

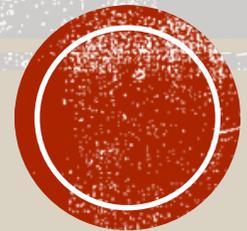


LIVING IN THE IN-BETWEEN

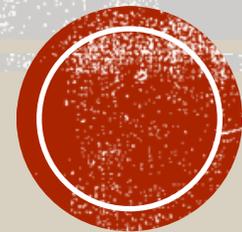
Susan Weinberg

Minneapolis Jewish Artists Lab

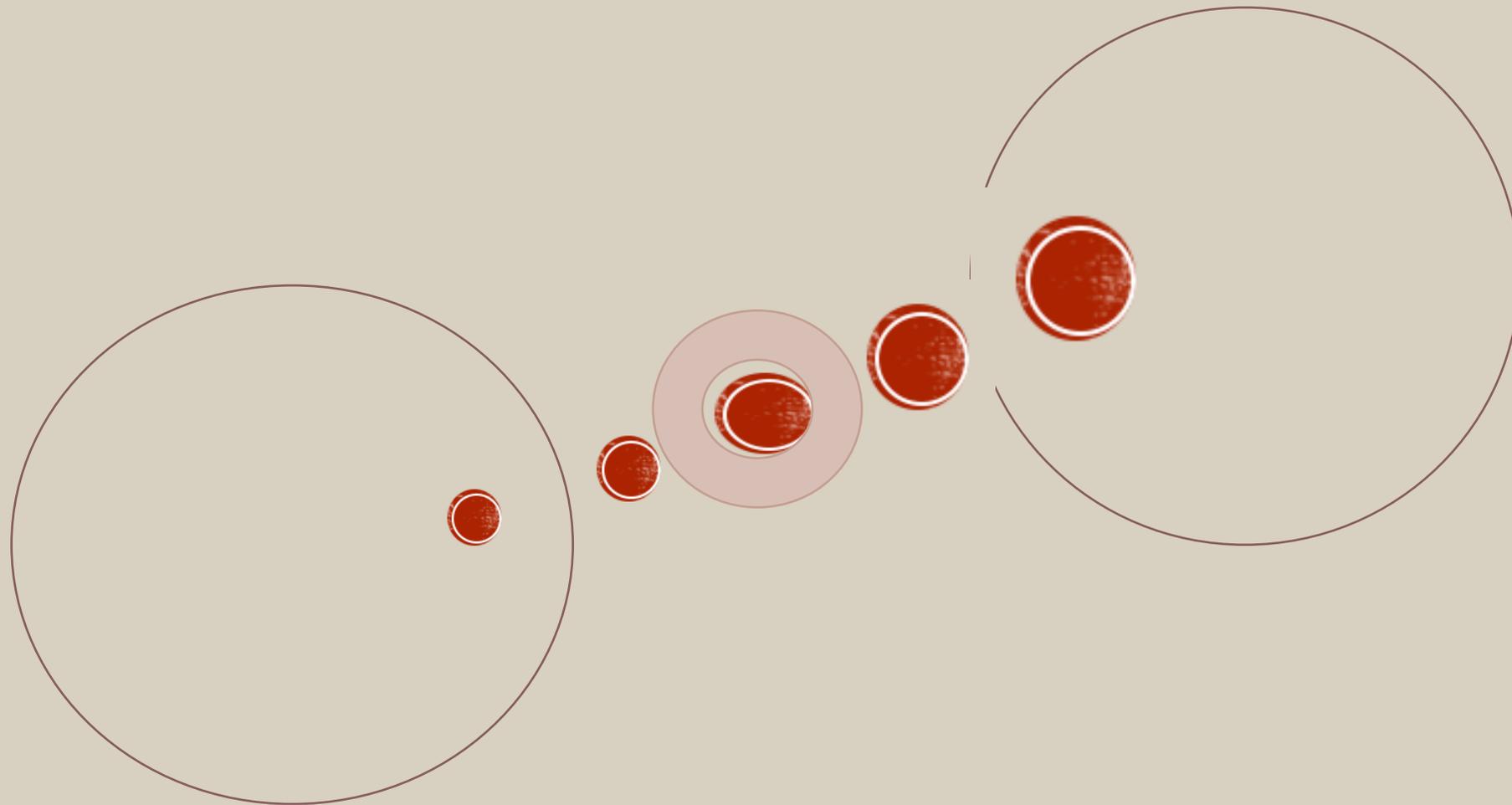
April 25, 2017



"THERE IS A FIFTH DIMENSION, BEYOND THAT WHICH IS KNOWN TO MAN. IT IS THE MIDDLE GROUND BETWEEN LIGHT AND SHADOW, BETWEEN SCIENCE AND SUPERSTITION, AND IT LIES BETWEEN THE PIT OF MAN'S FEARS AND THE SUMMIT OF HIS KNOWLEDGE. THIS IS THE DIMENSION OF IMAGINATION."



LIVING IN THE IN BETWEEN



LIMINALITY

- Anthropological concept focused on rites of passage
- Coined in 1906 by Arnold von Gennep
- Rediscovered by Victor Turner in 1963
- From Latin word “limen” which means a threshold
- Implies a process of transformation
- Unlike ”limbo” from Latin “limbus” which means border
- Implies immobility, border of Hell for unbaptized infants

You stand at the threshold between how you previously structured your identity and world and a new way, yet to be determined. The world may feel uncertain as your path to the future is altered.



STAGES OF LIMINALITY

- *preliminal rites (separation)* Involves a metaphorical “death” as you are forced to leave something behind, breaking with previous patterns
- *liminal rites (transition)* Passing through the threshold, a passage, that marks the boundary between two phases
- *postliminal rites (incorporation)* Re-incorporated with a new identity, as a “new” being



TRIGGERS FOR A LIMINAL STATE

Individuals

A disruptive event

Death

Divorce

Illness

A Move

A Job Loss

Society

social distinctions and
normal hierarchy disappears

War

Natural disaster

A plague

A significant change in political
environment



LIMINALITY CAN BE TANGIBLE

OR INTANGIBLE



WHAT TANGIBLE THINGS ARE LIMINAL?

- **A doorway** marks the boundary between inside and outside
- **A bridge** is a liminal space between starting point and destination.
- **An airport** is a transition point between here and there.



WHAT INTANGIBLES ARE LIMINAL?

- **Time** is liminal, transitory
- **Twilight** is a point in time between day and night
- **Remembering** is liminal – neither there, nor here
- **Semi-awake state** is liminal – between sleep and wakefulness



LIMINAL BEINGS

A **liminal being** is one that cannot be easily placed into a single category of existence. Such **beings** represent and highlight the way in which boundaries of the social world are enforced.

- Immigrants
- A deaf person getting a cochlear implant
- Transgender individuals
- People of mixed ethnicity
- Children of religious intermarriage
- Teenagers
- Artists
- Assimilated Jews



LIMINAL SPACE IN WRITING

- Liminality is the in-between moments, the space between an inciting incident in a story and the protagonist's resolution. It is often a period of discomfort, of waiting, and of transformation. Your characters' old habits, beliefs, and even personal identity disintegrates. He or she has the chance to become someone completely new.
- Liminality is destructive
- Liminality is chaotic
- Liminality is the place of transformation
 - Joe Bunting at <http://thewritepractice.com/liminality-story/>



TRANSIENCE

- Transience has to do with change, and liminal space and time are in-between places and moments. They are boundaries. They are neither here nor there. Transience is also neither here nor there. It is always on its way. Both are areas that can feel uncomfortable, they are conditions or places where we humans like least to be.
- By Rabbi Katy Allen, Academy for Jewish Religion ajrsem.org



EVERYDAY RITUALS

- What do you do when you meet someone?
- Hug or handshake

- What does your host do when you enter a dinner party?
- Take your coat and offer you a drink

- What do you do when a baseball game begins?
- Sing the National Anthem

- How does a conference begin?
- A Keynote speech

- How does the school day begin in grade school?
- A School Bell, The Pledge of Allegiance



MARKING THE TRANSITORY IN JUDAISM

- **Mezuzah**- protects upon going out and coming in, means lintel
- **Lighting Candles**- we sanctify the liminal moments when day meets night
- **Havdallah** – marks the end of Shabbat
- **Benediction** – marks the close of prayers
- **Bar or Bat Mitzvah** – marks transition to adulthood



LIMINALITY IN JEWISH HOLIDAYS

- **Passover** marks that period between leaving what we knew and approaching the unknown, the transition from slavery to freedom
- **Counting the Omer** marks the period from **Passover** to **Shavuot**, a gestation period of preparing to receive the law
- During **Sukkot** we live in a liminal space, neither in nor out, during a season whose weather is often unpredictable.
- **Purim**'s heroine is a Jew pretending to be a Gentile, masks and disguises reflect liminality as well, neither here, nor there
- During the period from **Rosh Hashanah** to **Yom Kippur** we are in a liminal state whether inscribed for life or death.



QUESTIONS?

