

Feeling as a Heroic Act:
An Enneagram Perspective on the American Myth of Progress

We know certain things: that power and fear are cast out by love, that relationships cannot advance without frankness and integrity, that a man must have honor, that self-deception leads to catastrophe. (Hillman, 130)

When we participate in a culture, we also participate in its collective myth. Psychoanalyst

C. G. Jung noted this when he wrote:

Almost every great country has its collective attitude... Sometimes you can catch it in a formula, sometimes it is more elusive, yet nonetheless it is indescribably present as a sort of atmosphere that permeates everything, the look of the people, their speech, behavior, clothing, smell, their interests, ideals, politics, philosophy, art, and even their religion. (Jung, 1964, p. 511)

The collective myth of a nation can be described as the organizing storylines that run, often unconsciously, through the culture. We can glimpse their themes by observing the spectacular successes, unique events and recurrent weaknesses displayed in the history of a nation. During the 20th century, America reigned as the most prosperous country in the world, full of resources, capital, entrepreneurship, and the prospect of unlimited growth. How do we reconcile this with the fact that Americans today are the most in debt, addicted, busy, obese and medicated society in the world? (Brown, 2010) Taken together, these phenomena illuminate a prevailing psychological pattern that dominates our collective identity in the United States. It is also showing signs of running its course. I call this cultural pattern the myth of progress.

This essay examines the American myth of progress through two complementary lenses: depth psychology, the study of unconscious patterns, myth, dreams and symbols; and the Enneagram, a model of psychological functioning most commonly applied to individual personality (Palmer, 1995). Both fields pay close attention to the psychological structures that

shape our beliefs and filter our perceptions. Depth psychology calls these archetypes (Tarnas, 2006), while the Enneagram refers to these simply as types, describing nine basic type structures in total (Daniels & Price, 2009). These types or archetypes are patterns of meaning, showing up in both conscious and unconscious experiences. They can be applied to individual personality as well as larger scales of psychological functioning, including cultural patterns (Singer & Kimbles, 2004). The American cultural myth of progress has political and economic roots as well as implications, but the focus of this essay is on its psychological aspects. The United States' cultural norms of progress, achievement and competition match Enneagram type Three in its unconscious aspect, in which personal feelings are neglected while image, performance and success get priority above all else. In Enneagram literature one finds sporadic but consistent references to United States culture embodying the type Three pattern. Statements like, "America is the land of the Three" (Goldberg, 1999, p. 88) and "North American culture is largely Three" (Palmer, 1995, p. 89) reflect what has in effect become common knowledge in the Enneagram field. If this is accurate, then depth psychology should reflect a very similar analysis on U.S. culture. Bridging the Enneagram with depth psychology allows for a fuller analysis of the origins and development of this particular cultural complex and provides insight into how this nation's story may turn out.

I spent time in OPUS Archives¹ investigating the psychology of American culture as depth psychologists, historians and scholars have analyzed it. I paid attention to what these depth psychological scholars had to say about American psychology and how their assessments lined up with the Enneagram's description of type Three. I looked for clues as to how our current cultural story may turn out, and for illumination as to what psychological shifts are necessary for

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our sustainable presence on this planet.

The results of this inquiry yielded three themes. The first two portray the American psyche existing as a paradox. On the one hand, the American psyche embodies the ideal of the self-made individual. On the other hand, the American psyche is caught up in identification with the group, driven by collective influences. This has led to an unsustainable tension. The third theme provides some insight into resolving this paradox: the American psyche has a wounded feeling function. In the following pages I elaborate on these three themes with archival material from C.G. Jung, James Hillman, Joseph Campbell, and Joseph Wheelwright, all prominent scholars in the fields of depth psychology and mythology. Before articulating each of these themes, I demonstrate how the Enneagram type Three pattern manifests in the American culture and how it ultimately provides insight into the psychological shifts necessary for our cultural healing. The insights of the Enneagram and depth psychology inform each other in this study of American culture, and together they provide a richer view of the cultural psyche of the U.S. than either could alone.

A caveat

It is important to note that we encounter a slippery slope when we attempt to describe an entire culture in terms of a specific psychological pattern. It can become tempting to assume that this analysis then “defines” the culture, and that we can sum up citizens of that culture through this one perspective. The benefits of classification are offset by the limiting effects of stereotyping. The reality is that all cultures, just like all individuals, employ many different psychological strategies and embody multiple qualities, patterns and complex motivations. We cannot be so conveniently summed up. However, upon self-reflection many of us realize that we can be recognized by, and are indeed propelled by, a few major psychological tendencies more

than others. Likewise, one Enneagram type tends to dominate our psyche, with several other types playing supporting roles (Palmer, 1995; Riso & Hudson, 1999). The same can be said for cultural patterns. The ethos, or collective spirit, of a country can often be identified by a few predominant qualities that motivate and affect its citizens. This article therefore explores one of the major collective myths of U.S. culture, which parallels the type Three pattern in the Enneagram. This is not to say that other Enneagram patterns or other archetypal themes are not at work as well, only that type Three is currently very pronounced.

The case for America as a type Three culture

It is fairly straightforward to demonstrate that the pattern of type Three mirrors many of the values and qualities existing in current U.S. culture. Type Three is the success-oriented performer, a pattern that revolves around image, efficiency, competition, goals, and a can-do attitude. These qualities result in an adaptable achiever, one who understands what it takes to succeed in a given environment and has the ambition to do so. Underneath this drive for accomplishment lies the belief that a successful performance is the way to secure love and approval (Palmer, 1988). However, confusion can arise around identity, as “what I do” becomes “who I am,” and high productivity masks deeper feelings. Perhaps even more than achieving actual success, achieving a successful *image* is the hallmark of type Three. Chameleon-like Threes assess the values and ideals shared by a group or culture, and then masterfully adapt themselves to display those preferred qualities. In short, Threes seek to impress. They work hard to succeed in the eyes of others.

Enneagram authors who describe type Three can sound like they are describing American values, from packaging the self as a commodity (Riso & Hudson, 1999) to working hard to be the best and maintain a good image (Daniels & Price, 2009). In the type Three paradigm, “Your

worth depends upon how well you can sell yourself or how marketable you are” (Wagner, 1996, p. 60). America is famous for its systems of efficiency in transportation, industry and commerce, and as Americans we² are infamous for our fast pace, busy lives, and multi-tasking abilities.

“Lots of folks pretend to be Threes, sometimes without knowing it,” writes Michael Goldberg, “in a culture where our identity seems to hinge on our material achievement and success” (Goldberg, 1999, p. 88).

In his observations on American culture, C. G. Jung noticed this national obsession with success and efficiency, and described the European view of Americans as being, “a very active, business-like, and astonishingly efficient people, concentrated upon a single goal” (Jung, 1964, p. 502) but he was insightful enough to see that it was not simply about money. In an essay titled, “The Complications of American Psychology,” he wrote:

America has a principle or idea or attitude, but it is surely not money. Often, when I was searching through the conscious and the unconscious mind of my American patients and pupils, I found something which I can only describe as a sort of Heroic Ideal. Your most idealistic effort is concerned with bringing out the best in every man, and when you find a good man you naturally support him and push him on, until at last he is liable to collapse from sheer exertion, success, and triumph. It is done in every family, where ambitious mothers egg their boys on with the idea that they must be heroes of some sort, or you find it in the factory, where the whole system anxiously tries to get the best man into the best place. Or again in the schools where every child is trained to be brave, courageous, efficient, and a “good sport,” a hero in short. There is no record which people will not kill themselves to break, even if it is the most appalling nonsense. The moving pictures abound with heroes of every description...America is perhaps the only country where ‘greatness’ is unrestricted, because it expresses the most fundamental hopes, desires, ambitions, and convictions of the nation. (Jung, 1964, p. 512-513)

Jung’s astute assessment of the American attitude aligns remarkably with Enneagram type Three.

In Helen Palmer’s description of type Three in North American culture, she writes, “We reward youth and vitality. We support a competitive marketing system. We expect to be propagandized

² I often use the word “we” when referring to Americans as a way of acknowledging that as the author of this essay, I include myself (as an American) in this psychological analysis.

by the media” (Palmer, 1995, p. 89). Indeed, America is immersed in cultural media that feed on advertising, where products and lifestyle images are sold as tickets to health, wealth and happiness. This focus on selling and promotional advertising reinforces the type Three motto of “Sell yourself.” The type Three pattern is built to perform. What keeps the Three pattern going in our free-enterprise society is the rags to riches story and the optimism of unlimited progress. These are two powerful forces fueling the American dream. The type Three paradigm of earning our worth through success and achievement influences us to believe in unlimited progress and to regard the rags to riches myth as the ultimate triumph.

When we are in the grip of type Three, our own desires, emotions and opinions are undervalued for the sake of embodying the right image. The inner world of feelings and values which might deviate from the expected norm are neglected. Instead, we use a psychological process called *identification* in order to shape ourselves to become like the valued people or prototypes we were exposed to when young: parents, a favorite teacher, a performer, an athlete. Threes are “particularly susceptible to identification because they look to others for approval and can therefore mobilize a lot of energy to change into what other people want” (Palmer, 1988, p. 156). Joseph Campbell correlates this impulse for identification with a quintessentially American mythology: “We have the capitalism mythology. People aligning themselves, identifying themselves with specific units, specific groups and living in terms of those commitments” (Campbell, U42).

James Hillman warns us, however, not to condemn identification. He considers it a beginning stage in the development of feeling and relationships. “No stage of a relationship should be discarded,” writes Hillman. “Identification, in fact, helps understanding, grasping the basic need of the other which we can only feel through identification with him” (Hillman, 130).

In the unconscious Three pattern, if our well-being is attached to gaining others' approval, then identification is necessary. If we don't stop and identify what our parents, teachers, peers and/or bosses value, we risk not knowing how to relate to them. We say the wrong thing. We pursue the wrong goal. If we don't look outward for successful prototypes to model ourselves after, how are we going to succeed? We might risk looking different or being cast out. Our survival depends on identification.

The result? The Enneagram describes the type Three's fixated state bluntly: deception (Palmer, 1988). In a Three culture, we deceive ourselves and others in our quest to impress and succeed. As a nation in the grip of type Three, we are indeed caught up in self-deception that is leading to catastrophe. We continue to uphold the myth of progress while ignoring dwindling resources, persistent poverty, and ecological disasters— from oil spills to hurricanes. Most notably, this cultural myth faced a severe challenge with the banking crisis of 2008 and the financial collapse of the markets not just in America but worldwide. Deception—the Achilles heel of type Three—played out on several levels in this financial drama. The general public was deceived by lenders and financial authorities, but these individuals appeared to be deceiving themselves as well. The financial crisis is a painfully excellent example of what happens when a cultural myth—in this case, the Three myth of progress—plays out its story unconsciously in the participating collective. In many ways, Americans wanted to be deceived. Self-deception was necessary in order to keep the myth alive, to keep believing that growth is unlimited and that perhaps we, too, cannot just keep up with the Joneses, but become them. Such self-deception creates enormous stress. Two outlets for this stress are fear and apathy, which are hallmarks of Enneagram types Six and Nine, respectively.

In the Enneagram, psychological functioning is seen as a dynamic system, in which each type is connected closely with two other types. For type Three, these dynamic movements are toward Six and Nine. Type Three therefore can take on negative aspects of both types Six and Nine when stressed. Figure 1 shows an image of the type Three, Six and Nine dynamic. Highlighting the Six and Nine perspectives helps to further demonstrate how the psychological pattern of type Three operates in the American psyche.

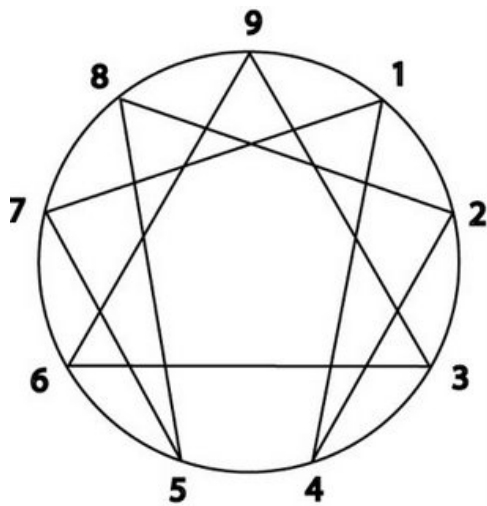


Figure 1. The Enneagram symbol.

Type Six, the hyper-vigilant watchdog

Fear and paranoia are typical of type Six when stressed, and as a nation the United States moved into this position after the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11. We as a nation are now on constant high-alert with a daily warning from the government that we are at “Threat Level Orange.” This results in intense feelings of vulnerability, which is compensated for by becoming hyper-vigilant. A typical Six reaction to such threat is to draw a sharp distinction between the in-group and the out-group. Patriotism and solidarity are key, while at the same time

the “other” is identified as an enemy to be avoided or defeated. For example, after 9/11 the “other” was explicitly named as the Axis of Evil, activating a typical stressed Six response of in-group favoritism and out-group hostility. The Patriot Act, which allowed unprecedented access into private lives, showcased a Six-like paranoia and suspicion. The dominant question was, “Who can be trusted?” There was a high need to know who was friend and who was foe. From the Six perspective, the world is uncertain, and great defenses are erected in order to create the illusion of security. Formerly called the War Department, the renamed Department of Defense reflects the Six mode of defensively reacting to what is unknown, and a majority of the federal budget goes toward funding this defense³. The banking crisis of 2008 reinforced the message that we live in uncertain times, and the collapse of the housing market in particular threatened one of our basic forms of security.

These are just some examples from recent events that showcase a psychological shift from the home base position of type Three to the stressed, defensive position of type Six. As archetypal patterns, each Enneagram type contains positive and negative manifestations of the core psychological pattern. This means that when Three enters the territory of Six, both positive and negative tendencies can be accessed. In this case, Six emerges positively as the archetypal watchdog. Amidst the financial crisis, new agencies and committees sprang up, including the Congressional Oversight Panel, designed to monitor financial regulation and the U.S. Treasury’s actions, and the Consumer Financial Protection Agency, which aimed to create more transparency in financial markets and thereby protect citizens from deceit. Given the role of the United States as a global superpower, its political and economic crises cannot be easily contained within its borders. On a global scale, we can see the American myth of progress that has

³ I credit my colleague Charles Miller for sharing this insight with me.

transformed industries and markets worldwide shifting to type Six with the birth of WikiLeaks, an international non-profit organization dedicated to exposing critical information formerly kept “classified” and hidden from the general public. For a Six, uncovering hidden motives is crucial in a world that feels threatening. Knowledge is power. With WikiLeaks, the Six watchdog turns whistleblower, exposing secrets that help to dismantle oppressive regimes.

Type Nine, the numbed consumer

Stress on type Three also can lead to apathy, the position of type Nine. The Nine defense mechanism is narcotization, which translates into numbing feelings of discomfort, pain or conflict. Hillman noted this tendency in the American psyche when he wrote that one of the results of repressed feeling was *aproxia*, a close cousin to apathy. “In modern day language it would mean the taking of tranquilizers” (Hillman, 130). This desire for a freedom from pain lands us squarely in the pharmacy. Antidepressants have now become the most commonly prescribed drug in the United States, and a record number of children are now on anti-anxiety and anti-depressant medications as well.

Self-medicating takes many forms, from food to pharmaceuticals, compulsive shopping to workaholism. Our culture of consumption encourages this, illustrated pointedly in both our obesity rates and our credit card debt. The endorsement to go out and shop as a way to demonstrate our patriotism after the 9/11 attacks reinforced what the Enneagram calls “appetite” in the type Nine psychology—the instinct to consume in order to numb any type of discomfort. These self-medicating patterns aid us in literally repressing internal feeling states that we are not prepared to deal with. In fact, to acknowledge them might only upset the pernicious belief in unlimited progress and impede the unrelenting drive for success. But the high rates of

unemployment have already upset this belief, and a lack of productive work can lead directly to apathy.

In the preceding pages I have attempted to demonstrate how American culture embodies the type Three pattern. Now, drawing from my research in the OPUS Archives, I share my analysis of American culture from a depth psychological perspective and show how it converges with the psychology of type Three. Three themes emerged: 1) the American psyche embodies the ideal of the self-made individual; 2) at the same time it is caught up in identification with the group, driven by collective influences; and 3) the American psyche has a wounded feeling function. The third theme provides some insight into resolving the paradox of the first two themes.

Theme one: America as the land of the self-made individual.

For most of human history, survival meant conforming to and supporting the group. “To sum up the whole lesson of the world of the past, one may say that in traditional societies all meaning is in the group, none in the individual” (Campbell, 121). Only in the last few hundred years has the term “individual” had meaning of any consequence. Now people are encouraged to be self-sufficient, to follow their personal dreams and goals, and to accomplish something for themselves. Indeed, personal ambition has practically become a requirement for adulthood in America. “Heroism has become democratized” (Campbell, 121), and everyone is expected to pursue his own goals and chart her own course. Campbell refers to this phenomenon as, “that precious respect for the individual which is the spiritual banner of our Christian-Democratic state” (Campbell, 121). And the task of the individual is nothing less than to create his or her own identity, to fashion it out of one’s own impetus, ability and interests. This is the American version of free will.

Campbell locates the first traces of this Western individualism, so epitomized by modern America, in none other than the legend of the Grail in the twelfth century⁴. He considers the Grail period as the launching period of the Western world, and illustrates how the seeds of our heroic individualism are scattered liberally about in this legend as each knight went his own way to discover the Grail. This legend may represent a point of departure from group identification and mark an important transition to heroic individualism.

The knights of Arthur's castle at this court were seated in the great dining hall waiting for an adventure...And then Gawain, the nephew of King Arthur, stood up and he said, 'I propose a vow. I propose that we should all go in quest of that Grail, to behold it unveiled.' And they decided they would do that...They thought it would be a disgrace to go forth in a group. Each entered the forest at the point that he had chosen. Where there was no way and it was darkest. Where there was no path. Where there is a path it's someone else's path. Go into the dark forest, find your own way. This is the sense of life that I think is the properly Occidental modern sense. Of every life as its own adventure. Respect for the uniqueness of each of these individuals so that each life unrolls on its own trajectory. And what we ultimately, deeply yearn for is exactly that, the fulfillment of our own unique potentials. (Campbell, U42)

Type Three in many ways epitomizes this spirit of an individual on its own trajectory. For a Three, hope lies in one's accomplishments, buoyed—for better or worse—by one's own merit, talent, and resources. When we succeed, we congratulate ourselves and expect to be congratulated by others on our efforts. The scant social supports America has built into its government sends a not-so-subtle message to its citizens that we must depend on ourselves and build up our own resources. We make it or break it on our own abilities. Indeed, capability may be the strength America values most. What other nations might call interdependence or even basic rights, Americans would call "asking for a handout." For Americans, there's no such thing as a free lunch. In America, we must earn it ourselves, and we are taught to be proud to do so.

⁴ I credit Richard Buchen, OPUS Archives Librarian, for sharing this insight with me and directing me to this reference.

In a lecture given in 1970, Campbell reminded his audience how unique the individual is in human history:

Now in a traditional society, which does not have a margin to tolerate variance, the individuals are trained to behave in a specific, certain way. Anyone deviating from the norm is liquidated. Our society is one of the very few in the history of the world that has been able to tolerate—and this is because of the power of our economic base and our, the wealth and the spiritual nature of our concept of a society—the only one in centuries that has asked the individual to differentiate. To find his own unique quality. (Campbell, 1970)

But have we Americans really resisted being trained to behave in a specific, certain way, according to the norms and rules of our collective society? Jung's writings suggest that he didn't think so. It is no wonder he titled his essay, "The Complications of American Psychology." In it he notes the contradiction in this young nation's psyche, between the self-made individual and the group-oriented conformist. This brings me to the second theme.

Identification with the group

Jung notes how dependent Americans are on the approval of peers, how susceptible we are to popularity, and how public are our identities.

You are simply reduced to a particle in the mass, with no other hope or expectation than the illusory goals of an eager and excited collectivity. You just swim for life, that's all. You feel free—that's the queerest thing—yet the collective movement grips you faster than any old gnarled roots in European soil... If it were possible, everything would be done collectively, because there seems to be an astonishingly feeble resistance to collective influences. (Jung, 1964, p. 505-506)

Jung was astute in seeing through the individualistic ideal of American culture to what runs beneath: collectivity and conformity. Are we Americans in fact pursuing our personal dreams and goals, or are we caught up in replicating the collective values around us and channeling our ambition toward external goals sanctified by the culture? Are we truly individualistic at all? I offer the perspective that many of our personal ambitions and competitive impulses conform to the collective myth of progress, best illustrated in the phenomenon "Keeping up with the

Joneses.” The American dream of wealth earned through opportunism and hard work propels us ever forward, and we measure our worth against the images propagated by advertising media. Our perceived value lies in our ability to project the right image, acquire the right stuff, and achieve the right goals. Comparison of status is fueled by our extraverted orientation, in which we look primarily outward instead of inward. Jung had something to say about this as well.

The most amazing feature of American life is its boundless publicity. Everybody has to meet everybody, and they even seem to enjoy this enormity. To a central European such as I am, this American publicity of life, the lack of distance between people, the absence of hedges or fences round the gardens, the belief in popularity, the gossip columns of the newspapers, the open doors in the houses... the defenselessness of the individual against the onslaught of the press, all this is... positively terrifying. (Jung, 1964, p. 506)

This public persona is outwardly focused and necessarily extraverted, which is why Jung, an introvert, would have found it so terrifying.

Joseph Wheelwright elaborated on Jung’s typology when he described the extraverted American psyche. “An unconscious extravert values the outer object and fears his own inner self. In our riotously extraverted country, this attitude is evident in our love of groups, good-mixers, and outgoing people” (Wheelwright, 104). Two things are important in Wheelwright’s observation. First, the description of extraversion as “unconscious” in the American psyche, and second, the correspondence to fear of one’s inner self. I believe it is this quality of unconscious extraversion that contributes to the tension between the individualistic ideal and our collective conformity. Perpetual extraversion leads one to place more attention and value on what is happening in the outside world, with other people, places and events. The unconscious aspect can cause one to forget, resist and repress what is going on inside, in the inner world of subjective feelings and values. If this happens for too long, the estrangement from one’s inner self can lead to fear, and to further repression. Wheelwright’s observation aligns with the

psychology of Enneagram type Three, where competition and efficient performance are hallmarks.

In our highly competitive life, one attitude is more or less dammed up to produce an apparently more efficient performance, and a definite type is established. However, it is never possible to completely suppress introversion, as both attitudes are basic psychological factors in every individual. (Wheelwright, 104)

To this type, inner feelings—especially so-called negative feelings—might slow down efficiency, especially if they contradict with external goals. Basic feelings such as self-doubt, fear and sadness threaten to distract them from their successful achievements in the public realm. Even worse, they might fail in the attempt altogether, and then where will they be? *What* will one be? A failure? Worse—a nobody? To pursue a goal directed by one's own inner feelings may not be valued or noticed by anyone else. In fact, it may directly oppose collective values. It becomes easier to not look inward. Participants in the culture of the U.S. who also identify with type Three as their dominant psychological type face a double whammy—their own perceptual filter lines up so well with the cultural perceptual filter that it is even easier to neglect their inner life.

The third theme: the wounded feeling function.

James Hillman cites modern American culture as an example of exhibiting what he calls “wounded” feeling. “Feeling in our culture has become a problem, and our personal feeling problems are partly a collective result of ages of repression” (Hillman, 130). According to Jung's typology, the feeling function manifests in both extraverted and introverted ways. Jung described extraverted feeling as harmonizing with externally held values generally held by the group or culture at large (Jung, 1971). Motivations for the expression of extraverted feeling include maintaining a cordial atmosphere, being sensitive to the politics of a situation, and adjusting to how others are feeling. Without extraverted feeling, “a harmonious social life would be impossible” (Jung, 1971, p. 355). Such accord with external, “objective” factors, (e.g. current

trends, the atmosphere, other people, etc.) can sometimes curtail the expression of internal, subjective feelings if these feelings clash with the generally accepted attitudes or values “out there.” When taken to an extreme, extraverted feeling loses any authenticity, and a person can give the impression of posing, playing a chameleon, of saying “the right thing” without any genuine spirit behind it. A corresponding under-development of the introverted feeling function results in a lack of connection with subjective feelings, values, and preferences. In the mode of introverted feeling, the feeling states are intensive rather than extensive and “develop in depth” (Jung, 1971, p. 390). The expression of feelings is intimate and selective, often shared within the boundaries of a trusted relationship, a private journal or a creative outlet in which the internal world can be processed, interpreted and articulated. This process requires some amount of time, solitude and silence. However, in an exclusively extraverted mode, a focus on outward attitudes, goals and relationships help to distract one from this inner world, and this can create a split from inner feelings and public self.

Hillman’s assessment of wounded feeling aligns with the psychology of Enneagram type Three, which is understood as being most out of touch with one’s own feelings and most attuned to the collective attitudes around him (Riso & Hudson, 1999). Jung defined feeling as a process of imparting a value judgment. “Feeling is a kind of *judging*, differing, however, from an intellectual judgment, in that it does not aim at establishing an intellectual connection, but is solely concerned with the setting up of a subjective criterion of acceptance or rejection” (Hillman, 130). This is an accurate representation of how the feeling function appears in type Three. There is a sensitivity to being accepted or rejected, liked or disliked. The focus is on how other people are affirming and approving them, and the Three’s own internal evaluation rests on these external reflections. In short, Threes do not trust their own feelings (Hurley & Dobson,

1991). In addition, their habit becomes “shifting attention from real feelings in the interest of efficiency in order to ‘do’ the image that a task requires” (Palmer, 1988, p. 156).

Accomplishment becomes a tangible way of securing acceptance. If one neglects inner subjective feelings—if they are dismissed, rationalized or otherwise ignored—then external goals can be pursued without obstacle. Repressed feeling is a necessary ingredient for self-deception, the vice of type Three.

Healing the wounded feeling function: a heroic act

The American dream promised us that with enough hard work, ingenuity and verve, we could indeed accomplish whatever we set our minds to. That spirit—what Jung called the Heroic Ideal—has in many ways served America well, and it is also part of the gift of the type Three. However, the myth of unlimited progress and personal success, which has sustained our capitalist market and democratic forms of government for the past several hundred years, appears to be fracturing.

As Thomas Berry says, we have to re-invent the human species, or perish... In our commitment to make progress at any cost during the last 300 years, we have failed to see the universe as limited by organic laws. (Gimbutas, 1991)

What, then, are we to do? I offer the perspective that one of our tasks as a culture is to heal our collective wounded feeling function. In order to heal, we must take the feeling function out of our collective shadow. “Our feeling problems are not just *our personal* problems,” writes James Hillman. “They are a collective problem. And therefore any change you or I make in ourselves in the differentiation of feeling can only be seen as heroic, because this change is part of the collective redemption of repressed feeling life” (Hillman, 130).

Developing the feeling function is a heroic act. The psychological task for type Three is to reconnect with feeling. The psychological task of the United States as a nation, as a Three-

dominated culture, is to reconnect with feeling. If we are to lift self-deception, our task is to reconnect with specifically introverted feeling. Now we see how, paradoxically, type Three with its heroic energy can actually help us develop this feeling function. The spiritual and higher psychological qualities of type Three include hope and honesty, and it is these two qualities that are especially necessary to heal wounded feeling. In dark times, hope chases away fear. Hope gives us a reason to believe in ourselves again. It gives us the energy and commitment to look inward. As for honesty, part of developing our feeling function is accepting the range of feelings we have. Anxiety, sorrow, disappointment and anger are just as much a part of introverted feeling as are joy, satisfaction, awe and enthusiasm. It is also about re-examining our values. Introverted feeling takes us to the task of evaluating our standards for love, work, and ethics, and then aligning our lives with a credo that conveys our own unique spirit and authentically connects us with the spirit of the collective. But because our feeling function is under-developed, we may at first be immature at locating it and expressing it.

The development of the feeling function therefore requires only two things: involvement with people, and involvement with oneself. The first is given us by life, and the second too, through our own feeling reactions to our own inner world of dreams, emotions, conflicts, and experiences, best carried out in a kind of diary or intimate journal, which gives form to what we are feeling. (Hillman, 130)

Hillman's advice is important: to give our feeling form and expression in both intimate and private ways. It is interesting to note that during the past few years, social media via the Internet has created multiple forums for every person to express her own feelings—through blogs, chat rooms, facebook updates, twitter accounts and so on. But is this the development of the feeling function that Hillman says our culture needs? Perhaps not. My assessment is that social media is exactly that: social. It fuels our ability to do *extraverted* feeling, but for the most part still leaves our “inner world of dreams, emotions, conflicts, and experiences” unattended to in an

intrapersonal way. Instead we parade them through the public sphere. We deliver them to an audience to be commented on and rated with a “Like” on facebook by hundreds of “friends.” We run the risk of treating them as a commodity to be traded and valued, accepted or rejected, by the evaluation of the social group. In the meantime, introverted feeling, that wounded function of American culture, continues to starve in the basement of our collective shadow. Hillman’s comments from forty years ago pre-sage this phenomenon:

Jung says that feeling is a process of valuation. Too often this process of valuation has been reduced to something simple—pleasure or displeasure, like and dislike...This, of course, is too simple, for what are we going to do with such things as good and bad, with moral feelings? Or what are we going to do with beautiful and ugly, or with love and hate? Are these feeling scales reducible to *like and dislike*? (emphasis mine) ... Feeling is not just a matter of preferences. Its nature is much more complex. (Hillman, 130)

As noted earlier, introverted feeling requires time, solitude and silence. These are states not easily obtained in our extraverted culture, with its ubiquitous media, traffic and pressure to perform. As Anthony Storr noted in his treatise on solitude, “What goes on in the human being when he is by himself is as important as what happens in his interactions with other people” (Storr, 1988, p. xiv). I am not talking about the self-absorption and isolation that can come with an exclusive focus on the self. I am talking about the creativity and reflection that can emerge from time spent in solitude. Such creativity and reflection are needed if we are to overcome the private crises of apathy and fear, and the public crises of ecological and financial collapse. Releasing ourselves from the need to succeed or be accepted according to external standards releases us from identification and self-deception. It gives us permission to dig down and reconnect with our values and confront feelings that may be uncomfortable, painful or full of regret. We need this type of honest self-reflection not just individually, but collectively as well.

Whereas before I argued that the paradox of the American psyche is the self-made individual who conforms to his peers, now we enter a new paradox: genuine connection with self naturally fosters genuine connection with all living things. This is the bright light at the end of the Three's tunnel, and it is a bright light for our society. It will not be easy. And it will not solve all of our crises. But it is something we can do, and we have the tools in our type Three American psychological make-up: hope, honesty and a pioneering spirit.

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