

a 1:1 map of itself

part 1 of the video triptych *Mahicantuck*
Derek Owens

for Charles Stein

The world is an apte frame, made of heaven, and earth, & of things in them conteyned. This comprehendeth all things in it self, nether is there anything without the lymites of it visible.

-- Cleomedes

...a boundless "and-then"...

-- John Crowley, *Little, Big*

prelude

They took our world away.

Wait; that's not right. *We* did. We took it away.

So we looked for another.

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"Begin with a garden," she said. "A problem-idea, a peculiar cipher.¹ A bounded space.² A 1:1 map of itself."

Then she opened the door to Hollow Earth.

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"Nature loves to hide," she cautioned.³ "Hades isn't an absence but a hidden presence--an invisible fullness."⁴

We got lost down there in the forest. Trying, failing, to grasp all we'd let go.

Deserted by the gods.⁵

¹ "This book critically examines site specificity not exclusively as an artistic genre but as a **problem-idea**, as a **peculiar cipher** of art and spatial politics." Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 2.

² "A garden, then, is both a **bounded space** and a representation." John Beardsley, *Gardens of Revelation: Environments by Visionary Artists*.

³ "To arrive at the basic structure of things we must go into their darkness....Because, says Heraclitus, 'The real constitution of each thing is accustomed to hide itself,' which has also been translated: '**Nature loves to hide.**'" James Hillman, *The Dream and the Underworld*, 26.

⁴ "...a definite image of a void, an interiority or depth that is unknown but nameable, there and felt even if not seen. **Hades is not an absence, but a hidden presence--even an invisible fullness.**" James Hillman, 28.

⁵ The work of art is not an autonomous aesthetic object but is, in the final analysis, the perceiving subject. The work of art, in other words, is nothing less than oneself. Within this framework, the only art worthy of the name is an art that saves--saves not only itself but also saves the

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As we climbed up through the basement of the Compost House she said, "Do you see now how you and yours are but minerals in the earth?⁶ Signs, and wonders, in your own backyard."⁷

"You mean a poet's compost heap," we joked, "is his castle."⁸

"The aim is to create space,"⁹ she said. "No space except that which the perceiver forms."¹⁰

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"Now build a Telescope Bridge at the point where your earth and heaven meet."¹¹

Seeing our puzzled expressions, she added: "There is no distance as far as things of the mind are concerned."¹²

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Daylight, many-colored and faint, poured out. The music of the spheres. Like soft-soughing wind among clicking bare branches.¹³

subject by allowing the self to lose itself. Saving art struggles to save art by refiguring the art of saving in a world [deserted by the gods](#)." Mark C. Taylor, "Saving Not," in Arakawa/Gins, *Reversible Destiny*, 127.

⁶ "There is no other remedy for death than to look death constantly in the face. We all are born to die; life will not stay with us; we must submit. Even [s]he who held the world under the seal of [her] ring is now only [a mineral in the earth](#)." Farid Ud-din Attar, *The Conference of the Birds*, 68.

⁷ "It is estimated that one-third of all reef-building corals, a third of all fresh-water mollusks, a third of sharks and rays, a quarter of all mammals, a fifth of all reptiles, and a sixth of all birds are headed toward oblivion....If you know how to look, you can probably find [signs](#) of the current extinction event [in your own backyard](#)." Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, 17-18.

⁸ "[A poet's compost heap is his castle](#)." Ian Hamilton Finlay, *Selections*, 179.

⁹ "But, after all, [the aim](#) of art is to create space--space that is not compromised by decoration or illustration, space in which the subjects of painting can live." Frank Stella, *Working Space*, 5.

¹⁰ "There is [no space except that which the perceiver forms](#)." Arakawa/Gins, *Reversible Destiny*, 20.

¹¹ "A missionary of the Middle Ages recounts that he had found [the point where heaven and Earth meet](#)." Reference to a caption of an engraving first appearing in Camille Flammarion's *L'Atmosphère: météorologie populaire*, qtd in Michael Benson, *Cosmographics: Picturing Space Through Time*, 59.

¹² "The image of the 'well-rounded' sphere is extraordinary. it has often been taken literally, as if Parmenides meant to project a spherical cosmology of a material sort. In fact, the image is clearly a simile--it is meant to express the concept that measurable distances, (such as the distances measured by geometers) have no application with Being. [There is no distance as far as things of the mind are concerned](#). The aspect of the sphere that is intended in the simile is that which is contained in its formal definition: that all points on its surface are equidistant from its center. Similarly, all 'points' or thoughts within Being are correlated without subdivision or hierarchical organization of any kind." Charles Stein, ed. *Being = Space X Action*, lo #41, 6.

¹³ "[Daylight, many-colored and faint, poured out; the music of the spheres, like soft-soughing wind among clicking bare branches](#), became distinct." John Crowley, *Little, Big*, 202.

"Notice how the stars," she said, "are optical nerve endings of the eye which the universe is."¹⁴

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And then, we were back, returned to the Erth Bath from which we had never left.

"The fabric of the world," she explained, "consists of a multitude, a plenitude, of landing sites."¹⁵

We stood there, our feet in the water, gazing into skies created through the sheer act of our looking.

hollow earth

"You must make a mappemunde," she instructed. "It will include your being."¹⁶

"Now repeat after me: 'I am ready to explore the hollow, if the world will support and aid me in the undertaking.'"¹⁷

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The first thing we noticed? A thing is a hole in a thing it is not.¹⁸

Also: the sky is a cylinder to the moon.¹⁹

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¹⁴ "The stars are optical nerve endings of the eye which the universe is." Stan Brakhage, "The Stars Are Beautiful", *Brakhage Scrapbook: Collected Writings 1964-1980*, 138.

¹⁵ "The fabric of the world equals all a person presently perceives plus all she believes she perceives or believes herself to have ever perceived plus all she feels she might perceive. Each instance of perception lands as a site. The fabric of the world consists of a multitude, a plenitude, of sites. It is useful to think of these sites as landing sites. Landing sites occur as a perceiver's perception, whatever that might be, lands *here* and *there* as the world. All discerning that is, to any degree whatsoever, locatable is a perceptual landing site. Even the slightest suspicion of something's being there can be counted as a landing site. A landing site is simultaneously an event and an event-marker. The concept of landing site is basically a heuristic device for mapping how a person forms the world and situates herself within it." Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *Architecture: Sites of Reversible Destiny (Architectural Experiments After Auschwitz-Hiroshima)*, 19.

¹⁶ "I am making a mappemunde. It is to include my being." Charles Olson, *Maximus*.

¹⁷ "To all the world--I declare the earth is hollow and habitable within; containing a number of solid concentric spheres, one within the other, and that it is open at the poles 12 or 16 degrees. I pledge my life in support of this truth, and am ready to explore the hollow, if the world will support and aid me in this undertaking." J. Cleves Symmes, letter written in 1818, qtd in Umberto Eco, *The Book of Legendary Lands*, 395.

¹⁸ "A thing is a hole in a thing it is not." Carl Andre, qtd by Robert Smithson, in the essay of the same name, in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. by Jack Flam, 95.

¹⁹ "The sky is a cylinder to the moon." Stan Brakhage, 138.

What goes on in the center of the Earth?²⁰

The fact is, the earth is falling into a well. The sun is the top of the well, the blue sky the walls.²¹

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"One enters the underworld by means of reflection," she said, leading the way. "Pausing, pondering, a change of pace, voice, or glance. Or better yet: a cocked ear, a sideways look, a suspicious fish eye."²² She squinted for effect.

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"It's like an interworld down here," we said, "limiting and conjoining time and eternity, space and transspace."²³ Those words weren't ours, but passed through the Aeolian harps of our mouths.

"You're getting the idea," she said.

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She paused along the herepath. "Shall I tell you of purgatory?"

"One day they opened the back door and let all the souls slip into the universe, where they dissipated, of course, until there was nothing left of them at all. And they acquired a kind of beatific *thank god, I finally got to dissolve myself into the what-all of the universe*, whence, of course, they came. (You do know this whole idea that 'I'm me' is preposterous.)"²⁴

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²⁰ "What goes on in the centre of the Earth? The entire ancient tradition imagined that, on penetrating the bowels of the Earth, you entered the realm of the dead. This was the nature of Hades in Homer and Virgil; this was the nature of Dante's inferno and that of the many visions of the hereafter that had preceded his masterpiece, such as the *Book of the Ladder* and other Arabic texts that tell the story of Mohammed's visit to the underworld." Umberto Eco, *The Book of Legendary Lands*, 345.

²¹ "The fact is, the earth is falling into a well. The sun is the top of the well, the blue sky the walls. The stars are reflections of the real stars behind the sun." Stan Brakhage, 138.

²² "So again, entering the underworld is like entering the mode of reflection, mirroring, which suggests that we may enter the underworld by means of reflection, by reflective means: pausing, pondering, change of pace, voice, or glance, dropping levels. Such reflection is less willed and directed; it is less determinedly introspective like a heroic descent into the underworld to see what's going on there....Let us imagine it to be more Hermetic, a cocked ear, a sideways look, a suspicious fish eye, or intuitional feelings and thoughts that appear in the midst of life and twist life into psyche." James Hillman, 52.

²³ "...an interworld, limiting and conjoining time and eternity, space and transspace." Henry Corbin, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shi'ite Iran*. Trans. by Nancy Pearson.

²⁴ "...they let all the souls out of purgatory. They go down to purgatory and open the back door and let all these souls just slip out into the universe, and as they slip out into the universe, they're dissipating, of course, and then there's nothing left of them at all, because there is no heaven....they all acquire a kind of beatific *thank god, I finally got to dissolve myself into the what-all of the universe*, whence, of course, they came. The whole idea that 'I'm me' is preposterous." Blake Butler, "Interview with Denis Wood," in Denis Wood's *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas*, 132-33.

Time, she showed us, has nothing to do with the underworld.²⁵

The spiritual center of the world can be anywhere.²⁶

petrified forest

We came to a black and frozen wood.

And were overcome.

The echoes of ghosts engulfing. Entities in the grain, of numbers unfathomable.

"The whole fabrick brake," she said. "You tore the frame of the Earth into pieces."²⁷

"It's one thing to say what you did to the land, you did to yourselves. But another to realize you *are* the landscape."²⁸

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Time rushed from our bodies, the glooms and solitudes sweeping into our veins.²⁹ We became as frozen as the phantom flora and fauna surrounding.

"It's true to say nothing is lost when everything is given away," she said.³⁰ "But you, and your kind--you *took*. Took everything, losing all."

²⁵ "Because **time has nothing to do with the underworld**, we may not conceive the underworld as 'after' life, except as the afterthoughts within life. The House of Hades is a psychological realm now, not an eschatological realm later. It is not a far-off place of judgment over our actions but provides that place of judging now, and within, the inhibiting reflection interior to our actions." James Hillman, 30.

²⁶ "Achok, a Malaysian Senoi, drew this diagram of himself dreaming in the shaman's hut. The central point represents Achok; the spokes are leaves forming the cone-shaped roof; the circumference of the circle is the rim of the round floor. All Senoi who attain the highest level of initiation build a hut of the same sort and isolate themselves in it, hoping to achieve total possession by their spiritual guides. All of them represent the experience in identical diagrams, which symbolize wholeness and the complete integration of internal and external reality. The diagrams show the Self at **the spiritual centre of the world, which can be anywhere.**" David Coxhead and Susan Hiller, *Dreams: Visions of the Night*, 94.

²⁷ "When the appointed time was come, that All-wise Providence had design'd for the punishment of a sinful World, **the whole fabrick brake, and the frame of the Earth was torn in pieces, as by an Earthquake; and those great portions or fragments, into which it was divided, fell down into the Abyse, some in one posture, some in another.**" Thomas Burnet, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, qtd by David Standish, *Hollow Earth: The Long and Curious History of Imagining Strange Lands, Fantastical Creatures, Advanced Civilizations, and Marvelous Machines Below the Earth's Surface*, 27.

²⁸ "**It's one thing to say that what we do to the land we also do to ourselves, and another to realize that we *are* the landscape.**" Mark Klett, in *Tainted Prospects: Photographers and the Compromised Environment*, co-curated by John Pfahl and Sandra Olsen, Castellani Art Museum: Niagara University, 30.

²⁹ "Superior gardens are composed of **Glooms and Solitudes** and not of plants and trees." Ian Hamilton Finlay, 179.

³⁰ "**...nothing was lost when everything was given away...**" John Cage, quoted by Denis Wood, *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas*, 15.

"Seizing impalpables that slipped through your fingers or burned at the touch."³¹

"Gaze across this underworld ocean, at the shades encroaching on every side. The tiny shoals you stand upon, what you call your souls, are awash. Even now the water laps at your toes."

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"Melancholia," she lectured, while we wept, "is a form of preservation of life—a life already gone, but whose ghost propels a changed understanding of the present."³²

"Your kind will forever be saturated with an unrequited longing of illimitable depth."³³

"Your acts will forever take place in the loneliness of the thinker's internal life."³⁴

"Yours is a core of grief, albeit ungrievable,³⁵ it being impossible to hold in your minds even a fraction of the disappeared. You will inhale grief to the last, acutely aware of the limits of your empathy."

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As the realization of our crimes sank in we felt the waters in our bodies harden, the flesh turn to charred wood, our eyes turning to glass. But before our forms embalmed entirely, adding our lot to the forest of the gone, the takers commingling with the taken, she took pity on us--waved her hand, halting our evaporation.

"If you were to cut my life in half," she said, "you could read it by the rings it would contain. You contain them too: who you used to be is enclosed in who you are. Your old heart is not erased. It's encased in another. We are a wasp's nest of selves, each embedded in the next."³⁶

³¹ "Because the underworld differs so radically from the underground, that which has its home there, dreams, must refer to a psychic or pneumatic world of ghosts, spirits, ancestors, souls, daimones. These are invisible by nature and not merely invisible because they have been forgotten or repressed. This world is fluid, or dusty, fiery, muddy, or aetherial, so there is nothing firm to hold to--unless we develop intuitive instruments for *seizing impalpables that slip through our fingers or burn at the touch*." James Hillman, 40.

³² [A]t the heart of the modern age is indeed *a core of grief*—but ... that 'core' is more accurately conceived as a condition of *melancholia*, a state of suspended mourning in which the object of loss is very real but psychically 'ungrievable' within the confines of a society that cannot acknowledge nonhuman beings, natural environments, and ecological processes as appropriate objects for genuine grief....Melancholia, here, is not a failed or inadequate mourning. Rather, it is a form of socially located embodied memory in which the loss of the beloved constitutes the self, the persistence of which identification acts as an ongoing psychic reminder of the fact of death in the midst of creation. In a context in which there are no adequate cultural relations to acknowledge death, *melancholia is a form of preservation of life—a life*, unlike the one offered for sale in ecotourist spectacle, *that is already gone, but whose ghost propels a changed understanding of the present*. (333) Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands "Melancholy Natures, Queer Ecologies," in *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, eds Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson, 333.

³³ "*Saturated with unrequited longing*". Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*, 2007, 186.

³⁴ "[L.E.J.] Brouwer viewed mathematics as being built up from certain profoundly private internal acts of the thinking psyche. *These acts take place in the loneliness of the thinker's internal life* and constitute the inner gestures performed between the self and its deity." Charles Stein, ed. *Being = Space X Action*, 10.

³⁵ op cit. Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands.

³⁶ "*If you were to cut my life in half, you could read it by the rings it would contain. You contain them too: who you used to be is enclosed in who you are. Your old heart is not erased. It's encased in another* heart, another axon-dendrite shell stacked, shellacked atop the old. We are a

"Let's go."

compost house

As we climbed the helix, our blood warming as we neared the surface, she remarked again how nature loves to hide.³⁷

How the phantom of a site remains. In memory, in longing. A means of survival.³⁸

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"Be an act of the earth in the process of self-definition," she told us.³⁹

"Think *with* things as they exist. Not at them."⁴⁰

"Bear in mind the conditions and raw materials for art are located within territories, as part of the earth--but they only become art, architecture, and dance to the extent they become transportable elsewhere."⁴¹

"Unhinging, deranging, and complicating survival for the sake of intensification."⁴²

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As we brushed off the loam and the worms, blinking back at the dawn, she directed our attention to the remains of a statue. The figure, whatever it had been, was long gone; only the base remained, with these words carved:

wasp's nest of selves, each embedded in the next." Ander Monson, "Everything Sings Triptych," in Denis Wood's *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas*, 140.

³⁷ James Hillman, 26.

³⁸ "Despite the proliferation of discursive sites and fictional selves, however, **the phantom of a site** as an actual place **remains**, and our psychic, habitual attachment to places regularly returns as it continues to inform our sense of identity. This persistent, perhaps secret adherence to the actuality of places (**in memory, in longing**) may not be a lack of theoretical sophistication but **a means of survival**...The advocacy of the continuous mobilization of self- and place identities as discursive fictions, as polymorphous critical plays on fixed generalities and stereotypes, in the end may be a delusional alibi for short attention spans, reinforcing the ideology of the new--a temporary antidote for the anxiety of boredom. It is perhaps too soon and frightening to acknowledge, but the paradigm of nomadic selves and sites may be a glamorization of the trickster ethos that is in fact a reprise of the ideology of 'freedom of choice'--the choice to forget, the choice to reinvent, the choice to fictionalize, the choice to 'belong' anywhere, everywhere, and nowhere. This choice, of course, does not belong to everyone equally." Miwon Kwon, 165.

³⁹ "The poem is **an act of the earth in the process of self-definition**." Charles Stein, *The Secret of the Black Chrysanthemum*, 129.

⁴⁰ "**...thinking with things as they exist...**" Louis Zukofsky, qtd in Jonathan Skinner, 15.

⁴¹ "**While the conditions and raw materials for art are located within territory, as part of the earth, they become art, architecture, dance only to the extent they become transportable elsewhere; that they intensify bodies that circulate, move, change; that they too become subject to evolutionary transformation and spatial and temporal movement.**" Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art*, 172.

⁴² "Sexual selection **unhinges, deranges, and complicates survival for the sake of intensification**." Elizabeth Grosz, 171.

"The buried cities are enormous and heterogeneous time capsules, full of lost abstractions, and broken frameworks. There the wilderness and the city intermingle, nature spills into the abstract frames, the containing narrative of an entire civilization breaks apart to form another kind of order."⁴³

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Art leaks and spills art.⁴⁴

The disintegrative effects of the dream. Only by falling apart do we extend consciousness to embrace and contain its potential.⁴⁵

Life is wakings-up, all unexpected, all surprising.⁴⁶

Veil upon veil.⁴⁷

telescope bridge

⁴³ "The buried cities of the Yucatan are enormous and heterogeneous time capsules, full of lost abstractions, and broken frameworks. There the wilderness and the city intermingle, nature spills into the abstract frames, the containing narrative of an entire civilization breaks apart to form another kind of order." Robert Smithson, "Art Through the Camera's Eye", *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam, 375.

⁴⁴ "Art is asphyxiation; annihilation; anachronism; inebriation; something 'cut-down'; something shoplifted; like trash, it makes more of itself; like the past, it should go away but it never does. Like a cough, it doubles up or doubled down on terribleness. It preempts itself by making multiple knockoff versions of itself; it is never sufficient because it is always more than enough. Through perverse excess, Art trashes conventional value, reassigning it to odd and ill-made receptacles, which inevitably can't hold; the chandelier is cut-down; asphyxiation has a baby; *Art leaks and spills Art*." Joyelle McSweeney, *The Necropastoral: Poetry, Media, Occults*, 55-56.

⁴⁵ "...the underworld teaches us to abandon our hopes for achieving unification of personality by means of the dream. The underworld spirits are plural....The underworld is an innumerable community of figures. The endless variety of figures reflects the endlessness of the soul, and dreams restore to consciousness this sense of multiplicity. The polytheistic perspective is grounded in the chthonic depths of the soul. A psychotherapy that reflects these depths can therefore make no attempt at achieving undivided individuality or encouraging a personal identity as a unified wholeness. Instead, psychotherapeutic emphasis will be upon *the disintegrative effects of the dream*, which also confronts us with our moral dis-integrity, our psychopathic lack of a central hold on ourselves. Dreams show us to be plural....*Only by falling apart into the multiple figures do we extend consciousness to embrace and contain its psychopathic potentials*." James Hillman, 41.

⁴⁶ "But life is wakings-up, all unexpected, all surprising." John Crowley, 254.

⁴⁷ "No one really knows the essence of the atom--ask whom you will. The Heavens are like a cupola upside down, without stability, at once moving and unmoving. One is lost in contemplation of such a mystery--it is *veil upon veil*; one is like a figure painted on a wall, and one can only bite the back of one's hand." Farid Ud-din Attar, 6.

"You are now looking into the night from the white light of the dayworld,⁴⁸ into the centre of the egg."⁴⁹

"This is the boundary where the boundary ceases to be a boundary and becomes a passage."⁵⁰

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Such was her running commentary as we built the machine in accordance with her designs.

"You're like a coxswain," one of us said, "and we the rowers of your ship."

"Not my ship," she said.

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"There must be a complete circuit," she demanded.⁵¹

"These boundaries can be crossed."⁵²

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"So how does it work?" we asked. "This business of getting from here, to there?"

"Listen up and pay attention," she answered. "The fundamental element of temporal consciousness...has an irreducibly complex structure: it is not a point-instant, an indivisible, durationless unity, but a 'twoity'--a dyad with the following characteristic: each moment of consciousness spontaneously splits into two parts--1, the trace of itself surviving as a spontaneous memory; and 2, the succeeding moment. This new moment repeats the process, similarly splitting into the trace of itself and its own successor. Both the dynamic character of time and the way consciousness is bound up with temporality are thus built into the fundamental concept."⁵³

⁴⁸ "The region of the soul in which dreams have their home is deeper than flesh-and-blood urges, which we have been, mistakenly, calling chthonic, as if it were the same as natural....This all is earthy; the natural, physical somatic soul of emotions. Our modern word *unconscious* has become a catch-all, collecting into one clouded reservoir all fantasies of the deep, the lower, the baser, the heavier (depressed), and the darker. We have buried in the same monolithic tomb called The Unconscious the red and earthy body of the primeval Adam, the collective common man and woman, and the shades, phantoms, and ancestors. We cannot distinguish a compulsion from a call, an instinct from an image, a desirous demand from a movement of imagination. [Looking into the night from the white light of the dayworld](#) (where the term *unconscious* was fashioned), we cannot tell the red from the black. So we read dreams for all sorts of messages at once--somatic, personal, psychic, mantic, ancestral, practical, confusing instinctual and emotional life with the realm of death." James Hillman, 42.

⁴⁹ "Right [at the centre of the egg](#) [the universe], lies an eccentric momentum that includes an astral nucleus that is electromagnetically negative and positive and constitutes the central physical star. It moves around an ethereal cone that has its apex turned to the north and its base facing south. Cyrus Reed Teed, *Koresh: Fundamentals of Koreshan Universology*, 1899, qtd in Umberto Eco, 396.

⁵⁰ "At the boundary where the boundary ceases to be a boundary and becomes a passage." Henry Corbin..

⁵¹ "[There must be a complete circuit.](#)" Paul Ryan, *Video Mind, Earth Mind: Art, Communications and Ecology*, 79.

⁵² "The imagination; that is, the way we shape and use the world, indeed the way we *see* the world, has geographical boundaries like islands, continents, and countries. [These boundaries can be crossed.](#)" Guy Davenport, *The Geography of the Imagination*, 4.

⁵³ "...[the fundamental element of temporal consciousness...has an irreducibly complex structure: it is not a point-instant, an indivisible, durationless unity, but a 'twoity'--a dyad with the following characteristic: each moment of consciousness spontaneously splits into two parts--1, the trace of itself surviving as a spontaneous memory; 2, the succeeding moment. This new moment repeats the process, similarly splitting](#)

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Here the pages of time were paper thin.⁵⁴

We had located the point where heaven and earth meet.⁵⁵

Harmonial Spheres

Doors in the sun's disk opened to reveal the world of the seven planetary gods!⁵⁶

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Rays crisscrossed Space in a multidimensional web of color. A webwork of light.⁵⁷

Souls here possessed their own familiar sun and stars.⁵⁸

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The sun, moon, and stars were the footprints of the God! and we were his head as he roamed around in circles.⁵⁹

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into the trace of itself and its own successor. Both the dynamic character of time and the way consciousness is bound up with temporality are thus built into the fundamental concept. The duality, continuity/discreteness, is also established thus at the foundation." Charles Stein, ed. *Being = Space X Action*, 16.

⁵⁴ Quickly the mind will pass over the dizzying height. Here the pages of time are paper thin, even when it comes to a pyramid. The center of this pyramid is everywhere and nowhere. From this center one may see the Tower of Babel, Kepler's universe, or a building by the architect Ledoux." Robert Smithson, "Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. by Jack Flam, 34.

⁵⁵ "op cit. Camille Flammarion's *L'Atmosphere: météorologie populaire*.

⁵⁶ "Doors in the sun's disk open to reveal the world of the seven planetary gods...." Joscelyn Godwin, *Arktos: The Polar Myth in Science, Symbolism, and Nazi Survival*, 164.

⁵⁷ "Stars and planets are sexual beings. Gravity on the physical plane serves as a metaphor for the erotic attraction which really moves the universes:--the Aromal Emanation. Each cosmic body shoots out multi-colored rays of aroma by which they copulate with each other and propagate their kind in a continual orgy of creation. These rays crisscross Space in a veritable multidimensional web of color just as Space on another level is a webwork of light. Each of the Passions corresponds to a numeral, a musical note, color, mathematical process, geometric form, alchemic metal--thus the Cabalist Passion is symbolized by an indigo silver spiral....Everything is erotic, everything yields to the influence of Passional Attraction--the only possible society is one composed entirely of lovers, therefore the only possible politics is a politics of the impossible, and even a science of the impossible, erotico-pataphysics, dada epistemology, the Passional Calculus." Peter Lamborn Wilson, "Fourier!--Or, the Utopian Poetics," in *Escape from the Nineteenth Century*.

⁵⁸ "Souls here / Possess their own familiar sun and stars." Virgil, the *Aeneid*, qtd by Edmond Halley, qtd by David Standish, *Hollow Earth: The Long and Curious History of Imagining Strange Lands, Fantastical Creatures, Advanced Civilizations, and Marvelous Machines Below the Earth's Surface*, 33.

⁵⁹ "The sun, moon, and stars are the footprints of God (we are his head) as he walks currently in a circle." Stan Brakhage, 140.

"These stars and planets," she smiled, "are sexual beings. Everything is erotic. The Passional Calculus."⁶⁰

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"Look," one of us exclaimed, "the stars are a flock of hummingbirds, the sun and moon their flowers."⁶¹

A voice drifted in from a corner of the universe:

"Clogged
only with
Music, like
the Wheels of
Birds"⁶²

*

"The musical laws of nature," our guide said, "bind together the spider and the fly, the tick and the mammal, the wasp and the orchid, the leaves of an oak tree and drops of rain. The snapdragon and the bumblebee evolve together, and form a becoming."⁶³

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The moon and the planets were visual reflections: the moon, of the earth's surface; the planets, of the mercury disks floating between the layers of the metallic planes.⁶⁴

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The starry realms were a jewelled bracelet in the hand.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Peter Lamborn Wilson.

⁶¹ "The stars are a flock of hummingbirds. If you look closely, you can see their wings flickering. The sun and moon are their flowers." Stan Brakhage, 140.

⁶² Emily Dickinson, "A 821," *The Gorgeous Nothings*, 198.

⁶³ "the 'musical laws of nature,' which bind together the evolution of the spider and the fly, the tick and the mammal, the and the orchid, the leaves of an oak tree and drops of rain, each serving as a motif or counterpoint for the other. Nature itself is musical, composed of material notes which each play their own melody, a melody complicated, augmented, syncopated, and transformed through the melodies of the other living and nonliving things with which it engages....The snapdragon and the bumblebee evolve together, form a becoming, and enhance and transform each other so that each can only be understood in relation to its counterpoints with the other. These are no longer autonomous entities, self-sustaining organisms, but operative pairs, a duet, two entwined melodies, which may function without the other, but which open up and resonate only together." Elizabeth Grosz, 174.

⁶⁴ "The sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars are not great celestial bodies, as they are believed to be, but rather focal points of a force that, being substantial but not material, is susceptible to transmutation from materialisation to dematerialisation; this capacity for metamorphosis maintains a constant combustion, and in consequence a radiation of the ethereal essences constantly generated by the combustion itself....The moon and the planets are visual reflections: the moon, of the earth's surface; the planets, of the mercury disks floating between the layers of the metallic planes..." Cyrus Reed Teed, *Koresh: Fundamentals of Koreshan Universology*, 1899, qtd in Umberto Eco, *The Book of Legendary Lands*, 396.

⁶⁵ "the starry realms were a jewelled bracelet in the hand." John Crowley, 250.

It dwarfs the Whole, And makes an Universe an Orrery.⁶⁶

erth bath

Our solar meanderings, an ecstatic bliss, came to an abrupt end as she whisked us back to the surface.

"What have you shown us; the hereafter?"

She shook her head in disappointment. "You haven't been listening. There is no afterlife. It's already the end of the world. Don't you know that yet?"⁶⁷

She saw we were confused and tried again: "What happens to names when time stops? Answer: Nothing happens: There is no when."⁶⁸

*

"And as the blood works in all animals," she continued, "so water does in the world, which is itself a living animal.⁶⁹ The galaxy as well, for as you have seen, stars are but drops of rain sinking into the seas of space."

*

"The day-sky is a pool of all our tears. The world is getting smaller and smaller."⁷⁰

*

With that she took her leave, telling us: "You must 'fold unfold' your thoughts--with no predictable aim or intent--above the river beds."⁷¹

"Remember: the aim is to create space. No space except that which the perceiver forms."⁷²

⁶⁶ "[It] dwarfs the Whole, And makes an Universe an Orrery." "orrery," *Oxford English Dictionary*.

⁶⁷ "It's after the end of the world—don't you know that yet?" Sun Ra, *It's After the End of the World*. Universe, 2010.

⁶⁸ "What happens to names when time stops? Answer: Nothing happens: There is no when" Susan Howe, *That This*, 20.

⁶⁹ "...as the blood works in all animals so water does in the world, which is a living animal." Leonardo da Vinci, qtd in Michael Benson, 51.

⁷⁰ "The day-sky is a pool of all our tears: the world is getting smaller and smaller. The night-sky is a blotter to all our black thoughts: there is very little space left." Stan Brakhage, 139.

⁷¹ "Poems 'fold unfold' their thoughts--with no predictable aim or intent--'above the river beds'." Jonathan Skinner, "Thoughts on Things: Poetics of the Third Landscape," in Brenda Iijima, ed., *(eco/lang)(uage/reader)*, Callicoon, NY: Nightboat Books, 2010: 10.

⁷² Frank Stella. Arakawa/Gins, *Reversible Destiny*.

*

There is only starlight falling tonight on asphalt streets still warm with the sun's heat, these mains beneath them with the runoff from this afternoon's rain, and--listen!--if we bend over the manhole cover, we can hear the sound of rushing water. There are only these wires scarring this sky, these trees with their heavy shade, this streetlight casting shadows of branch and leaf on the sidewalk, passing cars and that sound of a wind chime. But...none of our maps pretends to catch more than a note or two of a world where everything is singing.⁷³

coda

that there will come so many terrors to us
and to our measured hours.
Or that, after many mornings, many days,
we would come to love
this waking life enough to dread its loss.⁷⁴

*

Do lovers even regard their lives? The lover sets fire to all hope of harvest, he puts the blade to his neck, he pierces his body. With love comes sorrow and the heart's blood. Love loves the difficult things.⁷⁵

*

And yet, what was it but joy in the confirmation of our knowledge that Mind, in the center of all, contains within it all that it is the center of? If the Earth, the old center, now was seen truly to revolve somewhere halfway between the center and the outside; and the Sun, which before had revolved on a path halfway to the outside, were now the center, then a half-turn like that in a Mobius strip was thrown into the belt of the stars: and what then became of the old circumference? It was, strictly, unimaginable: the Universe exploded into infinitude, a circle of which Mind, the center, was everywhere and the circumference nowhere. The trick-mirror of finitude was smashed.⁷⁶

*

⁷³ "I say to you there is no real deal. There is only this starlight falling tonight on these asphalt streets still warm with the sun's heat, these slopes down which the streets slip, these mains beneath them with the runoff from this afternoon's rain, and--listen!--if you bend over the manhole cover, you can hear the sound of the rushing water. There are only these wires scarring this sky, these trees with their heavy shade, this streetlight casting those shadows of branch and leaf on the sidewalk, those passing cars and that sound of a wind chime. But...none of our maps pretends to catch more than a note or two of a world in which everything's singing." Denis Wood, 29-30.

⁷⁴ K.A. Hays, *Dear Apocalypse*.

⁷⁵ "Do lovers regard their lives? The lover sets fire to all hope of harvest, he puts the blade to his neck, he pierces his body. With love comes sorrow and the heart's blood. Love loves the difficult things." Farid Ud-din Attar, 6.

⁷⁶ "...what was it but joy in the confirmation of his knowledge that Mind, in the center of all, contains within it all that it is the center of? If the Earth, the old center, now was seen truly to revolve somewhere halfway between the center and the outside; and the Sun, which before had revolved on a path halfway to the outside, were now the center, then a half-turn like that in a Mobius strip was thrown into the belt of the stars: and what then became of the old circumference? It was, strictly, unimaginable: the Universe exploded into infinitude, a circle of which Mind, the center, was everywhere and the circumference nowhere. The trick-mirror of finitude was smashed..." John Crowley, *Little, Big*, 250.

To dream the myth onwards.⁷⁷

*

Always made, never found. As it is made, so it makes.⁷⁸

One world only, but with different modes; and what anyway was a "world!"⁷⁹

⁷⁷ "to dream the myth onwards." Charles Olson, qtd by Chuck Stein, *The Secret of the Black Chrysanthemum*, 38.

⁷⁸ "Art denaturalizes life. It erupts from within a natural order, whether animal or human, but it also radically transforms and disrupts life, it detours life through intensity, force, pleasure, and pain as no natural or given forces can. Art is created, *always made, never found*, even if it is made from what is found. This is its transformative effect--*as it is made, so it makes*." Elizabeth Grosz, 189.

⁷⁹ John Crowley, 504.

