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Grace Unfolding: Self-transformation as a Sacred, Trangressive Art of Listening to the Inner Voice - A Jungian Perspective

by

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This research inquiry is an autobiographical exploration and elucidation of the lived-experience of Self-Transformation; Self-transformation connoting a comprehensive framework that comprises personal, professional, social and spiritual renewal. The study emphasizes a mind-body-spirit holism as the *whole* experiential reality of the person is considered. Thus, transformation is viewed as a *psycho-spiritual* process. An integral aspect of the transformation process is listening to the *inner voice*, “the voice of a fuller life, of a wider more comprehensive consciousness” (Jung, 1954. p. 184). The degree to which the transformation process ripens and the integration of the personality realized, seems directly contingent on the conscious listening to and actual follow through on the guidance of the inner voice (Assagioli, 1965; Jung, 1954; Sinetar, 1986; Luke, 1984).

As an autobiographical inquiry, lived-experience refers to the actual *living-ness* of experience: becoming, indwelling, the heuristics of experience. It is about floundering in the flux, living the paradox of knowing that one does not know yet yielding into the flux and the ambiguity inherent in experiencing the phenomenon and conducting the inquiry.

The analytical psychology of C.G. Jung (Collected Works, 1953 - 1979) is used as the main theoretical framework in which to ground a psychology of transformation. The phenomenon of Self-transformation is termed the process of individuation (Jung, 1959), spiritual psychosynthesis or Self-realization (Assagioli, 1965), and spiritual emergence (Grof and Grof, 1989). Individuation is viewed as an evolutionary growth process. As a lifelong existential project, it entails undergoing several *rounds* on the transformation spiral - ongoing, punctuated episodes of personal transition and psychological shifts in

consciousness, in which we go through the process of passage between one life phase and the next in a cyclical pattern of death and rebirth (Bridges, 1980). Sharp (1991) says that individuation is a process of psychological differentiation informed by the archetypal ideal of wholeness, the Self, which relies on an vital relationship between the ego and the unconscious; the goal being the development of the *in-dividual* personality. Jung (1966) viewed individuation as an internal, subjective process of integration *and* a process of self-and-collective synergy. The synthesis of both these processes constitutes wholeness.

How this process manifests as lived-experience is the focus of this inquiry. The phenomenon is elucidated by employing and blending two modes of inquiry, heuristics (Moustakas, 1990) and autobiography as in Allport's (1942) idiographic research, both components of a qualitative (interpretive) methodology. The six phases of heuristic research, (initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis), are naturally operative within the transformation process and are used to describe the unfolding of the inquiry process *and* the lived-experience, and as the means for data collection and analysis. Analysis of the autobiographic data revealed the following salient features of the transformation process - a renaissance call to wholeness (premonition phase), light bows to darkness (holistic disintegration), the unformed silence (excursion into the abyss), awakening of the heart (illumination and initiation into rebirth), and return to innocence (a second dark night of the soul and a deeper integrative synthesis). These stages entail overlapping and divergent psychological processes that illuminate a unique pattern inherent in the renewal process. Implications for professional practice, education and research are discussed, including a call for a broader conceptual framework that encompasses the spiritual as integral to the healing and educating of lives.

Examiners:

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**GRACE UNFOLDING: SELF-TRANSFORMATION AS A
SACRED, TRANSGRESSIVE ART OF LISTENING TO
THE INNER VOICE - A JUNGIAN PERSPECTIVE**

BY

SHANTI M. PERSAUD

PREFACE

The Sanctity of Vulnerability

In opening this dissertation text, I am somehow drawn into a sober and piercing reminiscence, an anamnesis, of the *sanctity of vulnerability* - a terrifying and sedulous quality of experience that has imbued both the process of my inquiring into and my actual living of the phenomenon of Self-transformation. Only now, nine years later, am I amply porous and humbled so as to behold the subtle power intrinsic in such vulnerability. Upon reflection of the many nuances of meaning, the word *sanctity* also suggests a sense of “sacredness, restoration, the making free from,” and the word *vulnerability*, a sense of “being assailable, accessibility, wounding.” An inherent paradox pervades the notion, *the sanctity of vulnerability*, the sacredness of wounding. Wounding becoming sacred and emancipatory as we free ourselves from and release our old stories and our constricted ways of telling them, and become the tenacious midwives through which our new stories may emerge into living forms. And herein lies an invitation to our renaissance. Houston (1987) says that a renaissance occurs because the soul is breached. In this wounding, the psyche is opened up and new questions percolate about who we are in our depths. A larger story emanates from the wounding as we live the questions.

This research inquiry is an incomplete story, *my* story, and inevitably *your* story, of such a renaissance and vulnerability. It is an in-depth, autobiographical pilgrimage into the lived experience of the process of Self-transformation. It is an excursion into personal decay and renewal, wherein the disquietude has been immense, the suffering has perforated the boundaries of what I imagined I could bear, the vulnerability has initiated me into a quiet *knowing* of Mystery, and the seeds of transformation and resilience have gradually blossomed into resplendent fruition. Moreover, the meaning and depth of the vulnerability that has infused every aspect of my living, reading and researching of the phenomenon has come to issue as a foundational requirement of this inquiry process and has been a most erudite mentor. The entire experience has felt like a gentle touch of grace from the unfurling of Life itself and from the courage to endure the harsh call to growth.

There is no emphatic beginning or ending to this self-story, though. Rather, it intimates an *instance* (Jardine, 1992) within a fluid life that is in a dynamic process of

being and becoming. By telling my story, which is in the midst of a larger progressively transforming narrative, and by elucidating the many moods, textures and essence of the transformative journey via the rhythm of my living in these last nine years, I offer my experience as data and text. And even though this story suggests only a partial snapshot within a wider landscape, it does offer manna to fellow seekers inclined toward a path that restores our capacity to question, to struggle, to suffer, to awaken, and to seed even one moment with rejuvenating possibilities. The particular intimating the universal.

In attending to the voicing of this story, as in the actual immediacy of *this* writing, a different shade of vulnerability surges through me inducing a quandary, a perplexity of how to write so as to sustain fidelity to this inquiry. On the one hand, I feel a bold desire to passionately write from the heart, from the direct heat of honest experience. To inhabit the words in a wild (Goldberg, 1990), “un-rule-ly” yet disciplined way, which is more in accord with my own intrinsic nature and with the process of transformation itself. On the other hand, a cunning timidity threatens this desire. It is rooted in a fear of succumbing to the prescribed conventionality that seeps into much academic writing, dissecting experience from researcher and subject. Moreover, partial, subjective writing that is immersed in the humus of living is still questionable in the mainstream psychological arena. Yet, *I am writing for my life and the life and integrity of this inquiry* into the lived experience of Self-transformation; the way of transformation itself being anything but a clear, linear, detached process. It is experienced more like a relentless Bitch-of-a-force that rampages through our innermost depths, enacting a perilous revolution from within, announcing that old forms are ready to die, creating havoc with the entrenched inner and outer status quo, shattering illusions, and bringing us to our knees as we acquiesce to the raw fragility that breaks us open to the newly released energies of the psyche and the delicate forms of Selfhood that are ready to blossom.

An internal logic inheres in this convoluted, chaotic process of becoming. Hence, giving voice to the experience necessitates writing in heat (Rilke, 1984) - writing that stays close to experience and emotions, honors the organic unfolding of process, reflects the searing of transmutation, and maintains fidelity to the phenomenon in all its essential *whatness* (van Manen, 1990). Much has been sacrificed on behalf of this inquiry and,

having faithfully listened to and followed my own inner guidance throughout this entire research project, I must again listen, this time to how I am called to write. Thus, I choose to inhabit my desire and write from the heart which may not necessarily be in accord with traditional protocol but which coheres with a qualitative, descriptive-interpretive schema.

The risk in *not* writing thus, would be to interfere with the “microscopic truthfulness” that ensues when we get down to the Naked self and speak from that place (Ueland, 1987) and from our consummate powers of delicacy and truth. The metamorphosis of the writing itself would also be compromised. Upon further reflection too, it is clear that the crux of this inquiry process has constituted the ongoing synergy of passion, vulnerability *and* rigor in a mutually provocative rhythm that has allowed for my full engagement in experiencing and researching the phenomenon in question. I write therefore, inevitably embodying this synergy and trusting in an innate sense of form as I create this text.

Hence, the design, organization and content of the different components of the text are allowed to emerge so that the transformative process speaks for itself. I get out of the way and let what needs to come forth, come forth. Thus, the Prelude, *Sacred Whisperings*, comes as an invitation to readers to *pause*, and gently come into the reading of the text with a sense of reverence for the phenomenon itself, for the gift of the inquiry and for their own participation in the story, the lived-experience of transformation. It is an opening of the dissertation to prayer and blessing. May this be respected. The section, *Musings*, are a gathering of poems and quotations intended to softly lure readers into pondering the subtle intimations of transformation inherent in the text and perhaps stir their self-reflective responses. It invites a slower, more thoughtful initial engagement.

Chapter One, *Prologue to a Promise*, constitutes the introduction to the study, the research questions that ripened over time and through my intimate experiencing of the phenomenon, the purpose of the study, assumptions, and a summary of the methodology. Definitions of Self, transformation, inner voice and mystery are interwoven in the text and again presented with other definitions at the end of the chapter. In addition, thirteen heart-shaped rocks, termed “earth-hearts,” were conspicuously gifted by mother-nature (in Scotland, Hawaii, and Canada), at strategic turning points throughout the research process. These have poignant, symbolic value that are interpreted according to Jungian

psychology and are integral to the description, interpretation and elucidation of the phenomenon. Together they comprise a *synthesis* of the whole transformative process, which I discovered later, in an unexpected revelatory way, as representing the final stage of the heuristic methodological process. Photographs of the earth-hearts are interspersed throughout and aligned with the relevant text according to their meaning value. Edinger (1992) and Jung (1966) suggest that as symbolic meaning-bearers, the hearts are *alive* and shed light on processes going on in the psyche and in the embedded life of the person. Psychic life becomes concretized. Earth-Heart One (p. 36) suggests the prologue to a promise, the initial call to and seeding of this inquiry as discussed in the rationale.

Chapter Two, *A Theory of Transformation*, grounds the experience of Self-transformation in Jung's analytical (or depth) psychology. An in depth discussion of the psychology of transformation is presented here along with two tables synthesizing the stages, phases and processes of the lived-experience of the phenomenon. Other models of the transformation process are also briefly discussed. Chapter Three constitutes an overview of studies done that are relevant (substantially or partially) to my topic. Chapter Four, *Methodology*, constitutes two sections. Part one is a discussion of my encounter with methodology, which is important in speaking to *how the methodology emerged from the actual living of the phenomenon and through the progression of the inquiry itself*. Hence, it belongs to this chapter. Part two presents a detailed elaboration of qualitative research, heuristics methodology, autobiography, and a chart synthesizing the stages and processes of heuristics methodology. Chapter Five, *The Lived-Experience of Transformation*, gives a full autobiographic description, interpretation and elucidation of the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation. The analysis of the lived experience and the theoretical underpinnings embedded in the experience are shown in a different font to differentiate these from the description of the experience. Chapter Six, *Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations*, comprises a discussion of the findings and conclusions of the study, limitations, implications for health, health-related practice and practitioners, and graduate training programs in counseling psychology and psychotherapy, directions for future research, and references.

Prelude – Sacred Whisperings

**Holy One:
we live at mystery's edge
watching for a startling luminescence
or a word to guide us.**

**In fragile occurrences
You present yourself
and we must pause to meet you.**

**Daily, there are glimmers,
reflections of a seamless mercy
revealed in common intricacies.**

**These circles of grace
spill out around us
and announce that we are a part of You. Amen.**

Wehlander, Keri (1998).

(This text gently echoes the nuances of fragility and sense of mystery that imbues the transformational process which we experience in the direct and simple acts of our diurnal experiences - as we stumble, pause, listen mindfully, walk the razor's edge, and come into the grace of healing, rebirth and quiet blessing.)

Musings

...desiring

Some deep desire beckons within us, a need for something that we can only vaguely articulate, only barely whisper in the shadows. Yet, we know it is there, *within us*, somewhere, somehow...and, in a moment of stumbling in the half-light along a dusty road, a strange conspiracy of sorts is enacted, provoking desire into an intimate, timid Self-remembering. Rumi (in Barks, 1990) delicately echoes nuances of this desire in his *Like This. 43 Odes*:

*There is some Kiss we want
With our whole lives
The touch of Spirit on the body.
Seawater begs the pearl to break its shell.
At night, I open the window
And ask the moon to come
And press its face against mine.
Breath into me.*



*Choosing not to betray the truth in its "madness"
was a hair-raising thing, but it taught me everything
that I think I know: that reputation is nothing and
that the only valuable thing is to remain true to the
soul...It's not that you become sane; it's that you find
the courage to stay "mad," to stay with an endless
capacity for transformation. In fact, you come to trust
enough to remain perpetually bewildered so as always,
always to be vulnerable to miracle (Harvey, 1990).*



*Still, I want to know how we can best embrace the wound, to perceive and allow
for its mystery...to be seduced into its miraculous possibilities (Persaud, 2000).*



What now seems to you opaque, you will make transparent with your blazing heart. (Rilke, 1984).



The person who, being really on the Way, falls upon hard times in the world will not, as a consequence, turn to that friend who offers refuge and comfort and encourages the old self to survive. Rather, s/he will seek out someone who will faithfully and inexorably help her/him to risk himself, so that s/he may endure the suffering and pass courageously through it, thus making of it a "raft that leads to the far shore." Only to the extent that a person exposes himself over and over again to annihilation, can that which is indestructible arise within her/him. In this lies the dignity of daring. Thus, the aim of practice is not to develop an attitude which allows a person to acquire a state of harmony and peace wherein nothing can ever trouble her/him. On the contrary, practice should teach her/him to let her/himself be assaulted, perturbed, moved, insulted, broken and battered – that is to say, it should enable him to dare to let go her/his futile hankering after harmony, surcease from pain, and a comfortable life in order that s/he may discover, in doing battle with the forces that oppose her/him, that which awaits her/him beyond the world of opposites... Only if we venture repeatedly through zones of annihilation can our contact with Divine Being, which is beyond annihilation, become firm and stable. The more a person learns wholeheartedly to confront the world that threatens him with isolation, the more are the depths of the Ground of Being revealed and the possibilities of new life and Becoming opened (Durckheim, 1971).



Once we enter [the labyrinth], ordinary time and distance are immaterial, we are in the midst of a ritual and a journey where transformation is possible; we do not know how far away or close we are to the center where meaning can be found until we are there; the way back is not obvious and we have no way of knowing as we emerge how or when we will take the experience back into the world until we do. There are no blind ends in a labyrinth, the path often doubles back on itself, the direction toward which we are facing is continuously changing, and if we do not turn back or give up we will reach the center to find the rose, the Goddess, the Grail, a symbol representing the sacred. To return to ordinary life, we must again travel the labyrinth to get out, which is also a complex journey for it involves integrating the experience into consciousness, which is what changes us (Jean Shinoda Bolen, 1996).



Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
 You do not have to walk on your knees
 for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.
 You only have to let the soft animal of your body
 love what it loves.
 Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
 Meanwhile the world goes on.
 Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
 are moving across the landscapes,
 over the prairies and the deep trees,
 the mountains and the rivers.
 Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
 are heading home again.
 Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
 the world offers itself to your imagination,
 calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting –
 over and over announcing your place
 in the family of things.

(Mary Oliver, 1986)



The Journey

One day you finally knew
 what you had to do, and began,
 though the voices around you
 kept shouting
 their bad advice –
 though the whole house
 began to tremble
 and you felt the old tug
 at your ankles.
 "Mend my life!"
 each voice cried.
 But you didn't stop.
 You knew what you had to do,
 though the wind pried

with its stiff fingers
 at the very foundations –
 though their melancholy
 was terrible.
 It was already late
 enough, and a wild night,
 and the road full of fallen
 branches and stones.
 But little by little,
 as you left their voices behind,
 the stars began to burn
 through the sheets of clouds,
 and there was a new voice,
 which you slowly

recognized as your own,
 that kept you company
 as you strode deeper
 and deeper
 into the world,
 determined to do
 the only thing you could –
 determined to save
 the only life
 you could save.
 (Mary Oliver, 1986)



"You see", he said, what we're after is to remind ourselves that we didn't come to Anarres for safety, but for freedom. If we must all agree, all work together, we're no better than a machine. If an individual can't work in solidarity with his fellows, it's his duty to work alone. His duty and his right. We have been denying people that right. We have been saying more and more often, you must work with others, you must accept the rule of the majority. But any rule is tyranny. The duty of the individual is to accept no rule, to be the initiator of his own acts, to be responsible. Only if he does so will the society live, change, adapt and survive. We are not subjects of a State founded upon law, but members of a society founded upon revolution. Revolution is our obligation: our hope of evolution. The revolution is in the individual spirit, or it is nowhere. It is for all, or it is nothing. If it is seen as having an end, it will never truly begin. We can't stop here. We must go on. We must take the risks."

Rulag replied, quietly but very coldly, "You have no right to involve us all in a risk that private motives compel you to take."

"No one who will not go as far as I'm willing to go has any right to stop me from going." Shevek answered. Their eyes met for a second; both looked down.

Le Guin, U (1974).



"Mediocre" tends to mean "undistinguished," while snobs enjoy their distinguishing hallmarks of style – how they wear clothes, use words, where they go and gather and gossip...Whatever the circumstances the genius has put you into, the fact of individuality defends the soul against all class-action claims. No soul is mediocre, whatever your personal taste for conventionality, whatever your personal record of middling achievements..."mediocre" does not adhere to "soul." There are no standard benchmarks for a diamon; no usual angels, no regular genius...What determines eminence is less a call to greatness than the call to character, that inability to be other than what you are in acorn, following it faithfully or being desperately driven by its dreams.

(Hillman, 1996).



CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study - Prologue to a Promise

The primary focus of this inquiry is the exploration and elucidation of the essence of the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation; the Self, connoting a more comprehensive framework that encompasses personal, professional, social and spiritual transformation. The phenomenon is also viewed within a mind-body-spirit holism as this is integral to my lifework - my personal and professional (healing, psychotherapeutic) calling. As an autobiographical inquiry, lived-experience refers to the actual living-ness of experience - becoming, indwelling, the heuristics of experience. It is about floundering in the flux, living the paradox of knowing that I do not know yet surrendering to the flux and the ambiguity inherent in experiencing the phenomenon and in the process of doing the research. And this is the crux of autobiography as method, the struggle of the unconscious in coming to consciousness, an experiential process of struggle and of explicating the struggle of coming to knowing or knowledge through the unconscious. Lived-experience is research that is alive and yielding to the amorphous unfolding of inquiry.

From a Jungian view, the Self is used as the central archetype in the person. It is the strongest, ineluctable urge in every being; the urge to realize itself (Jung, 1954). It connects with the past, is the corrector of onesidedness in the present, and is potential future. It functions in us as a dynamic of wholeness, i.e. completion of the personality. In its dark mystery, Jung (1959) calls the Self, the "God within us" which manifests as psychic phenomenon. Durckheim (1971) alludes to the Self as essential being, the individual form that Divine Being takes in any particular manifestation of life. As we become aware of its presence, it is experienced as an inner image and also as an inner path to follow. He says that our destiny is to be so transformed that the essential being and as a corollary, the Divine Being is able to realize itself in its totality in the world. We become Persons, living forms through which Divine Being sounds (personare) (p.104).

In my tentative understanding, the Self symbolizes that intrinsic life-force that moves us in the direction of greater life. It is likened to a sacred center within, the Source to which everything and everyone is connected and from which all potentiality and fulfillment originate. I call it Spirit, Mystery, Tao, even as this naming does violence to

that which is unnamable. For me, the Self infers the ground of Being, a core substrate that permeates our selfhood and is essentially unassailable and constant. It symbolizes our spiritual essence and I concur with Jung that it impinges upon consciousness and is experienced as psychological phenomena in dreams, spontaneous waking fantasies, visions, mystical encounters, etc. It underpins all aspects of the socially, historically and culturally developing selves of the individual. This position differs radically from the postmodern notions of the self as solely a social construction and groundlessness as the only constant. Rumi's (in Barks, 1990) whisperings hint at the Self as a core principle:

Though we seem to be sleeping,
there is an inner wakefulness
that directs the dream,
and that will eventually startle us back
to the truth of who we are.

Transformation from this perspective then, i.e. Self-transformation, is studied here as a psychospiritual process in which the evolving, multiple selves of the individual are continually orienting toward and aligning with the Self; the individual gradually waking up and becoming the truth of who s/he is. In other words, the process through which we are transformed so that the *sacred* permeates the various levels of consciousness and is integrated into all aspects of our *being and doing* is critical to this inquiry. By sacred consciousness I mean being imbued with a pervasive humility, reverence and compassion for, and mindfulness in the intricate details of our ordinary living with oneself, other and world. There is an irrefutable feeling of belonging to and being in relationship with the Holy. A crucial dimension of the transformative process is *listening to the inner voice*, listening for and to the diverse ways in which the Self disrupts, speaks to and guides our living and struggling along the path of decay and renewal. This is elaborated on later.

The phenomenon of Self-transformation is termed the *process of individuation* (Jacobi, 1967; Jung, 1969; Perry, 1986; Sharp, 1988; von Franz, 1984; Woodman, 1985;), *personal and spiritual psychosynthesis* or *Self-realization* (Assagioli, 1965, 1973), *self-actualization* (Maslow, 1971), *soul-making* (Hillman, 1975; Moore, 1992), and *spiritual emergence* (Grof and Grof, 1991). The psychospiritual dimension, or the coming into

“hidden wholeness” (Merton in Higgins, 1998), is recognized by these theorists and is integrated into their psychological models. de Wit (1991), Durckheim (1971), Frankl (1975), Hardy (1987), Laing (1982), Metzner (1986), Sinetar (1986), Vaughan (1995) and Wilber (1997), all theorize about a spiritual psychology in ways similar to and different from the above theorists, and while Jung’s analytical psychology is mainly used for grounding a psychology of Self-transformation, I am also much indebted to these other theorists for shedding light on the phenomenon (as discussed in Chapter Three).

A few brief definitions are provided here to help give a sense of the phenomenon. The “individuation process” is an evolutionary growth process experienced contextually within our worldly destiny. As a *lifelong* existential project, individuation entails many “spiraling rounds” of the transformative experience; ongoing psychological death and rebirth episodes, some more acute than others, that move toward Self-realization. It is a journeying ripe with mystery that begs forth the fulfillment of our multiple potentialities. According to Sharp (1991), individuation is a process of psychological differentiation informed by the archetypal ideal of wholeness, the Self, which in turn relies on an vital relationship between the ego and the unconscious; the aspiration being the development of the *in-dividual* personality, unique and indivisibly whole. The Self symbolizes the ordering and unifying center of the psyche, which intentionally seeks its own realization via the individuation process. Jung (1966) asserted that the individuation process comprises an internal, subjective process of integration, *as well as* a process of self-and-collective synergy. The synthesis of both processes constitutes wholeness.

In *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993), *transformation* means the action of changing in form, shape, nature; metamorphosis, a radical change in character or form. A linguistic spin-off is the conversion of one syntactic structure into another by the application of specific rules; a rule converting deep structure to surface structure, (which seems analogous to the unconscious being made conscious). The Latin prefix “trans” means through, beyond or across. “Form” implies the structure, shape, state, configuration or essence of something; a fixed mode, expression of what is actually present. An active meaning is to come or bring into existence, to create; hence a sense of process,

of ongoing movement and fluctuation as opposed to stasis or fixity. We are in a constant process of becoming, bringing into existence the as yet unformed dimensions of being.

Thus, by transformation I mean the intentional, radical changing or *breakdown* of familiar psychic states, and the *breakthrough* or the conscious bringing into existence of progressively integrated configurations and expressions of the Self; a process of the life-death paradox that returns in a different guise at each new spiral of growth. Individuation then, is the lifelong progressive movement toward completion of the personality and fulfillment of our innate destiny. And within this existential drama, transformational experiences are viewed as those punctuated episodes of personal transition and psychological shifts in consciousness when one goes through “the process of passage between one life-phase and the next, in a pattern of death and rebirth” (Bridges, 1980. p. 24). It is reiterated here that the phenomenon of Self-transformation is studied in a *comprehensive manner*, encompassing personal, professional, social and spiritual components and how these undergo change and maturation within the individual’s personality and life-world.

The Research Questions

It is my experience that a research question goes through its own evolution. It ripens, expands, goes into the shadows and takes on certain shifts, detours and foci while the heart of that which we are inquiring into pulls us along a restless desire to understand. It is like the core of the question remains firm yet pliable and ambiguous as its parameters are perforated and opened up through the actual experiencing of the phenomenon. This predicament is not usually fully grasped at the beginning of the research project. I first became inspired to study the process of transformation but had only a vague notion of how the phenomenon needed to be probed and contoured or in which experiential context to ground it. I had absolutely no idea that I would be called to *live* the phenomenon as an essential criterion for birthing the precision of the question(s). I recall being asked to declare early the specific focus of the inquiry and the population chosen to target the experience. This felt like a most premature gesture to which I could not honestly respond at the time. Feeling inept in not knowing *precisely* the direction of the inquiry, I gave a superficially persuasive response but felt intuitively that while I really did not know, I had to remain open and continue *to be with* the amorphous process of coming into this

knowledge. I did not know that I did not know. It was as if something more internally wise knew the blueprint of the inquiry and enacted a slow process of revelation through my first experiencing the phenomenon and later in reading the literature. *I could not manipulate this inner agenda. I had to surrender into it so as to be penetrated by it.* This attitude is analogous to the Taoist notion of *wu wei* – a contemplative mode that does not resist, meddle or interfere with the flow of life. Rather, *wu wei* encourages permeability, receptivity, a letting be and an alert mindfulness (Au and Cannon, 1995) so as to be impregnated by a thing *as it is*. It issues as a more participatory way of re-searching.

It took several years to discern that the phenomenon being studied is the more comprehensive lived-experience of Self-transformation. Dr. C. Moustakas (Institute of Humanistic Studies) helped clarify my understanding of this in fall 1996. Experiencing the phenomenon further brought more directed focus and increased conceptual and contextual depth to the inquiry. Elements such as *listening to the inner voice* as integral to the process of Self-transformation, the dimension of *mystery* coming into play in the process, and questions about the ramifications of the transformative experience occurring *within academia* emerged. These insights were slowly permeating the inquiry without me fully realizing then that it was through my direct experiencing of the phenomenon that I was giving birth to the deeper layers and angles of the question. Finally feeling quietly confident about the *rightness* of the primary and the three secondary questions, it took me another two years to discern then accept and trust my guidance that the inquiry be written up as an *autobiographical study* of the lived-experience of Self-transformation. This process is described in Chapter Four in the section, *Coming into Methodology*, and is vital in understanding how the methodology emerges as the inquiry proceeds according to its own organic unfolding. In this study, the actual stages and processes of the experience of Self-transformation cohere with many of those of the heuristic methodological model; heuristics intrinsically engaging an autobiographic mode as *the internal pathways of the self of the researcher* are validated as a credible means to knowledge (Moustakas, 1990).

Hence, there are *one primary* and *three secondary questions*. Each of these are further unfurled through a multiplicity of “tributary” questions that together, assisted in unveiling underlying nuances of meaning and thus rendering a more comprehensive

explication of the phenomenon; bearing in mind that understanding is ever incomplete and meaning is not *ever* fully explicated. Life as a process seems to be perpetually in flux, continually and craftily outdistancing our current grasp of reality as well as our insatiable compulsion to tame the flux and *finalize* Truth. However, an *instance* of the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation is revealed through this inquiry.

It is important to understand that the “tributary questions” that follow each of the main questions came out of sober contemplation of the topic as well as from my in depth experiencing of the subtleties of the phenomenon. They were also born out of further researching the topic and are answered through the embedded descriptions, interpretation and explication of the phenomenon as I have lived it. These questions probe and speak to the essence of the transformative process and are deliberately included to engage the reader in further reflection on the phenomenon and also as a way of intimating angles and layers of meaning that are inherently hidden in the primary questions. In other words, I have elaborated on and teased out the primary and secondary questions via the tributary questions as a way of broadening out certain underpinnings of the phenomenon itself and at the same time of inadvertently describing that which I have experienced and given deep thought to. There has been an ongoing retrospective refining of the questions, the definitions and the description of the phenomenon as new revelations deepen previous meaning. Even at this stage of the inquiry, knowledge is still only partial and tentative.

The primary question of this inquiry that has provoked my relentless passion and struggle is: **What is the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation (ST)?** In deeply contemplating the phenomenon, some further underlying, “tributary” questions percolated to the surface. What constitutes the human art of “becoming”? How is it that from our deepest wounds miraculous possibilities for new life emerge? What is it that challenges us into a space of radical openness and surrender so as to allow our inmost nature to unfold? How do we begin to shatter fixed identities, oppressive boundaries and *transgress* on behalf of becoming truly passionate, wild human beings? What sustains us in that liminal space (hooks, 1994; Goodheart, 1980; Van Gennep, 1960;), that space “in between” that is harder to inhabit as it seldom feels secure, so that we may experience our existence as broadly as possible? What ensues when we betray our cherished subjectivity

as part of an ongoing project of self-renewal? How do we come into living the difference between what impels us toward our Self-making projects and what sabotages our desire to engage thus? Is there some nexus or guiding principle that *cradles* the fragility of the death-rebirth cycle? What constitutes our inner capacity for healing and resilience? Is self-trust a vital component in coming to Self-consciousness? Does Self-transformation have critical sociopolitical implications beyond the personal? Is rebirth a deliberate participatory process, a ruthless, unexpected “call” to consciousness from Life itself, or a haphazard play within the flux? Are there spiritual, psychological, emotional and bodily processes at work within our self-renewal projects? And within all this, how do we *navigate* and *sustain* the rhythm, tension and movement between cowardice and courage, honoring the integrity of both as we descend into the Depths? Who or what gives us the tenacity and courage anyway? Do we *just* let go of the umbilical cord or the shoreline of routine, anesthetized habit and embrace the rude, unremitting flux?

A second related question of this inquiry is: **Is listening to the “inner voice” (“iv”) integral to the experience of Self-transformation?** Again, within this broad, umbrella question, other fertile questions emerged. What is meant by “inner voice” (Assagioli, 1965; Belenky et al, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Heery, 1987; Jung, 1954; Levin, 1989; Luke, 1984; Maslow, 1971; Sinetar, 1986; Van Dusen, 1981)? How is it experienced? Does the “inner voice” emerge from a broader, more comprehensive consciousness (Jung, 1954)? Does the inner voice manifest outwardly? How does one listen (deeply) *for* and *to* this voice? Is this listening intrinsic to the striving toward meaning and personal integration? Is this voice different from the introjected voices of culture, family and ego? If so, how is it discerned amidst the raucous “chatter” of those voices? Are there *consequences* for listening to this voice? Is self-trust integral to this listening? Does the concept of *call* (vocation) have any relevance to the inner voice?

The term “inner voice” refers to a significant subjective experience perceived as a voice speaking inwardly and/or a vaguer “felt sense” of some inner communication that strives toward meaning and integration (Heery, 1987). Jung believed the inner voice to be the voice of a fuller life, of a wider more comprehensive consciousness (Sabini, 1987). Durckheim (1971) says it cries aloud to us when we lose sight of our inner destiny, and

Belenky et al (1986) refer to it as subjective knowing as women move from self as static to self as becoming, “from silence to a protesting inner voice and infallible gut” (p. 54). Luke (1984) contends that it speaks to us from the unconscious and we recognize it, however dimly, as the ultimately single voice with a thousand names. Maslow (1971) referred to this inward sensing as impulse voices that must be “tested.”

From my own serious inner work since 1976 and in reading the relevant literature, there seems to be a crucial interplay between this inward listening and transformation. The degree to which the Self-transformation process ripens and the integration of the personality realized, seems directly contingent on the conscious listening to and follow through on the guidance of the inner voicing (Assagioli, 1965; Durckheim, 1971; Heery, 1987; Jung, 1954, 1959; Levin, 1989; Luke, 1984; Sinetar, 1986; Van Dusen, 1972, 1981; Woodman, 1985). Furthermore, the progression of the transformative journey appears to inevitably evoke further voicing, resulting in a circular, synchronistic, interweaving principle of healing and wholeness. *It is in the interplay of both these processes within the experience of Self-transformation that the inquiry focus emerged.*

A third question of this research inquiry is: **Does “mystery” (or the spiritual) come into play in the process of Self-transformation** (Buber, 1952; Caputo, 1987, Heidegger, 1962; Higgins, 1998; Hillman, 1975; Jung, 1961, 1963; McNamara, 1983; Merton, 1948; Proffoff, 1973; Underhill, 1955; Varani, 1984; Vaughan, 1995;)? Probing this question unearthed further questions. What is meant by mystery? Is mystery intrinsic to life? Does it show up in the ordinariness of daily living? Can we recognize it or feel reverence as it displays itself? Is it experienced in the living process of transformation? How does it reveal itself? Is it a hidden aspect of the unconscious? Does it have a physical, emotional, psychological correspondence (Jung, 1964)? Is there a dovetailing between mystery and inner voice? Are *secular* and *spiritual* as dichotomized as the dominant rationality of both factions would have us believe? Is mystery a sort of go-between within the death-rebirth cycle? Is the psyche sacrament (Dourley, 1981)? Is the experience of mystery an aspect of spiritual unfolding? Or is it a delusive, escapist fabrication of a pallid mind? Is it an immanent or a transcendent element? Does mystery pry us open to our *raw* selves? Is mystery present in the midst of chaos, suffering,

struggle and uncertainty? Does it operate with a kind of benign indifference *on behalf of* emancipatory possibilities? Is there a two-foldness to human consciousness – a surface and a mystical (mystery imbued or transcendent) consciousness (Underhill, 1955)? Why a pondering and reflecting on mystery with regards to this phenomenon?

Here, I briefly discuss *mystery* to offer a sense of what I am hinting at. Varani (1984) writes that, unlike a problem, a mystery is not solved; it may be resolved in that one may come to accept or learn to live with the unexplainable. From Greek, the word problem, *pro-ballein*, means anything thrown forward, “evoking the image of life as a series of difficulties being thrown at one from the outside” (p. 23). In contrast, the Greek root for the word mystery is *mu-oo*, meaning to see and yet not to see, as if looking through a veil. This flows into Heidegger’s sense of mystery: “That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws is the essential trait of what we call mystery” (Heidegger in Varani, 1984. p. 24). In linking this to the psychological realm, Hillman (1975) and Progoff (1973) assert that psychology is infused with mystery. For Hillman, the role of psychology is to *psychologize*, meaning *to see through to the deeper levels*, to see beyond what the eye sees, to see with the eye of the soul; to go past ego development to the art of *soul-making*, which desires to make every event a psychic event. And to psychologize is also to *mythologize* which offers possibilities for deepening the sense of mystery and meaning of complex, multiple psychic events. Thus, “the road to mystery or the numinous is through the imagination” (Varani, 1984. p. 25). For Hillman (1979; 1972), imagination and mystery are integral to the soul, that elusive concept linked to heart, spirit, mind. For Progoff (1973), the sense of mystery manifests in the symbols, (images, dreams, waking visions), which arise out of the depth of the psyche. He views the role of the psyche as acting as a bridge between the finite and the infinite and as guiding growth from the moment of conception forward (p. 73). Progoff affirms that through the psyche we can become acquainted with the infinite, encounter the sacred within ourselves, verify its presence, sense intimations of a larger purpose, and also experience an atmosphere for the deeper meanings of life to enter the world (p. 80-81).

A fourth question of this inquiry is: **Is Self-transformation possible within academia, specifically the transformation of doctoral students *whose personal***

processes are intrinsic to and cohere with their inquiry? This inquiry into the process of Self-transformation was *not* limited to the context of academia. However, because my own crucial Self-transformation journey was occurring simultaneously with my doctoral research *on the very phenomenon*, within an academic setting, I wished to explore some of the ensuing dynamics and ramifications. Like the other related questions, this one begged forth other questions. If rebirth is possible within academia, who might facilitate this delicate process? Is it imperative that educators, who deem themselves “*midwives*” of students’ transformational processes and who *enter midstream* in such processes, be responsibly adept in consciousness and knowledge of these very processes? Do these educators have a professional and moral responsibility to be or become conscious of their own operating psychology, possible cultural encapsulation and personal issues as they engage with students’ processes? What ensues when this consciousness *lapses*? Do students’ processes mirror those of the educators? What does this mean for both parties? Are there ethical guidelines to protect students and their processes? Do educators who *invite* personal process, (via experiential activities, autobiographical writing), have an obligation to provide a “*temenos*” or container (Jung, 1953; 1959) for such processes? What are students’ responsibilities? Who monitors the personal and political agendas of educators to ensure that the rights and fragility of students are protected, and their ST processes respected and allowed to unfold *on their own terms*? Do educators *blur* the line between inquiry and therapy? Is this potentially damaging? Are they conscious of the implications? Are the health, wellbeing and research inquiry of these students at risk? How? These questions are answered through describing the lived-experience and in engaging the works of Cranton (1994), Grumet (1981), Lather (1991), and Pinar (1988).

In closing this section on the research questions, I observe retrospectively that, as this inquiry ripened and as I was taken on a sojourning into its unknown and multifaceted domains, my desire to tease out some of the possible underpinnings to these questions and elucidate the essence of the lived experience of Self-transformation was fulfilled, if only partially. “Ripened” is used in the sense of evolved with no sharp distinctions between beginning and ending, much like the circumference of a circle. If inquiry, like our lives, according to Emerson (1987) in *Circles*, is an apprenticeship to truth and that

around every circle another can be drawn, then inquiry may be viewed as a continuous movement of opening outward into possibility - the possibility of discovery, of coming into *slow knowledge*, revelation, meaning, and of being humbled through understanding. Conversations of Self-transformation as a game of circles may then offer us inspired opportunities for re-interpreting and re-creating our lives and in so doing, enhance the collectivity through our individually committed, self-making projects.

In summary then, I reiterate the primary and related questions of this inquiry,

- a. **What is the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation?**
- b. Is listening to the “inner voice” integral to the experience of Self-transformation?
- c. Does “mystery” (the spiritual) come into play in the process of Self-transformation?
- d. Is Self-transformation possible within academia, specifically the transformation of doctoral students whose processes are intrinsic to and cohere with their inquiry?

The Question within the Questions - My Story

These four questions became excruciatingly alive within the fabric of my personal and research life and early into and during the entire process of the inquiry. The story of my Self-transformational journey, which constitutes the research “data,” is discussed in depth in Chapter Five. Here, I briefly comment on the personal “question” that was unknowingly embedded in the four research questions; *the* question that catapulted me into an intense nine-year rebirth journey in the second year of my Ph.D. program. At 4:35am, one October morning in 1992, I was abruptly awakened with this harsh question reverberating through the depths of my being, filling my conscious mind with great angst and creating a tension so strong in my body that a sudden, heavy malaise engulfed me:

What is it in you that you allow such deep disrespect into your life?

(This question grounded and catalyzed the entire experiential component of the inquiry.)

Unbeknownst to me, this question *entangled* me into the core of the inquiry, engaging me unremittingly in the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation; the experience fiercely *untangling* years of acute personal unresolve lodged in my childhood history. I was totally unguarded and unprepared for this invitation to deeply inquire into my own life, let alone have it implicate my entire doctoral research or understand what to do with it all initially. While this question *took effect* in my personal life from

the day of its inception, I had no clue that it was connected to the four formal research questions. Yet, it was *this question* that initiated the commencement of the formal research inquiry and the methodological procedures. This question, in its serious and terrifying call to personal accountability, had embedded in it all the time the four research questions which kept taking on significant meaning as I experienced the transformational process. It was not until several years into the research work and my personal healing journey, (with sporadic insightful breaks), that revelation after revelation began showing the alignment of the four questions with the personal one. In looking back, it seems that my doctoral research has been *first* a call to attend to my soul's pleading, to inquire into and question the very foundation of my praxis of living. Yet, this in turn has been inextricably linked to the core purpose of the research and has inevitably authenticated and grounded the inquiry into the very heart of the phenomenon, providing a much disciplined and rigorous context in which to gather genuine, experiential research data.

Being simultaneously a participant and an observer served to engage me in an arduous struggle in coming into self-knowledge *and* in plummeting into the depths of the questions in ways I could not have done in interviewing co-researchers. I was gifted with firsthand, embodied knowledge of how the processes of inquiry, methodology and transformation emerge and blend in a rich synchronism. I was *living* qualitative research methodology while experiencing the phenomenon and researching it. Furthermore, my psychotherapeutic repertoire and inner-healer assisted in the midwifery of my healing process even as I encountered ridicule from some faculty uninformed about the delicate nature of Self-transformation. All of this has made this inquiry a life-work in which this writing is part of the process and, a *giving back* - an honest sharing of my personal and research experience with a community of others to make of it what they desire. I am not invested in what is made of my work. I am only deeply humbled and grateful to be found worthy by some benevolent force inspiring me to fulfill an aspect of my life's purpose.

Rationale for the study

The substantive focus of this inquiry is the lived experience of the process of Self-transformation (ST). The phenomenon is considered in an inclusive manner so as to encompass personal, professional, social and spiritual aspects of the human life-world.

Listening to the inner voice, the possibility of mystery coming into play in the experience of ST, and this occurring within (but not restricted to) the context of academia are crucial, exploratory components of the phenomenon. The inspiration and premise for my choice of research phenomenon emerged from a diversity of realities and as such, the rationale comprises three parts: personal and professional knowledge and experience, discernment within broader psychosocial contexts, and personal “calling” or vocation. These overlap and have substantial bearing on the inquiry. As such, they are not compartmentalized or dislodged from their inherent connectedness. These three sections are now elaborated on with the intention of grounding the vision of my inquiry.

Personal and Professional Knowledge and Experience

Do I dare speak of my research *calling* as being serendipitously revealed through the chaos, struggle and joy of our ordinary living? In the deepest sense, the phenomenon of Self-transformation (ST) chose me as opposed to me choosing it. My life’s journeying has constituted three major transformational processes which have profoundly sensitized and informed me personally and professionally about some aspects of the ST process – disintegration, transition, rebirth and reintegration (Jung, 1969, Andersen, 1991).

I first became excruciatingly awakened to this deep process of ST at age twenty-one, (and too naïve for the underground), when I experienced my first harsh descent into the abyss. I was ushered into motherhood by my beloved daughter, Khalila Lara. She who was a Down’s Syndrome baby and my husband and I were told by the attending physician that she would amount to being a “vegetable” and that we must institutionalize her at once. My husband who first got the news kept his secret pain for two days, not knowing how to respond yet offering his deepest love in the moment. This wrenching pronouncement forced a premature collapse of our innocence. I recall glaring into a sort of oblivion, staggering zombie-like to the bathroom. As I lowered my body onto the toilet bowl, I literally experienced the sensation of my innards emptying out of me. I became like a skeleton woman (Pinkola-Estes, 1993) in whose life an act of violence was unexpectedly perpetrated by nature. That was my first abysmal experience, with not much know-how in traversing such chaos. My natural, youthful wildness was abruptly

tempered as I was initiated into intimate, piercing contact with the raw mysteries of life. It seems now that my daughter was the catalyst for my beginning transformation.

My love for my child and my husband's devotion fueled a thin hope in me as I floundered through that uncharted cave of death and rebirth, not quite grasping the complex transformational dynamics that were set in motion and were to become a *persistent*, spiraling, experiential reality in my life. This cycle was enacted again, but differently, when both my children died, and later when my primary partnership ended. Another critical round of the ST spiral was initiated at the onset of my doctoral program in 1991, catalyzing my most acute healing, rebirth and personal revitalizing process. This nine-year sojourning constitutes the major autobiographical data of this inquiry. Autobiographical data on Thomas Merton and Carl Jung are also intermittently accessed to further elucidate the essence of the phenomenon of Self-transformation. Having delved in the personal realm, I now draw on experiences from my professional work.

In Calgary, Alberta, I both taught and counseled mainstream and new Canadian adolescents and adults from 1979-1991. Some clients and students comprised men and women enduring major life transitions: midlife crises, career reorientation, death, divorce, and acculturation to a new culture and sociopolitical system, together with the immediate, impinging necessities of daily survival such as learning a new language. I worked very intensely with and observed, for example, a middle-aged eastern European neurosurgeon and her husband assume refugee status then began selling hotdogs at a corner stand in a prairie city. After completing the provincial Manpower training program and working through many transitional issues, they came to experience a gratefulness for their newly found freedom and peace which ensued in a genuine resilience on their parts, and gave meaning to their lives and work. In this case, *the individuals* dignified the work because of their own intrinsic self-worth and realigning with their core values. They blossomed.

Another example is of an elderly Vietnamese man who witnessed his wife and teenage son drown en route to a refugee camp near Thailand. He and his infant daughter were in a separate boat. "I've lost everything except my humanity and dignity," he cried. He arrived with his child in my class, penniless, bewildered and mourning. Yet, despite his tragedy and acculturation struggles, he gently and consistently demonstrated a keen

responsiveness to and appreciation for his new Canadian reality and unfolding future. His quiet gratitude and will to give his child a fresh start exuded from his every action.

As a young professional, those pathfinders taught *me* about renewal, fluidity in life and hope as I puzzled over what was at the root of this resiliency in the human spirit. Those early, delicate human encounters, together with the birthing of my own fragility through mothering silently permeated my being, seeding in me a niggling, persistent questioning and need to understand life's vagaries, paradoxes and transitions. Intuitively, I was just vaguely beginning to sense this transformative process. Subsequent personal and professional exposure fueled my desire and passion to inquire into the phenomenon.

Discernment within Broader Psychosocial Contexts

Within contemporary society, more people are seeking help as a "guiding inward knowing" (Assagioli, 1965; Jung, 1954;), or inherent wisdom, challenges them to rethink their praxis of living more candidly, compassionately and suspiciously, hermeneutically speaking (Caputo, 1987). Individuals are being jolted into Self-consciousness from within their own barren life-charades, the lassitude of affluence and the sad, accelerating failure of culture. Increasingly being witnessed is an inexorable need to understand the connection between our interior lives, our exterior dynamics and the quality of our health (Myss, 1996). Life-constricting postures, neurotic patterns and learned helplessness are surfacing as people thaw out, shattering the cushy amnesia that kills the urgency for thoughtful self-inquiry. A chronic sense of psychic malaise from being vogue outside but vague inside, a jarring realization of complicity in one's own oppression, or a shocking turn of fate may be the *very* conditions that provoke a process of *waking up*, initiation into, and acceleration of the Self-transformation process. Thereby inviting regenerative possibilities for *conscious, erotic* (Lorde, 1984), *wild* living (Pinkola-Estes, 1992).

Surface repair of our whole selves suffices no longer. There is a foraging for a reunion of mind, body and spirit especially within hyper-technocratic contexts, thereby subverting the violent dichotomies of nature and culture, body and soul, and echoing a sober *re*-thinking of more holistic approaches to health and healing. Cutting edge research in the healing arts is recognizing the spiritual as integral to healing and therefore embracing a more integrative model (Wilber, 1996). This, however, is not new for many

Eastern and indigenous traditions nor was it for pioneers like James, Jung and Assagioli. As articulated before, this is an inquiry into the experience of Self-transformation. How this process manifests as a holistic mind-body-spirit dynamic, how it is facilitated in counseling and psychotherapy, how it is recognized and dealt with within pedagogical praxis and whether it is integrated into curriculum content are sober issues of this inquiry.

As such, this study calls into question the tripartite counseling/psychotherapeutic approach - focusing on cognition, behavior and feelings- and the need for the field to broaden its conceptual foundation and strengthen its methodologies by becoming more integrative. This means becoming more cross-cultural, embracing other therapies and perceptions of healing and incorporating a *fourth dimension* – inner spiritual awakening and alignment with the Self or archetypal God-image (Jung, 1968), Christ consciousness, Atman, or what I intuit as a primordial, sacred Depth within. Jung likened the archetypal Self to an image of a greater totality, wholeness and integration of the personality. Hillman (1967) views this image of God as constitutive of the psyche and is experienced, felt, intuited, sensed and formulated by the individual. It is “primarily an experience, secondarily a concept” (p. 41) and it suffers change in the life of any person and differs widely among people. He postulates that the image of God is a universal experience which reveals itself in and through the soul, “without limits, and beyond the confines of any dogma” (p. 41). As *living experience* originating in the human psyche, it is a psychological phenomenon (p. 42) and open to inquiry. Perry (1989) suggests that the nature of the archetypal center or Self is to undergo cyclic rounds of birth, death and resurrection. He adds that this ancient knowing has however become alien to us moderns enamored of linear progress and bent on a quick fix mentality. In alluding to the spiritual, Bugental (1978) comments (*italic mine*) that this fourth dimension points to:

Our ineffable subjectivity, to the unimaginable potential which lies within... to the aspirations which well up for greater truth and vividness of living, to our compassion for the tragedy of the human condition, to pride in the undestroyed but endlessly assaulted dignity of our being, *and to something more*. To the sense of mystery in which we always live if we are truly aware and to the dedication to explore that mystery which is the very essence of being human (p. 139).

This domain is integral to holistic depth psychology, some of the precursors of which were Assagioli, Eckhart, James and Jung. Contemporary theorists such as Grof, Hillman, Progoff, Wilber and other transpersonal and Jungian psychologists have acknowledged the spiritual, in its broadest sense, as valid psychological phenomenon. The depth psychotherapy of Bugental and Frankl also fit here. However, this orientation has yet to make it into many mainstream core academic curricula despite the needs of clients and students. The psyche, the soul, the unconscious and the sense of mystery are relegated to the “unscientific” fringe, or deliberated only as “ideas” in some philosophical camps but not recognized, let alone respected, as these *manifest* in the ordinariness of everyday living. Even many of the post-isms now in vogue (Spretnak, 1991), while legitimately deconstructing the cultural, social and historical embeddedness of systems, fail to address the depths of the psyche and soul. Some come on with an onslaught, *a new kind of tyrannical colonizing*, decrying the soul’s often inexplicable and subtle uprising with profane misinterpretations and old paradigm psychologizing. Their personal is political campaign still *feels* barren to me, lacking a more inclusive consideration of the whole human drama which includes the religious function or attitude (Jung, 1964), and which is not about any specific creed or dogma. For me, the personal *is* political *is* spiritual, (as private as it is public) - a circular, interpenetrating dynamic that takes the Ground of Being (Durckheim, 1971) into *all* aspects of our living. Without this third factor, the formula lapses into sheer, vacuous rhetoric with the token voice of the body politic echoing only the pretense of justice. And grand ideologies continue to reign as deep Care, conscience and accountability wait for a miracle!

However impoverished our experiencing or understanding of the spiritual domain, as helping professionals we have to sensitively deal with its *psychological manifestation*. Deeper transformational processes, including spiritual emergence are being presented more frequently for therapeutic facilitation (Grof & Grof, 1991; Jung 1969; Kornfield, 1993; Laing, 1989; Perry, 1986; Vaughan, 1995; von Franz, 1993; Wilber, 1997; and Woodman, 1985). Stein and Stein (1993) argue that psychotherapy can function as a kind of initiation ritual to mark and facilitate deep ST processes with the therapist attending in a “maieutic” (midwife) role to the process of giving birth to a new self. In

therapy the phenomenon of ST is *understood, honored, and highly valued as essential to psychological development*. It is vital that helping professionals recognize what they are dealing with, grasping “what is transpiring in the self and in the deeper layers of the personality as one dominant pattern of self-organization is dissolving and another is forming” (p. 297). The various stages, processes and content must be understood. Methods and treatment need to be aligned to what is going on *in the whole psyche*, not only within ego-consciousness. The therapist is a maieutic attendant and an empathic companion that has gone through the process, can respect its complexity, and discern some of the major pitfalls (p. 299).

Assagioli (1965), Grof and Grof (1991), Perry (1989) and von Franz (1993) voice concerns about the suitability and training of therapists and the vocational problematic of practicing professionals with respect to the facilitation of deep transformational work. Extensive training programs that are limited to the provision of indispensable knowledge, as necessary and valid as this is, cannot impart that *something* which creates in a person a healing emanation (von Franz, p. 276). Moral integrity and the will to help, while vital, are not sufficient either to create the result in question. von Franz emphasizes a deep sense of vocation, of being “called” to one’s lifework, of having feeling or “heart” which cannot be instilled (p. 273), and of undergoing one’s own intense, disciplined inner work or modern “shamanic initiation” *so as to know from the inside*.

During the shamanic initiatory “illness,” the candidate is mutilated and reduced “to a skeleton, that imperishable basic substance from which the renewed shaman can be birthed” (p. 275). Persons who have not “acceded to the depths of the unconscious and seen there the ways of all spirits of sickness” (p. 276), and come to terms with their own struggles and unconscious contents, are hardly likely to embody empathy real enough to touch the deep, psychic suffering of others. Further it is questionable if they can grasp the complex psychological processes at work. In the course of the initiatory “illness,” candidates succeed in finding their own cure, in experiencing the infinite in their own lives so that meaning has been found, and in coming to possess a core ego-strength and intactness in their innermost being. These last two components being indispensable prerequisites for the profession of psychotherapist (p. 277). But von Franz further argues

that it is not sufficient to have experienced a sense of vocation once. The right to practice this profession “must be earned again and again within oneself” (underline mine, p. 281).

Assagioli, Grof and Grof, and Perry, in a similar vein to von Franz, stress that helping professionals must be able to differentiate between a meaningful inner process and pathology, “not through hearsay or because of a liberal intellectual view” (Perry 1989. p 73), but as a result of actual experience. If not, in a moment of crisis, during the turmoil of transformation the truth of this knowing or not knowing would readily surface. A non-sickness or non-labeling view is agreed on. Further, they insist on helping professionals being sensitively discerning between “what is a person’s essence and what is the dross derived from the accidents of upbringing” (p. 73) or sociopolitical abuse, for example. The fragility of newly emerging elements in the personality must be met with responses that *embrace rather than violate*; less the ST project becomes *Self*-defeating.

To briefly address ST within the larger collective, research indicates a “turning point” happening on other levels too. Cultural transformations pervade (Capra, 1982; Capra and Steindl-Rast, 1991; Freire, 1992; Goldberger, 1996; Harding, 1996; hooks, 1994; Levin, 1989; Macy, 1991; Spretnak, 1997, 1991; Wilber, 1996), with individuals and groups re-examining and deconstructing oppressive regimes of power and conceptual models that fossilize consciousness. Virulent opposition abounds within the entrenched status quo, yet this counter-revolution is inevitably unfolding, hopefully aiding us to slowly adapt to a new ethos grounded in commitment to inner and outer peace.

Grof and Grof (1991) argue though, that “diplomatic negotiations, administrative and legal measures, economic and social interventions ... have had very little effect” (p. 235) in combating the dark side of this century’s history: the arms race, cultural genocide, demonic destruction of the earth’s resources etc. They suggest that these interventions are extensions of the very attitudes and mindset that created the global crisis in the first place! Certain psychological forces characterize this darkness: a bold readiness for violence, an insatiable greed and acquisitiveness, an insidious, destructive power over mentality and a chronic selfishness and discontent that fester limitless ambition and the pursuit of futile goals. As a species we seem to lack an ecological sensitivity critical for continued survival - a deep awareness of our intimate relationship with all of life; an

acumen that urgently questions self. How might I live a radical nonviolence *in my most inconspicuous of actions*? How might I be deeply related to *this* tree (Nhat Hanh, 1987)?

Those cultures that live(d) this more intuitive, embodied interconnection are (were) sanctioned “primitive” and “savage” by the imperialist rationality. As we watch the tides turn, it is pathetically ironic to witness the sordid backlash of such spiritual ignorance. My own Hindu mother suffered for living a ripe life grounded in the pride and wisdom of her ancestry, and for honoring I-Thou relations, the intuitive, the body and her sacred tradition. Like an undaunted woman-warrior however, she saw through and relativized the “civilized” rationality in her own way. Her liberation was costly. Yet, she dared and lived her truth by honoring her heritage *and* that of others. She crafted her path from within a more inclusive consciousness and modeled a way-of-being way beyond her time, instilling in me my own radical sense of primordial worth and inclusiveness. Thus, separatist constructs like minority and woman of color are pointedly oxymoronic in relation to an intrinsic sense of belonging to Life, to each other, to the ineffable Mystery. Instead, a politics of radical equality and compassion ensues as an ethos of the Heart.

Fundamentally speaking, the dark psychological forces that the Grofs cite seem symptomatic of a “severe alienation from inner life and loss of spiritual values” (p. 236). They suggest that although the problems of the world assume diverse forms, they are indicative of one underlying condition. “They are the collective result of the present level of consciousness of *individual human beings*” (p. 235). One possible solution to this predicament seems to lie in “a radical inner transformation of humanity on a large scale and its consequent rise to a higher level of awareness and maturity” (p. 236). I feel some resonance with the Grofs in that institutions/governments constitute individual psyches that may be equally toxic or healthy. Sam Keen (1989) says *we* are the enemy. We talk about abstract “institutions,” protect the perpetrators, skirt the heart of critical issues, and write novellas as it is lethal to *name* the oppressor. Moreover, some collude in the very toxicity they audaciously contest and when called to task, they take cover, for example, in Gadamerian philosophy arguing that every interpretation is a misinterpretation, (a post-modern tyranny of a subtler nature), thus contemptibly mocking that tacit, gut intuition that *knows* something is amiss. When this occurs within the dynamics of power relations,

the tacit knowledge is silenced. This intellectual raping compounds the double standard, coagulating the toxicity such that no genuine Self or social transformation ensues.

While Jung is criticized for a lack of socio-political acuity (Lauther & Rupprecht, 1985), he argued that our first responsibility to the world is our own in-depth, individual transformation (Jacobi, 1967). A process whereby we are hopefully given an opportunity to access the roots of those aspects of our destructive human nature by bringing them fully into consciousness, and to become aware of the transpersonal dimensions of our being and our spiritual sensibility (Grof and Grof, 1991). This suggests that our inner work can profoundly impact the collective consciousness. The process of transformation then seems integrally political even as it is personal and spiritual, and individuals undergoing this hazardous journey deserve competent and compassionate facilitation. This in turn necessitates more formal inclusion of theoretical and experiential knowledge of the process in counseling and psychotherapeutic graduate training and professional practice.

In summarizing this section, the purpose of this inquiry is to elucidate the process of the experience of Self-transformation as a mind-body-spirit dynamic within a personal, social, professional and spiritual context. This inquiry also points to the concerns of this researcher regarding *how* the experience of ST is understood and facilitated, taking into account the holistic perspective and the fragility of the process. As such, this study also addresses the urgency of incorporating theoretical *and* experiential knowledge of the ST process into the academic training of helping professionals. Cranton's (1994) work, which utilizes Mezirow's (1975) theory of transformative learning is engaged in Chapter Six as a parallel for discussing transformative processes occurring within education.

Just as critical is the need for practitioners to avail themselves of knowledge of the transformative process, which demands compassionate, sensitive midwifery. In like manner, this study points to an ethical imperative that educators who facilitate graduate research in psychological studies and who *invite student self-inquiry*, (which very often precipitates deep process work), become knowledgeable about the psychospiritual issues at hand, and accountable for *how* they deal with students in such processes. Often, the dynamics of power relations masks some educators' unwillingness to be thus responsible. Lastly, this inquiry questions the need for both practitioners *and* educators to be more

conscious of their own unresolved life issues, internal processes and possible limits as these interface with students' and clients' processes. Bugental (1976) alludes to this when he says, "hidden in the background, I am trying to mend the split within myself by mending those I find in my patients" (p. 281). This consciousness is critical in academia.

In my view, this also applies to educators in higher education or at any level. While Grumet (1981, 1987), Lather (1991), and Pinar (1988) insist on student self-inquiry, I have observed in the discourse on pedagogical praxis very little *embodied* self-awareness of educators with respect to how their possible personal, historical-cultural and pedagogical encapsulation may implicate their praxis. I am alluding to that quality of cogent self-awareness as exemplified by hooks (1994) in such discourse and Bugental (1987, 1978) in psychotherapy. Self-knowledge that unveils the fragility of the pedagogues' struggles and humanness and thus illuminating a *deep pedagogy* in which transformation ensues as a two-way, mutual dynamic and not a lopsided power-hierarchy with students' transformational processes being put at further and unnecessary risk.

Personal "Calling" or Vocation

In concluding the rationale, I now consider how the birthing of this inquiry into the experience of the process of Self-transformation, my life-work as personal "calling" (or vocation), personal destiny, and my own transformational process during the research are inextricably linked. The simultaneous process of experiencing and researching the phenomenon has been about a "call" to deepen my vocation. This has also constituted a legitimate purpose of the inquiry and has been understood only retrospectively. This provides a foundational matrix for understanding the nature and inherent complexity of this research inquiry which has been experienced as *engaged research*, and which has thus called into question what constitutes research and hence purpose.

Vocation is used as in Homan's (1986) quest for authentic existence, supported by Heidegger's (1949, 1962) existentialist tradition and Cochran's (1990) sense of life's calling. Vocation is a unifying concept that grounds the notion of work, suggesting that the work we do throughout a lifetime has a unity of purpose such that vocation is relative to self and the meaning we attach to work is relative to self. Thus, the matrix of meaning attributed to life-work and to self are inseparable aspects of some oneness of being

(Cochran, 1990.) Vocation is an order of being, a way of being such that for the person who has achieved a true sense of vocation, person and work are united (p. 3.)

According to Heidegger (1949, 1962 in Homan, 1986) authentic existence is a mark of being, a mark of *Dasein* – being there. The essence of *Dasein* is to be, to exist at all, to ponder the question of who one is or one's "existenz." Two features of *Dasein* are *thrownness* and *fallenness*. We are thrown into the world; we are. We also forget our innate selfhood by falling into the world and negating our self-responsibility. Inauthentic existence is experienced as anonymous living, coiled in illusory security and fearful of actualizing freedom. We subjugate ourselves to forms of domination rather than assume responsibility for the outcome of exercising our freedom. In authentic existence we accept our thrownness and the fact of our being, face the threat of death and insecurity, engage with the world in love and work and honor our self-integrity and interdependence.

Having vocation means to be on a quest for authentic existence - to be on a path of ongoing discovery through experience, to be open, and to be who we can become (Homan, 1986). It is *vocatio* – a life's calling (Cochran, 1990); a calling to a way of being in the world that allows for particularity; a calling that draws us forward to a meaning that is inherent in our life. The work of a vocation is a life's work, occupying the center of a life, enduring throughout life, and is the very measure of one's life. It translates into who one is essentially. "One bends all of life in service of a vocation" (Cochran, 1990. p. 4.)

This has been critical to the unfolding of this inquiry. An implication that needs articulation here has to do with my initial desire to inquire into the phenomenon, which, unbeknownst to me then, had something intrinsic to do with challenging the status quo within and growing in personal, spiritual and professional wholeness and maturity. In other words, *the call to take up the task of investigating the phenomenon of transformation has been synchronously a call to my own individuation process*. Thus, my living my vocation (or life's calling) as healer-psychotherapist-teacher has been the catalyst that impelled my pursuing doctoral studies so as to enhance my overall repertoire. This then initiated an intense transformational process, summoning me to sober inner work and healing, with me acutely experiencing the phenomenon from the inside out. This in turn has been transforming my selfhood while solidifying this intrinsic union of self and

vocation and preparing me to be of service to community again, coming from a deeper level of compassionate, buddhist professionalism. My Self and my vocation are one. The refining of both is integrally mutual, confirming von Franz' (1993) resolute stance: "the right to practice this profession must be earned again and again *within oneself*" (p. 281). Inquiring into the phenomenon of Self-transformation, then, seemed in itself to be a pivotal movement toward the maturation of Self and vocation. Thus, the purpose of this inquiry has also been about consolidating "the opus of a life," unifying the inward and outward life through a single directive principle - vocation (Progoff, 1986).

In my experience, my vocation has been *the* relentless path through which I have been consistently *broken open*, brought to my knees and graced into self-knowledge and healing. This in turn, as a reciprocal process has enriched my professional acuity and sensitivity while deepening my humility. This circular dynamic is an endowment steadily paid for with my very life. I now proceed to describe my experience of how the seeding of this inquiry came into being while attending to vocational-personal needs and how the symbol of the heart, actual heart-shaped rocks called *Earth Hearts* began serendipitously "showing up" as an uncanny and sacred metaphor for Self-transformation and symbolic of the Jungian concept of the "Self" or God-image within.

I reread my first statement of purpose for pursuing doctoral studies in counseling psychology dated Jan/25/91. One line stood out: "I feel quietly confident and prepared to embark on yet a higher level of Self-actualization and expand on both my educational and professional repertoire." This attests to an ethical imperative regarding the dedication to and the integration of personal-professional growth, thus weaving an enduring fabric of vocation. Back in 1991, I was unaware of the profundity of that statement and how it was to subsequently take root within the design of my research inquiry and inner work. I did not bargain for the depth of pain, struggle, healing and Self-transformation that I have since endured. Had I known, I may have chosen a more benign topic! Nonetheless, my Self *is* the embodiment of my personal, professional and research praxis and as such, it is inevitably disposed to perpetually entering zones of decay, annihilation and renewal. This knowledge helps little though as it seems that I am most often caught off-guard and immensely bewildered when change beckons.

Indicative in my statement of purpose for pursuing doctoral studies was an alert confidence and preparedness. That inner atmosphere of potency did not just happen though. It was nourished over time and during a thirteen-month world trip prior to my application. And therein laid the *Sower*, the *soil* and the *seed* of the inquiry. The *seed* that blossomed into the gift of green and birthed this then nascent research project took form and substance as a *process* of sacred travelling inwardly and outwardly around the world.

That round-the-world project constituted four intentional, open-ended purposes: (a) doing informal cross-cultural research in health, wellness and spirituality; (b) visiting sacred sites, doing an earth weaving and healing ritual at each site, blessing mother Earth and offering a “gift” of deep gratitude for all that we have received; (c) celebrating my life with a gift of travel for having come to a new depth of self-possession after healing for eight years from the dissolution of my primary partnership; and (d) visiting the homelands of my students and clients, desiring to penetrate the infrastructure of their cultures and witness firsthand the reasons why some of them left, why some yearn to return and why others resolutely refuse to bear allegiance to their past. Their stories came painfully alive, instilling in me a renewed “emancipatory anger” while deepening my love for and implicit commitment to them. This eventuated in a profound sensitizing process for me.

Suffice it to say that beneath the surface of things, I was initiated into an even deeper understanding that “home” *is* a space I carry in my heart, that each human being *is* of intrinsic worth, that the earth *is* sacred, that trust and surrender to the ways of the Holy *are* my inner compass, and that my politics *is* the way in which I live my life. People of diverse cultures shared various levels of intimacy with me, and at the Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz, a diabolic hate informed me ironically of radical nonviolence. That accursed side of humanity, in its most odious manifestation drew me up against my own darkness when I returned to Germany and felt the raw frenzy of wanting to avenge every German I saw. The intensity of that brief insanity echoed the caution that the enemy is also *me*. That jolted me into consciousness right there at the Frankfurt station. I prayed, realigned with my *Center*, vowed to use my life as a channel for peace and to be open to my own shadow-shit as shameful as it might be. This coming into deeper consciousness prevailed throughout my journey. It was guided and informed by the dialogues, solitude

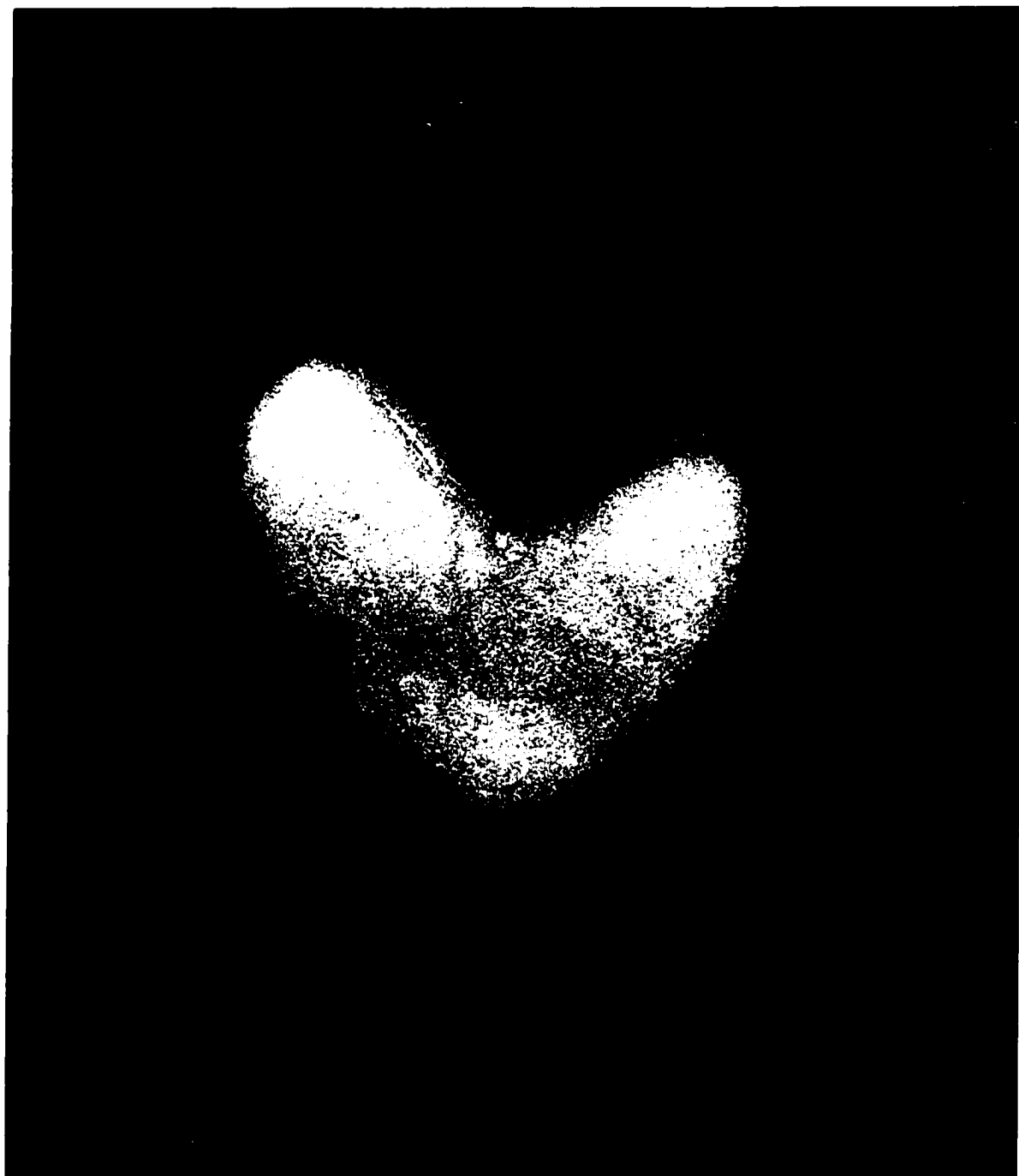
and relationships that I encountered. This allowed for much personal integration and instilled in me a sense of sober accountability for how I participate in the world. Whether the moments were of ecstasy or despair, vocation as a way of life was being deepened.

Nearing the tail end of the journey and on returning to the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland a second time, I stayed at their Isle of Iona retreat house. In my contemplative moments, I got clear inner guidance that I would do doctoral studies in transformation in Victoria, B.C. A South-African retreatant shared a book from the Theosophical Society that spoke of Vancouver Island as being a power spot and a place of tremendous inner cleansing as certain ley-lines constituted its geological configuration. Only some of this stirred me. What I felt deeply though was an indubitable intuition that some substantial purpose was dawning within my being but having no solid clue, I just let it be.

Then on returning to the main Findhorn center in Forres, I began having decisive dreams and waking images of my work as a psychologist and about creating a healing sanctuary for such work. The guidance was about practicing psychotherapy at a deeper spiritual level. Crisp visions came for the design of the sanctuary which I then carefully documented. Then, during a solitary encounter with the waters of Findhorn Bay, I was gifted with the *first* earth-heart (Earth-Heart One, p. 36). It was a rich moment as I had not so casually come into a big heart rock before. I felt like my daughter, Khalila, at age five, whose little tanned body thundered with pleasure over a unique find. I was pregnant with joy. That was in March 1989. I got no immediate clues yet imposed no premature meaning to that treasure. I simply cherished and placed it in my sanctuary where it has since been present to daily prayer-meditations for mother Earth and all of her inhabitants.

It was only in March 1999, after having “received” the *thirteenth* earth-heart from Keawakapu beach in Maui and experiencing a strong bodily intuition that “*something*” had come full circle in my transformational process, that the meaning of the *first* earth-heart was revealed. Now it symbolizes a sort of blueprint or hidden master plan and a source of wisdom and orientation - a symbolic compass guiding the beginning of the inquiry and my transformation. The heart itself represents what has been *the crux* of my healing. This seems analogous to Jung’s idea of the Self, “that central authority of the psyche which seems from the beginning to be in *a priori* possession of the goal” (Jacobi,

EARTH HEART # 1
The *Sower*, the *Soil* and the *Seed* of the Inquiry



Found at Findhorn Bay, Scotland 1989

1967. p. 30). In Jung's (1959) view, the Self may appear through abstract images like mandalas, in the form of feminine figures like a priestess or as sacred objects such as stones and jewels. These symbols serve the function of elucidating living, subjective meaning, guiding and sacralizing experience, and like dreams, may possess attributes indicative of the specific qualities seeking expression, embodiment and incarnation through a particular individual (Bogart, 1992). They point to something essentially unknown, a mystery. Edinger (1972) says that they become living organic entities that act as releasers and transformers of psychic energy. Thus, "a symbol is alive" (p. 91).

In relation to the significance of the other twelve earth-hearts, this first one also symbolizes the Tao, the Most Holy, or that "unencompassable" which we cannot get around in the sense of avoid or circumscribe with our concepts (Caputo, 1987). For me, it symbolizes the *Sower*, the *soil*, the *seed*; the synergy out of which the germ of healing and wholeness and the embryonic stages of this inquiry into the experience of the process of Self-transformation were birthed, *long before the academic process began*. It is also the *seed* carrying awakened consciousness gathered along the Way. Now, it seems like a fertile incubation is giving way to a harvest, weeds and all, through this research inquiry.

In essence then, in this section on the rationale, I have delved into the "ground" from which the inspiration and premise for this inquiry was birthed, and discussed the varied purposes as they relate to my personal and professional experiences and to much broader psychosocial and collective issues. I have also elaborated on others aspects integral to the purpose of this research work - the refining of a vocation, the enactment of a sober Self-transformation journey and the coming into a living symbol that permeated the research process and offered a metaphor for guiding and interpreting meaning, insight and action; each aspect seemingly informing the other in a reciprocal way. This dynamic interplay of processes came unbidden, *as I continually listened and surrendered to what the inquiry kept calling forth*. It was like the inner life had enacted a complex, manifold process asserting Jung's view that the unconscious is capable of acting autonomously in highly sophisticated ways to effect healing (Bogart, 1992) and transformation. It seems like a deeper wisdom was at work then and hence the purpose of the inquiry was not as clear-cut and unambiguous as the dominant scientific paradigm desires. Many subtle,

convoluted implications have been revealed over time *as a process* and several “messy” detours have been essential and needed to be honored so as to maintain true fidelity to the phenomenon. The amorphous process has been leading ... with me following.

Assumptions

In seriously considering the assumptions with which I came to this inquiry, it is evident that some were implicit and explicit in nature while others were acquired along the way or surfaced from the unconscious as the inquiry proceeded. Even now, I am not aware of all my assumptions as I can never fully know myself, agreeing with Heshusius (1992). Some that directly relate to this inquiry are as follows:

- a. There is a resiliency to the human spirit that must be honored and tended to carefully.
- b. Transformation of the individual psyche has direct import for the collective good.
- c. There is a ground of Being or a core substrate that is sacred, unassailable and indwells all of creation. It impinges upon the human psyche, making itself known and guiding the unfolding purpose of each life as well as the order within the chaos of the universe.
- d. In psychotherapy, as in living itself, this innate unfolding has to be partnered with.
- e. We can choose to commit to Self-transformation or subscribe to inauthentic living, although there is an *in between stance* whereby we are pushed along even as we resist.
- f. Each human life has intrinsic worth that I must respect and treat as equal to mine.
- g. I cannot know all of my assumptions at any one time as it is in the dynamics of participatory research that I consciously encounter or stumble unconsciously into them.
- h. We are capable of healing ourselves and can choose to access that capacity or not.
- i. A mind/body/spirit holism is intrinsic to the *thriving* of the individual and the planet.
- j. Research is a *process* in which we surrender to the unknown so as to be impregnated with experience and knowledge of things *as they are* and not what we wish them to be. This more indigenous mentality invites vulnerability and “foolish floundering” that does not necessarily cohere with the more linear, precise rationality in vogue.
- k. A researcher is a rich repository of tacit knowledge and innate wisdom and *must* trust and act on the intuitions and insights that arise from her direct participation in inquiry as opposed to strictly adhering to prescribed protocol. Yet, self-suspicion is critical to the integrity of the work. However, self-authenticity naturally breeds self-suspicion.

- l. The academic milieu is a safe environment to engage in research in transformation.
- m. Educators who engage in transformative praxis are reasonably *self*-aware, informed and can be trusted with the fragility of students' progressive transformative processes.
- n. There are multiple realities/perspectives, each relative to the other with no one Truth.

Summary of the Methodology Employed

The phenomenon, the lived-experience of the psychological process of Self-transformation (ST) lends itself to elucidation within the qualitative research paradigm in psychology, employing and blending two modes of inquiry, heuristics and autobiography or self-narrative, both of which are constitutive of an interpretive methodology.

Qualitative research refers to a particular approach to knowledge production and to research that uses qualitative data. The approach to knowledge production entails the rediscovery of the subjective nature and storied quality of science (Sandelowski, 1994)). Science meaning human science which studies persons who possess *consciousness* and act intentionally in and on the world by creating objects of *meaning* that are expressions of how they exist in the world (van Manen, 1990). This research mode focuses on asking people questions, observing them and listening and interpreting their lived experience. Whatever the phenomenon, it is the total context that creates what it means to be present and to be an experiencing participant. And it is that context and those meanings that the researcher seeks to illuminate. The data is perceived as "textual" and the type of research based on them as descriptive or interpretive/critical and hence qualitative (Tesch, 1990).

The *heuristics research* (HR) methodology employed in the inquiry is that of Clark Moustakas (1990,1985, 1981). It has its roots in humanistic psychology and shares philosophical and methodological procedures with hermeneutic phenomenology (which is descriptive and interpretive). It is also a form of phenomenological reflection termed "imaginative presence" (Colaizzi, 1978) whereby researchers rely on their contemplation on and experience of the phenomenon rather than on the experiential accounts of others. As such, they use their own experience as data (Tesch, 1990) and the phenomenon is revealed through experience and awareness (intuitions, dreams) and by approaching it from diverse angles (metaphor, myth, symbol and poetry). Phenomenological reflection

is a process of “wondering about and searching, delving into a phenomenon, awakening to it and letting oneself be inspired” (p. 70).

Heuristic research is a passionate, personal engagement with a phenomenon in an effort to understand the essence of an aspect of life through *the internal pathways of the self*. The researcher aligns with and honors her own questions and problems and affirms imagination, intuition, self-reflection and *the tacit dimension*, (the inner essence of human understanding - we know more than we can tell (Polanyi, 1967)), as legitimate pathways in the search for knowledge and understanding. Moustakas (1990) says that the heuristic process is autobiographic in that when pursued through intimate and authentic processes of the self, the data that emerge is autobiographical, original and accurately descriptive of the textures and structures of lived experience (p. 40). The concepts and processes of heuristic research are - identifying with the focus of the inquiry, indwelling, self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, focusing and the internal frame of reference. The six phases are - initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis. These concepts, stages and phases mirror many of those encountered in the transformational process and hence the methodological fit of heuristic procedures in describing and elucidating the lived-experience of transformation, using the form of autobiographical writing. This fit emerged gradually after many years into the inquiry.

Autobiography is a narrative portrayal of individual experience. As such, it is being grounded in idiographic psychological research (Allport, 1965, 1962, 1942; Smith, Harre and Langenhove, 1995). Some reference is also made to postmodern human science research which focuses on reflexivity and narrative and problematizes orthodox conceptualizations of the research and knowledge process (Bruner, 1986, 1995; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Grumet, 1981, 1987; Harding, 1989; Lather 1999, 1991; Pinar, 1975, 1988; and Pinar and Grumet, 1976).

Allport (1942) argues that acquaintance with particulars is the beginning of all knowledge – scientific or otherwise. In psychology, the font and knowledge of human nature lies in acquaintance with concrete individuals in their natural complexity. He stresses that it is a serious error to assume that generalized knowledge of human nature can outstrip knowledge of particular expressions of human nature. Hence, he placed

equal value in idiographic (dealing with particulars) research as with nomothetic (dealing with generalizations) research and considers personal documents as valid scientific data. The idiographic method is essentially phenomenological in that personal documents are viewed as introspective and subjective protocols that are especially adaptable to the study of the complexities of phenomenal consciousness. It also allows for interpretation of meaning of lived experience. Autobiography is considered one form of personal documents and comprises a variety of forms: comprehensive, topical and edited. The topical autobiography, in this case, that which is focused on the lived-experience of Self-transformation is the form engaged in this study. It is topical in the sense that it focuses on the effects of one social event or the experience of a particular human phenomenon. It gives the “inside half” (p.77) of a life, the half that is hidden from the objectively-minded scientist. The possibility exists for the researcher to gather in depth data of the lived-experience of a phenomenon. The topical autobiography represents an excision from a life and offers comparative study and inductive use of the data.

Brunner (1995), Pinar (1988) and Smith, Harre and Langenhove (1995) also advocate the autobiographic process as a method of scientific inquiry. Their view is that our life histories are not liabilities to be exorcised but the very precondition for knowing. Autobiographic method offers opportunities to return to our own situations, our “rough edges” (Pinar, 1988), and to re-imagine our existential agendas. The “focus in such work is the felt problematic and the method is intuitive” (p. 148). Chapter Four constitutes an in depth discussion of the methodology and its emergence over time.

Definition of Terms

The following terms, concepts or phrases are used throughout the text and are presented here to facilitate further understanding of their contextual meaning. Some may constitute abridged versions compared to that which appears in the text.

Archetype: psychic processes that are transformed into primordial, symbolic images or patterns of human behavior. Their effects are observable in motifs and processes that belong to the collective archetype (Jung, 1969).

Autobiography: a narrative portrayal of individual experience. It is one form of personal documents that takes three forms: comprehensive, topical, edited (Allport, 1965).

It focuses on knowledge of *particular expressions* of human nature. As a research method, it aligns with a phenomenological perspective which views personal documents as introspective, subjective protocols and allows for the study and the interpretation of the *meaning* of the complexities of phenomenal consciousness.

Collective Unconscious: a structural layer of the psyche containing inherited aspects that are objective, universal or characteristic of the human species (Jacobi, 1973).

Consciousness: the range of experience of which we are aware at any moment, and the activity that maintains the relation of psychic contents to the ego (Sharp, 1991).

Ego: the central complex in the field of consciousness that possesses a very high degree of continuity and identity (Jung, 1971). It stands in a complementary relation to consciousness and the unconscious. It focuses on external and internal events and facilitates the understanding and integration of contents from the unconscious.

Essence: the essential *whatness* of a thing (van Manen, 1990). A thing as it is in itself.

Heuristics Research: a type of qualitative research with roots in humanistic psychology and shares philosophical and methodological procedures with hermeneutic phenomenology which is descriptive and interpretive. It involves a passionate, personal engagement with a phenomenon in an effort to understand the essence of an aspect of life through *the internal pathways of the self* (Moustakas, 1990).

Individuation: a lifelong existential and growth process that entails many “spiraling rounds” of the transformation journey. The goal is the development of the *individual* personality, unique and indivisibly whole (Sharp, 1991).

Inner Voice: a significant subjective experience perceived as a voice speaking inwardly and/or a vaguer *felt-sense* of some inner communication that strives toward meaning and personal integration (Heery, 1987).

Mystery: that which cannot be solved like a problem, but may be *resolved* in that a person may come to accept or learn to live with the unexplainable. That which we encounter as infinite, as sacred within ourselves, and which intimates a larger purpose and deeper meaning to life. That which shows itself and yet withdraws.

Numinous: a term coined from the Latin word *numen* (indwelling divinity) Otto (1923). It stands for that which is ineffable, that which is ‘extra’ in the meaning of holy.

Persona: the “social guise” between the ego and the relational world, i.e. the form of a person’s system of adaptation to, or the manner s/he assumes in dealing with the environment. It is a protective covering and is effective if it remains permeable.

Personal Unconscious: the personal layer of the unconscious which is distinct from the collective unconscious. It contains lost memories, painful ideas that are repressed and contents that are not yet ripe for consciousness (Jung, 1966).

Psyche: the totality of all psychological processes, both conscious and unconscious. The manner in which it manifests is a complex interplay of factors - hereditary disposition, age, sex, psychological type and attitude, and degree of conscious control over the instincts (Sharp, 1991). It is the organ through which we mediate our understanding of the world and being. It is also a process (Brookes, 1980).

Qualitative Research: a particular approach to knowledge production and to research that uses qualitative data. This approach entails the rediscovery of the subjective nature and storied quality of science (Sandelowski, 1994). It is the study of persons who possess *consciousness* and act intentionally in and on the world by creating objects of *meaning* which are expressions of how we live in the world. The focus is on asking people questions, observing, listening and interpreting lived-experience. The total context of the subject offers meaningful data.

Self: the central archetype and ordering and unifying center of the psyche (Jung, 1966). It is the source and ultimate foundation of the psyche and symbolizes the “God within.” It functions as a dynamic of wholeness - completion of the personality.

Shadow: an aspect of the personal unconscious containing hidden, rejected parts of self.

Transformation: the ongoing punctuated episodes of personal chaos, transition and psychological shifts in consciousness in which the individual undergoes and endures the process of passage from one life-phase to the next in a cyclical pattern of death and rebirth (Bridges, 1980).

CHAPTER TWO

A Theoretical Framework

A Psychology of Self-Transformation: A Jungian Perspective

Introduction

In the interplay between worlds within the chrysalis, the parts of my being began to dissolve, merging into each other with wavelike motions, then settling into a shapeless mass that pushed against the inside of the shroud in a dead weight A dead weight. That was my cue. Sure as you are living, I was dying I hung without any visible support Slowly the ladder stopped swinging as if warning of the ultimate plunge into wherever the Dream was leading me I was alive and dead I was dying and I was being born ... the question and the questioner hovered over me. Something or someone had set the whole thing in motion (Bach, 1985, n.p.).

In this chapter, I present an in-depth psychological theory of Self-transformation from a Jungian perspective, weaving in first, a discussion of spirituality and inner voice which are, in my belief system and experiential reality, integral dimensions of the Self-transformation process. This stance is in resonance with the theorists I refer to here. Definitions of transformation and the individuation process (articulated in Chapter One) are briefly and necessarily reiterated here for clarity and the essential flow of the topic. While directly accessing Jung's *Collected Works* (1953-1973) and his other writings, I am especially indebted to Andersen (1991), Jacobi (1973, 1967), Perry (1986), Sharp (1991, 1988), Stevens (1990), van der Post (1975), and von Franz (1995, 1993, 1964), for their interpretation of Jung's often convoluted expositions on analytical psychology and the individuation process. These authors explicate psychological processes based on Jung's model that are directly operative within the transformational experience.

According to Jung (1969), "rebirth is an affirmation that must be counted among the primordial affirmations of mankind" (p. 116), since it is observed across cultures. Growth seems to happen in enigmatic interweavings of cycles of change on many levels marked by discontinuous transitions in which familiar patterns are turned inside out as a restructuring of the psyche occurs. Durckheim (1971) says that the destiny of everything that lives is the inescapable unfoldment of its inherent nature; the realization of which demands the perpetual living, like Nietzsche (1970), at "the departure of all gates." Jung

viewed this unfoldment as the development of personality and he called it individuation. In offering a substantive definition of transformation, it is necessary to first speak to the individuation process. In my understanding, it is an evolutionary growth process that is experienced contextually within our worldly destiny. As a lifelong project individuation entails many spiraling rounds of the transformational experience; ongoing psychological death and rebirth cycles, some more acute than others, that move toward Self-realization. It is a journey ripe with mystery that begs forth the fulfillment of our innate potentialities.

Individuation is a process of psychological *differentiation* informed by the archetypal ideal of wholeness, the Self, which in turn relies on an essential relationship between the ego and the unconscious (Sharp, 1991); the goal being the development of the *in-dividual* personality, unique and indivisibly whole. The *Self* symbolizes the ordering and unifying centre of the psyche which intentionally seeks its own unique realization through the individuation process. Individuation constitutes an internal and subjective process of integration, as well as a process of self-and-collective synergy (Jung, 1966). For Jung it is the critical life process through which an individual is:

... informed and differentiated ... it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology (1971, p. 448), and the aim of individuation is nothing less than to divest the self of the false wrappings of the persona on the one hand, and the suggestive power of primordial images on the other (1966 p. 174).

Transformation suggests the *action of changing* in form, shape or nature. It is a process of metamorphosis, a radical change in character or form. The Latin prefix *trans* means through, beyond, or across. *Form* implies the structure, shape, state, or essence of something; what is actually present. An active meaning is *to come or bring into existence*, to create; hence a sense of process and fluidity as opposed to stasis. Transformation is thus used to mean the intentional, radical changing or *breakdown* of familiar psychic states, and the *breakthrough* or conscious bringing into existence of progressively fluid, integrated configurations and expressions of the Self; a process of the life-death paradox that returns in a different guise and with intentional purpose at each new spiral of growth.

Individuation, then, is our lifelong, progressive quest for Self-realization and the fulfillment of our innate destiny. And within this existential drama, *transformational*

experiences may be understood as those punctuated episodes of personal transition and psychological shifts in consciousness when one journeys through the process of passage between one life-phase and the next, in a cycle of death and rebirth (Bridges, 1980). These episodes signal critical turning points on the path of self-renewal and are marked by periods of disorientation, ending, confusion and distress, re-orientation and rebirth. Transformation symbolizes movement inward into depth *and* outward into the relational world, eventuating in a complex deepening of the implications of humanness (van Dusen, 1972). It is as though our primal Essence is veiled in the depths and the depths takes us “*through* the circumstances of life, with all its dramas, *along* the lines of our innate tendencies” (van Dusen, 1972, p. 186), via a wise and transcendent process; a benevolent “midwifery” of sorts by the Mystery inherent in life itself.

Spirituality within the context of Self-Transformation

I want to write about faith,
 about the way the moon rises
 over cold snow, night after night,
 faithful even as it fades from fullness
 slowly becoming that last curving and impossible
 slither of light before the final darkness.
 But I have no faith myself
 I refuse it the smallest entry.
 Let this then, my small poem,
 like a new moon, slender and barely open
 be the first prayer that opens me to faith (Whyte, 1993, p. 4).

It seems that we unsuspectingly practice a deep faith when we let go, descend into the depths of our innermost being, and practice the hard discipline of self-healing and transformation. Humility and courage feed this faith-*fullness*. Jungian analyst, Adler, once said that the words *whole, holy and heal* all embrace within them a deep and abiding similarity - they convey the idea that wholeness and healing are related (in Sinetar, 1986), and in these experiences we are blessed - vitally renewed, released, and deepened in our primordial Nature. My mother taught me that there is something of immeasurable dignity and worth intrinsic to each living being that secures their primary value. This ensues in a sacredness that commands, from each of us, an attitude of deep honoring and Care as we practice stewardship toward each other, the earth and ourselves. I believe that the very

process of self-renewal and remembering (*anamnesis*) of our primal Self-worth, *and* that of the other, constitutes this same sacredness. Jung likened this path to a spiritual journey to the larger Self whereby we become attuned to a more reverent way of being and doing.

In his therapeutic work, Jung (1945) insisted that his primary concern:

... was not with the treatment of neuroses but rather with the approach to the numinous. But the fact is that the approach to the numinous is the real therapy and inasmuch as you attain to the numinous experiences, you are released from the curse of pathology. Even the very disease takes on a numinous character (p. 377).

Jung was an early pioneer who challenged the dominance of the medical model in psychiatry and psychology, emphasizing the importance of spirituality and its relation to mental disorders. He, like Assagioli (1965), questioned the limited biologically-based thinking of Freudian psychoanalysis. Freud's neglect and misrepresentation of the spiritual (or numinous) dimension in human life was a deep concern for them. The numinous is integral in Jungian analysis. von Franz (1993) confirms that if a relationship with the numinous cannot be established no healing is possible, only social adjustment.

It was Rudolf Otto (1923) who coined the word *numinous* from the Latin word *numen*, meaning indwelling divinity, to speak of a unique numinous category of value and a definitely "numinous" state of mind which may be discussed but which cannot be strictly defined. It totally eludes apprehension in terms of concepts. *It is the feeling that remains where the concept fails.* An experiential understanding of this state of mind reaches a person when "the numinous in him perforce begins to stir, to start into life and into consciousness" (1977, p. 7). The numinous stands for that which is ineffable, that which is *extra* in the meaning of holy and that which is above and beyond the meaning of moral goodness. It is the unnamed Something, a vital force that animates and guides, an original feeling-response that cannot strictly speaking, "be taught, it can only be evoked, awakened in the mind as everything that comes 'of the spirit' must be awakened" (p. 7). Creeds, dogmas and rituals are secondary elaborations of this primal intimate experience.

Jung (1969) felt that the experience of the numinous might actually be impeded by institutional indoctrination. Moreover, he asserted that the urge toward the numinous is an inborn need of the soul and thus, we are endowed with a natural *religious function* of the psyche in which the activity of the Self is revealed in its most significant aspect

(Jacobi, 1967). The Self symbolizes the archetype of wholeness and the regulating center of the psyche. It is a transpersonal power that transcends the ego (Sharp, 1991). "It is in all beings, like the Atman, like Tao. It is psychic totality ... a totality supraordinate to consciousness ... and *experienced* as something numinous" (Jung, 1964, p. 463). Though ontologically indescribable, it is immanently *felt* and experienced with an unmistakable certainty and sense of humility, even trepidation (Underhill, 1974).

Jung felt that neglect or violation of this inborn urge results in severe injury to psychic health. For him, every neurosis is fundamentally an expression of a disturbance of the "religious function" (Jacobi, 1967, p. 106). Jung viewed the individuation process (which is intrinsic to this inborn urge) as directed primarily to the ongoing completeness of the personality; the aim being to bring out of unconsciousness the missing dimensions that would make for wholeness. According to Jung, our dedication to this process to which we commit all of our powers is an attitude that may be aptly called religious or spiritual in the broadest sense. This is so because the experience of the individuation process leads a person to the knowledge "that she is at the mercy of an irrational power which transcends her consciousness and which she has to accept humbly" (Jacobi, 1967, p. 106). This is supported by the fact that when archetypal contents (dreams, urges, fantasies) spontaneously arise out of the unconscious, "numinous and healing effects emanate from them, restoring the disturbed equilibrium" (Jung, 1952, p. 56). Jacobi (1976) adds that the religious function of the psyche is the *motor* (p. 109) that drives one to the completion of her human task and the individuation process to its fulfillment.

Jung's work proved empirically that the pattern of the numinous, a master pattern, exists in every person in the collective unconscious. This pattern constellates within the Self and expresses an unknowable essence (Jung, 1953). It has at its disposal the greatest of all of an individual's energies crucial "for transformation and transfiguration of his natural being" (van der Post, 1975, p. 217). The meaning of life and renewal, individual and collective, rely on a conscious relationship with this pattern in the unconscious. In other words, transformation seems inextricably linked to this numinous dimension.

Like Jung and other Jungian analysts - Brooks (1991); Jacobi (1977); Perry (1976, 1986); Sharp (1991); Stevens (1990); von Franz (1964, 1993); Woodman (1985) - and

theorists like Assagioli (1965, 1973); de Wit (1987); Dossey (1989, 1993); Durckheim (1971), Grof and Grof (1989, 1991); Hillman (1975, 1996), Myss (1996); and Underhill (1956), I take the resolute position that the “numinosum is primary religious experience” (Stevens, 1990, p. 248). It is both transcendent and immanent; its immanent dimension being *re*-awakened in our psyche, body, heart, attitudes and actions. It exists interiorly and exteriorly. As such, its psychological and physical manifestations *are* empirically valid and it is the responsibility of psychology to care for and tend thoughtfully to these religious or spiritual, (terms used synonymously here), needs as they erupt and demand integration during the process of transformation and in the ongoing development of the personality. Any paradigmatic stance on human development that puts sole emphasis on cognition, behavior and affect without responsibly and sensitively attending to the very Ground from which we live and have our being, reflects a stark ignorance; the idiocy of which we continue to pay an alarmingly exorbitant price.

How does the numinous manifest in the transformation experience? Many adherents of the healing arts have theorized about the acute turbulence that accompanies profound changes in the psyche. When genuine spiritual awakening and transformation of one’s inner culture are underway, one encounters images of death and world destruction. This often entails periods of acute discomfort, fragmentation, de-adaptation, and episodes of altered states of consciousness called *transitory psychosis* (Perry, 1986), which are usually short and mild (Assagioli, 1965; Grof & Grof, 1991; Jung, 1959). Perry (1986) questions the need for all this upheaval and suggests we persist with a second query, i.e. “What is *spirit* and what is its nature” (p. 33)? The term *spiritual* is often loosely defined as anything uplifting or, at the other extreme, supernatural. However, the actual phenomenology of spirit gives a different impression. The ancient words for it suggest breath or air in motion and hence wind - in Hebrew *ruach*; in Latin, *animus*; in the Far East, *prana* or *chi*’i. The very word itself implies the meaning of breath, derived from the Latin *spiritus*. These all connote a dynamism that is invisible as air yet potent as wind that bloweth where it listeth, intimating that spirit is pure energy moving with a will of its own. Perry suggests that *spirit* has a voice (as when one is moved by the spirit). Hence, it seems to have the property of intention, is imbued with information, and as such may

be defined as “informed energy” (p. 33) or energy with a quality of mind that manifests in psychological experiences. Throughout the ages, this energy has been intuited and felt.

Perry (1986) further postulates that, in terms of psychological experiences, this sense of spirit or powerful life-force energy is persistently seeking release from its entrapment in our rigid and conventional mental structures:

Spiritual work is the attempt to liberate this dynamic energy, which must break free of its suffocation in old forms - emotional patterns such as the complexes engendered in the family system; assumptions about the nature of the world and human life; values that need revision as conditions change; and cultural forms derived from family, subculture, or dominant cultural conditioning that must change with the times (p. 34).

If the work of releasing spirit becomes imperative during the process of individual development and (this *call*) is not heeded and committed to seriously, the psyche tends to predominate and overwhelm the conscious personality with its own dynamic processes. Perry terms this dynamic the “renewal process,” Jung (1969, 1960), the “individuation process,” Grof and Grof (1991), “spiritual emergence,” and Assagioli (1965), the “Self-realization process.” They state that this deep work does not eventuate in some acquired ultimate end-state but is rather an evolutionary process in which a person experiences many *rounds* of the transformational spiral; an experience of continuous be-coming.

Before closing this section, I now briefly touch on some other interpretations of spirituality. Campbell (1988) views religion (going back to the word “religio”) as a process of linking back the phenomenal person to the one Source. This is the mystery that has been reduced to concepts and ideas, the overemphasis of which actually short-circuits the intense, transcendent experience of mystery. This experience, says Campbell, “is what one may regard as the ultimate religious experience” (p. 209). Jung (1968) suggests that this mystery manifests psychologically in a kind of “correspondence” (p. 11), which he called the Self, the archetype of the God-image, of meaning, purpose and orientation. He viewed the beginnings of our whole psychic life to be inextricably rooted in this point and all our highest and ultimate purposes to be striving toward it (Jung, 1966). van der Post (1985), in interpreting Jung’s perspective on spirituality, declares it to be an attitude toward life; a process of continuing revelation and experiencing of revelation and being

obedient to our greater awareness of becoming in life. It is the responsible living and fulfilling of the divine will in us that ensue in a form of meaningful worship and commerce with the Source. The “divine” connoting the “underlying whole that gives birth to, supports and receives back all of existence, providing the cosmic pattern in which all distinctions adhere” (Coward, 1996, p. 491). Or it may suggest “the between,” or the pattern that connects (Bateson, 1979), and heals (Dossey, 1993; Myss, 1996).

For Assagioli (1965), spiritual experiences refer, in its broader sense to:

... all the states of awareness, all the human functions and activities which have as their common denominator the possession of higher values — the ethical, the aesthetic, the heroic, the humanitarian and the altruistic ... deriving from the superconscious levels of being” (p. 38).

These become activated during different stages of personal transformation. Assagioli’s map of human personality has some correlation to Jung’s in that it explicitly embraces spirituality and the notion of the collective unconscious. For Frankl (1975), it is humankind’s deeply personalized, experiential search for and trust in *ultimate* meaning in life that constitutes a religious attitude, in the widest possible sense. It is also our “responding to questions that life is asking us and in that way fulfilling the meanings that life is offering (p. 31). Grof and Grof (1990) suggest, referring to the Chinese pictogram for crisis, that *danger* and *opportunity* make up the turbulent passage of transformation, yielding rich evolutionary and healing potential. They regard spiritual development as an innate capacity of all human beings, a movement toward wholeness and the ripening of our multifaceted potential. Attending to the practical consequences of direct encounters with the numinous (similar to Jung), is foundational to their psychotherapeutic work. The direct experience of spiritual realities is termed *transpersonal*, and transpersonal states of consciousness that manifest during personal process work demand alternative strategies for care and facilitation as opposed to *mis-treatment* based on traditional models.

Bugental (1976, 1978) and Moustakas (1988, 1990) speak of spirituality in the human condition. Bugental (1976) says, “I am the crest of a wave that always has moved on by the time the wave can be identified” (p. 292). He affirms that we are ongoing, unfolding possibility and within our deepest intuitions about our own nature, far beyond

the capacity of words, we can at times grasp a sense of possibility for ourselves and for others. This inward vision may elude us due to the many misconceptions of the false self. Yet, in poignant, serendipitous moments we do catch a glimpse of the unknown yet present in us that is so wildly marvelous:

... so transcending of our usual concerns ... it is a vision of god ... a search for the god, [creativity], hidden within us ... which is identical with our deepest longings for our own being” (p. 292-296).

We all have the potential for bringing into the universe authentically new and creative meanings, interpretations, relationships, perceptual experiences and projects. This is our task and a mark of the divine in our depths. As we yield and dedicate our energies to this ardent work, we are graced in our becoming. This is at the heart of Self-transformation.

A quiet resonance has blossomed between Moustakas’ powerful writing and my own tender sensibilities. I am stirred in ways that make me feel like my creative depth has been caressed. His profound trust in and honoring of the wisdom and powers of the self and of direct experience communicate his remarkable fidelity to human integrity and capacities personally realized. This, to me, constitutes a spiritual and holistic approach to inquiry and psychotherapy. Influenced by Husserl, he recognizes the important “value of returning to the self to discover the nature and meaning of things as they are and in their essence” (Moustakas, 1988, p. 2). Heuristic inquiry into a phenomenon is integrally an inquiry into the self-experiencing-the-phenomenon first and foremost. The researcher is receptive and attuned to all the shades and nuances of experience allowing comprehension and compassion to mingle, and “recognizing the place and unity of intellect, emotion and spirit” (Moustakas, 1990, p. 16). One undergoes the experience of the phenomenon in a vigorous, fierce and full way. The total self is immersed in the heuristic process:

It demands the total presence, honesty, maturity and integrity of a researcher who strongly desires to understand ... is willing to commit endless hours of sustained immersion and focused attention on one central question, to risk the opening of wounds and passionate concerns, and undergo the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey (Moustakas, 1990, p. 14).

This quality of authentic presence, struggle and openness called for in engaged inquiry is humbling and invites one into the heart of what is truly at stake. Processes and concepts

like immersion, self-dialogue, tacit knowing, focusing, intuition, incubation, indwelling, internal frame of reference, illumination speak of a feminine way of knowing that is wise, embodied and vulnerable. Somehow, I am summoned to live in deep reverence for the phenomenon as I search heuristically. The transformation journey engages one similarly.

Earlier, I said that the numinous manifests in the *heart*. Merton (1971) offers a moist reflection on the concept of the heart. He says it is:

... the deepest psychological ground of one's personality, the inner sanctuary where self-awareness goes beyond analytical reflection and opens out into ... confrontation with the Abyss of the unknown yet present - one who is more intimate to us than we are to ourselves (p. 33).

It is in the abyss that we encounter our gods and demons as metamorphosis of the inner culture ripens. The heart yields as the ego resists and a deeper Intelligence seems to sustain the unglued personality while simultaneously breaking down everything that obstructs contact with the essential Self. A kind of original faith, which "rests on unconscious inner laws" (Durckheim, 1971, p. 26) persists, embracing the fragility and gradually breaking open the heart to essential being "which is the individual form of Divine Being" (p. 104). A person coming through this process experiences humility and gratitude and is attuned to what is genuinely renewed in him. The heart *knows* and is awakened to a sober reverence, veracity and compassion.

de Wit (1991), Dossey (1993, 1989), Myss (1996) and Woodman (1985), speak of *embodiment* or the body as sacrament, "that reality through which the holy makes its presence felt" (Dourley, 1981, p. 31). Myss (1996) concedes that our biography becomes our biology and that "the Divine is locked into our biological system" (p. xiii) in seven stages of power (energy systems) that enable us to heal and become more refined and transcendent in our personal power. Her model of the seven centers of spiritual and physical power synthesizes the ancient wisdom of three spiritual traditions: the Hindu chakras, the Christian sacraments and the Kabbalah's Tree of Life. In understanding the anatomy of our spirit, Myss suggests that we can discover the spiritual causes of illness and realign our energy imbalances. Beliefs, values, attitudes, emotions and lifestyle manifest directly *in* the body which harmonizes with a greater unitive Energy. When these domains are realigned with this unitive Energy healing and wellness are possible.

Dossey (1993, 1989) endorses the spiritual art of healing through prayer as complementary to the practice of medicine. Scientific proof of prayer's efficacy exists but is discarded as irrational by modern medical education. Nonetheless, Dossey's persistent research verifies that prayer works. He says that prayer has its roots in the unconscious, affirming Jung's theory, and as such its nature cannot be fully grasped. Yet it says "something incalculably important about who we are and what our destiny may be" (Dossey, 1990. p. 6). It is nonlocal, i.e., not confined to (specific) space and time and hence, can operate at a distance and outside present time. Since prayer is initiated through mental action, this implies that aspects of our psyche are also nonlocal, suggesting in turn that something of our own being is omnipresent and immortal. This infinite dimension of the psyche has been referred to as the soul. "Empirical evidence for prayer's power, then, is indirect evidence for the soul" (p. 6), and evidence for shared qualities (eternality and infinitude) with the Divine within.

Dossey (1993, 1989) suggests some possibilities for the ways in which prayer and spiritual practices act "locally" to influence health. For example, the psychodynamics of faith may be comparable to the placebo effect in a positive or negative sense - expecting blessing or punishment. The psychodynamics of spiritual beliefs and rituals such as prayer may trigger emotions which, in turn, may positively impact the immune and cardiovascular systems. Being prayed for through laying on of hands or any other ritualized activity may stimulate in a person an endocrine or immune response that is facilitative of healing. The very preparation for healing (fasting, meditation, etc) may promote health. Experiencing the presence of a healer may foster a sense of belonging, support and deepening belief in the power of healing which research shows is healthful (Dossey, 1993. p. 252). I personally believe that trust in and *intentional engagement* of one's own inner Healer (Jung's Self) can activate direct and profound healing. This act may also influence attitudes of prayerfulness such as accepting without being passive, being grateful without giving up, being more willing "to stand in the mystery, to tolerate ambiguity and the unknown, and to honor the rightness of whatever happens" (p. 24).

de Wit (1991) sees the contemplative body as *soma* (a body-mind-spirit unity) versus *sarx* (a body-mind-spirit split). As soma, embodying the *pneuma* or breath of

spirit, the body is the possibility of realizing and giving form to a spiritual life. It becomes “the physical basis of contemplative action” (p. 191), giving form in the world to generosity, compassion, understanding, love and devotion. It is our primal connection with our world of experience and during transformational work, the body, *which does not lie*, is brought to consciousness. The traumatized body, through its flaccidity, illness and inflexibility often reveals that the flesh is barely inhabited by the soul (Woodman, 1985). The body mirrors the soul and the psyche is enacted through the body. The Christian mystic, von Bingen (in Fox, 1988) inferred that the *body is in the soul* versus the reverse. What is fundamentally at stake then in a holistic healing paradigm is the integration of body, psyche and soul. This in turn mirrors the wholeness of the earth-body.

Finally, reference is made to van Dusen (1972) and McNamara (1983) regarding the concept of the *deep Center* within persons (analogous to Jung’s Self) from which the *inner voice* speaks. I am in resonance with these authors and affirm the living quality of this deep Center that is obscure but concrete and “monstrated” rather than demonstrated. It is likened to that “something that is indestructible in the depths that never gives way ... the created ground of being grounded in Uncreated Being” (McNamara, 1983, p. 411). It is that unassailable core in us that never succumbs despite vacillating conditions. It is intuitive and “penetrates beyond sense and discursive thought to the essential unity of things” (McNamara, 1983, p. 410). van Dusen views the Center as the innermost region that seems to understand all things as connected.

It cannot be violated by our manipulations ... it will live and will express its guiding wisdom ... it is like a subtle potential that requires the deepening of humanness even to approach and understand it ... it we miss fulfilling our nature, its warning signs become louder (1972, p. 186).

The essentiality of the deep Center *underpins* the multiple evolving selves, in my view.

In attempting to embrace the notion of spirituality in this context, I have drawn insights from diverse professionals who explicitly acknowledge, through their practice or philosophical stance, that a synthesis of psychology, biology and spirituality is critical for the healing of the whole person. In speaking to the spiritual domain, I am soberly aware of and reiterate that the map is *not* the territory and that no single conception can be sharply drawn. In truth, this has been a most unnerving project in that spirituality is

utterly personal and delicate, yet so vitally important to my own intimate and professional sensibilities. Lao Tzu, (in Mitchell, 1988) urged that the Tao that can be named is not the true Tao. Yet if we dare to embrace the question “Who am I?” then we engage our energies in the task of bearing light onto our own inner truth. This is a wild pondering of the heart that involves the ecstasy and the agony of “consciously allowing our own I am to magnify the great *I AM*” (Woodman, 1985, p. 190).

The Inner Voice within the Context of Self-Transformation

Is listening to the “*inner voice*” (or higher Self) integral to the experience of Self-transformation? From my own intense inner work since 1976 and in reading the relevant literature, it seems evident that there exists a crucial interrelatedness between this inward listening and human transformation. As articulated earlier in Chapter One, the degree to which the transformation experience is fully realized and integrated into the personality is directly contingent on the acuteness of and follow through on the guidance of the inner voice. Further, the progression of the transformative journey appears to inevitably evoke further voicing, resulting in a circular, interweaving, synchronistic principle of healing and wholeness. The interplay of these processes as a phenomenon of Self-transformation has been the enduring focus of this research inquiry. In discussing the two merging processes of listening to voice and transformation, I refer to these theorists as I penetrate the theme - Assagioli, 1965, 1973; Durckheim, 1971; Heery, 1987; Jung, 1954, 1959; Levin, 1989; Luke, 1984; Raphael-Staude, 1977; Sinetar, 1986; and Woodman, 1985.

Historically, the “inner voice” has been alluded to and described in myth, art, literature, religion and psychology. Heery (1987) notes that the psychological literature on inner voice has focused mainly on persons considered pathological while the religious literature has deemed such persons inspired or possessed. Between these two extremes are ordinary psychologically healthy individuals who have inner voice experiences as an intrinsic aspect of the psycho-spiritual growth process. This inquiry has focused on the psychologically healthy individual bearing in mind that, during Self-transformation individuals can and do undergo temporary but necessary experientially difficult stages of intense psychological upheaval engaging the whole personality and involving perceptual, emotional, cognitive, sensory, and physical manifestations (Perry, 1986). Spiritual

themes may also be experienced as psychological death and rebirth, encounters with mythological beings, archetypal images, memories of past lives and acute unitive experiences (Assagioli, 1965; Grof & Grof, 1989, 1991; Jung, 1954, 1959; Perry, 1976, 1986; Walsh, 1990; Watson, 1994).

The term *inner voice* refers to a significant subjective experience which is perceived as a voice speaking inwardly and/or a vaguer “felt sense” of some inner communication that strives toward meaning and integration (Heery, 1987). Heery’s inquiry into the meaning of inner voice experiences revealed three categories of experiences moving along a continuum from disintegration to integration. Inner voice experiences as fragmented parts of the self that moves a person toward integration. Inner voice experiences as dialogue providing clear guidance for healing and the releasing of creative energy. And finally, inner voice experiences with numinous qualities in which channels penetrated to and beyond a higher Self (p. 67). Others have suggested that the inner voice communicates intrapsychically between the different levels of the psyche (Assagioli, 1965; Woodman, 1985; van Dusen, 1981). Jung (1954) believed that it speaks to us from the unconscious and is the call of a higher principle which exerts a pervasive influence in our whole lives. It is the wise old woman/man or the daemon in whose grip we may experience both blessing and chagrin. He viewed the inner voice as “the voice of a fuller life, of a wider, more comprehensive consciousness” (p. 184) that impels the growth of personality. Durckheim (1990) says it cries out to us when we lose sight of our inner destiny. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) refer to it as subjective, embodied knowing as women move from self as static to self as becoming, “from silence to a protesting inner voice and infallible gut” (p. 54). This quality of inner voicing is differentiated from the internal monologues of the sub-personalities, the stern imposing voices of culture and family and as Jung said, the mental chatter of the persona.

Assagioli (1965, 1973) viewed it as a *pull* or *call* of the Transpersonal Will which is an expression of the Transpersonal Self operating from the superconscious levels of the psyche. It is a “dialogue with the spiritual Self, the higher Center, the deeper Being, the wise teacher within (1965. p. 86, 204). He connected listening to the inner voice with growth and the development of personality which involves ongoing rounds of the trans-

formational spiral. He believed this *pull* to be the stirrings of latent and superconscious potentialities demanding realization. A “mysterious action of the intrinsic vitality or ‘livingness,’ both biological and psychological, works with irresistible pressure from within” (p. 214), catapulting the individual into disequilibrium and self-search. This process is essentially progressive in nature though it often ensues in temporary chaos, regression and suffering (Grof and Grof, 1990; Jung, 1954, 1959; Perry, 1986).

Assagioli (1965) warned that, depending on a person’s religious or philosophical background and mentality, the personification of this internal dynamic needs to vary so as to honor difference. Assagioli affirmed theoretically and experientially that a relationship between the individual’s ego-self and the Transpersonal Self exists. He stated that the Self, in its essential nature, qualities and powers differs from the personal ego-self and “to disregard this vital distinction leads to absurd and dangerous consequences” (p. 45) such as self-deception and/or self-inflation. This is a result of contact with deeper truths or inner awakenings too powerful for the mental capacities to grasp and integrate. He also theorized that in order to dialogue with the inner voice (or the higher Self), it is essential to journey inward and ascend to the different levels of the conscious and super-conscious psyche. Furthermore, guidance reverberating from the inner voice may express as intuition, a function that apprehends the totality of an event directly, or as an incomprehensible process (similar to Jung’s concept of synchronicity) that involves:

... the whole gestalt of a person’s life and the subtle, unconscious psychological interplay between the person and his environment ... coming seemingly quite spontaneously through a third person, a book, other reading matter or through the development of circumstances themselves ... (p. 205).

This incomprehensible process in which the inner voice speaks or gives subtle messages can also be experienced in contexts such as dreams, bodily sensations, songs, visions or nature symbols. Assagioli warned though about “testing” the validity of the inner voice messages to discern genuine guidance versus idle or destructive egoistic manipulations.

Gilligan (1982) talks of a “different voice” which is distinguished by personal morality and honesty with one’s self despite conflicting outer voices. Bugental (1976) suggests that instead of living in authentic accord with our deepest nature, we live in terms of crippling images of ourselves. The key to vital life change comes in recovering

our centering of life in our subjective awareness or *inward sensing* that is evocative of our present being. This awareness, experienced as promptings of our own inner voice, is treated suspiciously. Yet it is in this voice that we discover the true flow of our living. Maslow (1971) speaks of “listening to the impulse voices” (p. 44) as letting the self emerge, i.e. listening to one’s *own self* in each moment with honesty and responsibility and making the growth choice despite the introjected voices of parents, culture and establishment. Sinetar (1986) says that in the collective wisdom of humankind there is an abiding belief that within each person “is some substantive truth waiting to be known ... to be expressed” (p. 17). The realization of this truth means being conscious of and receptive to one’s innermost self. This in turn makes a person exist, be *real* in his or her own eyes. Answering this inner yearning means to be *called*, to be *addressed by a voice* which often inaugurates inner and outer turmoil; a stepping back, a sorting-out-process and the subsequent alteration of life and worldview. This transition necessitates a steady transformative process of self and social transcendence.

For Levin (1989), personal and societal transformations are inherently based on our capacity for *listening* (Heidegger’s (in Levin, 1989) *hearkening*) - hearing that is moved by ontological understanding and *informs* thoughtful living. Levin views our hearing as a gift of nature, “the gift of an unfulfilled capacity, an unrealized potential, and unfinished task” (p. 2). It makes moral claims and demands existential work; work as an “ascetic practice of the Self” embedded in a cultural and socio-political reality. It is:

...[a *disciplined*] ongoing process of self-development, a structure of individuation creatively fluid and open to change, a structure organized by and identified with processes that *carry forward* learning and growth (p. 47).

This work demands listening that *hears again* the Self and is open to a *recollection* of Being (that we still innately embrace by the grace of our embodiment). It is attuned to our bodily wisdom and authority; is compassionate and responsive to our interrelatedness with the collective, and is obedient to *letting go and letting be* of that which resonates with our deepest nature and Being itself. Levin argues that our self-development as auditory beings is imperative for the re-creating of a just and democratic society in that our self-transformation directly implicates that of the larger collective.

Woodman (1985) argues that “everywhere the ceremony of innocence is exploited” (p. 16) in favor of moronic caricatures of the collective stereotypes as we wager our inner resources to stand alone and face who we truly are. Yet, the natural propensity of the psyche is toward wholeness. Thus, the Self will push for authenticity and wholeness through the nudging of a deeper intuitive “voice” which begins to disrupt the routine embeddedness of static living. The possibility of rebirth constellates with this disruption and ensuing breakdown of what suffocates personal emergence. Luke (1984) says the “voice” comes to us from the Ground of being and brings to consciousness (via fantasies, verbal messages, images, thoughts and dreams), intuitions that reveal various truths and conditions of our subjective lives. People who report a sense of the inner voice describe it as a powerful, directive force in their lives (Raphael-Staude, 1977) which strengthens their resoluteness to resist the conformity demanded by the mass mentality (Heery, 1989). It is argued that this “voice” is speaking less and less in the language of collective institutions or through external rules of morality and more persistently and loudly through the individual’s growing Self-consciousness.

It presses in on Jung’s insistence on our deeper ethical self-reflections - *knowing who we are, what we do, and what that does*. This in turn directly impels the execution of *conscience*. This means having the moral courage to face and take responsibility for who we are and who we may become, for our “shadow” aspects and other manifestations of the unconscious, and for consciously retrieving our projections and working through and integrating these within the personality. This is our most arduous lifelong task and without which there can be no individuation and no emancipation of the true Personality. Jung (1954) asks the question:

What is it, in the end that induces a person to go her/his own way and to rise out of unconscious identity with the mass as out of a swathing mist? Not necessity, for necessity comes to many, and they all take refuge in convention. Not moral choice, for as a rule we decide for convention likewise. What is it then that inexorably tips the scales in favor of the extra-ordinary? (p. 175).

Jung contends that it is what is commonly called “vocation” or “calling:”

... an irrational factor that fatefully forces one to emancipate oneself from the herd and from its well-worn paths. True personality always has vocation and believes in it, has fidelity to it as ... it acts like a law from which there is no

escape. The fact that many who go their own way end in ruin means nothing to them who have vocation. They *must* obey their own law ... anyone with vocation hears the voice of the inner man or woman; s/he is “called” or addressed by a voice” (p. 175-176).

After two years of researching the topic of Self-transformation and having been catapulted into a most profound transformative journey, my “inner voice” began pushing me to incorporate into the research inquiry the inner voice experience as *integral* to the transformative process. Having experienced much guidance from the inner voice, I have deepened my experiential and theoretical understanding of how this kind of listening and the transformative process coalesce. I therefore felt a resonance with Jung’s analytical psychology and his theory of the individuation process; the development of personality of which listening to the inner voice is an intrinsic process. I now briefly discuss Jung’s perspective so as to elucidate the integral and reciprocal nature of these two processes.

According to Jung (1954), the ultimate aim and deepest desire of all humankind is to develop that fullness of life called personality. The achievement of personality means the optimum development of the whole person, of all that lies waiting to be released into living creativity. Personality is the supreme realization of the innate distinctiveness of a living being demanding a “whole life-span in all its biological, social and spiritual aspects” (p. 171). Jung suggests that human personality develops through need or the motivating coercion of inner and outer necessities. This is experienced as a “call” of a higher principle to wholeness, i.e., the ongoing completion of the personality. This call to release our innate potentialities into dynamic livingness, purposefully and meaningfully, is our primary responsibility. It is the astonishing possibilities germinating within us and it is the *law* of our own being, *the* vocation for which we are destined. “The development of personality means *fidelity* to the law of one’s own being ... a trust in this law, and a loyal perseverance and trustful hope” (pp. 173-174). According to Jung, personality development insists on a person choosing her own particular way, living out *her* own life consciously and with deliberate moral decision. This is what comprises *true vocation* and it demands sober courage and engagement of all that constitutes our being.

“To have a vocation” originally meant to be “addressed by a voice” (p. 176). Thus, Jung refers to the inner voice as the *vocation* and defines it as a “powerful

objective-psychic element” (p. 182) so as to designate the way in which it functions in the developing personality and how it appears subjectively. It symbolizes needs and innate aspects of our individual psychic life that percolate from the unconscious. Harkening to the “call” (which breaks through warningly against obstacles that impede wholeness), ensues in genuine conflict of duty between innate impulses (Jacobi, 1967) of the evolving selfhood and conventional prescriptions that constrain us. Yet, one must choose (or not) to “follow the inborn law of his life and achieve wholeness as a life individually lived and individuated” (Jung, 1964, p. 179) within his contextually embedded phenomenal world.

Jung asserts that, only the person who consciously affirms the power of the vocation confronting him from within and intentionally allows it to act on him and who actualizes and integrates into his existential reality the wholeness called forth, becomes a personality. Our basic predisposition, however, is to opt for conventional life that keeps us unconscious even as we sense deeply that creative life lies beyond the routine flatland. In order to break through this stasis, “something irrational, that cannot be rationalized, must always supervene” (p. 182), impelling the growth of personality. This “growth” or proliferation is the objective activity of the psyche which, “independently of conscious volition, is trying to speak to the conscious mind via *the inner voice* and lead a person toward wholeness” (p. 183). To the extent that we betray the law of our being, the life-will with which we are born, we fail to fulfill our destiny and life’s meaning. The “inner voice” confronts us with critical decisions regarding healing and Self-transformation and, treacherous as it is, it urges us toward the undiscovered way or the “Tao” alive within us.

A Psychological Theory of Self-Transformation

Self-transformation has been conceptualized in various ways. Self-actualization is a term used in humanistic and existential psychology inferring a bringing into actuality of latent potentiality. Self-realization is the term used by depth psychologists suggesting psychospiritual maturation and a making real of our inherent possibilities as well as our coming into resonance with the deep “Self.” Individuation is Jung’s term for becoming an individual distinct from the mass consciousness and becoming *in*-divisible or whole. Debate abounds as to whether the ego should be annihilated (as in various spiritual

traditions), or strengthened (as in Western psychotherapy), and if a core Self exists. In Buddhist psychology, for example, a self or ego does not exist. Transformation is conceptualized as radical shifts in functioning of the five complex aggregates or “skandhas” of consciousness — memory, perception, feeling/valuing, form awareness, and conscious comprehension (Govinda, 1960, in Metzner, 1986). Our inherent nature is revealed to be that we possess no inherent nature, meaning that the essence of our consciousness is void, free and already present as Original Mind; in seeking our True Nature, we create an illusory duality (Hixon, 1978). This Original Mind is the fundamental principle of Being which is never lost, but which falls prey to our *forgetfulness*. Buddhahood is a recollection of Being which, to me, is analogous to Jung’s Self-realization or coming to Selfhood; or what Heidegger (1962, in Levin, 1989) argued as the human being’s inveterate tendency to lose itself. It fails to hear its own Self in listening-away to the they-self. Thus, this lostness or failure to hear itself must be retrieved by Dasein itself, Dasein designating one’s innermost sense of being-Self.

While no self/ego exists in Buddhism (which I disagree with as different concepts are construed to say basically the same thing — the skandhas of consciousness manifest in *defilements* such as attachment, being asleep, desire, forgetfulness, which to me, reflect similar states of shallow ego-consciousness proposed by other psychologies), a counterpoint is suggested that, before you can lose your self so as to find yourself, you first have to have a *self* to lose. Personally, I resonate with Jung (and Assagioli, 1965), who refer to the ego-self as the I-consciousness) and for whom the ego is indispensable in *serving* the Self-realization process. The chaos induced, when the irruption of unconscious contents overwhelms the conscious personality, creating dissolution of the persona and a state of psychic imbalance, *necessitates* the possession of a firm, chastened ego that can endure the intolerable tension. This vigilant and paradoxical role of the ego offers the possibility of a new psychic order (Sharp, 1988; Jacobi, 1973; Jung, 1968) through the synthesis of ego and Self (consciousness and the unconscious). This conceptual model seems most conducive to my inquiry in Self-transformation and is thus employed. In the same breath, however, these concepts, obviously inadequate and oversimplified, are merely aids in

understanding the very complex and functional relations (and ineffable dimensions) of the human psycho-spiritual makeup and experience.

Intimations of a Spiritual Psychology

Jung is viewed as the first transpersonal psychologist (Frager, 1989). He used the term transpersonal unconscious as a synonym for the collective unconscious, that which contains “the whole spiritual heritage of mankind’s evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual” (Jung, 1960, p. 158). In embracing Jung’s analytical psychology, I borrow the phrase “pleromic psychology” from Babcock (1983) to describe the overarching psychic holism inherent in Jung’s theory of individuation. *Pleroma* means an “abundance of light,” fullness or completeness. It arises from the core Self, the unfathomable depth or archetypal God-image (Jung, 1968) that exists within us and manifests as psychic reality. The Self is viewed as complete consciousness in the sense that it is one measure of the Whole and is of the quality of the Whole, as *Atman* is to *Brahman* in Hindu philosophy. In pleromic psychology, the Self which emanates from the unconscious is imaged as the Ground of the whole being, containing the potentiality of all of life, like psychic DNA (Babcock; 1983); potentials that are recognized and ones that are not. Jacobi (1973) in interpreting Jung, says of the unconscious:

Within the psychic totality, the unconscious is not merely a cesspool for the repressed contents of consciousness; it is also ‘the ever-creative mother of consciousness’ ... the primary and creative factor ... the never failing source of all art and all human endeavour (p. 101).

It is the acknowledgement of the Self, the spiritual nucleus in the unconscious, so to speak, as well as the realm of consciousness that constitutes an overarching holism in Jung’s psychology. It is from the Self that the *call*, which summons us to fulfill our destiny, persistently breaks through into consciousness. Jung’s work reveals a reverence for and a cognizance of the mystery inherent in life and in the spiritual consciousness of humankind. His empirical evidence and bold declaration of spiritually valid intrapsychic processes experienced through the unconscious manifesting in consciousness caused him great suffering within the theological mindset and the scientifically-oriented psychology of his time (Hillman, 1975; Jacobi, 1973; van der Post, 1975; von Franz, 1993). Though criticisms pervade, there is no denying that Jung’s analytical psychology is spiritual in its

orientation. It clearly verifies through phenomenological descriptions and hermeneutic interpretations (amplification of meaning), numinous experiences that are ontologically integral to a comprehensive human psychology. As psychic phenomena then, the mind-body-spirit equation is the domain of psychology and psychotherapy with the explication of the meaning of lived-experience through deep process work being a central factor.

Jung (1960) says himself that we need to summon up the courage to consider:

... [the] possibility of a 'psychology with the psyche' — that is, a theory of the psyche ultimately based on the postulate of an autonomous spiritual principle. We need not be alarmed by the unpopularity of such an undertaking for to postulate *spirit* is no more fantastic than to postulate *matter*. Since we have no idea how the psychic can arise out of the physical and yet we cannot deny the reality of psychic events, we are free to frame our assumptions the other way about for once, and suppose that the psyche arises from a spiritual principle which is as inaccessible to our understanding as matter (p. 344).

Bateson and Bateson (1987) and Buber (1952) speak in defense of the spiritual domain too. On becoming gradually cognizant of the unity of nature, Bateson declared that he was approaching "that integrative dimension of experience he called the sacred" (p. 2) in that he sensed what he called a pattern that connects or a necessary unity (Bateson, 1979). But this however, was an issue he courted with great trepidation as *the very inference of anything sacred was likely to evoke reflexive misunderstanding*. This was more so because he saw in religion the potential for abuse, obscurantism and division. Buber (1952) too, in his own struggle contended that the word *God*, (Tao, Being or whatever concoction we devise to hint at the pervasive Mystery), cannot be cleansed or made whole due to the horrid injustices and idiocies that have been so readily attributed to *that* Source for authorization. Yet, he insisted that, as debased and mutilated as the concept of God is, we can raise it from the sludge "and set it over an hour of great care" (p. 8) in the depths of our own hearts. And it is in the depths of our being that the sacred issues forth as experiential reality. Brookes (1980), Grof & Grof (1991) and Perry (1986) theorize that the sacred manifests as transpersonal or spiritual experiences and must be tended to with deep care within psychotherapeutic work. It is intrinsic to the Self-transformation process. Elkins (1994), Grim (1994) and Kelly (1994) in Corey (1996) also argue for the integration of a spiritual component in counselor education programs as spiritually

related concerns are becoming increasingly important within therapy. Hillman (1975, 1996), Moore (1992), Schaef (1992) and Wilber (1996, 1997) are other contemporary voices that are reiterating this same need for a more holistic, integrated psychology.

The Nature and Structure of the Psyche in Jung's Psychology

The emphasis on rationality and cognition as the primary functions or modes of consciousness troubled Jung as this predicament negated the "irrational" experiences that impinge on consciousness. Those dreams, waking fantasies and inarticulable experiences that seem to readily elude precise definition and rational explanation. Moreso, Jung believed that it is precisely that irrational side of experience that harbors powerful energy and bears essential meaning for existence (Jung, 1961). His psychology thus embraces two complementary but antithetical domains, *consciousness and the unconscious*, both constitutive of the "psyche" and indispensable to an understanding of human psychic functioning and the individuation process. This being so, it seems necessary to elaborate on the nature and structure of the psyche before discussing its self-regulatory function and the various stages and phases of the Self-transformation process.

By *psyche* Jung means the totality of all psychological processes both conscious and unconscious and the manner in which it manifests is a complex interplay of factors - hereditary disposition, age, sex, psychological type and attitude and degree of conscious control over the instincts (Sharp, 1991). It is the organ through which we mediate our understanding of the world and being and its varied manifestations help us to follow "the slippery trail of neurotic thinking and feeling" (Jacobi, 1973, p. 2) until we find our way back to life. Jung (1969) says that the psyche is anything but a homogeneous unit. It is a "boiling cauldron of contradictory impulses, inhibitions and effects" (p. 104) and psychic processes act like a scale along which consciousness slides:

... at one moment it finds itself in the vicinity of instinct and falls under its influence; at another it slides along to the other end where spirit predominates and even assimilates the instinctual processes most opposed to it (Jung, 1960, p. 207).

He contends that the psyche is *process* and "cure" is not necessarily a valid concept for work with the psyche. The nature of psychic life is such that new problems and new questions continually arise (Brookes, 1980), signaling the necessity for change which is

being resisted on some level and demands integration. The psyche is viewed as a “site” where experience is given depth and meaning beyond being simply events. Jung viewed the psyche’s primary trait as a “structure made for movement, growth, change and transformation” (Samuels, 1991, p. 115). The complexity of psychic phenomena makes it impossible to formulate an all-inclusive theory of the psyche. Yet, for Jung, it is no less real than the body and can be directly experienced and observed. It is a world unto itself governed by and endowed with its own laws and modes of expression (Jacobi, 1973) that can be quite baffling to a person in the throes of the transformation process. However, the process may mean the possibility of a grounding in what is unassailable and imperishable in the primordial nature of the psyche (Jacobi, 1973). (See Diagrams 1 and 2, p. 68, 69.)

The Sphere of the Unconscious

Earlier I said that the psyche is viewed as consisting of two complementary yet opposing domains: conscious and unconscious. The unconscious constitutes the totality of all psychic phenomena that are inaccessible to consciousness. It is inexhaustible and not only the repository of repressed thoughts and emotions but contains creative content that may or will become conscious (Sharp, 1991). The *personal unconscious* and the *collective unconscious* make up the levels of the unconscious. Jung (1971) says:

The concept of the *unconscious* is for me an *exclusively psychological concept*, and not a philosophical concept of a metaphysical nature ... it is a psychological borderline concept which covers all psychic contents or processes that are not conscious ... not related to the ego (p. 483).

He asserts further (Jung, 1960):

the unconscious depicts an extremely fluid state of affairs; everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking; everything perceived by my senses, but not noted by my conscious mind; everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want, and do; all the future things that are taking shape ... and will sometime come to consciousness (p. 185).

The unconscious is viewed then, as a fluid process that exists autonomously beyond the constraints of time, space, logic, or the laws of cause and effect. When it is seemingly overactive, most likely when unconscious material is repressed or ignored, it manifests in symptoms that incapacitate conscious action. However, this compensatory attitude of the

DIAGRAM ONE
Schematic Representation of Jung's Model of the Psyche
(Taken from Jacobi (1973), p. 130)

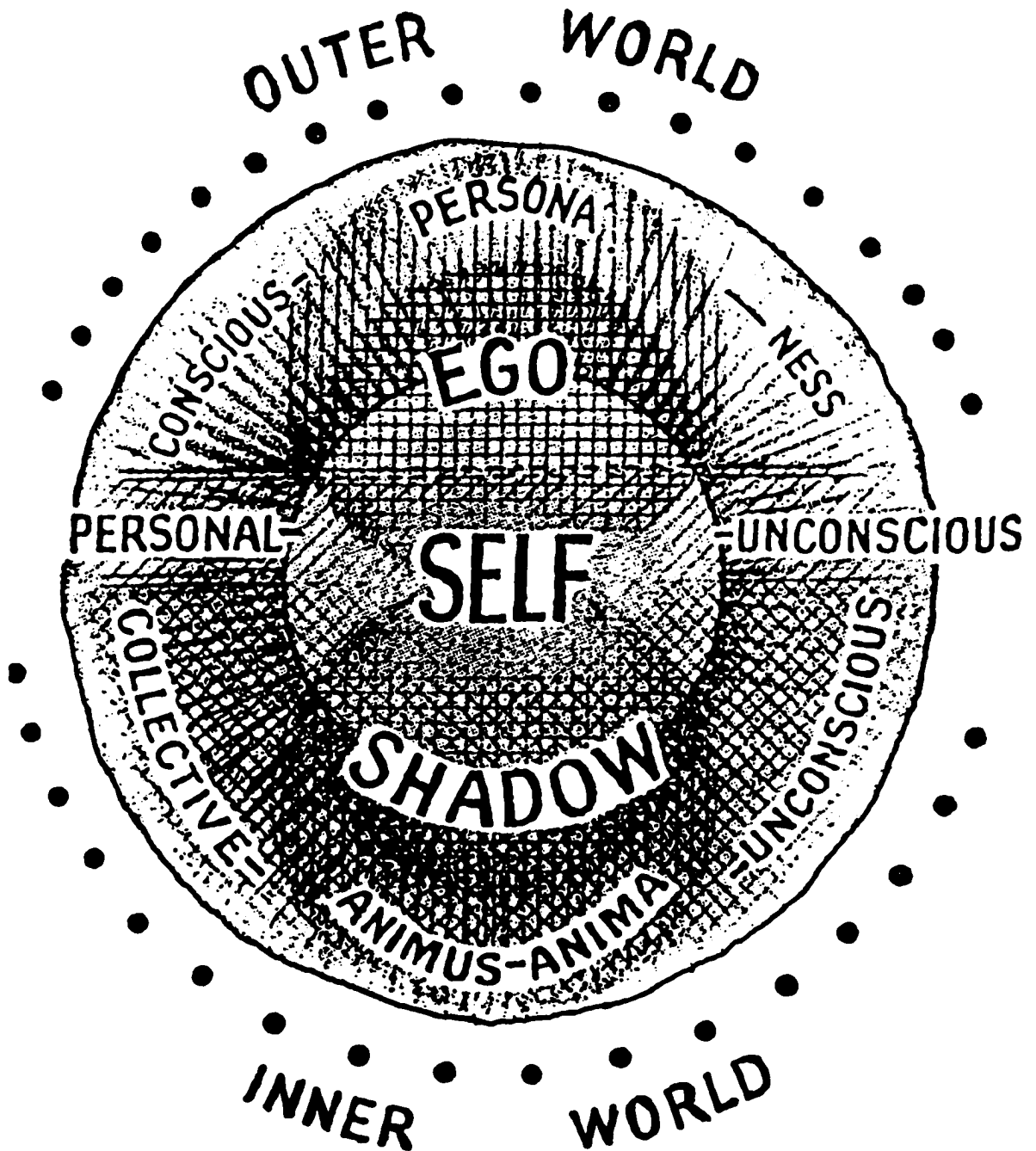
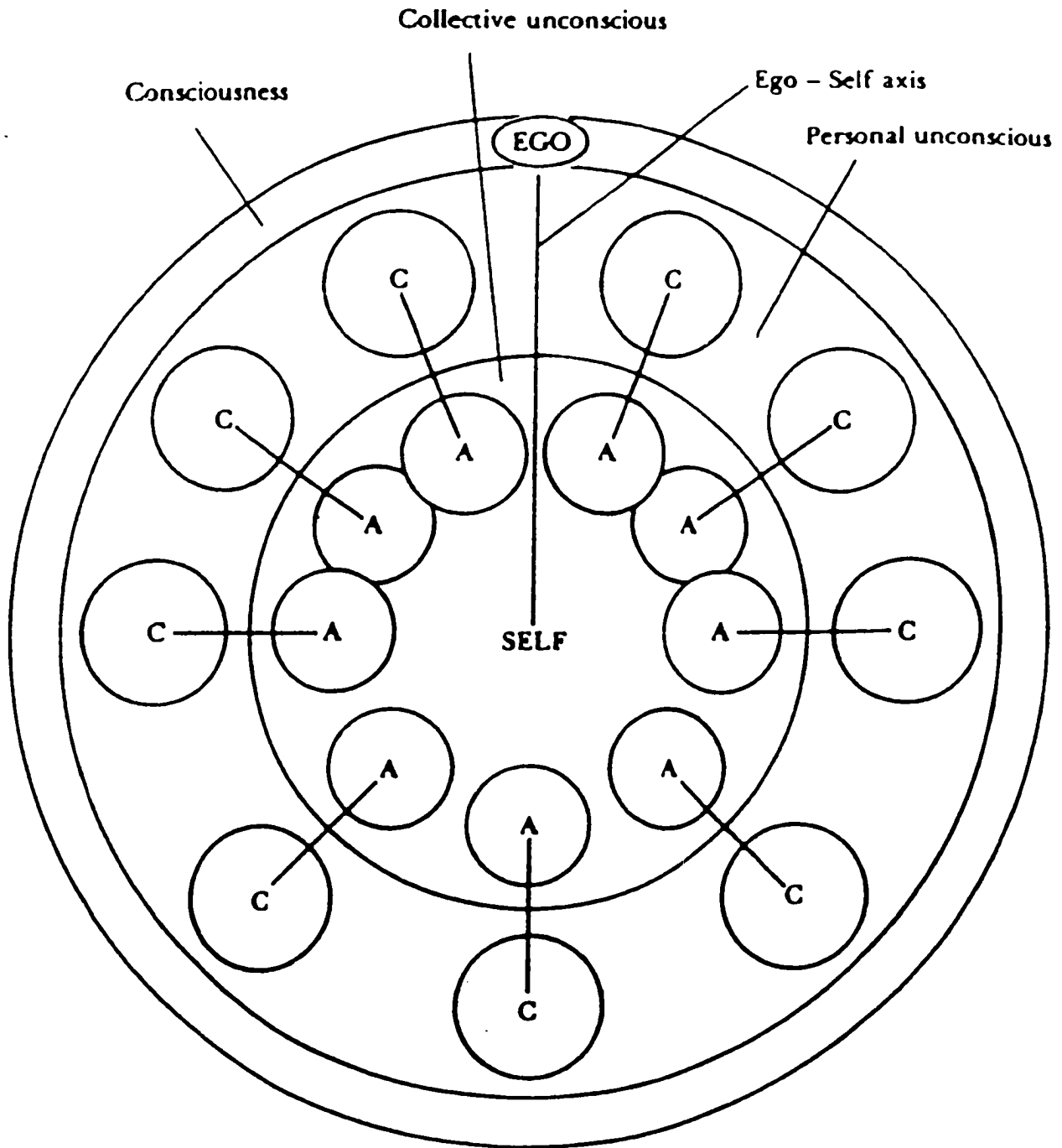


DIAGRAM TWO
Schematic Diagram of Jung's Model of the Psyche
 (Taken from Stevens (1990), p. 29)

C = Complex
 A = Archetype



unconscious works to maintain psychological health in the sense that it brings to the fore of consciousness, mediated by the ego, contents necessary for processing and integrating into the personality. This coming into consciousness is inherent in Self-transformation.

The *personal unconscious* is the personal layer of the unconscious, which is distinct from the collective unconscious (Sharp, 1991). Jung (1966) says it:

... contains lost memories, painful ideas that are repressed ... subliminal perceptions (sense perceptions not strong enough to reach consciousness), and contents that are not yet ripe for consciousness (p. 66).

Jung also speaks of the *shadow* as a hidden aspect of a person and a dimension of the personal unconscious. It comprises elements of repressed desires, pain, impulses, resentments, fantasies, morally inferior motives, etc. that we reject as being of our makeup. Unacknowledged, these repressive elements get projected onto others creating conflicting circumstances. Sharp (1991) comments that the recognition of the shadow is inhibited by the *persona* and that the brighter the persona, the darker the shadow. Conflict between these two dimensions presents a neurotic outburst as our pretensions leak out and erode our pious self-image. Taking responsibility for and assimilating the shadow, through attention to its qualities and intentions, our conscientious self-criticism and retrieving of projections, are essential for psychic health and a therapeutic necessity. Positive potentialities, qualities and instincts also make up the shadow. Aspects that we may let waste from laziness or a constricted sense of identity. Sharp (1991) suggests that "an outbreak of neurosis constellates both sides of the shadow" (p. 125) - qualities and activities we abhor as well as new, creative possibilities we were never aware were there. Jung insists that we cannot deny the personality its proper shadow if it is to retain its malleability and sprightly form. Without the shadow we are merely pious caricatures.

The *collective unconscious* is a structural layer of the psyche containing inherited aspects that are objective, universal or characteristic of the human species (Jacobi, 1973). Jung (1969) suggests that there are psychological phenomena that cannot be reduced to experiences in an individual's past. They are impersonal manifestations that are of a collective psychic substratum and analogous to mythological motifs and primordial images. He calls the collective unconscious the objective psyche in that it is "impervious

to the critical, ordering activity of consciousness” (Jacobi, 1973. p. 35). It is decidedly indifferent to our *egocentric* purposes and intentions. Its sole purpose is to sustain the flow of psychic life and create movement toward wholeness of the psyche by opposing all one-sidedness that might promote pathogenic phenomena. The contents of this domain are considered to be of a supra or transpersonal nature. (See Diagrams 3, 4 and 5, p. 72, 73 and 74.)

The *archetypes* are psychic processes transformed into primordial, symbolic images or patterns of human behavior. In themselves, they are not representative but their effects are observable in *archetypal images*, motifs and processes that belong to the collective psyche. Jacobi (1973) postulates that:

... the archetypes are reflections of instinctive, that is, psychically necessary reactions to certain situations; with their inborn propensities that circumvent consciousness and lead to modes of behavior which are psychologically necessary, though they do not always seem appropriate when considered rationally from without (p. 41).

Jung (1969) views the archetypes as playing a crucial role in the psychic economy as “they represent or personify certain instinctive data of the dark and primitive psyche, the real but invisible roots of consciousness” (p. 160). The innate tendency of the archetype to circumvent and intrude upon consciousness is a key element in the differentiation of consciousness as psychic processes are presented for analysis, interpretation and integration. Jung says that “the archetype is the introspectively recognizable form of an *a priori* psychic orderedness” (p. 100) which suggests to me that irrupting archetypal material is inevitably a numinous (or scared) “offer” to be reckoned with in so far as we are called interiorly to bring wholeness to and “round out” the personality.

The *Self* is the source and ultimate foundation of the psyche. It is the archetype of wholeness and functions as the organizing, unifying principle of the psyche as a whole (Jung, 1971). It is unifying in the sense that it is the *midpoint* between consciousness and the unconscious (Jacobi, 1973) where conflicting polarities are harmonized. It is Jung’s view that only when this midpoint is consciously located within and integrated, can we speak of a well-balanced individual. Being an archetype, the essential nature of the Self is unknowable. However, empirically the Self manifests in dreams, myths and legends

DIAGRAM THREE
The Ego in Compensatory Relationship to Consciousness and the Unconscious
(Taken from Jacobi (1973), p. 6)

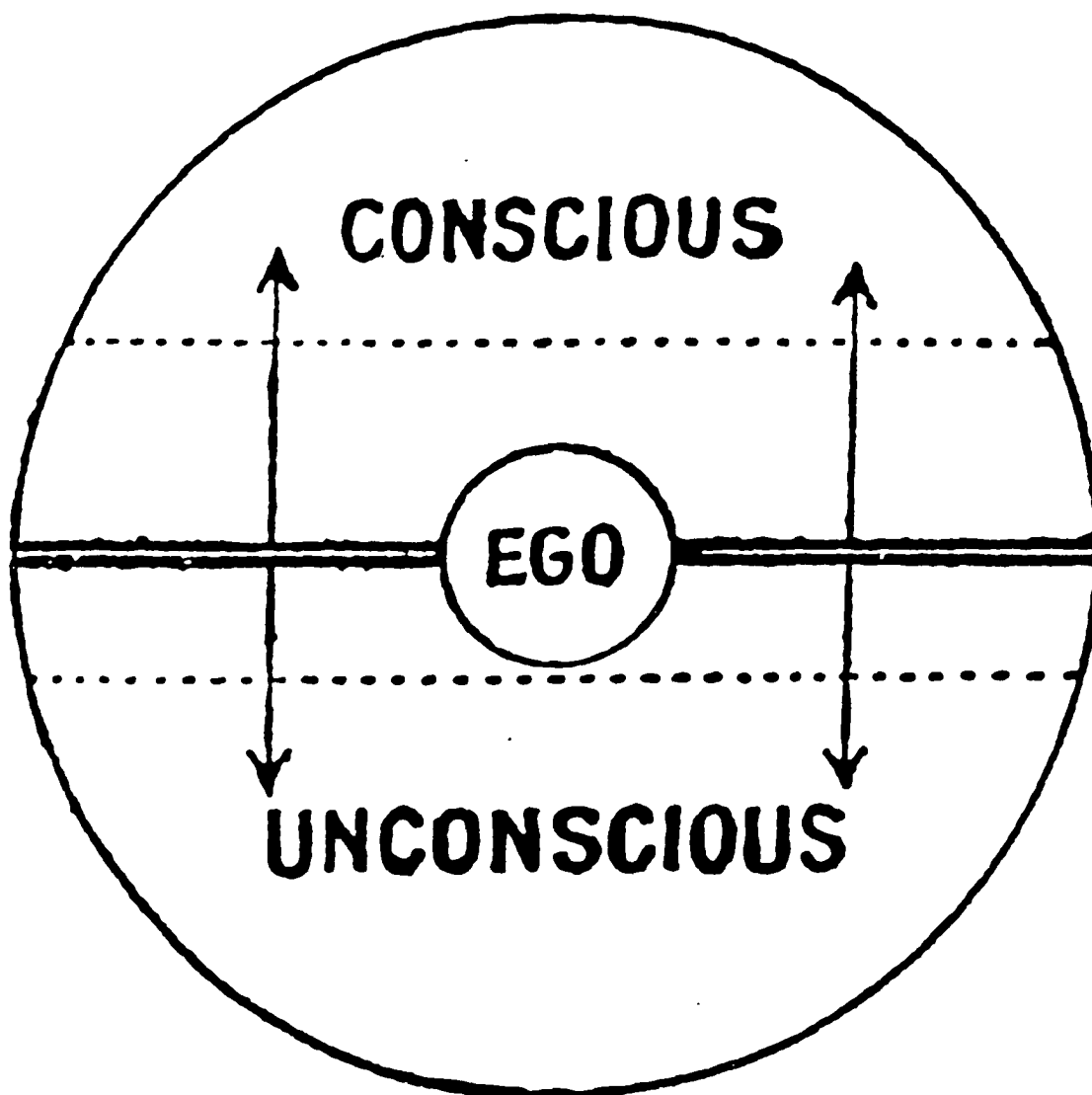
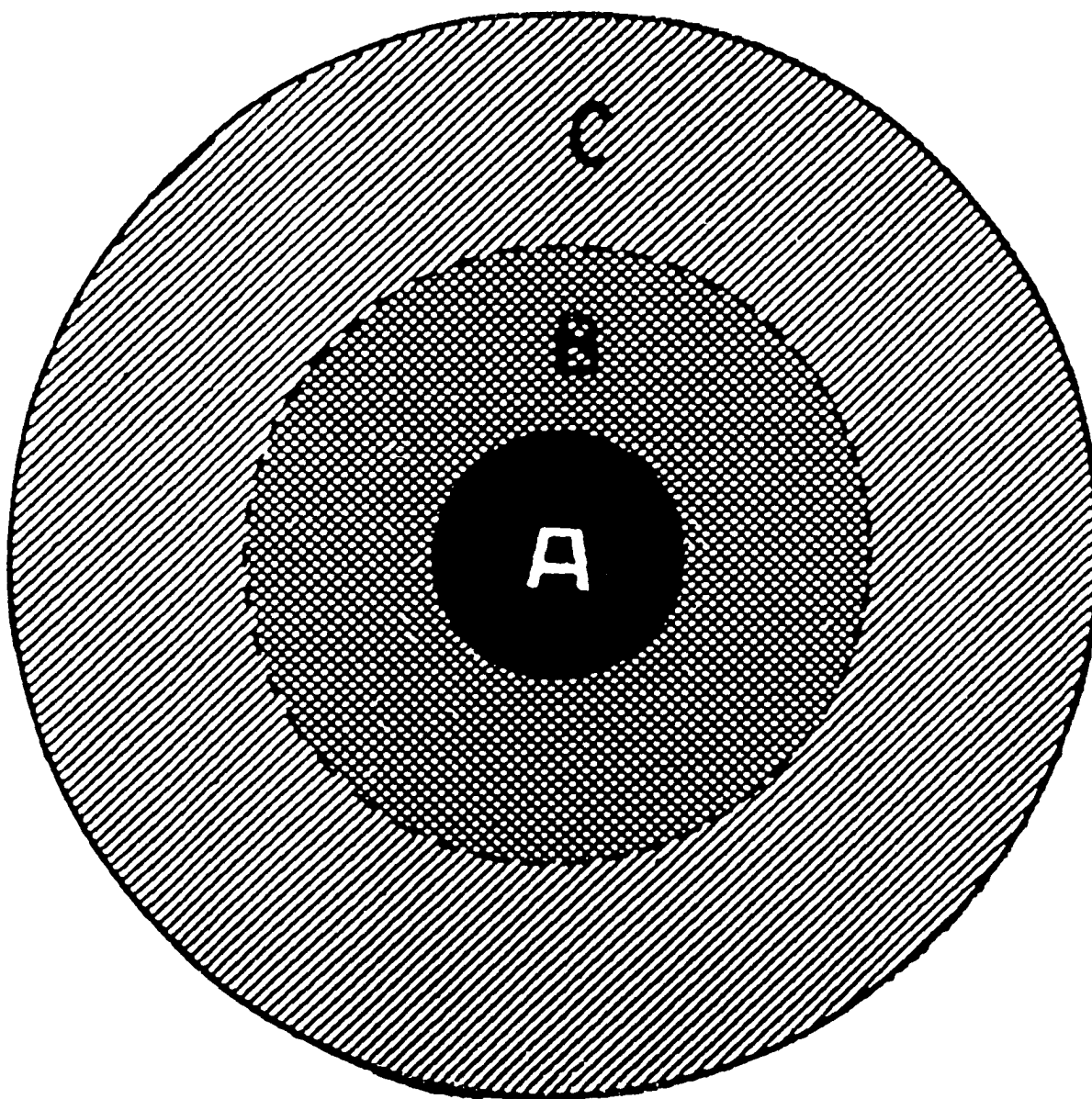
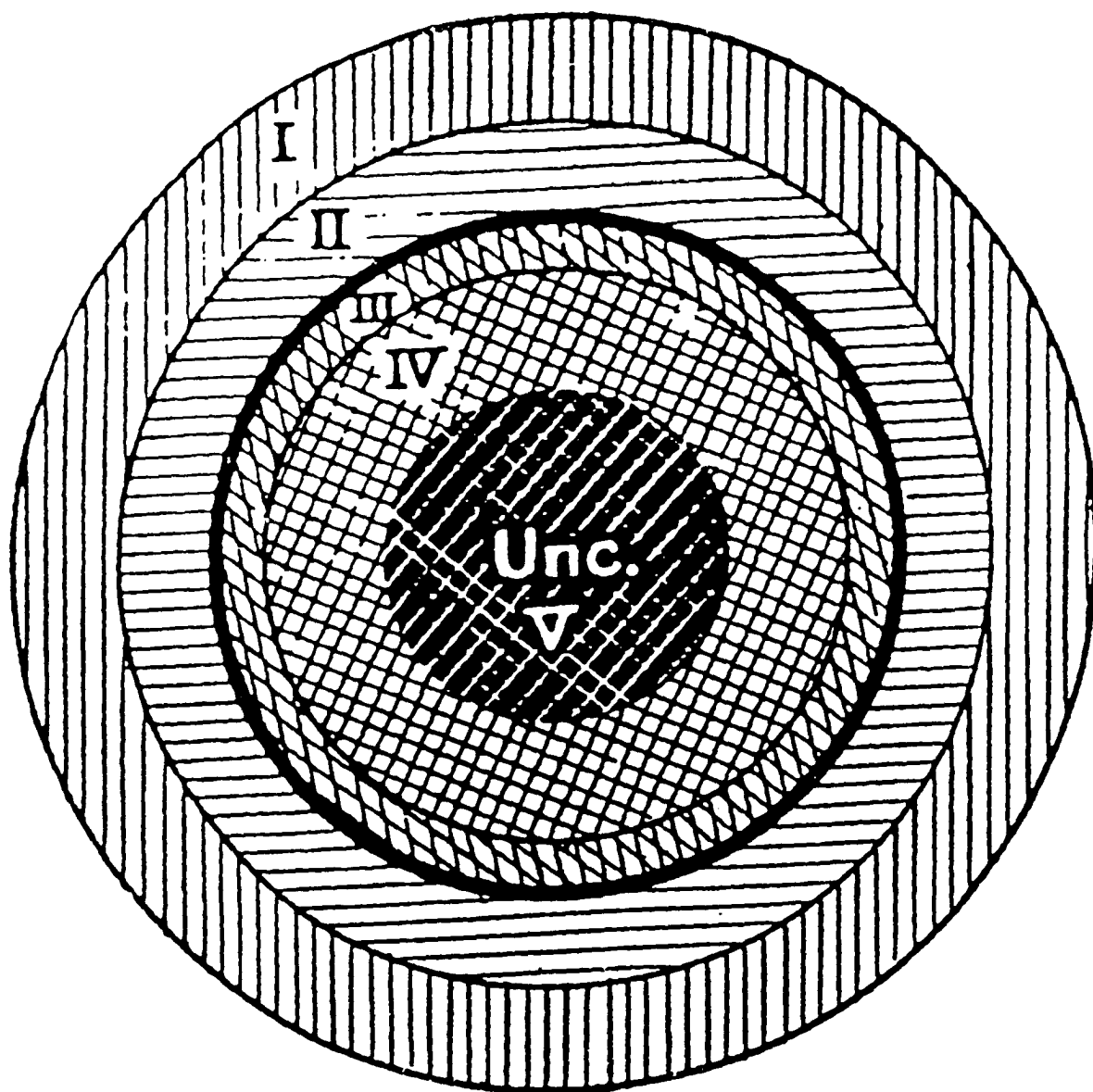


DIAGRAM FOUR
Schematic Representation of the Unconscious
(Taken from Jacobi (1973), p. 9)



- A. The part of the collective unconscious that can never be raised to consciousness.
- B. The sphere of the collective unconscious.
- C. The sphere of the personal unconscious.

DIAGRAM FIVE
Elaboration of the Unconscious
 (Taken from Jacobi 1973), p. 31)



I. Memories.	} Personal Unconscious.
II. Repressed material.	
III. Emotions.	
IV. Irruptions.	
V. That part of the collective unconscious that can never be made conscious.	

as the supraordinate personality (hero, goddess), in the form of a totality symbol (a circle or cross), or a united duality harmonizing the opposites like the Tao (Jung, 1971. p. 460).

Sharp (1991) says that the realization of the Self as an autonomous psychic factor is often activated by the intrusion of unconscious material over which the ego has no power. This can, in turn, “result in a neurosis and subsequent renewal of the personality” (p. 120). For Jung (1966), the Self is a construct that serves to express an ungraspable essence within us. It is also “a virtual centre of so mysterious a constitution that it will claim anything” (p. 237) on behalf of the development of personality. Experiences of the Self “possess a numinosity characteristic of religious revelations” (Sharp, 1991, p. 12). Jung believes that there is no essential difference between the Self as an experiential, psychological reality and the traditional concept of a deity. The Self is the spiritual centre and our life’s goal. It is the fullest expression of individuality and hence, the Way (or Tao) of the individuation process.

The Sphere of Consciousness

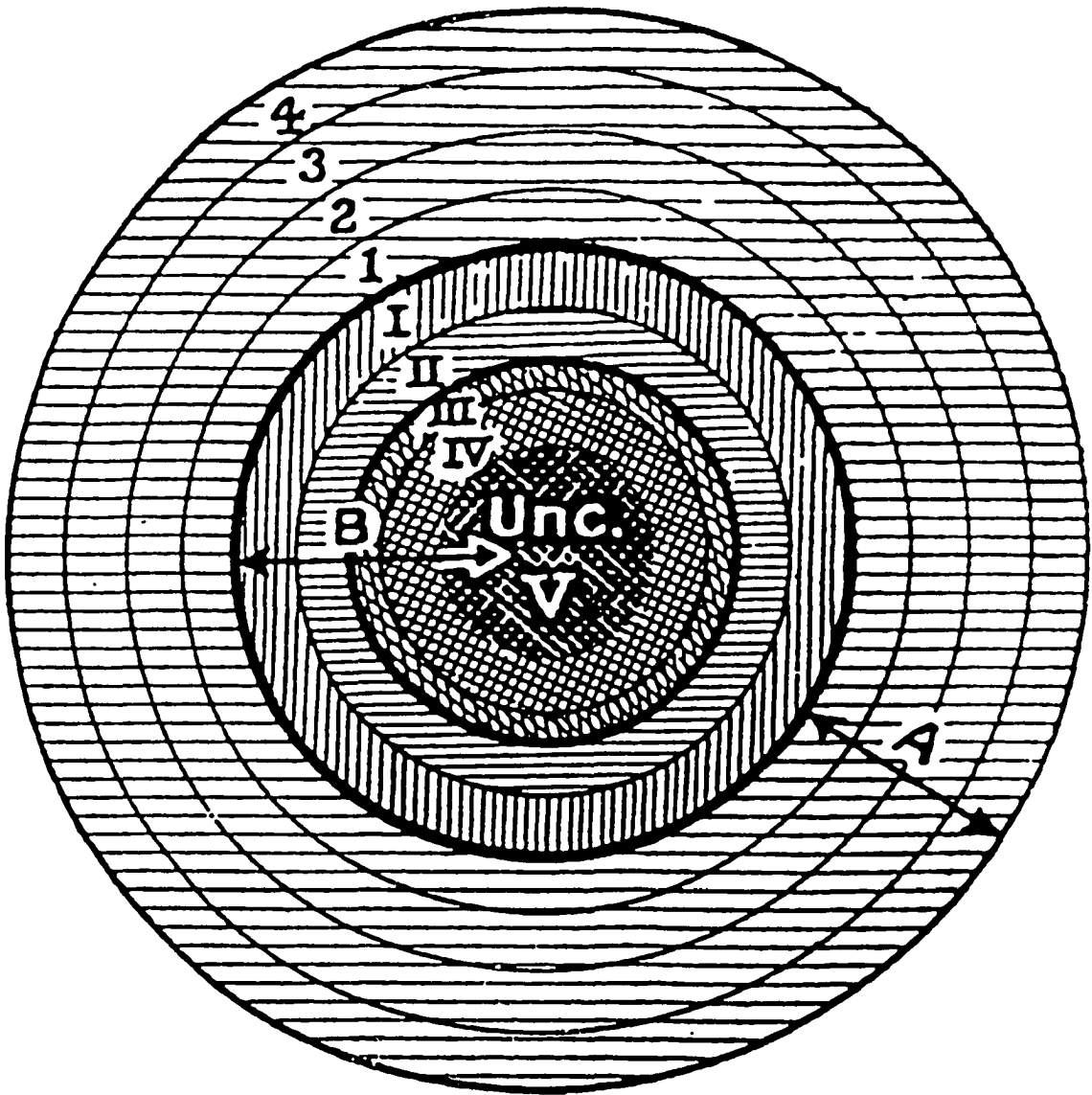
Consciousness, in Jung’s view, is a secondary phenomenon that has its roots in and is dependent on the unconscious. It refers to the range of experience of which we are aware at any moment, and “the function and activity that maintains the relations of psychic contents to the ego” (Sharp, 1991. p. 42). Jung (1969) says:

consciousness does not create itself—it wells up from unknown depths. In childhood it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep from an unconscious condition. It is ... born daily out of the primordial womb of the unconscious (p. 569).

It is conceptually different from the psyche and is selective by nature, relegating what is undesirable into the unconscious. Such repressed contents inevitably cause intrapsychic turmoil which may lead to a neurotic break and eventual healing. (See Diagram 6, p. 76.)

While the *ego* is the central complex in the field of consciousness and appears to possess a high degree of continuity and identity (Jung, 1971), it also stands in a necessary compensatory relation to consciousness and the unconscious. The ego attends to external and internal events and facilitates the understanding and integration into consciousness of contents from the unconscious. The more limited our consciousness the more the ego tends to dominate. The broader our consciousness, the more *differentiated* the ego. It is

DIAGRAM SIX
Elaboration of Consciousness and the Unconscious
 (Taken from Jacobi (1973), p. 32)



A. Consciousness.

B. Unconscious.

- I. Forgotten material.
- II. Repressed material.
- III. Emotions.
- IV. Irruptions.
- V. That part of the collective unconscious
that can never be made conscious.

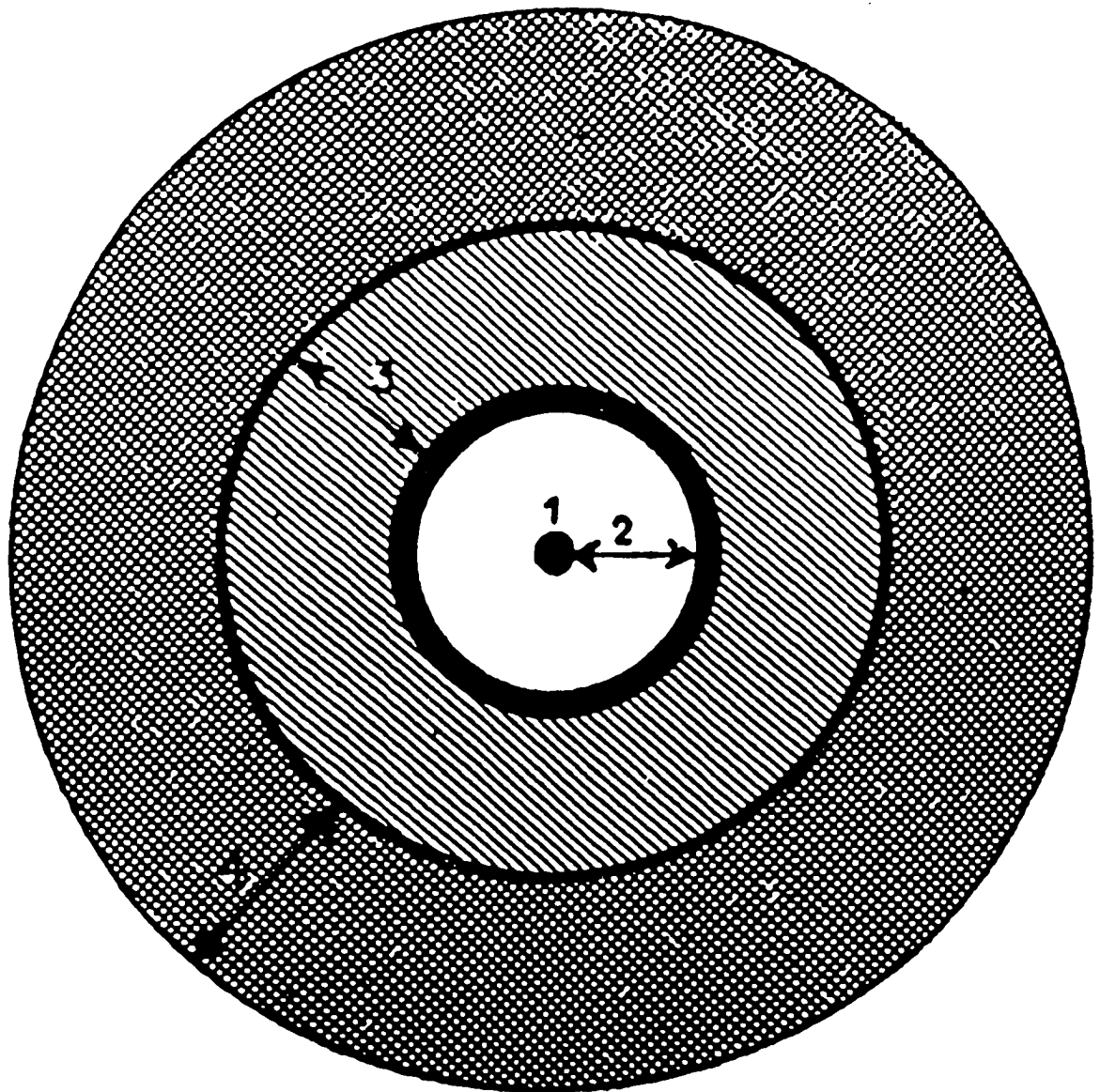
- 1. Sensation.
- 2. Feeling.
- 3. Intuition.
- 4. Thinking.

the subject of consciousness and indispensable to the individuation process during which a primary task is to differentiate the ego from the complexes in the personal unconscious: the persona, the shadow and the anima/animus (Sharp, 1991). A firm ego disidentifies with these contents yet relates objectively to them. (See Diagram 7, p. 78.)

The *persona* is the form of a person's system of adaptation to or the manner s/he assumes in dealing with the environment. It is a "social guise" between the ego and the relational world - a functional complex that is both a protective covering and an asset in interpersonal negotiations. Jung (1969) declares that the persona "is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is" (p. 123). It is a compromise between societal demands and the inner structural necessity of a person and serves as an effective medium of exchange between one's inner and outer worlds, providing it remains plastic and permeable. However, over-identification with the persona becomes a hazard to the development of personality. "The mask freezes and behind it the individual wastes away" (Jacobi, 1973, p. 28). There is no personality behind the husk, the husk of cheap compensation for hidden inadequacies. To the degree that ego-consciousness is identified with the persona, the negated inner life instigates a revolution in compensation catalyzing neurotic symptoms that can induce the process of individuation (Sharp, 1991) if heeded. I believe that the *extent of a culture's valuation* of the persona can and do directly impinge upon the health or the neurosis of a group. And, as the persona becomes insidiously corrupted with manipulative tact, diplomacy and philosophical mind-games disguised as political savvy, aspirations for authentic I-Thou relations and liberation of the inner life are sadly forfeited. Instead, a savage rape of our intrinsic sacredness occurs.

A *complex* is readily observable in conscious life and is defined as a psychic element that has evaded the control of consciousness, has split off from it and has receded to the unconscious "whence it may at any time hinder or help the conscious performance" (Jacobi, 1973, p. 36). Jung (1960) views the complexes as emotionally charged or "feeling-toned" groups of ideas or images that are incompatible with the habitual attitude of consciousness. Over time these images accrue around certain archetypes such as the *mother* and *father* and, once constellated, they become invariably imbued with intense affect (Sharp, 1991). In themselves complexes are not negative, only their effects are.

DIAGRAM SEVEN
Depiction of Consciousness and the Unconscious
(Taken from Jacobi (1973), p. 7)



1. Ego.
2. The sphere of consciousness.
3. The sphere of the personal unconscious.
4. The sphere of the collective unconscious.

They indicate that something incongruous and opposing exists. The ill effects of complexes are typically experienced as a distortion in judgement, perception and feeling response. Becoming conscious of and minimizing the effects of a complex are essential for coming to terms with its hold on us. Jung (1971) urges though that complexes are integral to psychic life for “without them psychic activity would come to a fatal stand-still” (p. 529). This suggests that our neuroses are paradoxically integral to wholeness and must be befriended and penetrated for healing purposes. (See Diagram 8, p. 80.)

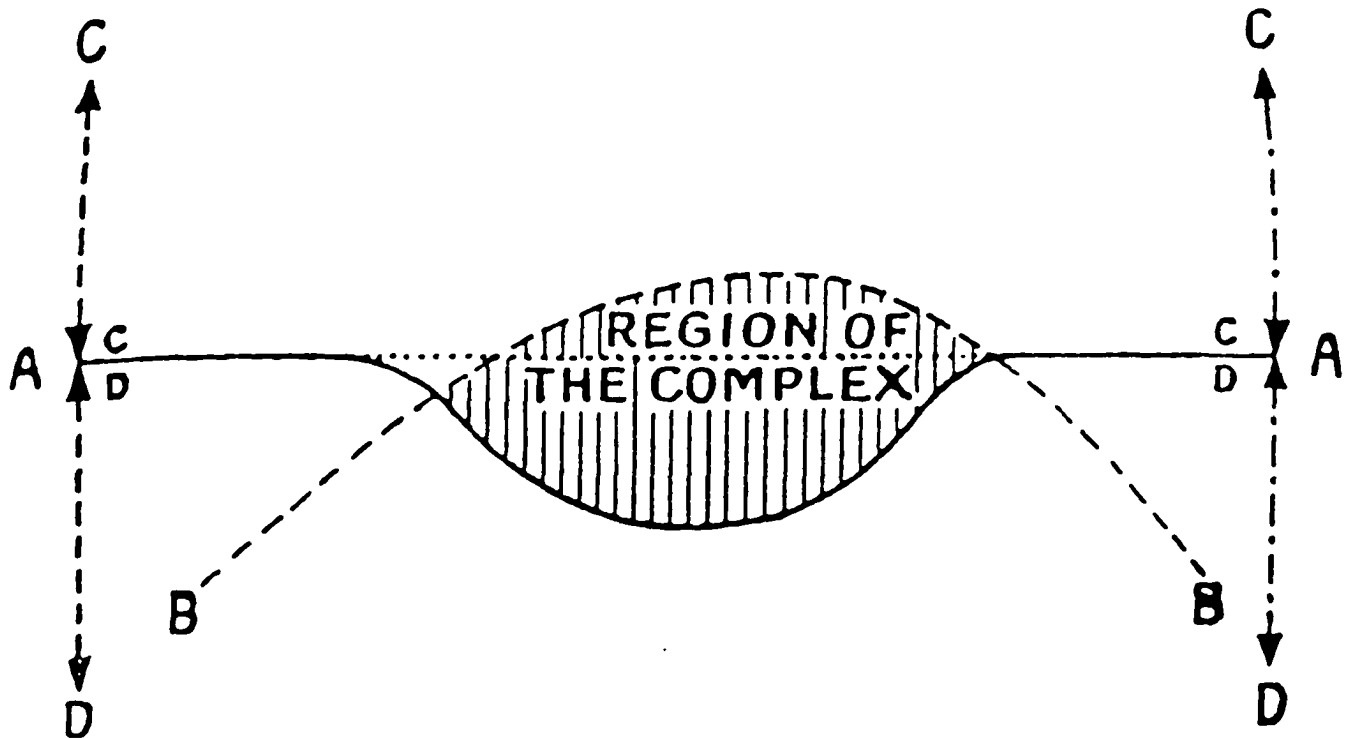
The *four psychological functions* - thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition (and the two attitude types - introvert and extrovert) - constitute Jung’s model of typology. They represent the various modes of our conscious orientation. By function, Jung means a form of psychic activity that is stable despite fluctuating conditions. We engage the four functions in comprehending, fleshing out and assimilating contents that are presented to consciousness. (Refer back to diagram 6, p. 76.)

Sensation establishes what is actually present, thinking enables us to recognize its meaning, feeling tell us its value and intuition points to possibilities as to whence it came and whither it is going in a given situation (Jung, 1971, p. 540).

For a more balanced orientation all four functions should contribute equally. Thinking should foster cognition and judgement, feeling should inform us as to how and to what degree a thing is important (subjective valuation), sensation should convey reality via our sense perceptions, and intuition should enhance our ability to divine the possibilities hidden in unconscious contents. Thinking and feeling are termed *rational*, and sensation and intuition *irrational* as “they circumvent the ratio and operate not with judgements but with perceptions which are not evaluated or interpreted” (Jacobi, 1973, p. 12).

Though the functions make up every psyche one necessarily dominates (e.g. the *superior* function), which may be relatively differentiated yet creates some one-sidedness resulting in possible imbalance. An *auxiliary* function may also be made use of while the *inferior* function recedes into the unconscious. It behaves in a compensatory manner irrupting unexpectedly and often contradicting the habitual temperament. In actuality, the functions appear not in pure, distinct forms but more in mixed combinations. Jacobi argues that “the complementary or compensatory relation between opposite functions is a

DIAGRAM EIGHT
Depiction of the Complex in Relation to Consciousness and the Unconscious
 (Taken from Jacobi (1973), p. 37)



- AA. Threshold of consciousness which is broken through at the dotted line, i.e., which has sunk into the unconscious.
- BB. The path of the ascending complex.
- CC. Sphere of consciousness.
- DD. Sphere of the unconscious.

structural law of the psyche” (p.18) and that over-differentiation of the superior function creates tensions that constitute some of the main problems of the second half of life. As an example, Jung (1971) states that there are many people who narrow their range of experiencing a certain context or situation to the simple perception of concrete reality without thinking more deeply about it or taking any feeling value seriously. They also ignore the hidden possibilities in the situation. This example focuses on the sensation type but applies equally to the other functions and their respective one-sidedness. Along with the tensions that this dynamic might create, I have been also invested in elucidating, within the context of Self-transformation, how the four functions are engaged in the *reflective* and *receptive* modes of meditating on and mediating with (Assagioli, 1973) the inner voice “messages.” Reflective meditation focuses on self-knowledge. It aims at “understanding, interpretation and evaluation of what we discover in ourselves” (p. 223). Receptive meditation receives, through “direct supra-rational comprehension” (p. 225) or “inner hearing,” guidance from the Self via contemplation, silence, intuition, revelation and illumination. How this is experienced is incorporated in Chapter Five.

The *two attitude types*, introvert and extravert, represent the overall tendency of an individual to respond to her/his outer and inner experiences. They are psychological orientations that determine our subjective reality and influence the entire psychic process, even the compensatory action of the unconscious (Jacobi, 1973). Adaptation to the environment necessitates flexibility in attitude type as circumstances fluctuate. When an attitude type constricts flow in the internal and external reality, psychic difficulties ensue (Sharp, 1991). While an attitude of introversion or extraversion may dominate a life, at certain times the attitudes may alternate or co-exist. Jung believes that puberty is a more extraverted phase while the climacteric is a more introverted one. There can be no generalizations, however, especially when cultural contexts, basic inherent dispositions, and shifts that occur in ways-of-being as persons heal are taken into consideration. Jung considers the attitude types in terms of libido or the general flow of psychic energy and asserts that they are rooted in our biological makeup. He also suggests that there is a compensatory relation between extraversion and introversion and that the opposite of the

dominant attitude hovers in the unconscious, breaking in on consciousness unexpectedly through projections and with conflicting results. (See Diagrams 9, 10, p. 83, 84.)

Introversion is a psychological orientation whereby the flow of psychic energy is toward the inner world and a person who is so endowed is less motivated by external conditions and resists outside influences. Jung (1971) points out that:

... anyone whose attitude is introverted thinks, feels and acts in a way that clearly demonstrates that the subject is the prime motivating factor and that the object is of secondary importance" (pp. 452-3).

In devaluing objective reality the introvert experiences, by way of compensation, an unconscious reinforcement of the object's influence. This is felt as "a tie, with concomitant emotional reactions, to outer circumstances or another person" (Sharp, 1991, p. 76) resulting in futile execution of the will.

With extraversion, the movement of energy is toward the outer world. External factors constitute the primary impetus for judgements, perception, affects and actions. One's ethics are of a highly collective nature and psychic life adapts to changing external reality which may be both a strength and a limitation. Inner reality may be sacrificed to outer circumstances creating one-sidedness (Sharp, 1991). Jung argues that by mid-life the opposition of the functions and attitudes is exacerbated, resulting in a neurosis which impels a striving for psychic totality and makes conscious the functions and the attitudes.

Overview of the Individuation Process

Individuation is a spontaneous, naturally occurring phenomenon within the life-span of the individual. Like the physical process of growth and aging, it is the psychic parallel of maturation and development that unfolds organically and on its own terms if not impeded by severe psychological disturbances. Also, historical, sociopolitical and economic factors can and *do* strategically disenfranchise individuals and groups of such emancipatory possibilities, although, even in the midst of dire deplorable circumstances, the spirit can endure and strive toward growth as Frankl (1963) attests to at Auschwitz:

In a position of utter desolation, where man cannot express himself in positive action, where his only achievement may consist in enduring his sufferings in the right way, an honorable way ... in such a position man can ... achieve fulfillment (p. 58).

DIAGRAM NINE
Depiction of the Persona and Ego in Psychic Relation to the Objective World
(Taken from Jacobi (1973), p. 27)

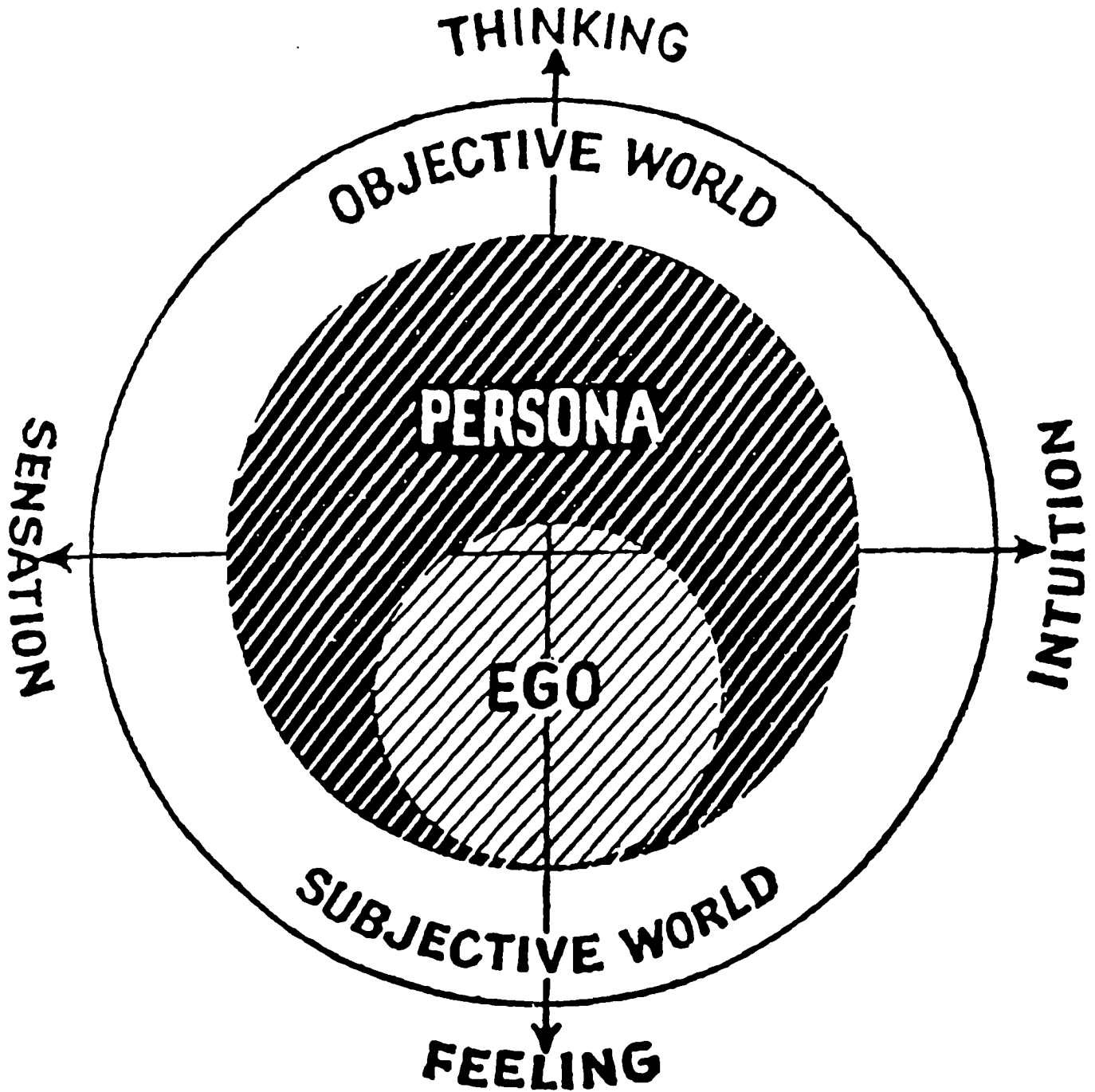
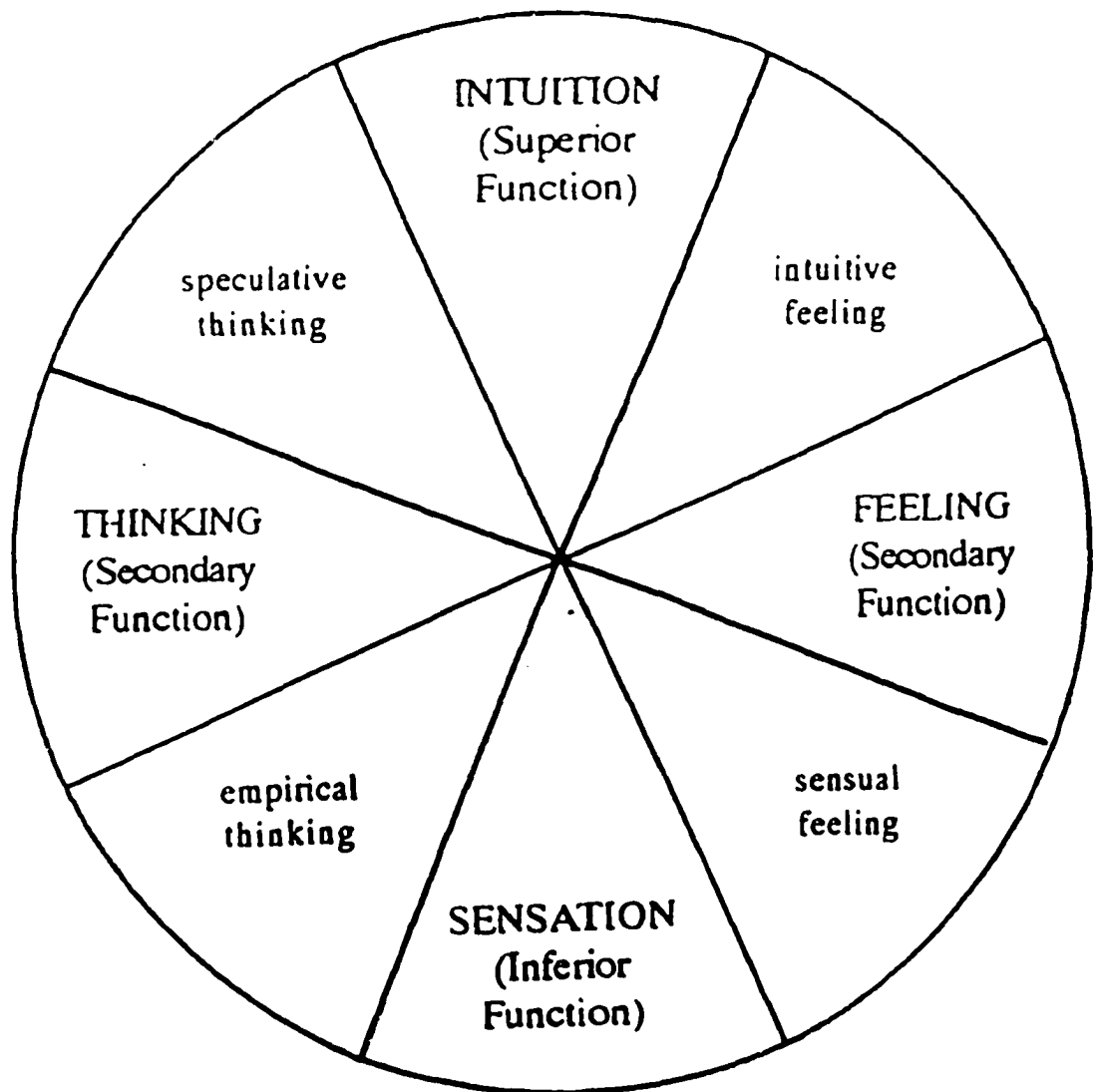


DIAGRAM TEN
Depiction of the Four Functions and their Relative Dominance
(Taken from Sharp (1988), p. 97)



It is Jung's argument that, while individuation is a process potentially present in all persons, few are consciously aware of let alone conscientiously committed to its often stringent demands (Jacobi, 1973; Stevens, 1990; von Franz, 1993). Individuation signals the ceaseless striving of the future personality to break through amidst the flux of everyday existence. As a process of psychological differentiation, its goal is the development of the *in-dividual* personality, a response of the psyche to the question of Self-realization.

von Franz (1993) argues that the concept of Self-realization is being used by various psychological schools in a manner different from Jung, a sense of discovering a certain ego identity that matures and stabilizes over time and becomes more aware of itself. By contrast, Jung means something radically different. A stable ego identity is developed but "it is *less egocentric and has more human kindness*" (p. 1). In this sense the ego gets out of its own narcissistic way and serves the unfolding of the individual's deeper destiny. It does not so much realize itself as it helps the Self toward realization. The Self is not the ego. It is more like a primordial inner substrate (as discussed in the spirituality section) that already exists in each person's basic makeup. Through the process of individuation the Self realizes itself. It "incarnates itself, so to speak, in the mortal life of the ego" (p. 8). It seems like there is a foundational, sacred essence that is constant, permeates our being and underpins the many configurations of the evolving selfhood. Through deep transformation work this Self-presence is more consciously and vitally experienced via the differentiated ego and one may thus be more aligned with it.

Jung refers to this as the synthesis of the Self which constellates as unconscious contents, including numinous experiences, and which are wrestled with and integrated into consciousness. This incrementally culminates in a rounding out of the individual into a psychic whole, although Jung renounces any delusions of a *perfect* state. Sharp (1991) reiterates that, in Jung's view, no one is ever completely individuated. While the goal of individuation "is wholeness and a healthy working relationship with the Self" (p. 69), *the real value is realized in the lived processes along the way*, i.e., in the dynamic tension between psychological death and rebirth, stagnation and the compulsion toward growth.

Sharp emphasizes another point about the aim of individuation. It is not about overcoming one's personal psychology but becoming acquainted with it; becoming

increasingly aware of one's unique psychospiritual reality, including personal strengths and weaknesses together with acquiring a deeper appreciation of humanity as a whole. Yet, individuation and life lived according to the collective dictates and values assume seemingly divergent paths. Jung (1950) says, "they are related to one another by guilt" (p. 453). The individuated path is often antithetical to the collective norms. However, it does not lose its essential relatedness with the collectivity. It is like being *in* the world but not *of* the world. Sharp adds, "to atone for this 'desertion,' the individual is obliged to create something of worth for the benefit of society" (p. 68). Or, in being found worthy, in being humbled and in being *called* to wholeness, one then becomes ethically and spiritually obliged to offer the gifts of his renewed selfhood in service to the collective good. Wholeness in and of itself leads to a cul-de-sac, hemmed in with no giving back to life. We rust out rather than burn out, in a navel-gazing, ego-inflated enlightenment.

Individuation cuts one off from personal conformity and hence from collectivity. That is the guilt that the individuant leaves behind him for the world. That is the guilt he must endeavor to redeem. He must offer a ransom in place of himself, i.e., he must bring forth values which are an equivalent substitute for his absence in the collective sphere. Without this production of values, final individuation is immoral, more than that ... suicidal (Jung 1950, revised 1980. p. 451).

Individuation thus differs substantially from the process of becoming superficially conscious and telling stories. First, in order to achieve any desired development of the personality and to derive any actual benefit from the process of psychic differentiation, one must humanly experience, comprehend and *not betray* the process. The process of first staying with the mess, ambiguity, lostness, stuckness and tension, and gradually elucidating meaning from the images, symbols, voices and visions that irrupt from the depths or are synchronously encountered in the world. Secondly, one must *understand* and judiciously and actively *integrate* any meaning and wisdom gained with one's full consciousness (Jung, 1966). It requires strength of character, courage and faithfulness to carry the inner and outer work to meaningful fruition. Jung insists that individuation is not individualism. The former deviates from collective norms but maintains respect for those aspects that prove credible while the latter renounces the whole gamut. Clearly, Self and world co-constitute the individuation process.

Like Jung, Assagioli (1965, 1973) incorporates the concept of the Self in his model of Self-transformation or what he terms psychosynthesis - the formation or reconstruction of the personality around the unifying center, the Self (1965). However, he differentiates between personal psychosynthesis (self-actualization) and spiritual psychosynthesis (Self-realization). Though these two processes are more or less related, they differ in nature and manifestation. Self-actualization refers to psychological growth and maturation, the actualization of potentialities latent in the normal personality (ethical, aesthetic, religious experiences and activities). Self-realization or the realization of the Self is the experience and awareness of the synthesizing spiritual Center, the progressive manifestation of transcendent, transpersonal potentialities, "culminating with the direct, experiential awareness of the Transpersonal Self (1973. p. 119). Assagioli refutes Jung's idea that the Self is an archetype. He conceptualizes it as a direct, experiential and fundamental structure of the psyche or for that matter, of the intrinsic human makeup.

The Types and Phases of the Individuation Process

The individuation process offers a way of broadening the personality through painstakingly exploring the contents and functions of the whole psyche and the effect on the ego. It is a way to self-knowledge, meaning and self-regulation and is in no way limited to cure of mental illness or neurosis (Jacobi, 1973). The individuation experience can occur unconsciously or it can be made conscious and brought to a high level of differentiation. Jacobi (1967) outlines two types of processes. "The natural process occurring autonomously and relatively unconsciously and the artificial one assisted by analysis and developed by specific methods and consciously experienced" (p. 15). Within the limits of the natural process there are individuals who, without professional intervention or specific methods, have successfully "midwived" their own processes, their healing and wholeness being realized through sustained, honest self-analysis and strategic guidance from the Self (Assagioli, 1965). I disagree with the dualism of natural versus artificial since the process *is* inherently natural. It is the actual participation in the process that can be consciously undertaken or not that separates the two.

The individuation process unfolds in stages of ascents, crises, collapse, failures, and new beginnings, with most people treading the path unconsciously, unreflectively,

and forfeiting the development of the personality. Moreover, this first unconscious type may be further blocked by psychosis, inhibited by drugs, interrupted by accident, death or abuse and sabotaged by superficiality and various perversions and degeneration (Jacobi, 1967). Since individuation exerts rigorous demands of self-discipline, self-knowledge, and self-responsibility, the majority of individuals opt for the path of least resistance, i.e., futile and sole fulfillment of biological and material needs. Jacobi reiterates that the more biological a life is, more so in the second half:

... the more it comes to an end. The more it is shaped by the spirit, the more it comes to completion, realizing the goal of individuation ... and giving life an incomparable value ... inner peace and the highest form of happiness (p. 17).

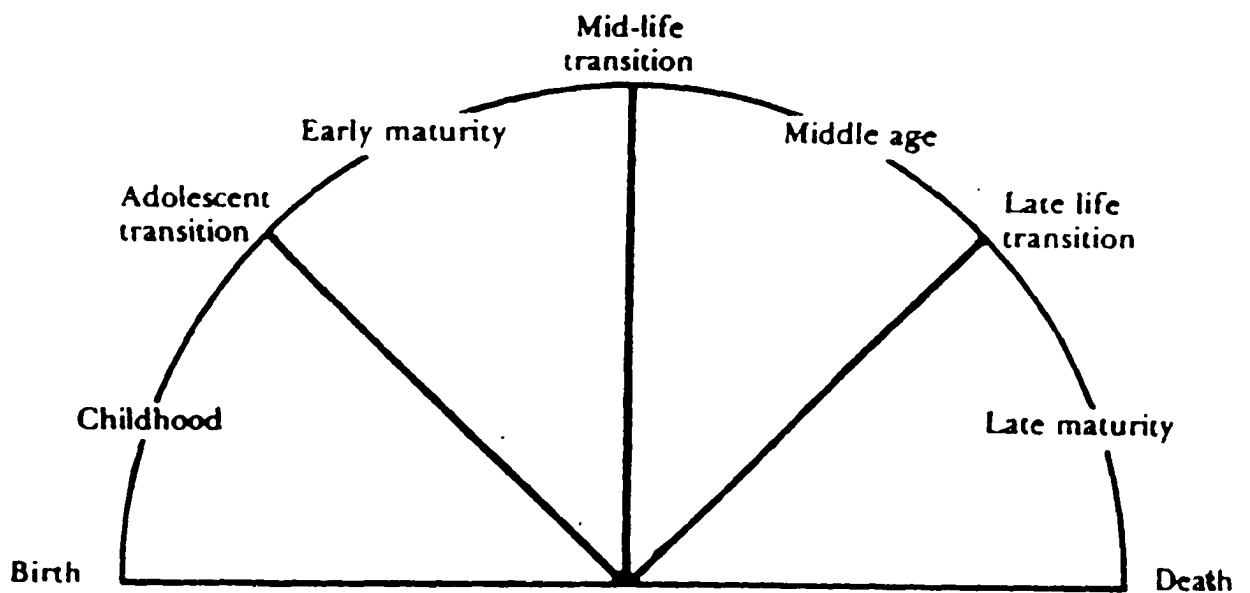
The way of individuation as explicated by Jung differs from the natural type, which happens to a person as a passive object. The second type is followed through “and experienced consciously and is actively shaped” (p. 18) by the individual. Between the process of automatic *doing* and *I am conscious of what I do and what that does*, there is a huge chasm separating each. There may exist not only vast differences but also complete opposition. Hence, “there is consciousness in which unconsciousness predominates, and consciousness in which self-consciousness predominates” (Jung, 1960, p. 187). We live mostly on automatic pilot without deeply reflecting on our participation as a conscious act. Jung, therefore, strongly emphasizes the essentiality and strengthening of consciousness, its intervention in the organic flow of psychic life and its capacity for insight. The aim being that, for the individual, every conscious decision becomes in effect an ethical decision that cumulatively serves the Self-realization process (Jacobi, 1967).

The *two main phases* of the individuation process are divided into the first and the second half of life, each being the opposite of the other yet sharing a polar relationship. The duration of each phase, the tasks to be attended to and the depth and intensity of experience vary with each person. The course of the first half of life is determined by its own form and laws which may be described as initiation into adulthood or initiation into outer reality. It designates the first phase of the way of individuation in which the ego, (which Jung theorizes as growing out of the Self), in its encounter with the environment, grows into a solid nucleus. It is Jung’s perspective that the ego must first sufficiently

“emancipate itself from the Self and the absorptive powers of the collective psyche” (p. 30) so that it becomes relatively self-contained. Yet this emancipation could lead to one-sidedness or a kind of hypertrophy, an exaggerated rationalistic attitude severed from the world of inner images and emotions and ensuing in feelings of deep emptiness and isolation. The converse is the undifferentiated ego that has not achieved independence, falls prey to uncontrollable impulses and ideas and lacks the requisite tenacity to fulfill the demands of the second half of the way of individuation. An example is a highly, intellectually developed man who has remained psychologically and emotionally a boy and cannot embrace the midlife transition honorably. He remains fixated at the pubescent level, a sad *puer aeternus* or infantile adult with weak ego-stability and poor discernment of the realities of life. He may idiotically indulge in the most absurd antics to sustain his illusion of youth and prowess. To the demise of society some of these individuals occupy positions of power, perpetuating the toxicity inherent in some institutional systems! Some women aptly fit this bill too though their discrepancies are often nicely wedged in behind the persona! The critical task of the first half of life then, is the maturation and stability of the ego and the strengthening of consciousness. Only then is the individual equipped for the arduous demands of the second half of life. (See Diagram 11, p. 90.)

Much theorizing about the first half of life has been conducted. Jung’s attention focused on the psychological problems of life’s second half. For him, the gradual process of achieving individuation, (which is experienced consciously as ongoing death-rebirth rounds of the transformation spiral), constitutes the whole course of one’s life though it is more crucial a task for the years following the change of life. It can give new meaning to life as well as facilitate a psychic preparation for death. Jung differentiates the two phases by the “change of life”- the onset of biological aging, the urge and potential for further spiritual and psychic development and the sober reckoning with one’s mortality. A courageous inventory of one’s life may ensue which initiates a “change of dominance” (Jacobi, 1967. p. 22), an acute reversal of what is vital for the future. It may be a time of great disequilibrium. The degree of maturity at midlife directly correlates with the extent of chaos experienced, processed and integrated provided that the change even occurs and one is not arrested in an early developmental stage. The chaos is a vital and natural aspect

DIAGRAM ELEVEN
The Life Cycle (adapted from Staude, 1981)
(Taken from Stevens (1990), p. 62)



of the individuation process and provides ripened opportunities for psychic wholeness. Embracing this phase and honoring its processes could be life's most critical engagement.

These years of change constitute the most profound transformation as a person moves from "an ego-centered attitude to an ego-transcending one in which the guiding principles of life are directed to something objective" (p. 24) like work, humanity or God. The operative principle driving both phases of the individuation process is the Self. That organizing center that "seems from the beginning to be in *a priori* possession of the goal and with a kind of fore-knowledge (Jung, 1960, p. 447) aims at the "*entelechy*, the unity and wholeness of the human personality" (Frey-Roh, 1955, in Jacobi, 1967, p. 30). The transformation occurring in this phase offers the discovery of a new life-form and an opportunity to maximize the successful conduct and honoring of one's ongoing life. It may be gradual, over several years, or sudden and of varying intensity and upheaval. Jacobi says that the greater the areas of experience encompassed by the transformation, that is, from the initial catalyzing event(s) to the integrative circumstances, the more sudden will be the transformation and vice versa. Jung views mid-life as a gifted time to be used wisely to learn genuine self-acceptance and make peace with one's own soul. There are certainly individuals who penetrate the depths much younger and cultures that quicken and nurture awareness of the ego-Self axis in early childhood. This has been my own experience and my sustaining strength. I thank my mother for this early quickening.

The overall stages of the individuation process, therefore, entail: the progressive differentiation of the attitudinal (extravert, introvert) and functional (thinking, feeling, etc.) modes of being; the development and differentiation of the ego and the persona; the confrontation and integration of the shadow; encounter with the archetypal images - the soul-image (anima, animus), the contrasexual aspect of the psyche, the spiritual principle (the Wise-old-Man, the Magna Mater); and the conscious aligning with and integration of the Self, the Deep Center. This initiates a transformation in the fullest sense and a shift of the psychic center, i.e., consciously living from the Self. Attitudes toward and views of the world also shift radically (Jacobi, 1973). Furthermore, consciousness of the Self inevitably demands ethical, responsible and compassionate living such that, in the most inconspicuous of engagements with self, other and earth, we become deeply accountable.

Jacobi (1967. p. 132-133) offers a synthesis of the individuation process which is hereby included, the format and content totally accredited to her. Metaphorically, the most important stations on the way of individuation can be viewed as *four births* within the life cycle of the individual:

1. the *first*, the initial birth from the mother's womb and into the world;
2. the *second*, at puberty, when the ego differentiates itself from its psychic fusion with the parental authority and begins to realize its unique form, independence, and sense of responsibility;
3. the *third*, when the "spiritual body" emerges from the chaos of mid-life, and anchored again in the depths of the psyche, the individual allies herself with the "Self," the experience of which is a "rebirth;"
4. the *fourth*, death and re-entry into the vast unknown from whence we came.

This all entails an immense trust in the natural striving of the psyche towards its goal.

Jacobi also delineates five perspectives from which to view individuation:

- A. as a process of *psychological development*, it represents the step-by-step maturation of the psyche to the degree that its potentialities are realized and the conscious and unconscious domains are united by integrating its historical roots with present-day consciousness;
- B. from the perspective of *characterology*, it highlights the typological profile of the individual. It facilitates increasing control of the auxiliary functions and of the undeveloped, inferior function and attitude, resulting in increased capacity for judgement, decision-making and use of free will;
- C. from the *sociological* perspective, it integrates the individual with the collective and adapts the ego to the demands of everyday life;
- D. in *psychotherapy*, it facilitates a redistribution of psychic energy, assists in the dissolution of complexes, identification and fixations, as well as with the conscious withdrawal of projections. It provides a way of recognizing and enduring one's own shadow qualities, of crystallizing one's own values and thus of overcoming neurosis and finding new meaning and wholeness; and

- E. from the *religious* point of view, it creates a living relationship between the individual and the suprapersonal and helps him/her find his/her proper place in the order of the universe. Through the encounter with the contents of the unconscious realm of the psyche and their integration into consciousness, one is provided with the foundation for an independent, personal philosophy of life which, depending on the person, *may* also ally with a particular creed.

In summary, individuation cannot be grasped in its essence. It is of life's grand Mystery.

Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

In this section, I move from the broader existential drama of individuation and focus in on the lived-experience of transformation, a slice of the individuation process, so to speak, in which individuals experience the death-rebirth cycle as punctuated episodes of transition from one life-phase to another. The psychological stages and phases of the lived-experience of Self-transformation as delineated by Jung and other theorists are synthesized and summarized in Table One (p. 95-98). While the emphasis is on Jung (1969), the other voices (Andersen (1991); Assagioli (1965); Grof and Grof (1991); Perry (1986), and Sharp (1988)) further elucidate essential elements that are constitutive of the phenomenon. Andersen, Perry and Sharp are influenced by Jung's psychological theory of transformation. Assagioli and Grof and Grof developed their own separate theories.

In Table One, the synthesis of the process of Self-transformation are categorized such that there are three common stages, three phases that are conceptualized differently by the various theorists, and the respective detailed process of each phase. It is suggested that the ensuing stages are enacted spontaneously and may be earnestly committed to or lived out rather unconsciously. The entire process is *preceded* by what Dabrowski (1964 in Andersen, 1991) calls "successfully living a socialized existence."

I go a step further and create Table Two (p. 99-102), a model that delineates a *pre-stage* and four subsequent stages with the fourth stage comprising two parts. Table Two is an overall synthesis of my lived-experience of transformation and has evolved from nine years of observing, documenting, interpreting, re-interpreting the experiential data and theorizing about the process using my acquired knowledge together with various theoretical models studied. The pre-stage is termed a *Premonition Phase*, during which

time one may receive repeated messages or perturbing inner jolts that strive to arrest attention and direct reflection on neglected aspects of the inner life whereby one's primal integrity is being compromised. These cues may manifest as bodily symptoms, pervasive discontent with work or relationship, a gut sense of meaninglessness, or animosity toward life itself. If given their due attention these cues could instigate much critical inner work. Stages One and Two follow closely those in Table One with additions of my own. Stage Three, *Awakening of the Heart (Illumination)* offers another view of the *beginning* of the rebirth process while stage Four, the ripening of the rebirth phase constitutes two parts - a *Second Dark Night of the Soul* and a *Deeper Integrative Synthesis*. Further, Table Two comprises two parts - skeleton diagram showing the stages and phases of the rebirth journey, and a full diagram showing the detailed psychospiritual processes of each stage.

I am indebted to Underhill (1974) and McNamara (1983) for their most insightful explication of the transformation processes of the Christian mystics. They facilitated my understanding of the latter phases of my rebirth experience and my subsequent ability to break down the last rebirth stage into the two phases mentioned above. Their writings also confirmed the credibility of my firsthand experiences and provided the "linguaging" necessary to describe the processes that I endured but could not quite articulate. More so, their writings helped me find deeper meaning in my experiences by inducing a deeper contemplative process whereby my entire transformation process came to gradually make more sense. I have come to feel an immense gratitude as I have more fully understood the profundity of my journey to wholeness. *I was not deluding myself as a way of staying alive* - an example of the ridicule that I endured from an uninformed faculty member.

I wish to add that in my detailed descriptions, interpretation and discussion of the lived-experience of Self-transformation in Chapter Five, I combine in an embedded way some of the contours of the maps presented in these tables rather than address each phase or process separately. In other words, my description of the lived-experience inherently portrays its stages, phases and processes. However, I further discuss these in light of the psychological literature and the methodology in two different sections following each description in Chapter Five. The tables provided here are intended to give an overview of the overall lived-experience, reiterating of course that it is a *partial* perspective at that.

TABLE ONE - PSYCHOLOGICAL STAGES AND PHASES OF THE SELF-TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

<u>THEORIST</u>	<u>STAGE ONE</u>	<u>STAGE TWO</u>	<u>STAGE THREE</u>
Andersen (1991)	<u>Diminution Phase</u> Wholistic disintegration of life-world; psychological and physical malaise; resigned to impasse/downward spiral; meaninglessness; powerlessness; existential isolation; inner sterility; catalytic event propels drive for growth; resistance.	<u>Transition Phase during Retreat</u> Finding self in solitude; learning about "Self;" hearing voices, seeing images; paradox of Self-world co-constitutionality yet feeling of alienation and liberation in retreat; ungroundedness; revaluation of world-of worldview; differentiation from collective; psychological clearing; negative affect being transformed; enlargement of psyche; emergence of multidimensionality of being; turning point – emergence of new consciousness; lucidity; insight and trust; owning of core Self.	<u>Integration Phase and Reentry</u> Sense of rebirth and acceptance, if not resolution of questions of life-meaning; Self recollection and cognizance of Self as evolving; valuing of one's life and integral worth; return of will to live; energy, joy, revitalization; sense of self as effective and powerful; sober appreciation of what one has endured; interconnectedness with all of life; sacred way of being in world; awareness of a divine order; reentry and reconnection with world; clearer sense of boundaries; value solitude and contact; care of Self/others; service to world and Self-integrity in accord.
Assagioli (1965)	<u>Crisis: Urge to Know Self</u> Sense of dissatisfaction; deprecation of self; feelings of remorse and guilt; inner breakdown and disintegration; depression and suicidal ideas; moral crisis; psychosomatic	<u>Transition: Search for or Creation of a Unifying Center</u> Irruption of unconscious material into consciousness; exploring of, disidentification with and disintegration of images, complexes, fears, conflicts that silently dominate and sabotage the conscious personality; vigilant,	<u>Psychosynthesis: Union with "Center"</u> Self-realization – reconstruction of the personality around the new Center; expansion of personal consciousness into that of the Self; Self-world synthesis; internal expansion; sense of multiplicity and unity; experience of the synthesizing

symptoms; inquiry into life's purpose; inner paralysis and aridity; deep sense of abandonment; resistance, hanging on to old "reality;" acute affect and regression.

critical self-analysis within volatile, vulnerable psychological state; hold inner tension, enduring pain until meaning/insights synergistically break through; training of undeveloped functions: will, imagination; opposition between ego and unconscious; control and use of emerging energy; gaining inner independence, strength/self-reliance; facing ridicule without resentment; holding vision; progressive move to the Center.

spiritual center, the Self, via descent of superconscious contents or ascending superconscious levels in peak "experiences;" living along new inner dimension; mental illumination; feelings of love, compassion and peacefulness.

**Grof/Grof
(1991)**

Psychological Collapse

Fragmentation of conscious attitude; unconscious dynamics blur ordinary clarity; ego defenses weaken; redirection to inner world; disorganization and isolation.

**Dark Night of the Soul and
Symbolic Death**

Loss of ordinary functioning; feeling of powerlessness, ineffectiveness, loneliness, fear, shame, guilt; sense of "losing it;" release of repressed emotions; recollection and encounter with memories or experiences from the personal/transpersonal realms; reliving of serious illnesses or disturbing events from infancy or childhood; confronting self-sabotaging, ingrained patterns, fears; symbolic death; encounter with divine and awakening of Kundalini; shift in values and lifestyle; turning point.

Rebirth and Homecoming

Sense of numinosity or profound feeling of sacredness; diminution of egotism; inner and outer unity; strong positive emotion; peak experience; transcendence of time and space; ineffability; paradoxical nature; positive aftereffects; contentment; transcendence of sexual polarity/conflict; "sacred marriage" and spiritual rebirth; deep connection with Higher Self (God); resolution and reentry.

**Jung
(1969)**

Diminution of Personality

Fragmentation, slackening of the intensity of consciousness; neurotic symptoms; paralysis of will.

Enlargement of Personality & Change of Internal Structure

Activation/processing of archetypal images, complexes, inferior function, shadow, spiritual principle, anima/animus; ego struggle; transcendent function active; conflict dissolution.

Individuation/Synthesis of Ego and the Self

Integration of unconscious contents – synthesis of ego/Self, ego/Self axis aligned; sense of numinosity; progression of energy; rebirth.

**Perry
(1986)**

Disintegrative Phase

Self-image decomposing; impending metaphoric death inner and outer status quo becomes chaotic; letting go of inner culture; confidence and energy wane; worldview collapses; rigid ego position becomes fractured.

Transitory “Psychosis”

Deep nature struggling to break through; who one is and what one values are up for grabs; inner reenactment of early emotional experiences; spiritual crisis; fear, depression, rage, acute sense of isolation; temporary and fragmentary “thought disorder;” regression to past, back to the mother/father; contra-sexual conflict; negative self-inflation; extreme affect; encounter with archetypal images as the unconscious breaks through; reliving of repressed pain; deep psychological clearing.

Reintegrative Phase

Self-renewal and rebirth; contact and alignment with the Self or Deep Center; sense of order and meaning to one’s process; value experience as gift of grace; sense of peace and contentment with sacred attitude toward Self and all of life; groundedness in one’s Center (Self); embracing paradoxical nature of life due synthesis of opposites within Self; solidifying of personal spirituality; shift from motivations of power and prestige to that of compassion, love and relatedness.

**Sharp
(1988)**

De-adaptation

Difficulty of adaptation;
regression of energy and
libido; depression, disinte-
gration of self-image.

**Activation of Unconscious
Contents and Compensation**

Encounter with complexes;
fantasies, archetypal images,
inferior function, opposite attitude,
shadow, amina/animus, symptoms
of neurosis – confusion, anxiety,
fear, extreme affect; inner tension,
defensive reactions and moods;
activation of transcendent function,
involving Self and archetypal pat-
terns of wholeness; formation of
symbols (numinosity/synchronicity).

Integration and Individuation

Transfer of energy between unconscious
contents and consciousness; enlargement
of ego; progression of libido; integration
of unconscious contents; individuation.

These models are not elaborated on, but are embraced in my overall discussion of Self-transformation.

Bridges (1980)	Ending	Neutral Zone	New Beginning
Frankl (1963)	Disequilibrium	Search for Meaning	Wholeness
Pincola (1992)	Negredo (Loss)	Rubedo (Sacrifice)	Albedo (Coming to Light)
Rebillot (1989)	Point of Departure	Confrontation in the Underworld	Return to Point of Origin/Resolution
Von Durckheim (1971)	Letting Go	Dissolution in “Ground”	New Becoming
Woodman (1985)	Caterpillar	Chrysalis	Butterfly

TABLE TWO - Part One

Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

Theorist: Persaud (2000)

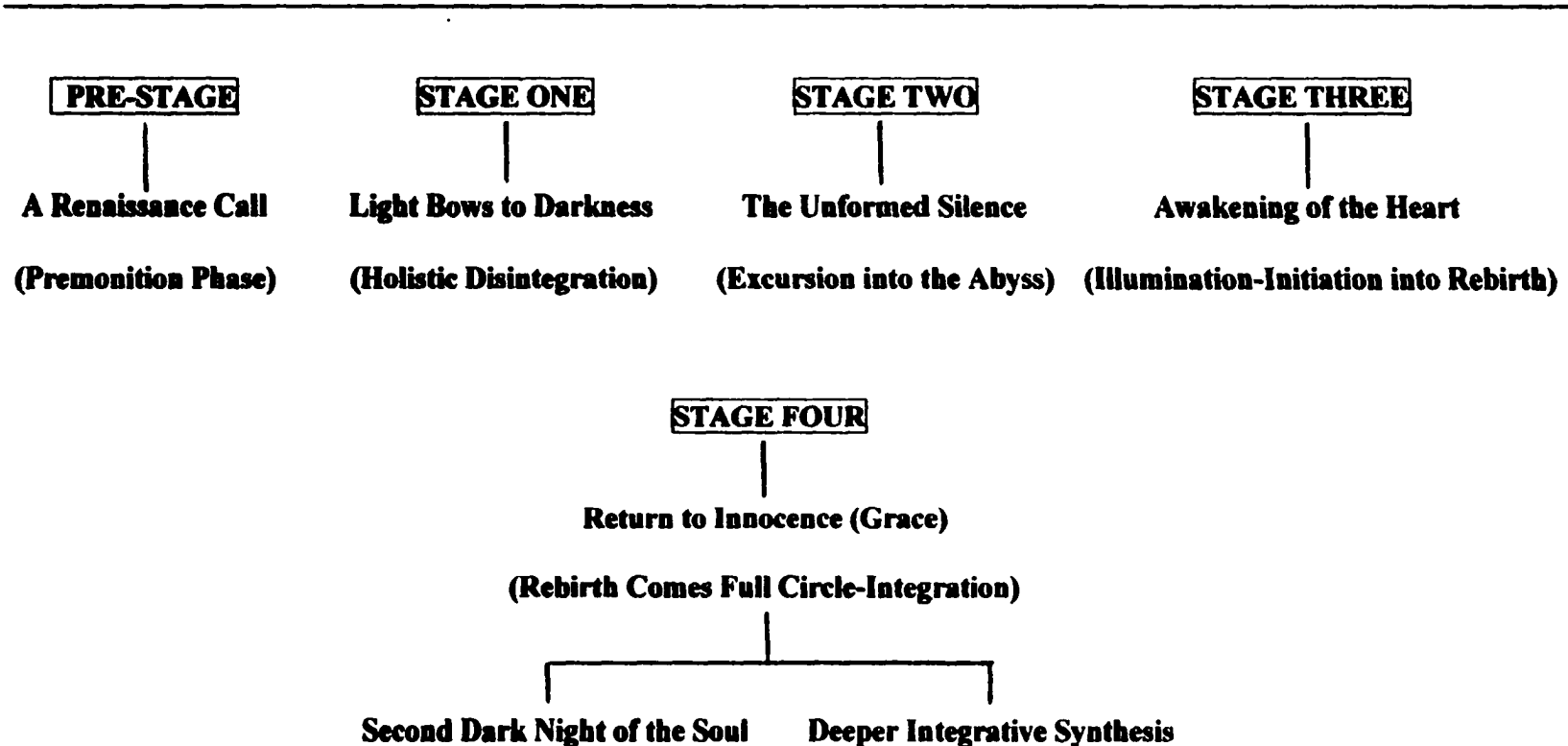


TABLE TWO - Part Two

Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

PRESTAGE: A RENAISSANCE CALL

Premonition Phase: Nudges from within the play of routine living experienced as inner provocations, subtle, vague sense of angst that *something* is amiss; inner/outer contradictions; receipt of persistent *messages* (bodily, mental, intuitive, spiritual), cues and perturbing jolts giving hints of being out of sync with self and self-in-world; a tacit *knowing* that one needs to make personal changes yet willful (or unconscious) denial and defensive posture, neglectful attitude and rationalizations; whistling in the dark; conscious or unconscious game-playing; non-specific anxiety; continuing of routine living as angst slowing ferments; sense of an impending *break*; further entrenchment within the status quo; eventual acknowledgement and acceptance or continuous, irresponsible disregard of the *call*.

STAGE ONE: LIGHT BOWS TO DARKNESS

Holistic Disintegration: Inner voice *messages* abruptly (or slowly and gently) breaks through; the ego becomes *hostage* to the inner life; feelings of resistance, confusion, pronounced anxiety and fear; struggling to maintain control of reality; losing essential ground; physiological and physical discomfort; pretending things are okay; slow psychological, emotional and spiritual collapse; acute depletion of physical and psychic energy; defiant pursuit of immediate goals as body and psyche become unglued; worldview begins to collapse and self-esteem and confidence begin to be diminished; conscious awareness of *breakdown* but paralysis of will and stamina to defend against the immediate predicament; disorganization, disorientation, sadness, depression and intense feeling of isolation; start of the *double-life*; sense of physical and spiritual abandonment and feeling of deep loss; extreme affect; voluntary or involuntary surrender to the chaos without conscious knowledge of where process is leading or the future outcome.

STAGE TWO: THE UNFORMED SILENCE

Excursion into the Abyss: Movement into the first dark night of the soul; personal fragmentation intensifies; out of

control at ego level with much reduced sense of internal fortitude, yet *tacit knowing and trusting* of the wisdom of the sacred inner Healer; inner reenactment of early emotional experiences; intense grief, primal weeping, remorse for self-sabotage, rage; regression to developmental stage(s) or specific life event(s) when wounding occurred; irruption of repressed, unconscious material into consciousness; reawakening of unresolved familial and relationship issues; reliving of repressed pain; embracing, exploring, confronting and disintegrating of images, complexes, fears and ingrained, outmoded patterns that dominate and sabotage consciousness; critical, honest self-reflection within tense, vulnerable psychological state; profound questioning of lifestyle, values and worldview; sober reckoning with self, others and environment; acute psychological, bodily and emotional clearing; enduring pain, ridicule, ostracism and tension until insights and poignant revelations break through; experience of a fertile germinating in the dark.

STAGE THREE: AWAKENING OF THE HEART

Illumination-Initiation into Rebirth: Sudden or gradual initiation into the rebirth phase; temporary unification of consciousness, i.e., a sense of the *sacred* glimpsed *in* and *through* the ordinary and the momentary; acute awareness that a major “shift” has occurred (body/mind/spirit/perception of world); change in perspicuity of perception; withdrawal of consciousness from circumference to center with attention to and involuntary, intense absorption with *one thing* that has manifested and impregnated selfhood; *transpersonal experiences* - profound transformational dreams, out-of-body experiences, altered states of consciousness, mystical encounters during sleep or while awake, peak experiences, awakening of the heart through deep love (agape and Eros), intense erotic awakening or quickening of the “kundalini” (as in Tantric Hinduism); heightened sensitivity and attunement to nature, others, and the Divine (as uniquely understood); intense joy, peace and aliveness; deep self-validation and profound experiencing of who one really is; feelings of genuine innocence, surprise, and like one has broken through into the Light; a Taoistic sense of non-interfering and non-striving receptivity to revelation and insights; sense of brief merging with the Self.

STAGE FOUR - PART ONE: RETURN TO INNOCENCE (GRACE)

The Second Dark Night of the Soul: A swing back into darkness - a double death; a painful, dark state which normally intervenes between the illuminative and unitive life; a fuller transformative process leading to deepening of the spiritual self and the *sacred marriage* (alignment with the higher Self); more drastic psychological and spiritual cleansing; being forced to *turn back* and pick up those residual, resistant and inactive corners of the personality still embedded and neglected in the undercurrent of a life; deeper initiation into a sphere of reality not yet acclimatized

to; direct invitation to active endurance and a condition of stress in which deep work is accomplished; no longer a seeking *to know* but a fervent desire *to be*; destruction and construction occurring simultaneously; the progressively illumined consciousness of previous stages are further exhausted and destabilized; a felt sense of cosmic betrayal and utter abandonment; withdrawal of all observable comforts and graces; disenfranchisement of the individualistic stand-point which thwarts the *great movement* to the Center; deprivation of power to exercise any clear, perceptible operations of the otherwise refined, personal repertoire; intervals of unsought chaos and suffering lasting months or even years before consciousness again unifies itself and a new equilibrium established; intellectual aridity and much emotional confusion; the little *self* ceases to be its own center and circumference; intense sense of *nothingness* pervades the personality with detachment from all talents, attributes and even spiritual courage; a total letting go of all that serves survival (inwardly and outwardly); interior travail directed at annihilation of selfhood so as to be penetrated by the ground of Being itself, on its own terms; humility is impregnated and embraced as personal ground gives way; despite abasement, there is unremitting self-surrender and acquiescence to the hidden purposes of the Divine Will; *un-selfing* leads from multiplicity to unity; the sensual and the spiritual merge into unified whole; slow growth and costly *inner practicum* manifesting in living more contemplatively and at transcendent levels of reality.

STAGE FOUR - PART TWO: REBIRTH COMES FULL CIRCLE

Deeper Integrative Synthesis: Out of the mist and into the gift of green; a homecoming and return to the Self; synthesis of ego, Self and world; Self-renewal and rebirth; reconstruction of the personality and groundedness in the Self or sacred *Center*; valuing of process as a gift of grace; sober appreciation for what one has endured; feeling of simplicity and of having been found worthy; sense of profound humility and attunement with all of life; quiet awareness of a pervasive mystery and order in cosmos; selfless way of being in the world; integration of unconscious material into consciousness; *deepening in compassion* for self and world; integrated feeling of self-possession and self-love; return of energy, joy and will to live; feeling healed and revitalized; immense sense of inner peace and valuing of one's life; consciously feeling one's rightful place and belonging in the world; forgiveness toward self and others; sensual and erotic responsiveness heightened; *heart breaks wide open*; reentry and reconnection with world; responsiveness to and reverence for the beauty and subtleties encountered in the world; committed to care and service to the world (buddhisatvic attitude); profound sense of *intimately knowing* the Divine (as one uniquely understands this Source); reflecting on and honoring one's faithfulness to the call; quietly living *Thy Will Be Done*.
(Shanti Persaud - 2000)

CHAPTER THREE

Review of the Literature

In my efforts to locate research studies on Self-transformation (ST), especially studies that considered transformation, inner voice and mystery as integrated components in the change process, I found some that were partially relevant to my study. I accessed the data bases of ERIC, PSYCHINFO and DAI from 1999 to 1990 then went further back to 1980. In using the key words “psycho-spiritual” transformation, only four entries were retrieved. With the key words “spiritual transformation”, sixty-six entries were found with only ten being relevant to my topic. In using Self-transformation as search words, sixty-three items were found with only eight bearing closely to my topic. I also sought out dissertations that were not available through the above systems. The same process was applied to my search for Self-transformation and inner voice, listening to the inner voice, psychological transformation and inner voice, and mystery and transformation. I found thirty-nine items with only three having direct import for my inquiry while twelve had some peripheral value. Here, I discuss some of these studies using three categories Self-transformation, Inner Voice and ST, and Mystery and ST.

These studies are valuable and have provided different lenses from which to view the process of renewal. However, I wish to suggest that both the experiences of ST and listening to the inner voice in particular, have not been purposely probed so as to discern whether they constitute an intrinsic interweaving dynamic. Therefore, I feel strongly that my study, with its deliberate focus on *the lived-experience of Self-transformation and listening to the inner voice as integral to this process*, seems to be breaking new ground. The intricacies at play in listening to the inner voice during the transformation process appear to be a complex dynamic that has not been adequately teased out and elucidated. This inquiry, therefore, is an important research work that may be helpful in more fully explicating the essence of the phenomenon of Self-transformation and the processes inherently operative in the various stages of the experience.

Self-transformation

Studies done on the experience of Self-transformation that were of some interest to me were categorized into three sections: studies on related topics e.g. psychospiritual

change, archetypal patterns and chaos theory; studies on specific groups e.g. women returning to school, women on welfare, and being-black; and studies on psychological and religious traditions e.g. Buddhism, Native Spirituality, and Christianity. These are briefly discussed in sequence and are intended to give a general overview of the studies.

Studies on Related Topics

Focusing on the archetypal patterns in Western literature, Federenko (1996) studied the castaway and the island as a parallel metaphor for Jung's individuation process. He argued that Jung (1969) emphasized primarily archetypal figures and their effect on individuation, but the specific workings of the archetypal *place* as an agent of change receives little consideration. The island - a kind of incubator - inspires human transformation due to its remoteness from the castaway's home society and the island's isolation from other societies. Affirming Jung's belief that a particular kind of psychic energy flourishes in isolation which results in an animation of one's psychic atmosphere, Federenko suggested that the archetypal site exerts a more active influence on a person's growth than has been acknowledged. Several themes within this island transformation were elucidated: isolation, awakening to and taking stock of self; strange surroundings; initial setbacks followed by increasing adaptation; spiritual, psychological and emotional growth due to island experiences; a climatic event which challenges growing feelings of wholeness; and escape and return to the home society in a much-altered state. This study is helpful in emphasizing the solitude and isolation *necessary* for engagement in the renewal process and how vital it is to create an inner and outer island space for the work.

Imber (1994) conducted a heuristic investigation into the experience of psycho-spiritual transformation (PST). Features of PST are - diminution of current world view and sense of self, opening up of the psyche to powers both transcendent and immanent, letting go of former ways of being, encountering a deeper reality within self and nature, identifying with a spiritual dimension and seeking to live in concert with and becoming an expression of Being. Ten core themes were elucidated - the work of PST is an ongoing process; PST is related to the healing of core issues; adhering to cultural scripts suffocates inner spiritual longings; catalytic events open the heart to the transcendent dimension; accepting the spiritual invitation ensues in a sense of belonging, in feeling at

home and identification with God; the experience of God (connection to the transcendent) is one of feeling touched by love; a deeper experience of emptiness and breaking of ego-identity and worldview are necessary to connect to the spiritual-self; detachment from ego and social role facilitates finding a new context for expressing the deeper self; being of service to others; experiencing a contemplative dimension to life; participation in the world as sacred experience; and a feeling of joy and a freedom to be oneself. Because of the psychospiritual focus, this study touched on and provided some insight through the elucidation of the stages and core themes for my own inquiry.

Nelson (1991) inquired into the process of transition from one level of psychological development to a higher level. Using an interdisciplinary approach, he combined Wilber's (1988) model of the basic structures of human consciousness and models of transformation from chaos theory (mathematics), the theory of dissipative structures (thermodynamics), and the concept of autopoiesis (biology), to suggest that the strange attractor, the dissipative structure, the autopoietic unity, and the structure of human consciousness are open systems on a continuum of increasing sophistication and organized complexity. These systems share a complex transformation process based on the principle of self-organization which suggests that the inner dynamics of an open system drive it to reconstitute itself in new structures. A psychological structure is stabilized and maintained through its interaction with the environment and it is transformed when fluctuations of energy within this interaction trigger a reorganization of the structure at a higher level of organization. It was argued that the potential for transformation, including psychological transformation is *intrinsic to matter* and *not* imposed by the environment. The transformative role of psychological chaos was considered within a model of psychotherapy which facilitated my further understanding of the inner dynamics of the psychological process of transformation.

Andersen (1991) researched the lived experience of psychological transformation, using archetypal psychology (Jung, 1969) and existential-phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962) to ground a conceptual understanding of transformation. She delineated four phases for discussing the process of transformation: successfully living a socialized existence; diminution phase – holistic disintegration of life-world and catalytic events;

transition phase during retreat – further disintegration, revaluation, psychological clearing, enlargement of the psyche until turning point; and integration phase – rebirth, resolution and reentry. Andersen addressed and integrated the spiritual aspect of transformation through her inclusion, conceptually and experientially, of the transpersonal Self as an aspect of Being. This work has directly informed my study.

Studies on Specific Groups

While targeting a specific group, these researchers elucidated diverse themes of the transformation process. Loring (1997) studied ST within the context of adult women's experiences of returning to school. To analyze the testimonies of the women's personal transformations for how and why change took place, Loring used the ideas of social theorists Sartre (1970), Foucault (1983) and Kristeva (1992) to set the women's stories in a larger context of existentialist, feminist and post-structuralist thought. She stressed the dynamics at work as women redefined the terms of their existence by altering their stance to the world. As adult students, they asked themselves new questions, identified self in new ways, dislodged fixed habits and discovered new possibilities and power in themselves. They undertook and sustained their transformations by tapping into inner resources that are rooted in being human and that are available to each individual.

Scarborough (1997) focused on ST as a process of psychological change within a group of twenty welfare recipients completing a community college program. Using grounded theory analysis, she discerned how these isolated, stigmatized low-income women determined their lives within the constraints of structural power as it affects gender and class, and how the policies of education and welfare foster or impede the process of ST. Devalued and subordinated by sexual, physical and institutional abuse, the women saw the events of motherhood, betrayal by a mate and higher education as opportunities to rethink and rewrite self and make new claims to knowledge.

Robbins (1988) investigated the lived-experience of psychohistorical and spiritual transformation of midlife women who experienced the death of their mothers during this period of their lives. How the death of the mother interfaced with and influenced the resymbolization of sense of self, the relationship to others and the image of God within a historical context of cultural disorientation regarding the identity and roles of women

were further delineated. The findings elucidated the interrelated process of mourning, reconstructive work and transformation. Four related factors constituted this process: the nature of the early mother-daughter relationship enacting the daughter's "myth of the mother," the mother-daughter relationship as affected by socio-historical changes during the daughter's midlife period, the multidimensional layers of grief involved in mourning the death of the mother, and developmental phases in the process of unraveling and reweaving the mythic images of self-in-relation to mother (others), world and God.

Porter (1984) utilized a psychological, theoretical framework for contextualizing the Self-actualization of the Black Self. The experience of being black is viewed in its ontological context using a technique of literary exposition, psychological research, life experience and psychological systemic dynamics. The primary tenet in the work is that duality pervades the experience of being-black in the form of Double Consciousness. A second yet vital notion in this work is that of transformation. Double consciousness, in its experiential and symbolic reality, provides a powerful fulcrum for transformation in the experience of being-black from a negating and self-fragmenting experience of self to a validating, unifying and holistic transformed experience of self and person.

Studies on Religious and Psychological Traditions

Gunn (1997), Lewton (1997), Peng (1993), Shoberg (1987), and Spence (1994), have inquired into the process of ST from within a combination of religious and psychological traditions. As such, these studies had peripheral value. The question of mystery (at play in ST) and how it is experienced (personal spirituality or internalized organized religion) were indirectly touched upon in these inquiries.

Gunn's (1997) work is a comparative study of the experience of emptiness in the process of ST according to Zen Buddhism (Zen master Dogen's work), Christianity (Merton 1971) and depth psychology (Jung, 1966, 1969). For each tradition, the experience of emptiness is a crucial stage in the process of ST, but the meaning of *emptiness* and the understanding of the process and goal of ST differ for each. Broadly speaking, emptiness is experienced as a form of loss or wounding that can lead to an experience of emptiness of self and all things and which, when confronted, can lead to transformation and experiencing of the underlying unity of life. One undergoes critical

changes, becoming more authentic and integrated with a deepened sense of purpose and service to society. Similarities and differences among the three traditions are noted.

Lewton (1997) studied ST throughout the therapeutic processes in each of three religious healing traditions practiced on the Navajo reservation – traditional Navajo religion, the Native American Church and Pentecostal Christianity. The study moved beyond static, abstract concepts of tradition and culture and accounted for socio-historical complexity and cultural heterogeneity, and privileged the experiences of many Navajos who live complex, multicultural lives. While the nature of transformation differed according to religious tradition, individual life context and socio-historical processes, specific cultural themes were elucidated from interview data from patients and healers.

Navajo therapeutic practice is observed as guided by the main synthetic principle Sa'ah Naghai Bik'eh Hozho (SNBH) - "according to the ideal may restoration be achieved." This lived principle signifies that wellbeing requires the establishment and maintenance of proper relations guided by respect, kindness and cooperation. Relationship includes relatives, spiritual beings and other aspects of the environment. Distress is associated with improper relationships, and healing with the transformation of self in relation to the environment and with respect to proper behavior and speech. SNBH is not specific to any one religious doctrine but rather issues from the culturally situated self.

Spence (1994) conducted a qualitative study of the psychospiritual experiences of Western women practicing an Asian meditative discipline, the purpose being to uncover the characteristics of spiritual journeyers and the psychospiritual process. She explored her own experiences, examined selected published accounts of psychospiritual journeys and interviewed six practitioners of Asian meditation. Psychospirituality was defined as an innate psychological phenomenon within the whole of human development. In-depth presentations of the women's stories revealed the following: a significant source of childhood nurturing; a positive childhood spiritual orientation; family-of-origin dysfunction and/or early trauma or illness; childhood and adolescent success in the outer world; adolescent angst and a sense of inner loss and low self-worth; a lifelong unwillingness to settle for the status quo; an ability to find sanctuary (in nature); intuitive capabilities; a life graced with synchronicities; an eventual surrender to inner guidance; valuing of

connections to community and friends; commitment to people focused work; and a life-long search for an authentic self. Five of the women experienced a lifetime of discontent with a precipitating crisis that awakened them to psychospiritual growth. They were highly intelligent, risk-taking, committed to ST and had direct experience of a universal Essence or something larger than self, often beginning in childhood.

Peng (1993) studied the nature of meditation in Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism and Christian mysticism and how meditative/mystical experience can affect psychospiritual transformation. Four core themes emerged from the Ch'an Buddhist experiences: increasing ability to live in the present moment, increasing detachment; sharpening of awareness and sensitivity and experiencing one's true self as 'prajna' (transcendental wisdom), compassion and equanimity. The core themes of the Christian mystical/contemplative experiences were: experiencing God's presence, feeling union with God and others and feeling loved by God. The study showed similarities/differences in the goals, practices and approaches to Ultimate Reality: in Buddhism it is void (sunyata) and the goal of meditation is to contact the self-nature as prajna, compassion and calmness. Contemplation in Christian mysticism is a way to unite with God. Both systems are similar in practicing non-dual and non-cognitive approaches i.e. Ultimate Reality is grasped through direct experience or intuitive apprehension and not intellectually.

Shoberg (1987) did a comparative study of the relationship between Jungian individuation and Christian salvation. Early literature (1947-1967) on Jung's analytical psychology and Christianity entailed both theological criticism of Jung's theory and a variety of attempts to relate the two constructively. Later literature (1968-1984) focused on relating the two more constructively through the interpretation of scripture, language, spiritual formation, methods of personal growth and interdisciplinary analogies. Some vital problems encountered in attempting to relate Jung and Christianity were: Jung's ambiguity about the relationship between God and the Self archetype, epistemological issues, and the differing bases of authority used to make judgements about Christian theology and experience. On the basis of New Testament witness of Christian experience and Jung's scientific writings, the inquiry concluded that individuation is not equivalent to Christian salvation in either its essence (i.e., relationship to the divine) or its fullness

(social and eschatological aspects). Nonetheless, it was concluded that psychological transformation (the process of individuation) and Christian transformation (sanctification viewed as process) can be related as analagous structures but that they differ substantially in content and end. Differences in the nature of the mediator (an archetype or Christ), and in the goal (wholeness/individuality or righteousness/agape) are critical. It was affirmed that the two processes could influence each other in a complementary manner.

While these inquiries relate partially to mine, none of them have strategically investigated the aspect of listening to the inner voice as integral to ST. Thus, I searched for studies on inner voice and ST. Seven had some import for my inquiry.

Inner Voice and Self-Transformation

Owens (1997) did a heuristic study of how the essential elements of ancient shamanic principles are related and contribute to self-healing. She purported that each person has an inner consciousness or wisdom metaphorically termed the "Inner Shaman" or inner voice which represents an awakening of a higher state of consciousness that is conducive to healing. She defined health, illness and healing from within a shamanic world view and offered an in-depth study of what it means for her personally to be healed; healing being a process of becoming whole, of embracing all of who one is on all levels of being and making connection to the spirit within and without.

Kelly (1995) investigated the deeper meaning and significance of intuition within the context of expert nursing staff development. Qualitative data were interpreted using Heideggerian hermeneutics. The recurrent, constitutive pattern discerned was - intuition as trusting the everyday *whole knowing* of the inner voice. Four relational themes were elucidated which supported this pattern: (a) struggling to find this knowing: forming and informing intuition; (b) informed knowing about the possibilities; (c) listening to the moment: dwelling in the moment; and (d) transforming the daily routine of practice. A profound grasp of the complex and demanding nature of nursing staff development emerged through the narratives of experts during their reflections about intuition.

Jeune (1993) inquired qualitatively into the process thorough which religious women healers became wounded through their lifestyle and work and how they were healed. Through teaching, nursing, hospital chaplaincy, prison chaplaincy and other

helping contexts, these healers engaged a deep empathy and sensitivity for the suffering of others. In so doing, that very sensitivity wore them down physically, emotionally and spiritually. The healers then became “wounded healers.” Finding their “inner voice” to share their pain and desired needs was the fundamental psychological process discerned. Finding the inner voice was comprehended within the experience of becoming wounded and becoming healed. Becoming wounded was understood as comprising three themes: (a) losing the true self, (b) attempting the ideal self and (c) living the incongruent self. Becoming healed consisted of (a) a turning point, (b) therapy, and (c) owning the true self. Understanding the social process of “finding voice” was discussed in light of the confusion between authority and obedience, the genesis of which was in the family of origin and lived itself out in the social context of the religious community.

Tirkey (1992) conducted a textual and analytical study of the life of Mohandas Gandhi in light of Vatican II’s call to dialogue ‘through loyalty of conscience.’ Gandhi’s life was a series of experiments with truth in which he was guided by his “inner voice.” For Gandhi (1956), the inner voice was the voice of a disciplined conscience and he identified this voice with the voice of God. Gandhi’s concept of conscience, based on his writings and writings about him, was examined in terms of Vatican II’s teaching of conscience. Points of convergence and divergence between the two were explicated. Gandhi’s listening to inner voice had radical sociopolitical ramifications as he believed that disobedience to a civil law was a consequence of obedience to a higher law and that in appealing to conscience, a response can be evoked through the force of truth and love.

Poire (1988) did a qualitative study on the search for wholeness in the lives of three women, focusing on Erickson’s developmental task identified as ego-integrity. The aim was to describe the components of the process and to identify any factors that needed to be present before the process could begin. The research questions were: Is there an awareness of an inner voice? Is there an awareness of certain patterns? Does a search for meaning include aligning feelings, perceptions, thoughts and behaviors with the inner voice? Are there feelings of wholeness where this alignment occurs? It was discerned that responsibility for self equated with ego-integrity and with the journey to wholeness. Further, the process of ego-integrity was found to consist of two aspects: (1) the

awareness of an inner voice which speaks for the personal 'rightness and truth' of the individual, and (2) the consistent, conscious choosing to align feelings, perceptions, thoughts and behaviors with the inner voice. It was found that patterns described as defenses and fears impeded the alignment process, as did a non-nurturing childhood. Two phenomena were elucidated as prerequisites to the journey to wholeness: (a) the awareness of the concept of 'choice' and (b) the awareness of an insistent inner voice.

Rietdorf (1988) studied the experience of trusting oneself. Self-trust was defined as the process of listening to or being attuned to and valuing one's inner messages. Three major themes emerged from the qualitative data: (a) self-trust as diminished by cultural training, (b) self-trust as developed or re-awakened, and (c) self-trust as a component of psychological health. The results indicated that self-trust is an experience of intimate connection with self – listening to and hearing one's own inner voice and distinguishing that voice from all others. An acute sense of awareness was found to accompany self-trust; an awareness that fostered being true to one's self. Further, intimate connection with self demands a commitment to self-nurturance, challenges one to find an authentic path, calls one's total being into the present moment, and invites risk and a leap of faith. Being true to one's inner being was viewed as a catalyst for personal growth.

Heery (1987) explored qualitatively the meaning of inner voice experiences as a felt sense of inner communication or as an actual perception of a voice within. Further, she examined if inner voice experiences were significantly related to a person's external life process and if there were common characteristics among those who report inner voice experiences. The findings suggested there were gradations of inner voice experiences and that they can be of a growth-producing nature. Three categories of experiences were identified: inner voice experiences as fragmented parts of self, inner voice experiences characterized by dialogue and providing guidance and growth, and inner voice experiences which opened channels toward and beyond a higher self. This last group reported being engaged in selfless service to humanity. The experiences had direct impact on the individuals' lives. Implications for psychotherapy were discussed. This study deepened my theoretical and experiential understanding of inner voice and growth.

Mystery and Self-Transformation

Two studies were found that inquired into the experience of mystery as a primary phenomenon and how it related to ST as a secondary factor. Ryan (1985) conducted a theoretical study into the psychological significance, existential meaning and psychodynamic functioning in Western religious experience, Western mysticism and adult individuation. The relationship between the spiritual-developmental process involved in Western mysticism and the psychological-developmental process involved in adult individuation was viewed from an existential-psychoanalytical perspective. The theorists used in the study were: Freud, Jung, Underhill, Buber, Rank, Fromm, Tillich, Erickson, Becker and Frankl. An important contribution of the study was the identification of an analogous relationship and intersection of the psychological processes of mysticism and adult individuation which subsequently revealed that mysticism is a viable paradigm for individuation theory. It was argued that, although psychology and religion hold different worldviews, they can meet and complement each other. Psychology has aided religion in moving beyond superstition and magical thinking while religion assists psychology in moving toward faith and an acceptance of the mystery of life. As such, both disciplines converge and the point of juncture is adult individuation.

Varani (1984) employed a qualitative design to explore the notion of mystery from the perspective of the philosopher, the theologian, the psychologist and the pastoral care worker. Polanyi's (1965) heuristic methodology was used to collect and treat the descriptive data while Heidegger's (1962) hermeneutics provided the philosophical base for the study. It was revealed that the experience of mystery has a polar nature. At the negative end, elements such as fear, anger, confusion and loss were found, plus a sense of nonbeing and varying degrees of the unknown and the uncontrollable. At the positive pole were elements of joy, peace and satisfaction, along with a sense of varying degrees of awareness and freedom. A shift from the negative to the positive pole occurred through an experience of surrender. He argued that a mystery *is not to be solved; it may be resolved*, i.e. one may learn to live with the unexplainable. Implications point to the possibility of living with an enlarged worldview, a deeper awareness of the spiritual and greater authenticity. These are available not as techniques for therapists but more so as

fundamental attitudes that enrich both personal and professional practice. Moreover, Varani argues for the honoring of mystery as a way of honoring life in all its complexity.

In the ongoing process of my own inquiry, I have revisited some of these studies and gained incremental insight regarding the different aspects of transformation that each address. Pooling the findings of the various studies have deepened my contemplation on, inspired my investigation of and provided a much wider parameter from which to view the phenomenon of Self-transformation and listening to the inner voice.

CHAPTER 4

Methodology - Heuristics and Autobiography

Introduction

Rilke (1984), in speaking out from a rich understanding, offers us soft inspiration and intuits other possible ways of *being* and *doing* (research) in the life-world:

... have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to *love the questions themselves* as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. *Live the questions now*. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without noticing it, live your way into the answer. Perhaps you do carry within you the possibility of creating and forming, as an especially blessed and pure way of living...take whatever comes, with great trust, and as long as it comes out of your will, out of some need of your innermost self... (p. 34-35).

We are invited to live the questions with the possibility of coming into understanding and meaning along the way and as a process of that very living. Are the (research) questions born out of some innermost desire or pondering (Moustakas, 1990)? And is there an attitude of faithfulness and integrity in living and probing the questions (Polanyi, 1969)? A qualitative mood inheres in Rilke's wisdom, lending itself to multiple methodological considerations regarding this inquiry into the lived-experience of Self-transformation.

It provokes an array of fundamental questions. Is there a methodological orientation that lends itself to *living (embodying) the research question*? How *does* one live the question *and* maintain fidelity to the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1985)? *What* is at stake in living the research question? *What is* research? *How do* we come to know what we know? Is there a *relation* between the knower and what can be known (epistemological considerations)? *What is* the nature of reality? What does it *mean* to be human (ontological concerns)? How *do* we engage in finding out what can be known? Are there theoretical perspectives on *how* we do research (methodological assumptions)? And where do *I* stand as an *engaged researcher* in relation to the diversity of perspectives, methodologies, approaches and locations that these questions evoke? These questions are taken up here and in Chapter Five where the lived experience of transformation, (which is inextricably interwoven with the methodology), is described in detail.

In this chapter, I enter into these key questions as I elaborate on a synthesis of methodologies that I have felt gradually “pulled” toward, after years of intense and personal immersion in the phenomenon and *listening to what it has continually called forth and following where it has led*. This has demanded of me an attitude of open, naïve receptivity, allowing the process of the inquiry itself to inform my intuitive hunches. Thus, the methodology per se has slowly emerged (with messy detours that loop back with fecund insights) as the inquiry proceeded, affirming what Guba (1978), Moustakas (1990), and Patton (1990) suggest about the “emergent design” nature of qualitative research. With this inquiry there has been an ongoing dovetailing between the *process* of the lived-experience of Self-transformation and the *process* of coming into understanding of it such that the phenomenon and the methodology *as processes* have cohered; the former giving rise to the latter in an organic way, defying exploration of the phenomenon via pre-set design rules. The phenomenon has sort of “begot” the methodology.

Therefore, within the umbrella paradigm of qualitative (interpretive) research in psychology (Bugental, 1975-1976; Giorgi, 1986; Moustakas, 1990; Patton, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1989; Smith, Harre and Langenhove, 1995; Tesch, 1990; Valle and Halling, 1989) the two modes of inquiry that have emerged and have been combined to elucidate the essence of the phenomenon are *heuristics and autobiography* or self-narrative. As indicated earlier, the heuristic methodology model referred to is that of Moustakas (1990, 1985, 1981). Heuristics is rooted in humanistic psychology and while it shares philosophical and methodological procedures with hermeneutic phenomenology, it has crucial points of departure from phenomenology (Moustakas and Douglas, 1985). A heuristic quest results in a narrative portrayal of experience (Tesch, 1990). As such, it has points of convergence with autobiography as Moustakas (1990) confirms.

Autobiography is considered as a reflexive form of phenomenology (Colaizzi, 1978 in Tesch, 1990) in that the researcher uses his own experiences as data. It is also a narrative portrayal of individual experience. As such, autobiography is being grounded *in idiographic psychological research* (Allport, 1965, 1962, 1942; Smith, Harre and Langenhove, 1995; Weale and Harre, 1979;), and within *postmodern human science research* (Bruner, 1995; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Grumet, 1987; Harding, 1989; Jardine,

1992; Josselson and Leiblich, 1995; Lather, 1999, 1991; O'Dea, 1994; Pinar, 1988; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Smith, 1987).

In proceeding to discuss qualitative research methodology in psychology, I first speak to my personal encounter with methodology, the aim being to show how the methodology has been integral to and emerged from the natural unfolding of the inquiry and through my intimately living the research question. This autobiographical dimension *is* intrinsically part of the methodology and belongs here. I also discuss some concerns regarding the attitudes toward and the way qualitative research approaches are sometimes engaged in within academic praxis. This is an essential aspect of the writing as it speaks directly to how students' inquiry processes can be prematurely interrupted or sabotaged when catapulted into the dynamics of power relations positioned within the academic milieu. The issues at hand are the misuse of qualitative approaches by some faculty and what it means for students to have a voice and to give voice to what is vital to their research inquiry. I then elaborate on the two modes of inquiry employed, heuristics and autobiography and detail the procedures and applications. As a final comment, mixed pronouns are used to avoid gender bias and, in referring to certain groups in particular contexts and at specific times, I may not always repeat *some* or *many* or *sometimes* although I am inherently inferring this and not making sweeping generalizations that are obviously false and do not acknowledge multiple realities and perspectives.

Personal Encounter with Methodology

The phenomenon, the lived-experience of Self-transformation lends itself to elucidation within the *qualitative research paradigm*, employing two modes of inquiry, heuristics and autobiography that are constitutive of an *interpretive methodology*. Since the phenomenon is experienced in the inner domain of the psyche, the nature of the change of internal structures may prove challenging for the researcher to observe. Carl Jung (1959), after many years of multi-perspectival, scientific investigations in the arena of psychological transformation, affirmed this when he declared:

Rebirth is not a process that we can in any way observe. We can neither measure, weigh nor photograph it. It is entirely beyond sense perception. We have to do here with a purely psychic reality which is transmitted to us only indirectly through personal statements. One speaks of rebirth; one professes rebirth; one is filled with rebirth. This we accept as sufficiently real. These psychic events...

are the business of psychology (p.116).

Jung's statement infers the application of a qualitative methodology for explicating the essence of the phenomenon of Self-transformation – getting at the essential *whatness* of the experience via personal narratives, interviews and telling stories of the life-world. However, I disagree with Jung that the experience of rebirth is entirely beyond sense perception. While interpretation and meaning facilitate understanding of consciousness, bodily (physiological and biochemical) changes can and do manifest, for example, as the result of an epiphany experience or as the body-wisdom aligns with deep psychic healing, which the rationally arguing medical expert may deem a spontaneous remission.

I did not deliberately choose an interpretive methodology. After five years of sober, unexpected personal immersion in the phenomenon being studied, I gradually came to feel some resonance with a heuristic mode of inquiry. The more I engaged with Moustakas' *Heuristic Research*, (an unread shelved item which I was later compellingly, intuitively drawn to), and Jung's theory of the individuation process, the more I gleaned partial meaning and understanding of my then currently progressing Self-transformation experience. At the same time, I was *unknowingly* gathering bits of fragmentary insights into the experiential and theoretical underpinnings of the phenomenon itself. This in turn began quickening my awareness of possible broader methodological implications with respect to this inquiry. It has been somewhat uncanny how pertinent reading materials began "showing up" serendipitously and at times that seemed "right" within a kind of natural logic inherent in the research process itself. The paradox of both hiddenness and revelation becoming subtly evident with time as the experiencing of the phenomenon took precedence. This sense of timing is analogous to *kairos*, fruitful time, the fullness of time, or the graced moment (Au and Cannon, 1995), versus *chronos*, clock or linear time, to which most academic scheduling adheres. The heuristic mode inclines more to *kairos*.

Thus, through my own experiencing of the phenomenon and a process of slow, delicate, intuitive discernment, I sensed an intrinsic "fit" between the process of heuristic research and the process of Self-transformation (ST). This recognition evolved over the years with an eventual sense of *felt* certainty jelling regarding the methodology when, in essence, I was *not searching* for a methodology. Other poignant reading materials "came"

only after a long way into the immersion phase with me being immensely naïve as to where it was all leading. I had to exercise an implicit, radical trust and *risk into the flow of the unfolding research process*, not understanding in those ensuing years the intricate dynamics at play yet hesitatingly succumbing to what was continually being asked of me *on an inner level*. It was as if a kind of intrinsic wisdom took over and I was both in and out of control of things. This often ensued in much vulnerability compounded by ridicule from some academics that were oblivious to this organic process. Nonetheless, I quietly endured the pain and the process until this naturally occurring methodological process became clearer to me, *on its own terms*, so to speak. Quite unbeknownst to me, it came into play in the early months of this research project, issuing as an integrated unfolding process throughout this entire inquiry. Hence, the methodology has taken form as the *actual ongoing unfolding of the research project* which has been inextricably linked to my *in-depth experiencing of the phenomenon*. In other words, these two continuously interweaving and organically unfolding processes have essentially constituted phases of the research methodology. I have come to understand, retrospectively, that these are initial phases of the heuristic research methodology: initial engagement, immersion, indwelling, self-search and incubation (Moustakas, 1990, Moustakas and Douglas, 1985).

Coming into the methodology, then, ensued through first intimately living the phenomenon and allowing this living to reveal hints of *how* the phenomenon manifests in the human life-world, albeit a relative view. *How* the phenomenon manifests seems in itself an interpretive act in that the processes of Self-transformation and interpretive inquiry appear to have poignant points of convergence. Both seem to entail dimensions of discovery through unknown territory with no a priori hypotheses, experiencing of process, and self-reflexivity and elucidation of meaning. The very process of mindfully living the research question and yielding to what the research project demands of the researcher inheres in the heuristic process. These same elements are enacted during the transformation journey with other parallel processes. In order to probe these insights further, in October 1997, I contacted Dr. Clark Moustakas, author of *Heuristic Research*, at the Institute of Humanistic Studies in Detroit. In dialoging with this graciously gentle scholar, I came to feel at peace with my retrospective realization that the process of

heuristic research has in fact been naturally operative from the start of this inquiry and that my in-depth experiencing of the phenomenon is intrinsic to this mode of inquiry.

In addition to a heuristic research methodology, *autobiography* as a mode of inquiry began to feature as an essential component of the *overall* methodological process. After seven years into the inquiry and having gone through my most profound personal healing and rebirth process through living the phenomenon of Self-transformation, I came to realize, again retrospectively, that I have been living the research question and learning about transformation *from the inside out*. I did not bargain for this journey when I signed up for doctoral studies. Yet my life was unexpectedly catapulted into a lengthy, arduous, individuation process that proceeded simultaneously along with my scholarly researching of the question on Self-transformation; the experiential and the conceptual together converging and creating a dynamic synergy that fostered deeper understanding of the phenomenon. This unplanned, *integrative process* has authenticated this research in ways that no textbook reading alone could have. Many nuances (bodily, psychological, emotional, spiritual, social) of the transformation process have been *first* experientially endured *then* subsequently theoretically validated via the research literature. This, in my view, hints at the essence of integrated living and the heart of scientific inquiry – first deeply listening to, honoring and openly yielding into the impulse of life’s innate wisdom as it erupts in our primal experiencing of the world. This is not to negate the logic of rational conceptualizing but rather to recognize *experience*, (the piercing of life through the moist humus of our being), as the primordial a priori from which all theorizing of the human life-world emerges. In living this research inquiry in such a manner, yet another authenticating dimension has unfolded – my being found worthy to be “called” to self-healing and renewal *and* my heeding the call. I have felt quietly blessed by unbidden grace and have been humbled through the process.

The profundity of my own rebirth journey has acutely informed my sensibilities about the transformation process. During the rebirth phase in 1995-1998, I began getting clear intuitive cues to write the dissertation autobiographically since I have undergone an in-depth and profusely detailed transformation process that could elucidate *an instance* of the essence of the experience. I also kept repeatedly “bumping into” autobiographical

writing like the *Seven Story Mountain* by the Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, (in whom I previously had only a vague interest), and *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* by Carl Jung. There have been earlier intuitions to include these persons as secondary autobiographical sources. At first I did not clue into this “call” to autobiography as a *serious* issue. I found myself being distracted (so I thought) with readings of Merton and Jung until eventually I felt unequivocally that autobiography is a medium through which I am called to write, with my transformation experience constituting the major research data. Still, for a while I only intellectually perused the idea, giving it little attention.

Then I *totally* panicked at this preposterous and relentless “guidance” to write autobiographically and I felt too embarrassed to talk to anyone about it. I read profusely about solipsism, the narcissism of autobiography and other criticisms of self-narrative as I struggled with a genuine fidelity to honor the “call” within, which many postmodern critics rarely acknowledge. I had also experienced enough berating through this research inquiry and, because of my own personal process I hesitated to risk further. So I carried on with my research persuading myself that the heuristic methodology was sufficient in itself and that this other incumbent “fantasy” must be some twisted aspect of Jung’s idea of ego-inflation! However, no matter how diligently I pursued my inquiry, I felt stuck and the writing stagnated. For months I waffled in the dark, being royally “pissed-off” yet faithfully yielding to this bloody inner guidance! Eventually I mustered enough nerve and spoke with my supervisor and two caring committee members about this prickly issue of autobiography. Be it wisdom or folly, I do go for broke when the inward vision or the “daemon” beckons as Jung (1961) intimated. Jaffe (1961) speaks in a similar vein of Jung’s own dilemma about and decision to write autobiographically in his later years:

... he would not undertake anything of the sort unless he felt it was a “task” imposed on him from within. Here was evidence that the “autobiography” was justified in terms of Jung’s own inner life (p. vi).

What was at stake? My integrity and self-trust were. I committed to the autobiography.

The support of my committee fueled my courage to continue to listen to my inner wisdom and to trust my perceptions and convictions. Accepting yet another challenge of this inquiry, I spent the next eight months reading the literature on autobiography, totally dedicated to integrating heuristic research with autobiography even as I still squirmed at

the idea. Beneath this surface trepidation though, I genuinely honored the impulse that has consistently provoked, propelled and sustained the research work in both its fertile and barren moments. This whole dynamic process as experienced thus far resonates with Polkinghorne's (1983) idea of a human science that is more inclusive, uses multiple systems of inquiry and engages a willingness to let *the questions* of the human realm *inform which methods are appropriate* (p. 289).

What is genuine about this whole experience is that it has occurred naturally with an acute naivete on my part as I puzzled over yet trusted the innate intelligence of the work. Thus, this slow coming-into-methodology has not been perverted by any a priori theorizing. It has been about being faithful to whisperings of the inner voice, adhering to a stubborn fidelity to the question and research process, trusting the creative flow and letting the phenomenon *as process* lead the way even as I wrestled with the unknown. In my understanding, theorizing in a qualitative sense seems to *first* require deep respect for the innate wisdom and creativity that come into play as Providence senses our fidelity to risk on behalf of Truth. This cannot be taught but only experienced as a hesitant yielding and letting go as in *wu wei*, with the inquiry process becoming an imaginative enterprise.

In faithfully living this organic process, I have come into deeper awareness of the process of interpretive inquiry *before* encountering concepts and theories. Subsequent reading of the literature has confirmed the wisdom of *my own intuitions* and my *following* these intuitions as I slowly came into knowing what I know. This honoring of organic process so as to allow for that which needs to break through on its own terms yet through my full participation, is how I live my life and practice my profession as instructor and healer/psychotherapist. That my research process would naturally harmonize with this key way-of-being is not surprising. Through my indigenous heritage and my Hindu mother's life-praxis, I was initially indulged in a more organic, passionate reciprocity between self and world (which the imperialist mind still views as culturally "uncivilized" and some postmodern academics now deem *too intense*). Nonetheless, this quality of engagement with life, which is also integral to a Taoist orientation, has infused my consciousness long before reading philosophers like Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. While I value these fecund minds and embrace their thinking, it is my more

ancient, ancestral tradition that I deeply honor for first nurturing my *embodied* self and consciousness. This has featured as a kind of *primordial a priori* that *in-forms* my life engagements. It has been my way-of-being during this entire inquiry process, even as I have experienced being callously disparaged at times by a few of the very postmodern educators who ideologically expound this way of engaging with research but who could not recognize its actual lived manifestation. In this instance, postmodern philosophical idealism, lived-experience and cross-cultural sensibilities seemed inconsonant somehow.

Spretnak (1991) speaks to this incongruity. She remarks that some deconstructive postmodernists “seem to revel in a hermetically sealed chamber of discovery” (p. 293) while being densely oblivious to related ideologies and developments of other cultures and disciplines that *preceded their movement*. In education, this echoes as an alarming lack of cross-cultural sensitivity. Some western educators, struggling to emancipate themselves from their own modernist cultural-encapsulation seem unable to acknowledge the reality of culturally diverse students who *live* what they as educators are now striving to realize in their own lives. An example is their attempting to enlighten students about postmodern concepts like relationality, uncertainty, multiplicity, difference and relativity which inhere as tenets in qualitative methodology, but which are *innate* to these students’ life-praxis while maybe being only intellectual postulates or experientially embryonic formulations of these academics’ psyches. While these may be “new” conjectures within postmodern sensibilities they have been integral to more ancient and indigenous cultures.

In mentoring culturally diverse students, academics enacting their de-centering agenda while attempting to raise students’ consciousness of the above postmodern concepts, seem unable to grasp that these are already embodied in the students’ lived reality and in *how* they engage in their inquiry and methodological process. That some students are also professional psychotherapists who embody these postmodern constructs (Kvale, 1996) does not register with these educators. With both parties becoming frustrated and the deconstructive agenda going awry, some academics may enact the ultimate power play. They withdraw from the committee. Also, the possibility that some students may be existentially and spiritually more evolved than the academic, (due to diverse cultural and spiritual upbringing which may differ ontologically and epistemologically from the

entrenched modernist narratives), seems to evade some educators' awareness or threaten their very pedagogic ground and/or their assertion of being the *more* knowledgeable one.

When the latter is the case, a subtle but pervasive disenfranchising of the student's truth occurs which may even be unconscious on the pedagogue's part but which all the same amounts to institutional and spiritual rape. It demands a fierce courage to sustain trust and momentum in one's inquiry process amidst such daunting reality. To some readers, this bit of writing may seem contentious. For me it is not. It speaks to my own experience during a most critical phase of my inquiry in which the evolving methodology as process was taking form. It is also essentially addressing some of the inherent "*blind spots*" of academics who practice a postmodern deconstructive pedagogy and take up a qualitative stance with respect to research inquiry. When *who* students are and *how* they engage with their research projects interface with the academic's blind spots, the project of an emancipatory pedagogy becomes jeopardized. Also, research in which methodology coheres with *who* one essentially is and *how* one lives is robbed of this gifted reciprocity. But more alarming is the very real possibility that students' inquiries may be severely compromised as efforts to negotiate such inherent struggles may beget *silence* from the pedagogue. I have read little self-critique by academics of these subtler, subversively occurring issues that are sore spots in their otherwise genuine work. The focus in their writings is mainly on power issues but seldom on personal and pedagogic "blind spots."

Qualitative Research and its Applicability to Psychology

What then is qualitative research? And how is this paradigm different from that of the quantitative? And how does psychological inquiry fit into a qualitative schema? I begin first with a brief definition and history of qualitative research (Kvale, 1996; Locke, Spirduso and Silverman, 1993; Morse, 1994; Patton, 1990; Tesch, 1990), compare differences between qualitative (empirical/interpretive, Oberg (1988)) and quantitative research (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 1990), then focus on heuristic research and autobiography.

According to Tesch (1990), strictly speaking, there is no such thing as qualitative research. There is only qualitative *data*; information gathered for research purposes that is not expressed in numbers but may span a range that includes written texts, pictures, drawings, films, photographs, videotapes and music (p. 55). However, the term

qualitative research is used by scholars to refer to a particular approach to knowledge production and to research that utilizes qualitative data. This approach to knowledge production entails the “(re)discovery of the subjective nature and storied quality of science” (Sandelowski, 1994. p. 47) versus a science that is privileged and pure. A distinction is made between *human* science and *natural* science with the human world being constitutive of “mind, thoughts, consciousness, values, feelings, emotions, actions and purposes which find their objectifications in languages, beliefs, arts and institutions” (Dilthey in van Manen, 1990. p. 3). In van Manen’s (1990) view, human science studies persons who are endowed with consciousness, act deliberately in and on the world, and create *meaning*, which are expressions of how human beings exist in the world (p. 4).

This emphasis of human science then, necessarily moves away from numbers and back to asking people questions, listening to them, observing and interpreting experience. The data is perceived as “textual” and the type of research based on them as descriptive or interpretative/critical and hence *qualitative* (Tesch, 1990). What separates qualitative research from conventional science are the assumptions held by the researcher - how s/he views the world, not the methods of data collection. The paradigmatic difference lies in the ontological and epistemological assumptions, what is real and how we come to know what we know (Locke, Spirduso and Silverman, 1993. p. 99). Qualitative researchers address the primordial question, “What is going on here?” Whatever the phenomenon, it is the overall context that creates what it means to be present and to be a participating subject. It is that context and those meanings that the researcher seeks to illuminate. The focus is on the perceptions and experiences of participants. What they say they believe, the feelings they communicate and the explanations they give are treated as consequential and legitimate data. Thus, a more *relative* view of the world is explicated versus *absolute* “truths” operating in a cause and effect reality. Locke, Spirduso and Silverman add:

The working assumption is that people make sense out of their experiences and in doing so create their own reality. In qualitative research, understanding both the content and construction of such multiple and contingent realities is regarded as central to answering the question, “What is going on here?” (p. 99).

According to Patton (1990), qualitative methods consist of three types of data collection: in-depth, open-ended interviews, direct observation and written documents (p.

10). The qualitative researcher talks with people about their life experiences and inherent meanings and the rich raw data are organized into narrative descriptions with key themes, categories and illustrative case examples extracted through content analysis. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to study a phenomenon with openness and in great depth, approaching it without constraint of predetermined categories of analysis or hypotheses. However, I agree with Oberg (1988) that a researcher does not approach a study as a *tabula rasa*. In the first place and in many instances, the researcher is intrigued by some facet of life that has called out to her from within her own experience and that informs the inquiry in an initiatory sense. She has intuitions, beliefs and ideas of what she is looking for and these become a springboard from which to delve further. In qualitative inquiry *the researcher is the instrument* and as such, validity hinges greatly on the skill, competence and rigor of the researcher (Patton, 1990. p. 14).

Quantitative methods, on the other hand, utilize standardized measures so that differing perspectives and experiences of people can “fit into a limited number of pre-determined response categories to which numbers are assigned” (p. 14). The advantage of a quantitative approach is the possibility of measuring the responses of a large number of people to a limited set of questions, thus allowing comparison and statistical groupings of the data which in turn render broad, generalized sets of findings. Validity depends on careful instrument construction to ensure that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. It is then administered in an approved, standardized manner according to prescribed procedures. The focus is on the measuring instrument (p. 14). Patton states that while there are different strengths and weaknesses to qualitative and quantitative methods, they constitute alternative though not mutually exclusive strategies for research.

Tesch contends that qualitative research is as old as social science with Comte (1942) and the birth of sociology, Taylor (1871) and the maturing of anthropology as a discipline, and James (1878) establishing the first course in psychology. Education as a discipline only surfaced in the twentieth century. Even then tension existed between adherents of the invincible “objective” results of the natural sciences (positivists), and those who believed that a different approach was needed (anti-positivists) in the “human”

sciences because of “their complexity and the existence of a phenomenon unknown to the mechanical world: *consciousness*” (p. 9). Consciousness thus catalyzed the debate.

These latter scholars inspired by the German Romantic Movement, argued that humans were not things to be manipulated by simple causal laws. They recognized the “life experience of humans, the emotional and vital feeling of life, and the engagement that humans have with others and with the world” (Polkinghorne, 1983. p. 21). However, except in sociology where some scholars integrated statistical and journalistic methods, non-positivists arguing for a humanistic social science were relegated to the fringe as they could not devise a method of inquiry that could “rival the coherent, standardized natural science procedures of measurement and experiment” (Tesch, 1990. p.10).

Compounding this dilemma, Thorndike, in 1927, paved the way for the idea that essentially anything psychological could be measured, which influenced the development of the probability theory and the tenet that these measures could be compared. Statistical formulae ensured the relationships between measured entities such that, if valid in the present, were so in the future and hence predictable. Other positivists, (Braithwaite, 1953; Cronbach, 1949; and Kerlinger, 1964 in Tesch, 1990), further fueled the *measurement* conspiracy. Thus, positivism, (the philosophical standpoint that the ‘positive’ data of experience is the basis of all science), became *the* legitimate form of inquiry in the social sciences with the existential individual, the core of individuality, and what constitutes consciousness forever escaping those social scientists then and those so inclined today.

But despite the hegemony of positivistic methods, non-positivistic researchers continued to engage in studies whereby they “observed, described ... listened, analyzed and interpreted” (Webb and Webb, 1932 in Tesch, 1990. p. 11). Reform movements began infusing the fields of education and psychology with individuals like Denzin, (1971); Feyerabend, 1975; Guba, 1967; Giorgi, 1971; Maslow, 1966; Patton, 1975; Rogers, 1960; and van Kaam, 1959 in Tesch (1990), launching heated debates against positivistic science. Some argued that it was a product of capitalist technocracy, the core of which was the mechanistic imperative of reducing the human person to an object, “taking the social order as a given, and aiming at modifying and controlling undesirable behavior in the service of the social system” (Suransky, 1980 in Tesch, 1990. p.13).

Others simply defended their non-positivistic positions against the accusation of being less than science. The debate not only issued a decisive message that qualitative research such as phenomenology was “proper scholarship,” it necessarily unfurled as a weapon of social change with the emergence of alternatives in methodology infiltrating diverse disciplines. While this is emancipatory and Kvale (1996) heralds qualitative research as freeing and empowering, Hillman (1996) cautions that adulation of any person, archetype or system of thought can obliterate common sense and openness to possibilities.

A qualitative approach in psychology assumed the form of phenomenology, a twentieth century philosophy founded by Edmund Husserl who asserted that phenomenological explication does nothing but explicate the sense that this world has for us prior to any philosophizing (1970. p. 151). A detailed discussion of phenomenology will follow this brief review of qualitative research in psychology. van Kaam (1966) is assumed to be the first psychologist to employ a qualitative approach in his study of the phenomenon of “feeling understood.” His method was to ask students to describe in depth their feelings and the situations in which they felt truly understood. He then explicated these descriptions to determine “the necessary and sufficient constituents of this feeling” (van Kaam in Tesch, 1990. p. 34). Giorgi, Colaizzi, Fischer and von Eckartsberg, building on van Kaam’s (existential) work and blending variations of their own, formulated the existential-phenomenological methodology in psychology with the *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology* (1971) constituting their writings.

Distinctions are made within the existential-phenomenological approach. Colaizzi (1978) argued that differentiation be made between researchers who use their own experience as data, a *reflexive form of phenomenology* termed phenomenological reflection, and those who use descriptive protocols from many subjects, an *empirical form of phenomenology*. In the former, researchers rely more on their own contemplation on and experience of the phenomenon than on the experiential accounts of others. Autobiography, which is a component of this inquiry fits into this reflective form. Fischer (1978) highlighted how phenomenological and natural scientific empiricism differs. While both researchers work with data experienced by the senses, traditional natural scientific psychology is empirical “to the extent that it is open to phenomena insofar as

they show themselves to the researcher” (p. 186). The *empirical* phenomenologist, however, is open “to all perceivable dimensions and profiles of a phenomenon” (p. 186). Thus, both the researchers’ and the subjects’ experiences are potentially informative.

Tesch (1990) delineates other forms of phenomenological research in psychology: a type of reflexive research termed *heuristic research* (Moustakas, 1981) – a discovery method with the emphasis more on process than outcome; *perceptual description* as a type of phenomenological work (Colaizzi, 1978) – psychological phenomena may be beyond experiential awareness (incommunicable) as with infants. The observer perceives in a primitive or primordial way by allowing himself to be imbued by the object before his cognitive objectifying powers intercept the process; *dialogal phenomenology* (Strasser, 1969) – a researcher reflects on her own experience of the phenomenon and dialogues with others about their experience of the same phenomenon; a brand of phenomenology termed *experiential method*, (Barrell and Barrell, 1975) – a method that fuses research and self-development in that participants engage in self-observation of the same experience in different contexts; and *imaginal* (Aanstoos, 1987) - a variation of phenomenological research which is differentiated by the nature of the data as opposed to the methodology. The data are “myths, etymology, literature and other art forms which reveal hidden wisdom about psychological life” (Tesch, 1990. p. 37). Archetypal (Jung, 1969) and depth psychology are employed to facilitate insight and meaning.

Other qualitative forms of psychological research that are not phenomenological yet non-quantitative are: the *case study* (Allport, 1941, Smith, Harre and Langenhove, 1995), which is an old, acceptable psychological method that studies an individual life; *hermeneutics*, which is older than phenomenology and is defined as the art and science of interpretation (originally of biblical texts). Heidegger (1962) and later Ricoeur (1984) very cleverly appropriated hermeneutics for the social sciences, suggesting the similarity of human actions to the manner a written text seems to the reader. Packer (1985) suggests that the hermeneutic approach aims at progressively illuminating and making explicit our practical understanding of human actions through interpretation and as free as possible from prior theoretical assumptions. Hermeneutics is essentially more concerned with the social rather than the individual meaning of actions; and lastly, *ecological*

psychology (Barker, 1968) unlike phenomenology, stresses the interdependence of the objective environment or concrete setting of people's lives and the psychological habitat or subjective environment, the latter being accessible through one's emotional responses to the surroundings. Two other types of qualitative research being introduced to psychology are grounded theory and critical emancipatory research based on Habermas' notion of a critical social science which would illuminate reasons for people's skewed self-understanding and how it can be reconstructed (Carr and Kemmis in Tesch, 1990). de Boer (1983), in applying this approach to psychology, suggests that automatic thinking and behavior patterns rooted in cultural origins could be questioned via self-reflection. (But who is reflecting, the privileged or the oppressed?) While Tesch argues that this form of critical emancipatory psychology indicates a shift to the next paradigm, I agree and suggest that this shift is already inherent in various cross-cultural psychotherapies and counseling models. Oppressed peoples have long been deconstructing the dominant regimes of power that disenfranchise them in their struggle for equality. Counseling these groups within their sociopolitical contexts is not new (Pedersen, 1995, 1984; Sue and Sue, 1992). Their voices have long echoed in the therapy session. Postmodern ideology may only now be catching up or, some who have lavished in modernity's "stolen" privileges may be finally waking up and having conscience as their indulged affluence has been paid for dearly by local and indigenous sweat, blood and resources.

I now elaborate on heuristic research and autobiography. The diagrams on pages 131, 132 and 133 show an overview of qualitative research, a summary of qualitative research in psychology indicating the positions of heuristic research and autobiography, and a summary of basic assumptions of both quantitative and qualitative inquiry.

Heuristic Research Methodology

Here I discuss heuristic research methodology (HRM) and its relevance to my inquiry. Its roots in existential-phenomenology, how it differs from phenomenology, its phases, processes and limitations are also explored. The fact that HRM is applicable to research *as well as* psychotherapy (Moustakas, 1990), suggests that it is fitting for this inquiry as the process of transformation is naturally therapeutic and unfolds heuristically. There is a synchronous dynamic at play nicely blending research inquiry and psychology.

Diagram Twelve:

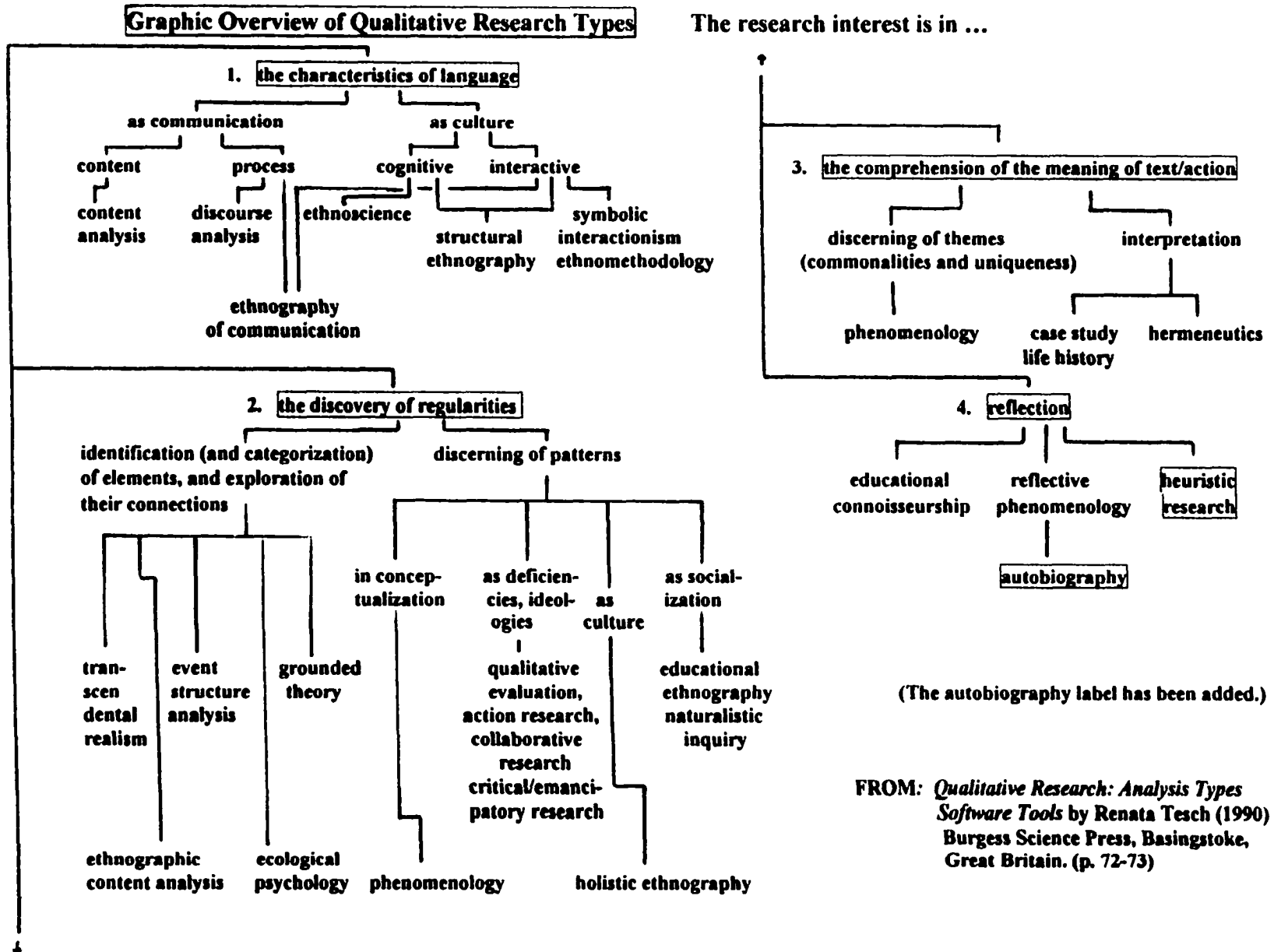
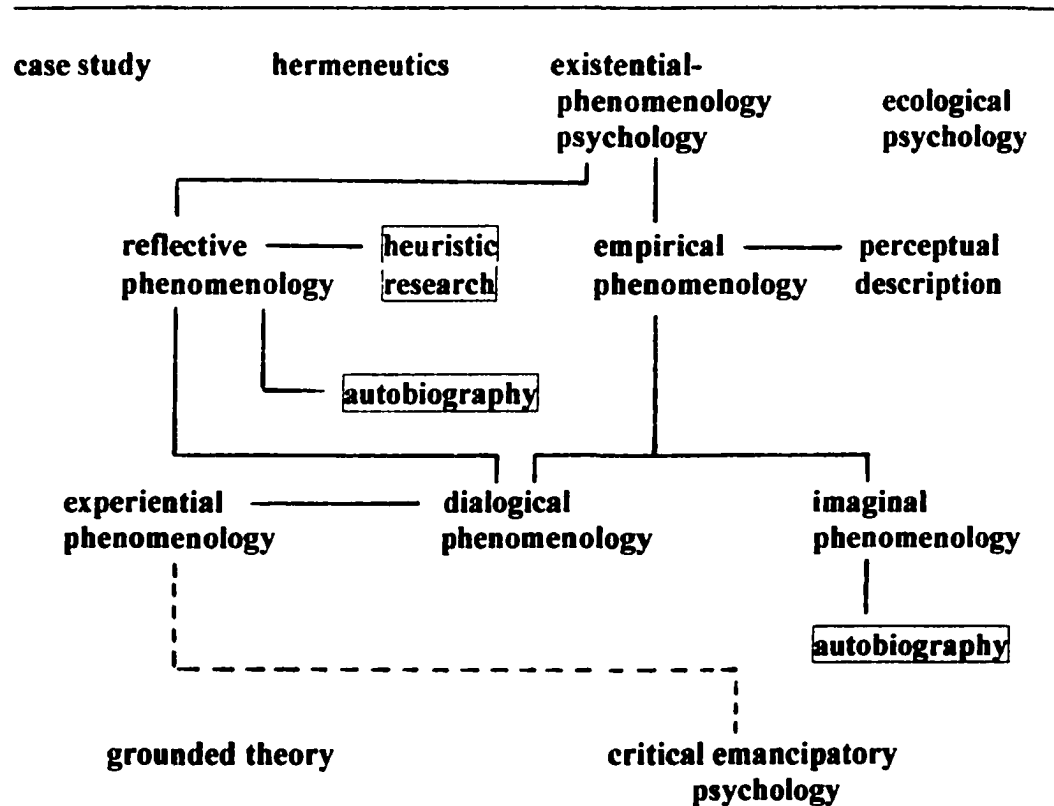


Diagram Thirteen: **Qualitative Research in Psychology**



(The autobiography label has been added.)

FROM: *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools*
 by Renata Tesch (1990).
 Burgess Science Press. Basingstroke,
 Great Britain. (p. 39)

Diagram Fourteen:

Differences Between Traditional Science Paradigm and Human Science Paradigm

Traditional Science	Assumptions	Human Science
A single reality; parts separable, manipulable; variables independent, context neutral and free	Nature of reality	Multiple realities; parts interrelated; variables dependent; context dependent
Inquirer-investigator can maintain distance and independence	Nature of inquirer- subject-object relationship	Inquirer and respondent interrelated; the in- quiring process has an influence on the inquiry
Generalizations possible; enduring truth statements focus on nomothetic (group norm) knowledge; concern with similarities	Nature of truth statements	Full generalizations not possible; what results are working hypotheses for a particular context; focus on idiographic knowledge or combination; (individual) concern with difference.

(Adapted from Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. *Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry*. Educational Communication and Technology, 1982, 30, p. 2-7).

From the summary diagram on qualitative research in psychology, it is apparent that HRM has its roots in existential-phenomenological psychology and is a form of reflective research (Patton, 1990; Tesch, 1990). For the purposes of my inquiry, I take a position similar to Tesch as she draws parallels between HRM and a form of phenomenological reflection termed “imaginative presence” by Colaizzi (1978). In this type of inquiry, the researcher relies more on his/her own contemplation on and experience of the phenomenon than on the experiential accounts of others. In other words, the researcher uses his/her experience as data (Tesch, 1990. p. 34, 70). The phenomenon is revealed through experience and awareness. Tesch asserts that phenomenological reflection is a process of “wondering about and searching, delving into a phenomenon, awakening to it, and letting oneself be inspired” (p. 70). In essence, one lives and becomes the question through a natural gradual process. (This has been my experience as articulated earlier).

This resonates with Moustakas’ (1990) belief that the initial *data* is within oneself and that the heuristic process is autobiographic. “When pursued through intimate and authentic processes of the self, the data that emerge is autobiographical, original, and accurately descriptive of the textures and structures of lived experience” (p. 40). Phenomenological reflection inheres in autobiography in that the researcher’s life and world become the living form and site of the experience of the phenomenon. Therefore, I combine heuristics, phenomenological reflection and autobiography as my overall synergistic methodology, taking the position that the latter two modes inhere in HRM. I use my own experience of the Self-transformation process as the major source of data and may include autobiographical data of Thomas Merton and Carl Jung, (and poetic, artistic-symbolic and lyrical renditions) as secondary sources. Also cyclical patterns and actual symbolic objects of the natural world that have serendipitously imbued meaning to this unfolding phenomenon is elaborated on. This fulfills the heuristic process of extending and deepening understanding of the phenomenon through the voices of others, including that of Mother Nature as she weaves an intricate web of complexity with us.

A Broader Definition of Heuristic Research

Heuristics is an approach to human science research and a passionate, personal engagement with a phenomenon in an effort to understand the essence of an aspect of life

through the internal pathways of the self (Douglas and Moustakas, 1985). These authors claim that the private and imaginative nature of HRM presents a unique challenge in research investigations and philosophical conceptions of human science. The aim is to inspire researchers to honor their own questions and problems and to affirm imagination, intuition, self-reflection and the *tacit* domain - the inner essence of human understanding (Polanyi, 1967), as legitimate pathways in searching for knowledge and understanding. HRM is an in-depth search for the discovery of meaning and essence in authentic human experience. Its power lies in its potential for disclosing truth. It is an autobiographic, reflective process of “creating and clarifying the meaning of experience in terms of self in relation to self and self in relation to others” (Douglas and Moustakas, 1985. p. 40). Since heuristic inquiry challenges the extremes of perceptions, passionate yet sober, disciplined commitment is critical if the search is to achieve scientific credibility:

Through rigor and disciplined commitment, one follows the subjective past ordinary levels of awareness, living the question internally in sources of being and nonbeing, recording hunches, ideas, and essences as they emerge, and, ultimately, consulting with others regarding the experience. The researcher must remain with the search relentlessly in order to root out its meanings completely...the commitment carries the urgency needed to reveal and explore shadings and subtleties of meaning...when to probe deeper, when to shift the focus, when to pause to examine inmost layers of meaning, when to reflect, when to describe – all are considerations of timing and attunement that demand a disciplined sensitivity if the nature and essence of an experience is to be revealed. Passion, commitment and attachment are crucial (p. 40-41).

The root meaning of *heuristic* is derived from the Greek word *heuriskein*, which means to discover or to find. It refers to a process of internal search through which the researcher discovers the nature and meaning of experience and “develops methods and procedures for further investigation and analysis” (Moustakas, 1990. p. 9). A word related to heuristics is *eureka*, which refers to the process of discovery that lures the researcher to new images and meanings regarding human phenomena, but also to realizations relevant to his/her *own* experiences and life. Hence, the heuristic researcher undergoes the experience in a vital, intense and full way, giving his/her total presence, honesty, maturity and integrity, and engaging in endless hours of sustained immersion and focused concentration on one central question. “She risks the opening of wounds and

passionate concerns, and undergoes the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey” (Moustakas, 1990. p. 14). In reading this description, I was taken aback by its accuracy in terms of my own experience of the phenomenon. The word heuristic also suggests a means by which a person is inspired to discover and learn more on his own. For me this has ensued as a solitary, challenging journey of discovery into uncharted waters in which dawning awareness has been both jarring and liberating.

The heuristic process demands a return to the self, discernment of self-awareness and valuing of one's own experience. The researcher is challenged to depend on her own resources and to embrace within herself the broad scope of her “observations, thoughts, feelings, senses, and intuitions and to accept as authentic and valid whatever will open new channels for clarifying a topic, question, problem or puzzlement” (p. 13). The HRM process asks: “What is *my* experience of the phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience the phenomenon intensely” (Patton, 1990. p. 71)? There are two focusing dimensions of heuristic inquiry: the researcher *must* undergo the experience and be intensely interested in the phenomenon and co-researchers must share *an intensity* of experience with the phenomenon (p. 71). It is the combination of personal experience and intensity that reveal an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon. Heuristic research carries farthest the notion that the researcher is the research instrument with the research becoming an *integrative living form* and the researcher being intensely engaged and open to “intuitive visions, feelings and sensings that go beyond anything one could record or think about or know in a factual sense” (Moustakas, 1981. p. 212). HRM challenges, in the extreme, traditional scientific concerns about researcher objectivity and detachment. Understanding is gleaned through sustained, solitary engagement with the phenomenon, letting go and allowing revelations and insights to break through, empathic listening, nature, literature, music and other art forms that reveal meaning. The rigor of heuristic inquiry stems from systematic observation of and thoughtful, deep dialoguing with self and others. The heuristic mode affirms the possibility of living passionately and deeply in the moment, being fully, profoundly immersed in mysteries and miracles, and *still* be involved in poignant research experience (Craig, 1978 in Patton, 1990, p. 72).

Heuristics as a Conceptual Framework

As a conceptual framework of human science, heuristics provides an attitude with which to approach research and a methodology that is *qualitative* in that it seeks to obtain descriptions and meanings that are at the heart and depths of people's experience. The commitment is not to methods but to examining and refining a humanistic understanding about human existence and behavior, taking the stance that "human beings exist within an experience of meaning" (Polkinghorne, 1982, p. 48). The emphasis in a heuristic inquiry is the human person in experience and his reflective search, awareness and discovery. "Research begins with inner searching for deeper awareness...as achieved in meditation, self-searching and intuitive and mystical reaching" (Moustakas, 1981, p. 209). The real challenge is to uncover that which is, as it is, echoing Husserl's (1970) stance. The aim is not to prove or disprove anything but to discover the nature of the phenomenon itself and to illuminate it as it exists in human experience. According to Douglas and Moustakas (1985), this orientation lends itself to a blending of existential philosophy and perceptual psychology with phenomenological underpinnings. At core, "heuristics is concerned with meanings, not measurement; with essence, not appearances; with quality, not quantity; and with experience, not behavior" (p. 42). Formal a priori hypotheses do not feature, although the researcher holds beliefs, hunches and intentions with respect to the phenomenon being studied based on intuitions, knowledge and experience which *inform* the inquiry (Moustakas, 1990) and define the chosen research tradition (Oberg, 1988). Essential to HRM is Husserl's concept of *epoche* or suspension of suppositions whereby biases and prejudgements are set aside so as to apprehend the phenomenon in a pure way, the idea being to become transparent to it and ourselves (Moustakas, 1988).

Phenomenological underpinnings inhere in the HRM yet distinctions are made between the two. Further, Moustakas does not infer a hermeneutic thread to his HRM but with the focus being on the discovery of the *nature* and *meaning* of experience, this infers that a hermeneutic phenomenology is integral to his method. I now elaborate on these issues and on Husserl's transcendental phenomenology which inheres in the HRM.

Douglas and Moustakas (1985) contrast heuristics with phenomenology, a model that affirms the subjective as an essential component of truth and from which heuristics

was derived (Patton, 1990). Phenomenological research is the study of everyday human phenomena. Through disciplined focus on the structure of experience, (e.g., time, space, materiality and interpersonal factors), the phenomenological study attempts to reveal the actual nature and meaning of an event, perception or occurrence as it occurs. Through *rigorous* analysis the *subjective* data (direct reports/observations) are transformed into *objective* accounts of reality that are (partially) unbiased through the process of epoche or bracketing of suppositions and prior beliefs. I say “partially” as I agree with Heshusius (1992) in that we can never quite *get at* all of our subjective biases and preconceptions. It is an illusion. I can know only some of my preconceptions and biases beforehand. It is precisely in my actual engagement with the inquiry that I may stumble into those hidden from conscious awareness. Phenomenological reduction (analysis) is complete when themes or patterns have been elucidated and when the essence or the essential *whatness* of the phenomenon is revealed through textural and structural descriptions. One offers as full an elucidation as possible knowing that the phenomenon cannot be totally captured.

Rigorous in phenomenological research is meant in the sense that the research is “strong” or “hard” in a moral and spirited sense (van Manen, 1990).

A strong and rigorous human science text distinguishes itself by its courage and resolve to stand *up* for the uniqueness and significance of the notion to which it has dedicated itself ...to stand *out* and be prepared to be “soft,” “soulful,” “subtle,” and “sensitive” in its effort to bring the range of meanings of life’s phenomena to our reflective awareness (p. 18).

Objectivity in this context means that the researcher remains faithful to the object of her inquiry; that she is *oriented* to that which presents itself as it is and that she protects the true nature of the object or phenomenon (p.20). *Subjectivity* means that we are strong in our orientation to the object of inquiry *in a unique and personal way* while being alert to the seduction of becoming arbitrary, self-indulgent or entranced by our unreflected preconceptions (p. 20). It means that we are receptive and tacitly alert to intuitions and nuances that reveal the phenomenon for what it is in its fullest depth. *Validity* is achieved not by following certain procedural rules but by “being true to the basic aims and tenets of phenomenological interpretation, the most important being the epoche or suspension”

(Oberg 1988. p. 5) of preconceptions. Validity is evidenced in how accurately and credibly the qualitative data *captures* the true nature of the phenomenon being studied.

Like phenomenology, heuristics explicates pure descriptions of lived experience and engages in elucidation of meaning through disciplined and rigorous scrutiny of data. However, there are numerous critical points of departure. Whereas in phenomenological studies the researcher need not experience the phenomenon firsthand, the researcher using HRM *must undergo the experience* (or a comparable experience) in a meaningful, deep and complete way. Whereas phenomenology encourages a kind of detachment from the phenomenon being studied, heuristics emphasizes connection, relationship and intense engagement. Whereas phenomenology permits the researcher to conclude with definitive descriptions of the structures of experience, heuristics leads to the depiction of essential meanings and portrayals of the intrigue and personal significance that imbue the search to know. Whereas phenomenological research concludes with a presentation of the distilled structures of experience, heuristics may involve reintegration of derived knowledge that itself is an act of creative discovery, a synthesis that includes intuition and tacit understanding. Whereas phenomenology loses the persons in the process of descriptive analysis, in heuristics the research participants are visible in the examination of the data and continue to be portrayed as whole persons. Whereas phenomenology ends with the essence of experience; heuristics *retains the essence of the person in experience* (Moustakas, 1990 p. 38-39), making it for me a much more personal, emphatic approach, especially so because it honors the direct perceptions, intuitions and the voice within.

Philosophical Foundation of Heuristics

The literature indicates that Husserl's transcendental phenomenology (HTP) is the type of (descriptive or eidetic) phenomenology that mostly underpins heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990, 1988). Husserl (1970) said that phenomenology is the *first* method of knowledge since it begins with things themselves. Whereas his phenomenology is *epistemologic* and stresses a return to reflective intuition to describe experience as it is lived and constituted in conscious awareness - it asks, How do we know? (Ray, 1994) - hermeneutic-phenomenology (HP) or the interpretive approach is *ontologic*, "a way of being in the social-historical world where the fundamental dimension of all human

consciousness is historical and socio-cultural and is expressed through language (text)” (p. 118). It questions the meaning of Being *in* the world while the orientation of HTP is being *of* the world. Hermeneutic-phenomenology is central to Gadamerian (1990), Heideggerian (1962) and Ricoeurian (1981) philosophies. (I do not agree that all human consciousness is historical and socio-cultural as this stance leaves no room for tacit knowing or the breakthrough of unmediated, unitive and mystical consciousness (Valle, 1989). Further, language and text can be over valued and interpretation can be imposed and be disturbingly misguided. These issues are discussed further on in the dissertation.

Husserl’s philosophy was radically criticized for its stance of presuppositionless relationship to the world, its concept of certitude or non-relativistic evidence (i.e. without a relationship to historical traditions or theories of the world), its exclusive emphasis on subjectivity and its “idealistic commitments” (Farber, 1943 in Moustakas, 1988). Heidegger radically reinterpreted phenomenology as hermeneutic or interpretive in that it is not after evidence first “as it is in itself” as foundational, but rather reveals the *horizon* by disclosing the presuppositions. This makes prior understanding of Being (presence or something that is) possible and hence, the questioning of the meaning of Being *in* the world. Heidegger’s interpretive phenomenology seeks out the preontological understanding of Being (Ray, 1994). The key distinction between Husserl’s and Heidegger’s philosophies is that the latter assumes the position that presuppositions are not to be eliminated or suspended. They constitute the possibility of intelligibility or meaning such that Being as such already is present *in* the world as *Dasein*. *Dasein* guides the question that is made explicit and is interpreted as a possibility to be realized. Gadamer drew on Heidegger’s ideas and proposed a hermeneutic in the context of temporality and historicity of human existence. Here, hermeneutics illuminates the modes of being in the world where understandability is interpreted through language. Ricoeur (1981) combined both philosophies to offer the broadest definitions of phenomenology and hermeneutics. He proposed that the belonging to the world is the interpretive experience itself and that all understanding is mediated by interpretation. (Again, I have difficulty with the latter part of this perspective as it negates that which is *prior to* any experience or pre-reflective thought or felt-sense i.e. numinous consciousness as experienced by many mystics and

ordinary folk and during transformation). He brought together the relationship between the ontology of human reality (being *in* the world) and the epistemology of what is to be known (being *of* the world) (p. 122). This view facilitates understanding of the human condition in a changing yet continuous social-historical reality in which we find ourselves immersed. In my view, this seems similar to Husserl's notions of co-constitutionality, situated-freedom and the life-world, which inherently constitute the cultural, economic and socio-political arena.

I will now explore some tenets of Husserlian transcendental philosophy (HTP) so as to amplify their underpinnings within heuristic research methodology. The main tenet of HTP is that knowing based on intuition and essence precedes empirical knowledge. Empirical knowledge must be set aside as a threat to coming to understand anything in its true meaning (Moustakas, 1988). This is done through the concept of *epoche* or holding in abeyance one's suppositions, theories, etc., then, through deep reflection, seeking the true form of things or the beginnings of knowledge in the subjective processes or *in the things themselves*. This philosophic activity Husserl termed *transcendental subjectivity*, whereby *transcendental* may be understood as attributing meaning by the knowing ego or self reflecting on itself (Ray, 1994). Thus, the realm of transcendental being is that of pure ego and what it knows (p. 119). The idea is:

to "see" in purely descriptive ways what exists in things themselves, to permit what is present to enter consciousness and to be understood in the light of pure intuition. The process involves a mixing of what is really present as phenomena with what is imagined as present from the vantage point of possible meanings; thus a unity of the real and the unreal or ideal (Moustakas, 1988. p. 3).

In the HRM process, this is experienced as the researcher consciously bracketing whatever suppositions she has so as to clear the space for that which needs to reveal itself in fresh light. In the process of becoming transparent to the viewing of things one in turn becomes transparent to oneself. What is acquired by the *epoche* is my pure living. I enter a clear space with an open self ready to fully embrace life's offerings. "In the *epoche*, no particular position is taken; every domain had equal value" (p. 75). Although nothing is determined ahead of time, everything that appears is embraced by the possibility of being seen and being known in its essential nature and meaning. The *epoche* creates a unique

type of philosophical solitude, “which is the fundamental methodical requirement of a truly radical philosophy” (p. 77). Achieving the epoche, the pure state of being for new perceiving and experiencing, is not easy yet crucial for the inquiry process to proceed. It is something the researcher must practice alone, the nature and intensity of it requiring his/her absolute presence in absolute aloneness so as to intentionally focus in an enduring way to what is being revealed to consciousness. It demands slowness and patience.

In my experience the epoche is not often intentionally done. Sometimes it seems like some kind of internal involuntary process takes over and disenfranchises the person of his/her props, defenses and known ways of being and thinking – a kind of *temporary* psychic crippling and destabilization of the intact, prospering ego occurs. This process continues depending on the degree of unconscious material that surfaces. The old formulas become useless and that which constricts the free and unfettered fantasy that makes possible a deeper and broader range of meanings is broken down. A clearing process takes place and because the usual survival strategies collapse, it is like one has little choice but to yield into the impending shift in consciousness which allows the apprehending of the phenomenon is a fresh, naïve and wide open sense. And this is where much vulnerability may ensue as one proceeds, unguarded, into unknown territory.

The concept of *intentionality*, which addresses the ongoing dimension of our consciousness that we are always in relation to that which is beyond us, (Valle, King and Halling, 1989), comes into play. Whatever the phenomenon, it seems that consciousness is implicitly or explicitly intentionally directed toward a grasping of its essence and hence the clearing of the psychic space as an openness and movement toward the phenomenon. Likewise, the intentional revealing nature of the phenomenon is always already present to be apprehended. Thus, consciousness is not only a pure interiority but also a going-out-of-itself (Moustakas, 1988), with the essential indissolubility of the subject-object unity remaining intact and interrelating in the inquiry process.

Another Husserlian concept is *intersubjectivity*. The necessity of the transcendental ego in the revealing of meaning and essence does not negate the importance of the connection with coexisting others, especially in relation to my self-insights and subjective perceptions of what is real. In an intersubjective world of self-and-others my existence

and that of the other are co-present in intentional communion. I experience my world within the open plurality of other human beings. Therefore, within the inquiry process, Husserl insists that I first explicate my own intentional consciousness through transcendental processes before I am able to understand someone or something different from me. While “my own perception is primary, it includes the perception of the other by analogy” (p. 14), thus overcoming the illusion of solipsism.

Phenomenological reduction is another aspect of the inquiry process. The task is that of describing in textual language exactly what one sees in terms of the internal act of consciousness and the external objective, “the experience as such, and the rhythm and relationship between the phenomenon and self” (p.81). All the subtle details and nuances of the experience are described. The process entails a pre-reflective, pure description of things just as they appear in consciousness and a reduction to what is horizontal and thematic. This reduction process increases the attunement and refinement of knowledge.

Eidetic variation is another Husserlian concept and a further step in the heuristic process. The task is to seek possible meanings through the employment of imagination, varying the frames of reference, using polarities and reversals and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, positions, roles and functions (p. 91). The aim is to render *structural* descriptions of experience, the underlying and catalyzing factors that account for what is being experienced; “in other words, the *how* that speaks to the conditions that illuminate the *what* of experience” (p. 91). In eidetic variation, the focus is on meanings and essences not on facts and numbers. Husserl (in Moustakas, 1988) stresses that, “pure essential truths do not make the slightest assertion concerning facts. Pure essence needs for its grounding insights into the essences of things” (p. 93).

The last step in the heuristic research process is *synthesis*, the intuitive integration of the essential textural and structural descriptions into a comprehensive statement of the *essence* of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole. Husserl (1962) suggested that synthesis is “the guiding direction of the eidetic sciences, the establishment of a knowledge of essences” (p. 40). Husserl’s notion of essence is that which is common or universal, the condition or quality without which a thing would not be what it is (p. 39). Sartre (1963 in Moustakas, 1988) refers to essence as the “concatenation of appearances”

which is “radically severed from the individual appearance which manifests it, since ... it is that which must be able to be manifested by an infinite series of individual manifestations” (97). The essence is never exhausted, however, as the synthesis is representative of *an instance* of the phenomenon at a specific time and place and from the perspective of a particular researcher, after an extensive, imaginative and reflective inquiry into the phenomenon. Husserl (1962) concludes that:

Every physical property draws us into infinities of experience; and that every multiplicity of experience, however lengthily drawn out, still leaves the way open to closer and novel thing-determinations...in infinitum (p. 48).

In concluding this section, I reiterate Moustakas’ (1988) thoughts that understanding the nature, meaning and essence of epoche, phenomenological reduction, eidetic variation and synthesis, provides a guide for engaging in human science research and a viable philosophy of human nature and human existence. Such a philosophy of coming into knowledge values the significance of vulnerability, openness, freedom, returning to things themselves and to the pure self of the experiencing person; letting things present themselves and linger; seeing with new eyes what comes; perceiving each phenomenon as having value; and searching for central themes and syntheses of textural and structural qualities. With such a philosophy we are able to approach experience in fresh, naïve ways, honor the evidence of our senses, value conscious experience and move toward an intersubjective knowing of things, people and experiences of the life-world (p. 99). My understanding of Husserl’s transcendental philosophy has been profoundly deepened by Moustakas’ application of it in his heuristic research model. I feel a deep resonance with this research approach because, like the philosophy, it places ultimate knowledge in the domains and powers of the self where listening to the inner voice and to one’s intuitions guides the inquiry process. These are also critical aspects that have been considered in the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation. Thus, the methodology and the inquiry have been in sync with this synergy occurring gradually and naturally.

The Phases of Heuristic Research

The heuristic research methodology (HRM) comprises six phases that has guided this evolving inquiry and make up the basic research design - the initial engagement, immersion into the topic and question, incubation, illumination, explication, and the

culmination of the inquiry in a creative synthesis. There are also six concepts and processes that facilitate the movement of the researcher through each phase of the process. These will be elaborated on later. This entire process is one of discovery.

Initial Engagement

In this stage, the researcher is apprehended by a concern that calls out to her. It is one that holds crucial social meanings and personal, compelling implications. There is an intense, passionate interest in the topic. This stage invites self-dialogue, an inner search to discover the topic and question (Moustakas, 1990). During this phase one encounters the self, one's autobiography and important relationships within the social milieu. Eventually a critical question is birthed that lingers, provokes a deep response and awaits the disciplined commitment that will uncover its subtleties and underlying meanings. The engagement of a question that holds personal power is a process that demands inner receptiveness, "a willingness to enter fully into the theme and to discover from within, the spectrum of life experiences that will clarify and expand knowledge of the topic and illuminate the terms of the question" (p.27). The researcher delves inward for tacit awareness and knowledge and allows intuition its free reign so as to reveal the context from which the question takes form and significance. Discipline and surrender are vital here as a restlessness begins to stir, creating an subtle urgency regarding the clarity of the question. Fine tuning the question entails "lingering" with and within the question.

Immersion

Following the initial engagement, the researcher immerses himself in the research question. He lives the question in waking, sleeping and in dream states. Everything in his life becomes centered around the question as he comes into intimate contact with the question. He is alert to all possibilities for meaning and is fully open to any context that is connected to the question and reveals raw material for immersion and for staying with and maintaining concentrated focus – people, places, nature, readings, any and everything that offers possibilities for understanding the phenomenon. Immersion is deepened through spontaneous self-dialogue, pursuing intuitive clues and hunches, and being receptive to the mystery and sources of energy and knowledge with the tacit dimension.

Incubation

In this phase, the researcher intentionally retreats from the intense focus on the question. Although seemingly superficially detached from engagement with the question, on another level expansion of knowledge is occurring. In this “timeout” period growth is occurring in that incubation allows the inner tacit dimension to reach its full possibilities. The gathering of information is now being processed at an unconscious level and there is a letting be as in “wu wei.” This coheres with Polanyi’s (1964) assertion that discovery does not ordinarily occur through deliberate mental operations and directed calculated efforts. It seems to happen more “by a process of spontaneous mental reorganization uncontrolled by conscious effort” (in Moustakas, 1990. p. 29). In this time, the seed of the question is nourished and supported in such a manner that an integration of its parts and qualities begin to take on creative form. This is an alert, fertile waiting and a not meddling with the natural processes at work in the depths.

Illumination

This is a key phase. In being open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition, the researcher experiences a breakthrough into conscious awareness of qualities and a clustering of qualities into themes inherent in the question. The illumination process may entail an awakening to new dimensions of the experience and hence new knowledge. It may also involve corrections of distorted understandings or the unveiling of hidden meanings. These insights or modifications require a receptive state of mind without conscious striving to know. Moustakas says that while “a degree of reflectiveness is essential...the mystery of situations requires tacit workings to uncover meanings and essences” (p. 29). In this process one may also experience a synthesis of fragmented knowledge or a totally new discovery of something that has been “hovering” but still beyond immediate awareness, adding something essential to the truth of an experience.

Explication

During this phase the researcher begins to tease out specific meanings, qualities, components and underlying themes that inhabit the experience. The task here is to thoroughly examine what has awakened in consciousness so as to understand the various layers of meaning. A full elucidation of the descriptive themes that characterize the experience is the aim. In this phase the researcher employs focusing, indwelling, self-

searching and self-disclosure and recognizes that meanings are unique and depends on internal frames of references. Her thoughts, feelings, awareness, beliefs and judgements are attended to as a prelude to the understanding that is derived from dialogues with others. Focusing and indwelling are the main concepts that are used to discover further nuances, textures and constituents of the phenomenon. A fuller apprehension of the *key* ingredients occurs and with refinements and corrections, a comprehensive depiction of the core themes is developed. The detailed explication of the major components of the phenomenon is now at hand and these are put together into a whole experience (p. 31).

Creative Synthesis

The heuristic process culminates with a creative synthesis that can be only achieved through tacit and intuitive powers (p. 31). A comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon now allows the researcher to gather the components and core themes into a creative synthesis. This could be a narrative depiction utilizing verbatim material and examples, or it may be expressed as a poem, song, drawing, painting, collage or any other creative form that expresses the whole. Solitude and meditation that focus on the topic eventually inspires the creative synthesis. What is vital is that the researcher moves beyond any constricted attention to the data and allows an inward contemplation on the question to grow until a synergistic expression of the essence of the phenomenon gels and is ready to be displayed. There is mystery in this unfolding process.

Concepts and Processes Pertaining to Heuristic Inquiry

The following concepts and processes provide the discipline that enables the researcher to contact the experience from within the structures of the experience itself. They help in understanding the essence of the phenomenon at a deeper level. They are identifying with the focus of inquiry, self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling, focusing and the internal frame of reference. These concepts and processes constitute a scientific search for knowledge and understanding of the human life-world and validate the “self” as an indispensable source of deep currents of meaning and knowledge.

Identifying with the focus of the inquiry

Through exploratory, open-ended inquiry, self-directed search and immersion in active experience, the researcher climbs inside the question, becomes one with it and

acquires an understanding of it. This is termed the “inverted perspective” (p. 15) which helps to get an inside view of the question. In my sensing, it is somehow like having an empathetic relationship with the question such that I come to know it from the inside out.

Self-dialogue

The idea is that in order to understand and discover the constituents and qualities of an experience, one must begin with oneself. One’s own intuitions, understandings and self-discoveries are the initial steps of the heuristic process. The researcher enters into a dialogue with the phenomenon and allows it to speak directly (p. 6) and intimately to her own experience, and to be questioned by it. She engages in a dynamic rhythm with it, going back and forth and as many times as is necessary until multiple meanings are revealed. Moustakas says it beautifully. One is open, yielding, “attuned to all facets of one’s experience of a phenomenon, allowing comprehension and compassion to mingle and recognizing a place and unity of *intellect, emotion and spirit*” (p.16 italics mine). Self-inquiry is imperative. One faces oneself nakedly and is honest with one’s self and one’s experience of the question. Knowledge and experience of a personal life issue enables the researcher to begin inquiring into the question as a springboard somehow.

Tacit Knowing

Polanyi (1983) says, “we can know more than we can tell” (p. 4 in Moustakas, 1990). Sometimes knowledge cannot be put into words but through a *tacit capacity* one senses the unity of something from an understanding of the individual qualities or parts. Tacit knowing is a knowing other than verbal and allows the researcher to open herself to implicit or subliminal ways of knowing. Polanyi (1962) suggests that knowledge is rooted in the tacit dimension, “which underlies and precedes intuition and guides the researcher into untapped directions and sources of meaning” (p. 22).

Intuition

Intuition, the realm of the in between, links the implicit knowledge inherent in the tacit domain and the explicit knowledge which is observable. Intuition makes immediate knowledge available without the intervening steps of logic and reasoning. While the tacit is pure mystery, ineffable and not specifiable, in intuitive processes we draw clues, sense patterns or underlying conditions and through inference, we surmise a truth. Throughout

the heuristic process, the researcher uses intuitive clues and “makes necessary shifts in method, procedure, direction, and understanding which will add depth, substance and essential meanings to the discovery process” (p. 23). The whole is perceived intuitively.

Indwelling

Through the process of indwelling, the researcher turns inward to grasp a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the nature and meaning of the phenomenon. Enduring concentration is directed on the core themes of the experience so as to draw out every possible meaning, nuance and texture. Indwelling is a conscious deliberate process whereby one follows clues wherever they appear, dwells inside them and expands their meanings and associations until a fundamental revelation is had. Indwelling is essential throughout the inquiry so as to elucidate the parameters and intricate details of the experience. Patience and incremental understanding inhere here.

Focusing

The discipline of focusing is essential to dwelling inside the experience. The researcher clears an inward space so as to sustain the process of contacting the central meanings of an experience. The idea is to tap into the essence of what matters and to relinquish peripheral qualities and feelings. One is openly receptive to whatever may yield forth that is substantial. Through focusing the researcher is able to determine core themes that constitute an experience and also achieve cognitive knowledge that “includes refinements of meaning and perception that register as internal shifts and alterations of behavior” (Douglas and Moustakas, 1985. p. 51).

The Internal Frame of reference

The internal frame of reference is a way of honoring and giving credibility to the perceptions and experience of the person who has experienced or is experiencing the phenomenon. The rich details of the experience are embedded within the internal frame of reference, and this personal knowledge needs to come into the light for discussion, amplification, clarification, refinement and further exploration. The art is to draw out the experience through skillful, sensitive, open-ended mutual engagement.

Research Design and Methodology

The essential processes in heuristics are concentrated gazing on something that compels one into a search for meaning, focus on a topic or formulation of the question, and methods of preparing, collecting, organizing, analyzing and synthesizing the data.

Formulating the Question

Discovering and articulating a significant concern or question that will sustain the commitment and passion of the researcher is the beginning of the heuristic process. The awakening of and the desire to pursue a question that is deeply connected to one's own identity and selfhood comes through an inward clearing and an intentional readiness and commitment to discover an essential truth with respect to the meaning and essence of one's own life and that of others. Polanyi (1969 in Moustakas, 1990) speaks to the imperative nature of the problem:

To see a problem is to see something hidden that may yet be accessible ...

It is an engrossing possession of incipient knowledge that passionately strives to validate itself. Such is the heuristic power of a problem" (p. 40).

The question and the researcher's *relationship* to it determines if an authentic and compelling path has opened or not, one that will sustain the full energy, commitment and endurance of the researcher over a long period of time. The question needs to be clearly and concretely stated as the basic elements of the search are entailed in the primary words stated in the ordering of the question. "The question should reveal itself immediately and evidently so that one knows what one is seeking" (Moustakas, 1990. p. 41).

Moustakas delineates certain characteristics of the research question:

1. It seeks to disclose more fully the essence of a dimension of human experience.
2. It seeks to discover the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspects of experience.
3. It engages the total self, passion and sustained participation in the search process.
4. It does not seek to predict or determine causal relationships.
5. It is illuminated through careful descriptions, illustrations, metaphors, dialogues, poetry and other creative renditions as opposed to measurement or scores (p. 42).
6. The researcher is intimately and autobiographically related to and learns to love and serve the question unrelentingly. Genuine openness to the question necessitates being

“humble and not holding a single presupposition, so as to be in a position to learn the more” (Kierkegaard (1965) in Moustakas, 1990. p. 42). Having formulated the question and defined and determined the primary terms and meanings, the next steps are careful and disciplined exploring and answering of the question.

Methods of Preparation

Methods in heuristic research are open-ended, (yet congruent with responsible ethical concerns), as each research process unfolds in its own way. However, there are guidelines that help the phenomenon to reveal itself more completely than it does in ordinary experience. The key is that every method or procedure must relate back to the question and facilitate collection of data that will illumine the nature, meaning and essence of the phenomenon being investigated. To accomplish this, methods and procedures must encourage open expression and dialogue that can manifest in diverse and creative ways. Methods of preparation include (Moustakas, 1990. p. 44-46):

1. Immersion in the question - going wide open to discover meanings in everyday observations, conversations, and published works, being alert to any significant signs and expressions of the phenomenon, and being prepared to enter *moments* of the experience “timelessly and live it fully” (p. 44).
2. Developing a set of instructions - carefully designing a document that informs potential co-researchers of the nature of the research design, its purpose and process, and what is expected of them.
3. Locating and acquiring the research participants, developing a set of criteria for selection of participants - age, sex, socioeconomic factors, ability to articulate the experience, cooperation, willingness to make a commitment, interest etc.
4. Developing a contract - this will include time commitments, place, confidentiality, informed consent, opportunities for feedback, permission to tape-record, permission to use material in dissertation and academic documents, and verification of findings. This is done with care and sensitivity for all parties concerned.
5. Atmosphere building - considering ways of creating an atmosphere that will be conducive to trust, openness and self-disclosure and privacy.

6. Fostering relaxation - the possibility of using relaxation/meditative activities to encourage a sense comfort, relaxation, and a feeling of being at home.
7. Constructing a way of apprising co-researchers during the “collection of data phase” of the importance of immersion and intervals of concentration and respite. Also, to engage in reciprocal feedback as to what is going on, the meaning of the ongoing research experience and any shifts and or changes that may become evident.

Methods of Collecting Data

A typical manner of gathering data is through extended interviews that often take the form of dialogues with oneself and one’s research participants according to *inner experiential* time rather than clock time. In genuine dialogue, ideas, thoughts, feelings, and images are allowed to unfold and be expressed naturally and unhurriedly. The inquiry is complete only when the telling of the story of experience comes to a natural closure. In theory it is possible to conduct a heuristic inquiry with only one participant depending on the depth and breath of the experiencing of the phenomenon. The usual number of participants ranges from between three to fifteen to get richer and more varied meanings. Three basic interviewing approaches suggested by Patton (1980) are:

1. The informal conversational interview – which relies on the spontaneous generation of questions and conversations in which the co-researcher participates in a natural, unfolding dialogue with the researcher. There is a sense of ease and flow in the dynamic between the two parties and, within the unfolding story the researcher is quietly alert to poignant cues that reveal the essence of the phenomenon.
2. The general interview guide - this outlines a set of issues or topics to be explored that might be shared with co-researchers as the interview unfolds and focuses on common information to be sought from all the co-researchers.
3. The standard open-ended interview - this consists of carefully worded questions that all research participants will be asked (p. 47).

The conversational interview is clearly the chosen method here as it is aligned with the rhythm and flow of heuristic exploration and search for meaning. Dialogue fosters natural expression, elucidation and disclosure of the experience that is being investigated. Also, self-disclosure elicits disclosure and appropriate, timely disclosures

by the researcher could inspire more depth of revelation from the co-researcher. Although general questions may be designed ahead of time, genuine dialogue, in which there is mutual unveiling and where each desires to be experienced and confirmed, cannot be planned. In such dialogue, “the inter-human opens out what would otherwise remain unopened” (Buber, 1965. p. 86). The data generated is dependent on being flexible and free to vary procedures according to what emerges in the flow of the dialogue and on being skillful in probing for genuine, accurate, full depictions of the phenomenon. These depictions may take the form of stories, examples, conversations and analogies that are tape-recorded, transcribed and analyzed for constituents, themes and essences of the observed experience. Interview data may be supplemented with personal documents, diaries, journals, logs, poetry, music and art which offer additional meaning and depth.

Method for Organizing and Synthesizing Data

Moustakas (1990. p. 51-52) provides a comprehensive outline guide of procedures for analyzing the research data. This is included verbatim (p. 156), preceded by a chart showing a condensed overview of the heuristic research methodology (p. 155). Also, a letter of instructions to research participants and a participation release agreement are necessary documents which are not employed here as this is an autobiographic study.

In closing, it is suggested that the heuristic research process can provide an experience that forever alters one’s life. Moments of meaning, vulnerability, tenderness, understanding and discovery quicken one’s responsiveness and deepen how one sees, feels and thinks. A quality of attunement and communion has been made with self and world that is savored with much gratitude. A rhythm that has taken its own course comes to a natural closing, leaving one with a quiet sense of awe that research can be a thrilling, vulnerable affair; a sacred engagement within the ordinariness of our everyday living.

Limitations of Heuristic Research

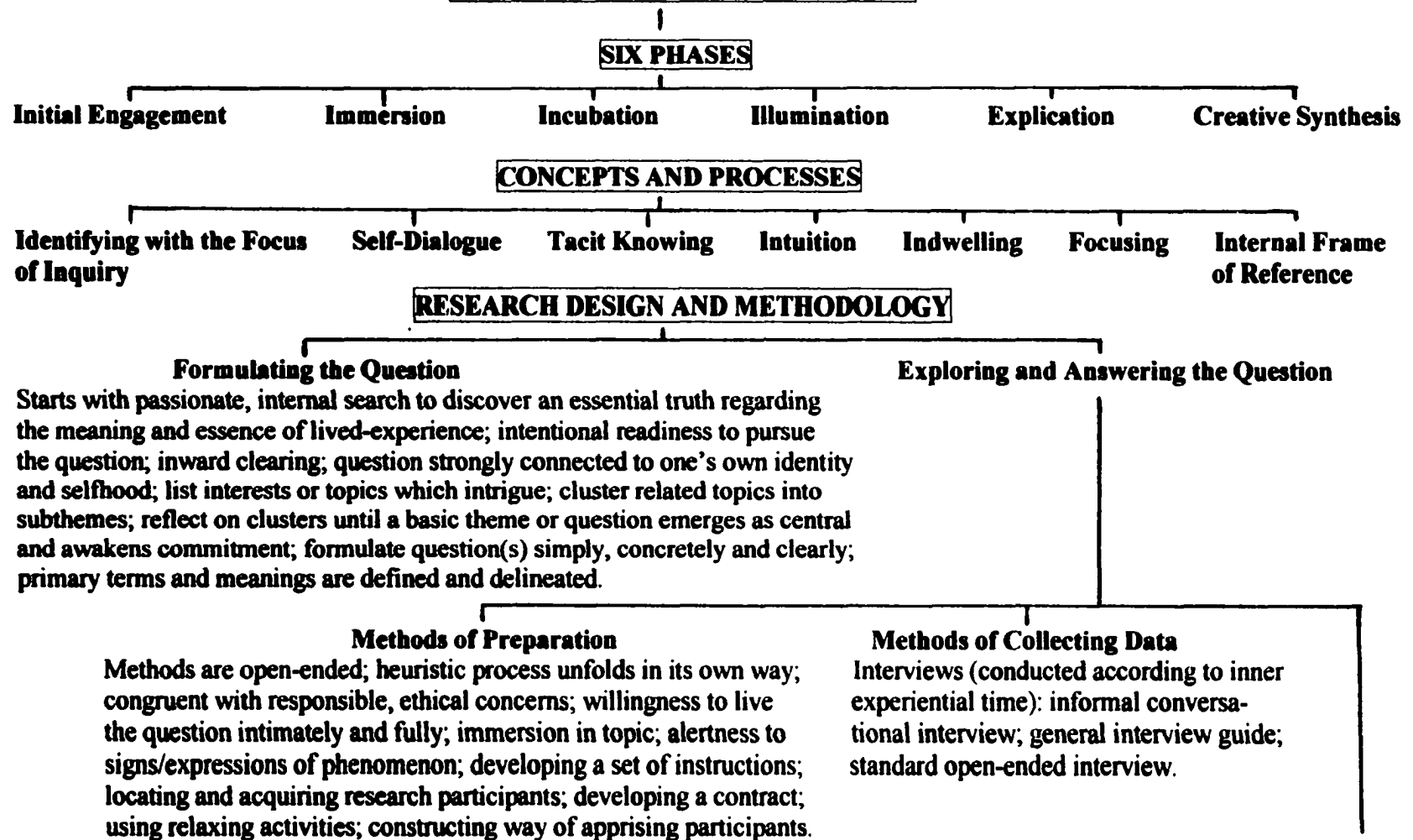
Having gone through a sustained and in-depth heuristic process, and being acutely tuned in to many of the nuances and intricate details that Moustakas so thoroughly and thoughtfully articulates, I am hard pressed to come up with “limitations” as such. What I speak to now is not viewed as limitations although this might be the case from another’s perspective. On the contrary, I have come to deeply respect and value the whole arena of

interpretive research because of my experience with the heuristic process. It is a most sensitive, affirming, rigorous, “soulful” and respectful way of coming into understanding and meaning of the diverse ways of being human. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Moustakas for his ingenuity in creating a methodology that coheres with my basic nature.

Nonetheless, I will address two issues here. The findings from a heuristic study are applicable to a small number of co-researchers, maybe even one. Therefore, one would need to be tentative in creating a broader, universal picture or model based on the heuristic data. Yet, this “perceived” limitation is conversely its strength in that the qualitative data is extensive, in-depth, thorough, intimately thoughtful, and gets to the very core of experience. The credible, honest portrayal of a particular life issue through a penetrating analysis and synthesis can be transforming or at least inspiring. Moustakas’ own heuristic study on loneliness was generated from his autobiographical involvement and a limited research base. Nevertheless, many readers of this study have confirmed the validity of his depictions of loneliness, verifying that heuristic research can illumine essences and explicate essential themes specific to human experience.

More of a concern is the issue of time. The inner experiential time, (or what I called earlier time according to the concept of *kairos*), with respect to the immersion, incubation and illumination phases of the heuristic process has a rhythm and life of its own. These processes *cannot* be hurried (Moustakas, 1990. p. 14) and so they can and do create great tension within academic scheduling and with administrative notions of *what* constitutes research. The unpredictability and natural flow of the heuristic process further compounds this dilemma, especially when paradigmatic research positions are opposed to each other and non-negotiable. When personal transformation, which may ensue as an inherent process of heuristic inquiry, is added to this already complex dynamic, immense time, energy and personal credibility are engaged and are at stake. Yet, the heuristic research path is worthwhile as it quickens the researcher at a depth not ever imagined before and engages exploration and elucidation of a phenomenon *from the inside out*.

Diagram Fifteen: **HEURISTIC RESEARCH CHART**



(Taken from *Heuristic Research*. C. Moustakas (1990). p. 15-49)

OUTLINE GUIDE OF PROCEDURES FOR ANALYSIS OF DATA

- (1) In the first step in organization, handling, and synthesizing, the researcher gathers all of the data from one participant (recording, transcript, notes, journal, personal documents, poems, artwork, etc.).
- (2) The researcher enters into the material in timeless immersion until it is understood. Knowledge of the individual participant's experience as a whole and in its detail is comprehensively apprehended by the researcher.
- (3) The data is set aside for awhile, encouraging an interval of rest and return to the data, procedures which facilitate the awakening of fresh energy and perspective. Then, after reviewing again all of the material derived from the individual, the researcher takes notes, identifying the qualities and themes manifested in the data. Further study and review of the data and notes enables the heuristic researcher to construct an individual depiction of the experience. The individual depiction retains the language and includes examples drawn from the individual co-researcher's experience of the phenomenon. It includes qualities and themes that encompass the research participant's experience.
- (4) The next step requires a return to the original data of the individual co-researcher. Does the individual depiction of the experience fit the data from which it was developed? Does it contain the qualities and themes essential to the experience? If it does, the researcher is ready to move on to the next co-researcher. If not, the individual depiction must be revised to include what has been omitted or deleted, and what are or are not essential dimensions of the experience. The individual depiction may also be shared with the research participant for affirmation of its comprehensiveness and accuracy and for suggested deletions and additions.
- (5) When the above steps have been completed for one research participant, the investigator undertakes the same course of organization and analysis of the data for each of the other research participants until an individual depiction of each co-researcher's experience of the phenomenon has been constructed.
- (6) The individual depictions as a group, representing each co-researcher's experience, are gathered together. The researcher again enters into an

immersion process with intervals of rest until the universal qualities and themes of the experience are thoroughly internalized and understood. At a timely point in knowledge and readiness, the researcher develops a composite depiction that represents the common qualities and themes that embrace the experience of the co-researchers. The composite depiction (a group depiction reflecting the experience of individual participants) includes exemplary narratives, descriptive accounts, conversations, illustrations, and verbatim excerpts that accentuate the flow, spirit, and life inherent in the experience. It should be vivid, accurate, alive, and clear, and encompass the core qualities and themes inherent in the experience. The composite depiction includes all of the core meanings of the phenomenon as experienced by the individual participants and by the group as a whole.

- (7) The heuristic researcher returns again to the raw material derived from each co-researcher's experience, and the individual depictions derived from the raw material. From these data, the researcher selects two or three participants who clearly exemplify the group as a whole. The researcher then develops individual portraits of these persons, utilizing the raw data, individual depictions and autobiographical material that was gathered during preliminary contacts and meetings, contained in personal documents, or shared during the interview. The individual portraits should be presented in such a way that both the phenomenon investigated and the individual persons emerge in a vital and unified manner.
- (8) The final step in heuristic presentation and handling of data is the development of a creative synthesis of the experience. The creative synthesis encourages a wide range of freedom in characterizing the phenomenon. It invites a recognition of tacit-intuitive awarenesses of the researcher, knowledge that has been incubating over months through processes of immersion, illumination, and explication of the phenomenon investigated. The researcher as scientist-artist develops an aesthetic rendition of the themes and essential meanings of the phenomenon. The researcher taps into imaginative and contemplative sources of knowledge and insight in synthesizing the experience, in presenting the discovery of essences—peaks and valleys, highlights and horizons. In the creative synthesis, there is a free reign of thought and feeling that supports the researcher's knowledge, passion, and presence; this infuses the work with a personal, professional, and literary value that can be expressed through a narrative, story, poem, work of art, metaphor, analogy, or tale.

(Source: *Heuristic Research*. C. Moustakas (1990). p. 51-52)

Autobiography (or Self Narrative)

Autobiography as a method of inquiry is grounded and discussed within the qualitative research paradigm, focusing on various streams of interpretive inquiry - *heuristics*, discussed previously and hence not dealt with here (Moustakas, 1981, 1990; Moustakas and Douglas, 1985; Polanyi, 1962, 1969, 1983 as discussed in Moustakas (1988, 1990); *phenomenological reflection* (Colaizzi, 1978); *idiographic research* (Allport, 1942, 1962, 1965; Smith, Harre and Langenhove, 1995); and within *postmodern critical theory* which focuses on reflexivity and narrative and problematizes orthodox conceptualizations of the research and knowledge process (Bruner, 1986, 1995; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Grumet, 1981, 1987; Harding, 1989; Lather 1991, 1999; Pinar, 1975, 1988; and Pinar and Grumet, 1976). Before proceeding in this direction, however, I first explore, (within a brief and limited perusing of the origins of autobiography from the standpoint of literary theory, education and psychology), some tentative perspectives on autobiography and what constitutes this contentious field of inquiry

What Constitutes the Nature of Autobiography?

According to Graham (1991), autobiography currently informs a number of important educational projects in greater or lesser degrees of sophistication with regard to some epistemological issues (e.g in language arts in order to write the self (Britton, 1970a in Graham, 1991); methodologically in teacher education courses (Abbs, 1976, 1979 in Graham, 1991; Grumet, 1981); and in reconceptualizing curriculum studies (Pinar, 1975; Pinar and Grumet, 1976). In each case, claims are being made for autobiography as a legitimate way of coming into knowledge. Even so, it still exists in an *under-theorized* state within the educational community as a whole. This situation, unfortunately, has not been conducive to increasing people's consciousness and valuing of the importance and power of autobiography. Also, although it is being employed intuitively by educators both as process and product, i.e., as an element in a text or as a text in itself, its versatile nature adds to the confusion in making specific claims on its behalf. Further, within education and its many fields of inquiry, there is lack of agreement as to what educators mean when they refer to their reliance on autobiography or on the autobiographical. Thus, the nature of autobiography and what constitutes its distinguishing features have

been a source of contention in which theorists and educators have been long embroiled. Graham suggests though, that despite the arguments, autobiography's power is its capacity to cause us to engage with principles and ideas of broadest concern to many educators. These include "conceptions of knowledge and the forms of knowledge; theories of the self, of personality and of identity; psychological ideas of development; theories of language and learning; and issues pertaining to the use of autobiography as an instrument of research" (p. 3). For my study, I focus on autobiography as an instrument of research and as a method of inquiry, (which inherently engages the above concerns).

Autobiography has been the subject of extensive theorizing in many intellectual arenas - literary criticism, structuralism, phenomenology, psychoanalysis, feminism, mythology, and post-structuralism, to name a few. The literary theorists who attempted a definition were divided into two opposing camps, the strict and the loose constructionists. The strict constructionists insisted that autobiography inferred "a specific literary genre that [could] be defined in terms of purpose, materials, focus, form, scope and length" (Carlock, 1970. p. 341 in Graham, 1991. p. 18). The loose constructionists argued that letters, journals and diaries should be considered autobiography too, since no matter what form the records take, they blend subtly into one another. Graham (1991) says that there are no definitive givens about autobiography but rather an ongoing struggle to keep the conflicting ideas of its nature in play. The strict constructionist position with its reliance on definitions and confident assertions is juxtaposed with the loose constructionist position for which autobiography is like an expandable suitcase, roomy enough to hold all discourses that use "the perpendicular I" (Carlock, 1970 in Graham, 1991. p. 20).

Although autobiography appeared in the Middle Ages and Renaissance with the writings of Augustine's *Confessions* and Montaigne's *Essais* (in Graham, 1991), it was in the Romantic era that autobiography was rediscovered when ideas of individuality and self-disclosure as a positive virtue were woven together. The rise of autobiography as a scholarly topic was related to three separate but related occurrences in the later nineteenth century. An unexpected boom in the consumer market for autobiographical writings, an equivalent rise in the number of essays on autobiography, and the publication of William Dilthey's proposals for a study of human history based on the reading of autobiographical

documents. What was common among these incidents was a pervasive idea that “an individual life does add something to the evolving history of mankind and therefore individual lives are, potentially at least, of supreme interest to everyone, especially to the individual retelling the life story” (Graham, 1991. p. 20). The study of autobiography proceeded piecemeal, however, during the twentieth century in America and Europe with works in each continent barely known by the other. The situation improved by the late 1960’s with the publication of some seminal works but issues of definition and what legitimately constituted “true” autobiography remained highly contestable.

Even so, several crucial trends occurred within the literary milieu such as the change of emphasis within criticism from “concentrating on the historical or biographical facts contained in the autobiography to the psychological states expressed in the texts, [and] to the workings of the text itself” (Sprengemann, 1980, in Graham, 1991. p. 21). What occurred was a displacement of critical interest from life to mind to text, or “from facticity, to psychology, to textuality” (p. 21). But the debate shifted again to the position of autobiography relative to historiography versus the position of autobiography relative to poetry (fiction); the issue being one of truth as it is construed in the autobiographer’s stated information about his or her life on the one hand (historiography), and the idea that “the very act of writing falsifies those facts by creating an order or pattern that never existed in reality” (poetry or fiction) (Graham, 1991. p. 21). Another trend was the conceptualization of autobiography as life history which led to its appropriation by scholars and researchers in the social sciences who regarded it as an instrument of knowledge and a useful fund of information about the lives of marginalized groups who have endured forms of human degradation due to race, color, economic status or gender.

When I consider, within the context of my profound transformational experience and the writing of it, the statement above about the falsity of the autobiographer’s facts due to the very act of writing, my intuitive wisdom rejects this argument. It seems that one can maintain fidelity to lived-experience by closely flowing with and tracing its subtle and convoluted contours as one writes, bearing in mind that “language from the outside” (disembodied, abstract, linguistic formulations) can only approximate direct experience. On the other hand, through an *embodied* and *tacit* kind of knowing, in deeply

remembering (anamnesis or a blood remembering), and in staying intimately connected to one's senses, cognition, feelings and intuitions, one can inhabit and access experience in such a way that *experience* profoundly informs *language*. One indwells and engages in experience in this "whole" way in the first place such that one is fully present *in* and *with* lived-experience as it saturates the body, the senses and the multiple layers of consciousness. Within *this experiential grounding*, (of course, recall may not describe lived reality fully), I believe that near accurate and truthful renditions of experience are possible. What I am talking about and honoring here is "language from the inside." Put another way, slow knowledge that is born out of lived-experience and is consciously embodied, integrated and intuitively attuned to, *is* the real *voice* that written language listens to, follows and *is in service to*. Hence, sustained fidelity to and embodiment of lived-experience together in-form language and provoke writing from-the-inside-out. Colaizzi's (1978) term, *physiognomic perception* seems to allude to what I am trying to articulate here. With physiognomic perception, contact is sustained with the original perceptual unity of whatever is being experienced. It is "not a perception of things but a perception of worlds" (p. 68). He speaks of a *primordial perception* in which the lived-experience or object is not "based on the contributions of the senses but rather it presents itself to us from the start as the center from which these contributions radiate" (p. 67). We allow what we experience to teach us to comprehend that which is experienced.

It is my contention that, within the dominant (academic) rationality, written language is too dangerously *overrated* and given too privileged a role as *the* definitive mode that elicits and portrays experience. Conversely, too great a suspicion is levied at embodied knowledge and the ability to tacitly recall the near-original essence of lived-experience. This ability with its inherent desire for expression is further maligned as narcissistic and solipsistic. I wonder if this tendency may be due to cultural encapsulation in and lopsided over-indulgence with the mind and the (tyrannical) written word! It seems that cultures and contemplative traditions that honor the body, ritual engagement of the senses, silence, self-reflection, feelings, intuition, the orality of narrative, and the ability to stay rooted in embodied knowing, (which *includes* the intellect), implicitly trust the capacity to relocate self deeply in experience. They seem more receptive to other

ways of knowing that tacitly and lucidly inform the languaging of lived-experience. Coming from this more integrated consciousness, written language is relativized and more humbly positioned in its service as handmaiden to experience and as other modes of coming-to-knowledge are honored. Thus, the debate regarding the falsity in describing lived-experience due to the very act of writing per se seems to be more of an oxymoronic excursion into intellectual frivolity by those who fear or deny engaged embodiment.

In the light of my argument, I think of Gustorf (1980), a literary theorist who argues that autobiography as a genre seems not to be found outside of western culture. It engenders a concern specific to the westerner with a focus on individuality since there has been a loss of organic community as “our place in the cosmic cycle was replaced by the adventure of the autonomous individual” (Graham, 1991. p. 28). Autobiography then ensued as a mirror of the *exterior* of the person with the life “reviewed through the ideological lenses of the age and according to the demands of current propaganda” (p. 28). Gustorf views autobiography as a second reading of experience, which is “truer than the first reading because it adds consciousness of itself to the raw contingencies of experience ... the passage from raw experience to consciousness in memory modifies the significance of the experience” (Gustorf, 1980 in Graham, 1991. p. 29). My earlier argument is that embodied consciousness directly impregnates raw experience, especially so depending on the depth of consciousness with which one lives. I question the idea of “the passage *from* raw experience *to* consciousness,” if one is keenly attuned to and integrally conscious of the interplay of self and world. Insight, revelation, interpretation and meaning can be had in one stroke, (i.e., the moment wherein experience and consciousness are synergistically operative as in mystical, epiphanous or even ordinary experiences), or they can occur through a more gradually unfolding discovery process. It is the inability or unwillingness of some educators and theorists to honor the former that makes the emphasis on the latter particularly perturbing to me, especially when I have experienced both conditions of coming-to-knowing in my diverse encounters with reality.

In returning to the historical and fictive nature of autobiography within literary theory, the earlier movement from life to mind to text (querying the truth issue) was not the last score. Historians saw autobiography as a unique source of experience that was

not represented in the major records of the past. Their emphasis was on the relationship between the self and history, focusing on how the self was formed through the events and circumstances that shaped it. The literary critics, on the other hand, saw autobiography as fiction, a crafted artifact through which the self is viewed “as a product of imagination rather than history” (Dodd, 1987 in Graham, 1991). Issues of form and intention and “techniques, structure, and language of the work itself” (Graham, 1991. p.21) were also contested along with the cultural and personal situation of the autobiographer. Other issues prevail in the ongoing debate concerning autobiography as the shaping of a life into a self-portrait. Topics addressed include character, technique and theme (Howarth, 1980 in Graham, 1991), authorial intention in the sense of an author’s purpose and view of the audience (Hart, 1970 in Graham, 1991), and individuality and autobiography as a spiritual revolution and the retracing of a period and a development within a life across time (Gusdorf, 1980 in Graham, 1991).

For example, autobiography as the shaping of a life into a self-portrait entails consideration of character, technique and theme. The element of character involves a double persona, i.e., telling the story as a narrator and enacting it as a protagonist, the implication being that the voice of the narrator must maintain fidelity to the predicament of the protagonist. The idea of technique involves issues of style, imagery and trope, which are not subservient to content or being simply ornamental but are formal devices in their own right. Hence stylistic choices like tense or person may ensue in larger effects like metaphor and tone. Theme has to do with larger universal issues like loss, betrayal and love which give autobiography its meaning. How a person deals with and transcends these may reflect similar universal tendencies and it is this assertion of the ego’s ability to overcome circumstances that gives autobiography its appeal (Howarth, 1980 in Graham, 1991). It is life affirming in that its themes reach out and touch the lives of the reading public. I now move to a discussion of autobiography in education and psychology.

Within the realm of education autobiography features as an aesthetic of self-realization and an ethic of becoming. Autobiography implicates the education of the individual in that it provides opportunities for self-discovery and self-knowledge through methods that foster reflective thinking and accounting of experience within a social and

historical context. These aspects of autobiography inhere in John Dewey's theories (in Graham, 1991), which underpin many areas of education. According to Graham, Dewey views education as a process of living, of discerning the relatedness between things and not a preparation for future living. He rejected the dualistic perspective that separates the knowing subject from the object of knowledge and took issue with an educational system that failed to access students' prior knowledge and connect life experiences outside the school with those inside it. Dewey emphasized the integration of affect and cognition, reinterpreted *mind* as a process of growth and not a fixed thing and viewed knowledge as a process - provisional, indeterminate and a social product made up of funded experience. The life of the mind is "connected to the problems and interests of the life of practice" (Dewey, 1900/ 1967 in Graham, 1991. p. 51). As such, (self) knowledge and knowledge creation are processes in which the end of experience, the *telos*, is tentative and always in flux. Self-knowledge is at the core of Dewey's theorizing implicating both selfhood and self-consciousness as the individual takes an objective, impersonal attitude toward and a critical, intimate look at herself and her experiences.

And herein lies the interconnection between self-realization, autobiography and education. With self-knowledge and self-realization as the goals of education, and education in turn defined as "a continuous reconstruction of experience in the light of the past and of problems arising in the present" (Graham, 1991. p. 55), the analysis of reflective experience issues as the narrative potential within autobiography itself. Hence, the autobiographic urge toward reconstructing one's life experiences becomes a primary instrument of thought with reflective thinking being a theory and method of inquiry. To elaborate further, reflective thought is viewed as an engaged and ongoing consideration of any belief or form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the possible conclusions to which it leans. Moreover, since knowledge is itself a process and self and knowledge constitute an interactive nature, reflective thinking becomes essentially a theory and a process of inquiry with temporariness and uncertainty its underlying tenets.

Various educators, theorists and researchers, some adhering to, others challenging Dewey's ideas, have claimed autobiography as an integral component of the educational experience. Bruner (1986) says that there are two modes of cognitive functioning, each

offering particular ways of ordering experience and constructing reality. The first mode relates to scientific methods and the establishing of formal, empirical proof. The second mode is narrative, the constituent of a “good story” (p. 11). In this mode, *verisimilitude* is established and not truth. That is, the *goodness* of a story is judged by its believability and by criteria derived from the practice of literary interpretation. *Aesthetic experience*, the integration that heals the disorientations and disturbances that are integral to life, and *form* come into play here. Form is concerned with the way in which past experience is shaped and ordered, carrying the experience of an event to its own integral fulfillment. Aesthetic experience refreshes and enhances the spirit and promotes new possibilities and dispositions (Graham, 1991) conducive to a sense of wholeness. But this is not meant as a closing down or a grand finale. *Resolution is tentative* and is, in essence, a process of continuous movement wherein tensions and difficulties may be resolved (come to terms with), in order to bring experience to a consummatory moment, and until new resistances and discontinuities set the cycle in motion again. These literary criteria reflect processes that are inherent in the self-realization story, that which constitutes the autobiographic project in which we reconstruct and bring to the fore “the nature of the transactions that have been instrumental in making us who we are” (Graham, 1991. p 66).

Bruner (1995) elaborates on the autobiographical process. He questions if there is some basic set of requirements that all autobiographies must meet to deserve the name. He offers a tentative definition borrowed from the French critic, Philippe Leieune (1989a in Bruner, 1995). “Retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his [sic] own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his own personality” (p. 164). He also suggests that, “autobiography is life construction through “text” construction” (p. 176). Embedded in these definitions, however, are many defining properties and criteria that are imposed on acts of self-revelation. Certain key elements constitute *good* autobiography - perspectivalism, localness, witness or *mimesis*, interpretation or *diegesis*, stance, verisimilitude, fitness of the genre, and negotiability.

Perspectivalism suggests that subjective knowledge is inevitably partial and limited by the individual perspective from which it is viewed. Another angle is that a certain situation or event may be analyzed from different points of view. As such, the

autobiography is a distillation of an individual's subjective experiences within a personal, historical context. Though it is limited to the personal perspective it still is representative of history as autobiography is seen as the human side of history (p. 166). This ties in to the criterion of *localness*. Reflection on my self and my world is not mine alone: my world and I have to be "public, recognizable enough to be negotiable in the conversation of lives" (p. 165). The reality of a life achieves localness in that it is representative within and can be shared with a community of others. *Witness* or mimesis involves the accounting of the experiences in which one participated. Witness provides existential immediacy for the reader and the writer and the objective is to convey the facts as ontologically given. With *interpretation* or diegesis, the described experiences or stated facts are given wider significance (as in Jung's active imagination). The detailed constituents of witness are arranged into larger-scale consequences like careers, mid-life, etc., and these are given evaluative frames like struggle or commitment. These may then move out into timeless universals. *Stance* is the writer's orientation toward the world, self, fate and the possible, and seems innocent of intention (which is more likely in ordinary discourse). *Verisimilitude* is likened to believability. Proof of truth is not the issue at hand. Rather, "in some implicit way, the 'truth' of autobiography plainly rests upon some signs of evidentiary probity - something like fair-mindedness toward others' views, an absence of reticence about one's mistakes and so on" (p. 168). Verisimilitude also relies on the fitness of the genre to the facts as in Bruner's example of the victim-of-circumstance genre that seldom fits the Mafia chief well. A wrong choice of genre creates an aura of unbelievability which just does not make any sense! Lastly, *negotiability* is whatever makes it possible for the autobiography to move into the 'conversations of lives' and the stance the writer takes with respect to his own life. Is s/he worth caring about as a human being? Is he "bearably modest or decently self-mocking ... forgivably free of contempt ... and are we prepared to accept this life as part of the community of lives that makes up our world" ((p. 169).

In the area of curriculum studies, a movement termed *reconceptualization* has been changing the dynamics of what constitutes curriculum and learning and in so doing, autobiography has been claimed as an important methodological tool within pedagogical

praxis. Reconceptualization is a process of criticism whereby the current bureaucracy's conservative theorizing of the curriculum is called into question. It is about putting back "on the curricula agenda all those dimensions of intuitive, personal, political, and social experience that ... were being neglected by empirical/analytical approaches" (Graham, 1991. p. 15). It is also essentially about the restitution of personal experience which is integral to the goal of self-realization in education. My brief focus in this area is on the works of Pinar (1975, 1988), Grumet (1981, 1987) and Pinar and Grumet (1976).

These curriculativists have drawn on phenomenology and existentialism to underscore the experiential and situated nature of all human action and have sought to study "matters of temporality, transcendence, consciousness, and politics" (Pinar, 1975. p. xiii). With this focus, autobiography emerged as a form of inquiry and a methodological tool, as it was argued that only through a more awakened consciousness and self-knowledge could the primary goal of education be realized. Intrinsic to the autobiographical method, are the themes of ideology critique, spiritual and moral introspection and emancipation through reflective self-consciousness, (aspects of the transformation experience). Pinar's (1975) autobiographical method, termed *currere*, (after the Latin root of curriculum as a course-to-be-run), was used in the root infinitive as in the activity of running to stress the individual's own ability to reconceptualize her own autobiography. It is also used to accentuate the immediate experience of one particular runner, on a specific track on a given day with certain conditions (Grumet, 1981). Although *the particular moment* cannot be seized, according to Grumet, the autobiographic method offers ways to tell our stories so as to unveil dimensions of our own collective and individual histories and how these infuse our moments. The method is evocative and analytic and assists in the prying of experience from the depersonalization of anonymity and generalization and "returning it to the particular persons who lived it" (Grumet, 1981. p. 116).

But the autobiographic method wears the stigma of narcissism and privatisation argues Grumet, and she wrestles with rescuing autobiography from the self which has given subjectivity bad press. She locates her argument in the American bourgeoisie culture of advanced capitalism and individualism in which monological ideologies of autonomy have valorized the *self* and therefore have conjoined subjectivity to the status

quo. Thus, in celebrating wholeness, authenticity and selfhood, (that which is now in vogue with the 'autonomous individual'), Grumet contends that we forget that it is the tension and struggle of feeling and form, and *not* fusion, that births subjectivity. She is suspicious of any connotations of authenticity, optimism, integration or wholeness. Thus, the autobiographic agenda is to deconstruct these in light of exposing the multiple ways in which we have insidiously sold out to the personal and collective status quo.

While I agree with Grumet, I view aspects of her argument as dualistic and negating of crucial dimensions of the *whole* human experience while amplifying their opposites. The legitimate political agenda unfortunately becomes the sacred cow that displaces what is at heart and of priority - conscious attunement to and working with the intrinsic psychological and spiritual processes of self-realization, the affirmed goal of education. Movement from periphery to center seems to get lost in polemics and philosophy or given only intellectual and 'textual' validity. It is like, if you cannot articulate you cannot individuate. Grumet juxtaposes (partly) her argument for a reconceptualization of curriculum with the shadow side of American bourgeoisie culture. While I resonate with this aspect of her debate, I question her use of bourgeoisie values to legitimize what does and does not constitute the birthing of subjectivity or the struggle to self-realization. It seems that the idiocy of a dominant system is dictating the constituents of a primordial *human* phenomenon and in so doing the human change process and the autobiographic method are being very compromised. The renewal cycle of psychological death and rebirth ensues in experiences of struggle, tension and resolution, integration and wholeness. Likewise, critical self-reflection may lead to expansion of consciousness and greater personality integration (Mezirow, 1991 in Cranton, 1994). A *gestalt* can and does occur. The ripened fruit falls in its fullness! Pedagogic praxis skewed in a dualism that stresses only struggle and tension does violence to the transformation processes that secures the *full* range of experiences and are integral to students' experiential realities.

In my view, Grumet's deconstruction agenda is precisely that of the higher Self as we are called to transformation and it is intrinsic to depth psychotherapy and autotherapy. While the field of curriculum studies is welcomingly progressive in its work of self and societal deconstruction/reconstruction, this consciousness is not new. It is indigenous to

diverse areas within the psychological and contemplative traditions *and* the personal code of ethics of many individuals who strive to live authentically. Grumet is astute in echoing the superficiality of North American culture regarding its drastic loss of attunement to the finer aesthetics of the inner life; she sensitively compares it to the culture of the Ojibwas. Yet, I have harbored great concern for the serious lack of cross-cultural awareness on the part of some academics who practice Grumet's brand of deconstruction when working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. I am referring to students who have sustained their ability to integrate the obvious and the hidden (or the mysterious) latent content (Grumet, 1981. p. 117) like the Ojibwa people, and who respond to life from this more unitary ground-of-being. These educators, while having good intentions but little cross-cultural literacy, frustrate themselves and their students by trying to teach them what they as students already *live in a natural integrated way*. Many of these students understand interdependence, cooperation, difference and multiplicity as a way of life. Many have suffered with their ancestors for their liberation and have been deconstructing the external and internal powers that disenfranchise them, long before the postmodern era with its similar persuasions. Yet, while educators enact their emancipatory ideologies in the mentoring context *they fail to recognize the embodiedness of these said ideologies in the immediate experiential lives of their students*. And within the power dynamics where little room for negotiation exists, the repercussions from the lack of knowledge regarding cross-cultural issues and the psychological processes of self-realization are serious.

For example, when the student's inner processes do not cohere with the pedagogic agenda, she is labeled difficult or resistant and her autobiographical writings are rejected as having no *subtext*. Moreover, the educator announces that she *feels no connection* to the student's work. In the meantime, the student is ahead of the educator in terms of the project of personal emancipation as fertile self-realization processes which are underway and in which critical turning points (illumination and rebirth phases) are occurring and do come full circle. (Of course, providing that the student can sustain her own process). This ensues even as the educator, with her emphasis only on deconstruction and struggle, fails in respecting and allowing the resolutions and gestalts of the change process their natural fulfillment. These are critical educational issues that are not addressed in the writings of

many postmodern educators and must be seriously penetrated as educators deconstruct their pedagogical praxis and examine their repertoire with respect to cross-cultural and psychological knowledge. It is not enough to deconstruct the dominant status quo *out there*. It is imperative that educators assume a sober humility and evaluate their degree of *cultural encapsulation* and unconscious cultural projections if emancipatory pedagogy is to honor multiplicity, and the autobiographic method is to serve the needs of culturally diverse students. The *inner* status quo and regimes of power are often times much more insidious and conducive to inducing *blinding* spots that cripple consciousness and numb ethical considerations.

Moving to Pinar's (1988) autobiographic method, he says that "our life-histories are not liabilities to be exorcised but are the very precondition for knowing ... and awareness of our stories is the lamp illuminating the dark, the rough edges" (p. 148). Pinar embraces Dewey's *intuition* and Heidegger's *attunement* (p.148) to capture the idea of unity of self and situation in that there is a reflexive grasp of problematic qualities in situations. The situation echoes through the self and the self through the situation and qualitative understanding requires penetration and subtle attentiveness to both. He suggests that engagement in autobiographic method cultivates the attention that probes the interrelatedness of self and situation and facilitates the transformation/reconstitution of both. For Pinar, the curriculum field is imbalanced toward the general in that its principles and guidelines with respect to curriculum, instruction, evaluation, etc:

have ignored the specificity of each situation ... it was a flight from particularity ... and autobiographic curriculum theory attempts to redress this imbalance by focusing upon concrete individuals in specific situations (p. 137).

However, autobiographic work must acknowledge the relation between the general and the specific, the abstract and the concrete and situate these dialectically in order that each element facilitates the transformation of the other to attain a higher-order integration.

Issues of origin and meaning are critical to the autobiographical method, making *interpretation* the harbinger to self-knowledge. It is essential to penetrate the surface, to interrogate the habitual explanations of our action and to probe the obvious and the taken-for-granted that obscure what lies underneath. Pinar insists that we must "refuse to accept the visible as the final and irreducible" (p. 138). In this sense the autobiographic

method again mirrors the inevitable destabilizing agenda of the Self-transformation process. Contrary to other adherents, Pinar suggests that autobiography does not adhere to conventions of literary form in the sense of focusing on audience or portraying our lives to others. We write autobiography for ourselves (p. 149), to engage in a dialectical self-self relation, to instigate an inner revolution and penetrate arrested movement. Through autobiographic work, we gain understanding of self, which is not narcissism but “a precondition and concomitant condition to the understanding of others” (p. 151).

Moving now to the psychological arena, the autobiographic process is viewed as a legitimate method of scientific inquiry. As mentioned earlier, Allport (1942) argues that:

acquaintance with particulars is the beginning of all knowledge – scientific or otherwise ... the font and origin of our curiosity in, and knowledge of human nature lies in acquaintance with concrete persons in their natural complexity ... Starting too soon with analysis and classification, we run the risk of tearing mental life into fragments and beginning with false cleavages that misrepresent the salient organizations and natural integrations in personal life (p. 56).

Allport (1942) and Smith, Harre and Langenhove (1995) see it as a grave error to assume that *generalized* knowledge of human nature can override *particular* knowledge of it. Moreover, they argue that generalized abstractions have led to oversimplification of the human condition. Philosophically, they view the individual and the universal to be not as distinct as often perceived. “The particular eternally underlies the general; the general has to comply with the particular (Goethe in Smith, Harre and Langenhove, 1995. p. 59). Hence, they place equal value on the idiographic (dealing with particulars) and the nomothetic (dealing with generalizations) and view personal documents as valid scientific data. They are not arguing for exclusive concentration on the particular but stressing that it has been seriously neglected in psychological research. The statistical probabilistic paradigm fails to say anything that can be held true for any particular person and hence in one sense about anybody. A key aspect of the idiographic method is the focus on the individual in his/her terms, “the analysis of data ‘within person’, the writing of a case study where the individual remains central, not subordinated to a general theoretical position” (p. 62).

The idiographic method is phenomenological in that personal documents are viewed as introspective and subjective protocols that are adaptable to the study of the complexities of phenomenal consciousness. It also allows for the interpretation of lived

experience which brings *meaning* into play. Autobiography is considered one type of personal documents and constitutes three forms: comprehensive, topical and edited (Allport 1942). The topical autobiography, in this case, that which is focused on the lived-experience of Self-transformation is the form engaged in this study. It is *topical* in the sense that it focuses on the effects of one social event or the experience of a *particular* human phenomenon. It gives the “inside half of a life; the half that is hidden from the objectively-minded scientist” (p. 77), (and which may not be wholly known to the autobiographer either). Still, though selective, condensed and incomplete, the topical autobiography allows the researcher to gather in depth data on a phenomenon. Because it is topical, the data facilitates comparative study and inductive generalizations. Allport discusses a case for and against personal documents, including autobiographies. Some of his arguments are discussed in Chapter Six where limitations of the study are considered.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Lived-Experience of Self-Transformation

(A Synergy of Lived-Experience, Theory, Methodology and Symbolism)

In this chapter, a full autobiographic description, interpretation and elucidation of the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation is offered. Having articulated the one primary and three secondary questions in Chapter One, (those pertaining to the lived-experience of Self-transformation, inner voice, mystery and Self-transformation occurring within an academic setting), I indicated that the questions became surprisingly, painfully alive within the context of my personal and research life. This occurred early into and throughout the entire inquiry process. I knew that I desired to inquire into the topic of transformation but these ensuing research questions became clearer only after several years into the inquiry process as I lived the phenomenon. They became solidly rooted and concretized within a haunting inner confrontation that echoed in the depths of my being when I was unsuspectingly catapulted into a most critical nine-year rebirth odyssey. Unbeknownst to me, this predicament set in motion the entire experiential component of the inquiry and hence, provided a rich, ripened context for data collection. Beneath the conundrum of my personal and research preoccupations, from that still point within that is likened to the eye of the hurricane, a strange, loud inner voice reverberated, echoing an immobilizing, unsettling question that summoned me to sober self-reflection:

What is it in you that you allow such deep *disrespect* in your life?

This question became pivotal, incessant, probing and gathered momentum as it shoved me into the most remote crevices of my being, initiating me into the heart and complexity of the transformational process, much against my conscious volition. But what were the subtle yet disturbing issues and processes in the undercurrent of my life that *led up* to this self-confrontation? At the time of this call to personal accountability, as my life became slowly unglued on many levels, I was clueless to the dynamics at play between self and research. How did I experience this leading up to personal decay? What elements and conditions constituted this process? Possible answers to these questions have brought insight into a stage of the transformation process that I have termed *the prestage or premonition phase* - the rumblings before the actual beginning of personal

collapse and fragmentation. The nudgings and warning of the inner life that *something* is amiss. Dabrowski (1964) and Andersen (1991) talk about successfully living a socialized existence prior to personal disintegration. However, the social and personal nuances, the acts of denial, resistance and self-gaming that are indulged in, in avoiding the “call” to growth are not sufficiently dealt with in the literature studied. I believe this is a critical stage in the healing process as we become willing to be vulnerable, to commit to change, and to be accountable for *how* we live and affect our world. Economic, sociopolitical and professional prowess that continue to mask a destitute inner life still leave the individual an imposter with the organs of the inner life withering, while further exacerbating the collective lethargy and the compulsion to live in the destructiveness of self-ignorance.

This pre-stage is a *renaissance call* that heralds a breaching of the soul (Houston, 1987), and issues as an open invitation and an instinctual drive of the psyche toward holiness, wholeness and health. Jung believed that the psyche persistently seeks its own integration and that the soul abhors division and separation (Bakken, 1985), even as we often live in a fog of unawareness. In neutral zone where we neither disown nor claim the unsettling questions that make a difference as they provoke our rancid complacency. The process of letting go of worn out patterns, suffering the confusing and disorienting transition of in-betweenness, and plunging forth in a new life direction may be terrifying when consciously undertaken, let alone when it sneaks up like a thug in the dark. Thus, befriending the pre-stage may ensue in much trepidation or it may be resisted altogether. I unsuspectingly succumbed to it as an experiential reality and that process is elucidated momentarily, along with the other four stages of the Self-transformation process.

Before proceeding hitherto though, I need to point out the embeddedness in the writing of certain elements constitutive of the research inquiry. I mentioned in Chapter Four, Methodology, that my encounter with methodology emerged as a direct process of living the phenomenon in an intimate, intense way and through the organic progression of the inquiry itself. Therefore, here, in the fabric of the description of the lived-experience, the heuristic methodology is naturally interwoven as many of its stages and processes inhere in the transformational experience and are indicated in the headings of each stage (see Table Three - An Integrative Chart). Also, while there is a flow to and overlapping

TABLE THREE

An Integrative Chart: The Self-Transformation Process, Methodology and Earth-Heart Symbols

This chart integrates the stages and phases of the Self-transformation process, the heuristics methodology, and the repeated, strategic emergence of the heart symbol at poignant stages of the lived-experience of Self-transformation.

Transformation Theory

PRE-STAGE	STAGE ONE	STAGE TWO	STAGE THREE	STAGE FOUR
A Renaissance Call Premonition Phase	Light Bows to Darkness Holistic Disintegration	The Unformed Silence Excursion into the Abyss	Awakening of the Heart Illumination-Initiation into Rebirth	Return to Innocence/Rebirth/Integration Second Dark Night Deeper Integrative Synthesis

Heuristics Methodology

Initial Engagement Indwelling	Immersion/Indwelling	Immersion/Indwelling Focusing/Incubation	Illumination/Explication	Indwelling/Focusing Incubation/Explication	Creative Synthesis

Heart Symbols

Heart #1	No new hearts yet (#1)	Hearts #2 (#1,2)	Hearts #3,4,5,6,7 (#2,3,4,5) (#1,2,3,4,5,6,7)	Hearts #8,9,10,11 (#4) (Hearts #1-11)	Hearts #12,13 (Hearts #1-13)

(These stages and phases are *not* compartmentalized and sequenced in real life as they are in this chart. It is important to remember that the map is *not* the territory. Also at every stage and phase, there is a kind of tacit knowing though often conscious unknowing.)
(Shanti Persaud - 2000)

of the description and interpretation of the experience, the theoretical underpinnings and analysis are differentiated by using a different font. Lastly, the visuals of the earth-hearts and other imagery incorporated *in each stage* offer imaginary extensions into the topic.

The data has been retrieved from revisiting extensive journal writings, field-notes, (spontaneous in-the-moment scribbling of lived-experience), written poetry, documented depth-conversations with fellow kindred spirits, song lyrics and audiotapes done over the last nine years and continuing even today. Added to this, is an assemblage of symbols, visual images, and written passages by other authors that synchronously “came” to me at strategic points during the inquiry process and helped facilitated insight and meaning. This accumulation of data has been revisited and reinterpreted several times over as new meaning, insight, revelation, and intuitive connections about the process of the transformational experience came unbidden and in a Taoist non-interfering manner. As my Self-transformation process gradually ripened and became integrated into my way-of-being-in-the-world, (through contemplation, self-dialogue and disclosure, study, retreat and rest, maintaining fidelity to the unfolding process, being continuously receptive to intuitive clues, and “drawing from the mystery and sources of energy and knowledge within the tacit dimension” (Moustakas, 1990. p. 28)), the data itself took on fresher and richer dimensions of meaning. Diverse patterns and themes slowly emerged. These were first repeatedly, penetratingly studied in and of themselves, then within the context of my own experience in its various stages, (using focusing and indwelling so as to discover further nuances, textures and essences). These were later cross-referenced with the literature.

It is important to note that during the entire research process, new awareness and understanding consistently broke through, revising old ones. Also, after much struggling to comprehend certain aspects of an experience, out of nowhere and quite unexpectedly, a synthesis of fragmented pieces of knowledge would occur or an altogether new discovery would be made about some dimension that had been present but yet beyond immediate awareness. Or, a misunderstood distorted perception or misinterpretation would somehow resurface into consciousness, issuing in a further penetration into the issue at hand, thus adding something essential to the truth of the lived-experience. This demanded my full, sustained discipline and implicit commitment to be *out-of-control*, and to *listen deeply*.

Because my life was so totally doused into the rebirth experience, there were a persistent innocence, a naivete and a disorienting unknowing that innately protected the authenticity of the inquiry. Finding myself in a state of utter surrender while unwittingly becoming hostage to the inner life, I did not have the wherewithal to deliberately tamper with or manipulate the process. I was simultaneously being a participant and an observer in my own process, yet seemingly without conscious willing as *something* sort of took over and strategically, painstakingly stripped me of my usual egocentric bag of survival tricks. Being called to such serious soul-making work, the inner life or Jung's (1961) Self, the guiding principle and archetype of orientation and meaning, seemed to have made "chopped liver" out of me, leaving me raw, formless and seasoned for further annihilation. It was as if on one level I was dead, a pathetic corpse undergoing a psycho-spiritual biopsy while on another level, the inner Eye was overseeing and witnessing my entire metamorphosing predicament and the conscious *I* had no bloody say in the matter! The ego and its defenses were relativized in its service to the Self (von Franz, 1993).

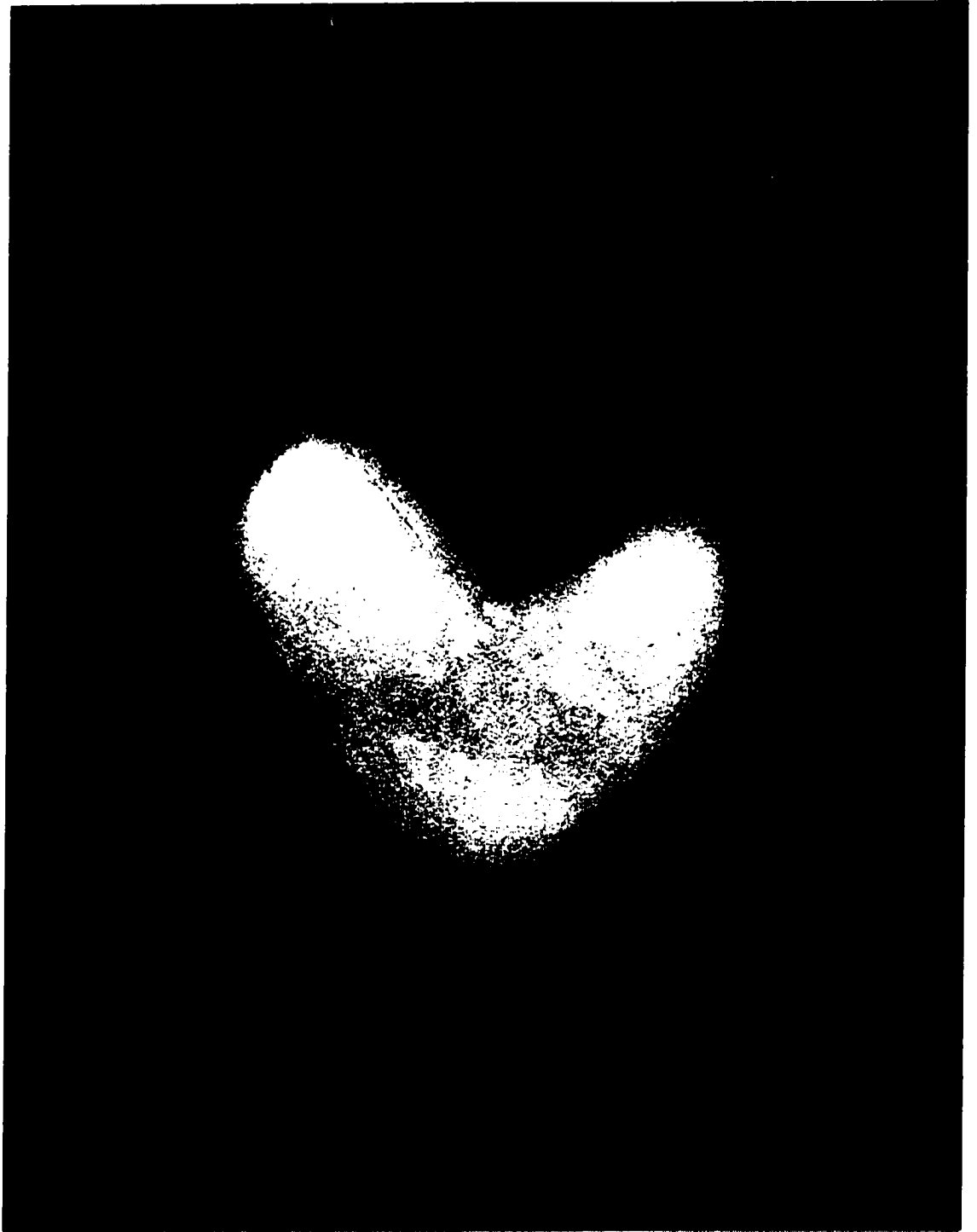
And when on occasion I *prematurely* tried to "fit" an interpretation or meaning to an aspect of experience that was naturally out of resonance with some deeper truth, I felt stuck, confused, and became exhausted to the point where I would be drained of energy and brought to bodily and psychological collapse. There would be a tacit knowing that I had gone off-course. I then had to let go and *wait*, maybe for days, months or even years for the essential revelation to be unexpectedly birthed *on its own terms*. In essence, one cannot manipulate the wisdom and maneuvering of the Inner Life. *It will have its way*, one way or the other. One is consistently called to be porous, yielding and receptive so as to be infused with the essence of that which has its own energy, pacing and intrinsic logic. In this dynamic, the whole being surrenders to and becomes an apprentice to truth. There is no half-assed engagement. One either commits fully and honestly, recognizes the potential bigotry and hubris of consciousness, lets go of the insatiable need for control or, courageously bows out. Jung (1961) echoed these thoughts in his own way:

A creative person has little power over his own life. He is not free. He is captive and driven by his diamon ... this lack of freedom has been a great sorrow to me ... Often I felt as if I were on a battlefield ... But the diamon manages things so that one comes through, and ... I can keep faith in unsuspected measure ... The diamon ... has ruthlessly had its way with me (p. 357-358).

PRE-STAGE:
A Renaissance Call to Wholeness



PRE-STAGE: A Renaissance Call



Earth Heart # 1 Found at Findhorn Bay, Scotland 1989

PRE-STAGE: A Renaissance Call or Premonition Phase

(Methodology: Initial engagement, Indwelling. Symbol: Earth-Heart #1)

Preamble

Back in Chapter One, in part of the rationale that dealt with personal “calling” or vocation, I articulated that, unbeknownst to me, the call to take up the task of inquiring into the phenomenon of Self-transformation was, in essence, also a call to refine my vocation and to commit to my own individuation process. Also, the first Earth-Heart found at Findhorn Bay, Scotland, has been *symbolic* of a kind of blueprint or hidden master plan and a source of wisdom and orientation. Something akin to Jung’s concept of the “Self,” the regulating center of the psyche which seems from the start to be in *a priori* possession of the goal (Jacobi, 1967). Hence, I suggested that Earth-Heart #1 has been symbolic of the seeding of the research project and has been like a compass guiding the beginning process. It has also held the energy of *the pre-stage* in that my renaissance call to healing and rebirth was also implicitly implicated in that initial seeding of the inquiry process which serendipitously occurred at the “Peace Pole” (see pg. 184) located at the Findhorn community in Forres, Scotland.

These insights have come only retrospectively, several years later. I have reiterated elements of the rationale here so as to connect the pre-stage to that earlier period in Scotland as the renaissance call had its embryonic traces back then. The conversation now reverts back to the time and space immediately before and during the actual inquiry process in order to elucidate the pre-stage within the context of my lived-experience. To ensure anonymity, I use the past participle and refer to certain individuals as “the other.” Lastly, the *skeletal diagram*, Table Two - Part One, Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process is reinserted here to help recap the whole process, while the *detailed descriptions of the psychological processes*, Table Two - Part Two, (both tables are from Chapter Two), are provided separately for each stage in the interpretation and analysis section. This particular inclusion follows right after each description of the lived-experience to facilitate theoretical understanding of the processes.

TABLE TWO - Part One

Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

Theorist: Persaud (2000)



The Lived-Experience

In the year leading up to my commencement of doctoral studies in Victoria, I owned and lived in a townhouse on the Bow River in northwest Calgary. It was *home*, a reclusive space that I honored and called *Umista*, (a name given by the Kwakwaka'wakw people of Alert Bay to the museum built to house the retrieved artifacts from their early potlatches). The word means *the return of something precious* and it spoke powerfully and symbolically of the status of my own inner and outer culture; the reclamation of my selfhood after several years of healing from the dissolution of a marriage, and my artfully fashioning an esthetic space that quietly yet tangibly reflected the inner re-creation. Here, for six years, I tasted a measure of self-possession and peace, being alone but not lonely, living the power of being my own best friend and standing gracefully yet strong.

In that very year, I became briefly involved in a relationship, the toxicity of which only became evident over time. Many incidents raised red flags about the health and consciousness of the other. My selfhood and home were repeatedly disrespected by the other through angry emotional fits, profane language, projections, and other overt or subtler offensive behaviors. These were not indigenous to the relationship but, I discovered later, were rooted in the other's childhood trauma and adult irresponsibility of not coming to terms with the past. At the dinner table, a Scandinavian piece beautifully crafted out of solid teak, for example, dessert in the form of fruit would be removed from the serving plate and cut on the bare tablecloth with citric juices penetrating to the wood surface. Feet fitted with dirty, smelly shoes were carelessly flung on an exquisite, pearly white Eilersen chesterfield or on the solid teak coffee table etched with marble-like African slate. These instances were not simply my petty nagging about material possessions. My home was a space that enveloped a certain ambiance of serenity and beauty and it was in its sharing that the true value was realized. The disregard engendered in that space felt vulgar. Instinctively, I felt that the violation of my outer "home-as-sanctuary" mirrored the defiling of the inner "self-as-sanctuary." Though I communicated my displeasure and struggled to establish a more considerate attitude, things remained essentially unchanged.

In other areas, several of my personal boundaries that were clearly stated were consistently violated by the other with many an empty and unconscious "I am sorry"

come back that quickly lost fervor as repeated acts of blatant disrespect soon followed. In social situations there were often much gameplaying and teasing putdowns thrown my way that were foreign to my own interpersonal repertoire. In such instances, my intuition would kick in again, or my soul would plead with me, alerting me to a fundamental not-rightness that registered deep within. Further, those dynamics got more muddled by my engagement with and processing of the other's childhood trauma, the effects of which erupted within the context of several interactions. Together with other incidents, that mode of living continued until I left for my studies in Victoria six months later. I felt an immense freedom on leaving and in my mind, I decided I was moving on, or so I thought.

During the above encounters, however, I felt in my gut that that energy in my home and in my intimate soul-space was totally out-of-sync with my own rhythm and way-of-being. I argued for my rights, often trying to bring consciousness to bear on the circumstances and, while the other slowly gained partial insight, I became exhausted and depleted on all levels. Physically, mentally and spiritually I felt the ramifications of that predicament that I obviously chose on some unconscious level. My intuition spoke quite loudly and clearly about my being an accomplice in my own demise, but I still did not seriously intervene on my own behalf to create a new reality. I believed that my move to Victoria would have resolved the matter so I casually reasoned, but a subtle, unsettled feeling persisted, as I had not conscientiously dealt with the *source* of the problem.

In Victoria, I felt in control of my reality and engaged less with the other but that was short lived. During late nights when I engaged in a research apprenticeship at the university, I would get phone calls demanding that I fly out to Calgary or agree to the other coming to Victoria to process the relationship and have a vacation. That was only two months into my doctoral program when I was barely just beginning to settle into my studies and my new environment. None of my needs, academic commitments or feelings were recognized let alone honored. While working on a number of graduate practicum tapes one night, I received a call from the other at 1:00am, threatening suicide if I did not agree to an immediate rendezvous. Hours were spent processing the implications of that threat. Later I returned fatigued to the completion of my academic task. Worried about the other, I called the next day to discern the latest status of things. I had spent the night

in angst, deeply concerned while feeling quite expended myself. The response from the other was a surprisingly happy, carefree voice with no serious recollection of the severity of the contents of the previous phone call. The other felt rested and relaxed, having just unloaded some hefty personal baggage but communicating little sensitivity or conscience for having indulged in such emotional blackmail at my expense. Again, I became aware of the discrepancy between what I desired for my life and how I was compromising myself. But nothing constructive was done. Instead, *I* allowed more infractions to and invasion of my selfhood and living space, in my desperate, neurotic need to be loved and to belong. The urgency of this *felt* human dilemma ruled my life in sad, pathetic ways.

Throughout those encounters, I experienced much private sadness and many inner and outer contradictions. My self-betrayal was flaunting itself right in my face but I ignored the signs. In caring for the other, I took my spirituality to unhealthy limits while parading a putrid self-respect. Goodwill my ass! The will to be good was eroding my damn innards! I received perturbing inner jolts giving loud cues that I was living out-of-sync with my primal integrity and with Self-in-the-world (Assagioli, 1965). Often, in my indulgence with the other, I felt sick, literally nauseated, tight chested, losing my appetite and being unable to concentrate fully. There was an undercurrent of anxious feelings and a deep, tacit knowing that I needed to make some drastic personal changes. Yet, I kept being aware of but continually disregarding the dynamics at play. I kept overriding that informing intuition and my incessant bodily cues and did whatever the hell I wanted to, slowing paying a huge price; the realization of which I was yet immeasurably ignorant.

I would travel back and forth to Calgary or allow the other to frequent my home in Victoria as I continued to engage in my own deplorable racket. The more I conspired in my own self-degradation, the more I felt distraught and angry, yet the more I became entrenched in the denial game. Then I gradually became aware that that pattern had been repeated twice before but still unable or unwilling to ride the dragon through its own fire, I perpetuated the status quo of my neurotic living as the angst slowly fermented. On one level, that reality seemed like such a contradiction because I had clear boundaries with friends and colleagues and exercised a decent measure of self-honoring in both my social and professional environments. Also when alone, I took admirable care of my mind,

body and spirit through a disciplined yet creative, richly playful lifestyle. But it was in the heat of intimacy that the glue of my Self-caring melted, became messy and fucked with my living. My insidious, personal irresponsibility plagued me on some dark, subterranean level and I could hear, just barely, a subdued trace of conscience muttering that I would *not* get away with things as they were. At times I mourned that degree of chaotic living and self-betrayal especially after having experienced vital, meaningful growth in the past. "What was being constellated within the contours of my existence?" I had no clue. I continued with my research and work commitments, tending to those successfully to my amazement while the inner life headed toward an unsuspecting, impending break

Interpretation and Analysis within a Jungian Framework

TABLE TWO - Part Two (Revisited)
Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

PRESTAGE: A RENAISSANCE CALL

Premonition Phase: Nudgings within the play of routine living experienced as inner provocations, subtle, vague sense of angst that *something* is amiss; inner and outer contradictions; receipt of persistent *messages* (mental, intuitive, spiritual, bodily), cues and perturbing jolts giving hints of being out of sync with self and self-in-world; a kind of tacit *knowing* that one needs to make personal changes yet willful (or unconscious) denial and defensive posture, neglectful attitude and rationalizations; whistling in the dark; conscious/unconscious game-playing; non-specific anxiety; continuing of routine living as angst slowing ferments; sense of impending *break*; further entrenchment within the status quo; eventual acknowledgement and acceptance or continuous, irresponsible disregard of the *call*.

Sharp (1988) argues that the juxtaposition of neurosis and individuation may seem like strange bedfellows, but according to Jungian psychology, "a case may be made for neurosis as a prerequisite for the individuation process" (p. 11). He suggests that Jung's description of neurosis is *disunity with oneself*, and individuation as *the conscious movement toward psychological wholeness*. From this perspective then, neurosis actually creates the impetus and the drive toward psychological development. Sharp argues too that if we believe in the value of becoming conscious (Self-conscious), then those experiencing neurosis are in essence the lucky ones. Rather than perceiving neurotic symptoms as purposeless indicators of illness, Jung felt that they are attempts at self-cure - efforts of a basically healthy psyche to restore proper balance:

PRE-STAGE: A Renaissance Call

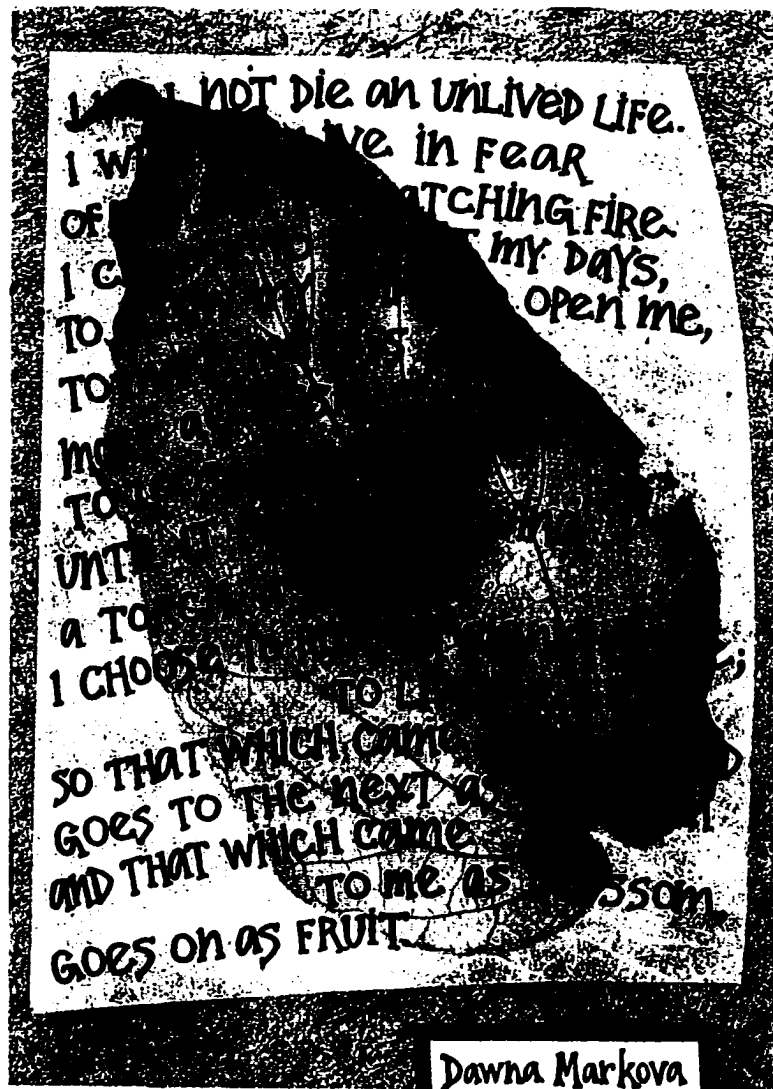


A Renaissance Call

Earth-Heart # 1
Found at Findhorn Bay, Scotland, 1989

The "Peace Pole"
at Findhorn Community,
Forres, Scotland

PRE-STAGE: A Renaissance Call



Prologue to a Promise?



Victoria 1991
Shanti at the Pre-Stage phase ...before the descent

The moment of the outbreak of neurosis is not just a matter of chance. As a rule it is most critical. It is usually the moment when a new psychological adaptation is demanded (CW 4. 1966. p. 245);

... It is an attempt of the self-regulating psychic system to restore the balance, in no different way from the functions of dreams - only rather more forceful and drastic (CW 18. 1966. p. 169)

From this view, a breakdown in the personality leads to the question, "To what purpose?" It seems like our amazingly wise inner lives propel us toward a new level of awareness, to an opportunity for fresh life that offers the possibility of *meaning* in what would otherwise seem like futile suffering as we are brought to our knees by the experience of our own psychology. This approach to neurosis is in contrast to the general view of it as a sickness, something unhealthy and "abnormal," a natural extension of the medical model of physical illness which harbors a mindset that diseases are a pathological aberration that must be cured.

In retrospect then, the manifestation of my own neurotic living was in fact an opportunity to become Self-conscious at a much deeper level as I was experiencing a worrisome disunity with myself. My dis-ease was like an alarm clock waking me up to who I am in a primordial sense as opposed to who I thought I was. Through the pre-stage experience, (my chaotic living, my bodily symptoms, contradictions, denials, my self-sabotage, etc), I began to barely encounter, (let alone accept), my incongruity in a harsh, new light. Jung believed that in a psychological crisis, unconscious contents are automatically activated in an attempt to compensate for the one-sided attitude of consciousness (Sharp, 1988). The more intense the crisis, the more pressing the need to reestablish a vital link between consciousness and the unconscious. Looking back now, my self-disrespect was a disturbing, exaggerated attitude of consciousness that was directly linked to unconscious processes that automatically ruled my life and perpetuated my unawareness. And while there were legitimate, dishonoring environmental factors that did impinge on my wellbeing, they did serve to mirror my own psychic imbalance. The innate tendency of the psychic system is to restore balance and this began manifesting as the cues that came through, challenging me to growth. The long struggle that ensues in bringing about this restored balance is the path of individuation, the conscious journeying toward psychological and spiritual wholeness. But my dilemma was whether or not I was willing and/or prepared to take up the challenge to find out what was going on inside and commit to the painstaking task of healing myself. The whole question of *readiness* came into play then. At that point in time, it seemed that, while I could sense the inappropriateness of attitude toward my life, I was yet unaware of the extent to which my outer reality reflected "an externalization of an unconscious conflict within myself" (Sharp. 1988. p. 36). Intuitively I quietly sensed that something was amiss with my overall way-of-being, not just psychologically, but I seemed unable to grab the bull by its horns and shift gears. My neurotic maneuvers had to ripen, so to speak, to push my dis-ease into high gear before I could even ponder the speed of my falling into the abyss.

The beginning gesture toward psychological wholeness was yet in its incubation phase. Still, as an active goal, it seemed instinctively inbred as an integral aspect of the Self of which Jacobi (1967) says, "it's

a priori teleological character and its striving to realize an aim exist without the participation of consciousness (p. 50). Regarding the movement toward wholeness as a goal, Jung (1954) suggested that "the goal is important only as an idea: the essential thing is the *opus* [the work on oneself] which leads to the goal: *that* is the goal of a lifetime" (CW 16. p. 200). I understand better that this work on myself has been to bring to the foreground of my consciousness, *my operating psychology*, that which is embedded within the total context of who I am and my way-of-being-in-the-world. And the aim has not been to overcome it but to befriend it, refine it, partially, incrementally through time, circumstance and sober self-examination. Hence, my emerging, pre-stage process was my being caught off guard in an urgent inner necessity, a psycho-spiritual imperative that catapulted me into an in-depth journey of self-discovery.

Methodological Implications

Methodologically, this pre-stage was my beginning engagement, or what Moustakas (1990) calls "initial engagement" (p. 27) with the topic of Self-transformation. At that time though, I had no clue that my personal affairs were the initial unfolding of the phenomenon and the inquiry and methodological processes. Yet, within the context of that neurotic living, the phenomenon was already being manifested as I naively began to stumble into and only intermittently catch brief flashes of its nuanced multifacetedness, the pre-stage providing a rich, experiential arena for that direct encounter. Moustakas affirms that within each researcher exists a question or a topic, (yet formless or only embryonic), that calls out to him. It represents a passionate interest and area of search that instigates the engagement of the researcher and evokes significant social meanings and compelling personal implications. This in turn invites self-search, self-dialogue, and an inner urgency to discover the topic and question. In the process:

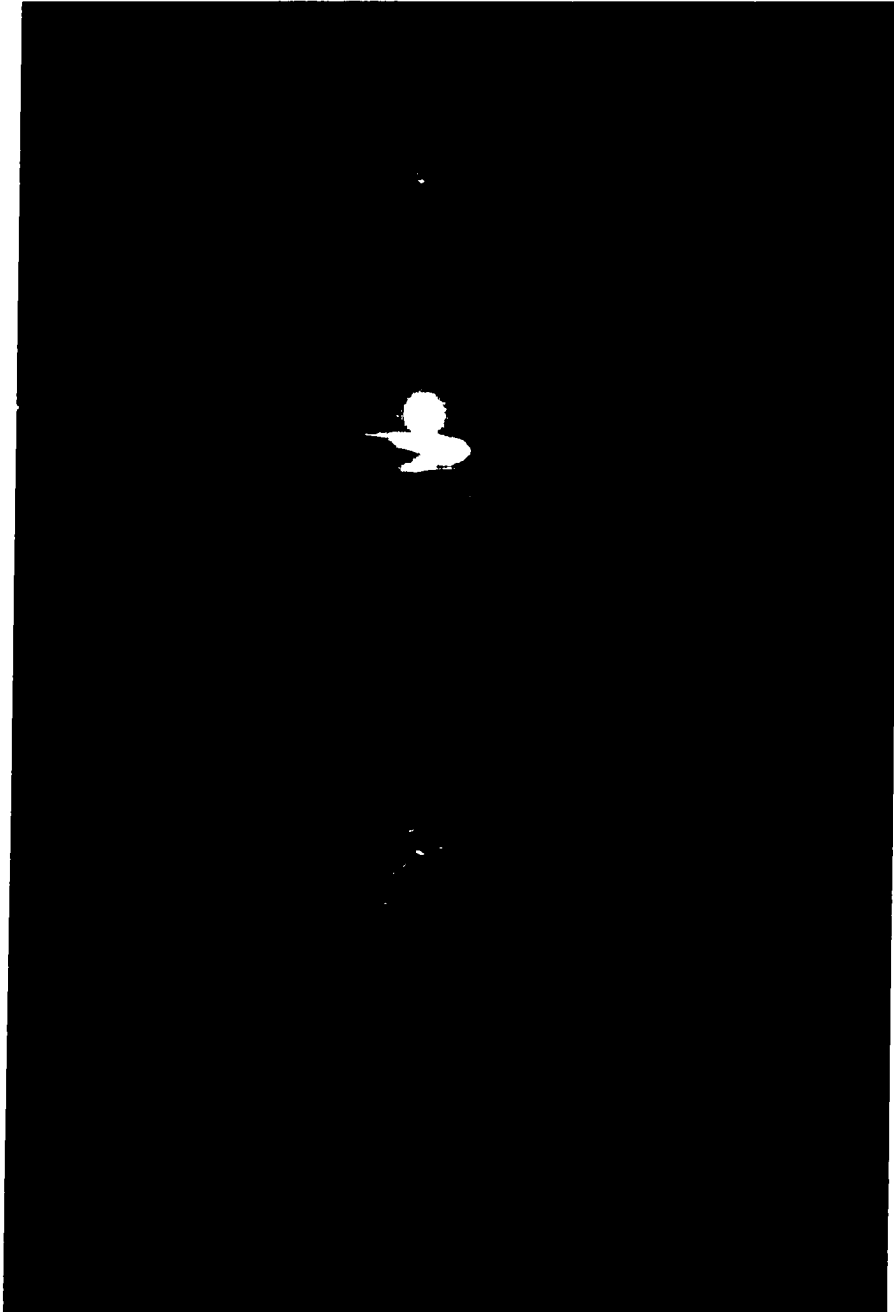
one encounters the self, one's autobiography, and significant relationships within a social context. Ultimately these forces come together to form a question which lingers within the researcher and awaits the disciplined commitment that will reveal its underlying meanings ... The engagement requires inner receptiveness, a willingness to enter fully into the theme, and to discover from within, the spectrum of life experiences that will clarify and expand knowledge of the topic and illuminate the terms of the question ... the investigator reaches inward for tacit awareness and knowledge ... and elucidates the context from which the question takes form and significance (underlining mine) (p. 27).

In looking back, this is precisely what occurred in an organic way during the commencement of my Self-transformation journey. The interpretive methodology

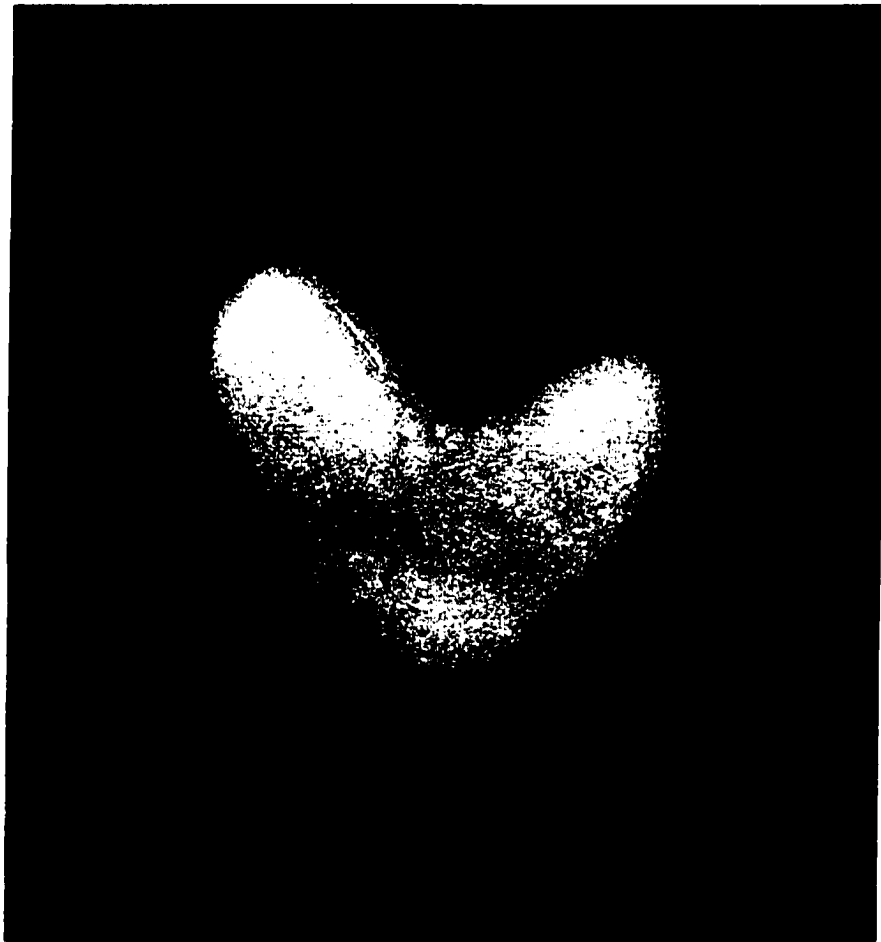
naturally came into play, without my knowledge, as an integrated component of the change process. Retrospectively, it seemed like once I committed to the inquiry process, an innate, creative intelligence was set in motion, guiding every step, and quietly aligning my consciousness with my own intuitive processes. I instinctively followed how I was being led internally (through inner voice experiences, repeated dreams, insights, visions and intuitions), and externally (as cues came from books, people, nature, art, music, movies and diverse symbols). My own internal frame of reference which encompassed my thoughts, feelings, perceptions and senses, quietly and sometimes more boldly began informing the beginning exploration of the topic and the prospective questions. I was called to go into myself to begin my transformational work, which in essence, enacted both my experiencing of the phenomenon and the beginning of the methodological process. In my view, this fits with Moustakas' sense of the researcher naturally reaching inwardly for tacit awareness and knowledge which in itself helps to configure the context from which the question(s) and inquiry process take form and meaning. I did not understand then that I was actively engaged in the heuristic research process. I was honoring the natural unfolding of my personal process while diligently pursuing my research commitments. Six years later (and after having taken courses in qualitative research), I was internally guided to Moustakas' text on heuristics research. The subtleties of this specific methodology with its emphasis on and respect for the researcher's internal frame of reference, self-searching and intuition (Moustakas, 1990. p. 12), resonated with the methodological processes that were already naturally occurring. Subsequently, I felt a deep confirmation with respect to heuristics as my decisive choice of methodology.

In identifying with the focus of the inquiry, Moustakas (1990) talks about the "inverted perspective" (p. 15) which suggests that the researcher gets inside the question through immersion in active experience, self-directed search and exploratory open-ended inquiry. The pre-stage ensued in just this process with me undergoing the experience and unwittingly "risking the opening of wounds and passionate concerns, and undergoing the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey" (p. 14). Moustakas further insists that the researcher undergoes or has undergone the experience in a "vital, intense and full way" (p. 14) for the research to be truly heuristic in nature.

STAGE ONE: Light Bows to Darkness



STAGE ONE: Light Bows to Darkness



(Repeated for Stage One)

STAGE ONE: Light Bows to Darkness or Holistic Disintegration

(Methodology: Initial Engagement, Immersion, Incubation, Indwelling.

Symbol: Earth Heart #1)

Preamble

The Soul Lives Contented

*The soul lives contented
by listening,
if it wants to change
into the beauty of
terrifying shapes
it tries to speak.*

*That's why
you will not sing,
afraid as you are
of who might join with you.*

*The voice hesitant,
and her hand trembling
in the dark for yours.*

*She touches your face
and says your name
in the same moment.*

*The one you refused to say,
over and over,
the one you refused to say.*

(White, D. 1992. p. 31)

Still haphazardly whistling in the dark and being unwilling to hearken to the call of the inner life, my *dis-ease* persisted until it seemed like an inevitable *saturation point* was reached as a natural process of moving into Stage One: "Light Bows to Darkness" or Holistic Disintegration. On some level, in the lowest moments of neutral living, it seems that the deepest part of our being seeks to touch us. It strives to quicken us to *listen into* the still solitude and to heighten awareness that our living is inconsonant with the wisdom of the Self. Intercepting the destructive, downward spiral and confronting the distortions in our lives seem to be a beginning reconciliation with the unexplored, repressed dimensions that have alienated us from our primal aliveness. I now describe this process as a beginning movement to pierce through to the thick shadows and numbing disguises.

The Lived-Experience

My life slowly proceeded in a manner such that nothing unusual occurred to upset the status quo. I felt decidedly impassioned about school and welcomed the possibilities to learn and to *become*. My doctoral studies were challenging and my social life with some erudite female colleagues proved exhilarating indeed. Together we spanned a horizon of topics from Taoism, to deconstruction, to kayaking gear. In the meantime, my purpose for pursuing doctoral research quietly deepened and I felt blessed to be living my “calling.” That blossoming reality was juxtaposed, however, with a gnawing disharmony in my intimate world that finally came to a head on and set in motion an arduous journey.

It was 4:20am, one October morning in 1992. I woke up sweating profusely and feeling terribly nauseous with violent stomach cramps. I had had no previous symptoms so I chalked it up to food poisoning. Rolling over I sought relief through sleep but to no avail. In a subtle intuitive way, I felt something was seriously wrong at a deeper level but it behooved me as to *what* that was. Perturbed, I simply laid there half-frozen and unable to fathom the storm that was brewing. Yet, I could *feel* a heavy energy setting in, engulfing me and partially retarding my awareness even though beneath it all, I sensed that a foreboding or eerie premonition was hovering, ghostlike. My anxiety intensified slowly, weakening any resolve to escape through sleep. It seemed like I was losing control of the situation and that in turn increased my panic and nausea. A vicious cycle of both fear and physical and psychological *dis-ease* played itself out several times that morning. Then, in the still darkness, abruptly and somehow out of nowhere, a deafening, thunderous-like inner voicing reverberated through my whole being, electrifying all my senses and calling me to personal accountability from within the throws of my existing chaos:

*Shanti, you are disrespecting me deeply,
violating this temple-space in which I dwell,
dishonoring the gifts of selfhood I have crafted thus far.
You cannot continue like this. You cannot!
My tears feel like blood!*

The voice was like an informed, commanding “wisdom” that lamented bitterly and came seemingly from the innermost realm of my own being. I felt like I was being grabbed by the collar, shoved against a wall, cornered, and summoned to finally bloody

pay attention to certain infractions enacted against the Self, by myself! Obviously, my personhood was being seriously eroded, and that was occurring in an intimate space where I was trying to “cut clean with a rusty knife” (Smith, 1990). The line, “*my tears feel like blood*” resounded in an almost paralyzing echo throughout my entire body-mind as my heartbeat tripled and my sheepish, tail-tucked-between-its-leg conscience began to kick in. That infamous line lingered in consciousness, haunting me relentlessly, triggering disguised guilt and gradually stripping me down to the bone so I could no longer ignore the call to healing; the call to self-search and to inquire in a fundamental way into the issue of my deep self-disrespect. I wept mournfully, regretfully because at a *core* level, I *knew tacitly*, then and there, what that voicing was about and what was surfacing for a reckoning. Prior to that inner voice experience, there were several blatant warnings, feelings of not-rightness and loud cues to which I paid little heed or gave any scrutiny. It seems like our violations and subsequent neglect of the inner life come around full circle in a kind of deliberate insidious backlash, forcefully driving us to our knees at any cost in order that we *get* the message one way or another, sooner or later. Rats ass!

Yet, something in me decided to put up a bloody good fight and, as a last attempt to resist and counterattack that invasive voice, I began a soliloquy of rationalizations, shoddily defending my soggy turf as my fraudulence silhouetted the background. On a sort of self-righteous binge then, I mustered up the little remaining ego strength I had and called up as many of my finer attributes as I could fit into my nice, defensive posture. Then I deliberated on how much personal work I had done in the past anyway and so why the bloody hell was I being picked on. The “other” was the more troubled who kept impinging on my space! And true enough prior to that then current call to accountability, I had endured a few heavy-duty rounds on the transformational spiral engaging in honest, meaningful healing work with respect to the dissolution of my marriage and the death of both my daughters. There has been legitimate enduring growth in that domain of my life. What I did not understand then was that the individuation process is an intricate *lifelong* developmental journey into *essence*, with no arrival at some transcendent, nirvanic end state. While this is an achievable reality in some contemplative practices and I would dearly welcome it, my evolving selfhood was still experientially slouching toward whole-

ness with intermittent peak or transcendent moments interspersed by inevitable descents. I could not even discern that another round of this lifelong process was being enacted.

Continuing to enslave myself in those sorry mind-antics proved futile as I became increasingly and acutely depleted of physical and psychic energy. Still, in a last die-hard attempt, I thought of school, refocused on my goals for that day and sought to shift gears. I literally tried getting out of bed but felt like the remaining flimsy bit of tail wind was taken out of my sails. Feeling miserably sluggish I remained in bed for three days, sleeping, waking in angst, eating dry cereal once a day and avoiding all contact with the outside world. I did not once take a bath or brush my teeth. On the third day, in a bleak attempt to reassure myself that it was all a nightmarish dream, I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror and was shocked to see the wretched mass of flesh that gawked back at me. I thought, "Surely I am beginning to go crazy but why so suddenly?" "What the hell is the matter with me?" It was obvious that I was losing essential ground and there was not much that I could do about it. I heard in the background of my mind a Caribbean expression that aptly described my overall predicament: "Corbeau smoke yuh pipe!" The corbeau is a scavenger bird that inhabits the garbage dumps and thrives on the stench. So, if this bird is smoking your personal pipe, then your arse is surely in mega shit! You are up your yin-yang in alligators. You are in dire straits! How very generous of cultural memory to rub it in, to so timely offer such poignant, provocative imagery to burn the message through to me! As a hopelessly barren and last defense, I swore obscenities to every damn thing that I imagined was conspiring to take me under. But under ... where?

Where was I heading? What did all that chaos mean? How was I supposed to conduct my worldly affairs while falling apart inside? What was behind the conspiracy? I quietly puzzled over those vaguely formed questions that moved sporadically in and out of consciousness, but no solace was to be found. Further, I had no instinctual urge to actively search the literature so as to get a grip on my situation. In truth, I had no clue as to what was occurring theoretically. My overall repertoire, personal resources and sense of intactness seemed to diminish by the day. That in turn threw my formal intellectual pursuits temporarily to the wind. *I had to endure the transformational experience first hand, in a naive way it seemed, without prior contamination by theoretical suppositions*

and conceptualizations. I was scrambling for my life while being unaware of innocently succumbing to being a *hostage* to the inner life *and* to the heuristic inquiry process.

Nothing was the same after that first inner voice message. I became increasingly disturbed and preoccupied with the severity of that confrontation and while I continued to fulfill my obligations in the world, I began to slowly undergo a subtle, beginning process of psychic upheaval and tension. I gradually yielded unintentionally into whatever it was that was happening to me. While attending to my daily tasks, I found myself ruminating about my life in Calgary, trying to recap how I maneuvered myself in certain incidents in the hope of grasping some germinal clues regarding my self-disrespect. But I could make no immediate sense of the medley of muddled introspective deliberations. Nonetheless, I engaged in that process obsessively for several months as it seemed that on some level of conscience, I urgently needed to cut to the quick and figure things out. I became quietly despondent over time and felt like I was losing my fire, my *jour de vivre*. And I was!

An inexplicable sadness occupied my living as I contemplated another aspect of that inner voice message: "*violating the temple space in which I dwell.*" I was reminded that my being *is* a temple space. I reflected on that issue in journal entry dated 21/12/92: In a very private and resolute way, I have always *felt* my being to be a "temple space" in which my sense of the Holy dwells. As a child, my dear mother seeded in me an awareness of this Mystery and its presence indwelling my core essence. Very thoughtfully, she taught me by her very way of *being-in-the-world* - in authentically *living* her talk, her faith, *and* her shadow, without a whole lot of constipating, philosophical and ideological camouflaging. Her life was rich *and* difficult because of that very congruence. Intuitively I sensed and respected her choosing essence over appearance.

That indwelling sense of Mystery that my mother awakened me to has been a source of invulnerability, very much unassailable despite the conundrums of adulthood. It waters my well-springs in arid moments. And the gift of this deep knowing has slowly cultivated in me a *capacity for innerness*, (returning constantly to this Source within), and an abiding self-worth, self-reliance and self-trust. Throughout the years, I have nurtured an "inner relationship" with this Source. Its guidance has fostered a kind of insistence on paying more conscious attention to my subjective life. This in turn has initiated me into an experience of ongoing pervasive change (Bugental, 1978) and has strengthened my recognition of the centering of my life as being from *within*, while participating in the intrinsic interdependence of self and world. I resolutely believe that instilling, at an early age, a sense of primary trust in one's sacred intrinsic Nature sets in motion a predisposed capacity to

habitually return to the inner life, seeking and trusting its abiding guidance. It is like a foundational, sustaining psychic strength is seeded in the evolving selfhood and one learns early to be one's own authority and to be authentic in a fundamental way. This has been indigenous to my constitutional makeup and first nurtured by my mother and cultural milieu during the first eighteen years of my life in Trinidad, West Indies. This has been a valued gift from my mother with my birthing and her womb as my first. Earth-home being her greatest gifts to me. Thank you Ma, woman of substance. (And this is *not* to dismiss the fact that familial dynamics did seriously impinged on and overshadowed this core truth, as discussed in the later stages of my transformational process).

Yet, in living this integrated self-knowledge in western Canada in the last thirty-one years, I have recently been at odds with some white feminist Intellectuals and activists who have persisted in trying to fit me into their pathetically narrow and separatist categories of *woman of color, minority and oppressed*. A rigid context in which I should supposedly be drenched in a loathsome inferiority with my spirit beaten down and diminished due to imperialist oppression. Some refused and others are still unwilling to accept and *respect* that my core identity has always been intact, thanks to my mother's modeling, pride in her Hindu ancestry and the fact that I grew up in a culture where I was part of the majority. My psyche and spirit were not decimated like that of others, even those within the same cultural milieu and, despite the onslaught of various forms of colonialism. I grew up with a kind of core tenacity, an audacity of spirit that find resonance with Gandhi's indubitable stamina when he said in the movie, *Gandhi*, "You can destroy my body, you can kill my spirit, but you will not have my obedience!" Living from my spiritual Core, I engage in a more transcendent way of being in the world. I honor my life and that of others as an original blessing as opposed to some absurd sociopolitical ideology perpetrated by those too lost in fatuous supremacist delusions to fathom that they are desperately in need of restored sight. Sight centered in the "Longer View."

Sineta (1986) speaks clearly of self and social transcendence, which is not about blindly denying reality, the angry retort that I often got from some of those intellectuals when my psyche would not wrap around their bogus notions of identity. They were actually being overtly oppressive in *their* actions. I experienced the imposition of their own oppressed history on me while refusing to believe that I could be genuinely intact at my core, maybe even more so than some of them who were of the dominant culture and participating in pretentious elitist maneuvers.

That piece of journal writing was not idle detouring but served to put me in touch with a primal *ego strength*, located in an inner sacredness that I did possess back in 1991, and which has been critical in order to undergo the stringent demands of the individuation process. Jung (1953) said that a firm ego is essential to endure the tension and onslaught

of the unconscious, while not becoming prey to it. Also, I have lived my life as fully as possible, as a human being belonging to the universe and making a contribution through my very living. Life brought me to my knees with the loss of my children, marriage, and due to childhood wounding, not because I am a vivacious Trinidadian-Indian-Canadian. But even this *category* intimates little about the ebullience of my soul, the urges of my heart or the diversity of my cosmological inheritance. Essence is slippery, elusive.

So what happened to disengage me from that primal childhood knowing? And when did it happen? All of that prior self-knowledge percolated to the fore as I wrestled with my unknowing. "*Violating the temple space in which I dwell.*" I became frighteningly restless as more critical questions plagued my mind. Who was the "I"? What was I doing to the temple space? *Why* was I doing what I did? What did that *mean* within the context of my overall living? *How* and *from whom* did I learn such a dishonoring mode of being? I felt an urgency building that got worse with time and made me increasingly fragile, especially so because I was not being rescued with any quick-fix answers that would readily coax me into making a bee line back to my spurious living. In the three months that followed, I began slowly experiencing what Perry (1986) calls the *double-life*, consciously meeting the demands of the social world while progressively enduring multiple forms of personal disintegration as existing psychic structures broke down.

My saving grace was the fact that I finally realized, in a most convincing way, that I had to release the relationship, take a ruthlessly honest stance with myself, and urgently focus on my inner work and on healing myself. Just how I needed to move into my own self-reflective process was still questionable but I *knew* instinctively that I had no choice in the matter. In communicating my position and need to the other, I received little understanding or support. Instead, friends who were given only one perspective on the situation decided that I was being rather selfish. Nonetheless, I became a recluse, pulling away from the other as a beginning self-reclaiming process and moving into a womb-space where I could begin a serious archaeological dig, unearthing some deeply fossilized patterns that were imprisoning my vital energy and forward movement. It became quite clear to me again, as it had with previous inner work that *I* was responsible for what I allowed in my life and that blaming others would bear no fruit but rather only

severely retard my own spiraling evolution. I keenly committed to begin mining for a healing vision, to unravel some core truth. My desire to heal myself *felt* like Self-love.

In essence then, that initial inner voicing served as a catalyst for instigating the disintegration process. It was important to move to a new location. I found a wooden cottage, nestled in the woods and right beside the healing ocean waters. Looking back now, that living space was very much symbolic of the *womb*, a dark, warm enclosure that provided some basic nutrients for the inner metamorphosing process. In solitude, afraid yet trusting in a gut sense of rightness that somehow what I was about to do was indeed purposeful, I yielded to the unconscious and the process of fragmentation. Amidst all the confusion though, I loved myself and timidly mothered my own beginning fragility.

Interpretation and Analysis within a Jungian Framework

TABLE TWO - Part Two (Revisited)
Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

STAGE ONE: LIGHT BOWS TO DARKNESS

Holistic Disintegration: Inner voice *messages* abruptly (or slowly and gently) break through; the ego becomes *hostage* to the inner life; feelings of resistance, confusion, pronounced anxiety and fear; struggling to maintain control of reality; losing essential ground; physiological and physical discomfort; pretending things are okay; slow psychological, emotional, spiritual collapse; acute depletion of physical and psychic energy; defiant pursuit of immediate goals as body and psyche become unglued; worldview begins to collapse and self-esteem and confidence begin to be diminished; conscious awareness of *breakdown* but paralysis of will and stamina to defend against the immediate predicament; disorganization, disorientation, sadness, depression and intense feeling of isolation; start of the *double-life*; sense of physical and spiritual abandonment and feeling of deep loss; extreme affect; voluntary or involuntary surrender to the chaos without conscious knowledge of where process is leading or the future outcome.

First, please note that, at the end of this section, I briefly revisit some theoretical perspectives (from Chapters 1 & 2), on the Self, the inner voice, and the transformation process, with the purpose of creating a synergy of these three dimensions and suggesting that the renewal project is essentially a *psycho-spiritual process* in which *listening to the*

STAGE ONE: Light Bows to Darkness



and then
the day came
when the risk
to remain tight
in a bud was
more painful
than the risk
it took to
blossom.

inner voice is an integral component. This is an essential context for embedding the descriptions of the individuation process in that the interrelatedness of these three elements is demonstrated both in the lived experiences and interpretation of each stage.

Interpretation and Analysis of the Lived-Experience of Stage One

The road to creativity and mental and spiritual health is a difficult one as we confront our existential vagaries and psychic imbalances. Joanna Macy (1991) suggests that there are times when *going to pieces* is essential to evolutionary and psychic transformations as the cracking of outgrown shells. It allows for the emergence of higher psychic structures and awareness. Dabrowski (1967) calls it "positive disintegration" (p. 91), and suggests that for the individual who, in facing current anomalies of experience, yields into the disintegrative process, it can ensue in a dark night of the soul and times of psychological and spiritual turbulence. Yet, the confusion and anxiety that set in are essentially healthy and creative for the person as fresh possibilities and original approaches to reality come into play. Disintegration refers to the loosening of structures and the dispersion and breaking up of psychic forces. It constitutes a wide range of processes, from emotional disharmony to fragmentation of the personality structure (p. xiv). For the purposes of this inquiry, the concept is being used within the context of psychologically healthy functioning individuals who undergo the change process. Dabrowski views disintegration as a positive developmental process that facilitates a higher level of psychospiritual maturation and integration. Symptoms manifest as self-criticism and feelings of guilt, shame and inferiority. Sadness, depression and discontent with oneself are also felt and these, he asserts, are all crucial for development. He believes that psychological distress arises from "dissatisfaction with regard to one's own conduct ... an awareness of 'infidelity' toward the personality ideal" (Mowrer in Dabrowski, 1967. p. xvi-xvii), or toward one's core integrity, in my view. What disintegrates is not the self but its defenses, distorted beliefs and dishonesty. Defensive self-protection restricts vision and flexibility and blocks the flow of vital psychic energy needed for the development of personality and the ebullience of the soul. As open systems, we are like "whirlpools in a river of ever flowing water ... patterns that perpetuate themselves" (Wiener in Macy, 1991. p. 22), and our propensity toward change is inevitable.

This *going to pieces* then is intrinsic to growth and is indicative of a disunity with oneself, which is Jung's definition of neurosis. In theorizing about neurosis, he introduced the *energetic viewpoint* (Jung, 1961) and asserted that all psychological phenomena may be perceived as manifestations of energy. Subjectively and psychologically, this energy is conceived as *desire* and Jung called it *libido*, (encompassing a broader connotation as in vital life energy or *elan vital*, and not just sexual energy). Jung (1960) saw neurosis as a blockage of the flow of energy or libido and postulated that "the flow of energy has a definite direction (goal)

in that it follows the gradient of potential in a way that cannot be reversed" (CW 8. p. 4), like water needing a gradient to flow. Jung rejected an exclusively causal view of neurosis and the idea of the regression of energy to the past in and of itself. Regression is in service of future development as it helps us to understand the *meaning* of the memory-images that have been reactivated by the regressive libido. It facilitates healing and releasing of our historical wounds and associations. Jung said the libido regresses to the past, "in order to find there the memory associations by means of which further development can take place" (CW 8. p. 23). The root cause(s) of a problem must be dealt with but more so, it has to encourage development by "transforming causes into means to an end, into symbolic expressions for the way that lies ahead" (Sharp, 1988. p. 21). Thus, inner work becomes meaning making in the present and future, and herein lies the transformation of energy, which needs the dynamic tension of the problem in the first place. The energetic viewpoint encapsulates the Taoist concept of *non-doing*. One does not impose will power or force the direction of the flow of psychic energy but asks, "What is the intention of the psyche as a whole; where does the energy naturally "want" to go" (Sharp, 1988. p. 20, 23)? Jung (1953) said it this way, "What is it, at this moment and in this individual, that represents the natural urge to life? That is the question" (CW 7. p. 290).

Jung was concerned with the necessary *task* that the individual will not accomplish in the present and how that affected the energy flow. A basic assumption, psychologically and energetically speaking, is that when the energy is not available to consciousness due to a psychological imbalance, it is "busily stirring up unconscious contents that for the sake of psychological health need to be brought to light and examined" (Sharp, 1988. p. 25). This also means that where a psychic function has been deprived in one area, there is an over-activation of energy in another. Thus, when the libido slackens as in depression or general malaise, it may reassert itself in another area as a symptom (physical illness), e.g. as in positive disintegration. What is critical here is the establishment of a connection between the conscious mind and the unconscious so the split-off energy may be accessed for the fulfillment of the "necessary task" that the individual is avoiding.

In referring back to Tables One and Two, (p. 95-102), I called this stage holistic disintegration or light bows to darkness. It has been termed diminution of personality (Andersen, 1991; Jung, 1959), crisis - urge to know self (Assagioli, 1965), psychological collapse (Grof and Grof, 1991), disintegrative phase (Perry, 1986), and de-adaptation (Sharp, 1988). The processes are reiterated at the start of this section.

So what was the psyche's way of initiating the renewal process, specifically the disintegration stage in my case? The moment of slipping over the edge into the onslaught of confusion was preceded by a slow, accumulating angst that led into an unexpected, abrupt revolution from within, the inner voice charging forth. It was like the previous warnings and cues (from the pre-stage) slowly fermented in the depths of my being, undermining the foundation of my ordinary existence and increasing my sense of impotence and confusion. It is clear, (retrospectively speaking), that I was being neglectful of the many messages from the Self that

indicated that there was a psychic imbalance and hence an inappropriate adaptation to my then current reality. I was violating my core integrity in failing to embrace and change those aspects of my living that were self-negating. The task that I was *not* accomplishing had to do with me practicing conscious self-respect within intimate partnership. In that milieu, my way-of-being did not exemplify genuine self-Care, i.e., honoring my intuitions and inner voice, protecting my core essence and innocence, asserting clear, firm boundaries and choosing to not allow the violation of my selfhood or the undermining of my health, well being and personal environment. I was also not sufficiently discerning about a potential partner's lifestyle, core values, level of psychospiritual health and compatibility. Of course these are not clear-cut domains to be checked off from a list, but there can be discriminating knowledge and intuitions that give some sense of rightness in these matters. As one heals, discernment increases. My irresponsibility had to reach a ripe, saturation point before I heeded the inner voice. Or more so, the inner life had to pounce on me and illness set in before I would listen. van Dusen (1972) said that when we miss fulfilling our nature the warning signs of that innermost region within us become louder as it will not be violated by our manipulations! That was the case when the inner voice summoned me to personal accountability. It was the catalytic event (Ander- sen, 1991) that catapulted me into a nine-year renewal process. Yet, even then, I still resisted (Assagioli, 1965) that initial call to healing and wholeness, engaging in an array of mind-antics and in so doing, continued to dishonor myself in the deepest way. Until, gradually, my ego defenses weakened (Grof and Grof, 1991), the energy in the conscious field dissipated dramatically (Perry, 1986), and my confidence waned rapidly. I was painfully brought to my knees with my belligerence becoming literally, physically nauseating, and a period of distressing de-adaptation (Perry, 1986) set in. I am amazed at the virility of resistance!

My physical illness, powerlessness, acute affect, depletion of physical and psychic energy, loss of control and disintegration of the self-image were symptoms and manifestations of positive disintegration of which Dabrowski (1967) spoke. Jung (1959) described this overall condition as "a slackening of the tensility of consciousness, which might be compared to a low barometric reading, presaging bad weather" (p. 119). The analogy fits with the disintegrative process as it moves into further psychological collapse and clearing work. As fragmentation of the conscious attitude intensified with respect to my process, there was a gradual shift in attention from engagement with conventional reality to the more sober concerns of the inner life, (my questioning the origins or how and why of my self-disrespect). Perry (1986) suggests that when the energy in the conscious field drops, there is a surcharge of energy intensely activating the archetypal contents of the deep psyche (the unconscious). The "focus of this activation and energy is the archetype of the center ... the Self ... and all the parts and phases of the renewal (process) are represented as taking place within this center as their vessel of transformation" (p. 35). I want to argue that it is from this center that the initial inner voice message came to me and as Jung stated, it is the voice of a fuller life that calls us to wholeness.

In summation then, as the outer life and the current self-image began dissolving, forcing me into an existential isolation and helplessness, the inner life started becoming dramatically alive with unconscious material gradually percolating to the surface for reflection and processing. My defensive posture weakened, with me letting go of egoistic interests as a natural outcome of the disintegration process. That in turn made the habitual ways of responding to life less easy. Further, as the psychic energy that was constricted in the structures of the old self-image and worldview began to loosen up, much havoc ensued. As Perry said, I was forced to let go of worn out self-expectations and surrender to being "tossed about by the winds of change ... all of this happening in the interest of development, of cultivating a more capacious consciousness, open to new dimensions of experience" (p. 34). The moral crisis that provoked the inner turmoil awakened my secret guilt and a new sense of personal responsibility. In order to penetrate a larger truth and give my life new meaning, I had to be obedient to the law of my higher nature or the Self.

I certainly did not fully grasp the intricacies of those dynamics when I was first catapulted into living the transformative experience. However, throughout the process, I was inevitably both *a participant and an observer* (on some tacit level). Something in me *consistently* maintained fidelity to the workings of the inner life and the natural rhythm of the inquiry process while intuitively honing in on and registering the multiple details and nuances of the lived-experience. That occurred quietly despite the feeling many times that everything was up for grabs. It seemed like the *natural researcher* in me was instinctively alert and engaged ever so subtly in the background, while the self was actively going through metamorphosis. It was like two levels of consciousness were simultaneously operative and an innate wisdom orchestrated a natural and necessary process of observation and reflection without me deliberately "working" at it. Sinetar (1986) talks about a critical thinking/observing faculty, a "detached perception" (p. 34) that watches and processes lived-experience while one is *in process*. Thus, coming-to-knowledge occurred through direct experiencing of the phenomenon, repeated, dispassionate reflection and contemplation, and the emergence of insight and revelation. I was able to gradually make sense and discover meaning in my experiences and in turn, feel an immense gratitude for the unfolding rebirth project. The subjective and the objective, (the weft and the warp) interweaving and co-authoring the whole research inquiry into a tapestry of lived-knowledge.

I am aware that even though I have endured two prior rounds on the transformation spiral, it is the intricate processes of this round of personal work that I have been emotionally, cognitively and intuitively most attuned to. As I reflect on those past episodes, (the dissolution of my marriage and the death of both my daughters), I now understand better the processes that ensued. In reflecting on this round, I see that I have faithfully persisted through the experiences and endured the isolation, discipline, unknowing, and suffering demanded of me, (and continue to do as I write, being still engaged in the inquiry process). I have also been able to consistently hold, midwife and document my arduous journey myself, except for periods

when I engaged a psychologist to witness the work with me. Also a few genuine fellow sojourners offered unstinted spiritual companionship and intellectual hospitality along the way. They also lovingly provided manna in arid lonely moments. Fundamentally though, *I have not been alone*, in the deepest sense. I have experienced unfailing guidance and comfort from the Sacred Center, or the deep Self throughout the project and in that, has been my anchoring and unassailable fortitude. Black Elk (1932 in Neihardt, 1979) said the Center is everywhere and Spretnak (1991) suggests, and I concur, that the Center *holds* and is experienced "more like the energy of the universe bursting into ... consciousness ... in such a manner that the amazing unitary ground of being is revealed" (p. 211). This idea differs from postmodernism's "groundlessness" and the thinking that everything in human experience is merely relative and "socially produced" (p. 210).

In retrospect, I honor how I befriended my own process and trusted the guidance of the Self. In desiring to inquire into the experience of Self-transformation and listening to the inner voice, I see now that I was thrown back solely on myself to experience as fully as possible what it is to *deeply listen* to the voice of the Self and practice a radical self-trust. The phenomenon being continually, experientially realized within the context of my being and living. The authority experienced throughout my transformation rested primarily in the truth or law of the Self or, put another way, in the directives of my deepest being. Sinetar (1986) speaks poignantly of persons who become whole and experience completeness by consciously integrating inner and outer realities. Becoming whole for her is not a static state but a continuous process of development. She comments that there are ordinary people who can and do resolve some of life's contradictions "alone, without guidance from experts or advice from friends and family ... they themselves are our ... best teachers of what it means to be self-sufficient and what it means to lead virtuous courageous lives" (p.1). She talks about individuals who pull away *physically* and *perceptually* from conventional life, enter into the wilderness of their own interior journey yet manage to *stay connected* to others through work or community in some positive, contributory way (p. 8). These individuals experience what she calls self and social transcendence which "involve a letting go of the old secure ways, a dying to the old self, and a movement into unknown, uncharted territories of the self" (p. 5). These individuals courageously live out their convictions in ways that honor what is truly alive inside them and they have the capacity to surpass themselves. They know, tacitly, that within them there is some substantive truth waiting to be known and expressed and that succumbing to its realization is risky business. Yet without it life is valueless and they sacrifice whatever is necessary to actualize it. These people are ruled by the laws of their own character rather than those of the society. They judge things by their own inner criteria and live "in such a way as to become more conscious of the Self within, the deepest aspects of the whole personality" (p. 29).

I feel a deep resonance with Sinetar's thoughts. I identify closely with many of her descriptions of individuals who have found a substantial measure of inner peace in their own way, trying as that may have

been. This resonance is not a narcissistic, self-preserving gesture but rather affirms a sense of solidarity I feel with the participants of her study. My personal and research work in transformation has been a lonely, painful journey with little external guidance. I am not referring to the suffering and solitude intrinsic to the rebirth process. The psyche searches out its own privacy by withdrawal. I am pointing to the experiences of ridicule, disrespect, and misinterpretation of my process that I encountered in contexts that I assumed were safe. Had I not had a core tenacity, resilience, and faith in the unfolding mystery, I would have lost the entire renewal process, especially during one of the most critical stages. The *broad* philosophical concept of co-constitutionality with the world takes on *specific* meaning when one discerns which aspects of the world one must pull away from. I learnt hard lessons about whom to trust in the academic world with the fragility of the rebirth process. Perry (1986) is sensitive to the kind of predicament to which I am referring:

one is apt to be ... dismayed to find oneself isolated since communication of one's experiences is not often empathetically received. At the very time when one needs loving acceptance one finds oneself either alone or surrounded by professionals who want to suppress the process (p. 35).

Perry is adamant about what is required of the people who choose to engage themselves with the self-renewal projects of others. This also applies to academics and their students. These people need to know:

the difference between a meaningful inner process and pathology, not through hearsay or because of a liberal intellectual view, but as a result of actual experience. Otherwise, in a moment of crisis, the truth of this knowing or not knowing would come out all too clearly ... since the process involves a renewing of the Self and self-image, it is necessary that the other responds to the newly emerging person with genuine caring, with a loving appreciation of the qualities coming to light. Sensitive discrimination between what is a person's essence and what is the dross derived from the accidents of upbringing is important ... Because the process tends to move a person from motivations of power and prestige to motivations of love and relatedness, this newly emerging capacity must be met with responses in kind ... if not the facilitation becomes Self-defeating or too closely a reenactment of the schizogenic family setting, the initial faulty starting point ... attributes sought are sensitive receptiveness, a respect for another person's quite different mental state, and especially an understanding of the necessity for the subtle quality of non-intrusive allowing (my italics and underlining), as well as the experience of "being there" in some form or other ... emotional vitality and warmth ... and capable of empathy and honest interactions (p. 37-38).

I am grateful that my inner constitution sustained the work on all levels and that I accepted the challenge to surrender to and trust my own internal process of healing and evolution. What I have learnt in more depth from my own sad mistreatment is how to not treat others when facilitating their personal work and inquiry, and *whom* to trust with sacred inner work. Categorical prerequisites of education, professional training and outstanding academic and political achievements may not necessarily constitute the criteria most adept to the quality of care needed for facilitating in-depth Self-transformation.

Methodological Implications

Methodologically, Stage One of the lived-experience of Self-transformation constituted the phases initial engagement and immersion, and the concepts and processes

self-dialogue, tacit knowing, intuition, indwelling and the internal frame of reference.

Moustakas (1990) comments that the heuristic process necessitates a return to the self, a recognition of self-awareness, and a valuing of one's own experience. It challenges:

me to rely on my own resources, and to gather within myself the full scope of my observations, thoughts, feelings, senses, and intuitions; to accept as authentic and valid whatever will open new channels for clarifying a topic, question, problem or puzzlement (p. 13).

The heuristic journey commences with something that calls out to a person from within her life experience, something of which she has associations and flashes of awareness but whose nature is basically unknown. The awareness may emerge peacefully or with much jarring and disruption (p. 13). This speaks aptly to that initial call to Self-transformation and the fact that I had had previous transformative experiences, the intricacies of which I was only vaguely aware. Moustakas says that although the territory is unfamiliar the mystery of the unknown summons and lures one to let go and venture into undiscovered terrain. Back in Scotland in 1989, I received clear inner guidance to pursue research in Self-transformation and the urge never let up. And since the inner agenda was the transformation of my own life, I felt persistently hounded by that guiding principle and finally had to surrender to the work. I investigated into, applied for, and got accepted into the doctoral program with Dr. Vance Peavy communicating a deep honoring of my desire to pursue the work and an appreciation for the topic that was fairly broad at that time. His goodwill has autographed my life. I felt understood, validated and genuinely respected.

Moustakas feels that "an unwavering and steady inward gaze and inner freedom" (p. 13) is essential to explore the topic and accept what is. One penetrates the multiple regions of a human phenomenon to come to understand its underlying dynamics, constituents and essence. My determination and relentless desire to probe the topic took the form of a radical self-search in which I was initially forced to go inside and set up camp and from there, patiently and painfully allow the topic to inform me. Moustakas says:

The initial "data" is within me and the challenge is to discover and explicate its nature. In the process, I am not only lifting out the essential meanings of an experience, but I am actively awakening and transforming my own self. Self-understanding and self-growth occur simultaneously in heuristic discovery ... The heuristic research process is not one that can be hurried ... it demands the total presence, honesty, maturity and integrity of a researcher who strongly

desires to know and understand and is willing to commit endless hours of sustained immersion and focused concentration on one central question (p. 13-14).

Again, he reiterates the risking and opening of wounds and passionate concerns, and the enduring of personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey.

These ideas of Moustakas precisely describe what became an experiential reality for me as I was called by the Self to transformation. My unfolding rebirth process, the inquiry into the phenomenon and the methodological processes all simultaneously occurring and interweaving in a naturally whole process of discovery. I did not "formally" orchestrate that procedure. Instead and most important, I intuitively yielded to an innate wisdom that kept guiding, giving form to and deepening the work. And in that process, I developed an implicit trust in the sometimes subtle, sometimes clear directions of how to proceed, which emerged with a quality of authority that felt in sync with the overall feel of the work. In my view, those experiences constituted elements of what Moustakas terms the internal frame of reference, self-dialogue, intuition, tacit knowing and indwelling. I did not always immediately comprehend or follow through with the guidance that came though. Sometimes I waited, felt confused, became impatient with the pacing, judged what I had to do as foolish, or felt an instinctive rightness to proceed in a certain manner and did just that. Many times the direction changed, the topic expanded or contracted, the question(s) took on varied angles, and meaning deepened then became opaque, only to resurface with renewed clarity. A kind of tacit process became operative in that vague dimensions of the process that took on "sharp outlines of certainty" (Polanyi, 1964. in Moustakas, 1991. p. 21) dissolved in the light of new information, then gained truth value upon further reflection, additional evidence, and the breakthrough of fresh insights. All the while, I was acquiring directly relevant experience and gathering data according to the principles of heuristic research without initially having the labels. This experience has confirmed for me, with regard to qualitative interpretive inquiry, the importance of trusting first, the natural unfolding of the inquiry process, following where it leads, and allowing experience, questioning, confusion and emerging insights to inform the work. From this evolving, dynamic interplay, the methodology emerges (Peavy, 1989; Patton, 1990) as an integral part of the synchronized, "whole" research process. I am not sure that I could have read this in a book beforehand, then implement it. It seems that the

natural tendency of interpretive inquiry and my own innate predisposition is to intuitively come into the very methodology while “stumbling” into the topic. Although, of course, one does not come to the research process as a blank slate (Oberg, 1988), nor does one ignore existing methodological guidelines. But that is precisely what they are, guidelines that are perforated to allow for emerging possibilities and not static, prescribed rules that dissect and objectify researchers, research participants and their experiences.

With respect to the immersion phase, Moustakas (1990) says that once the topic is discovered and the question and its terms are defined and clarified:

the researcher lives the question in waking, sleeping, and even in dream states. Everything in his/her life becomes crystallized around the question ...enabling the researcher to come to be on intimate terms with the question - to live it and grow in knowledge and understanding of it ...Virtually anything connected with the question becomes raw material for immersion, for staying with and maintaining sustained focus and concentration...people, places, meetings, readings, nature ...primary concepts for facilitating the immersion process include spontaneous self-dialogue and self-searching, pursuing intuitive hunches, and drawing from the mystery and sources of energy and knowledge in the tacit dimension (p. 28).

From my experience, the immersion phase is repeated throughout the inquiry process. and not just at the beginning. This phase became enacted when the inner voice catapulted me into the disintegrative process as described earlier. I began living the phenomenon in an intimate intense way as I questioned and struggled to understand what was happening to me. After much resistance, I gradually honed in on intuitive cues indicating that I was not living in integrity with my Self and that I had no choice but to surrender into the inner journey. As I questioned and probed into the inner voice message, searching for understanding and deeper meaning to my predicament, I was in fact already becoming deeply intimate with the beginning, experiential qualities of the phenomenon through indwelling, but not quite knowing that at the time. And through a natural process of self-discovery, it was like I was clearing an inward space to begin to tap into core elements of the phenomenon. In deliberately and consciously delving into my personal transformation process, after being first brought to my knees by the inner life, I was simultaneously seeking to understand the nature and meaning, in short, the essence of the experience of the process of Self-transformation. Therefore, while coming to understand the phenomenon of Self-

transformation with increasing depth, I was also experiencing enhanced self-awareness, self-knowledge and a radical transformation of my personality.

(Earth-Heart One, in its quiet magnificence, symbolically “held” the energy of these various processes like the “Self” holding the vision of a promise. It was the first heart that was “gifted” and the largest of the thirteen hearts that serendipitously came at strategic turning points during the rebirth process. When I behold its beauty, my heart warms with deep appreciation for its mysterious presence that has so graced this work. How does one fathom the mystery of its appearance back in 1989 and the subsequent, gradual addition of its twelve companions, all synergetically coming together in the play of transformation? “Synchronicity” was Jung’s (1960) take on it, a phenomenon where an event in the external world coincides meaningfully with a psychological state of mind. “An unconscious image comes into consciousness either directly ... or indirectly symbolized or suggested” (CW 8. p. 447). He defined it as an acausal connecting principle, an “essentially mysterious connection between the personal psyche and the material world, based on the fact that ... they are only different forms of energy” (Sharp, 1991. p. 132)).

Integration of the Self, Inner Voice and Self-Transformation Theory

The processes of Self-transformation and of listening to the inner voice ensue in a dynamic, reciprocal interplay that propels the urge toward completion of the personality and the alignment of the self and Sacred Center, or the ego-Self axis. Along with the other theorists, I believe that rebirth, in the sense of *Self*-realization or realization of the Self, is one of the great mysteries in which we participate and is an *expression* of the *immanence* of the Holy in our lives. The *Holy* intimating that which is inexpressible, an *ineffabile*, in the sense that it completely eludes apprehension in terms of concepts yet it is “the *feeling* which remains where the *concept* fails” (Otto, 1923. Forward, n.p). It is the *numinosum* that inhabits the psyche and makes its presence known via the symbols of the Self. Jacobi (1967) suggests that the idea of the Holy “is a necessary psychological function of an irrational nature” (p. 52) that cannot be educated out of existence.

Like Assagioli (1965, 1973), Durckheim (1971), Grof and Grof (1991, 1989), Hillman (1975), Jacobi, (1967, 1973), Jung (1953, 1958, 1963), Perry (1986), and von Franz (1964, 1993), I concur that psychology can say nothing about the nature of, nor

confirm or deny the existence of the Holy. But it can observe and describe the phenomenology of its “reflection” (Jacobi, 1967) in the psyche and explore it scientifically. Based on extensive research and therapeutic practice, the above theorists infer that there is a God-image (Jung, 1960), a Higher Self (Assagioli, 1965), a Transpersonal Center (Grof and Grof, 1991), an essential being (Durckheim, 1971), or a supra-rational core (Otto, 1923, as theologian), that is constitutive of the psyche and is symbolic of the center from which our highest and ultimate purposes emanate. It is “the individual form that Divine Being takes in a particular manifestation of life ... and is experienced as an inner image and ... as a path to follow” (Durckheim, 1971. p. 105). Jung (1953) ascribed to this form the concept, the *Self*, which he suggested is a “*correspondence, which in psychological terms, is the archetype of the God-image*” (CW 12, p.11).

The Self is the archetype of wholeness, the ordering and unifying center of the psyche and, like any archetype, its essential nature is unknowable but its manifestations are the content of myth and legend (Sharp, 1991). Jacobi (1967) says that, “its *a priori* teleological character and its striving to realize an aim exist without the participation of consciousness” (p. 50). It symbolizes the “God within” (Jung, 1953. CW 7, p. 238) that is revealed to us “through the psyche and the psyche understands it and we experience it as something psychic” (Jung, 1932. Letters 1. p. 98). The Self appears in the psyche as symbols, dreams, inner voice messages, visions, or as a supraordinate personality such as a goddess or hero (Jung, 1971. CW 6, p. 460), and coming mostly from the unconscious but also from the conscious realms. The Self alludes to a:

psychic center ... it expresses an unknowable essence which we cannot grasp ... as it transcends our power of comprehension ... The beginnings of our whole psychic life seem inextricably rooted in this point, and our highest and ultimate purposes seem to be striving toward it (CW 7, p. 238). Further, The Self is the totality of the psyche ... not only the center, but the whole circumference which embraces both conscious and unconscious” (CW 12, p. 41).

(At the end of this section and out of necessity, I comment on the use of the word “God”).

Fundamentally then, Jung (1945) was not interested in the treatment of neuroses but rather in the approach to the numinous, that which is our spiritual being, the Self, our essential essence. He felt that if a relationship with the numinous cannot be established, then no genuine change is possible, only social adjustment (von Franz, 1993).

It is the foremost task of the individuation process to raise the God-images, that is their radiations and effects, to consciousness and thus establish dynamic contact between the ego and the Self. This alliance bridges over the tendencies to personality dissociation which arise from the instincts pulling in opposite directions (Jacobi, 1967. p. 53).

This dynamic contact between the ego and the Self, the conscious and the unconscious, is referred to as the ego-Self *axis*, and Jacobi contends that the whole development of the personality orients around it and is inherent in the psyche from the very start. “Every development of the ego and of consciousness, and every change or transformation of the individual is accomplished with the help of the ego-Self axis” (p. 53). The overall aim of the individuation process then is the synthesis of all the partial aspects of the conscious and unconscious psyche, and the maturing of a strong, consolidated ego that is “fed not only by the material of consciousness but also from the source of the Self” (p. 49).

From my emerging understanding of Jung’s and the other theorists’ orientation, and from my own experience of the individuation process, it seems evident that in-depth transformation of the personality is not a surface repair job whereby we are vogue outside but remain pitifully vague inside. As Bugental (1976) suggests, the call to wholeness is an inward vision that we instinctively have about the possibilities for ourselves and for others. He believes that it arises from our deepest longings for our own being and is our lifelong task and a mark of the divine in our depths. Jung understood this implicitly and while he has been derided as a mystic and prophet, connoting unscientific confusion (von Franz, 1993) by the dominant rationality, (a mindset that reflects a dense ignorance and a lack of *essential*, experiential spiritual knowledge), his psychology is in essence holistic. It resonates with the original Taoist teachings of China, a wisdom tradition that honored *the whole of human life*, meaning it also included the bodily and spiritual dimensions of being human. Jung experienced the individuation process in depth and encountered the numinous as an integral aspect of his journey. That together with his ongoing research enabled him to theorize about a spiritual psychology. He has been legitimately criticized though, e.g. for his limited view of particular aspects of women’s psychology, i.e., the reclaiming of the *anima* (the feminine aspect of the soul) in women (Lauter and Rupprecht, 1985). His work with the anima focused primarily on men. Nonetheless, despite its overall holistic approach, Jung’s work remains on the fringe of academic psychology.

It behooves me that the *spiritual* as an integral component of the human condition is still held suspect and neglected by mainstream academic psychology (or given only pretentious lip-service at that), even as students desire its inclusion in the core curriculum.

Contact with the numinous then, is experienced through the activity and symbols of the Self. The activity I wish to accentuate here is that of *the inner voice as it relates to the individuation process*. Jung (1954) theorized that the development of personality issues as a fidelity, (a trustful loyalty), to the law of one's own being and a perseverance and hope in one's life projects. He stated that "personality can never develop unless the individual chooses his own way, consciously and with moral deliberation" (CW 17. p. 174), and that that is the *vocation* of a lifetime. To have such a vocation means "to be addressed by a voice" (p. 176), which "is the voice of a fuller life, of a wider, more comprehensive consciousness" (p. 184). This voice is more often compromised though and substituted for the group-voice with its conventions and collective necessities. Jung argued that while all are addressed, only some take up the call to awake "by the summons of the voice, whereupon they are set apart ... and confronted with a problem" (p. 176), and often ridiculed because of "impenetrable prejudices" (p. 176) by uninformed others. Assagioli (1965), Grof and Grof (1991), Perry (1986), and von Franz (1993) have also echoed concerns about the derision and mistreatment experienced by individuals who heed the inward call to growth. Yet, true inwardness demands courage and self-trust as well as a willingness to risk on behalf of self-discovery. This self-trust ensues as an unconditional desire for truthfulness balanced with an austere self-suspicion (Wisdo, 1993). It is a demanding task pursued in solitude and gives us strength to *claim* our life-projects and assume responsibility for them as we open to new life possibilities. Implicit in this self-trust is a healthy ego strength or enough genuine self-possession necessary to honestly confront oneself and endure the harsh demands of the individuation process.

Thus, hearkening to the voice "that is a *pull* or *call* from the Transpersonal Will ... which is an expression of the Transpersonal Self" (Assagioli, 1973. p. 113), means honoring the *law* of the inner life that commands the fulfilling of *the* vocation for which one is destined. In this is the potential for developing and completing the *in*-dividual personality, unique and indivisible whole, which in essence constitutes the individuation

process. Jung (1954) felt that “only the individual who consciously assents to the power of the inner voice becomes a personality” (CW 17. p. 179 -180), the growth of which:

is the full realization of the life-will that is born with the individual ... It is the objective activity of the psyche, which, independently of conscious volition, is attempting to speak to the conscious mind through the inner voice and lead a person towards wholeness (p. 183).

Assagioli (1965), in theorizing about the inner constitution, the plasticity and elusiveness of the psychological life and “the realization of the Self” (p. 37), has also incorporated the spiritual as central to the human condition. He suggested that the inner voice operates from the superconscious levels of the psyche and that it is a dialogue with the higher Self. For him, the inner voice is intrinsically related to growth and development of the personality and its *call* is viewed as the stirrings of latent, superconscious potentialities demanding realization. This may be experienced as “the mysterious action of the intrinsic vitality or “livingness,” both biological and psychological, that works with irresistible pressure *from within*” (p. 214), summoning a person to continuous growth.

The inner voice dialogue between the aspiring personality and the higher Self, (or the inner Teacher, Healer, the Inner Christ, or whatever symbol/metaphor fits a person depending on the philosophical or (non)religious orientation), *may not be a mystical or spiritual experience in any orthodox, religious sense whatsoever and such connotations must not be imposed on the experiencing person*. Assagioli explains that “it can be unaccompanied by any emotional exaltation; it can be on a clear mental level, in a sense impersonal, objective, and therefore unemotional” (p. 207). Furthermore, regarding the process of Self realization, (another conceptualization of Jung’s individuation process), Assagioli stresses that there is no separation between inner and outer, between spiritual and worldly life as “there should be a dynamic balancing of the two, a wise alteration” (p. 210). Realization of the spiritual Self educes more dedicated service in the world with daily life being the channel through which the sacred is expressed (Durckheim, 1971).

With regard to *how* the inner voice dialogues with the individual and vice versa, Assagioli (1965, 1973) offers a few thoughts. He first speaks of the inner experience of “willing” (1973. p. 8). This is perceived as a state in which a specific power rises up within us, an inner energy that helps us perceive of ourselves as *living subjects* endowed

with “the power to choose, to relate, to bring about changes in our own personalities, in others, or in circumstances” (p. 9). It may be in thoughtful deliberation over our motives, in moments of crisis or decision, or sometimes in contemplative, inner recollection that:

a “voice,” small but distinct, will sometimes make itself heard urging us to a specific course of action, a prompting which is different from that of our ordinary motives and impulses. We feel that it comes from the central core of our being. Or else an inner illumination makes us aware of the *reality* of the will with an overwhelming conviction that asserts itself irresistibly (p. 9).

This will is not of the stern and forbidding Victorian conception. Rather it has a directive and regulatory function in that it balances and effectively employs all the activities and energies of a person without repressing any of them and thus enhancing future endeavors. The above quote describes the action of the personal, interpersonal, and Transpersonal Will, with the third assuming an awareness that functions in a “vertical” manner, i.e., it connects to what Maslow (1964) calls the *higher needs* or Being-values (p. 92-94) that emanate from the Self. It is from this point that the voice within *calls* and challenges the individual to growth and completion of the personality.

Sometimes the inner voice manifests as an imperative command that may be felt temporarily as a persecution, as in Francis Thompson’s poem *The Hound of Heaven* (in Assagioli, 1973. p. 114), or as a relentless push to radically change aspects of one’s life. On occasion the voice may sound quite spontaneously as an answer to a request when the personality is not voraciously seeking a solution. Its message is “received clearly and comes with authority and an absence of all doubt” (Assagioli, 1965. p. 204). At other times, it may be more indirect and intriguing in its mode of communication, involving:

- the whole gestalt of a person’s life and the subtle unconscious psychological interplay between him/her and the environment ... sometimes messages come seemingly spontaneously through a third person, or through a book or other reading matter, or through the development of circumstances themselves. (p. 205).

Heery’s (1989) research indicated that the inner voice is experienced as an “actual perception of a voice speaking internally and /or a vaguer ‘felt sense’ of some inner communication” (p. 73). It may communicate intra-psychically between one level of the psyche and another (van Dusen, 1981 in Heery, 1989. p. 73). Heery (1987) delineated three major categories of inner voice experiences - inner voice experiences as fragmented parts of the self that are breaking through to consciousness. The messages are not clearly

understood and hence, a sense of urgency is experienced (fragmented inner voices); inner voice experiences that are characterized by dialogue providing guidance for growth of the individual (guiding inner voices); and inner voice experiences where inner channels are opened toward and beyond a higher Self. Understanding and integration of inner voice messages facilitate positive resolution to difficult circumstances such that, in some cases, one's life is slowly transformed (integrated, higher inner voices) (p. 176-179). Both the inner and outer lives of an individual are implicated to varying degrees by the inner voice guidance, moving from little or no change to higher levels of psychological organization.

In summation then, the blossoming of personality in the Jungian sense involves a life-long developmental process, the blueprint of which seems encoded in the deepest urgings of our primordial nature and is revealed to us through diverse and convoluted means. The inner voice being suggested as one such means of revelation. We are each called to attend to this critical life task with a salubrious integrity that sanctifies and gives *meaning* to each aspect of the process - our fears, surrender, resistance, hope, oscillations, endurance, faith-fullness. Some theorists consider this act of *be-coming* a spiritually guided journeying that is reflective of something that touches the divine in us. When approached in this light, genuine Care, respect, honesty and humility instinctively imbue the ground of such work. I now move into a brief discussion of the word "God" as the term is used, discussed, (and interchanged with other terms), within the context of the lived experience of the transformation process as described in this document.

Discussion on the Use of the Word *God*

I find it necessary to affirm that, should the use of the word "God" prove troublesome to anyone, I do acknowledge this while not walking on eggs, hedging the issue. Whether terms like Font, Center, Being, Brahman or Tao are used, in my view, these are symbolic of *That* which cannot be named according to Lao-tsu (in Mitchell, 1988), but which is acutely felt and experienced in the solitude of the inner life and the lived-world. I honor my intimate encounters with this Source and quietly live this knowledge as a way-of-being. As a doctoral student undergoing an intense individuation process as part of my research inquiry, I endured critical periods of spiritual development that I myself did not fully grasp at the time. In that fragility, I experienced being unduly prodded in

the academic milieu where the pedagogic agenda issued as an imperative to *de-center* that aspect of my experiential reality with little awareness of the delicate metamorphosis taking place in the inner realm. I was repeatedly harangued with the intrusive question, “What do you *mean*?” when what I needed was a more non-interfering (Taoist) waiting with me as the inner life gradually revealed its wisdom on its own terms and timing. Then, in sharing my experience of spiritual unfolding within the context of transpersonal psychology, I was told that that, i.e. transpersonal psychology, “is a cop out!” A sardonic energy accompanying the remark. I felt silenced in that an aspect of my own theoretical orientation was negated by the other who had little knowledge about the field of depth psychology. I felt shocked and hurt as I had entrusted my vulnerability to that mentoring dyad. In my clumsy attempt to again negotiate understanding of my predicament, it became evident that, due to the other’s philosophical orientation in existentialism, the term *Being* was privileged over *God*. The former term having more of an intellectual, elitist flair and stature than the more banal defamed latter. In that de-centering maneuver and surprising academic elitism, pedagogical *tact* (van Manen, 1990) atrophied. The tender, germinating of the inner life became subtly susceptible to abuse as the spirituality intrinsic to my transformation process was ridiculed along with any inference to God, the heart, or the Holy. (I did not protect the fragility of that aspect of my process. Grof and Grof (1991) differentiate between spiritual emergence and emergency. In the former, the individual is “discriminating when communicating about his/her process (when, how and with whom” (p.37)). I understand this better now. Anyway, in reengaging the discussion about the infamous term, Buber (1952) faithfully argued for and against the word *God*:

... it lies in the dust and bears the whole burden ... of the races of man ... they murder and say ‘in God’s name’ ... it has become soiled, mutilated ... Just for this reason I may not abandon it ... We cannot cleanse the word ‘God’ and we cannot make it whole; *but defiled and mutilated as it is, we can raise it from the ground and set it over an hour of great care* (italics mine) (p. 7-9).

I too, cannot abandon it, cannot betray the deep holiness that inheres the core beneath its tarnished surface. Yet I cannot turn a blind eye to the wrongs we commit in *that* name.

This passage evokes a deep tenderness in me for the indwelling Beloved as Rumi, the Sufi mystic, so passionately calls that No-thing. Buber’s care moves me as I sense it as a care that rebels against the injustices so readily ascribed to ‘God’ for legitimation. A

care that sustains our capacity to *feel* the Holy and to tend it fervently even in the midst of intolerable atrocities, as Joanna Macy (1991) so aptly asserts in her despair workshops - that we *must* hold the gaze until the nuclear sites become the monasteries of tomorrow. So, I use the words *God, Spirit, Holy or Mystery* interchangeably and without reserve, as an intimation of that which reveals itself in the healing experience of meaning, in the order within dark chaos, and in the searching lies that are often truths turned inside out.

It is my experience that the tyranny of pedagogic deconstruction is experienced in ever so subtle ways, and it seems that some adherents of this postmodern teaching tactic are in dire need of a more respect-full, *humbler*, pedagogic gesturing as they come face to face with the unexpected Mystery - unfolding as process - in the transformational work and experiences of their students. As a last thought, I am reminded of Maslow's (1964) remarks on spiritual or religious experiences within the context of self-actualization:

whatever it is that peak-experiences teach in common (whatever is *different* about these illuminations can fairly be taken to be localisms both in time and space, and are, therefore, peripheral, expendable, not essential). This common something, this something which is left over after we peel away all the localisms, all the accidents of particular languages or particular philosophies, all the ethnocentric phrasings, all those elements which are *not* common, we may call the "core-religious experience" or the "transcendent experience." (p. 20).

A competent and compassionate midwifery of that which is common, that core-spiritual dynamic that imbues the experiential lives of students as they engage in *Self-conscious* reflection and re-search praxis, is what is required of educators who *invite* or enter mid-stream in such processes. Moreover, this kind of pedagogic sensibility first necessitates that educators themselves have a genuinely integrated, experiential understanding of the spiritual realm, (not just a superfluous abstract notion), if they are to seriously embrace this domain as part of the student's whole educational experience. This is most critical in cases where educators *consciously engage themselves* in students' self-reflective analysis, which is based on students' inquiry into their own personal/professional experiences, and the revelation of that knowledge through autobiographical writing. These educators need:

to have a connection with the numinous (or spiritual) and have a belief in it that is based on their own experience; otherwise they overlook the elements ... that are directed toward numinous experience and instead project into them their own ideas of what ... "should" be (von Franz, 1993. p. 179).

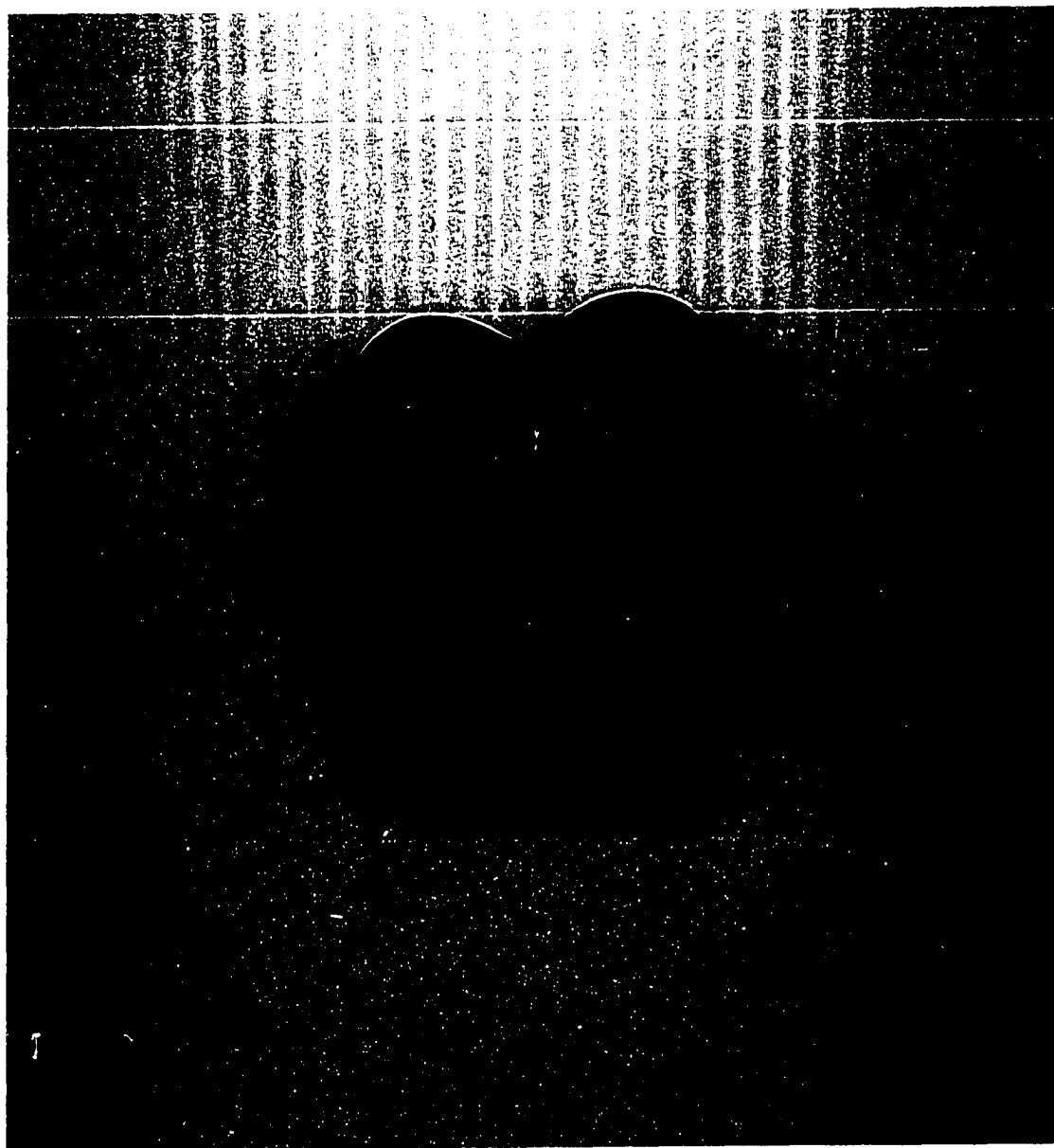
When the self-conscious, autobiographical writing of students is hyper-emphasized and privileged, while the fragility of the personal life and the subtler spiritual processes *that give birth to the writing in the first place* are neglected or philosophically dispensed with, pedagogy becomes a crass, thoughtless enterprise. Those spiritual experiences that need tending to with deep Care are misconstrued or scoffed at while the student is relegated to being *in process*. And since some trendy postmodern intellectuals *do not do therapy* (!), (though some provoke students' deep personal work but provide no container or *temenos* Jung (1958. CW 11. p. 95) for such work), the student's core work (or inner practicum) can and do get aborted if not embraced by the self-aware, psychologically astute student him/herself. Yet, vain pontifications about spirituality are echoed within liberal academic discourses that, at first mention, seem almost plausible. Until of course, in tense, telling moments when the abstract ideology of the educator interfaces with the direct experience of the student, and a tangible lack of integrated knowledge on the educator's part is evidenced, which cannot hold or interpret the spiritual experience in its essential essence.

With the educator in the power position and thus able to tactfully manipulate the situation so that the incongruity is skillfully projected onto the less-powerful other, the student is written off as "difficult" or "deluding herself." No one in academia challenges this covert abuse as the spiritual life and its processes are often considered "fluff" in the first place. Hardcore cognition, behaviorism, experiences that do not transgress implied boundaries, or grand philosophical exhortations are the order of the day! However, although the student's self-hood and intrinsic power may seem diminished, and often that *is* the case, luckily in some instances, the very integrity and mysterious workings of the inner life and the student's unflagging fidelity to his personal and research work do secure its progression and meaningful realization. This pedagogic dilemma is engaged in my research question on the transformation process occurring in an academic milieu and is dealt with in Stages Three and Four. This immediate writing issues out of the pain and mistreatment that I encountered in having exposed myself and my spiritual process within an academic setting that I assumed was safe. My hope is that, in voicing my experience, more *conscious* pedagogic Care will infuse the mentoring of students' spiritual processes, Perry (1986) is adamant about this Care when engaging with the fragility of inner work.

STAGE TWO:
The Unformed Silence



STAGE TWO: The Unformed Silence



Earth-Heart #2
Found at Clover Point, Victoria, B.C., 1993

STAGE TWO: The Unformed Silence or Excursion into the Abyss

(Methodology: Immersion, Incubation, Indwelling, Focusing.

Symbol: Earth Heart # 2)

Preamble

The Well of Grief

*Those who will not slip beneath
the still surface on the well of grief
turning downward through its black water
to the place (where) we cannot breathe
will never know the source from which we drink
the secret water, cold and clear,
nor find in the darkness glimmering
the small round coins
thrown by those who wished for something else.*

(Whyte, D. 1993. p.35)

It Is Not Enough

*It is not enough to know.
it is not enough to follow
the inward road conversing in secret.*

*It is not enough to see straight ahead,
to gaze at the unborn
thinking the silence belongs to you.*

*It is not enough to hear
even the tiniest edge of rain.*

*You must go to the place
where everything waits,
there, when you finally rest,
even one word will do,
one word or the palm of your hand
turning outward
in the gesture of gift.*

*And now we are truly afraid
to find the great silence
asking so little.*

One word, one word only.

(Whyte, D. 1993. p.3)

Turning downward through the black water of the well of grief, to the place where *everything waits* is what Stage Two is about - The Unformed Silence or Excursion into the Abyss. The initial "inner voice" call to wholeness unmasked certain aspects of my self-sabotaging personality, thus setting up the first level of resistance. Whatever it was in my existing life situation that was supporting or depending on the status quo but undermining the flow of my life-force energy, e.g. my pattern of relationships, was ignored at best then rationalized away, only to be eventually, painfully acknowledged and reckoned with. That was the harbinger to the turbulent excursion into the unformed silence. The issues around relationship, first with myself (i.e., my self-disrespect) and with intimate others had to be meaningfully confronted and dealt with before proceeding to the point of no return, called "the threshold of adventure" (Rebillot, 1989. p. 216).

The Lived-Experience

Having moved to the womb-like cottage near the ocean, and having accepted the challenge to surrender to and trust my own internal process of healing and evolution, I began the descent through the black hole into the well of grief. As mentioned earlier, I was living the double-life, attending to my worldly demands while the fragmentation of the inner life slowly intensified. Although I pulled away from the other, and despite my resolve to not participate in further contact, I still responded to phone messages and the occasional visit which served to compound my inner turmoil as I was beginning to see more clearly the dynamics at work in that interaction. I fought more for my rights and argued about the level of disrespect that I experienced but nothing constructive ensued. Except, only now I see the benefit of that last bit of dysfunctional relating as providing a tangible, technicolored forum to see how my woundedness ensued as psychic imbalance.

The realization that *I* was totally responsible for allowing that degree of chaos and disrespect in my life and my seeming inability then to do something (anything!) about it, was devastating. It enacted the beginning of a deep and long grieving process. I could not reconcile with the truth that I was the betrayer and the betrayed in my own sad drama! I lost faith in myself and felt despondent. What was immensely tragic was the truth that, while I trusted myself implicitly and depended on my own inner resources to create my

evolving reality, I became soberly aware of how unloving I was to my own innate being. I carried around a private sorrow beneath a fairly well adjusted persona and tended to my daily demands for a few more months until what I call *the breaking point* was reached.

I got up as usual, got dressed for school and was in the act of picking up my briefcase when I felt like all my energy literally drained out of me and I was about to collapse. I braced myself for a moment on a nearby filing cabinet, hoping that the experience was momentary and would dissipate soon. A few minutes later, I reached for the briefcase again and mentally tried pulling myself together saying, "This is bloody nonsense! I have a research paper to complete and I must get to the university on time." I grabbed my briefcase with the last ounce of determination I could muster and assumed a decidedly assertive body posture, as if I was really on my way! That must have taken two seconds flat before I physically collapsed, dropped the briefcase and barely made my way to and crawled into bed. I laid there in a kind of half comatose state having absolutely no choice but to yield to whatever the unknown had in store for me. I was laid bare for sacrifice.

I then pulled my legs toward my chest, contoured my body into the fetal position and let go into a sort of helpless, befuddled waiting. I tried to *think*, urgently needing to hold on to some semblance of ordinary mental functioning but even that was a chore. It was like everything in and around me was becoming unglued and I was too paralyzed to intervene on my own behalf. Sometime later, in an unsuspecting moment, I heard myself weeping profusely, the intensity of which increased over the next few days and became more like a deep wailing that frightened me on another level somehow. It seemed to have originated from the womb, that primordial space that embraces the germinating darkness. Thoughts of having betrayed myself surfaced and I could feel and hear the bitter grief in the mournful sounds. The worst pain and hardest truth to swallow seem to be that which issues from *self-betrayal*. I experienced an unrelenting ache and a silent yearning to understand the meaning of that infidelity toward self. In a brief moment of surprising, uncanny clarity, I heard myself say, "I must go back to square one. I need to trace back the lineage of this wounding. I *will* heal." Then the darkness set in again until it appeared that something was unleashed in me, and my agony knew no bounds. I was relieved that I was alone and need not interrupt or explain my present existential turmoil.

Then, in an aimless gesture, I found myself stumbling out of bed and heading toward the bookshelves that housed a huge collection of reference books. I stood there looking questioningly at the stack but having no specific focus in mind. Then it was as if my hand was guided to Bradshaw's (1990) *Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child*, a book that I had for two years but had not read. Why *that* book? *What* guided me to it? What did that *mean* with regards to my healing journey? I did not know the answers but I felt an insatiable compulsion to race through the contents, searching for what, I did not know. It felt like my own volition was taken over and superseded by *something* else. As I read through the contents, two sections, reclaiming your *infant* self and reclaiming your *toddler* self jumped out at me and awakened an anxious, serious mood. It was such a strong sensation that instinctively I *knew* I had to heed that distinct guidance. Reading those particular sections catalyzed a flood of repressed childhood memories and pain that sent me right back to the grieving well where I imagined my suffering would surely break me. It did not matter if that author or book was in vogue in the academic world. *That was the source of information that came unbidden and served to quickly unleash the unconscious.* I did not need a lot of the guidance provided in the text. My own inner Healer interceded and guided the self-discovery process. (In linking back my experiences to the academic milieu where I later tried to explain that incident, I was told that Bradshaw's book is "pop psychology" and not "relevant." Yet, I have read consistently throughout the transformation literature, especially the works of Assagioli, Jung and von Franz, that whatever the meaningful image or objective situation is that *precipitates psychic contents*, it is an essential medium connecting the personal psyche and the material world. Attunement to its inherent value is critical for the renewal work).

The inner work proceeded with me recalling that I had a preschool photograph of myself and felt a strong urge to find it. I gazed at the child looking back at me and the sadness in her eyes penetrated my core. I went back in time and remembered the exact location, the outfit, and the impatient, mean nanny who took care of me while my mother managed her business. Memories came back to me of how I was pushed and shoved to get my clothes on and shouted at when I cried from that mistreatment. I recall mouthing back to the other that I would, "tell my mom," which only provoked the situation and

increased what I now see as blatant abuse. That scenario led me to question why my parents allowed that situation in the first place. That in turn brought up earlier memories. Between the ages of nine to sixteen, I was told stories of my childhood by one parent, the knowledge of which left deep wounds in me. For example, as an infant, a member of the extended family was paid to take care of me on weekdays. One of my parents would visit and find me many times lying in a crib with my clothes and bed sheets totally drenched in urine, giving the impression that I stayed in that mess for hours on end. That incident repeated itself until eventually other arrangements were made. I was also told that as a newborn, I cried a lot at nights and one parent became so irritated to the point of calling me awful names and in cursing, wondered why I was born, especially as a *girl*. (This is the shadow-shit side of *that* very Hindu tradition from which I also learnt ancestral pride, a contradiction for sure but fortunately, though not without a high price, one parent transgressed some of the idiocies of the tradition). I was also told that when I was born, all the problems of one of my parents started. In addition, it was consistently drilled into my psyche that I was “just like” one of my parents who, in the other’s opinion, was unworthy in manifold ways. Thus, I was first taught that I was born an original blessing but was also cursed for being a girl who inherited some poor parental attributes, and was further responsible for one adult’s misfortunes. A nice formula for patented neurosis!

Stettbacher (1991) says that psychic illness means “to have been injured in one’s primal integrity, to be a person whose original self-congruence has been traumatized ... by people who were themselves disturbed” (p. 10-13). He suggests that, “usually this is not done intentionally but simply passed on from generation to generation” (p. 12). He says that these are “blunt and unsettling assertions” that implicate others who may go on the defensive. However, if we are to heal ourselves, which is integral to healing society and stopping the cycle of degenerative living, he asserts that we must “be willing to call into question both ourselves and the entire collective in order to discover the roots of our disturbed consciousness” (p. 11). For me, my primal integrity was injured and legitimate infancy needs were severely neglected. In healing myself, it was *not* a matter of blaming anyone but befriending my woundedness and seeking to understand its source through a lucid honesty and an uncompromising, hard look at my personal and familial history.

Those erupting memories of childhood trauma, (trauma that inevitably impinges on spiritual essence), evoked layers of repressed pain and brokenness. The anger came later. I was also taken back to actual childhood events and there I relived the contextual experiences with the feeling tones coming alive and *grounding* me in the experience. In a strange way that I still cannot explain, I was taken back and could *feel* the energy of the sperm and the egg of my parents which brought a felt sense of their operating psychology during my conception. I got in touch with a deep seated assumption that that union was not one of love but convenience and that my sibling and I were not wanted or lovingly planned, at least by one parent. Rather, we were the haphazard outcome of thoughtless indulgence. Later on in my process, I challenged one parent with that assumed reality and my gut feeling was confirmed. Grof and Grof (1991) speak of regression to the prenatal intrauterine life called the “the amniotic universe” (p. 147). I tried to make sense of my experience through their work as I continued to honor my own guiding intuition.

I began to understand that, in a fundamental sense, I had experienced acute childhood neglect and disregard of my primary needs. I was also burdened with the weight of heavy adult issues that I had to listen to and help bear with an unresolved parent. At an early age I had vicariously assumed a caretaking role. In so doing, *I* was abandoned in a primary way with my internal system becoming overloaded and disturbed. Those insights kept breaking though relentlessly, pushing me further into my family-of-origin dynamics, intensifying the fragmentation process and compounding my suffering. *I grieved terribly for the loss of my rights as an infant.* I also began to get a hint of how some of those unmet needs still ruled my life. Rage and animosity toward my parents ravaged my being as I struggled to accept my unfortunate predicament. A piercing ache moved through my chest to my stomach and I became saturated in a dark grief. Forty-two years of buried anguish finally crossing the threshold into consciousness, with the unknown beckoning.

More repressed material erupted. Because I strongly resemble one of my parents, apparently my presence provoked unresolved issues for the other. I recall being told, when the other was angry for whatever reason, that my face, specifically my cheek would be marked, i.e., damaged. I was a teenager and I remember going to my room, looking into the mirror and saying, “I am innocent. Why would my own parent say that to me?

That is a sick! I certainly do not deserve this. I will not let that energy in!" In that and other incidents, it appeared that a sort of self-preserving mechanism would instinctively kick in often, protecting my capacity to be resilient and honoring that sacred depth that is unassailable. I could not protect myself from external situations but somehow *internally* I could affirm my innocence or claim justice on my own behalf, if only in the privacy of my own psyche. *Something in me never succumbed to the external world.* In so doing, something of my core essence remained intact even though I did experience the injuring of my primal integrity. As a child and a young person, I had an uncanny intuition that got me into great trouble as often I could discern much of the adult fraudulence around me. Even today, this faculty is a double-edged sword as experienced and described later on.

My rage toward one parent became overwhelming and I decided to engage a fine psychologist to witness my process with me. Through the many hours of therapy, one specific intervention had a profound impact on my healing. The "loyal" child in me was so protective of all the genuine good that I had experienced with my parent that I could not allow the "wounded" child to finally have a voice. Complicating the issue was the fact that the *image* I had created of that parent had to be revised to accommodate the previously repressed data. In going back and forth on the issue, the psychologist held out both hands, one cupping the other, and indicated that the left hand, the loyal child, held all the good that was tentatively being put to the side, (the left hand was moved to the side). The right hand, representing the wounded child and the repressed material, was symbolically freed up from the suffocation of the loyal child, (the right hand remaining open and centered near the body). Thus allowing the processing of the material from the unconscious, while assuring the preservation of my parent's love and goodness that I also know and carry in an embodied way. In the raw intensity of the therapeutic moment that *simple* symbolic gesture totally freed me up to fully and safely express my rage and grief.

The psychologist validated my experience with me and called it for what it was, abuse. That triggered even more pain. I had never before "violated" my bond with that parent in such a manner. But the secret was out and the shame in owning the darkness embedded in the fabric of my family history became more bearable. What had been only passively endured had become consciously experienced and I no longer needed to keep

that parent on a pedestal. It was a coming time to smash the damn pedestal! I felt sad and relieved but I could not feel compassion for that parent *just yet*. That gesture would have sabotaged my lonely, necessary confrontation with that person. I did not realize that then but that was the way of the inner Healer - her wisdom and pacing still leaving me in awe.

Back home, the rawness of that therapeutic encounter left me divested of physical and emotional resources, forcing me in bed for days. Then, an unexpected and fierce rage engulfed me again and my inner guidance became active and demanding once more. The experience of the inner voice in that instance was not so much a thought process but more of a kinesthetic, bodily sensation. I *felt* driven to move and act. I found myself grabbing a photograph of one of my parents together with the metal poker from the fireplace and I went out to the backyard, which was at least an acre of forest stretching out to the sea. Alone in the silence, I placed the photograph on the soft earth and began disfiguring it bit by bit. My rage was like the fury of the ocean in a deadly storm. I screamed and pounced on that visual with the energy of a ferocious beast. With every blow to the ground, I released massive amounts of pent up energy and emotions ... then some more. After smashing the visual almost completely, I gathered all the pieces in a heap. As I was about to pick up the decimated fragments, I noticed that one part of the visual remained totally intact, the face. I did not know what that meant but it struck a chord deep in me and I made a mental note of it. I took the whole heap and slowly burnt it in the lit fireplace. I was sweating profusely and promptly collapsed in bed. I did nothing for a week except to stay in the silence, listen to the inner wisdom, journal and pray unceasingly. I was given strength when I needed it and I was “incapacitated” when it was critical to intercept the defensive personality and engage the healing work.

Soon after that incident, I got terribly ill. My symptoms were confusing and I got rapidly worse. I barely made it to the university health services where I was diagnosed as diabetic and immediately sent for blood tests. I was shocked as I had had no previous symptoms and was never ill in the way I was then. As I waited for the test results, I read profusely on the topic and verified most of the symptoms. The lab results indicated a glucose fasting level of *15.0mmol/L* compared to the normal level of *3.9-6.1mmol/L* (see Appendix C). I was scheduled for insulin treatment and a second blood test. I soon came

down with a flu bug and told the doctor that I preferred to wait awhile before proceeding further. I was devastated with the realization that I was literally experiencing the disease and soon recalled that *that* parent had diabetes during those difficult years mentioned above. Interestingly, in processing my childhood trauma, I came down with the illness quite suddenly and the physical manifestations, (the smell of my sweat, breath and urine), provided a tangible, visceral connection with that parent. I recalled the intimate bodily closeness and that parent's routine of coping with the illness. That all served to establish the fact that the embeddedness with that parent was profound. On a deep psychic level, I carried that parent's illness with me all those years, embodying it in every cell of my being without conscious realization. The time had come for me to purge myself of it.

I suffered through that *psychosomatic illness* for ten days as I continued to work through and release the pain of my past. I made a firm decision that I did not need any medication and that I would heal my body-mind through spiritual means. I used a rock, found on the Isle of Iona, Scotland, to do a healing ritual. Placing the rock in my prayer sanctuary, I imagined it to be my pancreas and visualized pure white Light penetrating every cell of that organ, healing and restoring health. I asked for healing from the Holy One, repeating the prayer for ten days and believing implicitly in a successful outcome. I returned to the doctor and went for the second blood test. As the lab assistant extracted the blood, I quietly affirmed that I was already healed and that the results were normal. The result of that fasting plasma glucose was less than 6.4mmol/L, which was normal. The medical staff decided that *maybe, just maybe the lab had made a grave mistake in the first place*. The power of spiritual healing was not validated but I had the direct experience and knew that the lab tests were *not* a mistake. That was all about a spiritual process of further letting go of my embedded past. While leafing through an old medical textbook, I saw a visual of the pancreas (at a certain angle) and discovered that the rock I used for the healing ritual was similarly shaped. I was awed by the Mystery once more as all those elements came together in an offering of healing and blessing. I documented the relevant experience and got copies of the first two and subsequent test results.

Two weeks later, I got clear guidance as a subtle voice speaking inside me and directing me to go to a nearby beach. It was a cold, dark, cloudy Victorian day and I had

no inclination whatsoever to tarry thus. I ignored the “cue” and proceeded to go to bed when again I heard the voice, which was more assertive the second time. I *felt* driven again and it was like my own volition was overridden by the inner life. I got dressed and went to the “designated” beach. It was bloody, freezing cold out there. I stood alone in the silence as even the birds were more with it and hung out elsewhere. I waited though, trusting on a deep level that I simply had to be there. I *was* surrendered to and was very much honoring of my process. I did not have to understand most things beforehand. After some time, a complete water ritual emerged into consciousness and I proceeded to carry through with it. I walked into the water and began moving in a circle, in an *anti-clockwise* direction. I did that several times and eventually heard myself speaking aloud and releasing segments of my childhood history. My tone of voice and psychic energy became crisper as I let go of the past. I kept circling until a natural shift came about. Then, I felt guided to walk *clockwise* in the water, giving thanks for the gifts of healing, affirming and symbolically taking in energy, healing, beauty and wholeness from Mother Nature. I circled several times in that direction until a natural closure eventuated again. As I stopped, I opened my eyes and the sun had come out. It was brilliant, in perfect alignment with my body and bathed down on me like pure blessing. The sun, symbolic of the Light of Spirit warmed me and made me feel like wholeness was gently unfolding. With humility and appreciation I uttered a quiet prayer then meditatively walked home. I made notes of the experience and rested light and easy for hours. When I awoke, I lit a prayer candle and silently worshipped until I felt a natural completion of the activity.

One week later to the date, I was in my room mediating as usual. Suddenly, I heard a clear voice in me guiding me to a particular book (again!) on my bookshelf. It was an old book that I had lugged around for about ten years. I saw no specific purpose in needing it but fetched it anyway and was sort of idly flipping through the pages when something fell out. I retrieved the item from the floor and discovered that *it was an exact copy of the photograph of my parent that I had destroyed and burnt*. I had sent that copy to Trinidad with a warm message after a visit with my family. It was returned to me with a collection of other items when my parent passed away. I was totally blown away by that serendipitous occurrence. I was beside myself and cried with sheer joy. I could not

believe what had just happened and my urgent desire was to go to my sanctuary and give thanks to the Holy. The Mystery is pervasive and sacred indeed! In that moment, my love for my parent absolutely flooded my being again and my heart felt like an ocean ablaze with a million star-shaped sun reflections dancing on water. *That which was held in abeyance (so the wounded child could heal) was once more vitally realigned in the depths of my heart.* The first thought that came was that no one would believe my truth. But that was nonessential thinking. My truth lives and my intimate companions honor it.

That piece of personal work stirred in me a relentless desire to go to Trinidad, to go back to my roots in search of a healing vision. Again, I felt a strong inner push that would not let up. I called one of my parents and explained my urgent need to unearth some of my childhood history so as to further understand the family dynamics and heal my life. My parent lovingly agreed to cooperate and communicated that whatever I needed would be provided as best as possible. That offer in itself touched a fragile place in me and I eagerly headed home. There, I had long, hard, exhausting conversations with members of my immediate and extended family. I challenged one of my parents in the presence of an older sibling and together we struggled through years of painful history, cutting through defensiveness, anger and denial. I especially needed to get candid feedback about the truth of my parents' relationship and their underlying operating values with respect to children, commitment, and other key issues. My determination to get to the root of things persisted although there were tense moments that had to be endured.

On one occasion, I regressed to the six-year old child that was abandoned, my voice and mannerisms assuming that developmental age. It seemed that everything unresolved that I held inside me with respect to my childhood and that parent saturated the space between us. In my agony and beneath all my outpouring, my core need was to hear my parent say, "I love you" and mean it. The observing adult in me was surprised and actually embarrassed by such a display of fragility as I asked for just that - a need so ordinary, so profound yet so debilitating. The charge behind the need finally dissipated. More than anything else the honesty and accountability assumed by one of my parents, and the attentiveness, respect and genuine care that were invested in our work together helped my healing significantly. Further, my parent's courage and willingness to engage

the reconciliation process fueled my compassion and began softening my attitude. The admittance of ignorance and the genuine remorse felt by my parent for how my life had been implicated set the stage for restorative justice. *Something in me began to blossom.*

Those encounters later led me to revisit the places where I lived. I spent time in total solitude, reconnecting with the feeling memories that surfaced, staying with them and allowing them to inform me. Certain scenarios were reenacted in my mind and I became the child or (pre) adolescent that I was at the time. For several days I meditated on whatever was presented, then, consciously and deliberately I released each situation and its accompanying energy into the universal Mind for transmutation. Gandhi said, “prayer is a heart search and a call for self-purification” (Spretnak, 1991. p. 72). That was how I felt as I engaged in prayer for healing and cleansing at each home-space. I recorded my experiences, took photographs, and as I walked away from each location, I *consciously* peeled off layer after layer of the past and forgave my parents’ fallibility. Of course, that conscious act became a process of meaningful integration on many levels *over time* and was not a one shot deal. Interestingly, in one of the photographs that I took at my birthplace, (which is now commercial property), there were two automotive posters that read “original parts” and “genuine parts.” I only recently saw them (August/00), and was thrown for a loop as there is a powerful *meaning* connection with my healing work, i.e., going back to my roots to reclaim my original innocence. I need to reiterate here that all those interventions came solely from within as I stayed in the silence day after day, *waiting, listening to, and faithfully following through* on the guidance of the inner Healer.

The next phase of that journey entailed researching the history of my deceased parent. I felt compelled to talk with family members and friends to gain deeper insight into and understanding of *who* that parent was, to some measure anyway. Conversations and further probing unraveled a very tragic yet stoical life history, the details of which evoked a profound sorrow in my sibling and me. We grieved together for weeks as we fitted pieces of the puzzle and slowly began to make sense of our parent’s suffering and way-of-being. It became evident that that parent did the best within the circumstances and the internal and external resources available. Our compassion and love that were always steadfast deepened immeasurably and *I* experienced genuine forgiveness toward

my deceased parent. My sibling did not have many issues to resolve. Soon, the details disclosed from probing that parent's life history provoked a second wave of intense rage in me. It was directed at my other parent whose personal conduct created some of that tragic history. We went at it again, engaging in heated heavy-duty processing as my anger found voice and until a natural closure ensued with justice rendered on behalf of the deceased parent. My loyalty to that parent was grounded in truths that were *finally* acknowledged. It took time, but my compassion for my living parent was quickened too.

I then decided to perform a special Hindu *puja* or prayer ritual for the healing of my deceased parent's spirit. My sibling lovingly supported the decision and while my family did all the heavy physical, preparatory work, I did the nine-day fast and the actual sitting in for my parent at the actual *puja* ceremony, as shown in the visual. While not comprehending all the intricacies of the ritual, I maintained fidelity to the *meaning* and *purpose* of the process and consistently *held the energy* for the healing work. I did not realize it but I was doing healing work for both my parent and me. At the closing of the ritual, I sang my parent's favorite *bhajan*, or hymn. I have included only the refrain here.

Tumhi ho mata, pita tumhi ho (God, you are my mother and my father)

Tumhi ho bandhu, saka tumhi ho (You are my friend, you give me sustenance)

In the process of singing, a clumsy self-consciousness disturbed me. In moving into an attitude of genuine self-forgetfulness, however, that invasive perturbing egoistic detail dissolved as I realigned with the matter at hand. In attuning to the vibratory energy, the rhythmic sounds, and the sacredness of the moment, my body became slowly infused with a subtler, purer energy and a transmutation of sorts occurred. A kind of tangible, warm innocence permeated my whole being and my body tingled for a while. What ensued in a most gentle way was a powerful, *mutual healing* and quiet reconciliation between my beloved mother's spirit and my own, the rich inner silence bearing witness.

Something came round full circle and my heart soared. The deep bond between my mother and I, (that was temporarily held in abeyance so the critical inner work could break through suffocating loyalties), was released into refreshing possibilities. What I was so afraid of losing with my mother circled back like unbidden Grace. Feeling the subtle fragility of new growth, I found myself needing time alone. I acknowledged the generosity and love of my family then proceeded to the quiet sister-island of Tobago.

There, in solitude for seven days, I befriended a warm ocean, rested, documented my experiences and allowed the synthesis and integration of that aspect of the renewal work to ripen. By the seventh day, I could truly feel the ebullience of my soul bursting through again and my gratitude echoing like sweet poetry. I returned to Trinidad and when I bade farewell to my father at the airport and said, "I love you," I felt a love for him that I had not before experienced at such depth. It infused every cell of my being. As the aircraft flew across the Atlantic heading toward Canada, the *home* of my choosing, I purposely eyed the massive expanse of greenish-blue waters. I gazed with quickened consciousness and felt that forty-two years of "baggage" was literally washed away and released into that all embracing element of Mother Earth ... and something essential of my primal integrity was r-e-c-l-a-i-m-e-d. A peace filled me that felt like grace unfolding.

On the night that I returned to Victoria, B.C., I received a long distance call from the other telling me off because I was not available in my usual accommodating but self-negating role. I talked about the intense work that I had just completed but clearly my reality could not be embraced. However, *my side of the racket was made conscious*. I excused myself, reiterated my position of having gone in a different direction, and wished the other well. I unplugged my phone. A simple, inconspicuous gesture inconceivable in the past, now a conscious act of self-respect. I felt peacefully alone and gently strong.

I moved to a new location, to a space that was actually brand new and recreated a smaller but still esthetically pleasing *home* space again where I continued to honor my personal journeying and research work. A few weeks later, while exploring Clover Point with a friend, Earth Heart Two offered itself. It peeked out from the thousand other rocks that decorated the shoreline. In a casual glance I beheld the exquisitely shaped piece of creation enticing me to a rendezvous, its rich black color, solid, smooth contours and distinct lines reflecting a bit of mystery. I gently reached for it and thanked the earth. I recall saying to myself, "This feels like *my* heart! To whom will I lose it?" I knew not that it was about losing the *self* to find the *Self*. Nestled in my coat pocket, it evoked a secret delight in me. This heart symbolizes my evolving selfhood back in 1992-1994 and my transition process as I began the long trek toward wholeness. At that point, no connection was made between hearts one and two, but there was a sense of attachment and

regard for both items which I kept being mindful of in an unusual way. Later that day inspiration perked after a rather long drought. My fingers took poetic license.

A view of personal slippage

*Soul, you ...you bloody mega-pimp
 you brutally prostitute the feeble scraps of
 my struggling existence
 on behalf of e m a n c i p a t o r y possibilities.
 Is this rapacious p u l v e r i z i n g of my selfhood
 your idiotic idea of some cosmic joke?
 f r a g m e n t a t i o n silently seeps in
 drowning my joy, choking my self-deception.*

*In the d e s e r t again ... you bastard barren land
 who the f-u-c-k said i am ready
 for this wasteland c l e a n s i n g ?
 NO WHERE TO HIDE ... too paralyzed to run
 even my nakedness b e t r a y s me as
 soul ruthlessly rolls up her sleeves
 "Oh no, another r o u n d! Is there really a goddess?
 resisting, s u r r e n d e r i n g only momentarily.*

*"Frankly dear soul, i don't give a damn about transformation."
 Swimming, metamorphosing, l o s i n g essential ground
 sand in my eyes, guts falling out,
 pain blinds the inner Eye, numbs the inner s o u n d i n g,
 i grab for a mask, a familiar f a c a d e
 vulnerability cannot hold anymore right now.
 i yearn for trivia, the s u p e r f i c i a l feels comfy
 my pretenses protect me.*

*Until i am ready ... yes, ready to b-l-e-e-d on behalf of
 my own l i b e r a t i o n ... again,
 only i know how slippery my edge is.*

*Yet, a-g-a-i-n-s-t my will, frightened, i bend toward the earth
 and LISTEN into my chaos and entrapments as
 i get doused into alchemical fire
 my b a s e metal being transmuted into gold?
 Soul seems to have her own purpose and (no?) end ...*

*Meanwhile, i r-i-s-k my significance and die so i might live
 and l-o-o-s-e-n my heart and o-p-e-n to it becoming
 a melody, a wing, a torch, a soft p r o m i s e.
 Hate to admit ...but ... YES!
 i do deeply honor this burning, soul-full s l i p p a g e,
 gift of G-r-a-c-e from the heart of life itself.*

STAGE TWO: The Unformed Silence



The above photo is symbolic of a *love* that was held in abeyance, only to be vitally reawakened in the depths of my heart. (1992)



The Iona stone used in a spiritual healing of my body. (1992)

STAGE TWO: The Unformed Silence

Returning to my Trinidadian roots in search of a healing vision.



My father



My beloved sister... there for me anytime.



My birth place now turned commercial property. Only recently a *meaning* connection was made with the signs *original parts* and *genuine parts* in the above photo. The signs symbolize my healing journey back to my origins. (1993)

A loving reconciliation with my dad who honored my need for us to go back in time and heal some childhood wounds. (1993)



STAGE TWO: The Unformed Silence



My beloved Mother, a woman of substance who paid a high price for her liberation. She gave me roots, wings and a few *warts*.



A Hindu *puja*, a prayer ritual that I participated in to honour the healing of my mother's spirit. (1993)



STAGE TWO: The Unformed Silence



Releasing that which no longer
nourishes life.



The ebullience of the soul bursting through
again... after engaging in deep healing
work. (1993)



Warm Caribbean waters soothing
the fragility of new growth.

STAGE TWO: The Unformed Silence



Earth Hearts # 1 and # 2
(Combining hearts to show gradual synthesis in Stage Four)

Interpretation and Analysis within a Jungian Framework

TABLE TWO - Part Two (Revisited)
Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

STAGE TWO: THE UNFORMED SILENCE

Excursion into the Abyss: Movement into the first dark night of the soul; personal fragmentation intensifies; out of control at ego level with much reduced sense of internal fortitude, yet *tacit knowing and trusting* of the wisdom of the sacred inner Healer; inner reenactment of early emotional experiences; intense grief, primal weeping, remorseful of self-sabotage, rage; regression to developmental stage(s) or specific life event(s) when wounding occurred; irruption of repressed, unconscious material into consciousness; reawakening of unresolved familial and relationship issues; reliving of repressed pain; embracing, exploring, confronting and disintegrating of images, complexes, fears and ingrained, out-moded patterns that dominate and sabotage consciousness; critical, honest self-reflection within tense, vulnerable psychological state; profound questioning of lifestyle, values and worldview; sober reckoning with self, others and environment; acute psychological, bodily and emotional clearing; enduring pain, ridicule, ostracism and tension until insights and poignant revelations break through; experience of a fertile germinating in the dark.

Many of us are searching for and finding our connections to ourselves and to our world. We are beginning to forage for and re-gather what has been wounded or forgotten or disowned and re-embrace it into our conscious living. Anderson and Hopkins (1992) suggest that there is a Hebrew word, *tikkun* that describes this process. It means "to heal, to mend what has been broken, to transform" (p. 223). Our great human task is to restore the sacred vessel that is the self - to gather together the scattered light, to call home those parts of ourselves that have been lost or in exile, and to heal the division between the self, the *Self*, and the creation. To realize this task, we must go to the place where everything waits (Whyte, 1993) and the process is one of coming to *slow knowledge*, i.e., knowledge that is shaped and calibrated to the "call" of our innate destiny (van Dusen, 1972). "Slow" does not imply lethargy, but discerning patience, struggle, tentativeness, non-interference and thoroughness. The aim of slow knowledge is resilience, wholeness, and the vivifying of our lives in such a way that aesthetic, spiritual and social meaning come to bear on all that we do. This coming to slow knowledge is also termed the process of individuation (Jung, 1969), and it is a maturing that calls for "a stride of soul" (Craighead 1986 in Anderson and Hopkins, 1992).

p. 227). And we need to listen for our own inner timing that heralds the initiation into another level of consciousness, a consciousness that breaks through the entrapments to allow the new to enter us.

These thoughts congeal to give some meaning to the transformation process that I experienced. This stage, The Unformed Silence or excursion into the abyss, is akin to Thomas Berry's (1988) idea that it is as if we are between stories. The old story of who we are and how we conduct our lives no longer serve us and we have yet to come into the new story. It is a watery space that is slippery and dangerous and yet, here, suffering has meaning. Whatever has fueled, channeled or blocked energy in the past breaks open (Jung, 1960) to allow for enhanced awareness and more graceful movement in the future. It is spiritual birth in which we watch the outer cycles and listen for and act on the inner promptings that push us into zones of annihilation or positive disintegration (Dabrowski, 1967) so that fresh possibilities for creative living and understanding of the mystery could break through. Caputo (1987) captures a sense of this process:

... there is a fine point in the mind where one is brought up short, a moment of midnight reckoning where the ground gives way and one also has the distinct sense of falling into an abyss ... in the thin membranes of structures which we stretch over the flux, in the thin fabric we weave over it, there are certain spots where the surface wears through ... certain breaking points in the habits and practices, in the works and days of our mundane existence where the flux is exposed, where the whole trembles and the play irrupts. Then we know we are in trouble. The abyss, the play, the uncanny, in short, all hell breaks loose, and the card castles of everydayness come tumbling down. Something breaks through because the constraints we impose on things break down (p. 269-270).

I was brought up short by the inner life to dive into the wreck of my disrespect through a ripening of my dis-ease and self-betrayal. A saturation point was reached when the thin membranes of disloyalty that I had stretched over the living flux finally gave way and shoved me into the abyss of the unconscious where forgotten truths were dredged up, befriended and reckoned with. All hell broke loose, the constraints broke down and I was exposed to the raw mystery. Caputo says that what breaks down in the breakthrough is the spell of conceptuality, the illusion that we have somehow managed to tighten our conceptual fists around the "nerve of things" (p. 270). He also suggests that the *breakthrough* hovers around the fringes and interstices of everydayness and shows up suddenly and in disruptive ways, only to disappear again. In this stage of the renewal process, psychologically speaking, the breakthrough appeared as a call from the Self which led to the grip of the old self-concept loosening up as the illusion of personal intactness was killing me softly.

In speaking of the breakthrough as a sense of coming to know the Mystery that nudges us onto itself, a knowing of its essential essence that is uncontaminated by the nonsensical human conceptualizations that we impose on it, Meister Eckhart (in Caputo, 1987) said:

... beneath the busy work of conceptualizing and willing, down at the base of the soul, or alternately, out on the tip or the fine point of the soul - there is a certain spot, "the ground of the soul," where the soul was able to establish contact with God (p. 268).

Heidegger (in Caputo, 1987) called it the "heart's core" (p. 268), and from there, one is initiated into a chastened sense of the Mystery. One comes in intimate contact with it and gets to understand its presence (and absence in a felt sense as I do not believe it is ever absent) on its own terms. Eckhart's thoughts help to illuminate that felt sense of how the Mystery has been operative, in its presence and withdrawal, during the transformation process. I believe the call to wholeness is in itself the Mystery calling us unto itself.

von Franz (1964) says that the actual process of individuation - the conscious coming-to-terms with "one's own inner center (psychic nucleus or Self) - generally begins with a wounding of the personality and the suffering that accompanies it. This initial shock amounts to a "call" that is not often recognized as such" (p. 169). My call to self-accountability and healing is interpreted in this light. The initial encounter with the Self, the inner Friend or Healer, first came as a trapper to ensnare my helplessly struggling ego. Eventually I took the bait or rather, with much resistance at first, I became the bait on the transformation hook. The Self gave cues and signs to symbolize its intentions, i.e. the direction in which the life-stream was moving and the direction in which the energy (libido) wanted to go (Sharp, 1988). The initial cues in the prestage were an underlying sadness, inner and outer contradictions that manifested as physical illness, anxiety and a deep gnawing feeling that something was amiss, especially when I was violating the integrity of the inner life by what I was doing consciously or unconsciously. Later on, the Self announced its intentions in more drastic ways. A commanding inner voice spared me no mercy in its relentless confrontation of my incongruence. Physical illness immobilized me by intercepting the ego's insipid dance. The call to conscience and authentic shame drew me face to face with my self-betrayal so that I was saturated with its stench.

This led to the abyss where my personal fragmentation intensified (Jung, 1969), my conscious volition dissipated as in my many attempts to "keep it together" but experiencing physical and psychological malaise and collapse (Andersen, 1991). I became out of control at the ego level (Perry, 1986) which was experienced as powerlessness to exert my will to resume life as usual. My self-image decomposed as I let go of the inner and external culture. I became like chopped liver with no recourse but to surrender to the Carver's knife. Intense affect (Assagioli, 1965) was experienced as volatile rage at my parents, acute sadness for being my own best betrayer, remorse at self-sabotage - getting loud cues but ignoring repeated intuitive guidance, deep grief in unveiling the contents of my own history, (the loss of my rights as an infant), guilt for having hurt others through ignorance of my own woundedness, and tremendous anguish in unearthing one parent's tragic history. Within all that though, was a resolute feeling of gratitude for Divine guidance and for being *called* to healing. I felt unsentimentally enheartened that I struggled but yielded to the call.

The irruption of repressed childhood trauma reawakened serious unresolved familial and relationship issues (Perry, 1986) - neglect of my primary needs as an infant, physical mistreatment by nanny and external caregivers, violation of my primal integrity (Stetbacher, (1991) as an infant and preschooler by

unconscious parents who were themselves sadly wounded, and rage at the shadow-side of my ancestral heritage (Jung, 1953) which was perpetuated unconsciously through the family dynamics. The specific issues were the mindless disrespect, devaluing and abuse of females, forced marriages, the condoning of male abuse, infidelity and superiority, the hierarchy of the caste system, and values around children.

"The psyche seeks its own privacy by withdrawal" (Perry, 1986. p. 37) and so, in solitude, the transformation of the inner culture ensued in in-depth self-examination and dissolution of the old self-image and world-image. Perry says that the psychic energy in the conscious field drops radically while that which is bound up in the old images and the erupting unconscious is immense and its discharge creates temporary havoc. However, the energy "seeks reincarnation into new structures, expressed in the form of images and experiences of birth and world regeneration" (p. 34). In my case, the energy moved in the direction of the inner reenactment of emotional experiences of earlier years, creating periods of acute and uncomfortable de-adaptation and episodes of altered states of consciousness. Perry refers to these periods as "transitory psychosis" (p. 33) and says that they are mild and brief. This description fits the episode of explosive rage and frenzy with which I destroyed my parent's photograph. The energy's reincarnation into new structures was experienced in many ways, one being the healing experienced with my parents and the subsequent genuine resolution with them and the restoration of my love for and bond with each of them. The ebullience of the soul bursting through again, after engaging in deep process work in 1993 comes through in the visual.

Jung (1954), Perry (1986), and (Sharp, 1991) also calls into question the integration of opposites, which psychologically means the ego and the unconscious. Jung (1959) said, "there is no consciousness without the discrimination of opposites" (C.W 9i. p. 96). A one-sided conscious attitude usually creates an impasse and a blockage of energy, making it critical to bring to light unconscious material that has been repressed (Sharp, 1991). This surfaced material produces tension and conflict that are essential and without which, there can be no forward movement. The assimilation of repressed contents ensues in the ego assuming responsibility for what was previously unconscious. Perry (1986) argues that opposites exist on every level and they clash and wrestle for ascendancy. However, the very tension produces a third, unifying psychic function (Jung, C.W 6. p. 479), the transcendent function which supports the union of opposites and helps to "make the transition from one attitude to another organically possible" (Jung, 1960. C.W p. 73). When I consider the deep conflict between the (conscious) loyal child and the (unconscious) wounded child that was foundational to working through my childhood pain, this theoretical interpretation makes sense. The loyal child (L), the thesis, certainly had ascendancy over the wounded child (W), the antithesis, creating a perturbing disunion within myself. As the unconscious elements of W began surfacing a difficult struggle was enacted as L kept subordinating W, causing compounded suffering and tension. While W was unable to call my parents to task for the violations to my selfhood and the neglect of my primary infancy needs, L

exaggerated their legitimate strengths and reinforced my neurotic positioning of one parent on the pedestal. Being disloyal meant losing the real *and* concocted good of the parent in my unconscious adult-child's mind.

The impasse and suffering forced me to engage a psychologist for that piece of work. As we worked through the tension of those opposites, a third transcendent function was configured psychically. It came about first with the therapist becoming a live symbol, a balancing scale holding each polarity in each hand and working through the contextual issues with me. The wounded child was finally given a voice, which led to tremendous psychological clearing (Andersen, 1991) and healing in the therapeutic encounter, with my family, and through the visitations to the different places where I lived in the Caribbean. I returned to Canada feeling light-hearted and embracing a new attitude toward my parents, my life and myself. There was successful disidentification with and disintegration (Assagioli, 1965) of the conflict that silently controlled and sabotaged the conscious personality and adversely influenced my choices. I have come to accept the reality of my childhood and understand in a deep way that my dearest mother did the best she could, given the complex dynamics of her own circumstances when she was alive. I am amazed at her quiet heroine endeavors as a woman in her times, and how she lived both her politics and spirituality in the way she conducted her life. She was not just merely human. She was courageously human. Given a choice, I would have no other but her as my mother. My compassion for her came round full circle indicating that the negative affect was transformed (Andersen, 1991). My deep love for her never faltered even through my worst phases of rage. I was able to hold the tension throughout the storm as the Sacred Center guided the inner work. Jung (1971) and Jacobi (1973) cannot reiterate enough the critical importance of holding and enduring the *tension* during psychic upheaval. Jacobi argues that transformation in the fullest sense demands staying with the struggle, with being bitten "by the animal impulses of the unconscious" (p. 127), less one defeats the purpose of the whole enterprise. She says further:

This often entails an almost unbearable tension because of the utter incommensurability between conscious life and the unconscious process which can only be experienced in the innermost soul and cannot touch the visible surface at any point ... whatever the inner turmoil ... it is precisely the endurance of tension, the ability to hold out in the midst of psychic disorder, that provides the possibility of a new psychic order (Jacobi, 1973. p. 128).

In enduring the tension and living the suffering through to its meaningful healing possibilities, I was quietly blessed in finding a measure of inner peace and acceptance of *what is*. I did not have Jung's insights in those early days. I faithfully honored the guidance of the higher Self and dared to transgress on behalf of the healing work to which I was called. My strength was rooted in a more primordial Source. Yet, that was the most conscious suffering I had endured and the most demanding piece of inner work I have ever done.

Another aspect of the healing work that was engaged in in Stage Two was the *bodywork*. de Wit (1991), Dossey, (1989), Myss (1996), and Woodman (1985) advocate the interconnectedness of the mind,

the body and the spirit. Dossey asks, "where in the body is the mind" (p. 87)? He quotes Hermann Hesse: "I have been and still am a seeker, but I have ceased to question stars and books; I have begun to listen to the teachings my blood whispers to me" (p. 80). Dossey suggests that the mind is in the blood and argues that that "is not a poetic statement or a metaphor, but a literal truth" (p. 81). Myss asserts, "your biography becomes your biology" (p. xiii), and de Wit says, "in contemplative psychologies, the material realm of form is not dissociated from its mental aspects. This is also manifest in its approach to corporeality" (p. 184). Woodman quotes James Hillman (1980), "the image by which the flesh lives is the ultimate ruling necessity" (p. 55). For Woodman, a way must be found to create an image, physically and psychically, that discerns:

whether the soul has taken up residence in the body, or whether the body is so intolerable that the flesh is barely inhabited ... Body awareness ... has nothing to do with the technology of the body. It is not fitness or longevity that is at stake, although these may be by-products. What is at stake is the integration of body, soul, and spirit ... The body mirrors the soul. Where rejection occurs, something has gone seriously wrong. But no matter what went wrong, the soul will do everything in its power to correct it (p. 55-56).

Even Jung (1960) suggested that "psyche and matter are contained in one and the same world ... it is fairly probable that psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing" (C.W 8. p. 215). And later he postulated that, "there are indications that psychic processes stand in some sort of energy relation to the physiological substrate" (C.W 8. p. 233). de Wit (1991) differentiates between the Greek words, *sarx* (flesh) and *soma* (body) (p. 185). *Sarx* posits the *mind over the body*, setting up the dualism in which "corporeality is denied by attempting to dissolve it into mind (p. 186). It also manifests as a rejection of the material world and the body. *Soma*, on the other hand, "appears as a spiritual body (*soma pneumatikon*) if it is lived as a psychophysical unity that is essentially spiritual in nature" (p. 186). de Wit contends that "when the state in which the body is lived as *sarx* is broken through, then the state in which the body is experienced as *soma* may appear and manifest its nature" (p. 186). The psychology of *sarx* is based on a philosophy of satisfaction "as in the psychology of Freud and in the academic psychology known as behavioristic psychology" (p. 188) that views the individual mainly in terms of the biological imperatives of corporeality. But *after satisfaction, what?* Heschel (1965 in de Wit, 1991) asks the question referring to the human *being*, and he suggests that "the circle of need and satisfaction, of desire and pleasure, is too narrow for the fullness of his/her existence (p. 189, *her* added by me). Viewed as *soma*, the very corporeality of the body becomes the opportunity of *being and working fully in the world* and it is our connection with our world of experience. It makes it possible "to give form in the world to generosity, love, devotion, fortitude, goodness and profound understanding" (p. 191). The body is the possibility of manifesting and giving form to a spiritual or profane life. As *soma*, it is the physical basis of contemplative action and the very ground from which we honor Life in its multifacetedness. de Wit suggests that this perspective of the body could offer a meaningful contribution to conventional psychology which generally takes the dualistic viewpoint of *sarx*..

These theorists certainly confirm what I understand about the holistic approach to psychotherapy and healing in that all three domains - body, mind and spirit - perform synergistically in the overall wellbeing of the individual. My brief experience of a diabetic condition that manifested exactly when I was engaged in deep psychic work with my mother who was diabetic, and the subsequent spiritual healing that ensued affirms the integral relationship of body to psyche and soul. The body was cleared of blocked energy that took the form of diabetes and toxic emotions. Along with clearing the psyche of those emotions, destructive thought patterns and unintegrated content, the body released the pain and its deep-seated embeddedness with the parent; the paralyzing enmeshment taking root in and through the childhood trauma. This healing, in turn, further aligned the self with the *Self* or Sacred Center. Embodiment is a two-edged sword in my view. The mind-body-spirit holism configures in such a way that, whether the incoming energy is positive or negative, it affects the whole of the selfhood one way or the other, consciously or unconsciously. In other words, the whole of the personality becomes more fully penetrated by the flow of life as one's attunement becomes more inclusive. This makes for a more engaged and fuller presence of being, which in turn makes life harder as one's sensibilities and sensitivities are more acutely receptive to the inner and outer culture. It does not surprise me then that my body so powerfully manifested the psycho-spiritual and emotional trauma and that it so wisely healed itself as it did. Embodiment has been an integrated way-of-being in my life. It is part of my Caribbean heritage. It is a heritage in which the sensuality or eroticism of life as a whole, that is, the *dynamic life force energy*, what Jung called *libido* and not just Freud's sexuality, permeates all facets of living and being. The sexuality of the body and the sensuality of the soul are one and the same and give birth to the Holy. (This comes up in Stage Three). The body does not lie (Woodman, 1985). Like the child, it tells the truth and it does so whether we like it or not, heed it or not. As a final word, the symbol of the *heart* also configures holistically. It holds the energy of the spiritual heart, the emotional and mental heart, and the physical heart. Its symbolic value has impregnated the entire renewal journey.

Methodological Implications

Methodologically, Stage Two of the lived-experience of Self-transformation constituted the phases immersion and incubation, and the concepts and processes of indwelling, focusing, tacit knowing, intuition, self-dialogue and the internal frame of reference. To reiterate, Moustakas (1990) asserts that the immersion process is one in which the researcher becomes intimately acquainted with the phenomenon. Everything in her life becomes crystallized around the question. She lives it and grows in knowledge and understanding of it. The question comes alive and the researcher is attuned to all

possibilities for meaning and enters fully into those situations wherever the themes reverberate, are expressed or lived out - people, places, readings, nature, art. Moustakas comments, "virtually anything connected with the question becomes raw material for immersion, for staying with, and for maintaining a sustained focus and concentration" (28). The main concepts for facilitating the immersion process include spontaneous self-dialogue and self-searching, following intuitive clues and hunches, and tapping into the mystery and sources of energy and knowledge within the tacit domain.

It seems that there are levels and intensities of the immersion process. In Stage Two, the immersion phase took on more depth in terms of probing and becoming more directly and deeply intimate with the phenomenon. Everything in my life did become crystallized around transformational issues. The phenomenon bore down on me like the trapper with his snare and there was no way out except through the convoluted contours of the abyss. There, in the context of relationships with self, others and nature, various themes were actually lived through that are essential constituents of the lived-experience of transformation - existential isolation, spiritual crisis, awareness of the Self, inner voice guidance, egoistic struggle, fracturing of self and world image, holistic disintegration, psychological and physical malaise and collapse, powerlessness, impasse, extreme affect, loss of control, suffering, irruption of unconscious material, regression to past, psychosomatic illness, catharsis, revaluation of worldview, psychological clearing, and conflict dissolution. Those direct experiences offered an inside view of the themes in their manifold expressions as I lived and grew in experiential knowledge.

Without knowing it, in entering fully into the abyss stage and focusing attention on the subtleties of my own process, essential raw material or data was gathered. Penetration into the underside of issues and following the pain and trauma to their roots led to further and further unraveling of my history and in turn, to deeper probing of the phenomenon itself. The very act of continuous self-searching - through guidance from the Self or inner voice, suffering intensely while becoming aware of my incongruent living and self-disrespect, drawing from the mystery and sources of energy that informed me tacitly of what I needed, questioning my own childhood predicament, getting in touch with embodied trauma through the enactment of illness, delving into my familial history by

going to the Caribbean, dialoguing with particular family members, experiencing volatile emotions, and painfully and patiently working through the legitimate traumatic issues that impinged on my life - were concrete, powerful ways of living the Self-transformation process and simultaneously defining, redefining, opening up, delving into and investigating the phenomenon. Everything pointed toward and was in service of the gradual and both meticulous and messy unfolding of the research topic. I journaled about my process through artwork, writing, and audiotaping as I reflected on my diverse experiences.

When I consider my quiet, alone time in Tobago (and later in Maui), after the intense processing and healing work in both Victoria and Trinidad, it approximates what Moustakas (1990) calls the incubation phase. (which of course goes on indeterminately). Incubation is the phase and process whereby "the researcher retreats from the intense, concentrated focus on the question" (p. 28). While there is a sense of detachment from the actual experiencing of the manifest nature and meanings of the phenomenon, as in rest and temporary, conscious moving away from the heat of the action so to speak, on another level expansion of knowledge through deepening of insights and intuitions is taking place. Moustakas says that the researcher, in this phase, is not immediately absorbed in the topic or alert to external cues that contribute to further understanding of the topic. Yet growth is occurring. "The period of incubation enables the inner tacit dimension to reach its full possibilities" (p. 28). The inner workings of the tacit domain and the intuitive processes facilitate clarification and extended understanding "on levels outside the immediate awareness" (p. 29). In this phase, discovery seems to occur not by deliberate mental effort or calculated deliberations but by a process of "spontaneous mental reorganization uncontrolled by conscious effort" (Polanyi 1964 in Moustakas, 1991. p. 29). New understanding or perspectives that unveil additional qualities of the phenomenon are birthed. A sense of the unfolding unity of the topic slowly emerges as the seed that was planted undergoes silent nourishment and care that in turn blossoms into a creative awareness of some dimensions of the phenomenon or an integration of its constituent parts or qualities (Moustakas, 1990). In my time of welcomed solitude in Tobago, insights and intuitions percolated in a sort of organic timing (kairos time), and were consolidated in the birthing of meaning and understanding of the topic. I recall

waking up suddenly at night or early hours in the morning with distinct insights and revelations about certain aspects of my experience racing through my wakefulness. Those moments marshaled me to an acute alertness wherein I pondered the connections that were being made between my lived-experience and the tacit knowledge that was surfacing. I made notes to myself and proceeded to go back to sleep. Sometimes, later on in the day as I swam or nonchalantly watched the birds or strolled through the streets taking in the local ambience, inspiration would gel and clear, whole meaning units would gently cruise through or suddenly pop into consciousness helping me to make sense of previous experiences. Or, different angles of the same situation would present in such a way as to further muddle my prior understanding. In such instances, instead of probing the topic further, I just naturally let go of the whole issue yet made mental notes of things. There was no deliberate effort to force meaning. In a way I felt too exhausted from the previous intense engagements to have the energy for further probing. It was in that casual letting go that fertile germinating took place as I rested and replenished myself.

That pattern of resting, letting go, playing, and being slowly imbued with insight and understanding repeated itself until a sort of saturation point was reached and I felt like I had had enough and it was time to leave. That naturally occurring inner resolve initiated the next step in the outer environment that would again precipitate the cycle of experiencing, processing and discovery. Or, if it was that some insight surfaced that unsettled a previous understanding, I would somehow be directed in an inner way, to mentally and emotionally reengage some aspect of the experienced reality and stay with it for however long it took until additional clarification and new understanding came. That process would last a day, a week, a month or even years. At other times, meaning would be had in an instant and it would be valid on its own terms and be carried through as the rest of the transformation progressed. The incubation process seemed more like an undercurrent that kept with its own agenda while the surface water tended its own.

In those soothing, regenerating "off-times," in the exuberance of warm earth and waters, bird song, and dazzling flora and fauna, I also came into moments of intimacy with the Holy. A deep serenity that transcended my usual experience of peace permeated my being and it was as if I was filled with a momentary contentment beyond measure.

STAGE THREE:
Awakening of the Heart



STAGE THREE: Awakening of the Heart



Earth Hearts #3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 found at Clover Point, Victoria, B.C.,
1995 to 1996

STAGE THREE: Awakening of the Heart or Illumination

(Methodology: Illumination, Explication. Symbol: Earth Hearts #3,4,5,6,7)

Preamble

*There is some Kiss we want
with our whole lives
the touch of Spirit on the body.
Seawater begs the pearl to break its shell.
At night, I open the window
and ask the moon to come
and press its face against mine.
Breath into me.*

(Rumi in Barks, 1990)

Breaking the shell so as to be imbued with the touch of Spirit is *the* Kiss for which some hunger unceasingly. Such a need may configure as inner signals that alert us to the proximity of new possibilities, the hallmark of which may not be a logical sign of validity but rather a resonance that it sets up inside us. Subtle intimations of something different may begin to stir us and we may be unwittingly already doing what we need to do to be renewed. Or, we may willfully choose to heed and act on the prompting that is just at the lower edge of consciousness. Having lived a period of fallow neutrality, I began to listen to and follow through on the *call* of the inner life, immersing myself in the disintegration process which wreaked havoc with my living but eventually instigated a process of inner realignment and reclaiming of my primal innocence. Having endured that perilous period, I came into a measure of peace and self-awareness that moved me into a more outwardly directed mode, the temporality of which was readily curtailed with the unconscious erupting again. I was challenged to further self-examination and to reconsider my indoctrinated conceptualization of spirituality versus that “core-religious experience” (Maslow, 1964. p. 20) or intrinsic spirituality that arises from the depths of the psyche and precedes formal dogma. Discerning how spirituality featured within the fabric of my daily praxis and whether or not it diminished my innate vitality were the issues at hand. After further psychological clearing, one day, to my true amazement an unexpected *turning point* ensued that radically reconfigured the contours of my existence. I was initiated into the beginning of the rebirth phase through three poignant experiences that together and progressively moved me into an illumination or awakening of the heart.

The Lived-Experience

The initiatory death experience is a trial indispensable to regeneration. Having traversed regions of the abyss and coming through to a place of meaningful healing, I engaged more rigorously in my formal intellectual pursuits and work commitments. Life resumed a level of normalcy, a welcomed reprieve from the intensity of personal work. The focus was predominantly on course work and researching and studying the literature on transformation. My creativity blossomed as well as my insights into the phenomenon. However, back then I was still not making the connection between my acute experiential reality and the formal theoretical constructions about the topic. It was like a genuine naivete persisted to ensure a kind of probity, porosity to and full immersion into the transformation experience. Nonetheless, as I researched the literature I made massive notes of relevant topics. These were kept in assorted files but also stored on some tacit level for retrieval during the later integration stage. I understood that only retrospectively when I was interpreting and analyzing the data and would clearly recall and access portions of the theoretical literature that *made sense* in moving from experience to theory and back to experience. There was initial and cumulative intellectual understanding of the phenomenon. Deep experiential, *embodied* knowledge came gradually *as a process*.

During some of my course work between 1993 and 1995, I became engaged in research writing that was phenomenological in nature, i.e., writing that describes lived-experience. Much to my surprise (and private discomfort depending on the topic), my course work led me into poetic renditions of experiences that opened me to the abyss again. The material that surfaced provoked further self-confrontation which in turn, demanded stringent self-deconstruction and accountability and led to increased healing. The difference in stage three was that, while those writing *acts* enacted a revolution from within, the degree of devastation was less than that previously experienced. It was as if the disintegration process led to further psychological clearing but because of healthier ego strength and a relatively more solid personality, I could better endure the assault of the unconscious. I now share a poetic rendition, briefly discuss what ensued and move to the illumination phase, which is the focus of this section of the transformation process.

The following poem is about anger as it pertained to my “surface” spirituality, (not the core-religious essence that *is*). Some things are lost in cultural translation while others are gained. What is lost or gained and how that occurs become pivotal in the individuation process. In further self-reflection, I came to understand aspects of both my Caribbean and Canadian heritage that stifled growth. For example, being *other-directed* was a value taught in my first culture as opposed to *looking out for the individual self* in my second culture; both taken to extremes ensue in violence toward self and others. I erred in moving confusedly from other-directedness (Caribbean), to hyper-individualism (Canadian), then back to extreme other-directedness (Christian). The *deep* spirituality of my childhood became contaminated and superimposed with my own misinterpretation of core elements of my Christian-Taoist beliefs. My misguided conceptions were connected more with the ingrained patterns that seeded my self-disrespect than with the *essence* of any religion per se. I called this *surface* spirituality as my own dogmatism was killing me softly and unconsciously. By surface spirituality I also mean the moronic mimicry of dogmatic, religious ideology as opposed to deep spirituality that is born out of cumulative *hard earned* maturity and self-authenticity, a quality of *intrinsic* Beingness from which springs intimations of the Holy. It is critical to stress that I am not pointing fingers at any one religion. Fundamentalism seems to pervade all *practiced* religions, be it Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, etc. It is in the *movement from essence to praxis* that contamination of the idea of the Holy becomes possible, contamination meaning the perverted fabrications of essence, (based on sociopolitical and personal agendas), that debase the Ineffable in any tradition. In wrestling with my own perversions of spirituality, I wrote voraciously, as part of one of my course assignments, the following journal entry on Nov/3/94.

Something is emerging about my understanding of how I have reconstituted the sacred, where I have positioned the deities within the context of living an ordinary life. Anger surfacing? What is this leading to? How is this connected to the rest of the writing, to my unfolding transformation process? Don't know yet.

So Profanely Sacred

*I took Christ down from his bloody Tree some years ago.
Now I have him very mindfully engaged
in the ordinariness of my messy, everyday living,*

*doing the laundry, cleaning the shit hole and the inside of the garbage pail.
I've also taken the Cross and chopped it up for firewood
and stakes to brace stems pregnant with oversized, luscious tomatoes.*

*But first, I drove a few nails through his pious body myself
to somehow ensure that he felt my human suffering and not just
the transcendent (bullshit) pain of the celestially privileged few.*

*I took Christ down from the Tree and had him patiently feed
my handicapped children for hours while contemplating the Void within me.
I had him absorb the hurt and rejection of my "maimed" kids at the park,
and had him just bloody witness with me my self-doubt and dark confusion.
I had him take off his blasted salvific sandals and walk barefooted with me
on a frozen lake, probing the idiocy of my children dying before me.*

*But then I had to shred his goddamn parables to bits too
like, "you have to lose yourself to find yourself," for it was all too
nicely ambiguous and paradoxically packaged for my infantile consumption.*

*I pulled the Tao apart from its damned harmonious, unifying duality and
hurled it amidst the sociopolitical imbalances and separatist "isms."
I dragged Shiva from his blissful dancing and took him right into my mother's
heart where he, devastated too, could wince in the injustice she endured.
I desecralized the Mother Goddess, stripped down her pious robe and shoved
her naked ass up my brokenness to hear the screams of my wounded inner child.*

*But then I also had to see my neurosis disguised as spirituality
which led me to fucking smash the St. Francis of Assisi prayer about
selfless service and altruism ... illusions of the first degree.*

*Enraged, I burnt the Bible, the Bhagavadgita, and the I-Ching
so I could fiercely, symbolically slaughter the inimical dogmatism
instilled within the fabric of my conditioning, in my very cells.
Flung into the abyss, all hell broke loose, my faith broke down and bled
wastefully into a parched wilderness ... My ground decomposed.
Out of the ashes, out of the rude imposing flux, the mystery has been re-emerging.*

*Now I live faith one moment at a time, hesitatingly, mindful of her
trickery of breaking me down so her essence could perpetually break through.
Surrender ... my only recourse as I unwittingly venture into the flux ... again.*

**I actually did carry through with that demolition derby by symbolically destroying
a beautiful Italian icon inscribed with the St. Francis of Assisi prayer that read:**

*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred let me so love.
Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair,
hope. Where there is darkness, light, and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood, as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that*

we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. (Taken from an inspirational card).

With that poem and prayer came boiling questions about how I had interpreted and lived the spiritual concept of other-directedness, how I understood *giving* and *caring*, how I gave of myself to others, how I neglected my own needs but took care of others. An imbalance was at play and I began to seriously question if I had taken my spirituality too far, to unhealthy limits and in so doing had acted most unspiritual toward myself. Or was it my brand of spirituality itself that was debilitating? How did I understand giving as a way of life? What is the quality of giving? Was receiving a reciprocal part of the formula? I learnt “do unto others as you would have them do to you.” Did I learn “do to self as you do to others?” I then reflected on past encounters with intimate others and had to redefine what shared reciprocity meant as a practice of life-affirming spirituality. Was it a question of giving to others or more to the point, an issue of learning self-love through the gift of healing, a giving that was currently happening? In all this, another angle of my self-disrespect came up for a show down. I wrote in my journal Nov/19/94:

My life has become chaotic ever since my self was catapulted into a stormy search for the Self; a fundamental re-assessing and re-evaluating of some crucial aspects of who I am. My life feels like it is distinctly coming lose at the seams again. Bursts of creative, energetic voicing are being punctuated and punctured with powerful dreams, detours into off-beat readings, searching for meaning as I ... ride the waves of anger and discomfort, watch eagles fly in circles, kayak in the rainy Finlayson-Arm, relentlessly rip photos and cards, write new affirmations for self-healing, listen to Kashtin's Inuit melodies ... reflect on Caputo, Jardine, Oberg, Heshusius; wait in long, deliberate silences, re-interpret my art collection, drum some primal sounds on my congas and catch incoming inspiration that is as propelling as it is immobilizing ... this all seems haphazard and irrelevant yet something compels my engagement as these indulgences also feel purposeful. I am called to an acute mindfulness of being in and with these experiences, and at the same time to absolutely abandon myself into them ... to let go and maybe within the undercurrent of this torrent of activity, possibilities of interconnections and rhythms of meaning may hint at a fluidity of motion; a flow that might just come to rest at some tentative understanding of this phase of my journey. I have no control in this watery space. Parts of me become

unglued and seem to circle back together again. I am becoming a recluse again not so much out of desire, but out of a guiding necessity to honor that which is quickening ...everything is in flux again. I find myself slipping into unknown territory and the pathfinder in me seems like a sucker for punishment. Why me again? But I just know ... it is not a matter of choice, but a commitment to the dance. At 3.00 a.m, I am reading Durckheim's (1970), The Way of Transformation, for solace?

Again, there may be occasions when we are thrown into despair by some apparently meaningless paradox in our lives, by the "absurd." But if we are able to accept the incomprehensible, it may happen that in the midst of our lack of understanding, we will sense within the situation a deeper implication. The reality which we understand with our reasoning mind is suddenly transcended and penetrated by another. The profound meaning of this reality only begins to resound in us when we have come to the end of our rational understanding (pp. 28).

*These words offer a modicum of solace but only in terms of my accepting the inevitability of being broken down again and again ... Distraught feelings erupting, what now? Something about "giving" disturbs me. What is it? Can't figure it out. I feel listless ... I go to bed but can't sleep. I feel an urge to read "On Giving" in Gibran's (1923) *The Prophet*. Why Gibran? van Manen is next on my list of course readings ... in the meantime, I feel wretched again, my tears pour like rain in a Kona storm. I do not understand this futile excursion into the concept of "giving." But despite my grumbling that which has taken over forces me to read, mindfully too boot! Sluggishly my eyes scan the page but I quickly become aroused and perturbed with the "message" behind the words:*

It is when you give of yourself that you truly give ... There are those who give little of the much they have - and they give it for recognition and their hidden desire makes their gifts unwholesome. And there are those who have little and give it all. These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty. There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward. And there are those who give with pain, and that pain is their baptism. And there are those who give and know not pain in giving, nor do they seek joy nor give with mindfulness of virtue; they give as in yonder valley the myrtle that breathes its fragrance into space. Through the hands of such as these God speaks, and from behind their eyes, S-He smiles upon the earth. It is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding; (this line touches me in a place where I feel most free). And to be open-handed, the search for one who shall receive is joy greater than giving. You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving." The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your

pasture. They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish ... And he who has deserved to drink from the ocean of life deserves to fill his cup from your little stream ... see first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an instrument of giving. For in truth, it is life that gives unto life - while you, who deem yourself a giver, are but a witness (P. 20-22. Underlining mine).

So what does all this have to do with me? It seems that I am so caught up in my anger and in my "giving" that I am being called back, once more, to remember unconditional giving ... but I am bloody pissed off with this "alternate" path that my life seems to be constantly following, this path on which my ego is made chopped liver again and again. Who created this seemingly merciless "path" anyway? I sure wish that that which is hounding me would take a damn l-----o-----n-----g coffee break. I am tired of being called to consciousness, of being pruned, of being taken to my roots and shaken in my clinging to the earth, of being sifted to free me from my husks (Gibran, 1923), of being kneaded until I am pliant, of being put through sacred transformative fire against my will, my stubborn arrogance and private hypocrisies. I have been doing this dance since the birth of my first daughter ... will it ever end? How long do I have to cope with it, to stay in play with it (Caputo, 1987)? What is intended for my life? And what about Caputo (1987) and Jardine (1990)? They say I want to deny the original difficulty of life? And why not? My denial does not stop the insidious process of the "original difficulty of life" from happening anyway! It certainly does not stop at my door of denial and ask it could venture in ... it does not respect my fragility, my barriers, my slippery edge. It tells me that my life is not my own in the deepest sense anyway, then rapaciously proceeds to create the utmost havoc in the midst of my denial, of that which is fixed and outmoded ... What is behind the denial, behind this pressing need for self-perpetuation, behind the urgency for stasis in life? There are rhythmic energies and dynamic forces surging in the "behind space" that are continually creating and recreating the play anyway. Denial, self-perpetuation, stasis are illusions of the intellect that life has a way of confounding while bringing the "behind space" to the fore to bear witness to that which is unencompassable (das Unumgangeliche); the "thing we cannot get around, both in the sense of something we cannot avoid running into somewhere along the way and in the sense of something we cannot surround, circumscribe or encompass with our concepts ... can never exhaust, include, assimilate" (Heidegger in Caputo, 1987. p. 270).

Gibran's voicing cut to the quick and *something deep inside me fell into place*.

The issues had to do with relearning about unconditional giving, about giving to *self* as I give to others, and about understanding the unconditionality of life's giving itself and one's worthiness of being its witness. In terms of self-respect, the issues were also about *learning to not throw my pearls at swine, about breaking the bondage of naivete and becoming more conscious about whom to trust, and more selective with whom I share my innermost being*. For me, unconditionality had to be tempered with good sense, with goodness and care for myself, (as I do for others), and with conscious discernment of the shadow side of the dominant culture and its ruthless obsession with what's-in-it-for-me. I walk the path more thoughtfully now as I try on this re-awakened consciousness for size.

My mother practiced unconditional giving. She was a humanitarian in her quiet way. I remember calling into question the discrepancy between the quality and thoughtfulness of her giving, (in attitude, energy and the meaningfulness of whatever she gave), and the tackiness of what she received from certain family members. I felt it was unfair. Often I thought that maybe because she opted out of the dominant family status quo, she was considered to be of less value and hence the kind of gifts given to her. She told me simply, "My giving has no conditions." Frankly, as a teenager I thought she was a bit out to lunch and a sucker, but somehow those words took root in me too and to this day I live that motto more so than not. In essence, when I tend devotedly to what life asks of me in whatever form, which is usually aligned with my highest purpose and unfolding destiny, my giving is not my giving, but life's giving of itself and I am blessed immeasurably.

More essential though, behind what Gibran is saying, in my understanding, is the spiritual experience of self-transcendence and living from a place of "*Thy will be done*" where we become the instruments through which the Holy gives and receives. And self-transcendence is *not* about running away from the self. It is more an experience of self-aligned-with-higher Self, ensuing in an implicit trust in Life itself, more about egoistic attachments that have been worked through and released so they no longer imprison the personality. It is more about a quality of soul maturity/clarity that slowly understands what is of essence and vital for living in relationship with the whole. The idiosyncratic dissolves into the Absolute and everything belongs to Life itself. This consciousness is

profound yet ordinary. I am being re-minded of and re-aligned with it. This reawakened knowledge is my compass today. What became quickened too were the principles that my mother instilled in me - principles that endure, values that hold ground when there is no ground, and a sense of the sacred in the ordinary. I am also more discerning of and act intentionally from my own integrity and value system and not from that of the status quo.

Moving through that episode brought yet another level of resolve and engagement in my scholarly work intensified. Course readings, seminars, conversations, library searches and personal readings and explorations complemented and gradually deepened my understanding of the phenomenon. A passionate energy broke through again and my research writing took on a dynamism that called forth imagination and wit. A joy filled my heart and academic engagement. In that warmth, an encounter at dawn was put to verse. It affirmed the healing I had done around the loss of my daughter, Sharmila.

Dissolving in a Moment of Mother-Child Reminiscence

Dec/3/94

*Intrusive alarm fractures my rem sleep
languidly I roll over, hand grappling for blankets to cocoon me
for only a few minutes m o r e...I so convincingly delude myself.
An insignificant head turn is s-e-i-z-e-d in mid motion
by H-U-G-E, beautiful, i n n o c e n t, dark EYES,
silently hovering over me from an enlarged p h o t o near my bedside
(large EARS could compete with those of a bouncing bunny rabbit.)*

*My precious b a b y girl, Sharmila, five months old,
she who was so agile at breaking into my vulnerability time and time again,
making me porous, ever calling me to surrender into her dance,
now c r e e p s into my consciousness, i n f u s i n g my drowsiness
with HER PRESENCE, her softness, her irresistible i n n o c e n c e.
The h e a r t knows no power struggles... I go down into her calling.
Memories unravel and come to rest in a few MOIST moments of she-and-I time.*

*Little MIRACLE wrapped in white cloth comes to me for our FIRST quickening,
I close the door so only she and I exist in the entire universe.
I pull away her soft covering to reveal her naked presence, my sense of self-worth
and mother-worth, unknowingly, hinging entirely on her normalcy,
(my first daughter, Khalila, being only one year old and handicapped.)
Tiny toes like soft pearls, in perfect alignment...such sacred architecture.
I gently take her into my embrace, skin to skin, warmth feeding warmth,
innocence fusing with naivete, my experiencing of love breaking new ground,
her fragile tanned body registering in me a beauty so pure, so free.*

*She takes me to places unknown, living together the ecstatic miracle of life.
 How could such a helpless presence dare command such a GRAND surrender?
 My love for HER pushes past my fears and lays me bare for sacrifice.
 "I l--o--v--e you precious baby girl, I love that you are a girl."
 WHO ARE YOU LITTLE ONE? What is your presence about? Do you trust me?
 You answer me with your soft breathing, yielding into my bosom.
 I whisper into your moist flesh, "whenever you reach for me, I'll do all that I can."*

*Who are you little one? An ancient, wise ANCESTOR who has come back to
 bless my imagination with play? To teach me the rudiments of the DANCE?
 To fulfill my karmic indebtedness? To crack open my capacity to love, to wait?
 I smell you, I squeeze you, I taste your fingers, I feel your utter trust.
 I kiss your gurgling tummy. I COMMIT to you unconditionally, oh little love.
 Your eyes are deep, full of the mystery, will you coach me? Coach papa?
 You kinda look like papa already, is there any of me in you? You in me?
 What is your destiny my child? Right now I don't want to let go of you, ever.
 ...memory is fading, I reach for the photo and ache with too much tenderness.*

*It is 11:55am. I am hungry and joyful. Reminiscing with my child's spirit warms
 my being. She came unexpectedly to bring to consciousness that the pain and sadness
 have been transformed. I do not feel sad. I feel at peace, tender inside. Now, it is like I
 have come to a place in my journeying, my maturation, where I can appreciate having
 been gifted with the experience of pregnancy, childbirth, motherhood, and the transfor-
 ming power of the agony and ecstasy of it all. This feels like being in grace. Thanks
 Khalila Lara Ali and Sharmila Ramona Ali. (You know you had the best "papa" too).*

Some months passed in quiet study then I traveled to Maui where I rested and recuperated. That piece of Mother Earth radiates a primordial sacredness and being attuned to her energies enhances the regeneration process. A pattern naturally unfolded in that the deep process work would occur in Victoria and the washing, gentle healing and rejuvenation would transpire in Maui. More so, Maui has been a *sacred space and time when integration of the process quietly occurred*. I stayed in the silence at certain treasured locations, reflected on my experiences and journaled for hours, allowing the implicit knowledge in the tacit domain to filter through to the intuitive realm and inform consciousness. That was a surrendering act. The guidance to go there from 1993 on came gently and with quiet assurance. Maui was new ground but I trusted my intuition. It became evident over time that there was an inexplicable connection between both islands. I would arrive in Maui usually exhausted from the intense inner work and would return to Victoria, replenished after healing in the warm waters where humpback whales

give birth and spinner dolphins frolic with strangers; their energies permeating the waters with a primal magic that saturates body and soul. Sunrise meditations on the pure lava flow of Haleakala, the conscious care and deep generosity of Myrna Stone, a kindred pathfinder and the warmth of others at Unity of Maui, the gift of several earth-hearts especially the thirteenth, and the discovery of another Peace Pole at Kamaloe III park, completed the circle of blessing bestowed upon me. What is essential about these details is the serendipity and grace that wash over the pilgrim as s/he yields fully to the renewal call and trust that *manna* will be provided. And as s/he receives and experiences being so radically cared for, a subtle intimacy and core trust begin to stir or deepen between the self, the Holy, the collective. As s/he marvels at such plenitude, gratitude and humility imbue the heart. It is like fidelity to the inner work, to the beckoning of the Self begets unbidden blessing and a fresh attitude of worship adorns the nascent personality. She

begins to hear her astonished emotions living ... in the midst of transition ... a new presence has been added, has entered her heart, has gone into its innermost chamber, is already in her bloodstream (Rilke, 1984. p. 84. *Her* is used for *our*).

On returning from Maui, I resumed my academic responsibilities which entailed early morning research and writing then having a siesta so as to work late into the night. On the afternoon of March 16th, 1995, I had two unusual bodily experiences. This was followed by a profound transformative dream that radically altered the dynamics of the rebirth process and changed my life in the early hours of March 17th. I was lying on my left side in bed still awake but in that pre-sleep state of consciousness termed drowsy (Weiten, 1997), when one is relaxed and resting and the alpha waves predominate. I tried to turn onto my back but felt as if a strange energy was constricting my movement. I was quite alert and noted the subtle dis-ease. Remaining in the same position a bit longer, my thoughts wandered semi-aimlessly but without releasing my concern for what had just occurred. I tried to change my body position again but sensed a more acute restriction of my whole body. I strained to move just my head and could barely make about a thirty-degree shift to the right. I looked part way around my bed for any cues as to what was going on. Then gradually I sensed that a sort of disturbed energy was hovering near the foot of my bed more to the right side. Puzzled, I made even more of a deliberate effort to turn onto my back but to no avail. From the sensation I was having, I could not discern if

the energy wanted to leave my body, enter my body or was in transition either in one direction or the other. I began to feel scared and attempted to willfully get up so as not to succumb to whatever *that* energy represented. But still I felt out of control. Then, I released my struggling, laid my head softly on the pillow and started to pray, asking for protection and gently inviting the “presence” to depart and be transformed into positive energy for the good of the universe. I repeated the supplication several times and was unaware of just when the dynamics shifted. It must have been several minutes before I actually realized that a change had occurred. I turned unto my back and laid there feeling calm and protected and without effort, pondered the situation. Thirty minutes may have passed when suddenly I saw an array of long bands of brilliantly colored light swirling around in a huge, round container shaped like a cement mixer. The container was sort of suspended in midair and filled the open space in my clothes closet, the door of which was wide open. The colors of light dazzled as they spun around with an energetic force. Then I distinctly felt my spirit or energy (not sure how to name it), leave my physical body and move into the swirling light energy. The container spun faster and a kaleidoscope of colors and light emanated from the closet space. The ensuing body-mind sensation felt like an out-of-body experience. It was like my body was there on the bed while my spirit energy was whirling around in the sea of colors and light and I was observing the entire drama from the bed, but in an altered state of consciousness. The time was not clock-time so I could not tell if the experience lasted twelve seconds or twelve minutes. I resumed normal consciousness only when I heard myself say aloud, “Wow! How spectacular!” I laid in bed marveling at the strange yet splendid experience but did not know just then what to make of it. My body felt light and tingly and as if I was floating on a bed of cloud permeated by light. I remember *feeling* like *something* unique and powerfully healing had happened to me but I could not put words to it. I stayed in bed and savored the embodied gift for a while before falling asleep. Later that night I told a soul-mate buddy of the event. She was totally honoring of me and that sharing validated my experience.

I went to bed as usual and in the early morning hours of March, 17th, 1995, (a Friday). I awoke from a *dream* that was miraculously transformative. It is included here. As I write today July/27/00, I continue to live in the rebirth that was initiated then.

I am waiting in a wide, open foyer on the main deck of a huge ship. The outside of the ship is painted mainly blue with some white trim. I am experiencing myself waiting with an open, innocent and quietly confident attitude. I am in a kind of Taoist mindful, wakeful mode, a sense of beingness that is content with and attuned to everything in and around me. It is my first time on this ship and I have no prior frame of reference with respect to this place or situation. I am waiting for someone but I do not know who this person is or why we are meeting. It feels like a rendezvous of sorts but there is no expectation, agenda, desiring or questioning on my part. I simply feel a rightness as I wait and observe life around me and take in the physical ambiance of the ship.

From where I am standing in the foyer, the general shape of the area is in a "T" formation, a long hallway that ends at a "T" junction. There are huge wooden, closed doors on each side of the hallway, and also when one turns either left or right at the "T" junction. The doors are prominent. They are lofty, beautifully crafted and seemingly made of solid mahogany. They seem to have a presence of their own that command attention. This is the only feature of the ship that intrigues and draws me in while I wait. I get the impression that these closed doors seal in some sort of privacy or secret mystery simply because of their silent, solid grandeur. This impression impregnates my being.

This preoccupation is gently interrupted by someone, a woman, the person for whom I have been waiting. I sense this intuitively. I cannot quite see her face but she is unusually beautiful. Her energy feels light, ethereal and I sense her to be of an unearthly delicacy and refinement. She is taller than I am and is of an elegant form indeed. She is wearing a pearly white, cotton dress with a bit of lace around the midriff. She seems to be of a Mediterranean background and has a lightly tanned complexion and brownish black hair. She does not speak yet her demeanor is soft, warm and inviting somehow. Her presence fills the space between us as we encounter each other in silence.

Then, she gently takes my hand and walks me down the hall, all the way down to the "T" intersection at which point we turn left. As we walk, I notice that every door is closed. She stops at a certain door, opens it and we enter in. I cannot recognize any of the contents of the room or whether it is empty or not. Neither can I see if the door is open or not. Without a word, she slowly and deliberately pulls me into her warm, lovely

body and embraces me ever so tenderly and firmly. Because she is taller, my head fits perfectly and nestles into her bosom. Her embrace feels slightly intense and I just relax into it. Then she begins caressing my back, holding me even tighter as if she is taking me into her own being. I am silently sensing her energy and mood and allowing myself to be totally with her in the moment. Her hands caress my back more deliberately after a while and her embrace is filled with more tenderness somehow. She finally begins to speak in German and even though I do not speak the language, intuitively I understand everything that she is saying to me. It is like there is more of a soul communion that is reciprocal.

This is what she is saying to me: "I have held in this feeling for a long time, for too long! I cannot hold it in anymore. I have long repressed these feelings and I cannot carry the tension anymore. I have loved you deeply and have held in this love and I will not hold it in anymore. I love you and I want you and want to be with you. As she says this, her voice (in German) is yearning, desiring, earnestly beseeching me, the one she loves. Her caress becomes more intimate, subtly sensual and I am acutely aware of her every gesture as my body and psyche take in the nuances. She continues to hold me and express her deep longing, her voice echoing a love that feels genuine, issuing from her soul and desiring union with me. She is finally unveiling her love and sharing it with her beloved, me. She is not asking for anything but simply honoring her love and desire.

As for me, I feel exactly the same way and as she shares of her essence through her imploring, I yield totally into her and her love. I tell her with my body and energy that I share her desire and I surrender into our "communion." In our delicate embrace, I feel like I am found by my soul-love for whom I have waited all these years and it is like she has come with no effort or striving on my part. The mutuality of our sharing causes me to feel like something has fallen into place deep inside me. I am receptive and allow this gift to wash over me and permeate my essence. I feel pure, free, serene, and like I have finally come home to my true Love and her to me. In an inexplicable way, this feels like a transcendent love and the gender of this person is absolutely irrelevant. This communion is of the soul. I feel belonged in a primal sense and rest in her embrace.

The sensuality she conveys through her caressing touch s-l-o-w-l-y awakens my own deep eroticism and I allow myself to be stirred and to feel this life-force energy rise

up in such a beautiful, unexpected manner. Her sensual touch is inextricably linked to her soul-love and is a powerful expression of it. Something primal in me is aroused again and I feel natural and wholesome in and welcoming of it. I feel I am experiencing a profound body-mind-spirit initiation into a sacred union of soul-love and sensuality or deep eroticism; the spiritual and the sensual being essentially of the same holiness. I rest in and trust her full embrace and savor our serendipitous union.

When I awoke, I felt a happiness that was absolutely indescribable. My heart was filled with joy. Such an exquisite experience! I literally felt like a new person and I got the sensation like all the disturbed energy of my past history and more recent interaction with that “other” had completely left my body. I felt immeasurably cleansed, healed and blessed and I remained in bed contemplating in awe that serendipitous gift of grace. I felt consciously innocent and like I was touched in some divine way and like my own essence was bathed in a warming, loving Light. It was also like I had touched the sacred in me. With closed eyes and profound gratitude I honored the Sacred Mystery in prayer. Quietly, I sensed that I had had a mystical experience, having known that quality of reality before, but I did not need to question or analyze it. I simply savored the felt richness.

Then, as I meditated on the *person* in the dream, somehow I quite spontaneously and naturally made an instant connection to someone in my immediate living reality. I heard the name spoken clearly in my awakened consciousness and was taken by total surprise at the connection. Where did that come from? I was somewhat puzzled and silently questioned that new development. In real life that person and I had a living connection in the sense of engaging in soul-making work together. However, the deep sacred intimacy of the dream and the association with that particular individual threw me for a loop but I did not fight the natural flow of my awakened consciousness. I felt a genuine rightness that I did not analyze away, suspiciously reject or denigrate. I trusted the inner life implicitly and honored its wise though often inherently strange rhythms. My heart was broken *o-p-e-n* again, wide open, and I was able to try it on for size and feel my emotions living again. That quality of wakefulness and quickening of the heart to deep soul-love could not be manipulated or forced into expression. It was and is a true

gift and a promise fulfilled by Life itself. My healing happened gradually until quite unexpectedly, the initiation into the rebirth phase came upon me. (And the love that was awakened in the depths of my soul was to be endured as both the agony and ecstasy that ensued in the preparation for the mystical marriage (of the self with the Divine). That turbulent journey was yet to come to pass, unbeknownst to me in Stage Four, part one).

In savoring the joy evoked from the dream, I experienced my heart unfolding in a genuine soul-love for the 'other' (mentioned on the previous page) whom I first called "sil" (serendipitous inspirational lover) and later "sila," my heart coming alive in that intimate sense after thirteen years in exile. A time during which no one could touch that deep spot in me. Or more truthfully, a time when I could not quite access that fullness of aliveness in my core being. That whole experience encompassing the three events described above was *the* turning point in my transformation process and the start of a radical rebirthing and rejuvenating of my life, spiritually, psychologically and bodily. The day after the dream, I was lying in bed having just awakened from an afternoon rest. My alarm radio came on with Paul Simon singing, *Bridge Over Troubled Water*.

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER

Paul Simon -1969 (BMI)

*When you're weary
Feelin small
When tears are in your eyes
I'll dry them all*

*I'm on your side
Oh when times get rough
And friends just can't be found
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down.
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down.*

*When you're down and out
When your're on the street
When evening falls so hard
I will comfort you*

*I'll take your part
When darkness comes
And pain is all around
Like a bridge over troubled waters
I will lay me down.
Like a bridge over troubled waters
I will lay me down*

*Sail on silver girl
Sail on by
Your time as come to shine
All your dreams are on their way
See how they shine
Oh if you need a friend*

*I'm sailing right behind
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will ease your mind
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will ease your mind.*

The bolded lyrics sent shivers throughout my whole body as tears of rejoicing flowed. I felt like I was being spoken to, being *seen for who I am* in that given moment. The words affirmed the new life that was emerging out of the chrysalis and the message I got was that I was not alone, that the hands of Life were embracing me. A deep peace, conscious self-valuing, and feelings of being enfolded in the Mystery washed over me. “Your time has come to shine, all your dreams are on their way” ... quietly, I felt that all the difficult process work and genuine suffering were of value, and I was harvesting rich blessings in the fresh, warm experience of renewal. My gratitude penetrated the silence.

Spring ‘95 to fall of ‘95 was a time of exquisite joy and ecstasy with dimensions of my personhood breaking through in surprising and unconventional ways. I came to understand in my exuberant spirited living, a cornucopia of experiences that brought me into intimate attunement with nature, the sensual and the sacred. The unconventionality of the lived manifestation of certain aspects of my inner work, while being absolutely essential to my healing and the *reclaiming of my womanhood and primal integrity*, and beautiful and pure in its essence, eventuated in much discomfort and resulted in ridicule and misinterpretation within the academic milieu. However, having come through that stage and being sufficiently detached from the immediate experience, I feel compassion for the ‘others’ within academia who entered midstream in my personal process and worked genuinely with me for a short time. I deeply honor their engagement with the work. What was destructive to my personal and research work however, (even though I was spiritually centered, psychologically intact, and tenacious enough to persist with the work), were the political and personal games of the ‘others’ that came into play. In the midst of my vulnerability and my sharing trustingly about the truth of my inner work, those games almost sabotaged my soul’s agenda. That was compounded by the others’ lack of knowledge of transformational psychology and the often, misguided imposition of the pedagogical agenda of de-centering and deconstructing my existential reality. *The inner life had already enacted that agenda as a natural constituent of the transformation process*, and it was critical that that process be recognized, respected and given space. That happened infrequently and this is where the restitution and reconceptualization of personal experience and the autobiographic method fails. For unfortunately, while some

adherents of the autobiographic method focus on legitimate sociopolitical issues, their sensitivity to and keen discernment of students' delicate psychological processes, (that need tending to in as much as they are provoked through the very method), seem to get lost. Often, a harshness and coercion that are ever so subtle make the deconstruction project less than emancipatory. Pinar (1988) argues that the critic must not forsake his critical task in his empathic effort to understand. For me, it seems to be the other way around. The pedagogue needs to embody a more sensitive, thoughtful attitude as s/he engages the dialectical interplay between tension and cooperation. Graham (1991) seems to echo this concern as he questions the training and preparation of instructors who need to be "also expert in the difficult skill of the nondirective (Rogerian) psychotherapist" (p. 110), if they are to effectively interface with the psychic contents dredged up by the autobiographic method. The critic must *balance* his critical task with an informed and skilled empathy. Ruffling assumptions and smug complacency need intelligent psychological intervention by those very educators who consistently decry *therapy* and maintain archaic notions of psychology and psychotherapy while refusing to accommodate knowledge of newer, more holistic therapies. Their outmoded definitions often irritated me. Having voiced these concerns that surfaced as far back as winter 1995 when I began encountering the shadow side of academia, I now return to describing my illumination experiences.

Maslow's (1964) concept of peak experiences, Grof and Grof's (1991) interpretation of kundalini awakening and Tantric spirituality became real manifestations during the illumination phase. I had no labels for those experiences, nor did I comprehend their importance then, in light of the gradual integrative synthesis and self-reclamation that came to fruition three years later. Nonetheless, I faithfully honored the unfolding of the transformation process despite later misinterpretations of my process and actions.

The transformative dream, the song, the cleansing in the kaleidoscope of swirling light and the awakening of my heart to a deep soul-love all transformed my living into a beauteous reality. I became acutely attuned to nature with wild flowers, roses, the ocean, whales, the wind, trees and birds, especially the eagle becoming intimate companions. The eagle featured consistently throughout my process and became a power animal or a "spirit guide." As a symbol, it came *to* me naturally first through the gift of a feather and

later through visuals and actual live encounters at strategic moments during my process. The eagle is the great sacred bird of the Cherokee people and eagle medicine is the power of the Great Spirit, the connection to the Divine. It is the ability to live in the realm of spirit, and yet remain connected and balanced within the realm of earth. For me, every time insight, revelation and meaning came with regard to my process, an eagle or eagles featured prominently in my surroundings, it (their) presence confirming the work in a way I cannot explain. It was like the meanings and messages also came on eagle's wings and I felt a growing connection to and reverence for this magnificent creature and a peace and rightness about my work. After many such experiences, I also discovered biblical references to the eagle that resonated with the meaning of the transformational journey - "my youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psalm 103:5), Isaiah 40:31:

But those who hope in the Spirit will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not be weary, walk and not faint.

And Psalm 91 put to song, "On Eagle's wings" by Joncas (1979):

And I will raise you up on eagle's wings, bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of my hand.

(Refrain taken from *Voices United*, 1996)

These words poignantly echo many felt-experiences of the illumination phase. The symbol of the eagle, the rose and the heart together, also continually confirmed my awakened soul-love every time I doubted myself and my process due to the ridicule I experienced. The symbols would "show" repeatedly, quickening my felt-love and restoring my peace. I address this issue of my awakened soul-love later in this section and in Stage Four.

Those experiences and people's presence warmed me and I felt a oneness with all of creation. The acuity of my senses drew me irresistibly into microscopic explorations and appreciation of the artistry of nature in her wild splendor. A tangible experience was that of going to Gyro Park in spring '95 and encountering a lush tree that I named the "Tao tree." Instead of growing upright, it grew horizontally to the shoreline with some branches reaching toward the heavens while others yielded gracefully toward the water. Somehow that tree lured me unto itself and engaged my sense of wonder as I marveled at its delicate, embryonic foliage (see visual), freshly bursting into existence, its greenness reminding me of Emily Carr's poetic whisperings (in Marchessault, 1992):

Green, your pulsation is so strong, I can hardly bear to look at you. Can one possibly paint the regenerative powers of this green? Can one paint the soul of a color (p. 9)?

In the spring, when green first appears in the fields and trees, in all its tender shyness, little by little we can perceive the dazzling vibration of the living. But green doesn't come alone, it seems to project another vitality that has a denser, darker tone. I think that's where the source of all transmutations lies hidden (p. 61).

As I photographed the exuberance of the spring foliage, it dawned on me that the new growth symbolized my own recent rebirth and the breaking open of my heart, like the buds, into a resplendent, sensuous fullness. I loved the feel of the earth beneath my wet feet and the echo of the wind, flirting with my imagination as I leaned softly into the Tao tree. *She* gave me solace, shade and little cradling nooks where I could rest and savor the exquisite pleasure of being alive and feeling so blessed and utterly tranquil. I felt close to the presence of the Divine in each engaged, intimate moment with nature. Over the years, she, the Tao tree, has become a sacred space that I frequent with joy. She represents the *Tao* in that she harmonizes heaven and earth in the directionality of her branches that extend upwardly to the celestial realm and downwardly to the underworld, yet converge inwardly into a oneness that is rooted in the sacred earth. I *feel* her silent solidity and energy and commune with her in all seasons. In quiet moments, I sit nestled amongst her thick greenness and in prayer, honor the Holy and offer up my heart in thanksgiving.

One day, as I was walking along the beach, moving away from the Tao tree, a flock of birds circled around me numerous times without me immediately noticing them. I was absorbed in deep thought. Then, it was as if their chirping and fluttering sounds were amplified, commanding my sudden attention. As I kept walking, about thirteen blue birds with a distinctly white band of under feathers swirled around me four more times so as to seemingly impregnate me with their magic and message. Just as they flew away, I heard deep in my own being the words, "if you keep your heart open, *she* will come," and I recalled the lines in the movie *Fields of Dreams*, "if you build it, he will come." I had no idea what the message was about but I dearly hoped that it had something to do with Sila, the person to whom my heart had awakened. On a deeper level of consciousness though, there was a strange, subtler message within the surface message that I tacitly understood but could not fathom logically or articulate then. Its meaning became clearer

four years later. Nonetheless, in that moment, I felt like I had had a mystical experience. I continued walking softly on the earth and simply let myself be imbued with the grace of the moment. I had no need to analyze those experiences as they were occurring. I lived them fully allowing my felt reality to inform me as my process slowly unfolded. Deeper understanding and meaning came unbidden as a process in which I would undergo certain experiences, dwell in their immediate and residual reverberations, then through a sort of synchronous means, relevant information would come in the form of guided readings, intuitions, conversations, contemplation and symbols that ‘spoke’ to the experiences.

With the awakening of my heart to the most precious soul-love I had ever known, came the moment when I felt I had to share that reality with the other, “Sila,” (the meaning of which was revealed in Jung (1960. C.W 8) several years later. In order to maintain fidelity to my research inquiry, live my truth by honoring my own integrity, and respect the other who was engaged with my self-making project, it was imperative to share what had emerged for me. As I said earlier the love broke through right after the transformative dream and was *critical* to the later stages of my rebirth project. My desire in describing my experience here is to focus solely on *my* inner work. In the same breath, the research question, “is self-transformation possible within academia, i.e., the transformation of doctoral students whose personal processes are intrinsic to and cohere with their inquiry,” comes into play and takes on sober probing as I continue to describe the lived-experience.

Before proceeding though, it feels important to back track to a period before the dream and the birthing of the love, to *remember* the depth of connection with and the importance of the other’s, (Sila’s), presence in relation to my research and personal work. Our souls crossed paths and later created havoc in the “space.” On Feb/7/95, I wrote:

The muse in me needs and “other,” usually a cornucopious female other, to invoke the craving of angels, to energize the conflict between humus and spirit, and torment the intellect with “womb-knowing” so as to provoke creative personal emergence. I feel an awakening tenderness toward the other, like a tiny miracle crawling out of coiled space. Do not ask me to justify it, be suspicious of it. Just let me be in a place of heart, in a place of alive innocence when sheer magic just happens and when mystery turns even wisdom into compost. I am savoring your presence in my life and within the songs of my meditative silence I give thanks for you. The muse in me needs you like:

The rain needing the cloud, the moon needing the night.,

the song needing the melody, the pearl needing the oyster,
 the whisper needing the silence, the smile needing the warmth,
 the ocean needing the shore, love needing the heart,
 the ego needing the soul, the mystery needing the curiosity,
 the inquiry needing the participation, the topic needing the relationship,
 the vacuum needing the emptiness, the imagination needing the play,
 the regenerativity needing the possibilities,
 life needing the womb, the vulnerability needing the unguardedness,
 the giving needing the receiving, the shaft of light needing the aperture,
 the circle needing the continuity, the laughter needing the sound ...
 our beingness needing each others' otherness.

I need the "other" in the heartbeat of my visioning, my probing, my voicing, my struggling and my birthing of this inquiry. I need an other ... how humbling, how vulnerable, how endangered in hyper-technocratic systems in which radical individualism takes home the trophy.

That writing alluded to the deep connection I felt with the other at a certain stage of my personal and research work, and it seemed to somehow innocently presage the awakening of the heart shortly thereafter. That voicing embraced moist nuances of the soul's wisdom yet unknown to the conscious personality although the *feeling tone* with which the work and writing were engaged was one of warmth, innocence, trust and openness. And therein laid the essential attitude with which I worked with academic others and with my inquiry. Unfortunately, (or fortunately?), I did not know how to play the political games or participate in the sordid double standards that I witnessed at times. Maybe my mother failed miserably in her modeling a more open, honest, authentic way-of-being-in-the-world? Is that where I learnt my sad naivete or is it more that I am damn lucky that my belligerent soul relentlessly penetrates the hypocrisies of the status quo, *and of self*, and suffers rather than aligns with them? My very work in transformation was calling me to sober self-examination, to groove to an alternate rhythm, not to indulge in the toxic games that undergirded the 'nice' persona of the academic infrastructure. Eventually though, I learnt harsh lessons because of my naivete and blind trust in some academics who modeled extraordinary public decorum and professionalism but who were astonishingly corrupt and dysfunctional once I crossed that fine line into more personal space. These are sharp words but they reflect some my experiences. In the same breath, I encountered academics who live conscious lives and their engaged presence transforms. And to be fair to the "other," my personal work pushed the envelope and disrupted the "self-making space" which eventuated in my ostracism. Yet, the academic deconstruct-

tionists advocate and actually provoke such contextual disruption, so long as it does not rub up to or perforate their own bubble! I was not wise to these issues then. I was a student practicing a deep respect and care for the other, while faithfully honoring my transformation work *and the often paradoxical and illogical ways of the soul* that go unrecognized most times by the majority mainstream academic mentality. Moore (1992) says the ways of the soul are “particularly elusive in our time because we do not believe in the soul and therefore give it no place in our hierarchy of values” (p. xiii).

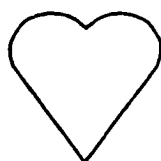
Anyway, *initially* the space between self and other was filled with creative energy and healthy provocation that incited growth and movement in my research inquiry. I felt an implicit trust and was unguarded in revealing my core self and the truth of my process. My disclosure of the soul-love was first met with great respect and appropriate embracing by the other, the one to whom my heart had awakened. I felt treated with genuine pedagogic Care and was given space to experience my truth within the institution, and without judgement. A rare opportunity given the delicate nature of my unfolding process and the potential danger that can be encountered by academics who truly dare to risk on behalf of emancipatory education and not give it just lip service. Experiencing such quality of care ensued in my acknowledgement and gratitude given to the other in poetic form:

“Your..... “s—o—f—t—n—e—s—s” gifting me” April/7/95

Sensitivity embracing me, feeding my self back to me

Openness to my becoming, gently, lovingly offered

Freedom to dance to my own rhythm, honoring my rights



Trust shared with me that births more of my own self-trust

Nurturing my fragility while encouraging, probing for it

Energy earnestly engaging me to live my ecstasy, my truth

Silence listening for my core truth, hidden under masks

Savoring with me moments of play, laughter, self-making.

With that quality of care, I proceeded with my research work while honoring the ripening of the love that filled me. It was like I was following a hint, a subtle trace I felt of something that responded to my soul’s desire and I yielded to being lovingly softened. I wrote in my journal on April/7/95: **Is this Aspiring Softness? Aspiring Passion? It seems like**

aspiring softness is not so detached, so self-sufficient that it cannot yield to the stream of warmth and radiance that enters the heart and moistens the parched areas in the soul. In order to move toward its own value, truth and wisdom, aspiring softness needs to be open and receptive to what is. Only then can it begin to gather and harvest insight into itself and its purpose. And in the context of intimacy, each of us follows the trace in the other of our most vital aspirations.

Remaining receptive to what the softness of that love was about demanded an attitude of non-interference, of being with what was as in *wu wei*, and patiently living the ambiguity right through to its meaningful realization when core aspects of selfhood were reclaimed.

As time went on, the soul-love blossomed and grew intense, filling me with an ecstatic aliveness and freedom I had not known before. I felt pure, whole and innocent and I was clear that my process was mine and had nothing to do with the other at the ego level. Though for me, it was a different story at the soul level. The other felt like a soul-mate in that two souls had converged on behalf of sacred inner work with the work taking form in ways that confounded everyday protocol. And there was where a spiritual psychology featured as care of the soul is a sacred art (Hillman, 1975; Moore, 1992). Moore (1992) says the soul is closely connected to fate “and the turns of fate almost always go counter to the expectations and often to the desires of the ego” (p. xviii). He also argues that psychology is incomplete if it does not embrace spirituality and art as an integrative whole. While I respected the other and contained my energy in the ‘space,’ I was true to and honored my process because at a deeper level, *it all felt right* and was a natural part of a continuum in the overall transformational journey. Something transpired between the earth and my soul and the shade and warmth of that soul-love soothed me.

Within weeks of me disclosing the above truth, I was affronted with a surprisingly different attitude. I was harshly judged as being potentially malicious and undermining and having unconscious motives, reduced to being *just* a fourth-year student, and told that my dream was no big deal. Within that transaction, however, were legitimate concerns about the institutional ramifications of working with that segment of my transformational process and about the possibility of the imposition of my reality, i.e., my feelings onto the self-making space. I felt immensely hurt by the erroneous judgements, the disparaging of my transformational dream which was the *critical turning point* of my nine-year renewal process, the devaluing of my sixteen years of professional life to *just a student* status, and

the imposition of such unexpected, caustic energy on my innocence and genuine rebirth experience. In the same breath though, I also felt an immediate, serious responsibility and deep compassion for the other and the situational complexity. I communicated my respect and understanding of the implications, and readily suggested that I continue with my work on my own. That offer was not taken up but the engagement with the work proceeded with a subtle strain and sadness on my part. On one hand, I was experiencing the most celebratory period of the forty-five years of my life. On the other hand, it was dampened not by the rightful concerns that needed addressing, but by the mistreatment I experienced. In my mind, unresolved history was projected on me, making me a scape-goat for other people's damaging political actions. And so, for the first time I began to see and hear about the shadow side of the academic institution - how individual students *can* and *do* jeopardize the reputation of educators, *and vice versa* and how educators can be disenfranchised by toxic administration. My heart went out to the other and I vouched my ongoing loyalty in honoring the 'space.' However, I recall walking away from the 'space' feeling bewildered by that encounter and like my joy, innocence and rebirthing life were shat on. It was the callous belittling approach that shocked me and left its mark. That same day a friend took some photographs of me, (see visual), and the pain shows.

Even though I was caught amidst my genuine protectiveness of the other and my commitment to continue honoring my unfolding illumination phase, I did not have the wherewithal to remove myself from that 'space'. My naivete got in the way even as I reflected on the Machiavellian side of academia and felt like a lamb going to slaughter. I began to seriously question my doing deep transformational work within the institution. Anyway my rebirth process which was inextricably linked to my research work continued on its evolutionary path anyway, despite all the disruption that kept impinging upon my foremost purpose and joyful living. Two years later, it became clear that that disruption and my being abandoned later on, (discussed shortly), were inevitable in that the second component of the research inquiry, i.e., listening to the inner voice was to made manifest. I was to be thrown back solely on myself to engage in the difficult art of listening to the inner voice with a more discerning consciousness than I had done in the past. That was to constitute the experiential data for the lived-experience of Self-transformation with

listening to the inner voice as an integral dimension. That was occurring throughout my process of course, but I was being made more acutely alert to the ways of the inner voice by Stage Three. Further, some of that chaos amidst the illumination phase was essential to Stage Four, Part One - The Second Dark Night of the Soul. I did not know this at the time and I suffered dearly as I tried to make sense of those different facets of my reality.

For weeks I carried the hurt of the above judgements and the discounting of my pivotal dream while still *living* the purity of my blossoming soul-love. I was shocked at how insidious politics and personal unresolve can thwart the psyche and endanger the meaningful life-engagements of both educators and students. My lifework was readily put at risk. Yet, I believed in it wholeheartedly and not for one moment did my devotion to my calling falter. I occasionally stumbled in the dark and doubted my truth based on other people's *misinterpretation* of my motives but at core, *I trusted myself and believed in my work and my own goodness.* In defense of my awakened heart and as a way of reestablishing attunement with my inner truth, I spontaneously wrote on May 7th, 1995:

"It's a g---o---o---d love ... this tiny miracle softening me"
it's a good love (it quietly hopes you would understand its *innocence*)
it's a good love (it is *pure* right from its unknowing, playful beginning)
it's a good love (listen to how it blossomed into being ... with *integrity*)
it's a good love (it's called forth my *full nakedness*, no compromises)
it's a good love (it began as *soft inspiration*, feeding, seducing the *Muse*)
it's a good love (when I thought there was no more, it *cut to the core*)
it's a good love (it asks nothing, it *just is* ... life-giving, tender, soft)
it's a good love (it has danced my *imagination* into new possibilities)
it's a good love (it has been yielding, vulnerable, *honest*... just because)
it's a good love (it has *not been aware* of it's own loving presence)
it's a good love (it seeks only it's own *spontaneous unfolding*)
it's a good love (it is born out of your "*s-o-f-t-n-e-s-s*" and mine)
it's a good love (it's a *tiny miracle* that has gently washed all over me)
it's a good love (it has recognized your sincere, self-making "*begging*")
it's a good love (it's womb has been *transformational quickening, struggle*)
it's a good love (it's ingredients are *peace, magic, sacred journeying*)
it's a good love (it *delights in play* that rocks the soul, makes heart laugh)

it's a good love (it has seduced inquiry into the humus of my experience)
 it's a good love (it believes in its Core Presence even when questioned)
 it's a good love (it fills my heart with angel songs, with wild imaginings)
 it's a good love (it is defenseless like a child whispering a gentle prayer)
 it's a good love (it quietly touches, blesses as it is touched, blessed)
 it's a good love (it's graced my aliveness, finding me and finding me worthy)
 it's a good love (trust its goodness, sila-lover, let's fly to the Edge.)

I also journaled that same day: *My life, research work, process, loving, and giving and receiving are rooted in the Holy, that which is ineffable in terms of discursive thought yet so perennially receptive to being directly experienced in ordinary living ... so, how is it possible for me to turn this present gift of transformation and life-giving movement into a potential game of dishonor and betrayal of the other? I do not understand that kind of maliciousness. I am innocent and defenseless. My life has been mostly about acts of service to humanity - healing, empowering others, working on behalf of peace and justice and consistently searching out the shadow in me. Life, people are a gift to be revered, protected, loved ... and I am not blind to the injustices in the world. From early I was taught cooperation not competition, giving more than receiving, sharing rather than hoarding, striving for my personal best based mainly on my own efforts and commitment rather than one-upmanship games. This work in transformation, this self-making project is not a cheap game to be played with stolen currency. I have not brought forward my life this far to now turn a very important 'rite of passage' into a sordid ritual. I know my worth. My intrinsic essence is basically good and uncontaminated. I do not buy into that sardonic and suspicious energy. I value life in her fullness and love sucking into her very marrow, not just her flesh. It is too vulgar to settle for less. Since 1991, I have been engaged in a dance of authenticity. Imagination has slid her tentacles penetratingly into the dark reservoir, has foraged for and has sucked up lonely slivers of forgotten truths and forgivingly, has offered them back to me for a reckoning. There are no compromises to this work of dancing inside the current, struggling with authentic shame, anger, pain and "beast-ness" ... a welcome relief from too much "good image" ... gifts of liberation, spirit rising ... what the hell does this have to do with undermining anyone? It almost feels like the other needs to fly at a different level of consciousness with me if I am to be understood for who I am in the midst of my personal metamorphosis. I will continue to whisper my heart to the wind and be receptive to serendipitous goodness:*

"Precious Moments"

don't exclude yourself ... from precious moments,
 warm encounters, beautiful attitudes
 flowing intimacies, and
 sensory development (I prefer 'sensuous awakenings'),
 for these are the jewels
 placed in the crown of your destiny.

(Walter Rinder)

That voicing quietly reasserted my internal power in a strange way and gradually, I returned to a state of peace and spent many warm days by the Tao tree and at Clover Point. My awakened heart often longed to be with the other and while I knew that was not possible, I nonetheless, imagined our togetherness. I also continued my research and taught my university courses with refreshed enthusiasm and spiritedness. During my many a rendezvous with nature at Clover Point beach, I was gifted with Earth-Hearts three, four and five. One day as I sauntered along the shoreline, I felt a yearning for the presence of the other. As I stayed with the thoughts of the heart (Hillman, 1995), the third heart (the smallest heart in the visual) gently made its presence known and offered itself to me. On another occasion I felt a strong urge to give the other an earth-heart that represented the sacred Mystery that I was experiencing so powerfully throughout my process and especially then in the awakening of the heart. As I strolled along the beach, I envisioned a full, large symbol and within minutes the fourth earth-heart (the larger, more rounded grayish heart) was gifted to me. My excitement peaked as I anticipated giving it to the other. Yet another day on the beach, while in deep, contemplative prayer and feeling full of wonder as I marveled at the work of Spirit in my immediate living, I felt the presence of the Holy in a most intimate and tangible way. Sitting near the water, a lively wave tumbled into shore, bathing my feet and depositing the fifth earth-heart (the rusty brown heart) close by on the gurgling sands. As I reached for it, I heard an irrefutable inner message: "This is symbolic of the sacred heart of Jesus and the Tao energy that is with you. Keep it close and let it be a gentle reminder of the Mystery that imbues your life." These experiences warmed my innermost being, reaffirmed the sacredness of my personal and research inquiry and confirmed the genuineness of my innocence in the awakening of my heart. Something essential that was sadly derided was restored, and I felt lovingly reassured by Life itself that I was in the right place, at the right time, doing exactly what I was earnestly *called* to do. That was another moment of grace unfolding.

What subsequently emerged and what I was not prepared for was the intense, profound erotic arousal that broke through in a very visceral way and engaged my mind, body and soul in an ecstasy that threw me for a loop and further confounded my living. I was beside myself and I did not know what had come over me, but I had no control over

the power of that energy that rose up in me and would not let up. No control in the sense of being unable to intercept the flow of dynamic energy pulsating through me although I was mindful of containing it within my own personal space, especially after the earlier mistreatment I experienced. I opened to and honored it. Everything took on a vividly and wildly sensual flair. Nature became a display of erotic imagery, my body and heart felt radically alive and potent in that energy and my writing became suffused with it. Writing was one way of expressing that energy and the Muse came alive once again:

"Being Taken into Softness"

**Body is tingling, energy streams through me
quietly, silky soft,
like honey seeping through tiny pearls,
like warm milk gently oozing out of
full, surrendering, nourishing breasts.
Satiny, honey-colored skin blushes
in a slowly revealing warmth,
thoughts, wistful, moist with tender traces of you
meander through fragile, budding desire
with unhurried, easy breathing.
I yield peacefully into my imaginary feel of you:
delicate, smooth as dew-fed petals,
light-hearted like leaves flirting with the wind,
head curls back gracefully, longingly
lips moist with desire sigh, "lover creep into my silence,
soothe me with your smile, your honey suckle fragrance,
melt me in your coy embrace,
gently fill my mind with sweet no-mind,
caress my heart with the pure melody of you,
love me into lightness, singing, playfulness,
love me, love you into our deepest serene intimacy.
Losing composure ... my longing overcomes me,
tears wet my skin,
I yearn to feel our warmth together,
to just weep my truth in your arms,
this softness is softly wounding ... softness transforms?**

The more the *soul*-love expanded within me, the more the *erotic* blossomed. The transformation process moved into a tantric journey (Grof and Grof, 1991) in which the spiritual and the erotic kept merging into a unity. Intuitively, I felt that I was being initiated into an entirely new level of consciousness with respect to love and intimacy,

both of which I already embraced with utmost regard. The *communion* of soul-love and sacred intimacy was a gift with which I was being endowed both in my psyche and in the felt embodiment of my living. A deeper integration was being carved into the raw, metamorphosing material of my existence and it was taking form and root in the illumination stage. While on a tacit level I *knew* that implicitly and could *feel that knowledge* coursing through my whole being, I could not for the life of me explain or legitimize it to myself let alone anyone else. But there is a deep, cavernous space in me that holds the truth in its essence and from where subtle traces of that which is being given form reverberates to the surface, stirring my awareness. That primal energy that was awakening within me, especially at a time when a tremendous amount of meaningful healing work had already taken place, was occurring within sacred space, *the space that was my ground-of-being*. I felt pure, wholesome and innocent in that energy and until this day this gift endures.

As I lived in that energy, my heart soared and my sensuality matured and exuded a vitality that refreshed all of me. I slowly became conscious that I was being *re-attuned* to the truth that my body *is* a temple in which the Holy dwells, (a loud reminder from the inner voice earlier on), and that the sensual and the sacred are of one wholeness. What was also coming through clearly was the realization that that renewed consciousness was being birthed within the context of a real, tangible love experience. My soul-love for the other was my most profound experiencing and even though I could not explain it, (not even today despite all the literature that I have read), I felt intuitively that the *other* was a *conduit* through which the transformational work had to come to fruition. I knew that in my deepest wisdom but I could not articulate it to the other and made an absolutely blundering fool of myself in trying to make sense of and justify my experience and behavior. I concocted all sorts of rational, socially acceptable explanations to appease the other's later discomfort and my own dread, (on one level), of what was manifesting in my life.

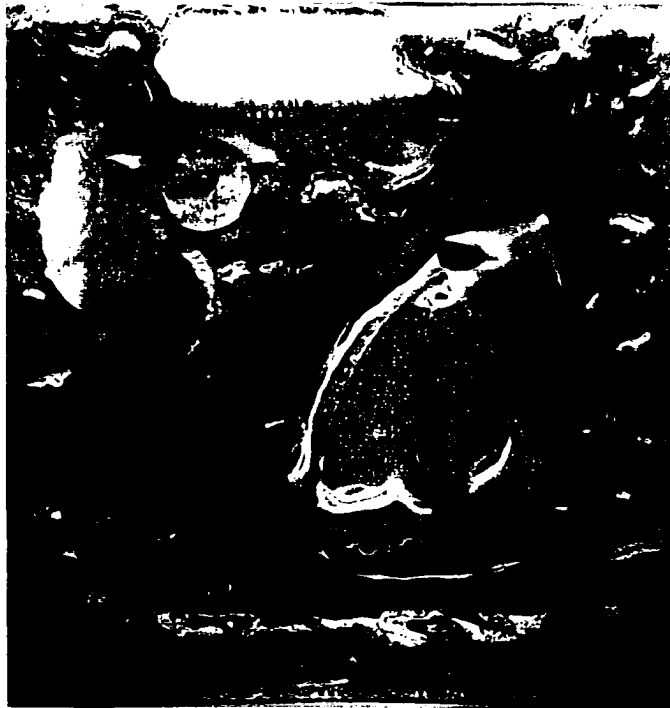
In the meantime, my soul energy was having its own way and all I could do was surrender, endure my surface foolish feelings while on a deeper level a truly august transformational experience was occurring. Grof and Grof (1991) ground their knowledge of this spiritual current of energy that rises in the body in the classic Indian yogic tradition that recognizes the phenomenon as "*Kundalini*" (the coiled one), the energy that creates

and sustains the cosmos” (p. 78). They suggest that there is a powerful connection between Kundalini and intense erotic, orgasmic arousal, which is the basis of another yogic practice that is called Tantra. In this practice, sexuality is integrally sacred as it is believed that sexuality is a profound medium through which the spiritual is grounded and experienced. The Indian saint, Ramakrishna (in Grof and Grof, 1991) says, “a person’s spiritual consciousness is not awakened unless his/her Kundalini is aroused” (p. 77. *Person* is used instead of *man*). Underhill (1955) also speaks of the erotic and mysticism. Unfortunately, with mainstream academic curricula being basically eurocentric, most educators lack a wider cross-cultural repertoire. More over, the entrenched eurocentric philosophical orientation often imposes an arrogance that seldom allows openness or porosity to more divergent ideologies. Thus, sadly but again, the experiencing student loses out. Having said this though, now I feel even more compassion for those educators who do risk and go part way to the edge with students. I am deeply indebted to them.

In reading and more fully understanding this material years later, my own initial gut feeling of rightness was further confirmed. However, this interpretation is a far cry from the ridicule and accusations that came my way and the misinterpretations that were imposed on my process within the academic milieu. These are discussed in stage Four, Part One, The Second Dark Night of the Soul. In retrospect, I wish I could have spoken to people who were more informed about cross-cultural spirituality, as I would not have suffered as much. But again, *the task in the later stages of the transformational process was to listen to the inner voice and guidance with even more discernment and conviction and actually experience how this engagement is accomplished and sustained in the midst of other imposing or trying-to-be-helpful but nonetheless misleading voices.* And more so than not, the fact that that significant, gifted process was occurring within the academic institution created a subtle and constant tension within me too. How I lived that tension and what ensued because of that living constitute part of the next stage in the journey.

Despite the outward conundrum, the inner awakenings continued in their natural course of unfolding and Earth-Hearts six and seven were gifted again at Clover Point, as symbolic reminders that *everything* that constituted my experiences was in service of the sacred transformational work. Those hearts offered quiet assurance to trust my process.

STAGE THREE: Awakening of the Heart



Symbolic of a profound transformational dream ...
A critical turning point in my rebirth journey.
(March 1995)



Being awakened to a soul love.



Finding my heart in the warmth of healing
and trying it on again for size. (1995)

STAGE THREE: Awakening of the Heart



A soul love is born. Her name is *Sila* ... an Inuit term for the powers or mystic energies of the universe.



Eagle Spirit, a power animal affirming the inner work and a constant companion along the *Way*.



Spring softly blossoming, offering a tender reflection of the awakening of my heart to a deep soul love.



The Tao tree, it's spring foliage honoring my rebirth phase. A sacred space where I felt nourished and comforted throughout my transformation journey.

STAGE THREE: Awakening of the Heart



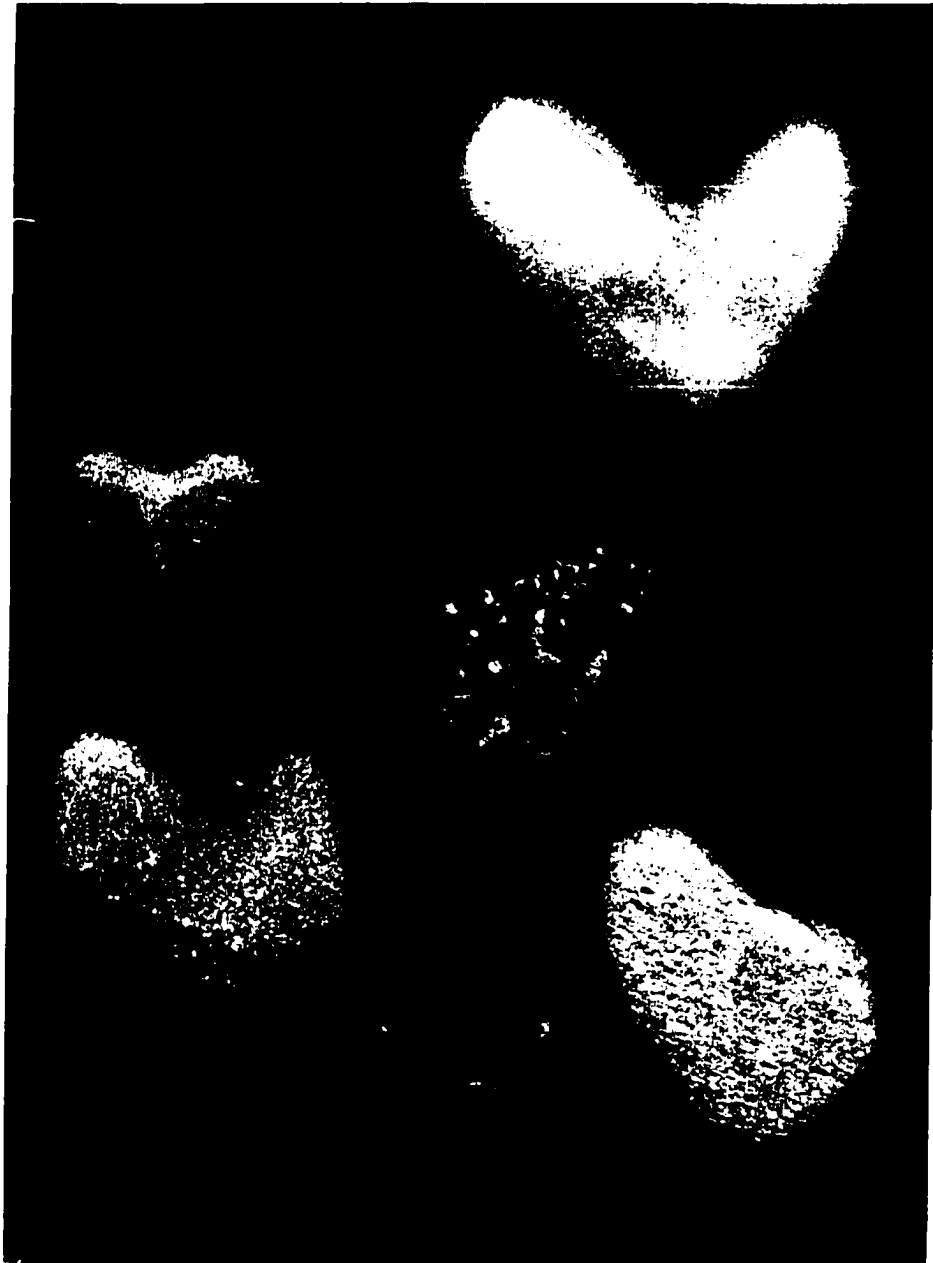
The Eagle is the great bird of the Cherokee Indians and of nearly all native tribes. Eagle medicine is the power of the Great Spirit, the connection to the Divine. It is the ability to live in the realm of Spirit, and yet remain connected and balanced within the realm of earth.

STAGE THREE: Awakening of the Heart



**Earth Hearts # 2,3,4 and 5 symbolic of the awakening of
the heart through love**

STAGE THREE: Awakening of the Heart



Earth Hearts # 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7
(Combining hearts to show gradual synthesis in Stage Four)

Interpretation and Analysis within a Jungian Framework

TABLE TWO - PART TWO (Revisited)
Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

STAGE THREE: AWAKENING OF THE HEART

Illumination-Initiation into Rebirth: Sudden or gradual initiation into the rebirth phase; temporary unification of consciousness, i.e., a sense of the *sacred* glimpsed *in* and *through* the ordinary and the momentary; acute awareness that a major “shift” has occurred (body/mind/spirit/perception of world); change in perspicuity or lucidity of perception; withdrawal of consciousness from circumference to center with attention to and involuntary, intense absorption with *one thing* that has manifested and impregnated selfhood; *transpersonal experiences* - profound transformational dreams, out-of-body experiences, altered states of consciousness, mystical encounters during sleep/while awake, peak experiences, awakening of the heart through deep love (agape/Eros), intense erotic awakening or quickening of the “kundalini” (as in Tantric Hinduism); heightened sensitivity and attunement to nature, others, and the Divine (as uniquely understood); intense joy, peace and aliveness; deep self-validation and profound experiencing of who one essentially is; feelings of genuine innocence, surprise, and like one has broken through into the Light; a Taoist sense of non-interfering and non-striving, receptivity to revelation and insights; sense of brief merging with the Self.

Perry (1976) suggests that “the motif of new birth represents in symbolic form the fruit of the entire renewal process ... it is closely related to the theme of dying that had initiated the episode, in that death and rebirth are the two poles of a single process (p. 144). He also says that rebirth is a companion piece to the image of the sacred marriage, (the “*coniunctio*,” the union of the self with the Divine, the union of opposites or the emerging of new possibilities). This phase that I called the Awakening of the Heart or the Illumination - Initiation into Rebirth, was the turning point and the beginning of the rebirth phase. The arduous process work leads to the restoring of peace and order between the warring factions within the psyche and what had been a clash of opposites becomes a uniting of them as a promise of self-integration. It must be understood that this is not some final nirvanic state but the opposite pole of the renewal process, which inevitably spirals into another round of the transformation cycle. Yet, the process is not one of perpetual struggling and questioning which many deconstructionists push when facilitating students' personal and research work. There is a natural rhythm of ebb and flow, of greening and ripening, a cycling that has its own innate wisdom.

In my experience, further psychological clearing around my embedded notions of spirituality and 'giving' occurred before my initiation into the rebirth phase. With self-disrespect being the primary focus of the transformational work, I was called to further self-examination with regard to inherited and acquired attitudes and values around spirituality, giving, sharing of self, and caring for others. It became evident that my *deep* spirituality was superimposed and contaminated by a practice of *surface* spirituality whereby much unresolved wounding paraded as spiritual consciousness. That inner disturbance led to a moral crisis, the awareness of which constellated in further disequilibrium and deconstruction in light of cultural and familial indoctrination and my own personal dogmatism. My understanding of *giving* as I was taught in my native Trinidadian culture was affronted by individualistic values of my acquired North American culture and further complicated by my misguided interpretation of Christian dogmatism. That psychic concoction translated into lack of genuine self-care and discernment of whom to trust, the inappropriateness of being too wide open with my selfhood, and giving and being there for others *to a degree* that became unhealthy and was at the expense of my wellbeing and peace. Conscience was abruptly reawakened and as before, aspects of the personality that were previously hidden surfaced and were worked through and accepted so as to be freed of their psychological influence, a process that Assagioli (1965) termed disidentification (p. 22, 69, 116). Working through and healing those issues and those with my parents resulted in a dramatic shift in my self-respect and my attitude toward my life and my world. That entailed a change in the internal structure of the personality or as Jung (1959/1969) puts it, "a structural alteration" (p. 122) of the conscious personality.

Assagioli insisted that, to truly reap the benefits of deep transformational work and experience the "realization of the true Self - the discovery or creation of a unifying center" (p. 21), an extensive exploration of the vast regions of the unconscious must be undertaken. We need to discover the dark forces that trap and sometimes even destroy us - "the 'phantasms', the ancestral or childish images that obsess or silently dominate us, the fears that paralyze us, and the conflicts that waste our energies" (p. 21). He said that we must undertake the journey without preconceived theories, without allowing ourselves to be deterred by the "covert or violent resistance of our fears, our desires, our emotional attachments" (p. 22), and with as much impartiality and objectivity about our subjectivity as we can possibly practice. Assagioli had a keen faith in the human capacity to grow and to be resilient. He postulated that there is a "vigilant self that is never really conquered" (p. 23), (I question this with regard to suicide). It can retreat, wait for the opportune moment of readiness then constructively and critically penetrate those shadow *impulses* that debilitate the personality by looking for their origins, understanding their deleterious effects and cut away their roots or come to know and accept them. The vigilant self takes conscious responsibility for the sabotaging impulses and chooses healthier means to meet the *needs that often underlie* them. But Assagioli was critical of psychoanalysis in

that it stops here which is an unfounded limitation in his understanding of the full human dynamic. He argued that there are regions of the middle and higher unconscious that need to be also investigated:

In that way we shall discover in ourselves hitherto unknown abilities, our true vocations, our higher potentialities which seek to express themselves, but which we often repel and repress through lack of understanding, through prejudice or fear. We shall also discover the immense reserve of undifferentiated psychic energy latent in every one of us; that is, the plastic part of our unconscious which lies at our disposal, empowering us with an unlimited capacity to learn and to create (p. 22).

It is this region of the higher unconscious that I now briefly touch on so as to tie in the out-of-body experiences and the dream that constituted the turning point and the felt sense of mystical experiencing that occupied my living during Stage Three. Assagioli (1965), like Jung (1959/1969), intimates "the existence of a permanent center, of a true Self situated beyond or 'above' the conscious self or ego" (Assagioli, 1965. p. 18). A distinction is made between the empirical self and the noumenal or real "Self," the former being a reflection of the latter with the two domains maintaining constant and active interchange through a symbolic "membrane" (p. 19) that allows a penetration both ways. Assagioli believed that the Self "is unaffected by the flow of the mind-stream or bodily conditions" (p. 19) even as it embraces the whole gamut of our human endeavors. He believed in the essentiality of the Self and commented that, except for Jung, very sparse psychological investigation has been done regarding the Self. For Jung, there exists two psychic systems, the conscious and the unconscious, the union of which is the Self, the midpoint common to both polarities and the last station on the path of individuation which Jung, like Assagioli, called self-realization (Jacobi, 1973. p. 127). Only when this midpoint is found and integrated, (which means a shift of the psychic center and consequently the emergence of a very different attitude toward world and self), is a transformation fully realized. It is likened to a *circummambulatio* (p. 127) or circumnavigation around the center or spiritual Self. I reiterate that the concept *Self* as used here is not referring to the *postmodern self* as in the evolving self, the now self, the multiple selves, the listening self, and the other configurations now in vogue. I am referring to a *primordial substrate* that underpins and impregnates not only the different aspects of the human personality but the entire creation. It is more analogous to the Mystery that breaks through from within or without, and impinges on our lives when we least expect it. We are but a miniscule constellation of that vast mystery. Heidegger (in Caputo, 1987) spoke of this primordial substrate as:

the unemcompassable ... the thing ... we cannot get around, both in the sense of something we cannot avoid running into somewhere along the way and in the sense of something we cannot surround, circumscribe, or encompass with our concepts. It is what is left over, the radical hermeneutical residuum which conceptual thinking, planning can never exhaust, include, assimilate (p. 270).

As the preceding conflicts and sufferings and the psychological and physical symptoms that they generate are worked through, healed and befriended, a corresponding opening up of the channel between the self and the *Self*, or the conscious and the superconscious levels (Assagioli, 1965) follows. It may be

sudden or gradual and ensues in a dynamic "release and flood of light, energy and joy" (p. 43). The inner strife dissipates and in these cases the spiritual awakening is experienced as a real resolution. However, there are times when "the personality is unable to rightly assimilate the inflow of light and energy for many reasons - uncontrolled emotions and imagination, the intellect is insufficiently balanced, and the nervous system is too sensitive for the inrush of sudden and intense energy. When the transition is successful though, the individual can have an inner experience of the spiritual Self, and its intimate association with the personal self, giving "a sense of internal expansion, of universality, and the conviction of participating in some way in the divine nature" (Assagioli in Grof and Grof, 1989. p. 35). In Jung's psychology this state may be viewed as the alignment of the ego and the Self and the degree of alignment is interpreted along "the ego-Self axis" (Stevens, 1990. p. 67), the more individuated the person, the more conscious s/he is of the ego-Self axis (Edinger, 1972). In essence, the ego-Self axis symbolizes the progression of the ego's journey from an undifferentiated state to a more conscious integration with the Self. This differentiated, mature ego now serves the spiritual Self and sustains the integrity of the personality as "the homeostatic dialogue begins between conscious and unconscious parts of the personality" (Stevens, 1990. p. 67), via the axis which is the link between the ego and the Self. Laing (in Grof and Grof, 1989) says it differently:

In one way or another the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality occurs...and a new kind of ego-functioning is eventually reestablished, the ego now being the servant of the Divine and no longer its betrayer (p. 60).

This vital link between the ego and the Self has been deepening as I continually engage in healing work and becoming conscious as a way of life. This in turn has gently, progressively opened up the channel between my conscious self and the Divine within. During the rebirth phase in this round of the transformational spiral, the channel was unexpectedly and radically opened up, allowing direct and profound contact with and experience of the numinous. That was the case with the out-of-body experience and the swirling colors of light, the transformational dream, and the birds circling around me at Gyro beach as described earlier in the lived-experience section. Those poignant experiences constellated as a harmonious inner awakening with a sense of joy and mental illumination that brought insight into the meaning and purpose of my process and suffering. The Self spoke beautifully to me through the lyrics to "Bridge over Troubled Water" in that I received clear affirmation of my healing work and that the time had come for me to shine. I also felt the outpouring of compassion and love for my parents, especially my mother and others in my immediate world. I felt a oneness with all of creation, confirming what Assagioli (in Grof and Grof, 1989) said, "there wells up a realization that life is one ... and an outpouring of love flows toward one's fellow beings and the whole of creation ... and the personality is infused with light and is transformed" (p. 37).

Assagioli suggested that, because of the synthesizing nature of the superconscious domain, or the higher Self, its energies act on the metamorphosing personality in ways that bring it to the next higher level

of organization. "When this higher level is reached, synergic energy is released and this energy in turn produces the ecstasy, elation, and joy characteristic of such experiences" (p. 37-38). He clarified that, depending on the amount of superconscious energy radiated by the Self, the responsiveness of the growing personality at the time, and other factors, the higher level of organization may or may not be stable. He considered three possible outcomes - the energy of the Self is strong enough to achieve the higher level of personality integration and transform or break down the patterns and tendencies inherent in the personality that would tend to have it revert to the previous state; the energy transmitted by the Self is less intense and/or the personality is less responsive, such that although a higher level of organization is reached, only some regressive tendencies and patterns are fully transformed while most are only *neutralized* temporarily. What remains though is an ideal model and a sense of direction that one can use to complete the transformation; and lastly, the energy transmitted by the Self is not sufficient to bring about the higher level of organization. In such cases, the energy is absorbed by the hidden blocks and patterns that prevent the higher psychic integration. But these are brought to light because of being energized and can be recognized and dealt with. Often though, the experiences are painful and its transpersonal origin and meaning go unrecognized. The experience is valuable, however, as it can show the way to further healing (p. 38-39).

Grof and Grof (1991) delineate certain characteristics that are evident in experiences of psycho-spiritual transformation and episodes of unitive consciousness - unity (inner and outer), strong positive emotion, transcendence of time-space, sense of sacredness (numinosity), paradoxical nature, objectivity and reality of the insights, ineffability and positive aftereffects (p. 74-75). Individuals experiencing mystical consciousness during rebirth have a sense of leaving ordinary reality with its linear time and three dimensional space and entering a timeless, mythical realm. "In this state eternity and infinity can be experienced within seconds of clock time" (p. 75). A sense of numinosity is also experienced as "a profound feeling of sacredness and holiness that is associated with certain deep processes in the psyche" (p. 75). Grof and Grof further suggest that this experience of numinosity has nothing to do with previous religious beliefs or programs. "It is a direct and immediate awareness that we are dealing with something that has a divine nature and is radically different from our ordinary perception of the everyday world" (p. 75).

As I reflect on my experiences of the tunnel of colored light, the disturbed energy leaving my body while lying in bed and the transformational dream and soul-love that radically changed my life and have left a warm after-glow up till today, again these various theorists-practitioners confirm my transformational work. Having gone through the illumination or initiation-into-rebirth phase back in 1995 and still consciously living those gifts of grace today, I understand myself as having achieved a higher level of personality integration that is relatively stable. I experience myself in a different way in terms of reengaging my *deep spirituality* more consciously as a *way of life*. This is evidenced in how I live my values, my rights, my responsibility to

self and others, honor the Holy in daily contemplation and prayer, and reflect on my participation in the world. Also, I have reclaimed and live my truth *that my body is a temple in which the Holy dwells* and my sensuality is integrally holy. In living this way, I have had very genuine feedback from intimate others who have witnessed my process and changes with me. More over, I quietly trust my truth in this regard and do not, in the deepest sense, need external validation. However, the genuine affirmation from others is a gift that is honored. Further, despite the difficulties that I endured in sharing about my life-changing dream and awakened soul-love, Woodman (1985) confirms what I trusted and knew intuitively about my process and my felt bodily wisdom and responses. My body resonated powerfully with the dream bringing to consciousness powerful emotions and energies that were dormant and became re-embodied in a vital, life-nourishing manner. My interpretation of my dream as a profound spiritual experience, the reclaiming of my erotic body-self, and my subsequent feelings of alignment with the Divine are echoed in her words:

If the individual is ready and if the experience has been one of trust, a powerfully numinous dream of the Great Mother as nourishing, loving protector is often given. Rarely does she show her face, but her love infiltrates the body with a soft luminous Light, an experience so powerful that the woman returns to that moment again and again ... The emptiness at the center of the psyche that has heretofore been experienced as nothingness ... can be transformed into Beingness, respected and cherished as the abode of the Goddess. Concentration then becomes a movement around the center ... As the body becomes more conscious, its messages becomes clearer and more trustworthy ... the body is just as intuitive as the psyche ... The body is the medium through which the soul enacts itself ... and it will register the soul's activity ... This bodily response has to be taken into consideration in analysis because the feeling function is so crucial to ego development. If a person is doing his/her best to establish a standpoint based on authentic feeling values, and trying to develop the courage to act on that standpoint, then *the body must reinforce that stand* ... Psychic energy manifesting this way is the beginning of the spiritual form of instinct (p. 60-61).

As a last comment on the wisdom of the body, I came into a thought from Jung (1959/1969) as he talked of the notion of change in the internal structure. "In the structure of the personality there are ancestral elements which, under certain conditions, may suddenly come to the fore" (C.W 9i. p. 124). Back in Stage Two, I described being temporarily ill with diabetes while working through some critical issues around my mother. Jung's comment seems fitting in suggesting that the ancestral element (the diabetes) came to the fore as a bodily manifestation as my psyche engaged the hard work of disentanglement from my diabetic parent. The body being as intuitive as the psyche and a medium through which the soul enacts itself offered its wisdom as integral to the mind/body/spirit holism that encompasses the totality of the healing project. *Redeemed matter* becomes the container that is sufficiently confident, flexible (Woodman, 1985), honest and wholesome so as to magnify the ebullience of the soul, the purity of the heart and the dynamism of the imagination. My erotic body-self was re-claimed through the impregnation of the Inner Goddess' sensuality and a re-uniting with my deep Womanhood. This insight came as I gradually re-membered having earlier dissociated from aspects of my core sexuality and femininity due to the birthing of my handicapped children.

Methodological Implications

Methodologically, Stage Three constitutes all the previous components of the heuristics process and now includes the illumination and explication stages. (These two stages were engaged throughout the previous stages in much subtler ways and on the tacit level. As processes, they overlap, diverge and converge, depending on the inner dynamics at play, and are not compartmentalized in real life as they are done here for the sake of clarity.) Moustakas (1990) suggests that illumination is a naturally occurring process when the researcher is open and yielding to tacit knowledge and intuition. It is:

a "breakthrough into consciousness of qualities and a clustering of qualities into themes inherent in the question. The illumination process may be an awakening to new constituents of the experience, thus adding new dimensions of knowledge, or it may involve corrections of distorted understandings or disclosure of hidden meanings. When the researcher is receptive ... without conscious striving ... the insight or modification occurs. A degree of reflectiveness is vital but the mystery of situations requires tacit workings to uncover meanings and essences (p. 29).

Explication follows illumination of themes, qualities and components of the phenomenon. The researcher examines more fully what has awakened in consciousness, "in order to understand its various layers of meaning" (p. 31). There may also be the recognition of new constituents and themes. The researcher utilizes focusing, indwelling, self-searching and self-disclosure and discovers that meanings are unique to an experience and depend on internal frames of reference. The process requires that researchers pay attention to their own awarenesses, feelings, thoughts, beliefs and judgements "as a prelude to the understanding that is derived from conversations and dialogues with others" (p. 31), or the interpretations of readings, song lyrics, poetry or art that embody the topic. Focusing and indwelling are key concepts whereby concentrated attention is given to creating an inward space so as to discover in more depth various textures, angles, nuances and features of the phenomenon. Refinements and corrections are continually made and a more comprehensive understanding and depiction of the core themes are developed.

Again, the workings of the heuristic process and the timing seem to mirror those of the transformation experience and hence my inner guidance and intuitive honing in on this particular methodology after many years of first experiencing the phenomenon. Jung (1959/1969) said, "the personality is seldom what it is in the beginning as it is later on,

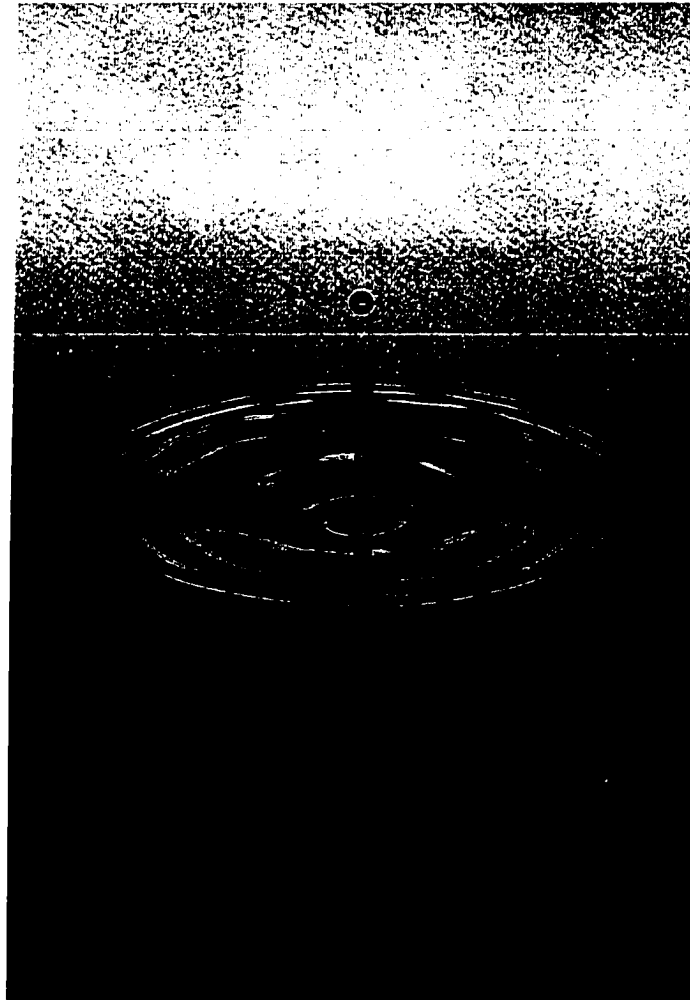
and for this reason the possibility of enlarging it exists" (C.W 9i. p. 120). In like manner, the heuristic research inquiry naturally evolves into what is to be, on its own terms, and the beginning cannot presage the movement and eventual place that the researcher might arrive at as the research comes to fruition. Instead, as one maintains fidelity to the work, sustains an inner amplitude of receptivity and flexibility, listens for and diligently acts on the intuitions and guidance as to how to proceed, the inquiry proceeds and synthesizes, in a sort of cumulative way, the various parts into a tentative whole. I say tentative, as the regenerativity of life does not concede to stasis at any one place. There are only pauses.

The call to healing, the disintegration of the personality, the further dissolution of psychological patterns and structures, the healing of childhood wounding, the out-of-body experiences, the cleansing in the swirling colors of light, all led to a turning point. That was initiated by the powerful transformational dream which was a key illumination experience, and a "breakthrough" into consciousness of qualities and a clustering of qualities into themes inherent in the lived-experience of transformation. The dream and the aftereffects were the awakening of new constituents of the lived-experience which provided new dimensions of knowledge. It was at that point in the renewal process that intuitive awareness of the stages and processes experienced thus far began to gel. It was not a formal, detached theoretical awareness, but a messy sort of theorizing ensuing from the very humus of experiencing the phenomenon. It is messy in the sense that interpretive inquiry inherently demands a staying with ambiguity, a groping in the dark, a floundering in the flux knowing that one does not know, yet yielding into the struggle of coming into slow knowledge. A patient, discerning knowledge that gradually illuminates dimensions of the essence of the phenomenon in question. In a kind of parallel process, as I honored my call to transformation, got catapulted into the journey, waffled through the confusion and uncertainty about where the process was leading, and remained faithful to the entire process, I began to intuit and feel a pattern emerging in the renewal process. In other words, the illumination phase of my personal process and that of the inquiry process were synchronized. A sense of clarity about a pattern inherent to both processes began to congeal in a natural way. It was essentially a cumulative clarity in that, on a tacit level, it constituted a gradual gathering of awareness of the experiences that had

preceded and included the present moment. Thus, the initiation into rebirth, the personal resolve, the feelings of sacredness and joy were intensely reflected upon and juxtaposed with the suffering, pain, and struggle of the previous stages. The body and psyche were attuned to the various kinds of experiences and the nuances of quality and feeling tones between them. With that attunement, I began to get hints of a natural movement from chaos to order, (death to rebirth,) within the transformation cycle. And it was the phase of illumination that crystallized that beginning knowledge. As awareness of my own transformational processes and stages increased, I began noticing processes and stages that were naturally occurring with respect to how I was coming into knowledge. For example, I followed hunches and intuitions that engaged me in the lived-experience of the phenomenon. I waited in the silence and confusion for direction to come or for meaning to gel. I got unexpected intuitive cues that crystallized meaning, and I stayed with those meanings until a natural rightness was felt. All the while, the heuristic inquiry processes and stages were being naturally enacted and experienced without me having the labels. In other words, I discovered the heuristic inquiry process as a process of authentically living the transformation journey. I also discovered the discovery process through naively living and discerning the very process. That was the case in coming to know both the phenomenon and the research methodology through authentic pathways of the self.

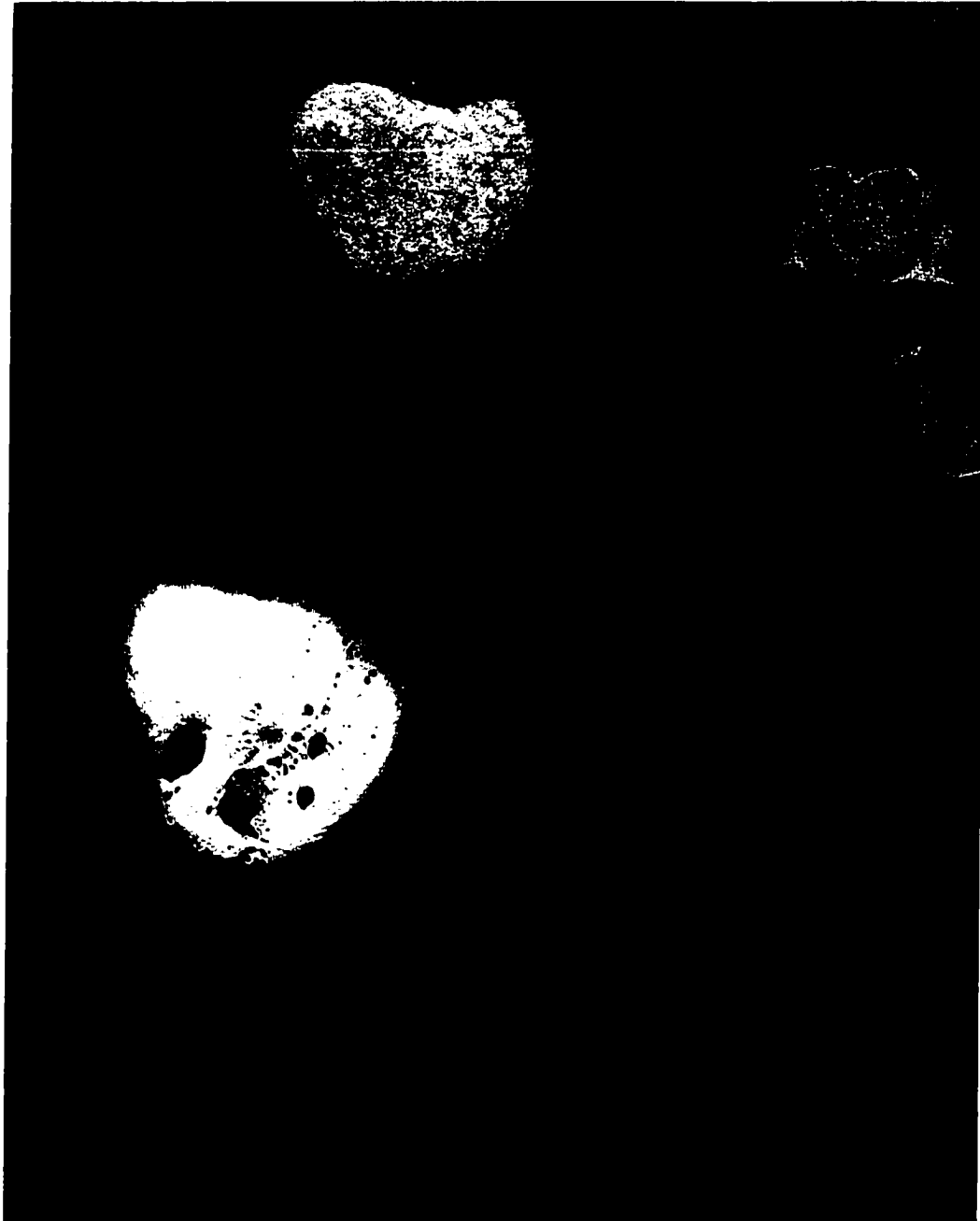
The illumination as a breakthrough in my renewal experience manifested as self-healing, lightheartedness, mystical or transpersonal experiences, forgiveness and compassion for my parents, inner peace and joy. Those experiences in turn awakened me to the knowledge that those were aspects of the illumination stage of the inquiry process. Understanding also gelled regarding my previous experiences in that they fitted stages that were different from that of illumination. The illumination as a breakthrough with respect to the inquiry process manifested as a beginning synthesis of the fragmented knowledge about the phenomenon itself and clarity about the very nature of the inquiry process as I lived the experience and became alert to how I was coming into knowledge.

STAGE FOUR: *Return to Innocence*
PART ONE: *The Second Dark Night of the Soul*



Re-turning to the darkness

STAGE FOUR - PART ONE: Return to Innocence



**Earth Hearts # 8, 9, 10 and 11 found at Clover Point and Gordon Point Estates,
Victoria, B.C. and Keawakapu Beach, Maui, 1997 - 1998**

STAGE FOUR: Return to Innocence

Part One - The Second Dark Night of the Soul

(Methodology: Explication, Incubation, Indwelling, Focusing.

Symbols: Earth Hearts # 4 and # 8,9,10,11)

Preamble

After a period of intense illumination and the experience of *temporary* but valid unification of consciousness, i.e. a sense of the sacred glimpsed in and through the ordinary and the momentary, the individual psyche does a “*swing back*” to a second dark night of the soul (SDNOS) (Underhill, 1955). It is like a *double-death* and a dark state that sometimes intervene between the illumination phase and the more fully integrative synthesis phase which encompasses a more unitive life, (living in harmony with the Self and world). Circumstances now press in on the transforming person who must *turn back* and pick up those residual, resistant and inactive corners of the personality still embedded and neglected in the undercurrent of the practicing life. While this is a lifelong task, there *are* times when the maturing personality is ready for a deeper spiritual synthesis and the second DNOS is enacted by the higher Self. Myss (1996) says of this stage,

“the signature of the ordained healer is having gone through a ‘dark night’ and endured the sensation of abandonment by God ... it is a turning back ... to accept the terms of the Divine, regardless of what heaven asks of you from that point forward ... The memory of the ‘dark night’ remains in your consciousness as a reference point, keeping you aligned to God ... and humbled” (p.281).

More drastic psychological and spiritual cleansing occurs at this stage and there is a deeper initiation into a sphere of reality not yet acclimatized to. The experiences of the previous stage now take on a greater depth and intensity, propelling the transformation process further and leading to a deepening of the spiritual life and the possibility of the sacred inner marriage or the *coniunctio* (Jung, 1954). Prior to this SDNOS, a legitimate degree of ego-Self integration has ensued and there is acute awareness that a real *shift* has occurred within the whole personality. Now, there is a withdrawal of consciousness *from the circumference to the center* with focused attention to and involuntary or voluntary absorption with *one* specific thing (Underhill, 1955) that has manifested and impregnated one’s selfhood. A fervent desire *to be* begins to replace the seeking *to know* and *to have*.

The Lived-Experience

*less and less do you need to force things
until finally you arrive at non-action
when nothing is done
nothing is left undone* (Tao te Ching, viii)

There was a withdrawal of consciousness *from the circumference to the center* with focused attention to and voluntary absorption with *one* specific thing as Underhill (1955) suggested that manifested and impregnated my selfhood - the experience (in the dream) of the visitation of the Goddess, the conscious awakening of my erotic self and my soul-love. The dream occurred on March/17/95 and the months that followed were filled with much peace and joy. I honored my truth through living it and writing about it. My writing became increasingly erotic with intense, exquisite feelings of desire saturating my body, mind and spirit. Like I said earlier, that energy surged through my being with such a force that I did not know what to make of it. Nonetheless, I felt wholesome and pure in it and on a more tacit level, I knew I had to surrender into it and honor its rhythm and evolving meaning within the whole transformational experience.

In pondering the dream and trying to make sense of my experience, I wrote:

*First rendezvous with you, my "serendipitous inspirational lover."
Who might this "She-being" be that has so surprisingly,
so gently and quietly slipped into my rem moments,
moistening my dreams, awakening the heart, arousing volcanic passion,
sending burning currents through channels that link heart, head, voluptuous softness?
It is you, this same creative Muse that has been seducing
my present living into perpetual chaos.*

*Sultry, midnight cravings of a whispering heart...boldly erupting,
exploding inside the shadowy dunes of my deep darkness,
plunging inwardly into my raw, erotic vulnerability,
impregnating my innocence, igniting hot, savage desires inside my pulsating body,
making me wild, swelling with ecstasy; wildness in this twilight dimension that
roars and screams out at lifeless, passionless, flat conventions of dividing lines, roles.
Wildness that has never understood or accepted the separation of research from living,
the separation of life from the very heart and messiness of all its wetness, contradictions.
Wildness that hungers to t-a-k-e you, Inner Lover, to overdose on your sweetness,
like a hummingbird ... drunk, drenched, giddy from too much "She-nectar."
I am ready to lay bare my soul for something I have not yet known with You.
My tenderness for You, almost too delicate, is too alive to bear.*

You push your softness hard into me, electrifying my being and I surrender, as rationality wins no power to intrude, constrain, condemn or destroy. Energies merge in splashing splendor like bold colors on wet, translucent desire, and I don't have control, don't want it, don't desire anything unlike desire. Heart yearns to touch yours, yearns to melt into You and mount the waves of ecstasy, dancing, loving, whispering, frolicking, respecting, adoring, penetrating, caressing, holding the tension, riding on Mystery's edge, begging your reentry into my Womanhood. Feminine energy inside me, holding me, filling my womb, taking me totally. I hold back nothing. I give all of me to You. You are in my life-force. You fill me, sending me into galaxies of infinite sweetness, madness, love. Your essence imbues my soul, your soft flesh covers me as we soar into zillions of exquisite ecstasies, sparkling, diamond-like in the sun, dazzling the soul and transforming the heart, the flesh and desire into divine, orgasmic inner Fire, bringing the "wave-riders" home to the sacredness of vulnerability, loving, trusting, giving, receiving, honoring, being natural, feeling whole, living fully, innocently, and allowing what is at the heart of Life and in the moment, to find its true melody.

Later, on May/22/95, I wrote:

This voicing has totally taken over my being, yet I feel strong in it. I feel that which has surfaced. I honor it, am with it, protect it, am private with it (except for sharing it with the 'other'), nurture it, savor it, allow it to carry me to what is at the heart of it. This awakening is not just my imagining and my dreaming now ... it is a living, essential experiencing in my current reality and I do not understand all of it but honestly, I love it, I want it, and I do not manipulate it. It feels like a gift birthing in just "being" and living an ordinary life, in struggling yet honoring my purpose. And I do not want anything or anyone to judge it ... for me it feels sacred in its innocence, its integrity ... and I feel soft and alive and yearning. I resolutely refuse to let conventions contaminate my innocence, my sacred feelings, my organic erupting and unfolding. I trust the movement of my soul and I will not stop my heart from opening, blossoming, yielding to life, nor will I compartmentalize my mind ... my "whole intelligence" will remain open and receptive to perceiving and living what is percolating in my life; I am porous to new possibilities.

That writing was followed by further voicing as I wrestled with the depth of soul-love and sacred eroticism that awakened in me. I struggled to understand their deeper meaning, as they felt both transcendent and immanent. I struggled to comprehend the reasons for the spiritual taking form in my life via the heart, the physical and the erotic. I also struggled to explain to the other what was not yet quite clear to me because of the misinterpretation of my process and the mistreatment I experienced, even as I embraced and honored my unfolding truth. Even though my truth seemed so out of sync within the

educational setting, nothing in me wished to interfere with the soul's agenda. The soul transgresses as she pleases and many times Moore's (1992) words gave me solace:

A soulful personality is complicated, multifaceted, and shaped by both pain and pleasure, success and failure. Life lived soulfully is not without its moments of darkness and periods of foolishness. Dropping the salvational fantasy frees us up to the possibility of self-knowledge and self-acceptance, which are the very foundation of the soul ... care of the soul ... means several things: attention, devotion, husbandry ... healing ... being anxious for and worshiping the gods ... observing and respecting what the soul presents and not trying to take things away in the name of health ... I try to give what is problematic back to the person in a way that shows its necessity, even its value ... *a homeopathic move*, going with what is presented rather than against ... our purpose is to first observe the soul as it is ... and find deeper respect for what is actually there ... it can be difficult to honor the soul's dramatic ways of expressing itself ... by doing less, more is accomplished ... the Tao brings persons back to what they have lost ... helps the ten thousand things find their own nature ... it is not easy to observe closely, to take the time and to make the subtle moves that allow the soul to reveal itself further ... this action-through-nonaction has to be simple, flexible, receptive ... in soul work we cleanse our minds of well-intentioned heroism (p. xvi, xvii, 5-10).

I had to write about my process. It was imperative that I did so, as it was a way of concretizing my experience, giving it validity. It was also my way of *transgressing on behalf of* that which was being birthed but not yet fully understood. In submitting some of the above writing as course work, I journaled about my trepidation - May/25/95:

My writing and actual submission of such private expositions confound all logic and finalize, with resounding clarity that I am truly m-a-d and have begun the

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t... to the underside of the Edge, abandoning my reputation and security ... as I hang on a noose of uncertainty. I now feel unsure, questioning. I ask, what is in the crevice between fear and wildness? It is my not wanting the 'other' to feel disrespected even as I honor my deepest truth. I have to trust the blurring of the boundaries so life can happen in all her messiness, wildness, half-truths, conflicts, so life can live by killing and devouring itself, facing death and being reborn since security is illusory, superstitiously luring and entrapping 'wave-riders' into fragmented wastelands

*of futility. Wave-riders, living as free spirits, living truly animated in Spirit, of Being, face unknown destiny brazenly and cowardly, carry the torch of strength undefeatably, dare adventure, and immerse themselves in the Fire of life, becoming transformed into mindful heart-beings. And the spaces where we are most receptive to the flaming mystery of Life are those places of our struggles and vulnerability where letting go and risking the unknown allow new things to be born in us. Our weaknesses gather momentum and push us into the abyss so we can learn richer ways of being and come home to a greater understanding of life itself, knowing that emptiness and fullness are polar opposites of the greater loving whole. Our struggles become the very place of our practice and synergistic renewal is born in the stupendous, marvelous dynamism of ordinary living ... I recall again Simon and Garfunkel's lyrics, "the time has come for you to shine...I will be your guide" ... lyrics seep into my cells and gentle awareness rises inside me like yeast in dough. I hear these thoughts deep inside me: "It is your time now, your time has come ... you are living the dream within the Dream ... pull in the net slowly, thoughtfully ... the gathering will soon be a harvest ... you have followed your heart and given your full energy to the Work ... your dreams are in the sun, ripening like yellow papayas full of seeds of voicing" ... What is this wounding that is wounding me with tenderness, softness, desire? Who is behind this trickery? I feel this tenderness in the aliveness of my skin, in my voicing, in the gentleness of simply being alive ... I feel like I am being taken over by some mystery and I am spontaneously in it ... I have tried to push "this thing" away, but away where? Maybe back into the conventions that I abhor ... at least life is "safe" there and we do not fall into the Crack ... but as I write this my tenderness and tears drown such logic ... **It is not in my character, not in my integrity, to deny what is real in me** ...even if I suffer because of it, more so, when it springs up in innocence and beauty.*

In some later writing, my head was compelling me to write about transformation and inner voice but my heart desired to speak in her wayward, moist manner of Mystery:

May/30/95 - I walked the beach today and I am alone but not lonely. Silent ocean ripples in around yellow kayak boots as I whisper, "come to me Sila." Gentle energy in curling waters mirrors your soft, caring energy that spills into shared space ... anointing, gracing. Your voice echoes through the chimes of my

imagination as salty, crisp winds brush against face ... feeling wind as Your face on me ... I send whisperings of "I love you" to circumscribe and touch your Presence ... branch rupturing with green embryonic life dips down, greeting me ... I kiss it, relish its miraculous emerging as it quickens my "seeing" ... etchings in sand bespeak my inner longings, quietly ocean is implored to be messenger of the heart being laid bare in this elemental Fire. Do I have the courage ... blood ... nerve, the daring to live this sliver of the Dream? Does my being need Being to unfold the Mystery? And where does the "Path with Heart" fit with my trembling heart anyway? How does this Path imbue my heart with compassion that hears all cries, humility that surrenders and it rises, love that walks the talk and risks identity, morays and sanctions ... all for the sake of the Dream? How do we become Kuan Yin, the Mahayana archetype steeped in compassion and equanimity, and Green Tara, healing with our presence and calling forth awakening? How do we become mature, conscious Lovers awake to the ebb and flow of life? Sustaining ground when there is no ground? Allowing ourselves to be humbled through living out our own lies until the Inner Lover can no longer be prostituted and demands authentic living from the inside out? How do we make space in the farthest reaches of our inner natures so as to risk participation in the Mystery? How do we listen to our own inner voice amidst the external voices that drown our intuitive knowing, our instinctual rhythms, our celebrative, erotic dance of life first indulged in, in the womb - dance of the fetus, dancing inside Her, sucking on her very life-force, kicking, punching ... wildness in her womb? How do we love each other and ourselves compassionately, in ways that mutually feed our passion, our wholeness and our power within? How do we consciously seduce each other into our deepest awakening, mining for the perpetual Orgasm? And what about my Inner Lover, this persistent seductress who lures me, traps me, teases, plays with my vulnerability, unsuspectingly jolts the life out of my fragmented self then douses my fragility into her alchemical juices ... transmuting my base metal into gold? And not only that, this Inner Lover insults my smug self-righteousness, tells me I ask for it ... that I take the seduction ... that I play into it ... that I want the opportunity on some level to be seduced ... that I voluntarily lubricate the "crack" in my soul so this Inner Lover could slide in and mess up my core personhood, leaving wet stains of Her transformational juices all over me, inside and out. She also tells me that in my wet dreams ... dreams desiring wholeness, play, and spontaneity ... she listens to my serious (though many times messy) intentions and blesses my desires with gifts of fulfillment ... unbidden Grace.

As time went on, I lived the dance of intimacy within myself and within nature. My writings did give me some solace as I continued to yield into the unknown while refusing to allow any more negative energy to be imposed on my process. I struggled with the tension of allowing the soul its undisturbed unfolding, walking a fine line in 'holding' my energy in the other's space and embracing the fullness of all that was being birthed in me.

McNamara (in Welwood, 1990. p. 45) speaks of this tension:

When you live in tension that is the best possible atmosphere for high creativity. That is where the void is and that's where God is: in between. We need a two-eyed view. Otherwise there will be no charge, no electricity; there will be no joy.

At one point, the tension became too great and I felt overwhelmed. That in turn created a feeling of being stuck in that the natural rhythm of the energy coursing through me came to a kind of temporary halt. The soul-love that I carried all that time bore down on me as the agony and ecstasy of it created havoc in my immediate life. I lived that dilemma for a few months then decided that I had to make a change in my inner environment and within the context of the mentoring dyad. I took Earth-Heart number four, (which was symbolic of the Sacred Mystery), together with a eucalyptus scented candle, (used for healing and meditation), and a tape of instrumental music called *Spring Rain*, (symbolic of the fertile, luscious time of nature's greening and my beginning rebirth phase), as gifts for the other.

They were gifts that gently honored the transformational work and I wished to share them and their meaning as a last warm gesture as I shifted gears. At the same time, I communicated that I felt stuck and that I needed to make a shift in the content of my writing, i.e., not write about the soul-love, my intention being to write more abstractly and objectively in preparation for the candidacy examination. (*While all the writing was transformational in essence and necessary, I did not understand that then.*) I thought I was being proactive in making meaningful changes and taking charge of my predicament while still attending to the demands of my research work. I owned my dilemma and felt that I was being thoughtful in sharing what was occurring for me in that particular phase of the transformational journey. In so doing, all communication broke down.

I was told that everything was about sex and that I had ulterior motives for wanting my needs met. I was puzzled by such unfounded accusations. I was innocent in my sharing and wide open about what was genuinely being birthed in me. I lived my truth while honoring the 'space' and as I write now my conscience is still at peace. I was not fraudulent with my soul-work. A week later the earth-heart was put in my mailbox (with a message that sadly misinterpreted the meaning of the heart and my motive for giving it), together with a withdrawal note that suddenly implicated the status of my academic mentorship. I was shocked and bewildered but got no opportunity to discuss the issue.

That experience set in motion the second dark night of the soul phase. I felt like the “heyoka” warrior of the Native American tradition who goes into battle *backwards* on his horse with a *broken* lance, knowing that the Great Spirit will protect him. I was really devastated by the outcome of my decision to shift gears and had no idea what to do next. I had to stay with the pain, enter the darkness again and search my heart to try and understand how my own actions had implicated my reality. The soul-love that was a genuine awakening in me remained alive despite the disruption and the deep pain from being cut off from the other. Yet, that was all my process and I had no choice but to endure that difficult transition. I had to return to the silence and listen to whatever was being brought to bear on the situation. I recall Heidegger’s ideas (in Levin, 1989) that the human being:

fails to hear its own Self in listening to the they-self, [i.e., the Self socialized into a condition of conformity and self-alienation, out of touch with itself]. If *Dasein* is to be able to get brought back from this lostness of failing to hear itself, and if this is to be done through itself, then it must first be able to find itself - to experience itself as something which has *failed* to hear itself, and which fails to hear in that it listens away to the ‘they’ [to what others hear, say and think] ... This listening away must get broken off; in other words, the possibility of another kind of hearing which will interrupt it must be retrieved by *Dasein* itself (p. 42).

The erroneous accusations were the thoughts of the they-self and it was critical for my transformational work that I remained faithful and *present to* (as in *Dasien*) the work that was taking form in me. I had no recourse but to engage in further self-examination and discern what was my ‘shadow’ material and what belonged to the other. The bottom line though was that it was my personal and research work and I could not abandon any of it.

I struggled with anger, feelings of betrayal and abandonment and felt scapegoated in my struggle to stay true to the soul. That was when I began to believe that the soul has no place in academia as it is not at all understood. On the contrary, it is relegated to misinterpretations that are conjured up from the more banal realms of the psyche. Yet, the soul did choose to make itself manifest in that setting, within the context of my research work and I had to yield to its calling. Locating myself in my sacred Center and praying for guidance was a powerful way of staying focused in the work. It was comforting too to observe again, how readings came as affirmations of the legitimacy of my experiences. Hillman (1996) in talking about mentoring relationships as perceptual relationships says:

It is the eye of the heart. Something moves in the heart, opening it to perceiving

the image of the heart of the other ... allowing the diamon to come forth ... An erotic component is necessary, as it has been essential to education since Socrates, as it still is ... though in our culture today, this is seen only with the genital eye as seduction, harassment or impersonal hormonal need. The genital eye does not reveal what the acorn seeks ... and we can no longer quite believe in these relations of the heart's affections. We have learned to see with the eye of the genital ... desires must be unconsciously sexual, liaisons must really be copulations; open confessions, really seductive manipulations ... yet what draws a pair together is a common vision. Age, history, gender, fact play no significant roles ... its about heart to heart, acorn to acorn communion (p. 120-125).

Hillman quotes Keats' words, "I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of the Imagination." (p. 121), and says that these words provide the transhuman ground for the art of mentoring. I wept profusely on reading Hillman on one hand as I felt understood by him even though the soul's agenda was only alluded to. On the other hand, I felt the pain of having my soul's work reduced to cheap manipulations. But I could not defend the inner work in its metamorphosing stage. Even though I felt at core that something vital was being birthed, I could not speak sensibly about it.

Nonetheless, I spent time searching my motives to discern if and how I may have impinged on the 'space' and lived with a deep sadness for several years. In retrospect, I made a huge mistake in disclosing the fragility of my unfolding process in the academic milieu and I paid a high price for such naivete. Yet, it was an intrinsic part of my overall transformation and I could not get around the soul's agenda, even if I tried. I realize that even this statement may be scoffed at for its non-rational tone. Thirteen months later I tried to engage a dialogue to understand what happened for the other and to apologize if my process did implicate the 'space.' I experienced further ridicule that cut to the core. I was told, "you may be deluding yourself, but if it keeps you alive, I guess something is working for you." Those words hurt deeply even though I knew that my inner work was critical to my healing journey. I could not believe that all my personal work in stages one, two, and three could be so blatantly derided. I was shocked that such treatment or rather abuse could be experienced in the academic space. The most crucial turning point in my transformation process was much reviled and all I could do was live through and heal from the experience, continue to trust in and hold fast to my ongoing research work and midwife my own rebirth process. Friends offered sustenance in that difficult time.

Search as I may, I could not find anything that was discrepant about my living. What became clear to me though was the fact that I assumed that the mentoring space could embrace what comes up for the student, especially when students hear statements like, “no matter how far you go, I will push you further.” This is where some educators blur the line between pedagogy and therapy, (as that kind of pushing can and do provoke deep process work), but provide no *temenos* or container for such work. The personal and the professional are not separate categories in my way-of-being and living and so, these categories merge as far as my academic and professional engagements go. However, Bruner (1995) suggests that there exists the compartmentalization of life in post-modern bureaucratic life which imposes the requirement of impersonation on those who live it. He further states that the different impersonations of the self are incapable of communicating with each other and that this issues as “a mild version of Multiple Personality Disorder, a rapidly growing illness which seem to have its locus classicus in North America” (p.176). In living a more integrated existence, however, one pays a huge price. In the same breath, I realize now that students need to be most aware, as best as they can discern, of the depth to which their personal work may take them and consciously take responsibility for protecting themselves, their unfolding processes and the facilitating others. This also means being more selective about how and what they share and *not* buy wholesale into the deconstructive de-centering agenda no matter how subtle the coercion. Students often do *not* know the risks involved as they engage in the de-centering process.

The ridicule that ensued from my apologizing for my process was contradictory to my own motives which were grounded in Nhat Hanh’s (1987) concept of *Tiep Hien*. Nhat Hanh says that initiating and inviting are (spiritually) different from *forcing*; the former being more aligned with *Tiep Hien* or “interbeing” - we inter-are. This ties in with “reconciliation, the effort to make peace, to be in touch with both sides ... with the capacity for understanding and compassion” (p. 83-95). He says that an effort to make peace, as part of the deep penetration and realization of the Tao, is intentionally different from *wanting to be satisfied*, (which I was also told), and evokes an egoless commitment and accountability. Instead of this kind of mutual engaged effort, I heard a monologue on the problematics of apology. I realized then that I had to work through the issue myself.

Three years later, as I was enjoying the sun down at Cattle Point, a crisp imagery came to me of the 'Charred Cross' located at Coventry Cathedral. It is symbolic of the forgiveness offered for the bombing of the cathedral during the last war. I was called to let go and feel genuine forgiveness and reconciliation in my heart toward the other and toward myself after harboring much anger and resentment. I went home, found the card from Coventry and did a deep prayer and healing ritual around that issue. It still took time for me to eventually *feel* forgiveness versus doing only an intellectual dance with it. Soon after that, I encountered Rudhyar's (1983) book, *Rhythm of Wholeness*, in which he engages the use of Jung's (1930) term "transpersonal." He says the term is used to:

represent action which takes place through a person, but which originates in a center of activity existing beyond the level of personhood. Such action makes use of human individuals to bring to focus currents of spiritual energy, supramental ideas, or realizations for the purpose of bringing about, assisting, or guiding transformative processes (p. 219, italics and underlining are mine).

That piece of writing felt like 'guidance' as it confirmed for me what I felt all along, that the 'other' was a conduit through which an aspect of my transformational work had to be realized. Our souls crossed paths and the soul's agenda had nothing to do with ego manipulations. This is an honor but it has become clear that this level of inner work does not belong to the educational institution. Nonetheless, when educators engage with the self/soul-making work of students, they cannot impede the soul's progress. They must be prepared for the unknown that breaks through unexpectedly and/or leave the space as I suggested right at the beginning of the work. Now I realize that this notion of soul-work may even be an oxymoronic affair within academia. It is one thing to expound grand, impressive ideas about the reconceptualization of curriculum and the restitution and reconstruction of educational experience. It is another matter to both consciously and actively integrate these notions within pedagogic praxis when educational experiences cohere with and engage students' deep inner work. It seems to me that transformational work embraces academia and transcends it as we move deeper into the heart of what is essential, discover the larger pattern for our lives, and seek to fulfill it in authentic ways. Nevertheless, in the *stream* of academic research, where I *least* expected it, I found the *fish* of Mystery, sustenance that fed my transformational work, self-respect and self-trust. This sustenance moved *inbetween, outside and beyond*, not *against* academic protocol.

In moving through that experience and still being in the second dark night of the soul phase, yet another critical matter came up for a reckoning. I had three profound dreams about my deceased daughter, Sharmila Romona. She was a severely handicapped cerebral palsied child who died at the age of thirteen. With the dissolution of my primary partnership in 1980, my daughter was taken to the Caribbean in 1981 for a brief stay with her grandparents. That turned out to be a long drawn out process with Sharmila being kept in Trinidad initially against my will. Even though she was a born Canadian citizen, because she was a minor in Trinidad where her other parent was a local citizen and I was not, the other parent had rights over her that I did not; the laws were also blatantly gender biased. Eventually, in weighing what was in Sharmila's best interest with respect to her overall care, I struggled in my role as mother and made a difficult decision to not fight to bring her back to Calgary where she would have been placed in a home for handicapped children while I cared for her part-time. I felt that she would have had better care living in Trinidad with many family members versus being in an institution, as it was physically impossible for me to care for her alone. I deeply trusted the goodwill of her other parent in ensuring that her overall care and safety would be tended to as agreed upon. That commitment slowly dissolved and I learnt of the state of her gross neglect only after she died.

Sharmila came in three dreams, all pointing to her utter loneliness, mistreatment and her spirit's unresolve with respect to how, when and where she died. She timed it well for I was in a more healed place in my life and could fully tend to her spirit's needs. However, a whole different can of worms got opened up and I had to revisit that history and honestly re-examine if I too had contributed to her sad end. I carry a deep and tender love for this child and even as I write now, my heart is reawakened to her past pain and I feel the sting of her loss. Anyway, I faithfully engaged with my daughter's needs as she *communicated* them in my dreams. She gave clear messages about the healing ritual she desired and who was to officiate that process. She called me to personal accountability too. So, here was a residual issue that needed tending to during the second DNOS. I engaged a thoughtful university chaplain to help bring that piece of work to fruition for the healing of both Sharmila and myself. Much quiet time was spent in deeper reflection, grief, pain, further process work and preparation until the day of the ritual at Elk Lake.

This is the letter I wrote to my daughter's spirit, followed by Gibran's (1923) thoughts on 'Children,' from *The Prophet*:

PRAYER RITUAL FOR SHARMILA - APRIL/4/98

My Dearly Beloved Daugther, Sharmila:

Your mommy, Kate and Carolina have come together, in the presence of the Holy to deeply honor your spirit and to mindfully and reverently tend to your need for healing, resolution and blessing. My earnest prayers and desire are for your spirit to experience abiding peace at last and to truly let go and soar with the Eagles.

I, Shanti, your mom, deeply thank you for coming so audaciously in my dreams, rupturing years of silence and "voicing" the pain in your little soul. You are truly my daughter in this decidedly assertive way as this is precisely how I would have desired to see you blossom in the physical world. I also call to presence, here with us, the spirit of your sister Khalila, and your "papa." Most vital, too, we invite the presence of the Holy to honor and bless the purpose of this gathering and to bless you throughout this time.

Sharmila, from within my own intuitions, my tender and abiding love for you my child, and from your poignant messages in my dreams, I now bring forward for healing those experiences and needs of yours that I feel were not honored or tended to with deep Care when you were ill in Trinidad, and in those crucial final moments when you were leaving this physical life and moving on into your other World:

1. Before your actual serious illness, your physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs as a growing young person were severely neglected by one parent, even though your granny did whatever she could, being put in the role of caregiver. Granny tried her best. Nonetheless, many times you felt lonely, abandoned, unloved by your other parent who committed to your care in Trinidad but reneged in your last years. You also felt this to some degree from me, your mom. In my fear of being totally alone with you in Canada, I agreed with your other parent's decision to keep you in Trinidad, trusting that you would be cared for. (That parent was good to you and Khalila in Canada). Sadly, I did not more fully discern the intentions of the other.
2. During your illness and stay in the hospital, I came and was with you, at which time you were already slowly beginning to leave this earth-plane. Some sort of serious mistreatment happened to you in the hospital that your other parent could not explain and did not query. That felt like the first assault to your primary integrity and your mind-body-spirit. You felt helpless, alone, violated. I knew nothing of this until after the fact when a family member finally broke the silence around your illness/death.
3. In your actual moments of dying, you felt totally alone and abandoned, with no loving care and support present to help you through your transition. My heart aches to write these words now as I go back with you and feel the anguish of such terrible loneliness

and abandonment. You were an innocent child, deserving of the utmost loving, proper and responsible care. You needed love, comforting, cherishing, companionship and prayers. These you did not have in your final moments, Sharmila, and I intuit deeply your legitimate pain, hurt and woundedness. I grieve as you help me to "feel" your truth and be with you even now, my child. Yes, Sharmila, your primal integrity was NOT RESPECTED in your last hours, days and years. YOUR TRUTH HAS COME TO LIGHT TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED, WITNESSED AND RIGHTED.

4. So, in this moment, Kate, Carolina and I pray sincerely and lovingly for your healing, your resolution and eventual peace, and that your spirit may now feel the wholeness, love and closure necessary for you to move on. In the name of the Most Holy, I ask this healing and blessing for you, my precious child.
5. I now ask you to forgive me for my legitimate part, through the earlier decisions that I made, in contributing to your experience of neglect, abandonment and real fear in dying alone. I love you deeply, my child, and my keen awareness of your truth and my deep grief help me to connect with you and feel some measure of redemption. I also ask you to forgive your other parent, and other persons who harmed, neglected or dishonored you in your last years, days, and moments on this earth.
6. Sharmila, remember that, though your human family failed you in critical moments, the Christ Spirit has been with you always, blessing and comforting you. May this same Christ Spirit continue to guide your spirit-life. I own my part in whatever way I contributed to your pain. I am sorry Sharmila. I love you always. Blessings, Mommy.

ON CHILDREN

(by Gibran, 1923)

And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, "Speak to us of Children."

And he said: "Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you.

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts.

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls.

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,

And He bends you with his might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies,

so He loves also the Bow that is stable.

The ritual ended with the playing of one of Sharmila's most loved songs (see visual), the sharing of chocolates which was her favorite treat, and a special tree was selected at Elk/Beaver Lakes and was dedicated to her memory. It was a powerful and meaningful ceremony and quite serendipitously, during the ritual, a child wandered by and sort of "checked out" the scene. For me, that little person's brief presence somehow symbolically represented the spirit of the child for whom the ritual was being performed. Then a bird fluttered nearby, chirping profusely and drawing attention as if to render its own contribution to the occasion. For several months following that event, I spent quiet time at the "tree", reminiscing shared moments with my daughter, "communicating" with her spirit, and experiencing the gift of further healing in yet another area of my life. 

While focusing on those personal matters, the research focus took a new turn in that there was a *reshaping* of the overall topic of Self-transformation. It was imperative that the process of listening to the "inner voice" be included as an integral component of the lived-experience of transformation. It was actually my own "inner voice" that kept "harassing" me to expand on the research topic. That experience started with one of my students thoughtfully leaving an article entitled, *Inner Voice Experiences* (Heery, 1989) in my mailbox. The student reminded me of our long-forgotten sharing of the topic. I read the article but ignored that external cue along with other subtle promptings for six months until gradually, an insistent restlessness haggled me beyond my comfort level. I was awakened quite abruptly one morning at 3:30am, with a clear, inner voice message:

Voice: Call Dr. Heery, author of the inner voice article.

Me: What craziness is this? (I muttered half-asleep).

Voice: This is significant for your research work.

Me: This is absurd. I will not detour from the core topic.

Besides, I cannot afford the time or energy.

Two months lapsed, followed by a second "push" from the inside:

Voice: Go and phone Dr. Heery now.

Me: This is nonsensical. Leave me alone. (I protested out aloud).

All that day, however, every research effort proved futile. I was intentionally reading the literature on transformation, but a vacuous, going-no-whereness persisted. The next day, despite feeling like an idiot, I phoned Dr. Heery but to no avail. I left a long, convoluted message on her answering machine. Three weeks passed with no reply. I quietly insisted

that the gesture was wholly foolish in the first place and gave up. That same night, I heard through my own thoughts, this superimposing thought:

Voice: Call Dr. Heery again. Your topic of transformation *has* to move into and include listening to the inner voice. It is an integral component of your work.

At that point, I began quietly reflecting on the significant inner voice experiences that had consistently instigated and propelled my personal journeying. Something inside of me seriously shifted and I became profoundly convinced of the urgency to expand the topic. My resistance dissolved. I contacted Dr. Heery and we communed at length about the inner voice. She inspired me to *listen to* and *trust* my guidance as she felt that the phenomenon of listening to the inner voice in the context of healing and transformation is an area of much needed research. She then generously shared her ideas and resources with me. I felt deeply appreciative. More over, my respect for the insistent inner voice grew, especially so because I “tested” and weighed its guidance (Assagioli, 1965). Jung (in Sabini, 1987) called this persistent inner force the “diamon” and said:

I have had much trouble getting along with my ideas. There was a diamon in me, and in the end its presence proved decisive. It overpowered me, and if I was at times ruthless, it was because I was in the grip of the diamon ... I had to obey an inner law which was imposed on me and left me no freedom of choice (p. 74).

Dr. Heery’s and Jung’s personal experiences with the inner voice affirmed some of my own, which in turn increased my confidence to tackle the topic. I engaged in an intense two-year researching of the topic and came to understand the interconnectedness between listening to the inner voice and the lived-experience of Self-transformation. The research inquiry continued to naturally unfold in a manner that maintained fidelity to that new understanding. More so, my experiences exemplified the *livingness* of the topic such that I came into deeper experiential awareness of its subtler nuances and contours.

Looking back now, the years 1996 - 1998 were clearly a time of further in-depth psychological and spiritual cleansing and a clarifying and ripening of the research topic and inquiry. It was also a period of profound surrender, letting go of all inner and outer attachments, of everything that served survival - various identities (psychotherapist, educator, kayaker, mother, partner, etc.), relationships, my home in Calgary, professional work, and issues around finances. While the research ripened through my very living on the one hand, everything else was taken away from me on the other hand. However, that

was all the *actual living* of the phenomenon, quite unbeknownst to me. I experienced intervals of unsought chaos and suffering - the forced sale of my home due to being an absentee landlord and tenants reneging on rental payments, and malicious slandering by two adult students, one of whom had to be removed from the classroom because of becoming three times over, emotionally volatile and overtly abusive toward two assertive female students and myself. Instead of due and proper process being enacted on my behalf, that led to the strategic undermining of my professional role as educator while the student accessed complete protection from the administrative body. My seventeen years of validated professional competence suddenly went down the tubes due to the subversive toxicity inherent in the academic system. My longstanding, cumulative, *documented*, excellent teacher evaluations were readily invalidated due to the malicious feedback and no protection of sessional instructors within the institution. Yet the student's abuse and misconduct, which were verified by students who witnessed the experience, went unchallenged. Calling into question the institutional discrepancies with regard to that matter amounted to no avail, except for my further observance of the enactment of the dehumanizing political games skillfully played out within the academic infrastructure - and no one talks about the toxicity even as it is killing some softly, and if one does, one is severely penalized and thus, the shadow-side of academia perpetuates itself! People talk about "the system" but fail to acknowledge that there are *individuals* that make up the system, and that some of them can be and are the perpetrators of injustice of all kinds within the system.) As I write this now, I am fully aware that to speak out is dangerous and self-implicating yet silencing the self is a worst terror (Lorde, 1984). More over, such demonic silencing does not foster transformation of persons within the institution.

In the end my only choice was to let go and trust that Divine justice would prevail in its own timing as I do believe that everything comes round full circle. There is a deeper sacred Law that endures. Nonetheless, I experienced one good thing throughout that foul experience. My compassion grew for the 'other' (mentioned earlier) and other authentic educators who dare to walk their talk and risk on behalf of emancipatory education. Not a cosy path to forge through in the aridity of the dominant academic rationality. I also became crisply aware of how swiftly one can lose everything ... and the world goes on.

Yet, in an inexplicable way, I believed that there was a purpose to all that was happening although none of it made immediate sense to me. I trusted Rilke's (1934) thoughts:

Do not draw too hasty conclusions from what happens to you; let it simply happen to you ... life has not forgotten you, it holds you in its hands, it will not let you fall (p. 70) ... and, do not be bewildered by the surfaces; in the depths all becomes law. And those who live the secret wrong or badly ... lose it only for themselves and still hand it on, like a sealed letter, without knowing it (p. 38).

Despite the hardships, suffering and isolation that ensued, I stayed utterly patient, respectful of and faithful to the Path out of an existential and spiritual imperative, "bowing to necessities that were greater than pleasure and pain and more powerful than will and understanding" (Rilke, 1934. p. 36). I honored the natural course of the research inquiry and the healing wisdom of the transformation process. As I let go of the surface reality, I became increasingly penetrated at the center by the pervasive Mystery. I slowly became more of a recluse living a contemplative life of intense reflection, prayer and meditation and being with and in nature as I read profusely on the topic of the inner voice and Self-transformation. The soul-love and the sacred eroticism that permeated my being earlier remained fresh and alive while deepening in a quiet way. My stuckness dissipated over time and the genuine essence of that love-experience imbued the foundation of my living while I struggled to understand the deeper meanings of my worldly encounters. It seemed like a more substantial maturation was taking form in me, a quality and depth of being I had not experienced before. In this stage of the second DNOS, the way of *wu wei* was lived in an essential sense - letting go and letting be, non-interfering, surrender and non-doing; letting *what is to be* what it is. It seemed that as the destruction of the outer world occurred, the construction of the internal world around the spiritual Center was enacted in a paradoxical process and I had to submit to the suffering and the unfolding process. I realize that on the surface level this *surrender* makes no logical sense. Yet, on the level of soul, it does. The onward movement of the *self* toward the higher Center, the *Self* (Jacobi, 1973), was a process in which I was being pushed deeper and into a new and different world where I did not quite feel at home yet. I did not understand this process of the second dark night of the soul (SDNOS) until only in February/2000, when I reread Underhills's (1934,1955) classic books, *Practical Mysticism* and *Mysticism*, and tearfully came to understand the meaning of my deep suffering back in the period 1996 to 1998.

In describing the more intense experiences of the dark night of the soul, Underhill (1955), suggested that, in being prepared to undergo the deeper communion of the little self with the Divine, the evolving selfhood is shoved into active endurance of great stress in which deeper inner work is accomplished. The progressively illumined consciousness of previous stages of the renewal process is exhausted and destabilized and the individual experiences a sense of cosmic betrayal and utter abandonment. Underhill says:

The self is tossed back from its hard-won point of vantage. Impotence, blankness, solitude are the epithets by which those immersed in this dark fire of purification describe their pains ... the chief psychological characteristics of normal mystical development ... consist of a series of oscillations between "states of pleasure" and "states of pain" ... It is an orderly movement of the whole consciousness toward higher centers, in which each intense and progressive affirmation fatigues the immature transcendent powers, and is paid for by a negation; a swing-back of the whole consciousness, a stagnation of the intellect, a reaction of emotions, or an inhibition of the will ... the exalted consciousness acquired in the "mystical awakening," (what I called the illumination stage), is balanced by a depressed and bitter consciousness of its own inherent imperfection ... sooner or later, the state of illumination begins to break up, the complementary negative consciousness appears, and shows itself as an overwhelming sense of darkness and deprivation ... when the higher centers have been submitted to the continuous strain of a developed illuminated period with its accompanying periods of intense fervor, lucidity and deep contemplation ... the swing-back into the negative state occurs almost out of necessity ... the long period passed in faithful correspondence with the transcendental order, growing consciousness of the "presence of God," the whole inner experience is suddenly swept away, and only a blind reliance on past convictions saves the individual from unbelief ... those destined to attain the full stature of the mystic, emerge from this period of destitution, however long or drastic ... as from a new purification. It is for them the gateway to a higher state. This "great negation" is the sorting-house of the spiritual life ... those who go on are the strong spirits who do not seek *to know*, but are driven *to be* (p. 381-383).

It seemed that the little self began to be less of its own center and circumference and the previous healing and joy that were integrated were transcended. All that was occurring on behalf of the movement away from the periphery to the Center (Underhill, 1955), which again, I did not understand but patiently endured. Merton (1971) says we are:

brought naked and defenseless into the center of that dread where we stand alone before the Mystery in our nothingness, without explanations, without theories, completely dependent upon ... and in dire need of the gift of Grace... (p. 14).

It was an emptying that reached to the very root of my nature and it was as if the limits were withdrawn so as to bear the risk of further disclosure and discovery of the Mystery.

I did an extensive amount of journaling during that time. It helped me move through a tremendous amount of affect and brought me closer to myself, more attuned to the subtlety of my feelings, bodily expressions and deeper psychological processes.

Journal entry 01/21/96:

Since all of last week, I am feeling a deepening in my surrendering, in my faithfulness, in my understanding and valuing of Spirit. There is a quiet confidence and knowing that simply displays itself in how I act and feel right now. A different quality of trust is being birthed in me. I do not need approval from the outside world. Even though all the trap-pings are taken away, I feel paradoxically secure and free on an inner level. I feel like some deeper layer of letting go is happening in me ... I have little need for things, for small talk, my little self seems to be merging with a larger Whole in that I am feeling more connected to some wiser principle in my life. I feel my relationship with the Divine growing and like I am called to another level of "discipleship." I feel peaceful in my body, a contentment in my heart and a quietness in my immediate surroundings. A gentle calm strolls through my interior life and I am mindful of a deepening love for the Holy. I feel a coming home to my sacred Center as I continue to experience this soul-love that has infused my heart. How do I experience this soul-love as sacred? As I listen to my voice, it sounds warm, unhurried and sincere. I feel a softening of my attitudes ... awe, compassion, considering both sides of an issue, desiring to be fair and inclusive of other perspectives as I weigh things. I feel reverence for and in the most inconspicuous of occurrences, like the laughter of a child sitting in a buggy in front of me at Thrifty's. I engage with my tasks mindfully, doing things with care and sensory awareness. I give quiet thanks to the garden for the "rose" that has been an ongoing symbol of the Holy. I feel gratitude in my smile and in the warmth of my skin. I feel a deep regard for life again and my research readings move and inspire me as I make sense of my experiences.

Journal entry 02/12/1996:

I am taking care of myself - caring for my body by working out in the gym, doing yoga, eating rich organic foods that I prepare with much care, taking vitamin supplements, resting, having long candle-lit baths perfumed with oils and healing herbs, going for hikes, kayaking, spending time in the sun and gently absorbing its healing energy, going into the silence, praying and writing poetry. This time of solitude, with self is inspiring me. In honoring my erotic essence, in rediscovering my sensual desires, in loving my sexual body and delighting in its erotic expressions and fantasies, I feel a coming home to my Inner Lover, a re-embracing of my deep femininity, my naturally wild self. Something is coming round full circle since that day when I gave birth to my first handicapped child. This awakened soul-love and erotic desire have been essentially a re-awakening of my deep love and respect for myself, my body and my heart, and a re-claiming of my primal womanhood. I am being reunited with my sensual self and I cherish and feel most alive in this return of my wild woman and her beautiful nature after years in exile ... and this is what is most sacred about the awakening of my heart. I rejoice that I endured to this point ... I felt whole and good in this love from the moment of its birthing. It is a celebration ... the 'other' mirrored my feminine Self to me in some respects without either of us understanding how or why ... I cannot explain it nor wish to ... my experience speaks for itself and I have come to experience that the body does not lie.

During those years of solitude and inwardness, the symbol of the earth-heart kept materializing in the outer environment as if to remind me to hold on to the Dream and not become tired, fainthearted or sardonic. It was amazing for me to *feel* the power of those symbols in times when it appeared as if there was no ground and nothing whatsoever to hold on to except a radical trust in the unknown that offered no assurances or consolation. Yet, it seems that our capacities are born out of our weaknesses and when we feel most ontologically alone. The gifts bestowed on us in such moments must be respected and honored although we cannot take credit for them, as they seem mysteriously given. Yet, they cannot be ignored for to ignore them is a form of ingratitude to and a negation of Life itself. We must breathe life into them. Vivify them! This requires a deep humility.

For me, Earth-Hearts eight, nine, ten, and eleven symbolized on one level, the gift of an indefatigable stamina to endure the awakening of the conscious personality to the higher Self (Assagioli, 1965; Durckheim, 1971, Jacobi, 1973). The “heart” is symbolic of the Divine center and as it kept presenting itself, I was constantly *re-minded* of the divinity within me to which I was being more deeply, intimately aligned. So, despite the outer conundrums, the “Center” kept coming to the fore, showing itself and consistently *taking my focus back to what was essential*, what was being crafted within the temple of my own being. The more I gave energy to the outer circumstances, the more the symbol “came” in books, in the shape of leaves, in cards, in the street on people’s sweaters and cars and in tangible gifts from the sea, *returning me to the Center*, to stay in and be open *there*. Thus, the gift of the heart has been the gift of my maturing consciousness of and aligning with the Holy that is in and around me and penetrates the essence of everything.

Earth-Heart eight, the one with the white streak running through it like a flash of lightening was a reminder of the power of love cutting through to the core and affirming the love that was alive in me. Earth-Heart nine came with a gentle message that had to do with the transformation of the ‘other.’ That was quietly respected. Earth-Heart ten was gifted in Maui near the Makena shoreline and it warmed *my* heart as I savored its coral texture, exquisite shape, pearly white color and quiet charm. It reflected the beauty of the love and the color of the garment worn by the Goddess in my rebirth dream. Earth-Heart eleven is of the rich, dark soil. It holds the vision of the healing sanctuary to be created.

Earth Heart #4 - Rejected



Earth Heart #4 Symbolic of the Sacred Mystery and the Swing Back to the Second Dark Night of the Soul Stage

This heart was given to an *other* as a symbol of the Sacred Mystery. It was rejected and returned to me via my mailbox with the message: "Would not give your heart away when there is healing work to be done." The original, spiritual interpretation of the symbol which came from deep intuitive guidance was readily misunderstood and misinterpreted by the other, despite having conveyed the original meaning that came with the heart when it was gifted to me by Mother Earth in 1995.

There was no space to negotiate understanding of the misrepresentation that had occurred. However, despite the rejection and sudden, subsequent severing of the mentoring dyad, I continued to *honor* and *hold fast* to the original and pure meaning of the symbol *as there was no need to change the gestalt*. Even though the symbol and I were relegated to a cheap reductionism by the other, with the spiritual ambience of the whole gesture sadly distorted, in an uncanny, tacit sense I *knew* and *felt* the deeper meaning of the earth-heart. I trusted myself in that knowledge implicitly even in moments of doubt. I was misjudged in my naivety and unguardedness, then abruptly disposed of. Apologizing for taking my reality into the "space" was met with further rebuke. Yet, I am deeply indebted to the other for having walked with me that far.

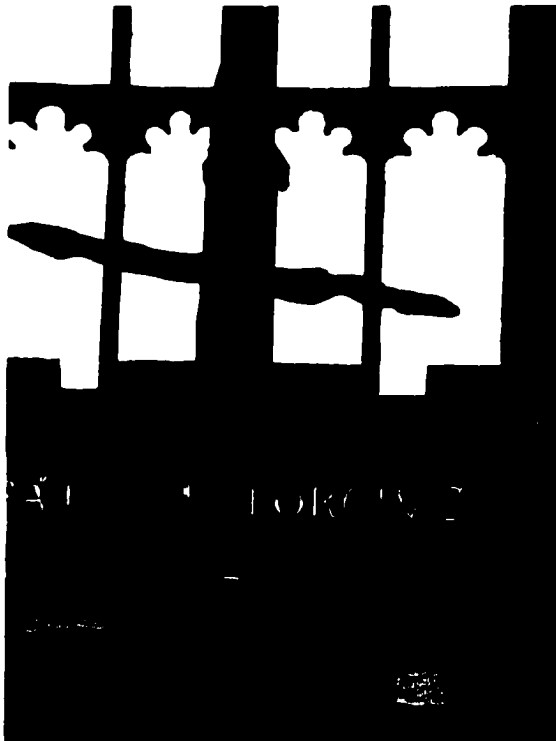
The heart was *not* symbolic of me giving my heart to anyone. Just before I found it at Clover Point, I asked Mother Nature to gift me with a heart that would symbolize the Sacred Mystery that had permeated each phase of my transformation thus far, and had awakened my heart to a profound soul-love. I desired to share the sense of Mystery with the other via the heart. After moments of quiet reflection, the gift gently washed up on shore near my feet. With gratitude I embraced it and later gave it to the other.

Today the meaning is the same. It is symbolic of the Sacred Mystery and the swing back to the Second Dark Night of the Soul stage. Having endured that period of growth, I now live what Jung (1954) called the mystical marriage, or *coniunctio* (CW 16. p. 169), or the union of the self with the Divine within. It also points to the union of opposites and the birth of new possibilities (Sharp, 1991). The *other*, together with my awakened *soul-love* served as a *conduit* that moved me into the very heart of my transformational work, the *conscious* coming home to, alignment with, and *living* from my Sacred Center. It is a gift of Grace and I am blessed and deeply humbled.

The *stone* the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. (Psalm 118: 22-23)

As you come to him, the *Living Stone* - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him - you too, like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priestesshood. (1 Peter 2: 4-5)

STAGE FOUR - PART ONE: Return to Innocence



Torso, symbolizing the self in the Second Dark Night of the Soul Phase - stripped of all the trappings so as to penetrate the abyss and be touched by the Mystery.

Charred Cross at Coventry Cathedral (1989) - Imagery came to mind at Cattle Point. Found photo hours later and felt called to forgiveness and reconciliation.



In the stream where your least expect it, there will be fish.

STAGE FOUR - PART ONE: Return to Innocence



Loving healing work done for my deceased daughter, Sharmila. April/4/98

A woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children.
And he said: Your children are not your children.
They are sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which
you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
And He bends you with his might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable. (Gibran, 1923. p. 17)

"I Love" by Tom T. Hall

(For you my little munchkin-baba, Sharmila...from mommy)

I love little baby ducks, old pick up trucks, slow moving trains...and rain
I love little country streams, sleep without dreams, Sunday school in May...and hay
and I love you too

I love leaves in the wind, pictures of my friends, birds of the world...and squirrels
I love coffee in a cup, little fuzzy pups, bourbon in a glass... and grass
and I love you too

I love honest, open smiles, kisses from a child, tomatoes on the vine...and onions
I love winners when they cry, losers when they cry, music when it's good ...and life
and I love you tooooooo...

STAGE FOUR - PART ONE: Return to Innocence



Combining hearts #1 to #11 to show gradual synthesis in the final stage

Interpretation and Analysis within a Jungian Framework

TABLE TWO - PART TWO (Revisited)

Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

STAGE FOUR - PART ONE: RETURN TO INNOCENCE (GRACE)

The Second Dark Night of the Soul: A swing back into darkness - a double death; a painful, dark state which normally intervenes between the illuminative and unitive life; a fuller transformative process leading to deepening of the spiritual self and the *sacred marriage* (alignment with the higher Self); more drastic psychological and spiritual cleansing; being forced to *turn back* and pick up those residual, resistant and inactive corners of the personality still embedded and neglected in the undercurrent of a life; deeper initiation into a sphere of reality not yet acclimatized to; direct invitation to active endurance and a condition of stress in which deep work is accomplished; no longer a seeking *to know* but a fervent desire *to be*; destruction and construction occurring simultaneously; the progressively illumined consciousness of previous stages further exhausted and destabilized; a felt sense of cosmic betrayal and utter abandonment; withdrawal of all observable comforts and graces; disenfranchisement of the individualistic stand-point which thwarts the *great movement* to the Center; deprivation of power to exercise any clear, perceptible operations of the otherwise refined, personal repertoire; intervals of unsought chaos and suffering lasting months or even years before consciousness again unifies itself and a new equilibrium established; intellectual aridity and much emotional confusion; the little *self* ceases to be its own center and circumference; intense sense of *nothingness* pervades the personality with detachment from all talents, attributes and even spiritual courage; a total letting go of all that serves survival (inwardly and outwardly); interior travail directed at annihilation of selfhood so as to be penetrated by the ground of Being itself, on its own terms; humility is impregnated and embraced as personal ground gives way; despite abasement, there is unremitting self-surrender and acquiescence to the hidden purposes of the Divine Will; *unselfing* leads from multiplicity to unity; the sensual and the spiritual merge into unified whole; slow growth and costly *inner practicum* manifesting in living more contemplatively and at transcendent levels of reality.

"We don't need to *build* pillars of light! By being willing to receive, we *draw down* the light. It pours through us continually wherever we stand ... We need to share it ... to talk about it, to live it out and *hook* it into the earth ... That's the challenge for me now ... to be able to stand and hold open a space for spirit to come into all my relationships ... I need to be a chalice, an active, receptive, open space for the Great Mystery ... I also need to be a Medicine Eagle who embodies spirit and brings it into daily life ... The challenge is not just to have visions and dreams, but to make them real," said Brooke Medicine Eagle (in Anderson and Hopkins, 1992. p. 226 - 227).

Brooke Medicine Eagle's thoughts resonate with the purpose of that time of the second DNOS. To hold still, to be receptive, porous, and open a space for spirit to come into all of our relationships including those with ourselves. This stage also speaks to the paradox of suffering, darkness within and without *and* that these are indispensable for the re-emergence of the Light. Here, the Earth-Heart four symbol embraces this inevitable paradox. The "rejected" heart (see visual) symbolizes and bears the pain that is essential to growth in that its very rejection is its blossoming in the desert of the dark night like the prairie crocus bursting through parched, frozen earth as one of the first signs of spring.

In scrutinizing the literature over the years, I came into some theoretical (psychological and spiritual) and experiential perspectives that shed insight on the meaning of the experiences of my awakening heart and irrupting eroticism as processes integral to my overall transformational journeying. In discussing these, I integrate my own intuitive understanding of what my experiences have come to mean within the context of my overall history and not just at the time when these gifts first imbued my experiential reality. They have manifested in bodily, emotional, spiritual and psychological states and value qualities that have endowed my being and have become a way of living in the Tao.

Bankson (in Anderson and Hopkins, 1992) asks, "what do you know about your own sexuality, *from the inside*" (p. 188)? Anderson and Hopkins argue that sexuality is an experience of the most intractable subjectivity and like spirituality, it has been defined by men, i.e., only male sexuality has been named as real within the patriarchal mindset. Sexuality was split from the spiritual body-awareness but women are reclaiming the truth that "God is present in the ecstasy of sexual union as in that of unitive prayer" (p. 189). Maya Angelou says, "for full enjoyment of sex, for true completeness, one does the same thing one does with God" (in Anderson and Hopkins. p.189). The whole self yields into the mystery. In terms of women's knowing, feeling and sensing, sexuality is "a miracle that is sweet and good and the song of life singing through me" (p. 190). Griffin says Eros:

becomes a wild card constantly cracking open the heart ...pulling us beyond our individual selves in ways that undo the old, sure identities and distinctions... and pull us off in directions where we lose conscious control (in Anderson and Hopkins. p.190).

Craighead views sexuality as a profound and inclusive relatedness and in being woman, she is a sexual being. As an artist, she believes that:

Whether we are weaving tissue in the womb or weaving imagery in the soul, our work is sexual: the work of conception, gestation, and birth ... Our spirituality should center on the affirmation of our sexuality ... we transform clay into vessel, feeling into movement, wind into song, egg into child, fiber into cloth, memory into image and body into worship (in Anderson and Hopkins. p. 192).

In essence then, my soul-love and deep eroticism have transformed my body into a new form of deep worship with the song of life pulsing through me and an abiding and inclusive relatedness taking root between my sense of the Holy, the community of others and myself. I have come home to a profound embodied understanding of the *communion* of soul-love *and* sacred intimacy. I have come home, at last, to

my sacred inner Lover, ("*sila*") and have reclaimed my deep femininity, my deep womanhood, after having been unconsciously exiled for twenty-five years. That perforation happened early in my youth, at twenty-one, when I got married and gave birth to my first daughter, Khalila Lara. She was born a Downs Syndrome baby and we were told by the attending physician at the University of Alberta hospital that she was severely handicapped and would amount to being a "vegetable." At that young age, I had not yet learned the art of transcending the medical model. More over, upon further testing, it became evident that I was a "carrier" of the abnormality, (a spontaneous mutation), and hence it was because of my genetics that my child was a Down's baby. I had no skills for coping with such a trauma and on a psychospiritual level, I gave myself some harmful, distorted messages about my sexuality, and my role as a woman, mother and wife. I linked my sexuality to my child's abnormality and I blamed myself for exerting that kind of trauma on my newborn.

That reality and mindset permeated my life, my marriage, how I cared for my child and how I related to myself. Within a year I had a second child, Sharmila Romona, who was genetically normal but due to an oxygen shortage during the delivery, (the reason was never confirmed), was severely cerebral palsied. Thus, at the delicate age of twenty-three, I became a mother with two seriously disabled children. Providence set it up so that I had a husband who was exceptionally dedicated and goodhearted and totally embraced our children and me. However, on a deeper level, a spot in the flux ruptured and gave way, initiating me into the spiraling dance of transformation. I felt ripped of and cheated at such a young age. I questioned the meaning of life and asked why me, why my children. I swore obscenities to whatever I understood then to be the Holy, and I demanded answers in my foolish youth. I endured the greatest struggle and slowly fell apart inside while keeping my home together with the full support of my husband, caring for my children, researching the medical literature and pursuing my academic ambitions. The good natures of my children made their care less traumatic but in the bigger scheme of things, life seemed to have gone radically wrong and my wild abandon and youthfulness abruptly and prematurely ended. The same could be said for my ex-partner who was a gentler sort of soul and took things in stride. Me? I ranted and raved at the universe for years and philosophically and spiritually plumbed the depths of existence and questioned things for which there were no "answers" per se. My faith and I often fell into the abyss.

So, with years and layers of committed healing work cumulatively coming to surprising fruition, my transformation dream, on March/17/95, was indeed a profound *turning point*! Twenty-three years in the making and a hard earned homecoming and reclaiming of my innocence, my sensuality, my resplendent womanhood. The gift of Green coming through unbidden Grace. The erotic realigning with the sacred. The heart finding its true melody once more. That powerful erotic energy was the life-force breaking through the barriers in me that severed the heart from her instinctual knowing of sacred pleasure (Eisler, 1995), an endowment that was mine at the moment of birth. This force, re-igniting in midlife as fierce love and wild

passion has resolved and reintegrated the nondualism of holy and sensual, virgin and whore (Woodman, 1985), soul and academia, and pleasure and pain into a unity that bespeaks the soul's issuance of a certain kind of spirituality. A spirituality that in essence exudes "*capacitar*" (Eisler, 1995. p. 369), that which enables and encourages, and brings forth *consciousness* that is grounded in a new politics of transformation. This consciousness is imbued with compassion, deep Care and the freeing and realigning of our bodily vitality so that we can participate in nonviolent and empathic means of providing genuine alternatives to suffering.

This consciousness also re-engages:

a spirituality that can again be erotic and the erotic can again be spiritual ... sex can be a sacrament and our bodies shrines ... and we will know in our everyday lives, not just in moments of spiritual illumination, that it is through love that we expand ourselves to ... embrace others at the same time that we enfold ourselves into them and into that oneness mystics and lovers speak of as an experience of both exquisite passion and perfect peace (Eisler, 1995, p. 400 - 401).

In studying Carl Jung's works over a two-year period, I discovered among other things that "*Sila*," (serendipitous inspirational lover alighted), the name I created in 1995, quite spontaneously and intuitively for the "Goddess" that appeared in the transformational dream and for the 'other,' is actually an old Slavonic word meaning "strength" (Jung, 1960. CW. 8. p. 345). In discussing the ancient view that the soul was the life-breath, Jung examined the word soul within different cultural contexts. He suggested that the German word, *seele*, like the English word, *soul*, comes from the Gothic *saiwala* and the old German *saiwalo*, and that these can be connected etymologically with the Greek *aiola*, "quick moving, twinkling, iridescent" (p. 345). The Greek word *psyche* also means "butterfly" and *saiwalo* is related on the other side to the Old Slavonic *sila* or strength. Jung intimated that "these connections throw light on the original meaning of the word *soul*: it is moving force, that is, life-force" (p. 345).

The Germanic *seele*, soul, "was feminine and used by mystics like Eckhart and Goethe in the same sense as *Shakti* in India, i.e. the feminine Ultimate Reality" (Walker, 1983. p. 954). Other ancient words for the soul were female - psyche, pneuma, anima and alma. "Goddesses souls were Kore, Sophia, Metis, Sapientia and Juno" (p. 954). Larrington (1992) offers another interpretation of the word *sila*. In the Inuit tradition, *Sila* was considered to be a force of nature: a source of knowledge, breath and weather, which might react in a human way to the breaking of taboo with forbidding storms" (p. 164). In its capacity to change the sex of a newborn child, *Sila* also enfolded the distinguishing capacities of either sex. According to the Greenlanders, the air, *Sila*, from which a newborn drew its first vital breath, could change the sex of the baby. Further the knowledge of sewing gifted through *Sila* assisted the newly married woman to take the first step towards establishing a human way of life, and "water procured by *Sila* ... was sufficient to grow foetuses" (p. 165). *Sila* was also the complementarity of the masculine and the feminine.

Needless to say, these discoveries both fascinated me and affirmed the rightness I felt and honored all along regarding the soul-love that blossomed and my persistent belief that it was of a sacred essence. *Sila* was the "soul" and the "life-force" energy in the deep love and the powerful eroticism that became alive first in my transformational dream then actively infused my living and being, and led to the reclaiming of my sacred inner Lover, my authentic womanhood and the aliveness of my sensuality bathing freely in the warmth of my self-respect. *Sila* was the soul-work itself and the soul-strength that I was continually blessed with so as to endure the arduous journey home. *Sila* was also the feminine Principle, the Goddess that Woodman (1985) says comes in a powerful dream when the individual is ready and when the transformation experience has been one of trust. I trusted the calling of the inner voice and the renewal process and gave myself to all that was asked of me. *Sila* came in my dream, making sacred again my erotic essence and uniting me unto Herself. For me, this experience has been the initial consummation of the mystical marriage or the *coniunctio* (Jung, 1954. CW. 16. p.169). *Sila*, also being the complementarity of the masculine and the feminine, speaks to the "union of opposites" from a Jungian perspective (Sharp, 1991. p. 42), and psychologically of the birth of new possibilities. In resolutely trusting in the inner voice, despite the struggles, abandonment and mistreatment, and believing in that primordial "something" that was taking form in me, I am now living the manifestation of those then nascent possibilities - the integration of my masculine and my feminine aspects, the embodiment of soul-love and eroticism as a sacred whole, a genuine attunement of the self with the Self, the inhabiting of a profound self-possession, and a distinct *knowing* that my life belongs to Life itself and that I am blessed and cared for within a larger divine Truth.

As a final comment, I found some measure of meaning regarding the souls of educators and students 'crossing paths' in Bache's (1995) work on *morphic fields* in higher education. He speaks of a spiritual resonance in the classroom, "a particularly intense form of energetic resonance between teacher and students which emerges spontaneously and generates symptoms of kundalini arousal" (p. 1). He suggests that when we are engaged in spiritual work, "our spiritual ecology does not permit isolated realization" (p. 1), and that the deeper the connection between the student and the instructor, the more pronounced the resonances will be. Within these morphic fields, the collective energy takes on a creative direction and a mysterious alchemy of sorts is enacted between individuals such that consciousness synchronizes. A kind of psychic loop is created whereby one person intuitively and may even experience what another is going through in the moment or experiencing in his/her private life. Hidden truths psychically "cross barriers" so to speak, linking instructor and students in powerful processes, the intimacy and connection of which neither person solicits. The synchronicities are "the overture of a much deeper connection" (p. 4). Bache first called these mysterious interweavings of minds "the magic" (p. 5), and later came to understand them in terms of Rupert Sheldrake's (in Bache, 1995) work on morphogenic fields in science.

Bache says that, "truth spoken directly from the heart and skillfully illumined by the mind has an enormous power that cannot be eliminated even in the academic setting" (p. 5 underlining mine). This statement speaks most powerfully to my transformation experience in academia despite the fact that my process was so grossly misinterpreted. Bache adds that when spiritual truths are simply spoken and they touch on memories long forgotten, there is sometimes a spark of recognition that can suddenly explode into a flame.

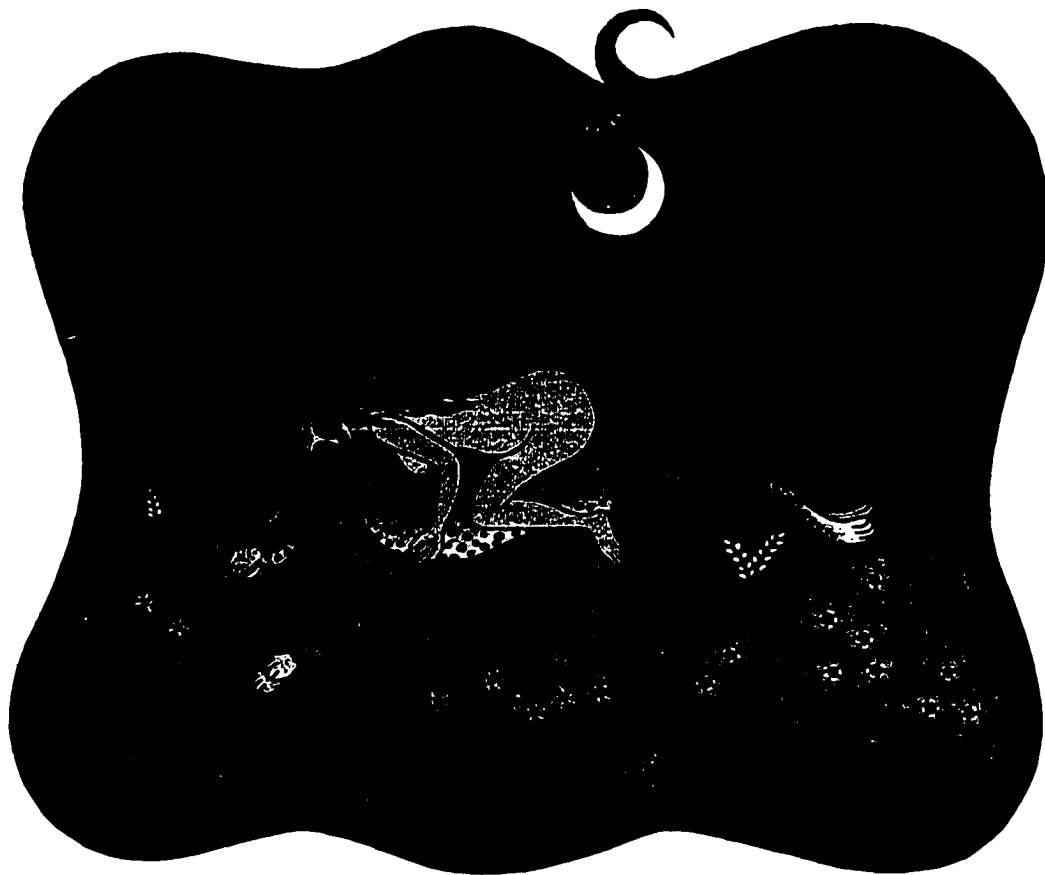
The kundalini flame is contagious. As an energy not trapped within matter, it naturally stimulates chakra-specific resonances ... and students ... feel their energy shifting to higher centers of awareness though they may not understand what is happening. Symptoms of kundalini arousal and chakra-opening begin to manifest. Energy runs, hearts explode, emotions threaten to overwhelm, and insights arise ... teaching at this level in an academic setting ... quickly becomes a very delicate matter and opens the doors to all manner of errors of judgement ... it becomes necessary to protect your students from their own enthusiasm as well as your personal shortcomings (p. 5 - 6).

Bache suggests that the instructor's person may in some way act as a catalyst for these experiences though in essence, it is something larger than him or her that is operative and that permeates the gossamer boundaries between the two individuals. From my reading of Bache, I intuit that the "course mind," the "class mind," and the individual "soul mind" converge on behalf of the inner and outer work. This is how I felt about my process and my convergence with the 'other' even though I could not find words for it. I was told that I was trying "to entrap the other in my process" but deep in my being that felt so wrong. I could not explain what Bache has so empathically described but I *just knew* that that energetic dynamic was beyond me and hence my trying to make sense of it by saying "our souls crossed paths." My soul-work and my process had nothing in common with the cheap reductionism that was later ascribed to them. The dehumanizing treatment was a far cry to how Bache treats his students. In my case, my consciousness was far more evolved, (and I say this with a sober clarity), than the consciousness that was supposedly there to guide my process. A question I have for Bache, (about which I will dialogue with him), is, what happens when the *student* is more intuitively attuned than the educator to this kind of consciousness? Often, many evolved professionals returning as doctoral students surpass their educators on many levels of competencies. I have observed this delicate dynamic at work. How do educators handle this situation? Luckily, I had enough intuition and trust in that *other* dimension, though I could not name it, to midwife my own transformation and not lose my life's work. There were times when the ridicule I endured burnt through to the core, but I took it, still believing in the Dream when the darkness of the SDNOS seemed like the only reality. In my trust, a new, added thing entered into my heart and went into its innermost chamber and is now already in my blood (Rilke, 1962).

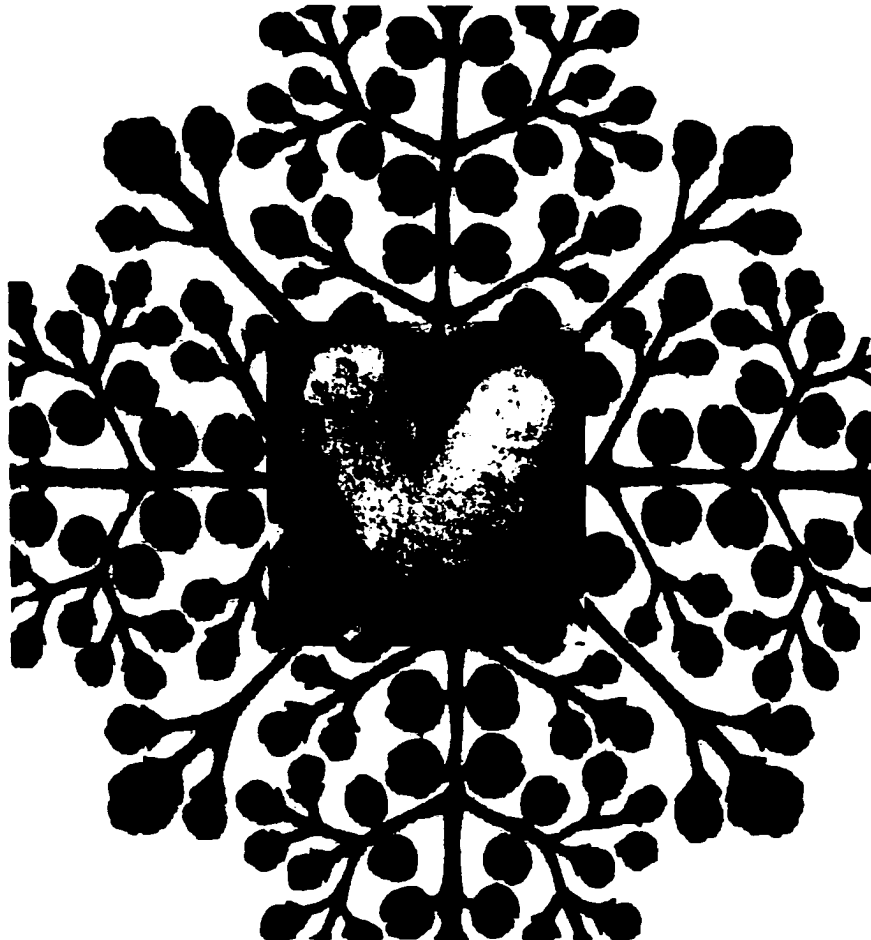
Methodological Implications

This methodology section is combined with that of Stage Four, part two, in that they both constitute Stage Four. Also, the stages and processes in this section were already dealt with in-depth in previous sections on methodology.

STAGE FOUR: *Return to Innocence*
PART TWO: *Deeper Integrative Synthesis*



STAGE FOUR - PART TWO: Return to Innocence

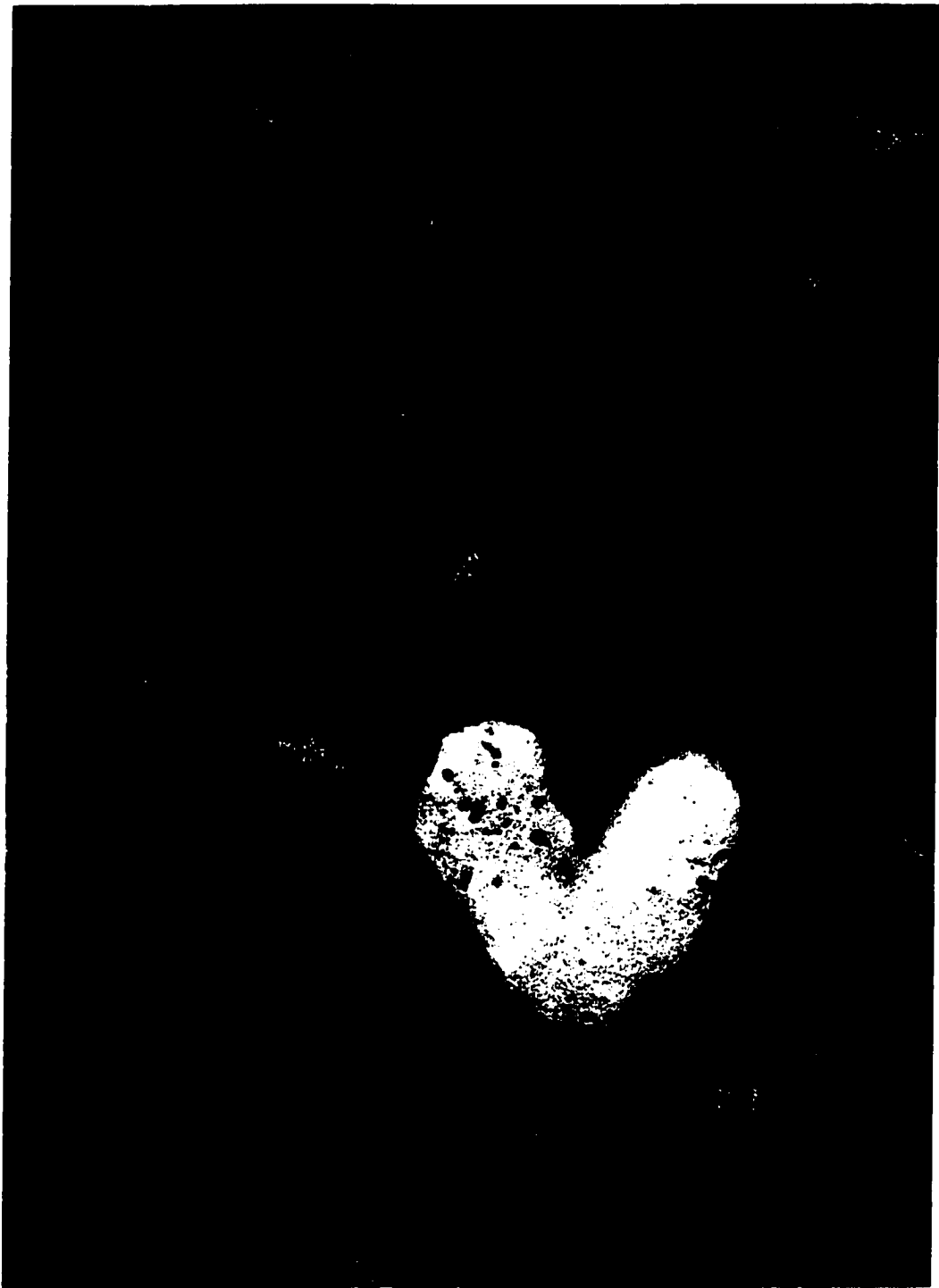


“TEMENOS”

I call this self-created mandala, *Temenos*, a Greek word used by Jung (1958) meaning a sacred, protected space. Psychologically, it is descriptive of both a personal container and the sense of privacy that encompasses a therapeutic relationship (Sharp, 1991). It is also a sense of privacy in the relationship that I have with my higher Self. Jung (1950) said that, “the symbol of the mandala has exactly this meaning of a holy place, a *temenos*, to protect the center ... of the personality from being drawn out and from being influenced from the outside” (CW 18. p. 178-179). Psychologically, the four-fold symmetrical-type structure points to the idea of wholeness and Jung believed that the spontaneous creation of quaternary images like those found in mandalas are indicative of the ego’s ability to integrate unconscious material (Sharp, 1991).

The mandala was created with the image of the thirteenth Earth-Heart found at Keawakapu Beach, Maui, 1999, superimposed on the Pikake quilt design (from the Maui Pot Pourri Quilt Collection) which was reproduced on a gift item I received at that same time. When I “received” the earth-heart from the Maui shoreline, I got a clear inner message, (a distinct felt sense and conviction in my body-mind), that my Self-transformation journey and the research inquiry had come full circle. The sun blazed on the aquamarine waters and my heart felt full, surprised. I waded knee-high in the warm ocean and felt an immense peace wash over me as my being radiated a quiet gratitude. “The work is completed. I have been faithful. This is all that matters. Thank you, O Holy One,” I whispered as tears merged with the water. For me, the mandala symbolizes the wholeness I have come into and the union of my self with my Sacred Center. It is also a concrete reminder that my whole being is a *temple* space. The heart *feels* like the Tao or the sacred heart of Jesus, the Christ whose spirit has been my constant companion. My mother awakened in me at an early age, a sense of the Divine within. Now this knowledge is more fully realized and integrated. I am also more protective and respectful of this inner Space and more discerning of whom I share it with.

STAGE FOUR-Part Two: Return to Innocence



**Earth Hearts # 12 and 13 found at Clover Point, Victoria, B.C. and
Keawakapu Beach, Maui, 1998-1999**

STAGE FOUR: Return to Innocence

Part Two - Rebirth or Deeper Integrative Synthesis

(Methodology: Explication, Creative Synthesis, Indwelling, Focusing.

Symbols: Earth Hearts # 12, 13)

Preamble

I Go There

*There is a place that I go
Not for pleasure
Not for show
No, I just take comfort there
It's a marvelous place
I forget about my face and the clothes I wear
I arrive there naked as the day I was born
I'm relieved at the door of disguises I've worn
There is no hall of mirrors but I do see myself
I'm delighted by my reflection
I am not somebody else
No, I am the person I always wanted to be
The person I always wanted to be*

*I go there, I go there
To find wind on a still, still day
I go there, I go there
To find stillness when the wind might blow me away
And when I am feeling the need to look deep into my heart
I see all the signs pointing me back to the start
When I believed in my visions
When I trusted in my dreams
When no amount of trouble ever turned out to be
More trouble than it seems
Oh, the person I always wanted to be
Yeah, the person I always wanted to be*

*When I'm feeling the need to look deep into my heart
I hear a celebration and I'm invited to take part
I watch as my hopes triumph over my fears
And I dance with the child I lost touch with through the years*

*There is a place I go
Not for pleasure
Nor for show
No, I just take comfort there*

*(Laura Smith, 1990 - singer/songwriter;
one of my beloved artists - underlining mine.)*

Out of the mist and into *the gift of Green*. Laura Smith's (1990) lyrics beautifully illumine the place we come home to within ourselves, when we courageously endure the night journey. We come round full circle to the place where we started but with refreshed spirits and increased consciousness. She says we arrive there naked as the day we were born. We are naked in our *conscious* innocence as we hear again our surprised feelings living. The disguises dissolve and we are delighted by our more transparent reflection. We have penetrated deep into the unconscious and have integrated repressed material into the conscious personality. Our dream of wholeness has triumphed and we celebrate and *dance* the Goddess and the healed, natural child within. The rebirth process has ripened to fruition and its deeper integrative synthesis has taken root in the ground of our being.

It is a homecoming and a return to the Self and the world. Reconstruction of the personality and groundedness in the Sacred Center have been realized. The individual values the whole transformation experience as a gift of unbidden grace and there is an attitude of *sober appreciation* for what one has endured. One feels simplicity, humility and attunement with all of creation and is quietly aware of a pervasive Mystery and order infusing the universe. Experiences of deepened compassion for the world and for self, responsiveness to and reverence for the beauty and subtleties encountered and genuine self-possession imbue the renewed life. There is an acute sense of *intimately knowing* the Divine (as one understands that Source) and living contentedly in '*Thy will be done*,' i.e., a conscious surrender to the *deeper purpose* for one's existence. Quickening of the life-force energy, joy, immense peace, effervescence, valuing of one's life and that of others and a feeling of *rightful belonging* in the world are constitutive of this stage. One *returns* to community filled with an ardent desire to care and to serve. Underhill (1955) echoes aspects of this stage as she describes the mystic's path from Appearance to Reality:

We see the ever-changing, ever-growing human spirit emerge from the cave of illusion, enter into consciousness of the transcendental world ... and pass through its gates and attain his home in the bosom of Reality ... His success has depended on the intensity of his love and will, his capacity for self-discipline, his steadfastness and courage ... and the generosity and completeness of his outgoing passion for absolute beauty, absolute goodness, or absolute truth ... the "new birth" takes place and the new life-process of the deeper Self begins ... receiving a new vision of the world, he is spurred by it to a total self-dedication, an active surrender of his whole being to that aspect of the Infinite which he has perceived (p. 444-445).

The Lived-Experience

That initial question that catapulted me into living the phenomenon of Self-transformation was, “What is it in you that you allow such deep disrespect in your life?” A fierce attention allowed the question to come alive inside me and I found myself saying and doing *something* from within the depths of the question itself. That something was a lengthy process of psychic cleansing and healing occurring through integrating the influx of unconscious material into consciousness, extricating the self from the mother (Jacobi, 1973), *re-creating* a new psychic balance, and *re-aligning* the self with the Self. “An instinctive and sub-rational level of insight and energy” (Bridges, 1980. p. 156), (which I call sacred guidance), secured the movement, probity and completion of the process. That ensued in a manner such that I was found by Love, by a new vibrant life arising out of the agony and exuberance of the question itself. I also lived the paradox inherent in the work.

This stage was experienced more as a slower and further transmutation of the whole personality whereby subtle changes naturally emerged without much outward fuss. For example, I found myself thinking of the St. Francis of Assisi prayer for months, (the prayer I destroyed in the early stages of the transformation journey), and feeling like I had come to understand its deeper meaning of selfless service that is born out of self-healing and self-transcendence. Again, transcendence here does *not* mean negating the self or bypassing the self. From a Jungian sense, on the contrary, it means that a person has *moved through*, (*trans* as in through), the ego-self issues and has consciously owned and integrated the unconscious material that was distorting the personality. It means that the ego-self has matured, is strengthened and is aligned with the Self in a way that it now serves the bigger Purpose with awareness and dedication. I kept getting urges to buy the prayer all during 1999 but did so only in June 2000, after having entered a wholesome soul-mate relationship and *experiencing in a real way* my renewed capacity for loving and the mutuality of healthy giving and receiving. In learning increased self-respect and honoring of my life I am more able to offer this gift to a mate and the world. Now the St. Francis prayer *feels* right in that its message is in consonance with my renewed being. It reaches in and imbues my soul with new meaning and compassion that are of the Holy. I now quietly live a more buddhisatvic path and practice aspects of Gandhi’s *satyagraha*.

Another poignant example of the subtle movement in this stage was experienced one cold night in December 1999, at about 1:30am. I was still burning the midnight oil at my university office. I felt exceptionally tired and abandoned the research reading for the night. Becoming aware of the time, the cold outside as I peered through rainy windows and feeling an immediate existential aloneness, I heard myself “dialoguing” with the Mystery and asking why I was choosing the life I was living. My thoughts went like this:

What is this all about anyway? Why have I stayed with this project all this time? What is the matter with me? Am I a masochist? What is keeping me here? I could return to Calgary right now and find meaningful work again and change my financial status. Am I nuts to be doing this work days on end, years on end? Who cares anyway? Why the hell was I chosen to do this work anyway? I could do with a bit of superficiality right now ... beer and pizza would be an added bonus! In addressing the Sacred I said: What do You want from me anyway? Have you not got enough of me? How about You taking a l-o-n-g coffee break! Will this ever end? What happens next anyway? I don't know why I keep doing this work, serving You no matter what. What am I, “chopped liver?” Damn! Damn! Damn!

After venting for some time, I had no zeal to reengage with my research reading in that moment and casually began flipping through a photocopied chapter from Bly's (1992), *Iron John*, as I wished to inquire into what Bly had to say about naivete. The writing was compelling and engaged me further. Suddenly I came upon words that dumbfounded me because of my tantrum just minutes before. I immediately gasped at Bly's provocation:

The energies who ask for *katabasis* (i.e. the Drop or Descent) have immense powers at their control. The mood is that of Christ's remark, “*You shall not get out until you have paid the last penny.*” (p. 74, italics mine).

I could not believe the pointed message in the last sentence! I felt spoken to very clearly except my interpretation went more like this: “You will not get out of this until you have endured the last bit of transformation work and have written the last sentence!” I was in awe, like the Sacred had spoken directly via Bly's words. In my weariness I was heard and given a sharp directive that I will stay in the desert until the work is completed. That awareness totally shifted my energy and I fell into a contemplative moment of sheer gratitude. In that instance I felt a profound closeness to the Mystery and my disharmony dissipated. I packed up and headed home. As I drove through the moist foggy darkness, quite unexpectedly and out of nowhere I heard myself repeating convincingly several times: “I know You. I know You. I know You. I know You.” With each gentle but firm declaration, I felt my whole body and consciousness become permeated with a tender

energy. That sense of “*knowing*” came from the ground of my soul and bespoke of an alignment deeper than I had experienced before. Each repetition came spontaneously and saturated my body-mind with an overwhelming joy and a resolute certainty that *my God and I were truly one*. The rain poured monsoon-like along Blenkinsop Road, mirroring my profuse tears of ecstasy as I drove slowly towards home, not really needing to get home in a sense. Home was that inner space in me right there and then that was being so beautifully infused with magic ... another moment of grace unfolding. I eventually got to bed and fell asleep feeling like a lover in the arms of the Beloved. As I write these thoughts nine months later, this knowing is as real as it was that December night in the rain. This profound feeling of oneness with the Holy has only deepened with time and experience. In an ultimate sense, I now feel like my life is no longer my own but *Thine*.

As I steadily embraced my life in solitude, I felt at peace and more reconciled with the past. I studied the research literature with full force. Books came serendipitously or, I would buy others that I felt compelled to get without having prior knowledge of them. I was constantly surprised at how *in sync* the materials were with the topic of transformation, inner voice and my lived-experience. It was the same with Carl Jung’s *Collected Works* on analytical (depth) psychology and Moustakas’ methodology text on heuristics. I did not deliberately choose these theoretical orientations to *fit* the research project. Rather, after years of experiencing the phenomenon and through a more organic process, they became essentially aligned with the already unfolding inquiry. In fact, when the guidance came to focus on Jung’s work I resisted as I had only partial knowledge of the subject matter. Gradually the guidance persisted and it took me another two years to digest dimensions of Jung’s convoluted expositions on the individuation process. But a few of Jung’s followers - Jacobi, Perry, Sharp, Singer, Stevens, Woodman and von Franz hugely facilitated my deepening understanding of depth psychology. It was not a question of first choosing a theory or methodology to nicely dovetail with my study. It was more about listening to what the inquiry itself was calling forth and honoring what was asked of me, no matter how difficult or long a process that entailed. As such, the inner voice spoke not only to my direct transformational journey but also to each stage and process of the unfolding inquiry. That whole experience was a patient coming into slow knowledge.

With regards to Earth-Hearts twelve and thirteen, those came near the end of the transformation journey, again offering poignant symbolism for what was going on in the psyche. Earth-Heart twelve was gifted at Clover Point in 1998. After many hours of meditation on the beach giving thanks to Mother Earth for her many blessings, I got up and proceeded to walk amongst the larger pebbles. Soon I came upon the exquisitely smooth, dark stone. Immediately an intuition came that it represented me, the renewed self, more balanced and rounded out in many respects compared to Earth-Heart two that was symbolic of me in my earlier stages of transformation. It is a subtle, magical piece and whenever I behold it, it conjures up feelings of warmth and beauty that adorn my selfhood as I live this present gift of renewal. Earth-Heart thirteen came in a resplendent moment when sun, sand, wind and ocean converged at Keawakapu Beach, Maui to create a ceremony of sorts. A huge wave gradually lost its intensity yet quite vigorously washed up on the beach and promptly delivered the coral treasure at my feet. With a resounding clarity I heard this message in a deep place inside me: “The journey has come full circle. The work is now complete. This is all that matters. You have been faithful, daughter of mine.” The energy of the coral heart was like the Mystery in her beautiful essence and I marveled at such a stupendous offering. I felt like I fell in love all over again as I waded knee high in the water, feeling the warmth caress my body. I felt an immense peace wash over me as my being radiated a quiet gratitude. I walked back to the condo in silence via the “Peace Pole” at Kamaole III Beach Park. There, I held the rich energy and feeling radically, marvelously alive and humbled, I honored all the good in an open prayer in the sunlight, using Rilke’s (1984), *Letters to a Young Poet* as manna and celebration:

Works of art are of an infinite loneliness ... Only love can grasp and hold and be just toward them. Consider yourself and your feelings right every time ... if you are wrong after all, the natural growth of your inner life will lead you slowly and with time to other insights. Leave to your opinions their own quiet undisturbed development, which, like all processes, must come from deep within and cannot be pressed or hurried by anything. Everything is gestation, then bringing forth. To let every impression and each germ of feeling come to completion wholly in itself, in the dark, in the inexpressible, in the unconscious, *beyond the reach of one’s own intelligence*, and await with deep humility and patience the birth hour of a new clarity: *that alone is living the artist’s life* (p. 23 – 24, italics mine).

All thirteen Earth-Hearts are configured in a circle to symbolize the integrative synthesis.

As I pursued the research readings further, I encountered increased documentation that confirmed my earlier and current experiences, thereby increasing my confidence and validating what I had trusted as authentic in the first place. In this stage the experiential and the theoretical came together and were consolidated on many levels, broadening my knowledge base and bringing fuller and more diverse meanings to bear on the whole transformation journey. That was an incredible gift since I had had to marshal my own inner and outer resources throughout the entire research project, be self-directed one hundred percent of the time, and midwife my own transformation process. So this stage was a harvesting of sorts, encountering authors that understood the renewal process and theories that shed light on the legitimacy of the experiential data. What that aspect of coming into knowledge did for me was to further crystallize my faith in the inner voice and strengthen my trust in my own wisdom. While on a surface level I griped about the work sometimes, I remained resolute that the work was for some genuine, good purpose. The readings and depth conversations with fellow sojourners outside academia provided fertile soil to integrate wisdom, theory, spirit and experience ... Grace unfolding again.

Morse (1992) for example, in *Transformed by the Light*, validated and offered insight into my experiences of the tunnel with swirling colored lights and the out-of-body sensations. He suggested that experiences of “*light*” are not just psychological. They are legitimate mystical experiences. From his research, he has “documented a spot in the brain that functions as the circuit board of mysticism ... located above the right ear in an area known as the temporal lobe” (p. 162). This circuit board is triggered by death and near death experiences, but also by fear, intense stress and while being in a state of drowsy half sleep. Morse confirmed my experiences in stages one and two when he said:

The transformative part of the experience is seeing the light. If a person has a paranormal experience such as leaving their body but it is *not* accompanied by the light, then the experience is not usually transformative. If the light is experienced then there is a transformation. The transformative powers are in the light. That is what our research tells us (p. 163).

What I encountered and totally trusted as real was substantially validated. I was vitally attuned to my bodily and psychic reality when I had those experiences. I felt the genuine shift in my entire being. In reading Morse, I honored my truth even more and felt a great satisfaction fill my heart as I recalled those lonely, barren days and my implicit self-trust.

Grof and Grof (1991) and Buber (1952) were other sources from which I gleaned insight into my experiences. The focus here had to do with my puzzle regarding my heart awaking to the 'other' in a deep soul-love. While the love was about the *reawakening* of my primal womanhood and my heart, I could not understand the reality of an actual other becoming a part of that process. While I never doubted the authenticity of my truth, I could not "explain" it to anyone. Often I questioned why that *other* and not someone else? Bache (1995) discussed earlier, offered an interpretation that made sense and helped me to better grasp how the transpersonal dimension becomes activated in the classroom. Again, all that theoretical/experiential consolidation occurred in this Stage four, Part two.

Grof and Grof (1991), in discussing psychological renewal through return to the Center, suggested that for many people undergoing radical psychological renewal, the issue of opposites comes into focus. Individuals become "fascinated by the differences between sexes, sexual change, homosexuality and transcendence of sexual polarity" (p. 87). They suggest that when the episode is allowed to move beyond the initial distress and confusion, the experiences become more pleasant and gradually become resolved:

The process often culminates in the experience of "sacred marriage," a blissful union with an ideal partner. This can be either an imaginary archetypal figure or an idealized person from one's life on whom the role is projected. The sacred marriage can have as protagonists such archetypal figures as Adam and Eve ... the Sun and Moon ... it usually means that the masculine and the feminine aspects of the personality are reaching a new psychological balance ... At this same time, the process seems to be reaching the center or ... the Self, the transpersonal center that represents our deepest and true nature ... these individuals ... may have a profound sense of spiritual rebirth (p. 87).

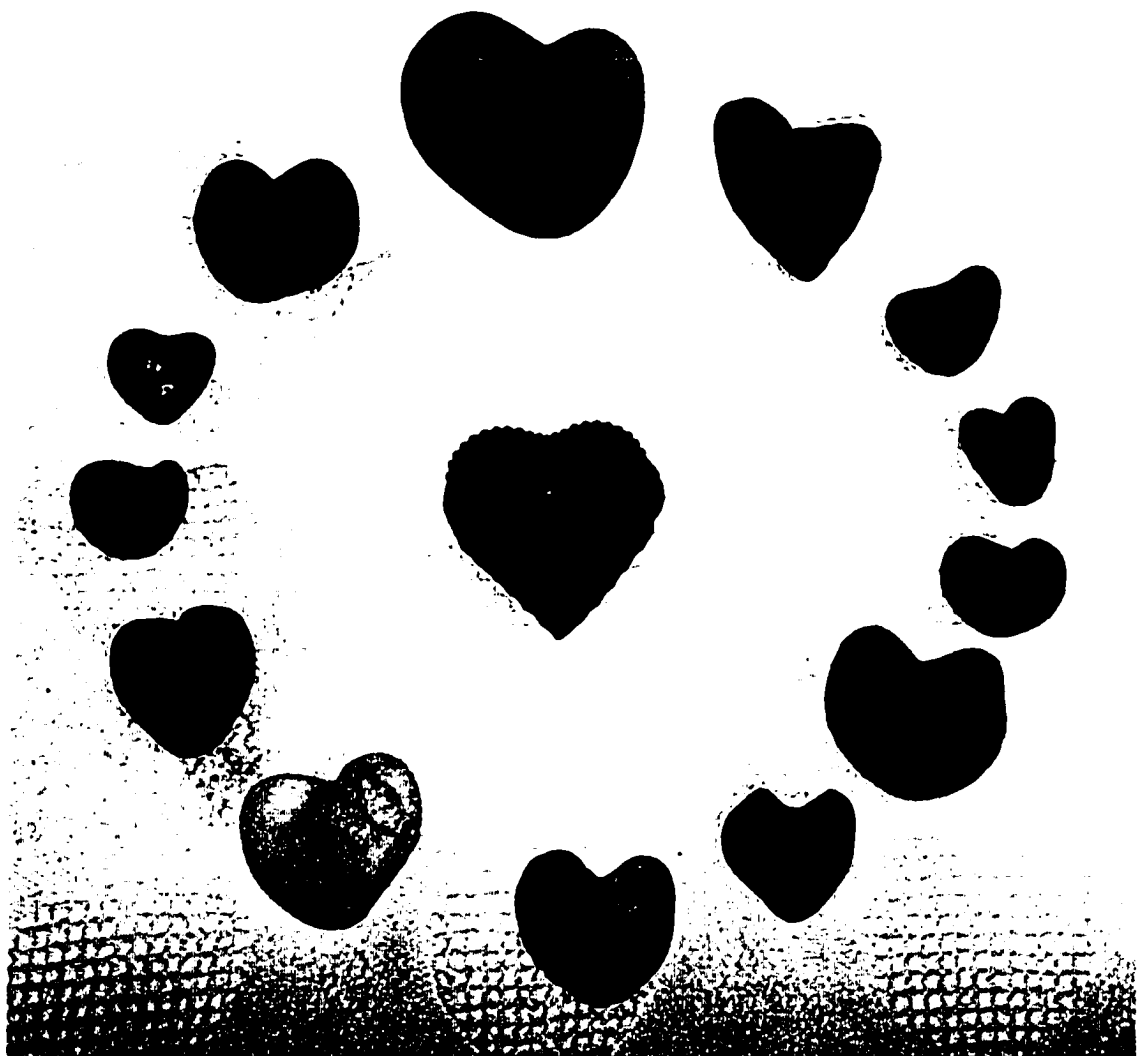
For me, I have come into an androgynous mode of being and feel like I have transcended the sexual polarity. The masculine and feminine are more harmonized within. I also now live a quiet sense of the "sacred marriage" between my self and the Holy as depicted in the rose visual and the mandala visual with the heart at the center, the *rose* and the *heart* symbolizing the Holy. I know the Holy in a deeply intimate way. Further, I understand better that the mentoring *other* was a conduit for a vital piece of the transpersonal work.

Buber (1962) offered yet another perspective on the issue of my soul-love and the *other* being a part of the work. Buber reflects on Kierkegaard's idea of "a teleological suspension of the ethical" (p. 115) in that there are times when a moral duty is suspended

for the realization of a higher purpose. He uses the example of Abraham when he is called by God to sacrifice Isaac. In essence, Buber argues that there are times when we are called to plunge into the seemingly absurd, to sacrifice and *cross over* the borders of the ethical with a paradoxical movement of faith. Further, we are left alone and to our own resources as no one can perform the critical task demanded of us. This hard, extreme demand draws forth the innermost readiness to sacrifice out of the depths of one's being. The readiness is allowed to grow with the full intention to act, but once one is tested and tried and there are no further hindrances standing between the intention and the deed, (the readiness is fulfilled), then the action is intercepted. One sacrifices everything knowing or hoping paradoxically that one will not lose. In other words, that which is typically moral is suspended for the duration of the dilemma because it is pleasing to a higher Principle. Buber stresses that acting in faith as in trusting in the greater Good and in the rightness of one's predicament is imperative or else, "all becomes a demonic temptation" (p. 117).

From this perspective, an interpretation could be made that validates the soul-love for the *other* in that a real live context was presented so as to follow through completely in the healing of my primal womanhood and my sensual self. The usual boundaries were suspended for the realization of a higher purpose, i.e., the mystical marriage (Jung, 1954) and the reclaiming of my femininity and the restoring and rebalancing of the heart, body and mind. The soul-love and blossoming eroticism were not intended to be consummated on the physical plane but to be pushed to the fullest possible endurance on that level so that the breakthrough could happen on a spiritual level. That was realized in two ways. First, I *re-embodied* my full sensuality after having distorted my identity in this regard due to giving birth to my mentally challenged daughters. Secondly, that soulful love *re-awakened* me to and *re-aligned* me with my Love for the Holy ... and myself! It was a process that gradually allowed the *third transcendent function* to come full circle in my being and consciousness. It was all a necessary movement of the soul, the bigger purpose of which I had no control. My part was to suffer and endure the *tension* all the way so as to secure the fulfillment of the inner work. Feeling beautifully aligned, I *re-adorned* my body with my 22K gold chain and cross that I wore when I was sixteen. It is symbolic of a return to conscious innocence and the alchemical base metal now *re-turning* to gold.

STAGE FOUR - PART TWO: Rebirth Comes Full Circle
An Integrative Synthesis



**Hearts one to thirteen combined to show a creative synthesis of the
Self-transformation process**

STAGE FOUR - PART TWO: Return to Innocence



This subtle and beautiful visual symbolizes the mystical marriage, the *coniunctio* (Jung, 1954. CW 16, p. 169), or the union of the self with the Divine within. The hand on the periphery symbolizing the little self in union with the Divine within symbolized by the peach colored *Rose*. It also points to the union of opposites and the birth of new possibilities (Sharp, 1991). The *Rose* has been regarded as a symbol of “the Soul, the spiritual Self, the Divinity in both the East and the West ... and is evocative and effective in stimulating psycho-spiritual processes” (Assagioli, 1965, p. 213).

Jung (1971) and Assagioli (1965) suggested that symbols be considered as images or signs of psychological realities. By analogy they serve as important psychological links between outer and inner realities. They function as accumulators, transformers and conductors of psychological energies, and lastly as integrators - the integration of psychological energy through the process of *synthropy*. In this process the psychodynamic efficiency of the symbol serves to in-gather, store and transform psychological energy for the purpose of psychospiritual integration (Assagioli, 1965, p. 178).

The *Rose* has featured throughout my Self-transformation process and has been like a companion-on-the-Way, especially during Stages Three and Four. It has symbolized the awakening of my heart to a deep soul-love which then served as a *conduit* that moved me into the core purpose of my inner work - the sacred marriage of my self with the Divine within. It also reflects the purity, beauty, and delicacy of my soul-love (for an *other*) that has endured throughout my rebirth journey and continues to inhabit the soft contours of my being. In the second phase of Stage Four, Rebirth and Integration, I came into a depth of wholeness and a quality of spiritual integration that I am now joyously living but had not known before to that degree. I have come home to my Sacred Self and am open to new possibilities as my life continues to unfold into the ever regenerative Promise.

The St. Francis prayer first destroyed then *re-claimed* as rebirth process ripened

Prayer for Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love.

Where there is injury, pardon.

Where there is doubt, faith.

Where there is despair, hope.

Where there is darkness, light.

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so

much seek to be consoled, as to console.

To be understood, as to understand.

To be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.

And it is in dying that we are

born to eternal life.

St. Francis of Assisi

STAGE FOUR - PART TWO: Return to Innocence



Peace pole at Kamaole Beach III, Maui, 1999, completing the healing journey that started at the peace pole at Findhorn, Scotland, 1989.



Renewed and living humbly in the Light

Interpretation and Analysis within a Jungian Framework

TABLE TWO - PART TWO (Revisited)
Psychological Stages and Phases of the Self-Transformation Process

STAGE FOUR - PART TWO: REBIRTH COMES FULL CIRCLE

Deeper Integrative Synthesis: Out of the mist and into the gift of green; a homecoming and return to the Self; synthesis of ego, Self and world; Self-renewal and rebirth; reconstruction of the personality and groundedness in the Self or sacred *Center*; valuing of process as a gift of grace; sober appreciation for what one has endured; feeling of simplicity and of having been found worthy; sense of profound humility and attunement with all of life; quiet awareness of a pervasive mystery and order in cosmos; selfless way of being in the world; integration of unconscious material into consciousness; *deepening in compassion* for self and world; integrated feeling of self-possession and self-love; return of energy, joy and will to live; feeling healed and revitalized; immense sense of inner peace and valuing of one's life; consciously feeling one's rightful place and belonging in the world; forgiveness toward self and others; sensual and erotic responsiveness heightened; *heart breaks wide open*; reentry and reconnection with world; responsiveness to and reverence for the beauty and subtleties encountered; committed to care and service to the world (buddhisatvic attitude); profound sense of *intimately knowing* the Divine (as one uniquely understands this Source); reflecting on and honoring one's faithfulness to the call; quietly living *Thy Will Be Done*.

It seems that everything is realized through a plan that is patterned on life itself. No new period of life is possible without the death of the old life-phase. To become, we must first *un-become*, become undone. Everything moves toward some larger whole and change becomes a *transgression* that violates the old rules, the life-negating patterns that sabotage the emancipation of the soul and the individuation of the personality. Having access to the layers of unconscious material is essential but not enough. These must be embraced, worked through and integrated into consciousness. So-called *mis-takes*, weaknesses or wrong turns are often the indispensable ingredients necessary to unleash the power that procures life-transforming possibilities. To endure suffering and dread in the liminal space of confusing in-betweenness demands courage, trust and great self-discipline. Jung (1959) said, "real increase in personality means consciousness of an enlargement that flows from inner sources" (p. 120), and that we must be capable of an inner amplitude and psychic depth so as to adequately meet the magnitude of the task at hand; the task being the unfolding of the lesser into the greater, the perpetual flowing of a life into the greater Life.

Since I have already integrated some theory and interpretation in the lived-experience description in this section, I resort to a shorter commentary here. The deeper integrative synthesis stage entails the full maturing of the rebirth process within the time that it takes for its fruition. I reiterate that the processes and stages inherent in the rebirth journey are not distinct and separate, nor do they occur within a fixed time frame or a specific psycho-spiritual configuration. Rather, they slide into each other (with messy detours) and often overlap. There is, however, a definite progression from one stage to next with various regressive/progressive episodes. How they manifest and their particular psychological content differ among persons. Yet common themes and salient features emerge, enhancing understanding of obvious and subtle elements of meaning and poignantly elucidating the essence intrinsic to the lived-experience of Self-transformation.

According to Jacobi (1973), in this stage the dark side of the psyche has been made conscious and integrated into the personality. "The contrasexual element in us has been differentiated, the relation to spirit and primordial nature has been clarified" (p. 126), and the ego is more aligned with the Self. That is, there is a shift of the psychic center from the ego to the Self, from the circumference to the center, the place of creative change wherein one acquires an entirely different (or gradually changing) worldview and attitude toward life and self. The psychic imbalances created by unconscious material dominating consciousness are meaningfully righted. Sharp (1988) asserts that the process of assimilating unconscious material demands disciplined effort, concentrated application and "a mind that is receptive to the numinous" (p. 142). The fixated persona loosens up and the personality becomes more pliable and transparent. These shifts in consciousness occur to the degree correlative to the depth of transformation experienced. More so, they are not one shot, determinate arrival points but rather degrees of self-realization achieved over a lifetime as we venture into and through each round of the rebirth spiral. Jung felt that "only what is really oneself has the power to heal" (in Sharp, 1988. p. 143), and Sharp (1988) argues that what is truly oneself can only be discovered through sustaining the raw tension between the opposites until the unexpected, transcendent function manifests as a third essence. In other words, the transcendent function is a psychic function that cradles the tension, confrontation and energy between consciousness and the unconscious and supports their union, so as to bring about that which heals and restores the personality. This is represented by "the creative intervention and guidance of the Self, the archetype of wholeness" (p. 143). I call it *sacred guidance* throughout this writing. It is termed "transcendent" in that it makes the transition from one attitude to another organically possible (Jung, 1960). In my perspective, it is that which consolidates the pieces of the puzzle, facilitates resolution that is in sync with the soul's cadence and faithfully gives birth to the new psychic order; all of this synergistically integrated into consciousness in a manner that reflects inner and outer congruence. This is the core of the integrative synthesis. The conflict with my mother, with the necessary severing of the umbilical cord, is used to contextualize the notion of the transcendent function and the integrative synthesis.

The degree of self-disrespect and the domination of the *loyal* child (the thesis) were in conflict with and in direct opposition to the *wounded* child (the antithesis) that was crying out for healing and resolution. My neglect of the inner voice cues and the gnawing impasse came to a head on that eventually catalyzed a metamorphosis of the inner culture. The energy and force of the thesis and antithesis ripened into a fierce confrontation that got resolved through consciousness embracing and integrating the repressed material that surfaced for a reckoning; that material constituting family-of-origin history/experiences, cultural patterns and indoctrination, personal psychology and belief system that inflicted necessary suffering which brought me to my knees. Disenfranchizing the personality of its pernicious racket ensued in an escalation of the tension between the warring factions within the psyche. But that very tension was exigent for the transformation to take place. It was in that tension and slow process of transmutation that the transcendent function had its form and way, so to speak. It is likened to the work of the transforming substrate or essence, the Self, that inhabits the liminal space, synchronizes the diverse inner processes and transmutes the tension into living emancipatory possibilities. That all carefully occurred within my reconstruction of the historical development of the neurosis, my coming to understand and accept the implicating factors, and my surrendering to being pruned and blessed into deep healing. The healing manifested as forgiveness and compassion toward my parents and myself, reclamation of my primal womanhood and sensual self, reconciliation with my daughter, greater alignment with my higher Self, embodiment of authentic self-respect, experience of real soul-love, peace and self-possession, fellowship with nature in her profuse beauty, and a covenant to serve humanity.

The individuation process, says Jacobi (1967), cannot be grasped in its essential essence for it is a part of the mystery of transformation that infuses all of creation. It embraces within it the secret of life that is perpetually reborn through the ceaseless cycle of death and rebirth. To create the wholeness and fullness of the personality is a task of the whole of life and if it has been performed in an honoring manner, then it is the preparation for death in the deepest sense of the word. "The cycle of human life closes meaningfully and harmoniously, beginning and end coincide ... like the symbolized Uroboros, the snake biting its own tail" (Jacobi, 1973. p. 149). Death is as important as birth and an inseparable dimension of life. In embracing this paradox and re-inhabiting our beautiful essence, we can celebrate the Love and the gift of Green with each day, in the most inconspicuous of events and in the most ordinary of moments. Rumi says it this way:

Those who do not feel this Love pulling them like a river,
 those who do not drink dawn like a cup of spring water,
 or take the sunset like supper, let them sleep.
 This Love is beyond the study of theology.
 If you want to improve your mind that way, sleep on.
 I have given up on my brain.
 I have torn the cloth to shreds and thrown it away.
 If you are not completely naked,
 wrap your beautiful robe of words around you ... and sleep. (Rumi in Barks, 1990).

Methodological Implications

The power of heuristics is in its recognition of the significance of self-searching and the value of personal knowledge as core requirements for understanding our common human experiences (Moustakas, 1990). Self-inquiry, self-dialogue and thorough firsthand accounts of experience underpin the elucidation of the essence of lived phenomena. In explicating the distinctive qualities and themes of the experience through description, artwork, narrative and literary expression, the researcher harvests that which is necessary to depict the universal portrayal or essence; that which makes the experience *what it is*. This comprises the *creative synthesis* - a peak moment when the researcher discerns the nature of what something is and means and in turn grows in self-understanding and as a self. It is the last phase of the heuristic process and it portrays the overall experience in a whole or unified, integrated way (using many forms of representation). Solitude and a meditative process of focusing on the topic and the question(s) are preparatory steps for inspiring the birth of this phase. Moustakas says that it is only through tacit and intuitive powers that the creative synthesis comes to fruition, the researcher having integrated a comprehensive grasp of the data “in its major constituents, qualities, and themes and in the explication of the meanings and details of the experience as a whole” (p. 31).

To consolidate the phases and processes experienced in this heuristic inquiry, I begin with the *initial engagement*, the phase that invited self-dialogue and inner search to discover the topic and the question(s). During that process I encountered my self, my autobiography and significant social relationships. Those all came together to form the question that took root in my being and living and awaited my disciplined commitment and willingness to enter fully into the theme and to discover *from within* the diversity of life experiences that illumined the terms of the question and expanded knowledge of the topic. That was followed by the *immersion* phase in which everything in my life became crystallized around the question. I embodied the question in an intimate way, living it and growing in knowledge and understanding of it through intense suffering and growth.

Closely related to immersion is *indwelling*. Immersion allowed fuller entry into the question(s) and the gathering of critical knowledge and lived-experience. Indwelling issued as a means of thinking and feeling into the deeper layers of the knowledge at hand.

Thus, I came into deeper meanings, refinements, additional nuances and textures as I dwelled inside my experiences and understood the key parameters of my knowledge. The fullness of that period led to the *incubation* phase, a time of withdrawal when richer understanding, insights and meaning grew from within and broke through on their own terms. It was a warming up to the issue from the inside, “a brooding over it and sense of being connected to it until a crucial insight becomes strong enough to be born” (p. 109). That process merged into the *illumination* phase which occurred naturally in me being receptive to tacit knowledge, intuition and the mystery inherent in both the inquiry and transformative processes. Illumination came as new discoveries of some things that were present for a while but beyond immediate awareness, (e.g. the meaning of the swirling colors of light, the dream, the soul-love and the explosion of erotic energy. Those insights broke forth adding something essential to the truth of the transformative experience. The illumination phase also facilitated the modification of old understandings, (e.g. viewing my parents within the fuller context of their personal/cultural histories); the synthesis of some fragmented knowledge, (e.g. understanding the dynamics between the loyal child and the wounded child and the unifying of their opposing energies); and the acquisition of new awareness, (e.g. in the process of moving into and living authentic self-respect).

The themes, qualities and components of the experience of Self-transformation were interrogated further by staying with what had awakened in consciousness so as to deepen understanding of the various layers of meaning and to recognize (possible) new constituents and themes. That happened as a natural process of maintaining fidelity to the call to growth and to the inquiry process itself. That period ensued as the *explication* phase, whereby a more complete apprehension of the key ingredients was discovered.

With respect to the *creative synthesis*, I was gifted with the thirteenth Earth-heart at Keawakapu Beach, Maui, and received, in that same moment, a clear message that the journey had come full circle. After that powerful and awesome experience, a vision of a circle consisting of all thirteen hearts that made up the transformation process persisted in my mind’s eye. Months later, another image surfaced showing that same circle with the addition of a lighted candle in the middle, the candleholder shaped in the form of a heart. That vision did not let up and after staying with the imagery for some time, I felt resolute

that I was meant to write about each heart in an integrated manner in each stage of the transformation process, speaking to their unique and symbolic meaning. I did just that and included visuals of each heart with their cumulative acquisition at each stage of the journey, ending with the final circle as seen in my first vision (see visual in this section). The lighted candle symbolizes the sacred Center, or the Self, around which the different activities and processes of the chastened ego-self revolve and have become intrinsically aligned. This visual offers an imaginative take on the creative synthesis of the Self-transformation journey or Jung's individuation process. It intimates a comprehensive synergy and expression of the essence of the phenomenon investigated.

I reiterate here that symbols are considered as images and signs of psychological realities (Assagioli, 1965; Jung, 1971). By analogy they serve as important psychological links between our inner and outer realities and function as accumulators, transformers, conductors of psychological energies, and as integrators - the integration of psychological energy through the process of *synthropy*. In this process the psychodynamic efficiency of the symbol serves to in-gather, store and transform psychological energy for the purpose of psychological integration (Assagioli, 1965. p. 178). (See other visuals amidst the text).

The poem, "Seed Song" (Rupp, 1997) is also offered as another form that depicts the creative synthesis in that it reflects the components, core themes and the essence of the lived experience of the Self-transformation phenomenon in a simple yet profound way - initial resistance, fear, confusion, disequilibrium, surrender, fragmentation, sense of guiding Principle, cooperation with and trust in the rebirth process, further disintegration of internal structures, suffering, illumination, rebirth and renewal, experience of oneness with life, joy, gift of Green, deep gratitude, and commitment to service to humanity.

Rogers (in Moustakas, 1990) said that when a person participates skillfully and passionately in a quest for his or her truth "*the process itself is therapeutic*" (p. 103), with scientific and therapeutic gains occurring simultaneously. Healing ensues as "a natural consequence of a successful moment in a progressive search for truth" (Moustakas 1990. p. 104). These insights echo precisely the interweaving and synchronous processes that comprised my research into the topic of Self-transformation – the personal odyssey and the human science inquiry reciprocally serving the meaningful realization of each.

"SEED SONG" (A creative synthesis of the Self-transformation process)

I am the seed so small, so dry, lifted in the hand of the silent Sower.	I let go of my self and suddenly the husk that holds me weakens and breaks.	Days go quickly now. I become one with the small stem of life.
Into the earth I fearfully fall, darkness covers me, silence surrounds me.	"No!" I scream. I am losing my self, but it is too late. The husk is cracked; I cannot be contained.	Oh! the glorious moment when, ah, breath of Spring fast fills my face. I move through the hard earth and taste the world which awaits my arrival.
The terror of my heart is the only sound to keep me company.	It is then that I sense a power deep inside of me, encouraging me: "let go, let go, let go."	from within my tender shoot comes a soft sound. I listen. I hear. It is a song to the Sower:
All that is me huddles together trying desperately not to surrender any part of self.	It is an energy that pushes the husk until it falls away.	O Sower of seeds, did you always see this gift of green that was hiding in me?
"Why was I planted?" I cry out. "Why am I here?" I entreat. "Take me out into light; I cannot bear this deathly dark."	As it slips aside my eyes behold color. Ah! can it be? A tiny glimpse of green in the heart of me."	O Sower of seeds, how came you to prize the beauty within that I hid from my eyes?
I weary. I weaken, the days become long. I can no longer fight. I surrender in this lonely place of waiting.	Yet, it is there; each day it slowly stretches upwards to where the warm seems to be.	O Sower of seeds, the husk has been broken; my gratitude to you for helping me to open.
Quietly I sense a penetrating warmth; it surrounds me; it fills me and blesses my pain.	I become less of a seed. I am losing my self but the pain I once knew is lost in surprise; something wonderful is greening and growing deep within my heart.	Accept now my praise, my thankfulness, too, for the seed you have sown and the gift that you grew.
In a moment of peacefulness I forget my fear.		[May you lead me to others who await your Good, so the seeds within them can awake and be heard.]
		amen...

(Rupp, J. 1997. *Fresh Bread*. p. 66-68. Two verses changed slightly.)

GRACE UNFOLDING



CHAPTER SIX

Call to Grace, Summary, Discussion, and Openings

... the reality of Grace will remain unexplainable within the conceptual framework of conventional science and “natural law” as we understand it. It will remain miraculous and amazing ... all we can say is that there is a force, the mechanics of which we do not fully understand, that seems to operate routinely in most people to protect and to foster their ... health even under the most adverse conditions (Peck, 1978. p. 235-38).

Call to Grace

This inquiry was borne irrevocably on the crest of two tides that were coming to full flood within the recesses of my existential questing; the one tide being a passionate desire to understand the lived-experience of Self-transformation and the other being an inevitable personal *call to grace*. The call to grace seems integral to the *will to grow* and hence it is essentially a call to growth. It is the necessity of choosing repeatedly and with effort, courage and angst our own paths through the unique circumstances of our lives toward fuller psychological maturation and the alignment of the self with the sacred or the Holy. It is a striving for a fullness of Being which seems intrinsically inseparable from our coming into spiritual wholeness. For me, this issued as a self-transformation journey, living the phenomenon in question *from the inside out*. Grace infers a powerful force, the mechanics of which do not fit in easily with traditional scientific concepts, that nurtures the psycho-spiritual growth of human beings. It undergirds the growth process of all life and hints at the dynamic interplay between the force of evolution and the force of entropy; the former propelling us to ascend the ladder of *Self*-consciousness while the latter fuels our smug resistance, retarding us on the addictive, somnolence-inducing rung. It is suggested that grace resides both in the unconscious realm of the psyche (in dreams, sudden insights, premonitions), and beyond the boundaries of the single individual (in the experience of such phenomena as synchronicity and serendipity (Peck, 1978)).

The call to grace is a lonely, unnerving, difficult journey. It is a call to “a position of higher responsibility” (Peck, 1978. p. 301) and self-discovery. And with grace come consciousness, power, freedom, sober responsibilities, self-discipline and accountability. The power that accompanies genuine psycho-spiritual health can be terrifying or sadly

self-inflating without the true humility that it is *because of grace* that we have been so beneficently endowed. Jung (in Peck, 1978) viewed psychological distress not as a product of the unconscious but rather a phenomenon of consciousness or “a disordered relationship between the conscious and the unconscious” (p. 247). It was suggested earlier that grace resides in the unconscious realm and also beyond the single individual.

Unlike the *conscious* mind, which disowns and refuses to fess up to reality and tolerate the pain of genuine self-scrutiny, the *unconscious*, (which knows *who we are*), struggles toward openness, truth and honesty and fights to “tell it like it is” (p. 248). It provides us with insight into ourselves, into others, or into the world outside ourselves. The assistance may come in diverse forms: dreams, sudden insights, thought fragments, premonitions, intuitions, serendipitous, synchronous occurrences and symptoms. Notice may be served to us as warnings of personal pitfalls, guides to the solution of problems previously unable to be resolved, clear indications that we are wrong when we think we are right, legitimate support that we are right when we believe we are probably wrong, sources of necessary information about ourselves that we are lacking, depression, anxiety attacks, direction finders when we are lost, and pointers of the way we need to go when we are floundering (Peck, 1978. p. 245). The unconscious, knowing the true score, tries to stimulate the conscious mind to the awareness that something is amiss. The symptoms and painful revelations *are* manifestations of grace calling us to live the endowment of who we are in essence. This has been my experience, my call to grace, as echoed earlier.

Summary

The substantive purpose of this research inquiry was to explore, elucidate and document, via a qualitative (heuristic/autobiographic) methodology, the essence of the lived-experience of Self-transformation; the Self connoting a more comprehensive realm in that it encompasses personal, professional, social and spiritual transformation. The phenomenon was studied within a mind-body-spirit holism using Jung’s analytical (or depth) psychology as a theoretical framework within which to ground the experience. Integral to the primary purpose was connecting the experience of listening to the inner voice, “the voice of a fuller life, of a wider more comprehensive consciousness” (Jung, 1954. p. 184), as a synchronous and inevitable interweaving dynamic in the unfolding of

the Self-transformation process; each process reciprocally propelling the full interplay of the death-rebirth cycle. Jung (1959) termed the Self-transformation process *individuation*, an evolutionary growth process that moves in the direction of increasing expansion of consciousness, which directly implicates the healing and wholeness of individuals and inevitably the planet. Jung viewed individuation as a journey toward Self-realization, i.e. the alignment of the ego with the Self or put another way, the progressive union of the self with the Sacred Center. As a lifelong existential project, it entails undergoing several *rounds* on the transformation spiral - ongoing, punctuated episodes of personal transition and psychological shifts in consciousness in which we go through the process of passage between one life phase and the next in a cyclical pattern of death and rebirth (Bridges, 1980); the goal being the development of the *in-dividual* personality (Sharp, 1991).

The central question driving the study was: What is the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation? Three secondary questions emerged as the research proceeded: Is listening to the “inner voice” integral to the experience of transformation? Does “mystery” or the spiritual come into play in the process of Self-Transformation? Is Self-transformation possible within academia, specifically the transformation of doctoral students whose personal processes are intrinsic to and cohere with their inquiry? These four questions became painfully alive within the fabric of my personal and research life when I was catapulted into a tumultuous transformational odyssey early into my doctoral studies, the inner *re*-search paralleling the outer research. It became evident that an inner practicum was initiated and it had to be honored and endured. The pivotal and terrifying question that, unbeknownst to me, encompassed the above four questions and *grounded* and *catalyzed* the experiential part of the inquiry *and* my descent into the abyss was:

What is it in you that you allow such deep disrespect into your life?

This question hurled me into the core of the inquiry process and relentlessly engaged me in embodying and living the phenomenon of Self-transformation as an inner practicum for nine years; the experience *untangling* years of personal unresolve lodged within my childhood history and family dynamics. This unsuspecting, archeological dig, in turn, gradually provided cogent, in-depth experiential data from which to document, scrutinize and analyze the phenomenon of Self-transformation.

The study thus also entailed a soul purpose - a renaissance call to and an arduous pilgrimage into personal decay and rebirth as experienced by the researcher herself. The elucidation of the phenomenon thus took the form of an *autobiographical narrative* with the various themes, phases and processes of the lived-experience of Self-transformation embedded and depicted in whole descriptions. It accentuated the meaning and purpose of necessary suffering and vulnerability *and* the resilience and rejuvenation that gradually blossomed into resplendent fruition. The stages, phases and processes of the phenomenon became an intimate experiential reality and not simply an abstract research enterprise.

The narrative intimated an *instance* (Jardine, 1992) in a life that is in perpetual play with and is perforated by the imposing flux, a life in the throws of endless *becoming*. It also portrayed a life-story in the midst of a larger progressive narrative in that it revealed psycho-spiritual themes and patterns within the transformation cycle that are universal and therefore, “must be counted among the primordial affirmations of humankind” (Jung, 1959. C.W. 9i. p.116). Jung insisted that rebirth as a psychic process can be transmitted indirectly through personal statements, the *idiographic* intimating the universal. “One speaks of rebirth; one professes rebirth; one is filled with rebirth. This we accept as sufficiently real ... and is the business of psychology” (p. 116).

As an autobiographical inquiry, the data constituted extensive journal writings; personal reflection and documentation of my own Self-transformation process; taped interviews with family members; field notes (in the moment documentation of live transformation experiences, insights, revelations, and conversations with others); dreams, artwork; written poetry; physical rituals that were recorded (dance routines on a Victorian beach, swimming and meditating with dolphins and whales in Maui); encounters with particular trees, animals, flowers, nature objects, and the elements that offered significant symbolic meaning. These were carefully documented and further researched so as to broaden their symbolic value - as in Jung’s active imagination (the maple tree, the eagle, the rose, heart-shaped corals and rocks, the Celtic cross, the ocean, the sunrise and the wind); and the contents of particular autobiographies/biographies (Jung’s, Merton’s, and that of three Christian mystics: St. Theresa of Avila, St. Francis of Assisi and St. John of the Cross). These were studied in-depth and portions extrapolated for personal reflection

and further use. All of my personal documentation as mentioned above was considered *historical material* and as such was revisited, rethought and reflected upon many times over as new insights, revelations and meaning came to the fore of consciousness. This process of ongoing *reflection* and *revision* occurred during the actual experiencing and documenting of the phenomenon and all through the actual analysis of the data when fragments of knowledge came together in a kind of gestalt or with a consolidation of meaning. The material was thus dealt with as experience and personal work. Hence, my personal experiences (and the documentation of these) were used as *the* research data.

The salient features of the transformation process that were unveiled are:

- *a renaissance call to wholeness* (or the premonition phase),
- *light bows to darkness* (or holistic disintegration),
- *the unformed silence* (or excursion into the abyss),
- *awakening of the heart* (or illumination and initiation into rebirth) and,
- *return to innocence* (a second dark night of the soul/a deeper integrative synthesis).

These stages constituted both overlapping and divergent psychological processes that illumined a unique pattern inherent in the renewal process. Some of the stages were verified via in-depth study of the works of other theorists (Andersen, 1991; Assagioli, 1965; Grof and Grof, 1991; Jung, 1969; Perry, 1986; Pincola, 1992; Sharp, 1988; von Durkheim, 1971; and Woodman, 1985, see Table One. p. 95). In my model, however, the Self-transformation spectrum of stages and processes was expanded to incorporate additional experiences on both ends. At the beginning, *a renaissance call* or premonition phase, and at the end, *a second dark night of the soul phase* and *a deeper integrative synthesis* phase were discerned from the experiential data and incorporated into a broader framework of transformation. The writings of McNamara (1983), Merton (1948) and Underhill (1955) provided the language and facilitated understanding of the later phases of the Self-transformation process. They spoke of a more advanced stage of spiritual metamorphosis/synthesis that occurs at the other end of the spectrum (Table Two: Part Two, Stage Four. p. 100). This was evidenced in my lived-experience and the ensuing experiential data but the processes and meanings thereof were not clearly articulated, if at all, by the earlier theorists. Clarification and verification came via the spiritual literature.

The transformation process ensued in the dissolution of some of the contents and structures of the psyche - the old worldview, embedded cultural and historical data, and destructive life-patterns that dominated and sabotaged the personality. This facilitated the working through and integration of unconscious contents into consciousness, which required a fundamental attitude of surrender and cooperation with the inner life. Psychic life was *re*-balanced, the relation to spirit and primordial nature was clarified and there was a shift of the psychic center from the ego to the Self. An entirely different attitude toward self and world was realized (Jacobi, 1973), with new possibilities for being and doing becoming available to the self ... until the next round on the transformation spiral.

Validation of the transformation process came from subjective experiences, confirmation from repeated inner guidance, and serendipitous occurrences that could not be logically explained but which resonated in a convincing manner with the experiences of others. It also came from the conceptual framework of other researchers and theorists, writing in the form of journaling, song lyrics, poetry and contemplative meditations, artwork and symbols that were serendipitously “gifted” and mirrored the psychological life in its transition, a concept that Jung (1960) termed synchronicity – an acausal, mysterious, connecting principle that links the personal psyche and the material world.

The question of validity in this heuristic inquiry was one of *meaning* since a qualitative methodology was employed to explicate the themes and essences of the lived-experience of Self-transformation. “Does the ultimate depiction of the experience derived from one’s rigorous, exhaustive self-searching and from the explication of others present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience” (Moustakas, 1990. p. 32)? This judgment was made by me, the primary researcher, and the only person in the investigation who had undergone the lived-experience of the phenomenon and engaged the heuristic inquiry from its inception to end - formulating the question; moving through the incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis phases; collecting and analyzing the data and reflecting on and judging its relevance and meaning; and finally elucidating the themes and essences that depicted the experience. Bridgman (1950, in Moustakas, 1990. p. 33) affirms the subjective bases of validation, the dependence of validity on the interpretation and judgment of the researcher:

The process that I want to call scientific is a process that involves the continual apprehension of meaning, the constant appraisal of significance, accompanied by a running act of checking to be sure that I am doing what I want to do, and of judging correctness or incorrectness. This checking and judging and accepting that together constitute understanding are done by me and can be done for me by no one else. They are as private as my toothache and without them science is dead.

The data was repeatedly visited, rechecked, revised as new information, revelations and insights surfaced, and judged to gather further verification that the explication of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon actually portrayed the phenomenon that was investigated. Through such a process, certain visions of truth became apparent and were strengthened by further reflection and additional evidence. These were finally accepted.

Discussion

In this section, I address three issues that are of import in this inquiry: a. the Self-transformation model in its expanded form and the ensuing implications; b. the nature of interpretive inquiry with a focus specifically on heuristics and the interweaving dynamic between the self-process of the researcher, the organic unfolding of the phenomenon and the inquiry process itself. Linked to this is the needed sensibility and responsibility of the educational body, especially those educators who directly engage with students as the synergy of their personal and research processes emerges and is made manifest in the very search for and the elucidation of the essence of the phenomenon in question; and c., the limitations of the study. Since two of these issues were substantially delved into in earlier chapters, the subsequent discussion would be brief in nature.

The Self-transformation Model and its Implications

In considering the expanded model of Self-transformation as delineated in Table Two: Part Two (p. 100), The Prestage: Premonition Phase (renaissance call to wholeness) seems most critical in that it may be the beginning period in which one is called to grace, to journey the road less traveled in search of one's deepest and most essential self; (the process of which is an incremental, lifelong maturation that Jung called individuation). It is a pivotal stage and a most onerous one as we come to a crossroad (with many along the Way) where we face a choice of paths particularly significant in the fashioning of all that is to come to, and from, our lives. Sometimes the crossroads are met relatively early in

life's journey, thus setting the direction for all that is to come (O'Driscoll, 1982). Often the crossroads appear at later stages and "the particular choice can in a mysterious way express all that one has become over a long period of journey already taken" (p. 11). And there may even be crossroads at the very end of life. Nonetheless, these crossroads tend to weave mysteriously into the ever-changing terrain of our spiritual journey.

What is most critical is our cognizance of the premonition phase and commitment to the call. Some of us, however, vacillate in following through because the barriers of our self-defense are thickly entrenched, our hearing is disturbingly out of sync with our true rhythm, and our grasp of the status quo is almost petrified. Further, we do not at core know how to listen *into* the call, to inhabit the liminal space, to befriend the threatening shadows, to wait as we germinate in the dark, to endure process, to tolerate ambiguity, to let go into the impending chaos and surrender as in *entrust* our lives into the hands of Life itself. We often miss the cues, ignore, deny or relegate them to idle nonsense as we spin cobwebs in the mind. Yet, every inconspicuous fragment of experience, every cue may issue as necessary ingredients of the inner work *once the self-search is on the way*.

In the therapeutic exchange people need to be helped (via an educative process and thoughtful probing) to understand this stage and its subsequent processes, less they miss out on key guidance. They need to know and accept that they are beginning to live the "double life" (Perry, 1986) – attending to the tasks of the external world with some degree of competence while faithfully surrendering to the demands of the inner life. Just as important are the knowledge, awareness, (and preferably the experience) of facilitating professionals of the Self-transformation process, so as to recognize where the person-in-process may be at and work compassionately and competently to maximize the growth experience. Less we have the blinder leading the blind while being camouflaged in the cloak of professionalism. All of the above necessarily applies to every stage and phase and throughout the transformation journey. However, if the beginning stage goes awry, the entire project has the potential of being prematurely aborted to the detriment of the ongoing evolution of the individual and the loss of gifted opportunities to blossom. One may wander lost in the mayhem without quite knowing how closely one has brushed up against one's potential freedom but missed out due to poor professional intervention and/

or degree of self-ignorance. The contours of the inner geography seem unable at times to guide the personal excavation, having little or no definition from lack of exposure to the winds of change. Compounding the dilemma is the uninformed therapist or educator who whistles in the dark, oblivious to the deeper meaning of the transformation process but proceeds in making erroneous judgments and interpretations of the unfolding personality.

On a final note, Stage Three: Illumination - Initiation into Rebirth (awakening of the heart) is usually the end stage of the typical transformation experience (Assagioli, 1965; Grof and Grof, 1991; Jung, 1969) with reentry into community occurring as a natural progression (Andersen, 1991). Assagioli (1965, 1973) does discriminate between self-actualization and self-realization, the former approximating Stage Three and the latter aligning more with Stage Four in my model. He argued that many people become self-actualized with respect to social, economic and political achievements but remain spiritually impoverished and do not for a variety of reasons move through to the level of spiritual or self-realization. Whether a person is at this point or is moving into the deeper realms of spiritual upheaval and synthesis - Stage Four (Assagioli, 1965; McNamara, 1983; Underhill, 1955), seasoned discernment of this later stage, its phases and processes is required of the helping professional. More critical, this stage needs to be understood from within the professional's own integrated, spiritual repertoire as it cannot be grappled with on an intellectual level alone. This cannot be reiterated sufficiently as ignorance can lead to disastrous ends (Perry, 1986; von Franz, 1993). Lastly, the Self-transformation journey is a slow demanding process that cannot be expedited at will. Persons-in-process need to be encouraged to make time and space in their routine lives when the call to grace makes its presence *felt*. It is not a sideshow to be flippantly toyed with but rather the very blueprint of one's innate destiny (van Dusen, 1972) being enacted as a true gift of Spirit. It is "the *opus* which leads to the goal: *that* is the goal of a lifetime" (Jung, 1954 in Sharp, 1991. p. 69). The call to grace is the work of a lifetime and *the* goal in and of itself.

The Interplay of the Heuristic Inquiry Process and Self-Process

Moustakas (1990), in discussing the heuristics research process, insists that it demands the "total presence, honesty, maturity and integrity of a researcher" (p. 14). Further, as the researcher willingly endures endless hours of sustained immersion and

concentrated focus on one pivotal question, s/he must be prepared “to risk the opening of wounds and passionate concerns, and to ***undergo the personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey***” (p.14, italics/bold mine). These last words burn even as they are wise and make total sense as I reflect on the experiential reality and twofold nature of my research inquiry – simultaneously inquiring into the phenomenon of the lived-experience of Self-transformation and experiencing the phenomenon as an intense personal odyssey for which I had not initially bargained. In truth, I had no clue whatsoever that the processes of my inner life were to reveal the salient features of the phenomenon. I doubt that I would have consciously indulged that degree of struggle and loneliness. It is this unknown and its ramifications within academia that I deliberate here.

Was I forewarned, would I have disengaged from the academic assignment and proceeded elsewhere, perhaps in a safer environment, with my healing journey? Yet, in reality and *in principle*, the self-process and the inquiry process cohered and depended on an intrinsic, reciprocal relationship for the investigation to proceed, to be sustained and to open out where it needed to on its own terms. This recognition comes only as hindsight and painfully so, having endured a measure of harshness and misinterpretation within academia for listening to the guidance of the inner voice and committing to the personal transformation that was integral to the heuristic process. Moustakas’ wisdom came much later on in the inquiry process, after having engaged in a substantial amount of personal and research work ... and circumstances *had* to be that way to allow for and to maintain absolute fidelity to the natural unfolding of the inner and outer inquiries put in play by the mysterious call to grace. I understood this on a tacit level somehow even as I struggled with the ambiguity. It was this deep knowing that sustained both me, and the process.

How does one prepare for this *unknown* when one undertakes a heuristic search? How does a person accommodate this ensuing reality within the constraints of academia? How do educators who invite this kind of process deal with it? What responsibilities do they have? What are students’ responsibilities? Where does one draw the line between research inquiry and personal process? How is this determined? What happens when the line is crossed or perforated and self and inquiry processes cohere? Answers to some of these questions were dealt with through discussion of my experience in Chapter Five and

Chapter Four in the personal encounter with methodology section. I present the questions for further pondering and offer some suggestions for educators and helping professionals.

Educators who invite personal process as they engage with students' research inquiry or experiential course work, and wittingly or unwittingly instigate a revolution from within (small or great), need to be psychologically astute, not only academically proficient so as to understand, respect, cautiously work with and possibly tentatively "hold" what may surface for students in a *temenos*, (Jung's term for a safe, sacred space), in which both student and mentor honor the Work. The very act of inviting students to self-process necessitates a responsibility and accountability on the part of the educator. It is argued that students have a choice to take up *the offer*. This may be so, but experience teaches that students are often naïve about the unknown inherent in undertaking inquiry that catapults self-discovery. Some may be feeling overwhelmed and insecure as they commence their academic work. They are in a watery space, so to speak, trusting their mentors implicitly and probably not having the wherewithal to know if or how to accept or reject the invitation, or to even understand in the first place that an invitation has been initiated, as I have personally experienced the subtlety with which this is instrumented.

One may not perceive that one is being "conned" in a sense (Grumet, 1981) into self-exploration. Educators who invite such processes, on the other hand, have hopefully witnessed this predicament sufficiently to understand the seriousness and ramifications of their invitation, and be judiciously alert and accountable for how they deal with students' processes. When some argue that they do not *do therapy* but in fact blur the line between inquiry and therapy, probing students in ways that unleash their histories and unfinished business, they play a dangerous, unethical game that can scar students indeterminately. There is no system monitoring this dynamic and students may leave bewildered, giving up their research altogether and having no opportunity to negotiate understanding with the mentor. Sadly, this reality exists and seriously needs to change. Educators also need to reflect on their unfinished business and be aware of their own counter-transference issues as students' realities mirror their own. I am boggled by the lack of self-awareness in this respect on the part of educators. Having said this, it is imperative to communicate a deep respect and appreciation for these said educators who dare to walk that delicate

edge with students, treading a fine line. Their goodwill and dedication help in befriendng their “blind spots.” Their *soul*-presence can and do facilitate the transforming of lives.

Students also need to be more discerning about their own level of engagement in the mentoring process, anticipate potential vulnerability and secure ways of dealing with same outside the institution, and protect themselves by learning when, with whom, and how much of their intimate processes to put on the line (Grof and Grof, 1991. See bottom item in Appendix C). Lastly, in a mysterious way and unbeknownst to both mentor and student, the mentor may serve as a conduit for the Work and as such, s/he does not own the Space, but is honored by grace to enter it. The mentor’s own transformation may even be at stake in spite of his/her unwillingness to entertain such a possibility, remaining aloof and armored in the academic status quo. But this may be the point at which soul-work transgresses institutional protocol, a spot in the flux wears thin, and all hell breaks loose (Caputo, 1987); the emancipatory project becoming a potentially messy enterprise.

Limitations of the Research Inquiry

Back in Chapter Four, I conveyed my deep respect and value for the whole arena of interpretive research because of my intimate experience with the heuristic research process and how much in resonance it is with my basic nature. Hence, I felt hard pressed to come up with limitations as such. Nonetheless, I discuss two issues here with respect to this inquiry which utilized a heuristics research methodology.

The findings from a heuristic research study are applicable to a small number of co-researchers, maybe even to one individual as in my investigation. Thus, the researcher needs to be cautious and tentative in offering any universal models based on the heuristic data. However, this perceived limitation is conversely its strength in that the interpretive data is extensive, thorough, intimately detailed and cuts to the core of lived-experience. The comprehensive, credible portrayal of a particular life issue through a penetrating analysis and synthesis can be essentially transforming or at least inspiring. Moustakas’ (1961) study of loneliness was generated from his in-depth autobiographical involvement and a limited research base. Nonetheless, readers confirmed the validity of his depictions of loneliness as it resonated powerfully with their own experiences, verifying that heuristic inquiry reveals themes/essences of human experience even with minimal co-researchers.

With respect to my own inquiry which evolved as a heuristic-autobiographic study of the lived-experience of the process of Self-transformation, the experiential data elucidated dimensions of the phenomenon that surpassed previous investigations (e.g. the Prestage or Renaissance Call to Wholeness at the beginning of the transformation process and Stage Four: A Second Dark Night of the Soul and Deeper Integrative Synthesis at the other end. This was achieved using the life experience of one participant, the researcher's. This was not intentional but issued forth rather as a natural progression of the inquiry, and in me, the researcher, maintaining integrity in and fidelity to the research process in every respect. Even the psychological literature, which was studied in-depth much later, did not articulate the above experiential processes, although the later stage was only theoretically inferred by a few (Assagioli, 1965; Grof and Grof, 1991; Perry, 1986). It was the psycho-spiritual writings of McNamara (1983), Merton, (1948), and Underhill (1955) that further verified these processes as legitimate expressions of the phenomenon. The point here is that although my inquiry constituted one participant, its depth and breath of experiential detail provided rich, full descriptions of the essence of the Self-transformation experience, (albeit, understanding that the essence of any phenomenon is not ever *fully* elucidated).

From my own experience in doing an autobiographical study within the heuristic methodology, I understand in a much deeper way what Moustakas means when he insists on the total presence, honesty, integrity and maturity of the researcher. A lack of these attributes in full measure would be a huge limitation in maintaining fidelity to the heuristic process and to the organic unfolding of the phenomenon on its own terms. However, when one is thus faithful, one often walks alone and is vulnerable to misjudgment and ridicule from uninformed others, as I have experienced. To embrace the gaps and detours as the research progresses, to be judiciously self-suspicious, to find then lose meaning, to wait with unconditional openness in the shadows for the phenomenon to reveal itself, to pierce the darkness and see what cannot be seen, to truly let go and ride the flux and admit that one *does not know* in the truest sense, and to release all prior gains in knowledge when new evidence superimposes itself on tidy formulations make for bloody arduous work and engenders a humility that only a very mature personality could cough up. To trust the process even when it feels like one is losing essential ground and resist the temptation of

mediocrity by not compromising one's integrity demand real strength. I learnt that I did not own the inquiry process in the least even though I was fully pregnant with it, and that all I could do was live the question(s) one day at a time and hope that in being tossed about by the flux (with a benign indifference at that!), I would eventually be graced with some measure of insight and meaning-making that would vivify the search. I have come to believe that being an apprentice to Truth commands rigor of character and suppleness, the engagement itself relentlessly pruning those of us who do not *quite* measure up.

More of a concern is the issue of time with respect to the length of the inquiry process and the personal process of the researcher as these cohere, and as the researcher becomes increasingly immersed in the investigation. The inner experiential time, (time according to the concept of *kairos*), with respect to the immersion, the incubation and the illumination phases of the heuristic process, has a rhythm and life of its own. These key processes which *cannot* be hurried (Moustakas, 1990. p. 14), create great tension within academic scheduling (time as *chronos*) and with administrative notions of *what* constitutes research. I recall being told sternly, "this is a research degree, what is all this introspection about?" Yet, sensitivity needs to be extended to those administrators who are themselves working within the constraints of academic protocol. The unpredictability and natural flow of the heuristic process further compounds this dilemma especially when paradigmatic research positions are opposed and non-negotiable. When transformation, which may be enacted as an inherent process of heuristic inquiry, configures in this already complex dynamic, immense time, energy and personal credibility are involved and are at stake. Yet, the heuristic path is inspiring as it quickens the researcher at a depth not traversed before, and invites and provokes inquiry in such a manner that s/he grows in self-understanding and as a self. One harbors a solemn respect for having lived through the heuristic process, relinquishing the monotony of security and weathering the stormy path to self-discovery.

Openings

Since every facet of living remains in play, touching the intangible as the cycle of creation continually regenerates itself, there are no definitive conclusions, only transitions that lead into further opening up into the inexhaustible. And so, the question here is how and where does this inquiry create an opening up? I first discuss a few merits of the study,

some implications for the counseling field, helping professionals and counselor education, and then proceed with suggesting some possibilities for future research.

At the conceptual and experiential levels, this inquiry has contributed in some measure to the fields of counseling psychology and psychotherapy, education, spirituality and holistic health. First, it has become evident that the present understanding of the Self-transformation process, as it is presented for facilitation within the therapeutic dyad and lived as an integral component of a student's inquiry process within educational praxis, is mostly compromised due to a lack of knowledge and experience. This inquiry contributes to our knowledge and understanding by delineating the many stages, phases and processes engendered during the Self-transformation experience, especially so within the academic milieu and in light of the consequential misunderstandings and distress that issue for all parties involved. The experience is often misinterpreted and devalued leaving the student-in-process bewildered, self-doubting, and having to traverse the path alone when essential guidance may be needed depending on the level of his/her psycho-spiritual finesse.

On the other hand, this study offers an example of what it meant for a researcher to sustain her in-depth transformational process which was inevitably catapulted through engagement in the heuristic inquiry process; the self-process having been foundational, in essence, to the natural unfolding of the entire inquiry process and had to be honored and endured. Telling the story in Chapter Five grounded the theoretical notions, created an ambiance of immediacy and corporality, and hopefully made a space for resonating with others in their experiences. The study also gestures forth a frame of what it means to give voice to one's lifework, to vivify with breath and soul the improvisations of a life in progress, and to risk vulnerability in shedding light on the personal work so critical to the ongoing refinement of the inner culture of a helping professional-educator.

In all my training in counseling psychology up to the doctoral level, I encountered little educational opportunities in the area of transformational psychology, except for my ongoing personal and professional self-study. It was my doctoral undertaking that both inspired and deepened my theoretical and experiential competence in this specific area. In investigating the phenomenon of Self-transformation within the framework of Jungian analytical (depth) psychology, I learnt more about the synergy between psychological and

spiritual development, (from a conceptual, theoretical and facilitative perspective, as I live this synergy as a way of life), and came to understand better the concept and experience of listening to the inner voice as a dimension of a larger ineffable and a guiding principle that manifests in the psyche and is available to the scrutiny of psychology. However, the area of depth or transpersonal psychology has not yet entered the core curricula of mainstream psychologies in most Canadian universities, even though professionals-in-training and clients are demanding more inclusive educational and therapeutic experiences and options.

The spiritual is still relegated to the fringe or given only lip-service to appease its adherents. And while post-modern emancipatory praxis devoutly challenges the dominant regimes of power and ideology, the ultra-political agenda often seems to take precedence over the necessary professional training and acquisition of knowledge in the fields of counseling and psychotherapy. In studying a number of Ph.D. psychological dissertations, I observed that several are steeped in legitimate political critique but are appallingly sparse in essential, in-depth psychological content (theory and process), and requisite integrated psychological understanding, let alone offering any substantial psycho-spiritual input.

With respect to spiritual psychology still being on the fringe in academia, it is not that relevant scholarly work is not available. Theories of integrative psychologies, mind-body-spirit holism, abound. For example, Wilber's (1980, 1996, 1997) theorizing offers a synthesis of the empirical (concerned with sense data), the mental (concerned with logic and reason), and the spiritual (concerned with insight and truth). Application in the arenas of counseling and psychotherapy translates into a synthesis of traditional therapies and the spiritual. Having engaged in solid reductive therapeutic work and having gained insight and symptom relief, a person may be ready to grow beyond the stage of ego integration and experience a larger wholeness in the collective or the spiritual. Therapy thus reflects the full spectrum of a person's life experiences: at the ego level it deals with everyday life issues; at the existential level it deals with questions of meaning and authenticity; and at the transpersonal level it deals with the possibility of self (and, in turn, society's) deeper transformation and transcendence; moving *through* and *beyond* the fallow antics of ego and culture to consciously reintegrating and living an ancient (no, it is not new!) ethos of compassion, ethics, and personal and planetary stewardship.

It is now imperative that counseling programs provide not just token courses in spirituality and counseling. Their conceptual foundation needs to be broadened and their methodologies strengthened by incorporating spirituality as an area of legitimate study and an integral component of core psychological curricula (as theory courses and practicum experiences). This means becoming more cross-cultural by embracing other therapies and perceptions of healing/health, and incorporating a *fourth dimension*, spiritual awakening and alignment with the Self, to the tripartite counseling model: cognition, behavior, affect. This helps to diversify educational praxis and enhance students' learning experiences.

This study also makes a significant contribution in discerning the vital connection between the Self-transformation process and the experience of listening to the inner voice. Heery's (1987) research on inner voice dealt indirectly with this connection as her focus was on the meaning of inner voice experiences. In my study, however, both processes were experienced firsthand as a synchronistic interplay and hence the ability to observe their relatedness. It became evident during the inquiry process and throughout the Self-transformation experience that there exists a definite interrelatedness between this inward listening and human transformation. The degree to which the transformation experience is fully realized and integrated into the personality is directly contingent on the acuteness of and conscious follow through on the guidance of the inner voice. The data further revealed that the progression of the transformation journey inevitably evokes further inner voicing, creating a circular, interweaving, synchronistic pattern of healing and self-renewal. Discernment of these two processes and how they interface with each other are critical.

Knowledge of this therapeutic dynamic moves the spotlight onto the helping professional's competence. Is s/he able to recognize and facilitate this process in the therapeutic dyad? It is my observation that more people at midlife, especially women, are seeking counseling and psychotherapy today. Many seem to be called to a reckoning at this halfway point as they enter into significant life transitions. The Self-transformational process is being enacted, creating great angst. In a similar vein, this trend is noticeable within academia, more so at the graduate level. Within the group of thirteen that started the Ph.D. program with me, for example, eleven were women, nine of whom were nearing fifty and dealing with midlife issues that interfaced with their inquiry topic. It appears that

personal process and research inquiry interweave and conspire in the emancipation of the individual since most times, the topic is actually born out of one's experiential reality and summons him/her to the *self*-search. Listening to the call of the inner voice at midlife may engender great struggle and confusion but vision sometimes arises out of such chaos as one grapples with the many ways of being human and sets out on an individual course.

Within this interactive climate, helping professionals *and* educators who choose to work in close proximity with students' processes need to be competent, psychologically and pedagogically, informed in the areas of transformational and transpersonal psychology which includes the spiritual, sensitive in their facilitation and cognizant of their limitations with regards to areas of expertise. They have an ethical obligation to inform themselves of developmental issues at midlife and throughout the lifespan, acquire the requisite skills and knowledge, and scrutinize their frames-of-reference for cultural encapsulation, biases, pedagogical tunnel vision, personal dishonesty and ineptness, and assumptions that may adversely influence their intervention and otherwise well-meaning intentions.

Educators and helping professionals also need to accommodate a humility and grapple with the reality that some students and clients may be more evolved in some respects than they are, and realize that *they cannot take a person past where they are not*, lest their subtle or expressed agendas become misguided and pervert the wisdom and complex, active inner world of the person in a transformation process. This enhanced repertoire of which I am speaking rings true for a number of mature, professional women and men who seek psychotherapy or return to academia and assume the status of "student" while inhabiting and nurturing sophisticated, fecund depths of being. They sustain a quiet but extraordinary dignity in pursuing their call to grace despite their processes sometimes going awry because of pedagogical "blindness" or their own self-sabotaging tendencies. The suggestion here is for the educator or helping professional to embrace, e.g., a possible approach such as: "I do not know what is intended for this person. Maybe all I can do is help her to hear better what her psyche is whispering to her." Or ask what is the intention of the psyche as a whole. "Where does the energy *want to go*" (Sharp, 1988. p. 20)? One gets out of the way like the midwife who resides in the liminal space and, in intuiting her role as a conduit in the ongoing regeneration of life, remains fluid, open and challenging.

Suggestions for Intervention and/or Facilitation

Psycho-spiritual development is an innate evolutionary capacity of human beings (Grof and Grof, 1991). It is a paradoxical regressive-progressive movement toward healing, growth and expansion. Initiation into this kind of transformation suggests that one is on the edge of inner growth and it may ensue in a crisis of the ego-self as well as tremendous opportunity for the transmutation of the personality. This work does not secure tidy contexts in which to engage the process. Initiation is unpredictable, breaking in on graduate work or a high profile career, during a time of relative peace, or in certain lives as an implacable force that never lets up. How this work is facilitated varies. Here, I focus on some helper issues and pose questions re the facilitation process in point form:

- Discernment on the part of helping professionals (HP) and educators (E) as to their suitability for, relative ease with, and willingness in facilitating the growth process.
- The indubitable importance of the possession of as solid and comprehensive a fund of knowledge and training as possible (together with “heart” which cannot be instilled). Equally critical is the HP’s and E’s sober *inner training* - dwelling inwardly in what is essential in their own life, undergoing the necessary growth journey, finding meaning and experiencing the infinite in their own lives (von Franz, 1993) so as to guide others to their own center. Otherwise, the facilitation process gets lost in superficialities: good advice, intellectual interpretation, and well-intentioned recommendations for normalization.
- The realization on the part of the HP and E that it is the inner life or the unconscious, in Jungian terms, that ultimately brings about and directs the healing process and that they are “only the helpers and supporters of this process, not its author” (ibid, p. 268).
- In terms of the transformation stages, phases and processes, see Tables on pg. 95 and pg. 100, and the references section for additional information. Regarding facilitation of the transformation process, the disturbances of which have very different meaning and function than the more usual causes, these general questions and guidelines are put forth:
 - Is a “*temenos*” (a safe, sacred space) provided for the work in progress?
 - What are the catalytic events and/or crises *preceding* and *initiating* the transformation?
 - What are the crises caused *by* the transformation experience?
 - How is the person *dealing with* and what are the *reactions* to the impinging dynamics?

- What are the *operating beliefs* and how is the *meaning of suffering* being interpreted?
- How is the crisis being *manifested* in the early stages in terms of neurotic and borderline psychotic states (Assagioli, 1989), physical and psychosomatic symptoms, resistances, affect, suicidal thoughts, sense of alienation and collapse of worldview?
- Is the *ego-strength* sufficiently intact to endure the imposition of the unconscious?
- Is there an *impasse* and how does the individual *move through* it?
- *What* constitutes the impasse and is the person *aware* of how it was penetrated?
- As the work progresses, what are the *turning points* and how are they made sense of?
- What are the *themes* experienced in the transformational process, e.g. self-preservation/destruction, differentiation/enmeshment, projection/clear reflection (Andersen, 1991), and how is the individual making sense of and *integrating* these into the change process?
- How are *dreams/symbols/inner voice messages* interpreted/used to aid the self-process?
- During the transformation process the *shadow aspects* of the personality come up for transmutation. Is there openness? How is this dealt with *without* being identified with it?
- During the progression of the growth journey, is the person developing a more *coherent conceptual framework* which aids understanding of what is observed and experienced?
- The *trials* endured during Self-transformation have a specifically *progressive* character. They are due to the call of the Self or the stimulation of the superconscious energies. Is the individual understanding what is going on and does she have the right attitude?
- Is the will used to harness the *drives emerging from the unconscious* without repressing them? Recognition and integration of the *energies inflowing from the Self* and expression of this in altruistic love and service are valuable (Assagioli, 1989).
- Is the *energy of the Self* sufficiently strong (or not) to achieve a higher level of personality integration and disrupt the patterns and tendencies that sabotage healing?
- Is *guidance* provided through the various phases of the reconstruction of the personality around a higher inner center? What does a *higher center* mean for the individual?

Possibilities for Future Research

The literature (Assagioli, 1965; Grof and Grof, 1991; Jacobi, 1967; Jung, 1969; Perry, 1986) suggests a perspective on transformation as being predominantly a midlife phenomenon. I raise some theoretical issues regarding the *age ranges*, the *developmental*

stages and the *transformation phenomenon*, viewing the experience more inclusively within the lifecycle and within a life-span development model. My professional work with mainstream and culturally diverse young adults, my doctoral work, and experiences in my twenties challenge some of the assumptions made about transformation at midlife.

As a take-off from this inquiry, potential topics for investigation could include:

1. The area of *human resilience in the face of adversity, in particular, the transformation in young adults through diversity* (coming out as a gay person, displacement/identity crisis due to refugee status in new host culture). A discussion of strategies for counselors would be helpful in recognizing when these individuals are going through genuine transformation and how to more effectively facilitate these life processes. The spirituality inherent in the experience (spirituality used in the widest sense (Bugental, 1976; Frankl, 1975; Jung, 1958; Wilber, 1997) need to be an integral component of the investigation. The study may entail three sequential projects that constitute a set of integrated studies in the areas of human life-span development, transformational and counseling psychology and psychotherapy and education. A cross-cultural focus could be an angle of exploration within the core topic. A qualitative (interpretive) methodology would fit this study.

Part One: Study questions culturally diverse young adults who have undergone/are undergoing acute transformational experiences.

Part Two: Study questions helping professionals (in high-school, university counseling services, private practice) who work with young adults going through critical transitions.

Part Three: Study questions graduate students training to be helpers/teachers who have experienced/are experiencing genuine transformational experiences as an integral part of their research and the ensuing implications within their academic environment.

2. The area of *spirituality in counseling and education* needs further exploration, e.g., education as a spiritual journey (Palmer, 1993, 1998); spiritual wellness as core to counseling theory/practice (Hinterkopf, 1998); the needed spirituality within academia.
3. The topic, *listening to the inner voice*, as integral to self and societal transformation needs more researching. Are we as a society listening beneath our smug affluence and consumptive appetite to what the real priorities are? Also, listening to voice in terms of true calling and hence *vocation*, is a needed component in career counseling research.

AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a soul like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

And when we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We'll have no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun

John Newton (1725-1807)

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APENDIX A: Diabetes Medical Lab Report

AS TEL: 472-6443

TIME _____
DATE _____
TO: _____

PERSAUD, SHANTI

12 512 603

SURNAME

FIRST NAMES

ADDRESS

LAB. NO.

DATE

26 NOV 1999 (604) 472-6443 RAY, J.E. 7987 8 UNIC HEALTH, VICTORIA

Sodium	135-145 mmol/L		Iron (total)	10-61 µmol/L		Aspartate (fast)	0-40 U/L
Potassium	3.5-5.5 mmol/L		L.B.C.	45-75 µmol/L		Asp. Phos (fast)	0-40 U/L
Chloride	95-111 mmol/L		Serum	0.20-0.30		ALT	0-60 U/L
Bicarbonate	20-28 mmol/L		Amplase	15-100 U/L		GGT	0-60 U/L
Asap Gap			Carotene	0.9-1.7 µmol/L		CK	20-100 U/L
Glucose (Fasting)	Normal 3.9 - 6.1 mmol/L			15.0		BMA PROFILE	
Glucose (hour po.) Time =						Total Protein	60-80 g/L
Glucose (hour po.) Time =						Albumin	35-55 g/L
Glucose (hour po.) Time =						Globulin	20-35 g/L
Magnesium (0.80-0.95 mmol/L)						A/G Ratio	1.0-2.5
COMMENTS: <i>pk stat Nov 16</i>				Calcium		2.12-2.60 mmol/L	
				Ethy. Phosphorus		0.01-1.45 mmol/L	
				Glucose		mmol/L	
						2.9-6.6 mmol/L	
				Uric Acid		180-470 µmol/L	
				Creatinine		50-110 µmol/L	
				Bilirubin (total)		0-20 µmol/L	
				Bilirubin (direct)		0-7 µmol/L	
				Alkaline Phosphatase		30-115 U/L	
				LFT		100-800 U/L	
MEDICATIONS:				SIGNED		DATE	12/11/92

G.N. HOAG, M.D.

50-6.1.6 REV.1

4480 Viewmont Ave., Victoria, B.C. Tel. 478-0301

1614 Morey Rd., Nanaimo, B.C. 754-8131

CHEMIST

ISLAND MEDICAL LABORATORIES

AS 74114751734

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PHONE BY: DATE

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PERSAUD, SHANTI

SURNAME

FIRST NAMES

ADDRESS

26 NOV 1999 (604) 472-6443 RAY, J.E. 799 / UNIC

DATE

PHONE

DOCTOR

THERAPEUTIC DRUG MONITORING

DRUG	O.D.	S.I.D.	T.I.D.	Q.I.D.	Q.D.	TIME OF LAST MED.
• DRUG 1						
•• DRUG 2						
••• DRUG 3						

TIME OF SPECIMEN COLLECTION:

DRUG	THERAPEUTIC RANGE	TOXIC RANGE	RES. I.T.
Phenytoin	40-80 µmol/L	OVER 80 µmol/L	
Phenobarbital	65-170 µmol/L	OVER 170 µmol/L	
Carbamazepine	17-80 µmol/L	OVER 80 µmol/L	
Primidone	20-80 µmol/L	OVER 70 µmol/L	
Ethosuximide	50-710 µmol/L	OVER 710 µmol/L	
Theophylline	65-110 µmol/L	OVER 110 µmol/L	
Valproic Acid	300-700 µmol/L	OVER 1400 µmol/L	
Quinidine	0-16 µmol/L	OVER 16 µmol/L	
Salicylate	1.20-2.20 mmol/L	OVER 2.20 mmol/L	
Lithium	0.5-1.5 mmol/L	OVER 1.5 mmol/L	
Interferon	445-650 mmol/L	OVER 1700 mmol/L	

GLUCOSE TOLERANCE TEST		# Chd, wt. or kg.
After	75	grams of oral glucose
☒ Diabetes mellitus ☐ hypoglycemia		2 HOUR
☐ Gestational diabetes ☐ Weeks gestation		
Time	Fasting	0.5 h 1 h 1.5 h 2 h 3 h 4 h 5
Plasma Glucose	4.3 9.3 5.4 5.9	
Urine Glucose	neg	
Urine Ketones	neg	
Urine Bilirubin	neg	

COMMENTS:

Glucose Tolerance Test: NORMAL.
The fasting plasma glucose

The Cdn. Diabetic Assoc. criteria as based on FBS through 120 min sampler

APPENDIX B: Father's Letter of Consent

February / 9 / 00
Union Village, Claxton Bay, Trinidad, West Indies.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter is to confirm that I, Krishna Persaud, have given my daughter, Shanti Persaud, my full permission to include historical data in the form of her journal writings in her Ph.D dissertation. This historical writing material was dealt with as experience and personal work and pertains to the working through of some inter-familial dynamics and childhood issues with respect to herself, her mother, Bassie Marajh who is now deceased, and myself, her father. The personal work that Shanti engaged in between Fall 1992 and Spring 1999 was therapeutic in nature and provided the opportunity for meaningful healing for both of us, (including the spirit of her mother). I also give permission on behalf of her deceased mother, whom if she were alive, would have supported Shanti's personal and academic work wholeheartedly. Shanti's commitment has been to respectfully work toward healing in all our lives and I commend her for her integrity, courage and strength.

It is my understanding that she will maintain necessary anonymity with respect to family members while speaking to the legitimate issues that she has worked through. It is inevitable though, that in dealing with certain matters the context may reveal data that may make inferences to certain individuals, for example my interactions with her as a child. I trust that how Shanti deals with the issues will maintain the regard for all persons involved while speaking honestly about her healing journey. We have discussed this and for example, she can say "a family member" rather than "a parent." Or "a parent" rather than "my father" The personal work that she and I did together was lovingly intense, respectful, healing and bonding; a gift that I personally carry in my heart. Thank you.

Signed: -----
Krishna Persaud (father of Shanti Persaud)

APPENDIX C

TABLE 1 • DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPIRITUAL EMERGENCE AND SPIRITUAL EMERGENCY.

Emergence	Emergency
Inner experiences are fluid, mild, easy to integrate.	Inner experiences are dynamic, jarring, difficult to integrate.
New spiritual insights are welcome, desirable, expansive.	New spiritual insights may be philosophically challenging and threatening.
Gradual infusion of ideas and insights into life.	Overwhelming influx of experiences and insights.
Experiences of energy that are contained and are easily manageable.	Experiences of jolting tremors, shaking, energy disruptive to daily life.
Easy differentiation between internal and external experiences and transition from one to other.	Sometimes difficult to distinguish between internal and external experiences, or simultaneous occurrence of both
Ease in incorporating nonordinary states of consciousness into daily life.	Inner experiences interrupt and disturb daily life.
Slow, gradual change in awareness of self and world.	Abrupt, rapid shift in perception of self and world.
Excitement about inner experiences as they arise, willingness and ability to cooperate with them.	Ambivalence toward inner experiences, but willingness and ability to cooperate with them using guidance.
Accepting attitude toward change.	Resistance to change.
Ease in giving up control.	Need to be in control.
Trust in process.	Dislike, mistrust or process.
Difficult experiences treated as opportunities for change.	Difficult experiences are overwhelming, often unwelcome.
Positive experiences accepted as gifts.	Positive experiences are difficult to accept, seem undeserved, can be painful.
Infrequent need to discuss experiences.	Frequent urgent need to discuss experiences.
* { Discriminating when communicating about process (when, how, with whom).	Indiscriminate communication about process (when, how, with whom).

Taken from Grof & Grof. 1991. p. 37