

A vibrant, surreal landscape featuring a mountain range under a dramatic sky. The mountains are bathed in a mix of purple, blue, and pink light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. A bright rainbow arches across the sky, and the foreground shows a valley with patches of green and yellow. The overall atmosphere is ethereal and numinous.

# Designing for the Numinous

Tricia Eastman & Dr. Joseph Barsuglia

*Forbidden Design: Stanford Design Course*

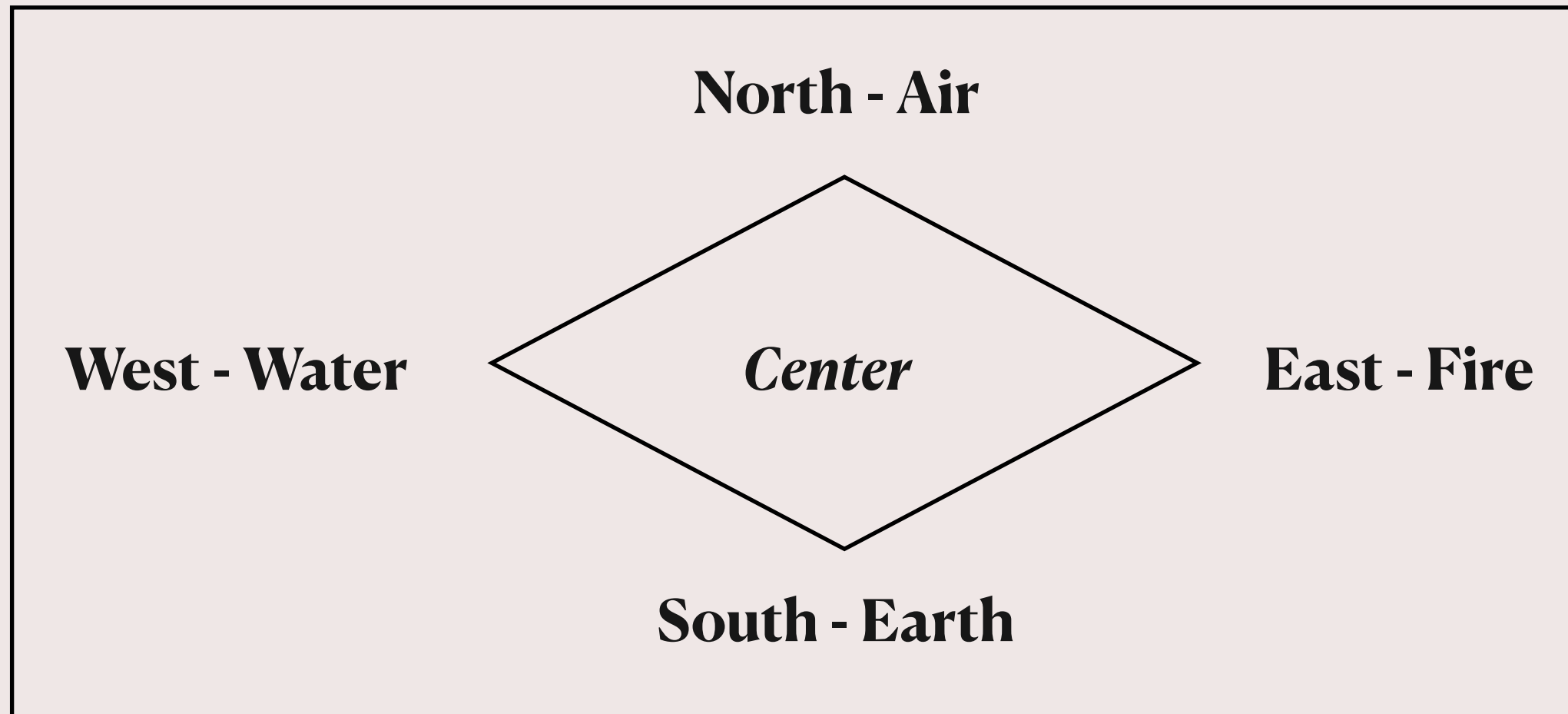
May 2023

# Opening Ritual - 7 Directions

*Ometeotl*

*“Oh- meh- teh- oh”*

*Sky / Heaven*



*Mother Earth*

# **Principles for Numinous Design**

1. Qualitative Nature of Mystical Experiences
2. Archetypal & Symbolic Principles (i.e., cosmic, body, womb)
3. Purification & Ritual
4. Architecture (i.e., sacred geometry, biophilic, orientation)
5. Nature Integration (4 elements and placement)

**Why  
design for the  
numinous?**

**The current  
state of  
psychedelic use  
in the US**



# Current State



Ketamine Clinic



Psilocybin & MDMA

# Current State



Festivals and Recreational Use

# What's missing in current system?

**“The main interest of my work is not concerned with the treatment of neuroses, but rather with the approach to the numinous...**

**The approach to the numinous is the real therapy,  
and in as much as you attain to the numinous experience you are released from the  
curse of pathology.**



**Carl Jung (1875-1961)**

Swiss psychiatrist, psychoanalyst

Father of archetypal psychology



**What is the  
numinous or  
mystical  
experience?**





# What is the numinous?

Numinous (/ˈnjuːmɪnəs/) is a term derived from the Latin numen, meaning  
**"arousing spiritual or religious emotion; mysterious or awe-inspiring."**

numen, numinis

Definitions:

1. divine will, divinity
2. god

# What is the mystical?

mysticus, mystica, mysticum

Definitions:

1. mystical
2. of/belonging to/used in sacred mysteries/rites
3. secret, mysterious

“Everyone of us is a mystic.

We may or may not realize it, we may not even like it.

But whether we know it or not, whether we accept it or not,

mystical experience is always there,

inviting us on a journey of ultimate discovery.”

—*Wayne Teasdale*

*Catholic Monk (1945 - 2004)*



# How has science defined the numinous?

## Mystical Union:

Sense of awe, being at a spiritual height

Experience felt as sacred or holy

Knowledge of ultimate reality

Pure being or awareness

Unity or Oneness with all things

**Transcends Time & Space**

**Ineffability - Beyond Language**

**Noetic - direct knowing**

**Inner Wisdom, intuition**

**Peak Emotions- Ecstasy, joy, peace, and love**



# **Dark Side of the Mystery**

**Go Within To Face The Shadow**

**Ancient Darkness Technologies**

**Stepping Into The Unknown**

**Returning To The Womb**

**Learning How To Die**



**GAMMA**

INSIGHT, EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS



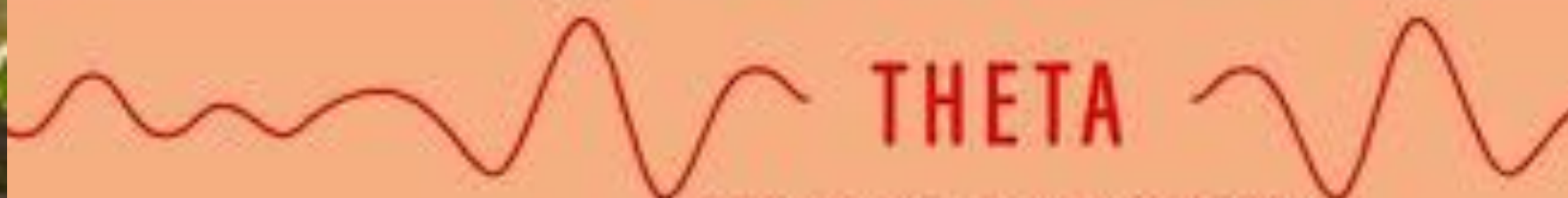
**BETA**

CONCENTRATION, LEARNING



**ALPHA**

RELAXATION, REFLECTION



**THETA**

DREAMING, FLOW STATES



**DELTA**

DEEP, HEALING SLEEP

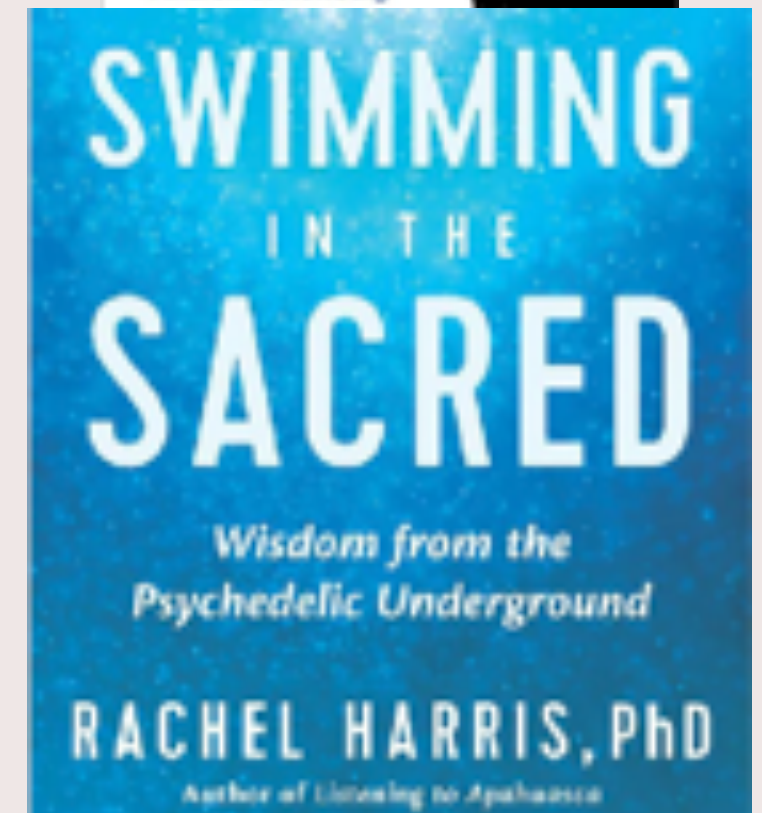
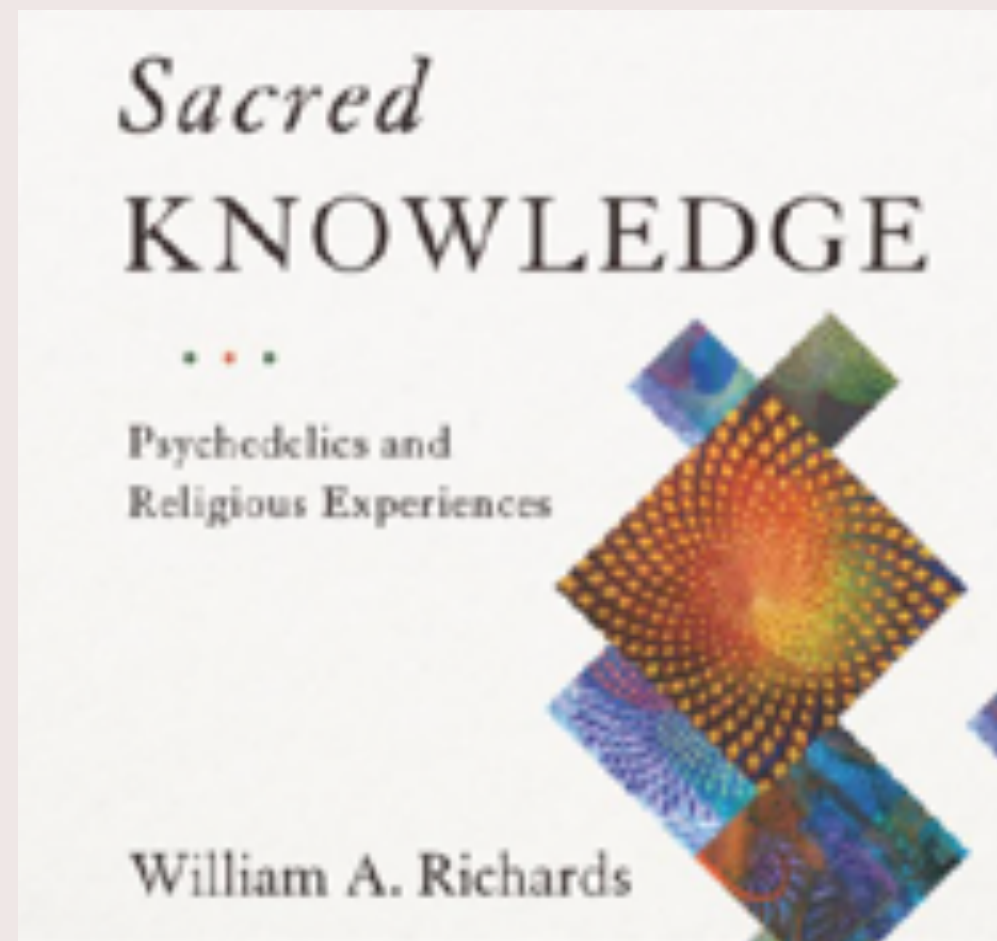
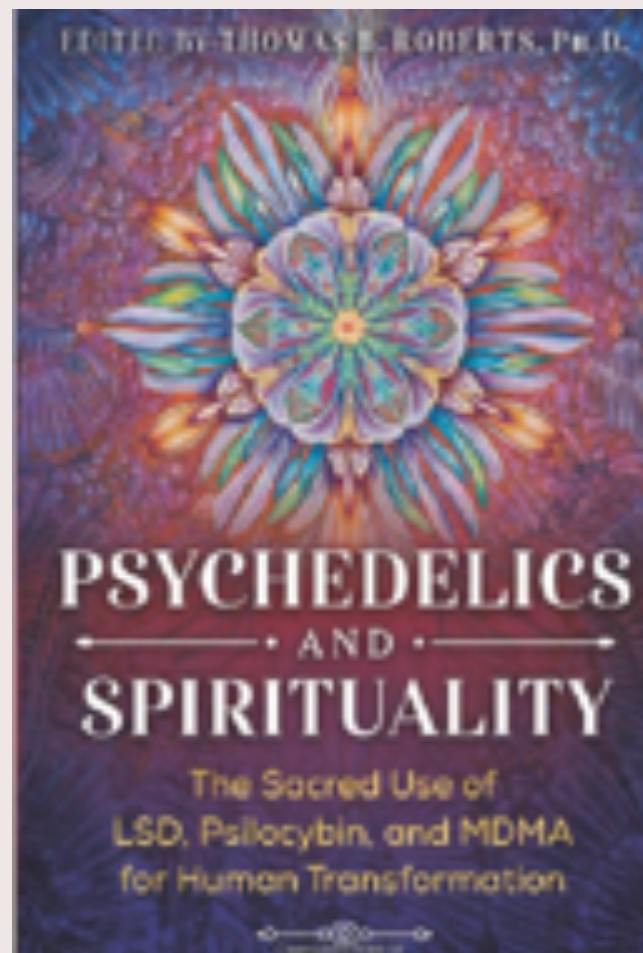
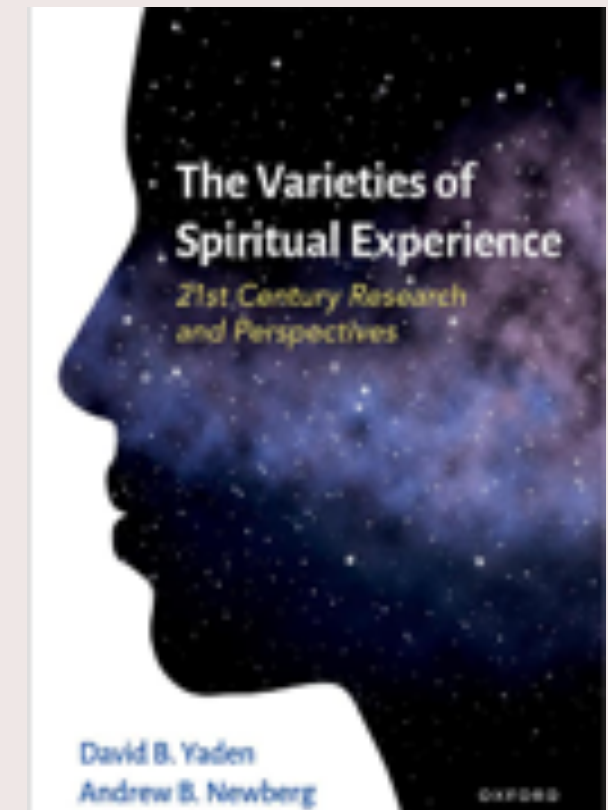
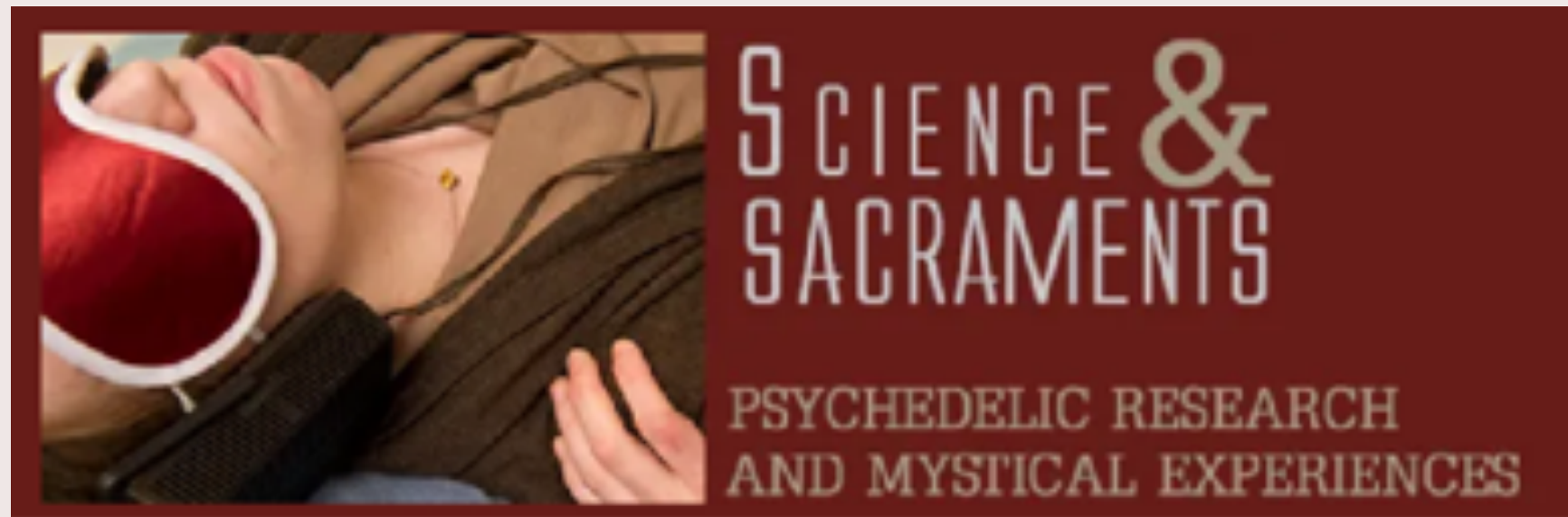


**How does  
the mystical  
relate to  
outcomes with  
psychedelics?**





# Psychedelics & Sacred Experience



# The Mystical Experience Predicts Outcomes with Psychedelics

Mystical-type experiences are the strongest mediator of therapeutic efficacy across numerous psychedelic studies in addiction, mental health, and positive outcomes.

**Psilocybin can occasion mystical-type experiences having substantial and sustained personal meaning and spiritual significance**

**Mystical-type experiences occasioned by ketamine mediate its impact on at-risk drinking: Results from a randomized, controlled trial**

**Psilocybin-Induced Mystical-Type Experiences are Related to Persisting Positive Effects: A Quantitative and Qualitative Report**

**Mystical Experience Defines Psychedelics**

**Psychedelics, Mystical Experience, and Therapeutic Efficacy: A Systematic Review**

**The Relationship Between Psychedelic Use, Mystical Experiences, and Pro-Environmental Behaviors**

Journal of Humanistic Psychology

1–29

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# Quality of Acute Psychedelic Experience Predicts Therapeutic Efficacy of Psilocybin for Treatment-Resistant Depression

Lear Roseman\*, David J. Nutt and Robin L. Carhart-Harris

Psychedelic Research Group, Department of Medicine, Imperial College London, London, United Kingdom

Responders (n=9)

Non-responders (n=10)

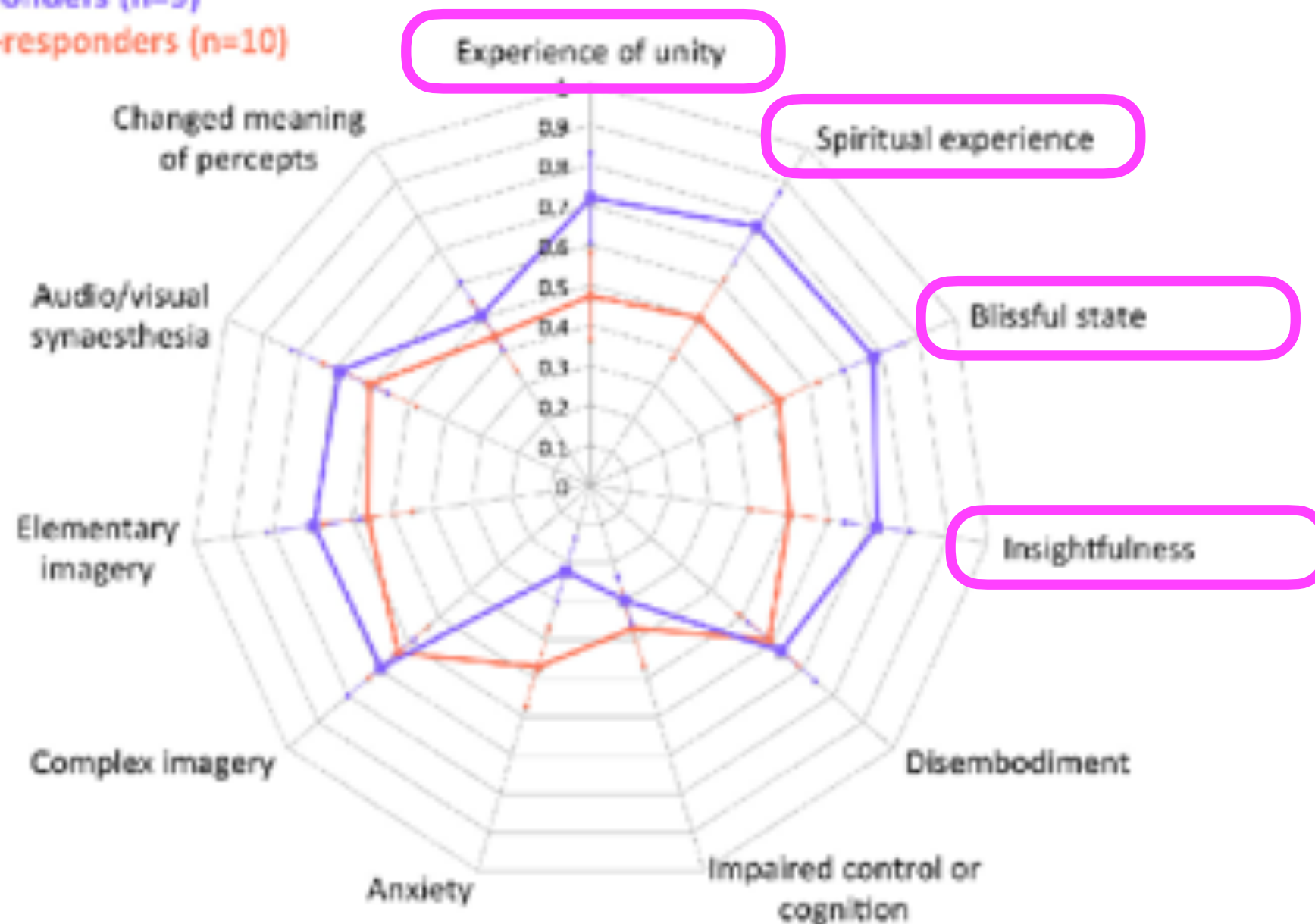
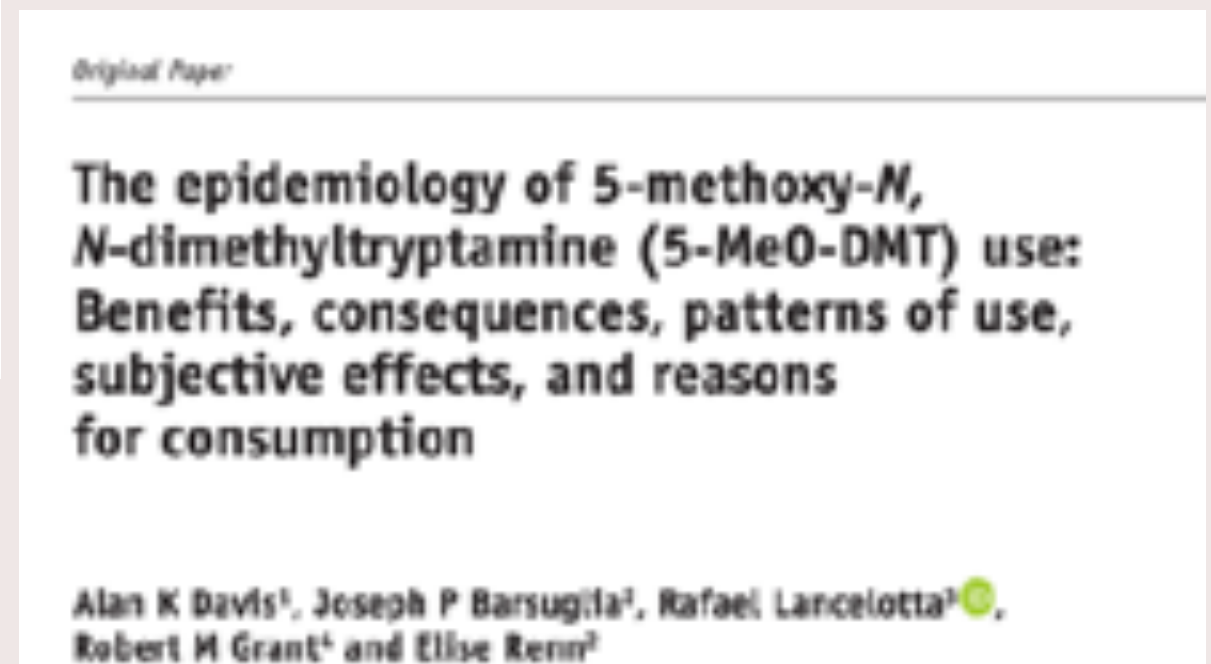


FIGURE 2 | ASC (11 dimensions) of responders and non-responders at 5 weeks. Error Bars = Standard Error.



# Setting > Psychedelic



## Percentage of Samples with “Complete Mystical Experience”

**Ceremonial Group, Synthetic 5-MeO (n = 362)**

**83%**


**VERSUS**

**Epidemiology Group, Synthetic 5-MeO (n = 284)**

**50%**

**What is the  
numinous or  
mystical  
experience?**

**Examples of  
5-MeO-DMT  
& Iboga**



**Warning:**  
**Psychedelics Are Powerful Tools  
With Risks And Should Be  
Approached Seriously  
& Only In The Proper Set And Setting  
With A Trained  
And Vetted Practitioner**



# What is 5-MeO-DMT?



# What is 5-MeO-DMT?



## The New York Times



*Demand for This Toad's  
Psychedelic Toxin Is Booming.  
Some Warn That's Bad for the  
Toad.*



# 5-MeO-DMT Mystical Effects

## Intensity of Mystical Experiences Occasioned by 5-MeO-DMT and Comparison With a Prior Psilocybin Study

Joseph Barsuglia<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>, Alan K. Davis<sup>1</sup>, Robert Palmer<sup>1</sup>, Rafael Lancelotta<sup>2</sup>, Austin-Marley Woodhams-Jernigan<sup>1</sup>, Kristel Peterson<sup>1</sup>, Martin Polanco<sup>1,4</sup>, Robert Grant<sup>1</sup> and Roland R. Griffiths<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

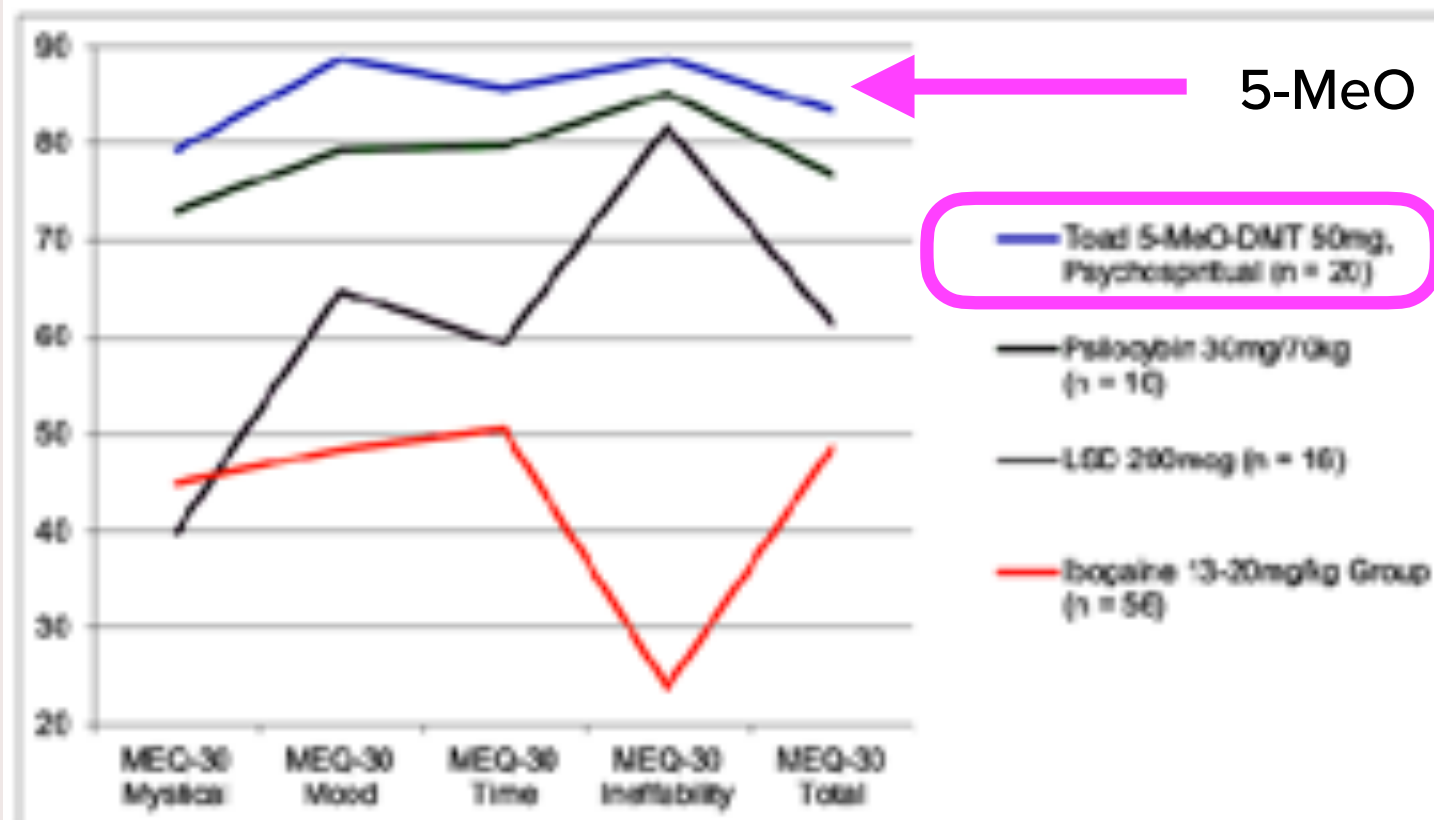
Original Paper

The epidemiology of 5-methoxy-*N*,*N*-dimethyltryptamine (5-MeO-DMT) use: Benefits, consequences, patterns of use, subjective effects, and reasons for consumption

Alan K Davis<sup>1</sup>, Joseph P Barsuglia<sup>2</sup>, Rafael Lancelotta<sup>3,4</sup>, Robert M Grant<sup>1</sup> and Elise Renn<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1  
Comparison of Psilocybin, 5-MeO-DMT, and LSD on the Mystical Experiences Questionnaire-30 Across Studies



# PsyPost

Spiritual exploration is the top reason people consume 5-MeO-DMT, study finds

Spiritual exploration (68%) was primary reason for using the drug, followed by recreation (18%) and psychological healing (12%).



# 5-MeO-DMT Field Reports

“It is difficult to describe the experience from the senses  
because it is so intense and rapid that everything simply merges together  
in the lived experience of being one with everything!  
I remember having faded away and having lost the notion of time and space.

It was a reunion with myself.  
I remember waking up and repeating - “I am love. I am love” many times,  
and feeling a profound love for everything around me:  
people, plants, animals  
Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

- Anonymous

# **AI GPT4 Analysis**

**5-MeO-DMT experience = 569 experience reports**

**Q: How can these experiences help humanity?”**

**A: 5-MeO DMT has the potential to help humanity in several ways...**

**1. Fostering a sense of unity and interconnectedness**

**2. Emotional healing and personal growth**

**3. Encouraging spiritual exploration**

**4. Promoting a sense of gratitude, love, and compassion**

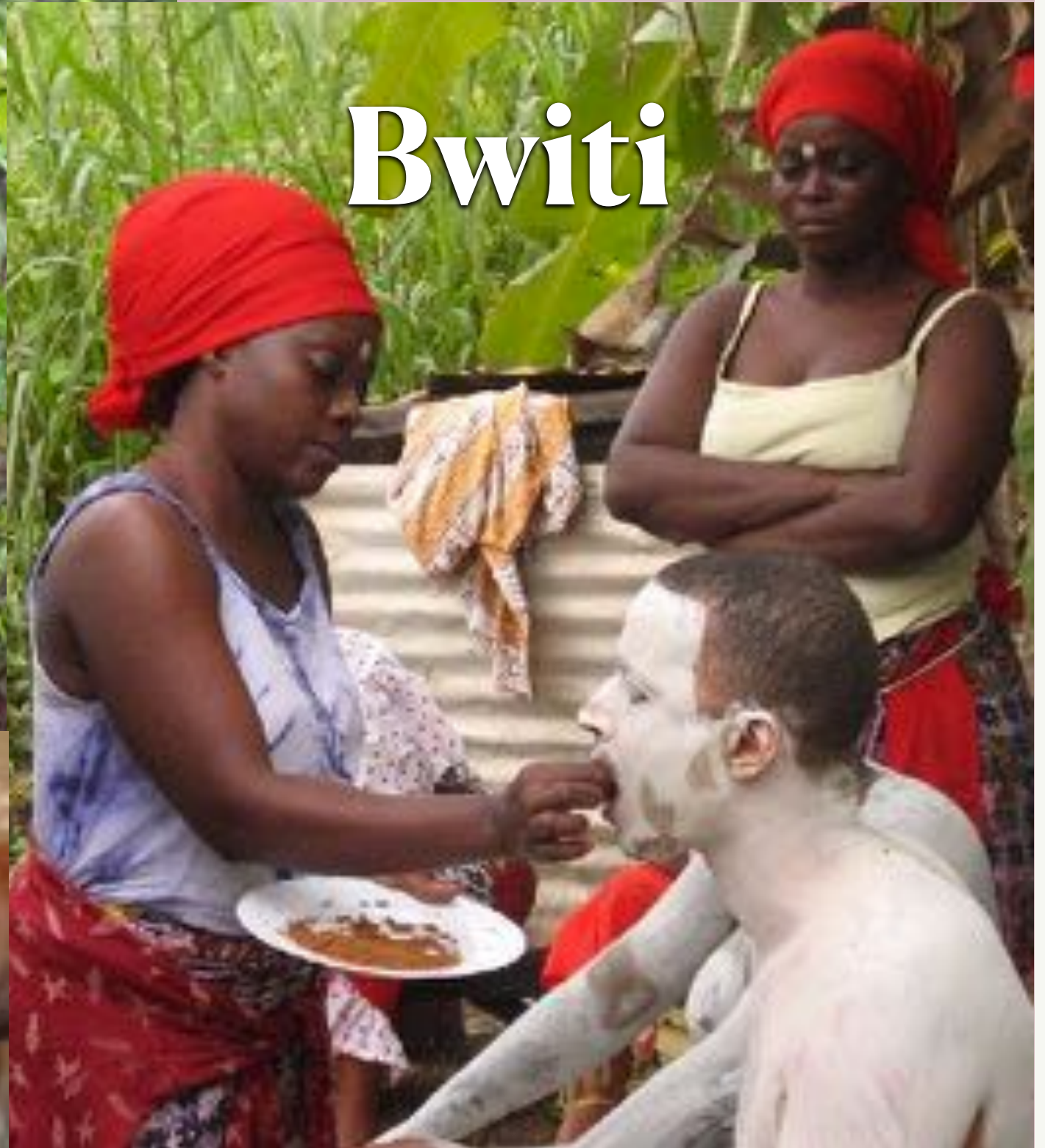
**5. Inspiring environmental stewardship**



# Iboga



# Bwiti





# Ibogaine Navy Seal Veteran Video



# Numinous Facets of Ibogaine

## Visionary Content

Ancestors - faces, spirits

Panoramic Planetary Landscapes - Often African

Themes of violence or destruction

Outer space & Dream-like Landscapes

Cinematic film reel - TV set or Screen

## Healing Effects

Trauma & Emotional release

Meta-Observation & Reliving life

Feeling of rebirth & Feeling Transformed

Empathy, forgiveness, love

Spiritual awakenings



*The Ancient Journey - By Bwistist Mometo - Ben Taylor*

# **Ancient Design for the Numinous**





# Kogi Kaggaba Design

*La Sierra Columbia*

# Zulu Hut Design

*Hlululuwe South Africa*



# Ancestral Wisdom of the Mystical



“Healing comes when the individual remembers  
his or her identity - one’s purpose chosen  
in the world of ancestral wisdom  
- and reconnects with that world of spirit”

*- Malidoma Patrice Some, Dagara Elder, (1956-2021)*



# Bwiti Temple



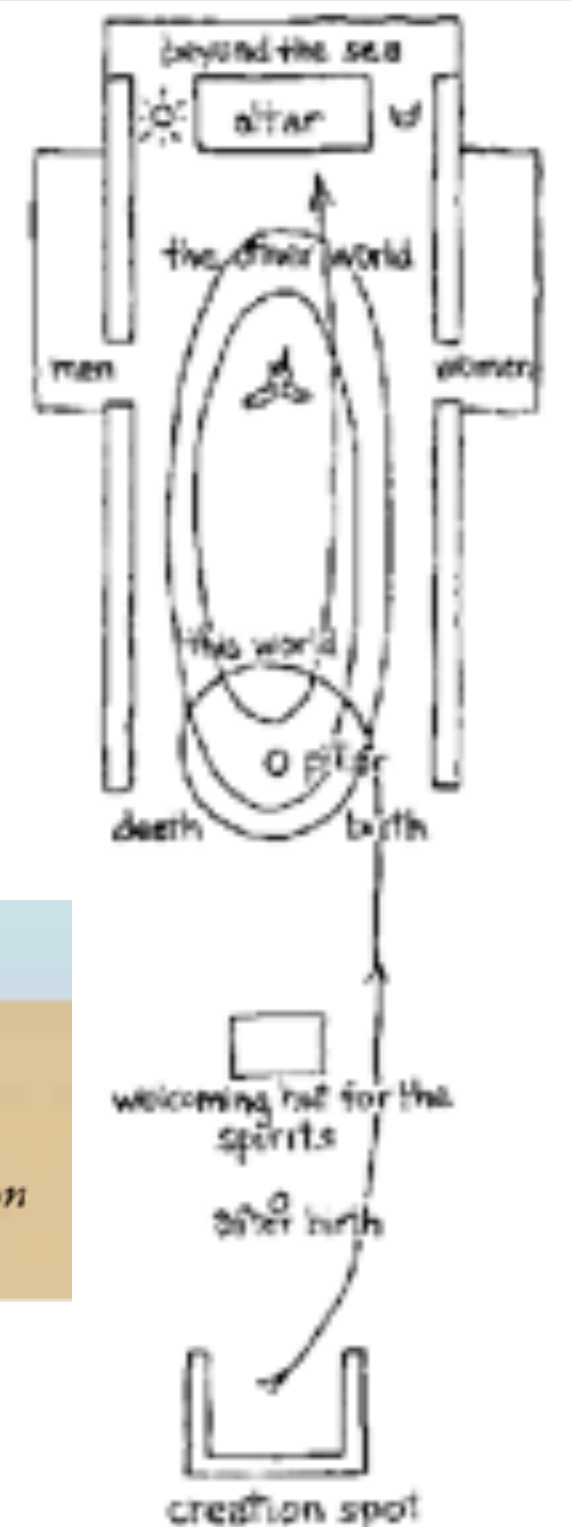
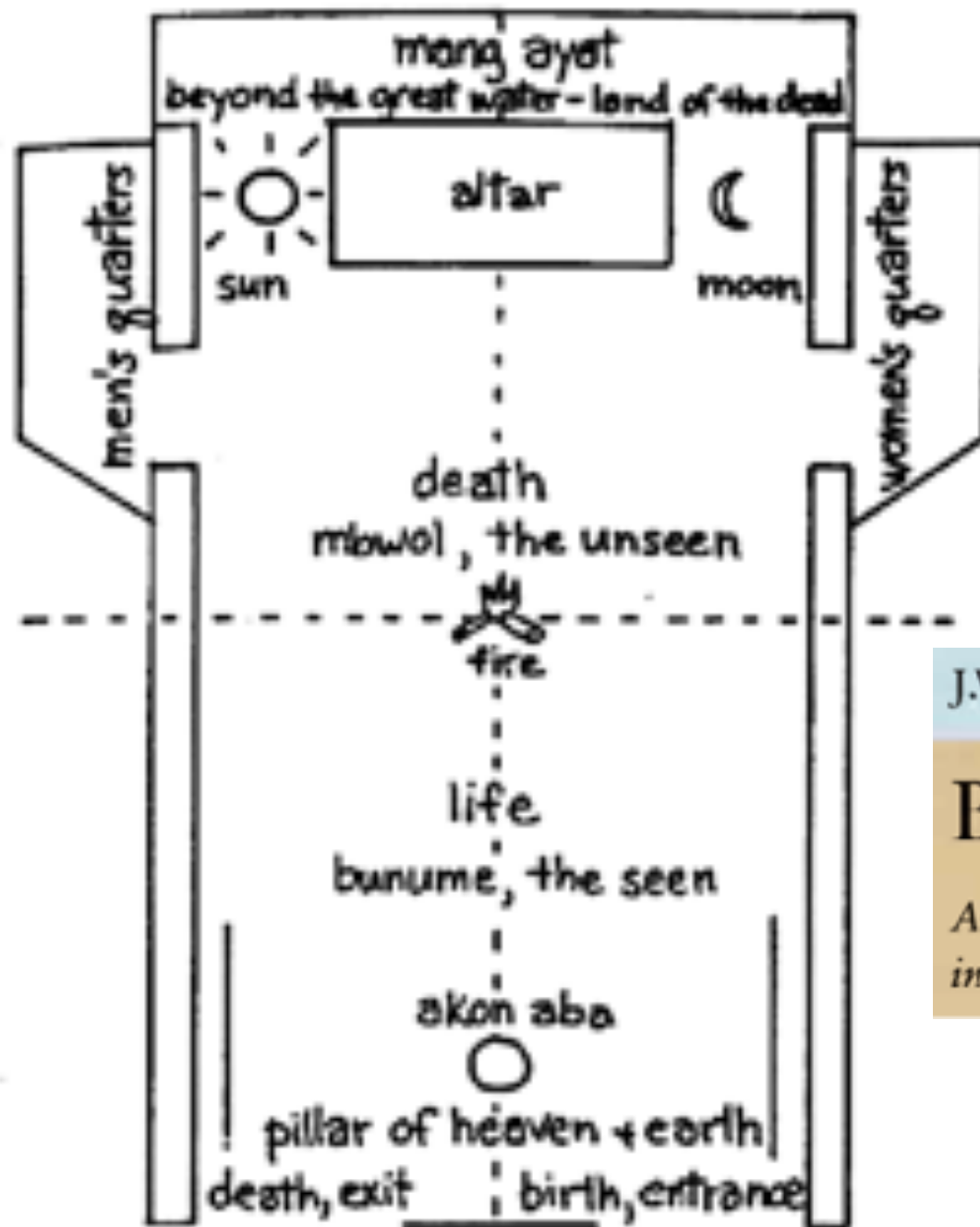
Okala temple, Gabon

J.W. FERNANDEZ

## Bwiti

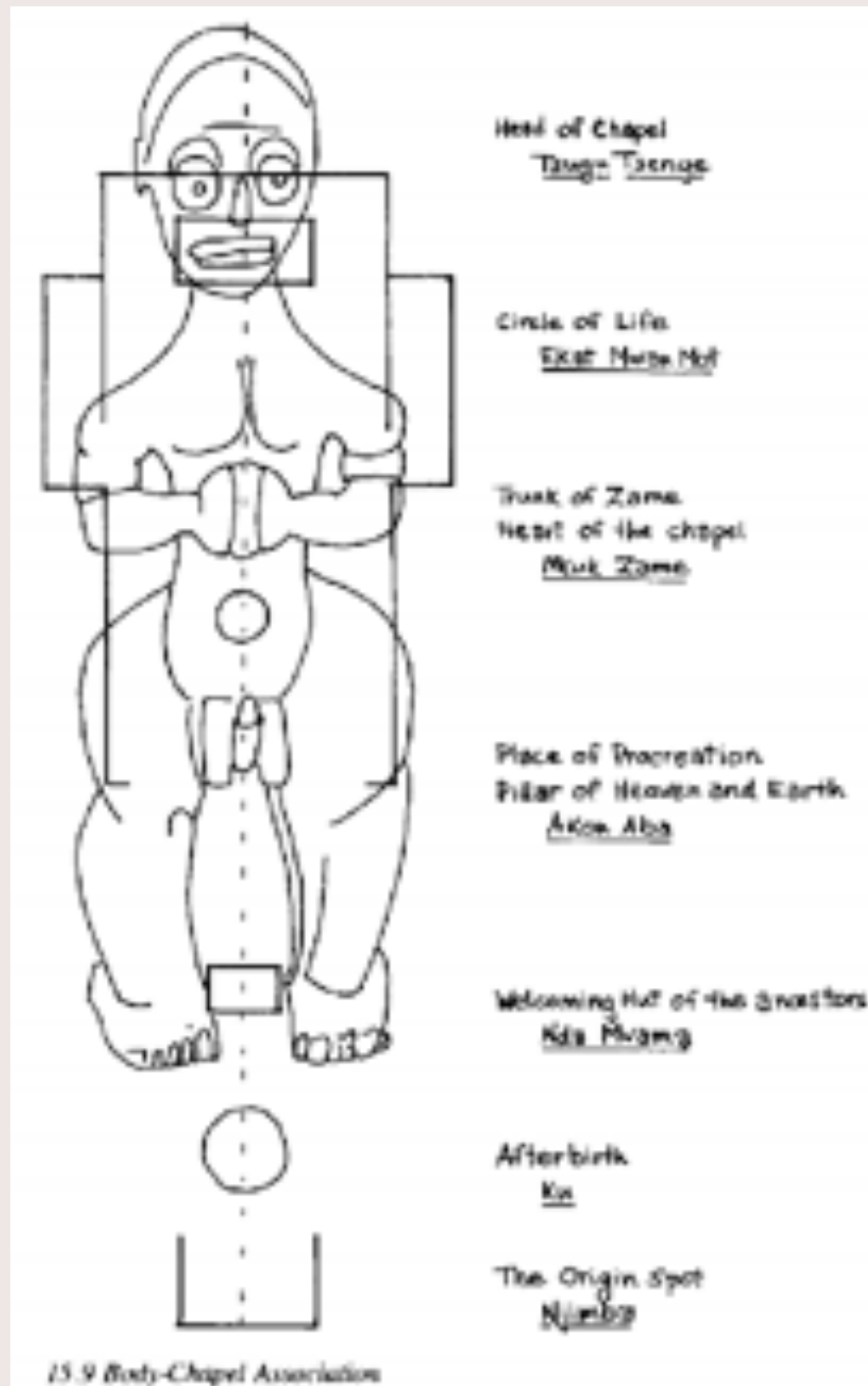
*An Ethnography of the Religious Imagination in Africa*

### *The Body in Bwiti*

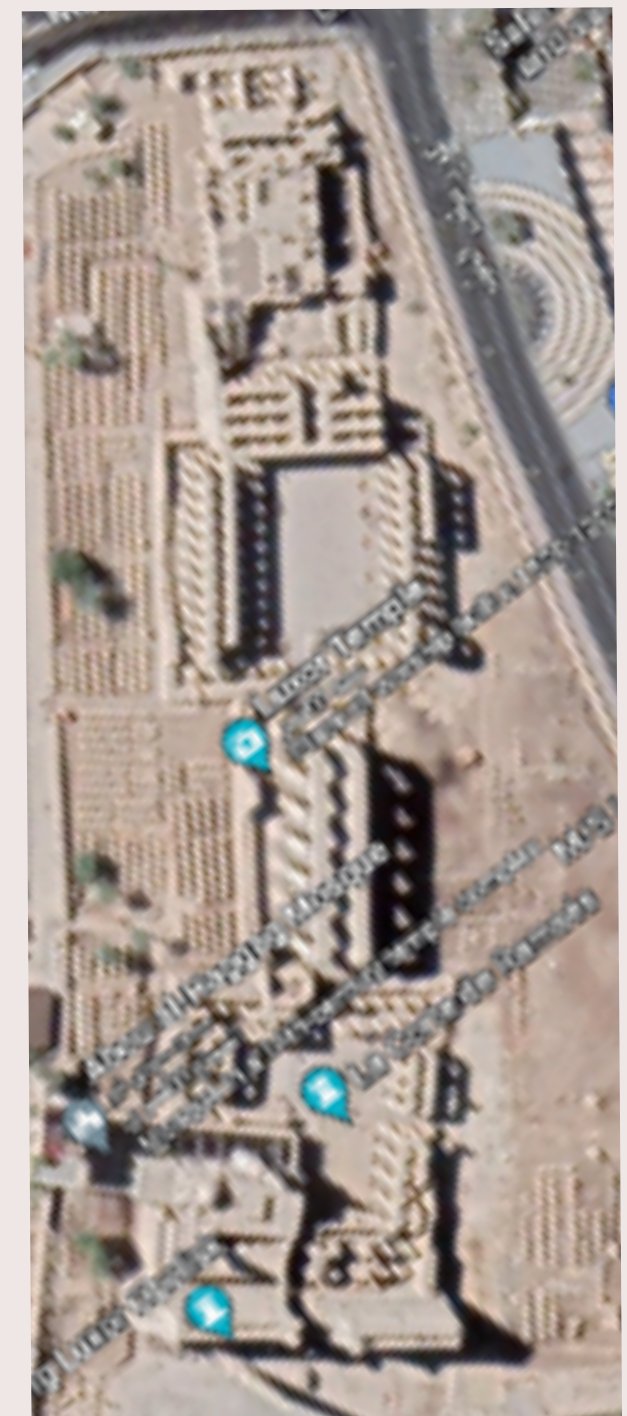
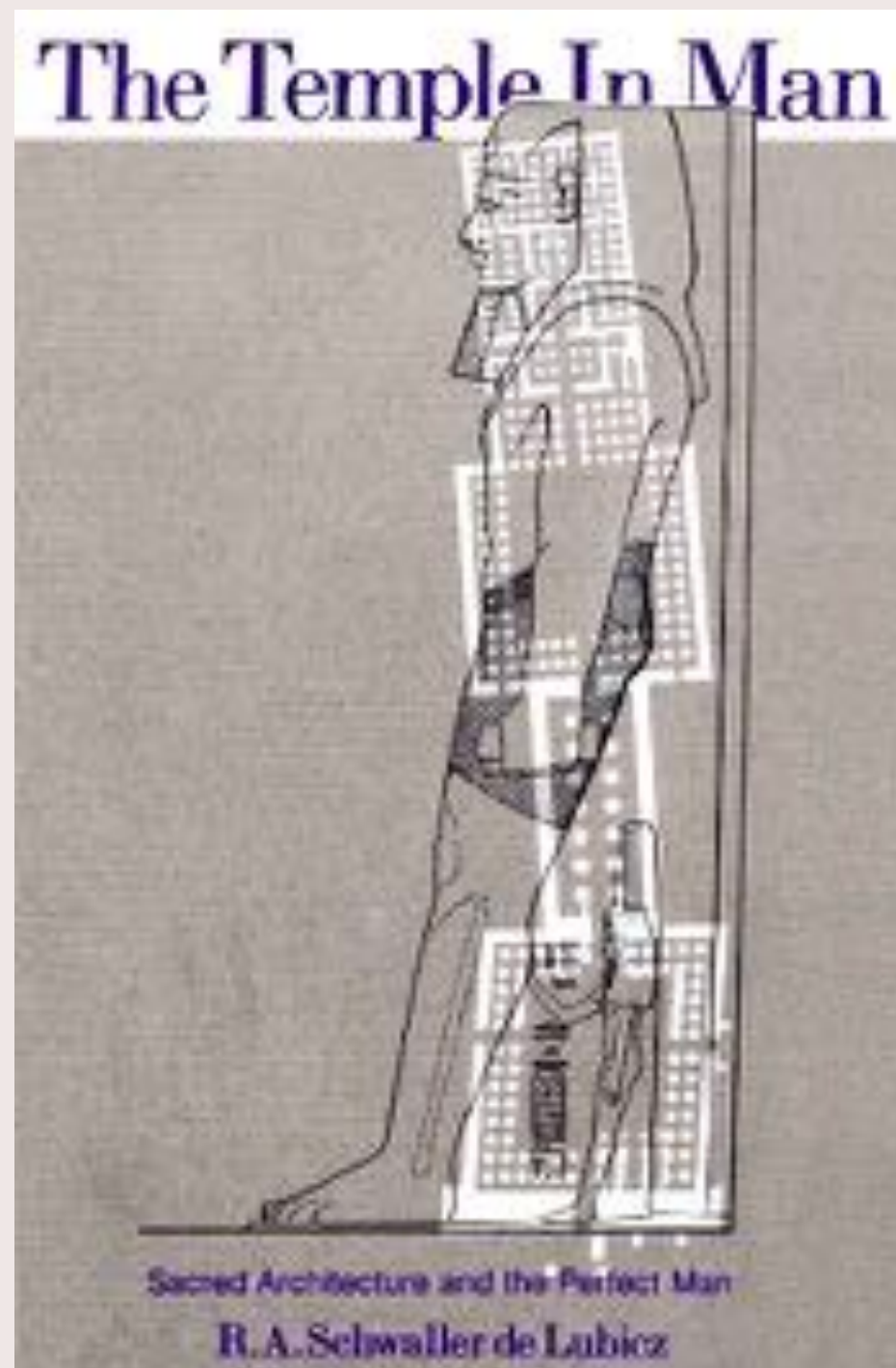
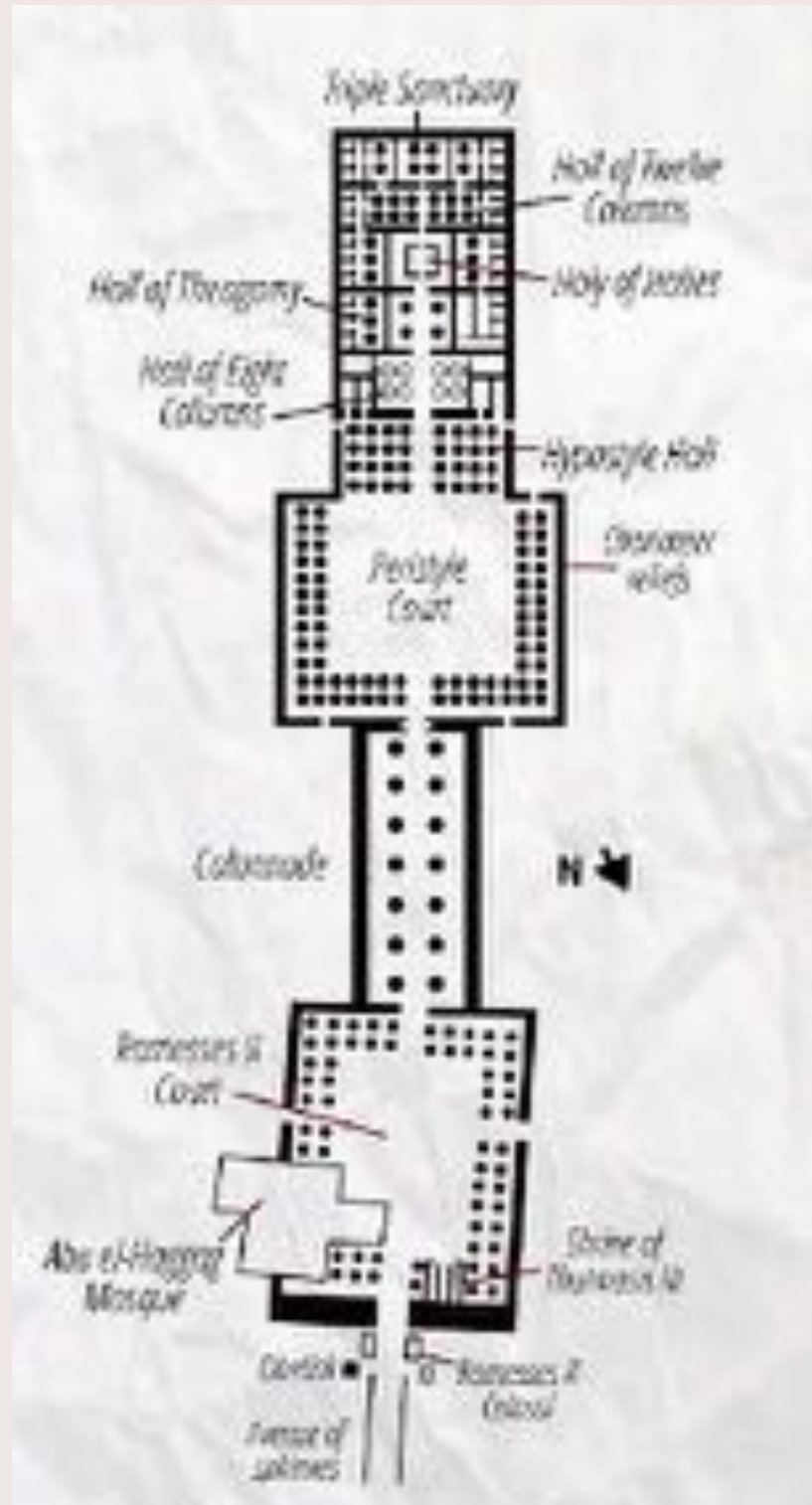




# Bwiti Temple



# Egyptian Temple



Luxor Temple



# Bwiti Preparations





# Mesoamerican Preparations



## Summary

1. Spaces inspired by and in harmony with nature.
2. Designed as chambers of transformation  
mimicking cosmos, the body, and spiritual cycles.
3. Ritual preparation supports mystical experience



# **New Design for the Numinous HU Institute**





# PSYCHEDELIC JOURNEYS







HU INSTITUTE

# HU Institute Symbolism

“HU” is the sound heard by an initiate when wisdom is discovered.

In antiquity, HU was understood as the original sound of creation.

The ‘U’ in the mark represents a vessel, opening up to elevate oneself and receive the transference of wisdom from above.

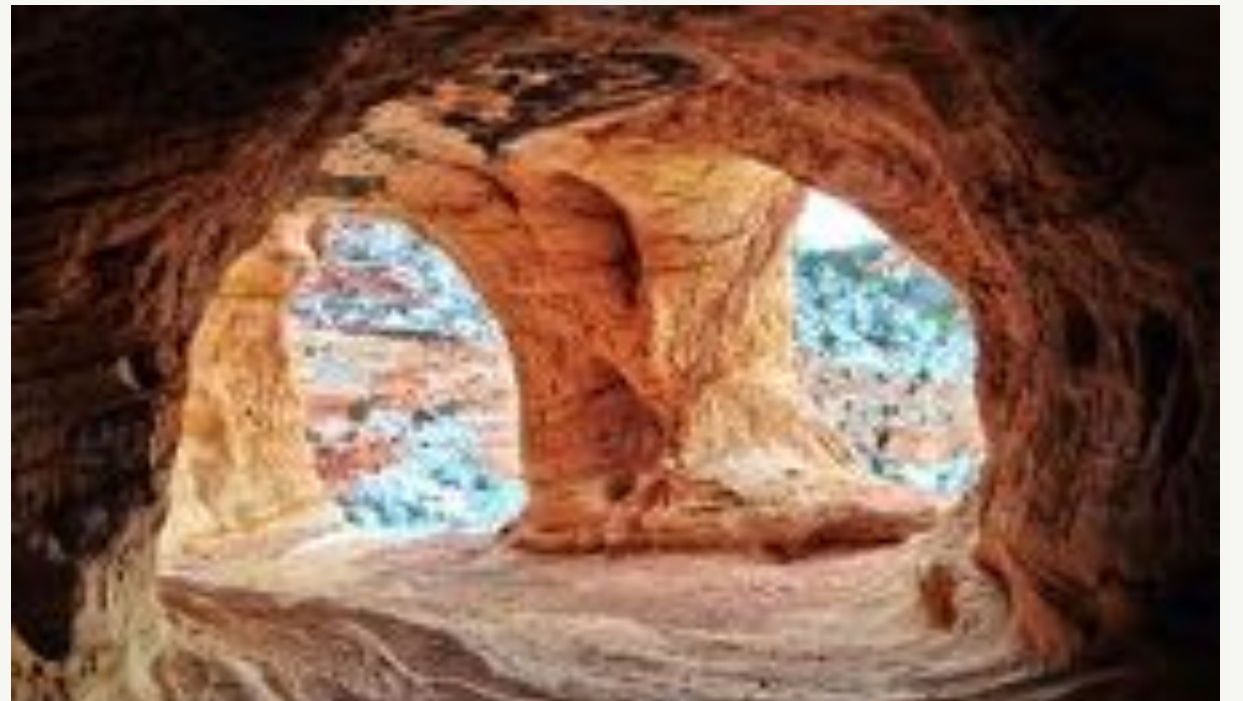




# Entering another world



# Biophilic Design





# Numinous Design

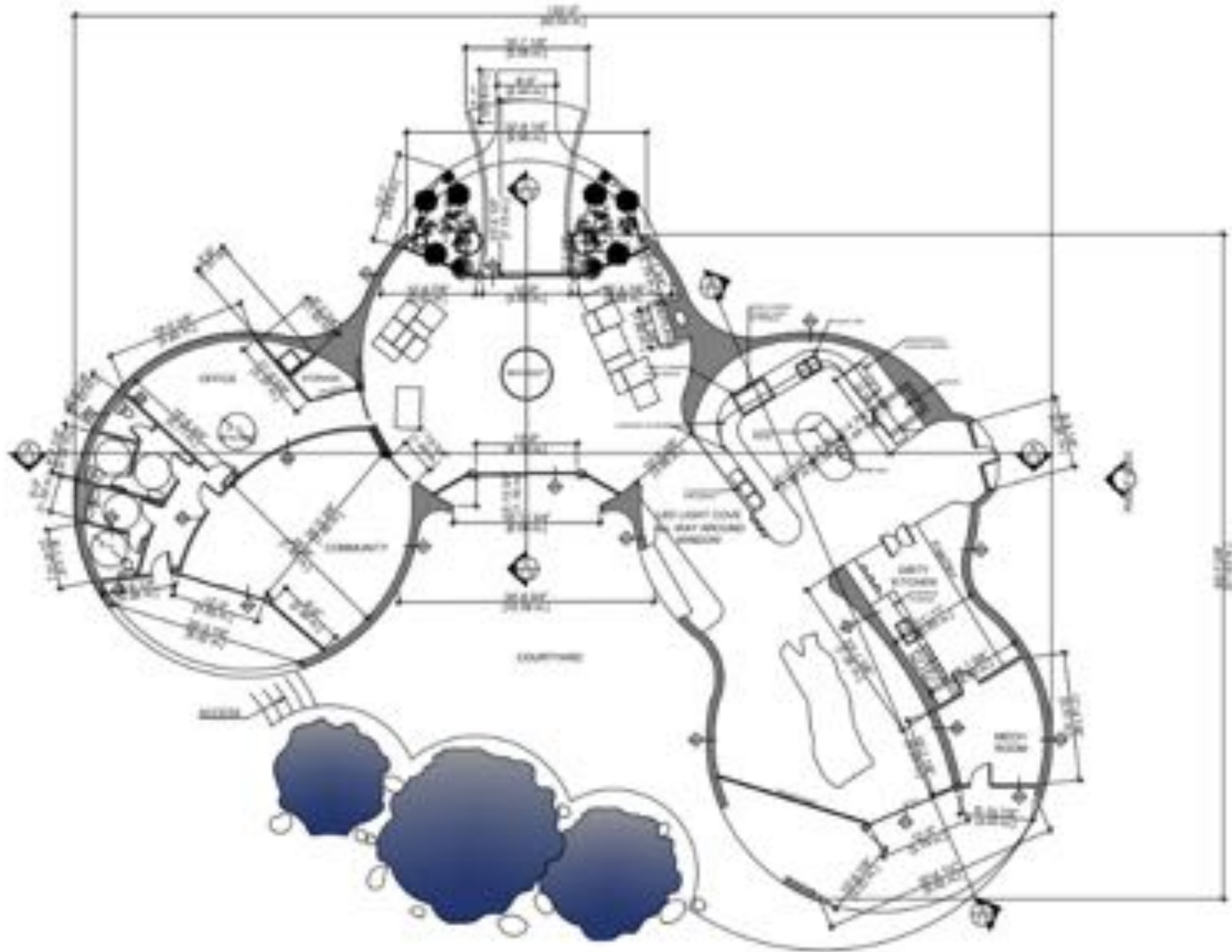




# Biophilic Design

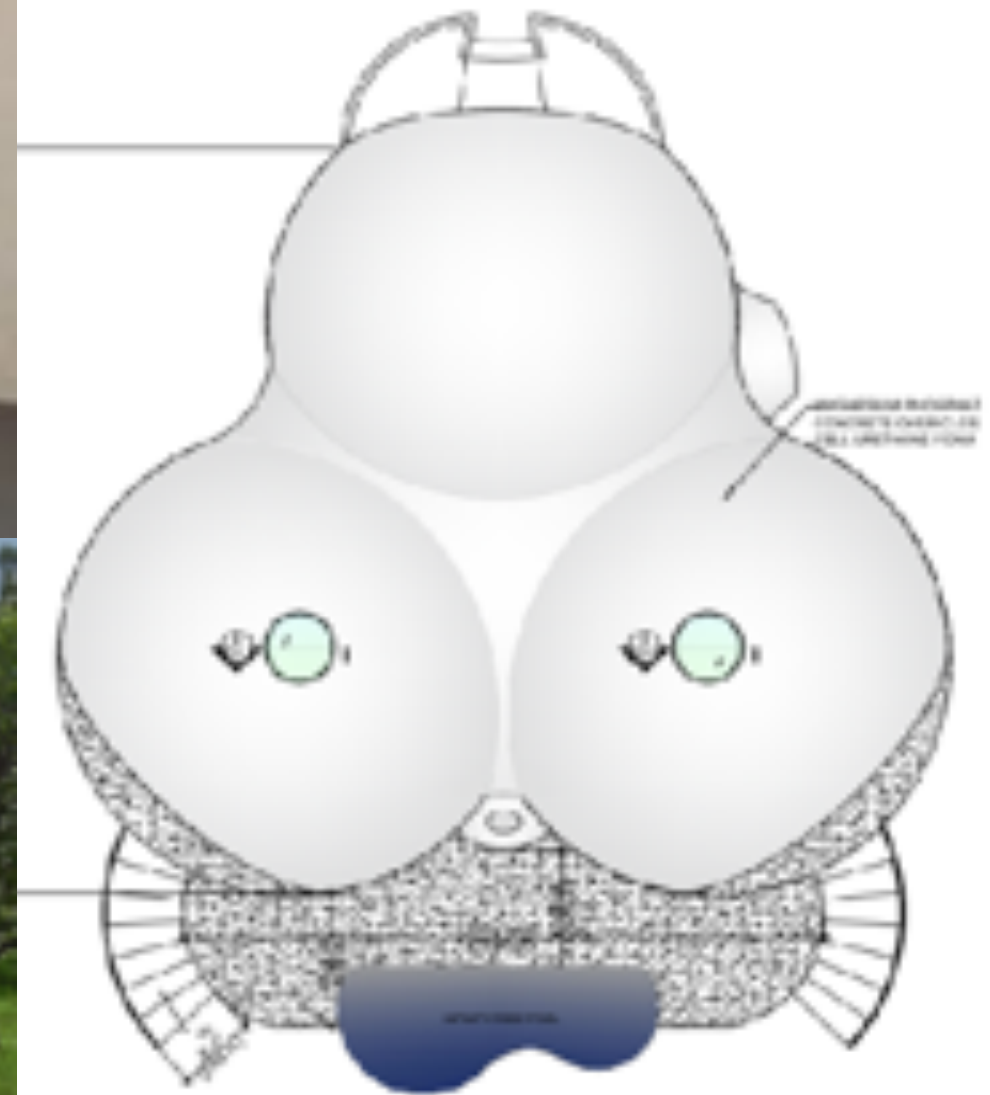


# Main Lodge Building Design



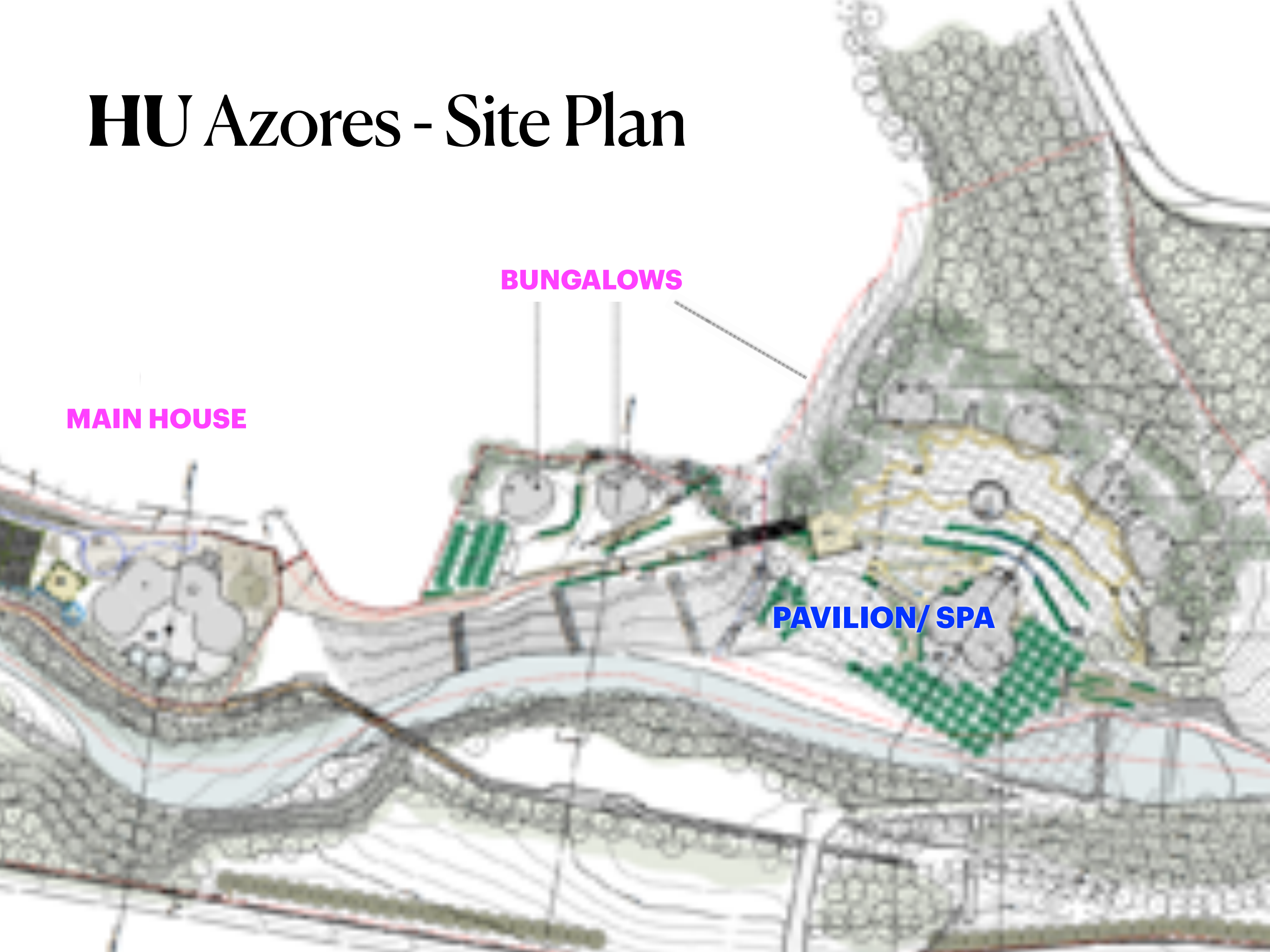


# Pavilion/Spa Building





# HU Azores - Site Plan



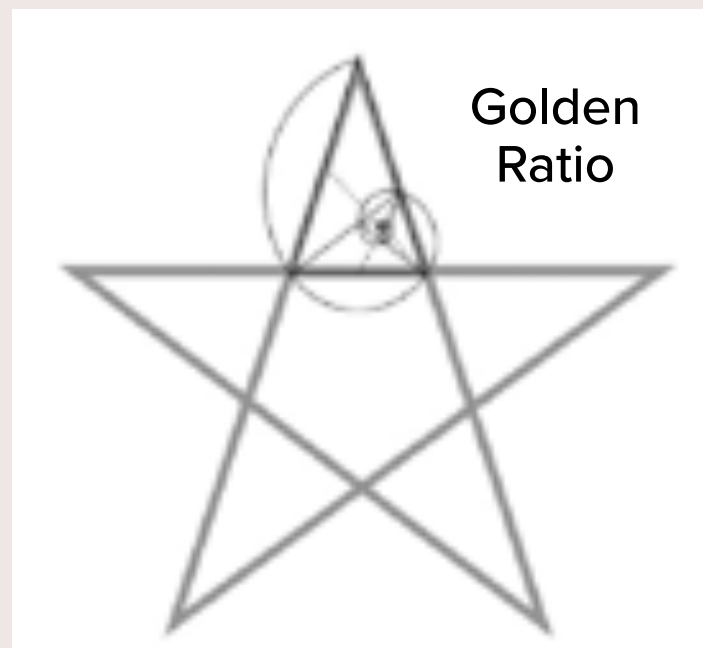
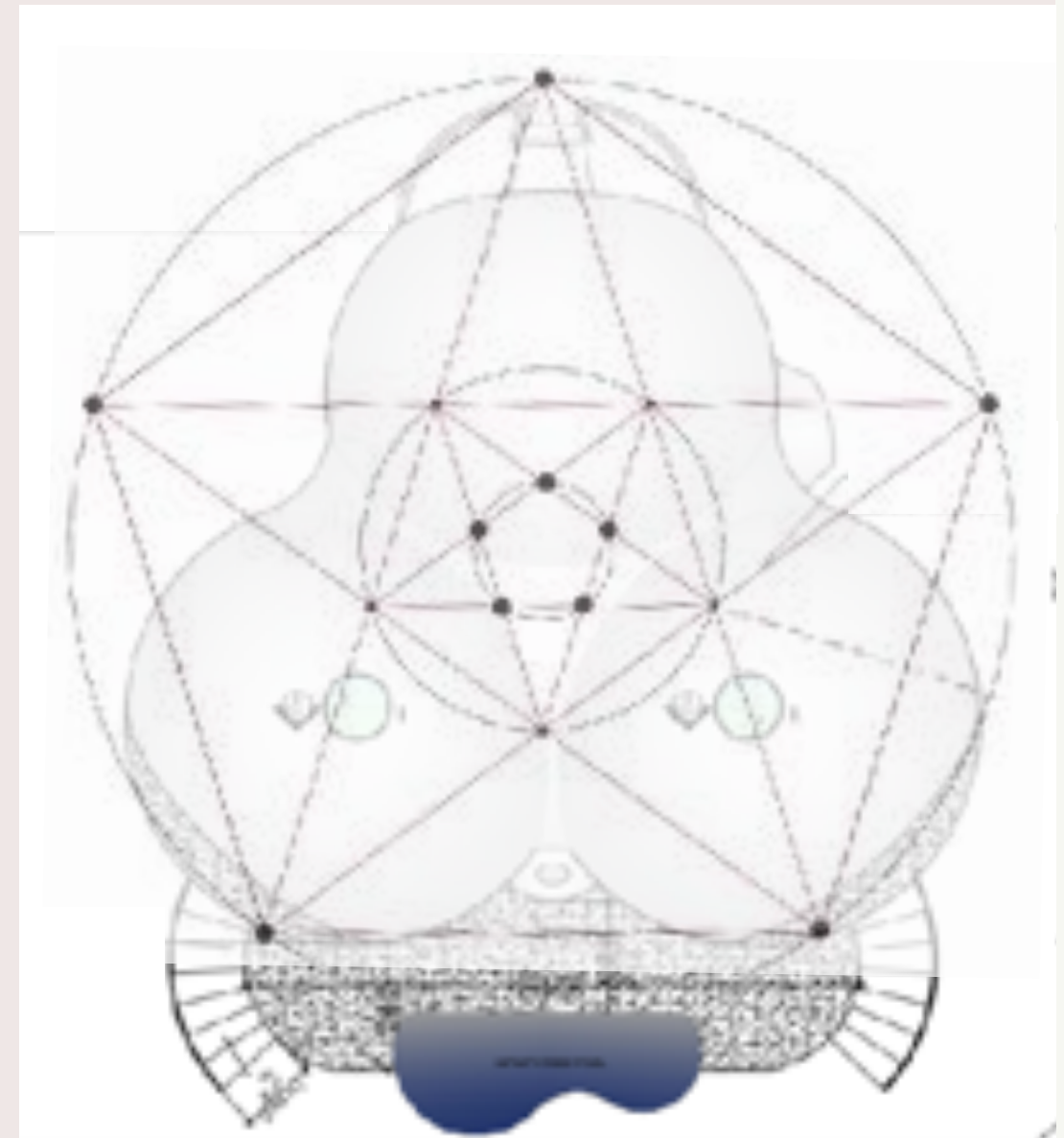
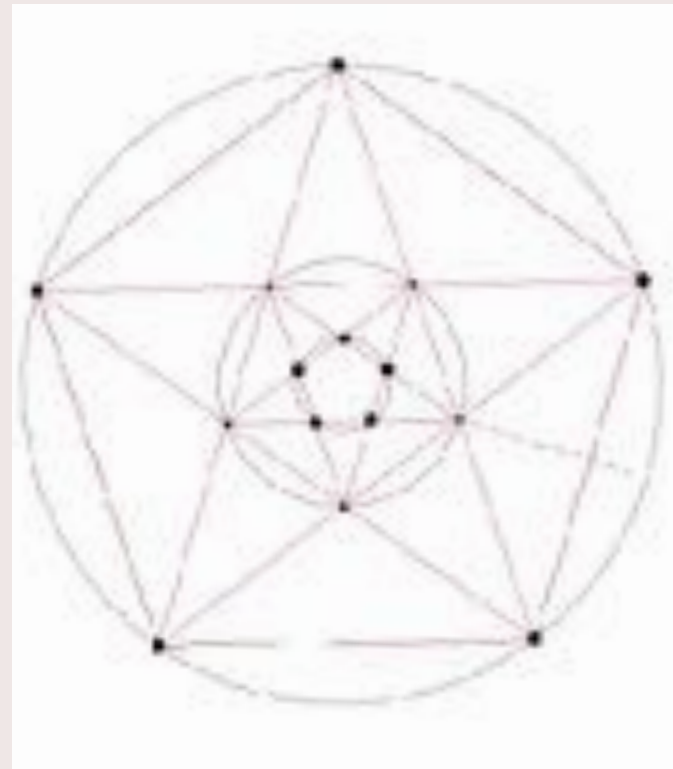
**MAIN HOUSE**

**BUNGALOWS**

**PAVILION/ SPA**



# Sacred Geometry



Morning Glory



# Conclusion

**“Your ego is a set of thoughts that define your universe.**

It 's like a familiar room built of thoughts;  
you see the universe through its windows.

You are secure in it, but to the extent that you are afraid to venture outside,  
it has become a prison. Your ego has you conned.

You believe you need its specific thoughts to survive.

The ego controls you, through your fear of loss of identity.

To give up these thoughts, it seems, would eliminate you,  
so you cling to them...”

# Conclusion

**There is an alternative.**

You needn't destroy the ego to escape its tyranny.

You can keep this familiar room to use as you wish, and you can be free to come and go. First you need to know that you are infinitely more than the ego room by which you define yourself. Once you know this, you have the power to change the ego from prison to home base.

*-Ram Dass*

**We design the outer experience  
to facilitate design of the inner experience!**



# Design Exercise

# Design Exercise

***How might we apply the mystical to a client experience?***

Each Team will design for one context.

Locations are as follows:

1. Traditional healthcare clinic providing 5-MeO-DMT therapy
2. Community care center providing ketamine-assisted group counseling to low-income residents
3. International Retreat Center providing Iboga to executive leaders



# Design Exercise

## How might we apply the mystical to a client experience?

### 1. **[3-5 minutes] Patient Journey Map:**

1. Choose one person to be the 'patient.' This patient shall tell the story of their experience finding, entering, and moving through their context.
2. As the patient tells their story, teammates shall draw a quick map of a patient journey including all of the highs and lows of the experience touch points. You might consider: the setting, physical space, guest experience, languaging around psychedelic experiences, etc.

### 2. **[5-10 minutes] As a team, brainstorm a few specific touch points of the patient's journey in a way that brings the mystical to life in their experience.**

### 3. **[10-15 minutes] Prototype! And iterate based on feedback from your patient.**

### 4. **[4 -5 minutes] Practice! Share the experience in a way that your fellow classmates can understand your design.** This may be through prototyped objects, spaces, props and/or skits.

Your share shall last no more than 4 minutes.