Dec. 1987, "Bugs." On the insect in modern literature, see the chapter in Colin Wilson, *The Outsider* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1956).

5. Richard Riegler, *Das Tier im Spiegel der Sprache* (Dresden/Leipzig, C. A. Kochs Verlag, 1907), 223–94.

6. Gladys A. Reichard, *Navaho Religion*, Bollingen Series (New York: Pantheon), II: 387 ff.

7. "Bugs" in *The New Yorker*, 28 Dec. 1987, 79.

8. Cf. J. Hillman, "Further Notes on Images," *Spring 1978*: 176–77, on "eternalizing" an image.

9. W. F. Otto, *Dionysos* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1981), 133–34; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 4. 1 ff.; *Lempriere's Classical Dictionary*, "Minyas."

10. C. G. Jung, from an interview in *Good Housekeeping*, December 1961, as quoted by E. Edinger in *Ego and Archetype* (Harmondsworth: Penguin), 101.

11. Marcel Detienne, *The Gardens of Adonis* (London: Harvester Press, 1977), 60–71: "Whether Adonis takes refuge or is hidden by his mistress, it is always in a bed of lettuce. . ." (67); ". . . mythical significance of the lettuce: sexual impotence and a lack of vital force" (68).

12. P. Berry, "Defense and Telos in Dreams," in *Echo's Subtle Body* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1982), 81–95.

13. P. Berry, "An Approach to the Dream," in *Echo's*, 59–60.

14. J. Hillman, "Further Notes on Images," 176–77.

15. Cf. S. W. Frost, *Insect Life and Insect Natural History* (New York: Dover, 1959).

16. Wm. James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (London: Longmans, Green, 1909), 194.

17. Kaji Aso, "Black Ant," *Proteus* (Boston, 1977).

18. Karl M. Abenheimer, "Re-Assessment of the Theoretical and Therapeutic Meaning of Anal Symbolism," Guild of Pastoral Psychology, Lecture 72 (London, 1952).

19. Further on Christianism's victory over the Underworld's sting, see my *The Dream and the Underworld* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 85–90. J. G. Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, 3: 424–38, reports many cases where the Church and various religious orders tried and executed or excommunicated insects as vermin. For instance, St. Bernard, by excommunicating the flies that buzzed about him, laid them all out dead on the floor of the church. Vermin were dealt with by the Church authorities, domesticated animals tried by civil authorities. Frazer (438) explains this, saying: "It was physically impossible for a common executioner, however zealous, active and robust, to hang, decapitate . . . all the rats, mice, ants, flies, mosquitoes, caterpillars . . . but what is impossible with man is possible with God, and accordingly it was logically . . . left to God's ministers on earth to grapple with a problem which far exceeded the capacity of the magistrate and his minister the hangman." I would contend the reason to be less logical: vermin present the theological problem of the Underworld and had to be eradicated as demons rather than as animals. Nonetheless, records show the bugs got a "fair trial" (even if they always lost), for against the prosecuting priest, another priest took on their advocacy as having been created by God before humans, and therefore they had their rights to fields and crops.

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THE VEGETABLE SOUL

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I want to consider the vegetable kingdom in human fantasy but prefer not to begin with fruits, trees, or flowers. These can too easily be made into transcendent symbols: doorways to the spirit, to fantasies of wholeness and wellness, rather than to the darker, downward regions of soul. Nor do I wish to begin with "exotics"—the vegetable inhabitants of swamps, rainforests, or jungles—or with obscure fungi eking out their livelihood in the dark, damp places of the Earth. These also can be too distracting for our purposes. Nor do I want to consider the ocean's vegetation—the algae and seaweeds. In Western European culture these seaplants are now generally associated with macrobiotics, health or Japanese cuisine. We can, and must, return to all this immense variety of the vegetable kingdom. No, I wish to begin with the most mundane plants in our culture, those least capable of being spiritualized or holized: the cabbage, the potato and the other *vegetables* of the vegetable kingdom.

How can we respond and move into the vegetable world? Our way of listening should stay as close as possible to the things themselves. We need to hear the vegetable at work in the imagination. This paper is therefore not only concerned with vegetables in dreams and fantasies but with a *vegetable way* into the imagination, the vegetable eye of things, the vegetable soul.

A thirty-year-old woman dreams:

> I am in prison, feeling hopeless. Long dark corridors stretch out like underground tunnels. Then it becomes a P.O.W. camp. The soldiers are listless and depressed. There are lots of browns, greens and greys, especially in their uniforms. I suddenly notice that their heads are all cabbages. It becomes a field of cabbages.

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A standard cabbage interpretation would indicate boredom, or just vegetating and so on. But perhaps it wasn't the dreamer who was imprisoned, who was the victim of war, but the cabbages and the other vegetable imaginings.

Jung said, "I am fully committed to the idea that human existence should be rooted in the earth." Every person, he continued, "should have his own plot of land so that the instincts can come to life again." He directly blamed modern disease upon the rootless and gardenless existence of so much city life. He spoke favorably of small gardens.[1] Vegetables provide us with a view from the allotments, those well-used bits of wasteland, or from market gardens, looking out at the manic mobility of contemporary society, the restlessness, the rootlessness. In his essay "Mind and Earth," Jung addressed the cultural psyche of comparatively recent settlers in countries such as the U.S.A. and Australia. He considered these to lack an ancestral connection with the earth.[2] As Corbin put it, the past is beneath our feet.[3] What better way to touch the ground than through cabbages, about which the poet Robert Bly wrote: "cabbages love the earth."[4]

Being rooted or rootless, digesting images, ripening, stemming, grafting, pruning—these are vegetable metaphors. To be "radical" is to get back to the roots. "Radish" stems from the same etymological roots. Perhaps we can see in the tap-root, the deepest root of all, the child who one was, the deep ancestral nourishment. Gaston Bachelard, acutely sensitive to the subtleties of the material imagination, writes: "an image is a plant which needs earth and sky, substance and form." For Bachelard, the concept of *grafting* is essential for understanding human psychology: "It is the graft which can truly provide the material imagination with an exuberance of forms, which can transmit the richness and density of matter to formal imagination. . . . Art is grafted nature."[5]

But vegetables, like animals, have suffered at the hands of modern psychology. One has to search long and hard for anything about vegetables in modern psychological literature. Vegetables are not only devalued, they are also often ignored. Consider the most famous of European vegetable folk-tales: "the pumpkin at the ball"—more commonly called "Cinderella." Usually the poor young woman is thought to be the lowest and most oppressed, the social outcast. But what about the pumpkin! All the glitter and show is carried by and *within* the pumpkin. The *literal immobility* of this generous vegetable contains within it an *imaginative mobility* symbolized by the coach and by a dream of upward aspiration. But at the depth of midnight, the pumpkin will insist on bringing us back to our vegetable senses. The pumpkin is the creature of the night. It belongs with Halloween, witches and broomsticks, the return of souls from the dead, with rats, lizards and mice. Originally in Europe turnips were used as lanterns. Now we find hollowed-out pumpkins with a candle inside. In these cases the light is *within* the vegetable, looking out from inside the pumpkin or turnip: *vegetable consciousness.*

Like the pumpkin, the bean in Jack's famous tale surely *contains* within it the stairway to the giant's realm and the gold. Both pumpkin and bean contain an upward aspiration *and* a downward rootedness, the promise of a fall. Both for a limited time also provide the *means* for the mobilization of deepest longings. Placing the vegetable at the center of such tales provides them with totally revised coherence.

Definitions of the word "vegetable" reflect its common usage: unconscious life; inactivity; living an uneventful, monotonous life; vegetating. A "cabbage": a person who is inactive or lacks interests. To be called either an animal or a vegetable is usually taken as an insult, implying either savagery or inertia.

Of course, there are many references in books on symbolism to vegetables "in general": annual cycles, death and resurrection, fertility, nourishment, as well as unconscious life, inactivity and immobility. But there is a lack of soulful discussion, especially about particular vegetables, although there are certain exceptions to this general absence: onion (unity of the many, the cosmos, immortality, the first cause, veils and revelation), leek (victory, protection against wounds), garlic (magic and protection). These plants are all from the same family and in medieval times were crucial for flavoring. They were therefore considered to be almost herbs or spices and hence relieved of their vegetableness. Beans (immortality, phallic power) and grain (resurrection) were also ancient exceptions to the general symbolic fate of vegetables.

In Europe vegetables generally have long been held in low esteem.[6] Certainly, our medieval ancestors didn't think much of vegetables, crudely classifying them as providing either starch or taste. It wasn't flattering for a medieval plant to be labeled a vegetable, and the cabbage was the most *basic* of all. In the famous medieval poem "Piers Plowman," a character is described as having no money, but plenty of cabbages. The "neep" family was also a basic vegetable: pars-neep, tur-neep. A medieval saying summed up their status: "not worth a withered neep."

While most nations have national flowers, few have a vegetable as their

emblem. Vegetables are frequently pejorative terms in such cases: Spud-Murphy for the Irish, Swede-bashers for the Cornish. Even the mineral kingdom seems to come off better than vegetables in human fantasy. Teaching a stone to talk (the title of a recent meditative book on nature) seems better, more "zen," more spiritual than teaching, say, a cabbage to talk. It's always the philosophers' stone, never the philosophers' cabbage, although alchemy *did* imagine and create the vegetable stone, the *Lapis Vegetabilis*, the *Quinta Essentia.*[7]

Part of the human, or dayworld, aversion to the vegetable soul has to do with its supposed lack of will, or intelligence, or its apparent *immobility.* Hence the appellation "vegetable," or "vegetate," applied to people in a coma or severely incapacitated. But, as we have seen in the case of pumpkin and bean, a literal immobility is often matched by an imaginal mobility. As Ponge says of plants and vegetables: "To their immobility they owe their perfection."[8] The apparent immobility of vegetables is not a pathology, but their defining characteristic, their mode of being. A vegetable-like immobility is not simply the *absence* of an animal-like activity. Within it there can be a repose for the soul. "Vegetable permanence," writes Bachelard, "what an *anima* truth, what a symbol for a soul's repose in a world worthy of dreams. . . !"[9]

Studies show how a physical immobility can result in a deepening of imaginal reverie. Robert Sardello, commenting on the weariness often associated with cancer, writes: "The fatigue of the natural body, its apparent loss of animation, calls for a different kind of engagement with the world, one sensing everything in the world as alive, as image, as autonomously animated. Only in our fatigue can the world's animation begin to show."[10] Vegetable repose evokes a different imagination of time to that of creatures, for whom time invariably involves movement *through* and *across* space.

Indeed, the word "vegetable" comes from a root that means the very opposite of immobile, passive, uneventful, or lacking interest. *Vēgere* (ML) means to animate, enliven, invigorate, arouse. *Vegete* (E) means to grow, to be refreshing, vivifying, animated. From these roots come "vigil," "vigilant," "vigor," with their connotations of being wide-awake, alert, keeping watch.

Another aspect of the aversion, or fear, that dayworld consciousness can have toward the vegetable soul is its *slow downwardness.* Cabbages, according to Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, cause troublesome dreams, send black vapors up to the brain and are especially to be avoided.

Galen condemns it of all the herbs, claiming it brings heaviness to the soul. Some Renaissance thinkers felt that *all* raw vegetables, except lettuce which was then considered an herb, bred melancholic, vegetable blood: inert, still, without heat. Ficino wrote that black bile, which causes a drying-out and encourages Saturnian depression, is made worse by cabbages, radishes, garlic, onions, leeks and carrots. He cautioned against eating too many fresh vegetables.[11] Most vegetables were traditionally associated with melancholy and depression. They initially take us down, into the earth, into the dark stillness of immobility. They bring with them the fearful elimination of rationality and will.

The Fate of Vegetables in the World

Throughout the nineteenth century, Westerners came into contact with the prolific global varieties of all three kingdoms: zoos and botanical gardens were set up, geological societies founded. The importance of botanical gardens early in the nineteenth century has been compared with the vital role chemical laboratories were to play at the very end of the century. They encouraged and facilitated plant transfers which had enormous impact in those parts of the world subject to Western hegemony: tea in India, Africa and Ceylon; rubber in Asia; sugar in the Caribbean and Australia; wheat in Canada and Australia; coffee in Africa and Latin America.[12]

These were tremendous shifts in the *anima mundi.* The vegetable-imaginings of entire continents were altering. There were furious debates about the purpose of the botanical gardens themselves. Should they be economic-scientific laboratories or playgrounds for the promenading bourgeoisie? How should the vegetable kingdom be imagined, how displayed, how placed? These were fascinating new images. What was their *topos?*

These events must be seen imaginally and the soulfulness of vegetable history reclaimed from both scientific abstraction and everyday mundanity. The consequences of living among vegetables imagined as inert and soul-less have been profound, as the present ecological crisis bears witness. Ninety-five percent of plant food for the entire human race now comes from just thirty species, with just three (wheat, rice and maize) especially vital. It has been estimated that pre-historic cultures used about five hundred species. Today, crops are designed for responsiveness to artificial

fertilizers, pesticides, simultaneous ripening, machine harvesting, transportation, factory processing and maximum yield: the Florida MH-I tomato can withstand a fall of six feet at a speed of 13.4 m.p.h. (which is two and a half times the impact resistance for U.S.A. car bumper standards). In the European Economic Community it is prohibited to market any vegetable that isn't registered—a long and expensive business—so vegetables of limited appeal are in great risk of extinction. Vegetable sanctuaries have sprung up to save types and seeds. Seed banks preserve varieties in deep freeze. Many vegetables have vanished, and it is possible that three-quarters of Europe's vegetable varieties will be extinct in the very near future. The situation is exacerbated by the patenting of seeds, especially by multinationals.[13]

This may all seem rather a long way from psychology and its concerns. The threat to our vegetable imaginings can seem remote and diffuse despite our intimate daily involvement with them. But the daily disappearance of numerous vegetable species, the mass production of fewer and fewer varieties, the homogenization of form and taste limit the possible plurality and variety of vegetable imaginings, demonstrating a scorn and indifference toward the vegetable soul. The dream fantasy of imprisoned cabbages is not so crazy.

The Vegetable Soul

"In the depths of matter there grows an obscure vegetation; black flowers bloom in matter's darkness."[14] This beautiful line by Bachelard reminds us of the vegetable vitality of a material imagining. "The soul," he continues, "suffers from a deficiency of material imagination."

In Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* the soul is imagined in three parts: the vegetal (in plants); the sensitive (in beasts); and the rational (in humans).[15] Here is a hierarchy of souls: the superior cannot exist without the lower, therefore humans possess all three, animals only two and plants just one. Symbolically and imaginally, the vegetable kingdom stands midway between the animal and mineral worlds and is a bridge between them. Burton imagines the vegetable soul to be a fundamental part of human existence. The vegetable soul is "the substantial act of an organic body by which it is nourished, augmented and begets another like unto itself." We can read this statement in a number of ways: bodily, as part of an ar-

chetypal medicine and anatomy; or as an alchemy, a vegetable way of working with images. This nutritional, digestive process can also be seen as a kind of cosmic reverie: drawing sustenance from an earthy rootedness while at the same time being open to the stars.

Of all the functions into which Burton subdivided the vegetable soul, digestion was by far the most important. As Ficino warned: "digestion is the root of life."[16] He particularly cautioned scholars and contemplatives about neglecting the body: of their preoccupation with incorporeal things, their neglect of the material imagination. The word "digestion" comes from the Latin *gerund*—to bear or carry; *geste* (ME) refers to a deed, an exploit, a tale; we have "gestate" as in a womb, "gesticulate," "gesture," "register," "suggest." Digestion clearly implies a taking apart, separating and rearranging. It also appears to be an orderly process that takes time, that involves stories and gestures.

Digestion is essentially a process of dissolution, a *dissolutio.* As such the vegetable soul is intricately bound up with death. Beer rather than wine is part of the vegetable intoxication, being made from barley, wheat, maize, potato. Originally brewed for the Egyptian tombs as part of the mysteries of Osiris, it has been claimed to predate wine in the Mediterranean region.[17] Eventually, it became incorporated into European folk culture as the dismemberment and resurrection of "John Barleycorn."

In the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, death is described in terms of an orderly process, as the various elemental components and the gross and subtle levels of consciousness dissolve and are absorbed back into the primeval emptiness and chaotic plenitude of Śūnyatā. Death is here imagined as a kind of ultimate digestion by the World Soul. Vegetables are part of the matter of soul, part of the body's imagination. Soul-making is a way of dying.

The vegetable soul, perhaps unlike the two other souls in Burton's schema, offers no hope to fantasies of individual salvation or immortality except to become part of the ancestral earth. The Islamic mystic Shaikh Ahmad Ahsā'I writes: "The vegetable soul in man—when separated (in death)—returns to its origin, there to blend and be lost, not to survive there autonomously."[18] Psychoanalysis must at some point touch death if it is at all to be worthwhile.[19] Through the vegetable soul, the vegetable-way into images, we are brought to face, to give faces to, the *materiality* of death. The ancient melancholic dread of vegetating is of being drawn into the material depths. But we are nourished only by the death of things.

Vegetable Naming

Although immobility, downwardness and digestion are fundamental to the vegetable soul, to the vegetable way of working with images, we have so far stayed at the level of generalities. Now we need to return to the aesthetic particularities of soul-work, attend to the specificity of the image presented by a particular vegetable, both as a type (e.g., cabbage, potato, turnip) and individually (e.g., *that* particular cabbage which presented itself to us under its own special and unique circumstances).

A forty-year-old man dreams:

> I come across a strange plant. It has very large red-brown leaves. A voice tells me it is a wild-rhubarb. I crouch down very low to inspect the roots where there is a small, black-leather pouch like an old-style money-pouch or rosary-bag. I look inside to find black, dried seeds from the plant. . . .

The plant *lures* the dreamer downward, to the roots, to the seeds. This is a truly vegetable way of propagation: through the attraction of insects, birds and animals. The dreamer eventually saves and carries away a single seed. The plant lures the dreamer downward to the roots through ancestral fantasies (it is associated with the ancient Celts in the dream), through sex, prayer, ritual, wealth—the scrotum-like pouch filled with blackened seeds preserved through *calcinatio*.

There has always been a need for humans to feel somehow involved with the vegetable kingdom, and the clearest expression of this need is through naming. "The name bespeaks an image."[20] To name a thing is to relate it to an imaginal ground. The earliest classification of plants was always in terms of their usefulness to humanity—whether edible, or of medicinal value, or of allegorical importance, and so on.[21]

Linnaeus's mid-eighteenth-century classification system still used human, social metaphors. The vegetable kingdom was divided into "tribes" and "nations": grasses were "plebeians"—"the more they are taxed and trodden upon, the more they multiply"; funguses were "vagabonds"—"barbarous, naked, putrescent, rapacious, voracious."[22] Linnaeus was a mixture of scientist and poet. Here was a desire to feel the natural and psychological worlds as interpenetrating, co-existing and, perhaps, as being identical.

By the close of the eighteenth century, however, formal classification and a new Latin terminology had become firmly established. The vegetable soul lay all but forgotten beneath the arid orderliness of abstraction. Poets complained, but their cries were epitaphs for the old order.

Throughout the nineteenth century attempts were made to reconnect observation and imagination, science with poetry; to create an imaginal aesthetics; to move reflection into the vegetable world. John Ruskin succinctly described the difference between the scientific and poetic approach to plants:

> The one counts the stamens, and affixes a name, and is content; the other observes every character of the plant's colour and form; considering each of its attributes as an element of expression, he seizes on its lines of grace or energy, rigidity or repose. . . he associates it in his mind with all the features of the situation it inhabits, and the ministering agencies necessary to its support.[23]

In addition to the encounter between science and vegetable, the relation between humans and vegetables has been imagined in other ways. These are the schema we use in our amplifications; they are the alchemy of our vegetable imaginings, our vegetable metaphysics, the ancestral roots of our vegetable reveries.

A) Vegetarianism in Western culture has moved in and out of popularity since ancient times.[24] But its arguments are primarily based upon questions about the relation between humans and *animals*, rather than with *vegetables*. Especially important are issues of animal intelligence, feeling and will-power (the *lack* of which precisely defines the vegetable soul in human fantasy). Indeed, in this debate little is said about vegetables at all, except in relation to human health and spiritual well-being. Vegetarianism is perhaps a negation of the vegetable soul by default. In the understandable urge to criticize the effects of meat-eating, vegetarianism can propagate a too cosy, or too spiritual, view of vegetables. Most literature on vegetarianism has little to say about the vegetable soul, about its dark downwardness, or its association with melancholy and depression. The digestive, putrefying aspect of the vegetable soul becomes cleaned up and neutralized. The presence of death in the vegetable diet can be obscured by an emphasis on cycles of fertility and the fantasy of growth.

Nevertheless, vegetarianism has occasionally contributed to fantasies of the vegetable soul. The Manichees, for example, believed that they could obtain spiritual power by eating vegetables rather than meat; Pythagoras

believed that the human soul could transmute into beans and so forbade his followers to eat them. Vegetarianism contains both an upward and a downward transcendental fantasy. In the former, eating vegetables is imagined to bestow spiritual purity and simplicity, fineness of mind and blood, a non-violent and peaceful disposition as compared with meat-eating. Paralleling this upward move is a "back-to-the earth" philosophy: vegetable gardens as part of the recreation of paradise. A medieval fantasy saw "Adam and Eve sent out of Eden with hoes." Gardening was then a monastic ideal. St. Jerome advised a young novice in the fourth century: "Hoe your ground, set out cabbages, convey water to the conduits." Cabbages as monks, monks as cabbages in God's garden: basic, simple, undemanding, unprepossessing, receptive to Him, contemplative. This is the wisdom of the gardener: "the answer lies in the soil."[25]

These vegetarian fantasies clearly echo the dual movement of the vegetable soul: an upward opening to the imaginal heavens and a downward deepening into the imaginal earth. But both moves can become too literal and easily lose touch with a melancholic materiality.

B) There has also been an attempt to animate vegetables by endowing them *directly* with feelings, intelligence and will. Like vegetarianism, the kind of fantasies found in books such as *The Secret Life of Plants* or *Supernature* have an ancient pedigree.[26] Also considered are relations *between* vegetables. So, beans and peas are imagined to be incompatible with the onion family but to enjoy growing next to carrots, beetroots and cauliflowers. Pumpkins and marrows, cabbages and dills are the best of friends, while potatoes and onions are not at all on good terms. Burton quotes Claudian:

> Trees are influenced by love,
> and every flourishing tree in turn feels the passion;
> palms nod mutual vows,
> poplar sighs to poplar,
> plane to plane
> and alder breathes to alder.[27]

These ideas, however "unpsychological" they may seem, draw us into the vegetable world. But care must be taken not to simply draw them, tamed and sentimentalized, into *our* world. Animating vegetables by imputing human feelings, will and intelligence runs the risk of refusing the essential vegetating downwardness of the vegetable soul. Such animation

is a denial of that region of psyche where human intentionality, purpose and feeling are entirely absent—that region where an entirely different order of imaginal life holds sway. Such a move also reinforces the notion that psyche and imagination are concerned solely with feelings and experiences, rather than with aesthetics and display.[28]

C) Rather than attempting an imaginal animation through an anthropomorphic fantasy, we can discover a more subtle reconnection between vegetables and humans through botanical and ecological studies. Animals and vegetables are here imagined to share the same evolutionary roots. "Is this world animal or vegetable?" asks the poet Robert Bly. Charles Darwin wrote in his diary: "prove animals like plants."[29] Of course, the evolutionary schema places plants at an earlier *stage* and hence at a lower *level* than human life, yet in a sense Darwin drew us into a new dreaming of the vegetable kingdom: an unbroken continuity between animal, vegetable and mineral, a process rather than a fixed "chain of being." Vegetables became part of our imaginal archeology rather than—as Burton imagined—just part of a fixed psychic structure.

This phylogenic fantasy of our earliest plant origins has become imbedded into the individual as a kind of imaginal *layering*, either physical or psychological. For example, Reich's "vegetotherapy" sought to act through the body on the *deepest* layers of the unconscious.[30]

But one does not have to literally embrace such a hierarchical topography of souls in order to imagine vegetableness as a particular quality of psychic life. Jung, for example, wrote of Mercurius as being the "spiritus vegetativus," a unique archetypal aspect that was somehow basic without being at a lower level.[31] For Bachelard too, vegetableness is a kind of elemental poetic force, a fundamental state of permanence, of repose, of animated materiality and, especially, of childhood: "The vegetable force of childhood subsists within us throughout our lives. Therein lies the secret of our profound vegetalism."[32]

Rather than restrain our fantasy of vegetableness to one of *levels*, we can instead allow an imaginal *resonance* to be set up between the vegetable and animal kingdoms. This sustains difference without losing relationship. In Andrew Marvell's poem "To His Coy Mistress," he urges haste in the consummation of their passion, contrasting this with the much slower, albeit expansive, growth of his "vegetable love." Dylan Thomas, on the other hand, is less convinced of this vegetable calm and focuses instead on the dynamics of vegetable vigor—a kind of Dionysian frenzy, a virility of the rising sap: "The force that through the green fuse

drives the flower/Drives my green age. . . ."[33] Science has followed a similar parallelism: the discovery of the circulation of the blood led to that of sap movement; the chlorophyll molecule closely resembles that of haemoglobin; one of the ways animals manufacture the "haem" of haemoglobin is the same as that used by plants to produce chlorophyll.[34] Vegetables even have cycoplasts which function like eyes—as light-sensitive areas. The important word here is *like*. We are here not concerned with literal botany and biology but with the fantasies they embody, express, or reveal. Bachelard writes of a lake as "a large tranquil eye."[35] Science, by another route, has led us to a vegetable eye. The question now is how to recover our *own* vegetable eye.

D) Another animation of the vegetable kingdom occurs in traditional cultures under the broad heading of "totemism."[36] Vegetable totems—such as the yam, the rice-plant, coconut, taro and breadfruit—"gather" and organize social, spiritual, individual and collective identities.[37] They also express difference: this clan is the yam, that one the taro. How these vegetables are placed in nature imaginatively echoes how and where the clan is placed in the world. Vegetables are imagined to be vessels both for the Gods and for the ancestors. There is a mutual listening and response between vegetable and clan.[38]

In our own society vegetables are similarly the gathering point for a complexity of imaginings, although less consciously celebrated as such. Our vegetables too have their stories to tell, their "jests" and "gestes," which help us to "di-gest." Many Western cities are now filled with the "exotic" vegetables of recent migrants: vegetable reminders of a colonial past. These have their place in gathering together the various communities and sub-cultures. The Christian Harvest Festival and the enlistment of vegetable help from the Devas at places such as Findhorn gather together communities, earth and Gods. Vegetables also have a dark side in such gathering: who could doubt the place of the potato in the *memoria* of the Irish or the place of the varied plantation crops in the memory of countless exploited peoples?

Within such a fantasy, therapy becomes a process of reclaiming this imaginative complexity—an initiation into vegetable stories and reflections. This process of listening to the gathering power of vegetables in dreams and fantasies follows the way vegetables, each in its own specific way, gather the dream around themselves. In a dream a young mother is organizing a birthday party. All the food is set up outside. It begins to rain and chaos ensues as she brings the table indoors and attempts to

reorganize things. Cousins arrive unexpectedly, bringing luxury food as gifts—champagne and chocolate. These just add to the clutter and chaos. Meanwhile,

> Some children have arrived and are standing at the table eating out in the rain. The most predominant "morsel" being lettuce, the green-ness of which acts as a decorative cover to the table.

The dreamer then goes to a delicatessen to buy more elaborate food for the party. How serenely lettuce-like is this lettuce, as it quietly gathers the children with its edible green-ness, a delicate center to the general confusion and the widening search for more extravagant food. Lettuce has an ancient pedigree, reaching back to the Middle Kingdom of ancient Egypt. It cools and moistens martial heat. Sacred to Adonis in its fragility, its totemic potency is often overlooked. Of course, the amplification could be extended into the association made by the ancients between the milky sap of the lettuce and mother's milk, as well as with semen. But the simple aesthetics of the image speak eloquently.

E) In folk culture vegetables are animated by their association with the "small people." For example, in Russian tales we hear of the "Polevik" (field elves who protect bean fields), the "Pilwize" (who live among rye and oats) and the "Pavaro" (who live only among broad beans). There are also the ubiquitous tree elves, wood trolls, and moss-people. Generations of English children loved the "flower-pot men," whereas in Australia there were the frightening "banksia-men" and the friendly "gum-nut" people.[39] Every culture has such vegetable dwellers. These mischievous creatures introduce us to a *personification* of the vegetable soul. Archetypal psychology insists that we ask not so much "what" as "who": "*Who* is the earth? *Who* are the waters, the plants, the mountains? or, *to whom* do they correspond?"[40]

F) The complex relations between vegetables and archetypal powers, as personified in the deities of ancient cultures, embrace most of the fantasies expressed above. Peas have been associated with Jupiter or with the Great Mother; the radish with Mars; mushrooms with Mercury; onions and peppers with Mars; lettuce, the pumpkin and cucumber with the Moon. Cabbages align themselves with the Sun, carrots with Mercury, beans with Demeter, fennel with Prometheus, asparagus and artichoke with Aphrodite, lettuce with Adonis, and so on.[41] Although the danger here is a kind of recipe-book approach, an over-systematization of cor-

respondences, nevertheless it can also reach great sophistication, reconnecting vegetables with their ancestral "gestes" or stories.

Imaginal-placing also involves ritual and often a kind of planting-lore. Sowing particular vegetables on Saints' days, or by reference to zodiacal signs, has been common: potatoes planted on Good Friday imitate Christ's death and resurrection; Aries governs the head and so favors head-shaped vegetables such as cabbage, turnip and swede; planting by sunlight benefits crops that grow above ground while moonlight favors those that grow below ground.

A Vegetable Aesthetics and Epistrophē

Epistrophē, the leading back of images to their origins, is a crucial aspect of archetypal work. Perhaps each species or substantial-form has its *own way* of taking images back and down. Bachelard insists that each of the four elements, for example, has its own style of reverie—a system of poetic fidelity based upon the *aesthetics* of each element.[42] We need to listen to the vegetable way of leading us back—a vegetable epistrophē.

Plants do not wander around. They have no voices but draw attention only by means of their postures.[43] These "gest-ures" are integral to a vegetable epistrophē. Vegetables express an aesthetic *tension*: cactuses with their combination of spikes and soft, watery center; carrots with their soft green plumes above ground and their hard, red bodies below; artichokes, the edible thistles, the aristocrats of the Renaissance kitchen, with their exquisite combination of flavor and elegance, pointedness and fleshiness, of increasing delight by anticipation.[44]

So let us give the cabbage and carrot their heads ("kaput"). An aesthetics of soul work means staying close to the vegetable images: their form, structure, seeds, skin, flesh, color, environment. Such aesthetic resonances have been used by homoeopathy: yellow sap cures jaundice; rough surfaces heal skin problems; red roses stop nose bleeds; walnuts are imagined good for the brain and the potato as aphrodisiac. Gardeners' chants offer an aesthetic encouragement: "As round as my head/and as big as my butt!" went an old Illinois song to cabbage seed as it was being sown, "As round as my head and as big as my thigh" for turnips, or a daily call to parsnips—"As long as my arm/as thick as my wrist."[45]

An archetypal aesthetics attempts to hold together form and classification; it is a poetic attention to details of form and an explicitly soulful

classification. The form *is* the classification; the form *is* the epistrophē—a combination of aesthetics and reflection in the mirror of myth. An archetypal aesthetics also insists upon a plurality of possible referencing. For example, why see plants and vegetables only through the eyes of the Mother? Especially in her benign form? What about a cosmic, almost Uranian, contemplation as in vegetable reveries?[46] The Herculean potato giving vegetable muscle to the industrial-revolution? Hestia relates to the gathering of vegetables, their place in the home, the various ways they are stored. "One enters the world by admiring it," writes Bachelard.[47]

The Wisdom of the Cabbage

In calling for a return of imagination to the world, imaginal psychology has emphasized a kind of natural wisdom of things themselves. To re-spect animals in dreams as theophânies of the Gods, to attend to their aesthetics, has liberated them from reductive, devalued and stereotypical interpretations. Yet it seems so much easier to bow to the divine presence of certain animals (the roar of a lion, the peacock's display), or to listen with respectful seriousness to the vast, oceanic promptings of the "unconscious in general," than to grant wisdom to the cabbage and the humble vegetables. Indeed, even the very thought provokes a smile, a quiet humor. The cabbage as theophany? It sounds slightly ridiculous.

This humorous response is an essential aspect of a vegetable wisdom. A particular type of digestive humor is fundamental to the vegetable soul. The "jest" of vegetables is part of their way of working imaginally. Cabbage, rhubarb, bean and pumpkin—each marks an outer-limit of a divine, vegetable humor.

An image of the cabbage as a theophany perhaps evokes a chuckle, proffers an amiable, slightly foolish form of absurdity. Rhubarb, whether ingested physically or through a goonish kind of madness, has a surreal, nonsensical acidity that breaks up the rigidity of extreme imaginal constipation. Pumpkin humor, through the pranks and wiles of Halloween, is akin to black comedy. Beans have their own scurrilous, windy way of provoking laughter. Each of these forms of vegetable humor acts as an imaginal *loosener*.[48] Each views the world from a basic, earthy rootedness. Reflected in this green light of vegetable consciousness, the pretentious claims of so-called higher consciousness are undermined, broken down, thrown back on themselves. Sanitized manners are defenseless against the

flatulent joviality of the bean; staid religion is vulnerable to the underworld challenges, pranks and antics of the pumpkin; heady speculation has no answer to the amiable foolery of the cabbage; senex dignity and density fall apart under the insistent promptings of rhubarb.

A man entering middle age dreams of a return to his problematical childhood home from which he had fled. Despite a heavy backpack he skips lightly in the sun down the drab inner-city street. He is warmly welcomed by his old parents who have full, open, somewhat simple grins on their rounded, countrified faces.

> Over the road, directly opposite, some of the terraced houses have been displaced, and instead there is a small field with a single, very straight row of giant cabbages—dark-green, solid, grounded.

In this idealized return to ancestral roots, sunny, jolly home and dark, earthy cabbages *face each other.* Not so much opposite in an oppositional sense, they rather mirror two sides of cabbageness: solidity, orderliness and an almost regal presence complement a rounded, simple amiability, which in its own way is no less grounded. Not so much cabbages and kings, as cabbages *are* kings, and the fool as well.

1. C.G. Jung, *C.G. Jung Speaking*, ed. W. McGuire and R.F.C. Hull (London: Picador, 1980), 200–01.
2. C.G. Jung, "Mind and Earth," *CW* 16.
3. H. Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 90.
4. R. Bly, "The Glimpse of the Waterer," in *Selected Poems* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986).
5. G. Bachelard, *Water and Dreams* (Dallas: The Pegasus Foundation, 1983), 3, 10.
6. See T. McLean, *Medieval English Gardens* (London: Collins, 1981), 203–14; also, D. Stuart, *The Kitchen Garden* (London: Robert Hale, 1984). S. Mennell, in *All Manners of Food* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1985) discusses eating and taste in England and France from the Medieval period to the present.
7. A. Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk* (London: Picador, 1984); M. Junius, *Practical Handbook of Plant Alchemy* (New York: Inner Traditions International, 1985), 183 ff. One exception to the general absence of national vegetable emblems is the leek of Wales.
8. F. Ponge, "Fauna and Flora," in *The Random House Book of Twentieth Century Poetry*, ed. P. Auster (New York: Vintage, 1984), 315–21.
9. G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 82–83.
10. R. Sardello, "The Cancerous Body of the World," in *Stirrings of Culture*, ed. R. Sardello and G. Thomas (Dallas: The Dallas Institute Publications, 1986), 215 ff.
11. R. Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881), 143–44; also, M. Ficino, *The Book of Life* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1980), 18, 46.

12. See P. Ucko and G. Dimbleby, eds., *The Domestication and Exploitation of Plants and Animals* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1969). L. Brockway, *Science and Colonial Expansion* (New York: Academic Press, 1979) offers a discussion of the role of British botanical gardens. See also H. Hobhouse, *Seeds of Change* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1985).
13. *Seeds* (London: Friends of the Earth Trust Ltd., 1986).
14. Bachelard, *Water and Dreams*, 2, 112.
15. Burton, *Anatomy*, 98–100.
16. Ficino, *Book of Life*, 20–21, 42–43. Burton suggests three functions of the vegetable soul: nutrition, augmentation and generation. Nutrition is divided into the capacity to attract nourishment, to retain it, digest it and expel waste. Digestion itself is imagined to consist of maturation or ripening, elixation or cooking, assation or assimilation. In addition to digestion, perhaps disorders of "circulation" can also be approached advantageously with a vegetable-eye. Sap, blood, money and energy—all began to "circulate" around the mid-eighteenth century: see I. Illich, *H_2O and the Waters of Forgetfulness* (Dallas: The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1985), 38–47.
17. H.G. Wunderlich, *The Secret of Crete* (Athens: Efstathiadis Group, 1983), 193–94.
18. In Corbin, *Spiritual Body*, 215.
19. See J. Hillman, *Interviews* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1984).
20. J. Hillman, "The Animal Kingdom in the Human Dream," in *Eranos Yearbook 51—1982* (Frankfurt a/M: Insel Verlag, 1983), 304.
21. K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), 209 ff.
22. E. Sewell, *The Orphic Voice* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955), 171 ff.; Thomas, *Natural World*, 66.
23. Ruskin quoted in Sewell, *Orphic Voice*, 253.
24. See D. Dombrowski, *Vegetarianism* (Wellingborough: Thorsons Publishers Ltd, 1985), for a sophisticated philosophical discussion.
25. For example, there is the gardener-wisdom/idiocy portrayed in the film *Being There*. On the medieval gardening advice, see M. Baker, *The Gardener's Folklore* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1977).
26. Burton, *Anatomy*, 492; L. Watson, *Supernature* (London: Coronet, 1974); P. Tompkins, *The Secret Life of Plants* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).
27. Burton, *Anatomy*, 492.
28. See the comments on imagination as an aesthetic phenomenon rather than a purely experiential one, in J. Hillman, "Anima Mundi," *Spring 1981.*
29. A. Huxley, *Plant and Planet* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 16.
30. W. Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm* (London: Souvenir, 1975).
31. C.G. Jung, *CW* 13, §§ 243, 459.
32. Bachelard, *Poetics*, 134.
33. A. Marvell, in *The Metaphysical Poets* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963); D. Thomas, *The Poems* (London: J.M. Dent, 1979).
34. See Huxley, *Plant*, 53–55; also, Erasmus Darwin in Sewell, *Orphic*, 200.
35. Bachelard, *Water and Dreams*, 28.
36. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), especially the introduction by R. Firth.
37. M. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), suggests that "things" gather the world of earth and sky, humans and gods.
38. Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism.*
39. See L. Gordon, *Green Magic* (London: Ebury Press, 1977).
40. Corbin, *Spiritual Body*, 5.

41. See Ad. de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (London: North Holland Publishing, 1984), for a thoughtful version of the genre; Junius, *Plant Alchemy*, 96 ff., discusses the "Doctrine of Signatures." See also Baker, *Gardener's Folklore*, 138. Corbin, *Spiritual Body*, 8–9, outlines Mazdean cosmology's personification of the feminine archangel Amertat as ruler of the plant and vegetable kingdom.

42. Bachelard, *Water and Dreams*, 5; see also Hillman's comments in "The Animal Kingdom," 317: "Body is always carried by the soul in a specific fashion."

43. Ponge, "Fauna and Flora."

44. See J. Grigson, *Jane Grigson's Vegetable Cookbook* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984). P. Neruda's "Elemental Odes" are classic expressions of an imaginal aesthetics. See also E. Jong, *Fruits and Vegetables* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1971) for poems on this theme.

45. Baker, *Gardener's Folklore*, 64.

46. See the fantasy of vegetable reverie in O. Stapeldon, *Starmaker* (London: Methuen, 1937).

47. Bachelard, *Poetics*, 190. Context is particularly important in an aesthetic appreciation of vegetable soulfulness: there is a rich symbolic history in gardens, jungles, farms, plantations, forests, deserts, orchards, window boxes.... Illich, for example, gives an insightful account of vegetables in the city, amid the excrement and pollution of nineteenth-century Paris (H_2O, 67–69).

48. A kind of Dionysian vegetableness? The intoxication of the vegetable kingdom includes beer, wine, spirits, hallucinogens, etc.