

Inner and Outer Geographies: Recovery, Spirituality, Psychotherapy and Making Art

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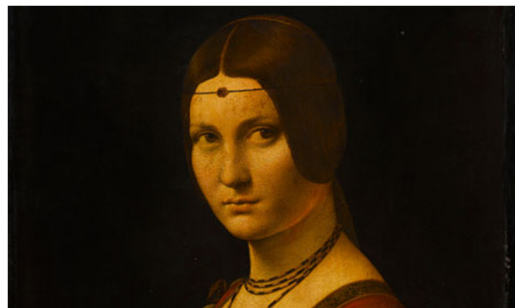
'Spirituality' as 'Transcendent Function'

- from Latin *transcendent*- 'climbing over'
- Jung meant: When we are stuck in a conflict of opposites...
- Often between conscious and unconscious attitudes, (e.g between I think I ought to be and who I am) energy & life are stuck.
- The build up of energy as we 'hold' the conflict, if all goes well, generates a third position.
- AKA Thesis, antithesis, synthesis.

Surviving and thriving in conflict

- Images and symbols **embrace** contradictory meanings, ambivalence and conflict.
- Therefore they help us hold and transform conflict and suffering. **contain**
- They both **express** and powerful, (even overwhelming), feelings.
- Which are often **mixed** feelings anyway.

What do you think this person is feeling?

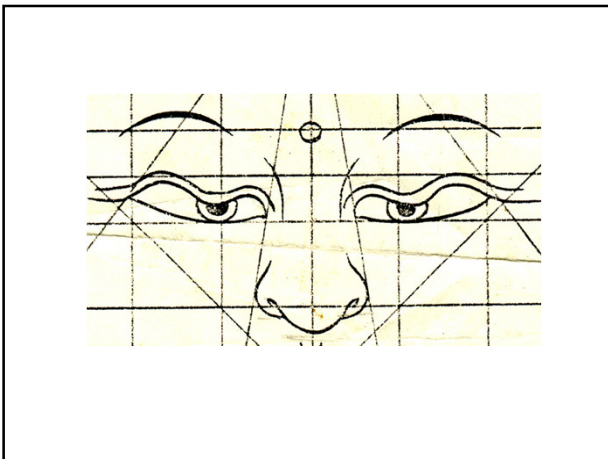
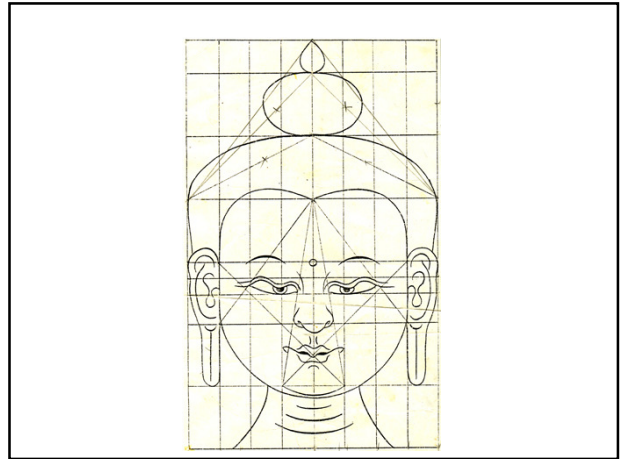


Some Personal 'Art History' (from 1982.)

'Raised on It'

'Enantiodromia' and Compensation.

- Sometime an **overstated conscious attitude** needs to be **balanced out**.
- This balancing often comes from the unconscious, if we let it.
- 'We have to be able to let things happen in the psyche... it would be simple enough if simplicity were not the hardest of all things'
CGJ



Therapy isn't always necessary, but the right one can't half help.
And all people working therapeutically with others should have experienced personal therapy, to check their own motivations and wounds, and understand the power dynamic..

Faith, Hope and Charity

It never ends, because loss, and hope, and adapting to loss, and living with conflict never ends.

Branscombe Birds

Parting Dance

Journeys, Paths, Pilgrimages.

- We are meaning-making creatures.
- Meaninglessness really does seem to drive us mad.
- Stories and images are one of the main ways we make meanings that help us to **shape our perplexity and suffering.**
- And, just sometimes, we touch something beautiful that consoles us deeply.

All this depends on the capacity of the images and stories to *hold* and *transcend* conflict. That means they are always double edged... Take the Maze:

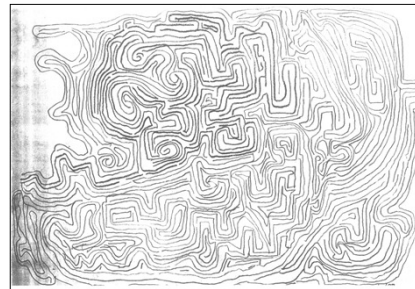
- The labyrinth is a place of fear, disorientation, confusion and panic. It frequently contains traps and monsters. The labyrinth does have a route to the centre, but it is not straightforward.
- On the other hand, it has appeared time and again in the context of the inner quest and the spiritual life.

Navigating this maze on the floor of Chartres Cathedral, on your knees, enough times, with enough prayers, got as much 'sin remission' as a pilgrimage to Jerusalem!

Tracing our Labyrinths is a pilgrimage.



On the other hand, they can be terrible and disorientating traps:



Labyrinth made by young man on the edge of psychotic breakdown.

In this sense the Labyrinth is *initiatory*, and '**terror is the essence of true initiation**'

Many experiences of distress, disorientation and disturbance might have this potential if we can give them 'art vessels' to contain them...

Art therapy= art making + therapeutic relationship=initiatory vessel

'I can get in very deep making these images. I do have to come up slowly: its like something takes over. But you and the art therapy room are like having a bathysphere of the soul, so I can do it without getting the bends'

'Disorders': The World Turned Upside Down!

If artists, rather than scientists, wrote diagnostic manuals of mental disorder... one might see 'disorders' like:

- ***Pathologically Middle of the Road Personality Disorder***
- ***Emotional Blandness***
- ***Insufficient Fantasy Life***
- ***Arts Aversion***
- ***Reality Obsession***
- ***Aspiritual Personality***

Peter Chadwick

"Do not imagine that Art is something which is designed to give gentle uplift and self-confidence.

Art is not a brassiere. At least, not in the English sense. But do not forget that brassiere is the French for life jacket."

Julian Barnes, 'Flaubert's Parrot', 1984