

Gaia, Psyche and Deep Ecology

Navigating the Anthropocene



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Why psychology?

"I used to think that the top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and climate change. I thought that with thirty years of good science we could address those problems, but I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with these we need a cultural and spiritual transformation. And we scientists don't know how to do that."



Speth, J.G., (2013), BBC Radio interview

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Why Jung?



"...the world today hangs by a thin thread, and that thread is the psyche of man."

Jung, C.G. (1957/1977) 'The Houston Films.' in C. G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters

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Joined-up thinking

- Systems dynamics, ESS & Gaia theory
- Jungian psychology
 - Structure and dynamics of the psyche / psychoid
 - Individuation process and the Self
 - Enantiodromia and the stages of life
- Decompositional dual-aspect monism
 - Pauli-Jung, [Bohm-Hiley, Eddington-Wheeler]
- Deep ecology

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Topics

1. The Anthropocene
2. Gaia and science
3. Psyche and beyond
4. Psyche-Gaia conjecture
5. Heroic development
6. Frugal individuation
7. The end?

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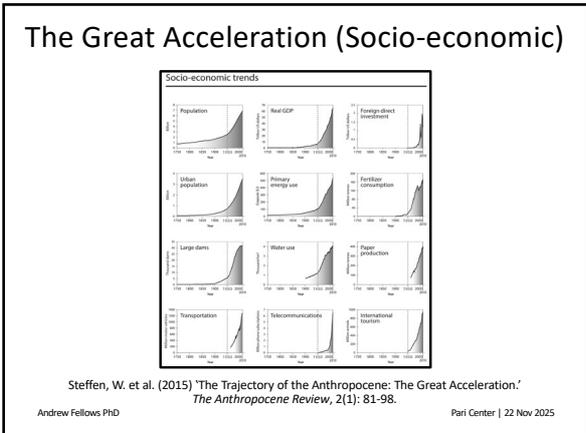
The Anthropocene

... a proposed geological epoch dating from the commencement of significant human impact on Earth until now. It affects Earth's geology, landscape, ecosystems and climate. The effects of human activities on Earth can be seen for example in biodiversity loss and climate change. Various starting dates have been proposed, ranging from the beginning of the Neolithic Revolution (12,000–15,000 years ago), to as recently as the 1960s. ... the term was widely popularised in 2000 by atmospheric chemist Paul J. Crutzen.

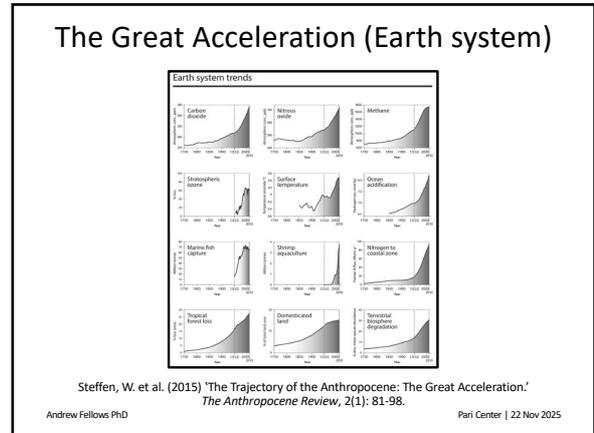
Adapted from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropocene>

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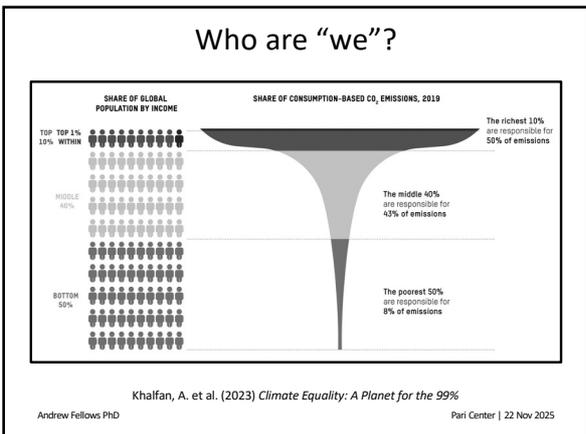
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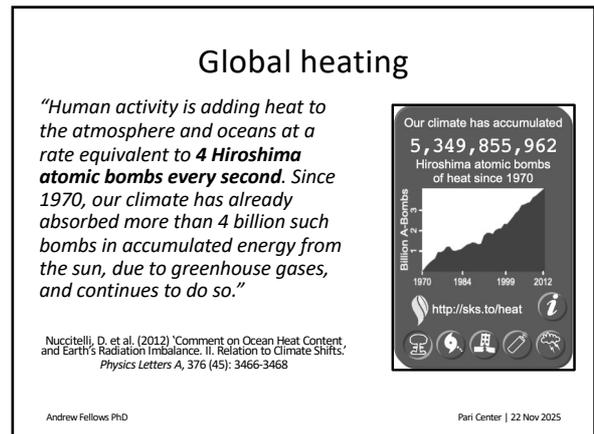
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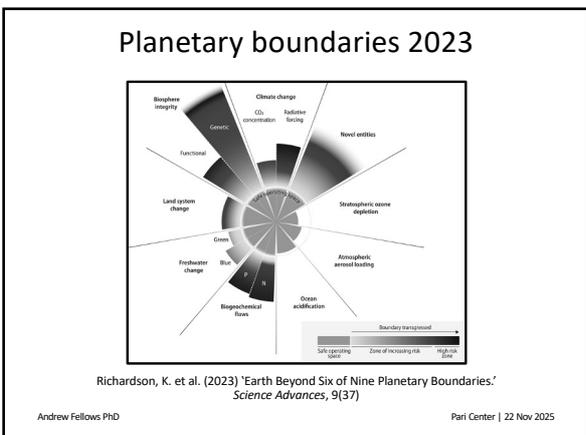
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- ### Topics
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James Lovelock and Gaia



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Emergence of Gaia

“The system seemed to exhibit the behaviour of a single organism, even a living creature. One having such formidable powers deserved a name to match it; William Golding, the novelist, suggested Gaia—the name given by the ancient Greeks to their Earth goddess.”

Lovelock, J.E. & Epton, S. (1975) 'The Quest for Gaia.' *New Scientist*, 65(935): 304-306.

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Gaia theory

*“A view of the Earth introduced in the 1980s that sees it as a **self-regulating system** made up from the totality of organisms, the surface rocks, the ocean and the atmosphere tightly coupled as an evolving system. **The theory sees this system as having a goal** - the regulation of surface conditions so as always to be as favourable as possible for contemporary life. It is based on observations and theoretical models; it is fruitful and has made eight successful predictions.”*

Lovelock, J. (2009) *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning*

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Jungian (analytical) psychology

“...presents a set of ideas that in many respects is at variance with the embedded assumptions of mainstream modern culture in the West. With its concepts of the collective unconscious, universal archetypes, the teleological process of individuation, the transpersonal self, and the epistemological priority of psychic over physical reality, Jung’s model champions notions that are not easily squared with the materialistic, reductive, naturalistic and causal emphases of modern Western culture. ... the variance is unfortunate, for Jung himself, later Jungians, and others interested in analytical psychological ideas have wished to make positive and acceptable contributions to mainstream Western culture.”

Main, R. (2004) *The Rupture of Time: Synchronicity and Jung’s Critique of Modern Western Culture*

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Descartes (1596-1650) vs Spinoza (1632-1677)



mind <i>(res cogitans)</i>	matter <i>(res extensa)</i>
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mind <i>(res cogitans)</i>	matter <i>(res extensa)</i>
substance God or Nature <i>(Deus sive Natura)</i>	

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Complementarity (Jung)

*“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.**”*

Jung, CW8, §418

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Pauli-Jung conjecture

mental domain	material domain
conscious objects	observed objects
collective unconscious ↔ quantum nonlocality	
unus mundus	

Adapted from Atmanspacher, H. (2014) '20th Century Versions of Dual-Aspect Thinking,' *Mind and Matter*, 12(2)

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Different maps, same territory?

“A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness.”



Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

Korzybski, A. (1933/2000) *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* René Magritte, 1928-9, *La trahison des images*

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Core of my conjecture

If mind and matter are complementary aspects of the *unus mundus*, then Jung's and Lovelock's theories could be considered as complementary maps of the same territory experienceable as the inner and outer human worlds respectively.

If so, a degree of correlation between their maps is only to be expected.

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Psyche-Gaia conjecture

Psyche	Gaia
conscious objects	observed objects
emergence (complexes etc.) <i>symbolism</i>	emergence (climate etc.) <i>chemistry</i>
<i>instinct</i>	
<i>archetypes</i>	
Self	
unus mundus	

Fellows, A. (2019) *Gaia, Psyche and Deep Ecology*

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Correlated dynamics

	Psyche	Gaia
Self-regulation process:	compensation	biogeochemical feedback
Self-regulation goal:	function in the present	favour contemporary life
Self-realisation process:	individuation	evolution
Self-realisation goal:	wholeness	biodiversity

Fellows, A. (2019) *Gaia, Psyche and Deep Ecology*

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Ego / Homo sapiens

“Do we as a species constitute a Gaian nervous system and a brain which can consciously anticipate environmental changes? ... Still more important is the implication that the evolution of homo sapiens, with his technological inventiveness and his increasingly subtle communications network, has vastly increased Gaia’s range of perception. She is now through us awake and aware of herself.”

Lovelock, J. (1979/2000) *Gaia : A New Look at Life on Earth*

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Correlated structures / contents

Psyche	Gaia
ego <small>(individual centre of consciousness)</small>	Homo sapiens <small>(planetary centre of consciousness)</small>
shadow <small>(rejected / denied by ego)</small>	anthropogenic impacts <small>(rejected / denied by H. sapiens)</small>
anima / animus <small>(soul)</small>	anima mundi <small>(world soul)</small>

Fellows, A. (2019) *Gaia, Psyche and Deep Ecology*

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Correlated pathologies

	Psyche	Gaia
Cause:	monotheism of consciousness	human dominance
Effect:	enantiodromia	Anthropocene

Fellows, A. (2019) *Gaia, Psyche and Deep Ecology*

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Monotheism of consciousness

*“We lack all knowledge of the unconscious psyche and pursue the cult of consciousness to the exclusion of all else. **Our true religion is a monotheism of consciousness, a possession by it, coupled with a fanatical denial of the existence of fragmentary autonomous systems. ... This entails a great psychic danger, because the autonomous systems then behave like any other repressed contents: they necessarily induce wrong attitudes since the repressed material reappears in consciousness in spurious form. ... The effect is collectively present all the time ...**”*

Jung, CW 13, §51

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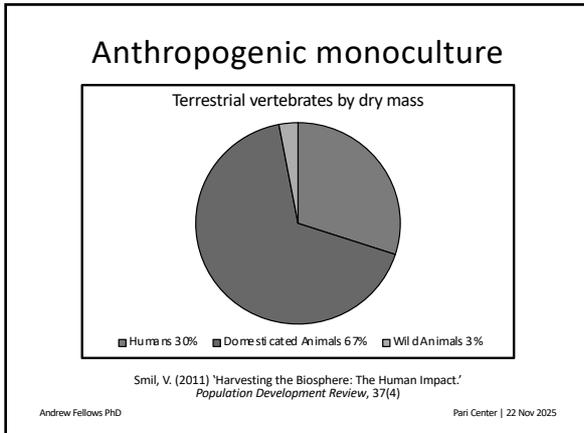
Sixth Mass Extinction

“... our global society has started to destroy species of other organisms at an accelerating rate, initiating a mass extinction episode unparalleled for 65 million years.”

Ceballos, G. et al. (2015) 'Accelerated Modern Human-Induced Species Losses: Entering the Sixth Mass Extinction.' *Science Advances*, 1(5)

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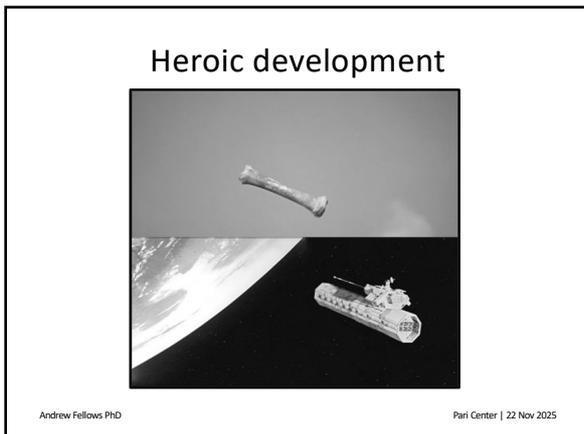
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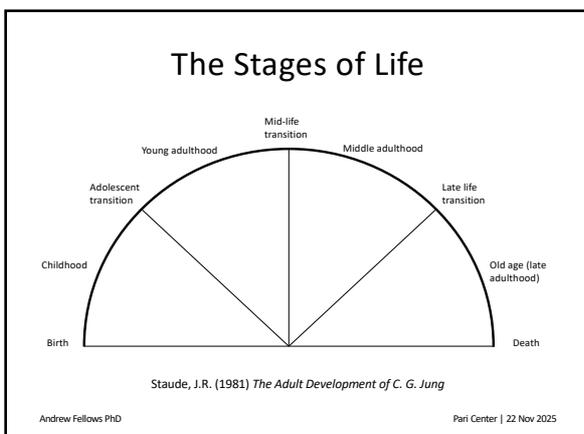
Heroism and hubris

*"Jung saw ... that the Hero could be understood as an archetype within the collective psyche and, moreover, that **this archetype was the one most often identified with humanity's emerging ego consciousness.** ... Jung's deep appreciation for the power and potentiality of the unconscious led him to be suspicious of any overvaluation of heroic ego consciousness ... To identify ourselves with the Hero is to flirt with disaster, psychologically and these days perhaps literally."*

Hopcke, Robert H. (1989) *A Guided Tour of the Collected Works of C.G. Jung*

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Jung's life-span psychology

*"Instead of focusing on the achievement of ego competencies, Jung evaluated lives in terms of their balance, well-roundedness, wholeness. He emphasised developing the underdeveloped aspects of the self and **maintaining an ongoing dialogue between the ego and non-ego aspects of the self as a total self-regulating developing system.**"*

Stauder, J.R. (1981) *The Adult Development of C. G. Jung*

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The subtle dance of life

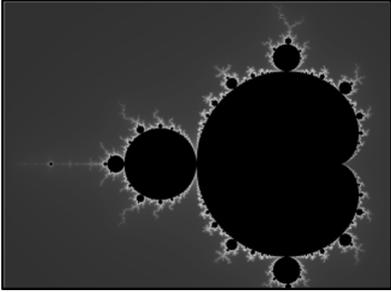
*“Life itself arises at the boundary between order and chaos: it requires both, it is a daughter of both. On the side of perfect order there is only dead stability, inertia, symmetry, thermodynamic equilibrium. Nothing very interesting can happen there: everything is too predictable, it resembles death more than life. But the side of total disorder is not very interesting either: forms appear and disappear too quickly, there is a total lack of symmetry, everything is too unpredictable. **It is on the edge between order and chaos that the subtle dance of life takes place ...”***

Ritsema, R. & Sabbadini, S. (2005) *The Original I Ching Oracle*

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Self-similarity across scale



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Beyond the individual

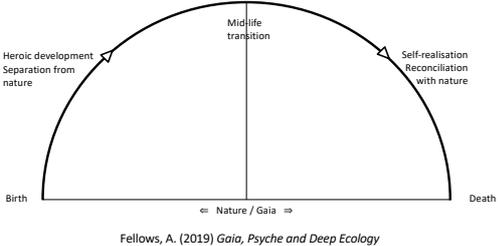
*“There is one way in which Jung’s first/second half dichotomy can be of enormous help. This is as an aid to looking at the culture we live in now which, in spite of sporadic signs to the contrary, has a cast of a first half of life type, as Jung described it. We value independence and success; it seems we cannot control our destructiveness. And we have but glimpses of the meaning and purpose of life. **The qualities of the second half of life represent what our culture desperately needs to grow toward.**”*

Samuels, A. (1985) *Jung and the Post-Jungians*

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The evolution of *Homo Sapiens*?



Fellows, A. (2019) *Gaia, Psyche and Deep Ecology*

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Anthropogenic mass

“...Earth is exactly at the crossover point; in the year 2020 (± 6), the anthropogenic mass, which has recently doubled roughly every 20 years, will surpass all global living biomass. On average, for each person on the globe, anthropogenic mass equal to more than his or her bodyweight is produced every week. This quantification of the human enterprise gives a mass-based quantitative and symbolic characterization of the human-induced epoch of the Anthropocene.”

Eihacham, E. et al. (2020) 'Global Human-Made Mass Exceeds All Living Biomass.' *Nature*, 588(7838): 442-444

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Enantiodromia



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Jung's definition

"I use the term enantiodromia for the emergence of the unconscious opposite in the course of time. This characteristic phenomenon practically always occurs when an extreme, one-sided tendency dominates conscious life; in time an equally powerful counterposition is built up, which first inhibits the conscious performance and subsequently breaks through the conscious control."

Jung, CW 6, §709

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Enantiodromia?



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Mid-life enantiodromia

*"The significance of the morning undoubtedly lies in the development of the individual, our entrenchment in the outer world, the propagation of our kind, and the care of our children. This is the obvious purpose of nature. But when this purpose has been attained—and more than attained—shall the earning of money, the extension of conquests, and the expansion of life go steadily on beyond the bounds of all reason and sense? **Whoever carries over into the afternoon the law of the morning, or the natural aim, must pay for it with damage to his soul.**"*

Jung, CW8, §787

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Collective psychopathology

*"...the psyche of civilized man is **no longer a self-regulating system** but could rather be compared to a machine whose speed-regulation is so insensitive that it can continue to function to the point of self-injury, while on the other hand it is subject to the arbitrary manipulations of a one-sided will."*

Jung, CW8, §159

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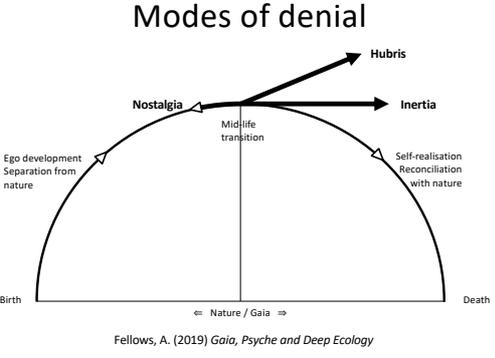
Denial



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Modes of denial



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Inertia

- Default ‘business as usual’ mode benefits those in power
- We have evolved to recognise events, not trends (frog)
- Short-term perspectives of government, business, media
- Measures to maintain economic growth:
 - advertising (abuse of depth psychology)
 - disinformation (bogus science, astro-turfing)
 - false accounting (discounting, subsidies, external costs etc.)
- Factors that perpetuate paralysis:
 - algorithmic filtering (‘information silos’)
 - distraction (consumption, will to power)
 - individualism (Ayn Rand, Milton Friedman et al.)
 - tragedy of the commons (systems archetype)
 - apocalyptic beliefs (Revelation, Rapture etc.)

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Complacency

“What we may be witnessing is ... the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”

Fukuyama, F. (1989) ‘The End of History?’ *The National Interest*, No. 16, Summer 1989

“We have spent our entire existence adapting, okay? So we will adapt to this. Changes to weather patterns that move crop production areas around — we’ll adapt to that. It’s an engineering problem, and it has engineering solutions.”

Tillerson, R. (2012) CEO Speaker Series: A Conversation With Rex W. Tillerson
Council on Foreign Relations

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Short term perspectives

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Discounting the future

“Discounting is a weapon of intergenerational oppression disguised as a rational economic methodology. ... If you really want to know how much a government cares about its future citizens ... just look at the discount rate.”

Krznanic, R. (2020) *The Good Ancestor: How to Think Long Term in a Short-Term World*

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Algorithmic “filtering”

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Nostalgia

- “Take back control” (British Empire)
- “Make America great again” (New World Order)
- “Historical Russia” (Soviet Union)
- Technological and economic optimism
- Ecological innocence (pre-*Silent Spring* etc.)
- “Traditional values” (good and bad)
- Regression to authoritarianism / nationalism in Europe, Asia, North America, South America:
 - Argentina, Austria, China, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Philippines, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, UK, USA...

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Hubris

- Alienation from nature:
 - urbanisation
 - industrialisation
- Triumph of techno-capitalism
- Unlimited growth
 - Ecomodernism
- Immortality
 - Transhumanism

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Triumph of techno-capitalism



Piazza San Marco, Venice, Italy, 2018

“It’s easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism.”

Originally attributed to Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek

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Unlimited growth?

“Anyone who believes in indefinite growth in anything physical, on a physically finite planet, is either mad—or an economist.”

Kenneth Boulding (President Kennedy’s Environmental Advisor)

“One of the most difficult things for people in our culture to understand is the fact that if you do something that is good, then more of the same will not necessarily be better. This, to me, is the essence of ecological thinking.”

Capra, F. (1982/1983) *The Turning Point*

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Ecomodernism

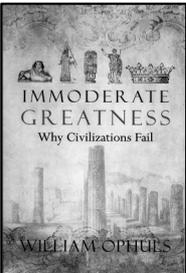
*“For the ecomodernists, instead of final proof of the dangers of hubris, the new epoch is greeted as a sign of humankind’s ability to renovate and control nature. ... in this eco-Promethean view, the Anthropocene is not evidence of human short-sightedness or foolishness, nor of global capitalism’s rapaciousness, but presents an opportunity for humans finally to come into their own. Several years ago they began to speak of the good **Anthropocene**: there are no planetary boundaries that limit continued growth in human populations and economic advance because ‘human systems’ can adapt and indeed prosper in a warming world.”*

Hamilton, C. (2017) *Defiant Earth : The Fate of Humans in the Anthropocene*

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Global collapse



*“Because our own civilization is global, its collapse will also be global, as well as uniquely devastating owing to the immensity of its population, complexity and consumption. To avoid the common fate of all past civilizations will require a radical change in our ethos – to wit, the **deliberate renunciation of greatness** – lest we precipitate a dark age in which the arts and adornments of civilization are partially or completely lost.”*

Ophuls, W. (2012) *Immoderate Greatness: Why Civilizations Fail*

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Disconnection



Photo credit: Kristi McCluer

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Polarisation

“The present age must come to terms drastically with the facts as they are, with the absolute opposition that is not only tearing the world asunder politically but has planted a schism in the human heart. We need to find our way back to the original, living spirit which, because of its ambivalence, is also a mediator and a uniter of opposites, an idea that preoccupied the alchemists for many centuries.”

Jung, CW 9ii, §141

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Astrological transition

“If metaphysical ideas no longer have such a fascinating effect as before, this is certainly not due to any lack of primitivity in the European psyche, but simply and solely to the fact that the erstwhile symbols no longer express what is now welling up from the unconscious as the end-result of the development of Christian consciousness through the centuries. This end-result is a true antimimon pneuma, a false spirit of arrogance, hysteria, woolly mindedness, criminal amorality, and doctrinaire fanaticism, a purveyor of shoddy spiritual goods, spurious art, philosophical stutterings, and Utopian humbug, fit only to be fed wholesale to the mass man of today. That is what the post-Christian spirit looks like.”

Jung, CW 9ii, §67

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Metanoia

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A non-Jungian parallel

Jonas Salk believed that the values that dominated in Epoch A, especially during the past two centuries, would need to be replaced by the values of Epoch B as we moved into the twenty-first century.

Credit: World Future Council

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Why frugal?

“Frugality is the art of making as little as possible go as far as possible. ... It therefore fits perfectly with the essential principle of ecological economics—usufruct, which is the use and enjoyment of property or resources without damaging or depleting their worth so that they remain permanently useful.”

Ophuls, W. (2011) *Plato's Revenge: Politics in the Age of Ecology*

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Spatial boundary issues



Azemichi (Makoto Aida, 1991)

“There is only one core issue for all psychology. Where is the ‘me’? Where does the ‘me’ begin? Where does the ‘me’ stop? Where does the ‘other’ begin?”

Hillman, J. (1995) ‘A Psyche the Size of the Earth,’ in *Ecopscychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*

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Jung at Bollingen

“At times I feel as if I am spread out over the landscape and inside things, and am myself living in every tree, in the splashing of the waves, in the clouds and the animals that come and go, in the processions of the seasons.”

Jung, C.G. (1963/1995) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*

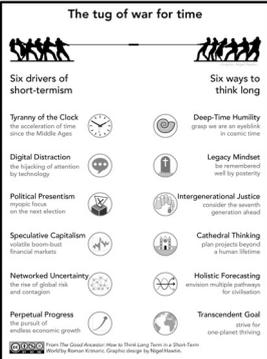


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Temporal boundary issues

The tug of war for time



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“What kind of ancestors will we be?”



Gregory Cajete

Tewa author and professor from Santa Clara Pueblo, New Mexico

“Native Science: Natural laws of Interdependence”

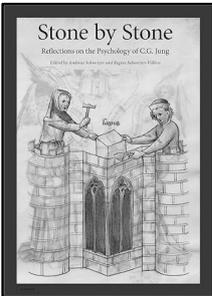
lecture at

CIVILIZATION IN TRANSITION & Psyche & Earth
A Relationship in Crisis
November 2-5, 2023
Santa Fe, New Mexico

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Max Zeller’s dream



“A temple of vast dimensions was in the process of being built. As far as I could see—ahead, behind, right and left—there were incredible numbers of people building on gigantic pillars. I, too, was building on a pillar. The whole building process was in its very first beginnings, but the foundation was already there, the rest of the building was starting to go up, and I and many others were working on it.”

Zeller, M (1991) *The Dream: The Vision of the Night*

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Jung’s interpretation

“Jung said, ‘Ja, you know, that is the temple we all build on. We don’t know the people because, believe me, they build in India and China and in Russia and all over the world. That is the new religion. You know how long it will take until it is built?’

I said, ‘How should I know? Do you know?’ He said, ‘I know.’ I asked how long it will take. He said, ‘About six hundred years.’ ‘Where do you know this from?’ I asked. He said, ‘From dreams. From other people’s dreams and from my own. This new religion will come together as far as we can see.’”

Zeller, M (1991) *The Dream: The Vision of the Night*

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Anima mundi—the world soul

Beyond the gender controversy around anima / animus as personification of the soul, it seems both reasonable and necessary to describe the **world soul** as the **implicitly feminine anima mundi**. Our consciousness and civilisation are so dangerously skewed towards patriarchy that an archetypally feminine counterbalance is required, hence Golding's genius in suggesting Gaia to Lovelock.

Jungian analyst Verena Kast suggests that anima and animus are **archetypes of relationship** and bonding, capable of *"bringing us closer to the individual personality, to the Self, and perhaps even to images of being in relationship with something like the Anima Mundi."*

Fellows, A. (2009) *Jungian Ecopsychology: Depth Psychology meets Deep Ecology in the Anima Mundi and the Arc of Life*
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Vital women




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Anima mundi—disconnection

"The development of Western philosophy during the last two centuries has succeeded in isolating the mind in its own sphere and in severing it from its primordial oneness with the universe. Man himself has ceased to be the microcosm and eidolon of the cosmos, and his 'anima' is no longer the consubstantial scintilla, or spark of the Anima Mundi, the World Soul."

Jung, CW 11, §759

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Anima mundi—reconnection

"This dawning awareness of the anima mundi in our times is in truth a reawakening of the old, non-dualistic animism that has been dormant for so long. It is a reassertion of our indigenous soul, and of the felt solidarity with earthly nature common to our indigenous, tribal ancestors. Our task now is to explore ways in which the new animism can be integrated into the very heart of Western culture. Holistic science is one possibility."

Harding, S. (2009) *Animate Earth : Science, Intuition, and Gaia.*

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Deep ecology—deep roots

*"Deep ecology is **radically conservative** in that it articulates a long-established minority stream of religion and philosophy in Western Europe, North America and the Orient. It also has strong parallels and shared insights with many religious and philosophical positions of primal peoples ... In a certain sense it can be interpreted as **remembering wisdom which men once knew.**"*

Devall, B. & Sessions, G. (1985) *Deep Ecology: Living As if Nature Mattered*

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Arne Næss at Tvergastein



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Self-realisation

*"I do not use this expression in any narrow, individualistic sense. I want to give it an expanded meaning based on the distinction between a large comprehensive Self and narrow egoistic self as conceived of in certain Eastern traditions of atman. This large comprehensive Self ... **embraces all the life forms on the planet** ... together with their individual selves ... Viewed systematically, not individually, maximum Self-realization implies maximizing the manifestations of all life."*

Næss, A. (1986) 'The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects.' *Philosophical Inquiry*, 8(1)

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Cultural diversity

"Deep cultural diversity is an analogue on the human level to the biological richness and diversity of life-forms."

Næss, A. (1986) 'The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects.' *Philosophical Inquiry*, 8(1)

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Deep ecology as individuation



"Part of the joy stems from the consciousness of something bigger than our ego, something which has endured through millions of years and is worth continued life for millions of years. The requisite care flows naturally if the 'self' is widened so that protection of free Nature is felt and conceived as protection of ourselves."

Næss, A. (1987) 'Self-Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World.' *The Trumpeter*, 4(3)

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Correlated dynamics

	Deep ecology	Individuation
	Of: worldview / ethos / population	Of: midpoint of personality
Change:	From: anthropocentric	From: ego
	To: biocentric	To: Self
Goal:	biotic flourishing / cultural diversity	psychological wholeness
Agent:	ecological Self	Jungian Self

Fellows, A. (2019) *Gaia, Psyche and Deep Ecology*

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Individuation and nature

*"...if one is allowed to speak of **complete individuation** at all, I should say that it would be a conscious experience of the **totality of nature**. ... The provisional life is a mutilated existence, it is only half a life, giving absolutely no chance of fulfilment, which is the only guarantee for a consciousness that is in harmony with the **totality of nature**. Only when you behave exactly as you are meant to behave are you the friend and the brother of all living things; then you are right in your place, and then you suddenly understand that everything else is in its place. That is the experience which old China called Tao ..."*

Jung, C.G. (1998) *Visions: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1930-1934*

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Topics

1. The Anthropocene
2. Gaia and science
3. Psyche and beyond
4. Psyche-Gaia conjecture
5. Heroic development
6. Frugal individuation
7. The end?

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UNFCCC COP-6 (Rotterdam, 2000)



Fellows, A. (2000) *The Potential of Wind Energy to Reduce CO2 Emissions*. International Energy Agency (IEA) Greenhouse Gas R&D Programme. on behalf of the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA)

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UNFCCC COP-15 (Copenhagen, 2009)



Joel Pett cartoon for USA Today, published just before COP-15

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UNFCCC COP-30 (Belém, 2025)



Photo credit: Reuters / Express Tribune

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Fault lines

"Move fast and break things."

Mark Zuckerberg

"Think like a mountain."

Aldo Leopold

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Up to me ... and you

"As any change must begin somewhere, it is the single individual who will undergo it and carry it through. ... Nobody can afford to look round and to wait for somebody else to do what he is loath to do himself."

Jung, CW18, §599

"Can we rely on it that a 'turning around' will be accomplished by enough people quickly enough to save the modern world? This question is often asked, but no matter what the answer, it will mislead. The answer 'Yes' would lead to complacency, the answer 'No' to despair. It is desirable to leave these perplexities behind us and get down to work."

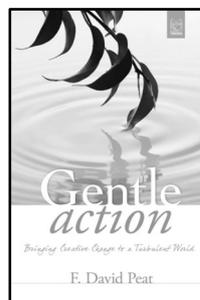
Schumacher, E.F. (1977) *A Guide for the Perplexed*

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Non-linear inspiration



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Back to the beginning



*“Everywhere people ask: ‘What can I actually do?’ The answer is as simple as it is disconcerting: we can, each of us, **work to put our inner house in order.***

The guidance we need for this work cannot be found in science or technology, the value of which utterly depends on the ends they serve; but it **can still be found in the traditional wisdom of mankind.**

Schumacher, E. F. (1973/1974) *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered.*

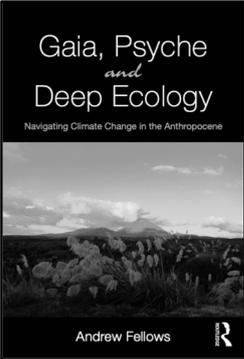
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