



# Re-envisioning Visionary Art: An Inquiry into Analytical Psychology and Art Criticism

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## Abstract

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Visionary art is a complex phenomenon that has captivated the attention of artists, scholars, and the public alike. Despite its growing popularity and influence, there is a considerable lack of comprehensive examination of its historical and contemporary contexts. This research aims to address this gap by exploring the interconnections between art criticism and analytical psychology to develop a more nuanced understanding of visionary creativity. This exploration could potentially benefit both fields and enhance mainstream perception of the phenomenon.

The problem at hand is the inconsistencies in defining visionary art, which hinders the development of a cohesive understanding. The proposed solution involves employing philosophical hermeneutics and phenomenology to develop a revised framework and definition that could potentially enrich our understanding of the category.

The research methodology encompasses two main analysis procedures. First, a comparative historical analysis was employed to examine the development and evolution of visionary art by comparing different strands that employ the term, such as outsider art, fantastic realism, and Jungian and post-Jungian frameworks. Second, phenomenological interviews were conducted with several participants who self-identify as visionary artists, selected through purposeful sampling. The goal was to include individuals from diverse backgrounds and representing the various categories, to capture a range of perspectives and experiences. These semi-structured interviews, guided by open-ended questions, allowed participants to share their insights and experiences, thereby fostering a contemporary understanding of the style.

By combining the hermeneutic approach with phenomenological interviews, this research aimed to create a 'fusion of horizons' of the past and present that captures the complex and evolving nature of the category. As a result of this, the research has culminated in the development of a model for artists and art critics to utilise when analysing and/or attempting to create visionary images. Additionally, the study proposes a revised and more inclusive definition of the genre, paving the way for a clearer understanding and greater appreciation of visionary art and creativity.

## Declaration

### *Declaration*

*The work presented in this dissertation is the original work of the author under the direction of 'Re-envisioning Visionary Art: An Inquiry into Analytical Psychology and Art Criticism' by Lisa Hester and due reference has been made, where necessary to the work of others. No part of this dissertation has been previously submitted to T.U.S or any other Institute.*



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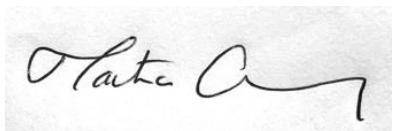
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*I dedicate this project to my spirited daughter Cleo, who  
helped me perfect the art of multitasking.*

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## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABR	Arts-Based Research
AFAM	American Folk Art Museum
AVAM	American Visionary Art Museum
CAVA	Colorado Alliance of Visionary Artists
CHA	Comparative Historical Analysis
CoSM	Chapel of Sacred Mirrors
CW	Jung's Collected Works
DMT	Dimethyltryptamine
IAJS	International Association of Jungian Studies
JABR	Jungian Arts Based Research
LSD	Lysergic Acid Diethylamide
MAPS	Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies
MDR	Memories, Dreams, Reflections
MBTI	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
VSFR	Vienna School of Fantastic Realism

# CHAPTER ONE

## Setting the Context

### 1.1 Introduction

The term ‘visionary’ has two distinct applications: as an adjective and as a noun. When used as an adjective, it describes someone with the ability to “think about or plan the future with great imagination or wisdom” (Hornby, 2020, p. 1330). As a noun, ‘visionary’ refers to an individual who embodies these qualities. In art criticism, the term is frequently applied to describe artists who exhibit unique and impactful styles, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Hilma af Klint, Francisco Goya, and more recently, Alex Grey. Despite their diverse styles and historical contexts, these artists have been labelled ‘visionary’ for their boundary-pushing creations.

This observation implies that both ‘visionary’ and ‘visionary art’ function as broad terms, encompassing a variety of styles originating from innovative artists. However, this is an inadequate oversimplification. While the term may be used for specific types of art, it is difficult to define precisely what those entail. This can lead to inconsistencies in how the term is used across different sources or even its absence as a descriptive art category.

The problematic usage of the term ‘visionary art’ has also been observed by Folklorists Kerry Noonan and Stephen Wehmeyer who argue that it requires further examination. In their article *Re-Envisioning the Visionary: Towards a Behavioral Definition of Initiatory Art* (2008), they emphasise the fundamental

incomprehensibility of the category, stating that the term proves less useful when closely examined.

An online search is also problematic. When researching the category of visionary art, the top results often associate the style with phrases such as ‘transcending the spiritual world,’ ‘portraying a wider vision of awareness,’ ‘the occult,’ and ‘mysticism’ (accessed on 13/04/2023). These initial descriptions, while not necessarily inaccurate, can be biased or limited in their implication that artists and critics need to possess a deep understanding of mystical or occult practices. However, the spiritual elements in the work may manifest in various and subtle forms if present at all.

Beyond these initial descriptions, two fringe art movements within contemporary art criticism use the term and have attempted to define the category: outsider art, which generally refers to artwork created by self-taught individuals outside the mainstream art establishment; and fantastic realism, a movement characterised by the combination of realist techniques and surreal or fantastic elements. On the surface, these two movements agree that the style defines an artist who attempts to depict their psychological or spiritual journey. Yet, they have a drastically opposed viewpoint on its aesthetic characteristics and the techniques required for its production.

Additionally, in recent years, post-Jungian scholars have shown an increased interest in visionary art. This interest may have been sparked by the publication of Carl Gustav Jung’s *Liber Novus* (2009), an illuminated manuscript-style text that documents his self-experimentation with visual and literary elements. The success of this publication demonstrates the public’s fascination

with Jung's visual creative style which he later referred to as the 'visionary mode of creativity.'

Yet, although some Jungian scholars such as Susan Rowland (2016) and Craig Stephenson (2015) have discussed the topic, they primarily focus on literary examples. In the instance when an analyst or scholar explores a visual artist's work, the discussion is typically focused on a specific artist or series of artworks (Kaufmann & Schaeppi, 2019; Matthews, 2015). It appears that analytical psychology has largely excluded the broader field of art criticism from their discussion, which may be due to the inconsistencies that are widespread in the area. Therefore, this project's main research question is: can a more nuanced understanding of visionary art be gained by considering the interconnections between analytical psychology and art criticism? This exploration could potentially benefit both fields and enhance the mainstream perception of the phenomenon.

## 1.2 Literature Review

### Overview

In this section, I conduct a thematic literature review to examine and evaluate the most significant figures and concepts within the three domains identified in the introduction, focusing on the origins of the movements, the conceptual foundations, the techniques and aesthetics and the gaps in the literature. It is important to mention that this review serves as a starting point for a more in-depth study of visionary art which will be explored more thoroughly in Parts One and Two of this dissertation.

### **The Relationship between Visionary Art and Art Brut/Outsider Art**

#### 1. Origins and Development

Contemporary visionary art, according to outsider art, remains an enigmatic term without precise or consistent definition. As noted by art historian David MacLagan in *Outsider Art: From the Margins to the Marketplace* (2009) visionary art amounts to either a subset within the outsider art category, or as an alternative that suggests some dissatisfaction with the original term. This is evident by the definitions offered by influential institutions, such as the American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) in Baltimore and the quarterly publication *Raw Vision*. On AVAM's website they describe how art brut, outsider art, and visionary art, are all terms used to describe the same things (Hoffberger, 2010). On the contrary, the *Raw Vision* website (2023), considers visionary art as a subcategory of outsider art that specifically focuses on works inspired by religious or revelatory experiences, encompassing urban folk art from the third world, as well as works based on spiritual encounters and visions. Yet, Daniel Wojcik, in his text *Outsider*

*Art: Visionary Worlds and Trauma* (2016) further argues that many artists within the outsider art category draw inspiration from spiritual or religious experiences, which are often overlooked entirely.

Nonetheless, Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), a French artist and critic, laid the groundwork for the development of art brut, outsider art, and visionary art with his foundational concepts. In his essays *In Honour of Savage Values* (1951/2004) and *l'Art brut Préféré aux arts cultures* (1949), Dubuffet argued for the importance of 'low art,' a raw and unfiltered form of artistic expression that challenges traditional beauty standards. By advocating for the value of this untamed, instinctive creativity, Dubuffet sought to elevate the status of art forms that were often marginalized or dismissed by the mainstream art world.

Dubuffet was largely influenced by surrealism, an artistic movement that sought to explore the unconscious's role in creativity. Surrealist artists like André Breton and Max Ernst provided a context for his interest in the unfiltered, uninhibited expression of outsider art. Interestingly, the surrealist and the writer of the *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), Breton, was one of the original members of the *La Compagnie de l'Art Brut*, the first non-commercial art association in Paris, which formed in 1948.

Building on Dubuffet's legacy, art critic Roger Cardinal (1940-2019) introduced the term 'outsider art' as an English counterpart to Dubuffet's art brut. Cardinal first used the term in his book *Outsider Art* (1972), whereby he provided an examination of the origins and development of the movement, focusing on the characteristics that set these artists and their work apart from mainstream art. He also questioned the prevalent notion of art as a commercial product, advocating for outsider art as a legitimate alternative.

In 2000, the art critic and historian Colin Rhodes (b. 1950) published his text *Outsider Art: Spontaneous Alternatives* (2000), which has been revised and republished as *Outsider Art: Art Brut and its Affinities* (2022). In these texts, he explores the connections between outsider art and various groups, including self-taught visionaries, spiritualists, eccentric recluses, and folk artists, all of whom exist beyond the boundaries imposed by the art market and society.

Similarly in his essay *Exquisite Vistas* from the exhibition catalogue *Private Worlds: Outsider and Visionary Art* (2001), Rhodes attempts to define visionary art, noting that it is often perceived as unpolished and difficult to comprehend. Alongside Dubuffet and Cardinal, Rhodes is considered a significant scholar and researcher in the field of outsider art. He has made substantial contributions to the development and understanding of the genre through his extensive writings, curatorial work, and exhibitions. His work has been influential in shaping the discourse around outsider art and has contributed to its recognition as a legitimate field of study within the art world.

## 2. Conceptual Foundations

The conceptual foundations of outsider art is rooted in Dubuffet's idea of art brut which emphasises the importance of creating art free from formal artistic training. He believed that the 'raw,' and unfiltered creativity would result in more genuine and powerful expressions, untainted by cultural norms and expectations. This movement shares similarities with other avant-garde movements of the time, such as surrealism and dadaism, which also sought to challenge conventional artistic values and push the boundaries of creativity. However, while surrealism focused on tapping into the 'subconscious mind', and dadaism aimed to reject reason and

logic, outsider art embraced artists who were untouched by the influences of the established art world.

In his text *Outsider Art* (2009), art critic David Macclagan critically examines this movement, aligning it with modernism's quest for new and original forms, especially following the horrors of the second world war. He contends that art brut can be seen as an intensification of modernism's pursuit of unchartered territories of creativity. By exploring areas considered immune to conventional culture, such as the art of children, primitive art, and the art of the mentally ill, art brut and the corresponding outsider art was driven by a strong desire to uncover untamed creativity and expression.

The 'art of the insane' played a pivotal role in the development of outsider art as described in *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane* (1992) by the art historian John Macgregor. This text offers a comprehensive examination of the influence of this type of art form on cultural and artistic movements, particularly on surrealism and outsider art. His examination involves an interdisciplinary approach, merging art history, psychiatry, and cultural studies, to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the social, cultural, and historical contexts that shaped the perceptions of the 'art of the insane'.

Macgregor's exploration of outsider art's origins and development shed light on the movement's complexities and its place within the broader art world, particularly in the context of evolving attitudes towards the production and appreciation of psychotic art. In addition, he outlines how artworks created by individuals with mental health disorders were primarily regarded as diagnostic tools by psychiatrists, offering insights into the patients' psychopathology. However, with the publication of psychiatrist Walter Morgenthaler's *Mental*

*Patient as Artist* (1921) and Hans Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (1922)

the perception of these works shifted from mere diagnostic aids to a recognition of their aesthetic significance. As the appreciation for 'art of the insane' grew, the mainstream perception of these works changed. Instead of simply reflecting the mental state of their creators, these works began to be celebrated for their inherent artistic value, transcending their diagnostic purpose. The originality, emotional intensity, and unbridled creativity displayed in these pieces captured the attention of the art world, ultimately contributing to the emergence and evolution of outsider art as a distinct movement.

One of the initial aims of the art brut and outsider art movement was to challenge the notion of art as a commercial product and present an alternative to the mainstream art world's commodification of creativity. In his text, Cardinal (1972) questioned the focus on art as a commodity to be bought and sold, advocating instead for outsider art as a legitimate alternative, deserving recognition and appreciation for its unique characteristics and creative processes. In line with this, the art critic Michel Thévoz (b. 1936), in his text *Art Brut* (1976) added to this concept, highlighting the dichotomy between cultural, or 'insider art', and outsider art. In his view, the former draws inspiration from historical or foreign sources, while the latter disregards aesthetic rules and follows a path of indifference.

With this emphasis on outsider art as a reaction to the commodification of art, Macclagan (2009) argues that, just as with surrealism, outsider art faces the risk of assimilation into mass-media imagery and the market potentially diluting its original purpose and authenticity. He warns that this could lead to collections and galleries promoting works that do not capture the genuine spirit of outsider

art, “muddying the waters, rather than tapping into the true wellspring of unauthorised creativity.” This point, alongside the recognition of changes in psychiatric hospitalisation and treatment has impacted the production of ‘psychotic art’, which, Macclagan argues, was previously a result of long-term institutionalisation. He suggests that the core idea of ‘true creation’ in outsider art might be a product of a historical era, raising questions about its significance in contemporary art.

Cardinal offers a different perspective on the contemporary definitions of outsider art in his article *Outsider Art and Autistic Creator* (2009). He asserts that the criteria for the category should be flexible enough to include not only art arising in the context of extreme mental dysfunction but also art produced by individuals who are quite capable of handling their social lives, but who recoil, consciously or unconsciously, from the notion of art being a publicly defined activity with communally recognised standards. He acknowledges that some commentators have insisted that true outsider art can only be produced by people with aberrant biographies, but he emphasises that the category should be defined by its anti-conventional nature, idiosyncrasy, and unworldly distance from artistic norms and commonplace experience, rather than by sensational biographies or lurid case histories.

In addition, referring to work as ‘psychotic’ or highlighting its significance due to mental illness and marginalisation is incredibly problematic. For instance, Wojcik (2016) argues that the term is dehumanising, ultimately marking individuals as pathological in relation to normal people and culture. Cardinal’s perspective supports this notion, emphasising the importance of focusing on the

artmaking itself and the thrilling visual experience it offers, rather than solely on the artist's unconventional backgrounds.

### 3. Technique and Aesthetic

Outsider art, including art brut and visionary art, is known for its unique departures from conventional artistic practices and styles. Without formal training and isolated from the mainstream art world, these artists are thought to create works with a raw, unpolished quality that challenges traditional norms of beauty and craftsmanship (Hoffberger, 2010). According to Maclagan (2009) and Rhodes (2022), outsider artists often use unconventional materials, such as found objects and repurposed materials, driven by necessity or a desire for originality, which imbues their works with a sense of spontaneity and inventiveness.

The influence of surrealism on outsider art is evident in the focus on the unconscious as a source of creative inspiration. Like surrealists, outsider artists experimented with techniques such as automatic drawing or writing to access deeper and more authentic parts of their imagination, bypassing rational thought, and tapping into raw, instinctive aspects of creativity (Cardinal, 1972). However, Cardinal (1972) points out that, not all surrealist art embodies this primitivism, as some artists may be influenced by cultural norms, too sophisticated, or too focused on recognition.

The art of individuals with mental health disorders has also played a significant role in shaping the aesthetics of outsider art. MacGregor (1992) highlights the striking originality, emotional intensity, and uninhibited creativity of this art, which often disregards conventional artistic rules. One of the historical texts that he explores is Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (1922). Within this

text, Prinzhorn's research focuses on the first-ever collection of this type of imagery and provides insights into the unique visual style of the artform<sup>1</sup>. Prinzhorn's research is examined with some detail in both Rhodes and Cardinal's texts. Rhodes (2022) notes that Prinzhorn believed that every individual has an innate tendency towards pictorial configuration, but this is often suppressed in adults. While Cardinal (1972, p. 49) suggests that Prinzhorn's aesthetic research was expanded upon by Jung, namely that "the primary process operative in artistic work [...] tends to produce recurrent motifs – the so-called archetype." This connection between Prinzhorn and Jung is intriguing and warrants further examination.

#### 4. Discussion

The literature on outsider art, art brut, and visionary art reveals gaps in our understanding of these forms and their place in the artworld. One major challenge is the inconsistent definition of these terms, leading to confusion and lack of clarity in the discourse. Institutions and publications often use these terms interchangeably or as subsets or each other causing ambiguity in their meanings and scope. It is possible that a closer examination of foundational texts, such as Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, may help clarify the distinction between these forms and their connections with other artistic movements and psychological theories, such as Jungian psychology.

Another aspect of the literature that requires attention is the emphasis on the notion of 'non-cultural art' and the lack of formal artistic training among

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<sup>1</sup> Prinzhorn's collection has a permanent home in 'The Prinzhorn's Collection Museum', located at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. The current director Thomas Röske writes extensively on the artwork within the collection. However, these articles are predominantly in German.

outsider artists. While this characteristic has been used to define and distinguish outsider art from mainstream art, its significance within the broader context of artistic expression and its relationship to the Jungian framework remains largely unexplored. Delving deeper into the role of formal artistic training (or lack thereof) in the creative process, as well as the influence of cultural norms and expectations on the production of outsider art, could provide valuable insights into the nature of these art forms and their place within the larger artistic landscape.

Moreover, the current literature on outsider art, art brut, and visionary art often focuses on the artists' unconventional backgrounds, mental health issues, or marginalization as defining characteristics of their work. This approach has been critiqued by Wojcik (2016) and Cardinal (2009) as dehumanizing and reductive, emphasizing the need for a shift in focus towards the art-making process itself and the unique visual experiences it offers. A more comprehensive examination of the characteristics of configuration, content of the imagery, techniques and the materials employed by the artists is needed. This approach would offer a more comprehensive understanding of these artforms steering away from a sensationalist focus on the artist's personal circumstances.

## **The Relationship between Visionary Art, Psychedelic Art/Fantastic Realism**

### 1. Origins and Development

The Vienna school of fantastic realism (VSFR), a major influence on contemporary visionary and psychedelic art, was first introduced by art critic Johann Muschik in the 1950s. This Austrian art movement gained prominence through the 1974 text *Die Wiener Schule des Phantastischen Realismus*. A key figure connecting the past and present movements is Ernst Fuchs (1930-2015), a leading and arguably the most popular member of the VSFR. Fuchs shared the techniques of the movement with at least three generations of visionary and psychedelic artists, leaving a significant impact on contemporary figures such as Alex Grey, Laurence Caruana, and Amanda Sage, among others (Oroc, 2018).

The strong influence of surrealism on the VSFR is noted by art critic Eugene Holton in *An Unlikely Meeting of the Vienna School and the New York School* (1989). In this article, Holton highlights the impact of surrealism on VSFR, contrasting it with the New York school of abstract expressionism, both of which had roots in surrealism. He notes that the artists in VSFR drew inspiration from the artistic traditions and techniques of the past and aimed to depict the fantastic aspect of reality. In contrast, abstract expressionists, such as Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), and Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), were interested in non-representational art and sought to challenge or ‘puncture’ reality (Holton, 1989).

Nonetheless, contemporary visionary art has also been shaped by the works of key authors and artists. One foundational contribution to the field is the artist Alex Grey's *The Sacred Mirrors: The Visionary Art of Alex Grey* (1990). This text was the first to propose the term ‘visionary art’ in a contemporary

setting. Another influential figure in this movement is the artist Laurence Caruana, who provides a comprehensive overview of the visionary art movement in *The First Manifesto of Visionary Art* (2001). Within this text, he explores various aspects of visionary art, including its history, philosophical underpinnings, and key principles. He also draws connections to a range of historical and cultural influences, such as the VSFR, surrealism, and the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, and Jung. However, some critiques arise from a close reading of Caruana's text<sup>2</sup>. Namely, while Jung's name is mentioned sixteen times throughout the seventy-two-page document, only *Memories, Dreams, and Reflections* (1963) is cited in the bibliography. This text is largely considered a quasi-biography containing misleading and incomplete information suggesting that Caruana's reliance on this single source might lead to a superficial understanding of Jung's theories and their potential connections to visionary art.

It is also relevant to mention the non-academic sources that have played a significant role in shaping the development and public perception of this movement. These sources, such as contemporary art magazines *Juxtapoz* and *High Fructose*, have provided exposure for artists working within these genres. Organisations like the *Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies* (MAPS), the *Chapel of Sacred Mirrors* (CoSM), the *Museum of Visionary Art* in Vienna, and *The Academy of Visionary Art* have promoted the genre, fostered a sense of community, and provided dedicated spaces for showcasing and teaching visionary and psychedelic art techniques.

Festivals and events, including *Burning Man*, *Lightning in a Bottle*, and *BOOM!* have also served as platforms for artists to display their work and connect

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<sup>2</sup> The manifesto has been critiqued in depth. See Appendix A

with a wider audience. Documentaries and films, such as *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* (2010) and *Neurons to Nirvana* (2013), explore the world of psychedelics and often feature psychedelic and visionary art, further promoting the genre and providing exposure to the artists working in these styles. Together, these non-academic sources have significantly contributed to the visibility and appreciation of psychedelic and visionary art as well as an overall understanding of this movement.

## 2. Conceptual Foundations

The philosophical foundations of visionary art are deeply rooted in the concepts of perennial philosophy, mysticism, and psychedelic substances. Perennial philosophy, also known as the ‘perennial wisdom’ or ‘primordial tradition,’ posits that there is a single, unchanging truth at the core of all spiritual and religious traditions. This truth encompasses the idea that all beings are connected to a divine source and share a common spiritual origin. In the introductory essay of *Sacred Mirrors*, titled *In the Eye of the Artist: Art and the Perennial Philosophy* (1990) the renowned philosopher, writer and psychologist, Kenneth Wilber (b.1949) contributes his expertise in transpersonal psychology and integral theory to the discussion of visionary art.

Mysticism is another significant influence as it involves the pursuit of achieving a direct, personal experience of the divine or transcendent reality. Grey in *The Mission of Art* (1998) explains how mystics, from Plotinus to Padmasambhava, encountered multiple dimensions of reality and gained glimpses of these higher states through spiritual practice which they reflected in their artworks. In his view, this shows that human consciousness is evolving towards

the transpersonal, as reflected in the stages of development and understanding that many artists undergo (Grey, 1998/2017). It is interesting to note that Jung is mentioned only twice throughout the text, while ‘archetype’ is mentioned thirty-eight times, highlighting a sway towards analytical psychological ideas.

Hallucinogens and psychedelic experiences have also been significant catalysts for inspiring visionary art, as they often induce altered states of consciousness that can lead to profound insights and vivid, otherworldly imagery. James Oroc's book *The New Psychedelic Revolution: The Genesis of the Visionary Art* (2018) delves into the resurgence of interest in psychedelics and their impact on contemporary art, spirituality, and culture. Oroc suggests that psychedelic substances have led to a new wave of artistic expression that transcends conventional boundaries, promoting creativity and spiritual insight. While the book offers a comprehensive view into contemporary visionary culture and its many aspects there is a clear bias towards the scene and does not provide as balanced or critical analysis of the potential risks and benefits of psychedelic substances or offer alternative ways to produce visionary images. Oroc (2018) also makes several questionable statements, particularly his declaration that an entheogenic perspective may be our society's best chance of survival. This statement is problematic as it oversimplifies the challenges facing society which are often complex and multifaceted, requiring a combination of approaches and solutions.

The use of hallucinogens, such as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), psilocybin, and dimethyltryptamine (DMT), can result in experiences characterised by vivid colours, intricate patterns, and the dissolution of boundaries between self and other, all of which may inform the artistic process of visionary

artists. Furthermore, these experiences often involve encounters with archetypal figures, mythological beings, and alternate dimensions, which can serve as rich sources of inspiration for artists working in the visionary art genre. Stanley Krippner's study, *Ecstatic Landscapes: The Manifestation of Psychedelic Art* (2016), provides additional evidence for the relationship between hallucinogens and psychedelic art. The study found common themes in the works of over 200 artists, writers, and musicians who referred to their creations as 'psychedelic' due to their use of LSD-type drugs or related substances. These findings underscore the importance of psychedelics in shaping the content and style of visionary art. Moreover, Krippner (2016, p. 417) highlights an important observation that "psychedelic art" is not defined by its contents but by a certain type of experience (or experiences) that have affected and impacted the artist."

However, he also acknowledges that eighteen of the artists and writers in his study denied using LSD drugs, despite claiming their work was 'psychedelic' (these individuals were omitted from the study). Instead, these participants preferred other consciousness-altering experiences, such as meditation or an intense contact with nature in the creation of their work. This underscores the importance of considering not only the link with entheogenic substances, but also alternative practices in defining the concept of psychedelic art.

Reflecting on the statement that psychedelic art is characterised by the influence of psychedelic experiences on the artists, rather than the content of the artwork itself, it may be helpful to consider the implications of this distinction for the broader understanding of visionary art. Interestingly, in his text, Oroc (2018) argues that the term 'visionary' was used as a "sophisticated substitute" to psychedelic art, without the negative connotations attached to it. The rebranding,

as Oroc suggests, may have been a strategic move by artists and proponent of the movement to distance themselves from the stigma associated with psychedelic drug use and the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s.

### 3. Techniques and Aesthetics

One of the prominent techniques used by visionary artists is mischtechnik, a mixed-media painting method that originated in Europe during the Renaissance. This technique involves the application of multiple layers of paint, typically combining egg tempera and oil paint, to achieve a luminous, glowing effect. The mischtechnik is promoted by many influential members of the contemporary visionary art scene (Caruana, 2001; Oroc, 2018). Moreover, as Oroc (2018) states, Fuchs was responsible for teaching the old master's mischtechnik to at least three generations of visionary and psychedelic artists. This intricate layering process in mischtechnik allows for a depth and vibrancy of colour that is particularly suited to the vivid, otherworldly imagery often found in visionary art.

Moreover, in his manifesto, Caruana (2001) states that these techniques and the precise renderings of visionary experiences is necessary for visionary works. Precise rendering refers to the meticulous, detailed portrayal of the subject matter, which can lend a sense of realism and clarity to the artwork, even when depicting fantastical or abstract scenes. This precision often requires extensive practice, skill, and patience, as the artist must carefully craft each element of the composition to achieve the desired effect. Similarly, Grey (1998/2017) suggests that an emphasis on technique is important as it fosters a meditative discipline that produces sacred and visionary imagery. These declarations are interesting, as they directly conflict with the views of art brut/outsider artists on the topic.

The creation of visionary imagery often demands a high level of artistic discipline, as artists must develop and refine their technical skills to effectively communicate their visions. As noted in Caruana's *Sacred Codes: The Forgotten Principles of Painting Revived by Visionary Art* (2017) this discipline may involve years of dedicated practice, experimentation, and learning from other artists or mentors. This comprehensive guide covers classical principles of figure drawing, the development of painterly principles in French and Italian academy systems, principles of vision, sacred geometry, and composition, situating the visionary art movement, and the revered techniques into a solid visionary art tradition.

#### 4. Discussion

The sources and perspectives in the literature on fantastic realism, psychedelic art, and visionary art has given rise to a variety of considerations related to the field. Key topics of interest include the distinctions between psychedelic and visionary art, the emphasis on technique and precise renderings, and the role of Jungian psychology in understanding the artistic and cultural significance of these genres.

As mentioned, Krippner (2016) highlights that psychedelic art is characterised by the influence of psychedelic experiences on the artists, rather than the content of the artwork itself. In contrast, Oroc (2018) suggests that the term 'visionary' was employed as a more sophisticated alternative to 'psychedelic,' allowing artists to distance themselves from the stigma associated with drug use and counterculture. This distinction raises questions about what specifically differentiates visionary art from psychedelic art<sup>3</sup>. If psychedelic art is defined by the influence of psychedelics on the artist, does visionary art focus

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<sup>3</sup> Oroc (2018, p. 219) also states, "thus not all psychedelic art should necessarily be considered visionary, nor is all visionary art necessarily psychedelic."

more on the content of the artwork itself? If so, what does this content entail, and how is it distinct from psychedelic art?

In addition, both Caruana (2001) and Grey (1998/2017) stress the importance of technique in creating visionary art, with Caruana stating that accurate rendering is essential for producing vision-inducing works. This emphasis on technique is said to foster a meditative discipline that leads to the creation of sacred and visionary imagery. However, this focus on technique directly conflicts with the views of art brut/outsider artists, who often prioritise spontaneity, raw expression, and personal experience over formal artistic technique and training. This raises the question about the role of technique in defining visionary art as a genre and whether the emphasis on technique may limit the range of artistic expression and experiences that could be considered visionary art.

Furthermore, the frequent use of terms like ‘archetype’ in Grey (1990;1998/2017) and Caruana’s texts (2001) signal the possible influence of Jungian psychology on the contemporary visionary art movement. In addition, there is a growing body of literature exploring the intersections between the psychedelic experience and Jungian psychology. For instance, *Confrontations with the Unconscious: Jungian Depth Psychology and the Psychedelic Experience* (2019) by Jungian analyst Scott Hill and, *Carl Jung and the Psychedelic Brain An Evolutionary Model of Analytical Psychology Informed by Psychedelic Neuroscience* (2021) by Jungian scholar Gary Clark, to name a few. While these studies are not directly related to these project’s research question, they suggest that Jung’s insights may be valuable for understanding the psychedelic experience, and by proxy psychedelic and visionary art.

## An Analytical Psychological View of Visionary Art

### 1. The Origins and Development

In recent years Jungian scholars have shown an increased interest in creativity and its connection to the imagination, fantasy thinking, symbolic representations and even the individuation process. This interest may have sprung from the publication of Jung's *Liber Novus* (2009), an illuminated manuscript style text that documents Jung's creative self-experimentation – his personal confrontation with the visionary mode of creativity. This text enters analytical psychology late yet presents itself as a foundational text; it was a personal monstrum from which Jung formulated much of what would become his analytical psychology. This publication's success is proof of the public's fascination with Jung's visual and literary creative style, which he later referred to as the 'visionary mode of creativity.' Nine years later, the same publisher released *The Art of C.G Jung* (2018). This book was published in response to the interest generated by *Liber Novus* and traces the evolution of Jung's visual works from childhood to adult life while illuminating the relation of Jung's lived experience to his scientific and creative endeavours.

Even though there is an emerging conversation on the connection between analytical psychology and fine art, it has been a neglected topic for some time. Ulrich Hoerni (2018, p. 10), Jung's grandson, and co-editor of *The Art of C.G. Jung*, recently described how, "for decades, few suspected the vital role that visual art played in his oeuvre.". Jung himself wrote extraordinarily little on the subject, only mentioning the visual arts as an afterthought to literature and poetry. This suggestion is implied by the title of his two essays, which introduce the visionary mode of creativity: *On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry* (1923) and

*Psychology and Literature* (1930) from *The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature* (CW 15). Even then, literature and poetry were only briefly touched upon in his discussions.

The topic of visionary art has been discussed amongst post-Jungians, such as Robert Matthews, who published *An Analytical Psychology View of Wholeness in Art* (2015). This article had three aims: to describe the general creative process according to Jung's view of the transcendent function, discuss three roles of the visionary artist according to Neumann, and explore the role of the visionary artist in the west at present. However, it contains several discrepancies. First, Matthews failed to discuss contemporary western art. Instead, his focus was on Modern art, a movement that ended during the 1970s – forty-five years before the article's publication. Second, Matthews' interpretation of Neumann's 'three roles of the visionary artist' does not correlate with the source material. Instead, Neumann's essay, *Art and Time* (1959), presents four stages that differ somewhat to Matthews' interpretation.

Likewise, Jungian scholar and literary critic Susan Rowland is a key figure who has contributed over ten books on the creative imagination and Jungian psychology. However, her academic works generally focus on the literary aspects of visionary art<sup>4</sup>. Nonetheless, in *Psyche and the Arts* (2008) glossary, she defines the genre effectively, providing the reader with an introductory understanding. Following this, Rowland's most recent publication (with contributions from the poet Joel Weishaus) *Jungian Arts-based Research and 'The Nuclear Enchantment of New Mexico'* (2021)<sup>5</sup> extends the understanding of visionary art, relating it to

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<sup>4</sup> This is evident by the titles of Rowland's publications, for example: *Jungian Literary Criticism* (2018), *Jung as a Writer* (2013), *C.G. Jung and Literary Theory* (1999).

<sup>5</sup> This text includes a primary case study that utilises the methods explained throughout the text on Joel Weishaus' *The Nuclear Enchantment of New Mexico*.

arts-based research, and proposing a methodological approach she refers to as Jungian arts-based research (JABR).

Another crucial figure is the Dutch theologian Tjeu van den Berk, who examines – in his book *Jung on Art* (2012) – Jung’s profound reflections on artistic matters. However, this book is concerned with Jung’s perspective on art, rather than the question of whether Jungian psychology can be meaningfully employed in the analysis or creation of art. Van den Berk’s text is a clear exposition, which explores key concepts, such as the crucial connections between ‘participation mystique,’ the visionary artist, and the individuation process. Nonetheless, the author’s focus is to deliver a comprehensive account of Jung’s perspective on art instead of the specific ‘visionary mode’ and how this relates to art criticism.

Finally, David Parker is currently an independent artist with a particular interest in Jungian and post-Jungian archetypal psychology, as described in his essay *On Painting, Substance and Psyche* (2008). In this publication, Parker explores Jung’s ideas on alchemy and the process of individuation while highlighting the importance of material substance to the creative process within both alchemy and painting. Likewise, he explores this connection in *The Abstract Unconscious in Painting* (2009) and *Art and Otherness: An Inquiry into the experience of ‘Other’ in Painting* (2011). Furthermore, Parker extends his theoretical interests into the realm of art criticism, with several publications focusing on Outsider art and its connection to Jungian ideas – for example, *Leon Martindale: Illness and Epiphany* (2009) and *Outsider Art and Alchemy*<sup>6</sup> (2013). Interestingly, the former article was published in *Raw Vision* – the international

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<sup>6</sup> This essay can be found in *Contemplations of the Spiritual in Art* (2013) published by Peter Lang, Oxford.

journal of outsider art and art brut. Parker's interests align with this project somewhat; however, I am extending the study to include psychedelic art with a more thorough and extensive examination.

## 2. Conceptual Foundations

Drawing from the definitions in the texts, it becomes evident that visionary art, from an analytical psychological perspective, arises from the depths of the collective unconscious, with minimal conscious intervention by the artist. Rich in symbols and raw material from the unchartered psyche, it serves as a potent intuitive expression that holds significant implications for the individual and society. Analogous to a transformative dream for an individual, visionary art unveils what has been ignored, repressed, or requires compensation to balance collective consciousness.

In line with this, Rowland (2021) asserts that visionary art not only transforms individuals but also moulds cultures through its forward-looking, teleological capabilities, which can disclose emerging trends and even propose potential future scenarios. For example, in *Catafalque* (2018), Peter Kingsley examines the origins of Jung's *Liber Novus*, arguing that its inception was fuelled by the prophetic potential of Jung's unconscious and his deep longing to understand its implications. Similarly, Marie-Louise von Franz investigates prophetic potential in her book *On Divination and Synchronicity* (1980), where she delineates two distinct orders governing the nature of reality: the causal order, encompassing the physical world and its predictable and sequential events, and the acausal order exemplified by the enigmatic concept of the *unus mundus*.

The *unus mundus*, a term derived from alchemical thought, signifies an underlying unified reality that transcends the apparent division between the physical and mental realms. It is within this elusive domain that prophetic insights and meaningful coincidences (synchronicities) are thought to arise. As per Jung in his essay *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connective Principle* (1952), this interconnected reality acts as a source of creativity, transformations, and cultural progress, effectively preventing stagnation and deterioration of culture.

Expanding on the ideas presented by Jung and von Franz, physicist and Jungian analyst Andrew Fellows introduces his innovative Gaia-Psyche conjecture in his book *Gaia-Psyche, and Deep Ecology: Navigating Climate Change in the Anthropocene* (2018). This conjecture suggests that the same underlying principles guiding the emergence of prophetic insights and synchronicities in the *unus mundus* may also apply to the complex interplay between the human psyche and nature. The implications of this idea highlight the potential for visionary art to foster a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between humans and the natural world, ultimately inspiring transformative cultural shifts, and ecologically conscious behaviours to address pressing environmental challenges in the Anthropocene.

The role of visionary art for shifting cultural perceptions is also explored in sufficient depth in the Jungian scholar Erich Neumann's (1905-1960) *Art and the Creative Unconscious* (1959). In this text, he suggests that 'Great Individuals', such as medicine men, seers, prophets, and visionaries, stimulate cultural growth and orient a group's collective consciousness by perceiving archetypal eternity (Neumann, 1959). He argues that these individuals, with their unique form of consciousness contribute to the continuous reciprocity between the collective

unconscious and the cultural canon to prevent the stagnation of culture. This perspective, however, has its limitations; by focusing on the exceptional contributions of the ‘Great’ individual or artists, he inadvertently perpetuates the idea that artistic innovation and cultural growth are primarily driven by an elite few, reinforcing a narrow understanding of artistic creation and its societal implications.

On the other hand, Rowland (2021) challenges the romantic notion of the ‘Great’ artist, by advocating for a more inclusive approach to engaging with visionary art. In her exploration of arts-based research and transdisciplinarity, she emphasises the importance of collaboration, interdisciplinary engagement, and the integration of artmaking into the research process. She argues that everyone can participate in the creative process and contribute to the ongoing dialogue between the individual, cultural, and creativity, thereby opening the realm of visionary art to all who wish to engage with the method (Rowland, 2021). This perspective democratises the creative process and fosters greater potential for individual and cultural transformation.

This emphasis can be summed up in Rowland’s (2021, p. 70) statement that visionary art can be understood as an epistemology of cultural and historical research. This novel idea is also implied in the works of Jungian scholar Morris Philipson, who explores the intersection between Jung’s psychology and aesthetics in his book *An Outline of Jungian Aesthetics* (1969). In this text, Philipson argues that the interpretation of symbolism in Jungian aesthetics can lead to a formulation of personal knowledge, stating that the process of interpretation and validation can be viewed as an epistemological standpoint as it highlight the role of art in the construction of knowledge.

### 3. Technique and Aesthetics

Within analytical psychology, Jung's concept of active imagination serves as a cornerstone for understanding and engaging with the creative process. Active imagination is a technique that involves a conscious dialogue between the ego and the unconscious, allowing individuals to explore and integrate the contents of the unconscious. This method is thought to foster a deep connection between the inner psyche and external expression, facilitating the emergence of symbolic imagery and archetypal themes in creative works.

Active imagination has become an important art therapy technique serving as a tool for self-exploration and healing. In her book, *Jungian Art Therapy: A Guide to Dreams, Images and Analytical Psychology* (2018), Jungian analyst and art therapist Nora Swan-Foster suggests that engaging with the unconscious through artistic expression enables individuals to address unresolved psychological issues, uncover hidden aspects of their personality, and deepen their understanding of their inner world. Furthermore, she guides the reader through active imagination processes by suggesting the selection of a single intriguing image from a dream, vision, or picture, and then observing any changes that may occur. She emphasises the importance of suspending critical judgment and maintaining an objective yet attentive stance (Swan-Foster, 2018).

In *Liber Novus* (2009), Jung documented his own active imaginations and inner dialogues through a process of writing and illustration over a sixteen-year period. According to Shamdasani (2009), Jung's composition process involved writing an initial protocol layer of narrative encounter, followed by a lyrical elaboration and commentary on that encounter which can be characterised by

three distinct stylistic registers. The first register reports on the fantasies, images, and inner dialogue that he experienced during his active imaginations, providing a detailed account of the content of the unconscious material. The second register is more analytical and conceptual, helping to frame and interpret this material in a broader context, providing an intellectual perspective on the experiences. The third register is more visionary and prophetic, expressing a sense of transcendence and mystical insight, and seeking to communicate a deeper meaning and significance that he perceived in his experiences.

Together, these three registers provide a multi-dimensional perspective on Jung's psychological process and insight that he achieved through active imagination and illustrates the ways in which he engaged with his unconscious material to gain a deeper understanding of himself and the world around him. Interestingly, Rowland (2021) suggests that Jung's engagement with this project is an example of arts-based research that combines active imagination and amplification to facilitate individuation.

In line with this, *The Art of C.G. Jung* (2018) sheds light on the techniques, creative processes and material used by Jung in creating his visionary manuscript. The text showcases the intricate and vivid illustrations, calligraphy, and paintings, that Jung incorporated, emphasising his attention to detail and depth of the exploration into the unconscious. Additionally, it examines the material and technical aspects of his artmaking, such as media choices, artistic tools, and methods. This information offers valuable context for understanding Jung's skill, dedication, and the visionary significance of his creative work.

Since Jung's original conception, the method of active imagination has evolved in various ways. For example, in *On Active Imagination* (1983) Marie-

Louis von Franz emphasises the importance of integrating the symbolic and archetypal content that emerges during active imagination into everyday life, rather than merely using technique for therapeutic purposes. Another expansion is evident in *The Wounded Researcher: Research with Soul in Mind* (2015) by Emeritus professor and Jungian psychotherapist Robert Romanyshyn. Specifically, through his 'Transference Dialogues'. Romanyshyn's dialogues align with the principles of active imagination but focus on the researcher's relationship with their subject matter. According to this model, the researcher should adopt an open, reflective, and imaginative stance toward the research material, inviting a deeper connection with the unconscious and facilitating an ongoing dialogue between the researcher's conscious and unconscious and allowing for the emergence of insights, or realisations of a presence (such as ancestral 'voices') that might have otherwise remained hidden.

#### 4. Discussion

This literature review revealed several gaps that need to be addressed. One gap lies in Matthew's (2015) work, where he does not engage with contemporary western art, and arguably misinterprets or omits important elements of Neumann's ideas on the role of the visionary artists and the developmental stages discussed in his work. Another gap can be found in both Jung (1922; 1930/1950) and Rowland's (1999; 2013; 2018) focus on literary aspects of visionary art rather than visual art. While scholars such as Matthews (2015) and Parker (2009; 2011; 2012) have attempted to expand the scope of research to include visual art, it is not as extensive or comprehensive as it could be. Moreover, van den Berk's (2012) work, while insightful, is primarily focused on Jung's perspective on art

rather than exploring how Jungian psychology can be meaningfully employed in the analysis or creation of works. Further research could further examine the application of Jungian psychology to art creation and its interpretation.

Additionally, Neumann's (1959) emphasis on the 'Great' artist or individual as a driving force for artistic innovation and cultural growth inadvertently narrows the understanding of artistic creation. While Rowland's (2021) proposal for a more inclusive approach to visionary art, emphasises collaboration, transdisciplinary engagement, and the integration of artmaking and visionary creativity into the research process. This offers a potential direction for future research that broadens the understanding of creativity and its impact on society.

The intersection between Jung's psychology and aesthetics, as well as the role of art in constructing knowledge, as discussed in Philipson's (1969) work, is another area that warrants further exploration. This could lead to a better understanding of the epistemological significance of visionary art and its potential to contribute to the development of knowledge within and beyond the field of analytical psychology.

Lastly, the evolving concept of active imagination and its various applications in art therapy, self-exploration, and research, as demonstrated in the works of von Franz (1983), and Romanyshyn (2015), Swan-Foster (2018) among others, presents an opportunity for continued investigation and development. Understanding how active imagination can be integrated into the study and creation of visionary art can potentially enhance our comprehension of the creative process and its personal and cultural therapeutic benefits.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Methodology and Contextual Analysis

### 2.1 Methodological Considerations

#### Overview of Research Design

As discussed in the introduction and literature review, visionary art is a complex phenomenon that has captivated the attention of artists, scholars, and the public. However, despite its growing popularity and influence, there remains a need for a comprehensive examination of its historical and contemporary contexts. This research aims to bridge this gap by employing hermeneutics and phenomenology to develop a revised framework that could potentially enrich our understanding.

Hermeneutics, significantly influenced by the renowned Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), has become a standard account of ‘truth’, and meaning within the humanities, particularly in exploring the political, social, and cultural aspects of life (Gadamer, 1960/2013). Similarly, phenomenology, primarily developed by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and later expanded by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) seeks to explore and understand the subjective, lived experiences of individuals or groups of people (Moran, 2000). While these approaches have distinct philosophical beliefs and methodologies, this project will utilise both by employing hermeneutics as its guiding framework and incorporating phenomenological interviews. As I will show, this approach allows for the development of a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon within both contemporary and historical contexts.

In the following sections, I discuss how I plan to incorporate hermeneutics and phenomenology into the research design. In addition, I will introduce the research collection methods, analysis procedures, and a consideration of this project's limitations.

### **Hermeneutics and Phenomenology**

Hermeneutics emerged as a discipline after the publication of Gadamer's *Truth and Method* (1960/2004). In this text, he persuasively argues why the physical scientific method must not be the sole determinant of truth within the human sciences. In his view, the experience of science, art, history, and the true meaning of language surpasses the domain of the scientific method. The concepts and perspectives that I incorporate into this project is pre-understanding, the importance of history and tradition, the 'hermeneutic circle' and the 'fusion of horizons.'

1. Preunderstanding: In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer argued that theories precede facts because facts cannot exist without a theoretical framework. Understanding, therefore becomes a product of pre-existing beliefs or biases about the subject or object being studied. This sets hermeneutic inquiry apart from other methods by acknowledging and embracing the researcher's biases and experiences. As Gadamer (1960/2004, p. 319) states, "the researcher must express what is being said in the way that seems more appropriate for him [or her]."

In the context of this research, my interest in 're-envisioning visionary art' originates from my experience as an undergraduate Fine Art student, studying

painting. Initially, I was disenchanted with how the subject was taught and viewed in the educational system, and I stumbled upon my research topic while seeking academic validation for my own art practice. As I explored deeper into the subject, I became increasingly captivated by the inconsistencies in art criticism and the intersections with analytical psychology on the topic of the visionary art and the ‘visionary mode of creativity.’ This prompted both inspiration and a sense of responsibility to investigate the topic further, to understand its relevance and potential value.

Additionally, I am particularly interested in the outsider art style, and the context surrounding the movement, especially its emphasis on the unfiltered creative process and its connection to art therapeutic practices. This interest could potentially affect my research as I could be inclined to favour these concepts over maintaining objectivity. Furthermore, my background and interest for painting has directed my attention towards this specific art style, even though visionary creativity can be expressed through any form or medium. As I embark on my research journey, it is important to acknowledge and address these initial biases as well as any future ones that might arise.

To address and reflect on my biases, or ‘pre-understanding’ during the research process, I will maintain a reflective diary. This diary will serve as a space to document personal thoughts and feelings, biases and assumptions, insights and learning opportunities, as well as potential actions. This practice will help to ensure a more balanced research approach.

2. History and tradition: Gadamer (1960/2004) contended that

‘understanding’ is a process of transmission in which the past and present

mediate, challenging the prevailing notion that ‘understanding’ is a subjective and isolated act of consciousness. He proposed that tradition and history form the basis for understanding, particularly through what he termed ‘the fusion of horizons.’ This concept refers to modern interpreters bringing their cultural assumptions and unconscious preconceptions to their research. However, by engaging with historical material, interpreters can integrate their perspectives with ideas and knowledge presented in the material.

In line with this, I suggest that the contemporary understanding of visionary art has developed through language, grounded in historical material, rather than emerging without context. To investigate this, I will employ a method of Comparative Historical Analysis (CHA) and Process Tracing which involves ‘tracing’ the genre through time to identify a selection of cultural movements, individuals, and texts that contributed to the genre’s development<sup>7</sup>. In doing so, this research embraces the hermeneutic perspective that understanding is a process of transmission where the past and present are constantly mediated.

3. Hermeneutic circle: The role of a hermeneutic researcher involves a constant process of projection and revision, where their preconceptions and understanding of the topic will evolve as they explore deeper into its meaning. According to Gadamer (1960/2004), interpreters must work with their pre-existing notions, which are constantly updated as they uncover

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<sup>7</sup> According to the sociologist James Mahoney (2003, p. 47), CHA aims to determine causal sequences and patterns to challenge existing ideas. One of the methods employed in process tracing “consists of analysing a case into a sequence (or several concatenating sequences) of events and showing how those events are plausibly linked.”

new insights. This leads to the concept of the ‘hermeneutic circle’, a spiral process in which the understanding of a text or a cultural artefact as a whole is established by examining its individual parts. Through ongoing dialogue between their pre-existing ideas and the new data they encounter, researchers can refine and expand their perspective, ultimately enhancing their research findings.

In line with this, I will engage in an iterative process of interpretation, moving between the parts (individual art movement, theories, and case studies) and the whole (the broader context of visionary art). This will involve revising earlier chapters consistently considering new insights gained in later chapters, thus deepening my understanding of the connections between different aspects of the research.

4. Fusion of Horizons: According to the hermeneutic philosopher Jens Zimmerman (2015), the multifaceted nature of the hermeneutic process has the potential to expand the interpreter’s perspective, enabling them to better comprehend what lies beyond their own horizon. Zimmerman states, “by uniting past and present horizons, this ‘fusion’ leads to a transformation of the reader.”

While Zimmerman likely refers to the interpreter as the ‘present’ in relation to the ‘past’ material and cultural artefacts, I am creatively adapting this notion by extending my own ‘present’ perception through the experiences and opinions of contemporary artists via phenomenological interviews. The hermeneutic approach

allows for an exploration of the historical context and the interpretation of visionary art, while phenomenological interviews add a much-needed contemporary dimension.

Engaging with living artists directly involved in the relevant fields (outsider art, fantastic realism/ psychedelic art, and Jungian and post-Jungian) provides an opportunity to explore their lived experiences, interpretations, and perspectives, enriching the overall understanding of the topic. These interviews could help bridge the gap between the past and present, intertwining insights gained through hermeneutic analysis of materials with the personal narratives and experiences of those immersed in the contemporary art world. By employing phenomenological interviews, I can foster a fusion of horizons that captures the complex and evolving nature of visionary art, ultimately contributing a more comprehensive and integrated understanding.

### **Research Collection Methods**

As noted in the previous section, hermeneutics argue that history is a rich and evolving intellectual system that allows us to achieve a more profound and better understanding of the world and ourselves. According to the historian Anthony Brundage (2018, p. 2), “history still deals with the past, but it conceptualises a past in constant dialogue with an ever-advancing present, one that responds to new questions and reveals fresh insights in the human condition.” In this way, historians are constantly searching for fresh insights, approaches, and interpretations to understanding the past concerning the ever-evolving present. Moreover, when interpreters challenge an established understanding of a past event or phenomenon, they are called a “revisionist” (Brundage, 2018, p. 3).

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2020, p. 1007), revisionism is the “theory or practice of revisiting one’s attitude to a previously accepted situation or view.” One way this project aims to re-envision visionary art is by examining and interpreting relevant historical textual and visual materials that have influenced the development of the genre and integrating or ‘fusing’ these findings with contemporary perspectives.

To achieve this, I will employ a systematic literature review as well as purposeful sampling with semi-structured interviews. These methods will enable an exploration of contemporary visionary art and its historical roots and help toward establishing commonalities and early influences between outsider art, fantastic realism, and Jungian-inspired artists<sup>8</sup>.

### 1. Systematic literature review:

This research will involve a review of both academic and non-academic sources, including peer-reviewed articles, traditionally published and self-published texts, exhibition catalogues, TV documentaries, relevant blogs, and websites of relevant individuals and organisations. The aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic by considering both academic and mainstream perspectives.

To ensure a thorough analysis, primary, secondary, and tertiary sources will be incorporated. The use of primary sources, such as artists interviews, and original artworks, will provide first-hand accounts and direct evidence. Secondary sources, such as academic articles and critical texts, will offer a deeper analysis

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that these categorisations are based on the self-identification of the artists. While this is a simplification in some respects, it is worth mentioning that the outsider artist and psychedelic artist discussed in this research are prominent figures in their respective fields. Moreover, the selected Jungian-inspired artists emphasize the relevance and influence of Jung's theories and concepts and have a strong understanding of the topic. These points will be explained in more detail in the introductory sections of the case studies.

and interpretation. Tertiary sources, such as encyclopaedias and handbooks, will provide a general overview and summary. In addition, the ‘snowball method’ or ‘citation chasing’ will be used to explore the field of contemporary visionary art and its historical roots. By following citations, a network of sources related to the topic can be built and the understanding of the literature in the field can be expanded (Haddaway *et al.* 2022).

## 2. Purposeful sampling with semi-structured interviews

In conducting the research, I will employ a purposeful sampling technique by accessing databases containing artist names on websites dedicated to the visionary art movement, such as Henry Boxer's Gallery ‘visionary art’ category<sup>9</sup>, the American Visionary Art Museum<sup>10</sup>, and the Academy of Visionary Art<sup>11</sup>. My aim is to gather a small sample of approximately 8-10 artists recognised as part of the movement for the interview process. However, I need to adopt a different strategy for identifying Jungian-inspired artists. As a member of the *International Forum of Jungian Studies*, I can obtain recommendations directly from the forum.

While my primary objective is to interview individuals who identify as visionary artists or are referred to as such by others, I must also ascertain whether they are associated with outsider art, psychedelic art, or if they are primarily Jungian-inspired. The websites or galleries of which they are members should provide valuable information, but this will not be fully determined until the interviews are conducted.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.outsiderart.co.uk/visionary-artists> [last accessed on 26/04/2023]

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.avam.org/art-artists> [last accessed on 26/04/2023]

<sup>11</sup> <https://vienna-academyofvisionaryart.com/faculty/teachers-work> [last accessed on 26/04/2023]

This purposeful sampling approach will facilitate the study of a targeted group of artists deemed most relevant to this project's research question, offering valuable insights into the different strands of visionary art. Subsequently, I will conduct semi-structured interviews using a predetermined interview guide to gather information about the artists' experiences, beliefs, and practices, as well as their perspectives on the movement. These interviews have received ethical approval in accordance with the institution's procedures. This approval is necessary to ensure that participants have been fully informed about the study and their rights and interests are protected<sup>12</sup>.

## **Analysis Procedures**

The analysis procedure deploys a multi-faceted approach that integrates CHA, process tracing, thematic analysis, and comparative analysis. This comprehensive method aims to identify recurring themes, patterns, and discrepancies in the understanding of visionary art, as well as to examine the unique characteristics, influences, and contributions of the selected case studies. In light of such considerations the collected research information will be examined according to the following criteria:

### **1. Initial literature review:**

The first step of the research methodology will involve conducting a systematic literature review. This will entail identifying and critically evaluating relevant literature on the historical development of art movements in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Next, I plan to apply both CHA and process tracing (in Chapter 2.2) to

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix C for further information of the ethical approval process.

the information gathered from the literature review. Through CHA, the aim is to identify commonalities, early influences, and possible causal relationships between the three different strands. Meanwhile, process tracing will be used to map out the historical roots and development of the art movements, as well as track the causal mechanisms and pathways that have influenced their evolution since the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2. Supplementary literature analysis:

In addition to the initial literature review, I will conduct supplementary examinations to develop relevant frameworks for understanding and defining the style of visionary art. For instance, in Chapter 3, I will explore Prinzhorn's (1922) research and its influence on outsider art through a close reading. In Chapter 4, I will examine the contributions made by Wilber (1990), Grey (1990; 1998/2017), and Caruana (2001) to develop a framework for understanding visionary art within the context of the psychedelic art movement and fantastic realism. In Chapter 7, I will investigate a Jungian perspective of visionary art, focusing on Jung's (1930/1950) concept of visionary and psychological modes of creativity. Furthermore, in Chapter 8, I will consider post-Jungian frameworks, such as Neumann's (1959) theories on 'Great Art' and Romanyshyn's (2015) 'Transference Dialogues.' Through this additional analysis, I aim to address gaps and inconsistencies in the existing literature on visionary art in the context of the three individual strands. My objective is to utilise these frameworks to augment the insights gained from the initial literature review, ultimately expanding our knowledge on the topic.

### 3. Historical case studies:

Through CHA and process tracing, I will select historical case studies based on their significant influence within their respective genres. These case studies will be analysed to trace the development and evolution of visionary art, as well as the influences, themes and creative processes that shaped its interpretation over time (Chapters 4 and 8). The analysis will primarily involve a biographical examination of the artists, a visual analysis of their work, and a consideration of how they fit within the specifically identified frameworks developed from the supplementary literature analysis.

### 4. Phenomenological interview analysis:

As mentioned, this project will investigate the lived experiences and personal perspectives of contemporary visionary artists through phenomenological interviews. To analyse the interview transcripts, I plan to utilise a qualitative research approach, implementing thematic analysis techniques, such as coding schemes, to reveal patterns, themes, and concepts. This methodology is particularly appropriate for examining subjective experiences, and for offering valuable insights into the artists' perspectives.

Although I attended an NVivo<sup>13</sup> workshop hosted by my third-level institution, I have opted for a manual analysis process due to the small sample size. This manual approach will encompass several stages, including printing out the transcripts, highlighting relevant quotes, open coding, categorising the information into themes, and refining the categories iteratively (Burnard, 1991).

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<sup>13</sup> NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software designed to help researchers manage, analyse, and visualise unstructured or semi-structured data, such as interview transcripts, open-ended survey responses, field notes, webpages, among others.

During the analysis, I will consider themes such as childhood, education, art career, art influences, creative process, connection with visionary art, visual analysis, and linkage to Jungian psychology. It is worth mentioning that, due to space constraints and word count limits, not all individuals interviewed will be included in the final project. Instead, I will selectively focus on the most relevant participants based on their influential roles within their respective categories (Chapters 6 and 10). However, the various conversations with all the interviewees will be most valuable in shaping the overall understanding of the project, as they will provide diverse perspectives and insights into the field of visionary art.

By conducting this analysis, my objective is to achieve a more profound understanding of how visionary art is perceived, experienced, and practiced in the present day. By adopting a rigorous qualitative approach to analyse the interview material, I aim to contribute valuable insights to the field of visionary art and provide a nuanced understanding of the artist's experiences and perspectives<sup>14</sup>.

### 1. Visual analysis:

The visual analysis will principally focus on the artist's imagery in the context of specific research frameworks and case studies identified during the study. Although Edmund Burke Feldman's method (1972/1992) and Erwin Panofsky's iconographical analysis (1939) offer valuable perspectives for visual interpretation, they will serve as ancillary tools in this research rather than central methodologies. The primary aim is to analyse the selected imagery through bespoke lenses derived from the research.

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<sup>14</sup> Please refer to Appendix D for a list of the interviewed artists along with links to their transcripts and consent forms. A total of seven artists took part in this research.

Feldman's process, comprising description, formal analysis, interpretation, and judgement and evaluation, and Panofsky's method, consisting of pre-iconographical description, iconographical analysis, iconological interpretation are referenced to offer a basic understanding of the formal and iconographical elements of the imagery. Nevertheless, the application of their methods will be concise and non-exhaustive and will pay a modest tribute to their influential works in art analysis.

The study will further apply other theories and methods to develop an understanding of the selected imagery and case studies in accordance with the contextual focus of each part. For example, chapters 5 and 6 will predominantly employ Michael Owen Jones' behavioural approach, reflecting the aspirations of outsider art proponents (with elements of Caruana's concept of personal and cultural memory-images). Subsequently, the analysis in chapters 9 and 10 will be conducted through a lens inspired by Romanyshyn's 'transference dialogues.' This tailored approach will facilitate a nuanced understanding of the artist's work, by examining the art within the frameworks that align with the research objectives.

## 2. Integration and development of a new framework:

Upon completing the initial literature review, supplementary literature analysis, historical case studies, and phenomenological interview analysis, I will proceed to integrate the findings from these research domains. In Chapter 11, I will build upon the exploration by presenting a revised definition of visionary art. Subsequently, in Chapter 12, I will develop a revised and more inclusive framework for understanding and discussing visionary art, for both the artist and

art critic to utilise. This integration will facilitate a re-envisioning of the genre, considering the diverse perspectives and experiences identified in the research. However, it is important to note that my objective is to formulate a somewhat open and ‘porous’ development, providing a foundation for an interdisciplinary approach to further understand and engage with the topic. An open standpoint aligns with the interdisciplinary nature of this study, which seeks to bridge gaps between various fields of research and foster a collaborative understanding of visionary art. By avoiding a rigid, closed structure, the research offers a starting point for engagement, and encourages further exploration, dialogue, and potential future developments in the field.

## **Limitations and Potential Biases**

In this section, I will address the various limitations. The discussion will focus on three key areas: sampling limitations and selection bias, the limitations of interpreting historical texts, and methodological limitations and alternative approaches.

### 1. Sampling limitations and selection bias

One of the limitations of this study is the use of purposeful sampling with a homogenous approach, which may restrict the diversity of perspectives and experiences explored within the realm of visionary art. While this sampling method is suitable for gaining a fairly detailed understanding of a specific phenomenon, it may not capture the full range of experiences and viewpoints present in the broader field of visionary art. This limitation could potentially hinder the development of a comprehensive and inclusive definition of the

creative style. To mitigate these limitations, future research could employ a more diverse sampling strategy, using questionnaires for instance rather than semi-structured interviews. This would help in capturing a wider range of perspectives and experiences.

A further limitation is the reliance on online platforms for participant recruitment, which may introduce selection bias. By recruiting participants primarily through digital channels, the study may inadvertently exclude artists who are not well-represented or active on these platforms. This could lead to an unrepresentative sample of the artists and limit the generalisability of the study's findings to the larger population of visionary artists. Despite this limitation it is important to acknowledge that, although this project narrows its focus to a particular category of visionary art (paintings and pictorial configurations in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries), it is noteworthy to recognise that the term and application encompasses a much broader scope. The aim is that the insights derived from this project will have the potential to be extended beyond these limitations. This would allow for the possibility of challenging, expanding upon, or considering the findings in relation to other visionary works from other categories and periods.

## 2. Interpretation of Historical Sources

Another potential limitation involves the interpretation of historical sources which may be subject to restrictions in terms of availability and representativeness, as we see with the lack of an English translation of Dubuffet's French writings, and Thomas Röske's predominantly German writing. In addition, some sources may have been lost or destroyed over time or may not have been preserved in an accessible format. Furthermore, interpreting historical sources may be influenced

by my personal biases, as well as contemporary understandings of the subject matter. To mitigate, or even embrace these limitations, I will critically engage with the sources, consider alternative interpretations and viewpoints, and triangulate my research findings. Reflexivity and positionality are also essential considerations, particularly since it engages with a hermeneutic approach. Therefore, I will continuously reflect on my background, experiences, and biases, which may influence the research collection and interpretation process. By acknowledging my assumptions and beliefs using a reflexivity journal, I aim to be aware of my perspectives and how they contribute to the interpretation of the research material.

### 3. Methodological Limitations and Alternative Approaches

Even though I am a fine art, painting graduate (as of 2019), I have chosen not to engage with arts-based research for this study, such as outlined in the sociologists Patricia Leavy's *Method Meets Art* (2015). This was largely due to a desire to immerse myself in the textual material, as the concept of visionary art was incredibly aloof. This immersion was important, particularly for understanding the interconnections between the different categories, and the current inconsistencies and discussions on the style. Therefore, I chose to employ a qualitative approach, focusing on a variety of textual analysis techniques. While my exploration of analytical psychology is comprehensive, it is important to note that my academic training is primarily in the Fine Arts. Therefore, my interpretations might lack the nuances a professional in the field could provide.

It is, however, vital to acknowledge that, halfway through this research project, Rowland's publication *Jungian Arts-Based Research and the 'Nuclear*

*Enchantment of New Mexico* ' emerged as an intriguing and relevant text. The research approach advocated in this text champions transdisciplinarity, dismissing the hierarchy of truth among academic disciplines and accepting that no single discipline holds monopoly (Rowland, 2021, p. 2). Moreover, it seeks to dissolve the subject/object split by integrating individuals with the realities of society, nature, and the planet, recognising the subject/object division as a culturally specific construct of modernity.

For this project, I have opted not to adopt the JABR approach. However, its importance cannot be overstated due to its engaging ideas on visionary art, and the similar desire to integrate analytical psychology and the arts. In the text, Rowland (2021, p. 2) states, "Arts-based research is not a machine for generating fixed answers to social problems. It is rather a way of raising new or more emphatically informed questions." Instead of engaging with this project's research topic as a visionary artist, or someone seeking to uncover something unknown, my goal is to develop an inclusive understanding that remains flexible and evolving, aiming to create a foundation that can potentially build upon and coexist with current theories.

In addition, during the research process, I was also introduced to the method called 'autoethnography,' a qualitative research method that blends elements of autobiography and ethnography. In this approach, the researcher serves as the subject of study, using their personal experiences, reflections, and observations to examine and analyse cultural, social, and personal phenomena. As described in *Autoethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research* (2015), the goal of this method is to provide an insider's viewpoint on the topic being studied, while also acknowledging the researcher's subjectivity and biases (Adams *et al.*

2015, p. 58). Although autoethnography, and JABR approaches would be promising for future projects, I have chosen to temporarily set aside these interests and continue with the initial inquiry and methods outlined above.

## 2.2 Tracing the Development of Visionary Art

### Overview

This section presents a curated<sup>15</sup> selection of occurrences that have played a formative or significant contributory role in shaping the contemporary understanding of visionary art between the years 1899 and 2001. The choice to limit the timeline to this period is purposeful, as it marks the emergence of new ideas and movements that have shaped the field. Extending the timeline to the present day would be too comprehensive and unnecessary for this present inquiry.

Drawing from the relevant literature outlined in the literature review, I have employed CHA and process tracing method to create three distinct timelines. These timelines move backwards and examine the following categories: visionary art in relation to outsider art, visionary art in the context of psychedelic art, and visionary art within Jungian and post-Jungian frameworks. The primary objective of this analysis is to scrutinise the existing variables and identify intersections that could further the research goals. This section provides a concise overview or ‘map’ of events, which will be elaborated upon and explored in subsequent chapters, positioning itself as the foundation for the rest of the project.

### Timeline 1: Visionary Art in relation to Outsider Art (1899-2001)

**2001:** Colin Rhodes defines visionary art in the exhibition catalogue *Exquisite Vistas* (2001).

**1995:** Co-founders Rebecca and LeRoy Hoffberger open AVAM in Baltimore, Maryland (Hoffberger, 2022b).

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<sup>15</sup> The term ‘curated’ here refers to a carefully chosen and organised collection of events, specifically picked to showcase or highlight significant and relevant occurrence within a particular context.

**1993:** The Outsider Art Fair is founded in New York City, providing a platform for galleries and artists to showcase outsider, visionary, and self-taught art to a broader audience (Outsider Art Association, 2020).

**1992:** John Macgregor published the comprehensive *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane*, tracing the roots of outsider art and the complex relationship between mental illness, creativity, and artistic expression throughout history.

**1976:** Michel Thévoz publishes *Art Brut*, which is significant because it provides a thorough examination of the origins, development, and characteristics of art brut. Thévoz's and Cardinal's books were for a long time the only two references for this category of art.

**1976:** Dubuffet donates his Collection de l'Art Brut to the Château de Beaulieu, an 18<sup>th</sup>-century patrician residence belonging to the city of Lausanne, Switzerland (Rhodes, 2000, p. 46).

**1972:** Roger Cardinal published the seminal text, *Outsider Art*, coining the term as an anglophone for Dubuffet's art brut, opening the category to the English-speaking world.

**1961:** The American Folk Art Museum (AFAM) is founded in New York City becoming a significant institution for the study and exhibition of outsider art (Folk Art Museum, 2014).

**1948:** Jean Dubuffet joins with André Breton to form the Campagne de l'Art Brut (Maizels, 2002). Artists and intellectuals, Jean Cocteau, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Henri Michaux, Francis Ponge, Tristan Tzara, and Joan Mirò, also show their interest.

**1945:** Dubuffet coins the term 'art brut' (Rhodes, 2000).

**1945:** Dubuffet undertakes a first exploratory trip to Switzerland where he visits some of the hospitals where Prinzhorn acquired work from. He also makes connections among writers, artists, and psychiatrists there. The works he discovers form the core of a collection that has never stopped growing (Rhodes, 2000).

**1923:** Dubuffet's interest in the art of the insane is first stimulated by Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*. His response was purely visual as he could not read the German text (Rhodes, 2000).

**1922:** Prinzhorn published the highly influential *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*.

**1921:** Walter Morgenthaler published *The Mental Patient as Artist*, a monograph of Adolf Wolfli. With this text Morgenthaler brought into focus aesthetic questions about the art of the insane, preparing the way for Prinzhorn's broader and more theoretic perspective on the topic.

**1899:** Freud publishes *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud's early work had a considerable impact in Swiss psychiatric circles, and, according to Macgregor was a likely factor contributing to the publication of Morgenthaler and Prinzhorn's research (1992). Overall, Freud is credited not only with the creation of psychoanalysis but with the invention of the unconscious (Macgregor, 1992).

## **Timeline 2: Visionary Art in the Context of Psychedelic Art (1899-2001)**

**2001:** Caruana published *The First Manifesto of Visionary Art* marking the beginning of his career as an artist and establishing him as one of the leading figures in the visionary art movement.

**2000:** Caruana (2003) began an apprenticeship with the artist Ernst Fuchs. Fuchs is largely considered the 'father of visionary art' (Oroc, 2018, p. 6).

**1996:** Foundation for the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (CoSM) opened as a non-profit organisation to create a permanent public exhibition of Grey's Sacred Mirror collection (Chapel of Sacred Mirrors, 2005).

**1990:** Grey published *Sacred Mirrors: The Visionary Art of Alex Grey*. His publisher Ehud Sperling encouraged him to use the term 'visionary art' in the subtitle of his book, taken from the great poet and painter William Blake (1757-1827). This is the first time 'visionary art' was used in a contemporary setting.

**1975:** Terence Mckenna published *The Invisible Landscape*, recounting a psychedelic expedition into the Amazon in search of *oo-koo-hé*, a shamanic snuff that contained DMT (Oroc, 2018). This marked the beginning of Mckenna's career as a writer and speaker on the topics of psychedelics, shamanism and spirituality and inspired many others to pursue similar investigations.

**1974:** Johann Muschik published *Die Wiener Schule Phatastischen Realismus* (the Vienna school of fantastic realism), defining and legitimising the movement, and sparking an interest in fantastic and imaginative art.

**1950:** Ernst Fuchs began reading Jung's work, particularly *Psychology and Alchemy*. In response, he created the *Cycle of the Unicorn* which is a theme explored in depth in the text (Caruana, 2001).

**1946:** VSFR is officially established (Oroc, 2018).

**1929:** Ernst Fuchs becomes enthralled with the work of Salvador Dalí after viewing his painting *Lugubrious Game*. Fuchs proceeded by developing a master/apprenticeship relationship with his idol (Caruana, 2001b).

**1924:** Surrealism was officially declared by André Breton with the *Manifesto of Surrealism*.

**1923:** Max Ernst shares Prinzhorn's text with the surrealist circle, which eventually becomes considered the "surrealist's bible" (Röske, 2010, p. 10).

**1922:** Prinzhorn published the highly influential *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*.

**1921:** Walter Morgenthaler publishes *The Mental Patient as Artist*, a monograph of Adolf Wolfli.

**1899:** Freud publishes *The Interpretation of Dreams*. This influenced surrealism by providing a theoretical framework for exploring the unconscious through artistic expression, and by inspiring the use of dream imagery and symbolism.

**Timeline 3: Visionary Art within Jungian and post-Jungian Contexts (1899-2001)**

**1980:** Von Franz published *On Divination and Synchronicity*, in which she argues that divination in the form of dreams, fantasy, and other creative expressions can help individuals connect to the unconscious and the underlying meaning behind synchronistic events.

**1969:** Philipson published an *Outline of Jungian Aesthetics*. This is significant because it marked the first comprehensive attempt to apply the principles of analytical psychology to the field of aesthetics.

**1963:** Jung's quasi-biography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* is published. This book helped popularise his ideas and establish him as one of the most important thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**1959:** Neumann published *Art and the Creative Unconscious*, a major contribution to the field of analytical psychology and the understanding of the role of the unconscious in art.

**1952:** Jung published *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connective Principle*, providing a new perspective on the nature of reality and the relationship between the conscious and unconscious. Moreover, he introduced the concept of synchronicity, arguing that the principle can help bridge the gap between the objective and subjective realms, while also providing evidence for the existence of a unifying reality that underlies physical and psychological events.

**1948:** The C.G. Jung Institute in Zürich was founded.

**1944:** Jung published *Psychology and Alchemy*, which influenced the direction of Ernst Fuchs's creative practice (Caruana, 2001b).

**1930:** Jung published *Psychology and Literature*. In this text, he introduced the terms 'visionary and psychological mode of creativity' to describe different ways in which the unconscious can influence the creative process.

**1922:** Jung published the essay *On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetic Art*, in which he implies the two modes of creativity.

**1921:** Jung attends a conference in which Prinzhorn spoke on the drawings of the mentally ill on March 12<sup>th</sup> (Hoerni *et al.* 2018). Interestingly, a copy of Prinzhorn's text was in Jung's library, however it is uncertain when this was purchased or read (*ibid.*).

**1914:** Jung begins the creation of *Liber Novus*.

**1913:** Jung splits from Freud.

**1906:** Jung and Freud begin their professional relationship.

**1899:** Freud publishes *The Interpretation of Dreams*. This influenced Jung by providing a foundation for his ideas about the role of symbols and archetypes in the human psyche.

## Discussion

In response to the identified sequence of events, I developed a diagram to illustrate the key interconnections and overlaps between art criticism and analytical psychology in relation to visionary art and the visionary mode of creativity (Figure 2.2.1). The overlaps reveal several converging themes and influences, providing insight into the complex interplay between visionary art, outsider art, psychedelic art, and Jungian psychology.

One notable overlap is the influence of Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (1922), which impacted all three timelines. In Timeline 1, Prinzhorn's work served as a catalyst for Dubuffet's interest in the art of the insane, leading to the development of art brut, and subsequently outsider art. In Timeline 2, Prinzhorn's work found resonance among surrealists, shaping the direction of the movement and its connection to visionary and psychedelic art.

In Timeline 3, Prinzhorn's influence extends to Jung's analytical psychology, as he attended a conference where Prinzhorn spoke, and his text was present in Jung's library. An interesting observation is that, a year later, Jung wrote the essay *On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetic Art*, in which he first implied the existence of two modes of creativity, indicating a potential influence from Prinzhorn's ideas.

Another significant overlap is the impact of Jung's work on both visionary art and its predecessors. In Timeline 3, Jung's ideas about the unconscious, symbols, and archetypes serve as a foundation for various theories and concepts within analytical psychology, such as the visionary mode of creativity, synchronicity, and active imagination.

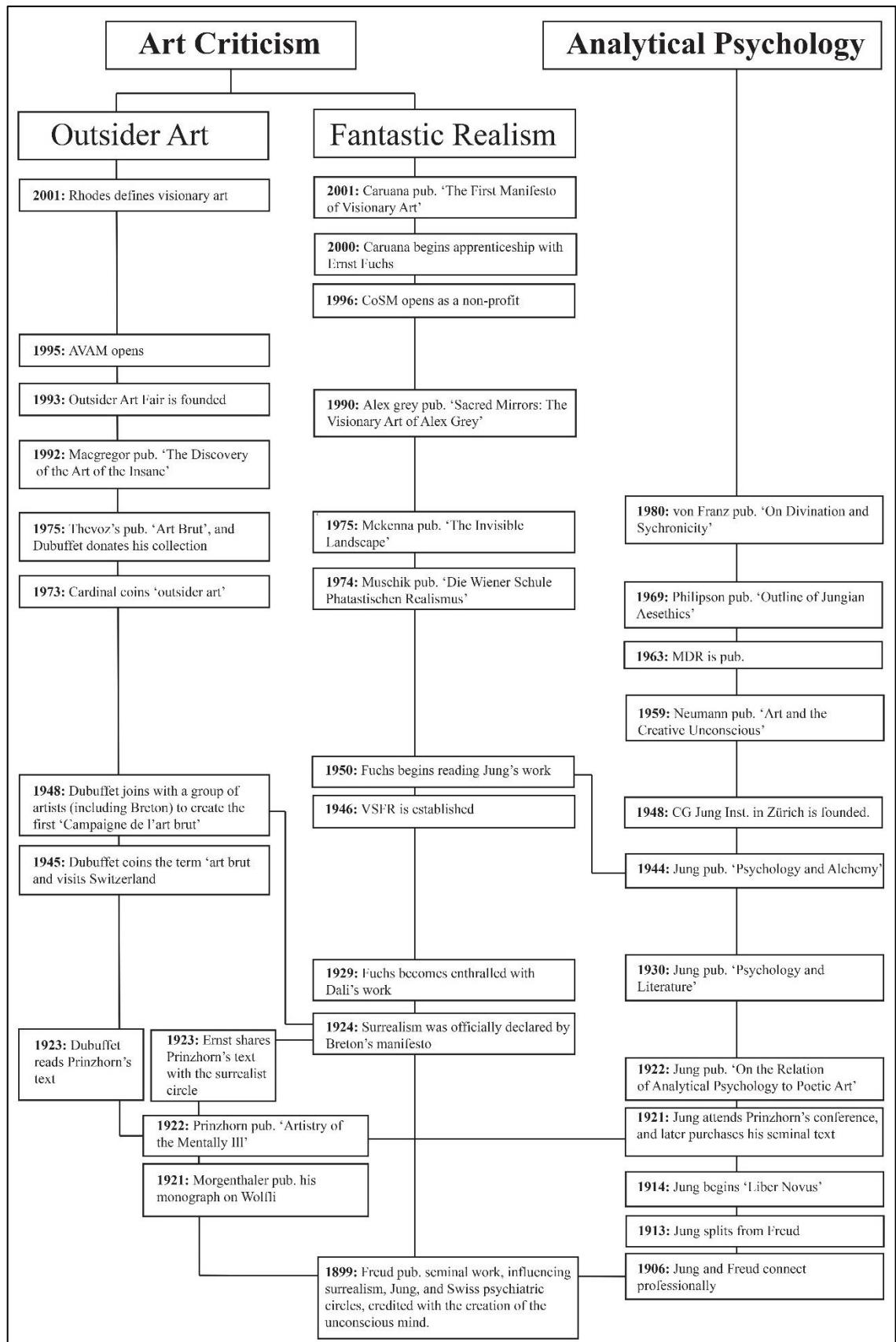


Figure 2.2.1 – Tracing the development of visionary Art according to three strands: outsider art, psychedelic art and analytical psychology.

These ideas not only influenced this field of psychology, but also shaped the creative practices of artists like Ernst Fuchs (Timeline 2). Moreover, in Prinzhorn's text he speaks about the method of 'amplification' and highlights the importance of Jung's ideas on the interpretation of symbols, which at the time were still in early stages of development<sup>16</sup>. With this observation, it appears that Prinzhorn is inviting us to re-interpret and extend his ideas alongside advancements in analytical psychology.

In addition, the influence of Freud's work is apparent throughout all the three timelines. *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) laid the groundwork for the exploration of the unconscious in artistic expression, and his ideas resonated with artists, psychologists, and critics alike. Freud's work impacted surrealism, Jung's theories, and the publication of Morgenthaler's text, which paved the way for Prinzhorn's broader perspective on the art of the mentally ill.

The overlaps between the timelines reveal that visionary art is not an isolated phenomenon; instead, it is deeply connected to various art movements, psychological theories, and cultural developments. These connections hold significance, as they promote an interdisciplinary approach that underscores the importance of considering multiple fields and perspectives. Furthermore, they lend credibility to this project's methodological approach, as it becomes evident that between 1899 and 1950, there was fertile ground for intellectual development from which contemporary visionary art emerged. This highlights the importance

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<sup>16</sup> In his text, Prinzhorn (2022) emphasises the temporary nature of his approach to symbols, which is due to scientific caution. However, he acknowledges that the true charm and cognitive value of pictures will only become clear once progress is made in interpreting symbols, which is currently not well-established. Prinzhorn also highlights the significance of Jung's elaboration on Freud's ideas which needs to be further explored.

of examining this period, alongside a contemporary understanding, to foster a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon.

## 2.3 Content Outline

This project aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of visionary art by examining its development through the lens of art criticism and analytical psychology. The project is divided into three parts. Part One focuses on exploring visionary art in art criticism, where I discuss outsider art, art brut, fantastic realism, and psychedelic art. I examine Prinzhorn's research as outlined in *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (1922) and explore the contributions of Grey (1990; 1998) Wilber (1990), and Caruana (2001; 2009) to contemporary visionary culture. I present historical case studies on Adolf Wolfli (1864-1930), and Ernst Fuchs (1930-2015), and contemporary case studies featuring Amanda Sage (b.1978) and Daniel Martin Diaz (b.1967). This part serves to establish the context and development of the contemporary understanding of visionary art within the domain of art criticism.

Part Two explores an analytical psychological view of visionary art, beginning with a Jungian perspective on the visionary mode of creativity and its connections to prophetic insight. I also explore the artistic dimensions of Jung's work. The following chapters then discuss post-Jungian perspectives, including Neumann's views on 'Great Art' and his four stages of 'art in relation to its epoch' as outlined in *Art and the Creative Unconscious* (1959) as well as Romanishyn's 'Transference Dialogues'. I present historical and contemporary case studies to illustrate these concepts, examining Jung's (1875-1961) imaginal encounter with Elijah and Salomé, Hazel Florez's (b. 1984) 'Suprarational language of Dreamish', and Danielle Poirier's (b. 1956) intuitive forms.

Part Three is dedicated to re-envisioning visionary art through a deeper reflection on the relationship between art criticism and analytical psychology. I examine the implications of art criticism and analytical psychology models and suggest a new framework for both art critics and artists to employ when engaging with the category. This part culminates in a redefinition of visionary art, achieved through the integration of art criticism and analytical psychology, thereby offering a fresh perspective on the subject.



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# PART I

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Exploring Visionary Art in Art  
Criticism



# CHAPTER THREE

## Outsider Art and Art brut

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, outsider art, visionary art, and its precursor, art brut, are explored, as well as their connections to the art of the mentally ill. The chapter begins by examining the historical evolution and modern development of both art brut and outsider art, highlighting their defining characteristics and their impact on the wider art world. Subsequently, the ground-breaking discovery of artwork created by mentally ill patients is discussed with an examination of the factors that led to their recognition and the ensuing debates surrounding their artistic merits.

Attention is then given to Hans Prinzhorn's influential book, *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (1922), and an analysis of his proposed five categories of recurring configuration types is provided. These categories offer valuable insights into the creative processes and unique visual language of these artists. Finally, the key points and insights gleaned from the exploration of outsider art, art brut, and the art of the mentally ill are reflected upon, considering their broader implications and relevance to contemporary discussions on visionary art.

### 3.2 Defining Art Brut, Outsider Art, and Visionary Art

#### Overview

The historical understanding of art brut and outsider art places emphasis on the raw and authentic creative process that is free from cultural and formal artistic influence. This perspective showcases the unique and seemingly pure artistic expressions from individuals outside the conventional art world.

Dubuffet, the pioneer of the art brut movement, was captivated by art that he believed was produced by individuals who were shielded from any outside influence. In 1948, he published a notice inviting individuals to share their unique and inspiring imagery with the *Compaignie de l'Art Brut*, the first non-commercial art association in Paris. This notice requested art that drew “upon the basic human experience and most spontaneous personal invention” (Maizels, 2002, p. 11). It described, “they should be creations that their creator has produced from his own psyche (through his own invention and means of expression) his own impulses and moods, without reference to current convention” (ibid.).

#### Art Brut and ‘Non-Cultural’ Art

Dubuffet (1901-1985) was born in Le Havre, France. In 1918, at the age of 17, he moved to Paris to study at Académie Julian, an institution which he left after six months. During this time, he became fascinated with Prinzhorn’s publication. Many writers and critics state that this text inspired his later conceptualisation of art brut, such as Rhodes and Wojcik. Wojcik (2016, p. 38) states that Dubuffet was “influenced by Hans Prinzhorn’s 1922 *Artistry of the Mentally Ill.*” Whereas Rhodes (2000) informs us that Dubuffet could not read the German text, so his interest sprung solely from the rich illustrations.

Nonetheless, Dubuffet did not commit himself to painting until 1942 and it was another six years until he joined with Jean Paulhan, André Breton, Charles Ratton, Michel Tapie, and Henri-Pierre Rocher, to officially establish *La Compagnie de l'Art Brut*. The public's response was overwhelming and resulted in Dubuffet collecting many artworks from various individuals. He referred to this collection as the *Collection de l'Art Brut*, consisting of approximately 5,000 works by 133 creators. This collection is currently housed at the *Musée de l'Art Brut* in Lausanne, Switzerland, and was almost certainly inspired by Prinzhorn's collections of drawings from the mentally ill.

Dubuffet's approach to aesthetics was relatively idealistic; he embraced a so-called 'low art' which challenged the traditional beauty standards. In his view, the unique works he collected were examples of a more authentic and humanistic method of image-making representing a 'raw' and 'uncooked' depiction of the creative process untouched by culture and formal artistic training. In an essay titled *L'Art Brut Préféré aux Arts Cultures* (1949), as quoted by Thévoz (1976/1995, p. 9), Dubuffet declared:

By that, we mean works executed by people free from artistic culture, in which therefore mimicry, unlike what happens among intellectual, has little or no part, so that their authors derive from it, everything (subjects, choice of material used, means of transposition, rhythms, ways of writing etc.) from their own background and not clichés of classical art or fashionable art. We are witnessing the pure, raw artistic operation, reinvented in the entirety of all its phases by the author, starting only from his own impulses.

Dubuffet's search for art outside cultural concerns was headed for failure from the start, as no-one can create from a situation that excludes any awareness of the world around them. However, Dubuffet put forward the concept of 'non-cultural art', which stands in contrast to 'cultural' or 'insider' art. Thévoz (1976/1995)

highlights this point, by describing how ‘cultural’ art evolves from conventional norms, taking inspiration from historical or external sources, allowing for a connection or continuity between different art movements and styles. On the other hand, art brut or outsider art is not concerned with adhering to or breaking the rules of aesthetic creation. Instead, they are indifferent to the questions of continuity and connection. He described, “there is no organic connection between them, nor interaction of any kind.” He continued, “their trajectories diverge or crisscross but never meet, each going its own way with sovereign indifference [...] Art brut does not serve to define anything; it is the name given to what cannot be bound by a definition” (Thévoz, 1976/1995, p. 167). In this context, art brut poses a challenge to the conventional notion of representation that is moulded by societal norms and expectations, as well as to the perception of art as merely an aesthetic or object.

### **Debates Surrounding the Topic**

Since its conception several debates have emerged. Critics argue that the term ‘outsider art’ is becoming too inclusive, which might render it useless and dilute its unique characteristics. Moreover, art dealers and collectors are often accused of romanticising, and at times, fabricating biographies of outsider artists, which can be dehumanising as they exaggerate eccentric personal histories for financial gains. Additionally, the neglect of personal and cultural influences in the artists biographies, due to the emphasis on ‘non-cultural’ art adds further complications.

Expanding on the first point, some critics suggest that the term ‘outsider art’ is becoming too broad and inclusive, which may make the term ineffective and diminish its distinctive features. For instance, Cardinal (2009, p. 1459)

declares that the term ‘outsider art’ was initially intended to reflect Dubuffet’s art brut exclusively but has since “led a life of its own and has been abused and used in a variety of ways, which has often compromised its usefulness as a technical term.”

Likewise, Rhodes argues that, since the 1980s, the term has been transformed by art dealers and critics who now use it to reference any blend of art that exists beyond the borders of the mainstream art market. This interpretation could involve any work created by a varied demographic, such as untrained artists, naïve art, art from the third world and developing nations and even children’s drawings.

In recent years, the term outsider art has begun to be used extensively to describe a bewildering range of artistic activity situated outside, or in opposition to, mainstream concerns. While it is surely desirable to maintain flexibility, there is a danger of the term becoming all-inclusive and therefore, meaningless (Rhodes, 2000, p. 14).

Wojcik (2016, p. 22) also contends that the term is problematic: “those who condemn the idea of the outsider art genre argue that the term is dehumanising, ultimately reinforcing notions of ‘artist as other’ – and marking individuals as pathological or primitive in relation to normal people and culture.” He asserts that outsider art is a classification defined and imposed upon individuals by collectors, art critics, and dealers, and that artists labelled as ‘outsider’ typically have little interest in defining their work in such terms.

This issue is extended by the fact that some dealers and enthusiasts emphasise selected biographical anecdotes, often embellishing the eccentricity and outsider status of individuals to amplify and celebrate their subject’s raw creativity and rare authenticity. In some cases, dealers and writers have not only

highlighted perceived madness or cultural isolation but also seemingly falsified biographical accounts to promote and increase the monetary value of art (Wojcik, 2016, p. 25). As sociologist Gary Alan Fine (2004) discusses in his study of the subculture of outsider art devotees and its community of collectors and dealers, outsider art is 'identity art' often defined by the biography and stigma of its makers as well as the stories told about artists that help to sell the work.

Wojcik highlights a further consideration, arguing that well-known outsider artists are influenced by vernacular culture, ethnic heritage, religious worldviews, social interactions, folk traditions, and popular culture, which are central to understanding such art. However, many promoters of outsider art tend to ignore these influences in favour of emphasising a romanticised notion of originality and authenticity untouched by cultural traditions. He describes, "the emphasis here is on personal motivations, life experiences, and broader, sociocultural contexts as they relate to the creative process is offered as a corrective to the ongoing barrage of depersonalized and romanticised portrayals of alleged outsider artists" (Wojcik, 2016, p. 27).

### **Proposed Methods of Interpretation**

There are two main methodologies used to understand outsider art: formalist and behavioural. The formalist approach focuses on analysing the visual and structural elements of the art, disregarding the artist's background, experiences, and cultural context. In the case of outsider art, a formalist approach aims to judge the work solely on its visual qualities, without considering the artist's biography or cultural influences. Wojcik (2016) argues that, although this method can promote and validate outsider art for its aesthetic value, it can also be problematic as it

separates the art from the artist, neglecting the personal and cultural significance that is often crucial in understanding the work. Art historian Kenneth Ames (1994) observes that while the formalistic approach to interpreting art may be acceptable when applied to works of well-established artists who embrace formalist values, it is not appropriate when applied to art created by people in different cultural contexts. In his view this is because, imposing this elitist method on such art erases its original purpose and prevents a proper understanding of the individual and cultural factors that contributed to its creation.

In response, Wojcik (2016) suggests that a more comprehensive and humanistic understanding of individuals labelled as ‘outsiders’ can be achieved through the behavioural approach proposed by Michael Owen Jones<sup>17</sup>. Jones’ (1997; 1995) method focuses on exploring the complex relationship between individuals, their communities, and creativity, to grasp the various sources that contribute to the creation and understanding of a material object. According to this approach, a complete understanding of outsider art requires looking beyond just the final product and considering various factors that contributed to its creation. These factors include the personal motivations behind the art, the processes and techniques used to conceptualise and create the work, the connection between the artist’s personality, psychological state, and overall dynamic of the creative process. In Wojcik’s (2016) view, this approach offers a more humane and accurate understanding of those classified as ‘outsiders’ as it acknowledges their personal motivations and the contexts in which they create.

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<sup>17</sup> This method is derived from an anthropological and folkloristic perspective that explores various forms of material culture, including artwork.

## Defining Visionary Art

Within this genre, visionary art is used as a general term, either as a direct alternative to the art brut and outsider art title or as a subcategory that refers specifically to works inspired by religious or revelatory experiences. AVAM is an example of the first instance. This museum opened in 1984 and was intended as “a unique new museum and education centre that would emphasise intuitive, creative invention” (AVAM, 2021b). However, its initial goal was purely aesthetic, it was not until 1985 that the museum began to develop a reputation for sharing similarities with Dubuffet’s *Collection de l’Art Brut*. According to AVAM’s (2021a) corresponding website, visionary art is “produced by self-taught individuals usually without formal artistic training, whose works arise from an innate personal vision which revels in the creative act itself.” The source continues:

AVAM enjoy and respect the learning that comes from academic study or through apprenticeship to a trained artist. We dedicate AVAM exclusively, however, as a place devoted to the other path of mastery – the intuitive path of learning to listen with the small, soft voice within. We believe there is a great power in not knowing what will or won’t work, and we adhere to the importance of not being immersed in rule-based systems which can cloud one’s vision (ibid.).

This definition aligns with the art brut and outsider art labels, a suggestion that is solidified by their statement that art brut, visionary art, and outsider art are all terms used to describe the same thing (AVAM, 2021a). A curious oversight of this vocation is one of the named visionary artists, Alex Grey. Grey does not create imagery reflective of the art brut movement; instead, his work emphasises the pure technique and precision encouraged within fantastic realism. He was also an instructor at New York University for ten years, teaching artistic anatomy and

figure sculptures. This point contradicts their aim: to avoid work ‘immersed in rule-based systems which can cloud one’s vision,’ highlighting further inconsistencies within the genre.

Likewise, Rhodes (2001, p. 2) describes self-taught visionaries as “not amateur painters or naïve artists who take up art as a hobby or strive and fail to attain technical mastery.” Instead, they are “people who give themselves entirely to the creative urge, irrespective of any likely audience for their production.” This definition is identical to the outsider art and art brut label.

In the second instance, visionary art is understood as a subcategory of art brut, referring specifically to creative works inspired by revelatory or religious experiences. The international publication *Raw Vision* describes the genre in this way. On their corresponding website (Raw Vision, 2021) they describe how visionary art is a “fairly general term.” However, “it encompasses much urban folk art of the third world, as well as works based on religious experiences and visions.”

Additionally, Wojcik (2016, p. 92) describes visionary art as being associated with creative individuals who are inspired by “revelatory experiences, trance states, dreams, or waking apparitions and who attribute these to a preternatural or supranormal agency such as a deity, a spirit, a divine force, or a sacred realm.” However, he argues that many or most artists assigned to the outsider art category attribute their creations to religious experiences and spiritual functions, but this is often de-emphasised and neglected entirely. He suggests that current definitions of outsider art convey stereotypical assumptions and fail to consider the cultural and spiritual influences that often play a central role in an artist’s motivation.

Despite attempts to define visionary art within the outsider art label, its usage remains inconsistent and lacks a uniform understanding. If we accept AVAM's definition that art brut, outsider art, and visionary art are all terms to describe the same phenomenon, we are left with a label that carries problematic connotations. Conversely, if we consider visionary art as a mere subcategory of outsider art to define work inspired by divine spirits, we rely on the artist's life story to convey its importance and relevance while excluding individuals who perceive their 'divine revelation' as a psychological or introspective journey.

### **The Proposal for an 'Initiatory Art'**

In response to the inconsistencies, Noonan and Wehmeyer (2008) suggest a departure from the terms 'visionary art' and 'outsider art,' proposing instead the term 'initiatory art.' Their novel proposal draws heavily on Jones' (1997) behavioral approach. They argue that, despite not being explicitly designed for art criticism, Jones' approach proves advantageous in providing an in-depth and nuanced understanding of an artist's work within its broader cultural and societal contexts (Wehmeyer & Noonan, 2008).

Using this methodology, Noonan and Wehmeyer apply it to their analysis of the life and work of Edith Tenbrink (1883-1963). By exploring personal, social, and cultural contexts surrounding the creation and use of Tenbrink's artwork, they critique the traditional conception of visionary art as a subcategory or alternative to outsider art, citing its limitations and inherent problems. However, instead of trying to clarify the term, they suggest revisioning it as a new category called 'initiatory art', which they define as a form of art created within the context of esoteric spiritual belief systems and practices, intended to facilitate spiritual

development and initiation. They further define 'initiatory art' as an artistic form that can be both a record and a means towards an individual's spiritual or psychological transformation through the teachings and practices of mystical, religious, or esoteric movements.

Noonan and Wehmeyer (2008) argue that by establishing 'initiatory art' as an analytical category within the framework of Jones' behavioral approach, a deeper appreciation of the mysteries and traditional visions integral to visionary art can be achieved. While they make a constructive attempt to introduce a new category within Jones' framework, it is debatable whether refining visionary art by renaming the category is the best solution, as it could further confuse and fragment the field. Rather, it might be more beneficial to focus on developing a more comprehensive understanding of visionary art by incorporating relevant aspects of Jung's psychology, and other potentially fruitful perspectives and frameworks, in tandem with Jones' behavioral approach.

## **Discussion**

The contemporary understanding of art brut and outsider art has been plagued by numerous challenges and debates. The expanding definitions of outsider art, the tendency to romanticise and fabricate biographies for financial gain, and the neglect of personal and cultural influences in the portrayal of this type of art have all contributed to the confusion surrounding the subject. The commercialisation and commodification of this artistic style, which originally emerged as a fascination with the art produced by marginalised individuals and its implications for understanding the natural creative impulse beyond the traditional fine art establishment, have only perpetuated these issues.

Despite the ongoing inconsistencies and debates, this project aims to explore the possibility of attaining a more nuanced understanding of visionary art by examining the interconnections between art criticism and analytical psychology. To this end, the focus will now shift from the current controversies and instead concentrate on the influential texts that sparked Dubuffet's interest in art brut. Specifically, Prinzhorn's text *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*.

### 3.3 Origins: Art of the Mentally Ill

#### Overview

At the turn of the twentieth century, an artistic revolution was taking place that had been brewing for over a century. This revolution presented a new perspective on how creative imagery functioned in human life and led to the recognition of early primal drawings, naïve and folk paintings, children's art, and art of the mentally ill as valuable and worthy of serious consideration.

During this time, psychiatry was primarily focused on categorising and identifying mental disorders rather than developing cures or therapeutic techniques. However, this began to change with the research of French psychiatrist Paul-Max Simon, the “father of the study of psychiatry and art” (MacGregor, 1983, p. 8). Simon was the first psychiatrist to undertake a significant and extensive analysis of the drawings and paintings of the mentally ill, and his contribution exists in the form of two journal articles, originally published in French: *Imagination in Art* (1876) and *The Writings and Drawings of the Insane Person* (1888). Broadly speaking, Simon's investigations into the drawings of mentally ill patients revealed themselves to be an externalisation of their delusional preoccupations embellished with symbolism and allegorical material (Macgregor, 1983). Although Simon never referred to the creative material as art, he still took intriguing measures that served as a forerunner for therapeutic methods still used today.

## Developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Subsequently, the Swedish psychiatrist Walter Morgenthaler (1882-1965) published his text *The Mental Patient as Artist: Adolf Wolfli* (1921)<sup>18</sup>, a powerful presentation and commentary on the work of a mentally ill patient that attracted enormous attention in European artistic circles. Moreover, it exhibited art by mentally ill patients as more than a diagnostic tool; instead, the patient was reimagined as an independent artist with a potentially remarkable creative ability.

With this text, Morgenthaler brought into focus aesthetic questions about the art of the insane, preparing the way for Prinzhorn's broader and more theoretical perspective of the topic. The psychoanalyst Aaron Esman (1992, p. viii) describes how Morgenthaler "sought to understand his work in the light of what were then new developments in psychiatry – in particular, the new psychoanalytic concepts of Freud and Jung." This text brought artistic fame to Wolfli, who is now known as "the quintessential outsider artist" (Maizels, 2002, p. 92).

Following these notable contributions, the psychiatrist and art historian Hans Prinzhorn's (1886-1933) text *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (1922) has become a valuable contribution to both art criticism and psychiatry. On the first page of his book, Prinzhorn (1922/2019, p. 1) points out that "most of the reports published to date about the works of the insane were intended for psychiatrists." Prinzhorn's study, however, was aimed at a far broader audience and intended as a foundation upon which he might begin to construct a general psychology of art relevant to all forms of human expression. He pursued a "basic, universal, human process behind the aesthetic and cultural surface of the configuration process" (Prinzhorn,

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<sup>18</sup> This was later republished as *Madness and Art: The Life and Works of Adolf Wolfli* (1992).

1922/2019, p. xviii). Prinzhorn's work was influential in psychiatry, art criticism, and art history and has been credited with paving the way for contemporary art therapeutic techniques.

As mentioned, this book's appearance created great excitement amongst artistic circles, triggered by André Breton, Max Ernst, and Jean Dubuffet. This text was initially published in German, so Ernst was the only surrealist who was able to read the text and to understand its revolutionary significance, “not only for the psychiatric investigation of schizophrenic art but for the development of modern art and aesthetics” (MacGregor, 1992, p. 279). In the year it was published, Ernst brought the book to Paris and presented it to Paul Éluard. Macgregor (1992, p. 279) describes how “it is not impossible that this was the first copy of the book to reach the surrealist circle in Paris.” Moreover, the current director of the Prinzhorn collection<sup>19</sup> Thomas Röske (2010, p. 32) claims that *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* was the “surrealists’ Bible.” Given the historical importance of this book, it is relevant to revisit Prinzhorn’s research to determine whether it can inform our current investigation on visionary art.

### **Introducing Hans Prinzhorn**

Prinzhorn was a German psychiatrist and art historian who, before the age of 25, had distinguished himself in two areas of study; philosophy, and art history, followed by two years in London studying music and voice training. He then began his medical education and positioned himself as an army surgeon during World War One. After the war, he obtained an assistant role at the Heidelberg

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<sup>19</sup> The ‘Prinzhorn Collection Museum’ is currently located at the University of Heidelberg. Röske has written extensively on the material within Prinzhorn’s collection. However, many of the sources are in German.

psychiatric clinic in Germany, where he worked under the chief psychiatrist, Karl Wilmanns. Wilmanns had already begun collecting paintings and drawings by asylum patients, and he encouraged Prinzhorn to expand the collection and conduct systematic research on the subject (Foy, 2019, p. x).

Prinzhorn's approach was divided into two goals, reflected in the subtitle of the book, *A Contribution to the Psychology and Psychopathology of Configuration*. First, he aimed to create “a descriptive catalogue of pictures couched in the language of natural science and accompanied by a clinical and psychopathological description of the patients” (Prinzhorn, 1922/2019, p. xvii). This approach was likely influenced by Wilmanns, whose original vision for the project was primarily clinical. However, Prinzhorn also had a personal goal of conducting “a completely metaphysically based investigation of the process of pictorial composition” (ibid.). This intention was personal and most likely influenced by his art history and philosophical education.

Prinzhorn spent three years amassing over 5,000 pieces of artwork from institutions in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, and the Netherlands. He requested these works from hospitals with a letter, asking for “productions of pictorial art by mental patients, which are not simply copies of existing images or memories of their days of health but intended as an expression of their personal experience” (Rhodes, 2000, p. 60). This request resulted in a collection of work from individuals who “worked autonomously, without being nourished by tradition or schooling” (Prinzhorn, 1922/2019, p. 269).

## **The Artistry of the Mentally Ill**

To better understand the text, let me first provide an overview of the book's structure. First, the introduction provides background information and contextualises the research. It specifically discusses the Heidelberg collection that Prinzhorn developed with Professor Wilmanns. It also highlights his original intention for the research, which aimed to contribute to the future psychology of configuration and explore the intersection between artistic configuration and the outlook of the mentally ill.

In Part 2, he examines the psychological foundations of pictorial configuration, examining various aspects of artistic expression and understanding. With this examination he identifies six interrelated tendencies or 'impulses' that inspire an individual to create, including the expressive urge, the urge to play, the ordering tendency, the tendency to imitate, and the need for symbols. In addition, he investigates the role of eidetic images in artistic perception and configuration, emphasising the complex interplay of psychological factors that contribute to artistic expression and appreciation. Prinzhorn posits that these tendencies offer a more effective means to classify the diverse visual expressions found in psychotic art than traditional diagnostic categories. Due to this consideration, Macgregor (1992) suggests that this approach effectively dissociates the art of the insane from the realm of psychiatry, as the six tendencies were in no sense pathological.

In Part 3, titled 'The Pictures,' Prinzhorn explores the artistic expressions of schizophrenic individuals, examining their unique perspectives and various symptoms. He also explains that he chose to focus on schizophrenic art because it represents a dominant portion of the collection, and its artistic qualities are compelling, diverse, and abundant. Moreover, the exploration in the study is

exclusively concerned with the ‘schizophrenic outlook’ and the goal is to gain insight into the psychological foundations of this outlook through an analysis of the pictures. The chapter starts with a psychiatric overview of schizophrenia, discussing characteristics such as autism, affective ambivalence, and associative loosening. It then builds on the six interrelated tendencies that inspire creativity by exploring five recurring configuration types: unobjective and unordered scribbles, playful drawings with a predominant ordering or copying tendency, visual fantasies, and increased symbolic significance.

Prinzhorn theorised that these categories evolve based on the growing complexity of the configuration and the artist’s capacity to express a distinct vision. He noted, “the more completely a picture’s individual expressive content ripens into a more commonly understandable and communicative configuration (which it does independently of skill), the higher we will rank it as a creative achievement” (Prinzhorn, 1922/2019, p. 67). The chapter concludes with an analysis of ten schizophrenic artists’ work, illuminating the intricate relationship between mental health and artistic expression. Finally, in the concluding chapter, titled ‘Results and Problems’, Prinzhorn considers the implications of his findings with other types of imagery from diverse groups and considers the relationship between schizophrenic art, visual art movements, and the age it represents.

This comprehensive research is interesting in numerous ways. However, for the following examination, I will focus on Prinzhorn’s five configuration categories and consider their relevance to visual art, specifically focusing on examples from the modern art movement and the outsider art genre.

## 1. Unobjective and Unordered Scribbles

*Unobjective and unordered scribbles* is a category of art characterised by random, dramatic gestures that have no connection to anything real, formal, or symbolic. This configuration type is considered by Prinzhorn (1922/2019, p. 4) as the precursor to drawing, existing “nearest to the zero-point on the scale of composition.” He believed that when an individual engages in this practice, it solely satisfies an expressive urge, a “dark involuntary impulse” to create. This idea is based on Ludwig Klages’ *Theory of Expression* (1921), which states that expressive gestures can reveal psychic<sup>20</sup> factors. In response, Prinzhorn (1922/2019, p. 12) argued that voluntary and involuntary movements communicate individual psychological elements “simply and directly, instead of by rational association.”

Regarding pictorial composition, the expressive urge is linked with two other primary impulses: the playful and the decorative urge. However, these impulses present themselves as ‘unobjective and unordered scribbles’ when there is no relation to formal tendencies, such as linear arrangement, regular pattern, symmetry, and proportion. Prinzhorn compares this style to a young child who scribbles between the ages of two and four. He wrote, “to a child, scribbling is a game of movement, and nothing could be further from his mind than the possibility that it could actually be made to represent something” (p. 27).

This informal configuration can be observed in abundance in the abstract expressionism movement, particularly in the practice of ‘action painting.’ This abstract style emphasises the physical act of painting and focuses on a creative

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<sup>20</sup> For this project, I am using the term ‘psychic’ to describe mental or emotional phenomena, which can include thoughts, feelings, perceptions, memories, dreams and other subjective experiences.

process that is instinctual and direct. Artists within this category produce imagery using the spontaneous application of dramatic, sweeping brushstrokes and the chance effects of dripping paint upon a canvas. A well-known example of an artist who engaged with this configuration type is Jackson Pollock (1912-1956). During his lifetime, Pollock (1978, p 214) described “the source of my painting is the unconscious.”

It is also interesting to note that Prinzhorn acknowledged that his collection strongly parallels modern expressionist art. He proposed that the individual suffering from mental illness had to adapt to the world’s alienation forced upon him, whereas the modern artist deliberately turned away from his familiar reality (Prinzhorn, 1922/2019, p. 271). Additionally, Dan Miller (b.1961) creates expressive imagery reminiscent of Pollock’s abstract paintings. However, Miller is classified as an outsider artist due to his low-functioning autism diagnosis. Miller’s drawings are made up of numbers and words written repetitively, appearing as a work of abstraction.

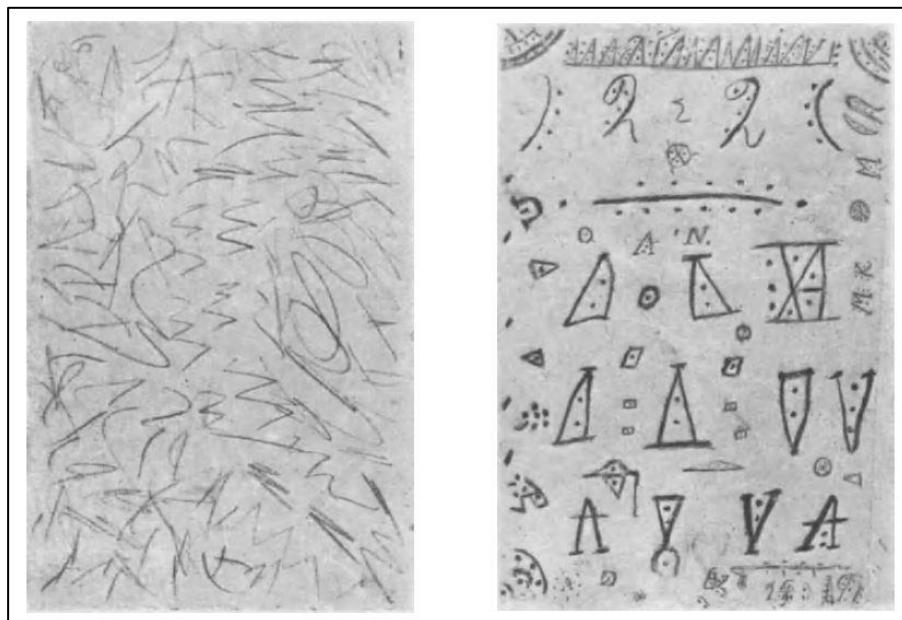


Figure 3.3.1 – Extracted from *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (2022). These images exemplify Prinzhorn’s category of unobjective and unordered scribbles. Sourced from the public domain.

## 2. Playful Drawings with a Predominant Ordering Tendency

*Playful Drawings with a Predominant Ordering Tendency* is a category that refers to pictorial configurations that combine formal tendencies with unobjective and unordered scribbles. Alongside the expressive urge, it conveys a dominant playful urge that produces ornamental and decorative features, sometimes with a rhythmic movement of line.

When referring to playful drawings, Prinzhorn describes ‘play’ as an activity that follows specific rules but fulfils no purpose other than entertaining and passing the time. According to him, play is an intuitive activity in which the “whole personality resonates sympathetically” (Prinzhorn, 1922/2019, p. 16). This playful urge presents itself as an incorrect perception of an object in undefined forms, such as seeing shapes in clouds or faces in abstract patterns. This free association game has since been called ‘pareidolia’ and is a common human tendency in which naturally occurring or playfully created forms are not accepted for their objective face value<sup>21</sup>.

According to Prinzhorn, the playful urge is a psychological fact that stems from imaginative and fantasy fuelled activities. He believed it was crucial to “underline the relationship of fantastic activity in its many ramifications to that simple, playful urge which appears in every child and all kinds of adults when they compose something” (p. 18). In his view, the inspiration from pareidolia is not limited to childish drawings but also expresses itself in great art. To prove his point, he quotes Leonardo da Vinci, who described how artistic inspiration could arise by observing random and chaotic patterns, such as those found in the natural world or everyday objects.

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<sup>21</sup> Prinzhorn did not use the term pareidolia, as it was not coined until 1962.

It consists of this, that you look at many walls which are covered with all sorts of spots, or at a mixture of [...] stones [or] into the ashes in the fire, into the clouds of mud – if you observe them closely you will discover wonderful inventions in them: compositions of battles, of animals and men; terrifying things like devils, various landscapes ornamented with mountains, streams, rocks, trees, great plains, valleys and hills; lively arrangements of peculiarly strange figures, facial expressions, dress and uncounted things which you can bring to completion [...] through entangles and undefined things the mind is opened to new inventions (Da Vinci cited by Prinzhorn, 1922/2019, p. 18).

Moreover, he described how ornamental and decorative features could arise as formal elements from playful activity. While these objects have no practical purpose, they are dominated by abstract rules and order, which include formal principles such as “linear arrangement, regular pattern, symmetry, and proportion” (p. 21).



Figure 3.3.2 – *Untitled* (1961) by Laure Pigeon.

In addition, Prinzhorn distinguished a free and autonomous order which he called ‘rhythm’ – a living uniform movement of line only comparable to the pure melody of music. This rhythmic movement is a gradual development of line, separate from the mechanical and exact uniformity of mathematical rules.

Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) is an example of a modern artist who engaged with this configuration type. Specifically, his abstract paintings, such as *Improvisation 10* (1910) and *Composition 8* (1923), exemplify this style. In addition, many creators promoted by the outsider art genre also engage with this configuration type. For instance, Laure Pigeon (1882-1965), whose work remains untitled, depicts abstract figures within a complex web system in blue or black ink (Figure 3.3.2). She began her artistic endeavour at 52, under the guidance of spirits. This initial experience inspired the production of 500 large drawings and additional notebooks, many of which feature a melancholy female silhouette<sup>22</sup>. Other outsider artists that fit into this category include Alice Schwager (1933-2015), Thornton Dial (1928-2016), Victória Domingues (b. 1944), and Cathy Ward (b. 1960).

### 3. Playful Drawings with a Predominant Copying Tendency

This category refers to the tendency to copy, which is not directed towards a real and existing object but draws freely on preconceptions. In this text, Prinzhorn used the term ‘eidetic image’ to explain an individual’s perceptual comprehension of their environment. He considered how, through observation, an individual’s perception is shaped by their attitude and personality. He stated that “our eidetic image is not formed by the individual real and external object: instead, we form a

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<sup>22</sup> After her death, her collection was acquired by Jean Dubuffet for his Collection de l’art brut.

personal eidetic image out of this object by applying a personal system”

(Prinzhorn, 1922/2019, p. 31).

According to Prinzhorn, eidetic images can form intricate ideas or purely abstract concepts arising from an individual’s attempt to interpret their experience of the external world through their five senses. He described how the psychological process of understanding an image is unavoidable, as “perception does not immediately result in the formed image,” there also exists “compulsions running counter to its aims” (p. 30). Therefore, in this view, realistic configurations require an artist to transfer this eidetic image into a spatial and tangible format. Thus, an artist’s inclination towards depicting an eidetic image characterises the copying tendency. Prinzhorn described, “what is of primary psychological importance is that the artist is determined by the eidetic image.” He continued, “whether an object is painted realistically or abstractedly is [...] completely secondary” (p. 24).

According to Prinzhorn, the copying tendency can present itself as a representation of an eidetic image using the narrowest realism or the broadest abstraction: “when it comes to objective representation there exists only a simple polarity between a materially bound proximity to nature and a more abstract and formal remoteness from nature” (p. 33). This polarity depends on whether the playful urge dominates or submits to the copying tendency. When the artist allows the copying tendency to dominate, he or she creates configurations intended to reflect the natural object or its immediate memory image (such as realistic art).

However, when the playful urge dominates the copying tendency, the configuration is no longer directed towards the real and objective world and instead draws freely from the imagination. In this category, mental processes

remodel natural subjects, creating a more unique and personalised configuration.

Prinzhorn (p. 233) explained:

The drawer is not really concerned so much with picturing the represented objects as with realising for himself the special meaning they hold for him. His attitude is very different from that of a naturalist whose desire to lose himself in the beauty of the world and to capture of it what he can.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and George Braque's (1882-1963) analytical cubist paintings are relevant examples of this configuration type. This style involved a structured dissection of an object or subject, resulting in a fragmentary image of overlapping planes with multiple viewpoints – for example, Braque's *Violin and Candlestick* (1910). This painting can be interpreted as a still life that has been playfully remodelled to convey a sense of ambiguity and illusion. This painting's inspiration stems from an externally existing object and reflects the artist's inclination towards depicting the eidetic image with a playful twist.

Sam Doyle's (1906-1985) paintings are examples of this configuration type within the genre of outsider art. Doyle was an African American artist from South Carolina. His paintings were produced on discarded materials – metal roofing and plywood – and were intended as colourful depictions of the history and people of St. Helena's Gullah community. For example, his painting *Ladsen, Nurse Midwife* (1980) shows a crude depiction of a seated woman holding a large baby (Figure 3.3.3). In this image, the artist is summing up momentous events with simplicity. Other celebrated outsider artists who create works in a similar manner include James Edward Deeds Jr (1908-1987), Alcides Peirera dos Santos (1928-2018), and William Scott (b.1964).

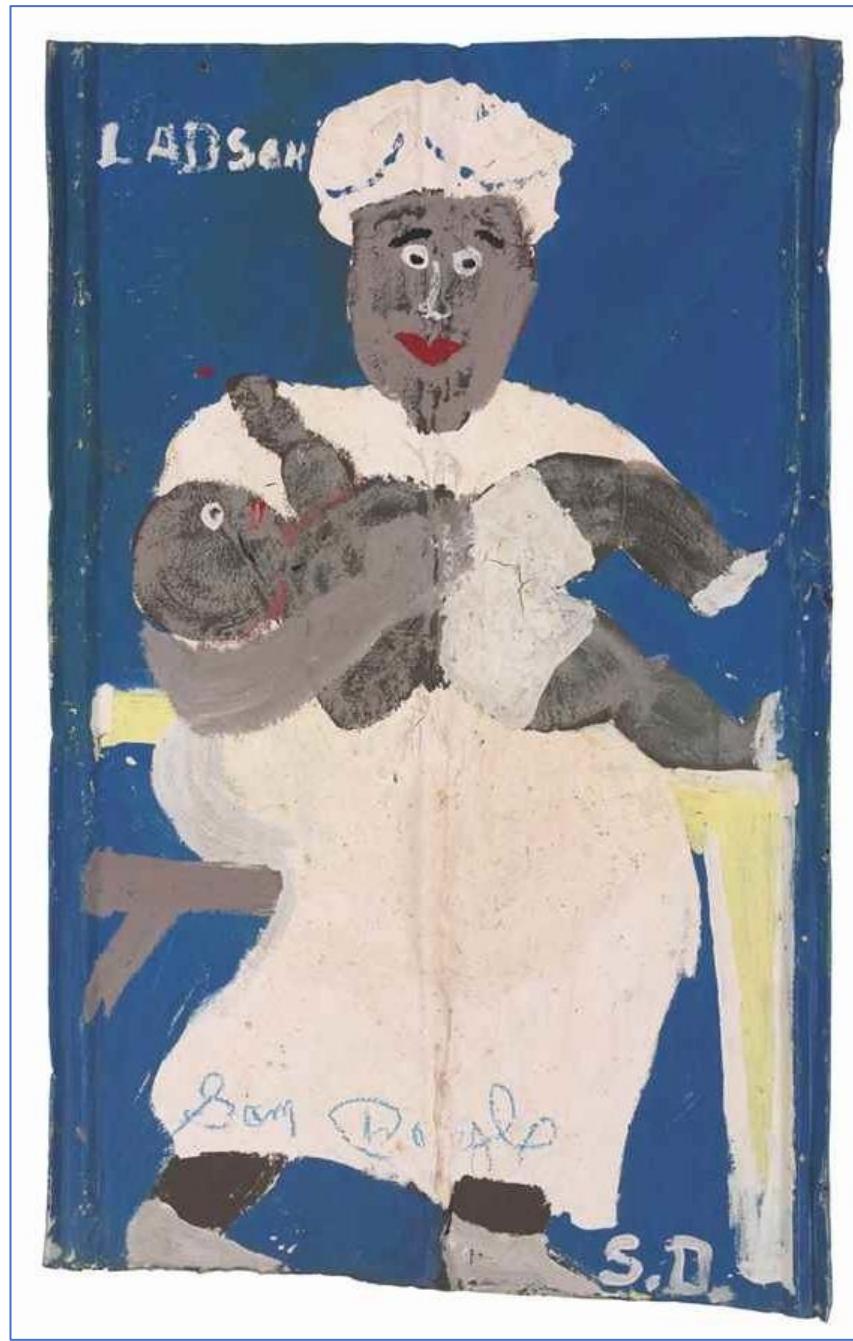


Figure 3.3.3 – *Ladsen, Nurse Midwife* (1980) by Sam Doyle.

#### 4. Visual Fantasies

According to the last category, when the playful urge dominates the copying tendency, mental processes remodel natural subjects resulting in a more unique and personalised configuration. However, in this group, *playful drawings with a*

*predominant copying tendency* are combined with the need for symbols resulting in the depiction of visual fantasies.

In this category, the external object loses inherent value and is instead used as a primary material to project inwardly directed psychic processes. Prinzhorn (p. 236) described, “although objects have lost their inherent value and are no longer anything of and by themselves, they serve as bearers and representatives for the psychic movements of the artists.” In his view, this habit of using external objects as a primary material “leads even relatively modest talents into a more or less symbolic but nevertheless firm and consistent language of form – into a personal style” (ibid.). Prinzhorn stated that the more naturalistic the work, the less likely it is to have symbolic significance. However, “if, on the other hand, there appear combinations of forms or familiar objects which are not in common experience, some kind of psychic process must have taken place within their author from which the combination resulted” (p. 27).

Configurations of this type have a strange and eerie quality, and because of their ambiguity, it is impossible to attribute any rational meaning to them. Prinzhorn declared, “it crumbles into numerous single motifs, each of which seems to want to say something original without finding the saving expression” (p. 68). This category can present itself in two ways – the artist relies on traditional symbols to convey meaning or creates new ones. In the first instance, churches and popular customs become sources of inspiration for the artists; they move within a customary conceptual world. In the second instance, the artist is preoccupied with a personal philosophical battle and intends to combine their instincts with cultural forces. Prinzhorn (p. 237) described this as “obscure and fascinating [...] they use traditional symbols [...] spontaneously or, from another

point of view intuitively add new meanings to old symbols or even create new ones out of their own conflicts.”



Figure 3.3.4 – Image from the series *Realms of the Unreal* (1910-1913) by Henry Darger.

This configuration type can be seen abundantly within surrealism – a twentieth-century art movement that explored the workings of the mind through literary, philosophical, and artistic means. These artists and philosophers rejected the rational mind, favouring the unconscious and dreams. For instance, Leonora Carrington (1917-2011) depicted her visual fantasies by intuitively combining her unique vision with cultural forces. Her painting titled *The House Opposite* (1945) depicts a cutaway view of a domestic environment full of female figures, many of whom are busily engaged in preparing, presenting, and consuming food. In this

painting, she explores the female role in the domestic environment with invented symbolic characters and pre-existing symbols, such as the Virgin Mary in the upper left-hand corner. The inclusion of symbolic imagery adds ambiguity to the imagery, allowing for numerous interpretations.

Henry Darger (1892-1973) is an example of a celebrated outsider artist known for his imaginative creations. One of his most famous projects is the epic fantasy novel which consists of more than 15,000 pages with 300 colourful, often disturbing watercolours and collages – referred to as *The Realms of the Unreal* (1910-1913). The story follows seven girls – the Vivian girls of the catholic nation Abbieannia – who attempt to rescue kidnapped children enslaved by the atheistic villainous Glandelinians (Figure 3.3.4). The watercolour paintings remain untitled, but they bring the tale of destruction and heroism to life by illustrating children's vulnerability against abusive captors within fantastic landscapes and complex compositions.

## 5. Increased Symbolic Significance

The previous category explored 'the need for symbols' by referencing external and cultural elements, such as the domestic environment in Carrington's *The House Opposite*. However, Prinzhorn (1922/2019, p. 27) described this characteristic as 'rational content', which increases "the significance of the scene beyond the impression which the drawing alone is able to give." He continued by stating that the rational content distracts attention from the pure psychic expression, which can only be depicted symbolically, "in the sense that rhythm of lines, the relations between lines, and the symbolism of colours communicate emotional experience to us" (ibid.).

*Increased Symbolic Significance* refers to a category of configuration which depicts purely symbolic content with limited reference to external forces. This category combines emotional and psychic elements through abstraction and symbolic content. According to Prinzhorn, this configuration type emphasises “formal convention, rhythmical solemnity, and the dominance of abstract geometric elements” (ibid.). The superiority of the need for symbolic content promotes order and uses conventional or unique symbols to express the artist’s psychic experience.

Hilma af Klint (1862-1944) is an example of an artist who successfully depicted pure symbolic content with limited reference to external forces – for example, *The Dove, No. 2, Group IX* (1915) from her series *Paintings for the Temple*. This painting shows a variety of shapes with perfect symmetry and a soft pastel colour palette. It is highly ambiguous and leaves little for the rational mind to contemplate.

Likewise, Augustin Lesage (1876-1954) is an exciting example of an outsider artist who engaged with this configuration type, as seen by his drawing *Burbure* (1944). This painting shows Lesage’s rigorous method, which begins by tracing a precise median line down the canvas’s centre and then working from the top down (Figure 3.3.5). Subsequently, he would place details on one side of the line and duplicate the image on the other side, creating a perfectly symmetrical design. His compositions combined uncountable miniature themes, architectural designs, decorative vegetation, human figures, and motifs reminiscent of Egyptian and Oriental art, all crafted with extreme precision and skill.

## 6. Discussion

Prinzhorn's five-category framework offers a valuable perspective for understanding the creative process of outsider artists and others who engage in a deep introspective journey. The first two categories, unobjective and unordered scribbles and playful drawings with a predominant ordering tendency emphasise self-expression. This style is exemplified by artists such as Pollock, Miller, and Pigeon. The third category, playful drawings with a predominant copying tendency, recognises the balance between playfulness and the copying tendency in the creative process. This balance is essential for understanding various distinct styles, highlighting the importance of artists' personal interpretation and transformation of their eidetic images. Artists like Picasso, Braque, and Doyle embody this category, showcasing a mix of personal expression and recognisable subjects.

The fourth category, visual fantasies explore symbolism and the incorporation of dreams and the unconscious in the creative process. This is particularly relevant for many outsider artists whose work aims to represent transcendent ideas or beliefs, as seen in the work of Darger. In addition, artists such as Carrington exemplify this category, with her works rich in symbolism and fantastical elements. Finally, the fifth category, increased symbolic significance, concentrates on the abstraction and symbolism that can dominate an artist's creative process. Artists like af Klint and Lesage epitomise this category, prioritising emotional and psychic experiences over rational content.

An important observation about Prinzhorn's framework is its presentation as a scale that progresses with the increasing complexity of the artist's configuration. As Prinzhorn (1922/2019, p. 67) states, "the more completely a

picture's individual expressive content ripens into a more commonly understandable and communicative configuration (which it does independently of skill), the higher we will rank it as a creative achievement." This leads one to question the extent to which this scale can be applied in understanding, defining, and distinguishing between outsider and visionary art. For example, artists such as Darger, Carrington, af Klint, and Lesage are often labelled as visionary artists. A question that arises is whether it is appropriate to associate the characteristics of two-dimensional visionary artworks predominantly with the fourth and fifth categories of Prinzhorn's framework. This line of inquiry, however, remains speculative at this stage, providing fertile ground for continued exploration and discourse on the topic.

### **Prinzhorn's Conclusions**

From the research outlined above, Prinzhorn (1922/2019, p. 272) developed his thesis, stating that "pictorial creative power is present in every creative person," and we must view "tradition and training as external cultural embellishments of the primary configuration process." He believed that under the right conditions, creative power could emerge in every individual. However, he suggested that individuals in the confused states of schizophrenia provided rare access to the psyche, as they were less affected by the outside world.

According to Prinzhorn (p. 39), schizophrenics experience an "associative loosening," where external objects and experiences lose their importance. This loosening results in patients experiencing the world more freely according to their inspirations or psychic complexes<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Prinzhorn states: "external things are disposed of freely, either playfully according to inspiration or under the single direction of psychic 'complexes' with emotional overtones" (1922/2019, p. 39).



Figure 3.3.5 – *Untitled* (1950) by Augustin Lesage.

He explained that everyone experiences something similar in their dreams or can achieve it through practice. He wrote, “in any case, it is not difficult to achieve through practice a similar loosening of associations while awake; the free association of ideas, which belongs to psychoanalysis, leads in the same direction” (p. 39). However, he declared that these comparable cases are only temporary, whereas the schizophrenic's experience “occurs necessarily and is almost impervious to change, finally becoming a permanent condition” (*ibid.*). This observation opens questions about different methods of achieving an ‘associative loosening,’ such as Jung’s active imagination and the use of entheogenic substances. Both approaches aim to facilitate a deeper connection with the unconscious and may offer alternative ways to access the creative potential that Prinzhorn describes.

Another observation by Prinzhorn, stemming from his analysis, suggests that there are two explanations for the artistic expression of mentally ill individuals. The first is a rational, causal explanation, while the second is a mystical, irrational one. He argues that the former is more agreeable when viewed as a representation of basic human phenomena or innate images. Conversely, the latter is slightly different, as it suggests that “our patients are in contact, in a completely irrational manner, with the most profound truths, and have unconsciously reproduced images of transcendence as they perceive it” (p. 242).

Jung’s two modes of creativity, the visionary and psychological mode, offer valuable insights that could enhance Prinzhorn’s conclusions. The visionary mode aligns with Prinzhorn’s mystical, irrational explanation, as it refers to creative expressions that emerge from profound, archetypal experiences. On the other hand, the psychological mode corresponds to the rational, causal

explanation, as it involves the artist's conscious effort to interpret and represent their personal complexes and external experiences<sup>24</sup>.

Furthermore, Prinzhorn proposes that there are psychic forms of expression and representational configurations that are nearly identical for everyone under similar conditions, much like physiological processes. However, these expressions are disrupted and hindered by the influences of civilised customs and restrictive rules. This observation bears a striking resemblance to Jung's concept of archetypal forms, which are universal patterns or themes that recur across different cultures and time periods. These archetypes are believed to originate from the collective unconscious, a shared reservoir of human experiences. Interestingly, Cardinal (1972, p. 49) also makes this observation by stating:

One can appreciate the intellectual attraction of Prinzhorn's premise, one that C.G. Jung was to expand upon a good deal, namely that the primary process operative in artistic work as far as possible untouched by 'high' cultures, tend to produce recurrent motifs – the so-called archetypes.

Prinzhorn's research and thesis on the creative power within every individual, especially those in schizophrenic states, provide valuable insights into understanding artistic expression and the unconscious. His observations on the dual explanations of artistic expression and the commonality of psychic forms of expression emphasise the significance of his work for this inquiry.

## **Discussion**

While Prinzhorn was not strongly associated with the psychoanalytic community there is a record that he was familiar with Jung, stemming from his student days in

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<sup>24</sup> The creative modes suggested by Jung are explored in Chapter 7.

Vienna. There is also evidence that Prinzhorn spoke on the topic of the drawings of the mentally ill in 1921 at the famous Wednesday meetings of the *Vienna Psychoanalytical Society*, a meeting in which Jung was present. Jung even possessed a copy of Prinzhorn's text in his private library, suggesting that Jung and Prinzhorn may have directly or indirectly influenced one another (Hoerni, *et al.* 2018).

Another important observation in this regard is that Prinzhorn (1922/2019, p. 240) spoke about the method of amplification in his text, stating that "we must therefore be temporarily satisfied with a survey which badly needs amplification by a more knowledgeable hand." In addition, he highlights the importance of Jung's ideas on the interpretation of symbols:

The major charm and also the real cognitive value of our pictures becomes clear only when we succeed in making progress in the interpretation of symbols [...]. The only impulse of any importance which has prepared the ground for the study of symbols once again came from Freud, Jung, and their followers. [...] especially, the elaboration of Freud's thoughts by Jung (p. 240, n. 31).

Prinzhorn's findings align remarkably with Jung's conceptualisation of the visionary and psychological modes of creativity, and both figures recognise the significance of recurring images that arise from the unconscious. This extraordinary common ground between Prinzhorn and Jung not only suggests a clear influence between the two but also positions analytical psychology as an essential framework of reference for understanding the development of visionary art and its historical roots.

The convergence of Prinzhorn's and Jung's ideas is fascinating and illuminating. Although Jung is frequently referenced in numerous texts on outsider art, these mentions often lack in-depth exploration. To gain a deeper

understanding of this artistic style, it is therefore useful to study it alongside the continuous progress made in Jungian psychology. Similarly, Prinzhorn seems to invite further exploration and growth of his ideas by emphasising their potential to evolve in tandem with advancements in the field of analytical psychology.

### 3.4 Key Points and Reflections

Throughout the chapter, the complexities and debates surrounding the contemporary understanding of art brut, outsider art, and visionary art have been investigated. The primary issue faced was the confusion resulting from the expanding definitions of outsider art, romanticised and fabricated biographies, neglect of personal and cultural influences, and the commercialisation and commodification of the artistic style.

To address this problem, I proposed examining Prinzhorn's text *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, to determine if it could inform and enhance the understanding of these genres. The outcome of this examination revealed a fascinating and illuminating convergence of Prinzhorn's and Jung's ideas. This overlap highlights the significance of studying these artistic styles in the context of the continuous progress being made in Jungian psychology.

Another important point is that Prinzhorn's focus on the art of schizophrenic individuals and his comparative analysis with other types of art, led him to conclude that such creative works can arise in any individual under the right conditions. This insight brings into question the emphasis on mental illness and marginalisation in contemporary outsider art, which is a topic of controversy. It is worth considering whether the category can be re-evaluated alongside Jungian and post-Jungian understandings of the visionary mode of creativity, and its relevance for understanding and engaging with this form of artistic expression.

It was also found that, although Jung is frequently referenced in numerous texts on outsider art, these mentions often lack in-depth exploration. Prinzhorn's work, with its remarkable alignment with Jung's ideas, serves as an invitation to

further investigate and expand upon the subject. By doing so, a more comprehensive understanding of art brut, outsider art, and visionary art can be achieved, and the challenges that have long plagued contemporary interpretations can be addressed.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Fantastic Realism & Psychedelic Art

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus shifts to fantastic realism and psychedelic art, along with their unique interpretation of visionary art. The chapter begins with an examination of VSFR, a movement that is considered a precursor to psychedelic and visionary art. The analysis covers its origins and significant contributions, providing an introductory understanding of its role in shaping the contemporary visionary and psychedelic landscape. The discussion then turns to the role of entheogens and visionary culture highlighting their profound impacts on these art forms. This exploration offers insights into the effects of these substances on human consciousness and creativity, while also emphasising their significance and influence on the broader cultural context of these art movements.

The chapter continues with an examination of the concept of visionary creativity from the perspectives of theorists Wilber and Caruana. The goal of this analysis is to develop an understanding of visionary art according to the perspectives of influential figures in the field. Finally, the chapter reflects upon the key insights gathered throughout the exploration, considering their implications and relevance to contemporary discussions on visionary art.

## 4.2 Defining Fantastic Realism, Visionary Art and Psychedelic Art

### Overview

The VSFR refers to a group of painters from the 1950s in Vienna who combined their interests in psychoanalysis, esoteric symbolism, and the painterly precision of the old masters. Unlike their non-representational contemporaries (abstract expressionists), they believed that unconscious images were better depicted realistically. The art critic Eugene Halton (1989, p. 5) described:

Influenced by Surrealism, Freud, Jung, [...] and a great love for the craft and traditions of painting, the Fantastic Realists began making paintings in the post-war period suggesting born-again Bosch's and Breughel's, at a time when non-representational painting was reaching its peak.

In 1974, art critic Johann Muschik officially declared the term 'The Vienna School of Fantastic Realism' in his German text of the same name. He characterised the art movement as one filled with painters with a meticulous sense for detail and realism. However, he argued that what makes them fantastic, is their unique ability to arrange elements and create scenes that are intriguing yet not surrealistic. In his view, these artists differed from surrealists despite evolving from surrealism, as their works lacked the absurdity, preference for paranoia, trance, and hallucination typically associated with surrealism (Muschik, 1974, p. 64).

The VSFR initially comprised of seven artists: Fritz Janschka, Arik Brauer, Ernst Fuchs, Rudolph Hausner, Wolfgang Hutter, Anton Lehmden, and Kurt Steinwender (Halton, 1989, p. 6). However, among these, Fuchs arguably stands out as the most prominent and influential member. He acted as a vital link between the historical and contemporary movements within this genre and Oroc (2018, p. 6) goes so far as to refer to him as the "Father of Visionary Art."

## The Legacy of Ernst Fuchs

Fuchs's influence radiated far beyond his immediate circle, touching the lives, and shaping the art of notable individuals such as Caruana, Sage, and Grey, among others. His profound impact is further evident in the master-apprentice relationships he had fostered with many contemporary artists before his death in 2015. As Oroc (2018) points out, Fuchs's influence has significantly shaped at least three generations of visionary and psychedelic artists.

Furthermore, he is prominently recognised for his championing of the 'mischtechnik', a mixed media painting approach with roots in European renaissance. This method entails the strategic application of multiple layers of paint, often with a mix of egg tempera and oil paint which result in a luminous, radiant effect. The layering process enhances the depth and intensity of the colour making it an ideal technique for the vibrant, fantastic imagery typical of visionary art. Fuchs played a crucial role in disseminating this technique among numerous visionary and psychedelic artists, significantly shaping the aesthetics of these art genres.

Interestingly, Caruana (2001) identifies several influential figures, such as Pablo Picasso (1881-1873), Max Ernst (1891-1976), and Salvador Dalí (1904-1989), who significantly influenced Fuchs's artistic trajectory. For this reason, Caruana refers to them as the modern pioneers of visionary art. Moreover, he elucidated how VSFR arose as a "misinterpretation of surrealism" (Caruana, 20001, p. 12). This observation is reinforced by Holton (1986), who outlines the shared roots of both VSFR and the New York school of abstract expression, in surrealism. Given this background, it is worth briefly examining the surrealism movement, as well as the distinctions between it and VSFR.

## **André Breton, Max Ernst, and Surrealism**

Surrealism originated in the late 1910s and early '20s as a literary movement that experimented with a new mode of expression influenced by the dream studies and psychological theories of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Surrealism was officially declared in 1924 with the publication of the *Manifesto of Surrealism* by the poet André Breton (1896-1966); which stated:

SURREALISM, n. Pure psychic automatism by means of which one intends to express, either verbally, or in writing, or in any other manner, the actual function of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, free of aesthetic or moral concern (Breton, 1972, p. 29).

In his view, surrealism was a means of reuniting the conscious and unconscious portions of the psyche in a way that dream and fantasy can be joined with the rational world; he wrote: "I believe in a future resolution of these two states, seemingly contradictory, of dream and reality, in a kind of absolute reality, a surreality, so to speak" (p. 20). He saw the unconscious as the imagination's creative centre, which can produce ingenuity when accessed by an individual. In addition, he held a romantic view of the mentally ill: "the art of those who are nowadays classified as the mentally ill constitutes a reservoir of moral health [...] Here the mechanisms of artistic creation are freed of all impediments" (Breton cited by Cardinal, 2009, p. 1459). This idea was most certainly inspired by Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, which was considered the "surrealists' Bible" (Röske, 2010, p. 10). Moreover, Breton collected works from artists in Prinzhorn's collection, such as Aloise Corbaz (1886-1964) and Adolf Wolfli (1864-1930).

Nevertheless, Breton did not work alone and developed surrealism's theoretical foundations alongside the French poets Louis Aragon (1897-1982),

Paul Éluard (1895-1952), and Phillippe Soupault (1897-1990). These surrealist poets were hesitant to align themselves with the visual arts because, in their view, the laborious processes of painting, drawing, and sculpting inhibited the spontaneity of expression. However, the forerunners of surrealism did not ignore the visual arts completely and respected such artists as Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), and Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968). By 1925, Breton began to show his support towards the visual arts by organising exhibitions and publishing artists' work in *La Révolution Surrealiste*<sup>25</sup>. The original visual artists who first worked with Surrealist techniques and imagery were Max Ernst (1891-1976), André Masson (1896), Joan Míro (1893-1983), and Man Ray (1890-1976).

One of these primary pioneers, Ernst, dabbled in both visual arts and poetry. Like Dubuffet, he discovered Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* and presented it to Paul Éluard the year it was published (Röske, 2009, p. 54). In addition, art critic Werner Spies (1991) proposed that Ernst's *Oedipus* (1925) is created in tribute to the schizophrenic August Natterer's *Miraculous Shepherd* (Spies, 1991) – an image that appears in Prinzhorn's publication.

Subsequently, by the 1940s, several art movements sprung from the surrealist's roots, such as art brut, magical realism and fantastic realism. Fantastic realism adopted the psychoanalytical influence, disregarding the literary element and mixed media creations. Instead, they focused on producing highly detailed paintings to depict the “intrinsically fantastic nature of reality” (Halton, 1989, p. 5). Also, Caruana (2001, p. 40) states that the fantastic realist had “Jung's latest discoveries to spur them onward to new dimensions of consciousness.” He

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<sup>25</sup> This was a publication by the surrealists in Paris. Twelve issues were published between 1924 and 1929.

continued, “while the dreams of Dalí manifest much of the repressed sexual imagery uncovered by Freud, the fantastic works of Fuchs, by contrast, revealed the sacred images of alchemy which Jung recently uncovered.” In a separate source, Caruana (2009, p. 12) writes:

While Surrealist painters began with the *petit bourgeois* objects and, through their strange juxtaposition, created dream symbols from the personal unconscious (tinged with sexual associations); Visionary artists began with *sacred* symbols and created, through their strange juxtaposition, dreams symbols from the deeper cultural matrix of the collective unconscious.

The importance of Prinzhorn’s text cannot be overstated. The influence of his ideas and psychoanalysis is evident in the visual works of both VSFR and surrealists who use the creative process as a ‘gateway’ to the unconscious. As such, the artworks from both categories can be seen as visual representations of the psyche, sharing similarities with the visual fantasies, and increased symbolic significance categories identified in Prinzhorn’s research (outlined in Chapter 3).

### **The Emergence of Contemporary Visionary Art**

In personal correspondence, Caruana (2020) informed me that he and Alex Grey started employing the term ‘visionary art’ in the 1990s. This terminology was used to characterise an art movement that was seen as the successor of VSFR. In the following sections I explore their unique contributions to the contemporary understanding of visionary art.

## 1. The Visionary Art of Alex Grey

Oroc (2018), Wilber (1990) and Sage (2022) state that the artist Alex Grey (b. 1953) is the forerunner of the contemporary visionary art movement. His role in triggering this movement's development began with the publication of his art book *Sacred Mirrors: The Visionary Art of Alex Grey* (1990). Grey is a New York-based and psychedelically inspired artist who was encouraged by his publisher Ehud Sperling to use the term 'visionary art' in the subtitle of his book. The term was taken from the great poet and painter William Blake (1757-1827), who often used the term to describe himself and his imaginative experiences. For example, he once wrote, "the nature of my work is visionary or imaginative; it is an endeavour to restore (what the ancients called) the Golden Age" (Bloom & Erdman, 1988, p. 555).

Likewise, while concluding a letter dated 1800, he wrote, "[from your] enthusiastic, hope-fostered visionary, William Blake" (p. 715). This self-ascription as a 'visionary' was a testament to the profound visions that punctuated his life, beginning from a young age when he saw God peering through his window. These visions, teeming with angels, kings, and monstrous figures, spurred Blake to create extraordinary imagery and poetry. Interestingly during Blake's time, the term 'visionary' was associated with someone "affected by phantoms; disposed to receive impressions on the imagination" (Johnson, 1755, p. 2172).

However, since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, concepts such as 'visionary' and 'visionary art' have evolved in step with advances in psychology, as well as philosophical and metaphysical ideas. Even so, these terms retain a degree of ambiguity. To bring some clarity to the term, Grey (1998/2017, p. 125) offers the following definition:

Visionary art is the creative expression of glimpses into the sacred unconscious, spanning the most searing shadow imagery of tortured souls in hell, the mythic archetypes of demonic and heroically compassionate forces that seem to guide and influence our feelings, and the luminous transpersonal heaven realms.

Visionary art offers bizarre and unsettling insights, convincing us by its compelling internal truth. The mystical experience of spiritual illumination, unity, wisdom, and love is the ideal of visionary art.

Grey's choice of language, such as 'shadow imagery', 'mythic archetypes', and 'sacred unconscious' seems to echo concepts from Jung and analytical psychology. However, he seldom mentions Jung directly. An exception is the passage where he writes "the visionary realm embraces the entire spectrum of imaginal spaces; from heaven to hell, from the infinitude of formless voids [...] Jung knew this realm as the collective symbolic unconscious" (Grey, 2008). This observation suggests a connection between Grey's concept of the visionary realm and Jungian theories. Yet, the infrequency of such references implies that Grey's understanding of the visionary realm is more intuitive or personal, rather than being grounded in a study of Jung's work or related theories.

Nonetheless, over the past two decades, Grey and his wife Allyson, have fostered a new generation of visionary artists, many of whom have now assumed the role of teaching their successors. Despite Grey's significant success and popularity, Oroc (2018) points out that he is yet to gain recognition or acceptance from the mainstream art world, even though he is arguably one of the most well-known artists in America today<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> On 03/02/2022, Grey currently has over 1.3 million followers on Instagram. For context, Jeff Koons (b. 1955) who is considered to be the most famous artist in the world has approximately 470k followers at the same time.

## 2. Caruana's Manifesto of Visionary Art

Following Grey's contribution, Caruana published *The First Manifesto of Visionary Art* in 2001. He described how the movement followed in the footsteps of VSFR, however he chose to use the term visionary art as it "seemed closer to what we were doing, and many fantastic artists felt comfortable with the label" (Caruana, 2020). The manifesto is a 72-page text, in which the author addresses various concerns, such as describing what visionary art is, and the origins of a visionary experience.

Regarding the question of what visionary art is, Caruana (2001, p. 1) writes, "the visionary artist uses all means at his [or her] disposal [...] to access different states of consciousness and expose the resulting vision." In his view, these artists attempt to depict "what lies beyond the boundary of sight" to reveal humanity's hidden and sacred truth. He continues: "through dream, trance, or other altered states, they attempt to *see the unseen* (original italics)" (ibid.). In addition, he argues that the roots of visionary art can be traced back to ancient civilisation, reflecting grand cosmic narratives (p. 7). He also categorises visionary artists into three categories, which he refers to as true, near, and false visionaries, while also explaining how their influences span from the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to modern surrealism (p. 11).

Moreover, with the field of visionary art, Caruana identifies two major thematic categories: 'visions of darkness' which depict themes of shock, horror, and underworld explorations, and 'visions of light' which convey sacred and transformative experiences. He argues that this contrast is often probed by artists like Grey and Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) with their use of psychedelic substances.

Moving on to the sources of visionary experience, Caruana highlights various examples: madness, dreams, hallucinogens, reading, and comprehension of the ancient image language. According to the author, madness, which was historically linked with visionary experiences, has been reconceptualised by Freud and Jung's work as a mythic hero journey providing rich imagery for artists. Dreams, from ordinary to prophetic, offer pathways to the divine, with artists like Jung, utilising dream imagery to discovery personal mythologies. Psychedelic substances, while not the only tool, facilitate altered states of consciousness. Caruana describes how their use is tied to transpersonal psychology, which integrates spiritual aspects of experience, aiding artists in accessing higher states of consciousness. Likewise, reading stimulates the imagination, leading to the creation of indescribable new worlds, while understanding the ancient image language, including cultural styles, symbols, and myths, enriches an artist's work by connecting it to historical context and shared meanings.

In the last section of the manifesto Caruana highlights the emphasis on technique and craftsmanship of the old masters, and his aspiration to make the artist's role invisible, thereby enhancing the immediacy of the artwork for the viewer. In line with this he wrote, “contemporary with this development was the rediscovery of art brut or outsider art [...] who developed styles and vocabularies of imagery amazingly similar to the more calculated works of visionary artists” (Caruana, 2001, p. 12). According to this statement, outsider art is *amazingly similar*, yet not quite as powerful as the *calculated works* of visionary artists due to the lack of emphasis on formal technique.

An important observation regarding the manifesto is the repeated references towards Jung and analytical psychology. Yet, the only work related to

the field cited in the bibliography in MDR, which is now consider a quasi-biography with misleading and incomplete information. During a private interview, Caruana (2022) admitted his lack of familiarity with Jung's psychology and the concept of the 'visionary mode of creativity'. He acknowledged that he had read only a few of Jung's books in the 1990s, mainly focusing on alchemical writings. Despite this, the concept of the archetypal substratum has maintained a lasting fascination for him. He shared:

Fundamentally, for me, the whole concept of archetypes is something that doesn't go away. I am very interested in the idea that there is a deep stratum of the unconscious [...] populated by these structured images. So, the idea of the archetypes is something that always informed my work" (Caruana, 2022, p. 20).

Caruana's interest in 'archetypes' is evident throughout the manifesto, as the term appears ten times while 'Jung' is repeated eighteen times. However, the focus is narrow and limited. While archetypal forms are central to Jung's work, they only represent a fraction of his ideas and concepts in the field. Exploring additional aspects of Jungian and post-Jungian theories, such as individuation and active imagination, amongst others, possess substantial potential for providing profound insights into our understanding of visionary art.

### **Debates Surrounding the Topic**

The term visionary art, according to this category hosts several debates, particularly focusing on the role of entheogens and psychedelic substances, the significance of the artist's painterly technique, and the genre's definition and boundaries.

## 1. Role of Entheogens and Psychedelic Substances

The role of entheogenic and psychedelic substances in visionary art is a subject of ongoing discussion and divergence of views within the field. Known for inducing altered states of consciousness, these substances can act as a catalyst for profound insights and vibrant imagery, influencing the creation of visionary art. Enthusiasts such as Oroc (2018) and Grey (1998/2017) consider these substances to be akin to sacraments, vital to the visionary process. Grey, a renowned visionary artist, frequently speaks about his use of substances like LSD as spiritual exploration tools, allowing access to deeper layers of consciousness and universal perspectives. This viewpoint is reflected in his work, which often depicts intricate, interconnected systems of energy and consciousness. Oroc (2018, p. 72) even states that “visionary art could be the new religion [...] with psychedelic recognised again as sacraments.”

However, not all artists view the role of these substances in the same light. Artists such as Caruana and Sage perceive these substances more as tools rather than indispensable elements. During our interview, Sage (2022) emphasised the potential risks of casual psychedelic use and advocated for more education of the subject. She also highlighted that many of her students have found different means of accessing their visions, independent of psychedelics. Caruana (2001) echoes this sentiment, suggesting that psychedelics provide only temporary glimpses into the higher transpersonal states necessary for visionary art. He quotes Ernst Fuchs, who stated “I knew or anticipated that the world in which I was looking had a gate, and the drug was only a ladder for thieves, who, in order to ‘steal’ climbed over the wall because they did not know the gate or did not have the key” (Fuchs cited by Caruana, 2001, p. 42).

Krippner's (2016) research lends valuable insight into this debate. He notes that 'psychedelic art' is not defined by its content, but by particularly experiences that deeply impact the artist, emphasising the use of LSD type drugs or related substance on the production of psychedelic imagery. However, he observes that some artists, despite identifying their work as 'psychedelic' denied using hallucinogenic substances. Instead, they credited alternative consciousness-altering experiences such as meditation or intense engagement with nature as their source of inspirations.

Although Krippner acknowledges these non-substance related influences, he nonetheless chose to exclude these artists from the study. This decision hints at the complexity of defining psychedelic art, underscoring the need to consider not just the role of entheogenic substances, but also a variety of consciousness altering practices.

## 2. Painting Techniques

Caruana (2001) asserts the necessity of precise rendering, achieved through meticulous painting technique for creating visionary art. This viewpoint is mirrored by Grey (1998/2017), who highlights the significance of mastering artistic techniques as a conduit for cultivating a meditative discipline that yields sacred and visionary imagery.

However, this perspective that foregrounds technique as a requisite for visionary art is not universal. Sage (2022) offered a contrasting view. She proposed that, although skill can aid in the artistic representation of the world, it is not an essential condition for accessing the visionary domain. According to her, individuals can also tap into this realm without a formal foundational structure:

“skill is helpful because when you understand how to recreate the world – modelling light and dark, adding colour and all those intricacies – then you can go through the portal and play around with those laws [...] but I think people can attain this intuitively; they don’t need the foundation and structure” (Sage, 2022, p. 10). While Sage herself follows a path that may not entirely align with this assertion (as she creates highly detailed and masterfully executed compositions), the recognition that precise skill isn’t a compulsory element for creating visionary works is significant as it opens the creative style for further expansion.

These differing perspectives highlight a spectrum of approaches within the style of visionary art. At one end, artists like Caruana (2001) and Grey (1998/2017) advocate for the mastery of technique as a gateway to effectively convey profound experiences. Conversely, artists like Sage (2022), and the theorists identified in Chapter 3, suggest intuitive approaches can lead to visionary experiences and expressions.

### 3. Definitions of Visionary and Psychedelic Art

The terms ‘psychedelic art’ and ‘visionary art’ are frequently used interchangeably, contributing to ambiguity surrounding the definitions and the boundaries of these genres. Krippner (2016) attempts to distinguish them, arguing that the term ‘psychedelic art’ is not defined by the artwork’s content, but by the psychedelic experiences that have impacted the artist, evoked by hallucinogenic, or LSD-type substances. Conversely, Oroc (2018) suggests that the term ‘visionary’ emerged as a sophisticated alternative to ‘psychedelic’ enabling artists to distance themselves from the stigma associated with drug use and the counterculture of the 1960s.

This distinction raises complex questions about the unique characteristics of visionary art versus psychedelic art. If psychedelic art is primarily defined by the artist's psychedelic influences, does visionary art instead place greater emphasis on the artwork's content? If so, what constitutes this content, and how does it differ from psychedelic art? Furthermore, this debate hints at an underlying tension within the genre about the impact of societal perceptions and stigma on the categorisation of art.

## **Discussion**

In this section I illuminated the layered discourse surrounding visionary and psychedelic art. This involved tracing the roots of these movements and identifying their connections with outsider art, notably through the shared influence of Prinzhorn's text. This rich heritage has played a crucial role in defining these genres.

The debate surrounding painting techniques in visionary art is particularly interesting. While artists like Caruana (2001) and Grey (1998/2017) emphasise the importance of mastering precise painting techniques, others like Sage (2022) propose that intuition can be a potent guide in creating visionary works. This recognition of intuition is particularly crucial as it establishes a bridge to art brut and outsider art styles.

The use of entheogenic and psychedelic substances form a central theme in the discourse around visionary and psychedelic art, encompassing a range of viewpoints. Some artists champion the reconceptualisation of psychedelics as sacraments, promoting visionary art as the potential basis for a new kind of spiritual practice. Conversely, other artists view psychedelics as optional tools that

offer fleeting glimpses into the divine realm. Additionally, there are those who bypass the psychedelic experience altogether, favoring other consciousness-altering practices like meditation, as indicated by Krippner (2016). With these perspectives in mind, I will now further explore the ‘second psychedelic revolution’ and the corresponding visionary culture.

## 4.3 Entheogens and Contemporary Visionary Culture

### Overview

The term *psychedelics* describe psychoactive substances that distort mood and perception by affecting numerous cognitive processes. Generally, they are non-addictive and are considered physiologically safe. The term was coined in 1957 by the psychiatrist Humphrey Osmond and has been a common colloquialism for more than sixty years. However, it was and remains scorned by the scientific community. Thus, it is no wonder that a new term emerged. In 1979 a group of ethnobotanists coined the term *entheogen* to describe the personal growth and spiritual aspects of the psychedelic experience. It is defined as “a neologism to designate psychoactive substances employed in culturally sanctioned visionary experiences in rituals and religious contexts” (Ruck, 2019, p. 343).

This change in vocabulary marks a significant attempt at reframing hallucinogenic substances from party enhancers to instruments for personal and spiritual development. It is essential to highlight that today’s new wave of psychedelic authors prefers the term entheogens, which offers an insight into their perspective. An essential text that contributed to this section is *The New Psychedelic Revolution: The Genesis of the Visionary Age* (2018) by James Oroc. This text presents an interesting perspective on the history of visionary art from its roots in prehistory, Ernst Fuchs and VSFR, and contemporary psychedelic art. He asserts, “[this book] is one of the first major attempts to document and provide a timeline for the emergence of contemporary visionary culture [...] which I have been a privileged witness over the past fifteen years” (Oroc, 2018, p. 5). It also proposes that a ‘second psychedelic revolution’ has arisen from the embers of the

original 1960s LSD revolution. This text offers an interesting first-hand account of contemporary visionary culture which is highly relevant for this discussion.

### **The Second Revolution of Psychedelics**

Recent years have shown a shift in perspectives on the role of illegal psychedelic substances. This is evident by the numerous research studies currently active in universities and research labs; for example, Dr Martin William, the executive director of psychedelic research, is co-leading a trial at St. Vincent's hospital in Melbourne, Australia. His research examines how effective psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy is in treating anxiety disorders in terminally ill patients. Likewise, similar trials are exploring how psychedelic substances can help with many ailments including depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, alcoholism and nicotine addiction, cluster headaches, autism, cognitive functioning, creativity, post-traumatic stress disorder, glaucoma, tissue regeneration, improving immune response, and cell differentiation and growth (Nichols, 2016). In addition, multiple organisations fund and promote psychedelic research, such as the *Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies* (MAPS), the *Beckley Foundation* and the *Mind Foundation*.

On a similar note, hundreds, maybe thousands of websites actively promote psychedelic culture<sup>27</sup>. This enhanced digital connectivity has played a significant role in electronic dance music's dramatic rise and popularity – the first prominent music genre to revere and popularise psychedelics since the 1960s. According to Oroc (2018), the success of this global music scene has contributed significantly to 'transformational festivals'<sup>28</sup> and the corresponding visionary art

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<sup>27</sup> For example: [www.erwoid.org](http://www.erwoid.org), [www.chacruna.net](http://www.chacruna.net), and [www.psychadelicexperience.net](http://www.psychadelicexperience.net)

<sup>28</sup> Such as Burning Man in the USA, and the BOOM! Festival in Europe.

culture. In addition, there are numerous new publications on the topic<sup>29</sup> and the largest number of synthetic and natural psychedelic substances that have ever been available to any society in history. It is for these reasons that Oroc (2018, p. 12) believes that “the psychedelic revolution within western culture is [...] entering a second renaissance.” He argues that this second revolution has arrived at a critical time in human history. He writes, “an entheogenic society is a critical piece of the new paradigm required for humanity to survive its rapidly worsening modern dilemma” (ibid.).

### **Psychedelics and the Development of Consciousness**

This grandiose claim relies on the speculative research by ethnomycoloists and historians that suggests that ‘psychedelic transformations’ have occurred numerous times throughout history and may have been crucial for the development of the modern person’s consciousness. For example, the ethnomycoloist Richard Wasson (1980) and the amateur mycologist Terence Mckenna (1992) both proposed that the accidental consumption of psychedelic psilocybin mushrooms may have been a ‘spark’ that encouraged early humans to first conceive of language and God. However, this stance is argued by many such as the anthropologist Andy Letcher (2006, p. 24) who argues:

Aficionados claim that magic mushrooms are not just another drug but are psycho-spiritual tools that bring a greater understanding of the self, of our place in the world and of some essential ‘truth’. Mainstream society, they maintain, is blinkered by the ‘war on drugs’ and in unfairly prejudiced against this most benign and illuminating of the naturally occurring hallucinogens [...] I would suggest that enthusiasts’ time would be better spent arguing the case for mushrooms in terms of the culturally sanctioned criteria of our time, that is, on

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<sup>29</sup> For example, James Fadiman’s *The Psychedelic Explorer’s guide: Safe, Therapeutic, and Sacred Journeys* (2011) and Boon Marcus’ *The Road of Excess: A History of Writers on Drugs* (2000).

health and medical grounds than on the grounds of some fantastical history, dreamed up on a basis of wishful thinking and overworked evidence.

While Letcher makes a compelling point, I think it conflicts with the fundamental goal of contemporary visionary culture: to transcend the ego and cultural boundaries to gain a deeper understanding of our existence beyond the confines of current cultural norms.

According to the promoters of entheogens, the power of entheogenic substances lies in its ability to force an individual to recognise their ego – “the mechanism of division and separation” (Oroc, 2018, p. 68). The separation is allegedly responsible for creating an unnatural reality – a world with false meanings and values. Thus, Oroc concludes, “then it follows that the ways in which psychedelics are practical for singular personal growth might apply also to the collective growth, and in fact survival of our entire culture” (*ibid.*). In this view, the psychedelic experience can destroy the illusion of separation by making the singular ground of reality visible – or, in other words, by transcending the dualistic nature of the ego. These ideas strongly resonate with mysticism and occult ideas from the 19th and 20th centuries as well as with analytical psychology’s *unus mundus* and dual aspect monism (explored in Chapter 7).

### **Spiritual Transformation and Visionary Art**

In Oroc’s (2018) view, the most significant development of the second psychedelic revolution is the domination of psychedelic art, also known as visionary art. The visionary artists have propelled this second wave, in contrast to the psychedelic revolution of the 1960s, which was mainly influenced by writers such as Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), Alan Watts (1915-1973), and Timothy Leary

(1920-1996). In addition, contemporary visionary artists have provided psychedelic imagery for the worldwide electronic music scene that supports it. And, thanks to the internet, it has become the most recognisable and arguably the most influential element of contemporary psychedelic culture. In line with this Oroc (2018, p. 184) states:

I have come to understand both the technical difference between the term's *visionary art* and *psychedelic art*, while practically I have come to recognise how these differences may not even effectively matter anymore, since in the twenty-first century, the two terms have now merged as One.

However, he also acknowledges that "not all visionary art is psychedelic, nor is all psychedelic art necessarily visionary" (p. 195). These statements present an intriguing paradox that underscores the complexity of defining and differentiating between visionary and psychedelic art. While he advances that the two terms have merged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century art scene, he simultaneously contradicts himself by acknowledging that not all art in these categories are interchangeable.

According to Oroc (2018) visionary art has the potential to change the world. Likewise, as noted in Oroc's text, Grey is fond of saying, "visionary art could be the new religion [...] with psychedelics recognised again as sacraments" (Grey cited by Oroc, 2018. p. 72). In this view, a psychedelic-mystical response to art, music, and dance is one of the few effective methodologies that can combat the programming of modern existence and help alleviate our shared existential suffering (ibid.).

The assertive language and bold claims in these statements merit a careful evaluation. Phrases like 'has the potential to change the world' and 'the few effective methodologies' exude a high level of confidence, bordering on dogmatism. Moreover, equating visionary art to a 'religion' and referring to

psychedelics as ‘sacraments’ is a powerful yet contentious assertion. Such comparison could potentially elevate the practice to a quasi-spiritual level, distancing it from ordinary people and everyday experiences. In this context, the granting of church status in 2008 to The Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (CoSM) co-founded by visionary artists Alex Grey and Allyson Grey, is a notable development. The decision essentially acknowledges CoSM as a spiritual, community-based institution where art plays a pivotal role. The Greys perceived the chapel as a catalyst for creative spiritual awakening, founded on their conviction about the interconnectedness of all things (Chapel of Sacred Mirrors, 2005).

The assertiveness of this movement’s ideals appear to revolve around a rigid ideology, which can potentially separate the practice from ordinary people, fostering a sense of exclusivity and discouraging broader participation. For example, one of the contemporary artists interviewed for this study described, “for me, it is hard to take them seriously. It almost feels like there is a hidden agenda; it does not feel authentic” (Diaz, 2022, p. 14). However, the same artist acknowledges, “I think we (outsider artists and psychedelic artists) are talking about the same thing, just using two different languages” (*ibid.*). Regardless of these initial reservations it is important to maintain a critical perspective and encourage open discussion. By doing so we can better understand the nuances and complexities of visionary art, which includes its relationship with spirituality, psychedelics, and the broader society.

## 4.4 An Exploration of the Visionary Artist's Process

### Overview

This section focuses on the theories and methodologies of Wilber and Caruana, two influential figures in the psychedelic community. First, it explores Wilber's concept of evolving human consciousness, followed by a discussion on Caruana's method of subjective engagement with art. The discussion highlights the transformative potential of visionary art, emphasising its role in bridging the gap between individuals and the divine.

### Alex Grey, Kenneth Wilber, and the Three Eyes

Wilber (b. 1949) is an American philosopher who specialises in transpersonal psychology, a sub-field of psychology that attempts to integrate the transcendent and spiritual aspects of the human experience with the domain of modern psychology. He explores the concept of visionary art in the essay *In the Eye of the Artist: Art and the Perennial Philosophy*, published in Grey's *Sacred Mirrors* (1990). In addition, Wilber wrote the foreword to Grey's later book *The Mission of Art* (1998). It appears that Wilber greatly appreciated Grey's artwork, as evidenced by the following statement, "Alex Grey might be the most significant artist alive" (Wilber, 1998/2017, p. 1).

Interestingly, Wilber's admiration for Grey was not one-sided. Their friendship is evident by the numerous podcasts and video interviews they have participated in<sup>30</sup>. Grey also created a detailed drawing of Wilber's portrait with charcoal and ink on paper in 1998. In addition, in 2022, Grey released a heartfelt post directed at the American philosopher, describing him as "the greatest living

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<sup>30</sup> See YouTube Channels *The Integral Life* and *CoSM*.

philosopher, an integral spiritual leader, inspiring author and long-time friend”<sup>31</sup>.

Thus, it seems probable that the ‘most significant artist’ and ‘the greatest living philosopher’ had a significant influence on one another, marking Wilber as an influential figure in this area of visionary art. The following statement introduces Wilber’s (1990, p.1) view on visionary creation:

According to Perennial philosophy – the common mystical core of the world’s great spiritual traditions – men and women possess at least three different modes of knowing: the eye of the flesh [...] the eye of the mind [...] and the eye of contemplation.

According to Wilber, *the eye of the flesh* reveals the material, concrete, and sensual world; *the eye of the mind* reveals the symbolic, conceptual, and linguistic world; and *the eye of contemplation* reveals the spiritual, transcendental, and transpersonal world (ibid.). Moreover, Wilber remarks that these three modes of knowing are not simply given to an individual at once. Instead, they evolve in a developmental sequence from the lower eye of the flesh to the higher eye of contemplation. He explains:

In the first two years of a baby’s life, sensorimotor intelligence – the eye of the flesh – develops and evolves to disclose a material world of ‘object permanence’ [...]. In the following decade or two, the eye of the mind will increasingly emerge and develop, disclosing in its turn the world of ideas, symbols, concepts, images, values, meanings, and intentions. If development continues or, in some instances, psychedelically induced mystical experience – then the eye of contemplation opens and discloses the world of soul and spirit, of subtle energies and insights, or radical intuition and transcendental illumination (ibid.).

According to Wilber, echoes of these ideas can be found across various major traditional schools of psychology, philosophy, and religion. For instance, these

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<sup>31</sup> Posted Grey’s personal Facebook account on 31/01/2022.

three categories correspond to the three major realms delineated in the perennial philosophy – the gross, the subtle, and the causal.

The gross realm, perceived with the ‘eye of the flesh,’ embodies the domain of space, time, and matter. It comprises the physical realm of the body and the material world we perceive with our sensory faculties: seeing, touching, hearing, smelling, and tasting. This realm includes our day-to-day experiences and satisfies our physical needs and desires.

In addition, the subtle realm, perceived through the ‘eye of the mind’ unveils a world steeped in symbolism, concepts, and linguistic constructs. The insights of thinkers like socialist economist Ernst Schumacher and Prinzhorn align well with this assertion. Schumacher (1977/2015, p. 53) emphasises that our ‘seeing’ is not confined to our physical senses but extends to a significant part of our intellectual and mental faculties. Through this “light of the intellect” we can perceive realities that remain invisible to our bodily senses.

Similarly, Prinzhorn’s concept of the ‘eidetic image’ illustrates how an individual’s perception of their environment is shaped more by their personal attitudes and systems than by external objects themselves. These insights converge in Wilber’s description of how the ‘eye of the mind’ transcends the confines of the ‘eye of the flesh’ as it can imagine and comprehend sensory objects not immediately present, signifying its liberation from the limitations of physical sensory perception. Thus, the subtle realm, through the eye of the mind, becomes a significant locus of understanding, extending far beyond the material constraints of the gross realm.

Lastly, the causal realm is accessed through the eye of contemplation, which describes the highest and most transcendental of the three realms. In

Wilber's view, the eye of contemplation is a mode of knowing that allows an individual to access the most profound aspects of reality. However, the eye of contemplation is not something that is simply given to an individual, instead it is something that must be developed through a process of spiritual growth and development. This can occur through practices such as meditation, prayer and contemplation which are designed to help an individual access the deeper levels of consciousness and to transcend the limits of the ego, allowing them to experience a sense of unity and oneness with the universe.

Thus, in Wilber's (1990, p. 5) view, visionary artists have the strength of "concentration, imagination, or mystic reverie," which can give a peek into the divine realms – conjuring a world beyond the eye of the flesh, and the eye of reason." He concludes with the following assertion:

If, as modernists thought, true art is the manifestation of spirit, and if spirit is seen most clearly with the eye of contemplation, and if meditation is one of the surest ways to open the contemplative eye, it follows that the truest and purest art will be contemplative art, art born in the fire of spiritual epiphany and fanned by meditative awareness (Wilber, 1990, p.5)

This declaration matches Grey's (2008) view that "visionary art encourages the development of our inner sight. To find the visionary realm, we use the intuitive inner eye, the eye of contemplation, and the eye of the soul. All the inspiring ideas we have as artists originate here." He continues, "the artwork becomes a way for viewers to access or worship the associated transcendental domain" (ibid). In short, Wilber and Grey both believe that visionary art is a manifestation of the spiritual and that, through concentration, imagination, or mystic reverie, artists can use the eye of contemplation the access the divine realm.

## Caruana's 'Enter Through the Image'

Caruana (2009) presents his concept of 'entering through the image' as a method to explore visionary creativity. This intriguing notion is founded on an ancient heretical text recently unearthed after being lost for centuries<sup>32</sup>. Among its fifty-two tractates, a particular fragment invites the viewer to "...enter through the image" (Caruana, 2009, p. 1). In this context, the emphasis lies on the sacred image, defined as a symbol imbued with spiritual or religious importance. This section considers Caruana's ideas on personal and cultural memory-images, and 'the source', as well as his understanding of visionary creativity. Moreover, it considers his proposed methodology for engaging with sacred and visionary imagery.

### 1. Interpreting Caruana's Concepts

Caruana (2009) introduces three key terms to elucidate the connection between an individual, their cultural environment, and the transcendental source of creativity. First, 'personal memory-images' encapsulate deeply rooted memories from one's personal history. In his view, these must be awakened to truly 'enter through the image,' possibly leading an individual to rediscover emotions connected to forgotten events, such as their birth.

Next, 'cultural memory-images' encompass shared symbols, myths, and collective experiences across diverse cultures and societies. Caruana (2009, p. 31) explains that "these images from our cultural memory [...] are all inherently

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<sup>32</sup> Caruana quotes the following source: 'The Gospel of Philip' 67:9, The Nag Hammadi Library, edited by James Robinson, Harper & Row, 1978, p. 140.

designed so as to lead us to an experience of union with the Divine<sup>33</sup>.” This union with the divine is what Caruana refers to as the source, representing the ultimate origin or essential core that all memory-images (personal and cultural) lead back to. Using Goswijn van der Weyden’s (approx. 1465-1538) painting *Virgin and Child* as an example, he describes:

To *enter through this image* would be to identify our childhood self with the Christ-child, and then to identify the Christ-child with the Sacred, and so cross its threshold to a sudden moment of illumination. During that brief epiphany, as we *enter through* the image of the Divine Child, we experience ‘the source’ of all these personal and collective memory-images – that which unites them at their centre (Caruana, 2009, p. 30).

In line with this, Caruana (2009, p. 13) argues that “visionary art expands our cultural horizon, so as to manifest a broader yet more unified vision of the sacred.” In his view, visionary artists play a crucial role in building a deeper connection between individuals and the source by creating imagery imbued with potent memory-images, transforming personal journeys into shared experiences. He further notes that, the process of engaging with these images, either as an artist creating them, or a viewer interpreting them, allows for a transformative journey towards self-discovery and a deeper understanding of the collective human experience.

## 2. Caruana’s Methodology for Entering the Image

Caruana provides a method for engaging with sacred images, which can be presented in the following manner:

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<sup>33</sup> The use of the term ‘cultural memory-images’ is slightly problematic here, as it implies a singular cultural context. However, Caruana is using the term to refer to ‘collective’ images that are universal.

- a) Initial engagement: viewers are advised to allow the artwork to interact with their inner consciousness, stirring personal feelings and memories.
- b) Unearth personal memory-images: the viewers are then encouraged to direct their attention towards emerging emotions and attempt to establish a connection with their earliest memories. Specifically, they should concentrate on the period of their infantile ego, when they experienced an inseparable union with their parents: “we must erase that horizon, eliminate the ego, and so return to the time before mother and father were distinct in our mind” (Caruana, 2009, p. 39).
- c) Link with cultural memory-images: viewers are then prompted to connect these personal memory-images with cultural memory-images, which encompass shared symbols, myths, and collective experiences spanning across various cultures.
- d) Seek the source: at the heart of the painting lies what Caruana refers to as the ‘source,’ representing the undifferentiated unity that every cosmogonic myth starts with.
- e) Integrate personal and cultural memory-images with the source: viewers are then encouraged to associate their personal and cultural memory-images with the source, facilitating the manifestation of sacred unity within their consciousness.
- f) Reflect and re-engage: Following this, viewers are advised to pause for introspection, navigating the complex emotions and insights evoked by the profound encounter with the artwork.
- g) Enter through the image: the final step involves achieving a profound moment of illumination or ‘gnosis’ by aligning oneself with the sacred

source in the painting. This is the pinnacle of Caruana's sacred journey, where viewers transcend historical time and step into the realm of eternal mythic time, achieving a state of timeless unity.

This framework presents a unique methodology for exploring visionary creativity and visionary artworks. It provides a unique avenue for engagement with sacred art, highlighting the transformative potential of identifying with memory images, and the source, through a meditative and reflective exercise. A key feature of this model is the emphasis on the subjective nature of the exploration. It advocates for the artist or viewer to focus on their personal experiences when interacting with sacred or visionary imagery. This approach is particularly significant in the field of art criticism, where artworks are often viewed as extensions of the artist, and the critic's emotional response is frequently overlooked or downplayed. Caruana's model encourages a more intimate, emotional connection with the work, fostering a sense of co-creation between the painting and each viewer who engages with it profoundly. Interestingly, there is also an echo of Jung's active imagination in this method, as both emphasise personal engagement, introspection, and emotional responses that can lead to profound experiences.

### 3. Discussion

As mentioned, a key feature to Caruana's model is his attempt at fostering a subjective engagement between the viewer and an artwork. It is interesting to contrast this with Jones' behavioural approach as outlined in Chapter 3. Jones' approach highlights the importance of an individual's background, personal experiences, and cultural contexts in interpreting art. His methodology, grounded

in a folkloristic perspective, explores the intricate relationships and diverse factors that contribute to the creation of art, extending beyond the final artwork itself. In contrast to Caruana, Jones adopts a more traditional approach, with an objective stance, positioning the art critic as a detached observer. The critic's primary role in this approach is to objectively observe the work and the artist, crafting an informative and biographical portrayal of the artists, in order to understand the imagery they produced.

The contrast between these two methodologies is striking. Caruana's model fosters a deeply personal and emotional connection with the artwork, which is imbued with the sacred. Whereas Jones' approach emphasises the artwork as a material artefact, which requires an objective engagement rooted in the artist's background and cultural context. This juxtaposition offers a compelling example of the diverse ways in which art can be experienced and understood.

Nonetheless, the potential of these methods to inform and enrich each other should not be overlooked. Caruana's emphasis on personal engagement and emotional response can add depth and nuance to Jones' more objective, context-based analysis. Conversely, Jones' focus on the artist's background and cultural context can provide a broader perspective to Caruana's deeply personal approach. Together they offer a more holistic understanding of art, combining multiple aspects of artistic engagement and interpretation.

## **Discussion**

The exploration of visionary art through the lenses of Wilber and Caruana provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the creative process and the transformative potential of this unique form of artistic expression. Both models, while distinct in

their approach, converge on the idea that visionary art serves as a conduit to deeper realms of consciousness and spiritual insight.

Wilber's model, with its emphasis on the evolution of human consciousness through the 'eye of the flesh', the 'eye of the mind', and the 'eye of contemplation', suggests a developmental journey. This journey moves from the material and conceptual realms to the spiritual, with the 'eye of contemplation' serving as the gateway to the divine. Visionary artists, according to Wilber, possess the ability to access this divine realm through concentration, imagination, or mystic reverie, thus creating art that provides a glimpse into these realms.

Caruana's model, on the other hand, focuses on the subjective engagement between the viewer and the artwork. His method of 'entering through the image' involves a transformative journey that unearths personal and cultural memory-images and ultimately leads to the 'source.' This process encourages a deep, emotional connection with the artwork, fostering a sense of co-creation between the painting and each viewer who engages with it profoundly.

The interaction between these two models offers valuable insights into the nature of visionary art according to this field. Both models underscore the transformative and spiritual aspects of this art form, suggesting that the process of creating or engaging with visionary art can lead to profound experiences and insights. However, Wilber's model primarily centres on the various modes of perceiving and interpreting reality. On the other hand, Caruana's approach offers a methodology that fosters meditative exercises, potentially opening Wilber's 'eye of contemplation.' In addition, both models propose that visionary art is not merely an aesthetic product but a tool for spiritual exploration and personal transformation. This understanding implies the unique role of visionary artists as

facilitators of spiritual insight and shared human experience and highlights the potential of visionary art to serve as a bridge between the individual, the collective, and the divine.

#### 4.4 Key Points and Reflections

This chapter explored contemporary visionary and psychedelic art, tracing its roots and evolution. It brought to light several debates surrounding the role of entheogens and psychedelic substances, the emphasis on technique, and the challenges inherent in distinguishing between visionary and psychedelic art. Furthermore, the chapter examined the contemporary visionary culture as delineated by Oroc (2018) and highlighted the assertive language and bold claims made by a select group of influential figures in the field. These assertions, it was suggested, foster an atmosphere of exclusivity, potentially stifling broader participation.

To broaden my understanding of the subject, I turned to an examination of visionary creativity as conceptualised by Wilber (1990) and Caruana (2009). This exploration yielded a fascinating interpretation of art as well as an intriguing methodology for interpreting or experiencing visionary art. This was contrasted with Jones' (1997) behavioral approach, as detailed Chapter 3. I argued that these perspectives offer a vital counterbalance to mainstream methods of art interpretation, potentially serving as a fertile ground for expanding the breadth and depth of art interpretation discourse.

Echoing the findings of the previous chapter, a clear link to surrealism and, by extension, Prinzhorn's *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, was identified, thereby introducing the influence of Jungian theory, as detailed in Chapter 3. A noteworthy observation was the recurrent mention or subtle allusions to Jung's theories, specifically 'archetypes' and the 'collective symbolic unconscious'. However, the Jungian influence, while present, was found to be incomplete. This

notion was further corroborated by Sage (2022, p. 9), who, when questioned about the impact of depth psychology on her work, responded, “I wouldn’t say, directly. I would say more, indirectly. I feel like a lot of the influence came through Ernst Fuchs and my own personal experiences. I didn’t study it, but I have always been interested in his ideas.”

In the following chapters, the focus will shift to the exploration of historical and contemporary case studies (Chapters 5 and 6), each providing a unique vantage point from which to examine the themes and methodologies explored thus far. These case studies will serve as practical embodiments of the theories and concepts discussed, allowing for a more grounded and nuanced understanding. Subsequently, the discussion will transition towards an analytical psychological perspective on visionary art. This shift in perspective will allow for a deeper dive into the psychological underpinnings of this art form, offering a fresh lens through which to view the artistic process and its resulting creations.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Historical Case Studies

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the work of outsider artist Adolf Wölfli and fantastic realist Ernst Fuchs, primarily using Jones' behavioral approach for analysis. To structure the analysis, I will refer to the framework used by Noonan and Wehmeyer (2008) in their study of Edith Tenbrink's (1883-1963) art. Their study included a detailed analysis of Tenbrink's life experiences, her spiritual and artistic influences, her creative process, and the cultural context of her work within the esoteric landscape of Los Angeles and the broader tradition of metaphysical art. Furthermore, they presented their own interpretation of her art, compared her oeuvre with that of her contemporaries, and recorded the circumstances surrounding the discovery and collection of her paintings.

Their application of Jones' method resulted in an interpretation that considered the various factors that contributed to the creation and perception of an artwork. I intend to apply a similar approach in my exploration of the historical case studies which will be structured around the following subheadings: artist's background and influences, cultural context, creative process and interpretation, comparison with other artists, and circumstances of artwork discovery.

Additionally, I plan to incorporate a further subheading titled 'personal and cultural memory-images', which will allow me to bring in an aspect of Caruana's framework. The inclusion of this element is necessary to facilitate a deeper

exploration of the symbolic language and visual metaphors present in the artists' work, which is an important characteristic of visionary art. This addition will provide an extra layer of understanding to the overall interpretation and enable a more comprehensive exploration of their artistic expressions, connecting the personal, cultural, and symbolic dimensions.

## 5.2 The Quintessential Outsider Artist Adolf Wölfli

### Overview

Adolf Wölfli is a quintessential figure in the realm of outsider art, embodying the characteristics that define this genre (Maizels, 2002, p. 92.) Born in Switzerland in 1864, Wölfli's tumultuous life and struggles with mental health issues profoundly influenced his art, which he began creating while institutionalised. His vast body of work, comprising over 25,000 pages of intricate drawings and writings, exhibits a raw, uninhibited expression and a complex personal mythology, demonstrating the profound depths of the human psyche. This compelling fusion of personal history and creativity makes Wölfli an ideal case study for outsider art. I chose him for the intensity of his vision, the sheer volume of his work, and his pivotal role in shaping the perception of art produced outside the conventional art world.

### Background and Influences

Wölfli was born into an environment of severe deprivation and hardship. Wölfli's father, a known alcoholic and criminal, abandoned the family when he was only five years old, subjecting him to early experiences of neglect and abuse (Cardinal, 1972). Tragedy struck again when his mother passed away when he was ten, and he spent the subsequent twenty-one years cycling through foster homes and various jobs throughout Switzerland, as well as serving in the army.

Wölfli's early life was marked by instability and adversity, including a failed romance in his teenage years due to his lower social status that deeply affected him. In 1890, his life took a drastic turn when he was convicted and imprisoned for attempting to sexually assault two young girls. His behaviour

became increasingly erratic and aggressive in the years following his release, culminating in another assault on a child in 1895, which led to his commitment to the Waldau Mental Asylum. Here, Wölfli was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He suffered from hallucinations, psychosis, and violent outbursts that were severe enough to necessitate periods of complete isolation. He frequently attacked guards and destroyed everything he could get his hands on. His psychiatrist Morgenthaler (1921/1984, p. 88), described Wölfli's state in an account that also reveals the disregard psychiatric patients went at the time:

Wölfli ran around, stormed, broke, tore, and demolished everything he could; he soiled himself and those who approached him; in brief, he created an uproar that he had to be locked up in his cell for weeks at a time, naked with a pile of seaweed.

However, four years into his confinement, Wölfli discovered that art could calm his tumultuous mental state. The doctors provided him with supplies, and he embarked on a prolific artistic journey, producing over 25,000 pages of unique and intricate imagery throughout his life. Sadly, most of his early works were lost, but over 1,600 illustrations and 45 volumes of his autobiography survived.

Despite the challenging conditions of his life and mental health struggles, Wölfli managed to develop a highly personal and complex artistic style. His works were filled with dense, fractal designs, weaving intricate stories through unique visual, musical, and written vocabularies. He obsessively depicted certain symbols and motifs, such as faces and the 'vogeli' – a little bird interpreted as a sexual symbol and the protector of Wölfli's alter ego.

Dr. Morgenthaler was the first to recognise the artistic value of his work. He published a monograph of Wölfli, *Ein Geisteskranker als Künstler* ("A Mentally Ill Person as Artist") in 1921, a year before Prinzhorn's more

comprehensive *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*. Morgenthaler's account of Wölfl's life, characterised by trauma, deviance, and madness, became a prototype for the outsider artist's image.

## Cultural Context

Wölfl's artwork was produced within a very specific and complex cultural context. Born in Switzerland in 1864, his life spanned a period of significant societal and cultural change, including the Industrial Revolution, the emergence of psychoanalysis, and the tumultuous years leading up to World War I. However, Wölfl's personal circumstances and the isolation of his institutionalisation largely shielded him from direct participation in these wider cultural movements.

The most defining element of Wölfl's cultural context was arguably his confinement in the Waldau Clinic, a mental institution, from 1895 until his death in 1930. During this period, attitudes towards mental illness were slowly evolving. The burgeoning field of psychiatry sought to replace archaic notions of madness with a more nuanced understanding of mental disorders (Macgregor, 1992). The Waldau Clinic itself was at the forefront of these developments, with a progressive outlook on patient care that encouraged creative and occupational therapies. This environment likely played a significant role in facilitating Wölfl's artistic output.

During the early 20th century, there was also a rising interest in the art of the mentally ill, inspired in part by the work of Prinzhorn who collected artworks by psychiatric patients and argued for their aesthetic and psychological value in his influential book. This growing fascination with the creative expressions of the mentally ill led to the recognition of artists like Wölfl and positioned their work within the larger context of modern art. Despite the isolation of his

institutionalisation, Wölfl was indirectly connected to the broader cultural movements of his time. His intricate, highly detailed drawings resonate with the complexity and anxieties of the modern age. His work, devoid of the influence of artistic trends or schooling, was seen as a pure, unfiltered expression of the human psyche. This aligned with the interests of the emerging expressionist and surrealist movements, which sought to explore the irrational, ‘subconscious’ aspects of the human experience.

### **Creative Process and Interpretation**

Wölfl's creative journey was a profound exploration of his mental state and circumstances, as framed by his institutionalisation. His artistic process, though bereft of formal training, yielded a unique style marked by intricate details, geometric forms, and dense, layered compositions. These elements are manifested through an intense concentration and meticulous execution, as can be seen in the precision and complexity of his drawings.

For instance, in the piece *Mental Asylum Band-Copse* (1910) Wölfl creates a large-scale mixed-media drawing, measured at 99.7 cm x 72.1 cm, that combines geometric shapes with striking colours to craft an intricate composition (Figure 5.2.1). Dominated by a central rhombus divided into a quaternary, the artwork navigates the tension between order and chaos. The use of bold black lines and a palette of royal blue, purple, and red imbues the piece with a two-dimensional appearance, devoid of shading, proportion, or texture. The title alludes to a representation of a mental asylum, possibly symbolic of Wölfl's struggle for control and order.



Figure 5.2.1 – *Mental Asylum Band-Copse* (1910) by Adolf Wölfli. Image sourced from the public domain.

Wölfl's artistic motivation was deeply rooted in *horror vacui*, a fear of empty space. This compulsion drove him to fill every inch of his canvas with images, symbols, and text, a characteristic that became a defining feature of his work. His compositions typically consisted of intricate layers of geometric shapes, elaborate patterns, and recurring motifs, such as towers, birds, and human figures. His artistic practice wasn't constrained by the limited resources available to him at the mental asylum. Primarily using pencil and coloured pencil on newsprint or wrapping paper, he achieved an extraordinary level of detail and complexity in his work. He often combined drawing with writing, incorporating intricate codes, musical notation, and complex mathematical calculations into his compositions, thereby developing a unique visual language.

In 1908, he began to work on his narrative opus, which contained five main themes that described different periods of his life and elements of his delusional creations. They were created respectively: *From the Cradle to the Grave* (1908-1912), *Geographic and Algebraic Books* (1912-1916), *Books with Songs and Dances* (1917-1922), and *Funeral March* (1924-1928). Within these groupings, art and writing were deeply intertwined and included autobiographies, diaries, poems, and musical compositions complimented by unique visual art. Wölfl's artistic process was, in essence, a form of self-therapy, a mechanism to manage his schizophrenia and express his inner world. His art seemed to be his sanctuary, an escape from the confines of the asylum and his troubled mind. Although Wölfl rarely commented directly on his creative process, his psychiatrist, Dr. Morgenthaler, described him as being in a state of feverish excitement when he was drawing, indicating the intensity of his creative process. He wrote:

His method of work conveys the impression of urgency, of an internal necessity; Wölflī seems to follow a law, to obey the ineluctable [...] he almost never takes a break; as soon as one sheet is finished, he immediately begins another, ceaselessly writing and drawing [...] he cannot even tell you what he wants to draw when he is about to start; he does not know yet, he will have to wait and see [...] Wölflī is in many ways kinaesthetic: he thinks with his pencil (Morganthaler, 1921/1984, p. 14).

Wölflī's artistic process was an intricate endeavour that combined drawing, writing, and complex symbolic coding. Despite his challenging circumstances and lack of formal training, he developed a unique, personal visual language that allowed him to express his inner world and to some extent, manage his mental illness.

### **Personal and Cultural Memory-Images**

Wölflī's *Mental Asylum Band-Copse* (1910) is a mesmerising artwork that offers a profound insight into the complex psyche of the artist. Cardinal (1972, p. 57) suggests that Wölflī's creative output as an adult is dedicated to revisiting his early childhood memories, which were obscured due to an illness at the age of eight. He writes:

He is thus recapitulating rather than inventing. His writings and drawings constitute a fantastic autobiography in which Wölflī casts himself in the role of 'Saint Adolf II', a child divinity in the care of an almighty God who acts as his guide in various adventures.

The interplay of personal memory-images and cultural memory-images in this drawing reflects Wölflī's unique perception of his inner world. The dominant structure in the composition, resembling a castle or cathedral, can be seen to represent his struggle and confinement within the mental asylum. This personal symbol also resonates with a broader cultural symbolism tied to religious

institutions, particularly the Catholic Church, which operated many asylums during Wölfl's lifetime.

The divine child archetype holds universal significance in various cultural contexts. In Wölfl's artwork, this archetypal image merges with the personal memory-images of his lost childhood memories, manifesting in a compelling narrative that transcends the individual experience. The divine child often symbolises innocence, purity, and potential for growth and transformation, which can be seen as Wölfl's attempt to reclaim his lost youth and channel his personal experiences into a larger spiritual context.

The recurring bird motif, often symbolic of the soul and divine power across cultures, likely holds personal significance for Wölfl. Its presence throughout the artwork could represent his longing for escape or transcendence, reflecting his deep desire to break free from his physical and psychological confines. In a broader cultural context, the bird motif has been associated with the idea of spiritual ascension and freedom in various mythologies, such as the Egyptian god Horus, the Greek god Hermes, and the Hindu god Garuda. These cultural associations amplify Wölfl's personal quest for liberation and his search for a deeper connection with the divine.

Moreover, the large, central rhombus divided into a quaternary seems to serve as the 'source' of this artwork, the focal point from which all other elements radiate. This geometric form may symbolise the cosmos, with its division into the four cardinal points. Its prominent placement implies its importance and its possible role as a metaphor for Wölfl's perception of his place within the universe. Overall, Wölfl's *Mental Asylum Band-Copse* masterfully weaves

together personal memory-images and cultural memory-images to create a rich and evocative tapestry of his inner world.



Figure 5.2.2 – *Giant City Band-Wall-Hall* (1910) by Adolf Wolfli. Image sourced from the public domain.

## Comparison with Related Artists

Wölfli's work, in its complexity and depth, invites comparison with other artists from the outsider art movement. His intricate, detail-rich compositions and his utilisation of a personal visual language draw parallels with the work of Henry Darger (1892-1973). Darger, like Wölfli, was self-taught and created a vast, complex body of work that also included both visual art and writing. Both artists created immersive, intricate worlds that served as a reflection of their own experiences and internal states. Another artist with whom comparisons can be drawn is Madge Gill (1882-1961), a mediumistic artist whose work was also characterised by dense, detailed compositions and a distinct personal iconography. Gill, like Wölfli, filled her work with a recurring cast of figures and motifs, and her art was deeply intertwined with her personal beliefs and spiritual experiences.

However, while there are clear parallels to be drawn with these and other outsider artists, Wölfli's work also stands apart. The sheer scale and ambition of his work, exemplified by his illustrated autobiography, set him apart even within the realm of outsider art. His extensive use of musical notation and mathematical calculations in his drawings adds another layer of complexity to his work that is less common among his contemporaries.

Moreover, Wölfli's work displays a level of structural and geometric experimentation that is less prevalent in the work of Darger and Gill. His pieces often feature complex geometric patterns and structures, suggesting an underlying order and system to his work. This meticulous attention to structure and form sets his work apart from many of his outsider art contemporaries. Interestingly, the imagery created by Wölfli has a closer resemblance to Tibetan tapestries than to the modern art of his time. Tibetan tapestries, also known as thangkas, are

traditionally used as meditation tools to help bring one further along the path to enlightenment. They are rich with symbolism and meticulously crafted, mirroring Wölfl's detail-oriented and symbol-laden creations.

### **Circumstances of Discovery**

Wölfl's extensive oeuvre took shape within the walls of the Waldau Mental Asylum in Bern, Switzerland, his home for nearly 35 years. The recognition and preservation of his work, however, was significantly due to the dedication of Dr. Morgenthaler, the psychiatrist who first discerned Wölfl's artistic potential. Morgenthaler started showing interest in Wölfl's drawings in 1907, only a few years after Wölfl embarked on his artistic journey. He began accumulating and conserving Wölfl's work, identifying its therapeutic potential for the patient and its artistic significance for the larger world.

In 1921, Morgenthaler brought Wölfl's art to broader public attention by publishing *Ein Geisteskranker als Künstler* ("A Mentally Ill Person as Artist"), a comprehensive study of Wölfl's life and work. Morgenthaler's pioneering efforts inspired other psychiatrists and collectors to appreciate Wölfl's art. In the aftermath of his death, his work was showcased in numerous museums and galleries, further cementing his status as an important figure in outsider art. The establishment of the 'Adolf Wölfl Foundation' at the Museum of Fine Arts in Bern in 1975 marked another milestone (Maizels, 2002, p. 180). Their mission, even to this day, is to preserve and promote Wölfl's artistic legacy, making it accessible to researchers, art lovers, and the public.

Notably, according to Macclagan (2016), Morgenthaler's case study on Wölfl piqued the interest of several psychiatrists, artists, and writers of the time,

including Jung who owned three of Wölflī's drawings and employed them as examples to illustrate his theories about archetypes and mandalas<sup>34</sup>. Intriguingly, Prinzhorn also collected a substantial number of his drawings and anonymously included one in his publication as an illustration for the fifth category in his theoretical model. While analysing Wölflī's drawing, 'fig. 74,' he articulated how the composition showcased decorative elements and symbolic tendencies. He wrote:

In fig. 74 the method by which a completely uneducated person with strong symbolic tendencies creates a form language for himself. For him, the sheet is not intended for spatial depiction but for decorative division with flat stereotypical forms, each of which is given a distinct range of meaning by countless repetition (Prinzhorn, 1922/2019, p. 90).

Overall, Wölflī's enduring influence on outsider art and art therapy cannot be overstated. His life's work, born within the constraints of a mental institution illuminates the healing power of artistic expression. His legacy challenges conventional understandings of art, creativity, and the human condition, affirming the role of art as a powerful communicative tool, especially for marginalised voices.

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<sup>34</sup> Wojcik (2016) states this, however, I am unable to find any corroborating evidence, and he does not cite his point.

## 5.3 The ‘Father of Visionary Art’ Ernst Fuchs

### Overview

Ernst Fuchs is a pivotal figure in the realm of visionary art, exemplifying the characteristics that define this genre. Born in Austria in 1930, Fuchs’ life was marked by profound explorations of his spirituality and consciousness, deeply influencing his art. His vast body of work, encompassing painting, sculpture, and architecture, exhibits a sophisticated blend of technical precision and expressive symbolism, revealing the profound depths of his visionary imagination. This compelling fusion of personal history and creativity makes Fuchs an ideal case study for visionary art. He was selected for the richness of his artistic language, the breadth of his creative contributions, and his influential role in shaping the trajectory of the contemporary visionary art movement.

### Background and Influences

Fuchs had a complex and multifaceted personal background that shaped his artistic vision. As the child of Maximilian Fuchs, a man from an orthodox Jewish family, and a Christian mother, he was exposed to the harsh realities of the Nazi occupation in Austria. His father was forced to emigrate to Shanghai in 1938 while Fuchs, due to Nazi legislation that made it illegal for a Christian woman to raise a Jewish child, was deported to a transit camp for children of mixed racial origin. The subsequent formal divorce of his parents saved Fuchs from the horrors of the extermination camp. Fuchs’ complex background not only shaped his personal journey but also fundamentally influenced his artistic trajectory. He was baptised as a Roman Catholic at the age of 12, an event that shielded him from the

ongoing atrocities of the World War. This early exposure to religious symbolism, especially from two different faiths, would later permeate his art.

After the end of the war in 1945, Fuchs enrolled in painting at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, where he came across like-minded artists like Arik Brauer, Rudolf Hausner, Fritz Janschka, Wolfgang Hutter, and Anton Lehmden. Together, they founded the VSFR, aimed at redefining renaissance painting to include Alchemical, Christian, and Jewish mysticism spurred on by Jung's depth psychology (Caruana, 2001). It was during this period in the 1950s that Fuchs began reading Jung's work, notably *Psychology and Alchemy* (CW 12), which profoundly affected his creative practice (ibid.).

Despite the initial resistance and hostility towards their work<sup>35</sup>, the group persevered, with Fuchs playing a pivotal role in keeping the movement alive. His breakthrough came in 1962 when he and twenty-three other artists from the school took part in an exhibition called *Surrealism: Fantastic Painting of the Present* in Vienna. This event marked the beginning of international recognition for Fuchs and the VSFR. Subsequently, in 1972, he acquired an art nouveau building threatened with demolition, the first Otto Wagner Villa in Vienna. Fuchs worked on the restoration for two years, transforming the building into a gallery space. However, by 1988 it was converted into the 'Ernst Fuchs Museum' which still exists today.

Throughout his career, Fuchs demonstrated a deep reverence for traditional painting techniques and the master-apprentice relationship in an artist's learning process. He considered Albert Von Gutersloh (1887-1973) and Salvador Dalí

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<sup>35</sup> It took a long time for the group to gain recognition as the critics and public expressed great hostility towards their works. For example, at an exhibition in the 'Vienna Concert Hall's' foyer, the work of Fuchs' Hausner, and Janschka was removed due to public outrage (Muschik, 1974).

(1904-1989) as his ‘masters’. Von Gutersloh, his professor at the Academy of Fine Art, was a key influence despite their differing artistic styles. His paintings included general still-life imagery, portraits, and landscapes, a far stretch from Fuchs’ visionary depictions.

In contrast, Fuchs’ relationship with Dalí was “written in the stars” (Caruana, 2003). He became enthralled with Dalí’s work at the age of 17 after viewing his painting *Lugubrious Game* (1929). He was instantly amazed by the recognisable yet undefinable content of his configurations, exemplified by the precision of his painting technique. Fuchs proceeded by developing a relationship with his new idol, which blossomed over the years, inspiring Fuchs to continue his painting similarly; he described:

My valuable acquaintanceship with Dalí in the fifties, who became a kind of ‘protector’ for me, was no mere accident. This encounter was an omen, whose significance I immediately recognised. And I brought it back to Vienna as a fateful legacy [...] it prophesied the task of founding the Vienna School of Fantastic Realism (Fuchs cited by Caruana, 2001).

Fuchs’ background, marked by personal hardship, religious influence, and a profound respect for tradition, played a key role in shaping his artistic journey and approach. From the early experiences of the Nazi occupation to his deep engagement with the art of painting, Fuchs’ life story offers crucial insights into his work as an artist.

## **Cultural Context**

Fuchs came of age in a time when Austria, and indeed the world, was undergoing seismic shifts in political, social, and cultural spheres. Born in 1930, his early years coincided with the rise of Nazi Germany, the Second World War, and the Holocaust. His Jewish heritage and his father’s exile to Shanghai were stark

reminders of the deep-seated anti-Semitism that characterised this era. The religious undertones in his work and his repeated exploration of themes related to persecution, suffering, and redemption can be seen as reflections of this early experience.

After the war, Vienna emerged as a city attempting to rebuild its identity, a process that was mirrored in the art world. The founding of the VSFR, of which Fuchs was a key member, was a direct response to this cultural climate. Their approach, which emphasised a return to traditional painting techniques and incorporated elements of mysticism, symbolism, and the unconscious, stood in stark contrast to the growing popularity of abstract expressionism and conceptual art that dominated the post-war art scene. Fuchs' work was also deeply influenced by the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s, which was characterised by a rejection of mainstream values, an embrace of alternative lifestyles, and a renewed interest in spirituality. His visionary art, with its emphasis on mysticism, religious symbolism, and the exploration of altered states of consciousness (Caruana, 2001), resonated with many within the counterculture movement.

While Fuchs' work was rooted in the cultural context of his time, it also transcended it. He drew upon a wide range of influences, from religious texts to Jungian psychology to alchemical symbolism, creating a unique artistic language that spoke to universal human experiences of suffering, redemption, and transcendence. His ability to synthesise diverse cultural influences and respond to the changing social and political climate of his time was a testament to his adaptability and creative resilience.

## Creative Process and Interpretation

Fuchs' work is characterised by a meticulous and deliberate process that often combines traditional techniques with innovative experimentation. He was particularly known for his use of the Mischtechnik, a painting technique that involves layering and glazing to create a luminous effect. This method was widely used during the Renaissance and was later rediscovered and modified by artists like Fuchs, who valued its ability to produce depth and luminosity.

In the case of *The Generation (Birth) of a Unicorn* (1950), Fuchs demonstrates his expertise in the etching technique (Figure 5.3.1). He creates a fantastical scene featuring a tower with crenellations, the sexual union of a male and female figure, a male figure with angel wings positioned upright inside a decorated chalice, and an angelic unicorn resting peacefully amongst the rubble. These elements are brought to life through the precise manipulation of light and dark. Fuchs' etching technique, which involves breaking up the long contour lines into short strokes and dots, creates a sense of depth and form. Moreover, his use of chiaroscuro, a technique involving the interplay of light and dark tones, enhances the illusion of depth and brings a dramatic emphasis to certain elements like the tower and the couple.

*The Wedding of the Unicorn* (1960) on the other hand, is a luminous painting created using the mischtechnik (Figure 5.3.2). The painting depicts a contrasting scene of a decaying unicorn and a beautiful woman, creating an intriguing juxtaposition. Fuchs' strategic placement of objects and his use of light produce a sculptural quality that enhances the figures and the allegorical elements in the composition. His use of complementary colours, blue and orange, in different shades and values, also adds to the luminous modelling effect. Here

again, Fuchs' mastery of light and shadow is evident as he uses these elements to produce depth and to draw the viewer's attention to certain parts of the painting.

In both artworks, Fuchs' process involves combining representational forms with elements of fantasy, creating a world that feels both familiar and strange<sup>36</sup>.

In terms of interpretation, Fuchs' works can be seen as a commentary on the duality of existence. The contrasting figures in *The Wedding of the Unicorn* seem to represent the dichotomy between purity and corruption, innocence and experience, beauty, and decay. Similarly, *The Generation (Birth) of a Unicorn* presents a scene of union and creation against a backdrop of destruction and chaos, suggesting a perpetual cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. These themes reflect Fuchs' fascination with the mysteries of life. His use of symbols and icons from various cultural and historical contexts lends his works a universal appeal.

The tower<sup>37</sup>, for instance, is a common symbol in art and literature, representing strength, power, and protection. The unicorn, on the other hand, has been associated with purity, innocence, and magic. By incorporating these symbols into his works, Fuchs invites viewers to engage with the paintings on multiple levels, interpreting and reinterpreting the images based on their own cultural knowledge and personal experiences. Overall, Fuchs' artistic process and the resulting artworks demonstrate his unique approach to artmaking, one that

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<sup>36</sup> Within his paintings, Fuchs attempted to capture his imagination and combine it with his external world experiences. In his view, these components were equal. He described, "I realised more and more that the reality of the imagination is almost identical to the reality everyone sees" (Fuchs cited by Caruana, 2004). He continued: "so, over the course of my studies, I kept doing both – working from nature, making studies and working from my imagination" (ibid.).

<sup>37</sup> The image is reminiscent of the Ziggurat, an ancient Mesopotamian architectural structure (tower) often built as a temple or religious structure. The temple at the summit was used for religious ceremonies, specifically the sacred marriage ritual or *hieros gamos*, which was a central part of Sumerian religious beliefs and played an important role in the religious life of the community (Kathleen, 2013, p. 277).

combines technical skill, creative imagination, and a deep understanding of symbolic language.

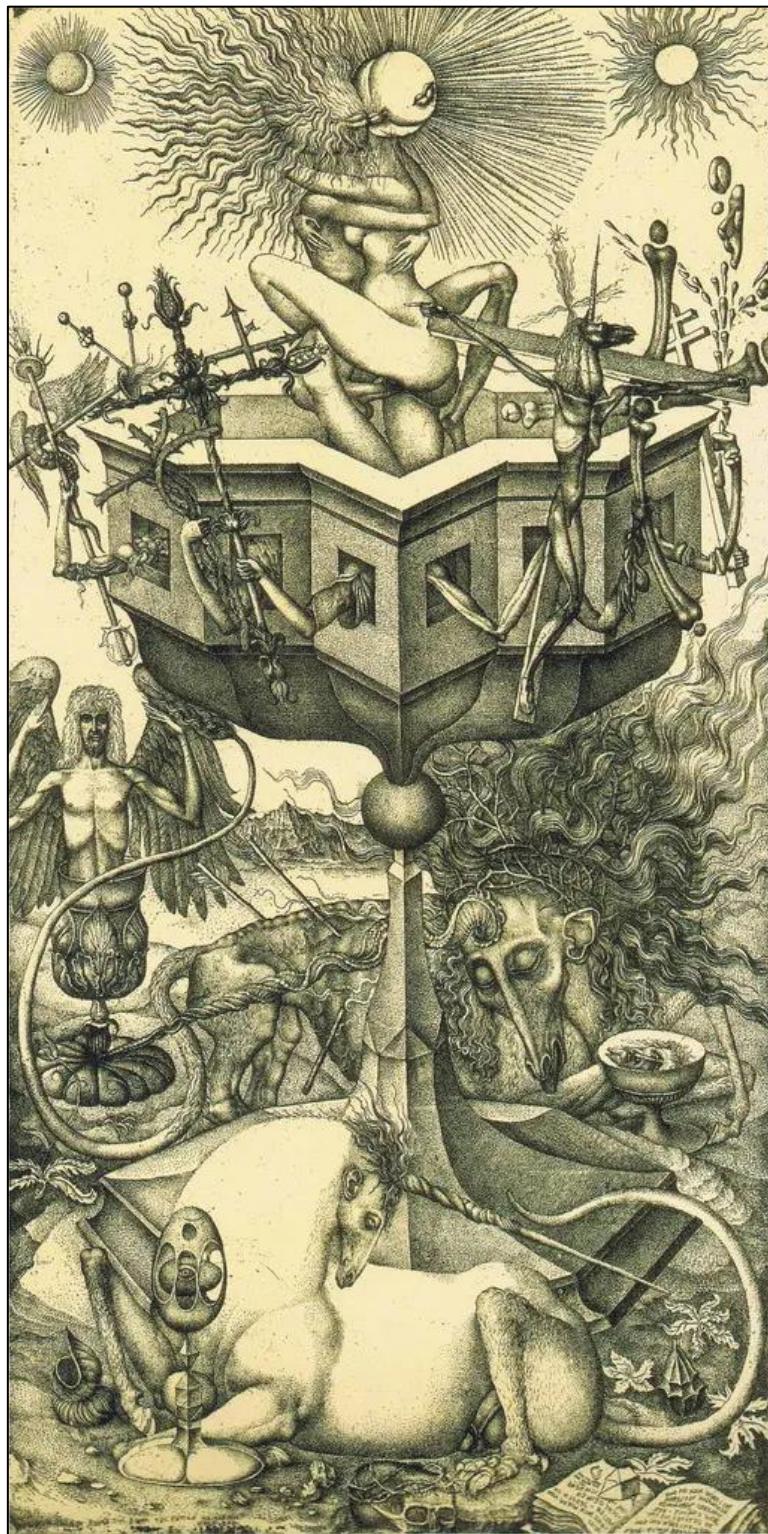


Figure 5.3.1 – *The Generation (Birth) of the Unicorn* (1950) by Ernst Fuchs.

## Personal and Cultural Memory-Images

The mystical allure of Fuchs' painting, *The Generation (Birth) of a Unicorn*, captivates viewers, coaxing them into a fantastical world where personal and cultural symbols converge. Despite lacking specific references to Fuchs' own personal memory-associations, it is hard to ignore the captivating allure of childlike wonder this work evokes. It resonates with the charm of fairy tales, where mythical creatures wander freely. The unicorn, a key figure in this piece, could potentially bring forth a range of personal memories tied to tales of magic, purity, and innocent curiosity. For many, the scene might reignite memories of a time when such narratives fuelled dreams of extraordinary realms, eliciting feelings of joy, awe, and fascination.

Yet, the painting goes beyond personal reminiscences. It taps into a shared cultural consciousness, weaving together various symbols and motifs. The unicorn, a creature deeply entrenched in Western folklore and mythology, stands as a symbol of transformation, purity, and enchantment. Its birth from the intimate union of the couple points to an alchemical marriage – a concept found in various esoteric traditions representing the reconciliation of opposites, the creation of something new and profound from the convergence of diverse elements.

At the heart of the painting, the couple in intimate embrace emerge as the 'source' – the nucleus around which all other elements revolve. Their union, resulting in the birth of the unicorn, signifies the transformative potential inherent in harmonising opposites. This theme resonates throughout the piece, subtly echoed in the intricate details and motifs that Fuchs masterfully employs. This central image of union and birth serves as a poignant reminder of the potential inherent in unity – be it between individuals, cultures, or symbolic archetypes.

Fuchs' painting is a visual feast, that invites viewers on a journey of introspection and discovery. It encourages an exploration of personal memories while also urging a deeper understanding of our shared cultural heritage.

### **Comparison with Related Artists**

Fuchs can be compared with other artists within the VSFR, such as Arik Brauer, Rudolf Hausner, and Wolfgang Hutter, for their shared dedication to a detailed and vividly imaginative approach. However, the synthesis of diverse cultural and religious symbols in Fuchs' works sets him apart from his contemporaries. *The Generation (Birth) of the Unicorn*, for instance is reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch's fantastic landscapes and the dream-like realities of Dali. Yet, his work exceeds surreal imagery as he attempts to dive deeper into the symbolic language of the unconscious, combining personal memory-images with cultural archetypes, thereby creating a unique iconography that is both profoundly personal and universally resonant.

While Dalí often utilised personal symbols and Freudian concepts to craft his surrealistic landscapes, Fuchs appears to be more concerned with integrating broader religious and cultural symbols into his work. His approach involved integrating Jung's concept of the collective unconscious and archetypes, wherein he blends personal memories and experiences with universally recognised symbols. A comparison with contemporary visionary artists like Alex Grey could also be illuminating. Grey's works often depicts spiritual and metaphysical themes using intricate details and layers of symbolism, like Fuchs. However, while Grey focuses more on the interconnectedness of life and the universe through the depiction of the human body, Fuchs' work is more concerned with the

juxtaposition of different religious and cultural symbols, which provides a unique and multifaceted view of the sacred.

### **Circumstances of Discovery**

Fuchs was not an artist waiting to be discovered but an active agent in the art world who took steps to disseminate his work and his philosophy of art. His dedication to his craft extended beyond the canvas, as he sought to create a platform for visionary art and VSFR, a genre that focused on transcending mainstream trends. A significant turning point occurred in 1972, when he purchased a space that could serve as a crucible for the kind of detailed, symbol-rich art that he and his peers were creating. This led to the development of his museum and exhibition space in Vienna, now known as the Ernst Fuchs Museum.

This museum provided a platform for showcasing his own work, as well as allowing the public to immerse themselves in his thought-provoking imagery. Moreover, the museum served as a hub for artists interested in the style. By working with apprentices, offering workshops and lectures, Fuchs imparted his knowledge and technique to a new generation of artists. This active dissemination of his artistic philosophy extended his influence beyond his own work, contributing to the growth and development of the fantastic realism and visionary art movements.



Figure 5.3.2 – *The Wedding of the Unicorn* (1960) by Ernst Fuchs.

## 5.4 Key Points and Reflections

This chapter explored the lives and works of two contrasting yet fascinating artists: Adolf Wölfli, an outsider artist, and Ernst Fuchs, a proponent of VSFR. This exploration, guided by Jones' behavioral approach and built upon by Caruana's concept of personal and cultural memory-images, has showed the complexities of their creative processes. Crucial distinctions between Wölfli and Fuchs were identified in terms of their artistic education (formal training versus instinctive creation), their participation in the artwork (active versus passive) and the exposure of their work (self-promotion versus discovery by others).

Yet, amidst these differences, striking commonalities emerge. Both artists were deeply absorbed in their internal worlds, using symbolic imagery as a conduit for expressing these realms. Their art became a coping mechanism, a way to navigate through their challenging circumstances - Wölfli's mental illness and institutionalisation, and Fuchs' experiences during a turbulent historical period. In addition, religious and cultural imagery prominently permeate their works, manifesting uniquely due to their disparate experiences. Wölfli transformed his struggles into a complex personal mythology, whereas Fuchs borrowed heavily from existing religious and mythical narratives. Furthermore, both associated their artistic inspiration with a divine source. Cardinal (1972) notes this spiritual connection in Wölfli's work, while Fuchs directly articulates it, claiming:

Inspiration is being contacted by spirits. You are always being contacted by spirits, good ones and bad ones. Artistic inspiration is just one level of this. Inspiration is an angel giving you a message (Fuchs cited by Matthiessen, 1963).

Regardless of their divergent paths, both Wölfli and Fuchs have left significant impacts on the art world. Their legacies continue to influence and inspire, with

their works serving as powerful reminders of the transformative power of art, while underscoring the universality of certain themes.

# CHAPTER SIX

## Contemporary Case Studies

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on visionary art and examines the artistic expressions and experiences of two contemporary artists. The artists discussed are Amanda Sage (b. 1980), a well-known visionary and psychedelic artist who identifies as such, and Daniel Martin Diaz (b.1967) who is recognised as both an outsider and visionary artist. Similar to the methodology in Chapter 5, this chapter adopts Jones' behavioral approach, as employed by Noonan and Wehmeyer (2008). Additionally, Caruana's concepts of personal and cultural memory images contribute to enriching the analysis. To gain a deep understanding of the artists' individual perspectives, this chapter incorporates quotes extracted from one-on-one interviews. These insights provide valuable context and enhance our comprehension of their artistic visions and creative processes.

## **6.2 The Psychedelic Transfigurations by Amanda Sage**

### **Overview**

Sage is widely recognised as a prominent figure in the realm of visionary and psychedelic art, embodying the defining characteristics of this genre. Born in 1978 in Denver, Colorado, her artistry reflects the profound influence of her dynamic life experiences and extensive training under classical artists. Her work has been specifically chosen for its vibrant intensity, as well as her dedication to personal and societal transformation, establishing her as an influential presence within the visionary art community.

### **Background and Influences**

Sage is an acclaimed visual artist who describes her work as both ‘visionary’ and ‘psychedelic’, as well as conduits for spiritual and planetary growth and transformation (Sage, 2019). Sage’s educational journey, distinct from conventional paths, had a profound influence on her artistic development. Initially home-schooled until the age of nine, she later attended Shining Mountain Waldorf School in Boulder. Waldorf schools, following the principles of Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy, offer a holistic education that blends arts, humanities, and academics to cultivate balanced cognitive, emotional, and physical abilities in students. During her time at Shining Mountain, Sage received artistic instruction from Hikaru Hirata-Miyakawa, a visual artist who introduced her to semi-realism and the work of Fuchs.

In addition to her unique educational background, Sage’s upbringing in the Unity Church, described as “a metaphysical Christianity” (Sage, 2022, p. 2), combined with her family environment that nurtured openness, creativity, and

spirituality, all contributed to her sensitivity to ethereal and visionary experiences from an early age. Sage recalls her childhood experiences of perceiving people surrounded by colours, which she later understood to be auras: “When I was a small child, I remember always associating people with colour, I saw colours all around people – it was only later that I learned they were auras. I had this natural openness” (Sage, 2022, p. 5). Subsequently, in 1997, she moved to Vienna to study classical painting techniques under Michael Fuchs and later served as a painting assistant to Fuchs. However, her artistic approach underwent a significant shift in 2005 when she had a transformative psychedelic experience. Since then, Sage has become a vocal advocate for the second psychedelic revolution (Rose, 2021).

Sage has been based in Los Angeles since 2009, maintaining art studios in Vienna and Colorado. She is a significant figure in the visionary and transformational art community, hosting workshops, delivering lectures, and showcasing her work on a global scale. One of her recent projects, *The Vision Train*, was developed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a virtual platform for artists to connect, share ideas, and collaborate on painting techniques. Sage (2022, p. 10) places immense value on collaboration and the development of visionary communities, seeing it as a highly enriching experience:

I think it is more beautiful to have a community and to consider the work we are doing in a larger context, beyond just the ‘me’ and ‘mine’. I think the work that we can explore together is much more exciting than being in competition. The collaboration is way more interesting.

Her profound contributions to the visionary and transformational art scene have earned her substantial recognition and popularity. She is often invited to visionary and transformational festivals, podcasts, and videos. Her close relationship with

renowned visionary artist, Grey, has led to high praise, with him stating that “Amanda Sage is at the forefront of a new breed of visionary/interdimensional art” (Grey, 2008) and she is often referred to as ‘world-famous’, ‘influential’, and a ‘visionary’ by various online sources (Rose, 2021; Armstrong, 2020).

## **Cultural Context**

Sage’s artwork is undeniably a product of her cultural environment and the broader societal context in which she lives and works. Since the late 20th century, the Western world has seen a resurgence of interest in spiritual matters, often in forms that diverge significantly from traditional religious institutions. This spiritual renaissance, sometimes referred to as the New Age movement (Melton, 2019) emphasises personal growth, holistic health, and a sense of oneness with the universe. Sage’s work can be seen as part of this broader cultural trend. Moreover, her cultural context most likely shaped by her experiences in diverse geographic locations, including the United States and Europe. Her time in Vienna, where she studied under Michael Fuchs<sup>38</sup> and worked as a painting assistant to Ernst Fuchs, exposed her to the rich artistic traditions of Europe. Vienna, in particular, has a long history as a hub for artistic and intellectual innovation, and this cultural legacy likely had an impact on Sage’s development as an artist.

Furthermore, her life in Los Angeles places her within a city renowned for its multiculturalism, its creative industries, and its openness to new ideas. LA is home to a vibrant arts scene, and its cultural diversity allows for an exchange of ideas from a multitude of perspectives. It also has a history of countercultural movements, including the psychedelic movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which

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<sup>38</sup> Michael Fuchs is Ernst Fuchs’ son.

has seen a resurgence in recent years and to which Sage contributes through her art and advocacy. During our interview she described, “I very much want to get more involved on the frontlines of the psychedelic renaissance, because we need it” (Sage, 2022, p. 1).

The cultural context of the early 21st century is also characterised by an increasing awareness of global issues, such as climate change and social justice. This awareness is reflected in Sage’s work, which often touches on themes of transformation and growth, both personal and societal. Moreover, her emphasis on community and collaboration can be seen as a response to the individualism that has been a dominant cultural trend in recent decades. In this way, her work challenges the status quo and presents a vision of a more interconnected and harmonious world.

The digital age is another key aspect of the cultural context in which Sage works. The advent of the internet and social media has revolutionised the art world, offering new platforms for artists to share their work, connect with audiences, and collaborate with other artists. Sage has embraced these new opportunities, as evidenced by her project *The Vision Train*, which utilises a virtual platform to facilitate artistic collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, Sage’s work is deeply influenced by the cultural context in which she lives, characterised by a renewed interest in spirituality, an awareness of global issues, a multicultural and geographically diverse environment, and the opportunities and challenges presented by the digital age.

## Creative Process and Interpretation

Sage's artistic journey is an intensive exploration of her personal psyche and the shared consciousness of humankind. Her work, though informed by formal training, notably under the mentorship of Fuchs, has yielded a distinct style characterised by intricate details, cosmic symbolism, and multi-layered, luminescent compositions. These elements are brought to life through a methodical and meticulous execution, as can be seen in the vibrancy and complexity of her paintings.



Figure 6.2.1 – *The Great Wave of Transformation* (2021) by Amanda Sage and Bob Merritt. Image used with permission from the artist.

In *The Great Wave of Transformation* (2020), Sage and her partner Bob Merritt apply a modern interpretation of the Mischtechnik, which involves layering oil and tempera to create a glowing effect that enhances the depth and luminosity of her work (Figure 6.2.1). The piece is an elaborate fusion of rich colours and symbolic elements that craft a narrative of transformation and evolution. The

painting, dominated by a wave-like entity, serves as a metaphor for change and the cyclical nature of existence. Sage (2022, p. 13) describes how the painting came about: “we started painting this together right before the pandemic hit [...] we saw a great wave coming, a big change.” In general, and as evident in this painting, Sage uses bold lines and a palette of vibrant hues, blending smoothly from one to another, to imbue the piece with an ethereal quality that transcends the conventional two-dimensional plane. The meticulous layering of colours and textures contributes to the depth and dynamism of the artwork, inviting viewers into a journey of introspection and spiritual awakening.

The symbols and motifs incorporated into Sage’s work reflect her desire to depict the interconnectedness of life and the universe, making her paintings a gateway to her inner thoughts and broader philosophical musings. She often infuses her work with elements such as the fibonacci sequence, sacred geometry, and various natural forms. These recurring motifs, combined with her attention to detail and her unique use of colour and light, contribute to her distinctive artistic style.

This process is exemplified further in her piece *Ana Suromai* (2011), which translates to ‘lift the skirt’ (Figure 6.2.2). In this captivating artwork, Sage explores the realm of feminine power and vulnerability. The painting portrays a woman in a state of self-revelation, lifting her skirt to unveil a universe of creation, symbolising the potent creative force inherent in femininity. Here, Sage employs a vibrant palette of blues, purples, and golds, with the central figure of the woman glowing in luminous white. The intricate detailing and depth created by the layering of oil and tempera paints give the piece a sense of movement and life, further emphasising the themes of creation and transformation.

In both *The Great Wave of Transformation* and *Ana Suromai*, Sage's work is not just about producing aesthetically pleasing images, but about exploring and communicating deeper truths about existence, consciousness, and interconnectedness. Her creative process involves not just the physical act of painting, but also an inner journey of exploration and discovery. Through her art, she invites viewers to embark on their own journeys of introspection and understanding, offering a visual medium through which they can explore the complexities of the human experience and the universe.

### **Personal and Cultural Memory-Images**

Sage's *Ana Suromai*, a blend of egg tempera, casein, and oil on linen, presents an arresting image of a goddess-like figure in a surreal landscape. It immediately stirs a range of personal memory-images, such as the echo of public protests or the awe and discomfort provoked by confronting societal taboos. The exposed female form, the fleeing crowds, and the stark depiction of a world in chaos could rekindle memories of news reports and history lessons about social upheaval, gender politics, and environmental degradation.

However, the painting also resonates with a rich tapestry of cultural memory-images. The central figure, lifting her skirt to reveal a glowing egg, draws upon shared symbols of power and femininity. This act of 'lifting the skirt' historically used as a gesture to ward off evil, challenges our shared understanding of feminine modesty and power<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> In a Facebook post, dated November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, the artist described the painting as a visual denunciation of the corrupt systems that have brought the world to a state of chaos and greed. Additionally, in a twitter post, date March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Sage attributed the inspiration of the painting to Catherin Blackledge's book *Raising the Skirt: The Unsung Power of the Vagina* (2005). The Term *Ana-Suromai* is derived from the Greek word 'to lift the skirt' which represents a powerful gesture that has historically been used to scare away evil and stop armies in their tracks.

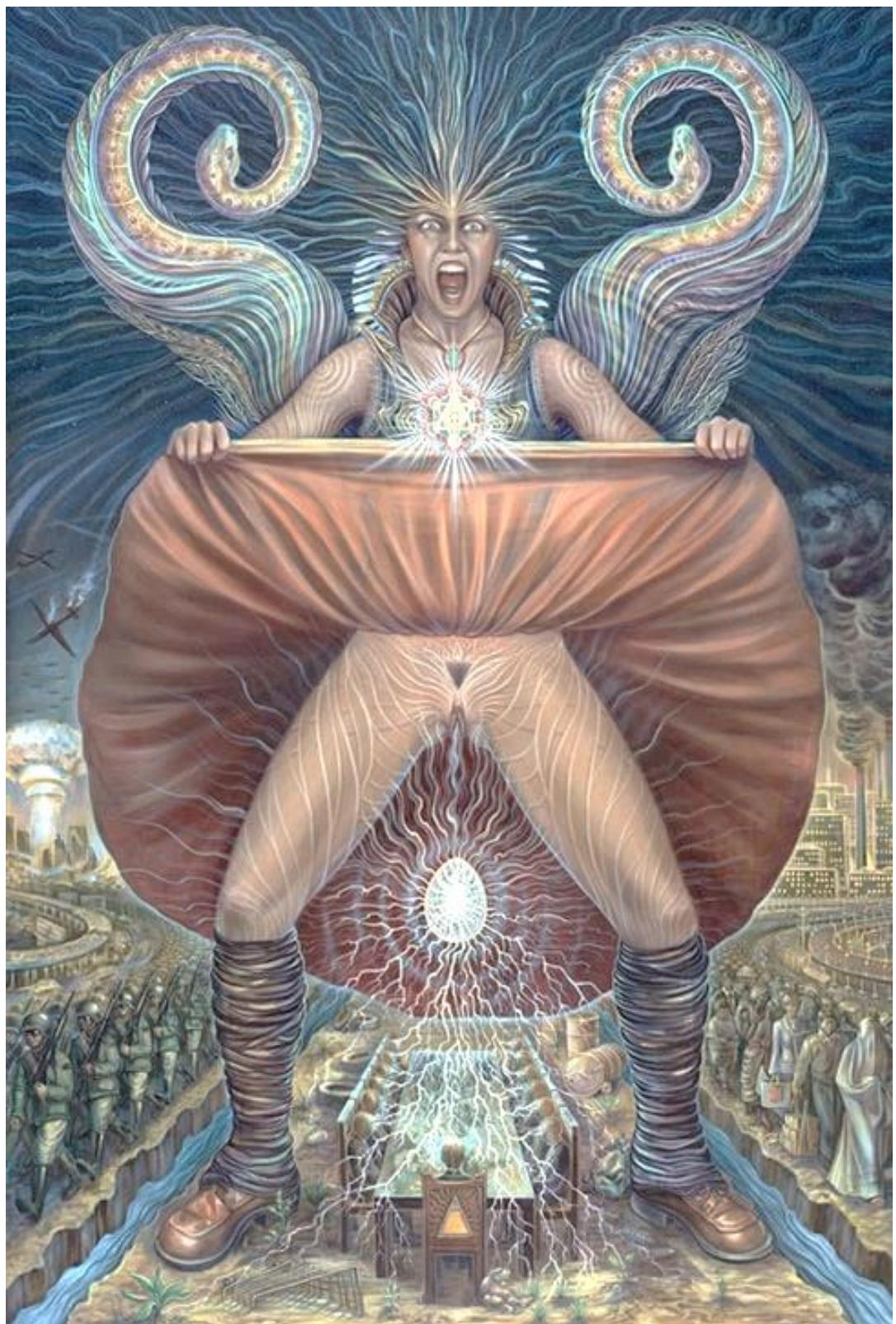


Figure 6.2.2 – *Ana- Suromai* (2011) by Amanda Sage. Image used with permission from the artist.

This, along with the universal symbols of the egg and the intersecting triangles, alludes to themes of birth, transformation, and the balance between spiritual and material realms.

The ‘source’ of the artwork, the symbolic epicentre, seems to be the goddess herself. Her commanding presence and the energetic lines radiating from her figure create a nexus from which all other elements flow. This central figure, embodying themes of sexuality, creation, and destruction, invites us to reconsider our personal experiences and cultural understandings in the light of her defiant, transformative power.

As we trace the relationship between personal and cultural memory-images and the source, Sage’s painting takes on new depth. It becomes a critique of societal failings, a call to confront outdated systems and attitudes, and a testament to the transformative power of feminine energy. The vibrant colours and dynamic linework, combined with the symbolic richness of the piece, invites the viewer to immerse themselves in the painting, encouraging a deeper exploration of personal experiences and shared cultural symbols.

### **Comparison with Related Artists**

Sage’s work can be compared with that of Fuchs and Hilma af Klint, each of whom has made significant contributions to the realm of visionary and spiritual art. Fuchs, a master of the VSFR and a teacher to both Sage and Caruana, has had a significant influence on Sage’s artistic development. Fuchs’ technical approach, particularly his use of the Mischtechnik, has been adopted and evolved by Sage in her work. While his art is rooted in biblical and mythical narratives with a strong undercurrent of symbolism, Sage’s art, although influenced by these elements, is

more focused on depicting concepts of consciousness and interconnectedness. Her work often presents a more abstract and fluid interpretation of human forms and natural elements, in contrast to Fuchs' more recognisable depictions.

Likewise, af Klint was a pioneer of abstract art, whose spiritual and visionary approach resonates with Sage's artistic philosophy. Both artists delve into metaphysical concepts and the unseen aspects of existence, exploring them through symbolic and vibrant imagery. While af Klint's work was heavily influenced by spiritualism, theosophy, and anthroposophy (Higbie, 2016), Sage's art draws from a wider range of mystical and philosophical traditions. In terms of visual style, af Klint's abstract compositions often emphasise geometric shapes and patterns, whereas Sage's work is characterised by more organic, fluid forms that blend human figures with their surroundings. Despite these differences, both artists share an interest in the transcendental nature of human existence and a desire to represent the intangible through their art. They both use colour and symbolism to communicate complex spiritual and metaphysical concepts, offering viewers a glimpse into the hidden realms of consciousness and the interconnectedness of life.

Overall, Sage's work can be seen as a contemporary evolution of the visionary art tradition, influenced by the techniques and themes of artists like Fuchs, as well as historically significant figures such as Hilma af Klint. While she shares certain stylistic and philosophical similarities with these artists, her unique artistic voice and focus on human consciousness, transformation, and interconnectedness set her apart.

## Circumstances of Discovery

The early 2000s marked a significant phase in Sage's career. Having obtained a studio space in 2000 in the Viennese WUK cultural centre, she not only created art but also organised cultural events and contributed to the cultural centre as a board member. Her artistic vision took her to Bali in 2006, a trip that resulted in the creation of her piece *Dreams* (2006) and introduced the recurrent egg motif in her work (Walker, 2013). Sage's recognition in the United States began to grow in 2007 when she started exhibiting with other visionary artists (ibid.). She was represented by Galerie 10, a renowned gallery that also represented Fuchs among other prominent artists. Moving to Los Angeles, her work began to be featured in places like the *Temple of Visions* gallery.

Sage became a recognisable figure in the global art scene through her live painting performances, workshops, and lectures at transformational festivals and exhibitions such as *Inner Visions* at the Boom Festival in Portugal, Palenque Norte's Burning Man, Harmonic Spaces in Australia, Art Basel Miami, and The Nexus Global Youth Summit (Baldini & St John, 2012). This direct interaction with her audience played a crucial role in the discovery and appreciation of her work. Moreover, in 2013, Sage, in collaboration with Caruana and A. Andrew Gonzalez, co-founded the Vienna Academy of Visionary Art<sup>40</sup>, bringing together the Visionary Guild which studied under Fuchs. This institution further elevated her reputation within the visionary art community and provided a platform to share her knowledge with aspiring artists. Alongside David Heskin and his wife Aloria Weaver, Sage also founded the Colorado Alliance of Visionary Artists

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<sup>40</sup> The academy's inception originated from the growth of the annual 'Visions in the Mischtechnik Seminar' that took place in Torri Superiore, an ecovillage in Italy. In December 2013, Sage proposed the concept of establishing the academy to Caruana, who currently serves as its director (Walker, 2013).

(CAVA), expanding her influence in her home country. Sage's discovery and rise to prominence in the world of visionary art can be attributed to her talent, her commitment to personal transformation and growth, her collaborations and associations with influential artists and institutions, and her active participation in international exhibitions and transformational festivals.

## 6.3 The Disagreeable Visionary, Daniel Martin Diaz

### Overview

Daniel Martin Diaz, born in 1967, holds a significant position in the scope of visionary art, even though he primarily identifies as an outsider artist. While Diaz is often referred to as a visionary by others, his unique artistic style and distinct approach to his craft contribute to his recognition within the art community. His work has garnered attention for its thought-provoking and introspective qualities, resonating with audiences seeking profound and unconventional artistic expressions. Diaz's contributions to the field, along with his exploration of visionary themes, offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of artistic vision and its impact on personal and cultural perspectives.

### Background and Influences

Diaz was born into a traditional Mexican family that was deeply Catholic. Growing up, Diaz had minimal exposure to the arts and initially had no aspiration of becoming a visual artist. Instead, he was drawn towards a profession in architectural drafting and mechanical drawing. The turning point in Diaz's life came during a college course where he was introduced to surrealism. This new exposure stirred within him a fascination and curiosity that led him to independently study the works of various artists, with surrealists like Giorgio de Chirico having a profound influence on his perspective. Diaz (2022, p. 9) recalls being moved on a "metaphysical level" by de Chirico's imagery, triggering a transformative moment in his artistic journey: "the moment I opened a book and saw his imagery, it hit me on a metaphysical level – I became a totally different person."

The early works of Diaz were deeply entrenched in his Catholic upbringing and theological uncertainties. His paintings served as an outlet for personal expression, reflecting his growing disillusionment and anger with the beliefs of Catholicism he had adhered to all his life. These works were not initially intended for public exhibition but served as a platform for Diaz to navigate his evolving beliefs and emotions. He explains “I had been a devout Catholic all my life and had invested in the beliefs Catholicism [...], but I began to feel disillusioned and angry. My initial paintings were a means of expressing my feelings without any intention of exhibiting them” (Diaz, 2022, p. 8).

The evolution of Diaz’s professional art career took a significant leap in 2001 when he exhibited his works alongside Joel Witkin. This exposure led to widespread recognition and an opportunity in 2002 to attend a seminar in Austria where Diaz honed his skills in traditional egg tempera and oil painting techniques through the Old Master’s New Vision scholarship<sup>41</sup>.

Between 2001 and 2009, Diaz focused on producing classical-style paintings with a surrealist touch. These works often featured disquieting depictions of Catholic themes, a reflection of his personal experiences and spiritual questioning. Despite his growing success, Diaz found himself increasingly disillusioned, feeling a loss of his original artistic purpose which was rooted in self-expression and the outsider perspective. This prompted Diaz to take a hiatus from painting to delve into the realms of science and philosophy, with a specific focus on quantum physics and cosmology.

This phase of introspection and study led to a significant shift in Diaz’s artistic style. He moved away from classical and surrealist paintings to produce

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<sup>41</sup> It is interesting to note the overlap here, the Old Master’s New Vision Seminar is hosted by Caruana, as mentioned earlier in the chapter.

intricately drafted and mathematically precise configurations using pen and pencil. Diaz also shifted the thematic focus of his works from Catholicism to a more encompassing exploration of the human condition. This exploration was enriched by his incorporation of ideas from various academic disciplines with a current focus on censorship, propaganda, and controversial topics. Diaz's most recent work is intended to manipulate the viewer by subtly incorporating these elements to convey a message about the dangers of censorship and technological advancement:

I think there is a lot of things throughout human history that we have used as propaganda [...] and I like to subtly sneak it into my work [...] it is magic. It is complete manipulation. I feel like my whole life has always been about exploring taboos that are not socially acceptable (Diaz, 2022, p. 16).

While Diaz does not self-identify as a visionary, he has been categorised as such by multiple sources, including the Henry Boxer Gallery (2018), alongside renowned artists like Fuchs, Grey, and Robert Venosa. When asked about this, Diaz expressed a preference for the term 'outsider,' reflecting his belief in creating authentic art for personal expression without an agenda for fame or recognition<sup>42</sup>.

## **Cultural Context**

The cultural context of Diaz's work is layered and multifaceted, encompassing influences from his personal life, his Mexican heritage, and his broader exploration of human society and consciousness. Raised in a traditional Mexican family with devout Catholic beliefs, Diaz's early work is heavily steeped in Catholic iconography and themes (Figure 6.3.1). The symbols, narratives, and

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<sup>42</sup> Diaz (2022, p. 6) explained, "I am more comfortable with the term 'outsider' more than anything [...] I feel like outsider art is created by artists with no agenda. It is authentic art that is created for themselves with no intention [...] of ever getting fame."

moral dilemmas of the Catholic faith deeply inform his early paintings, a reflection of the cultural and religious environment he grew up in. The influence of Catholicism in his work also reflects the broader context of Mexican American culture, where Catholicism plays a significant role.



Figure 6.3.1 – *Apocalyptic Resurrections* (2006) by Daniel Martin Diaz. Image used with permission from the artist.

However, the evolution of his work reflects a move away from these personal and localised cultural influences towards a more global and interdisciplinary perspective. Diaz's later works, particularly those produced after his break from painting to study science and philosophy, represent an exploration of the human condition that transcends the boundaries of his personal and cultural context. These works incorporate ideas from various academic disciplines and draw on a broad range of cultural symbols and narratives. The shift in his work reflects the influence of the cultural zeitgeist of the 21st century, marked by an increasing interest in interdisciplinary exploration and a move towards a more global perspective.

Moreover, his recent works reflect a deep engagement with contemporary concerns around censorship, propaganda, and the impacts of technological advancement. This engagement situates Diaz's work within the broader cultural dialogue around these issues, reflecting a commitment to exploring the most pressing concerns of our time. Furthermore, his work frequently explores controversial topics, using art as a tool to incite thought and communicate profound ideas. This facet of Diaz's work situates him within a wider cultural landscape, characterised by a readiness to challenge entrenched norms and values.

### **Creative Process and Interpretation**

Diaz's work, though informed by his personal experiences and vast array of interests, notably in the fields of scientific and religious symbolism, has yielded a distinct style characterised by intricate details, geometric abstraction, and multi-layered, symbolic compositions. These elements are brought to life through a methodical and meticulous execution, as can be seen in the minimalistic yet impactful aesthetic of his drawings.

In *The Spirit Machine* (2013), Diaz utilises a minimalist approach, crafting the image with graphite pencil on water-stained paper. The artwork is a careful fusion of geometric patterns and symbolic elements that craft a narrative of consciousness and spiritual connectivity (Figure 6.3.2). The piece is dominated by a quasi-crystal pattern linked to a human figure through a series of logic gates, serving as a metaphor for the connection between the individual and the cosmos. Diaz (2022, p. 22) described: "the pattern appears when you shoot a laser through certain crystal and the light is projected unto the background in the unusual patterns [...] I thought this image was a great metaphor for consciousness." The

meticulous crafting of forms and lines, the symmetry, and the limited use of colour all contribute to the depth and dynamism of the artwork, inviting viewers into a journey of introspection and philosophical inquiry.

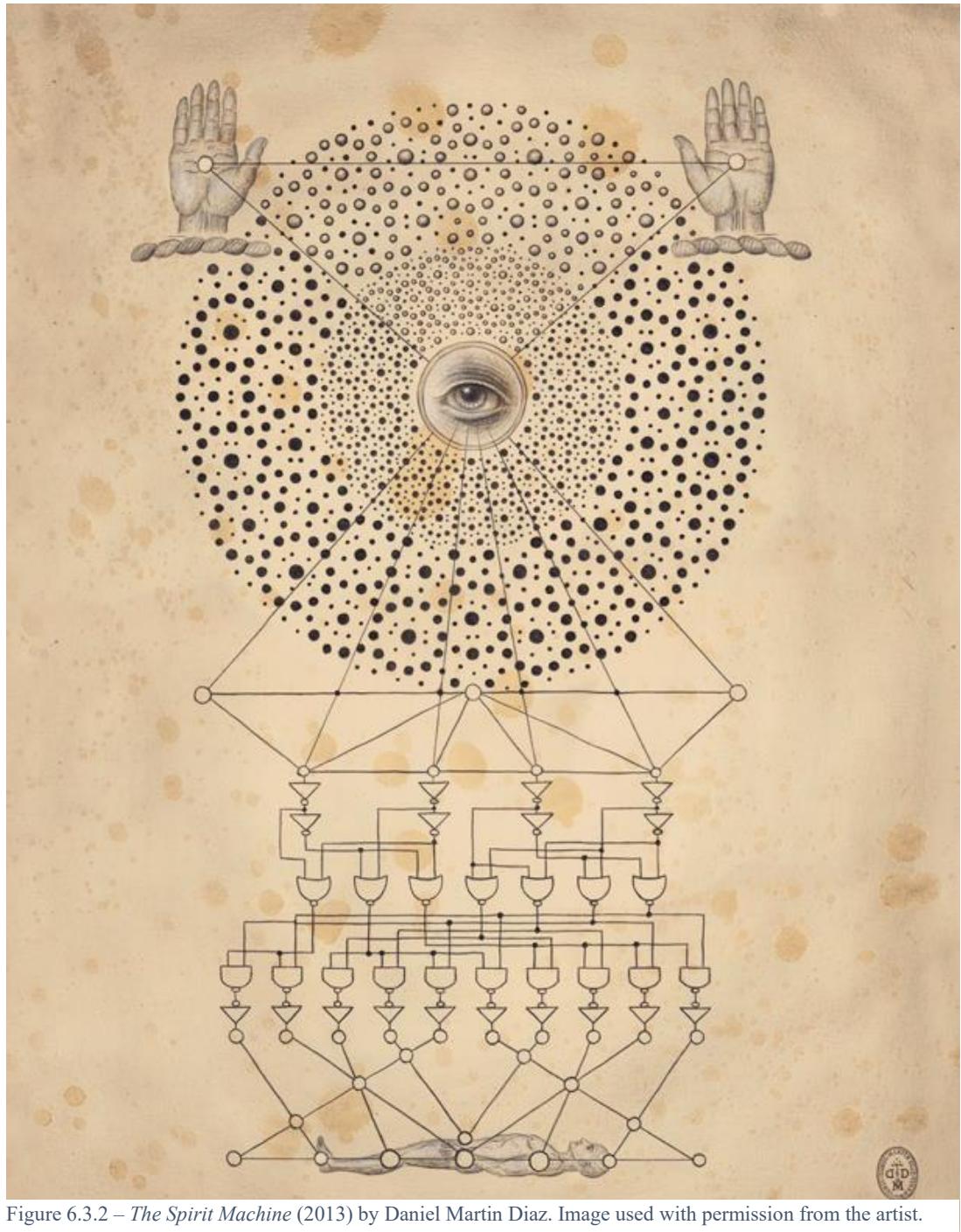


Figure 6.3.2 – *The Spirit Machine* (2013) by Daniel Martin Diaz. Image used with permission from the artist.

The symbols and motifs incorporated into Diaz's work reflect his desire to depict the interconnectedness of life and the universe, making his drawings a gateway to his inner thoughts and broader philosophical musings. He often infuses his work with elements such as sacred geometry, religious motifs, and various natural forms. These recurring motifs, combined with his attention to detail and his unique use of line and form, contribute to his distinctive artistic style.

This process is exemplified further in his piece *Phantom Virus* (2021). In this captivating artwork, Diaz explores the realm of human psychology and societal control. The drawing portrays a human figure connected to an external system, symbolising the influence and manipulation of an authoritative figure on the individual. Diaz employs a stark palette of black and white, with the central figure and other elements glowing in luminous white. The intricate detailing and depth created by the layering of lines and geometric forms give the piece a sense of movement and life, further emphasising the themes of control and manipulation.

Diaz's inspiration for this piece comes from his observations of societal phenomena. The elements of the external system within the drawing reflect the artist's concerns. In this way, the drawing is not just a portrayal of a human figure, but a visual commentary on the state of the world. Diaz (2022, p. 17) explained: "I am trying to warn people about not accepting censorship because if we do, it could be the beginning of a totalitarian state [...] If we accept censorship, it will be just one domino after the next." In an ironic twist, the image was deleted from Instagram days after our interview, with moderators stating that it was violent and dangerous.

## Personal and Cultural Memory Images

The stark contrast and intricate details of *Phantom Virus*, rendered in black and white, evoke an undercurrent of tension and disquiet. The piece presents a central human figure tethered to an imposing external system, stirring introspection about personal autonomy and control. This ensnared figure, caught within a web of outside influences, resonates with personal experiences of societal pressures and expectations. Significantly, Diaz's work also draws from his personal memories, reflecting his internal wrestling with religious beliefs. While he does not directly equate his religious upbringing with totalitarian regimes, his early experiences with a structured religious institution could have informed his perspective on control, manipulation, and individual autonomy – themes that are central to this image.

*Phantom Virus* also connects to collective cultural memories of oppressive regimes, symbolised by the striking inclusion of Russian Cyrillic script and an emblem evocative of the Nazi swastika. The artwork stirs recollections of historical and contemporary episodes of political propaganda, censorship, and the rise of totalitarian rule. It underscores the recurring nature of these issues across different societies and times, reminding us of the perennial struggle against oppressive powers.

Serving as the 'source' or the focal point of the artwork, the central human figure, tethered to the external system, demands our attention. This figure becomes the hub from which all other elements seem to emanate, potently symbolising the susceptibility and malleability of individuals under authoritative control. Its poignant representation highlights the overarching theme of the artwork – the potential loss of personal freedom in the face of pervasive societal

influences. Engaging with *Phantom Virus* prompts thoughtful consideration of the intricate dynamics of power, control, and individual autonomy. The detailed portrayal of a figure under external control challenges viewers to reassess their own freedoms and the societal forces that shape their lives. It serves as a compelling invitation to critically examine the systems we inhabit, urging a shift from passive acceptance to active questioning and resistance.

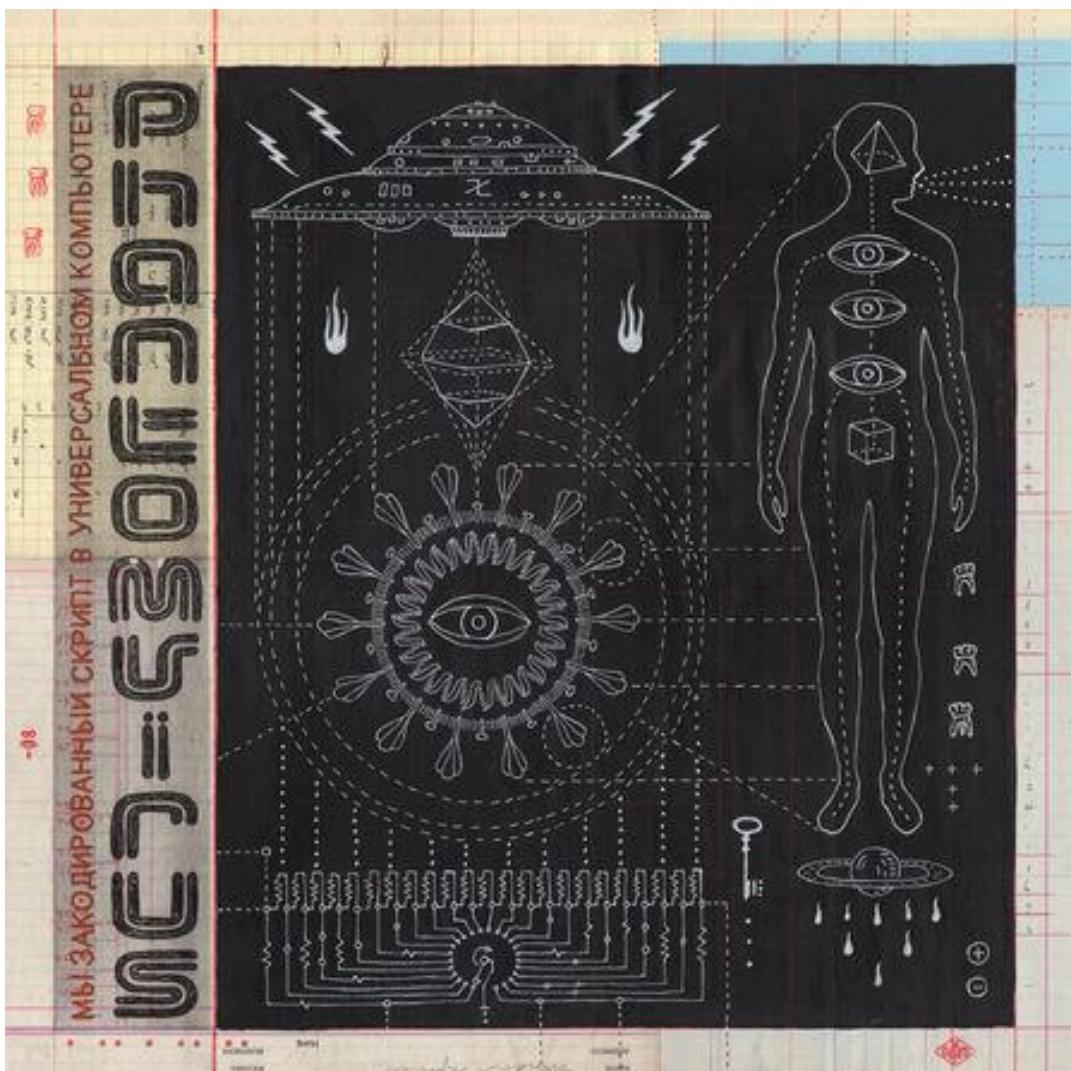


Figure 6.3.3 – *Phantom Virus* (2021) by Daniel Martin Diaz. Image used with permission from the artist.

## Comparison with Related Artists

As we have explored outsider art, it's hard to ignore the echoes and similarities between Wolfli and Diaz's work. As mentioned in Chapter 5 Wölflis was a Swiss artist and writer who created work during his lifelong residency in a psychiatric hospital. This work is characterised by intricate patterns, surreal figures, and an obsessive attention to detail, qualities that are also evident in Diaz's art.

When comparing Diaz's *Phantom Virus* to Wölflis's creations, the parallel in their use of intricate, layered detailing is apparent. Both artists fill the entirety of their canvas with elaborate patterns and symbols, leaving little to no empty space. This technique, known as *horror vacui*, or fear of empty space, is a shared element in their work that lends a sense of intensity and visual complexity. For instance, Wölflis's *Mental Asylum Band Copse* (1910) (Figure 5.2.1) features a blend of text and image, with a myriad of symbols, patterns, and figures populating the piece. Similarly, in *Phantom Virus* Diaz combines text and image, with elaborate circuitry and symbolic elements filling the composition. Both artists seem to create their own coded languages, imbuing their works with a sense of mystery and inviting viewers to decipher their meaning.

However, while Wölflis's work is deeply personal, born out of his inner world and experiences within the confines of a mental institution, Diaz's art, though personal, also engages with broader societal and cultural themes. In the selected image, Diaz critiques systems of control and manipulation that pervade society, a theme not prominent in Wölflis's work. The human figure in Diaz's is depicted as a puppet-like entity under the control of a larger, ominous force. This commentary on power dynamics contrasts with Wölflis's depictions of human

figures, which often appear as fantastical beings intertwined with his complex patterns and symbols.

Despite these differences, the works of Diaz and Wölfli converge in their intricate detailing, their integration of text and image, and their creation of complex visual narratives that require active engagement from viewers. While their thematic focus may differ, both artists utilise their unique visual language to communicate their personal vision and commentary, making their works thought-provoking and engaging pieces of art.

Interestingly, while Diaz's work moves away from the crude drawings often associated with outsider art, it aligns with Cardinal's (2009, p. 1459) declaration that the criteria for outsider art are sufficiently flexible to embrace not only art arising within the context of extreme mental dysfunction, but also "art produced by individuals who are quite capable of handling their social lives but who recoil, consciously or unconsciously, from the notion of art being necessarily a publicly defined activity with communally recognised standards."

### **Circumstances of Discovery**

Diaz's journey into the realm of public recognition began unexpectedly. Despite his initial scepticism, he was persuaded by a former partner to share his creations with a gallery (Diaz, 2022, p. 2). His first five paintings, which portrayed a raw and painful representation of Christ, stirred significant intrigue and controversy. The gallery owner saw something unique and powerful in his work, leading to its exhibition. Local media attention quickly followed, fascinated by his unconventional and daring approach to religious iconography. His work strongly resonated with the public, particularly because it channelled the pain and guilt

often associated with Mexican and Irish Catholicism. This authenticity, as well as his exploration of shame and suffering, quickly became defining features of his artistry.

Diaz's career took a significant turn when he connected with Henry Boxer, a renowned figure in the UK and parts of Europe's outsider art scene. Their relationship was likely facilitated through Maizels, the founder of Raw Vision magazine, a leading publication in the field of outsider art. Diaz's association with both Boxer and Maizels opened doors to new opportunities and greater visibility. His work gained traction in the outsider art scene, leading to further recognition and appreciation.

His art eventually caught the attention of significant clients, galleries, and museums, leading to extensive work in public art and commissions. His pieces can now be found in the collections of prestigious institutions like the National Museum of Mexican Art, the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Cirque du Soleil Collection, among others. His work has also been featured in HBO's Game of Thrones and Netflix's Black Mirror, illustrating his reach beyond traditional art platforms.

Diaz's association with outsider art is noteworthy, and his work's regular discussion in the Raw Vision magazine, including a cover feature in the winter of 2021/2022<sup>43</sup>, underlines his significance in this domain. Despite the attention, Diaz has remained committed to his authentic approach, opting to work with galleries that share his values of trust and mutual respect. In essence, Diaz's discovery was a confluence of chance, authenticity, and connection with key figures in the outsider art scene. His unique portrayal of taboo subjects and his

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<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to note how, a day after our interview I received this copy of Raw Vision in the post with Diaz's imagery on the cover.

daring approach to artmaking have solidified his place within the global art landscape, with his work continuing to challenge, provoke and inspire.

## 6.4 Key Points and Reflections

This chapter explored the artistic lives and works of contemporary artists, Amanda Sage, and Daniel Martin Diaz. Their work, embodying activist roles and integrating personal and cultural symbols, reveals the complexity of their creative processes. The divergent artistic education of Sage and Diaz provide a striking contrast – Sage's artistry being honed through formal education, whereas Diaz is largely self-taught. Additionally, the ways in which they engage with the creative process differ considerably.

Their relationship with their communities also provides a marked contrast. Sage is deeply involved with her community, engaging through workshops, lectures, and participation in transformational festivals. In contrast, Diaz treads a more traditional, isolated path, focusing on solitary exploration and creation. Yet, amidst these differences, striking commonalities emerge. Both artists delve deeply into their internal worlds, using art to express their personal and cultural experiences. For Sage, this involves conveying her spiritual journeys, while for Diaz, it's about articulating his anxieties around societal control and manipulation.

Their approach to technique further differentiates them. Sage adheres to mischtechnik, while Diaz, despite initial formal training, deviated, seeking authenticity in art. It was his shift away from these methods that led him to a more authentic representation. He describes, “This drawing here [Figure 6.3.2], this is the beginning of the series of me leaving the dogma of my past life behind; where I decided I wasn’t going to include the old symbols – I was going to start anew, create a whole new mythology” (Diaz, 2022, p.21).

Despite their differences, the commonalities between Sage and Diaz are instrumental in expanding our understanding of visionary art. Their works underscore the diversity, adaptability, and emphasis on personal expression, symbolic communication, and critical commentary in this field, regardless of their adherence to traditional techniques or formal education.



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## PART II

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### An Analytical Psychological View of Creativity



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## A Jungian Perspective

### 7.1 Introduction

In recent years, the field of analytical psychology has shown an increased interest in visionary art, the visionary mode of creativity, and the creative imagination. For example, various post-Jungian analysts and academics, such as Susan Rowland (2008; 2018; 2021), Tjeu van den Berk (2012), Craig Stephenson (2015) and Robert Matthews (2015), have discussed the topic. In *Psyche and the Arts*, Rowland (2008, p. 208) defines the category as consisting of mainly “symbols, which point to what is not yet known or unknowable in culture.” She continues, “visionary art is primarily expressive of the collective unconscious. As such, it compensates the culture for its biases, brings to consciousness what is ignored or repressed, and may predict something of the future direction of the culture.”

Likewise, Stephenson (2015, p. 14) describes the visionary artist as a creative individual who strives “to transcend the limits of what was actual and artificial by descending into the sensual and sublime profundity of nature as well as intuitively going down, through reverie and dream, into the ancient pagan depths of the mind.” These definitions are intriguing; however, they are somewhat vague. Thus, the first aim of this chapter is to inquire into Jung’s understanding of the visionary and psychological mode of creativity – his differentiation of archetypal and personalistic forms of artistic creation. This consideration uses primary source material – the Collected Works (CWs) – which is crucial for

developing a clear foundation and understanding of the creative phenomenon. In addition, I will be examining the artistic dimension of Jung's work, which involves a review of his creative process in relation to his discussion of the two modes of creativity.

Moreover, when examining visionary art, it becomes clear that the term 'visionary' is closely associated with revelation and prophetic insight. This observation is particularly evident in the field of psychedelic art. For example, Grey (1998/2017, p. 15), writes, "the artist becomes a prophetic witness of the truth of our time." However, it is not only psychedelic art that proclaims these ideas. For example, Rowland (2008, p. 190) states that "visionary art [...] may predict something of the future direction of culture." Thus, the third aim of this chapter is to examine the connection between visionary art and prophetic insight, as related to the field of analytical psychology.

## 7.2 The Visionary Mode of Creativity

### Overview

As a child, Jung (1963/1995, p. 44) struggled with a sense of inner division, writing that “somewhere deep in the background, I always knew I was two persons.” Rather than viewing his experience as pathological or abnormal, he argued that the “the play and counterplay between personalities No.1 and No.2 [...] is played out in every individual” (p. 42). It is interesting to note that he rejected the use of psychological terminology to describe his experience and insisted that it was not a ‘split’ or ‘dissociation’ in the traditional medical sense. He argued that his experience of possessing two personalities was not the result of a peculiarity in his psychological development. Instead, it represented a fundamental aspect of human psychology.

The Jungian analyst and scholar Mark Saban (2019) explores this idea in his doctoral thesis and the subsequent publication *‘Two Souls Alas...’ Jung’s Two Personalities and the Making of Analytical Psychology*. He argues that Jung’s experience of possessing two personalities informed the basic principles behind the development of analytical psychology and underlined the theory and practice of the whole field. Saban (2010, p. 27) explains:

Jung’s newfound perspective derived from a realisation that the dynamic tension between his two personalities was of central importance for the unfolding of his own individuation, in that it played a critical and ongoing role in his personal myth and therefore in his whole psychology.

However, in his study, he does not mention the visionary and psychological modes of creativity or the related fantasy and directed thinking, both arguably heavily informed by the same childhood experience. Instead, Saban suggests that Jung’s ‘two personalities’ played a significant role in forming the following theories:

feeling-toned complexes, active imagination, the transcendent function, the theory of types, and the individuation process.

In addition, other scholars have attempted to connect Jung's No.1 and No.2 personalities with various ideas and concepts. For example, in his text *Jung in Contexts: A Reader*, Paul Bishop (2008) suggests that the same experience influenced Jung's persistent interest in dissociation. Moreover, in her text, *Nietzsche and Jung: The Whole Self in the Union of Opposites*, Lucy Huskinson (2004) observes a connection between Jung's two personalities and his reception of Nietzsche's Zarathustra.

The following section builds upon previous scholars' observations that Jung's childhood experience of having two personalities influenced his later work. However, this project focuses on how this experience informed his understanding of creativity through his conceptualisation of the visionary and psychological modes of creativity. I am using this approach because a chronological investigation of the development of Jung's insight will provide a more comprehensive and applicable framework.

## Personalities No. 1 and No. 2

Jung was a solitary and introverted child, and from a young age believed that he possessed two personalities which he labelled personality No.1 and personality No.2. Jung's personality No.1 corresponded with his identity as an ordinary and somewhat conventional child, reflective of the *spirit of the time*<sup>44</sup>. In M.D.R., he described this side as having limitations and a sense of superficiality resulting from its involvement with the time-bound experiences of everyday life. In addition, Jung (1963/1995, p. 41) associated personality No.1 with "ridiculous clothes, [...] meanness, vanity, mendacity, and abhorrent egotism." As this personality, he existed as an insignificant and lazy "schoolboy who [...] deserved his punishment, and who had to behave his age" (p. 32).

Later in life, he associated his personality No.1 with systematically calculated questions. Moreover, it represented his interest in "concrete things" such as facts and empirical science (p. 78). In addition, Jung's No.1 was focused on social responsibilities and relationships. Saban (2019, p. 30) explains, "personality No.1 was the dimension that involved Jung in the world of outer relationships, both personal and collective, in the context of family, school, and work." However, adjacent to this 'dimension', there existed something else. Jung (1963/1995, p. 41) wrote:

Besides this world there existed another realm, like a temple in which anyone who entered was transformed and suddenly overpowered by a vision of the whole cosmos so that he could only marvel and admire, forgetful of himself. Here lived the 'Other,' who knew God as a hidden, personal, and at the same time suprapersonal secret.

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<sup>44</sup> According to Shamdasani (2009, p. 208), "the spirit of the times corresponds to personality No. 1, and the spirit of the depths corresponds to personality No.2." The spirit of the times refers to the zeitgeist or prevailing mood, spirit, or tone of a given cultural climate and environment.

In contrast, he associated his personality No.2 with an experience of nature in a wild and cosmic form. Although, he defined it as “sheer nonsense” (p. 32). He further wrote, “No.2 has no definable character at all,” instead, it is “living, dead, everything in one; a total vision of life” (p. 107). This part of Jung was “grown-up – old, in fact – sceptical, mistrustful, remote from the world of men, but close to nature, the earth, the sun, the moon [and] all living creatures” (p. 61). Moreover, personality No.2 was often experienced in the form of intuitive premonitions and was preoccupied with the mysteries and meaning of life. As opposed to personality No.1, he often experienced No.2 while alone, and its distinct focus was on the inner world. Saban (2019, p. 31) asserts that No.2 appears to be completely “nonrelational” except in an intrapsychic setting.

### 1. The Spirit of the Depths

In his early years, Jung’s sense of self seemed to be dominated by his personality No.2 – *the spirit of the depths*<sup>45</sup>. This preoccupation with his internal experiences resulted in his proneness to avoid school and the company of others. According to Saban (2019), this avoidance reached its peak when Jung began to experience a series of fainting fits that lasted six months. During this time, he spent his days at home, completely absorbed in the mysterious realm of No.2, spending hours enthralled by nature, reading, dreaming, and drawing.

Nonetheless, this attitude towards life changed when he experienced a “collision with reality” (Jung, 1963/1995, p. 38). This was triggered when he overheard a conversation in which his father spoke of the paralysing effect Jung’s illness had on the family. In MDR, he recounts: “from that day on I worked over

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<sup>45</sup> Jung used the term ‘spirit of the depths’ to describe the timeless and eternal nature of the deep psyche which appears in the mythopoeic imagination.

my [...] schoolbooks every day. A few weeks later, I returned to school and never suffered another attack [...] that was when I learned what a neurosis is" (ibid.).

After 'colliding with reality,' Jung learned the importance of re-entering the world as a participating member of society. Psychologically, his focus seemed to shift towards the direction of his No.1 personality as he began to experience an increased desire to live in the present.

Even though No.2 provided a sense of transcendence and otherworldliness, it removed him from the here and now. By being engrossed in his fantasy world, Jung felt powerless and "incapable of moving so much as a pebble upon the earth" (p. 71). Yet, when his personality No.1 took control, he felt trapped in an "insoluble conflict" (ibid.). However, in adulthood, he began to appreciate the tension that arose from the conflict between his two personalities. He realised that an individual should not identify with only one of the ego-states. Instead, he argued that they both need to be involved in a dialogical exchange, with the arising tension being a necessary component of psychological growth.

According to Saban (2019, p. 36), bringing together these two perspectives is crucial. He writes, "to bring together two different perspectives, each of which possess the monocular vision of a single eye, provides a comprehensive vision that transcends the limited possibilities offered by each of the original single perspectives." In this way, an individual can gain a new scope of vision that equals more than either state can offer in isolation.

## Directed and Fantasy Thinking

In 1912, Jung further expanded upon the psychological processes characterised by dual qualities. In the essay *Two Kinds of Thinking*, he hypothesised two contrasting modes of thought which he labelled *directed* and *fantasy* thinking. These two modes appear as direct descendants of Jung's No.1 and No.2 personalities:

We have, therefore, two kinds of thinking: directed thinking, and dreaming or fantasy thinking. The former operates with speech elements for the purpose of communication, and is difficult and exhausting, the latter is effortless, working as it were spontaneously, with the contents ready at hand and guided by unconscious motives (Jung, 1912, para. 20).

According to him, directed thinking is logical and adapted to reality. In his view, this mental process is a manifested instrument of culture shaped by educational systems for centuries. Moreover, he described this type of thinking as consisting of *verbal concepts* that are primarily a system of signs which signify external events. He explained: “directed thinking or logical thinking is reality thinking [...] the images inside our mind follow one another in the same strictly causal sequence as the events taking place outside it. We also call this ‘thinking with direct attention’” (para. 11).

In this essay, Jung argued that directed thinking is a new development in the history of humanity and was unknown in earlier ages. Instead, the thought processes of ancient<sup>46</sup> communities were influenced almost entirely by fantasy thinking. Fantasy thinking is the thought process that turns away from external reality, frees subjective tendencies, and is expressed within mythological

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<sup>46</sup> Jung often used the term ‘primitive’ to describe ancient modes of thought. However, this terminology is problematic, with some critics claiming that Jung’s psychology has been built on racist foundations (Dalal, 1988).

storytelling. These original, or primal myths, Jung explained, are unrealised projections unto the world. He wrote, “the primitive mentality does not *invent* myths, it *experiences* them (original italics). Myths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche” (Jung, 1940, para 261). In a separate source, he explained:

All the mythologised processes of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, rainy seasons, and so forth, are in no sense allegories of these objective occurrences; rather they are symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which become accessible to man’s consciousness by way of projection – that is, mirrored in the events of nature (Jung, 1934/1954, para. 7).

In contrast to directed thinking, fantasy thinking lacks all sense of direction; thoughts are no longer compelled “along a definite track”; instead, they “float, sink, or rise according to their specific gravity” (Jung, 1912, para. 18). Fantasy thinking “leads away from reality into fantasies of the past or future” (para. 190). In comparison, directed thinking turns toward the external world and objectively real things. Thus, directed thinking is deliberate, organised, and full of purpose, while fantasy thinking is unpredictable, spontaneous, and creative.

### 1. Fantasy Thinking and Ancient Man

Jungian scholar Robert Segal (2007, p. 647) highlights Jung’s opinion on how fantasy thinking in modern people has been “supplemented and considerably supplanted by directed thinking.” Segal describes how Jung accepted the assumption of his day that biological development (ontogeny) duplicated that of the species (phylogeny). While this *Law of Recapitulation* (1811) is now considered antiquated (to an extent), it led Jung to exhaustively investigate the elementary symbols of humanity, helping him reach compelling hypotheses. For example, Jung (1912, para. 26) suggested that “infantile thinking and dream-

thinking are simply a recapitulation of earlier evolutionary stages.” Thus, he theorised that ancient or indigenous people shared similar thought patterns to children demonstrated by their preoccupation with fantasy play. In this way, fantasy thinking rooted in the unconscious is a precursor to modern people’s psyches, and it exists still, neglected and almost forgotten.

Even though Jung believed that modern people were, in some ways, more advanced than our ancient ancestors, he criticised how society has disconnected itself from its ‘primitive’ roots. Segal (2007, p. 649) describes Jung’s position by stating, “modernity is better than primitivism, but it is not an ideal state [...] having disconnected themselves from their unconscious in order to develop their ego-consciousness, moderns must now return to their unconscious and reconnect themselves to it.”

Jung acknowledged that ancient people were as one-sided as modern people. The difference is that ancient people were mostly unconscious, dominated by fantasy thinking with a relatively underdeveloped ego. At the same time, modern adults are, in most cases, predominantly conscious, governed by directed thinking while simultaneously neglecting their unconscious side. In response to this observation, Jung (1940, para. 276).argued that myths and dreams were crucial for re-introducing modern society to the unconscious – he believed that they “compensate or correct in a meaningful manner the inevitable one-sidedness and extravagance of the one-sided man.”

At first, Jung reasoned that dreams and myths were the product of fantasy thinking. However, in 1935 he expanded his hypothesis with the concept of active imagination, a high-tension fantasy play used to integrate unconscious material. In addition, he further suggested that the creative arts, either visual or poetic, had the

potential to compensate for the one-sidedness of culture by bringing forth unconscious content. As Matthews (2015, p. 125) describes, “artists to (often unintentionally) open themselves to the primal energies of the collective unconscious, have an experience of wholeness and emerge [...] with a broader more complete view than the restrictive view of the social collective.”

## 2. Active Imagination and Amplification

Active imagination, as outlined by Sharp (1991), serves as a significant component of Jungian psychology, offering a method for assimilating unconscious contents through self-reflection. According to von Franz (1979) the technique entails a dialogue with personified aspects of one’s complexes, giving form to certain facets of these complexes in an effort to confront them. In this way, active imagination facilitates a conscious engagement with the unconscious, fostering the construction of vivid mental landscapes and narratives, often rich with symbolic significance. Different from the passive reception of dreams, active imagination incorporates various creative outlets such as writing and painting to cultivate psychological integration or ‘individuation’ as termed by Jung.

In contrast, amplification, another key concept, assists in the interpretation of an image or symbol derived from a dream or active imagination. It enhances understanding by drawing on contextual associations from mythology, religion, or historical contexts. Amplification goes beyond personal experience, linking individual psychic material to universal themes present in the collective unconscious. It thus becomes an essential tool for bringing unconscious material into conscious comprehension. Rowland (2021) underscores the art-researcher’s role in amplification, noting how selecting resonant images for expanding initial

imagery invigorates the underlying psychic content. She elucidates, “amplification discovers the image in its collective setting, the collective consciousness that is the emanation of the collective unconscious. Like active imagination, amplification is a ritual where the ego is put aside for collective, archetypal resonance” (Rowland, 2021, p. 66).

Active imagination and amplification, when employed together, can stimulate transformation in the creative process. According to this field, creativity manifests as a balance between conscious intention and unconscious inspiration. Active imagination enables artists to explore the unconscious, extracting unique and profound images or narratives. Amplification subsequently expands these discoveries, connecting them to broader cultural, historical, or archetypal contexts. This process enriches the creative output, promotes personal growth, and enhances self-understanding. Rowland (2021, p. 66) summarises this concept, by stating: “both are rituals for overcoming the subject/object split and for making symbols join us in the universe.”

### **The Visionary and Psychological Mode of Creativity**

In his essay *On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry* (1922), Jung suggested that there exist two modes of creativity that correlate with directed and fantasy thinking; however, he was yet to give them a name. In his view, it was crucial to distinguish between these two entirely different modes to judge a piece of work effectively. He wrote, “in one case, it is a conscious product shaped and designed to have the effect intended. But in the other, we are dealing with an event originating in unconscious nature” (Jung 1922, para. 116). According to Jung, the works belonging to the first category exist within the limits of conscious

comprehension. In contrast, the latter is strange in form with content that can only be intimated or revealed intuitively.

Eight years later, Jung elaborated on these ideas in his essay *Psychology and Literature* (1930). He labelled these two modes as the *psychological and visionary mode of creativity*. The former category works with materials drawn from man's conscious life. Jung (1930/1950, para. 140) referred to this category as 'psychological' because it "remains within the limits of the psychologically intelligible." In his view, this type of work originates entirely from an artist's intention to produce a particular result.

He submits his material to a definite treatment with a definite aim in view; he adds to it and subtracts from it, emphasising one effect, toning down another, laying on a touch of colour here, another there, all the time carefully considering the overall result and paying strict attention to the laws of form and style. He exercises the keenest judgement and chooses his words with complete freedom. His material is entirely subordinate to his artistic purpose; he wants to express this and nothing else (para. 109).

In his view, countless creations belong to this category. However, whatever form they take, they always originate from the sphere of conscious experience. He described, "the raw material of this kind of creation is derived from the contents of man's conscious life, from his eternally repeated joys and sorrows, but clarified and transfigured by the poet" (para. 139).

Interestingly, Van den Berk suggests that labelling works of this type as 'psychological' is confusing. He states, "Jung had a very unlucky intuition when he called the first form 'psychological' [...] he easily could have picked another name for psychological art, for example 'realistic art'" (Van den Berk, 2012, p. 88, fn. 268). However, I think it is necessary to defend Jung's position because viewing works of this type merely as 'realistic art' simplifies a category that can

highlight meaningful experiences and give us greater depth of human insight by making us aware of everyday happenings we tend to overlook.

In contrast to the psychological mode, the visionary mode forces itself upon the artist, bringing its own form, reminding us of our dreams and night-time fears instead of our everyday experiences. The artist is overwhelmed with a surprising avalanche of images and thoughts in this mode. Jung (1930/1950, para. 110) explained:

These works positively force themselves upon the author; his hand is seized; his pen writes things that his mind contemplates with amazement. The work brings with it, its own form; anything he wants to add is rejected [...] he is overwhelmed by a flood of thoughts and images which he never intended to create and which his own will could never have brought into being. Yet, in spite of himself, he is forced to admit that it is his own self speaking, his own inner nature revealing itself and uttering things which he could never have entrusted his tongue.

He described the visionary product as “sublime, pregnant with meaning, yet chilling the blood with its strangeness; it arises from timeless depths; glamourous, daemonic, grotesque, it bursts asunder our human standards of value and aesthetic form” (para. 141). In his view, the visionary expression remains a constant challenge to our thoughts and emotions while also representing a more profound and impressive experience than the human passion depicted in works created with the psychological mode.

Interestingly, he further described how a visionary experience is often concealed by a historical or mythical event, which can be mistakenly considered the real subject matter. However, the work’s deeper meaning does not lie in the historical or mythical material but in the visionary experience it expresses. Since the expression can never match the psychoid archetype<sup>47</sup> or richness of the

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<sup>47</sup> The concept of the ‘psychoid’ is explored in Chapter 7.4.

symbol, the artist must have an extensive collection of visual material to communicate a fraction of what they experienced and use complex and contradictory images to express the strange paradoxes of their vision (para. 143). It is necessary to mention that the visionary and psychological modes are linked categories that are “pushed apart to polar extremes” (Rowland, 2008, p. 188). Yet, they are not completely exclusive – the psychological mode can demonstrate a visionary core and vice versa.

### 1. Jung as an Art Critic

Even though Jung wrote about the two modes of creativity, he seldom ventured into the criticism of art. He only wrote two essays that considered the contemporary art of his time (modern art): *Picasso* (1934) and *Ulysses: A monology* (1932) by Irish author James Joyce. In addition, he discussed Yves Tanguy’s surrealist painting in his book *Flying Saucers: A Myth of Things Seen in the Sky* (1959). Interestingly, Jung (1973, p. 469) was somewhat outspoken about his dislike of modern art. For example, in 1947 he described it as “mostly morbid and evil.” He believed modern art shared similarities with the art produced by mentally ill patients, specifically those who suffered from neuroticism and schizophrenia. Jung explained his position by stating:

With the schizophrenic, the tendency usually has no recognisable purpose, but it is a symptom inevitably arising from the disintegration of the personality into fragmentary personalities (the autonomous complexes). In the modern artist, it is not produced by any disease in the individual but is a collective manifestation of our time (p. 176).

The Jungian scholar (and abstract artist) Lucinda Hill (2020) argues that Jung’s opinion on modern art was contradictory. She writes, “Jung ‘closed the door’ on modern [abstract] art due to his commitment to trying to understand it with

intellectual comprehension” (Hill, 2020, p. 232). However, the literary and Jungian scholar Roula-Maria Dib (2021) explains that Jung saw modern *expressionist* art, such as Picasso’s work, as a ‘falsity’. Whereas other modern artists, such as Jakoby Birkhäuser (1911-1976) and Tanguy (1900-1955), who did not create cubist or expressionist pieces, were viewed by Jung in a more favourable light. Dib (2021, p. 11) argues, “Jung viewed some modern art as containing a healing expression – despite not extending this view towards every modern artist (specifically Picasso).”

Thus, it seems that Jung disliked modern *expressionist* art because he believed it to be a symptom of his time which was largely fragmentary and one-sided. Even though these works were “a flight from the perceptible world, from the visible world” (Jung, 1978, para. 222), they still lacked the healing potential of true visionary art. Here, we are presented with a problem – if the psychological mode is understood to be connected to an artist’s representation of the external world and the visionary mode is understood to be the *great* representation of the inner world, where does that leave the *not so great*<sup>48</sup> experimental and expressive works that attempt to shed light on our inner reality? It is necessary to partition the two modes and further examine the different possibilities of art within the visionary category.

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<sup>48</sup> To clarify, I am using the term *not-so-great art* as an antonym for Neumann’s *great art*. I am not declaring that expressionist works are not great. On contrary, I believe that expressionist art is an important topic within art criticism both theoretically and aesthetically.

## 7.3 The Artistic Dimension of Jung's Work

### Overview

Jung was a pioneer who established analytical psychology and coined various terms and concepts, such as introvert and extrovert personalities, archetypes, and the collective unconscious. However, the psychological significance of *the image* was also central to his work. In his studies, he often emphasised the importance of images as a form of expression, which plays a significant role in the therapeutic process, which included considerations of dreams and creative expression. In addition, he often analysed specific visual motifs and coined the visual therapeutic practice of *active imagination*. Interestingly, throughout his writings, there are countless references to the symbolic meaning of inner images and their relationship to archetypal motifs.

According to Jung, artwork (predominantly with the visionary mode of creativity) does not exist as a singular expression. Instead, he believed it was a materialisation of the unconscious foundation of a person or an entire culture. The Jungian analyst Medea Hoch (2018, p. 15) explains, “art serves as an instrument capable of reflecting the collective psyche.” Moreover, Jung not only contemplated the arts but also created an extensive collection of visual material. Despite this, he resisted calling himself an artist, believing his work was “not art!” (Jung, 1963/1995, p. 211). Hoch (2018, p. 7) notes, “Jung himself never wanted to be considered an artist. While he included illustrations in some of his texts during his lifetime, he always ensured that he remained anonymous as their creator.” For example, in his commentary, published in *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (1931), he included ten anonymous images to illustrate the parallelism between eastern philosophy and the West’s unconscious mental processes. Interestingly, Jung created three of these images and left no indication of his authorship.

Likewise, a volume of essays published in 1950, titled *Concerning Mandala Symbolism*, included four of Jung's drawings. However, he was still unacknowledged; the text attributed the images to a “middle-aged man” (Jung, 1950, para. 682). Hoch (2018, p. 10) highlights a further example from 1947:

In 1947, Jung contracted with the Bollingen Foundation in New York to publish his writings in a collected edition [...] known as the *Collected Works*. The agreement defined the contents of the edition as ‘works and writing [...] written or made by the author.’ But the attached schedule did not mention visual works.

The exclusion of visual work from this contract is hardly surprising due to his resistance to being called an artist<sup>49</sup>. However, on the other hand, many of Jung's acquaintances knew he dabbled in the creative arts. For example, he showed some of his close friends the unpublished *Liber Novus* (in whole or part) and often gifted them with paintings and wooden figures. In addition, he exhibited various self-carved sculptures in the garden of his home in Küsnacht. For example, *Atmavictu* (1920), a shell-limestone creation of a bearded man with many arms (Figure 7.3.1). Nevertheless, he did not openly publish any of his visual works before his death in 1961.

However, Jung's desired anonymity was disrupted in the two previous decades. As a result, many scholars and analysts have exposed the extensive and elaborate visual material made by his hand throughout his lifetime. The most outstanding example is the publication of *Liber Novus* (2009), which has stirred public enthusiasm and interest in Jung's creative endeavours. The Jungian analyst Paul Brutsche (2011, p. 8) describes: “the calligraphic text and the images reveal

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<sup>49</sup> Rowland (2018, p. 111) notes, that Jung deliberately left *Liber Novus* unpublished because he found its “aesthetic elaboration unsatisfying.”

Jung as a man gifted with amazing artistic skills, an immense creative talent, and a remarkable sense of colour.”

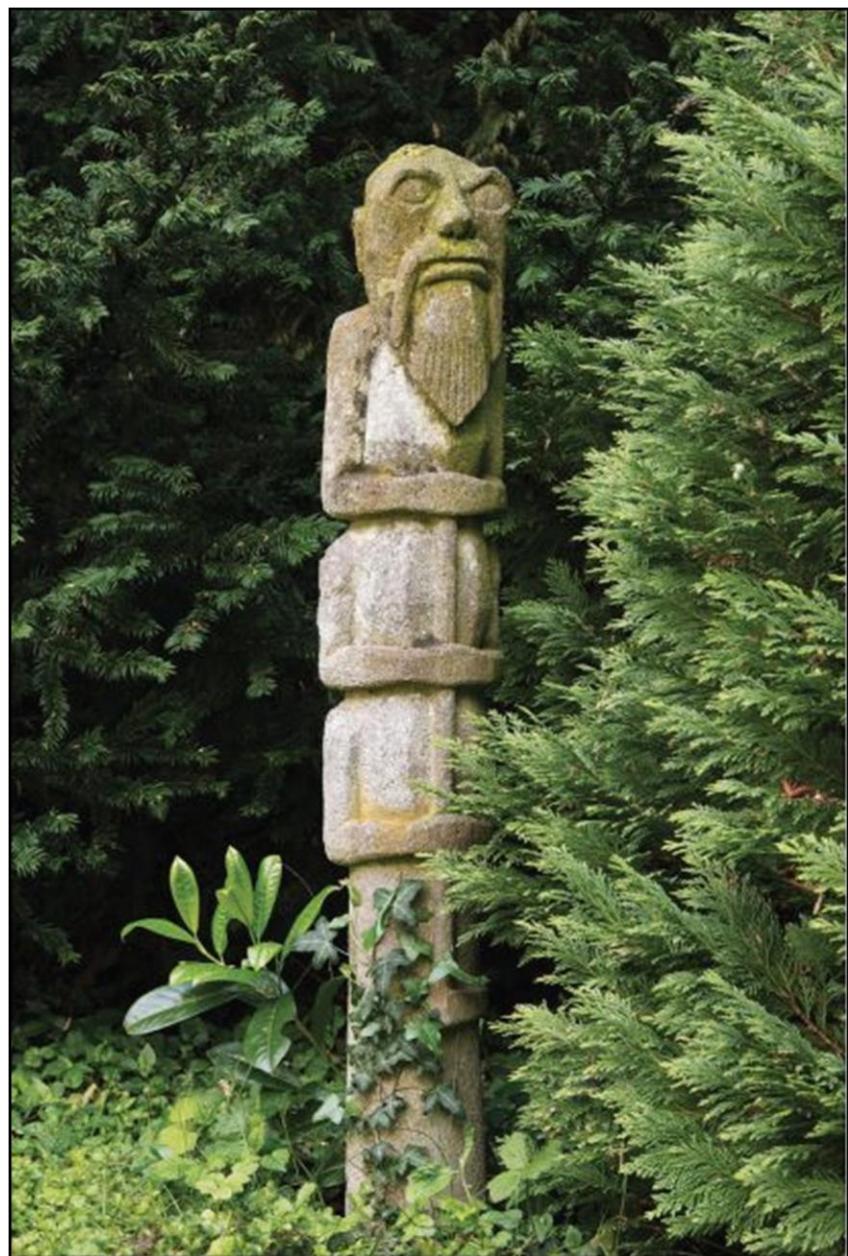


Figure 7.3.1 - *Atmavictu* (1920), Made of Shell-Limestone, 112 x 15.5 x 16.5 cm.  
Image from *The Art of C.G. Jung* (2018). I

## Jung's No.1 Creative Practice

Jung was a gifted artist who investigated and recorded his inner reality with words and images. Interestingly, his curiosity for the arts began during his early years as a pupil. However, his teachers and peers considered him devoid of talent and excluded him from art and drawing classes. In MDR, he recounted:

I was exempted from drawing classes on grounds of utter incapacity. This [...] was a fresh defeat since I had some facility in drawing, although I did not realise that it depended essentially on the way I was feeling. I could only draw what stirred my imagination (Jung, 1963/1995, p. 45).

Before starting *Liber Novus*, Jung was familiar with various creative mediums, such as pen, ink, pencil, pastel, gouache, watercolour, clay, wood, and stone, to name a few. Moreover, during the creation of *Liber Novus* and after, he worked on numerous ventures, from murals to masonry projects and freestanding sculptures. These projects were approached with self-taught proficiency. In addition, he was fairly well-read in art criticism, aesthetics, and colour theory, as mentioned in *The Art of C.G. Jung* (2018).

It was in 1913 that Jung began to record, write, and meticulously illustrate what he considered the “numinous beginning” (Jung, 2009, p. vii), from which all his succeeding work derived. The result was *Liber Novus* – a manuscript-style text consisting of 200 parchment pages of meticulous calligraphy and detailed watercolour paintings bound in red leather. Nevertheless, as mentioned, he only showed a handful of people its contents (in whole or part) throughout his lifetime. It was only made available to the public in 2009 – fifty years after his death and almost one hundred years after its creation.

When Jung decided to draft *Liber Novus* as an illuminated manuscript, he carefully chose the highest quality materials. To begin, he sketched designs in

pencil and used inks for calligraphy<sup>50</sup>. Moreover, for the capitals and detailed drawings, he used mineral pigments mixed with gum arabic as a medium and water as the carrier. However, years later, he applied varnish for preservation and added radiance. Additionally, he used a variety of brushes, such as fine sable brushes, round brushes with a fine tip, flat brushes, and liners for highly detailed work. He also needed a ruler, a protractor, and heavy paper to produce clean and crisp lines.

Furthermore, Hoch (2018, p. 41) states that the writing and imagery within *Liber Novus* are comparable to medieval manuscripts. She writes, “some drawings seem inspired by book illuminations with gold backgrounds, others by stained glass windows with black lead cames intensifying the chromaticism.” Hoch continues, “there is a clear reference to early medieval mosaics with their faceted surfaces” (ibid.). Likewise, the Jungian analyst Jill Mellick (2018, p. 394) elaborates on this comparison by highlighting the following:

In the tradition of his medieval counterparts, Jung first designed pages. He allocated bounding lines, determined proportion of word to image; determined sizes for calligraphy, allocated spaces for major and minor initials, rubrication, decoration, image, and illumination. He experimented with and selected colour palettes for pages. He planned almost every line in every majuscule, decoration, and illumination, noting centre and dividing lines, circles, angles, shapes. He did this with the patient exactitude of his artistic exemplars.

Jung planned each page of *Liber Novus* with great care and consideration, as shown by the visible pencil underdrawings. According to Mellick, he only allowed disciplined spontaneity to creep into his work once every detail, line, and colour was figured out. It seems that Jung approached the technical side of his art practice predominantly from the perspective of his No.1 personality, with intense

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<sup>50</sup> The text is written in German and includes quotations in Latin. In addition, there are several inscriptions and names written in both Greek and Latin.

focus and systematically calculated techniques. This approach was somewhat different to the modernist expressionist painters of his time. Instead of creating works that were a fragmentary and one-sided provocation of the unconscious – Jung was interested in synthesising the unconscious and conscious portions of the psyche, creating imagery that was closer to depicting psychological wholeness. Nonetheless, the discussion of Jung's approach so far has only included conscious deliberation, leading us to the following inquiry: what role did the unconscious play in the creation of Jung's artistic practice?

### **Jung's No.2 Creative Practice**

Even though Jung focused much attention on technique and method while creating *Liber Novus*, the original intention of the text was marginally different. Instead, it began as a psychological investigation, “a confrontation with the unconscious” (Jung, 1963/1995, p. 194). Within this document, Jung artfully recorded his unique inner experience to hear and understand his soul’s longing. According to Stein (2012, p. 283), the motivation for the creation of this manuscript emerged from an existential crisis. He writes, “it is clear that after his break from the personal relationship with Freud, he had to regroup his forces and find a new line of psychological thought.” In addition, Shamdasani (2009) states that this experiment was also motivated by his experience of two horrific yet identical visions occurring two weeks apart – described by Jung (1963/1995, p. 199) in MDR:

In October, while I was alone on a journey, I was suddenly seized by an overpowering vision: I saw a monstrous flood covering all the northern and low-lying lands between the North Sea and the Alps. When it came up to Switzerland, I saw that the mountains grew higher and higher to protect our country. I realised that a frightful catastrophe was in progress. I saw the mighty yellow waves, the

floating rubble of civilisation, and the drowned bodies of uncounted thousands. Then the whole sea turned to blood.

These reoccurring visions lasted for about an hour, causing Jung to question his sanity (p. 200) while feeling “perplexed and nauseated, and ashamed of [his] weakness” (p.199). Subsequently, he considered his situation and even searched for therapeutic and palliative insight. However, these conventional routes provided no answers, forcing him to seek his answers introspectively. Thus, in November 1913, Jung sat at his desk and started to make entries in his private journal – the so-called *Black Books*<sup>51</sup>. At the beginning of this inner journey, he asks, “my soul, where are you? Do you hear me?” (Jung, 2009, p. 232).

However, the course before him was unknown. He had no concepts or theories to explain what he was doing, whom he was addressing or how to proceed – instead, he allowed himself just to let things happen. Nonetheless, over time, he began to engage in exercises to reduce critical thinking, quiet his conscious mind, and allow his unconscious to have a voice. Slowly, he began to hear a response. He explained, “sometimes it was as if I was hearing it in my ears, sometimes feeling it with my mouth, as if my tongue was formulating words; now and then I heard myself whispering aloud” (Jung, 1963/1995, p. 178).

By early December, Jung (2009, p. 237) discovered that the activity he was engaging with could evoke autonomous visionary scenes and dialogic interactions. He declared, “the spirit of the depths opened my eyes, and I caught a glimpse of inner things, the world of my soul.” Moreover, by 1915, he continued by producing a more formal and detailed record of his inner visions. Jung

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<sup>51</sup> The *Black Books* (2020) consisted of six sequentially dated journals, described by Jungian analyst, Lance Owens (2010, p. 24) as “his primary and contemporaneous ledger of a voyage of discovered into imaginative and visionary reality.” At the same time, he also wrote in a series of ledgers, later called the *Brown Books*.

proceeded by working for sixteen years, translating the primary record of his experience from the *Black Books* into *Liber Novus*.

*Liber Novus* is presented as a selection of visions, fantasies, and dialogues copied directly, to an extent, from the *Black Books*. Following this, Jung added a poetic and paradoxical commentary to understand the visions using the mythopoetic language of the unconscious. While reading the translation, the fantasies play out as a dramatic performance between his ego and several characters who evolve over the narration. In this manuscript-style text, Jung meticulously painted seventy-two images, which exist as a reflection of his inner visions.

This period of creative self-experimentation was a formative time for Jung, in which he discovered his unique voice and true vocation. He described, “the years when I was pursuing my inner images were the most important in my life – in them, everything essential was decided” (Jung, 1963/1995, p. 199). Thus, the inspiration behind *Liber Novus* stemmed largely from the unconscious. However, by bringing in precise techniques and conscious deliberation, Jung combined the two worlds to create unique and powerful imagery.

## 7.4 Visionary Art and Prophecy

### Overview

Generally, people agree that prophetic power belongs to the outdated realms of myth and magic, unacceptable in the modern rational world. Nevertheless, when examining visionary art, it becomes clear that the term *visionary* is closely associated with revelations and prophetic insight. A prime example within art history is the medieval painter and poet William Blake (1757-1827). Many scholars and art historians describe Blake's creations as *visionary* works inspired by *prophetic* revelations (Billingsley, 2019; Eaves, 2007). For example, the art historian Morris Eaves (2007, p. 8) remarks, "you may come to him knowing that he was a painter, for instance, or a poet, printmaker, prophet, or visionary."

Similarly, Jungian scholars and analysts propose that Jung's *Liber Novus* is a *visionary* and *prophetic* creation. For instance, Shamdasani (2009, p. 203) states that Jung's experimental text is "presented as a prophetic work." Moreover, the classical scholar Peter Kingsley (2018, p. 287) argues that "the *Red Book's* creation was based, from the start, on the prophetic power of his unconscious and on the intensity of his need to explore what this means."

This section's primary goal is to examine the psychological processes that give rise to prophetic insight, with the overall purpose of applying this knowledge to our interpretation and understanding of visionary art. However, to provide a sufficient overview, it is necessary to include definitions from outside experts. Thus, I will briefly introduce a generalised understanding of *prophecy* and *divination* by using definitions from theology and anthropology. Following this is an investigation of the analytical psychological perspective of prophecy. This involves contrasting the prophetic with the prospective function, defining

synchronicity, examining Jung's understanding of the *unus mundus*, and considering the psychoid and its relationship to the epistemic and ontological divide as addressed in the Pauli-Jung conjecture.

### **Understanding Prophecy and Divination**

According to mainstream understanding, prophecy is the ability to predict the future through religious or magical means. However, this definition has been challenged by theologians and anthropologists, who argue that prophecy is more about engaging in a “mental struggle to discern the inadequacies of the present and conceive the way to a more helpful future” (Rowland, 2010, p. 120). Similarly, art historian Naomi Billingsley (2018, p. 61) notes that “prophetic inspiration then, is the insight which that mental effort engenders, and in turn provokes social criticism, striving for better of that which is amiss.” From this perspective, prophecy is not about seeing the future with absolute accuracy, but rather about gaining insight and inspiring change in the present.

According to the theologian Gösta Ahlström (2022), prophecy can manifest in two ways: as a spontaneous revelation through visions or auditory messages, or as a result of using certain techniques to achieve an altered state of consciousness. In the first case, an individual is chosen by a divine source to receive insights that appear in the form of visual or verbal messages. In the second case, an individual uses divination techniques to enter an altered state of consciousness, making them receptive to the will of a divine source and potentially becoming a mouthpiece for that source. The anthropologist Phillip Peek (1991) notes that these divination practices seek to gain insight into a specific question or situation through standardised processes or rituals.

However, like the arguments presented above, divination is not intended to accurately predict future events. Instead as von Franz (1980, p. 102) suggests, it can “sketch a more or less blurred image of possibilities.” Similarly, historian Stephen Karcher (1997) explains, that historically, divination was seen as a supplement to our everyday intelligence and was not meant to reveal an inevitable future, but rather to connect us with the flow of its signs, symbols, and spirits. It is important to bear this in mind as we consider prophecy as a phenomenon, as it is often misunderstood as a literal and accurate portrayal of the future.

Furthermore, many cultures around the world use divination techniques. Some of these procedures include Tarot cards, crystals, or bones, while others involve attaining an altered state of consciousness through meditation, chanting, or psychotropic substances. Gifted individuals, seers, and mediums are said to have a special connection to the spiritual world and can channel divine insights and revelations. While some people view these as legitimate methods of gaining knowledge, these strategies are frequently disputed and poorly understood. Jung shared his beliefs with the former category. He believed that the unconscious is a source of wisdom, and that irrational and supernatural experiences should be taken seriously and studied psychologically.

In a contemporary setting, analytical psychology approaches the study of prophecy from a psychological perspective, often using clinical observations, case studies, comparative mythology, and symbolism, as well as experiential techniques, such as active imagination. This approach differs from that of

anthropology<sup>52</sup> and theology<sup>53</sup>, which tends to focus more on the cultural and social context of prophecy and divination practices.

### **Analytical Psychological Insights**

According to Jung (1921, para. 321), prophets are “always the first to divine the darkly moving mysterious currents and to express them, as best they can, in symbols that speak to us.” He continued, “they make known [...] the stirring of the collective unconscious [...] which in the course of time must inevitably come to the surface as a collective phenomenon” (ibid.). In Jung’s view, the receptiveness of specific individuals to the collective unconscious is a crucial element of a healthy society. He proposed that, just as a person may become neurotically one-sided, so can a culture’s value structures. Moreover, just as the unconscious of a one-sided person reacts in a compensatory manner to regulate their constricted attitude, so will certain sensitive people live out a compensating role for a collective mindset that has become one-sided. Jung (1930/1950, para. 160) explained:

Whenever conscious life becomes one-sided or adopts a false attitude, these images ‘instinctively’ rise to the surface in dreams and in the visions of artists and seers to restore the psychic balance, whether of the individual or the epoch. In this way, the work of the artist meets the psychic needs of the society in which he lives and therefore means more than his personal fate, whether he is aware of it or not.

It is necessary to mention that, for most, this regulation of the psyche works individually. However, according to Jung, there are sensitive people who can

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<sup>52</sup> The methods anthropologists use to gain insights into prophetic experiences include ethnographic fieldwork, participant observation, interviews, document analysis and comparative analysis.

<sup>53</sup> Theologians use various methods to understand prophecy throughout history. These include interpretation of religious texts, historical analysis, and philosophical analysis.

perceive these changes within the collective psyche<sup>54</sup> – it is these people whom Neumann called *Great Individuals* and *Great Artists*. This process is not clear-cut. The individual needs to translate the metaphorical apparitions into a somewhat understandable and coherent form. If they cannot do this, their message is useless.

### 1. The Prospective Function

Jung used the term *prospective function* to describe the unconscious anticipation of future possibilities, which arose in the dreams and visions of these *great* individuals and artists. In his view, the prospective function is far superior to conscious awareness because it fuses subliminal and unconscious elements by combining all perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that consciousness has not registered. Jung proposed that, by combining conscious and unconscious material, some individuals have the potential to access the archetypal contents of the unconscious and translate them into powerful and compensatory imagery.

Jung (1921, para. 321) emphasised the term *prospective* instead of *prophetic* because “they are merely an anticipatory combination of probabilities which may coincide with the actual behaviour of things but need not necessarily agree in every detail. Only in the latter case we can speak of ‘prophecy’.” Jung establishes a critical difference between the prospective function and prophecy in this quote. In the former, the images that instinctively arise from the unconscious have an anticipatory quality, which *may* coincide with an actual event. Whereas

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<sup>54</sup> Here, it is relevant to mention Jung’s understanding of ‘big’ and ‘little’ dreams, which is one of the ways individuals experience the personal and collective psyche. In his view, ‘little’ dreams were marked by everyday happenings. In comparison, ‘big’ dreams were expressions from the collective unconscious and encounter universal archetypes. Jung believed that ‘big’ dreams were “often remembered for a lifetime, and not infrequently proved to be the richest jewel in the treasure-house of psychic experience” (Jung, 1947/1954, para. 554).

the latter, *prophecy*, ‘would agree in every detail.’ In other words, the prophetic revelation would be an almost one hundred per cent accurate depiction of the predicted events. In the previous section, I suggested that it was vital to reconsider *prophecy* as a phenomenon, to disconnect it from the misconception that prophetic insight is a literal and accurate portrayal of future events. However, as we can see, Jung had already attempted this by defining the *prospective function*.

## 2. Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle

Another way Jung (1952, para. 997) approached the topic of prophetic or prospective insight was with the concept of *synchronicity*, which he defined as a “meaningful coincidence” and an “acausal connecting principle.” He wrote, “Synchronicity [...] means the simultaneous occurrence of a certain *psychic state* with one or more *external events* which appear as *meaningful* parallels to the momentary subjective state” (para. 850). He argued that the meaningful coincidence between a person’s subjective state and external events could provide insight into the unconscious, which is related to the ideas and symbols used by prophets to convey their message.

A popular example of synchronicity that he posits concerns a young woman whom he had difficulty analysing due to her unmovable rationalism. Due to this struggle, he hoped that “something unexpected would turn up [...] [to] burst the intellectual retort into which she had sealed herself” (Jung, 1952, para. 982). He recounted, “a young woman I was treating had, at a critical moment, a dream in which she was given a golden scarab” (para. 843). Curiously, as she told her story, Jung began to hear a noise from behind him. After realising the source of the sound, he opened the window and caught the scarab as it flew in.

Afterwards, he handed the insect to his patient citing the words, “here is your scarab” (para. 982). According to Jung, this experience broke through her resistance, and the treatment “could now continue with satisfactory results” (ibid.).

In this example, the patient’s decision to discuss her dream involving the scarab reveals her *psychic state*. The *external event* was the appearance of the real scarab, which paralleled the patient’s psychic state. The psychic and physical events were not caused by each other in any usual way; thus, their relationship was *acausal*. Furthermore, the acausal connection was significant due to the patient’s transformation, making it *meaningful*. This example illustrates how synchronicity can help to explain the occurrence of highly improbable coincidences that seem to have no causal link but provide highly meaningful insights into the unconscious.

In his paper, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle* (1952), Jung argued that, since the physical and psychic realms coincide within the synchronistic occurrence, there must be a unitarian reality somewhere, one world where psyche and matter are not yet discriminated or separately actualised. He called this unified realm the *unus mundus*. In his view, synchronicity works by spontaneously opening individuals to this unified reality, transcending our consciousness and intimating the possibility of an absolute knowledge<sup>55</sup>.

Moreover, von Franz explores this concept in the published transcript of her lecture series *On Divination and Synchronicity* (1980). Within this series, she described the existence of two orders. First is the easily understood causal order of

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<sup>55</sup> Jung acknowledged that, because the *unus mundus* transcends our conscious grasp, we can only assume this psycho-physical world exists. Yet, he argued that the evidence lies in the sporadic manifestations of unconscious content as seen in synchronistic events.

the physical world, which we experience daily and where time runs sequentially. Second is the acausal order of the *unus mundus*, which does not rely on the laws of matter, space, and time. According to both Jung and von Franz, the causal reality of the physical world rests upon the *unus mundus*. Furthermore, it is from this unified reality that creativity, transformations, and cultural developments arise and, “whose perpetual eruptions prevent the stagnation and death of a culture” (Neumann, 1959, p. 89). However, the *unus mundus* is not simply a synonym for the collective unconscious. Instead, it is a “synthesis of the conscious and unconscious” (Jung, 1955, para. 770).

Interestingly, von Franz extends Jung’s theory by suggesting that idiopathically or otherwise induced trance states can allow an individual to become sensitive to highly charged archetypes within the *unus mundus*. So, rather than waiting for the images to rise instinctively or spontaneously (as seen with synchronistic events), an individual can actively attempt to access the content through divination practices. She explained, “the archetype could [...] be defined as a structure which conditions certain psychological probabilities, and oracle techniques obviously attempt to get at these structures” (von Franz, 1980, p. 54). As a result, psychic events, experienced either spontaneously (synchronistic events) or induced (using divinatory practices), are believed to be a concrete or formal expression of archetypal dynamics.

### **The Pauli-Jung Conjecture**

In his essay *On the Nature of the Psyche* (1947/1954) Jung revised his understanding of the archetype. Initially, he saw the archetypes as a primordial, structural element of the human psyche. However, he later came to view it as a

structure that exists beyond psychic reality, with a dual nature that exists both in the psyche and the world. This realisation led to the development of the concept of the *psychoid*, which refers to the idea that the unconscious has a quality beyond the matter and mind distinction. He proposed that the *psychoid* exists beyond the personal and collective unconscious and is connected to the fundamental structure of the universe. For instance, just as the personal unconscious acts as a bridge between the ego and the collective unconscious, the psychoid acts as a bridge between the collective unconscious and the natural world in its true state.

The concept of the *psychoid* was developed in collaboration with the physicist Wolfgang Pauli, referred to as the Pauli-Jung conjecture. This conjecture was based on the observation that mental and physical states often seem to be interconnected and may influence each other in complex ways. Through their framework, they proposed that the relationship between mental and physical states could be studied scientifically to understand the fundamental nature of reality. In this sense, Jung suggested that synchronous events could be seen as evidence of the psychoid level of the unconscious. Moreover, as discussed in the previous section this can be extended to divination techniques and the production of visionary images.

Nonetheless, this conjecture was not developed in isolation and relied on the philosophical musings of the mind-matter dilemma of René Descartes (1596), and Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677), which I will briefly introduce.

## 1. The Mind-Matter Dilemma

Descartes' dualistic view of the mind and the material world as separate ontological entities has often served as a starting point for discussions of the mind-matter dilemma. However, according to the physicist Harold Atmanspacher (2014), this perspective has been updated or replaced by three main approaches: alternate approaches to dualism (such as occasionalism and parallelism), primarily monistic approaches (such as idealism and materialism), and approaches that combine elements of both dualism and monism while postulating that the monistic domain underlies the mind-matter distinction. An early proponent of the latter view was Spinoza, whose monism proposed a unitary relationship between thought and matter by combining ontological monism with epistemic dualism. This framework began to be used more consistently by scientists and philosophers during the middle of the nineteenth century.

However, today we recognise two significant reactions to Spinoza: dual-aspect monism and neutral monism. Dual aspect monism holds that mind and matter are aspects of, or perspectives of, a primary domain or reality, which is neutral towards the mind-matter distinction. This viewpoint also holds that the manifestations of the unifying domain can only be understood indirectly. Thus, Atmanspacher (2014, p. 182) notes, "therefore, it is natural for dual-aspect monists to nurture metaphysical conceptions of the underlying domain."

Without delving into too much detail, the Pauli-Jung conjecture follows the dual-aspect monism tradition. The collaborators proposed that the physical and mental domains are strictly complementary, epistemic aspects of an underlying

ontic psychophysical reality called the *unus mundus*. The following schema (Figure 7.4.1)<sup>56</sup> clearly outlines this standpoint.

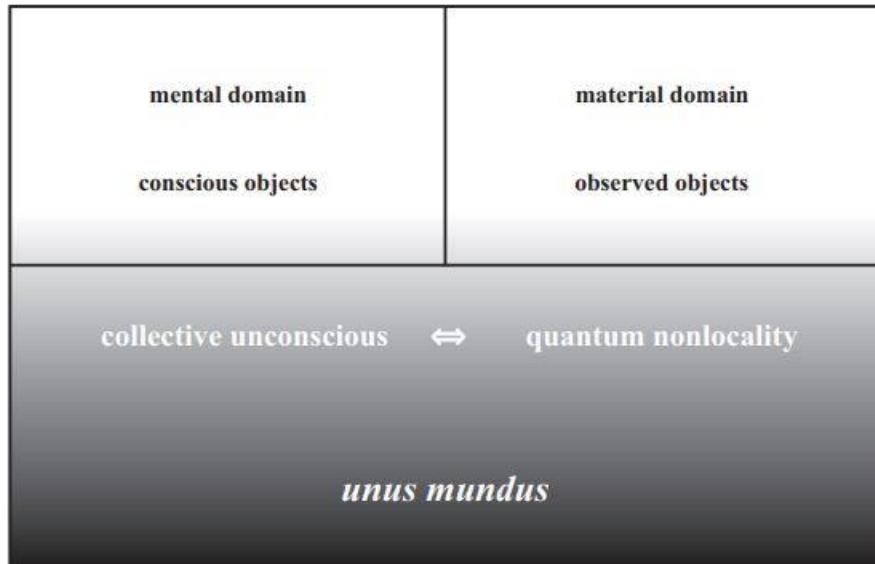


Figure 7.4.1 - The Pauli-Jung Conjecture according to Atmanspacher. Image was sourced by Fellows' *Psyche, Gaia, and Deep Ecology* (2018).

This figure shows the Pauli-Jung conjecture, which has two levels. The first level displays two distinct realms (mental and material). However, the lower level is a unified reality represented by the *unus mundus*. Atmanspacher depicts this unity as being tied to the collective unconscious and quantum nonlocality, stating that it is more profound than both the mental and material realms.

## 2. Gaia, Psyche and Deep Ecology

In his text, *Gaia, Psyche, and Deep Ecology: Navigating Climate Change in the Anthropocene* (2018), Fellows proposes a similar Psyche-Gaia conjecture. This conjecture suggests that the unconscious (psyche) and the physical world (as

<sup>56</sup> Atmanspacher first developed a similar schema in his text, *The Pauli-Jung Conjecture and its Impact Today* (2014). However, Figure 4.4.2 is extracted from Fellows' text (Fellow, 2018, p. 105).

represented by the Gaia theory) are more deeply and fundamentally connected than previously thought. The Gaia theory was proposed in the early 1970s by the scientist and inventor James Lovelock and the biologist Lynn Margulis. This theory, named after the ancient Greek Earth Goddess, postulated that the Earth and its biological systems function as one cohesive unit with tightly controlled self-regulatory systems. These systems, or feedback loops, maintain the planet's conditions within the boundaries favourable for life.

Figure 7.4.2 shows the Psyche-Gaia conjecture as proposed by Fellows. Like the previous diagram, this image depicts two distinct levels. The upper left cell represents the inner world of the psyche, which aligns with Jung's model of the subjective psyche and includes all the elements of the personal unconscious. The upper right cell represents the outer material world, which includes the technosphere and the Earth's organic, inorganic, and anthropogenic domains. In addition, Fellows portrays the bottom cell as the ontic, psychophysically neutral domain, whose contents we can only infer. The Self, which is unaffected by psychophysical<sup>57</sup> occurrences, is responsible for organising this layer. In addition, under the Self's guidance, the *psychoid* acts as an invisible agent that forms the epistemic realms of the human psyche and Gaia.

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<sup>57</sup> Psychophysical phenomena refer to the ways in which physical stimuli are perceived, processed, and experienced by an individual.

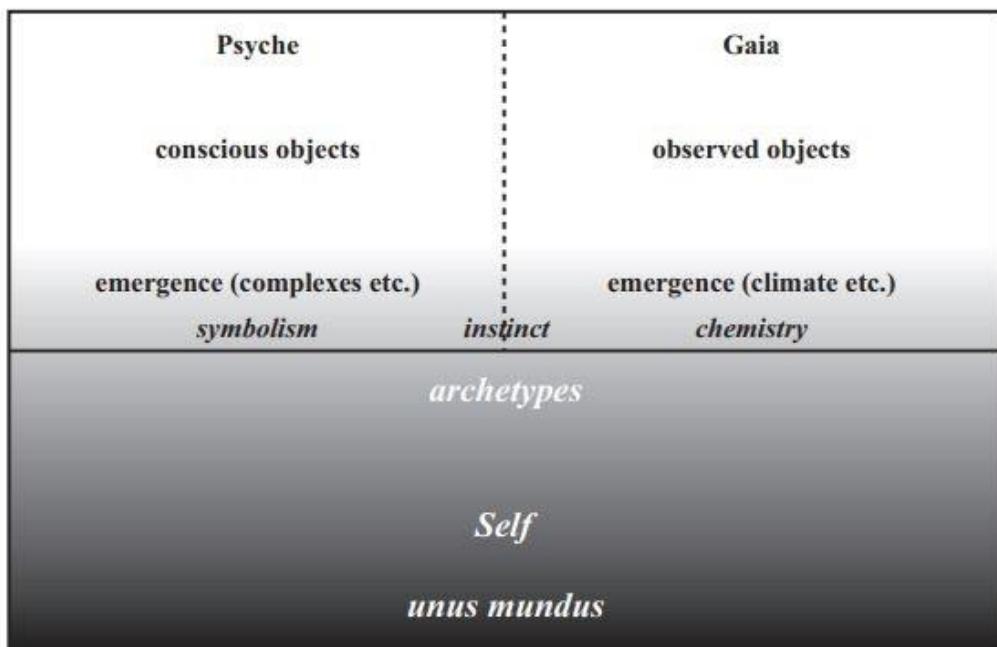


Figure 7.4.2 – Fellows’ Psyche-Gaia Conjecture. Image sourced from *Psyche, Gaia and Deep Ecology* (2018).

Through the Psyche-Gaia conjecture, Fellows aims to visualise a form of dual-aspect monism that incorporates and expands upon Jung’s concepts. According to this conjecture, the psyche has a robust and fundamental connection to the natural environment that exceeds Jung’s traditional concept of the collective unconscious. Fellows suggests that his conjecture can provide a valuable framework for understanding this relationship and help humanity to develop a more harmonious and healthy connection to the natural world. Even though this hypothesis does not directly connect to visionary art, it may be used to understand visual imagery since it posits a profound relationship between the psyche and the natural world, which may be mirrored in the themes and images of visionary works. Furthermore, it suggests a multilayered unconscious that may be used in creating and interpreting visual imagery.

## 7.5 Key Points and Reflections

This chapter explored the complexities involved in comprehending visionary art from the lens of analytical psychology. The initial obstacle encountered was the ambiguity in definitions proposed by Rowland (2008), Stephenson (2015), and Matthews (2015). To address this issue, the analysis turned to Jung's original conceptualisation of the subject. This examination uncovered insights into visionary creativity, exemplified by Jung's own art practice and *Liber Novus*.

Another important point discussed was the proposed link between visionary art and prophecy. This examination revealed further complexities and nuances in an analytical psychological view of visionary art. Namely, it offered insights into the interplay between the creative process, external world experiences, the subjective and collective psyche, and the individual's connection to the natural environment in its true state.

The importance of this discourse emerges from its recommendation to discern distinct modes of creativity, specifically the visionary mode, which transcends conventional aesthetic and personal confines. Drawing from Jung's creative practices, and his emphasis on prospective insights, there is a call to nurture artistic creation that attempts to engage with these expansive dimensions. By doing so, the artistic process can act as a conduit for societal introspection and environmental consciousness. In other words, when artists tap into the visionary mode, their work has the potential to provoke deep reflection and promote a greater awareness of humanity and their relationship with the environment.

To further explore this inquiry, the next chapter focuses on post-Jungian perspectives of visionary creativity. Specifically, it examines the contributions of two notable individuals, Erich Neumann and Robert Romanyshyn.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Post-Jungian Perspectives

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter explores visionary creativity through post-Jungian perspectives, beginning with Neumann's concept of Great Art<sup>58</sup>. It considers the stages of psychological development from Neumann *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (TOHOC) and the four stages of art in relation to its epoch, as explores in *Art and the Creative Unconscious* (1959). Insights from Whitmont's *The Return of the Goddess* (1983) supplement this analysis, highlighting the potential resurgence of the feminine archetype. Furthermore, this discussion extends to Neumann's theories on the dissolution and rebirth of archetypal values.

In addition, the chapter further investigates Romanyshyn's technique of 'Transference Dialogues.' The dialogues, explored within four distinct stages – personal, cultural-historical, collective-archetypal, and eco-cosmological – aim to illuminate hidden influences on the research process. The potential of these dialogues to amplify unconscious content in art is also examined, positioning Romanyshyn's approach as a potential tool for artists and critics. The chapter concludes with a summary of key points and reflections.

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<sup>58</sup> In Andrew Samuels's text *Jung and Post Jungians* (1985), the author divides Post-Jungians into three schools: the classical school, the developmental school, and the archetypal school. According to Samuels, Neumann is part of the classical and developmental school in post-Jungian studies (Samuels, 1985, p. 17).

## 8.2 Neumann on Artistic and Cultural Evolution

### Overview

Despite his untimely death at 55, Jung highly regarded Neumann's scholarly contributions<sup>59</sup>. However, he was not widely accepted by his fellow post-Jungians and was often misunderstood. In recent years, several publications have focused on Jung and Neumann's correspondence, which seems to have sparked a "Neumann renaissance" (Shalit & Stein, 2016, p. ix). Social critic Camille Paglia (2018, p. 443) also notes in her essay *Erich Neumann: Theorist of the Great Mother* that "it appears that the Zeitgeist – a force that Neumann says drives creative artists – is preparing the way for a Neumann revival." Given this context, it is worth revisiting Neumann's work and examining whether his writing can offer a deeper understanding of visionary art within analytical psychology and potentially further afield to art criticism.

#### 1. Problematic Issues

A point of contention in Neumann's work is the employment of gender-specific language when referring to 'Great Individuals' and 'Great Artists.' In the ensuing analysis, an effort has been made to reinterpret this terminology in a more inclusive manner. A further point I want to address is the emphasis Neumann (1959) places on great individuals (and artists) in his writings. His argument suggests that these unique individuals, through their distinctive consciousness, contribute to the dynamic interplay between the collective unconscious and the cultural canon, thereby averting cultural stagnation. However, a limitation with

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<sup>59</sup> In a letter dated 1955, Jung wrote: "My dear Neumann [...] I would like to sincerely thank you, not only that you have taken to the pen for me in such a generous way, but also for that greater thing you are achieving in your life's work" (Liebscher, 2015, p. 310).

this perspective is the inadvertent perpetuation of the notion that artistic innovation and cultural growth primarily stem from a select elite. This viewpoint reinforces a constrained understanding of artistic creation and its societal implications.

However, Rowland's (2021) recent work indirectly challenges the romanticised concept of the great individuals (or artists) by endorsing a more inclusive approach to visionary art engagement. In her investigation into arts-based research and transdisciplinarity, Rowland underscores the significance of collaboration, interdisciplinary interaction, and the integration of artmaking into the research process. According to her argument, the creative process should be accessible to everyone, allowing for contributions to ongoing dialogues from all interested parties.

Psychologist and mythologist Sharon Blackie's (2023) concept of the 'post-heroic' aligns with Rowland's inclusive approach by also emphasising community and diversity over individual glory. She states: "Post-heroic stories aren't focused on individual glory; they're focused on community, relationality. On diversity. It's not about slaying the dragon but harnessing his special skills – making him a part of the time" (Blackie, 2023). These perspectives suggest a shift away from the singular, exceptional individual, towards a more collective inclusive approach that values all contributions, potentially enhancing Neumann's framework.

Once these outdated notions have been addressed, Neumann's insights can still prove valuable. Therefore, this chapter proceeds with an examination of his work, starting with an exploration of how his idea of 'Great Art' corresponds to Jung's 'visionary mode of creativity.'

## **Neumann's Concept of Great Art**

Neumann's (1959) essay *Art and Time* is a thought-provoking work in which he aimed to present an argument for understanding art as a psychological phenomenon essential for both the individual and the collective. He explained, "our effort will begin and end with the question of what art means for mankind and what position it occupies within human development" (Neumann, 1959, p. 82).

In this essay, he argued that art can transcend time and reveal universal truths that apply to all individuals, regardless of their culture or historical background. He introduced the concept of the "eternal presence" (Neumann, 1959, p. 190), which refers to the timeless, eternal components of human experience reflected in art. He characterised the "eternal presence" or "archetypal eternity" (ibid.) as archetypal patterns that recur throughout history in various artistic mediums such as myths, literature, and music. These archetypal patterns are universal and timeless and serve as a reminder of the deeper, eternal reality beyond our everyday existence.

Moreover, in this essay, he describes the role of 'Great Individuals' in stimulating cultural growth and orienting a group's collective consciousness by perceiving the archetypal eternity. These "Great Individuals", he writes, are the institution forerunners of whom the group follows, for example, "the medicine men, seer, prophet, [...] [and] the man of genius [who possess] a form of consciousness different from the average" (p. 286).

## 1. Great Individuals and Creativity

Neumann's theory is grounded in the assumption that there is continuous reciprocity between the collective unconscious (shared by all individuals in a group), the cultural canon (the group's shared values and beliefs), and the creative individual (who express the new ideas from the collective unconscious). In his view, this connection helps prevent cultural stagnation. For Neumann (1959, p. 89):

In the group as in the individual, two psychic systems are at work, which can function smoothly only when they are attuned to each other. The [first] one is the collective consciousness, the cultural canon, the system of culture's supreme values toward which its education is orientated, and which set their decisive stamp on the development of the individual consciousness. But side by side with this is the living substratum, the collective unconscious, in which new developments, transformations, revolutions and renewals are at all times foreshadowed and prepared and whose perpetual eruptions prevent the stagnation and death of a culture.

This quote illustrates a correlation between Neumann's two psychic systems and Jung's dual psychological processes. First, 'the collective consciousness, the cultural canon to which its education is orientated' links with Jung's No.1 personality and directed thinking, as explored in the previous section. Second, 'the collective unconscious [...] the living substratum' links to Jung's No.2 personality and fantasy thinking.

According to Neumann (1959, p. 211), these great individuals are the heroes of our time who have "achieved a synthesis between consciousness and the creative unconscious [...] upon which the continued existence of the world depends." This explanation is in line with Saban (2019) and Jung's acknowledgment that bringing together the two psychological states can provide a new scope of vision that equals more than either state could offer in isolation.

Furthermore, Neumann suggested that when these extraordinary individuals express themselves through art, they become ‘Great Artists’ who can effectively portray the formless psychic structures of the unconscious. This description suggests a clear overlap between Neumann’s reference to *great art* and what Jung referred to as the *visionary mode of creativity*.

In addition, Neumann indirectly described the psychological mode of creativity by stating that this vocation could never truly realise the potential of great art. He explained:

For the artist, whose vocation it is to represent the cultural canon, it is a question of growing into a tradition – that is, into the situation of the time and into collective consciousness [...] art which is orientated toward those sectors of the archetypal world that have already entered consciousness through representation will never realise the supreme possibilities of art (Neumann, 1959, p. 93).

Even though Neumann did not mention the visionary mode within his texts, the above observations strongly suggest that this was the mode to which he referred. Therefore, this project proceeds with the assumption that Neumann’s understanding of the ‘Great Artist’ refers to a creative individual who effectively engages with (either wittingly or unwittingly) the visionary mode of creativity and produces visionary artworks. With this understanding, the discussion now shifts to exploring the connection between the individuation process and the visionary artist.

### **Individuation and the Visionary Artist**

Jung introduced the term *individuation process* to describe the potential for psychological development that is innate in every person. This process relies on a balance between the conscious and unconscious portions of the psyche and

involves the creative interplay between them. In his essay *The Stages of Life* (1930), Jung divided the human life cycle into four phases:

- a) childhood (from the earliest years to puberty)
- b) youth (just after puberty to the fortieth year)
- c) midlife (fortieth to the eightieth year)
- d) old age (eightieth year to death).

To illustrate his perspective, he used a metaphor of the sun sweeping across the horizon. He wrote, “in the morning it rises from the nocturnal sea of unconsciousness and looks upon the wide, bright world which lies before it in an expanse” (Jung, 1930/1950, para 778). He also noted that the four life stages are made up of both unconscious and conscious phases. The unconscious phases correspond to young childhood and extreme old age, while the conscious phases correspond to youth and midlife<sup>60</sup>.

When discussing the individuation process, Jung focused primarily on mid-life. He believed that it is during this phase that an individual becomes adequately prepared to integrate the two aspects of their psyche. However, he also argued that not everyone undergoes individuation, stating that it is “only experienced by those who have gone through the wearisome but indispensable business of coming to terms with the unconscious” (Jung, 1947/1954, para. 430).

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<sup>60</sup> Jung (1930/1954, para. 795) wrote: “childhood and extreme old age are, of course, utterly different, and yet they have something in common; submersion in unconscious psychic happenings [whereas] conscious problems fill out the second and third quarters.”

## 1. Neumann and the Individuation Process

Neumann built upon Jung's ideas by arguing that the first half of life and childhood play a crucial role in self-realisation. He explained, "self-formation, whose effects in the second half of life Jung has termed 'individuation,' has its critical developmental pattern not only in the first half of life but also in childhood" (Neumann, 1954/2013, p. 54). In response to this observation, he coined the term 'centroversion' to illustrate the individual's desire to strive towards wholeness – to individuate. He described it as a regulatory and compensatory system that is a primary factor within organic and psychic life.

In line with this, in TOHOC, Neumann (1954/2013) proposed four stages of psychological development that align somewhat to Jung's four life stages:

- a) the original unity
- b) the separation of systems
- c) the balance and crisis of consciousness
- d) the self-realisation of centroversion.

Likewise, in his essay *Art and Time* (1959) he identifies four stages of growth and development of a 'great' or visionary artist:

- a) self-representation of the unconscious
- b) representation of the cultural canon
- c) compensation for the cultural canon
- d) the transcendence of art.

Neumann (1959, p. 104) suggested that these two sets of stages are related, stating that “the supreme alchemical transformation of art merely reflects the alchemical transformation of the Great Individual.” This quote suggests a clear parallel between the individuation process and the Neumann’s theories on the visionary artist’s development. The following sections compare each of these stages, considering their relationship to visual art and visionary art. This exploration, as outlined in the introduction, also incorporates insights from Whitmont’s *Return of the Goddess* (1983).

### **Stage One: The Original Unity**

In TOHOC, Neumann outlined the stages of humanity’s psychological development, with the first category being labelled as the ‘original unity.’ He employed the symbol of the uroboros, a serpent or dragon consuming its own tail to illustrate this stage. He outlined how the uroboros, in its depiction of a creature consuming itself, symbolises a state of self-contained totality, an undifferentiated existence when the conscious and unconscious are not yet separated. It epitomises a primal state of unconscious dominance, where individuality is submerged in a collective unity.

This stage, according to Neumann (1954/2013, p. 276) is characterised by “non-differentiation,” a condition where a group exists as a single, cohesive entity rather than as separate individuals. Despite its roots in prehistoric times, he argues that the psychological imprint of this stage persists in modern individuals, often manifesting in dreams or during meditative practices. He notes:

It is within dreams that we most readily regress to the uroboric stage of the psyche, which like all the other bygone stages, continues to exist in us and can at any moment be reactivated, provided that the level of consciousness falls, as

during sleep, or [...] some debility or illness or a lowering of consciousness otherwise induced (1954/2013, p. 276).

### 1. The Self- Representation of the Unconscious in Art

Neumann (1959, p. 91) introduces the first stage of art in relation to its epoch as ‘the self-representation of the unconscious.’ He argued that, in this foundational stage, artists are more driven by unconscious, collective, and transpersonal forces than by their conscious, individual factors. They remain entrenched in the “original psychic situation” (p. 83), resulting in art becoming a collective endeavour that is integral to the life of the group and reflective of its shared condition.

Neumann posited that artists in this stage may be largely unaware of the unconscious forces influencing their work. He explained, “his [or her] reaction to the creative impulse of the psyche is not to reflect; it is to obey and execute its commands” (1959, p. 84). In this manner, they use colour, form, and tones to express their emotions and perceptions of the world. Eventually, the artist’s integration into the collective leads to the development of a relatively fixed style of expression, which helps establish traditions that guide the artist into the next stage.

In this light, Neumann (1959, p. 98) proposed that modern artists, such as Picasso, Van Gogh, and Klee ascend to an “exalted and detached transpersonal state.” Through their works, they channel the collective unconscious, resonating with the symbolic echoes of the original unity stage. Modern art, as Neumann interprets it, features a distinctive departure from external reality and the activation of the transpersonal world.

He further argues that modern art carries with it, the turbulent impressions of isolation, chaos, and disorder. These elements, manifesting in their artwork, suggest that the artists' resonance with the overarching collective consciousness, mirror societal and individual crises. In this sense, modern art transforms into an embodiment of what Neumann (1959, p. 134) terms a "sacred disease." Yet within this disarray, Neumann discerns a remedy. He proposes that the very act of confronting and expressing these complex, often troubling themes, serves as a form of healing and understanding. Thus, modern art, despite its apparent chaos, is in fact a conduit for resolving the inherent conflicts and tensions of the time<sup>61</sup>.

## 2. Whitmont's Contribution

In the context of cultural and individual development, Whitmont (1983) proposed four stages: magical, mythical, mental, and return of the Goddess. The *magical stage* aligns with Neumann's initial category. According to Whitmont, this stage is characterised by the powerful presence of the Great Goddess, representing a time when culture was open to the unconscious and could express its contents through creative forms such as myths, rituals, and art. He suggested that this period occurred while culture was relatively innocent and not yet fully differentiated from the surrounding world – approximately 2,000 B.C. In the individual context, the magical phase of psychological development usually occurs between the ages of two and six. During this time, the child is receptive to the contents of the unconscious and can express them through play and creativity.

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<sup>61</sup> "For despite all the despair and darkness which are still more evident in us and our art than the secret forces of the new birth and the new synthesis, we must not forget that no epoch, amid the greatest danger to its existence, has shown so much readiness to burst the narrow limits of its horizon and open itself to the great power which is striving to rise out of the unknown" (Neumann, 1959, p.134).

Like Neumann, Whitmont posits the existence of multiple stages within cultural and psychological development. They concur that the initial phase is marked by a state of non-differentiation and integration within the group. Importantly, despite this stage being rooted in pre-historic times, they contend that individuals can still tap into it, a connection that can be established through play, dreams, meditative practices, and other mindful exercises.

### **Stage Two: The Separation of the Systems**

In TOHOC, Neumann labelled the second stage of humanity's psychological development as the 'separation of systems' – the division of the individual personality into conscious and unconscious aspects. This separation is symbolised by the First Parents, which represents the "splitting off of opposites from unity, the creation of heaven and earth, above and below, day and night, light and darkness" (Neumann, 1954/2013, p. 103). During the earlier matriarchal phase of human history, the *First Parents* were represented as the Great Mother with the invisible Spirit Father. However, in this stage the tension between the mother and father is reduced, and the patriarchal world inherits the father archetype, while the unconscious becomes the living representation of the Great Mother.

With the systemisation and development of consciousness and the reinforcement of the ego, there emerges a collective consciousness, "a cultural canon for each culture and cultural epoch" (Neumann, 1959, p. 87). Neumann explained, "there arises, in other words, a configuration of definite archetypes, symbols, values, and attitudes, upon which the unconscious archetypal contents are projected and which, fixated as myth and cult, becomes the dogmatic heritage of the group" (ibid.). He noted that the cultural canon limits and fixates the

intervention of the numinosum (the divine or transcendent power or quality present in human experience) and excludes unpredictable creative forces, which can lead to one-sidedness and congealment.

### 1. The Representation of the Cultural Canon in Art

In the context of art, Neumann (1959, p. 91) described the second stage as the “representation of the archetype in the cultural canon.” This stage is characterised by the artist who derives inspiration from the collective consciousness and represents the existing cultural canon, which consists of the traditions, beliefs, and images within a culture that have become dogmatic and accepted without question.

The art created in this manner is closer to consciousness than the previous stage and has less of an ambiguous power. However, it is still influenced by the unconscious and has a therapeutic function for the collective. Neumann saw these artists as growing into the tradition of their time, rather than receiving a direct mandate from the unconscious. He wrote, “art which is orientated toward those sectors of the archetypal world that have already entered into consciousness through representation that will never realise the supreme possibilities of art” (Neumann, 1959, p. 93).

Charles Soubre’s painting *The Crucifixion* (1867), serves as an example in fine art that can be viewed as a representation of an archetype that was entrenched in the cultural canon. This painting portray Christ on the cross, symbolising the trinity, which according to Jung (1942/1948, para. 221), represents the son, critical reflection, and differentiation and is “based on an archetype of an exclusively masculine nature.” This interpretation suggests that the image of crucified Jesus,

and by extension the trinity, can be perceived as a manifestation of male dominance and the repression of feminine values and unconscious impulses.

## 2. Whitmont's Contributions

According to Whitmont (1983), the 'mythological phase' is characterised by the creation of mythological images and represents a shift from magical to mental thinking. He suggested that this phase occurred during the Neolithic period, reaching its peak in the Bronze Age, and ending in the Iron Age. In children, this stage corresponds to ages three to seven (Neolithic) and seven to twelve (Bronze age), while puberty corresponds to the Iron Age and the beginning of androlatric values<sup>62</sup>.

Whitmont suggested that the mythological worldview considered everything, including work, as sacred and imbued with mana and soul. In contrast, the modern mindset separated spirit from matter and became secularised, leading to an obsession with material things and a grim pursuit of fun that lacks celebration and festivity (Whitmont, 1983, p. 50). He explained how, during the mythological period, opposing forces were seen as complementary aspects of a unified whole. The forces, however, grew more distinct and independent as the mythological era concluded, leading to a dualism in which opposites exclude or negate one another. This transition denotes a shift from viewing opposites as related polarities to seeing them as opposing and conflicting entities. Whitmont referred to this latter perspective as the 'mental phase'.

According to Whitmont, the patriarchal mental phase is focused on control and domination of the external environment and one's own inner experiences and

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<sup>62</sup> "the terms gynolatric and andolatric denote the reverencing of respectively, the feminine or masculine" (Whitmont, 1983, p. 42)

desires. This phase is dominated by the persona and internalised moral standards and expectations that shape an individual's sense of self and behaviour. It is also marked by a rejection and devaluation of feminine deities and values, as well as the suppression of natural drives and spontaneous emotions. In his view, the development of the conscious ego is achieved through the control and repression of these elements (Whitmont, 1983, p.50). Like Neumann, Whitmont identifies a stage of human psychological development marked by a shift towards systemised consciousness, the emergence of a collective cultural canon, and the negation of opposing forces.

### **Stage Three: The Balance and Crisis of Consciousness**

As indicated in the preceding stage, the Father archetype becomes prominent in the typical western development, and the unconscious Mother archetype becomes severely repressed and inhibited. However, in creative individuals (and to a significant extent in neurotics), this reduction of the archetypal tension between the First Parents is incomplete. According to Neumann (1954/2013), these creative individuals have a less dominant Father archetype, and the Mother archetype is not as repressed as in normal western development.

The third stage of humanity's psychological development, known as the 'Balance and Crisis of Consciousness,' involves reintegrating the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche (in a coniunctio). During this stage, the hero's mythological journey involves 'slaying the parents', which means surpassing the Mother as a symbol of the overpowering unconscious and surpassing the Father as a symbol of collective values and traditions. Once the hero achieves this victory, they begin to develop a new world vision in which the uroboric parents become

companions rather than hostile, confining powers, “bestowing [...] blessings on the [hero’s] life and work” (Neumann, 1959, p. 21).

Nonetheless, according to Neumann, the tension between the Great Mother and Spirit Father is necessary for creative growth. He identified two types of creative development: patriarchal development, in which the hero breaks free from the Mother, and matriarchal development, in which the hero remains under the influence of an overpowering unconscious (1959, p. 21). In his view, the Great Individual must confront and reconcile with the opposite archetypes to achieve a creative existence that reaches beyond the existing cultural canon. In patriarchal development, the hero must reconcile with the Great Mother, while in matriarchal development, the hero must confront the Spirit Father.

Therefore, to maintain a balanced consciousness, the creative person (or the individuating person) must interact with the transcendent function. This function facilitates a change in psychological attitude by dialectically combining the unconscious (Great Mother) and conscious (Spirit Father) portions of the psyche into a third position, representing a new stage in the development of the personality and potentially further afield to the cultural canon.

### 1. The Compensation for the Cultural Canon in Art

In his essay *Art and Time*, Neumann (1959, p. 94) labelled the third stage of art in relation to its epoch as “the stage of compensation for the cultural canon.” In this stage, the creative person’s mission is to compensate for the cultural canon, to “destroy the old order to make possible the dawn of the new” (*ibid.*). He explained:

When unconscious forces break through the artist, when the archetypes striving to be born in the light of the world take form in him, he is as far from men around

him as he is close to their destiny. For he expresses and gives form to the future of his epoch (ibid.).

Neumann argued that the needs of the time works within the artist, influencing their art without them being aware of it or understanding its true significance. This advancement leads the artist to become close to the “seer, the prophet, and the mystic” (p. 97). At this stage, the artist’s role goes beyond merely representing the already conscious archetypal values and becomes one of transforming them. Their work becomes “sacral,” representing a direct revelation of the numinosum.

Neumann (1959) used Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1518) to illustrate this concept. He argued that Bosch was a magnificent painter who consciously followed the old medieval canon, but his work was marked by intense conflict and transformation as he experienced the revival of the earth archetype.

## 2. Whitmont’s Contributions

Neumann’s example of Bosch is relatively outdated. However, Whitmont offers a more contemporary illustration of how our present cultural canon attempts to address the imbalances of our patriarchal system. In his view, our current patriarchal culture has deemed it necessary to suppress what is perceived as negative aspects of femininity, including instincts, desires, and emotions. These qualities were seen as a potential threat to the newfound freedom of will built upon reason, and were often associated with untamed nature, destruction, and Satan. As a result, the perception of women as temptresses, witches, and destroyers of men became prevalent, and men were helplessly vulnerable to being deceived and seduced by them.

As patriarchal culture emphasised a puritan, life-denying ideal, repressed passions were projected on to women. Whitmont argued that, as a result, women were kept in subordinate positions and were expected to be passive, domestic, and nurturing, and they were taught to distrust their emotions and bodies (Whitmont, 1983, p. 183). Whitmont proposed that this is one of the major downfalls of a patriarchal society and that the integration of the feminine is necessary to continue to the next phase of humanity's psychological development. Moreover, he argued that the emergence of the feminine within the arts and mythology is a compensatory response to long existing androcentric values.

While Neumann underscores the compensatory role of the artist in balancing archetypes, Whitmont posits the essential task of integrating the repressed feminine aspects. It remains intriguing to speculate how this integration might be actualised, and whether approaches such as Rowland's JABR could serve as viable strategies towards this vital psychological and cultural objective.

#### **Stage Four: The Realisation of Centroversion**

According to Neumann (1954/2013, p. 423), the fourth stage of humanity's psychological development is the 'realisation of centroversion.' This process, known as individuation, leads to the realisation of the Self as the psychic centre of wholeness rather than the ego. As a result, the ego is no longer dominated by the overpowering unconscious or the traditions and values of the cultural canon. Instead, both are combined uniquely. Neumann (1954/2013, p. 41) stated that this results in increased stability, reduced tension, and "a profound structural change, a new configuration of personality." Moreover, he declared, "the genesis, the stabilisation, configuration and consolidation of the personality are therefore

associated with symbolism whose ingredients are perfect form, balance, harmony, and solidity" (ibid.).

### 1. The Transcendence of Art

In his essay *Art and Time*, Neumann (1959, p. 100) referred to the fourth stage of art in relation to its epoch as the "transcendence of art." He explained how, in the previous three stages, the individual's relationship to the collective remained their true vocation. However, in this final stage, the artist becomes more individualised as their ego and consciousness develop, allowing their unique artistic identity to emerge from the anonymity of the current style.

In his view, this stage is characterised by the individual's realisation of centroversion, which transforms them into the 'Great Artist (or Individual)' who transcends their bond with the collective both outwardly and inwardly. Thus, it is no longer the role of the creative person to express the will of the unconscious, portray a sector of the archetypal world, or compensate for the culture out of the unconscious depths.

According to Neumann, the great artist passes through all the stages of artistic development during their lifetime. First, they respond to the creative impulse within them, which seeks to find form in any way possible (self-representation of the unconscious). Second, they mature and grow into the eventuality of their time by studying their cultural traditions (representation of the cultural canon). At this point, many artists will stop, but the truly inspired gradually move away from the traditions of their time and compensate for their culture by bringing awareness to cultural and archetypal values that were previously lacking (compensation for the cultural canon).

Neumann (1959, p. 100) suggests that, during their solitude, the creative person surpasses the limitations of their epoch and escapes “the prison of time and ego-bound consciousness.” However, this stage occurs rarely, and when it does, it is difficult to objectively state that everyone can find transcendence in specific works of art. Neumann noted that this experience can only be achieved through a limited number of the greatest artistic works and only by those who are open and willing to experience it. Furthermore, he wrote, “even when the highest form of artistic reality has achieved objective existence in a work, it must be reborn in subjective human experience” (p. 106). Finally, Neumann contended that the primary purpose of art is to activate the universal, transpersonal aspects of the psyche and at the highest level of artistic expression, to bring the individual to a state of transcendence, “to lead him to the timeless radiant dynamic that is the heart of the world” (ibid.).

Neumann’s idea of ‘transcendence of art’ appears to be a metaphorical representation of the ‘third’ position arrived at by the interaction of the conscious (spirit father) and unconscious (great mother) aspects of the psyche, a process referred to as the ‘transcendent function.’ This suggests that the artistic creation acts as a vessel for this third position, embodying a unique blend of unconscious and conscious elements, leading to a transformative psychological and potential cultural shift.

## 2. Whitmont’s Contributions

In the concluding chapter of *The Return of the Goddess*, Whitmont described how patriarchy has repressed the magical stratum, or the fairy world, which was characterised by a holistic, emotionally connected worldview in which life and

death were seen as part of a single wave. This worldview was based on instinctual tides and rhythms, extrasensory perception and communication, and a receptive openness to whatever presented itself (stage one).

Whitmont notes that, in its primitive form, this worldview is overly passive, fatalistic, and regressive compared to the current level of consciousness. However, if integrated with the best achievements of the mental phase and patriarchal ethics, and tested through personal experience and interpersonal relationships, it can contribute to a new stage in the evolution of consciousness (Whitmont, 1983, p. 197). In his view, this ‘new’ femininity will value inwardness, affirm both the sensuous and intangible aspects of life, and acknowledge pain, ugliness, and woundedness alongside joy and beauty. Nevertheless, “the patriarchal achievements of the past must not be overthrown but integrated into this new outlook” (*ibid.*).

Considering Neumann’s discussion on the ‘transcendence of art’ as a representation of the ‘third’ position or synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the psyche, it is notable how Whitmont’s portrayal of the emergence of ‘new femininity’ seems to embody similar principles. The new femininity, valuing inwardness while acknowledging both sensuous and intangible aspects of life could be seen as a manifestation of this third position in a sociocultural context, spurred on by the emergence of new and impactful archetypal forms, or the rise of the Goddess.

### **The Dissolution and Rebirth of Archetypal Values**

So far, this chapter has compared Neumann’s four stages of psychological development, as outlined in TOHOC, to the four stages of a visionary artist’s

creative and psychological growth as described in the essay *Art and Time*, while also considering Whitmont's theories on the evolution of individual and cultural consciousness. This framework presents an intriguing viewpoint on humanity and the function of the arts in fostering cultural development.

Nonetheless, in his essay *Art and Time*, Neumann (1959) further expanded his theories on the relationship between art and the creative unconscious. For him, the four stages of development operate cyclically, with civilisations rising and falling based on the demand for emerging archetypes and their corresponding value within society<sup>63</sup>. To illustrate his point, he presented two diagrams. The first illustration (Figure 8.2.1) depicts a “balanced culture” (Neumann, 1959, p. 107) in which the collective experience is integrated with the cultural canon, represented by the upper semi-circle. This semi-circle signifies the culture’s core values, including symbols, images and ideals that shape the spiritual and psychological experiences of the collective. According to Neumann, these core values are associated with specific archetypes from the collective unconscious, and their placement in the “celestial arch” (*ibid.*) determines their power and significance.

In his view, unconscious forces shape the individual and collective in a balanced culture and these forces come from various sources, such as religion, art, and science, which are all expressions of the cultural canon. Neumann (1959, p. 107) argued:

For in a balanced culture, the collectivity and the individual integrated with the group are fed by the forces of the unconscious. In part, these forces flow into the personality through consciousness, which stands in direct communication with the constellations of the cultural canon in religion, art, custom, science, and daily

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<sup>63</sup> Whitmont (1983, p. 71) also describes this phenomenon: “these back-and-forth rhythms in their largest spacings occur also in smaller cycles, down to the ten- and twenty-year cycles that make for the proverbial generation gaps. Thus, one mythopoetic wave follows the other, little waves within larger ones, within centuries, within millennia-spanning epochs. The renaissance, enlightenment, and industrial age are all sub cycles of the epoch of the rational mind.”

life; in part, the unconscious is set in motion by the archetypes embodied in the cultural canon.

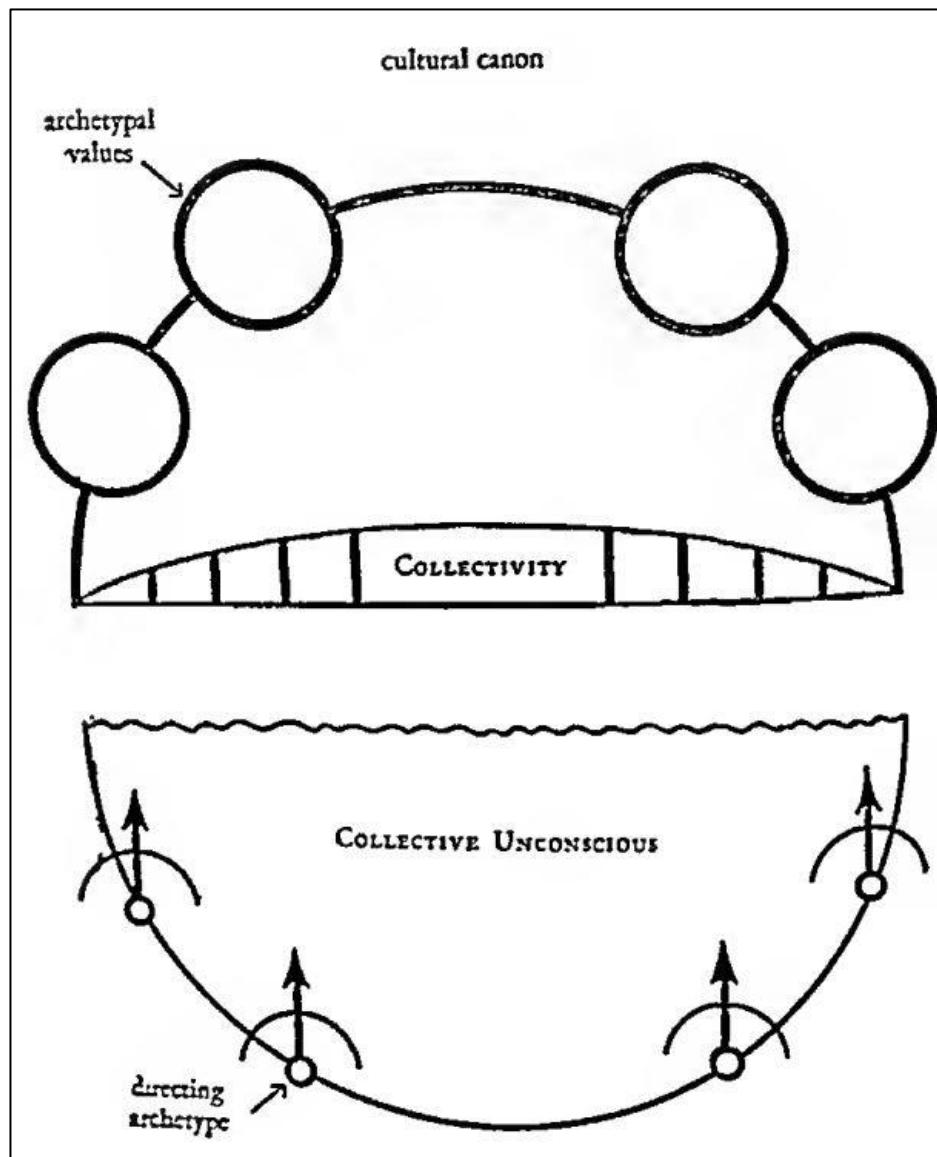


Figure 8.2.1 Neumann's diagram illustrating a "balanced culture". Sourced from *Art and the Creative Unconscious* (1959).

The second illustration (Figure 8.3.2) depicts the “disintegration of the canon” (ibid.), which he claimed, has been occurring in recent centuries. The balance in the psychic field has been lost, and the archetypes that make up the canon is disappearing. The symbols associated with archetypes are also disintegrating, and the celestial arch is collapsing because the underlying order has been disrupted. According to Neumann, when the cultural canon collapses, chaos and panic ensue, much like a hive of bees falling into chaos and panic when the queen is destroyed.

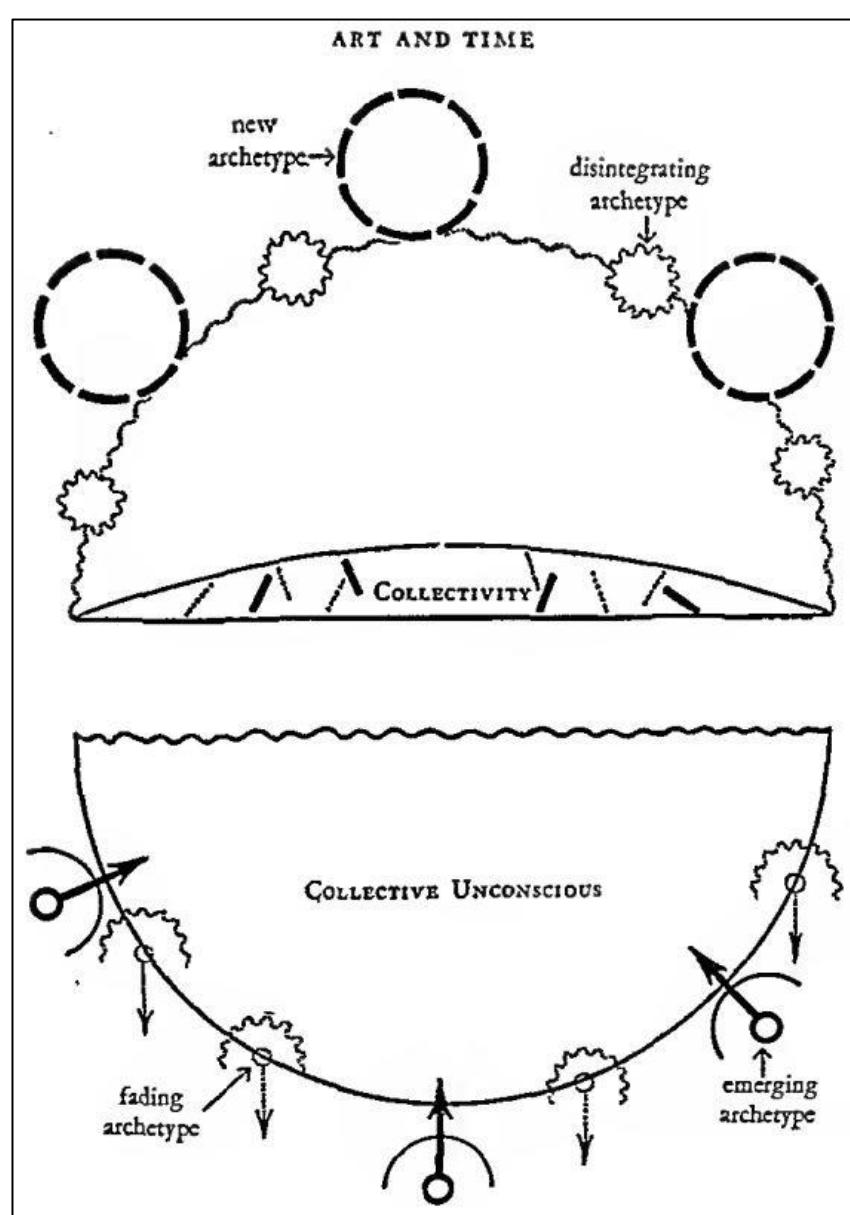


Figure 8.2.2 Neumann's diagram illustrating a “disintegration of the cultural canon”. Taken from *Art and the Creative Unconscious* p. 107.

Moreover, he described how the beginning of a new cultural canon is a dangerous time of judgment and turmoil, and only rarely, when the clouds clear during the crumbling of the old canon, do great individuals and artists see a constellation that belongs to the new cultural canon and hints at its future form. According to Neumann, the disintegration of the cultural canon is evident in the increased number of isolated individuals in literature and painting and the decline in concepts such as school, tradition, and the unity of style. Neumann (1959, p. 113) explained that the world becomes uncertain, people feel devoured by ‘nigredo,’ or a state of chaos and darkness, and the archetypes of the devil and the terrible Mother become dominant.

As mentioned, Neumann (1959, p. 124) uses modern art as an example to demonstrate this idea, stating that “everywhere in modern art we see this dissolution in the breakdown and decay of form” because “abstraction is often the form corresponding to the world of the spirits and the dead.” He noted that many modern artists have abandoned traditional notions of beauty in favour of ugliness but argued that this should not be seen as purely negative. Instead, he argued that the conscious renunciation of form is a necessary step in disowning the ego and has the potential to be creatively constructive as it leads to a new vision of the world.

Through this example, Neumann demonstrates a connection between the disintegration of the cultural canon and the first stage of psychological development, characterised by the overwhelming influence of the unconscious and a state of chaos and confusion. This observation intimates an intrinsic need to reconnect with the original unity, or the overpowering unconscious, in response to a disintegrating cultural canon. This transformative immersion into the primordial

chaos, which initially appears destructive, has the potential to pave the way for renewal and evolution.

## **Discussion**

Exploring Neumann's perspective uncovers a multifaceted framework that enriches the understanding of visionary art. Neumann's elaboration on Jung's original concept of art as an expression of the collective unconscious highlights its integral role in the psychological and spiritual evolution of society. Moreover, his four stages of development, applicable to both individuals and artistic endeavours, offer a compelling blueprint for discerning artistic progression.

One of the significant points raised through this discussion is the idea of the cultural canon's dissolution and rebirth. This cyclical perspective aligns with the ebb and flow of societal development. As seen in Neumann's model, societal unrest and cultural decay often trigger a reversion to a state of chaos, a seemingly regressive step. However, it is within this chaos that a new order begins to emerge. The implications of this theory for understanding visionary art are profound, suggesting that art not only reflects society's current state but also anticipates its future trajectory.

During societal disintegration, Neumann points out the crucial role of visionary artists who can navigate the chaos and provide glimpses of the emerging cultural canon. This insight positions artists not merely as observers, but as active agents shaping the societal narrative. This understanding compels us to consider the evolving role of artists within society and how they can potentially impact cultural development.

Neumann's model provides a rich and multidimensional framework for understanding visionary art. By linking the psychological stages of development to the cultural canon's cyclical dissolution and rebirth, Neumann provides a lens through which we can appreciate the transformative potential of art. His theories invite a consideration of the wider societal implications of artistic movements and its prospective function.

## 8.3 Romanyshyn's Transference Dialogues

### Overview

In his text, *The Wounded Researcher: Research with Soul in Mind* (2013), Romanyshyn proposes an imaginal approach to research modelled on Jung's active imagination. This approach involves using the "transference dialogues" (2013/2021, p. 71) to explore unconscious factors that influence the research process. An essential part of this methodology is engaging in dialogues with imaginary characters that emerge from the unconscious in line with Jung's active imagination technique. These characters serve as vessels for exploring the depths of the researcher's psyche, with their dialogue assisting to unearth hidden motivations, biases, or perspectives that may shape the research process, and much more.

The purpose of the transference dialogues is to create a space for play in which the researcher willingly surrenders their ego and enters an "imaginal landscape" (p. 137) that is neither fully awake nor fully asleep. Here, in this imaginal landscape, the researcher can explore the psychological complexity of human subjectivity, including dialogues with these emergent characters. Romanyshyn suggests that these engagements should span across four levels of the transference field: the personal, the cultural-historical, collective-archetypal, and eco-cosmological. By doing so, the researcher can uncover unconscious factors that may impact their research and attain a holistic understanding of the subject at hand.

## 1. Transference Dialogues and Amplification

While Romanyshyn initially designed the dialogues as a tool for active imagination, they could conceivably be employed to induce various layers of unconscious content. This method could furnish a structured framework for exploring unconscious content, providing a valuable tool for artists and perhaps even art critics.

The intrigue in Romanyshyn's approach lies in the layered nature of his four stages of the transference dialogues. This stratification seems to present a refined extension to Jung's tripartite model of the unconscious, comprising the personal, collective and psychoid dimensions. In this regard, Romanyshyn appears to be extending this model somewhat by including the 'cultural-historical' and 'eco-cosmological.' He suggests that "the various levels of the unconscious [...] range in their depth from the cultural-historical, collective-archetypal, and eco-cosmological realms of the psychoid archetype" (2013, p. 210). This notion invites contemplation: could the exploration of the archetypes, symbols, and themes intrinsic to these multi-layered levels enhance the understanding and interpretation of visionary art? Such an inquiry could help in unveiling unconscious dynamics and potentially enrich the method of amplification.

Although Romanyshyn's text doesn't explicitly elaborate on the origins of these four levels, further exploration and development of these categories appear necessary to comprehend their possible application<sup>64</sup>. As such, the subsequent sections will examine these four levels in conjunction with Jung's model of the unconscious, as well as other relevant developments in the field. This approach

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<sup>64</sup> Romanyshyn responded to my IAJS Forum post, dated October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022. In a personal email he stated, "They [the four levels of unconscious dynamics] were specifically developed for the book in order to address the complex relation between the researcher and his/her work."

will offer an exploration of the elements at play, aiming to provide insights into the complexities and potential utility of these layers in psychological and artistic contexts.

### **The Personal**

The personal level represents the first layer of the unconscious in Romanyshyn's model, where he emphasises the significance of personal biography in determining the psychological intricacies of research. To navigate this level, he encourages researchers to contemplate the question, "Is there anyone from my family, history, my biography who has something to say about this work?" (2013/2021, p. 349). This level of inquiry invites researchers to bring personal narratives and experiences into their exploration.

Romanyshyn's emphasis on the personal levels bears parallels with Jung's concept of the personal unconscious. For Jung (1916), the personal unconscious houses repressed emotions, forgotten memories, and trauma that has not yet risen to consciousness (similar to Freud's understanding of the unconscious). He further postulated that, as individuals become more aware of these contents, they can potentially unveil a rich tapestry of images and motifs that constitute the collective unconscious. Following this line of thought, Romanyshyn's initial question serves a dual purpose: its aids researchers in pinpointing personal complexes that might influence their work, and it simultaneously provides an entry point into the deeper realms of the unconscious.

#### 1. The Personal Unconscious and Visual Art

The concept of engaging with personal complexes finds a role in the realm of expressive arts therapy. This therapeutic approach employs the creative process as

a powerful means for personal growth and healing. To illustrate this, Jungian art therapist Nora Swan-Foster (2018) highlights how art materials serve as significant conduits for this exploration. In her words, “art materials facilitate, document, and express the quality of complexes. They also encourage and provide a literal space for a relationship with complexes and then ultimately can enable an active exploration towards transformation” (2018, p. 105).

This exploration and transformation within the personal unconscious can be profoundly mirrored, or adapted, in an artist’s creative practice. Their artwork often becomes a therapeutic (whether intentionally or not) medium, reflecting and shaping their personal identity and relationships. For instance, artists could portray their experiences of trauma as a means of processing and healing, thereby bridging the gap between their unconscious and conscious realities.

However, the interaction between the unconscious and artistic creation extends beyond personal therapy. Neumann (1959) considers the significance of great (or visionary) art, stating that distinguished artists like Klee and Chagall had an ability to access their unconscious in a regulated and intentional way, producing work that was both meaningful and inspiring. Conversely, he points out that artists like Dalí indulge their unconscious in a more self-centred manner, prioritising the expression of personal issues and neuroses over the creation of truly inspired works.

Although Neumann's categorisation of Dalí and similar artists as ‘lesser’ is dismissive, it highlights an essential aspect of this discussion. It indicates that the manner and depth at which the unconscious is engaged can significantly affect representations in art, hinting at the relevance of the various unconscious levels.

## **The Cultural-historical**

Romanyshyn's second level of the unconscious is the cultural-historical (Romanyshyn, 2013, p. 349), in which he advises researchers to identify cultural and historical patterns that may be related to the personal complex previously identified. To do this, he suggests considering the following question: "Is there anyone from another gender, race, class, culture, and/or different historical time who has something to say about this work?" (2013, p. 349). This inquiry encourages researchers to widen their perspective and consider how diverse elements of cultural and historical context can influence their understanding and interpretation of a research subject.

Romanyshyn's second level aligns with the concept of the cultural unconscious, a notion initially pioneered by physician and Jungian analyst Joseph Henderson. In a precursor to the cultural unconscious notion, Jung (1928), during his 1925 seminar series, represented the psyche as a geological formation, with the ego at its peak (Figure 8.3.1). In this layered model each substratum represents the unconscious of increasingly larger groups – from family and clan to nation and continental identities, tracing back to our primitive and animal ancestry. At the deepest level lies the 'central fire' which permeates all strata, suggesting a foundational unconscious level that surpasses individual and group specificities.

Building on Jung's idea, Henderson (1988) introduced the concept of the cultural unconscious. He characterised this entity as "an area of historical memory that lies between the collective unconscious and the manifest pattern of culture" (1988, p. 8). Henderson theorised that this 'cultural unconscious' exists in the intermediate space between the personal and collective unconscious. It is

important, he argued, to distinguish these layers as the group-level unconscious, while rooted in the collective unconscious, is neither personal nor archetypal.

Supporting this notion, Jungian analyst Samuel Kimbles (2003) observed that that collective unconscious implies more homogeneity than diversity, necessitating the establishment of a distinct cultural level within the psyche.

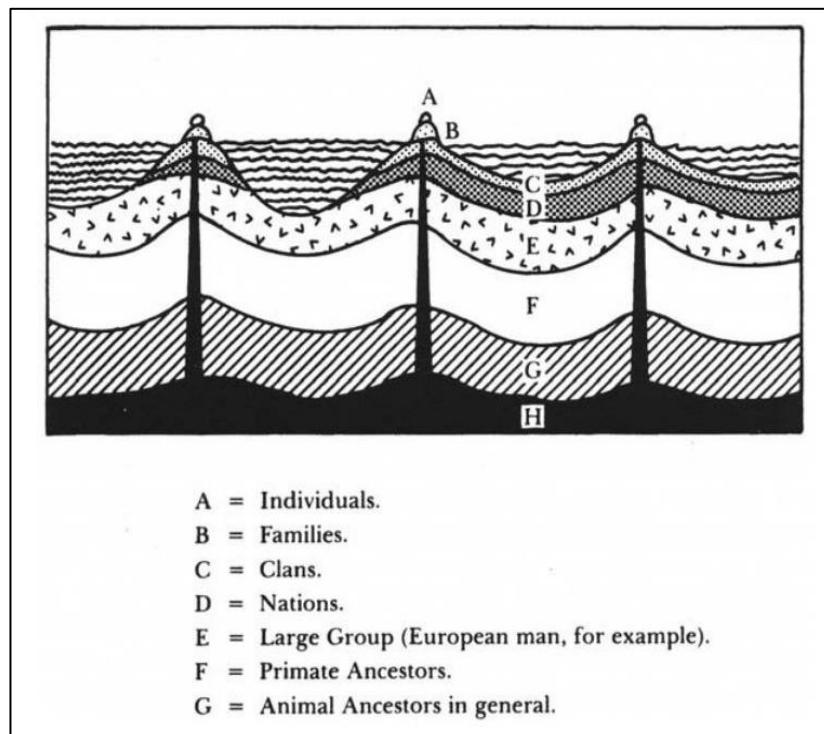


Figure 8.3.1 – Jung's illustration of the 'geology' of the psyche. Sourced from Jung (1989, p. 143).

This conceptualisation of the cultural unconscious served as a foundation for the subsequent theory of cultural complexes. Kimbles (2000) offers an understanding of cultural complexes, portraying them as dynamic entities that emerge from the interplay between individual experiences and societal expectations. He argues that these cultural complexes are not isolated phenomena; rather, they are shaped by a confluence of influences, including race, ethnicity, religion, and gender dynamics, that run through the fabric of society. Much like personal complexes, cultural

complexes can dominate the psyche of individuals or groups, leading to altered thinking and feeling patterns. A cultural complex is thus a constellation of emotionally laden ideas and images, clustering around an archetypal nucleus and shared within a specific cultural or social group.

### 1. The Cultural Unconscious in Visual Art

Jung's (1936) essay, *Wotan* provides an indirect illustration of a cultural complex, taking Hitler's Germany as the focal point of his study. Jung articulated his unease regarding potent collective forces that threatened to precipitate mass psychological possession amongst the German populace. As this societal transformation unfolded, art assumed a pivotal role in reflecting and reinforcing these cultural shifts. Artistic depictions of strength, heroism, racial purity, and nationalist fervour served to mirror and cement the dominant cultural psyche.

However, this period's art carried a dual purpose. It functioned as a vehicle of propaganda, bolstering the regime's ideology and contributing to the solidification of the prevailing cultural complex. Simultaneously, it provided a reflective surface, revealing the subtle undercurrents of the cultural unconscious.

Transitioning to a contemporary context, the work of artist Diaz, discussed in Chapter 6, presents a further instance of engagement with cultural complexes. His artwork serves not merely as a reflective surface, mirroring the intricate dynamics of personal complexes, but also includes symbolic references and thematic elements tied to historical periods of oppression and control, including that of Nazi Germany. Through this approach, he heightens awareness about the substantial influence of cultural complexes and the potential risks they represent.

## **Collective-Archetypal**

Romanyshyn's third level of the unconscious, the collective-archetypal, introduces an awareness of universally common symbolic patterns or themes nested within the collective unconscious. This category diverges from the cultural-historical in one crucial aspect; while the cultural-historical pertains to a specific culture or group, the collective archetypal is instead concerned with archetypal themes universally shared across humanity. In this context, Romanyshyn (2013/2021, p. 349) advises researchers to ask themselves: "Who are the guides of this work? For whom is this work being done?" This question is aimed at identifying the archetypal figures and patterns that extend beyond personal and cultural experiences, thereby inviting deeper access into the psyche's depths.

The collective-archetypal level in Romanyshyn's model appears to align with Jung's conceptualisation of the collective unconscious. Jung (1960, para. 270) proposed that there exists a level of the psyche that houses instincts and their corresponding archetypes. This core concept within analytical psychology states that these archetypes, which shape our perception and behaviour manifest themselves in diverse cultural phenomenon such as myths, religion, and collective behaviours. Jung's collective unconscious and Romanyshyn's collective-archetypal level, thus posit that there are symbolic patterns universal to all humans, which transcend individual or cultural experience. It is important to recognise that the collective-archetypal level, while being universal, largely follows a human-centric and anthropomorphic perspective.

## 1. Collective-Archetypal in Art

Art becomes a conduit for reflecting the collective-archetypal unconscious when it incorporates universal symbols and themes. These motifs may vary, including the hero's journey, the quest for self-discovery, the rebirth of the Goddess, or the endless cycle of life and death. Artists can draw on mythology and folklore from various cultures to portray these universal narratives, thereby transcending specific cultural or societal contexts.

Engaging with the collective-archetypal dimension allows art to explore and express themes shared by the entirety of humanity, rather than a specific cultural or social group. A prime example is Blake's painting, *The Ancient of Days* (1794). This artwork presents a wise 'Great Father', suggesting the universal archetype of divine rulership or godlike wisdom (Figure 8.3.2). Similarly, Michelangelo's portrayal in 'The Creation of Adam' on the Sistine Chapel ceiling shows a strong authoritative figure, embodying the patriarchal archetype in Christian tradition. The theme also reverberates in Indian culture, where the Hindu god Brahma, depicted in many traditional paintings, represents the 'Great Father' as the creator of the universe. These images serve as an exploration of the collective-archetypal unconscious, illustrating the pervasive reach of deeply rooted symbolic patterns and their powerful resonance across cultural boundaries.

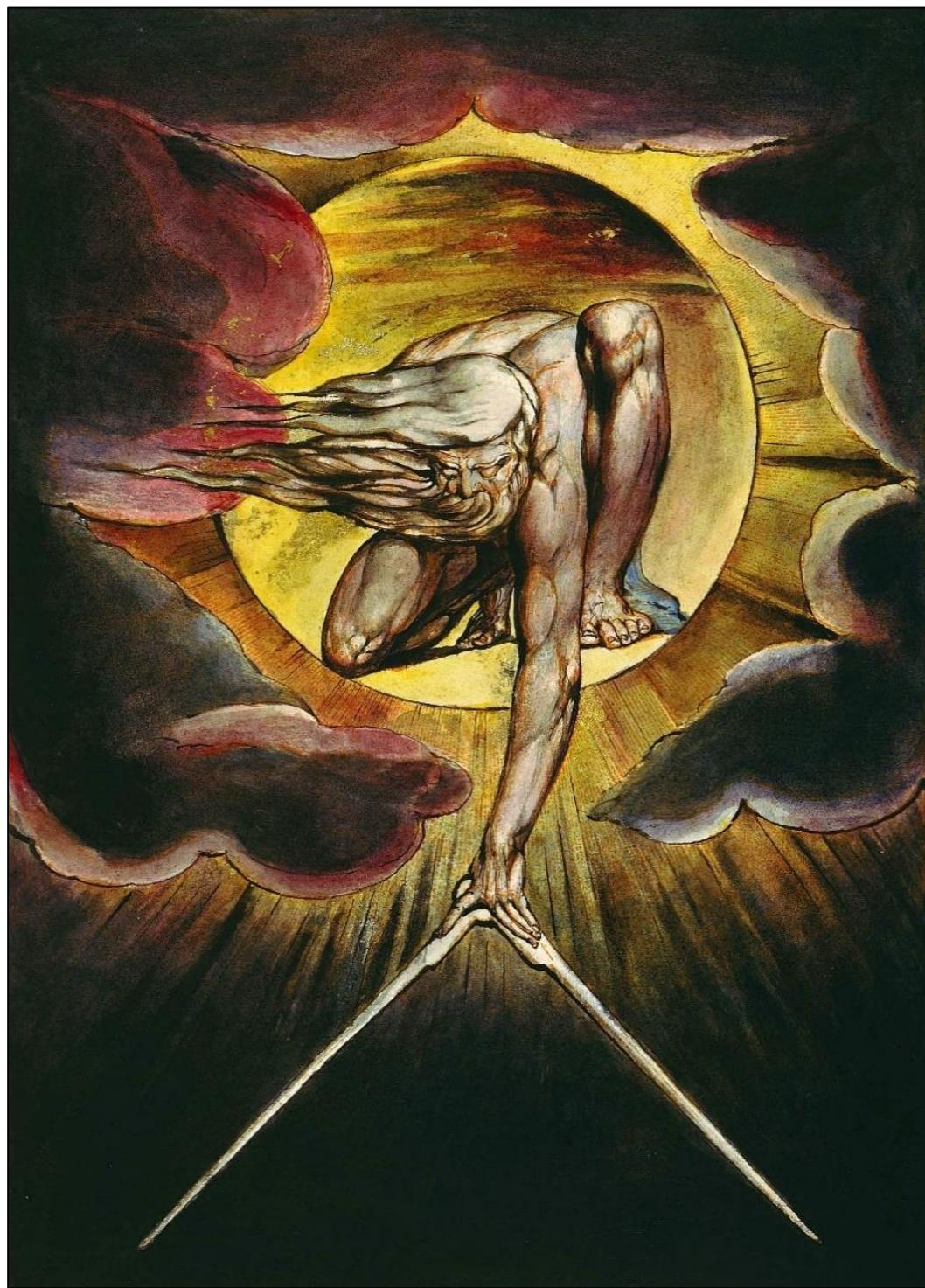


Figure 8.3.2 – *The Ancient of Days* (1794) by William Blake. Sourced from the public domain.

## **The Eco-Cosmological**

Finally, Romanyshyn (2013, p. 349) refers to the fourth level as the eco-cosmological, in which he advises the researcher to ask the following: “Is there anyone among the other creatures with whom I share this planet who has something to say about this work? Do the trees, animals, etc., have something to say?” According to Romanyshyn, the eco-cosmological refers to a level found in the deepest area of the psychoid domain.

An eco-cosmological perspective expands Jung’s focus to encompass humanity’s relationship with the wider cosmos, including the natural environment and non-human entities. Therefore, there is a greater shift from a predominantly human-centred or anthropomorphic view of archetypes and the unconscious to a more inclusive, interconnected view that acknowledges humanity’s embeddedness in the larger web of life. While this perspective is not explicitly outlined in Jung’s tripartite model, it is compatible with his emphasis on wholeness and the interconnectedness of all things. Due to the ambiguity of the term, I will unpack it a bit before considering its connection to the visual arts.

### **1. Understanding Eco-cosmology**

Eco-cosmology, a term that marries ecology with cosmology, serves as a framework to explore the connection between humanity and the natural world. Cosmology, as ecologist Mary Evelyn Tucker (1998) explains, pertains to explanations of the universe and the role of humans within it, which can encompass origin stories, descriptions of the universe’s state, or ethical guidelines. The prefix ‘eco’ brings an environmental dimension, often indicating an orientation towards sustainable practices, like ‘eco-friendly’ or ‘eco-tourism.’

Eco-cosmological perspectives typically view the natural world and all life forms as a single, interconnected system.

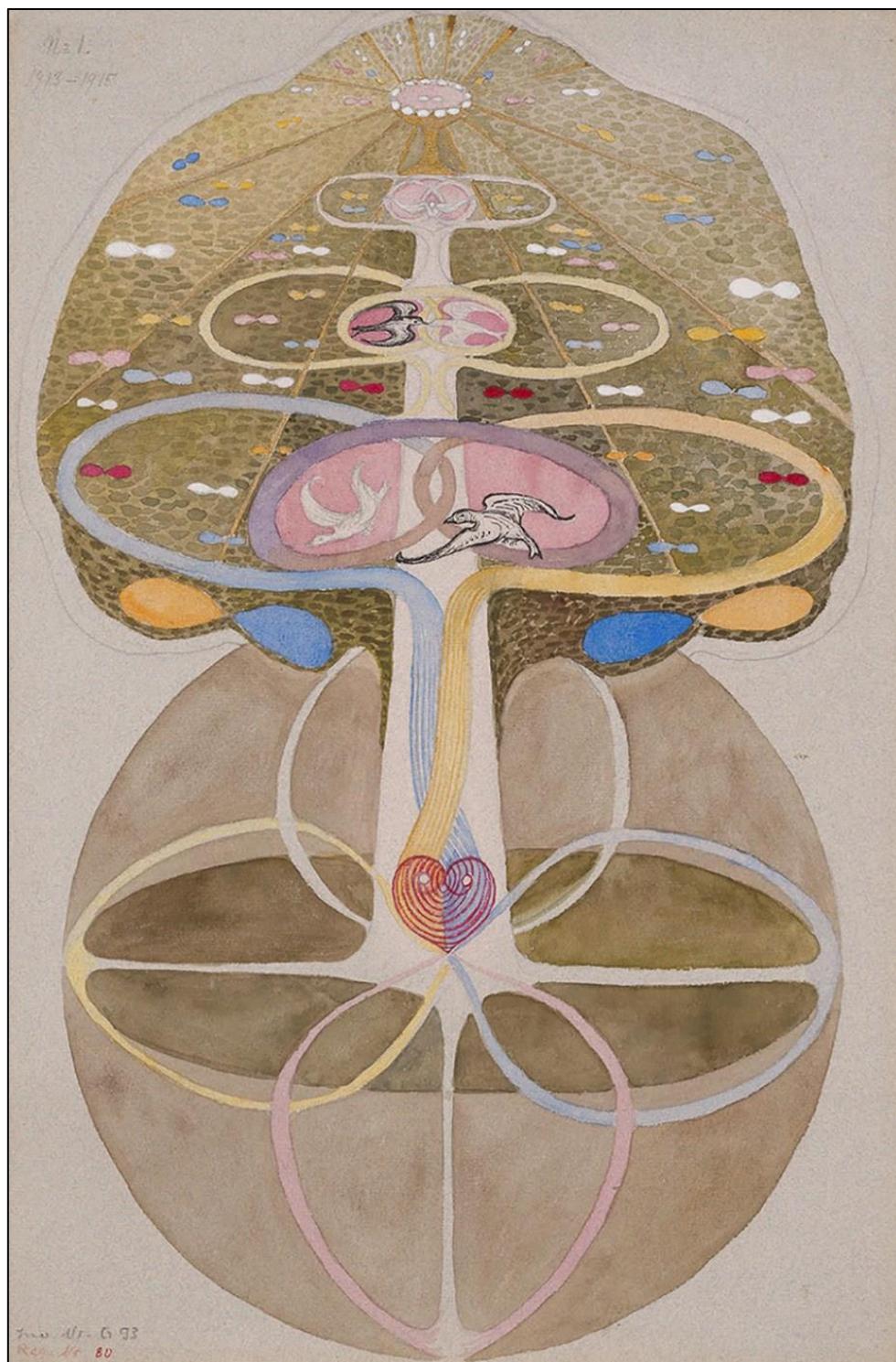


Figure 8.3.3 – *Tree of Knowledge* (1913) by Hilma af Klint. Sourced from the public domain.

They highlight the ties that bind all elements and the consequences of human actions on the environment. Ethnologist Lidia Guzy (2021), for instance, characterises eco-cosmology as a worldview that blurs the lines between humans and the non-human realm – be it the cosmos, nature, or spiritual entities. According to this view, eco-cosmology defines a lack of dualistic separation between individuals and their environment.

Anthropologist Louis Abad Espinoza (2022) echoes a similar sentiment, highlighting the importance of evaluating relationships between humans and non-human beings within nature, which can lead to a better understanding of our place within the cosmos. However, he argues that this isn't the norm in Western culture, which, as Espinoza puts it, is imbued with a discriminatory dualism that creates a wide chasm between human experiences and non-human physical realities.

Rowland (2021) also refers to this phenomenon as the subject/object split.

This perspective allows us to draw parallels between eco-cosmology and dual-aspect monism (outlined in Chapter 7) – the philosophical standpoint that implies a fundamental unity of reality, where the mind (humanity) and matter (natural environment) are intrinsically linked. The Gaia Hypothesis serves as a prime example of this unified view. Interestingly, in his work, Fellows (2018) laments the loss of animistic<sup>65</sup> (or eco-cosmological) worldviews, which he attributes to the inability of societies to effectively address escalating environmental issues. He argues that this disconnect needs to be addressed, with a fundamental shift in mainstream views required.

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<sup>65</sup> Animism is often associated with spiritual or religious beliefs and practices and is often used as a way of understanding and interacting with the natural world. Animist beliefs and practices may include rituals and ceremonies that honour and respect the natural world and its inhabitants, as well as a deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of all living things.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that eco-cosmology isn't merely about relating humanity to the natural world. It is also about recognising the profound interconnectivity of all aspects of existence – a concept resonating with Fellows' Psyche-Gaia Conjecture, Jung's idea of *unus mundus*, and the philosophical construct of dual-aspect monism.

## 2. The Eco-cosmological in Art

Approaching art from an eco-cosmological standpoint, allows us to view it as a means for artists to express their profound connections with the cosmos and their integration within the natural world. This perspective provides a broader context for interpreting artistic expression. Like Jung's archetypes, which represent recurring themes across cultures and time, the eco-cosmological can be seen as universal patterns and themes that reflect deeply ingrained perceptions, experiences, and responses to our environmental and cosmic surroundings.

An example that exemplifies this eco-cosmological exploration is Hilma af Klint's *Tree of Knowledge* (1915). This artwork goes beyond being just a painting. It serves as a philosophical statement conveyed through visual language (Figure 8.3.3). It embodies af Klint's vision of interconnectedness by symbolising the cyclical nature of life, growth, and transformation. It seamlessly integrates elements from earthly and celestial realms, illustrating the inherent connections between humanity, nature, and the divine. Interestingly, in her text *Jungian Literary Criticism*, Rowland (2018) describes Jung's essay *The Philosophical Tree* (1954) as containing "eco-cosmological properties"<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> In the book's epilogue, Rowland describes her text as opening to an "eco-cosmological imagination evoked for the twenty-first century" (Rowland, 2019, loc. 4553).

Through her art, af Klint intricately merges the spiritual and natural worlds, evoking an eco-cosmological perspective. The painting acts as a mirror, reflecting universal patterns and themes related to our place within the cosmos. In this way, art can become a powerful tool for exploring and expressing our connection to the broader network of life, emphasising the significance of eco-cosmology in comprehending our relationship with the universe.

## Discussion

Romanyshyn's four-part framework which includes the personal, cultural-historical, collective-archetypal, and eco-cosmological, can be interpreted as a development on Jung's three-tiered model of the unconscious. This model includes personal, collective, and psychoid dimensions. Romanyshyn enhances Jung's model by introducing the cultural unconscious and the eco-cosmological levels.

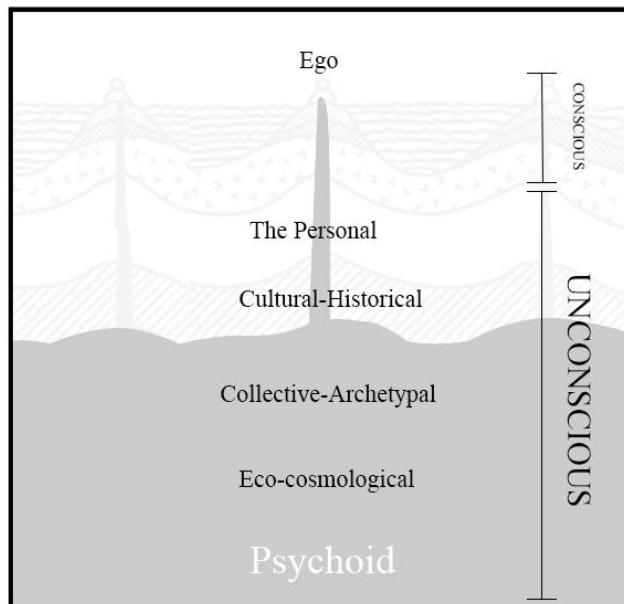


Figure 8.3.4 – The stratified unconscious developed from Jung's and Romanyshyn's perspectives.

These levels refine and expand upon Jung's original model, thus providing a more sophisticated model. One potential application of this enriched unconscious framework could be in the creation and analysis of visual art. This, in turn, can offer a deeper exploration of the unconscious dynamics that the artwork embodies, leading to a more intricate and comprehensive understanding of its meaning and significance. In light of this observation, I have made modifications to Jung's representation of the 'geology' of personality to incorporate the multiple layers identified in Romanyshyn's transference dialogues (Figure 8.3.4).

## 8.5 Key Points and Reflections

This chapter deepened the exploration of visionary creativity by focusing on post-Jungian frameworks proposed by Neumann and Romanyshyn. It was shown how, Neumann's framework offers an enriched perspective on the intersection of art and cultural development, highlighting the instrumental role of visionary artists in shaping societal consciousness. It elucidated the concept of a cultural canon's cyclical dissolution and rebirth, emphasising that visionary artist's potential role in the regeneration of a culture. This understanding implies the enigmatic role of artists in society, marking them as agents of cultural transformation.

Romanyshyn's model, on the other hand, expands on Jung's framework of the unconscious, potentially enriching the interpretation of art and leading to a more nuanced understanding of its underlying dynamics and significance. Together, these frameworks can broaden our understanding of artistic creativity and the role of the unconscious in art. The next chapter will further explore these theories by applying them to contemporary and historical case studies.

# CHAPTER NINE

## Historical Case Study: Jung's 'Liber Novus'

### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter builds upon the previous discussion, examining the significance of applying Neumann's and Romanyshyn's frameworks to interpret Jung's visionary work, *Liber Novus*. This analysis is informed by Jung's personal experiences as interpreted by various scholars. However, it is important to recognise that this approach falls short in capturing Romanyshyn's emphasis on the researcher's subjective engagement. This limitation that could be investigated in future studies.

A prequel to this discussion is Chapter 3.3, where the creative dimensions of Jung's work was explored. With this in mind, the attention now shifts towards two specific visual images and their associated narratives: *Image 154*, dubbed 'Philemon,' and *Image 155*, which I refer to as the 'Unnamed Anima'<sup>67</sup>.

### The Three Scenes

This section presents three scenes from *Liber Novus* that offer valuable insight into the material that emerged during Jung's 'confrontation with the unconscious.' These specific scenes have been chosen due to their significance in relation to *Image 154* and *Image 155*. They serve as a compelling depiction of the progression and metamorphosis of Elijah and Salomé into Philemon and the Unnamed Anima.

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<sup>67</sup> In his essay, *The Psychological Aspects of the Kore* (1951), Jung identifies this image as his anima. However, throughout *Liber Novus* he neglects to give her a name.

## 1. Mysterium Encounter

Chapter IX in *Liber Primus*, titled *Mysterium Encounter* describes a dramatic vision in which Jung sees the prophet Elijah accompanied by his blind daughter Salomé, with a black serpent at his feet (Figure 9.1.1). Elijah introduces his daughter by stating: “My wisdom and my daughter are one” (Jung, 2009, p. 246). However, Jung is appalled at this statement as he recalls that Salomé was the temptress who danced for Herod and demanded the head of John the Baptist as the prize. Nonetheless, Salomé asks (*ibid.*):

[Salomé] S: “Do you love me?”

[Jung] I: “How can I love you? How do you come to this question? I see only one thing, you are Salomé, a tiger, your hands are stained with the blood of the holy one. How could I love you?”

S: “You will love me.”

## 2. Castle in the Forest

Chapter II in *Liber Secundus*, titled *Castle in the Forest*, describes Jung’s encounter with an absent-minded and impolite man, who provides him with a chamber for the night after an awkward and brusque introduction. During the night, as he struggles to sleep, the scholar’s attractive daughter visits him in his bedroom. She declares that she has been waiting for a long time to be liberated. As the interaction proceeds, Jung breaks the fairy-tale mood by informing the young lady that the whole situation felt clichéd as if plagiarised from a cheap romance novel. However, the young lady’s response surprises him. She asserts that she is real, even though everyone she meets disagrees. She continues by describing how the only thing that can liberate her is if someone takes her seriously, for fairytales contain the most human truth. Jung feels sorrow for her and assures her he believes. This sympathetic response not only freed her from the

confines of her castle imprisonment but also brought a sense of liberation to Jung himself. He expressed his gratitude to the maiden, who, before disappearing, conveyed greeting from Salomé.



Figure 9.1.1 - This image depicts Jung's 'I', Elijah, and Salomé.

## 2. The Magician

Chapter XXI in *Liber Secundus*, titled, *The Magician*, depicts Jung standing in front of a little country house beside a big bed of tulips, the house in which Philemon (ΦΙΛΗΜΩΝ) and his wife Baucis reside. Jung comments on how the old couple spends most of their time tending to their tulips as the days pass. Eventually, Jung approaches Philemon and requests to be taught magic, “the black

art" (Jung, 2009, p. 312). Philemon is initially reserved but appreciates his eagerness to learn. Philemon continues the conversation by claiming that because magic defies "common knowledge" (ibid.), one must give up consistency to understand it. He states that magic cannot be taught or learned since it is the "opposite of what one may know" (ibid.). *Image 154* is positioned at the end of this dialogue.

Jung leaves the old master perplexed, but those around him believe he has been given a magic gift. While on a stroll, he spends some time pondering reason and reasonlessness. In time, he comes across a large luminescent serpent, who he charms by playing the flute. During this enchantment, he describes his wish to make her "believe that she was my soul" (p. 317). It is at this point of the narrative that *Image 155* is placed. This mysterious image depicts a veiled female figure of the *Unnamed Anima*.

### 3. Discussion

Within *Liber Novus*, these three scenes document the transformation of characters Elijah and Salomé into Philemon and the Unnamed Anima. This transformative progression deeply influences the following analysis, offering a multifaceted view of their complex identities. Considering this, Salomé, and the Unnamed Anima, as well as Elijah and Philemon, will be interpreted as evolving forms of a singular character. The significant role of this evolution will be elucidated further in the analysis.

## 9.2 Jung's Encounter with Salomé and the Unnamed Anima

### Overview

*Image 155* presents a captivating scene with a prominent central figure (Figure 9.2.1). Adorned in pristine white robes, she takes centre stage on an altar within a temple, flanked by sturdy pillars. This positioning between the pillars creates a powerful visual contrast against the surrounding darkness, accentuating the purity of her attire. While her face and body remain concealed, her hands and eyes are discernible, drawing attention to these captivating features. Adding an air of mystique, a crescent moon hovers on her left side, casting an enchanting aura over the scene. Above her, a burst of light resembling fireworks or rays of sunlight pierces through the darkness, creating a fascinating focal point.

To deepen the spiritual ambiance, a fresco adorns the temple walls, depicting a pair of angels set against a natural landscape. This intricate detail adds an extra layer of complexity to the image. Beneath the ethereal figure on the altar, a restless crowd is depicted, exuding palpable discontent and anger through their expressions and body language. They resemble a mob engaged in a symbolic witch hunt, their accusatory fingers pointing directly at the central figure. This stark contrast between their rage and the serene, regal demeanour of the central figure intensifies the drama and tension within the image.

### The Personal

In his article, *On Salomé and the Emancipation of Women in the Red Book* (2018), Jungian analyst Joerg Rasche (2018, p. 211) argues that Jung's "Salomé-imaginings" were shaped by his exploration of his own inner female side, as well as his attitudes and behaviour towards women.

Rasche identifies several significant female figures in his life, including Lou Andreas-Salomé, Sabina Spielrein, and Toni Wolf. Moreover, he demonstrates how their influence on Jung's psyche often left him conflicted. According to Rasche (2018, p. 193) these external associations triggered a personal complex within Jung, leading to his 'Salomé-complex' and a fear of the female, love, and dependency.

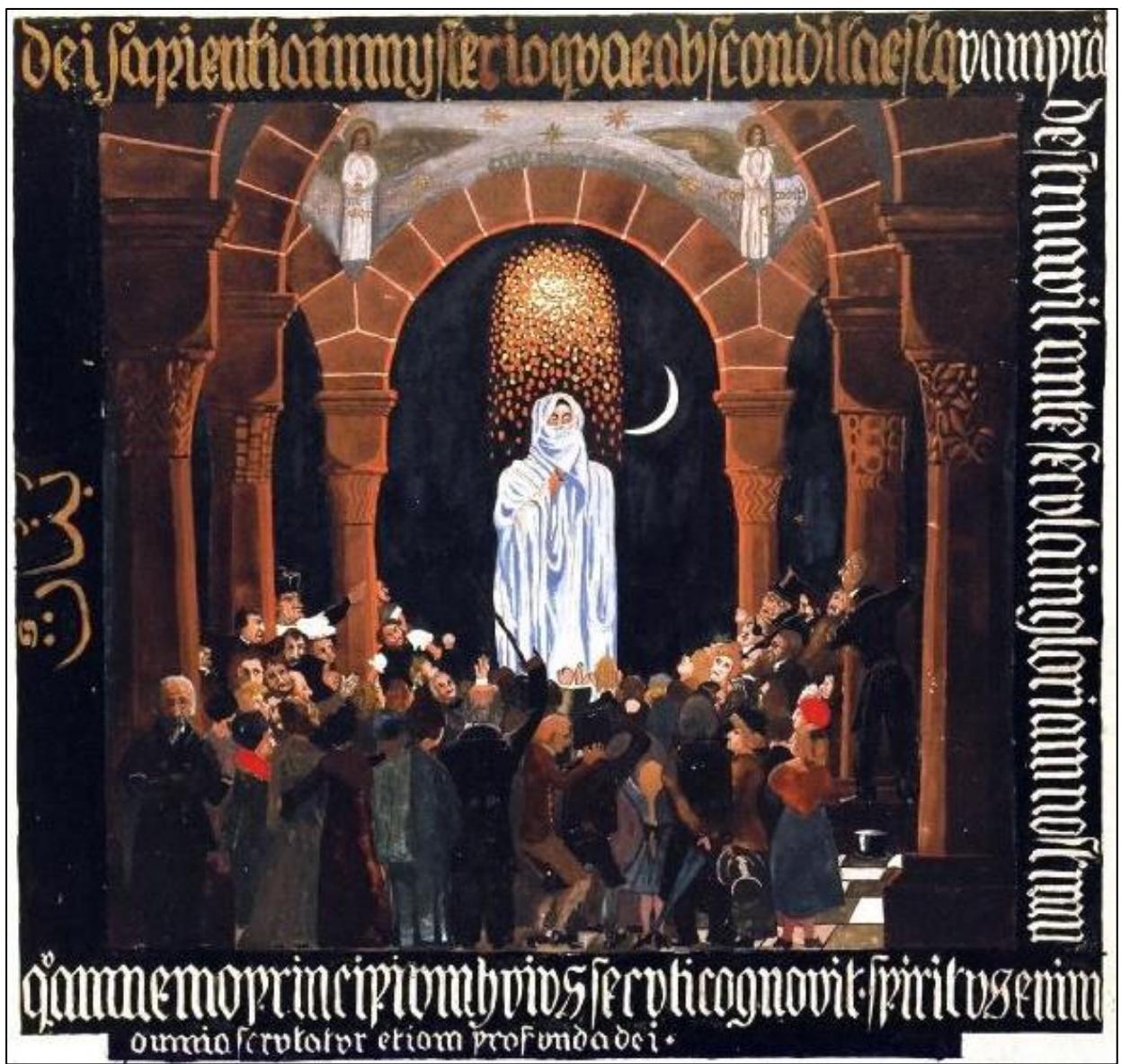


Figure 9.2.1 – *Image 15*, the 'Unnamed Anima.'

Overall, Rasche's argument suggests that Jung's personal experience with the feminine, including significant female figures in his life, had a profound impact on his psyche and shaped the imagery and symbolism found in *Liber Novus*. By exploring his own inner female side and attitudes, Jung accessed a deep well of inspiration, which significantly contributed to the creation of the multifaceted figure of Salomé in his visionary work.

### **The Cultural-Historical**

The complex triggered by his personal experiences appeared to Jung as a vision of the historical, cultural figure Salomé. This biblical female character has been a source of inspiration for artists for generations, with her image frequently represented as a dangerous and cunning seductress. The story of Salomé was prevalent in Christian art but rose to prominence during the Renaissance. Moreover, contemporary to Jung's time, Richard Strauss wrote an opera on the subject using the libretto from the drama of Oscar Wilde. Strauss's opera was on stage in Zurich from 1905 onwards. Rasche (2018, p. 192) suggests "some phrases of Jung's imagination are so close to Wilde's text that one must suppose that he had seen the opera."

#### **1. Salomé as the Femme Fatale**

A quick overview of the cultural milieu in which Jung lived is necessary to comprehend the significance of the Salomé figure. At the end of the nineteenth century, the suffrage movement grew significantly in the West and the United States as women fought for political equality. The suffragettes provided a startling

contrast to the period's ideal of femininity since they were frequently confrontational in their rallies. The feminine ideal depicted women as reserved, quiet, and modest, restricted to a home environment that protected them from the harsh realities of life outside. However, a new view of women began to arise. In the early twentieth century, often referred to as the Progressive Era, women were portrayed as having "short hair and short skirts [...] kicking up their legs and kicking off a century of social restriction" (Deutsche, 1998. p. 413).

Considering this feminine discourse, Salomé has emerged as a prominent archetype of the femme fatale, alongside other figures such as Eve, Lilith, Jezebel, and Mary Magdalene. These collective representations have spurred a liberating impulse by evoking a sense of feminine power and sexuality. This feminist perspective locates Salomé and her contemporaries as symbols of empowerment, embodying a resurgence of feminine strength that defies traditional gender norms.

## 2. Reflections

From a patriarchal standpoint, Salomé's image is seen as problematic and perilous due to its subversive nature, which challenges societal expectations within the established social framework. This defiance of cultural norms and gender roles creates a perception of danger that threatens patriarchal values and the status quo.

In the context of the cultural and social changes unfolding during Jung's era, his reaction to Salomé in the first scene discussed in the introduction (Mysterium Encounter) resonates profoundly. Jung's distaste towards Salomé, evident in the dialogue, highlights the internal conflict with the evolving concept of femininity. The femme fatale, epitomised by Salomé, starkly contrasts with the

traditional, passive feminine ideal prevalent in the cultural canon of the West at the time.

### **The Collective-Archetypal**

Reflecting on the figure of Salomé in MDR, Jung offered insights into her significance. He came to recognise her as a representation of his ‘anima,’ referring to the inner feminine side of a man. In his view, this was a personality that was forming within his unconscious. Jung (1963/1995, p. 210) described: “perhaps my unconscious is forming a personality that is not me, but which is insisting on coming through to expression.”

Furthermore, Jung identified Salomé as his ‘soul,’ a transition played out in the second scene highlighted in the introduction (Castle in the Forest). This recognition marked a pivotal point in his understanding of the character. He stated, “my conclusion was that she must be my soul” (*ibid.*). Later, he would broaden his perspective to see this inner feminine figure, not just as a personal symbol, but also a universal archetype playing a significant role in the ego’s relation to the unconscious.

#### 1. The Anima Figure

According to his theory, the anima represents a feminine image that every male unconsciously holds within himself, a force of primordial origin inscribed into the living organic system and depositing all imprints ever made by a woman. This image resides in the unconscious and is projected unknowingly upon a beloved, accounting for one of the primary causes of emotional attraction and aversion. Moreover, he described the anima as acting as a buffer between individual

consciousness and the collective unconscious, functioning as a bridge or a door leading to the images of the collective unconscious, much like the persona bridges ego-consciousness and the external cultural world (Jung, 1997).

Of relevance here is Whitmont's argument that contrasexual images in the psyche, such as the anima and animus, should be viewed as metaphors for otherness rather than as a specific set of gendered traits. This is due to the lack of terminology in the English language that is comparable to the Chinese principles of yang and yin, which describe cosmic and archetypal polarity. Additionally, Carol Schreier Rupprecht (1985, p. 227), a comparative literature expert, proposes the term "animity" as an alternative to Jung's binary anima/animus to describe the process of befriending the soul or unconscious.

## 2. Jung's Relationship with the Anima Figure

To comprehend the anima archetype and the 'other' in Jung's psyche, it is relevant to analyse his changing dynamic with the character throughout the narrative. Salomé, as a manifestation of the anima, represents the initially disowned and rejected facets of Jung's psyche, including his underdeveloped feeling and sensation functions. Notably, in the initial scene, she is portrayed as blind and unable to comprehend the significance of events. Jung's initial reaction to her is one of disgust and anguish. However, in the second scene mentioned above, Salomé takes on the role of the scholar's daughter, depicted as a seductive temptress or femme fatale. Jung's perception evolves through his conversation with her, leading to newfound respect and appreciation for the feminine figure.

As the plot unfolds, Jung develops a bond with his anima and enlists her aid in obtaining insights from the depths of the collective unconscious, which he

refers to as the *Garden of Salomé*. Through the narrative, one can observe the evolution of Salomé, and the significant transformation of the feminine within his psyche. The transformation enable him to perceive beyond the conventions of his time, to some extent.

### 3. The Significance of the Painting

When examining Jung's two paintings, it is worth noting the significance of the temple in *Image 154*, and *155*. In the former, the wise old man stands atop a dome-shaped temple, representing his elevated, transcendent perspective. Meanwhile, the *Unnamed Anima* is positioned *within* the dark dome-like temple. Potentially representing a connection with the depths of the unconscious, but there is also a sense of being trapped or confined. The darkness and gloominess of the temple could represent the suppression of the feminine and the mystery and danger associated with it, which has been a recurring theme in patriarchal societies throughout history. The confinement of the female figure within the temple and under the veil could indicate that the anima is not fully revealed or integrated into consciousness and that there is more work to be done in the individuation process. The boisterous and disgruntled crowd by her feet serves to reinforce this interpretation.

An alternative understanding emerges when considering the veiled woman's archetypal significance. Traditionally, she is associated with the high priestess, of the divine feminine, known for her esoteric knowledge and mediating role between the conscious and the unconscious. This perspective renders the image of the veiled woman in the temple as a potent archetypal entity emanating from the unconscious, providing a conduit to the psyche's deeper regions.

Consequently, her presence within the temple could suggest an esteemed psychic position where she serves as a guide, navigating the interplay between the conscious and unconscious. Nonetheless, while both interpretations hold merit, a more precise understanding of the image's meaning may be located within the tension between these two seemingly contrasting views.

### **The Eco-cosmological**

Another way in which Jung (1959, para. 57) described the anima was by referring to her as his soul, with the caveat that it is not to be interpreted in the dogmatic concept of a rational soul, but rather as a natural archetype that effectively encompasses all expressions of the unconscious, the primitive mind and the history of language and religion. In his view, the soul is a psychic reality that transcends the ego and is connected to the collective unconscious. Moreover, it is a vital force that animates the psyche and gives meaning and purpose to life.

#### 1. The Anima Mundi

At an eco-cosmological level, the *anima* is seen as a reflection of the larger *anima mundi*, or world soul, which is a concept that postulates that the natural world possesses a soul or vital force that is linked to all animate and inanimate entities in the cosmos. These concepts are considered essential elements of both the human psyche and the natural world, and they are interconnected by the notion of the feminine as the vital force within the universe. Moreover, analogous to how the *anima* functions to bridge the gap between the ego and unconscious, the *anima mundi* also acts as a bridge between the psyche and the natural world beyond the cultural, as suggested by Fellows' Psyche-Gaia conjecture.

Considering the concepts discussed, it is possible to interpret Jung's relationship with Salomé in terms of both his *anima*, and of the *anima mundi*. The following quote supports this interpretation: "man himself has ceased to be a microcosm and eidolon of the cosmos, and his 'anima' is no longer the consubstantial *scintilla*, or spark of the Anima Mundi, the World Soul" (Jung, 1935/1953, para. 759). In this passage, Jung alludes to a paradigm shift in the relationship between humanity and the natural world. Previously, humans were considered a microcosm and ideal representation of the larger universe, implying a deep connection and interdependence between the two. However, as this quote suggests, this connection has been lost, and humanity is no longer seen as a reflection and microcosm of the greater cosmos.

## 2. Reflections

It is noteworthy that *Image 155* largely excludes the natural world. Jung's mentioned 'Garden of Salomé' starkly contrasts with the temple's dark and somewhat adversarial atmosphere. The sole representation of nature is the fresco above the anima's head. However, this 'painting within a painting' primarily illustrates the masses' disconnection from the natural world rather than bridging it, aligning with Jung's assertion above.

## Discussion

*Image 155* holds significance across the four distinct levels, serving as a profound exploration of the feminine figure and the unconscious. Captured within the context of a remarkable man's life during the early twentieth century, this image is one of many that encapsulates his transformative personal journey. It allows us to

witness the evolution of Jung's awareness of his cultural heritage, showcasing his unwavering determination to transcend the limitations imposed by his era while envisioning possibilities for the future.

### 9.3 The Image of Elijah and Philemon

#### Overview

*Image 154* centres around the figure of Philemon, standing upright with large wings reminiscent of a kingfisher in full spread (Figure 9.3.1). These wings echo the iconic imagery of Jesus on the cross, inviting a sense of reverence and divine guidance. The figure's head is surrounded by a golden aura, or solar halo, commonly used in religious iconography to symbolise divinity or enlightenment.

In his hands before his stomach, the figure holds a flame, another potent symbol. He is firmly grounded on a diminutive temple, lending an air of authority, and anchoring the image in a space that is both earthly and sacred. The backdrop to Philemon's display is a lush garden or a verdant landscape teeming with trees, giving the composition a sense of vitality and tranquillity. A cerulean blue sky stretched across the scene lends an airy, peaceful ambience. To Philemon's right, are a pair of intertwined serpents with their bodies knotted together. At the top of the composition, three emblems draw the viewer's attention – a circle enclosing a four-petalled flower, or a 'quadratum circumscribens.'

The overall composition of the painting mirrors the design of a manuscript, bounded by a meticulously decorated border. This feature imparts an added layer of sophistication, reminiscent of the traditional craftsmanship associated with illuminated manuscripts.

## **The Personal**

In his essay, *Confronting Jung: The Red Book Speaks to Our Time*, Hill (2017) proposes a connection between Jung's image of Elijah and his personal relationship with Freud. Hill (2017, p. 145) prompts us to consider: "we know that Freud was a father figure for Jung. Had Jung's psyche transformed Freud into an old testament scholar?" To support his assertion, he cites Shamdasani's (2009, p. 248, fn. 187) footnote that highlights a resemblance between Jung's portrayal of Elijah, and Michelangelo's seated Moses – a subject Freud notably published on in 1914.

Likewise, Art scholar Kris Pint (2011) suggests that Jung's depiction of Elijah was a way for him to navigate the challenges he faced after the breakdown of his relationship with Freud. Pint (2011, p. 52) notes that Elijah was an "expression of a process of connecting with the right knowledge to get out, to escape from a situation, to trace a line of flight" (Pint, 2011, p. 52). Considering these perspectives, it is plausible to suggest that Jung's experience with Freud could have accentuated a personal complex, which became conflated with the figure of Elijah.

## **The Cultural-Historical**

In the Hebrew bible *Book of Kings*, Elijah is portrayed as a prophet and miracle worker who resided in the northern kingdom of Israel during the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE. According to the text, he was a conduit through which God performed numerous miracles, including resurrection, the raining down of fire, and a living ascent into

heaven. Additionally, Elijah is presented as the leader of a prophetic school called the ‘sons of Prophets<sup>68</sup>.

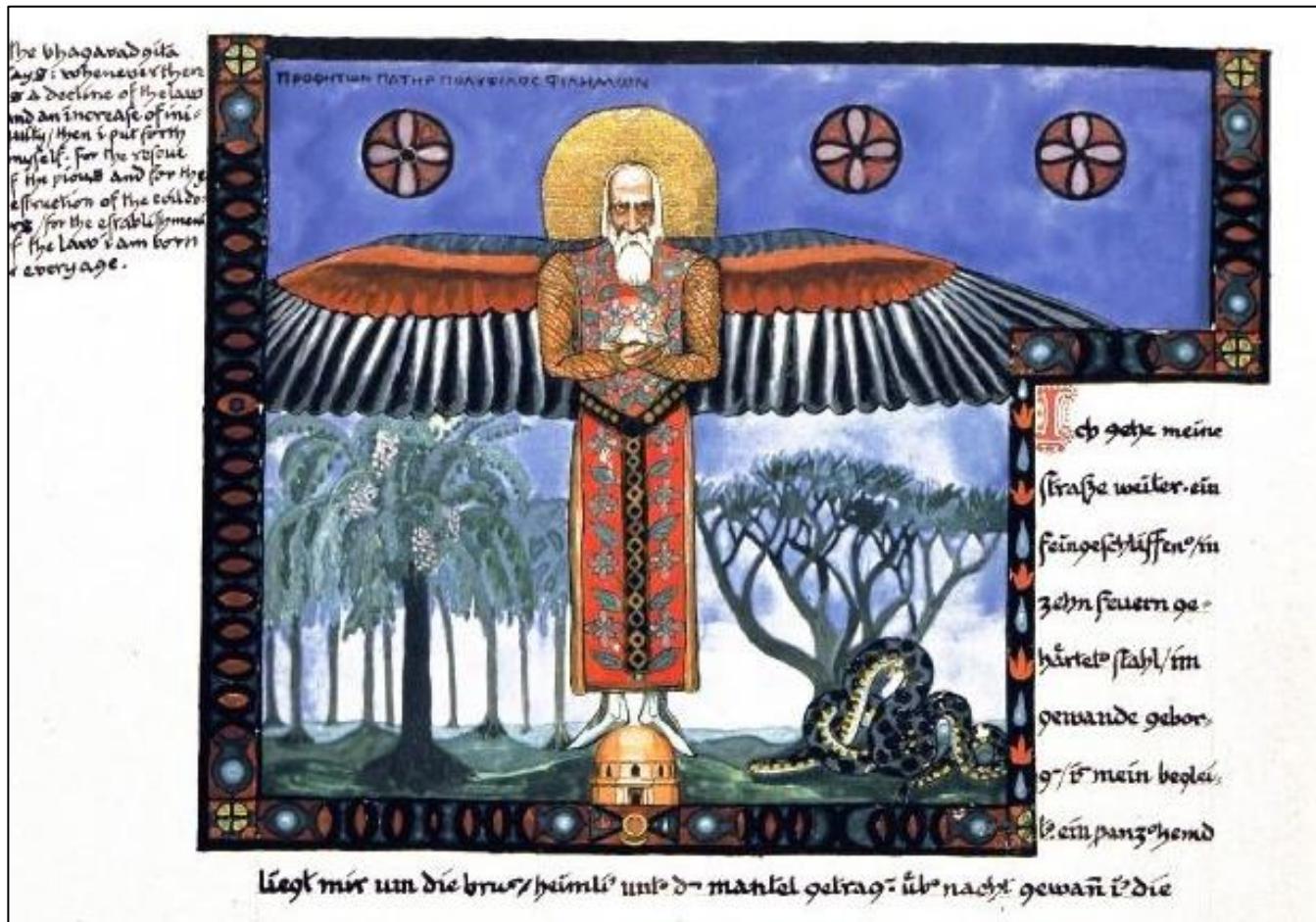


Figure 9.3.1 – Image 154, ‘Philemon.’

The *Book of Kings* recounts Elijah’s sudden appearance during the reign of King Ahab when he announced a drought as punishment for Queen Jezebel’s promotion of the worship of Baal over Yahweh. In this tale, Elijah challenged 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel to determine the true God of Israel. The two groups placed sacrifices on separate altars for Yahweh and Baal. Through Elijah’s prayers, fire descended upon Yahweh’s altar, while the prophets of Baal received

<sup>68</sup> Located in *The Book of Kings* volume 2, 2:3.

no response. The Israelites took this as a decisive victory and, following Elijah's instruction killed the pagan prophets and priests.

Reportedly, the drought ended, and rain returned to the land. This story of Elijah is notable not only for its spiritual and religious implications but also for its socio-cultural impact. In this way, Elijah, through his aggressive challenge and overthrowing of Pagan worship, acted as an early promoter of patriarchal power, and the inherent dualism associated with it.

## 2. Elijah and the Patriarchal Paradigm

To understand the character of Elijah, it is helpful to consider the cultural environment of Jung's era, imbued with patriarchal norms and values. While this societal paradigm still largely exists today, it was much more prominent in the early twentieth century. Within this structure, the rational mind reigns as the ultimate arbitrator, favouring objectivity and control, at the expense of intuitive and more feeling-based emotional expressions. Whitmont (1983, p. 69) offers insight into the enduring patriarchal mindset, suggesting that the societal structure is characterised by the devaluation and dismissal of feminine divinity and the suppression of innate and spontaneous emotions.

The patriarchy is underpinned by a dualistic framework, evident in its epistemological approach which typically results in a subject/object split. In this view, the 'subject' is perceived as the active, rational observer, while the 'object' is regarded as the passive entity to be understood or controlled. This dichotomy emphasises a preferential bias towards objective reasoning, often neglecting holistic or integrative ways of knowing. Such a mindset, while honouring rationality and control, overlooks the importance of intuition, feeling, emotion,

and interconnectedness. Despite their privileged position in a patriarchal society, men were not immune to its adverse impacts. For instance, Jung (1963/1995) experienced a sense of being carried away by an overpowering current of ego-driven success, propelled by the damaging inflation of patriarchal values embodies in the hero archetype.

### **The Collective Archetypal**

As the dialogue progresses in *Liber Novus*, Elijah morphs into an old scholar and eventually Philemon. Jung classified Philemon as the “prophetic wise old man” (Shamdasani, 2009, p. 207). This reference aligns with the wise old man archetype, who is often represented as a loving and protective older father figure who imparts knowledge through his awareness of people and the world. However, due to his excessive contemplation, he occasionally appears absentminded<sup>69</sup>. Jung (1945/1948, para. 74) wrote:

The *wise old man*, the superior master and teacher, the archetype of the spirit, who symbolises the pre-existent meaning hidden in the chaos of life. He is the father of the soul, and yet the soul in some miraculous manner, is also his virgin mother, for which reason he was called by the alchemists the ‘the first son of the mother.’

This embodiment of wisdom and insight stands in contrast to the hero archetype suggesting that Jung was on a path towards a more mature and balanced understanding of himself in the context of a still-dominant patriarchal society.

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<sup>69</sup> Philemon initially appears in *Liber Novus* as an elderly magician living with his wife.

## 1. The Wise Old Man Archetype

Jung claimed that the image of the wise old man could manifest vividly in dreams and active imaginations, and that it can assume the position of the guru. This image can take the form of a magician, priest, doctor, professor, grandfather, or any other authoritative figure. In his view, this motif arises when a spiritual deficiency requires further insight, determination, and understanding. He writes, “The archetype of the spirit, in the shape of a man, hobgoblin, or animal, always appears in a situation where insight, understanding [...] are needed but cannot be mustered on one’s own resources” (Jung, 1945/ 1948, para. 398).

To further elaborate on this motif, Henderson (1964) examines how the archetype of the wise old man is seen as a manifestation of the Self. In his view, the unconscious takes on a new symbolic form as a male initiator and defender for an individual who seriously grapples with the anima or animus issue for an extended period. Henderson illustrates that in many myths, the hero’s initial vulnerability is countered by strong protecting figures who enable the hero to undertake superhuman feats that cannot be achieved alone. As such, the wise old man archetype serves to develop the individual’s ego-consciousness, preparing them for the demanding responsibilities of life. He describes how, once a person has passed their initial trials, they may enter a phase of life referred to as maturity, during which the significance of the hero myth diminishes, and the wise old man becomes supreme.

## 2. The Integration of Feminine and Masculine Values

Whitmont (1983) argued that traditional masculine values, such as dominance, power, and conquest, have led to a destructive and unsustainable relationship with

the environment and the feminine, both in terms of gender and the feminine principle as represented by nature. So instead, he proposed that a new masculine ideal that respects these feminine values was needed. This figure, he states, embodies qualities such as wisdom, insight, and contemplation. Moreover, with this new ideal, the focus shifts from the king and conquering hero to the more introspective and contemplative figure of the “seeker” or “discoverer” (Whitmont, 1983, p. 191).

Jung’s depiction of Philemon in his painting, as well as his ongoing relationship with this archetypal figure, provides a rich illustration of the transformation proposed by Whitmont. After dismantling the heroic ideal, Jung adopted a new masculine value system centred on the archetypal wise old man, who embodies a more open and receptive stance, with a greater emphasis and respect for the feminine principle. In this way, Philemon represents a reconciliation and unification of the dualistic split, between the subject/object, the masculine/feminine, and the rational/intuitive, becoming a unitary God-image that transcends dualities. Rather than promoting division and conflict, Philemon serves as a creative source that embraces a myriad of dualities and opposites.

### **The Eco-cosmological**

This painting offers a vibrant display of eco-cosmological symbols, emphasising the interconnectedness of humanity, nature, and the divine. At its core, the figure of Philemon is observed, depicted as an aged man with a long, white beard, robed, and holding a flame. The setting portrays a fruitful garden abundant with trees, alluding to the concept of a paradisiacal garden, a common symbol for an ideal internal state, purity, abundance, and the golden age.

This garden can also be seen as a reference to the *anima mundi*, a concept suggesting that the natural world extends beyond a mere collection of inert objects, instead possessing an ensouled essence that links all life forms. Although the garden isn't the central focus of the artwork, it communicates the interconnectedness of the natural world and the significant role of the wise old man within it.

### 1. The Divine Embodiment of Philemon

Philemon's portrayal distinctly embodies the divine. His halo suggests a surrounding aura of wisdom and knowledge encapsulating this archetypal wise old man. An important element is the note found in the image's top left-hand corner, hinting at the idea of an avatar<sup>70</sup>. Avatars, or divine incarnations, typically appear during pivotal times. Philemon's depicted wings further strengthen this interpretation, symbolising spiritual transcendence and the ability to surpass the mundane.

A serpent lies at Philemon's feet, a symbol with various interpretations across cultures. In some traditions, the serpent represents wisdom and knowledge, while in others it signifies temptation, danger, or evil. However, from Jung's perspective, the serpent symbolises the potential for individuation, a process necessitating one to confront and integrate the multiple aspects of their psyche. The serpent, the tree, and the floral patterns on Philemon's clothing imply the significance of the natural world and its divine aspects, which starkly contrasts

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<sup>70</sup> The note reads: "The bhagavadgita say: whenever there is a decline of the law and an increase in iniquity, then I put forth myself. For the rescue of the pious and for the destruction of the evildoers, for the establishment of the law, I am born in every age" (Jung, 2009, p. 317, n. 281).

with a more rational, patriarchal worldview valuing control and dominion over nature.

## 2. Contrast with Rational and Patriarchal View

The depiction of an idyllic garden, teeming with symbols that are both divine and natural, stands in contrast to the mechanistic view of nature as merely a resource for exploitation and control, a stance deeply rooted in patriarchal values. The painting prompts a shift in perception, encouraging the viewer to see nature as a sacred, vibrant entity, filled with concealed meanings and intertwined relationships. These hidden aspects of nature can be better understood through an intuitive, rather than purely analytical interaction.

Similarly, the figure of Philemon represents an alternative to conventional patriarchal notions of wisdom and divinity. He isn't depicted as an overbearing authority figure but as a wise sage. His wisdom is manifested through his harmonious connection with nature and the divine, rather than dominance or control. This representation disrupts the traditional patriarchal view of divinity as a remote, all-powerful entity imposing its will upon the world.

## Discussion

The transition of Elijah into Philemon marks a meaningful shift from the remote, patriarchal archetype of a hero-prophet to a more accessible, introspective figure of wisdom. The aloofness between the divine and the people, facilitated by Elijah's intermediary role, is replaced by Philemon's more intimate and personalised guidance, bridging the subject/object divide. This evolution isn't merely a character swap but signifies a critical juncture in Jung's psycho-spiritual

unfolding, emphasising the value of personal connections with spiritual figures. Jung's (2009, p. 231) words encapsulate this: "My path is not your path; therefore, I cannot teach you. The way is within us, but not in Gods, nor in teaching, nor in laws. Within us is the way, the truth, and the life."

## 9.4 Jung through the Lens of Neumann's Framework

### Overview

In this section, I examine Jung's two paintings by applying Neumann's theoretical framework, which comprises four developmental stages: the self-representation of the unconscious, representation of the archetype in the cultural canon, compensation for the cultural canon, and the transcendence of art. The aim is to explore how Jung's visionary creation can shed light on the emergence and decline of archetypal values during his time.

### Stage One: Self-Representation of the Unconscious

In the initial stage of Neumann's (1959) framework, he considers the era of childhood or culture when the community or individual was receptive to the unconscious, expressing its contents through myths, rituals, and art. This characteristic is exemplified in *Liber Novus*, a testament to Jung's endeavour to explore the unconscious through play and creative activity.

Jung's creative method, later termed 'active imagination,' allowed him to suspend critical thinking and engage with the unconscious through dreams, fantasies, and imaginative exercises. This immersion into the unconscious facilitated the emergence of its contents. As Shamdasani notes, Jung's objective was to explore the underlying activity in the psyche, which was suggested by his visions and dreams. He aimed to "see what took place when he switched off consciousness" (2009, p. 200). Furthermore, Shamdasani describes how Jung sought to provide an avenue for this activity to manifest, akin to the effects of mescaline, a hallucinogenic drug occasionally employed for spiritual exploration in the early twentieth century.

## **Stage Two: Representation of the Archetype in the Cultural Canon**

In stage two of Neumann's framework, the focus is on the individual's connection to the cultural canon and the dominant paradigms of their time. As Jung began his introspective journey, he was initially joined by cultural figures, through the representations of Elijah and Salomé. These images align with the old Christian myth, which was a worldview prevalent throughout his childhood and early adult years. For instance, as expressed in MDR, Jung (1963/1995) describes how his father's role as a pastor profoundly impacted him. He mentions that it was customary for males in his family to pursue a career in the clergy.

As previously described, the old Christian myth is characterised by the notion of duality, encompassing the separation of conscious and unconscious aspects, a dismissal of feminine values, and a dominating approach towards nature. This duality is apparent in the initial portrayals of Elijah and Salomé, which embody the traditional, dogmatic elements of the Christian myth. These depictions also reveal tensions in the cultural canon, as a resurgence of the feminine begins to surface in Jung's examination.

## **Stage Three: Compensation for the Cultural Canon**

In the third stage of Neumann's framework, the focus shifts to the balance and crisis of consciousness, and the artist's role in providing a counterbalance to the cultural canon. Jung's dreams and visions, as documented in MDR, played a pivotal role in inspiring his creative endeavour. Two examples are noteworthy: a dream featuring an underground temple with a ritual phallus (1963/1995, p. 28), and a vision involving a "turd" striking a cathedral (p. 56).

The first occurred during his childhood and introduced Jung to the concept of a subterranean God, “not to be named” (p. 28). This encounter prompted him to question his cultural conditioning and consider the possibility of a broader spiritual reality. The second, a vision, occurred during his college years, represented a symbol of the crumbling cultural canon. This dream and vision are but two examples that served as early catalysts, inspiring Jung to challenge and reimagine the cultural canon that had dominated his upbringing.

In the context of *Image 155*, the evolution of Salomé plays a compensatory role, offering a counterpoint to the cultural canon’s limited and often restrictive portrayal of femininity and bringing light to the importance of the feminine archetype. In addition, the transformation of Elijah into Philemon, a more accessible and personalised spiritual guide, represents a significant shift in Jung’s psyche. The metamorphosis not only shows the importance of a personal connection with spiritual figures (in contrast to the inaccessibly ‘transcendent’ Christian deity of his upbringing) but also serves as a counterbalance to the cultural canon, implying the unification of opposites.

### **Transcendence of Art**

*Image 154* and *Image 155* serve as illustrations of Neumann’s ‘transcendence of art’ category, encapsulating elements of psychic wholeness. *Image 155*, or the ‘Unnamed Anima’ vividly represents Jung’s personal transformation and encounter with the feminine principle. On the other hand, in *Image 154*, ‘Philemon’ depicts a spiritual shift from the dualistic representation of the heroic Elijah to the unified God-image of the wise old man. Together, they demonstrate

Jung's departure from conventional cultural norms and his journey towards an integrated balance of feminine and masculine values.

Furthermore, aligning with Neumann's category as the 'third' position in Jungian theory, these images also exemplify the transcendent function, a transformative interplay of conscious and unconscious elements. *Image 154* and *Image 155* showcase this process through evolutions of Salomé and Elijah. Particularly, Philemon takes on the role of a 'third' position acting as an intermediary, or reconciling force that goes beyond the limitations of a dualistic perspective.

These images not only implicitly critique the established cultural canon through their representations of the masculine and feminine, but also represent Jung's escape from "ego-bound consciousness" (Neumann, 1959, p. 100). The transformations of Salomé and Elijah endure beyond their immediate context, continuing to inspire reinterpretations and provoke contemporary discussions. The themes of integration, transcendence, and self-realisation remain pertinent to modern audiences.

Through the transformative narratives of Salomé and Elijah and the enduring influence of Philemon, the two images also intimate Neumann's centroversion, the innate desire to achieve psychological wholeness. They not only demonstrate the potential for art to facilitate personal and collective transcendence but also serve as enduring touchstones for contemporary discourses.

## 9.5 Key Points and Reflections

This chapter explored two distinct images using Romanyshyn and Neumann's models as guiding frameworks. It was shown how *Image 155*, the 'Unnamed Anima' offers an interesting exploration of the feminine figure and the unconscious in the context of a 20th century man's life. This image encapsulated Jung's transformative journey, illustrating his evolving awareness of his cultural heritage and his determination to transcend the limitations of his era. Another significant finding was the character transition from Elijah to Philemon, which seemed to represent a significant shift in Jung's psyche. This evolution signified a crucial juncture in Jung's spiritual quest, emphasising the importance of personalised connections with spiritual figures. Philemon's intimate guidance served to bridge the subject/object divide, and largely inspired what would become his analytical psychology (resonances to his No. 1 personality), and towards a personal myth (resonances to his No. 2 personality).

Further examination through the lens of Neumann's framework revealed alignment with the 'compensation for the cultural canon' and the 'transcendence of art' category. It was argued that the 'Unnamed Anima' represents Jung's personal transformation and engagement with the feminine principle, while 'Philemon' illustrates a shift from the dualistic hero Elijah to a unified God-Image. Together these images showcased Jung's departure from conventional norms and his journey towards his individuation that included a more balanced integration of the feminine and masculine.

# CHAPTER TEN

## Contemporary Case Studies

### 10.1 Introduction

This chapter explores contemporary case studies of Jungian-inspired artists, whose works were discovered through a post on the *International Association for Jungian Studies* (IAJS) forum. The selected artists have cited Jung's theories as major influences on their creative processes, thereby making their artwork a compelling subject for this analysis.

The forthcoming discussion comprises of a brief biographical sketch of each artist, followed by an introduction of a chosen artwork from their portfolio. The artworks are examined using Romanyshyn's 'four levels of the unconscious.' Following the application of Romanyshyn's model, the artworks will be positioned within Neumann's framework. However, the fourth category is omitted. This decision was based on Neumann's assertion that this stage occurs infrequently, and when it does, it presents a challenge to universally ascertain its transcendent qualities. Moreover, he notes that transcendent artworks often involve the artist breaking free from their temporal constraints and the limitations of ego-bound consciousness. For this reason, it is possible that such artworks can only be recognised and appreciated by subsequent generations.

The analysis will be informed and enriched by incorporating direct quotes from the artists themselves, gathered from the one-on-one interviews. These

quotes not only lend authenticity to the interpretations but also offer direct insights into their influences and creative intentions.

## 10.2 Hazel Florez's Suprarational Language of Dreamish

### Overview

London based artist Hazel Florez (b. 1984) describes herself as an esoteric surrealist who paints imaginative scenes to escape the predictability of everyday life. I was introduced to Florez by the U.K. based Brazilian psychotherapist Punita Miranda (2022) who described her as a ‘visionary’ in an email sent via the IAJS online forum. Florez’s artwork has recently been published in *The Debutante* art journal. The article, published in 2022, includes various images of her work accompanied by a descriptive essay and interview quotes.

#### 1. Education and Early Art Career

Florez graduated from the Edinburgh College of Art in 2007. However, during this period she was focused on “making a statement of how [she] did not like the way things were, rather than considering what [she] should be doing instead” (Florez, 2022, p. 7). Her imagery consisted mainly of graph sheets, figures, and crisp lines which aimed to highlight her distaste towards clinical attitudes. During our interview she described how her early experience in art education was unfavourable as she “started associating art and creativity with completely unbridled self-destruction – a journey into the crazy” (p. 4). Due to her peers and bohemian lifestyle, she felt that it was impossible to be a great artist without mental instability.

To preserve her mental health from the destructive tendencies of creativity, Florez proceeded with her education by focusing on politics. In 2012, she started a Ph.D. program researching right-wing institutions. However, before her thesis submission date, she gave birth to her first child. This transformative event

compelled Florez to reassess the trajectory of her life, leading her to conclude that politics was no longer a suitable path. Instead, she felt a strong urge to restart her creative practice, realising that she could engage in a creative life in a maternal and nurturing way. She understood, “I did not have to live the stereotypical life of a ‘crazy’ artist” (p. 4). With this fresh insight, Florez flourished and began to teach herself the ‘suprarational language of dreamish’ – her own idiosyncratic metaphorical language of the visionary imagination.

## 2. Reconnection with Art and Visionary Creativity

The Jungian influence in Florez’s creative practice materialised around 2017 when an observer noted the ‘Jungian nature’ of her artwork at an exhibition. This comment ignited a passion, propelling her towards an intensive study of Jungian psychology. She immersed herself in a variety of learning channels, ranging from devouring relevant literature to attending related courses and tuning into informative podcasts. In 2022, she further demonstrated the impact and relevance of Jungian ideas on her creative practice by presenting her work in an online seminar hosted by the C.G. Jung Club in London<sup>71</sup>.

During the interview, Florez (2022, p. 1) expressed a dissociation from artistic labels, stating “when I am in my creative space, I am not thinking in terms of categories, definitions or ‘isms’. I usually just pin those things on afterwards.” However, her definition of visionary art and her own artwork aligns with Jung’s conceptualisation of visionary creativity. According to Florez (2022, p. 6):

For me, the visionary artist is one who draws on this connection with the spirit world and the ideas of the divine and the world of dreams [...] it is the art that

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<sup>71</sup> Florez presented *Transmutations of Alchemy in Art: From Psychology, Feminism, to Metamorphic Earth Alchemy* online, in May 2022.

connects to a non-literal understanding, instead of language you communicate using the vocabulary of the subconscious – the symbolic language of the soul.

Florez draws inspiration from renowned painters such as Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, Blake, Ernst Fuchs, and Grey. While she acknowledges the influence of male visionaries, she admits to a more profound affinity towards female artists. In particular, she resonates with Carrington, who she admires for maintaining a “wild and heretical” imagination despite leading a seemingly traditional life as a mother and a wife (p. 7).

### 3. Creative Process

Florez’s art captures the uninhibited expression of unconscious content, skilfully harnessing play, fantasy, and dreams within her creative practice. Approaching her artistic process with a blend of purpose and spontaneity, she begins with a fundamental shape or outline, leaving the finer details to intuition. She discovers inspiration in the delicate equilibrium between opposing forces, such as order and chaos. Furthermore, dreams hold a significance in her work, acting as a wellspring of inspiration that seamlessly fuses logic and the illogic. As Florez (2022, p.10) articulates: “I think sleeping and dreaming are like food for creativity.”

*Danu’s Garden* (2022) is one of her most recent paintings (Figure 10.2.1). The captivating work is an oil paint and gold powder creation on a 97 x 54 cm circular wooden board. The artwork dazzles the viewer with an earthy colour palette, teeming with a diverse array of plants, fungi, cells, neurons, and wormholes. To the right, a scene unfolds: five naked women dance around a snake-entwined tree, a humanoid figure rides a snail, and mysterious creatures hide in the shadows of a hill.

On the left, the eye is drawn to the enigmatic forms of a female figure, an avian dragon, and an anthropomorphic deer. Each figure enhances the atmosphere of enchantment and deepens the sense of curiosity. In addition, a tranquil river invites attention to the painting's centre – a pavilion standing on four crustacean-clawed legs. A snake encircling an egg guards the entrance. At the forefront, likely embodying the Goddess Danu, is another anthropomorphic figure, adding to the overall mythical resonance of the piece.

### **The Personal**

As mentioned, Florez's experience of giving birth and becoming a mother had a profound effect on her outlook. This transformation unearthed a deep-seated personal complex tied to her early loss of her own mother. This void, amplified by her own motherhood, marked the onset of a gradual journey of self-discovery and reassessment of her creative philosophy. This shift, however, wasn't instantaneous, but evolved slowly through hardship and introspection. Florez faced exhaustion and depletion due to her overwork, leading her to seek therapy and reconsider her Ph.D., which she came to realise was a form of self-punishment. During our interview, she related her struggles to Jung's accounts of despair and sorrow, and his journey of descending and emerging from chaos.

*Danu's Garden* mirrors Florez' profound personal experience. It serves as a visual representation of her attempt to marry the conscious and unconscious elements, providing a window into her evolving perception of creativity and femininity. The painting's unique creatures, dancing women, and lush organic elements are emblematic of Florez's journey to embrace her innate femininity and instinctual understanding.



Figure 10.2.1 – *Danu's Garden* (2022) by Hazel Florez. Image used with Permission from the Aartist.

## Cultural-Historical

Florez's depiction of Danu stands as a powerful symbol that confronts patriarchal norms, reflecting both her personal quest for empowerment and the larger societal movement towards gender equality. However, this isn't a new trend; as highlighted in Chapter 9, there has been a concerted push since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to dismantle patriarchal structures. Florez's imagery contributes to this ongoing dialogue, using mythology and symbolism to suggest new perspectives and enhance existing ideas about societal frameworks.

### 1. Historical Precedence in Celtic Tradition

Informed by the mythologies surrounding the Celtic Goddess Danu, *Danu's Garden* is imbued with the richness of Celtic tradition. The historical culture is renowned for its deep reverence towards feminine attributes, seamlessly integrated into spiritual, cultural, and everyday aspects of life. For instance, Celtic scholar, Jean Markale (1986, p. 17) notes:

The Celts, as inheritors of non-patriarchal societies, stood halfway between these and the Indo-European societies [...]. Here was a harmony between the roles of men and women that was not dependent on the superiority of one over the other, but on the equality in which each could feel comfortable.

By placing the Celtic Goddess at the forefront of her painting, Florez leverages the historical and cultural narratives of the Celts to amplify her feminist stance. In doing so, her work subtly addresses a cultural complex that lies at the intersections of patriarchal structures and the evolving recognition and elevation of feminine power.

## Collective-Archetypal

Florez's painting presents Danu, the Celtic Goddess, as the guiding archetype of this artwork. Despite her ambiguous background due to lack of surviving written myths or legends (Monaghan, 2004, p. 117), Danu is commonly associated with life, creation, and the natural world, with established connections to the Great Mother archetype. In addition, Florez has portrayed her within a garden setting, implying the universal archetype of the paradise garden.

### 1. Universal Archetype: The Great Mother

Florez's depiction of Danu embodies the powerful archetype of the 'Great Mother,' or 'Earth Mother' found in various cultural narratives worldwide. For example, Gaia in Greek mythology and Isis in Egyptian mythology. These archetypal motifs often represent either the personification of the earth itself, or are associated with motherhood, fertility, and creation. Moreover, the concept of the 'Great Mother' is also deeply intertwined with the notion of the sacred feminine, a universally resonant idea ingrained in the human psyche. This portrayal illustrates the foundational role of the feminine principle in creation narratives across diverse cultures, while simultaneously inviting viewers to engage with enduring themes of life, fertility, and the cyclical nature of existences.

### 2. Universal Archetype: The Garden

Although no records of a specific folklore titled 'Danu's Garden' can be found, the significance of the image can still be acknowledged. There are many myths and legends from different cultures that share similarities with the notion of *Danu's Garden*. One example is the biblical story of the Garden of Eden, which is

said to be a paradise where the first man and woman lived in harmony with nature and enjoyed the fruits of the earth. Other examples include Asgard in Norse mythology, Hesperides in Greek Mythology, and Mag Mell in Irish mythology. All these myths and legends of paradise or paradise-like gardens share a common theme of a perfect, idyllic place, where life is abundant, joyous, and eternal. All of them connected to the Gods or Goddesses, showing a deep connection between humanity, nature and the divine.

The myths and legends of paradise gardens such as the ones mentioned above can be understood as expressions of the ‘paradise’ archetype. According to *The Book of Symbols: Reflection in Archetypal Symbols* (2012, p. 146), the garden paradise is the imagined locus of our beginning and end, the original matrix and mandala of life, fed by underground sources of living waters: “the garden of Eden, the elysian fields, the pure land of western paradise of Buddhism, and the garden of Hesperides [...] are all enclosed paradisial garden worlds whose inhabitants are divinely protected.”

According to this source, the notion of the paradisial garden reflects humanity’s innate desire for an idealised internal world of complete potential or a return to a preconscious state of innocence or harmony – reminiscent of the fabled *golden age*. The source also notes that in almost all cultures and religions, the garden is seen as a sacred place that connects the conscious self to its unconscious roots (*ibid.*). In this way, the garden paradise is not just a physical space, but also serves as a symbol of the inner world, a place where the mind and soul can find peace and rejuvenation.

### 3. Reflections

Florez's representation of a paradisial garden offers a refreshing contrast to traditional narratives, such as John Milton's depiction in *Paradise Lost*. Instead of focusing on humanity's fall from grace, *Danu's Garden* reimagines the garden as a realm of possibility and positive potential in harmony with the feminine divine. This shift in interpretation reflects an evolution of cultural perceptions around the concept of paradise, infusing it with more empowering and hopeful undertones, largely de-coupled from its Christian mythological basis infused with guilt and shame.

#### **Eco-cosmological**

While the painting offers a rich ground for exploring the personal, cultural-historical, and collective-archetypal aspects, its true essence lies within the eco-cosmological realm. The current examination involves a brief look at the painting's symbolic content, unique representations, and the potential interpretations it holds from this perspective.

##### 1. The Pavilion as a Gateway

The painting centers around a pavilion that serves as a gateway, beckoning the viewer into the garden. The gateway acts as the boundary between the viewer's existing perspectives and the captivating, interconnected landscape that lies beyond. The presence of the egg and snake motif adds an archetypal dimension, often associated with the transformative power of the libido (Jung 1917/1943). It represents not only the potential for danger, but also the opportunity for renewal, providing a framework for the narrative depicted in the composition.

Through the pavilion gateway lies the garden, a captivating visual tapestry that seamlessly weaves together elements of the human world (such as human activities and figures), the natural world (plants, fungi, animals, insects), and the divine realm (the Goddess and mythological creatures). This composition showcases a harmonious co-existence between humans and their environment, challenging anthropocentric perspectives by emphasising the interconnectedness of all beings within the ecological fabric. The intricate depiction of diverse flora, fauna, and celestial motifs highlights the boundless complexity of life, underscoring the profound interconnectivity that transcends human understanding.

### 1. The Biomorphic Representation of Danu

Symbols such as the Goddess Danu infuse the natural environment with an air of divinity, highlighting the sacredness inherent in the natural world. Each detail of Danu's portrayal carries deep symbolism that adds layers of meaning. For instance, the presence of a moth's head potentially signifies the transformative and regenerative qualities inherent in nature, while her reptilian arms suggests the raw, unfiltered aspects of life, calling attention to primal forces. Danu's blue skin serves as a testament to her divine status and cosmic connection, emphasising her spiritual association.

The divine representation is heightened by Danu's biomorphic form – a fusion of human, moth, and reptilian characteristics. While traditional interpretations of Celtic lore often portray Danu as a human figure, typically depicted as a queen holding a sceptre or symbols of abundance, this rendition of the Goddess undergoes a remarkable transformation. Danu is not depicted as separate from her environment; rather, she seamlessly integrates into it. This

artistic form signifies a departure from the conventional human/non-human, or subject/object dualism, inviting a more holistic appreciation.

## 2. The Garden as a Psychic Mirror

The painting skilfully utilises the motif of a garden as a profound psychic mirror, reflecting the inner landscape of humanity. This portrayal echoes the depths of the human psyche, externalising it into a tangible manifestation, reminiscent of Jung's 'garden of Salome.' The depiction of the garden as a rich tapestry of diverse life forms and mythical elements, seems to morph into a physical embodiment of the primordial unconscious state – a space brimming with creative chaos and transformative potential.

The visual narrative resonates strongly with Neumann's theories which emphasise the importance of reconnecting with the original unity through immersion in the primordial chaos, as a path to renewal and evolution. As such, the painting serves as a metaphorical reflection of the unconscious, vividly depicting its inherent chaos and simultaneously inviting viewers to confront and engage with their own internal turbulence.

## 3. Reflections

This interpretation can extend beyond the microcosmic realm of individual growth. On a macrocosmic level, the painting alludes to the natural world and the imperative to recognise its divinity and significance. By embracing the unconscious and engaging with its transformative potential, there arises a parallel need to reconnect with the larger natural world, appreciating its wisdom, and fostering a symbiotic relationship for personal and collective well-being. Florez's

artwork serves as a unique medium for expressing eco-cosmological sentiments that can be challenging to capture in verbal form. The visual narrative, akin to poetry, enables an intellectual and emotional engagement that has the potential to resonate with viewers on multiple levels.

### **An Analysis through Neumann's Framework**

In the following discussion Neumann's framework is briefly applied to Florez's painting, specifically focusing on the first three categories: the 'self-representation of the unconscious,' 'representation of the archetype in the cultural canon,' and 'compensation of the cultural canon.' The fourth category 'transcendence of art' is excluded based on the parameters set in this chapter's introduction.

#### **1. Self-representation of the unconscious**

In the first stage of Neumann's framework, the unconscious dominates, a state of existence symbolised by the uroboros – a serpent dragon consuming its own tail. This primal stage, represented by self-contained totality, mirrors a period when the conscious and unconscious are not yet separated.

Florez's art captures the open expression of unconscious content, utilising play, fantasy, and dreams in her creative process. By attempting to engage with, and express the unconscious element through her work, Florez begins the process of integrating various aspects of her psyche, laying the groundwork for a transformative journey toward individuation. It is interesting to observe that while the painting does not exemplify an uncontrolled and unrestrained creation from the unconscious, it does seem to convey a metaphorical and reflective visual representation of this primal state.

## 2. Representation of the cultural canon

The second stage of Neumann's framework is characterised by an artist who grows into the traditions of their time and conveys conscious archetypal forms. In the case of Florez, the label 'esoteric surrealist' which she describes herself, places her within a lineage of artists who explore the mystical, hidden, and unconscious realms.

Furthermore, Florez's self-identification as a feminist aligns her with a critical cultural dialogue surrounding gender equality, societal roles, and power dynamics. By embracing feminist views, her work becomes part of a broader discourse on feminism, and her portrayal of figures like Danu, symbolising female empowerment, reinforces this alignment. This engagement with the feminist perspective reflects the contemporary emphasis within the cultural canon on gender issues and representation, situating her work within the progressive discourse on contemporary art.

## 3. Compensation for the cultural canon

Compensation in this context refers to the ability of an artwork to challenge, recontextualise, or provide an alternative to existing cultural narratives or dominant perspectives – a process that expands and enriches collective and cultural understanding. Florez's painting effectively challenges and enriches the cultural canon by foregrounding a narrative that is often side-lined. First it challenges patriarchal norms by centralising the Celtic Goddess, thus offering an alternative view on divinity that emphasises feminine power. Second, the unique portrayal of Danu as a biomorphic form disrupts conventional dualisms,

suggesting a profound interconnectedness of all life and redefining the sacred feminine as integrated with nature and the cosmos.

Moreover, the painting disrupts anthropocentric viewpoints by emphasising the interdependence of all life, urging viewers to see humans as part of a broader ecological fabric. Finally, the depiction of the garden, rather than embodying a fall from grace presents paradise as a realm of positive potential and harmonious co-existence. This is a crucial narrative in our current times of environmental and societal challenges. As such, Florez's painting provides a vital counterbalance to the cultural canon, bringing forward underrepresented narratives and offering a richer understanding of femininity, divinity, and our relationship with nature.

## **Discussion**

In the context of Romanyshyn's model, Florez's painting holds particular significance within the eco-cosmological domain. It serves as a visual narrative that encapsulates complex concepts related to the personal, nature and the divine, highlighting the interconnectedness of life. In terms of Neumann's framework, Florez's work can be mostly situated in the role of compensating for the cultural canon. Her painting challenges, recontextualises, and provides an alternative to existing cultural narratives and mainstream perspectives. *Danu's Garden* subtly incorporates a critical-activist stance, in its potential to influence and guide collective and cultural values. With this analysis we can consider how Florez's work reaches beyond the aesthetic, becoming a powerful medium of expression and anticipation of more hopeful future possibilities.

## 10.3 Danielle Poirier's Intuitive Forms

### Overview

Canadian artist, Danielle Poirier (b. 1956) describes herself as a visionary artist, based on the recognition by Jungian scholar, Steve Myers. In 2020, Poirier and Myers co-hosted a seminar with IAJS focusing on the engagement between Jung and art<sup>72</sup>. One of the seminar's highlights was an article by Myers (2020), who briefly explored one of her paintings, which he classified as a visionary work rooted in the collective unconscious. He contrasted this style with 'psychological' art which, he argued, engages with the artist's individual experiences and emotions (p. 2). In acknowledging Poirier's visionary works, Myers illuminates the compelling intersection of Jungian thought and artistic expression.

#### 1. Education and Influences

Poirier embarked on her artistic journey later in life. Prior to this, she had a fulfilling career as a corporate trainer for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) tests. However, the constant travel and financial unpredictability associated with this 'jet-set' lifestyle took a toll on her mental health, leading to bouts of depression and anxiety.

Over a period of fifteen years, Poirier intermittently sought help from a local Jungian psychoanalyst. However, during a particularly challenging time when she feared a relapse into a depressive episode, her therapist announced a month-long vacation, leaving Poirier without her usual support. This unexpected circumstance forced her to take charge of her own wellbeing. She found solace and a means of self-expression through art, which became a powerful tool for

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<sup>72</sup> This seminar was titled *Engaging with Art and Jung with Danielle Poirier and Steve Myers*.

managing her mental health. This newfound interest sparked her curiosity, leading her to enrol in the Bachelor of Fine Art Program at Concordia University.

Poirier was inspired by this creative awakening to experiment with various materials through drawing, painting, and sculpture. However, as she worked through the artistic processes, she discovered that a single female figure kept emerging. A powerful earth goddess with open arms. Poirier asserted that, this series, which she refers to as *The Magnificent 16*, was a numinous encounter that prevented her from relapsing into depression. While working on the series, she noticed a positive shift in her attitude and disposition and found that her anxiety was effectively channelled through the creative activities.

## 2. Creative Process

Poirier's approach to painting is rooted in a therapeutic process that prioritises emotional exploration and self-expression over conforming to artistic styles or movements. She embarks on each painting by selecting a colour palette that encapsulates the specific emotions, inquiries, or intentions she seeks to convey. She then fills the canvas with these colours, not bound by any predefined forms or patterns. Once the initial colour application is complete, she steps back to contemplate the emerging painting, allowing an image that resonates with her to surface organically from the colour arrangement.

Her approach, inherently intuitive, yields artworks that are highly personalised and thought-provoking. Interestingly, Poirier's (2022, p. 12) understanding of visionary art aligns with her own creative process:

It is a conversation, a conversation between the ego and the unconscious. Whether they are collective or personal, it is about allowing those images that we don't understand to arise. It involves suspending disbelief long enough for imagery to appear and for a dialogue to take place with them.

One of her paintings that is particularly thought-provoking is *A Feminine Triad* (2014)<sup>73</sup>. This oil painting on canvas brings to life three distinct feminine figures (Figure 10.2.1). To the right is a nude woman lying on her stomach. This woman, who is visually presented menstruating, confronts the viewer with a potent, arresting gaze. Counterbalancing this vivid depiction, the image's left side reveals a fully clothed woman engaged in cleaning up the blood. She exudes a serene, almost angelic presence as she attends to the task, crouched in a posture of care and attentiveness. Moreover, the composition is bisected by a horizon line, effectively delineating two separate environments within the painting. The lower half is imbued with the arid feel of a desert landscape, complete with rolling sand dunes, while the upper half contrasts with a hazy, dusty sky. Furthermore, commanding attention above the horizon line is an imposing, pregnant figure. This entity, evocatively rendered, seems to merge with the sky, casting an ethereal, ghost-like presence over the entire composition.

## Personal

In our conversation, Poirier conveyed her deep respect and affection for Indigenous cultures and communities, sharing her personal experiences with their rituals and practices. The significance of these experiences are notable, particularly in relation to the artwork under discussion.

Poirier fondly recounted her time spent in communes, where she gained insight into unique menstrual rituals practiced by North American Indigenous communities. Within these communities, menstruating women would seclude

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<sup>73</sup> Poirier did not name her painting. Rather than referring to it as *Untitled*, I have appointed the name 'A Feminine Triad.'

themselves into a designated space known as a 'moon-lodge.' Here, they engage in prayer, community dialogue, and received care from the community's elder women.



Figure 10.3.2 – *A Feminine Triad* (2014) by Danielle Poirier. Image used with permission from the artist.

Poirier also shared her experience with a specific person, a healer and guardian of Mayan tradition named La Abuela Margarita, from British Columbia. During a ritual, La Abuela would ask girls who were menstruating to give her their napkins. She would handle them in front of everyone, and then proceed to wash them in a bowl of water. Once cleaned, she would hold up the napkin and say, “this is garbage” (Poirier, 2022, p. 24). However, the blood on her hands and the blood in the water was considered sacred, as it was “life preparing for life” (*ibid.*). This ritual was a powerful demonstration of the deep reverence and respect for the sacred nature of menstruation and the connection between blood, life, and the cycles of nature.

This experience with indigenous communities, particularly the ritual performed by La Abuela Margarita, potentially activated a personal complex related to her understanding of femininity. This confrontation with a different perspective on menstruation, while not explicitly addressed during the interview, likely challenged Poirier’s existing beliefs, leading to a transformation in her understanding. As such, her painting can be seen as an expression of this altered perception.

### **Cultural-Historical**

Poirier, a French-Canadian artist, has a significant connection with Indigenous communities, shaped by the cultural context of French Canada. Despite a history marked by both cultural exchange and conflict, recent years have seen a growing recognition of Indigenous rights and a renewed interest in Indigenous cultures and traditions.

In general, Indigenous cultures are known for their deep spiritual beliefs and connection to the natural world. Many of these cultures have rituals and ceremonies that honour and celebrate menstruation, viewing it as a sacred and powerful time for women. Moreover, many Indigenous communities traditionally view menstruation as a time of healing, rest, and introspection. As mentioned, they often have a ‘menstrual hut’ or ‘moon-lodge’ where menstruating women and girls can find isolation and privacy. These spaces also serve as spiritual and cultural spaces for women to reflect, connect with their spiritual selves, and be in harmony with their bodies.

However, it is important to note that these traditional beliefs and practices were disrupted by colonisers and missionaries, who viewed such customs as primitive and uncivilised. This has led to menstruation being frequently misrepresented and negatively portrayed in mainstream culture as unsanitary and primitive. The cultural complex, which arises from the tension between these contrasting views, could have influenced Poirier’s understanding and representation of menstruation and femininity in her artwork. By depicting a subject often considered taboo in mainstream culture, Poirier challenges societal norms and invites viewers to reconsider their own perceptions of menstruation, potentially influencing a cultural complex surrounding this natural process.

### **Collective-Archetypal**

While the painting offers a rich ground for exploring the personal and the cultural-historical, its true essence lies within the collective-archetypal category due to its expression of universal human experiences and somewhat anthropocentric focus. Central to this exploration is the triple goddess archetype, a

symbol that appears in various forms across different cultures and religions, emphasising universal themes. For example, the Hindu Goddess Durga is often depicted in her forms as Saraswati (the maiden, goddess of knowledge), Lakshmi (the mother, goddess of prosperity), and Kali (the crone, goddess of time and change). Similarly in Irish mythology, the Morrígan is a powerful figure often portrayed as a triad who embodies the complexities and contradictions of feminine power.

### 1. The Maiden, Mother, and Crone

The triple goddess archetype is interpreted as representing the various stages of a woman's life. In Poirier's painting, the foreground features two female figures: a nude woman lying on her stomach, visibly displaying signs of menstruation. This depiction possibly represents the maiden aspect commonly associated with youth, vitality, and new beginnings. Beside her is clothed woman cleaning up the blood, embodying the mother aspect, commonly associated with nurturing, protection, and care. Moreover, positioned in the background, on the horizon is a large looming figure, with a round, possibly pregnant stomach. This figure connects with the crone, or wise woman aspect, typically associated with wisdom, experience, and the end of life.

Interestingly, Jungian psychology asserts that archetypes, including the triple goddess, embody both positive and negative characteristics. While the positive aspects of the triple goddess represent the diverse stages of feminine power and wisdom, the negative aspects can manifest differently. For instance, the maiden archetype may symbolise immaturity, naivete, and a lack of life experience. Similarly, the mother archetype can turn into overprotectiveness,

smothering, and enmeshment, resulting in the individual's inability to differentiate themselves from their nurturing role. Furthermore, the crone can become bitter, resentful, or unproductive, dwelling excessively on death and the past.

## 2. Integration of Opposites

In Poirier's painting, the depiction of a taboo subject serves as a bold statement that initially evokes shock and discomfort. This strong reaction suggests that the artist is attempting to explore the feminine in its entirety, encompassing both its positive and negative aspects. The painting, therefore, becomes a contemplative space where these archetypes and the complex experiences and behaviours they embody are laid bare for examination.

Jung (1917/1943, para. 78) often emphasised the necessity of acknowledging both the positive and negative aspects of archetypes for the development of a stable personality. He argued that "the repressed contents must be made conscious so as to produce a tension of opposites, without which no forward movement is possible." In this context, Poirier's painting, with its unique representation of the triple goddess, can be seen as a prospective invitation to the viewer. It encourages them to embark on their own process of individuation, a journey of self-discovery and personal development, by embracing the diverse aspects of the feminine.

## **Eco-cosmological**

While Poirier's painting adopts an anthropocentric perspective, using human forms to depict universal patterns of thought and behaviour, it also incorporates elements of the eco-cosmological. For instance, the triple goddess archetype,

which the painting prominently features, is intrinsically tied to the cycles of the moon: the waxing, full, and waning stages. Sociologist Leslie Gomberg (2001) identifies these stages as corresponding to the maiden, mother, and crone aspects of the goddess. She further elaborates that, much like the moon, the triple goddess is cyclical, symbolising the continuous cycles of birth, growth, decay, and rebirth.

Despite the different manifestations, both the moon and the triple goddess represent multiple aspects of a single entity. Lynne Masland (1994), in her Ph.D. thesis on comparative literature, describes how the roles of the maiden, mother, and crone mirror the seasons in the agricultural cycle and the natural rhythms that govern human and vegetative procreativity. This archetypal form, therefore, serves as a powerful symbol of the interconnectedness and interdependence of the natural world and the divine. When interpreted on a macrocosmic level, Poirier's painting could be seen as a reflection of the individual's deep connection with the universe, emphasising how everyone is sustained, supported, and more importantly, subject to the forces of nature.

### **An Analysis through Neumann's Framework**

In the following discussion Neumann's framework is briefly applied to Poirier's painting, specifically focusing on the first three categories: the 'self-representation of the unconscious,' 'representation of the archetype in the cultural canon,' and 'compensation of the cultural canon.' The fourth category 'transcendence of art' is excluded based on the parameters set in this chapter's introduction.

### 1. Self-representation of the Unconscious

Poirier's improvisatory painting approach highlights her openness to embrace and give shape to the spontaneous content of the unconscious. She actively engages with this content through her intuitive creative method. The free-flowing application of colours, the initial disregard for concrete form, and the anticipation of a meaningful image to emerge are all demonstrative of this engagement. She allows the unconscious to guide her in creating the artwork, emphasising the importance of the process over any preconceived notions of the outcome.

This openness to the contents of the unconscious, expressed through her painting, serves as an embodiment of Neumann's idea of 'self-representation of the unconscious.' In doing so, she not only provides the viewer with insight into her individual psyche but also creates a space where archetypal, cultural, and personal symbols can interact and converge.

### 2. Representation of the Cultural Canon

*A Feminine Triad* serves as a substantial addition to the cultural canon as it interacts and contributes to feminist discourse. It embodies the progressive shift in societal perspectives towards menstruation and womanhood, which has been traditionally stigmatised. The painting showcases these themes, bridging the gap between private and public conversations. This piece also aligns with modern movements that advocate for a fresh perspective on women's biological processes. It echoes the sentiments of movements such as 'free bleeding,' and using menstrual blood for plant nourishment. These initiatives aim to acknowledge the inherent worth of menstruation as a natural process, encouraging a more accepting dialogue.

In addition to exploring feminist issues, Poirier's painting reflects upon diverse cultural elements within Canadian society. *A Feminist Triad* draws inspiration from French-Canadian and Indigenous influences, emphasising the multicultural dimensions of the cultural canon. As a result, it holds significance not only within feminist discourse but also in promoting cultural inclusivity.

### 3. Compensation for the Canon

Poirier's painting serves as a captivating counterbalance to the cultural canon, enriching our collective understanding by exploring narratives that are often overlooked. First, the artwork challenges patriarchal norms by centralising menstruation, a facet of feminine experience often shrouded in silence. In doing so, it offers an alternative perspective that recognises and validates the power of the feminine biological process, a stark departure from traditional and historical cultural narratives.

Second, Poirier's portrayal of menstruation disrupts the convention of viewing this process as dirty or shameful. The display of menstrual blood, traditionally confined to the private sphere, serves as a potent symbol of women's intimate connection with the rhythms of nature. By recontextualising menstruation as a natural and essential aspect of the female existence, she offers a refreshed understanding of the feminine, integrated with natural cycles, thereby challenging societal taboos.

The painting's depth is further enhanced by the inclusion of divine symbolism, which serves to reframe the feminine not merely as a biological process but also as a spiritual journey. The inclusion of Indigenous symbolism in

the painting also serves as a compensatory role, contributing to the multicultural dialogue, and actively critiquing western practices and perspectives on femininity.

## **Discussion**

In the context of Romanyshyn's model, Poirier's painting holds special significance within the collective-archetypal category. It serves as a visual narrative that encapsulates complex concepts related to the universal human experiences. Using Neumann's framework, Poirier's work can be situated predominantly in the role of compensating for the cultural canon. Her painting challenges, recontextualises, and provides an alternative to existing cultural narratives and dominant perspectives. *A Feminine Triad* subtly incorporates a critical-activist perspective attempting to influence and guide collective and cultural understanding. Through this analysis, we can see how Poirier's work, like Florez's, goes beyond aesthetics, becoming a powerful medium of expression and opening possibilities for the future.

## 10.4 Key Points and Reflections

Contemporary artists Florez and Poirier are notable for their creative exploration of the multiple layers of the unconscious. Both artists, despite being significantly influenced by Jungian psychology and employing intuitive methodologies, exhibit different stylistic attributes in their work. For instance, Florez enhances her expressions by using a blend of innovative and pre-existing symbols from diverse fields. On the other hand, Poirier's work stands out for its raw and unfiltered portrayal of the subjects, eschewing traditional aesthetic norms in favour of a more authentic representation.

Both *Danu's Garden* and *A Feminine Triad* hold visionary significance due to their potential to challenge and enrich the existing cultural canon. They not only play a critical-activist role by questioning and pushing boundaries, but also maintain a profound connection to their personal and cultural origins. This connection makes their work more relatable and enhances its capacity to be integrated into the collective consciousness.

A noteworthy trend is the growing prominence of feminine themes within cultural expressions. This can be interpreted as the manifestation of a feminine archetype that has been progressively permeating our collective consciousness. In line with Neumann's perspective, it could prove beneficial to identify and engage with these cultural expressions to comprehend emerging archetypes and associate values more fully, to gain a better understanding of potential cultural shifts.

Overall, the four-part model of the unconscious proves to be a valuable framework for interpreting archetypal expressions in visual art. As shown, this approach allows for a detailed exploration of the complex layers within visionary

images, enabling a nuanced understanding of their symbolic and metaphorical aspects. This method also serves as a comprehensive tool for engaging with Neumann's model and understanding the artist's role in relation to their specific epoch.



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## PART III

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Re-envisioning Visionary Art



# **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

## **Defining Visionary Art**

### **11.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the task of defining visionary art. It begins by examining the religious and epistemological aspects that underpin visionary art, through the perspectives of Jungian scholar Susan Rowland, and the parallel, yet divergent views advocated by the psychedelic/visionary art community. Building upon this exploration, a revised definition of visionary art is presented, taking into account the wide range of perspectives and interpretations that have emerged throughout this project. The aim is to foster a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted genre. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion on the potential implications that arise from this revised definition.

## 11.2 The Religious and Epistemological Dimensions of Visionary Art

### Overview

This section presents a brief exploration of two pivotal perspectives on the role and impact of visionary art. The first perspective is that of the visionary/psychedelic art community, who perceive visionary art as a new form of spirituality. The second is that of Rowland, embodying the analytical psychological perspective, who asserts the epistemological significance of visionary art. The motivation for this exploration, particularly at this stage of the project, is the intriguing overlap between these two perspectives with both acknowledging the value of visionary art for revelation and knowledge generation. This shared recognition hints at potential avenues for dialogue and mutual enrichment. In addition, this inquiry sets the stage for the subsequent proposal of a revised definition and model for visionary art and creativity.

### Visionary Art as an Epistemological Exploration

In the text, *Jungian Arts-Based Research and the Nuclear Enchantment of New Mexico*, Rowland (2021, p. 2) notes:

Art in western modernity has been severed from many of the therapeutic, sacred, and social roles of its distant past. Some of these are found today only in indigenous societies. Indeed, western art suffers today from conventional assumptions that art is a decoration, a financial investment or entertainment.

She counters this perspective by reaffirming the significance of arts-based research (ABR). This research, she argues, is not merely about creating art after conducting research, but rather posits artmaking as an integral and revelatory part of the research process as “artmaking becomes knowledge-making” (Rowland, 2021, p. 3). From this vantage point, she argues for the extension and critical

evaluation of established arts-based research methods by inclusion of a Jungian approach. In this endeavour, she builds upon and scrutinises foundational theories by notable scholars, such as Patricia Leavy and Rita Irwin.

### 1. Artmaking as Knowledge Making

Rowland's (2021) approach to JABR challenges the traditional research methods that necessitate a separation between the subject and object. Instead, she advocates for a connection to the inherent living mystery found in the intuitive image-realising practices of art. She proposes an open paradigm that acknowledges subjectivity as part of a grander scheme, stating: "visionary works that flow from the collective unconscious, that are minimally consciously shaped, materialise the very reverse of the subject/object split. Such art makes visible nature within and outside us a continuum" (Rowland, 2021, p. 43).

In general, ABR is a method of inquiry that uses creative forms of expression to generate and represent knowledge. Leavy, a prominent figure in the ABR field, has consistently advocated for the use of art as a tool for social exploration and understanding. Rowland's argument aligns with Leavy's, particularly in viewing art as a conduit for critical inquiry. Similarly, a/r/tography, a practice that intertwines the roles of artist, researcher, and teacher, is another significant approach within ABR. Known for its capacity to imbue research with unique vitality, a/r/tography emphasises the process-oriented, immersive, and transformative aspects of arts-based research.

However, Rowland argues that the potential for ABR can be enhanced. She asserts that art, especially visionary art, can instigate a dialogue with the unconscious, leading to a deep and transformative engagement with reality that

expands upon Leavy's primarily sociocultural emphasis. In addition, she also enriches the concept of a/r/tography by incorporating Jung's techniques of active imagination and amplification, thereby deepening the exploration of the symbolic and archetypal facets of the psyche.

Rowland (2021, p. 70) claims that visionary art "is an epistemology of cultural and historical research." In her view, art and symbols serve as epistemological tools, offering a unique framework for meaning creation. She notes that, "art imbued with psychic images as symbols of the unconscious destabilise power as a necessary attempt to heal modernity's sick psyche" (p. 19). This viewpoint recognises that art has the capacity to unveil unconscious elements, which can be utilised to transform and critique both personal and collective experiences, thus serving as a form of activism and a tool for knowledge generation. Evidence of this is clearly outlined in this project, specifically with the contemporary and historical case studies.

### 1. Redefining Research Methods

Rowland's perspective on JABR presents a significant challenge to traditional research methods. She emphasises the need for a shift from the common subject/object dichotomy prevalent in many research fields, advocating instead for a more holistic and immersive engagement. She asserts, "this open paradigm acknowledges that subjectivity is always part of something larger due to the unknown psyche. It challenges the supremacy of the subject/object divide, presenting it as another culturally specific construct of modernity" (Rowland, 2021, p. 42).

Rowland's argument outlines the need to redefine our understanding of art beyond aesthetic limitations. She advocates for a revival of art as a profound source of truth, a catalyst for critical inquiry, and a mechanism for social and psychological transformation. This perspective reframes visionary art not as a passive aesthetic experience, but as an engaged, immersive, and transformative endeavour. It invites viewers to actively participate in the process of constructing meaning and embarking on a journey of self-discovery. This approach not only challenges traditional research methods but also expands the potential of art as a tool for knowledge creation and personal transformation.

### **Visionary Art as a New Form of Spirituality**

The psychedelic/visionary art movement frames itself as a new form of spirituality, emphasising art as a medium for personal and collective transcendence. The movement positions visionary art as a practice that can facilitate profound spiritual experiences, much like traditional religious rituals and sacraments. Institutions like the CoSM co-founded by Alex and Allyson Grey, embody this perspective. This resource is described as not just an art space but a spiritual institution where art plays a central role. Granted church status in 2008, CoSM has become a hub for the visionary art community. Through their art, the Greys invite viewers to explore spiritual dimensions, creating a bridge between material and immaterial worlds.

#### **1. Community, Psychedelics, and Transformational Festivals**

Psychedelics, sometimes referred to as 'sacraments' (Oroc, 2018, p. 72), are perceived as vital tools within this movement. They are seen to aid in

transcendental experiences that unlock the potential for deep, transformative engagement with art and the spiritual dimensions. These substances, traditionally used in various indigenous cultures for religious and healing purposes, are believed to open the doors of perception, allowing individuals to access alternate realities and states of consciousness. In this context, the use of psychedelics is deliberate and sacred, intended to facilitate personal growth and spiritual insight. While some proponents argue that psychedelics are not a necessary element of the psychedelic experience, the movement is still largely associated with these substances.

The religious overtones of the psychedelic/visionary art movement are further emphasised at ‘transformational festivals’ where the integration of art, music, and dance create a quasi-sacred space for participants. These festivals such as BOOM! and Burning Man, have been compared to modern day pilgrimages, drawing individuals from around the globe in search of transformational experiences (John & Baldini, 2012, p. 543). At these gatherings, visionary art serves as an expression that resonates with visionary experiences, exploring realms beyond ordinary perception. Art installations, live painting, and immersive environments offer glimpses into alternative realities and dimensions, inviting individuals to engage with their own visionary states. The combination of visionary art, music, and sensory experiences create a multisensory, immersive environment, promoting explorations of alternate consciousness states and engagement with non-traditional modes of knowing (ibid.).

## 2. Visionary art as a Means for Revelation

The psychedelic/visionary art movement is deeply rooted in the principle of pluralism, a cornerstone of new age thought (Partridge, 2008). This principle is characterised by the acceptance and integration of diverse spiritual and philosophical perspectives, reflecting a belief in the interconnectedness of all things.

Within this movement, art is not just a form of expression; it is seen as a universal language capable of transcending cultural and religious boundaries. It is a medium through which profound spiritual insights can be expressed and invoked, regardless of one's cultural or religious background (Caruana, 2001). This perspective positions visionary art as a powerful tool for revelation. It suggests that through creation and interpretation, individuals can access deeper levels of understanding and spiritual insight. This art serves as a bridge, connecting diverse perspectives and experiences, and fostering a sense of unity and shared understanding.

## Discussion

Rowland's assertion aligns closely with the beliefs of the psychedelic/visionary art movement, as they both recognise visionary art as a powerful medium capable of facilitating profound personal and collective insights. Beyond mere aesthetic experience, both perspectives view art as a transformative tool for generating knowledge.

To illustrate, Rowland perceives art as a vital component of the research process. Her approach involves utilising visionary creativity as a tool for generating knowledge. This method recognises the active role of human agency,

and intentional effort, acknowledging the significance of intuition, imagination, and subjective experience, extending beyond the confines of purely rational processes. On the other hand, the psychedelic/visionary art movement perceives visionary creativity as a medium for personal and collective transcendence. It encourages active participation in achieving revelations, which are understood as the sudden or unexpected disclosure of knowledge or information believed to come from a divine, supernatural, or higher source. However, this revelation is not just about passive reception, but also about active engagement and participation.

### 1. Integration and Enrichment

There are ways that these two perspectives can enrich each other. Rowland's academic rigor and incorporation of Jungian models can provide a structured framework for understanding and discussing the multifaceted nature of visionary art and creativity. Conversely, the psychedelic community's emphasis on direct, transformative experiences, as well as an analysis of their creative and sacred imagery, can complement the critical inquiry and knowledge production within Jungian and post-Jungian contexts.

Nonetheless, Rowland's academic perspective on visionary art as an epistemological tool may be more inclusive and integrable into mainstream culture. This is primarily due to Rowland's academic approach, which draws upon established theories and methodologies, like those of Jung, Leavy, and Irwin, to name a few. This approach bridges the gap between the avant-garde nature of visionary art and the traditional structure of academia, creating a platform for understanding that is accessible to a wider audience, transcending the confines of the psychedelic community. By situating visionary art within the broader context

of arts-based research and linking it with practices such as a/r/tography, Rowland integrates visionary art into the ongoing discourse in arts education and research. This opens the conversation to educators, researchers, art practitioners, and learners alike, fostering inclusivity and a more diverse range of perspectives and interpretations.

While Rowland's approach is grounded in academic theories and methodologies, the art 'products' derived from this approach are intended to be accessible and engaging for a wider audience, not just the academic community. For instance, her two novels (2022; 2023) serve as inspirational examples of how arts-based research can result in works that have a broad, even potentially popular, reach. Overall, the shared acknowledgment of the value of visionary art for revelation and knowledge generation is a curious overlap between the two perspectives. This overlap suggests potential avenues for dialogue and mutual enrichment, opening possibilities for understanding and engaging with visionary art.

## 11.3 Defining Visionary Art: A Synthesis of Perspectives

### Overview

The approach for updating the definition of visionary art will involve three steps.

First, the existing definitions for each category will be highlighted. Second, these definitions will be refined and expanded upon based on research findings. Finally, a synthesis of the refined definitions will be presented to propose a more comprehensive and unified understanding of the creative approach.

### Outsider Art and Art Brut

Existing Definitions:

- a) According to Rhodes (2001, p. 2), self-taught visionaries are “not amateur painters or naïve artists who take up art as a hobby or strive and fail to attain technical mastery.” Instead, they are “people who give themselves entirely to the creative urge, irrespective of any likely audience for their production.”
- b) Wojcik (2016, p. 92) describes visionary art as being associated with creative individuals who are inspired by “revelatory experiences, trance states, dreams, or waking apparitions and who attribute these to a preternatural or supranormal agency such as a deity, a spirit, a divine force, or a sacred realm.”
- c) According to the AVAM (2019) visionary art is produced by “self-taught individuals usually without formal artistic training, who works arise from an innate personal vision which revels in the creative act itself.” They continue, “we believe that there is a great power in not knowing what will

or won't work, and we adhere to the importance of not being immersed in rule-base systems which can cloud one's vision."

#### Research Findings:

In defining visionary art, it is relevant to consider the contrasting perspectives of Dubuffet and Prinzhorn. Dubuffet and the art brut movement emphasised the impact of mental illness and marginalisation on art, which has caused problems within a contemporary understanding. In contrast, Prinzhorn believed that creative power can emerge in anyone given the right conditions. Given this consideration, a revised definition of visionary art within the context of outsider art and art brut can be presented as follows:

Visionary art (n., outsider art context): A creative expression characterised by self-taught individuals who use a diverse range of materials and mediums, often without formal artistic training. These individuals immerse themselves in the creative process, guided by revelatory experiences, trance states, dreams, or waking apparitions. These experiences are often attributed to an unexpected appearance of preternatural or supranormal agencies, such as deities, spirits, divine forces, or sacred realms. Visionary art in this context may be influenced by mental illness, marginalisation, and other factors, however this is not necessary. With this category, there is a sense of authenticity that transcends rule-based systems and cultural embellishments.

## **Psychedelic Art and Fantastic Realism**

### **Existing Definitions:**

- a) In Wilber's (1990, p. 5) view, visionary artists have the strength of "concentration, imagination, or mystic reverie", which can give them a peek into the divine realms – conjuring a world beyond the "eye of the flesh" and the "eye of reason."
- b) According to Caruana (2001, p. 1), visionary art represents a synthesis of art, myth, and dreams, forging a unique visual language. This artistic approach not only integrates personal and cultural memory images but also attempts to tap into a primeval 'source' (Caruana, 2009). He further suggests that visionary artists aim to expose the unseen realms beyond the boundaries of ordinary perception. They accomplish this by leveraging altered states, including trance and use of hallucinogenic substances (Caruana, 2001). Despite stylistic variances among these artists, he notes a common emphasis on meticulous rendering characterised by fine lines, gradual transitions, and abundant details within their compositions.
- c) Grey (2008) states "visionary art encourages the development of our inner sight. To find the visionary realm, we use the intuitive inner eye, the eye of contemplation, and the eye of the soul. All the inspiring ideas we have as artists originate here." He continues, "the artwork becomes a way for viewers to access or worship the associated transcendental realm."

### **Research Findings:**

In light of these definitions, a distinct parallel emerges with analytical psychology. Particularly, the concepts of a 'divine realm' a 'transcendental domain' and the

‘source’, which can be compared to the dual-aspect monism tradition and the psychoid. The notion that the divine realm exists beyond the tangible, material world (‘eye of the flesh’) and the intellectual, mental realm (‘the eye of reason’) serves to further highlight this connection. In addition, Caruana’s allusions to art, myth, dreams, and the development of a novel visual language through the integration of personal and cultural memory imagery, as well as the source, indicate a strong correlation with the four-part model of the unconscious.

Although Caruana’s model may not be as polished and omits the eco-cosmological and psychoid level, it presents a perceptive observation that further signifies a connection with an analytical psychological view of creativity. Therefore, drawing from these insights, a definition of visionary art in this context can be formulated as follows:

Visionary art (n., fantastic realism context): A creative expression characterised by individuals who skilfully integrate elements of art, myth, and dreams, to develop a unique visual language. These artists purposefully draw upon personal and cultural memory images, as well as the ‘source’ to establish a connection to an underlying reality that unites and exists beyond the mental and material domains, reflecting the philosophical stance of dual-aspect monism. They have a keen focus on technique and often utilise altered states of consciousness, such as trance, meditation, and entheogenic substances to bring awareness to the multiple levels of the unconscious. The resulting works generally feature intricate details, meticulous renderings, and visual narratives.

## **Jungian and Post-Jungian Perspectives**

### Existing Definitions:

- a) Jung (1930/1950, para. 141) described the visionary product as “sublime, pregnant with meaning, yet chilling the blood with its strangeness; it arises from timeless depths, glamourous, daemonic, grotesque, it bursts asunder our human standards of value and aesthetic form.”
- b) Neumann (1959, p. 190) described how great artists perceive “eternal presence” or “archetypal eternity” – patterns that recur throughout history in various artistic mediums such as myths, literature, and visual art. In his view, these archetypal patterns are universal and timeless and serves as a reminder of the deeper eternal reality beyond our everyday existence.
- c) According to Rowland (2008, p. 208), “visionary art is primarily expressive of the collective unconscious. As such, it compensates for the culture for its biases, brings to consciousness what is ignored or repressed, and may predict something of the future direction of culture.”
- d) Stephenson (2015, p. 14) states that creative individuals who strive “to transcend the limits of what is actual and artificial by descending into the sensual and sublime profundity of nature as well as intuitively going down, through reverie and dream, into the ancient pagan depths of the mind.”

### Research Findings:

These definitions could benefit by including the further insights established in part two. Specifically, it is relevant to highlight the importance of dual-aspect monism as the ontological standpoint of visionary art, which offers a philosophical

foundation to this inquiry. By anchoring these theories in this ontological perspective, it is possible to enhance our understanding and contextualisation of the underlying principles and ideas that visionary art aims to convey. Another aspect to consider is Neumann's framework, which describes the role of the visionary art as compensatory for the cultural canon (as pointed out in Rowland's definition). Incorporating this perspective is significant as it emphasises the transformative function of visionary art within the broader cultural context, highlighting the potentially therapeutic benefits (for both the individual and society) of the creative approach.

Lastly, it is also relevant to include a mention of the four-part model of the unconscious as it illuminates the variety of themes found in visionary art, which includes the personal, cultural-historical, collective archetypal, and eco-cosmological. By exploring these multiple dimensions, the interpretation and creation of visual imagery can become more accessible, thus enriching our comprehension of the genre's influence and its contributions to human experience. Considering the various aspects discussed, a revised definition of visionary art within the context of Jungian and post-Jungian perspective can be presented as follows.

Visionary art (n., Jungian, and post-Jungian context): A creative expression that manifest the collective unconscious, characterised by its emphasis on archetypal patterns and eco-cosmological elements that surpasses and includes the personal and cultural contexts. This approach attempts to explore the depths of the human psyche, connecting with the recurrent, timeless patterns throughout history in various forms. The art can serve to address cultural biases and reveal hidden or

neglected aspects of the psyche, embodying transcendent experiences or instances of unification and integration within the self (coniunctio).

Ontologically grounded in dual aspect monism, this approach appreciates the mental and material aspects of reality, as well as the underlying unified reality, enabling a holistic exploration of the human psyche and the natural world, unrestrained by personal or cultural limitations. Moreover, visionary art can potentially anticipate future cultural possibilities. In doing so, it unveils emerging trends and patterns that may influence cultural developments and evolution.

### **A Synthesis of Definitions**

The proposed definition will be structured to encompass a brief overview, artistic and creative methods, ontological and epistemological standpoints, and the role of visionary art. The definition will be presented in a comprehensive form (420 words), followed by a more concise version (142) words), while attempting to maintain clarity and accessibility in the language used. Although the emphasis of the definition lies in the context of painting, an effort will be made to maintain a degree of openness to accommodate other forms of artistic expression:

Visionary Art (n., an integration of perspectives with an emphasis on painting): An expansive form of creative expression, visionary art accommodates a spectrum that spans from meticulously detailed compositions to spontaneous, unrefined expressions. Enriched by Jungian and post-Jungian theories, it is an exploration of the collective unconscious, integrating and surpassing personal and cultural boundaries through the encapsulation of archetypal patterns and eco-cosmological elements.

In this creative expression, artists utilise a variety of techniques and mediums. At one end of the spectrum, there are those who emphasise meticulous detail, blending art, myth, and dreams, often through altered states of consciousness. At the other end, raw, spontaneous expressions capture the authenticity of individuals, often untrained in formal artistry, guided by revelation or trance states. In between, fertile ground exists for diverse artistic approaches and a vast range of creative expressions.

Ontologically, visionary art is anchored in dual-aspect monism. It recognises both the mental and physical facets of reality, along with an underlying unified existence often referred to as the ‘source’, the ‘transcendental domain’, ‘the unus mundus’ or the ‘third.’ This realm is perceived as the origin of symbolic imagery and a catalyst for novel insights. The insights are not confined to painting but find their expression across a spectrum of creative mediums.

Epistemologically, visionary art revolves around the generation, transmission, and interpretation of knowledge. This knowledge, often arising from non-ordinary states of consciousness, revelatory experiences, profound introspection, or deep interaction with the personal and collective unconscious, extends beyond rational intellect and the subject/object split, to include experiential and intuitive insights. These insights find expression in varied artistic forms, with symbolic and archetypal imagery serving as pivotal mediums for conveying this knowledge. In addition, the way in which people interpret and understand visionary art is a vital part of its epistemology, with viewers bringing their own unique perspective and insights, contributing to the dynamic nature of knowledge within this sphere.

The role of visionary art is also multifaceted. As a critical-activist tool, it challenges prevailing norms and belief systems, encouraging introspection and re-evaluation of accepted truth. This, in turn, fosters social and cultural evolution. The prophetic nature of art offers glimpses into potential futures and alternate realities, providing unique insight. In essence, this transformative and future-oriented quality functions as a catalyst for change and a source of insight into our shared cultural evolution.

Alternatively, a more concise definition is as follows:

Visionary Art (emphasis on painting): Spanning from meticulous compositions to spontaneous expressions, visionary art is an inclusive and expansive form of creative expression. Enriched by Jungian theories, it explores the collective unconscious, transcending personal and cultural boundaries with archetypal patterns and eco-cosmological elements. Ontologically rooted in dual-aspect monism, it recognises a unified existence, sometimes called the ‘source’ or ‘unus mundus,’ which generates symbolic imagery and novel insights.

The epistemology of visionary art centres on knowledge generation and revelation often stemming from non-ordinary states of consciousness and introspection. It promotes self-awareness and personal transformation, inviting viewers to contribute their unique perspectives. As a critical-activist and improvisatory tool, visionary art challenges norms and drives societal evolution. With its prophetic dimension, it offers foresight into potential futures, making it a transformative and future-oriented art form that catalyses change and offers insights into our cultural evolution.

## 11.4 Discussion

The revised definition of visionary art bears several important implications.

Firstly, it promotes an increased recognition and respect for diverse artistic approaches. By acknowledging the spectrum of visionary art, from meticulously crafted pieces to spontaneous, untrained expressions, the definition advocates for an appreciation of a broader range of creative practices (such as psychedelic and outsider art), which could foster greater inclusivity and diversity within the art world. Secondly, the definition's emphasis on the exploration of the collective unconscious and archetypal patterns encourages a more holistic understanding of the human experience.

Furthermore, by recognising the role of visionary art in extending beyond personal and cultural boundaries, the definition invites individuals, and societies to challenge their ingrained beliefs and biases, fostering personal growth and societal change through an activist perspective. The positioning of visionary art as not merely an aesthetic product but an epistemological tool is another important implication. This perspective enhances the potential for transdisciplinary interactions, fostering dialogue and collaboration between art and other disciplines. Finally, by acknowledging the role of visionary art in challenging prevailing beliefs and unveiling social and cultural patterns, the definition underscores its potential in driving cultural evolution. This insight could stimulate debates about the role of art in society and its capacity to influence future trends.

One of the key points in understanding visionary art is its classification not merely as an artistic style or category, but as a creative process. Here, Jung's concept of the 'visionary mode of creativity' becomes relevant, not just for the classification of visionary art but for an exploration of the creative process connected to its production. I think it is relevant to differentiate between the two, the visionary mode encapsulates the ongoing engagement with the creative process, whereas visionary art refers to the outcome – the creation of profoundly moving and impactful works of art. This point, while not integrated into the definition is an important consideration for the next chapter.

# **CHAPTER TWELVE**

## **Model Proposal**

### **12.1 Introduction**

The primary goal of this chapter is to develop a model for understanding visionary art and its unique mode of creativity. It begins with a review of the three analytical psychology perspectives (Jung, Neumann, and Romanyshyn). Building upon these perspectives, a unified model is proposed. Subsequently, the chapter examines how this model can enrich, or be enriched by the art criticism models discussed earlier (Prinzhorn, Jones, and Caruana). Finally, the chapter concludes with a reflective discussion on the potential implications and applications of the proposed model.

## 12.2 Summarising the Identified Frameworks

### Overview

This section presents an overview of the three analytical psychology frameworks: Jung's visionary and psychological modes of creativity, Neumann's four stages, and the four layers of the unconscious as outlined by Romanyshyn.

#### Jung's Visionary and Psychological Mode of Creativity

In the essay *Psychology and Literature* (1930) Jung proposed two distinct modes of creativity: the psychology and the visionary. He described the categories as follows:

- a) The psychological mode of creativity involves art that utilises materials derived from an artist's conscious life experiences. This type of work is driven by the artist's intention to achieve a specific outcome, using their materials to communicate their artistic purpose. It operates within the boundaries of psychological understanding and draws inspiration from the range of human emotions, everyday events, and life's ups and downs.
- b) The visionary mode of creativity involves an artistic expression that imposes itself on the artist, manifesting its own form and often reflecting dreams or nocturnal fears rather than everyday experiences. In this mode, artists can be overwhelmed by a flood of emotionally charged imagery that they never intended to create, originating from the depths of the unconscious.

It is also relevant to mention that, while Jung explored the concept of two modes of creativity, he rarely ventured into art criticism. He only wrote two essays on the

contemporary art of his time and disliked modern expressionist art. He argued that, although the works attempted to escape the perceptible world, they lacked the transformative and healing power inherent in *true* visionary works.

### 1. Discussion

Jung's model introduces a dual perspective on creativity, separating it into psychological and visionary modes. This division can enrich our comprehension of artistic creation by acknowledging its potential to stem from both mundane experiences and deeper, unconscious impulses. It shines a light on the artistic process, highlighting how an artist's internal world can significantly influence their work. Such insights can intensify both the audience's and the artists' appreciation for the complexity and depth intrinsic to artistic creations.

### **Neumann's Theory on Artistic Development**

Neumann's framework explores four stages of artistic development in relation to their epoch:

- a) In the first stage, 'self-representation of the unconscious,' artists are largely unaware of the unconscious forces influencing their work. They react to the creative impulse and use colour, form, and tones to express their emotions and perceptions of the world.
- b) In the second stage, 'representation of the cultural canon,' artists draw inspiration from the collective consciousness and represent the existing cultural canon, which comprises traditions, beliefs, and images. Neumann saw these artists as growing into the traditions of their time.

- c) In the third stage, ‘compensation for the cultural canon,’ the artist’s role is to transcend both the overpowering unconscious and the traditions of their time to achieve a new worldview. Neumann argued that the needs of the time work within the artist, influencing their work without their awareness or understanding of its true significance.
- d) In the fourth and final stage, ‘the transcendence of art,’ the artist’s unique identity transcends the collective both inwardly and outwardly. The artist becomes more individualised as their ego and consciousness develop, allowing their unique artistic identity to emerge from the anonymity of the current style and the cultural limitations of their time.

Additionally, Neumann discussed the dissolution and rebirth of archetypal values that occurs in a cyclical manner, characterised by these four stages. In his view, the collapse of an old cultural canon is characterised by the disappearance of an old archetype. However, he asserts that new archetypal values emerge over time, which become more useful in directing the values of the community.

### 1. Discussion

In Neumann’s four-stage framework, he uncovers the cyclical nature of artistic development by examining how artists throughout history engage with and are influenced by the cultural context and archetypal values of their time. It is possible that Neumann’s framework could help deepen an artist’s understanding of their creative process and the unconscious influences at play. By recognising their current stage of artistic development, they can explore the unconscious forces, cultural canon, or archetypal values influencing their work and use this

knowledge to enhance creative expression. It can also encourage artists to break away from limiting beliefs or artistic styles constraining their creative potential, fostering personal and creative growth.

Lastly, it is possible that art critics can employ Neumann's framework to analyse and interpret an artist's work, considering the artist's developmental stage and the unconscious influence, cultural norms, and archetypal themes present in the artwork. This understanding can provide a more nuanced evaluation of the work. Additionally, it could serve as a lens to examine art history, identifying cyclical patterns of dissolution and rebirth of archetypal values across different epochs. This broader perspective on the evolution of art and the factors driving cultural and artistic change can offer valuable insights into future possibilities.

### **Romanyshyn's Four-Part Model of the Unconscious**

Romanyshyn's imaginal approach to research is an innovative method that utilises the 'transference dialogues' to explore the unconscious factors influencing the research process. These dialogues offer a promising avenue for expanding Jung's tripartite model of the unconscious. The levels and their possible applications to visual art are as follows:

- a) Romanyshyn's first level of the unconscious is the personal level, encompassing suppressed emotions, forgotten memories, and personal complexes. This level aligns with Jung's personal unconscious which can be reflected in their creative practice in various ways, such as processing and healing from trauma, exploring personal identity, or examining conflicts in relationships.

b) The second level of the unconscious is the cultural-historical level, which involves identifying cultural and historical patterns related to the personal level. This concept aligns with the idea of the cultural unconscious which can be communicated through art by depicting cultural values and ideas, utilising cultural symbols and imagery, and expressing cultural identity.

c) The third level of the unconscious is the collective-archetypal level, referring to the collective unconscious containing universal symbolic patterns or themes present in mythology, literature, and art across cultures. Art reflecting the collective-archetypal level of the unconscious can incorporate universal themes and symbols from various cultural sources.

d) The fourth level, known as the eco-cosmological level, pertains to the interconnectedness amongst humanity, the natural world, and the divine. Art reflecting this level may deploy archetypal cosmic symbols and imagery that explore themes such as the cosmos, elements, or the cycles of nature.

## 1. Discussion

The potential implications of the four-part model of the unconscious for understanding creative visual works are substantial. The model offers a comprehensive framework, enabling a rich interpretation by considering a broad array of influences, from personal experiences to collective archetypes and eco-cosmological symbols. Collectively, these aspects could significantly enhance our comprehension and appreciation of visionary art, offering a multi-layered framework for interpretation and engagement.

## 12.3 Model Proposal: The Scale of Creative Expression

### Overview

This section builds a model for comprehending visionary art and the visionary mode of creativity, drawing from the three analytical psychology frameworks. The process involves integrating Neumann's, Romanyshyn's, and Jung's models to establish a foundation for a nuanced understanding of the different levels and themes inherent in this creative style.

### The Integration of Neumann and Romanyshyn

There is an intriguing overlap between Neumann's and Romanyshyn's frameworks, which, if addressed, could help lay the foundation for a more nuanced understanding of visionary art. To begin, Neumann's first stage, the 'self-representation of the unconscious,' has no direct equivalent in Romanyshyn's model as it reflects a raw, spontaneous expression and primal form of creativity that appears to be absent from the four layers of the unconscious. This aspect, according to Neumann (1959, p. 84) is important for understanding the complexity of the creative process, therefore it will be important to add into the proposed model.

Neumann's 'representation of the cultural canon' aligns with Romanyshyn's cultural-historical, and personal level (though the 'cultural unconscious' is intrinsic to shadow dimensions). In this stage, artists are influenced by the collective consciousness, embodying the traditions, beliefs, and prevalent imagery of their culture. As artists draw from the cultural milieu, they naturally incorporate their suppressed emotions, forgotten memories, and personal

complexes. Essentially the artwork becomes a tapestry of personal experiences framed within the broader cultural narrative.

The ‘compensation for the cultural canon’ stage in Neumann’s model and Romanyshyn’s ‘collective-archetypal’ levels of the unconscious share commonalities, specifically regarding their collective focus. However, an important distinction surfaces when considering the role of the artist and the nature of the collective-archetypal themes being explored.

In Neumann’s stage, the artist is envisioned as a transformative force that challenges and reshapes the existing cultural canon, a role that suggests a compensatory function. In contrast, Romanyshyn’s model does not inherently assume this compensatory dynamic. Instead, it allows for a broader exploration of universal symbolic patterns or themes prevalent across cultures, mythologies, and literary works, without necessarily challenging or subverting them.

Considering this, it would be advantageous to enhance the comprehension of the collective-archetypal level by differentiating between cultural-historical representations and compensatory themes. This refined perspective would encompass traditional depictions of universal themes and symbols, as well as their potential for reinterpretation or subversion. The latter, adopting a critical stance, can serve as a form of cultural or critical activism that challenges established norms and conventions. By making this distinction, a more comprehensive understanding of the collective-archetypal level can be achieved, recognising the dynamic nature of artistic expression within this realm.

When evaluating Neumann’s ‘transcendence of art’ stage, there is a certain ambiguity and romanticisation surrounding the notion of the ‘great individual,’ particularly in relation to the emergence of a distinct artistic identity that

transcends collective influence. This category risks fostering an unrealistic ideal of the artist as an isolated genius, which could potentially marginalise artists whose work is deeply interwoven with their communities and collective identities. Hence, to avoid such drawbacks and to ensure inclusivity, this category will be excluded from the proposed model.

However, Romanyshyn's 'eco-cosmological' category offers an exciting opportunity to enhance and broaden Neumann's framework. By acknowledging the artist's interconnectedness with the cosmos and the wider natural world, this category expands the notion of transcendence beyond individualistic confines. This broader perspective suggests that the artist's journey of self-discovery and self-expression is intertwined with the larger cosmic aspect. It implies that the distinct artistic identity, once established, has the potential to evolve and embrace its interconnectedness with a greater reality, continually recognising and expressing this connection.

The amalgamation of these two models, tempered by some critique, presents a promising avenue for developing a more nuanced model of visionary art. Considering the above arguments, the levels can be summarised as follows:

- a) Spontaneous unconscious expression: unprocessed, instinctual, and spontaneous expressions that exist independently of empirical reality, established form, or conventional symbolism.
- b) Personal expression: an array of artistic elements and styles that explicitly explore personal experiences, emotions, and memories.
- c) Cultural-historical expression: artistic elements primarily aimed at representing or scrutinising cultural values, symbols, and identity. This

category could encompass historical scenes, cultural symbols, or commentaries on social dynamics.

- d) Collective-archetypal expression: a variety of visual elements that integrate universal themes and symbols from disparate cultural sources, communicating archetypal patterns and collective human experiences. This category could include depictions of mythological narratives, allegorical scenes, or visual metaphors<sup>74</sup>.
- e) Compensatory collective-archetypal expression: artistic elements and styles that challenge, reinterpret, or subvert established universal themes, symbols, and archetypal patterns, offering fresh perspectives on shared human experiences. This could include unconventional mythological representations, deconstructed allegories, or provocative visual metaphors.
- f) Archetypal eco-cosmological expression: artistic elements that use or critique cosmic symbols to illustrate the relationship between humanity, nature and the divine. This category could include depictions of the cosmos, natural elements, or cyclical phenomena, emphasising interconnectedness and unity among different forms of existence.

### **Incorporating the Visionary and Psychological Modes**

An essential query emerges in this discussion: do all the defined categories align with the concept of visionary art and the visionary mode of creativity? Before considering this, it is important to reiterate the argument from the previous chapter, that it is necessary to clarify the distinction between the visionary mode of creativity and visionary art. For this project's purposes, the visionary mode

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<sup>74</sup> When discussing collective-archetypal expression and incorporating elements from diverse cultural sources, it is important to avoid perpetuating cultural appropriation.

pertains to the creative process, closely aligning with the intention driving the creation of imagery. In contrast, visionary art refers to the resulting artistic product, which holds the potential to significantly influence both the artist and the viewer. This distinction underscores the importance of considering both the process and the outcome when examining the relationship between these categories and visionary art.

Given this distinction, we can further explore the artist's intentions; a key factor that frames the difference between the visionary and psychological modes of creativity. In the psychological mode, the artist consciously crafts their work, drawing from personal experiences, emotions, and perceptions. The primary intent here is to express personal narratives or make sense of conscious life experiences. The artist, in this mode, has full control over the creative process, selecting themes, symbols, and techniques that best encapsulate their intended message.

The visionary mode of creativity, however, is less consciously controlled by the artist. Here, the artwork springs spontaneously from the artist's unconscious, often taking them by surprise or even causing disturbance. The intent is not pre-determined in this mode. Instead, it surfaces during the creative process as the artist wrestles with powerful images and themes that impose themselves. The artist, in this case, acts more as a conduit for these unconscious forces, aiming to give them form and expression<sup>75</sup>.

Thus, in the psychological mode, the artist's intent guides the artwork from inception to completion. In contrast, in the visionary mode, the artist's intent is more fluid and emergent — it evolves as the artist interacts with the mysterious

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<sup>75</sup> Prinzhorn (see Chapter 3) described this phenomenon as 'associative loosening.' Additionally, numerous practices strive to induce this effect, employing methods such as active imagination or the utilisation of psychedelic substances. Other examples include hypnagogic and hypnopompic states, meditations, and repetitive drumming, to name a few.

images and themes bubbling up from the unconscious. An artist may start with one intent, but it may transform or deepen during the visionary process. Considering this it is necessary to consider where the visionary and psychological modes fit within the proposed framework.

### 1. Positioning the Visionary and Psychological Modes

Starting with ‘spontaneous unconscious expression,’ it aligns most naturally with the visionary mode of creativity, where the art emerges unprocessed and instinctive, unbound by reality, form, or symbolism. This is the realm of pure, unconscious creativity, where the artist may not yet understand or interpret the imagery that flows from their hand. However, this work is unlikely to be considered visionary art, due to its unformed nature.

‘Personal expression,’ however, can align with both visionary and psychological modes of creativity, depending on the artist’s intent. The artist may draw upon personal experiences, emotions, and memories consciously, reflecting the psychological mode, or they may find these personal elements surfacing spontaneously in their work, echoing the visionary mode. When it comes to ‘cultural-historical expression’ the artist may be consciously choosing to depict cultural values, symbols, and identity, aligning with the psychological mode. However, they may also find themselves unintentionally channelling these elements exemplifying the visionary mode.

Likewise, the category of ‘collective-archetypal expression’ includes the employment of universal themes and symbols drawn from diverse cultural origins. Artists, whether they lean towards visionary or psychological styles, have access to this collective-archetypal repository. They can weave in mythological scenes,

allegories, or visual metaphors that reflect common human experiences and archetypal patterns.

In contrast, the ‘compensatory collective-archetypal expression’ category focuses on challenging, redefining, or subverting traditional universal themes, symbols, and archetypal patterns. This category aligns more with the visionary creative style. Artists working in this mode tend to contribute to knowledge creation by pushing boundaries and introducing fresh insights into collective human experiences. Their work might feature unorthodox mythological depictions, deconstructed allegories, or bold visual metaphors that disrupt typical archetypal patterns. This venture into the unfamiliar and the cultivation of new perspectives is a distinctive feature of the visionary mode and, by extension, the creation of visionary art.

In the final category, ‘archetypal eco-cosmological expression,’ the relationship between humanity, nature, and the divine comes to the fore, resonating strongly with both the visionary mode of creativity and the concept of visionary art. This category embodies the transcendent aspects of the visionary mode, wherein the artist acts as a channel for messages, themes, and imagery that surpass the personal and cultural, reaching into the realm of the universal and cosmic.

However, it’s important to note that the generation of new knowledge, a key characteristic of the visionary mode (in the more academic sense), also plays a crucial role in this category. Artists working in the eco-cosmological vein don’t just reflect existing understandings of interconnectedness; they also contribute to these understandings, offering new insights, perspectives, and representations. This can manifest in the form of innovative cosmic symbols, original

interpretations of the cycles of nature, or fresh visions of the links between humanity and the divine.

## 2. The Intertwined Nature of the Visionary and Psychological

In this refined framework, the boundaries between categories are permeable, reflecting the complex and dynamic nature of artistic creativity. The framework also acknowledges that visionary and psychological modes can coexist and interweave in varying degrees across different categories of artistic expression, and that the resulting art can be a rich tapestry of personal, cultural, archetypal, and eco-cosmological elements.

Rowland (2008, p. 189) provides a thought-provoking viewpoint, suggesting that the “visionary and psychological are linked categories pushed apart to polar extremes, not wholly different realms.” Yet, it may be more fitting to consider the visionary mode as encapsulating the psychological mode. This is analogous to the way the psychoid, or the collective unconscious, envelops the ego, highlighting that our conscious experiences (psychological mode/ego) are influenced by and part of larger unseen structures of understanding (visionary mode/collective unconscious/psychoid).

By conceiving the visionary and psychological modes of creativity as interconnected rather than polarised, we can cultivate a more holistic understanding that embraces Jung’s later speculations on the psychoid. Bearing these considerations in mind, I have constructed the following table to illustrate the relationship among Romanayshyn, Neumann, and Jung’s models, I have referred to this revised framework as the *Scale of Creative Expression* (Figure 12.3.1).

### 3. Discussion

This framework is intended to function as a flexible model, rather than a linear or rigid categorical structure. It is designed to reflect the multifaceted and dynamic nature of artistic creation, acknowledging that art often transcends singular categories. For instance, a single piece of artwork may embody elements from multiple categories, weaving them in a cohesive whole that reflects the complex interplay of personal, cultural, archetypal, and eco-cosmological elements. The historical and contemporary case studies in Chapters 9 and 10 offer tangible illustrations of this complexity.

In addition, the act of interpretation plays an important role in the knowledge-generating process, as outlined in the proposed definition. The way viewers interpret and understand visionary art forms an essential part of its epistemology, given that each viewer contributes their unique perspectives and insights. Thus, interpreting artwork transforms into a co-creative act, where the viewer's individual interpretation layers additional meaning onto the work. This change elevates the act of viewing from passive observation to active engagement, fostering introspection, self-awareness, and potential knowledge creation.

The proposed model also provides an insightful road map for artists, aiding them in exploring and broadening their creative processes. Artists could use it as a guide to identify their current mode of expression and to explore new realms of creativity. For instance, an artist predominantly working with personal experiences, might consider branching into cultural-historical elements, or eco-cosmological themes. By reflecting on this model, artists can uncover potential growth areas, deepen their understanding of the creative process, and discover new pathways for self-expression. Considering these observations and aiming to

restore the dialogue element of Romanyshyn's framework, I have formulated a series of guiding questions. These questions cater to both artists, through active imagination exercises, and art critics, through amplification, in line with the proposed model (Figure 12.3.2).

(Page 371) Figure 12.3.1 – Proposed model for understanding visionary creativity, *The Scale of Creative Expression*.  
(Page 372) Figure 12.3.2 – Guiding questions for artists and critics.

Levels	Artistic Elements and Styles	The Modes of Creativity	Relation of Art to its Epoch
<b>0. Spontaneous Unconscious Expression</b>	Raw, instinctive, and spontaneous expressions, unconnected to reality, form, or symbolism.	The visionary mode of creativity.	Self-representation of the unconscious.
<b>1. Personal Expression</b>	Diverse artistic elements and styles that explicitly explore personal experiences, emotions, and memories.	The visionary and psychological mode of creativity dependent on intent.	Representation of the cultural canon.
<b>2. Cultural-Historical Expression</b>	Artistic elements that primarily focus on representation of examination of cultural values, symbols, and identity. This could include historical scenes, cultural symbols, or social commentary.	The visionary and psychological mode of creativity dependent on intent.	Representation for the cultural canon.
<b>3a. Collective-Archetypal Expression</b>	Diverse visual elements that incorporate universal themes and symbols from various cultural sources, conveying archetypal patterns and shared human experiences. This could include mythological scenes, allegories, or visual metaphors.	The visionary and psychological mode dependent on intent.	Representation of the cultural canon and compensation for the cultural canon.
<b>3b. Compensatory Collective-Archetypal Expression</b>	Artistic elements and styles that challenge, reinterpret, or subvert established universal themes, symbols, and archetypal patterns, offering fresh perspective on shared human experiences. This could include unconventional mythological representations, deconstructed allegories, or provocative visual metaphors.	The visionary mode of creativity and visionary art.	Compensation for the cultural canon
<b>4. Eco-Cosmological Expression</b>	Artistic element and style that use or evaluate cosmic symbols and imagery to explore themes of interconnectedness between humanity, nature and the divine. This could include depictions of the cosmos, elements, or cycles of nature.	The visionary mode of creativity and visionary art.	Compensation of the cultural Canon

Level	Guiding Questions for Artists (Active Imagination Exercise)	Guiding Questions for Art Critics (Amplification)
0. Unconscious Expression	Who from your past might be influencing the instinctual and spontaneous elements that emerge in your creative process? What emotions would they say your work evokes?	What instinctual or spontaneous elements can be identified in the artwork? What emotions do these evoke?
1. Personal Expression	Who in your personal circle – family, friends, or significant people from your biography – might have a voice or influence in this work? How might they interpret the influence of personal experiences, emotions, and memories on it?	How do the artist's personal experiences, emotions, or memories manifest in the work? What impact does this have on the viewer?
2. Cultural-Historical Expression	Who from your cultural background could be speaking through your work? What insights might they share about the representation of their culture, values, and history?	In what ways does the artwork represent or critique cultural values, symbols, or social dynamics? Does this resonate or challenge your preconceived notions and ideas?
3a. Collective-Archetypal Expression	Who among your guides, ancestors, or archetypes could be directing this work? For whom would they say it is being done, and whom does it serve?	What universal themes, symbols, or archetypal patterns can be identified in the artwork? How do these relate to the collective human experience?
3b. Compensatory Collective-Archetypal Expression	Who among your guides, ancestors or archetypes could be directing this work? For whom would they say it is being done, and whom does it challenge?	Can you discern any conventional themes, symbols, or archetypal patterns that the artist is challenging, reinterpreting, or subverting? How is this significant for the collective human experience? Does it resonate or challenge your preconceived notions and ideas?
4. Eco-cosmological Expression	Who from the natural or cosmic world could be expressing themselves through your work? How might they describe its depiction of humanity's interconnectedness with nature and the divine?	How does the artwork illustrate the interconnectedness of humanity, nature, and the divine? What significance does this have for understanding humanity's place within the cosmos?

## 12.4 Aligning the Proposed Model with Art Criticism Frameworks

### Overview

This section considers the intersections between the proposed *Scale of Creative Expression* and the art criticism models, namely, Jones' behavioural approach, Caruana's personal and cultural memory-images, and Prinzhorn's five categories.

### Comparing the Model to Caruana and Jones' Approach

Jones' behavioural approach, as applied in the context of art analysis is an in-depth, multifaceted strategy that considers an array of factors contributing to the creation and

perception of an artwork. It advocates for a comprehensive understanding of the artist's life experience, spiritual and artistic influences, the cultural context in which they operate, and their unique creative processes (as outlined in Chapter 5 and 6). Moreover, it entails a comparison of the artist's body of work with that of their contemporaries, as well as a record of the circumstances surrounding the discovery and collection of their creations.

In comparing the *Scale of Creative Expression* for understanding visionary art with Jones' behavioral approach, several points of intersection emerge. Both methodologies emphasise the importance of considering the personal and cultural contexts of the artist. However, while Jones' approach centres on the factors contributing to an artwork's creation and perception, the proposed model probes more deeply into the diverse forms of expression inherent within visionary art and related imagery.

The proposed model incorporates Jones' approach, and in some respects, extends it by including a depth psychological perspective. For instance, the

‘personal expression’ category, covers the artist’s life experiences and influences, while ‘cultural-historical expression’ encapsulates the cultural context. However, the model extends Jones’ approach by offering an exploration of the unconscious forces at play in the artistic process (spontaneous unconscious expression), as well as the universality of themes and symbols (collective-archetypal expression) and the critical activist role of the artist (compensatory collective-archetypal expression).

Despite these differences, these two approaches can function harmoniously. Jones' method provides a framework for understanding the artist's background, influences, and creative process. In parallel, the *Scale of Creative Expression* assists in the categorisation and analysis of the specific visual elements and themes present within the artwork. Importantly, both methodologies recognise the integral role of personal, cultural, and historical contexts, enriching the understanding of the artwork with a comprehensive and inclusive perspective.

### 1. Caruana’s Personal and Cultural Memory-Images

Additionally, to supplement Jones’ behavioural approach, the concept of ‘personal and cultural memory-images’ as proposed by Caruana was introduced. This concept refers to the exploration of the symbolic language and visual metaphors used by artists – a critical feature within visionary art. The incorporation of Caruana’s concept allowed for a deeper exploration of the artworks by connecting the personal, cultural, and symbolic dimensions and by acknowledging that the creative imagery is not only a manifestation of their personal visions but also a tapestry woven from the threads of their cultural memory and shared human experiences.

The proposed model encompasses Caruana's approach of exploring symbolic language and visual metaphors in visionary imagery, particularly in relation to personal and cultural memory-images. Caruana's focus on personal-memory images aligns with the 'personal expression' category, while his cultural memory-images resonates with the 'cultural historical expression'. Furthermore, his interest in the 'source' finds a home in the 'collective-archetypal expression' and 'compensatory collective-archetypal expression' categories. Thus, the proposed model not only incorporates Caruana's approach but also broadens it by offering a nuanced interpretation of expressive types.

### **Considering Prinzhorn's Five Categories**

Throughout the research project, I have observed compelling similarities between Prinzhorn's and Neumann's conceptual models. The commonalities in their linguistic choices and the arguments they put forth suggest a level of convergence, albeit potentially minor, that warrants further exploration. Due to the convergence, it is possible that Prinzhorn's framework also has relevance for the model proposed in this chapter. Therefore, it is important to pause and consider these correlations. Doing so could shed light on the expressive tools used in two-dimensional art that could be used to interact with the diverse categories set out in the proposed model.

#### **1. Spontaneous Unconscious Expression**

Prinzhorn (1922) identified a specific type of artistic expression stemming from the unconscious, described as raw, instinctual, and spontaneous. This mode of expression, largely unconnected to reality, form, or established symbolism, is

characterised by manifestations like ‘unobjective and unordered scribbles.’ He understood this category as representing a primal aspect of the psyche, uninfluenced by personal experiences or memories. This description shares parallels with Neumann’s (1959, p. 84) first stage, ‘self-representation of the unconscious’, where artists are largely oblivious to the unconscious influences driving their work: “his [or her] reaction to the creative impulse of the psyche is not to reflect; it is to obey and execute its commands.” Both Prinzhorn’s and Neumann’s classifications highlight the artist’s initial, instinctual response to the unconscious, a dimension that is similarly recognised and incorporated within the ‘spontaneous unconscious expression’ category of the proposed model.

## 2. Personal and Cultural Historical Expression

Prinzhorn (1922) notably pointed out the impact of an individual’s environment and personal attitudes on their perception of an ‘eidetic image.’ He postulated that ‘playful drawings with a predominant copying tendency’ and realistic art serve as expressive tools to articulate this experience. This observation resonates with the core aspects of Neumann’s second category, ‘representation of the cultural canon’, wherein the artist’s work is influenced and shaped by the cultural environment and its dominant symbols, narratives, and values. Moreover, the emphasis on realistic art and the dominance of the copying tendency in Prinzhorn’s model emphasises the artist’s engagement with their cultural milieu. The artist’s work becomes a site of intersection between their personal experiences and the broader cultural and historical narratives, depicting existing ideas connected to cultural values, symbols, and identity through their unique lens. This analysis is mirrored in the

‘personal expression’ and ‘cultural-historical expression’ categories of the proposed model.

### 3. Collective-Archetypal and Compensatory Collective Archetypal Expression

Prinzhorn’s (1922) exploration of how individuals combine their worldly experiences with a necessity for symbols, resulting in visual fantasies, harmonises with the categories of ‘collective-archetypal expression’ and ‘compensatory collective-archetypal expression’ in the proposed model. He characterises such work as “obscure and fascinating” (Prinzhorn, 1922/2019, p. 237), indicating the spontaneous use of traditional symbols and the instinctual creation of new meanings or even new symbols as a response to internal conflicts. This concept of artistic expression aligns with Jung’s (1930/1950) description of visionary art as often shrouded in historical or mythological content.

Neumann’s (1959) third stage of artistic development, ‘compensation for the cultural canon, aligns with this notion. Here, the artist incorporates unconscious influences and cultural traditions to eventually manifest a novel worldview. This transformative process challenges the cultural canon and reshapes conscious archetypal values with the generation of new knowledge. Neumann elucidates that the artist, often unconsciously, becomes a conduit for the needs of their time, thereby informing and influencing their work’s content and significance.

In this context, the expressive tools utilised for ‘collective-archetypal expression’ and ‘compensatory collective-archetypal expression’ could comprise of visual fantasies. Through these mediums, artists can weave in their personal experiences and conflicts while also engaging with broader cultural, historical,

and archetypal narratives. Such a process considers the transformative power of art, as it morphs traditional symbols and narratives into fresh, personal interpretations that reflect the artist's unique experiences and worldview.

#### 4. Eco-cosmological expression:

The 'archetypal eco-cosmological expression' category in the proposed model finds a partial parallel in Prinzhorn's 'increased symbolic significance' category. Prinzhorn (1922) described this as consisting of purely symbolic content, minimally influenced by external forces or rational constructs. This category is often characterised by formal conventions, rhythmic solemnity, and the prominence of abstract geometric elements, suggesting a level of transcendence beyond the tangible world.

These abstract forms, such as mandalas, are frequently associated with transcendental experiences, indicating that they could serve as suitable expressive tools for the 'archetypal eco-cosmological expression' category. This category aims to explore themes of interconnectedness among humanity, nature, and the divine, often through cosmic symbols and imagery, which aligns with the transcendental nature of the abstract forms described by Prinzhorn.

Neumann's (1959) category of 'transcendence of art' echoes these ideas, suggesting a similar exploration of abstract symbolism. He proposed that the genesis, stabilisation, and consolidation of the personality are inherently linked to symbolism characterised by perfect form, balance, harmony, and solidity. This idea suggests the importance of transcendent, symbolic expressions in the evolution of the individual's psyche, further validating the use of abstract, symbolic forms in this category.

## 5. Discussion

Prinzhorn's model, emphasising the evolution of creative expression from unordered scribbles to symbolic manifestations, could be a potential tool for visual artists. By engaging with this model, artists can navigate their inner creative landscape more effectively, translating their unconscious visions into tangible forms.

The initial stage of Prinzhorn's model 'unobjective and unordered scribbles' aligns with the first phase of active imagination. During this phase, the artist allows their unconscious to express itself freely, unencumbered by conscious control or judgment. This instinctive expression encourages less critical thinking, potentially leading to deeper engagement with the unconscious. As artists continue engaging with this process, the scribbles gradually evolve into structured patterns, eidetic images, and visual fantasies. This transformation mirrors active imagination's progression, from unformed thoughts and images to more concrete insights and ideas. The evolutionary process can guide artists in interpreting their unconscious impulses, thus translating them into symbolic and meaningful expressions.

In addition, the increased symbolic significance in Prinzhorn's model corresponds to the active imagination process's culmination. Here, the artist potentially gains a profound understanding of their unconscious and its symbolic language. Such understandings allow artists to infuse their work with enhanced depth and complexity and fill it with universally resonating symbols and motifs. When adapted as a flexible and personalised framework, Prinzhorn's model could provide significant insights into the artist's creative process.

While the parallels identified between Prinzhorn's, Neumann's, and the proposed model offers compelling points of discussion, it is necessary to approach these with a degree of caution. The association of different formal aspects of configuration with the proposed model calls for a more thorough and nuanced exploration. To meaningfully apply these expressive tools, a similar investigation to Prinzhorn's would be instrumental. In summary, the reflections presented here serve as a valuable starting point that highlight potential avenues for further research.

Finally, it is relevant to mention that *The Scale of Creative Expression* is not devoid of Prinzhorn's influence. His framework subtly finds expression within the model, enriching its structure. A prime example is the allocation of the number '0' to the 'spontaneous unconscious expression' category. This choice deliberately reflects Prinzhorn's (1922) assertion that 'unobjective and unordered scribbles' sit closest to the zero point on the scale of composition. The subtle incorporation of Prinzhorn's insights enhances the proposed model, a factor that shouldn't be understated.

## 12.5 Discussion

The *Scale of Creative Expression* integrating perspectives from Romanyshyn, Neumann, and Jung, puts forward a potential tool for exploring the multifaceted nature of visionary art. By identifying diverse layers of themes and influences, it opens avenues for a more nuanced interpretation and understanding of visionary works, which can potentially enrich the experience of artists, critics, and enthusiasts alike. For instance, the model's recognition of the collective unconscious and archetypal themes, complemented with personal and cultural expressions, provide a comprehensive and balanced approach to interpretation, and an attempt to capture the interplay between universal and individual influences that shape artistic creativity.

In addition, the model could prove useful for encouraging artists to venture into unexplored territories within their work. This could lead to innovative and transformative artworks, although this remains to be seen. Moreover, this model's foundation in analytical psychology not only expands upon existing theory but proposes a framework for understanding two-dimensional visual works, guided to an extent, by art criticism. While its utility remains to be fully tested, the model offers a starting point to further integrate visionary art into academic discourse and mainstream recognition.

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## Conclusion

This project's investigation has navigated the multifaceted realm of visionary art, from its early 20th century origins to its contemporary manifestations. This exploration has covered a range of topics, relating to art criticism and analytical psychology, enriching the comprehension of the topic.

### 1. Responding to the Research Question

Reflecting on the research question: 'can we gain a more nuanced understanding of visionary art by considering the interconnections between art criticism and analytical psychology?' This study sought to address the inconsistencies in defining visionary art, particularly in the context of paintings and two-dimensional works. The adopted methodology provided valuable insights into this complex phenomenon. The fusion of philosophical hermeneutics and phenomenological interviews allowed for a structured exploration of both historical and contemporary perspectives.

In addition, the comparative historical analysis provided a valuable backdrop for understanding the evolution and development of visionary art, since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This enabled an exploration of the various movements that employ the term, providing useful contextual information that supported the development of a more nuanced understanding. Complementing the historical analysis, the phenomenological interviews brought forth a contemporary understanding of visionary art. The insights derived from the participants added a

humanistic dimension to the project, revealing the deeply personal and experiential nature of the creative approach.

These methods allowed for a ‘fusion of horizons’ merging past and present perspectives and facilitating the development of a more inclusive definition and understanding of visionary creativity. Importantly, by demystifying the concept, to some extent, and showcasing its diverse nature, this project hopes to reduce the stigma associated with the term, encouraging broader acceptance and usage.

While promising, there are limitations and potential for refinement. For instance, further research could broaden participant selection or employ other interpretive frameworks. This project, nonetheless, contributes a stepping-stone in the ongoing discourse on the topic.

### 1. Future Directions for Research

Several promising research paths have emerged from this investigation. For instance, further research emphasising the Irish context, drawing from the work of scholars like theologian Mary Condren, presents a promising avenue. Condren’s influential exploration of the intersections between Christianity, the Celtic worldview, and Irish history in *Serpent and the Goddess: Women, Religion and Power in Celtic Ireland* (1989), as well as her more contemporary work on Brigid, could provide a unique lens to examine cultural and historical influences shaping Irish visionary works.

In addition, the emergence of thought-provoking imagery such as Sage’s *Ana-Suromai*, raises interesting questions about evolving perceptions of femininity and the divine feminine. Such themes are highlighted in Condren’s text. This leads to the question: could an analysis of contemporary visionary art

serve as a tool for investigating such phenomena? This line of inquiry could potentially enrich discussions around notions of an ‘Age of Magdalene’ as noted by Jungian psychotherapist Veronica Goodchild (2017). Goodchild’s exploration of the Grail legend, building on classics such as von Franz and Emma Jung’s *The Grail Legend* (1998), could offer a vital thread to further exploring visionary art.

Sharon Blackie’s (2023) highlighting of the post-heroic journey, which emphasises empathy, understanding, and “asking the right questions” over singular conquest, provides another fresh view to the legend. It would be interesting to explore how the Grail legend, interpreted through the lens of the post-heroic journey can deepen the potential of visionary art as a communal, accessible, and transformative process. This exploration could also potentially lead to a more nuanced understanding of both the humanly feminine and the divine feminine in art and spirituality.

Lastly, adopting elements of Rowland’s JABR approach alongside Romanyshyn’s elaboration of alchemical hermeneutics (originally coined by his partner Veronica Goodchild) could yield a more integrative understanding of visionary creativity. Such a methodology challenges the subject/object dichotomy and fosters a transdisciplinary perspective, which could provide a more direct, experiential approach compared to the largely observational stance I took in this research. By positioning myself within both the creative and interpretive process, rather than solely as an observer, I could deepen my engagement and insight into the multifaceted realm of visionary art and related topics, allowing for transdisciplinary possibilities. This engagement could also be reinforced by the model proposed in Chapter 12.

## 2. Dissemination and Closing Thoughts

To ensure accessibility, this project has been disseminated through multiple channels, targeting both academic audiences and the public. Two peer-reviewed articles have been published, encompassing several key points of this project (See Appendix D). Furthermore, I have delivered numerous papers at conferences, both online and in person. Most recently, I presented *Transcending Modernism and the Emergence of Visionary Art* with the London Arts Based Research (LABR). Additionally, I hosted an online seminar for MA students at the Limerick School of Art and Design, featuring visionary artist and interviewee Laurence Caruana as the guest speaker.

Furthermore, to engage with a broader audience, I established a YouTube channel called *Thecreativejung*, where I regularly share content exploring related topics. Complementing the channel is a blog of the same name, offering written commentary and analysis on various themes. As this phase of research comes to an end, it is hoped that it will serve as a valuable stepping-stone for future explorations in this captivating area.

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## APPENDIX A: Introduction to Analytical Psychology

Analytical psychology, also known as Jungian analysis, is a branch of psychology founded by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). The term 'analytical psychology' was used by Jung to differentiate his theories from Freud's analytic theories after their seven-year collaboration ended between 1912-1913. Jung meticulously documented the development of his ideas in his extensive opus, the *Collected Works*, written over a span of sixty years.

The history of analytical psychology is closely intertwined with Jung's biography. Therefore, this section begins by providing a brief account of Jung's early years. Subsequently, it delves into the analytical psychological perspective on the creative process, exploring key concepts such as the collective unconscious, archetypal imagery, and the transcendent function.

### Who was Carl G. Jung?

Jung was a psychologist and a psychiatrist who established analytical psychology and advanced the popular notions of introvert and extravert personalities, archetypes, and the power of the unconscious. Jung's writings are comprehensive and cover a wide range of subjects; a browse through his *Collected Works* shows the variety of his interests, such as the spiritual life of man, war and aggression, art and literature, religion, myths, and alchemy. He also developed a conceptual vocabulary that many of us still use, such as complex, synchronicity, persona, and the individuation process. Jung may not have been the first to use many of these terms, but he redefined them to describe elements of human psychology.

Jung was born in Kesswil, Switzerland, as a Protestant clergyman's only son. His childhood was lonely but enriched by a vivid imagination. During his childhood, he was significantly influenced by his father's relationship with Christianity. This early influence inspired a sceptical Jung to question religion and embark on a mission to define and understand his own personal connection with God. In MDR, Jung (1963/1995, p. 59) described:

There arose in me profound doubts about everything my father said. When I heard him preaching about grace, I always thought of my own experience. What he said sounded stale and hollow, like a tale told by someone who knows it only by hearsay and cannot quite believe it himself.

Jung began to show an interest in philosophical writing during his teenage years, especially those of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). This blossoming passion inspired him to attend the University of Basel and reject the family tradition of entering the clergy. He was shown numerous fields of study in university, including biology, palaeontology, religion, and archaeology before he eventually settled into medicine. In 1900, Jung graduated from the university and received his medical degree two years later at the University of Zurich.

Between 1900 and 1908, Jung worked as an assistant psychiatrist at the Burghölzli Mental Institute. Here, he witnessed men and women suffering from various psychological problems, such as psychosis, an ‘unconscious invasion’ which overwhelmed ordinary mental processes. During this period, Jung hypothesised the concept of the ‘complex’<sup>76</sup> by conducting word association tests on his patients. He was interested in the patterns that appeared in their responses, which he believed hinted at unconscious feelings and beliefs. From this experience, he began to question the reoccurring mythological motifs that appeared in the associations and delusions of his patients.

In 1906, Freud began communicating with the young psychiatrist. Jung’s first impression of Freud was that he was “extremely intelligent, shrewd and altogether remarkable” (Jung, 1989, p. 15). Likewise, Freud shared a similar admiration for Jung, referring to him as his “eldest son.” He wrote, “I formally adopted you as [my] eldest son and anointed you [...] my successor and crown prince” (McGuire, 1974, p. 217). However, their friendship was short-lived and ended in 1913 due to theoretical differences. The split was deep-rooted in Jung’s concern about the mysterious nature of the soul; he believed that Freud was incapable of explaining complex psychic phenomena such as art, philosophy, and religion because of his rational epistemic approach (Jung, 1966). When their relationship ended, Jung began to develop the field of analytical psychology – this period of his life was a crisis yet formative.

### 1. Cultural Context

Psychiatry today is very different from when Jung started his career. Then, many of his contemporaries saw an investigation of the psyche as related to problems raised by psychical research, the study of spiritualist phenomena. Shamdasani describes how the emergence of modern spiritualism attracted the interest of leading scientists and psychologists. For instance, in 1899, psychologist Theodor Flournoy argued that regardless of whether a medium’s spiritual experience was valid, it still allowed for far-reaching insight into the subliminal mind and human psychology (Shamdasani, 2009, p. 195).

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, psychiatry recognised the existence of the subliminal mind – it was a common belief that the unconscious could retain daily memories, images seen and forgotten. However, Jung wondered if it could hold archaic memories, collective and inherited images that reflect forgotten mythologies buried deep within our psyche. To challenge this hypothesis, he adapted the ‘constructive method,’ an approach that favoured the interpretation of psychic activity based on its purpose (to maintain the psyche’s self-regulating system) rather than the source (trauma during childhood). The Jungian analyst Daryl Sharp (1991, p. 44) explains, “the constructive method involves both the amplification of symbols and their interpretation on the subjective level.” This ‘amplification’ was a crucial component of Jung’s constructive method, which

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<sup>76</sup> Defined by Sharp (1991, p. 17) as “an emotionally charged group of ideas and images.”

aimed to establish parallels between images in dreams and drawings to the mythopoetic imagination seen within mythology, religion, and fairy tales. In Jung's view, the symbolic elements that spontaneously emerge in humanity's creative practices have a deeper purpose - to regulate the health of the individual and collective psyche. Jung used the term 'collective unconscious' to describe the deepest part of our psyche, from which the symbolic images arose. According to him, this layer is genetic and contains the "whole heritage of mankind's evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual" (Jung, 1960, para. 342).

### **The Framework of the Psyche**

Jung proposed his understanding of the psyche in the essay *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (1916). According to this source, separate but interactive systems make up the psyche: consciousness, the personal unconscious, and the collective unconscious.

In Jung's view, consciousness is part of the psyche that we are all aware of and refers to our responsiveness to our environment. His contemporary, Freud, believed that the conscious mind acted as a primary function that actively repressed elements, forcing them into the unconscious. Jung (1958, para. 935), however, disagreed. Instead, he suggested that consciousness does not create itself but "wells up from the unknown depths." He explained:

In childhood, it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep from an unconscious condition. It is like a child that is born daily out of the primordial womb of the unconscious. It is not only influenced by the unconscious but continually emerged out in the form of numberless spontaneous ideas and sudden flashes of thought (para. 935).

Furthermore, he suggested that the 'ego' is the centre of consciousness. The ego's role is to act as a filtration device, presenting in the form of a 'persona' aspects of oneself that it deems as acceptable within the culture. In contrast, the ego represses the unacceptable characteristics creating our 'shadow' – the unlived psychic traits that, for ethical, social, education or other reasons, have been excluded or split off from conscious life. This shadow exists in the personal unconscious along with forgotten information, repressed memories, subliminal messages, and complexes. The personal unconscious is the 'personal' layer of the unconscious, distinct from the universality of the collective unconscious.

In Jung's view, becoming aware of the personal unconscious contents would ultimately allow an individual to experience the rich layers of imagery in the collective unconscious resulting in an enlargement of the personality. This unification of consciousness and the unconscious or the realisation of the 'self' is the purpose of the 'individuation process,' enabling individuals to become who and what they are, not an idealistic mask.

## The Contents of the Collective Unconscious

According to Jung, the collective unconscious consists of instincts and their corresponding archetype. He described, “just as everybody possesses instincts, so he also possesses a stock of archetypal images” (Jung, 1960, para. 281). In his view, the proof of this statement lies in the psychopathology of mental disturbances, particularly in the case of schizophrenia, where there is an emergence of archaic impulses combined with mythological images (para. 281).

The instincts and the archetype together form the ‘collective unconscious.’ I call it collective because unlike the personal unconscious it is not made up of individual and more or less unique contents but of those which are universal and of regular occurrence. Instinct is an essentially collective [...] universal and regularly occurring phenomenon which has nothing to do with individuality. Archetypes have this quality in common with the instincts and are likewise a collective phenomenon (para. 270).

Jung first introduced his understanding of the ‘archetype’ in his essay *Instinct and the unconscious* (1919). The term itself had been used for centuries, appearing in various philosophical texts, including the writings of Plato, Kant, and Schopenhauer. Before Jung’s conceptualisation, an archetype was defined as “a model or first form; the original pattern or model after which a thing is made” (Whitney, 1889, p. 296). Jung (1960, para. 280), however, redefined it to mean “typical modes of apprehension,” he explained, “whenever we meet with uniform and regularly recurring modes of apprehension we are dealing with an archetype.”

The concept of the archetype in analytical psychology is understood in two parts: the psychoid archetype and the archetypal image. The psychoid archetype is the name given to the real nature of the archetype. Jung (1960, para. 417) described, “it seems to me probable that the real nature of the archetype is not capable of being made conscious, that it is transcendent, on which account I call it psychoid.” In his view, the true archetype can never be truly known or understood. Instead, it communicates its meaning and effects through archetypal imagery, which is symbolic. However, the archetypal image is not as pure as the psychoid archetype as it is blurred by the “material of conscious experience” (Jung, 1959, p. 1). These archetypal and symbolic images express themselves metaphorically as universal patterns and are the primary content of religions, mythologies, legends, and fairytales. Additionally, the archetypal image can also be seen in dreams and spontaneous image work; Jung (1934/1954, para 847) wrote:

The concept of the archetype [...] is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairytales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. We meet these same motifs in fantasies, dreams, deliria, and delusions of individuals living day to day. These typical images and associations are what I call archetypal ideas [...] they have their origin in the archetype, which in itself is irrepresentable, unconscious, pre-existent form that

seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest spontaneously anywhere, at any time.

Jung (1954, para. 105) uses the terms ‘archetypal image’ and ‘symbol’ interchangeably to describe an “expression of an intuitive idea that cannot yet be formulated in any other or better way.” They arise from the unconscious to express human patterns of understanding. However, the psychoid archetype needs to be assimilated into consciousness so as not to overwhelm an individual and cause mental disturbances. When the true archetype is assimilated, it becomes cloaked in cultural content, becoming the archetypal image and symbol.

### **The Creative Process and Transcendent Function**

The process of assimilating unconscious content into consciousness has been termed by Jung as ‘the transcendent function.’ Sharp (1991, p. 135) explains, “[it is] a psychic function that arises from the tension between consciousness and the unconscious and supports their union.” He continues, “it is essentially an aspect of self-regulation of the psyche. It typically manifests symbolically and is experienced as a new attitude towards oneself and life.” Likewise, the author and scholar Morris Philipson referred to the archetypal image/symbol as ‘effective images’ that emerge from the in-between state of the chaotic unconscious life and the barren conscious life. He wrote:

Between these two undesirable extremes, lies the field of the search for ‘effective images,’ for sanity which is not bought at the price of sterility, nor immediate experience of the unconscious at the price of psychosis. ‘Effective images’ are interpreted to function as the media through which manifestations of the unconscious can be transformed so that the rich but chaotic contents may be assimilated into an ordered but fruitful sanity (Philipson, 1963, p. 10).

According to Philipson, the aim of this function is to maintain the progressive well-being of the psyche as a whole. Likewise, the psychologist Jeffrey Miller (2004, p. xi) states that “the transcendent function is the core of Carl Jung’s theory of psychological growth and the heart of what he called individuation.”

Moreover, Matthews (2015, p. 126) also suggests that creativity arises from the transcendent function, “the tension of opposites is first held until an experience arises of the symbolic image, of the not yet known or lived, that grips the conscious gaze, and finally the symbolic experience is brought into expression.” Likewise, this point is also made by the artist and Jungian academic David Parker, (2008, p. 49) who explains, “in the process of creative transformation, both alchemy and painting are [...] essentially therapeutic activities [...] in the sense that they both mediate and manifest through matter an imaginative interchange between conscious and unconscious processes.” Therefore, in this view, the intuitive creation of symbolic imagery in paintings and

pictorial configurations is purposed towards maintaining and developing a healthy psyche, potentially enabling psychological growth.

Jung claimed that to produce the transcendent function, a person needs to access unconscious material through dreams, unconscious interferences, and spontaneous fantasies. Jung (1960, para. 152) considered dreams to be a “pure product of the unconscious.” However, they are not an effective tool in developing the transcendent function as the expression is too difficult to understand from a constructive point of view. Likewise, unconscious interferences, ‘ideas out of the blue’, slips, symptomatic actions and lapses in memory are also ineffective. They are too fragmentary, which affects the potential of achieving a meaningful synthesis between the conscious and unconscious. Jung (1960), instead, claims that the best way to access unconscious material is by engaging in ‘spontaneous fantasies.’ These fantasies are usually more composed and coherent and often contain an abundance of psychological material. Some people can produce fantasies at any time, allowing them to manifest freely by reducing their critical attention. However, this talent is not common but can be developed with practice using ‘active imagination.’

### **The ‘Play Instinct’ and Active Imagination**

Active imagination is a psychological technique developed by Jung to explore unconscious fantasy material during waking states of consciousness. Jung developed this technique between 1913 and 1917 when he began producing his ‘black books’ – a collection of private journals. However, at this time, he was unaware of what he was engaging in; it was only later, while researching alchemy, that he began to understand the relevance of his earlier project<sup>77</sup>. The term ‘active imagination’ was not used until 1935 at ‘The Tavistock Lectures’ in London, and it was not published until 1968<sup>78</sup> - however, it was implied in various essays beforehand.

#### **1. The Method of Active Imagination**

Active imagination is a high-tension fantasy play that is used as a “method of assimilating unconscious contents through some form of self-reflection” (Sharp, 1991, p. 12). Jung describes how this method exists spontaneously by nature or can be taught to a patient by an analyst. Jung’s technique for inducing spontaneous fantasies consisted of methodical exercises to eliminate critical attention and negative judgments. Once this was achieved, a patient was advised to concentrate on a specific mood and attempt to become conscious of the

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<sup>77</sup> Jung’s conceptualisation of ‘active imagination’ was not a new and undiscovered technique. According to the historian Wendy Swan, Jung drew upon a vast body of international scholarship on a variety of topics and treatment practices. Swan also describes how, at the time, there was flourishing literature in the United States and Europe on psychological experiments that employed various psychotherapeutic techniques, such as hypnosis, suggestions, automatic writing, and crystal gazing.

<sup>78</sup> The term ‘active imagination’ was published first in *Analytical Psychology: Its Theory and Practice* (1968). This essay can be found in *The Symbolic life* (CW. 18)

fantasies and association that arose with it. Hopefully, this fantasy free play led to bringing a symbolic expression of mood to consciousness, making it more understandable.

Jung describes the process of active imagination in two stages. The first stage is like dreaming with your eyes open; you can begin by focusing on a dream or fantasy image or concentrating on a bad mood and associating visual imagery with it. When an image has been chosen, the patient needs to fix it in their minds and focus their attention. Jung (1955, para. 706) instructs:

Usually it will alter, as the mere fact of contemplating it animates it. The alterations must be carefully noted down all the time, for they reflect the psychic processes in the unconscious background, which appear in the form of images consisting of conscious memory material. In this way conscious and unconscious are united, just as a waterfall connects above and below.

The second stage moves beyond simply observing the images and requires the patient to participate consciously. Jung (1955, para. 753) describes, “although, to a certain extent, he looks on from the outside, impartially, he is also an acting and suffering figure in the drama of the psyche. This recognition is absolutely necessary and marks an important advance.” He argues that it is a psychic fact that this fantasy is happening, and the patient must recognise their involvement by entering it as if they were one of the fantasy figures.

The Jungian Analyst Marie-Louis von Franz (1979, p. 22) describes this same process as “talking to our personified complexes and trying in our imagination and fantasies to personify certain (aspects) of our complexes and have it out with them.” As there is an archetypal core to every complex, an individual could potentially engage with universal and archetypal imagery with this practice. It is important to note that this experiment cannot be taken lightly and is challenging to achieve. Through the practice of active imagination, individuals are guided to stimulate their minds to produce visions, allowing them to establish communication with their unconscious.

### **Creativity as an Autonomous Complex**

Jung describes how a patient’s involvement with active imagination can look like a psychosis because the subject is integrating fantasy material that the mentally ill person may fall victim to. The subliminal contents could contain such a high energy that they overpower the conscious mind and take control of the personality, causing a condition like schizophrenia, leading to a genuine psychotic episode (Jung, 1960, para. 130). Likewise, the creative person is at risk of developing an autonomous complex as they may get lost in their unconscious and lose their grip on reality. Jung (1954, para. 115) describes, “we would do well [...] to think of the creative process as a living thing implanted in the human psyche. In the language of analytical psychology this living thing is an autonomous complex.”

In his essay *Psychology and Literature* (1930) Jung suggests that the creative person experiences a duality of contradictory qualities. As humans, they have moods and personal aims, but as artists, they are a “vehicle and moulder of the unconscious psychic life of mankind” (Jung, 1954, p. 152). Jung describes how the creative impulse can drain an artist of their humanity to such an extent that their ego only exists at a primitive level. He states, “the unborn work in the psyche of the artist is a force of nature that achieves its end, either with tyrannical might or subtle cunning of nature herself, quite regardless of the personal fate of the man who is its vehicle” (para. 155).

This ‘regressive development’ of conscious functions can manifest as infantile traits such as ruthlessness, selfishness, and vanity. Likewise, Matthews (2015, p. 127) describes how madness that is associated with creativity is not pathological in origin but is rather an unfortunate side effect of “the tension of holding true to an inner world which is often at odds with the outer.” He continues:

For Jung, the creative source of the unconscious remains strong in the artist precisely because they maintain a closeness with their unconscious into adulthood [...] this means they stay close to the symbolic mother, the inner creative matrix and so often portray shades of the infantile or maladaptive (p. 127).

A popular example of this regressive development can be seen in the life of Vincent Van Gogh, who embodies the dark association of genius artist and insanity. His ‘infantile’ behaviour can be seen on an occasion in 1888 when he sliced off his own ear with a razorblade and presented the flesh to a local prostitute.

### **Summary**

This section explored how analytical psychology perceives the creative process. In this field, the concept of the collective unconscious plays a vital role in humanity’s creative endeavours. However, it is important to note that the collective unconscious doesn’t act alone but rather requires a balanced interplay with consciousness. It is not a one-sided dominance but a reciprocal interdependence between the two. This dynamic interaction allows for the engagement of the transcendent function, facilitating creativity, psychological growth, and the generation of symbolic imagery.

Furthermore, Jung introduced the term 'active imagination' to describe a process that enables individuals to engage with the transcendent function. Interestingly, he observed that this practice does not necessarily require formal teaching and can be approached intuitively. Additionally, this section briefly touches upon analytical psychology's perspective on the connection between creativity and mental illness. It acknowledged that, according to Jung, mental illness can be an unfortunate consequence of engaging with the unconscious. The

immense power of subliminal energy can sometimes lead to a disconnection from conscious life, causing challenges for the artist.

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## APPENDIX B: Manifesto of Visionary Art Critique

When researching the genre of visionary art, a document emerges which is associated with psychedelic art and VSFR, *The Manifesto of Visionary Art* (2001). Spanning seventy-two pages, this source explores several significant aspects, including the definition of visionary art and the origins of the visionary experience. As an art manifesto, the text serves as a public proclamation of the intentions, motivations, and perspectives of psychedelic/visionary art movement. While not strictly academic in nature, it stands as the sole text endeavouring to address the very questions that align with the focus of this research.

In addition, the text seems to be relatively influential in its field, often cited when the topic of psychedelic and visionary art occurs (Oroc, 2018; Silka, 2016). Moreover, the author, Laurence Caruana has been an outspoken advocate of visionary art since the 1990s. He is the director of *The Academy of Visionary Art*<sup>79</sup> and the creator of the webzine *The Visionary Revue*, which traces the genre's evolution. Similarly, he has written copious amounts related to the genre, including *Moreau's Labyrinth: A Visual Journey Through Jupiter and Semele* (2018), *Sacred Codes: The Forgotten Principles of Painting* (2017), *The Hidden Passion* (2018), And *Enter Through the Image* (2009). Furthermore, the author was one of the apprentices of Ernst Fuchs – arguably the most admired forerunner of VSFR. Not to mention his connection with other highly influential artists, such as Amanda Sage and Alex Grey.

Due to Caruana's influential position in this field, it is safe to presume that the document has affected its audience and has a seat at the table of other influential texts in this specific genre. As such, this research views this document as a cultural artefact, created with a similar intent as André Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) and Tommaso Marinetti's *Futurist Manifesto* (1909) or even Friedrich Engel's *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). While Caruana's text may not have attained the same level of influence as the aforementioned examples, it nonetheless represents a noteworthy milestone in the evolution of the term 'visionary art,' lending it a more defined connotation. For this reason, it is relevant to use the publication as a starting point in developing a more nuanced understanding of the genre.

### Section 1: What is Visionary Art (Summary)

Caruana divides the manifesto into two sections: *What is Visionary Art* and *Sources of Visionary Experience*. Additionally, the document concludes with an appendix titled, *Appendix: The Question of Technique*. In section 1, Caruana explores various topics related to the following subheadings: *To Enter Through*

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<sup>79</sup> This academy was originally located in Vienna. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic it has been moved online.

*the Image, The Trackless Way, The Visionary Lineage, Visions of Darkness, and Visions of Light.* For clarity, I will be dividing this summary under the same subheadings.

### 1. To Enter Through the Image

Caruana (2001) begins the first section by providing a concise overview of how visionary artists create their artworks. He emphasises that they utilise various means available to them to access different states of consciousness and express the resulting visions. In his view, the purpose of their work is to portray what lies beyond the limits of ordinary sight, revealing humanity's concealed and sacred truths. He further notes that through dreams, trances, or other altered states, these artists strive to perceive the unseen.

By entering a visionary state that transcends everyday experiences, these artists play a crucial role in communicating their extraordinary encounters in a familiar form that can be recognised by regular individuals. Caruana (2001, p. 3) suggests that an unknown entity bestows upon the visionary artist the gift of "seeing." As a result, these artists often find themselves positioned as outsiders, wanderers, or even outcasts, detached from mainstream society. However, their social sacrifice may be rewarded with fleeting moments of union with the creator, where they bear witness to the timeless and eternal unity that binds everything together.

### 2. Visionary Lineage

In this section, Caruana asserts that visionary art is a form with ancient roots, evident in the cave drawings of shamans and the enigmatic patterns found on megalithic stones. He goes on to suggest that the appropriate subjects for visionary works encompass themes such as creation, paradise, the fall, the flood, the triumph of death, and the apocalypse, among others. Caruana provides an extensive list of fifty-eight additional themes that fall within this category. Continuing, Caruana categorises visionary artists. He divides the names of seventy-two artists into three categories: true visionaries, near visionaries, and false visionaries.

Caruana further describes two distinct types of visionary artists. The first type is characterised by a "unique cultural style, whose visual language was near-perfect in its expressiveness" (Caruana, 2001, p. 7). Examples of this type can be found in ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, Mesopotamia, and the Minoans. The second type of visionary artists diverge from the trends of their time, creating their own distinct and personalised visions. Examples of this type include William Blake, Gustave Doré, and Francisco Goya.

Additionally, he outlines several influences on visionary art, such as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in England and France, as well as Belgium's symbolist and decadent movements. However, he highlights surrealism, specifically *figurative* surrealism, as the most recent lineage that strongly influenced visionary art. Caruana recognises Pablo Picasso, Max Ernst, René Magritte, Paul Delvaux, Hans Bellmer, Leonor Fini, and particularly Salvador Dalí as the modern forefathers of contemporary visionary art.

Caruana also acknowledges the intersection of themes between visionary art and outsider art. He defines outsider art as works created by untrained artists, some with unconventional mediums or on the fringes of sanity. He notes that outsider artists often developed styles that were remarkably similar to the deliberate works of visionary artists. Concluding the section, he describes that his list is not definitive or exhaustive, but he highlights a remarkable phenomenon taking place: a growing wave of artists, across generations, who strive to bring their unique visions to light.

## 2. Visions of Darkness/ Visions of Light

Subsequently, Caruana further categorises visionary art into two distinct categories: ‘visions of darkness’ and ‘visions of light.’ He explains that “visions of darkness” fearlessly capture images depicting shock, horror, pain, degradation, demons, monsters, and various forms of underworld tortures (Caruana, 2001, p. 14). On the other hand, ‘visions of light’ encompass images of the sacred, typically encountered after a journey to the underworld. Quoting Dr Stanislav Grof’s words, Caruana (2001, p. 20) writes:

After the subject has experienced the limits of total annihilation and ‘hit the cosmic bottom,’ he or she is struck by visions of blinding white or golden light [...] the general atmosphere is one of liberation, salvation, redemption, love, and forgiveness. The subject feels unburdened, cleansed, and purged.

At this point in the publication, Caruana begins to introduce psychedelically inspired artists such as Alex Grey, Aldous Huxley, and Ernst Fuchs. He describes how the ‘underworld’ and the ‘sacred light’ can be revealed through psychedelic substances such as Mescaline or LSD. When discussing ‘visions of light,’ Caruana describes several essential characteristics – a multicultural style, a feeling of unity, and the artist’s encounter of responding to a call. He writes, “they do not question what they do. It comes naturally, as a part of their being” (p. 22). According to Caruana, the visionary artist endeavours to discover a ‘lost image-language’ that underlies all cultures, during the act of creation. In this process, the artist momentarily liberates themselves from their inherited tradition, allowing their vision to transcend cultural perspectives. As a result, their way of seeing becomes stilled, timeless, and even eternal.

## **Section Two: Sources of a Visionary Experience (Summary)**

In section two, Caruana explores the sources of a visionary experience. In his view, the sources are varied and can arise from dreams, nightmares, trance states, meditation, and near-death experiences, to name a few. However, for this manifesto, Caruana focuses on five examples that are considered under the following subheadings: *Madness and Visions*, *Dreams*, *Hallucinogens*, *Reading*, and *Ancient Image Languages*. Therefore, this summary will be divided under the same subheadings.

## 1. Madness and Visions

This section considers the historical connection between madness and visions that has persisted over centuries. He highlights the unfortunate treatment of individuals deemed “touched with madness,” who were relentlessly pursued like witches, condemned as heretics, or confined in asylums (Caruana, 2001, p. 37). However, he notes a shift in attitude during the 20th century with the ground-breaking studies of Freud and Jung, which began to alter the perception of madness.

Continuing the historical analysis, Caruana introduces the work of Joseph Campbell, who he claims, discovered a remarkable correlation between the emergence of mythical imagery in individuals with deepening schizophrenia and the pattern of the hero’s mythic journey. Nevertheless, both Campbell and Caruana acknowledge that the initial descent into the underworld is a challenging and demanding task. Caruana elucidates that while mystics may have the ability to navigate these psychological depths, schizophrenics may find themselves slowly sinking and even drowning/ Hence, an involuntary descent into madness may occur, sometimes temporary and other times permanent. Yet,

For the visionary artist, such journeys into the ‘heart of darkness’ offers him, as their reward, amazing images emerging from his inner depths. And the work of art that results allows the artist, or anyone else who beholds it, to re-experience continually its healing and centering power. It locates the beholder at the very centre of his existence, in the awareness of life as a gradual awakening to the Sacred (p. 39).

## 2. Dreams

The manifesto proceeds by exploring dreams as another source of visionary experiences. Caruana explains that as the visionary artist gradually opens themselves to the presence of the sacred in their life, their dreams may increasingly reveal the presence of the numinous. To support this notion, Caruana introduces a theory on dreams from the philosopher Macrobius, written in 430 A.D. In Macrobius’ classical text, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, he identifies different types of dreams and assigns them specific classifications.

Subsequently, Caruana (2001, p. 40) observes how Freud’s writings primarily inspired the surrealists, whereas VSFR had Jung’s latest discoveries to spur them onward to new dimensions of consciousness. This point is highly significant to this paper’s research aim, particularly for establishing correlations between analytical psychology, VSFR, and the corresponding psychedelic art. In addition, he uses Jung as an example of a visionary artist who utilised dream imagery. He writes, “during his own ‘confrontation with the unconscious,’ Jung spiralled down into deeper and deeper strata of the mind, discovering there, the collective imagery of dreams” (p. 40). In his view, by creating imagery continuously, an artist can gradually discover his own ‘life-myth’, “a myth that would reveal to him ultimately, the Sacred underlying his life” (p. 41).

### 3. Hallucinogens

Caruana (2001, p. 43) begins this section by stating that “psychedelic substances have a major spiritual and mythologising role in many historical cultures.” He accompanies this introductory statement with interesting examples, such as *ambrosia* and *nectar* from Ancient Greece, *peyote* used by the Mayans and Aztecs, and *ayahuasca* in South America, used amongst Amazonian tribes. Subsequently, Caruana maps out a brief history of hallucinogens and eloquently describes their significance. In his view, the significance of hallucinogens lies in their ability to encourage different states of mind. Yet, he points out that hallucinogens are not a visionary artist’s sole means of exploration. Instead:

Visionaries have, over centuries, sought *all* means of exploration and experimentation. It is true that, lately, certain psychedelics [...] have played a large role in image-creation, due mainly to the fact that they are new to our culture, offering unique and largely unexplored means to a visionary experience (p. 35).

Caruana clarifies that psychedelics are merely a tool, albeit currently the most popular one, for generating visionary artworks. This is why the terms ‘visionary art’ and ‘psychedelic art’ are often used interchangeably.

A significant portion of this section is dedicated to elucidating transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal psychology is a specialised branch of psychology that integrates spiritual and transcendent aspects of human experiences within the framework of modern psychology. Caruana highlights Ken Wilber as the most influential figure in this field. He notes that through extended periods of meditation, Wilber has endeavoured to identify and articulate the transpersonal states that hallucinogens offer, albeit fleetingly, during ‘peak’ moments.

Wilber’s theories propose that human development occurs through a series of stages. The first stage is the ‘pre-personal view,’ typically observed during early childhood. The second stage is the ‘personal worldview,’ where individuals discover their roles within society. Finally, there is the ‘transpersonal worldview,’ where one’s perspective expands beyond the ego and embraces a ‘world-centric’ view. However, it is important to note that attaining the ‘transpersonal worldview’ is rare and often fleeting, as it is experienced only for brief moments during specific peak experiences for many individuals. Nonetheless, Wilber acknowledges that throughout history, the transpersonal worldview has manifested more extensively among shamans, yogis, monks, and other contemplatives who are inclined towards mystical or visionary experiences. Thus, it seems that the role of hallucinogens is to gain a stolen peek into the higher transpersonal states necessary to produce visionary works. As Fuchs explained:

I knew or anticipated that the world for which I was looking had a gate, and the drug was only a ladder for thieves who, in order to ‘steal’, climbed over the wall

because they did not know the gate or did not have the key for it (Fuchs cited by Caruana, 2001, p. 42).

#### 4. Reading/ The Ancient Image Language

Caruana suggests that reading has the power to ignite the imagination, enabling it to conjure mysterious worlds through the mere arrangement of words. Moreover, the visual realm and our imagination can give rise to new worlds that transcend verbal description. He elaborates on this concept, stating that as we read, our imagination is free to wander, tracing chains of imagery and forming novel combinations that yield thoughts previously unexpressed in spoken language.

In the subsequent section titled *The Ancient Image Language*, Caruana briefly highlights the significance of merging cultural styles, juxtaposing symbols, and reimagining myths. These practices, he argues, form the ‘grammar’ of our visual language, facilitating shared meaning among individuals. He argues that a visionary artist must explore history to grasp the ancient image language, acquiring knowledge about concealed symbols to unearth their lost significance.

#### Appendix: Question of Technique (Summary)

Caruana concludes the manifesto by addressing the *question of technique*. This section discusses the importance of technique, how to approach *mischtechnik* in painting, and how to apply colour to create rich depth. Interestingly, Caruana (2001, p. 55) states:

From the technical point of view, visionary artists are surprisingly united in their tastes, temperament, and preferences. Though their methods may differ [...] all agree that as precise rendering as possible is absolutely necessary for vision-inducing works. Fine lines, gradual transitions, infinite details – there is no limit to the pains endured nor the patience required to successfully render a vision in image form.

Caruana emphasises technique with the intention of reviving the artistry of the old masters, similar to VSFR. He explains how visionary artists strive to produce works that appear as if they were magically created by a dream, rather than by human hands. In doing so, the artist aims to minimise their presence as the creator, leaving behind a piece with little evidence of their authorship. He further states that the ultimate goal is to make the painterly medium almost imperceptible, allowing the image itself to be immediately presented to the viewer.

#### Critique – The Manifesto is Outdated

In the introduction to this appendix, it was emphasised that, the significance of Caruana’s manifesto as a cultural artifact played a pivotal role in shaping the evolution of visionary art, establishing a more defined understanding of the genre. However, it is important to acknowledge that since the manifesto’s inception, there have been extensive dialogues and discussions surrounding visionary art. Consequently, the content of Caruana’s manifesto has become outdated.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Caruana (2001/2010, p. ii) acknowledges this in the preface of the 2010 edition of the manifesto.

Visionary art has advanced so quickly in the last ten years that I was sorely tempted to update much of the information [...] But rather than expanding on these pages, I've chosen to treat them as a time capsule of Visionary Art *circa* (original italics) the turn of the millennium.

Caruana expressed his intention to create *The Second Manifesto of Visionary Art* in order to expand upon the original document and encompass the numerous art movements and artists that have emerged since 2001. However, this aim seems excessively broad and ambitious. The task of listing and categorising such a vast array of movements and artists would be more fitting for an encyclopaedia rather than a manifesto.

During a private interview on May 23, 2022, Caruana revealed to me that he had not yet commenced work on the second manifesto. When asked about its progress, he expressed regret, saying, “No, I feel terrible. I even sent out questionnaires to all these artists, and I have received many interesting responses. But I have been overwhelmed with other commitments. I hope to begin working on it by 2025” (Caruana, 2022<sup>80</sup>). Thus, my first critique of this document is that it is outdated and could benefit from a re-evaluation. In addition, I believe Caruana’s aims for a second manifesto are too broad and ambitious, straying from the realm of a manifesto into an encyclopaedic arrangement of art movements and artists.

### **Critique – Inefficient Categorisation**

My second critical point is that Caruana offers an inefficient attempt to categorise visionary artworks and artists. In the first instance, Caruana (2001, p. 5) begins listing “the proper subjects of a visionary work.” This list includes sixty-three examples, ranging from “ancient heroes, [and] mythic beings” to “inventions and machines” and “melting pocket watches” (p.7). Next, Caruana describes how visionary works develop with a specific cultural style or from a unique and personalised vision. Then some images depict darkness and torment, and others depict sacred light. This description is, again, far too broad, which creates confusion. It is essential to ask; how are these themes connected, and why are they considered visionary?

In the second instance, Caruana attempts to categorise various artists he believes to be visionary. On page nine of the manifesto, Caruana drafts a grid divided into true visionaries, near visionaries, and false visionaries. Within these categories, there is a list of seventy-two artists. Unfortunately, Caruana does not explain how he concluded who is a true, near and false visionary; is he measuring technique, thematic content, or biographical information? This lack of clarity inhibits Caruana’s argument.

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<sup>80</sup> See APPENDIX D

In addition, there is not a single female artist mentioned on the list; for example, artists such as Leonora Carrington, Frida Kahlo, Hilma af Klint, and Remedios Varo, to name a few, are incredibly relevant<sup>81</sup>. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that feminist art criticism has only been widespread in the previous two decades, leaving female artists vastly underrepresented. Therefore, the exclusion of female artists from this manifesto is most likely a product of its time. This observation adds to the previous argument that the manifesto is outdated.

Thus, my second critique of Caruana's manifesto is that the categorisation method has a fragile foundation – largely due to the lack of clarity and explanation. Creating lists in this manner is doomed for failure as it will inevitably exclude essential elements. For this reason, I am interested in developing a theoretical framework or tool for identifying and understanding the visionary creative mode, that can be applied in the field of art criticism. In addition, I have chosen to focus on paintings, and pictorial configuration as the increasingly growing number of artistic mediums and movements are far too broad to develop an in-depth analysis.

### **Critique – Limited Engagement with Analytical Psychology**

Caruana's manifesto indirectly references Jung and analytical psychology numerous times; however, it is a rather subtle thread that could benefit from further expansion. In addition, the only publication related to the field of analytical psychology in the reference list is *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1963), which is now largely considered a quasi-biography with misleading and incomplete information.

In our private interview, I asked Caruana about his familiarity with analytical psychology and whether he was aware of Jung's notion of the visionary mode of creativity. Interestingly, he was unaware of Jung's discussions on the 'visionary mode.' In addition, Caruana acknowledged that he was not an expert on Jung and had only read several books during the 1990s, primarily focused on Jung's alchemical writings. Nevertheless, since this early research, the concept of the archetype has persistently kept him enthralled. He described:

Fundamentally, for me, the whole concept of archetypes is something that doesn't go away. I am very interested in the idea that there is a deep stratum of the unconscious [...] populated by these structured images. So, the idea of the archetypes is something that always informed my work" (Caruana, 2022)

Caruana's interest in the concept of the archetype is evident in the manifesto – for instance, the word 'archetype' is repeated ten times throughout the seventy-two-page text. However, this focus is somewhat limited because even though

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<sup>81</sup> However, Caruana does mention the female artist Leonor Fini as one of the 'forefathers' of visionary art.

archetypes are core to Jung's work, it still only makes up a fraction of the ideas and concepts explored within the field.

Thus, in my view, an understanding of visionary art could be expanded by including an analytical psychological view. Caruana's manifesto shows a proclivity towards the field. However, the author's interest appears largely recreational; for this reason, the manifesto is insufficient to provide a compelling overview and interpretation. Nevertheless, it is essential to mention that when Caruana's manifesto was published initially, there was less literature available on the topic; for example, it was not until 2009 that the Philemon Foundation published *Liber Novus*.

### **Critique – Exclusion of Outsider Art and Related Fields**

Finally, the last point to consider is Caruana's exclusion of outsider art from the category of visionary art in the manifesto. He wrote, "contemporary with this development was the rediscovery of l'Art brut or outsider art [...] who developed style and vocabularies of imagery amazingly similar to the more calculated works of visionary artists" (Caruana, 2001, p.12). According to this statement, outsider art is *amazingly similar* yet not quite as powerful as the *calculated works of visionary artists*. It is not entirely clear why outsider artists are excluded. However, later in the text, Caruana states that an essential aspect of visionary art is that a "precise rendering as possible is absolutely necessary for vision-inducing works" (p. 55).

During our interview, Caruana explained that technique and precision allow an artist to enter a trance state. He explained, "the act of rendering really puts you into that state or zone, when you become so focused [...] for me, the more I focus on the surface of the painting [...] the more it becomes three dimensional, and the more it becomes like a vision" (Caruana, 2022).

Interestingly, earlier in the manifesto, Caruana makes a statement that contradicts this belief. He stated, "visionary art is as ancient as the shaman's first etching on cavern walls, or the mysterious spirals carved on megalithic stones" (p. 7). However, a 'shaman's first etching' and the creation of 'mysterious spirals' were not created by using the precise painting techniques of the mischtechnik. Instead, these creations would be closer to the simplified drawings often seen by outsider artists. Nevertheless, in our interview, Caruana (2022, p. 10) explained his exclusion of outsider art:

Trying to make a living as an outsider artist seems like a bit of a contradiction. How do you become a professional outsider artist – it is a contradiction because you are not supposed to be in the system. Whereas for me and other visionary artists, we have visions, we use techniques, and we want to make art, we want to put it into galleries and sell it. We are not creating a myth about ourselves as an outsider artist.

Therefore, in my perspective, Caruana's omission of outsider art from his conception of visionary art is exclusionary. While Caruana presents an intriguing argument to support his exclusion, dismissing the genre as a mere 'contradiction' seems somewhat hasty. Moreover, labelling outsider art as less 'powerful' than the deliberate works of visionary artists is a subjective opinion laden with preconceived notions and biases.

### **Critique – Campbell's Outdated Hero's Journey**

A final critique which arose relatively late in this project is Caruana's emphasis on Campbell's 'hero's journey' monomyth. Instead, there has been several discussions on the 'post-heroic journey,' which may prove useful for the discussion. As noted in these project's *Conclusion*, Sharon Blackie (2023) presents a compelling argument for the 'post-heroic journey' favouring a communal engagement over singular conquest. Her perspective (in line with others, such as Rowland, von Franz, and Emma Jung) offers a refreshing take on the grail legend and the process of individuation. Considering these viewpoints could significantly enrich our understanding of visionary art, framing it as communal, inclusive, and transformative process that surpasses the patriarchal undertones embedded in Campbell's 'hero's journey.'

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# APPENDIX C: Ethical Approval and Participant Information

This appendix outlines the various documents and forms used in the ethical approval process and the conduct of interviews for this research. The full versions of these documents are available for viewing in the online appendix.

## **C1. Consent Form**

The consent forms used to ensure participants' understanding and voluntary agreement to participate in the research.

## **C2. Participant Information Sheet**

The participant information sheet, detailing the purpose of the study, what participation involves, and how data collected will be used and protected.

## **C3. The Interview Guide**

The general interview guide used to standardise the interview process and ensure all necessary areas are covered during each interview.

## **C4. Recruitment Email (Individual)**

The email template used to recruit individual participants for the research.

## **C5. Recruitment Email (Organisations)**

The email used to recruit organisations to participate in the research.

## **C6. Full Ethics Approval Form RE2**

Full Ethics Approval Form RE2 that was sent to the TUS ethical committee to conduct the research.

## **C7. Participant Information Sheet**

The participant information sheet, which was sent to each participant, introducing the research project.

For complete access to these files, please visit the designated online appendix:

<https://studentlit->

[my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/lisa\\_hester\\_lit\\_ie/EpjskmOsP9ZFquX5Nj2FZr0BVeqY4325JHNwPhvdoM7oKw?e=2eCr7o](https://my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/lisa_hester_lit_ie/EpjskmOsP9ZFquX5Nj2FZr0BVeqY4325JHNwPhvdoM7oKw?e=2eCr7o)

These documents are provided with view-only permissions.

## **APPENDIX D: Participant Consent Forms and Interview Transcripts**

This appendix provides an overview of the documents that are included in the online appendix, which are related to participant consent forms and interview transcripts.

### **D1: Consent Forms**

This section includes signed consent forms from each participant in the study, listed in alphabetical order by last name:

1. Caruana, Laurence
2. Diaz, Daniel Martin
3. Florez, Hazel
4. McMorrow, Denise
5. Poirier, Danielle
6. Sage, Amanda
7. Sorrenti, Carmen

Each consent form outlines the participant's agreement to participate in the research, with an understanding of the study's purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, and their rights as a participant.

### **D2: Interview Transcripts**

This section includes interview transcripts from the above-named participants, also arranged in alphabetical order:

1. Caruana, Laurence
2. Diaz, Daniel Martin
3. Florez, Hazel
4. McMorrow, Denise
5. Poirier, Danielle
6. Sage, Amanda
7. Sorrenti, Carmen

These transcripts provide detailed accounts of each interview, offering insight into the data gathered from each participant in the research study.

For complete access to these files, please visit the designated online appendix:

[https://studentlit-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/lisa\\_hester\\_lit\\_ie/EpjskmOsP9ZFquX5Nj2FZr0BVeqY4325JHNwPhvdoM7oKw?e=2eCr7o](https://studentlit-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/lisa_hester_lit_ie/EpjskmOsP9ZFquX5Nj2FZr0BVeqY4325JHNwPhvdoM7oKw?e=2eCr7o)

These documents are provided with view-only permissions.

## APPENDIX E: Dissemination

This appendix provides a summary of the various dissemination activities related to this research.

### E1: Scholarly Articles

The following scholarly articles have been published in relation to this research:

2022: 'The Visionary Art of C.G. Jung: An Exploration of Liber Novus using Neumann's Understanding of Great Art' in *The International Journal of Jungian Studies*, published online ahead of print.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/19409060-bja10018>

This article considers how visionary art expresses itself within paintings and pictorial configurations by using Neumann's work to expand on Jung's notion of the 'visionary mode of creativity.' The first part is a comparative study of Neumann's 'four stages of psychological development' discussed in 'The Origins and History of Consciousness' (1949) and his 'four stages of art in relation to its epoch' discussed in his essay 'Art and Time' (1959). This comparison aims to establish a selection of categories that considers the role of art on the micro-level (the individual) and the macro-level (society). Additionally, it is suggested that these four categories offer an interesting framework for identifying and understanding visionary artworks. Subsequently, the second part uses Neumann's framework to examine a selection of paintings from 'Liber Novus' (2009).

2021: 'Re-envisioning Outsider Art: An Inquiry into Hans Prinzhorn's Pioneering Research.' *The International Journal of Arts Theory and History*, 16 (20), pp. 1-15.

<https://doi.org/10.18848/2326-9952/cgp/v16i02/1-15>

This article considers whether re-focusing on Hans Prinzhorn's text *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (1922) could improve the inconsistencies within the Outsider Art genre. This article is a historical analysis of Prinzhorn's research and discusses five reoccurring categories that emerge during the production of pictorial configuration. This study has two aims: to consider the relevance of Prinzhorn's research in categorising and understanding reoccurring themes and styles that emerge spontaneously during the production of pictorial configuration, and to establish whether mental illness or marginalisation is necessary for the authentic style promoted by the Outsider Art genre. This historical analysis is considered alongside analytical psychology with fine art examples from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

### E2: Conference Presentations

Presentations and abstracts related to this research have been delivered at the following conferences:

2023: London Arts-Based Research Centre Modernism Remodelled: A Transdisciplinary Conference at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge University [in-person].

In this presentation, I will explore the evolution of visionary art from the modernist period to the present. The main question I will address is: what happened to the art and philosophical movements that emerged during the modernist period, and how did they contribute to the development of contemporary visionary art? My current research includes a historical and comparative analysis of outsider art and psychedelic art, two contemporary movements that use the term visionary to describe their imagery. By ‘rewinding’ through time, I aim to shed light on the origins and development of these movements and the schools of thought that influenced them. For this presentation, I will share a timeline I created that illustrates this development. I will also provide a brief overview of the interplay between modernism, contemporary visionary art, and analytical psychology.

2022: An Encounter with Visionary Art with Guest Speaker Laurence Caruana at the Limerick School of Art and Design [online].

This session included a presentation and discussion on Neumann’s framework, exploring its connections to the visionary/psychedelic art movement. This discussion served as a preliminary introduction to Caruana’s afternoon session. The schedule for the day is available to view in a poster format in the online appendix.

2021: AHSS Annual Postgraduate Research Conference, University of Limerick [online].

In contemporary and historical art criticism, the term ‘visionary’ encompasses diverse artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Hilma af Klint, and Alex Grey, prompting an inquiry into the reasons behind its application to their unique and challenging creations. However, this term remains inadequately defined or excluded from mainstream platforms and art glossaries. Two genres, outsider art and fantastic realism, have attempted to define the category, differing in their views on its aesthetic characteristics and required technique. Similarly, Jungian scholars have shown interest in the ‘visionary mode of creativity,’ but focus primarily on literary or alchemical examples. This presentation explores the interconnections between art criticism and analytical psychology, aiming to gain a nuanced understanding of visionary art. It includes an introduction to Jung’s concept of the ‘visionary and psychological mode of creativity’ and Erich Neumann’s ‘four stages of art in relation to its epoch.’ The discussion concludes by examining how analytical psychology can inform this research question.

2021: Panel discussion with SRPR Shannon Region Postgraduate Research Conference [Online].

The term ‘outsider art’ was initially used to define works of art that represented a ‘raw’ and ‘uncooked’ depiction of the creative process. However, since the 1980s, it is used to define any work of art outside the mainstream art market. This advancement has the danger of making the term all-inclusive and therefore meaningless. Additionally, condemnation of the movement is widespread due to its ‘dehumanising’ emphasis on the mentally ill or marginalised individuals. This presentation considers whether re-focusing on Hans Prinzhorn’s text ‘Artistry of the Mentally Ill’ (1922) could improve the inconsistencies within the outsider art genre. This text played a crucial role in developing various art movements such as surrealism, l’art brut and outsider art. However, the original publication was presented as a ‘picture book’ to many surrealists and artists who could not read the German text. As a result, many ideas from Prinzhorn’s research excluded the psychological theories proposed within it – potentially causing the current inconsistencies and problematic associations. Additionally, this discussion introduces a ‘scale’ that relies on an overlooked theory within Prinzhorn’s text, that may help categorise and understand the reoccurring styles that emerge during the production of pictorial configuration. There are two aims for this presentation (1) to establish whether mental illness or marginalisation is necessary for the authentic style promoted by the outsider art genre, and (2) to consider the relevance of Prinzhorn’s material in categorising and understanding the large variety of material associated with outsider art.

### **E3: Other Forms of Dissemination**

Additionally, this research has been disseminated through the following platforms:

- **Thecreativejung:** A YouTube channel with a current total of 25 videos that explore topics related to this research. It currently has 430 subscribers and more than 20,000 total views.
- **The Creative Jung Blog:** Accompanying the YouTube channel, this blog provides written commentary and analysis on various themes tied to this research.

For complete access to these files, please visit the designated online appendix:

[https://studentlit-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/lisa\\_hester\\_lit\\_ie/EpjskmOsP9ZFquX5Nj2FZr0BVeqY4325JHNwPhvdoM7oKw?e=2eCr7o](https://studentlit-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/lisa_hester_lit_ie/EpjskmOsP9ZFquX5Nj2FZr0BVeqY4325JHNwPhvdoM7oKw?e=2eCr7o)

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