

**Individuation Theory and Practice: The Promising Emergence of a Nonbinary
Transcendent “Third” Between Temporal Depth Psychology and Non-Temporal Dzogchen
Psychology**

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Individuation Theory and Practice: The Promising Emergence of a Nonbinary Transcendent “Third” Between Temporal Depth Psychology and Non-Temporal Dzogchen

This essay explores the basis for a nonbinary “third” position between depth psychology and Dzogchen psychology, one that resolves the duality between depth psychology’s view of individuation as gradual stages in time, and Dzogchen psychology’s view of individuation as immediate and beyond time. The trans-binary view recognizes temporality and non-temporality as interdependent elements of different dimensions of mind. It also recognizes psychology and spirituality as interdependent. A collaboration between individuation psychology and Dzogchen psychology holds great promise. They each have a part to the individuation picture that the other is missing. Jung explained his life as a story about his becoming conscious of elements in his mind that were outside of his awareness. Dzogchen contemplative scientists made a Copernican-like discovery about the mind’s innermost essence, known as the Nature of Mind. The Nature of Mind is beyond ordinary awareness. Although Mind’s innermost Nature is unconscious, it’s the essence of who we truly are—beyond time. Dzogchen’s contemplative science’s methods offer us valid and reliable access to the unconscious numinous elements Jung identified as the spiritual and mystical constituents of individuation. And depth psychology methods offer access to the unconscious psychological forces at play in the temporal mind that Dzogchen psychology too often misses. With knowledge of how to access both temporal and nontemporal consciousness, collaborators can consider opportunities for reconsidering individuation theory and practice accordingly.

I first met Murray Stein’s work in his 1983 book, *In Midlife: A Jungian Perspective*. The book was like a long-awaited desert rain for me. So much psychology writing, then and now, tends to be dry intellectual sand.

Murray's writing is often soaked in the hermetic secret sauce needed to transform letters, words and paragraphs into music, music for the inner ear. He is a judicious student of Jung's work and a capable keeper of the flame. Murray's own original work has given rise to an individuation psychology that extends and deepens what has gone before it. His words carry the melodic harmony needed to convey psychological meaning, meaning that lays far beyond the reach of the intellect. Murray's work helped bring Jung's sage individuation sheet music notations into song.

It has been a beacon for me. It's as if one dark night I saw it flash on the horizon and I approached with a vision in mind, a vision born of sacred heat. Our meaningful conversations led to a collaboration exploring the opportunities for a transcendent bridge between individuation theory and Dzogchen psychology. We wrote an essay in a book edited by Les Stein: *Eastern Practices and Individuation: Essays by Jungian Analysts*.¹

My conviction is that there is a transcendent "Third" emerging. And it could hold great promise. Murray Stein's body of work on individuation psychology is a solid foundation for us to understand and steward temporal individuation. And it gives us the opportunity to consider that individuation won't be all-inclusive unless we recognize and understand its nontemporal elements. Dzogchen psychology is about the non-temporal dimension of Mind. The Mind's innermost timeless nature is the Undus Mundus, known in Dzogchen as the Nature of Mind.

What needs to be worked out is individuation psychology's own "individuation". To include the understanding that "who we truly are" in time, is different than "who we truly are"

¹ M. Stein, J Manganiello, 2022, pp. 291-326

beyond time. Different, yet interdependent. No individuation can be complete unless we realize them both, as integrated experiential knowledge, and wisdom.

This essay is a tribute to Murray Stein and his work, work I will now gratefully stand on to extend our consideration of individuation.

Individuation Psychology and Dzogchen Psychology are Interdependent

Individuation psychology and Dzogchen psychology need capable bridging if they are to transcend the dilemma of persistent conflict as opposites. At first glance, the two appear to be diametrically opposed and separate individuation paths. One, a progressive path in time, the other, an immediate path beyond time. An interdependent view of temporal and non-temporal individuation points us towards a far-reaching revision of individuation psychology and depth psychology. For starters, psychology and spirituality are not two separate things. They are interdependent parts of the mind. The intellect separates them by mistaking its ideas about reality for reality itself. The thinking-conceptual mind is a remarkable resource for many things. Developing a psychology to understand the non-temporal, spiritual elements of mind is not among them. Conceptual views and theories can be like quicksand. Once stuck in them it's hard to realize we are stuck, let alone to break free.

The intellect draws a blank when it tries to fathom the spiritual, timeless dimension of mind. The Western "agnostic reflex" loses the connection between thinking and being. When it comes to recognizing the sacred, timeless part of the mind, the intellect is like a birdwatcher looking for birds with binoculars that still have their lens caps on. All the intellect can possibly see are its projections. Such a birdwatcher returns home with mistaken views. Feeling that he spent the day observing a vast array of birdies "out there."

Murray noted something essential for becoming who we truly are. In his words: “The demanding requirement for individuation is to return to one’s nature, to one’s true being.”²

I agree. I’m a depth psychologist with decades of experience studying and teaching psychology, doing therapy and training and supervising therapists. I’ve also been a Dzogchen practitioner for nearly as long, under the direction of accomplished “grandfather” teachers. And I’ve done many years of inner work in therapy and analysis, most with different Jungian analysts.

I’ve learned one thing unshakably certain in all of this: The work we must do to return to our nature, to our true being is— “in time” *and* “beyond time.” Because they are in fact interdependent. Neither alone will do. Believing otherwise is a risky misconception. Separated and alone both will run out of road and get lost.

Let’s consider what’s needed for an interdependent trans-binary vision for individuation.

The Sine Qua Non for Emergence of a Trans-Binary Position

The essential condition for the emergence of an interdependent nonbinary vision for individuation is that each of the binary positions must understand the other—experientially. Depth psychology and Dzogchen psychology must walk in each other’s shoes. In our context, temporal individuation must understand immediate individuation beyond time. And non-temporal individuation must understand temporal in time. Only then will the seams of interdependence between them be unveiled and understood. Only then can the interdependence of “in time” individuation and “beyond time” individuation be well considered and realized.

² M. Stein, 2006, p.11

Any East-West duality can be resolved if the lights within the mind are turned up. Jung's admonitions about westerners turning to the East and Eastern practices were well-taken cautions, not prohibitions. And Dzogchen psychology's hesitations about psychology stem from its lack of familiarity with depth psychology. Dzogchen misses the importance of temporal individuation and the unconscious psychological forces at play in the dimension of mind in time.

I think of Jung as part contemplative scientist. His core vision arose from the direct experience of his own mind. Not just from his intellect. Jung was awake at 3 in the morning talking to Philemon, taking dictations from Basilides, and painting mandalas. While most of us were sleeping. In some ways, conditioned views aside, Jung was more Eastern in his sensibilities than Western. He focused on the numinous, not ego adaptation or curing maladies.

We tend to regard time and timelessness as distinct opposites. But they are not.

Theoretical Physics Illustrates a Reconciling Path

Let's consider work being done in theoretical physics to develop a "Third" position capable of reconciling the differences between classical physics with quantum mechanics. Scientists holding tight to a classical view of physics initially felt that quantum mechanics wasn't valid physics. Because it seemed counterintuitive to their absolute, causal views about physical reality. Einstein maintained well known reservations about quantum reality, e.g., entanglement as "spooky science at a distance." But his own experiments showed that quantum mechanics could account for the behavior of light and matter on the smallest of scales. And he intuited early that chaos and upheaval in physics were necessary if physics was to move beyond binary conflict and integrate quantum science.

Individuation psychology will have to undergo its own chaos and disruption, if it is to recognize and overcome its biases. Including the preconception that psychology, the temporal part of the mind, and spirituality, the non-temporal part of the mind, are two separate things. A refreshed and revisioned depth psychology can realize that the differences between psychology “in time” and spirituality “beyond time” are more accurately understood as interdependent, not separate, elements of mind.

Keys for the Emergence of a Trans-Binary Position

The heated opposition between classic and quantum physicists as to whether physical reality is fundamentally causal and determined, or acausal and random, created opportunities for recognizing them as interdependent. A nonbinary position evolved resting on a twofold premise: 1) Reality is not what it appears to be and 2) The principles governing large-scale bodies are not the same as those governing small-scale bodies. The ongoing work to unify Quantum Mechanics and Special Relativity would not be possible unless all collaborators understood what they were working to unify. In well informed collaboration, a reconciling “third” position has emerged, one that integrates both general relativity and quantum mechanics in new frontier research on black holes.^{3,4}

This is also true for the proposed work on unifying the temporal and nontemporal dimensions of mind, and for integrated individuation in both. Our opportunities to realize the interdependence between temporal individuation (individuation psychology) and nontemporal individuation (Dzogchen psychology), are similar. 1) Individuation is not what it appears to be

³A. Almheiri. et al, 2020

⁴ G. Musser, 2020

from a temporal or nontemporal point of view alone. 2) The principles governing the temporal and-non-temporal elements of the mind, and individuation, are not the same.

Individuation psychology needs to understand and integrate what is known about the timeless dimension of mind. Including consciousness beyond time, and the nontemporal immediate individuation that arises naturally from it. Nontemporal, i.e., Dzogchen psychology, needs to understand and integrate what is known about the temporal elements of mind, including consciousness in time, and the temporal individuation that can gradually arise in it.

A Meta Psychology-Spirituality

Individuation in time and individuation beyond time need to be worked out as a meta psychology-spirituality. The alchemical individuation opus is both gradual and temporal and immediate and nontemporal. Time and Timelessness can lean into each other with mutual recognition and understanding. Timelessness is the unmanifest source of time, and time is the manifestation of timelessness. We need a new trans-binary transcendent position that integrates both psychology and spirituality as interdependent parts of the mind. Again, we may need to ring the bells of chaos more than a few times to work out a vision of mind that enables the emergence of such a vision. The issue of interdependence between psychology and spirituality is also the issue of interdependence between “in time” and “beyond time” individuation. In temporal individuation, we encounter unconscious forces, both conditioned and teleological, at play in the progressive process of realizing “who we truly are.” In non-temporal individuation, realization is immediate. In an instant, we encounter and recognize non-dual pure Being, as our ultimate “nonidentity.”

Now let's turn to Dzogchen.

About Dzogchen

Dzogchen came to the West from Tibet. The indigenous Tibetan spiritual tradition is known as Yungdrung Bon, or just Bon. Bon gave Tibetan Buddhism its unique form and character. Both Tibetan traditions share common features, though they have different lineages and histories. The Tibetan Bon and Buddhist traditions both share similar gradual progressive paths, each comprised of nine stages or vehicles, aimed at spiritual realization. Dzogchen is the ninth and final stage in both traditions, but it can stand alone—as an immediate path. The Bon and Buddhist Dzogchen teachings have been intermingled for so long, they are indistinguishable. Now known as Bon-Buddhist Dzogchen. Or just Dzogchen.

While Dzogchen is the highest stage of spiritual development in the Tibetan Bon and Buddhist gradual path traditions—Dzogchen can stand free of both. As an independent direct nontemporal immediate path dependent on nothing other than itself. Dzogchen can exist separate from Bon and Buddhism, as well as from the Tibetan cultural tradition. Anyone can practice Dzogchen, no religious, spiritual, or cultural affiliation is required or needed. There are no Dzogchen organizational doctrines. The task is to learn how to be conscious and undistracted. We simply must learn how to enter the timeless dimension of mind.

The Natural State: Rigpa

Tibetan contemplative scientists discovered Dzogchen, using “experiential” methods; they directly and systematically observed their own mind. Dzogchen arose out of these experiments. It is predicated on “Rigpa,” the mind’s Natural State. Rigpa is the direct experience of mind’s primordial Nature, it’s nondual, timeless awareness—as who and what we truly are.

We find Rigpa and the mind's Natural State in the only place it could possibly be—in the nondual NOW. More about Rigpa and the nontemporal NOW up ahead.

I want to make a simple note on dual vs. non-dual. If we look out at the sunset, that's dual. There's the sunset and there's us. Dualistic awareness has a subject and an object. Someone is aware of something else. Non-dual awareness is just awareness, on its own. It's timeless awareness NOW, free, on its own. No object, no subject. We're so accustomed to awareness being dual and temporal that we fail to experience timeless awareness, as awareness free from ego as a centering and determining point.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, (1938-2018), a celebrated Tibetan Buddhist Dzogchen master, scholar and author explains:

In Dzogchen, there is no object to be known. Instead, it's about experiencing the state beyond the mind, the state of contemplation.... our real nature is also called the state of *rigpa* or the primordial state (or Natural State). It consists of the discovery of true knowledge. The essential point is to be truly in this state and experience it.⁵

Rigpa is the immediate experience of timeless awareness, known in Dzogchen as “contemplation.” When in contemplation, in the Natural State, we are who we truly are, beyond the temporal mind.

Renowned Yungdrung Bon Dzogchen master, Yongdzin (teacher of teachers) Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, (1926-), explains further:

⁵ Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, 2011, *Guruyoga, Arcidosso, IT*, p.15

Rigpa, the Natural State, is neither the calm state nor the movement of thoughts, but a state of immediate awareness which transcends all thought and working of the mind. It is like a mirror reflecting what is set before it, without judgment or thought. ⁶

The Natural State is very easy to find, but only after we find it. Until we experience Rigpa directly, it's not so easy. Keep in mind the effortful sequence of learning a foreign language, how to ride a bike, skate on ice, dance, or play a musical instrument. First, we must meet the Natural State. Then we practice to familiarize ourselves with it, again and again. So, we become confident and certain about what it is. Then we strengthen and stabilize our connection to the Natural State so we can bring it into the circumstances of daily life. And so we learn how to manage the transitions in between temporality and non-temporality. Ultimately our Dzogchen practice posture becomes whatever position we find ourselves in.

The conflict and unnecessary separation between the temporal (psychological) and non-temporal (spiritual) dimensions of mind can be resolved, in an interdependent vision of individuation that includes them both. The reconciliation includes the direct experience that time, and timelessness are not two separate things. They are interdependent. Time flows from timelessness and returns to timelessness.

In this context, our first obligation as individuation psychologists is to learn how to directly experience Rigpa and the Nature of Mind, as our non-temporal identity, known as nonidentity. Keith Dowman is a longtime Dzogchen practitioner and an esteemed translator of Tibetan Dzogchen texts. Keith is an astute commentator on the Dzogchen View and its

⁶ Yongdzin (teacher of teachers) Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, and John Myrdin Reynolds, (1992).

implication for understanding timeless individuation as who we truly are, in our innermost essence. Discussing the Dzogchen View, he explains that:

Dzogchen is being here and now. It's not about what we want to be, but what we already are, what we have been from beginningless time, changeless time. That is what Dzogchen insists upon, and what it asserts from beginning to end. There's nothing much more to Dzogchen than identity with the nature of mind...than the knowledge of, or the memory of, who we are.⁷

Let's move on to look at Dzogchen as a contemplative science discovery.

Copernican-Like Contemplative Science Discovery

We can view Dzogchen as a Copernican-like contemplative science discovery, rather than as an “Eastern spiritual path.” Dzogchen contemplative science discovered the mind's innermost essence—its timeless Nature. The West learned about Dzogchen not that long ago, but it isn't well understood. Dzogchen hasn't transplanted well in the West, for several reasons. A significant one is because Dzogchen arrived in a form best suited to another time and place. A “radical” western form of Dzogchen addresses some of these problems by liberating Dzogchen from Tibetan cultural and traditional formalisms. But it also lacks temporal individuation perspective and suffers accordingly.

The Dzogchen and individuation psychology collaboration needs to come alive with visionary enthusiasm. Each has what the other is missing and needs to fulfill individuation's full promise. Together, they have an opportunity to recognize the possibilities for complete individuation. And to advance those possibilities as well as their own.

⁷ Dowman, Keith, 2020, *The Dzogchen View*, Dzogchen Now! Books, p.56

The Dzogchen Discovery

The breakthrough discovery: The human mind has an innermost Nature that escapes our ordinary awareness. The detection and recognition of the mind's essential nature are not cognizable by the intellect. Thought and concepts, along with Western scientific methods, will drive right by it and miss. And then conclude that it doesn't exist. An important next step in depth psychology's individuation is to understand and use phenomenological methods to make reliable and valid inquiry into the mind. Including inquiry into the interdependence between mind's temporal and nontemporal dimensions. Third-person empirical study of the mind misses the mark. For Western psychology to use the experimental scientific method to investigate the mind is another variation on the materialistic nightmare. Western science can no more understand the mind than a pigeon can understand a tax audit.

Dzogchen contemplative scientists used first-person experiential methods to make their discovery about the mind's innermost timeless Nature. In the future, direct, firsthand experience of one's own mind must be understood as essential for becoming an individuation and depth psychologist. And for working with others as one. Intellectual and conceptual knowledge and training are important but woefully insufficient. Experiential self-knowledge is necessary.

Underscoring important points: Dzogchen cannot be known intellectually. It must be experienced, as nondual timeless awareness, i.e., "Rigpa." By missing Rigpa and the timeless spiritual dimension of mind, depth psychology misses the critical elements of individuation beyond time. And by missing the psychological dimension of mind, Dzogchen fails to recognize the temporal elements of individuation. They both suffer the consequences, as do the prospects for recognizing complete individuation. The two are interdependent. And individuation psychologists need to learn how to experience timeless awareness, and so understand the

nontemporal dimension of individuation. And its interdependence with individuation in time. And Dzogchen psychologists must learn how to experience the temporal dimension of individuation. And temporal individuation's interdependence with becoming who we truly are, beyond time.

Dzogchen as Potentially Transformative

Dzogchen contemplative science's discovery of the mind's essential nature as akin to Copernicus' groundbreaking discovery that the sun, not the Earth, is the center of our solar system. His discovery changed our vision of our solar system, and ultimately the science and practice of astronomy as well. Dzogchen contemplative science research unveiled the Nature of Mind. We are only just beginning to learn and understand the details of this important discovery, one that could sit well with Jung's work as he imagined, experienced, and lived it. Dzogchen psychology positions timeless awareness at the center of the mind as an accessible direct experience, not as a concept or theory. Dzogchen is not a view of what is, it *is* what is. It's a "viewless" experience of pure Being. Dzogchen revelation is Gnosis experienced on its own, in the nontemporal state.

Copernicus' discovery was ignored, scoffed at and misunderstood initially by astronomers and other scientists, as well as artists and church authorities. Yet in 100 years, his work changed the role of astronomy in society. Similarly, the discovery of Mind's innermost Nature can have transformative implications. Especially if its timeless dimension becomes interdependent with the temporal dimension of individuation psychology. Dzogchen psychology also offers us an opportunity to understand what egocentrism is and what a sound, healthy mind looks like. And how to cultivate and protect such a mind. And Dzogchen gives us a unique

experiential lens to recognize and consider what hinders temporal individuation. A lens that also sheds light on our social problems, including much of the hell that characterizes human life.

Avoiding Indifference and Costly Misunderstandings

Great ideas too often die from a lack of blood supply. They are often just ignored or misunderstood. One of Einstein's colleagues, Hermann Minkowski (1864-1909), worked out the math demonstrating the distinct possibility of a fourth dimension. But despite Einstein's later support, it was ignored for decades.

I was shocked when I discovered that most of what I learned about Freud's ideas, were not Freud's ideas at all. I was taken aback when Freud explained how many science-oriented psychology professionals, including many of his followers, were missing something important about him and his work. Freud explained why:

Everybody thinks...that I started by the scientific character of my work and that my principal scope lies in curing mental maladies. This is a terrible error that has prevailed for years and that I have been unable to set right. I am a scientist by necessity, and not by vocation. I am really by nature an artist... And of this there lies an irrefutable proof: which is that in all countries into which psychoanalysis has penetrated it has been better understood and applied by writers and artists than by doctors. My books, in fact, more resemble works of imagination than treatise on pathology.⁸

⁸ G. Papini, 1969, pp 130-134

Keeping Jung's Vision for Individuation in Mind

As individuation psychologists informed and inspired by Jung's work, we should be certain we understand his views and vision. There's no doubt that Jung's vision of individuation included a sacred, nontemporal component, one that is too often glossed over and undervalued by those of us more comfortable and more aligned with his intellectual work. But whether we understand or like it or not, Jung was unequivocal that the numinous is central to his individuation vision and work. He told us that "Individuation is a philosophical, spiritual and mystical experience."⁹

We should regard Jung's words as inviolable. But not because Jung says so, as the One Who Knows, but because a view of individuation without the spiritual and mystical elements misses the mark. In our understanding of Jung's views on individuation we often overlook or downplay its spiritual and mystical features. Many of Jung's followers fail to recognize these elements as fundamental and indispensable.

So, we should remind ourselves occasionally about what Jung said about Jungians and Jungian Training Institutes. In his words: "Thank God I'm Jung and not a Jungian."¹⁰ Jung was not enthusiastic about the creation of training institutes using his name. When asked about the training program idea, Jung replied: "To tell the truth, I can think of nothing less I would rather

⁹ C. Jung, 1989, p.294

¹⁰ M. Stein, 2006, p. 11

hear about.”¹¹ Jung seemed to know that all educational and training organizations tend to contract into normative proprieties that lose track of the essential points.

A Key Point Requires Recognition and Understanding

Like Freud, Jung emphasized that his work was not focused on treating problems and illnesses. Jung told us that the main concern was the numinous. We should believe him. And appreciate its implications for what we call therapy, analysis, and individuation.

Let’s turn to a Von Franz quote of Jung’s views, and her commentary on their meaning and implications.

“The main interest of my work,” writes Jung, “is not concerned with the treatment of neurosis but rather with the approach to the numinous. But the fact is that the approach to the numinous is the real therapy and *inasmuch as* (italics mine) you attain to the numinous experiences, you are released from the curse of pathology. Even the very disease takes on a numinous character.” Von Franz continues: “This citation cites everything of essential importance about a Jungian analysis. If it is not possible to establish a relationship with the numinous, no cure is possible; the most one can hope for is an improvement in social adjustment. But then, what is left for the analyst to do?”¹²

As for Von Franz’s question as to what’s left for the therapist/analyst to do, the answer is clear in an experiential psychology that understands how to access the numinous timeless dimension of mind. There’s no reason we must wait for patients to catch the occasional

¹¹ M Stein, J Manganiello, 2022, p. 324

¹² ML Von Franz, 1990, p. 177

numinous big fish to carry into sessions. Not when, if we know how, we can help them experience the numinous. In synergistic concert with their gradual individuation work.

Let's note Jung's critically important words in Von Franz's reference above. "...*inasmuch* (italics mine) as you attain to the numinous..." (i.e., in so far as, to the extent or degree to which you attain, achieve, accomplish, realize). This is a key issue. Too often we imagine that the task of someone who has had a numinous experience is to just integrate the experience in sessions and out. That's surely the case, at some level, but more is needed. Because the numinous is where we find the timeless depth of who and what we are. Understanding this, the critical additional work is then to find, stabilize and strengthen our connection to the numinous, so we can "attain to the degree to which we need" to realize who we truly are. This is the precise Dzogchen agenda. And it resonates perfectly with Jung's vision and with Murray Stein's position that the return to one's true being is the absolute prerequisite for individuation.

Jung's Nondual Near-Death Experience

After his Near-Death Experience (NDE), in 1944 Jung was quite clear on the intellect's shortcomings and inability to grasp the spiritual and mystical elements of individuation. Like psychedelic mystical experiences, an NDE can move us quickly into timeless nondual consciousness. Lillian Frey was by Jung's side during the time. She reported to James Hillman's first wife Kate that Jung:

"...lives now in an "in-between" state somehow, most often he lets himself drop off into awake nondirective states, leaving the ego and mind out. He says he experiences truth as light, that is not with the consciousness that he has preached all these years, but another kind of awareness on a very deep level. ... Jung says he does not trust

consciousness in the usual sense anymore ... it means giving up a great deal to enter into this state where truth so to say lingers on a different level, that Jung has always known about it, but not until now really taking it on as a change in himself.¹³

In his NDE, Jung apparently discovered the profound difference between dualist and nondual awareness. *“He says he experiences truth as light, that is not with the consciousness that he has preached all these years, but another kind of awareness on a very deep level.”* Both NDEs and entheogen-induced mystical experiences can absent the conceptual mind, as pure awareness comes to the forefront. But we can’t just keep almost dying or taking entheogens to keep that awareness refreshed. But with Dzogchen methods, we can indeed do just that. With ongoing revelation in Nature of Mind.

NDE’s and entheogens, like LSD and psilocybin, can awaken us to the spiritual dimension of mind and nontemporal identity. While the lights are turned on in these experiences we can “leave ego and the mind out” and see “truth as light.” But our conditioned personality grows back, in time. With knowledge of how to access both temporal and nontemporal consciousness, without losing either, we can explore the transitional “in-between” states. This is critically important work.

Because the revelation of who we are beyond time only remains revelation if it can refresh enough to sustain during the in-between transitions to and from temporal and the nontemporal. Therein resides the great potential for integrated progressive “in time” and immediate “beyond time” individuation psychology and inner work.

¹³ D. Russell, 2013, pp. 468-469

Because time and timeless are state dependent experiences. In the inexperienced mind, the transition into one excludes the other. To remain conscious of both, they need to be bridged in direct experience as interdependent, so we don't fall into liminality amnesia. Jung suffered the pain of transition when "coming down" from his NDE. As if his sacred, nondual vision was dying his timeless identity along with it.

As Jung described in harrowing words:

I was profoundly disappointed.... The painful process of defoliation (shedding ego as centering and determining point), had been in vain. Disappointed, I thought, "Now I must return to the 'box system' again." For it seemed to me as if behind the horizon of the cosmos a three-dimensional world had been artificially built up, in which each person sat by himself in a little box. And now I should have to convince myself all over again that this was important! Life and the whole world struck me as a prison, and it bothered me beyond measure that I should again be finding that quite in order. I had been so glad to shed it all. . . And now all that would be a thing of the past!¹⁴

Kandinsky's Materialist Nightmare Offers Depth Psychology Perspective

For amplification, let's visit Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) and his visionary work, work well aligned and resonant with Jung's vision. Kandinsky was the father of abstract art and a savvy depth psychologist. His and Jung's work were simpatico. They both prized the numinous, self-knowledge, and inner life. Parallels have been drawn between Jung's first public exhibit of

¹⁴ C. Jung, 1989, pp. 292-293

the Red Book at NY's Ruben Museum and Kandinsky's simultaneous retrospective at the Guggenheim.¹⁵

Kandinsky gives us a clear look at the poisonous materialistic nightmare we live in. As well as its causes, consequences and only antidote. The nightmare's cruel reality testifies to the interdependence between psychology and spirituality. Kandinsky lived art, psychology, and spirituality as an interdependent whole. He understood the suffering born from the fragility of the human mind caught in dark egocentrism and the greedy evil marriage between science and commerce.

As Kandinsky put it long ago, in words that ring mightily true for individuation psychologists today:

The all-important spark of inner life today is at present only a spark. Our minds, which are even now only just awakening after years of materialism, are infected with the despair of unbelief, of lack of purpose and ideal. The nightmare of materialism, which has turned the life of the universe into an evil, useless game, is not yet past; it holds the awakening soul still in its grip. This feeble light is but a presentiment, and the soul, when it sees it, trembles in doubt whether the light is not a dream, and the gulf of darkness a reality.¹⁶

Kandinsky offers a numinous vision central to Jung's view of individuation, and to a healthy mind. Kandinsky's recognizes psychology and spirituality as inter-reliant. The mind with little or no "light" is a lost and troubled mind. If you are in a room 120 degrees, you are hot. Not

¹⁵ D. Sherwood, 2010, pp 11-18

¹⁶ W. Kandinsky, 1977, p. 1

because you are ill, but because it's 120 degrees. If you live in a materialistic nightmare where life is an evil game that leaves you in the dark with woe and weary, you are not ill. You are suffering. And your individuation is burdened or stopped.

The "light" has been marginalized and undervalued for so long, we can barely see it. For Dzogchen everything is light. When the grime of discursive thinking, intellectual concepts and materialistic vision give way to the mind's primordial awareness, we realize that it's the nightmare that is false. In the mind's innermost essence, the radiant, timeless light shines on.

The great artist composer Robert Schumann (1810-1856) defined the artist's role 150 years ago. He said: "To send light into the darkness of men's hearts - such is the duty of the artist."¹⁷ As depth psychologists, we share that obligation because it is truly our job. And the heart and soul of the individuation psychologist's work.

More on this later. For now, let's explore more of the issues facing our search for the famous transcendent "third."

Temporal and Non-Temporal Alchemy

Understanding individuation beyond time unveils a startling truth: We are already in the final temporal individuation stage, the Rubedo. NOW and always. Because, from a timeless perspective, NOW is all there is. The Dzogchen View is that the future is a projected concept, not a reality. On close inspection, the "future" never arrives because when it does, it's NOW. And the past always shows up as NOW, as well. NOW is the only real thing going on, ever. From the

¹⁷ J.S Sullivan Dwight, 1856, Vol. 7-8, p. 12

Dzogchen perspective, the Rubedo is the non-temporal first and last step, because it's the only step. Whether we are conscious of it or not, i.e., in the experience of NOW, or not. For Dzogchen, though we can imagine a temporal path, it's a conceptual projection. And the solid identity known as "I" or "me" who treads the imagined gradual path is fictive. For Dzogchen, no one exists to individuate through progressive stages.

Looking to theoretical physics again for parallel perspective, we see that light is both wave and particle, not one or the other. And individuation is both temporal and non-temporal. Dzogchen elegantly explains nontemporal individuation as the identification with the numinous dimension of mind. But we miss a great deal about individuation if we regard the Dzogchen view as sole and complete. While embodied in time, we can't deny the importance of temporal individuation. Depth psychologists and Dzogchen psychologists have the same problem—in reverse. Both risk falling into the egocentric trap of assuming their position is the only correct one.

The Egocentrism Dilemma

The collaborative work that must be done isn't easy. Because each position is inclined toward an egocentric stance. Where it strives to protect and advance itself to maintain position and power. Binary conflict is hard to resolve because each position feels it is more or less than the other. Each position can fear being marginalized and colonized by the other. If adversarial stances flare, then projections will trigger and dominate. And alliance and cooperation then become difficult, if not impossible. The egocentric dilemma is a binary power dilemma: I/my side is either right or wrong. It wins or loses. The dilemma is inherent in egocentric psychology. Once egocentrism has momentum, it can't be easily relativized and deliteralized. Even psychologically sophisticated minds get stuck in it. Consider Jung and Freud.

What's essential is cooperation and focus on experiment. The physicists are fortunate. Most often they can see the results. Light is both wave and particle. The "third" that emerges is the BOTH. The experiment for us is on ourselves. We use the same precise contemplative experimental methods Dzogchen used, to systematically explore our minds through direct experience. Then we consider our findings in collaborative engagement.

Dzogchen Psychology on Egocentrism

Dzogchen contemplative science research shows "egocentrism" to be an affliction, one central to understanding the mind, and individuation, in both its temporal and nontemporal aspects. Egocentrism means something different and more in Dzogchen psychology than the word usually implies in Western psychology. In Dzogchen, egocentrism is the hallmark of an unsound mind, separated from its innermost nature. It's a mind infected by materialism, a mind that lacks the light of non-dual awareness. Dzogchen contemplative scientists discovered its source and its remedy. Remarkably, if collaboration works, we can experience that directly as well. A transformative possibility.

The root of egocentrism is our inherent tendency to mistakenly impute solid identity to ourselves from the flow of discursive thought in our stream of consciousness. To avoid doing this is the key to a healthy mind. Using Dzogchen methods, we can replicate and this finding easily. For most people, mistaken identity is wrongly presumed to be solid and real, and chronically vulnerable. This vulnerable identity is based on a projected presumption of self and external reality. It's the fictive identity who becomes egocentric. This too can be easily confirmed.

This mistaken identity becomes the heap on which our conditioning gets layered. As young children, we don't have the mind power to make sense of our circumstances and the problems therein. This coalesces into a self-image that, although fictional, nevertheless feels real,

and determines much of what we think, feel, and do. We all become identified with our conditioned self-image until we develop the consciousness needed to see through and stand free from it. Our identification with this “I” or “me” is dominant and dangerous. It permeates all aspects of our psychological life. We live in it as something true and undeniable. As do nation states. The egocentric dilemma is to consider this mistaken identity as literally real. And then fall prey to the consequences: The chronic striving to protect, defend and advance relative identity as absolute and literal.

Temporal and nontemporal individuation work together hold great promise, for remedying the egocentrism problem. Active imagination can relativize and deliteralize the egocentric dilemma in time, when it’s illuminated by the light of the Nature of Mind, beyond time. This is an “in time” and “beyond time” remedy that arises from a nonbinary interdependent vision.

Self-Liberation as Antidote to Egocentrism

Dzogchen is known as the Path of Self-Liberation through seeing with naked timeless awareness. The key to understanding this path is to correct the error that arises from not properly understanding our stream of consciousness. And avoid attributing fictive identity to ourselves and the fall into egocentrism. In Dzogchen instead of liking, disliking or following our thoughts into storyline and narrative—we just let our thoughts “self-liberate.” Thoughts come and go. But we don’t go with them. When we do, we are in time, in a Waking Dream of sorts. A waking dream that feels very real, but on close inspection— isn’t. If we learn the appropriate Dzogchen method, then we can “train” to “see with naked awareness.” And avoid distraction and possession by waking dream narratives and storylines. We just remain more in non-dual awareness—NOW.

In the mind's Natural State, we can discover that thought is a manifestation of the mind's timeless, essential Nature. Here's what we can experience and understand: If we like, dislike or follow our thoughts, we miss the innermost Nature of Mind from which thoughts arise. We unconsciously ascribe solid identity to ourselves from our discursive thought flow. We then move into this imputed false identity as if it was who we truly are, and so we suffer the consequences. If we follow thought into storyline and narrative, we are in time, typically blindfolded and not fully conscious. But if we develop the capacity to release our thoughts then they self-liberate on their own. When thought liberates, what's left then is the timeless source of thought's arising. Thought manifests from the ground of indescribable non-temporal Being. The open and spacious Ground beyond description or characterization.

Dzogchen practice is known as contemplation. Many secondary practices support our entering contemplation as the Natural State, as Rigpa. One secondary practice is to relax, observe and directly experience your mind to answer the following three questions: 1) when thoughts arise where do they come from? When thoughts abide where are they? When thoughts leave, where do they go?

His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the former Abbot of Menri, the Bon Monastery in Northern India, gave key instructions on working with this issue, as follows:

Don't follow thoughts about the past or the future. When the past comes to mind, it is NOW. Don't follow thoughts about the future, when the future arrives, it is NOW. Stay in *rigpa*, Aware Presence, NOW.¹⁸

Easy to say, but hard to do—at first. But as we practice our capacity becomes more stable and stronger. We then experience thoughts as energy. As energy that arises from the Nature of Mind itself, as thought, as immaterial form. The thoughts can be charged with the grime of time: conditioned memories, complexes, hopes, fears, trauma and so on. They appear to be about us, but only if we follow them do we get sucked into the role of protagonist in recurring dramas. If we don't follow them—we can stay in the mind's Natural State. As NOW. Not as an "I" or "me" making egocentric efforts, but as effortless pure timeless awareness. From pure awareness, unburdened by what's not NOW, thought becomes spontaneously original, arising on the wings of the creative imagination.

This not a spiritual bypass, the kind so prevalent for westerners using eastern meditation, such as what I call mindless mindfulness training. Which leaves the unconscious, complex ridden, conditioned mind out of the picture. Correctly understood and practiced, Dzogchen is moving into who we truly are, beyond time. And this identity is interdependent with who we truly are in time. To assume that it negates our temporal identity is an egocentric error made by many Dzogchen followers and teachers, who are unfamiliar with the temporal mind, including its teleological imperatives.

¹⁸ His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizin, former Abbot of Yungdrung Bon Menri Monastery. Personal communication about Dzogchen practice.

At carefully chosen points, this method of experiential self-observation and then contemplative non-dual awareness can be creatively woven into individuation work. The benefits that come with this level of self-knowledge are clear. Impartial awareness gives rise to a consciousness better able to release from troublesome states of mind, not in defense, but as knowledge and wisdom. Awareness gives the mind a means to liberate itself from negative and conditioned states of mind, and so avoid identification with and possession by them. And temporal awareness then can learn to create and engage the “free position.”

“In time” and “beyond time” individuation are interdependent. And individuation must be reciprocal if it is to be complete. For Dzogchen to miss the temporal psychology and the progressive work needed to consciously individuate, is to also put itself at risk in the West. The forces at play in the unconscious temporal dimension of mind cannot be spiritually bypassed. Dzogchen in the West is less than it could be if it could address the forces at play in temporal psychological life. Any numinous tradition that claims to embody ultimate truth, but which won't face the ordinary truths about itself, will be rightly seen as lacking character and credibility.

Missing either temporal or non-temporal individual is an error. Seeing both together as interdependent is a breakthrough view. Both need to be considered and understood alone and together if we are to recognize and realize the entire individuation picture. To say that “in time,” alchemical individuation work leads to the Self as some literal personal attainment of wholeness is fuzzy, intellectual, and incomplete. The intellect is in time. The spiritual core of individuation is beyond time, it must be experienced. To say that because our essential innermost being, our Nature of Mind, is who we truly and the timeless source of all that is true. But also, incomplete. Because the beyond time view must recognize and acknowledge the reality of embodied existence in time, for the mind and the soul.

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