

The background of the slide is a deep space image featuring a dark blue and black field filled with numerous stars of varying brightness. Some stars exhibit prominent diffraction spikes. Interspersed among the stars are wispy, ethereal clouds of gas and dust in shades of brown, tan, and light blue, resembling nebulae or the structure of a galaxy. The overall effect is one of vastness and cosmic wonder.

Inner, Outer, and Imaginal:
The Interiorisation of the Cosmos

- The history of psychology might be seen as developing out of two distinct currents arising in antiquity.
- Organic psychiatry and clinical psychologies can be seen as the fruits of Aristotelian perceptions and methodologies, in that they are based on causes and a causal perception of the universe. These psychologies are rooted in a medical model and utilise the methods of the natural sciences.
- Dynamic psychologies and psychiatries can be seen as outgrowths of Platonic interiorised cosmologies; they rely on an acausal or synchronistic perception of the universe, and are concerned with individual transformation through encounters with, or union with, transpersonal potencies. They are rooted in *sumpatheia* and utilise the analogic thinking of symbolism.
- Dynamic psychologies perceive the psyche as multiplex, dynamic, and teleological, although not necessarily 'spiritual'.



‘Plato and Aristotle! These are not merely two systems, they are types of two distinct human natures, which from time immemorial, under every sort of disguise, stand more or less inimically opposed...Although under other names, it is always of Plato and Aristotle that we speak. Visionary, mystical, Platonic natures disclose...ideas and the corresponding symbols from the fathomless depths of their souls. Practical, orderly, Aristotelian natures build out of these ideas and symbols a fixed system, a dogma and a cult’.

[Heine, *Deutschland*, I, cited in Jung, CW6, p. 2]

Detail from Raphael, ‘The School of Athens’ , 1509-10, Apostolic Palace, Vatican City

Sympathies and symbols: the ancient roots of dynamic psychologies

συμπάθεια (*sympatheia*): affinity of parts to the organic whole, mutual interdependence (Stoic)

συν = with

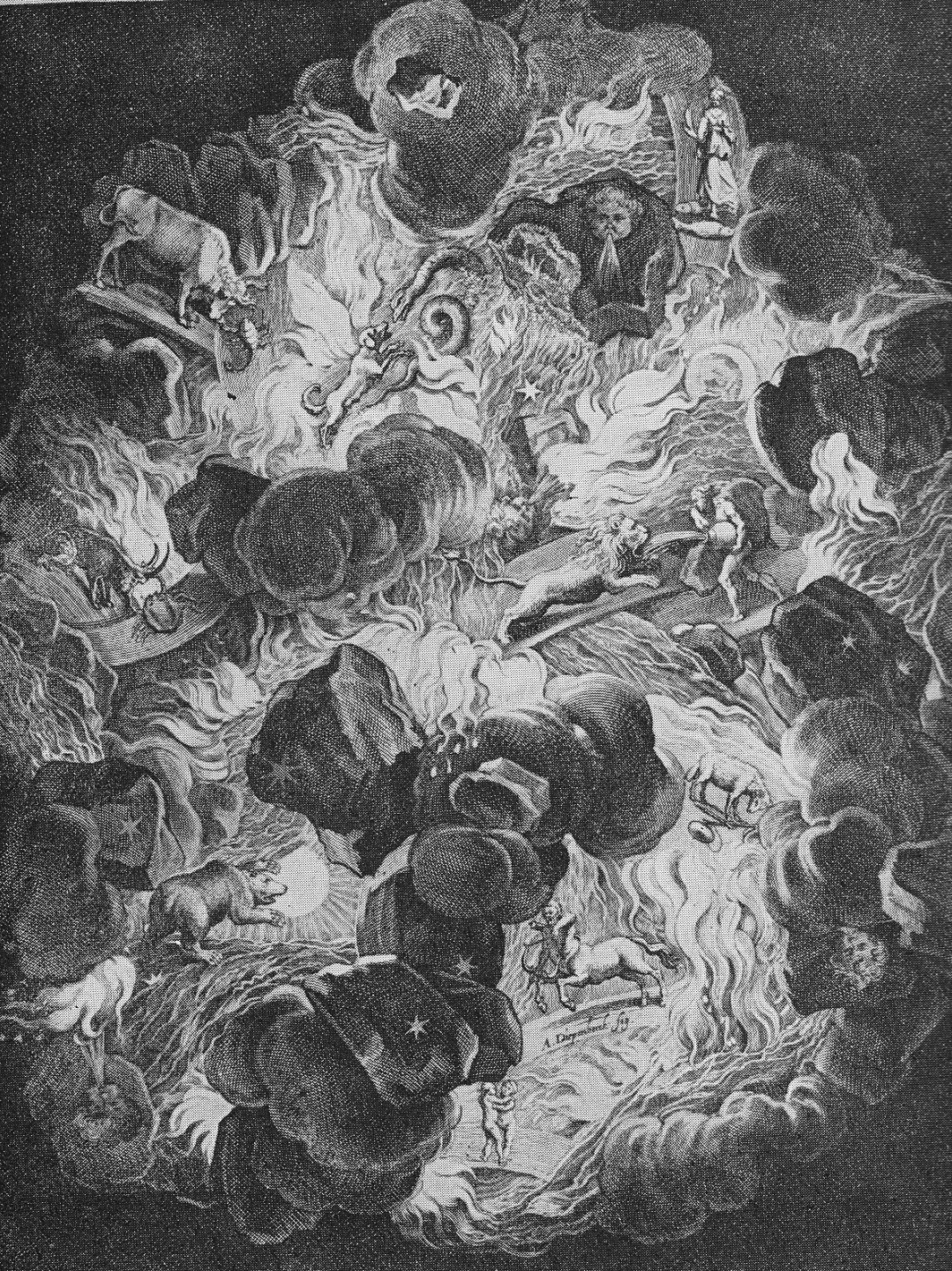
παθος, παθειν = anything that befalls one, an incident, an accident; what one has suffered, one's experience; to happen, to occur, to experience a passion or emotion, to suffer; a condition or state; the incidents or changes to which things are liable [see Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*]

συμβολον (*symbolon*) = a symbol

συνθεμα (*synthema*) = a password or token

αποσπασμα (*apostasma*) = that which is torn off, a piece, rag or shred

The theory of the Stoic philosopher Poseidonius of Apameia (135-51 BCE): Individual souls are the 'pieces' or 'seeds' (αποσπασμα (pieces) or σπερματα, *spermata*, seeds) of the πνευμα νοερον και πυρωδες (*pneuma noeron kai purodes*) the intellectual fiery breath or soul of the cosmos), and there are sympathies between all parts of this material divinity or divine matter. In Platonic thought, this is the *anima mundi* or world-soul.



An early modern alchemical interpretation of the 'intellectual fiery soul of the cosmos' in the process of creating the universe, from Marolles, *Tableaux du temple des muses* (1655), reproduced in Jung, CW12, facing p. 319.

Symbols and symbolic thinking: diverse views

‘It is the power of ineffable symbols comprehended by the gods alone that establishes theurgical union. Thus, we don’t perform these acts intellectually...In fact, these very symbols, by themselves, perform their own work, and the ineffable power of the Gods with which these symbols are charged, itself, recognizes, by itself, its own images. It is not awakened to this by our thinking’.[Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*, 96, 13-97, 9, in Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park, PA, 1995), p. 84]

‘Without symbolism there could be no culture...Culture is not itself formed of symbols, but of the meaning that lies behind and unites symbols. This meaning only exists in the minds of participants in culture, but it is acted out through the manipulation of symbols, which objectify meaning’. [Mary LeCron Foster, ‘Symbolism: The Foundation of Culture’, in Tim Ingold (ed.), *The Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (London, 1994), pp. 366-95, on p. 366]

Jung on symbols:

Symbols are ‘...the best possible description or formulation of a relatively unknown fact, which is...known to exist or is postulated as existing.’ [Jung, CW6, ¶814]

‘There are other processes which bear within them a hidden meaning, processes which are not merely derived from something but which seek to become something, and are therefore symbols.’ [Jung, CW6, ¶822]

‘What we call a symbol is a term, a name or an image which in itself may be familiar to us, but its connotation, use and application are specific or peculiar and hint at a hidden, vague or unknown meaning...A term or image is symbolic when it means more than it denotes or expresses. It has a wider “unconscious” aspect...that can never be precisely defined or fully explained.’ [Jung, CW18, ¶416-17]

Symbols ‘unite mystical significance and magic effect’. [Ernst H. Gombrich, ‘*Icones Symbolicae*: The Visual Image in Neo-Platonic Thought’, *JWCI* 11 (1948), 163–92, on p. 175]

- ‘The language of the modern self’ , according to Alex Owen, ‘is a language of interiority’ .

[Alex Owen, ‘Occultism and the “Modern Self” in *Fin-de-Siècle* Britain’, in Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger (eds.), *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 71-96, on p. 71.

- This view is also shared by other cultural historians.

[e.g. Wouter Hanegraaff, in *New Age Religion and Western Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 245-252].

- Owen further suggests that the idea of a ‘fragmented or multiple self’ is an aspect of the modern perception of human consciousness.

[Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 2004), 115-147]

- Psychology is therefore understood as a uniquely modern phenomenon because it focuses on the interior self of the individual and the multiplicity of dimensions of that self. This is contrasted with a ‘pre-modern’ world-view in which humans perceive themselves as components in an orderly and ontologically objective ‘chain of being’ – i.e. God and his creation – which dictates not only emotional and physical states but also psychic and spiritual conditions.

Henri Ellenberger traces the beginnings of modern dynamic psychiatry and psychology to Franz Anton Mesmer. He lists the antecedents in the healing practices of the Paleolithic period, which he groups in five simple categories:

- Disease-object intrusion
- Loss of the soul
- Spirit intrusion
- Breach of taboo
- Sorcery

Each of these requires a specific form of healing: extraction of the 'disease-object', finding and restoring the lost soul, exorcism of the invading spirit, confession and propitiation, and counter-magic.

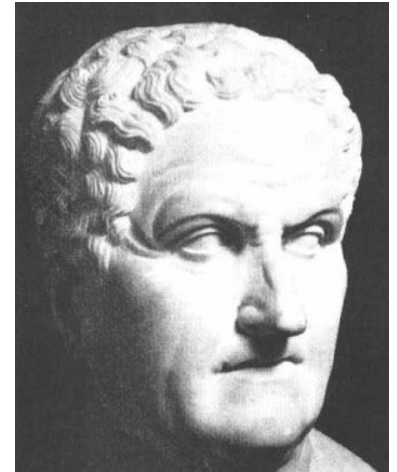
In Ellenberger's assessment the assumption is implicit that the idea of a 'soul' or 'spirit' has existed since Paleolithic times, as well as a belief that practices involving the interior self, such as confession, can provide healing. While these are not 'psychological' in the self-conscious sense, they concern the dynamics of the psyche.

[Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (NY: Basic Books, 1970), 5-40]



A masked shaman of the Sitka-Qwan tribe in Alaska, performing a healing rite

- ‘Philosophical psychotherapy’ is the term Ellenberger uses to describe those learned forms of pre-modern psychology and psychotherapy developed from the antecedents of the shaman or ‘medicine man/woman’.
- These forms include practices such as the incubation and meditation techniques of the Greek Asklepeions, and utilise elements from Greek, Egyptian, Jewish, and Persian philosophical, religious, and magical currents, as well as a planetary cosmology related either causally or synchronously to physical and psychic disease.
- The soul was understood to be the seat of passions which could generate disease. For example, a work by Galen (129-217 CE) called *On the Passions and Errors of the Soul*, is influenced by Stoic philosophy combined with Aristotelian perceptions of the four cosmological elements corresponding to the four ‘humours’ in the human body and soul. Galen’s healing methods combine causality with *sumpatheia*.



Galen of Pergamon
(129-216 CE)

[Galen, *On the Passions and Errors of the Soul*, trans. Paul W. Harkins (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1961)]

- Religious healing and ‘cure of souls’ were offered by the Church to replace the healing techniques of older cultures. Running concurrently, medieval medicine adopted Galen’s theories, which incorporated astrological elements in Aristotelian forms. Older Stoic/Platonic ideas of soul permeating the cosmos and the human being were suppressed through the official ‘de-animation’ of the divine cosmos that began in the 12th to 13th centuries. The planets became mechanistic ‘causes’ that ‘influenced’ the sub-lunar physical realm, including the weather, crops, the human body and, indirectly, human passions.
- Medicine and psychology in the older sense – knowledge of the soul – parted ways, the body being the responsibility of the doctor/surgeon and the soul being the responsibility of the priest. The interiorised cosmos of late antiquity went underground, surfacing in esoteric currents such as medieval alchemy, magic, and Jewish Kabbalah, and later, during the Renaissance and early modern period, in Marsilio Ficino’s ‘natural magic’ and the work of heterodox magi such as Henry Cornelius Agrippa.
- Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), in 1775, presented his theory of ‘universal fluid’ as a new scientific theory, challenging the authority of the Church’s traditional ‘cure of souls’. But Mesmer’s idea, couched in the new language of the Enlightenment, was in fact rooted in much older Orphic, Platonic, Stoic, Neoplatonic, Hermetic, and early Jewish ideas about a primal light or substance or divine intelligence permeating the whole of the universe.
- Mesmer’s theories were derived from the work of the Renaissance physician/chemist Theophrastus von Hohenheim (1493-1541), better known as Paracelsus, who acted as a ‘junction’ between late antique cosmologies and early modern science.



Above left, Paracelsus; below left, Mesmer; middle and right, Mesmer practising 'animal magnetism' with rods and with 'passes' of the hands.

Mythic themes in antiquity have often been interpreted in scholarly literature (especially mid-to-late 20th century) as veridical (literal or concrete). They are not usually perceived as psychological, except in the work of Jung and post-Jungians. The subjective perspective – interiorisation of cosmology and of various gods, *daimones*, or astral powers – is understood to be a unique feature of modernity: i.e. the cosmic powers are ‘psychologised’.

- For example, angels in late antique Jewish and Christian apocalyptic texts are often viewed by scholars as representations of objective entities whom the believer hopes will provide aid, healing, or salvation. Narratives of ascents of the soul are interpreted as though the narrator believed he/she was actually traversing the physical planetary spheres or heavens after death.
- Cosmologies from earlier historical periods are often expressed as mythic narratives, which are assumed to describe events and beings perceived as ontically objective or exterior. Astrological cosmologies are likewise assumed to have been literal, i.e. the planets or planetary gods or archons are ‘out there’ and ‘cause’ events in human lives.

- Texts from antiquity contradict this scholarly assumption, in particular works from the Orphic, Platonic, Neoplatonic, Gnostic, Hermetic, and early Jewish milieux. Mythic figures are clearly meant to represent inner states of the human soul as well as dimensions of a divinely animated universe.
- Sociologists and historians often remain ‘woefully ignorant’ of each other’s sources, methods, models, and discoveries. [Charles Tilly, ‘Historical Sociology’, in *International Encyclopedia of the Behavioral and Social Sciences* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2001), Vol. 10, pp. 6753-6757]
- The Neoplatonist Iamblichus describes an intermediary ‘place’ or ‘state’ in which the human imagination, as the organ of the soul, acts as a kind of two-way mirror which receives impressions from celestial or divine realms and reflects them into the mind as images, which are in turn experienced as the cause of interior transformations in the adept. Humans and gods meet in the realm of the imaginal.
- Such experiences are now known as ‘unitive’ experiences, superseding the older terminology of ‘religious’ or ‘mystical’ experiences. According to Iamblichus, such experiences are possible because gods and humans share the same divine substance. ‘Outer’ and ‘inner’ are thus simultaneous and inseparable, a unity which is only perceived as a dichotomy by the rational mind. Magical rituals and various forms of meditation which activate the imagination can dissolve the boundaries and can facilitate not only dialogue but also mutual transformation between interior (individual) and exterior (divine) expressions of soul.
- The *mundus imaginalis*, also characteristic of early Jewish *heikhalot* literature and Greco-Egyptian (Hermetic) philosophical texts, found its way into early medieval Arab philosophy and magic, e. g. the work of the Persian philosopher Avicenna (Ibn Sina, 980-1037).

- The apparent dichotomy understood by researchers, as well as the dichotomy reflected in opposing understandings of 'inner' and 'outer' from antiquity onward, may reflect individual predisposition as much as cultural context and the historical development of ideas. Jung, writing from his own individual predisposition and cultural context as well as empiric observation, looked at the parallels between his patients' interior journeys and alchemical, magical, kabbalistic, and theosophical texts, and proposed a psychological typology which he called 'introversion' and 'extraversion', reflecting a tendency toward subjective or objective perception.
- These 'types' do not fit into conceptual structures such as 'pre-modern', 'modern', or 'post-modern', although any specific culture in any specific historical period might be said to favour one perspective over the other as a general cultural trend. So, for example, British culture in the early 21st century might be viewed as generally more 'extraverted' because of the valorising of empirical science over subjective experience. However, individuals continue to demonstrate their individual temperaments even against cultural 'norms'.

'The introverted standpoint is one which sets the ego and the subjective psychological process above the object and the objective process...The extraverted standpoint, on the contrary, subordinates the subject to the object, so that the object has the higher value.'

[C. G. Jung, *Psychological Types*, CW6 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971, ¶5

'One sees what one can best see oneself.'

[Jung, CW6, ¶9]

Some additional references:

For interiorised transformative experience in Gnostic astral cosmology:

Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, 'Gnosticism: A Study in Liminal Symbolism', *Numen* 31:1 (1984), 106-128

For Iamblichus:

Iamblichus, *De mysteriis (On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians)*, trans. Thomas Taylor (Frome: Prometheus Trust, 1999 [1821]). (There are other, more recent translations.)

Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul: The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995)

For heikhalot astral/interior journeys:

Elliot Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines: Vision and Imagination in Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994)

Moshe Idel, *Ascensions on High in Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, Ladders* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005)

For Avicenna:

Henry Corbin, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital* (Dallas, TX: Spring, 1980)

On the mundus imaginalis:

Henry Corbin, 'Mundus Imaginalis, or the Imaginary and the Imaginal', in Benjamin Sells (ed.), *Working with Images: The Theoretical Base of Archetypal Psychology* (Woodstock, CT: Spring, 2000), 70-89