

# Archetypes of Cyberspace

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To see the archetypal in an image is thus not a [hermeneutic](#) move. It is an imagistic move. We amplify an image by means of a myth in order not to find its archetypal meaning but in order to feed it with further images that increase its volume and depth and release its [fecundity](#).

— James Hillman (1)

Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels' hierarchies?  
and even if one of them pressed me suddenly against his heart:  
I would be consumed in that overwhelming existence.  
For beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror,  
which we are still just able to endure,  
and we are so awed because it serenely disdains to annihilate us.  
Every angel is terrifying.

—Rainer Maria Rilke, Duino Elegies, opening of The First Elegy (2)

## Introduction

Cyberspace, the realm of information exchange, *invites* psychological exploration because it is a realm of meaning, interconnection. In this essay, I accept that invitation. As it is often said: The Internet changes everything. My belief is that 'everything' includes the psyche. Psyche evolves dramatically with the emergence of cyberspace.

I begin with an orientation to cyberspace. I propose the idea that cyberspace precedes the Internet. I reflect on the nature of psychological exploration and draw together threads in the psychological discussion about cyberspace. I expect the essay to lead to shared moments of insight, a collective *Aha!* if that happens we can be confident we are noticing an archetype. The recognition of archetypal structures of the psyche have a direct influence on clinical work.

Cyberspace is in the position the wilds of nature were once in, it took poets, pioneers, visionaries and activists enable us all to see that untouched nature had value.

## Cyberspace — out of this world

You may have connected to the Internet and surfed a wave of ideas. While exploring you may have followed links from a story to the author's biography and then to letters and gossip. Internet experience is not linear like a book, watching TV or listening to radio. On the Net you wind your own media experience as you soak in presentations to a range of senses. You come to crossroad after crossroad with opportunity to go deeper or wider. Discussion forums may have drawn you into connections with others. Archives of old debates lead you to more links. While you read, emails arrive, feelings are aroused, more discussion develops. You reply to your mother. You delete spam but can't help an occasional glance at the bizarre. You chat live. But then you look at the words of dead authors such as Plato or Shakespeare or another of the millions whose copyright has expired. You see something useful, you download a program, read the news, look at the US constitution or research your genealogy. As you Google for something, another item catches your fancy, it's a tangent, but you are engrossed in the unexpected. Music arrives, you listen. The in box has email. In a virtual community you are drawn into the life drama of a birth or a suicide...

It is absurd when someone remarks that all this time you have been on the computer. You have not been in this world, you have not noticed the hours go by. You have been in *cyberspace*.

Or you may never have such experiences online, some even though the Internet is 20 years old have not really done that, but all of the above will be familiar from simply being engrossed in study or a good book.

A surfer once said that the ultimate ride on a wave was to simply *not* be there, to disappear. The Zen like quality is present in the phrase *surfing the net*, which indeed may have originated (3) with a writer with some Zen ideas.

That the realm is distinct from the physical, presents an immediate association with the psyche. Body and soul, whatever we may understand about their unity will always each have their own qualities. Soul, has a sense of infinity, of being beyond time, of being shared collectively, of deeper levels of knowing. Our sense of cyberspace may have a lot in common with our sense of soul.

Cyberspace is something beyond the compass of our will, autonomous in the way the psyche is as understood by Jungians. Is there a relationship between psyche and cyberspace, are they related, or even the same thing?

### **Methodology — what is psychological exploration?**

Applying a psychological perspective to the world is a dying art, or perhaps a dead one. Experiencing the world as animated and alive is central to the experience of alchemy, myth and astrology. In the natural world we see huge forces at work; volcanic eruptions, ever-present gravity, evolution of species, weather cycles, moon-driven tides. Just as dramatic but more difficult to see are forces in the dynamics of human life; the rise and fall of empires, nations striving for power, companies driven by profit, love and hate in the tide of people's lives. Once these forces, natural and social, were seen as pulsing with the life of metaphysical entities. The world had soul. Can we still see the world like that? Would there be a point?

Science when investigating, classifying and manipulating the turmoil of events, sees a world of "things" and mechanisms. This Lego world view works. The usefulness of science satisfies in so many ways that it blinds us to soul in the world. (4) Our default modern western perspective is mechanistic, disenchanting (5), the world is dead. Yet there is a hankering to revive the older awareness in a way that does not invalidate our scientific insights. Seeing the living world is about our perception, our approach, our being. The resulting insight is not empirical in the scientific sense. Nor is it subjective, it is public knowledge and has practical consequences.

This exploration of the psychology of cyberspace is in the spirit of psychological knowing resulting from a specific mode of *engagement*. Soul is breath, the etymology is a pointer to a form of knowing that can happen only while the phenomenon is not taken apart, engaging with it as it lives. The sound of the words, soul, sigh (psy) indicates close attention to the breath, the flow of life. (6) Cyberspace is a natural subject for such exploration as it is itself akin to the soul of the world.

The mechanistic perspective has never had a thorough hold when it comes to human suffering. Times of pain are times when the breath is evident, be it through sighs or screams or whimpers. Pain leads us to poetry as well as science. At moments of trauma and chaos, poets and psychologists see and name patterns, dramas, dynamics and processes that are visible through engagement and pain invites connection. This simple truth has been at the heart of psychotherapy and psychology all along. *Relationship* is central to the work of psychological knowing. We do not find psychological truth through being distant and detached as we might in some forms of science. The impossibility of an observer outside a process is becoming evident in some forms of physical science.

How can we explore the psyche of a social phenomena? Is it anything like psychotherapy? What happens in the crucible of the therapeutic hour is tied in with the very nature of that hour. Psychotherapy can't be divorced from its context or its structure. It is not just what is said, it's the talking itself that does the trick. The centrality of process was proclaimed in an unforgettable way back in the 1960's by the media guru

Marshall McLuhan: *the medium is the message*. This applies to psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is a medium with its own message. It is not just what is on the agenda but the experience of working with the agenda that counts.

Some aspects of psychotherapy can be transposed to the social. Some aspects of exploring a social and cultural realm can be seen as akin to being a therapist with a client. The therapist's stance and mode of here-and-now engagement is bought to bear on the stuff of the world. That psychological (Z) stance is a *practice*, much as Zen Buddhism is a practice. The *practice* of psychotherapy can be transposed to the social world. The phenomena speaks and the therapist listens, but the speech is of a different order, and the therapeutic ear needs to adapt!

Here are some aspects of the practice which in their own way can be used to explore the underlying dynamics of social phenomena:

- 
- presence in the here-and-now moment
- containment, the creation of a space for contemplative work
- psychological "holding"
- engagement and conversation
- mirroring, doubling
- noticing and naming meaning

Finding meaning is done *psychologically* by entering the turmoil, distilling the essence, seeing the story in the chaos until there is a moment of knowing. Stories, poems, images help us make sense of our experience. (8) Not any story will do, yet many different stories can shed light on the same process. Psychological work is very close to art in this way. Such knowing provides comfort, and thus pain invites this approach. It is the not the kind of knowing we gain by distancing and examining parts. Knowing psyche is through closeness. Psychological knowing is verified by congruence and the integrity of the story that can be told, and by a sense of relief, even if the impact of life is still there. Psychological insight, while abstract is real in its consequences. This idea is at the core of what Jung called the "objective psyche" or soul.

To examine cyberspace psychologically is to let it be heard, to put it on the couch as it were. To take the stance we take in psychotherapy.

### **'The lightning bolt that is cyberspace'**

Just as with soul, it is not really possible or desirable to define what cyberspace *is*. Yet there have been plenty of evocative descriptions that each add to our grasp of this dimension. Before the word 'cyberspace' Chardin, Moreno, McLuhan had inklings of its presence.

Teilhard de Chardin envisaged evolution of our mind into a noosphere culminating into a Christ like Omega Point. The Internet has frequently been seen as a leap in the direction he pioneered. Cyberspace is difficult to distinguish from de Chardin's noosphere.



Moreno

The founder of Psychodrama, J.L. Moreno may have seen a link between cyberspace and what he called the sociometric matrix. He describes a process he calls tele "that attracts individuals to each other or which repels them, that flow of feeling of which the social atom and the networks are apparently composed." According to Moreno *tele* and feeling are not exclusively an individual phenomena, they are part of a "collectivistic unity", which can exist in social structures:

"...we found that social atoms and networks have a persistent structure and that they develop in a certain order, we had extra individual structures – and probably there are many more to be discovered -- in which this flow can reside... we conceive this flowing feeling, the tele, as an interpersonal ... as a sociometric structure."

Moreno [[1937](#)] in Fox, 1987 p. 27

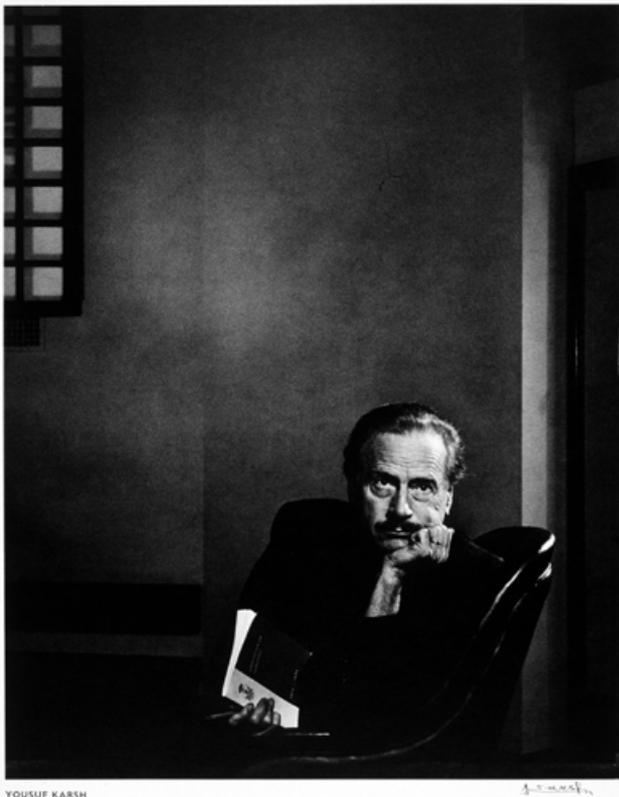
Underlying structure of tele relationships becomes visible upon analysis of the attractions, repulsions and neutral connections between the roles. Moreno speaks of the sociometric matrix as being "underneath" and that through sociometric tests and analysis we can "unearth" it. Here is his description of this hidden complexity:

"The sociometric matrix consists of various constellations, tele, the atom ... clusters of atoms linked together with other clusters of atoms via interpersonal chains or networks."

Moreno [[1953](#)], p. 80)

This field of positive and negative propensity is the stuff that links are made of. Links make up the Internet, they are the Internet, and the more abstract sociometric matrix underlying the links is akin to cyberspace.

Moreno may or may not have made such a connection, however much of his work is highly relevant to exploring the social networks on the Net. Another thinker from the time just before the Internet is McLuhan, his insights certainly include something of the notion of cyberspace - though he did not have that word.



Marshall McLuhan

Playboy [1969] interviewed Marshall McLuhan and the article remains an accessible introduction to his thoughts. Here is a passage from about half way through the interview:

The electronically induced technological extensions of our central nervous systems, which I spoke of earlier, are immersing us in a world-pool of information movement and are thus enabling man to incorporate within himself the whole of mankind. The aloof and dissociated role of the literate man of the Western world is succumbing to the new, intense depth participation engendered by the electronic media and bringing us back in touch with ourselves as well as with one another. But the instant nature of electric-information movement is decentralizing -- rather than enlarging -- the family of man into a new state of multitudinous tribal existences.

So we are in a new world, we are IN it. But what an interesting and paradoxical line follows:

**"incorporate within himself the whole of mankind"**. We are both absorbed by the new environment and at the same time we become, what we can now call a node in a hologram, each one of us is also the whole. This is very like the sense we have of the unconscious and collective unconscious, we seem to be both in it while it also feels "inner". Soul has the same feel, it is not just my soul nor is it all out there, to speak of its location is to miss the phenomena. In this fairly sober interview McLuhan captures this idea poetically and emphatically with the word: world-pool... **world-pool**, it is just a quirk of history that this was not the word we use for cyberspace.



Vernor Vinge

Moreno and McLuhan, had inklings, but did not fully identify the realm. A novelist was the first to do that. Vernor Vinge in the [1981] Novella, *True Names* is credited with the first real description of a network one could enter into. He was inhabiting the net in 1979! His first hand experience and creative imagination made the perception possible:

I did a lot of what is now called telecommuting. One night I was working at home... As usual, I sneaked around in anonymous accounts —no need for the whole world to see I was on the machine... Suddenly I was accosted by another user via the TALK program (which for some reason I had left enabled). The TALKer claimed some implausible name, and I responded in kind. We chatted for a bit, each trying to figure out the other's true name. [Vinge 1999, p. 16]

This led to the novella, *True Names*. Vinge notes with approval the later novelist William Gibson's (9) invention of the word cyberspace:

One of the central features of *True Names* is the notion that a worldwide computer network would be a kind of *place* for its users. I needed a word for that place, and the best I came up with was "the Other Plane." Alas, that is a lightning bug compared with the lightning bolt that is "cyberspace." [Vinge 1999, p. 20]

The word 'cyberspace' struck its target like bolt of lightning. It has caught on not just because a name was needed for a newly perceived realm, but because of the suitability of the etymological resonance. There is the immediate link with [cybernetics](#), the study of communication and control processes. The original Greek root *kubernetes*, translated as 'governor' or 'steersman', not far from the word for one who steers through cyberspace: 'surfer'. 'Cyberspace' captures the idea of freedom often associated, especially by libertarians with the realm.



William Gibson

It makes sense that science fiction writers and not engineers identify and name an abstract realm, where the mind has a life, while the body is gone. The idea of disembodied life is again akin to the old conceptions of soul and psyche.

Not long after it's invention the word cyberspace seemed like a cliché, because it was used so much. But not too much! How could one over-state the importance of the transformation of our abstract life -- all art, literature and music taking a leap into the noosphere, which at least in de Chardin's cosmology is a step closer to God. Some uses of the cyber words are trivial but it is not trivial in the in the volume of work edited by Michael Benedikt.

Michael Benedikt in the introduction to *Cyberspace: First Steps* (1994) defines the realm by listing dozens of its attributes (10). Twelve years since he wrote the introduction his description is hard to better. His list includes:

- A common mental geography
- A new universe, a parallel universe
- Its depths increase with every image or word or number
- Its corridors form wherever electricity runs with intelligence.

It makes sense to look at Cyberspace from many angles to arrive at a sense of what it is rather than to make a narrow definition.

Benedikt in the introduction to *Cyberspace* has a section about Karl Popper. Popper in 1972 referred to three worlds, the world of things, the subjective world and *World 3*, the constructions made by living beings. Many of these constructions he noted are abstract, yet they impact on the other worlds: language, mathematics, law, religion, philosophy, arts, and institutions of all kinds, these are all edifices of a sort. With cyberspace, *World 3* has come of age. Cyberspace is not just a new edifice on the block it is an abstraction holding all other abstractions. This idea amplifies the exponential quality of cyberspace.

A point was made in an obscure paper posted on the Net, author unknown, "Understanding Internet - Extension of Media" [1999?]. They propose that the Internet is not just a medium like radio and TV, it is a media of media. This alludes in an interesting way to Marshall McLuhan's idea that media are an extension of the human. The Net did not exist in his time but several writers have assumed that if it had he would have seen it as an extension of the brain. This simple linear extrapolation of McLuhan does not do justice to the power of the Internet. The Internet extends media *exponentially*. Media squared, media to the power of two. This idea makes sense in a world where the power of technology doubles every year, where we are talking about increases in the rates of change and qualitative leaps and paradigm shifts.

## GodNet -- Cyberspace is not technology

Computers, digitalisation and the Internet enabled us to *recognise* and *name* cyberspace. It is ironic that through intensive technological progress that a non-material abstract realm is discovered, named and undoubtedly enormously advanced. It was always there — but thin, slow and invisible.

That the cyber-realm is distinct from digital technology and the Internet was brought home to me in a small "Idees Fortes" column by Rebecca E. Zorach in *Wired Magazine* [1995]. She writes:

Imagine a medieval network of monasteries (and later, universities) as "nodes" of learning, text copying, cultural creation, and exchange of a wide variety of material, all using the universal language of Latin. Among monasteries, news traveled faster and more efficiently (when not disrupted by invasions) than we might imagine. This system of monasteries was the original Internet, albeit at fractional baud.

She called this GodNet. Seeing that word made me realise that we have always had cyber networks, beginning perhaps with cave paintings and drum beats. The abstract cyberspace is not as easy to see as the material paintings, books or other structures that house it. For example The Library at Alexandria was more visible than the abstract communication network formed by its scholars. Speedier technology *revealed* the nature of these complex nets of images and ideas as being a specific, inhabitable realm but technology did not *create it*. The libraries, books and journals, are not as significant as the sociometric maps one could draw around them. Footnotes are early hyperlinks, connecting one writer to another.



The network of images and words is old, and slow. Technology by speeding it up has enabled us to identify the whole realm as it is today and also to see the prequel to today's cyberworlds. Nets of interconnection are as old as humanity. Even though technology enhanced the storage, access and speed of information the two novelists to make the creative and imaginative step to see the new realm and to name it as a *place* or *space*.

Cyberspace and technology are of a different order. Cyberspace is abstract, technology is material. The Internet, while a complex construction linking people to each other and to all types of information is basically a material phenomena. An engineer, in principle, could measure and name its parts. In this respect cyberspace is often contrasted with the unsavoury term 'meatspace'. Of course it is also contrasted to the geographical world of countries and cities, where items in cyberspace transcend the places and sometimes even the laws of the places they were created in. Cyberspace is a realm we notice and name but its existence would elude anyone looking into the mechanisms of networks, computers or their software. No amount of probing the technology, understanding the flow of zeros and ones, will lead us to know cyberspace. This difference becomes pivotal when we look at the archetypes of cyberspace.

Technology and cyberspace each have their own psychology. Tools have their own story, they have been used to define human nature itself. Thomas Carlyle defined man in *Sartor Resartus* as "a tool-using animal", the idea was powerfully portrayed in the movie 2001 when the ape picks up the stick, which thrown becomes a space-ship circling the earth. Human nature has more than one aspect and cyberspace has a different origin story, more along the lines of "In the beginning there was the Word". ([11](#))

Thinking psychologically about technology is to be psychological about material things. To think psychologically about cyberspace is to be psychological about something that is already abstract, this adds the elusive quality to the work.

## The Psychology of Cyberspace

Vernor Vinge and William Gibson, at the moment of seeing and naming cyberspace were immersed, engaged and relating directly to the subject matter. These pioneers had the ability to see the phenomena imaginably and name it creatively, placing themselves close to a psychological tradition. They were psychological in that they did not name a technology but they identified and named an abstract phenomena. At its conception Gibson called cyberspace "a consensual hallucination", clearly leaning towards psychological understandings.

The phenomena of cyberspace has erupted with apocalyptic proportions during these last ten years or so. What is the nature of the energy in that eruption? What is its life force? What is its deeper story? What is its drama? Immediately evident is the tension in the phenomena. Perhaps it is no accident that the birth of the word 'cyberspace' went hand in hand with the dystopia in Gibson's *Neuromancer*. There is something

dark about cyberspace. A dot-com demise lurched in the shadows of the Net along with addiction, pornography, cyber-sex, peephole gangs, fraud and spam. At the same time it is hailed by techno-utopians as the solution for problems in education, democracy, commerce, medicine and international relations, in short a panacea for the state of the world. Cyberspace is repulsive and attractive, and often at the same time.

Cyberspace can get a bad press; the realm is portrayed as full of expensive gadgetry which one should buy, as a new drug that hooks the weak or as a playground for the sexually deviant. This impoverished sociology is cheap journalism's substitute for psychological insight into the Internet. Such perception is the antithesis of psychology. Yet, as is often the case, it is by the shadow that we first come to know the archetypal energy in our dramas.

Technology so often is treated as soulless. Love of machines and gadgets is evidence of a lack of a finer sensibility. Guilt is not uncommonly associated with time spent with plastic and not in nature.

The duality of cyberspace was there at the beginning of writing itself. In the Playboy Interview [1969] Marshall McLuhan mentions the mythic origin of the alphabet.

PLAYBOY: Isn't the thrust of your argument, then, that the introduction of the phonetic alphabet was not progress, as has generally been assumed, but a psychic and social disaster?

McLUHAN: It was both. It try to avoid value judgments in these areas, but there is much evidence to suggest that man may have paid too dear a price for his new environment of specialist technology and values. Schizophrenia and alienation may be the inevitable consequences of phonetic literacy. It's metaphorically significant, I suspect, that the old Greek myth has Cadmus, who brought the alphabet to man, sowing dragon's teeth that sprang up from the earth as armed men. Whenever the dragon's teeth of technological change are sown, we reap a whirlwind of violence. We saw this clearly in classical times, although it was somewhat moderated because phonetic literacy did not win an overnight victory over primitive values and institutions; rather, it permeated ancient society in a gradual, if inexorable, evolutionary process.

## Attraction and Disdain

The dramatic tension suggest that exploring the Net's archetypal power would be a burning issue, at least in some psychological circles, but that is not so. The sociology and even the spirituality of cyberspace has been approached from many angles (12), but a discussion about the depth psychology of cyberspace, particularly among those interested in the archetypal nature of social and cultural movement is embryonic.

Depth psychology is blind to a psychic revolution, that would seem to be at the heart of the matters psychology takes an interest in, metaphor, meaning, communication, connection and links.

Cliff Bostock has written about the psyche and cyberspace. He is a Jungian therapist, Doctoral Student of Archetypal Psychology and an online columnist. His work is compelling for those interested in both cyberspace and archetypal psychology. In, *Cyberspace: Shadow of the Cultural Imagination?* [1996] he makes a good case for avoiding cyberspace as part of the search for soul, concluding that,

Ultimately, cyberspace's imagery deprives the imagination of its spontaneity.

It is not so much the absence of soul in cyberspace but a worse scenario, the fake or pathological nature of soul in this realm, he refers to Sardello [1992, p. 107]

... what is really operating in cyberspace is a faux-soul, a psychopathic soul -- one that prizes efficiency and expediency above all else and reduces emotional interactions to gamesmanship. I would go so far as to say that cyberspace is the main bearer of the culture's current diagnoses. The disembodiment is by definition dissociative and identity becomes remarkably fluid....or "multiple."

Three years later Bostock totally re-wrote the article to reverse his position. In *Cyberwork, The archetypal imagination in new realms of ensoulment* [Bostock, 1999], the realm is viewed not with disdain but, as the title indicates, as a realm of ensoulment. Bostock addresses the reluctance and even antipathy to probing psychological depths of cyberspace by archetypal psychologists such as James Hillman. At first glance cyberspace would be an attractive space for soul-work, because it is a space of images which, as Bostock explains, are central to Archetypal Psychology's notion of the psyche. Bostock questions the values of "archetypal Luddites", a phrase he has coined for the psychologists (like his former self) who refuse to see the cyber realm as soulful. The essay is a plea for the acceptance of cyberspace as a psychological realm. He explores the reasons for the dismissal of cyberspace by James Hillman...

On the surface, everything that Hillman values seems to be true of cyberspace. There, through hyperlinks, images arise and morph. Some images, if not the majority, are certainly banal and do not arrest us for any longer than it takes to click on the next link. Still, one often clicks on an image that is like the vortex Pound describes: a center through which pours all manner of thoughts.

So why the disdain in psychotherapy circles? Cliff Bostock goes to the heart of the question: *the body*. Bostock explores the depth of the body in cyberspace by returning to McLuhan, a good place to start.

Technology, as McLuhan noted too, does not just disembody us. It extends (and accelerates) the body, even as it produces the experience of disembodiment. In pedestrian ways this is experienced as a lack of emotional inflection in the absence of vocal tone and physical gesture in cyber chatting. People often "misread" one another.

But the very suppression of these sensory cues, to say nothing of a very superficial anonymity, also heightens vulnerability and intimacy... Eros drenches every corner of cyberspace. It is filled with millions of erotic selfportraits of ordinary people something that probably is unique in history. Romances, platonic and sexual, are conducted in cyberspace. "Cybersex" and "virtual sex" describe new styles of lovemaking. For the average person, this is what cyberspace concerns.

The image of the body, if not the body itself is present, and it is the imaginative reflection of the body that adds a psychic dimension. The body without some form of *conscious* expression ranging from celebration to violence is inanimate, even though it may move. Immediately soul and cyberspace are juxtaposed the question of the body arises. "What about body language?" is the naive question in response to online psychotherapy and any type of depth dialogue online. Naive, because *body* and *language* carry such psychological complexity that any attention, even attention to its possible absence or destruction will reveal layers of depth. Yet there is something non-sexy about the "new styles of lovemaking", about the solitary cybernaughts forming connections and pursuing images always in the abstraction of the virtual.

Distaste for cyberspace among psychologists and artists is familiar. Brian Eno (who of course is *also* an aficionado of technology) sums up the idea in a now famous comment:

Do you know what I hate about computers? The problem with computers is that there is not enough Africa in them. [1995]

But where does the deficiency lie? In cyberspace or in the ethos that leads to the disdain?

The disdain occurs precisely when we can't see the archetypal nature of the new-born phenomena, and this happens when we expect one archetype and then, when not finding it, we ridicule what we do find. It is like shunning the poet because he is not an action hero, Eros because he is not Mars. Of course, in the very shunning, the shadow is revealed, it *is* the shadow. Invisibility itself is the magical grist of many stories. The soul of cyberspace is elusive and invisible to some.

Bostock's first essay, for all its negativity, speaks of soul in that cyberspace is a symptom of cultural malaise. His two essays together present a living dynamic of psychologically active tension between shadow and light. In his second essay Bostock affirms the arresting, archetypal depth of cyberspace.

He asks the question: "Do the gods occupy cyberspace? Can soul be constructed in virtual reality?" That is the central theme of this essay: exploring the archetypes of cyberspace, to which we now return, all the more comfortably because of Cliff Bostock's positioning the cyber realm as rich for psychological exploration.

Who are the gods of cyberspace?

### **Archetypes take a new breath**

"The medium has enormous shadow." ([Bostock 1996](#)), this is a comment on an archetypal quality of cyberspace. There is a fear of the new and the young in the disdain and shunning cyberspace. The fear is unconscious; cyber-phobia, to add to the over-supply of cyber-words. Bostock's archetypal Luddites would relish this shadow phenomena if they were not blind in its darkness.

Eros drenches "every corner of cyberspace" is how Cliff Bostock puts it. There is no doubt that in many ways cyberspace is erotic. Eros is about attraction, and just as cyberspace is shunned it also has a powerful lure. The lure is in part what invites the resistance, cyberspace is seductive, addictive. (13) Cliff Bostock in a third cyberspace essay *Deiknymena: Erotic revelations in cyberspace* (2000?) compares the attractions and repulsions to the mystery cults. While placing the Erotic in a central place in his essay, he mentions other archetypal dimensions:

... what is the fundamental quality of the medium - or, as the Greeks might put it, what is the god in the medium? Perhaps ... it is the collective psyche or anima mundi - the "megasyntesis" of matter and thought into a self-reflective collective envisioned by Teilhard de Chardin (1959).

Bostock in his 1999 essay, has yet another tantalising archetypal proposition in his final paragraph, one that alerts us again to the inability to position soul exclusively in the individual or in the world:

I offer alchemy and Goethe's own image of what may be occurring in cyberspace: the emergence of the homunculus, a personified manifestation of the philosopher's stone, a union of the organic and the inorganic. Is this so different from the cyborg of contemporary imagining in virtual reality? Of that small creature, constellated in the moment of Faust's brief coniunctio, Edinger writes: "the homunculus signifies the birth of the conscious realization of the autonomous psyche. In dreams it may appear as a doll or statue which comes to life, representing the ego's dawning awareness of a second psychic center, the Self" (p. 62).

We are alerted by Cliff Bostock to the vitality of archetypal dimensions in cyberspace: **Eros, Shadow, Self and anima mundi the soul of the world**. The power of these presences is enough to explain the both the attraction and the reluctance to enter the realm. That which affords cyberspace, its soul, is the very thing that inspires the repulsion.

To the list of archetypal forces ascribed so far we can add more and more, but there is one more that seems to encompass and absorb all the others: **Hermes**.

## Hermes

I was alerted to Hermes as a key archetypal figure of cyberspace by Dolores Brien, editor for the Jungian journal *The Round Table Review*, and the editor of the Jungian website [www.cgjungpage.org](http://www.cgjungpage.org)'s excellent Technology and Cyberculture sections. She wrote a review (14) of Mark Stefik's *Internet Dreams: Archetypes, Myths and Metaphors*. [1996] Brien writes a crisp summary of Stefik's exploration of the archetypes of the Internet. The descriptions of the archetypes in Stefik's book are apt: The Keeper of Knowledge, The Communicator, The Trader, and The Adventurer. Stefik's collection of articles is inspiring in many ways, one was that it led Brien in her review to this concluding paragraph, which carries an symbolic potency that Stefik's descriptions lack:

One last word-if the Internet acknowledges a god, that god has to be Hermes: mediator, communicator, messenger, trickster, patron of merchants, always on the move. His attributes seem as inexhaustible as does the Internet, of which he seems to be the soul.

Each of these attributes resonates with qualities of cyberspace, they could be words about cyberspace; communication, commerce, mediating, messaging, tricking and to top it off, being inexhaustible. Hermes is a natural icon (10) for cyberspace. For those acquainted with the astrological symbolism of Mercury (the Roman name for Hermes), the fast orbiting, often invisible planet, this association will come as no surprise. It is worth looking at astrological writing to see the traditional symbolism in the light of its relevance to Cyberspace.

See for example this website, ([Weboteric](#)) on Mercury :

Astrologically Mercury is seen as THE MIND, the giver of wisdom and our progression from the purely instinctive realm of the animal kingdom by the use of the INTELLECT.

It is ideas, methods, information, progressing through experimentation and invention. The transmitter of the spiritual to the material. Mercury associates with children before puberty and through this connects with tricks and jokes, youthfulness and light-heartedness. It rules all forms of communication, for example telephone calls, letters, speech. This planet is mobile and intellectual; it rules the sciences, curiosity, manner of thought and travel. It is also associated with merchants, commerce and mental pursuits. Wheeling and dealing would fall under Mercury's rule as would lying and cheating.

It represents the power of communication (even the Internet), interpretation and self-expression, intelligence and reason. Its action is to quicken and enliven whilst adding mobility and fluidity. The symbol illustrates receptivity resulting from the exaltation of spirit over matter.



Like every rogue, Hermes lives outside the boundaries established by custom and by law. In my *Hermes Psychopomp* I believed I could define his domain as a "no-man's-land", that is, as a hermetic intermediary realm, surrounded by established limits where the words "to find" and "to steal" still have a distinct meaning. I subsequently added: "On the other hand, the absence of scruples alone does not constitute Hermetic action; the art and spirit of making one's way in life must also be included."

Carl G. Jung and Carl Kerényi, *Le Divin Fripon* - [quoted p.64 Paris [1990](#)]

It is this spirit of making one's way in life that connects to the "cyber-" prefix with its connotation of steering.

Brien's words: "It has to be Hermes." are vindicated with another of Hermes attributes, Robert Graves mentions Hermes "assisted the Three Fates in the composition of the Alphabet." We see Hermes presence right there at the birth of the symbols that form the heart of communication and cyberspace, he was there right from the start. This mythic connection with the alphabet is not directly in contrast with the Cadeus story already mentioned. It seems one involves the consonants and the other the vowels.

To allow Hermes to amplify our perception of cyberspace we return to the distinction between cyberspace and the Internet and computers. Ginette Paris in her chapter on Hermes [[Paris, 1990](#), p. 66] presents a wealth of material that would lead us to see Hermes written all over cyberspace and she does allude to his place in that realm, yet she casts a doubt on Hermes as a suitable archetype for computer technology.

Some artificial intelligence specialists like Douglas R. Hofstadter and Terry Winograd blame the inability of computers to achieve the Faustian goal of artificial intelligence on the fact that an important part of our definition of intelligence has been overlooked in moving from oral culture to literacy and from literacy to computer-literacy – the part that allows for ambiguity. Hermes cannot be found in a setting where ambiguity is a "bug" rather than just added information...

He therefore supports the notion that, if we're going to have "intelligent" computers, it won't be by trying to make them more precisely denotative, more Apollonian, but by exploring the other side of intelligence – that is, a Hermes-type intelligence, as we would say in our mythological vocabulary.

This "Mercurial Computer" in a sense has already happened. The Mercurial happens not through the development of fuzzy-logic or technology, it is not Apollonian. Behind the computer screens there are people. Human participation adds spontaneity to the churning of the machine. Humans keep choosing, steering through information, Cyberspace results. The "intelligence" is Hermetic, as the ebb and flow of taste is governed by the mercurial nature of humans.

Thus Hermes remains suitable cyber-archetype, but only as one not related to the meticulous programming work, which is in the realm of his more elevated brother Apollo. Hermes has some interest in the tools of communication. You may recall the story of how as a boy he made the first lyre by adding strings to a tortoise shell. He has ingenuity. He is present in connection and communication.

Hermes is tied in with another sphere named with a "com" word: commerce, human exchange. Ginette Paris in "Pagan Grace" has a chapter on Hermes. There she describes the "gift of Hermes", a form of trade... The captain of a ship would leave goods on the beach and overnight the locals would leave produce and other items. If there was a fair deal the mariners would return.

That is commercial, and incidentally, also describes well the freely given efforts on the Internet. It is nice metaphor for what happens in cyberspace as we write email or programs late at night and see what returns in the morning!

## Quicksilver

Mercury - is also quicksilver. The name is apt for the swift shiny fluid metal, that can break into dust when dropped, but then be gathered and rolled into one contiguous whole. A recent book about the Internet comes to mind: *Small Pieces Loosely Joined* by David Weinberger [2002] - that title fits for quicksilver and the Net. Quick - a word for our time and for information which travels at the speed of light. Mirrors are silver, the Net, cyberspace is a mirror of the world, evidenced in the title of another book about the Net: David Gelernter's *Mirror Worlds* [1991]. Whatever we have in the world there is an online reflection of it: Shops, sex, learning, therapy, games, funerals and so on. More than that, we experience cyberspace through our chosen path of links and so it reflects instantly the consequences of our tastes, we are mirrored by our clicks. Quick silver - the fast mirror.



Neal Stephenson

Neal Stephenson, a science fiction writer, in *Snow Crash* (1992) presents another and definitive version of the world first created by Vinge. Stephenson pursues matters related to the means and consequences of information like one obsessed. In mid 1990s he literally travelled the path of cables that were creating massive data pipes through Europe and the middle east, writing up his journey in a classic item in *Wired Magazine*. (1996) Some of his insights from that documentary pursuit fed into his story of the origins of computers, the potency of information, and the power of decoding encryption in war time in his epic novel *Cryptonomicon*. [1999] At the time of writing this essay a book by Stephenson has just been published: *Quicksilver* [2003]. This recent novel delves into the origins of our communication revolution by tracing it back to the scientific revolution in the days of Sir Isaac Newton and the formation of the Royal Society. On the website associated with the book, the [Quicksilver Metaweb](#) is a reference to a work by John Wilkins (1614-1672), bishop of Chester: *Mercury, or the Secret and Swift Messenger* (1641)

...a work of some ingenuity on the means of rapid correspondence.

The images below are from the original and interestingly mention the story of the letters of the alphabet as dragon's teeth.

*Conclusion.*

The Poets have feigned *Mercury* to  
be the chief Patron of Thieves and  
Treachery,

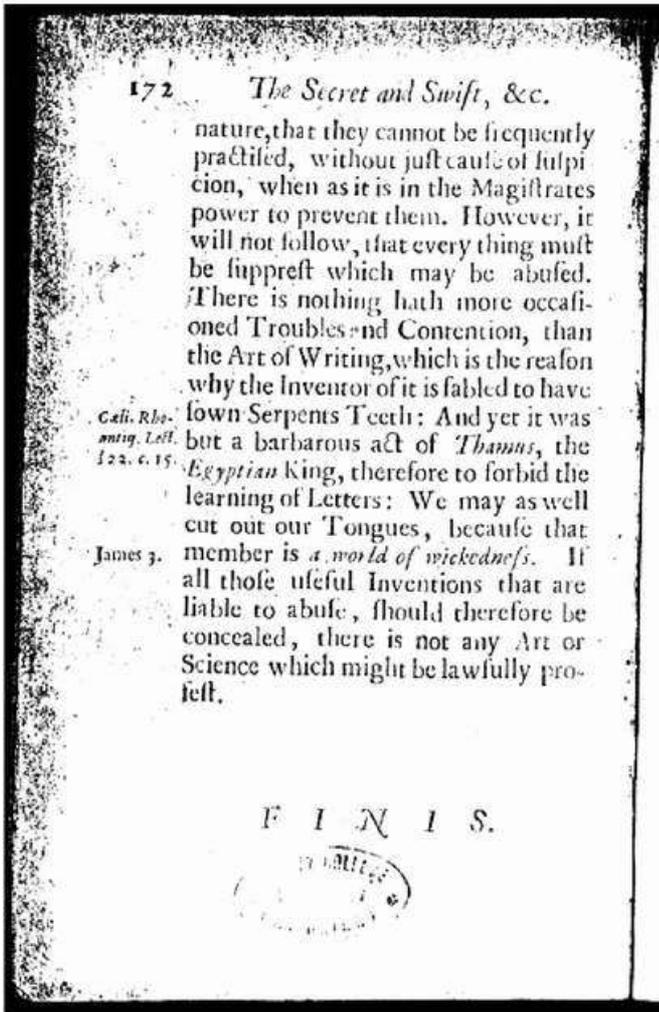
*Horat. l. 1.  
Od. 10.  
Ovid. Me-  
tamo. l. 11.  
Homer. 17.  
Hymnis.*

Ἄρχος φιλαντίας.

To which purpose they relate that  
he filched from *Venus* her Girdle, as  
she embraced him in congratulation  
of a Victory; that he robbed *Jupiter*  
of his Scepter, and would have stoln  
his Thunderbolt too, but that he  
feared to burn his fingers. And the  
Astrologers observe, that those who  
are born under this Planet, are natu-  
rally addicted to Theft and Cheating.

*Nat. Causes  
Mytholog.  
l. 5. c. 5.*

If it be feared that this Discourse  
may unhappily advantage others, in  
such unlawful courses; 'tis considera-  
ble, that it does not only teach how to  
deceive, but consequently also how to  
discover Delusions. And then besides,  
the chief experiments are of such  
nature,



Seeing these manuscripts from the 17th Century with the same ideas expressed by Marshall McLuhan in the Playboy Interview creates the sense that there is a cluster of phenomena which attract each other and which *want* to be together, and who have been working in the background to achieve this for a long time.

## Journey

The definite cluster of ideas which are at work is evident in a passage from Karl Kerényi in his book *Hermes, Guide of Souls* (1942). (16) He discusses travelling, roaming and being on a journey. Cyberspace may present the opportunity for all three, and we can add the word "surfing" as well. The idea of journeying that Kerényi refers to, many years before our electronic cyberspace, presents image after image that resonate with online experience.

We previously called the Odyssey a journey epic, and we must now imagine the often experienced reality of "journeying" as something special, in contradistinction to "roaming" or "traveling." Odysseus is not a "traveler." He is a "journeyer" (even if this is sometimes *malgré lui*, "in spite of himself"), not simply because of his moving from place to place, but because of his existential situation. The traveler, despite his motion, adheres to a solid base, albeit one that is not narrowly circumscribed. With each step, he takes possession of another piece of the earth. This taking possession is, of course, only psychological. In that with each extension of the horizon he also expands himself, his claim of possession on the earth expands continuously as well. But he remains always bound to a solid earth beneath his feet, and he even looks for human fellowship. At every hearth that he encounters he lays claim to a kind of native citizenship for himself. For the Greeks, the approaching stranger is *kat' exochen* ("an outstanding eminence") and *hiketes* ("one who comes to seek protection," "a suppliant" or "fugitive").

His guardian is not Hermes, but Zeus, the God of the widest horizon and the firmest ground. In contrast, the situation of the journeyer is defined by movement, fluctuation. To someone more deeply rooted, even to the traveler, he appears to be always in flight. In reality, he makes himself vanish ("volatizes himself") to everyone, also to himself. Everything around him becomes to him ghostly and improbable, and even his own reality appears to him as ghostlike. He is completely absorbed by movement, but never by a human community that would tie him down. His companions are the companions of the journey: not those he wants to lead home, as Odysseus his comrades, but those he joins, as it is said of Hermes in the Iliad (Book XXIV, 334-35). With companions of the journey, one experiences openness to the extent of purest nakedness, as though he who is on the journey had left behind every stitch of clothing or covering. Is it not true that those today who wish to be free of the bonds to the community in which they grew up and to which they were intimately bound, who want to be open to each other without reservation or boundary, as two naked souls—don't they go on a wedding journey (*Hochzeitsreise*)? Is this journey not a "*Heimführung*" ("taking home" the bride) as well as an "*Entführung*" ("elopement"), and therefore also "hermetic?" Journeying is the best condition for loving. The gorges over which the "volatized one" passes like a ghost can be the abysses of unbelievable love affairs—Circe and Calypso islands and holes; they can be abysses also in the sense that there no chance exists for standing on firm ground, but only for further floating between life and death.

The journeyer is at home while underway, at home on the road itself, the road being understood not as a connection between two definite points on the earth's surface, but as a particular world. It is the ancient world of the path, also of the "wet paths" (the *hygra keleutha*) of the sea, which are above all, the genuine roads of the earth. For, unlike the Roman highways which cut unmercifully straight through the country-side, they run snakelike, shaped like irrationally waved lines, conforming to the contours of the land, winding, yet leading everywhere. Being open to everywhere is part of their nature. Nevertheless, they form a world in its own right, a middle-domain, where a person in that volatized condition has access to everything. He who moves about familiarly in this world-of-the-road has Hermes for his God, for it is here that the most salient aspect of Hermes' world is portrayed. Hermes is constantly underway: he is *enodios* ("by the road") and *hodios* ("belonging to a journey"), and one encounters him on every path. He is constantly in motion; even as he sits, one recognizes the dynamic impulse to move on, as someone has acutely observed of his Herculean bronze statue. His role as leader and guide is often cited and celebrated, and, at least since the time of the Odyssey, he is also called *angelos* ("messenger"), the messenger of the Gods.

Modern communication experiences have maximised and filled out these trends, as if there was always a god pulling and pushing us in a definite direction with a definite outcome in mind, an outcome that we are speeding towards but whose actuality is still unknown.

## Shadows

Kerényi mentions "floating between life and death". Hermes of course is the guide of souls to Hades. A mediator of the realms of life and death.

Cyberspace is a group of the living and the dead.

We can communicate with the living online, but their words live on after they die. There are stories of email groups where people reply quite consciously and deliberately to the posts from someone who is dead. Through such services as project Gutenberg the dead poets and novelists have come back with their text more alive than ever as we search, and cut and paste their words into newer living documents.

The last book of the Odyssey begins with an epiphany of Hermes, which may poetically bring to life something of the experience of being in a mind rather than a body space:

Meanwhile the suitors' ghosts were called away by Hermes of Kyllene, bearing the golden wand with which he charms the eyes of men or wakens whom he wills.

He waved them on, all squeaking  
as bats will in a cavern's underworld,  
all flitting, flitting criss-cross in the dark  
if one falls and the rock-hung chain is broken.  
So with faint cries the shades trailed after  
Hermes, pure Deliverer.

He led them down dank ways, over gray  
Ocean tides, the Snowy Rock past shores  
of Dream and narrows of the sunset,  
in swift flight to where the Dead inhabit  
wastes of asphodel at the world's end.

From the section "The Hermes of the Odyssey" in *Hermes Guide of Souls* by Karl Kerényi  
(1942)

We can see how Hermes connects with the disdain for cyberspace we have discussed. The realm can be a Hades, and in our disembodiment we become ghosts.

The idea of 'archive' is often used for storing old records. On the net everything at the moment of its birth is archived and thus the latest pop song is as easily accessed as the ideas of people long dead re-published on the Net.

## Mind Space

The moment a new realm or space is delineated it will have tension at the borders. There are many political examples, but we can also see this phenomena in the sphere of information. Recall the controversies about the television set into our living space. But it is not only with electronic media that we see divisions. We see this in the family when the division occurs when (usually father) moves into a mind space behind the newspaper, or a child disappears for days into the fantasy land of books. Mind spaces are powerful and transcend physical place, geography.

Marshall McLuhan had the idea that the United States could be balkanized by electronic media. Cliff Bostock [1996] refers to McLuhan:

McLuhan's analysis of the impact of media on culture proved to be prescient in many structural respects. The World Wide Web and the Internet have certainly proven to be global villages of sort and these, as he predicted, are subdivided into special-interest communities (such as Internet news groups). The extent to which this directly influences life outside the cyber topography can't be seen yet, although McLuhan was daring enough to suggest that the United States would literally be "Balkanized" by electronic media (McLuhan, p. 257).

The reference is to the *Essential McLuhan* [1995] edited by his son Eric McLuhan.

Murray Stein's excellent essay, "Hermes and the Creation of Space" [2000] describes fully the role of Hermes in the creation of a mind space. His role as *guide* is a link with the cyber prefix, steering. How does the notion of space correspond with the Hermes symbolism? It is worth quoting Stein at some length:

The following passage is a good summation of Hermes' story and it amplifies his way of creating the "other planes" we see recurring under his influence.

The name Hermes is connected with the name for the stone heap that was a boundary-marker, a herma. This is the physical fact from which the experience of Hermes springs, in which it is grounded. Around this concrete phenomenon of the boundary-marker there grew up the many associated features and qualities that go into making this god what he is. Something about the experience of herma and boundaries and cross-roads stimulated the Greek imagination into elaborating the figure of Hermes.

Nilsson continues his imaginative presentation by saying that this stone heap at the crossroads might have marked a grave, and perhaps there was a body buried under it. This would mark a space that was a crossroad in a double sense, with one axis horizontal, another vertical: A three-dimensional cross-roads. Hermes is a god of travelers living and dead, his monument of stones a boundary marker for the world on this plane and between it and the underworld. Kerényi, in his masterful study, *Hermes, Guide of Souls*, emphasizes the god's role in traversing the boundary between life and death, between this world and the underworld of shades, Hades. Because of his association with boundaries and with the realm of shades, Hermes takes on the features of a liminal god, or of what I have called a god of liminality in my book *In MidLife*, that is, one who inhabits interstices, a denizen of betwixt-and-between (cf. Turner). He stands at the edge not only geographically and interpersonally but also metaphysically. He is essentially in and of the world of liminality.

The element of uncanniness, which Walter Otto so forcefully stresses in his chapter on Hermes in *The Homeric Gods*, would attach to Hermes because of this close association with the spirits of the dead and the underworld. The *Oxford Classical Dictionary* states flatly that while Hermes appears as a youth, he "...is probably one of the oldest [of the gods] and most nearly primitive in origin....and signifies the daemon who haunts or occupies a heap of stones, or perhaps a stone, set up by the roadside for some magical purpose" (pp.502-3). Again, we come upon the notion of magic in connection with Hermes.



Hermes roadside marker

"Hermes creates boundaries." We are always in a place. It is not possible to be outside a "place". One is at home or at work, but it is not until there is some attention drawn to that - a naming - that the sense of containment and stepping from one sphere to another is made conscious. Heaps of rocks were early ways of bringing consciousness to the transition from one place to another. They also provide a choice point, when we come to a pile of stones we can often take one of several directions.

This choice factor - perhaps is related to the duality we have been exploring, the attraction / disdain axis. It seems fitting that the statues of Hermes had two faces - looking in opposite directions. When there is a choice there is freedom, this is symbolised with the wings we see on the messenger's feet and helmet.

There is a phrase often used on the Net that comes to mind: "Information wants to be free". Perhaps a spontaneous sense of how strong the built in forces of cyberspace are.

The therapy space and cyberspace belong to the same order of reality. On the Internet the signposts are very explicit. There is no movement *without* the presence of a sign-post, some sort of icon to click, each with its own name. Cyberspace is made out of names. Online the ancient herm becomes a link we can click, forcing at least a moment of consciousness.

In therapy we see the epitome of such consciousness and the essay by Stein is mostly about the space of psychotherapy. He uses the Hermes archetype to describe a "third space" of psychotherapy - a term not unlike Vinge's "other plane". He puts it this way:

Psychotherapy itself and active imagination are two instances of the creation of new space in the modern world. But we can certainly find Hermes at work in many other locations as well. Wherever he is constellated, a new space opens up. He both creates and marks the space, sets it apart, and gives it an aura of numinosity and fascination. ... in communications, a new space called virtual reality suddenly pops up on the screen and draws awe and fascination, even addiction to itself...

Murray Stein highlights the importance of the new irreal dimensions in this statement: "One might call this the Age of Hermes."

## **Trickster**

It is certainly compelling to say with Dolores Brien and perhaps Murray Stein that in Hermes we have the God of Cyberspace. That by seeing Hermes as active in this way in the world we are seeing soulfully and that we have made cyberspace a place of more value. There is another take on this.

James Hillman, as Cliff Bostock has noted, is dismissive of the whole cyber realm, but he has also curtly dismissed it as being the domain of Hermes, or at least of it being a realm that has a psychological dimension. Here is a passage by Hillman from a response to an essay, "The Charm Of Hermes" by

Bernard Neville. [1992]

At its beginning, depth psychology must surely have pleased the gods. It incited the repressed return. But the repressed returned within an utterly secular and scientific cosmology. Thus, Hermes, deprived of his depth and his divinity, became secularized, merely slippery, deceiving, seductive, commercial, a thief and a liar, as Neville writes, and his inventiveness and invisibility became scientized as electronic technology.

So, I imagine him to be urging us to find more valid images to hold the invisibles; he is asking to be freed of the glass and plastic alter of your PC monitor and be given a more welcomingly beautiful place on earth. [Hillman, 1999 p. 14]

Hillman's voice has its attractions, this rings so true: "the repressed returned within an utterly secular and scientific cosmology." We are in an era that has lost its soul... but is Hillman right that Hermes is somehow tied to the glass and plastic? Hermes is the master of unbinding himself, he is already free in his very own cyber realm. He is tricky, and has tricked Hillman here with his ability to be able to cross invisibly from one realm to another.

Hermes was given the gift of invisibility by Hades so he could guide souls gently from life to death. For all the visibility in the sense of hype about the Internet there is an invisibility to the archetypal dimension of cyberspace. I hear the wounded lover who cries out: you want me only for my body, but what about the real *me*!

Can Hermes, as Hillman suggests, be given a beautiful place on earth? Of course "a place on earth" is full of soul. Earthiness and the particularity of place, epitomise almost as much as African rhythm the idea of soul. Can anything so opposite as a virtual space be soulful? Earthiness and being in a place called home are the soulfulness of Hestia or Hera. But these goddesses do not have wings. They are welcoming, but for them to have their life they need to welcome somebody who travels. Hermes is the traveller par excellence, he is at home on the journey, as Kerényi has shown. Hillman simply misses that quality when he urges us to tie Hermes to earth, back to the body. No, cyberspace is not a place on earth.

## Caduceus

Hermes carries the Caduceus - a staff with two snakes. This is not the staff of Aesculapius symbol of healing and medicine a staff with one snake, even though it is sometimes misrepresented. Two snakes facing each other and as they do so, like the ancient herms they also face in opposite directions. The misrepresentation, well explained by Darren Nichols (16), came about because medical books in the 16th century used the Cadeuceus as the printers emblem, which makes sense in terms of the correspondences we have been exploring.



## Conclusion

I would like to conclude with implications for psychotherapy.

No doubt others have and will see different archetypes in cyberspace. It has occurred to me that for all the strong associations with Hermes, we are looking at one of the most transformative forces central to the development of humanity and that *cyberspace* is an archetype, the Archetype of Cyberspace.

By developing a sense of the ancient correspondences between elements such as Mercury, the planet Mercury, the younger brother of Apollo and the dragon's teeth we are equipped to see psychologically into the stories of clients, not only about their surfing habits or the grief over lost email, but the mind space governed by Hermes as it appears in stories dreams. As we hear dreams and stories that have an element of exchange, commerce, theft, speed, journey, signposts, and so on we can see these as doorways to pursue to add depth.

The important conclusion that follows this exploration not about individual work. It is about the psychotherapeutic frame we work in. Once we have grasped the archetypal qualities of cyberspace then we can see that psychotherapy itself is a subset of the larger information realm. Psychotherapy is a sort of cyberspace. Working to create communication and to delineate the limits of the space that occurs in is the job of the psychotherapist. Psychotherapy is not the only place where we enter into an imaginal space. The gods of cyberspace are sure to also govern the work of the psychotherapist.

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## Footnotes

1. James Hillman quote from: [http://home.earthlink.net/~cradlo/godrealm/how\\_gr2.html](http://home.earthlink.net/~cradlo/godrealm/how_gr2.html)
2. From 'Ahead of All Parting: The Selected Poetry and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke' Edited and Translated by Stephen Mitchell [http://homepages.pathfinder.gr/georgios\\_ii/poetry/rilke/rilkefirst.html](http://homepages.pathfinder.gr/georgios_ii/poetry/rilke/rilkefirst.html)
3. The USENET archive at google is a gold-mine for etymology. For example, a bit of research seems to show that the term "net-surfing" originated with Brendan Kehoe, also known as the author of "Zen and the art of the Internet," an early Internet book.

In [this thread](#) from 1991 he uses the term to refer to somebody browsing telnet sites (there was no web at the time). Two messages later, Ron Newman talks about how he likes the term and wants to spread it!

However, others claim independent coinage, including possibly Mark McCahil the Gopher developer (they used the metaphor a lot) and others back to the 80s who talked about Information Surfing. Paul Saffo used the term "information surfing" in a [1988 magazine column](#) and reports it was commonly used and "definitely already in the zeitgeist" before he wrote it. Even Marshall McLuhan used the metaphor of surfing data like ur-surfer Duke Kahanomoku.

In addition, the term "channel surfing" shows first use in January 91, and seems to have originated at the same time. Several of the early users of forms of the term claim they did so due to a love of real water surfing, so this appears to be a metaphor of many parents.

from: <http://www.templetons.com/brad/spamterm.html>

4. That soul has been lost through the materialism of the enlightenment and the inability of theology sustain a viable space for soul is at the heart of Jung's work. Typically Jung reflects in this way:

How totally different did the world appear to medieval man! For him the earth was eternally fixed and at rest in the centre of the universe encircled by the course of a sun that solicitously bestowed its warmth. Men were all children of God under the loving care of the Most High, who prepared them for eternal blessedness; and all knew exactly what they should do and how they should conduct themselves in order to rise from a corruptible world to an incorruptible and joyous existence. Such a life no longer seems real to us, even in our dreams. Natural science has long ago torn this lovely veil to shreds. That age lies as far behind as childhood, when one's own father was unquestionably the handsomest and strongest man on earth.

The modern man has lost all the metaphysical certainties of his medieval brother, and set up in their place the ideals of material security, general welfare and humaneness. But it takes more than an ordinary dose of optimism to make it appear that these ideals are still unshaken. Material security, even, has gone by the board, for the modern man begins to see that every step in material "progress" adds just so much force to the threat of a more stupendous catastrophe.

[[Jung 1933](#) p.204]

Here is another passage noting the loss not of the Christian God but of the way alchemy had once been able to hold the sacred. Note Jung proposes that the denied, lost or shadow aspects are projected onto the world, leading to real conflict and wars. This passage contains an important though perhaps flawed idea, that comes up later in the present essay: that the repressed or lost soul can return as "alarming symptoms" such as "the unleashing of primeval blood-thirstiness and lust for murder on a collective scale".

The decline of alchemy during the Enlightenment meant for many Europeans a descent of all dogmatic Images -which till then had been directly present in the ostensible secrets of chemical matter- to the underworld. Just as the decay of the conscious dominant is followed by an irruption of chaos in the individual, so also in the case of the masses (Peasant Wars, Anabaptists, French Revolution, etc.), and the furious conflict of elements in the individual psyche is reflected in the unleashing of primeval blood-thirstiness and lust for murder on a collective scale. This is the sickness so vividly described in the Cantilena. The loss of the eternal images is in truth no light matter for the man of discernment. But since there are infinitely many more men of no discernment, nobody, apparently, notices that the truth expressed by the dogma has vanished in a cloud of fog, and nobody seems to miss anything. The discerning person knows and feels that his psyche is disquieted by the loss of something that was the life-blood of his ancestors. The undiscerning miss nothing, and only discover afterwards in the papers (much too late) the alarming symptoms that have now become "real" in the outside world because they were not perceived before inside, in oneself, just as the presence of the eternal images was not noticed. If they had been, a threnody for the lost god would have arisen, as once before in antiquity at the death of Great Pan. Instead, all weft-meaning people assure us that one has only to believe he is still there -which merely adds stupidity to unconsciousness. Once the symptoms are really outside in some form of sociopolitical insanity, it is impossible to convince anybody that the conflict is in the psyche of every individual, since he is now quite sure where his enemy is.

[Jung 1954 pp.498-513)

5. Here is a snippet from an enlightening post on Dolores Brien's weblog on the idea of disenchantment.

<http://www.bee.net/debrien/blogger.html>

Nature, mythos, the ancient Gods are really dead.  
And, as Hölderlin knew, it is not only forbidden  
but impossible to awaken the dead.  
We believe we are still living on earth  
whereas in truth our *anima* circles  
around the earth in our satellites in cold empty space.  
Instead of looking up  
from the earth to the sky,  
we look at our earth from below.

Robert Avens

We live, we are told, in a world that is "disenchanted" and that has been ever since the scientific revolution of the 16th century. The natural world of the ancient peoples, its trees, rocks, waters, the sky and earth, was alive and inhabited by spirits and gods. Humans were a part of this world too, at home in it. They did not perceive themselves as separate from nature. They belonged to the cosmos, just as did everything else in the natural world, both organic and inorganic. Their consciousness was, what Marshall Berman has called, a "participating consciousness." \*

\* The term "participating consciousness" actually originates with the philosopher, poet Owen Barfield, whom Berman cites.

For more: See Marshall Berman, *The Reenchantment of the World* (Cornell University Press, 1981); Relevant articles by Wolfgang Giegerich can be found on [The C. G. Jung Page](#) See also Katharine Hayles, *How We Became Post-Human*, (University of Chicago Press, 1999); Ray Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines*, (Penguin Books, 1999). Saturday, March 01, 2003 -- The Disenchantment of the World

6. Bachelard ( 1994 p.xx) in a footnote quotes:

Charles Nodier, *Dictionnaire raisonne des onomatopees francaises*, Paris 1828, p. 46. "The different names for the soul, among nearly all peoples, are just so many breath variations, and onomatopoeic expressions of breathing."

This is a beautiful insight, and fits with "soul" which is like a breath, not unlike "sigh!", which in turn is identical vocally with "psy". Exploring the psyche can not be done once the breath is gone.

7. I am using the word *psychologist* here in the spirit of its etymological roots.

**psychology** - 1653, from Gk. *psykhe*- "breath, spirit, soul" (see *psyche*) + *logia* "study of." Originally "study of the soul," meaning "study of the mind" first recorded 1748. <http://www.geocities.com/etymonline/p11etym.htm>

The loss of soul in the world has reached into psychology and psychotherapy in a fundamental way so that the word no longer means for many how I use it here, it has become to mean measurement of behaviour.

8. The verification of psychological ideas may seem impossible as they are totally subjective, but they are not. They are not verified either by logic or empiricism, and thus fall outside a familiar, western positivism. The following idea from Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* amplifies what I say here, firstly because of his use of the term "transsubjective", which names accurately the idea that while we can name things any way we like for them to have psychological veracity naming goes beyond that. Secondly his idea amplifies the idea of psychological work in that doing this work is never done, it is a process, something always done anew, again, a *practice*:

It seemed to me, then, that this transsubjectivity of the image could not be understood, in its essence, through the habits of subjective reference alone. Only phenomenology -that is to say, consideration of the onset of the image in an individual consciousness- can help us to restore the subjectivity of images and to measure their fullness, their strength and their transsubjectivity. These subjectivities and transsubjectivities cannot be determined once and for all, for the poetic image is essentially variational, and not, as in the case of the concept, constitutive.  
(p.xix [Bachelard 1994](#))

Reality is not separate from the story about it. The line from John Lennon comes to mind: "Reality leaves a lot to the imagination." The relationship between the two is summed up in the word "dialectical", a mutual, in the moment influencing of one by the other.

9. William Gibson first used the word in *Neuromancer* [[1984](#)].

Tom W. Bell, here <http://www.tomwbell.com/writings/Cyber-.html> sees only negative connotations with the cyber prefix.

William Gibson, the premier cyberpunk writer, apparently coined the term "cyberspace." Gibson may merit praise as a fine writer, but he hardly presents an appealing picture of technology's future. For a great many people, sadly, "cyber-" will bring to mind Gibson's gritty, dystopian world view.

Bell does not like the prefix at all but like the psychologists who would want to remove *psyche-* from psychology and call it behavioural since he'd remove cyber and replace it with digital and Internet removing altogether the idea that such a realm might make sense beyond the technology it runs on. He is exhibiting a typical response to cyberspace which is explored psychologically later in this essay.

Here is Gibson's first use of the word:

"Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts...A graphical representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the non-space of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding..." -William Gibson, "Neuromancer"

10. Here is the whole list of descriptions from *Cyberspace: First Steps*:

Cyberspace: A new universe, a parallel universe created and sustained by the world's computers and communication lines. A world in which the global traffic of knowledge, secrets, measurements, indicators, entertainments, and alter-human agency takes on form: sights, sounds, presences never seen on the surface of the earth blossoming in a vast electronic night.

cyberspace: Accessed through any computer linked into the system; a place, one place, limitless; entered equally from a basement in Vancouver, a boat in Port-au-Prince, a cab in New York, a garage in Texas City, an apartment in Rome, an office in Hong Kong, a bar in Kyoto, a cafe in Kinshasa, a laboratory on the Moon.

Cyberspace: The tablet become a page become a screen become a world, a virtual world. Everywhere and nowhere, a place where nothing is forgotten and yet everything changes.

Cyberspace: A common mental geography, built, in turn, by consensus and revolution, canon and experiment; a territory swarming with data and lies, with mind stuff and memories of nature, with a million voices and two million eyes in a silent, invisible concert of enquiry, dealmaking, dream sharing, and simple beholding.

Cyberspace: Its corridors form wherever electricity runs with intelligence. Its chambers bloom wherever data gathers and is stored. Its depths increase with every image or word or number, with every addition, every contribution, of fact or thought. Its horizons recede in every direction; it breathes larger, it complexifies, it embraces and involves. Billowing, glittering, humming, coursing, a Borgesian library, a city; intimate, immense, firm, liquid, recognizable and unrecognizable at once.

Cyberspace: Through its myriad, unblinking video eyes, distant places and faces, real or unreal, actual or long gone, can be summoned to presence. From vast databases that constitute the culture's deposited wealth, every document is available, every recording is playable, and every picture is viewable. Around every participant, this: a laboratory, an instrumented bridge; taking no space, a home presiding over a world ... and a dog under the table.

Cyberspace: Beneath their plaster shells on the city streets, behind their potted plants and easy smiles, organizations are seen as the organisms they are-or as they would have us believe them be: money flowing in rivers and capillaries; obligations, contracts, accumulating (and the shadow of the IRS passes over). On the surface, small meetings are held in rooms, but they proceed in virtual rooms, larger, face to electronic face. On the surface, the building knows where you are. And who.

Cyberspace: From simple economic survival through the establishment of security and legitimacy, from trade in tokens of approval and confidence and liberty to the pursuit of influence, knowledge, and entertainment for their own sakes, everything informational and important to the life of individuals-and organizations-will be found for sale, or for the taking, in cyberspace.

Cyberspace: The realm of pure information, filling like a lake, siphoning the jangle of messages transfiguring the physical world, decontaminating the natural and urban landscapes, redeeming them, saving them from the chain-dragging bulldozers of the paper industry, from the diesel smoke of courier and post office trucks, from jet fuel fumes and clogged airports, from billboards, trashy and pretentious architecture, hour-long freeway commutes, ticket lines, and choked subways ... from all the inefficiencies, pollutions (chemical and informational), and corruptions attendant to the process of moving information attached to things-from paper to brains-across, over, and under the vast and bumpy surface of the earth rather than letting it fly free in the soft hail of electrons that is cyberspace.

11. Interestingly for all the need to make a distinction between techne and cyberspace at the origins of Techne we come close to the abstractions of cyberspace, perhaps the distinction should *not* be drawn as clearly as I propose?

Some light on this in an [essay](#) by Michael Shumate 1996:

In earlier cultures, before writing had been "taken in and become a habit of mind" (Bolter 1991, 36), considering it a technology was not so difficult. The Greek root *techne* included not only crafts we would immediately see as technological--masonry, carpentry, pottery--but also art, epic poetry, sports and other fields requiring specialized, developed skills (cf. Bolter 1991, 35-7, and Mitcham and Casey, 36-7). It should come as no surprise, then, that tracing *techne* back to its Indo-European root, *tekth--*variously defined as to put in hand, to weave, to build (of wood)--reveals that technology springs from the same source as words for not only such tangible things as textile and texture, but also such seeming abstractions as text and technique (Cf. both Barnhart and Partridge). Both halves of the vague, airy "creative writing" have settled back to earth so that some actual work can begin. As I said above, to write is not to create *ex nihilo*, but to form and shape materials at hand, to make texts with technology and technique. Mark L. Greenberg and Lance Schachterle, in a discussion of the etymology of technology as developed by Eric Partridge, state it thus:

"Literature conveys not concepts existing in a void, but concepts worked over to present a richness of felt experience. As Partridge's *Origins* suggest, 'texts' in literature 'put' ideas 'in hand,' as it were, to frame knowledge within the dramatic fabric of experience, even as the technology of books and book production literally brings ideas 'to hand'" (Greenberg and Schachterle, 16).

More on this from [Heidegger: introductory notes for the class](#):

**techne** "The word stems from the Greek. *Technikon* means that which belongs to *techne*. We must observe two things with respect to the meaning of this word. One is that *techne* is the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts. *techne* belongs to bringing-forth, to poesis; it is something created.

Brian Lake discusses the origins of the term thoroughly in *Defining Technology*, [thesis available here](#).

[12](#). Sherry Turkle's *Life on the Screen* [[xxxx](#)], Erik Davis's *Techgnosis* [[xxxx](#)], *MW's* The pearly Gates of Cyberspace [[xxxx](#)] to mention a few of the classics. John Suer's comprehensive online book *Psychology of Cyberspace*. While all of these books have some psychological insight they do not go extensively into the area of depth or archetypal psychology.

[13](#). From Stanley Richard's *Eros is a Master of Perversity* (1993):

From a civilised point of view he is the ruination of our harmonies. He is the wrecker of our stabilities, of marriages, of well-founded institutions, of social order, our structures of convenience, the comfortable life. This is why, in spite of ourselves, we are so often attracted to trouble. Maybe he is even at work in the abominations of child abuse and hard-core pornography - the worst and most repulsive excesses we can imagine. It is not beyond belief that when Eros is suppressed he will return in his shadow form. We cannot help hating those excesses any more than we can help being tempted by them. Eros is felt in these excesses no less than in the mysteries of a welcomed ardour. It behoves us to see the god in the abominations of love as well as in its bountifulness.

[14](#). Dolores E. Brien, (1997) *Archetypes of the Internet*, Published on the C.G. Jung Page.

Dolores opens this Internet essay with the following contextualisation:

This article is adapted from a review of Mark Stefik's book *Internet Dreams: Archetypes, Myths and Metaphors* (The MIT Press, 1996) which was published in *The Round Table Review* (March/April 1997, V. 4, No. 4). The experience of the Internet has changed dramatically over the past two years. I would probably write a rather different review were I doing so today. Nevertheless, Stefik offers a stimulating perspective, one still worth thinking about. Your comments are welcome.

[15](#). In 1976 Magda Kerényi added a preface to the 1942 publication from which I will quote two passages to add some context for the passage quoted in the present essay:

Hermaion, a gift of Hermes, meant for Kerényi that a book or an article unexpectedly appeared at hand in the right moment, even independently of traveling. His Hermes lecture on August 4, 1942, played an important part in his life, quite concretely favoring a crucial journey: the appreciation of this lecture in the Swiss press facilitated permission to leave Hungary and then later to establish himself definitely in the free world. He seems

to have rendered homage to this daimon of his fate in 1952, during his first post-war visit in Delphi. There he walked each day to the site where, according to his intuition, Hermes used to be worshipped, even though, as a classical scholar, he was led to Delphi for the sake of its chief divinities, Apollo and Dionysos. Exactly there is the point-geographi-cally as well as metaphorically-where personal life leads into work, in this case to Hermes Psychopompos. Kerényi expressed it in a meditation about the "Angels" of Rilke: the poet had experienced the "Angels," according to Kerényi, as a spiritual place without the usual boundaries which separate importance from unimportance. "Such a place [Kerényi's meditation continues] can be assumed also in the sanctuary of a God of antiquity, for instance in that of Hermes. Apparently this was the case with my Hermes, Guide of Souls. . . ." A direct account of the genesis of the present work is to be found in a letter dated November 11, 1942, to Frau Hermann Hesse:

*The world of Hermes has been holding me captive ever since my lecture until the day before yesterday, and you will be amazed how much it grew and ripened since its conception in the lecture-an unexpected and passively received conception into its final, and even for myself, surprising shape.*

In the summer of 1943 the Hermes Lecture was published in the Eranos--Jahrbuch IX. A second edition, from which this translation was made, appeared as a monograph in 1944 as Number One of the new series "Albae Vigiliae," "because I felt compelled to publish it for reasons related to my situation after breaking 'official' connections with Hungary." Then began the difficult existence of the free, private scholar, although interwoven and protected by Hermes. Kerényi died on April 14, 1973, exactly on the day when thirty years of exile were completed. His grave in Ascona bears the inscription mentioned on one of the last pages of this volume-which had been used on the isle of Imbros for those "initiated into the Mysteries of Hermes": tetelesmenoi Hermei. It was not possible for Karl Kerényi to place his favorite divinity into the series of archetypal monographs on the Gods, but one is grateful to those who have helped the figure of "the speech-gifted mediator and psycho-gogue" to become, in the fresh vestments of the English language, "for all to whom life is an adventure-whether an adventure of love or of spirit-. . . the common guide."

16. Here is a quote from the [web page](#): *Walk Among Gods, The Symbols of Medicine* by Darren Nichols.

Despite the apparent clarity around the distinct origins and meaning of the caduceus and the staff of Aesculapius, they are both used commonly, and often interchangeably, every day. Just where this practice of ignorance and confusion began can be traced to two main sources. The first of these came in the 1500 s when printers began to use the caduceus as their insignia because they felt it symbolized their role as messengers and businessmen. That in itself was not a problem until several publishers of medical texts began prominently displaying the caduceus on the books given to students and doctors. Suddenly the distinction between a staff with a single snake and one with an extra serpent and wings was blurred.

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