

AN INATE DESIRE TO CREATE



SEEING THRU ART
The Artist as an Instrument; Soul's Creation

The image is a complex artistic composition. On the left, a black and white photograph of a woman's profile is shown, her hand resting on her head. This is overlaid with a large, intricate geometric symbol in the center, which resembles a stylized eye or a third eye, composed of concentric circles and triangular patterns. To the right of the woman's head, there is a vibrant, multi-colored abstract painting with swirling, organic forms in shades of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The overall effect is one of spiritual and artistic exploration.

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Art? What is Art



Art is all around us in the modern era, having broken out of the confines of the frame, yet it is notably changed from past forms. In particular, the major subjects of religion, politics, and sexuality are not permitted in secular societies in public art, denying art's role of

evolving humanity through fantasy thinking and imaginal discourse.



Also, art is increasingly used in advertising and politics, which manipulates art's ability to work with unconscious images and emotions. The restriction of art's typical subject matter and the subordination of its purpose to the manipulation of images in advertising evidence some of the ways that forgetting how to learn through art have left us not only visually

illiterate but vulnerable. In remembering how to learn from art, I hope humanity will reclaim art's power to both educate and heal by embodying the soul's images in form.

Where the spirit does
not work with the hand,
there is no art.

Leonardo da Vinci



While there are citations and explanations, the primary purpose is not academic in a traditional sense but imaginal, following the example of *TRB*. Additionally, this website is about both theory and practice, not only theoretical but practical. Based on Jung's recognition that **"everything essential"** was decided in the images of *TRB* (Jung, 1961, p. 199), this website is designed to aid in the creation of artistic images that can generate new knowledge—new theories. The orientation of the website seeks to lay the groundwork for the application of this art-based methodology. The aim is to teach people the fundamentals of Jung's approach, so that individuals can try and apply this approach in their own ways and their own lives—their own art.



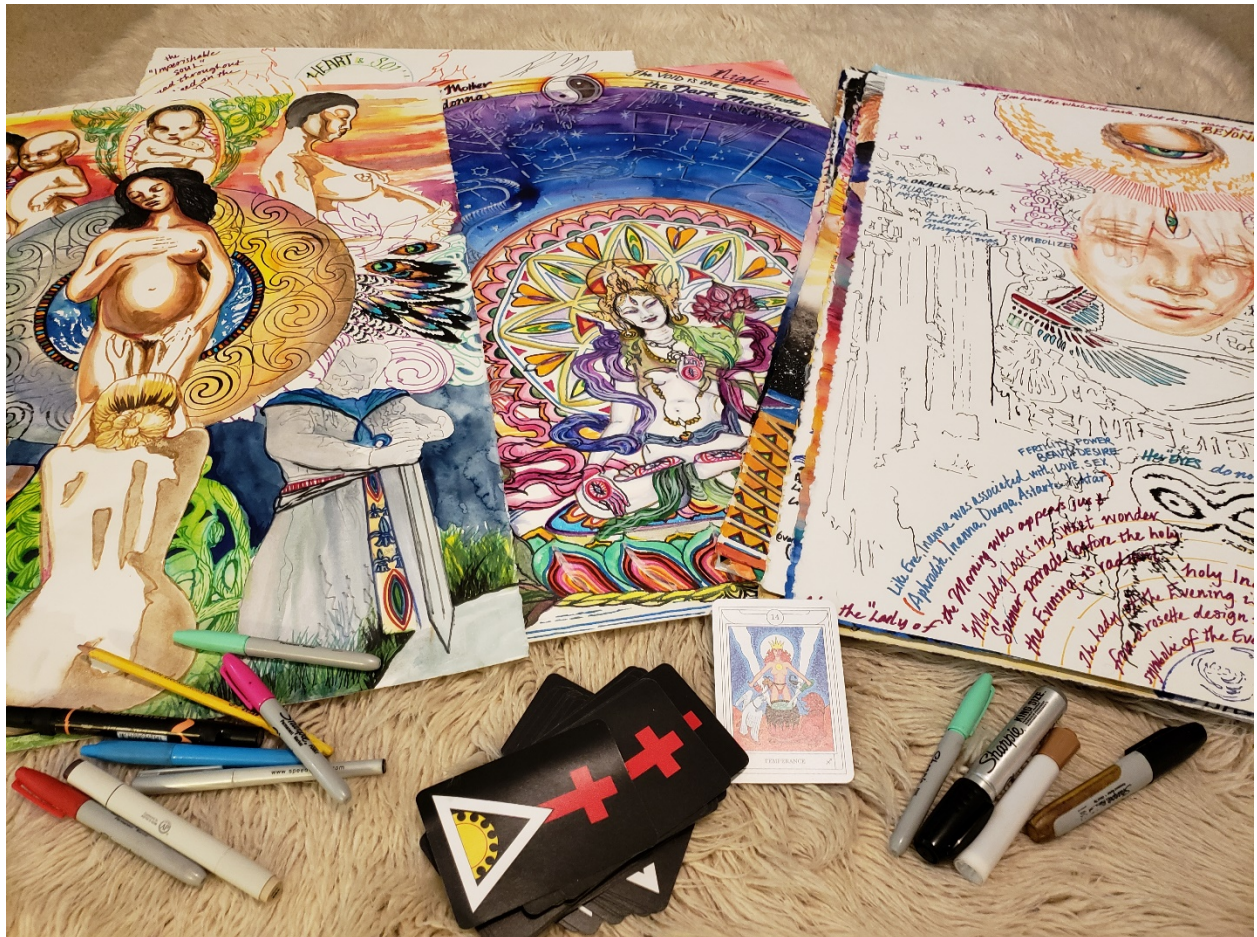
The application and creation of Jung's methodology is something that I have done myself. After researching Jung's process and that of Christiana Morgan, a patient of Jung's that he taught, I applied this methodology in the creation of over 165 paintings and a couple hundred pages of written active imagination.



This process was undertaken as part of my doctoral dissertation in an attempt to understand Jung's methodology both externally and internally, so that I could teach from both perspectives—as what Jung called *theoria* and *practica*. Just as Jung (1933) said that he **“purposely avoided weighing down”** his essay on his art process **“with theory,”** I will likewise avoid theory, **“for which reason many things must**

remain obscure and unexplained,” but “in order to make intelligible the pictures produced by my patients, certain theoretical points must at least be mentioned” (p. 71).

“Practice without theory is more valuable than a theory without practice.” Marcus Quintilianus



This website seeks to share my understanding with others, fulfilling Jung's hope to publish his art-based process and *“bring it to a wider circle”* of people (Jung, 1933, p. 72). While Jung said that he never was able to work this methodology up in a **“suitable form for publication”** (p. 72), I am publishing the methodology in a website as a modern form that allows for a visual format that includes audio and video formats to

enable a more embodied, imaginal experience. I had created a combination website and **white paper** approach to accommodate this content, using two different formats that combine verbal and visual information in an interactive format.



I see this approach as a modern equivalent to the format that Jung or, more aptly his soul, chose for *TRB*. A genre named for the illuminating reflection of light off the gold and silver of its pages, **illuminated manuscripts** reflect the light of consciousness that allows us to transform the alchemical lead of our unconscious through the union of the masculine (**gold sun**) and feminine (**silver moon**). This union of opposites was referred to by Jung as the transcendent function and it is the key to his art-based approach which returns to a genre that marked the transition between visual and verbal literacy from **400 to 600 BC into the Middle Ages**.



In a fundamental sense *TRB* was a return to a past age in which art-based learning was primary. Jung (1961) said that, “we are very far from having finished completely with the Middle Ages, classical antiquity, and primitivity, as our modern psyches pretend,” and so we return to our “ancestral character” in this work to “live in many centuries simultaneously” like Jung and Bollingen Tower (p. 237). The Middle Ages was a model for Jung’s art in *TRB*.



Redefining a genre

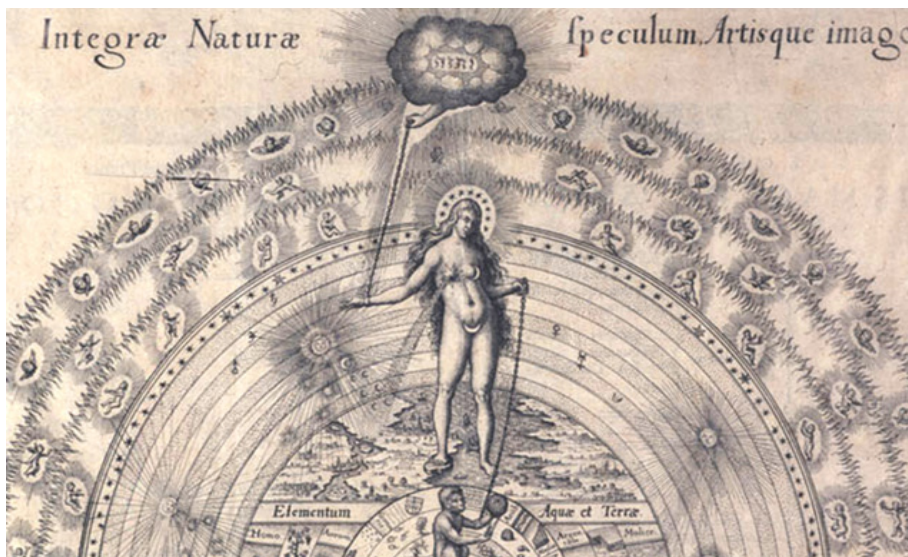
Known for their decorative and illustrative approach to sacred (biblical) teaching, illuminated manuscripts marked a time in which people were almost entirely illiterate and so learned through art. This was a transitional point in human history, marking the end of the hegemony of art which arose in the **MIDDLE PALEOLITHIC** (from 100,000 to 50,000 years ago) and the coming dominion of the written word, which was ushered in with the printing press and the Gutenberg Bible in 1455.



This transition from visual to verbal literacy is captured in illuminated manuscripts, like one that I visited, whose creation spanned over one hundred years and a number of artistic styles. Beginning with an entirely pictorial representation, it ended with a verbal recitation, capturing this evolution in language and thought. I see this **evolution or INDIVIDUATION** as central to Jung's approach and his call to return to viewing through the images of the imagination, back to the dawn of time and consciousness. It is as if we are touring back through ancestral caves in descent to find Jung's (and Goethe's) realm of the mothers.



The ability to span both verbal and visual ways of knowing through art is a central feature of both the illuminated genre and Jung's art-based methodology. Yet, while Jung described *TRB* as both an illuminated manuscript and a mystery play (a popular medieval biblical drama), his approach was different from both of these genres.



Rooted in the archetypal nature of the symbol which speaks across space and time, *TRB* was

“a new

proclamation of a new religion,” according to Jung’s soul

(Shamdasani, 2009, p. 62), and it needs to be seen in this light.

A Teaching of the Soul



In this genre-bending book, Jung pioneered art-based research as a modern epistemological approach to creating new knowledge or learning through art by returning to archetypal antecedents from the past. *Bridging opposites of past and the present* in this groundbreaking work, he returned to past ages in which visual literacy was the predominant way of knowing and a way of embodying the **SOUL**—the meaning of psyche and psychology as the study of the soul.



Critically, the soul in *TRB* was what Jung (1961) called the **“primitive soul”** or Eve (p. 186), a **“psychic system”** that described in terms of the body **“with a prehistory of millions of years”** and a **“consciousness that began its evolution from an animal-like [unconscious] state”** (p. 348). This soul or anima (Latin for soul) was **“a strongly historical character”** and **“a personification of the unconscious”** that **“goes back into prehistory and embodies the contents of the past”** (p. 286). She is **“all life that has been in the past and is still alive”** in us (p. 286).



While the soul is a feminine principle, this website uses Jung's terms **anima (soul)** and **animus (mind)** in a post Jungian sense to represent an inner psychological feminine and masculine within both men and women. Though there are unavoidably gender-essentialist aspects of this **BINARY CONCEPTION**, I view their tension of opposites as an essential part of the transcendent function in art—despite recognizing a fluid spectrum of expression that transcends a dual perspective.



This is true of all opposites which are never fully oppositional but characterized as. Like the sun and the moon that move in constant rotation, the *liminal state* *between conscious and unconscious* is where Jung's art-based methodology takes place. This will be shown throughout this website as the vision that sees through the right and left eye, archetypally associated with the masculine, conscious, sun and mind (words other than metaphor) and the feminine, unconscious, moon and soul (images) respectively.



This art-based method combines both of these visions, **LOOKING THROUGH THE RIGHT TO LOOK FORWARD TO ETERNITY AND THE LEFT TO LOOK BACK INTO PREHISTORY.**



Jung said of his soul: “In comparison to her I have always felt myself to be a barbarian who really has no history—like a creature that sprung out of nothingness, with neither a past nor a future” (p. 286). In a sense, the conscious eye looks back into the unconscious and the unconscious looks forward into consciousness, united in the present. We need both eyes to see. *Art-based research returns to this dual vision that unites the eyes and the hemispheres of the brain that they*

connect with to reclaim both visual and verbal literacy.



Referenced as “perhaps the best example” of the field of art-based research by another pioneer of this creative methodology, Shaun McNiff (2013, p. 6), *TRB* represents a newly emergent example of Jung’s learning process. A growing approach to knowledge, art-based research was an approach that Jung first learned under the guidance of his soul in his creative opus (*TRB*), going on to teach this process to others. Describing this as a **“path”** that he **“so often walked with his patients,”** Jung (1933,

p. 72) never published what he referred to as **“his method”**—even though he attributed all of his later theory to the images that arose from it.



This website Seeing Through Art views art as a psychological lens that allows the artist to **“look at the pictures through the eye of the soul,”** as McNiff (2004) described the art-based process (p. 23). Exemplifying the soul and sight-based nature of artistic research that Shamdasani referred to as a **“psychology of sight”** (Hillman & Shamdasani, 2013, p. 20), this site explores sight through an art-informed lens (looking at art created by others) as well as an art-based approach (creating art). In essence,

we are looking at the example of Jung in *TRB*, his student Christiana Morgan in the *Vision Seminar*, and myself in my dissertation to learn his art-based process.