

Alchemical flames:

Individuation through the sacred and sexual in *tummo* meditation and Jung's late thought

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Impact of COVID-19

I have been diagnosed with Long-COVID (sometimes called Post-COVID) by Derbyshire NHS Covid Service, after 3-4 years of symptoms (which equates to around two-thirds of this project). Symptoms have included brain fog, atrial fibrillation and dysregulation of the autonomic nervous system. I do not have a clear sense of whether the quality of research produced has been affected by this situation but do know that more time has had to be allocated to it in order to manage the cognitive disruption, reduced capacity and pacing needs resulting from Long-COVID.

Dedication

For Sandhya, who we knew as Jeji, my grandmother, whose strengths shaped my past, and for Sarah, my wife, whose inspiration shapes my future. You are both always with me in my present, which is a gift.

I would also like to dedicate this thesis to Dr Steve Buller, psychodynamic psychotherapist, teacher, colleague and mentor, who sadly passed away shortly before this thesis was submitted. Steve was passionate in his constant pursuit of deeper knowledge, developing theory for the sake of helping others, and sharing his findings generously. He brought many people (including myself) together in community. His warmth, love of intellectual grappling, and bigheartedness will always be remembered – this thesis is written in that spirit which he embodied.

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I'd also like to thank Steve Gibbin; it's rare to find someone to talk to about such niche and esoteric interests as these, so conversations with him – although occasional and sporadic – have been encouraging and energising. May there be many more in the decades to come.

Abstract

This research addresses the central complex of how the relationship between the sacred and sexual is problematised and plays out over the course of individuation. Jung articulated it as core to his relationship with Freud breaking down, describing a split between the secular (which becomes sexualised) and the spiritual (which becomes desexualised). Such a division can be understood, via a Jungian sense of myth, to express a broader issue within Western culture *per se*. The method of addressing this problem is to bring Jung's late alchemical thought, especially found in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, into dialogue with the Tibetan Buddhist *Vajrayana* tradition, especially *tummo* meditation, which makes clear, rigorous connections between the sacred and sexual in its approach to individuation.

Results hinge upon consciousness itself as a trainable, mutable, refinable capacity (rather than a fixed state). Dimensions of this hinge-point include its presence (or not) as a feature of mind, body and nature, and its (potential) extension across waking, sleeping, and living/dying processes. These dimensions unpack into applications: psychotherapeutically, a sequence that tracks the sacro-sexual across therapeutic phases; socio-culturally, synthesising Jungian alchemical aesthetic and *Vajrayana* "technological" precision offers a fruitful mode of reception in cultural discourse; theoretically, a re-reading of Jung's "erotic phenomenology" evolves, distinct from most pre-existing Jungian schools. These all stem from the basic thesis that the sacro-sexual relationship alters as a function of the granularity of consciousness, as mediated via the mind-body problem.

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Reader's notes:

Bar the initial background and the final conclusion, the thirteen chapters cluster into six groupings: i) articulating the problem, ii) the method for addressing the problem, iii) concepts employed, iv) consciousness, v) psychosocial applications, and vi) Jungian erotic phenomenology. To aid the overall narrative an introductory section to each grouping is provided.

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“” is used to denote quotations from publications, while “” is used as a more general punctuation device, not in reference to specific quotes from publications.

Occasionally, small instances connecting the present moment of writing (and reading) this thesis are linked to the content; although minor, these details are purposefully included to demonstrate synchronicity as a major conclusion of the work.

Background

The central problem and its importance

The central problem that occupies the current thesis is that of the relationship between the sacred and the sexual as it plays out across the course of individuation. Of particular interest is how this presents in Jung's depiction of a Dornian alchemical model in *Mysterium Coniunctionis* when brought into dialogue with Je Tsongkhapa's depiction of *tummo* meditation in the *Six Yogas of Naropa*. One could argue that the core matter of the sacred and sexual has been extrapolated in general psychological terms by Jung in terms of *anima* and *animus*, *eros* and *logos*, the "masculine" and "feminine", and his overarching (and archetypal) treatment of the opposites. The *specific* nature of sexuality as its relation to the sacred, however, is given scant attention. "Sexuality" has only one appearance in the index of *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, but one which articulates the pith that this thesis elaborates: 'sexuality does not exclude spirituality nor spirituality sexuality, for in God all opposites are abolished' (1955-56/1989, par. 634).

A number of post-Jungian authors have portrayed the central matter of splitting the secular (containing sexuality as non-religious biological impulse) and religious (as "pure" of such contaminants such as sexual desires) as problematic. Robert Aziz (2007) notes that underneath their divergence on whether progress should be defined culturally or spiritually, both Freud and Christianity share a common 'absolute bottom line on human sexuality [which] is that nothing intrinsically good is to be expected to issue directly from the sexual instinct and its attendant psychic energies' (p.131). Contrasting the current state of affairs with ancient Greece's embedding of sexuality into spiritual life Nancy Qualls-Corbett asks of modernity, 'why is sexuality cut off from spirituality, as if they were opposites?' She cites clinical cases

in which for patients ‘the connection to an important layer of instinctual life – joy, beauty, a creative energy that unites sexuality and spirituality – had been lost’ (1988, p.13). In his observations of American culture of the 1990s, even more acutely relevant today, James Hillman (1996) describes a deep split in the cultural psyche between the hardcore crudity of pornography (symbolised by Priapus), outcast and un-integrated to be consumed in the shadow, and the wholesome desexualised domesticity of family life, symbolised by Hera, a dominion of jealously guarded “Christian values.” Eugene Monick (1987) similarly writes that,

People are uneasy with the correlation of sexuality and religion. Christianity, especially, has separated the two in a way that would make them appear to be irreconcilable...The Church elevates religion, devaluing sexuality. Psychiatry does the opposite – elevating sexuality and devaluing religion. The union of sexuality and religion is like an electrical connection. *Wrong joining leads to disaster. No joining produces no energy. Proper joining holds promise.*

(p.15, emphasis added)

Monick’s terms of “wrong”, “no”, and “proper joining” between sexuality and religion prove helpful to extend the discussion. Andrew Samuels (1984) gives an example of “no joining” which appears as an heirloom inherited from the split between Jung and Freud. Where Freud, writes Samuels, ‘observed that feeding [for an infant] was pleasurable and exciting and concluded that sucking had a sexual quality,’ Jung was moved to push back against the sexual reductionism of Freud’s hypothesis, suggested that both sex *and* sucking can be pleasurable in themselves, and that ‘*obtaining pleasure is by no means identical with sexuality*’ (Samuels, 1984, p.149, quoting Jung CW4, par. 237).

Jung’s role of repeatedly rebutting Freud’s “wrong joining” on such points seems to have accreted into a reading of “no joining” in his own work, a reaction of sexuality being *ruled out*

as an overcompensation to Freud's fixation to *rule it in* everywhere. 'I am convinced,' writes Samuels, 'that had Jung not been in the grip of as one-sided an attitude (no sex in infancy) as Freud's (nothing but sex in infancy) he would have been able to explore [an hypothesis regarding the co-existence of two instinctual systems] further' (1984, p.150). This "one-sided attitude", then, seems more an outcome of historical contingency: of the need for Jung (and Jungians) to distinguish themselves from Freud (and Freudians). As we will see, there is submerged in Jung's late work a rich seam of "proper joining" between sexuality and religion, the promise of which becomes more actualised when brought into contact with *tummo* practice. The hypothesis Samuels is convinced Jung would have explored further is indeed laced into his later alchemical thought, a fine detailing to be embroidered up into stronger definition and potency through the encounter with Tibetan Buddhism given in this current work.

In a later publication to the previously cited *Jung and the post-Jungians*, Samuels provides another interpretation of potential "proper joining" in "A New Anatomy of Spirituality," when he describes what he calls *profane spirituality* as one of four dimensions of spiritual experience¹. Samuels' analysis brings in more elements of independent thinking than those found in Qualls-Corbett, Hillman and Monick, therefore giving an impression of academic critique of the Jungian tradition from both "outside" and "within". Samuel's idea of profane spirituality acknowledges the presence of spirit in the everyday, whether that be addictions (as Jung advised was the case to the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, "*spiritus contra spiritum*"), the vibrant aliveness of pop culture, the "high" of consumerism and, most relevantly for current purposes, sex and sexuality. As well as the sacredness of intimate relationships, Samuels writes,

¹ The others being social spirituality, craft spirituality and democratic spirituality

I am thinking about sex itself – orgasmic, orgiastic, rapturous, to the point of mysticism. That is important because so many mystics write about their mystical experiences in the most frank sexual imagery. There is something about the sex act – just sex as a drive, not sex as part of a relationship – that people who engage with the spiritual would often like to overlook.

(2005, p.124)

Samuels is clear that this re-joining of sexuality and religion through the profane does not tie one to a heteronormative ideology regarding sex or marriage, but what it *does* do is tie psychotherapy back, explicitly, to the body. ‘The implications of profane spirituality for psychotherapy are enormous,’ he writes, in that it reiterates the crucial importance of the body (‘the body is the grounding for spirit’), which is consistent with prevailing fascinations in neuro-biology, neuro-anatomy and neuro-psychoanalysis, which ‘take the whole field in a bodily direction,’ a movement which psychotherapeutic practice appears to largely ignore. His rebuke of such ignorance forms a position in which the “proper joining” of sexuality and religion must involve a much greater somatic element, rhetorically asking ‘can there really be any psychotherapy worth its salt that isn’t in some sense a body psychotherapy?’ (2005, pp.124-125). There are alchemical layers to this question, salt being a symbol pertaining to body (Jung, 1955, par. 234-348), Samuels quoting a line from Blake, which also relates to Jung’s second alchemical conjunction, that “Man has no body distinct from his soul” (2005, p.125).

The trend of “looking Eastwards” for solutions

In pursuing these questions a strikingly high number of authors have sought Eastern traditions as sources of solution, suggesting that they combine sexuality and spirit in enriching and alien ways compared to the much criticised split of sex and religion in the Judeo-Christian West. Samuels (2005) makes an overall framing statement, whereby ‘everybody knows about how

mind, spirit, and body have got separated in Western culture,’ so that ‘we should listen to colleagues who do transcultural or intercultural work’ on these matters (p.125). The general premise here is that profane spirituality – including sexuality and the body – has both universal and particular aspects, the supposedly fractured West being distinct from an image of a cohesive and integrated East, the former able to (re)learn from the latter universal persisting truths that have been culturally forgotten in the swim of historical contingency.

The universal pole of the universal/particular axis suggested by Samuels is stressed by Jung in his foreword to *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, writing of ‘the essential similarity of psychotic contents, whether they come from the Middle Ages or the present, from Europe or from Australia, from India or from the Americas,’ unsurprising when one remembers ‘that the structure and function of the bodily organs are everywhere more or less the same, including those of the brain’ (1955-1956/1989, pp.xviii-xix), and that psychic phenomena are intimately bound to such anatomical structures. The *particular* ways that commonalities are expressed across cultures is also apparent, and explored by Anne Harrington in her 2008 book, *The Cure Within: A History of Mind-Body Medicine*. She investigates the startling dynamism of this variety, describing how bodies themselves display different symptoms in different times and places, flexing to alternative culture-bound narratives which cajole psychosomatic events along specific trajectories, “proving” certain explanatory frameworks, leading to distinct valued ends.

Interestingly, Harrington describes the body as ‘a genuinely mindful entity’ (p.24), meaning that the different profiles of physical symptoms in different times and places are not the artifacts of the different psychological lenses through which they are interpreted in that culture, but in fact objectively distinct physical states. Harrington concludes that the body ‘listens and speaks’ (2008, p.24) in its own right: it is not an inert meaning-neutral entity to be interpreted

differently depending on one's cognitive perspective, but an active communicative participant. This implies that the body and its instinctive life offers an alternative source of consciousness than the cerebral thinking mind, an embodied being which can listen and speak with capacities distinct from the self-reflective egoic consciousness of the pre-frontal cortex.

Harrington herself “journeys Eastwards” to consider another narrative that commonly affixes itself to the mind-body connection, and threads through Western science and psychology's encounter with, first, Indian transcendental meditation and the counterculture of the 1960s, the secular mindfulness movement of the 1980s, and ongoing dialogues with Tibetan Buddhism amongst others, orbiting around key figures such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The structuring narrative she finds here is that the West is somehow “broken” in its mind-body connection (often identifying Descartes *Cogito* as the culprit), and the Eastern Other holds the key to addressing this matter. A solution is found through a *rapprochement* between the best of the West (science) and the East (ancient Wisdom) which heals the breakage. We can hear this narrative echo in Samuels' (2005) pronouncements on the subject. Harrington focusses on medically-unexplained symptoms as a manifestation of the life of the psychesoma, but her model of the body as a “mindful entity” that “listens and speaks” as well as the mind logically fits, too, with the embodied sexual instinct and its relation to the psyche as an embodied whole.

Particular forays “Eastwards”

John Ryan Haule's *Tantra and Erotic Trance* focusses more specifically on the sexual and spiritual connectivity found in some Indian traditions, without the wide-ranging overview provided by Harrington. Haule writes on the conscious, spiritually-informed manipulation of the sexual instinct in order to cultivate “erotic trance”, also known as *carezza*, sharing connections with Hillman's (1966) understanding of the expanding somatic imaginative space

between the urge and inhibition within masturbation. In that altered state of consciousness the highly affective, energised and destabilising kundalini energy is brought into confrontation with the observing ego. Transformation ensues at the margins between personal and transpersonal, one's ego encountering 'the life of the soul' and consciously observing 'the integrating dragon of *kundalini* as it confronts the disturbing dragon of...appetites' (2012, p.182). This, suggests Haule, is a razor's edge, the grand object of transpersonal realisation casting a shadow of potential madness, and the process moves into a subtle interior domain recognised by esoteric traditions but still invisible, unmeasurable, or even unconscionable, to standard psychology, science, logic and/or modern academia. Haule describes, in Jung's terms, a domain of highly differentiated feeling function, imaginatively calling 'the heavenly palace of copulating gods and goddesses into being' (2012, p.183); such states pare away attachments to identities and doctrines, resting instead in nameless experiential interdependence, such that 'we return from such ecstasy to live our temporal lives on two planes simultaneously as spiritual wayfarers' (2012, p.183).

That entry into the "subtle body", described by Haule's reading of Indian Tantra, is described too by Hillman, via Tissot, in 'the *prana* in Indian psycho-physiology', Freud's concept of *libido* being a modernised 'restatement of the same archetypal hydrodynamic model of the psyche' (1966, p.52). It is found too, he writes, in Hippocrates, Plato, Tibetan anatomical drawings, Kundalini Yoga, and

the early Greek ideas of life-stuff...called *aion*...a fluid or liquid flowing through all parts of the body but especially associated with sexual liquids, the brain, the spinal fluid, the water of the eyes, knees, kidneys, etc.

(1966, p.52)

The role of sexuality is especially important here, such that semen symbolises ‘an example *par excellence* of this vital fluid’ meaning that ‘*loss of semen is loss of soul-substance*’ (1966, p.52) itself; conversely, by this logic, its retention and circulation within the body (rather than dissipation) is tantamount to the cultivation of soul. A recent historical treatment of this theme uniting body and soul across religious and intellectual movements can be found in Simon Cox’s 2022 book, *The Subtle Body: A Genealogy* (for a review see Stang, 2023).

Arguably the most full-blooded bid to inhabit the space between Freudians and Jungians (although I will argue not *some* aspects of Jung himself when we re-read his late thought) and “properly join” sexuality and religion comes from Robert Aziz in his 2007 book *The Syndetic Paradigm: The Untrodden Path Between Jung and Freud*. Devoting an entire chapter to what he calls “Sexual Alchemy” (2007, pp.121-193), Aziz describes his Syndetic Paradigm as a) divergent from Jung and concordant with Freud in acknowledging ‘how very core the problem of human sexuality is to the more comprehensive problem of the human condition’ (2007, p.123), and b) divergent from Freud in its interpretation of sexuality’s centrality. Aziz’ divergence from Freud is that, for him, undifferentiated psychic energy (which is not *fundamentally* sexual) tends to become entangled with, in a sense magnetised *to*, the sexual instinct, through which it seeks secondary discharge. In short, Aziz states that,

whereas the Freudian Paradigm holds that *the sexual instinct underlies just about everything*, the Syndetic Paradigm holds that *just about everything [undifferentiated] attaches to the sexual instinct and neurotically or secondarily seeks to channel through it*.

(p.123)

Aziz' self-styled "Syndetic Paradigm" draws strongly at root from Taoism. He acknowledges the Taoist and Tantric traditions of China and India would be more *au fait* than the "Western mind" with the core principles of his paradigm, that the 'human sexual experience' is 'nonpathologic' and 'fully functioning...existing in its own right', that 'the unalterable ambition of nature is for each individual to know the sexual instinct as it exists untouched by the complexes,' such that 'psychological/spiritual progress is dependent on the strength of our direct and conscious relationship to the sexual instinct' and it 'leads to the heightening of our conscious relationship to the life force of Reality itself' (2007, p.132).

Whatever the debatable veracity and anatomy of those archetypal patterns described by Haule, Hillman and Aziz, these practices as a whole fall under the umbrella of what Jeffery Kripal (2001) identifies as mysticism. Charged with the libidinal force of eroticism and practiced within ritualised confines that prevent simple descent into unadulterated hedonism, the questioning of gender norms and the need for self-reflexivity arises, as the boundaries between self and other, realisation and insanity (or research and researcher) become thinned down. Kripal engages with these themes through engagement with five specific thinker-theory dyads.

Crucially, Kripal's method incorporates the transference and countertransference aspects of the individuals in relation to the mystical traditions they engaged in, and Kripal too is candid regarding his own inner experiences as the research project progresses. Doing so appears to usher in a crucial factor in what have been described by Samuel as *shamanic* traditions (Samuel, 1993), in that there is a living, changing and potentially imperfect relationship between the theory-practice teaching espoused, and the individual espousing it, drawing upon first hand experiences of the altered states of consciousness to which the theory-practice pertains. Following this "infernal method" Kripal pursues the conviction that the modern study

of mysticism *itself* contains elements that are themselves “mystical” (across dimensions of experience, hermeneutical reflection, and writing), ‘and that these esoteric and erotic structures, however suppressed or camouflaged they might be, deserve to be uncovered, explored, and openly discussed’ (2001, p.305). His endeavours arrive at seven “palaces of wisdom,” which chime with the current method. He describes these palaces as “excess”, “absence”, “art”, “the erotic”, “ethical criticism”, “paradox”, and “hermetical union.”

The (near) absence of *tummo* in Analytical Psychology and Psychoanalysis

A significant omission in Jungian-inflected forays Eastwards to resolve the central problem is that of *tummo*, a key practice in the higher tantras of the Tibetan Vajrayana tradition (Baker, 2019; Mullin, 1996; Yeshe, 1998; Shaw, 1993)². Beyond the confines of academia, Preece (2006, 2018) is undoubtedly a pioneer in this field, gathering, translating and synthesising core teachings from this tradition directly from Tibetan *lamas* and, where illuminating, filtering these through Jungian thought in order to render them more amenable to a Western practitioner. This is a remarkable task which has generated a body of work in which *tummo* is centrally located and made sense of within a matrix both alive to the needs of Western culture and the Tibetan lineage it is part of. The role of sexuality appears implicated in this synthesis but not explicitly stated. This tendency towards veiling a full discussion of such matters seems an essential part of the tradition, such esoteric and advanced practices being particularly ripe for misunderstandings and misuse (Baker, 2019; Mullin, 1996).

Others have also engaged a dialogue between Jung and Tibetan Buddhism (Bishop, 1984, 1993; Davis, 2011, 2015, 2016, 2020; Kalff, 2012; Katz, 1977, 1992; Komito, 1983; Mansfield, 2006; Moacanin, 1992, 2012), not least Jung himself in his commentaries for early translations

² The one exception to this omission on *PEPWeb* (Birven, 1948) will be considered shortly.

of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead (Bardo Thodol)* and *Tibetan Book of Great Liberation* by Evans Wentz. In these, however, the role of *tummo* is not prominent and, again, the problem of the sacro-sexual relationship in individuation is not directly addressed. A 2002 review by Payne and Petropoulos critically examined encounters between Buddhism and Jungian Psychology. These investigations are mostly conceived more broadly than the current thesis, exploring “Jungian Psychology” and “Tibetan Buddhism” as a whole. Therefore the current work makes certain sacrifices in terms of breadth, which I hope is compensated for with gains made in terms of depth.

Other specific research, mainly journal articles, have looked at specific features of specific types of Buddhism (Cambray, 2017, 2019; Maeda & Sado, 2019; Nakazawa, 2017; Young-Eisendrath, 2008), picking out a particular concept to be worked on (the notion of “self/no-self” being common, see Abe, 1997; Eisendrath, 1997, 2000; Kawai, 2002; Odin, 1992, Martin-Vallas, 2017). Other research looks at connections between Analytical Psychology or Psychoanalysis (collections by Molino, 1998, and Safran, 2003; also Epstein, 2007) in relation to other Buddhist traditions (Finn, 1998; Haya, 2003; Kotsch, 2014; Rubin, 2012), most notably Zen (collection by Young-Eisendrath & Muramoto, 2003; also Avens, 1976; Gellert, 2025). Relatedly, Jungian and Freudian dialogues with Tao (Coward, 1996; Main, 2007; Zabriskie, 2005, 2014) and Hindu traditions (Clarke, 1998; Coward, 1985; Whitney, 2017) have also been initiated, grouping into the wider category of “Encounters with the East” (Clarke, 1998; Corbett & Whitney, 2016; Corbin, 2019; de Moura, 2014; Stein, 2005, 2019), aligning with Jung’s original writing gathered in *Collected Works Volume 11, Psychology and religion: West and East*.

Alchemy and *tummo*

The research question regarding the sacred and sexual is addressed primarily through two major systems of thought – Jung’s alchemical model and *tummo* meditation³. Jung asserts that his articulation of the former, in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, is derived from his reading of Gerhard Dorn (1530-1584), a Belgian alchemist, philosopher and physician. Jung (1932/2014, p.128) appeared to hold Dorn in particularly high regard among alchemists, as evidenced in his letter to Pauli in 1952 recommending the reading of “GERHARDUS DORNEUS”, a ‘remarkable man’ who tackled the question of alchemy ‘in a particularly interesting way’. Jung writes that Dorn’s approach forms the basis of the last chapter in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, which concerns “the conjunction”, ‘the coniunctio being ‘the “central idea” of the alchemical procedure’ (1955-56/1963, par. 654). Jung reports Dorn to be one of the most psychologically advanced alchemists, coming closer to modern psychology than most of his contemporaries. Therefore, although focus on Jung’s interpretation of Dorn does not capture *all* his far-ranging alchemical studies, it articulates a central, vital and potent seam of it.

It is high praise that Jung took Dorn’s writings with him on his voyage to India in 1938. In India, too, lie the roots of *tummo*, as earlier ideas originated there, before crossing the Himalayas into Tibet and subsequently evolving in the specific ways we see it presented now. *Tummo* is most commonly packaged along with five other practices by the Indian *mahasiddhas* (Sanskrit, “great adepts”) Tilopa (988-1069) and Naropa (1016-1100), together becoming known as Naropa’s “Six Yogas” (as translated by Mullin, 1996) or “Six Dharmas” (as known elsewhere, e.g. Shaw, 1995). These teachings were taken over the Himalayas into Tibet and then translated into Tibetan in the Eleventh Century by Marpa Lotsawa (1012-1097), also

³ Commonly known as “inner heat” meditation, *tummo* is a form of meditation that uses breathing and visualisation to control and activate psycho-spiritual warmth rising from the navel, meeting complementary oppositional visualisation moving downwards, invoking an internal energetic bliss-inducing platform upon which the most highly advanced *yogas* can then be practiced.

known as “Marpa the Translator” – a crucial figure in this influential diffusion of tantra into Tibet. This influx of tantric ideas tends to be generally depicted as the third of three waves of Buddhism into Tibet, after initial Hīnayāna (“Lesser Vehicle”) and secondary Mahāyāna (“Great Vehicle”) waves that came before, these first two together also known collectively as the Sūtra tradition (Samuel & Kozhevnikov, 2022). The sacred-sexual relationship differs between these waves. Stevens (1990) notes the sutra tradition’s trend of excluding sexuality from spiritual life, whereas tantra enfolds them together, forming a religious milieu that is erotically infused.

At the turn of the Fifteenth Century the diversity of live Tantric practices related to *Naropa’s Six Yogas* in Tibet were systematically documented by the influential Buddhist tantric monk and philosopher Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419), resulting in his canonical work *A Book of Three Inspirations: A Treatise on the Stages of Training in the Profound Path of Naro’s Six Dharmas*⁴. As *Mysterium Coniunctionis* is the primary text used in this study for Jung’s alchemical model, *The Six Yogas of Naropa* is the primary text for *tummo* practice. Where R.F.C. Hull’s 1963 English translation is used for Jung’s text, the 1996 English translation by Glenn Mullin is for *The Six Yogas of Naropa*.

A striking initial parallel in these texts is that both authors are seeking to bring together a variety of what could be considered alchemical teachings, involving the transmutation of “base” materials into psycho-spiritual “gold”. Their analysis and synthesis of these materials could itself be considered alchemical: they both distilled and refined seemingly confused sources into systems of inner transformation widely practiced today. A core alchemical motif is the connection, or conjunction, of the spiritual and sexual. For Jung it was the union of the

⁴ To be referred to as the *The Six Yogas of Naropa* or *The Six Dharmas of Naropa*

that both occupy a similar cultural space in a never more globalised world: sitting outside the currents of conventional thought, but influential counterculturally, both have something distinctive to say about what makes a good life, and both relate in potentially sophisticated, illuminating ways to what might count as “religion” in societies after the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution. It is no surprise, therefore, that the matter of consciousness – an enduring preoccupation in academia – comes to play a pivotal role in this thesis. As well as these systems of thought having something to say about this and cultural life in general, they both have something to say to each other, a potential dialogue that could be mutually enriching; this thesis is an attempt to be part of that conversation. At the time of writing, literature in this precise area is almost non-existent. I have found no document to show Jung wrote on *tummo* himself, although it is plausible he knew about it given his wider interests. A *PEPWeb* search uncovers only one publication on the topic, appearing seventy-eight years ago. Henri Birven’s 1948 German-language “Die Magische Vollendung des Naropa: Eine Tibetanische Erlösungslehre” (trans. “The Magical Completion Of Naropa: A Tibetan Doctrine of Salvation”) stands alone. Fascinating links to Romanticism, Naropa and Goethe, and the entwining of imagination and reality, insight and insanity, arise from this text – themes which will be expanded on in the chapters to come.

Overview of chapters

This surrounding research context, then, is highly suggestive of the need for the current project: the matter of the specific relationship between the sacred and sexual presents itself as a topic in need of further work, and *tummo* – as part of a system of thought that addresses this issue directly – is conspicuous by its absence in the relevant literature. To meet this outstanding need the following approach will unfold in the work to come, with this section already having introduced related areas of literature and binding alchemy and *tummo* as the twin conceptual

motors of the project. Next, section one (Chapters One and Two) presents the problem of the sacro-sexual split through the “mythic situation” Jung presents in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. As it is a myth it is, in Jungian terms, culturally embedded in the *zeitgeist*. Chapter Two seeks to demonstrate that, showing that conventional approaches to addressing the issue – which imbibe our cultural assumptions – cannot resolve the problem, but reiterate the underlying pattern. This leaves us, therefore, with a rationale for seeking unconventional approaches which do not share these assumptions (in this case, alchemy and *tummo*).

However, the *way* in which these new elements meet is important, and this is the concern of the method section (Chapters Three and Four). Here I argue for a method of meeting that represents an *intention* towards universal “unit-ideas”, or archetypal patterns, but recognises the naivete of thinking one can approach such patterns directly – one must become conscious of one’s *projections onto* texts. Considering context and linguistics help raise awareness of such projections, but language and logic reaches breaking point after long labour – at that point paradox can be respected as opening one into hidden frontiers of experience, domains which Jung’s alchemy and Tibetan Buddhism are deeply invested in. To benefit from a return on that investment the “synoptic seeing” of the artist helps, combining active intellect (seeking, analysing, making sense) and vacant stare (absorbed, wanting for nothing, open to experience).

Bringing this method forward into the next section on concepts (Chapters Five and Six), the core ideas of Jung’s Dornian alchemical model and *tummo* within the Vajrayana matrix are introduced. Doing so gives rise to four questions: what are the implications for consciousness? What is the therapeutic relevance? How might the social reception of *tummo* be modified via Jung? How might Jungian erotic phenomenology be reappraised? These generated questions provide a structural springboard for the subsequent thesis.

The next section, then, is regarding consciousness (Chapters Seven and Eight). Here, the *rapprochement* between Jung and the Vajrayana tradition elicits a sense of consciousness as a mutable capacity amenable to training to enhanced levels of granularity. At the coarser end of that spectrum Jungian theory refines the view, showing in finer detail how the split sacred and sexual *approach* a conjunction. This near-conjunction is then taken further into embodiment, bridging personal and transpersonal at “subtle” levels of consciousness whereby the bisexual conjunction is achieved, overcoming duality of mind and body. Finally, the sacro-sexual conjunction is surpassed entirely at extremely subtle gradations of consciousness which move beyond words, constellating in the “now” as a spiritual monument of impossible dimensions. The most subtle stage exposes an apparent philosophical muddle in Jung’s alchemical thought, in some ways aligning with the process philosophy of Vajrayana and in other ways seeming to endorse a Neoplatonic position. Exploration of this issue through Jung’s correspondence with Pauli leads to the conclusion that although the process model is more defensible philosophically, both process and Platonism can function together as vectors of transpersonal experience. The mercurial character of language is suggested here, invoking a certain humility in making linguistic statements claiming to “solve” dualism, as statements inevitably use a soft-dualism in doing so. The proposed “epistemic dual/ontic-monist” position arrived at is one such statement.

Such humility is promptly evoked in the next section regarding applications (psychological in Chapter Nine and social in Chapter Ten). Here, the furthest echelons of consciousness seem to pierce ontology with epistemology, collapsing the distinction. Ontic relativity is recruited as a response, framing the notions of therapeutic application as properly subservient to the reality of lived experience. With that caveat a model of therapeutic application is proposed, with the alchemical containment of embodied imagination igniting potential for synaesthetic transition

from personal to transcendent, navigating twin dangers of *overactivation* (psychosis) and *underactivation* (ego/Self disconnection). Social applications suggest an “Eastern modern science, Western ancient wisdom” reversal of the popular trope, such that the aesthetic sensibility induced by Jung’s alchemical thought provides the (otherwise lost) suitable background attitude for using the precise Vajrayana “technology”.

The final section on Jungian erotic phenomenology (Chapters Eleven, Twelve and Thirteen) turns attention inward to the tradition of Analytic Psychology, questions regarding the “masculine”, “feminine” and their synthesis. The Axiom of Maria and the final three sentences of Jung’s erotic phenomenology frame a notion of the “forth as process” and an erotic *quaternio*. This is helpful regarding individuation as offers a means of discriminating between naïve and late-stage reenchantment. Finally, the theological implications of Jung’s erotic phenomenology are outlined, suggesting a non-causal synchronistic God, supporting tolerance and respect for a multitude of faiths, normalising the pursuit of the spiritual as an intrinsic part of humanity’s inner world, as well as retaining conceptual scepticism.

Problem

The background provided above paves the way for Chapter One, which outlines the problem of relationship between the sexual and sacred in the individuation process. The problem is raised via Jung's recounting of his break from Freud and how, in hindsight, he saw the division of sexuality and spirituality as at the epicentre of the split. Presented as a mythologising *motif*, Jung's account not only holds import for how Psychoanalysis and Analytical Psychology have evolved since, but also reflects the greater fracture between religion and sexuality in society at large. This chapter presents the core problem to which the rest of the thesis is addressed: if Jung's split from Freud represents a microcosm of a culturally endemic splitting of the sacred and sexual, what are the reasons for that? How could such a problem be overcome?

Chapter Two then critiques Michael Palmer's analysis of the break between Jung and Freud, and their framing of religion, psychology and secular (including sexual) life. Rather than offering possibilities for *resolving* the split between the sacred and secular, I argue that Palmer's analysis in fact *repeats* it. The reason for such a repetition compulsion, I suggest, is that it is grounded on conventional assumptions of what terms such as "God" and "psychology" are. As such, Palmer's is only one instance of a whole tranche of conventional approaches that *re-split* rather than *re-solve* the sacred and sexual. Therefore, alternative concepts are required.

Chapter One

The Problem of Sacred v. Sexual in the Jung / Freud Split

In the prologue to *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* Jung writes that what follows is the telling of his personal myth.⁵ One strand of this myth pertains to the intersections of religion, sexuality and science: a complex Jung claims Freud was gripped by, so feverishly as to epitomise ‘the struggle between light and darkness’ that characterises a ‘mythic situation’ (Jaffé & Jung, 1961/1995, p.178). Jung begins the weaving of this myth in the traditional way of the hero’s journey (Campbell, 1990/2003). He casts himself as the young protagonist, setting out on a quest for academic truth in the nascent field of psychology, even when doing so meant potential peril for his ambitions to make a reputable name for himself as a young academic. Seeking truth and jeopardising fortune came in the form of endorsing Freud (in particular his theory of repressive mechanisms) as the most plausible explanation for the results of his word association experiments. Jung describes choosing a Freudian explanatory framework for his results as the most intellectually honest option. However, as Freud was *persona non grata* within academic circles, ‘taking up the cudgels’ (Jaffé & Jung, 1961/1995, p.175) for him at conferences and with colleagues would not align Jung with fashionable research trends more likely to help him get ahead. Yet despite being warned against it by some of his German colleagues, he stuck to his course and embarked upon a personal and professional relationship with Freud, the legacy of which of course goes on reverberating and shaping the theory and application of psychology today.

⁵ Scholarship since re-clarifying the active role of Anelia Jaffé in editing and sculpting this published account of Jung freely associating to her on his life, with potentially influential aspects omitted (see Shamdasani, 1995)

From the outset however, Jung claims, his doubt over the primacy of sexuality in understanding the psyche was a wrinkle in his accordance with Freud. Even though, overall, he endorsed the *process* Freud hypothesised regarding repressive mechanisms, he could not bring himself to agree that the *content* of such processes must always be specifically, most fundamentally, *sexual* repression and *sexual* traumata. He gives three reasons for being unable to go “all the way” with Freud in this regard, two of which occurred to him at the time and the third upon reflection years later. The first reason is that such a claim did not tally with his own clinical experience. In practice he found that although sexual elements were important for some patients, for others different factors were more prominent. These could be, for instance, tragic life events, perceived low prestige, or social isolation. Making sense of their neuroses with a broader palette of underlying psychological dynamics rang truer than Freud’s sexual hypothesis and its “monotony of interpretation”. Given Jung’s inexperience relative to Freud, however, he did not feel able to push this claim too strongly.

The second reason was the horrifying reductionism that Freud’s sexual hypothesis implied regarding the whole edifice of cultural life. Was all cultural creativity only, at its essence, a means of managing and repressing sexuality? Could cultural life be merely a vast array of defence mechanisms, albeit highly elaborate ones? ““Yes,”” Jung claims Freud to have responded to such concerns, ““so it is, and that is just a curse of fate against which we are powerless to contend”” (Jaffé & Jung, 1961/1995, p.173).

Sexuality as a *numinosum*

The third reason for Jung objecting to Freud’s sexual hypothesis came to him through reflecting on the *manner* in which Freud talked about the subject. Jung describes an observable shift in

the older man's state would always occur, a change of tone suggesting his argument to be grounded more on fervour than fact:

When he spoke of it, his tone became urgent, almost anxious, and all signs of his normally critical and sceptical manner vanished. A strange, deeply moved expression came over his face, the cause of which I was at a loss to understand. I had a strong intuition that for him sexuality was a sort of *numinosum*.

(1961/1995, p.173)

This opening segment of Jung's myth-building, then, ends with a sense of Freud's numinous encounter with the question of sexuality in psychological life, suggesting a personal engagement that goes beyond reason, professional observation and the scientific method alone.

The next chapter of this myth unfolded in Vienna in 1910, three years after their first meeting. Here, a tragic quality to the situation is introduced, albeit one also loaded with potential. Jung gives an account of Freud as one who in the act of trying to reach his goal unintentionally works himself further adrift from it. Attempts to sanctify the sexual hypothesis in the language of secularised biological materialism in fact robbed it of the numinous charge that made it precious in the first place. Jung portrays such a process of self-defeat vibrantly:

I can still recall vividly how Freud said to me, "My dear Jung, promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. That is the most essential thing of all. You see, we must make a dogma of it, an unshakeable bulwark." He said that to me with great emotion, in the tone of a father saying, "And promise me this one thing, my dear son: that you will go to church every Sunday." In some astonishment I asked him, "A bulwark – against what?" To which he replied, "Against the black tide of mud" – and here he hesitated for a moment, then added – "of occultism."

(1961/1995, p.173)

Jung reflects that Freud was trapped between the pinioning effects of two poles which contrived to trap him in this way: a *numinous* experiencing of sexuality on one side, set against a *secular*

biological theorising about it on the other. By trying to cognise then and disseminate the former through means of the latter, the light he wished to impart inevitably dimmed.

Basically he wanted to teach – or so at least it seemed to me – that, regarded from within, *sexuality included spirituality and had an intrinsic meaning*. But his concretistic terminology was too narrow to express this idea.

(1961/1995, p.175, emphasis added)

In short, Freud's scientific-materialist language failed to convey the phenomenological kernel of sexuality's truth which re-enchanted *his own* life, and which was most vital to preserve.

Whatever the veracity of Jung's account of his break with Freud in *Memories, Dream, Reflections* it does (in the way of myths) articulate in miniature the greater theme of splitting the sexual from the spiritual in modernity, as summarised previously through the writings of Hillman (1996), Qualls-Corbett (1991), Aziz (2007), Samuels (2005), Haule (2012), Kripal (2001) and Monick (1987). To again borrow Monick's notion of "wrong", "no", and "proper" joining of spirituality and sexuality, a question is thus posed: if the disaster of wrongly joining sexuality and religion is avoided, as is the deenergised state of no joining, what would the promise of proper joining look like? The solution would be highly relevant not only for addressing any lacuna between Psychoanalysis and Analytical Psychology, but also for society beyond the consulting room.

Solution *and* obscuration: Jung's occupation with opposites

The final part of the myth Jung tells of his break from Freud sets the stage for his own set of solutions to the problems of the sacred, the sexual, (and the scientific) that Freud had (according to him) become hopelessly enmired in. A limitation here is that he sketches the lines of his

solutions in the most generalisable terms for psychology *as a whole* rather than sexuality and the sacred *per se*. He concentrates on the broad theme of fluctuation between opposites, that dynamic movement being what Edward Edinger (1995) described as the psychic anatomy of such “mythic situations”, the elucidation of such anatomy being Jung’s project. He sought to better grasp the dramatic means by which the psyche is ‘set violently oscillating’ when encountering the awe-inducing, which both ‘elevates and humiliates simultaneously’ (Jaffé & Jung, 1961/1995, p.171). It sets in motion opposing polarities that tend towards extremes and absolutes with a loss of psychological balance, ‘so that a modest truth is regarded as *the* truth and a minor mistake is equated with fatal error’ (p.177).

Jung suggests Freud to have been in the grip of such a struggle of opposites, his contact with the numinosity of sexuality contributing to his greatness and providing illumination, but at the same time leaving him in a daimon’s grip, fearing a rise of black mud and the occult, reacting defensively to that fear in ways which ultimately obscure truth. Jung continues critiquing Freud’s hypostatising of his sexual theory in the second chapter of *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. He suggests that in Freud’s pursuit of an “objective” theory aligned to the ideals of the Enlightenment, he neglected his own subjectivity, thereby contorting his fascination with sex into a theory which attempts, wrongly, to attain an unyielding universality and homogeneity for all. In his efforts for building a scientific and prestigious theory of sexuality, Freud closed the door on sexuality as a threshold into the enormity of the greater, spiritually open unconscious – the ultimately unknowable. In a thinly veined reference to Freud, Jung writes that,

if our author was of the type whose besetting sin is concupiscence, he would never dream that there is any other power in heaven or earth that could be the source of his conflicts and confusions. Accordingly, he will cling to his prejudice as if it were universal theory, and the more wrong he is the more frantically he will be convinced of its truth.

(par.99)

Even though *general* trends of an overall resolution are described, the *specific* solutions Jung holds regarding the question of the sacred and the sexual in particular are, I suggest, there but hidden, revealed partially or obscurely, and so often missed. That mixture of solution and obscuration are evidenced no more so than in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. Across the enormity of that entire work, “sexuality” as a specific topic is dwarfed to the point of non-existence, having only one entry in the index. That entry, as mentioned earlier, is highly suggestive: ‘sexuality does not exclude spirituality nor spirituality sexuality, for in God all opposites are abolished’ (par. 634).

The disguised nature of Jung’s solutions regarding the sacred v. sexual split has left his *oeuvre* open to severe criticism. For instance, Robert Aziz attacks Jung’s perceived inability to recognise sexuality as a core element for depth psychology. Writing that his ‘only slight interest in this important question...defies reason’, Aziz concludes that Jung’s ‘failure to give the critical problem of human sexuality the full attention it deserved exacted a price in the form of the Jungian Paradigm’s clinical efficacy’ (2007, pp.123-4) being severely limited. Aziz conjectures that the reasons for what he sees as Jung’s glaring omission may relate either to an inability or unwillingness to incorporate Freud’s findings into his own work or that, given its complexity, ‘he simply chose...to attempt to leap over the whole mess’ (p.124).

Critics such as Aziz represent a popular opinion, or received wisdom about Jung’s work, that it is concerned with the spiritual as divorced from the sexual (that being left for Freudians). Given an understanding of sexuality as instinctive and embodied, that prevailing tendency in the literature is described by Saban (2010), whereby given ‘the archetype as a spectrum ranging from the spiritual, ultraviolet pole to the infrared, instinctive, organic, corporeal pole...Jung and Jungians have on the whole found spirit more alluring than matter’ (pp.95-96). However, Saban goes on to argue that this trend does a disservice to some threads of Jung’s actual writing.

Close reading of his late work bears this out, suggesting that he was in some senses aware of sexuality's primacy in spiritual and psychological life, albeit veiling these ideas in various ways. In *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, for instance, Jung acknowledges sexuality's supreme capacity for accessing the unconscious, stating that 'apart from the personal striving for power, or *superbia*, love in the sense of *concupiscentia* [concupiscence]⁶, is the dynamism that most infallibly brings the unconscious to light' (1955-6/1989, par.99).

Alchemical allusions to the sacred and sexual

Another example of integrating the sacred and sexual is prominent in the *denouement* of Jung's psychological interpretation of the alchemical procedure (1955-6/1989, par. 694-706). This is especially significant as these passages are a cornerstone of his late thoughts on individuation, describing a transformation of consciousness from the narrow bounds of the ego to integrate an all-embracing consciousness of the self. Based on his research into medieval alchemical texts, Jung describes the production of the psycho-physical "substance" of the *caelum* ('the "azure quintessence"...the *anima mundi* extracted from inert matter...the God-image imprinted on the world') to be at the heart of the procedure. Production of the *caelum* is not the final step, however. After being produced, it must then be mixed with a variety of other substances, which hang heavy with symbolism intimately linking the sacred and sexual. In fact, as we can see, four out of the six (*italicised*) feature this erotic-spiritual component:

⁶ The word concupiscence will prove to be an important one in connecting sexual desire with a sense of wisdom beyond Christianity in the form of Sophia, an eternal feminine image of God. Von Franz (1980) defines "concupiscence" as 'the ordinary appetites – sexual desires, desire for food, and so on, but mainly sexual desire, the plain, vulgar basis of higher love. St. Thomas himself had a theory of love, namely that it always began with concupiscence and had to be sublimated into the love of God' (p.190), having the quality of a fire that can grow eternally and provide nourishment. Von Franz dissects the alchemical text *Aurora Consurgens*, which states that an individual with wisdom, intellectual accuracy, clarification of spirit and inventiveness can comprehend that fire, 'because then the mind of such a person begins to flow and follow its desire [here, for desire, the word concupiscence is used, a very shocking word for a medieval monk]' (p.188).

- (i) *honey* ('*pleasure of the senses and the joy of life*' which was also '*the deadly danger of worldly entanglements*'),
- (ii) the *Chelidonia* flower ('the self as the total personality...the healing and "whole-making" medicine'),
- (iii) *rosemary* ('*spiritual and conjugal love*'),
- (iv) *Mercurialis* ('*the lower chthonic element [of] sexuality*'),
- (v) *the red lily* ('*the red slave moved by passion*') and
- (vi) *blood* (which 'threw in the whole soul') (1955-6/1989, par.704).

In his rendition of mixing *caelum* with other alchemical substances at advanced stages of individuation, we can clearly read that for Jung a sacred-sexual conjunction was an intrinsic aspect of a whole individuation process which 'puts an end to a merely ego-bound existence'; ego is replaced by the self as 'the new centre of personality' (1955-6/1989, par.704).

He equates this new centre with Christ, but this is not a version of Christ generally recognised in Christianity (as will be explored in the final section). Jung claims that his alchemical image of Christ *goes beyond* Christianity. He recognises individuation as rising upwards from the darkness of the earth, matter and instinct (thus involving sexuality), as well as downwards from the light of the heavens (thus involving spirit):

...the *filius macrocosmi*, the son of the great luminaries and of the dark womb of the earth, enters the realm of the psyche and seizes the human personality, not only in the shining heights of consciousness but in the dark depths which have not yet comprehended the light that appeared in Christ. The alchemist was well aware of the great shadow which Christianity obviously had not assimilated, and he therefore felt impelled to create a saviour from the womb of the earth as an analogy and complement of God's son who came down from above.

(1955-6/1989, par. 704)

A major part of that great shadow left unassimilated by Christianity would be sexuality. Jung's vision of attempting this shadow-work through an alchemical Christ has historical antecedents: it is a pre-Augustinian image that connects with Manicheanism, an earlier form of Christianity which shares Jung's position on the enantiadromatic process of opposites and, therefore, a substantive sense of "evil" in opposition to "good". This was clearly important, perhaps foundational, to his alchemical thought, Jung dedicating a section of the first chapter of *Mysterium Coniunctionis* to it ("Alchemy and Manicheanism", 1955-6/1989, pars. 31-35). The importance of Manicheanism to Jung's late thought has been described by some authors such as Edward Edinger (1995) and Peter Kingsley (2018), Kingsley writing that 'Jung considered it his role to help bring an updated form of Manichean heresy back into the modern world' (2018, p.687). Part of that heresy would be the re-integration of the sacred and sexual, as suggested by passages in *Mysterium Coniunctionis* such as those quoted above.

Conclusion

The cultural splitting of the sacred and sexual described in the background section has been funnelled in this chapter into the fallout between Jung and Freud. As such, the breakdown of their relationship offers a microcosm, or emblem, for the split that is otherwise writ large across society. By studying this emblem in detail we found a kernel of a solution – that the sexual in fact resonates numinosity or, in other words, the sacred. It was suggested that Freudian and Jungian systems may generally miss the opportunity to fully develop that kernel. The Freudian seeks to universalise through scientific theory-building that casts out the numinous, whereas the Jungian holds on to the numinous but in the general terms of opposites, thus displacing and overlooking sexuality's particular potency. However, when we revisit Jung's primary texts on alchemy another possibility emerges, one distinct from the de-sexualised position popularly imagined as "Jungian" and attacked by critics such as Aziz. That hidden position in Jung is

evidenced by what he describes as the *denouement* of the alchemical process, which is the blending of *caelum* (the quintessence) with six other symbolic substances. Four of these six substances are erotically charged. We are left with the suggestion of an alchemical psychology which enfolds the sexual into the sacred, neither rejecting its numinosity nor its centrality.

Thus, we can observe that in Jung's late work there are the promises of the "proper joining" of religion and sexuality described by Monick, but that by and large they do not appear to have yet gained widespread acknowledgement. Why, then, might such promise be largely unfulfilled? This question is explored in the next section. A suggested answer is that the conventional paradigms Western culture holds when *conceiving* religion, sexuality, and secularism *as ideas* unconsciously enables this ongoing neglect. It is suggested that these undergirding assumptions manufacture intellectual, affective, and effective blindspots, so that attempts to *resolve* the splits described above in fact *perpetuate* them: the problem of religion and sexuality Jung discerned in Freud is actively and compulsively repeated culturally whilst those paradigms continue to work unchallenged.

Chapter Two

Conventional Approaches: Repetition, not Resolution

The central claim of this chapter is that when the paradigmatic assumptions around God, sexuality, and the secular are not addressed then attempts to answer the sacred-sexual split around Freud and Jung perpetuate the problematic pattern, rather than resolve it. As such, the potentially reintegrating “proper union” (using Monick’s term) found in Jung’s late work is left neglected. This finding presents a case for its amplification and elaboration in sections to follow through rapprochement with the *tummo* practices of Vajrayana Buddhism: a system of thought free from the pathologically splitting conceptual paradigms of Western culture.

A means of working through this claim is to focus on Michael Palmer’s *Freud and Jung on Religion*, which provides a strong example of addressing the questions already raised, but within the confines of unquestioned standard theological and secular conditions. Firstly, Palmer gives a sound and coherent synthesis of Freud’s position on religion. Secondly, he neatly summarises Jung’s objections to that position. Then, thirdly, Palmer critiques Jung’s alternative position on religion on the grounds of “psychologism” which does not do justice to our desired sense of the sacred. Fourthly, we find an improbable alignment between quintessential atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell and Jung regarding (un)certainly of God. This has the benefit of exposing how Palmer uses *the same* logical assumptions as Freud, only choosing the faith of theism over the scepticism of secularism. That choice is less important than the logic employed: the impasse is repeated and reinforced, not resolved. That impasse *does* resolve, I argue, in a fifth and final step whereby Jung’s “alchemical Christ” offers a transcendent function in the dilemma, enabling a state of *correlative thought* (what Main (2023) refers to as “applied synchronicity”) that steps out of the usual sacred-sexual paradigms.

In a surprising conclusion then, Jung's alchemical mode finds an unlikely ally in Bertrand Russell, the Twentieth Century's arch atheist. I suggest that, in this particular case, their positions may in fact unite in endorsing Russell's conclusion that 'man, in so far as he is not subject to natural forces, is free to work out his own destiny. The responsibility is his, and so is the opportunity' (1952, p.548). Their great divergence would be in the extent, depth and nature of those "natural forces", and the ultimate convergence or divergence of those forces with free will. The stages of this argument will now be worked through in turn.

Freud's position on religion

Culling an overall picture from arguments in *Totem and Taboo*, *The Future of an Illusion*, and *Moses and Monotheism*, Palmer describes Freud as providing an explanation of religious practices as in fact neurotic-obsessional symptoms. These symptoms arise from unconsciously repeating an inner dynamic for managing the archaic affective traces of Oedipal conflict. Religion, then, has a *sexual* and *secular* genesis. The wish for a "God the Father" is simply the unconscious remains of an infantile wish for a father in adulthood, an understandable longing for an external guarantor of safety, security and protection that cold hard reality, unfortunately, does not provide.

Freud conjectured that in prehistoric times the killing of a tribal father by the "primal horde" has bequeathed us an unconscious inheritance of incest taboo (the motive for murdering the tribal father being incestuous sexual access to family members) and totem worship (to appease our guilt for killing the tribal father *and* magically preserving an illusion of paternal protection at the same time). Religion is thus purely psychological and historical in origin (i.e. secular), a neurosis for managing anxieties and intrapsychic conflicts carried over from the past and

continuing to live out unconsciously. Religious rites and rituals are thus pathological, taking libidinal energy away from life and a clear-eyed view of material reality. Curable through the illumination of analytic interpretation, progress would come through growing out of religion's illusions, freeing up otherwise bound energy for engagement with the material world as it is. Such vaunting of reason and banishing of superstition in the irresistible march of human progress appears the epitome of the Enlightenment project.

Jung's opposition to Freud

Palmer gives five ways in which Jung would reject Freud's hypotheses, which he finds in *Symbols of Transformation*, the 1912 publication that sealed Jung's break from Freud⁷. These five refutations, according to Palmer (1997, pp.109-111) are:

- i. even if religion were neurotic, it does not follow that it must be a sexual neurosis, Freud is 'not wrong to see sexuality as a cause of a neurosis but he was wrong to see it as the origin of all neuroses';
- ii. if we define neurosis as the upsetting of psychic equilibrium whereby the free-flowing balance of libidinal energy is disrupted, then not all religious practice is neurotic as it may be working to aid 'a harmonious conjunction of the disparate sides of the psyche';
- iii. Freud's exclusively negative portrayal of religion-as-neurosis overlooks its positive attributes, considering the unconscious as 'no more than a lumber-room' of uncomfortable

⁷ Reading publications earlier in Jung's career than his alchemical works helps explain why Palmer, and others, seem to miss the elements which unite the sexual and secular; however, even when the later alchemical texts *are* engaged in, these elements still remain veiled and very much obscure. Therefore, I suggest, a case of need for a related interlocutor where these connections are more clearly drawn out (such as with the *Vajrayana* tradition).

infantile material, ignoring it as the source of deep creativity with ‘positive, profound and therapeutically necessary’ dimensions;

iv. The exclusively past-oriented account of religion, based on infantile (or inherited-infantile) events does not give enough weight to present events occurring later in life which effect the open homeostatic system of the individual, or the future-directiveness of one’s religious practice as ‘a constant and evolving process in the development of the personality’;

v. Freud’s attitude towards symbols as disguises for ‘something else that can be rationally explained...within the context of our infantile and Oedipal desires’ differs from Jung’s handling of symbols as manifestations of the deepest collective layers of the psyche, which,

open up a psychic level that completely eludes rational definition, that is primordial and independent of personal experience but which is nevertheless *of supreme value for the present and future development of the human psyche*.

(1997, p.111)

Palmer’s critique of Jung

Palmer provides a neat summation of Jungian objections to Freud’s overtly sexualising and secularising explanation of religion. His conclusion however, finding in concordance with Father Victor White, is that ‘we should be cautious about accepting Jung as a “friend” of religion’ (1997, p.194). Palmer’s reason to ultimately disagree with Jung rests upon a perceived psychologising of religion. He writes that,

to agree with Jung is to adopt a conception of God as an innate human disposition, indistinguishable as anything other than a particular psychic state, and “existing” only in the sense that anything that “works” for the psyche will be “real”

(1997, pp.194-5)

The pay-off of what Palmer sees as Jung's "psychologising" is that the conception of God becomes immune from metaphysical attack or burden of proof: He self-evidently exists in the same way that hunger, sexual appetite, the desire for power and other psychological phenomenon obviously exist. One need not prove them logically nor empirically other than knowing their truth directly, from experience itself. The cost of re-positioning of God in this way, however, Palmer sees as too great: God is 'reduced to nothing more than a subjective experience, on a par with any other experience that one might have...guaranteed as such in the same was as, say, belief in flying saucers' (1997, p.195). God is relegated to a mere thought that ranks alongside an infinity of other (regularly mundane and trivial) beliefs. Jung's "psychologism" saves one from having to engage in fruitless metaphysical speculation but, Palmer concludes, extracts too high a price in transforming God into 'an exclusively psychic reality' whereby 'it becomes questionable whether anything has been left of God at all, and thus whether anything distinctive is meant when we speak of religion' (1997, p.196). That ontological shift, understandably, somewhat blots out the majesty which one would wish to preserve for Him in the first place.

Orbiting teapots and flying saucers: a critique of Palmer, via Russell

Palmer's claim that Jung equates the belief in God with a belief in flying saucers appears to be a reference to Jung's 1959 essay *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*, published only two years before his death. Jung begins that work with the "psychologising" position that Palmer describes. He writes that whether flying saucers are objectively "real" or not, in a physical sense, has little bearing on our interest in them, as they are irrefutably, unequivocally real as a set of psychological phenomena. It was one which ran rampant in America in the 1950s and, considering their usually circular appearance, Jung hypothesised as a symbol of the Self, the making-whole process of individuation.

Dualism is a core feature of the lines of argument employed by Palmer: there are phenomena “out there” (be they spiritual or physical) and there are phenomena “in here” (the realm of the psychological), and these two sets of phenomena are of a distinct and separate class or category. Of course these two classes of thing *do* relate in some way, but it is a relationship *between two things*, or entities, akin to a relationship between two people. That basic dualism sets up a particular version of God that follows Cartesian principles: there is (or is not) a particular Abrahamic God as the ultimate thing “out there” (to be proved or disproved by argument or faith) and relates to the subjective thing of the human mind which exists “in here”, in an individual personal sense.

The dualistic form of God assumed in Palmer’s argument becomes more obvious when we examine another aspect of his evaluation of Jung’s position. As the *content* of Palmer’s conclusions alludes to Jung’s essay on flying saucers, the *linguistic structure* of his argument has clear parallels with Bertrand Russell’s well-known reference to an orbiting cosmic teapot and the (non)existence of a creator God. Appearing in 1952’s article *Is There a God?*, Russell compares belief in a God of the sort Palmer wishes to protect as equivalent to belief in an empirically undetectable china teapot orbiting the Earth:

If I were to suggest that between the Earth and Mars there is a china teapot revolving about the sun in an elliptical orbit, nobody would be able to disprove my assertion provided I were careful to add that the teapot is too small to be revealed even by our most powerful telescopes.

(1952/1997, p.548)

Palmer and Russell seem to be shaping a logically equivalent notion of God: one as existing in some domain that is qualitatively separable and independent from psychological phenomena.

God exists in a way that is a different category than the ideas, beliefs, and so on of the human mind. What they then *do* with this jointly preserved image of God of course is the opposite: Palmer theistically bridges the gap between God and the psyche through faith, Russell judges it to be irrational, logically unbridgeable. Either way, the concept of God (either defended or denied) is the same. Whether believed in or sceptical of, the picture of God formulated here is heavily imbued with dualism – there is the subjective mind and the objective existence of God beyond the subjective mind which Palmer wants to make definite claims about, and which Russell wishes to point out as irrational.

Palmer's notion of "God" and "psychology" compartmentalises the two as discrete types of phenomena that, as in Freud's formulation, continue to split along the same lines: the sacred, God, and religion is of a different sort than the psychological, the instinctual and the sexual. The former is transcendent and not of the mundane world, whereas the latter remains secular and quite possibly profane. Both he and Freud keep them strictly distinct from each other in their theories. His position is thus, using Monick's phrase, one of "no joining" between the sacred and sexual: as the latter is part of the secular world (of instinct, biology, Darwinian evolution) it is not part of religion, which is profoundly, morally, purely, virtuously *desexualised*. As such, the problems which Jung discerned in Freud are repeated rather than resolved, and the cultural split between the two maintained. Palmer has argued for a desexualised religion, in the same way Freud is arguing for a de-spiritualised sexuality. The status quo split is preserved. Are sexuality and the sacred inherently separate then, or might an alternative exist?

Jung's alchemical position: transcendent functioning of correlative thought

It is precisely this which Jung argues the alchemical Christ (which blends religion with sexuality) transcends. That transcendence is embedded in his concepts of the psychoid and synchronicity, situated at depths of the unconscious that, although there, are hard (perhaps impossible) to explain and model linguistically with certitude. Attempts to linguistically model God in this way (this sentence even potentially being an instance of such an attempt) abound with an intoxicating odour of truth and an equally toxic degree of dangerous, misleading error – the very hallmarks of being caught in archetypal myth motifs that Jung recognised in Freud's tone when discussing the sexual hypothesis. He writes,

We believe that we can make assertions about God...differentiate him as the only true one amongst other gods. The realisation might by this time be dawning that when we talk of God or gods we are speaking of debatable images from the psychoid realm. The existence of a transcendental reality is indeed evident in itself, but it is uncommonly difficult for our consciousness to construct intellectual models which would give a graphic description of the reality we have perceived...That the world inside and outside ourselves rests on a transcendental background is as certain as our own existence...the direct perception of the archetypal world inside us is just as doubtfully correct as that of the physical world outside us...[yet] it is an essential part of the phenomena that the "possessed" always feels compelled to make definite assertions.

(1955-6/1989, par. 788)

Jung seems to be elucidating through the psychoid a two-layered relationship with God: at once entirely confident in, and connected to, a numinous, indescribable sense, yet simultaneously suspicious of any cognitive or linguistic attempt to describe that numinosity definitively in a way wholly shareable to others. It holds open space for numinosity, experiential meaningfulness and individual difference alongside empirical scepticism that resists temptations to "pin down" the divine in human concepts.

Therefore, Palmer misses the alchemical position Jung comes to at the end of *Mysterium Coniunctionis* described above, whereby the psycho-physical *caelum* is combined with a) the honeyed edge of pleasure and attachment, b) the whole self, c) spiritual *and* conjugal love, d) chthonic sexuality, e) passion, and f) a full-blooded commitment to soul. Such an alchemical combination and process of individuation not only re-unites the sacred and sexual, but also questions and assuages the apparently sharp boundaries between a variety of opposites (*either* religious *or* secular, physical *or* mental, sexual *or* spiritual), least of all oneself and other people.

As Paul Bishop, Joseph Cambray, Roderick Main and others have argued, these trends in Jung's late thought point towards the holism of Romanticism, the German Classical Aesthetic tradition, and some branches of Eastern thought. The dualisms implied by Palmer and Freud, as exposed by Russell, would not be a feature of God *Himself*, but an inevitable feature of how our post-Enlightenment minds think; external-physical and internal-mental are characteristics of our inevitably dualistic apparatus for understanding. Therefore, a dualistic God is a facet of the modern mind thinking, not an object that is being thought about. It is a facet of the mind in the act of "opinioning" rather than such an opinion being a mind-independent existing thing. It is ironic then, that Palmer sees psychologism in a strand of *Jung's* argument but not in his own conception of the God he wishes to exist beyond the psyche: it is that dualistic God which, on this view, is psychologically derived.

A means by which Jung's alchemical Christ can be fleshed out further is through a different way of knowing termed *correlative thinking*. On discussing the poetry of Richard Berengarten, the *I Ching* and synchronicity, Roderick Main quotes Berengarten's statement that,

associative, analogical or correlative thinking, sometimes known as ‘correlative cosmos-building’...specifically underpins the holistic vision of the universe that runs through all traditional Chinese thought...[and] also gives rise to C.G. Jung’s theory of synchronicity.

(2023, p.1)

Correlative thinking provides access to, or awareness of, a different category of experience/phenomena which is not in the straightjacketing dualism of “psychologised God” or “genuine God” which Palmer describes. Main describes Jung’s argument for a layer of meaning which is not solely determined subjectively, by an individual, but also has *some kind* of objective dimension too. Those dual-aspected forms of meaning (featuring subjective and objective qualities) are discernible through synchronistic phenomena. Tracking this line of thought in Jung, Main writes that,

meaning itself is rooted in archetypes, which he saw as structuring factors of the collective unconscious that are universal, numinous, psychophysically indeterminate (or ‘psychoid’), and knowable only when expressed symbolically as archetypal images.

(2013, p.2)

This sense is intrinsic in the notion of the alchemical Christ which relativises the ultimate truth-claims of dualistic opposite-pairings (such as objective and subjective, or religion and sexuality); it appears alien to the more traditional dualistic form of God that Palmer wishes to argue for, bound it seems by the same cultural constraints as Freud in how the secular, religious, sexual, and scientific are carved apart.

Jung's alchemical position on Christ and the correlative thinking it engenders introduces a sense of God that is not causal. A non-causal conception of God appears distinct from the monotheistic creator God Palmer wishes to be arguing for in definite terms. At times Jung appears to want to push against such definite terms, writing that 'all metaphysical claims [from authority]...inevitably beg the question, as is obvious to any reasonable person in the case of the proofs of God' (1955/63, par. 784). Exposing these limitations of conceptuality and causality, however, paves a path towards an alternative type of (relationship with) God which, I argue in later chapters, appears to resonate with *tummo* practices and the Buddhist Vajrayana tradition. In particular, this type of transcendental path of individuation offers a reuniting of the sacred and sexual that helps to amplify the ways in which Jung does something similar in his late thought.

Conclusion

This section has attempted, across two chapters, to delineate the core problem that this thesis is concerned with addressing. Where chapter one offered a microcosm of the problem in the myth of Jung's split with Freud, chapter two has sought to understand *why* potential solutions to the problem that are secreted in Jung's alchemical texts are persistently overlooked. It has been proposed that this serial neglect occurs due to the unquestioned philosophical assumptions that unconsciously underpin standard attempts to resolve it. These assumptions are ontologically dualistic: there are a category of phenomena "out there" (scientific truth, a monotheistic Creator God) and a category of phenomena "in here" (biological sexual instincts, psychological ideas and beliefs). Both theists and atheists may commonly hold these same assumptions about how reality is carved, but only differ in whether they choose to relate these two categories through faith or through reason. It has been argued that this choice is not universal or innate to the nature of reality. In fact, the claim here is that this choice is the result

of culturally-sanctioned and historically contingent philosophical assumptions, those assumptions being hegemonic in the West since The Enlightenment.

It follows from this that to resolve the split between sexuality and the sacred one must interrogate the question from the position that is not grounded in these assumptions. An instance of such a position was then described: Jung's sense of an alchemical Christ. Features of such a position include scepticism regarding language's capacity to articulate God, doubt regarding definitive conceptualisations, a tendency towards correlative thinking that evokes openness to synchronicity, and a sense of a non-causal God, a non-dualistic spirituality. From this position promising approaches to the split of the sacred and secular can be entertained, the (sexual) secular and (de-sexualised) sacred being an instance of such dualism. We can thus progress the current thesis a little further: what does the sacred-sexual relationship look like from the vantage point of Jung's alchemical Christ?

This section's conclusions, however, raise rather a problem in terms of method as an academic thesis of course employs language and concepts as its primary tools for addressing the research question, tools which the current section has found loaded with potential for slipping back into the troublesome philosophical assumptions. *How*, then, can one maintain a line of enquiry that resists this pull? A certain method for doing so seems required. Building that method is the work of the next section.

Method

Chapters Three and Four, therefore, build a research method suitable for the current thesis, which can open the conceptual doors to Jung's alchemy and *tummo* meditation wide enough to let in oft-overlooked philosophical assumptions, but can also keep those doors held ajar narrowly enough to maintain focus on the sacred and sexual. Briefly, this method involves an initial orientation to interdisciplinary research, but with self-awareness as to the individual linguistically-derived assumptions one projects onto texts, which if not detected run the risk of "finding" ideas in texts that are not there. Being faced with one's own subjectivity however, as part of a research process seeking something more than solipsism, unfolds into a method that can tolerate paradox. In doing so, a queer awareness of the text "speaking back," as if it were conscious, arises; in that space a certain aesthetic sensibility is reached akin to an artist, who employs both an intellect which acts *on* the world, and a receptive stare which is altered *by* the world, in tandem. With this sensibility an "arts-based" research method is argued for.

Chapter Three

Unit-ideas and linguistics: the case for thinking for oneself

The need for a suitable method

‘...unfortunately the text itself compels one to cut across realms of thought which by their very nature are divided.’

(Marie-Louise von Franz, 1957/1966, p.vii)

A method that does not make the described assumptions regarding consciousness in the way described is highlighted by Hanegraff (1995), who makes the case for an empirical method in the study of esotericism, which is neither reductionist nor religionist. He characterises this way of studying the history of ideas ‘as a combined enterprise of empirical description *and* conceptual analysis’ (p.114). Citing French scholar Antoine Faivre’s identification of esotericism as an “ensemble of tendencies”, a cluster of common characteristics that map both Jung’s alchemy and *tummo* neutrally can be provided: 1) *correspondences* between all aspects of the universe – seen and unseen – which may be hidden at first, but come to be revealed through symbolic understanding, 2) *living nature*, as a ‘dynamic network of sympathies and antipathies’ imbued with vitality, 3) *imagination* as an ‘organ of the soul’ (not mere fantasy) that mediates ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ worlds through symbolic practices, 4) *experience of transmutation*, whereby enhanced insight into ‘the hidden mysteries of cosmos, self and God’ aligns with a path of development, purification, and spiritual progress. Two other marks of esotericism that occur frequently (but not necessarily) are 5) *the practice of concordance*, seeking commonalities between two or more traditions that, distinct on the surface, hold a deeper singular truth, and 6) *transmission*, from master to pupil, whereby esoteric teachings survive across generations through the preservation of these “authentic” lineages. In

contradiction to ideas of “pure” transmission, however, the study of esotericism, claims Hanegraff, must be *diachronic*, in that ‘a diachronic study of esotericism would have to consider *any* of its historical manifestations not in terms of continuation but in terms of *reinterpretation*’ (1995, p.121).

Lovejoy and the pursuit of archetypal “unit ideas”

Hanegraff goes on to suggest that a natural choice of methodology here is that of A.O. Lovejoy (1873 – 1962). This is especially suitable for alchemy and *Vajrayana*, as the opening quotation of von Franz suggests, as its study cuts across a variety of disciplines normally kept apart. Lovejoy (1936/60, 1940) saw the increased specialisation and barrier-building between different academic disciplines as dangerous to the legitimacy, creativity and truth-value of the research carried out in each respective speciality. Carving up phenomena into specialist areas of research, albeit practical, also imposes an artificially dissected view of the phenomena under investigation: artificial, as such labels and divisions are simply not there in the phenomena themselves. Divisional boundary-making in academia, at odds with the lack of such boundaries in reality, “has tended,” he argued, “at best to produce serious lacunae in the study of the history of man, and at worst, sheer errors and distortions” (1940, p.4). Lacunae develop as the barriers between disciplines can be so high as to prevent meaningful knowledge transfer, so that errors and distortions arise through mistaking the convenient carving up of reality as a feature of reality itself; “knowledge” becomes merely an artifice of organisational structures, not insight into the subject matter it claims.

To overcome these problems Lovejoy proposed a methodology for the history of ideas analogous to that of Chemistry⁸. In the same way that objects are compounds of more basic elements then so too, he claimed, systems of thought are compounds of more elemental “unit-ideas”, an idea suggestive of Neoplatonic versions of Jungian archetypes (e.g. Goodwyn, 2019). Unit-ideas are common across cultures in the same way that the elements of the Periodic Table are common across the diverse compounds that they combine together to form. Comparably, unit-ideas provide the indivisible basic components which thinkers blend into a variety of doctrines, philosophies, and worldviews: such systems of thought may be novel in the way they amalgamate unit-ideas in ways never done before, but the basic units of thought they blend, the unit-ideas mobilised, are perennial. Lovejoy (1936/60) proposed that one works to “crack the shell” of historical thought systems in order to ‘see the real units, the effective working ideas, which, in any given case, are present’ (p.6). It is these ideas which provide the vitality or “spark” which animates a doctrine or body of work with a sense of life and energy. Lovejoy proposed that the history of ideas is in fact the discernment of an ongoing dialogue between these vital and energising eternal ideas on the one hand, with the ever-changing realm of contingent human life on the other. As he concludes in *Reflections on the History of Ideas*:

An idea, in short, is after all not only a potent but a stubborn thing; it commonly has its own “particular go”; and the history of human thought is a bilateral affair – the story of the traffic and interaction between human nature, amid the exigencies and vicissitudes of physical experience, on the one hand, and on the other, the specific natures and pressures of the ideas which men have, from various promptings, admitted to their minds.

(1940, p.23)

⁸ In *The Psychology of the Transference* Jung makes the same analogy to Chemistry when describing the unconscious, particularly the transference, as distinct from the physical and conscious mind.

Lovejoy's method seems ideal for tracing ideas across Jungian and Buddhist writings in light of the vast cultural gulfs between "East and West" with which Jung was concerned (Clarke, 1994; Coward, 1985; Meckel & Moore, 1992; Shamdasani, 1998; Young-Eisendrath & Muramoto, 2004), and the need to discern what is common or "true" between them⁹. However, his method has come under significant and quite justified criticism since publication – elements which need to be accounted for if the most suitable method for the current project is to be found.

Skinner's critique of Lovejoy: psychological naïveté

Most pertinent of these criticisms, for the current research, is the propensity for psychological naïveté as to how the researcher's own psyche colours their interpretation of the unit-ideas supposedly 'dwelling within the shell' of the texts at hand. Objections on the grounds of psychological naïveté have been put most forcefully by Quentin Skinner in his highly influential 1969 paper *Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas*. Here, Skinner argues that the disregard in Lovejoy's method for one's own inescapably subjective "psychological set" has caused unaccounted-for intellectual damage, absurdities, and errors in tracing the history of an idea. This is because a founding position of naïveté to one's own psyche begets a process akin to projection: ignorance of one's own psyche and its contents leads to those contents being mistakenly "thrown", or projected, onto the text and then falsely perceived as some external, separately existing unit-idea which is *really* present *behind* the text at hand. The researcher is left drawing the mistaken conclusion that they have unearthed a unit-idea when in fact their own psyche has a role in its creation, through unconscious splitting and

⁹ In many ways this chimes with the archetypal forces that form the psychoid background to phenomena, which then manifest physically and/or psychologically in various forms in various cultures (Addison, 2016). Radmilla Moacanin's 2012 *The Essence of Jung's Psychology and Tibetan Buddhism*, it seems, uses this approach, highlighting what she describes as striking parallel ideas emerging from radically different cultures.

projection. The problem here is one of hypostatisation of the idea as somehow independently exiting¹⁰ from the researcher, and the self-delusion of the researcher as neutral observer¹¹.

For Skinner and many others, this reification of ideas arising from textual methodologies leads to endemic and disastrous errors in conceptual research; errors which Skinner (1969) refers to (interestingly, from a Jungian perspective) as “myths”¹². He identifies two broad types: *the myth of doctrine*, and *the myth of coherence*. Regarding the former, by either building up a theorist’s work to a doctrine that is not there yet claiming that it is, or criticising them for the absence of a doctrine we think they *should* have developed from our contemporary perspective, ‘history indeed becomes a pack of tricks we play on the dead’ (p.14).

The myth of coherence, again stemming from the researcher’s lack of consciousness of their own psyche, thus lack of awareness of how it is “filling in the gaps” of the key text at hand, mistakenly regarding and re-presenting the text itself as a fully coherent, rounded-out position. Through Lovejoy’s method we construct, unconsciously, the false impression of great thinkers leaving us with coherent closed systems of thought when in fact their *oeuvre* may be incomplete, inconsistent or even at times incoherent – great no doubt, but nevertheless human. Skinner concludes that we fall into a form of mass hallucination whereby,

the history thus written becomes a history not of ideas at all, but of abstractions: a history of thoughts which no one ever actually succeeded in thinking, at a level of coherence which no one ever actually attained.

(1969, p.18)

¹⁰ On reviewing this manuscript I notice making a spelling mistake, writing ‘exiting’ rather than ‘existing’; it seems useful to leave this in and treat as a Freudian slip, as the point Skinner makes it that indeed, in reality, these ideas do ‘exit’ from the researcher, but as this exiting is unseen, the ideas are then mistakenly spotted as ‘existing’ in the text material independently.

¹¹ This issue of hypostatisation is, of course, one that Jung was acutely aware of too (see Heisig, “Quest for the True Self,” 1997)

¹² The *problematic* aspects of myth are potentially dissolved when, following Jung, its intrapsychic truth is recognised rather than repressed and projected.

Paths for overcoming naïveté: the linguistic turn

We can conclude so far that an *aspiration* to find a way of “speaking” to past and far away thinkers must be held, like Lovejoy, with which to traverse the distorting barriers between disciplines, but that working in concordance with this aspiration must also involve *self-awareness* of the psyche that we, as researchers, bring to bear on this material. Otherwise, as argued by Skinner, psychological naïveté and distorting projections upon the subject matter occur. What options are available then to overcome this hurdle? Cowan (2006) documents the rise of contextual approaches, from the late nineteen sixties onwards, and distinguishes three iterations briefly named earlier: the intellectual, social and cultural.

Intellectual context refers to the contextualism of a thinker relative to contemporary texts and thinkers of that time, and the “language contexts” in which these texts were written and received, with ‘texts [as] the primary object of study and their meaning is elucidated almost exclusively by reading them with relation to other texts’ (Cowan, 2006, p.7); *social* context refers to the contextualisation of a thinker not only relative to contemporaneous texts, but also the economic and psychosocial *mentalité* of that era, so that ‘feelings, beliefs and superstitions’ enter the fray alongside the published work of the intelligentsia, so that ‘the texts were more often used as a window into a wider mental world than as the subject of sustained inquiry in and of themselves’ (Cowan, 2006, p.9); *cultural* context refers to a shift in understanding of ‘social’ away from being something that can be clearly discerned as something that can be set down and clearly identified, and towards ‘a new concept of the social as the product of active creation,’ bringing about a turn ‘from the social history of a culture to the cultural history of the social’ (2006, p.14).

We can clear a path through this thicket of contextual methodologies by considering a) Skinner's discernment of social and cultural methods being crucial in aiding an understanding the *outer social life* of a text, but unsuitable when used as terms for understanding its *inner phenomenology*, leading to the moral imperative to think for ourselves in the history of ideas, and becoming conscious of our own unconscious assumptions. This sets the stage for the next chapter, building upon John Toews' (1987) critique of a Skinnerian approach, in that emphasis on linguistics as *the* maker of inner meaning has led to what Toews describes as "the tyranny of the wordsmiths", problematic in that it denies non-linguistic experience, a key phenomenon for the current thesis.

Skinner's critique of social and cultural methodologies appears parallel to the critiques of Behavioural Psychology: that analysis of the external context around an action may yield impressive results in understanding the causal conditioning of said action, yet this analysis cannot provide a vocabulary for understanding the inner phenomenological world of the actor who makes that action occur (Chomsky, 1959). In other words, an *explanation* can be given of an actor's behaviour, but this is not the same as *understanding* the inner intention of it; while the outer action is explained, the inner world is left untouched and unexpressed. So, while these contextual methodologies are useful in helping to explain the outer shape of this inner world, they cannot be the terms in which this inner world is described, because they are the terms of outer events not the inner world of the psyche. Social and cultural methods can help us describe the outer surface of the inner world, its crust, but not the interiority itself, the felt sense, or *qualia*. Social and cultural methods can only take us so far, then, to the outer boundary of the autonomous agent, not into an understanding of their inner world, feeling tone, sensibility, drive.

How, then, to move into the interior? Skinner introduced the terms of linguistic philosophy, following the work of J.L. Austin on *speech acts* to case out the “black box” of the psyche left untouched by sociocultural methods. Most notable are locutionary and illocutionary acts, the former being defined as the act of making a meaningful (usually explicit) utterance, and the latter as the (often implicit) function, communicative effect or force of the locutionary act. For example, for Person A to ask ‘do you know the time?’ to Person B, the literal sentence (the locutionary act) was to ask if Person B had knowledge of the time (with no formal request to share that knowledge, Person B only being required to answer “yes” or “no”), whereas the illocutionary act was for Person A to ask that Person B tells them what the time is, if they know it (the informal request for Person B to say either “yes, the time is XX”, or “I don’t know, sorry”). Knowledge of context can function as a court of appeal to help work out which of the possible illocutionary acts is most likely.

Awareness of locutionary and illocutionary acts allows some technique for getting under the literal or surface meanings of texts and closer to the intentions of their authors. Doing so, writes Skinner, is to index these ideas written about to the authors themselves, so that rather than floating untethered in universalising abstraction, what appear to be “timeless” truths in fact cohere to the subjectivity of their authors and pertain to *particular* problems under *particular* circumstances, thus pushing back against the universalism within Lovejoy’s great chain of being. This push-back is qualified, however, as he claims not to deny that *questions* might be perennial (‘if these are sufficiently abstractly framed’ 1969, p.52), nor to suggest there cannot be tenseless truths (‘perhaps in mathematics’ 1969, p.52), but that the point of history cannot be to learn answers directly from the past, because

what *counts* as an answer will usually look, in a different culture or period, so different in itself that it can hardly be in the least useful even to go on thinking of

the relevant question as being “the same” in the required sense after all. More crudely: we must learn to do our own thinking for ourselves.’

(1969, p.52)

The consolations of timeless wisdom, offered by Lovejoy, are gnawed away by Skinner, leaving us exposed to the bracing cool of existentialist, humanist freedom.

Ultimately, Skinner’s intention appears to be to raise the awareness of transference (of assumptions, of hopes for ready-made solutions, of thinking) onto a text, an act of self-awareness which liberates one’s imaginative, creative mind from shackles of unconsciously constrictive assumptions which unquestioningly follow the norms of society’s conventions. ‘Our own society,’ he concludes, ‘places unrecognisable constraints upon our imaginations,’ and to remedy this ‘the historical study of ideas of other societies should be undertaken as the indispensable and the irreplaceable means of placing limits on those constraints’ (p.53). Rather than finding the same “unit-ideas” in the past so that we can re-present them as solutions in the present, the worth of these societies’ ideas comes from their imagination-stoking *other-ness*: ‘the classic texts, especially in social, ethical and political thought, help to reveal – if we let them – not the essential sameness, but rather the essential variety of viable moral assumptions and political commitments’ (p.52). The double negative of *constraining the constraints* of transference unlocks the positive roles of intellectual imagination via self-autonomy (thinking for ourselves) and self-awareness (seeing our assumptions), a radical commitment to the individual as conceived in liberal democracy, such that ‘to demand from the history of thought a solution to our own immediate problems is thus to commit not merely a methodological fallacy, but something like a moral error’ (p.53).

Conclusion

The need for a method arose from the previous section, where it was concluded that successful approaches to the sexual-sacred split need to avoid the same philosophical assumptions that split is part of. A method for avoiding these assumptions is required. Following Hanegraff's writing on study of esotericism that is neither empirical nor religionist, Lovejoy's method was considered. Lovejoy's unit-ideas appear analogous to Jung's archetypes, both concerned with breaking the shell of superficial difference to find common universal elements of the collective unconscious – especially useful for bridging Analytical Psychology and Vajrayana Buddhism.

The value of this method was cast into doubt, however, by Quentin Skinner's objection that a Lovejoyian method is naïve to one's own psychology. The danger of this, he argues, is that one's own ideas are unconsciously projected into texts and then "found" there, the author attributing ideas to these sources that are in fact their own. To remedy problem Skinner suggests awareness of il/locutionary acts gets us closer to discerning an author's inner world. Using this method, we find that authors (such as Jung and Tsongkhapa) do not reveal timeless truths as much as reveal the weirdness of our own modern cultural assumptions that we previously took for granted as true. Revealing our own culture's weirdness frees our imagination from its shackles, and we become able to think more clearly for ourselves. If Skinner's findings are taken seriously, meaning that we do not simply mimic him but think for ourselves, how can these ideas be further developed into a suitable method? The next project takes on that method of construction.

Chapter Four

Arguing for Arts-Based Research in the History of Ideas

Non-linguistic countertransference: the case of paradox

If we accept Skinner's argument as successful in lifting the distorting weight of transference projections onto research material, we are now in a position to consider the broader criticisms levelled against him. Doing so ends up being constructive, as out of these criticisms we can take latent layers in his argument to the surface, leading to unusual but salutary results. In particular, the *countertransference* effects of texts back onto their human agents become illuminated, phenomena which the clearing of initial transference projection allows.

There are other research methods which highlight similar bi-directional processes whereby the author becomes recipient to the effects of the text as active agent. Rosemarie Anderson (2011), writing on intuitive inquiry as a human science research method that incorporates felt sense, writes that 'in relinquishing one's claims upon the work and the narrow perspectives with which one began, re-search again takes on a lively character all its own' (p.27). She cites Robert Romanyshyn, whose concept of "the wounded researcher" again suggests a certain agency of the research itself, partially autonomous from its researcher, which can act as a guide if one attunes to it, such that research 'as a vocation...is what the work indicates. It is re-search, a searching again of what has already made its claim upon us and is making its claim upon the future' (2011, p.113).

An interesting quality of approaching research countertransference from the perspective of this discussion of Skinner and Lovejoy's ideas is that, as well as the already unusual reversal of roles between active-text and receptive-researcher, more counter-intuitive and unusual

characteristics also emerge. The situation is akin to a currency exchange, getting rid of one's home currency of logic and cultural assumptions in return for foreign currency involving paradox and mind-expanding otherness: ideas are not exchanged for ideas, but for something else of a different category. The alien oddness of the received material is picked up by Jeffrey Kripal's account of his own experiences researching the Indian religious figure Ramakrishna, where 'the lives of the researcher and researched had begun to mingle in strange, confusing, and wonderful ways' (2001, p.200). The strangeness of this situation can be reached into though turning Skinner's method of il/locutionary acts back around onto his own text, resulting in outcomes which, although seemingly unintended by the author, pave a way to a methodology that more accurately suits the needs of the current study and, I would argue, potentially others of its type in general. Our point of entry is the following quote which summarises Skinner's argument. Although there is only one locutionary utterance highlighted in its midst, there appear to be two illocutionary acts in co-existence within that one utterance. He states his main conclusion as,

On the one hand,...any attempt to justify the study of the subject in terms of the "perennial problems" and "universal truths" to be learned from the classic texts must amount to the purchase of justification at the expense of making the subject itself foolishly and needlessly naïve. *Any statement, as I have sought to show, is inescapably the embodiment of a particular intention, on a particular occasion, addressed to the solution of a particular problem, and thus specific to its situation in a way that it can only be naïve to try to transcend...*

(1969, p.50, emphasis added)

Concentrating on the emphasised sentence, the *locutionary* act can be taken at face value – Skinner means what he says, and his formal use of language clearly expresses it. However, underneath that, two potential *illocutionary* acts lurk, as follows:

a) Does this statement refer to *itself* as an instance of one of the ‘any’ statements referred to? Logic suggests that it must; in doing so, Skinner’s thesis can be seen as embodying the intention of addressing the particular problems of psychological naïveté in intellectual history alive in late Nineteen Sixties academia concerning the history of ideas, largely in response to Lovejoy; as such, the truth of Skinner’s approach is relative to its time and place – it is a comment *within* history, and can make no attempt at truth claims beyond its particular problem, which mainly exists in the Oxbridge and Anglo-American academic community in the 1960s; as such, it does not make sense that Skinner writes his statement in general terms *about* history in the way that his use of the term “any statement” suggests.

The general nature of this conclusion provides a second and contradicting illocutionary act:

b) In suggesting the truth value of his conclusion for *any* statement in the history of ideas (irrespective of particular intentions, occasions, problems or solutions), Skinner is making a statement that *transcends* these particularities, which is precisely the sort of transcendent statement that he argues to be always false! He is a case of his own diagnostic category of “Naïve Fool”! Yet he *must* be appealing to such universality if he wants his statement to hold any philosophical weight, that substantiality evidenced by the fact his thinking launched the “Cambridge School” since; but the cost of such influence appears to be logical inconsistency; here is a statement *about* history which claims one cannot make statements *about* history as one is always *within* history.

Thus as well as insisting on the extreme localism of all statements (illocutionary act a)), in doing so he simultaneously takes a position of extreme universalism (illocutionary act b)). In other words, *if* we accept the truth of his conclusion it *then* becomes a general statement, which

is the sort of statement it argues can never be the case, making it false; if we *reject* the truth of his universal conclusion it then *becomes* true as any attempt at generality is denied and the particularity it argues for is preserved, making it universally correct.

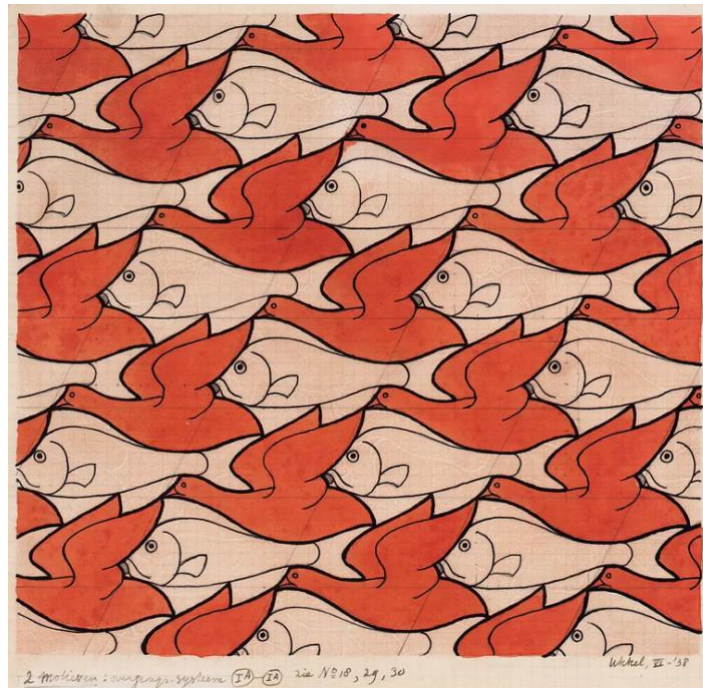
What are we to make, methodologically, of this apparently paradoxical position? Neither of the two logical choices is more attractive than the other: If position a) is taken and b) rejected then it becomes general despite itself, whereas if b) is taken and a) rejected then it is conceptually self-defeating from the outset. Given the undesirability of either of these two logical positions a third position presents itself: rather than submit to an either/or position, it is far more fruitful to take a both/and approach. Both illocutionary acts, a) and b), have some credence and value. When held together there is not merely a balancing of these two positions but the creation of a novel third position: the acceptance of paradox. Position a) is the position of the actor involved *in* history, an active and contingently located locus of engagement in the world as part of it, immersed in its sensory experience. Position b) takes the position of the equanimous observer, able to *witness* events with a sense of composure and awareness of transience. Both appear *at once* in Skinner's conclusion, and seem mutually reliant on each other to be true, despite contradicting.

Suspending *and* accepting biases, allowing levels of meaning to co-exist, is the equivalent of the *gestalt* described by Paul Bishop as integral to Goethean morphology and rooted in Aristotle, whereby 'nothing in them is permanent, nothing is at rest or defined – everything is in a flux of continual motion' (2008, p.53) so that one comes to 'understanding *shape* in terms of *change*, in terms of *dynamic*, in terms of *process*' (2008, p.54). Pictorial representation of this might be suggested in Fig.2's interaction with the observer, where fish *or* fowl can be seen

depending on momentary bias one way or the other, or *both* and *neither*, if attention is suspended differently.

Fig.2

Bird Fish, by M.C. Escher, 1938



What does this finding mean regarding method? It pushes it into the realm of acknowledging the existence of paradox, which John Suler defines as

a statement or behaviour that is seemingly inconsistent, absurd, or self-contradictory, yet in fact true...it signifies a countering of reason. It thrusts one, literally, into “nonsense” by challenging common sense and violating one’s basic assumptions about reality. Many paradoxes embody the self-contradiction that arises when a statement implicitly turns back and reflects on itself, asking whether or not it is to be taken as an example of the idea it proposes. The classic example is, “Everything I say is a lie.” If the statement is an example of the idea it asserts, it negates itself as it affirms itself.

(1993/1998, p.321)

An instance of paradox emerges when Skinner's text is analysed with the methodology it suggests for any statement within the history of ideas and thus logically, by extension, for itself. Accepting and making space for paradox, rather than seeking to chop it away through further logic, is an enormously preferable option here, particularly in light of the fact Suler argues paradox to be at the heart of identity and selfhood as conceived by psychoanalysis and Buddhism. Citing Douglas Hofstadter, he writes that paradoxes are outcomes of the well-known issue that 'an object bears a special and unique relationship to itself,' limited in acting on itself how it does on others, as 'a pencil cannot write on itself; a fly swatter cannot swat itself; people cannot directly see their own faces' (p.322). A change of method is required here. The riddles of selfhood and koans of Zen Buddhism, instances of paradox, will not yield to reason, forcing a 'quantum leap' that is

consistent with the principle of both psychoanalysis and Eastern philosophy that "intellect is a good servant but a bad master" (Watts, 1958) ...[and so] the paradox is a digging, churning tool that penetrates directly into the roots of who we are.

(p.324).

The struggle moves from an intellectual to an emotional and experiential one, 'a struggle for one's very existence. One becomes the self in contradiction with itself', a double-bind which 'forces the person outside the previous frame of reference, expands the individual's model of the world, "*decontextualises*"¹³ the seemingly paradoxical symptom' (emphasis added, p.325), precipitating an existential breakthrough which is 'an unself-conscious self-surrender, a relinquishing of control to the unconscious, to something beyond the conscious self...paradoxically, losing oneself is finding oneself' (pp.326-327).

¹³ The importance of *decontextualised* selfhood breaks the hegemony of methodological contextualisation that Payne and Petropoulos propose, which could potentially miss the point of the whole exercise if followed.

It is important to note that this move from an either/or to a both/and position confers a substantial shift away from an argument and intellect-based “logic first” position of proving one theoretical framework right and the other wrong to a more open position aware of irony, multiplicity, paradox and the proper limitations of logical thought. As with Jung’s (1955) description of Mercurius and the trickster archetype, this methodological shift ushers in *experience* as primary over either/or logic, the primary tool of Anglo-American philosophy relativised as a method for finessing and holding experience rather than shaving off aspects of it with Occam’s Razor. This is a different approach to other philosophically inclined approaches to Jung in the field, which seem to disagree with Alan Watts’ assertion that the intellect makes a good servant but a bad master. This disagreement can be in two ways: one following what Iain McGilchrist (2009, 2021) sees as an endemic problem of modernity whereby reason’s falsely elevated position is further reinforced, and the other extreme in which it is not only dethroned as master, but then also fired as a servant, in line with Isaiah Berlin’s description of some counter-enlightenment thought that ‘the burning question of the soul whose homelessness in the chilly world of the intellect only self-surrender in a transcendent God will remedy’ (1973/1998, p.260).

We thus come to an alternative philosophical methodology to those used by Jungian writers who take one of these two paths: those on the first path prioritising reason over experience (such as Mills, 2024) and those who take the second who banish reason in the name of experience (such as Avens (1980) and Hillman (1983)). Critiquing the former, Mark Saban (2025) writes of the danger of philosophy taking us *away* from the vitality of psychological life when in fact,

if we are going to invoke philosophy it needs to *serve* the core meanings of the psychology by finding new ways to amplify them and to open them out...to breathe new life into...ailing concept[s].

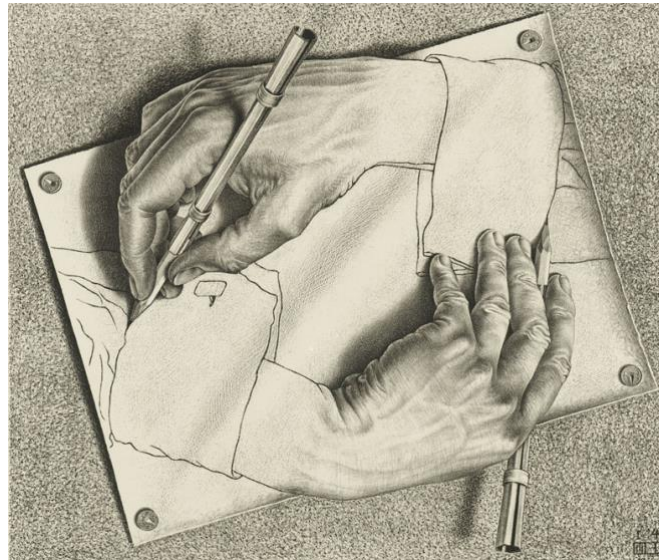
(p.7)

Similarly limited, only in the opposite direction, I would argue that the “radical relativism” Avens (1980) argues for could become what Atmanspacher (2014) calls the “tyranny of relativism”, a post-truth state with no yardstick for recognising “fake news”, as all subjectivity is viewed valid within ‘a postmodern salmagundi of floating beliefs’ (p.188). The current concern with building a third approach transcending these opposites is perhaps signalled by Herbert Guenther, in seeking a philosophically informed way into Tibetan Buddhism that is,

a quest for wholeness...intimately and intricately intertwined with a phenomenological exploration of the dynamics of psychic life [so that] they have little to do with philosophical speculation that inevitably ends in a theoretical construct from which, carrion-like, all life has been excluded

(1994, p.xv).

The decision to *not* come down on either illocutionary act a) or b) as correct is decisively agnostic; others might choose another position. ¹⁴ For current purposes, this decisive agnosticism allows us to arrive at a position symbolised by Escher’s *Drawing Hands* (see Fig.3): amusing, bewildered and fascinated by a paradoxical, impossible yet patently visible, self-generating and self-confounding statement, relativising the force of logical imperatives that one *should* “correct it” or “rub part out”.

Fig.3*Drawing Hands, by M.C. Escher, 1948*

This basic position, drawn out through an interrogation of Skinner’s text via his own methods, methods which are in response to Lovejoy’s great chain of being that pursues the “unit-idea”, can now be coloured out more substantially using the aesthetically-inclined methodology of Duncan Forbes (1922 – 1994).

Synoptic seeing: the active intellect and the vacant stare

With the logically enforced acceptance of paradox, a logic that exposes the limits of logic itself, thereby revealing a greater reality beyond, a different sort of method is necessitated that encompasses the linguistic but is distinct from it too, the nature of paradox pointing to something beyond words. Duncan Forbes’ brief article “Aesthetic Thoughts On Doing The History of Ideas” is reminiscent of Freud’s “On Transience” for its airy, informal, brief yet disarmingly incisive style. It sets the scene for an approach, described by Forbes as “synoptic seeing,” by which he means the capacity to bring all elements to bear at once, not excluding any one way of seeing. Such a method embraces rather than erases complexity, maintaining a

view of the whole in mind. A qualitative alternative to the figure of the mean average is implied whereby the particulars are not washed out for the semblance of generalisability but zoomed into so that through their granularity the overall totality is discerned too. Synthetic and analytic methods are used, such that ‘there is intensive *intellectual* effort, but also a passive receptiveness’ (2001, p.102) through which ‘the striving that ceases is an *intellectual* striving’ (2001, p.102) so that there is an experiential immersion as ‘a kind of seeing which involves one person confronting an object as an artist looks at a landscape...not the sort of seeing of the scientist watching an experiment’ (2001, p.106).

Forbes references Joanna Field (pen name of Marion Millner, later a psychoanalyst) in his building of the aesthetic method. Field herself found “two ways of looking” in her experiments for living an authentic life as documented in *A Life of One’s Own* (1981, pp.105-112). Her investigations led her to posit (i) narrow attention and (ii) wide attention. Although the difference in itself was subtle, ‘only a tiny act of will was necessary in order to pass from one to the other,’ the distinct psychological trajectories that followed from this small act were significant, ‘sufficient to change the face of the world, to make boredom and weariness blossom into immeasurable contentment’ (p.107). She writes that the “questing beast” of narrow attention is not interested in phenomena for their own sake, but as means to its own ends, the meeting of which (hypothetically at least) would mean contentment at some future, as-yet-unrealised date. Wide attention, Field found, comes when ‘the questing purposes were held in leash’ (p.108). Wanting nothing in particular allows one to see the whole at once, attending to objects and desiring nothing from them, so that if attention is held alongside suspension of desire then ‘we should have discovered the knack of holding wide our attention, then the magic thing happens’ (1981, p.108). She provides two examples, when moving from narrow to wide attention,

I would perhaps find myself breathing deeply in the calm impersonality of shapes or colours, or even in a sudden glimpse of someone's character seen from a viewpoint that had stepped clear of the distortions of my personal interests. And once when I was lying, weary and bored with myself, on a cliff looking over the Mediterranean, I had said "I want nothing," and immediately the landscape dropped its picture-postcard garishness and shone with a gleam from the first day of creation, even the dusty weeds by the roadside. Then again, once ill in bed, so fretting with unfulfilled purposes that I could not at all enjoy the luxury of enforced idleness, I had found myself staring vacantly at a faded cyclamen and had happened to remember to say to myself, "I want nothing." Immediately I was so flooded with the crimson of the petals that I thought I had never before known what colour was.

(pp.108-109)

These additional elements appear to give the fifth of a five-fold method we have now built up: following Lovejoy, an initial impetus, or desire, to "crack the shell" into the energising "unit-ideas" that track concepts across times, cultures and academic silos; that, as Skinner critiques, the peril of reporting false-positive unit-ideas by projecting one's own psyche onto texts – an unavoidable process that would be naïve to ignore; awareness of socio-cultural context reality checks such projection but is not enough to enter the lived interiority of thoughts and their thinkers; Skinner's use of linguistic methods, although vital in freeing intellectual imagination through self-autonomy and self-awareness, when applied to itself exposes the truth of paradox and the rational limits of rationality; the space "beyond" reason begins to be coloured in by the aesthetic two-tone seeing described by Forbes and Field: research material "speaks back" at us in unpredictably inspiring ways through a countertransference relationship.

This fifth and final element allows a movement away from the problematic elements of a "perennial philosophy" that Skinner and those coming after diagnosed in Lovejoy, but that concept being re-born as what Bishop calls a "perennial aesthetic" (2008, p.4). The timeless enters a space of sensory and intuitive receptivity to nature and beauty, a non-conceptual "knowing" that cannot *argue* for one particular over another particular as it contains all, and all particulars reflect the same thing. Following a lineage from Spinoza to Goethe, to Schiller,

Nietzsche and then Jung, Bishop writes that joy is the most fundamental and vital of affects in this space, ‘a cure for melancholy’ and, in Jung’s terms, a constellation of the self in nature and creativity. Entwinement of attitude and object is crucial here, Bishop referring to Jung’s writing on the notion of the symbol in alchemy, particularly that of Paracelsus, an idea we will return to with the idea of “twilight language” in tantra, such that

The underdetermined-determined mythologem and the shimmering symbol express the processes of the psyche far more perfectly and, in the end, far more clearly than the clearest concept; for the symbol conveys not only the visualisation of the process, but also – and this is perhaps just as important – it brings a re-experiencing of it.

(CW 13, par. 199)

Bishop suggests this method involves a bringing together of feeling and fact, imagination and the senses so that the artistic combines with the scientific, ‘rejecting the crudeness of a purely intellectual approach, unsympathetic to its subject, and calling for reason to be tempered by feeling’ (2009, p.88). In Susan Rowland’s terms selfhood is not to be constrained as a concept but re-iteratively ‘both *created and found*’ (2005, p.697) such that, with Jung,

the thinking and discriminating mind – conventionally used to produce non-fictional argument – was situated within a sea of unconscious creativity...this inner world of unfathomable and inexhaustible creativity is one of the most important aspects of the human mind.

(2005, p.1)

A sense of such method is illustrated by Forbes (2001) in his case study of the Scottish painter Joan Eardley (1921 – 1963), through whose described persona, imagery and paintings he builds a two-sided symbolism; looking *from* her eyes, as the researcher looking at their material, he describes her ‘almost overwhelmed’ by her subject, ‘a particularly ferocious tumble of waves,’

and then looking *into* her eyes and recognising she is regarding the scene ‘with a tremendous intensity of observation’, so that,

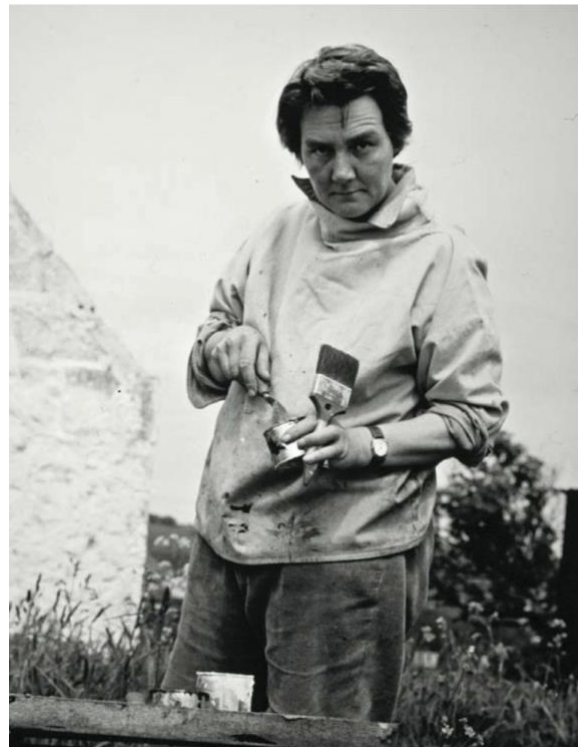
An outgoing from the self is involved which is not passive. This is what Siegfried Lenz’s painter emphasises: that seeing is a process of mutual exchange – man begins to see when he stops playing the mere spectator: the object seizes one when one has seized the object. Seeing’s a sort of mutual swapping. What that produces is mutual transformation...In work towards and appreciation of the work of the historian of ideas, active intellect and vacant stare are combined.

(2001, pp.101-2)

That two-sided combination is symbolised in the two images of Eardley provided in Fig.4.

Fig.4

The ‘vacant stare’ and the ‘active intellect’ combine into the ‘painterly eye’ methodology, which Forbes argues is exemplified by Joan Eardley



As with the two layers of meaning in Skinner's paradoxical sentence, there is both immersion in the moving particular *and* equanimous stilled capacity for universal observation.

To get to this submerged platform of both intense observation and engagement 'involves a great deal of sheer drudgery', building up the minutiae of 'nuance and specificity and difference that is so essential in interpretation' (2001, p.112) of past ideas in the context of the present. Forbes cites Eardley as a complete professional as one that is, ironically, not *entirely* professional, analogous to 'a kind of mental prowling about, which is unbusiness-like and therefore alien to able man ...who treats a document as a civil servant treats a...memorandum' (2001, p.107). There is a return to naïveté here but of a more self-aware and mature sort than the "foolish and needless naïveté" that Skinner reads in Lovejoy as somewhat childish and regressive. Instead,

to see with that trained eye of the artist, that is the 'innocent eye', the innocent eye being a disciplined eye trained to grasp and present the complexity of things and the interrelations of things and to see things as they appear and not as we think they ought to be.

(2001, pp.102-3)

With Forbes and Eardley, instead, naïveté is more like the "Beginner's Mind" of Zen Buddhism (Suzuki, 1991), fresh to experience as it presents itself anew in the present moment. Taken together as the "painterly eye", or synoptic stare, with this comes what Forbes describes as the capacity to "get particular without getting particular," in that the literal representation of an object is dropped in favour of a sophisticated abridgement, such as Hokusai's *Wave*, to express something more essential and felt about it, as if from within. A sense of this quality comes through in Eardley's painting in Fig.5, its looseness conveying a particular this-ness which literal attention to detail could not do. It's symbolic "twilight language" speaks clearly.

Fig.5

Sleeping Child, by J. Eardley c.1962



Summary and conclusion

With that same sense, we appear to have built up a methodology with which we can now further investigate the research question without falling into the conventional philosophical assumptions that would hamstring attempts to answer it. Below is the five-part criteria for methodology that has been built up over the course of this section, and works implicitly as a basic structure for the remainder of the thesis, maintaining a distinct set of philosophical assumptions.

Outcome: criteria for methodology

- i. Direction of travel: an *aspiration* to seek the underlying threads of meaning cohering across academic disciplines and thought-systems from diverse cultures with the awareness that,

every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure

(T.S. Eliot, quoted in Burrow, 2001)¹⁵

- ii. Textual considerations (transference phenomena): the need to study texts with consciousness of one's own psychological schemas that can be *transferred* onto texts; unconsciousness of these transferences creates erroneous projections onto texts, whereby the researcher's own ideas become hypostatized and essentialised as somehow "out there" or "behind" the text, rather than intimately bound with the psyche researching them.
- iii. Contextual considerations: the need for contextually situating texts, but to consider contextual events as *precipitating* factors rather than *causal* factors: attributing causality to context is consistent with the methodology of behavioural psychology, whereby the role of the intrapsychic is marginalised, thus inappropriate to a study of identity from Jungian and Buddhist perspectives, which require methodologies exploring intrapsychic phenomena.
- iv. Semantic considerations: the need for linguistic methods derived from Quentin Skinner and the "Cambridge School" of intellectual history to decipher meanings both

¹⁵ This aspect of method chimes with James Gustafson's (1986) proposal for what he calls "a method of methods" in brief psychotherapy, in which one's usual therapeutic approach runs aground. Any one therapeutic approach, he suggests, as is also the case with 'any work of art or explanation of science[,] concerns some local difficulty.' He goes on to suggest that 'the particular work or explanation may fail to evoke that difficulty or fail to generate a mechanism to explain how it occurs. But failures may be more interesting than success for those of us who follow, for those failures become our problems....So we have art and science as tradition insofar as we accept this cycle of problems, solutions, and new problems' (1986; p.3)

locutionary and illocutionary; at the same time, being conscious of the paradigmatic danger of “linguistic reductionism,” whereby language is assumed to be the root source of meaning, ruling out instances of non-linguistic, experiential “meaning” (e.g. synchronistic phenomena)

- v. Paradoxical considerations (countertransference phenomena): the need for methodology that allows for countertransference of texts/objects of study onto the researcher, as well as the researcher’s transference onto the text. The bi-directionality of relationship between researcher/research is essential to avoid distorting and research-disrupting power hierarchies, and promotes openness to researcher-experience evoked by subject matter, and acknowledges the ongoing conflict of affective engagement and observing “ego capacity” in the research process, thus linking back to i.
- vi. Synoptic seeing, combining the active intellect and vacant stare, in which the academic researcher employs the same attitude as the painter, whereby two modes are used in tandem: the active intellect, analysing and “making sense” of objects under consideration, and the vacant stare, absorbing as a receptacle the influence of those objects so that they are “taken in” wholeheartedly.

Reflective note I: the William Jacks Chair dream

Around the time of first drafting this section I dreamt that my supervisor and I were somewhere like Jung's childhood home, on the upper floor. I could somehow see into the attic, the same one in which the ten-year-old Jung had hidden a small wooden mannikin tucked into a wooden pencil case bed. In the dream, however, through the dim light I could see the loft-space held an array of treasures: chests, wrought bronze objects, sophisticated but un-namable things that glinted in the gloom. Everything seemed exotic and antique, and there was a wealth of it. The problem, however, was both getting up there physically, as there was no ladder up to the loft hatch. The solution was to get to work making "The William Jacks Chair", which in the dream was a Heath Robinson-type contraption, an ancient dark wooden seat installed amidst a plethora of cogs, pistons, pipes, tubes, chains, levers and so on, which we had to work on and then attach to a pulley system that rose from the landing up into the loft. This was a testing process, stopping and starting, and we were in the throes of many trials and errors with it when the dream came to an end.

On waking I remembered that in waking life The William Jacks Chair is not a literal chair, but in fact a Chair in Modern Languages held by Professor Paul Bishop at the University of Glasgow¹⁶. Bishop's work on how the German classical aesthetic tradition, particularly through Goethe, is vital to Analytical Psychology, and indeed the intellectual position that the argument of this section leads to. Years later, near the end of the write-up process, I looked into the life of William Jacks himself, who bequeathed the funds for the academic chair which Bishop now occupies. In 1894 he translated Lessing's play *Nathan the Wise*, a play which Jung and Pauli discuss in their correspondence in 1952-3, and in many ways succinctly summarises the interdependency between the personal and transpersonal articulated in the thesis.

¹⁶ Now retired from

Concepts

The previous section argued for an arts-based method through which the core concepts of the thesis could be regarded appropriately. The current section now presents those concepts. Chapter Five introduces i) Jung's depiction of the alchemical process found in *Mysterium Coniunctionis* which he ascribes to Gerhard Dorn and ii) *tummo*, as found in the Tibetan Vajrayana Tradition, specifically the writing of Je Tsongkhapa in his canonical *Book of Three Inspirations* (commonly known as *The Six Dharmas of Naropa*). One finding is there are inherent difficulties in isolating and decontextualising Buddhist practices (as arguably occurs in the secular mindfulness movement), meaning that presenting *tummo* as a stand-alone technique is highly problematic. Viewing it as part of the matrix of Tibetan tantra is preferable. Chapter Six, therefore, establishes *tummo* within that greater matrix and re-contextualises *tummo* in an appropriate way, part of the package presented by Je Tsongkhapa in the Fourteenth Century (which include so-called "preliminary" practices, *tummo* itself, *bardo*, *kamamudra*, clear light mind, illusory body, consciousness projection, and consciousness transference). Doing so is vital, as it helps re-conceive *tummo* as central in an holistic matrix, its elements woven interdependently.

Such an enriched understanding of *tummo* goes on to raise fundamental issues and unresolved quandaries regarding the relationship between sexuality and the sacred along the path of individuation. Particularly, four major questions are posed: what is implied regarding the nature of consciousness? How could *tummo* practice be (ir)relevant for psychotherapy? How might it be received cross-culturally in Westernised societies? How might Jung's position regarding his so-called "erotic phenomenology" be re-read when provocations from a *Vajrayana* perspective are met? These questions, taken together, give a suitably multi-faceted answer to the problem

of how the split between the sacred and sexual could be addressed through these systems of thought; as such, they provide the themes for each subsequent part of the thesis.

Chapter Five

Dornian Alchemy in Jung's *Mysterium Coniunctionis* and *tummo* in Je Tsongkhapa's *Book of Three Inspirations*

Dornian Alchemy in Jung's *Mysterium Coniunctionis*

An overview of the whole of Jung's interpretation of Dorn's alchemical individuation process is provided in Table 1, beginning with *unio naturalis*, then *unio mentalis*, the union of the body with *unio mentalis*, and finally *unio mystica*. The shadow, or resulting difficulty, of each stage is presented, which in turn provides a necessity for the next stage as a resolution. How these phases map to the Axiom of Maria is also indicated, which comes to be useful in the final section regarding a re-reading of Jung's (and Jungian) erotic phenomenology. Finally, the correspondences of these stages of the alchemical model to the cycle of (re)enchantment, as described by Main (2022), is provided, adding another depth of psychological and cultural meaning to the process.

Table 1*Overview of Dornian Alchemy in Jung's *Mysterium Coniunctionis**

Alchemical Stage	Description	Achievement of individuation	Shadow side / resulting issue	Axiom of Maria	enchantment cycle
<i>0, Unio Naturalis</i>	undivided entwining of soul and the body, a unity which is unconscious, unreflective, unaware of itself <i>Participation mystique</i>	Basic aliveness, vitality; Human existence in uncultivated and raw form	Chaotic, animalistic, “primal”, uncritical: no rational insight; enchainment of soul to bodily instinct; narcissistic	One; Original state of unconscious wholeness	Naïve enchantment Unconscious identifications of subject and object
<i>1, Unio Mentalis</i>	the uniting of spirit and reason, within the psyche, against the body and its tumult of affect, becoming free of projections and superstitions	Conscious control of instincts, increased realistic view of oneself and reality, Healthy separation	Deadening, lifeless view of world as inert, meaningless Vulnerable to regression back to unio naturalis	Two; The conflict between opposites; “One becomes two...”	Disenchantment (itself an enchantment)
<i>2, caelum</i>	Re-uniting unio mentalis with the body, which reanimates matter: body is connected to Self, as image of an earthed God	Becoming participative rather than passive, Invigorating involvement, embodied	Subtle dualism Lack of oneness between the integrated individual and the world	Three; A potential resolution; “...two becomes three...”	‘the transition from a state of disenchantment to a state of reenchantment’ (Main, p.22) (dissolving of dualism between person and world)
<i>3, Unio Mystica</i>	Holistic and ultimate unity of entire psyche (spirit, soul, mind, body) with <i>unus mundus</i> , “one world”, <i>tao</i> , <i>samadhi</i> , <i>satori</i>	Ultimate awareness of what is “beyond” space, time, causality, Oneness, liberation	Not-knowing, Potentiality, Emergence of unprocessed new material	Four; The third as transcendent function, one as fourth as relative wholeness; “...and out of the third comes the one as the fourth”	Reenchantment (non-dualistic) ‘an experience of unity with the creative ground of reality’ (Main, p.23)

The natural state, Unio naturalis

Prior to *unio mentalis* is what Jung referred to as *unio naturalis* (1955/1989, par. 696), the natural state of dimensions of phenomena bundled together to concoct a chaotic mass (*massa confusa*): a writhing con-fusion that lacks clear sense-making or order. One inhabits a basic sense of aliveness, vitality is present in a highly raw, unmeditated way, but this is somewhat “primal”, without rational insight. There is an identity here of soul and body, not yet differentiated from each other. Jung explains that the body ‘not only enjoys the advantage of being animated by the soul but suffers under the disadvantage of having to serve as the instrument of the soul’s appetites and desires’ (par. 673).

Sharp (1991), following the *Axiom of Maria*, describes *unio naturalis* as the initial “One” in the sequence of four – an original state of unconscious, unreflective, wholeness. Jung (1955/1963, par 696) describes the unconscious identification of subject and object in this so-called “primitive” mode of being, using Lévy-Bruhl’s anthropological term *participation mystique*. Main (2022) refers to *unio naturalis* as a state of naïve pre-scientific enchantment, existing naturalistically prior to the subject-object split that comes to be inherent in a scientific perception of reality. The external world is alive and ensouled, animated by projections from the mind (Jung, par, 696). There is no sense of psychology *per se*, as the mind’s contents are not recognised as phenomena of our inner life, but regarded as features of the external world instead. There is no question of union between the spiritual and sexual within the state of *unio mentalis* because they do not yet exist as distinct phenomenological categories to be united. Identification, rather than union, is how Edward Edinger (1960, 1998) conveys this position.

Following Neumann’s articulation of the ego-self axis, or ego-self paradox, Edinger (1960) puts *unio naturalis* in developmental terms. Akin to the original uroboric state described by

Neumann, Edinger describes the early phases of life involving ego-self identity, where the germ of the future ego is a potentiality, nested with the mandala of the Self. In other words, no ego has yet been actualised, only existing in potential, thus ego and Self are one. If this state goes unchecked and unchallenged into adulthood, a variety of pathological, narcissistic, God-like clinical difficulties present: illusions of immortality (the *puer aeternus*), of universality or totality (unwilling to choose a definitive life course thus trapping oneself in what Baynes called “a provisional life”), of omnipotence (A Freudian regressed state, or Adlerian will to power), of omniscience, of divine vengeance and wrath (or Christ-like martyrdom), and god-like delusions of grandeur.

The first conjunction, unio mentalis

A key operation of the *unio mentalis* is to free the soul from its enchainment to the body. This involves the uniting of spirit and reason, within the psyche, against the body and its tumult of affect. As Jung puts it, ‘the declared aim of the treatment [in psychotherapy] is to set up a rational, spiritual-psychic position over against the turbulence of the emotions’ (1955/1963, par 696). By spirit Jung refers to ‘all the higher mental faculties such as reason, insight and moral discrimination’ (1955/1963, par 696). Not to be reduced to reason however, spirit involves a rarefied, morally conscious, equanimous tone with a timeless quality, offering ‘a window into eternity’, such ‘knowledge of higher things’ having an ‘impersonal character of traditional, intellectual and moral values which educate and cultivate the individual’ (1955/1963, 673). Jung refers to the spirit as *animus*, which Dorn referred to as a ‘spiracle [spiraculum] of eternal life’ (par.670). In contrast, he refers to the soul as the *anima*, or Shakti, (‘who conjures up a delusory world for him’ (par. 673)).

There is a decidedly Kantian flavour to *unio mentalis*, with the vaunting of pure reason as a means to transcend our bounded subjective selves and enter into some connection with a universal moral truth beyond. That Kantian sense of spirit provides the engine for much in the liberal democratic tradition found in political philosophy. John Rawls' canonical *A Theory Of Justice* for instance, and the plethora of publications in its wake, utilises this notion of spirit in the foundational thought experiment of the veil of ignorance: asking one to imagine, what type of ethical code would one choose were one ignorant of one's own contingent circumstances of birth (socioeconomic status, gender, age, ethnicity, and so on), the veil of ignorance tunes one into an abstract sense of universal morality that utilises (but is not beholden to) reason. Gitz-Johansen (2020) tracks the ways in which Jung's description of spirit as a psychological phenomenon evolves chronologically across his writing, and Langan (2024) argues for Jung to be an "unlikely Spinozian", for whom spirit (along with psyche and matter) is part of a tripartite monism.

When articulated in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, the conscious cultivation of spirit at the stage of *unio mentalis*, or 'mental union in the overcoming of the body' (1955-1956/1989, par.676) is the moral discipline of pulling back from innate bodily gratifications, 'turning away from sensuous reality, a withdrawal of the fantasy-projections that give "the ten-thousand things" their attractive and deceptive glamour' (1955-1956/1989, par.676). Jung describes this as the work of "introversion, introspection, meditation and the careful investigation of desires and their motives" (1955-1956/1989, par.673). Going through this process is painful, aversive and challenging, abating the habitual flow of one's thoughts and actions. Such intellectual, ascetic, and ethical exhortation is a higher call to the cultivation of spirit and, through it, question the very nature of one's identity: 'it requires indeed an unusual degree of self-abnegation to question the fictitious picture of one's own personality' (1955-1956/1989, par.474). Jung

discerns this process as pitting oneself in a demanding, messy and ongoing emotional struggle in which we encounter unwanted affect, ego-bruising insight, and confrontation with the unconscious. It is an enormous achievement in the process of individuation, however, in which one becomes able to maintain the predominance of one's conscious reason, moral and spiritual sense over passions and instincts which if unchecked, in Thomas Hobbes' words, would reduce society to a state of nature in which life becomes nasty, brutish and short.

Sharp's (1991) use of the *axiom of Maria* puts *unio mentalis* as "one becomes two", in that there is now a dualism, and conflict between two parts of the psyche – the spirit (aligned with reason and morality) and matter (body, aligned with the passions and an unreflective state). For Main (2022) this is a state of disenchantment, as the subject and object are now split and the projections of naïve enchantment withdrawn from the world and recognised as inner psychic states, leaving the outer world inert and seemingly without inherent meaning. This is of course a crucial achievement for the advancement of science, which is predicated on the experimental design of the subject of investigation being distinguishable from the objective and neutral stance of the scientist investigating it. In Edinger's (1960) terms, *unio mentalis* is an important marker for individuation as a differentiation between ego and Self has now been achieved, forming an ego-self axis. The reasonable, moral and spiritual insight as counterweight to the tumult of passions and emotions acts to reduce the narcissistic psychopathologies that occurred with *unio naturalis*. One has learnt to 'free the mind from the influence of the "bodily appetites and the heart's affections,' writes Jung, 'and establish a spiritual position which is superordinate to the turbulent sphere of the body' (par. 671).

It is at this point that we can begin to discern why the conventional paradigms of religion and sexuality (as delineated by Palmer and Freud and repeated culturally) matter. Jung states that

the first conjunction is ‘a clear blend of Stoic philosophy and Christian psychology, [and] is indispensable for the differentiation of consciousness’ (par. 672). It concords with Palmer’s position in Chapter Two: dualistically, a sphere of spirit (reason, God, animus, morality) is framed in opposition to the animalistically mundane (bodily instincts, including sexuality, the secular world). Mastery of the former over the latter is a highly significant psychological and spiritual achievement.

However, if psychological development is considered no further than the stage of *unio mentalis* then intense difficulties, suggests Jung, are bound to occur and efforts at individuation doomed to fail. If individuation stays at this stage the achievement is somewhat brittle, and liable to crack. The situation regarding the sacred and sexual would be a prime example. As Jung writes,

the separation of the spiritual and the vital spheres, and the subordination of the latter to the rational standpoint, is not satisfactory in as much as reason alone cannot do complete or even adequate justice to the irrational facts of the unconscious. In the long run it does not pay to cripple life by insisting on the primacy of spirit, for which reason the pious man cannot prevent himself from sinning again and again and the rationalist must constantly trip up over his own irrationalities.

(1955-56/1989, par.672)

There seem to be two related limitations of *unio mentalis*: its capacities for deadening and for degeneration. Deadenning refers to the “crippling of life” which Jung describes, as when the life-affirming unconscious is disavowed and thus existence becomes somewhat meaningless. *Unio mentalis* has parallels with the achievements of scientific rationalism, and as such the wonder inherent in *unio naturalis* is cast out as unsophisticated superstition, to be scoffed at by a superior intellect capable of logical critique. Main (2022) describes this as a state of disenchantment, the world becoming barren of meaning or magic.

Applying such a split of spirit and the “vital spheres” can often be exemplified starkly in organisations and communities where the cultivation of spirit is emphasised and bodily motives and desires repressed, only to wreak havoc from the shadows. The litany and frequency of sexual scandals regarding religious institutions would be consistent with Jung’s formulation of the shadow of *unio mentalis*. The Catholic Church in Ireland, or Buddhist institutions within the UK, for instance, are a few amongst many illustrating a potential danger of attempting to divorce the life of the spirit (and its moral compass) from the life of the body (and its sexual desires). Enacting this divorce essentially tears apart the soul, or psyche, as the ligament which (when functioning) connects a well-functioning ego-self axis. Jung goes on to suggest how such disconnection results into a toxic warping of desire. Acts of sexual abuse in these contexts could be major examples of such a warping. Jung writes that a conscious attitude of striving for the cultivation of spirit runs this risk, such that,

...anything that slips away into the unconscious is beyond the reach of correction and, its rank growth undisturbed, is subject to increasing degeneration. Happily, nature sees to it that the unconscious contents will irrupt into consciousness sooner or later and create the necessary confusion. A permanent and uncomplicated state of spiritualisation is therefore such a rarity that its possessors are canonized by the Church.

(1955-1956/1989, par.672)

Thus, a state of dis-equilibrium is more often the case, characterised by a ‘chronic duel between body and spirit’ (1955-1956/1989, par.672) whereby ‘the rationalist trips up over his own irrationalities’ (1955-1956/1989, par.672). Given these harms of deadening and deterioration, a clear impetus for the second conjunction emerges.

The second conjunction, union of the body with unio mentalis

The solution provided by the *unio mentalis* to bring sensate desires under the control of the mind begets a second problem – how then to integrate the body back into balance soulfully, with spirit, given its capacity to re-assert itself destructively if left un-integrated? This gives rise to the need for a second stage of psychological development, which was ‘the re-uniting of the *unio mentalis* with the body’, that being ‘particularly important, as only from here can the complete conjunction be attained – union with the *unus mundus*’ (1955-1956/1989, par.679).

Although Jung appears to have left the second conjunction without a formal name, von Franz referred to it as *unio corporalis* (e.g. 1980, p.232). Other authors, such as Main (2022), refer to it as the *caelum*, that being the alchemical “substance” produced in the second conjunction, and which symbolises an embodied union with God, or the Self. Murray Stein (2019), who refers to the second conjunction as the uniting of the *unio mentalis* with the body, emphasises the meaning of action and behaviour at this stage. Entering into the world with practical activities and ways of being that are in keeping with *unio mentalis*, and ‘em-bodying’ and ‘incorporating’ the insight of the first stage into actual, physical action in day-to day-life.

As well as Stein’s sense of embodiment, we can also float the possibility of an additional meaning of this stage which can be drawn from Jung’s writing, which is admittedly more opaque and harder to grasp than the first stage, or Stein’s interpretation of the second as action-in-the-world. As Main stresses with reference to *caelum*, in the second stage of the conjunction Jung is imbued with alchemical thought. In it Jung describes *caelum* as ‘the production of the quintessence’ (*CW11*, par.681 – 685), the “*quinta essentia*, a lapis or a panacea”, what Dorn referred to as “a certain heavenly substance hidden in the body”, a “balsam”, a set of chemical processes designed to bring about the *caelum*, “the celestial substance hidden in man”. In the

following chapters I will argue that the second conjunction is in fact referred to the transformation of the *subtle body*, which bridges the personal and transpersonal psyche. This interpretation, additional to Stein's, is drawn out through connection to *tummo* practice, which displays marked connections of meaning with the second conjunction across various dimensions.

One consequence of the subtle body interpretation I argue to be important is that it demonstrates that further work is needed on a physical, bodily level in psychotherapy. This accords with growing awareness within the field that trauma, emotion, and memory are held somatically, and so interventions which target insight of the mind – equivalent to *unio mentalis* – are necessary, but not sufficient, for therapeutic change to occur. This fleshes out Jung's remark that 'natural science combines two worlds, the physical and the psychic. Psychology does this only insofar as it is psychophysiology' (CW17, para. 162). Following contemporary findings of researchers such as Bessel Van Der Kolk, who maintains that 'symptoms have their origin in the entire body's response to trauma' (2014, p.11), there are resonances with Jung's statement that 'the gods have become diseases; Zeus no longer rules Olympus but rather the solar plexus and produces curious specimens for the doctor's consulting room' (CW13, par. 54). The second conjunction goes further than much contemporary somatic psychotherapy research, however, in its insinuation of the transcendent with the mundane – following Jung, "small gods" can be located in somatic suffering.

The subtle body interpretation of the second conjunction is particularly salient for the relationship between the sacred and sexual. It offers a transcendent function through which to overcome their problematic split in the first conjunction. The subtle body provides a domain where sexual energies can be held within an intrapsychic alchemical vessel and transmuted

from the “lead” of basic desire to the “gold” of spiritual experience. Such awakening is of a qualitatively different type than the first conjunction (although it is reliant on the sound foundation of *unio mentalis* to come about effectively). This time it takes the form of an *embodied energetic experience* rather than spiritual insight and moral mastery of oneself. As such, it provides a radically different – and many would argue radically more fertile (e.g. Yeshe, 1998) – ground from which to individuate into the third conjunction, *unio mystica*.

The third conjunction, unio mystica

The transcendent quality of the second conjunction, however, is somewhat limited. Although duality no longer exists within the individual (i.e. spirit and body are conjoined via soulful functioning of the psyche), duality still exists between the individual and the outside world, and the world of the mundane (*creatura*) and transpersonal (*pleroma*). Remaining dualisms are overcome by the third conjunction, which is the final, ultimate conjunction of Jung’s reading of Dorn. This stage, known as the *unio mystica*, is the union of the second (the *caelum*) with the *unus mundus*, the “one world” of potential, primordial unity, and undifferentiation. As such, it symbolises the overcoming of all opposites, thus all dualities, and potentially the entering into the archetype-as-such (Main, 2022). Jung explicitly equates the third conjunction with the peak attainments in Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. Reflecting on the inability to articulate the *unus mundus* conceptually, he writes that

we could compare this only with the ineffable mystery of the *unio mystica*, or *tao*, or the content of *samadhi*, or the experience of *satori* in Zen, which would bring us to the realm of the ineffable and of extreme subjectivity where the criteria of reason fail.

(1955-1956/1989, par. 771).

The impossibility of articulation is perhaps a contributing factor in the confusion of Platonic and process-oriented descriptions of the relationship between the transcendent and mundane that this thesis highlights in Jung's work. For instance, the very definition of the *unio mystica* is no longer valid at the stage of reaching it, because separating the third conjunction as a distinct category introduces categories of what it is *not*. In other words, it would be a conceptual move that re-introduces dualism and negates holism. As such, the third conjunction logically begets an encompassing of all other conjunctions, indeed all other possibilities, thus in its effectiveness (by "doing its job") it makes itself redundant. In effect, then, the *unio mystica* commands the existence and continued co-creation of the other stages of Jung's alchemical model – rather than being a final stage of "perfection" it is an exhortation to participate in the whole cycle repeatedly. It takes on a mystical shape, as Jill Purce describes as a "spherical vortex":

The spherical vortex, spiralling through its own centre is perpetually turning in on itself, expanding and contracting, and has an interchangeable centre and circumference, it combines the inward and outward direction of movement and has neither beginning or end – it is the stable form of flow created in water and air.

(1974, p.7)

The shape of the spherical vortex symbolises the transcendence at the third conjunction of the union of the sacred and the sexual. It is *both* receptive *and* penetrative simultaneously, receiving itself through its space in the centre as it penetrates itself by turning back into that centre, combining inward and outward in endless iteration. As Robert Thurman writes in the commentary to his translation of *The Bardo Thodol* (commonly known as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*), the sexual metaphor is now playing out on a cosmic scale, beyond the limitations of strictly human psychology. It becomes a principle of the universe beyond the confines of

human behaviour. Thurman writes light-heartedly that Freud would have mixed feelings about such a cosmology – on one hand his sexual hypothesis finds its ultimate source of corroboration, on the other hand such corroboration arrives riding the tide of the black mud of occultism he sought to lock out.

Summary

Contextualising Jung's alchemical model as an infinitely (re)iterative process of individuation completes this overview of one of the thought-systems of this thesis. The chaos of *unio naturalis* is brought under control by the achievement of *unio mentalis*, the union of psyche and spirit. The deadening and desire-distorting shadow of this achievement (especially around the split of the sacred and sexual) begets the second conjunction, uniting *unio mentalis* with the body and producing the *caelum*. This represents action-in-the-world but also (I will argue) workings of the subtle body, but still holds a duality between the individual who is individuating and the ground of potential, the *unus mundus*. That remaining dualism is overcome by the final stage, *unio mystica*, where oneness with the *unus mundus* is achieved, and an infinitely reiterating process articulated. We can now turn our attention to the second core concept of this thesis: *tummo* practices of the Tibetan *Vajrayana* tradition.

Tummo practices of the Tibetan Vajrayana tradition.

Tummo is presented in several different Tibetan Buddhist systems (within the *Six Dharmas* of Niguma, Harding, 2010; the *kalacakratantra*, Wallace, 2001; the *Nyingma* school, Ray, 2002; the *Sakya* school, Davidson, 2005), but for reasons given above the presentation by Je Tsongkhapa, founder of the Gelug school, is focussed on here. Modern scientific studies on *tummo*, a potentially growing area of research, have been conducted (Benson, 1982; Kozhevnikov et al., 2013, 2022; Samuel & Kozhevnikov, 2024; Zunin et al., 2025), but as they do not address the sacred/sexual split in depth psychology terms they are not currently focussed on, although will be discussed in the section regarding therapeutic applications.

In order to describe *tummo* in sufficient detail its etymological network is first considered, after which its dimensions of “image” and of “energy”. The connections made between the sacred and sexual are suggested here, before being analysed in greater depth later. A final section describing *tummo*’s function as a “secret key” is provided, which begins to link it with other aspects of the *Vajrayana* structure. That vital work of contextualisation is taken up in the next chapter.

Etymological network

What is commonly known as *tummo*, *tum-mo* or *gtum-mo* (and in older documents often *tumo*) is most often referred to as ‘inner heat’, ‘subtle fire’ or ‘inner fire’. It is an anglicised representation of a term in Tibetan with roots in the Sanskrit word *caṇḍālī* or *chandali*. It thus refers to the Proto-Indo-European root *kand-* and so, as already mentioned, shares some characteristics with the *kundalini* practices found in Indian Tantric traditions. *Kand-* means ‘to give light, shine’, and is a root which contributes to words including candle, candescent, candor, chandelier, incandescence and incense. This etymological network is worth noting as

it provides a sense of *tummo*'s intimations, which has physical and emotional aspects: a sense of heat and visual illumination, and of roused temper and passions.

The shared etymological roots between *kundalini* and *tummo* are echoed in some broad commonalities of their practice, although ultimately a branching off in application occurs too. Fundamentally, both *tummo* and *kundalini* practices sit within the Tantric traditions, as opposed to the monastic and ascetic traditions of both Hinduism and Buddhism, also known as the *sutra* traditions. Whereas the ascetic/monastic considers 'the divine' and 'spirit' to be the mind, and the body as a defilement of spiritual purity to be disowned and detached from, *tantra* considers "the divine" to permeate all aspects of reality which would include, of course, the body and its functions (Feuerstein, 1998).

Kundalini (translated as 'serpent' in Coward, 1985, p.112; 'she who is coiled' in Feuerstein, 1998, p.178) refers to the latent, infinite, potential energy pooled at the lowest energy centre purportedly located at the base of the 'central channel', at the perineum. This energy is 'earthed', 'grounded', and associated with the feminine principle, but locked down, plugged and guarded by the symbol of the snake, or serpent, 'coiled eight times¹⁷ around it and blocking the opening...with its mouth' (Coward, 1985, p.112). Kundalini and *tummo* practices work to waken dormant energy (known as *prajna*) through some similar practices, in which pressure is applied to the lower energy centres through controlled breathing, muscle constrictions, and concentrated visualisations, so that the 'serpent energy' rises up the purported central pathway, dissolving each energy centre *en route*, and transforming the practitioner's bodymind consciousness. Many details of kundalini practices differ from *tummo*, as do their imagery

¹⁷ Feuerstein (1998) suggests three and a half times (p.175)

aspects, and the other elements which surround it (e.g. the type of preliminary practice, the role of *atman* or *anatman*, particular deity symbolism).

Image

Tum- refers to courage, bravery (Yeshe, 1998/2015), ferocity (Mullin, 1996), ardor or passion (Shaw, 1993), and *-mo* is a female modifier, meaning that when depicted in human form tummo is female. The feminine is of consequence within Tibetan Buddhism symbolically as, among other things, *she* ‘represents the wisdom of non-duality’ (Yeshe, 1998/2015, p.22). Therefore the embodiment of tummo is a ‘fierce woman’ – the *dakini*¹⁸ Vajrayogini, who acts as the holding deity, or guru, for tummo practice (Preece, 2023). Vajrayogini is thus a visual symbol for all aspects of tummo, and Shaw’s description (1993), albeit partial, communicates a potent impression:

Perhaps the foremost female Buddha is Vajrayogini. She is blood red and has loosely flowing black hair; she is dancing, wears bone ornaments, and brandishes a skull-cap brimming with ambrosia [in other versions blood]. She is beautiful, passionate, and untamed. Sometimes this supreme liberator tramples corpses underfoot...and sometimes she soars in the sky.

(p.28)

A visual depiction is provided in Fig.6.

¹⁸ Katz (1992) defines a *dakini* as ‘a heavenly being of female appearance who partakes of the luminous nature of space’ (p.315); Simmer-Brown (2023) writes that the dakini ‘represents one of the most important, potent, and dynamic images/ideas/symbols within all of Tantra’ and cannot be limited to a single definition. Translations along the lines of the dakini enjoying, dancing, or flying in her abode of the sky; the sky referring to ‘the nonconceptual realisation of the dreamlike nature of all phenomena appearing in the skylike mind’, and the sense of movement within it indicating the experiential quality of its realisation.

Fig. 6

Photograph of a painting of Vajrayoginī , symbolic image of tummo, in the form of Nāropa's Ḍākinī from a Thangka (Wikipedia Commons, 2014)



Energy

If Vajrayoginī illuminates what tummo is visually, then its aspect as inner heat – as somatic, imagined, spiritual and/or emotive experience – is most commonly cited and discussed. David-Neel (1929/1971) makes clear that Tibetans have another word for the everyday sense of heat or warmth, and so rather than referring to that, it is a technical term for a type of heat generated within spiritual-healing practices. She describes it as ‘the subtle fire which warms the generative fluid and drives the energy in it, till it runs all over the body along the tiny channels of the *tsas*¹⁹’ (p.199)²⁰. Shaw (1993) understands it slightly differently, as the heat generated when a practitioner brings the energy which is usually a ‘churning cauldron of chaotic thoughts and emotions’ under conscious control in the bodymind. Consciously gathering and containing the

¹⁹ ‘Written *rtsa*, which means at once vein, artery and nerve’ (David-Neel, 1929/1971, p.199)

usually anarchically diffuse energy in one place – usually just below the navel – generates warmth; it then grows to become ‘an inner fire or inner heat (*candali*) that burns away the dross of ignorance and ego-clinging’ (p.31). Yeshe (1998) expands on this theme of *tummo* as a practice simultaneously weakening the ego and strengthening one’s spiritual selfhood:

We do not have bamboo, pine, or olive trees to burn as our inner fuel, but we do have plenty of ego garbage and superstitions. The main function of inner fire is to burn all our delusions and superstitions and allow a non-superstitious, simultaneously born great blissful wisdom to grow.

(p.144)

Mullin (1996, p.59-60) further clarifies the situation when he notes that Tibetan spiritual-medical traditions recognise three planes of mind and body that exist simultaneously – ‘coarse/gross’, ‘subtle’, and ‘very subtle’ – which will be considered in the next section. Each plane of body supports a corresponding plane of mind consciousness. The gross/coarse plane is the ordinary body composed of flesh, blood, bone, and other empirically verifiable phenomena; the gross body gives rise to everyday sensations and ‘gross’ consciousness. The subtle body will be familiar as the ‘chakra system’ commonly referred to in popular culture. It consists of a network of energy channels (Sanskrit *nadi* Tibetan *rtsa*), energy centres (Skt. *chakra*; Tib. *rtsa khor*), flowing subtle energies (Skt. *vayu* or *prana*; Tib. *rlung*), and the emplaced sexual drops (Skt. *bindu*; Tib. *thig le*). These ‘drops’ are either male (white) or female (red), purportedly numbering in the many thousands, flowing through the subtle energy channels. In *tummo*, the interaction of red-female “drops” rising from below and white-male drops descending from above, uniting in the heart to unlock great bliss, mimics the union and orgasm of sexuality. As such, there are some parallels between *tummo* and sexual experiences. As Preece (2006) writes,

This subtle blood at the naval is known as the *tumo*, or wrathful female, responsible for a particular quality of heat, felt strongly most often at the time of sexual

intercourse... As the powerful heat of her passion rises, she reaches up towards the *daka harukachakrasambara* to draw him into her embrace. *Harukchakrasambara* is the white element at the crown, who, like the bull of heaven, or the spring seed, melts and descends into the goddess. The union is aroused and consummated within the central channel. The meditator... uses this blissful quality of awareness to open fully to the nature of emptiness. This transforms the play of the *daka* and *dakini* into the ecstatic union of bliss and emptiness experienced within the body in the central channel.

“A secret key”

Tummo practices are designed to establish the psycho-physical energetic state that propels the practitioner, more rapidly, to professedly rarified spiritual experiences that may otherwise be inaccessible. Je Tsongkhapa describes three types of practice to initiate that propulsion, namely: i) meditation through visualisation of subtle energy channels, ii) meditation through visualising mantic “seed” syllables, and iii) meditation through the technique of vase breathing. Although presented as distinct, in practice these three steps cannot be considered entirely separate as a strong element of visualisation is inherent in vase breathing practice, as are the mantic seed syllables. For a variety of reasons the primary focus of the practice explored in this research will be the vase breathing technique, to be analysed in more detail when the process of *tummo* (and its therapeutic relevance) is explored through a Jungian lens.

Yeshe (1998) describes *tummo* as the ‘foundation stone’, ‘a secret key’ (p.155) or ‘like the main door leading into a complex of hundreds of treasure houses’ (p.23). Although leading to even more complex, refined procedures and states it should be noted, however, that as part of the ‘higher tantras’ *tummo* is considered an advanced practice in itself. It is traditionally performed only after groundwork in extensive ‘preliminary’ work such as ethical action and mind-training have been well-established (Baker, 2019; van Schaik, 2016). These ‘preliminary’ steps are in themselves great spiritual accomplishments that may be the fruit of years, decades (and in the Tibetan tradition lifetimes) of effort. Therefore, as well as being a ‘foundation stone’ for even

more advanced practice, working with *tummo* is simultaneously regarded as a rare spiritual milestone for a highly advanced practitioner.

Another aspect of *tummo* as “secret key” is that it insinuates a doorway into another system of practice that enfolds the psychoanatomy of the subtle body; skilled manipulation of the subtle body’s energies is an advantageous position from which to then enter into the realm of non-duality. Movement into the subtle (as opposed to the everyday) body, in fact, also represents something of a “key change”. In musical terms it would be from minor to major, in that there is a shift in emphasis from acceptance of suffering or dissatisfaction (*dukkha*) to an amplification of joy and bliss. In tones that are somewhat surprising to the more familiar Western reception of Buddhism as a form of stoicism in the face of illness, inevitable old age and death Yeshe, in his classic introductory text on *tummo*, writes,

The purpose of inner fire meditation is to increase pleasure. The yogi or yogini is simply saying “I am not satisfied with the pleasure I already have. I want more. That is why I am practicing inner fire.” However, you must never forget to unify the father aspect of bliss with the mother aspect of nonduality...bliss helps the growth of your wisdom...If you do not use [pleasure] it becomes poison. Every experience that facilitates pleasure becomes the petrol to your inner fire, and you unify that pleasure energy with the wisdom of nonduality.

(p.182)

Conclusion

If the last section provided a sense of *how* to handle research materials, this chapter introduces *what* those materials are. It has, therefore, tended towards the descriptive rather than the analytical. A limitation of such benign-seeming description is, that if left unnoticed, *tummo* will come to be misleadingly treated as a stand-alone practice that can be studied in isolation; in fact, however, it lives and breathes as a core component of a matrix, interacting and mutually depending upon other practices for its full meaning to become clear. To remedy this the next

chapter explores that matrix within which *tummo* functions. As such, a fuller understanding is provided which resists the atomizing and essentializing tendencies of stand-alone description.

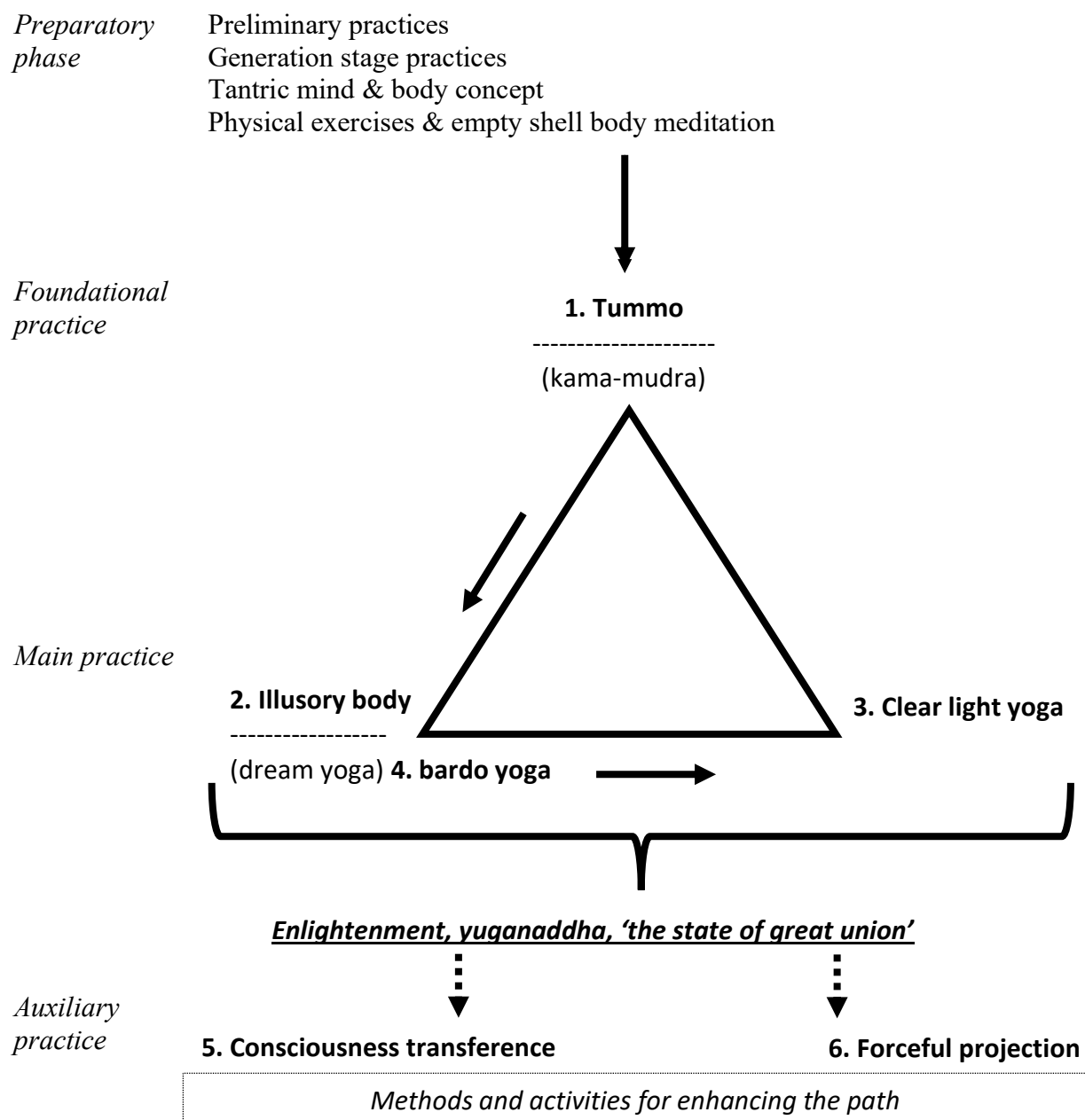
Chapter Six

***Tummo* contextualised: the Six Dharmas of Naropa**

For around a millennium *tummo* has most regularly been practiced within a set of highly advanced *Vajrayana* teachings and trainings, most notably *Naropa's Six Dharmas*. It's housing within that system is depicted diagrammatically overleaf (Fig. 7). Some brief information about the other parts of Naropa's system are given in this chapter, which allows a fuller and more contextually sound understanding of *tummo*. Although they cannot be followed up in this work, a number of fascinating leads and possibilities arise if the other aspects of *Naropa's Six Dharmas* were to be brought into dialogue with Jungian thought. Such research possibilities include i) bringing the dream work of analysis out of the consulting room and into the night time realm of dreaming itself, ii) the ontological status of the Self in relation to the ego, and iii) a psychology that spans not just human life, but also human death, and all varieties of non-human consciousness. It follows that an interpenetration of psychology and metaphysics is inevitable here and, although obviously well beyond the scope of the current work, nascent possibilities for these other research streams inevitably emerge.

Fig.7

Schematic Representation of the Je Tsongkhapa's ordering of the Six Dharmas of Naropa and their interconnections.



Preliminary Practices

The term “preliminary practice” is somewhat misleading. In fact, these preliminaries comprise the vast majority of Tibetan Buddhist practice, so that the esoteric builds upon the basis of the exoteric. Exoteric foundations include:

- i) “taking refuge in the three jewels” of spiritual community (*Sangha*), teachings (*Dharma*) and teacher/guru (*Buddha*);
- ii) meditating on the four traditional thoughts that “turn the mind towards *Dharma*” (those being a) the advantageousness and rarity of being reborn in human form, b) the universal truth of all things being changing and impermanent, c) the mechanism of *karma*, d) compassionate contemplation of the suffering of living beings).

Traditionally, hundreds or often thousands of hours may be devoted to other preliminaries such as recitation of mantras, visualising mandalas, prostrations, and devotional practices to one’s *guru*.

Consistent with the usual context of organised religious institutions and practices, receiving initiations (also known as empowerments) and taking vows (*samaya*) also feature as necessary preliminaries, considered to help foster states of sound mind and intention, as well as a suitable social fabric, or *milieu*, for the practitioner to inhabit. Along with this, skill in capacity for concentration on (and visualisation of) complex imagery is an important prerequisite prior to undertaking the *six dharmas*, as without this basis further work would be rendered ineffective, incomprehensible, and potentially harmful.

The *Lamrim* (“stages of the path”) is often cited in the literature as a systematic step-by-step organisation of teachings within the *sutra* tradition which offers a graded means of working through and organising these preliminaries into a coherent set of practices (Berzin, 2003; van Schaik, 2016). As may be apparent, the accomplishments of preliminary practices are in themselves rather advanced, and certainly enough for a lifetime’s work. Relative to practices to

come, there is greater onus on the fostering of spiritual discipline and moral integrity, wholesome intention and intellectual understanding, as well as building up secure, stable psychosocial conditions that can be relied upon as the otherwise destabilising practices of *Naropa's Six Dharmas* are entered into. The assumption is that the attainments of the preliminaries hold fast and function as something of an initial broad “alchemical vessel” (or psychosocial container) before the alchemy proper begins. Therefore although these practices are in a sense the prelude, without them the later alchemical practices of the *six dharmas* could not function effectively.

Karmamudra

Karmamudra, or sometimes *kamamudra* in some texts, is the practice of actual physical sexual union between two practitioners, traditionally male and female.²¹ It is categorized as a minor adjunct, or offshoot of *tummo* in Je Tsongkhapa's system (although more prominent in others (see Haule, 2012; Feuerstein, 1998; Shaw, 1993; Stevens, 1990). In an obvious sense it shares much in the way of sexual imagery, symbolic energy of the bliss-states reported to be akin in *tummo* to amplified orgasm. *Kamamudra* is distinct from *jhanamudra*²², which is the practice of inwardly *visualising* a sexual consort rather than having a physical one.

Jhanamudra is more common and generally seen to be safer, being less fraught with dangers of ethical and spiritual jeopardy, confusions, abuses of power and boundary violations. Tsongkhapa stresses the extremely advanced capacities required before attempts at *kamamudra* are made, the authentic sources of these stipulations going back to the original Indian

²¹ The practitioners appear to be male and female in the traditional literature; the question of how these practices can or could make sense and become applicable to other forms of sexuality is an important frontier of research

²² Two other types of *mudra* (or “seal”, “gesture”, “mark”) are worth noting here, as doing so articulates *kamamudra* and *jhanamudra* as parts of a sequence of gestures that conjoin, or unite, the practitioner with aspects of the spiritual path. There is *dharmamudra*, where the practitioner is “in congress” with an experience of emptiness, and *mahamudra*, when one is in congress, or union, with the ultimate nature of being.

mahasiddhas, ruling out all but a minute fraction of the most accomplished adepts. To ignore these requirements, he writes, ‘is exceedingly unwise,’ and ‘without a doubt only leads to the hell realms’ (p.165). Similarly, Ian Baker cites Chogyam Trungpa’s statement that attaining benefit from *kamamudra* is akin to ‘licking honey from a razor blade,’ and references Bengali poet Chandidas’ description of it ‘as the capacity to make a frog dance in the mouth of a snake or to bind an elephant with a spider’s web’ (p.166).

Mullin (1998) appears to insinuate that it is probable *karmamudra* is practiced more than is acknowledged in the public domain, but that the amount is still relatively low given the numbers of practitioners who have achieved this level of attainment within the traditional structures of Tibetan Buddhism. The small amount of practitioners and a moral safeguard is vouchsafed by an irony of the practice, as described by Je Tsongkhapa (Mullin, 1996): when one has reached such a rarefied state of spiritual progress that sexual pleasure and tasting faeces are both met with equal equanimity – neither being preferred to the other – then one is qualified to practice *kamamudra*.

Kamamudra involves a repurposing of the Freudian pleasure principle for spiritual ends, rather than simple impulse gratification. The restructuring process includes a distinction being made between pain/pleasure on one hand, and aversion/craving on the other. Instead of one craving pleasure and being averse to pain (which is of course the usual state of affairs) an equanimous, mindful and compassionate attitude is cultivated to both pleasure and pain equally. To state Freud’s famous position differently, in the context of *kamamudra*, where craving for pleasure and aversion to pain was, equanimity and compassion for pain and pleasure will be. Regarding *The Six Dharmas of Naropa*, its position as a minor branching off from *tummo* is framed as an “external condition”, in that one engages with another individual rather than the “internal

condition” of cultivating *tummo*; either way, these *dharmas* are claimed to propel the practitioner to the subsequent “main” practices in Naropa’s system.

Main practice: illusory body, dream, bardo & Clear light²³

Illusory body practice relates to the doctrines of emptiness, existence and dependent origination that are shared with the *sutra* tradition and recur as a *leitmotif* throughout Buddhism. It is these ideas of radical interdependence, the ultimate nature of “illusion” and so-called “emptiness” that are one way in which *tummo* differentiates from *kundalini* and its Hindu principles of the eternal Self, “I”, or *atman*. These doctrines hold that no object (including Self, “I”, or *atman*) can ultimately have ontological status as an independently existing entity, even though all appearances suggest such. A classic example is found in the analogy of the chariot in which Buddha asks, where is the essence of the chariot (Rahula, 1959/2018)? When taking each of its constituent parts in turn (spokes, wheel, nails, paint, etc.) no one part can be designated “chariot” – the chariot exists as an overall conceptualization of the parts together and their functioning in the world. Existence, then, is always dependent upon the countless causes and conditions that give rise to the object of investigation coming into being. As such, an object’s existence is dependent upon a hidden network of interrelated processes which, eventually, interconnect with all existence. The *separate* existence of all objects is one of appearance, thus “illusory”.

Meditation on illusory bodies is conjoined with the ecstasy unlocked through *tummo* in Naropa’s system, such that,

²³ “clear light” rather than the often used “clear light mind” is preferred here, as *mind* give the false impression that all schools of Buddhism have to employ an Idealist philosophy, when in fact the version presented here (as will be seen in Gorampa’s argument for non-duality later, from van Schaik, 2016) could align with an ultimate Monism which is perceivable through but is neither mind nor matter (dual-aspected), nor mind, matter nor spirit (tripartite), nor any other combination of aspects.

one invokes the great ecstasy, and then uses this as the driving force in the focus upon the view of emptiness, and then rests single-pointedly within that absorption of beyond-conceptuality mind

(Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.175)

That absorption is then taught regarding three subjects – the illusion of all appearances, meditation on illusions in dream, and the bardo experience as illusion.

The illusion of all appearances

What unfolds from the illusion of appearances is effectively a “double vision”, resonating with Jung’s writing to Pauli (see Main, 2014, pp.234-237), whereby two realities are perceived at once: the reality of conventional appearances and of ultimate (or absolute) reality (Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.172). Of the former, ‘conventional activity is accepted as omnipresent’ as on the functional level ‘all things indisputably appear as existing’ (p.174) and ‘all phenomena conventionally function with validity according to the laws of interdependent arising’ (p.175). Of the latter, there is ‘awareness of the vision of emptiness...transforming all appearances into the mandala and its deities’ (p.172). By perceiving ultimate reality one appreciates that ‘living beings and other phenomena are without even the slightest inherent nature’, as their nature arises from radical interdependence with all things that they are not. The “final nature” of consciousness is therefore non-dual: neither the same as or separate from body-mind aggregates it ‘does not even slightly exist in either place.’ Ultimately, then, ‘living beings are seen to utterly lack true existence’²⁴ (p.174), as well as at the same time, self-evidently, existing on a conventional level.

Mirrors and their images appear as techniques for realizing the double nature of appearances.

One may either:

²⁴ “true” here meaning separate independent existence, rather than “real”, which they self-evidently are.

- a) contemplate one's own image in a mirror, imagine the reflected image being absorbed into oneself, think of how one's body is like a reflected image,
- b) reflect an image of a mandala deity in a mirror, seeing it as dissolving into oneself, then meditating on oneself as having illusory deity form,
- c) reflect an image of *Vajrasattva*²⁵ in a mirror during an empowerment ceremony, a teacher using it to demonstrate the nature of illusory body by means of metaphors and meditation upon the mirror image.

A mutual reliance upon “appearances” on one hand and ‘the manner in which things are empty of existing’ (p.173) is stressed, in that ‘even though things are empty of a self-nature, nonetheless they appear as illusions’ (p.174). This is a meaning of the term “illusion” that is very much tied to, or in partnership with, reality, and not the sense of “illusion” as being disconnected from, or independent from, reality: ‘the nature of the appearance is not like that of a horn on a rabbit’s head or the child of a barren woman [neither of which conventionally exist]’ (p.173). Je Tsongkhapa appears to use a higher threshold for imaginative existence than some Jungian schools, therefore, which see “imagination as reality,” *per se* (see Avens, 1980).

Existence in the realm of conventional appearances is an indispensable condition of non-existence of those objects in an ultimate sense. Je Tsongkhapa uses the simile of a magician’s illusion to convey the sense of the conventional world as an enchantment:

the illusory things created by a magician’s spells, such as horses and elephants that he causes to magically appear, are empty of actually being present [as living, breathing horses and elephants], yet can be perceived by an audience of spectators. Their actual nature is utterly different from their ostensible presence.

(1996, pp.173-4).

²⁵ A central deity in Tibetan tantra, *Vajrasattva* represents the ultimate pristine purity of enlightenment

This co-dependence is apparent in the use of mirror reflections, as ‘when one takes away the supporting conditions, such as either the face or the mirror, the image disappears...the two [emptiness nature and appearing nature] have a commonly shared base’ (p.175). In this a quality of lively interaction is evoked, so that apparent objects become mandala and deities, which in turn appear as illusions, and from the play of illusions a state of ecstasy. In Jung’s terms a “spirit of Mercurius” permeates this conjunction of *tummo* and illusory bodies, to the fullest extent becoming a sense of being in the world:

When one has achieved stability in this realisation one extends it to the world, which is seen as the mandala; and to living beings, who are seen as tantric deities. Then one trains in the method of the playful view that dwells within ecstasy and emptiness conjoined.

(p.175)

Illusions in dream

Interplay of the “double vision” of all appearances during waking hours continues into sleep through meditations concerning dreaming. These practices fall into four categories:

learning to retain [conscious presence during] dreams; controlling and increasing dreams; overcoming fear and training in the illusory nature of dreams; and meditating upon the suchness of dreams.

(pp.175-6)

The first two of these are presented in two sub-categories: learning to retain dreams can be done through either working with the vital energies or through “conscious resolution”; controlling and increasing dreams can be achieved by either ‘control of worldly contents’ or by ‘controlling the contents of beyond-the-world dreams’ (p.181).

Learning to Retain Conscious Presence During Dreams. Learning to retain dreams through working with the vital energies is closely linked to *tummo*, as it involves gathering vital energies into the central channel for one to then meditate on the process of their dissolution. The dissolution process is described by a process of eight signs appearing. These signs initially appear as elements dissolving into one another (from least to most subtle), and then as qualities of consciousness (from least to most subtle). The final four of these signs are referred to as the “four emptinesses” (Mullin, 1996, p.37). The whole process is described in Table 2 overleaf.

Remarkably, the process of death and the process of liberation are considered identical: in both dying and becoming enlightened, these same inner experiences appear as one nears these ultimate states. Thus, meditating at such profound depth – while awake or asleep – is a “micro-death”, a simulacrum in life of what awaits beyond the veil of death. The experiences of falling asleep and waking up, too, are simulacra of dying and being born – these equivalences become clearer with the discussion of *bardo* below.

Table 2*Dissolution Process of Vital Energies Marked by Eight Signs*

Name	Element	Colour	Inner vision
1	Earth dissolves into water		mirage, shaky
2	Water dissolves into fire		smoke
3	Fire dissolves into air		flickering fireflies; sparks
4	Air begins to dissolve		butterlamp
5 appearance	Air dissolves into appearance; female drops collect	Whiteness	clear autumn sky pervaded by full moon light
6 proximity	Appearance dissolves into proximity; male drops collect	Redness	clear sky pervaded by sunlight
7 proximate attainment	Proximity dissolves into proximate attainment; female and male drops collapse together	Darkest black	sky before dawn with neither sun nor moon
8 clear light	Proximate attainment dissolves into primordial clear light	Utmost clarity	clear radiant sky at daybreak

Note: each sign signifies increasing subtlety of consciousness, correlating with advancement on the path of individuation

Controlling and Increasing Dreams. The second category of dream yoga, ‘controlling and increasing dreams’, reiterates the theme of the “double vision”, with one either controlling and increasing the richness of the “worldly contents” of dreams (e.g. ‘one can project oneself on the rays of the sun or moon to a celestial realm...or to a faraway human realm, and see what is there’, p.181), or controlling ‘beyond-the-world dreams’ (e.g. ‘consciously projecting oneself in the dream state to the various buddhafiels...and while there meeting with the buddhas and bodhisattvas, venerating them, listening to their teachings and so forth’, pp.181-2). As with retaining conscious awareness of dreams, controlling and increasing dreams refers to the technique of a) controlling vital energies (i.e. *tummo*), and b) cultivating strong conscious resolution.

Overcoming Fear and Training in the Illusory Nature of Dreams. The conscious will, usually the preserve of waking life, is entrained into the nighttime realm of dream through dream yoga. In the usual absence of one's will while asleep the dreamer is at best an observant witness, who can faithfully bring his report back to the daylight world. There it can be decoded, in psychoanalysis, or worked with alchemically, in active imagination. The notion of travelling the other way and *bringing the conscious will into the living world of the dream*, to shape it *in situ*, as suggested by Naropa's *dharma*, is of course nothing short of revolutionary from the perspectives of Western psychotherapy.

Overcoming fear and training in the illusory nature of dreams builds upon the innovative notion, from a psychotherapy perspective, that the nocturnal dream world itself becomes the equivalent of the therapeutic space of the analyst. Akin to trauma-processing and overcoming phobia procedures, Je Tsongkhapa describes how if one encounters dangerous or intimidating situations in dreams ('such as drowning in water or being burned by fire' (p.182), one recognises that one cannot in fact be hurt and overcomes fear of the object ("How can dream water or dream fire possibly harm me?" Make yourself jump or fall into the water or fire in the dream' (p.182)). These practices hinge upon recognizing the dream as the dream that it is as it occurs; failing to recognise this fact being an error 'like that of a young infant who looks at his own reflection in a mirror and thinks it to be a real person' (p.183). Removing such erroneous thinking fans out from dreams to all phenomena, such that 'all phenomena are empty of possessing even the tiniest bit of existence' (p.183) beyond their own mirror-image-like appearance.

Meditating Upon the Suchness of Dreams. The final part of dream yoga, meditating upon suchness in dreams, anticipates the *dharma* of clear light. 'Here one begins,' Je

Tsongkhapa writes, ‘by meditating upon oneself in the luminous appearance of the mandala deity, the mantic syllable *HUM* at one’s heart radiating with a great profusion of light’ (p.183). A systematic dissolution of phenomena occurs until a state of non-duality arises; initially, animate and inanimate dream objects melt into the light, which draws objects into the *HUM* at the heart; then, the body slowly dissolves the same way, from the extremities inward, then the *HUM* itself, until there is nothing but ‘one rest[ing] the mind unwaveringly within this...unapprehendable clear light’ (p.183).

The Bardo Experience.

Je Tsongkhapa describes such experience under two headings: the underlying philosophy of the *bardo*, and the stages of the *bardo* yoga practice. Philosophically, what quickly becomes clear is the multi-dimensionality of *bardo* as a process which cuts across the topography of sleeping, waking, dying, dreaming, living, and birth, and all between. Indeed, it is variously defined as an “in-between realm,” the “state in-between”, or “the in-between of becoming” (p.186). Perceiving the subtle actions of betweenness demands a raising of consciousness awareness beyond normal levels, and this is achieved through familiar means related to *tummo*. In an oft-repeated refrain, the core process is described as:

Meditation on the inner heat yoga, thus causing vital energies to enter into the central channel, and to abide and dissolve. Through the force of this experience one induces the experiences of the four emptinesses, four blisses, and the clear light consciousness. The experience is like that of the time of death, when the vital energies and consciousnesses naturally withdraw from the body into the central channel and the clear light of death manifests.

(p.80 & 188)

In the tradition of the *Six Yogas*, Je Tsongkhapa wrote that there are three “bardo states” described: firstly, there is the *bardo* of one’s lifespan, from the moment of one’s birth to the moment of one’s death, including this present moment; this is called “the bardo between birth and death.” Secondly, there is the period between falling asleep and waking up, which is known as “the dream bardo”. Thirdly, there is the space between the moment of death and the moment of rebirth, of course predicated on Buddhist systems of reincarnation and *karmic* cause-and-effect; this final bardo is known as “the bardo realm”, or “the bardo of becoming” (p.186). Confusion in the literature occurs as this third form of bardo is also referred to as, simply, “the bardo”.

These three bardos are closely connected to three forms of illusory body: the illusory body of the waking state, illusory dream body, and illusory body produced in the *bardo* between death and rebirth. Bardo then seems to offer a way in which the illusory body *yogas* go beyond life into the realms after death, and how these then return in rebirth.

Alongside the three forms of *bardo* and three forms of *illusory body*, three categories of clear light consciousness are described: ‘the clear light experienced through yogic endeavor in the waking state, the clear light of sleep, and the clear light of the moment of death’ (Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.188). With this, there are thus three sets of three processes, creating a three by three matrix, see Table 3.

Table 3

Matrix of Three by Three Regarding Main Practices of Illusory body, Bardo, and Clear Light, Providing the Basis for “Blending”

Illusory body	Bardo	Clear light of consciousness
Waking	Waking	Waking
Dreaming	Dreaming	Sleeping
Between death and rebirth	Between death and rebirth	Moment of death

Note: “blending” can be set of three (rows or columns) or nine (cells)

This matrix gives rise to the practice of “blending” (either three blendings or nine blendings depending on how the 3x3 matrix is being carved), and extends the practice of the *Six Yogas* beyond waking hours and, in fact, beyond the lifetime itself, as well as within it. The stakes are suitably high given this cosmic scale, and connections are made to the three *kayas* – the clear light of death with the *dharmakaya* (unmanifested, ultimate reality, truth), the bardo body with *sambhogakaya* (divine bliss, enjoyment body), and rebirth into waking life with *nirmanakaya* (physical form, earthly manifestation). These *kayas* will be referred to again when discussing *Vajrayana* notions of consciousness.

Clear light mind

Clear light mind (or, as translated by Thurman 1993/2012, “light clear”) is the most subtle level of mental activity. It refers to a quality of luminous clarity, or radiance, which is non-dualistic, non-conceptual and free from the karmic vicissitudes of cause-and-effect. Although ever-present, continuous awareness of it is said to only occur with advanced practice, and is otherwise glimpsed in deep sleep, orgasm, and the moment of death. Tackling the matter of dualism arises when Je Tsongkhapa writes that ‘it is said that the fundamental reality of being is something free from the extremes of being and non-being’, such freedom being the nature of emptiness, which is ‘the clear light as object’ (Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.198). ‘The clear light of subject’, on the other hand, is ‘the consciousness that perceives it...[i.e. awareness]’ (p.198). Breaking down the apparent dualism of subject/object is thus important, and involves the

merging of them in union, described as ‘the great innate ecstasy consciousness, which is the speciality of highest yoga tantra’ (p.199).

The symbolism of the sacred and sexual appears at this point, with a recommended technique being,

that one visualise oneself as the mandala deity, male and female in sexual union, the “wheel of truth” chakra at the heart, the central channel running through it...the universe melts into clear light, which absorbs into the animate universe. These then melt into clear light and into oneself as the mandala deity. The female aspect melts into the male of the mandala deity.

(pp.199-200)

Consciousness transference (*phowa*) and forceful projection

The fifth and sixth yogas of Naropa – those of consciousness transference and forceful projection – are prefaced as auxiliary practices by Je Tsongkhapa. Consciousness transference (*phowa*) involves preparing the ‘death channel’ so that at the moment of death ‘one can slip gently out of the body via this passage, and project or transfer one’s consciousness to a desired rebirth’ (p.85). Baker (2019) describes how *phowa* tackles the question of whether ‘in the moment that consciousness is freed from physiological constraints, does it begin a disembodied journey to a transcendental end?’ Answering in the affirmative, *phowa* acts as an ejector seat which the practitioner can use by ‘ejecting their vital energy out of the body to a paradisiacal realm, or take possession of another body’ (p.202). Often referred to as “opening the sky door,” *phowa* practitioners are said to develop a small aperture at the top of the head (at the fontanelle) from which the vital energies exit; the traditional test of success in *phowa* practice is to use a fine blade of grass to detect whether said aperture has opened (Sogyal, 2008).

Mullin (1996) writes that the sixth and final yoga, forceful projection, has almost entirely dropped out of commentaries of *The Six Yogas* over the last three to six hundred years,

explained by the practice dying out and the teaching supposedly now dead. This is somewhat ironic, as the practice is of transferring consciousness into a fresh corpse so that dying is avoided or voluntarily entered into. It could purportedly be performed for one's own consciousness or on behalf of another's. This could be for the purpose of finding a new abode for that consciousness if physically unwell, or vacating one's body so that someone in need can occupy it instead. Forceful projection can also entail projecting one's consciousness into an animal (pigeons, geese and foxes are listed). Parallels with the traditional mythos of many shamanic traditions are apparent here, perhaps suggested by the interweaving of Buddhism with the Bön tradition in Tibet (Samuel, 1996). These ideas appear to constellate in some of Jung's thought, too, remarkably with the inclusion of the term "auxiliary technique":

It may well be a prejudice to restrict the psyche to being "inside the body." In so far as the psyche has a non-spatial aspect, there may be a psychic "outside the body," a region so utterly different from "my" psychic space that one has to get outside of oneself *or make use of some auxiliary technique in order to get there*.

Jung (1955-56/1989, par. 410, emphasis added)

Summary

Cutting through all these distinct elements of Naropa's system is *tummo* practice, which functions as the vital "trunk", or central thread weaving through and binding all *yogas* into a coherent whole. As such *tummo*'s union of the sacred with the sexual is a core feature of the entire process. To iterate this clearly in summation, although lengthy, it is worth quoting the following passage by Je Tsongkhapa which communicates the sense of the the terms introduced in this chapter as not distinct, but in fact interrelated aspects of one dynamic matrix. *Tummo*, as can be seen, functions as a connective and foundational principle which, if one understands, allows an adaptable and intelligent engagement with the system, rather than

slavishly rigid dogmatism or a fruitlessly untethered free-for-all: it can be modulated flexibly, based on individual need, rather than in a way which forgets the subjective factor.

The practice of the inner heat doctrine entails directing the life-sustaining energies into the central channel.

Here the energies enter, abide, and are dissolved. When one trains well in this technique, the strength of the experience has the power to give control over the loss of the bodhimind substance [i.e. the sexual drops]. Then, based on this power, one can rely upon a karmamudra as a conducive condition to arouse the four blisses. On this foundation, innate ecstasy is aroused. *Arousing this innate ecstasy is the purpose of the practices of the inner heat yoga and karmamudra yoga.*

One unites the innate ecstasy with [meditation upon] emptiness, and during the waking state applies oneself to the illusory body doctrine. Based on the experience of the illusory body practice one can engage in the clear light technology.

Then when asleep at night one can cultivate awareness of the illusory nature of dreams. To do so effectively one must first master the yoga of retaining the clear light of sleep [i.e. the clear light that arises at the moment of falling asleep], and then enter into the dream state from that perspective.

Since the power to retain the clear light of sleep is accomplished by means of gaining control over the vital energies, one must, during the time of waking practice, master this control and cultivate the ability to direct the energies into the central channel. *Thus the foundation of both practices [sleep and dream yogas] is the inner heat doctrine.*

When one has progressed in the dream yogas, only then can one effectively work with the bardo yogas. *Again here [with the bardo yogas] the foundation is the power achieved through the inner heat.* All three of the above yogas [i.e. sleep, dream and bardo] are subsumed under the illusory body yoga.

As for the yogas of special consciousness transference and forceful projection, as a preliminary to them one must cultivate the ability to draw the life-sustaining energies into the central channel. *Therefore in these two the inner heat yoga again is the foundation.*

If one understands these principles of the system well, then the manner in which the Six Yogas are structured is not important. One should simply adopt the arrangement that feels most comfortable.

(Je Tsongkhapa, trans. Mullin (1996), pp.140-1, *italics added*)

Conclusion: a structural springboard

This chapter has sought to re-contextualise *tummo* in the highly complex, highly esoteric *milieu* in which it is best understood – that of *Vajrayana* Buddhism. To not do this would be an act of intellectual distortion and cultural injustice, running the risk of reinterpreting *tummo* merely as

further fodder for the modernising machine of Western academic and applied psychology. It would become another “technique”, repackaged and commercialised (such as Purser (2019) argues regarding mindfulness). *Tummo* would suffer the fate of another concept that gets attenuated, inconvenient aspects hewn off, in order for it to fit neatly into the Procrustean bed of Western Science and (post)modernity.

By resisting a Procrustean outcome the current thesis can, instead, be advanced significantly, as this resistance generates a chapter conclusion that holds four sub-themes. Taken in turn, these provide a structure for the remaining thesis. Taken together, they provide a well-rounded answer to the research question overall.

What do tummo and Jung’s alchemical model imply regarding the nature of consciousness?

The Six Dharmas of Naropa holds certain implications regarding consciousness which are radical in the context of modern Western thought. That radical nature can be understood across two dimensions. Firstly, there is the implication that consciousness is not only a quality of being awake, but also a trainable quality of being asleep. Even more shockingly, when physical existence ceases and death occurs, some form of consciousness continues beyond it in the third type of *bardo*, that between dying and rebirth, from which it then blooms again into waking consciousness, as usually understood.

Secondly, there is an implication that the *form* of consciousness being talked about is neither “mind” nor “body” in the usual senses used in Western discourse, nor a permanently existing “soul” in the sense of Cartesian dualism, Christianity, or the Hindu *atman*. Instead, Jung’s

sense of the *psychoid* and Pauli's wish for a *neutral language* beyond physics and psychology seem more appropriate. As a stepped model in the systematic refinement of consciousness along the path of individuation (raising themes of dying and rebirth, and a psychoid consciousness) Jung's alchemical model provides a potentially useful lens through which these implications can be further investigated. A final implication arises from these two dimensions: that the ultimate nature of consciousness dwells, in fact, in what depth psychologies refer to as the *unconscious*. An hypothesis is formed which proposes that by delving deeper into the unconscious one becomes, in fact, closer to consciousness.

Inherent in these conclusions are challenging dimensions to the relationship between the sacred and the sexual: does it alter during sleep and wakefulness, and what does it mean in the context of ideas around death, dying and (re)birth? How does sexuality and the sacred relate to ideas of consciousness that is neither mind nor matter, as phenomena which clearly involves both?

How could tummo practice be received through a Jungian lens, and how might it be (ir)relevant for psychotherapy?

A clear problem is how the highly esoteric, highly technical and often otherworldly nature of *tummo* and *the Six Dharmas* has any application to the practice of Western psychotherapy²⁶. At the same time, the purported rarefied fruits of such a labour seem as if they would be significant contributions *were* they applicable, not least regarding the transmutation of sexual desire into embodied spiritual experience.

²⁶ Given the choice is being made to not use it as a decontextualised stand-alone technique, like mindfulness, to train patients to self-regulate their nervous systems and attentional skills. Recent quantitative research is corroborating the longstanding principle that such effects arise from *tummo* (Kozhevnikov et al., 2013, 2022; Zunin et al., 2025), but as Knox (2009) makes clear in her review of mindfulness techniques, this falls out of the purview of the psychotherapy (rather than psychology) tradition, which is interested in questions of the relationship, the unconscious, and hidden affect.

A similar combination of questionable application and appealing promise was, of course, present in the medieval alchemical tracts that Jung engaged with. His patient and skilled deciphering of these texts has encouraged the growth of a particular mode of psychotherapy and individuation process that is of significant import in today's culture, many decades later. As Jung (1955/1963) writes,

the world of alchemical symbols definitely does not belong to the rubbish heap of the past but stands in a very real and living relationship to our most recent discoveries concerning the psychology of the unconscious. Not only does this modern psychological discipline give us the key to the secrets of alchemy, but, conversely, alchemy provides the psychology of the unconscious with a meaningful historical basis.

(p.xiii)

Jung's alchemical work could then function as somewhat of a Rosetta Stone: a key, or register, through which to parse *tummo* and *Naropa's Six Dharmas* that unlocks its symbolism, psychotherapeutic processes, and connections to therapeutically established Jungian paths of individuation. Presumably, Jung's alchemical work then stands to be altered by *tummo* in return, especially regarding the union of the sacred and sexual – a theme that the *Vajrayana* tradition appears to expound more explicitly than the oft-veiled terms of the former.

How can tummo be received in Western societies, when configured through a Jungian alchemical lens?

What might these efforts represent in terms of comparing two texts which, although aligned with certain themes and pre-occupations, come from different cultural contexts in which they have performed respectively different roles? The monastic traditions of Tibet, for example, for

which Je Tsongkhapa's text provides a canonical set of instructions and ideas that aids the preservation of a centuries-old, threatened cultural identity, is unlike the social functioning of Jung's writing, which sits within Twentieth Century Europe, somewhat on the fringes of academia, but cradled by the Romantic tradition, and highly influential for modern culture and therapeutic practices. Considering the broader sense of divergences, convergences, and other relationships between the two texts raises questions regarding the roles of science and arts in this type of study – does it conform, as other projects of this kind claim, to the idea of “Western science, Eastern wisdom?” What specifically would that mean regarding the connection of the sacred to the sexual? What sort of sociological discourses open up when these are infused instead of split? This appears a live cultural trope necessary to be engaged with for any *rapprochement* between Jung's alchemical model and *tummo* to be meaningful, encountering twin challenges of naïve universalism and benighted relativism.

How might Jung's position regarding his so-called “erotic phenomenology” be re-read?

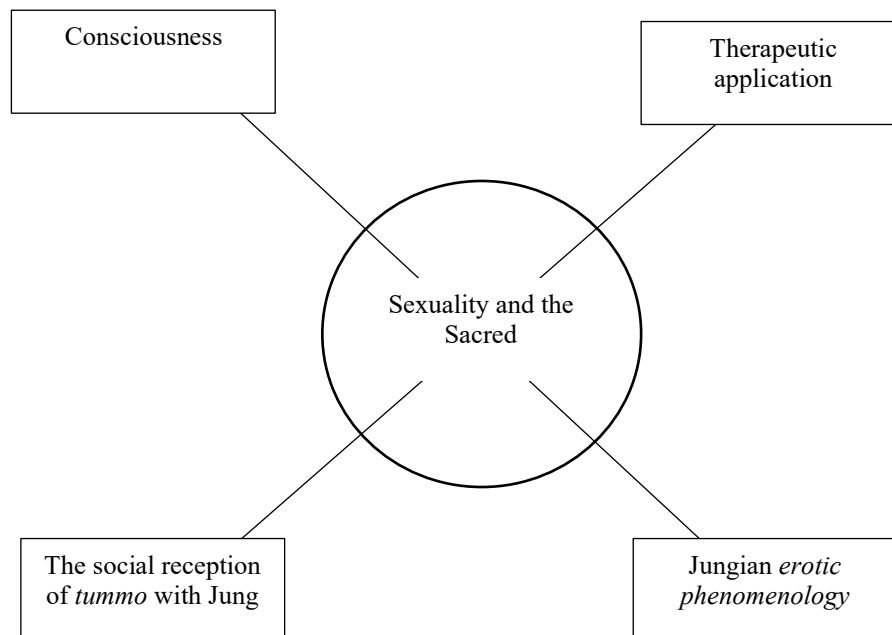
Engagement with *tummo* and Naropa's *Six Dharmas* may cause a re-appraisal of particular parts of the *Collected Works*, especially those related to the erotic and the East. It is beyond the scope of the current study to properly consider its effect on reading *The Kundalini Seminars*, which raises important questions regarding racial essentialism, the differences between the Hindu *atman* and Buddhist *anatman*, as well as the fact that this “version” of Jung was a pre-alchemical one, interpreting the *cakra* as symbolic objects upon which the mind projects meaning, rather than psycho-physical vortices of psychoid realms. Retaining focus on the question of the sacred and sexual, however, brings questions to bear on passages referred to as his “erotic phenomenology” – how have these been interpreted by schools of Jungian thought

post-Jung? How might the alchemical approach built through *rapprochement* with *tummo* be similar or different? Where would that be placed in the state of the Jungian tradition today? Might useful and clinically applicable insights be gained from a re-reading here?

In summary, these four questions which emerge from properly re-contextualising *tummo* provide lines of interrogation into the theme of sexuality and the sacred (see Fig.8); they therefore provide a framework for the different parts of the thesis to come.

Fig.8

Points of Investigation Between tummo and Jung's Alchemical Model Examining Sacro-Sexual Relationship in the Individuation Process



Consciousness

The previous section concluded with the finding that a *rapprochement* between Jung's alchemical model and *tummo* raises fundamental issues that require further investigation. One of these is the nature of consciousness and its evolution along the path of individuation.

Chapter Eight explores this theme along the lines posited through *tummo* practice and finds both resonances and dissonances with Jung's alchemical thought. Factoring in practices that enhance the granularity of one's consciousness allows a certain sense of progression in the relationship between the sexual and sacred to be tracked. Moreover, apparent philosophical confusions can be identified within the late-individuation stages of Jung's thought.

Vajrayana's radical notions of consciousness as expanding a) across waking, sleeping, and dying, and b) across mind and matter are considered in the context of posited gradations of consciousness: coarse, subtle, and extremely subtle. Jung's understanding of the psyche is employed to help enhance understanding of the individuation process at the coarse level, that being the domain of clinical and non-clinical individual psychological presentations. Approaching a *resolution to the split* between the sacred and sexual appears the primary task at that range of consciousness.

At the subtle level language of the "subtle body" as opposed to the "subtle bodymind" is questioned, as the subtle body is posited to have a "mind", in the sense of an embodied consciousness. A way in which the *Vajrayana* system augments Jung's alchemical model is found, with the result that it provides a scheme for the "secret of Being" that Jung discussed with Pauli. In short, it forms an underlying unitary matrix which respective dual matrices of

physics and psychology refer to. At this layer of consciousness *inhabiting the union* of the sacred and sexual appears to be the prime quality of the individuation process.

The extremely subtle body of clear light mind (symbolised as “spiritual monuments”) brings the ultimate nature of consciousness into a “zone beyond zones”. As described by Gorampa in van Schaik (2016), non-dual states of consciousness that go beyond essences pertain, holding deep interdependency with all aspects of reality. At the extremely subtle level, with regard to the sacred and sexual, there appears to be a *moving beyond* the situation as having an atomised meaning; the symbol of sacred-sexual union explodes into full conjunction with the moments of enlightenment and death. Enlightenment, death, and the sacred-sexual union, all “spiritual monuments” in themselves, ultimately conjoin. Some streams of Jung’s thought appear consistent with this view, while others follow a Platonic character that pursues essences of phenomena into a timeless eternal realm, as if they *persist* transcendentally as discrete entities (an ontology of essences being different to an ontology of mutual interdependency).

Chapter Nine examines this philosophical confusion in greater detail through correspondence concerning this theme between Jung and Wolfgang Pauli, the Nobel Prize-winning Physicist. Such examination leads to a conclusion regarding the primacy of lived experience, and the various forms of consciousness that can take. How those forms then manifest in application, both within psychotherapy and society, is taken up in the next section.

These Platonic and process philosophies were discussed by Pauli and Jung in their written correspondence. Exploring that exchange therefore provides further light on the matter, which is addressed in the second chapter of this section. In doing so an alchemical pattern of dissolution and synthesis is suggested in the pattern of the exchange itself. That pattern

provides an alternative way of considering the relationship between “Platonic” and “process”. Rather than being *only* distinct philosophies, they *also* represent complementary dimensions of how one may confront the unconscious. Doing so helps raise into consciousness the nature of language itself as playing the role of *Mercurius*, the trickster archetype essential to individuation.

Chapter Seven

Gradations of consciousness: coarse, subtle, extremely subtle

The dissolution of coarser layers of consciousness and arising of subtler and subtler forms of consciousness is purported to follow a path of eight signs in the *Yogas of Naropa* (see Table 2 in Chapter Six). A simplified version of these stages is reproduced below (Table 4, stages 1 – 8), correlating them with their respective gradations of consciousness. Moreover, the additional granulation of the coarse layer of consciousness provided by the application of Jung’s model of the psyche is introduced as three additional initial stages (-2 – 0). As such, its coarseness is lessened, and regarded with greater refinement. This table is presented here at the start of the chapter to help orientation along the sub-sections to follow; each of the three parts (-2 to 0, 1 to 4 and 5 to 8) will be taken in turn, with discussion of a Jungian approach to consciousness first as this pertains to the first “coarse” gradation (-2 to 0).

Table 4

Three Jungian Stages of Raising Consciousness within “Coarse” Gradation, Followed by Eight Vajrayana Signs of Dissolution of Consciousness within “Subtle” and “Extremely Subtle” Gradations

Description of inner experience	Gradation of consciousness
-2 “red” instinct without spirit	Coarse
-1 “blue” spirit without instinct	Coarse
0 “violet” combines instinct (red) with spirit (blue)	Coarse / subtle
1 Vision of seeing a mirage	Subtle
2 Smoke-like vision	Subtle
3 Vision like flickering fireflies	Subtle
4 Vision like that of a glow of a butterlamp	Subtle / extremely subtle
5 ‘a clear autumn sky pervaded by the light of the full moon’	Extremely subtle
6 ‘clear red sky pervaded by sunlight’	Extremely subtle
7 ‘black sky before dawn, with neither sun nor moon’	Extremely subtle
8 clear sky at daybreak free from clouds...utter radiance	Extremely subtle

A Jungian approach to consciousness

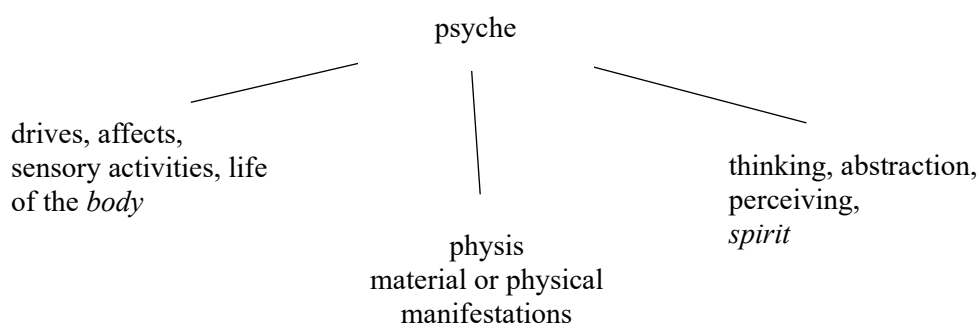
Psyche, spirit, body, matter, soul

It is possible that Jung's later conceptions of the psyche offer a promising direction from which to approach the radical aspects of *tummo* regarding consciousness described previously (i.e. that consciousness a) permeates waking, sleeping and death states and b) can be wholly explained by neither mind nor body and c) the ultimate "source" of consciousness emanates from what is "unconscious").

Holding the instinctual life of the body, the physical world of matter, and the domain of spirit all in relation to psyche provides a varied assembly of surfaces upon which the *Vajrayana* ideas surrounding consciousness could be better understood. In a letter to Pauli in 1953, Jung sketched this alchemical sense of the psyche in the following way, Fig.9:

Fig.9.

Jung's Schema of Psyche, Body, Material and Spirit (letter to Paul 64J, 24.10.1953; Jung & Pauli, 2001, p.126)



Notably, this letter is written when Jung is nearing the end of a decade long immersion in alchemical literature, thus it potentially acts as an intensive condensing of terms he articulates at length in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. In it one can read a wrestling of these terms of spiritual

engagement away from their standard Christian reception into a model that, Jung argues, achieves greater holistic and homeostatic harmony.

He tackles first the distinction between psyche and spirit. Where *psyche* is, for him, ‘a general term indicating the “substance” of all the phenomena of the inner world,’ *spirit* is a particular sub-category of this “substance” which does not come from either the body or the external world. Jung writes that substances of *spirit* are sometimes ‘graphic, vivid processes that lead to abstract ideas [and] sometimes conscious and deliberate abstractions’ (2001, p.125).

Jung places *psyche* in parallel with the physical term of *physis* or *matter* (see the vertical line in Fig 9). He writes that ‘like matter, psyche is also a *matrix* based on the mother archetype’ (2001, p.126). ‘Spirit, in contrast,’ he suggests, ‘is *masculine* and is based on the *Father archetype*.’ Given our age is a patriarchal one, masculine spirit currently ‘claims precedence over both psyche and matter’, although he seems to be suggesting that this is a state-of-affairs subject to historical change, thus a contingent and mutable feature of culture. It is the conscious aspect on the modern mind, and so the inevitable counterpart of the masculine spirit dwells toward the unconscious pole: ‘with Sophia as his consort he also has a feminine aspect, which emerges more clearly the closer one gets to the unconscious.’ Jung seems to indicate that ultimately the matriarchal sphere is the greater of the union, ‘the spirit is the son of the mother (alchem. the “primeval son of the mother”)’ (2001, p.126).

As psyche is placed parallel to physis, Jung similarly places *spirit* parallel to *body*, as ‘turbulent air [pneuma] in contrast to the earth (matter or hyle)’ (p.126). One may raise an objection here regarding the *matter* of the body and the *matter* of physis – aren’t human bodies material objects, therefore countable as physical entities? Following such reasoning would collapse

body and *physis* into one category, making Jung's separate categories seem unnecessary. However, this objection to his template seems somewhat resolved if the subject of the former (*body*) is biology, and the subject of the latter (*physis*) is physics, two distinguishable disciplines. Support for this argument is found in Addison (2009, 2016, 2018), who writes that Jung's earlier forays into these psychoid realms tended to be informed by biology whereas his later tendencies (influenced by Pauli) tended towards physics.

Jung next refers to the soul as *ligamentum corporis et spiritus* – the bond, or connective ligament, between body and spirit. This is a crucial move as it appears to place soul as functionally equivalent to psyche *where psyche is functioning as a connecting bond* between body and spirit (i.e. optimal psychic functioning is soulful and the converse – when the psyche is not functioning as a connective ligament between body and spirit, one loses one's soul).

In considering the equations of psyche, soul, body and spirit, Jung criticises what he seems to suggest are unhelpful complications introduced into it by theology and can be resolved by his psychology. Analytical Psychology then, it could be argued, becomes a new, heretical “theology” when its metaphysical implications are worked through, the current work being an example of such an effort. In the letter to Pauli, Jung writes that the Church's ‘elevation of the spirit to a divinity has introduced a certain disorder, thus disturbing the equilibrium’ (2001, p.126). The soulful connective function of psyche between body and spirit has been upset by dogmatic bias *against* the former and *for* the latter. Psyche, i.e. soul, is thrown off balance. This disequilibrium is compounded further, he argues, by the identification of the ‘pneumatic divinity’ (spirit) with the *summum bonum* (highest good), which forces matter ‘into the vicinity of the *malum*’ (evil). A judgemental split in the psyche is thus enforced: one aspect exalted, another disowned. In these two ways, not only does Christian dogma prejudice one against

one's own body, it also prejudices against the entire material world in which one lives. The solution, Jung suggests, is a retrieval of holism through his reading of alchemy, whereby psyche 'must be given a middle or superior position' so that all aspects in relation to it – *body, physis, spirit* – can be integrated soulfully, i.e. seeking equilibrium and greater wholeness.

A final point is the importance of Jung's description of psyche and physis as *matrices*, or even one matrix. Doing so clears conceptual ground for phenomena such as synchronicity to be understood. Psyche and physis are distinct from each other on a secondary level only, whereas on the primary level 'psyche and matter, as a "matrix", are both an X – i.e., a transcendental unknown quantity and thus indistinguishable...which makes them *virtually identical*' (2001, p.126). There are psychic and physical phenomena running in parallel but these pertain to (and ultimately narrow towards) the same shared primary substrate that is neither. As if two languages being spoken about the same object, the object in this case being no less than "the secret of Being":

there cannot be just *one* way of access to the secret of Being; there must be at least *two* – namely, the material occurrence on the one hand and the psychic reflection of it on the other.

(p.127)

"Little luminosities" – thresholds between conscious and unconscious

What is less obvious in Jung's depiction of the *psyche-spirit-physis-matter-soul* exchange is the dynamic of conscious and unconscious. To add this element to Jung's late model of the psyche one can revisit his oft-quoted use of the colour spectrum as an analogy for the range of consciousness (Jung, 1960/2001). He used it to describe the thresholds of conscious and unconscious life, whereby unconscious contents (under certain activating circumstances) will

become ‘powered with energy’ (Jung, 1960/2001, p.115) enough so that they break through the unconscious/conscious threshold into the subjectively visible range, becoming ‘perceptible to the ego’ (Jung, 1960/2001, p.143).

In distinction from Freud, it is the interplay of present-moment internal and external conditions that fire their latent energy as opposed to a Freudian derepression mechanism; a difference between these mechanisms is that the former portrays a potentially more contextually embedded and less atomistic way of seeing psychology than the latter. When an individual comes into contact with certain contexts then particular (previously hidden) aspects of the psyche “light up”; these illuminations might bridge inner and outer worlds even if one has no individual autobiographical experience of such external situations. On this view, a threshold phenomenon is one of a ‘multitude of little luminosities’ which comes ‘flickering into life here and there wherever outer or inner events, instincts, and affects happen to call it awake’ (1960/2001, par.387). There is an ongoing, unseen and continuous conversation between one’s unconscious and the field of phenomena it is (sub)merged with.

Those energised boundary-crossing “little luminosities” are ‘like the demons and gods of the primitives or the “isms” so fanatically believed in by modern man’ (1960/2001, par.366). Jung remarks that there is a ‘world of difference’ between being gripped by them (taking them as literal truths that must be obeyed) and being able to work with them therapeutically (1960/2001, par.384). He refers to the contents dwelling at the upper and lower ends of the psychic scale as “psychoid”: close to the conscious psyche’s edge, acting in the twilight realm between psychic and instinctive, partaking both in the light of consciousness and dark of unconsciousness. Active imagination can be deployed with such material, operating upon them in a way that pulls them out of the darkness of instinctual unconsciousness, lifting and holding

them within the spectrum of conscious awareness, and so advancing – to some small degree – one's wholeness: a part of the psyche has been reclaimed, prevented from 'sinking back into the instinctual sphere' (1960/2001, par.414). Transformation of this once-psychoid element would be, for Jung, *violet* coloured on the spectrum. Violet is suitable because it is a compound of blue and red: blue symbolising spirit, red symbolising instinct. Both are necessary for genuine integration of archetypal content because they represent two necessary ingredients:

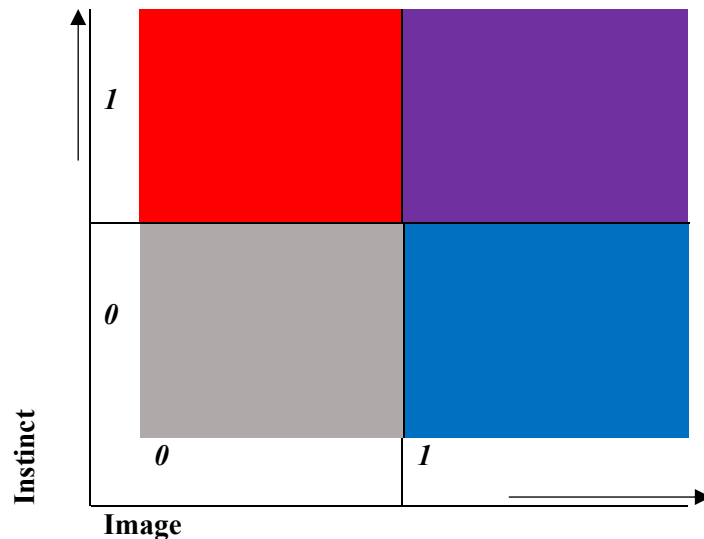
On the one hand [archetypal content] is experienced as a psychological dynamism, while on the other hand its multitudinous forms enter into consciousness as images...which...appear to offer, the strictest possible contrast to instinct physiologically regarded.

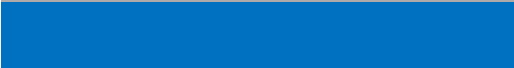
(1960/2001, par.414)

The argument here seems to be that image alone is not enough, and neither is instinctive energy. Holding their contrasting qualities together, in conjunction, is essential for the 'violet' outcome of individuation. Such union overcomes regression to 'red' (energy bereft of spirit) or dissociation to 'blue' (spirit bereft of energy). The importance of blending these two elements is described in Fig.10.

Fig.10

Binary Schematic of Individuation in Jung's Colour Consciousness Analogy



Key	
	No spiritual or instinctual activation
	Spirit-image only (disembodied individuation)
	Energy-instinct only (unconscious possession)
	Energy-instinct & image-spirit (embodied individuation)

This schematic maps onto the alchemical model presented in Chapter Three, and the extended depiction of coarse-subtle-extremely subtle gradations of consciousness given in Table 4. Red, as raw instinct without the containing presence of spirit, equates to phenomena of *unio naturalis* – basic aliveness is present but with no insight or awareness of psychology *per se*. Blue, as spirit but without activation of energy-instinct, maps onto *unio mentalis* – the spiritual achievement of the psyche gaining mastery over the body's chaotic impulses is gained, but the deadening of life's vitality (and toxifying “rank growth” of impulses when confined to shadow-parts of the psyche) is the cost. Violet, the combining of both spirit-image and energy-instinct,

appears to be an approaching into *caelum*, the second conjunction, as the disembodied achievements of *unio mentalis* (blue) are brought back into union with the embodied soul (red) but in a new spiritually evolved form (violet) with both energy and imagery (rather than simple regression to the former, or the arid would-be-saintliness of the latter).

The relevance of the (dis)union between the sacred and sexual is apparent in this model of the development of consciousness. As discussed in Chapter Three, there is no question of union between sacred and sexual at the level of *unio naturalis* because these two aspects of the psyche have not been differentiated as distinct elements yet – a prerequisite for any possible union (or disunion). At the level of *unio mentalis*, a splitting of the sexual from the sacred has occurred in the name of conscious mastery over the body's wild impulses; the cost, Jung has argued, is the potential life-deadening found in attempts to follow a "saintly" path to individuation, and the horrors of sexually abusive enactments by individuals who have artificially split off sexual elements of their psyches. At the level of the second conjunction a process of re-integrating this split occurs, in which libidinal sexual instinct (red) is paired with spiritual motifs and imagery (blue) to form a transcendent function that unites the sacred and sexual in a new form (violet).

Jung appears aware of the delicate procedure needed for uniting the sacred and the sexual. He writes about the way in which such instinctual desires often seem in conflict with spiritual aspirations but, if worked with carefully, become allies instead:

It is an open secret that although physical and spiritual passion are deadly enemies, they are nevertheless brothers-in-arms, for which reason it often needs the merest touch to convert the one to the other.

(para. 414)

Marie Louise Von Franz (1980, p.130-132) makes a similar point when she contrasts concretised instincts with spiritualised passions, employing the motif of the joined pair of wingless (concretised) and winged (spiritualised) birds in alchemical texts. In a remarkable exchange with a Christian priest, she describes this motif with reference to the composite case study of a monk who has a rich life of sexual fantasies, powerful enough to compel him to quit the monastic life and seek out actual sexual relationships with real women. Contrary to the priest's objections, she observes this to be a playing out of the unconscious and that individual's unique path of individuation. Rather than being something morally "wrong", it is the psyche correcting itself by bringing the wingless bird (earthed impulse) back into relationship with the winged (skyborne spirit).

In summation, these three forms of conscious experience can be put into sequence as in Table 4, whereby red is first (-2), blue is second (-1) and violet third (0). They are best put in this range (-2 to 0) as they add granularity to the range of coarse consciousness. Although already involving subtler elements through the presence of spirit, these stages are relatively cruder than that of subtle (0-4) and extremely subtle (4-8) consciousness. This appears to be a useful development of the coarse-subtle-extremely subtle gradations provided in the *Vajrayana* system, Buddhist soteriological systems tending not to attend to individual psychology, whether in clinical or non-clinical populations (Preece, 2006, 2018; Rinpoche, 2012). Thus, applying Jungian ideas enhances the granulated detail of the first category. Such enhancement would be the natural outcome of psychotherapy's primary focus on pathological and non-clinical types of psychological presentations, rather than the rarefied, heightened "peak" experiences related to the other two categories. These three gradations of consciousness within the *Vajrayana* system will now be considered.

Coarse Mind & Body consciousness

“Body” and “Mind” (as opposed to bodymind) are introduced as separate words as it helps flag what Roth (2015-2021) refers to as “Cartesian” and Neoplatonic assumptions. These assumptions appear to be actively ungirding the coarse gradation of consciousness. The coarse (or gross) level of body and mind refers to the standard anatomical and perceptual apparatus as understood by medicine and psychology. These include the five senses, bodily organs, skeleton, and blood, allied with the conventional intellectual and affective states consistent with the body’s functioning. Generally the biological and psychological organs and elements would be considered as potential objects of empirical measurement by scientific methods, given the necessary instruments.

The practices engaged in at this level are known as “Creation Phase” (Baker, 2019) or “Preliminary Stage” (Mullin, 1996) trainings, which “actively engage imagination, intellect and emotion in liberating reified perceptions of reality” (Baker, 2019, p.87). The *sutra* traditions of Buddhism, based upon sacred texts from India in Pali and Sanskrit, originating earlier than *tantra* texts and purported to be the dialogues of the historical Gautama Buddha (c.563-483 BCE) himself, do not include the subtle and extremely subtle ideas within *Vajrayana*, and thus by exclusion would predominantly be based on “coarse” mind and body assumptions. This is consistent with the *sutra* tendency towards cultivating the capacity for perceiving reality as it is, without being distorted by the projected fantasises that arise in the mind through mental defilements or impurities, referred to as “cankers” (Bodhi, 1980).

Applying the above-described Jungian model of consciousness to the coarse body and mind enhances the granularity of the individuation process at this stage and illuminates how gradations of consciousness can be moved through, approaching the subtle layers to come. To

begin, there is a pre-reflective state of consciousness as impulses and desires are embodied (red, -2) without a distinct mind capable of insight into them as psychological processes. Enhanced consciousness comes next, as a reflective and “disembodied” mind, able to reason and consider ethically, spiritually (blue, -1), it contains and gains insight into the subjective, psychological nature of instinctual life. After that, a more advanced level of consciousness is attained, whereby the spiritually infused psyche reengages with the vital and soulful life of embodied being (violet, 0), enabling creative and imaginative states of moving through the world. Such an achievement takes one to the brink of the subtle layers of consciousness, which is the domain of *tummo* practice. Of course, in the standard sense of the term these waypoints of individuation are subtle enough, but these do not yet make full reference to the technical use of the term employed in the *Vajrayana* and other traditions.

Subtle bodymind consciousness

I have chosen to often use the term bodymind (as opposed to “Body” and “Mind”) as one word, uncapitalised except for grammatical reasons. It is a term used frequently in somatic forms of psychotherapy (e.g. Porges & Dana, 2018; Levine, 2025; Rothschild, 2013; Totton, 2014). Doing so is helpful in establishing body-mind phenomena as two aspects of a unitary process rather than an interaction between what Roth (2015-2021) refers to as the qualitatively different categories of a Cartesian *res extensa* (dead matter) and *res cogitans* (thinking thing). Engaging bodymind as two aspects of one consciousness is an important point that arguably gets missed in the relevant literature, which consistently describes the “subtle body”, not the “subtle bodymind.” The nomenclature of “subtle body” is problematic because it runs the risk of smuggling in Cartesian assumptions, or allowing a reader more leeway to retain these unspoken conventions. That is, the mind is still distinct from the body and is the seat of consciousness, and the subtle body is simply a more refined anatomical system akin to the gross body’s

anatomy. Were that the case, it would not hold consciousness, which is precisely the claim which principles of the subtle bodymind appear set up to dispel. The seat of consciousness retreats again into its so-called “Cartesian” confines of the non-extended mind, from which it projects out onto the physically extended world which is, itself, incapable of consciousness. Prefacing the writing to follow with this concern is important, as use of the term “subtle body” is ubiquitous in the literature (e.g. Berry, 2008; Cox, 2022; Stang, 2023), therefore continues to be used to a great extent here.

Baker (2019) describes the subtle body, or “vajra body”, as an ‘envisioned metaphysical anatomy’. Composed of “channels”, “energy winds” and “drops”, the subtle body refers to a structural network of flowing energy and dynamic movement that pertains to the hidden springs of potential human creativity (Guenther, 1989; p.101). Thousands of subtle energy channels (Sanskrit *nādi*, Tibetan *tsa* or *r'tsa*) – purportedly 72,000 – run throughout the body. The primary “central channel” (*madhyanādi*, *tsa uma*), runs from the base of the spine to the crown of the head, and acts as an axis, much like the spine acts for the gross body. Either side of the central channel is a side channel, one white (*lalanā*, *kyangma*) and one red (*rasanā*, *roma*). The central channel is depicted as blue on the outside and red inside, and at five points along it a greater number of smaller channels branch off, these junction points being known as “wheels”, “energy centres” or *cakras* in Sanskrit (Tib. *Rtsa 'khor*). The number of *cakras* varies in different traditions, and in the Tibetan tradition the five are located at the head, throat, heart, navel and genitals.

It is the “energy winds” (*prajna* or *vayu*, *lung/rlung*) or airs, that move through these locations, the movement of (or obstructions to) these winds considered to cause mental clarity or disturbance. Thus, “the mind rides on the wind” (Yeshe, 1998/2015, p.87). Consciousness is

“mounted” on the energy winds as a rider on a wild and powerful “windhorse” which they train through the Vajarayana practices of the subtle body. Finally, the subtle body also contains “drops” (*bindu*, *tigle*), a ‘subtle liquid energy’ (Yeshe, 1998/2015, p.84) in contrast to the air-energy of the subtle winds. Yeshe equates “drops” to *kundalini* in the Indian tradition, also referred to in Tibetan as *kun-da da-bu jang-sem*, meaning “moon-like bodhicitta”²⁷. Drops are either red or white, and are ‘sexualised’ (Mullin, 1996, p.59): red drops as female and white as male. Although they occur throughout the subtle body there is a preponderance of red-female drops at the navel *cakra* and white-male drops at the crown *cakra*. Drops are also depicted as infinitesimal dancing deities, *dakas* (white-male) and *dakinis* (red-female), rhythmically moving throughout the subtle body.

This brief sketch of the subtle body scratches the surface of its intricate architecture, an arrangement that is highly differentiated in the literature and living practices of Tibetan Buddhism. In contrast, it is very much on the fringe of the Western mind, both empirical psychology and psychoanalytic researches being concerned with the phenomenology of what would be the gross level of bodymind consciousness. The frontiers into the existence and nature of the subtle body have been subject to some study, however, Baker (2019) citing research linking it to the myofascial connective tissue, the autonomic nervous system, and certain signatures of brain activity. The danger of making these links, again, is that the same assumptions around consciousness are retained (i.e. subtle body is a more refined physical anatomy) rather than challenged (i.e. subtle body holds a form of consciousness itself). In *The Kundalini Seminars*, along with the Indologist Gottfried Hauer, the *cakras* of the subtle body is considered at length. For Jung it represented a potential gateway from the personal to

²⁷ Preece (2018) defines bodhicitta as ‘the awakening mind or heart; the intention to awaken for the welfare of sentient being’ (p.250).

transpersonal unconscious content. However, he still appears to interpret the *cakras* using the mind/body split, suggesting them as symbols for psychological interpretation, rather than distinct seats of bodymind consciousness.

Whereas in the gross body-mind practices the mind is dominant partner to the body, at the subtle level the body becomes dominant partner to the mind, the body being claimed as one's spiritual refuge, the dwelling place of the deity, of one's teacher and – in totality – a 'sacred mandala'. As such the practices of the Completion phase, requiring mental focus and imaginative visualisations, also emphasise breath control and physical exercises. *Tummo* is the principal yoga here. The purpose of *tummo* is to move the frequency of consciousness from gross to subtle plane. This occurs through divesting energy from the gross, and moving it into the subtle body, where an experience of inner heat occurs in the central channel at the level of the navel *cakra*; that inner heat rises and – through alchemical reaction with subtle energy descending from the crown – unlocks an experience of bliss at the heart *cakra*. Such psychosomatic bliss is then used as the undergirding phenomenological substrate for the even more advanced practices that engage the extremely subtle levels of consciousness. As *tummo* provides the basis for that tremendously advanced work it is referred to as the "foundational practice" of the Vajrayana system. Shaw (1993) clarifies that in some contexts, such as these, the term 'foundational' can mean 'something that has the power to produce something that was not previously present, just as the earth generates new life and then supports everything that lives upon it' (p.44). The erotic-as-spiritual emerges clearly here, but in transformed iteration. The bliss-states unlocked by *tummo* are described in analogous ways to orgasm but employing the "vajra body", rather than the physical one.

How does the system of subtle mindbody consciousness relate to Jung's model of consciousness described above? It was concluded above that Jung's system was generally pertaining to the coarse body, but offered enhanced granularity regarding the passage of individuation through coarse mind and body consciousness, approaching and beginning to enter the subtle body. Entry into the realm of the subtle body appears to pertain to what Jung described to Pauli as "the secret of being". That is, namely, that the respective matrices of psyche and physis are, in fact, distinct in appearance only. In truth, they are merely different routes into, or different languages about, a singular matrix that is more primary. As quoted previously in Jung's letter to Pauli, the secret of being resides in a singular matrix in which material and psychic are "virtually identical", but which provide two distinct pathways into the secret: 'the material occurrence on the one hand and the psychic reflection of it on the other.'

The hidden "virtually identical" matrix under the matrices of the material and the psychic appears to hold close resemblance to the subtle body (or, more properly termed, subtle mindbody consciousness). The "energy winds" (*prajna* or *vayu*, *lung*/*rlung*) or airs purported to blow through the subtle energy channels (Sanskrit *nādi*, Tibetan *tsa* or *r'tsa*), has been equated by Preece (2006, 2018) to Jung's use of the term *pneuma*. Jung describes *spirit*, as 'turbulent air [pneuma] in contrast to the earth (matter or hyle)' (p.126), symbolising the father archetype, and the *animus*. In describing *lumen naturae*, he even makes reference to the subtle body as distinct from the physical, and the inner natural light as the breath of God travelling in it: 'the light is given to the "inner man" or the inner body (*corpus subtile*, breath-body)...' (1947/2001; p.123-4). The subtle body's "drops" (*bindu*, *tigle*,) are either red or white, red drops as female and white as male, the former rising from the navel cakra, the latter descending from the crown cakra; this appears to connect with the *animus* or spirit as sky-born, and anima, or the soul, rising from earth-embodied vitality. The psyche as *ligamentum corporis et spiritus* –

the bond, or connective ligament, between ensouled body and spirit – appears to play a crucial role here. It is the functioning of an altogether more subtle gradation of consciousness than available at the coarse level.

Connecting the subtle bodymind to the “secret of being” referred to by Jung and Pauli offers a valuable additional dimension in which the sacred and sexual act in conjunction. A deeper layer of union arises beneath the level of the coarse body, which presents the split between seeking resolution. One means of that resolution, then, is to track consciousness into the zone of the subtle bodymind. Here the resolution of the split becomes primarily an intrapsychic work, as the inner dynamics of *Vajrayana* and Jungian architecture both suggest blending of the sacred and the sexual: as discussed earlier, being referred to as the *chemical* or *holy wedding* in alchemy (Edinger, 1995; Jung, 1955/1963’ von Franz; Roth, 2015-2021), or the *yab-yum* in *Vajrayana* (Preece, 2018; van Schaik, 2005).

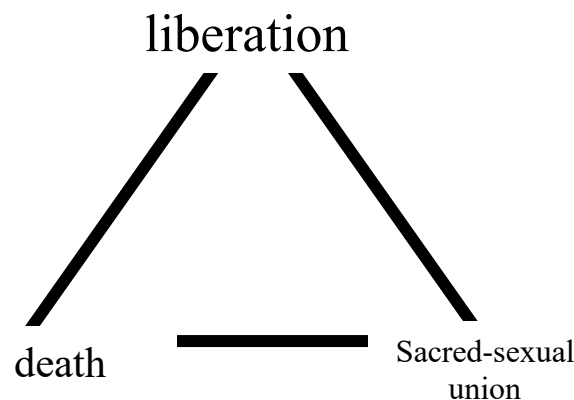
Extremely subtle consciousness

By taking what Mullin (1996) calls a “quantum leap” from the subtle body to the very subtle bodymind, the most refined frequency of consciousness is arrived at; it is known as “clear light mind”, the Coalescent Seal (*Mahāmudra*) or Great Perfection (*mahāsanti*, *Dzogchen*), and is said to occur at the moment of death (Yeshe, 1998), ‘when only the heart-drop is present as the support of the energies’ (Mullin, 1996, p.59), and stillness pervades the gross and subtle bodies. The goal of training, of course, is to experience it in life so that death can be met with freedom from fear, and micro-expressions of it arise naturalistically in the erotic-as-spiritual as the *petit mort* of orgasm (Haule, 2012). Associating the triad of ultimate liberation, death and orgasmic bliss seems an important theme at this layer of consciousness. This triad equates these three as consistently of the same *type*, at an extremely subtle level, but of different *magnitudes*,

liberation being the greatest and sacred-sexual union the least. Such a scale is reflected in the font-size used in Fig.11.

Fig.11

*Linking Core Phenomenological Moments at the Extremely Subtle Layer of Consciousness
(Freudian & Jungian Unconscious)*



Paralleling these phenomena at the extremely subtle layer (which are of course highly distinct and non-confusable on the coarse level of everyday “consciousness”!) naturally has significant repercussions for the question of resolving the split between sexuality and the sacred. It is as if the ultimate oneness of *unio naturalis* re-appears but in a different form. As the symbolism of “spiritual monuments” described below attempts to convey, that oneness is held through imagery both harmonious and complex, pushing the conceptual mind past breaking point, and into an open, aesthetically alive state. It seems that the question of uniting sexuality and the sacred has been passed through, its resolution opening up broader unknown vistas.

Clear light mind ‘represents an embodied realisation of the Buddhist *Yogācāra* doctrine of the indivisible ‘three bodies’ (*Trikāyavāda* or *trikāya*), also known as the three *kayas* (Baker, 2019; Dowman, 1984; Preece, 2018; Thurman, 1998). The three *kayas* are the ‘emanation body’ (*Nirmānakaya*), the ‘beatific body’ (*Sambhogakāya*), and the primordial ‘truth body’ of

ultimate reality (*Dharmakāya*) (Baker, 2019, p.87). Preece (2018) defines *Dharmakāya* as ‘the wisdom or truth body of a Buddha’, the impossible to conceive of and unmanifested “clear light” of potential out of which everything manifests and dissolves back into; *Sambhogakāya* as ‘the enjoyment body or purified energy body of a Buddha’, manifesting as limitless bliss and light; *Nirmānakaya* as the body within which the former two manifest, and as the *kaya* of manifestation bringing the other two *kayas* into the dimensions of time and space. Dowman (1984) recites a traditional formula defining these three modes:

essence – empty (*Dharmakāya*);
 nature – radiant (*Sambhogakāya*);
 compassionate manifestation – all-embracing (*Nirmānakaya*).

In terms of their relation to each other, Dowman (1984) describes the three *kayas* as three spheres that interpenetrate, three forms of one ineffable truth, in the same way that steam, ice and water are three ways of H₂O appearing. The indivisible dynamic amongst these three aspects of “clear light” consciousness is expressed vividly in a seascape with the following poetic image:

The *Dharmakāya* is likened to an infinite, waveless ocean,
 from which arise mists and rainbows,
 symbolising the *Sambhogakāya*.
 Enhaloed clouds condense and fall as rain,
 symbolising the naturally manifesting *Nirmānakāya*.....
 the bodymind is ultimately experienced as co-extensive with the universe....
 absolute reality as one’s own innermost, self-transcendent anatomy.

(Baker, 2019, p.87)

What we see here is an infinite, perpetually unfolding scene constantly in the play of auto-generation, never still yet unchangingly constant; interlocking facets endlessly interact in a panorama that is both conceptually impossible *and* imaginably evocative. It is what Jung (1960/2001) would call a “spiritual monument,” a phrase he used to refer to Zen *koan*, being

one of those ‘sublime paradoxes that light up, as with a flash of lightning, the inscrutable relationship between ego and self’ (p.160).

Therefore, the vision of the ever-moving-yet-constant three *kayas* demands some form of spiritual monument that would have to hold a sense of impossible motion, or simultaneous stasis and movement – each quality reliant on the other for its existence. Another apt monument of this type, as well as the seascape described by Baker (2019), is Wolfgang Pauli’s dream image of *The World Clock* (as depicted in Fig.12). It is an object described as one of ‘the most sublime harmony,’ and which Jung reported to be a culminating moment of religious conversion for Pauli (Peat, 2008). As Jung describes it in *Psychology and Alchemy* (CW12),

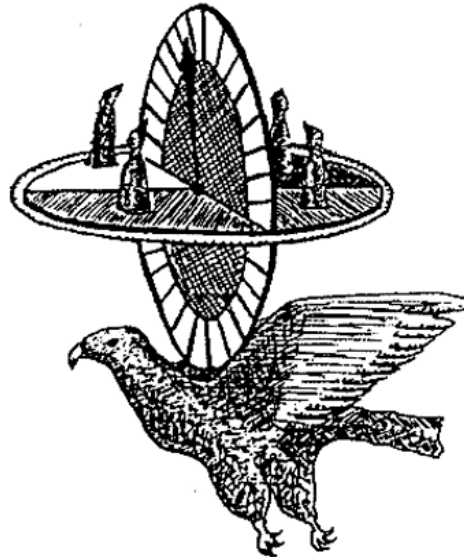
There is a vertical and a horizontal circle, having a common centre. This is the world clock. It is supported by the black bird. The vertical circle is a blue disc with a white border divided into 4 X 8—32 partitions. A pointer rotates upon it. The horizontal circle consists of four colours. On it stand four little men with pendulums, and round it is laid the ring that was once dark and is now golden (formerly carried by four children). The world clock has three rhythms or pulses: 1) The small pulse: the pointer on the blue vertical disc advances by 1/32. 2) The middle pulse: one complete rotation of the pointer. At the same time the horizontal circle advances by 1/32. 3) The great pulse: 32 middle pulses are equal to one complete rotation of the golden ring.

(CW12, par.307)

Fig.12

Herbert van Erkelens' conception of Wolfgang Pauli's World Clock vision,

Sparks (2018, p.455)



Peat (2008) points out that for two discs to spin around a common axis, that axis cannot exist in three-dimensional ordinary space-time: there must be a shared space where the axes can overlap and move in different directions at the same time. To do so requires a fourth dimension, a “missing dimension,” an invisible existentialist lynchpin at the heart of the monument.

Moreover, the existence of that dimension is brought into necessity by the continuing action in three dimensions: if these stop, the need for the fourth dimension ceases also. That dimension disappears entirely when not necessitated. Inter-dimensional existence is mutually reliant, none can exist without the other. In this way a resounding with the core Buddhist principle of emptiness, *shunyata*, (that pervades the three *kayas* and the whole Buddhist system) is encased in the image of the *The World Clock*.

The ultimate recourse to emptiness is expressed with the fifth sign of leaping from the subtle to the very subtle: “...a formless sign, resembling a sky free of clouds” (see Table Four at the start

of this chapter). How can a sign without form, without image, be a sign? This “formless form” forces the mind into a dimension without standard conceptual dimensions, in precisely the same way that workings of *The World Clock* also forces the existence of a fourth missing dimension, and the oceanic vista of the three *kayas* in eternal *and* time-bound exchange. This crucial impossibility of clear light mind, from the perspective of standard human psychology, is echoed too by Jung (1960/2001) in writing that,

there is no conscious content which can be said to be totally conscious, for that would necessitate an unimaginable totality of consciousness, and that in turn would presuppose an equally unimaginable wholeness and perfection of the human mind.

(p.115)

This passage seems to refer to omniscience, as total consciousness seems to infer becoming consciousness, i.e. knowing of, everything entirely. Therefore, an important definition here is how omniscience is meant. If it is meant in the sense of knowing all conceptual contents knowable this of course is unimaginable. But the limits of consciousness gestured towards by *The World Clock* and the vista of the three *kayas* is to point towards a dimension of *knowing beyond knowing* in such a conceptual sense. An ultimate knowing of not-knowing. This is a state of consciousness which Dowman (1984) refers to as non-referential: there are no objects to which the knowledge refers. In other words, it is a non-dualistic state of consciousness. It does not encounter the problem of omniscience presented by Jung as all-knowing only exists at a layer of consciousness at which there is anything to know. Beyond that level, “nothing” is equivalent to “everything”, in the same sense that death, liberation and orgasmic bliss become equated too. In some parts of Jung’s late thought this idea is present. At the very beginning of *Septem Sermones ad Mortuos* 153mniscience, all-knowing, is regarded as identical with knowing nothing. Jung writes as Basilides in Alexandria, “the city where the East touches the

West”, so perhaps it is unsurprising for us to find a connection with Buddhism in his work here.

He writes,

Nothingness is the same as fullness. In infinity full is no better than empty. Nothingness is both empty and full...A thing that is infinite and eternal hath no qualities, since it hath all qualities. This nothingness or fullness we name the Pleroma. Therein both thinking and being cease...In the pleroma there is nothing and everything. It is quite fruitless to think about the pleroma, for this would mean self-dissolution...The pleroma...pervadeth...as the light of the sun everywhere pervadeth the air ...

(Jung, 1916/2001, p.1)

Non-duality consciousness

Passing beyond the union of the sacred and sexual at the extremely subtle layer of consciousness raises such questions about the nature of consciousness itself, conclusions pushed even further by the Tibetan Buddhist scholar Gorampa (1429-89) (Kassor, 2021; van Schaik, 2016). He makes an argument for a non-dualistic state of consciousness that is extremely subtle, but nevertheless important to state, as it helps open up challenges in the dialogue between Jung’s alchemical model and *tummo* which require addressing. Gorampa starts with the underlying arguments of systems such as Pauli’s world clock or the seascape of the three kayas, which refute transcendence having any independent eternal existence distinct from non-transcendent phenomena: reality arises from processes unfolding in perpetuity – there is no eternally enduring transcendence existing independently. Reaching this position has its own pitfalls. He writes,

Having refuted [independent existence], one may grasp at the emptiness of true existence. When mounting a horse from the right one doesn’t fall off on that side but falls off on the left. Likewise, one may not escape from falling into the extreme of nihilism, so this needs to be refuted as well. Furthermore, grasping at both or neither

also needs to be refuted until no object grasped according to the four extremes can be found at all.

(Gorampa quoted in van Schaik, 2016, p.81)

Refutation of independent existence opens one to the risk of adhering to nihilism. This is a risk as by doing so one is simply grasping, or clinging, to yet another conceptual position with purported inherent, eternal and independent existence, only this time it is labelled ‘Nihilism’ instead of ‘Eternalism’. The label has been replaced, but one remains tightly clutching a philosophical bottle that one identifies as everlasting and timeless (i.e. eternal). From a soteriological perspective too the problem of grasping and clinging endures, which is an obstacle to further individuation. One also runs into the same problem if trying to solve it by accepting the paradox that *both* independent existence *and* empty existence are true.

The issue here is not whether one holds a view of Eternalism, Nihilism, or Paradox, but one’s relationship to any conceptual “view” whatsoever. The alternative positions are initially summarised in Table 5.

Table 5

Summary of Gorampa's Argument Regarding Eternalist, Nihilist, and Paradox Views, According to Dimensions of Independent v. Empty Existence, suggesting solution of non-conceptuality

(Kassor, 2021; van Schaik, 2016)

	Independent Existence	Empty Existence
Independent Existence	ETERNALIST VIEW	PARADOX VIEW
Empty Existence	PARADOX VIEW	NIHILISM

The next logical move would be to reject all views, whether they be eternalist, nihilist, or paradoxical: conceptuality itself (which all these views represent) is the problem, therefore non-conceptuality is a preferred position. Unfortunately this does not provide a solution either, as one is merely now clinging to an opinion which is identifying by being the *opposite* of the other views proposed. It is thus simply a mirror-image rather than resolution, caught again within the dualistic play of opposites belonging to the subtle and coarse layers of consciousness.

Reflecting on the process of grappling with these arguments to write this thesis, I struggled to see how the non-conceptualizable position would not be a resolution. Or, more accurately, what would the alternative look like? It seemed unimaginable to me, and the non-conceptualisable was as far as my engagement with the research material could take me. This is illustrated graphically in the way the non-conceptualizing position is not “caught” in the net of Table 5 – it seems to escape all conceptual boxes. Therefore, is it not a way of escaping the problem?

A breakthrough came when I then realized that non-conceptuality in fact *is* in the grid – “hidden” from conventional thinking in the top left corner. That box must be inevitably created *by* forming any grid of this type, but it is usually left blank (or airbrushed out) with the tacit agreement to “play by the rules” and stay within the boxes defined by the labelled rows and columns. Abiding by the conventional rules set by the labels given to the rows and columns dictates that we ignore the top-left box: it has to be there due to the rules of image formation, but there is a tacit agreement to remain unconscious of it. If we ignore that tacit agreement, however, it forms the precise space needed for a position which refutes the concepts introduced.

As it is defined in contradiction to the positions in the main grid, which are all conceptual, as defined by the row and column labels. It can be mapped after all – see Table 6.

Table 6

Summary of Gorampa's Argument Regarding Eternalist, Nihilist, and Paradox Views, According to Dimensions of Independent v. Empty Existence, moving "beyond" non-conceptuality and enforcing present-moment "spiritual monument"

(Kassor, 2021; van Schaik, 2016)

NON- CONCEPTUAL VIEW	Independent Existence	Empty Existence
Independent Existence	ETERNALIST VIEW	PARADOX VIEW
Empty Existence	PARADOX VIEW	NIHILISM

With this advancement, Gorampa's argument is leading us to something profoundly subtle. If what he is pointing to is not in the dimensions of the grid (or in opposition to those dimensions) where is it? How can it be located? In what sense does it exist? The only dimension, or vector left, it seems to me, is between you (as the reader, after I have written this) and Table 6 (as the object being read). As the dimension of consciousness Gorampa is articulating resists articulation *in* Table 6 (but is prompted by engagement with it) one is *forced* to become conscious of one's own consciousness, observing/reading/thinking/feeling *in relation to* the external conditions of the figures and arguments being read. The dimension is no longer on the

page, but between page and reader's eye. A new vector is forced open or, more accurately, a vector that was always implicitly there is forced into conscious self-other interdependent awareness. This moment of pure phenomenology *in* itself only exists *as* itself: a lived, present moment experience of immediate consciousness always there yet hiding in plain sight. That spark of present this-worldly transcendence appears, I suggest, as an infinitely small micro-moment of extremely subtle consciousness. It appears to be the "clear light mind" of *Dzogchen* – direct encounter with the mind's natural state, or *rigpa*, which suddenly becomes effortless. A brief glimpse of Jung's (1960/2001) sense of a "spiritual monument" occurs experientially which, like a *koan*, lights up 'as with a flash of lightning, the inscrutable relationship between ego and self' (p.160).

Three characteristics of this, and perhaps all, spiritual monuments are highlighted by this finding: a) it must occur in the now as without you as the reader to activate its coming into being then, like a tree falling in the wood with no one present, its phenomenological potency is not actualised, lying dormant only as a particular configuration of pixels or ink, b) *non-duality is not monism*, because the two distinct things (sensory apparatus and ink/pixel) are necessary for the one moment of lived relational awareness: dualism is enfolded rather than denied, c) it is neither idealism nor materialism, as both psychological and physical conditions are necessary, and it is the unknowable meeting of the two which forms the "spiritual monument", which appears reducible to neither.

Divergences and confusions

The conclusions reached by working through these gradations of consciousness raises a question regarding Jung's use of alchemy: is transcendence something static and persisting unchanged from antiquity (a statue akin to Michelangelo's David), or is it in ever-moving

dynamic process, liable to vanish if the cogs of the mundane world ceased (such as Pauli's world clock or the seascape of the three *kayas*, and the thought experiment raised by Gorampa)? This seems an open question as clear elements of an Eternalist position appear in Jung's thought. In *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, for instance, Jung writes that, psychologically, 'the collective unconscious takes the place of the platonic realm of eternal ideas. Instead of these models giving form to created things, the collective unconscious, through its archetypes, provides the *a priori* condition for the assignment of meaning' (1955, par.101). In his discussion of the *scintilla* he (1947/2001 p.119-20) suggests that they 'correspond to the Platonic Ideas, from which one could equate the *scintillae* with the archetypes on the assumption that the Forms "stored up in a celestial place" are a philosophical version of the latter'. It is from that mimicking of celestial form that these sparks are endowed with their luminosity and numinosity.²⁸ Lovejoy (1933/1960, pp.315-7) refers to this as "the fundamental axiom of emanationism", formed from Plato's *Timaeus*, in which the essences of the eternally perfect overflow into that which is less perfect: the flow from Platonic Idea into everyday object endows the latter with its numinosity – the lower derives from the higher and there is a dualism between two worlds: the this-worldly and other-worldly.

These ideas of the eternal timeless realm charging the mundane world with its numinosity is an influential position in Jungian thought, which seems to contradict the (admittedly more complex) position arrived at through the extremely subtle gradation of consciousness. The influence of the Platonic streak in Jung's thought appears, for instance, in von Franz's (1980) consideration of *Sophia*, the Wisdom of God as female figure, as representing the sum of all

²⁸ Of course this is not the only reading of Jung. He also writes, for instance, that 'the shadow on the wall of Plato's cave are just as real as the invisible figures that cast them' (1947/2001, p.145n). It is absolutely crucial to fillet out the Platonic stream in Jung from the process-oriented one as it is a mode of thought that has found some credence for some post-Jungians (e.g. Goodwyn, 2019), and become a straw-man for others to knock down to support a post-modern Jung (e.g. Hinton, 2011), which washes out the transpersonal elements that are argued for here.

archetypes, the *archetypi*. She explains *archetypi* is medieval language used prior to Jung's usage of the term, and refers to,

the eternal ideas in God's mind when He created the world... when God created the world, like a good architect He first conceived a plan in which everything – trees, animals, insects, and so on – was present as an idea. Before there were thousands of bears in this world, there was the idea of a bear in God's mind, and before there were millions of oak trees, there was the idea of an oak tree.

That idea of an oak tree in God's mind would be the *archetypos* or...the eternal plans or ideas. God conceived the world and then cast His idea into matter and created the real world. If we then translate this into psychological language it would mean that the Wisdom of God represents the collective unconscious, the sum of all the original idea patterns of reality – but that would be the feminine side of the Godhead [Sophia].

(p.184)

In conclusion, this points to a confusion between the *Vajrayana*-adjacent and Christian Platonic in Jung's writing, which give two models of consciousness. Is one's "essence" imparted from the Platonic realm of Ideas, or is the experience of essence neither existent nor non-existent, but sustained through the ever-changing dynamic processes of the whole? It is precisely this question that Pauli pursues in his correspondence with Jung. The exchange is illuminating, and is the focus of the next chapter. This focus allows for what could be described as an "alchemical" approach to this question of consciousness. This conclusion then provides an enriched platform from which to consider the process of *tummo* practice itself in finer detail, posing questions as to its relevance for psychotherapy.

Summary and conclusions

This chapter has pursued the questions of consciousness raised by *tummo* and the *six dharmas of Naropa*, when considered alongside Jung's Dornian alchemical model. The former's radical notions of consciousness expanding a) across waking, sleeping, and dying, and b) across mind

and matter were considered in the context of posited gradations of consciousness: coarse, subtle, and extremely subtle.

It was found that Jung's understanding of the psyche (employing concepts of spirit, soul, body, matter, un/conscious) helped enhance our granular understanding of the individuation process at the coarse level, that being the domain of clinical and non-clinical individual psychological presentations: a factor traditionally under-considered. Approaching a resolution to the split between the sacred and sexual appears the primary task at this range of consciousness.

At the subtle level language of the "subtle body" as opposed to the "subtle bodymind" was critiqued from the perspective of consciousness, and the way in which the *Vajrayana* system aids a Jungian alchemical model was considered; it provides a scheme for the "secret of Being" Jung discussed with Pauli: an underlying unitary matrix which respective dual matrices of physics and psychology refer to. With regard to the primary research question, at this level inhabiting the union of the sacred and sexual appears to be the prime quality of the individuation process.

The extremely subtle body of clear light mind (symbolised by the seascape of the three *kayas* and by Pauli's world clock dream) brought the ultimate nature of consciousness into a "zone beyond zones". As described by Gorampa, non-dual states of consciousness that go beyond essences pertain, and consciousness itself becomes the object of consciousness. At the extremely subtle level then, with regard to the sacred and sexual, there appears to be a moving beyond the problem as a discrete phenomenon, coming back into relationship with the phenomena of death and dying, and liberation.

Finally, it was described how some streams of Jung's thought appear consistent with this view, while others follow a Platonic character which pursues ultimate essences of phenomena into a timeless eternal realm. These models were discerned by Pauli and discussed with Jung directly in their exchange of letters. Exploring this exchange therefore provides further light on the matter of consciousness, to be addressed in the next chapter.

Reflective note II: the bubble dream

Somehow hovering around a stream or river, the water was flowing rapidly, clear and glittering as it ran over mossy rocks worn smooth from the current. On one submerged stone I could see what looked like a diamond or a crystal. It shone white and silver, a steady still presence underneath the water's incessant flow. I somehow became small enough to swim through the water, and with strenuous effort got to the diamond. An upwelling of excitement exploded on finally arriving, as if completing the quest for the Holy Grail, or gaining the Philosopher's Stone. At the end of labouring against the current I was going to hold in my hands the ultimate treasure. On reaching to the diamond, however, my hand passed through its surface: all I felt was thin air. The "diamond" was in fact a bubble trapped underwater. It was "nothing"! This made it impossible to lift, carry out or take as my own. In fact, the "precious" unmoving bubble only existed *because* of the constant movement of the water: there was an interactive dependency. The flowing water, which I had laboured against as the resistance against reaching the prized stone, was in fact making the apparent "stone", which was in reality air.

Finding thin air when I expected a diamond, the whole thing began to seem a practical joke of cosmic proportions. My own foolish intoxication with the illusive jewel became the most hilarious thing I had ever heard. A trick had been played brilliantly, and the line of a Bruce Springsteen song came to mind: "There's a joke here somewhere and it's on me." It felt a relief to laugh at myself. A sense of wonder at the elegance of the diamond-bubble-water interaction was also detectable as an undercurrent to the humorous absurdity, providing a satisfying admixture of humility and appreciation that the joke (which was played on me) led into seeing the play of nature itself.²⁹

²⁹ Coincidentally, while writing this up, a radio programme called "A Lungful" has begun to play (0930-0945 on 03.04.2026, Radio 4extra, as part of a series called *Hybrid* (Knight, 2021/2026)). Considering the lungs of other animals, evolutionary biologist Dr Simon Watt considers how the human lung might be improved. Much of the programme is concerned with breathing underwater, prompting

Chapter Eight

Varieties of conscious experience: themes of fire and stasis in the Jung-Pauli letters, 1952-3

To recap, the matter of consciousness at the interface of Jung's alchemy and Tibetan Vajrayana has yielded progress in answering the question of the sacred-sexual split in specific ways. When put within the Buddhist frame of consciousness as a spectrum (moving from gross to subtle) Jung's ideas of instinct and spirit (and their combination) significantly enhances how we can formulate the sacred-sexual relationship at the gross end of the spectrum, in a way that does not seem to be there in the Tibetan system alone. At the subtle level, Buddhist notions of the subtle bodymind greatly clarify what Jung termed "the secret of being," in that mental and physical phenomena are two routes to the same inner "essence" of being that is in fact neither mental nor physical in itself (but discernable through both). The sacred-sexual connection being an example *par excellence* of something perceived both mentally and physically, the subtle level clarifies that these aspects are pointing to "somewhere" that, in itself, transcends both.

Whatever that "essence" or "somewhere" may be, it is the domain of extremely subtle consciousness. Dramatically, it is at this fundamental level that the most violent ruptures and inconsistencies within Jung's work are exposed, made plain by its encounter with Vajrayana Buddhism. Namely, does Jung consider the ultimate to be a NeoPlatonic realm of essences and eternal Ideas of a Creator God, or the spiritual monument of the present moment, a living process with an impossible dimension at its core, which ignites and ultimately unbinds imagination? That question is the topic of this chapter.

the realisation that in fact finding an air bubble underwater would be much *more* valuable than finding a diamond, potentially life-saving.

Pauli's philosophical analysis

Two approaches to these questions of consciousness and mind/matter relationships can be found in correspondence between Pauli and Jung between 1952 and 1953 concerning the philosophical modelling of archetypal phenomena, particularly emerging from Pauli's dream content which he shared with Jung, and Jung's theoretical propositions, which were read by Pauli, especially *Aion* Parts V, XIII and XIV.

In Pauli's letter to Jung of 27th February 1952, he labels one approach the "process of becoming" view, and the other the "static ones" (see Jung & Pauli, 2014, pp. 74-81). The former is aligned with the philosophy of Heraclitus, Taoism or some schools of Buddhism. It describes the interdependence of all things, and it is the ever-moving interplay of poles of opposites that gives life form and movement. The second, alternative model that Pauli identifies as describing archetypal phenomena almost as a leaking through of the light of an eternal, ever-constant transcendental realm into the relative darkness of the normal mundane world. This is aligned with Parmenides, some readings of Plato and Christian theology, and the Hindu concept of Atman. In his letter of February 27th, Pauli is absolutely strident and clear that in his opinion Analytical Psychology is better suited to a "process of becoming" Heraclitean than a Neoplatonic "static" philosophy.

The *privatio boni*

Why did Pauli think this? His argument is concerned with the *privatio boni*, the Catholic doctrine that evil is not a substantive thing, but in fact is merely the absence of good, and that good is equated to God. The ultimate good, in perfection and in its entirety, is God Himself. Evil, thus, is a simple lack of good, and a lack of God. Evil is an absence, an emptying out, or forgetting of our true relationship with God, not something that exists in its own right.

“Absence” (in terms of a privation) is an emptiness in the sense of nothingness, void, lack, oblivion and non-being. It is, in other words, non-existence.

From a Neoplatonic position, Pauli argues, matter (such as the human body) can be interpreted as a *privatio* because it is a relative absence of the purity and completeness of the God-image from which human bodies derive their essence. Matter is in this sense a mark of the climbing down from spiritual perfection – our corporeal existence is a reminder of our inherent original sin. In the same way that evil is an absence of good, matter is an admission that we have lost the perfection of Platonic Form. Thus, writes Pauli, ‘according to Plotinus matter is supposed to be a pure *privatio* and “absolutely evil” to boot; furthermore, evil, evidently as understood by Parmenides, is depicted as “non-being”’ (Pauli, 1952/2001, p.76). There can be no “process of becoming” on this view because being has (literally) nothing to interact with. On the other side of being is an absence, a devoid-of-characteristics type of vacuum that no amount of interaction with could create anything with. Hence, finds Pauli, “being” is presented as

a *stationary sphere*. Psychologically speaking, this is a yearning for peace and quiet (lack of conflict) as against the dispute of (war) or Heraclitus...The ensuing extremely strong devaluation of matter is for me a sort of rationalised withdrawal from the world.

(Pauli, 1952/2001, p.78)

Pauli contrasts the stationary sphere of Plato to the Gnostics, Heraclitus, or Lao-Tzu, for whom pairs of opposites are treated symmetrically, rather than the *privatio*’s asymmetrical treatment of superior “being” (good, God, substance) and inferior “non-being” (absence, or lack of “being”). Parity between pairs sets into motion an ongoing unfolding of conflict, change and flux as each part of the pair interacts with the other. This is the process of becoming that was considered by Heraclitus as a “permanent living fire.” ‘God is a *coincidentia oppositorum*’ (Pauli, 1952/2001, p.77) writes Pauli, rather than the summation of good, and is found in the

world rather than *outside* of it. Spiritual experience is found in the numinously unfolding, alive, interconnecting, merging and shifting experience of the here and now. After outlining the “static ones” and “process of becoming” philosophies, Pauli concludes that Jung’s psychology is clearly and unambiguously aligned with the process of becoming view. He writes,

It was those who denied the process of becoming (the “static ones”) who came up with the idea of the “*privatio*.” Thus it comes as no surprise to me that those modern thinkers who – like yourself – are now once again pleading the case for a symmetrical treatment of the pairs of opposites are also close to the concept of becoming...It is the *fire of Heraclitus*, now appearing to you once again “on a higher level” as the “Dynamics of the Self.”

(Pauli, 1952/2001, p.81)

In his letter Pauli is, then, appearing to offer Jung the enticing possibility of grounding analytical psychology on coherent philosophical grounds with a lineage going back to the pre-Socratics, aligning it with ideas from the East such as *tao* which Jung was interested in, and separating it from the Platonic ideas in Christianity which are philosophically problematic and aligned with the *privatio boni*, a theology which we know Jung to be strongly opposed to, given his writing in *Answer to Job* and his published correspondence with Father Victor White (Lammers & Cunningham, 2007).

Jung’s response to Pauli: to blend, not distinguish.

It would be natural to think that Jung would receive this erudite philosophical dissection of his work with some form of agreement or alternatively (although it seems less likely) disagreement. In fact, somewhat surprisingly, his response seems to be to take neither position. Instead, he seems keener to re-muddy the water, and re-mingle the clean and tidy positions that Pauli had worked so hard to disambiguate.

Not only that, Jung seems to have taken up this agnostic position passionately and persuasively. This is evidenced in their correspondence, which documents the fact that they spent an evening together within three months of Pauli's 27th February letter, and the nature of their meeting had the effect of shaking Pauli from his previously strident and steadfast position. That effect is apparent in his letter of 17th May 1952, which refers to the two approaches as now impossible to choose between after his discussion with Jung on the topic. In the letter, Pauli thanks Jung for their pleasant evening together, and states that he will 'give a lot of thought to many of the things you said, so that I can digest them properly' (p.81). Again, he sums up the two philosophical positions, this time briefly, and concludes that 'at the moment I see no possibility of objectively deciding between the two' (p.82): this is a total upending of his previous certainty! Such a statement of not knowing represents an absolute sea change from his previously assured position.

We can also observe an interesting inverse correlation between Pauli's certainty about the philosophical grounding of Analytical Psychology and the warmth and affection between the two men: as certainty reduces, warmth increases. Jung writes back to Pauli quickly and in glowing personal terms three days later, expressing 'Many thanks for your ever wonderfully stimulating conversation' (p.83), and he agrees that 'in actual fact, I do not see any real possibility of deciding on the question' (p.83). He then leaves us a small clue as to why this position of not-knowing might be an important one for him to keep; he argues that psychological and biological facts 'suggest at least the possibility of an "*analogia entis*," or analogy of being: that is we can speak truth about God, but never come to an exhaustive and complete statement about Him. It is this infinite intellectual openness which seems valuable to preserve. It seems to represent openness to life, openness to spiritual awakening, and intellectual humility – a triad which can collapse if academic conclusions (surrounding archetypes, for example) are held too tightly. In this sense, his passionate not-knowing seems

to be pointing to a type of open-consciousness arrived at the end of the last chapter and Gorampa's *koan*-like argument that elicits *dzogchen*.

Jung's response to Pauli as a microcosm of his general position

The pattern found in Jung's letters merging and mobilising distinct philosophies without discrimination is neither an incidental nor minor aspect of his thought, but clearly resonates through much of his published material. We see in miniature through his writings to Pauli a trend that plays out through much of his late work. He recruits both Platonic "static ones" and Heraclitean "process-of-becoming" models side-by-side with apparent ignorance of their subtly different lenses.

In *Aion* (1951a/1960), for example, he draws upon the Platonic eternal through utilising the Hindu concept of *Atman*, of a timeless and immutable "I" distinct from worldly things. writing,

He who dwells in all beings, yet is apart from all beings, whom no beings know, whose body is all beings, who controls all beings from within, he is your Self, the inner controller, the immortal...There is no one seer but he, no other hearer but he, no other perceiver but he, no other knower but he. He is your self, the inner controller, the immortal. All else is of sorrow.

(1951a/1960, par. 349)

On this view, the numinosity of the Platonic realm of Self lights up the enshadowed plane of mundane existence. All corporeal things reflect, or are shadows of, the eternal realm of Forms from which phenomena originate (Jung, 1951a/1960, par.380; 1952/1960, par.930).

Seamlessly, Jung then combines these Platonic statements with those of thinkers who Pauli describes as "process-of-becoming", whose philosophies lay out a non-dual perspective. An example of this is in Jung's essay on Synchronicity³⁰, in which he quotes Lao-Tzu, writing that,

³⁰ Interestingly, Jung equates synchronicity with the apprehension of meaning, and meaning with Tao, and meaning and Tao as ultimately, perhaps, unknowable.

We put thirty spokes together and call it a wheel;
 But it is on the space where there is nothing that the utility of the wheel depends.
 We turn clay to make a vessel;
 But it is on the space where there is nothing that the utility of the vessel depends.
 We pierce doors and windows to make a house;
 And it is on these spaces where there is nothing that the utility of the house depends.
 Therefore just as we take advantage of what is, we should recognise the utility of what is not.

(Jung, quoting Lao-tzu, 1952/1960, par.919)

In sharp contrast to the *privatio* notion of “no-thing” being merely the absence of “thing”, nothing (or space) in Lao-Tzu’s understanding is an equally real and active agent as thing (lack of space). The former is automatically rendered invisible and unseen by our conditioned ways of perceiving that disconnect us, consciously at least, from the flow of *tao*. Recovering awareness of space as a “real thing”, forever interacting with that which takes up space, is to reconnect with *tao*. This substantive concept of nothing is found too in Jung’s concept of evil as a substantive opposite of good, rather than its lack, a position Peter Kingsley (2018) sees as central in Jung’s attempt to revive a pre-Augustinian, pre-*privatio*, sense of Christianity.

An alchemical approach

What can we take from the quality of the exchange between Jung and Pauli? I would like to suggest that they offer a template for addressing the question of philosophical positions regarding gradations of consciousness raised in the last chapter. Pauli distinguishes, while Jung blends together, Pauli discerns and separates as Jung combines and amalgamates, both tasks contained within a relational vessel of warmth and (it appears) mutual care, as well as robust disagreement.

Seeing these elements of their process together as a whole, an *alchemical* procedure seems to be occurring. As Jung writes near the very beginning of *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, the repeating refrain of the alchemists is “*solve et coagula*” - dissolve and coagulate. As he puts it,

the alchemist saw the essence of his art in separation and analysis on the one hand and synthesis and consolidation on the other...bringing the hostile elements and qualities, once they were separated, back into unity again.

(p.xiv, 1955/2001)

When taken as a whole, it is precisely this pattern that we see playing out between Jung and Pauli in their exchange. Doing so appears to uphold qualities of openness and humility. These seem evident in the very last line of the last direct letter between the two, Jung's writing to Pauli a year before Pauli's death. It was a simple question with regard to the most openminded of things, UFOs. Jung asks Pauli 'has physics any suggestions to make in this respect?', before signing off 'with heartiest thanks.' This seems to be the final communication they ever had with each other.

Ontic networks, epistemic dyads

The basic rhythm of *solve et coagula* also repeats when the Platonic stasis and fire of becoming positions are held as complementary heuristics for experience in life rather than competing philosophies for the intellect alone: the two models separated and distinguished by Pauli through logical analysis, when united again point to one reality experienced in different ways, as described by Jung.

The process of becoming model generates a different view of archetypes as hubs of intensified interconnection in an infinite network of action; each point of archetypal activity cannot exist independently of the others, but as reflective of the deeper and richer web of phenomena of which they are part.

In his 2009 book on synchronicity, Joseph Cambray describes this view of archetypes through the image of “Indra’s net,” an image of archetypal interconnectivity from Chinese and Indian Buddhist philosophy. He writes,

in the heaven of the great god Indra is said to be a vast and shimmering net, finer than a spider’s web, stretching to the outermost reaches of space. Strung at each intersection of its diaphanous threads is a reflecting jewel. Since the net is infinite in extent, the jewels are infinite in number. In the glistening surface of each jewel is reflected all the other jewels, even those in the furthest corner of the heavens. In each reflection, again are reflected all the infinitely many other jewels, so that by this process, reflections of reflections continue without end.

(p.44)

This notion of archetypal activity as a net, weave, or web, is also argued for by Renos Papadopoulos (2006, 2011). He suggests archetypes not to be seen in isolation, but to rather consider them always as networks, collective structures of meaning, or sets of interaction that facilitate certain processes. Archetypes are not things in themselves, perhaps, but point to

aliveness as connective tissue between an individual and their *Umwelt* - the meaningful world around them. The world, in fact, is rendered meaningful through interaction via archetypal psychic structuring so that, Papadopoulos argues, for Jung ‘the archetype provides...that Archimedean point outside the “inner” and the “outer” as it includes both but is neither “inside” nor “outside” (2011, p.218). Note, however, in both Cambray’s and Papadopoulos’ language, dyads still have to be evoked: Indra’s heaven, as opposed to our earth; an “inside” and “outside” which the archetype must refer to yet is neither.

Complementing layers of experience and competing philosophies

Why does this matter regarding models of consciousness, particularly the confusion in Jung’s writing between positions which suggest connectivity to a *Vajrayana* system, and those which seem to contradict? I would suggest that it matters for two reasons. Firstly, because it allows for the possibility of seeing the “Static ones” and “process of becoming” positions as distinct types of experience rather than competing philosophical models. As such both become descriptions of different types of psychological phenomena: one pertaining to transcendent experiences in which the barrier between the personal and transpersonal dissolves, the other describing a deep sense of interconnectedness between all things. Of course, both of these things can happen simultaneously, as well as one and not the other. Whatever the combination, labelling these as layers of experience allows us to at least describe different vectors, or dimensions, of the archetype.

The suggestion here is that Neoplatonist streams of thought in Jung, although less philosophically defensible, are a genuine mode of experiencing subtler states of consciousness. Its ontological truth may be relative, and less philosophically sound than the more subtle and complex view of the process of becoming model, which recognises archetypes as moments in

Indra's net, according to Cambray, as parts of a network, according to Papadopoulos, as the secret fire of Heraclitus, according to Pauli, and as lacking any inherent existence as separately existing entities, according to Buddhism. Nevertheless, Jung's justifiable stress on lived psychological experience (rather than intellectual metaphysical position) suggests its value: as Saban (2025) points out regarding Analytical Psychology, philosophy should be in service to life, rather than life to philosophy.

Language as Mercurius, the trickster archetype

A second reason for an alchemical position towards the “static ones” and “process” models is that they reveal a mercurial, trickster-like quality of language, which if not recognised entraps one into the problematic hypostatisation of statements which blocks the dynamic quality of depth psychology. Prime examples of this appear in the various debates and attempts to critique, reconstruct, remove or resuscitate the concept that have gone on in the last few decades. To give two illustrative examples, Warren Colman (2015) claims that a phenomenological approach (as pioneered by Brooke 1999, 2009) is preferable to Jung's later conceptual system (including synchronicity and the psychoid archetype) because it removes problematic (“Cartesian”) dualisms, as that between an event on one hand, and its meaning on the other:

[it] starts with our direct experience of “the things in themselves”. In my view, this is a much more promising, less abstract and hypothetical way to accommodate the sort of phenomena in which Jung was so interested. By starting with a unified dynamic system of organisms within an environment, we are able to recognise the intentionality of all living things for whom the *meaning* of an event cannot be separated from the event itself.

(pp.320-321)

So too with Jean Knox (2003), whose book-length treatment of archetypes eschews esoteric ideas such as synchronicity which, she argues, still labour under dualistic errors. Her approach, connecting constructivism with biology, ‘does nothing less than overcome the Cartesian dualism that has plagued philosophy and psychology for centuries’ (p.204). How? Through ‘the imagination’, which, ‘is the thread that links psyche and soma...[because] *imaginative projection is the process by which bodily experience works its way up to the mind*’ (2003, p.204).

Closer analysis of these statements reveals hidden qualities of the trickster archetype of *Mercurius* at play, which refuses to yield to final, conclusive statements that “pin down” a definitive position in words. In the cases of Colman and Knox, which appear illustrative of similar efforts more broadly, *statements unconsciously invoke dualism as a psychological phenomenon in their attempts to banish it as a philosophical idea.*

The phenomenological approach, Colman (2015) claims, avoids dualisms between events and their meanings as:

...By starting with a unified dynamic system of organisms within an environment, we are able to recognise the intentionality of all living things for whom the *meaning* of an event cannot be separated from the event itself.’

(p.320-321)

The final part (“the *meaning* of an event cannot be separated from the event itself”) is key. It may well be true in one way, yet at the same time how can that sentence make sense without, in another way, it also being false? In other words, how can you understand it without making a cognitive distinction separating ‘the meaning of an event’ utterance from ‘the event itself’

utterance? It cannot be understood unless the reader distinguishes “meaning of an event” from “the event itself”, which is precisely what the sentence is telling us not to do! Therefore, if Colman was not *evoking* a dualistic separation of “meaning of event” and “event itself” in that sentence then we would read it as:

By starting with a unified dynamic system of organisms within an environment, we are able to recognise the intentionality of all living things for whom the *meaning* of an event itself cannot be separated from the *meaning* of an event itself.

He has to evoke the epistemic duality he seeks to negate for us to differentiate *meaning* from *event* and so understand the point he is trying to make. Thus, *he is forced to evoke an epistemic duality to articulate an intelligible argument against epistemic duality!* Ironically, such sentences unconsciously evoke the problem they consciously seek to resolve. It is almost as if the sentence’s unconscious, were it alive, compensates its conscious attitude.

This semantic irony is not uncommon and, I would suggest, inevitable given the epistemic dualism of language concepts³¹. It arises again in Knox (2003). When she writes that ‘*imaginative projection is the process by which bodily experience works its way up to the mind*’ (2003, p.204) she has to be invoking a soft version of dualism in describing “bodily experience” on one hand and “mind” on the other, let alone leaving open the question of where “imaginative projection” comes from (presumably mind, thus looping back into a harder dualism).

Again, even here, epistemic dualism is inevitably and unconsciously evoked. This is because, as Nathan Field (1991) points out, for one to “project” there must be an active subject which projects on one hand, and a receptive object that is projected onto on the other. In the case of

³¹ It is an example of the well-documented Liar Paradox, as found in the sentence: “this sentence is false” (Beall, Glanzberg & Ripley, 2017)

Knox's conclusion, something that is [not-body] imaginatively projects onto what is [body]. An (epistemic not substance) dualism of body and not-body occurs. Without evoking some subtle dualism then the concept of projection Knox (2003) describes becomes un-imaginable, and her sentence unintelligible. She has to evoke an epistemic dualism between body and mind in order to claim that she has overcome the plague of Cartesianism that has infected psychology and philosophy.

But, of course, Knox and Colman's meanings *are* imaginable, their sentences *are* intelligible, and on one level of analysis make good sense. Unfortunately, there seems to be no acknowledgement in the literature that an unconsciously evoked epistemic dualism makes this good conscious sense possible. An air of intellectual triumphalism reigns which states a certain position and vanquishes the foe of Cartesian dualism. In doing so Jung's position of not-knowing and the possibility of an *analogia entis* are shut down too. The triad of openness to life, openness to spiritual awakening, and intellectual humility appears to collapse. Of course, my conclusion here is open to the same issue and so the spirit of *Mercurius*, the trickster in the form of language, is retained. Humility in academic positions are therefore retained, through *Mercurius*, reminding us that rigid concepts can further distance us from the 'living mystery' of experience as it is, linked to 'the *ground*, the messy, earthy matter from which logos emerges' (Rowland, 2009, p.700). Remembering the presence of *Mercurius* within the written word aids that sense of re-grounding.

Conclusion

This section has approached the question of the sacred and sexual through the vector of consciousness. In doing so, substantive resolutions to the problem have been found. The first is the way that the relationship alters as a function of the subtlety of consciousness. The very notion of consciousness as a mutable spectrum open to refinement is itself a useful addition to Analytical Psychology from the Buddhist tradition. At the least refined end of this spectrum Jung's ideas, in turn, enhance the Buddhist perspective, describing instinct (red), spirit (blue), and their combination (violet). Beyond that, in the middle subtle layer, Buddhist ideas tease out a particular reading of Jung's "secret of being," one commonly misread in post-Enlightenment minds which are habituated to assign phenomena to one of two categories (physical or mental), rather than see those categories as avenues to further domains beyond.

At the most subtle level Buddhist analysis seemed to push Jung's alchemical writing to breaking point, appearing to expose fatal contradictions and inconsistencies between process and NeoPlatonic philosophy. Wolfgang Pauli, too, found that philosophical distinction to be important but was unable to convince Jung that a process-oriented psychology was preferable because it was more philosophically sound. Rather than consider Jung's resistance to this nothing more than a failure of philosophical acumen, this chapter has argued it can also be considered a success of alchemical synthesising: NeoPlatonic timelessness and process-interdependence are in fact two ways of *experiencing* the numinous. Experiences of resolving and transcending the sacred-sexual split would be no exception to that. Prioritising lived experience over theoretical position, then, emerges as another significant facet of the current thesis. This prioritising of real-world application is developed further in the next section.

Applications

The previous section iterated the primacy of lived experience over systems of thought and practice which seek to further that experience along the path of individuation. The current section, therefore, is concerned with the practical applications of the thesis. The next chapter explores such application within the confines of psychotherapeutic practice by using a Jungian lens to detail the actual step-by-step process of *tummo* in a way potentially amenable to psychotherapy. As with the previous chapter, a conclusion that encourages lived experience and rigorous humility of intellectual position is again reached. The chapter after that looks at applications in society, beyond psychotherapy, regarding the Western reception of practices such as *tummo*. A generative relationship between the Jungian and Vajrayana tradition is found by exploring the respective natures of the texts themselves. The result is a synthesis which appears capable of both i) re-vivifying Buddhist practice where it becomes deadened, and ii) building ego-capacity where encounters with esoteric Buddhism are destabilising. Such findings appear to extend or alter Jungian ideas regarding the erotic and the sacred, which are explored further in the next section.

In brief, therefore, the current section revolves around one of the questions generated at the end of Chapter Six: *how could tummo practice be received through a Jungian lens, and how might it be (ir)relevant for psychosocial studies?* As described then, it is certainly not self-evident how the highly technical esotericism of Tibetan *Vajrayana* relates to the everyday difficulties that bring people into weekly psychotherapy. Nor is it obvious how ideas from a wildly different cultural context (replete with reincarnated *lamas*, the centrality of monasticism in social organisation, and a role for oracles and divination in government decision-making) relate to modern Western life. Simultaneously, however, there is a hunger (and apparent potential) for it

to be so: comparable waves of “Eastern wisdom” have permeated practice in the therapy room at least since the counter-culture movement of the 1960s, and related ideas and applications (such as yoga, meditation, and “New Age” beliefs) have established themselves in society at large (a rich tradition of many iterations, from the theosophical movement of the late Nineteenth Century to today).

Chapter Nine

***Tummo* in Process: Applications for Psychotherapy**

This chapter works through the process of *tummo* as it is presented by Je Tsongkhapa, unpacking it along the way into various points of clinical relevance which have applications for psychotherapy. As an initial starting point, the role of emotion is described as a core element of relating *tummo* to psychotherapy, strengthening what Kahr (2018) refers to as the Winnicottian “white heat” of the consulting room. Its technique is described, and a particular sequence of alchemical containment, which has relevance to psychotherapy especially in terms of embodiment. After that the role of synaesthesia and alchemical transmutation within the bodymind matrix is suggested, which utilises, inhabits, alters, and ultimately transcends the relationship of the sacred with the sexual. As such an important threshold to factor into psychotherapeutic practice is established: the transition(s) between personal and transpersonal.

With the transitional space between personal and transpersonal are dangers regarding psychosis and altered states of consciousness – potentially therapeutic, but also risk-laden. A specific linking of Jung’s second conjunction with *tummo* is made in this in-between space too, which adds to the somewhat scanty attention paid to this conjunction in the literature. Ultimately, with the layers of further individuation that *tummo* offers a foundation for, the role of Mercurius resurfaces, raising questions of ontology and epistemology once again. Therapeutically, at this final level, the consequences entailed by *tummo* reiterate the value of life over ideas (and ideas in the service of life), and ultimately knowing experiences of not-knowing as the backdrop, or negative space, which properly holds psychotherapeutic practice. At the end of this chapter a particularly pronounced countertransference reaction to the research is described. To begin, however, the functional capacity of *tummo* within the *Vajrayana* system is worth recapitulating in order to ward off its misconstrual as a stand-alone practice.

tummo* as binding “red thread” in the *Six Yogas

Tummo practice functions as somewhat of a vital “red thread” interweaving the other *yogas* of Naropa, moving through different stages of the union of the sacred and sexual. It functions to gather life-sustaining vital energies from coarse consciousness into the subtle bodymind. When gathered there, these energies settle and dissolve following the eight signs of dissolution, as described in detail in the “dream yoga” section of Chapter Six (reiterated at the start of Chapter Seven). This process harnesses libidinal energy that would otherwise be expressed sexually at the coarse level; moving beyond the coarse level allows the use of *kamamudra* as an external condition for arousing “innate ecstasy” further, as both craving (of pleasure) and aversion (to pain) have loosened by that point.

One then pairs such ecstasy founded via *tummo* with meditation upon emptiness and the illusoriness of all bodies, thereby engaging “clear light technology”; these are the “main practices” in Naropa’s system (built upon the “foundation” of *tummo*). The domain of such technology can be expanded into the realms of dream and sleep, which is again founded on *tummo* (as the preferred method is based upon the gathering of energy into the central channel of the subtle bodymind).

Moving from waking to dream to *bardo* yoga encompasses the three aspects of the illusory body, leading to the “auxiliary” practices that enter into the specific *bardo* between death and re-birth. Again, Je Tsongkhapa writes, ‘the inner heat yoga again is the foundation’ because it corrals activated libidinal energy optimally; when that basic dynamic energetic principle of the system is understood, ‘the manner in which the Six Yogas are structured is not important. One should simply adopt the arrangement that feels most comfortable’ (1998, p.141).

The overall structure enveloping *tummo* described above orients it as a practice working within a matrix. It can now be unpacked through a Jungian lens to help understand how it might – and might not – be applicable in a Western therapeutic context.

Sulphur as *prima materia* for inner heat

A somewhat vitalist conception of libidinal energy initially binds *tummo* and Jung's alchemical thought in practice. Regarding *tummo*, pioneer French-Belgian explorer Alexandra David-Neel (1929/1971) makes the point that Tibetans have a different word for an everyday physical sense of heat or warmth, and so rather than referring to that, *tummo* is a technical term for a certain type of heat generated within spiritual-healing practices. She describes it as 'the subtle fire which warms the generative fluid and drives the energy in it' (p.199)³².

A Jungian means of connecting into *tummo* is through the element of sulphur (Jung, 1955-56, par.134-153). Jung describes sulphur's fiery quality as coming from its 'occult fiery nature' (Jung, 1955-56, par.134). Edinger refers to it as a term for the *prima materia*, 'the fire principle itself, so it is an image of libido, the principle of life which has as its basic feature energy' (1995, p.97). Edinger goes on to describe sulphur as meaning soul, mercury as spirit, and salt as body. Together, they form an alchemical triad. There are consistencies between the inner heat and Jung's alchemical treatment of sulphur (1955-56/1989, pars.134-153) which enable us to begin to understand this therapeutically, particularly concerning the erotic as a signifier of the *instinctive affect* required for therapy to proceed, and spiritual as a signifier of the way in which such affect is worked with, and thus alchemised. Jung's discussion of sulphur helps to set this ground.

Sulphur has a duplex quality, which helps understand the instinctive affect requiring activation in therapy transitioning into transcendental experience – a symbol which makes *tummo* more relatable for psychotherapy. As *kenosis* involves the sun and moon, so does sulphur, coagulating ‘when the gold (Sol) and his bride (Luna) are united’ (1955-56/1989, par.134). These forms are *both* end-product *and* raw material. Jung wrote that it is ‘both the initial material and the end product. At the beginning it is “crude” or “common” sulphur, at the end it is a sublimation product of the process’ (1955-56/1989, par.134). In this way it resonates with the overarching method of *Vajrayana*, which is known as the “resultant” or “fruitful” path, because the practicing the ultimate state of liberation serves as the means for refining consciousness when it is initially in its raw form.

The duplex quality of sulphur means it symbolises soul as well as sin, relating itself (and *tummo*) to the specific question of the sexual and sacred. The *prima materia* of the alchemical work comes in the form of instinctive drives. Von Franz (1980) hones in on the question of the sacred and sexual, writing that,

if you look at it from a certain religious angle, that would naturally be the devil; it is sex, for instance, but in the sense of being driven by sex, or sex in its overwhelming form, i.e., something not under one’s control.

(p.126)

By sex being compulsive beyond one’s conscious wish, von Franz highlights the red aspect of sulphur as this biological affective tone, the concretized “wingless bird” which appears in imagery circling endlessly in conjunction with the spiritualized winged bird. In reducing the importance of the imagery to the concretised instinctual wingless red half of the pair only, she gives a critique of Freud’s sexual hypothesis:

To get to the bottom of someone's problem it is necessary first to find the make-up of such drives...Freud was so impressed by this aspect that when he discovered the "red sulphur" he thought that was the whole thing, that that was it. In a way he was right. He was impressed by the driving nature of the unconscious, by the sex aspect...so [he] fell upon the *prima materia* of the red sulphur and from that angle tried to explain the role of the unconscious.

(1980, p.127-8)

This, according to von Franz, is only the "wingless bird" half of the equation, and that the winged bird ("the exalted soul of the other" "the flying fugitive substance", von Franz, 1980, p.128) must be brought in for the spiritualisation of instinct or, in other words, the retrieval of soul from body. Doing so is an alchemical process of "cooking" the basic instinctive drive of the personality, so that 'when cooked emanates steam which "flies" above matter, which would be what the alchemists call the soul of the matter' (von Franz, 1980, p.128). Jung writes that 'sulphur is the soul not only of metals but of all living things; in the "Tractatus aureus" it is equated with "nostra anima" (our soul)...Paracelsus also calls sulphur the soul...The soul is also described as the "hidden part [*occultum*] of the sulphur"' (1955-56/1989, par.136).

Therapeutically, for lifting the soul from its instinctive base, von Franz suggests five processes for alchemical cooking:

- i) initial contact with the instinctual desirous *prima materia* itself, presumably containing it in the way Edinger's disidentification of ego-Self suggests, observing it directly 'without opinions and without condemning the thing as unreasonable'; this would be the exposing of the "red" sulphur to consciousness. The next steps are then the "cooking" of that raw drive state, lifting the "white" steam sulphur (i.e., soul) from it carefully, which would include,
 - ii) meditating on it,
 - iii) active imagination,

- iv) looking for underlying meaning, and
- v) experimenting in reality

All of these procedures run the risk of splitting the process, over-intellectualising and removing the “heat” from the affect to such an extent that it becomes inert, in that ‘*where there is no emotion there is no life...emotion is the carrier of consciousness, there is no progress in consciousness without emotion*’ (von Franz, 1980, p.252).³³ Interestingly, the designation of emotion as bearer of consciousness is repeated in current neuroscientific literature, research in affective neuroscience and “neuro-analysis” spearheaded by Jaak Panksepp and Mark Solms suggesting that primary affect, not cognition, is the id-derived “hidden spring” of consciousness (Solms & Panksepp, 2012; Solms, 2021).

³³ It is worth noting the difference in technique here between Freud and Jung, as echoing the distinction between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, which Jung described in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. He writes that although Schopenhauer’s diagnosis of the world’s ills had his ‘undivided approval’ he found the proposed cure to be ‘an inadequate answer’ (1963: p.88-89). That cure was to disavow the will through use of the intellect; by holding that mirror of insight up to it one sees the will for what it is (rather than what it professes to be) and can choose to say ‘no’, achieving liberation from blind obedience to its dictates (Singer, 2011). In the same way, Freud’s rational identification of the patient’s instinct (the wingless bird, equivalent to Schopenhauerian Will) is not enough: it needs to be “cooked” alchemically for it’s soul (the winged bird) to be drawn forth. Jung perhaps takes his cue from Nietzsche, whose disagreement with Schopenhauer parallels Jung’s divergence here from Freud. Rather turn away from the Will, one must steel oneself to plunge deeper in: diving into the deepest vaults of the ‘magic mountain’ rather than observe those roots and attempt to cut them off. Nietzsche’s affirmative stance is based upon a premise that joy is deeper than woe – ‘The world is deep...Deep is its woe; Joy – deeper yet than agony’ (Nietzsche, 1883-5), rather than Schopenhauer’s disengagement being based on the endlessness of suffering, thereby detachment being the best medicine. Jung’s methods follow Nietzsche’s signpostings, working actively and imaginatively with shadows transforms them into something giving of life.

Interestingly, this difference resonates with the divergence between *sutra* and *tantra* ideas around joy and suffering. In the Buddha’s *Fire Sermon* for instance, ‘the fire of passion’ is linked to ‘the fire of hatred, the fire of infatuation’ and the cure for the ‘learned and noble disciple’ is ‘aversion for...whatever sensation, pleasant, unpleasant, or indifferent...an aversion for the body, conceives an aversion for things tangible...’ (quoted in Edinger, 1995, p.98). Contrast this with Yeshe’s (1998) remarks that ‘the purpose of inner fire meditation is to increase pleasure...’ ‘I am not satisfied with the pleasure I already have. I want more. That is why I am practicing inner fire’” (p.182). These two positions can be mutually reinforcing rather than mutually exclusive however, Yeshe argues, when the practitioner does not ‘forget to unify the father aspect of bliss with the mother aspect of nonduality. For this reason, the tantric teachings tell us not to reject pleasure, but rather to utilise it. If you do not use it in this way, it becomes poison. Every experience that facilitates pleasure becomes the petrol to fuel your inner fire, and you unify that pleasure energy with the wisdom of nonduality’ (Yeshe, 1998, p.182). In other words, there can be full experience of pleasure without clinging, full experience of pain with aversion. In Jung’s alchemical terms, this is suggesting that the third conjunction is a requirement in order to add wisdom, Sophia, to the bliss-states of the second conjunction aroused by *tummo*.

The procedures for *tummo* given by Nāropa connect with these Jungian methods, albeit in a form that appears intent on the archetypal directly rather than involving, too, those aspects of the individual unconscious. The addition of sulphur is important in remedying this from the perspective of the modern autonomous individual, as it brings in a form of personal *prime mover*: ‘the principle of desirousness, will, compulsion and the “motive factor in consciousness”...the match that lights the fire to ignite our stove or our candle’ (Edinger, 1995, p.96). One’s own subjective drives are brought back into the equation in this way, factoring in how they may interact with the archetypal procedure described.

In sum, application of Jungian alchemy – via sulphur – suggests an initial starting point for *tummo* to have capacity to hold an embodied sense of desire, perhaps in particular sexual desire. The meeting of sulphur as alchemical symbol and *tummo* forms a complementary relationship regarding application for psychotherapy: where sulphur accentuates the need for emotional activation in terms of one’s *personal* unconscious, *tummo* further deepens the *archetypal* and collective dimensions of that same numinosity.

Three techniques

Je Tsongkhapa describes three steps in the entrainment, or spiritualisation, of that initial sulphurous spark: i) meditation through visualisation of subtle energy channels, ii) meditation through visualising mantic “seed” syllables, and iii) meditation through the technique of vase breathing. It could be that the five processes for alchemically cooking sulphur (affect) as the *prima materia* given above by von Franz may be prerequisite stages of work before the steps described by Je Tsongkhapa are attempted. This is because the Jungian methods aim to “lift” the “spiritual steam” aspect from the enflamed instinctive aspect, such that when both sides

are in play they can be brought into even more defined, subtle forms through the steps described by Je Tsongkhapa, which seeks the transpersonal beyond the personal.

He reports advice from oral traditions asserting that the vase breathing technique intensifies the arousal of inner heat and is recommended to supplement visualisation processes. In practice however, these three steps cannot be considered in isolation as a strong element of visualisation is inherent in vase breathing practice, as are the mantic seed syllables. However, the cardinal process described here will be breathing, around which the others hang. There are a variety of reasons for this based upon existing literature. Firstly, it provides a natural touchpoint with the existing ways in which Buddhist concepts have already been in dialogue with Western psychology, most prominently the mindfulness of breathing practices that exploded in the 1990s (Harrington, 2008). Relatedly, breathing is the least metaphysically loaded of the three techniques described, thus being most neutral theoretically. Finally, Je Tsongkhapa's discussion of breathing provides the most yielding interface between the underdetermined individual spontaneity of Jung and overdetermined collective proscription of Nāropa, which can coalesce within the bounds of active imagination. In other words, space for personal unconscious elements as picked up through sulphur are better preserved.

Je Tsongkhapa (1996) describes the vase breathing technique as having four phases:

drawing in the airs; filling like a vase; compressing the airs; and releasing like an arrow

(p.150, emphasis added).

These stages will be taken in turn, as they built what is essentially a somatic alchemical vessel, from which the further stages of *tummo* play out. In fact, Ian Baker (2019) states that in Gyalwa Yangönpa's work *Hidden Description of the Vajra Body*, the author 'likens *tummo* to

inner alchemy’ (p.160). A core feature here is that the alchemist’s instruments are not, by and large, projected onto external physical objects, but held *within* the body: the practitioner’s body is their alchemical retort, and the alchemical materials are generally found therein, so that *tummo* is an instruction for how to practice the spagyric art on oneself. Doing so significantly shifts the dualistic boundary from inner and outer world (as Jung describes for the modern West and the projection of medieval Western alchemists) to an entirely internal dualism between mind and body. Thus, a far subtler form of duality pertains in the Tibetan system: the subject/object split occurs between mind and body, all within, rather than between individual and outer world, thus edging one closer to ultimate states of non-duality beyond.

Although suitable for practice at any time of day or night, Je Tsongkhapa suggests that a good time for doing so would, ideally, be ‘when the vital energy known as “lotus protector” is most easily caused to arise’ (1996, p.151). This small detail highlights the enhanced attunement to the body and its rhythms in this system, in contrast to psychotherapy practice, where time of day less considered. This enhanced awareness of soma chimes with current neuroscientific studies of *tummo*, notably by Maria Kozhevnikov (e.g. Kozhevnikov et al. 2013, 2022), and summarised by Samuel and Kozhevnikov (2023). They distinguish *tummo* as activating the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS), which correlates with optimal alertness, high wakefulness, and awakened states. This is opposed to the restful “relaxation response” induced by mindfulness *sutra* practices, leading to the suggestion that tantric practices such as *tummo* are ‘a better basis for developing the wakefulness and fluid responsiveness associated with Buddhist *awakening*’ (p.C6P33). There is a sense of comparative evaluation in this conclusion that *tantric* would be preferable to *sutra* meditation techniques; however, that inference does not seem to account for the synthesising approach of the tradition outlined by Je Tsongkhapa that suggests capacity for *sutra* practices must form the bedrock for the

more advanced *tantra* to come. For example, the capacity for “placement” (to be able to keep one’s awareness on the “place” of a visualised image for long periods of time) is suggested as necessary for *tantra* meditations to be effective, and placement skills are trained by second wave mindfulness-type meditations as taught by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003). Therefore, synthesising *sutra* and *tantra* practices would better account for the (un)readiness of individuals to take on different types of practice tailored to their individual psychology, rather than Kozhevnikov’s promotion of *tantra* as objectively superior to *sutra* meditation. These studies highlight a potential strength of bringing *tummo* and the psychotherapy together, in that the result is increased awareness of individual differences in presentation.

Vase breathing and alchemical containment

For the first phase of *tummo*, “drawing in the airs”, one is instructed to take in gentle, long, deep breaths through the nostrils, holding the air inside and ‘pressing it down’ so that it fills the *rasana* and *lalana* side channels of the subtle body, filling each one out ‘like an empty intestine inflated with air’ (Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.151).³⁴ The next phase, “filling like a vase”, then comes by imagining that the air drawn into the inflated side channels then flows into the base of the central channel (*madhyānādi, tsa uma*). This compression is imagined as coming from all sides, being contained from above by silent swallowing, pressing the abdominal muscles downwards, while simultaneously ‘from below one draws in air gently from the lower two apertures [i.e., anus and sexual passage]’³⁵ (Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.151) towards the part of the central channel four finger-widths below the navel. The third phase,

³⁴ As will be obvious the role of imagination is entirely baked into the breathing procedure, with holding air inside and filling subtle energy channels being counter to standard anatomical processes. This practice relates to a wider theme within such traditions, Preece (2000) affirming the truth of Jung’s observation that ‘In the East they have taken the essence of our capacity to fantasise and turned it into a powerful religion’, but that a strand of reality becomes strengthened with such imaginative exercise, so that ‘any image given enough devoted concentration will become potent...and imbue it with power’ (p.139).

³⁵ Again, see previous footnote.

“compressing the airs”, comes as the gathered air within this psychosomatic “vase” is held for as long as possible, its centre being the navel *cakra*. Je Tsongkhapa argues that alternatively pressing air down from above and up from below is a feature overlooked by some teachers, but is one that he regards as vital, in that a key feature of the task is the blending of opposites: here, it is the ‘eliminating energies’ from below the navel and the ‘life-sustaining’ energies from above the navel together in a “kiss”. Such compressed blending of “above” and “below” energies is a continuation of a theme which runs throughout in different iterations. The fourth and final phase of “releasing the airs like an arrow” is the imaging of the gentle and quiet release of the breath upwards through the central channel. One’s prime attention does not follow this upward rising breath, however, but stays with the “kiss” of higher and lower energies at the navel *cakra* where an *AH*-stroke mantic syllable is placed.

A merging of fantasy and reality with practice is claimed, Je Tsongkhapa remarking that ‘when the technique has reaching maturity one gains the power to *actually* draw the energies into the central channel’ (1996, p.153, emphasis added). The sense of working with a psychoanatomical apparatus that is neither straightforwardly psychological nor physical again comes through in discussions regarding the proper level of concentration, in that over-forcefulness produces temporary results in the gross (i.e., physical) body, which does not achieve the goal of bringing vital energies into the central (subtle) channel, which is of a finer granulation than the standard state of consciousness pertaining to the gross bodymind. Jung’s (1955-56/1989) conclusions that, with due caution, when considering that exceptional psychic states such as these that are shrouded with uncertainty, it seems ‘reasonable to take cognizance of the fact that there is not only a psychic but also a psychoid unconscious’ (par. 788), seems apt and relevant. The image of the “windhorse” is thus a psychoid form (see Chapter Five), the implication being that it is a more powerful form of volition attached to the vital energies,

horse-like, which one's ego volition, rider-like, must connect with patiently and persistently, attuning to it gently train over time until these two forms of consciousness are yoked as one. To illustrate, Je Tsongkhapa writes that although the 'the energies may occasionally enter the navel chakra through forceful practice, their inclination³⁶ is to flow and not remain, and thus one will not be able to retain them...if one attempts to force them, they cannot be retained at the desired place' (1996, p.154).

There are various points of connectivity between *tummo* and Jung's alchemical model, the first to mention here being the "Russian doll" patterning of vessels within vessels that can be observed now that the four phases of vase breathing have been described. The effect is to form subtler and subtler intrapsychic space, each one dependent on the last for its integrity. Vase breathing appears to form the innermost of three vessels, being a psychosomatic container for vital energies centred around the navel; that container is itself contained by a sound egoic vessel, presumably defined by some stabilising capacity for contact with reality and emotional regulation; that intrapsychic container is itself held securely by interpersonal, social and contextual networks in the external environment. As with the first of these three, Jung (1955-56/1989, par. 295) describes Dorn's writing that the "spagyric vessel" is to be spherical, following nature and mimicking a womb, concave and closed (but presumably like a womb, with an aperture) (1955-56/1989, par. 75). Akin Je Tsongkhapa's description of the energy from above and below meeting with the bliss-inducing "kiss" at the midpoint, Jung reports that Dorn describes vacillation within the vessel from these sides too,

³⁶ Implies volition of energy autonomous but in relation to the orthodox conscious mind.

so that the painful suspension between opposites gradually changes into the bilateral activity of the point in the centre. This is the “liberation from opposites,” the *nirvandva* of Hindu philosophy, though it is not really a philosophical but rather a psychological development.

(1955-56/1989, par.296),

The final comment stresses that the effect is intended as experiential phenomena not abstract idea. It is thus a ‘vessel of transformation’ (1955-56/1989, par. 369) in which the ‘poisonous dragon’ (of sexual drive for instance) turns into the ‘healing medicine’ so that what was sin is turned into spirit (1955-56/1989, par. 399). As with the “vase” made by *tummo* practice at the navel, opening into the central channel that rises upwards, Jung also makes reference to the aperture of the vessel being at the top, indicating the place that the “moon rises” from, where the sublimated contents of the vessel well upwards. It therefore appears that similar psycho-spiritual apparatus is being appealed to. Psychotherapeutically, this *rapprochement* between *tummo* and alchemy is indicating an enhanced awareness of somatic processes, and their dis/alignment with verbal content. The psychoid realm is within the therapy room, linguistically silent, in the form of subtle bodily process.

Seed syllables, cakras, and synaesthesia

After the four stages of vase breathing have been established, Je Tsongkhapa’s text instructs one to conjoin them with the visualisation of four mantic seed syllables at the navel, heart, throat and crown *cakras*. In surveying different Hindu, Jain and Vajrayana Buddhist systems Georg Feuerstein (1998) writes that a variety of *cakra* systems exist, and so this stage in the process thus presents a potential point of confusion when unpacking *tummo* in the light of Jung’s late work. The *cakra* system referred to by Hauer and Jung in the 1932 *Kundalini Seminars* is presented in Table 7 below; it comprises seven points and relates to Hindu systems of thought rather than Tibetan Buddhist. In the latter system only four of these seven points

are focussed on and used in *tummo* (crown, throat heart, sacral). The mantic syllables pertaining to each are *AH*, *HUM*, *OM* and *HAM* respectively.

Table 7

Cakra system used by Hauer and Jung in 1932 Kundalini Seminars

Note: those in **bold** are focussed on in *tummo* practice.

<i>Chakra</i>	<i>Location</i>
Sahasrāra	Crown
Ājñā	Third eye
Viśuddha	Throat
Anāhata	Heart
Manipūra	Solar Plexus
Svādhīsthāna	Sacral (a few inches below navel)
Mūlādhāra	Root (base of spine, perineum)

Recalling the underlying assumption that *cakras* are concentrated hubs of bodymind consciousness, and that consciousness on this view is akin to a particular wavelength of sound, each syllable is intended to represent – in the tone it makes – the frequency of consciousness at each point in the body.

There are (at least) two ways to read Je Tsongkhapa's instruction to bring the subtle energy gathered by vase breathing into contact with the somatic image *and* aural tone of the four *cakras*. Firstly, an extremely cognitively complex appears to be presented, in which somatic experience, visual image, and sound are held together at four sites in the bodymind matrix, at the same time as establishing an alchemical vessel for higher and lower energies to blend at the navel through vase breathing. Secondly, in somewhat the opposite direction, we can observe that a certain quality of synaesthesia is being introduced: the *sound* of the bodily location is to be *visualised* and *felt somatically* simultaneously. One can argue that these two interpretations are mutually exclusive: rather than *adding* complexity, the synaesthetic interpretation suggests a *dropping away* of cognitive complexity and conceptual

categorisation, instead opening up to a more unified, holistic experience which such conceptualisations usually obscure.

The synaesthetic interpretation can be fleshed out through Merleau-Ponty's use of the concept in 1962's *The Phenomenology of Perception*³⁷. Rather than considering synaesthesia to be an abnormality of adult psychological functioning affecting a minority of individuals, Merleau-Ponty brought it front and centre in a proposed system of developmental psychology. He suggested it as, in fact, a fundamental means of embodied knowing whereby senses are consistently communicating with each other to build rich multi-dimensional experiences of being. Such multi-sensorial knowing functions innately in childhood but lessens as a conscious experience as one ages due to the atomising of each sense from the other being a convention of how a modern mind (and society) categorises and compartmentalises, imposing pragmatic ordering and structuring onto the world, by which it can navigate largely reliably, accurately and efficiently. In Korzybski's terms, a structuring "map" of phenomena is gained at the cost of dampening the multi-sensory felt sense of the living "territory" itself.

Applying this account to the meditative state described by Je Tsongkhapa, then, the introduction of seed syllables and cakras into the *tummo* process is no introduction of an additional component at all but removal, or discarding, of the conventional conceptualisations which obscure what the tones of libidinal energy already there - a *dropping back* into the synaesthetic state of multi-sensory embodied knowing that is ever-present on the borders of consciousness. The synaesthetic interpretation of this stage of *tummo*, consistent with Merleau-

³⁷ This ventures into territory regarding the mind-body connection which other Jungian authors have addressed through the work of Merleau-Ponty. Alternative approaches to this issue of the mind-body connection in Jung has been carried out by Saban (2011), who applies Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'flesh' and re-considers Jung's relationship to Nietzsche; Kaylo (2003) too considers Merleau-Ponty's concept a useful one, and encapsulates this (as does Brooke (1999, 2009) and McCoy Brooks (2011, 2019)) into a broader current of phenomenological thought providing suitable apparatus for this area, most notably through Heidegger.

Ponty, also finds support from the neuroscientific findings of Ian McGilchrist (2009, 2021) regarding the brain's hemispheric activities. In McGilchrist's terms the narrowly discriminating and conceptually organising activities of left-hemisphere led mindbrain functions are being invited to fall away; when these recede a natural welling up of right-hemisphere led experience occurs, which registers a broader, more holistically-inclined experience that lets go into a finer yet kaleidoscopic multi-sensory embodied consciousness of reality as it is, prior to the usually automatic conceptual winnowing.

Blazing fire, dripping fat, and sacro-sexual conjunction

The theme of lower sexually embodied consciousness conjoining with higher embodied consciousness as held within Merleau-Ponty's synaesthetic backdrop, then, is consistent with Je Tsongkhapa's use of the term 'non-conceptuality consciousness' in the next phases of *tummo* practice (1998, p.164). This too appears to resonate with von Franz' (1980) description of the alchemical moment of egoic surrender to the silence of God/Self 'where the conflict transcends verbal discussion and becomes an intuitive experience of Oneness behind the two' (p.137). Je Tsongkhapa describes the 'energies residing in the secret place' (i.e., the genital area, also referred to as the "jewel chakra" or "hidden place") to cause the navel *chakra* syllable to 'blaze with light', that light in turn melting the other syllables at the crown, throat and heart, fusing into 'the tongue of a tiny flame...the nature of which is the innate ecstasy' that resides at the navel (Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.154). This red inner heat then rises up the central channel again more strongly, this time melting 'the drop of white bodhimind'³⁸ substance abiding within the crown chakra'(Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.154). Like fat dripping

³⁸ Bodhimind can be considered analogous to Jung's use of the term spirit, a lucid clarity that aligns with higher sensibilities and spiritual progress. As such, the stabilisation of the bodhimind substance at the crown may represent the fruition of the first alchemical conjunction, the *unio mentalis*, whereby the mind is conjoined with spirit.

down onto fire below, the bodhimind substance drips down the central channel onto the inner heat, strengthening it further so that,

the light from the inner fire will illuminate the inside and outside of one's body, as well as one's dwelling place and so forth, rendering them as transparent as a piece of *kyurura* fruit³⁹ held in the hand.

(Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.155)

As such, with the conjoining of the white masculine bodhimind from the crown (moving from above downwards) and the red feminine inner fire from just below the navel (ignited by the sexual organs below upwards) we can see the symbolically sexual uniting of spirit with body on a distinct and subtler plane than tension between ethical and sexual behaviours and interpersonal actions as described in *sutra* traditions and, to an extent, in Zen (Stevens, 1990).

A certain difficulty becomes even more acute at this stage, however, in that, *prima facie*, it is unclear how we might understand these statements in a Western context of the psychotherapy. Indeed, they are so rarefied and beyond usual experience, are they even relatable at all? As David McMahan suggests, the de-traditionalised context of modernity inevitably alters and evolves the original meanings and practices of these texts, potentially leading modern practitioners into cul-de-sacs with no apparent means of going forward. Without the surrounding traditional structures that breathe texts into living practices, in what way are they actual? It may be here that the highly advanced, highly esoteric, often secret teachings of *tummo* lose their relevance to the practice of Analytical Psychology.

³⁹ A type of gooseberry, bitter in taste and often used in Tibetan medicine

To navigate this seeming impasse the suggestions given by Jung's second alchemical conjunction appear highly useful. Unlike the first (*unio mentalis*) and the third (*unio mystica*) conjunctions, Jung does not appear to give a specific label to the second conjunction. Describing it as the conjunction of the first, *unio mentalis*, with the body, he provided a rationale to the term coined by von Franz, "*unio corporis*" (1980, p.232). The second conjunction sought to overcome the limitations of embodied deadening resulting from the first conjunction, and the "rank growth" of bodily desires into distorted shadow aspects of the psyche if left unintegrated. Jung's core alchemical theme for the second conjunction achieving successful bodily integration is the production of *caelum* referred to by Dorn and other alchemists. There are some compelling grounds for linking the transformation purported in *tummo* with this production of *caelum* Jung describes in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, and it is suggested here that building such a link helps the "blazing and dripping" phase of *tummo* out of any apparent impasse at this stage.

In the second stage of the conjunction Jung describes 'the production of the quintessence', the '*quinta essentia*, a lapis or a panacea', what Dorn referred to as 'a certain heavenly substance hidden in the body', a 'balsam', a set of chemical processes designed to bring about the *caelum*, 'the celestial substance hidden in man' (*CWII*, pars.681-685). This will be explored in more detail when the full extent of the ecstasy purported to be aroused by *tummo* is described, the origins of that experience being the union of "higher" and "lower". The theme of blending higher and lower appears too when Jung cites Dorn at length, who describes how, after making certain alchemical 'assiduous rotary movements'⁴⁰,

⁴⁰ The 'assiduous rotary movements' are in fact mirrored in the rotary movements of the body instructed in *trulkhor* practices, purported to activate and awaken the body's subtle energies as part of *tummo* meditation.

Then you will see the pureness floating to the top, transparent, shining, and the colour of purest air....You will see the...secret...heaven, which you can bedeck with the lower stars, as the upper heaven is bedecked with the upper stars...Will now the unbelievers, who have imitated the Physicists, marvel that we handle in our hands the heaven and the stars? ...For us, therefore, the lower stars are all individuals produced by nature in this lower world by their conjunction with heaven, like [the conjunction] of the higher with the lower elements....heaven can conjoin itself to earth...

(Jung quoting Dorn, para. 681-2)

The relations between the second conjunction, *caelum*, and *tummo* will be considered at greater length shortly, after significant difficulties in the process are addressed which revolves around the dangers of psychosis and the transpersonal.

Inner life, outer death: psychosis and ecstasy

Themes of dramatic, destabilising inner experience paired with outer problems of daily functioning occur at this phase, which link *tummo* to the deep work of psychotherapy. Je Tsongkhapa describes a variety of only marginally different types of experience depending on the skill of the practitioner helping, it seems, to finetune practice. While these inwardly subtle variations in experience are unfolding, outwardly physical signs have resemblances to states of catatonia, or near death, with breathing reported to become very subtle or stopping altogether, or the flow of physical energy becoming arrested. Von Franz (1980) describes such phenomena of outward stasis and inner fireworks in cases of psychosis too, involving inexpressible hallucinations and overwhelming emotions internally, but being “locked” into a physical state where these cannot be shared with the outside world:

The worst is when the thing is so overwhelming that they simply turn white and sink into bed and become catatonic. One knows they are going through the most tremendous inner experiences, but outwardly they lie in bed like a piece of wood and refuse nourishment.

(p.190)

A key difference between the “inner fireworks/outer catatonia” motif described by both Je Tsongkhapa’s advanced meditator and von Franz’ patient with psychosis hinges on the word “overwhelming”. The claim in *Vajrayana* is that the practitioner has trained themselves to contact but contain these experiences, to not be overwhelmed but to confront and integrate them. Von Franz describes the therapeutic procedure prior to a psychotic break, however, that ‘if you suspect a possible outbreak or invasion of the collective unconscious’, the best thing to do is ‘provide them with a tremendous amount of symbolic knowledge’ so that ‘when the experience comes they have a net in which to catch and re-express it’ (p.191): with the lack of an inner capacity for containment, a symbolic net has to be provided for the patient as an emergency procedure, in the hope that it might provide some coordinates for self-orienting reasoning in the chaos.

Robert Thurman, Chogyam Trungpa, Francesca Freemantle and Jung himself, commentators on *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (or *Bardo Thödol*), have certainly regarded that text in the same way – a guide for what to expect in the dying process and to frame such experiences intrapsychically (as products of one’s own mind), so as to be able to confront and pass through rather than be fearful and avoidant of them, thereby managing the dying process optimally. The same principles were applied in Western psychology’s early experiments with psychedelic therapy, before its renaissance in the 2000s. Leary, Metzner, and Dass’s seminal work in the field, *The Psychedelic Experience: a manual based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, published in 1964, three years after Jung’s death, uses the *Bardo Thödol* as a blueprint to chart a psychonaut’s journey, suggesting that a correspondence between the psychedelic process of death, dying and re-birth mimics the actual dying process itself as delineated in the

Tibetan text.⁴¹ In a sense, these are interventions which introduce an individual to what Geoffrey Samuel calls a shamanic mode of experience, defined as,

the regulation and transformation of human life and even society through the use (or purported use) of alternate states and consciousness by means of which specialist practitioners are held to communicate with a mode of reality alternative to, and more fundamental than, the world of everyday experience.

(1993, p.8)

In doing so, ‘‘psychosis’’ experiences are potentially framed in a transformational way, moving from the negative valancing of inpatient mental health and social incapacity, to the positive valancing of insight into a transpersonal domain of the psyche that is otherwise obscured by, but if glimpsed enriches, daily life.

Jung describes this balancing of stability and confrontation with the unconscious in *Mysterium Coniunctionis* in a psychotherapeutic context, describing how beginning psychotherapy by dream analysis, for instance, activates the unconscious to such an extent that an apparent psychosis can be unleashed (1955-56, par. 755). In modern dynamic psychotherapy, too, Allan Abbass (2015) describes the process of therapeutic integration of unconscious factors to indeed mimic psychosis, writing that ‘signs of the unconscious therapeutic alliance can be mistaken for a psychotic breakdown or major cognitive disturbance’ (p.39). In contrast to such difficulties, however, this pseudo-psychotic material is in fact yielding psychodynamic insights into the patterns of the unconscious, a more conscious working through of previously hidden affect, and a reduction in symptoms. It seems that good enough ego-capacity makes

⁴¹ In it, a section entitled ‘A Tribute to Carl G. Jung’ is included, Jung having written the commentary for Evans-Wentz’ ground-breaking translation of the *Bardo Thödol*. Originally published in German in 1935, revised for 5th Swiss edition in 1953 and 3rd English edition in 1957.

the difference between “breakdown” and “breakthrough”. Similarly, in Jung’s terms, the difference between such a therapeutic process and psychosis is whether,

the patient is integrating the same fantasy-material to which the insane person falls victim because he cannot integrate it but is swallowed up by it...he has arrived at an inner certainty which makes him capable of self-reliance, and attained what the alchemists call the *unio mentalis*.

(Jung, 1955-56/1989, par. 756)

Arguably, Jung himself appears to have had personal experience of such phenomena through the visions that occurred during his illness in 1944 that brought him close to death. Main (2004) cites a letter Jung writes to Kristine Mann in February 1945 to suggest an occurrence of mystical unity that is consistent with broader conceptions of synchronicity. In a sentence reminiscent of Je Tsongkhapa’s descriptions of *tummo*, Jung writes that his experience of mystical unity was ‘a silent invisible festival permeated by an incomparable, indescribable feeling of eternal bliss, such as I never could have imagined as being within reach of human experience’ (Main, 2004, p.147, quoting Jung 1973, par.357-8). As mentioned earlier, in a letter to Pauli Jung describes his agitated compulsion to produce writings, plunging into the depths of his unconscious, in a state of “fever”, which would only lift when he had put into writing what felt necessary for the soul to express. These processes are thus deeply alchemical, transmuting the material of potential psychosis into objects that confer insight and psychological transformation.

In sum, at this stage of the *tummo* process, albeit rarefied, useful connections are made to the process of psychotherapy, entering deep territories of the unconscious, which hold promise of awakening collective and transpersonal elements, and also run the risk of unbalancing the psyche and tipping it into psychosis. Therefore, not only does the *tummo* literature add to the

rich vault of symbolism Jung sought to collect in support of his alchemical model of individuation, its embedding of these motifs in a longstanding tradition provides signposts and suggestions for how to mitigate these risks, and encourage safe passage through into the new territories they unlock.

Stone to diamond: bliss and *caelum in tummo* and the second conjunction

In these further reaches of the psyche, safeguarded by *unio mentalis*, the conjunction continues building in intensity, such that ‘if the igniting of the heat is done properly, then the melting and dropping of this white [bodhimind substance] drop will cause the inner heat of the red bodhimind substance to grow in strength’ (Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.159). Crucially, an increase of sexual craving *at this point* is now a sign that things have gone awry, and that the vital energies have not successfully gathered into the subtle body. This appears to be a marker of movement from the personal to transpersonal aspects of psyche.

Je Tsongkhapa now describes the melting of the bodhimind substances into each other, an amalgamated third substance that transcends the previous “masculine” and “feminine” opposition. This third conjoined “substance” induces four kinds of bliss as it rises and then descends along the central channel⁴² and dissolves into it, as the red and white elements coagulate. There are marked parallels with Jung’s discussion of sulphur again here, describing its duplex nature as ‘red and white sulphur, the white being the active substance of the moon, the red that of the sun’ (1955-56/1989, par. 134) which von Franz relates to concretised passions (such as sexualised libidinal energy), mirroring the red rising element of feminine

⁴² “bliss”, “supreme bliss”, “inexpressible bliss”, “innate bliss” as descending from crown to throat, throat to heart, heart to navel, navel to secret place, and in the reverse order ascending again.

Vajrayogini, and the white descending masculine element. Linking to the *erotic quaternio*, to be discussed in the final section, comes through a connection with Venus in that,

our Venus is not the common sulphur...but the whiteness of the Venus of the Sages is combined with the combustion of the white and the red [*albedinis et rubedinis*], and this combustion is the entire whitening [*albatio*] of the whole work.

(1955-56/1989, par. 139)

This process of the second conjunction refers to ‘an adventure in the grove of Venus’ where Sal (body) gives Sulphur (soul) an “incurable wound” so that ‘blood pours from it in the form of “whitest milk”’ (1955-56/1989, par.144). Edinger’s commentary on the conjunction of red and white sulphur in the grove of Venus engenders a scene in which ‘nature and instinct are subjected to an encounter with the spirit principle’ (1995, p.103). They are reconciled so that Sulphur dissolves, meaning ‘that psychologically one frees the affect from the complexes in which it first expresses itself [and] in its freed form it is seen to be a manifestation of the Self’ (1995, p.103). Freed from imprisonment through active imagination, so that ‘at a certain stage of development sulphur, as desirousness, must be wounded, killed, frustrated, or bottled up’ (1995, p.104). Edinger here quotes Jung’s *Visions Seminars* in the statement that ‘when your devil [red sulphur]’ is contained,

he will rumble around in your entrails, but after a while you will see that it was right. You will slowly become quiet and change. Then you will discover there is a stone growing in the bottle...Insofar as self-control, on non-indulgence, has become a habit, it is a stone...When that attitude become a *fait accompli*, the stone will be a diamond.

(Jung, *The Visions Seminars*, vol.1, pp.239, quoted in Edinger, 1995)

The transmutation from “stone” to “diamond” is mirrored in the union of red and white drops in the Vajrayana (“diamond way”) text of Je Tsongkhapa at the same point, as that integration seems to mark a moving beyond, or sublimation of, normal sexual impulses of the body. Tsongkhapa writes that ‘from the melting [of the bodhimind substance] comes the ecstasy, and from the ecstasy arises a state of beyond-conceptuality consciousness’ (1996, p.161), so that ‘the main purpose behind these meditations that ignite the inner heat and melt the bodhimind substances is to arouse the innate bliss’ (1996, p.163). The aroused innate bliss sublimates the force of energies from the crown chakra downwards, so that ‘by the time it arrives at the jewel chakra it has already arrested the flow of the subtle bodily energy that causes ejaculation’ (1996, p.162).

As noted briefly above, the form of this coalesced energy appears to have many resemblances to Jung’s description of *caelum* in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, his major alchemical study. This is salient information as, if so, *tummo* practices could be considered a form of the second conjunction that has not otherwise been identified in the literature. Not only is this a novel addition, but it also makes additional suggestions as to the value and aspects of *unio corporis* – and *tummo* – as applied to psychotherapy: not only is it a call to put into action and behaviour the insight gained in the first conjunction, and to become a participative agent in the world rather than a mere observer (Main, 2022; Stein, 2019), the second conjunction could also represent the actual *somatic* changes that occur in deep psychotherapeutic procedures, as described by the body-based psychotherapy practices, and shown in Jung’s original descriptions of *caelum*.

The second conjunction is largely defined, according to Jung’s reading of Dorn, by the production of the *caelum* and its subsequent mixing with other symbolic ingredients. *Caelum*

is described in a myriad of ways – the eye of the soul, unblinking as the eye of a fish (par. 46); liquid “the colour of the air” resulting from a ‘hair-raising chemical fantasy,’ ‘the celestial substance hidden in man, the secret “truth,” the “sum of virtue,” the “treasure which is not eaten into by moths nor dug out by thieves.” Worthless to most but “to the wise more worthy of love than precious stones and gold, a good that passeth not away, and is taken hence after death”’ (pars.692-693, Jung quoting Gerhard Dorn). The *caelum* is also described as the ‘blue tincture’ concocted from the dead sediment of a once living world, the *prima materia*, the *filius Philosophurum*, the sought-for celestial substance (par.703), a substance, a “truth”, celestial balsam, a life principle identical with the God-image (par.705). In Jung’s own terms he describes it as a representation of individuation through means of chemical substances and procedures. The *caelum* draws together contradictory opposites, invoking a potential for transcending them, so is ‘a transcendental entity that could be described only in paradoxes...the stone that is not stone...on the one hand a liquid that could be poured out of a bottle and on the other the microcosm itself’ (par.765). Its creation shapes out some ‘intuition of a mysterious centre pre-existent in man, which at the same time represented a cosmos, i.e. a totality’ (par.757).

The *caelum* is thus a physical equivalent of the idea of the self. As a quasi-materialisation of the self it holds the potency to impart substantial effects on consciousness beyond the ‘pale abstraction’ of a mere idea or representative concept. Jung brings such arcane effects into the modern context of the therapeutic encounter, that while the conscious rationalistic mind may dismiss such endeavours, the unconscious ‘does in fact seem to be influenced by such images’ (para 758). This is evidenced by the reactions of patients to the drawings they make that touch the self, or draw out the *caelum*: ‘they do have in the end a quietening influence and create something like an inner foundation’ (para. 758). Thus the second conjunction, in the producing

and mixing of the *caelum*, offers a ground for the psyche earthed in a version of the body alive with soul that is unified with spirit. As Jung cites Dorn:

The *caelum* therefore is a heavenly substance and a universal form, containing in itself all forms, distinct from one another, but proceeding from one single form... For since there is one single and most general beginning of all corruptions, and one universal fount of regenerating, restoring, and life-giving virtues, who, save a man bereft of his sense, will call such a medicine in doubt?

(Jung (1955-56/1989) quoting Dorn, pars.681-2)

It is in this context that Jung further defines *caelum* as the spiritualisation of the body, expressed by the symbol of the “air-coloured” liquid that floats to the surface, representing a ‘*corpus glorificationis*, the resurrected body whose relation to eternity is self-evident’ (1955-56/1989, par.763). A two-way exchange is enacted: as the body is elevated towards spirit, spirit is drawn down towards matter – ‘by sublimating matter he concretized spirit’ (1955-56/1989, par.763).

This play of inert matter with energised life is described by Jung in his allusions to it as “a living stone...a stone that has a spirit... the living man who adds himself as a brick in to the tower of the Church” (1955-56/1989, par.770). This is a rather peculiar form of life, however, as it is of a type that eludes death:

The physical equivalent of heaven, of the potential world...the very essence of the body, an incorruptible and therefore pure and eternal substance...the quintessence...the original stuff of the world, God’s adequate and perfectly obedient instrument, whose production, therefore, permitted the alchemist to “hope and expect” the conjunction with the *unus mundus*.

(1955-56/1989, par.774)

Beyond *tummo* and *caelum*: illusory body, clearlight, and *Unio Mystica*

This hope and expectation of the *unus mystica*, the third conjunction, again resounds with the next stage of practice going beyond *tummo*, which is the conjoining of ecstasy with emptiness.

The instructions given by Je Tsongkhapa at this stage are:

Rest within the inseparable ecstasy and [wisdom of] emptiness. Even if you do not have a profound understanding of the emptiness doctrine, at least avoid all distractions and rest in the singular ecstasy of the experience until the absorption becomes stable, mixing this with the beyond-conceptuality consciousness...During the post-meditation periods one must consciously cultivate mindfulness of the experience of ecstasy and emptiness, and stamp all objects and events that appear and occur with the seal of this ecstasy and emptiness. This application causes a special ecstasy to be ignited, which one should foster.

(Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.164)

This last move shades the ecstasy unlocked by *tummo* into the non-dual awareness of emptiness enjoined by the “main” practices of Naropa to follow⁴³, resting in an awareness of both at once as inextricable. On the positive side this conforms with the move from the second to the third alchemical conjunction, as non-dual intimations of the ultimate conjunction with the *unus mundus* are evoked. Therefore an illuminating connection between Jung’s alchemical model and *tummo* appears to have been sustained throughout the process, which helps to bring the latter into a form of discourse more amenable to “the West”, as represented by Jung’s late thought.

On the negative side, tracking the transformation of the *tummo* practitioner’s consciousness from the initial phases to the final states which build beyond *tummo*, conjoining bliss with emptiness, and opening the door to non-duality and the third conjunction, an apparent fatal blow is delivered to the epistemic-ontic model described in

⁴³ These being the practices of illusory body and of clear light mind

Chapter Eight⁴⁴. This model argued for a dualistic epistemology as an unproblematic, natural conceptualising device for human knowing, when nested within a non-dual holistic ontological view of reality, which is both philosophically defensible and therapeutically useful. The last phase of *tummo* just described shatters that nesting, as a human *awareness* (i.e. an epistemological knowing) penetrates into the non-dual ontological domain via non-conceptual experiencing of ecstasy and emptiness conjoined. In other words, the *ontology* becomes (for the advanced practitioner) an *epistemology*: reality (ontology) becomes known (epistemology). The structured nesting collapses. A reasonable philosophical view of reality (non-dualism) no longer gives logical plausibility to a phenomenological psychological state of knowing about that reality (dualism) because one effectively *is* the other, so cannot be held as an independent philosophical justification for it.

The breakdown of philosophy

In short, the philosophical underpinning established in earlier chapters (of epistemic dualism nested within ontic monism) seems to have broken down, failing the stress test it was subjected to with an in-depth exploration of the *tummo* process, as discerned through Jung's alchemical lens. Therefore, a substantial alteration to the epistemology-ontology model is required for the philosophical underpinning of the current thesis to stay afloat. This alteration is possible and comes in the form of a move from fundamental to relative onticity⁴⁵ described by Harald Atmanspacher (2014, pp.186-88), as originated by W

⁴⁴ It was argued that this model resolves problems in Jungian literature that a) assign dualistic positions as ontological (which is hard to defend philosophically), b) avoid the question of ontology entirely by swamping the matter in lyricism without logic, or c) attack dualistic positions such as found in a), unaware that the arguments for doing so require a form of epistemic dualism that the authors are oblivious to, problematic in that they encroach into the non-conceptual space of Analytical Psychology with conceptual thought. This move furthers the "tyranny of the wordsmiths" problem defined by Toews, as discussed in the methodology, and disarms the approach from an aspect that gives it a certain value when considering psychospiritual concerns.

⁴⁵ also known as ontological relativity

Quine and developed by Hugh Putnam, both Twentieth Century philosophers of the Anglo-American analytical school. The argument here is that hard boundaries between states do not pertain, but transitions are in fact “grey zones”. There are a whole host of such boundary transitions from the mental and physical separation at the top to the *unus mundus* at the bottom. Jung’s transcendent function regulates moves between levels, each move downwards becoming more general, more comprehensive, and more distinction-less.⁴⁶ As Atmanspacher (2014) writes, ‘this entails that a tight distinction of one fundamentally ontic and two derived epistemic domains is too simplistic’ (p.187); it is precisely that type of over-simplistically constricted distinction that the final phase of *tummo* exposes in the model formed in this chapter, as the meditator’s epistemic penetration of the ontic space occurs.

The switch from fundamental to relative onticity factors in the perspective of the subjective perceiver in dynamic relation to the objective level. Atmanspacher writes,

one and the same descriptive framework can be construed as either ontic or epistemic, depending on which other framework it is related to: bricks and tables will be regarded as ontic by an architect, but they will be considered highly epistemic from the perspective of a solid-state physicist.

(2014, p.187)

One person’s subjective epistemological object can be another’s ontological object. In the present case, from the perspective of the meditator who has entered into the final stage of *tummo*, who is beginning to experience an epistemic knowing of the ‘distinction-free *unus mundus*’ (2014, p.187), the distinct categories of “epistemic” and “ontic” (and “dual” and “non-dual”) themselves transform beyond normal understanding because the meditator

⁴⁶ Each of these traits being a spectrum, or continuous rather than discrete variable.

has some sense of *both* categories at the same time. This is equivalent to them having no sense of either category at any time, as those categories are defined by their mutual exclusivity: if one is experiencing both simultaneously then one no longer understands them. If they are *both* mutually exclusive *and* not mutually exclusive from the perspective of the *tummo* practitioner, the framework itself dissolves. In other words, a version of the epistemic dualist-ontological non-dualist model must be given which accepts, ultimately, in the relative truth of models such as itself. In this sense it becomes self-referencing, queerly self-aware, thereby through its imperfection becoming, ironically, complete. It is thus itself a moment of transcendent functioning which has significant value in overcoming binaries such as universalism and relativism.

More importantly this move to relative epistemic-ontic nested brings the role of the subjective experience into the objective equation. The position of the subject must be factored in and accounted for. This move vouchsafes the role of philosophy and theory in deepening experience and life, enriching the latter rather than providing an arid and dusty space from which to retreat from it. Mark Saban (2025) articulates this well in his review of Mills and Goodwyn's work of the ontology of archetypes, concluding that 'if we are going to invoke philosophy it needs to *serve* the core meanings of the psychology by finding new ways to amplify them and to open them out' (p.7). Relative onticity safeguards just that sense of *opening out*, sustaining a creative tension between creative freedom of expression and restriction of possibilities through logic:

the relativisation of onticity does not mean dropping ontology altogether in favour of a postmodern salmagundi of floating beliefs⁴⁷. The "tyranny of relativism"...can be avoided by distinguishing more appropriate descriptions from less appropriate ones. The resulting picture is more subtle and more

⁴⁷ See Avens (1980) explanation that 'Hillman adopts what he calls an attitude of "radical relativism"...[that] human existence, even at its basic vital level, is a metaphor' (p.33).

flexible than an overly bold reductive fundamentalism⁴⁸, and yet it is more restrictive and specific than a patchwork of arbitrarily connections opinions.

(2014, p.188)

It is this self-aware life-oriented philosophy that Clare Colebrook refers to in the closing remarks of *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life*. She recruits Raymond Ruyer's concept of "absolute survey," whereby a form is able to perceive itself from within, capturing both the whole and detail, in a way both non-localisable and non-conceptual. It is such that, Colebrook writes, 'the *concept* of absolute survey comes to the fore only when philosophy, also making its way in the world, is confronted with its own impasses, stupidities and contradictions' (2010, p.185). It is just such a confrontation that the current chapter has elicited, and which frees such practice into fuller exploration of possibility, potential, the unknown, and the unfolding of life.

⁴⁸ See George Hogensen's (2019) discussion of Anthony Stevens' position as archetypes-as-such being biologically inherited functions and the debates surrounding it.

Summary and conclusions

To summarise, although *tummo* seems in one sense niche and esoteric, when worked through as a process several substantive applications for therapy are evident which, through symbols as mind-body affective phenomena, impact clinical practice. In turn, such applications have included i) the primacy of imagination as an *embodied* phenomenon, alongside ii) the need for symbolic somatic activation to be navigated delicately, carrying as it does the risk of psychosis (breakdown) as well as embodied insight (breakthrough). This is so because iii) the liminal space between personal and transpersonal dimensions of the psyche starts to be broached. With that, iv) sensory qualities heighten and intensify, meshing synaesthetically into greater awareness of wholeness (and all its attendant numinosity). In this, v) the symbolic element of sulphur is key – infernal in its daemonic instinctive aspect as raw *prima materia*, invaluable through its transmutation from stone to diamond. A crucial contour to all these clinical features is vi) the nature and manipulation of the breath, providing as it does both inner containment through construction of psychosomatic alchemical vessel, and the oxygen required for rousing the libidinal sacro-sexual fire within.

These clinical applications are brought together in an overall schematic that can be used to guide therapeutic processes in this domain, as mapped graphically in Fig.13, drawing upon the work of Neumann (1959) and Edinger (1960). Those authors describe the ego-Self axis in Jungian terms, and the clinical map presented below integrates elements of *tummo* and the *Six Yogas of Naropa* to that frame, allowing the introduction of various interventions in the ways just described.

Beginning at the base of Fig.13, preliminary practices prior to *tummo* work to balance two essential pre-conditions: affixing a clear sense of external reality and oneself, but at the same time affirming the inner reality of fantasy and imagination. With these in place the practice of

tummo can begin, providing a foundational means for the activation of subtle body energy, otherwise known as kundalini awakening.

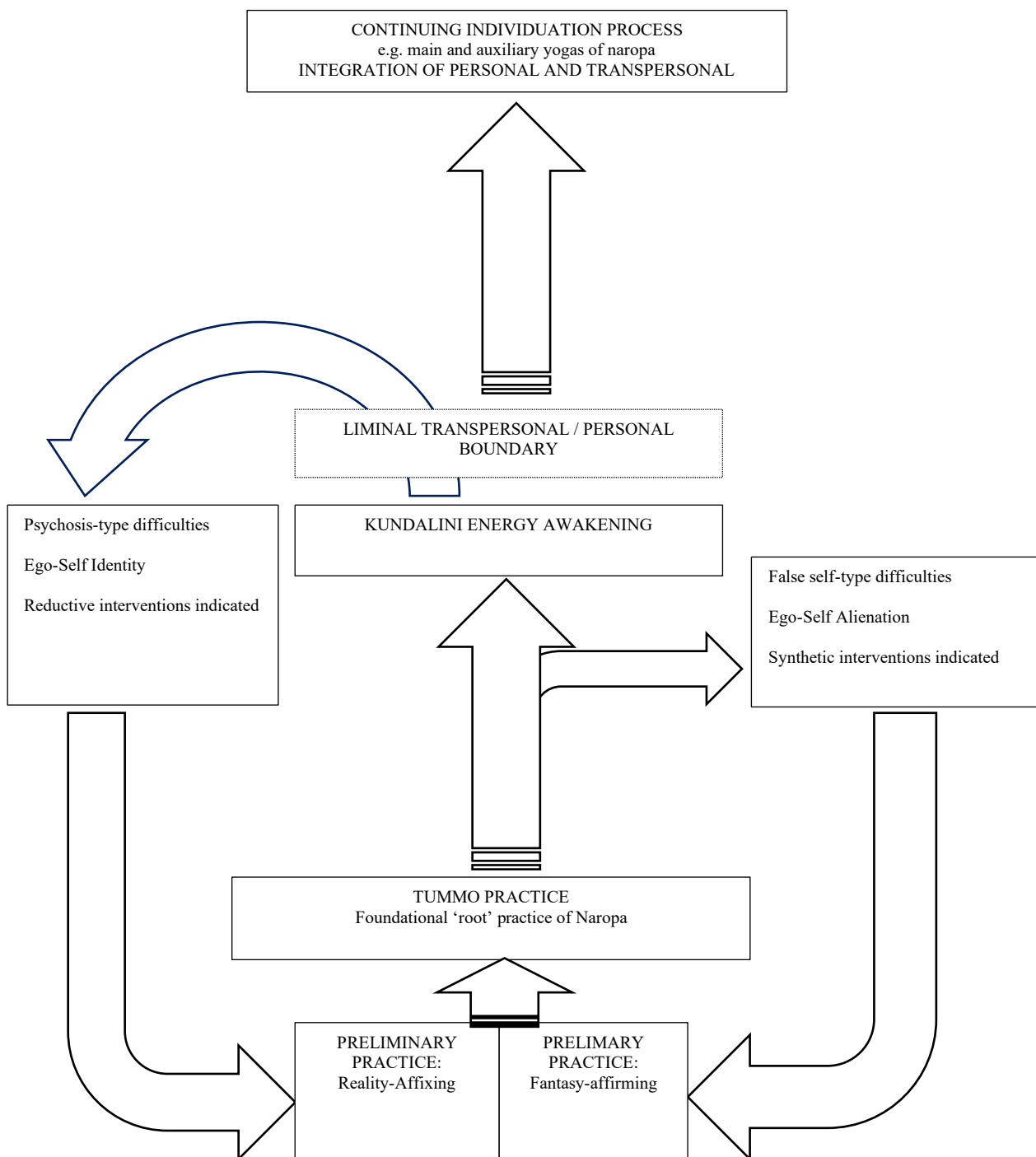
Awakening provides potential propulsion through liminal zones moving from personal to transpersonal aspects of the unconscious. If achieved, then states beyond *tummo* (and beyond the second conjunction) come into view, known as “main” and “auxiliary” practices within *Vajrayana*, or *Unio Mystica* in Jung’s alchemical model.

However, this progression can go awry in two primary ways: non-activation and non-containment. Non-activation arises with alienation between the ego and Self, whereby the imagery and creative aspects of *tummo* cannot be felt on an affective, somatic level, but only entertained intellectually. This would be, in Winnicott’s terms, a “false self” presentation. In these cases Edinger suggests synthetic interventions, which encourage Self-derived fantasy and imagination and dampen the analytic functioning of the ego. Non-containment arises when the fantasy material activated by *tummo* floods and overwhelms the psyche, leading to high levels of destabilisation and episodes or moments of psychosis or psychosis-type presentations, when fantasy and reality merge and blur. In Edinger’s terms a problematic ego-Self identity pertains (“if the ego looks like a Self, that’s bad for the ego”), meaning that reductive-type interventions are indicated, which reinforce a distinction between ego and Self.

This chapter has therefore, in conclusion, described a certain set of applications and a schema for within the clinic room; how a *rapprochement* between Jung’s alchemy and *tummo* might apply beyond the clinic room – in society at large – will be explored in the next chapter.

Fig.13

Depiction of Therapeutic Variables in Relation to the Process of Tummo



Reflective note III: countertransference considerations

Consistent with the methodological need to include countertransference to text as another important data-point, it is worth noting the unusually challenging, surprisingly difficult experience of writing up this section, which went beyond the usual conceptual, intellectual trial. The countertransference arose in what was roughly the third of three phases in researching and writing it. The first phase was the reading and gathering of information and notes, which took place the summer before. I then wrote the section in rough by hand, which was the primary “intellectual work” of synthesising, evaluating and critiquing the information that I had gathered, and forming it into a narrative structure. The third and final phase of writing up electronically happened a week or so after that and was, again, an intensive period of work, in a quiet location and alone for long periods of time. Tracking the material as I typed it up I became aware of a growing sense of unease and physical discomfort, along with some sense of agitation, as I sat down to write. This experience grew and grew over time, to the extent that I was forced to take breaks from writing so that it could settle down enough for me to continue. It culminated with lying on a bed one afternoon, simultaneously exhausted yet agitated, unable to sleep due to a swirl of tension, yet unable to work as it seemed overwhelming. In this state I suddenly had the image of a woman, naked, standing over and looking down at me. My body seemed wet and she had a Latin American appearance, a somewhat shamanic or priestess quality, and an earthy strength. I had the impression that somehow she had just given birth to me. This was soon followed by an experience of having each bone in my body, from largest to the most miniscule, being crushed. With pulverised bones the whole body had become infinitely malleable. I realised that I had perhaps seen these images in reverse order, in that the crushed bones were necessary for the body to be malleable enough to be given birth to. After this episode, although still somewhat present, the agitated state was reduced enough for the write-up to be completed in the isolated time I had set aside

for it. This episode impressed a new attitude upon me in no uncertain terms: a comfortable belief that such material is of a solely intellectual nature was banished, and a strengthened respect for the power of irrational forces described took hold instead. The experience was both disconcerting and awe-inducing, encouraging a healthy respect for the material, and sensible caution as to handling it with respect and care.

Chapter Ten

Dialogue Between Texts: application for society

This chapter pulls back from the close reading of *tummo* through a Jungian lens in the previous chapter, to look at the nature of that dialogue itself: what textual considerations surround this dialogue? What implications are there regarding how *tummo* could be received in the broader social context, beyond the clinical space? Divergences and similarities between the texts are considered, which build a set of features that draw out these psychosocial implications regarding, in particular, the sacred and sexual. It describes a way in which a) Je Tsongkhapa's text works as a discriminatory device, separating out redundant from more fertile components in Jungian discourse which tend to be clumped together without differentiation; b) Jungian imagery and alchemy, in turn, acts as a re-vivifying element for a "detraditionalized" Western context, bringing matters to bear on the individual psyche. The heightened individual autonomy of Western culture is recognised, resonant with the everyday being of lived reality of individuation in a non-monastic, non-shamanic culture. In effect, this critical synthesising of Jungian and Buddhist modes of thought around individuation – the former coagulating while the latter dissolves – is itself an alchemical process.

A methodological tool

As described in the method, historian of ideas Quentin Skinner (1969) introduced the terms of linguistic philosophy, following the work of J.L. Austin on *speech acts* to case out the "black box" of the psyche left untouched by sociocultural methods. Most notable are locutionary and illocutionary acts, the former being defined as the act of making a meaningful (usually explicit) utterance, and the latter as the (often implicit) function, communicative effect or force of the locutionary act. Knowledge of context can function as a court of appeal to help work out which

of the possible illocutionary acts is most likely. Awareness of locutionary and illocutionary acts allows some technique for getting under the literal or surface meanings of texts and closer to the intentions of their authors.

Divergences: instructive or descriptive?

Following the methodological innovations of Skinner (1969), it is worth evaluating the locutionary and illocutionary acts of *Mysterium Coniunctionis* and Tsongkhapa's *Six Yogas of Naropa*, as doing so helps us discern ways in which their cross-fertilisation can be furthered or obstructed that are otherwise overlooked. Firstly, significant divergences exist on a locutionary level. Relative to each other, Jung's language presents its content primarily in terms of description, whereas Tsongkhapa's is instructional. The difference would be between a book on botany, for example, compared to a recipe book; one helps observe phenomena more clearly, the other instructs how to manipulate phenomena for desired results. In his foreword, for instance, Jung compares the study of alchemical symbolism to the study of comparative anatomy. In the same way that the bodily organs, including the brain, are generally the same across cultures, it is reasonable to hypothesise that these common physical structures would correlate with a layer of common mental structures that persist universally, irrespective of localised differences. This is the main contention which Jung overtly expresses that he wants to argue for in the text, and he writes that there is an 'urgency and vital intensity' in establishing it which is 'even greater than the question of therapeutic application' (1955-1956/1989, p.xviii). Therefore his primary locutionary act appears to be one of observation and scientific illumination⁴⁹, building up modern psychology's lexicon for describing the underwater world

⁴⁹ Bishop (2014) notes that Jung had a tendency towards the sciences as well as the humanities, being interested in fossils, plants, animals and ancient civilisations. His textual style perhaps reflects this, as well as setting out a particular position on what "science" should mean as a discipline. As Main (2000, pp.92-7) writes, Jung pursued a vision of science that was not in conflict with religion, guided by the premise that these respective fields are incommensurable therefore cannot, logically, encroach into each other's domains reductionistically. As both, however, are grounded in psychic reality (e.g. religious ideas are incontrovertible psychic events – the

of the unconscious; through visiting alchemy's 'veritable treasure-house of symbols' (1955-1956/1989, p.xviii) and coming back with those treasures in psychologically-inflected form, their imagery and "spagyric"⁵⁰ art can be transferred into a code for interpreting the modern psyche.

The formal locutionary verbal acts of Tsongkhapa are, in contrast, devotional and didactic. The first line of his prologue, to illustrate devotion, is 'With great reverence I pay homage to the lotus feet of my spiritual masters, who are inseparable from Buddha Vajradhara' (1998, p.109). The final line of his prologue illustrates didactic intent, formally stating his goal of teaching the reader how to practice both the preliminary foundational meditations of Naropa's system, and then how to practice that system itself. Language used is thus more active than Jung's, phenomena being not only observed and recognised but then directed, with finely tuned instructions for how to do so with best effect. For example, when describing an aspect of *tummo* practice, Tsongkhapa writes in ways reminiscent of cookery. He asks the reader, for instance, to 'engage in a soft exercise of the vase breathing technique and also shake the body gently. Meditate that the bodhimind substances are diffused throughout the appropriate sites of the channels. Repeat this process several times' (Je Tsongkhapa, 1996, p.163).

A paradigmatic instance of this difference in locutionary style is in relation to dreams, especially as both Analytical Psychology and *Vajrayana* consider dreams to be extremely valuable cornerstone phenomena. Therefore although recognition of the importance of

incontestable fact that they exist in the mind is self-evident but often overlooked) a scientific method can encompass phenomenology as subject matter. In Buddhism's use of terms such as "inner technologies" and "science of the mind" it appears to have taken this possibility forward. Jung suggests too, that the arguments of science seem most convincing to the modern mind; therefore, his deployment of such language may be regarded as having a tactically advantageous element in pursuing the reader. The same can also be said with many aspects of Buddhist modernist trends.

⁵⁰ To 'rend, tear, stretch out' and 'bring or collect together' (Jung, 1955-56/1989, p.xiv)

dreaming is a strong point of contact that distinguishes them from other approaches within their respective worlds of Buddhism and psychotherapy⁵¹, the (relatively) different ways dreams are then worked with brings out a fascinating contrast. Jung (1955-56/1989, par. 189) describes dreams as the ‘daily fare of the psychotherapist’ and, using the patient’s personal history, symbols, sense impressions, associations and affective tone, a meaning can be deciphered. That interpreted meaning is hard to prove ‘correct’ in an objective sense but proves to be correct as an heuristic hypothesis if it helps reach into the unknown of the patient’s life and aid the emergence of some sort of solution. Jung uses the same techniques of dream interpretation for understanding alchemical parables, as does von Franz (1980, p.179).

The analyst-analysand⁵² dyad’s role is as observer-recipient and interpreter, who must not ‘fall into the error of thinking that they have *created* these fantasies,’ because ‘in reality the fantasies have merely occurred to them’ (CW16, par.13). This would include of course countertransference experiences – the analyst is moved from an “impartial observer” stance, but by and large does not consider that emotional movement as something they have created, but an informative communication received from the unconscious. Jung’s thoughts on the way that unconscious background emanates into the therapeutic dyad are detailed in *The Psychology of the Transference*, and mapped by Jacobi (2013) in his diagram of the analytic field.

Contrastingly, in Tibetan dream yoga (*milam naljor*) (otherwise known as lucid dreaming (Holecek, 2016) and another *yoga* of Naropa) the “therapeutic stance” of practitioner-teacher

⁵¹ The vipassana tradition and the modernist secular strains of Buddhism would not value dreaming in the same way (Barnea-Astrog (2016); McMahan (2008)), and neither would Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Beck et al., 1979), regarding these as distractions from a more rational clear-minded view of external reality, and carrying dangers of exacerbating (anxiety and depression) symptoms through fuelling subjective and inaccurate views of the world.

⁵² Broadening the definition of ‘analysand’ to include alchemical texts, as Jung and other Jungians such as von Franz have done since.

is more active and instructive (Norbu, 2002). Baker (2019) describes how the conscious mind of the lucid dreamer has been highly trained to maintain volitional alertness during REM sleep, the phase in which learning and memory consolidation generally takes place. During REM sleep – through their retained volitional consciousness – the dreamer deliberately manipulates their dreamscape in ways in which they choose that are not “found” in the dream itself. By ‘consciously altering one’s dreams’ (p.191), instead of only being a receiving observer of dream material, the apparently valid binary between “awake” and “sleep” becomes suspect and erodible, the possibilities of inner psychic exploration vastly expanded, and the truth claims as to the waking world being “more real” relativised. In a sense, Tibetan dream yoga does directly *in situ* what Jungian active imagination does indirectly *post-hoc* in regard to dream material.

A vital nuance to the locutionary difference between Jung and Tsongkhapa’s texts is that it is indeed a relative one – there is a synthesis of passive reception and active suggestion in both, but the dominant partner changes: for Jung the language suggests PASSIVE-active, and for Tsongkhapa ACTIVE-passive. The reason for this relative difference may be developmental, in the sense that Jung describes psychology as a nascent discipline, stating in 1935 that it had only acquired a certain independence as a healing art since the 1880s (CW16, para 1). Thus his researches in *Mysterium Coniunctionis* appear aimed at establishing certain facts about a cross-cultural psyche’s existence through retrieval of largely forgotten alchemical material, and then intelligently repurposing it for a post-Enlightenment age. Tsongkhapa’s work, in contrast, certainly draws upon a cultural, social, political, religious and textual history, emerging in Tibet after disseminations of teachings from India in the Tenth and Eleventh Century, which of course in themselves stretch back to 500BC and before, and continue to be preserved through a variety of living institutions. Jung makes the comparison directly himself, writing that psychoanalysis is ‘only a beginner’s attempt compared to what is an immemorial art in the

East' (1933/2001, par. 249; see also Clarke, 1994, pp.54-79). The difference in locutionary style, then, can relatedly be explained by the position of the author – while Jung is in a sense reporting back in the Twentieth Century the active “therapeutic” efforts of alchemists from an earlier time, Tsongkhapa *is* one such alchemist, relaying his instructions to the reader directly. His form of alchemy is of a more advanced sort than the medieval Western alchemists, on Jung's metric, as the “gold” is explicitly subtle and spiritual, rather than coarsely material.

Identifying these (il)locutionary acts between texts creates an opportunity for a *rapprochement* potentially helpful for the cultural reception of *tummo* in Westernised societies with greater nuance and depth. The ACTIVE-passive and PASSIVE-active linguistic differences between these texts (which exist for developmental and cultural reasons) have significant ramifications. If held together, I argue, they may be mutually strengthening, keeping them apart being to the detriment, potentially, of today's reader. As Peter Bishop (1984, 1993) makes plain, the ideas of Tibetan Buddhism (and assimilated Bön) have become highly structured and overdetermined, set firm within the structures of politico-religious seats of power; passed down through rigorously rote formulas the “purity” of an unbroken lineage is preserved, the teaching of which whole societies are still organised. They are, in this way, *conduits for tradition*. Monastic schools headed by reincarnated *lamas* (*rinpoches*), which maintain teachings and customs through hundreds of monks and nuns, supported by (and in turn support) surrounding settlements of lay practitioners, are still common in countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, India and to some extent Tibet, despite the effects of Chinese invasion. In contrast, Jung is attempting to recover alchemy as a literature lost to mainstream society, arguing that despite popular opinion it ‘does not belong to the rubbish heap of the past, but stands in living relationship to our most recent discoveries of the unconscious’ (1955-1956/1989, p.xiii). Alive as well to the emphasis on freedom of *individual expression* in Western psychology and culture, his attention

may be more on alchemical symbolism as offering a scaffold upon which underdetermined unconscious content of the individual can become more differentiated.

The importance of the European enlightenment is important to recognise here. As political philosopher Isaiah Berlin (2000) states, the rights of the individual, the recognition of equality, and the value of personal freedom to pursue one's unique definition of the good life are central to the Western mind and can be found in the canonical writings of Hume, Locke, Kant, JS Mill and the modern academy. Whether straightforwardly within the Enlightenment tradition or the Romantic defined against it, that enshrinement of the individual and their status as sovereign autonomous agent is in some ways reflected in Jung's psychology. Nowhere is this more evident than his concept of *individuation*, whereby 'individual beings are formed and differentiated; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology' (CW6, par.757). Crucially, of course, individuation *is not* individualism, partly because it involves a moral, collective imperative, whereby through guilt one seeks to give back to the society one has stopped conforming to, in the way most appropriate to one's innate selfhood:

Individuation cuts one off from personal conformity and hence from collectivity...that is the guilt he must endeavour to redeem. He must offer a ransom in place of himself...he must bring forth values which are an equivalent substitute for his absence in the collective personal sphere...without this production of values, final individuation is immoral.

(CW18, par. 1095)

That nexus of individual development-moral agency is present in the milieu surrounding Jung's thought, but less so in that surrounding Je Tsongkhapa. Therefore, there is a prioritising of spontaneity in the former that is not in the latter, and a didactic element in the latter that is less present in the former. Seeking patterns in spontaneous unconscious irruptions and proscribing

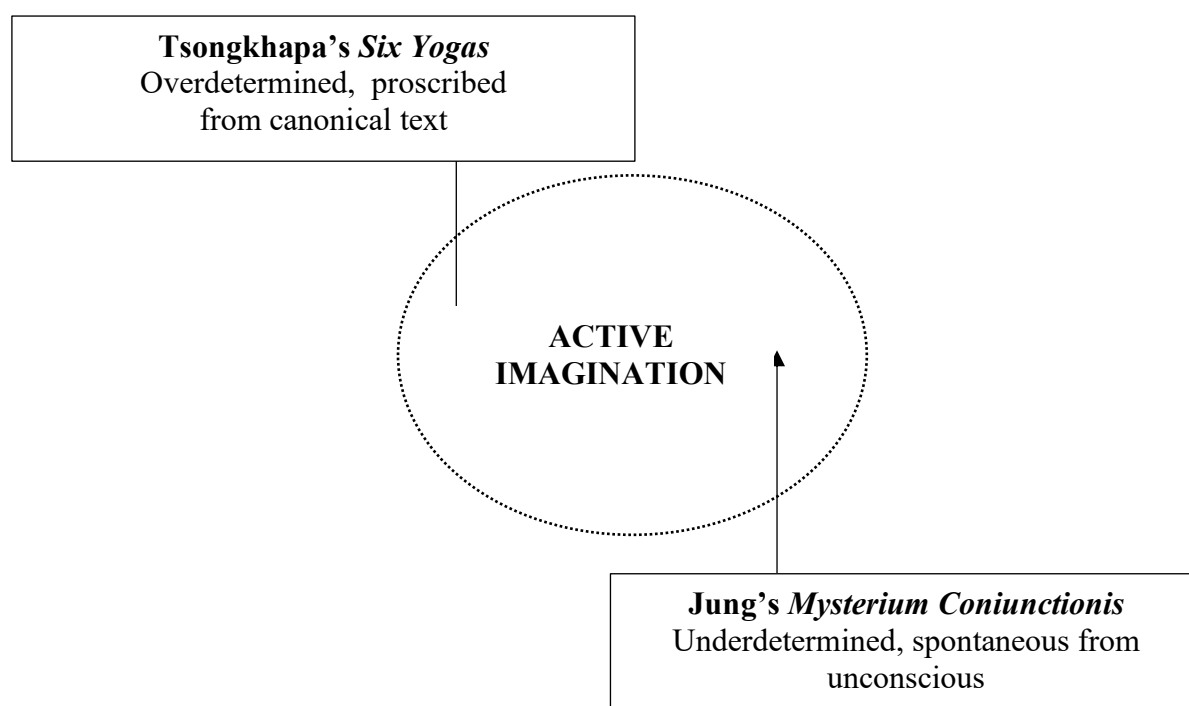
procedures for training the conscious/unconscious interface are two distinct but potentially complementary approaches which aid the social reception of *tummo* and its notions of individuation for the Western practitioner.

Convergences: active imagination, *telos*, and silence

How could this twin-lensed social reception of *tummo* be applied? Three prongs can be outlined here: active imagination, *telos*, and the role of silence. Within the scope of *active imagination*, in *tummo* there appears to be an accent on image over instinct, as the imagery it evokes is standardised as part of a pantheon of deities, and the imagining of somatic pathways of energy. To an extent, these are pursued irrespective of *instinctual* activation as an individual with unique presentation. Conversely, it could be that Jung's route to active imagination is likely to have a more spontaneous, individually-focussed quality to the imagery, arising from the partially idiosyncratic unconscious (personal and/or collective) of the individual, needing a certain personal charge to "break through" into awareness. Such individual activation is less scaffolded by collectively sanctioned culturally-alive archetypal imagery than in the cultural context of Je Tsongkhapa's text. Fig.14 depicts this difference graphically.

Fig.14

Different Utilisation of Active Imagination within Vajrayana Tradition and Analytical Psychology



Their shared destination of active imagination intimates what appears to be the common implicit illocutionary act of both texts. Both rely heavily on active imagination, which Sharp (1991) defines as being able to take place spontaneously or through artificial induction. Either way, it establishes ‘lines of communication’ between consciousness and unconscious, whether that be the imaginal inner *reverie* states of meditation or “dreaming while awake”, dance, sound, sculpture, art, poetry and many other media. All of these and more are enshrined in both Jungian and *Vajrayana* traditions. There is a shared implicit function, intent, or force here towards some form of psycho-spiritual healing, illumination or development process.

It seems that there is, then, a shared illocutionary holistic *telos* within *Mystorium Coniunctionis* and *The Six Yogas of Naropa*. Yet whereas the former’s text perhaps induces this force through aesthetic impression the latter tends to do so through precise exposition. Susan Rowland (2002,

2013) comments on that textual aesthetic in Jung's writing, noting that it serves to frustrate attempts at rational understanding, writing on its subject of the psyche allusively, 'his sentences dip in and out of his own concepts, often embedding them in the fantasies of his patients or even his own' (p.24). She suggests a sense in which Jung's writing about theory is also a form of analytical practice in action – a therapeutic methodology that one partakes in as reader, as suggested imagery and associations swirl before one's eyes in the sentences presented. Rather than conforming to the language of pseudo-scientific reductionism (which would kill what he intended to express) the language form itself intimates an aesthetically-informed method of conscious-unconscious communication.

Thus Jung's textual method of instigating therapeutic change is of a different tone to Tsongkhapa. Mullin (1996) writes that Tsongkhapa's most pressing task was largely about improving accuracy rather than aesthetic. Surrounded by a confusion of dozens of schools and lineages that had evolved over generations, he came to the conclusion that 'many of the Tibetan lineage lamas had become somewhat provincial, and suffered from poor training, sloppy understanding, and spiritual complacency' (p.21). Using a tripartite form of "quality control" comparing the practices of these various schools to what he found in a) the established *sutras* purportedly originally spoken by the Buddha, b) the Indian treatises (Skt. *Shastras*) initially imported into Tibet, and c) the works of the earliest Tibetan translators of those *Shastras*, he produced a well-referenced, highly systemised and ordered summary of the most robust type. His writings form the basis of what has now become the *Gelukpa* ("order of excellence") school, which is most prominent today. The focus then, is on clarity and rigour. In the main section of his work, for instance, there are thirteen layers of section and subsection, each being

phenomena categorised, re-categorised, and re-re-categorised into a literary flowchart of stupendous proportions and scalpel-like precision⁵³.

As well as a common illocutionary act of attempting to point towards some form of spiritual development, both texts share the difficult task of using words to gesture towards that ultimate sense of living “spiritual monument” described at the end of Chapter Seven. As such, Jung’s writing style may very well serve as a useful compliment to the advanced methods described by Tsongkhapa, providing some form of poetic lubricant in a systematised approach which has at times the danger of getting rusted up in technical machinations.

Maintaining the optimal fixity/fluidity between “words” and “facts” is an important matter, and one which Jung demonstrates great sensitivity to in his letter to the original translator of his conversation with Shin’ichi Hisamatsu, a Zen scholar and Professor of Buddhism at Kyoto University, which took place on May 16th 1958. He courteously but firmly declines to give consent for their conversation to be published. Leaving problematic overgeneralisations aside for the moment, ‘there is a terrific gap,’ he writes, ‘between the Western and Eastern mind, when it comes to the problem of rational understanding’ (1992, p.114). More specifically (thus accurately), he is referring to his own “Western” and Hisamatsu’s “Eastern” mind. His concerns are, like those of Skinner and JL Austin, that individuals using the same words may be using them to refer to different facts: what appears as agreement, verbally, is in fact misunderstanding and further obscuration. Genuine factual agreement involves interrogating, through lengthy efforts, the facts and assumptions under the words used, in order to dispel ‘the fallacy of the illusion that we can understand each other by mere words’ (1992, p.115).

⁵³ For example, one paragraph (p.158) categorises the following types of inner heat: 1. Inner heat in and out of central channel 2. Heat from depth of body v heat from surface 3. Heat in narrow areas v heat in large areas 4. Heat rising quickly v slowly 5. Heat that seems thick v thin 6. Categorising each pair as more or less preferable.

Sadly yet aptly, Hisamatsu's commentary on the conversation rather proves Jung's point. Being composed of a list comparing "psychoanalysis" and Zen across three issues (i. the unconscious and "No Mind", ii. the "Self" in psychoanalysis and Zen, and iii. differences in treatment), he demonstrates a striking failure to understand basic (albeit fairly subtle) rudimentaries of Jung's perspective and Jung, in turn, seems loathe to be drawn into making any definitive statements, bar his much-debated answer "yes it is!" to the question of whether it is possible to free ourselves from the collective unconscious (Meckel & Moore, 1992, p.111). Such malfunctions of meaning are to a great extent understandable given both the nascent status of East-West dialogues on psychology and issues of language translation⁵⁴, which seem to be the problems Jung identifies afterwards in his awareness of the gap between "words" and "facts." These problems, however, are compounded by what appears to be Hisamatsu's misplaced conviction that Jung's verbal utterances and his own conceptualisations can "pin down" these matters in some absolutist sense, proclaiming rather grandly that if 'Jung's statement is accurate' that one can become liberated from the collective unconscious then 'there is an open passage from psychoanalysis to Zen, and that the vicious cycle of psychoanalysis can be overcome and psychoanalysis itself can advance a step forward'⁵⁵ (1992, p.118).

Hisamatsu reaching such a statement based on verbal muddles is somewhat ironic given Zen's fame as a school which recognises the value of non-conceptuality. Hisamatsu refers to Jung

⁵⁴ For example: i. his definition of the Jungian Self appears identical with the Freudian sense of ego and unconscious; ii. he understands therapeutic treatment as "finding the causes of the individual mental sicknesses within the unconscious, and removing them" one by one, as a surgeon removes skin tags; iii. There seems to be no distinction between Analytical Psychology and Freudian psychoanalysis, Hisamatsu repeatedly referring to Jung as a psychoanalyst – that lack of distinction naturally has a bearing on how the 'unconscious' and 'self' or 'Self' are defined.

⁵⁵ It could be argued that the current thesis is pursuing the same project, attempting to forge an "open passage" between Jung's alchemical model and *Vajrayana*, in the hope of breaking the sexual-spiritual vicious cycle; a difference, however, is that the current study concludes that the *contents* of such passages cannot be formed by words, but that words – and their mercurial spirit – can help protect the conceptual *space* needed for such passages to allow non-verbal content to pass through.

throughout as a psychoanalyst, suggesting that the differences between Freudian and Jungian schools have perhaps not been considered. That possibility somewhat exacerbates Jung's concern that 'I am never certain that we [when talking to an "Eastern mind"⁵⁶] exactly mean the same thing, as our *point de départ* is so very different' (1992, p.114).

Yet strangely, it is Jung that leaves the impression of being the one possessing a stereotyped "Eastern mind" in this conversation, leaving space for not-knowing and silence. And, conversely in the case of *tummo*, it is Je Tsongkhapa's writing that displays a "Western mind", technologically advanced, precision engineering for inner mechanisms for awakening. With Jung's alertness to the *spontaneous* aesthetic unfolding of an individual's psychology, and the *Vajrayana's* highly developed systematisation of spiritual "technology", a reversal of the "Eastern wisdom, Western science" populist trope results: the wisdom of Jung's holistic sensibility can be twinned with the science-like specificity of Tsongkhapa's text to great effect. Hybridising these lenses together brings to bear what may be a useful reception of *tummo* in Western society. Developing this form of receptivity may be particularly relevant for modern society, in which the alchemical milieu in which the *Dharmas of Naropa* originated has been lost, which would have vivified its technical procedures in an essential and particular way. Introducing this Jungian-*Vajrayana* hybridity can address this deficit.

Jungian-Buddhist hybridity as key to unlock the symbolic in a detraditionalized culture

This discussion is of relevance to the *Vajrayana* path generally, as well as *tummo* and the spiritual transmutation of the erotic specifically, and how both might be received in society beyond the therapy room. The tradition as a whole is known as the "resultant" or "fruitful"

⁵⁶ There are troubling matters of racial essentialism here, which again arise in Jung's 1938 *Kundalini Seminars*; other essentialising motifs of concern in Jung's work (regarding anti-semitism and misogyny, for instance) are picked up in the work of Susan Rowland (2002), Andrew Samuels (1993), for instance.

vehicle, a rapid course towards liberation as the “fruits” or “results” are instigated as the practice of arriving there in a way that is ‘positive, direct, and concrete’ (Stevens, 1990/1991, p.61). *The goal is practiced as the journey*, based on the postulation that the ultimately liberated state already resides in all individuals in timeless latent form, temporarily obscured from conscious awareness in the same way that blue sky is obscured by cloud (van Schaik, 2016).

The problem of individual psychological variation occurs from a Western therapeutic perspective here, as the density of clouded obscurity varies between people, and the traditional cultural systems of highly striated levels of practice – dependent upon the particulars of the practitioner – are not available in the context of modernity. Problems of individual variation might fit into what McMahan (2022, pp.42-4) regards as the trend towards detraditionalization, quoting Woodhead and Heelas’ definition as moving ‘from an authoritative realm which exists over and above the individual or whatever the individual might aspire to, to the authority of the first hand spiritually-informed experience of the self’ (p.42-3).⁵⁷ How to account for variations in individual psychology in a modern context, then, is a role that can be picked up through a Jungian lens.

⁵⁷ Arguably detraditionalization as a critique applies less to the *tantric* than the *sutra* tradition, the former already established as more antinomian and focussed on the experiences of the individual (Crook & Low, 1997; David-Neel, 1931/1965), thus following what Samuel (1993) defines as a shamanic rather than clerical paradigm, which in itself is anti-structural and in opposition to power hierarchies; Shaw (1994) makes the point that in those moments of anti-establishment innovation, feminine voices and perspectives are often those that emerge, breaking through and then integrated into establishing novel trends.

An example of Jungian symbolism: Tilopa's introduction to tummo

Regarding *tummo* and the erotic-as-spiritual, Guenther's 1963 English translation of the moment when Nāropa was introduced to "the mystic heat" by his mentor Tilopa is a case in point:

Tilopa again sat motionless and silent for a year in the border country...
 Then sitting near a dark and deep pool, full of leeches, he said to Nāropa:
 'If I had had a disciple he would have built a bridge over this pool.'
 Taking these words literally Nāropa began building a bridge.
 When he was waist-deep in the water, he slipped and went under.
 Since the water had been disturbed, leeches and other vermin came in swarms and
 bored into his body...
 Tilopa asked: 'Nāropa, what is wrong with you?'
 And Nāropa answered:
 'I dissolve, I freeze, through the bites of leeches,
 I am not master of myself and so I suffer.'
 Tilopa said:
 'This pool of your body fashioned by former deeds
 Deserves to be turned into ice, Nāropa.
 Look into the mirror of your mind which is the mystic-heat,
 The mysterious home of the Dākinī.'

(Guenther, 1963, pp.53-4)

A myriad of aspects present themselves for symbolic interpretation, using the dream interpretation methods suggested by Jung. Imagery of silence, being motionless in a border country again suggests the "twilight language" of liminality (Dowman, 1994; Shamdasani, 1998), entry into deep dark waters suggesting connection into the unconscious (Martin & Ronnberg, 2010), and perilous *nigredo* swarms of "vermin and leeches" one confronts therein (von Franz, 1980). A direct interpretation based on the *sutra* tradition might equate the passions of the body with the leech-infested pool, their clinging being a form of emotion that Jung writes 'isn't concerned with kindness,' but 'is just a hellish possession' in the usual way of anima projections (quoted in Edinger, 1995, p.46). To remedy this, by training the "mirror of the mind", one begins to prevent oneself from "going under" and becoming subsumed by passion-projections, staying on one's feet and building a bridge towards greater self-sustenance: de-

projecting the affects of one's inner warmth away from external objects (leeches) into one's self (the home of the *dākinī*, which Katz (1992) argues equates to the *anima*). Paralleling with Jung's alchemical stage of *unio mentalis*, spirit becomes aligned with psyche so that the perilous passions of the body are held in obedience so that Nāropa becomes "master of myself".

A second and more advanced layer of understanding Tilopa's encounter with the leeches is available through the concept of *kenosis* ("to empty") found in *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (1955-56, par.28-30), whereby egoic energy transfers into the Self, forming a personal-transpersonal axis. Like the cold pool dwelling leeches which bore into and extract the warmth of life from Nāropa so that he begins to dissolve and freeze, a key image of *kenosis* is, writes Jung,

...where a toad is laid on the breast of the woman so that she, suckling it, may die as it grows. The toad is a cold and damp animal like the dragon. It "empties" the woman as though the moon were pouring herself into the sun.

(1955-56, par.30)

Edinger (1995, pp.44-6) defines *kenosis* as a form of divine "emptying" involving the union, or marriage, of solar and lunar elements. Connecting to the myth that the moon voluntarily empties her light into the sun over the course of a waning cycle, Edinger illustrates it through the examples of Christ emptying himself of divinity to take human form, as a *bodhisattva* empties themselves of enlightenment to return to the world for the sake of all sentient beings, and quotes Jung's example of Kwannon (Chinese Goddess of Kindness) emptying herself of heavenly appearance to not frighten devils when she descends into hell to nourish them. As well as stressing the sense of kindness inherent in the concept (a radically different form of love to "hellish" anima-projection possession), Edinger emphasises that *kenosis* symbolises a crucial developmental task: the dis-identification of ego and Self. He describes the original

state of identity between the ego and Self, and identification with God where one feels oneself at the centre of all things, ‘with assumptions of omnipotence and of oneness with the universe,’ and that ‘this identity needs to be “emptied out” if the ego is to have a separate place of its own’ (1995, p.46) from which one can sense the reality of one’s own limitations, responsibilities and mind that is not shared with others, but distinct and autonomous. By the same token the Self too has a separate place of its own, the “mysterious home of the Dākinī” within which the divine dwells, now disidentified from the ego.

Von Franz (1980) approaches this theme from a more explicitly therapeutic perspective, but that nevertheless still makes alchemical and tantric connections. She takes the opposite starting point to Edinger’s ego-Self identification in childhood, beginning with ego-Self dissociation in adulthood. A feature of such dissociation is depression, listlessness and meaninglessness pervading waking life, as libidinal energy has been drawn into the unconscious, gathering around a desire that has not yet been completely given up on, or some act of creativity, ‘romantic dreams of truth and life and real love’ that are finding no expression in everyday life. ‘The whole task’ of alchemical work, von Franz continues, ‘is to save the nucleus, the fantasy of the Self, and cut away all the childishness, the primitive desire, and so on which surround it...That is what the alchemist did in a projected form when he said that the divine man had to be extracted from the lead coffin or from corruptible matter’ (1980, p.107). Although life-sustaining, she also recognises it to be a prepsychotic symptom that while creative also carries the risk of being too strong for the ego to integrate, echoing Edinger’s preoccupation with sound ego-Self disidentification.

Contra-example: costs of engaging Vajrayana without symbolism

Von Franz (1980) describes the value of symbolic thinking as providing a net through which to catch, identify and make sense of irruptions from the unconscious which would otherwise be dangerously destabilising. Preece (2000) describes one such incident, whereby activation of unconscious contents without symbolic holding led to loss of contact with reality, fear of annihilation, terror, and a collapse in ego-stability. He details attending a higher *tantra* empowerment retreat in which a set of young motivated male practitioners became enthralled by the captivating power of these seemingly exotic, other-worldly practices. Preece hypothesises that an archetypal activation had occurred, which animated and energised as well as destabilised and disconnected from everyday reality. For at least one individual it transpired that a psychotic crash occurred, accompanying by a complete shutting down of everyday functioning. Without symbolic thinking to strengthen ego-capacity for engaging with the unconscious then breakdown is a possibility. Jung himself, in his “confrontation with the unconscious” following his break with Freud is another illustration of this situation (Clay, 2016; Jaffe & Jung, 1961).

In the context of detraditionalization (McMahan, 2022) the balance between growth and risk are important to highlight in cultural engagement *tummo*. It is especially important given Baker’s (2019) reporting that the traditional barriers of entry to such practices have been removed by authorities such as The Dalai Lama in order to improve their odds of survival. Symbolism has a twin role, in typical Jungian fashion bringing into conjunction two opposing elements: on the one hand it helps unlock the potency of the practice, on the other hand it offers enhanced ego-capacity for the safe containment of that potency.

Another instance in the literature that demonstrates the limitations of engagement without symbolic thinking is John Stevens' (1990, pp.50-85) discussion of *tantra* in his book *Lust for Enlightenment*. His critique appears to be wrestling with difficult matters without recourse to the symbolic thought that would strengthen his powers of appraisal. He finds the *sutra* tradition problematic in its misogyny and monastic (and unrealistic) attempts to "extinguish the flames" of sexual passion – a goal doomed to fail, as Jung highlights too in the shadow of the first conjunction. Stevens then finds fault with *tantra* for going too far to the other extreme:

Many types of Tantra may even degenerate into the worst kind of perversion – “Feast on my faeces, gulp my urine, and lap up the blood of my vagina,” for example, is a frequent refrain of *dākinīs* in more than a few Vajrayāna texts.

(p.84).

While conceding that such content *may* be symbolic, taking the sense of symbolic reality does not appear to hold. He does, promisingly, acknowledge the psychic rather than literal reality (so often stressed by Jung), in that ‘such frightful and disgusting imagery...is no worse than what psychoanalysts uncover in the psyches of their patients’ (Stevens, 1990, p.84). However, he nevertheless concludes that *tantra's* fixation with the darker side of human nature is problematically excessive, in the same but mirror-image way as the puritanical constrictions of *sutra*. This conclusion does not account for the duplex quality of sulphur described earlier, wherein the base “worthless” embodied desires have the capacity (in the form of the wingless and winged bird) to transform into spiritual epiphany. The transmutation of sexual desire – as is part of the *tummo* process – would be one such instance.

Stevens, a Zen priest and Professor of Buddhist Studies in Japan, conveniently suggests that ‘Zen, especially in its Japanese manifestation’ presents a salutary “middle way” that makes it the preferred solution to the entanglement of lust and enlightenment. He regards it as being

‘essentially Tantra purified of excess’ (p.85). His conclusions however, do not quite match up to this claim, as there is very little in the Zen literature that pertains to sexuality. Not only is there little material, but the way in which it is handled has no alchemical element – there is no consideration of desires as the *prima materia* necessary to be worked on alchemically, so that spiritual outcomes can be achieved. At best, the sources he cites evidence that the Zen tradition is not prudish nor as misogynistic and unrealistically monastic as the *sutra* tradition. This is a far cry from an alchemical understanding of the connection between the sacred and the sexual.

Stevens concludes with the quote “‘If your heart is pure, all things in your world will be pure,’” and that ‘when this is true, even lust may win us enlightenment’ (p.141). In Robert Aziz’s terms, Stevens’ conclusions ultimately conform with, rather than break through, the conventional prevailing paradigm, such that ‘in Western culture, discussions about human sexuality generally stay within the parameters of what we might characterize as the modality / amorality polarity’ (2007, p.121). Moreover, Stevens’ final assertion seems more suitable to religious practice than the intricate and complex work of therapeutic practice, which does not rely on the provision of ethical pressures in the same way. It could be argued that without symbolic thinking (as provided in Jung’s late thought) it becomes rather difficult to move beyond these dimensions.

Summary

In brief, (il)locutionary analysis of the respective Jungian and Buddhist texts exposed divergences in illocutionary act, within the shared wider project of individuation and enlightenment. Describing this divergence, however, enabled a particular form of social reception of *tummo* practice to be proposed: Jung’s work reintroduces an alchemical sensitivity of mind essential to *tummo* practice in its originating *milieu*, but washed out by modernity;

tummo itself presents a high level of technical precision and intellectual rigour not found in Jung's alchemical aesthetic. As such, together, they form a hybridity of so-called "Western wisdom, Eastern science", reversing the populist trope that casts the East as holding ancient wisdom but lacking in technological sophistication, and the West as scientifically advanced but without sagacity. In the context of the psyche and the inner world of humanity, the switched characterisation is argued to be more apt. It has been claimed that this aptitude is of particular importance now, in the context of modernity's de-traditionalization, where means of interpreting practices such as *tummo effectively* and *safely* are greatly needed. A foray into such means was provided in symbolically interpreting Naropa's mythical introduction to *tummo* from Tilopa. The potential of symbolic thinking was suggested, and the limitations of literality too, the latter described in Steven's critique of *tantra*, which ignores the alchemical dimension of change, focussing only on the instinct-morality aspect. This theme, and others, will be taken up in the next section regarding Jungian approaches to erotic phenomenology.

Conclusions

This section addressed the question of whether a *rapprochement* between Jung's alchemical model and *tummo* holds relevancy either therapeutically (within the clinic room) or socially (as part of popular cross-cultural exchanges of thought that tend towards describing "Eastern wisdom" dialoguing with "Western science").

Chapter Nine dealt with the therapeutic aspect. It found that the vitalist sense of "subtle energy" purported by *tummo* finds connection to Jung's alchemical use of sulphur; sulphur, then, enabled a connection between psychotherapy and *tummo* as it highlighted the need for embodied affect to be activated as the *prima materia* for the individuation process. Vase breathing techniques in *tummo* (although not perhaps literally translatable into the relational dyad of psychotherapy) helps set up a three-layered alchemical vessel from therapy: the external social context, the interpersonal therapeutic relationship, and the inner embodied container between ego and Self (West's "emotional core"). Next, the transitional space between personal and transpersonal was considered. Here, the role of synaesthesia as understood by Merleau-Ponty helped articulate *tummo*'s relevance to psychotherapy, and psychology's relevance to *tummo*: crossing into the transpersonal involves a *dropping back*, or paring down, rather than *addition of*; learning to let go of higher order functions rather than further augmenting them. These stages forged a link between *tummo* and the *caelum* of Jung's second of three conjunctions (somewhat of an overlooked middle sibling); as such, a useful addition to the therapeutic literature regarding Jung's alchemical thought is provided. Beyond this, entering phases of the *unio mystica* and the main practices of Naropa, a reiteration of the relationship between theory/philosophy and life/psychology is reiterated: the former pairing works in the service of the latter, not vice versa. Ultimately, this provides a backdrop, or negative space of not-knowing, which holds the therapeutic endeavour appropriately in place.

Chapter Ten dealt with the socio-cultural aspect of the encounter between Jung's late thought and *tummo*. Using the methods of linguistic philosophy derived by Skinner and JL Austin, divergences and convergences between the two texts were drawn out. Firstly, they diverged in terms of apparent intent: where one instructs technically, with surgical precision, the other observes naturalistically, with openness to aesthetic impression. Put together, another incidence of the alchemical method was found – together these dissolving and synthesising qualities present a promising means of engaging with *tummo* fruitfully in a Western context. These complementary qualities were found to come together in three domains – active imagination, shared *telos* regarding individuation, and relative silence regarding “pinning down” concepts. This led to the capacity for Jungian symbolic language to be an apt means of receiving *tummo* in the context of a detraditionalized culture. Specifically, symbolism is found to unlock the potency as well as contain the destabilising effects of such encounters. Instances of the limitations of literalism (not using symbolism) were also provided.

Therefore overall, although complex, dimensions of psycho-social relevance can be found in the *rapprochement* between *tummo* and Jung's alchemical model. One outcome is that the dimensionality of the union between the sexual and the sacred expands beyond the instinct – purity vector. Questions of beauty and wisdom arise too. These questions can be further explored through Jung's “erotic phenomenology”: the most complete fragment of his thought on the matter, which has been subject to much scholarly work since. How the current thesis might contribute to that discussion is the topic of the next chapter.

Jungian Erotic Phenomenology

This final section brings the broader findings of the last section back into tighter focus in terms, specifically, of the sacro-sexual relationship. As such, this ending also marks a return to the beginning background section, as authors mentioned there are re-viewed, seen anew through the conclusions reached since.

The kernel of Jung's original writing on the relationship between the sacred and sexual is found in his passage on "erotic phenomenology" in *The Psychology of The Transference*. Those thoughts, and related ones, have been developed since through Developmental, Archetypal, Classical, and emerging Phenomenological schools. An alchemical contribution is offered in this section, built upon the findings of the current thesis. Chapter Eleven offers a critical edge, used to identify problems around i) heteronormativity in Jung's erotic phenomenology, and ii) philosophy in post-Jungian schools. Chapter Twelve then constructs alternatives and evolutions, using the Axiom of Maria to engage a more coherent underpinning to Jung's erotic phenomenology, and offering an *erotic quaternio* not otherwise found in the literature.

Together, the *rapprochement* between Jung's alchemical thought and *tummo* unearths a particular solution to the relationship between the sacred and sexual that, arguably, *is* present in Jung's late thought. It has remained somewhat latent and obscured, however, perhaps because of its heretical quality (from a Christian perspective), which would have caused somewhat of an agonising complex for Jung and Classical Jungians. The current encounter with *Naropa's Six Dharmas*, I argue, brings this complex and (its hidden solution) to the surface more clearly, and it is articulated in Chapter Thirteen.

Chapter Eleven

Preliminary Critiques

Although the space between the spiritual and sexual described by Jung in his split from Freud does present somewhat of a lacuna, the paucity of research is relative rather than absolute. Some Jungians have taken up Jung's brief but potent writings on the theme directly (e.g. Hillman, 1996; Qualls-Corbett, 2022; von Franz, 1964; Wallace, 2024), while a few have evolved his indirect implications regarding it in his alchemical work (e.g. von Franz, 1980; Roth, 2015-2021). Others have taken the approach of elaborating on anima/animus ideas (e.g. Monick, 1987; Ulanov, 1971; Ulanov & Ulanov, 1994), while others developed their own approaches adjacent to (but not within) Analytical Psychology (e.g. Aziz, 2007), amplifying through myth and history (Hillman, 1966, 1996; Qualls-Corbett, 1988) or "looking Eastwards" (Aziz, 2007; Haule, 2012). The positions of these authors will be touched on throughout this chapter as they articulate the topic's current theoretical landscape, having evolved from the mythic situation Jung described in his break from Freud, thus reflecting its wider psychosocial importance. Certain features of the myth have been advanced into sharper relief and others left dulled, murky, shrouded or undifferentiated. The distinctive ways in which the findings of the current thesis cut through and contact these features of the terrain outline its contribution.

An Alchemical Background

An essential source of orientation for these authors comes from Jung's (1946/1954) short yet loaded passage on "erotic phenomenology" (CW16, par. 361) in *The Psychology of the Transference*. Although compact, his lines contain a concentrated dose of his attitude on the subject. It tends, then, to be a touchstone for Jungian authors from which amplifications, admonitions, and applications uncoil themselves. As such, it is worth establishing an

understanding of Jung's passage on erotic phenomenology first before we embark on re-evaluating it through the insights built up in the thesis so far.

Jung's erotic phenomenology arises in his approach to the question of transference through alchemy. From an alchemical point of view the *coniunctio*, or "mystic marriage", is core. Jung writes that the term refers to 'what we now call chemical combination, and that the substances or "bodies" to be combined were drawn together by what we would call affinity' (CW16, par. 353). It is important to note that "affinity" means some kind of *charge* but not necessarily a positively valanced one. As he writes at the beginning of *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, the coming together of two opposing factors in a *coniunctio* may be 'either confronting one another in enmity or attracting one another in love' (1955-56/1989; para 1). He then makes the interesting claim that the *coniunctio* relates to human, especially erotic, relationship, and associates a list of related terms to illuminate further (*nuptiae, matrimonium, coniugium, amicitia, attractio, adulatio*).

The *coniunctio* is important for modern psychology, Jung writes, because it is part of the "psychic background" upon which neuroses and psychoses play out. Psychotherapy must therefore be concerned with the *coniunctio* and an unknown, possibly psychophysically neutral, dimension:

It can no longer be denied that morbid disturbances of the psyche are not to be explained exclusively by the changes going on in the body or in the conscious mind; we must adduce a third factor by way of explanation, namely hypothetical unconscious processes.

(1946/1954, para 356)

This is crucial for the transference because inner unconscious contents can become projected upon outer situations or persons, such as a psychotherapist. In such cases (not all) the effect is ‘fascinating’ (para 364), compelling and cannot be ignored. Again, Jung alludes to alchemy to describe the spell cast by transference between therapist and patient: ‘this bond is often of such intensity that we could almost speak of a “combination.” When two chemical substances combine, both are altered’ (1946/1954, para 358). The “substances” being altered here are, of course, unconscious aspects of patient and therapist. But what *sort* of alteration could this be? Of what type? In answering this, Jung is clear in distinguishing himself from Freud: the transference is not *always* sexual, cannot be reduced to such, and the lively variety of its kinds must be respected: of course it *may* be sexual, but it may also be about the will to power, or a combination of both, or from “hungry” wishes to possess, or from the ‘instinctive negation of desire’ so that fear or self-destruction encompasses the relationship.

There appears to be somewhat of a contradiction around Jung’s statements on the “mystic marriage” so far. On the one hand he seems to be stressing the special importance of erotic charge (widely defined) as the unconscious backdrop to the therapeutic situation, yet on the other hand he is keen to distance himself from Freud’s insistence on the exclusive primacy of sexuality. This tension is partially relieved by the varied ways in which *meaning* inseparably infuses itself with biological impulse: different types of meaning produce discernibly different packages of symbolic erotically-charged phenomena.

Infusions of violet

After distancing himself from Freud by stressing the *eclectic* (not solely erotic) possibilities of the transference, Jung nevertheless circles back to narrow in again on erotic transferences specifically, but now carrying with him an important addition: such phenomena are not *purely*

biological and instinctual. Since biological instincts are powerfully modified by the individual's personality, their activation 'will take on a certain symbolical character' so that instinctual impulses are now associated (or complicated by, fused) with "meanings" (para 361). Those meanings will vary depending on the individual's psychology.

Having woven meaning into the erotic, Jung now appears to feel safer in sailing closer to Freudian ideas of the erotic being primary. He now states that the most vivid examples of these instinctual-symbolic types of transference *are* in fact erotic ones. Therefore, he is clearly taking a position that the erotic is suffused with the sexual instinct but not reducible to it – the erotic carries symbolic and diverse depths of meaning inherently within. He then goes on to describe that diversity as spread across four different stages, and that those four stages can be symbolised by four symbols of the feminine. In doing so, he claims, he takes his cue from those symbols known in the Greek late classic period⁵⁸ (400-323 BCE) and from Goethe.

With these alchemical and instinct-meaning details now in place, we can arrive at Jung's "touchstone" passage regarding the four symbols of his erotic phenomenology:

Hawwah (Eve), Helen (of Troy), the Virgin Mary, and Sophia. The series is repeated in Goethe's *Faust*: in the figures of Gretchen as the personification of a purely instinctual relationship (Eve); Helen as an anima figure; Mary as the personification of the "heavenly," i.e. Christian or religious, relationship; and the "eternal feminine" as an expression of the alchemical *Sapientia*. The nomenclature shows that we are dealing with the heterosexual Eros- or anima-figure in four stages, and consequently with four stages of the Eros cult. The first stage – Hawwah, Eve, earth – is purely biological; woman is equated with the mother and only represents something to be fertilized; the second stage is still dominated by the sexual Eros, but on an aesthetic and romantic level where woman has already acquired some value as an individual. The third stage raises Eros to the heights of

⁵⁸ *Prima facie*, this presents as a somewhat spurious claim in the sense that one of the four is the Virgin Mary, who by definition could not have been known in the 'Before Christ (BC)' era, as she was rather intimately involved with defining the *end* of that era, and the beginning of our current one, some three hundred years later! A broader interpretation of Mary to mean something like spiritual purity or religious devotion and piety is more apt, then, rather than a narrower focus on Christianity *per se*.

religious devotion and thus spiritualizes him: Hawweh has been replaced by spiritual motherhood. Finally, the fourth stage illustrates something which unexpectedly goes beyond the almost unsurpassable third stage: *Sapientia*. How can wisdom transcend the most holy and most pure? – Presumably only by virtue of the truth that the less sometimes means the more. This stage represents the spiritualization of Helen and consequently of Eros as such. That is why *Sapientia* was regarded as a parallel to the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon.

(par. 361)

These stage-images represent the symbolic meaning which libidinal energy is concocted with at each phase. Wallace (2024), citing Hillman, writes that these images are objects or containers, even mirrors, for Eros to travel into, through, and be seen by. If it is the energy of Eros that progresses upon an alchemical journey from the base to the sublime, then these images represent markers along that path rather than being Eros, the traveller, itself. Alchemically, they are the figments of meaning that infuse with the impersonal biological instinct to form inner symbols of transformation.

Wallace's recent re-translation of the passage does useful work in cementing the alchemical acculturation that carries across these stages. What is translated as "the cult of Eros" in the collected works he now translates as "the *culture* of Eros." This is helpful as it implies Eve, Helen, Mary and Sophia as phases of the individuation process subject to one's *cultivation*, rather than insinuating an historical niche group of worship around them. "Cultivation" rather than "cult" of course makes the passage more relevant to psychotherapy.

Wallace's translation also aids us in seeing resonances with the gradations of consciousness described earlier. With Eve representing red (instinct without spirit, -2), Mary as blue (virginal spirit which quells instinct, -1), and Helen potentially as violet (instinct and spirit combining

into an aesthetic sense vibrant with beauty, 0)⁵⁹, questions forms around the “colour” of Sophia. On closer inspection this also correlates. Referring to Table 2 (in the Chapter on *tummo* and the Six Yogas of Naropa), Sophia would align with the first sign of dissolution of the vital energies (“earth dissolves into water”). A qualitative change from colour to element is consistent with the qualitative change from personal to transpersonal dimension. This notion will be returned to shortly (in “nature beyond religion”), after more preliminary issues surrounding Jung’s “erotic phenomenology” are addressed.

The problem of homophobia

Jung’s statement that “we are dealing with the heterosexual Eros” requires clarification, as it runs the risk of labelling same sex relationships less capable of uniting the sacred and sexual than heterosexual ones. Such a reading would claim that his erotic phenomenology would be relevant only to heterosexual men and their relationships with women who hold anima projections of Eve, Helen, Mary or Sophia. In other words, it would only be a “masculine psychology” (CW7, par.328), and only a heteronormative one at that. A “female psychology” of equivalent symbols would be necessary and has indeed been offered by von Franz (1964), for instance, who suggests Tarzan/Shelley/Lloyd-George/Gandhi as a masculine erotic phenomenology). Either way, the problem is the same: attraction is between heterosexual pairs of individual and their symbol.

Robert Aziz (2007) elaborates a theory that appears to prioritize heterosexuality. Not only does this seem jarring with liberal values, it is also distinct from another (preferred) interpretation in

⁵⁹ It may be noticed that the sequence of stages is altered here: rather than Eve-Helen-Mary as given in Jung’s passage, it becomes Eve-Mary-Helen, when the gradations of consciousness idea is applied. This apparent anomaly will be returned to in the next chapter. Suffice to say, for now, Helen (violet) appears to represent a “secret path”, easily skipped over in pursuit of spiritual purity (Mary). If doubled back towards and taken, however, after Mary, it seems to correlate with a tantric dimension of the sacred-sexual, complementary to the instinct-spirit dimension. This will be mapped into a *quaternio* in the next chapter.

Jung consistent with tantric *Vajrayana* and *tummo*. Aziz constructs a theory of “sexual alchemy” as part of developing what he terms *The Syndetic Paradigm* – a third position transcending the problematic paradigms of Jung and Freud. He writes that ‘the Syndetic Paradigm holds that in matters of sexual love, men and women are called upon by nature to know each other’ (p.184) in both transpersonal and personal dimensions, and that ‘the starting point of all relationship typically is the transpersonal. Man meets woman, woman meets man’, ‘...the man and woman begin to live together...’ (p.185), that ‘when people first come together as a couple...they are inclined to be with that which exists between them as *man* and *woman*’ (p.187). This raises the obvious questions,

a) from a liberal pluralist perspective, what about “man meets man, woman meets woman?”

Can same sex relationship not hold transpersonal potency too?

and,

b) from a Jungian perspective, what’s happening here with the woman in the man and the man in the woman? If I’m meeting my contrasexual other in my partner, what about the contrasexual other in myself? Is one not stuck in the trap of *projecting* one’s contrasexual inner-other, so that it is never found in oneself?

It can be argued that these heteronormative interpretations don’t fit with Jung’s deeper treatment of masculine and feminine in his alchemical work, however, and certainly not when brought into dialogue with the tantric tradition, of which *tummo* is part. The alchemical process is concerned with the repeated dissolution and coagulation of components, particularly pairs conceived as opposites. *Masculus* (masculine) / *foemina* (feminine) is listed as one of these pairs (1955-1956/1989; para 1). Jung later writes that successive unions of an active principle (sulphur), a passive principle (salt), and an ambivalent mediating principle (Mercurius, neuter)

“then produces the relationship of male to female as the supreme and essential opposition”. A circle, the totality, “is produced only by the synthesis of male and female” (para 656), these being understood as psychophysical elements. Therefore, Jung seems to be getting at something much broader and more profound than simply heterosexual romantic relationships. He appears to be reaching towards aspects of psyche beyond the mores of mainstream culture, individual sexual preference or gender: the masculine and feminine represent essential elements of a synthesis,

conceived by the adept as self-knowledge, which, like the knowledge of God, is needed for the preparation of the Philosopher’s Stone. Piety is needed for the work, and this is no other but knowledge of oneself.

(par. 657)

In other words, “masculine” and “feminine” are being understood as a *psychoid* phenomenon, aspects of a psychophysically neutral language. They could pertain to the *subtle* rather than the *coarse* body. This helps flesh out Samuels’ (1984) call for understanding anima/animus’ connection to body as occurring at a what he calls a “deeper level”. The deeper level, based on this thesis, would be the subtle body. Samuels alludes to this finding in terms of “the imaginal body,” when he writes that,

psychology cannot be split off from the body. But the link is on a deeper level even than that of anatomical or endocrinological distinctiveness...a psychological body, a psychesoma, an imaginal body even – providing a whole range of experiences. Sometimes, this imaginal body provides crossover experiences, ‘masculine’ for women and ‘feminine’ for men...whether the body is anatomically male or anatomically female is less significant.

(p.13)

The difference from Samuels’ position is that such interplay ultimately occurs at the nature-based non-linguistic subtle (not a society-based linguistic) level. If this is so it would mean that

inner cross-gender experiences show up as processes in dynamic motion rather than static states, because their ontology doesn't derive from a Neo Platonic realm with essences but a process-oriented unfolding where nothing has independent existence, but existence occurs through interconnection with what is other than itself. It is indeed this quality of dynamic unearthing of the *other within oneself* which some find to be the case clinically. Marsman (2017) for instance, addressing transgenderism and transformation in the therapy room, writes regarding animus/anima that,

In general, but especially when working with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transpeople, I find it important to view anima/animus as function rather than fixed form. Anima, for example, would not necessarily be imaged as female but would instead be characterized as the inner other, that which carries the inferior function and draws one into a relationship with the unconscious, often carrying something of the erotic.

(p.682)

Dionysian synthesis & twilight language

This inclusive interpretation of Jung's erotic phenomenology finds additional charge when brought into dialogue with the tantric tradition. In particular, features of Dionysian synthesis, articulated in what is termed "twilight language", helps draw this charge out. These aspects relate to later stages of the individuation process, especially that of Sophia, and are captured in some of the writing of Ann Ulanov. She describes how re-uniting with the eternal feminine features at later stages of development rather than initial stages, at which earlier points the masculine side of the conjunction dominates.

The highest phase of confrontation and individuation in both sexes is initiated by the feminine: for the man, through the anima, which leads to the self; for the woman, through the feminine self, not through any contrasexual elements. The feminine, in this sense, is the completing element; it is the feminine which completes the individuation of *each* sex. The masculine initiates the emergence of consciousness from primary unconsciousness; The feminine initiates the completion of consciousness by re-establishing contact with the unconscious.

(Ulanov, 1971, p.269)

The essential equality of masculine and feminine, but a leaning towards the feminine aspect of the synthesis in the most advanced stages, is seen too in the *Vajrayana* tradition, which is considered a “higher” or “completion” phase of esoteric Tibetan Buddhism, only arrived at when more patriarchal, “masculine” phases of practice in the lower tantras have been established securely. As Stevens (1990) writes, quoting Padmasambhava, “the basis for realizing enlightenment is a human body. Male or female, there is no great difference. But if she develops the mind bent on enlightenment, the woman’s body is better’ (p.60).

Shaw (1995) summarizes the matter of gender in Buddhist traditions by drawing attention to matriarchal forms of spiritual relationship, which correct against the patriarchal forms of religious organizational hierarchies. She argues that the Theravāda tradition’s doctrine itself is egalitarian but overlain with the dominance of male monastic cultures which denigrate the female form. Regarding Mahāyāna traditions, arguments for non-duality reject gender as a false binary yet (as with Theravāda) organization structures shroud such arguments within power structures that have partaken in misogynist social practices. The Tantra tradition, she argues, takes a new approach: it emphasizes rather than neutralizes gender poles within a discourse in which,

technically men are considered to be of equal metaphysical status and value, but in the empirical realms of image and ritual women receive more explicit affirmation...The man’s divinity it is not given the same range of concrete expressions as the woman’s divinity in this gynocentric context.

(p.69).

Shaw’s commentary appears to reach the same conclusion as Ulanov (1971). She suggests that the Tantric tradition has an *intraphysic* onus for women, in that the connection is one of identity: they are entrained to unearth ‘the divine female essence within themselves’ (p.41), fostering a “divine pride” that – in Jungian terms – forms a bridge between ego and self. The tantric

tradition for men, suggests Shaw, has a greater accent on the *relational* – a relationship towards women defined by devotion, based on the view of all women as living representatives of female divinity, essentially sacred. Either way, for men and women, a path to divine vision of things – either of themselves in the case of women, or others in the case of men – is sought.

The tantric position as depicted by Shaw appears somewhat different from a Jungian model. In the former, contra-sexual elements of men are seen less intrapsychically and more interpersonally, and in the latter contra-sexual elements for both men and women are seen intrapsychically. Yet, they are both open to an egalitarian reading whereby their concepts and practices are both applicable to any. As will be seen, too, the Tantric tradition is open to views of the feminine as both inwardly spiritual elements of all genders, and concretely concerning women *per se*. Shaw's (2006) statement that femaleness relates to 'a special spiritual potency and...vessels and channels of the energy (*śakti*) that gives rise to life and well-being on all levels' (p.44) can be read both ways.

One explanation for the differences in accent between Shaw's interpersonal and Jung's intrapsychic tendencies is that the former has a sociological focus on remedying the historical account of Tantra as a system geared towards male practitioners, where females are subordinate, marginal, and at worst exploitable. As Rowland (2002), Samuels (1984, 1989) and others suggest, Jung's work did not prioritize female emancipation, but nevertheless may well hold within it various concepts and methods which in fact could further that cause. The nature of emancipation here seems primarily one of Dionysian synthesis: the unconscious (symbolized by female, Dionysian) is brought into union with consciousness (male, Apollonian), but as the former is far greater in sheer scale than the latter, the synthesis is naturally slanted towards it.

Activation of unconscious symbolism is inherent to the simultaneous multi-layered readings made possible by what is termed “twilight language” in Tantric texts (Dowman, 1984). This method of equivocal language speaks directly to the matters of (il)locutionary speech acts raised by the current methodology. Dowman explains that it is designed to enable enough enigma and mystery to hold capacity for ‘mind-changing verbal impact’, for if symbols such as *dakini* ‘are caught on the point of a nice definition she becomes a dead concept’ (1984, p.264). It is interesting that Jung, too, refers to the significance of twilight as a legitimate mode of the written word – reference to it found in the quotation below. His purpose for twilight, it seems, is therapeutic. He suggests that it encourages a warmer, more empathic state of mind in tune with the endeavours of psychotherapy bringing into balance the functions of thinking, feeling, sensing and intuiting. He writes,

The protean mythologem and the shimmering symbol express the processes of the psyche far more trenchantly and, in the end, far more clearly than the clearest concept; for the symbol not only conveys a visualization of the process but—and this is perhaps just as important—it also brings a re-experiencing of it, of that *twilight* which we can learn to understand only through inoffensive empathy, but which too much clarity only dispels.

(CW13, para.199, emphasis added)

Sharpening the points of “nice definitions”, psychologically, would skew the psyche further towards thinking and feeling functions and drive away sensation and intuition – such bias being for Jung a cause of therapeutic stagnation for those who already have such inclinations. His course of treatment of Maggy Reichstein, and the synchronicity of the scarab beetle, would be a case in point (Jung, 1952; Main, 2007; de Moura, 2014). Understanding the presence of twilight language and the therapeutic task puts a different gloss on Sonu Shamdasani’s comment regarding the presence of erotic charge in *kundalini* texts. He notes that,

one is left unsure as to whether this is a symbolic sexuality or concrete act. This is an especially delicate problem when one considers that the goal of tantrism is ...the transformation of physiology into liturgy.

(1998, p.44)

Uncertainty is indeed the point. Such ambiguity does not have to be interpreted as *failure* of logic or clear explication, but the ultimate conclusion of logic itself – an intellectual bridge into life-giving realms of apparent paradox and ineffability (Suler, 1994). Moreover, it can offer intentional interactiveness of text: the same words can store different latent meanings for different readers (or for the same reader at different points of individuation), to be unlocked at the precise moment of being read.

Summary and Conclusion

In sum, Jung's erotic phenomenology of Eve-Helen-Mary-Sophia holds alchemical assumptions by positing a psychophysically neutral backdrop of unconscious transference phenomena. It can be understood as coming close to Freud in prioritising the erotic, but distinct from Freud in embedding meaning inseparably *into* the erotic instinct. As such, it can be associated to the gradations of consciousness explored earlier in the thesis. A problem of homophobia is raised. Although this is arguably present in some strands of Jungian thought, a more inclusive erotic phenomenology is also available, which construes "masculine" and "feminine" primarily as psychoid elements of the subtle body. Engendering them at this level allows for greater flexibility and diversity in their appearance at the psychological (coarse consciousness) level: therapeutically, anima and animus appear as interactive functions (that point to the internal *other*) rather than fixed forms. That progressive, inclusive reading of Jungian connections between the sacred and sexual is given further definition when brought into dialogue with the tantric traditions, of which *tummo* is part. A sense of interactivity and dynamic is accelerated. Specifically, Dionysian synthesis and the use of twilight language

would be particular features, reinforcing the previous findings of language as Mercurius, the trickster archetype. These are relevant findings for contemporary Jungian discourse, as they provide a progressive alternative to some elements of conservatism and heteronormativity within Jung and some Jungians (e.g. Ulanov & Ulanov, 1994; see Samuels, 1984, 1993, 2003 for further critiques). With these considerations of Jung's erotic phenomenology made we can now investigate further ways it unfolds when the results of the dialogue between Jung's alchemy and *tummo* are brought to bear.

Chapter Twelve

Reconfigurations

To reiterate the argument so far: an early finding was that that applying conventional methods to resolving the sacred-sexual split repeats (rather than resolves) the problem, because they are reliant on the same basic concepts that cleave the split in the first place. Therefore, introducing an alternative collection of concepts (through Jung's alchemical model and *tummo*) is justified as an approach. Taking this approach, however, raised a number of fundamental issues to be addressed in order to avoid a Procrustean fate of these concepts being sliced to conform with pre-existing paradigms of thought. Firstly, distinct granularities of consciousness suggested different types of relationship between sexuality and the sacred at different levels, and a model of consciousness with its source ultimately in the psychoid "unconscious", beyond what is conceptualizable, and bringing one into connection with the present moment as a "spiritual monument." Distinct ways of experiencing such moments – Platonic and/or process – puts *experience* before *theory*. Examining the process of *tummo* more closely fleshed out its relevance for psychotherapy and its role in developing an additional understanding of *caelum*, Jung's second conjunction. Comparing the texts from which these ideas come was also found to be helpful for the cultural reception of *tummo* practice: it introduces an alchemical trend whereby a Jungian lens affords a helpful aesthetic sense to synthesise, and Je Tsongkhapa's writing a discriminatory device through which to analyse. Preliminary critiques of Jung's erotic phenomenology have now been made, which paves the way for the conclusions just summarised to be applied also.

The current chapter proposes to use the *Axiom of Maria* as an heuristic device for bridging some of these conclusions into an engagement with Jungian erotic phenomenology. As quoted by Jung, the axiom states,

One becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the third comes the One as the fourth.⁶⁰

(CW12, par.209)

As described previously, that slightly off-kilter fourfold patterning correlates with the alchemical model described by Jung. Moreover, as links between Jung's alchemical model and the Vajrayana system have now been made, the axiom of Maria also holds with a sense of the progression in the *Six Yogas of Naropa*: the preliminary practices of the coarse level (one) become the foundational *tummo* practices of the subtle level (two), from which the main practices of the extremely subtle level (three) lead to non-dual states of oneness (the One) which are holistic, encompassing all practice (including the additional auxiliaries), repeating what Purce (1974) calls the "mystic spiral" (fourth).

As well as such chiming with material already covered, *the axiom of Maria* is also suggested by the particular structure of Jung's erotic phenomenology: from the initial one of the basic biological sexual instinct (Eve) comes a second (Helen), where the erotic is elevated to the aesthetic, cultivated with an enhanced subtlety and meaningfulness; out of the aesthetic comes a third (Mary), when Eros is refined and manifested as religious devotion, untainted. In a conventional sense the transformation of the sexual into the spiritual appears complete in these three phases alone: the most carnal and base has become "the most holy and most pure."

⁶⁰ Remo Roth (2015-2021) writes that an additional last sentence is "Like this the two become one"; he reports this as missing from the English edition of Jung's *Collected Works*, and that although the Axiom of Maria is quoted several times in the original German, this second sentence only appears in par.187, footnote 160.

It seems somewhat of a mystery then, as Jung himself suggests, as to why the fourth, Sophia, is present in the series. How, he asks, could one go beyond the *most* holy and *most* pure in the form of this fourth, which stands for wisdom? It seems impossible in the sense that it is impossible for perfection (by definition) to be perfected upon, with Mary appearing to symbolise the spiritual perfecting of Eros. What could be “more” than that? Applying the axiom of Maria is instantly helpful here, as it suggests that the fourth – Sophia – brings the One too, a sense of unity and wholeness *in toto*. The instinctively sexual, the sublimely aesthetic, and pristine purity are all (somehow) encompassed, combined *and* surpassed by Sophia.

A sense of holism is teased out, a position which Main (2020) argues to be implicit in Jung’s late thought, especially around ideas of the self and *unus mundus*. While the more commonly described sense of phases, stages or levels is significant (e.g. von Franz, 1964; Wallace, 2024), that dimension of Jung’s erotic phenomenology does little to shed light on the nature of Sophia – a form of wisdom which “transcend[s] the most holy and most pure.”

Delving more deeply into the qualities of Sophia, through the prism of the Axiom of Maria, is the subject of the next three parts. Each part can be cued by one of the final three sentences in Jung’s erotic phenomenology. Close reading of this text will, I argue, reveal further applications for the thesis already developed.

Sophia: fourth as process binding three as one

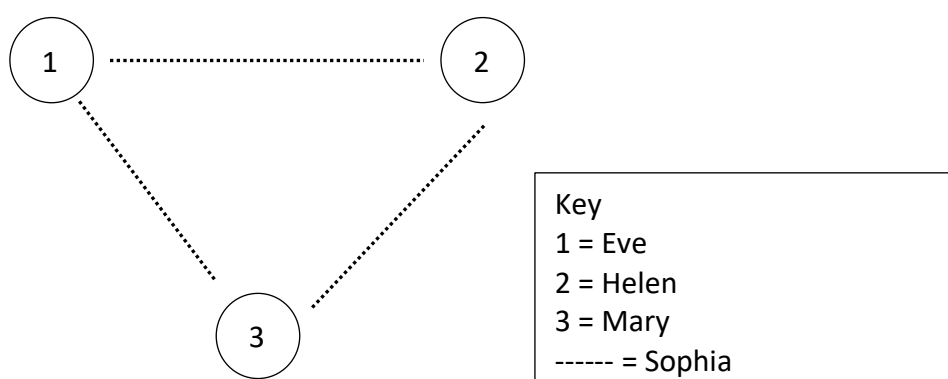
How can wisdom transcend the most holy and most pure? – Presumably only by virtue of the truth that the less sometimes means the more.

The first is that “the less sometimes means the more”. This suggests that whatever Sophia may be, she cannot simply be *more* of the same; she cannot be *another* symbol in the same way as Eve, Helen and Mary, as if she were it would be an addition. In other words, “more means more” not “less means more.” Jung therefore seems to leave a riddle: how can less mean more? One solution is that a shift of *category* is being suggested – an alternative *type of thing* that is potentially already here, but hidden and unseen. Seeing it, therefore, would not *add* any extra thing *per se*, but only make us aware of what was there all along. Shifting paradigm in this way would only be an addition of *wisdom*, i.e. insight, not an addition of *substance*. One is not adding another element but illuminating what is already present differently.

A paradigm-shift that fits this criterion is to move from *content* to *process*: Sophia addresses *how* erotic phenomenology *arises*, rather than simply adding to the list of *what* erotic phenomenology looks like. It thus points to the “eternal feminine” as a relational acting-into-being. It would be the generative process by which the image-containers of Eve, Helen and Mary are suspended in existence and ever-going *animation*. This idea is best described by Fig.15, which makes the category shift clear:

Fig.15

Jung’s Erotic Phenomenology Through the Axiom of Maria



Sophia can symbolise insight into the relational, dynamic, always-alive process that can be attained when the previous triad is stabilised in awareness, and which explains how that triad comes into being. As such she is “less rather than more” (she does not *add* another circle but shows how each previous circle is generated and what the relation between them is). By showing the process of relating she binds all together in wholeness.

This interpretation conforms with Jung’s notion of the *archetype* and the *archetypal image* as related and distinct. The archetypal ground itself is not thought as directly perceivable itself, but as experienceable through archetypal images as ‘a dynamism which makes itself felt in the numinosity and fascinating power of the archetypal image’ (1960/2001, para 414). Beholding Sophia as process shows the images of Eve, Helen, and Mary to not be static or concrete objects in themselves, but existent as arising from the dynamic ever-alive archetypal ground. As such, these archetypal images are shimmering, vibrant, living hologrammatic phenomena. They are certain typical processes that are ‘products of the unconscious in the widest sense of the word, namely dreams, fantasies, visions,’ (CW9i, para 309) existing in a *dynamic* psyche. Understanding Sophia in the way described allows Jung’s sense of a dynamic (rather than static) psyche to be appreciated. Without interpreting her as such, the whole constellation of four risk being interpreted as solid non-dynamic objects, open to the reification and hypostatisation Jung argues against consistently throughout his work (e.g. Jung, 1932/1998). This interpretation of Sophia is supported by Henry Corbin (2014), who writes that she is the divine *ousia* (essence),

she is not therefore a hypostasis herself, but she has the power to create of herself a given hypostasis and to constitute its life. That is why, strictly speaking, there is no quaternity (the symbol that attracted Jung so strongly)...The world, our cosmos, is produced in the Image of this eternal, divine Sophia.

(pp.144-145).

Fig.15 conveys the lack of quaternity described by Corbin: the fourth is process, of a different order. This ontology chimes too with Madhyamaka (“middle way”) philosophy, which Mullin (1996) describes as encompassing the Tantric mind-body system deployed by Tsongkhapa in the *Six Yogas*. Again, a hologramlike existence is entailed:

All the various objects of experience
 Are like the moon reflected in water –
 Neither really true nor really false
 Those appreciating this do not lose the view

(p.57)

The erotic quaternio

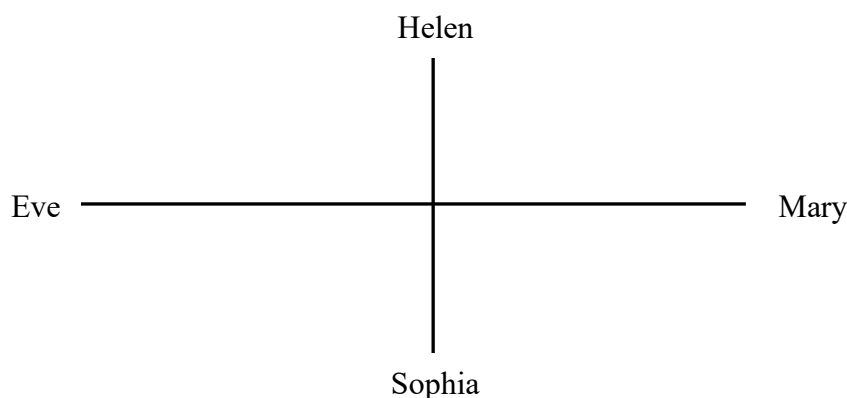
[Sophia] represents the spiritualization of Helen and consequently of Eros as such.

The penultimate sentence of Jung’s erotic phenomenology provides another riddle which on first reading seems to be a mistake. The natural response is to gloss it over or explain it away. Instead of describing the fourth stage, Sophia, as what goes beyond the third stage, Mary, he unexpectedly writes that Sophia represents a spiritualization of *Helen*, the second stage. This is strange in itself, but becomes even more curious when it is remembered that earlier in the passage he seems to pair Eve (one) and Mary (three) together, skipping over Helen (two): “Hawweh [Eve] has been replaced by spiritual motherhood [Mary]”). As with the holistic fourth just described, these irregularities seem at odds with the usual interpretation of successive anima-images as stages or phases that linearly increase in subtlety of erotic-meaning as one replaces the last. The cognitive dissonance created by these two instances of leapfrogging tempts one to ignore it.

Closer inspection, however, begins to yield interesting results. If we read this not as an editorial mistake, but as intentional, a therapeutically useful arrangement emerges. Choosing to read Jung in this way puts Sophia, wisdom, in conjunction with Helen as symbol of aesthetic (“an anima figure”), and Eve (unrefined sexual urge) in conjunction with Mary (spiritual purity). To do so generates a *quaternion*, the cross-symbol which Jung reports to be common across alchemical texts as a structure for arranging conjoining pairs to create a “symbol of the sublunary physical world”⁶¹ (1955-56/1989, para 1), as described below in Fig.16. As with the ontological nature of the world “under the moon” depicted in the Madhyamaka philosophy above, the hologrammatic nature of the *quaternion*’s existence does not negate its truth, only that its truth is mutually dependent rather than independent.

Fig.16

Jung’s erotic phenomenology quaternion



Acknowledging this *quaternion* shapes out certain therapeutically relevant features of Jung’s erotic phenomenology. The Eve-Mary pole describes the so-called “Madonna-Whore complex” (Welldon, 2018), whereby a psychic split occurs: an instinctual, somewhat degrading “less than

⁶¹ “Nature, I say, when she turned about the golden circle that movement made its full qualities equal, that is to say, she squared that homogeneous simplicity turning back on itself, or brought it into an equilateral rectangle, in such a way that contraries are bound together by contraries, and enemies by enemies, as if with everlasting bonds, and are held in mutual embrace.” (Jung quoting Michael Maier, 1955; para 1, footnote 8)

human” state of biological sexual desire (Eve) is dissociated from a puritanical, sanctifying, mothering and idealising “more than human” state (Mary).⁶² As explored previously, sulphur’s duplex nature may stand as an apt symbolic element for illustrating this oppositionality. Jung’s discussion of it in *Mysterium Coniunctionis* is suggestive of the Eve-Mary split. He writes that,

Sulphur as the arcane substance was set on a par with Christ, so that for the alchemists it must have meant something very similar...Certainly there could be no greater disparity than that between the holiest conception known to man’s consciousness and sulphur with its evil-smelling compounds...

(1955-1956/1989, par.145)

Jung describes sulphur as the “motive factor in consciousness”, which splits into the will on one hand, aligned with reason and spirit, and compulsiveness and impulse on the other, the latter being ‘the thwarting of our conscious will and of our reason by an inflammable element within us, appearing now as a consuming fire and now as life-giving warmth’ (1955-1956/1989, par.151).

Rather than opposing instinct with spirit, the Helen-Sophia pole appears to relate to the transformation of beauty into wisdom. This is an additional alchemical dimension missed by Stevens’ (1990) reading of Tantra, but is integral to both Jung’s alchemical project and *tummo*. For Jung, transforming the inner “inflammable element” from “consuming fire” to “life-giving warmth” was a personal as well as theoretical preoccupation. Personally, Catrin Clay (2016) describes the erotic impulses that consumed Jung and caused disruption in the early years of his marriage, which were then channelled through meaningful relationships with women (primarily Toni Wolff) that held life-giving *anima* functions. Theoretically, Paul Bishop

(2008b) traces a line from Jung to Schiller and Goethe, arguing for a deep connectivity between German classical aesthetics and anima-charged spiritual wisdom of nature itself. Parallels with *tummo* and *kamamudra* arise here, with Vajrayogini holding obvious symbolic parallels with Helen, harnessing libidinal energy for sacred ends, forging paths to the wisdom insights of illusory body and clear light mind. The motif of transforming base instinct into spiritual cure is shared:

...prevalent and truly characteristic of alchemy was the optimistic notion that this creature of darkness was destined to be the *medicina*, as is proved by the use of the term “*medicina et medicinus*” for the untrustworthy sulphur...What in one place is a river of grace is a deadly poison in another – harbouring within it, however, the potentialities of healing.

(Jung, 1955-56/1989, par. 148)

How do these two aspects of Sophia – as process, and as enabling a *quaternio* – help understand the way the erotic quaternio is used by Jungians today, and how it might be used differently? To answer this question it will now be applied to two prominent authors who have addressed this area: Nancy Qualls Corbett in her book, *The Sacred Prostitute: Eternal Aspect of the Feminine* (generally aligned to the Classical School of Analytical Psychology), and James Hillman, in *Pink madness, or Why does Aphrodite drive men crazy with pornography?* (representing Archetypal Psychology).

Case studies: applying alchemical instruments

The culturally endemic splitting of the sexual from the spiritual is a theme picked up by Nancy Qualls Corbett in her book, *The Sacred Prostitute: Eternal Aspect of the Feminine*. She echoes Jung’s words on sulphur and its duplex quality, on one face divine and the other degraded. She asks,

What has happened to our understanding of the goddess, the divine feminine, in contemporary times? Why is woman's sexuality so exploited, so debased, when once it was revered? How can men come to know and to value the deeper meaning of femininity? *And why is sexuality cut off from spirituality, as if they were opposites?*

(1988, p.12-13, emphasis added)

Qualls Corbett addresses these questions through evoking the archetypal image of the sacred prostitute, which evokes the aesthetic (Helen) to mediate the instinctive (Eve) and spiritual (Mary). In antiquity, temples to goddesses of love, passion and fertility, known by different names in different cultures (Ishtar, Inanna, Anahita, Isis, Aphrodite, Venus), would house 'holy courtesans', temple prostitutes who 'throughout their entire life...exercised sacred prostitution like a religious duty which aimed at their becoming one with the goddess' (Souli, 1997, p.42). Like Christ, writes Qualls Corbett, the sacred prostitute was a liminal intermediary between the human and god realm. Making incarnate the sensual, sovereign, relational, aesthetic and passionate qualities of the goddess, she would enter into religiously erotic, sexual and ritual acts with strangers who came to worship the goddesses of love. The stranger too, Qualls Corbett (1988) suggests, is an archetypal figure:

[He is] an image found often in myths, religion and fairy tales, as well as dreams, pointing to an aspect of the unconscious which breaks through into consciousness to instigate change. Whenever it appears there is indeed a feeling of strangeness, as something "other than" enters in and the numinosity of the divine is experienced.

(pp.74-5)

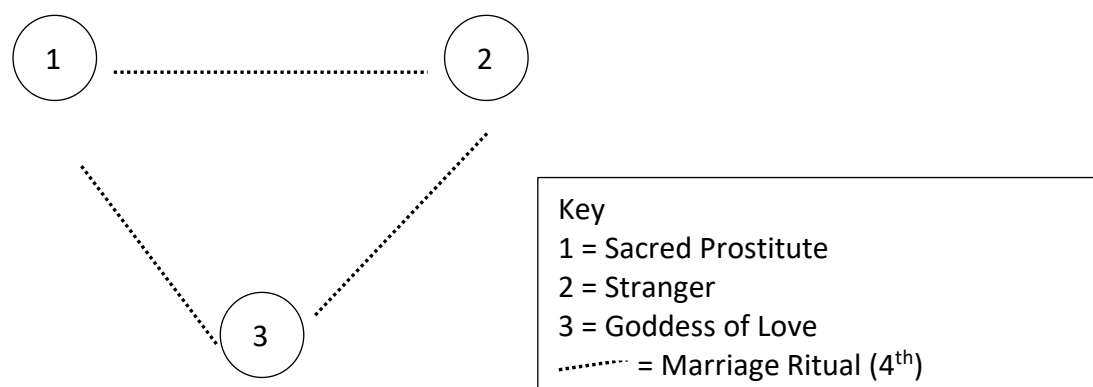
After the goddess of love, the sacred prostitute and the stranger, the fourth element Qualls Corbett brings into the archetypal drama is the marriage ritual: the sacred union of male and female element, 'a mystical process by which disconnected elements are joined together to form a whole.... [Here] sexuality and spirituality are integral aspects, each drawing vitality from the

other' (p.79), see Fig.17. She references Jung's casting of this in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, whereby spirit is 'earthed' and earth 'sacralised'.

In line with the interpretation above through the *Axiom of Maria*, the fourth of the marriage ritual is a *process* that unites and constellates the preceding three archetypal elements into a dynamic whole. As such, the marriage ritual completes an archetypal patterning that re-connects with the vitality of the erotic-as-spiritual, addressing the deadening, dulling, and depressive symptomatology in which erotic charge is split from spiritual life. The whole is animated into oneness by the fourth as a process that springs them all into living action. Again, a constellation is indicated whereby three archetypal images are contained, connected, and completed, "made whole", through a fourth archetypal process. In Wallace's terms, there is a pattern of *acculturation* rather than a forgotten and faraway *cult*.

Figure 17

Schematic of Qualls Corbett's "Sacred Prostitute", using the Axiom of Maria

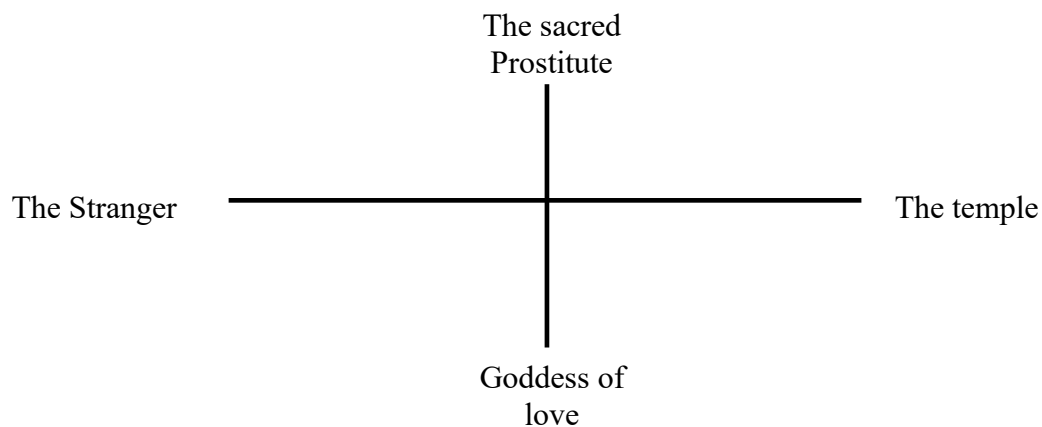


Qualls Corbett's approach to erotic phenomenology can also be expressed as a *quaternio* (see Fig.18). The stranger carries with him a biological erotic instinct (Eve) which comes into union with religious devotion and spiritual purity on entering the temple (Mary). There the sacred

prostitute (Helen), as the earthly incarnation of the Goddess of love (Sophia), completes the conjunction.

Figure 18

Schematic of Qualls Corbett's "Sacred Prostitute" using the Erotic Quaternio



James Hillman's work on pornography, like Qualls Corbett, leans on the anima-image of Helen. The aesthetic, as a mediating element, is evoked to resolve the split between uncultured sexual gratification and prim Christian religious devotion that Hillman sees playing out in modern American society. His mode of therapeutic intervention, evident in his writing (both style and content), is *lyricism*: forms of words crafted to rouse the aesthetic, perhaps dormant, Hellenic sensibilities of the recipient. The intended therapeutic outcome, it seems, is to cultivate a felt sense of softened, semitranslucent, rosy blush, which one may apply to the rigors and routines of everyday life. The sensory borders of living become gilded with a flush of imagination and romanticism.

The application of Hillman's lyrical technique to Jung's erotic phenomenology follows the Greek myth of Priapus (god of fertility and gardens, known for his large genitalia) and his birth.

Son of Aphrodite (goddess of love and beauty), Priapus was cursed by Hera (Zeus's wife, goddess of marriage, women, family) while in Aphrodite's womb. Hera's curse was driven by jealousy, sparked perhaps by Aphrodite being regarded as more beautiful, or because Priapus was the outcome of Zeus' affair. Hera cursed Priapus with ugliness, a sex-obsessed mind and for his oversized genitalia to be ever erect except, wretchedly, at the moment of intercourse. Priapus thus, for Hillman, represents the hardcore, "ugly", lewd, unimaginative pornography interested only in rudimentary biological release. As such it exists in the cultural wilderness outside civilized society, the latter being Hera's realm, where domesticity and family values are prized and jealously protected from such prurience.

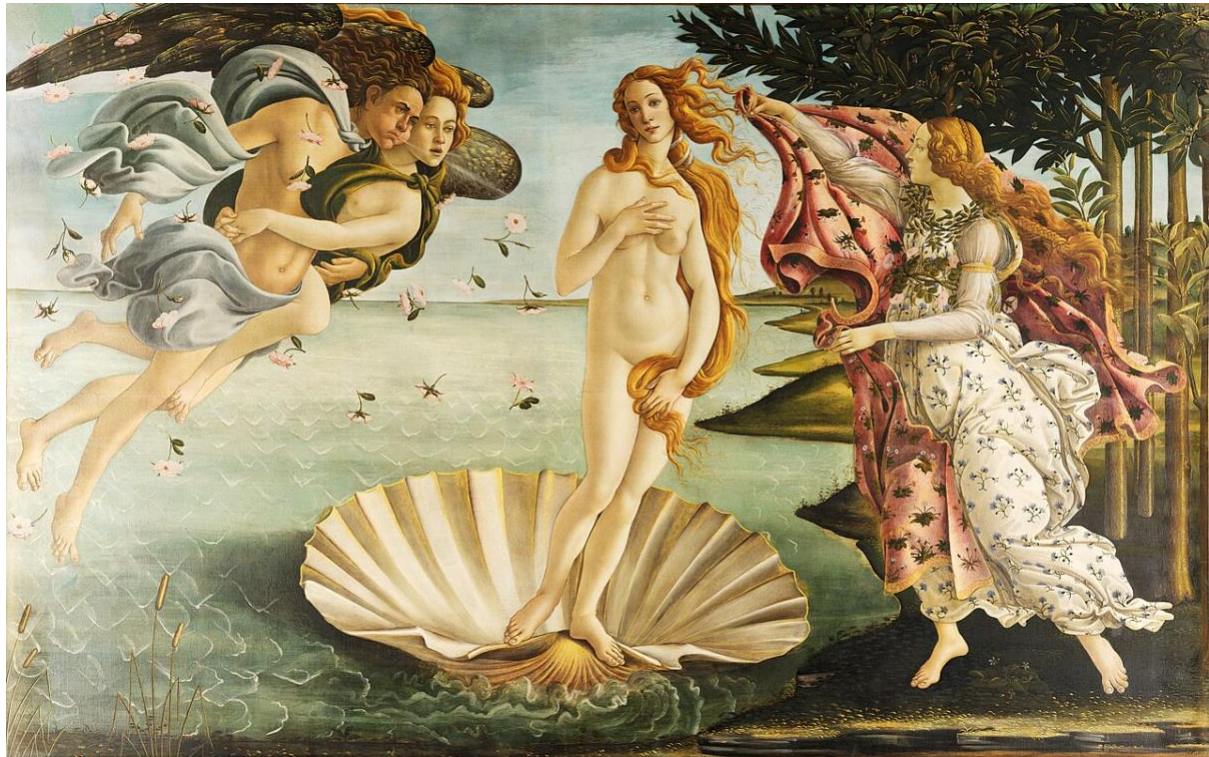
Hillman's intervention into this pathological split between Priapus (Eve) and Hera (Mary) is the evocation of Aphrodite (Helen) through a culture more permissive of softcore "pornography", which fosters an appreciation of beauty through the nude image. This is of course a call to resuscitate Classicism in the midst of consumerism, fascination with the nude image (male and female) being a heart chord of many civilizations, not least those stemming from ancient Greece and Rome. Botticelli's *The birth of Venus* would be a paradigmatic example (see Fig.19).

Hillman roguishly ventures that the nudity of Jesus, too, is an exercise in softcore pornography. Christ's nudity becomes a containing object for the erotic libido, making it resonate soulfully. 'Softcore,' Hillman states,

brings in Eros, softcore adds a glow to the secularization of sex... with a pink hope, a flash of beauty, desire for wings. What this evokes is erotic *pothos*: a yearning, longing for something far away, a desire for the absent that is never fulfilled... the light of Eros at dawn and dusk softens the brutal and banal day of facts with the sweet impossibilities of images.

Fig. 19

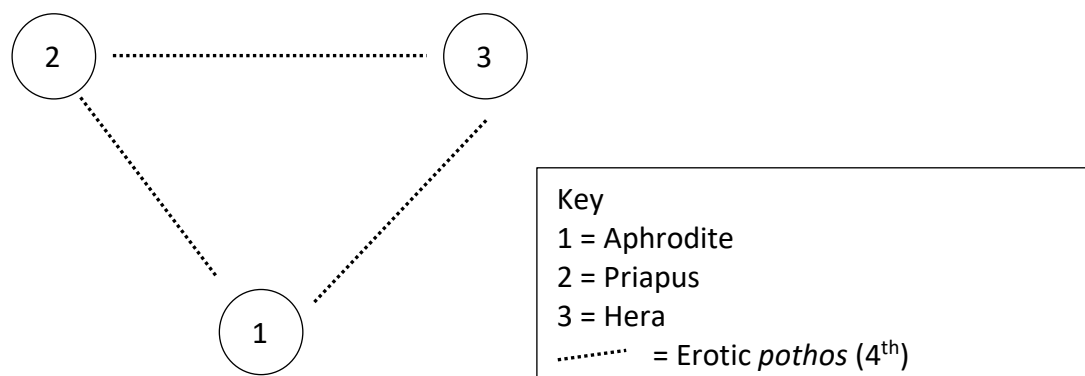
The Birth of Venus Botticelli, S. (c. 1484–1486).



Thus after Priapus, Hera, and Aphrodite, the fourth archetypal aspect Hillman references is *Eros* in the form of *pothos* – erotic longing, yearning, desire for an object that is being imagined but is out of reach. *Pothos* appears to be of a different category than the archetypal images of Priapus, Hera and Aphrodite, instead referring to a particular feeling tone that becomes activated towards an image-object, rather than being an image-object itself. Thus, interestingly, Hillman's analysis of the problem of pornography, and its solution, suits being formulated into the Axiom of Maria patterning, as used previously (see Fig.20).

Fig.20

Schematic of Hillman's "Pink Madness", using the Axiom the Maria



Priapus and Hera stand respectively for the pathological de-sexualization of spirit and de-spiritualization of sex in cultures riddled with the consumption of hardcore pornography. With that split comes the breaking of *pothotic* enchantment – the Erotic is either satisfied functionally by what is readily attainable (Priapus/Eve), or dissociated from as morally impure (Hera/Mary); either way, the feeling tone of yearning is not held. Aphrodite provides a third image which sets up the triadic solution; re-establishing ground for yearning, an aesthetic sensibility (Helen) which can contain the enantiodromic tension between Priapus and Hera. If Aphrodite performs the transcendent function here, then *pothos* provides the connective tissue, or fascia, for maintaining a suspension of these elements interplaying in a state of active imagination, thus providing a fourth process-element (rather than another containing object).

However, Hillman appears to *collapse* Sophia into Helen, undifferentiated, as if they were the same phenomenon. His approach to the matter of erotic-as-spiritual doesn't appear to hold them as a conjunction, as a Jungian *erotic quaternio* (as presented above) suggests. Such a collapsing into one another appears consistent with Hillman's underlying assumptions regarding language

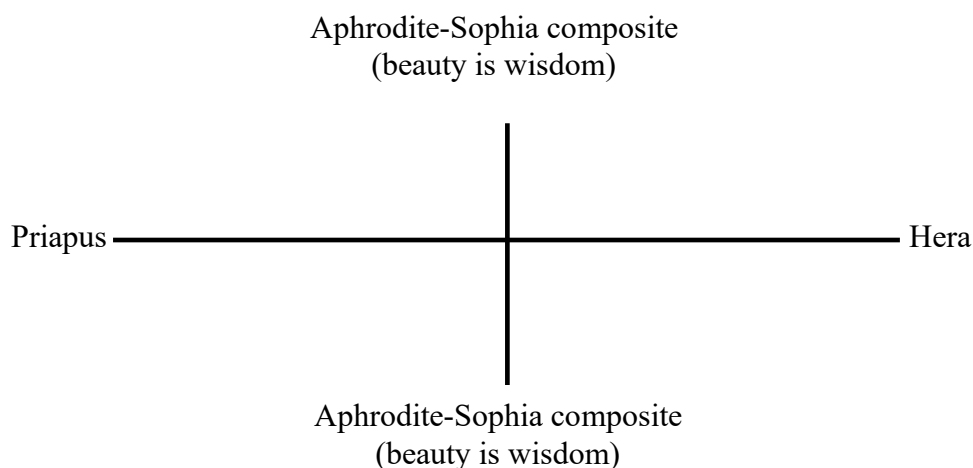
and reality, Cheetham (2015) writing that he would see language as a fundamental feature of reality itself or, quoting the poet Robert Kelly, ‘language is the ocean in which we live’ (p.210).

A crucial distinction between the Archetypal Psychology and Vajrayana position on language, consciousness and reality emerges here: while the Vajrayana position depicted in this thesis would not disagree with the idea that “language is the ocean in which we live”, it would also insist that an ocean bed exists, as indeed does dry land, and the sky. How could an ocean exist without those things that it is not? Thus although we cannot linguistically live in those places, their existence is a supporting condition of the ocean’s existence. An ocean (language) cannot exist without what is not ocean (non-language). Hillman’s position seems to forget that interdependency, and imagine the ocean could stand alone, independently of its conditions, with no bed, sky or land to distinguish itself from (and thus distinguish itself at all). Hubris indeed!

Putting this distinction between the Archetypal Psychology and Vajrayana in terms of the erotic quaternio, the Vajrayana position insists upon a *polarity* between Helen and Sophia as distinct poles defining one axis, whereas Hillman’s position collapses that axis into one singular data point in which Helen and Sophia are synonymous, undifferentiated, and in fact one. Graphically, this would look like Fig.21 below.

Fig. 21

Schematic of Hillman's "Pink Madness", using the Erotic Quaternio



From the Vajrayana perspective the relationship between Aphrodite (Helen) and Sophia changes in relation to levels of consciousness. At the coarse level there may be disconnect or discrepancy. At the subtle level a certain synchronicity between the two is approached: wisdom becomes embodied in states of heightened bliss. Then, only at the extremely subtle level do these poles collapse into each other as one, non-dual transcendence of dualities having been achieved. Prematurely collapsing these poles at more gross levels of consciousness helps explain the relative ineffectiveness of Archetypal Psychology as a therapeutic intervention. It is a potential form of what John Welwood describes as “spiritual bypassing,” that being ‘the tendency to try avoid or prematurely transcend basic human needs, feelings and developmental tasks’ (2000, p.64). Hillman’s ontology attempts, through language, to catalyze what in the Vajrayana tradition would be extremely subtle states of consciousness. There may be some intermittent successes in raising consciousness for those who happen to be primed, ready to receive such mergers of beauty and wisdom, but the odds are stacked against it: a balancing of the Eve-Mary pole and a level of embodied synchronizing of the sacred and sexual needs to be

in place for it to occur. Therefore such therapeutic techniques will be effective in only a small number of cases.

Serious problems emerge from collapsing Helen and Sophia, I would argue. Specially, it makes Archetypal Psychology struggle to differentiate between what Main (2022) calls “naïve enchantment” and the more therapeutically bona fide reenchantment of late-stage individuation. Whereas the former is a regression away from the world of fact, the latter enfolds fact into a deeper sense of creative engagement with the world. Worse still, Hillman’s position enables high levels of false positives, whereby naïve reenchantment is taken for mature (late-stage individuation) reenchancement, mistaking the former for the latter, meaning that fantasy and imagination can function as a means of floating away from contact with reality rather than being a means of creative, life-seeking, affirming engagement with it.

A prime example would be bereavement. An example of naïve enchantment in this context might often occur with the emerging phenomena of so-called griefbots, deadbots, and postmortem avatars, ‘AI-solutions in the digital afterlife industry’ (Hollanek & Nowaczyk-Basińska, 2024, p.63), whereby the “digital remains” of the deceased (their social media posts, emails, etc.) are used to generate a digital representation of them that the bereaved can interact with via artificial intelligence. Although potentially useful in some circumstances, it is also feasible for these acts of “artificial imagination” to pathologically interrupt the grief process, suspending the bereaving in an *ersatz* state of connection, preventing the working through of stages of grief such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance proposed by Kübler-Ross (1969). In these instances there is a sense of regression, a wish to undo, a basic fact of external reality, and thereby avoid the deep pain it evokes inwardly. Examples of mature re-enchantment in the context of death, however, may be found in Joan Didion’s aptly-named

2003 book on the death of her husband, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, or CS Lewis' 1960 *A Grief Observed*, following the death of his wife. Didion's conscious awareness of her thinking as magical (that she must keep his shoes as he will return, for instance) illuminates the edges of the unconscious and its irrationality that surface in amidst the pain of grief. Lewis' engagement with the pain of grief and the meaning of God and spirituality in the context of carrying on with the everyday, again describe phenomena that are uniquely felt, but collectively resonate.

It could be argued that the distinction being made between naïve and late-stage reenchantment is merely one of snobbery, that of "low" versus "high" culture. That would miss the point however, which is that with Didion and Lewis' work (and the reading of it) there is an encouragement to turn inward, entering into the alchemical *prima materia* of one's own emotion in response to impermanence. That turn inward is, from the Jungian and Buddhist perspective, an essential prerequisite for meaningful change. It is likely that griefbots act to prevent this inward turn, reducing awareness of one's own mind and body phenomena even at the level of coarse consciousness in the *Vajrayana* system. If so, an even coarser granulation of consciousness is encouraged which is consistent with Yurchak's (2006) notion of hypernormalisation, whereby one acts *as if* a failing system is working normally, that one can carry on with this normality, when in fact it is a falsehood that covers over reality, and perpetuates a dysfunctional status quo. From the wisdom of acceptance of reality comes the beauty of creativity: the poles of Sophia and Helen are activated in tandem, and the "alchemical" axis of the *erotic quaternio* expressed. Doing so shines a light on the final sentence of Jung's erotic phenomenology, which provides the starting point for the final chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter has interpreted Jung's erotic phenomenology in a way consistent with the current thesis. In doing so a reconfiguration of its therapeutic application is presented, which is argued to be more effective than the interventions of the dominant archetypal school. This conclusion has been reached via the axiom of Maria, used as a device for close reading the last three lines of Jung's erotic phenomenology. Firstly, it revealed Sofia to be the feminine emanation of wisdom *as a process*, binding as one spiritual purity, aesthetic beauty and biological instinct. Secondly, it suggested a clinically useful *quaternio*, with biological instinct in opposition to moral purity as one pair (the sutra pole), and aesthetic beauty in opposition to wisdom in another pair (the Tantra pole).

These two instruments were then applied to the work of Qualls Corbett and Hillman in the area of the sacro-sexual relationship. Doing so appeared helpful in deciphering the content/process elements and opposite-framings inherent underneath the surface of their writings. These instruments may therefore be helpful in reading other post-Jungian authors too. Using the *quaternio* as a tool for critique, I went on to argue that it shows Hillman's archetypal psychology collapses aesthetic and wisdom as if they are one and the same. I claimed this has dire therapeutic consequences because it attempts to reach in and activate extremely subtle levels of consciousness with total disregard for the existence of gross and subtle levels. These attempts will therefore, I suggest, be more likely to fail than to succeed. Put another way, Hillman's techniques seem to hold little capacity for discerning naïve enchantment and spiritual bypassing from enchantment occurring at later stages of individuation and genuine spiritual progress. This was illustrated in through the subject of grief. Moving from these therapeutic concerns, the more theological repercussions of the third and final sentence of Jung's erotic phenomenology will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Thirteen

Nature Beyond Religion: the “time bomb” of *Aurora Consurgens*

“That is why Sapientia was regarded as a parallel to the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon.”

The central claim of this final chapter is that late Jungian thought inhabits a bind between an approach to the psyche, sexuality and the sacred that explodes conventional paradigms (as described in Palmer’s work in chapter two), but on the other hand holds fast to some of those conventions, the vestiges of which obscure his radical solutions to the problematic sacred vs. sexual split. That bind is suggested in the third and final sentence in his erotic phenomenology, then blown up into larger proportions in the third and final instalment of *Mysterium Consurgens*, penned by Marie-Louise von Franz at Jung’s request, concerning their retrieval and translation of the medieval alchemical text *Aurora Consurgens*.

Exposing this bind helps discern two streams of Jungian thought in operation today: that which Roth (2015-2021) refers to as the Neoplatonic, aligned with the Christian tradition and philosophically dubious (yet experientially invaluable), and the Hermetic, consistent with the *Vajrayana* system and a useful evolution of Jungian thought (as well as being another vector of individuation experience). Again, this framing does not need to *only* be one of competing philosophical models for the intellect, but more importantly (for the current thesis) *also* helps address the problem of (dis)connection between the sacred and sexual as it develops over the course of individuation, so that they come to be complementary models pertaining to different phases of the process. In addressing the bind between conventional and alchemical conceptions of the sacred and sexual an alternative type of connection with God develops, one epitomised

by synchronicity, and which overcomes the “psychological” vs. “real” convention in Palmer’s work.

To recap, we have so far understood the third-to-final line to mean that *Sapientia* – wisdom – points towards the ongoing and ever-alive *process through which* the symbols of Eve, Helen and Mary gain their existence, that existence therefore being hologrammatic and mutually dependent rather than static and independent. Next, the penultimate line has offered an erotic *quaternio*, whereby Eve is paired to Mary as Helen is paired to Sophia. Those pairings provide clinically useful oppositions (between sexual instinct and spiritual purity, and aesthetics and wisdom) as aspects that flesh out *eros*. It has been suggested that Hillman’s position does not recognise the Helen-Sophia pair (conflating beauty and wisdom together instead), thus limiting therapeutic effectiveness at least at the coarser levels of consciousness.

The Shulamite in the Song of Solomon

In the third and final line analysed here, Jung writes that wisdom represents the spiritualisation of *eros*, and that is why it is regarded as a parallel to the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon. Reference to the symbol of the Shulamite suggests a layering of erotic phenomenology beyond the bounds of Christianity, or indeed any named religion, but originating in, and regenerating from, the nature of nature itself. As Wallace (2024) writes, the Shulamite is a Biblical figure who is engaged in erotic love, and who also figures strongly in Jung’s alchemical treatise *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. There, we see Jung describing the black-skinned Shulamite as,

Priestess of Ishtar, [who] signifies earth, nature, fertility, everything that flourishes under the damp light of the moon, and also the natural life-urge. The anima is indeed the archetype of life itself, which is beyond all meaning and moral categories.

(par.646)

In evoking the Shulamite Jung appears to be establishing a sense of the sacred imbued with erotic charge and connected to the earth (anima, soul, unconscious dark night) rather than a purely moral sense of the sacred connected to the sky (animus, spirit, daylight consciousness). To underline this revolution (or re-conception) of sacred-sexual union he then describes the son of the black Shulamite (herself a daughter of Eve) as an “Adam reborn”. To stress that revolution of thought further, Jung quotes his alchemical source as describing the Shulamite’s son as an “old Adam.” The “old”, Jung suggests, is intended to allude to this Adam as Jewish. Such use of Jewishness is a rhetorical device, or code, to subvert Christianity, for he describes it as being a,

vessel for all those things a Christian could not or did not like to remember. So it was really very natural to put those dark half-conscious thoughts which began with the movement of the free spirit, the late Christian religion of the Holy Ghost, and which formed the lifeblood of the Renaissance, into the mouth of an allegedly Jewish author.

(1955-1956/1989, par.646)

Nature beyond religion: Jung’s and Jungian’s Christianity complex

Of course, in making this assertion Jung himself is taking the role of another “Jewish author”, introducing notions of *Sophia* that connects back to the soul, anima, and *eros* that challenge the norms of Christian orthodoxy. He concludes that this re-birth, via the Shulamite, into “old Adam”, is an *inner* transformation. As such, he is linking these ideas to his own alchemical model, which seeks such inward change. With the “Adam” born of this concept of Sophia Jung seemed to not only be reaching for some sense of wisdom beyond Christianity (as symbolised by Mary), but moreover one hallmarked with a particular connection between the spiritual and erotic, symbolically conceived.

In making these conceptual moves in the last sentence of his erotic phenomenology Jung is crafting a sense of alchemical change, a nonconformist strain of Christianity, that has heavy alliances with the Vajrayana tradition. He suggests this “correction” to Christianity through an embrace of Eastern thought fairly directly in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, after describing the “escape to freedom” derived from the alchemical art. The word escape, he writes, alludes to a state of imprisonment in opposites that one breaks free of. ‘The Hindus derive this as *nirvandva*, “free from the opposites,” a conception that, in this form at least, is alien to the Christian West because it relativises the opposites and is intended to mitigate, or even heal, the irreconcilable conflict in the militant Christian attitude’ (1955-1956/1989, para. 66). The connection between Jung’s alchemical Christianity to the East also comes indirectly through his mentioning of the Brethren of the Free Spirit, an heretical group of the Thirteenth Century who advocated autotheism (a non-dual position in which there was no distinction between creator and created being), denial of the necessity of Christ, erotic union with Christ, antinomianism, and anticlericalism (Cross & Livingstone, 2005). It is striking that those elements he indicates through mentioning the Brethren of the Free Spirit – non-duality, spiritual erotic union, antinomian qualities, opposition to spirituality-by-authority – open a plethora of touchpoints into the tantric parameters of Tibetan Vajrayana (Coward, 1998; Shamasani, 1998).

Von Franz’ (1957/1966, 1980) work on *Aurora Consurgens*, the third and final instalment of *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, seems to be enveloped in the Jungian bind between these radical alchemical ideas and Christianity even more so than in Jung’s previous instalments. As a highly influential thinker in Analytical Psychology, exploring her writing in greater detail allows us to follow the the logical conclusions of Jung’s original confusions with some clarity, in turn appreciating how these continue to pervade current thought and practice. Controversially, von Franz’ research suggests *Aurora Consurgens* was in fact written by St Thomas Aquinas, a

somewhat scandalous finding as the text contains heretical content completely out of step with the bulk of his theology, so central in building conventional Catholic and Western thought.

An implicit argument against (a)theism

In her alchemical commentaries, von Franz describes the attempts of St Thomas (and his mentor St Albert the Great) to work the concept of *nous poiétikos* into Christian theology. An Aristotelian idea that was developed by the Arabic philosopher Ibn Sina (known as Avicenna in European literature), *nous poiétikos* refers to the notion that,

within the cosmic reality of the world is a creative intelligence which exists in things themselves; it exists in the cosmos, it is created by God. God created the world and in it He created a creative spirit or, as generally interpreted, a creative intelligence which is responsible for the meaningfulness of cosmic events. This meaningfulness – the fact that the cosmos is neither chaos nor an engine which just continues in accordance with causal laws, but is also a mystery in which meaningful synchronicities take place – was attributed to the *nous poiétikos*.

(1980, p.186, underline added)

The underlined part of this quotation highlights God's causal role in creating *nous poiétikos*, a creative spirit, to be in the cosmos. In other words, the concept of God as creator implies the concept of causality – God caused *nous poiétikos* to be in the cosmos as without his creation of it, it would not have occurred. God as an agent of creative causality is important as von Franz goes on to suggest that causality, as well as synchronicity, does not exist in bare reality itself, but through the *interaction between* reality and mind: Reality itself, on this view, would be in itself causeless as well as meaningless. She writes that,

causality is not something that exists, it is simply the way in which we explain the sequence of events, a philosophical category. *The same applies to synchronicity*, the connection of the sequence of events in themselves is not known to us...it is a question of our own mental operations for *there is no meaningfulness unless we see*

it and if nobody can describe causality then it does not exist. Both depend on the mind which observes and can describe.

(p.187, emphasis added).

Causality and synchronicity have equal ontological status and occur through dynamic interaction of psyche and matter. It is important to note that this does *not* have to be a commitment to Idealism (as found in some Hegelian readings of Jung, e.g. Mills, 2024), nor is it Materialist (as found in some developmental iterations of Jungian thought, e.g. Knox, 2003).

The logical repercussions of von Franz' statements, however, *do* have significant repercussions for God's ontology as a Creator, as He is understood in the mainstream of Abrahamic religions and, indeed, as he is construed by atheistic scientific-materialism (Dennett, 2006). If it is being proposed that causality is something that cannot exist independently of the mind (which is the case here) then God-as-creator/causal force, too, cannot exist independently of the mind, because a creator God implies causality. Ontologically, on this view, there is no way of claiming that God-as-creator exists independently of psyche because his existence is dependent on the existence of a mind thinking Him. In the most theistically optimistic scenario, we would be creating Him as much as He would be creating us. The theistically pessimistic scenario (we are creating Him and there is no Him beyond) cannot be logically *proved* because we cannot get beyond our minds to check.

Therefore, the question of a creator God's existence in a reality beyond the human psyche must, logically, be left open – a categorical theistic or atheistic conclusion cannot be made. Epistemologically, however, we are logically forced to conclude that God-as-creator has to be a thought-form that is dependent on the human mind as his causal quality is dependent upon

the human mind: ‘if nobody can describe causality then it does not exist’ is then the logical equivalence of the statement ‘if nobody can describe a creator-God then he does not exist’. Therefore there is at least a minimum level of existence for God-as-creator in an epistemic sense, as a category of attempts to know about the world. To summarise the above logical argument, the following propositions are made in von Franz’ work:

1. God caused creative intelligence in things (including humans)
2. Causation does not exist independently of the mind

From these, the following two logical conclusions can be drawn:

- A. Ontologically, it cannot be claimed that a causal/creator-God exists (or not) separate to mind
- B. Epistemically, a causal/creator-God at least exists as part of knowledge-making processes

Von Franz states another two propositions regarding causality and synchronicity:

3. Synchronicity, like causality, does not exist independently of the mind
4. Causation and synchronicity are ontologically equal categories

With these propositions, a further third conclusion can be drawn:

- C. Synchronicity allows an a-causal human-God relationship

Synchronistic “God”: questions of knowing and humility

These conclusions hold a number of advantages. Firstly, regarding conclusion A, respect and tolerance for different types of faith is logically necessary, as no claim about a creator deity (or lack of) could be more plausible than any other. As Jung writes in the concluding paragraphs of *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, ‘Christianity...offers the lamentable spectacle of one great and many small schisms, each faction helplessly caught in the toils of its own rightness’ (1955, par.787). Secondly, regarding conclusion B, it is a normal and wholeness-seeking aspect of

individuation to conceptualise ideas of God, on the proviso that these linguistic representations are provisional and non-definitive attempts at articulating an inner experience that is ultimately beyond verbal transfer-of-knowledge processes ('it is uncommonly difficult for our consciousness to construct intellectual models of the reality we have received. Our hypotheses are uncertain and groping, and nothing offers us the assurance that they may ultimately prove correct', par. 787). Thirdly, regarding conclusion C, that sacred inner space which is beyond unambiguous articulation, a space for meaningfully knowing God, is protected, ringfenced by the concept of synchronicity, as distinct from causality. By resisting any closing down through verbal definitions then numinous engagement with life is allowed to remain open, amenable to new discoveries that upend previously accepted attempts at knowing ('the psychoid aura that surrounds consciousness...presents a world of relatively autonomous "images," including manifold God-images...debateable images from the psychoid realm...The existence of a transcendental reality is indeed evident in itself...that the world inside and outside rests on a transcendental background is as certain as our own existence', par. 786-7).

This puts forward a version of Jung in which a non-dual ontology and dualistic epistemology cohere. Epistemic dualism is of a non-problematic type, as truth-values of statements are accurately relativised by being nested within an ontology that recognises dualistic thinking as a facet of human attempts at knowing rather than an inherent facet of any reality that could exist independently of the psyche that seeks to know.

Instances which do not share these alchemical agnostic conclusions are rife within Jungian thought, from both atheistic and theistic positions. Of the former, we can consider an example from the writing of Wolfgang Geigerich, in response to the theistic variety, which he discerns in Jung's recruitment of Plato when describing archetypes. In his 2005 *Dialectics & Analytical*

Psychology: The El Capitan Canyon Seminar, Geigerich attacks what he sees as unwarranted metaphysical theism in Jung. He writes,

Jung's idea of archetypes metaphysically substantiates the psyche as a *Hinterwelt*, a positive-factual reality behind reality, and solidifies the belief that one could go behind the phenomenon (behind the myths, etc.) to positively existing noumenal factors that produced the phenomena....The only problem with this way of thinking...is that this legitimising assumption is itself not legitimate: for we are not permitted to invent a positively existing psyche behind psychological phenomenology. There is no such thing as a soul that produces psychological phenomena. The phenomena have nothing behind them. They have everything they need within themselves, even their own origin, their author or subject. "The soul" in my parlance thus does not refer to something real outside of, distinct from, and in addition to psychological phenomenology.

(Geigerich, 2005, p.44)

Giegerich is clearly making an atheistic claim that he does *not* think that something beyond psychological phenomena exists ("the phenomena have nothing behind them"), against a theistic claim, which would believe something beyond phenomena to exist ("the phenomena have something behind them"). In other words, there *is* nothing, and he *knows* it. This begs the question: how could Giegerich *know* there is nothing, in the same way he claims Jung *knows* there is something? If this noumenal realm can't be perceived, how can Giegerich know (decisively) that it is not there? His conclusion flies in the face of his own reasoning that one cannot make positive assertions about things that are beyond the psychological phenomena one's subjectivity is immersed in. In his categorical denial of the numinous he seems to be making the same circular argument as he reads in Jung's affirmation of it; he is going around the same circular argument, only doing so in the opposite direction. The strictly open, creatively unknowing position logically implied by von Franz is crowded up with untenable logical assertions that starve us, once again, of a precious non-verbal space of potential and possibility

– a non-conceptual zone that both alchemy and *Vajrayana* regard as therapeutic in a particularly deep sense, and arrived at in conclusion C above.

Having drawn out these logical conclusions within *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, which align it to notions of *tummo* described, it is curious as to the extent to which they are *covered up*. This perhaps speaks to a complex within Jung, alive in von Franz, and inherited by Jungian thought today, regarding radical ideas (here represented by a rapprochement with *tummo*) and conservative ones (here depicted as in Christianity). It is striking that Jung reserves the final paragraph of the final chapter of *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (regarding the self and the bounds of knowledge in the alchemical conjunction) to a comparison of Buddhism and Christianity, and their shared projects (reflected in his own psychology, too), of ‘draw[ing] man more into the centre of the picture as the measure of all things’. Referring to them as ‘the two great world-religions,’ Jung writes that man has been accorded a central place in both, but that Christianity goes further, ‘by the dogma that God became very man.’ This jars with Jung’s more consistent position of concretizing spirit and spiritualising matter (e.g. par. 764, 1932/1998, p.165), which could equally conclude that *Buddhism* has gone further, in the notion that man can become very God. He then ends with what seems to be a subjugation of his psychology before the authority of God Himself, writing that ‘no psychology in the world could vie with the dignity that God himself has accorded to him [man]’ (par. 789). Despite these public-facing, Christianity-intimating conclusions, Jung’s greater (yet more secret) allegiances may be found hidden in the *epilogue*, where a clearer loyalty to the life of the psyche itself, enlightened via alchemy, comes out. Invoking the alchemical dictum *in stercore invenitur* (“it is found in filth”), he describes ultimate unity, the quest for wholeness, coming from clinical observation of ‘the distressing darkness of the human psyche’, with all its ‘contradictions...grotesque phantasms...scurrilous symbols...[and] antagonistic forces’ (par. 790). Doing so presents one with a choice:

Could he throw them out and get rid of them? Or had he to admit their existence, and is it our task to bring them into harmony and, out of the multitude of contradictions, produce a unity, which naturally will not come of itself, though it may – *Deo concedente* – with human effort?

(par. 791)

Conclusion

This final chapter has addressed the final line of Jung's erotic phenomenology passage. His reference to the Shulamite in the song of Solomon suggests an heretical form of Christianity in which the erotic and sexual are deeply laced together as one. Hallmarks of this radical Christianity include a God in ontological interdependence with mind, whose existence (or lack of) cannot be proved independently of mind, and a God that appears known through our meaning-making processes. It is a sense of God that cannot be pinned down conceptually but can be known in a felt sense through synchronicity. These conclusions resonate strongly with ideas of the sacred and sexual in Tibetan Vajrayana. Although being a logical outcome, such conclusions appear somewhat hidden in both Jung and von Franz' writings, suggesting some complex around the nature of their own Christianity, at least in published form. Not surprisingly, then, these radical conclusions have perhaps been underplayed since. It is hoped that the current conclusion helps redress that oversight.

Conclusions

Claims and conclusions

This thesis has made a number of claims. Firstly, the core problem was presented regarding the split between the sacred and sexual in modernity. It was then claimed that Jung's reading of the fallout between him and Freud can be considered as a microcosm of that split, and that the underlying explanation for it is the foundation of philosophical assumptions upon which modernity is based. Therefore, a method that avoids those assumptions was required, and it was claimed such can be found with an arts-based methodology which nests logical analysis within the aesthetic. Keeping that method as guide, the research materials of Jung's alchemy and *tummo* were described, leading to the outcome that the latter had to be understood as part of a greater matrix, as articulated in *The Six Yogas of Naropa*.

Insistence on understanding *tummo* as part of a matrix yielded significant results, in that it produced a series of dimensions through which the question of the sacro-sexual relationship could be adequately addressed. These were i) the nature of consciousness, ii) its application (in psychotherapy and society), and iii) a subsequent re-reading Jung's ideas of Eros. The first of these proved to be the engine room of the entire thesis because, in particular, it demonstrated how the sacro-sexual relationship alters enormously depending on the granularity of consciousness and, in general, it introduced radical views of psychology that reframe modern debates on the mind body connection entirely. It introduced a psychology beyond death as well as within life, and a psychology encompassing nature itself, of which humanity is part. This engendered a host of clinical applications concerning affect in the body, the liminal space between personal and transpersonal, and the breath as psychophysical alchemical container. Socio-culturally, an alternative to the well-worn populist trope of *Eastern ancient wisdom meets Western modern science* was claimed. Instead, I argued that Jung's work can revivify

the essential poetic aesthetic that gets washed out in modernity's translation of Buddhism, and Je Tsongkhapa's text, in turn, provides the technical scientific precision that Jung's writing often lacks. Together, a potent synthesis arises which resists the popular trope.

Finally, a significant rereading of Jung's erotic phenomenology was argued for which summarizes a distinctive position within current Jungian discourse, claiming an ontological role for process over content, a *quaternio* that distinguishes a *sutra* and a *tantra* pole, and a radical view of synchronistic Christianity. Together, the claims in this thesis could be considered part of an emerging stream within (post)Jungian thought, potentially labeled "neo-Jungian (Hill, 2024) or alchemical (Main, 2022). It is hoped that this thesis advances such a position for dialogue in the field, possibly gaining traction since publication of *Liber Novus*, and offering an alternative to classical, developmental, archetypal and phenomenological trends.

Although sharing with the classical school an openness to spirituality and synchronicity, this thesis diverges philosophically, rejecting NeoPlatonic essences as timelessly unchanging, thereby rejecting an essentialism which often implies a certain conservatism. Therefore, a more progressive position has been argued for here, as can be found in the developmental school too. Whereas the developmental school emphasizes secular empirical claims that tend to eschew spiritual elements, however, the current thesis argues *for* the re-enchanting qualities of Buddhist ontology and takes a more open view to the esoteric and the parapsychological. The lyrical, magical, romantic qualities of such domains find some resonance with archetypal psychology, but again a major difference occurs. Whereas Hillman and those that follow might consider language to be a foundational feature of reality, the thesis developed here would suggest that there is a *reality* beyond language. This leaves the phonological school, which

draws upon the work of continental philosophers such as Heidegger and Hegel. Although concerned with philosophical coherence too, the current thesis draws upon a different philosophical tradition – that of analytical, rather than continental, philosophy, as is often found in Great Britain. Therefore, in carving this particular niche, the current thesis hopes to contribute to current Jungian discourse in novel ways, not least in further developing the bridge between East and West that Jung was so invested in building. A Jungian engagement in *tummo* meditation is a highly significant development of that bridge, connecting Jung's work with a major element of Eastern thought, which has been otherwise under-represented.

Limitations and future research

There are a number of limitations with the current study, not least the lack of engagement with *The Red Book* and *The Black Books*. Its nature has been extremely wide-ranging and free-roaming, to the point of ill-discipline, leaving me with the sense of inhabiting a wildly out of control jungle-like garden I have no chance of pruning or cajoling into something that neatly resembles a well-ordered tidy academic project. This is somewhat of a 'subjective confession' (Jung, 1935/1989, par. 275), in that it reflects my personality, and has a shadow as well as a strength. The strength, I hope, has been to pursue a Lovejoyian sense of transgressing the boundaries of disciplines in order to trail broader patterns and themes that hold greater truth-value and use beyond conforming to the "local customs" of their home discipline. The shadow, or weakness, of this approach is a shallowness of engagement with those norms and reservoirs of knowledge, even mixing separate cultures in a way that creates unhelpful overcomplexity and obscures genuine illumination. There may be a sense that these conclusions only *partially* "speak to" different parts of academia, but fully inhabit, or belong in, none. Its worth, therefore, may be limited.

These limitations could, I hope, be addressed by four directions for future research. Firstly, while studying it, I became acutely aware of to use Jung's term, "the veritable treasure chest" of possibilities and remarkable insights available within *The Six Dharmas of Naropa*, that extends beyond anything I could have imagined. Repeated reading offered layer after layer of fascinating material, and I am sure that further cross-referencing with other sources, in original languages, would reveal more. The current study has focussed on *tummo*, which seemed appropriate given its foundational status and functioning as connecting sinew across the *Six Dharmas*. The other five hold great interest as research projects too. Perhaps most urgently, from the perspective of depth psychology, would be dream yoga, which forms a substantial part of illusory body yoga. From the perspective of Psychoanalysis and Analytical Psychology the connotations are revolutionary, allowing the analysand to work with dream material live, *in situ*, rather than reporting on it from the waking state, *post-hoc*.

Secondly, I was surprised by the core position that consciousness came to occupy in this thesis. I had not expected it to play so key a role, coming to function as somewhat of a central channel through which everything – problems, solutions, applications – had to flow. The far-reaching nature of consciousness from the perspective of the *Six Dharmas* was a highly enriching input into the already fertile ground of Jungian alchemy. Further research into how these ideas would engage with the field of consciousness studies is indicated by these current findings. In the British Psychological Society's recent special issue of *The Psychologist* on consciousness introduced by Max Velmans, he asks whether consciousness is the "chimera" of psychology: a mythical entity, creatively composed of diverse parts from many beasts, and 'perceived as wildly imaginative, implausible, or dazzling' (2026, p.15). Citing Robert Kuhn's 2024 review of the over two-hundred theories of consciousness in circulation today, Velmans notes that most are non-reductive,

a sure indication that we are in a transition period from a conventional reductionist-materialist paradigm that views reality as entirely driven by blind, nonconscious, mechanical forces to a more inclusive worldview that gives full weight to the central importance of our lived human experience.

(2026, p.17)

Not wanting to add needlessly to the 200+ theories, the view of consciousness presented here in *Naropa's Six Dharmas* captures this move of the *zeitgeist* in an extremely sophisticated, rigorous, and reenchanting way.

Thirdly, I'm conscious of the lack of a consistent and concerted engagement with the research tradition of vitalism, which holds great potency for what embodiment in fact *means* therapeutically, and how it could be worked with effectively within depth psychologies. Whether drawing historical links with Jung's vitalist influences such as Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869) or making new connections with the philosophy of thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze (see McMillan, 2018, 2021), vitalism offers a clear conceptual path between Analytical Psychology and Vajrayana. The therapeutic consequence of making that link appears potentially significant, as it offers an academic position from which to critique the "linguistic tyranny" suggested by Toews (1987), which seems to have crept into some clinical practices, quite possibly leaving therapists and their patients stuck in the first conjunction of *unio mentalis* at best, without the somatic techniques and insights necessary to move to the embodied second conjunction.

The fourth and final proposed direction for future research comes from another surprising current finding – the importance of Christianity and theology. Personally, coming from a

secular background and researching in the secular environment of University, I was somewhat surprised to discover the depth of Christian theological matters in the research material, and the importance of taking these seriously. In my ignorance, and possible arrogance, I found myself swimming (possibly drowning) in matters concerning Thomas Aquinas, St Augustine, Manicheanism, and Platonically influenced Christian thought. For researchers more capable of swimming in these deep waters some fascinating points of parallel and of friction could be explored. It seems an essential part of the struggle that Edward Edinger and Marie Louise von Franz were immersed in with their own individuation, let alone Jung's. These are essential research questions for my own context of the United Kingdom, which of course has extensive Christian cultural roots, giving rise to moral and political philosophy that supports a society that values liberalism, democracy, pluralism, and the "broad church" of multi-culturalism that seems so vital to defend in today's global climate.⁶³

By coincidence, I am finishing the writing of this thesis at All Hallows Guesthouse, built at the shrine of Fourteenth Century medieval English mystic St Julian of Norwich, who lived on this site as an anchoress, and wrote *Revelations of Divine Love*. At the same time as she lived out her life here, in a distant part of the world presumably barely known to these shores, it appears Je Tsongkhapa was alive in faraway Tibet, Julian being around fifteen years old at the time he was born. Both died no more than a few years apart some sixty-two years later (Julian b.1342, d.1416-23; Je Tsongkhapa b.1357, d.1419). Thus with this concluding section summarising the efforts of the current thesis, its limitations, and its indications for future research efforts to

⁶³ The Vajrayana Buddhism explored here seems to offer a strain of holism which is by definition non-essentialising, offering a built-in resistance mechanism to racially essentialising forms of holism that support authoritarian fascist nationalism (Harrington, 2006). The dangers of essentialising holism seem intimated by the proposed Nazi expedition to Tibet in 1938/1939 prompted by Hitler and other high-ranking Nazi's 'convoluted occult beliefs' (Berzin, 2003, p.1), and Indologist Wilhelm Hauer's flirtation with Nazism, especially after *The Kundalini Seminars*, whereby he sought for his Indo-Germanic religious nationalism to become the faith of National Socialism (Poewe & Hexham, 2005).

correct these faults, it seems apt to leave the last words to Julian, who wrote them metres away, regarding the inevitable failures of concerted effort, even with the best intentions: “first the fall, and then the recovery from the fall, and both are the mercy of God.”

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