

Logos in the Garden of Souls (Part 2)

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So just to pick up where we left off. We said that if we're going to forge a conceptual framework then there's a lot of elements of our existence that it needs to account for, include, make sense of, give vital place and purpose to, and tie together. And part of it, just very quickly repeating what we've said, we're acknowledging its historical place. It's historically conditioned, contingent. We're not devising or discovering some kind of ultimately true, grand conceptual framework or theory that's completely ahistorical. We're recognising that there's always a way of looking, which includes the concept. And the way of looking and the concept shapes, determines, gives rise to experience, and vice versa; that it needs to support soulmaking; that it needs to support a fertility and widening of experience and also of ideation in fact as well, support a widening and an opening of other ways of knowing and not limiting that in some kind of epistemicide; that it is opening embodied ways of looking without preprescribed limits to it. We're not shrinking down to a claim that there's just one right way of looking called mindfulness or science or whatever, and some kind of naive notion that there's only one way of looking and it reveals one reality. Even if we don't use the word *truth*, we're not shrinking down in any kind of monotheism in that way.

We're incorporating dependent origination, the idea of ways of looking and the whole fact of emptiness of things. And we're even including the idea that logoi break. Conceptual frameworks even break, shatter, melt, need to expand -- all that, and that we can never fully understand something like eros because of that. So all that's quite a lot and we even said more about other aspects of our existence that need to be included. But if we just pick out for now, to pick up our thread again. And we need a conceptual framework that supports soulmaking.

So if we pick these up individually. We've said before the logos needs to support, needs to allow, the psyche, the image, and the eros. If we want a logos that supports soulmaking, if we take that aspect, somehow we want a conceptual framework that supports soulmaking, then the logos that we have of whatever it is we are in relationship to needs to support the imaginal perception that's happening, it needs to support the erotic connection. So for example, back to that idea of the divinity of eros, that idea, that conception, that logos in the moment functions -- if I'm really incorporating it, if I'm really bringing it into the way of looking -- that will affect what happens, what I actually experience, and how I actually live, how I relate to life. It's supportive of soulmaking. The idea of discrepancy-based processing that I mentioned a while back, to me that's not -- I mean, it might be to a very limited extent because it helps discern between different things and maybe it creates a bit of letting go or something, but its potential as a soulmaking-supporting logos is very, very limited, very limited. And there's a way that thinking too much with those kinds of ideas actually will really constrain the whole eros psyche logos dynamic, the whole movement of soulmaking, the whole potential of soulmaking, because wrapped up in a logos like that is -- either explicitly or implicitly, and in most logoi as well, or a lot of logoi -- is what is a human being, like I said, and what is important, what is actually important. Discrepancy based processing, what does it tell me about, almost like imply in the kind of subtext and the quality of the idea, what does it imply about what a human being is and what's important?

Included, wrapped up in a logos is ontology (the question of what's real, the assumptions about what's real), epistemology (about what's a valid way of knowing), cosmology. Metaphysics. And all of this wrapped up in that effects the experience. We want a conceptual framework, conceptual ideas, that actually support soulmaking, that open soulmaking. Support and open, and support the opening of soulmaking -- and also that allow the increase, because soulmaking is that increase, in the psyche, in the image, the growth, the expansion, the widening, the deepening, the complexifying of the image and

of the eros. In other words, the logos needs to be able to, at certain points, support and allow that expansion of the whole soulmaking dynamic, which means the logos needs to not be so fixed; it needs to be able to break and replace it by something else or whatever.

And you can see also the logos of eros, the logos, the view of desire, let's say. And just compare, over simplistically: "desire as a defilement, it's not okay." If that's the kind of logos and the subtext, if that's how we're viewing desire, compared to "desire is ok, it's just another thing. Everything is ok," kind of loose, slightly sloppy, maybe nondual kind of teaching: "desire is ok, everything is ok. "Or a little more nuanced: "the desire that leads to the end of suffering is good but the desire that leads to an increase in suffering is bad." Is that enough of a delineation? Or "desire is something beautiful and divine". Four ideas -- although in the last one you could say it gets diverted or constricted, contracted, you know. That's possible. Too simplistic. But you can see how differently the different ideas, the different logoi and conceptions about desire, which shape the experiences -- and this is something we're going to come back to; I said it already but we're going to come back to it. If you are in love and you have the sense or you play with the idea that my being in love, our being in love, is somehow mirroring the divine eros, somehow through our being in love we are participating in a divine inloveness, in a divine eros, and that becomes the way of looking and the way of looking at your beloved and the way of looking at your life and this moment, what does that open? What does that lead to?

There are many other variations we already mentioned about how to view desire or the possible ways of viewing desire, but they all have different effects. And we made that distinction, eros is a subset of desire and craving is a different subset and all that. But there's other variations, too. But the view, the logos, effects the experience. And I have to really acknowledge this and find out, find out how, what, why. And so we said that before. I'll say something else that I've said before as well just because I think it's so important. If our whole dharma conceptual framework, if our whole edifice of Dharma conceptually is too narrow or not subtle enough or not sophisticated enough and not making the right distinctions, and maybe, I don't know, what might pass nowadays for typical dharma conceptual frameworks, I'm not sure if that's true or accurate, but if it's too narrow and it doesn't have the right kind of levels of subtlety and sophistication and openness etc. then this -- whatever it is it that might be a sort of typical dharma -- can get quite entrenched and unquestioned and kind of stagnant. We don't realise then that it's just one possible way of looking, one possible conceptual framework, one possible set of conceptual distinctions -- you know, whatever, "be with what is", "everything's impermanent", "everything's just flowing, so let go because you can't hang on, and this is it, this is it now." That kind of simplistic dharma can very easily become entrenched, unquestioned, a stagnant kind of dogma, and not realise that this is just a way of looking, this is just a set of conceptions that informs a way of looking -- one among many possible others. It will have its effects, others will have their effects.

But if that happens and it does become something too narrow, not subtle and sophisticated enough, does become entrenched in that way etc., then what happens is we look at life that way and our hermeneutics, our interpretation of existence, is constrained by that conceptual framework. We might think, "I'm not into conceptual frameworks. I'm not intellectual. This is really simple. This is just really basic, true, not conceptual at all." It's a conceptual framework and it constrains the interpretation of experience and existence. And it also then constrains experience -- I've said this before. Experience of what? Of self, of other, of world, of cosmos, of time, of desire, of eros, certainly the experience of soulmaking. It constrains the range of freedom that's available to us and the depth of freedom, both wide and deep; the kinds of freedom; constrains our creativity in all kinds of ways; constrains our sense of beauty, and again the range and the diversity and the senses of beauty.

Now if you ask well what is the relationship with the Pali Canon of what you're saying or this conceptual framework of all this business that we're talking about, what's the relationship then with Pali

Canon dharma?

I would ask in response -- I would say quite a lot in that, so I just want to say some things right now. One question I would ask in response is "whose Pali Canon?" "Whose interpretation of the Pali Canon?" The Pali Canon, just like any other text, is always approached with an agenda, and always approached with assumptions, as well with certain conceptual frameworks in place already, certain ways of looking in place, or a way of looking in place and available; a certain ontology, a certain epistemology, a certain cosmology. Whose Pali Canon? Whose agenda? Whose assumptions? Whose conceptual framework? If I approach the Pali Canon with the agenda and the assumptions and the conceptual framework and the limited range of ways of looking and ontology epistemology cosmology etc. of, let's say, secular modernism, based on classical science and a sort of monotheistic view of reality and a kind of existential one-dimensional universe of humanism, what am I going to get? What am I going to see? I'm going to see a secular modernist Pali Canon. And then curiously the Buddha seems like a guy just like me cos I'm looking that way, I have an agenda. What would it be, we might ask, I think more interestingly, to bring a post-modern, a critique of modernism, a post-modern attitude and a kind of agenda to the Pali Canon? What would that give rise to? To me that's actually much more interesting.

But we bring an agenda, we bring a set of assumptions. What happens is we ignore this or that aspect of, in this case, the Pali Canon. We give a centrality of place to this and something else dependent on our agenda and dependent on our assumptions. We have a certain fantasy of the Buddha, and a fantasy as well as conception of what awakening is. All of this comes into creating, if you like, the Pali Canon, creating-discovering the Pali Canon. I need to see this. I need to admit it. So a scholar, so-called -- and actually I have to point out that scholarship itself is part fantasy; scholarship itself is part fantasy. And again. I can say that from perhaps some experience. But scholarship itself is part fantasy. What goes on for the scholar that keeps them at it, that makes it alive for them? There's soulmaking going on in scholarship and that involves fantasy. But anyway a scholar without a practice related to the Pali Canon, a Pali Canon so-called scholar, without a practice and without a lived engaging of that material in their life, in their practice, can't understand what the Pali Canon is about. They cannot claim that they understand it. Someone who doesn't have practice and a kind of really passionate engagement with it can't understand it. And yet at the same time a scholar who *does* have a practice that really matters to them and *is* engaging that material in their life, in their practice, they already have a fantasy and a conceptual framework. They already have an investment and an agenda and a perspective.

So here again is a kind of version of -- I don't know if it's the hermeneutic circle so much as a hermeneutical conundrum, a hermeneutical situation about interpreting the Pali Canon. If I try and have this objective, almost quasi-scientific, classical scientific methodology there, because I don't practice, because it doesn't mean anything to me, I don't really care about it, I'm not really engaging with it, I'm not really going to understand it. And if I do I'm already bringing everything that I bring to it. Even somebody who is supposedly not engaging brings their whole historical situation to it and the assumptions of modernity and postmodernity, whatever it is. So here's a hermeneutical conundrum, situation, fact. Can I be honest and be aware of it? And what is the implication then?

Usually what happens historically -- and it still goes on actually -- is that we create-discover the Pali Canon, just as we do with anything else that's meaningful to us and anything else that's involved in our soulmaking to whatever extent. There is creativity going on. But if I cloak it, my creative discovery, in the language of the tradition in, let's say, Buddhist language, then it's almost like I smooth over. It's as if, Yeah, sure we're all talking about the same thing, there's no problem, we're not creating anything here, we're just discovering because we all use words like four noble truths and we all use words like suffering and awakening and enlightenment or whatever it is. It might mean completely different

things; utterly divergent range of meanings of these Buddhist words. But because we're all using the words of the tradition, it's like it's ok. Somehow it cloaks the fact that we're creating and not just discovering. And it also hides the fact that we may be talking about really, really radically different directions and ideas etc.

So when the Dhamma comes to a new culture, a culture that's new for it, historically -- now this is happening in the west; it's in its very early infancy, not even that, not even out of the birth canal really -- just as it went to China or Japan, what happens there? You know really if you take Japanese Zen, Soto or Rinzai Zen or Shingon or whatever, first of all there's quite a variety there, but sometimes you'd be hard pressed to -- I don't know; if the Buddha was alive would he even recognise that it's the same thing that he talked about? Maybe some words are the same, but it's so vastly different. Or even what passes for Zen or what has the label of Zen in Western cultures now. I'm not saying that's a bad thing; I'm just trying to expose something here, and it's like let's be honest about something, if it really matters to me about whether some conception is -- how it relates to the Pali Canon, and is it the Pali Canon, is it real Buddhism and all that.

And so there's historically a way of doing this that still goes on, to do with cloaking the creation, the creativity, and using traditional words to kind of cover something that's vastly divergent, a range of teachings and directions that are vastly divergent. Again historically what happened with the Mahayana and the Vajrayana in India is that you get the teaching that "the Buddha said this, historically he said this, but he said it in secret to a small, select band of disciples." So there's a kind of historical factual claim: they preserved this teaching in secret and now we're revealing it. This is the tradition. It goes back to the historical factual Buddha. Or the Buddha is revealing this on another plane of existence -- and actually strange as that may sound to some people, it actually makes more sense, it feels more viable to me if you open up the language of who the Buddha is and who my mind is etc. Or you get a terma was found, an actual teaching was found, by this particular person, a tulku or whatever, found this old teaching, this ancient original teaching -- a scroll or whatever it is. Or you get the modern version of "what the Buddha meant was this when he said this."

And all of it is trying to claim authority and authenticity -- and those words are related -- via a fantasy of origins and via the particular fantasy and agenda that one brings to the Dharma, to the Pali Canon, to whatever it is, the Mahayana texts or whatever it is in front of one that one is invested in. But I don't think now that the Dharma can grow -- and it needs to grow if it's a baby coming out of the birth canal; it will grow, it will change; it has already changed, Western Dharma has already taken on, as I mentioned in one talk already on this retreat, has already integrated into it certain concepts that were absolutely not there in the Pali Canon or Zen Buddhism, some psychotherapeutic concepts or certain neuroscientific ideas that we just take for granted. So it's already happening. But nowadays in our culture, the Dharma can't grow convincingly, to me, not convincingly at all, with this kind of appeal to the authenticity or authority of the actual reality of a tradition, as if that's something real, and we're not owning the fantasy, the fantasy of scholarship, the agenda, the assumptions, the concepts that one brings to it -- all of that.

For me that just -- that's not convincing. The cat is out of the bag. The cat's out of the bag in regard to our hermeneutical relationship with texts and tradition and all that, and historical figures. And if you know from modern philosophy a philosopher that I'm very fond of, Hans Georg Gadamer talked a lot, wrote a lot about this, hermeneutics, and our situation in history, looking back at a text. It doesn't mean we shouldn't inquire and talk about the Pali Canon but there is no pristine, unsoiled actuality that we're going to arrive at there, and to think that we are is philosophically and psychologically naive. The cat's out of the bag. And we are too aware now of the cultural and historical context. So if someone said, "the Buddha in secret taught neuroscience to a select band of disciples," or whatever -- I mean, maybe

some people believe; that I don't know -- or actually what's more common is "the Buddha did teach this" in certain psychotherapeutic interpretations of what's happening, but I don't know -- it doesn't really, for me it's not very convincing.

What about being in dialogue with the Buddha, with the Buddhadharma, with the tradition? Dialogue, *dialogos*, in dialogue. We're in a conversation, in a back and forth. And that's part of loving a tradition and respecting a tradition, is actually admitting, like when we love, we're in dialogue with our lover. We're in dialogue with this. *Dialogos*, back and forth. Dia means *two*. It also means *through*. So there's this kind of -- logos goes through one way and the other, like water through other water, flowing both ways, mixing and coming back. To be in dialogue with the Buddhadharma, with the tradition, with the Buddha, with the Sangha. So to me it's important to acknowledge that. And then creativity -- actually we're acknowledging that we are creative, we are creating-discovering, if you want, the Pali Canon or whatever text, and we add things and all of that. So to me it's disingenuous to try to convince others that we're sort of discovering something authentic and independent, you know, independently existing, and the fantasy of that, the fantasy of historical facticity.

We should say a little bit more about this. I mentioned that word epistemicide. It's a great word. The killing of, the *cide*, like homicide, the killing of ways of knowing; the erasure, the eradication, the starving and therefore killing of ways of knowing. So this is something that actually happened anyway in western society with the emergence of modernism, starting with the enlightenment -- and the scientific revolution but really the western enlightenment -- that a certain way of knowing, modelled on the methodology of classical sort of Cartesian and Newtonian and Baconian science, the western enlightenment was claimed to be superior, and the project was to reveal the one universal reality, and there is, with that, one universally valid way of knowing things. So it's a mixture of empiricism and rationalism, basically, the sort of basic scientific method. But again, if you know much about recent western philosophy, this has been radically questioned. The whole project of modernism and the western enlightenment project in relation to ways of knowing, ways of looking, and what reality is supposed to be, radically questioned by postmodern philosophy, philosophers of science even, postcolonial theory, feminist studies, and even philosophers from the so-called analytical Anglo-American tradition -- Wilfrid Sellars and W.V.O. Quine etc. So rigorous, analytical, logical philosophers questioned that whole take on epistemology and monotheistic take on epistemology and ontology and so called reality and ways of knowing and all that.

So that in this, in this, what we have now is a situation where the yogi's saying the trees were calling me, the forest was calling me, as she said so beautifully, and felt and experienced. Or I can feel this tree, this particular tree that I visit, is happy at my return today, is happy at my approaching it again. Or when people say in this culture and other cultures, Oh, we are sensing, we are perceiving the spirits that are around now. Or my friend says, I'm getting information, it's like my ovaries are receiving information, I'm knowing through my ovaries, or through my tongue. We've talked about a sense of divinity, a sense, a sensation of divinity. And many, actually infinitely many more possibilities. All these kinds of ways of knowing that are implicit or claimed there, or spoken to, or spoken of through this epistemicide of modernism and secular enlightenment (so-called), they are discounted, dismissed, and often actually ridiculed, sometimes openly and also in some dharma centres.

So either explicitly or implicitly discounted, dismissed. There's an explicit or implicit epistemicide happening. And then the whole project that we're just teaching mindfulness without a cosmology. Again, hahahahaha, *really*? Is there not a cosmology wrapped up in the whole presentation there? And what is that cosmology? Well, that's the one dimensional cosmology of classical science, empiricism with a bit of rationalism thrown in. If one of us was teaching that way, and, let's say, I don't know, someone from an Amazonian tribe or first nation native American person heard it and they accused the

teacher of colonialism, of this kind of foisting, peddling this kind of view, and essentially an attempt at epistemicide (a very successful attempt, not completely successful but pretty successful so far), what would the teacher say? Effectively what you're saying is basically dismissing and discounting and ridiculing ways of knowing that I have grown up with that are very meaningful to me etc. If I'm teaching a kind of secular dharma or secular mindfulness or whatever, am I in fact peddling or enforcing what is effectively a kind of white man's religion? A white man's religion, and even religion when it seems to me that's the last thing, the furthest thing away from what I'm doing. Am I effectively foisting that and forcing that somehow?

I've been wondering about this for a little while, and I think it's great and really an important start, the kind of diversity initiatives in terms of people of colour and gender orientation and identities and sexual orientations and identities and all that that's starting to open in some dharma centres in dialogues. I think that's really, really important. But within that, you know, how many people have stopped to consider that actually a certain presentation of the dharma -- which is sometimes quite aggressive -- again, explicitly or implicitly, a certain kind of secularised dharma may actually be a form of proselytising, a kind of violence that's akin to the Christian missionaries of centuries in the past? So, you know, importantly we consider the language and inclusion and the environment that we're teaching in and the way we might be more inviting or more inclusive to different groups and identities etc. and respectful of that, but how many people are actually considering the content? Is there a blindness here, that actually there may be something that doesn't allow or invite or sit well with certain groups of people because of the content? So, you know, in America the slaves brought over from Africa etc. and enslaved there, or in Africa, African Americans whether via slavery or Africans in Africa, some of them took on or you could say it was foisted on them, they were forced to take up Christianity. But they took it on and -- not all, but look at how much they gave it, the dimensions they give and gave to it, the dimensions of soul, their soulfulness, they became soulmaking for them in their ways that had to include more body, more hips, more groove, than what the white missionaries might have had in their presentation.

And so it was taken on board, but something had to be added to it to make it real, fertile, beautiful, soulmaking. And if you prohibit that, whatever it is that needs to be added, which may need to be certain epistemologies, certain ways of knowing, you're actually no better than a white missionary or whatever it is that would actually even try to disallow that. So maybe what we consider stripped down, secularist dharma in the way we present it, maybe that's amputating something, neutering something as I said someone told me a while ago. Maybe we're smothering something to death. What? Certain ways of being with the body. Certain ways of knowing with the body, certain embodiment, the hips. Certain ways of knowing, epistemicide -- like I said there's a killing of certain ways of knowing. Another phrase: epistemic cleansing. As I said I didn't come up with these phrases. I had been thinking about this for a while and then Catherine taught at IMS recently and she had a conversation with one of the staff people there who is alive to this, and there's a teacher, apparently, Bonnie Duran, who is also really drawing attention to this colonialism, epistemicide, etc., within the Dharma.

So I doubt it's with realising it; I don't think it's intentional, but there's an enforcing of a cosmology and a metaphysics, and limited fantasies and images of awakening. All of that is kind of enforced. And it's like closing doors and creating a prison, rather opening doors. And a person might say, very tempting to say, "No, no, no. We're not doing that. We're just teaching a certain mode of mind called mindfulness, which brings freedom." Well, I would actually say I'm not sure, because I don't think it's a very deep freedom that comes from just that, if the mindfulness doesn't go beyond that, into deeper insights about reality, if it doesn't include this movement into the unfabricated and the understanding of dependent origination at a very deep level, if it doesn't open ways of looking, the freedom of ways of looking, it doesn't liberate ways of looking.

And so sometimes dogma and truth, both things that most people would run and believe that we're a million miles away from, or want to renounce being dogmatic or drawing in that word truth, which has become very unfashionable now, but yet it's there underpinning things without admitting or realising it. How much is that the case?

Last thing about this epistemology. I'll pick up later. But I heard a dharma teacher say in a Q&A in a dharma centre on a meditation retreat "one can't go from meditation to epistemology". In other words, just because you have certain experiences in meditation, you can't take that as saying anything about reality. It's not a valid epistemology, it's not a valid source of knowledge. Now I could say, "ok, fine, you can say that if you want, absolutely, but where do you get your epistemology from? You must have some epistemology, ok? So you're just saying that for you it's not coming from meditation. I don't think you can say that for everyone. In other words, what gives you the right to dismiss that as a source of epistemology and where do you get yours from?"

So nowadays in western philosophy, some of it is quite fashionable -- for example Richard Rorty and other philosophers -- it's quite fashionable to recognise the hermeneutical conundrum with regard to epistemology but also ontology and all of that, and also recognise the kind of collapse, if you like, of the whole project of modernity, and the kind of coming up with the one grand theory of everything that reveals the truth and the way of knowing to know that truth etc. So philosophers like Richard Rorty respond to all that, reiterate it and respond and say, "abandon epistemology, abandon ontology, abandon all that kind of attempt in philosophy." And what it amounts to is a kind of just shrugging, shrugging at the whole question of ways of knowing. And maybe one comes up with different ideas. For him it's solidarity with your community, all kind of believing in the same sort of epistemology, ways of knowing, but letting other communities have theirs. And so that sounds quite nice, but effectively what happens is that there's a reverting to the default epistemology, the default ways of knowing. In other words, you can say that as an intellectual position and say something like, "I don't have an epistemology or an ontology or cosmology," but you actually live one. You live one. You live an epistemology. In other words, there's certain experiences that you trust as being valid sources of knowledge and intimations of what's real or make certain conclusions about what's real, and you live your life based on that. You live your life with a certain sense of what the cosmos is. So to say there's no epistemology, no ontology, no cosmology operating, that's not tenable, as we've said before. But because there's not the flexibility of the ways of looking, because there's not the meditative training to actually adopt different conceptual frameworks and different ways of looking and actually see the experience open, inhabit, if you like, different universes -- there's just, you can say what you like philosophically and intellectually and write it and write it very nice, but there's just a reversion to the default. And where did you get that default from? The default is probably mostly from the dominant modernist western culture. It's just what you receive, as much as you learn in high school and what most people around you are sort of believing.

So a question would be, where do you get your epistemology from? And is it from just what's popular around you, what's dominant in the culture? Is it just a kind of laziness, where it just slinks to in the being without questioning it? Is it just your personal inclination? Are you admitting that, am I admitting that? Why do I choose this or that, whatever it is -- if I get my epistemology from logic, I get my epistemology from a high school science book, or I get my epistemology from the dominant culture, I get my epistemology from my meditation experience, I get my epistemology from what it says in such and such a scripture or in what such and such a teacher says. Why? And is it possible to justify any of those epistemologies?

I don't think so. Ultimately justify, I mean. This is partly why I think epistemology is so interesting, is that always an epistemology, a decision, a lived decision about what's real and what isn't, will come to

rest, will be found to rest, on some or other assumptions that are not actually provable, that are ultimately not provable. I end up just having some recourse to some basis that's not actually provable. So can we be conscious of this? Where am I getting my epistemology? And what are my claims for it? If I realise this that epistemology rests on some assumptions -- which something somewhere needs to rest on some assumptions that are not finally provable -- then what are my options? Where does that leave me? Am I just going to smooth this over? Am I going to talk as if it's true but then revert to.. as if there's a certain truth? I avoid the word truth -- it's a bad word because it's not very fashionable now and because philosophers have shown that it's not a good thing to go bandying around or assuming -- but basically I'm reverting to something that says that, that assumes a truth? What are my options if I really hold this insight?

So what's happening in the epistemology? Classical scientific method, like I pointed out, rests partly on rationalism and reductionism, reducing everything to units and atoms and how these work together in a coherent way, atoms and then subatomic particles and whatever it is, or neural processes or whatever, partly it rests on rationalism and reductionism. But as Jeffrey J Kripal, a scholar, pointed out -- and he is drawing on someone else's thought called Charles Tart -- he said rationalism and reductionism, if you're choosing that as your epistemological framework, that as the basis of it, which a lot of people do, rationalism and reductionism are also what he calls state-specific truths. This is the bit he got from Charles Tart. That is, they are specific to highly trained egoic forms of awareness. But they're states of mind. In other words, rationalism and reductionism is something that pertains or is possible in a certain state of mind that's actually highly trained, but these states of mind that allow rationalism and reductionism and the epistemology and all that that comes out of that, these states of mind are more easily produced and communicated at least within our present western culture. In other words, we are trained within that epistemology. We are trained in that way of looking. We are trained in those states of mind in which rationalism and reductionism hold sway. It's a training, training of a state of mind, training of a way of looking. What does that sound like? Sounds like a kind of how I would conceive of meditation: that we're training in ways of looking. It's just that we're so used to certain ways of looking, certain epistemologies, and certain states of mind in our culture, that these become much more easily reproduced and communicated, taught to others. But if we think of meditation as the whole range of flexibility of learning and developing and moving between ways of looking, it starts to take a different kind of contextual place. And again, what are my options? So we'll pursue this.