

The Victimhood Archetype: Health, Illness, Compliance, Causality and Human Consciousness – an Interview with Jill Hall

Note: this interview was hand-written and conducted by post during 2021 – hence, it was written before more recent developments in the unfolding coronavirus story, and so should be read in that light as, to some extent at least, an historical document – albeit an important one. However, the discussion of the *dynamics* of the pandemic experience is just as valid and compelling today as it was last year – and especially so, if Covid-19 proves to be just the first episode in a new ‘Era of The Pandemic’. [Ed.]

Richard House [RH]: Jill, your book *The Reluctant Adult* (Hall, 1993) had a profound influence on many people when it came out nearly 30 years ago; and I think the momentous issues about what you call ‘the Victimhood Archetype’¹ and the evolution of human consciousness are perhaps even more relevant today in the ‘Age of Covid’ than they were when you wrote your path-breaking book. Can we begin this interview by you sharing how you see the global response to Covid in terms of the Victimhood Archetype, and all the associated dynamics around it (i.e. the so-called ‘Drama Triangle’ of Persecutor–Victim–Rescuer – or P–V–R). I’m also wondering how it was that you came to realise that Victimhood is a core dynamic at this juncture in the evolution of consciousness. A definition of the Victimhood Archetype might also be helpful for readers not acquainted with these ideas – though of course I’m aware that *definitions* can be dangerous things!

Jill Hall [JH]: Yes, our response to Covid is a wonderfully powerful illustration of the Victimhood Archetype, and the device of Lockdown literally breeds it and requires it of us – sprinkled with ever-changing little tit-bits of freedom. Trust of any kind thrown into chaos, as people flee to Persecutor or Rescuer within their confinement, or when let loose for a spell, as if for a treat. An alarming number of youngsters have decided that if this is ‘life’, they’d rather not be here at all. It is not a farce – it is tragic.

Meanwhile, to put it crudely, our political leaders also flounder and play out Persecutor in the name of Rescuer, fleeing to Victim when the consequences of all this doesn’t deliver in the way they hoped for or intended. They rush to ‘The Science’, pick out bits of it and re-arrange ‘the facts’ which were already frail.

All this can divert many of us from examining ourselves according to our own values. We can so easily slip into our most familiar compulsion – or compulsions – and be diverted from genuine unclouded self-reflection. It is not easy to take responsibility for ourselves in non-reactive ways when we are being subjected to an unprecedented worldwide ‘epidemic’ of control far more damaging than any virus, and more widespread over the entire world than any war. The most natural aspects of our humanity, from when we first evolved on this planet, have been violated.

When has a warm comforting hug been vetoed? No access to people we love when they are dying or most in need of us? Or just for the joy or pleasure of it. And the rituals, that are so part of every culture at those moments of prime significance such as births, marriages, funerals. The decisions no longer up to us. Surely a violation of our basic Human Rights, to which ‘Western’ nations love to lay claim. What an invitation for anyone prone to the lure of Victimhood, when our natural instinctive human responses are crippled, and forbidden, and dubbed irresponsible. It is an insult to our very humanity. I’m pretty confident in asserting that there has never before in history been such a

worldwide fixation on controlling others, and at such a cost to their mental and physical well-being and other health issues and vital concerns. Multiple interference in the name of protection.

Our challenge is how, nevertheless, not to be a Victim. No-one can prevent us from thinking for ourselves. We are creative beings, and could devise all sorts of ways to bypass the reactive behaviour of the Persecutor in others.

RH: Thank you for articulating my hunches about Victimhood and the current Covid experience so clearly, Jill. This is the first time we've communicated since the beginning of the 'Covid psychodrama' (as I perhaps controversially term it), and it's very affirming that we see things similarly. What you say here is one of the most resounding and authoritative critiques I've seen or heard anywhere, as I write.

I think it's a crucial insight that we can slip into our most familiar compulsions in the face of all this. And of course that will include (and perhaps *especially*) our leaders and 'scientific experts', and not merely us 'ordinary' citizens! So the need for leaders with a deep and mature self-awareness about all these dynamics becomes all the more essential (assuming they are not using and deploying such understandings for nefarious purposes, that is).

Again, many of our readers won't necessarily be acquainted with the Persecutor–Victim–Rescuer (P–V–R) dynamic/model that's so well known in Humanistic Psychology circles. Could you say something succinct and 'in a nutshell' that summarises the P–V–R dynamic, and its importance and relevance for understanding human relationships and experience?

I'd really like to get into dialoguing with you about science, *medical* science, and ill-health and well-being. But first, could you say something about this: 'our challenge is how not to be a victim'. I realise that this is perhaps akin to a Krishnamurti-like 'impossible question'! – but can you share your thoughts on what we

need to do, individually and as a species, to transcend Victimhood and step forward into genuine, responsible adulthood (which is of course the core theme of your 1993 book *The Reluctant Adult*).

JH: Well, what a challenge! You ask if I could say something 'succinct' and 'in a nutshell' about the P–V–R dynamic (the Drama Triangle). Yes, it can be immensely dynamic in the sense that we can whip from one 'position' on the triangle to another in a kind of reactive dance in some circumstances, although of course many settle into, or get addicted to, their favourite mode. So identified with Rescuer, for example, that they believe or assume that to be a Rescuer is their true character, and that it is a commendable way of being and acting in the world. What is wrong with caring and being willing to help those who can't help themselves? Someone entrenched in Rescuer can't see it as collusion – indeed, few caught up in the Persecutor–Victim–Rescuer dynamic are drawn to self-reflection.

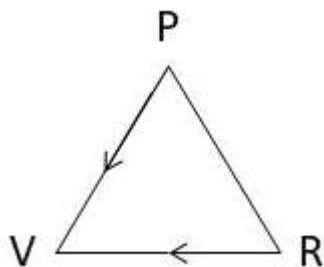
It is such a relief, such a blessing for all concerned, when we manage to become aware of what we are up to, and get a sense that we could perhaps even choose to step out of our familiar role in the dynamic. The more clearly someone consciously abdicates their position on the Triangle, the more likely that the whole dynamic can be undermined. It is a very transformative step. If we could dare face it and name it *as* a compulsion, the road to freedom has begun. The dynamic in which we'd been participating loses its grip somewhat – its attraction. The Triangle goes wobbly, losing its set shape, leaving the participants somewhat lost and disconcerted, but also released in some way – even relieved. Compulsions are both limiting and exhausting.

However, it is hard to imagine a person naming him- or herself as a Persecutor – not even Hitler! We can simply embrace a position on the Triangle as if it is who we are, without ever naming ourselves as such and using the term. And it is indeed true: neither the role nor the

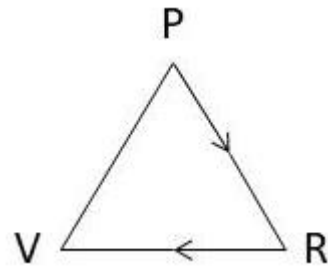
label is *who* we are. Every human being is a one-off unique being, and we must treat them as such when working together as their therapist. Not that a person established on the top of the Triangle, in the Persecutor position, is likely to seek a therapist. But they could possibly, through a conversation with a caring friend, manage to own up to a persecutory action. If that friend can simply listen, appreciating the courage inherent in such a disclosure and the increased intimacy involved in such a sharing, a vital shift could occur. There is always some wounding fuelling all our destructive behaviours. If we can only acknowledge the vulnerability that lies beneath them – a courageous step to take and a shift is possible.

So, how to release ourselves from our unhelpful compulsion or habit? First, by sensing that there is something repetitive going on – all too familiar – and stepping aside and pondering on things; realising that one is missing out on something. Am I really happy? Fulfilled? I'm feeling lonely yet I'm busy enough. I'm relating to people. It can all feel thoroughly disconcerting.

It is helpful to visualise this 'Trinity of Compulsions' as an Equilateral Triangle, as follows:



Note: Persecutor domination at the top of each triangle; Rescuer fixated on the Victim at the bottom of both triangles; Victim remains passive, and yet – unless a child – still an unwitting player colluding in the dynamic with the other two.



We can see why the Rescuer would want to keep well clear of a Persecutor and divert their attention to the 'good role' of helping an unfortunate Victim, just waiting to collude with the Rescuer with relief.

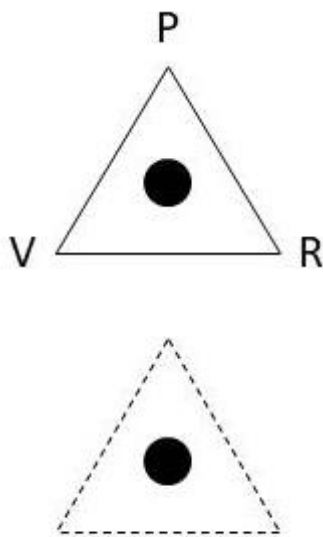
It's also worth noting that the Persecutor remains unchallenged at the pinnacle of the structure, with no arrows going in his or her direction. Thus it can remain the most inherently lonely and addictive of all the positions on the Drama Triangle. What a paradox; how complex we human beings are! Stuck being a king-pin of the Triangle could be the most isolating of conditions, yet the hardest to let go of.

The inner emptiness of the first two diagrams speaks volumes. We are by nature immensely complex and amazing beings. What's most striking about the Triangle is that it is empty – vacant. But what about the core self within us? Each one of us is a unique being – even expressed in our finger-prints. The Triangle is empty because the dynamic it is charting is an ego-persona interaction driven by reactive energy, resulting in flitting around like a moth with nothing of true substance to act as a reference point. It is bereft of complexity (as opposed to the complicated wiles of manipulation of the players in the Triangle). It does not invite reflection but only either flight or fixation – or wobbling between the two.

Fortunately, that vacant space in our diagram in itself communicates the emptiness, the diminishment and loneliness to which we are so unwittingly subjecting ourselves: caught in unsatisfying co-dependence cannot bring fulfilment, nor serve our true needs. There is no

aware, enquiring activating Self taking stock of the situation or reflecting on their inner state. Daring to face up to something not really being fulfilling about the way they/we are dealing with our lives, and that we could choose to explore something differently. No Self willing to take responsibility for their choices. We have vacated our very personhood and confined ourselves to a narrow playing field. Our capacity for love left unwatered. Our most important and vital relationships unable to flourish. Perhaps wilting, or even dying.

If we place this substantial core of our being within the empty space, the triangle of compulsions dissolves, thus:



And we are forced to relate in a variety of different ways drawing on who we more truly *are* – • – a unique human being gifted with an inborn capacity to love. And what's more, so much better equipped to handle the distorting effects of social Lockdowns – and who knows what is yet to come.

However, the most sneaky yet relentless Persecutor is the Superego. Why would we suppose that our ego, when elevated in status, would possess wisdom of any kind? A very poor advisor. When we flounder somewhat, feeling a bit anxious and unsure – on the brink, perhaps, of attempting to explore something

new and a bit risky – we are only too likely to receive a barrage of discouraging and/or distracting 'put-downs'. Cynicism is another of its ploys. It is an inner voice that can work so stealthily, informed and infected by our earliest woundings and fears – using the tool of shaming, which paralyses action of any kind. We are bound to flounder and feel undermined.

And all this goes on in an isolated inner region of our being. It is such a liberation when we can learn to recognise the input of this adept Persecutor, and dismiss it before it gets further into its wily ways. Especially as we are likely to fall prey to it unconsciously, and automatically find ourselves turning it on others – often in our most intimate and important relationships. It's helpful first to notice the 'shoulds' and 'oughts', as they emerge. Not to condemn ourselves, but to release us from the unwelcome repercussions. To free ourselves from being its Victim – or identifying with it and patronising others with its diminishing advice.

RH: Thank you so much for such a comprehensive and insightful outline of the Persecutor–Victim–Rescuer dynamic, Jill. I realise what a curve-ball I lobbed you in asking for a 'succinct' description – an impossible question! – especially if you were to do justice to the model's inherent richness, wisdom and complexity.

I'm particularly interested in how the 'Victim' position is playing out in the current Covid crisis (and I guess that precisely because of the system's dynamic nature, one can't speak about the 'Victim' position without speaking of 'Persecutor' and 'Rescuer', too).

As I understand it, a 'Victim' *pre-supposes* a 'Persecutor'; so how do you see the various Persecutor–Victim–Rescuer roles playing out in the main actors / protagonists of this unfolding Covid psychodrama? (another simple question for you!). And I'm especially interested in the medical/health system, and its accompanying 'science' and scientific and medical 'experts'. Can you weave into your answer how illness,

and fear of illness / death, and orthodox medicine's patriarchal 'war-like' response to the virus, might fit into the P-V-R framework?

JH: What excellent questions – thank you, Richard. As I see it, the whole Persecutor–Victim–Rescuer dynamic is running rampant right now, however unwelcome to many of its players. We are being controlled by those in power in various ways over the entire planet, as never before in human history – utterly driven by the obsession with *controlling the virus*. Possible freedoms stipulated and then suddenly reversed. Domination is seldom so chaotic. A veritable plague of 'Dictators', even if some are reluctant and well-meaning in intention. The trouble is that whatever they do, they are thwarted.

The virus will never respond as a Victim, and is never stuck waiting to be Rescued – it simply morphs into another form. It is a most dynamic invader whose requirement is finding a home in a living entity. Domestic birds and animals are an obvious 'mistake', as then their owners are required to kill them all. However, human beings rally into action to save themselves, and this makes them a much better bet. Hospitals are perfect – fine if people die, but even better if they survive – a home for the virus thus assured.

Maybe it could then have continued morphing into causing far less lethal ailments for us human beings if things had been handled in a more holistic way. Accepting that death is part of life – as essential occurrence – not the worst thing that could befall us and to be deferred at all costs. It is the quality of life that matters – its meaningfulness. And especially for the aged, whose options and opportunities might well have shrunk.

What a grandiose idea that we *should* be able to defeat death. (One of those sneaky intrusions from the Superego, taking us off course as usual.) Naturally, we welcome what means of protection and healing are possible, but death as a phenomenon is not some kind of outrage. It is an aspect of life itself; and we'd be in a right old

pickle without it. Death is not some kind of Persecutor, and we are not Victims if we die a natural death (which might well be due to a virus). The carers and healers who offer their services in the hope of relieving suffering are not bound to be compulsive Rescuers. People who love us, comfort us, and accompany us during the dying process if they can, aided by carers perhaps, are simply living out their natural human impulses, as they have done throughout the ages. Often a time when differences and past woundings can be shared and forgiven, and in the dying one can slip away peacefully.

As I write I feel a sense of outrage that this profound and natural process has been ruled out of order in the name of 'protecting the aged'. I know my daughter could not bear it if that situation was to be imposed on us.

Yes, I'm also interested in the medical/health system and medical 'experts' and our 'war' on the virus, rather than treating it as a player in Nature that we must respect as such and work *with*, in as informed a way as possible, as we do with flu and AIDS. Viruses are part of Nature, and we need to learn as much as we can about them in an unhurried and rigorous manner. Our bodies are full of them, and bacteria, and we wouldn't be here, we wouldn't exist, let alone flourish, without them. And of course we shall get ill at times, and every single one of us will die. What matters is our quality of life as we *live* our lives in the fullness of the complexity of what it is to be a human being – creative beings, ever evolving and curious beings with a wonderful complexity – and most important of all, an inborn capacity to love. Nurturing our unique potential, and how we relate to our fellow human beings and the natural world, are far more important than how *long* we live for. And people have lived enriching lives with all sorts of ailments and disabilities. These things are not some kind of insult to our humanity – such as unnecessary poverty, or homelessness and Lockdowns, the rules themselves often being an absolute impossibility to live on a practical level anyway. Much easier for the

well-housed and wealthy. But it seems that death from ‘the virus’ is somehow something that *shouldn’t* occur (that arrogant Superego slipping in again).

Thus, all this focus on how not to die. We have to put the elderly first at all costs – the ailments of others, who are *forming* their lives, and are profoundly harmed by interrupting all the natural stages in infant and child development in ways that cannot be remedied, are given scant attention. Their mothers – parents – left without support. The old must come first. And then the hypocrisy of not caring one jot for the *quality* of life of the old when isolated at home by decree to save them – never mind if their lives are bereft of meaning, and visitors and grandchildren, or terrified of contact because of all the fear being generated about this crafty invader, the virus, hyped up by the approach of our politicians acting as Persecutors and Rescuers at the same time. We now have a truly crazy-making dynamic!

And even worse in care homes, where rules cannot be surreptitiously circumvented. The outrage of expelling Covid sufferers from hospital straight into care homes, endangering both inmates and care-workers in the initial chaos of ‘Twin Dictatorship’. It’s interesting what decisions are never put to a vote in Parliament. And noteworthy that we don’t get suicide figures reported every day. Quick, efficient methods easy to access online. All therapeutic help offered by city councils shrunk to a bare minimum.

To my mind, no virus could be so harmful or as disruptive to our well-being as the ‘solutions’ thought up by our highly privileged leaders who claim to be saving us from them. They seem utterly oblivious of the fact that the material conditions necessary for keeping the ‘Rules of Protection’ simply don’t exist for a vast number of our society. They have spent years in power failing to build houses more amenable to being locked down in. And what are called ‘State *Benefits*’ simply reveal a complete lack of respect for people less fortunate than

themselves. The hypocrisy of that hand-clapping for the NHS, and then refusing those exhausted nurses a pay rise, is another sickening example. At least the virus has no prejudices.

Is it perhaps our fear and outrage that the virus is a secret and invisible killer – such a stealthy Persecutor, as it seeks to outwit even our brilliant and recently ‘knighted’ Rescuers by whipping across from the other side of the world with this Delta variant, just as our final liberation day is in sight. Trust India – no idea about hygiene and washing their hands etc. But we won’t enlarge on that one. Our team of vaccines will soon be topped up to deal with things. *We* know how to handle things.

RH: Thank you for this resounding response, Jill. I’m reminded of what Laura Dodsworth writes in her book *A State of Fear* – that the government made sure that none of ‘the science’ that they commandeered was argued against, with all “‘wild cards” and dissenters edged out of advisory panels’ (p. 256). How different it could all have been if the perspective and insights you’re sharing here would have been allowed a voice in the policy-making process!

Would you agree that ‘the vaccine’ has become the Rescuer of us (potential) Covid Victims in the Covid psychodrama? And that it is people’s assumed and encouraged Victimhood in relation to the virus that has been a major aspect of the vaccine being seen and positioned as our salvation? – rescuing us all from death and mortality. I can’t help wondering what the overall response to the virus might have looked like if we hadn’t taken up a collective Victim position in relation to this Persecutor! I’d love to hear your views on this. (I even can’t help wondering, in passing, whether the high-powered team of behavioural scientists that have been advising government on how to keep us scared and compliant (Dodsworth, 2021) might even have been aware of the P–R–V dynamic and its archetypal power, and deliberately used and exploited it in order to engineer the compliance outcome they required.)

And finally, is there a lesson for humanity here on how we urgently need to move beyond the P–R–V / Victimhood archetype in relation to our understanding of, and relationship with, well-being, illness and disease? Because it seems to me that the current prevailing ‘medical science’ approach and worldview are (unconsciously?) steeped in P–R–V metaphysical assumptions about reality. And what might a *post*-P–R–V medical system look like, I’m wondering? Big questions, I know!...

JH: I appreciated the quotation by Laura Dodsworth, Richard – thank you. In answer to your first question: behind all the crazy-making obsession with control (however erratically implemented) is this obsession with *defeating death*, rather than giving value to life. What an utter waste, when we could instead give our focus and attention to how to enhance the quality of life at all levels of society – expand opportunities not only to achieve viable living standards for everyone, but also for exploring our talents and creativity and all that gives joy and meaning to our lives. A sense of hope and purpose. I believe that fear is a most pernicious, destructive and disrespectful means of control, and one of the greatest of all threats to our well-being. Its dominance is crippling – diminishing. No wonder fears about humanity’s extinction and wild conspiracy theories – and even wilder solutions – are proliferating.

Meanwhile, with all this emphasis on Collective Victimhood, it is important that we defy any slippage into Victim-like resignation and despair. Resignation is especially dangerous because it is devoid of all energy! Many people have lost the will to venture out of doors at all – Lockdown or no. Their lives have become stale and meaningless. Can’t even be bothered to commit suicide. We have been utterly messed around as if in some horrendous experiment, rather than being encouraged to adapt to the presence of the virus in our lives in sound, respectful and creative ways. Common sense care for each other by checking ventilation and not getting too close to each other. You can

have a good warm hug while looking over someone’s shoulder. Ever-morphing viruses simply are a part of Nature, and need to be accepted as such.

Was perhaps the drive and rush to hurry forward ‘The Science’ so as to achieve the invention, trials and production of vaccines by our acclaimed team of ‘vaccine researchers’ in record-breaking time – and thus the UK as World Rescuers (even if somewhat stingy about sharing with less well-endowed nations) – an attempt to *divert* attention from the bumbling lack of attention given by Boris Johnson and his ‘advisors’ in the early days of the pandemic? No concern to check that all the front-line workers of the soon-to-be lauded NHS had adequate means of protection. Slip in a quick bit of trade with Turkey who want a load of masks, as Europe is being so tiresome at the moment. What a damn nuisance this all is; let’s just carry on and see what happens. Pretty well exactly what Johnson is saying today as we’re enticed (as I write) towards Liberation Day on 19 July [2021]. Meanwhile, if People of Colour and Muslims refuse our gallant Vaccine Rescuers, what can you do about such ignorance? We’ll keep up our good work, dealing out fresh jabs in the autumn in readiness for the winter onslaught. As you say, Richard, an assumed and *encouraged* ‘Mass Victimhood’ in relation to the virus, rather than a focus on those responsible for handling our welfare – our elected government.

It can never suddenly be OK. Positivity can’t be turned on like a tap. Seeds of fear have been systematically scattered throughout the entire population, touching the vulnerability that lies in every human being, even if they refuse to recognise it. Serial Lockdowns breed and rely upon fear; what could be more corrosive to our general health and well-being? Breeding distrust in the resilience of life itself and the spirit of hope that sustains us in times of challenge.

To respond to your ponderings about whether the high-powered team of behavioural scientists, whose advice the government has been

following, might have known about the P–R–V dynamic and its archetypal power. Highly unlikely – it’s not a subject they’d be tempted to explore or research. The P–R–V dynamic is a somewhat automatic and unrecognised phenomenon, especially if we are principally, or most used to, operating from ego. As I’ve mentioned before in a previous dialogue with you, what dispels the compulsions played out on the Triangle is when we access, or return to, what I call ‘Activating Self’. A centring experience – drawing on the energy of our Heart Chakra combined with that of our solar plexus, which empowers the actualisation of our gifts in the world. We have a core, an inner reference point, from which to take responsibility for our choices. If we can bear to embrace our Truer Self, the Triangle dissolves and disintegrates. And thus it is urgent, now as never before, that we claim our more authentic and fuller selves; refuse to be worn down into Victimhood by accessing the richness of who we can become as continually evolving conscious beings – free to explore and discover, if we wish, more of who we are.

Our failures teach us even more, perhaps, than our successes. It is our ego that seeks to dismiss them – sees them as somehow shameful. However, they are intrinsic to the learning process, and inspired by the enlivening spark of curiosity. A baby needs to roll around and explore on the floor, discover how to grasp on to something so as to stand, only to topple around until he or she can walk. Mother and father responding with pleasure and/or comfort, if need be. Experiencing delight in learning is such a vital part of our development.

We are such extraordinary beings, but we pay the price for our complex and rich potential. For we are also wounded beings. Our challenges of such a different order once we, as a species, evolved beyond our tribal heritage, with shared beliefs and common aims grounded in a respectful partnership with the natural world. The development of ego defining us as separate, even though inter-dependent beings, not yet come into play. Ego, however, is far too flimsy

a construct to be awarded a position of dominance in our psychological make-up. It is fatal to place our sense of identity in its hands. It lacks substance, and is unduly concerned with our image in the eyes of others.

I believe that the ethos of English Public Schools has wrought great harm in our society. Far from serving the general public, these schools harbour a culture of elitism along with emotional deprivation; arrogance combined with humiliating practices; entitlement, along with a lack of physical and emotional nurturing in their early years. The caned wait apprehensively to become the caners, while all too likely holding inside themselves a terrible shame of unwanted sexual abuse from their teachers. A continual exchange between Persecutors and Victims, bereft of Rescuers. Their parents all the while believing that they had acted in their offsprings’ best interest by sending them there. Mothers often deprived of fulfilling an inner longing to nurture their children.

What a tragic mess. Their sense of entitlement has, however, enabled them to side-step the detrimental psychological and economic aspects of Lockdown. It has yet to emerge into our collective consciousness just how inhumane the ‘solution’ of Lockdown has been. It has so reduced our sense of agency: everyone except the privileged minority has been subjected to the likelihood of a de-evolutionary backward state of being, and many well-functioning relationships have been ruined beyond repair. The natural stages of infant, child and adolescent development ‘put on pause’ by decree – even though it is impossible to put time on pause. Crucial processes thus interrupted, delayed, and all too likely to be radically distorted. So many left confused as to how to handle dealing with the world, the obsession with defeating ‘the virus’ blocking and diverting awareness of the profound harm and disorientation that the proclaimed ‘Rescue Strategy’ has had, and will continue to go on having, on millions of our fellow citizens. My own work as a psychotherapist is increasing, not

easing, as is the number of telephone calls late into the night. Much of the damage irretrievable, however many serial ‘jabs’ are rolled out.

And yet as always, some people have accessed resources they never knew they possessed, and want to share their new insights and integrate them, and I feel a lift in my heart.

I wake up to the new day. What a rapidly shifting world. Even ‘the science’ is losing its grip, with various ‘experts’ doling out conflicting advice. Switching Cabinet roles is also wearing a bit thin. Attempting to keep their nerve as the virulence of the Delta variant outwits the lauded band of Rescuers, and turning their attention to the economy instead. Stay upbeat, and talk about business and commercial life expanding once more during the summertime, when we are out of doors and can ease up on wearing masks etc. And we won’t worry *too* much right now about schools and education because it’s the holidays soon. And what about the glory of our footballers? Of course their loyal supporters and fans, with their Double Jab status, will be cheering them on on behalf of all of us – shouting and singing and hugging each other in celebration. (Oh dear; damn penalties again....)

Meanwhile, how is it for the unsung? – for the millions of neglected and struggling and deprived members of society, including those who are soon to have even their £20 of Universal Benefit withdrawn that only just enabled them to keep an adequate amount of food on the table, and who were never privileged enough to fulfil the Lockdown rules? No hope or chance to ‘get out there’ and spend and eat out and play their part in getting the economy going, as if it is our civic duty. Not enough food on their own tables.

RH: Thank you for these searing insights, Jill. I often think that the Victimhood Archetype is surreptitiously embedded into the very language we use in everyday life. I recently came across a book about Covid that I think illustrates this, with its tell-tale title, *Covid-19 – How It Made*

Us Feel: Life in Lockdown during the CoronaVirus Pandemic (my bold emphasis). I also find myself wondering whether those who experience themselves as victims of Covid and the pandemic are actually those who are constitutionally far more susceptible to falling ill from Covid, than are those who are not consumed by fear and foreboding (notwithstanding the government’s determination to scare us ‘optimally’... – Dodsworth, 2021). Anyone who has worked closely and deeply with people’s well-being and ill-being – as psychotherapists like yourself do all the time – will surely know that illness and disease are infinitely more subtle and complex than materialist medical science can ever comprehend.

And so to several final questions for you! I’m wondering what all that we’ve touched upon in this conversation might mean for the evolution of human consciousness that you and me have spoken about a lot over the years. You were writing and lecturing about the Victimhood Archetype well over three decades ago, Jill. Do you think that the human species is any closer to being able to evolve beyond the Victimhood Archetype today, compared with when you first started thinking, writing and lecturing on this question all those years ago?

And with specific reference to medicine, health, well-being and dis(-)ease: I wonder whether you have any vision of what a ‘post-Victimhood’ medical system and truly holistic ‘medical science’ might begin to look like, in broad (paradigmatic) terms? You say that ‘Ego... is far too flimsy a construct to be awarded a position of dominance in our psychological make-up. It is fatal to place our sense of identity in its hands.’ Is it perhaps also ‘fatal’ to have a medical system that is created, and maintained from, the place of ego alone? Or put differently, what might a ‘post-ego’ Health and Well-being Service (as distinct from a National *Disease* Service) look like, I’m wondering? – taking account, perhaps, of the traps and machinations of the P–R–V Drama Triangle and its neurotic positions, which can of course manifest

institutionally, as well as at an individual level. I know you'll have much of interest to say about these questions! – some simple ones for you, to end with! ;-)

As always, it's an undiluted pleasure to have the opportunity to dialogue with you, Jill, and to co-create an opportunity for you to share your great wisdom and insight. I leave the final words with you.

JH: Thank you for your final question, Richard. You wonder what all we've touched on in this conversation might mean for the evolution of human consciousness, and whether I think the human species is any closer to being able to evolve beyond the Victimhood Archetype today.

Having been subjected to bouts of enforced Victimhood by serial Lockdowns could, I think, possibly catapult a substantial number of people forward on a truly radical path, albeit with many left tragically wounded in a manner never before lived. It isn't easy to take responsibility for ourselves when we are being treated in a fundamentally inhumane way. Whole societies have never before been subjected to such extreme and bizarre and intrusive modes of control. A Pandemic of Victim Creation. Even people who would never have been prone to Victimhood. Reluctant Victims rather than The Reluctant Adult! Any stranger can become viewed as a possible threat.

Perhaps the greatest danger of being manipulated into so many situations that *invite* Victimhood is *resignation*. A plight into which all too many may have slipped. Resignation is devoid of any energy whatsoever. The most limiting state of all human beings is when nothing really matters any more. The light of hope is then dimming, flickering, and then turned off. Depression is really grim, but people really mind if they feel depressed and can seek therapy and/or medication which can make a significant difference. If into resignation, you probably wouldn't bother. Just keep plodding on, regardless. I've heard of so many people

who say they no longer listen to the news – they don't want to know. Just a brief summary will do so as to check on the latest 'rules'. And I'm speaking here of fairly privileged members of society, not people who aren't even in a position to be able to follow the rules.

The tragedy is that it is the young, who most urgently require the opportunity to explore their way forward in life, whose path is most seriously blocked and distorted. It is they who most need to be free to make their own mistakes and enter into intimate relationships of their choice, as well as discovering what kind of work could fit their needs and talents. Furthermore, if you are blocked going forwards in your development, you're likely to slip or sink backwards, and find yourself at the mercy of past woundings that you're not yet ready to process. What must it feel like for them, knowing that they are the least likely to be seriously affected by catching the virus (unless they have some prior condition), or take up hospital beds if they did. It is they who are our future. It is their state of physical and psychological well-being that needs to be our social priority, not delaying the final stretch of life in the old. It's positively cruel to meet our end in a ventilator. (The son of a friend of mine, who is a doctor, spoke of 'the hell' of being in a ventilator.) It is likely that there will be plenty of life-loving, long-living elderly people, both here and in societies all over the world, who would, as a matter of course, add their experience, wisdom and insight to the mix.

And I do believe, with millions of others, that this is indeed a critical point in the evolution of humankind, as more and more of us wake up and learn to honour and care for, and wish to restore, the balance of life on this planet. There is increasing discovery and exploration of Nature's auto-restorative potency at the same time as the most drastically extreme temperatures, gales, fires and floods in more and more parts of the world at this very juncture in Time/Space, calling and urging us to wake up.

We could be in for another dose of Lockdown this autumn after our short, jab-won burst of freedom. Some of the most obedient rushing around like children given a treat. The Delta variant perhaps outwitting our Vaccine Solution, and ordinary old flu activated as usual, especially if the weather begins upping the stakes. Another frozen and enforced P–V–R dynamic, our worn-out NHS over-stretched yet again, and more destructive to our well-being than ever – sick and sick-making in its consequences. Our modes of coping wearing thin.

Fortunately, life itself is dynamic, and at some point – drawing ever closer – we can't help but move on, whatever we get up to, and even if only by default. Life itself can't be put in a deliberately engineered freezer; it can only unfold. That is why *eventually*, 'All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well'. Nothing starry-eyed or ungrounded about Julian of Norwich. Interesting that she was never persecuted by the Church at the peak of its Persecutory Epidemic and preoccupation with Satan as its chair-leader.

Julian would never be 'locked down'. She chose solitude plus individual contact with people through her window into the world – a literal window on to the street in the heart of Norwich, and thus available to those who were drawn to stop and speak to her. And at some point she wrote a book – not in the acceptable Latin, but in English – the language of the people – and the first woman to do such a thing. And in it she offered her vision of love to the world and God's Hand in All Things through her delight in holding and beholding the wonder of contemplating a little chestnut in the palm of her hand.

Julian never criticised the Church, which had slipped to its lowest depths at that period of its history with its revelling preoccupation with persecutory devices. She had no draw to martyrhood. She experienced suffering, yes, in common with us all, but carried on living her unique path through those dark times. Her

deepest pains arose in her visions of the wounds of Jesus on the Cross – his living out in actual and symbolic terms the five archetypal wounds that we human beings undergo in our journey through life: Abandonment, Rejection, Betrayal, Injustice and Denial – the prices of our multidimensional complexity. It is why, as love is the living source and Spark of Creation, I believe we are already forgiven for all our stumbling mess, but still invited to embrace the journey. Furthermore, this belief nurtures humility and a willingness to learn from our mistakes. It is the truth that sets us free, and love that crowns our life with meaning.

After the shame I felt in being a white citizen of South Africa in the 1930s, I never thought I'd feel a shame in being a British citizen, led by the most arrogant band of wounded egos imaginable. I am struck by the pure ineptitude of ego-led politicians, their policies so bereft of wisdom. But this very pandemic is serving as a world-wide Pan-Revealer of every culture and nation in the world, including our own. Not a Rescuer but *a Revealer*. And on a world-wide scale – each nation and culture presented with different challenges and hurdles to overcome.

I believe we could take a spurt forward as never before. A strangely cruel wake-up, but also a blessing. A coming together to save the only home we have – this Earth. Pan Co-operation. The nations of the world coming together to work with what we share in common as a species, but aware of certain radical differences so as not to collude with what we discern as unjust without fighting wars about such things. After all, there are shadow sides to every society (I cringes when I think of British arrogance and pride in their erstwhile Empire). Let us each, and each nation, deal with our own wounded histories. We all have plenty to get on with – in ourselves as individuals and as diverse societies and cultures and nations. Just as we are all suffering from this epidemic of control, we will all benefit from choosing to co-operate and go beyond blaming, while not colluding with that with which we strongly disagree.

So yes, I believe, along with countless others, that this is a critical point in the evolution of humankind, as more and more of us also face the reality of climate change, and wish to support every means to restore balance of all living creatures and plants and lifeforms on this wonderful planet. Many have been stirred and disturbed and awakened by our bold young activists such as Greta Thunberg, daring to speak up before the Swedish Parliament and inspiring school children to follow her. And the vision, courage and commitment, and imagination and daring of another order of those involved in Extinction Rebellion. We have so needed to be jolted awake, and I am convinced it's not too late. What amazing people they are. We human beings can be enormously creative and determined, once we combine all our varied gifts and talents. And for the first time in history, drawing on Global Co-operation. No place for Victimhood or being caught in, and reduced to, the P-V-R Drama Triangle, that takes us nowhere.

I have perhaps not given sufficient attention to the extremity of the Lockdown conditions imposed on all places of worship – and just when people's need for that aspect of their being would likely have been most urgent. Doors ordered to be kept locked and bolted except for the briefest of windows, not even to enable people to sit in silence way apart from each other in the beauty and peace of the many ancient buildings in this country. And never allowed to sing until the Sunday after Liberation Day on 21 July (2021) – and then only with masks on. Zoom is no substitute in matters spiritual, which is all about a state of full presence. *Being* with others in a shared recognition and sense of Mystery that is beyond words while still, being human, needing to use words. And singing lifts their resonance and takes us beyond those words. As also occurs with chanting together, which is so central to many faiths. And just when solace in loss of loved ones was so profound for so many people. All through the thousands of centuries human beings have been on earth, they have sung and chanted together. They sang when they gathered

food and worked on the land, made their pots and tools and weapons, and wove their cloth. Even slaves in the cotton fields of America were allowed to sing – free to express the anguish in their hearts and the hope in their souls. Humankind has sung while they worked or celebrated or worshipped or buried their dead together from their earliest days on this Earth – this life-giving planet. Until Lockdowns. A deprivation of the very thing that would have sustained and nourished people in a way that completely transcended the P-V-R construction.

So to bring this interchange between us to a close, Richard. This is a time in our world history like none other. Humanity is confronted with two strands of threat to their existence at the same time, and at a global level: climate change and the pandemic. And they are both progressing rapidly, denial requiring somewhat deranged use of our gift of imagination or the folly of avoidance. Once fear takes over, we can so easily lose ourselves, along with all spark of hope.

The fact that those in powerful positions of political leadership have been pushed and stimulated into facing the plight of this planet, and are meeting together from all over the world in full realisation that it is essential to co-operate together to begin dealing with it, at least sparks hope in me – and no doubt in many others – that we human beings will now give priority to maintaining a home for us and our descendents not only to survive, but to thrive and flourish. We have the intelligence and creativity, imagination and resourcefulness to fulfil this task if we really take it on board and, at long last, we have dared to face it.

What a paradox that it was the operation of President Trump's bloated ego, spewing out any handy lie as required which happened to include climate change denial, that became so gross that he lost the election to Biden, who has embraced the reality of climate change and taken action to consult with China, which had already done so and was getting on with creating solutions.

Their political system is ideally suited to actualising them. (Can it be ‘The flutter of the butterfly’s wings’ within the potency of our Collective Unconscious?)

So I believe we are not just poised, but are geared to create a better world. It has become a necessity. However, it can only be transformed into actuality if we are to tolerate radically diverse cultural norms and socio-political arrangements – and we human beings have not to date shown much propensity to do so. It will, no doubt, be an exacting and bumpy ride, and it will need the co-operation of all nations who have the vote. That means it is up to us to play our part. We will each have the responsibility to keep our eye on the bigger picture.

And there’s not much opportunity for P–V–R compulsions within the emerging new paradigm of co-operation. Could we even end up with *transformation*? Reality is dynamic, and thus so are we.... As the pandemic has served to subject so many other cultures over the world to Lockdowns, who knows what transformative effects will emerge that will differ from ours, and will possibly serve to enlighten us all?

You wonder if it is perhaps fatal to have a medical system that is created and maintained from a place of ego alone. Yes, to be sure. But the troubling thing is that our NHS was not conceived and brought into being from a place of ego – it was socialist in conception and realisation, and greatly appreciated both here and beyond these shores. So much so that it’s stealthy and gradual degeneration took time to reveal itself. Deals with the private sector, among other things. And now it seems that it is only because nurses and doctors are going beyond ego right now, as many always have done, that the NHS is functioning at all.

You then ask what I think a *post*-ego ‘Health and Well-being Service’ would look like. The very title offers the answer in itself. I imagine it would be holistic in its ethos and functioning – offering alternative medicines such as homeopathy and plant-based substances, and

modes of healing such as shiatsu, reflexology and biodynamic massage. And of course, plain, straightforward compassion and kindness, as so many of our current staff manage to do even now, in these most stressed and over-stretched of circumstances. And the science would be sound, offering the best hypotheses available at the time. The chaplin or chaplins (both genders, if possible) would ideally need to be sensitive to the particularity of the person and their state of being, and offer only that which they could receive – inviting them to unburden themselves of anything undealt with or disturbing to their peace of mind – especially if they are on the point of death.

And so to close with some final thoughts with regard to your first question about whether I think that the human species is any closer to being able to evolve beyond the Victimhood Archetype today, compared to when I first started exploring it. Yes. Paradoxically, the very imposition of the unprecedented means of control to which we have been subjected since March 2020 is likely to stimulate a longing to be free to make our own choices. This could give rise to a more keen sense that it could also mean we’d be more responsible for the outcome of those choices. This in turn would involve more self-reflection, and a realisation that we can participate in creating our reality, thus experiencing a greater sense of fulfilment. It would also transform the quality of our relationships. Blaming others would become redundant, a passing slip when stressed or frustrated. Our most intimate relationships would be greatly enriched, and the love in us freed to flower.

Note

1 Throughout the interview, capital letters will be used to denote the terms ‘Victimhood’, ‘Persecutor’, ‘Victim’ and ‘Rescuer’, to flag their usage in relation to the Drama Triangle of Persecutor, Victim and Rescuer (P–V–R), which will be a key theme in the interview.

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About the contributors



Jill Hall was born in South Africa into an environment of extreme inequality and oppression, and cannot remember a time when she was not disturbed, puzzled and fascinated about what it means to be a human being. Jill moved to London in her late teens, working as an actress until becoming a

mother and philosophy student. Attracted to the arena of self-development in the early days of Humanistic Psychology, she later became a tutor at the Institute of Biodynamic Psychology. She now runs weekend residential groups and has been a guest lecturer for various professional bodies and universities. She is the author of the book *The Reluctant Adult*.

Richard House edits *Self & Society* and its online sister magazine.

SOME HUMANISTIC WISDOM

“It is not ‘forgive and forget’ as if nothing wrong had ever happened, but ‘forgive and go forward’, building on the mistakes of the past and the energy generated by reconciliation to create a new future.”

Alan Paton (1903–1988)