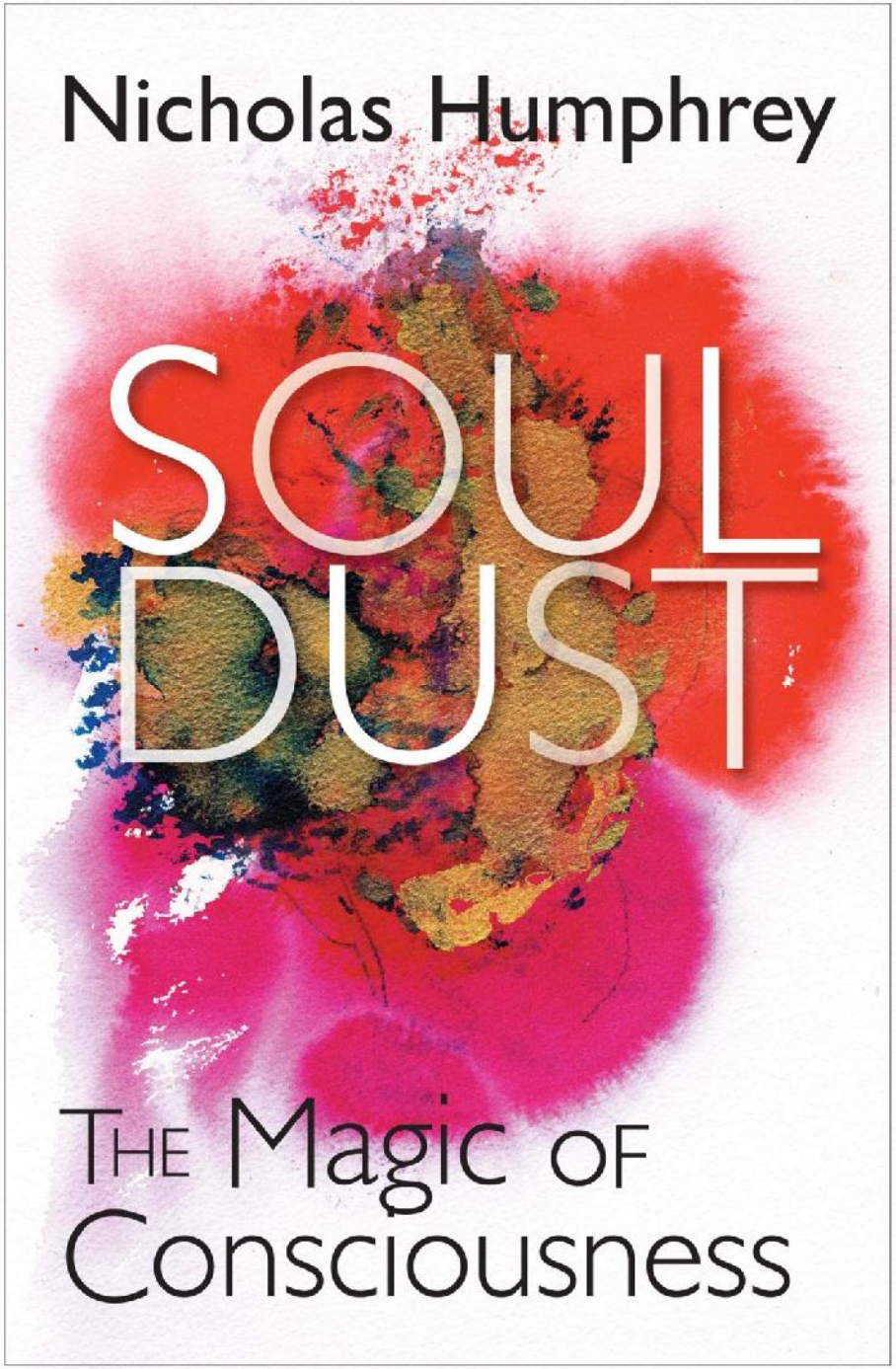
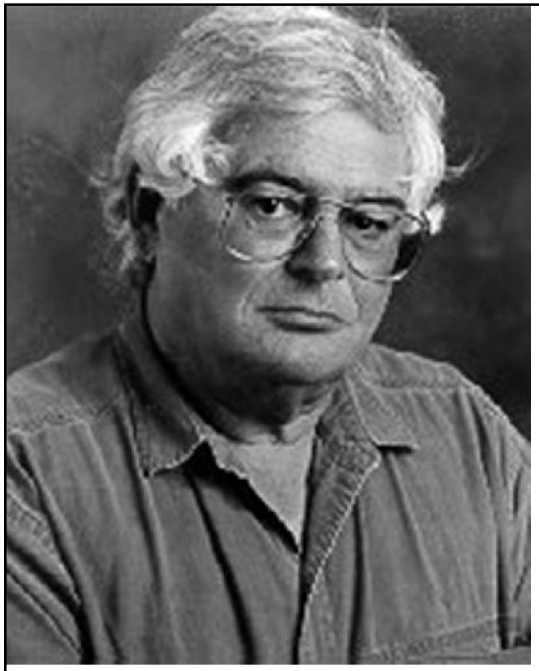
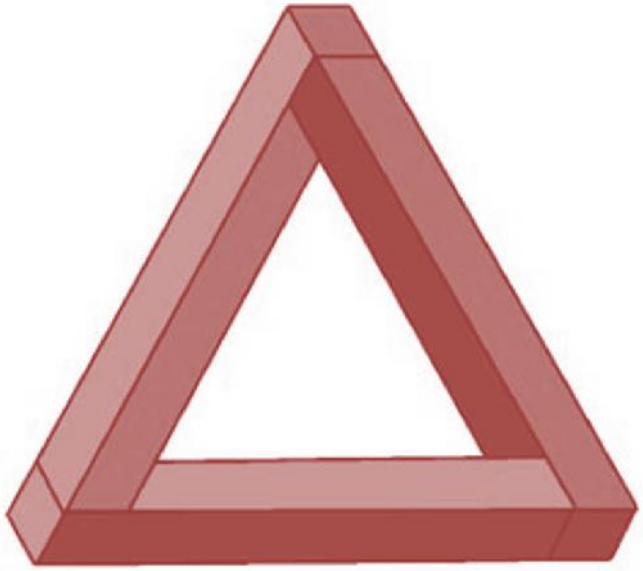

Nicholas Humphrey
SOUL DUST
THE Magic OF Consciousness

Wassily Kandinsky, 1911:
Colour is a power which directly influences the soul. Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings.

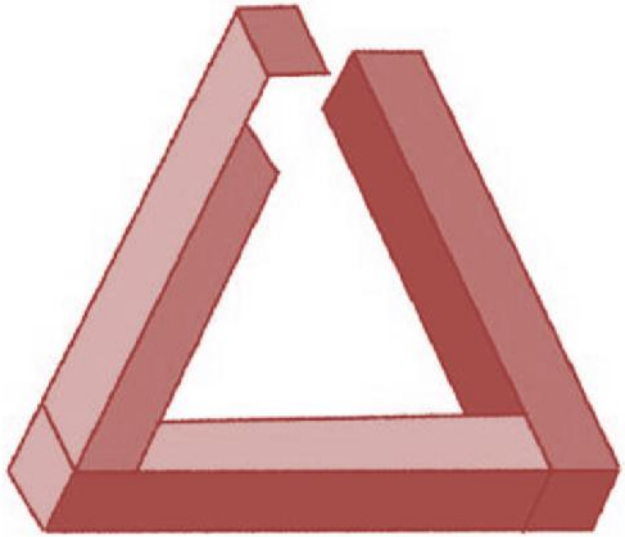


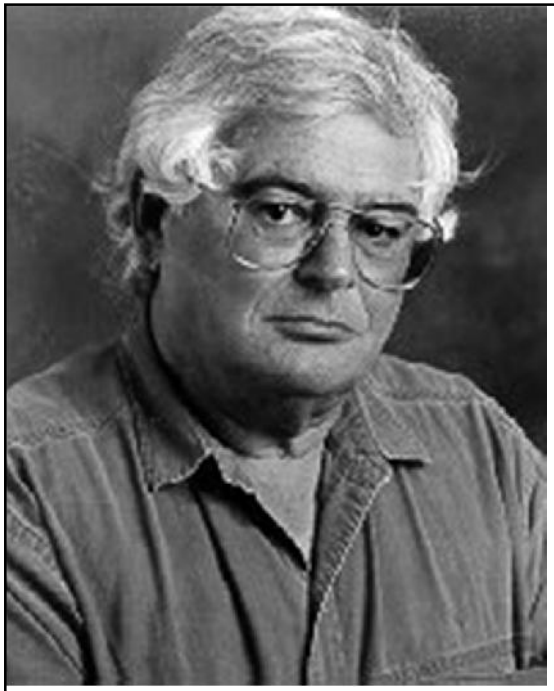
Jerry Fodor, 2007:

We can’t, as things stand now, so much as imagine the solution of the hard problem. The revisions of our concepts and theories that imagining a solution will eventually require are likely to be very deep and very unsettling . . There is hardly anything that we may not have to cut loose from before the hard problem is through with us.



Penrose's "impossible triangle"



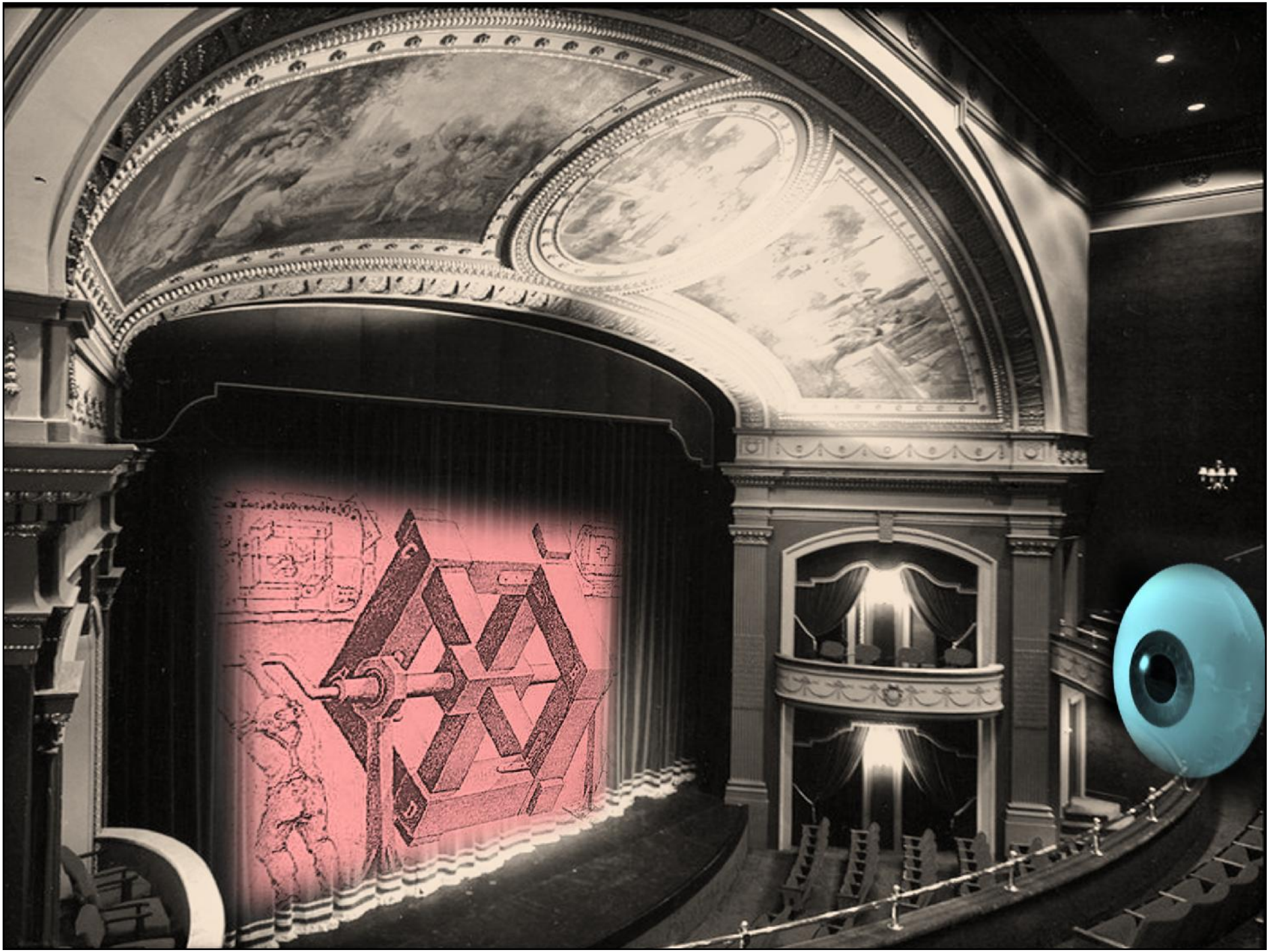


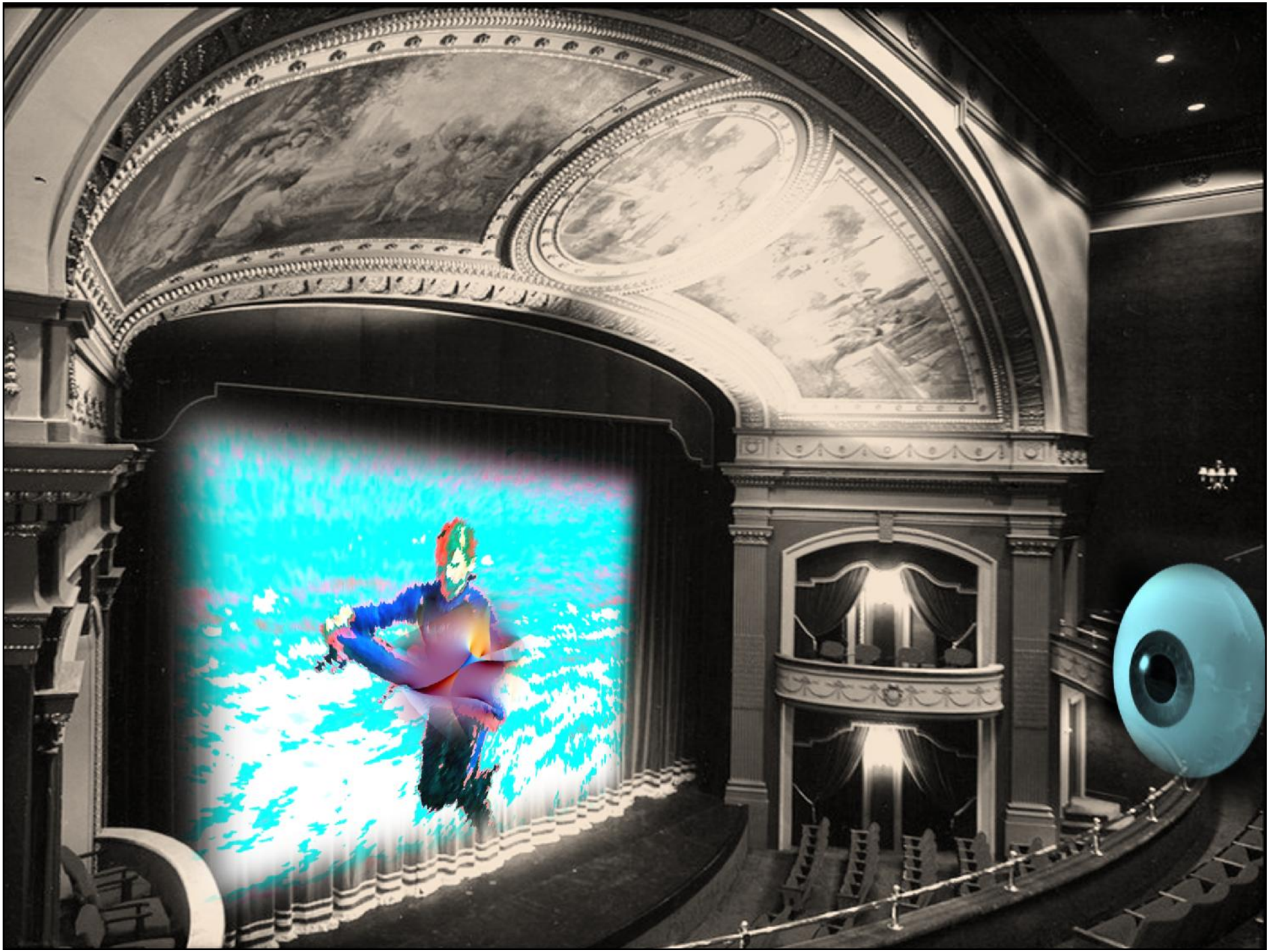
Jerry Fodor, 2004:

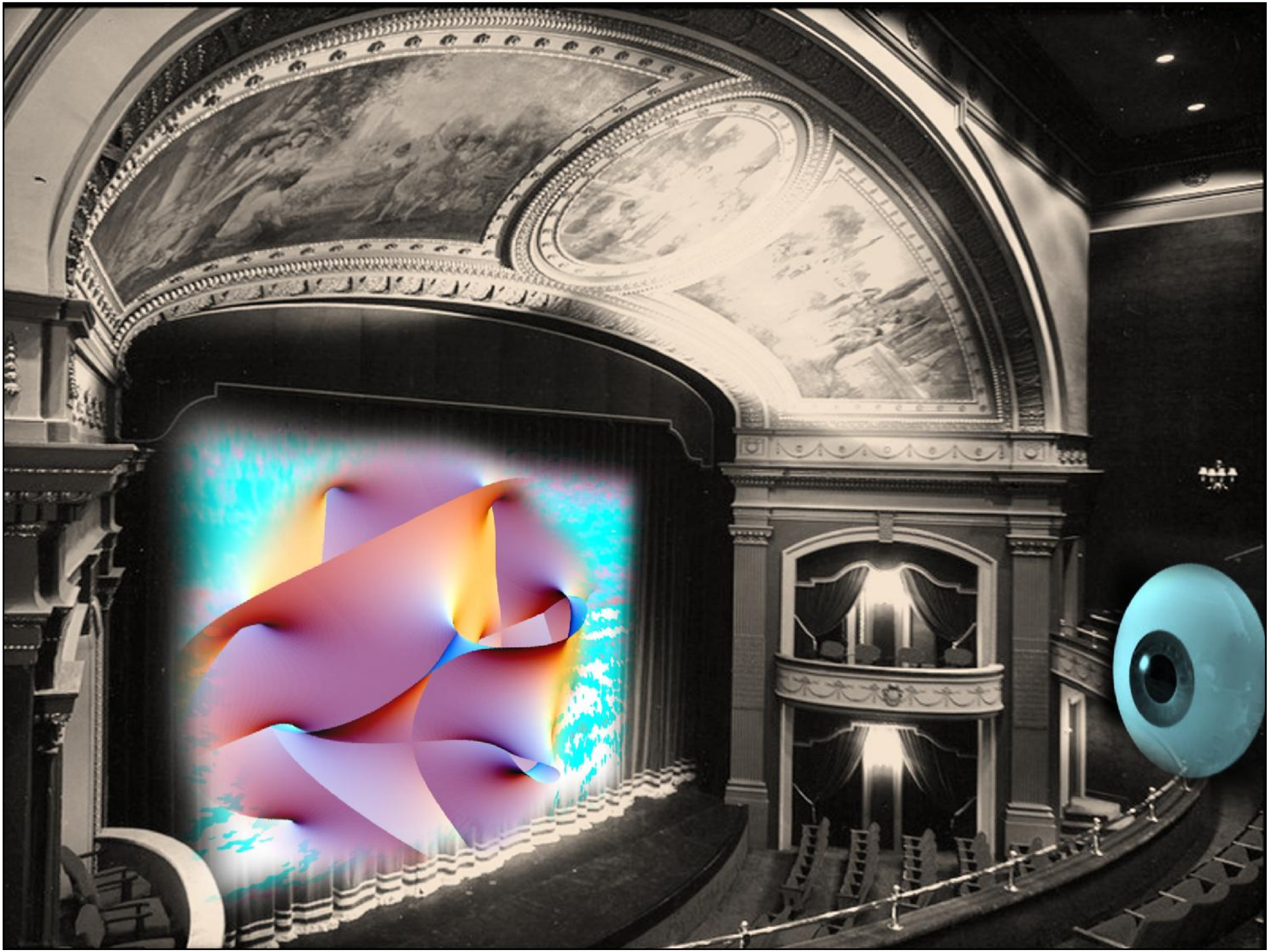
Nobody has the slightest idea what consciousness is, or what it's for, or how it does what it's for (to say nothing of what it's made of).

- what consciousness is
- what it’s for
- how it does what it’s for
- what it’s made of

- what *is* consciousness?





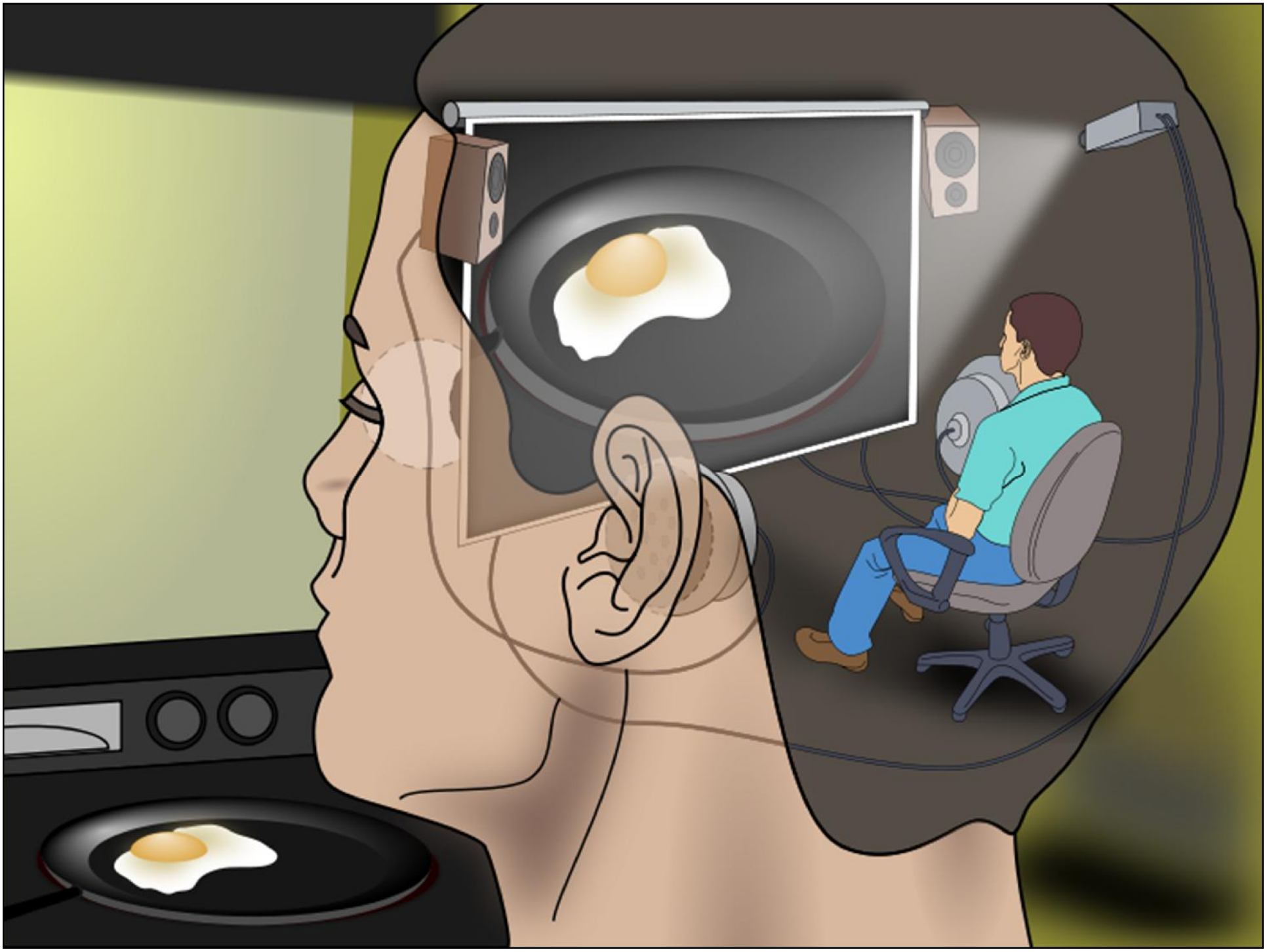


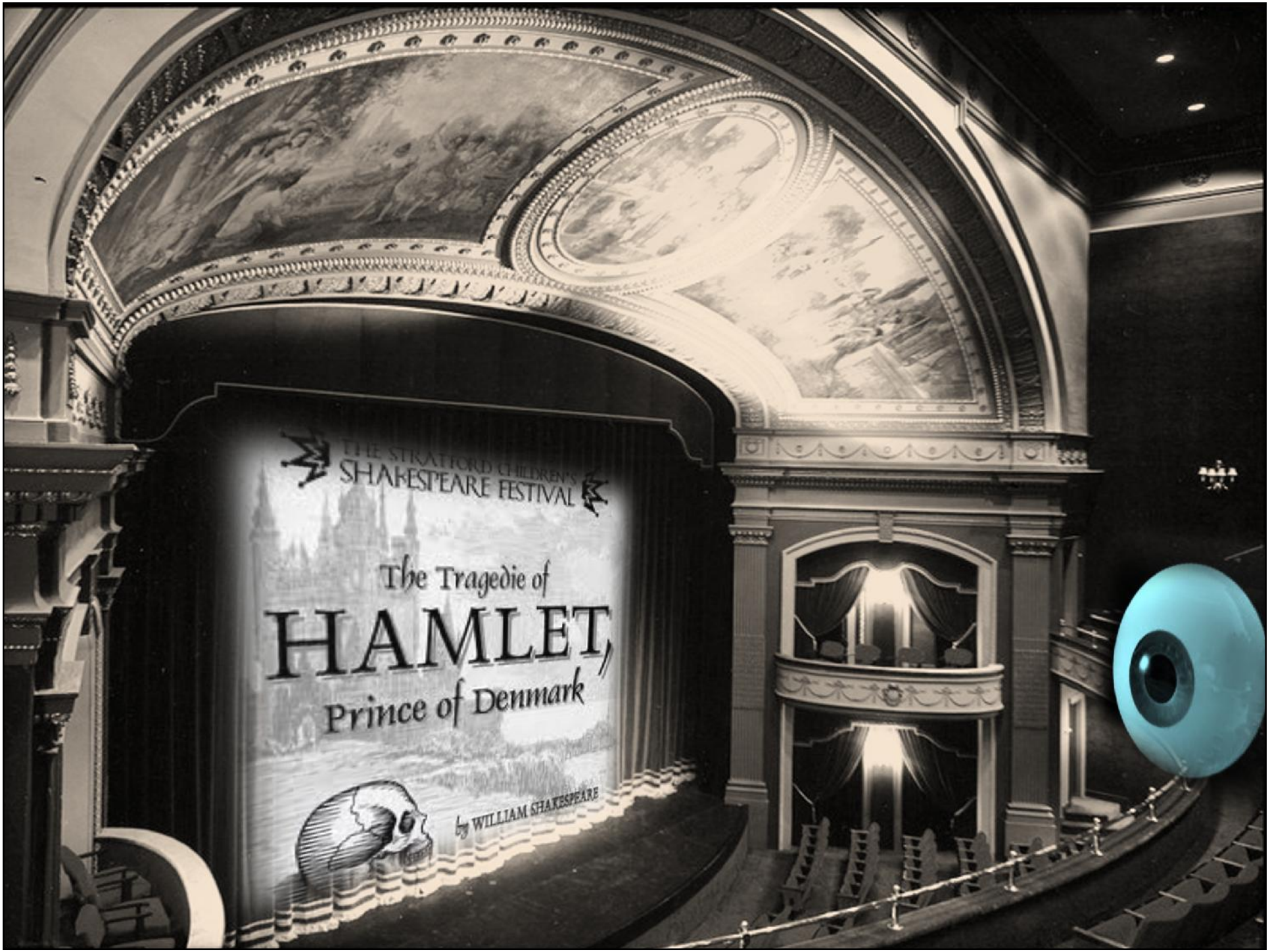
SÄULENTOR
ZUR
VIERTEN
DIMENSION
HINTEN IST
ZEITIG
GLEICH –
WO VORNE

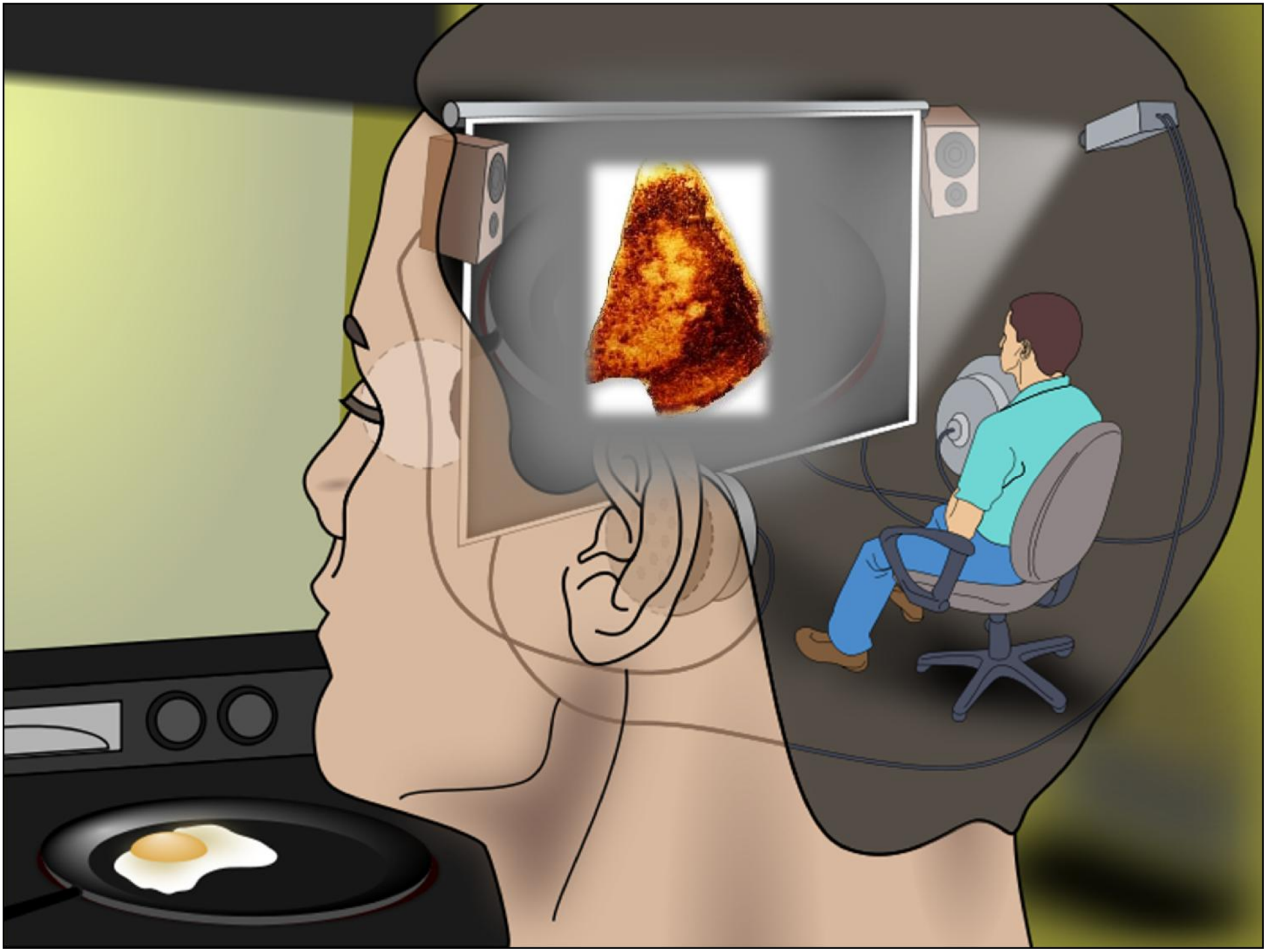
- *what is consciousness for?*

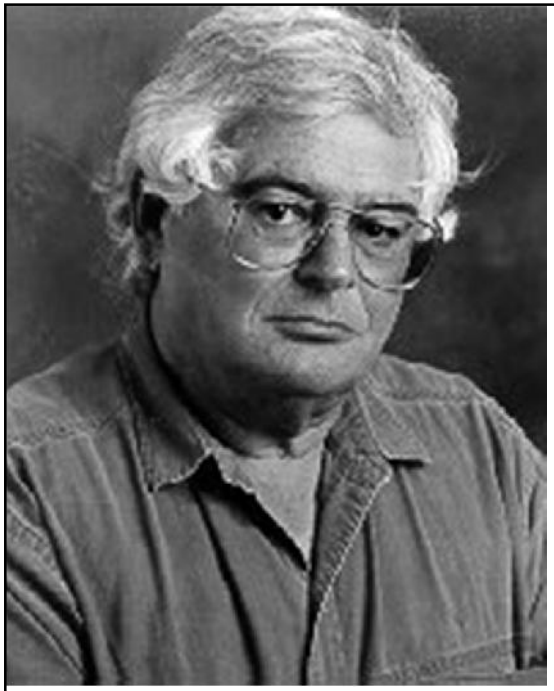
Daniel Dennett, 1991:

The persuasive imagery of the Cartesian Theatre keeps coming back to haunt us– laypeople and scientists alike – even after its ghostly dualism has been denounced and exorcized.




THE STRATFORD CHILDREN'S
SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
The Tragedie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmark
by WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

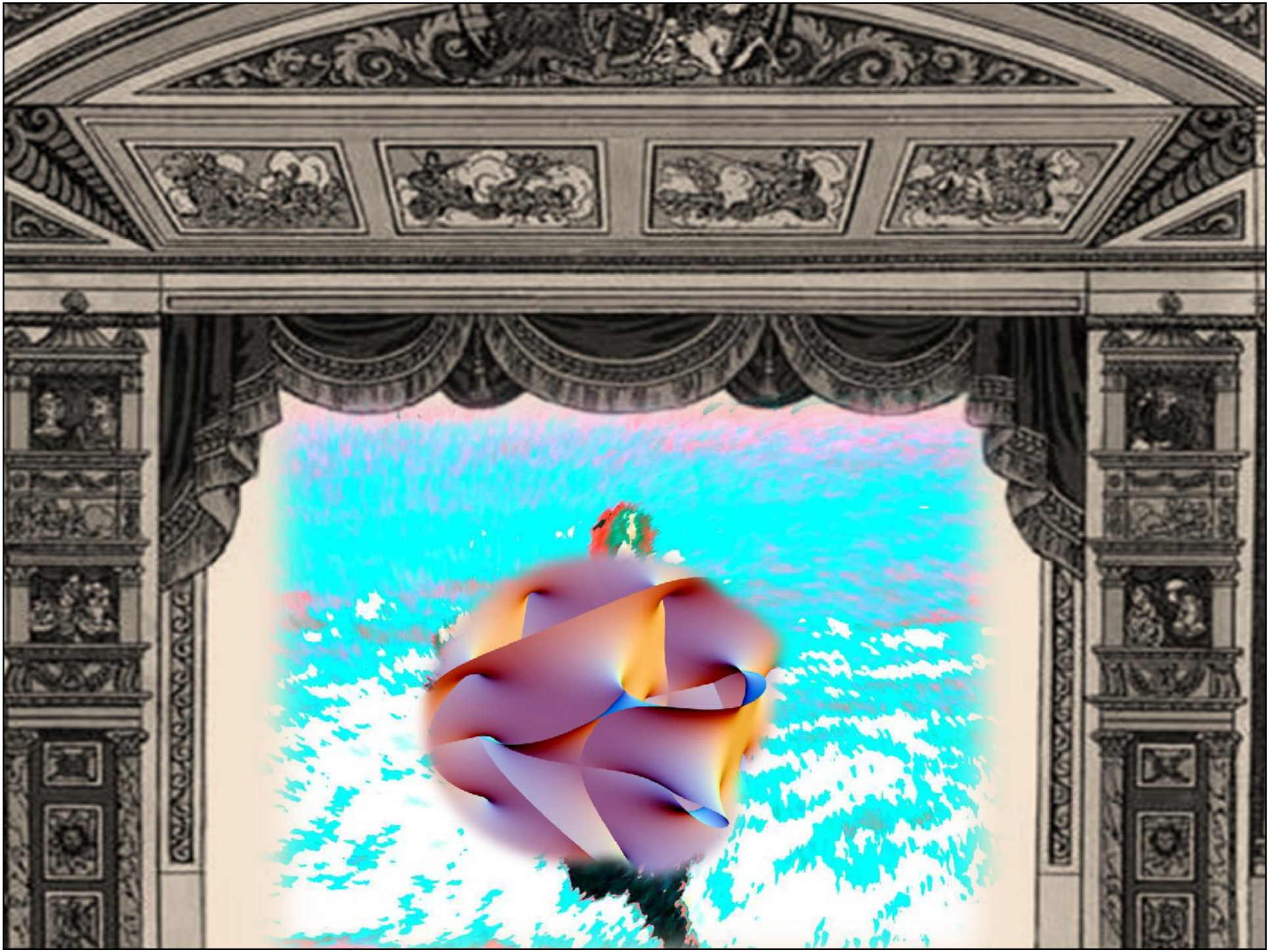


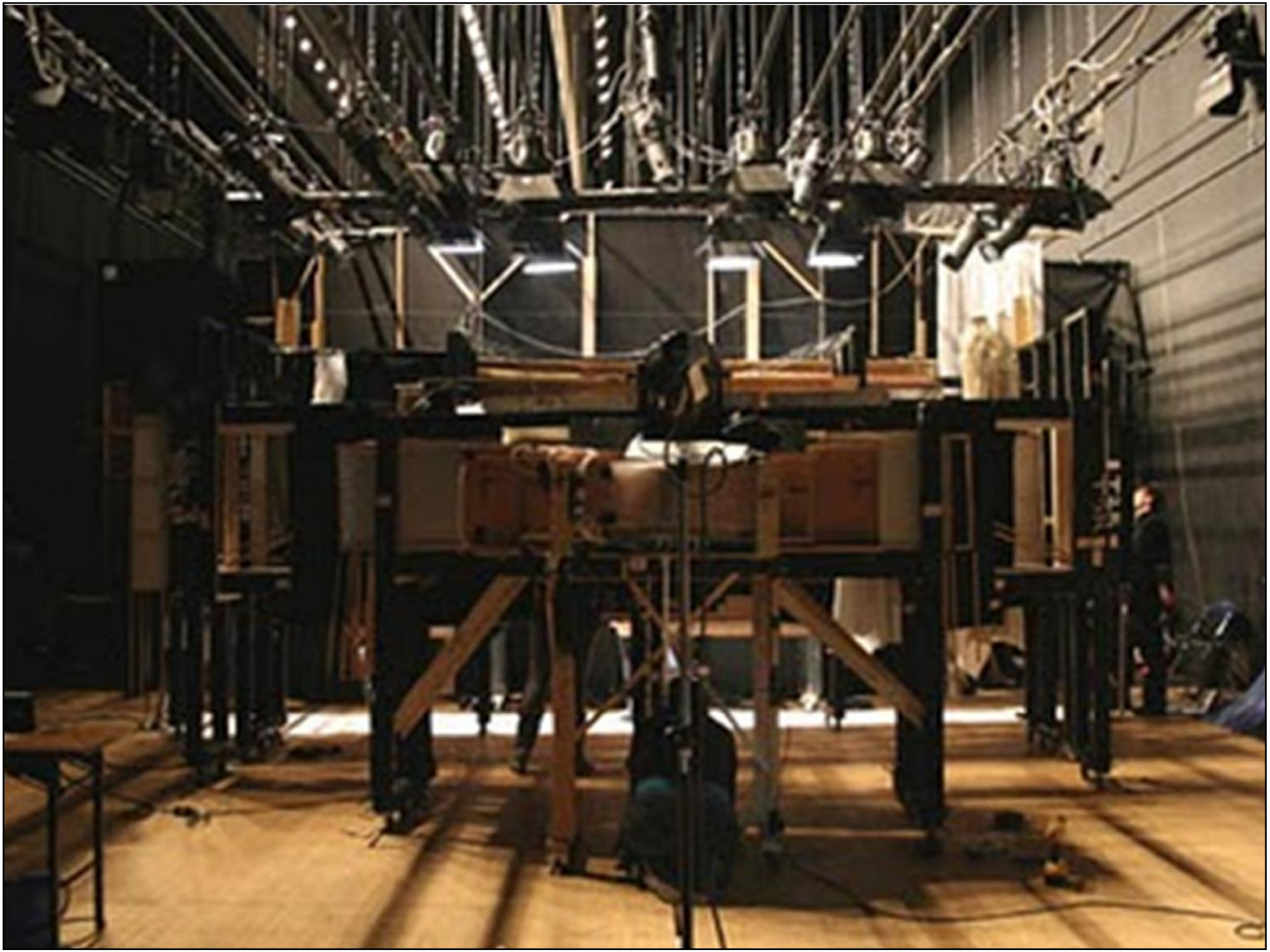


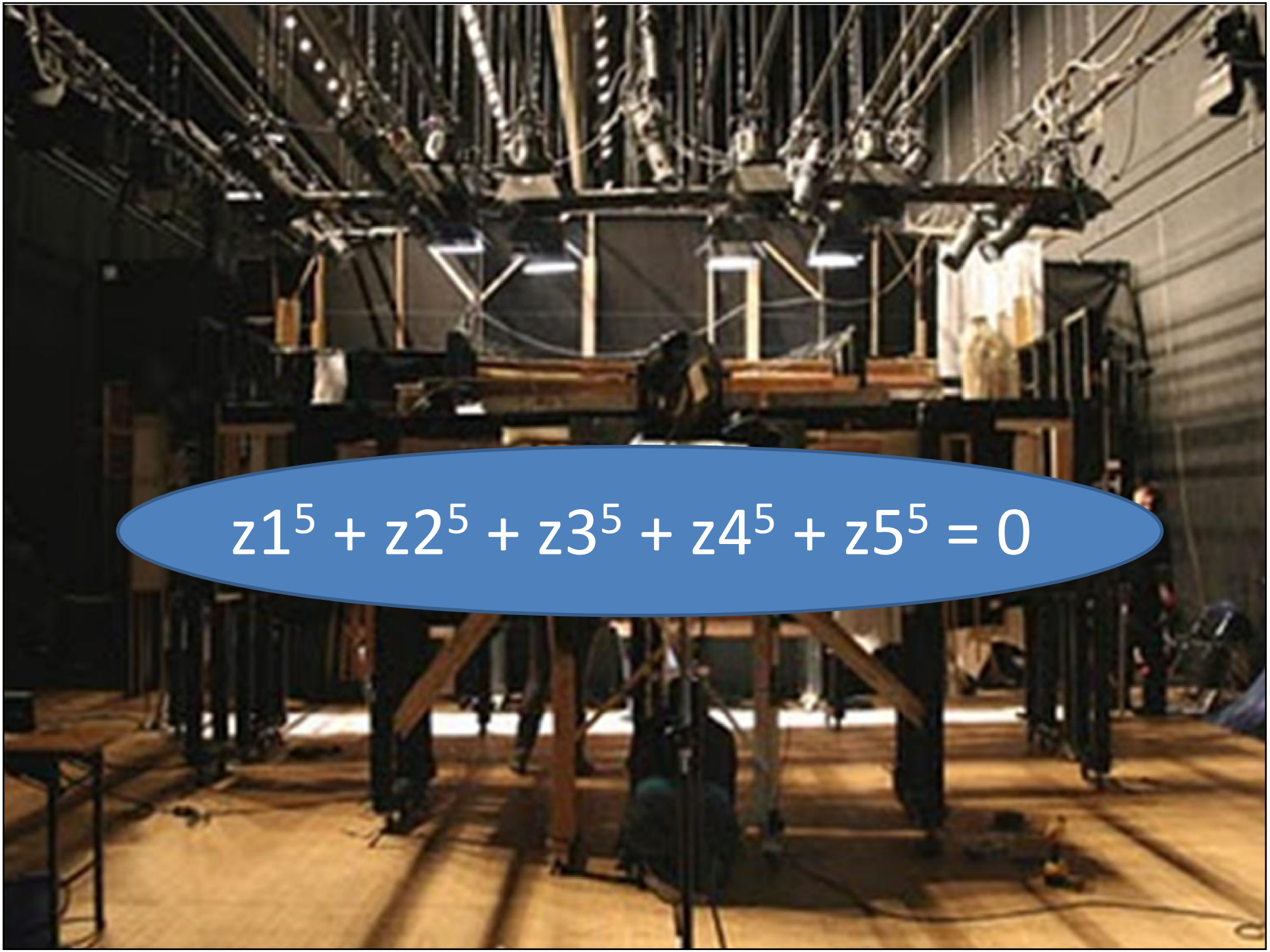
Jerry Fodor:

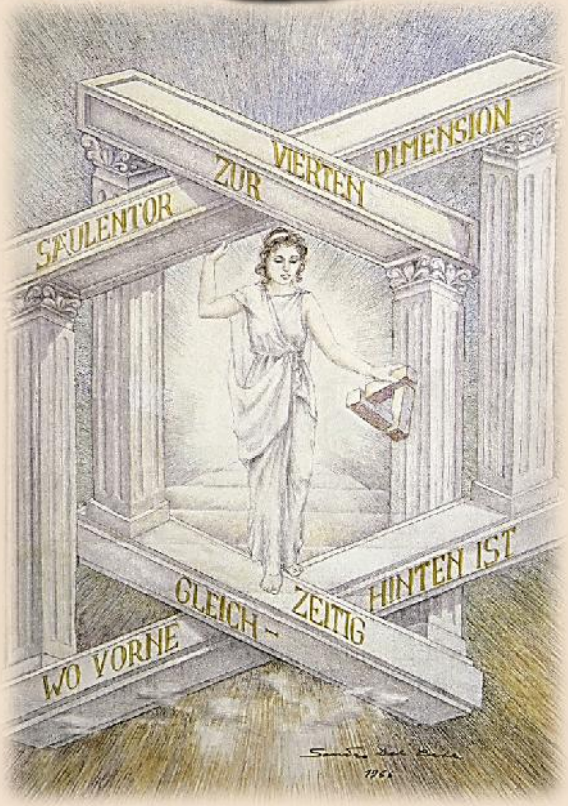
Consciousness seems to be among the chronically unemployed. What mental processes can be performed only because the mind is conscious, and what does consciousness contribute to their performance? Why then did God bother to make consciousness?

- *how does consciousness do what it's for?*






$z1^5 + z2^5 + z3^5 + z4^5 + z5^5 = 0$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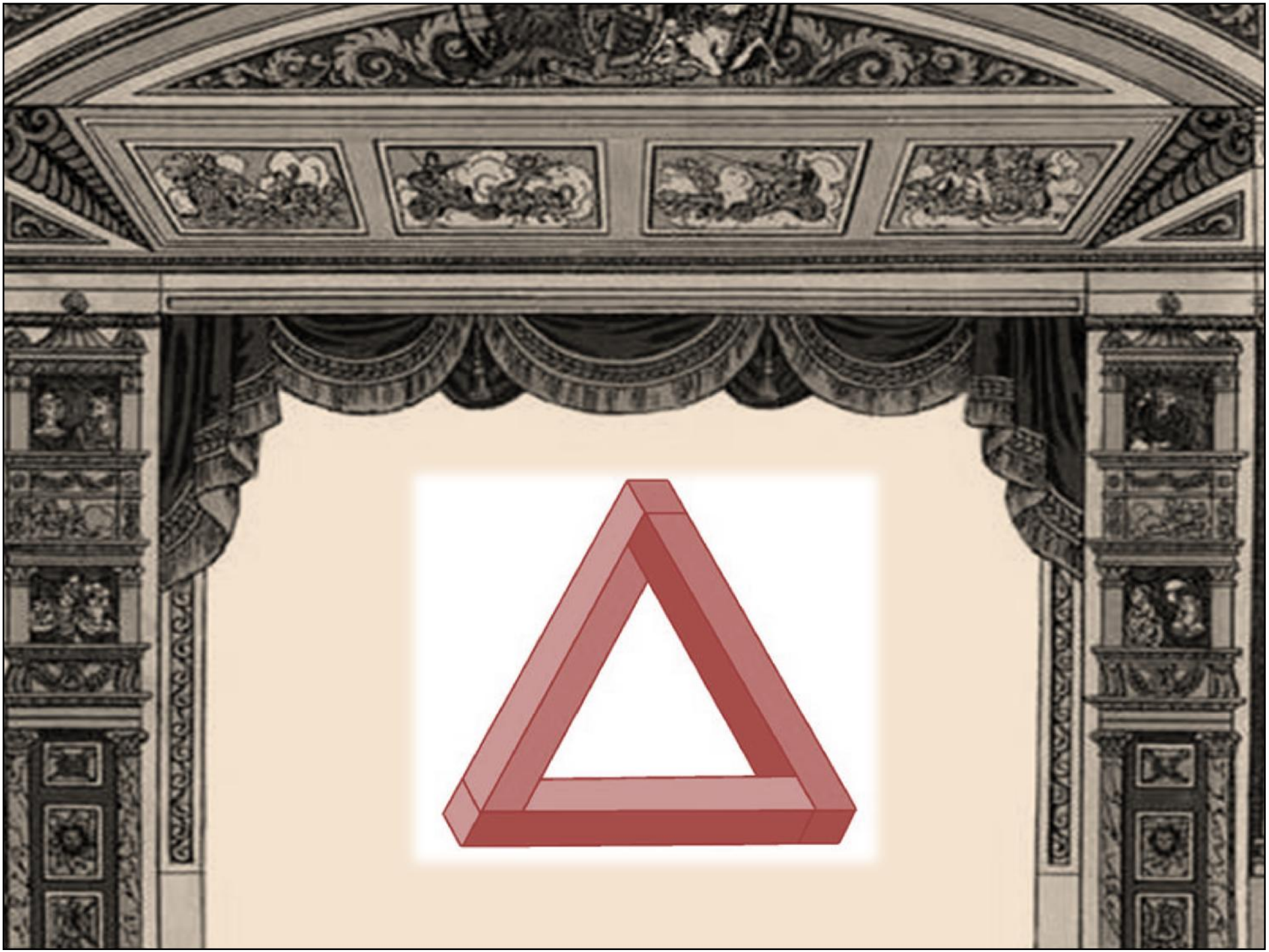
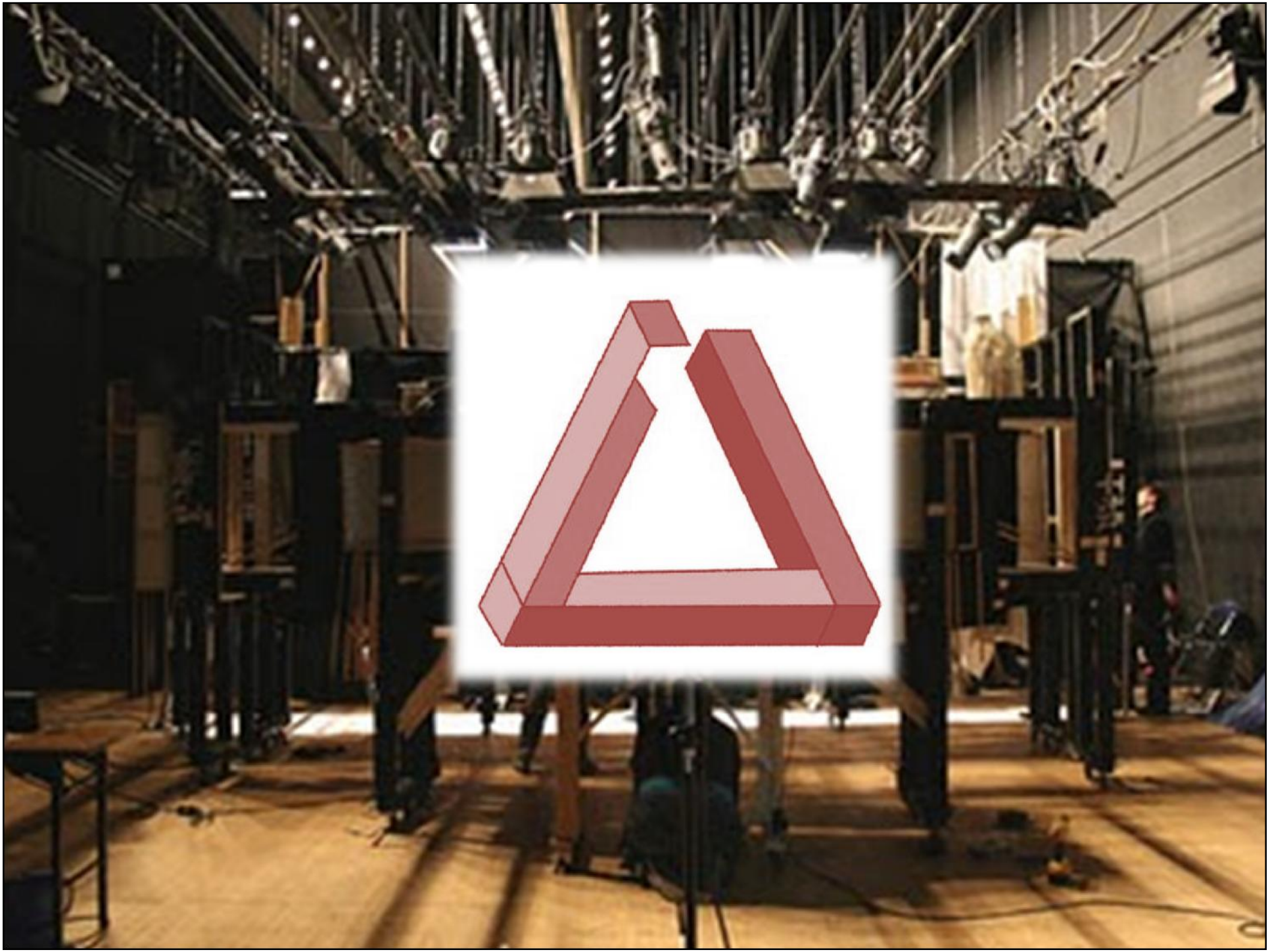
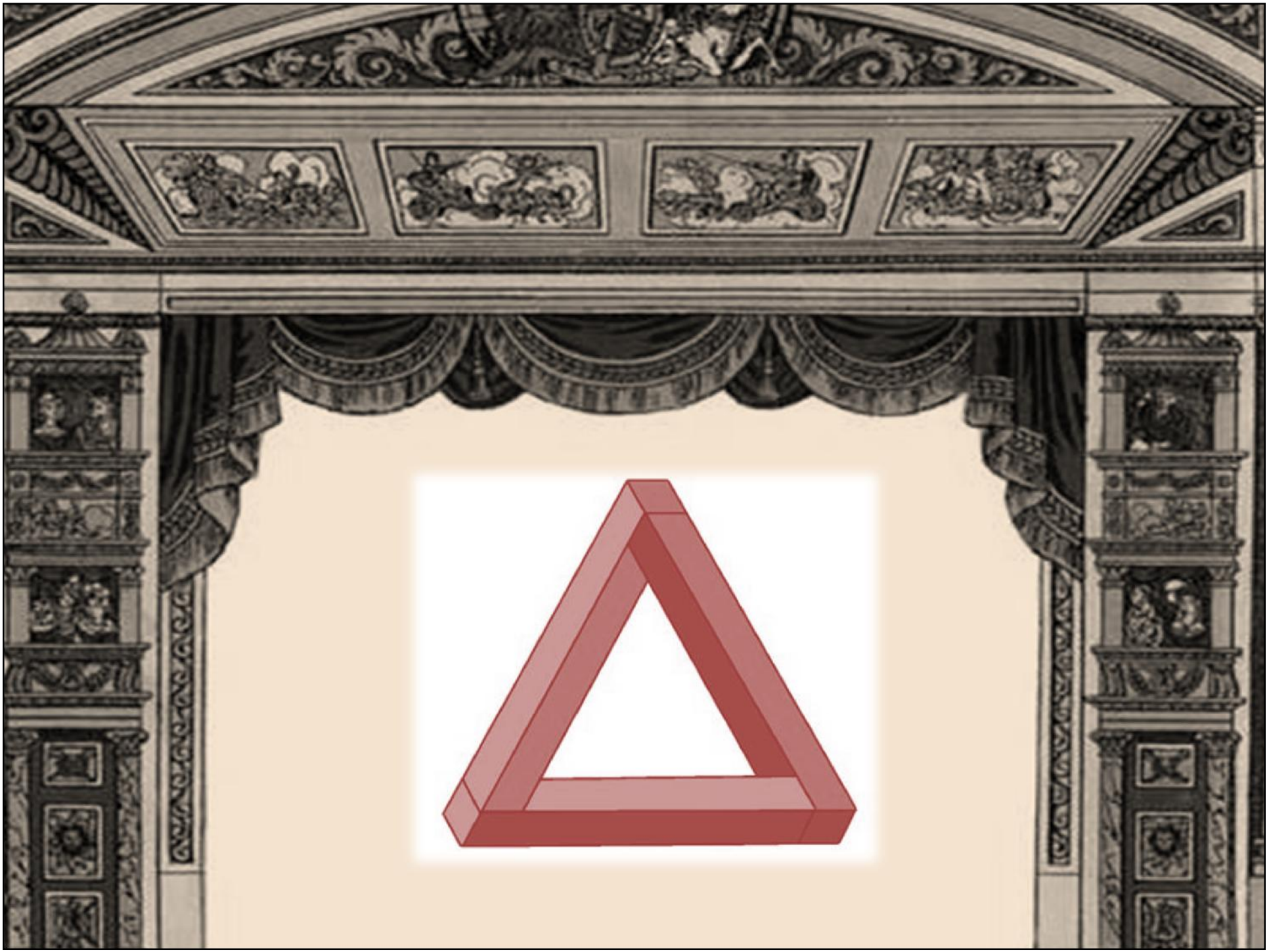
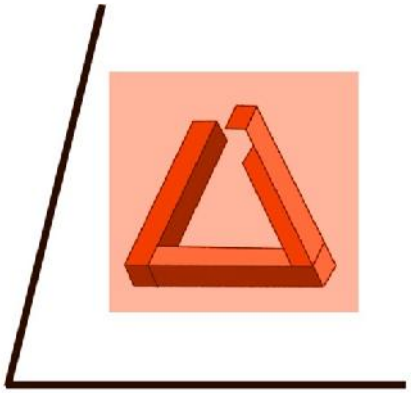
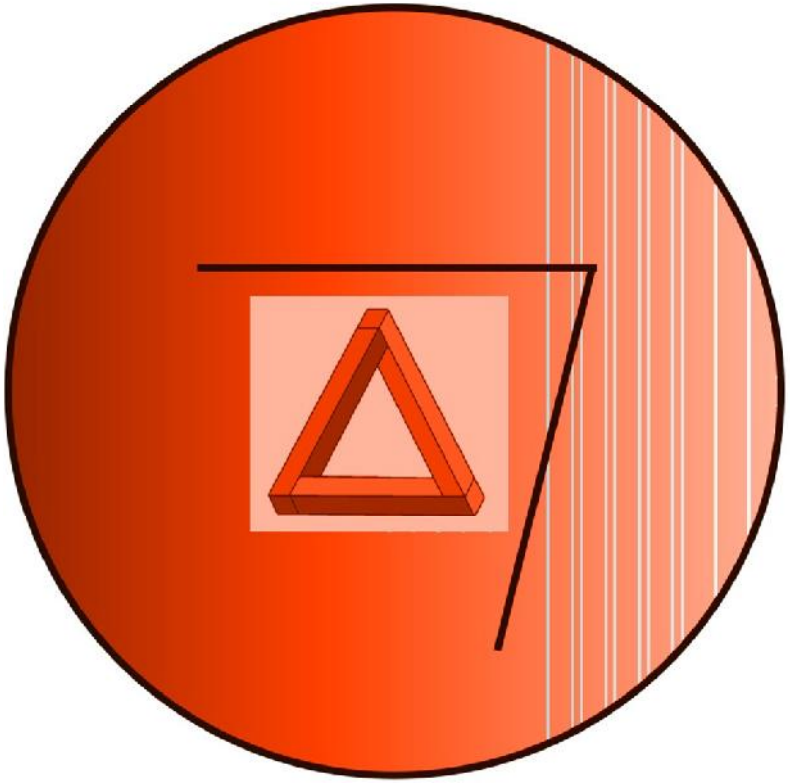








Third-person viewpoint

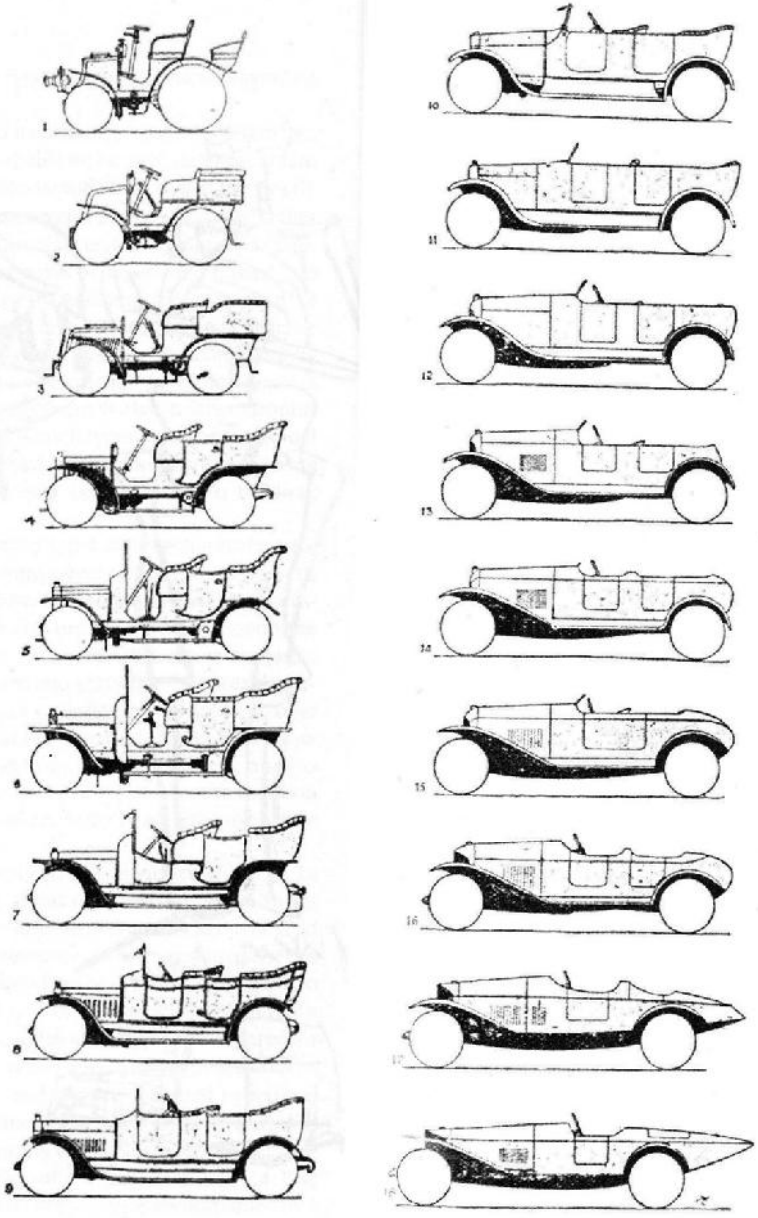


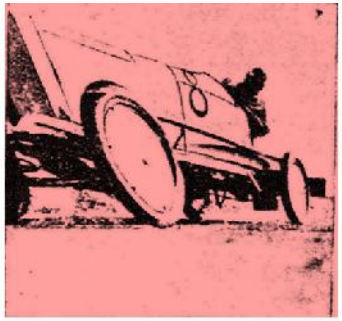
First-person viewpoint

- *what is consciousness made of?*

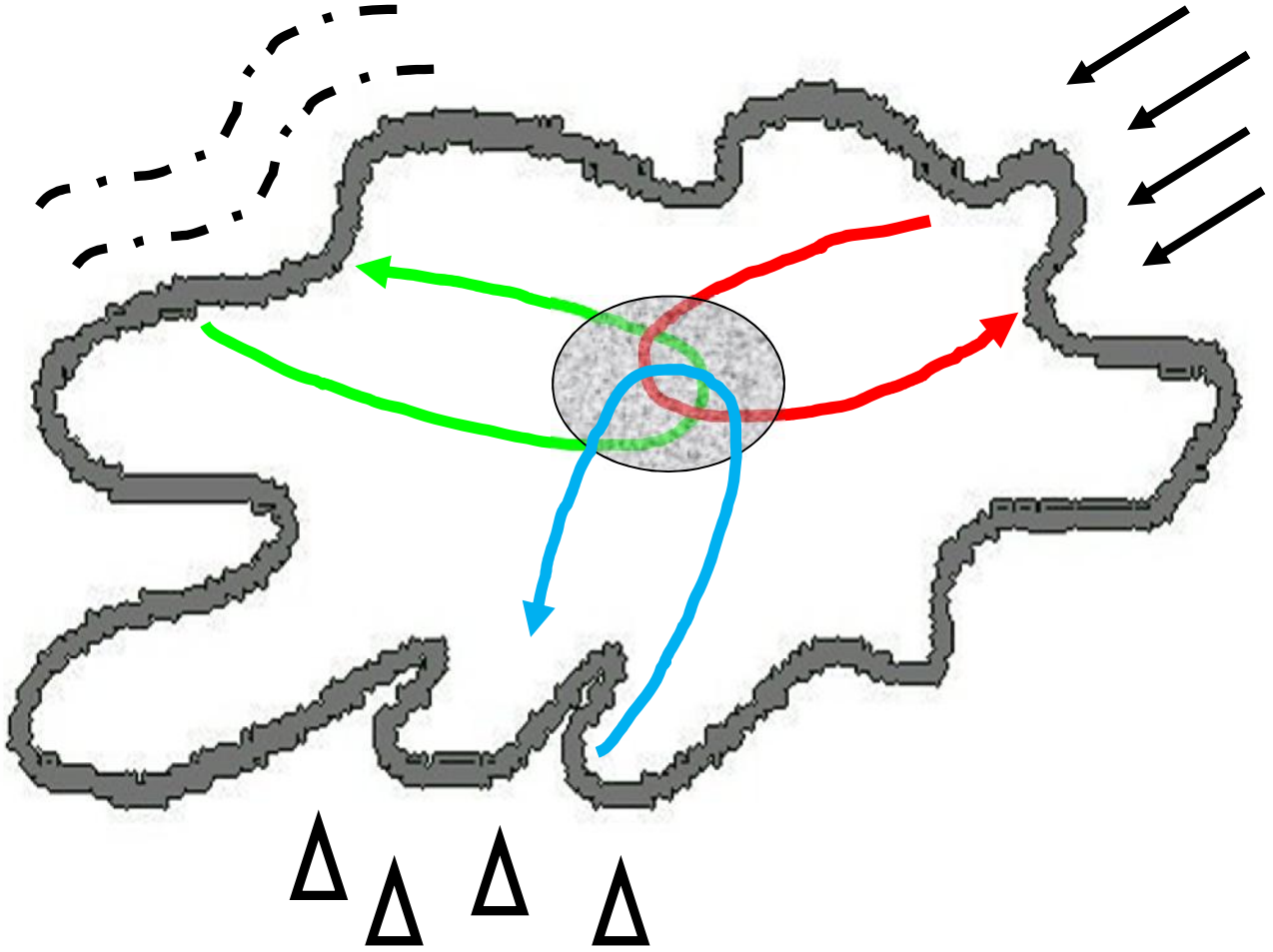
1900

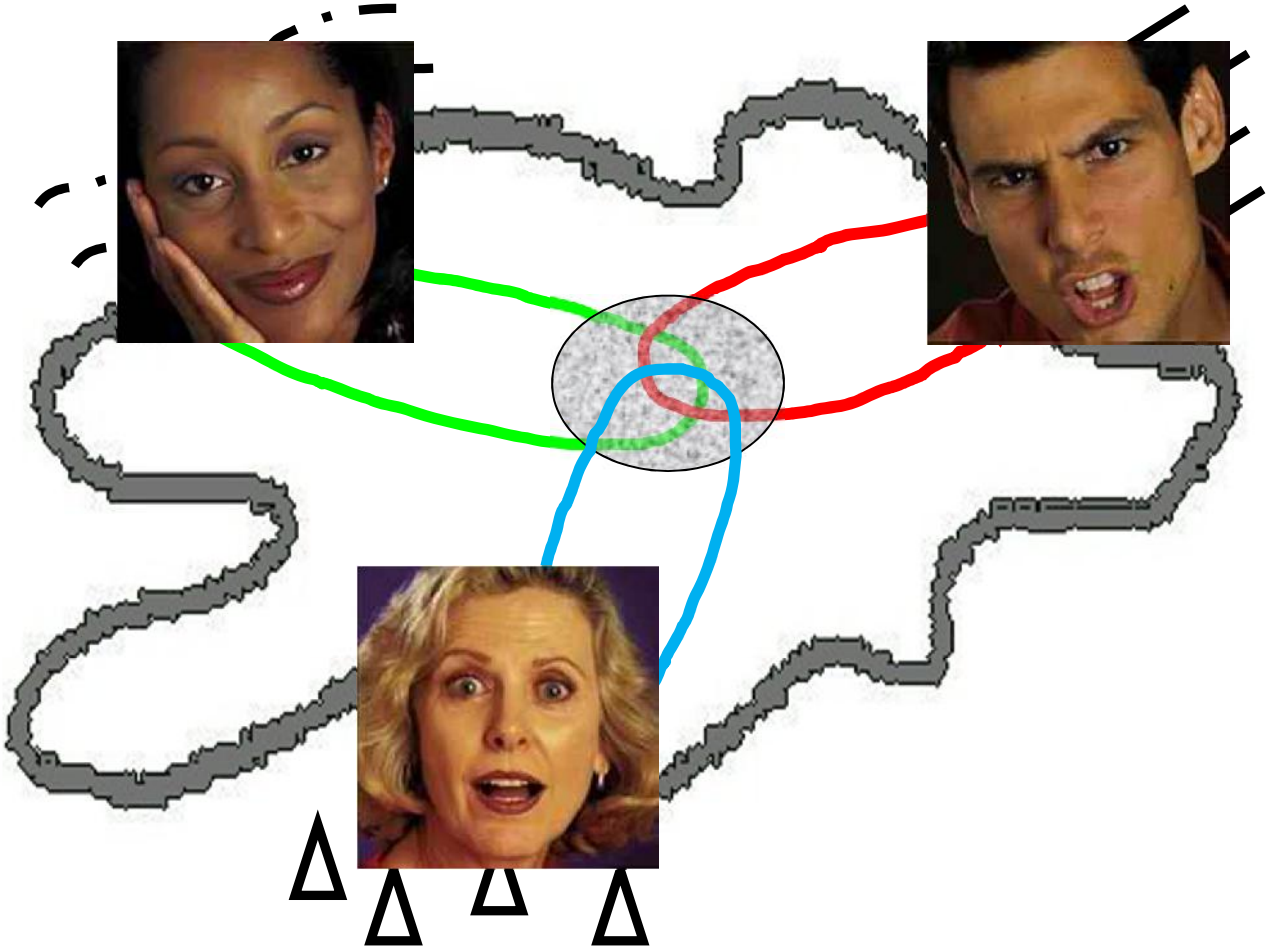
ÉVOLUTION DES FORMES DE L'AUTOMOBILE

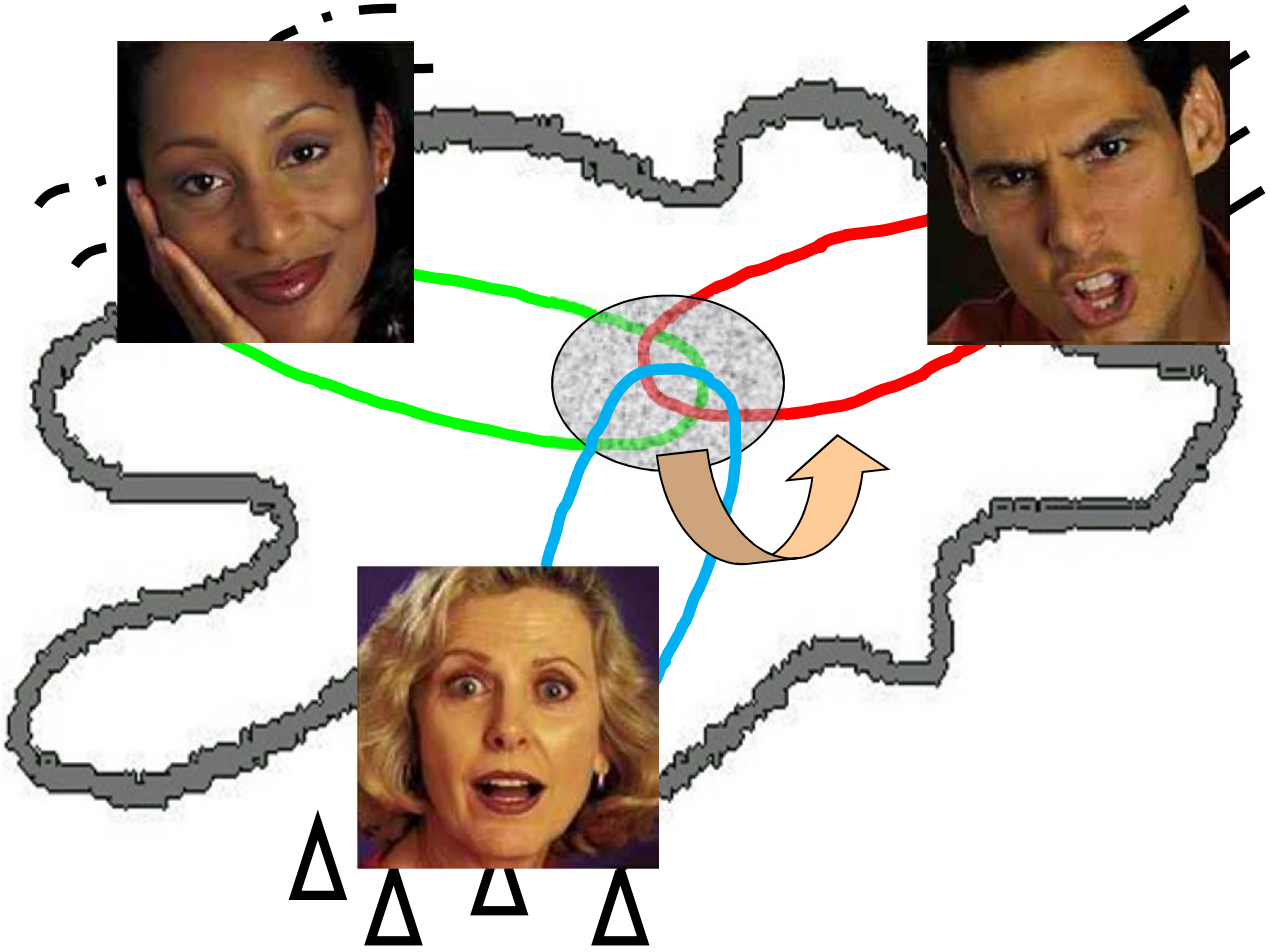


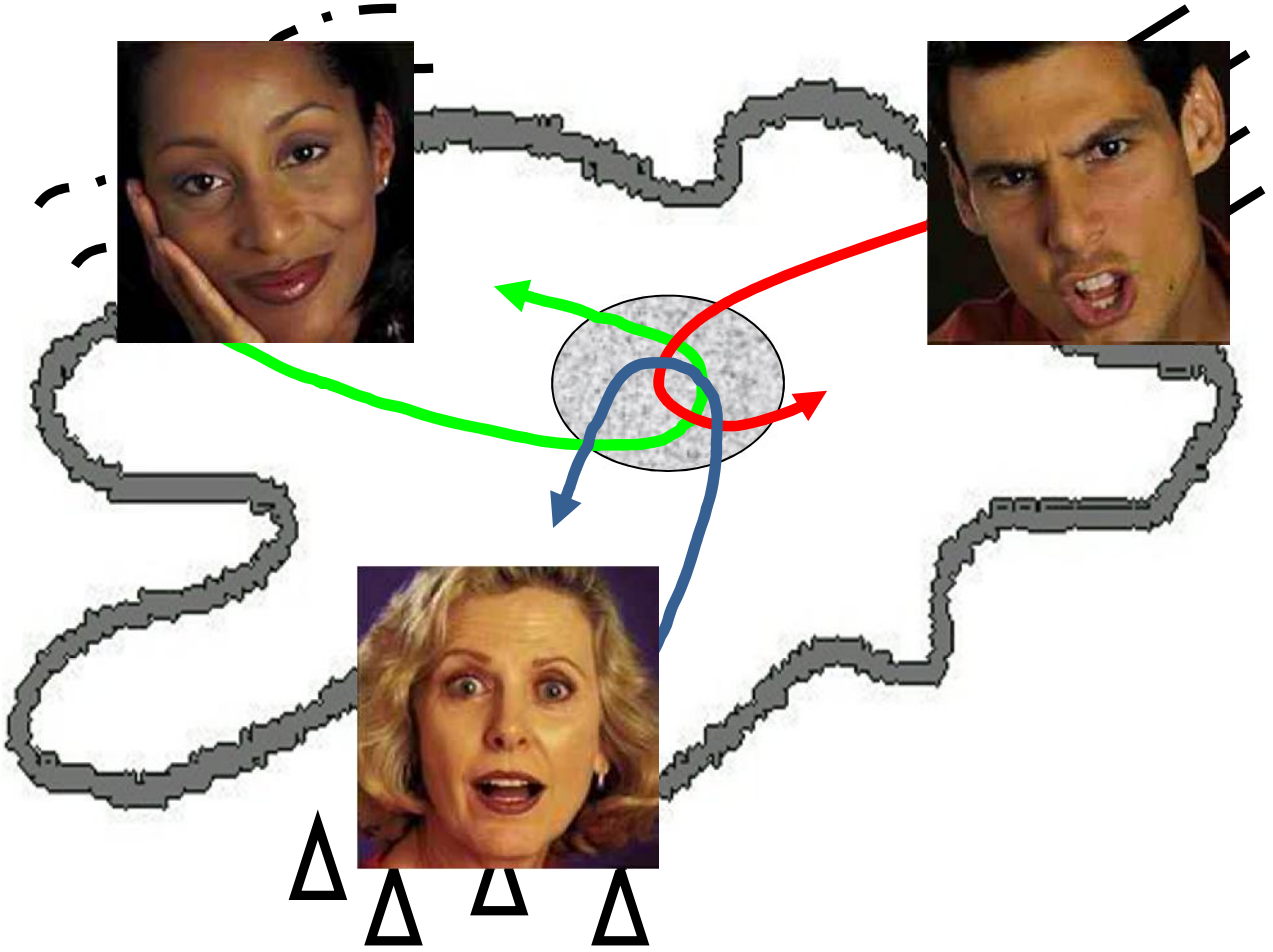


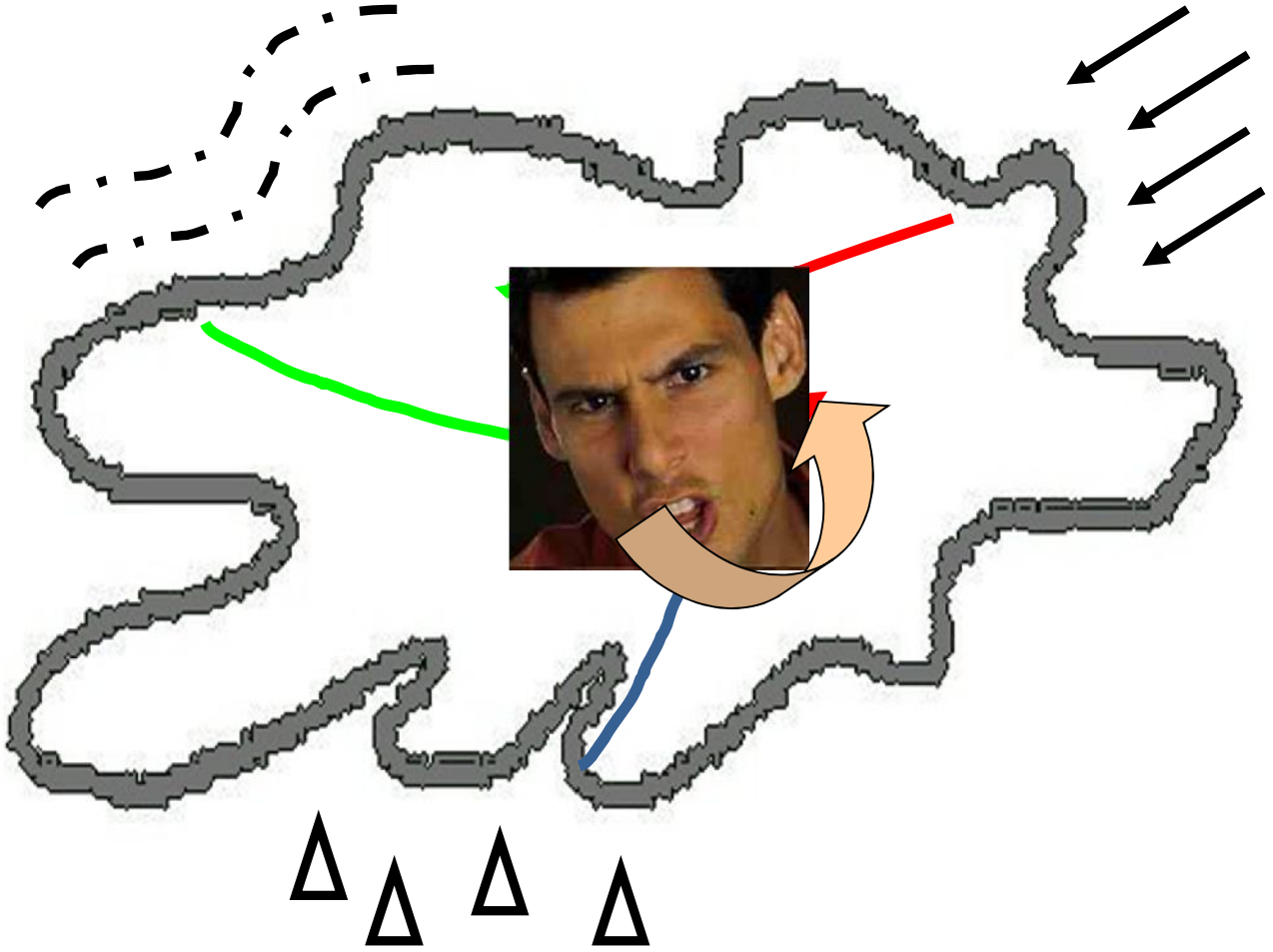
1921

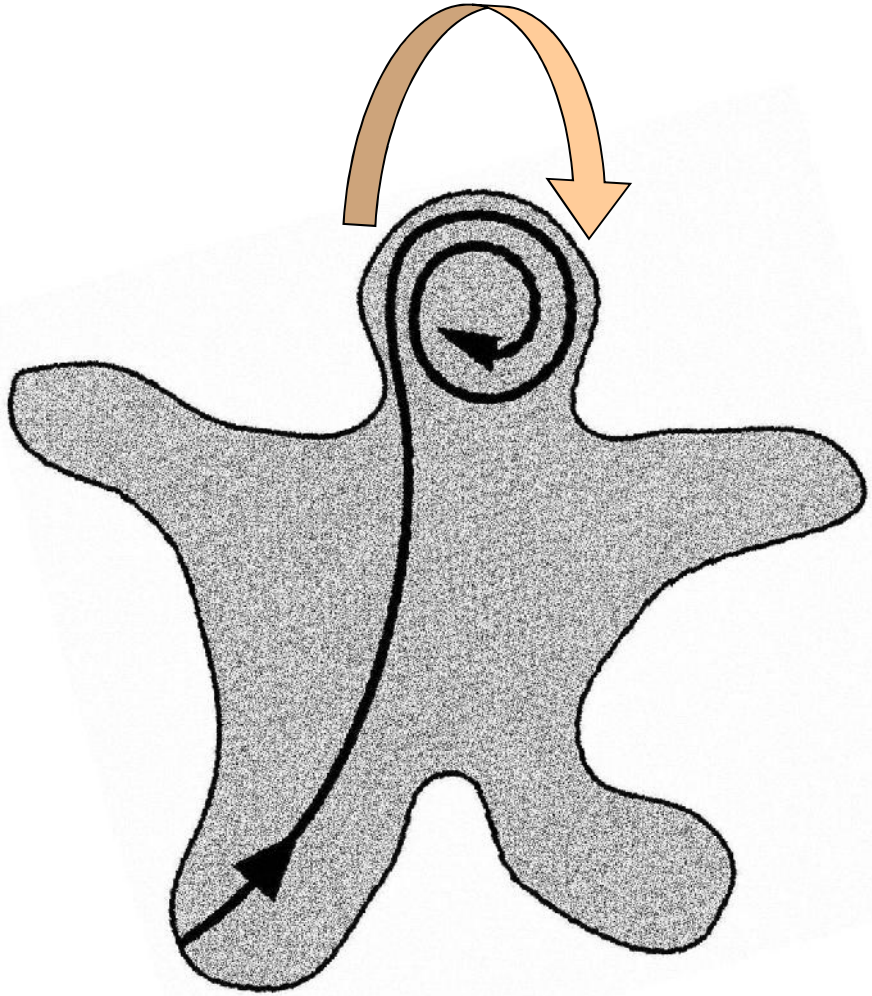


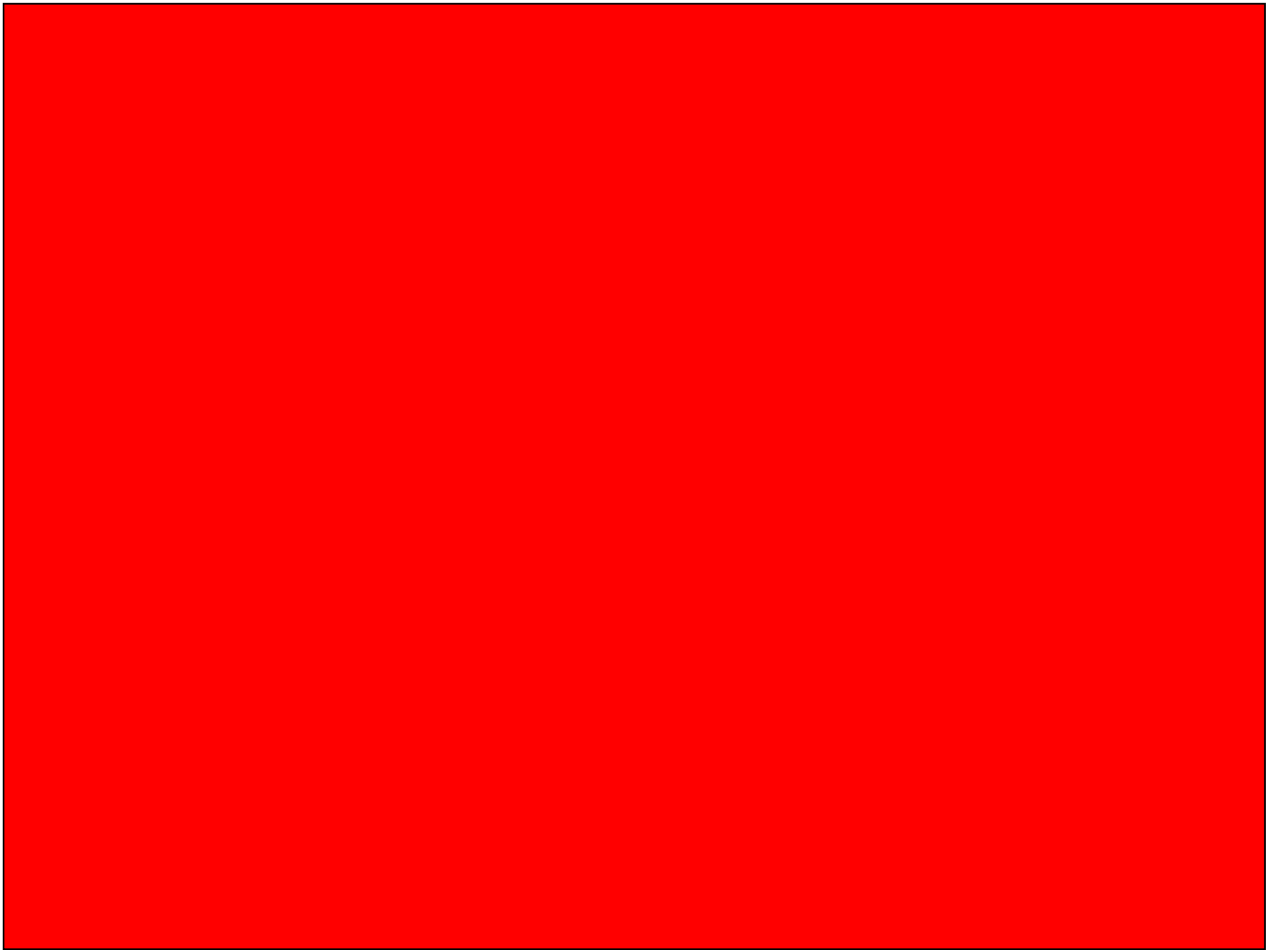


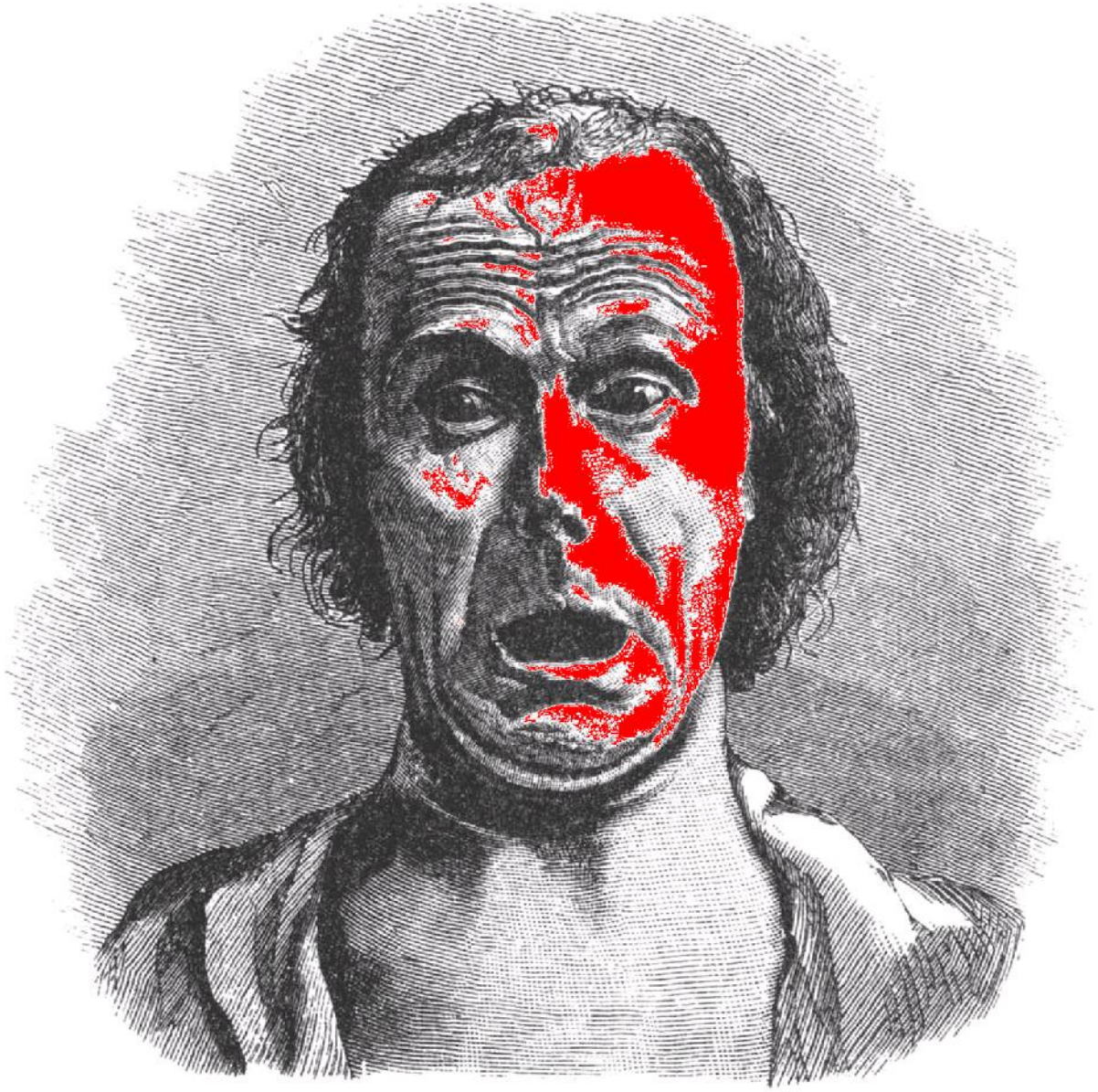


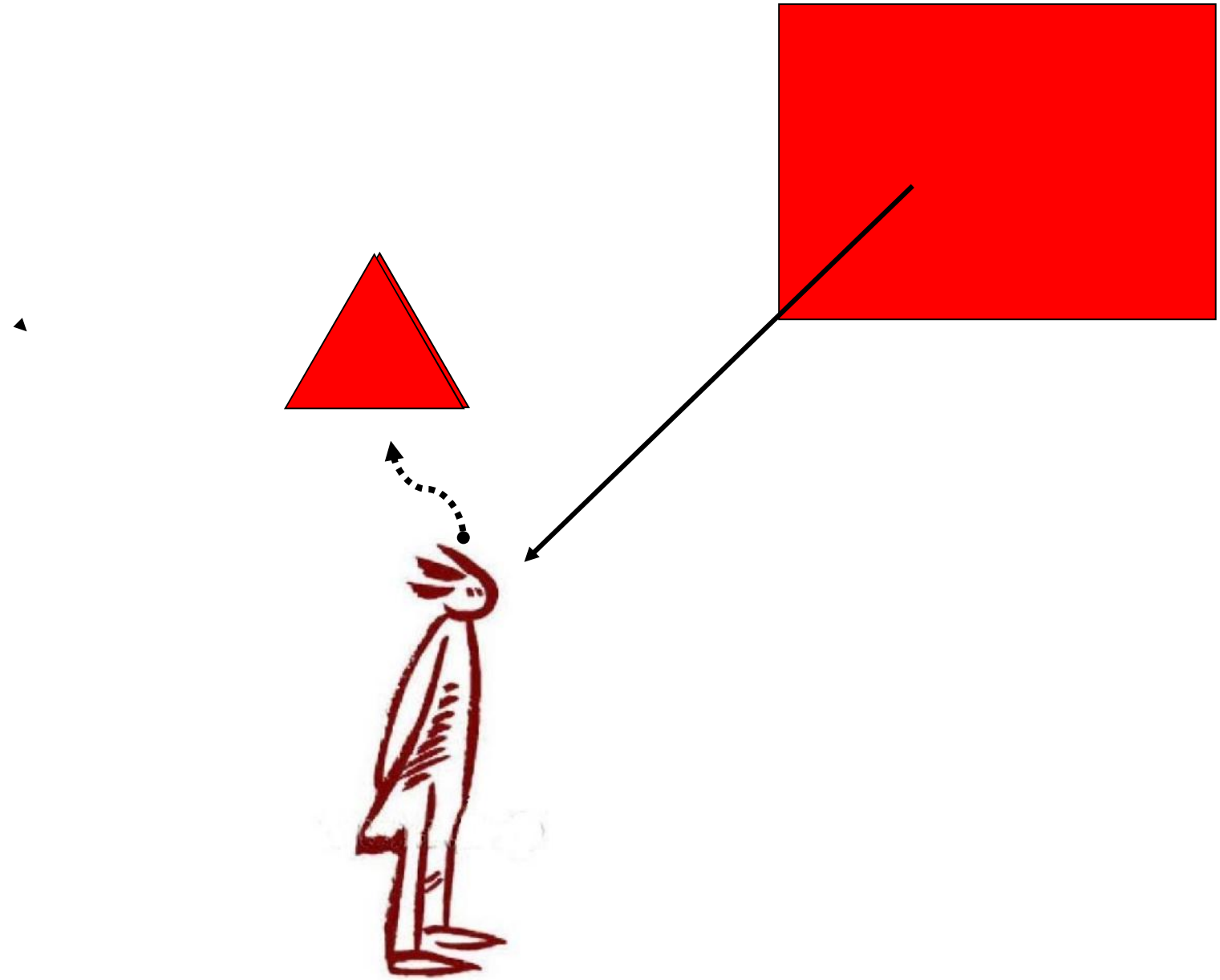




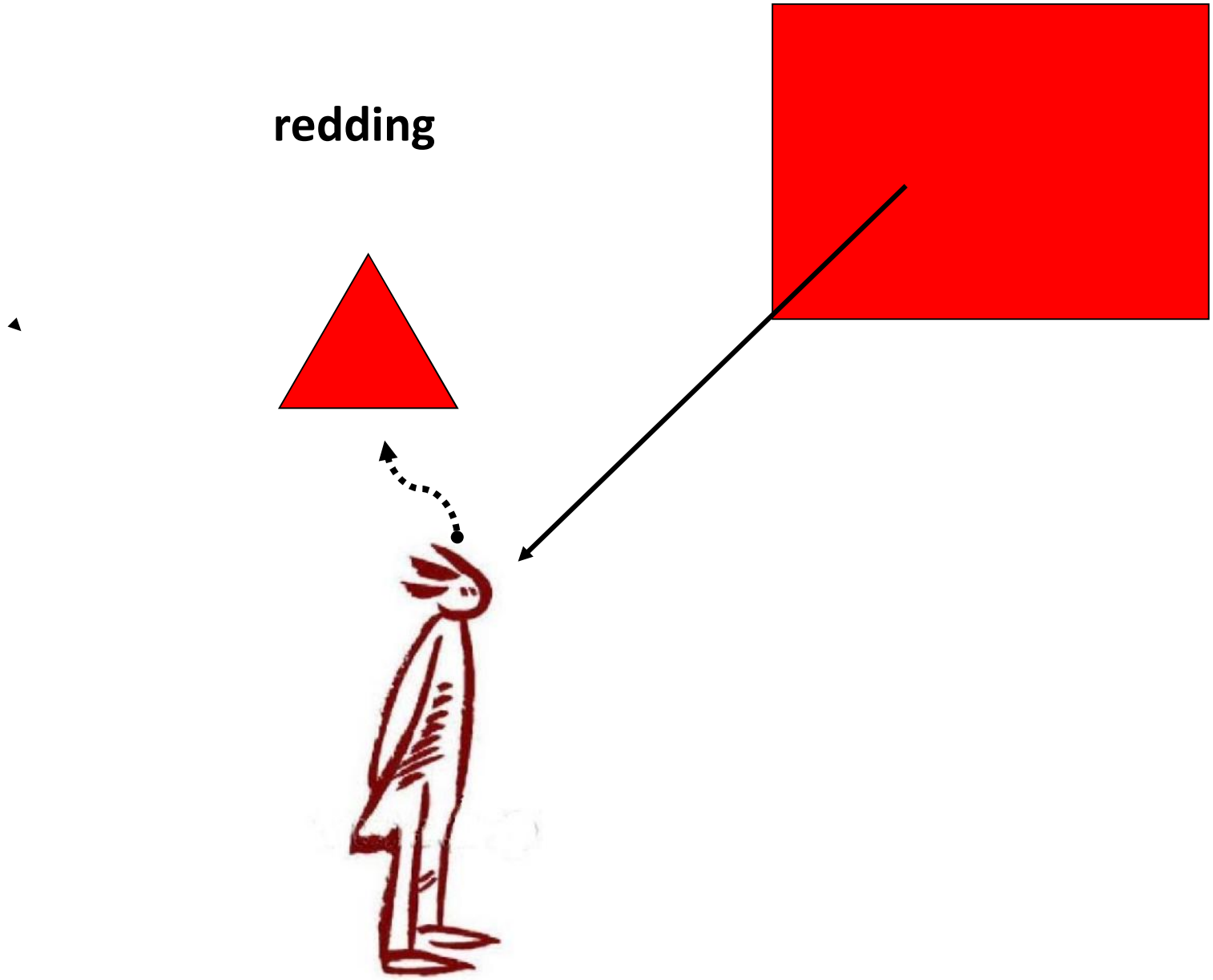


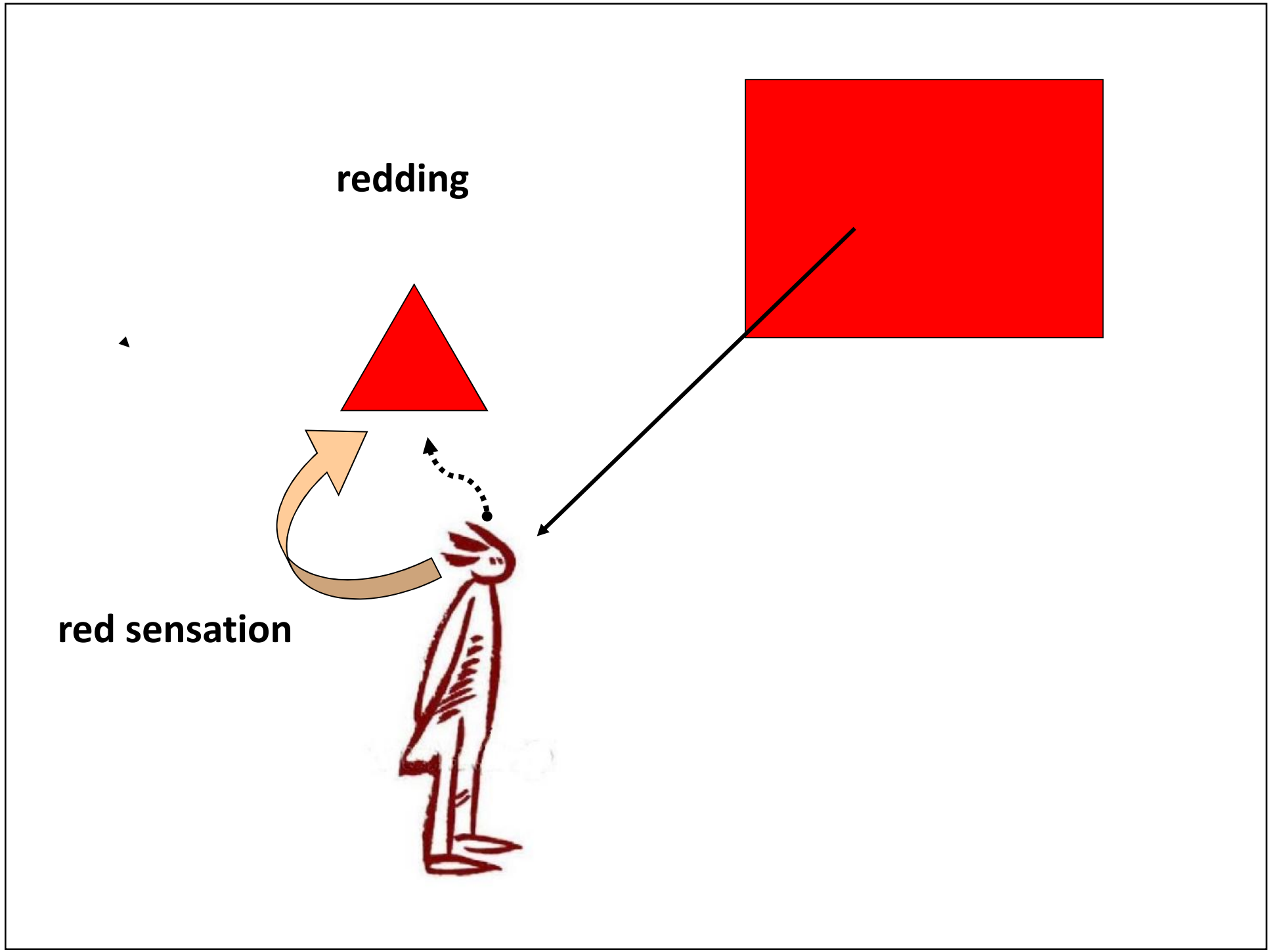




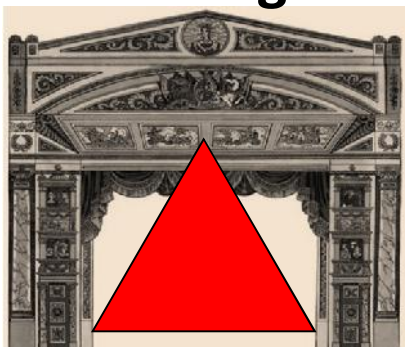


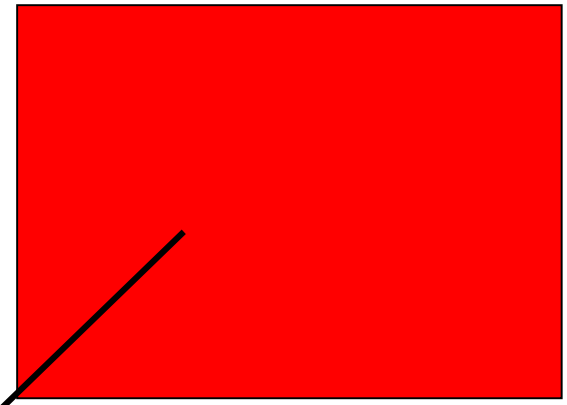
redding

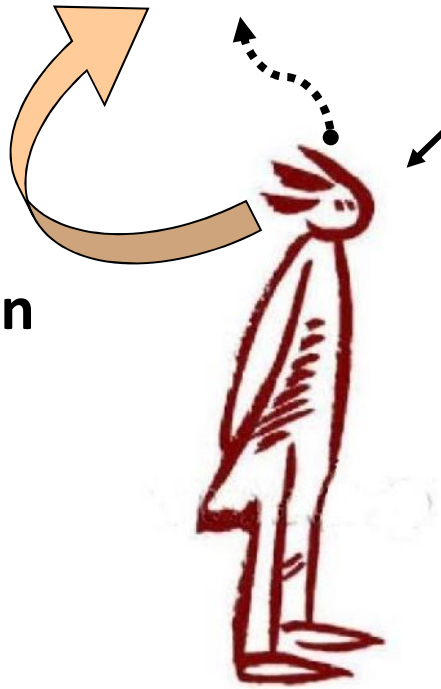



redding
red sensation

redding

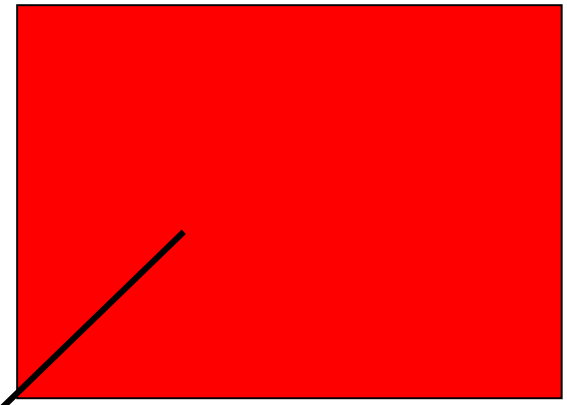




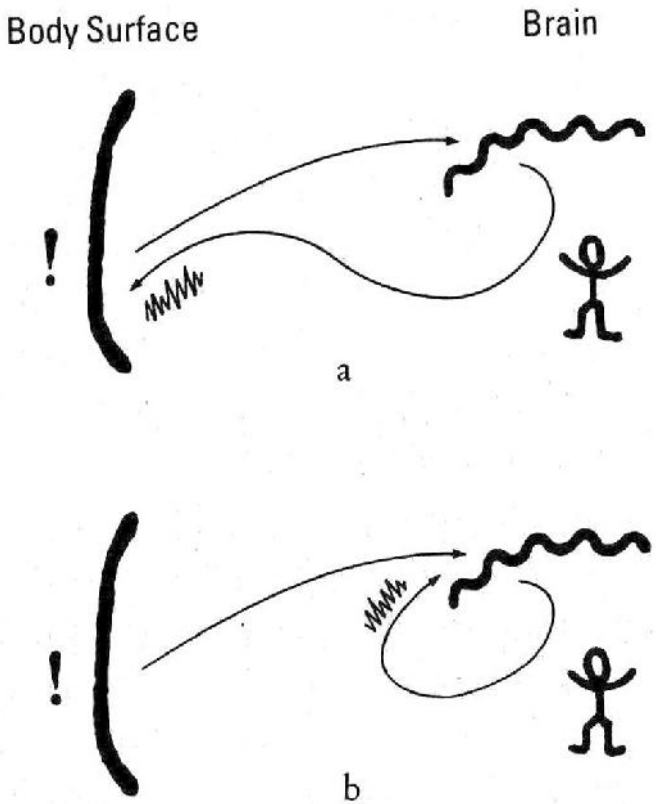


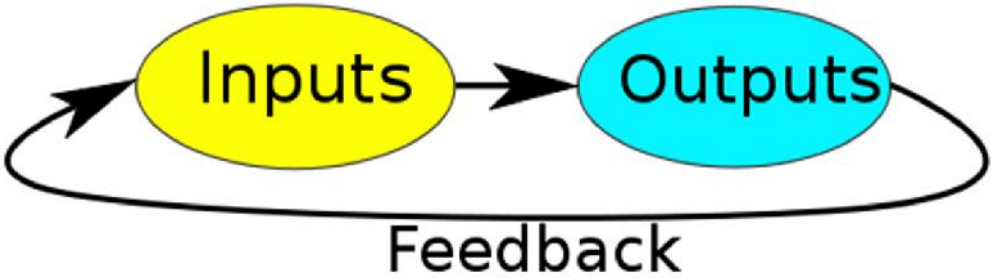
red sensation

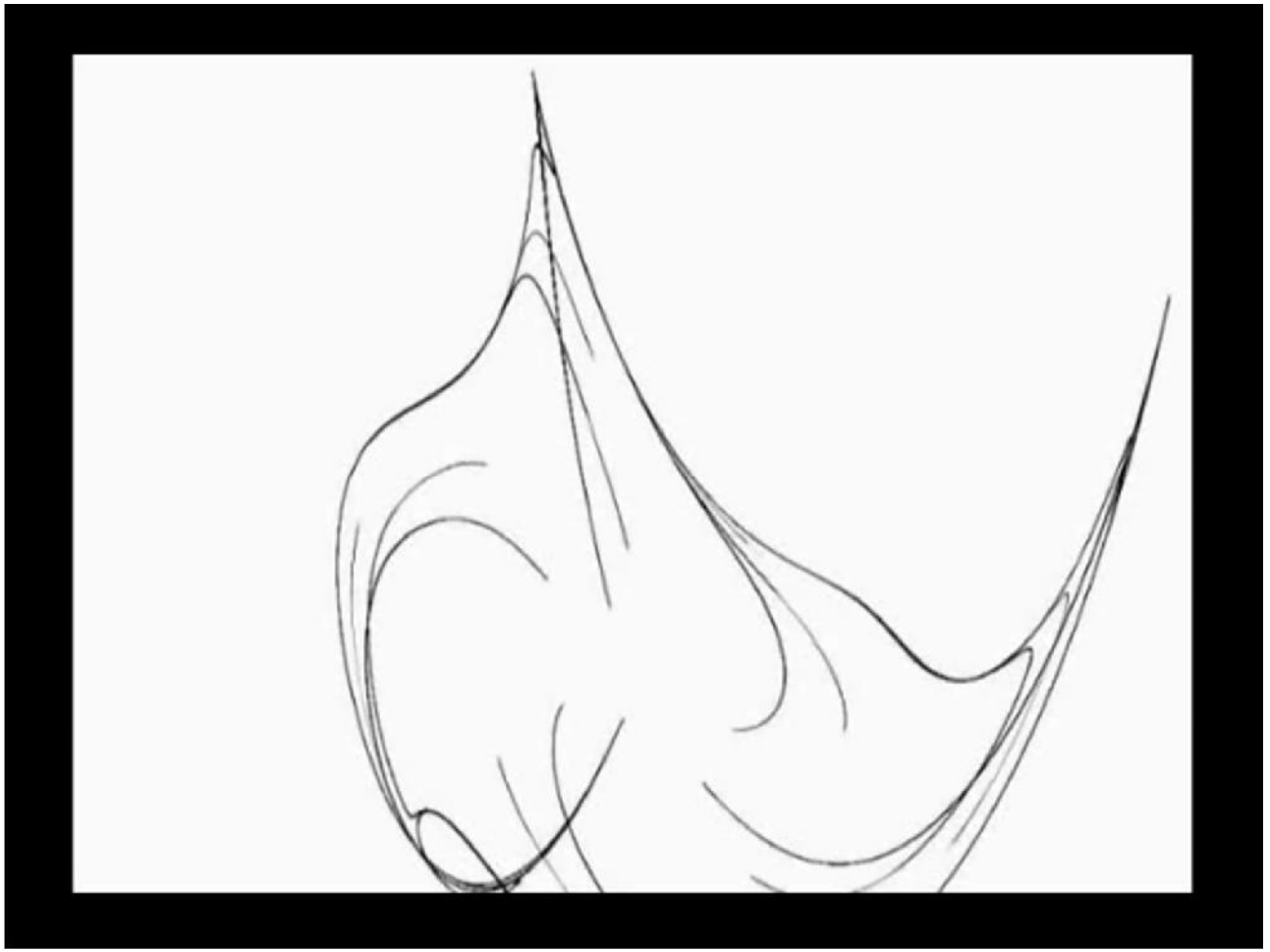
redding



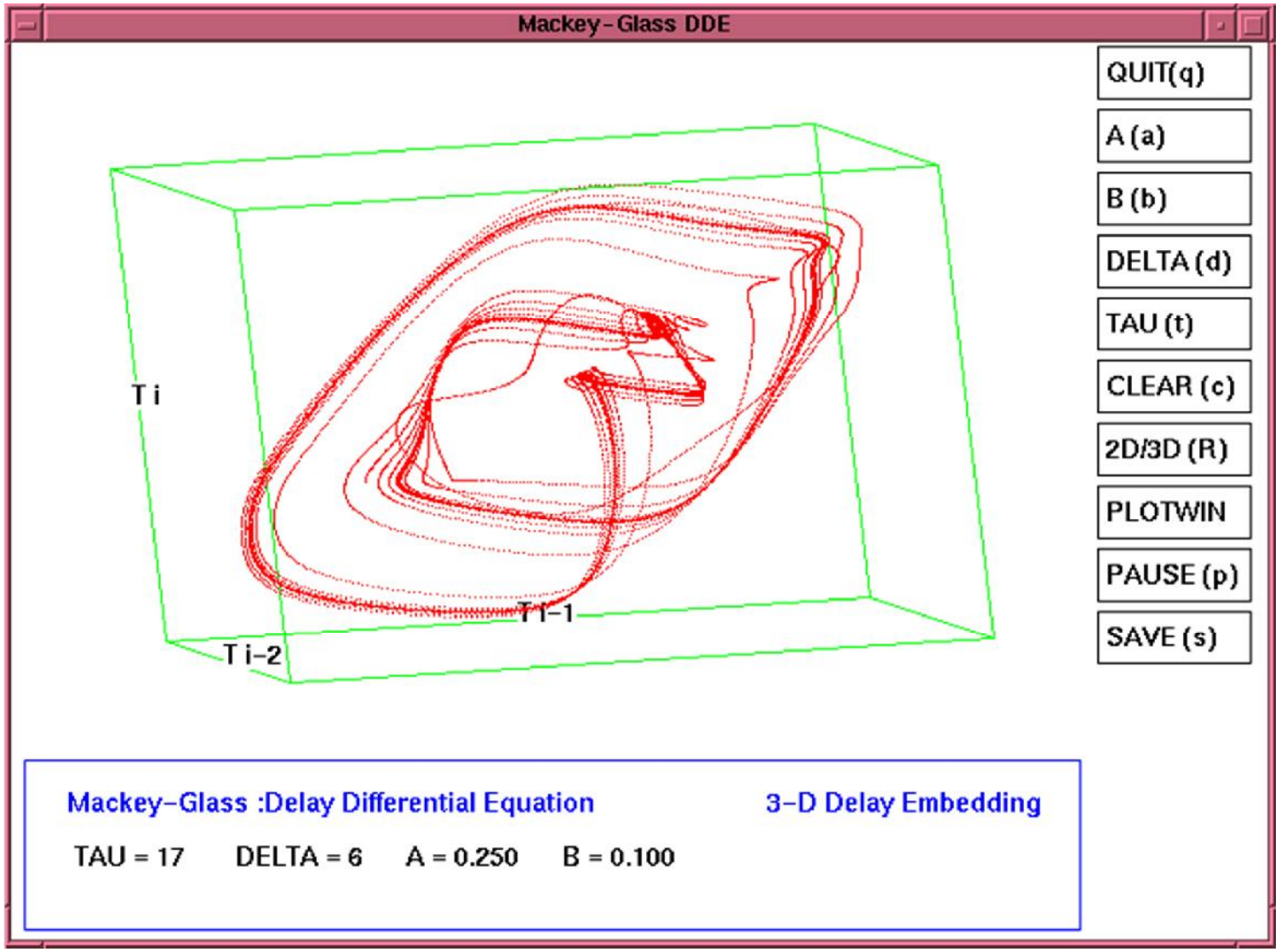
phenomenal
red sensation


Body Surface
Brain
!
a
!
b


Inputs
Outputs
Feedback

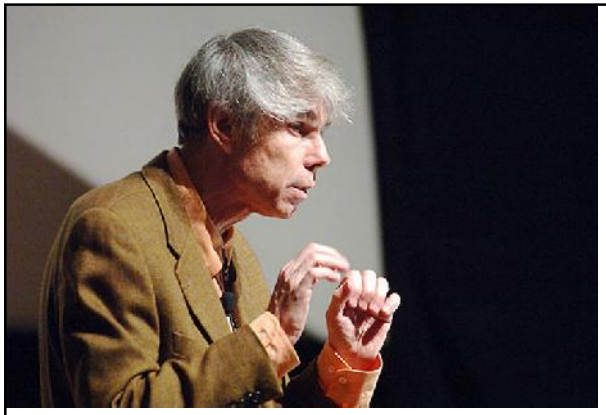


A “strange attractor” developing in a feedback loop



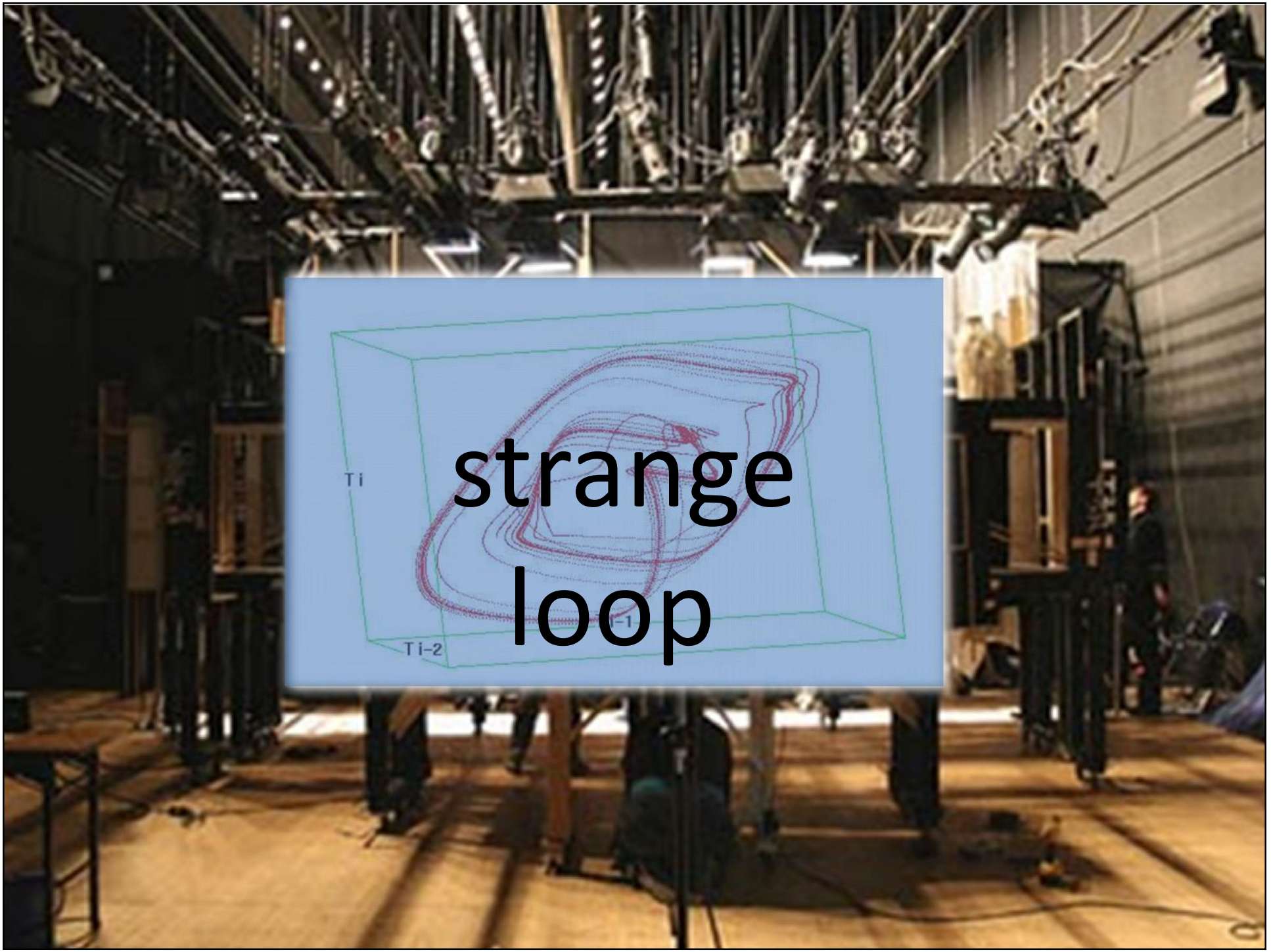
A typical discrete delay differential attractor

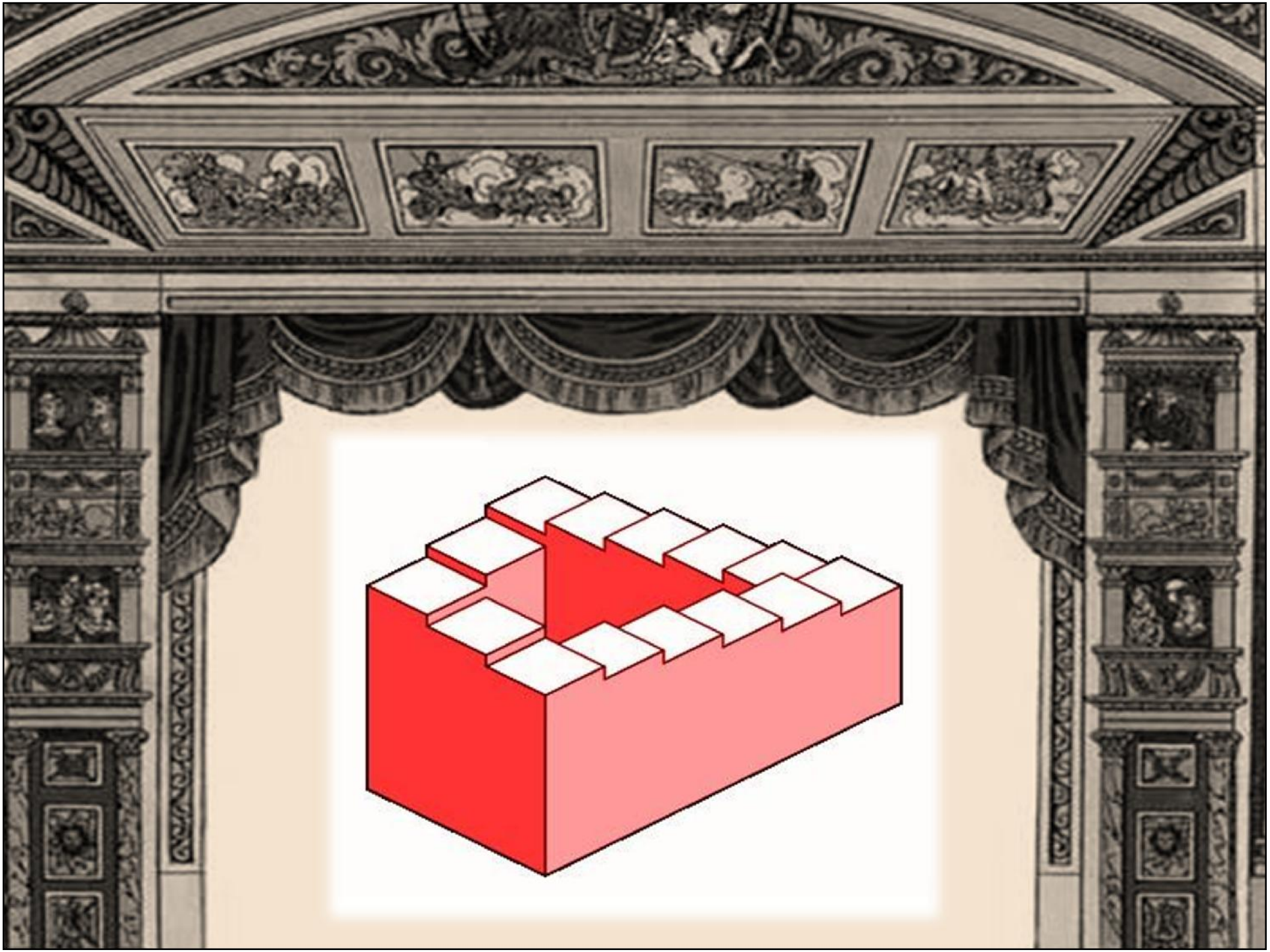
THE NIGHTINGALE.



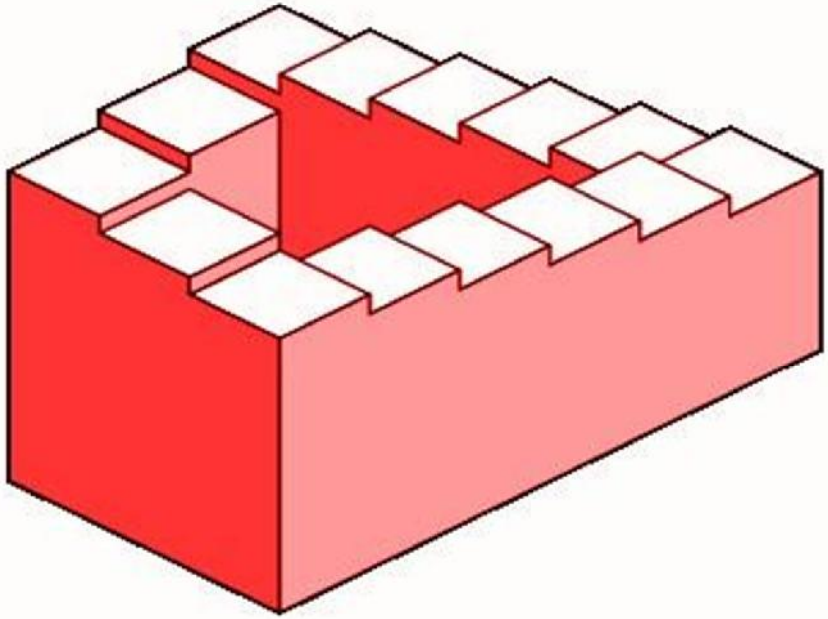
Douglas Hofstadter:

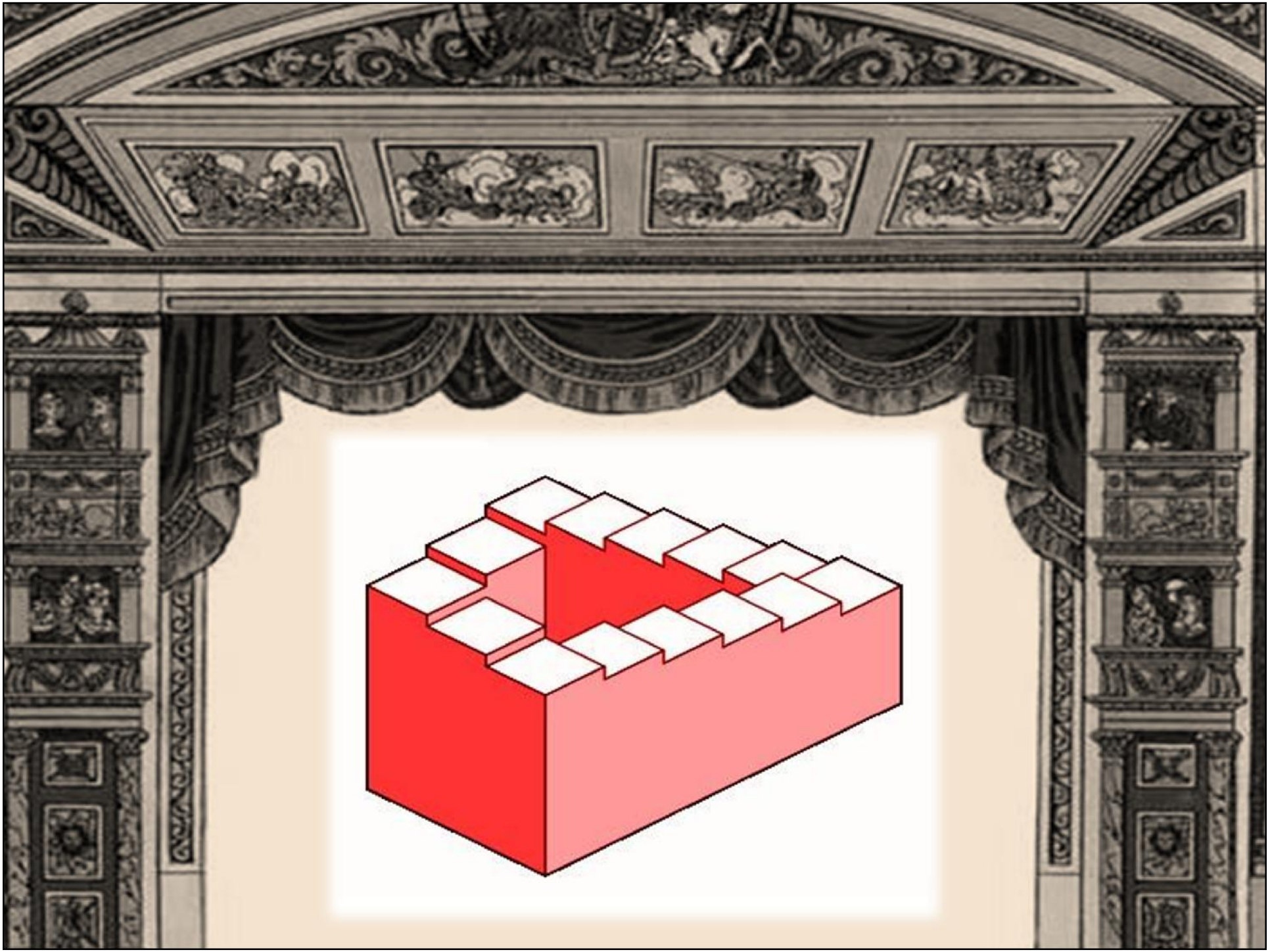
In the series of stages that constitute the cycling-around, there is a shift from one level of abstraction to another, and yet somehow the successive ‘upward’ shifts turn out to give rise to a closed cycle... Despite one's sense of departing ever further from one's origin, one winds up, to one's shock, exactly where one had started out.

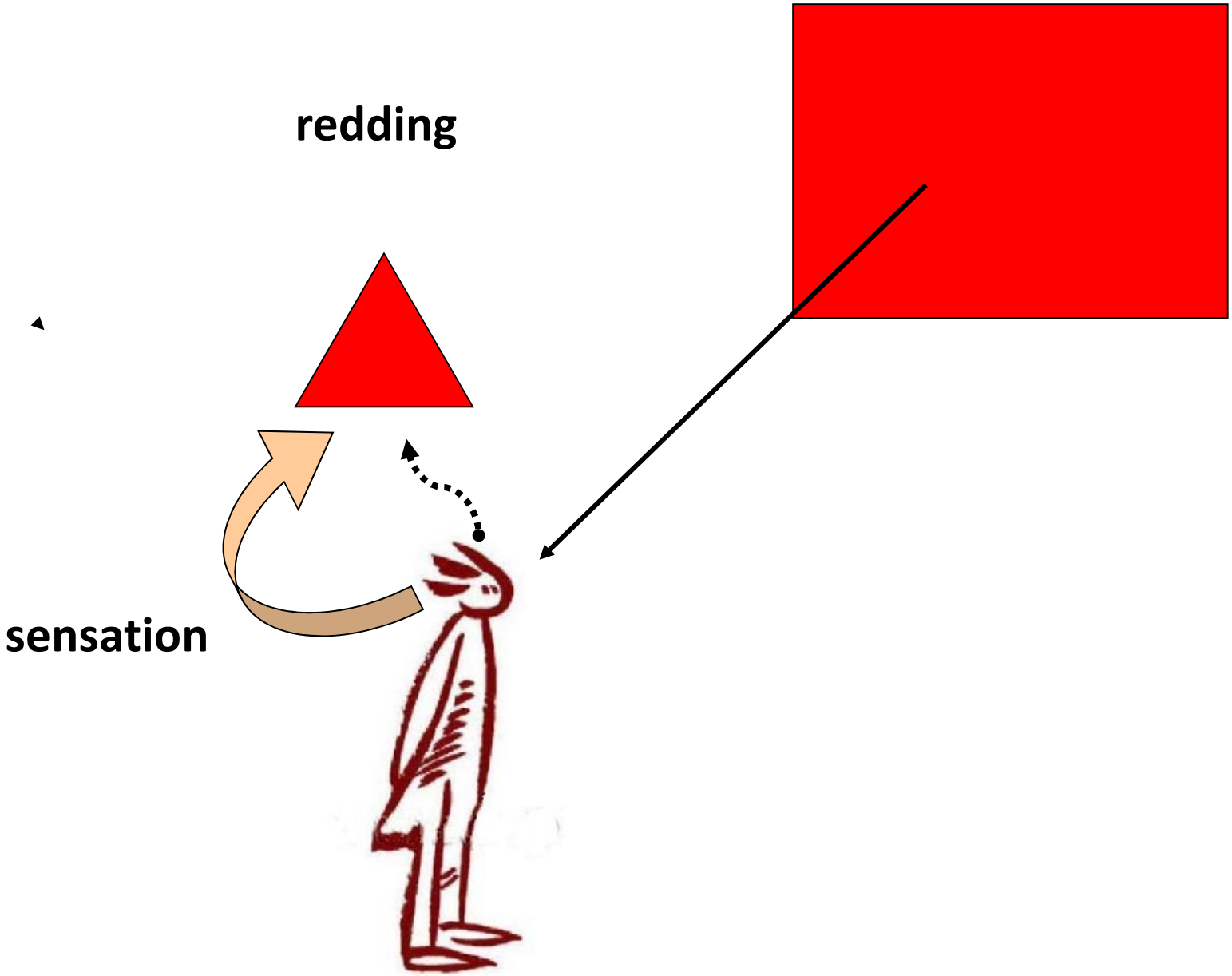

Ti
Ti-2
strange
loop



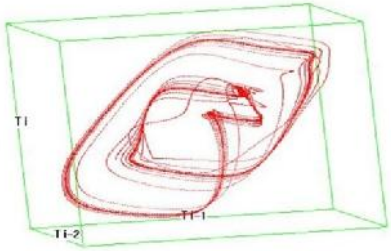
Shepard-Risset glissando

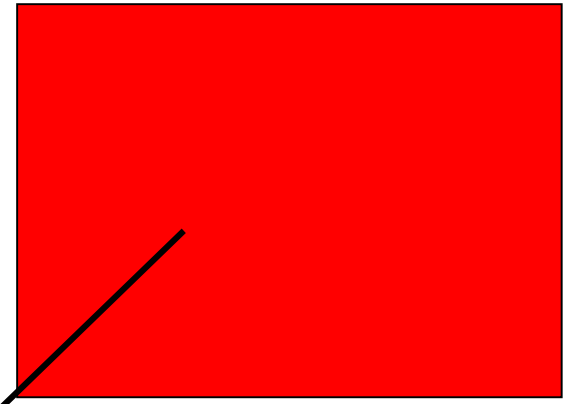


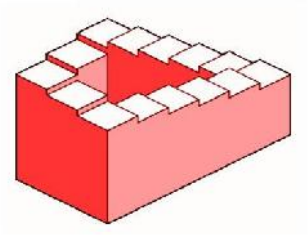



redding
sensation

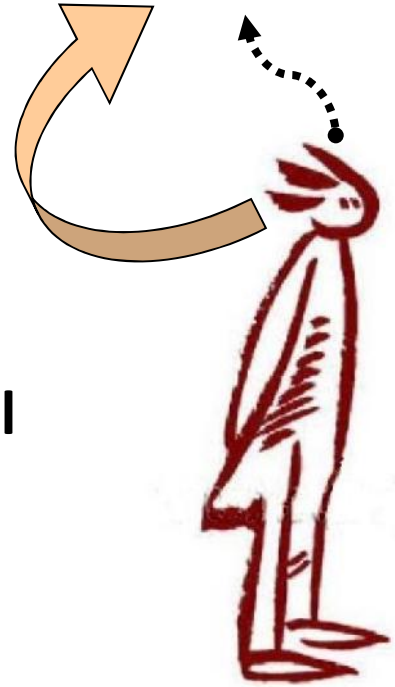
redding

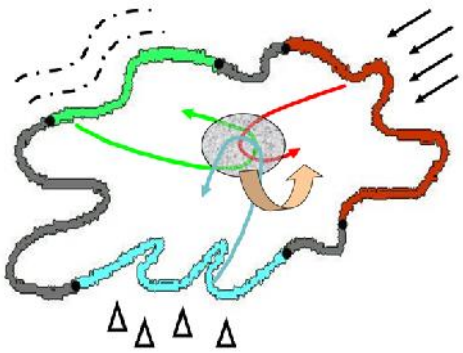


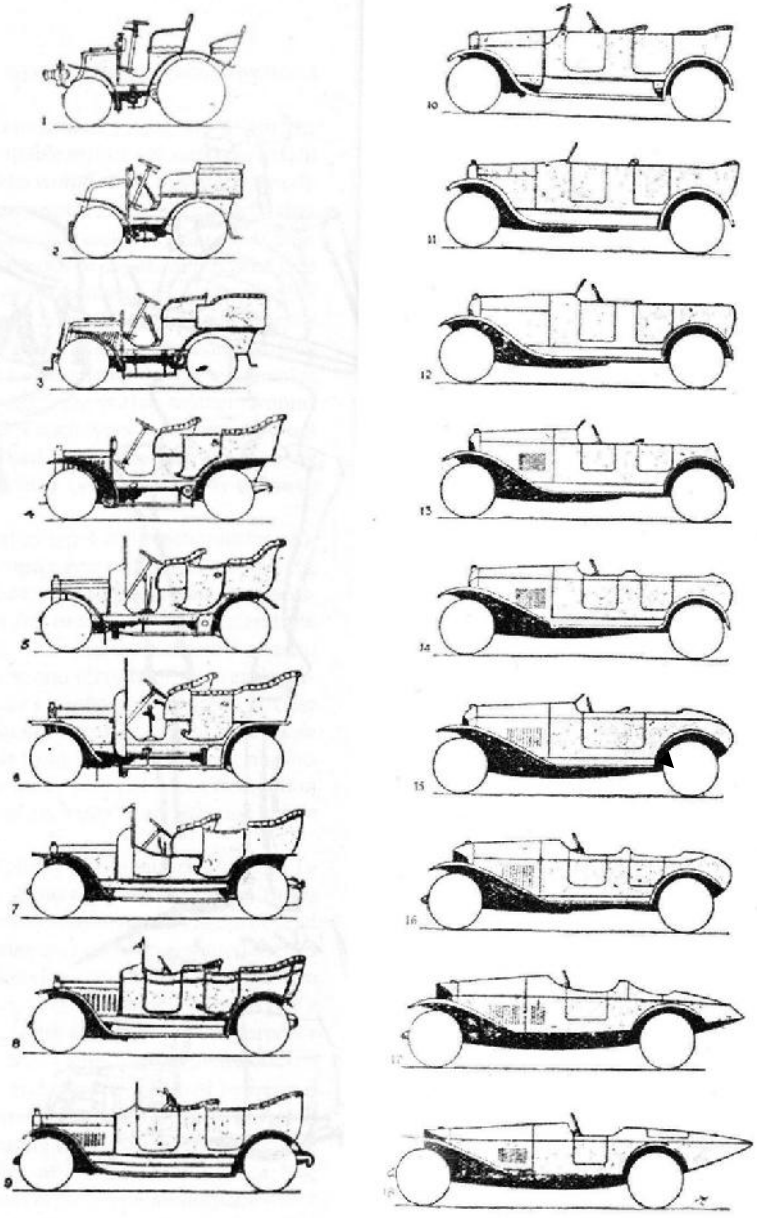


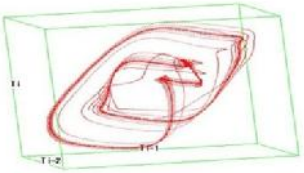


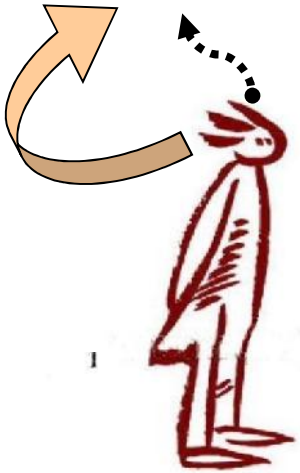
phenomenal
sensation



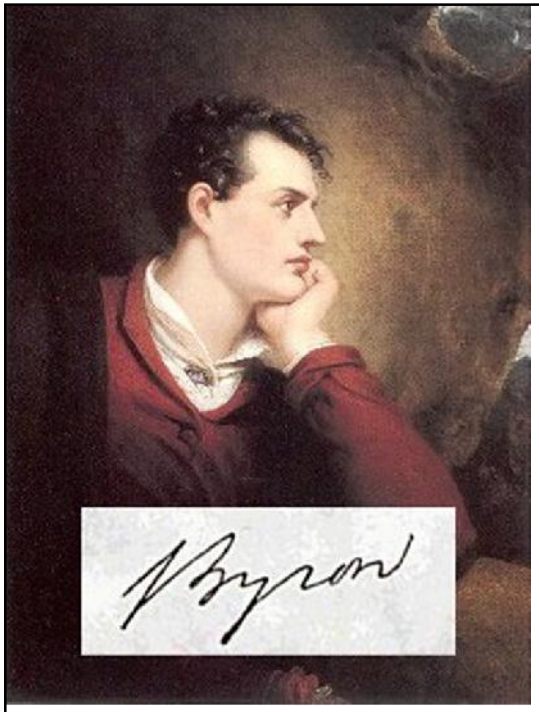






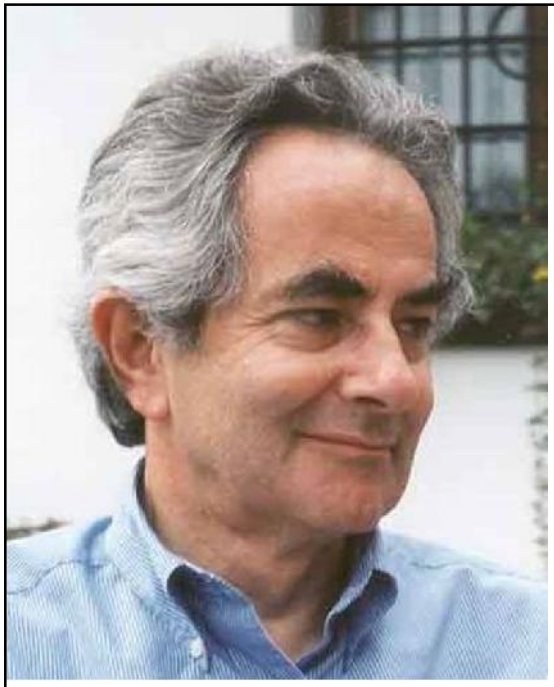


joie de vivre



Lord Byron:

The great object of life is sensation – to feel that we exist, even though in pain.



Tom Nagel:

There are elements which, if added to one’s experience, make life better; there are other elements which, if added to one’s experience make life worse. But what remains when these are set aside is not merely *neutral*: it is emphatically positive. . . The additional positive weight is supplied by experience itself, rather than by any of its contents.

John Keats, 1819:

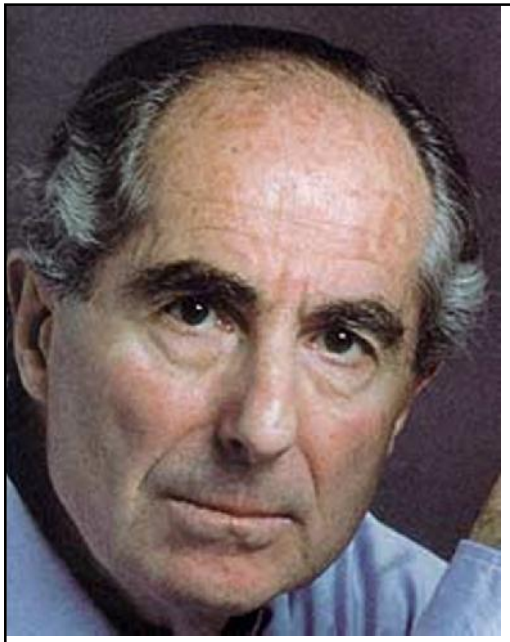
Talking of Pleasure, this moment I am writing with one hand, and with the other holding to my Mouth a Nectarine - good god how fine - It went down soft pulpy, slushy, oozy - all its delicious plumpness melted down my throat like a large beatified Strawberry.

Albert Camus, *Nuptials at Tipasa*, 1938:

How many hours I have spent crushing absinthe leaves, caressing ruins, trying to match my breathing with the world's tumultuous sighs! Deep among wild scents and concerts of somnolent insects, I open my eyes and heart to the unbearable grandeur of this heat-soaked sky.

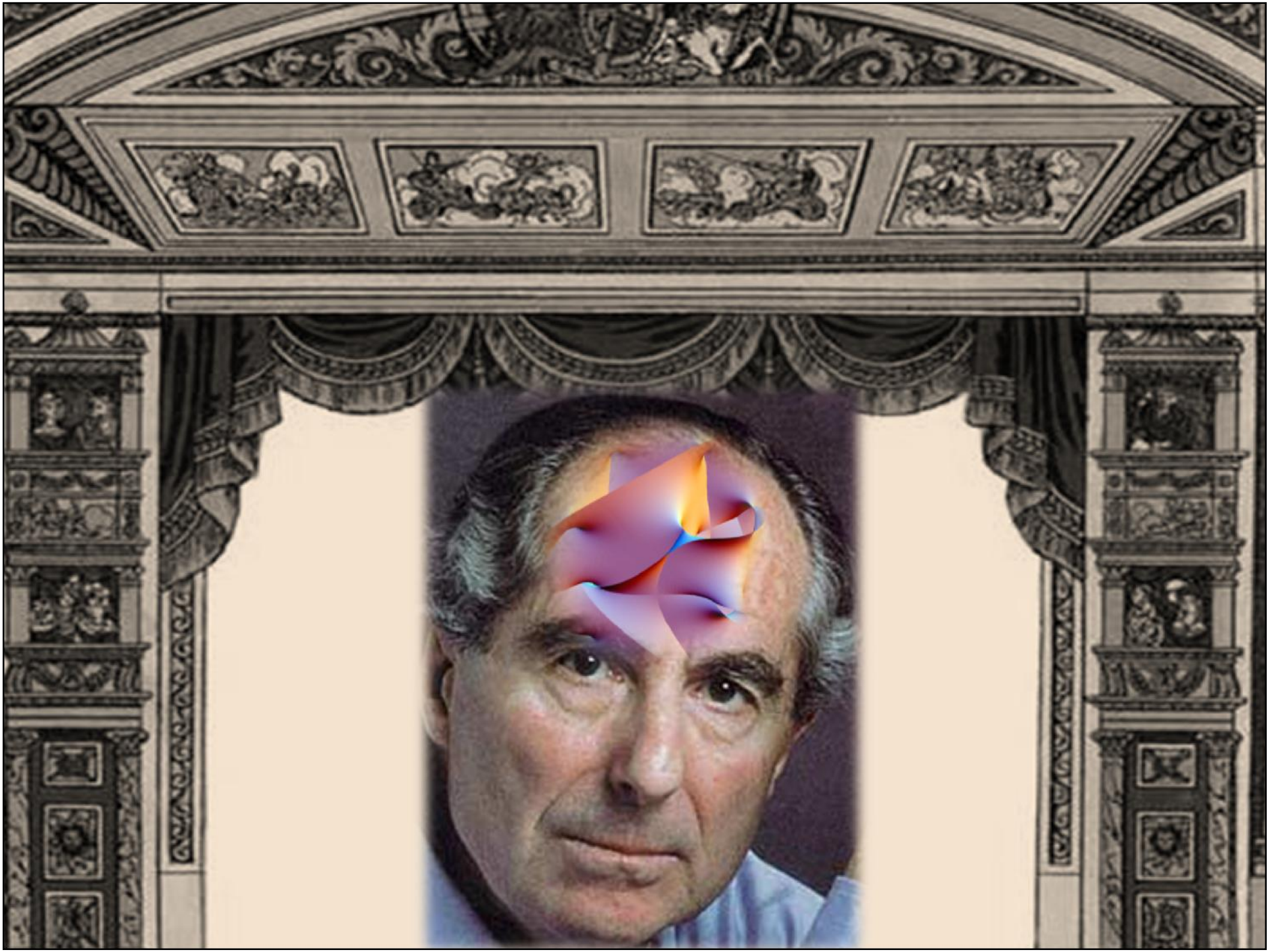
Marc Bekoff:

I once saw a young elk run across a snowfield, jump in the air and twist his body while in flight, stop, catch his breath and do it again and again. Buffalo have been seen playfully running onto and sliding across ice, excitedly bellowing as they do so.

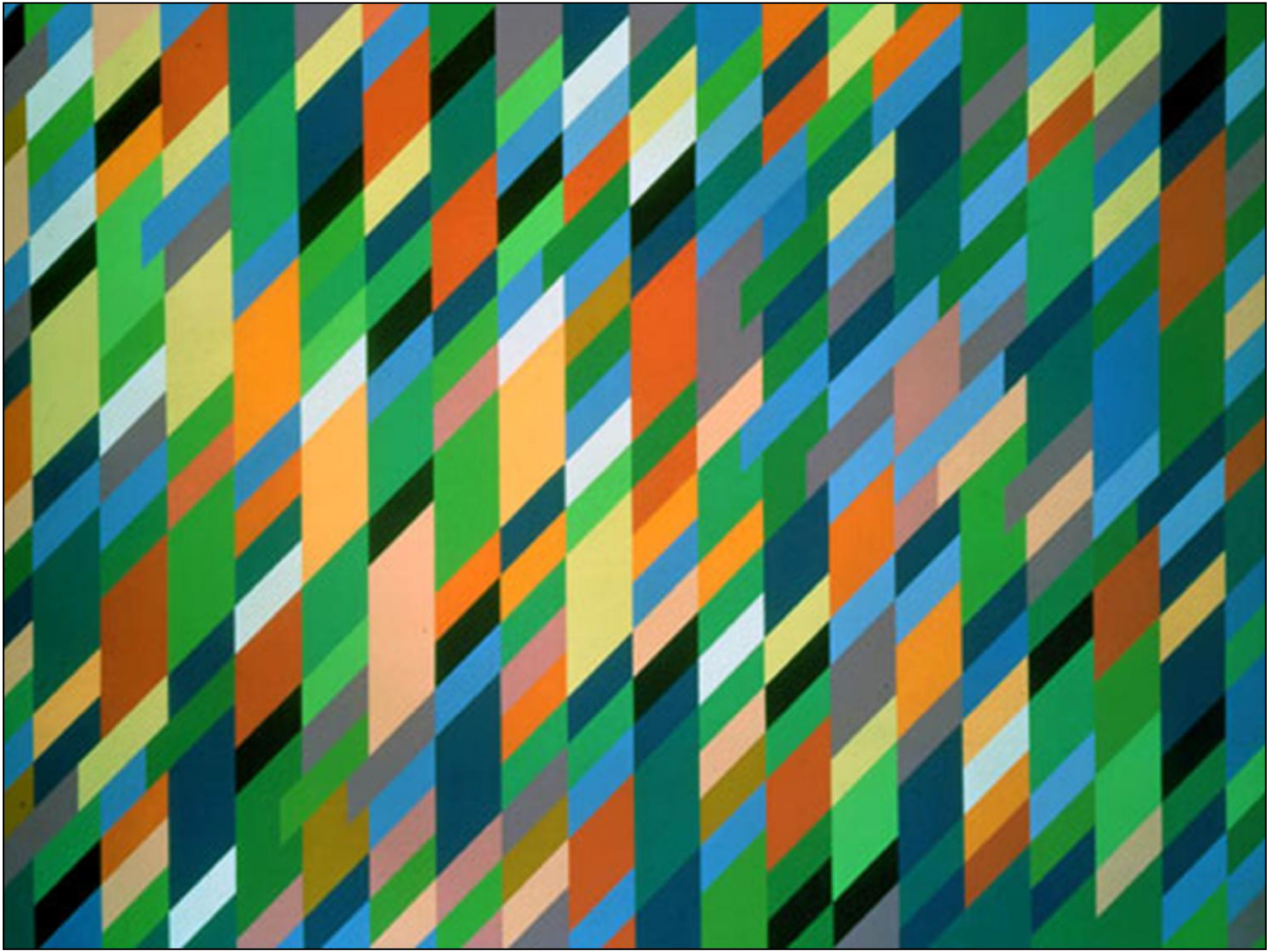


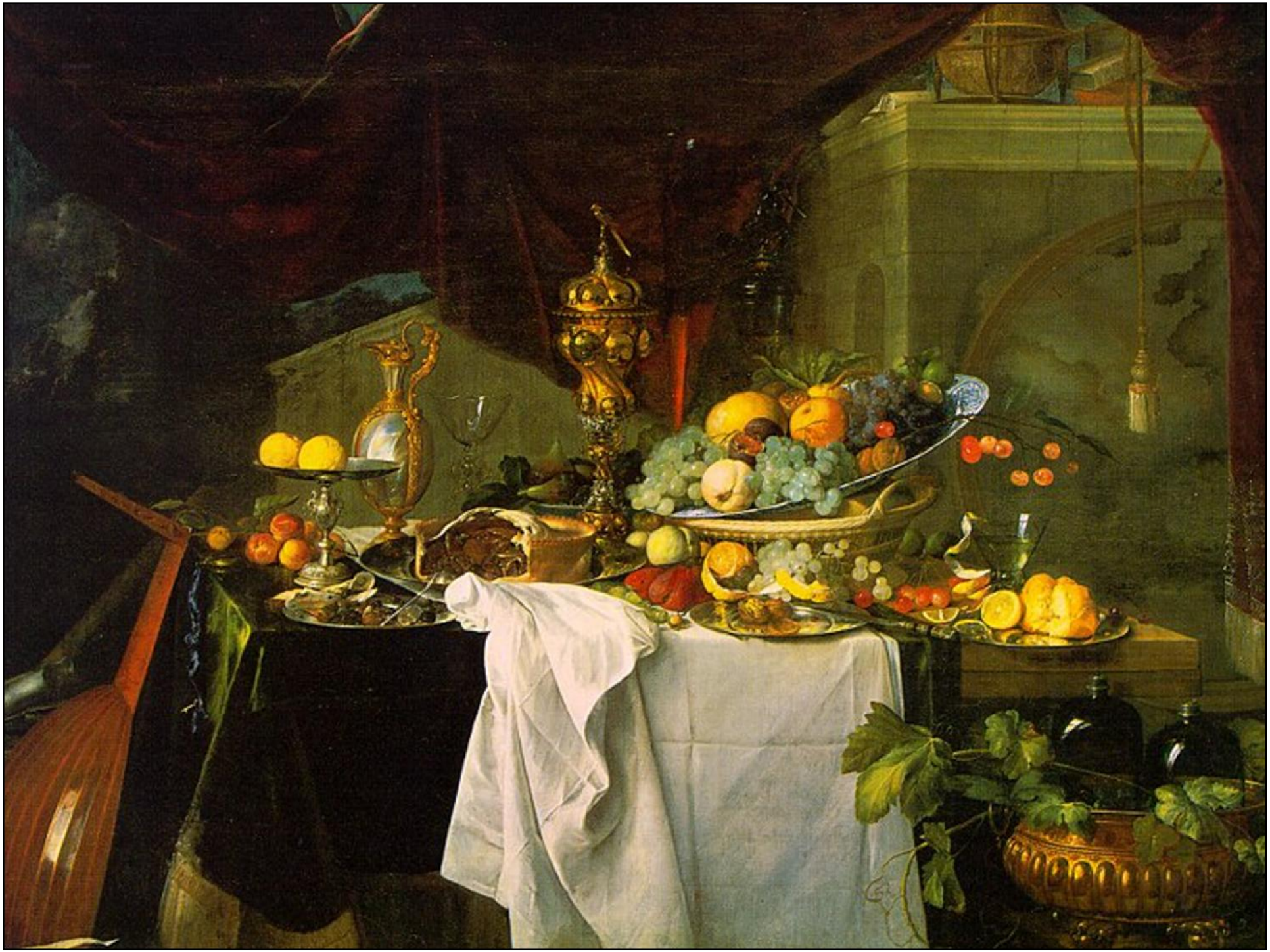
Philip Roth, 2005:

“I’m afraid of dying. . . I’m 72. What am I afraid of? . . . Oblivion. Of not being alive, quite simply, of not feeling life, not smelling it.”



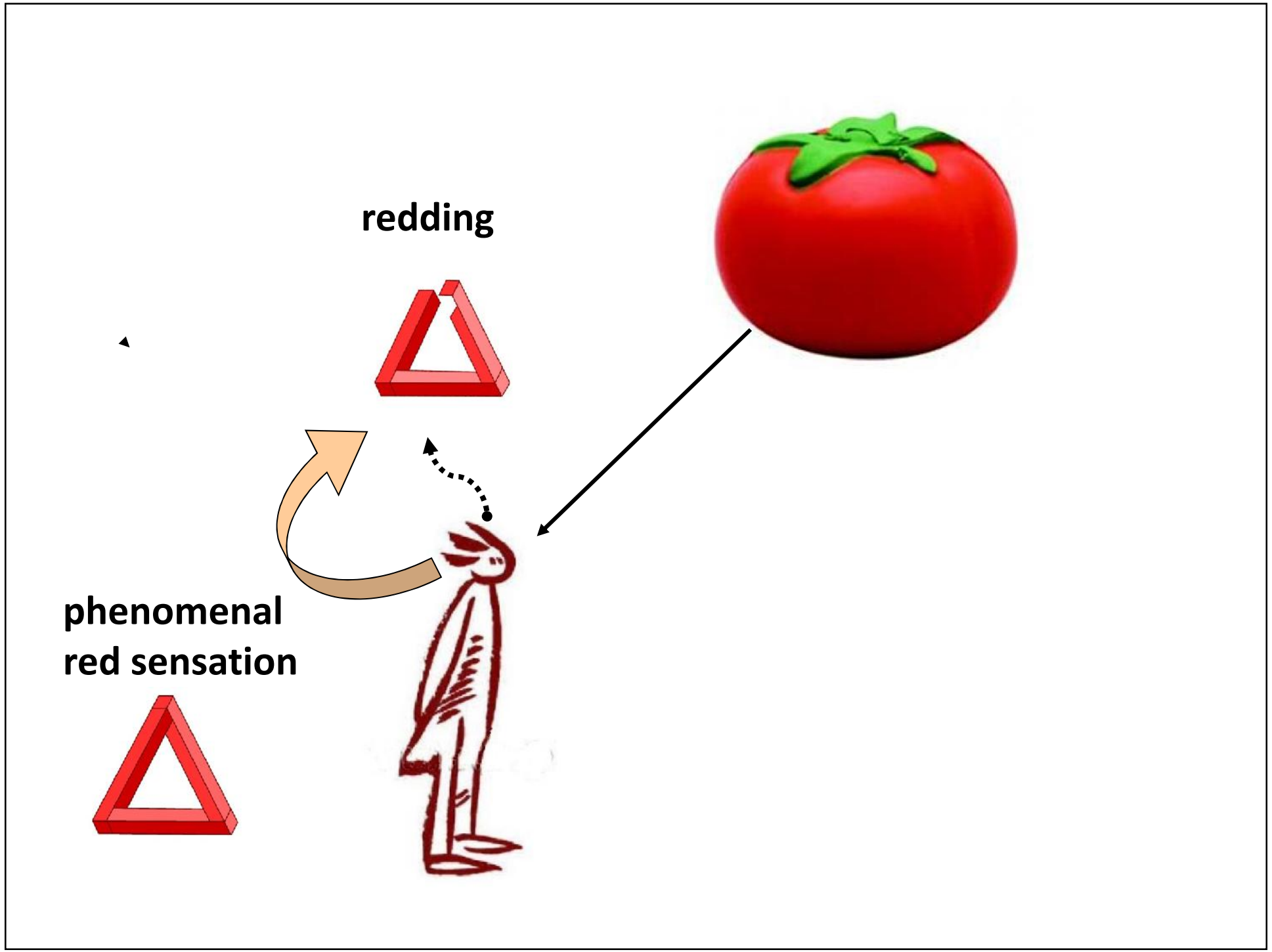
enchanting the world

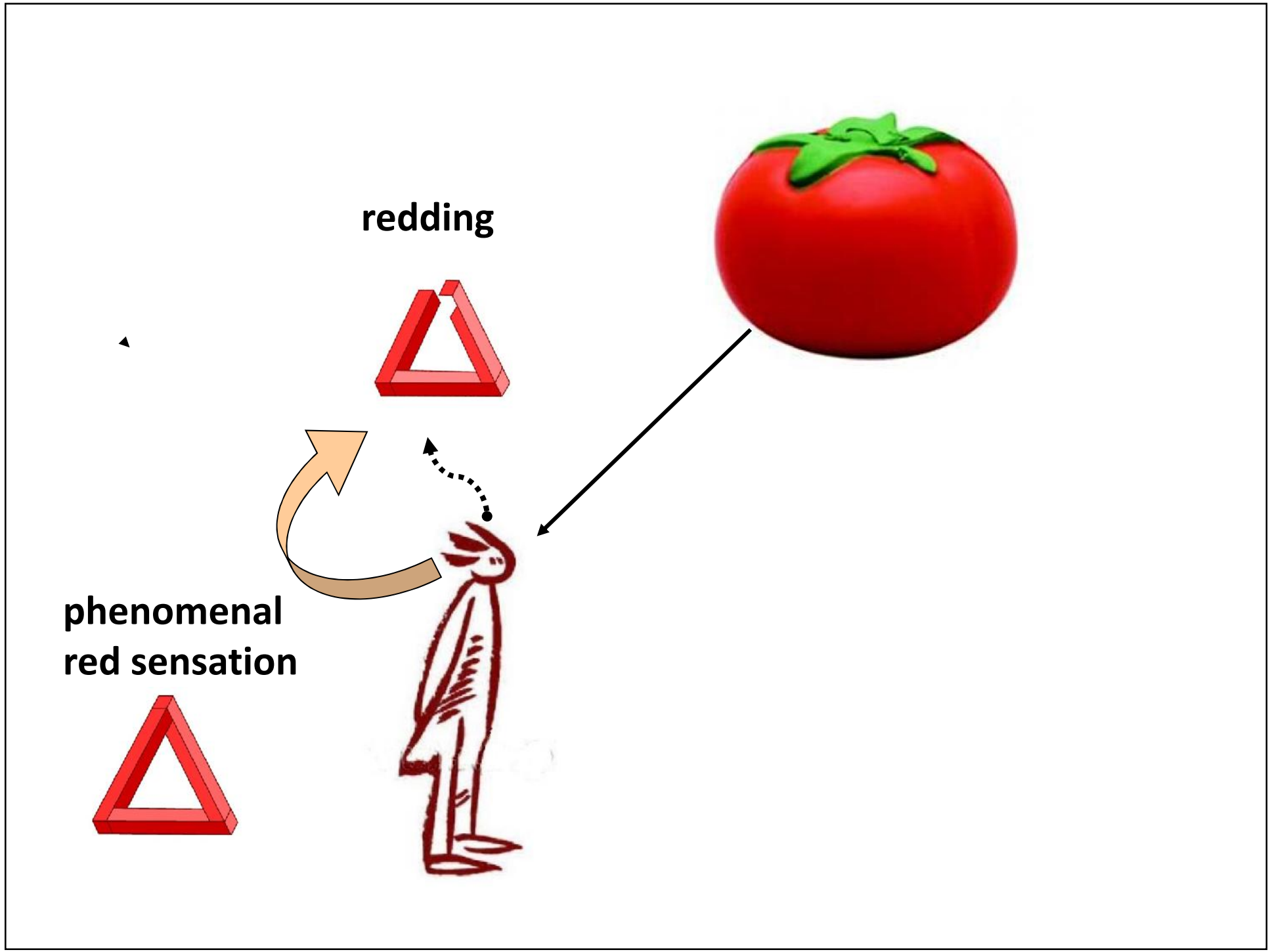




Rupert Brooke:

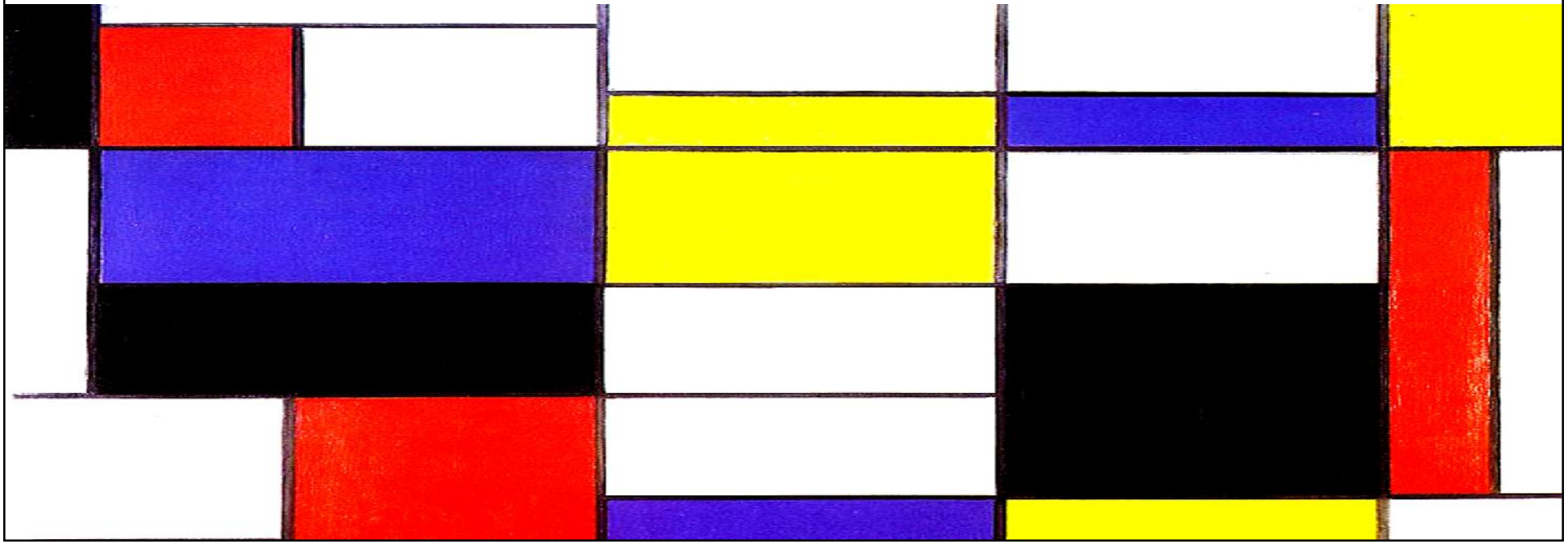
These I have loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;
The good smell of old clothes; and other such –

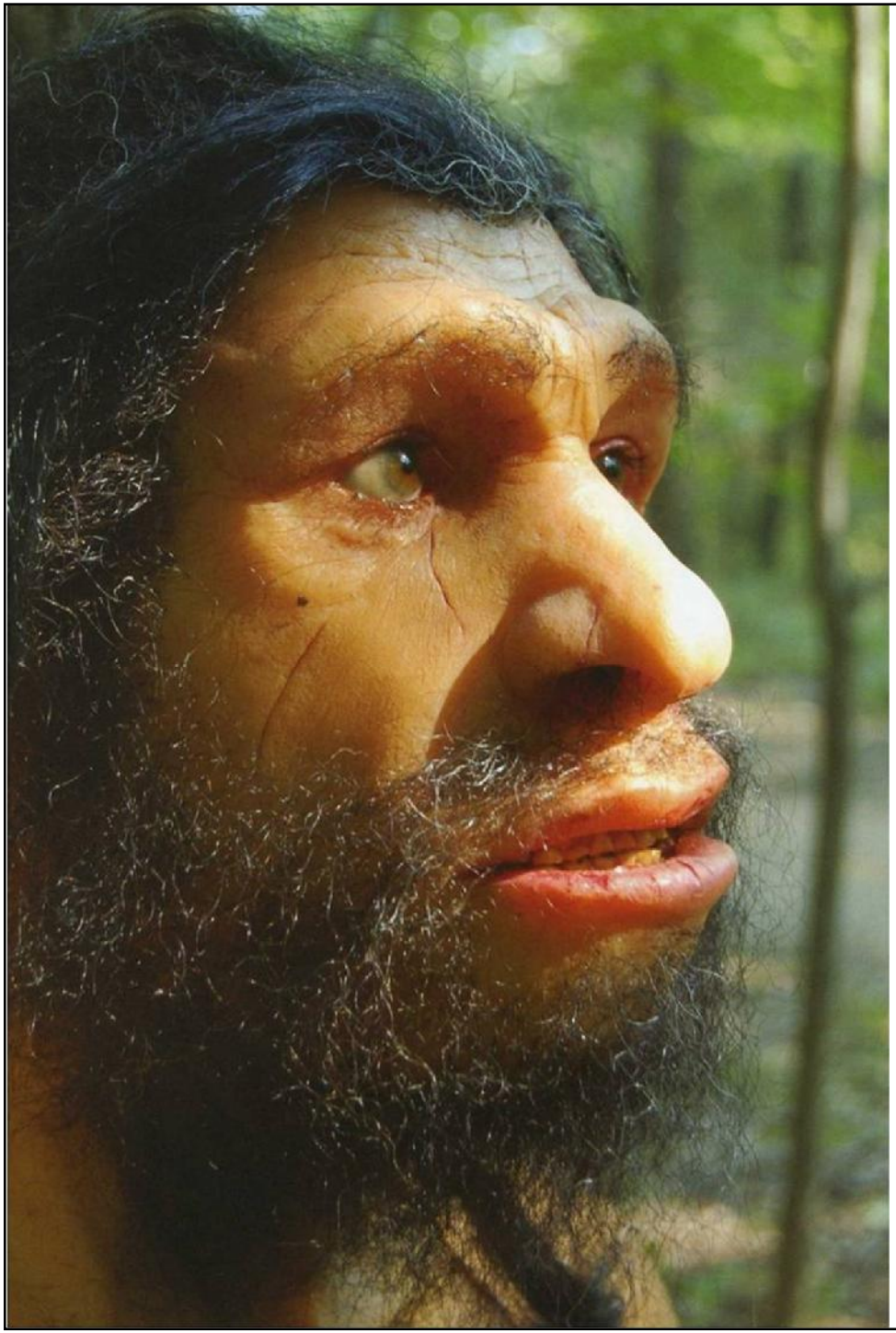

redding
phenomenal
red sensation


redding
phenomenal
red sensation

Aldous Huxley:

The books with which my study walls were lined glowed with brighter colours, a profounder significance. Red books, like rubies; emerald books; books bound in white jade; books of agate; of aquamarine, of yellow topaz. . .

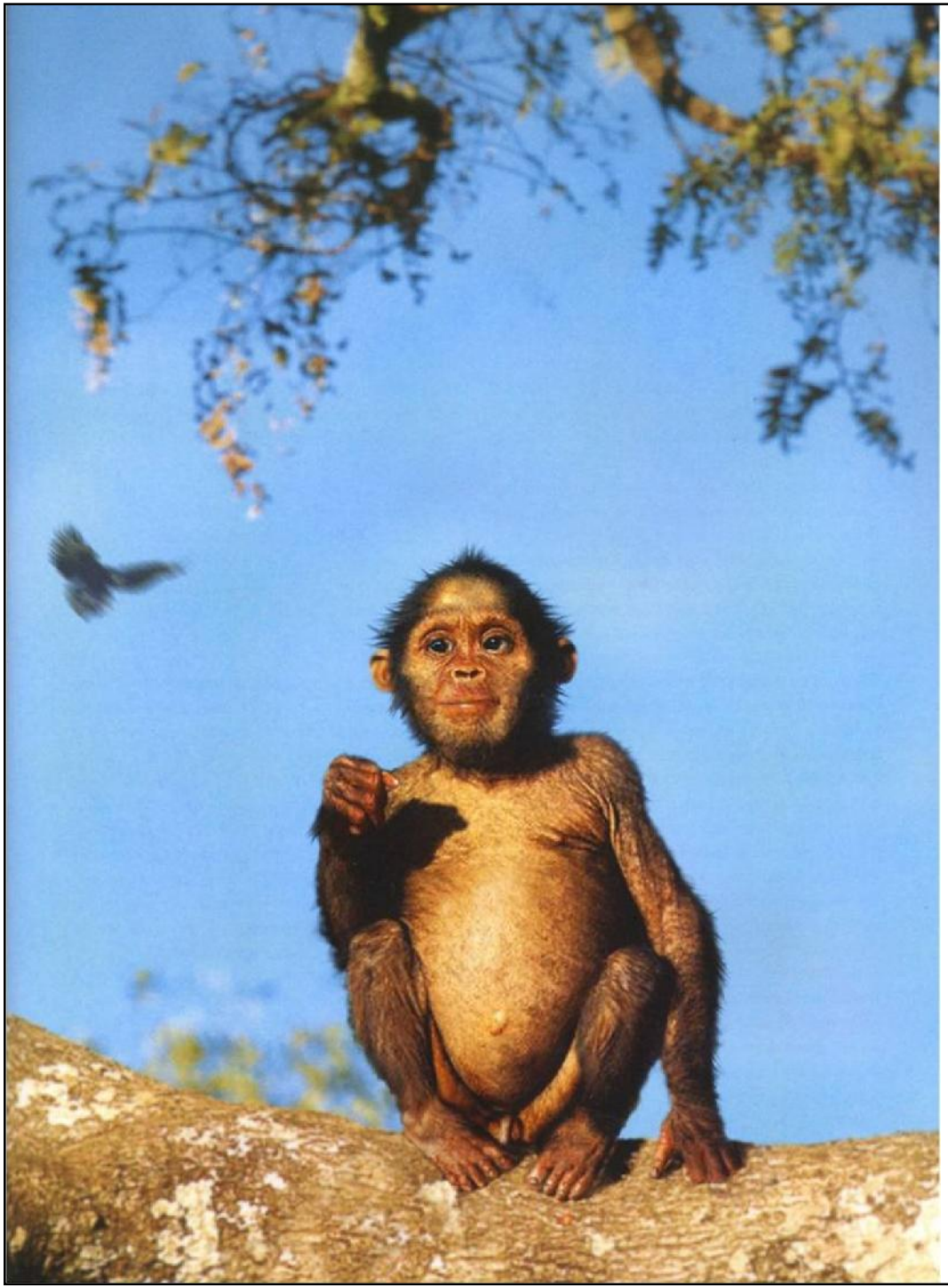




“The play of light and shadow between tree, sun and sky fills this Neanderthal man with a sense of awe”

Rupert Brooke:

In a flicker of sunlight on a blank wall, or a reach of muddy pavement, or smoke from an engine at night, there's a sudden significance and importance and inspiration that makes the breath stop. It's a feeling that has amazing results. I suppose my occupation is being in love with the universe.



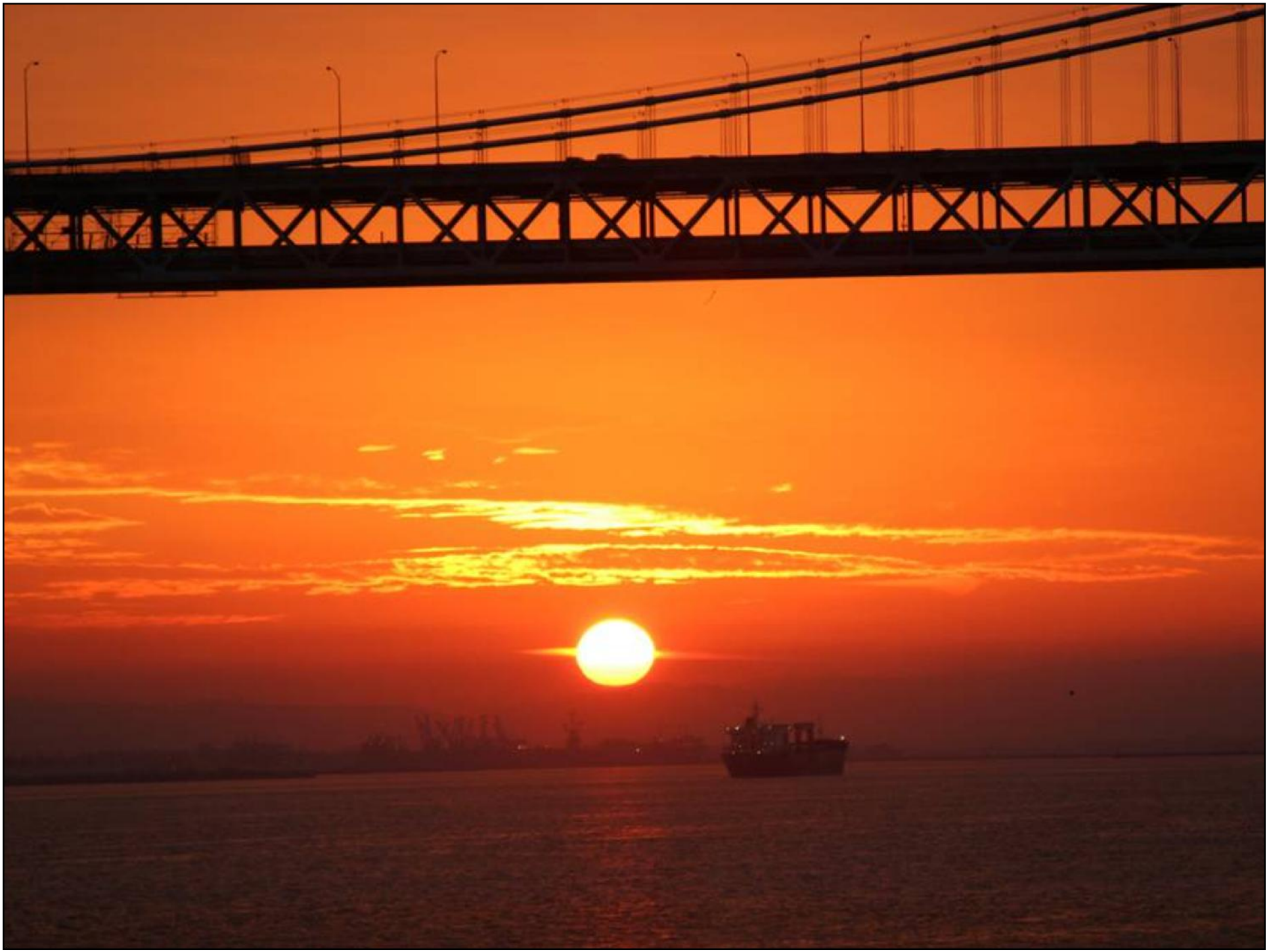
"A juvenile *Australopithecus africanus* greets a new morning two and a half million years ago"

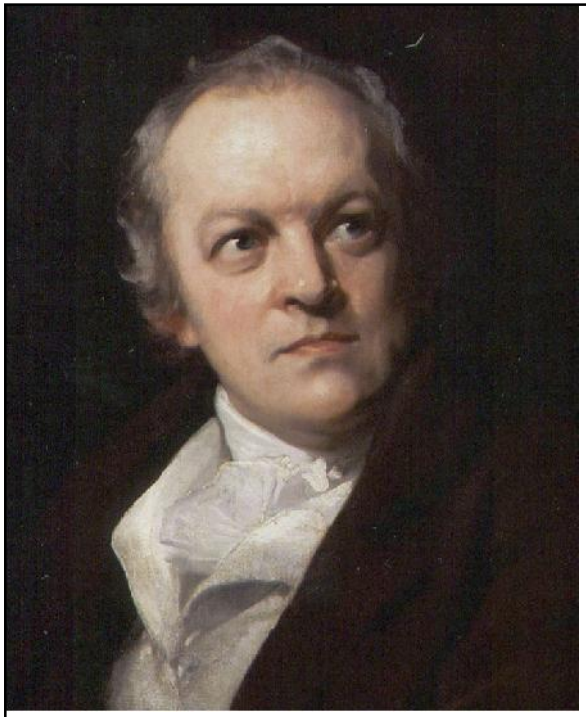
A.A.Milne, *Spring Morning:*

Where am I going? I don't quite know.
Down to the stream where the king-cups grow.
Up on the hill where the pine-trees blow –
Anywhere, anywhere. I don't know.

Where am I going? The high rooks call:
“It’s awful fun to be born at all.”

self and soul





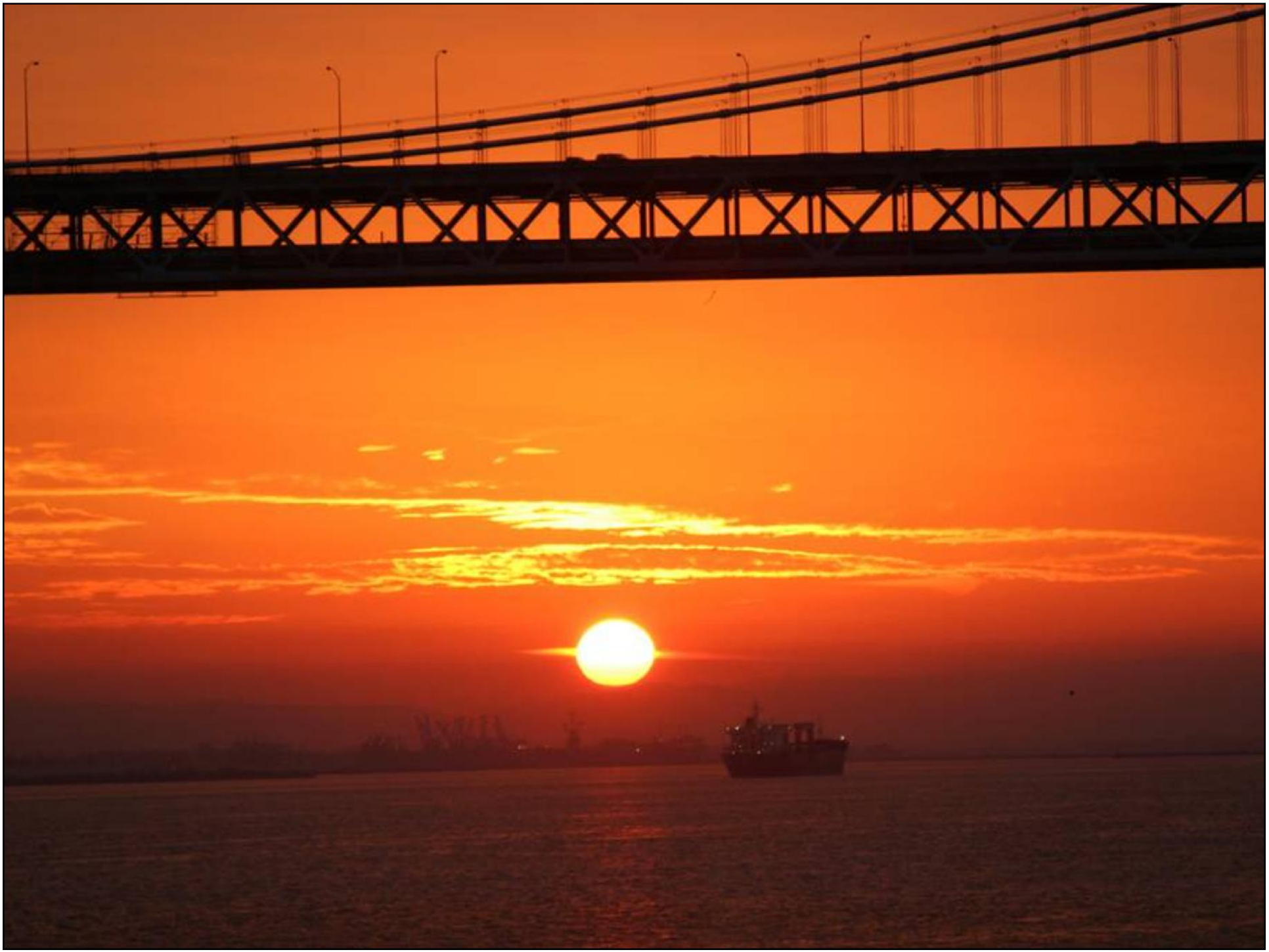
William Blake, 1810:

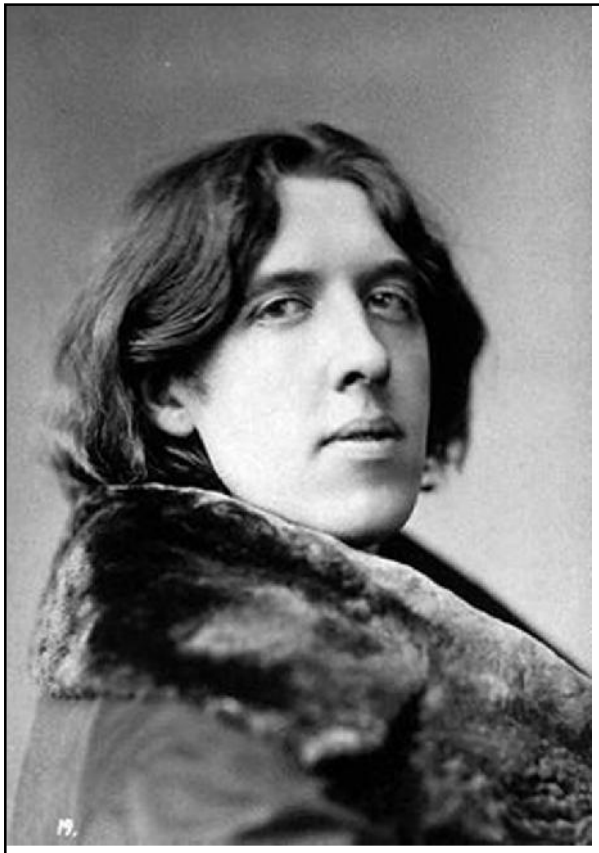
“When the sun rises do you not see a round disc of fire somewhat like a penny?" O no, no. I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty".

Thomas Traherne, 1670:

By the very right of
your senses you enjoy
the world. . .

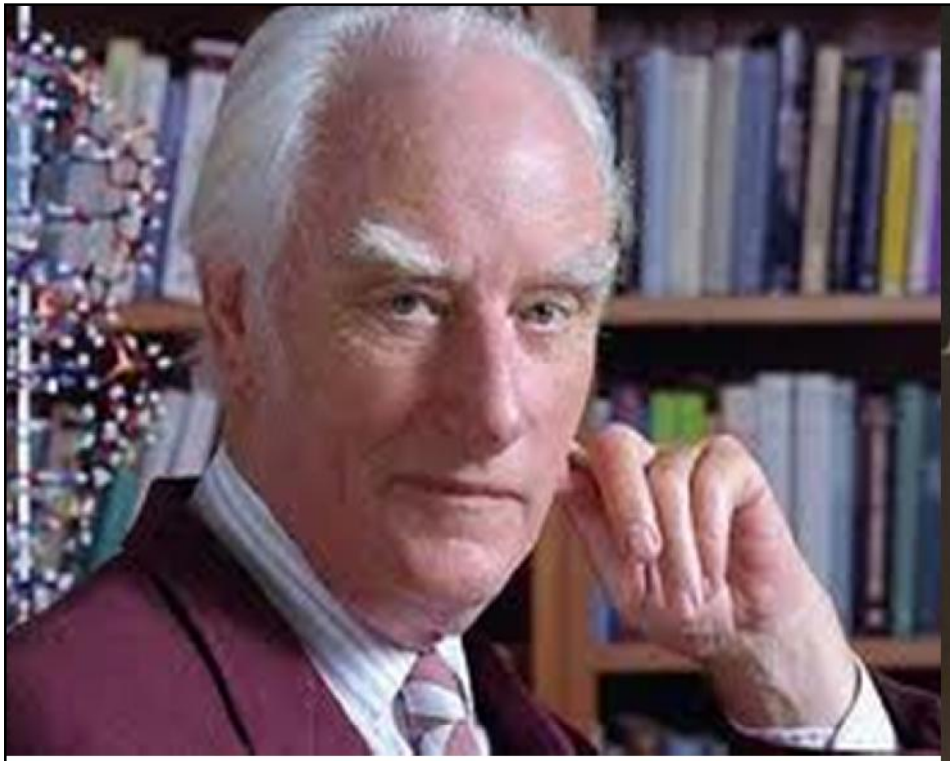
*Doth not the glory of
the sun pay tribute to
your sight?*



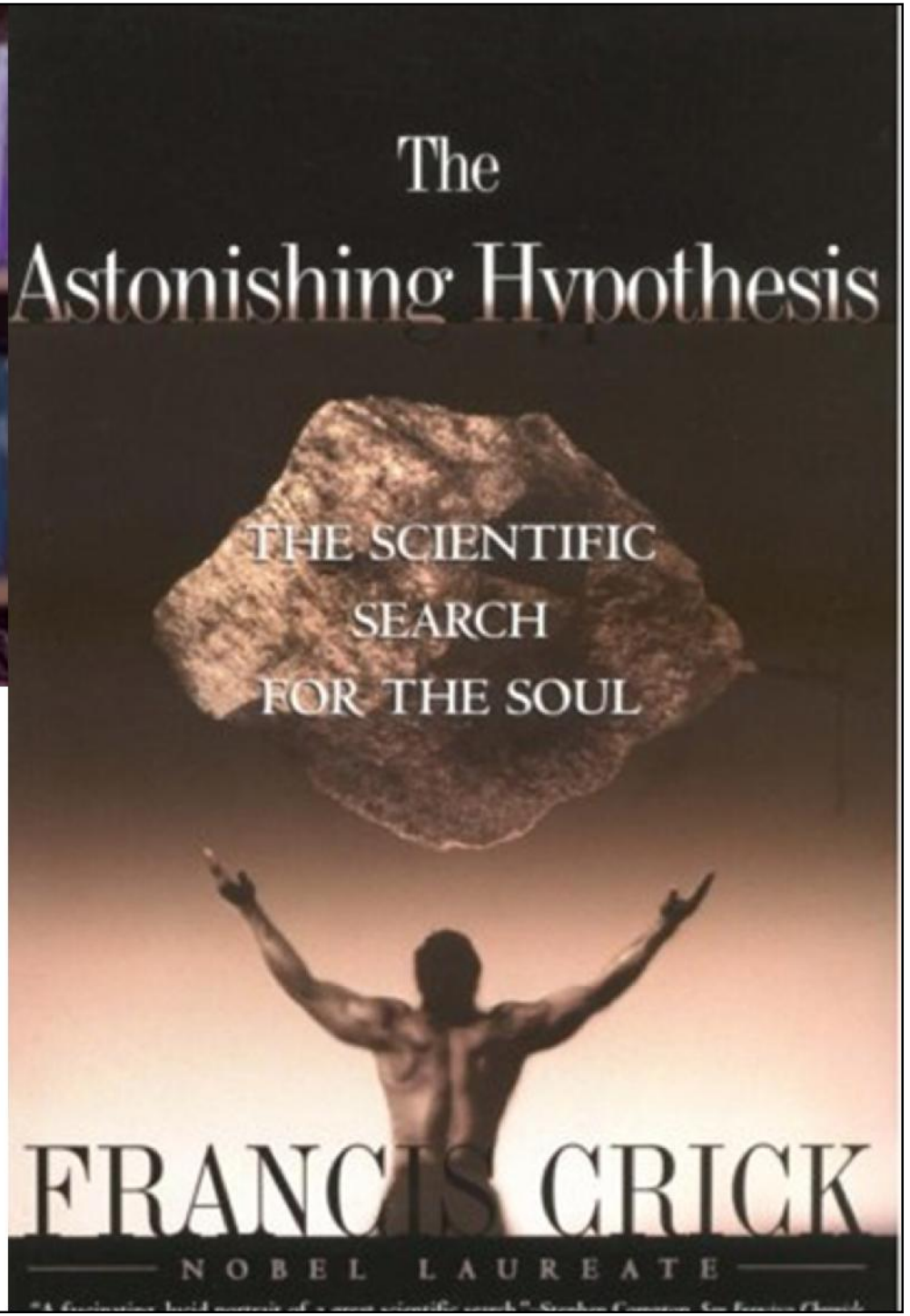


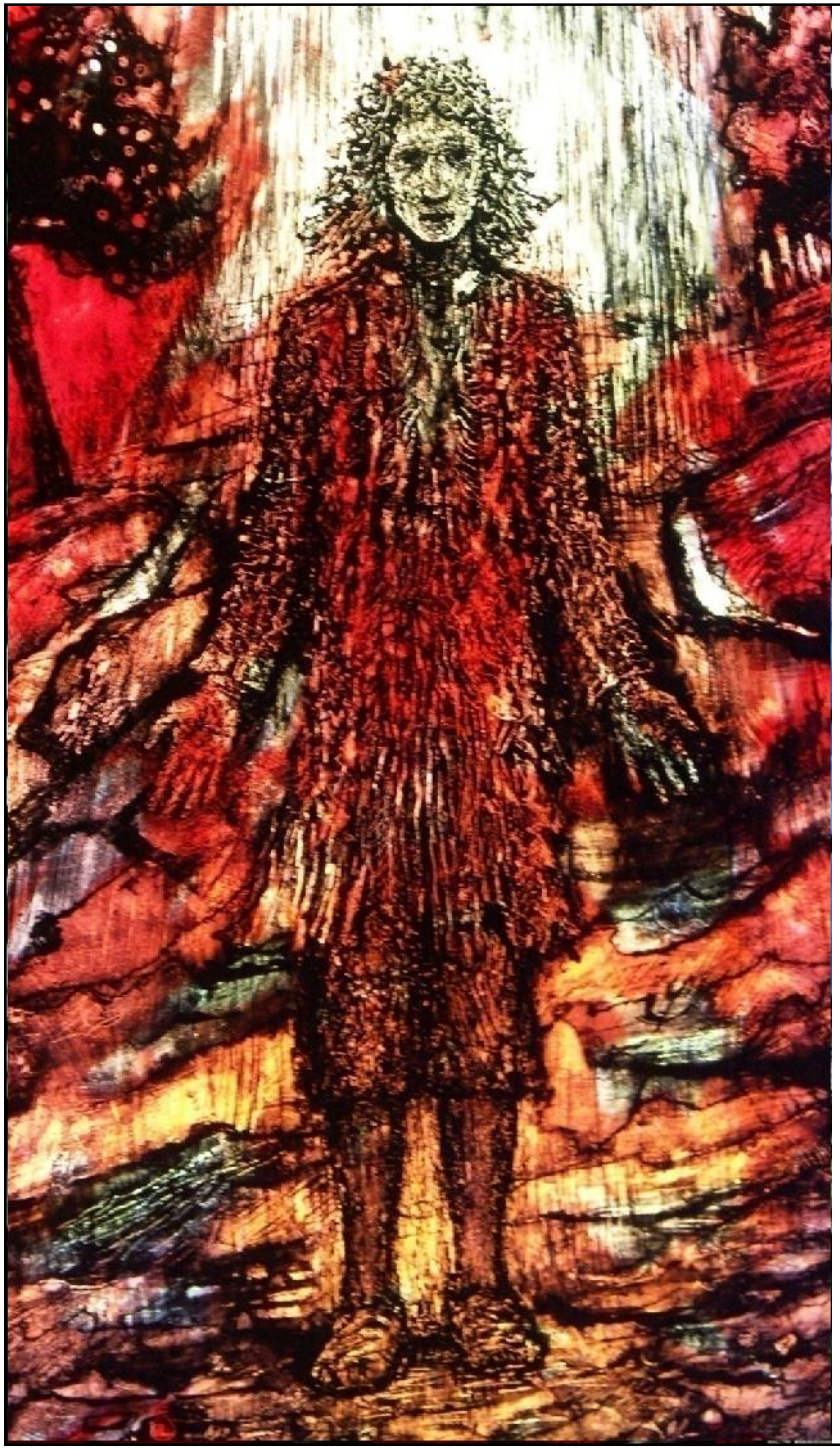
Oscar Wilde:

It is in the brain that everything takes place. . . It is in the brain that the poppy is red, that the apple is odorous, that the skylark sings.



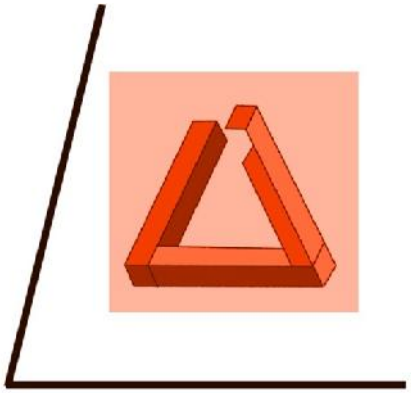
"The Astonishing Hypothesis is that 'You,' are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells."



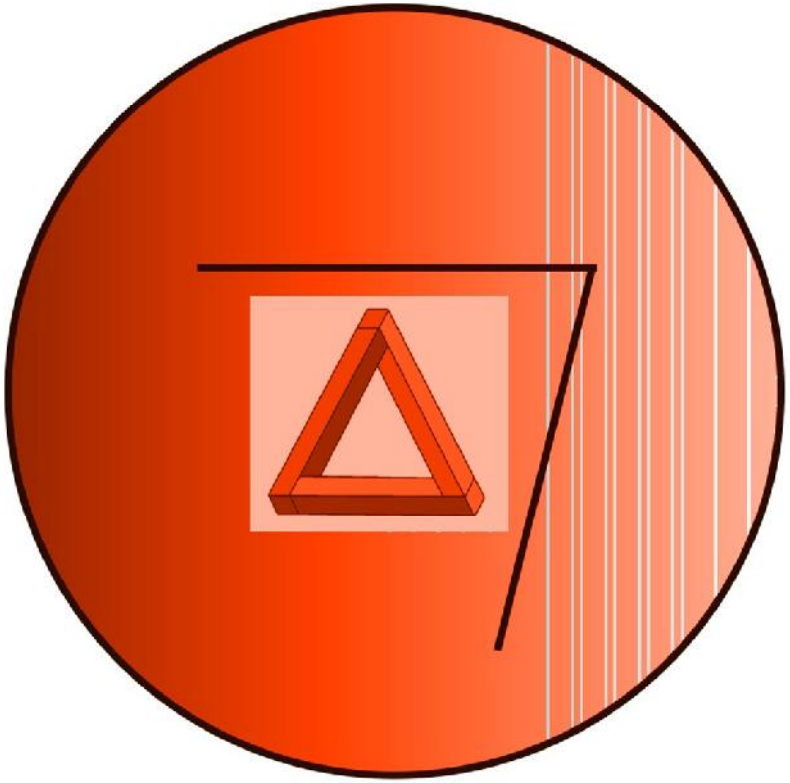


Thomas Traherne, 1670:

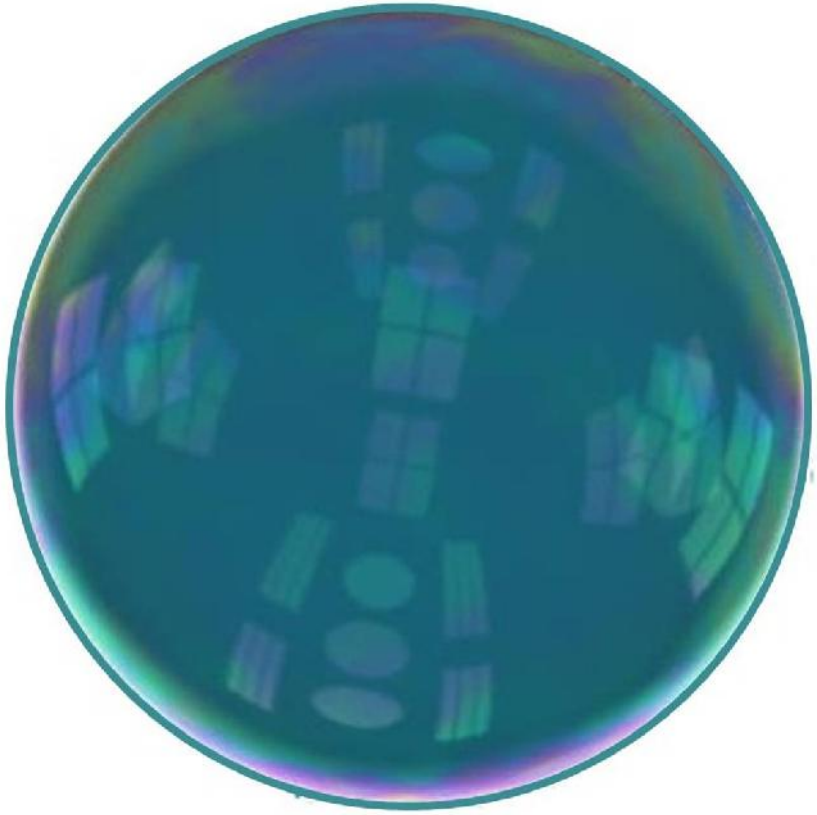
The streets were *mine,* the temple was *mine*, the people were *mine*, their clothes and gold and silver were *mine* .. The skies were *mine*, and so were the sun and moon and stars; and all the World was *mine*, and *I* the only spectator and enjoyer of it.

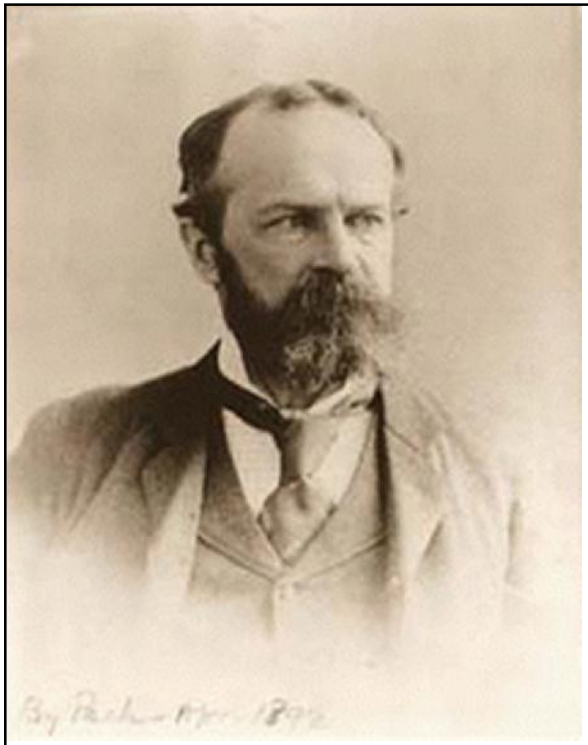


Third-person viewpoint



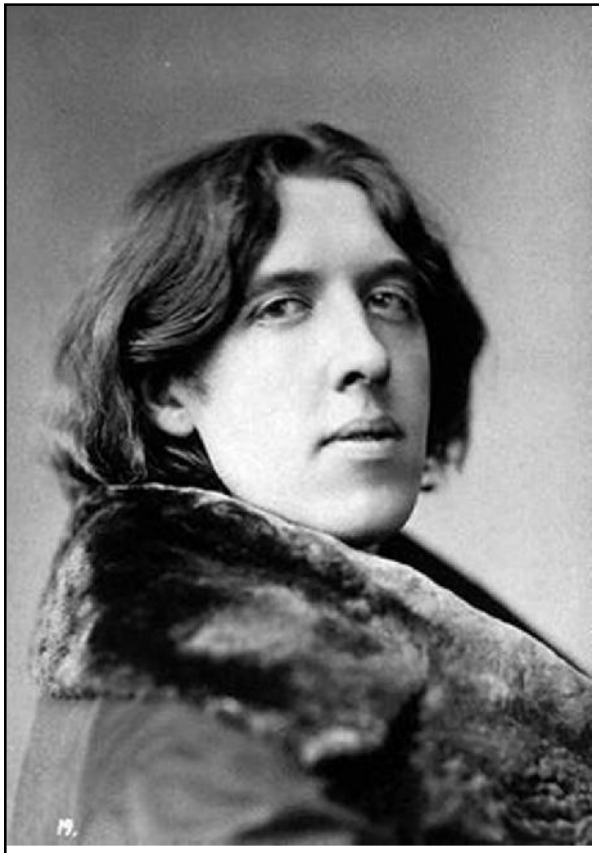
First-person viewpoint





William James, 1890:

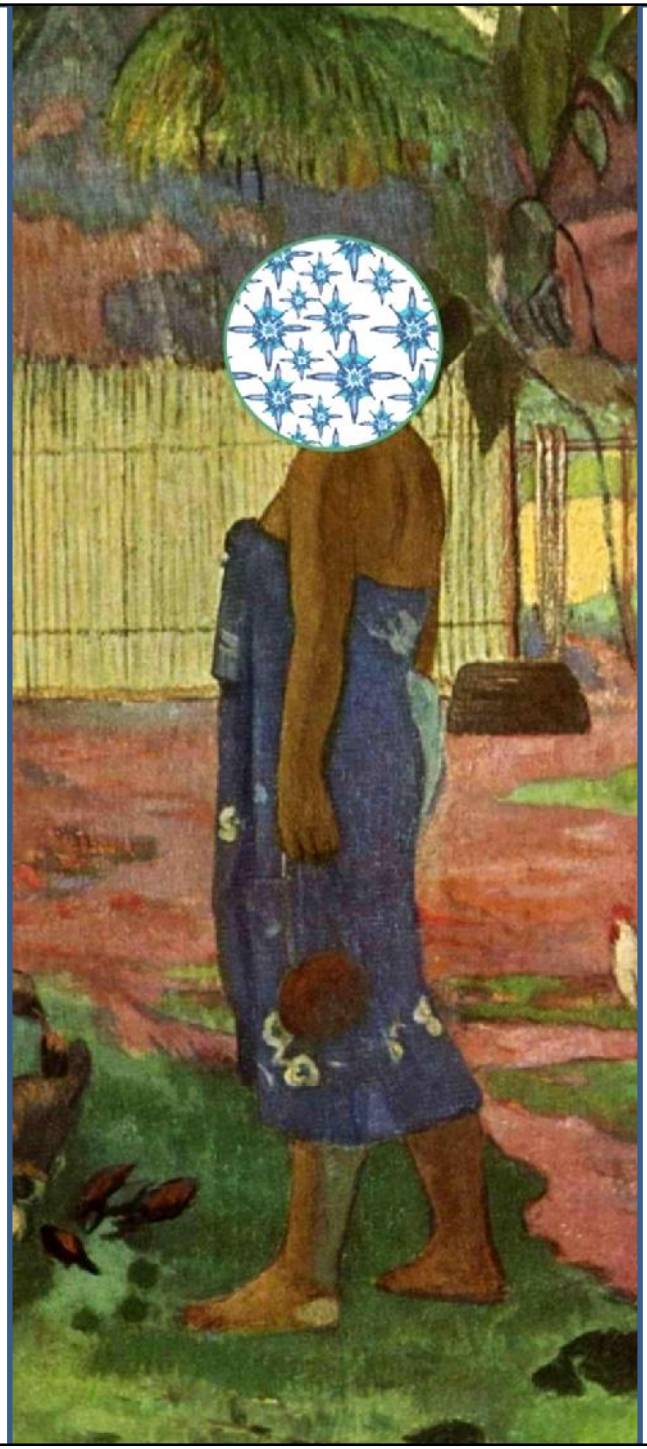
The altogether unique kind of interest which each human mind feels in those parts of creation which it can call *me* or *mine* may be a moral riddle, but it is a fundamental psychological fact. No mind can take the same interest in his neighbor's me as in his own.

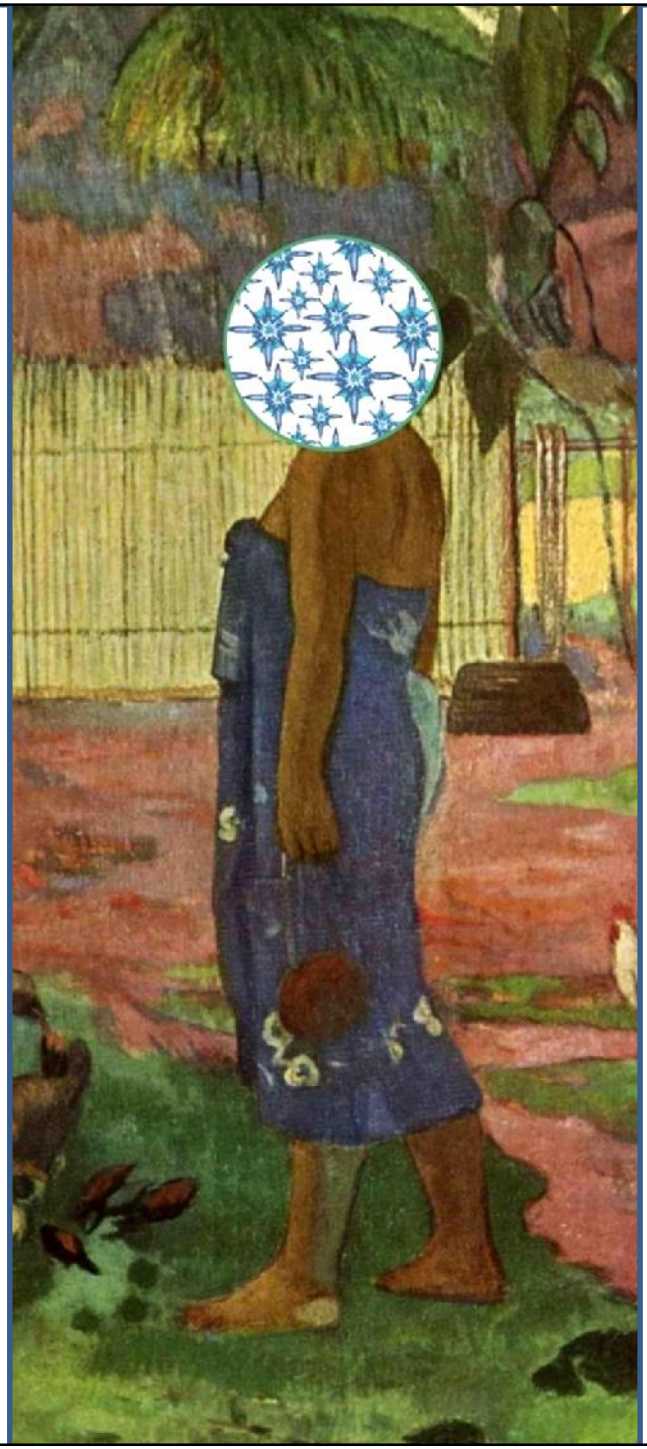


Oscar Wilde:

The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly - that is what each of us is here for.

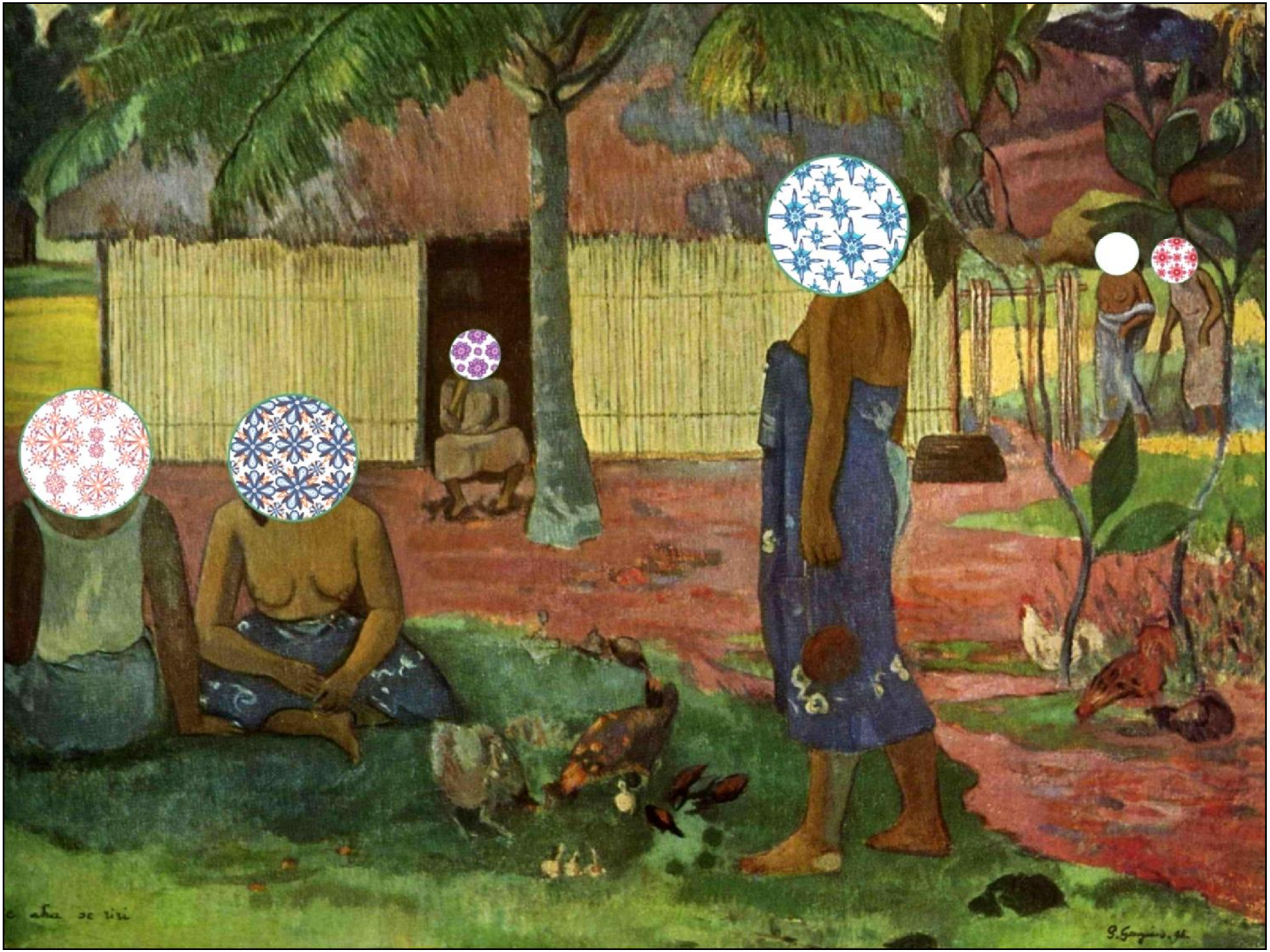
To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance.

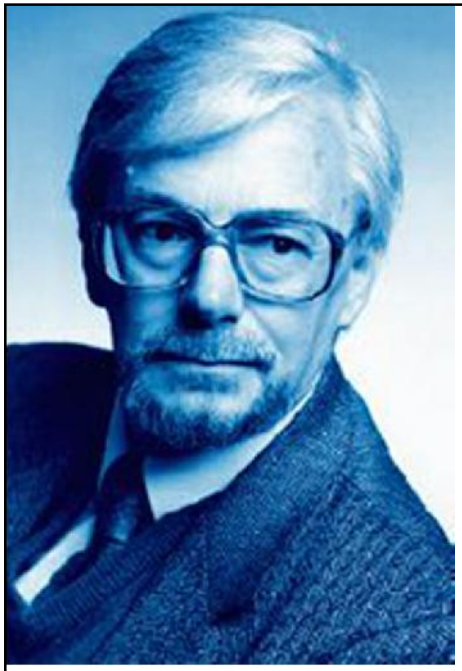




Thomas Traherne:

You never enjoy the world aright, till you perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you.



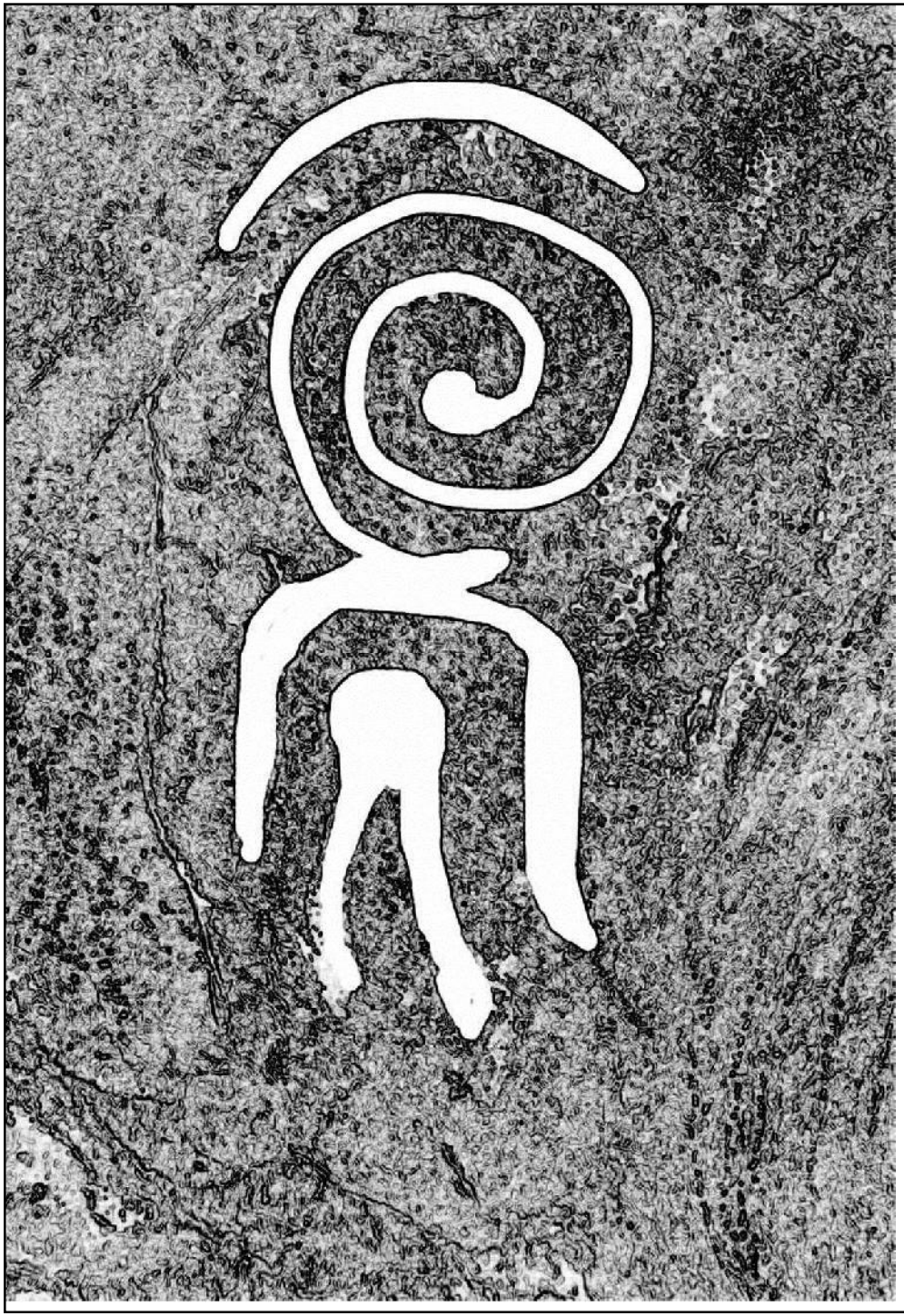


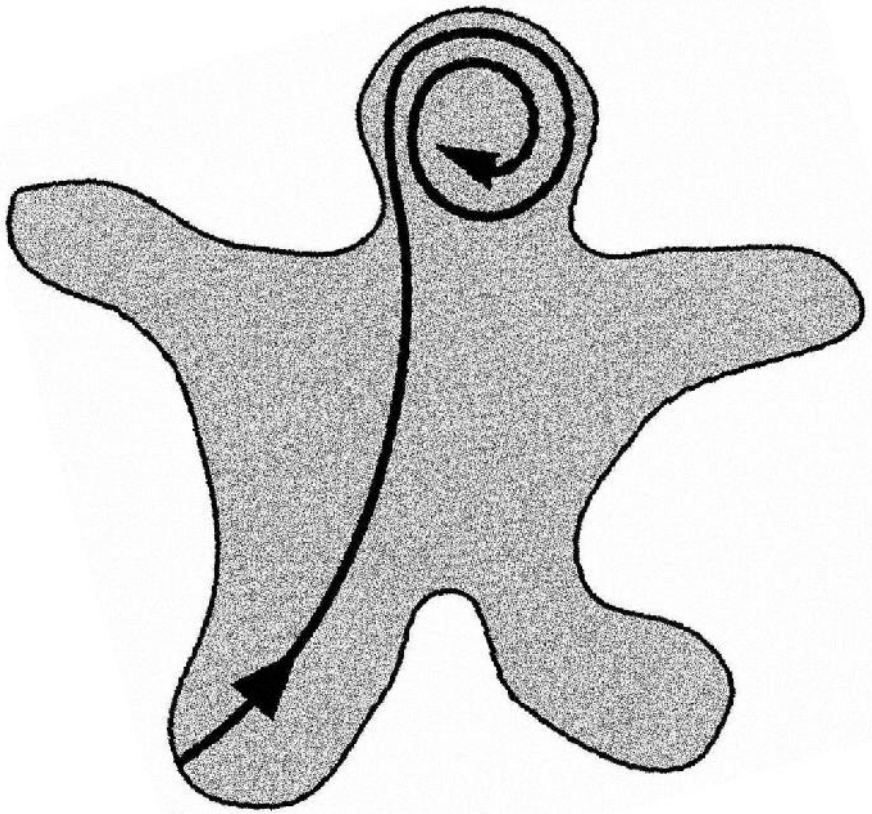
Keith Ward, 1998:

The whole point of talking of the soul is to remind ourselves constantly that we transcend all the conditions of our material existence. We transcend them precisely in being indefinable, always more than can be seen or described, subjects of experience and action, unique and irreplaceable.

Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?

Vilafames





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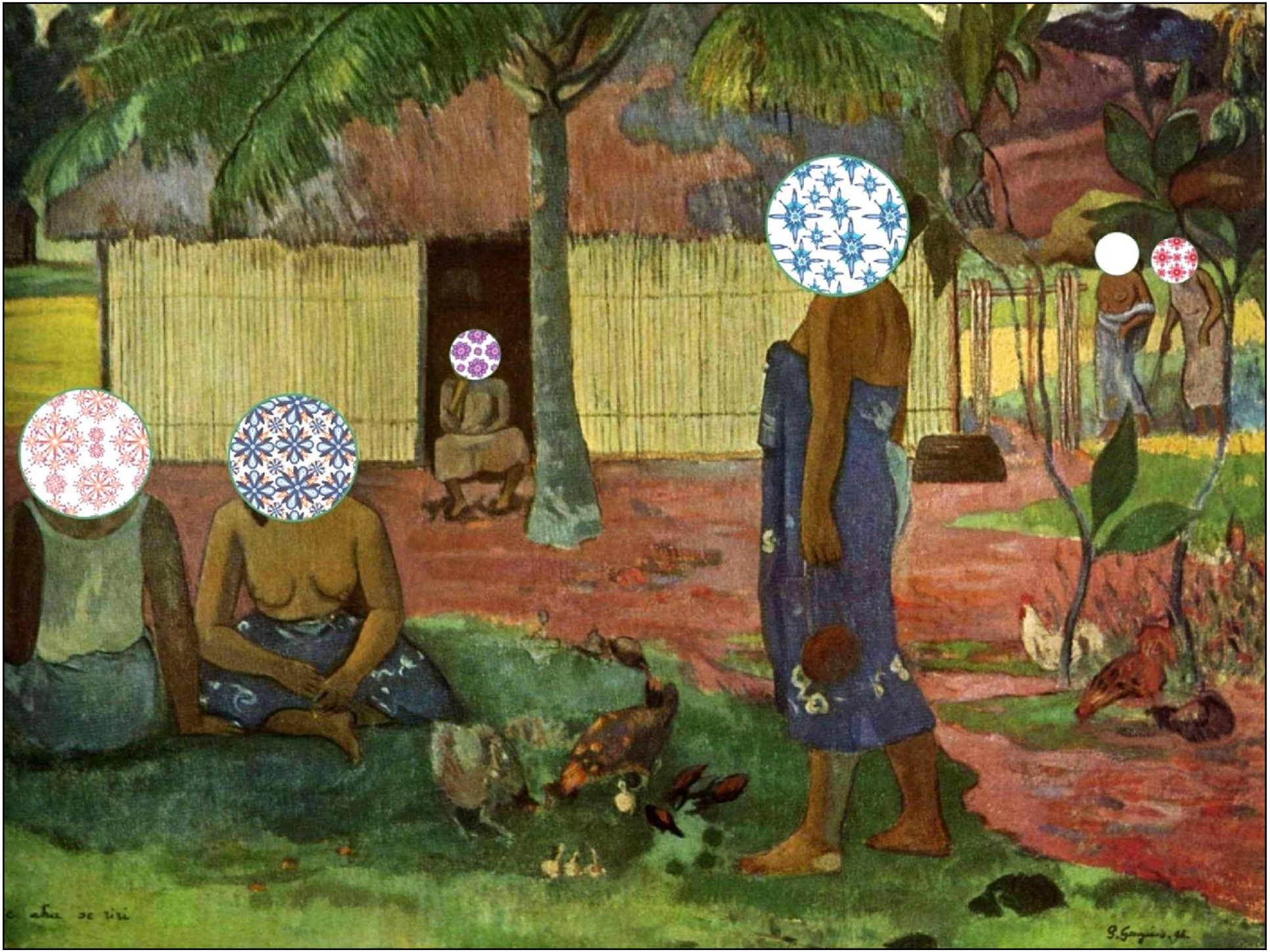
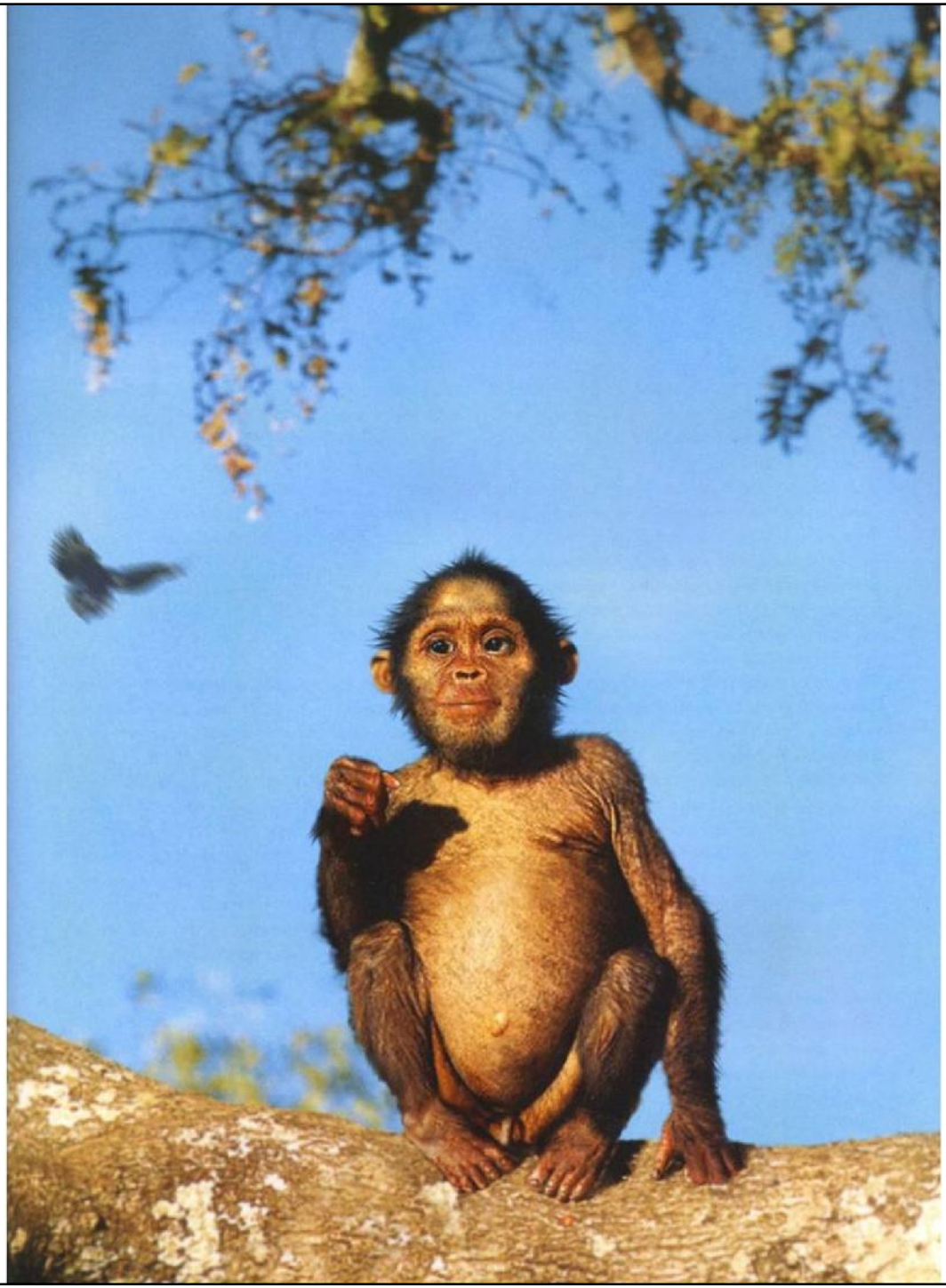
Queensland, Australia

Cambridge, England



HERE LIVE SOULS

HERE LIVED SOULS



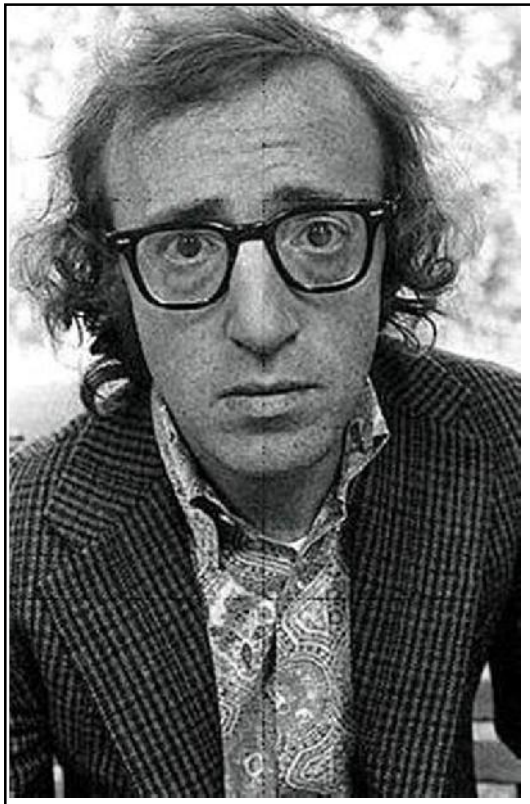
Yevgeny Yevtushenko:

No people are uninteresting.
Their fate is like the chronicle of planets.

Nothing in them is not particular,
and planet is dissimilar from planet.

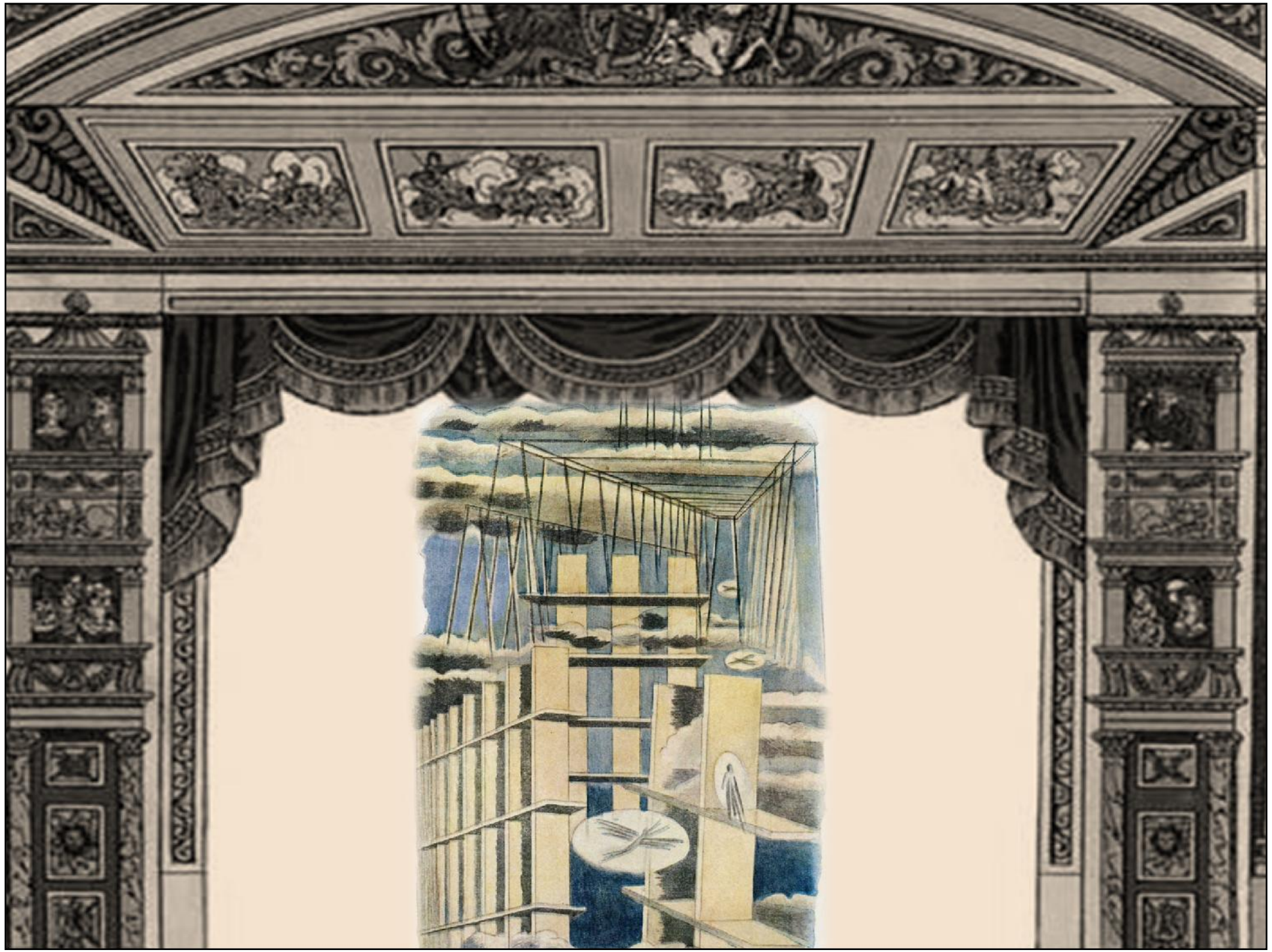
In any man who dies there dies with him
his first snow and kiss and fight.

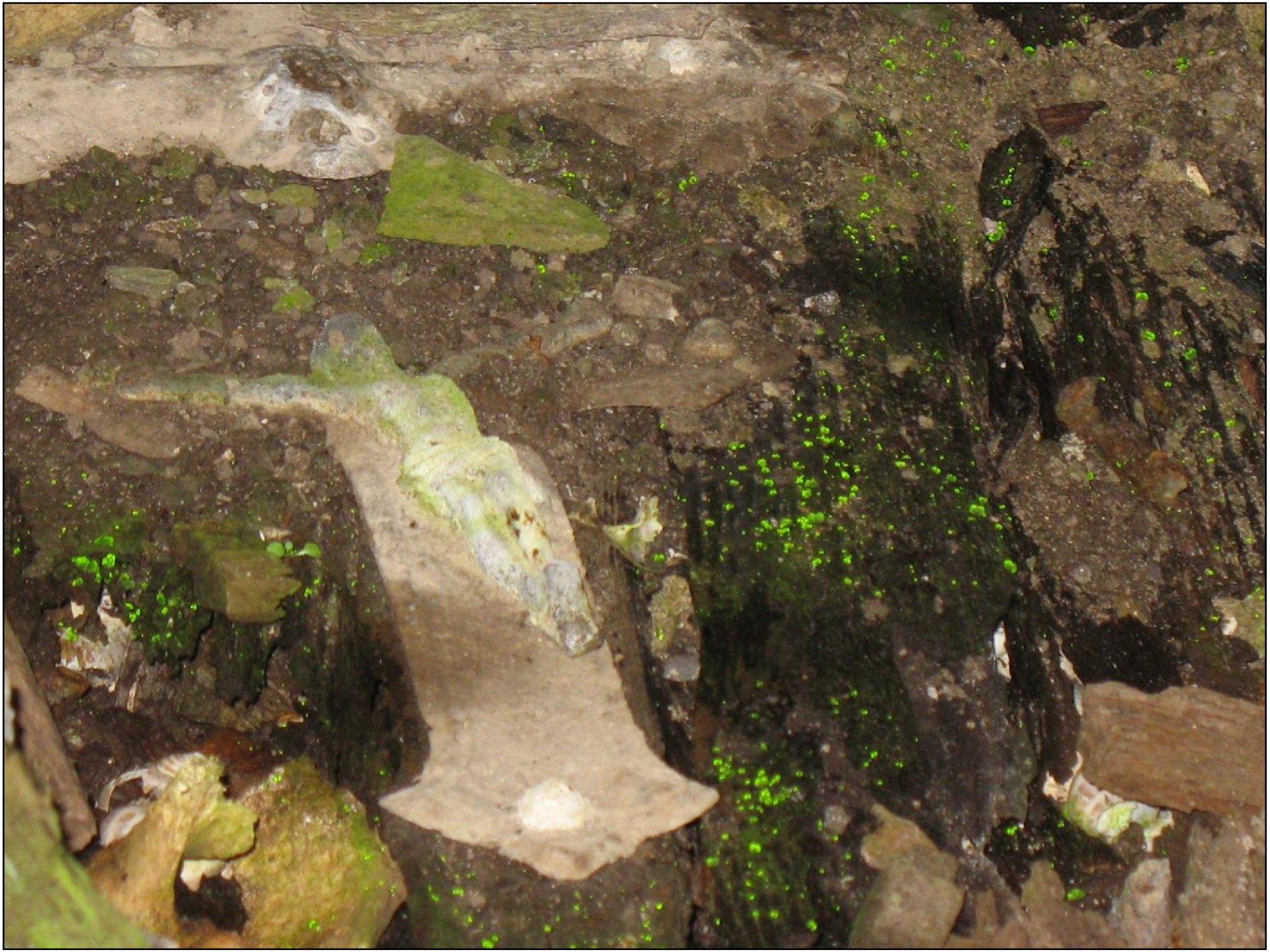
Not people die but worlds die in them.

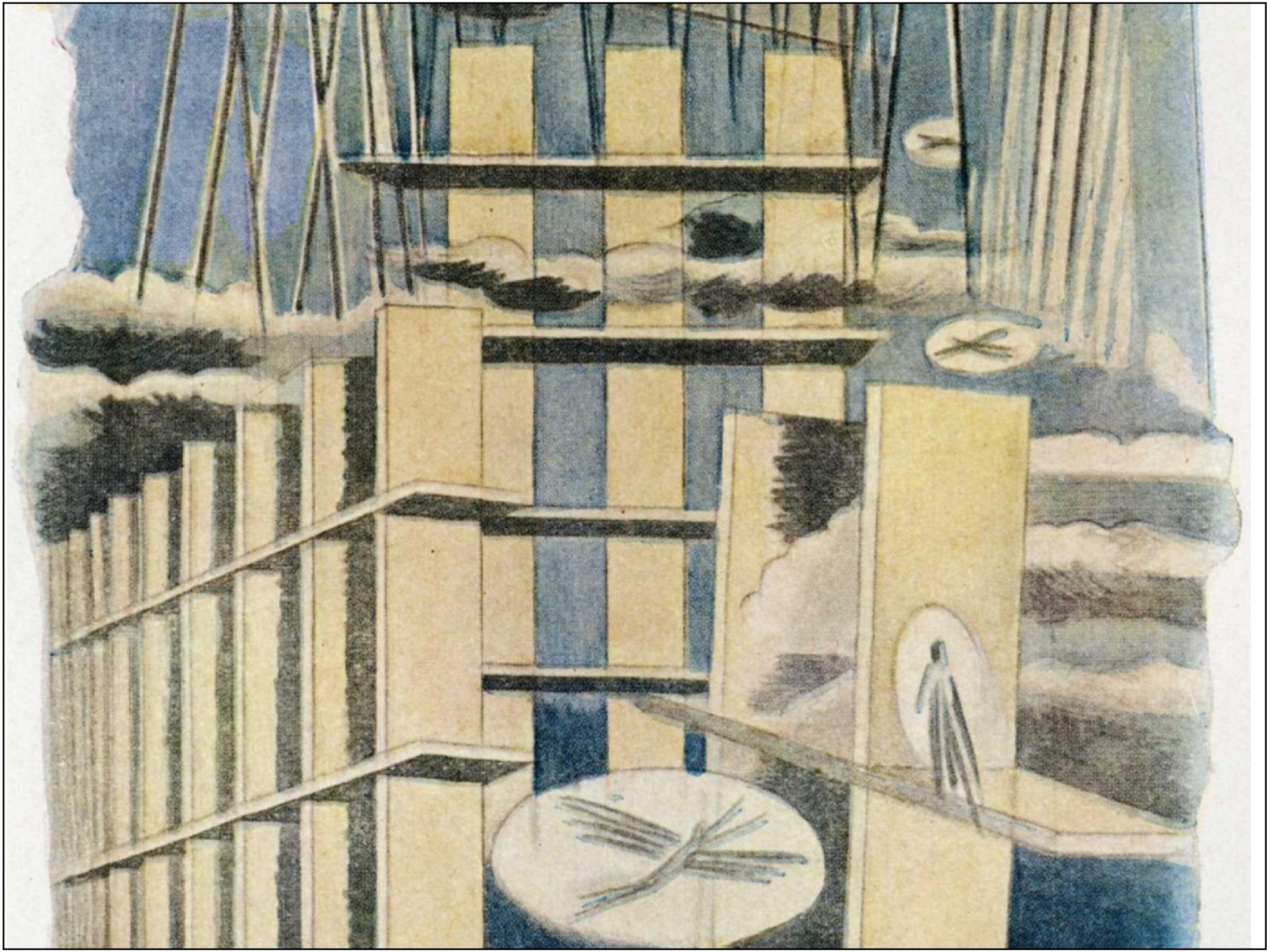


Woody Allen:

I don't want to achieve immortality through my work; I want to achieve immortality through not dying. I don't want to live on in the hearts of my countrymen; I want to live on in my apartment.







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