Dilemmas and Delineations: How did we get here?! (Part 3)

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So, as we've already said, what we mean by eros—the way we are using that term—is actually woven in and related to and indissolubly bound up with and connected to a whole range of other terms that we're using with specific meanings to form a kind of larger conceptual framework. There's a whole web of relationships and implied meanings there. So we can't really unpack what we mean by eros without beginning to include more of those terms and say a little bit about those other notions and a little bit about what the relationships are. But this whole edifice, this whole architecture, this conceptual framework will unfold gradually. There's quite a lot to it, in a way. So I want to begin doing that now.

Just before I do, I'm aware that I'm referring to what is now really quite a large body of work. When we think about all the material on emptiness and dependent arising and imaginal practice and re-enchantment and all that, it's actually quite a large body of work together with this piece on eros. So if someone who is coming from the Insight Meditation tradition or something like that were to just pick a talk at random and listen to that talk, they would probably be baffled, puzzled, probably even maybe shocked, perhaps even outraged. What is this? What is he talking about? What are they talking about? How on earth did we get here? These words—soul, eros, divinity, even the word God, cosmopoiesis, whatever that means—what on earth is he talking about? How did he get there? This is really pretty far out. And is this Buddhism?

Now, I've touched on that last question before. It may be, in some respects, quite an interesting question. In other respects, it might not be interesting at all. What's more interesting about it to me is why is a person asking such a question, and what assumptions and fantasies are operating for them, and what—in our language—what soul styles can we approach this material with in its relationship to, let's say, more conventional interpretations of Dharma. And I've talked about that before; I'm not going to repeat it here.

But just to say that I would say this body of material needs listening to, studying, practicing with—all that material around emptiness, but certainly around the imaginal material—in series. In other words, it adds up. And in that way, only then can a person see and understand what is meant in these teachings. But we'll also hopefully understand, if a person does that—listens, studies, ponders and practices in series—that there is what I would say an almost inevitable or natural evolution of this material. It evolved, if you like, naturally. The doors were presented one after another. The consequences, the avenues were traveled in a kind of logical or inevitable order. One insight, one opening led to another, and so on.

All based on what we might call the phenomenological approach, which is how I would base my approach to Dharma—very, very simple, starting with very, very simple practices, including ideas of mindfulness, but not based on the usual assumptions. This is what makes a phenomenological practice: not based on the usual assumptions, but based on just what do I have as a human being? I have experience. I have what appears to me. Phenomena means appearance. And just basing it on: this is experience, and what can I discover about experience?

And introducing into that very quickly, one discovers, oh, well, I can look at it this way, and I can look at it that way. I can relate to it this way, that way. So the ideas of ways of looking and fabrication eventually come out of that, because I see some ways of looking fabricate differently than others. So all this unfolds—very, very simple practice, just not based on the usual assumptions. Just suspending them, opening them, relating to what actually is here. Experience is here. Appearance is here. Without other assumptions.

And all this leads to other concepts and other ways of framing what's happening. And out of that comes a freedom and certain conceptual frames, or the availability to look in different ways and to conceive in different ways. If one doesn't understand all that...

If we press a little, if we investigate a little more deeply, we discover that these terms—self, matter, life—are actually quite mysterious. The more we examine them, the more elusive they become. What exactly do we mean when we say "I"? What precisely constitutes matter when we look closely enough to discover it's mostly empty space, energy patterns, quantum fluctuations? What is this thing we call life that seems to animate biological systems?

The same mysterious quality applies to words like soul, divinity, or God. They point toward something in experience, something we can sense or feel, but when we try to pin them down conceptually, they reveal the same kind of fundamental mystery that we find in our most basic, seemingly solid concepts.

So there's a kind of strange inconsistency, if you like, or perhaps an unexamined bias in readily accepting and using words like self and matter and life, while simultaneously dismissing words like soul or divinity as somehow less real or more speculative. In terms of their ultimate nature, in terms of what they actually refer to when we look deeply, they're all equally mysterious, all equally empty, and yet all pointing toward dimensions of experience that are undeniably present.

The question becomes: are we willing to open our practice and our investigation to include the full range of what might be available to experience? Or do we limit ourselves based on the current cultural assumptions about what's acceptable to acknowledge or explore?

This doesn't mean we have to believe anything in particular about these words or concepts. It simply means we remain open to what might reveal itself in experience when we don't foreclose possibilities from the outset. Just as we've learned to hold our sense of self lightly—recognizing its conventional reality

while understanding its ultimate emptiness—we can learn to hold these other dimensions of experience in a similar way.

The practice, then, becomes one of radical openness while maintaining the discriminating wisdom that comes from understanding emptiness. We neither grasp at these experiences as ultimately real nor dismiss them as mere fantasy. We allow them to arise and inform our understanding while recognizing their fluid, constructed, and ultimately mysterious nature.

But yes, but what do you mean by that? And if you kept pushing this question, probing with this inquiry, without a doubt it would pretty quickly reveal just how vague the notions of self are—but also the notions of life, and even matter. How full of assumptions they are, how often not well thought out, full, as I said, of assumptions and presumptions that don't actually really bear much scrutiny, much probing. And these can be pretty quickly revealed to be without secure foundations.

Even matter—I mean, you just have to know, well, maybe a fair amount about modern physics, and it's like, matter, this most obvious thing, at a certain point becomes: what are we actually talking about here? And when we talk about it, what are we assuming and presuming, and what is the basis for assuming that? Can we be absolutely secure in those assumptions? Or we find out that it's resting on a set of assumptions, or the definition itself—of self, of matter, of whatever it is—is full of contradictions.

All this applies equally to notions of divinity and soul. They're vague notions. They rest on other assumptions. Any assumptions—you push them deep enough and you're going to come to something you just have to assume without knowing it's an absolute truth. In other words, it has no secure foundations. And a lot of notions actually end up being kind of circular in their definition, as you'll see when we talk about soul.

In fact, that's probably true about everything. There's a kind of assumptionality and vagueness and kind of incoherence or circularity, self-contradictoriness about everything—anything you might name or point to or use as a concept or experience.

Okay, so all that as a kind of precursor. And I'm also aware, of course, that as I said, there's a lot of material here. There's a lot of material on this retreat. There's a lot when you add it to the other retreats and the whole thing about emptiness and imaginal—it's really quite a lot. And it's hard, you know, I appreciate it. It's hard to kind of keep it all in mind, especially hard if you're not practicing with this material in a really exploratory way. And also, a lot of these ideas are not necessarily always so simple or easy to understand, so I fully appreciate that.

And by now, what's happened is that someone very often says, "What do you mean when you say X or when you say Y or when you say cosmopoiesis or this?" And I know that that person has heard me explain it or unfold it at maybe even some length in other talks in the past. And yet still they're asking. So this is very, very normal, very understandable.

So partly what I want to do now in exploring this web is also to hopefully have it function as a bit—somewhere between a kind of exploration of the whole web of ideas and a glossary, a kind of, if you like, glossary of terms. Which is a pretty, I think, strange thing to try and do in a talk, in a recorded talk format, rather than a book where you can just flip to that page and quickly look it up. But I'm hoping it will be helpful. I'm hoping you just know this is the glossary talk and I can just go there and find it and it's about this time in or whatever. But it is pretty strange. So I hope it's helpful. I hope it's not too dry. Hopefully it will serve.

So I made a list of twenty terms. It's also strange because each of these terms... I'm going to be pretty brief. That's the whole point, trying to be quite brief. But each of these terms refer to a wide range of experience and things that I've talked about at much more length. So it's not always easy to kind of sum them up very succinctly. So somewhere between a very brief glossary and a sort of looking at the relationships and filling it out a little bit.

Alright? So, twenty terms.

Number one is... Actually, we just used it a minute or two ago. Phenomenological approach. The phenomenological approach.

So, phenomena in Greek means appearance—that which appears. Now, in my life, what I have is appearances. The assumption that this or that is underneath appearances, or it's really matter, or perceptions come from the brain—this is all assumptions. What I have is appearances, phenomena.

I use the words appearances, experiences, and perceptions interchangeably. So what I have is appearances, what I have is perceptions, what I have is experiences. That's what I have as a human being.

In the phenomenological approach, I don't add the assumption that everything comes from the neurophysiology of the brain and that's what gives rise to perceptions. Nor do I approach from a metaphysical perspective that first there is God or beingness or some foundational reality. It's simply that there are appearances. Let's just relate to appearances and see what we can discover.

This is what makes the phenomenological approach so powerful for me—it's a very potent gateway into understanding emptiness and also the imaginal.

One of the proto-phenomenologists, William James, a psychologist and philosopher, held that anything arising in experience was worthy of phenomenological investigation. This includes images, apparent psychic phenomena—whatever appears. Basically, whatever appears to me, I can relate to as a phenomenon and investigate it. I can explore the relationships that function around that thing, whether it's an image, a worldly perception, or something from the different senses. Even an idea is appearance.

All of this is worthy of investigation. Of course there are differences between these domains of appearance, but still—they're all appearance.

What I believe is that if we go deeply enough and radically enough with this phenomenological approach, it can actually open what we might call metaphysical philosophy. We'll return to that later.

The second fundamental concept is ways of looking. This isn't just looking with the eyes, but ways of sensing, ways of knowing, ways of perceiving. It refers to the perspective being employed now and includes the relationship with whatever object I'm perceiving—internal, external, whatever it might be.

Am I grasping at it? Am I pushing it away? Am I seeing it as self or not-self? These are all different ways of looking. Wrapped up in every way of looking is the conceptual framework—the whole collection of conditioning factors in the perceiving that creates the way of looking.

There's always a way of looking. Most of the time, unless you're deeply engaged in this kind of practice, the way of looking remains unconscious. We're not aware of everything involved in our way of looking. Most human beings have very little range or flexibility in their ways of looking—they can only shift them slightly on a gross level.

I see insight meditation practice as the cultivation of a whole range of ways of looking, really developing flexibility and breadth of ways of looking in practice, in ways that have powerful effects.

Related to this is the third concept: fabrication. As we experiment with ways of looking through the phenomenological approach, we begin to see that perceptions, appearances, and experiences are fabricated more or less depending on the way of looking.

Some ways of looking fabricate more perception—a more solid sense of self that feels more separate and contracted. They also create objects that appear more separate, solid, real, and often oppressive. This extends to our whole sense of the world and other phenomena like time and space.

There's a spectrum of fabrication. Different ways of looking fabricate more or less, ranging from extremely gross, solid, and oppressive fabrications to much less fabricated perceptions, down to not fabricating at all. What's fabricated includes dukkha—dis-ease and suffering—but also the sense of self, the sense of object, the sense of world, the sense of time. All of it.

The fourth concept is emptiness. These ideas of ways of looking and fabrication emerging from the phenomenological approach offer a very powerful way of understanding emptiness.

Emptiness means that nothing exists in what's called inherent existence—in a way that's independent of the way of looking, independent of the mind observing it. It's the way of looking that makes something appear as a thing, that makes it seem like a separate, independently existing entity.

Without the way of looking, without being fabricated by the way of looking, there is no appearance of that thing.

You can also approach emptiness analytically and discover that the whole notion of things that seem so

real, so solid, so independently existent is actually incoherent. Things are unfindable. That's another gateway into understanding emptiness.

Everything is empty, without question.

So even, not just all selves and all things, but... And that means any notion of self. So even the self as process, not a real thing. It's just arising as a way of looking. It's a relative degree of fabrication. But awareness is empty too. Actually, even the notion of fabrication is empty too. In other words, it's not really real. It's a kind of construct that we see.

Actually, there's a way of going deeper and deeper into the whole teaching of fabrication as a practice. You find out that fabrication too is kind of incoherent. It cannot be a reality.

Dependent origination, similarly it's empty. All those twelve links, or thirteen, or ten, or whatever system you're using, all of them are lacking inherent existence. They don't refer to real units of existence, or units of being, or realities, or entities, or whatever.

The unfabricated actually also turns out to be empty, and the whole distinction then between what's unfabricated and fabricated also illusory. Emptiness as well is also empty. So empty is a very radical, pervasive concept. Everything without question is empty.

What we end up with then, we start with this notion of ways of looking, and we end up with this really radical, thorough insight that in the end, there are only ways of looking. The ways of looking are empty too, but all we have is a range of ways of looking which we can expand, and that's not realities, that's ways of looking. And those ways of looking also don't inherently exist. But all we have, all we come to, the freedom that we come to is there are just ways of looking.

Something very beautiful, very radical, very profound in that insight. And extremely far-reaching.

So, in traditional Dharma approach, we, as I said... the idea of ways of looking, we channel that into the direction of which are the ways of looking that bring more suffering or lock suffering into place, and which are the ways of looking that ease suffering. So the whole concept of ways of looking in the narrow Dharma sense is tied up very much with the Four Noble Truths, with what leads to suffering and what leads to the ease of suffering.

But in exploring ways of looking, we also see that there's other directions that don't have, at least don't obviously have much to do with suffering and the end of suffering that can open up. So a way of looking can open up, for example, soul-making more or less. Or cosmopoiesis, more or less. And they are related to freedom and ending suffering, reducing suffering, but sometimes not in a very obvious way.

Okay, so that's the fourth: emptiness.

The fifth: the words imaginal and image. So when I use the word image, I mean an imaginal image, which

means definitely not just imaginary—i.e., just completely fictitious. It also doesn't have to be, as we think, image has to be something visual. It doesn't. It can involve any of the senses and quite unusual ways of knowing and ways of perceiving things. But it also refers to more than just the use of the imagination.

So just using the imagination does not mean imaginal. Nor even if an image comes and it has a kind of mythic character—I don't know, dragons and... You know, even Jesus or, whatever, or some classic archetypal figure or something—it may not be imaginal.

An image is an image for me, or imaginally functioning for me, is an imaginal for me, if for me, at that time, it has a kind of unfathomability to it, a depth to it, just, for example, in the way that a person does. So we would never... Hopefully. We would never say, this person, my friend X, she means this to me. Or she is this. It's like, I mean, we might say that, but we always know that that never captures her entirely. There's something I can't get to the bottom of her. Why? Because she's a person. She's a person. There's something unfathomable there.

I can't reduce her. If I do start reducing her, what's going to happen to my relationship with her? She's probably not going to stick around much. But similarly with imaginal figures, I can't capture them. They have this unfathomability. There's something beyond the reach of my grasp, that I can keep uncovering meanings and truths and dimensions to them, but I can't reduce them.

So I can't, or rather I'm not reducing them for them to be imaginal. I can't say this image is just a result of some random neurochemical reactions in my brain, or neurophysiological pathways being fired, or whatever. Nor can I reduce it in the way of saying this image is coming because it represents this from my childhood or this factor of my mind or something. So imaginal means not reduced. There's a sense of irreducibility to them.

It might encompass all of that or acknowledge all of that is involved—the neurophysiology of course is involved. It might have some bearing, we'll talk about this later, what's the relationship with my personal history and this image, but not reducing the image to the personal history, not seeing it as merely a result of the personal history.

So what is imaginal to me? An imaginal figure has a kind of otherness and a kind of autonomy—just like a person. It's like they're not part of me, I don't completely control them. So you can hear implicit in that: for something to be an image, it requires me to have a certain way of looking at it. Because if I start to see it as "no, no, no, this is just random neurochemistry or whatever. This dream that happened was just my brain randomly firing at night. That's what brains do"—then I have a way of looking there that's not imaginal and the image is resolved or reduced or I lose interest in it or whatever. It's no longer imaginal.

So in the meaning of the word image, it's not just an object—it includes the way of looking at that object. And we are kind of granting it a certain autonomy.

With that, because there's this unfathomability and they're not reducible, in time we sense a kind of—let's

call it divinity—to the image. It's part of the dimensionality. So I keep finding more dimensions in this image, in the unfathomability of it. And all of this is meaningful. So that's part of what an image is—always meaningful in some way. It doesn't mean it means X or it means Y. It's meaningful as a much fuller, less tightly circumscribed term. And always with the imaginal is some kind of sense of beauty and some kind of sense of sacredness.

They may not at all be—they may be quite surprising senses of beauty. There's a breadth and a diversity to the kinds of beauties that can open up, and the kinds of sense of beauty and the sense of sacredness that can open up through imaginal practice. And oftentimes it's quite surprising that that's a feature of image and imaginal practice—beauty and sacredness.

Now, the imaginal and images—and I'll also use the word fantasies almost interchangeably with images, but maybe when it has a bit more of a narrative feel to it, I'll use the word fantasies—we don't just mean intra-psychic. These also relate to how we perceive the world. So images, fantasies come in, they pervade, they mix with, they saturate our perception of everything—of self, of other, of world, of being, of path. They operate in our life.

Some people say, "I don't get any images," meaning they don't get any intra-psychic images, sort of like "I shut my eyes and nothing comes." But images are in our life, and I would say where there is love, where we love deeply, where something's really alive for us, where something's really important to us, where something's really meaningful to us—there, image and fantasy are operating in our life in relation to and around that thing, whatever that thing is, if it's dharma or practice or a lover or... It can be absolutely anything. Where there is love, meaningfulness, importance, aliveness, there is image and fantasy.

Now, I'm going to throw in one more thing here in imaginal practice, which is that it involves also what I call seeing the image as an image, knowing it's an image. In other words, we're not taking this literally. If I have an image of having sex with someone, it doesn't mean I have to have sex with someone or I'm going to have sex. It doesn't mean that at all. I don't have to take it literally. But actually any image—it might have an outflow into life. But often that outflow is almost always not literal. It's always subtly refracted or modulated in life, in the way that it's expressed.

Seeing image as image doesn't mean if I have this image that I'm picking up something, some kind of ESP either, or whatever. Although, of course, there's that possibility too. But I'm not going to go into that distinction on this course. It also means, seeing image as image, that the ideas and the concepts that are perhaps wrapped up with the image are not taken as truth claims. I'm not saying this is the reality or this is true about whatever.

Image and Imaginal

The sixth term, very related, is soul-making, which we've used already. What is soul-making? It's anything—any activity or way of looking or way of being—that gives rise to a sense of soulfulness. We

could use it in the way of meaning it's soulfulness-making. It's making the experience of soulfulness. And again, it could be anything, anything in relationship with anything at all. The way of being with it, the way of looking at it, the thing that I do with it or in relationship to it gives rise to a sense of soulfulness.

This is very related to the definitions of imaginal, but when there is soulfulness, there is a sense of importance, of deep importance. This thing is important to me. Strange as it might seem to someone else, this is important to me. It has a deep importance. It has a beauty to it. There's love involved, and often very different kinds of love—a very large range in the kind of expressions of love that are involved in soulfulness. There's meaningfulness. There are resonances.

Soul-making is recognized through its resonances in the heart, in the emotionality, its resonances in terms of image. An image has resonance with other images, and an image itself is resonant—with the energy body, which I'll come to in a little bit, and with ideas. Soul-making also gives a sense of dimensionality. It involves image and fantasy and also idea. I'm going to call this whole complex *logos*.

So soul-making means soulfulness-making in the sense that it creates that kind of gestalt, those kinds of experiences that refer to a sense of soulfulness. But soul-making can also mean making soul, making something called soul. So not just soulfulness as an adjective to describe a set of experiences, but also making something called soul.

The seventh term is indeed that word *soul*. Here, again, I can use it in two ways. I can use soul not in the sense of referring to an entity, but referring to a way of looking. Soul is just a way of looking that gives rise to soulfulness, that gives rise to soul-making. When I say soul, I'm just referring to it as a way of looking.

But I can also refer to soul as if it were an entity, or talk about it as an entity—an empty entity. Go back to what we said earlier about self. We talk about self as if it's an entity, but it's not. It's empty. Yet we still use the concept and we feel it as an entity at times. Similarly, we can talk about soul as if it was an entity.

What kind of entity? Well, it's that entity, that aspect of *citta*, if you like, that facet of *citta* or of being—it's that which sees or senses in a soul-making way. That's the entity of soul. It's that which sees in a soul-making way, and I meant all that before—with image, with fantasy, with meaningfulness, with depth, with dimensionality, and beauty and all that. That's soul.

So soul-making increases soul. It makes soul in the sense that it reinforces, it strengthens, it widens and deepens that entity or that capacity or that tendency to see in a soul-making way, to see in a way that gives rise to soulfulness, to see imaginatively and with meaningfulness and resonance and depth and beauty. Soul-making builds soul, it makes soul.

The eighth term is the energy body. Here I really mean—it can sound like we're talking about some thing, some kind of new age idea or esoteric sort of idea—but really I'm referring to a kind of mode of attending to the experience of body, a way of looking again if we go back to the phenomenological approach. Energy body really refers to that.

A way of attending to this space—actually a little bit bigger than what appears to be my physical body—and the feeling of that, the sense of that, yes, the image of it, but also the palpable sense of that field of vibration, texture, energy.

It's really important to stress here that there is a real spectrum, a wide spectrum in that experience, so that we can experience a very, very refined field of energy—very insubstantial, ethereal—and that's lovely and actually very important. Sometimes even that goes and there's just a sense of space, which is really at the absolute edge of what we might call energy body experience. But at the other end, there's also just the sense of something really dense and earthy and solid and very substantial—we can feel the energy body that way too.

So the energy body refers to that whole spectrum. It means more than just what many people are familiar with from, say, mindfulness practice or more conventional kinds of insight meditation practice—just this what can seem at times like a pulsing or flickering energy field of sensations or field of hot or cold or pressure. Yes, that's a certain kind of mode of attention or experience of the energy body, but it actually is much broader than that. There are ways of paying attention and experiencing energy body that are not like either that or the regular solidity we feel. There's really a whole range there.

That's energy body. That's the eighth.

The ninth is eros, which we've already defined in a small way, and we're going to expand it and make a bigger definition as we go along. So it's the desire—eros is a kind of desire. It's the wanting more contact, more connection, more touching, more experience of, or to experience more of, to know more or to know more of, to penetrate more or to penetrate more of, or to open more and to open to more of, to have more intimacy with some object, some erotic object, either in everyday perception or imaginally, intrapsychically.

Note that this is multidimensional, multifaceted. We're not just talking about a mental faculty here, some kind of vitakka-vicāra thing where you're just probing the object. I'll come back to that relationship. First of all, it's not just mental. It involves all the senses and it's embodied, which doesn't mean that it needs to manifest in actions.

But more importantly—and this is where the definition starts to get bigger—it involves and it pulls in and stimulates the imaginal and the ideational. So actually, when we talk about eros, we're talking about something that moves towards, that includes the imaginal and the ideational in certain ways, in ways that expand them and move towards soul-making.

So you can see that eros is the ninth term, and you can see eros is one kind of desire, if we use that word desire as the tenth term. And desire, we can maybe use it in a way that's more neutral or as a broader term, perhaps similar to the Pali word chanda. So desire would then include eros as a subset in the way that we've just described. When it does that, when the desire is of that kind, it's eros. But it would also

include—desire would include craving and clinging and these kinds of words we've used before, which I'll come to in a minute. But the tenth is just desire as a kind of broad term of which there are different kinds. It's kind of a neutral term.

So that word craving is the eleventh term. And craving—we'll come back to this more—I'm going to say craving is a kind of desire that does not lead to soul-making. Actually it leads to a kind of contraction. Soul-making is an opening movement, and craving brings contraction. As I said, you can actually feel that in the being, in the body, in the energy body, and in the mind, and in lots of other ways, which we'll go into. Craving brings dukkha, in the way that we might use it to distinguish eros and craving, different kinds of desire. But craving is the eleventh term.

And maybe if I use the term clinging as the twelfth term, what I'm really referring to is that whole spectrum that I talked about in the first few talks, where you're really talking about something that can be very, very gross—gripping, "don't leave me," "I need you," that kind of clinging—to something really, really subtle. I'm talking about actually avijjā, just the belief that, the unconscious assumption that this thing, whatever this thing is—this emotion, this fingernail, this foot, this thing—is me or mine, unconsciously, without even thinking about it. Or even the avijjā that this thing, whatever this thing is, this moment of vedanā, or this lamp in front of me, has inherent existence. That's a very subtle level. That avijjā is a very subtle level of clinging. It's wrapped up in attention because the mind needs to cling in a very subtle way to actually perceive anything. But clinging, we might use it to refer to that whole spectrum in that broader sense.

That's the twelfth term, clinging.

The thirteenth term—I have to apologize here. I've used it already: libido, and I've already used it inconsistently, so apologies. In a way, it's because it's not, for me, well, at least not yet, that important a term. So apologies, and just to note, I have been inconsistent.

Sometimes I might use it in a way that's almost equivalent to the way I'm using eros, and I think that's the way James Hillman likes to use it. And so sometimes I might use it that way. I'm also thinking about using it to mean more something like libido as the embodied, directed, intentional flow of life force into any area or domain. So that might be a stream of creativity or work or relationship or building something or whatever. It might be a stream, it might be a trickle, it might be a torrent. In a way, it refers to psychic energy and the way that can be employed in different ways. I think that's equivalent to how Jung used the term, but I also read something recently where he sort of said that and then said something else, but he didn't really explain the alternative, and I couldn't find anything else. So I'm not sure how he uses it.

But it is a term that people use. For Freud I think it was just the pleasure principle in a way, or the instinct that came out of the id, that sort of pool of animalistic instincts, if you like, and the force often guided by pleasure principle and maybe other things. And that's the libido.

Sometimes Freud referred to it that way. For other people, it literally means sexual urge or desire. And there's also—some of you will know, and I'm going to return to this—a psychoanalyst who was very active in the 1950s and 60s, a Scotsman called Fairbairn, who used libido in a way that sounds at first similar to how we're using eros: a desire to connect. So people use it in very different ways.

It sounds similar, but actually I'm going to point out some differences later on in the retreat. So libido—people use it in very different ways. Sorry, I've already been sloppy and inconsistent there. All I can say is maybe the sloppiness and fluidity in the way I'm using it just reflects its etymology, which I already mentioned: libido, libation, liquid. This is the etymology—it's liquidy, so I'm quite fluid in my definitions. That's a pretty lame excuse. But I don't think we'll be using it much anyway. Anyway, apologies. That's the thirteenth term.

The fourteenth term is *psyche*. One meaning of psyche in the way that I use it is simply the totality of the *citta*—the psyche. In other words, the mind, but not reduced to the thinking mind—just the whole totality of *citta*. But another kind of inflection of the meaning refers especially to soul. So using it equivalently with soul in the way that I defined soul earlier in this talk as the organ of imaginal perception. So psyche as the organ of imaginal perception.

But there's a second way that I use it sometimes, and I really mean by psyche the totality of imaginal perceptions. Jung actually says psyche is image. So I'm using it sometimes as the totality of the *citta*, more often as equivalent with soul—the organ of imaginal perception—but quite a few times I will use it as the totality of imaginal perceptions, almost interchangeably with image.

Logos. So there's another Greek word—your eros, psyche, logos. Logos I'm using to refer to a concept or an idea or a whole conceptual framework. In other words, what we're elaborating here is a kind of conceptual framework. But any concept or any idea or any conceptual framework is a logos.

For example, when I say the autonomy of the imaginal figure—as if they have a degree of being independent of me—that's a concept, it's an idea, it's a logos that's operating in imaginal practice, even at the same time as we know it's a dependent arising, which is another logos. So you have mixtures of concepts operating at any time.

If I reduce the imaginal figure to, let's say, the product of random neuronal firings or conditioned neuronal firings, or it's expressing something from my childhood, or it's expressing an aspect of my personality—any kind of reduction of the imaginal figure involves a logos in operation. Any idea of causality—that this is a result of that in the past, for instance—is also a logos, a concept operating.

Another alternative would be what's called *telos*—there's another Greek word. I'm learning a lot of Greek in this retreat. *Telos*, which refers to almost like causality from the future. I've talked about this, I think, on the last retreat. That's a different logos, a different concept operating where something, so to speak, from the future beckons us and shapes the present. Very different idea, very different logos.

If we talk about the divinity of eros, which is something we'll come back to, that's a logos. Neuroscience as a whole is a whole conceptual framework, is a whole logos. The idea that consciousness arises from matter as an epiphenomenon of matter, of neurology—that's a logos. Actually, evolution itself is a whole conceptual framework, is a logos.

What I want to say is that there's always a conception, there's always a logos operating in the mind—always, always, always—except during experience of the unfabricated, when there's a collapse of conceptuality. By conceptuality and logos I don't just include thought structures and thoughts, but it goes way deeper than that. There's conceptuality operating even when there's no thought whatsoever.

Oftentimes the concepts operating are just assumed, not really checked out, and oftentimes they're operating—most of the time they're operating—without us really being conscious of what they are. But when I talk about logos, because it's wrapped up in perception, I'm not talking about something abstract. We live different ideas; different concepts shape how we live. They inform how we live, but more fundamentally they shape our way of looking. They're part of, they're included in the way we look at everything, and therefore what we perceive, what appears to us. So they have massive influence. I'm not talking about something abstract here. So the fifteenth is logos.

The sixteenth is what I'm going to call the Eros-Psyche-Logos dynamic, or the soul-making dynamic—these are interchangeable terms. I'm going to devote quite a lot of time to that on this retreat, but what it really means is that the more, the wanting more that we talked about with eros—more connection, more opening, opening to more of the erotic object, penetrating more, to know more, to experience more—

This wanting more, that push or wish to open more to the erotic object, starts bringing in, inseminating, influencing, expanding the psyche in relation to that object. In other words, the imaginal perception of that object. So more dimensionality is created and discovered in that object.

In my erotic connection with my lover, I start to see in her, I start to see in him, I start to see more, more dimensions. They're not just this person I can put in a box around. They're even more than just a human being, or rather the notion of humanity starts to expand and have other dimensions. And with that expansion of the psyche, they become richer, more complicated, deeper, wider. There's an expansion of psyche, of image, and also of logos. In other words, my whole idea of who they are, my idea then of what a human being is and what soul is, that gets expanded as well.

This is really, really important. When it gets expanded, they are then more yummy to me, more interesting, more attractive. It increases the eros there. And so there's a kind of self-feeding, self-generating, ongoing fertilization of Eros, mutual fertilization of Eros, Psyche, Logos, mutual widening, deepening, enriching, complicating, adding dimensionality that goes on. We can say much, much more about that.

When I refer to the Eros-Psyche-Logos dynamic, we'll also use the term soul-making dynamic for the same

thing. That's that process, and we have a lot to say about that. It's very, very fundamental, I would say, in understanding this and a very central concept.

That's number 16, the Eros-Psyche-Logos dynamic.

Number 17 is this term cosmopoiesis. This is something I would say that we start to notice in imaginal practice. As we go into imaginal practice, we start to see that it begins to spill over. Even when I'm practicing with my eyes shut, I open my eyes after I've been working deeply with mindfulness and sensitivity with this imaginal figure. I open my eyes and there's a kind of spilling over to the perception of the world, to the world of perception. Something of the image, and something particularly of the divinity of the image, starts to pervade my sense of the cosmos that I feel myself to be part of. So this is something we notice.

It's also an instance of that whole Eros-Psyche-Logos expanding dynamic I was just referring to. It starts to expand beyond just the object but also to other objects and to the world. There are infinite possibilities for cosmopoiesis.

More typical ones involve a kind of universal cosmopoiesis. So for example, meditating a lot on metta, and eventually at some point a meditator will have the experience: the world is love. The cosmos is shot through with love. Now, you explain that to someone on the high street and they'll say, "What are you talking about?" It's a perception of the cosmos. It's a mystical perception, but it's characterized by universality. All things in the world are of the same substance. The substance is love.

It could be awareness. So if you practice a lot with vastness of awareness and other related practices, you get a similar thing. The cosmopoiesis there is also universal. Everything is awareness. Everything is the play of awareness.

But then there's also, rarer in our circles and more interesting for that very reason, particular cosmopoiesis. So this particular erotic, imaginal figure that I'm working with sensitively and mindfully in practice—then I get up and walk around and look at the world around me and I notice that the particularity of that figure that I was opening to and discovering and sensitive to in the practice comes to characterize the cosmopoiesis. So the whole world becomes this particular manifestation of, or flavored with, this particular imaginal figure and its characteristics, its particularities.

So cosmopoiesis—note that word poiesis in contrast to logos, or in contrast to logic. Cosmology is a word that people know. Cosmology means the study, the science of the universe. So we go and we hear about Big Bangs and all that stuff, which I love. It's absolutely fascinating to me.

The difference between cosmology and cosmopoiesis is the absence of a truth claim that goes with the cosmopoiesis. So we're recognizing that this is a creation of the way of looking. Or a better word is participation. We're participating in something.

The way of looking, the citta, the soul, is participating in the cosmos. So there's a participatory aspect of a kind of cosmopoiesis of the reality creating. And also cosmopoiesis, we're talking about poetic truths, if you like, here, which is something I've talked about before, which is different than the usual notion of scientific truth.

Now this also I've talked about before, there's a whole exploration into the philosophy of science and what's true and what's a model, and all that. And also to point out that when I use the words, so it's contrasting poiesis and logos, but actually when I use the word logos, in the way we're using it, we're not making a truth claim—other than that everything is empty, and even that actually we let go of at some point. Logos is just a concept that we can pick up, or a conceptual frame we can pick up without insisting or even believing it as true. But cosmopoiesis is the seventeenth one.

The eighteenth term is theophany. Theophany literally means an appearance of the divine. I think I gave a set of talks—no, it was the last five talks of the retreat, the path of the imaginal, that had the title something like Insight, Theophany, Cosmic Vision, Sacred Universe, something like that. So dealt with it a lot there. And in a way, the whole of the re-enchanting the cosmos retreat had to do with cosmopoiesis and theophany.

But theophany would refer to maybe when a particular thing or object becomes a particular face of the divine, or becomes a face of the divine. Again, that can be universal, but more I'm interested in the particular. So this—it really could be anything. This tree, or this person, or this body, or whatever, becomes a particular face of the divine. Or this imaginal figure is a particular theophany. It's a face of God, if you like. It's a face of the divine. That's the eighteenth term, theophany.

The nineteenth term is divinity. And again, this is something that we notice. I'm using it very broadly, so I'm actually not defining, but if you like, it refers to a kind of unfathomability, mystery, otherness, including of transcendence—all of that. But actually the notions are really quite wide of what that might involve. But it's something I'd rather leave to your experience and just say, notice with images as you work with them when they become really alive that they have this kind of numinous quality. It's something we notice constantly rather than we define it. So you'll notice in imaginal practice that more and more, with an image, when you get used to it, it has this kind of quality of divinity. So it's part of its otherness.

But just to say a little bit about that also—that word, you know, standard insight meditation will bring experiences of divinity of certain kinds. The whole range, actually various experiences of divinity, mystical experiences, I would say would be inevitable for meditators, meditating with dedication and consistently with insight meditation techniques and approaches. The question is, so for example, that big awareness thing, everything is awareness. It really feels, or everything is love. It really feels like there is a divinity to that love. This is—the cosmos is shot through with a divine love. This awareness has somehow the sense that people often talk, they never have before, they start talking in theistic terms of love almost

surprising to themselves when those kinds of very common experiences happen.

And I would say certain kinds of practices, I can put people in a room, get them to do these practices, and it's just a matter of time until these very standard experiences of divinity open up and people almost inevitably start using that language.

And so the question is, if these experiences open up, even in standard insight meditation, what is the attitude to these experiences? What's the relationship to them? How are we interpreting them? How are we conceptualizing them? So a person might be told or might hear or might think, well, all experiences are impermanent. Don't think about them. Don't get attached to them. Don't try and repeat them. We touched on this earlier. That's useful sometimes. Sometimes that's useful, that letting go when it's too tight, the kind of gripping, the attachment.

But mostly it's not that helpful as a kind of attitude or a way of relating to these kind of experiences. It's not quite intelligent enough. It won't open things out in a way that is that beneficial. Insight meditation, standard insight meditation techniques, conceptions, approaches, the conceptions underlying insight meditation, will lead, with a certain amount of dedication and good practice, to experiences that the Buddha did not ignore. He did not say in relation to, oh, just don't try and repeat them, they're just—let's not go there, don't get attached.

He gave them names, he taught the monks to repeat them. These were not experiences he simply brushed off. As the Buddha Dharma evolved after the Buddha's passing into different streams of tradition—the Mahayana, the Vajrayana—there emerged an even greater exploration and range of experience opening up from people's meditative practice, along with more careful, comprehensive categorization of those experiences involving different senses of divinity.

When we say divinity, I'm leaving it quite broad, speaking of a whole range of experiences. Some may be universal and impersonal in character, while others may be very particular. Some relate to particularities in theophanies, and some will be personal—a personal god, an imaginal figure as a personal god, not an impersonal deity. We'll return to this.

That brings us to the nineteenth: divinity.

The last one I'll mention is Buddha nature. In the Buddhist tradition, this term has a wide range of usage and arguments. Some traditions employ it quite narrowly—it simply refers to your capacity to become fully enlightened, to become a Buddha, usually over many lifetimes. This is possible by virtue of the fact that the mind, the factors of the mind, and the contents of the mind are impermanent. Although there's ignorance right now, ignorance is impermanent. With the right training, you could change it. It's not fixed. Similarly with craving and the rest of what gets in the way, or rather whose absence qualifies enlightenment.

In some meanings of Buddha nature, it refers simply to that—your unavoidable possibility. No matter

what you think of yourself or where you actually are in terms of your spiritual development, there is always and undestroyably the possibility of becoming a Buddha.

Sometimes in more popular usage nowadays, it refers to your innate goodness. If you think you're a mean person and see lots of not-so-nice qualities in yourself, it's a way of saying that what's in you at your core is something bright, luminous, and good—inherently good, inherently loving.

When I use the term, I probably use it as an alternative to the word God or divinity, which I'm using in a much broader way. Often the words God or divinity really rub people the wrong way, especially some Buddhists. So you can use Buddha nature instead, but in a different way than just that possibility. I'm actually talking about something that's divine.

Again, it has a range of meanings. Perhaps the most full-on meaning comes from the Shentong tradition in the Tibetan tradition, though it's actually a tradition that goes back to Mahayana Indian Buddhism. In that tradition, Buddha nature is interchangeable with words like Dharmakaya and even the word emptiness, which is used differently when they use it in that tradition from the way I'm using it.

So Buddha nature, Dharmakaya, emptiness, the absolute, and other words—quite a few words used interchangeably—mean something like the cosmic awareness that is inherently in me and in you and in everything that knows the emptiness of all things. It is not separate as a separating subject dividing subject and objects—in that sense it is non-dual. It refers to the knowing, which is also empty; this knowing awareness is empty in itself, but the knowing and the appearances and their emptiness are all known in a non-dual way.

In other words, it includes the whole cosmos as this field of empty awareness, knowing all things and also the emptiness of all things. Everything is Buddha nature. Everything has Buddha nature. Everything is Buddha nature. Everything is Dharmakaya in that logos, in that experience.

Even stranger to some Buddhists—this will sound strange—is that this Dharmakaya or this Buddha nature can act. This cosmic Buddha nature can act in the world and manifest different appearances or different qualities for an individual or in an individual, dependent on what that individual needs for their well-being and their deeper journey. There's a kind of intelligence, something akin to the world soul—a divine intelligence or divine activity that's operating in and through and as Buddha nature, as well as that awareness and its inseparability from emptiness, from appearances.

So there are twenty terms in this glossary.

Thank you for listening.

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