

The Epistemology of the Salvia Divinorum Altered State

Rupture, Layered Amnesia, and the Phenomenology of Remembering

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Abstract

This manuscript investigates the epistemology of the Salvia divinorum altered state: what kind of knowledge, if any, the rupture yields, what explains its recurrent forgetting / recognition / return cycle, and how far those explanations can be trusted. Its central claim is that Salvia is epistemically significant not primarily because of the recognition — I have been here before — but because of what its brevity and compression can make phenomenologically noticeable: autobiographical memory, context, identity, and ordinary orientation can become unavailable and later become available again through remembering and reorientation. Reports in which that loss or restoration was noticed during the transition are retrospective, so the record cannot fully determine how much of the noticing was contemporaneous rather than organized in later recall. Where the return is remembered as differentiated, that differentiation does not by itself establish discrete underlying recovery stages. Reports of awareness while autobiographical identity is absent or incomplete likewise do not establish that awareness was causally, temporally, or metaphysically prior to restored autobiographical identity. What survives these constraints is the reported loss and restoration of autobiographical and contextual access itself.

The manuscript first establishes recurring structure at graded evidentiary weights across controlled studies, specialist first-person accounts, and a wider third-party corpus, including a single-author German-language longitudinal corpus. Coarse rupture and amnesia recur under controlled conditions; recognition and gradual or piecemeal return recur across the wider first-person corpus; the bare experience of another person or being also recurs under controlled conditions; and finer claims about imagery, already-there quality, recurrent roles, and apparent trans-experiencer awareness remain concentrated in an interlinked report ecology. Recurrence constrains interpretation but neither corroborates a metaphysical framework nor excludes shared-mechanism explanations.

The later Parts develop a naturalistic explanatory program from Salvia-specific pharmacology, Metzinger's self-model theory, and memory science; develop Kastrup's Analytic Idealism as a framework-conditional explanation of bounded access and reconstitution; and use Tibetan, Śaiva, Jungian, and a compressed Gnostic comparison to sharpen particular loci. Letheby's naturalistic epistemology clarifies how altered self-modeling may be epistemically significant without validating its apparent metaphysics. These explanations operate at different levels and are adjudicated locus by locus rather than forced into false symmetry. Structural resemblance is comparative, not independent corroboration. Claims remain within four registers: phenomenologically real, structurally real, veridical under a named framework, and metaphysically established. The manuscript does not claim the fourth.

Keywords

Salvia divinorum; salvinorin A; phenomenology of altered states; epistemology of mystical experience; anamnesis; layered amnesia; dissociation; Analytic Idealism; Tibetan bardo; thought-free awareness

Disclosures

Author standpoint and method. The author writes from within Analytic Idealism and discloses this directly; the manuscript's discipline is to hold that commitment in suspension and let competing frameworks pressure-test it. The standpoint disclosure, the three writing registers and four epistemic claim-statuses the manuscript distinguishes, and the evidentiary handling of the first-person accounts are stated in full in the opening Argument Overview.

AI use. Large language models (principally Claude and ChatGPT) were used in an editorial and analytic capacity throughout: reference checking, terminology and consistency auditing, structural review, and the pressure-testing of claims against primary sources, including drafting and revising language at the sentence and section level. No AI output is treated as evidence, source, or authority. The selection of sources, the phenomenological record, the interpretive commitments, the arguments, the conclusions, and final responsibility for the wording are the author's.

Table of Contents

[Abstract](#)

[Keywords](#)

[Disclosures](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

[Argument Overview: What This Manuscript Claims](#)

[The Thesis](#)

[The Phenomenological Foundation](#)

[The Epistemic Crux](#)

[How the Seven Parts Argue Toward the Thesis](#)

[A Note on Authorial Standpoint](#)

[What the Manuscript Does Not Claim](#)

[The Standing Posture](#)

[Methodological note on the primary accounts](#)

[PART 1: THE SALVIA RUPTURE — PHENOMENOLOGY](#)

[What This Section Does \(and Does Not Do\)](#)

[1.1 The Empirical Anchor](#)

[1.2 The Structure of the Rupture](#)

[1.2.1 The Entry: Salvia Space Recognized](#)

[1.2.2 Directional Structure](#)

[1.2.3 Depth and Reportability](#)

[1.2.4 Phenomenological Configurations](#)

[1.2.5 Level-Dependent Features](#)

[1.2.6 The Return and the Overlap](#)

[1.2.7 Variation and Unpredictability as Structural Features](#)

[1.3 Cross-Source Recurrence and Evidentiary Weight](#)

[1.4 What This Section Has Not Done](#)

[PART 2: THOUGHT-FREE AWARENESS AND SELF-MODEL COLLAPSE](#)

[What This Section Does \(and Does Not Do\)](#)

[2.1 Arthur's Thesis: The State Before Interpretation](#)

[2.2 Metzinger and the Naturalistic Model: No Self, Only Models](#)

[2.2.1 Awareness Without the Ordinary Self](#)

[2.2.2 The Recognition Problem](#)

[2.2.3 Retrospective Return: Noticing, Segmentation, and Priority](#)

[2.3 Memory, Access, and Reconstructive Return](#)

[2.4 Minimal Phenomenal Experience and the Residue Problem](#)

[2.5 What the Naturalistic Program Explains—and What It Still Owes](#)

[PART 3: THE BARDO AS EXPERIENTIAL MAP](#)

[What This Section Does \(and Does Not Do\)](#)

[3.1 What a Bardo Is \(and Isn't\)](#)

[3.2 The Compressed Transit](#)

3.2.1	Dissolution and Chikhai Bardo
3.2.2	Encounter and Chönyid Bardo
3.2.3	Re-formation and Sidpa Bardo
3.3	Recognition and the Problem of Missing It
3.4	What the Bardo Framework Cannot Explain
PART 4: THE HINGE — ARRANGED FORGETTING AND FRAGMENTED SELFHOOD	
	What This Section Does (and Does Not Do)
4.1	The Phenomenological Datum: Forgetting That Feels Arranged
4.2	Concealment: Adversarial and Non-Adversarial Readings
4.2.1	The Adversarial Pole
4.2.2	Kashmir Shaivism's Tirodhāna
4.2.3	The Phenomenological Pressure on the Readings
4.2.4	The Tether: The Readings Made Concrete
4.3	Which I Is Remembering?
4.4	PKD's Black Iron Prison as Living Case
4.5	Severance as Cultural Mirror
	What Part 4 Has Established
PART 5: JUNG, ARCHETYPES, AND THE AUTONOMOUS PSYCHE	
	What This Section Does (and Does Not Do)
5.1	What Is Reported: The Texture of the Encounter
5.2	Daemons and Dissolved Membranes: What the Jungian Framework Offers
5.3	Pressure Points: What Jung Does Not Settle
5.4	The Jungian Self and the Limit of the Comparison
5.5	Active Imagination: Working With What Returns
	What Part 5 Has Established
PART 6: CONSCIOUSNESS, DISSOCIATION, AND THE STRUCTURE OF INDIVIDUAL MIND	
	What This Section Does (and Does Not Do)
6.1	The Dissociative Model: Universal Consciousness and Individual Mind
6.2	Internal Impairment or Reduced Dissociation?
6.3	Explanatory Scope Without Corroboration
6.4	What Kastrup Cannot Settle
	What Part 6 Has Established
PART 7: INTEGRATION AND EPISTEMIC STAKES	
7.1	The Integration Problem
7.1.1	Difficult Integration and the Negative Corpus
7.2	Memory, Continuity, and the Returning Self
7.3	The Practice Question
7.4	The Epistemological Stakes
Appendix: Glossary of Key Technical Terms	
References	

Argument Overview: What This Manuscript Claims

The Thesis

Salvia divinorum can briefly take away a person's sense of who they are, where they are, and how they arrived there — and then give it back. This manuscript focuses primarily on what that loss and return can tell us, while also examining the striking recognition Salvia can produce, *I have been here before*. Salvia's brief course can leave reportable aspects of entry and return even when the intervening experience cannot be recalled, and it is that reported loss and restoration of access — to autobiographical memory, context, identity, and ordinary orientation — that the manuscript takes as its central datum.

Three limits apply to what those reports can show, because all of them are told after the fact.

First, someone who reports noticing the loss or the return as it happened cannot be sure how much of that noticing occurred at the time and how much was organized later, in the act of remembering.

Second, a return remembered as a series of distinct steps — something absent, then suddenly present — may actually have unfolded more continuously; memory can impose the steps.

Third, awareness reported while personal identity is still incomplete does not show that the awareness came first, caused the recovery, or exists apart from the processes that restore the ordinary self. It shows only that awareness was reported under those conditions.

None of these limits removes the central datum. They restrict the stronger conclusions that could be drawn from it.

The wider record supports the recurrence of these features, but not all of them equally. Controlled studies anchor the broad disruption of self and surroundings and the impairment of memory. The finer descriptions — the recognition, and the forms of return, including gradual reorientation and piecemeal remembering — come mainly from first-person accounts. Recurrence therefore constrains interpretation without settling it: shared pharmacology, common psychology, and circulating descriptions can all produce similar reports.

The chapters that follow ask what best explains this cycle of forgetting, recognition, and return, and how far each explanation can be trusted. The strongest claim defended here stays phenomenological and structural: people report noticing the loss and restoration of memory, context, identity, and orientation, although later remembering may partly organize how that transition is described. Naturalistic and consciousness-first accounts each explain different parts of that structure, with different evidential strength. No metaphysics is established.

The Phenomenological Foundation

Part 1 establishes that the Salvia rupture has a recurring structure: disruption of ordinary reality and identity, recognition, encountered presences, amnesia, and—in some reports—a gradual or

piecemeal return. These features recur across sources with different evidentiary strengths. The manuscript therefore treats the structure as something requiring explanation, while avoiding the claim that every reported feature is equally well established.

The amnesia is not a single event. Memory can fail differently during entry, the deeper state, and return, while a felt sense of having undergone or recognized something may survive after propositional content is lost. The manuscript calls this session amnesia and keeps it distinct from the later, framework-dependent idea of constitutive amnesia: the proposal that ordinary selfhood itself depends on a kind of concealment.

Arthur's longitudinal Salvia account and one later account in this record both describe awareness under severe attenuation of ordinary mentation and autobiographical organization, but in different retrospective vocabularies. Arthur characterizes a recurring condition as “thoughtless awareness” (Arthur 2010, 28–29). Account 14 describes calm “nothingness,” awareness of that nothingness, and thought becoming available again. These reports can be compared at the level of content attenuation without being treated as one technically identical state. Account 14 does not establish literal absence of all differentiated phenomenal content.

The non-reportable interval is a separate epistemic case: no accessible trace survives from which the interval can be positively characterized. The central argument does not depend on either Arthur's reports or Account 14 establishing a contentless state. It rests on the wider evidence for disruption and restoration of autobiographical and contextual access, including reports of gradual reorientation, piecemeal reconstruction, and observation while ordinary identity remains incomplete.

The Epistemic Crux

The central problem is simple: Salvia can produce a powerful recognition — I have been here before — while leaving little of the deeper experience available to ordinary memory.

These two facts are not necessarily contradictory because they can occur at different points in the rupture. In this record, the retained recognition — I have been here before — appears near the entry threshold, while memory and language are still functioning well enough for the recognition itself to survive. Deeper in the state, propositional memory can fail even though a felt sense of having known or experienced something remains.

The manuscript therefore separates the experience of recognition from the question of whether what was recognized was true. The recognition is phenomenologically real. Its veridicality is not established. Under Analytic Idealism it may represent genuine recognition; under a deflationary account it may be a memory or familiarity artifact. The structural point survives either interpretation: the sense of knowing can persist even when what was known cannot be retrieved.

This places a burden on both sides. An interpretation that treats the recognition as genuine must explain why the deeper content is usually not retained. An interpretation that treats it as an artifact must explain why the recognition can feel so certain and why a non-propositional trace can remain after the content is lost.

The manuscript does not resolve that contest.

How the Seven Parts Argue Toward the Thesis

Part 1 — Phenomenology establishes what needs explaining. The Salvia rupture has recurring features—including disruption of ordinary identity, amnesia, recognition, encountered presences, and forms of gradual return—before any metaphysical interpretation is applied.

Part 2 — Self-Model Collapse builds the naturalistic explanatory program. Arthur remains the phenomenological source for failures of memory, language, and ordinary identity; Salvia-specific pharmacology anchors the disturbance; Metzinger models ordinary selfhood as a phenomenal self-model; and memory science addresses state-dependent access, encoding failure, reconstruction, and retrospective organization. The account has real explanatory successes and named promissory burdens rather than functioning only as a defeater.

Part 3 — Bardo tests the Tibetan framework as a map of dissolution, encounter, recognition, and return. The resemblance is structurally useful but does not establish that Salvia produces the tradition's technical states. Its developed model of recognition-stability sharpens a problem both explanatory programs must face while leaving the Salvia-specific mechanism and metaphysical significance open.

Part 4 — Arranged Forgetting asks why some returns feel like re-enclosure rather than simple recovery. A compressed adversarial Gnostic pole preserves the surface grammar; Kashmir Shaivism supplies a non-adversarial framework-conditional account of concealment and renewed differentiation; and the naturalistic program must explain the same felt imposition without relying on promissory mechanism-language. The separate question which “I” is remembering is retained through Metzinger, Jung, and three live alternatives rather than another standalone framework.

Part 5 — Jung turns to the encountered presences and to awareness reported under disrupted ordinary self-organization. Jung's autonomous psyche supplies a developed psychological account of apparent autonomy without establishing independent entities. The Part hands both explanatory programs only the evidentially graded features they must account for and leaves stronger already-there and transpersonal claims at their lower evidentiary weight.

Part 6 — Analytic Idealism develops the principal consciousness-first explanation. Under Kastrup's model, dissociation and localization explain the general form of restricted access and why renewed individuation would restore that restriction. That framework-conditional explanation does not establish the ontology or explain Salvia's specific severity, timing, imagery, or memory profile. Kashmir Shaivism contributes distinct explanatory structure around concealment, contraction, recognition, and renewed differentiation without serving as independent corroboration of Kastrup.

Part 7 — Integration and Epistemic Stakes adjudicates the explanations locus by locus: recognition, arranged re-enclosure, amnesia and failure-to-hold, awareness during return, and the presences. It distinguishes what has been explained, what has only been rendered

intelligible, what remains promissory, and what evidence could discriminate, while preserving the integration problem and the refusal of final metaphysical adjudication.

The whole movement is: What happens? → What can a naturalistic account explain? → What do Tibetan, Śaiva, Jungian, and adversarial comparisons sharpen? → What does a consciousness-first account explain at a different level? → Where do the explanations succeed, remain promissory, or genuinely conflict? → What, finally, are we justified in claiming?

A Note on Authorial Standpoint

The author approaches this inquiry from within Analytic Idealism: consciousness is taken to be fundamental, and individual minds are understood as localized perspectives within it. This commitment predates the manuscript and is disclosed rather than presented as a conclusion established by the Salvia evidence.

The manuscript therefore distinguishes between the author's preferred interpretation and what the evidence itself warrants. A competing naturalistic program — centered on Salvia-specific pharmacology, Metzinger's self-model theory, memory science, and a bounded use of Letheby — tests how much of the phenomenology can be explained without the author's metaphysical commitments. Where the evidence does not decide, the manuscript leaves the question open. Where that discipline fails, it will fail toward Analytic Idealism, usually in summary statements that harden what the argument holds open.

The inquiry also moves among three registers: analytic argument, comparative phenomenology, and first-person integration. Each serves a different purpose. The first asks what the evidence warrants; the second compares the experience with existing frameworks; the third asks what living in relation to what cannot be retained requires of the one who carries it.

Throughout, claims are kept at one of four levels:

1. Phenomenologically real — reported as experienced.
2. Structurally real — recurrent across sufficiently independent reports.
3. Veridical under a named framework — true conditional on the named framework and the additional assumptions needed to apply it to the experience.
4. Metaphysically established — true of reality itself.

The manuscript works within the first three levels and does not claim the fourth. At level 3, accepting a framework does not by itself establish that a particular Salvia experience instantiates what it describes. The additional claims connecting the framework to the experience require their own support; mere compatibility establishes neither their truth nor their warrant (see §§6.2, 6.4).

What the Manuscript Does Not Claim

The manuscript does not claim that Salvia establishes a metaphysics. Analytic Idealist, deflationary, and agnostic interpretations remain possible where the evidence does not discriminate among them.

It does not claim that the felt sense of arranged forgetting proves any particular explanation. Gnostic, Shaivite, and other readings remain interpretations of the same phenomenology.

It does not claim that the deepest content of the state can be recovered intact. Recognition and fragments may survive, while much of what was experienced remains unavailable to ordinary propositional memory.

It does not treat the author's reports as unmediated evidence. The experiences are remembered, interpreted, and in some cases described through frameworks that were already familiar to the author. Those influences are part of the evidentiary record, not something the manuscript pretends to eliminate.

Finally, it does not assume that the felt "cosmic joke" is a neutral description of the state. That interpretation may itself be part of the author's response to what happened.

These limits do not weaken the inquiry. They define what the evidence is actually allowed to support.

The Standing Posture

The manuscript distinguishes explanatory work from comparative interpretation. Specified causal and cognitive mechanisms, framework-conditional ontological explanations, and comparative maps are all allowed to do the work they actually support, but none is treated as an authority that settles the Salvia state. Agreements are noted; disagreements and evidentiary asymmetries are preserved.

The aim is strong provisional mapping without metaphysical overclaiming: say clearly what the evidence supports, name the framework when interpretation begins, and leave unresolved what the evidence cannot decide.

Methodological note on the primary accounts

The first-person accounts are not treated as direct recordings of the deepest Salvia state. At sufficient depth, the memory and language needed for ordinary reporting are themselves disrupted. The evidence therefore consists of what survives before, during, and after that disruption, and different kinds of surviving evidence carry different weight.

1. Pre-rupture context — ordinary historical information: setting, expectations, life period, and other circumstances known before the state began.

2. Surviving in-state fragments — words, recognitions, or observations that crossed the disruption in propositional form. These are especially valuable because they survived the amnesia, although long-term retelling can still alter or stabilize memory.
3. Return-phase phenomenology — observations reported from the period in which memory, language, and autobiographical identity are becoming available again. This is the manuscript's strongest first-person evidentiary window because the reporting apparatus has partly returned while changes in its own availability may still be noticed. The reports are nevertheless retrospective: the record cannot fully determine how much of that noticing was contemporaneous rather than organized in later recall, and remembered differentiation may still reflect retrospective segmentation. The reported return-phase remembering and reorientation belong here.
4. Immediate residue — affect, certainty, recognition, and the felt sense that something occurred even when its content cannot be recovered.
5. Later structural comparison — comparisons between the experience and philosophical, contemplative, literary, or cultural patterns. Comparisons noticed near the original experience are distinguished from those made years later, which face greater risk of retrospective fitting.
6. Framework interpretation — readings drawn from Advaita, Bardo, Jung, Kastrup, Gnosticism, Shaivism, Metzinger, and others. Some frameworks were already familiar to the author when the experiences occurred; others were introduced much later. A Vedantic and yogic interpretive frame was already present during the earliest sessions. A framework that shaped how an experience was originally noticed cannot later count as independent confirmation of itself; the same genealogical caution applies where one later framework led the inquiry toward another.

The aim is therefore not to reconstruct a pure, uninterpreted report from the deepest state. Such a report is unavailable. The aim is to identify what survives the disruption, distinguish observation from later interpretation, and give each kind of evidence only the weight it can support.

PART 1: THE SALVIA RUPTURE — PHENOMENOLOGY

What This Section Does (and Does Not Do)

Part 1 describes the Salvia rupture before interpreting it. Its task is to establish what is reported, how it varies across the rupture, and with what recurrence across sources, together with the relevant neurobiological findings. When framework vocabulary is needed to label a feature, the label does not import the framework's explanatory claims; those remain suspended until later Parts.

This separation matters because the same phenomenology can look Bardo, Gnostic, Jungian, Idealist, or deflationary depending on which framework reaches it first. **Part 1 therefore establishes the phenomenology before asking what it means.**

Part 1 draws on three kinds of evidence: the author's first-person accounts; Arthur's and Heaven's book-length Salvia phenomenologies and the reports they compile; and the clinical and pharmacological literature. Convergences and departures are marked rather than treating these sources as evidentially equivalent.

1.1 The Empirical Anchor

Salvinorin A is a potent, selective κ -opioid receptor agonist (Roth et al. 2002), pharmacologically distinct from classical psychedelics such as psilocybin, LSD, DMT, and mescaline (5-HT_{2A} agonists) and from dissociative anesthetics such as ketamine and PCP (NMDA antagonists).

The compound was first isolated and structurally characterized by Ortega, Blount, and Manchand in 1982; Daniel Siebert later identified it as Salvia's active principle through self-administration.¹ Heaven reproduces Siebert's summary of characteristic effects: resurfacing memories; sensations of being pulled or twisted; membranes, films, and two-dimensional surfaces; merging with or becoming objects; and overlapping realities (Heaven 2013, ch. 2). These motifs recur in the phenomenology examined below.

When inhaled, effects begin within about a minute. The strongest effects typically last roughly five to ten minutes and then subside over the following tens of minutes (Siebert 1994; Siebert n.d.). This compression is central to the manuscript's argument: entry, rupture, and return can occur within a single retainable arc even when the deepest interval is not recalled. **What becomes examinable is the structure around the gap, not the gap itself.** This makes Salvia useful here as a compressed case of deep disruption with a reportable return.

¹ The compound now known as salvinorin A was first isolated and structurally characterized by Ortega, Blount, and Manchand (1982). Siebert (1994) identified it as the active principle through self-administration.

Doss et al. (2020) found that acute salvinorin A reduced connectivity within the default mode network (DMN) and reduced brainwide dynamic functional connectivity. Connectivity between networks tended to increase, but this finding was not statistically reliable.²

Similar DMN disruption occurs with several other psychoactive drugs, so the finding does not by itself establish ego dissolution or any metaphysical interpretation.

Siebert's S-A-L-V-I-A Trip Rating Scale³ provides a Salvia-specific six-level schema for describing intensity. It is used here only as a descriptive orientation, not as a validated psychometric instrument.

1.2 The Structure of the Rupture

The phenomenology that follows is not a description of one fixed Salvia state or one canonical sequence. **The state varies by depth, and a single session may move through more than one register.** Siebert's six-level SALVIA scale is useful here as a map of possible depth, not as a series of stages every experiencer passes through.

The features below are therefore mapped according to where they tend to occur. Their appearance also varies with individual and contextual factors, and no single session need contain all of them.

1.2.1 The Entry: Salvia Space Recognized

In this record, onset is marked not first by the loss of ordinary consciousness but by recognition: *Salvia Space* begins to appear while ordinary reality is still present. I use *Salvia Space* descriptively for the field experienced as becoming perceptible and already-there; the term makes no claim about what that field is.

The recognition “*I have been here before*” belongs to this entry threshold. It occurs before the encountered presences, deep amnesia, and full rupture, while memory and language are destabilizing but still functional enough for the report itself to survive. The entry recognition and the later failure-to-hold are therefore not contradictory: **the recognition is retained before the deeper content becomes unavailable.**

Recognition is not confined to this threshold. Other recognition-class events occur deeper in the record, including “*it is me doing this to myself*” and the 2004 in-state utterance “*It’s just amnesia, I have to remember!*” The evidence therefore establishes **distinct loci of recognition**, not one recognition occurring at a single depth. Whether these events concern the same underlying territory remains an interpretive question.

² Doss et al. 2020, an fMRI study (N = 12). The between-network increases did not survive correction for multiple comparisons. DMN reduction was consistent across participants in the first half of the 20-minute scan and more variable in the second half. Whether DMN connectivity recovered as effects subsided was not settled: the drug-by-time interaction and its association with subjective-effect duration were inconclusive. Subjective duration was assessed in a separate practice session, not during scanning.

³ Siebert n.d., The Salvia divinorum User's Guide, “S-A-L-V-I-A Trip Rating Scale.” The six-level scale was devised as a descriptive rating scheme for Salvia trips; it is used here only as a qualitative intensity/orientation schema, not as a validated psychometric instrument.

1.2.2 Directional Structure

Once ordinary orientation loosens, the rupture can develop in at least two reported directions.

Outward drift moves away from autobiographical identity toward an increasingly impersonal field: personal memory weakens, ordinary self-structure loosens, and the experience may take on the quality of something larger and already-there.

Inward drift moves instead into biographical depth. The Childhood-Ground Account, for example, involves somatic return to maternal care and early safety rather than movement toward an impersonal field; analogous biographical regressions recur in the kk84 corpus (kk84 2017, 152, 169, 192).

These are descriptions of **direction within the phenomenology**, not claims about what either direction ultimately represents. Salvia therefore does not appear to be a one-destination state.

1.2.3 Depth and Reportability

Depth and reportability are not the same thing. A useful comparison across altered states is therefore not simply how far ordinary consciousness is disrupted, but **how much accessible trace remains for the returning subject**.

At the non-reportable limit, the record can contain a gap from which no accessible experiential trace survives. Level 6 on Siebert's scale explicitly allows either unconsciousness or subsequent inability to remember the experience (Siebert n.d.). General anesthesia and dreamless sleep are useful comparators precisely because lack of later report does not by itself establish that experience was absent; dreamless sleep in particular may include forms of conscious experience despite absent dream recall (Windt, Nielsen, and Thompson 2016). The comparison here concerns reportability, not identity among the underlying states.

In a **threshold region**—including sleep-wake transitions, emerging anesthesia, and some Salvia states—ordinary self-organization is disrupted while enough continuity remains for aspects of that disruption to be observed and later reported.

In **altered-but-reportable states**, including lucid dreams and Salvia experiences with retrievable content, more of the ordinary subject remains available and more propositional content can return.

Reportable return is not unique to Salvia. James reproduces an abridged retrospective account of J. A. Symonds, via H. F. Brown's biography, in which ordinary qualifications of self progressively recede and return through touch, familiar impressions, and ordinary interests (James 1902). The comparison is limited: Symonds reports the continuous persistence of an abstract Self and does not report the autobiographical discontinuity or amnesia at issue here. Leslie et al. (2007) likewise found dreaming reported on emergence from anesthesia and argued that much of it likely occurred during recovery rather than stable anesthesia. In the author's primary record, the kitchen-renovation account explicitly compares Salvia return to "slipping in

and out of a dream in that hypnagogic phase”; that comparison is first-person evidence from this record, not independent corroboration.

Salvia is useful here not because other states lack reportable return, but because a brief rupture can combine profound autobiographical and self-world disruption with enough continuity for aspects of loss and restoration to be reported. That same continuity creates the evidentiary problem: the apparatus able to register the transition is also able to organize it retrospectively. Salvia therefore offers a compressed first-person window on changing access, not an uncontaminated record of the underlying recovery.

The central point is therefore counterintuitive: the deepest Salvia state is not necessarily the most epistemically informative. Once the reportability horizon is crossed, increasing disruption yields less accessible evidence. The manuscript's most productive region is the threshold at which disruption or restoration can still be noticed and later reported while some bridge to recall remains.

This is the sense in which the manuscript later reframes the dosing question as one of **access rather than depth**.

1.2.4 Phenomenological Configurations

The SALVIA scale measures intensity. The distinctions here serve a different purpose: they sort phenomenological features and the evidence that survives them. They are not stages, levels, or positions on a second depth scale, and no session need contain them in a fixed order. Nor do they form a metaphysical hierarchy: less content, greater lucidity, or poorer reportability is not thereby more fundamental, more truthful, or closer to any metaphysical ground.

What is reported. Ordinary self-organization can be substantially weakened while vivid, immersive or “dreaming-awake” content remains. The content can be elaborate while its meaning and source remain uncertain. The recurrent features themselves are described in §1.2.5.

Two distinctions within this material matter. **Felt arrangement** names reports in which forgetting or concealment seems deliberate: “someone did this to me” or “I was not supposed to discover this.” Part 1 records that texture without deciding whether anything was actually arranged.

Encountered content includes presences, recurring figures, and symbolically charged object-becoming experiences. Not every object-becoming report should be included in this category. Reports of simply becoming a brick, wall, sheet of paper, or similar object without presence, instruction, or symbolic charge are phenomenologically different and should not be counted toward the later convergence argument about encountered figures.

Some reports also describe greater lucidity: the experiencer becomes less caught in the apparent events and can observe the rupture more clearly. Reports such as “it is me doing this to myself,” along with the relief or “cosmic joke” affect, occur in this register. What such recognition means remains open.

Other reports emphasize severe attenuation of ordinary content. Arthur describes “thoughtless awareness” in which ordinary mentation and autobiographical orientation can fall away while awareness is nevertheless reported (Arthur 2010, 29). Account 14 says, “there is nothing, only my awareness of the nothingness,” and that “there was nothing until I thought of something”; it also describes the “space” as calm.

In using nothing here, I meant the stillness or emptiness I was trying to report, not a technical assertion that literally all differentiated phenomenal content was absent. Arthur's reports and Account 14 can therefore be compared at the level of content attenuation without being treated as one technically identical condition or ranked by their retrospective vocabulary.

Account 14's retrospective description adds further remembered differentiation: thought arising, attention turning toward what was arising for “Rich,” the sense that one could “be there forever,” and a tethered return toward body and biography. That description supports remembered differentiation without establishing a fine-grained contemporaneous chronology or literal absence of all phenomenal content.

Because a Vedantic and yogic framework was already operative during the earliest sessions and shaped the later articulation of Account 14, its fit with those doctrines cannot serve as independent corroboration of them. That prior framework also creates a specific priming risk: an observer trained to expect a witness may be more likely to notice, retain, or stabilize the experience in witness terms. The contemplative traditions compared here are themselves historically entangled, so their agreement is partly shared inheritance rather than independent discovery (Sanderson 2009).

Severe attenuation is not the non-reportable interval. Reports of markedly reduced ordinary content are still reports: something is remembered and can be described. Severe disruption may also impair the encoding or retrieval needed for later report. At the non-reportable interval no accessible trace survives, so no positive first-person description is available. Awareness may have ceased, continued without leaving an accessible trace, or left a trace that cannot later be retrieved. The blank does not decide among these possibilities, and the two conditions should not be collapsed into one depth scale.

These distinctions organize different dimensions of the record rather than a progression or hierarchy. Later Parts use the underlying phenomena — encountered content, felt arrangement, lucidity, content attenuation, and reportability — directly rather than treating them as shared coordinates on a numbered map.

1.2.5 Level-Dependent Features

The characteristic features of Salvia are not uniformly present across sessions. Their appearance depends partly on depth and partly on where the experiencer is within the rupture.

Body-world distortion. At moderate and greater depths, reports repeatedly describe ordinary spatial organization breaking down: reality unzipping, surfaces becoming sheets or pages, depth flattening, and the visual field reorganizing into panels, wheels, rotating frames, or conveying structures. Heaven's reports and the wider first-person corpus contain several versions of this

pattern (Heaven 2013, chs. 2, 6). An early account in this record adds a related center-periphery effect: while attention remained fixed on an incense burner, the surrounding room appeared to dissolve into visual static. These reports establish a recurring alteration in perceived spatial organization; they do not establish what that alteration represents.

Presences. At greater depths, reports may include beings, intelligences, or more indeterminate **presences**. The neutral term is preferable because *spirit*, *entity*, or *angel* already interprets what is being reported. Some presences are seen; others are experienced as nearby but inaccessible through ordinary spatial orientation—as if behind the observer or in an adjacent space. The bare experience of another person or being also appears in controlled research (Addy et al. 2015; MacLean et al. 2013), while finer claims about recurring identities, already-there quality, or apparent autonomy rely more heavily on the first-person report ecology. Their ontological status remains open.

Session amnesia. Amnesia within the rupture is layered rather than unitary and should be kept distinct from the later, interpretive idea of **constitutive amnesia**. The descriptions below concern which material is unavailable, not when or why it became unavailable. They are overlapping descriptive groupings, not distinct memory mechanisms; encoding, retrieval, and state-dependent access are examined separately in §2.3.

- **Memory of entry:** how the state began or ordinary orientation disappeared may become unavailable.
- **Memory of the altered experience:** content from the experience beyond its entry and return may become unavailable. Loss can be partial: detailed memories or fragments may survive. A felt sense that something happened may also remain without recoverable content.
- **Memory of return:** portions of the recovery that are known to have occurred may not later be recalled.

These components can vary independently. Most importantly, **propositional memory and phenomenological residue can dissociate:** the experiencer may retain little describable content while still retaining a strong felt sense of having undergone or recognized something. A well-remembered session therefore supplies more reportable evidence; it does not by itself establish that the session was deeper. Conversely, a blank establishes lack of accessible recall, not what occurred during the inaccessible interval.

The return from amnesia can itself be structured; its forms are examined directly in the next section.

1.2.6 The Return and the Overlap

The return can take several forms: gradual fading and reorientation, piecemeal remembering or reconstruction, or abrupt termination of the trip or its peak. Two features of the return matter here: overlap and remembering. Neither is universal.

Overlap. In some reports, ordinary reality becomes perceptible again while the Salvia state remains partially present. My own description was: “I was in between — I could see reality and I felt like I was outside it at the same time, dreamlike, layered.” Arthur reports a related overlap during descent: ordinary surroundings were becoming progressively available while an unusual central awareness remained salient (Arthur 2010, 102–104). The significance here is descriptive: different experiential organizations can remain simultaneously available during return.

Remembering and restored access. More important to this manuscript is the report that autobiographical identity and ordinary orientation can become available again through remembering. One early description emphasizes the suddenness with which previously unavailable memory returns:

“The returning of my memory was just like that — one step at a time ... step-wise, boom boom boom.”

The “step-wise” wording describes remembered changes in availability: something is not remembered, then it is. Because the account is retrospective, it does not establish that the underlying recovery itself occurred in discrete steps. What it does support is the reported return of autobiographical and contextual access through remembering.

Arthur separately reports the same broader phenomenon. In one recurring pattern, ordinary biography is unavailable while experience continues and later becomes available again through remembering (Arthur 2010, 27–29). Elsewhere he describes the underpinnings of ordinary awareness becoming perceptible during descent as the customary mode gradually regains solidity through automatic “returning to form” (Arthur 2010, 121). Awareness is also reported while ordinary autobiographical identity remains incomplete. That establishes awareness under conditions of incomplete autobiographical self-organization; it does not establish that awareness is functionally or metaphysically prior to the returning self.

The wider corpus supports several return forms, including gradual reorientation and piecemeal remembering. Arthur's reports make clear that reportable recovery is not unique to this record. What the evidence most securely shows is that the return itself can become phenomenologically noticeable through remembering, reorientation, and the renewed availability of ordinary self-world organization.

1.2.7 Variation and Unpredictability as Structural Features

Salvia does not produce a fixed phenomenological sequence. Sessions in the same person can differ in depth, direction, content, and emotional tone even under broadly similar conditions.

Some of that variation tracks identifiable factors. Dose affects intensity, while set and setting influence the nature of the experience (Siebert 1994; Siebert n.d.); none fully predicts what a given session will contain.

The features described above should therefore be treated as **recurrent possibilities within a variable state**, not as guaranteed components of every Salvia experience. The variability is itself part of what must be explained.

1.3 Cross-Source Recurrence and Evidentiary Weight

The phenomenology described above does not come from a single source, but its features are not equally well supported. The evidence ranges from controlled studies, through specialist first-person phenomenologies, to an interlinked online report ecology. Recurrence across these sources constrains interpretation, but it should not be mistaken for uniform independence.

The controlled clinical literature provides the strongest anchor for the coarse structure of the state: rapid onset and resolution, disruption of ordinary self and surroundings, depersonalization and derealization, marked perceptual reorganization, and memory impairment (MacLean et al. 2013; Addy et al. 2015). Controlled reports also include the bare experience of another person or being, although this lies at the weaker edge of the clinical evidence and establishes nothing about the autonomy or veridicality of what was experienced (Addy et al. 2015; MacLean et al. 2013).

Those participants are themselves drawn from ecology-exposed populations, so what the clinical literature contributes is controlled conditions and standardized instruments, not framework-naïve reporters. All eight participants in MacLean et al. (2013) had prior Salvia use, and neither MacLean et al. (2013) nor Addy et al. (2015) cross-tabulated the entity finding by prior use.

The wider first-person literature supplies the finer phenomenology: unzipping or flattening of ordinary space, pages and membranes, recurring figures, the felt already-there quality of the state, and forms of gradual or piecemeal return. These reports support recurrence of such features, but the Anglophone report ecology is culturally interlinked and its imagery circulates. The wider corpus supports several forms in which memory, identity, embodiment, and world-orientation become available again; it does not by itself establish a fine-grained recovery structure.

Arthur supplies a single-author longitudinal Salvia corpus rather than independent replication. He notes that the chronology of specific occurrences was altered in some instances for exposition, while stating that the sequence of events was generally as portrayed (Arthur 2010, 4–5). His reports therefore support the broader loss and restoration of autobiographical access more securely than any fine-grained return chronology.

One reporter, Comradez, compares Salvia's rearrangement to stage magic: changes seem to occur outside attention, accompanied by what he calls “false memories or sensibilities” that make the altered configuration feel longstanding (Comradez 2018). This is the reporter's explanation of how the state works, not a metaphysical claim.

Heaven's Peru chapter provides a same-group comparison across two sessions involving Heaven, Tracie, and Jungle. In the first, Heaven reports bodily dissolution while Tracie and Jungle each report loss of ordinary identity, Jungle re-anchoring through his role as a shaman; a few days later, with the same trio, Heaven reports childhood-street imagery in which self and objects become interchangeable (Heaven 2013, ch. 2). Because these participant reports reach the manuscript through Heaven's single-author narration, this is comparative testimony within one group rather than independent multi-witness corroboration.

The German-language *Salviabibel* provides a useful longitudinal and cross-linguistic comparison. Across one author's reports from 2007–2017, several familiar features recur, including layered or stacked realities, page- and membrane-like structures, ego-loss, presences, laughter, difficulty carrying the state back into ordinary language, and one explicit description of an observing position during piecewise reconstruction (kk84 2017; for the reconstruction report, 297–300). In one report, the questioner asks the figure he identifies as the Salvia goddess who remains when he has been peeled completely and is answered nobody, followed by laughter (kk84 2017, 157–160)—the corpus's sharpest instance of the arrangement texture. What it amounts to is deferred to Part 4. But *Salviabibel* remains a **single-author corpus within the broader internet drug-report culture**. It is not population replication or a clean control for cultural contamination.

The evidentiary result is therefore graded. The clinical record secures the coarse rupture. Specialist longitudinal first-person corpora such as Arthur's add sustained within-author phenomenology and cross-author comparison, but not replication. The wider first-person record adds recurrent finer structure. Cross-linguistic recurrence strengthens the case that some of that structure is not peculiar to one writer or vocabulary, while stopping well short of independent replication.

Recurrence constrains explanation; it does not decide it. Shared pharmacology acting on shared neuropsychology can itself produce convergent phenomenology.

Mechanism-shaped convergence, not noise, is therefore the deflationary expectation, and convergence counts against a deflationary reading only to the degree that it exceeds what a mechanism-shaped account covers. Structural similarity is comparative evidence, not independent corroboration of any metaphysical interpretation.

The first-person corpus also selects for experiences that could later be organized into language. Difficult and poorly integrated outcomes are considered separately in Part 7.

1.4 What This Section Has Not Done

Part 1 has not decided whether the recognition “I have been here before” is veridical, what the encountered presences are, or what awareness reported under disrupted ordinary self-organization ultimately represents. It has not established a metaphysical hierarchy of states, the fine-grained structure of recovery, or the persistence of awareness through the non-reportable interval. Those questions belong to the Parts that follow.

What Part 1 has established is narrower. The Salvia rupture has a recurring but variable phenomenology: rapid disruption of ordinary self-world organization, recognition-class events, encountered presences, layered amnesia, and several forms of return, including gradual reorientation and piecemeal remembering or reconstruction. These features carry different evidentiary weights across controlled and first-person sources. Awareness and recognition may occur in the same broad rupture, but they should not be collapsed into one phenomenon.

The manuscript's central datum is the reported loss and restoration of autobiographical and contextual access: memory, context, identity, and ordinary orientation can become unavailable and then become available again. Some reports describe that change as noticeable during return, but the accounts are retrospective and cannot fully determine how much of the noticing was contemporaneous rather than later organized in recall. Remembered differentiation likewise does not establish discrete underlying recovery stages.

Part 1 also leaves the status of markedly attenuated content open. Arthur's thought-free-awareness reports and Account 14's remembered "nothingness" support comparison at the level of severe reduction in ordinary thought and autobiographical organization; they do not establish one technically identical or literally contentless state. The non-reportable interval remains different epistemically because no accessible trace survives from which it could be positively characterized.

These are the data. The remainder of the manuscript asks what they can legitimately mean.

PART 2: THOUGHT-FREE AWARENESS AND SELF-MODEL COLLAPSE

What This Section Does (and Does Not Do)

Part 1 established the phenomenology. Part 2 asks what happens to memory, language, and the ordinary sense of self during the rupture before the later interpretive frameworks are introduced.

J. D. Arthur supplies the phenomenological constraint: failures of ordinary memory, language, and thought limit what can be retained and carried back. Thomas Metzinger supplies the core cognitive model: the ordinary self is a constructed phenomenal self-model, so its disruption can explain loss of ordinary selfhood without requiring disclosure of a deeper metaphysical self. The Salvia-specific empirical literature supplies the pharmacological anchor, while memory research supplies mechanisms of state-dependent access, encoding failure, reconstruction, and retrospective organization. Part 2 therefore develops a naturalistic explanatory program rather than using Metzinger only as an objection.

Arthur remains a phenomenological source rather than a naturalistic explainer. His reports establish the problem that any account must face: the apparatus of memory, language, identity, and orientation is altered during the state, so what returns is constrained by what that apparatus can preserve and recover. The naturalistic program then asks whether Salvia's pharmacology, self-model disruption, memory dynamics, and reconstructive return can account for the arc without invoking transpersonal access. Where those mechanisms are specified, they earn explanatory weight; where they remain promissory, Part 2 says so.

2.1 Arthur's Thesis: The State Before Interpretation

J. D. Arthur's *Salvia Divinorum: Doorway to Thought-Free Awareness* records Salvia experiences over roughly five years.⁴ Across those sessions he identifies a recurring condition he **characterizes as "thoughtless awareness"**: not merely a brief quieting of thought, but a sustained state in which ordinary mentation and autobiographical orientation can fall away while awareness continues.

Arthur links this condition directly to memory and language. Ordinary language, he argues, depends on remembered words, meanings, and relations. When ordinary memory fails, ordinary language therefore fails with it (Arthur 2010, 50).

But Arthur does **not** describe the resulting state as devoid of all structure or significance. He reports a different mode of communication — what he calls "dream language" — in which a word or phrase can carry an entire constellation of meaning (Arthur 2010, 53–54). The narrower conclusion is therefore important: **ordinary propositional language can become**

⁴ Arthur 2010, 28–29, 126. Arthur introduces the recurring condition as one that “one might characterize as ‘thoughtless awareness’”; his epilogue states that the reported consistencies emerged “over the course of five years.”

unavailable without implying that experience itself becomes structureless or unmediated.

Arthur's own reports already show that memory failure and recovery are not monolithic. He can remain experientially engaged while unable to retrieve who he is, his age, where he came from, or how he entered the state; as the scene recedes, he begins to remember who he is and details of his "other life" (Arthur 2010, 27–29). He also describes a state-specific phenomenon in which material unavailable in ordinary awareness can return on re-entering the altered state (Arthur 2010, 61). Part 1's layered account therefore systematizes distinctions already present in Arthur rather than replacing a unitary memory model.

These observations complicate the Recognition Problem. Some familiarity may reflect altered-state material becoming accessible again rather than a fresh recognition of an independently persistent domain; conversely, the report's reality-status and noetic qualities are not exhausted by that mechanism. Arthur also describes altered-state meaning being translated during reintegration into ordinary language (Arthur 2010, 52–54), underscoring that what returns may be transformed by the recovering memory-language system.

Arthur's account is equally important on return. He reports ordinary surroundings becoming available while an unusual central awareness remains salient, and elsewhere describes what he calls "unbroken awareness" persisting as the trance recedes (Arthur 2010, 102–104). Most directly, he describes the underpinnings of ordinary awareness becoming perceptible while the customary mode gradually regains solidity through automatic "returning to form" (Arthur 2010, 121). Arthur therefore already describes a reportable return of ordinary self-world organization; the manuscript's task is to analyze what such reports warrant, not to claim priority for the phenomenon.

Arthur himself draws stronger conclusions from these experiences about the limits of ordinary perception and the possible validity of the Salvia world (Arthur 2010, 123–125). Part 2 does not need those conclusions. It extracts the narrower structural claim his account supports: when the apparatus of ordinary memory, language, and self-orientation is disrupted, what can later be retained and reported is correspondingly constrained.

That is enough for the argument. **The failure-to-hold is not merely an experiencer failing to find words afterward; the ordinary machinery by which something becomes sayable and retainable was itself altered during the state.**

2.2 Metzinger and the Naturalistic Model: No Self, Only Models

Where Arthur describes what becomes unavailable, Thomas Metzinger asks what the disappearing self is. In *Being No One* (2003), the phenomenal self is not a persisting entity but the content of a phenomenal self-model: a representation through which the system experiences itself as someone (Metzinger 2003, 330–336). This supplies the central cognitive component of the naturalistic account: Salvia need not uncover a deeper self if it disrupts the modeling processes by which an embodied system ordinarily experiences itself as a continuous person.

The crucial feature is transparency. We do not ordinarily experience the self-model as a model; we experience its content directly as me. The representation disappears behind what it represents (Metzinger 2003, 330–331). When that organization is disrupted, the ordinary person and world can lose their taken-for-granted reality without any deeper metaphysical layer being disclosed. The Salvia rupture can therefore be modeled, at this level, as disruption of normally transparent self- and world-modeling.

Crucially, this does not require consciousness itself to disappear. Being No One already envisages a state that is functionally centred but phenomenologically selfless (Metzinger 2003, 335–336), and Metzinger's later Minimal Phenomenal Experience work investigates forms of awareness without egoic self-consciousness or an ordinary first-person perspective (Metzinger 2020). A naturalistic explanation can therefore allow awareness under attenuated autobiographical organization while denying that the report establishes an independently existing witness.

The pharmacological and cognitive levels should not be conflated. Salvinorin A's κ -opioid action and the network changes summarized in §1.1 establish that this is a drug-induced neurobiological disturbance; Metzinger supplies a model of what disrupted selfhood could consist in; memory research addresses why access, encoding, recognition, and reconstruction may fail or change across the arc. None of these components by itself explains every feature. Their strength lies in forming a testable program whose parts can be specified and challenged separately.

2.2.1 Awareness Without the Ordinary Self

Part 1 reports awareness during return while autobiographical identity is still incomplete. The phenomenology establishes awareness under those conditions; it does not establish what that awareness is or whether it exists independently of the processes restoring ordinary selfhood.

A Metzinger-style deflationary reading requires no independently existing subject behind the report. An observer-like representational process could become available while the autobiographical self-model remains offline or only partly restored, producing awareness of the return without implying an underlying ātman, Self, or other metaphysical subject. The report of awareness does not settle its ontology.

Arthur widens the Salvia-specific base. During one return he describes ordinary surroundings becoming progressively available while a central awareness remained salient; elsewhere he reports “unbroken awareness” continuing as the trance receded (Arthur 2010, 102–104). These reports support awareness during disrupted or returning autobiographical organization without establishing either that a single subject persisted continuously across the rupture or that awareness had temporal priority over restored identity.

Account 14 adds a differently worded report of severe content attenuation: calm “nothingness,” awareness of that nothingness, and thought becoming available again within a retrospective account that also includes return toward body and biography. That report does not establish

literal absence of all differentiated phenomenal content. Section 2.4 therefore compares Arthur's thought-free-awareness reports and Account 14 with Metzinger's later Minimal Phenomenal Experience program at the level of reduced ordinary content and self-organization, without identifying any of them.

Awareness without full autobiographical identity therefore remains phenomenologically significant without becoming metaphysically probative.

2.2.2 The Recognition Problem

The Salvia recognition — *I have been here before* — is reported with the felt quality of remembering rather than inference. That certainty is phenomenologically important, but it does not establish that what is recognized is true.

Controlled evidence gives the deflationary challenge an empirical foothold. MacLean et al. (2013) found dose-related impairment of both recall and recognition memory under salvinorin A. The study does **not**, however, show that salvinorin A produces false familiarity or alters a specific familiarity-tagging mechanism; on the experimental recognition task, response criterion shifted conservatively with dose. That task is not equivalent to field-level familiarity, so the finding neither establishes nor refutes the hypothesis below.

Arthur supplies a more concrete state-specific alternative. Across repeated sessions he describes increasing familiarity and continuity among successive excursions, and he explicitly identifies state-dependent retrieval: thoughts and perceptions forgotten after return to ordinary awareness can become available again when the hallucinogenic state is re-entered (Arthur 2010, 16–17, 61). Recurrent recognition can therefore arise, at least in principle, through restored access to prior altered-state memory rather than through recognition of an independently persistent domain. This does not explain every feature that may accompany the Salvia recognition — such as altered reality-status or apparent timeless continuity — but recurrence by itself cannot discriminate between those possibilities.

A separate manuscript-constructed possibility is that the Salvia state disrupts recognition processing in a way that gives the emerging phenomenal field the texture of familiarity. On that account, “I have been here before” would report a condition of the memory system rather than a fact about what has been encountered.

This possibility is enough to block the inference from **felt certainty** to **veridical recognition**. It does not show that the recognition is false. Nor does recurrence of recognition across reports decide the issue. Salvinorin A is a potent and selective κ -opioid agonist (Roth et al. 2002), and a shared mechanism acting on shared architecture predicts **mechanism-shaped convergence rather than noise** — the form-constant literature on the classical psychedelics is the

precedent.⁵ Whether a κ -opioid analogue of that account can be specified for the salviaic image-cluster is open work, and §6.4 counts it among the tests to which the deflationary reading is exposed.

The recognition is therefore phenomenologically real and epistemically significant, but its felt certainty cannot establish its veridicality.

2.2.3 Retrospective Return: Noticing, Segmentation, and Priority

The return is sometimes reported as phenomenologically noticeable and differentiated: autobiographical or contextual material may be described as absent and later available, sometimes suddenly, while other reports describe gradual fading, overlap, or abrupt termination. Because these are retrospective reports, the record cannot fully determine how much of the noticing belonged to the transition itself rather than to later organization of it. A second constraint reaches remembered differentiation: a recovery more continuous than remembered could later be segmented into discrete moments of absence and sudden availability. These reports therefore support loss and restoration of access more securely than a fine-grained recovery structure.

A separate priority defeater applies where awareness is reported while autobiographical identity remains incomplete. An observer-like process could become available during cognitive recovery while autobiographical identity and world-orientation remain incomplete, and the later integrated mind could represent that interval as having been earlier or continuous. Research on emergence from general anesthesia shows that cognitive capacities can recover at different rates. In Mashour et al. (2021), executive function recovered earlier than several other measured domains, contrary to the investigators' hypothesis that it would recover last. These measures concern functional access and task performance rather than phenomenal consciousness.

Isolated-forearm studies further show connected consciousness during intended general anesthesia without later explicit recall (Sanders et al. 2017). Together these findings make differentiated recovery empirically plausible without establishing the phenomenal structure of Salvia return. The same comparator disciplines the manuscript in the other direction: that a returning subject recalls nothing of the deepest interval does not establish that awareness lapsed there — the agnosticism Part 1 registers for the non-reportable interval.

The evidence nevertheless supports a narrower claim. The return phase is the strongest first-person evidentiary window because memory and language are functioning again while changes in autobiographical and contextual access may still be noticed. Across the wider corpus, piecemeal remembering, observation during return, gradual fading, and abrupt termination all occur. In one cross-linguistic report that combines observation with piecewise reconstruction, the reporter himself flags the neutral-observer description as retrospective grammar rather than

⁵ Klüver 1966; Ermentrout & Cowan 1979; Bressloff et al. 2001. This form-constant lineage supplies the manuscript's precedent for mechanism-shaped convergence: recurrent phenomenology can arise from shared perceptual or neural organization without implying a shared external referent.

a contemporaneous fact (kk84 2017, pp. 297–300). What the corpus supports is loss and restoration of access and sometimes differentiated return, not a fine-grained recovery chronology.

Awareness can be reported while autobiographical identity remains incomplete. That supports a phenomenological distinction, not functional or ontological priority. A naturalistic account may model this as an observer-like or minimal-awareness process available before full autobiographical integration; contemplative frameworks may interpret it differently. The report does not decide between them.

Prospective, near-immediate reporting could test contemporaneous noticing, differentiation, and priority more directly. The thesis therefore rests on reported loss and restoration of access through remembering and reorientation, not on a fine-grained chronology of recovery.

2.3 Memory, Access, and Reconstructive Return

The naturalistic program needs a more explicit account of memory than the word amnesia can provide. Part 1 grouped unavailable material by whether it concerns entry, the altered experience beyond entry and return, or return itself. These descriptions do not determine when or why the material became unavailable. Explanatorily, however, a second distinction is needed: information can fail to be encoded, can be encoded but become inaccessible from the ordinary state, can return only as familiarity or recognition without recoverable content, or can be reconstructed during recovery into a form different from the original episode. These possibilities are not interchangeable. The present evidence supports several of them as live mechanisms but does not reduce all Salvia memory loss to one process.

Encoding and retrieval. MacLean et al. (2013) establish dose-related impairment of recall and recognition memory under salvinorin A. That finding shows that the drug can impair the ordinary memory system during the acute state; it does not identify whether every later blank reflects failed encoding, failed retrieval, or some mixture. Arthur supplies evidence for at least one different possibility: material unavailable in ordinary awareness can become available again when the altered state is re-entered (Arthur 2010, 61). That is a state-dependent-access pattern. Where such recovery occurs, the material was not simply absent from memory in every state. The two findings therefore constrain a naturalistic model in different directions: Salvia can impair memory performance, and some apparently lost material can nevertheless remain conditionally accessible.

This distinction matters for the failure-to-hold. If an episode was never encoded in a form available to later autobiographical memory, no amount of ordinary-state retrieval will recover it. If it was encoded but access is state-dependent, ordinary return can restore the person while

simultaneously closing access to material available only under the altered configuration. If only a familiarity or noetic trace survives, the returning subject may retain the sense that something was known without the content needed to say what. The phenomenology alone cannot tell which of these occurred in a given interval. A naturalistic explanation therefore does not begin by calling the whole gap “memory failure”; it asks which kind of access failure the surviving evidence permits.

The non-reportable interval is the limiting case. No accessible trace survives from which to infer what was experienced there. Metzinger's MPE work supplies one naturalistic model in which sufficiently absorbed states may suspend autobiographical encoding, making entry and emergence more reportable than the absorbed interval itself (Metzinger 2020, 15). The isolated-forearm literature supplies a different caution: connected consciousness can occur during intended anesthesia without later explicit recall (Sanders et al. 2017). Neither result identifies the Salvia mechanism, but together they block a simple equation between later blankness and absence of experience. Naturalism can explain why reportability may fail without claiming to know what occupied the unreported interval.

Recognition and state-dependent access. The entry-threshold recognition creates a more specific memory problem because something survives in propositional form: I have been here before. Arthur's state-dependent-retrieval reports show one route by which recurrent familiarity could arise without contact with an independently persistent realm: prior altered-state material could become accessible when a sufficiently similar state returns. That mechanism can explain recurrence of familiarity in principle, but it does not by itself explain the recognition's felt timelessness, altered reality-status, or extraordinary certainty. Nor does MacLean et al. establish a false-familiarity mechanism. Their recognition task showed impairment and a conservative criterion shift, not evidence that salvinorin A causes subjects to falsely endorse novelty as familiar. The manuscript-constructed familiarity-error hypothesis therefore remains a testable possibility, not a delivered result.

That separation is important because a naturalistic explanation can be partly successful without being complete. State-dependent access gives a specified route to recurrent recognition. Impaired recognition memory supplies a drug-specific empirical constraint. Metzinger's Epistemicity concept explains why the phenomenal quality of knowing cannot, by itself, certify knowledge. But the exact production of this recognition — with its already-known and already-there texture — remains incompletely specified. Calling it a memory artifact would therefore overstate what has been shown.

Reconstruction during return. The return adds a further process. Remembering is not simply the reopening of a stored file; what becomes reportable is rendered through a recovering autobiographical system. Metzinger's later discussion of selfless experience explicitly allows later autobiographical memory to reformat an episode and import first-person structure retrospectively (Metzinger 2024, 467). Mashour et al. (2021) show, in a different context, that cognitive capacities can recover at different rates after anesthesia. Those findings do not establish the phenomenal structure of Salvia recovery, but they make a reconstructive and functionally differentiated recovery empirically plausible.

This gives the segmentation constraint a positive explanatory role. A return that was continuous at the level of underlying processes could later be remembered as discrete moments in which one element was absent and then suddenly present. Conversely, a genuinely differentiated return could also be remembered accurately. The present record cannot discriminate between those possibilities. The naturalistic model therefore explains why retrospective segmentation is possible; it does not use that possibility to erase the reported phenomenology. What remains secure is that memory, context, identity, and world-orientation can become available again in ways that are themselves reportable.

Reconstruction may also bear on the always-having-been-the-case texture described in Part 4. When ordinary self-world organization returns, it does not merely provide a room, a biography, and a body; it normally provides them as continuous with a remembered past. A recovering system that rapidly reinstates those background relations could, in principle, make the restored configuration feel not newly assembled but simply true again. That is a more specific naturalistic route than the label “contrast-shock,” because it identifies continuity as part of what autobiographical reconstruction supplies. It remains incomplete, however. The present evidence does not show that this mechanism produces the transitive feeling of being put back or being made to forget. Part 4 therefore keeps the continuity burden open rather than treating reconstruction as a solution by assertion.

The resulting naturalistic sketch operates across explanatory levels rather than prescribing a phenomenological chronology. Salvinorin A perturbs a κ -opioid-sensitive neurobiological system and large-scale organization (§1.1). Self- and world-modeling can then lose their ordinary transparency and integration. Encoding, retrieval, recognition, and state-dependent access can be disrupted in different ways. During recovery, autobiographical and contextual organization can become available again while later memory reconstructs what can be retained of the transition. These processes can jointly explain why the ordinary person disappears, why some content fails to carry across the rupture, and why changes in access can become reportable during return. They need not unfold uniformly across sessions, nor do the currently identified mechanisms explain every distinctive Salvia feature.

This model also generates discriminating questions rather than merely a vocabulary. Prospective, near-immediate sampling of the return could test whether reported noticing and differentiation survive closer observation. Re-entry and state-dependent-access findings can test whether material unavailable in ordinary awareness is recoverable under a reinstated altered configuration. Recognition tasks can test whether the Salvia state produces a specific familiarity distortion rather than memory impairment alone. Cross-substance comparisons can test whether the already-there and re-enclosure textures track κ -opioid disruption specifically or recur whenever self-model and autobiographical organization are destabilized. The present manuscript does not possess those answers. Their importance is methodological: they identify where the naturalistic program is already specified enough to risk failure and where it remains promissory.

2.4 Minimal Phenomenal Experience and the Residue Problem

One residue remains after the memory analysis: what to make of reports in which ordinary thought, identity, and representational content are markedly attenuated while awareness is still reported. Metzinger's Minimal Phenomenal Experience program supplies a naturalistic comparator. It treats minimal phenomenal experience as a multidimensional cluster rather than one essential contentless state; Low Complexity can range from absence of discursive thought with perception still present to much stronger reductions of ordinary representational content (Metzinger 2020, 13–16).

What may phenomenologically appear as bare or objectless awareness can therefore be modeled naturalistically without implying that every low-content report has the same structure or that a metaphysical subject has been disclosed.

This provides a naturalistic comparator for Arthur's thought-free-awareness reports and Account 14's remembered "nothingness" without ranking them or identifying either with MPE. Arthur reports severe reduction of ordinary mentation; Account 14 reports calm nothingness and awareness of that nothingness. Neither report establishes the literal absence of all differentiated phenomenal content, and differences in retrospective vocabulary do not establish that one lies closer to a contentless endpoint.

MPE shows that reports of highly simplified awareness do not by themselves require an independently existing subject. It does not establish that the Salvia conditions are MPE or that κ -opioid disruption produces the same condition.

2.5 What the Naturalistic Program Explains—and What It Still Owes

The naturalistic program should therefore be judged feature by feature rather than granted or denied victory as a block. On loss of the ordinary self, it has a genuine cognitive explanation: if ordinary personhood is the transparent content of a phenomenal self-model, disruption of that modeling can remove the experienced person without requiring that a deeper personal subject has been uncovered. Salvinorin A's pharmacology anchors the disruption causally, although the chain from κ -opioid receptor action to the full phenomenology remains incomplete.

On session amnesia and the failure-to-hold, the account is stronger still but not unitary. Acute memory impairment is empirically established; Arthur supplies a state-dependent-access pattern; Metzinger supplies models of suspended autobiographical encoding and later reconstruction. Together these mechanisms explain several routes by which content can be unavailable after return. What they do not establish is which route accounts for each inaccessible interval, or whether some material remains encoded in a form the ordinary autobiographical system cannot retrieve.

On awareness without complete autobiographical identity, Metzinger's framework removes the need to infer an independently existing witness. Selfless or minimally self-organized experience is conceptually available within a naturalistic model, and an observer-like process could become reportable before the full autobiographical self-model is restored. This is an explanation of how the phenomenological distinction can occur without a metaphysical Self. It does not determine whether the awareness reported in different parts of the rupture is one continuous process, nor does it establish the temporal priority of awareness over restored identity beneath retrospective report.

On recognition, the result is mixed. State-dependent retrieval is a specified mechanism that can generate recurrence of familiarity across sessions, and memory impairment makes a memory-based account independently plausible. But a specific false-familiarity process has not

been demonstrated under salvinorin A, and the conservative response shift in MacLean et al. is evidence against pretending otherwise. The extraordinary certainty, apparent continuity, and already-known quality of the recognition therefore remain only partly explained. Naturalism has mechanisms here; it does not yet have the whole phenomenon.

On re-enclosure and the always-having-been-the-case texture, reconstruction supplies a plausible component: restored autobiographical organization normally reinstates a world as continuous with a past rather than as a newly generated scene. Rapid restoration after a radical contrast could therefore help explain why ordinary reality returns with its authority already attached. But the distinctly transitive feeling that the self-world is being put back still lacks a specified mechanism. That feature remains a promissory burden rather than evidence for either an adversarial or consciousness-first account.

On presences and Salvia-specific imagery, Part 2 has the least to say. Disrupting a self-model can make room for experience not organized around the ordinary autobiographical person, but it does not thereby explain why encounters take person-like form, why some roles recur, or why the field can feel already occupied. Shared neuropsychology, cultural schemas, state-dependent retrieval, and later Jungian interpretation remain possible contributors. No single naturalistic mechanism developed here accounts for the full encounter phenomenology, and the finer features are themselves less strongly established than the coarse rupture.

Finally, on why Salvia has this unusually compressed and discontinuous profile, the pharmacological anchor is real without yet being a complete mechanistic explanation. The κ -opioid target, rapid time course, memory impairment, and altered network organization make the state empirically tractable; they do not yet derive the specific conjunction of identity loss, recognition, characteristic perceptual reorganization, re-enclosure, and rapid return. That is precisely where further Salvia-specific work would matter most.

The conclusion is therefore neither that naturalism has explained Salvia away nor that its remaining gaps count in favor of Analytic Idealism. Part 2 establishes a positive but uneven explanatory program. It explains ordinary-self disruption, supplies several mechanisms for failures of access and retrospective reconstruction, and offers testable routes to parts of recognition and return. It remains incomplete at the finer Salvia-specific textures. The promissory-naturalism guard applies exactly there: an explanation not yet specified cannot be credited merely because a future neurocognitive account seems likely. The same incompleteness also cannot be converted into evidence for a consciousness-first ontology. The later Parts inherit both the delivered explanations and the unresolved burdens.

PART 3: THE BARDO AS EXPERIENTIAL MAP

What This Section Does (and Does Not Do)

Parts 1 and 2 established the data and the constraint. The rupture has describable structure, attested at graded evidentiary weights; the failure-to-hold is structural; and the felt quality of knowing is not by itself grounds for veridicality. Part 3 makes the manuscript's first sustained framework comparison: does an existing experiential map illuminate the structure of the rupture, and what would such illumination establish?

The map is the Tibetan bardo framework. Structural resemblance can supply vocabulary, locate reported features relative to one another, and identify a related problem of recognition or presence failing to remain stable across a transition in a tradition that did not have Salvia in view. It cannot establish that Salvia produces the states the tradition names — clear light, *rigpa*, or the post-mortem bardos — or that the surrounding cosmology is correct. Part 3 therefore marks where the comparison holds, where it strains, where the two records diverge, and what it leaves unexplained.

The principal sources are Padmasambhava's *Bardo Thödol* in Robert Thurman's translation,⁶ Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, and Leary, Metzner, and Alpert's *The Psychedelic Experience*⁷ — an early psychedelic adaptation of the bardo framework and one important channel by which Tibetan vocabulary entered Anglophone psychedelic culture. The aim is not to defend Tibetan cosmology but to ask what its phenomenological descriptions illuminate when the cosmological commitments are held aside.

Part 3 also inherits a constraint established across Part 2: the entry-threshold recognition is propositionally retained; deeper-strata material is variably retained; and the return-phase rendering is limited to what the returning apparatus can recover. Section 3.1 establishes the technical contemplative comparison on which the mappings in §§3.2–3.3 depend.

What the bardo framework leaves unexplained becomes the starting point for Part 4.

3.1 What a Bardo Is (and Isn't)

Bardo means "between" or intermediate state. In the six-bardo scheme used here, the three post-mortem bardos — death-point, reality, and existence — sit alongside the bardos of life, dream, and meditation. The framework is therefore not confined to literal death. That is sufficient for the manuscript's limited use of it: as a vocabulary for comparing transitions between configurations of experience (Padmasambhava 1994).

⁶ Padmasambhava 1994, trans. Thurman, 122, first-between clear-light instruction in Natural Liberation Through Understanding in the Between: "...your immaculate naked awareness dawning clear and void without horizon or center."

⁷ Leary, Metzner, and Alpert 1964, an early psychedelic adaptation of the Tibetan bardo sequence. It is cited here as historical reception and comparative precedent, not as a source for Tibetan doctrine or as method.

Salvia is not death, and nothing in this comparison implies death, rebirth, or any claim about karmic continuity. The question is narrower: whether the Tibetan distinctions among dissolution, visionary encounter, and re-formation help organize features reported in the Salvia rupture. Where they do not, the divergence counts against the mapping rather than being forced into it.

One technical distinction is essential. In Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Bön/Dzogchen presentation, *rigpa* is not defined by the absence of thought or appearance. Wangyal's mirror analogy presents thoughts, images, emotions, and apparent subject and object as arising in *rigpa* without affecting its nature; with developed stability, thought can arise and dissolve without obscuring it (Wangyal 1998). Wangyal also distinguishes the natural clear light of waking life from the clear lights of sleep, *samadhi*, and death, associating each with a different obstacle to maintaining presence. In sleep practice, neither subject nor object is present.

This objectless clear-light sleep condition provides a stringent tradition-specific comparator for Salvia reports in which ordinary thought and familiar content are severely attenuated, including Arthur's thought-free-awareness reports and Account 14's remembered "nothingness." Neither report establishes Wangyal's technical condition, and differences in retrospective vocabulary do not establish that one is closer to it than the other. Objectlessness and absence of propositional content do not by themselves establish absence of subtler structuring.

Thurman's *Bardo Thödol* translation supplies a related death-point formulation: recognition of one's own naked awareness as the clear light (Padmasambhava 1994). But Thurman does not use the transliteration *rigpa*. Reading that formulation through Wangyal's *rigpa* vocabulary is therefore a comparison made by this manuscript, not a lexical equation established by the source.

The comparison remains conditional: severe content attenuation in Arthur's reports and Account 14 warrants comparison with Wangyal's cultivated objectless condition, not identification, and does not establish that traditional recognition occurred. A further divergence concerns recognition itself: Wangyal's clear-light recognition is nondual awareness recognizing itself, whereas the entry-threshold Salvia recognition has the memorial form I have been here before. Whether that propositionally retained recognition concerns the same territory as the deeper material remains unsettled. Section 3.2 therefore tests the bardo map against the Salvia phenomenology rather than treating the map as evidence for what the phenomenology was.

3.2 The Compressed Transit

Part 3 now tests a limited comparison with the three post-mortem betweenstates presented in Thurman's *Bardo Thödol*: death-point, reality, and existence. Wangyal's account is related but not identical: his discussion of dying separates dissolution, a primordially pure (*kadag*) stage at which liberation into the clear light is said to be available, the bardo of visionary experience, and integration into the *bardo of existence* (Wangyal 1998). Leary, Metzner, and Alpert adapted the three-bardo sequence to psychedelic experience as ego-loss, visionary encounter, and return. That adaptation supplies historical precedent, not evidence that psychedelic states reproduce the Tibetan sequence.

Salvia reports can contain analogous phases within a brief rupture: disruption of ordinary self-world organization, encounter-rich experience, and return or re-formation. **The mapping is therefore phase-by-phase, not a claim that Salvia reproduces one canonical Tibetan sequence.** Each proposed correspondence must stand or fail on its own.

3.2.1 Dissolution and *Chikhai Bardo*

The first comparison concerns dissolution and the clear-light interval associated with the death-point transition. In Thurman's presentation, clear-light recognition belongs to the death-point bardo; Wangyal separates dissolution from a primordially pure stage at which liberation into clear light is possible, followed by the clear-light bardo of visionary experience (Wangyal 1998). Salvia likewise produces rapid disruption of ordinary selfhood, autobiographical orientation, and the experienced stability of the ordinary world. **That supports a comparison at the level of dissolution. It does not establish that the Salvia onset is the *chikhai bardo* or that bare awareness generally remains when the ordinary self is disrupted.**

Arthur's thought-free-awareness account strengthens the comparison only at this narrower level. His reports describe ordinary mentation, memory, and language becoming unavailable while awareness is nevertheless reported (Arthur 2010, 28–29, 50), but they do not by themselves establish objectless awareness or the Tibetan clear light. Part 2 therefore gives the bardo comparison a model of failure in the ordinary apparatus, not evidence that the state disclosed what the Tibetan framework says lies beyond that apparatus.

3.2.2 Encounter and *Chönyid Bardo*

The second comparison concerns visionary encounter. In Wangyal's account, the bardo of visionary experience follows the primordially pure stage: "consciousness is manifest in various forms,"⁸ and ordinary dualistic identification can resume as the experiencer identifies with part of what appears. The traditional *Bardo Thödol* supplies the much more specific iconography of peaceful and wrathful deities.

Salvia reports likewise include encounter-rich states in which beings, intelligences, or more indeterminate presences appear while ordinary self-world organization is substantially disrupted. The evidentiary weight is graded. Controlled research includes the bare experience of another person or being, but the finer features — recurring figures, already-there quality, apparent autonomy, and characteristic imagery — rely more heavily on the culturally interlinked first-person report ecology. They therefore support recurrence without establishing cleanly independent replication.

The *chönyid* comparison is useful at the level of **visionary content arising during a disrupted configuration of self and world.** In some Salvia trajectories, such encounter-content appears after substantial weakening of ordinary orientation and before ordinary identity has returned. But the corpus does not establish that every encounter occupies that position or that Salvia follows a canonical dissolution → encounter → return sequence.

⁸ Wangyal 1998, 138, "Secret Unification: Integrating the Clear Light with the Bardo," under the bardo of visionary experience: "consciousness is manifest in various forms."

Nor does the detailed Tibetan visionary taxonomy reproduce itself in the Salvia material. The comparison therefore concerns the **structural role of an encounter-rich phase**, not identity of content, sequence, or ontology.

3.2.3 Re-formation and Sidpa Bardo

The third comparison concerns re-formation. In Wangyal's account, the *bardo of existence* is the stage in which, if recognition is not stabilized, identification with the conventional self and dualistic experience reassert themselves; within the post-mortem framework, this culminates in rebirth (Wangyal 1998). Salvia ordinarily returns the experiencer to the same body, biography, and world. The useful comparison therefore reaches only as far as re-formation and renewed identification with a conventional self-world.

Part 1 established that Salvia return can take several forms, including abrupt termination of the trip or its peak, gradual reorientation, and piecemeal remembering or reconstruction. What matters here is that changes in autobiographical and contextual access can become phenomenologically noticeable while ordinary self-world organization is still being restored.

Arthur's "returning to form" supplies a genuinely parallel Salvia-side comparison. He explicitly describes the underpinnings of ordinary awareness becoming perceptible during descent as the customary mode gradually regains solidity through habit (Arthur 2010, 121). This record adds a particularly sudden remembered texture of some returning memories without establishing a fine-grained recovery structure. Arthur does not establish any metaphysical priority of awareness.

This is where Salvia's brevity matters most to the manuscript. A return that occurs over minutes can sometimes leave a reportable trace of changing autobiographical and contextual access. **The bardo framework provides a vocabulary for that movement; the evidentiary significance comes from the reported Salvia return itself, not from the framework's resemblance to it.**

3.3 Recognition and the Problem of Missing It

The bardo framework becomes most useful here at the point where the comparison also becomes most constrained. In the *Bardo Thödol*, the death-point clear light is presented as available for recognition, and the instructions repeatedly urge the dying person to recognize present awareness as that clear light. Failure of recognition leads onward into the later bardos; prior familiarity and practice are therefore treated within the framework as central to whether recognition can be sustained (Padmasambhava 1994).

Wangyal gives the practice claim a more general form. Dream and sleep yoga cultivate continuity of awareness across changing conditions and are explicitly presented as preparations for death (Wangyal 1998).⁹ But their immediate targets differ. Dream yoga develops recognition

⁹ Wangyal 1998, 138, "Secret Unification: Integrating the Clear Light with the Bardo": "All the dream and sleep practices are, on one level, preparations for death." The manuscript uses this practice relation comparatively; it does not imply that Salvia produces the Tibetan states being cultivated.

amid appearances. Sleep yoga is imageless: Wangyal describes it as awareness recognizing awareness, without subject-object structure. Stability in clear light can then persist even when dreams or other contents arise.

This is not initially the same problem as the Salvia recognition. *I have been here before* occurs near the entry threshold and has the phenomenological form of remembering a prior encounter. It is also propositionally retained. The deeper material is different: it is only variably recoverable, and whether the retained entry recognition concerns the same territory as that deeper material remains unsettled. **The Tibetan recognition is therefore not simply another vocabulary for the Salvia memory-like recognition.**

The comparison survives at a narrower level: **what permits recognition or presence to remain stable across changing conditions.** Wangyal's practices are designed, within their own framework, to cultivate continuity through waking, dream, sleep, and death. The Salvia record instead presents a pharmacological rupture in which some recognition survives while much of the deeper material does not. The two records therefore pose a related question without treating Tibetan distraction from clear light as equivalent to Salvia amnesia, and without establishing that they concern the same state or the same kind of recognition.

One stronger Tibetan reading remains available in principle: a severely attenuated Salvia condition could be interpreted as related to clear-light territory and its subsequent loss as a failure of stability in an unprepared experiencer. That reading requires the very state-identity the phenomenology cannot establish; neither Arthur's thought-free-awareness reports nor Account 14 can serve as evidence that traditional clear-light recognition occurred.

Part 3 therefore takes from the Tibetan material a **model of cultivated recognition-stability**, not independent confirmation of the Salvia recognition or its veridicality. The tradition shows how one framework understands recognition as trainable across transitions. Salvia supplies a different datum: a retained memorial recognition, deeper material that is harder to retain, and a return in which changes of access can become reportable. Their structural resemblance motivates comparison; it does not increase the evidentiary weight of either account.

3.4 What the Bardo Framework Cannot Explain

The bardo comparison is useful but bounded. It supplies vocabulary for dissolution, visionary manifestation, recognition, and renewed identification with a conventional self-world. It does not establish that Salvia produces the technical states named by the Tibetan traditions, nor that one canonical Tibetan sequence is reproduced in the Salvia corpus.

The divergences are now explicit. Salvia has no established canonical return sequence; the detailed Tibetan visionary and karmic taxonomy is not reproduced in the Salvia material; and *sidpa* culminates in rebirth, whereas the Salvia subject returns to the same body and biography. The recognitions also differ in kind: the entry-threshold Salvia recognition has the memorial form *I have been here before*, while Wangyal's clear-light recognition is nondual awareness

recognizing itself. **These mismatches limit the mapping rather than constituting defects to be explained away.**

The two records also describe loss differently. In Wangyal's account, appearances do not literally erase the clear light: the practitioner becomes distracted from it, and with sufficient stability dreams, thoughts, or bardo visions need not interrupt presence (Wangyal 1998). The Tibetan problem is therefore one of maintaining recognition or presence across changing conditions. Part 2's Salvia failure-to-hold is different: the apparatus of ordinary memory, language, and self-orientation is itself altered, constraining what can later be retained and rendered. The two problems are structurally comparable, not identical.

A further residue belongs specifically to the Salvia phenomenology. In this record and some third-party reports, return can carry the felt quality of re-enclosure or imposition — as though the ordinary self-world were being put back. That felt quality is phenomenologically real where reported; it does not establish that anything external or purposive imposed the return.

The bardo framework does not explain why that return can feel arranged. Its recognition-stability account may help deflate that impression, or the impression may point to a feature the framework does not describe; the phenomenology alone cannot decide. That unresolved residue is where Part 4 begins.

Part 3 therefore leaves a limited result. The Tibetan materials provide a useful comparative map and a developed model of cultivated recognition-stability across transitions. The Salvia record both resembles and diverges from that map. The resemblance motivates interpretation; it does not independently corroborate the Salvia phenomenology or the Tibetan account.

For the explanatory programs, the handoff is limited to features already carrying Part 1's evidentiary grading: disruption of ordinary self-world organization, variable retention and return, and the problem of recognition across transition. The Tibetan material supplies a comparative model of cultivated stability, not a Salvia mechanism. The naturalistic program must explain the observed disruption, memory failure, and return; consciousness-first accounts may interpret their larger significance, but neither can use the Tibetan resemblance as corroboration. This comparison remains explicitly source-specific to Wangyal's Bön/Dzogchen presentation; no broader Dzogchen claim is required for the audience-bounded use made here.

PART 4: THE HINGE — ARRANGED FORGETTING AND FRAGMENTED SELFHOOD

Central question: *Is the forgetting natural, arranged, or structurally necessary? And which "I" emerges claiming "I have been here before"?*

What This Section Does (and Does Not Do)

Part 3 left a narrow residue. The Tibetan material offers a model of cultivated recognition-stability, but it does not explain why the Salvia return can feel like re-enclosure — as though the ordinary self-world were being put back. Part 4 examines that felt transitivity without treating it as evidence that an external agent, cosmic system, or metaphysical process actually imposed the return.

Two questions must remain separate. First, what does the felt sense of arranged forgetting amount to? Section 4.1 isolates the phenomenology; §4.2 then sets a compressed adversarial Gnostic pole beside Kashmir Shaivism's non-adversarial account of concealment and the naturalistic reconstruction already available from Part 2. These readings do different kinds of explanatory work. The phenomenology does not decide among them.

Second, which "I" is doing the recognizing? Section 4.3 treats that as a problem of constructed or plural selfhood using Metzinger and Jung rather than adding another framework. Even if the arrangement question were settled, the identity and epistemic authority of the recognizer would remain open. Felt certainty cannot establish that the recognizing position is a deeper self rather than another psychological configuration or an observer-like process.

The return itself must also remain analytically differentiated. Three things must remain distinct: reports of severe content attenuation, restoration of access to ordinary autobiographical self-world organization, and the status of whatever residue survives afterward. The retrospective record does not establish these as a fixed chronology. The arrangement texture attaches most directly to re-enclosure rather than to content attenuation itself. Account 14's low-content interval is not itself reported as imposed. The tether names the reported pull back toward body and biographical structure; the pull has wider attestation, but its narration within Account 14 belongs to that single account.

Part 4 also keeps two uses of amnesia distinct. Session amnesia is the phenomenological and pharmacological disruption of encoding, retrieval, and translation produced during the Salvia session. Constitutive amnesia is a framework-level proposal that ordinary bounded selfhood depends on an ongoing concealment or forgetting. The first is part of the empirical problem already established. The second is proposed by some consciousness-first and traditional readings. Part 4 does not turn it into a datum.

Sections 4.4 and 4.5 then use Philip K. Dick and Severance as comparative mirrors, not as independent corroboration. PKD shows how revelatory phenomenology can generate an

expanding, potentially self-sealing cosmology; Severance makes divided access and literally arranged forgetting easy to see. Neither settles what the Salvia structures ultimately are.

The governing distinction is simple: **the return can feel arranged without being established as arranged**. Part 4 preserves the transitive grammar of the experience without allowing that grammar to become ontology.

4.1 The Phenomenological Datum: Forgetting That Feels Arranged

In the reports at issue here, the Salvia return can feel less like simply waking and more like **being put back**. The ordinary self-world does not merely become available again; its return can carry the felt grammar of re-enclosure, even of being *made to forget*. That transitive grammar is the datum. It does not establish a transitive cause.

Part 1 already cited Comradez's stage-magic description: changes seem to occur outside attention, while “false memories or sensibilities” make the altered configuration feel longstanding (Comradez 2018). Part 1 also marked the necessary limit: this is the reporter's explanation of how the state works, not a metaphysical claim. What matters here is narrower. The ordinary world can return with an apparent continuity already attached to it—not merely *here is the room again*, but *this has always been the room*. Call this the **always-having-been-the-case texture**.

My own return reports contain a related texture. Autobiographical and contextual material can be absent and then become available again during return. In the kitchen-renovation account, the returning scene appeared sufficiently dependent on memory, and sufficiently unfinished, that I attempted to insert a counter-memory while the reconstruction still seemed malleable. What this establishes is experienced malleability during remembering and reorientation, not a fine-grained account of the underlying recovery or evidence that an external agency was performing the reconstruction.

Arthur's “automatic returning to form” (Arthur 2010, 121) supplies the immediate non-agentive alternative. On that reading, the customary self-world reconstitutes itself through its own entrenched organization. The felt imposition could then arise from **contrast-shock**: after a rupture in which ordinary identity and reality have ceased to function as the unquestioned baseline, their rapid restoration may itself feel like enclosure. Part 4 cannot rule this out.

Comradez's always-having-been-the-case description appears more specific than simple restoration, because it includes not only the return of the prior configuration but the apparent restoration of its continuity. But that distinction must not be overdrawn. It remains one reporter's characterization of the experience, echoed in aspects of my own return phenomenology; it does not independently demonstrate that continuity was literally installed or that contrast-shock cannot generate such an impression. That specificity nevertheless leaves the present contrast-shock reading with an unmet explanatory burden: it must account for continuity apparently restored as part of the return, not merely for dramatic restoration. Meeting that burden remains possible; the feature does not establish literal installation.

A second deflationary possibility is pharmacological. Salvinorin A's κ -opioid action could contribute affective salience to the return and thereby help generate a sense of imposition. The evidence does not reduce neatly to generic dysphoria: preclinical κ -opioid findings are strongly aversive, while controlled human Salvia studies show a more mixed subjective profile. Those human samples consisted of experienced hallucinogen users, however, and Butelman and Kreek (2015) leave unresolved whether the discrepancy reflects experimental context, participant characteristics, prior exposure, or pharmacodynamic differences. MacLean et al. (2013) additionally caution that available instruments may have limited utility for characterizing κ -opioid effects. Generic negative affect therefore does not explain the arrangement texture by itself. Pharmacologically shaped salience nevertheless remains a live contributor rather than a defeated alternative.

The evidentiary conclusion should remain modest. The arranged-feeling appears in the author's record and in third-party description, and is therefore worth explaining and comparing across frameworks. Its evidentiary footing is weaker than the coarse rupture, amnesia, and differentiated-return features established in Part 1. What §4.1 establishes is not that the forgetting **is** arranged, but that some returns are experienced with a transitive and sometimes always-having-been-the-case texture that makes arrangement a natural interpretation.

Section 4.2 asks what different traditions make of that grammar.

4.2 Concealment: Adversarial and Non-Adversarial Readings

Section 4.1 established a phenomenological problem, not its explanation: some Salvia returns are experienced with the grammar of re-enclosure or arranged forgetting. If the Salvia return feels as though ordinary reality is being imposed again, what kind of process would that be? The comparisons that follow offer different answers to that question.

The distinction from earlier parts remains essential. **Session amnesia** concerns what happens to memory during and after the Salvia state. **Constitutive amnesia** is the stronger, framework-level proposal that ordinary bounded selfhood itself depends on an ongoing concealment or forgetting. Nothing in §4.1 establishes constitutive amnesia. The frameworks below are interpretations of the phenomenology, not additional observations.

Under the veil readings only, the Salvia rupture may be interpreted as *anamnesis* — a brief thinning or failure of constitutive concealment — while session amnesia still constrains what can later be retained. The first half of that sentence is framework-relative; the second is part of the empirical problem established in Parts 1–2. Keeping the two claims separate is the point of the distinction.

The remaining comparison deliberately keeps two poles distinct. The adversarial Gnostic reading takes the transitive grammar of being put back or made to forget close to face value. Kashmir Shaivism instead treats concealment as intrinsic to finite manifestation: *tirodhāna* is not imposed by an alien power but belongs to the structure through which consciousness

appears as a particular subject. These are not independent corroborations of one another. They show how the same reported texture can be given radically different causal and ontological meanings.

4.2.1 The Adversarial Pole

The strongest Gnostic reading takes the transitive grammar almost literally. In Sethian and related Gnostic materials, the Demiurge and Archons belong to a lower order that mistakes its own domain for the whole. Yaldabaoth's boast — “I am god and there is no other god beside me” — expresses precisely this ignorance of what lies beyond him.¹⁰ Within the adversarial reading, ordinary consciousness is enclosed within that mistaken order, and awakening consists in remembering an origin the enclosure obscures.

The *Gospel of Truth* gives forgetting an especially active form: Error produces “works and deeds of forgetfulness and fear” that hold beings captive.¹¹ Hans Jonas identifies the corresponding existential texture as *thrownness*: the awakened self experiences itself as foreign to the world in which it finds itself (Jonas 1958). Taken strongly, these motifs yield a clear interpretation of the Salvia return. The sense of being put back or made to forget would be read as the experiential trace of an actual structure of enclosure.

That conclusion belongs entirely to the framework. The Salvia phenomenology supplies the felt transitivity; it does not establish Demiurgic or Archonic agency. The value of retaining this pole is diagnostic: it preserves the experience's surface grammar in its strongest form and thereby demonstrates that literal phenomenological fit is not evidential support.

4.2.2 Kashmir Shaivism's Tirodhāna

Kashmir Shaivism changes the explanatory structure fundamentally. Here concealment is not imprisonment by an alien power. Tirodhāna names the self-concealment through which Consciousness appears as a particular subject. To manifest as this embodied locus, with this biography and horizon, Consciousness limits what is available to itself (Wallis 2013). Concealment is therefore not an accident added to particularity; under the framework, it is part of what particularity requires.

This must not be translated into the image of a cosmic person deciding to become “Rich.” Śaiva *svātantrya* names the intrinsic autonomy of Consciousness, not deliberative choice between alternatives. The contrast with the Archonic reading is therefore precise: the limitation is not imposed from outside. The apparent victim and the source of the concealment are, at the level of the framework, the same Consciousness.

The complementary act is *anugraha*, self-revelation or grace; *pratyabhijñā* names recognition of one's nature within this broader framework. Under this reading, the Salvia rupture may be interpreted as a moment in which the concealment loosens and what had become locally

¹⁰ Meyer 2010, The Secret Book of John, NHC II,1 13,8–9, where Yaldabaoth boasts, “I am a jealous god and there is no other god beside me.”

¹¹ Meyer 2010, The Gospel of Truth, NHC I,3 17,4–18,11, where Error prepares “works and deeds of forgetfulness and fear” in order to attract and take captive.

unavailable becomes recognizable again. The subsequent re-enclosure is then not an alien power forcing consciousness back into ignorance, but particularity reasserting itself. The phenomenological sentence *I am being put back* remains intact; the Śaiva interpretation changes who, if anyone, is doing the putting back.

That interpretation carries substantial metaphysical commitments. It presupposes Consciousness as fundamental and particular selves as contractions or expressions of it. Nothing in the Salvia phenomenology establishes those commitments. Tirodhāna nevertheless does genuine framework-conditional explanatory work: it links finite individuality to concealment and pairs contraction with recognition and renewed differentiation. Because this project reached Śaivism through Kastrup, that later fit cannot serve as independent corroboration of Analytic Idealism; it can still contribute explanatory structure the dissociation model does not itself supply.

Even closely related nondual traditions disagree about what the return would mean. In Advaita, *sākṣin* names witnessing awareness, and the renewed availability of thought and autobiographical identity can be read as the empirical subject becoming operative again without altering the witness (Śaṅkara [attrib.] 2003).¹² Kashmir Shaivism gives manifestation a different status: the return of thought, name, and world can be read as Consciousness differentiating itself again into a particular perspective (Wallis 2013).

Account 14 does not decide between these readings. It retrospectively juxtaposes remembered calm “nothingness” and awareness of that nothingness with the later availability of thought and autobiographical identity. Advaita can read that transition as renewed empirical identification; Śaivism as renewed differentiation. The report itself establishes neither a content-independent witness nor a Śaiva account of manifestation, and it does not establish literal contentlessness. The comparison matters because it shows that even nondual frameworks disagree about what the transition means; it does not strengthen the evidence for the reported return.

The manuscript weights the return because aspects of its loss and restoration are accessible as evidence, not because it assumes a Śaiva account of manifestation. Advaita can grant that evidential priority without conceding a Śaiva metaphysics. The Śaiva rendering remains a framework-relative comparison rather than a second metaphysical commitment beside the Analytic Idealism disclosed in the authorial standpoint: available within the framework, but not established as true of this experience merely by accepting that framework.

4.2.3 The Phenomenological Pressure on the Readings

Does the Salvia phenomenology favor one of these readings?

At the level of **grammar**, the reports in §4.1 fit the adversarial end most naturally. *Being put back*, *made to forget*, and the always-having-been-the-case texture sound more like imposition

¹² For a sustained scholarly study of *sākṣin* in Advaita epistemology and metaphysics, see Gupta 1998. The present subsection uses Gupta as a secondary study; claim-level verification against a primary Advaita text remains open.

than like remembered self-concealment. The experience does not present itself as *I am freely choosing particularity again*.

But grammatical fit is not evidentiary preference. A Śaiva reading can interpret the same felt imposition as self-concealment experienced from a perspective that no longer recognizes itself as its source. A neurocognitive account can instead treat the transitivity itself as a feature of how return is experienced. The adversarial pole, the Śaiva account, and the naturalistic account therefore incur different explanatory burdens rather than forming a scale of increasing plausibility.

The phenomenology therefore pressures the readings without resolving them. The adversarial reading best preserves the experience's surface grammar; it is not thereby better established as ontology.

4.2.4 The Tether: The Readings Made Concrete

The tether makes the difference among these readings concrete. The term is metaphorical. It names the reported pull back toward body, biography, and ordinary identity as the rupture closes.

The evidence is asymmetric. The pull toward ordinary identity has wider attestation in the assembled return corpus. Its narration within Account 14, where calm “nothingness” and awareness of that nothingness are remembered in the same retrospective arc as the tethered return of ordinary identity and body, belongs to that single account. The account therefore permits a more specific question than the wider corpus does: what does the pull mean when autobiographical identity is remembered as not yet fully available? Whether awareness reported in the low-content interval and awareness reported during return are continuous remains open.

One detail should not be overread. The account also says, I could be there forever but that would be boring. The retrospective record does not establish whether “boring” characterized the low-content interval itself or was a judgment formed as ordinary thought and autobiographical organization became available again. The manuscript therefore does not treat boredom as an established property of the condition.

Three live readings interpret the tether differently.

Under the **strong Gnostic reading**, the pull is re-enclosure: the structure of forgetting reclaiming a consciousness that briefly exceeded it.

Under a naturalistic reconstruction, no metaphysical jailer or constitutive concealment is required. The tether is the felt aspect of neurocognitive self-world organization reconstituting itself. That account remains incomplete until it explains why recovery can feel imposed rather than merely resumed.

Under **Kashmir Shaivism**, the pull is the return of particularity under *tirodhāna*: not an alien power defeating consciousness, but Consciousness again appearing as a bounded perspective. The framework supplies that interpretation; the Salvia report does not establish it.

A separate question remains even if the mechanism of return were known: what is the status of the subject who later says that recognition occurred? Section 4.3 takes up that problem through the self-model and depth-psychological resources already in the manuscript.

The deflationary alternative from Part 2 remains live throughout. As ordinary neurocognitive organization resumes, the autobiographical self-model and its world can simply be reconstructed. On that account, the felt tether requires no metaphysical counterpart. Every reading must nevertheless accommodate the same neurocognitive recovery; the readings differ over what that recovery signifies. Whether identifying its mechanism as dissociation settles the character of the concealment remains for Part 6.

Part 3's Tibetan material should be kept narrower still. It supplies a model of cultivated recognition-stability across changing conditions and, in Wangyal's sleep-yoga presentation, an objectless clear-light condition that provides a bounded comparator for Salvia reports of severe content attenuation, including Arthur's thought-free-awareness reports and Account 14's remembered "nothingness." It does not establish that either Salvia report instantiates that condition, that the Salvia tether is karmic patterning, or that Tibetan practice is designed to resist this return.

The tether therefore does not make these readings testable in the strong sense, and the frameworks do not yet generate discriminating empirical predictions. It gives them a common datum to interpret. Their differences concern what the pull **is**, not whether the pull was reported.

That is enough for this locus. The phenomenology preserves the experience of being drawn back into ordinary identity. The adversarial, Śaiva, and naturalistic readings show how differently that experience can be explained or interpreted. The report does not decide among them.

4.3 Which I Is Remembering?

Even if the mechanism of forgetting were known, a separate question would remain: what is the status of the subject who says I have been here before? The recognition occurs principally near the entry threshold as ordinary identity is destabilizing, while awareness under incomplete autobiographical organization is reported most sharply during return. The present record does not establish that these two loci belong to one continuous subject or process.

Metzinger and Jung make the problem intelligible without requiring another anthropology of self-plurality. Metzinger treats the experienced self as a model rather than a persisting entity; Jung treats the ego as one organization within a larger psyche and allows relatively autonomous partial personalities. Both therefore undermine the inference from apparent personal continuity to one simple, unified recognizer, while differing sharply about what lies beyond the ordinary ego.

Three live readings remain. The recognition could belong to a deeper or more unified form of selfhood; it could arise from another configuration within psychological plurality that becomes salient when habitual self-organization is disrupted; or the relevant position could be an

observer-like process becoming available during recovery rather than a deeper self at all. These alternatives concern the authority and identity of the recognizer, not merely whether the content of the recognition is true.

The first reading is available under several consciousness-first frameworks, but the phenomenology does not establish it. Felt certainty, calmness, or apparent non-identification cannot by themselves distinguish a deeper Self from a temporarily dominant configuration or an observer-like process. Even a veridical recognition would not establish that its recognizer is metaphysically deeper or more authoritative.

The kk84 passage introduced in §1.3 sharpens the second possibility. Asked who remains when the self has been completely “peeled,” the figure identified by the reporter as the Salvia goddess answers: nobody, followed by laughter (kk84 2017, 157–160). The exchange does not independently reveal what lies beneath ordinary identity. It is compatible with the absence of a deeper personal I, with a nonpersonal reading, and with a psychologically generated encounter. It therefore pressures rather than resolves the question.

The third possibility bears most directly on awareness during return. Advaita can interpret awareness under incomplete autobiographical organization through *sākṣin*; Kashmir Shaivism through its own account of manifestation; Jung through experience not exhausted by ego-consciousness; and a naturalistic account through an observer-like or minimal-awareness process available before full autobiographical integration. These readings are not equivalent, and the report does not decide among them.

The retrospective-return constraints from Part 2 remain active. Awareness reported while autobiographical identity is incomplete does not establish that awareness functionally came first or exists independently of the processes restoring identity. A recovery more continuous than remembered could also be segmented retrospectively. The evidence secures awareness under incomplete autobiographical self-organization and reportable return more strongly than any claim about the identity, continuity, or priority of the subject.

The result is therefore limited but load-bearing: Salvia can make the loss and restoration of ordinary autobiographical identity phenomenologically noticeable while leaving the authority of the recognizer unresolved. That question passes forward to Jung and Kastrup without adding another independent framework.

4.4 PKD's Black Iron Prison as Living Case

Philip K. Dick's 2-3-74 experience remains useful here for a narrower reason than metaphysical comparison. It did not occur under Salvia and cannot validate the Salvia phenomenology. Dick nevertheless reports an abrupt recognition experienced as remembering something that had somehow been hidden, and he later interpreted ordinary reality through the image of the Black Iron Prison. The phenomenological resemblance lies in recognition, hiddenness, and enclosure; it does not establish a common cause or object of recognition.

The more important comparison is what happened afterward. Dick spent years constructing and revising increasingly elaborate explanations — VALIS, Zebra, the plasmate, the persistence of Rome, information across time, and others. Those systems are historically important as interpretations of the initiating experience, but they do not inherit the experience's evidentiary status simply because they arose from it.

That expansion is the caution Part 4 needs as it gives Kastrup and Kashmir Shaivism greater explanatory license. A powerful recognition can constrain interpretation and still underdetermine the cosmology built around it. Explanatory resonance can become self-sealing when every later event is recruited as confirmation of the original revelation. Dick's record makes that danger unusually visible because the interpretive proliferation itself is documented at length.

PKD therefore remains as a warning, not an additional explanatory framework. His case does not confirm arranged forgetting, amnesia, or the Salvia recognition. It shows why the manuscript must keep the initiating phenomenology, the models constructed to explain it, and the evidence for those models in separate registers.

4.5 Severance as Cultural Mirror

The television series *Severance*¹³ offers a useful cultural mirror for the problems Part 4 has examined. Its premise is deliberately artificial: a surgical procedure divides a person's work and non-work autobiographical memory, producing an “innie” and an “outie” who inhabit the same body but cannot ordinarily access one another's lives.

The comparison with Salvia is limited but clear. In both, one configuration of consciousness can become active while ordinary autobiographical continuity is unavailable, and transition back can restore one world while making the other inaccessible. Each configuration experiences its present world as immediately real. Siebert's foundational self-test supplies the Salvia anchor: he reported being “totally convinced that this state of existence was all there ever was” (Siebert 1994, quoted via Heaven 2013). The dramatic premise therefore makes bidirectional amnesia and divided selfhood unusually easy to see.

The difference is decisive. In *Severance*, the forgetting is literally arranged: the procedure is technologically imposed and institutionally maintained. Salvia supplies no comparable evidence of an arranger. The show's engineered enclosure can therefore illustrate the **meaning** of arranged forgetting without serving as evidence that the phenomenological transitivity described in §4.1 corresponds to an actual mechanism of enclosure.

The innie and outie also dramatize the problem of multiple configurations claiming the same body and biography from mutually inaccessible positions. This resembles the question posed in §4.3 — which “I” has epistemic authority? — but the analogy does not establish that Salvia produces discrete selves of the kind the fictional procedure creates.

¹³ *Severance* 2022–, created by Dan Erickson (Apple TV+). Treated as cultural mirror, not evidence.

I recognized the parallel on first viewing, before developing the present vocabulary for Part 4. That observation should not be mistaken for independent corroboration. By then, the underlying Salvia record had been under reflection for years, alongside Vedantic and related frameworks. The modest point is that *Severance* provided an immediately recognizable narrative image for problems already present in the record: discontinuous memory, divided identity, and the difficulty of determining which configuration should count as the whole person.

Its role in the manuscript is therefore illustrative. *Severance* does not confirm the adversarial reading, psychological plurality, or any Salvia interpretation. It gives those abstract problems a concrete dramatic form.

What Part 4 Has Established

Part 4 began with a phenomenological residue: some Salvia returns can feel transitive, as though ordinary identity and world were being put back and the rupture made unavailable again. That arranged-feeling is phenomenologically real where reported but rests on weaker evidence than the coarse rupture, amnesia, and differentiated-return features established in Part 1. Arrangement itself is not established.

The adversarial Gnostic pole preserves the experience's surface grammar most literally; Kashmir Shaivism supplies a non-adversarial framework-conditional account in which concealment and finite individuation belong to the same structure; and a naturalistic reconstruction can treat the transitivity as a feature of self-world reconstruction. Literal fit is not evidential preference. The Śaiva account can contribute explanatory structure without serving as independent corroboration of Kastrup, and the naturalistic account remains promissory where no specified mechanism explains the felt imposition or restored continuity.

A separate question concerns the recognizer. The available evidence does not establish whether I have been here before belongs to a deeper or more unified self, another configuration within psychological plurality, or an observer-like process. The kk84 “nobody” exchange sharpens that question without deciding it. Awareness reported during return likewise does not establish a deeper Self or priority of awareness over restored autobiographical identity.

The tether preserves the same discipline in concrete form. A pull toward restored body and biography is reported; its metaphysical meaning is not. PKD supplies a warning about allowing revelatory phenomenology to harden into a self-sealing cosmology, while *Severance* remains an illustrative model of divided access and arranged forgetting rather than evidence about Salvia.

Part 4 therefore hands both explanatory programs a bounded burden. Naturalism must explain why some recovery is experienced not merely as return but as imposed re-enclosure with continuity apparently restored. Consciousness-first accounts must explain the same texture without converting coherence into evidence. The governing distinction survives: the return can feel arranged without being established as arranged. Part 5 turns from the structure of re-enclosure to the encountered presences.

PART 5: JUNG, ARCHETYPES, AND THE AUTONOMOUS PSYCHE

Central question: *Who — or what — are the presences encountered in the Salvia state? And what does it mean that they seem to have been there all along, only now visible?*

What This Section Does (and Does Not Do)

Parts 1 through 4 leave one primary question for Jung here: **what are the presences?** The separate question of what awareness under disrupted ordinary self-organization ultimately is remains unresolved and is carried forward only where a Jungian comparison helps establish its limits.

The phenomenology comes first. Some reports describe presences as other, already-there, and role-bearing. Jung can interpret those qualities through archetypal imagery and the autonomous psyche under disrupted ego-organization. That is an interpretation of the reports, not evidence that independently existing entities were encountered. Recurrence or structural similarity does not by itself supply such evidence. The subject-question from §4.3 carries into this part in a second form: if the felt quality of the rupture did not settle which I was recognizing, the felt quality of the encounter does not settle which I was encountering.

Sections 5.1–5.3 therefore move from report, to Jungian interpretation, to pressure-test. Section 5.4 states the limited relation between Jung's Self and reported awareness without identifying them. Section 5.5 considers active imagination as a way of working with what survives the encounter without assuming that it recontacts the same agency or recovers inaccessible content.

5.1 What Is Reported: The Texture of the Encounter

Arthur's term *presences* is useful precisely because it does not decide what these figures are. Across several years of sessions he described figures with the attributes of ordinary people that no available category fit. During one session the word *spirits* struck him as both inaccurate and disrespectful; he thereafter preferred *presences* and *companions* (Arthur 2010, 34–35). In different reports they appear as teachers, escorts, familiar strangers, or figures associated with the transition back toward ordinary awareness. One older female presence tells Arthur that teaching him would require more time; elsewhere, skeletal figures recur near the approach of return. These are reported roles within Arthur's phenomenology, not evidence that the roles exist independently of him.

Across the wider first-person material, the important phenomenological feature is **apparent autonomy**. Presences may be experienced as already occupied with something, as responding from their own perspective, or as having been present before the experiencer noticed them. That experience of otherness can be extremely strong. But “experienced as already there” does not entail “independently existed before the experience,” just as apparent agency does not establish an independently existing agent.

The bare experience of another person or being reaches controlled attestation, though at the weaker edge of that evidence, and the finer qualities of those encounters — especially the sense that a presence was already there, occupied a recognizable role, or knew more than the experiencer did — are reported mainly within the interlinked first-person literature. They therefore carry less evidentiary weight than the occurrence of an experienced other.

Part 5 therefore begins with a narrow datum: **Salvia can produce encounters experienced as encounters with autonomous others, sometimes with recurrent or recognizable roles.** Jung provides one way of interpreting that structure. The phenomenology itself does not decide whether that apparent autonomy reflects Jungian psychic autonomy, other figures generated within a disrupted psyche, or independently existing entities.

5.2 Daemons and Dissolved Membranes: What the Jungian Framework Offers

Jung's framework places ordinary ego-consciousness within a larger psyche. He distinguishes the personal unconscious — contents once conscious but forgotten or repressed — from the collective unconscious, whose inherited structures he calls archetypes. The archetype is not itself the image encountered in experience. Jung describes it as a pre-existent form that becomes consciously manifest only when filled with particular experiential material. This is also a distinction about memory. Personal-unconscious material may be recovered as material from the individual's own history; an archetype, within Jung's framework, is inherited form rather than a forgotten personal memory.¹⁴

That distinction offers a simple interpretation of the Salvia presences. A maternal, teacherly, threatening, or guiding figure can be read as an *archetypal image*: a particular representation shaped by the experiencer while expressing a more general psychic form. This can account for structural similarity alongside variation in imagery. It does not establish that any Salvia presence is in fact archetypal; it supplies a Jungian way of reading the pattern.

Jung also describes dreams, delirium, reveries, and visions as states in which reduced conscious intensity relaxes the check on unconscious contents (Jung 1991, ¶263). The “ego membrane” is therefore this manuscript's metaphor for that constraint, not a Jungian mechanism. Salvia's disruption of autobiographical selfhood can be compared with a reduction of the ordinary check on unconscious material, but it should not be identified with it. Metzinger's self-model account and Jung's depth psychology remain different in kind: the first models how ordinary selfhood is

¹⁴ Jung 1991, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (CW9i), ¶¶88–90, 155, 262, 265. ¶88 distinguishes personal-unconscious contents that were once conscious but forgotten or repressed from collective-unconscious contents that were never individually acquired. ¶89 glosses the archetype as a pre-existent form; ¶90 states that the collective unconscious is inherited rather than individually developed and consists of such forms, which become conscious only secondarily. ¶155 gives the crystal-axis analogy and distinguishes inherited archetypal form from the experiential material through which it becomes consciously manifest. ¶262 distinguishes personal fantasy material reducible to the individual's past from impersonal material that cannot be so reduced; ¶265 states that archetypal contents do not refer to anything that is or has been conscious. The reduced-conscious-control comparison later in §5.2 is directly anchored at Jung 1991, ¶263.

constituted; the second interprets unconscious material and apparent autonomy under disrupted ego-organization. They are not interchangeable.

Jung also treats unconscious contents as capable of relative autonomy. In material quoted by Kastrup, Jung uses the language of *daemons* for relatively autonomous fragmentary personalities.¹⁵ This supplies a psychological vocabulary for why a Salvia figure may present as an intentional other rather than as a passive image.

But the interpretation stops there. **Apparent autonomy does not establish independent agency.** A figure generated within a disrupted psyche may present with the same otherness, intentionality, and already-there quality. Jung therefore provides a vocabulary in which the encounter can be taken seriously as apparently autonomous without requiring the manuscript to decide whether an independently existing entity was encountered.

5.3 Pressure Points: What Jung Does Not Settle

Jung's framework can accommodate more of the Salvia encounter than the phenomenology alone can verify. The felt presence of a genuine other therefore does not discriminate between an independently existing entity and an autonomous configuration within a disrupted psyche.

Cross-report recurrence does not settle the issue either. Similar roles — maternal figure, teacher, guide, threshold companion — can be read as expressions of shared archetypal structure. They can also arise from shared human neuropsychology, common cultural schemas, or transmission within the Salvia report ecology. The finer claims of already-there-ness and apparent trans-experiencer knowledge are not independently established strongly enough to choose among these explanations.

Cross-session familiarity inherits the memory-based defeater already developed in Section 2.2.2: state-dependent retrieval. Applied to presences, a figure encountered across several sessions may feel previously known because prior altered-state material has become accessible again, without establishing that the figure persisted independently between sessions. This bears most directly on recurrence and familiarity; it does not by itself explain a first encounter's sense that a presence was already occupied before being noticed, or similarity across different experiencers. Nor does it reach the Jungian archetype at the level of inherited form: it bears on the familiarity of a particular encountered image, not on whether archetypal form exists within Jung's framework.

Anthropomorphic form does not adjudicate among these readings. Human roles are compatible with archetypal rendering, shared neuropsychology and culture, or stronger transpersonal interpretations. A stronger transpersonal reading that posits a source not already characterized by personal form still owes an account of why that source appears anthropomorphically; the

¹⁵ Kastrup 2021, chs. 3, 6. Kastrup develops Jung's autonomous-psyche material into the language of secondary centers of consciousness and reproduces Jung's description of daemons as relatively autonomous fragmentary personalities, citing the Jung-White Letters (JWL: 70). The manuscript relies on Kastrup for that Jung-White passage rather than on a direct reading of the correspondence.

Jungian and shared-neuropsychology readings do not incur that specific burden in the same way.

Wilber's pre/trans challenge adds a further constraint. Prepersonal and transpersonal phenomena can both be nonrational and imagistically rich; the latter observation is Rowan's, quoted by Wilber.¹⁶ Ego dissolution therefore does not by itself establish that what emerges is transpersonal or transrational. Numinous figures may represent archaic or prepersonal psychic material becoming unusually vivid when ordinary organization weakens. Their felt profundity cannot decide among regression, archetypal emergence, and transpersonal encounter.

Kastrup presses in the opposite direction, reading Jung's collective unconscious in a stronger transpersonal register (Kastrup 2021); that disagreement is framework-level pressure, not additional Salvia evidence, and the ontological question belongs to Part 6.

5.4 The Jungian Self and the Limit of the Comparison

The question now shifts from the encountered figures to the experiencer. Section 4.3 left several possibilities open for the subject associated with the Salvia recognition. Jung's Self is a framework-relative candidate for only one of them: a deeper or more unified level of selfhood. It is not thereby a candidate for awareness reported during return, which that section keeps as a separate question.

For Jung, the Self is not another observing subject behind the ego. It is the totality of the psyche, conscious and unconscious, with the ego occupying only a part of that whole. Jung describes the Self as both the center and the circumference of that totality, while the ego is the center of consciousness.¹⁷ This matters because the Salvia reports concern awareness while autobiographical organization is disrupted or recovering, whereas the Jungian Self is an account of psychic totality. They are not the same kind of thing.

A comparison is nevertheless possible. Awareness reported during Salvia is not exhausted by the returning autobiographical ego, and Jung likewise treats the ego as only one part of a wider psychic organization. Under a Jungian reading, awareness under disrupted ego-organization can therefore be interpreted as experience occurring from a position not exhausted by ordinary ego-consciousness — a reading available within the framework, not evidence for it.

The evidence goes no further. Awareness is reported under disrupted or returning autobiographical organization, but calmness, neutrality, or apparent non-identification do not establish that this awareness is the Jungian Self, a deeper level of selfhood, or an independently existing subject. Nor does the record establish that awareness reported in different phases

¹⁶ Wilber 2000, *Integral Psychology*, 244–45 n.17. Wilber defines the pre/trans fallacy as the confusion of prerational and transrational phenomena, including prepersonal and transpersonal states. The observation that both can be rich in imagery is John Rowan's, quoted by Wilber. The application to Salvia and Jung here is this manuscript's.

¹⁷ Jung 1968, *Psychology and Alchemy* (CW12), ¶44; cf. ¶310. Jung defines the Self as the totality of the psyche: not only its center but the circumference embracing conscious and unconscious, while the ego is the center of consciousness.

belongs to one continuous subject. A further self-confirmation constraint established in §1.2.4 remains active: the inquirer was already trained in traditions that describe a witness or awareness as prior to ordinary content-states, so later fit with Jung's Self may partly reflect conceptual inheritance rather than independent convergence.

The same limit applies to individuation. A pharmacologically induced rupture may produce material that can be interpreted in relation to the Self, but it does not establish an encounter with the Self or the achievement of individuation. Jung's framework therefore clarifies one possible reading of reported awareness without resolving its status.

5.5 Active Imagination: Working With What Returns

Jung's active imagination provides a method for engaging unconscious material that has become available to consciousness. He compares it with the psychic dimension of alchemical work and relates it to individuation. His explicit constraint is non-identification: the figures that arise are not to be taken as the whole of oneself. The manuscript adds a second caution — not deciding in advance that the figure is nothing but fabrication — as its own methodological extension, not as Jung's formulation.¹⁸

For the Salvia case, its value is limited but clear. Images, figures, affects, or fragments that survive the rupture can become material for later psychological engagement. Active imagination does not establish that a figure encountered afterward is the same presence reported during Salvia, nor that the original presence was an independently existing agency. The later figure may be a new psychic construction organized around what remains of the experience.

The memory constraint is equally important. Salvia material that does not survive in accessible form cannot be assumed recoverable through active imagination. The practice can work with what returns; it cannot verify what failed to return. Jung's distinction adds a second limit: material from the personal unconscious may represent forgotten or repressed personal history, whereas an archetypal image need not be a recovered memory at all; it may be a new manifestation of inherited form even when its imagery incorporates autobiographical material. A later image or apparent recovery therefore cannot, by itself, establish that inaccessible Salvia content has been retrieved intact.

Active imagination consequently belongs here as an **integration method, not an epistemic bridge back into the rupture**. It allows the experiencer to work with remembered or reconstructed material while leaving the status of both the original presence and the later figure open.

¹⁸ Jung 1968, *Psychology and Alchemy* (CW12), ¶448, where the psychic dimension of alchemical work is compared with active imagination and related to individuation; ¶43 for the requirement that the practitioner not identify with the figures. The manuscript's caution against deciding in advance that a figure is nothing but fabrication is its own methodological extension, not Jung's formulation.

What Part 5 Has Established

Salvia can include encounters experienced as encounters with autonomous others. The bare occurrence of another person or being has stronger evidentiary support than the finer qualities of already-there-ness, recurrent roles, or apparent knowledge beyond the experiencer, which are reported mainly within the interlinked first-person literature. Jung's distinction between archetype and archetypal image, together with his account of autonomous psychic figures, provides a psychological framework in which this apparent autonomy can be taken seriously without treating the figures as independently existing entities.

The evidence does not decide what produces that autonomy. The same phenomenology remains compatible with archetypal or otherwise psyche-generated figures, shared human structures becoming vivid under disruption, and stronger transpersonal interpretations. Recurrence and numinosity do not adjudicate among them. Wilber's pre/trans challenge reinforces the point: the weakening of ordinary ego-organization does not by itself establish that what emerges is transpersonal rather than prepersonal or otherwise psychologically generated.

Active imagination provides a way to work with images, figures, affects, and fragments that survive the rupture. It does not establish that a later figure is the same presence reported during Salvia, and it cannot verify or recover content that left no accessible trace.

Part 5 therefore leaves its central question open: what are the presences, and what does their apparent already-there autonomy amount to? Jung gives that question a disciplined psychological vocabulary without settling whether the presences are archetypal or otherwise psyche-generated figures, expressions of shared human structure, transpersonal phenomena, or independently existing entities. The separate status of awareness remains unresolved — neither a stable metaphysical subject nor priority of awareness over restored autobiographical identity is established — and passes forward to Part 6.

For the competing explanatory programs, the evidentiary handoff is narrower than the imagery. Both must account for the controlled-level occurrence of an experienced other and for the recurrent but less securely independent finer qualities of autonomy and already-there-ness without silently upgrading those weaker features. The naturalistic program must specify how disrupted self/world modeling and memory could generate these qualities rather than merely promise that they are brain-based; consciousness-first readings must not treat apparent autonomy or cross-report resemblance as evidence of independent agencies.

PART 6: CONSCIOUSNESS, DISSOCIATION, AND THE STRUCTURE OF INDIVIDUAL MIND

Central question: *Can Kastrup's dissociative model make the Salvia rupture and return coherent without turning that coherence into evidence for the model itself?*

What This Section Does (and Does Not Do)

Parts 1 through 5 leave the ontology unresolved. The rupture and forms of return require explanation, but the status of the encountered others, awareness reported under disrupted ordinary self-organization, and the recognition remains underdetermined. Apparent autonomy does not establish independent agency, awareness does not establish a metaphysical subject, and the fine-grained structure of remembered return remains subject to retrospective organization.

Part 6 asks how these findings can be explained under Bernardo Kastrup's Analytic Idealism. In that framework, consciousness is fundamental and individual minds are modeled as dissociated perspectives within a wider field of consciousness. Applied to Salvia, one interpretation treats the rupture as a temporary reduction in dissociation and return as its reconstitution. Kastrup also distinguishes impairment of an alter's mental contents without a reduction in its dissociation (Kastrup 2019, ch. 10). Part 6 therefore asks whether the Salvia evidence distinguishes these possibilities. The reduced-dissociation reading offers a framework-conditional ontological explanation of the general form of restricted access and renewed individuation, not a Salvia-specific causal mechanism or a conclusion established by the evidence.

Part 6 therefore asks what Analytic Idealism explains at that general level, what it merely renders coherent, and what remains unresolved at the specific level of Salvia's pharmacology, memory profile, imagery, and return.

6.1 The Dissociative Model: Universal Consciousness and Individual Mind

Under Analytic Idealism, consciousness is the ontological primitive: it is taken as fundamental rather than as something produced by matter. The physical world is understood as the extrinsic appearance of processes within a universal field of consciousness — the perceptual form those underlying conscious processes take — while individual living beings are modeled as dissociated perspectives within that field, what Kastrup calls alters.¹⁹

The empirical starting point for this model is ordinary psychological dissociation: mental contents can become partitioned so that one configuration lacks access to contents available to another. A documented dissociative-identity case showed different visual-evoked responses

¹⁹ Kastrup 2019, §§8.4, 8.10, for the dissociation argument, alter ontology, and extrinsic-appearance account used in Part 6. The manuscript treats this as a framework-relative metaphysical model, not as evidence supplied by the Salvia phenomenology. Kastrup 2021 is cited separately for the Jung-rendering material and is not the source of the dissociation framework.

when sighted and reportedly blind alters were in control.²⁰ The evidence is case-level, but it shows that dissociative organization can have measurable physiological correlates. It does not establish Kastrup's ontology.

Kastrup's further move is metaphysical: he proposes that an analogous dissociative process explains why individual minds are private despite belonging, under his framework, to one universal consciousness. On this account each organism is an alter; its body is the extrinsic appearance of that alter, and brain activity is part of what its inner life looks like from across the dissociative boundary (Kastrup 2019, §§8.4, 8.10).

Kastrup also argues that some conditions in which rich experience accompanies reduced or disrupted measures of ordinary brain function are compatible with this model. He interprets such cases as possible weakening of the processes that maintain dissociation (Kastrup 2019, chs. 10–11). Other neurocognitive accounts can interpret the same observations through disinhibition, altered network organization, or related mechanisms. The salvinorin A imaging reported in §1.1 is likewise compatible with a dissociative-boundary interpretation under Analytic Idealism, but it does not establish that such a boundary actually thinned.

For the present argument, the relevant model is individual mind as a dissociated perspective. A change in its mental contents need not be a change in the dissociation that bounds it. Section 6.2 asks whether the Salvia evidence supports that stronger interpretation over impairment within an alter whose dissociative boundary remains intact.

6.2 Internal Impairment or Reduced Dissociation?

Kastrup does not expect every impairment of brain function to weaken dissociation. He argues that many, perhaps most, impairments diminish mental contents within an alter while leaving its dissociation from universal consciousness intact. Only impairments affecting the dissociative processes themselves would loosen that boundary. Within his model, the expected experiential difference is between cognitive deficit and enrichment of inner life, including reintegrated memories, a broader sense of identity, or renewed access to previously dissociated insights and emotions (Kastrup 2019, ch. 10).

Kastrup also qualifies this distinction. The precise neural correlates of the dissociative processes remain unknown, preventing accurate prediction of which impairments produce which effects. Moreover, enrichment could coexist with damage to the capacities needed to remember, describe, or reflect on it. Cognitive deficit therefore does not exclude enrichment elsewhere in the experience, and absent report cannot establish that enrichment occurred.

Applied to Salvia, the distinction gives the evidence an uneven bearing. Loss of autobiographical memory, context, identity, and orientation fits the deficit side of Kastrup's account and supplies no positive evidence, by itself, that dissociation from universal consciousness has weakened. The

²⁰ Strasburger & Waldvogel 2015, abstract and “Visual Evoked Potentials in a Sighted and Blind State,” for the absent versus normal VEPs across blind and sighted personality states and the authors’ proposed top-down gating. The article is an English translation and expansion of Waldvogel, Ullrich & Strasburger 2007. The evidence is case-level.

reports also include recognition, apparent wider significance, and experience continuing while ordinary identity is incomplete. These could motivate an enrichment interpretation, but felt familiarity or significance does not establish recovered knowledge or expanded access. Encountered presences do not establish access beyond the individual, and awareness under severe content attenuation does not by itself establish enrichment in Kastrup's sense.

Kastrup identifies an evidential difficulty within his own account: impairment must affect the processes maintaining dissociation while sufficiently preserving the capacities needed to report expanded awareness (Kastrup 2019, ch. 10). Salvia does not uniformly prevent reporting: threshold and return experiences can leave accessible accounts of changing memory, identity, and orientation. Where an interval leaves no accessible trace, however, Kastrup's requirement for reportable enrichment cannot be assessed from that interval. This limits the evidence available for boundary change without locating such a change in the unreported interval or excluding it from reportable experience. The reported losses therefore do not discriminate between internal impairment with an intact boundary and reduced dissociation accompanied by impaired reporting. The burdens nevertheless differ. The reduced-dissociation reading requires support for enrichment associated with boundary change; an inaccessible interval cannot supply that support. The internal-impairment reading does not require expanded access, but must still explain the reported losses and surviving phenomenology; the boundary's remaining intact is not independently established. This is non-discrimination with asymmetric burdens, not parity or a verdict about the whole experience.

Within the framework, the recognition I have been here before becomes coherent as potentially veridical. If the individual mind is a dissociated perspective within a wider field of consciousness, reduced dissociation could make normally inaccessible aspects of that field available. This interpretation does not imply direct access to the private contents of other alters. The recognition could then be genuine recognition rather than mis-flagged familiarity. Nothing in the Salvia evidence establishes that reading over the deflationary alternative, which can also explain recurrent structure through a shared pharmacological mechanism acting on shared neurocognitive architecture.

On the reduced-dissociation reading, return is the reconstitution of the organization that maintains ordinary individuality: renewed boundedness restores restrictions on access. On the internal-impairment reading, autobiographical memory and ordinary orientation recover within a perspective whose dissociative boundary need not have changed. The reported return makes both interpretations intelligible without distinguishing them. The first links recovery to renewed individuation; the second does not require individuation to have been interrupted.

The same interpretation offers one account of the failure-to-hold. If renewed individuation also renews the limits on access that define the individual perspective, then what became available during the disruption may become unavailable again as ordinary organization returns. This makes the loss of access coherent; it does not establish that the dissociative boundary is the actual mechanism of Salvia amnesia or that transpersonal access and ordinary memory are intrinsically incompatible.

The inward/outward distinction is phenomenological, not ontological. Inward episodes are dominated by autobiographical, developmental, or relational material. Outward episodes may present as beyond the ordinary personal field, but that does not establish transpersonal status. Wilber's pre/trans challenge remains active: weakening ordinary ego-organization does not determine whether what appears is transpersonal, prepersonal, archetypal, or otherwise psychologically generated.

Part 4 called the framework-dependent idea that ordinary bounded selfhood depends on concealment constitutive amnesia. Analytic Idealism supplies one possible rendering of that idea: if individuality is maintained by dissociation, then the return can be read as bounded access being restored along with the ordinary self. The phenomenology establishes reported loss and restoration of access. The interpretation of that return as renewed dissociation belongs to the framework.

6.3 Explanatory Scope Without Corroboration

Analytic Idealism can place several of the preceding comparisons within one consciousness-first ontology, but that unification has two limits. First, explanatory compatibility does not make the frameworks mutually confirming. Second, earlier frameworks can retain explanatory contributions that are not reducible to Kastrup's vocabulary — most notably the Śaiva pairing of concealment, contraction, recognition, and renewed differentiation.

The Bardo framework remains a comparative map of dissolution, altered experience, and renewed identification with an ordinary self-world. Under Analytic Idealism, aspects of that transit can be interpreted as changes in the organization of a dissociated individual perspective. This does not establish that Salvia produces the Tibetan technical states, that clear light is access to universal consciousness, or that Tibetan practice and Salvia affect the same mechanism. Part 3's divergences remain intact.

The Jungian framework similarly remains open. Kastrup reads Jung's collective unconscious in a stronger transpersonal register and allows apparently autonomous psychic figures to be interpreted as agencies within a wider field of mind (Kastrup 2021). That is a coherent possibility under his framework, not additional evidence about the Salvia presences. Part 5's alternatives remain live: archetypal or otherwise psyche-generated figures, shared psychological structure, and stronger transpersonal readings. Apparent autonomy does not establish independent agency. Nor does an outward movement beyond ordinary autobiographical material establish that what appears is transpersonal.

The same limit applies to reported awareness. Jung's Self and Kastrup's wider field may each provide framework-relative ways of interpreting experience that exceeds ordinary ego-consciousness; neither identifies what awareness reported during disrupted Salvia self-organization ultimately is. Section 6.4 returns to what remains open.

Finally, Analytic Idealism and Kashmir Shaivism overlap on concealment without becoming one model. If individuality is constituted through dissociation, ordinary boundedness can be understood as restricted access within universal consciousness. Śaivism contributes a different

internal structure: tirodhāna, contraction, recognition, and renewed differentiation. Because this project reached Śaivism through Kastrup, the resemblance cannot function here as independent corroboration of the dissociation model. Nor does assuming Analytic Idealism establish the Śaiva machinery. The overlap is explanatory and comparative, not evidential.

What Analytic Idealism gains here is explanatory reach, not corroboration: it makes the general form of bounded access intelligible within its ontology. Interpreting Salvia's rupture and return as reduced dissociation followed by renewed individuation requires the additional application examined in §6.2; impairment within an alter remains possible within the same framework. That reach is not independent evidence that the ontology is true, and it does not absorb the distinct explanatory work of the earlier frameworks.

6.4 What Kastrup Cannot Settle

Analytic Idealism makes a stronger interpretation of the Salvia rupture coherent, but several questions remain unresolved even if the framework is assumed.

First, it does not identify what awareness during disrupted self-organization represents. A reduction in dissociation would not tell us which configuration is doing the recognizing or observing. The alternatives already preserved remain live: a deeper or more unified form of selfhood, another configuration within psychological plurality, or an observer-like process arising during recovery. Any fine-grained structure attributed to remembered return remains subject to retrospective organization. Kastrup's ontology does not distinguish among these possibilities.

Second, it does not explain why Salvia's re-enclosure — the felt reassertion of the ordinary self-world — can be so severe. The framework explains the general form of renewed boundedness if dissociation is assumed, but not why this compound produces such discontinuity or why recovery can feel imposed and continuity-laden. Those questions likely depend in part on Salvia's particular neuropharmacology and on memory, self-modeling, and large-scale organization. Cross-substance comparison and prospective return-phase study can test that local structure. Specifying the mechanism would explain an important feature of the state without by itself deciding the underlying metaphysics.

Third, it does not settle what the recognition is a recognition of. Under the reduced-dissociation interpretation, *I have been here before* can be read as recognition of a wider field of consciousness or, more conservatively, as familiarity with a recurrent structural condition associated with weakened individuation. Section 6.2 preserves another possibility within Idealism: altered memory and familiarity within an individual perspective whose dissociative boundary remains intact. The phenomenology does not discriminate among these interpretations. Shared pharmacology acting on shared neurocognitive architecture may contribute to recognition and its recurrent form without deciding the ontology.

When the stronger veridical Idealist reading is compared with the deflationary account, the evidence still does not decide between them, but they are not methodologically symmetrical: they differ in how directly empirical findings could show them to be wrong. The deflationary

account can be specified in ways that expose it to empirical failure: κ -opioid mechanisms can be investigated, fine-grained return structure can be tested prospectively, and cross-substance comparisons can probe the specificity of the re-enclosure. The veridical Idealist reading of the recognition is less directly exposed to such tests; at this specific locus, its strength lies primarily in coherence and accommodation.

For that reason, the deflationary account retains the stronger claim to working-hypothesis status for the recognition itself. This does not settle the metaphysics. A successful neurocognitive explanation would not by itself refute Analytic Idealism; within Kastrup's framework, the identified neural process could be interpreted as the extrinsic appearance of changes within an alter, without establishing a change in its dissociative boundary. But such an explanation would reduce the need to invoke a stronger veridical reading. If a specified mechanism accounted for the recognition's form and certainty without remainder, the Idealist reading would remain coherent while losing evidential force at that specific locus.

The felt sense that re-enclosure is actively arranged remains similarly underdetermined. Analytic Idealism can explain, within its ontology, why renewed individuality would restore restricted access; Kashmir Shaivism can frame the same locus through concealment and renewed differentiation. Neither thereby explains the Salvia-specific felt imposition. A naturalistic account may explain that texture through reconstruction, salience, and memory dynamics, but remains incomplete until a specified mechanism accounts for why recovery can feel like imposed restoration rather than simple return. Coherence is not evidence on the consciousness-first side; promissory mechanism-language is not evidence on the naturalistic side.

Overall, the choice between interpretations remains underdetermined. But at the recognition locus the evidential burdens are asymmetric: Analytic Idealism makes the stronger reading coherent, while the deflationary account presently has the better claim to status as a testable working hypothesis. Neither result establishes a metaphysics.

What Part 6 Has Established

Part 6 establishes a limited framework-conditional result. Under Analytic Idealism, dissociation and localization explain the general form of an individual perspective's restricted access. If Salvia reduces that dissociation, return can be interpreted as renewed boundedness, making the loss of access intelligible within the framework and leaving open a veridical interpretation of recognition. But Kastrup also allows impairment within an alter whose dissociative boundary remains intact, and the present Salvia evidence does not distinguish that possibility from boundary loosening. The reduced-dissociation reading therefore requires an additional claim about what Salvia does, not merely acceptance of Idealism. Neither interpretation establishes a Salvia-specific mechanism, contact with universal consciousness, independent presences, or the identity of reported awareness with universal consciousness.

The empirical reality of psychological dissociation and the available neuroimaging are compatible with the model but do not establish its ontological extension. Nor does Analytic Idealism's compatibility with the Bardo, Jungian, Gnostic, or Śaiva comparisons independently

corroborate it. At the specific locus of the recognition, the deflationary reading retains the stronger claim to status as a testable working hypothesis without thereby settling the larger metaphysical question.

The central result survives either way: the Salvia return can make the loss and restoration of autobiographical and contextual access phenomenologically noticeable through remembering and reorientation. Part 7 now compares what the naturalistic and consciousness-first programs actually explain at the principal loci, where each remains promissory, and what evidence could discriminate. What that loss and restoration ultimately signifies remains unresolved.

PART 7: INTEGRATION AND EPISTEMIC STAKES

Central question: *What do you do with this? How do you live after having repeatedly seen something you cannot keep seeing?*

7.1 The Integration Problem

Contemporary psychedelic integration models extend beyond psychotherapy alone and often treat integration as a long-term process across multiple domains of life (Bathje et al. 2022).

The Salvia record presents a narrower difficulty within that larger problem. What requires integration is not only unusual content. Repeated return phases have included reports of autobiographical identity and ordinary world-orientation becoming available again through remembering and reorientation. The disturbance therefore reaches background assumptions about self and world rather than content alone: assumptions normally taken for granted — that the world is stable and that one's identity persists continuously through time — can become objects of doubt.

This is the narrower sense in which I have sometimes used the word broken. I do not mean damaged, nor do I use the word as a clinical diagnosis. Ordinary biography remains intact and ordinary functioning continues. What has changed is the prior transparency of that continuity: after repeatedly experiencing identity and world-orientation as becoming unavailable and then available again through remembering and reorientation, I can no longer inhabit them with quite the same unexamined certainty.

That description also requires restraint. Broken may dramatize the experience and grant it more significance than the phenomenology alone warrants. A change in one's relationship to self and continuity need not be understood as damage, and other people may undergo comparable shifts without describing them this way.

The repeated pattern in my own record — recognition, loss of deeper content, and restoration of ordinary identity — is what I have called the cosmic joke. The recurrence of recognition, amnesia, and forms of return is supported beyond my own accounts, but the cosmic joke is my interpretation of what that recurrence means and feels like. It may name irony, tragedy, or simply the affective tension between recognition and re-enclosure. The label is not evidence for any explanation of the loop.

The integration problem is therefore not that the experience cannot be integrated at all. It is that integration cannot simply mean restoring the assumptions that preceded it. The task is to live with an altered relationship to ordinary continuity while leaving unresolved what the rupture ultimately disclosed. That requires neither denying the experience nor converting its felt authority into metaphysical certainty.

7.1.1 Difficult Integration and the Negative Corpus

The corpus used in this manuscript necessarily favors people who were able to organize the Salvia rupture retrospectively into coherent phenomenological or interpretive language. That

creates a selection bias. Reports of prolonged anxiety, derealization, intrusive rumination, psychotic elaboration, and difficulty returning to ordinary life must therefore remain part of the evidentiary picture.

This problem is not unique to Salvia. Argyri and Evans describe ontologically challenging psychedelic experiences as disruptions of basic assumptions about reality, existence, and self rather than as a diagnostic category. Some individuals later integrate such disruptions constructively; others report prolonged existential uncertainty, derealization, social disconnection, or functional impairment (Argyri and Evans 2026).

The Salvia literature contains its own negative corpus. The Erowid archives include 144 reports categorized as “Bad Trips” and 31 as “Train Wrecks & Trip Disasters.”²¹ Doss et al. and Addy et al. document depersonalization, derealization, amnesia, loss of ordinary self/world awareness, and incapacitating or difficult acute phenomenology under controlled and qualitative conditions. Baggott’s survey of 500 users reports 25.8% lasting positive effects beyond 24 hours and 4.4% persisting negative effects, most often anxiety; psychotic presentations reported by El-Khoury and Sahakian remain causally unresolved.²² These cases establish that coherence or positive meaning-making cannot be treated as the default outcome of rupture.

One third-party report describes the long-arc version directly: continuing difficulty relating to memory, past, and identity — a “splinter in the mind” that could be neither removed nor integrated.²³ This is one retrospective self-report, useful for the texture of difficult aftermath rather than for establishing a distinct mechanism.

None of this establishes that the finer structure emphasized elsewhere in this manuscript — recognition, awareness during return, or differentiated remembering and reorientation — recurs in difficult-integration cases, because that corpus has not been coded for those features.

This distinction matters epistemologically. An experience may be epistemically significant because it disrupts previous assumptions without producing an epistemic benefit, such as a more accurate or less opaque understanding. And either may occur without practical benefit in the person’s subsequent life. Difficult-integration cases therefore prevent the manuscript from

²¹ Erowid Experience Vaults: Salvia divinorum (Erowid Center, n.d.), https://www.erowid.org/experiences/subs/exp_Salvia_divinorum.shtml, with “Bad Trips” at https://www.erowid.org/experiences/subs/exp_Salvia_divinorum_Bad_Trips.shtml and “Train Wrecks & Trip Disasters” at https://www.erowid.org/experiences/subs/exp_Salvia_divinorum_Train_Wrecks_Trip_Disasters.shtml. Category counts are as indexed on June 24, 2026; the vault is a living archive and totals shift over time.

²² Doss et al. 2020 and Addy et al. 2015 support the acute-severity portion of §7.1.1; Baggott et al. 2010 supplies the survey figures for persisting effects; El-Khoury & Sahakian 2015 reports a review and two cases and treats a Salvia–psychosis association as a hypothesis requiring further research. These sources are not evidentially equivalent and are not cited as establishing a common mechanism or causal pathway.

²³ Cumberland aftermath case: Hubert Cumberland (Erowid pseudonym), “Goodbye Reality, Goodbye Universe” (Nov. 26, 2011; exp86484), long-term-aftermath portion — trouble relating to memory, past, and identity, and a “splinter in the mind” sense that reality was not what it had seemed. Single pseudonymous retrospective self-report; used here for the texture of difficult aftermath, not mechanism or metaphysical claim.

treating phenomenological intensity, felt revelation, or lasting impact as evidence of either truth or benefit.

What determines whether rupture becomes coherent integration, prolonged destabilization, or something between them is not established by the present record.

7.2 Memory, Continuity, and the Returning Self

Part 1 established that some Salvia returns make changes in autobiographical memory and ordinary orientation phenomenologically noticeable. Reports include sudden remembered availability and gradual reorientation, while the §2.2.3 retrospective-return constraints remain active. This section concerns the consequences of that loss and restoration of access, not its fine-grained recovery structure or ultimate cause.

Arthur supplies the same broader pressure on continuity's transparency. He reports episodes in which ordinary autobiographical identity becomes unavailable while experience continues and then returns as remembering; he also describes memories whose accessibility changes with state, becoming unavailable in ordinary awareness and recoverable again on re-entry into the altered state (Arthur 2010, 27–29, 61). These reports do not show that memory creates personal continuity. They show that access to the autobiographical self can vary sharply by state, and that its loss and restoration can themselves become phenomenologically noticeable.

The consequence is not that ordinary biography becomes false. What changes is its transparency. After repeatedly experiencing autobiographical identity as unavailable and then returning through remembering, continuity can no longer be taken quite as automatically as an uninterrupted given. It can also be experienced as something actively maintained and restored.

The record also suggests that recovery of autobiographical identity and recovery of ordinary world-orientation can be phenomenologically distinguishable, though it does not establish separate mechanisms.

That is a phenomenological change in stance, not a metaphysical conclusion. The Salvia record does not establish that personal continuity is merely an illusion, that memory creates rather than preserves continuity, or that awareness exists independently of the processes that sustain autobiographical selfhood. It establishes something narrower: during the return, processes ordinarily experienced only in their completed form were reported while still becoming available again.

One episode makes that distinction especially clear. During a return in which the kitchen renovation from ordinary life was becoming available again, I attempted to substitute the memory that the kitchen was already finished. The record does not preserve whether the attempt succeeded. What survives is the experience that memory and ordinary reality were not yet fully settled, strongly enough that alteration seemed possible from within the return. The

datum is therefore experienced malleability, not demonstrated malleability. The missing outcome prevents the stronger claim.

The same episode also reinforces the retrospective-segmentation constraint. If the return was experienced as sufficiently unsettled for a counter-memory attempt to occur, remembered differentiation during that phase cannot simply be assumed to reproduce the underlying recovery accurately. One terminological distinction should also remain clear. The return-phase feeling recorded elsewhere as I broke something is not the same claim as the later use of broken in §7.1. The former is an immediate affect of culpability during re-entry; the latter names a lasting change in the experiencer's relationship to ordinary continuity. They share a word but should not be treated as evidence for one another.

What, then, holds personal continuity together? The manuscript cannot answer that question from the Salvia record. Buddhist, Jungian, and Idealist frameworks give different answers, but choosing among them would simply reopen the metaphysical contest already left unresolved. What the record establishes is more modest: ordinary continuity returns, remains functionally effective, and can afterward be experienced with less transparency than before.

7.3 The Practice Question

The contemplative comparisons in this manuscript repeatedly distinguish transient recognition from stable realization. Recognition-stability is the capacity, within a particular contemplative framework, to recognize and remain with what that framework identifies as fundamental. Integration despite instability is different: it is the problem developed in §7.1 of living coherently after an experience whose significance remains unresolved and whose recognition cannot reliably be retained. A practice might bear on both problems, but they should not be treated as the same goal.

The Tibetan comparison is useful precisely because Wangyal treats stability as something cultivated rather than granted by a single experience. Dream yoga develops recognition amid appearances; sleep yoga addresses presence in clear-light sleep; and the foundational dream-yoga practices operate through ordinary waking life rather than through repeated production of an exceptional state (Wangyal 1998).

The limit is equally important. Wangyal does not identify the Salvia rupture as a condition his practices are designed to stabilize, and the manuscript has not established that awareness reported under disrupted Salvia self-organization, Arthur's thought-free awareness, Account 14's remembered "nothingness," objectless clear-light sleep, or rigpa are technically identical. Arthur's reports and Account 14 both motivate a bounded comparison at the level of severe content attenuation, but their different retrospective vocabularies do not establish that either is a closer match to Wangyal's technical condition. The traditional practice can therefore show what stabilization means within its own framework; it cannot establish that the same practice would stabilize the Salvia phenomenon.

The same restraint applies across the manuscript's other traditions. Advaita's viveka and Wangyal's zhiné and dream-yoga practices are not variants of one method; the divergence is part of the framework asymmetry, and the Salvia rupture cannot decide among them.

There is also no need to solve the question who trains? by identifying the practicing autobiographical self with awareness reported during return. In practice, these disciplines are undertaken by the ordinary person who can intend, remember, and repeat them. Whether such practice changes the conditions under which a later Salvia recognition occurs is an empirical question. Awareness reported while autobiographical identity is incomplete does not establish a separate metaphysical subject or settle how the relevant processes are related.

The comparison is temporally asymmetric. These traditions largely describe cultivation toward greater stability; this section asks what follows after repeated rupture has already occurred without that preparation. At the time of writing, I have not undertaken any of these disciplines in the sustained form their traditions require. Naming or studying them does not establish their effects in my own case.

The traditions offer disciplined comparative models of what stabilization can mean; they do not establish which practice, if any, is appropriate to the Salvia rupture, nor whether contemplative training would alter its recognition, retention, or return.

7.4 The Epistemological Stakes

The manuscript began with a narrow epistemological question. At the end, the more practical question is what has actually been explained. The strongest finding remains phenomenological: Salvia can make the loss and restoration of autobiographical and contextual access noticeable as memory, context, identity, embodiment, and ordinary world-orientation become unavailable and later return through remembering and reorientation. Arthur had already described ordinary biography becoming unavailable and returning as remembering, and later described the customary mode gradually “returning to form” (Arthur 2010, 27–29, 121). The contribution developed here is to grade that phenomenon across sources, distinguish reported loss and restoration from the fine-grained structure of recovery, and ask what competing explanations actually account for.

The explanations operate at different levels. The naturalistic program asks for causal and cognitive mechanisms: salvinorin A supplies the known κ -opioid disturbance; Metzinger supplies a model of ordinary selfhood as a transparent phenomenal construction; and state-dependent retrieval, encoding failure, reconstructive memory, and retrospective binding supply ways in which access can disappear and return. Letheby bears on epistemic significance rather than Salvia-specific mechanism. The consciousness-first program asks a framework-conditional ontological question: under Analytic Idealism, could restricted access itself be a consequence of dissociative individuation, with return marking renewed boundedness? Kashmir Shaivism contributes a related but non-identical structure of

concealment, contraction, recognition, and renewed differentiation. These programs are not methodologically symmetrical and need not receive equal verdicts at every locus.

The first locus is the recognition I have been here before. Its felt quality is remembering rather than inference, and that noetic force is phenomenologically real. But it does not establish that what is recognized is true. The naturalistic program has several specified footholds: salvinorin A impairs recall and recognition memory; Arthur reports state-dependent retrieval in which altered-state material becomes accessible again on re-entry; Metzinger's Epistemicity distinction shows that the phenomenal quality of knowing can occur without knowledge in the epistemological sense. Together these mechanisms can explain why recurrent familiarity need not imply contact with an independently persistent domain. They do not yet specify a Salvia-specific mechanism for the full reality-status, timeless continuity, or already-there quality of the recognition. The possibility that disrupted recognition processing gives the emerging field its familiarity therefore remains a hypothesis rather than a demonstrated mechanism.

Under the reduced-dissociation interpretation, the recognition can be read more strongly: temporary weakening of the boundary constituting an individual perspective could make normally unavailable material accessible. This is a framework-conditional interpretation, not independent evidence that universal consciousness was contacted. But §6.2 distinguishes this from impairment within an alter whose dissociative boundary remains intact. Accepting Analytic Idealism does not select the stronger application, and felt recognition does not establish the enrichment that Kastrup associates with reduced dissociation. At this locus the evidentiary asymmetry established in Part 6 remains: the naturalistic account has the stronger claim to working-hypothesis status because its mechanisms can be specified and exposed to empirical failure. A successful naturalistic account would not by itself refute Analytic Idealism, but it would reduce the evidential need for the stronger veridical reading.

The second locus is the arranged feeling of return. Some reports present re-enclosure transitively: the ordinary self-world seems to be put back, and continuity can arrive with an always-having-been-the-case texture. The evidentiary footing is weaker than the coarse rupture, amnesia, and differentiated return. On a naturalistic reading, Arthur's description of automatic "returning to form" supplies a non-agentive description of recovery, while reconstructive memory, contrast-shock, and κ -opioid-shaped affective salience supply plausible contributors. But an account that merely says the brain reconstructed the ordinary world has not yet explained why that reconstruction can feel imposed or why continuity appears restored rather than merely resumed. That is a promissory burden, not a delivered mechanism.

As §6.4 established, Analytic Idealism explains a different aspect of the same locus: if renewed individuation restores the access limits constitutive of a bounded perspective, then loss of access on return is intelligible within the framework. Kashmir Shaivism adds the structure of *tirodhāna* and renewed differentiation, making concealment non-adversarial without making it accidental. Neither account, however, derives the Salvia-specific felt imposition from its general ontology. The compressed Gnostic pole remains useful precisely because it preserves the surface grammar most literally: something is doing the putting back. Its literal fit is not evidential preference. The

arranged feeling therefore remains a place where each program explains part of the structure and none yet explains the whole.

The third locus is amnesia and the failure-to-hold. Here the naturalistic program is strongest. Memory impairment under salvinorin A is empirically established; Arthur describes state-dependent retrieval; Metzinger's MPE work supplies a model in which autobiographical encoding can be suspended in absorbed states; anesthesia research shows that connected consciousness and later explicit recall can dissociate; and reconstructive memory gives a principled reason to distrust fine-grained retrospective reconstruction of recovery. These findings do not prove one Salvia memory mechanism, but together they explain why experience, retention, and later report can come apart without invoking constitutive metaphysical forgetting.

The reduced-dissociation reading addresses a different level. If Salvia weakens the dissociation constituting the individual perspective, its restoration could make material available during the rupture inaccessible again. This explains the general form of renewed restricted access conditional on both the ontology and that application to Salvia. That conditional explanation does not explain the specific memory impairment produced by salvinorin A. Under the internal-impairment alternative, ordinary memory and orientation recover within an alter whose boundary need not have changed. The loss and restoration of autobiographical access alone do not establish interrupted individuation. Neither interpretation should displace the better-supported local account of memory impairment. Session amnesia remains empirically grounded; constitutive amnesia remains a framework-level proposal.

The fourth locus is awareness during return. Reports from this record and Arthur describe awareness or observation while ordinary autobiographical identity is incomplete. Phenomenologically, that matters because changes in autobiographical access can be reported before ordinary continuity feels fully restored. It does not establish that awareness was causally, temporally, or metaphysically prior to the returning self. A naturalistic account can model an observer-like or minimal-awareness process becoming available while the autobiographical self-model remains incomplete. Advaita, Jung, Kashmir Shaivism, and Analytic Idealism can give stronger framework-relative interpretations. The retrospective-registration, segmentation, and priority constraints remain active in all directions: a report of noticing may be organized in later recall, a process arising during recovery could later be represented as having preceded the autobiographical self, and a more continuous recovery could be remembered as discrete moments of absence and sudden availability. Prospective, near-immediate study could improve evidence about contemporaneous noticing, differentiation, and priority; the present record cannot settle continuity or priority.

The fifth locus is the presences. The bare experience of another person or being reaches controlled attestation, although at the weaker edge of that evidence. The finer features — already-there quality, recurrent roles, apparent autonomy, and apparent knowledge beyond the experiencer — rely more heavily on interlinked first-person corpora. Jung gives the strongest developed psychological account in the manuscript: reduced ego-organization can permit relatively autonomous unconscious contents and archetypal images to appear as intentional

others. State-dependent retrieval can also weaken persistence inferences from repeated familiarity. Naturalistic accounts of disrupted self/world modeling and shared neuropsychology remain plausible, but the manuscript does not currently possess a specified Salvia mechanism that fully explains the first-encounter already-occupied quality. Consciousness-first interpretations can allow stronger transpersonal possibilities, but apparent autonomy and recurrence do not establish independent agency. The evidentiary grading therefore limits how much any program is required to explain.

Letheby's naturalistic epistemology changes the significance of this competition without supplying a Salvia mechanism. He argues that psychedelic states can provide knowledge by acquaintance with the contingency, constructedness, and mutability of the ordinary sense of self, in part through phenomenal opacity: self-representation can become experienced as representation rather than transparently as reality (Letheby 2021, 179–184). Salvia differs pharmacologically from the serotonergic psychedelics around which much of that discussion is developed, so REBUS or other 5-HT_{2A} mechanisms are not transferred here. The representational point is narrower. For phenomenal opacity to contribute to reportable epistemic benefit, some access to the relevant alteration must survive or become recoverable during return. Salvia's amnesia may therefore confine much of the usable Letheby-style benefit to the return phase even if opacity occurred earlier and was not retained. Section 7.1.1 prevents treating such benefit as automatic.

William James remains useful as a classifier of the noetic texture rather than as corroboration. His marks of noetic quality, transiency, and passivity describe aspects of the Salvia recognition, and his nitrous-oxide reports provide a structural analogue for propositional content fading while a strong sense that something significant was known remains. The manuscript therefore distinguishes a felt-sense trace — the residue that something happened — from felt knowing, in which acquaintance or knowledge seems to remain despite unavailable content. Felt knowing is phenomenologically stronger than a bare trace but not thereby epistemically warranted; the present record cannot distinguish preserved acquaintance from a reconstructed noetic tag.

The reportability limit governs all five loci. Greater disruption does not automatically yield stronger evidence; in that epistemic sense, the dosing question is one of access rather than depth. Once memory and reportability collapse, additional depth leaves less examinable material. The epistemically productive portion of the rupture is the portion from which some trace survives, especially the return phase, in which the apparatus of reporting has partly resumed while changes in its own availability may still be noticed. What occurs beyond the reportability horizon cannot be positively characterized from this record. Recurrence does not remove that limit: similarities across sessions may reflect a stable underlying phenomenon, but they may also reflect shared pharmacology, state-dependent retrieval, common human architecture, cultural transmission, or similarities in how the returning apparatus reconstructs poorly retained states. Nor do inward and outward episodes corroborate one another merely because they occur under the same drug.

The resulting adjudication is deliberately uneven. Naturalistic explanation is strongest where Salvia-specific pharmacology and memory science directly address amnesia, self-disruption, and reconstructive return. It is weaker where the manuscript has only promissory accounts of the arranged feeling, the full recognition texture, or the finer qualities of presences. Analytic Idealism provides a genuine framework-conditional explanation of the general form of restricted access and renewed individuation, but not the Salvia-specific severity, timing, imagery, or memory profile. Kashmir Shaivism contributes explanatory structure around concealment, contraction, recognition, and renewed differentiation without serving as independent corroboration of Kastrup in this project's evidentiary genealogy. Jung and the Tibetan materials illuminate narrower psychological and transitional problems without being absorbed into either program. The main discriminating evidence would come from prospective return-phase sampling, tests of Salvia-specific familiarity distortion and state-dependent retrieval, and cross-substance comparison of the already-there and re-enclosure textures. The present manuscript does not possess those results.

The manuscript therefore ends with a division of explanatory labor rather than a metaphysical verdict. Some mechanisms are empirically specified, some models explain the general form only, some comparisons sharpen what an adequate explanation must account for, and some features remain genuinely unresolved. The Salvia return can make the loss and restoration of autobiographical and contextual access phenomenologically noticeable; recognition can carry extraordinary felt authority while remaining underdetermined; and the deepest material remains bounded by failure of reportability. What the experience ultimately is remains open.

That limit does not make the experience inert. It can alter the transparency with which ordinary continuity is subsequently inhabited without telling the experiencer what metaphysics to adopt. The epistemic achievement is not metaphysical certainty but a more disciplined view of what became visible, what has been explained, and what still has not.

Appendix: Glossary of Key Technical Terms

Terms are listed by the framework in which they originate. A full glossary appears in the project's working files; this appendix includes only terms that recur across multiple parts of the manuscript.

TIBETAN BUDDHISM

Bardo — "between" or intermediate state. In the six-bardo scheme used in Part 3, the three post-mortem bardos — death-point, reality, and existence — sit alongside the bardos of life, dream, and meditation. The manuscript uses the post-mortem sequence comparatively; it does not claim that Salvia reproduces a canonical Tibetan sequence.

Chikhai bardo — the death-point or clear-light bardo. Part 3 uses it as a comparator for dissolution and death-point clear-light recognition; it does not identify Salvia onset with this bardo.

Chönyid bardo — the reality bardo, associated with visionary experience and, in the Bardo Thödol, the specific iconography of peaceful and wrathful deities. Part 3 compares some encounter-rich Salvia material with this structural role without asserting identity of content, sequence, or ontology.

Sidpa bardo — the bardo of becoming or existence. Within the post-mortem framework, renewed identification with the conventional self culminates in rebirth. Part 3 compares this only with re-formation and renewed identification during Salvia return; the Salvia subject returns to the same body and biography, so the comparison stops short of traditional sidpa.

Rigpa — in Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Bön/Dzogchen presentation, the nature of mind (Wangyal 1998). Thoughts, images, emotions, and apparent subject and object arise in it without affecting its nature; with developed stability, thought can arise and dissolve without obscuring it. In this manuscript, rigpa supplies the broader framework within which the objectless clear light of sleep is used as a bounded comparator for Arthur's thought-free-awareness reports and Account 14's remembered "nothingness"; it does not itself name either Salvia condition. See Clear light.

Clear light — Wangyal distinguishes the natural clear light of waking life from the clear lights of sleep, samadhi, and death, associating them respectively with external appearances, dream, thought, and bardo visions as obstacles to maintaining presence; they are parallel clear-light contexts, not identical conditions (Wangyal 1998). In sleep practice, neither subject nor object is present. This objectless condition provides a bounded tradition-specific comparator for Arthur's thought-free-awareness reports and Account 14's remembered "nothingness"; neither Salvia report establishes that Wangyal's technical condition occurred. Thurman renders the death-point instruction as recognition of one's own naked awareness as the clear light

(Padmasambhava 1994); whether that English rendering translates *rig pa* is not established here.

Zhiné (also: *calm abiding*, *shamatha*) — foundational meditation practice; stabilization of attention on an object, the substrate for all further contemplative development.

ADVAITA VEDANTA / KASHMIR SHAIIVISM

Pratyabhijñā — recognition of one's own nature within Kashmir Shaivism. Part 4 uses it as a framework-relative interpretation, not as a name for the reported memorial recognition I have been here before. The comparison does not establish that traditional recognition occurred.

Tirodhāna — the fourth act of Śiva; concealment; the necessary self-limitation by which universal consciousness manifests as a particular embodied locus. Part 4 uses it as a non-adversarial framework-conditional account of concealment and finite individuation.

Anugraha — the fifth act of Śiva; grace, self-revelation; the same gesture as *tirodhāna* seen from its other aspect. If *tirodhāna* is the concealment, *anugraha* is its lifting — built into the same structure.

Viveka — sustained discrimination of Self from not-Self; the foundational Advaita practice.

Jivanmukti — liberation while living, achieved through sustained *viveka* rather than through death.

Sākṣin — the witness; the awareness that observes all mental contents without being identical with them.

Turiya — (Advaita Vedanta; *turya* in Kashmir Śaivism) the fourth state: the witnessing principle that underlies waking, dream, and deep sleep. Not a state to be entered but the ground in which all states occur.

GNOSTIC TRADITION

Anamnesis — un-forgetting; recollection not of a past event but of what was always the case. In the Platonic original: recollection of the Forms. In Gnostic use: recollection of the pneumatic self's origin in the Pleroma. In this manuscript's two-amnesia vocabulary: under the veil readings, anamnesis names the brief failure of the constitutive amnesia — not a recovery from the session amnesia (see *Constitutive amnesia*; *Session amnesia*).

Archon — (Greek: ruler) the ignorant or adversarial lower powers who administer the material world in Gnostic cosmology. In the manuscript: the name for whatever maintains the ordinary forgetting if that forgetting is adversarially structured.

Demiurge (also: Yaldabaoth) — the craftsman-god of Gnostic cosmology who fashions the material world in ignorance of the higher Aeons, producing an inferior world and boasting "I am god and there is no other god beside me."

Kenoma — the void or deficiency; the realm below the Pleroma where the Demiurge and Archons operate.

Pleroma — the fullness; the divine realm from which the pneumatic sparks descend and toward which gnosis is the return.

Pneuma — spirit; the divine spark within the pneumatic human that is capable of gnosis and return.

ANALYTIC IDEALISM (KASTRUP)

Alter — a localized, bounded configuration of universal consciousness; what individual minds are under Kastrup's framework. The biological body is what an alter looks like from outside the dissociative boundary.

Dissociation — in Kastrup's ontological use: the primary mechanism by which universal consciousness manifests as individual minds. Not pathological but structural; the partition that allows particular consciousness to exist as particular.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL / STRUCTURAL TERMS

The non-reportable interval (the reportability horizon) — the limit at which no accessible trace survives for the returning personal-I. The cause is indeterminate — awareness may have lapsed, may have continued without leaving an accessible trace, or may have left a trace that remains inaccessible; the blank does not decide which. This is an epistemic limit on retrospective access, not a positively characterized phenomenological state and not a claim that the interval is metaphysically deeper than reportable low-content conditions.

Tether — the reported pull back toward the body and biographical structure. Attested across the assembled corpus as the pull itself; its specific association with remembered calm "nothingness," awareness of that nothingness, and the return of ordinary identity belongs to Account 14 alone and is retained as retrospective phenomenology rather than proof of a fine-grained recovery chronology.

Felt-sense trace — the somatic or pre-cognitive residue of having-been-in-the-state; what persists when propositional memory does not. Distinct from retrievable narrative content; points at something without specifying what.

Reportability threshold — the region in which ordinary self-organization is disrupted while enough continuity remains for aspects of that disruption or return to be observed and later reported. It is epistemically productive because some bridge to later report remains; it is not a numbered stage, a metaphysical boundary, or a fixed point every Salvia session passes through.

Constitutive amnesia (the veil) — the framework-level proposal, made in different forms by Gnostic, Śaiva, and Idealist readings, that ordinary bounded selfhood involves an ongoing concealment or restriction of access which the rupture may temporarily loosen. It is an interpretive object, not a phenomenological given. Part 4 compares adversarial and Śaiva readings with the naturalistic alternative rather than treating constitutive amnesia as established. Under Analytic Idealism, dissociative individuation supplies one process reading; its resumption can be interpreted as renewed bounded access. This does not replace the empirically grounded session amnesia. Working-file alias: Type 1.

Felt knowing — a reported sense of direct acquaintance with what was recognized, persisting in the re-formed self without stateable content; noetic rather than indexical. Distinct from the *felt-sense trace*, which marks that something happened without knowledge of what. Bounded twice: it does not remove the veil (the knowing and the forgetting coexist in the returned self), and a deflationary reading — a post-hoc confabulated noetic tag — cannot be excluded. See Part 7.4.

Session amnesia (encoding, retrieval, and translation failure) — the layered, session-level failure to encode, retrieve, and translate what occurred in the state: the overlapping descriptions of unavailable memory of entry, the altered experience, and return mapped in Part 1 and examined in Part 2 through constraints on memory, retrieval, and reportability. Produced by the rupture; pharmacological in origin; established phenomenology. The body holds open whether encoding ceased, occurred in another register, or left a trace inaccessible on return. Variable in the manner of dream recall — amount of recall is not a measure of a session's depth. Working-file alias: Type 2.

This glossary covers recurring terms only. First definitions appear in the body at the point where each framework is introduced.

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Revision note

September 24, 2026 — Corrected the reporting of Doss et al. (2020) in §1.1 and note 2.