

# *To Make a World, Session Two:* **“The Storied Self”**

“It is important to tell at least from time to time the secret of who we truly and fully are – even if we tell it only to ourselves – because otherwise we run the risk of losing track of who we truly and fully are and little by little come to accept instead the highly edited version which we put forth in hope that the world will find it more acceptable than the real thing.”

-Frederick Buechner, theologian and author



# *Liget vs. Psychological Languages of the Self*

Obsessive-compulsive

Sadomasochistic

Antisocial

Bulimic

Anorexic

Repressed

Psychopath

Voyeuristic

Depressed

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Identity Crisis

Stressed

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Authoritarian

Paranoid

Inferiority Complex

## “*In Other Words*”

*tatemae* (Japanese) – a form or reality everyone must profess to be true, even though they may not privately believe it

*meraki* (Greek) – to do something with soul, creativity, or love in such a way that you “put yourself into it”

*taarradhin* (Arabic) – a type of compromise in which no one “loses,” because both parties agree to accept “little wins”. No one loses face.

-*In Other Words*, by Christopher J. Moore (Linguist)

# METAPHORS & MEANING

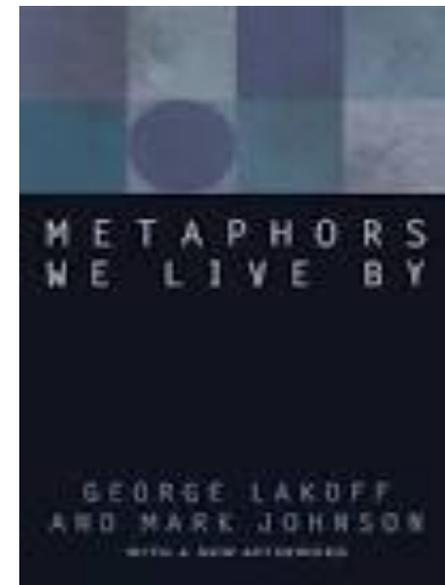
“Metaphor is far more common in everyday language than has previously been realized. People often use one metaphor for every 10 to 25 words—that’s about six metaphors *a minute*.” -Cameron, 2008

“In all aspects of life we define our reality in terms of metaphors and then proceed to action the basis of the metaphors. We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans, all on the basis of ... metaphor.” -Lakoff & Johnson, 1980

Life is like a box of chocolates

Love is a gamble

War against cancer



# SECOND-ORDER AND ROOT METAPHORS

## ◆ SECOND-ORDER METAPHOR

- ◆ Heart on my Sleeve
- ◆ Take the High Road
- ◆ Trading ideas
- ◆ Bottled up emotions
- ◆ Fighting sickness
- ◆ Kick the habit

## ◆ ROOT METAPHORS

- ◆ Life is a Journey
- ◆ Winning the Argument
- ◆ Time is Money
- ◆ Love Story

# “life is a journey”

- ◆ *Where* do you come from?
- ◆ Look how *far* we've come.
- ◆ You're aimless.
- ◆ I feel *lost*.
- ◆ I don't know *where* I'm going.
- ◆ Life is *spiraling* out of control.
- ◆ I haven't made any *progress*!
- ◆ You *misguided* me.
- ◆ I'm not *where* I need to be.
- ◆ Life develops in *stages*.
- ◆ You have a *mountain* to climb.
- ◆ Aimless.

# “time is money”

I *wasted* my time.

Keep *track* of time.

How did you *spend* your weekend?

*Running out* of time.

We *saved* so much time!

I can't *afford* the time.

In what are you *investing* your time?

*Squandered* time.

*Get the most* from your time.

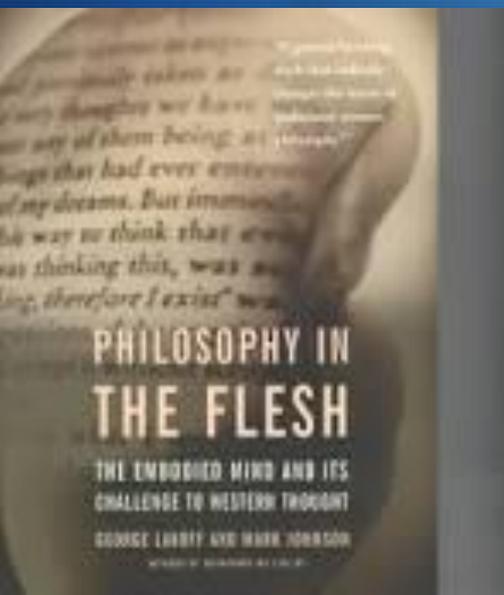
Need to *budget* my time.

Not *worth* my time.

Please just *give* me time.

*“It is next to impossible to describe internal states, abstract ideas and complex notions without using metaphor, yet speaker and listener are mostly not conscious of the metaphors being used.”*

-Lakoff & Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*



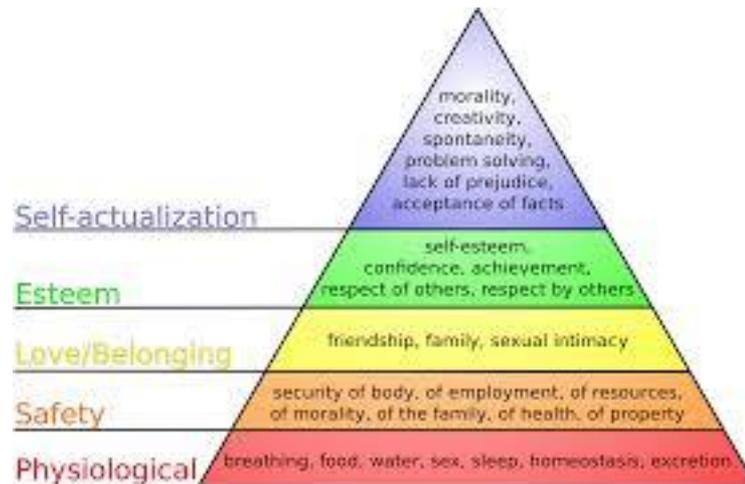
# Metaphors of the Self



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## 🟢 The Layered Self

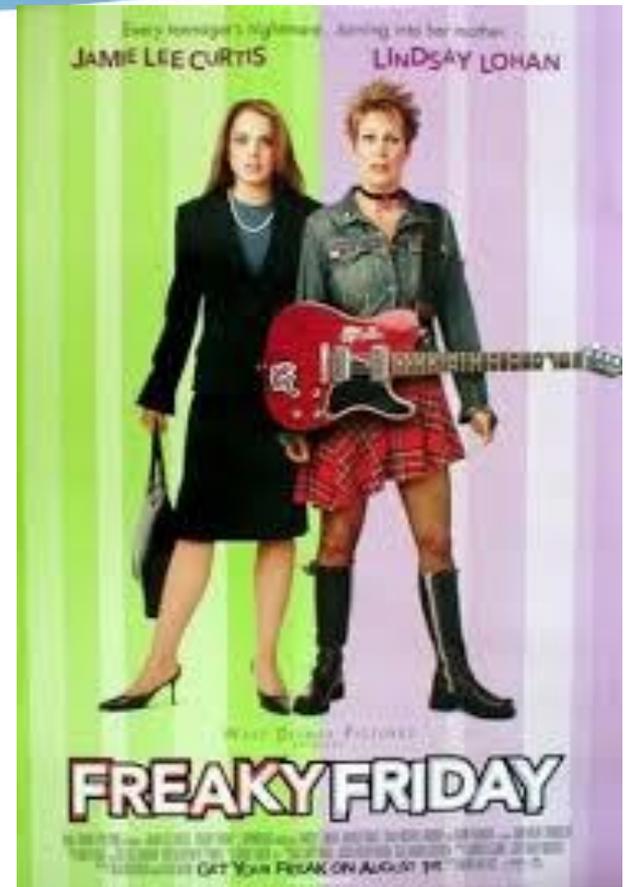
*e.g. Freud & Maslow*



# Metaphors of the Self

The “Ghost in the Machine” Self

e.g. Descartes & Lindsay Lohan



# Metaphors of the Self

## THE CONFLICTED SELF

### NEGATIVE

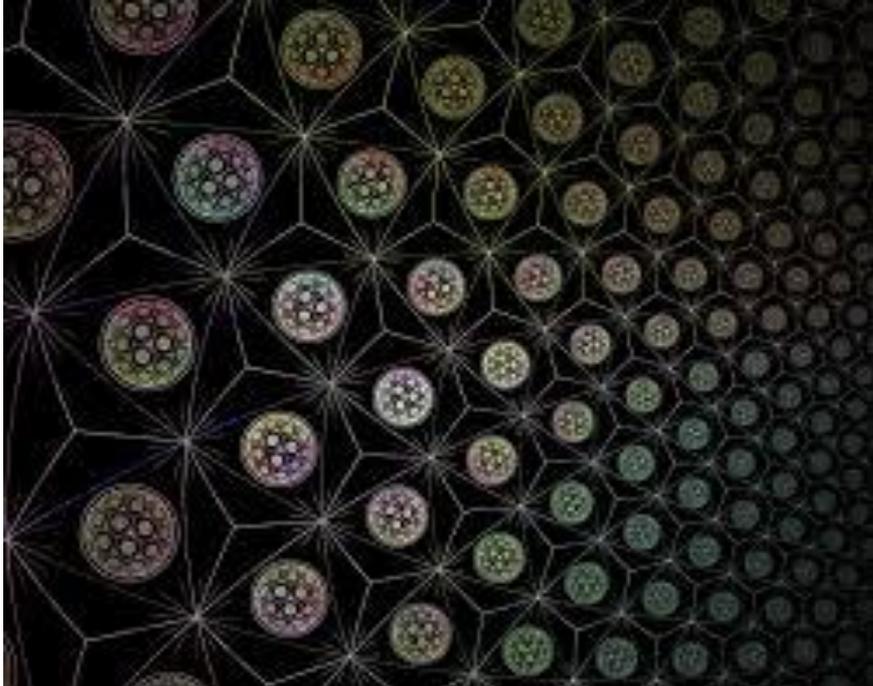
- i. Buddha – “The Six Animals”  
(Chappana Sutta)
- ii. St Paul – Flesh vs. Spirit

### POSITIVE

Walt Whitman – “Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes”

# Metaphors of the Self

## *The Related Self*



*“No man is an island,  
entire of itself; every man  
is a piece of the continent,  
a part of the main... any  
man’s death diminishes me,  
because I am involved in  
mankind; and therefore  
never send to see for whom  
the bell tolls; it tolls for  
thee.”*

*-John Donne*

# Metaphors of the Self

## The *Temporal* Self

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money.’ Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that.’” (James 4:13-15)

# Metaphors of the Self

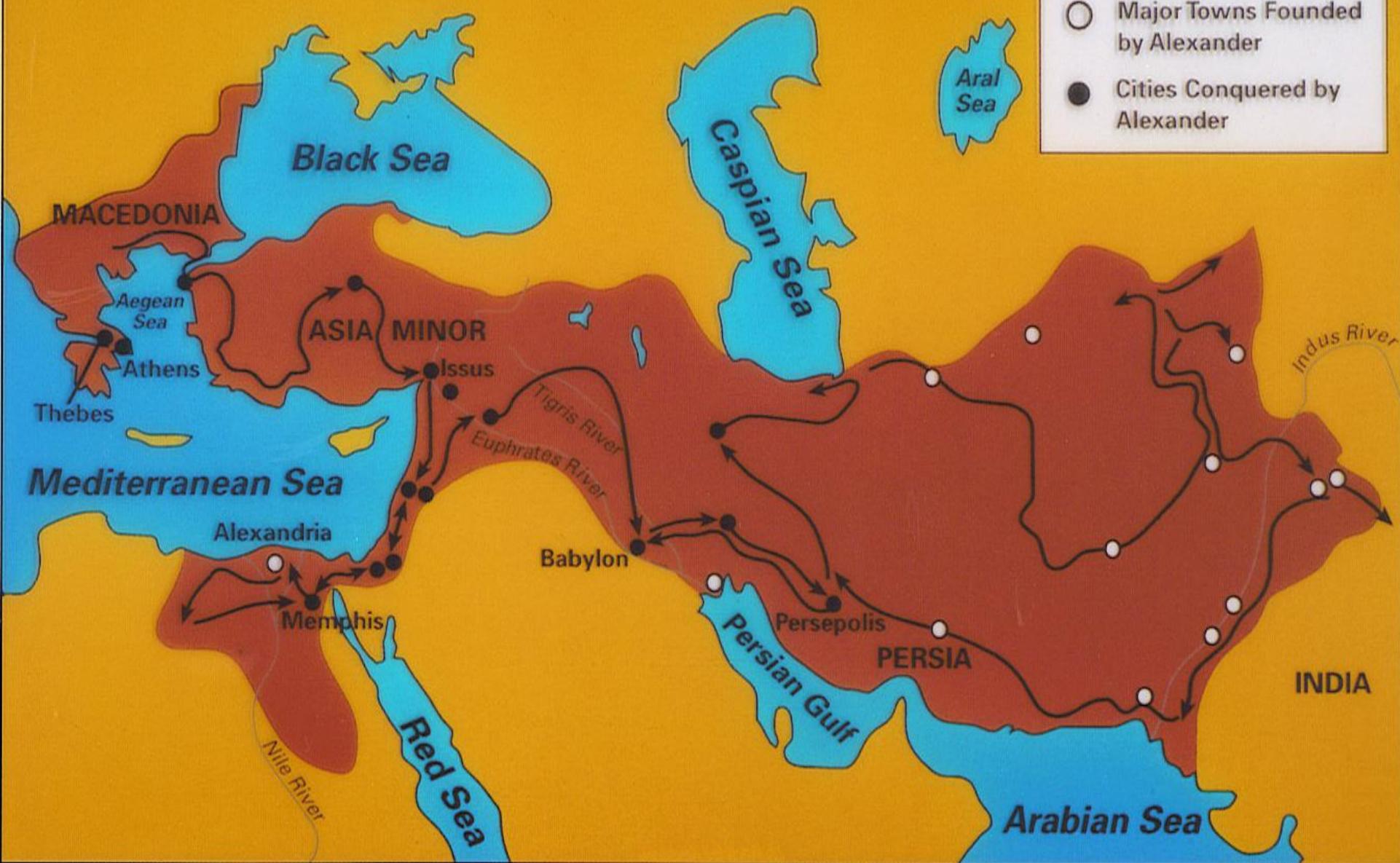
## THE STORIED SELF

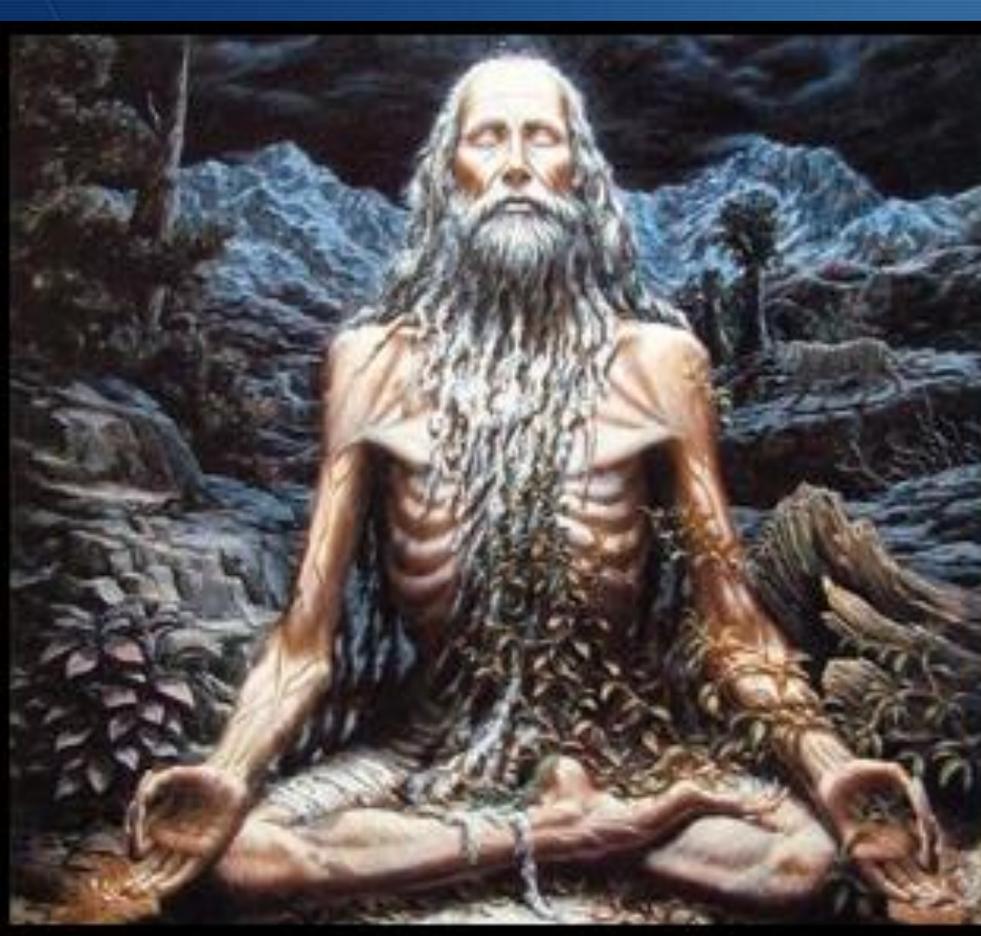
“This is what fools people: a man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his life as if he were telling a story.”

-Sartre

# The Conquests of Alexander the Great

-  Alexander's Empire in 323 B.C.E.
-  Route of Alexander
-  Major Towns Founded by Alexander
-  Cities Conquered by Alexander





Alexander the Great and the Gymnosophist  
(426 BCE)



*“It is not through experience alone that we become who we are, but through the creative act of storytelling.”*

—Bonnie Swift, Stanford Storytelling Project



Dan McAdams,  
*The Psychology of Life Stories*

“Stories are fundamentally about  
the ***vicissitudes*** of human  
intention organized in time...”

\*Vicissitude – Alternation between opposite or contrasting things.



# To be a Self...

## **Diachronic**

- ◆ Integration of contrasts separated across time into a meaningful and organized whole

## **Synchronic**

- ◆ Integration of a wide range of different, and often conflicting, roles and relationships in the here and now

## Session Two: Take home activity

On a sheet of paper, divide your life into approximately 6-10 chapters. Give the chapters non-generic titles. Beneath each chapter heading, write (1) the main characters of that chapter of life, (2) essential supporting characters, (3) one or two key events, (4) the main role you played in that chapter; e.g. child, student, employee, victim, clown, soldier, parent, scapegoat, seeker, Muslim, etc., and (5) the primary challenge, obstacle, or growth opportunity for each chapter.

You are welcome to include one or two anticipated future, or final, chapters in which you expound on what you imagine.

This exercise will be the basis on which next week's exercise will build.

