

Dear Seminar Participants,

It was a delight to be with you for our four Saturday mornings in April. Below is the promised PDF of the major continent image slides from our experience together and I hope you enjoy them. I have left in several bonus slides and suggestions for an amplifying Bibliography that time did not permit sharing.

Blessings of Spring and the upcoming Summer Solstice to you all,

Terry

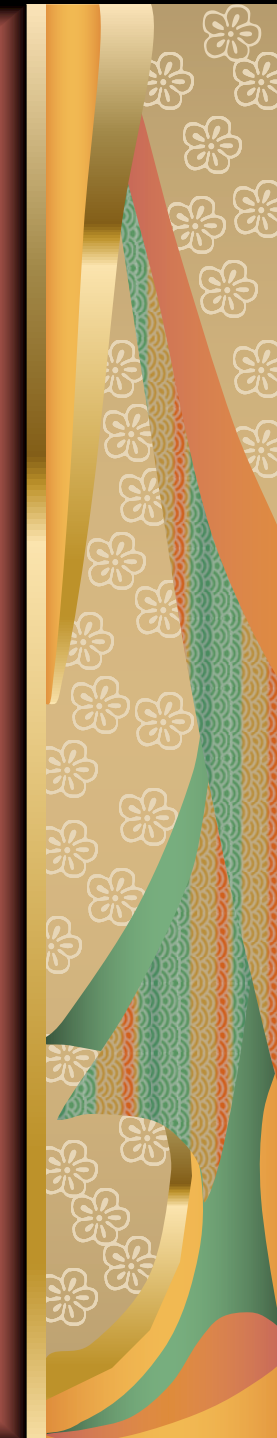
Seattle Jung Society

The Liminal and Luminescent

Four Session Virtual Seminar

Session One, April 8, 2023

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learning use and not to be distributed  
or copied in any form





- I am not here as an expert, but as a therapist who loves the Anima Mundi Spirit and culturo-religious containers that birth her Presence in our lives.
- I am a Jungian analyst whose model of therapy values Anima Mundi originated image and word as the most important gift of culturo-religion and Psyche.
- I believe the Anima Mundi and its communicative culturo-religious vessels is the most important transmitter, translator, and transformer of image, word, and soul in our contemporary world.

All life is bound to carriers who realize it, and it is simply inconceivable without them. But every carrier is charged with an individual destiny and destination, and the realization of these alone makes sense of life.

**C. G. Jung**

**CCW 12, 222**

Our world is bathed in ongoing biological, political, cultural, climate, and spiritual crises that seem endless. If anything, these disruptions appear to be spiraling into ever larger threat fronts that challenge our survival as a species.

Carl Gustav Jung, renowned Swiss psychiatrist, avowed in his archetypal psychology that there is a portal of transforming possibility if we have the courage to enter that doorway. That threshold entering demands that we embrace our individual and collective sufferings and then seek the path of meaning and destiny that is always resident deeply at the core of such trauma.

This book narrates how this destiny is found and lived forward for both each individual life and for our varied human cultures. It affirms and gives examples of the deep-soul dimension of life that lies under the often chaotic surface—the liminal realm of animate and guiding dream, vision, myth, and spirituality where the gods meet us so that we all can find our mutual way Home. This liminal world is navigated through the metaphoric and literalness of pilgrimage, performance, and political processes in our personal and cultural lives. What might be your path of destiny?

“Brilliant! Bold! Beautifully written! . . . Offering insight through dreams, personal experience, film, and psychological and philosophical reflection, Gibson takes us on a journey between the trauma of our divided world and the reflective reconciliation of acceptance that enables the harmony of human nature and the divine.”

—LINDA LEONARD, author of *The Wounded Woman*

“*The Liminal and the Luminescent* . . . sparkles like a peacock’s tail and illuminates many of the struggles of our time. It is a rich text grounded in history, psychology of religion, and Jungian archetypal thinking. . . . The book brings to the forefront the value of liminal experiences for the individual and the collective—namely, that these experiences can and do heal individuals and societies.”

—JOHN ALLAN, University of British Columbia, emeritus

“Terrill Gibson’s legacy book, *The Liminal and the Luminescent*, is a worthwhile read for any person or practitioner interested in the Jungian perspective of soul craft. Clinicians will find many useful discussions of the evolution of ideas across the twentieth century. Gibson uses his intimate knowledge of the history of craft ideas to lead a way for mature clinicians to embrace Jung’s wisdom regarding evidence for the value of confronting the mysterious and mystical.”

—JAMES INGERSOLL, Senior Psychologist and Family Systems Specialist

**TERRILL L. GIBSON** is a diploma Jungian analyst, diplomate pastoral psychotherapist, and an approved supervisor for the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. He lectures and writes widely on the basic theme of the integration of psychotherapy and spirituality. He has been a frequent consultant, faculty, supervisor, and facilitator for a variety of universities, social service agencies, corporations, and religious congregations. He has a passion for film, sea kayaks, and the blues.

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GIBSON

the LIMINAL and the LUMINESCENT

# the LIMINAL and the LUMINESCENT

Jungian Reflections  
on Ensouled Living  
Amid a Troubled Era

TERRILL L. GIBSON foreword by John Allan





A blunt assertion--Jungian psychology is a psycho-theology, a Western esotericism, and perhaps the best situated psychology to deal not only with the individual but also the collective crises facing our planet and all sentient life. Another radical suggestion is that the roots of these crises (climate change, ecocide, militarism, racism, misogyny) are located in a profound dislocation and disruption in the divine-human dialogue. This seminar proposes that the only wholistic solution, C. G. Jung's core solution, is that the gods and humanity co-evolve away from the position of competition and conquest to one of compassion and cooperation. Through theoretical reflection, amplifying clinical vignette, and myth illustrations, this thesis will be interactively explored and deepened. Participants can expect to experience:

- A model for an understanding of Jung's inherent psycho-theology
- A suggestion for ways in which the model can help facilitate individual transformation and destiny achievement
- A suggesting for ways our species might collectively transform itself and achieve its destiny
- Hints for ways such an individually-and-collectively-engaged, depth, liminal model might add a more fluid and embodied alteration of our species' on-going addictions to racism, misogyny, militarism and destruction



# *Session One*

## *Prelude and Pilgrimage*

PRELUDE



- Lars and the Real Girl
- 2007
- Director, Craig Gillespie

# Liminal Lars:

Disrupts Expectations and Assumptions

Disrupts Feeling and Value Vertices

Disrupts Hard Time and Space. . .

To Introduce Synchronistic-Dream-Time-Space so as to

Revisit Trauma Space and Make Room again for

Liminal Soul-Time Space



# Freud/ Jung Clark University, 1909



CHRONOS

LOGOS

EGO

POLIS

PERSONAL

POLIS

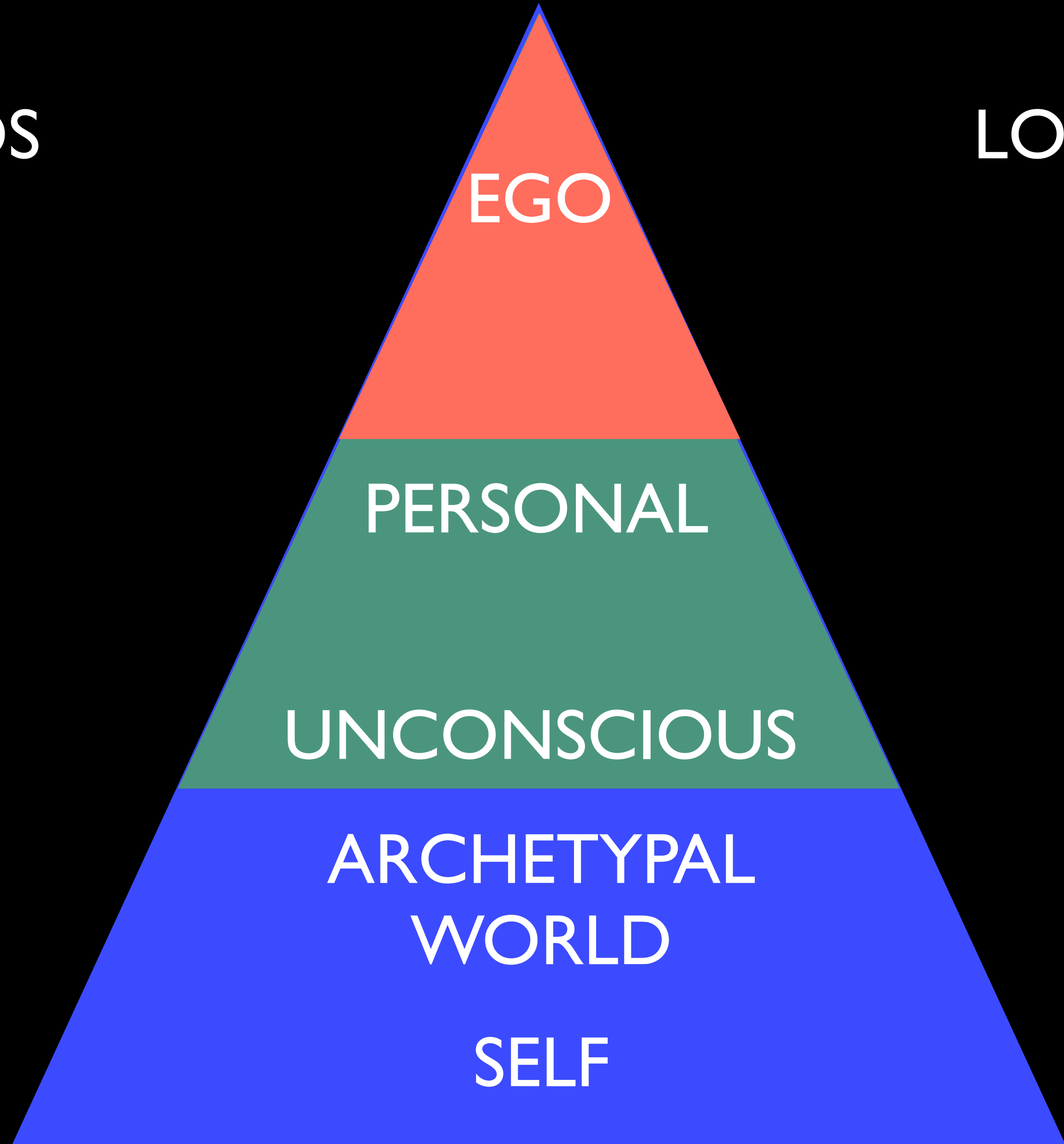
UNCONSCIOUS

ARCHETYPAL  
WORLD

SELF

KAIROS

EROS



# Analysis is a Liminal, Mystery Religious Practice

Everyone enters analysis with a spiritual question. Many just don't know it consciously when they arrive. They often think they come for their symptom; that they *are* the symptom. They don't know that their symptom is a doorway into resolving their alienation from their destiny, from the pure lure of meaning-making that they came blazing into this world long ago to manifest and fulfill.

Our corporatized, consumerist culture trains people into this confusion, for if what they feel is a symptom, it is a commodity that can be sold to remedy rather than claimed as a doorway to transformation. As Ann Belford Ulanov posits, "Whatever spirituality is, we know from our glimpses along the frontier with the transcendent that it wants to step over into living."

A dream deferred is often a dream denied. A destiny deferred, is often a destiny lost. Analysis is inherently destiny work. It is mainly destiny retrieval work. Retrieval work because our destiny dreams us from the womb onwards, but we often become accomplished saboteurs of its urgent witness to our lives. The opportunities for fulfilling our destiny never abandon us. Although, if we are not very careful, a particularly harsh and violent quelling of that voice can kill the dream and the soul animating it long before we physically die.

Jungian psychology is a mystery psychology. Jungian analysis is a mystery religion. It initiates its celebrants into liminal realms, attempting to accompany them in their search for and submission to their authentic destiny. It is a genuine profession, a profession of service to the deepest essence, the core being-ness of those it serves. Of course, it uses pragmatic sciences to help frame and inform its protocols of engagement for companioned sojourns with suffering seekers. But tools are not telos, diagnoses are not destinies. Mystery inspires science, but science does not define mystery. At its best, science can only point the way. In the liminal Queendoms of Mystery, science discovers its true bride: the Soul. Only in the liminal can science complete its mission—the achievement of individual and collective consciousness and compassion.



# Henderson/Turner Initiatory Model

**PRE-LIMINAL**

**(Rites of Separation/Submission)**

**LIMINAL**

**(Rites of Transition/ Transformation)**

**POST LIMINAL**

**(Rites of Immanence/ Incorporation)**



# Jung's 3 Major P of R Propositions

[a la Dourley, 186]

- Religion is ineradicable
- Religion kills
- Religion could greatly enhance life, enhance survival of the human by universal compassion for all and acceptance of all equally valid depth experience.
- THIS is what depth therapy does, this is its metaphysical mission

# J. Harley Chapman 's Three Categories of Jung's Description of Religious Experience

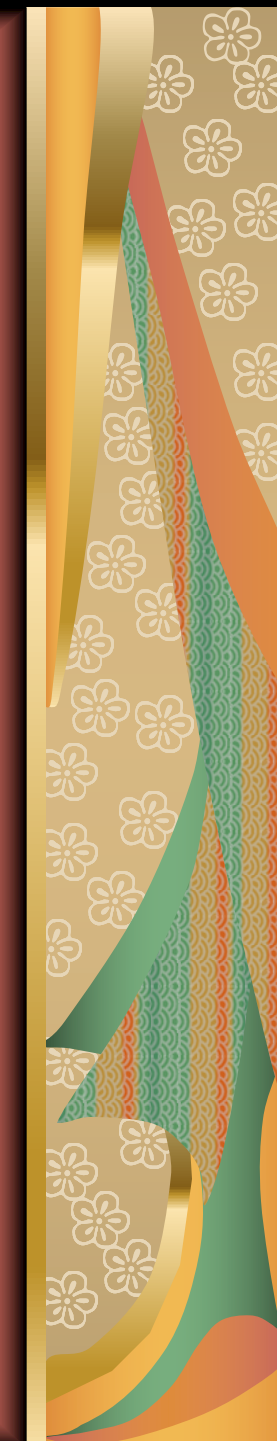
- ★ Scientific-psychological—Stream-libido model
- ★ Phenomenological-mythological—Quest-individuation Model
- ★ Metaphysical-theological—Numinous-meaning Model



 Spiritus

 Communitas

 Caritas



Ignatian:

Purgative

Illuminative

Unitive

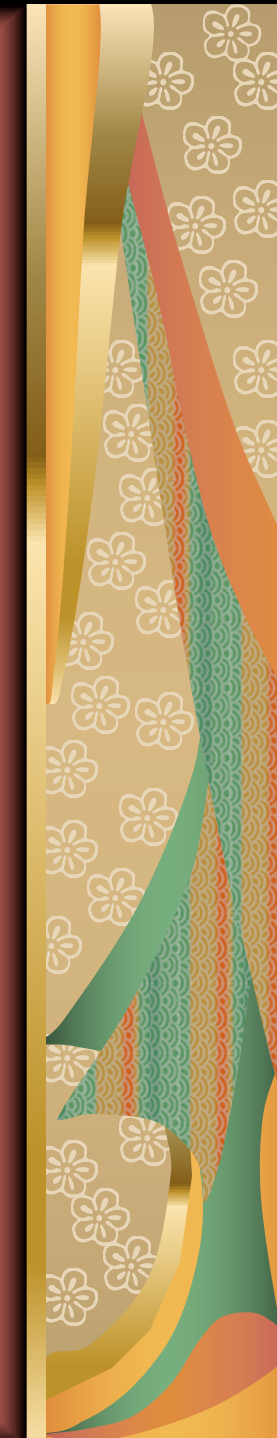


Lutheran:

*Sola fidei*

*Sola scriptura*

*Sola gratia*

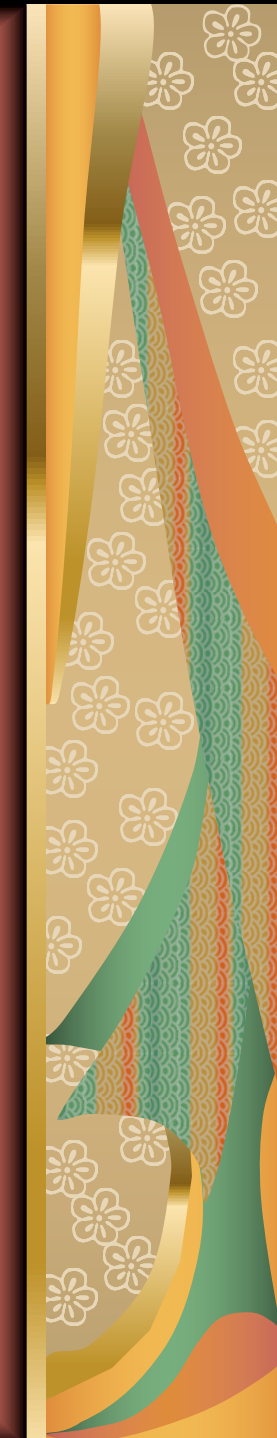


# Kierkegaard

 Aesthetic


 Ethical

 Religious



 Sustaining

 Guiding

 Educating

 Transforming

*Hiltner*



## Jame's *Mystical*:

■ Ineffable

■ Transient

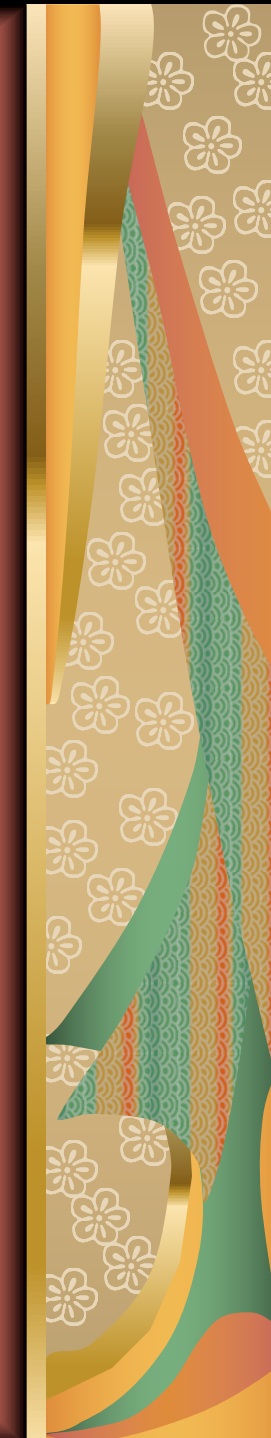
■ Ontological

■ Midwives Core Meanings



## Jaffe's Essential Components of Jung

- Our evolution after meaning possibly contributes to God's evolution.
- The reality of the Psyche.
- The restoration of meaning to our lives wholly subjective, not objective.
- The affirmation of the feminine principle.



**My work will be carried forth by  
those who suffer.**

**C. G. Jung**





## Transference by Preston Singletary



What are some of your most transformative liminal and guiding experiences—how have you learned from them or forgotten them?

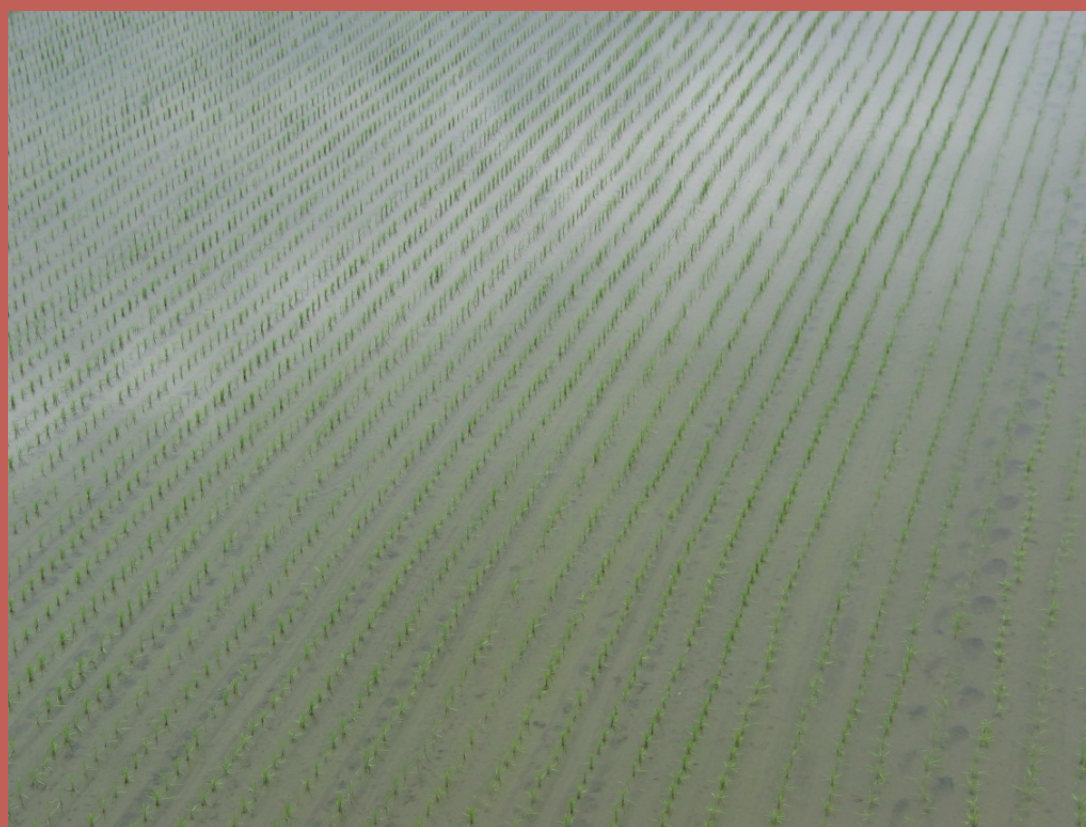
# Pilgrimage



Individuation, the need to live from our own depths in an authentic and growing way, is a journey that takes the ego into the forest.

Jean Shinoda Bolen [148]





Pilgrimage is “afterwards walking,” what German depth therapy calls *Nachträglichkeit*. It is not reductive to look at what happened before—say, in our childhood—to determine what happens later in adulthood, especially by primally organizing traumatic events. Rather, it is a hermeneutic process, the core dynamic of depth therapy, where we “project retroactively” into the past in a present living moment to review, relive, and rearrange a delaying/detouring/disturbing moment in our lives. Pilgrimage is a dynamic individual and collective way of walking ancient paths in the company of ancestors for the purpose of rearranging traumatic constellations of being. *Nachträglichkeit*.

So, we are all minefields of complexity. Pilgrimage and therapy safely explode our minefields. Depth therapy, soul therapy, seeks the opening of these complexes into something more whole, meaningful, and useful for our individual and for collective existence. An often stagnant collective consciousness fears these unnerving openings and meaningful prying, for therapy is inherently an act of revolution, not accommodation. It is an act of prying open lost and forgotten chambers of soul treasure.

Pilgrimage walking is thus revolutionary walking. Pilgrimage walking is holographic walking. It is an intentional walking that spirals down into the avoided, uncomfortable truths of being. It is liminal ambulating. It walks around things and then penetrates them to their core. Pilgrimage walks between time and space. It fills the interstices between time and space with numinal presence. The ancestors, the gods, the guardian spirits of all our collective species’ history abide in pilgrimage-mediated time.

Pilgrimage restores the centrality of the mystic earth to human progress and procession. Neither individuals nor cultures fare well when exiled from the earth. As Tom Cheetham puts it, “No one has seen the soul with the eyes with which we normally perceive the things of this world. Only the lament of the mystic flute cut from the source, from the Earth of Light, can give some premonition of it. All that grows from that Earth and is separated from it, the story of exile and return, this it is that haunts.”

Pilgrimage walks between worlds, between things. It is Henry Corbin’s *Ta’wil*—the spiritual nature within all things. It is *tohu va vohu*—waste and void. It is *challal ha-panui*—the vacated space. And it is animate and relentless, pursuing us *lo dumiyah*—with no respite.

Pilgrimage is a panentheistic process (divinity is in everything, not that everything is divine). It is a walking through a world infused with the numinous. The longer one walks, the more one generally realizes that all is touched by *all* the transforming radiances *all* around us *all* the time—earth, sky, fire, water, being. All being is fired and animated.

There is cosmological conjecture in some theological circles that there was a noisy void before the Big Bang that generated creation. This void was filled with a murmuring, an incessant thrumming hum. The moment of creation brought this hum to a halt. Silence was born. Here, noise is an eternal given. It is silence that is the novel creation.



## Solvitur ambulando

..... It is solved by walking

<http://www.uucava.org/sermons/Pilgrim.htm>



# Pilgrimage

道

、	、	、	、	、
首	首	首	首	首
道	道			

音読み	どう、とう
訓読み	みち

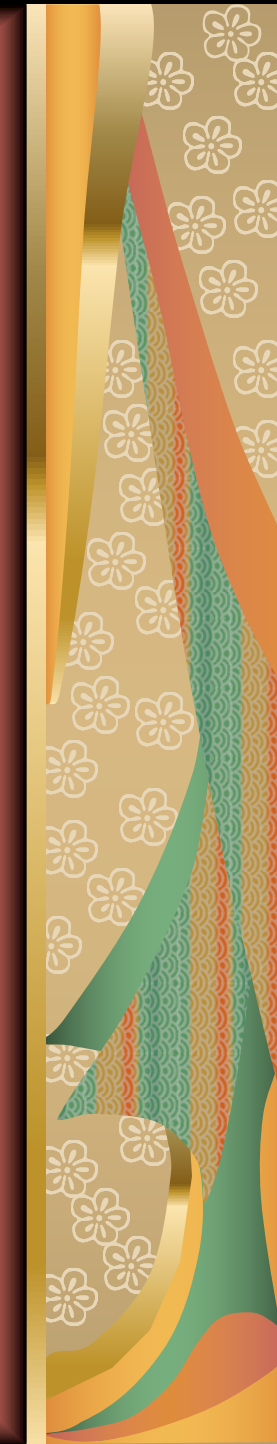


HENRO





PEREGRINO









Monastery/ Temple

伽藍

iG





Bird





Threshold

閾

ideogear







Sacred Sound

音

ideogear





Bell

鐘

ideogear





Temple Bell & Clapper  
Chianin / Kiyota  
1985

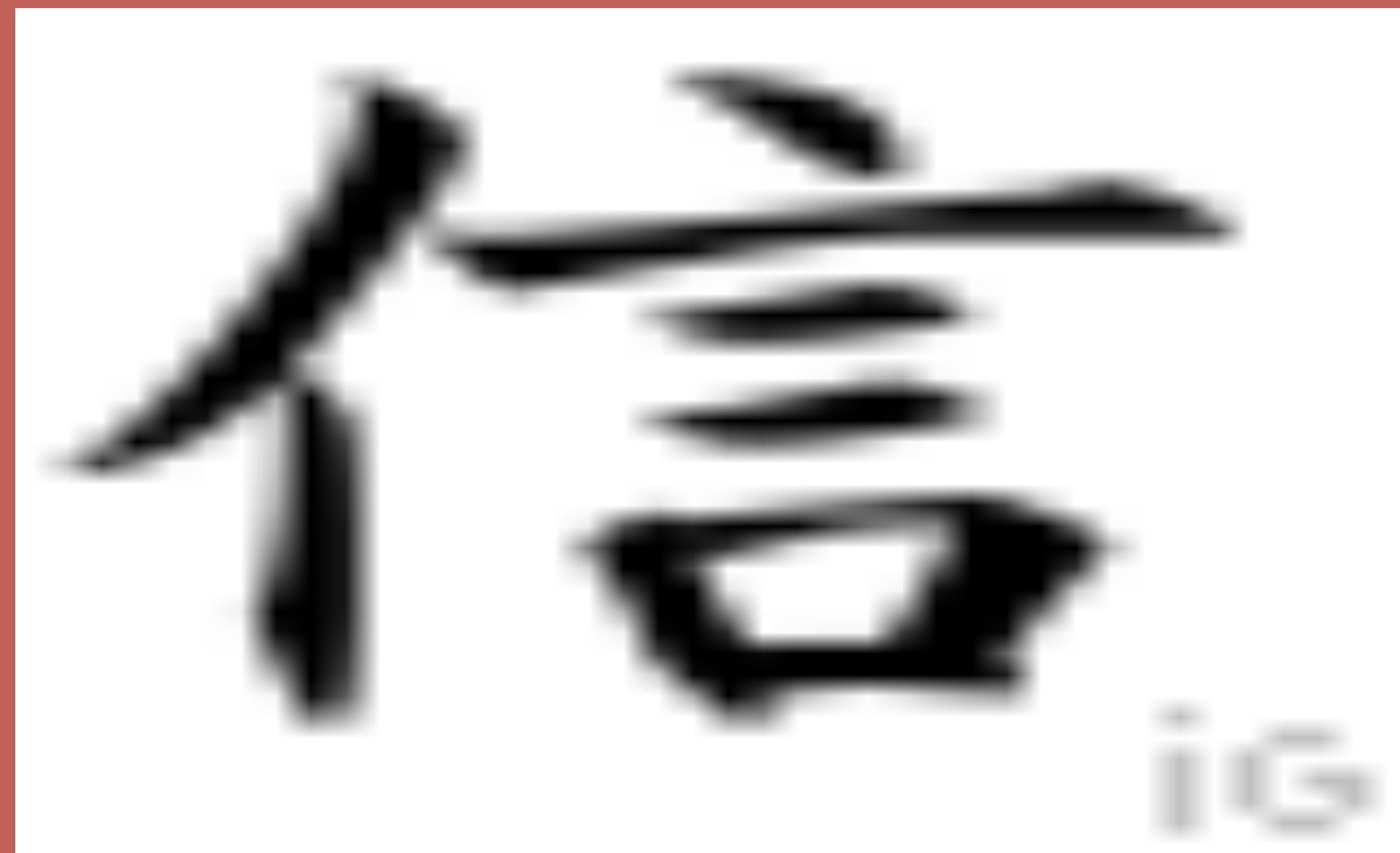


Chant





Creed





# Sacred Incense

香

ideogear







Blessing

祝

ideogear







Silence





# Community









Prayer

祈

iG







Dream/ Vision



Swirl, Georgia O'Keefe



Mountain



ideogear



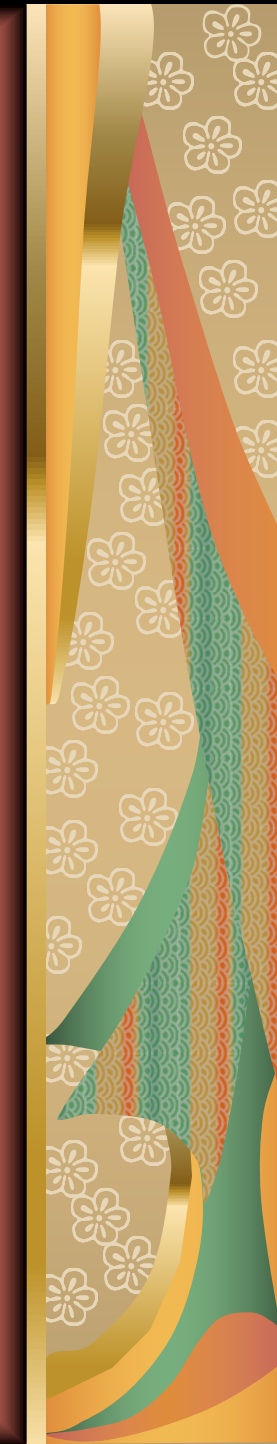


Pilgrimage seeks a salve for the  
painful separation from the Deep,  
Sacred Feminine and the Healing  
Earth.





The topic is especially urgent, given the religious war currently being waged between the three ancient Western Monotheisms—all traditions with strong pilgrimage practices built on top of forgotten Goddess practices. Can pilgrimage bring something toward planetary peace and healing as well as individual psycho-spiritual growth?



What true path of Life has become liminally revealed to you and how do you walk that path or, if not revealed, what is your plan to discover this authentic pilgrim's path for yourself?



*Session Two*  
*Performance*



Arthur Rubinstein - Chopin Nocturne Op. 55,  
No. 1 in F Minor

***Liminal Themes Chopin Nocturne Opus 55 No 1 in F Minor***

**Opening in Familiar-Conscious Time/Space World**

**Dramatic Thundercloud Arrival of the Distaff  
Unconscious World**

**The Balletic Combat-Dance between Major and Minor Key,  
Light and Dark Forces of Psyche**

**The Liminal, *Unus Mundus* Arrival of the Transcendent  
Function on that Fragile, Shy, Aguishly Beautiful Liminal  
Resolving Major Single F Note—an Integrated Liminality  
Present Conscious World, Not a Familiar One**

The opening theme, which is also the principal theme of this work, returns often, slightly altered nearly every time. It bears a melancholy that is deepened by the almost obsessive repetition of the initial melody, which proceeds in a tempo and rhythm characteristic of nocturne contemplation. This elegiac aura is contrasted with a brief counter-theme: music that escapes for a moment into a realm of brighter sonorities (A flat major), though it does so in vain.

All that we have heard up to this point was merely a foretaste of what is to follow. And follow it does. It takes the form of a collision between the violent octaves of an aggressive recitative and the calm strength of the chords that stand opposite. The tumult leads to a climax, a watershed. The exalted passage of the recitative leads the narrative back into the melancholy aura from which it emerged. Yet Chopin does not leave the listener in that mood till the end. Following the example of Bach, he closes the work with a ray of hope, by changing a single note, as a result of which the key of F minor becomes F major. For the pianist, it is a perilous moment, as one easily falls into a naive-sentimental mood. The famous pianist and editor Theodor Kullak summarised that passage from the minor to the major with an ironical sigh: 'And so, thank God, the goal is reached!'



James Huneker wrote: 'Something of Chopin's delicate, tender warmth and spiritual voice is lost in larger spaces. In a small auditorium, and from the fingers of a sympathetic pianist, the nocturnes should be heard, that their intimate, night side may be revealed. ... They are essentially for the twilight, for solitary enclosures, where their still, mysterious tones ... become eloquent and disclose the poetry and pain of their creator.'

Author: Mieczysław Tomaszewski

A series of programmes entitled 'Fryderyk Chopin's Complete Works'

Polish Radio 2

<https://chopin2020.pl/en/compositions/110/nocturne-in-f-minor,-op.-55-no.-1>

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Disrupts Feeling and Value Vertices

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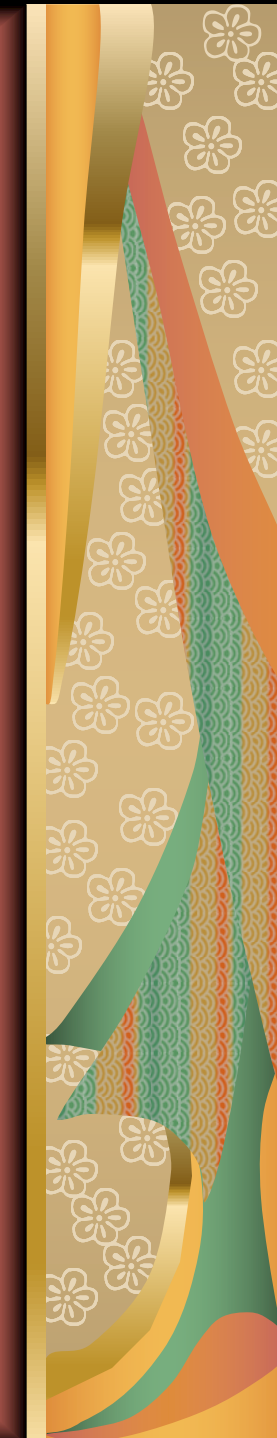


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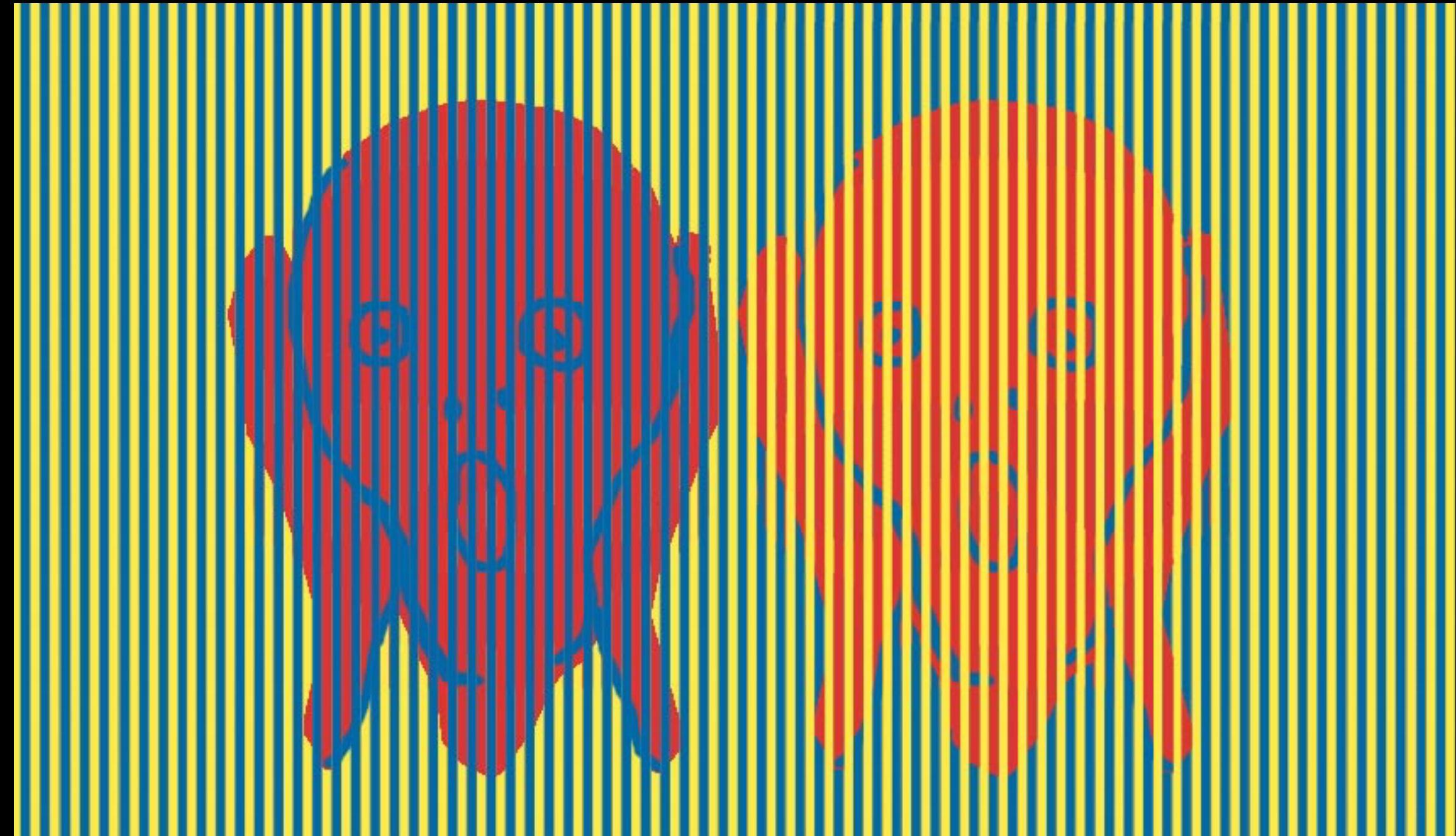
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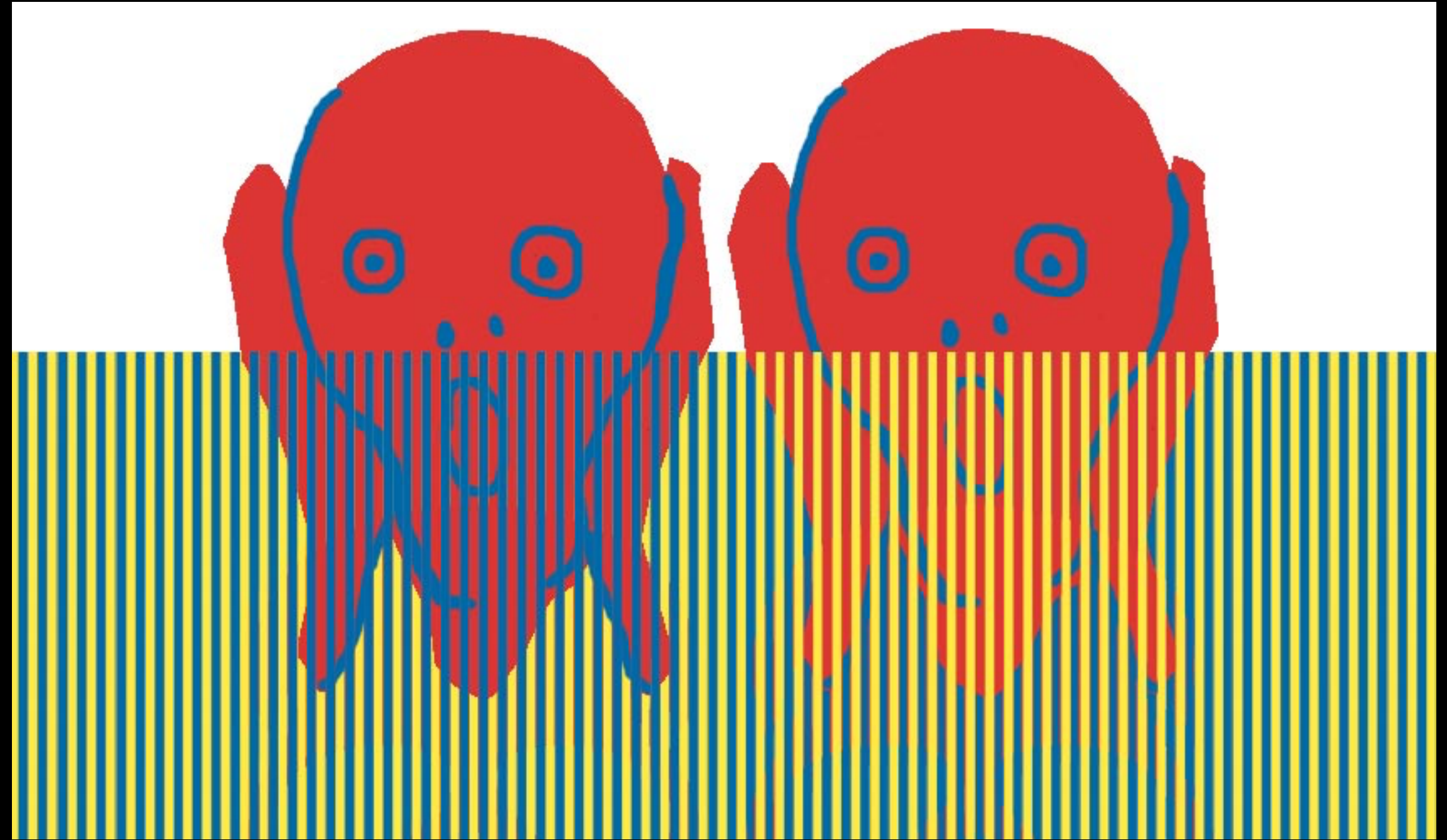


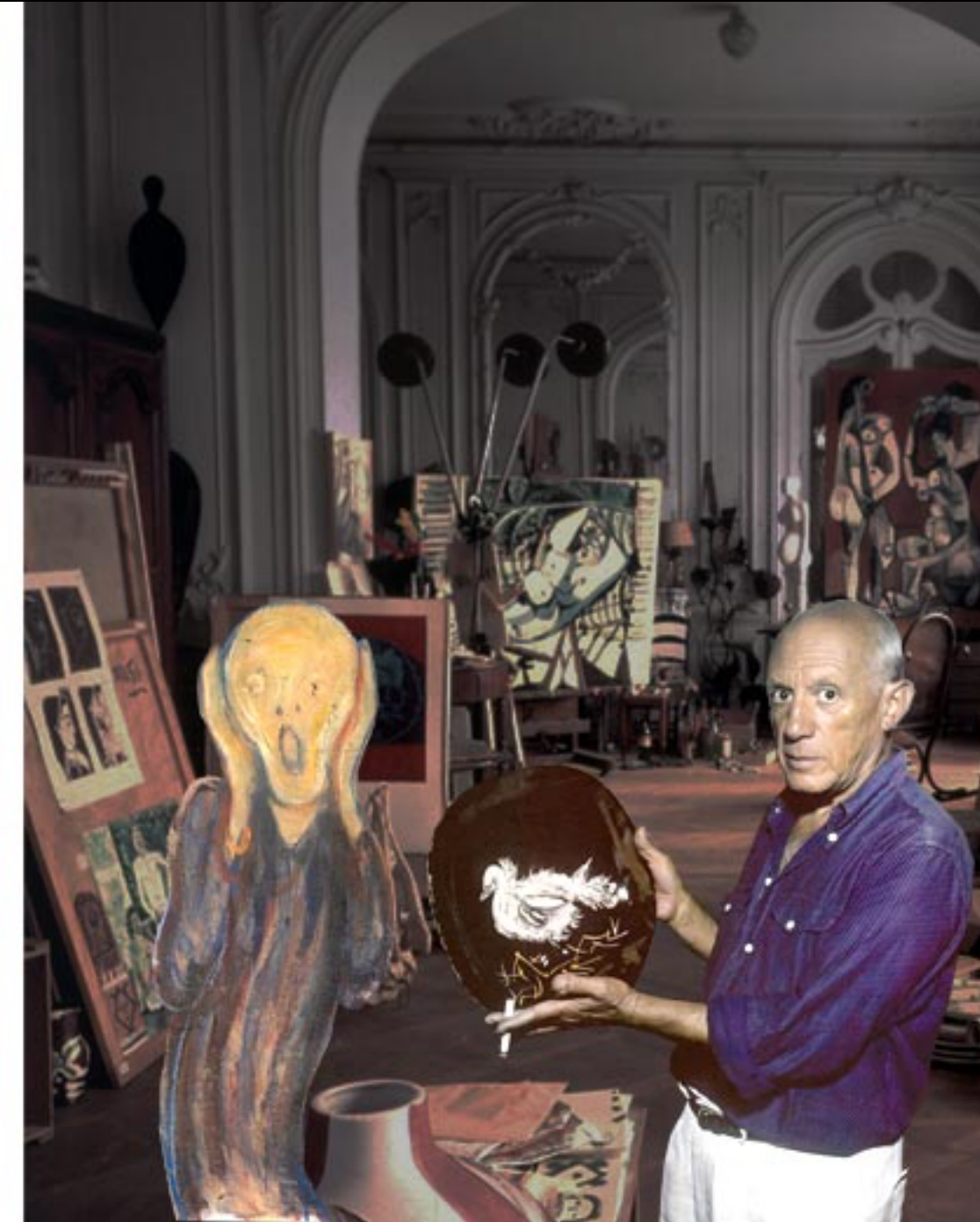
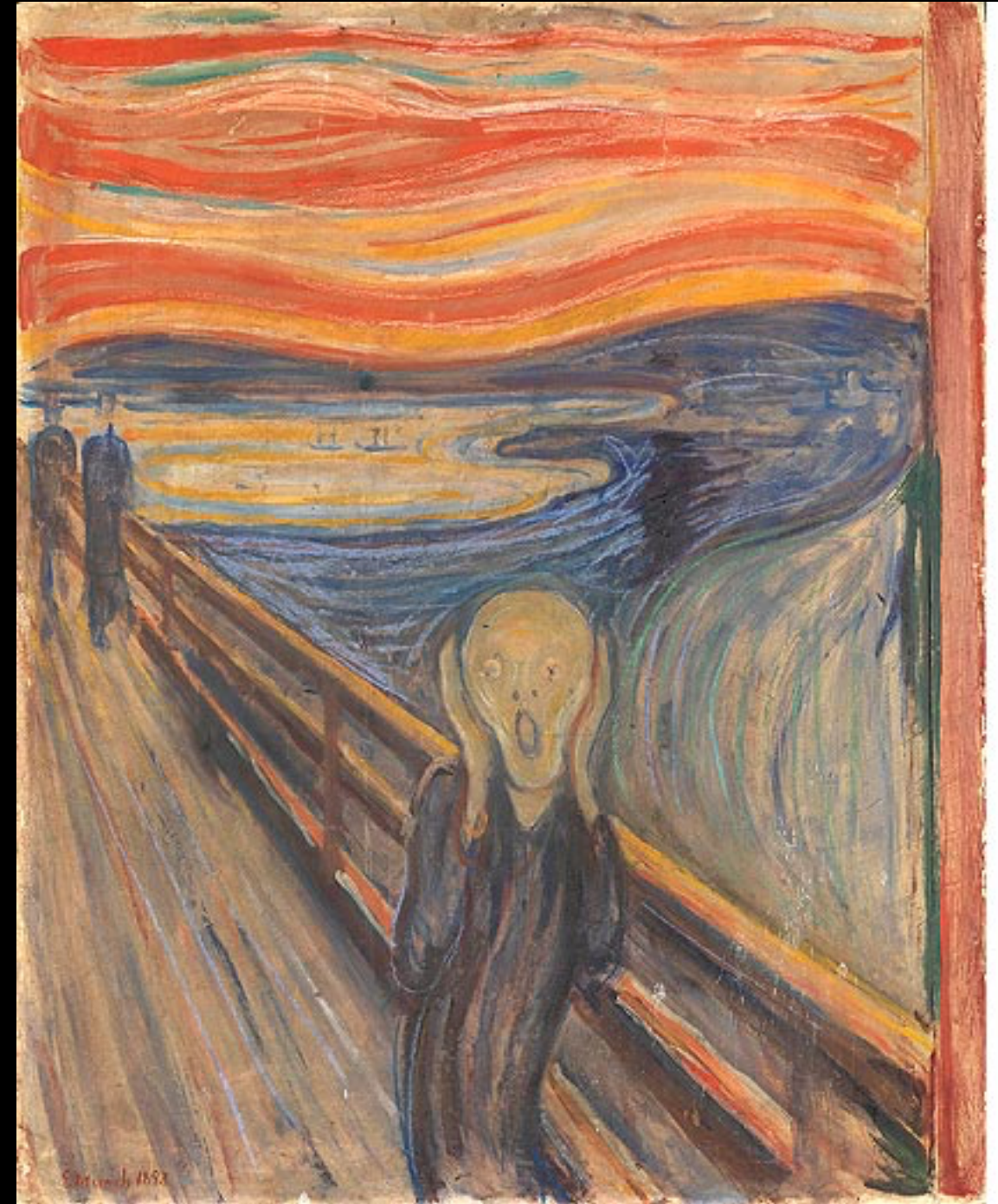
# THE BEZOLD EFFECT

The Bezold effect is an optical illusion, named after a German professor of meteorology Wilhelm von Bezold, who discovered that a color may appear different depending on its relation to adjacent colors. It happens when small areas of color are interspersed. [Wiki]











# The Science of Why No One Agrees on the Color of This Dress

Not since Monica Lewinsky was a White House intern has one blue dress been the source of so much consternation. (And yes, it's blue.) The fact that a single image could polarize the entire Internet into two aggressive camps is, let's face it, just another Thursday. But for the past half-day, people across social media [...][Wired Magazine,, 2/28/15]



**About a week before the wedding of Grace and Keir Johnston, of Colonsay, Scotland, the bride's mother, Cecilia Bleasdale, took a photograph of a dress at Cheshire Oaks Designer Outlet north of Chester, England. Bleasdale intended to wear the dress at the wedding and sent the photograph to her daughter.[4] After disagreements over the perceived colour of the dress in the photograph, the bride posted the image on Facebook, and her friends also disagreed over the colour; some saw it as white with gold lace, while others saw it as blue with black lace.[5][6] For a week, the debate became well known in Colonsay, a small island community.[7] [Wiki]**

**Neuroscientists Bevil Conway and Jay Neitz believe that the differences in opinions are a result of how the human brain perceives colour, and chromatic adaptation. Conway believes that it has a connection to how the brain processes the various hues of a daylight sky: "Your visual system is looking at this thing, and you're trying to discount the chromatic bias of the daylight axis ... people either discount the blue side, in which case they end up seeing white and gold, or discount the gold side, in which case they end up with blue and black. [Wiki]**







What art form provides the most consistent portal for your discovery of your true Destiny Path or what is your plan to discover this inner artist resource?



# *Estate Sale,* **Gloria Baker Feinstein**

- <https://petapixel.com/2012/07/02/memories-for-memories-portraits-of-garage-sale-buyers/>
- <https://archive.nytimes.com/lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/06/29/memories-bought-and-sold/>

# Aristotle's Theater Model

- Setting
- Characters
- Plot
- Climax
- Lysis/ Resolution

*Session Three*

*Politics*





“History is a nightmare from which I’m trying  
to escape”

James Joyce

Title Slides from series from Borgen [2010-2022]



# Liminal Theses in Children of [Wo]Men

- Politics Fateful Dance with the Cynical/  
Corrupt and the Hopeful/ Liminal  
Transformative
- The Old Patriarchal gods/ Theo Must Die
- To Welcome the Liminal Kee/Key of the New  
Child Deep Feminine

I once witnessed an indigenous coming-of-age ceremony. The opening chanter came out and, in native language, proposed three simple questions and a declaration[**BL 1-4**]:

- Is everybody here?
- Is everybody safe?
- Is everybody awake?
- Everybody will get home.[/**BL 1-4**]

These questions and declaration are essentially cosmological. They are, in fact, cosmological necessities.

Is everybody here? What a core liminal question—maybe *the* core liminal question. We are not really here, safe, and awake until *everybody* is assured that they will be able to get home.











# Hadewijch of Antwerp

You who want  
knowledge,  
seek the Oneness  
within

There you  
will find  
the clear mirror  
already waiting

“You won’t know what’s hit you until it’s  
too late”

American arms producer -

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# No Man Is An Island

## Liminal Themes

- Patriarchal Innocence tells the truth the Sinex Avoids
- Sorrow over Lost Connection to the Liminal, Deep Feminine
- Sorrow restores Lost Harmony/ Connection to Authentic, Liminal Vocation/Purpose



What liminal political events have you experienced and how have you acted on what was revealed to you there or what is your plan to be more liminally alive politically



Naaata Nungarrayi

*Piti Kujarra*



Anselm Kiefer

*The Orders of the Night*



Susan Point

*The First People*

WE'VE COMPOSED A NEW AMERICAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

TAKE A KNEE

AND SCREAM

UNTIL

YOU CAN'T BREATHE



Nicholas Galanin



# The Grey

Joe Carnahan, Director [2011]



# The Grey Themes

- We are all hunted—by our outer wolves but, more importantly, our inner ones.
- We all fear an empty universe. We all our terrified by our own inner, immense emptiness.
- We all seek a unifying Animation, a cohering Divinity against that Emptiness.
- Only Initiates who have reposed in and journeyed successfully through this Liminal Emptiness to a recovered unifying animation are ready to fully enter Unus Mundus Realms



And still today one seldom finds that  
people come to great things without they  
first go somewhat astray.

Meister Eckhart





- 
- 
- 

# Chronos and Kairos

- Time is running out
- Apollonian-Logos
- Rational
- Productive-consumptive
- Often cruel
- Ordinary secular
- There is all the time in the world
- Dionysian-Eros
- Irrational
- Aesthetic-recreative
- Often restorative
- Extraordinary sacred

What we humans have done over the past five hundred years to maim this continent and tear apart its fabric of life is in large degree the consequence of the Judeo-Christian religious ethos and its modern technological offspring—science, industry capitalism, and technology. [Worsten, 185]

In the lure to destructiveness, we become aware that the unconscious exists and can intrude as threat, and that consciousness, right on its border can find passage to freedom from threat.

Ulanov, Ann. Back to Basics (p. 53). Daimon Verlag. Kindle Edition.

# Reinhold Niebuhr

If we should perish, the ruthlessness of the foe would be only the secondary cause of the disaster. The primary cause would be that the strength of a giant nation was directed by eyes too blind to see all the hazards of the struggle; and the blindness would be induced not by some accident of nature or history but by hatred and vainglory.  
— Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History*, 1952

Lepore, Jill. *These Truths: A History of the United States* (p. 783). W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle Edition.

Lepore, Jill. *These Truths: A History of the United States* (p. 783). W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle Edition.

***Gibson's Tentative Model of the Major and  
Minor Rites of Developmental Initiation***

**Male Initiatory Rites**

**Female Initiatory Rites**

**Minor Rite (Late Adolescence)**

**The Sword from The  
Great Father**

**The Basket (Kista) from the  
Great Mother**

**Warrior rites**

**Poet rites**

**ABANDONMENT    ANNIHILATION**

**TERROR**

**RAGE**

**REDEMPTIVE/MYSTICAL**

**SORROW**

- 
- 
- 

## The Mystical Sorrow Phenomenon

Results from that magical moment of deep affective/imaginal connection when the ego first consciously and fully experiences the Touch of the Self and does not freeze or withdraw but paradoxically, against all the rationale of its defenses against previous unutterable sufferings, profoundly surrenders to this Divine Embrace.

# The Culture Complex



CHRONOS

LOGOS

EGO

POLIS

PERSONAL

POLIS

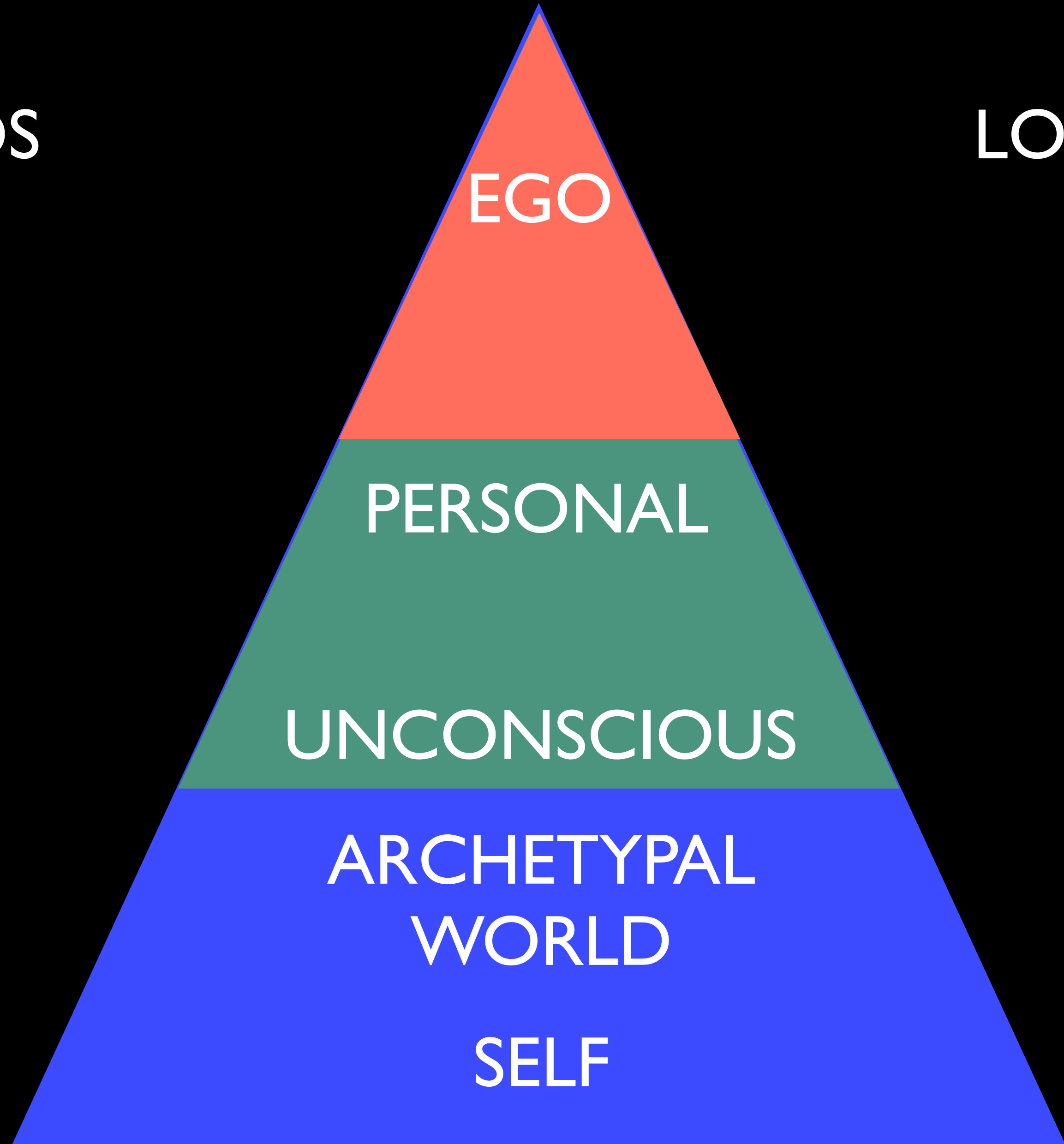
UNCONSCIOUS

ARCHETYPAL  
WORLD

SELF

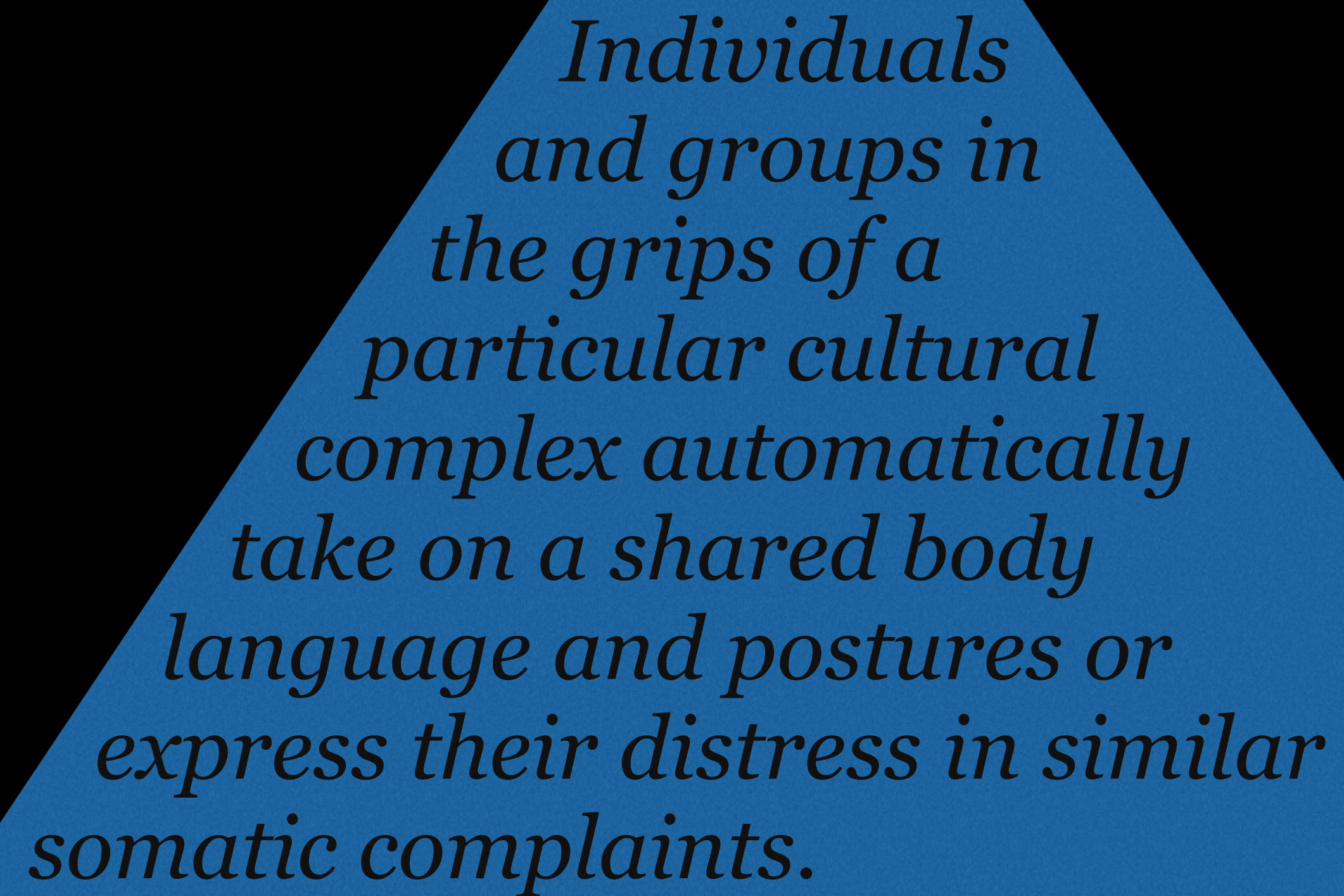
KAIROS

EROS



*Like individual complexes, cultural complexes tend to be repetitive, autonomous, resist consciousness, and collect experience that confirms their historical point of view.*

*And, as already mentioned, cultural complexes tend to be bipolar, so that when they are activated, the group ego or the individual ego of a group member becomes identified with one part of the unconscious cultural complex, while the other part is projected out onto the suitable hook of another group or one of its members.*



*Individuals  
and groups in  
the grips of a  
particular cultural  
complex automatically  
take on a shared body  
language and postures or  
express their distress in similar  
somatic complaints.*

*Finally, like  
personal complexes,  
cultural complexes can provide  
those caught in their potent web of  
stories and emotions a simplistic  
certainty about the group's place in  
the world in the face of otherwise  
conflicting and ambiguous  
uncertainties.*

*~Tom Singer/ Sam Kimbles*



Denying the existence of a ghost will only make  
it bigger (4)

Greenland proverb

WHAT AILS THEE, MY KING?







**EGO**

**PSYCHE-  
ARCHETYPAL**

**PSYCHOID**

**DIVINE**

***Wholeness is born of the acceptance of the  
conflict of human and divine in the  
individual psyche.***

Helen Luke

# Edinger's Six Stages in the Evolution of the Western God

- Animism
- Matriarchy
- Hierarchical Polytheism
- Tribal Monotheism
- Universal Monotesim
- Individuation—The Discovery of the Psyche

# THREE THEMES

Return to Original Source

Management of Evil

Death and Rebirth

Sandner, 265-68

# King's Three Evils

- Poverty
- Racism
- Militarism

# Harari

## Humanist Religions – Religions that Worship Humanity

### Liberal humanism

### Socialist humanism

### Evolutionary humanism

*Homo sapiens* has a unique and sacred nature that is fundamentally different from the nature of all other beings and phenomena. The supreme good is the good of humanity.

'Humanity' is individualistic and resides within each individual *Homo sapiens*.

'Humanity' is collective and resides within the species *Homo sapiens* as a whole.

'Humanity' is a mutable species. Humans might degenerate into subhumans or evolve into superhumans.

The supreme commandment is to protect the inner core and freedom of each individual *Homo sapiens*.

The supreme commandment is to protect equality within the species *Homo sapiens*.

The supreme commandment is to protect humankind from degenerating into subhumans, and to encourage its evolution into superhumans.





# Advocate For a Global, Earth Patriotism

E pluribus unum—out of many, one—

*Session Four*

*Postlude*



In Carl Jung's famous commentary "The Philosophical Tree," he reflected on a series of tree drawings by patients in deep engagement with the depth psyche. Within that rich canon of therapeutically-generated images, Jung found a whole healing cosmology, a cosmology that goes all the way back to Plato and, through Plato, to our shamanic cave origins. The tree is a living *imago* of Plato's ancient world soul, which Jung draws on to explicate this connection between tree, symbol, and soul. The ancients called this *über*-earth spirit the Anima Mundi, the spirit of the world, one of the oldest consistent psycho-spiritual ideas in the West. The earth is pure psycho-spiritual space. This notion about the primary vitalism that underlies all sentient experience on the planet is probably as old as the Paleolithic cave sanctuaries, but certainly as old as Plato. It is a notion that the planet is alive, that she is mother, breast, and home to us all. The tree stands as an essential demotic of soul.

Jung felt that the contours of the psyche were carved very closely to the contours of nature; that nature, if you will, was the mold, psyche the molten content. So, this Anima Mundi always bears the core imprint of nature, the *magna mater* of creation. To lose daily, maybe even momentary, connection to this nature spirit is to risk losing connection to life essence itself and, hence, the personal destiny that always leads us to our full home of being within Her.



We share the same skin with the earth. We live in each other's bones. We co-inhabit each other's dreams. We dance a cosmic *pas de deux*. And, as was the case on my grandparents' Kansas farm, we share a party line with all the animate beings on this planet. All of us listen in on each other's planetary calls. If someone needs help, we know it, and, if we are good neighbors, we respond caringly with all the resources we have to offer. We pitch in to address the common threat. If someone's home—or the home of some species—burns to the ground, we bring a potluck and rebuild. This is what good neighbors do. This is what we used to do, but not so much anymore. Arrogant apex predator that we are, we have grown impervious to what feeds us, to the great food and life chain that supports our being. When that chain collapses from our material and spiritual neglect, we collapse. Connection is that interactively essential—if one being forgets respect and gratitude for any of the other beings, the chain breaks apart. Anima Mundi is the connective tissue through which this essential chain communicates. She is the *admirandum mundi maioris mysterium*, the wondrous mystery of the macrocosm.

But this Anima Mundi is not a benign, Disneyland essence; it is a wild and unpredictable telluric force. It is part Athene, part Kali; part gentle soul kiss and part savage-to-the-bone bite. She has the fangs of a Japanese tsunami, the devouring bowels of a West China earthquake. Anima Mundi is not a giddy archetypal presence. She is a close companion of darkness. She broods. She has profound capacity for experiencing and constellating what the continentals call *Weltsmertz*: world sorrow. She grieves because, often, we can't or we won't. All that lost innocence and violence, that rampage, that destruction and disaster—she is often as impotent to prevent it as we sometimes are. But she can mourn. Like the ancient aborigine, she has days of sorrow where she wakes in the morning filled with the agony of this plane of existence. She just walks up to a cedar at the western end of the camp, stoops beneath its fragrant bower, and stares off at the horizon, rapt in lamentation and grief. Some recent distaff Jungian voices to the contrary, there is teleology to nature. There is a telos to consciousness. And it is human inclusive, not human exclusive—even in human-and nature-generated disaster. Our survival as a species seems to depend on our understanding this.





What liminal encounters with Mother Nature have you experienced or how do you plan to enact rituals of reception of Deep Nature and Her voice in your own earth-connected Soul/Psyche?

*The living mystery of life is  
always hidden between Two.*

~ C. G. Jung



When despair grows in me  
and I wake in the middle of the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting for their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Wendell Berry

# *The Sun*

## Mary Oliver

Have you ever seen  
anything  
in your life  
more wonderful

than the way the sun,  
every evening,  
relaxed and easy,  
floats toward the horizon

and into the clouds or the hills,  
or the ruffled sea,  
and is gone--  
and how it slides again

out of the blackness,  
every morning,  
on the other side of the world,  
like a red flower

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