RED: amplification of a color

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INTRODUCTION

“The really important psychic facts can neither be measured, weighed nor seen in a test tube or under a microscope. They are therefore supposedly indeterminable, in other words they must be left to people who have an inner sense for them, just as colours must be shown to the seeing and not to the blind.” — C. G. Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*

You could tell the whole story of Carl Jung’s *The Red Book* by means of colors. It begins with a fight between the archetypal opposites of black and white. Red then interposes itself with its dimly perceived wisdom to lure Jung forward into the dark underworld, and into action to kill off the too-blond, too-heroic life of the ego.
Figures 1-3  Jung watching the fight of the black and white snakes, approaching the red crystal in the underground cave, seeing the dead Siegfried, the scarab, and the underground sun, C. G. Jung, The Red Book, Liber Novus, fol. iii(r), Cap. iv, fol. iii(v)
Jung is pulled into the sacrifice of his red blood on a cross and then drawn into the joyous life of The Red One, beyond the opposites of good and evil.

He gets red blood on his hands from the death of a vagrant. The black and white of an ascetic anchorite and his words give way to a burning red sun rising over a yellow desert. Jung encounters black death, watching a bloody red sun glowing over dead bodies washed...
ashore from a dark sea. Red One and white-robed anchorite meet and, becoming companions, cancel each other out. In reaction, Jung retreats into solitary green growth of human being beyond the to-and-fro of human doing. After a brief flirtation with chameleon-like concealment, Jung encapsulates the god he next meets, red-and-blue-attired Izdubar, into a white egg.
Jung is plunged back into red violence and death in the service of life, eating the liver of a red-haired child while a shrouded, also red-headed, figure looks on. A gift of magic, the magician’s black staff of power, red blood and white bird, red blood for his soul, then taking refuge in the blue of Philemon’s kingfisher wings.
A green frog god is born. The dead demand their due of red blood. At tale’s end, a blue shade appears, walking in a garden.

Gaston Bachelard, that philosopher of science and poet of the elements, observes that the soul “possesses an inner light, the light that an inner vision knows and expresses in the world of brilliant colors, in the world of sunlight.” In the inner visions of The Red Book, color mainly appears as given, prior to conceptual organization by means of schema or code. Color colors—gives life and substance, materiality and sensual form—to the complexly crafted exposition of Jung’s fantasies, and the concrete and symbolic resonances of these colors give chromatic body to Jung’s evolving experience of self.

To perceive the inner light of color in Jung’s Red Book, the way color works in Jung’s soul, we must, paradoxically, develop what Bachelard calls a “material imagination,” a capacity for “material reverie.” This means we must investigate, not only the inner appearances, but also the outer modes, the concrete manifestations, of color, and the ways these two intersect. To do this is to honor Jung’s, and the alchemists’, understanding of the correspondence of levels—as above, so below, or as we might also say, as without, so within—to understand spirit/psyche/body/world as a mutually reflecting and interpenetrating whole, constituted of the same substance. For, according to Jung, inner and outer are not separate, nor even merely related, but actually one:

Since psyche and matter are contained in one and the same world, and moreover are in continuous contact with one another and ultimately rest
on irrepresentable, transcendental factors, it is not only possible but fairly probable, even, that psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing.

Yet, he continues,

Our present knowledge does not allow us to do much more than compare the relation of the psychic to the material world with two cones, whose apices, meeting in a point without extension—a real zero-point—touch and do not touch.¹

A painting in *The Red Book* provides a visual image of this zero-point—blue and green cones “touching and not touching,” a minute space opening between the apices:

![Figure 8 Liber Secundus, Image 72](image-url)
Exploring this zero-point, a place of no extension—where psychic and material both touch and do not touch—is in some senses the point of Jung’s analytical psychology. That point is also the place where Bachelard’s material imagination can flower. The following meditation on color attempts to give this zero-point, this minute opening, dimension and color, so that its resonances may allow inner and outer to be rejoined.

To understand how colors work physiologically, psychologically, materially, culturally, and archetypally, to develop our material imagination of colors, what James Hillman terms an “aesthetic method” is called for:

The [aesthetic] method follows Jung’s method of amplification: building the power of a theme by amplifying its volume with similarities, parallels, analogies. The method is also empirical in that it starts and stays mainly with actual experiences. Further, the method is phenomenological; let the event speak for itself. ... An aesthetic method relies on texture, images, language, emotion, and sudden mysterious arrivals. The method complies with and submits to the content. Logos in the embrace of psyche. ...

An aesthetic method ... would let the beauty of an event, its sweet shock, instruct the soul, educate it by leading it to an edge, out of the box of the already conceived and into pondering and enjoying. The method suits the correspondences that compose the cosmos itself, each thing implicating other things by likeness rather than only by causality, in an implicit order of the world. Metaphors and analogies abounding. The display of images addresses the “poetic basis of mind,” which is our most native mode of comprehension.
Seeing analogies, similarities, connections, implications, references, reverberations, and relationships gets us out of the box, outside the lines, beyond the forms that provide colors with their safe edges. It goes past the one-to-one, simple correspondence of concepts to colors that is the common shorthand used in “decoding” chromatic symbolism. But the dominance of linear, logical thought in literate Western society means that, in order to make full use of the opportunity offered by a color in a dream, an active imagination, a story, or a mood, we may need to have our directed thinking knocked off the throne of reason. The aesthetic method, this poetic basis of mind, can circumambulate colors, amplifying empirically, phenomenologically, and metaphorically, in order to understand the correspondences between archetypal and empirical, cultural and psychical, embodied in the colors we experience in our inner and outer lives.

ARCHETYPAL COLOR(S)

Colors are the world itself, and this world is not merely a colored world, as if by accidents of light and chemistry, or as if decorated by a painterly god. Colors present the world’s phenomenal actuality, the way the world shows itself, and, as operational agents in the world, colors are primary formative principles. — James Hillman, “The Seduction of Black”

To take seriously Jung’s insight that psyche and matter are “aspects of one and the same thing” means to reverse the way the modern western scientific and philosophical tradition understands colors—as an surface epiphenomenon of our visual apparatus, as a code by means of which we schematize our experience, or as a subsidiary phenomenon that ornaments shape or form. Treating colors as “primary formative principles” raises
the surface of things—visual, sensual, material phenomena—to first importance at the same time as it connects it to depth. In this view, color is “of the essence,” an understanding that matches our phenomenal experience.

Color, Hillman observes, is a carrier of significance that connects us to the sense of our surroundings:

[The earlier and alchemical proposition that change of color reveals change of essence ... corresponds with the way we actually live in the world. Colors of the sky, sea, sunset portend the coming storm. As a fruit sweetens on the stem, its color changes. As a patient sickens, we see pallor, jaundiced skin, cyanotic lips, brown urine, empurpled nose, raspberry tongue, red rashes, white exudates, black stools. The human eye’s ability to distinguish 20,000 varieties of hue helps us read the inherent intelligibility of the world.]

This view that color is essential to our understanding is reiterated by Charles Riley, who has written a survey of color theories in philosophy, art, architecture, and psychology. Indeed, Riley claims that color is one of the gifts, along with fire and language, that mark us as humans and characterize the way we interact with our environment:

[A] world without color ... would not simply be a world lacking a secondary quality of doubtful significance. It would be a world lacking “legibility,” in which the connections among things and the connections between the observer and those things are suddenly dissolved.... [C]olor sense is a third Promethean gift, like language or fire. Completely mastering it is
impossible, but the power it imparts to those who dare to handle it is as profound as that of light itself.\textsuperscript{8}

Color sense as a one of humankind’s essential attributes, equal to our ability to talk and to make things—for Riley, \textit{homo sapiens} is not only \textit{animale rationabile} and \textit{homo faber}, but also \textit{homo pigmentis}!\textsuperscript{9} This idea is not only the fanciful conceit of a philosopher of color—it is both foundational myth and historical fact. In the Old Testament story of humankind’s beginnings, the first human being is called by the name of a color—Adam, $\text{הָדוֹן}$, who is fashioned from red earth, is named “red-brown.” And coeval with the emergence of \textit{homo sapiens} from the other “featherless bipeds” around 285,000 years ago is the symbolic use of red ochre. Employed in pigment as early as the Middle Stone Age, as ornament and sacred burial rituals from as early as 33,000 BP, and in cave art, where humans invented the visual image, from at least 25,000 BP, color—and particularly red—is central not only to our comprehension of the world but to our very way of being in it.\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Animale rationabile} and \textit{homo faber} are, in fact, \textit{homo pigmentis}.

To recognize color as a “primary structuring principle” of our experience is to see it, in Jung’s terms, as archetypal. It is to understand that our multilayered experience of color arises from our essential embeddedness in this world and the mutual correspondences of all its levels. Emphasizing this immersion, Jung comments in the \textit{Zarathustra Seminar}: “[D]o you think that somewhere we are not nature, that we are different from nature? No, we are in nature and we think exactly like nature.”\textsuperscript{11} This deeply-held intuition of the unity of all things and beings, including human beings, implies that color is more than a surface phenomenon, that it connects all the levels of psyche and beyond, from the
mystical to the material, from spirit to nature—from the ultraviolet to the infrared, to use Jung’s colored metaphor of psychic functioning. Thus if color is archetypal, its symbolic resonances will include the material and the concrete as well as the abstract and the spiritual.\textsuperscript{12}

Marie-Louise von Franz’s diagram of the span of the archetypal gives a visual image of this continual interchange among levels:

\textbf{Figures 9-10} Visible spectrum\textsuperscript{13}/Marie-Louise von Franz, Diagram of span of the archetypal from infrared to ultraviolet\textsuperscript{14}
As von Franz’s diagram shows, to view color in this way is to comprehend that the symbolic inheres in the phenomenal, that if we plumb the heights and depths of the image, we will also re-engage in the specific, the sensual, the concrete, in the world of things.

In My Name Is Red, the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk’s enchanting mystery novel set in sixteenth-century Ottoman Istanbul, two old blind Persian miniature painters are chatting as they work. One tells a parable that places color at the origin of both human and divine experience of the world:

Allah created this worldly realm the way an intelligent seven-year-old boy would want to see it; what’s more, Allah created this earthly realm so that, above all, it might be seen. Afterward, He provided us with words so we might share and discuss with one another what we’ve seen. We mistakenly assumed that these stories arose out of words and that illustrations were painted in service of these stories. Quite to the contrary, painting is the act of seeking out Allah’s memories and seeing the world as He sees the world.15
The old artist claims that to make color tell the story, as Jung does in *The Red Book*, is to see the world as Allah does. This allegorical rendering of Jung’s insight that “image is psyche” construes visual images as prior to conceptual language—sees images as the native “speech” of the psyche.17 As anyone knows who has held off directed thinking long enough to experience the endless parade of astonishing figures proliferating at the threshold of sleep and waking, the unconscious psyche does indeed seem to “think” in a visual idiom. And as many philosophers and art theorists attest, from the nineteenth-century art critic John Ruskin to that ecstatic of nature, Annie Dillard, the “innocent eye”—the eye seeing the world before the imposition of conceptual ideas onto what it sees—sees in colors.18
INFRARED—THE PHYSIS OF COLOR

The world is as we see it in our dreams and poems, visions and paintings, a world that is truly a cosmos, cosmically adorned, an aesthetic event for the senses because they have become instruments of imagining. — James Hillman, “Alchemical Blue and the Unio Mentalis”

The soul’s experience of colors, its “material imagination,” marries archetypal origin to empirical event. And not only color as such, but individual colors have archetypal significance, for like the resonances of individual natural numbers, the reverberations of each of the colors is distinct. The archetype of red is not that of yellow or black or white or blue or green.

But how do colors work in our psyches? Tying together the material and the spiritual by way of the personal and the cultural, how do our very particular, subjective, even idiosyncratic experiences of colors, so interlaced in memory, emotion, and individual association, accord with the mystical, historical, cultural, sensate, bio-physiological, and material characteristics of color?

Since, according to Jung, the material/instinctual and the spiritual/archetypal are so closely linked by means of the soul’s experiences, anywhere we start will lead us to all the other points of entrée. Circumambulating the archetype of color, let us begin at the infrared level—the level of “physis, body, instinctual mechanical reactions” located at the
bottom of von Franz’s diagram. This most “rational” of explanations for our relationship to color will quickly lead beyond causality to likeness, beyond logic to metaphor.

As we have seen, color is one of the primary ways we humans make sense of the world. We see red because our eyes have evolved from the blue-yellow sensing of even single-celled organisms to the blue-green-red vision of some primates, including ourselves. “Seeing red” confers many advantages in finding food, discerning sexual readiness, and sensing danger, an evolutionary innovation possessed by many, but not all, primates. Biologists have differing theories about the advantages of trichromacy, but by enabling us to see the colors of sex, food, and danger, and to feel the emotions arising from desire, hunger, and fear, red-green-blue vision is crucial to our senses, and our sense of things.

Figures 12-13 Spectrally, yellow can be split into red and green; according to some evolutionary biologists, red-green vision evolves from the yellow pole of blue-yellow vision / Trichromacy vs. dichromacy

According to the evolutionary psychologist Nicholas Humphrey, color’s most basic function is to signal—to attract attention, convey information, and stimulate emotions.
At this level, the effect of color is unconscious, a physiological response that we experience as an affect arising from instinctual reactions:

Whatever the level of the message, signal colours commonly have three functions: they catch attention, they transmit information, and they directly affect the emotions of the viewer—an orange arouses appetite in a monkey, a yellow wasp fear in a fly-catcher, the red lips of a young woman passion in a man.24

Color attracts—or repels—and impels us to action; Humphrey theorizes that red is so often used for signaling information both because of its strong value and because it occurs naturally in red-blooded animals:

There are two good reasons why red should be chosen to send signals. First, by virtue of the contrast it provides, red stands out peculiarly well against a background of green foliage or blue sky. Second, red happens to be the colour most readily available to animals for colouring their bodies because, by pure chance, it is the colour of blood. So an animal can create an effective signal simply by bringing to the surface of its body the pigment already flowing through its arteries: witness the cock's comb, the red bottom of a monkey in heat, the blush of a woman's cheek.25

However, color's energies impinge upon us not only through our eyes. At long wavelengths, according to experiments done in the 1930s by the French neuro-endocrinologist Jacques Benoît, colors can penetrate the skin and skull, even affecting the hypothalamus.26 Describing these experiments, psychologist of art René Huyghe concludes:
Color really works like a bath. Red increases the muscular tone, the blood pressure, the breathing rhythm. It is at once a physical and a mental stimulant. ... Green, on the other hand, lowers the blood pressure but dilates the capillaries. ... As for blue, it is the most depressing color because it lowers the blood pressure, and simultaneously reduces the pulse rate and the rhythm of breathing; it is quieting and calming, sometimes too much so.\(^\text{27}\)

This is true not only for us humans, but also for other creatures such as monkeys and pigeons.\(^\text{28}\) Huyghe notes that “popular wisdom” and “old wives’ tales” capture these unconscious bodily experiences in metaphoric form—“seeing red,” “singing the blues.”

Figures 14-15  Blue (RGB 0,0,255) vs. red (RGB 255,0,0)

The blind Persian miniature painters in *My Name Is Red*, chatting as they work, muse about the color red:
“Because we’ve spent our entire lives ardently and faithfully working as painters, naturally, we, who have now gone blind, know red and remember what kind of color and what kind of feeling it is,” [says one.] “But, what if we’d been born blind? How would we have been truly able to comprehend this red that our handsome apprentice is using?”

“At such a great issue,” the other said. “But do not forget that colors are not known, but felt. ... If we touched it with the tip of a finger, it would feel like something between iron and copper. If we took it into our palm, it would burn. If we tasted it, it would be full-bodied, like salted meat. If we took it between our lips, it would fill our mouths. If we smelled it, it’d have the scent of a horse. If it were a flower, it would smell like a daisy, not a red rose.”

For the miniaturists, the “bath of color” Huyghe describes is a synaesthetic experience not dependent upon sight. This level of operations, at the boundary between the psychic and the physical, is what Jung refers to as the psychoid: that unconscious—and incapable of becoming conscious—“lower” end of the spectrum of the psychic that shades over into the instinctual. But the instinctual, for Jung, is intrinsically connected to the other pole of the archetype, the spiritual. Ultimately it is nearly indistinguishable, since “the archetypes are the unconscious images of the instincts themselves,” the “self-portrait of the instinct,” and “[t]he archetypal image represents the meaning of the instinct.”

As conscious and unconscious, visual and synaesthetic experience, colors thus conjoin opposites—instinct and image, material origin and cultural form—in paradoxical relationship. And the opposites of material and spiritual, instinct and archetype,
according to Jung’s formulation, create a potential within which and by means of which the soul experiences itself as real:

Opposites are extreme qualities in any state, by virtue of which that state is perceived to be real, for they form a potential. The psyche is made up of processes whose energy springs from the equilibration of all kinds of opposites. The spirit/instinct antithesis is only one of the commonest formulations, but it has the advantage of reducing the greatest number of the most important and most complex psychic processes to a common denominator. So regarded, psychic processes seem to be balances of energy flowing between spirit and instinct, though the question of whether a process is to be described as spiritual or as instinctual remains shrouded in darkness.32

What is experienced by the soul aesthetically—that is, as phenomenologically real—gives access, as Hillman points out, equally to instinct and to spirit. In our dreams, fantasies, and dayworld experiences, colors knit together what conceptual language takes apart. Collating inextricable mixtures of personal memory and taste with cultural convention, concrete particularity with semiotic system, emotional evocation with conceptual structure, colors marry the schematic to the aesthetic, essence to existence.

**PSYCHE’S EXPERIENCE—THE SUBJECTIVITY OF COLOR**

“Color is a power which directly influences the soul.” — Wassily Kandinsky33
While colors do carry largely unconscious, somatically-experienced signals for humans, we also experience color more consciously, as a sensation. In between the material and the spiritual, the infrared and the ultraviolet, in the soul’s conscious experience of itself, we find the counterpoint to color’s biophysical universalities in our irreducibly subjective relationship to the multifarious shades of our experience. Color, in other words, is not only bodily-affective, symbolically spiritual (and, as we shall see, lexically logical and mystically transcendent), but individually associative, and above all emotional. What makes colors so compelling is this indissoluble combination of subjective intensity, cognitive legibility, and ineffable “isness.”

Riley notes that “The sheer multiplicity of color codes attests to the profound subjectivity of color sense and its resistance to categorical thought.” This “profound subjectivity” means that each of us possesses a unique and idiosyncratic relationship to the way individual colors structure our experience. The lift in your heart from a bright blue sky, the stab of fear from the tan of the pants worn by the bully who came after you in fifth grade, the pang of nostalgic longing for the pink roses in your grandmother’s garden, the obscure dread aroused by the lurid wine-red curtains lining the scenes of Twin Peaks, the shiver of attention to the woman in a red dress that turns Neo’s head in The Matrix, the joyful challenge of the bright splash of red with which Turner triumphs over Constable in Mr. Turner—our reactions to these memories and images are both individual and visceral, signaling color’s combined evocative, affective, and expressive power.
In subjective experience, all colors are particular, and each one draws us into the world of things at the same time as it calls attention to the intrinsically psychic nature of our experience of that world. This complexly subjective experience of color is what Humphrey and others term *qualia*—what it is like to be encountering something, or the “*ways things seem to us.*” Humphrey claims that sensation incorporates evaluation—how, or what, we feel about a stimulus:

[S]ensing is not a passive state at all, but rather a form of active engagement with the stimulus occurring at the body surface. When, for example, I feel pain in my toe, or taste salt on my tongue, or equally when I have red sensation at my eye, I am in effect reaching out to the site of stimulation with a kind of evaluative response—a response appropriate to the stimulus and the body part affected. Indeed what I experience as my sensation of “what is happening to me” is based not on the incoming information as such but rather on the signals I myself am issuing to make the response happen. ... This is how I feel about what’s happening right now at this part of the field of my eye—I’m feeling redly about it.

As with pain, there is no way to compare my sensation of a color with yours, because there is no objective exterior referent. Humphrey argues in *Seeing Red: A Study in Consciousness* that, because of its inherent subjectivity, the essential nature of a sensation cannot be described to another person except in terms of itself.

In his paean to the color blue, William Gass nonetheless tries, attempting to overcome the inherent solipsism of sensation by amplification, accumulating and accreting, piling
on image after image in order to inundate the reader in sense impressions, thus to arrive at an essence by elaboration. Evoking the cold, the absent, the withheld, the distant, the dismal, the empty, and the sad, including the mournful petite mort of sex, Gass rhapsodizes about blueness:

Blue pencils, blue noses, blue movies, laws, blue legs and stockings, the language of birds, bees, and flowers as sung by longshoremen, that lead-like look the skin has when affected by cold, contusion, sickness, fear; the rotten rum or gin they call blue ruin, and the blue devils of its delirium; Russian cats and oysters, a withheld or imprisoned breath, the blue they say that diamonds have, deep holes in the ocean and the blazers which English athletes earn that gentlemen may wear; afflictions of the spirit—dumps, mopes, Mondays—all that's dismal—low-down gloomy music, Nova Scotians, cyanosis, hair rinse, bluing, bleach; ... the shaded slopes of clouds and mountains, and so the constantly increasing absentness of Heaven (ins Blaut hinien, the Germans say), consequently the color of everything that's empty: blue bottles, bank accounts, and compliments, for instance, or, when the sky’s turned turtle, the blue-green bleat of ocean (both the same), and, when in Hell, its neatly landscaped rows of concrete huts and gas-blue flames; social registers, examination booklets, blue bloods, balls, and bonnets, beards, coats, collars, chips, and cheese ... the pedantic, indecent and censorious ... watered twilight, sour sea.43
Gass manages to evoke in each of us our subjective experience of blue, connecting our subjectivities together in common experience.

With its embeddedness in experience, memory, and emotion, the sensation of color is both characteristic of, and productive of, consciousness and a sense of self. According to Humphrey: “Sensation lends a here-ness and a now-ness and a me-ness to the experience of the world.” With the evolution of complex sensory/neurological systems in primates, and especially in humans,

the activity of sensing is destined to become self-sustaining and partly self-creating, so that sensory experiences get lifted into a time dimension of their own—into what I have called the "thick time" of the subjective present. ... [T]he establishment of this time-loop is the key to the thing we value most about sensations: the fact that not only do they have quality but that this quality comes across to us in the very special, self-intimating way, that we call the “what it’s like” of consciousness. ... The philosopher Gottlieb Frege made a similar claim, saying “An experience is impossible without an experienc. The inner world presupposes the person whose inner world it is.” ... My own view is that self-representations arise through action, and that the “feeling self” may actually be created by those very sensory activities that make up its experience.

Like Humphrey, Jung observes a connection between action and experience when he notes that “it is impossible to say which comes first—apprehension of the situation, or the impulse to act. It seems to me that both are aspects of the same vital activity.”
ULTRAVIOLET—THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE OF COLOR

The whole world, as we experience it visually, comes to us through the mystic realm of color. Our entire being is nourished by it. — Hans Hofmann, “Search for the Real”\(^{47}\)

![Figure 21](Hans Hofmann, *The Golden Wall*, 1961, detail)

The intimate connections among sensation, experience, action, feeling, and subjectivity are, for the blind painters in *My Name Is Red*, encapsulated in the primary sensation of vision. Poignantly, red is for them an experience that must be seen to be understood, an experience whose ineffable meaning, its “isness,” both precedes and exceeds any ideas or other ancillary attachments. Echoing Jung’s declaration that colors cannot be explained to the blind, they muse:

“What is the meaning of red?” the blind miniaturist ... asked again.
“The meaning of color is that it is there before us and we see it,” said the other. “Red cannot be explained to he who cannot see.”

But what is it to “see”? So different is the “aesthetic method” or “material imagination,” the “poetic basis of mind” that Hillman advocates, from the ordinary manner we have of looking at things that seeing the fullness of the world’s coloredness—regaining for however short a time the “innocent eye” before colors become coded into customary meanings—may have the intensity of a spiritual awakening. Ruskin, for example, differentiates among the qualities of yellow, blue, and red, conceiving of red as the most abstract color:

Now, this scarlet color,—or pure red, intensified by expression of light,—is, of all the three primitive colors, that which is most distinctive. Yellow is of the nature of simple light; blue, connected with simple shade; but red is an entirely abstract color.

Yet red surpasses his neat categories, and he ends up describing in the paintings of William Turner a surprising and specific visual experience of red shadows:

[T]he peculiar innovation of Turner was the perfection of the color chord by means of scarlet. ... [and h]is most distinctive innovation as a colorist was his discovery of the scarlet shadow. “True [says Turner], there is a sunshine whose light is golden, and its shadow gray; but there is another sunshine, and that the purest, whose light is white, and its shadow scarlet. ... I must indeed be lower in the key, but that is no reason why I should be false in the note. Here is sunshine which glows even when subdued; it has not cool shade, but fiery shade.”
The scarlet that Turner sees and paints, and that Ruskin adores, is anything but abstract; it glows with a light that seems to come from within itself and makes the shadows palpable and substantial.

Aldous Huxley, high on mescaline for the first time, has a similar, but even more intense, experience of *Istigkeit*, or the “isness” of things, while looking at the shadows of a blue chair:

That chair—shall I ever forget it? Where the shadows fell on the canvas upholstery, stripes of a deep but glowing indigo alternated with stripes of
an incandescence so intensely bright that it was hard to believe that they could be made of anything but blue fire. ... At any other time I would have seen a chair barred with alternate light and shade. Today the percept had swallowed up the concept.

When the percept—the experience—takes over the concept, color becomes primary, imbuing the ordinary with the extraordinary:

[H]ow significant is the enormous heightening, under mescal, of the perception of color! ... It would seem that, for Mind at Large, the so-called secondary characters of things are primary. Unlike Locke, it evidently feels that colors are more important, better worth attending to, than masses, positions, and dimensions. Like mescal takers, many mystics perceive supernaturally brilliant colors, not only with the inward eye, but even in the objective world around them.51

Huxley stresses color’s sensual predominance over the more conceptual aspects of visual reality. But the blue fire he sees also transports him into the territory of the mystical, where light does not fall onto objects, but rather inheres in the colored things of this world, both funding them and partaking of them at the same time. The two blue paintings shown below, both “about” the intensity of blue light, display this difference. Marc Chagall’s Interior with Flowers portrays the objects, however beautiful, as flat and lifeless except as they are illuminated by the light from the window, whereas the painting on the right, by an unknown contemporary painter, shows the objects it depicts as constituted of the colors they manifest, so that the color emanates from them rather than being bestowed upon them. Although we may admire Chagall’s painting as better art, the “isness” of blue is made more clear in the second painting.
What is the nature of this self-sufficient, self-generating, fiery blue? The prophet Ezekiel declares sapphire blue to be the mystical color of the Throne of God. Blue is also the color of the “show threads” or fringes on the robes of the Israelites, the sign of the experience of the divine Shekhinah. Blue’s mystical, spiritual, ascendant qualities, its “blue fire,” is also evident in Henri Matisse’s Chapel at Vence, a small space illuminated by stained glass windows that throw a blue hue across walls and floor.
Matisse well understood the vibratory resonance of colors, declaring that “For me, color is a force.” In designing the chapel windows, he used only three very strong colors—blue, yellow, and green—to evoke the sky, the sun, and the cacti of the surrounding Mediterranean landscape. The simple white interior is lit up in blue like the interior of a glass lamp.

Figures 27-28  Matisse, *Chapelle du Rosaire de Vence*, details of stained glass windows behind altar
Matisse wanted the colors to act compellingly on the worshippers’ feelings, “like a sharp blow on a gong”—to instigate enlightenment, the way a Zen master does by striking his students: “Attention—wake up! Pay heed to your experience in this moment!”

For both Huxley and Matisse, the overriding power of blue stimulates the experience of mystical immanence. This ecstatic immersion in color is nowadays mostly the province of artists or people in love, and we rely on them to evoke such experiences in the rest of us, as when Ella Fitzgerald sings:

Blue skies smiling at me,                                                   Never saw the sun shining so bright,
Nothing but blue skies do I see.                                           Never saw things going so right.
Notice the days hurrying by,                                               Notice the days hurrying by,
Bluebirds singing a song,                                                  When you’re in love, my how they fly.
Nothing but bluebirds all day long.                                        Nothing but bluebirds all day long.
Blue days, all of them gone,                                               Blue days, all of them gone,
Nothing but blue skies from now on.

(Yet as the song suggests and Huyghe confirms, blue is also experienced as sad, as “having the blues.” Why the bifurcation of meaning? In answer, Hillman distinguishes between two alchemical kinds of blue, one that makes the transition between black and white, a lightening but not a complete banishing of the nigredo, and the other the celestial blue of the caelum—the last stage, the quintessence, of the alchemical opus.)

Intense color in large doses creates a paradoxical abstraction and intensification of ordinary perception. A palpable atmosphere is made present in Color Field or Post-
Painterly Abstraction paintings, which aim at vibrations of “pure color,” free of history and culture and productive of an experience of the present. Mark Rothko says:

> It is the ... specific configuration of the medium that we call a work of art that brings feeling into being. ... [T]he medium can, of its own accord, carry one into the unknown, that is to the discovery of new structures.⁶¹

A painting is not a picture of an experience; it is an experience.⁶²

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The appearance of color in a dream may be a call to pay attention to such an experience of pure presence, in which meaning inheres without concepts. For example, a man dreams:

> There are patches of a dark red-brown powder, like the tracks of a holy person.
Besides asking about the associations to holiness, and the kind of holy person this is, and besides the association one might have to the Rumi poem about the dust raised by a saint’s footsteps—

You walked past me, and I rose,
as dust rises behind the walkers.
And now I am settling down again,
as dust settles on the road.\textsuperscript{63}

—or the longer poem, “Sanai Is Dead,” that beautiful verse in which the saint is compared to “fine powder in a rough clay dish,” and to golden wine and wine dregs that “mix and rise and separate again/to meet down the road”—

Someone says, \textit{Sanai is dead}.
No small thing to say.
about which poets are so ambiguous,
he married that one to the beloved.

He was not bits of husk,
or a puddle that freezes overnight,
or a comb that cracks when you use it,
or a pod crushed upon the ground.

He was fine powder in a rough clay dish.
He knew of what both worlds were worth:
A grain of barley.
One he slung down, the other up.

The inner soul, that presence of which most know nothing,

His pure gold wine pours on the thick wine dregs
They mix and rise and separate again
to meet down the road. Dear friend from Marghaz,
who lived in Rayy, in Rum, Kurd from the mountains,
each of us returns home.

Silk must not be compared with striped canvas.
Be quiet and clear now
like the final touchpoints of calligraphy.

Your name has been erased
from the roaring volume of speech.\textsuperscript{64}
—we might also be aware that here color itself functions as an invitation to mystical experience. So we might also notice that these powdery tracks are red-brown, and wonder, what is the specific kind of holiness manifested in the color red-brown? And what is the exact color and makeup of the red-brown powder? There are important distinctions among red ochre, russet (made from the plants madder and woad), and rust, both in hue and in origin. Where does this holiness come from—earth, vegetable matter, or metal? From what part of psychic experience is it arising—solid, supportive grounding, the ongoingness of “vegetative” life, or the slow evolution of metallic ores, the stuff of transformation, into and out of their current state?

This dreamer seems to be able to attend to, and experience, the immanent transcendence offered by his dream. But another dream ego reacts differently to an ineffable occurrence:

*Driving in the country, I pass a field of red flowers shining in the sun. It is so beautiful that I wish I could stop and walk into the field, but I don’t have time, so I text someone about it.*

Of colors, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe remarks that

People experience a great delight in colour, generally. The eye requires it as much as it requires light. We have only to remember the refreshing sensation we experience, if on a cloudy day the sun illumines a single portion of the scene before us and displays its colours. That healing powers were ascribed to coloured gems, may have arisen from the experience of this indefinable pleasure.
But this person, like the blind man pitied by the Persian miniaturists, “cannot see.” That is, although he has eyes that allow him to perceive the flowers, he has no ability to really experience them. Instead of wading into color, he stands outside it and tells someone about it, preferring words about experience to the experience itself. He does not step into the bath of red, the “isness” of the color, the meaning present in the encounter. According to Goethe, he is denying himself something he needs as much as he needs clear light. And according to Humphreys, he denying himself the sensation, not only of color, but the feeling of “here-ness and now-ness and me-ness.” The dream ego denies himself—or refuses to take the time for, or feels he cannot afford—awareness of himself as a reflective consciousness. And to deny himself red, as we shall see, is to deny himself life itself.
Figures 32-33  Claude Monet, *Poppy Field near Argenteuil*, and detail, 1873
COLOR AS RELATION

[T]he qualities we taste in wine, touch and feel along the thigh while loving, hear as singing, sniff from the steaming pot, or observe articulate the surface of a painting are, in fact, relations. Furthermore, the sense of passion or of power, of depth and vibrancy, feeling and vision, we take away from any work is the result of the intermingling, balance, play, and antagonism between these: it is the arrangement of blues, not any blue itself, which lets us see the mood it formulates, whether pensive melancholy or thoughtless delight, so that one to whom aesthetic experience comes easily will see, as Schopenhauer suggested, sadness in things as readily as smoky violet or moist verdigris.

Blue as you enter it disappears. Red never does that. Every particle of air might look like cobalt if we got outside ourselves to see it. The country of the blue is clear. — William Gass, On Being Blue

The ability to see colors, as Gass, Riley, Ruskin, Humphrey, and the Persian painters agree, is connective; by depth of feeling it links us to ourselves and environment, tying infrared and ultraviolet, body and spirit, together in our subjective, particular experiences of this world.

Colors soak our bodies and psyches in their specific characters. Some dreams feature only one color, and some persons have predominantly one psychic and emotional tone. If an analysand comes into each session angry, “seeing red,” he or she is immersed in red, has a red complex—an intensified distortion of the energy of red, in the same way that the icy blue complex of the disconnected puer that Hillman describes in “Senex and Puer”
is a distortion of the energy of blue.

Everything in the analysand’s life, as well as in the analysis, will be drenched in this distorted reddening—the increased heart rate, heightened blood pressure, and tensed muscular tone that both the analysand and the analyst may share, the boldness, the brutality, the sadism and masochism that Bachelard attributes to a red carnation:

Confronted with a red carnation, we shall ... need more than the word *carnation* and the word *red* put together to express the whinnying of its red fragrance. Who will tell us of this brutality? Who will arouse the sadism and masochism of our imagination at the sight of this bold flower?

The imagery and experience of red will be the chromatic background to the analysis. Just so, if an analysand comments that his shirt is the same color blue as the walls of the consulting room, we can imagine that we are immersed in a psychic state of blue. Besides asking for his associations to the color, we might then remember that blue is both elevating, even mystical, and lowering, even depressive—that blue moves you, one way or another. Because blue is a latterly-discriminated color in most cultures, we might wonder if something is, perhaps belatedly, coming to consciousness. We might consider the shade of blue—pale and ethereal, or strong and solid, royal (with all that this implies) or turquoise, shading into green. All this besides the ordinary, ready-to-hand associations to sky, water, and “the blues.”

Yet, despite these psychic bathings in the fields of particular colors, they are, as the blind miniaturists find, difficult to describe on their own, and it is often necessary to resort to
comparisons—what blue is, red is not, and *vice versa*. So, although we have been speaking of the “isness” of particular tones, colors almost always come together, in pairs or oppositions, in triads, quaternities, in simultaneities or successions. Red, for example, participates in a shifting set of binary, trinary, and quaternary alliances and oppositions—red/black, red/white, red/blue, red/green, red/black/white, red/blue/green, red/yellow/blue, red/yellow/white/black, red/blue/green/yellow, and more. Color, in other words, is not only experienced in its “suchness.” It is also relational—visually, emotionally, soulfully. Ruskin, who considers color “the holiest, the most divine, the most solemn” gift of God to human beings,” views its role in art as akin to that of harmony in music—both supremely a matter of relationship:  

*An object's* color is partly its own, partly shared with other things round it. ... *B*y what color it bears, this single object is altering hues all round it; reflecting its own into them, displaying them by opposition, softening them by repetition; one falsehood in color in one place, implies a thousand in the neighborhood.  

Riley adduces Ruskin to support his claim that color is what holds the world together in relationship: “If ‘color is the type of love,’ as Ruskin admitted, its great erotic task is this one of holding a world in relation.”  

What does it mean to think of color as “the type of love,” as being essentially “about” relationship? As we have seen, color connects us with the world of things through physiological response, through sensation, through memory and emotion, through mystical participation. But even if we consider only the visual effects, our experience of
colors changes according to what they are next to. In the same way that the tonic note of a scale can participate in a major third, a minor third, a fourth, or a fifth, each interval sounding distinct, although the tonic note is invariant, a color takes on a different identity depending on its neighbors. The color theorist Josef Albers painted relational diagrams to demonstrate color’s contextual nature; in the image below, the two small ochre squares are the same color, but they seem much different in hue and value because of the colors that surround them.

Figure 34  Josef Albers, *Interaction of Color*, Chapter IV-173
The field of colors is also a field of experience, emotional tone, and views of reality, and Albers’s diagrams suggest the mutability of all of these relationships. Like the ochre squares in this diagram, there are persons who take their color from their surroundings. What does it mean for such a person when the context changes? In Albers’s painting, there is only apparent change: the ochre is actually invariant, but seems to lighten or darken as its surroundings dim or glow. If the analyst provides the context by means of her own state of being, will the analysand appear different depending on the day and the analyst’s emotional/psychological condition? How will this affect the transference/countertransference field? Will the change in context shake the analysand’s sense of his or her identity? And on the other hand, since the effect in Albers diagrams depends on the ochre being a small colored square in a large field, how “big” does the analysand’s presence become before there is a tipping point, and s/he becomes the context for the analyst’s own mood and sense of identity?

Ruskin’s focus on relationships leads him to prefer moderate rose, harmonized with its whole situation, to strident red. But color’s visual contextuality is also part of its power. Like Matisse, Paul Gauguin sees color as a force, and like Ruskin, he relates its power to that of music: “Color is a vibration, like music; it has the same power of getting at what is most general yet vaguest in nature: its inner force.” Gauguin’s paintings subordinate their narrative, figurative elements to the patches of color that create, as in a dream or a transference/countertransference dynamic, fields of opposed and related energies. In his early *Les Alyscamps*, which seems at first to be a typical post-impressionist rural scene, the landscape elements abstract into patches of color that advance and recede, connect with and oppose each other. Gauguin’s later *Maternity*, ostensibly a narrative of Edenic
primitivism, dissolves story into oscillating patches of differently-colored, differently-valued force-fields. The oranges and reds come forward and connect, but they compete with the larger fields of greens for dominance. Opposed on the color wheel, they tell a “story” of dynamic opposition.

In his *Introduction to Picture Interpretation According to C. G. Jung*, Theodor Abt, a student of Marie-Louise von Franz, devotes a section of his short book to each of the primary and secondary colors in addition to brown, black, gray, and white. For each color Abt lists a combination of natural, physiological, and cultural associations, summarizing in a colored box the general aspects, both positive and negative, abstracted from the
specific associations. He then interprets two active imagination paintings containing the color in question.

![Summary of the Two Sides of Red: + warmth, unifying (Venus), renewing; - burning heat, dividing (Mars, devil), destroying. Summary of the Two Sides of Blue: + introversion, meaningful order, spirituality, receptivity; - loss of reality, cold, rigid order, spirit-possession, possessive absorption. Summary of the Two Sides of Green: + growth, life-bringing, hopeful; - overgrowth of vegetation, suffocating, devouring.]

**Figures 37-39** Theodor Abt, *Picture Interpretation*, Summaries of the qualities of red, blue, and green.

In a painting illustrating the actions of green, Abt emphasizes the balance of the picture, and the figures of the two snakes rising through the middle of an open space enclosed by foliage. The role of green in the painting is described as exhibiting the “living spirit of nature” in a bipolar form, with fiery, two-sided “drive energy,” sometimes associated with the devil, arising from the green snakes’ mouths in the red flames.
Abt’s brief analysis can be elaborated upon by considering the relationships among the image’s colors apart from the figurative forms. Examining the balances and oppositions of the two complementary hues of red and green, we see that each lends a bit of itself to the other. Green shelters, encloses, produces, and makes possible red’s appearances; and in return, red lights up green. Not only do the twin tongues of red fire flame from the green candelabra of the conjoined snakes—really two parts of one being, since they are

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**Figure 40** Abt, *Picture Interpretation*, Green (picture by a 34-year-old woman)
joined by small ligatures at the two points where their sinuous bodies meet—but the red ground is enclosed by green, and green, mixing with red and turned to brown, underlies, supports, and glazes the top of the red earth. At the same time, the tenderness of the green bushes, growing out of the darkness at the bottom of the painting, is lit up by red, glowing from ground and fire. As in Gauguin’s artworks, this intricate dance of red and green—meeting, balancing, blending—gives the painting its balanced dynamic. The balanced energy of opposing and intermingling colors tells a story as important as the figurative elements do. An intricate reconciliation of several different kinds of energies, embodied in color, this image is a visual reminder that opposites contain each other.

Turning to the representational, we see that, as there are two kinds of green—the soft verdure of foliage and the concentrated reptilian jade—so there are two kinds of red—the soft red of earth and the radiant blaze of fire. The foliage makes a protective enclosure for the dance of the serpents who rise to translate red earth into living flame, a biological frame for a paradoxical union of chthonic and celestial energies. This discrimination within, as well as between, colors presents a picture of complexly held connections and influences, mutual entailments and interpenetrations.

Hillman notes that

To imagine in pairs and couples is to think mythologically. Mythical thinking connects pairs into tandems rather than separating them into opposites which is anyway a mode of philosophy. Opposites lend themselves to very few kinds of description: contradictories, contraries,
complementaries, negations—formal and logical. Tandems, however, like brothers or enemies or traders or lovers show endless varieties of styles. Tandems favor intercourse—innumerable positions. Opposition is merely one of the many modes of being in a tandem.\textsuperscript{78}

The colors in this painting show these many modes of intercourse interwoven into complex presence.

\textbf{COLORS IN RELATION: THE RED BOOK}

In Jung’s \textit{Red Book}, it is red and blue, black and white that are in constant, contested, evolving relationship. These colors are handled rather conventionally in the \textit{Liber Primus} to convey conceptual qualities associated with the characters they clothe. In the image depicting the “Mysterium Encounter” between Jung, Elijah, Salome, and the snake, Salome is dressed in ardent, “emotional” red, whereas Elijah is clad in cool, “reflective” blue, and the all-too-innocent Jung’s white blank slate is countered by the all-too-knowing serpent’s trickster black.
Figure 41-42  *Liber Primus* Image v(v), detail showing Jung, Elijah, Salome, and the snake\textsuperscript{79}
Nevertheless, hints of “The Way of What Is to Come” are given in the decorative border surrounding the scene. At the bottom and sides (unconsciously, or in apprehension?), snakelike red twines around and overtakes angular, star-like blue, while along the top (consciously, or in a desideratum?), red and blue blend and transform, first into rose and periwinkle, and then into white—presumably the white that is the resultant of all colors rather than the untried white of Jung’s novice dress.

As the action unfolds, these colors take on lives of their own, evolving in ways that Jung watches in wonder, and sometimes horror. The black serpent, a representation of the “Way” winding between red and blue, masculine “forethinking” and feminine pleasure, divides into black and white snakes that fight each other and each end up taking on some of the other’s coloring.

**Figures 43-44** *Liber Primus* Cap. i fol. i(r)/*Liber Secundus* Image 111
This symbolism is conceptual and fairly easy to decode—although the conclusion is a profound prefiguration of Jung’s analytic psychology, in which the shadow is the source of growth and regeneration, whereas the “virtuous” persona sometimes seems to be the source of all evil. But the serpent also turns into an aspect of the soul, coloring psyche itself with its dark hue, and then reappears as the black rod given to Jung by Philemon, a power with which he can do magic that is indeterminate in moral shading.  

In the visual story, red, already powerfully present in the initial scene in the cave, soon takes over, overcoming Jung’s neat categorizations of male/female//thinking/feeling. In his encounter with The Red One, Jung meets the both/and of red. Watching the approach of the rubicund figure from the safe solitude of his tower, Jung says to himself: “[H]is long shape wholly shrouded in red, even his hair is red. I think: in the end he will turn out to be the devil.”

**Figures 45-46**  *Liber Secundus*, Cap. i, p. 2/Red devil, Breviary of Louis de Guyenne, 1414
If the red of Salome’s dress in *Liber Novus* signifies the fickle, fearsome feminine, The Red One personifies an ambiguity that overthrows Jung’s simple classifications. Amiably engaging in philosophical discussions, he twits Jung on his seriousness and sanctimoniousness, and tells him not to pass judgment. However, Jung also finds a way to get under The Red One’s skin, by talking about dancing, and this is where the two find a meeting ground. Dancing is pagan according to the Church, and as a devil, The Red One has a long and illustrious prehistory as a red or red-haired trickster figure: Egyptian Set, Norse Loki, three-headed Greek Geryon, and Yoruba Elegba all sport red locks and/or red skin.

**Figures 47-51** The Devil, Major Arcana XV, Rider-Waite Tarot/Set blessing Ramesses II, Temple of Hathor, Abu Simbel, Egypt, 1264-1224 BCE/Loki, SÁM 66 (*Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi*) Icelandic, 18C ms/Inscription Painter, Heracles fighting Geryon, Chalcidian black-figured amphora, South Italy, c. 540 BCE/Elegba, Yoruba trickster god83

The Red One is Jung’s first experience of a male character who chooses life itself rather than good or evil, knowledge or pleasure. He opposes Jung’s seriousness with his own joy, and the two are both changed, Jung’s green costume leafing out in new life, and The Red One turning a “tender reddish flesh color.” Jung calls The Red One “my joy.” Later, The
Red One pairs up with the white-robed solitary Ammonius, and in their clash of values, both opposites wither away.

In “A Study in the Process of Individuation,” his analysis of Kristine Mann’s active imagination paintings, Jung connects red with “blood and affectivity.” He comes to this view by way of his own experience. In The Red Book, Jung’s involvement in crucifixion,
bloody death, and the eating of a red-headed child’s liver, attended by a red-haired woman—perhaps his ambivalently amoral tutelary divinity—will involve him in the emotion that he would like to assign to women or the feminine, and in life “beyond good and evil.” Salome, all feeling and desire, will turn out to be Jung’s soul and will embroil him in a confrontation with love, or the lack of it. The dead will demand the red blood of life and feeling. Jung will desire to retreat to the celestial realm of the blue stars and take refuge with the blue shadow of Christ. The dance of red and blue will eventuate in a green frog god and a brown figure walking in a garden. Thus colors escape their confinement and, like everything else in *The Red Book*, take matters into their own hands.

Jung’s painted images tell a parallel tale, depicting with graphic drama the overflowing of feeling, the surpassing of reason, by the red energy of life, indeterminately good or evil, which proceeds to overwhelm and exceed categories. Picking out only a few of the hundreds of images, we can follow the lineaments of color’s story.

Although the dance of red and blue starts out on with the two colors on a relatively even footing,
Figures 53-54  The dance of red and blue: *Liber Novus* cap. vi, fol. iv(�)/Etruscan Dancers, Tomb of the Triclinium, Tarquinia (reversed), 470BCE

in an early capital of *Liber Secundus* blue, attempting to hold things together by means of conceptual language, sits precariously atop the big bang of a red explosion.


A reddish-brown dragon with an even redder mouth, balancing on a red sun rising from under red earth, represents what has been let loose. The dragon is barely contained by the pretty ornamental border surrounding it, where mannequins, lizards, dragons, and grimacing suns zigzag frenetically around the edges. As a result, the *Ich*, Jung’s ego’s sense of self, reddens, while rational blue forethinking valiantly attempts to encompass
snakes, flying insects, and the firmament itself in the background. Only much later do the fragmented bits come together in a new, balanced dance of colored balls.

In the meantime, red magma, containing a blue serpent, writhingly births a brown tree within a blue arabesqueing atmosphere, developing into a blue Tree of Life that valiantly tries to put things in order, balancing out equal and opposite emblems of life on its branches. But not too much later, a fiery red genie flames up over the small, frightened magician trapped in a funhouse chamber of red and black checkerboard floor and undulating turquoise walls. Red has escaped the order, evidently premature, that rational blue balancing has tried to impose, and what small grounding stability there is has been dyed in red’s intensities. As in the active imagination painting discussed above, the energies of red differentiate into red ground and red fire but, rather than lending its energy to the containing background, red rains down in flaming droplets on the head of the hapless ego.

**Figures 59-61** *Liber Secundus*, Image 54, Image 63, Image 64
Red takes over, and after many adventures, eventually composes itself into a gigantic red cross enclosed in a flaming sun, burning above a town, held up by a small blue-clad hero trying to shield human life from the ravages of raging red energies. Soon after, a fierce red dragon encircles a midnight sun quartered in red and blue in the dark air above another human community slumbering below. Red by day; red by night; the blazing red cross of the spirit and the fire-breathing red of the chthonic dragon. On both ends of the archetypal scale archetypal red overpowers the human psyche.

**Figures 62-63  Liber Secundus, Image 125, Image 129**

In an abstract sidebar of some twenty images, red overtakes the mandalas Jung has been drawing to stabilize his overactive psyche and get a read on “what condition his condition
is in.” With an upward thrust of red tendrils, red seeds blooming from a pod submerged under the blue waves of the unconscious unbalance the mandala’s green and blue symmetries, while a blue star looks on from a safe distance. Red encroaches from both above and below, and the star fights back, growing larger and approaching the central mandala figure pinioned between the two red energies. Combining with the celestial light, the red-seeded mandala pushes back against the red intrusions with its sharp rays. The process of expansion, concentration, and new differentiation is like the repeated *salve et coagula* of the alchemical treatises.
Blue attempts to restore order, encapsulating the red by means of a hieroglyphic language developing out of the self-structuring sea of the unconscious—the beginnings of a conceptual system arising out of Jung’s encounter with the depths. At the intersection of water and air, contained from above and below, red and blue are forged into a determinate, geometric relationship. The red pressure from above and below withdraws and, from this embryo enclosed in uterine fluids turbulent with patterned energy, a pregnancy occurs at the intersection of conscious air and unconscious water. Contained within the egg is a growing, petal-like mandala of black, white, yellow/gold, and red—the colors of the alchemical sequence Jung is about to stumble upon. Still more unconscious

**Figures 64-67**  *Liber Secundus*, Image 82, Image 88, Image 91, Image 92
than conscious, the new birth at the meeting point of the archetypal and empirical straddles both worlds.

Figures 68-70  *Liber Secundus*, Image 93, Image 94, Image 97

Does Jung succeed in finding what he would later call the “third thing,” the white that is all colors, in the upper border of the *Mysterium Encounter*? The cold brilliance of a blue star’s shining white rays, seen through dead tree branches, gives way to a warmer sheen, and underground, a red, brown, and green ferment nourishes the World Tree, the mandala-egg now coming to birth as an entire cosmos.
At the end of the story, the kingfisher wings and long robe of Philemon combine red and blue, surmounting both the green life of nature and the containing cultural creations of humanity. Stars of red and blue stud the sky. A serene, mysterious, blue-clad Sophia receives a shower of red-gold energy from above as she stands, framed in the red-brown shades of life on earth, immanent to the crowd of teeming humanity, some of whom seem to recognize her. As in the active imagination painting, red now embodies both celestial and terrestrial energies.
Figures 73-74  *Liber Secundus*, Image 154, Image 155
In two of the final images, a pale rose mandala edged in pale periwinkle, shading toward white in the center, is surrounded by circular and diamond-shaped blue layers that give way to the red-earth clay of human settlement, shot through by traces of blue. The mandala forms an image of the inner union of life—earthy spirit, reflective feeling, the blue-pink rose of the philosophers—with the all-colored white of the Self that organizes the whole.

Figures 75–76  *Liber Secundus*, Image 159, Image 169

The last, unfinished image returns Jung to humanity—greenish-blue like the shades who demanded blood, but illuminated into living warmth as the faces turn toward the
mandala of the self that radiates its all-colored energy, yellow-red-blue-green, out into the crowd.

This parable of color changes, running parallel to the verbal narration, images the evolving relationship of all that the initial opposites of red and blue “stand for,” symbolize, and embody. As much as the words do, the images advance the action, and the complexity of the white rose of the Self at the center of the final mandala gives evidence of the evolution Jung’s psyche has undergone from the beginning of his “novitiate” in the Mysterium Encounter to the broken-off sentence at the end of the tale.

COLORS IN RELATION: COLOR SYSTEMS

“Upon this simple system of many colors is based the manifold and infinitely varied investigation of all things.” — Zosimos of Panopolis

In The Red Book’s parable of red and blue, the roles of the colors evade neat classifications, but the colors tend toward relationship, grouping themselves into systems, as notes tend toward the grouping-together of harmony in music. Although colors, when they come to life, exceed their codified meanings, in many psychic situations they can nevertheless be understood conventionally, which is to say culturally. For example, in the following dream, red seems to equate rather simply to life, and black to destruction:
A red car ascending a mountain road is driven off the narrow highway by a black car coming down. Watching, it seems to the dream ego that the red car goes off the road of its own accord.

But even here—laying aside all the questions about the puzzling behavior of the red car—we must be attentive to the particularities of the system in which the colors partake, for there are a bewildering number of competing color schemas, and an almost equally great number differing opinions about the nature of these schemes.

All cultures make use of color systems, or schemata. Like Huyghe’s old wives’ color maxims, these schemata condense together sets of common experiences into codified sets of ideas and values that are conveniently conveyed in colors. Most traditional cultures, for example, assign a set of colors to the four or five directions. Partially conventional and partially “motivated”—connected to the qualities they represent—these color systems show regularities we would expect as well as some surprising variations. Red usually arises in the east in Native American cultures, for example, but in Asia it is most often found in the south.
The ancient Western system of the four humors, each a combined body and character type, with a characteristic ailment, an element, and a color—sanguine/air/red, choleric/fire/yellow, phlegmatic/water/blue, melancholic/earth/black—shows up again in Jung’s assignment of colors to the four function types—red for feeling, yellow for intuition, blue for thinking, and green for sensation. But the two map poorly onto each other, for one would want air and thought to match up, and instead they are assigned different colors in the two systems. Understanding how these many systems relate to each other is complicated by the fact that different cultures have different names for colors and divide the spectrum differently. Aristotle, for example, had only three names for the colors of the rainbow—purple, green, and red-brown; ancient Arabs divided the spectrum into blue-green, red-brown, and yellow-brown.
According to the semiotician Umberto Eco and Michel Pastoureau, a historian of color who has written volumes on blue, black, green, and red, these codified aspects of color predominate over the experience of the innocent eye. Contending that all color systems are relational and "semiotic," they claim that color is first of all a matter of language.\textsuperscript{89}
Yet there seems to be more to the story. Comparisons of the ways children in an African cultural group and an American one categorize greens and blues shows that at very young ages, the divisions they articulate between the colors are similar. But after about age three, cultural differences, perhaps reflecting the need for differing sorts of discriminations in their respective environments, come into play, and the children “see” different color divisions. Some researchers have found that prior to language acquisition, color is perceived primarily by the right hemisphere of the human brain, but that after color words are learned, the left brain takes over. Thus the innocent eye—“Eden before Adam gave names,” as Dillard terms it—is, after the names for various hues are learned, overlaid by our culture’s categories, and there is a strong association between color and language. In addition, we tend to conceive of colors either as “symbolic of” (really signs for) feelings—red equals passion, violence, love; blue equals sadness or serenity—or as communicating differences, as Gass observes:

Colors ... allow us to discriminate among otherwise identical things (gold and green racing cars, football teams, jelly beans, red-brown-blond-black-haired girls); however, our eye is always at the edge, establishing boundaries, making claims, so that colors principally enable us to discern shapes and define relations, and it certainly appears that patterns and paths—first, last, and in between—are what we want and what we remember: useful contraptions, useful controls, and useful connections.

But employed in this way, color is more afterthought, the secondary attribute that modern philosophy wants it to be, than something essential, like coloring between the lines or colorizing the movies.
Traditional color codes create a world, and a world view, made up of psycho/spiritual/physical objects. Like the four humors with their colors, which encapsulate complex relationships of interconnected traits, the very common triad of black, white, and red in traditional cultures links together life events, values, emotions, and numinosity. The Indian chakra system matches its seven colors to sounds and psycho-spiritual processes. Astrological systems connect colors with planets, gods, constellations, characters, and fates. The black, white, yellow, red, and blue (quintessence) of the alchemical process encompass life stages, psychological processes, and spiritual states all at once.

Alchemical theory and process is soaked in color, and the ancient resonances between matter, psyche, and culture are exemplified in this distillation of many early technologies. Although the alchemists applied traditional color schemata to their operations, these interrelated sets of qualities were not essentially schematic, nor did they constitute an abstract code. The colored stages were, rather, a distillation of the particulars and peculiarities of the materials with which the alchemists worked. As Hillman notes, in alchemy each color embodies, and thus condenses into a single unified experience, three aspects of the opus that Western culture normally keeps resolutely distinct, tying culture and psychology to material suchness:

(1) stages of the work; (2) conditions of the material worked on; and (3) states in the psyche of the artifex or worker-alchemist. Each color term
combines three distinct categories which our modern consciousness keeps separate: the method of working, the stuff worked on, and the condition of the worker, ... [i.e.,] method, problem, and subjectivity.\textsuperscript{93}

That great polymath of the Romantic age, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who developed his color theory in opposition to the physicist Isaac Newton’s quantitative one, considered color “symbolical,” by which he meant that it connects outer and inner and is expressive of meaning:

Every colour produces a distinct impression on the mind, and thus addresses at once the eye and feelings. Hence it follows that colour may be employed for certain moral and aesthetic ends. Such an application, coinciding entirely with nature, might be called symbolical, since the colour would be employed in conformity with its effect, and would at once express its meaning. If for example, pure red were assumed to designate majesty, there can be no doubt that this would be admitted to be a just and expressive symbol.\textsuperscript{94}
The use of these symbols is for the experience of feeling, according to Goethe: “The colours are acts of light; its active and passive modifications” (“Colors are light’s suffering and joy”). But whereas Goethe agrees with the consensus concerning blue’s depressive qualities—“Blue gives us an impression of cold, and thus, again, reminds us of shade. We have before spoken of its affinity with black”—some of the qualities he assigns to red are puzzling. Red is, for Goethe, “the highest of all appearances,” exhibiting at once gravity, dignity, grace, and attractiveness—the “dignity of age” and the “amiableness of youth.” Goethe’s estimation of red’s preeminence is in concert with common wisdom, but the serene value he assigns to the color places Goethe in a decided minority. Of course, it may be that he is thinking of specific tones and materials for age’s dignity and youth’s
amiableness—garnet for the former, perhaps, and bright orangey Turkey red for the latter.


As Goethe’s assessment of red’s significance shows, “[t]he first thing to realize about the study of color is its uncanny ability to evade all attempts to codify it systematically.”97 Riley describes many more systems of primary colors than the ones we have briefly considered—triads like red-blue-yellow, red-blue-green, quartets like red-blue-yellow-green, not to mention A. H. Munsell’s and Paul Klee’s quintets, Wassily Kandinsky’s, and most cultures’, sextets, and Isaac Newton’s septet, by which we now conventionally
designate the spectrum. Many philosophers, from Aristotle through Kant and Hegel to Wittgenstein, have attempted to explain color in a systematic way; yet as Riley notes, these efforts, which in modern times have been based on a fundamental question about the relationship between the mind and the senses, have “the precarious nature of the pursuit of a primary basis for thought through the exploration of what has been defined since Bacon and Kant as a secondary quality.” Thus color thus gives rise to, organizes, and escapes systems.

COLORS IN RELATION: CULTURAL SYSTEMS AND THE USES OF COLORS

Whatever the meaning system we ascribe to the hues we perceive, we humans are deeply attached to color in part because, as *homo faber*, we use it. From earliest times, humans have employed color ritually to mark burials, to enhance initiation, to observe the changes in the liturgical year, to display position and status, to ornament, to designate roles. Color’s material and symbolic presence in human life is intimately interwoven with technology and magic, economics and politics, hierarchy and status, ritual and religion. Thus color connects matter, history, society, and symbol.
Figures 83-84  Stephen Alvarez, Himba girls decorating themselves with red earth, Northwestern Namibia\textsuperscript{99}/American girls putting on makeup\textsuperscript{100}
Used both as a code, to convey information, and emblematically, to communicate conventional ideas encapsulated in figures, color always has cultural significance. Flags, heraldry, uniforms, and clan tartans signal membership in social groups, announce information about lineages, and designate who is on your side in war.

**Figures 85-88**  Emoji flags\(^{101}\)/William Wallace (Braveheart) kilt and belt set, The Costume Shop, Melbourne, Australia\(^{102}\)/1-to-30 scale British toy soldiers representing French Knight Charles of Artois and English Knight John Cheyney\(^{103}\)/British “Redcoats,” officers dressed in madder\(^{104}\)
We humans initiate ourselves using special colors to mark exceptional status or changed social position, change ourselves into fantastic, fearsome figures, or demarcate who is in and who is out.
We wrap ourselves in the colors of our country; we use color to propagandize, intimidate, and impress those we deem important.

Figures 92-94 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in red with American flags, January 6, 2010\textsuperscript{108}/Mao's Little Red Book, 1970s poster\textsuperscript{109}/Bandar Al-Jaloud, Donald Trump on the red carpet, Saudi Arabia, 2017\textsuperscript{110}
Cultures attempt to corral color for their own purposes. Sumptuary laws, passed in England as early as the fourteenth century, and much earlier in other European countries, aimed to restrict the colors and materials of clothing to particular social classes. Expensive colors—purple, red, black—were to be worn only by the high-born. Colors were sometimes used to indicate particular occupations; red was often used to designate prostitutes.\footnote{111} The rules, honored mostly in the breach, codified a system of communication based in image rather than in word.

![Figure 95](image)

**Figure 95** European sumptuary laws, colors and shapes: Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, *Festival at Bermondsey*, c. 1569, detail

Emblems use color, partially “naturally” and partially conventionally, to convey traditional ideas, stories, “memes.” Remnants of nonliterate, image-based communication, emblems contain symbolic meanings within their conventional colors, objects, gestures, and texts: Fortune is always blind, Daphne is always half woman, half tree, and hell is always red. As with conventional forms of dress and visual signage,
emblems operate under the assumption that the environment is legible, exemplifying the doctrine of signatures in the realm of human affairs.

Figures 96-98 The Boucicaut Master, *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes*, Boccaccio and Fortune, c. 1410/Christine de Pizan, *L’Epistre d’Othea*, Apollo and Daphne, c. 1410-1414/Apocalypse, Belgium c. 1313
Understanding the emblematic role of color as a condensation of ideas, stories, worldviews, beliefs into images, we might ask: when does color function as a kind of condensate or precipitate of conventionally held, unquestioned attitudes? When is an analysand so deeply embedded in a social, cultural, historical, or mythological system of hierarchical, codified relations that everything in the world, including color, seems to reinforce its truth?

COLOR AS CORRESPONDENCE—MYSTICAL SYSTEMS

Let us consider one last kind of system, a mystical one. In the cosmological organization of the Iranian Sufis, the sensation of color is, at least in potentia, tied to mystical levels of experience. For the nineteenth-century Shaykh Muḥammad Karīm-Khān Kirmāni, light exists prior to its manifestation—that is, it is archetypal—and it is always already colored. But it requires to be expressed in phenomenal colors—colors are light’s manifestation in the world of the senses—as, equally, color requires its source in light. This ontology of interconnection between the archetypal and the phenomenal holds good generally, but it is visibly and lucidly portrayed in colors. As the Islamicist Henri Corbin observes:

Without the human dimension, the divine dimension would not be manifested, but without the divine lordly dimension the human dimension would be deprived of reality, as color without light would remain in the inert state of a body deprived of life. ... This is to say that God only manifests himself to created beings by means of these created beings
themselves, [as] Light, because of its intensity, would remain invisible if it did not receive the tinctura of colors.\textsuperscript{115}

Kīrmāni’s diagram of this relationship between the divine and human level shows two interpenetrating cones, the representation, on a flat, two-dimensional surface, of the interpenetration of sensible and suprasensible spheres, which are related as “lord” (rabb) to “vassal” (marbūb), or as “determining” to “determined.”

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{triangle.png}
\caption{Triangle of the rabb and Triangle of the marbūb}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Figures 99-100} Henri Corbin, Interpenetrating spheres of the rabb and marbūb\textsuperscript{116}/Liber Secundus, Image 72

This modification of Jung’s diagram of two cones not quite touching at a zero point seems actually to be truer to Jung’s own vision and experience of things. The Sufi
Shaykh’s diagram does justice to the way the lower, micro-, earthly, phenomenal world is permeated and made possible by the principles of the higher, macro-, divine, invisible world. But likewise, the phenomena of this world are not to be discarded once the seeker has reached the level of the intelligible. Color may be “symbolic” of light, but as Corbin exclaims:

One can never say to symbols: ‘Vanish, you have been explained!’ Does the color red vanish once we have explained its genesis and symbolism?

Thus colors hold together the mystical and the material in an indissoluble whole.

The Iranian Shiite Sufi mystics and the medieval Jewish Kabbalistic writers express this understanding of color as stages on the levels of ascent toward, or descent from, pure energy, or light. In Shiite cosmology, there are four primary colors: red, green, yellow, and white, corresponding to the four pillars of the cosmic Throne or Temple of Mercy upon which is seated Allah, the Merciful one. The pillars of light are: red, the World of Nature and the Archangel Gabriel, who is the demiurge of the phenomenal world; green, the World of the Soul and the Archangel Azrael; yellow, the World of the Spirit and the Archangel Michael; and white, the World of the Intelligence and the Archangel Seraphiel. These four colored pillars are also states of being, ascending from Nature through Soul and Spirit to Intelligences. Thus color in a dream draws us up, or down, into archetypal levels of experience.
Moreover, each color is a world unto itself, a *weltanschauung*. A dream permeated by red, for example, is a dream taking place in the atmosphere of the World of Nature, our phenomenal world, whereas a dream soaked in yellow is one in which the World of the Spirit predominates. It is more than “merely” symbolic to speak this way, according to Corbin, for these pillars are “absolute and universal lights, from which all partial lights [that is, the visible colors of the phenomenal world] are derived.” The absolute lights, or archetypes, are “primordial ‘acts of light,’” of which the partial, phenomenal lights are “recitals” or “parables”—somewhat like the *langue* and *parole* of Ferdinand de
Saussure’s semiotics, which posits a linguistic structure in potentia that comes into being only when used to create phenomenal utterances. The difference is that, for the Iranian Sufis, the archetypal lights exist more fully than the lights of the phenomenal world.

For Sufis, and Islam in general, red is the color of God in this world, the interpenetration of this world by the higher one. This interpenetration shows itself especially in deep, rich red objects—rubies, red hyacinths, roses, blood, wine:

Through crimson-colored gems, demiurgic blood, and ambrosial covenant, God is ... the celestial Rubricator of the world. ... God created a red hyacinth that, under His gaze, melted and turned to water, and out of the foam on this water, God created the earth. ... [T]he interpretation of the esoteric (bāṭin) dimension of red points to the natural world and its concurrent hypostasis.

But within the World of Nature, which is red, the colors also descend into phenomenal appearance as “elemental qualitative modalities.” Here the order of descent is reversed, because the act of coming down into this world will take place first on the part of the highest and most subtle qualities of any color, those closest to its essential nature, and then will descend through the colors to the lowest, the most dense and material, the farthest away from that color’s essential nature. Thus fire, the most subtle red, comes down into this life first; airy yellow next, followed by watery white, and finally green, which manifests itself on the earthly level as black, or earth. This upends the estimation we may have had of Jung’s Red One, and we may suspect him, rather than of lowering
Jung’s excessively high-minded intellectuality, of spiritualizing Jung’s “green solitary growth.” In this light, the flames in the mouths of the serpents in the active imagination painting discussed above could be viewed as the creators of the snakes, rather than their creations.

A woman dreams:

_In my kitchen, which is dark, I see a young girl dressed in a brilliant orange-red dress that shines like fire, climbing up onto the kitchen table from the chair._

According the Sufi system, this fiery-red-clad girl climbing up onto the table may be, not the rise of intuition into the heights, but the paradoxical beginning of a descent of the spirit into the body—the first stage of the light energy of red entering this world as fire. Further, this red is not the red of feeling or the red of sanguinity. It is a very specific red, that of Gabriel, the Spirit of Nature, the creative demiurge who makes this world. From the viewpoint of this system, the darkness of the kitchen is evocative of earth, the heavy, dark, necessary locus of incarnation and transformation of this fiery energy into something useable, something the dreamer can “cook with.”

If red is the color of the soul’s—the psyche’s—embodiment in this world, we can return in the light of this new perspective to the earlier dreams of the field of flowers and the red-brown footprints. Red-brown seems then to be a mixture of earth and fire, secular and sacred, dust and the “fine powder” of sainthood. Red flowers, on the other hand, may not
be mixed enough to help ground, or “earth,” the fiery energy the second dreamer cannot seem to allow himself to experience. And conversely, when we hear Rumi say:

There is nothing left of me.
I am like a ruby held up to the sunrise.
Is it still a stone, or a world
made of redness? It has no resistance
to sunlight. The ruby and the sunrise are one.¹²¹

we know that this image is not simply a metaphor. For Rumi is, within a visual, this-worldly, sensate experience, also experiencing a communion with, or an immersion in, the archetypal funding by the ruby fire of this, our world of nature.
Rumi’s dream of being nothing but a completely permeable redness that is both stone-
Self and world, surrendered to the new beginning that is the flaming sunrise, may make us wonder: what is it like to be nothing but red—or nothing but “redness”—not in the partial, distorted, complexed way of the analysand in a rage, but in the sense that Jung articulates when he calls The Red One “my joy.” What is it like when ego, Self, and world completely interpenetrate and are contained in the life of red?

**Figure 102** Moise Nicu, Red Sunrise over the Black Sea, Constanta, Romania, 2008
COLOR OF COLORS: RED

In *My Name Is Red* the color, speaking for itself, waxes eloquent about its nature, inextricably intertwined with its making and materiality, and touching the divine:

What is it to be a color?

Color is the touch of the eye, music to the deaf, a word out of the darkness. Because I’ve listened to souls whispering—like the susurrus of the wind—from book to book and object to object for tens of thousands of years, allow me to say that my touch resembles the touch of angels. Part of me, the serious half, calls out to your vision while the mirthful half soars through the air with your glances.

But red is not just any color; it is RED. It proclaims its own importance to the world of humankind, to natural life, to the beings of the other world, and most of all, to their depiction in miniatures:

I embellished Ushak carpets, wall ornamentation, the combs of fighting cocks, pomegranates, the fruits of fabled lands, the mouth of Satan, the subtle accent lines within picture borders, the curled embroidery on tents, flowers hardly visible to the naked eye for the artist’s own pleasure, blouses worn by stunning women with outstretched necks watching the street through open shutters, the sour-cherry eyes of bird statues made of sugar, the stockings of shepherds, the dawns described in legends and the corpses and wounds of thousands, nay, tens of thousands of lovers, warriors and shahs.
Getting puffed up by its own rhapsodizing, red boasts of its good fortune and its puissance, exulting unapologetically in its full, embodied existence:

I’m so fortunate to be red! I’m fiery. I’m strong. I know men take notice of me and that I cannot be resisted.

I do not conceal myself: For me, delicacy manifests itself neither in weakness nor in subtlety, but through determination and will. So, I draw attention to myself. I’m not afraid of other colors, shadows, crowds or even of loneliness. How wonderful it is to cover a surface that awaits me with my own victorious being! Wherever I’m spread, I see eyes shine, passions increase, eyebrows rise and heartbeats quicken. Behold how wonderful it is to live! Behold how wonderful to see. Behold: Living is seeing. I am everywhere. Life begins with and returns to me.

Although relational and semiotic color systems treat all members as equal, to be immersed in redness is to be immersed in the archetype of color, in coloredness. Red is the “color of colors,” a designation based not only in human physiology but also in material origins and processes, economics, politics, and symbolic significance.

In his introduction to Red: The History of a Color, Michel Pastoureau, a historian of color, heraldry, and animals, declares:

to speak of the ‘color red’ is almost a redundancy. Red is the archetypal color, the first color humans mastered, fabricated, reproduced, and broke down into different shades. ... This has given it primacy over all other
colors through the millennia. ...[Red] remains the strongest, most remarkable color, and the one richest in poetic, oneiric, and symbolic possibilities.\textsuperscript{122}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure103.png}
\caption{Hallmark greeting card, 2014\textsuperscript{123}}
\end{figure}
The philosopher and semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce goes even further, bestowing on red an unconditional significance:

Firstness is that which is such as it is positively and regardless of anything else.... For an example of Firstness, look at anything red. That redness is positively what it is ... it is absolute.¹²⁴

Red’s “firstness” as a representative of color itself is instantiated in many languages: the words for “colored” in Latin (coloratus) and Spanish (colorado) also mean red. Red’s emotional importance is evident in the Russian word for red, Красный (krasny), which comes from the same old Slavic root as “beautiful” — красный (krasny) — and “excellent” — прекрасный (prekrasny). The Old English word tēafor, which means pigment or salve, but also red, red lead, vermilion, or purple, is connected to the Proto-Germanic root *taubrą, meaning magic or sorcery; the word is cognate with Dutch toverij, which means sorcery or witchcraft, German Zauber, or magic, and Icelandic töfrar, which designates magic or spells. Connected with blood and fire, sexuality and pleasure, life and the supernatural, red is magic — life-giving and death-dealing, both beneficent and maleficent, an indication of its archetypal nature.

Although its meaning is ambiguous, ambivalent, or even multivalent, red always matters. A diagram of the meanings of red in ten different cultures that shows that red has by far the largest range of significations; it can stand for: anger, beauty, courage, danger, desire, energy, the erotic, excitement, flamboyance, good luck, happiness, heart, love, marriage, passion, power, radicalism, repelling evil, strength, and success.
Whether experienced as the longing of erotic desire or the blood-lust of warfare, the shiver of danger or the rush of anger, red signifies the alert intensity and heightened experience of affective engagement. The symbolism of this color is thus both visual/sensate and verbal/conceptual, both bodily and spiritual, both natural and cultural, and archetypal.
RED’S INNER LAWS: AMBITALENT IMPORT

But if red is the archetypal color, or the archetypal image of color, what makes it so? How does it function symbolically, across cultures, and how does this symbolism intersect with red’s materiality and its cultural history?

As we have seen, red’s power is at least partly physiological, for we are made of, and for, red. Our eyes are able to distinguish red, red objects stand out from their environments, and our innards show themselves to us as red. Human infants are born with black and white vision, and some researchers have found that color vision of the longer-wavelength, red end of the spectrum develops somewhat before the shorter-wavelength blue end. Because it stands out against other colors, red is often used by graphic designers to call attention to objects in a field. This visual primacy is echoed in cultural customs: after black and white, red is the first color to be given a name in most cultures, the beginning of a sequence that runs as follows: first black and white, then red, then green and/or yellow, then blue, then brown, and finally any combination of the secondary hues orange/pink/purple/gray.

From increased heart rate when viewing, red as opposed to blue, to slower experience of time, red affects our senses directly. Humphrey, like Huyghe, finds that red environments are experienced as strong, hot, exciting, and disturbing; the color induces physiological symptoms of arousal, feelings of warmth, a slowing down of time, and shorter reaction times; blue, on the other hand, is physiologically calming. Red wavelengths elicit sexual excitation in us as in many animals, a physiological reality.
celebrated in the song “Put On Your Red Dress, Baby” and condemned in Hester Prynne’s Scarlet Letter. As imaged in Neo’s distraction by a red-dressed woman, heterosexual men are more likely to be attracted to women in red than any other color, and it works the other way around as well. Wearing red positively affects sports performance. Emotional reactions to red are more similar across cultures than for most other colors.

Red’s archetypal character is underscored by its participation in opposites: the red/white//sun/moon// sulphur/mercury of alchemy, the red/black of Stendhal’s novel, the red/blue of feeling/thinking, the red/green of stop/go. Red always wants to be part of contraries of good and bad; yet it cannot be contained by these oppositions, because, as Humphrey explains, of its indeterminate significance, equally likely to be positive or negative:

The reason why red should be in certain situations so disturbing is more obscure. If red was always used as a warning signal there would be no problem. But it is not, it is used as often to attract as to repel. My guess is that its potential to disturb lies in this very ambiguity as a signal colour. Red toadstools, red ladybirds, red poppies are dangerous to eat, but red tomatoes, red strawberries, red apples are good. The open red mouth of an aggressive monkey is threatening, but the red bottom of a sexually receptive female is appealing. The flushed cheeks of a man or woman may indicate anger, but they may equally indicate pleasure. Thus the colour red, of itself, can do no more than alert the viewer, preparing him to receive a potentially important message; the content of the message can be interpreted only when the context of the redness is defined. When red
occurs in an unfamiliar context it becomes therefore a highly risky colour.\textsuperscript{133}

The powerful yet ambivalent nature of red in human experience is illustrated in symbolic anthropologist Victor Turner’s 1956 study of the Central African Ndembu people, whose understanding of the color bears out the special, and inherently undecidable, status of the “color of colors.”\textsuperscript{134} Paired with and against both black and white, the other two principal colors recognized by the Ndembu, red has shifting significance; depending on which of these it is opposed to, it can take positive or negative valence.

**Figures 105-106** Ndembu costume worn in the Mukanda ceremonies (circumcision rites) of the Ndembu tribe by the makishi dancers, Mwinilunga, North-Western Zambia, 1950s\textsuperscript{135}/Traditional dancer, Lusaka, Zambia, 2006-10-03\textsuperscript{136}
In Ndembu culture, as for the Sufis, the three colors are seen as three rivers of power flowing from the Ndembu High God, as “principles of being that are symbolized and given visible form in the white-red-black triad.” “[P]ermeating the whole world of sensory phenomena with their specific qualities ... they are thought to tinge the moral and social life of mankind with their peculiar efficacies.” Evidence for these colored principles is “scattered throughout nature in objects of those colors,” and in the actions and characters of human beings.137

Associated with initiations and “life-crisis rites,” each color has its own character. White is “dominant and unitary”; red is “ambivalent, for it is both fecund and ‘dangerous’”; and black is “the silent partner, the ‘shadowy third,’ is in a sense opposed to both white and red, since it represents ‘death,’ ‘sterility,’ and ‘impurity.’” White and black are “the supreme antitheses,”

mostly arranged in a series of antithetical pairs, as for example: goodness/badness; purity/lacking purity; lacking bad luck/lacking luck; lacking misfortune/misfortune; to be without death/death; life/death; health/disease; laughing with one’s friends/witchcraft; to make visible/darkness, and so forth.

But in most rites, it is white and red that are in opposition as different aspects of life, whereas black, which opposes them both, is not directly expressed:
White and red, paired under the various aspects of male and female, peace and war, milk and flesh, semen and blood, are jointly ‘life’;... both are opposed to black as death and negativity.¹³⁸

When thus found in contrast to white, red is especially associated with the strong, powerful, aggressive aspects of life, which can, paradoxically, include death:

Red is peculiarly the color of blood or flesh, the carnal color. Hence it is redolent of the aggressiveness and pangs of carnality. It stands for the killing and cutting up of animals and for the pains of labor.

Both white and red are part of conscious life, whereas black is the underlying substrate of unconsciousness and death. Yet red can stand for homicide, menstruation, and hunting, for both the taking and giving of life:

[Both white and red may stand for life. When they are paired in ritual, white may stand for one alleged polarity of life, such as masculinity or vegetable food, while red may represent its opposite, such as femininity or meat. On the other hand, white may represent ‘peace’ and red ‘war’; both are conscious activities as distinct from black which stands for inactivity and the cessation of consciousness.¹³⁹]

Thus red is composed of simultaneous contraries, ambivalent, equivocal—the both/and of this world of human physical and emotional life. For the Ndembu, red plays the role Jung describes as that of the coincidentia oppositorum, the uniting third. This “shifting
signifier,” with its connective nature, gives immanent body to Jung’s idea of the transcendent function.

In *The Red Book*, Jung’s experiences with red are at times disturbingly, even shockingly bodily, forcing him out of the safety of detached blue mentality, or solitary green growing, into the bodily realm where killing and eating happen. In one of the most gruesome scenes in the book, Jung is required by a red-haired woman (a female taskmistress/trickster figure, and as it turns out, his soul) to rip out and consume the liver of a small, mangled, red-headed girl. In the section entitled “The Sacrificial Murder,” Jung enters a

dreary and unsightly valley; where the bushes stand in arid stony defiles. The valley looks so normal, its air smells of crime, of foul, cowardly deeds. I am seized by disgust and horror. I walk hesitantly over the boulders, avoiding every dark place for fear of treading on a serpent. The sun shines weakly out of a gray and distant sky; and all the leaves are shriveled. A marionette with a broken head lies before me amidst the stones—a few steps further, a small apron—and then behind the bush, the body of a small girl—covered with terrible wounds—smeared with blood. One foot is clad with a stocking and shoe, the other is naked and gorily crushed—the head—where is the head? The head is a mash of blood with hair and whitish pieces of bone, surrounded by stones smeared with brain and blood. My gaze is captivated by this awful sight—a shrouded figure, like that of a woman, is standing calmly next to the child; her face is covered by an impenetrable veil.\textsuperscript{140}
Commanded to cut the liver out of the dead and already slit-open child, Jung refuses in revulsion, but the veiled woman impels him to do it by telling him he is already responsible, as a man, for the murder of the girl. Retching and sweating, almost passing out, Jung does as she commands:

I kneel down on the stone, cut off a piece of the liver and put it in my mouth. My gorge rises—tears burst from my eyes—cold sweat covers my brow—a dull sweet taste of blood—I swallow with desperate efforts—it is impossible—once again and once again—I almost faint—it is done. The horror has been accomplished.

S: "I thank you."

She throws her veil back—a beautiful maiden with ginger hair.

S: "Do you recognize me?"

I: "How strangely familiar you are! Who are you?"

S: "I am your soul." \(^{141}\)

The symbolism is obvious—it is, after all, the liver, the ancient seat of the life, soul, and intelligence, heart and spirit, as well as the organ of divination, and thus the means of connection to the gods, that Jung is forced to consume. Blood-rich, liver is a source of iron, and it also cleanses the body of impurities. It is colored dark red, as is the historiated capital that marks the head of the chapter, teeming with wormlike creatures, blood cells or something worse.
This is the red of body and blood, necessary for human life to continue, but ambiguous in moral value. “Take, eat, this is my body,” says the Christian sacrament, and Jung lives it out imaginally in all its embodied, gory reality. This is also the red that connects the human, through the body, to the divine, and the ancient sacrament of theophagy, the eating of the god, here becomes, at least imaginally, quite concrete. Jung’s graphic description draws us into his experience, makes us believe, and even live ourselves, his horror, revulsion, disgust, and shame.
The undecidable third, between good and evil, here is gained at the tremendous sacrifice, as the chapter title says, of the detachment between body and spirit that has been Jung’s *modus operandi* for too long. For above all, red embodies. In *The Red Book*, red life is always closely with its linked opposite, death, and thus embodies that which is beyond these oppositions. It is body logic, and sometimes feeling logic, that surpasses intellectual logic. It is, as Jung says on several occasions, life itself, “beyond good and evil.”

For the color historian Pastoureau, it was precisely because of this awe-ful power that, in his childhood, red became a color that could not be enjoyed. In a personal essay, *The Colours of Our Memories*, Pastoureau remembers his high school days: “[R]ed … was regarded as a dangerous and transgressive colour. More or less consciously, its everyday symbolism suggested fire and blood, violence and warfare, wrongdoing and sin. Red was too dense, too strong, too attractive, so was set apart from other colours and was hardly granted any place in daily life. … It was an unrewarding role for a colour that, elsewhere, was often held to be the most beautiful of all.”¹⁴² In another essay in the same volume, he discourses at length on the proper shades of blue that were acceptable to his aunts.¹⁴³ The French refusal to embrace red’s contradictory call to full life saddens Pastoureau, at the same time as the intricacies of the social norms entrance him. In this way, despite his having written an entire volume on the color, he himself evades the siren song of red.
COLOR’S OUTER LAWS: THE MATERIALITY OF RED

“The pure red of which certain abstractionists speak does not exist. ... Any red is rooted in blood, glass, wine, hunters’ caps and a thousand other concrete phenomena.” — Robert Motherwell

If in *The Red Book*, red is a bloody liver, in our highly mediated, image-saturated twenty-first century culture, the insight of the abstract painter Robert Motherwell is not one that comes naturally to us. An energy of wavelengths 620 to 740 nanometers and of frequencies 480 to 400 hertz, the longest wavelengths visible to the human eye, red is more usually defined by a set of coordinates in “color space.” Red occupies, for example, the position 255, 00, 00 in Microsoft’s and Hewlett-Packard’s standard RGB color space (sRGB). This system describes the additive properties of light waves, so that red, green, and blue add together to make white light. Through a complex mix of rods and cones, the human eye also sees in terms of red, green and blue. The traditional triad of primary colors used by painters—red, yellow, and blue—is based on the subtractive, or absorptive, system of mixing dyes and pigments. The three primaries mixed together create something approximating black.
Figures 108-110  Additive color, sRGB space\textsuperscript{147}/additive color, as seen by the human eye\textsuperscript{148}/subtractive color\textsuperscript{149}

But as Motherwell observes, in phenomenal experience, color is given most essentially in the form of objects, alive or inert. Red, for Jung, is blood, with its associations to life and death, birth, menstruation, war and killing, blood and soil, blood of Christ, blood of the
martyrs, blood brothers. It may be wine, or strawberries, or cardinals, or rubies. Red quickly involves us in the world of things.

Figure 111 Rufino Tamayo, Sandías, 1953

Until the nineteenth century, when chemical dyes and new paint colors were invented, the colors humans used were named after and tied to the substances from which they were made—blood, urine, fruit, flower, insect, rock, root, or tree—the places where they
were found or manufactured—minium for the River Minius, Turkey red for the place it was prepared—and the processes used to discover them, work with them, and acquire them—mining, harvesting, purifying, macerating, crushing, boiling, fermenting, mordanting, importing, transporting, colonizing. These stuffs and processes were rare, difficult and time-consuming to collect, prepare, and ship, and hence expensive. Most of the substances used for dying had medicinal as well as tinting properties, and the secrets of preparation were closely guarded. Colors thus partook of the divine nature of the material world.

In *My Name Is Red*, the color tells the story of its begetting in insect and herb, in grinding, boiling, stirring, straining, and mordanting. Red knows that the material details of what it takes to make a color and a visual image—the tangible interconnection of the visual and the concrete, tying psyche and world inseparably together—are part of what gives the pure, dominant colors of the miniatures their power, and what makes its own presence the stamp of value in manuscript painting:

Hush and listen to how I developed such a magnificent red tone. A master miniaturist, an expert in paints, furiously pounded the best variety of dried red beetle from the hottest climes of Hindustan into a fine powder using his mortar and pestle. He prepared five drachmas of the red powder, one drachma of soapwort and a half drachma of *lotor*. He boiled the soapwort in a pot containing three *okkas* of water. Next, he mixed thoroughly the *lotor* into the water. He let it boil for as long as it took to drink an excellent cup of coffee. As he enjoyed his coffee, I grew as impatient as a child about to be born. The coffee had cleared the master’s mind and given him the
eyes of a jinn. He sprinkled the red powder into the kettle and carefully mixed the concoction with one of the thin, clean sticks reserved for this task. I was ready to become genuine red, but the issue of my consistency was of utmost importance: The liquid shouldn’t be permitted to just boil away. He drew the tip of his stirring stick across the nail of his thumb (any other finger was absolutely unacceptable). Oh, how exquisite it is to be red! I gracefully painted that thumbnail without running off the side in watery haste. In short, I was the right consistency, but I still contained sediment. He took the pot off the stove and strained me through a clean piece of cheesecloth, purifying me even further. Next, he heated me up again, bringing me to a frothy boil twice more. After adding a pinch of crushed alum, he left me to cool.\textsuperscript{150}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figures.png}
\caption{Ottoman miniaturists, 16C\textsuperscript{51}/Ottomans attacking the Safavids, 16C ms.\textsuperscript{152}}
\end{figure}

In the story, red is made from the gum lac, a dark red resinous substance secreted by \textit{Laccifer lacca}, a scale insect from India. But the color can be made from many substances. Ochre, minium, madder, kermes, cinnabar, cochineal, brazil—red has been made from
minerals, plant stuffs, and animal dyes. Each of these reds has its own shades of color and meaning, each its own history of economic, political, and religious exploitation, and each its own cultural entanglements. Red is red ochre, for example, an easily-available earth and the oldest-known pigment used by hominids. Found everywhere, it makes a deep, rust-red, rich but not compelling. It is useful for painting and dying. According to the paleoanthropologist André Leroi-Gourhan, the caves of prehistoric Europe often had a layer of red ochre powder up to eight inches deep, a testament to the importance of the color in the rituals of ancestral humans.153
Figures 114-116  Ancient red ochre open pit quarried by Nyoongar aboriginal people, Dryandra Woodland, Western Australia\textsuperscript{54}/"Young Prince," Red ochre burial, Caverna delle Arene Candide, Liguria, 23,500 BP/Red ochre cave art, Altamira, Spain, 15,500 BP
Red is cinnabar, a deep vermilion made from sulfide of mercury, was imported by the Romans from Almadén, Spain, where the slaves and prisoners who mined it died from mercury poisoning; because of its relative rarity and the difficulty of extraction, it was fifteen times as expensive as African red ochre. A particularly intense and brilliant red, it was used in expensive wall colorings of Roman upper class houses—for example, the deep red of unadulterated cinnabar covers the walls of the Villa of the Mysteries outside Pompeii—to shroud the skeletons of rulers in Mayan graves, and as the colorant in Chinese lacquer.\textsuperscript{155} It was also ingested by emperors in China in the belief that it would ensure their immortality.\textsuperscript{156}
Figures 117-119  Jacobo Zanella, Mexican cinnabar field, El Madroño, Sierra Gorda, Queretaro, México, 2004/Mayan royal grave, the “Red Queen”\textsuperscript{157}/Cinnabar face mask, El Perú-Waka (Maya), Guatemala, Tomb 80, 300–350\textsuperscript{158}

Figure 120  Vermilion (cinnabar)-painted walls, Pompeii, Villa of the Mysteries
Figures 121-122  Lacquer dish with roses, Chinese Yuan Dynasty, 1279 to 1368\textsuperscript{159}/tomb of Count Peng, Western Zhou Dynasty, 1100 BC-771 BC\textsuperscript{160}
In medieval times, cinnabar was created from sulphur and mercury. An alchemical recipe instructs:

Take one part of mercury and one of white sulphur, as much of one as of the other. Put it in a glass bottle, thoroughly clad with clay. Put it on a moderate fire and cover the mouth of a bottle with a tile. Close it when you see yellow smoke coming out of the bottle, until you see the red and almost vermilion-colored smoke. Then take it from the fire and the vermilion will be ready.\textsuperscript{161}

Red is red lead or minium, named for the river Minius in northwest Spain, made from triplumbic tetroxide, an oxide of lead, and favored by medieval European miniaturists, whose products are its namesake. Less poisonous than cinnabar, it is prepared by calcining litharge, or lead monoxide, and dissolving the result in potassium hydroxide—again an alchemical formula. Red is madder, \textit{rubia tinctorum}, or Turkey red, from roots that give an orange-red color if you know how to handle them. They are dried, crushed, hulled, cooked in hard water to just below boiling, and then dried, fermented, or dissolved with acid, alcohol, or an alkaline solution to make alizarin, then applied to mordanted cloth. Until the eighteenth century, this deep orange red could only be made in the East.
Figures 123-125  Minium, Lovers in the Garden, Codex Manesse, c. 1300 CE/Rubia tinctorum (madder root)/West Anatolian 17th-century Ushak design carpet, madder red
Red is realgar, arsenic disulfide, closer to orange. Red is safflower, which will make shades of red and pink, or saffron, which makes a range of colors from red through orange to yellow. Red is ephemeral Brazil, a tropical hardwood after which the country is named, ground into sawdust and mixed with an alkaline solution—a dye that fades quickly; or orchil, a red-producing lichen; or alkenet, whose root makes a red, or mulberry juice, for red and purple.
One of the best deep, rich, long-lasting reds is Venetian scarlet, or crimson, made from kermes, or coccus, as it is sometimes called in the Old Testament (from the Arabic kirmiz, or worm, and the root of the word crimson). The color is brightened with arsenic. Also called grana (seed), it takes thousands of the tiny bodies of these insects of the scale family to produce the deep scarlet and crimson that was most sought after in Europe. Other names are St. John’s Blood and Armenian Red, named for similar insects found underground.
Figures 128-129  Kermes scale insect/crimson coronation mantle of Roger II of Sicily (1133-1134), dyed with kermes
Figures 130-131  Steven van der Meulen, Queen Elizabeth I, c. 1563, in crimson/
Francisco de Goya, Manuel Osorio Manrique de Zuñiga, 1784

In *The Primary Colors*, Alexander Theroux waxes eloquent, and prolix, about the shades of red, delighting in the distinctions and differences, the shades and the sources of the tints (of the three primaries, red rates the largest number of pages, at ninety-nine):

There are many shades of red. Vermilion is a light cadmium red. Adrianople red, also known as Turkey red, is a bright, intense color made from the madder plant. Fire-engine red is unsubdued, like the translucent red-plastic Fresnel lenses of automotive lights. Dog food, which is presently being extruded and puffed and dyed in multicolors, is a sort of hideous matt liver-red. There is the deep red of Red Seal labels on old opera 78 r.p.m. records. Fox-red *tenné* in the language of chivalry shows a
somewhat burnt note. And garnet red with its low brilliance and medium saturation is a sort of “pigeon blood” or “Spanish wine.” Cranberry red has a saucy sharpness to it with a hint of yellow. Bluish red, popular in lipsticks, cardigans, and the aura of dramatic personalities always puts me in mind of Sir William Rothenstein’s arch remark, “One should always listen to Weber in mauve.” In the color trade, the impure native oxide with a bluish tone is known as Spanish red, the brighter, more scarlet shade of which, really an earth red, is called Venetian red, a color mixed with ocher, making a kind of sobresada stain that Raphael, Velázquez, and Goya all had on their rich palettes.


The famous Red Fort in Old Delhi in India, with its carved marble walls, is of a strange, chalky, powdery, reddish rust. There is also a special rust-red peculiar to the house walls of old Pompeii.
Figures 135-136 Red Fort, Delhi, 1639ff/Wall painting, Villa of P. Fannius Synistor, Boscoreale, Pompeii
Fuchsia is a pink-blue-red. (Elsa Schiaparelli’s famous “shocking pink” was really a Tyrian purple.) Red Cell, a brand of horse vitamin, is a livid liver-red. Red-orange is a crayon that Crayola has, unfortunately if you ask me—it was my favorite color for gunfire in my early drawings—discontinued. And don’t chicken pox, rubella, and erysipelas have their own quaint tints, the clawed hues of inflammation?\[164\]

Theroux’s catalog is based in the visual and constituent connections of color to color. His propositions about color arise from the particularities of the hues and their provenances, their material manifestations and their uses, so that we must wade through the specifics to get to the general—an unfamiliar way of arguing that frustrates the mind accustomed to directed thinking.\[165\] It is an attempt to get at the combined visual, emotional, and intellectual—not to say spiritual—experience of colors, as well as some of the essential qualities tying the particulars together.

Color is not only material, and made. In the Middle Ages, cloth and color were the foundation of the European trade economy. Because of the permanence and depth of crimson, Europeans had a great appetite for textiles dyed with grana, or “in grain” (the root of our word “ingrained”). Red could make or break a country’s fortunes, and when the Spanish discovered cochineal in the New World, they dominated the European market for red until the nineteenth century, when chemical dyes were invented.\[166\] Produced by another insect in the scale family that feeds on the prickly pear or nopal cactus, cochineal was grown and traded throughout South and Central America. It was first cultivated by the Andean civilizations, where beautiful jackets were worn by
Peruvian rulers were dyed in intricate patterns of cochineal-dyed camelid hair woven into cotton.

**Figure 137-138** Collecting cochinal from the nopal cactus\textsuperscript{167}/Peruvian tunic, Chimú, 12-15C, dyed in cochineal\textsuperscript{168}
Cochineal became a valuable item of trade throughout Latin America and was collected as tribute by the Aztec overlords from their subordinate tribes. Discovered by the Spanish when they conquered México, and sold by them at immense profit, cochineal was capable, by means of various dyeing processes, of making a wide range of colors, from bright pink to intense, clear carmine to dark blackish blood color. It was traded through Spanish ports to almost all parts of the settled world, appearing in Japan, China, Southeast Asia, as well as Europe and North America, and the plants were occasionally smuggled out of Latin America to try to establish the insects elsewhere. It is still grown today in México as an important cash crop.

Figure 139  Banner with King David and the Coat of Arms of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy, 1596, dyed with cochineal¹⁶⁹
With the exception of red ochre, all of these materials were arduous to mine, grow, and collect, and in addition to the problems of obtaining the raw materials, the secret of making strong, clear, vivid, long-lasting hues was a mystery, difficult to achieve and defended against rivals.

Figures 142-143  Georgius Agricola, *De re Metallica*, Book IX, Manufacturing vermilion, 1561/Dying silk madder red takes a hotter flame than dying it indigo blue, 15C Italian ms.

Dyers of cloth guarded their techniques as trade secrets. Many of the operations involved in dying—decantation, decoction, distillation, drying, filtration, maceration, precipitation, washing—were also those used by alchemists, and the alchemical writings are full of cryptic descriptions of how to achieve red and other colors.
Artists mixed their paints from the same materials, grinding them for each use. The art of mixing paint was carefully passed down among painters. Expensive colors were used.
sparingly, unused portions saved by storing them under water. Oil paints, a new medium developed in Renaissance Northern Europe and made popular by the Venetians Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese, allowed the colors to be applied in translucent layers, so that different red pigments could be layered the same painting, achieving luminous highlights. Johannes Vermeer’s *Girl with a Red Hat* uses vermilion mixed with black, over which a madder glaze is applied.

![Figure 146](image)

*Figure 146*  Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Red Hat*, 1665
However costly, many of these colors faded over time, and the invention of permanent, chemical, aniline color was a boon to artists, who eagerly embraced the new colors available to them, even making them the subjects of their paintings. Matisse’s *The Red Studio* was painted with the new color of cadmium red, made from a rare metal and thought to be less toxic and more colorfast than the old reds. *The Red Studio* is a decorative panel originally painted in blue, but overpainted in red. The color of the painting was crucial to Matisse’s sense of the world of things. He commented to someone visiting his studio and looking around: “You are looking for the red wall; this wall does not exist at all. ... Where I got the color red—to be sure, I don’t know that.... I find that all these things, flowers, furniture, the chest of drawers, only become what they are to me when I see them together with the color red.”171
Chemical dyes also greatly aided the coloring of cloth and thus the availability of ready-to-wear clothing. This democratized color, making red no longer rich and rare, but instead just one color like all the others. The pigment in *My Name Is Red* would, if around today, be having a narcissistic crisis.

In the twentieth-century reds get names divorced from their origins, and thus from memory and materiality, and aimed instead, through advertising, at desiderata and the future—Fire-Engine, Lipstick, Coca-Cola. Sometimes the names disguise their poisonous qualities, for the new reds are often as noxious as the old ones. FD&C Red #40, called Allura Red AC, was originally manufactured from coal tar, but now is mostly made from petroleum, and is presumably named for the effects it is hoped to have on consumers rather than for its repellant properties.

**Figures 147-148** Henri Matisse, *The Red Studio*, 1911/
Patrick Heron, *Cadmium with Violet, Scarlet, Emerald, Lemon and Venetian*, 1969
Figures 149-151  Kinsmart Red Rescue Fire Engine\textsuperscript{172}/Elixery Nevermore lipstick\textsuperscript{173}/Turner Duckworth, Coca-Cola ad

Figures 152-153  Bodeguita store with Coke signs/Coca-Cola ad, San Miguel de Allende, México, 2018-03\textsuperscript{174}

However, the “allura” of red is still there—graphic artists use it for its attention-getting qualities, and art with red in it sells for more than that painted in other colors.\textsuperscript{175} Red sells candy, coke, and cars, at Target and Toyota.
The occult materiality of these reds, now expressed in chemical formulae rather than diagrams of dye vats and furnaces, and the even more elaborate and hidden processes that go into their making, are still embodied in the colors of our dreams.

![Chemical formula for Allura Red (Red Dye #40)](image)

**Figure 158** Chemical formula for Allura Red (Red Dye #40)
But the close connection of body, psyche, and the natural world is harder to experience. Red in dreams may mean something new now.

Still, the psyche wants to imagine its interconnection with all the levels of being, from the archetypal to the material. A man dreams:

\[
\text{I am following a young boy carrying a fishing rod with a bright lure, made of red feathers, slung over his shoulder. I want to find out where he's going. I go into a shopping mall and discover there is a car dealership that sells beautiful, individually designed cars. I am entranced by the cars and find a red one I want to buy. I've forgotten about the boy, but then I hear he's gone down to a river to fish, and I want to follow him so I can get to the river too.}
\]

Here there are two reds, both alluring. One is made of feathers, carried by a small boy, perhaps a self figure, and the other is an individually designed vehicle that entrances the dream ego with its power and beauty. We might see the young boy as a figure of the divine child, and the river as the ever-active flow of images in the collective unconscious, a place where you can fish for a connection to the self, using the red feather of your spirit life as a lure. The car, on the other hand, although it is not a pre-made emblem of worldly position and success that the dreamer must simply accept or reject, is still a means of getting about in the dayworld, and its allure may have more to do with its being a power/pleasure symbol than with a connection to the self. The dreamer seems to be entranced by a persona ideal that seduces by being suited to him, individualized, and he forgets that there is something that matters even more to him than that.
Thus far, the color makes little difference to our understanding of the dream, and the interesting fact of two red elements is still a puzzle. These two reds require us to understand their differences, and what these differences might mean. One is feather, made from animal parts, and leads to moving water where the dreamer can fish for a deep layer of self. The other, although individually designed, is made of manufactured items—metal, plastic, perhaps leather. The dream, by imaging both of them as red, shows that there is a draw, there is life, in both; but the kind of life each leads toward is different. The feather unites levels, spirit and soul perhaps. The red car, on the other hand, is of this world. It may give the dreamer confidence, and it may drive well, smooth his way through the world, fit him like a glove. In a way, it may make things too easy. On-demand locomotion may actually erase the sense of the “isness” of things by making it
difficult to have enough reflective consciousness to step back and notice. Fishing, on the other hand, is by its nature a reflective activity, in which you attune yourself to another, become one with the rod, feeling for the tug on the line that means your red spirit feather has caught something that is alive.

**COLOR AS PROCESS AND “THE WAY”—ALCHEMY**

Friday I tasted life. It was a vast morsel. A Circus passed the house—still I feel the **RED** in my mind. — Emily Dickinson, letter to Elizabeth Holland

Dyers and painters strive to “fix” red, to make it stay put and stay the same, but perhaps the best way to conceive of red, and colors in general, is as participants in process. And the paradigm of color as process is alchemy, in which inner and outer, artifex and artifact, are intermingled, and color is the index of the stage in which we find ourselves in the psychological work of creating ourselves.

In alchemy, colors simultaneously instantiate material and psychological processes; as Hillman notes,

Every alchemical phenomenon is both material and psychological at the same time, else alchemy could not claim to be salvific of both the human soul and material nature. It is all metaphor (“symbolic” in Jung's 1921 sense of that word). All analogy. All a poiesis of the hand. Our minds still
retain this alchemical propensity for transferring technology into psychology.\textsuperscript{182}

And \textit{vice versa}—a poiesis of the hand has the propensity to transfer psychology into embodied materiality. The vector runs both ways.

In alchemy, red is the \textit{rubedo}, the fourth stage of returning to life, of bringing back into this world all the riches gained in the long peregrination in the inner world—the psychological work of dissolving and coagulating our complexes, mortification and putrefaction of our most deeply-held beliefs, fermentation and distillation of hard-won knowledge of ourselves. It is what Hillman calls the “sanguine tincturing of the world out there.”\textsuperscript{183}

In the alchemists’ treatises, red occurs as materials that are also spirit: red sulphur, red gum, red lion, red sun, red tincture, red stone.
Figures 162-164  Ripley Scroll, 15C, detail, Red and Green Lions/Splendor Solis Image III-4/Cabala minerolis, “The stone of the wise, the medicine of the third order, the omnipotent king, the perfect medicine of the third order in its projection able to transmute all metals”
This reddening is the second coniunctio, the re-union of the unio mentalis, soul and spirit, with the purified body. For Jung, the rubedo is tinged with all of the imagery of the Greater Coniunctio: Red King conjoined with White Queen, red and white sulphur, the Coronation of the Virgin, and the resurrection of Christ from the tomb. The reddening, says Jung, is the stage of reengagement in life; as he told his soul at the beginning of The Red Book, “the one thing I have learned is that one must live this life. This life is the way, the long sought-after way to the unfathomable, which we call divine. There is no other way, all other ways are false paths.”¹⁸⁴ In the rubedo, according to Jungian analyst and embodied dreamworker Robbie Bosnak, actions are “a subtle self-aware embodiment of practical metaphor affecting the powers in the world.”¹⁸⁵ In the rubedo, the energy that has gone inward, upward, downward, returns to this world, infused with what has gone on in those other planes.

The rubedo is shown in the seventeenth picture of the Rosarium Philsophorum, called “The Demonstration of Perfection.” In this image, the hermaphrodite, the protagonist of the alchemical process, previously naked and dead, now appears restored to life and clothed. In the picture below, s/he is tinted with the four colors of the process—black, white, yellow, red—in counter-clockwise, opus-contra-naturam, order. Still winged, meaning psychic or spiritual, s/he has commanded the unconscious dragon’s flights of fantasy to this-worldly purposes. Half-king, half-queen, dressed, however oddly, for their debut on this earthly plane, they are holding aloft the cup with the tri-colored serpent, black-white-red—the process that has gone on, and is still ongoing, although now
contained, in one hand—and the single serpent, the fourth which is the new unity, in the other. They are accompanied by the theriomorphic companions of the journey, standing on a rock holding down the three serpents who seem to be expiring, the blood running out of their mouths, the green lion of unregulated feeling behind him, the red (in this colored image) pelican of self-sacrifice feeding its young, the crowned serpent coiled, tamed around her/his left arm, the sun-tree shining at his/her side. All of these otherworldly creatures are now at their command.

Figure 165  *Rosarium Philosophorum*, Image 17, The Demonstration of Perfection
Unlike black, white/silver, and yellow, to which he devotes a chapter each in *Alchemical Psychology*, and blue, which merits two essays to cover its two aspects, elevating and depressing, Hillman has relatively little to say about the *rubedo*, with no chapter devoted to red. What he does say about the color is mostly cautionary, if not downright ambivalent. His advice can be summed up as “Let us not get inflated by red!”: “The *rubedo* first requires a receptive soul and a comprehensive understanding, else it streams in the firmament, reddening the world with manic missionary compulsion, the *multiplicatio* and *exaltatio* as conversion, moneymaking, and fame.” He emphasizes that red is, if an endpoint, not a stasis, but rather a dissolution, “a turning and turning like the cosmos itself”:

About the red only this: Whatever its many names and equations, it indicates the inseparability of visible and invisible, psyche and cosmos, a *unus mundus*. It requires the most intense heat: “The spirit is heat.” The operations coincident to the reddening are exaltation, multiplication, and projection, according to the fifteenth-century English alchemist George Ripley. These expansions together perform the tincturing, staining all things as the sun shines everywhere. The image of the King dominates. The King as a political figure redresses the balance of the introverted process that has led to his crowning, now toward the polis, the city on earth. The *rubedo* as a purple-red is also called in Greek terms the *iosis*, which means poisoning. It would seem that the *rubedo* deconstructs the very matter from which the King arises. “All corruption of matter is marked by deadly poison.” The Ouroboros, which can also indicate the *rubedo*, at this red juncture signifies a final dissolution of sunlit
consciousness and all distinctions—all the stages, phases, operations, and colors. It is a moment of the \textit{rotatio}, a turning and turning like the cosmos itself, requiring endless numbers of eyes to see with, like the King seeing and being seen by each one in the realm. The work is over; we no longer work at consciousness, develop ourselves, or possess a distinct grid by means of which we recognize where we are, how we are, maybe even who we are. “The dissolution of Sol should be effected by Nature, not by handiwork,” concludes Figulus. Psyche is life; life, psyche.\textsuperscript{187}...

Thus the red in the \textit{rubedo} signifies the interpenetration of inner and outer, spiritual and material, that color itself embodies.

Less sanguine than Jung about the prospects for, or even the desirability of, wholeness, Hillman emphasizes the continual Becoming in Being; the \textit{rubedo} is an intermingling of Being and Becoming:

\begin{quote}
The \textit{rubedo} is imagined as a final moment of the opus—not because a result is finally achieved (the King, the gold, the elixir), but because Becoming is overcome and Being is released from static immobility.\textsuperscript{188}
\end{quote}

Suggestively, the Old Norse rune for R—in Proto-German *\textit{Raidō}, in Anglo-Saxon \textit{Rad}, in Old Norse \textit{Ræið}, and Old Icelandic \textit{Reið}—means ride or journey. And at least in \textit{The Red Book}, for Jung as for Hillman red is not the goal but rather “The Way”—life beyond good and evil.
Along the Way, a dreamer dreams:

_I see a red substance wrapped up into a little round, wet, irregular ball, and I know that this is what people are born from._

The dream ego is aware of the irregularity, the contingent this-worldliness, of the (re)birth into embodied being after the long winter of mortification, calcination, coagulation, fixation, during which it has been obedient to the Work. Fermentation and incubation must have occurred, because a little wet red ball has been produced, a red seed of new life. Soul/spirits are incarnated into this world from the red ball. In her lovely poem “Red Bird Explains Himself,” Mary Oliver celebrates the teachings of red to the hearts of these newly-birthed spirit/soul/bodies:

“Yes, I was the brilliance floating over the snow and I was the song in the summer leaves, but this was only the first trick I had hold of among my other mythologies, for I also knew obedience: bring sticks to the nest, food to the young, kisses to my bride.

But don’t stop there, stay with me: listen. If I was the song that entered your heart then I was the music of your heart, that you wanted and needed, and thus wilderness bloomed that, with all its followers: gardeners, lovers, people who weep for the death of rivers.
And this was my true task, to be the
music of the body. Do you understand? for truly the body needs
a song, a spirit, a soul. And no less, to make this work,
the soul has need of a body,
and I am both of the earth and I am of the inexplicable
beauty of heaven
where I fly so easily, so welcome, yes,
and this is why I have been sent, to teach this to your heart.”

In the rubedo, soul and spirit, united in the *unio mentalis*, return to their body, which has need of their song. The soul is then both of this earth and of the other world—the “inexplicable beauty of heaven”—all the levels in correspondence, united in spirit, in soul, in substance, and in experience.

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The “innocence of the eye,” a much-disputed and, Jung (among others) would argue, impossible idea, is from John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing in Three Letters to Beginners* (1857), “Letter 1. On First Practice,” FN 1. Ruskin says: “The perception of solid Form is entirely a matter of experience. We see nothing but flat colors; and it is only by a series of experiments that we find out that a stain of black or gray indicates the dark side of a solid substance, or that a faint hue indicates that the object in which it appears is far away. The whole technical power of painting depends on our recovery of what may be called the innocence of the eye; that is to say, of a sort of childish perception of these flat stains of color, merely as such, without consciousness of what they signify,—as a blind man would see them if suddenly gifted with sight. For instance: when grass is lighted strongly by the sun in certain directions, it is turned from green into a peculiar and somewhat dusty-looking yellow. If we had been born blind, and were suddenly endowed with sight on a piece of grass thus lighted in some parts by the sun, it would appear to us that part of the grass was green, and part a dusty yellow (very nearly of the color of primroses); and, if there were primroses near, we should think that the sunlighted grass was another mass of plants of the same sulphur-yellow color. We should try to gather some of them, and then find that the color went away from the grass when we stood between it and the sun, but not from the primroses; and by a series of experiments we should find out that the sun was really the cause of the color in the one,—not in the other. We go through such processes of experiment unconsciously in childhood; and having once come to conclusions touching the signification of certain colors, we always suppose that we see what we only know, and have hardly any consciousness of the real aspect of the signs we have learned to interpret. Very few people have any idea that sunlighted grass is yellow.”

Similarly, in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, Annie Dillard, describes the experience of the world as seen by newly sighted cataract surgery patients who had been blind from birth in terms of patches of light and color. Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* ([1974] NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2013), 27-34ff. Against this idea Jung sets archetypal processes that predispose us to recognize certain objects as corresponding to our instinctual predispositions to have certain experiences of the world. Our visual apparatus takes awhile to learn to see the world in three dimensions, however, and some version of the “innocent eye” does seem to occur in the earliest period of human life. In perceiving colors, right brain, uncategorized visual experience seems to predominate until color terms are learned at two or three years of age, when colors congeal into delimited bits of experience corralled by names; see below, FN 82.

18 James Hillman, “Alchemical Blue and the *Unio Mentalis,*” *Alchemical Psychology,* loc. 2190.


20 According to the vision scientist Jay Neitz, the way we see color has an evolutionary history. Sensitivity to blue and yellow was important to the survival of single-celled organisms in the ocean because it enabled them to “see” the proper location to position themselves with respect to the shoreline—free from land predators, but able to catch food themselves. But forty million years ago, relatively recently on the evolutionary scale, some primates developed eye structures that allowed them to see red and green, granting the ability to recognize foods—fruits—and danger—blood—an evolutionary advantage that was instrumental in the explosion of primate species. Neitz thus sees blue and yellow as hardwired, and the emotions associated with them as driven by deep structures we are born with. In contrast, red/green sight is perceived in the cerebral cortex, and can be learned in male squirrel monkeys who, originally color-blind, are injected with a virus that introduces the human gene for red vision and then trained to learn to recognize the difference between red and green by means of attractive foods. Cited by Beau Lotto, in “Do You See What I See?” (BBC, 2011) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IqXyu14kpY ; accessed 2017-05-28. For a summary of Neitz’s work see “Gene Therapy Gives Monkeys Color Vision, Science, Sep. 16, 2009, https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2009/09/gene-therapy-gives-monkeys-color-vision , accessed 2018-02-21. Similarly, the early psychologist Christine Ladd-Franklin propounded an evolutionary theory of human color reception that posited blue/yellow as prior to red/green perception. See Riley, “Color in Psychology,” 299. Beyond a basic neurological understanding, however, there is no clear consensus on what color works in the human brain. At a physiological level, it is a matter of wavelengths impinging on cones, and the wavelengths of blue, green, and red are combined in various proportions to create all the colors we see. But a great deal of mental processing occurs between this initial interaction of photons with the eye’s optical structure and our experience of color. In addition to the continual adjustments that produce what is called color constancy, much of our experience of colors is actually manufactured in the brain—indeed, the tissues of the eye originate as brain cells, extruded to the purpose of picking up light waves. Huyghe, “Color and the Expression of Inner Time,” in *Color*
Symbolism: Six Excerpts from the Eranos Yearbook, 1972, ed. Klaus Ottmann (Zürich: Eranos, 1977), 121. This means that experience of color is both universal and completely individual, and we are inextricably imprisoned in our solipsistic color creations—despite which humans normally come to some consensus about what they seem to be seeing. But in “The Case of the Colorblind Painter,” Oliver Sachs and Robert Wasserman describe an artist whose brain damage did not prevent him from perceiving color but did interfere with his secondary processing, or construction, of color perception. The artist experienced profound incomprehension and distaste for visual experience that synthetically poisoned all sensation perception and made his life a nightmare. Sachs and Wasserman note: “The mystery of color constancy, or color judgment, seems to depend on an immense inner act of comparison and computation, performed continuously and faultlessly, every moment of our lives.” “The Case of the Colorblind Painter,” New York Review of Books, 19 November 1987, 32, quoted in Riley, 319.

26 René Huyghe, “Color and Time,” 122.
28 In one study, 100% of monkeys and pigeons, and 70% of humans, preferred environments colored in the blue to green range to red ones. Humphrey, Seeing Red, 31. “In research of my own with rhesus monkeys, I showed that they have strong and consistent emotional responses to colored light. When, for example, a monkey is put in a chamber bathed in red light, it becomes anxious and fidgety; when the chamber is bathed in blue, it becomes relatively calm. Given the choice, monkeys strongly prefer a blue chamber to a red one. Human beings (and, for that matter, pigeons too) generally respond to colored light in similar ways. They describe the sensation of red as strong, hot, exciting, and disturbing. Red light has been found to induce physiological symptoms of arousal, while blue light has the opposite effect, and this is true even in babies as young as fifteen days. Subjects feel warmer in red rooms than in blue, time seems to pass faster, reaction times go down (19).” However, once color becomes an aspect of an object, the influence of its form—its objecthood—overrides the influence of its color (21).
29 Pamuk, My Name Is Red, 187.
30 Jung on the psychoid: CW 8 §368: “If I make use of the term ‘psychoid’ I do so with three reservations: firstly, I use it as an adjective, not as a noun; secondly, no psychic quality in the proper sense of the word is implied, but only a ‘quasi-psyche’ one such as the reflex-processes possess; and thirdly, it is meant to distinguish a category of events from merely vitalistic phenomena on the one hand and from specifically psychic processes on the other.” CW 8 §380-383: “Just as, in its lower reaches, the psyche loses itself in the organic-material substrate, so in its upper reaches it resolves itself into a ‘spiritual’ form about which we know as little as we do about the functional basis of instinct. What I would call the psyche proper extends to all functions which can be brought under the influence of a will. Pure instinctuality allows no consciousness to be conjectured and needs none. But because of its empirical freedom of choice, the will needs a supraordinate authority, something like a consciousness of itself, in order to modify the function. It must ‘know’ of a goal different from the goal of the function. Otherwise it would coincide with the driving force of the function. Driesch rightly emphasizes: ‘There is no willing without knowing.’ Volition presupposes a choosing subject who envisages different possibilities. Looked at from this angle, psyche is essentially conflict between blind instinct and will (freedom of choice). Where instinct predominates, psychoid processes set in which pertain to the sphere of the unconscious as elements incapable of consciousness. The psychoid process is not the unconscious as such, for this has a far greater extension. Apart from psychoid processes, there are in the unconscious ideas and volitional acts, hence something akin, to conscious processes; but in the instinctual sphere these phenomena retire so far into the background that the term ‘psychoid’ is probably justified. … [T]he psychoid functions are those that are not capable of consciousness and of whose existence we have only indirect knowledge.”
31 CW 9i §91; CW 8 §277; CW 8 §398.
and underlying all qualities of Perception object. By an

When I recall something, the memory does not present itself to me as a vividly seen event or visualizer. Words, even the pregnant words of poets, do not evoke pictures in my mind. No hypnagogic visions greet me account, had trouble processing visual material:

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Oxford University Press 1988), rpt. in

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Humphrey, Seeing Red, 29ff.


CW 8 §282.


Pamuk, My Name Is Red, 187.


Aldous Huxley, The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell (New York: Harper Colophon, 1954), 53-55. This experience must have been all the more momentous for Huxley, not only because of his deep interest in mystical experience, but as a person whose vision had been compromised since he was a young man, and who, by his own account, had trouble processing visual material: “I am and, for as long as I can remember, I have always been a poor visualizer. Words, even the pregnant words of poets, do not evoke pictures in my mind. No hypnagogic visions greet me on the verge of sleep. When I recall something, the memory does not present itself to me as a vividly seen event or object. By an effort of the will, I can evoke a not very vivid image of what happened yesterday afternoon.” Huxley, Doors of Perception, 15.


Ezekiel 1: 26. Sometimes the sapphire is sometimes thought to be clear or white, as befits the deity who exists prior to and underlying all qualities.

55 Hillman describes the complexed version of the blue fire in the icy-cold blue of the puer’s lack of relationship. Hillman does not appear to have related the puer’s blue fire to Huxley’s ecstatic experience, however, and makes no reference to Huxley’s essay.


58 According to Paul Bony, the craftsman who executed the windows in the chapel, quoted in Alaistair Sooke, “How Matisse Created His Masterpiece,” The Telegraph, 15 Apr 2014, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/10744750/Matisse created his masterpiece.html, accessed 2018-03-06. Red, in this context, Matisse refused, although he allowed it in the vestments he designed for the officiant.


60 In “Alchemical Blue and the Unio Mentalis and “The Azur Vault: Caelum as Experience,” both in Alchemical Psychology.


62 Mark Rothko, quoted in Dorothy Seiberling, “Mark Rothko,” LIFE Magazine, 16 November 1959, 82.

63 Rumi, Kulliyate Shams #996.


66 Gass, Blue, 67, 86.

67 Of the puer Hillman notes: “The eternal spirit is sufficient unto itself and contains all possibilities. As the senex is perfected through time, the puer is primordially perfect. Therefore there is no development; development means devolution, a loss and fall and restriction of possibilities. So for all its changeability the puer, like the senex, at core resists development. This self-perfection, this aura of knowing all and needing nothing, is the true background of the self-containment and isolation of any complex, reflected for instance in the ego’s narcissistic attitudes, that angelic hermaphroditic quality where masculine and feminine are so perfectly joined that nothing else is needed. There is therefore no need for relationship or woman, unless it be some magical puella or some mother-figure who can admiringly reflect and not disturb this exclusive hermaphroditic unity of oneself with one’s archetypal essence. The feeling of distance and coldness, of impermanence, of Don Juan’s ithyphallic sexuality, of homosexuality, can all be seen as derivatives of this privileged archetypal connection with the spirit, which may burn with a blue and ideal fire, but in a human relationship it may show the icy penis and chilling seed of a satanic incubus.” James Hillman, “Senex and Puer: An Aspect of the Historical and Psychological Present,” Senex and Puer, Uniform Edition of the Writings of James Hillman Vol. 3 (Putnam, Connecticut: Spring, 2005), loc. 779.


71 Ruskin, “Hesperid Æglé,” FN 3, point #5.

72 Riley, Color Codes, 320.


74 “[I]t is not red, but rose colour, which is most beautiful ... and so of all colours; not that they may not sometimes be deep and full, but that there is a solemn moderation even in their very fulness, and a holy reference ... to great harmonies by which they are governed.” Ruskin, Modern Painters, 4.140.

75 Paul Gauguin, quoted in René Huyghe, “Color and Time,” 150.

76 Theodor Abt, Introduction to Picture Interpretation According to C. G. Jung (Zürich: Living Human Heritage, 2005), 90, 92, 96.

77 Abt, Picture Interpretation, 97.


79 In the detail, the intensity of the color has been turned up a bit so the snake can be seen. This is not inappropriate, in that the schematic use of the color in the image lends itself to representation in saturated hues.
oscillations," Kawasak
primarily a right to a left brain process. Thus, color is to some extent created in the brain, explaining why different color cells in the brain develop over the first three months of life. Infants do categorize colors before learning language, that has been much disputed but not entirely refuted.

The shaman smith Hephaestus is also colored red, and is both a giver of ingenious creations and a vindictive, spiteful trickster. See Pastoureau, Red, 24, who notes that Hephaestus is red-faced. Devils have not always been red, according to Lutz Rörich, “German Devil Tales and Devil Legends,” Journal of the Folklore Institute 7:1 (June, 1970), 21-35; 24-25. In Children’s Dreams, Jung says that when he is red, the devil represents emotion: “The devil is the black one, the opposite of light. When he appears red, he is of a fiery, that is passionate nature, and causes wantonness, hate, or unruly love.” C. G. Jung, Children’s Dreams (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008 [1987]), 174.


From Mickey Newbury, “Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In), 1967. The original sketches for these mandalas, drawn when Jung was serving as a medical officer during the winter of 1916, are in The Black Books.


Jung, CW 9i §588; CW 14 §390.


Rachel Adelson, “Hues and views: A cross-cultural study reveals how language shapes color perception,” American Psychological Association 36:2 (February 2005). This is both a revision of and modification of the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that color perception is specific to individual cultures and is based in language. Edward Sapir, an American anthropologist and linguist, studied Chinook and other northern Native American languages, arguing in “The Status of Linguistics as a Science,” Language 5, 207-219, that perception was based on language. Based on his study of Hopi grammar, Benjamin Lee Whorf reformulated the hypothesis in his 1940 essay “Science and Linguistics,” republished in Benjamin Lee Whorf, Selected Writings, ed. J.B. Carroll. (NY: J. Wilky/London: Chapinaon & Hall, 1956). Whorf is well-known for his claim that there were many more Eskimo (Yupik and Inuit) words for snow than in English, a claim that has been much disputed but not entirely refuted.

Dillard, Pilgrim, 31. According to Masahiro Kawasaki and Yoko Yamaguchi, humans are not born with color vision; color cells in the brain develop over the first three months of life. Infants do categorize colors before learning language, using largely right-brain processes, but learning color terms changes the way our brains categorize the visual world, from primarily a right to a left brain process. Thus, color is to some extent created in the brain, explaining why different cultures—and western culture at different points in its history—categorize, and appear to see, colors very differently. But the EEGs of people making decisions about which color preference find that a favorite color activates participants’ brains before they are consciously focused on the color—an indication of a neurological, right-brain, effect of color. Masahiro Kawasaki and Yoko Yamaguchi, “Effects of subjective preference of colors on attention-related occipital theta oscillations,” NeuroImage 59 (1): 808–814. See also Lotto, “Do You See What I See.”

Gass, Blue, 61-62.


Goethe, Theory of Colours, §915-916.

Goethe, Theory of Colours, preface to the first edition, xvii; Gass, Blue, 73.

Goethe, Theory of Colours, §782. §794, §796.


Riley, “The Palette and the Table,” Color Codes, 4.


112 Written by Giovanni Boccaccio and augmented by Laurent de Premierfart.

113 BL, Harley 4431, fol. 134v.

114 BL, Harley 13096, fol. 86v.


116 Corbin, “Realism of Colors,” 72.

117 Corbin, “Realism of Colors,” 98, FN 33.

118 Corbin, “Realism of Colors,” 77.


122 Pastoureau, Red, 7.

123 Author’s personal collection.


In a classic 1969 study of worldwide color naming, Brent Berlin and Paul Kay showed that, in a culture with only two terms for color, the two terms mean roughly ‘dark’ (black, dark colors and cold colors like blue) and ‘bright’ (white, light colors, and warm colors like red). Languages with three colors terms add red to this dichotomy. Thus, the three most basic colors are black, white, and red. Additional color terms are added in a fixed order: first one or the other of green or yellow; then the other of these; finally blue. All languages distinguishing six colors have terms for black, white, red, green, yellow, and blue, according to Cross and Kay. See Basic Color Terms: Their Universality and Evolution (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969). A more recent study argues that this hierarchy may be tied to the nature of human vision: Vittorio Loreto, Animesh Mukherjee and Francesca Tria, “On the Origin of the Hierarchy of Color Names,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PANS) 109: 18 (2012): 6819-6824. Brown is the next color named; then orange, pink, purple and/or gray, in any order (“The Vocabulary of Color,” in Colour, ed. Helen Varley (London: Marshall Editions, 1980), 50-51). Pastoureau agrees with this general outline, and shows that in the west there are only six major colors: red, blue, yellow, green and white (with the occasional addition of silver and gold). Pink, purple, orange, brown, and gray are “half-colors,” and no other real colors are given the dignity of named existence. But he disagrees about the cause, seeing it as historical and cultural; see Pastoureau, Colours of Our Memories.

On sports teams’ success: when Olympic competitors in boxing, taekwondo, freestyle wrestling, and Greco-Roman wrestling were randomly given blue or red uniforms in 2004, those wearing red won 55% of bouts; in bouts where the competitors were closely matched in ability, those wearing red won 60% of the time. Post World War II, English teams wearing red uniforms have averaged higher league positions and have had more wins than teams wearing other colors. A study of the UEFA Euro 2004 found similar results. Another study found that those taking penalty kicks performed worst when the goalkeeper had a red uniform. See Diana Widermann, Robert A. Barton, and Russel A. Hill, “Evolutionary perspectives on sport and competition,” in Roberts, S. Craig, ed., Applied Evolutionary Psychology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). The authors suggest that red may signal health as opposed to anemic paleness, or flushing from anger rather than paleness from fear, and that some primate species evaluate rivals and possible mates depending on redness. In addition, facial redness is associated with testosterone levels in humans, and male skin tends to be redder than female skin.

In one study of Europeans’ reactions to color, those of all nations associate red and black with anger, and red is seen as strong and active. Ralph B. Hupka, et al., “The colors of anger, envy, fear, and jealousy: a cross-cultural study,” Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology 28: 2 (March 1997); via Gale Health Reference Center; Widermann, Barton, and Hill, “Evolutionary perspectives on sport and competition.” According to market researchers, customers make their initial judgment on a product within ninety seconds first viewing it, and from 62% to 90% of that judgment is based on color.


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139 Turner, “Color Classification,” 89. In contrast to the Egyptian convention of portraying men as red and women as white, the opposite association prevails for the Ndembu.
140 Jung, Red Book, Liber Secundus, 76.
142 Pastoureau, Colours of Our Memories, 9-10.
143 Pastoureau, Colours of Our Memories, 17-20.
144 Quoted in Philip Ball, Bright Earth: The Invention of Colour (Hawthorn, Australia: Penguin, 2002), 375-376.
145 Adobe has another system, designed to encompass most of the colors achievable on CMYK color printers, but by using RGB primary colors on a device such as a computer display.
146 In modern printing cyan, magenta, and yellow also produce the same effects.
150 Pamuk, My Name Is Red, 186-7. An okka is 1.2829 kilograms or liters. Lotor is an old Turkish word for Symplacos Racemosa, or Lodhra.
156 An enormous store of mercury has been detected in the tomb of the first emperor of China. Because the tomb cannot be opened, it is not clear what the mercury is doing there; it may have been used to create a map of the Chinese world at the time. See Philip Ball, “Flowing rivers of mercury,” Chemistry World 7 January 2015, https://www.chemistryworld.com/feature/flowing-rivers-of-mercury/8122.article; accessed 2017-06-30.
165 “Two Kinds of Thinking,” CW 5 §4ff.
166 In A Perfect Red, historian Amy Butler Greenfield describes the global geopolitical maneuverings involved in the production of just one of these reds, cochineal or carmine. Amy Butler Greenfield, A Perfect Red: Empire, Espionage, and the Quest for the Color of Desire (NY: Harper Collins, 2006).
Illustration from *Reports on the History, Organization, and Status of Various Catholic Dioceses of New Spain and Peru*, 1620-49.


Author’s photographs.


Adapted from https://www.goosenest.co.uk/holiday-ideas/holiday-in-the-cotswolds-perfect-for-fishing ; accessed 2019-06-16.


Hillman, “Silver,” loc. 3304.

