

The Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth

Sheila Scotese Spremulli

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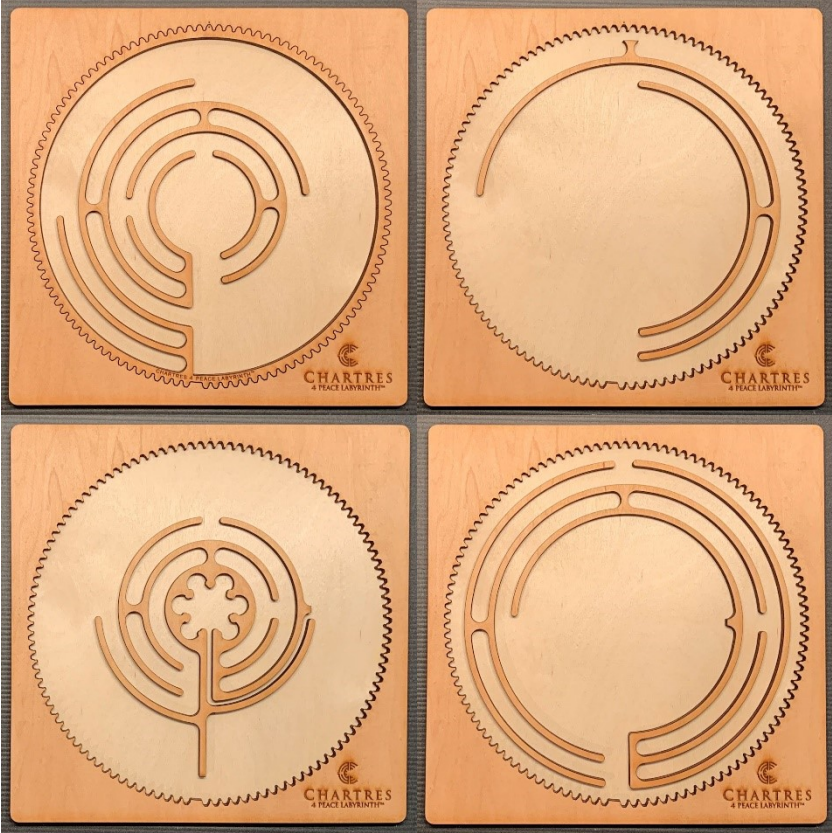
On the flight home from Paris after two weeks studying Chartres Cathedral, its labyrinth, crypt and the seventh Liberal Art, *Astronomica*, with Ubiquity University, I watched the film, *Mary Queen of Scots*. In the film's wedding feast scene, Wayne McGregor, known for his science-inspired dance movements, seemed to be choreographing the wayfinding behavior sperm exhibit as they move *en masse* to reach and fuse with the same egg. Similarly, my interest in human embryogenesis, the embryosophical work of Jaap Van der Wal, my involvement with Jungian and Birth Psychology and my experiences as a transformative learner have led me to discover a puzzle and spiral path within the Chartres labyrinth pattern – which I call the Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth™



*Figure 1 (above):
The Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth puzzle*

*Figure 2 (left):
The Chartres 4 Peace
Labyrinth Spiral Path as a mobile*

To me, the following four puzzle pieces of the Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth (Figures 3-6) symbolize the universal behaviors expressed during conception, implantation, cardiogenesis and somatogenesis by which the embryo preforms itself. The Spiral Path (Figure 2), represents each person's unique and unrepeatable biographical journey.



Figures 3 to 6: the four puzzle pieces of the labyrinth

Using artist Alex Gray's outline for creative work, I will attempt to summarize how the Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth was uncovered.

The Creative Process

Formulation: discovery of the artist's subject or problem

In 2014-2016 I was working toward two different certifications – one in birth psychology and one in spiritual direction. While waiting to enter the labyrinth during spiritual direction training, I got the idea that the six petals around the heart of the Chartres labyrinth

represented the Cardinal Movements of Birth: Descent, Flexion, Engagement, Internal Rotation, Restitution and Birth. With this connection made, and because embryogenesis, birth and rebirth share common behaviors, I began to wrestle with the problem of how I might use the Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth to support the healing of less than optimal pregnancies and birth, and how to apply the innate wisdom of embryogenesis and physiological birth to support adult spiritual formation.

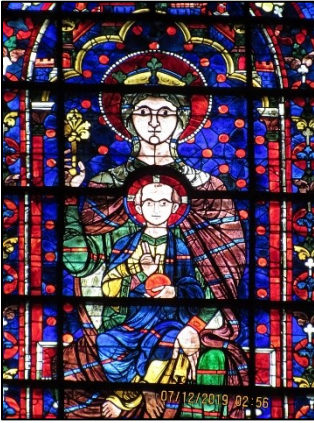
Saturation: a period of intense research on the subject or problem

I was expected to ground my spiritual direction studies in an established wisdom tradition. I knew I had found the right one when I discovered that Western and Eastern Alchemy both considered human embryogenesis as a model for spiritual awakening and rebirth. Additionally, interpreting the Cardinal Movements of Birth as the petals around the center of the Chartres labyrinth led me to compare the heart as the locus of rebirth; as in the stages of spiritual ripening or grief. [Irland 2010]

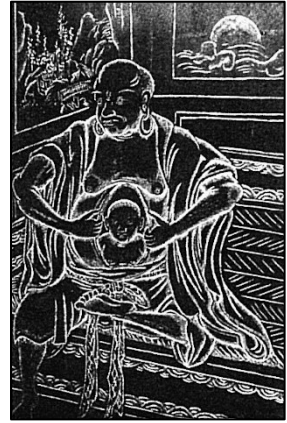
One reason I went to Chartres was to see if I could see the stained glass window above the high altar while standing in the heart of the labyrinth. I reasoned that it must have been important to the builders for them to place that particular version of the Seat of Wisdom there. I suspected the aged Madonna and Child in that window had something to tell me about my own aging and how the Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth might cultivate my own and other people's conscious eldering work.



***Figure 7: the author
at the center of the
Chartres Cathedral
labyrinth, looking toward
the high altar***



*Figure 8 (left):
Seat of Wisdom*



*Figure 9 (right):
Spirit Embryo or
Immortal Fetus*

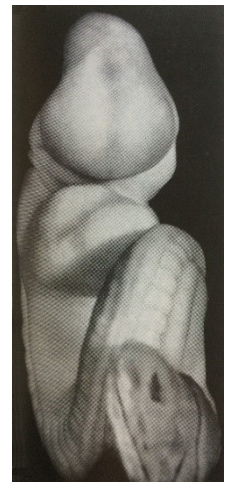
I like to compare Figures 8 and 9 because the Taoist monk gestating the Spirit Embryo and the Madonna holding Christ are all depicted as aged.

***Incubation: letting the unconscious sift the information
and develop a response***

In 2015, as a graduate of the Association of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health certification course for educators, I was invited to speak about my how I successfully completed the curriculum. I intended to use quadrants of the labyrinth to tell my story. However, I found that ‘verticalizing’ the labyrinth as if it were a spiral staircase allowed me to access deeper levels of understanding myself through the curriculum.

Inspiration: A flash of one’s own unique solution to the problem

After ‘walking’ the labyrinth with different color pencils multiple times, I still couldn’t decipher where one stage of learning began and the other ended. Out of frustration, I decided to cut the path with scissors. As I cut, the four stages of my own transformative learning process literally fell out of the paper on which I had printed the labyrinth. Not only did the stages of my learning trajectory present themselves, they were revealed in the correct developmental order of human embryogenesis. Some time later, the first laser cut prototype of the Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth showed that the path was indeed a spiral.



***Figure 10: Note the spiral shape
of this embryo [Heilmeyer, 1967]***

Translation: bringing the internal solution to outer form

Once copyrighted, I began taking the design to local makerspaces to create prototypes and in 2019 I found a local laser cutter able to produce the Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth using solar power.

Integration: sharing the creative answer with the world and getting feedback

The Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth was well received by Ubiquity University and the students and faculty attending the 2019 Chartres Academy. I continue to develop it as a birth psychology teaching tool, but I suspect it will take me to even more places and show me ways in which it might be used to address the ever-increasing concerns of a world in flux.

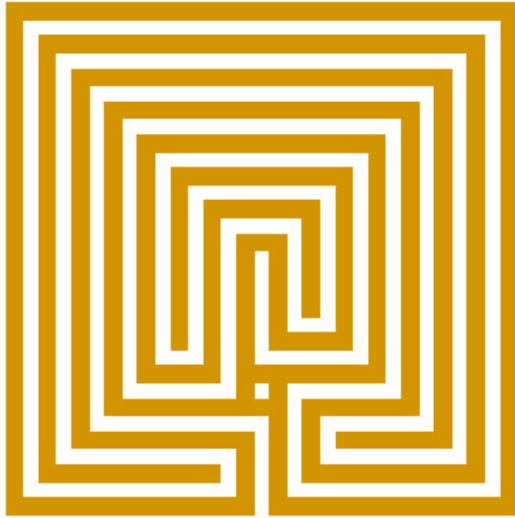
Each succeeding age formulates its characteristic concerns... each era... presents a different philosophical stance, but each one exists, like an embryo waiting for its own time to be born, in the womb of the preceding age. With the move 'away' from myth... the labyrinth is understood to exist within the mind of the individual. [Hackworth 2012, quoting Peyronie, p.231]

Sheila Scotese Spremulli, Bentleyville, Ohio, USA
Email: spremulli.s@gmail.com

The Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth™ puzzle and spiral path is available in different sizes and types of wood and can be personalized to order. Visit: www.chartres4peacelabyrinth.com for details.

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LABYRINTH PATHWAYS

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