

What the Fuck is Going on?

Take your Depression on Vacation

04/07/25

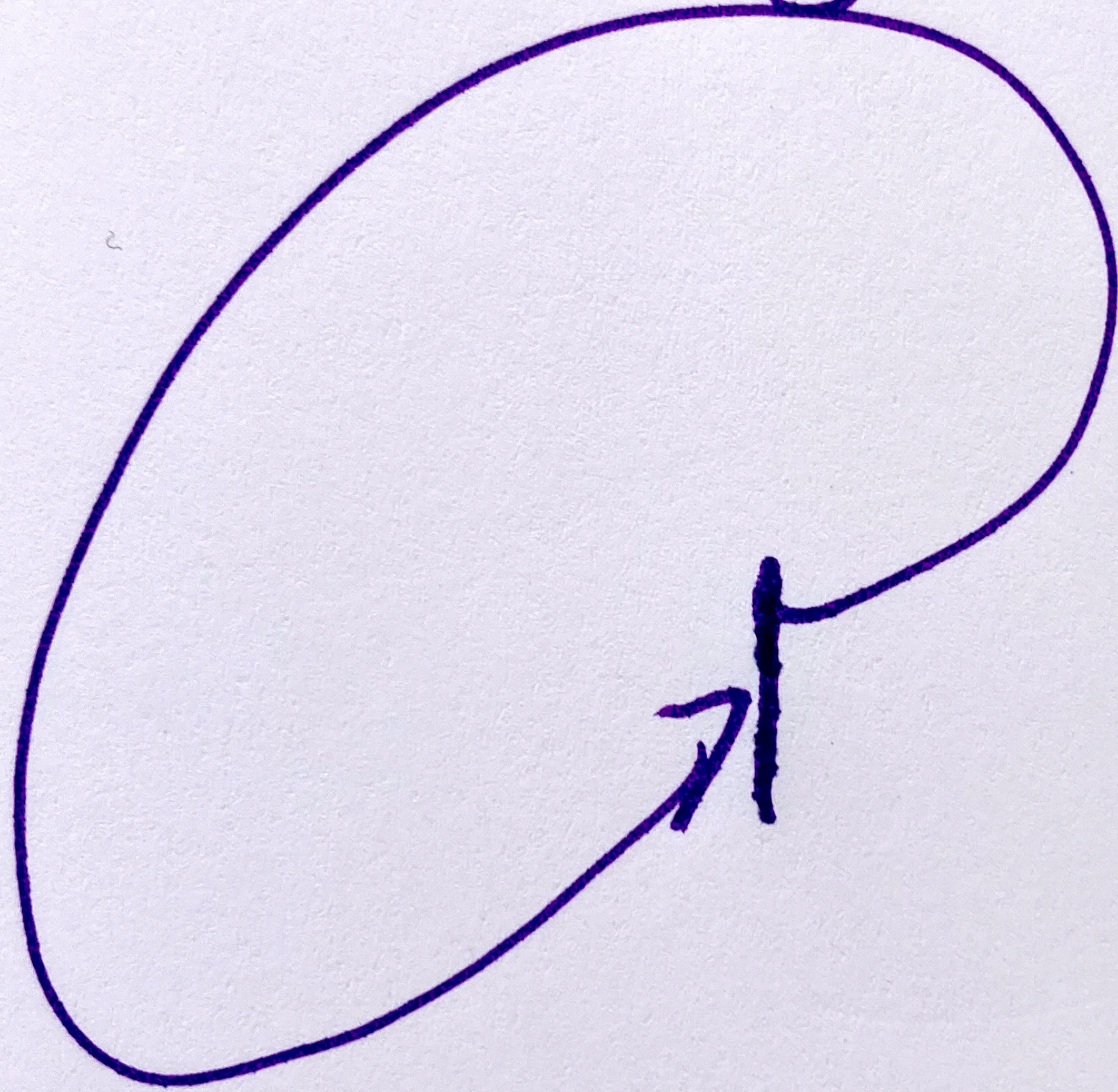
Macon Holt, PhD – Aesthetic Theory

Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Theories of Depression

Inward Directed Anger

How can they help us understand what is going on?

Anger



Freud – Mourning and Melancholia

Mourning and Melancholia

Mourning

- External object lost
- Anger and sadness at the loss of the object
- Slow recovery and repair of psyche for a reality in which the object is gone

Melancholia

- External object lost – but confused with internal object as part of the self
- Anger and sadness turn inward to prevent losing some part of the self
- Indefinite depression

Klein – The Depressive Position

The Paranoid/Schizoid and Depressive Positions

Paranoid/Schizoid

- Splitting (things/part object are all good or all bad)
- Good and bad things are external
- Paranoia that bad things will come and cause one to be aggressive/violent

Depressive

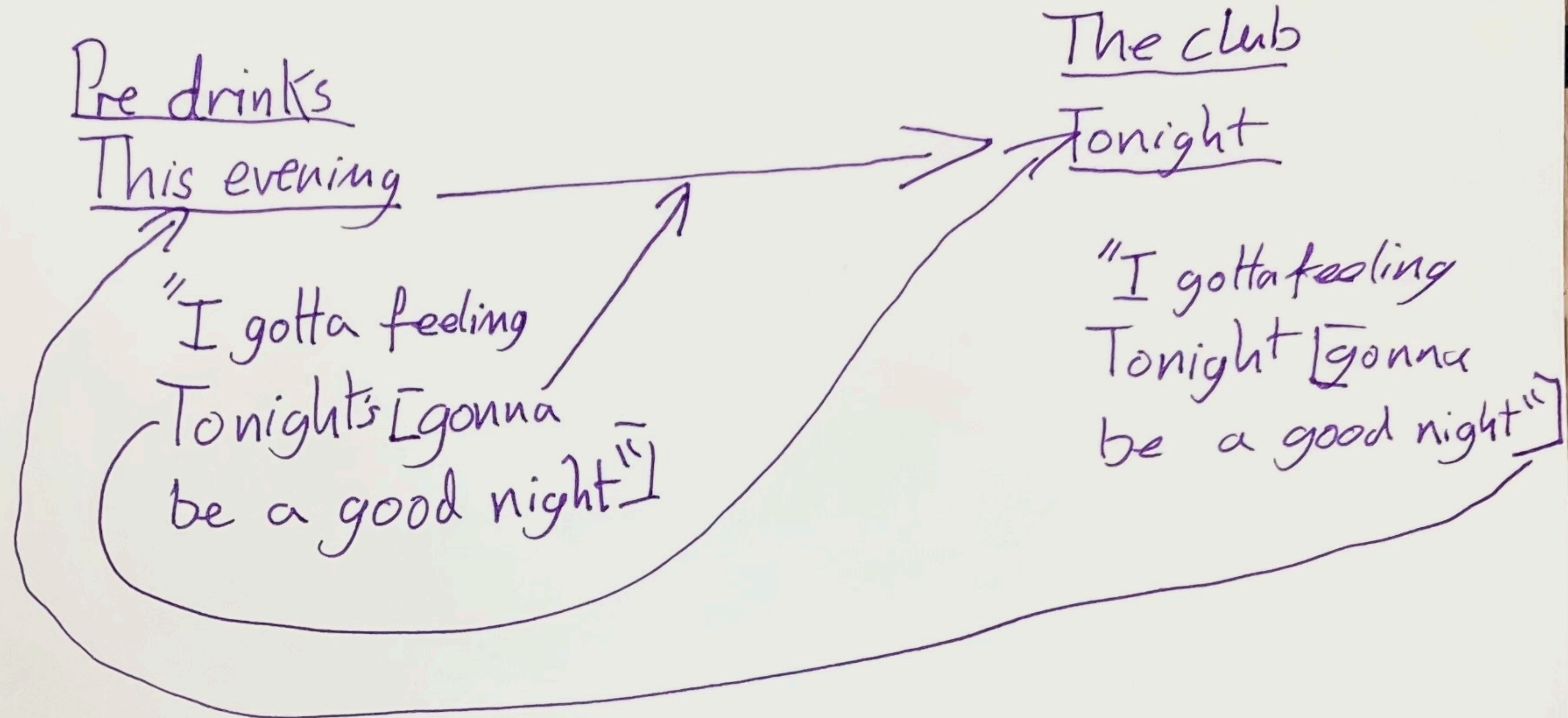
- Integration (things/whole objects can do bad and good)
- External and internal things have the potential to do both bad and good acts
- Ability to transform hateful feelings into guilt and reparative action
- Loss of the fantasy of finding the all good

Because these are positions, we don't always stay in one or the other

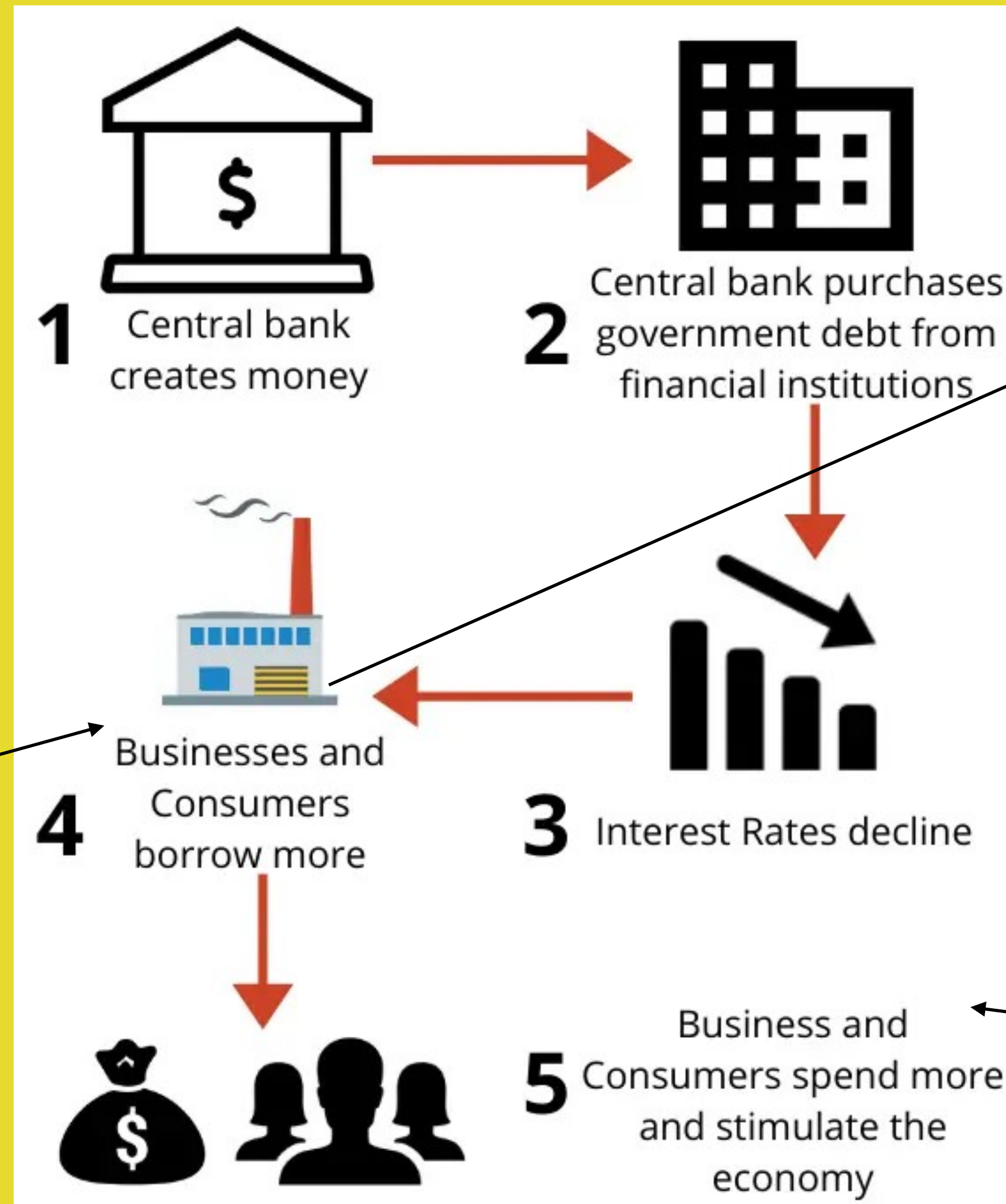
Cultural Uses of theories of Depression

- Mark Fisher – Ghosts of My Life, Good for Nothing
- Lauren Berlant – Cruel Optimism
- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick – Paranoid Reading: Or you're so paranoid you probably think this essay is about you (Reparative Reading)
- Climate Depression – widespread discourses that can benefit from considering these mechanism

"I Gotta Feeling" – The Black Eyed Peas



Quantitative Easing in Theory

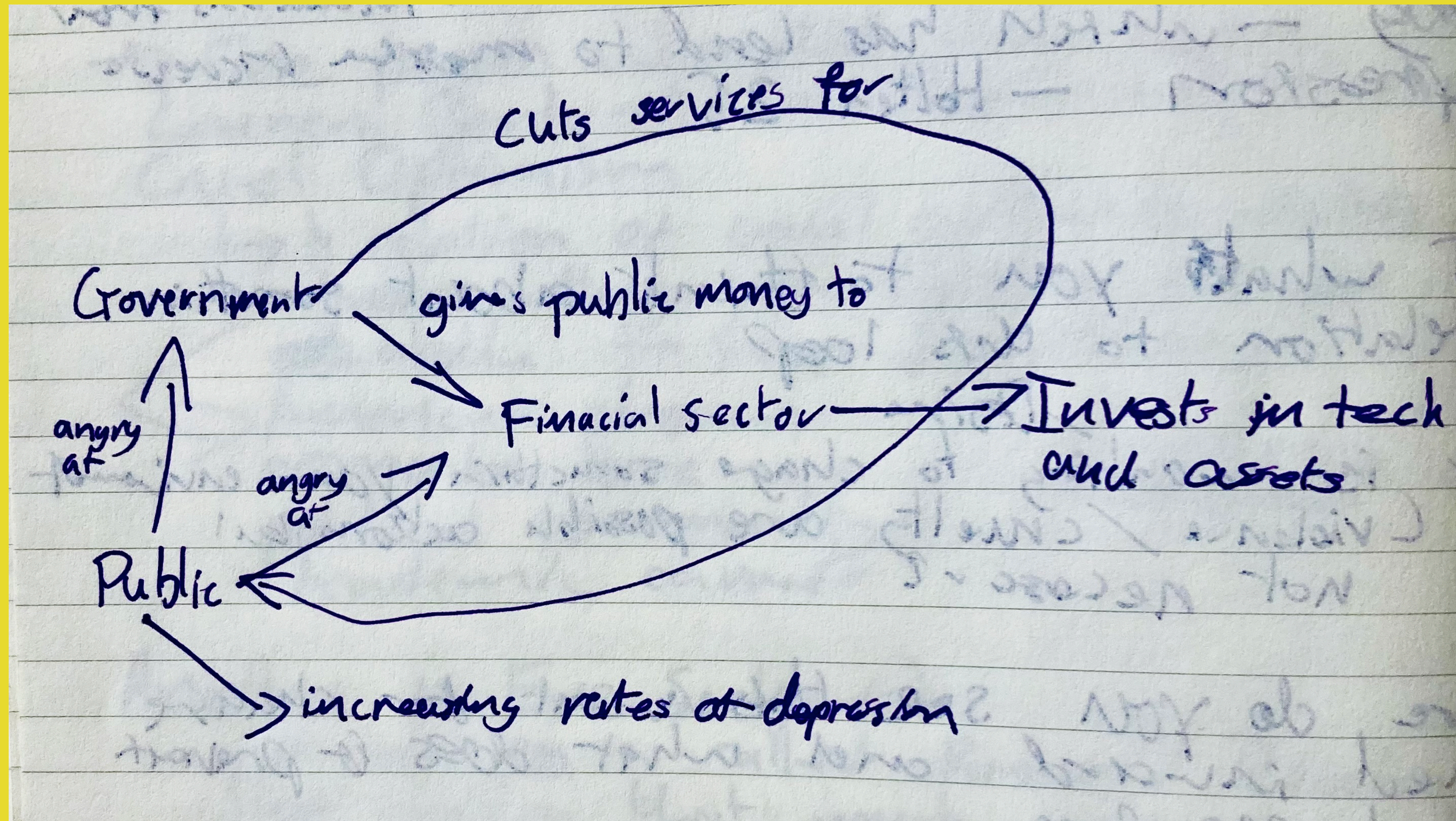


So, the money/
economic energy
stopped here

But not if you
simultaneously impose
austerity which reduces
demand and make
lending risky.

Or they don't
because they
can't due to
austerity and risk
aversion. Then
depression sets
in

2008 Crash



Back to budget cuts. When people don't receive care, it affects their health and well-being. In Greece, one of the countries that was hit hardest by the financial crisis, the number of severe depressive episodes increased from 3.3 per cent in 2008 to 12.3 per cent in 2013. The rate of suicide in Europe rose after the crisis by 6.5 per cent and even after the economy had technically stabilised, that number did not go back down. Families with

adult children with disabilities across Europe said that the conditions for their children were markedly worse in 2016 than they were ten years prior.³⁷ In 2015, Italy reached the highest death rate among elderly people since the Second World War.³⁸ Cuts to public sector jobs make people discernibly less optimistic about the future.³⁹ The foreword of the book *Health in Hard Times*,

**From *Deficit* by
Emma Holten
2025: 246–247**

Looking for Depressive loops in other places

If anger is wanting something in the world to change, then anger is a form of desire

- Where do we see this desire for change turned into inwardly directed anger?
- What does this prevent from happening?
- What paranoias motivate this prevention?
- What kind of splitting is taking place?
 - Who is good and who is bad?
 - What gets ignored to make that true?
- What does this retreat preserve?
- How can this retreat become an outward movement towards repair?

