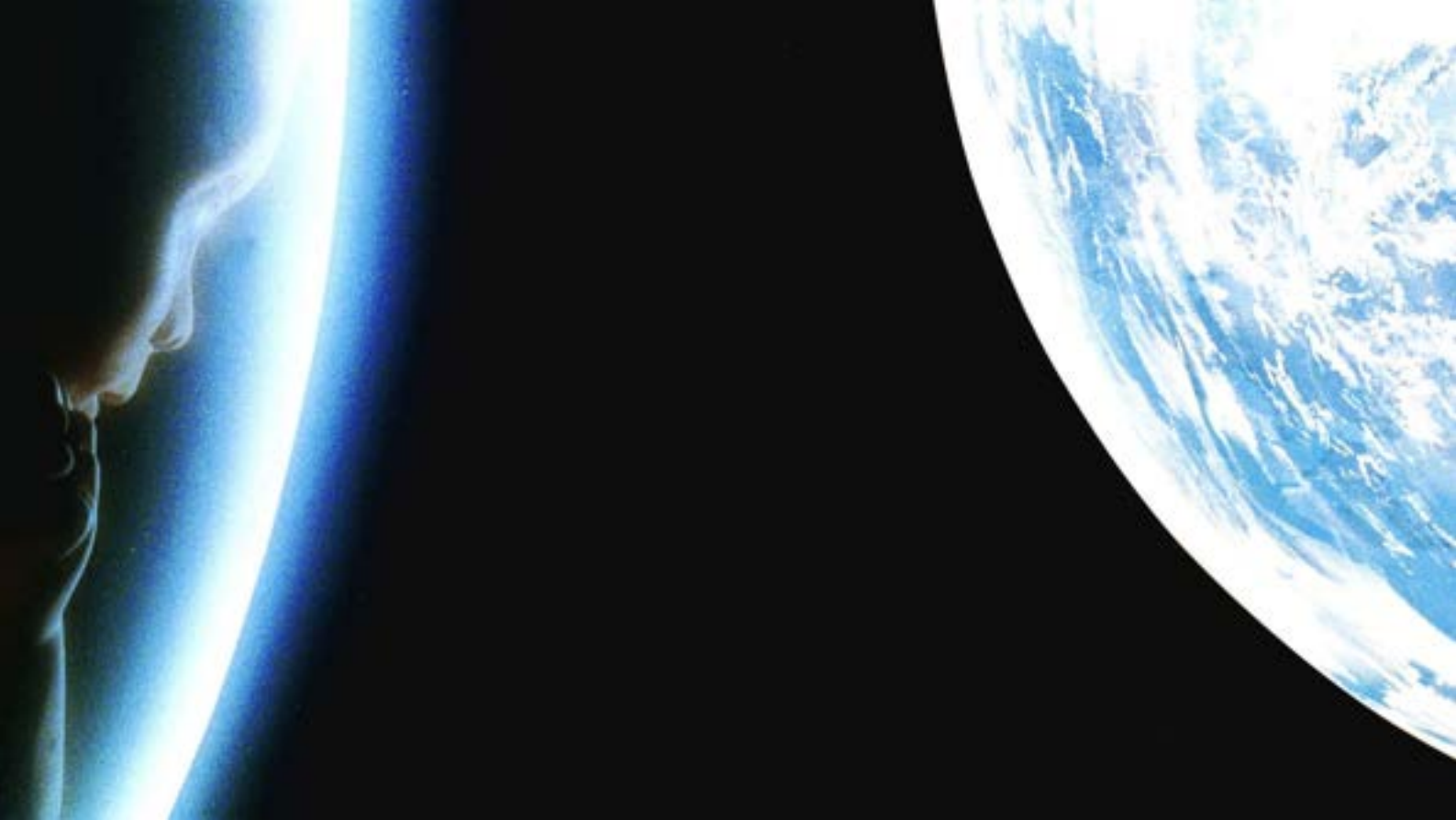




SELF ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGY & THE QUEST FOR CONSCIOUSNESS

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The Creation of Consciousness

Late in his life, Jung mused that “as far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being”.

We are the universe awakening to itself. Through our human eyes, the cosmos has gained an awareness of itself. Our evolution is geared toward the creation of consciousness.

Our self-awareness serves as the world's mirror. And through various practices including the study of dreams, myth, inner voices, the imaginal realm and the archetypal forces active within oneself, we may accelerate this creation of consciousness.



Our Continuing Evolution

According to evolutionary theory, life emerged from the mudflats. Following some miraculous act, the simplest cells were born of sunlight and raw elements.

These simple cells evolved into micro-organisms, plants, fungi and sea creatures. The first fish evolved into salamanders who crawled onto the land and became reptiles, mammals and higher primates. Over billions of years, the process of evolution has created ever more sophisticated lifeforms.

Accompanying our physical evolution, there is a corresponding psychological development. Here the crowning achievement appears to be our human intelligence and self-reflective awareness.

Underlying the evolutionary drive, there is a quest for consciousness. This quest for consciousness is a deeply instinctive and powerful force, present not only in ourselves but in the whole of life, including, as it seems, inanimate matter.

This evolution of consciousness is in no way complete, however. We could be even more aware. It was Friedrich Nietzsche who first

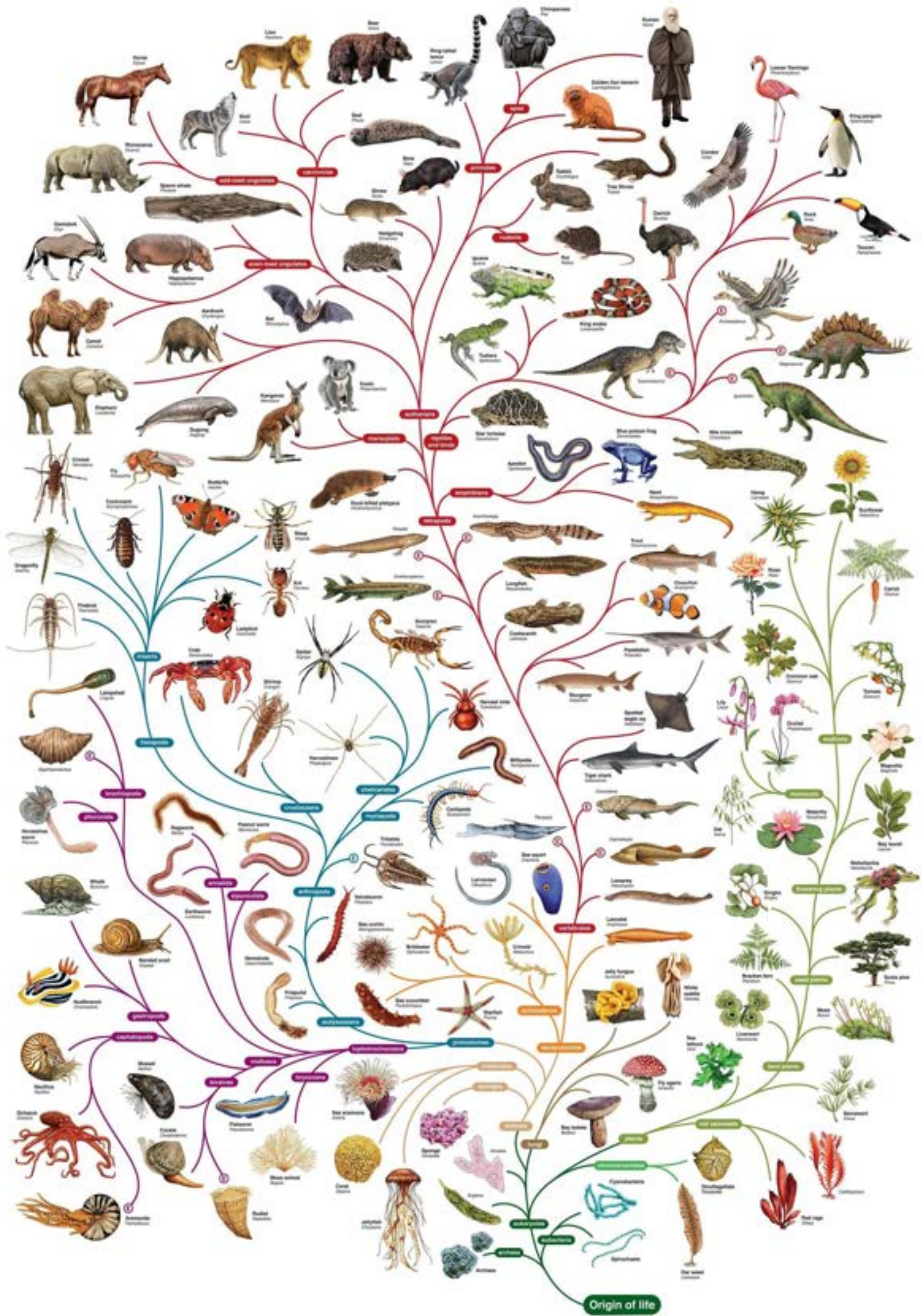
espoused, what has since become, a new ethic.

Nietzsche asked that we push on with the evolutionary process, reaching beyond our current human state, in the same way that we have surpassed our primate heritage. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he wrote:

I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?... All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood, and even go back to the beasts rather than overcome man?... You have made your way from worm to man, and much in you is still worm. Once you were apes... The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman shall be the meaning of the earth.

The need to develop, evolve and contribute to the collective conscious mind sits with all of us. We've no choice in the matter.

When approached in an active and willing manner, this pursuit is an enormously rich and rewarding aspiration.





Self-Reflective Awareness

The Book of Genesis tells the story of Adam and Eve, who lived in a state of innocence in the garden of Eden.

At the centre of the garden was the Tree of Knowledge, with a serpent in its branches. The Lord allowed Adam and Eve to eat the fruits of all trees, bar the Tree of Knowledge one, which he specifically forbade, telling Adam and Eve that if they should do so, they would die.

But the serpent tempted Eve. “You will certainly not die,” the serpent explained, adding that eating from the tree would open their eyes. Like the Lord God, they would know good and evil.

When Eve saw that the fruit looked both desirable and promised great knowledge, she ate and shared some with Adam. Having eaten the fruit, they awoke as if from some long slumber. Realising they were naked, they sewed fig leaves together and covered themselves.

When the Lord returned, Adam and Eve hid from view. Knowing that they had eaten

from the tree, the Lord cast them out of Eden and barred their return.

The story of Adam and Eve describes a fall from grace that we all pass through.

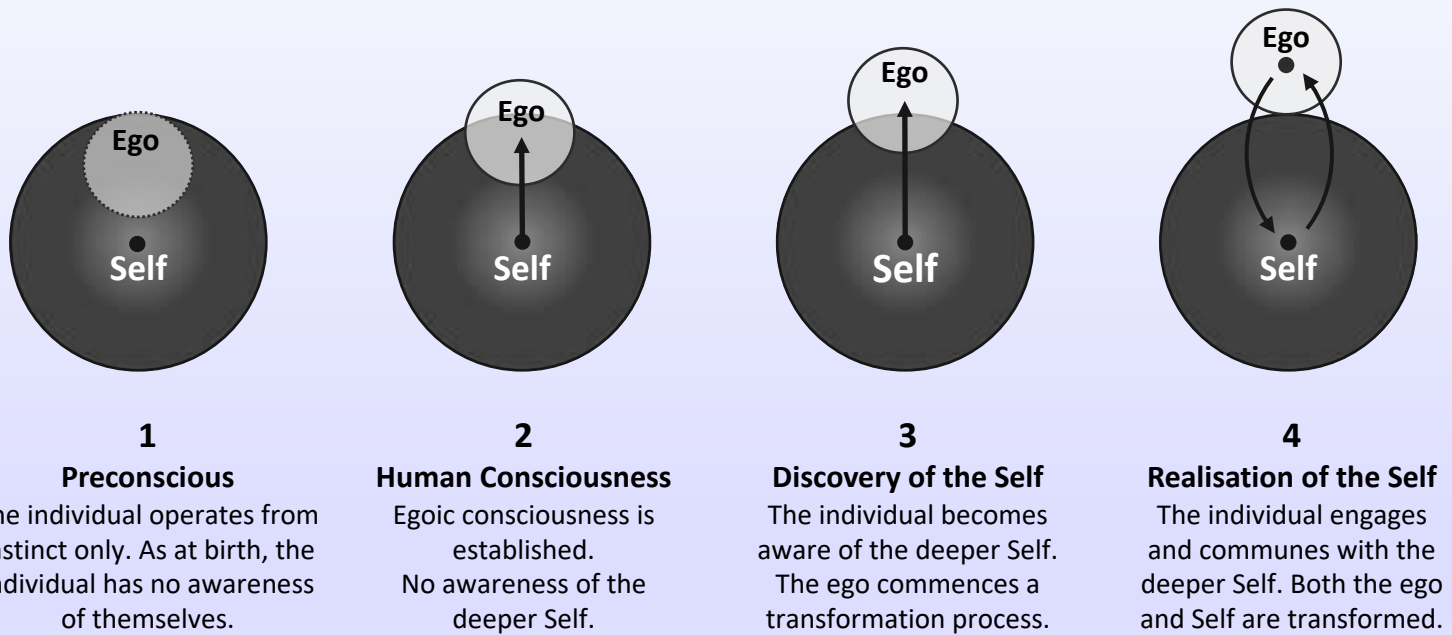
Unlike the rest of the animal kingdom, humans will develop a self-reflective consciousness. We grow to recognise our nakedness and will question our existence.

Like Adam and Eve, by the age of seven, we gain knowledge of right and wrong and lose our innocence.

Whereas animals will operate from instinct, humans enjoy an additional faculty that has been termed the ego (Latin for ‘I’).

This ego structure is born of our self-awareness. It is comprised of who we understand ourselves to be and represents the conscious portion of our psyche.

It is our human ego that distinguishes us from the beasts. As an animal, we retain our instinctive wisdom, which continues to operate at a level beyond our awareness. In addition, we have our ego-consciousness.



Individuation & the Realisation of the Self

As Nietzsche theorised, and Jung discovered, there are two centres to the psyche.

There is the ego, with which we are all familiar and call ‘I’, and there is also the greater Self, which remains largely unknown, and operates at a level beyond our awareness.

The Self serves as instinctive wisdom and, as per the evolutionary drive, will continue to impress itself upon the ego, and push for even greater consciousness. The ego is designed to meet this challenge and is capable of further development, yet needs to be prompted to do so.

Jung described this development as the process of individuation, which is regulated and governed by the deeper Self. As required, the Self will constellate whatever mental state or physical circumstance is required to capture the attention of the ego and stimulate its growth.

This individuation process may be approached willingly or unwillingly. To prompt the ego’s development, the Self will have us experience feelings of pleasure and pain. Where we honour the demands of the

Self, our process unfolds harmoniously. When we ignore the Self, it becomes more forceful and troublesome.

This process is unique. To pursue one’s individuation path, is to seek out and develop one’s particular potential. While there may be common themes, we are each required to find our own way.

As we individuate, our self-awareness grows, yet this is not the only benefit. The development of the ego allows for the ongoing discovery and realisation of the greater Self, not only for oneself, but for all.

Like branch or limb in a great tree, we build upon the consciousness of our forbears, so that we may contribute to the collective consciousness of future generations.

Individuation is a long, drawn-out process of inner transformation and rebirth into another being. This “other being” is the other person in ourselves—that larger and greater personality maturing within us, whom we have already met as the inner friend of the soul.

Carl Jung, *Concerning Rebirth*, CW 9i

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900)

The Self

Behind your thoughts and feelings, there is a mighty lord, an unknown sage - his name is Self

He dwells in your body, he is your body.

There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom.

The Self laughs at the ego, and its proud prancing. "What is this prancing and flights of thought unto me?" it asks itself. "A by-way to my purpose. I am the leading-string of the ego, and the prompter of its notions."

The Self says to the ego: "Feel pain!" And thereupon it suffers and thinks how it may put an end to the suffering - and for that very purpose it is made to think.

The Self says to the ego: "Feel pleasure!" Thereupon it rejoices and thinks how it may often rejoice - and for that very purpose it is made to think.

- Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*



The Descent of the Gods

In the history of myth, the gods have grown progressively more and more human.

Originally it was believed that the spirits lived on the earth, in the waters and in the sky. The gods were the spirits of the wind, the flowing river, the rising sun and the wandering moon. Later these forces were seen in the various animal spirits.

In Egyptian myth, the gods were depicted as half-human and half-animal. In time, these gods shed their elemental and animal forms, which were retained only as a totem and rulership. Zeus had his thunderbolts and could appear as an eagle, for example.

Initially, these gods expressed little interest in humans. Later, as Graeco-Roman myth tells, they descended from the heavens, and mated with mere mortals, thereby creating a race of semi-divine beings such as the hero Jason and the beautiful Helen of Troy.

Unlike earlier gods, the one God of the Old Testament displayed a particularly keen interest in humankind. He demanded obedience and would test and punish his human flock. Genesis tells the story of

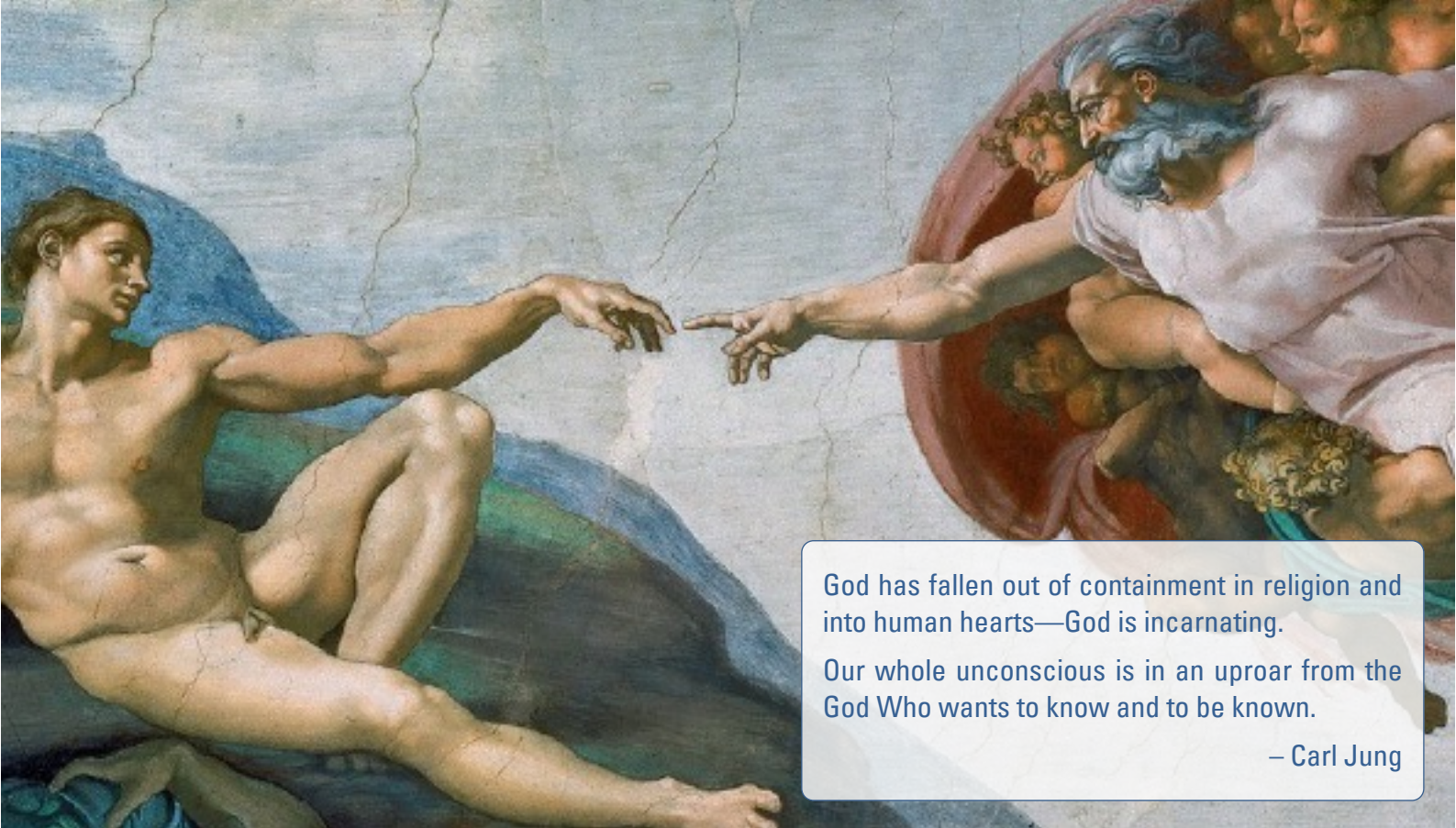
Yahweh calling upon Abraham to sacrifice his first-born son, Isaac. As explained in the New Testament, God went so far as to become a man. This was the figure of Jesus Christ - the divine incarnate.

We have now reached the next stage in this progressive incarnation. After taking on a human form, through to interacting and mating with humans, through to becoming human, the next step would be for the gods to become, not just one special being born free of original sin, but all humans.

With the advent of depth psychology, the gods of old have been rediscovered as the archetypes of the human psyche. No longer on top of Mt Olympus, the gods have re-emerged as the archetypes of the collective unconscious, that is, they live within us all.

Mars, the god of war, can now be seen as our aggressive side, or as our inner warrior.

Hermes is our ingenuity, as well as the trickster we can be. Aphrodite is our charm, Chronos is our rigidity while Zeus constitutes our search for freedom and meaning.



God has fallen out of containment in religion and into human hearts—God is incarnating.

Our whole unconscious is in an uproar from the God Who wants to know and to be known.

– Carl Jung

Meeting the Gods

In Michael Angelo's *The Creation of Adam*, God is seen actively reaching out to Adam, while Adam reaches back lazily in return. This indolent man paired with an energetic God is reflective of the ego-Self relationship. Whereas the deeper Self pushes for greater consciousness, the ego tends to dawdle.

Just as we reach for the gods, the gods reach out for us. Rather than remain dormant, the various archetypes seek to be made conscious. They seek human expression.

Here lies a key challenge to our human condition. If we engage with the contents of the archetypal realm, and give life to these gods, then we are blessed by such forces. Conversely, where we fail to meet the gods within, they are left with no option but to force themselves upon us.

In the opening prologue of Goethe's *Faust*, the Lord summoned the three archangels plus the devil to learn of the current human condition. While the three archangels offer a glowing report, Mephistopheles could offer no commendation. From his perspective, humans remained a miserable species and, like the beasts, continued rummaging in the

darkness. Only Faust appeared to show some promise. But he must be tested. A wager is struck. The Lord allows Mephistopheles to attempt to corrupt Faust explaining, "I've never disliked your kind. Without you, man grows lazy and amount to nothing at all."

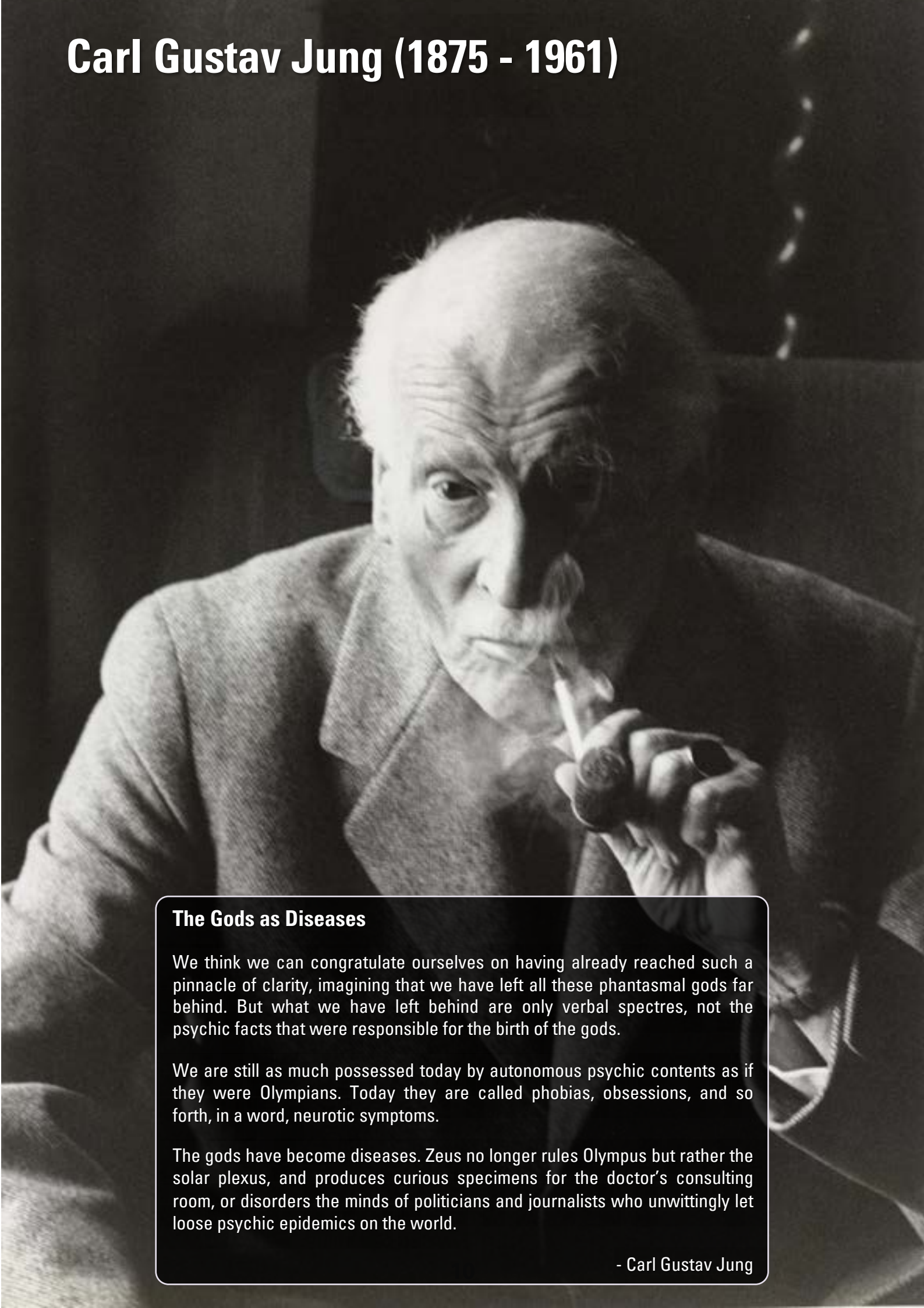
The laziness of the ego is the psychological equivalent of physical inertia. Our ego tends to resist change. For this reason, we must be prodded. The devil is allowed his pitchfork. The trials and tribulations we tend to attract in life are all designed to stimulate a deeper awareness.

In the Graeco-Roman period, one would honour the gods to attract their blessing. Alternatively, if one was cursed with an ill fate, then it was necessary to seek out the god that had been offended.

Such a practice would now be considered superstitious. We believe these gods are no longer with us and ignore them at our peril.

The gods (or archetypes) continue to exact the same demands as they always have. When we are open to an archetype, it comes in peace. If it is denied, it turns sour and destructive.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875 - 1961)



The Gods as Diseases

We think we can congratulate ourselves on having already reached such a pinnacle of clarity, imagining that we have left all these phantasmal gods far behind. But what we have left behind are only verbal spectres, not the psychic facts that were responsible for the birth of the gods.

We are still as much possessed today by autonomous psychic contents as if they were Olympians. Today they are called phobias, obsessions, and so forth, in a word, neurotic symptoms.

The gods have become diseases. Zeus no longer rules Olympus but rather the solar plexus, and produces curious specimens for the doctor's consulting room, or disorders the minds of politicians and journalists who unwittingly let loose psychic epidemics on the world.

- Carl Gustav Jung



The Pantheon of Gods & the Archetypes

The gods of old have been reborn as the archetypes of the collective unconscious. And it is through us that they seek to gain expression.

Once it was thought that a god might shine favourably upon one, or curse one. Now, when we honour an archetype, we benefit from its strengths. Conversely, if we deny the archetype, we suffer from a lack of its energies.

Take for example the hero. When honouring the hero archetype, we challenge ourselves. Our life will have meaning and purpose. Conversely, if we fail to live the hero archetype, we are left feeling that we are without a purpose and calling. Here we may grow world-weary. This ennui and boredom, however, is designed to prompt us into action. "What are you doing with your life?", comes the question.

Here is where Jung's premise, that the gods have become our diseases, finds its place. The dis-ease, or ill feeling we experience, is simply the god or archetype calling for our attention.

We may also be possessed by an archetype, in which case it dominates our personality to the extent that we become a caricature of the

god. If one is possessed by the hero archetype, for example, one may grow to be egotistical and full of self-importance. Here the archetype has overwhelmed the individual.

The mother goddess, when honoured, offers a sense of belonging. We care for others and feel cared for, or part of a tribe. When we neglect the mother archetype, we may lack empathy and connection, and may feel alone in the world, or become needy. If possessed by the mother, we might give too much of ourselves and tend to smother people. A balanced expression must be found.

Mercury, the wily trickster, and messenger of the gods, now appears as our intelligence, quick-wittedness and as our ability to communicate and persuade others. Without Mercury's blessings, we might find ourselves lost and confused. If Mercury dominates, we may become too smart, and too cunning.

Venus, the goddess of love, is our beauty, our charm and joy. Deprived of Venus, we lack flair, and life may grow grey and dull. Too much Venus, however, can result in an overly sociable nature. Hedonism is a sign of Venus running wild.



Mars, the war god, is our courage and strength. He allows us to strike out in the world. No Mars energy leaves us fearful and timid. Too much Mars renders us aggressive and domineering.

Jupiter, the expansive and freedom-loving god, relates to our aspirations and the broadening of our horizons. If this archetype is absent from the personality, we will lack 'spirit' and a sense of adventure. Gambling can be a low-grade way of drawing some of this god into our life. If Jupiter dominates, then we may become reckless and irresponsible.

Saturn, the old god of time, by contrast, is the more conservative god. Within our personality, his strengths are our stability, our self-discipline and containment. Without Saturn, we lack maturity. If possessed by Saturn, we become overly rigid, too sensible, and old before our time.

Prometheus, the rebellious god, allows us to think differently. This archetype lends us inventiveness and creativity. When his rebelliousness overrides our personality, the individual may quickly find themselves in conflict with authority figures, mainstream

society, and the law.

Dionysus, the god of ecstasy, equates to that part of us that seeks an otherworldly experience. This is the dreamer and idealist in us. If denied, or not lived, we may find ourselves turning to drugs, or in search of love. When Dionysus takes over, we become the drifter type dreamer, addict or alcoholic, whose attempt to escape normality takes on a pathological dimension.

Pluto, the god of death and the underworld, describes our capacity for transformation. A positive relationship with the Plutonian archetype allows us to undergo a process of renewal. Without Pluto on our side, we stagnate and may be called to his realm through a state of depression. Pluto's dominance of the personality can result in a dark and destructive disposition.

Clearly, the archetypes are upon us. On the one hand, we need to protect ourselves from such overwhelming forces, on the other, we need to allow them into our life and our being. Knowing which archetype is calling for our attention, and engaging that archetype, is essential for our psychological health.

The Archetypes & the Anatomy of the Psyche

The archetypes form the anatomy of the psyche. They are to be drawn upon and developed on an individual basis. Use the following table to identify those archetypes that have gained expression, those which remain undeveloped, and those which may dominate your character.

	Archetype	Qualities of Character	Excessive	Deficiency
	Neophyte	Open, Adventurous, Willing	Changeable	Restrained
	Leader	Purposeful, Determined, Powerful	Arrogant	Meek
	Artisan	Capable, Skilful, Productive	Pedantic	Inept
	Trickster	Playful, Clever, Quick, Artful	Beguiling	Artless
	Lover	Engaging, Joyous, Affectionate	Seductive	Plain
	Realist	Sensible, Practical, Reliable	Stolid	Wavering
	Carer	Supportive, Caring, Nurturing	Smothering	Detached
	Driver	Bold, Courageous, Driven	Aggressive	Timid
	Strategist	Aware, Intelligent, Prudent	Calculating	Rash
	Healer	Still, Centered, Harmonising	Delicate	Callous
	Provider	Kind, Generous, Helpful	Lavish	Measly
	Host	Warm, Hospitable, Gracious	Intrusive	Aloof
	Seeker	Enthusiastic, Spirited, Aspiring	Manic	Apathetic
	Guardian	Organised, Responsible, Worldly	Controlling	Negligent
	Mentor	Reflective, Wise, Instructive	Brooding	Superficial
	Innovator	Progressive, Innovative, Brilliant	Radical	Pedestrian
	Visionary	Creative, Inspired, Spiritual	Idealistic	Disenchanted
	Catalyst	Transformative, Regenerative	Destructive	Stagnant
	Medium	Attuned, Intuitive, Insightful	Invasive	Oblivious
	Agitator	Sharp, Confronting, Enlivening	Disputatious	Acquiescent

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