha was ten years old. Her mother had not explained to her children the reason for leaving him, assuming that the children understood and felt the same way as she did. Only recently Sasha told her mother the confusion she had felt at that time. She had one telephonic conversation with her father after they left and had news of him through her mother who kept contact for a short while after the divorce. The death

of her paternal grandmother some time ago broke Sasha's last link with her father.

Stepfather. When Sasha was thirteen years old, her mother remarried. Her explanation to her children was that she was marrying him to provide a good home for them. Sasha said that her initial feeling towards her stepfather was anger as she felt he had taken her mother from them and was taking the rightful place of her father. She said that later she oscillated between desperately wanting his attention, to angry feelings towards him for not caring for her. Now she accepts that he has been good to her mother but she feels that he has never nurtured her.

Siblings. Her stepbrothers are 29 and 33 years old and are both married. Sasha has a good relationship with them and described them as being more like friends than brothers.

Her sister Kate (22) is ten months younger than Sasha. She had a learning problem when she was young and her mother spent a lot of time taking care of her younger child. Sasha said that she had a very good relationship with Kate in that they have always been particularly close. She reported feeling very protective towards her sister.

Personal History

After Sasha was conceived, her parents married and moved to Zimbabwe where she was born. She described herself as a "calm quiet baby". Although she began walking late she described her other milestones as being within the normal range.

When Sasha was ten years old, her parents divorced and her mother and the two children moved to South Africa. At this time Sasha was very confused and until recently experienced tremendous guilt at them having left her father. She described her early adolescent years as being very difficult because of a stormy relationship with her stepfather.

At 15 years old, she had her first intimate and sexual relationship, with Gavin. She described him as being a father figure who really took care of her needs. She acknowledged being extremely dependent on him and that all her decisions, including the decision to study further, were on his advice. When he ended the relationship she felt devastated and this was a significant factor in her decision to initially visit the clinic.

Last year she began a relationship with her present

boyfriend, David. She sees it as being healthier in that she is not dependent in the same way as she was with Gavin. However she also feels that there is a problem in that she is the "nurturer" and is often left feeling dissatisfied within this relationship.

Although she described herself as a warm friendly person, Sasha reported having only one close friend whom she really trusts. She felt that her problems were becoming too much of a burden on this friendship and that she needed a safe place to talk about them. Hence her return to therapy.

3.2 Course of psychotherapy

The most dominant themes to emerge in the course of therapy were as follows: abandoning and being abandoned; blame and forgiveness; and the process of mourning these by crying in all but one of the sessions. The evidence of these will be identified as they unfolded in the therapy sessions. Through this process an attempt will be made to view these in the light of Hillman's contribution to archetypal motifs and the process of de-literalisation.

Sasha's initial inability to hold all the archetypal

figures inside herself and literally enact them in her relationships is focussed upon, as well as the process of de-literalisation that occurred as the resolution to the internal union of these figures.

The theme of crying occurred throughout sessions and the importance of this will be viewed in the next section.

Theme: Session 1

Sasha began the therapy by speaking about her recent abortion and about her feelings of extreme guilt for having got rid of her baby. She said that, with the exception of one friend, she had felt unsupported since this incident. She also discussed the difficulties she had experienced with David at the time of her abortion. She felt she had supported him when she was feeling desperately in need of support and nurturance herself. On returning home she had written a number of letters expressing her anger. Before she sent these she had received a letter from him saying that she was always supporting others because it was easier for her than asking for support. She felt enlightened by this but also experienced guilt. She felt that it made her realise that she was as much to blame as he was, but she had been oblivious to this and had blamed him.

Interpretation

1. Sasha blames herself for literally abandoning her baby by having the abortion. To view this from an archetypal perspective, she experiences herself as the one who abandons in this instance.
2. She feels unsupported with the exception of one friend. In this situation she sees herself as the abandoned one. However, there is help in the form of her friend who is experienced as the rescuer.
3. In relation to her boyfriend she is the rescuer who feels resentment because she feels abandoned and in need of rescuing.

What is beginning to emerge are the archetypal figures in Sasha's world. These are: the abandoned child (one), the one who abandons, and the rescuer.

Theme: Session 2

Sasha had recently been on holiday and stayed with her family. She spoke of wanting to tell her mother about the abortion but did not have the chance. Her mother told her that she had not loved either of her daughters during her pregnancies. She also mentioned having secrets from Sasha as she was sure that Sasha had

secrets from her, and that some things could not be shared. Sasha said she felt upset that her mother had secrets from her and experienced ambivalent feelings about the abortion. On the one hand she felt relief, but on the other hand she wanted to tell her mother.

She further discussed feelings of guilt about the abortion and hurt towards David for his seeming lack of guilt over what they had done. She was asked if she could forgive herself. She replied that she wanted forgiveness from outside.

Interpretation

1. Her mother's confession about her feelings during pregnancy suggests a literal abandonment of an unwanted child. When her mother admits to having secrets from her, Sasha feels abandoned. Her mother becomes the abandoner and she is the abandoned child.
2. In her discussion of the abortion, initially she feels the one to be the abandoner, then transfers this to David for an instant, but again becomes the abandoner and experiences guilt. By wanting forgiveness from outside she is looking for the saviour or rescuer externally.

There is more evidence to support the archetypal figures experienced by Sasha. What also emerges is the tension she experiences between these imaginal figures. She cannot contain them all within and while she enacts one, she must project the other onto external figures in her day to day life.

Theme: Session 3

Sasha spoke of a recent letter from David in which he mentioned feeling suicidal. She felt both fear and anger. She feared that he may attempt suicide, but anger that he wasn't considering her.

She also discussed her difficulty with receiving help and care from others because of a fear that her needs are excessive. Sasha mentioned her feelings about having left her father and the enormous guilt she still experiences with this.

Interpretation

1. Sasha experiences both fear of being abandoned and anger towards the one who potentially could abandon, namely: David. Archetypally her 'child' experiences both fear and anger at its abandonment.

2. She feels an inability to find a rescuer because her abandoned child's needs appear too great.
3. In relation to her father, she experiences being the abandoner and feels extreme guilt. In psychic terms this may be viewed as her adult ego experiencing guilt towards the abandoned one.

What is confirmed here is Sasha's inability to yet hold all the archetypal figures symbolically.

Theme: Session 4

Sasha spoke about her fear of David leaving her. She also spoke about her inability to trust him enough to allow him to meet some of her needs. She said she would rather do it herself because she feared that if she did allow it, he would not be able to do it properly. She also described a fantasy in which they were married with children but that he would continually have affairs with other women. She discussed mothering David and explained that it was because she wanted him to take care of her but she felt that that was not possible. She said she compensated for this by giving him what she wanted.

Interpretation

1. Again there is a fear of literal abandonment by David, but there is also an inability to trust that he could meet her needs. In psychic terms it is suggested that Sasha is experiencing the abandoned child as too-much and impossible to rescue. The belief that there is no external rescuer is a valid one and is a speaking from soul. It is a call to creatively find a rescuer within. However, Sasha cannot as yet respond, and denies its call.
2. Sasha shows insight in her acknowledgement of enacting what she herself wants, namely: mothering. She experiences the call from the abandoned child but psychically she cannot yet respond and instead attempts to take care of others. This is not experienced as satisfying.

There is movement in that Sasha acknowledges that she externally enacts what she needs, but she is still caught up in the need to project outward.

Theme: Session 5

Sasha mentioned that her two close friends had gone away with their respective lovers for the weekend. She said

she had had lots of work to do but had done nothing and just felt miserable all weekend. She said she spent a lot of the weekend wishing that David was there and could hold and comfort her at night. She spoke of feeling so alone and that this was the only place she could talk, and that was only twice a week for 45 minutes.

She spoke of feeling abandoned by an ex-boyfriend and how she felt a loss of self when he went away. She also spoke of feeling abandoned by her previous therapist at a time when she desperately needed her because she was pregnant.

Interpretation

1. Sasha again mentions feelings of abandonment and a calling for rescuers in the form of David and the therapist.
2. She speaks of previous abandonment by her ex-boyfriend and ex-therapist, and her feelings of an inability to literally take care of herself. Again, the abandoned child is asking to be rescued externally.

In this session the abandoned child was enacted through-

out the session. Sasha speaks of past abandonment and her inability to deal with it. Her abandoned cry to the therapist is: "I can't cope, take care of me, don't leave me."

Theme: Session 6

Termination was introduced by the therapist. Sasha responded by talking about future plans to join David overseas after graduation.

She explored her pattern of relating in intimate relationships. She discussed her present relationship in terms of beginning to own her behaviour and the possibility of sharing responsibilities equally. She mentioned some of David's behaviour as being problematic for her, but also said that she was now aware of everyone having limits, including herself.

She also said that before coming to therapy she had had a desire for her close friend to take complete care of her. At some point she had realised what she was asking and had stopped because she was aware that it would have destroyed their friendship.

She also discussed the abortion and said that although

she would always carry it with her, she no longer felt that she was a dreadful monster for having done what she had.

At the end of the session she asked why sessions were 45 minutes instead of 60 minutes. It was explained that as beginning therapists, this was standard. Sasha spoke about the difficulty for therapists and how drained and exhausted they must feel when people were crying and demanding. She was asked whether she felt a need to also take care of the therapist. She responded that this was one place where she didn't feel the need to do that.

Interpretation

1. Sasha responds to the issue of termination with positive plans for the future. She denies possible feelings of abandonment in this response.
2. Sasha acknowledges her patterns of relating in past relationships and appears to own her "problematic" behaviours. The question that could be raised is where is the abandoned child, or the one who abandons? One explanation could be that the literal rational ego has stepped in, denying both the abandoned child and the one who abandons.

3. In discussing her desire for her friend to take care of all her needs, Sasha is aware that her abandoned child needs are overwhelming and if literally acted out, could have destroyed the friendship. Psychically, she is aware of the sometimes impossible demands of the abandoned child.
4. In terms of the abortion, she is beginning to forgive herself. In psychic terms, it is suggested that this represents a combination of a rescuer who forgives and a nurse who accepts and mends.

Through her ability to forgive herself she is beginning the process of de-literalisation. In relation to this issue she is no longer only abandoner but also rescuer: she comes to her own rescue by forgiving herself. She has internalised both by no longer expecting the rescuer to be an outside figure.

Theme: Session 7

Sasha discussed the abortion and her feelings about David in a very similar way to Session 1, in that she blamed herself for the abortion. She spoke differently about the experience with David in that she becomes the one to blame because she hadn't asked for help. She spoke about having written poems to the baby. It was

explored whether she wanted to share these in the therapy. She said that she did, although it was difficult.

At the end of the session she gave the therapist a drawing and asked if she would keep it until next session when she would explain it to her.

Interpretation

1. She reverts to feeling the abandoner in relation to her aborted child. However, she has begun symbolically to work through this by writing poetry to her unborn child. She is no longer looking for forgiveness from the church or the therapist or another person, but rather is using her own creative resources to come to terms with her feelings of being the abandoner. Hillman would see poetry as soul-making and therefore her poetry is part of the de-literalisation process.
2. Although she blames herself for not having asked for her practical needs to be met, there is a movement in that she sees herself as abandoning and being abandoned through her own behaviour. Psychically, Sasha is beginning to internalise both the abandoner and the abandoned one. She is able to hold the

tension of seeing herself as both simultaneously. The movement here is that she has internalised both these archetypal figures and doesn't have to enact one and project the other outwards.

3. By asking the therapist to keep the picture until the next session, Sasha is being the abandoned child asking the therapist to symbolically hold that part of her until the next session. There is movement in this symbolic gesture in that she is not literally asking to be cared for but instead is able to use an imaginative stance.

There are two elements that suggest the beginning of the process of de-literalisation. Firstly, she is beginning to internalise being both the abandoner and the abandoned one. Secondly, she symbolically asks the therapist to hold a part of her until they next meet.

Theme: Session 8

Sasha started the session by taking out her poems. She said she could not read them but would leave them with the therapist. She discussed her feelings about them and said it brought up the raw pain.

She discussed the picture she had left with the

therapist which was about her difficulty in asking others to meet any of her needs. She mentioned her friend, David and her mother. She explored how it was even more difficult for David because of her past relationship in which her needs were met so well, so that when her ex-boyfriend left she felt completely abandoned.

She again discussed the poems and said when they were returned she would begin reading and re-reading them until she could let go.

Interpretation

1. Sasha is exploring her abandoned child's needs. The difference here is that she uses a drawing she has done to do this. Although she still feels abandoned, she is finding a more symbolic venue to house these feelings. In other words, she is using her own imagination to explore her feelings of abandonment, rather than literally enacting them in relation to others.
2. Her decision to re-read the poems is also a symbolic way of forgiving herself for abandoning her baby. Instead of just enacting being the abandoner, she is finding a soul-ful way to forgiving herself. Her poems express this desire for internal forgiveness.

3. She again leaves something with the therapist which is a symbolic gesture saying that, as yet, she cannot take care of her psychic abandoned child.

Theme: Session 9

Sasha mainly discussed her inability to ask David to meet her needs. What emerged was that she expects him to know what she needs. She spoke about feeling confused about these needs and, even if he were open to them, she is unable to express them. She also acknowledged that it was impossible to expect him to take care of all her needs.

Termination was raised by the therapist suggesting that the ending needed to be explored. Sasha responded by saying "so you want us to discuss that for the rest of the sessions". The response was that the therapist did not intend to direct the sessions but that the issue did need to be addressed at some point.

Interpretation

1. In Sasha expecting David to know her needs without her articulating them, she is expressing the psychic child who expects to be taken care of omnipotently.

2. She also enacts the child in relation to the therapist who is almost seen as 'the adult who knows best'.

Theme: Session 10

Termination was explored. Sasha said she experienced it as less problematic than with her previous therapy because from the beginning she was aware of the limits. She said she had expected her previous therapist to be there forever, especially as she was pregnant close to the time of termination.

She spoke of fears of not coping during exams. I offered to see her during this period. Sasha became very upset and said that she was not being trusted to cope. I said that I did trust her and I felt that this was my issue that I needed to look at.

Interpretation

1. Sasha shows movement from her previous therapy where she felt abandoned by the therapist even though she was aware of the termination date a while before the event.
2. In the therapist's countertransference, Sasha feels a

sense of abandonment in that she is not trusted to cope on her own. The therapist's previous affirmation of her abilities is removed and she is thrown into doubt about taking care of herself. Psychically, the therapist in this instance is experienced as abandoning her, which raises doubts as to whether she can take care of her own abandoned child.

Theme: Session 11

Sasha arrived at the session with a large collage. She began by telling the therapist that although she had said the remark was her mistake, some good had come of it. She discussed the collage which was about endings. The endings that felt complete for Sasha were with her ex-boyfriend, Gavin, and her mother. Explaining the latter, she said she had wanted to change things with her mother, but that although there was sadness at the futility of this, she had come to accept her mother as she was. She spoke about her father and said although this was not resolved she could let go of it. In the centre of the collage were two pairs of hands moulding clay. She explained that this represented her two therapists and that although she felt she would go back to therapy at a later stage, at present she felt she had been helped and could cope on her own.



At the end of the collage was a photograph of herself and David with a tree next to it. She explained that this was a new beginning and the tree represented growth and life.

Interpretation

1. The collage represented endings and a new beginning. Through symbolisation, Sasha creatively changes this ending and sees previous endings in a different light - she no longer feels abandoned. This is evidenced in her ability to reach a resolution over her ending with Gavin and her ex-therapist. Although she acknowledges that her ending with her father is not completely resolved, she has changed in that she no longer feels the abandoner in relation to him. She feels she can let go.
2. Through the ability to de-literalise, Sasha creatively deals with her previous feelings of being abandoned. In psychic terms, what has occurred is a resolution of the drama through her archetypal figures making restitution with one another. The abandoned child forgives, finds home, and can go out and play.

Theme: Session 12

Sasha discussed her difficulty at saying goodbye because it was so final. She discussed what she had got out of therapy. She said the most important thing for her was that she was able to forgive herself for the abortion. We explored how she had come into therapy trying to deal with this death and how she was ending with life. She spoke about how different this felt because she was leaving me and although she wished she could stay in therapy, it was not possible because of the choices she had made. She spoke of the new possibilities in her relationship with David and that she had a sense of beginning again.

The therapist asked her if she would be prepared to allow her to use her material for the present thesis. She agreed, signed the form, and spoke about a desire to read the thesis and see it from the therapist's perspective. She added, "but maybe not."

Interpretation

Sasha sees herself as leaving but not abandoning the therapist; she acknowledges the movement in the present therapy as her ability to forgive herself and thus feel

free to venture out. In psychic terms, Sasha has resolved the tension through the process of de-literalisation. She is able to hold all the archetypal figures internally and no longer needs to literally act these out in her external relationships.

Discussion

Throughout the course of therapy, with the exception of Session 6, Sasha openly cried. The tears rolled down her face during most of each session. Through her tears, Sasha was mourning her own feelings of abandonment and those whom she felt she had abandoned. Her tears increased when she spoke of the abortion. From Hillman's perspective, the tears could be seen as a return to soul, and crucial to the de-literalisation process. Through grieving her own abandonment and those whom she experiences as having abandoned, she was able to forgive herself and others.

When we began the therapy it was evident in the first session that Sasha had difficulty with the issue of blame and abandonment. In her intimate relating to others there had to be one who abandoned and the other who was abandoned. This inevitably denotes blame.

She struggled with this issue through the course of therapy. It was never directly interpreted but when she was experiencing herself as the abandoner, she was, on several occasions, asked if she could forgive herself. Her subjective report at the end of her therapy was that the one thing she had got out of the process was the

ability to forgive herself. Through being able to forgive herself she was also able to forgive others in her life for abandoning her, and with this came the ability to de-literalise abandonment and see it more symbolically. This was evidenced in her creative production of a collage in Session 11.

In this collage, the endings that had previously been experienced as literal abandonment had changed. She no longer felt abandoned by Gavin, her ex-boyfriend, and saw that ending as complete. It had been an experience in her life which she no longer had to mourn and hold onto: she could finally let go.

Her experience of having abandoned her father had also altered. It was no longer as important as it had been in the past. As she said, although it wasn't completely resolved, she could let go of it, too. Her mother, whom she felt she had to rescue, was no longer experienced in this way. Sasha felt sadness at the fact that her mother couldn't change and that it was not her role to save her. However, she accepted this and let go of the role of the literal rescuer of her mother.

Her previous therapist, whom she felt had abandoned her in crisis, was together with her present therapist in

the centre of the collage. Instead of being seen as an abandoner, she was viewed in a different light, as playing a positive, central role in Sasha's process of change.

Due to my countertransference in Session 10, the ending of this relationship could have been damaged. However, Sasha used this mistake creatively, by making a collage and dealing symbolically with this and all her other endings.

Finally, the collage ended with a photograph of her and David together, with a tree next to them. Sasha's explanation was that the tree symbolised beginnings, growth and new life.

Sasha was, initially, unable to nurture and be nurtured simultaneously. Again, she had to enact one and project the other outwards. It is suggested that her nurturance was done with resentment and was, therefore, not true nurturance. Because of this, she could not experience the other's nurturance in return. In other words, she was so caught up in herself literally as either nurturer or the one being nurtured, that she could not experience both giving and taking simultaneously. Her nurturance was done in the hope of receiving and not honestly in a real desire to openly nurture.

In relation to the therapist, she experienced herself as the one who was nurtured and the therapist as the one who nurtured. Although this is essentially true, therapists by their nurturing do also receive something in return. This was not openly addressed between therapist and patient but it is felt that Sasha left with the knowledge that therapy had been a good experience for both.

More pertinent, perhaps, is the change with regard to David. She generally saw herself as the nurturer and he as the nurtured one. By the end of therapy this had moved and she saw the possibility of mutuality, in that they could be together, grow and share with each other.

Archetypally, the constellation of figures pertinent to Sasha during this therapy were: the abandoned one (child); the abandoner (mother); and the rescuer. Initially, Sasha enacted one of these figures and projected the other externally. This always had a dualistic nature in that the figures were the abandoner and the abandoned. The continual call was for someone in the form of a rescuer. During the course of therapy, the form of the rescuer emerged through Sasha's ability to symbolise and change her experiences of being abandoned and abandoning. The tears began this process

and were a calling to her psyche to find a way to de-literalise her experience. The answer came in the form of forgiveness. Once she was able to begin forgiving herself, she started finding creative ways to express her own abandoned child motif and change its experience. When she no longer experienced it as being abandoned, she found its other face: creative and imaginative living. She had come home, was accepted and could, therefore, venture out to play.

It is essential to point out that although this therapy was only 12 sessions, Sasha had been in depth therapy a short while before her commencement of this present therapy. It is felt that the possibility of the change is doubtful if she had not previously experienced depth therapy.

Hillman's contribution to archetypal psychology was conducive to an understanding of the present therapy case. His belief that depth therapy offers a haven for the archetypal abandoned child to creep out of hiding was supported in this instance. The archetypal child was literally enacted through Sasha's continual reference to, and feelings of, abandonment. Hillman's belief that the abandoned child is never alone but comes with other archetypal figures is also witnessed in the

present case. Sasha's archetypal child was accompanied by the archetypal mother, the rescuer and the nurse.

The archetypal mother presented in the form of the one who abandoned. Sasha enacted the archetypal mother in relation to her aborted child. When she enacted this figure she expected too much of herself: 'she should not have done what she did, she could not be forgiven.'

The nurse was enacted through her tears. The tears were her way of caring for the abandoned child in all its woundedness. Nothing was expected, just accepted. The abandoned condition was acknowledged and the archetypal nurse was there to care for it as it was. With the presence of this archetype came the soothing of the abandoned one, allowing it to forgive the abandoner. The solution was the release of tension between these two polarised figures and finally, restitution.

Sasha's tears served a dual purpose as they also offered the way to soul and soul-making. Thus, they also represented part of the rescuer archetype. The rescuer also manifested in Sasha's ability to de-literalise by seeing beyond the event to find out its shadowy meaning. Although Sasha was not aware of this

theoretically, behaviourally she demonstrated the movement from literal enactment to de-literalisation.

Hillman's hypothesis that depth therapy is about the process of soul-making or de-literalisation is supported in the present case. In the beginning of the therapy Sasha demonstrated her inability to hold and contain all her archetypal figures within her psyche. Their polarisation was indicated through her need to project one outwardly onto another person. During the course of therapy, she moved towards an ability to see herself simultaneously as both abandoner and abandoned. As mentioned previously, this occurred through her tears (a talking from soul), to creatively working with and seeing the meaning of abandonment differently.

In Hillman's terms, what occurred was a re-writing of her story. Where previously she felt abandoned and abandoning, she moved towards feeling nurtured and wanting to nurture. She entered therapy involved with the issue of death. She left wanting to enter into all the possibility involved in life. Finally, by caring for her abandoned child archetype, she was ready to accept and carry its many changing faces with her, to embrace the possibility of many different and new stories that would be hers.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the value of a case study of this kind is that it offers a contribution in the following ways: Firstly, it may be useful in indicating to beginner therapists how theory can relate to practise. Secondly, a study of this nature could add to case law theory in the particular area under investigation. A number of case studies using Hillman's concepts on abandonment and de-literalisation could contribute to the validity of his theory.

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