

Katabasis, derived from Greek, is defined as a descent, the going down to the foundations, a retreat. The exhibition uses the mythological archetype of Psyche in the tale of Psyche and Eros from *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius as a metaphor for katabasis of both the self and culture in general. Katabasis can also be seen as preparation for the restoration of the body and soul and the metamorphosis into symbiotic integration with the ecological context.

The child Psyche, captivated by her lure for Eros, searches for the conscious realization of the soul through the undertaking of initiation in the form of a *descent*. Psyche's descent consists of the *Four Labors* — the sorting of the seeds, the gathering of the 'golden fleece', the collecting of the 'waters of life', and the descent into the *Underworld* to collect a box of beauty ointment from Persephone. In the first three labors Psyche utilizes creativity and instinct — *instincts* symbolized by the insects, plants, and animals — to successfully carry out the tests. In the fourth labor, Psyche is *conscious* that she must not open the secret box, she fails, opens the box, and falls into a 'deathlike sleep'. She had been drawn, in her devotion to Eros, to desire divine beauty. Psyche is awakened and redeemed by Eros, and finally received into the realm of the Gods where she is united with her beloved.

The botanist Rupert Sheldrake has proposed a formative causation hypothesis centering on the theory of the 'morphogenetic field' which is believed to contain all the memory and history of a given entity and as such determine the entity's form, development and behavior. All new changes in the behavior of an entity influence the 'memory' of the field and the field is then changed and any subsequent systems will be influenced by its new structure. Aristotle regarded the forms of things to be immanent, that specific forms were not only inherent in objects but actually caused them to take up their characteristic forms. The field of archetypal psychology reflects a similar understanding of a psychic stream of shared experience in the study of archetypal mythology. It is postulated that the morphogenetic field is the level of consciousness — the 'background' — from which profound creativity is generated, given that a trans-spatial and trans-temporal cumulative memory from all similar systems is being utilized in the creation process. It is believed that the existence of the field would account for the intense experiences of creative inspiration and spiritual connection. Given this formative theory, the morphogenetic field could be thought of as consciousness, and particle matter as a reflection of the field in the present.

We are re-evaluating our priorities in response to the hyper-complex condition of humanity and its influence on the natural world. There are fundamental changes occurring in the social and technological order of the global culture with the rise of the feminine, the deconstruction of the patriarchy, the sophistication of miniaturization of technology, the extension of cross-cultural communication and education, and the rebirth of spirituality. Ilya Prigogine, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist, postulated that in a complex structure, the degree of energy dissipated in maintaining the structure's complexity reaches a critical point, is amplified by the system's many

connections and is driven into a more ordered, coherent and connected state. The new state occurs as a sudden shift permanently altering the form of the system. We may theorize that we are at the critical point of fundamental growth and change — in the midst of a katabasis — preceding a sudden shift into an unprecedented coherent order.

The exhibition refers to exploration, mining, collecting, and naming to illustrate humanity's exploration of the ecological context, and combines these references with the metaphor of the Four Labors of Psyche to indicate the present state of katabasis in the social and technological order of global culture.

References

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