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Tom Singer & Daria Kunchenko
The Mythopoetic Imagination and the Creative Unconscious in Uncertain and Dystopian Times

Chair: **Pi-Chen Hsu**

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Introduction of Speakers by Pi-Chen Hsu

I extend my gratitude to the #WUJ team for holding this space and for the great amount of time and energy devoted to its development. #WUJ aims to ensure that our Ukrainian colleagues know that they are still very much to the fore, and #WUJ also wants to extend a caring embrace to all those who are affected by the war in the Middle East. Today, we also extend our moral support to those impacted by the tragic earthquake in Japan. I warmly welcome all participants for demonstrating trust in humanity and solidarity with those enduring suffering in these challenging times. Your presence gives this event profound meaning.

Globally, many regions, including Ukraine, Gaza, and numerous African countries are grappling with the ravages of war. As a friend astutely remarked, “perhaps the world is no more crazy or violent than it has always been. Also, perhaps people have been in conflict from time immemorial.” The aspiration is a resounding “never again,” but history often reveals that we struggle to learn from its lessons. While I am not currently in a war zone, as a Taiwanese, the looming threat of erasure is a constant reality. Pardon my somber tone, but the prevalence of wars, the rise of authoritarianism, and the surge of hatred are deeply disheartening. In Jungian psychology, we emphasize holding the tension between good and evil, acknowledging and confronting collective evils. Despite maintaining hope for a “transcendent third,” recent years have seen split and hatred getting intensified in our world; intimidation and violence seem to gain ground, while indifference and resignation permeate society. Should I accept it as a karma we all share as

my cultural upbringings told me? I don't want to lose faith in humanity, but I also am uncertain of the "transcendent third" and feel that it is out of reach. I feel that at this moment I can only speak for myself and my own experience as a Taiwanese.

In our initial email exchange for this collaboration, I was asked to provide images of Taiwan to be shared in the slideshow. I experienced uncertainty and I wondered what can represent Taiwan, and who can represent Taiwan. My country is composed of diverse populations, who came to Taiwan in different times and under different situations. Dated back tens of thousands of years, the island opened her arms to embrace indigenous people coming from the great seas. Starting from the 13th century, Han people came into contact with the island. Since 17th century, western explorers from Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands started settlement on this beautiful island—called Formosa at that time; followed by Hoklo and Hakka immigrants from the Ming-Quin Dynasty. The island also was under the colonization of Japan for 50 years. In 1949, a huge wave of Chinese people was forced to flee Mainland China and settled in this island. Moreover, people from southeast Asia and all over the world become the Taiwanese new immigrants. From the above summarized history, I am aware that I am speaking from the perspective of Taiwan, the island. She embraces all people coming toward her in search of shelter, peace, containment and home. We coexist on this island, collectively shaping the myth and identity of being Taiwanese.

Concerns about our future echo the uncertainties faced by our ancestors, true pioneers. They navigated uncharted territories; they faced trials with no experience and no guidance. Despite uncertainty and hardships, they plunged into the Black Ditch and bad water. I imagine they gazed in wonder and admiration upon the mountains, the forests, the streams, the valleys, and the gorges, the animals and plants before them when they arrived on this island. I imagine their eyes showed determination in establishing life and family on

this beautiful island. They plowed the ground and planted seeds, converted the land into fruitful fields and established home-- a home of affluence and abundance, and slowly transformed into a home of diversity, freedom and democracy. They passed on their experience from generation to generation. This is the myth all Taiwanese lived, and this is also the strength and spirit we inherited but has been forgotten in this dystopian time.

Engaging with #WUJ and participating in webinars has helped me to remember and reconnect to my ancestor's pioneering and islander spirit. Perhaps this is a revival of "transcendent third." The story, courage, and determination our Ukrainian colleagues have shared in the face of unimaginable adversity also becomes another flame in the torch of the "transcendent third," allowing me to envision a brighter future amid the looming threat of erasure. With this revival of spirit, we find the faith to endure uncertain times and the courage to stand united announcing "*We stand for compassion, solidarity, democracy, independence, the right to choose how one wants to live, and not be dominated by bullies whether they are other countries or other individuals. We stand for individuation, individual freedom.*" (Murray Stein, 2023)

In life's unyielding flow, we find solace in stillness. I want to invite you to join me in a minute of silence. With each silent breath, we gather to remember those who have fallen, the lives lost and the families forever changed by the wars. We remember our colleagues in war zones on a daily basis, so close to life and death. Our thoughts are with the children, families and communities who are caught up in the conflicts, who have experienced devastating loss, and who have to endure the agonizing choice between safety and connection with roots. As we stand together, let us hold in our hearts the memory of those who sacrificed for our safety, freedom, and independence. We think of those fighting for survival, and pray for the dignity and human rights of all sentient beings. May their courage ignite a path towards understanding, compassion, and universal respect for

human rights. In this quiet place, let the fragility of life remind us of the strength in solidarity. We remember. We stand together. We fall silent.

Moment of silence

Thank you for joining us in this moment of silence. Now it is my pleasure to introduce our distinguished speakers for this webinar.

Daria Kunchenko was born and raised in Kyiv. Amidst the war, Daria moved to Hamburg to ensure her children's safety, feeling torn between safety and the loss of root. In her talk, she delves into both her own and her patient's journeys of feminine initiation and creative unconscious in the face of adversity. Daria's message holds unwavering belief in a future Ukrainian Renaissance.

Dr. Thomas Singer requires little introduction, having lectured, edited, and published extensively. Tom sheds light on the collective depression gripping the global psyche and he will discuss what a Jungian perspective offers as an antidote to the paralysis hindering our ability to imagine a better future.

It has been an inspiring experience to work with both Tom and Daria. Please join me in welcoming Tom for the talk on *The Mythopoetic Imagination and the Creative Unconscious in Uncertain and Dystopian Times*.

The Mythopoetic Imagination and the Creative Unconscious in Uncertain and Dystopian Times

Thomas Singer

Uncertainty has become an everyday reality and an overarching theme of contemporary life. It is both on and beneath the surface of consciousness in many of the exchanges that we have with the inner and outer world. It can easily feel as though our current time is unlike any other in that the combination of wars, pandemic, climate change, overstimulation and overconnectivity, and any other number of less dramatic but equally powerful changes seem to be overtaking us at an unparalleled, exponentially amplified pace and intensity.

A Very Brief History of Uncertainty in Modern Times

I was stunned, upon rediscovering in Anne Morrow Lindberg's seventy-year-old *A Gift from the Sea*, that her sense of being overwhelmed by contemporary events in 1955 resonates with a freshness of vision that gives expression to what many of us feel today:

The search for outward simplicity, for inner integrity, for fuller relationship—is this not a limited outlook? Of course it is, in one sense. Today, a kind of planetary point of view has burst upon mankind. The world is rumbling and erupting in ever widening circles around us. The tensions, conflicts, and sufferings even in the outermost circle touch us, reverberate in all of us. We cannot avoid these vibrations. But just how far can we implement this planetary awareness? We are asked today to

feel compassionately for everyone in the world; to digest intellectually all the information spread out in public print; and to implement in action every ethical impulse aroused by our hearts and minds. The inter-relatedness of the world links us constantly with more people than our hearts can hold. Or rather—for I believe the heart is infinite—modern communication loads us with more problems than the human frame can carry. It is good, I think, for our hearts, our minds, our imaginations to be stretched; but body, nerve, endurance and life-span are not as elastic. My life cannot implement in action the demands of all the people to whom my heart responds.... We were brought up in a world that has now become impossible, for we have extended our circle throughout space and time.

That was in 1955.

Soren Kierkegaard, a mid-nineteenth century Danish theologian, anticipated and embraced the angst of uncertainty that would overtake modern humans. He writes:

And this is the simple truth—that to live is to feel oneself lost. He who accepts it has already begun to find himself, to be on firm ground. Instinctively, as do the shipwrecked, he will look around for something to which to cling, and that tragic, ruthless glance, absolutely sincere, because it is a question of his salvation, will cause him to bring order into the chaos of his life. These are the only genuine ideas; the ideas of the shipwrecked. All the rest is rhetoric, posturing, farce.

And in the twentieth century, Sartre and Camus, following in Kierkegaard's footsteps shared in his sense of the utter dislocation and of potential liberation that comes from the awareness that the known order of the world had collapsed, and that meaning is not a given in existence. This was summarized in a phrase that Sartre coined in 1945: "Existence precedes essence." One way to understand Sartre's formulation is that there is no inherent preordained meaning or purpose in being human or, for that matter, in the universe itself. The collective experience of the two World Wars and the Great Depression shattered in many the belief that meaning was inherent in human existence and in the

universe. This turned upside down the very foundations of millennia of traditional religious beliefs that the universe as God's creation has structure, meaning, and purpose. Camus proclaimed the universe "absurd" when he wrote: "The absurd is the essential concept and the first truth."

I remember attending a small Jungian conference in New York City in 1967 (57 years ago) when I was a young medical student. I raised the question of the twin foundational existential assertions that the universe was "absurd" and that "existence precedes essence." I was chastised by no less than Esther Harding, an early analyst of Jung's, pioneer of the American Jungian tradition, and author of *Women's Mysteries: Ancient and Modern*. She responded to me in no uncertain terms (which is not the same as uncertainty) that the existentialists were "superficial" and "didn't understand anything." From her perspective, the archetypes are preexisting structures in the psyche, and therefore, it can be reaffirmed that essence precedes existence. The Jungian notion of the Self took the destroyed belief in the inherent meaning "out" in the universe and placed it back inside the psyche where it would be safe from the attack of those who find the universe "absurd" and without intrinsic meaning.

My point is that uncertainty is not new to our age. It is age old. But we experience our uncertainty as if the world has never witnessed the crisis of uncertainty that we are currently experiencing—and, in one sense, that is true. But it is also true that the only certain thing about the topic of uncertainty is that there is nothing new about it.

Uncertainty in the Twenty-First Century

It now seems as though the timing of the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks was no accident. That date, September 11, 2001, ushered in the twenty-first century's version of uncertainty, which includes everything from increasing uncertainty about the security of

the Western structures of democracy, to uncertainty about the future funding of the war in Ukraine, to uncertainty about the fate of human existence and all living things on the planet. Leslie Sawin takes this huge topic up in *Our Uncertain World*, a new collection of essays by Jungians.

We are such a prescriptive culture that a common response to uncertainty is to embrace simplistic diagnoses and remedies with fanatical devotion. This undoubtedly contributes to the rise of fundamentalist beliefs of all kinds—whether they be in the form of dogmatic religious or political ideas or the convictions of conspiracy theories. They have an answer. It apparently doesn't make a difference whether the answer is right or wrong. Kierkegaard had the heads up on this human tendency when he observed: "There are two ways to be fooled. One is to believe what isn't true; the other is to refuse to believe what is true."

The alternative to embracing beliefs that provide certainty is to embrace uncertainty as a precondition of being alive. This goes against the grain of our progress-oriented culture which has trained us to think in terms of a "bullet point" approach to life and its problems. Jungians are often no exception to this tendency and sometimes I think we should create a "Jungian center for wish-fulfillment" where our unflappable belief in transformation can be preached. Jungians love the promise of transformation. How do you prescribe transformation? And who made the promise that transformation is the inevitable result of hard psychological work? Transformation can be our tradition's seductive promise and prime mantra that is chanted endlessly. Transformation is offered as our tradition's antidote to the stress of living with uncertainty.

A Tentative Model of Psychological Stages of Collective and Individual Responses to Uncertainty

In an attempt to find some frame for approaching the topic of uncertainty in the individual and group psyche, I found myself imagining a schema that takes bits and pieces from several well-known contributors to psychological theory: Melanie Klein's contributions to object relations theory, Norman Cameron's study of paranoid psychotic processes, the Tavistock Institute's studies of group processes, Jung's notion of the creative unconscious, and, finally, some of my own thoughts about the mythopoetic imagination in a time of dystopian uncertainty. This model has three stages, or, as Melanie Klein preferred to call them, three "positions." I think of this as a hybrid and tentative hypothesis about varying individual and group responses to uncertainty along a spectrum from paranoia to depression and dystopianism to a breakthrough of creative energies and the possibility of renewal.

Attitude One: The Paranoid-Schizoid Position

Klein posited that a healthy development begins with the infant splitting its external world, its objects, and itself into two categories: *good* (i.e., gratifying, loved, loving) and *bad* (i.e., frustrating, hated, persecutory). This splitting makes it possible to introject and identify with the good. In other words: splitting in this stage is useful because it protects the good from being destroyed by the bad. Later, when the ego has developed sufficiently, the bad can be integrated, and ambivalence and conflict can be tolerated.

In the paranoid-schizoid position, the frustrating, hated, persecutory bad "object" is split off and projected outside of the infant or the "infantile" group mind. It protects the good from being destroyed.

This sounds so familiar when we think of how different groups around the world are currently relating to one another. It feels as if much of the world is in a paranoid-schizoid position, not that there aren't real forces of brutal destructiveness out there and in there.

I would like to combine Klein's notion with Norman Cameron's brilliant description of the origins of paranoid processes in the disturbed individual. Cameron describes a psyche that has become overwhelmed by uncertainty, confusion, and anxiety. As a last desperate attempt to bring some order to the chaos, the psyche constructs a simple narrative that offers clarity, even if it is a paranoid delusion or fantasy. The paranoid idea brings order to disorder, certainty to uncertainty. It doesn't matter whether the idea is right or wrong, true or untrue. What matters is that order and certainty have been restored out of disorder and uncertainty.

What if the collective psyche works in the same way? When there is too much information that is overwhelming and confusing, the collective psyche can easily be captured by a simplistic idea that explains it all. In a contemporary context, QAnon in the United States is a perfect example of a surprisingly widely shared paranoid belief system in its assertion that the world is controlled by the "Deep State," a cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles, and that former President Donald Trump is the only person who can defeat it. It may be outrageous and paranoid, but it organizes the world into a comprehensible simplistic narrative of why things are so disordered and bad. Cameron also pointed to another main feature of the paranoid mind—it creates a so-called pseudo-community in that it lumps together in the mind of the paranoid individual (and I would add paranoid group) whole groups of people who have no real relationship to one another who are suddenly joined together in the mind of the paranoid individual or group as a "cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles." This creation of a false community of people creates a unified enemy and fulfills the second part of Klein's original formulation of the paranoid-schizoid position—namely the schizoid splitting off of the frustrating, persecutory bad "object."

It is not a stretch of the psychological imagination to appreciate the tremendous pull of a collective psyche fixated on a world of good and bad objects, good and bad groups. The whole world splits. There is a suction from the collective psyche that can easily swallow any of us into the paranoid-schizoid position as it creates certainty out of uncertainty. The consequence is that our world has become populated by multiple pseudo-communities in which whole large groups of people are seen as belonging to multiple bad, persecutory evil “objects.”

Attitude Two: The Depressive Position

Klein saw the depressive position as an important developmental milestone that continues to mature throughout the life span. The splitting and part object relations that characterize the earlier phase of the paranoid-schizoid position are succeeded by the capacity to perceive that the other who frustrates is also the one who gratifies. Schizoid defenses are still in evidence, but feelings of guilt, grief, and the desire for reparation gain dominance in the developing mind.

In the depressive position, the infant is able to experience others as whole, which radically alters object relationships from the earlier phase. “Before the depressive position, a good object is not in any way the same thing as a bad object. It is only in the depressive position that polar qualities can be seen as different aspects of the same object.” Increasing nearness of good and bad brings a corresponding integration of ego.

If the paranoid-schizoid position offers the certainty of a fixed idea and strong emotional conviction in knowing that one’s self or group is good and right and just and the rest of the world is wrong and bad and persecutory, the depressive position in the individual and the group may be a developmental achievement but it comes at the cost of having to tolerate the knowledge that good and bad exist in all of us and in all groups. This

tolerance of ambivalence and the knowledge that one's self and one's group can be bad as well as good means living with the burden of a depressive mood.

We can think of dystopianism as the cultural or group experience of what we call depression in the individual. It is indeed a short step from talking about a depressive mood in an individual to talking about dystopianism in a group in which a negative attitude to life in general and the future in particular dominates. The dystopian mood that has overtaken much of the world in response to intolerable uncertainty, seemingly insoluble problems and unending conflicts is one of the most disheartening and disturbing aspects of contemporary life. It may be a psychological achievement to see oneself, one's family and friends, and the greater world community as being a mix of both good and bad and not split into good and bad. But living with that painful truth and reality can leave one in a state of disillusioned resignation to the uncertain fate of a world in rapid decline. A natural consequence of the dystopian mood is for the individual and the group to withdraw from active engagement in the world.

This withdrawal can take many forms and different degrees—from just giving up on any meaningful commitment at all in a nihilistic resignation to a more moderate disengagement with the broader world and a sharpened focus on what is in one's immediate surroundings. As in Lindberg's 1955 statement that the world has become too much to take it all in, the increasing moves to a more local focus of many—from food production to shopping habits to friendship circles to isolationism from involvement in greater world issues and conflicts—can be seen as a consequence of narrowing one's vision to what is manageable in a highly uncertain world.

What concerns me most about the rise of the dystopian mood as a reflection of the depressive position is that it kills whatever capacities we have to imagine a positive future or any future at all. It freezes everything and the resulting stasis is a calcifying killer.

Attitude Three:

Reflective Thinking, Social/Political Engagement, and The Mythopoetic Imagination

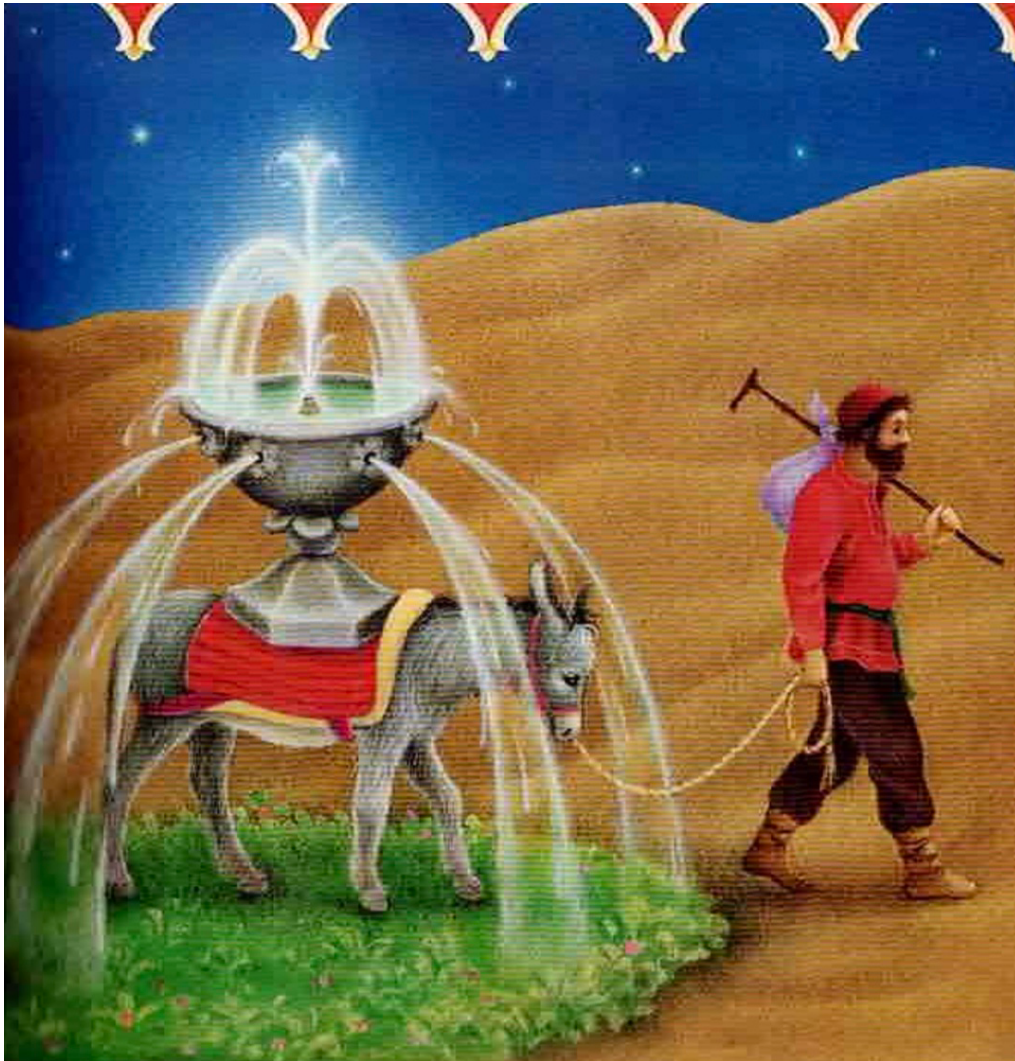


Figure 1

I am now going to shift from the focus on uncertainty and dystopianism in the paranoid/schizoid and depressive positions to what our Jungian perspective may offer as an antidote which I am characterizing as “attitude three” in the tentative schema I am

proposing. In this section, I will be using some images from one of my favorite children's books: *A Donkey's Dream*. I especially like the fact that the donkey grounds in earthly reality the various visions of the Self emerging from the creative unconscious—it is the donkey's dream after all and although it relies on the Christian myth I think people from all faiths including the Jungian can appreciate its appeal to the Self or fountain of creativity and renewal. Here is how Jung spoke about the potential for renewal emerging from the creative unconscious

“From the living fountain of instinct flows everything that is creative; hence the unconscious is not merely conditioned by history, but is the very source of the creative impulse.”

The tendency to cycle through the paranoid and depressive positions as natural responses to uncertainty in the world can block access in both the individual and the group to what Jung called the *creative unconscious*.

I have become increasingly convinced that the most positive way to deal with uncertainty and its resultant dystopian mood in the collective is to find access to the enormous energy and spirit that belongs to “the creative unconscious.” We cannot will ourselves into a good or open relationship with the creative unconscious. But we can cultivate a receptivity to its energies that flow through different people and groups in various ways, depending on temperament and typology.

I will outline three separate ways in which we can experience a breakthrough of the gridlock hold that the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions can exert on the creative energies of the psyche.

1. “Reflective thinking”. (reflection)
2. Social/political engagement. (action)

3. The mythopoetic imagination. (imagination)

These three modes of responding to dystopianism are hardly suitable to bullet-point application. Nor do they necessarily occur in isolation from one another: reflection, action, and mythopoetic imagination can blend in various alchemical combinations. But when they knock on the door of the psyche of the individual or the group, our task is let them help us break through the logjam and paralysis of the dystopian mood.

I will now offer examples of these three modes of gaining access to the creative energies originating in the unconscious

1. “Reflection”



Figure 2

Although it may not be at the top of many peoples' lists of how to respond to uncertainty and can easily be undervalued as not being active enough in the world, how can we respond creatively to our dystopian mood if we do not take the time and effort to reflect. Once again, I turn to Kierkegaard who noted: "People demand freedom of speech as a compensation for the freedom of thought which they seldom use."ⁱIn our own Jungian community this entire WUJ seminar series is an example of creating the space to share in reflective thinking that offers a gateway for creative energies to emerge from the unconscious. Ann Ulanov's most recent talk to WUJ, *Speaking to the Unspeakable*, is an example of the reflective psyche at its very best in which Ulanov, following Jung, says: "Psyche may push beyond blockages because its main activity is creative images. We may be moved to reaching toward a dot of good, of light, in the gloom of snarling and yelling in the pulls of death-dealing attractions. This is a fight and a contemplation: Hold to a dot of good in all the shambles of evil."

Following Ulanov's lead, we might even rediscover the "dot of good" in the democratic dream of the "shining city on the hill" as a "beacon of hope" and imagine it as Kyiv, a place constructed and inhabited by women and men aware of their great resources and their great responsibilities. We are embodying in this WUJ series the advice of Olga Tokarczuk, the Nobel Prize winning Polish novelist, who writes in *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*: "It's a good thing that God, if he exists, and even if he doesn't, gives us a place where we can think in peace. Perhaps that's the whole point of prayer—to think to yourself in peace, to want nothing, to ask for nothing."ⁱⁱ The Jungian Analysis and Activism list serve as another place for reflective thinking and sharing in peace, although it is often far from peaceful.

Action: Social/Political Engagement**Figure 3**

The second mode of breaking through the paralyzing hold of the dystopian mood on society is direct action. The movement from reflective thinking to direct action was beautifully enacted in Ukraine when, in November, 2013, Ukrainian investigative journalist, Mustafa Nayyem had enough of reflective thinking. Writing on his Facebook page, Nayyem urged his friends to join him in action, writing “Likes don’t count”—making it clear that the internet custom of showing electronic approval of a thought with a “Like” is

not enough. He urged people to take themselves to the street in direct action. And thus began the Maidon Revolution. We don't have to look any further than the experience of our Jungian colleagues in Ukraine to learn about how taking direct action can emerge as a spontaneous expression of enormous energies from the creative unconscious as a way to overcome the inertia of dystopian stasis. The Maidon Revolution sprang from the desire of the Ukrainian people to protect their freedom and the rule of law. That this was a spontaneous eruption of enormous energies is clear from Timothy Snyder's history of the uprising:

“In early 2014 the vast majority of protestors some 88% of the hundreds of thousands of people who appeared were from beyond Kyiv. Only 3% came as representatives of political parties and only 13% as members of nongovernmental organizations. According to surveys taken at the time, almost all of the protestors – about 86% made up their own minds to come, and came as individuals or families or groups of friends. They were taking part in what the art curator Vasyl Cherepanyn called ‘corporeal politics: getting their faces away from screens and their bodies among other bodies’.....As the philosopher Yermolenko put it ‘We are dealing with revolutions in which people make a gift of themselves.’”

In other words, a breakthrough of enormous spirit in a spontaneous collective action led to the flowering of a new nation that promised Ukraine's future would not be frozen in the timeless Russian system of an oligarchic kleptocracy—ie. a dystopian future. Not much attention in the West was given to this revolutionary time in Ukraine. But our ignorance about Ukraine's intentions for itself and Russia's intentions for Ukraine changed abruptly when Russia launched a full scale invasion against Ukraine on February 24, 2022 in an escalation of the [Russo-Ukrainian War](#) that had actually been going on since 2014. The 2022 Russian invasion and Ukraine's response did not happen in a geopolitical vacuum. Many countries in the West and elsewhere had been bemoaning a retreat of

democratic ideals in favor of the promise of greater security in the hands of autocratic rulers. But, just when democracies seemed most bogged down in paralysis with a rising tide of autocrats threatening to take hold of the reins of power around the world, President Zelensky came to symbolize a spirit of activism and renewal that took everybody by surprise. That many in the world have rallied to the support of Ukraine and reaffirmed the spirit of democracy has felt like a miraculous breakthrough, a true enantiodromia that has at least for the moment stemmed the tide of a dangerous drift to authoritarianism. Internationally, Ukraine's surprising resilience in the face of a brutal Russian onslaught has given hope that a shift in the spirit of the times might alter the defensiveness of the paranoid and depressive positions that have contributed to a deepening climate of dangerous dystopianism.

2. Mythopoetic Imagination



Figure 4

The third mode of responding to the toxic and paralyzing effects of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions that take hold of the individual and group psyche in response to uncertainty is what we think of as the mythopoetic imagination. During the height of COVID, with Russia's massive invasion of Ukraine still on the unforeseen and uncertain horizon—I stumbled into several projects that only retrospectively did I realize were unbeckoned breakthroughs of the mythopoetic imagination into a dystopian mood and stasis in which we could hardly envision anything positive or creative in the present or the future. When the mythopoetic imagination leaves port, all sorts of unimagined possibilities appear on the horizon.

These experiences of the mythopoetic imagination surprised me with a sense of delight and renewal, putting me on high alert to the importance of having an active “sniffer”—the capacity to smell—when something soulful breaks through and allows the spirit to set sail through the numbing fog of dystopia that has the effect of shutting us down to any signs of creative life-affirming energies. I want to highlight one project in more detail to give a sense of what I mean by the mythopoetic imagination.

As a senior in high school, Millie Kutz was home bound for a year because of COVID school closures. All of her academic and social life was conducted on the internet. In the absence of the stimulation of the school and friendship environment, Millie could have easily succumbed to the paralysis of her daily and future life with a mixture of paranoia and depression. Instead, something in the creative unconscious got stimulated in this already talented young artist and the mythopoetic imagination broke through the log jam of isolation, fear, and the all-pervasive dystopian mood. Instead, Millie embarked on a remarkable creative project—a series of 80 drawings that explore the growing dependence of young people on internet technology---. The time limits of this presentation only permit me to include a few of the images but a paper including many of them is available on ARAS in an interview that Jean Kirsch, and I conducted with Millie <https://aras.org/sites/default/files/docs/000146Kutz.pdf>.ⁱⁱⁱ

I want to focus on four of the drawings that speak specifically to the psyche’s responses to the impact of uncertainty that I have outlined in my schema. Among the many things that impressed me about her series, which we called *Millie’s COVID Fever Dreamscapes*, is the fact that Millie’s mythopoetic imagination did not deny the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions that overtook her at times. In fact, she faces them head on in her drawing. It is worth noting that Millie is not just being taken hold of by her own psyche but by the collective psyche and its cultural complexes as well.

Millie's Experience of the Paranoid-Schizoid Position

This drawing is as good a representation of the paranoid-schizoid position overtaking the group psyche as we might find. The giant eye of the internet hovers over Millie and all the people she knows.



Figure 5

About this drawing, Millie said to us:

“This drawing represents my fellow classmates and everyone I know who was engulfed by technology. There are so many people, and they go off into the distance, but you can still feel their presence in a sort of infinite regression. They are not all

the same person but many different people. We are all wearing the same colors as a way of saying that we are all in the same situation. But they are not all me. For instance, there are different kind of hair styles, and they are not all wearing the hat. In this drawing it is a single large eye rather than many eyes and I think the single eye is about technology as a whole and how overwhelming technology can be, about how tiny and insignificant you can feel when confronted with this entire online world. With social media, there is a sense that 'you're constantly being perceived online by thousands of people. It is crazy to think that so many people can look at something at the same time. It's just so huge. I have Instagram and recently I got on to TikTok where I've been posting my art. It's weird to think that so many people can look at one thing, that you can be seen by so many people. I posted one video that got a hundred thousand views. It's weird to think that so many people can know you exist and perceive you in a certain way."

Millie's Experience of the Depressive Position

This is one of the first drawings that Millie did in this series. It reminds one of Dorothy in Kansas at the beginning of The Wizard of Oz when the film is in black and white--before Dorothy is transported to the technicolor world of Oz and before Millie takes us into her brightly colored internet world. It is hard to make out Millie who sits cross legged and dark eyed in the very center of the drawing which she entitled Bleak Reality.



Figure 6

Here is how Millie describes this drawing:

“I think this was supposed to be like my reality—my mind—during those months of COVID isolation. It’s sad now that I think about it. My reality was a lot bleaker than the imaginative worlds I was creating or dreaming about. That’s why when I put all the drawings in a book I chose this as the first page. This is what reality was like. It was really bleak. A lot of people my age are getting addicted to this online world just because reality can be so bleak sometimes. When you have access to this very colorful, bright world that’s at your fingertips, why would you choose to stay in bleak reality when you can do all this instead?”

Millie's Experience of the Mythopoetic Imagination:**Figure 7**

In this stunning fusion of religious and internet symbolic imagery, Millie's mythopoetic imagination allows us to see more clearly how easy it is to confuse an attitude of sacred worship with reverence for the internet. I would suggest that in portraying a False Self image carried by the Internet, Millie is implying the existence of a True or Real Self image that is separate from that. Her mythopoetic imagination hints at a True Self behind the illusory false self of the Internet that is worshipped religiously.

Here is the exchange between Millie, Jean Kirsch, and me about this drawing:

JK/TS: This almost has a priestly Zen temple quality to it.

Millie: Yeah. So, this one was supposed to represent technology as a religion. Technology comes in and takes over, replacing human connection. Rather than relying on other humans for entertainment or comfort or anything, we're relying on technology.

JK/TS: It has a wonderfully centered feeling to it. There's an altar and it's almost like a mandala and it's very centered. And then there's that seated figure who has a spiritual feeling. But I guess the feeling of it is not wonderful. But it has the quality of a spiritual practice in it, of making a connection with something that's transcendent. In a way, you're implying that technology in and of itself is transcendent.

Millie: Yeah, because I feel technology is almost like religion in a weird way. It's this very unknown world that's greater than ourselves.

JK/TS: You weren't thinking of a transcendent spiritual centeredness when you were drawing this? You were thinking more in terms of technology taking over.

Millie: Yeah, like technology replacing religion,

JK/TS: Well, if it's about technology taking over religion, it looks religious. So technology can wear the guise of religion, but one needs to be careful about it then.

Millie: Yeah, especially because there's a crowd at the bottom.

JK/TS: So you're really consciously playing with a spiritual image in a way that says technology can replace religion and worship. People can worship technology. So the drawing is sardonic?

Millie: Yeah. Because I think there is something seductive about technology. The online world is very structured and grid like as symbolized by the retro color bars.

There is a tension between the orderliness of the technological world and the less orderliness of the human world. You can see how patterned and ordered the technological world is in this drawing.

Millie points to the orderliness of the internet as offering a most appealing analgesia to the disorderliness, bleakness, and uncertainty of living in everyday reality. Millie's ability to portray the paranoid and depressive positions of her responses to the uncertainty of COVID and the seductions of the internet have as their foundation the vitality of the mythopoetic imagination and its capacity to clearly see the dangers and false promises of a "brave new world". As opposed to the deadening of spirit and soul that are characteristic of the individual or collective psyche trapped in the paranoid and depressive positions, Millie's spirit shines through the very attitudes that could have paralyzed her. Her creative imagination allows her to transcend these "positions" even as it reveals them. She documents her own paranoia, her own depression, her own falling into a dystopian vision of the world—and, in that very witnessing, her considerable mythopoetic creative talent gives birth to a vision that transcends being trapped in those dystonic forces by seeing them clearly.



Figure 8

In the final drawing I am going to show, we get a glimpse of Millie struggling to literally find a position outside her passive dependency on the internet that offers the possibility of transforming paranoia and depression into something quite different as symbolized by the eyes becoming spirals that speak of a natural, unfolding organic wholeness. Millie said of this drawing:

“In this one, my alter ego is confronting the eyes rather than hiding from them. My alter-ego is at a panel, exercising control. **In taking control, my alter ego is able to hypnotize or mesmerize the eyes and turn them into spirals.** I don't know if I can actually control my relation to technology. I try. There have been times when I tried to go days without my phone and I deleted social media. But I always go back to it for some reason. I don't know if that's because so much of the world now is online that to keep in touch with news and friends you have to be on the internet whether you like it or not. I don't know if I'd say I have control of my being online. But in my mind, I like to play with that possibility that maybe I can gain control.”

Conclusion

Jean Kirsch, in her own moment of giving expression to the mythopoetic imagination, takes us back full circle to Olga Tokarczuk's notion of prayer as a place to think in peace when Jean writes rhapsodically about Millie's *COVID Fever Dreamscapes*:

“...we are no longer idealists of any political or economic ilk; and we feel with Yeats that, indeed, ‘the centre cannot hold.’^{iv} Yet, we draw back from the nihilism which seems to beckon and we seek meaning as our guide and protector. We count upon a certain resilience of being. We are struck by some manifestation of matter inspired by spirit—a sunrise or a symphony, a painting or the way a drop of water hangs at the tip of a blade of grass—and we are held in awe. Such is our experience of the rare burst of creative genius that Millie so casually handed to us with her fever dream paintings.”

My final point: we would all do well to become more alert to when the vitality of a soul or souls energized by the creative unconscious breaks through the deadening effects of our collective paranoid and dystopian attitudes that freeze life and its flow. Even if it sounds like I am a card-carrying member of the “Jungian center for wish-fulfillment and its unflappable belief in transformation” we glimpse in Millie’s drawing of eyes becoming spirals a transformation from paranoid/dystopian stasis to a restored rhythm of life’s natural unfolding, to a renewed sense of life’s possibilities. The Ukrainians fight for their existence and their freedom does the same thing and we join with them....

I will now hand this over to Daria who will show us how the creative unconscious has come alive in the most amazing way in the people of Ukraine.

Initiation by war. The Witch Archetype as a Guide to the Healing and Transformation of Femininity.

Daria Kunchenko

Good afternoon, dear colleagues. I sincerely thank each of you today for participating in the event in support of Ukraine. The whole world is currently experiencing difficult times of uncertainty and uncertainty about the future. The darker the details, the darker the storm cloud that hangs over humanity, regardless of faith,

geography or political system. First, the war in Ukraine, which from 2014 to 2022 was not even called a war. Then there is the war between Israel and Palestine, which takes a considerable number of human lives every day. There is also the threat to Taiwan's sovereignty, which makes the fate of every Taiwanese dependent on the upcoming elections. We are all going through extremely difficult times. But it is important that in times of destruction and loss, we can survive. And in times of trauma, when ties are broken, we appreciate the incredible support we have from each other.

Working with people in forced emigration for the second year in a row, I often hear stories of extremely difficult decisions to return home from the safety of Germany to great danger and hardship because they feel "cut off from their roots," or "as if their umbilical cord had been cut," or "as if they were hanging in the air hoping to set foot on their homeland once again." Many of my clients chose to return home, even to the most dangerous cities that are on the front line or partially under occupation, such as Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Mariupol, etc. They considered the threat of possible danger from rockets and shelling to be less of a threat to them than the loss of connection with their own roots, their own Soul.

In the first months of the war, when I was already in Germany, I had a dream: "I see a tree growing in the middle of a large grove, it is strong, with deep roots, full of vitality. Then I see the tree in a plant pot. The pot is large enough to fit the tree, but the roots have no access to the ground. At this point, I was overcome with a great longing in my dream and thought about the roots, the roots were completely isolated from the ground. This tree could survive, but did it live in the full sense of the word at that time? Then I saw 2 trees

next to each other, one slender and flexible, and the other strong and powerful, with centuries-old roots. Both of them were already growing in the ground.” For me, this dream became a realization of the depth of the grief of isolation and an incentive to search for my inner path to reconnect with the Self. As M. Eliade describes it, a tree is “the point of connection between Heaven, Earth, and Hell.” (1) I also recalled Jung’s words that “a person outside of myth is like a person without roots, who has no connection to the past and future within himself, as well as to modern human society.” (2) Thus, the revival of my own myth was the beginning of my journey of individuation through war.

In today’s talk, I would like to propose to consider the potential of the creative unconscious as a bridge to restore transcendence on the example of my client who revives the path to her soul through paintings. And also, to explore the deeper aspects of myth in Ukrainian culture through the study of the image of the witch in folklore and modern mythopoetry.

The Ukrainian folk view of magic was not monotheistic, but rather pantheistic. The image of the Ukrainian witch is dual, merging the elements of good and evil. Folk tales describe various ways of initiating a woman into a witch, including symbolic death and rebirth. In Ukrainian mythology, the witch has become a symbol of transformation.

Ann and Barry Ulanov in their book “The Witch and the Clown. Two Archetypes of Human Sexuality” note that the witch is the most significant missing element of gender identity, which in its negative form is the image of a woman obsessed with masculinity. It is the Witch who rejects the traditional image of the keeper of the hearth and chooses knowledge and the power to bend others to her will. “The Witch’s power lies in her knowledge of the secret life of nature, not society; her mind belongs to the unconscious,

not the rational. She embodies the problem that all women face in one form or another: how to integrate the dynamics of the counter-sexual aspect and embody all these undeniably masculine characteristics within a feminine identity.” (3) The witch is a symbol of female power, resistance, and rejection of stereotypes. The image of the witch in Ukrainian mythopoetry is much deeper than just a scary image. It reflects the desire of ancient cultures to defend the need for equality and freedom.

The Witch archetype constantly leads us to connect with our unconscious, as if mesmerizing our consciousness. (My client’s dream: “I am standing on a battlefield and see bloody battles of confrontation. I am very scared because I feel in danger. I realize that my future will depend on the outcome of the battle. On a distant hill, I notice a woman with long hair laughing loudly as she watches this action. I find myself standing next to her and seem to be frozen, unable to move at all. At this moment I see that she is playing a musical instrument like a harp, but this is how she controls the events on the battlefield. She offers me something to eat so that I can learn to play this instrument like that. I am scared, I realize that there is no turning back.”).

We cannot avoid it on our way to becoming who we are. If we come into contact with it, even if we find ourselves in its power for a while, it can lead to constructive transformations. Like in this dream: “I am driving in a car on mountain roads. I see that a woman is sitting in the car with me, she looks like a crazy person, she gives off a dangerous vibe, her hair is tousled. She scares me, I want to get rid of her. I try to direct the part of the car where she is sitting to push her to the side of the road. The woman has crazy eyes, as if demonic lights were burning in them. There’s a big rock in front of us, I’m afraid we’re going to crash, so I let go of the steering wheel, and she takes the wheel with a sly smile

and we just drive through the rock. We survived and now I can walk through the rock. I am grateful to this wild woman.”

Usually, a witch is someone who lives far away in the forest, in the thicket, in the swamps. That is, someone who is more connected to nature than to society, someone who lures us away from the conscious into the world of the unconscious, into the world of archetypes. Nature shows us that the world is dual, that there is an external and an internal world, and the witch sees this duality and combines it. This gives her power. A witch is someone who can withstand suffering and death. The source of the witch’s knowledge is the inner source of the unconscious, which is so far from patriarchal rational thinking. The witch personifies the missing masculine aspect.

The deepest roots of witchcraft can be found in ancient shamanic practices. In the Paleolithic and Mesolithic periods, shamanism was a male profession, as male hunters were the main breadwinners. But in the Neolithic period, with the spread of plant cultivation, women also gained a similar status. It was at this time that the Great Goddess became the main ruler of the world in people’s imagination, and it was more convenient for her to convey her will through her daughters, witches, who understood her better and thus became the ruling force in society. Analyzing the transformation of the image of the goddess in world mythology, E. Neumann writes: “From the image of the Great Mother, the Good Mother is separated, recognized by consciousness and proclaimed valuable by the entire known world. The other part, the Terrible Mother, is suppressed in our culture and largely expelled from the conscious world.” So great was the horror of the Dark Goddess, who was the personification of affects and instincts, that the shadowy aspects were displaced and objectified in the images of women half-demons. (4) In Ukrainian

demonology, the witch is ranked higher than mermaids, busurkani, foresters, etc., because she combines two energies-human and natural.

According to Ukrainian mythology, there were only two ways to become a witch: either by inheriting this knowledge (a born witch) or by going through an initiation ritual that can be compared to a deep trauma and sacrifice to gain knowledge (a trained witch). Most of the trained witches were widowed women, women with a deep wound from loss. The fire of pain and suffering, sometimes hatred, triggered an alchemical process of transformation. Having lost a real man, a woman went in search of unconscious male energy in her psyche.

We can see a similarity with initiation in shamanism. Initiation is the beginning, awakening. But on the other hand, initiation is also a loss of innocence. Only some shamans can inherit the gift, most of them go through initiation with the “shaman disease”. Usually getting a wound that doesn’t heal or pain that doesn’t go away. Transformation begins with accepting the fact that pain is important and an inevitable part of life. It is experienced as a “dark night of the soul”.⁽⁵⁾ This wound leaves a mark, but it is this mark that allows for inner healing and transformation. A shaman, like any awakened personality, realizes his or her original and own essence, lives in accordance with it, realizing the being of the Self, i.e. individuation. For Jung, the process of individuation is an open struggle and open cooperation between the mind and the chaotic life of the unconscious.

In Ukrainian literature, a witch is also often depicted with a snake’s body, such as Zmiivna in the fairy tale “Ivasyk-Telesyk”, or the enchanted princess from the fairy tale “Gryts and Viper”. In the Tryplian culture, the snake was a symbol of fertility and

personified the feminine principle. According to Neumann, the snake is a complex ambivalent image-archetype, which is a symbol of primordial unity and perfection. “It is a coiled serpent living in its own cycle of life, the original dragon of the beginning biting its own tail, 'Ουροβοος (Greek) begetting itself.” He kills, marries and impregnates himself. It is man and woman, begetting and beginning, devouring and giving birth, active and passive, above and below, all together. (4)

The snake is a symbol of wisdom - it is both masculine and feminine, combining opposites. The phenomenology of the snake is that it is capable of reincarnation, changing its skin every year. The snake creates vibrations, it can curl into a ring, spiral or choose a wave-like shape. The ambivalence of the image of the snake is traced in its nature - snake venom can kill, but is used in medicine; she can remain motionless for a long time, or make a lightning jump, etc. The snake is widely considered a symbol of initiation, it symbolizes the dark forces in man. The positive and negative principles are in conflict, as, for example, in the cases of Zeus and Typhon, Apollo and Python, Osiris and Seth, the eagle and the serpent. The snake also symbolizes the primal instinctual nature, the surge of life force, uncontrolled and undifferentiated, the potential energy that inspires. (6)

Another important attribute in shamanism is feathers, a symbol of spirit and air. Feathers as an important transformative aspect in Ukrainian folklore can be found in the fairy tale “The Lame Duck”. When she shed her feathers and turned into a girl, she turned back into a duck. When her feathers were burned, she turned into a bird and flew away, never to return. The burning of the feathers by deception here symbolizes an attempt to keep the psyche in the rational world of matter, completely cutting it off from the spiritual world. But this act causes it so much pain that it can no longer remain in the material

world and chooses the path of its Soul, forever abandoning its human form. Traditionally, the stork is the patron bird of Ukraine.

Often in shamanism and witchcraft, the symbol of “awakening” or gaining new knowledge is the “third eye”. It is considered a gateway to higher consciousness and spiritual realms, as well as a source of intuitive knowledge and insight.

The witch creates a connection between the external and the internal, creating synchronization. This transformation can be perceived as a symbol of inner transformation and liberation. In the folk imagination, the witch often embodied not only strength but also magic, wisdom, and power over the spirit world. The most famous image of a witch in Ukrainian culture is Solokha from N. Gogol’s *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*. She impressed with her mastery of magic and her ability to resist social conventions.

Today, witches are portrayed as strong, independent women who possess inner strength and wisdom. In particular, the works of such writers as Maryna Lutsenko and Lesia Ukrainka reflect the image of the witch, who acts as a symbol of female emancipation and the fight against patriarchal ideas.

The creative unconscious

The creative unconscious is an inexhaustible source of innovations, ideas and discoveries. The concept of the creative unconscious is related to the work of Carl Jung and his theory of the collective unconscious. He believed that creativity arises from delving into consciousness and unconsciousness, where elements of the collective unconscious become a source of inspiration and new ideas. In his work “Creativity and the Unconscious”, Jung emphasizes that our thoughts, feelings and ideas that we carry in our unconscious have a

great influence on our creativity. Often it is there that the deepest and most important ideas for our creative activity are hidden.

Jung believed that the autonomous essence of the creative impulse, as something that operates outside of consciousness, is reflected in the symbolic nature of art. Symbols express the unknown, hint at something beyond our understanding. Jung believed that they had deep historical roots; primary images from the realm of the unconscious were reflected in mythology. The creative process guides the artist to extract these images from the collective unconscious and present them to us as archetypal symbols. For Jung, it was a powerful psychological phenomenon: “He who speaks with primordial images speaks with a thousand voices” (Carl Jung. Artistic impulse, neuroses and madness as part of creativity).

Al's story

I was approached by a young woman of 37 years with sleep and eating disorders. At the first meeting, I felt interested, even admiring and sympathetic to her.

Here is what Al told me about herself:

“I have been working constantly to avoid contact with the horror of death that has befallen me for the last 8 years. I came from the East of Ukraine. For me, the war started back in 2014. To avoid feeling it, I had to work, manage and control all the time. I tried to be diligent in everything, a wonderful wife, a caring mother. I created for myself a rigid framework of what I should be and tried my best to meet these standards. I don't feel like I was really living. And it started much earlier... my life was like an instruction manual that I was following.”

In the first months of our work, Al would start meetings by looking closely at her own image on the screen. It was like her need to find her reflection through the reflection in my eyes, to see herself. At some moments, I felt unprotected and powerless around Al. When she told me about her achievements, I felt unworthy and carefully controlled my words. Also, at such moments, I seemed to lose touch with my own body, and sometimes I experienced severe headaches and bouts of nausea. At the same time, Al did not feel her body, it was as if it were covered with concrete. This strong dissociation allowed her to separate herself from the intense feelings of pain and loneliness, despair and intense longing that she was experiencing. Al's story was not easy; since childhood, she did not feel maternal warmth and parental love. She learned to mask her longing for social activity and achievement from an early age. When she was still a child, her parents divorced and her stepfather appeared in her life. Like her own father, she received no love from him, only beatings for "wrong" actions. Her mother never defended her, but rather scolded her and scolded her even more. At times, she reminded her of a stepmother, and Al fantasized about finding a new family. My patient learned to hide her true feelings and dreams and tried her best to guess the new rules of the game of life. The lack of warmth and love caused her despair and depression. Al tried to disguise her inner pain and abandonment from the world. In order to survive in such an abusive and violent environment, she had to abandon her "true self" and build a strong shell of defenses, a "false self" that would protect her immature childhood psyche from disintegration.

It was difficult for her to talk about herself during the sessions, and she mostly talked about how well she had done with the planned tasks, how satisfied or dissatisfied she was with her results. This was reminiscent of her style of communication with her mother, in

which urges, spontaneity, and imagination were not important, and the evaluation was always on the result. This is how Al learned to ignore her own needs and feelings from an early age. In her teenage years, Al expressed all her inner pain through destructive behavior, and later she obeyed the rules. During psychotherapy, Al realized how deeply she had isolated herself. She did not allow herself to be spontaneous and creative. Realizing her limitations and the need for an additional container, she accidentally met a woman selling paintings on the street. This gave her the idea to buy paints and canvases.



Image 1 "Loneliness"

This is how the client describes this painting: “This is an acceptance painting.” It was created over a period of 14 months and consisted of 3 layers symbolizing three different stages of life. Al describes the experience of painting the painting as follows:

“The first layer was just brushstrokes - I was crying and couldn’t stop. It was all pain, grief, despair and hatred, regret and powerlessness. The second layer is the eyes. In all my paintings I had eyes as a symbol of a new look, a look full of despair and pain. This painting is also about reconciliation for me. At first, these eyes were something big and evil, but in the end, I saw a new look that no longer frightened me. It was real, able to see something more. It was a clear look. In this picture, I accepted my loneliness, the complete lack of real support with an outwardly perfect picture. This vulnerability and the building of boundaries and the realization of the experience of my own worthlessness. The physical distance made me realize my separateness from other people, to understand who I am. Through pain, I was able to find the arrested or lost parts of myself. I had a feeling that I was losing my mind. The paintings became a container for what my consciousness could not hold. They became my guides. In the third layer, the figure of a little fairy appears. She brought me inner support, peace and hope.”

Through the description of these stages of painting, we can see the stages of transformation of the patient’s psyche. At the first stage, when it was just brushstrokes that could not be held, we can see displaced experiences or objects impossible to realize. The canvas became a kind of container for the archaic unconscious beta elements of Al. At this stage, our meetings were full of emotions. She was literally drowning in feelings. (This is what can also be called a paranoid schizoid position. In other words, Al kept all the “good” aspects of herself, such as kindness, openness, caring, concern for others, and responsibility, while completely splitting off the parts that cause anxiety, confusion, and uncertainty.) In the second layer of the drawing, we can see two different views. This is an

opportunity to see differently, to see from several sides. As an opportunity to withstand ambivalence (Depressive position). Al calls this view scary and witchy, which transformed into clarity.

Around that time, Al had a dream:

“I see myself surrounded by several men and feel a strong sexual attraction to them. I am surprised because I forbid myself to flirt with other men. But this attraction is stronger than me, and I let go of control. I start seducing them one by one, then they all hug me, I am ecstatic. They are now completely at my mercy.”

This aggressive sexuality aimed at control and power shows us the obsession with the Animus when our ego cannot cope with internal distortions. The deep need for intimacy gave rise to a desire to consume.

During this period, Al began to bring stories to the sessions about conflicts that had occurred in her life. Each time it was a story of suffering and unseen inner content that forced her to fight and defend herself. She was surrounded by people who demanded, condemned, and abandoned her in the most difficult moments, and she had to stay “in this dark room surrounded by monsters” over and over again. She was angry with me, sometimes even furious, and said that our meetings were not enough for her, they were too short, she felt as if I was abandoning her every time. At such moments, I would cry inside, feeling powerless. Once, there was a situation when she needed someone to pick her up after surgery. She was very afraid, worried, and told me how difficult it was to find a person with a car in a strange city who could take care of her in her moment of vulnerability. I felt that she seemed to expect this physical human help from me. My two identities were torn inside me. But I felt how important it was to keep the analytical framework. It was our Temenos, a strong container in which transformation would be

possible. Accepting and realizing this powerlessness allowed us to protect the inner content. She went to the surgery knowing that her image lives on in me. Al describes this experience as an opportunity to see something differently, and as an opportunity to be seen. Al's words: "It changed me, like I could never share something deeper than the literal with anyone."

The little fairy that appears on the third layer of the painting personifies the archetype of the Divine Child as a symbol of the transformation of the self. The symbol of the child represents the true but invisible "roots of consciousness", "the childhood aspect of the collective soul". The motif of the child compensates for the inevitable one-sidedness of consciousness. It is a symbol that unites opposites, a mediator, a carrier of healing. This is how we can observe how numinous psychic reality helps the traumatized ego. At this point in the countertransference with this client, I no longer felt like I was losing contact with my body or that my body was attacking me.

The emotional intensity of our meetings no longer flooded us, but instead made it possible to see behind this waterfall to see images emerging from the depths of the cave, which was hidden behind a strong stream of water.

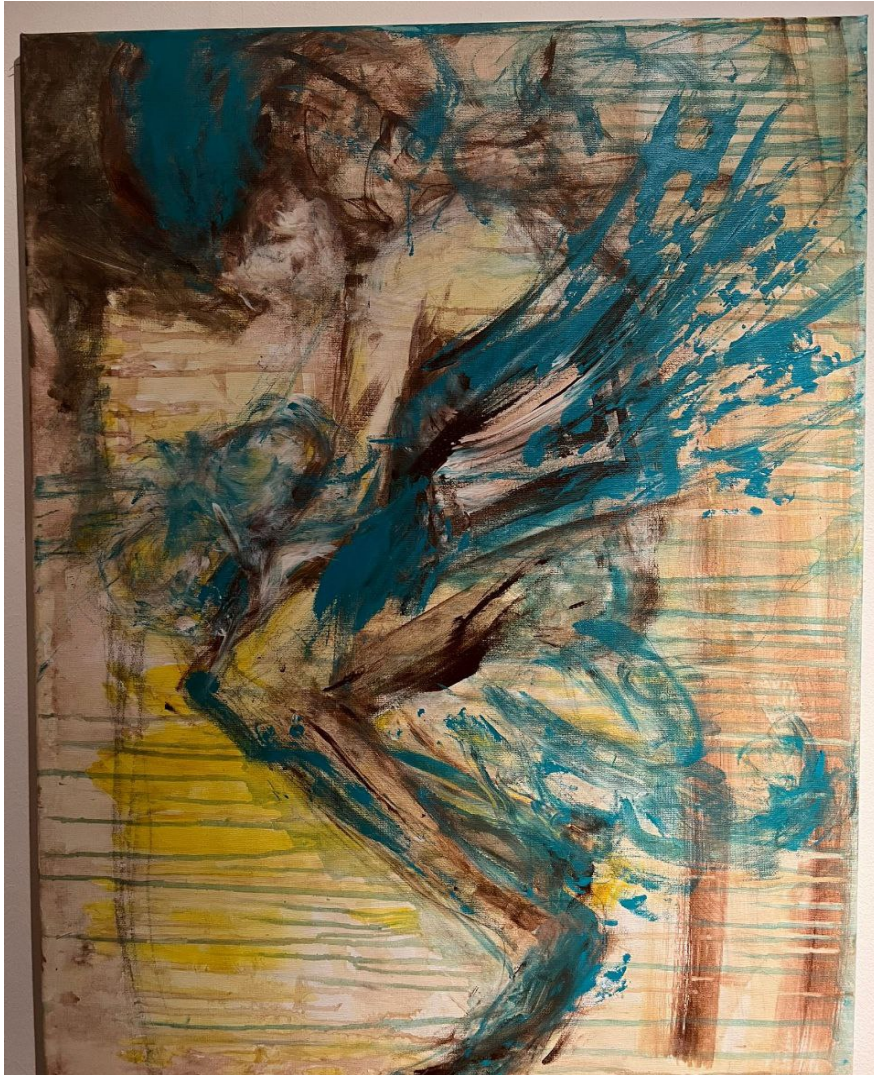


Image 2: “Helplessness”

Al describes this painting as follows:

“A girl lying on the floor. She is experiencing pain and ecstasy. This painting is about inner liberation. Through this painting, I experienced the whole waterfall of feelings that I hadn’t allowed myself to feel throughout my life. It’s about acceptance and powerlessness, about pain and watching this pain. This experience was like a waterfall bursting from inside me and falling on me with a powerful stream, immobilizing me. I felt like I was dying and coming back to life at the same time. In this picture, there is also a picture of an eye, it is washed with tears.”

In the second painting, we can see a contour similar to the blue wings of a butterfly. According to M. Stein in his book *The Transformation of the Self*, it is the transformation of the caterpillar into a butterfly that can help the “false self” to die, to actually decompose into molecules in order to make the spiritual transition to the “true self,” to its imago.

Although the processes in the paintings reflected Al’s individual processes, we also cannot help but notice a certain synchronization with the collective processes in the psyche of Ukrainians. At first, it was complete chaos and undifferentiated feelings. Later, thanks to differentiation, we managed to identify a “new look” or “clear vision”. The ability to withstand ambivalence and difficult experiences at the same time. Ukrainians who have left have already begun to build parallel lives in new countries, to love, rejoice, be in and break relationships, while feeling the pain of losing their homes, worrying about their loved ones, and fearing uncertainty. The third stage is a symbol of the transformation of the Self. It is about the ability to find the symbolic in oneself after losing something real, to internalize the lost objects.

After 1 year and 8 months of work, Al had a dream. “Meeting my inner man”.

“We are coming out of an underground tunnel with other people. It feels like everyone knows each other. You can’t see people’s faces, only images. It is a warm spring outside. There are cobblestones underfoot. The atmosphere of the French Riviera of the 70s. I am wearing a dress. Ahead of me walks a tall man with a slim build. He is carrying my handbag (it’s a very feminine handbag, and it’s small - I don’t have one yet). The bag is open and contains a large glass of beer with a handle. It spills over the edges and into the bag. Meanwhile, I am pulling two large bags of vegetables and flowers. And he is with my handbag and doesn’t even try to help me. I notice that the beer is spilling and my irritation is reaching its limit. I snatch the bag from his hands and quickly walk forward. He does not try to catch up with me and help me in any way. I just keep going as long as I can, then the bag of fruit

bursts and the oranges start rolling in different directions. I try to collect them. Everything is falling out of my hands. And I'm ready to explode. By this time, this man comes up to me, puts his hands out in silence. And I fall into him sobbing like a child after a difficult day at school. He hugs me and I find myself at home. The feeling is pleasant and calm. As if nothing is scary anymore, nothing can harm me or upset me. Neither problems nor the world exist in this embrace. There is only me, and I am alive. I woke up smiling.”

In this dream, we can see Al meeting her Animus, who was no longer attacking. From a threatening enemy, he turned into a supportive image that returns a sense of support and encouragement. It was the recognition of inner powerlessness and limitations, the ability to accept the frightening and annoying in oneself that contributed to the integration of the masculine into the feminine, and facilitated internal transformation.

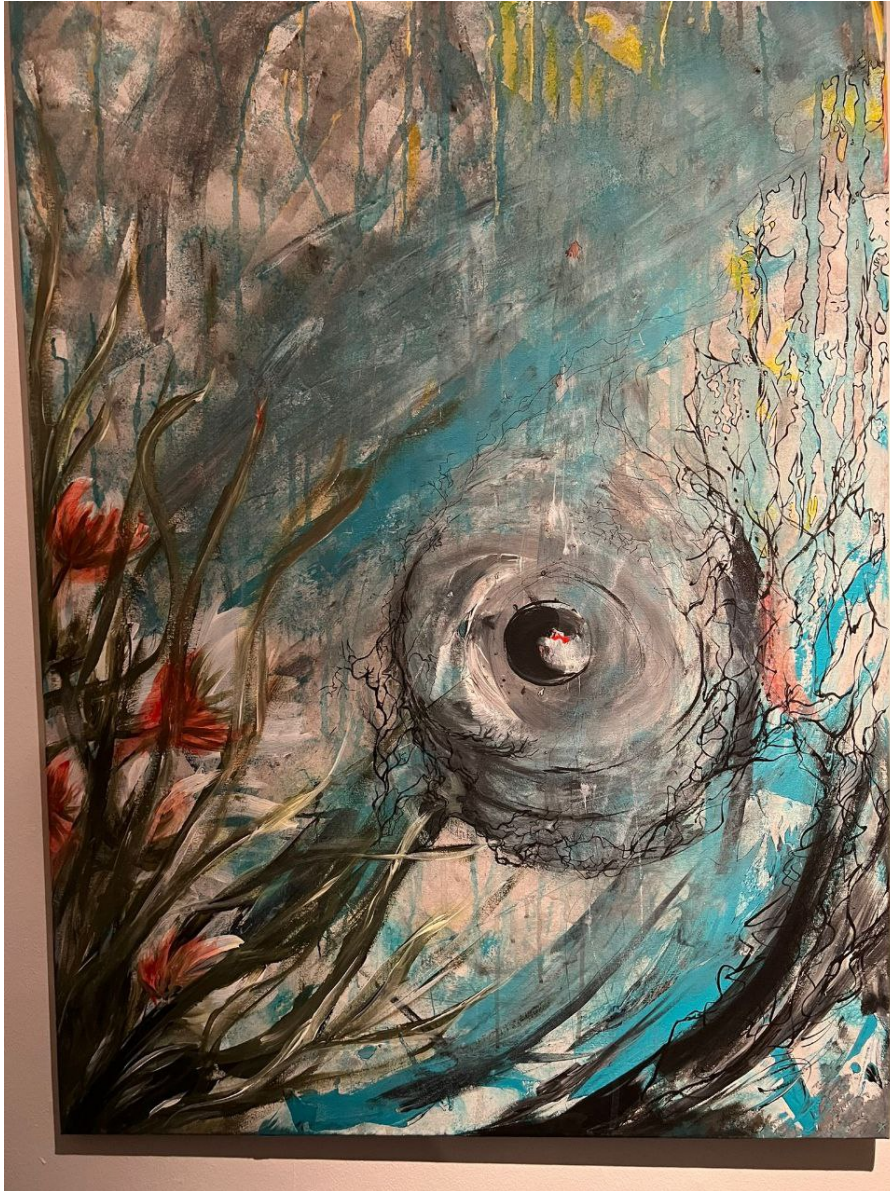


Image 3: “Yin Yang”

Al talks about this painting as a completely different painting, significantly different from the previous ones. It does not show pain and suffering, it depicts balance.

Al’s creative impulse became the bridge that connected the inner and the outer, opening the path of individualization, the path to the Soul.

Before the New Year, just as this presentation was being prepared, an interesting synchronistic event happened. Al went on a short trip to Germany, to the Black Forest, where the Brothers Grimm wrote their fairy tales. After visiting the museum where the writers worked, Al decided to take a walk and accidentally found the Witch's House in the depths of the forest. It was decorated for Christmas, with a waterfall on one side turning into a rapid mountain stream, and black mountain tops on the other. And she describes this experience as follows: "I found an exact reflection of my inner witch's house. It no longer scared me at all, but on the contrary, I felt calm." Thus, finding an inner contact with the witch archetype led to a powerful transformation from a frightening and incomprehensible object into a supportive inner object that helps one find one's own identity.

I would like to end my presentation by thanking all those present, as well as our defenders. I would like to close with a popular music video that has been one of the most viewed contemporary music videos for many months.

<https://youtu.be/3EJ4Clo7QSc?si=WK9h8A88S3EVihSn>

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Response to Tom Singer and Daria Kunchenko

Pi-Chen Hsu

Tom and Daria, thank you for gifting us with such a remarkable presentation! The images you shared truly resonated and enriched your message. And we're about to move into Q&A time. Please don't hesitate to fill the Q&A box with your questions. We will summarize them and ensure your voices are heard. Before the questions come in, I would like to shortly respond to Tom and Daria's presentation.

As we approached the end of the 2023, I shared a holiday greeting with a friend detailing my year and mentioning some cross-off bucket list items. The friend's surprised response "*it seems a little early for you to start working on your bucket list*" stuck a chord. Tom's talk on the "depressive position" resonated deeply with my experience. Millie's *Dreamscapes* beautifully mirrored this internal struggle, particularly how social media has trapped us in isolated "paranoia-schizoid" position. Ironically, the social media was supposed to connect us outward to a broader and more diverse world. The giant single eye in Millie's drawing represented how we were lock in our own pseudo social bubble. Our

perspectives narrow, and we worship the opinion leadership on social media, waiting for them to tell us what we should believe and what we should agree with. We spoon-fed information through “dummies” books, meme, and short videos, lulled into the illusion of understanding complex issues in under 15 minutes.

Millie’s courageous act of facing the giant eye in her *Dreamscape* ignites a powerful transformation. As she turns, the single gaze dissolves, replaced by a dance of multiple spirals. This change beautifully illustrated what Tom propose as the Jungian’s antidote of this dystopian time. Each spiral holds the potential for both inward and outward journeys. When it spirals in, we go inner to a place of peace and contemplation, to an interior space of memories and self-exploration. When it spirals out, the energy is outflowing and expansive. We take action and we engage with grassroot movement in making differences. While Millie was uncertain if she can truly have control of this giant eye, her true power lies not in domination, but in the freedom to choose. Each spiral whispers an invitation, beckoning her inward or outward, for personal growth or for positive societal change.

Daria’s presentation echoed the introspective depths of Millie’s *Dreamscapes*. The suffering from the war and the profound loss in life forced Ukrainians to spiral in and to connect to the archetypal level of consciousness. It’s the encounter of life and death, good and evil. It is a brutal encounter, but like the struggle of the butterfly trapped in its cocoon, navigating this painful truth is a necessary step towards transformation. Remember the tale of boy and butterfly? The boy watched over the butterfly struggled to break from the cocoon. The boy, eager to help, snipped a slit in the cocoon resulted in the butterfly’s wings being crumpled. The butterfly was no longer able to take flight. Without the struggle to break through the confinement, the emerging new butterfly lack the strength to embark on

her new journey. Just as the butterfly's struggle strengthens its wings for flight, Millie and Al's own challenges have given them the resilience and perspective to embark on their new journeys. It is the struggle that makes her stronger and brings out a new look and a new cosmos in motion.

The journeys of Millie and Al resonate deeply with the ancient myth of Inanna. Just as the goddess descended into the underworld to ensure life's renewal, so too do Millie and Al confront their inner darkness. This descent echoes Daria's amplification of the Witch archetype, particularly in the figure of Inanna's "dark sister," Ereshkigal. Perera (1932) describes Ereshkigal's realm as a space of

depression and an abysmal agony of helplessness and futility—unacceptable desire and transformative-destructive energy, unacceptable autonomy (the need for separateness and self-assertion), split off, turned in, and devouring the individual's sense of willed potency and value. (p. 26)

These are the very forces that we often deny, armoring ourselves against their unsettling gaze. Ereshkigal's eyes of death can petrify us with fear, while her eyes of depression freeze our lives, rendering everything stagnant. Yet, the myth of Inanna whispers a powerful truth: only through conscious and willing surrender can we turn the dark goddess into life. The healing arises

not only because the meaning or image is found, but because the process of life is giving attention and empathetic presence and a mirroring that touches it whenever it is. (Perera, 1932, p. 74).

Al's discovery of the witch's house in the Black Forest and the transformative image of the waterfall becoming a rushing stream resonate deeply with me. It echoes the image of the fountain in the Donkey's Dream in Tom's presentation. Maybe similar to Tom, I also

sounds like a member of the “Jungian center of wish-fulfilment;” however, I think my belief in transformation has some reality base. As I prepared this response transcript, an analysand reflected on the recent election and her New Year’s plan. Although unsure of her exact path, she declared, “*I want to help the general public have more conscious awareness.*” This simple expression allows me to have faith that the donkey can unload the boat. The fountain gushes, the waterfall roars, and the stream surges onward. This collective energy, like a rising tide, lifts the boat. It will carry the boat of our shared future forward.

Thomas Singer, M.D., is a psychiatrist and Jungian analyst in private practice in San Francisco. Dr. Singer’s newest book is entitled *Mind of State: Conversations on the Psychological Conflicts Stirring U.S. Politics and Society* which has been co-edited with fellow contributors to *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump*. Dr. Singer is the editor of a series of books exploring cultural complexes in different parts of the world, including *The Cultural Complex, Australia (Placing Psyche)*, *Latin America (Cultural Complexes of Latin America)*, *Europe (Europe’s Many Souls)*, *North America (Cultural Complexes and the Soul of America)*, and *Southeast Asia (Cultural Complexes in China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan)* In addition he has edited *Psyche and the City, The Vision Thing*, co-edited the *Ancient Greece, Modern Psyche* series and co-authored *A Fan’s Guide to Baseball Fever*. Dr. Singer currently serves as the President of National ARAS which explores symbolic imagery from around the world.

Daria Kunchenko was born and raised in Kyiv in a family of young doctors. All her life she saw herself as a doctor in the future. And so she did, entering medical school in 2006. Along with her studies, she worked for almost 3 years in oncology intensive care, but traditional medicine raised more and more questions, and the search for answers to which led her to psychology after almost 4 years of studying medicine. After moving to

Drahomanov University, she simultaneously began studying child and then family psychology and psychotherapy. She has been running a private psychological practice since 2011. In 2018, she began her journey of becoming an analytical psychologist. She works with adults and children. Since the beginning of the war, Daria has moved to Hamburg, where she also works with Ukrainian IDPs.

Pi-Chen Hsu, Psy.D., is a counselling psychologist in Taiwan, a clinical psychologist in California, and an analyst member of the Taiwan Society of Analytical Psychology. Dr. Hsu received her doctoral degree from California Institute of Integral Studies, and she received analytical psychology training through the International Analytical Psychology Scholar Program of C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco. Pi-Chen's areas of interests are attachment, infant observation, and symbolic representation of psyche. In 2021, she co-authored the article of "The House Imago and the Creation of Order," in K. Nakamura & S. Carta (ed). *Jungian Psychology in the East and West: Cross-Cultural Perspectives from Japan*. Oxon: Routledge. Her doctoral degree dissertation is on *Mother-Child Separation and Second Generation Attachment Representation—A Case Study of a Taiwanese Hakka Family*. In addition to her clinical practice, she also devotes her time and energy in translating analytical psychology books into Chinese. The following Jungian books have been translated and published by PsyGarden publisher in Taiwan: "Children's Dreams: Notes from the Seminar given in 1936-199", "Inner Work: Using Dream and Active Imagination for Personal Growth," "Trauma and the Soul: A Psycho-Spiritual Approach to Human Development and its Interpretation," "Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales," "The Problem of the Puer Aeternus," "The Interpretation of Fairy Tales, Revised Edition," and "Jungian Life."