Sacred Mandala Inquiry: The Lived Experience of Painting a Mandala as Research

by

M. Jane Johnston, MA

AA Nursing, Camosun College, 1986

MA Counselling Psychology, Pacifica Graduate Institute, 1997

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

© M. Jane Johnston
University of Victoria
All rights reserved. This dissertation may not be reproduced in whole or in part,
by photocopying or other means, without the permission of the author.

Sacred Mandala Inquiry: The Lived Experience of Painting a Mandala as Research

by

M. Jane Johnston, MA

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Wanda Hurren, Supervisor
(Faculty of Education: Department of Curriculum and Instruction)

Dr. Jennifer S. Thom, Departmental Member
(Faculty of Education: Department of Curriculum and Instruction)

Dr. Anne Bruce, Outside Member
(Faculty of Human and Social Development: School of Nursing)

Abstract

This phenomenological hermeneutic research explores the author's lived experience of painting a Sacred Mandala over the course of 15 months while focusing on child-loss by adoption. In this dissertation, the structure, process, and mindful practice of Sacred Mandala Inquiry are presented—incorporating methodological considerations, related theories, and illuminated through personal examples. Although the focus in the paper is on an individual Sacred Mandala practice, it is with the understanding that the individual is embedded within a community and world in a web of relationships.

Impetus for research often arises from personal lifeworld experience. The Sacred Mandala provides structure and containment for inquiry, for those who are attracted to the form, assisting in bracketing that which has previously been accepted while simultaneously becoming a sacred boundary for the unknown to emerge, protected and witnessed. The practice and process may be taken up by inquirers in the social sciences, humanities, arts and within the community of adult learners.

The mindful and embodied painting and journaling practices necessitate the inclusion of processes occurring outside of awareness—hosted in emerging images, dialogues, stories, synchronistic events, myths, metaphors, and poetry; inviting the unconscious forward. Opening both eyes—the rational and imaginal—provides a depth perspective. Both are needed, each is as real as the other, one illuminating the inner world, one illuminating the outer world, in wholeness. Importantly, the meanings embedded within the work continue to resonate, unfold, and inform over time.

Keywords: mandala, inquiry, lived experience, depth psychology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, synchronicity, non-dual, poetry, creative expression, adoption, curriculum

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

I first wish to thank those in the lineage of the work of the Sacred Mandala: Carl G. Jung, Jack Wise, Madeleine Shields, and Susan Breiddal, each of whom have made this dissertation possible. I thank my late mentor, Madeleine Shields, for the irreplaceable gift of her time, and for her beautiful Sacred Mandala images as inspiration for others. It would truly not be possible to thank Dr. Susan Breiddal enough for our richly shared time exploring the Sacred Mandala together, illuminating treasured pages of our unfolding story. The ripple effect of her kindness is inspiring. I thank Sacred Mandala painter Karen Guilbeault for our conversations, and for the use of her Sacred Mandala painting in this work. Thank you to the students of the mandala who have taught me much. I look forward to our mutual unfolding.

I am indebted to Dr. Michele Tanaka for her invitation to explore the work of the Sacred Mandala as a soul-tending, scholarly endeavor at the University of Victoria. I thank Dr. Madeline Walker for her reference, making it possible. I am enormously grateful to my committee members, Dr. Wanda Hurren, Dr. Anne Bruce, and Dr. Jennifer Thom, for their remarkable scholarship, careful eyes, caring patience, tact, and trust. The unwavering encouragement I received demonstrated what is possible when educators deeply care. I will always be grateful for the truly inspiring mentorship of Dr. William "Bill" Doll and Dr. Donna Trueit, whose feedback helped set my course. I thank Dr. Kathy Sanford and Dr. Monica Prendergast for skillfully helping illuminate my academic path. I am also appreciative of my external examiner, Dr. Susan Walsh, for her thoughtful participation, encouragement, and generative guidance for future direction in contemplative research.

I thank my dear husband Rob; to feel seen, known and loved is a gift beyond measure. I love you. Thank you to my beautiful, late parents, Rita and Alex Johnston, who

are with me always, as well as my four sisters, Susan, Vicky, Karen, and Kate whose love sustains me. Thank you to my son “Michael” for understanding and supporting my need to inquire into and transform aspects of the past/not passed, in part through development of this method of inquiry.

I thank my treasured and loving daughter Jessica, who “grew up with a brother she couldn’t see” and who carries the separation and reunion experience along with me; my son Nathan, for his conscious cultivation of a loving and gentle spirit which is a continual source of inspiration; Ann and Geoffrey, my son’s other parents, for their depth of care and understanding; and our shared, beloved grandchildren for the joy they bring.

I thank physics engineer Dr. Goksenin Sen for our lively discussions on quantum mechanics, complexity theory, and emergence and for her help in creating the digital image of the Sacred Mandala structure in this dissertation.

Thank you to friends Joyce Chocholacek, Heather Thibodeau, Dr. Coby Tschanz, Bruce Breiddal, Rosanna Breiddal, Hailey Eckstrand, Sylvia Robinson, Erica Messing, Charlene Simon, and Michele Murphy for their generous readings of my work: each of whom helped me to feel ready for my oral defense.

I am so thankful towards my dear women’s group for their loving embrace: Lorna Crozier, Margo Farr, Luba Lyons, Catherine McCavity, and Phyllis Serota.

I thank Manu Aluli Meyer for sharing, from Indigenous teachings, the embodied knowing that research is healing based and one needs to return to the source. Finally, I thank the many others, inclusive of the-more-than-human world (including my grandkitty Monster Truck) showing me embodied wisdom beyond concept.

Bless the Universe!

Dedication

This work is dedicated to future inquirers of the Sacred Mandala—

you will know who you are.

Figure 1. *Making the Darkness Conscious*, M. Jane Johnston, 2017.

The poem “Honey at the Table,” by M. Oliver (1984), removed for copyright reasons; see bibliography for source information.

Introduction

A philosophical engagement in any worldview involves a way of thinking and living generated by a love of, or desire for the idea of wisdom (Socrates, trans. 1989); yet, within the disenchantment of modernist Western discourse, a circumscribed and limiting material worldview of reality is privileged, affecting the way truth is defined. The truth of experience, however, can be not only found in reportable facts and statistics but also presented in rich descriptions, images, and poetics, capturing the sensual, difficult-to-express emotions evoked by the experience. Mary Oliver's (1984) poem, "Honey at the Table," beautifully accomplishes the latter. Poetry allows the reader to savour the nuances, so that each reading may be new, resisting summation, and preserving the gestalt. As educational phenomenologist Max van Manen (2007) writes, when comparing phenomenology to a poem, "to summarize a poem in order to present the result would destroy the result because the poem itself is the result. The poem is the thing" (p. 13). Oliver's (1984) words find me and speak to me of the poetic process of Sacred Mandala Inquiry: following the honey thread into the wilderness, where everything lost is found. As I begin writing about this type of inquiry, it is important to me that the sensuous be present, giving voice to "the world [that] is perceiving itself *through* us" (Abram, 1996, p. 68) and, through poetic language, that I add my voice into a "singing of the world" (p. 76).

Etched in the stone arch of the Temple of Apollo in Delphi is the inscription "γνῶθι σεαυτόν," which translates as "Know thyself" (Pausanias, trans. 1918, p. 507), yet how can we know ourselves, when, as W. H. Auden proclaimed, "We are lived by powers we pretend to understand" (as cited in Hillman, 2013, video file, 9:29). Archetypal psychologist James Hillman (2013) adds that we are always up against the enormous limitations of the mind and of language in attempting to understand the powers that are living us, once we enter the realization that we

are being lived. We are not the sole agents (9:30). Related to pretending to understand, or thinking we know reality with certainty, as one version of the ancient Greek story in Plato's (trans. 1981) *Apology* goes, the Oracle of Delphi proclaimed Socrates to be the wisest of people—as he *knew he did not know*.

I start my dissertation with these thoughts as my intention in this writing is not to proclaim that I understand the true nature of reality through a particular philosophical lens. Rather, my intention is to present the structured yet open-ended participatory practice and process of what I call Sacred Mandala Inquiry, harnessed by a phenomenological question, while embracing "imagination, aesthetic sensibility, moral and spiritual intuition, revelatory experience, symbolic perception, somatic and sensuous modes of understanding, and empathic knowing" (Tarnas, 2006, p. 55). In this way, I attempt to revitalize and honour realities beyond limited awareness. Sacred Mandala Inquiry is applicable to any study where, as depth-psychological researchers Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman (2011) explain, "the researcher is the instrument" (p. 112).

Jungian analyst Beverley Zabriskie (2001) asserts, "As psychology describes psychic contents with psychic means, psyche is subject and object, medium and message, source and goal; there is no point of observation outside the human psyche" (p. xxviii). Depth psychologist Jennifer Selig (2013) asks the important question: "What are the epistemological implications of knowledge that is created by partially unconscious human beings, done with or on partially unconscious human beings, and consumed and disseminated by partially unconscious human beings?" (p. 287). Sacred Mandala Inquiry is akin to phenomenological hermeneutics research in that it is predicated on the concept that texts, interpretations, and meanings are always unfolding and thus never final.

What is Sacred Mandala Inquiry? In this dissertation, I present the structure, process, and practice of Sacred Mandala Inquiry as a way of knowing, incorporating methodological considerations and related theories, illuminated through personal examples, placing Sacred Mandala Inquiry front and centre as a research method/ology, encompassing both philosophical considerations and steps in practice. I endeavor not only to make the process clear, but to provide illumination, through examples, on why the academy needs this type of inquiry. In my writing, I find courage in Hawaiian curriculum scholar Manulani Aluli Meyer's (2008) potent words: "Knowledge that does not heal, bring together, challenge or surprise, encourage or expand our awareness is not part of the consciousness the world needs now" (p. 221).

In this dissertation, the reader will notice three seemingly different, though not separate, voices: the mythic narrative/poetic voice, the scholarly voice, and the instructional steps-to-be-taken voice. For me, these voices, representing multiple ways of knowing, sing and harmonize in a way that, ideally, will resonate with the reader's own voices, temperament, and need for understanding. The following introduction explains my goal for this research and why it is important.

As a symbolic gesture to the non-linear, the chapters are named, rather than numbered, and as such, percolate and flow. The "Introduction" leads into the Sacred Mandala as a method of inquiry and explains the research methodology employed in this dissertation. The chapter titled "The Circle" includes a review of literature that focuses on imagery and the role the unconscious can play in approaching research. Consideration is given to literature related to the form of the circle, to Swiss psychiatrist Carl G. Jung's personal discovery of the mandala as a symbol of wholeness, and to embodiment anchoring the mandala within the flesh of the world. Essentially, Sacred Mandala Inquiry encompasses a mindful practice of working with images—

viewed, imagined, remembered, painted, described, and tended to through dialogue and poetics. My intention is to provide background for bringing the reader into my lived world of the unconscious in order to experience an unfolding understanding of how images, and later, synchronicity, can expand a sense of knowing. Finally, I provide a review of what phenomenology has to offer Sacred Mandala Inquiry.

The "Ethical Considerations" section is followed by an outline of the principles of Sacred Mandala, suggestions for generative activities, and finally, the creation of the resulting focusing question. "Practice and Process" follows Sacred Mandala Inquiry in terms of structure, beginning with the sacred circular structure: the Ring of Fire, the First Transition Ring, the Narrative Ring, the Second Transition Ring, the Sacred Ground or Wasteland, the Portals, the Sacred Garden, the Sacred Centre or Inner Sanctum, and the Ring of Return. Images from my Sacred Mandala entitled *Surrender: Return to the Source* are provided to illustrate the steps and examples of other inquirers' Sacred Mandala paintings are included as well. Detailed images are found in Appendix C to illustrate the process and results of Sacred Mandala Inquiry.

The chapter titled "The Unending End" presents reflections on my experience of conducting my own Sacred Mandala Inquiry. I discuss the implications of this dissertation and Sacred Mandala Inquiry as a research method/ology.

Introduction to Sacred Mandala Inquiry

Overall, Sacred Mandala Inquiry offers a heuristic, holistic, poetic, artistic, and emergent mode of exploration; a mindful and generative way of uncovering aspects of self; and profound interconnectedness of world, mind, body, and soul that may be unknown or disregarded based on enculturated privileged narratives on what constitutes reality. Sacred Mandala Inquiry is thus a way of returning the wisdom of experience to knowledge. In these ways, the work, with its

breadth and depth, calls into question and incites new potential for some of the most conventionally conceived, trivialized, and taken-for-granted concepts in education with its focus on the rational and linear, and where a 'correct' answer may mean dispensing with complex, spiritual, emotional and embodied knowing.

Taking up Sacred Mandala inquiry may help cultivate the lived and liberating awareness that there can never be full knowledge of anything. All is flux. The beauty of this liberation is that we are free to explore and evolve our relationships, experiences, understandings, interpretations, and meanings through being led by that which seeks our attention.

This understanding itself is relevant within education writ large, as our knowledge of the world is subjective and incomplete, and the fullness of reality is unknowable, unpredictable, and changeable. No amount of teaching, learning, or research can control for every factor or remove complex variability. Mindful practices within the constraint of a Sacred Mandala inquiry is psyche led, context oriented, constructivist, emergent, collaborative, interpersonal, active, emotional, imaginal, and substantial. The Sacred Mandala structure acts as scaffolding wherein the practice and process may lead to changes in the inquirer and topic through changes in structures (ways of thinking), either as an individual or community of interest.

For the purpose of this research, the term *sacred* denotes a protected space, which allows inquirers, individually or collectively, to investigate and consider an inclusive experience of both symbolic and lived interconnection within their psyches (Arguelles & Arguelles, 1972; Breiddal, 2013; Johnston, 1997; Jung, 1973b; Tucci, 1931/1961). Notably, part of what makes the inquiry sacred, from my perspective, is that Sacred Mandala practice is a work of embodied love—a love that includes a love of the question and intrapsychic, interpersonal, and worldly processes necessarily involved. As biologist and philosopher Humberto Maturana found, "love is the only

emotion that opens intelligence and expands awareness" (Maturana & Verden-Zoller, 2008, p. 109).

Depth psychology (and its related offshoots) as such is beyond the scope of this study, but it should be noted that a depth-psychological orientation is implicit in the inquiry processes of the Sacred Mandala. Some familiarity with this orientation is assumed; nevertheless, I think it is important to define it so as to understand the body of knowledge behind Sacred Mandala work. A depth perspective is interdisciplinary, drawing on philosophy, arts, mythology, literature, and critical studies. Depth psychotherapy embraces exploration of the significance of the imaginal realm, dreams, reveries, images, and synchronicities as well as rejected shadow aspects through a reclamation, integration, and transformation of consciousness for the benefit of self, community, and the world; this practice is considered soul tending (Aizenstat, 2011; Hillman, 2004; Moore, 1994; Sardello, 2001).

In her generative text, *Invisible Guests*, Mary Watkins (2000), a proponent of the archetypal/ imaginal psychology movement, writes of welcoming these images, graciously hosting them, and building a relationship with them through imaginal, dialogical processes in a way that Jungian analyst Robert Johnson (1986) would call her *inner work.* Jung (1955-1956/1970) describes engagement with an image as "active imagination" (p. 255) and writes "the mere fact of contemplating it animates it. . . . Conscious and unconscious are united, just as a waterfall connects above and below" (p. 496). Barbara Hannah (1981), who was mentored by Jung, related that he considered the dream to be "always going on in the unconscious but that it usually needs sleep and the complete cessation of attention to outer things for it to register in consciousness at all" (p. 17).

This expressive and affirming orientation grounds Sacred Mandala Inquiry. Depth psychology and phenomenology combined with the Sacred Mandala resonate powerfully for me, compelling me to study and make explicit the interconnections in order to offer it as a form of inquiry in its own right.

Concepts pertaining to ritual mandala painting were transmitted to me over the period of 3 years spanning 1994 to 1997 while working with artist and mandala mentor, Madeleine Shields. Madeleine Shields was the protégé of Jack Wise, a well-known Iowan artist and teacher who moved to British Columbia, Canada, in 1963. Wise was known for his Buddhist-inspired Chinese brushwork, calligraphy, and mandalas. In 1966, he journeyed to Tibet and India to study with painting masters who taught that the "ultimate answers lay within one's self" (Cummings, 2012, p. 1). Wise, also a student of Jungian psychology, adapted the Tibetan mandala form. He developed a unique projective technique I refer to as *image retrieval*, central to Sacred Mandala exploration, integration, and transformation, which I bring to light below.

The significant difference between traditional Tibetan mandalas and Western forms is that in Tibetan forms, typical icons are prescribed and embody particular traditional meanings, whereas in this Western lineage, images emerge out of the paint that may reflect personal, cultural, and archetypal layers (Breiddal, 2013; Johnston, 1997; Jung, 1950/1972; M. Shields, personal communication, September 15, 1994).

Each Sacred Mandala takes a minimal commitment of a year of daily practice to complete the painting; thus, it is a relatively long-term inquiry endeavor. The transformative processes of painting, writing, and mindfulness are of principle importance rather than the product itself. Though careful work is done, and the results reflect the quality of attention given,

the finished mandala primarily constitutes a visual record of mindfulness, inner work, and exploration rather than a work of art that can then be evaluated.

My inquiry, *Surrender: Return to the Source*, was painted over a 15-month period (September 2011–Nov 2012), prior to this writing, and visually represents the transformative space opened to host psychic representations of the experience of child-loss by adoption during my teen years and beyond. Gerontologist Kenneth Doka (2002) coined the term *disenfranchised grief*, which he defines as "grief that is experienced when a loss cannot be openly acknowledged, socially sanctioned, or publicly mourned" (p. 159). As adoption researcher Karen March (2014) found, "minimal consideration has been given to the impact of unresolved grief for birth mothers in either the professional or public realm, particularly with respect to the appearance of grief symptoms as part of long-term contact" (p. 417), much less from a depth psychological perspective. My original intention for this research had been to come forward to help fill this gap; however, my focus changed as I came to realize that, although the subject of my inquiry held importance for me and those affected by adoption, the description and discussion of Sacred Mandala Inquiry itself was of even greater importance to the academy, as it holds a key to a broader way of knowing and understanding human experience.

Examples within this dissertation reflect aspects of the literature pertaining to my own inquiry, given that I am the site of my research: a situated speaker, with my subjectivities engaged (Richardson, 2001). I have drawn on knowledge from personal, educational, and professional experience. The phenomenologically oriented question I asked was, "What is the experience of painting a Sacred Mandala while focusing on child-loss by adoption?" My original premise had been that in tending to the psyche through meditative Sacred Mandala painting and writing practices, awareness and integration of unconscious materials may further heal the

emotional, spiritual, and physical effects of child-loss by adoption, resulting from the era between World War II and the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark abortion rights decision in the case of Roe v. Wade (1973). In that intervening period, young unmarried mothers were culturally expected to part permanently with their newborns due to marital status (Andrews, 2017; Fessler, 2006; Kunzel, 1993; Pietsch, 2012; Shawyer, 1979; Solinger, 1992).

My focus in this practice had been on exploration within a protected sacred space, giving attention—the principle creative act (Bohm, 1998)—to the inquiry to see what might be revealed from a depth perspective, what meanings might be made, and what effects might be experienced as the work unfolded. I then further engaged the emergent images as wisdom figures, using poetic and narrative methods to amplify their psychic presence. In allowing for visible residence and voice, I have taken a "path with heart." Of this path, curriculum scholar Cynthia Chambers (2004) writes,

> While much research in education denies or resists pathos, I think inquiry into what matters will simply not let you do this. You must explore and write the suffering and grief that comes from living in an imperfect world. But you must also make peace with the past and the present, and live into the future. And it is logos, in part, that makes that possible. (p. 11)

My hope is that this research and documentation of walking this path, while consciously witnessing (Franklin, 1999) what emerged, contributes not only to personal peace but also social understanding through an affective, reflexive, aesthetic expression of a particular reality (Richardson, 2001) lived by so many. I seek to honour the complexity of such an inquiry by "unearthing questions that have been buried by answers" (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 27), to "see what knowledge is hiding" (M. Doll, 2008, p. 229). In keeping with a postmodern, feminist, complexity, spiritual orientation, accommodating the images of psyche resonates with multiple

meanings beyond culture, producing a liberating of mind and soul, which I believe to be sacred work (Lorenz & Watkins, 2003).

Through my long explorations in academic research, and stepping back to view an expanded horizon, I have come to understand that the work of the Sacred Mandala is a valuable and generative methodology for those attracted to the form and that topics within the humanities can be holistically explored through this embodied process and practice. I use the term *holistic* in this work to refer to the acceptance of ways of learning and knowing inclusive of rather than dividing art and science, thinking and feeling, intuition and sensation, conscious and unconscious, and self and other. It is my experience as an inquirer that the practice of ritual mandala painting may bring wisdom (of experience) to knowledge (of facts), through integration of experiential relational knowing, in a paradigmatic move toward a more holistic, dynamic world view whereby respect and humility may be restored through experiences of wonder (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962).

My intention with this dissertation is to offer what I have learned and continue to learn for the purpose of carrying forward this practice as a methodological form for inquiry within academic scholarship and within communities. I believe we are to be responsible to our own knowledge, partly through further cultivation of our ability to respond. Though this is not a model for everyone, those who wish to take up the practice of Sacred Mandala Inquiry will know who they are. The audience for this work, then, are those drawn to the symbol of the Sacred Mandala. Those who feel so drawn, I believe, will not apprehend the circle solely as a sign but will also perceive it as a living symbol shining forth, full of possible meanings, beckoning.

Methodological Approach to the Research

A braiding of methodologies supports the creation of this model. Phenomenology, depth psychology, and sacred narrative are woven as the container for the richness of lived experience; however, the work reflects an ongoing exploration in which the challenge of understanding the coherence among philosophical underpinnings is yet to be fully realized, consistent with the phenomenological attitude itself. Inasmuch as Sacred Mandala Inquiry is nonlinear, so too is describing the practice and process of an inquiry. Engagement in writing about events from the past/not passed remains active and unfolding, opening various time streams and portals. Any attempt to write down an approach to the work brings up the question "What should come first?" For now, the reader should understand that the word cloud in Figure 2 points to topics and themes woven throughout this work [rather than specific chapters] unfolding for both the reader and author.

Figure 2. Word cloud. Generated by the author via https://wordart.com/

The following sacred narrative exploration of an image offers an example of how the unconscious may claim the research, the researched, the researcher, and the reader through images as well as the practice of tending to these images. The term *tending* (Aizenstat, 2011)

refers to the act of bringing the unconscious more clearly to awareness by honouring emergent images with attention and through dialogue.

Depth psychologist and educator Robert Romanyshyn (2010) made the case that when approaching complex research, a place must be made for the unconscious, as the research claims the researcher. He offered that "the work is the site where the complex pattern of the researcher's history and the unfinished business of the ancestors meet, where the time-bound and the timeless qualities of the work encounter each other" (p. 110). In the beginning of my doctoral program in 2013, I was surprised to find that several professors had also discovered the value of drawing from the unconscious when considering research topics. In a foundations class forum, when asked to write about a time I "challenged or resisted traditional norms, . . . sought a different path or direction than the status quo" (K. Sanford, personal communication, October 17, 2013), I was intrigued when the memory of my first love with a Métis boy arrived, textured and nuanced. The smell of the Alberta marshland was in my nostrils, the Northern Lights streaked. I heard the soft sounds of Cree language in memory's ear, then felt the pain of forbidden love and, finally, the devastation of his drowning death while canoeing. The following is an excerpt from my journal for the forum:

> On the day of the burial, my mother surprises me by coming too. We stand together on the hill with his relations gathered around the open ground and wait a long while. As memory serves, the priest, Mom and I are the only white people present. Eventually, we hear the sound of singing in Cree, sad and low. Around the corner comes into view Ernie's parents and older family members shouldering the powder blue coffin up the long hill. As they near, their voices pick up and fill the air with what must be a Cree funeral dirge. As I watch Ernie's mom on her hands and knees wailing at the graveside, I glance at my mother's face, surprised to see her knowing eyes soft and glistening as she beholds the scene of another mother, another family, a community, broken open in grief. Mom too had lost a son. I understand then and there that the experience of love and loss connects us all, beyond culture, beyond race. Across the open ground before us, I feel the world change, if only for a moment. (Author's forum journal, October 10, 2013)

Out of a lifetime of experiences, why did this particular early memory emerge for consideration while in academic exploration? The startling image of the open grave stayed with me. When further asked what remained from this memory and what else might be uncovered in the image relating to research interests and passions (K. Sanford, personal communication, October 17, 2013), I began to attend closely to the multiplicity of phenomena of lingering, related images arising in memory. Humanistic psychologist Clark Moustakas (1990) writes of this attentive, informative process as a way of knowing. He calls it *heurism* and invites researchers to observe what emerges into consciousness as "perception, sense, intuition or knowledge [which] represents an invitation for further elucidation. What appears, what shows itself as itself, casts a light that enables one to come to know more fully what something is and means" (p. 11). Curiosity and mindful awareness, harnessed by a research question, extends knowledge by illuminating one's "self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery; the research questions and methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning and inspiration" (p. 11).

In reflecting on the emergence of this specific image and how it connects to my research, I engaged in a phenomenological experience of the unconscious: a depth–psychological approach wherein psyche speaks through image. Much is contained within the image: language, thoughts, feelings, sensations, and intuitions related to past, present, and future, retrospective, and prospective (Jung, 1979; Miller, 2004), like a seed to a flower. I was affected by the image, literal and metaphoric, as a whole, in a "triangulation of meaning" (Aluli Meyer, 2003, p. 54)—body, mind, spirit—as shown in the following journal entry:

> The grave: At ages 15/57, I stand before this open grave, now particular and universal, resonating with multiple meanings. Importantly, the grave is open (though I struggle with health, I am not yet "late"). Connected as the memory and image is with my bodily responses, the open aspect may speak to somatic knowing, of being fully alive in the present; the necessity, even urgency, of living the embodied moment. The work involves grave matter. This old grave may also signify the need to exhume the past/not passed for

> consideration and inclusion, while pointing to possible futures. Perhaps the grave is creating a space, digging deep into what 'matters' as I move towards my own death.
>
> Questions arrive: What threatens to be buried in personal/world soma, not made conscious? What in me–culture–world seeks renewal through spiritual emergence? What lies beneath the open degradation of the earth, and extinctions on the tree of life? What deadening attitude requires re-animation? What needs to decompose? What may emerge from the compost? Might my own love of earth and way of being and knowing be seeking further unearthing, allowing an embodied passion to "enliven" my own research? For me, the image of the open grave is laden, fraught, and compelling on personal and collective levels. (Author's journal, December 1, 2013)

I further questioned: What of the spoken and written language I employ in consideration of these images and memories? I had a strong sense of myself writing and being written, too. In wanting to express one thing, something else came out. In attempting to write a scholarly paper, particular words and phrases in reference texts lit up, resonating more as poetry than an intellectual endeavor. I felt comforted by these phrases that appeared to join hands as prayerful poems—one of which seems fitting to include in the final remarks of this dissertation (p. 128).

In harmony with the notion of being lived by powers we pretend to understand, Martin Heidegger (1949/1998), philosopher and generative hermeneutics theoretician, seems to say that language speaks us—that we humans have, in essence, been acquired by language. He writes, "Language is the house of being. In its home, human beings dwell" (p. 239), and "the experience is not of our own making" (1959/1971, p. 57). Semiotician Jacques Derrida (1996/1998) similarly claims, "I only have one language and it is not mine. . . . I call it my dwelling; it feels like one to me, and I remain in it and inhabit it" (p. 1). He observes that we are cultivated through language that is not our own; rather, it is given to us, the only language we know, meant for the other, belonging to the other. French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) agrees, when claiming that "language transcends us and yet we speak" (p. 349)—"transcends us" in that we are born into language, live within it, and then pass it on to generations coming after. Merleau-Ponty (1960/1964), claiming that we know ourselves through

language, asserts, "Things *are said* and *are thought* by a Speech and a Thought which we do not have but which has us" (p. 19). Experience of language is both deeply subjective and transcendental, yet always embodied, as we come to know ourselves through both difference with and deferral of the meanings of language, though this language is all we know (Derrida, 1996/1998). What of describing the essences of life? Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) explained that it is "the office of language to cause essences to exist in a state of separation" (p. xvii). If so, we live in a state of separation and paradox and yet must somehow find, live, and communicate—through language—the experience of subjective truths, rediscovering our presence to ourselves. As Aluli Meyer (2008) articulates,

> how I experience the world is different from how you experience the world, and both our interpretations matter. *This is an important point* as it links inevitably to transformative policies, awareness, and pathways to liberation via our own articulated epistemology. It expands the idea of what knowledge is supposed to be and in truth is—vast, limitless, and *completely subjective*. . . . Genuine knowledge must be experienced directly. (p. 1)

Echoing Aluli Meyer's (2008) earlier statement, I, too, know that language that does not democratically recognize other or privilege diverse knowledge and experience of the interconnectedness of world, mind, body, and soul is not the language the world needs now. Regarding knowledge production, Aluli Meyer (2014) understands that *"words have life—they heal or break . . . [and that] intention* shapes our language and creates our reality" (p. 392). I also resonate with Jung's (2009) experience when he writes, "My speech is imperfect. Not because I want to shine with words, but out of the impossibility of finding those words, I speak in images. With nothing else can I express the words from the depths" (p. 230).

In attending to guiding images and texts, perhaps it is no coincidence that Aluli Meyer's beautiful words struck a deep chord in me: "I have been nothing but awake, I just thought I've been asleep" (keyele, 2010, video file, 8:07). The transforming symbol produced by my

unconscious is, once more, an image of a grave, this time, with a woman resting in the bottom, a woman who thought she was asleep . . .

But the grave is open and the stars bright,

silhouetting the shovel on the mound, against the inky night.

Whether the woman has the ability to arise from this place is unknown.

Her limbs are cool, her thinking thick with slowing blood.

It is you, dear reader, who will help her know

if she can clamber out of this resting place. Out of our resting place.

And as she looks up to study the constellations, she whispers back,

"We were always awake,

we only thought we were dreaming."

Where to begin? "If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe" (Sagan, 1980, p. 218). There is no obvious beginning, no certain entry into the circle of this creation story—of how I came to the work of Sacred Mandala Inquiry or, more accurately, how this work seized me and was expressed through me, eventually leading to the practice of mentoring and co-learning with students of ritual mandala painting.

In the inner realm, I was and am a vivid dreamer, and I recall a numinous early childhood dream of strangely inscribed circles, perhaps presaging what was to come. In the outer world, my quest simply began with being thrown (Heidegger, 1953/1996) into life and having to make sense of my own questioning nature, while embedded in a culture where spirit and matter are split, gender hierarchy blatant, and where privilege keeps continents apart. The call might have originated through my Irish Catholic upbringing and nightly fairy-tale readings—maps of greater truths. Movies my father showed at the theatre—witnessing luminous lives lived at 24 frames a

second, seen aloft from the projection booth—filled my young imagination with possibility. An early infrastructure for apprehending myth and story was laid. But perhaps the rupture of being sent from home, a pregnant teenager and alone—during an era wherein I was culturally expected to be permanently separated from my precious son and all that unfolded from that loss—is a more accurate place to start. Or the spring season when, as a teenager, a public washroom was my home. But then, my treasured time living deep in the Rocky Mountain foothills forest where I first began to call my spirit back, seems just right too, for all of my biography, and all of yours, is the story of psyche, as lived through us and illuminated through us—psyche, present in all things seen and unseen.

Let me share an old tale that returns to me now and informs my thinking. In our growing-up years, my father loved to tell his children funny stories, including one about a man out in search of his lost key in the dark of night. Years later, when reading Indries Shah's (1983) Turkic Sufi wisdom stories about a beloved jester named Mulla Nasrudin, I found the origin of dad's oft-told tale, *The Key*. The narrative goes like this:

> Someone saw Nasrudin searching for something on the ground.
> "What have you lost Mullah?" he asked. "My key," said the Mullah. So they both went down on their knees and looked for it.
> After a time the other man asked: "Where exactly did you drop it?"
> "In my house."
> "Then why are you looking here?"
> "There's more light here than inside my own house." (p. 9)

This story presents the very image of my academic quest, with an embedded answer. Under the light of collective understanding, I have found a great deal of value in many approaches that speak to parts of the whole. Yet, I have realized the methodological key is to be found within the darkness of my own house, within the unconscious. As Jung (1954/1967) aptly states, "one does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light but by making darkness conscious"

(pp. 265-266). This is the transformative work of the Sacred Mandala: making darkness conscious. As well, Jung (1961/1963) discerns that "the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being. It may even be assumed that just as the unconscious affects us, so the increase in our consciousness affects the unconscious" (p. 326).

For the purposes of this discussion then, psyche is understood as the autonomous animating principle in psychological processes, conscious and unconscious (Sharp, 1991, p. 107), surface and depth, embedded and continuous with the material world, and irreducible. Psyche is itself what is studied and also the instrument of this research (Selig, 2014). As such, I have situated Sacred Mandala Inquiry within embodied, lived experience, reflected in theoretical orientations of phenomenology and sacred narrative hermeneutical inquiry, contained in a third space, through text that includes image. Regarding sacred narrative, is important to understand that, as educational scholar Petra Hendry (2009) writes,

> sacred narratives do not require analysis, or interpretation or verification. . . . They require that scholars attend to them and be present. Whether it is a sculpture, myth, painting, dance or sermon, these are narratives that ultimately speak to the human condition. Being present in the encounter with no other purpose than attending to and being open is what makes it sacred and illuminates its potential to be materialized. (pp. 75-76)

The sacred is an important idea in a depth orientation. Through Jung's critical contribution to psychiatrists Eugen Bleuler and Sigmund Freud's formation of depth psychology—the exploration of *Erelbnis*, or the lived experience of the phenomenology of the unconscious—and the psychoanalysts and theorists coming after, Steven Aizenstat (2011), Henry Corbin (1998), Hillman (1975), Robert Johnson (1991), Shawn McNiff (2005), June Singer (1994), Murray Stein (1996), Richard Stein (2007), Marie-Louise von Franz (1988/1992), and many more, I began to find my path. The footprints fit my shoe.

I locate my research within the field of curriculum studies in that 'curriculum' writ large concerns making sense of self and world. Throughout this work I address the two underlying questions informing the field of curriculum studies: what is worth knowing, and what counts as knowledge. I am concerned with how knowledge is produced and communicated across the generations and how this limits/opens possibility to self-knowing. In the field of education, curriculum scholar Elliot Eisner (1979) understood objective and subjective ways of seeing as knowing and considered that, if one of these eyes is closed, "we are left with a monocular vision; both are necessary to have depth perception" (p. 198). I now know any serious, creative inquiry in education and curriculum, the social sciences, humanities, or arts necessitates the inclusion of processes occurring outside of awareness, held in emerging stories, images, metaphors, poetry, and myths that invite the unconscious forward. Many ways of knowing are needed, each is as real as the other, illuminating the inner and outer world, in wholeness. For buried away in the "forgotten, repressed and denied aspects of one's personal, familial, cultural and collective unconscious" (Fidyk, 2016, p. 3) is the inner gold waiting to be reclaimed.

Through my long search in the darkness, I have come to understand that the work of the Sacred Mandala is its own inquiry—a way of finding out about the world through questioning—the work of which I have laid out for others. In this dissertation, I present the structure, process, and practice of Sacred Mandala Inquiry as a way of knowing, incorporating methodological considerations and related theories and illuminated through personal examples. Although the focus in this dissertation is on individual Sacred Mandala practice, that focus is with the understanding that the individual is embedded within a community and more-than-human-world in an ecology of interconnected, contributing relationships.

In my consideration of methodology in relation to this dissertation, I echo poet T. S. Eliot's (1934) query: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?/ Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" (p. 7). *Methodology* has been defined in *Oxford Living Dictionaries* as "a system of methods used in a particular area of study or activity ("Methodology," 2016) and in *Merriam-Webster.com* as "a body of methods, rules and postulates employed by a discipline: 1. A particular procedure or set of procedures, 2. The analysis of the principles or procedures of inquiry in a particular field" ("Methodology," 2019). These definitions are informative while reading the following description the Sacred Mandala and considering its use as a method/ology of research.

Jung (1951/1970) refers to the mandala as the "archetype of wholeness" (p. 355). Jung's colleague Aniela Jaffé (1964) states that a mandala, or sacred circle, "expresses the totality of the psyche in all its aspects, including the relationship between man [sic] and the whole of nature" (p. 266). In his book, *Jung and Eastern Thought*, philosophy scholar J. J. Clarke (1994) claims that "the mandala image is not only a symbol of wholeness and healing, but can be actively employed as a means toward that end" (p. 139).

This exploration of mandalas focuses on the Western tradition, introduced by Jung both as a symbol of wholeness and as a means of transformation and integration. A depth-psychological orientation acknowledges realities beneath conscious awareness and supports exploration of embodied, unconscious, imaginal, and transpersonal aspects of being human with an emphasis on the restoration of connection between the ego and Self through the study of dreams, complexes, and archetypes (Jung, 1957/1967, 1961/1963, 1973b; Romanyshyn, 2007; Singer, 1994; von Franz 1964, 1980). The Jungian conception of the archetype of the Self, which includes the conscious and unconscious, often represented by the mandala, illustrates the unity

which comprises wholeness. Jung (1951/1970) described *wholeness* as a fluid, harmonious relationship between the conscious and unconscious, which, he said, "seems to be an abstract idea . . . [but is] nevertheless empirical in so far as it has been anticipated by the psyche in the form of spontaneous or autonomous symbols" (p. 174). The Sacred Mandala is a subset of Western mandalas, drawn or painted for the purposes of exploring psyche.

Madeleine Shields began work with Jack Wise in 1981 and completed her first mandala, titled *Wise Journey*, in 1983. Both Jack Wise and Madeleine Shields were exceptional artists; however, to reiterate, this model does not require more than the attraction to the form, a modicum of artistic ability, and the willingness to follow the principles of Sacred Mandala Inquiry as described in this dissertation. (See examples of Sacred Mandalas painted by Madeleine Shields, Susan Breiddal, and Karen Guilbeault at the end of the chapter titled "Sacred Mandala Inquiry: Practice and Process").

A limited number of people have engaged in this lineage of ritual mandala painting, and a search of the academic literature on this particular form revealed that it is restricted to works by Jane Johnston (1997), Audrey Derksen (2000), and Susan Breiddal (2013). Derksen, a student of Madeleine Shields engaged in an inquiry for her master's research in Educational Psychology, employing a more traditional Tibetan mandala structure and iconography. My colleague, clinical counsellor Susan Breiddal, was mentored by Madeleine Shields for 2 years and continued the practice on her own.

Later, in her doctoral work, Susan Breiddal (2013) took up the Sacred Mandala as part of a phenomenological method of the experience of encountering mortality on a daily basis in a palliative care setting. During her time of dissertation writing, we were each engaged in our own Sacred Mandala painting and met formally each month to explore what was unfolding for us in

the work. It seemed natural and perhaps provided a sense of completion for us to then describe the work formally and academically so that other researchers could benefit from the process. As we found great value in ritual mandala painting, we began seriously collaborating on this project in 2009, making our way as we went. At that time, we began exhaustive conversations about the principles, practice, and processes of the Sacred Mandala, while also painting together and, later, co-facilitating mandala introduction and initiation groups, working with self-selected populations who had come in contact with our work and felt called.

Madeleine Shields did not use a focusing question in her own practice and mentoring, as she understood that the theme or revelation would arise from the unconscious. Both Susan Breiddal and I chose to use a focusing question, as we agreed that having a clear intention was a valuable part of the process. The principles and focusing process are described in detail below. The terms *student*, *inquirer*, and *meditator* are used interchangeably in these processes to describe the person painting the mandala. (For a fuller discussion on terminology see Breiddal, 2013.) Both experienced painters and those who have never taken up a brush may feel called to the work. Although the principles are discussed in more detail below, at this point, it should be understood that the Sacred Mandala painter is not required to be an artist or to have any formal art-training background but must have a strong attraction to the symbol of the mandala, bespeaking psychic engagement (Jung, 1961/1963). Madeleine Shields related that the student will have "a felt need to find a tangible, meaningful expression for inner work, and have the time in which to do it. A modicum of artistic ability is required—skill can be developed" (Johnston, 1997, p. 66).

Neither Susan Breiddal nor I were artists when we began, but we were very much drawn to the work. Although a skilled artist herself, Madeleine Shields believed that artistic training can

often be a barrier to students. She related that novice painters have an advantage in that they may have less difficulty assuming a "beginner's mind" (Suzuki, 1970, p. 2), with little need to unlearn habituated procedures in painting that may inhibit arising novelty. Jung (1973b) observed that being untrained in the arts allows for "the unconscious to slip subliminal images into the painting" (p. 8). The artifact produced in Sacred Mandala painting is not to be judged as a work of art, though aesthetics is an important consideration throughout the inquiry, toward which much care is given, honouring the care-filled spirit of the practice. Although a painting is produced and constitutes a visual record of the process of discovery, the images are not static as texts, as interpretation and meaning continue to unfold over time.

Throughout this dissertation, in support of the creation of Sacred Mandala Inquiry, I have interwoven observations made by expert Sacred Mandala painter Susan Breiddal (see Appendix A: Invitation to Participate; Appendix B: Informed Consent). After completing an ethics review, I derived quotations from her written responses to cue words—"meaningful images," "synchronicity," "themes," "mentoring," "practice," and "what remains?"—which I provided. Additional quotes have been drawn from personal conversations with Susan Breiddal, a former student of Madeleine Shields, supported by email and personal notes. I refer to her as Susan Breiddal or Susan just as I refer to Madeleine Shields or Madeleine, given our close relationships. Within my dissertation, I indicate any pseudonyms by the use of quotation marks.

Having provided a basic orientation regarding Sacred Mandala Inquiry—inclusive of depth psychology, phenomenology, and sacred narrative through examples—and the understanding that images emerging through memory, reveries, dreams, and imagination are important to the work, this dissertation now provides a review of literature that begins with

explaining the structural containment of the process by exploring the symbol of the mandala, or circle.

The Circle

In this chapter, consideration is given to several topics: the symbol of the circle, Jung's revelation of the mandala as a universal symbol of wholeness, the theme of emergence, and embodiment, anchoring the symbol within the flesh of the world. Essentially, Sacred Mandala Inquiry encompasses working with images—viewed, imagined, remembered, painted, described, and tended to through dialogue and poetics. My intention is to provide background for bringing the reader into my lived world of the unconscious to experience an unfolding understanding of how images and, later, synchronicity can expand a sense of imaginal and embodied knowing in research, evolving considerations from my unpublished thesis *Remembering Wholeness: The Hero's-Journey-in-Relation* (1997). A review of what phenomenology offers Sacred Mandala Inquiry is also provided.

The symbol of the circle and the mandala form are found in human sacred art and architecture worldwide. Social geographer Susan Walcott (2006) writes, "Mandalas are distinctive features of religious art throughout the Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist world, which extends from Central Asia through India to China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia" (p. 75). Art therapist Susan Buchalter (2013) explained that

> for Buddhists, the circle is a reflection of samsara which is the eternal cycle of life that can only be escaped if one achieves enlightenment, . . . and for Christianity and Islam, the circle is used for various divine symbols such as the Celtic Cross, the halo and the dome. (p. 11)

Some examples of sacred circles appearing in art and architecture across cultures are the labyrinth designs of Crete and the Chartres Cathedral floor, Navaho sand paintings, and the circle of stones at Stonehenge. Jung (1951/1969) observed that mandalas arise spontaneously in artistic processes, dreams, and reveries, particularly in turbulent times, and may even be observed "in the first dreams of infancy . . . [which] says much for the *a priori* existence of potential

wholeness, . . . paradoxically . . . as if something already existent were being put together" (p. 165). According to Jungian analyst Edward Whitmont (1991), at around the age of eighteen months, children "begin to draw circles, in a symbolic representation of the Self. The Self manifests as ego for the first time in this way" (p. 269). Art therapist and researcher Rhoda Kellogg (1970) analyzed over a million paintings of young children from 30 countries and found that all children between the ages of 3 and 5 draw mandalas and squares, often dividing them into quadrants by crosses. The circle thus appears to represent something fundamental to and about human consciousness.

Jung's (1961/1963) personal discovery of the mandala occurred in 1916 while he was a Commandant in a British prisoner of war camp in French Switzerland. According to his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, during this tumultuous time in his life, Jung spontaneously started sketching mandalas through which he began to realize a correspondence to his inner situation. Jung then abandoned the idea that his ego was in control and allowed himself to draw and see where the processes he felt compelled to undertake were leading him. Through this exploration, Jung realized for himself that "there is no linear evolution; there is only a circumambulation of the self . . . where everything points to the centre" (p. 197). Jung considered the mandalas he had spontaneously begun painting to be images of an archetype of the Self made visible and constellated by his inner turmoil in containment of chaos. He also understood these mandalas to be reflecting the microcosmic nature of psyche, representative of a small-scale universe. In essence, Jung recognized mandalas as symbolizing unity and totality, in which "the circular image represents the wholeness of the psychic ground or, to put it in mythic terms, the divinity incarnate in man" (p. 335).

Unus Mundus

Given the similarities of cultural myths of peoples worldwide—and in particular mandalas painted by both himself and his many patients, in which archetypal motifs and similar meanings were spontaneously painted with no prior knowledge of these contents, Jung (1951/1969) concluded that humanity is wholly connected at the deepest layer of being, emerging out of the material world. He observed that at bottom, psyche is the earth:

> The deeper "layers" of psyche lose their individual uniqueness as they retreat farther and farther into the darkness. "Lower down," that is to say, as they approach the autonomous functional systems, they become increasingly collective until they are universalized and extinguished in the body's materiality, i.e. in chemical substances. The body's carbon is simply carbon. Hence at bottom, the psyche is simply world and . . . in the [mandala] symbol the world itself is speaking. (p. 173)

Based on his research with these primordial structural elements of the psyche or *archetypes*, as he called them, Jung (1975) posited an underlying unity of the psychological and material worlds as different manifestations of one world, employing the Latin term *unus mundus* (p. 167).

In a letter dated January 2, 1957, Jung (1976a) wrote, "We have every reason to suppose that there is only one world, where matter and psyche are the same thing, which we discriminate for the purpose of cognition" (p. 342). He conceived that humans do not have a psyche but rather are *in* psyche. Throughout his writings, Jung leaned toward dual representations, for example, using concepts such as *conscious* and *unconscious*, or *ego and self*, presumably being a man of his time and culture and in order to discuss phenomena from a Western, scientific perspective. Notably, understanding psyche and matter as one is an important part of Sacred Mandala Inquiry. The multiple, unfolding synchronistic events occurring throughout my inquiry are documented below as self-clustering themes developed, allowing for an embodied experience of unity and, consistent with the underlying principles of phenomenology, providing experiences of wonder and awe. Experiences of awe have been found to include as fundamental features both "vastness

and accommodation. Vastness refers to anything that is experienced as being much larger than the self, or the self's ordinary level of the experience of frame of reference . . . and [accommodation] of the process of adjustment of mental structures" (Keltner & Haidt, 2003, pp. 303-304).

Jungian analyst Lionel Corbett and independent scholar of depth psychology Leanne Whitney (2016) note that according to nondual traditions, the Self is the ultimate subject and, as such, cannot be known as an object. In comparing Jung's Western focus on the individual in contrast with an Eastern nondual view, they offer the perspective that "pure consciousness can never itself be unconscious, but can only be obscured at the level of our human awareness" (p. 19). Jung's concept of the unconscious, then, indicates a dualistic or ego-level experience; however, Corbett and Whitney concede it likely that Jung had personal experiences of nonduality, evidenced in his autobiographical writing at the end of his life. Of this experience, he wrote,

> At times, I feel as if I am spread out over the landscape and inside things, and am myself living in every tree, in the splashing of the waves, in the clouds and animals that come and go, in the procession of the seasons. (1961/1963, p. 226)

Jung considered the substructure of thought as biologically shaped through thousands of millions of years of evolution, coupled with historical events and cultural processes.

Jung (1948/1969) framed the archetypes as being "modes of apprehension" (p. 137): inherent structures, inborn, and profoundly governing patterns of perception and culture. He conceived of archetypes as living in the phylogenetic substratum, which he named the *collective unconscious*, or *objective psyche* (not being solely subjective). He wrote, "Just as the human body is a museum, so to speak, of its phylogenetic [evolutionary] history, so too is the psyche" (1939/1969, pp. 286–287). Jung (1947/1977) understood the archetypal function as parallel to

"the inborn way in which the chick emerges from the egg, the bird builds its nest, a certain kind of wasp stings the motor ganglion of the caterpillar, and eels find their way to the Bermudas" (p. 518). In other words, archetypes are inherited with brains as the instinctual psychic aspect, experienced in the mind and rooted in the body, or earth, fully entwined. As such, strong themes of nondual reality are present in Jung's writings and also evidenced in his focus on the development of the concept of synchronicity (Jung, 1969), an integral aspect of Sacred Mandala Inquiry that is explored further on.

The depth-psychological orientation has continued to evolve, post Freud and Jung, notably through work of Aizenstat (2011), Hillman (1975), Romanyshyn (2007), Sardello (2011), and Watkins (1984), among others. Aizenstat (2003) writes that in this evolving expression, an expanded view considering the more-than-human experience of psyche is occurring, and it embraces the ecopsychological realm. Aizenstat named this inclusion the "World Unconscious" and explains,

> In the realm of the World Unconscious, all creatures and things of the world are understood as interrelated and interconnected. . . . I use the term "unconscious" realizing that, for the most part, it is we who are unconscious of these inner natures of the world's other inhabitants. These inner natures of the world's organic and inorganic phenomena make up the World Unconscious. (pp. 3-4)

Developing a theory related to depth psychology, beginning in the late 1960s, Chilean biologists and systems theorists Maturana and Francisco Varela (1972/1980) focused on consciousness research in embodied cognition, a concept that denotes embeddedness in the world. Their theory holds that minds are not solely located in heads but rather in whole bodies and also extend into the environment, situated and irreducible. Incorporating neurobiology, cognitive science, and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Maturana and Varela (1984/1987) developed an understanding that reality is co-constituted with the world, enacted together as only

one of many possible worlds. This position was predicated in part on Maturana's earlier research on eyes and colour perception, whereby he discovered that the visual spectrum differs from humans to birds to animals, revealing startling divergence across species. Recognizing perceptual diversity, Maturana and Varela understood subjective experience as a valid way of knowing, with the mind as an emergent property, providing a unique sense of self and reality. Varela and his co-authors, cognitive psychologist and philosopher Evan Thompson and psychologist Eleanor Rosch (1991), argued against the external objectivism and the strict separation of subject and object, of knower and known, saying, "There is no abstract knower of an experience that is separate from the experience itself" (p. 26) and adding, "We do not really have knowledge, we only have representations of the world" (p. 142).

Maturana and Varela (1972/1980) coined the word *autopoiesis*, defined as *self-creation* and derived from "the Greek words *auto* (self) and *poiein* (produce, create)" (Maturana & Poerksen, 2002/2004, p. 97). Autopoiesis refers to self-constituting, self-regulating systems, based on observation of cells that display innate intelligence, memory, and the ability to self-transform, as complex systems with adaptive, self-emergent, self-organized characteristics. Autopoiesis is the recognition that all living beings, or observers, are not separate from the environment. In essence, "autopoiesis entails an emergence of a self" (Thompson, 2004, p. 387).

The concept of radical embodiment points to the knowledge of fundamental embeddedness in bodies and world, through which all experience and values arise. This scientific perspective appears to be parallel with the depth-psychological idea that psyche, which emerged out of the stars and earth, is self-regulating, self-healing, individuating, and evolving within a network of relations (Cambray, 2002, 2009; Jung, 1979). As physicist Werner Heisenberg (1971)

succinctly articulates, “the same organizing forces that have shaped nature in all her forms are also responsible for the structure of our minds” (p. 101).

American educator, author, and curriculum theorist William Doll (2012) explored the topic of complexity and emergence over his long career in education. He wrote, “Drawing on principles derived from complexity science, we are encouraged to think of *emergence* as the ongoing flow of our awareness and appreciation of *being*-in-relation with others, the environment, the cosmos” (p. 175). Complex systems can be understood by their adaptive, self-emergent, self-organized characteristics. Complexity theory refers to unpredictable, dynamic, nonlinear, co-dependent, and self-emergent systems (Bak, 1996; Varela, 1996, 2001). Examples of complex systems in nature include cloud formations, ant colonies, and murmurations of birds, in which all agents co-create the system. In contrast to mechanistic, linear systems, complex systems can be viewed as learning systems (Davis & Simmt, 2003). In distinction to learning as a committing to memory activity, within a complexity framework, learning is active, adaptive, open to possibility, and operating at the edge of chaos. Hierarchal ‘top down’ learning, in which there may be one correct way to learn, is now understood to be ‘bottom up’ through engagement with self-organizing activity in which the group intelligence and learning is greater than that of the individual. Learning is authentic, deep, and transferable (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Doll, 2008).

Sacred Mandala Inquiry provides an ordered structure and framework for experiencing and exploring psychological emergence within a first-person embodied practice and within a phenomenological inquiry. It is my experience that emergent, self-organizing, learning, and healing structures may be viewed as coming into being within Sacred Mandala Inquiry, as awareness of complexity and interconnectivity arise, at times, through the *experience* of unity in thought and matter, revealed in images and novel synchronistic occurrences. These trickster

events (Combs & Holland, 1996) can further loosen a Newtonian mechanistic grip. Physicist and cultural studies scholar Moritz Ingwersen (2017) explains that in complexity science, the trickster figure of mythology is seen to perturb systems in stasis, while also being associated with transdiscipline inclusivity. Ingwersen writes, "The trickster will be understood as the epitome of a boundary-crosser who has come to signify moments of transition, disruption, and creation" (p. 254). Jungian analysts Joseph Cambray and Linda Carter (2004) suggest that "the openness to unconscious processes, with the dangers and novelty…also orients the mind towards the edge of order and chaos, the locus of deeper psychological creativity" (p. 125). Philosopher of science Michele Serres sees Hermes as the threshold trickster and, according to Ingwersen, "identifies a radical openness to an infinity of pathways, connections, and interferences" (p. 263). These interconnecting pathways may lead to ruptures, bifurcations, uncertainties, transitions, reconfiguring the self, and creating novelty (Ressurreição & Sampaio, 2018), and in my view, may be precipitated at times through astonishing synchronistic crossovers, insight, and transformative experience. In this dissertation, I use the definition of *synchronicity* provided below and later provide examples of synchronistic phenomena related to Sacred Mandala Inquiry.

Synchronicity

Both depth psychology and quantum mechanics hold mind and matter as being on a continuum, with synchronicity mirroring the profound interconnectedness of all things, revealing meaning at the intersections of the objective and subjective world (Cambray, 2009; Jung, 1954/1969). Cultural historian Richard Tarnas (1991), author of *The Passion of the Western Mind*, provides a coherent account of the intellectual history of the Western worldview that includes conceptions of reality as seen through the convergence of philosophy, science, religious

studies, and depth psychology. He observed that shifts in paradigms occur precisely when emerging patterns ring true in the communal psyche, and that this process itself is an archetypal evolution. During these shifts, events occur in society that coincidentally support the change; for example, "the telescope just happens to be invented and falls into Galileo's hands" (p. 439). Tarnas suggests that inclinations, methods, methodologies, data, and tools develop out of the shared mind in support of a collective emergence. The cumulative synchronicity of Jung's dialogues with a young Albert Einstein and later receiving Richard Wilhelm's (1924) German translation of the ancient Eastern teachings of the *I Ching*, a knowledge system of divination based on acausal principles, while himself painting an Eastern-themed mandala and being in correspondence with physicist Wolfgang Pauli (Pauli & Jung, 2001) led Jung (1969) to the understanding of synchronicities as *meaningful* coincidences within a constellated archetypal and emergent field but as

> so improbable that we must assume them to be based on some kind of principle or some property of the empirical world. . . . A content perceived by an observer can, at the same time, be represented by an outside event, without any causal connection. (p. 115)

Rather than being generated through the more usual processes of cause and effect (such as heating water molecules to a resulting boil), synchronistic events were now understood by Pauli and Jung to be related by *meaning*, often bringing with them a numinous (holy or luminous) quality engendering a strong emotional resonance. Importantly, significant synchronistic experiences were perceived by Jung to be tied to crucial phases of individuation—the lifelong spiraling process of development driven by the Self, which he defined as a "drive towards consciousness . . . fueled by this teleological pressure forward and upward" (Stein, 1996, p. 71), or the process of becoming uniquely oneself (Edinger, 1972). These events can be experienced as deeply spiritual and pivotal for transformation (Main, 2007a, 2007b; Richo, 1998), providing a

sense of harmony, or wholeness. Jung (1954/1969) applied the term "psychoid" to the nonpsychic nature of the archetype and underscored the inseparable nature of mind and matter, where, at the deepest level, "psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing" (p. 215).

Jung (1962/1969) illuminated the phenomenon of synchronicity with the oft-repeated clinical case study of a young woman whose overly rational attitude held treatment at an impasse. In session, while the woman recounted her dream of being gifted a valuable piece of jewelry, a golden scarab, Jung heard a tapping sound at the window. When he arose to investigate, he observed a flying insect attempting to enter. He relates,

> I opened the window immediately and caught the insect in the air as it flew in. It was a scarabaeid beetle, or common rose-chafer (*Cetonia aurata*), whose gold-green colour most nearly resembles that of a golden scarab. I handed the beetle to my patient with the words, "Here is your scarab." This experience punctured the desired hole in her rationalism and broke the ice of her intellectual resistance. (pp. 109-110)

Through synchronicity, the *unseen* invites a recognition of something eclipsed from conscious awareness, seemingly drawing attention to important and meaningful information. Explaining this psychoid process, Jungian scholar Anthony Stevens (2006) reiterates Jung's analogy between the visible and invisible in the electromagnetic spectrum:

> The part of the spectrum which is visible to us (i.e. the ultra-violet end) represents those psychic processes of which we are conscious. The invisible infra-red end of the spectrum corresponds to the unconscious biological aspect of the archetype which is identical with "the physiology of the organism and thus emerges with its chemical and physical conditions." (*CW* 8, para. 420). (p. 87)

Commonly, people experience synchronicities such as encountering people they were just thinking about, dreaming of an impending illness or death of a relative, overhearing a conversation, receiving a particular book bearing needed information, hearing a certain meaningful piece of music or poetry, or seeing a series of important repeating numbers, any of

which unexpectedly speaks to the current situation. Any of these might carry great meaning and appear to make visible an unseen, compensatory, unity. Although the focus in this current study pertains to individual inquiry, individual experiences may accumulate and lead to cultural change.

It was Jung's concept of the psychoid archetype that captivated Pauli, who joined Jung in a search for understanding the phenomenon of synchronicity (Zabriskie, 2001). In her introduction to *Atom and Archetype: The Pauli/Jung Letters, 1932-1958*, Zabriskie (2001) reports that Pauli had been in analysis with a student of Jung's, working through the effects of his mother's suicide (p. xxxii). Then, over the course of his and Jung's 17-year correspondence, the synthesis between quantum physics and depth psychology was born (p. xxviii). Their shared search into the nature of dreams and their correlation to reality profoundly influenced their individual work as well as the work of each other, as both understood that no observation outside of the psyche could be made, given that all observations are mind dependent (p. xxviii).

According to Zabriskie (2001), Pauli and Jung found that "matter and mind are both objective and subjective, complementary in their structure and, at the psychoid level, reflective of each other" (p. xxxviii). Each in turn had imagined a fourth unmeasurable dimension. Zabriskie relates that in addition to breadth, height, and depth, in 1930, Pauli added the particle neutrino and its invisible spin as a fourth. Both Jung and Pauli had thus added an invisible, dynamic, background dimension. Notably, based on her reading of their correspondence, Zabriskie makes the point that Jung was drawn to the ordering effect of the mandala patterning and Pauli to a unifying principle in physics, a possible reflection of the drive for containment of inner fragmentation within a psycho-physical unity. Zabriskie refers to holistic physicist F. David Peat's observation that Pauli eventually understood the existence of a unified reality

beneath the smallest of particles: the light of nature, "where mind and matter, religion and science originate" (p. xxxvii), and with synchronicity offering a "glimpse of the interconnected fabric of the universe" (Cambray, 2009, p. 31).

Seeing Anew: Phenomenology

My Sacred Mandala inquiry, titled *Surrender Return to The Source*, emerged out of the embodied experience of loss and also engaged the bodily processes of painting and writing (eye, hand, and pen) while viewing the structures of consciousness come into form. Merleau-Ponty's (1964/1968) book, *The Visible and the Invisible*, on the phenomenon of the perception of flesh (flesh as perceived and perceiving) and interaction with artistic processes, spoke to me. Sacred Mandala Inquiry involves creative, embodied, hands-on exploration, which may allow inquirers to see reality with fresh eyes and discover new meaning. The approach is consistent with phenomenology, a subset of qualitative research, involving "the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view" (Smith, 2018, para. 1). Van Manen (2014) states, "Etymologically, the term *phenomenon* means that which appears; *logos* means word or study" (p. 267)—the study of appearances. In the practice of phenomenology, the lifeworld of the individual is the primary source of data, and the lived meanings generated through the work are central to a research study (van Manen, 1990). The phenomenological approach, taken up and adapted by many philosophers, affirms being in the world as a way of knowing, as distinct from a detached, objective view from nowhere (Nagel, 1986).

Phenomenology, since its inception, has been a vibrant, ever-changing, and even contradictory project. Psychologist Susann M. Laverty (2003), in describing the lineage of phenomenology, states that at core "our understanding of the discipline is not stationary, but rather dynamic and evolving" (p. 3). At the heart of phenomenology is the intention to see anew

and carefully describe lived experience and thereby "return to embodied, experiential meanings" (Finlay, 2012, p. 17). The focus—to experience and describe the world in a way that is as free of intellectual and socialized enculturation as possible—appears to be consistent with contemplative practices. Phenomenology, like mandala practice, has to do with being present, aware, and reflective, which helps to uncover and perceive what is hidden or concealed (M. Johnson, 2000), and which increases our "capacity to wonder" (Eddy, 2008, p. 116).

German philosopher and mathematician Edmund Husserl is widely regarded as having originated a distinct phenomenological movement, predicated on the ideas of Immanuel Kant, Georg W. F. Hegel, and Ernst Mach (Morin, 2000). According to phenomenologist Dermot Morin (2000), Kant believed humans to be incapable of knowing reality directly but having access only to representations in the mind. In contradistinction, Morin pointed to Husserl's reasoning that certainty comes through experience of the world, of which we are always a part. He believed that meaning does not inhere in abstraction and scientific objectification. Laverty (2003) writes that Husserl

> criticized psychology as a science that had gone wrong by attempting to apply methods of the natural sciences to human issues. He charged that these pursuits ignored the fact that psychology deals with living subjects who are not simply reacting automatically to external stimuli, but rather are responding to their own perception of what these stimuli mean. (p. 22)

As such, Husserl (1913/1970) famously exhorted, "Back to the 'things themselves'" (p. 168), underscoring the value of the primacy of directly lived, given experience, and the requirement of slowing down and gazing upon the phenomena, returning to the essence of human experience. Building on the works of the German philosopher, psychologist, and priest Franz Brentano, who had developed descriptive psychology, and his colleague Carl Stumpf, Husserl held the main feature of consciousness to be always intentional and directed toward an object (Smith, 2018).

Brentano (1874/1995) wrote, “Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself. . . . In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on” (p. 89).

Husserl then became interested in this “relationship between knower and object studied” (Laverty, 2003, p. 14). Laverty (2003) discussed Husserl’s development of the idea of “bracketing,” or suspending one’s own given assumptions about the world (p. 6). For instance, a butterfly as it appears in a dream, a memory, or in the garden may be bracketed and viewed as phenomena rather than as an object, setting aside whether it is “real” or not. In other words, “the reduction” is not reductionist but rather is about allowing oneself to not know, or to doubt habitual thinking, and to take the imagination seriously. The phenomenologist no longer takes for granted that which has been previously accepted (Creswell, 2007). The difficulty lies in describing the phenomena as experienced, or the knowledge arising from the reduction, perhaps not having the language of experience to do so. In trying to describe the previously undescribed, language eludes us. As qualitative research instructor Michael Crotty (1996) explains,

> we find our descriptions incoherent, fragmentary, and not a little “mysterious.” We find ourselves lost for words, forced to invent words and bend existing words to bear the meanings we need them to carry for us. This has always been characteristic of phenomenological description. We may have to be quite inventive and creative in this respect. (p. 280)

In his book, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) proposes that the reduction could never be complete, as the world is inexhaustible, and the “slackened intentional threads” (p. xii) are always attached to the “body-subject” with paradoxical meaning derived through ordinary, pre-reflective bodily engagement in the world, which he defined as “perception.” He explains, “All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is

gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless" (p. viii).

Although engaged in the sciences, Merleau-Ponty reveals his strong opposition to the notion of philosophical objectivity and impartiality. For him, science passes over profound experience in attempts to explain phenomena, thereby moving away from the phenomena itself; he holds that the naming of the world separates us from the world. Merleau-Ponty's (1964/1968) thinking led him to the understanding that humans are always situated as a part of the "flesh" of the world, and he refers to nature as "the mother" (p. 267). Ecologist and philosopher David Abram (1996) describes this flesh as "the mysterious tissue or matrix that underlies and gives rise to both the perceiver and perceived as interdependent aspects of its spontaneous activity" (p. 66), a self-emergent phenomenon experienced through seeing, touching, and hearing. Seen this way, a return to the things themselves, for Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), is to

> return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign language, as the discipline of geography would be in relation to a forest, a prairie, a river in the countryside we knew beforehand. (p. ix)

Merleau-Ponty's lifetime study of philosophy, vision, and perception included a great appreciation of the processes of painting, particularly the works of Cezanne, which he likened to phenomenological work done in paint "by reason of the same kind of attentiveness and wonder, the same demand for awareness" (p. xvi). He believed that the reduction was to be achieved in art through "expressing essence in the very act of creative origination. It reenacts, as it were, the very coming to be of the world" (Burch, 1993, p. 359), through direct contact.

Heidegger and hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, a student of Heidegger, also did not consider objectivity or the ability to bracket oneself fully possible, due to human "embeddedness in the world of language and social relationships and the inescapable historicity

of all understanding" (Finlay, 2012, p. 22). The act of describing a phenomenon was regarded as interpretation—hermeneutics, and what it means to be human. Heidegger and Gadamer also aimed to uncover the lived experience in the world, rediscovering through critical reflection what they deemed lost by empirical science (Laverty, 2003). Within this context, they understood that multiple overlapping constructions of reality are possible, given self-interpretations of researchers (Koch, 1995)—thus understanding the necessity of leaving room for plurality, and listening to the other.

A crucial precept of hermeneutic phenomenology, then, is that fundamental experience of the world is already meaningful to us as individuals (Friesen, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962; van Manen, 1990, 2014). Linda Finlay (2012), an expert on qualitative, phenomenological research, explains that in hermeneutics, "interpretation is not an additional procedure: It constitutes an inevitable and basic structure of our being-in-the-world. We experience a thing as something that has already been interpreted" (p. 22) and discover that the fundamental experience of the world is already meaningful (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962; van Manen, 1990, 2014). Yet these interpretations and meanings themselves are ever-changing; there is no one true answer (Koch, 1995; Laverty, 2003; van Manen, 1990). Hermeneutic philosopher Jens Zimmerman (2015) elaborates, saying that "hermeneutic thinkers argue that understanding is the interpretive act of integrating things such as words, signs, and events into a meaningful whole, . . . [which] happens unconsciously . . . and depends on our current desires and interests" (pp. 7-8). Aluli Meyer (2001) makes clear that hermeneutics asks,

> Who is speaking, What is both the unconscious and conscious intention given that information, and Who is the audience? The same questions can be applied to texts, ideas, essays, curriculum, pedagogical expectations, and so on. . . . If epistemology is the shore-break, hermeneutics is the deep ocean. (p. 147)

Although scholars may disagree on the mythic origins of the term *hermeneutics*, the image of the winged Olympian god Hermes as the messenger bringing understanding remains a potent metaphor. From a depth-psychological perspective on hermeneutics, Romanyshyn (2007) explains that interpretation of symbolic texts may also refer to a "shard of pottery found buried beneath an ancient city as it is as much a text as an historical document, but so too is a dream and a set of data gathered in research" (p. 219).

In the approach to Sacred Mandala Inquiry, a phenomenological orientation privileging embodiment and imagination and vision is fitting. To engage in such an inquiry, all judgments about what is real are suspended, while also understanding that our directed attention affects our consciousness of reality and emergence and may illuminate meaningful subjective experiences.

These meaningful experiences may enhance nondual awareness. Philosophers Bohm and Peat (1987) suggest that what we see around us is the unfolded or explicate order arising up out of the enfolded or implicate order. They state that consciousness is implicate in materiality where, "at a deep level, mind and matter are two aspects of one whole and no more separable than are form and content" (p. 186) and claim that "perception of the implicate order is generally common to all works of art" (p. 188). The next chapter illustrates these principles in its explication of the lived experience of Sacred Mandala Inquiry.

Sacred Mandala Inquiry as Method/ology

The processes of the writing and painting practices in Sacred Mandala Inquiry are akin to the phenomenological moves of suspension, bracketing, reduction, or *epoche*, leading to feelings of astonishment and allowing the essence of things to be revealed, within a spell of wonder. Romanyshyn (2007) invites the researcher to cultivate "the attitude of negative capability, which the poet John Keats defined as the ability 'of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason'" (p. 293). The inquirer attempts to bracket the idea of what is "real" and allows phenomena to emerge through embodied experience—painted, written, spoken, dreamt—in illumination of the inquiry question held. These experiences can result in a radical transformation of consciousness. Yet, the Sacred Mandala also acts as a holy temenos, protecting the images which emerge as welcomed phenomenon.

The philosophy of mandalas with Buddhist origins is congruent with phenomenology in the shared assumption that humans cannot separate themselves out from the world (Gadamer,1960/2004; Heidegger, 1953/1996; Jung, 1950/1972, 1973b; Merleau-Ponty, 1964/1968; Tucci, 1931/1961). Sacred Mandala practice supports the development of a sensual, poetic, and imagistic way of being, wherein an openness may be restored. In everyday life, Sacred Mandala painting practice returns the student to the yet unarticulated experiences beneath preconceived conceptions of what the practice might be, hold, or reveal.

Jung's protégé, von Franz (1964), observed that the mandala

> serves the creative purpose of giving expression and form to something that does not yet exist, something new and unique. . . . The process is that of the ascending spiral, which grows upward while simultaneously returning again and again to the same point. (p. 225)

The structure, practice, and process may assist in bypassing that which has previously been accepted while simultaneously becoming a sacred boundary for the unknown to emerge and be

witnessed. Though many scholars agree that it is not possible to bracket oneself, Susan Breiddal echoes van Manen (2007) when she contends that "we can at least try—and in this trying, we make an attempt to distinguish between our everyday view of something and our desire to see the same object or experience anew" (S. Breiddal, personal communication, November 12, 2018). In phenomenology, as in Sacred Mandala Inquiry, the question is "What is this experience like?" This is a first-person approach totally situated in the here-and-now (Varela & Shear, 1999) in a quest for understanding. Those who feel called to take up Sacred Mandala Inquiry should understand that Hermes can also be an unsettling trickster. This unsettling aspect is discussed in the next section, where I emphasize the importance of support during an in-depth inquiry where unknown, dynamic aspects may well be disruptive and disturbing, as facets of the inquiry may be revealed but not yet reflected upon and integrated into consciousness.

Ethical Considerations

When taking up Sacred Mandala Inquiry, the student needs to understand that this practice is both meaningful and rigorous, involving a personal and depth-psychological, archetypal orientation. As depth psychology educators Oksana Yakushko and Elizabeth Nelson (2013), point out, the "researcher is the instrument, . . . [which] includes mind, body, and soul, and thus renders reflexivity a far more demanding task" (p. 290). A serious attitude is required in attending to possible transformational experience. The term *transformation* is not used lightly, as transformation may well come with a cost: a breakdown of structures, which can be experienced by a controlling, enculturated ego as disturbing. Furthermore, Sacred Mandala Inquiry should not be considered a tool that can be "used" but rather an engagement in a process of "conscious cooperation with the unconscious" (Spear, 2014, p. 227), in a mindful way of being that is reflexive, sensitive, and organic.

Painting a Sacred Mandala while harnessed by a phenomenological question can be challenging, healing, surprising, humorous, truthful, integrating, and transformational. The commitment of a Sacred Mandala inquiry takes a minimum of 1 year to complete, but the inquirer should understand that the length of time can be much longer if not practiced daily. The long period of painting can be an intense and at times disruptive process in which the outcome is unknown but to which one surrenders nonetheless, relinquishing certainty. As the dictum with painting goes, the inquirer must "trust the process" (McNiff, 1998, p. 13). Although trusting the process is crucial, ensuring that support is in place is also an important part of the discipline of Sacred Mandala Inquiry.

For the purposes of my research, I am referring to this practice as inquiry, though Sacred Mandala practices could well be taken up as an integrating therapeutic modality in a clinical counselling setting. In other words, there are different contexts and purposes for painting mandalas. In an inquiry context, the Sacred Mandala provides a vehicle, taken up for learning, within an academic and adult education community. However, inquirers must have the support of a guide—beyond an academic supervisor—a mentor, or depth-oriented therapist in their community. This part of the preparation cannot be overstated at the outset; relational balancing is important.

During the practice and process of Sacred Mandala inquiry, one's artificial separation between conscious and unconscious, between subject and object, and between the inner and outer world may begin to break down. Perception of time as a solely linear proposition may be disrupted. In 1927, geneticist John Haldane (2002) famously wrote, "My own suspicion is that the universe is not only stranger than we suppose, but stranger than we can suppose" (p. 286). Because people may feel strongly attracted to the form for the compensatory reason of

containing chaos, as was the case with Jung (1961/1963) during a turbulent period, the requirement for mentoring is doubly important. As attraction to the Sacred Mandala—The Call—may bespeak a need for further integration of events arising from personal experience carrying weighty emotional content, this map, or sacred path, may be experienced as redemptive.

Although an academic bias can be weighted away from emotion, emotion and intellect are mutually informing. As Bohm and Peat (1987) observe, "without some emotional arousal, we would think very little at all" (p. 218). These arousals can lead toward perspective shifts and transformation. W. E. Doll (2012) writes that "all transformatory change is basically a change of personal structures, [or] ways of looking at the world and dealing with it" (p. 142). In learning situations, it is this disruption or disequilibrium that is a basis of growth and reorganization, where novelty may occur.

The inquirer may be concerned about what will emerge or its appropriateness within an academic inquiry, given the intensity of the experience and of possible disruptions when what is revealed is not necessarily under egoic control; however, the Sacred Mandala inquirer will always be in control of what is ultimately revealed in the mobilizing of knowledge. The image here more like learning to navigate the seas rather than controlling the ocean. It is important to understand that Sacred Mandala practice offers capacious and long-term containment for emergent aspects, which continue to unfold.

Jungian analyst Daryl Sharp (1991), in summarizing Jung's view, points out that "knowledge of the ego personality is often confused with self-understanding" (p. 49). Yet the human mind is both complex and contradictory. Hillman (1975) described the personal psyche as a self-organizing multiplicity of autonomous selves, in opposition to the view of a singular ego (p. 31). The Sacred Mandala inquirer will experience and interact with multiple aspects of self:

known, hidden, and unknown. It should be understood that from a depth perspective, as Cambray (2002) explains, "the Self [is] the center and circumference of the entire personality, conscious and unconscious. . . . The ego is merely the center of consciousness" (p. 33), providing a feeling of personal continuity. As consciousness and unconsciousness are self-balancing, aspects of self and interconnections may come more fully into view through messages from the unconscious by way of dreams, imaginings, images, experiences, any of which the ego may defend against. It is through the allowance of rejected aspects of self that differentiation and integration occur, bringing a felt sense of authenticity, uniqueness, and wholeness (Jung, 1955-1956/1970; R. A. Johnson, 1991 M. Stein, 2006; von Franz, 1964).

Although a highly simplified representation of the self, the model of the "Johari Window" (Luft, 1969), created by psychologists Joseph Luft and Harington Ingham for self-help groups (see diagram at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johari Window.PNG), may assist in conceptualizing the Sacred Mandala process as a method/ology for self-awareness and how the ego (the conscious personality) may be shifted out of centrality in order to tend to the other within ourselves and world. The Johari window is comprised of four panes offering a succinct visual conception of the self. I have come to understand the model in the following way (see Figure 3).

OPEN SELF Known to self and others	BLIND SELF Unnoticed by self but known to others
HIDDEN SELF Known to self but not to others	UNKNOWN SELF Unknown to both Self and others

Figure 3. Author's adaptation of the Johari Window schema.

In Figure 3, Window 1 is the Open Self, known both to self and others, which will find representation in the Sacred Mandala but should not be ego-dystonic (threatening) in any way. It is in the spaces outside the Open Self where the greatest potential for discovery and transformation are held. The concept behind Sacred Mandala Inquiry is the integration of the hidden or unrealized aspects of self into conscious awareness, ultimately enlarging what the Johari model describes as the Open Self, known to self and others. The Hidden Self, which is known but concealed from others, may cause some discomfort in the Sacred Mandala processes, especially in an academic inquiry where there may be a perceived reason for resistance to exploring and documenting an experience. Again, this work can be done with a mentor and reported on briefly, or not at all.

Applying concepts derived from the Johari Window (see Figure 3) to Sacred Mandala Inquiry provides rich areas of exploration, as much that is hidden can be due to inner contradictions or family and cultural norms that may not serve well and are in need of inclusion, if not transformation (Breiddal, 2013; Johnston, 1997). Both the Blind Self (unnoticed by self but known to others) and the Unknown Self (unknown to both self and others) may also find thematic representation in a Sacred Mandala Inquiry as projective techniques are employed, initially bypassing the enculturated rational mind. As well, inquirers are attuned to feedback coming from their network of relations in bridling a phenomenologically oriented question.

The Hidden Self (see Figure 3) might be related to those traits and fear-based beliefs hidden within the personal shadow (paradoxical, rejected aspects, positive and negative). Jung (1951/1970) asserted that the shadow poses the moral challenge of recognizing dark aspects as actual and that the act of acknowledging the shadow is “the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge” (p. 14), yet there is also the gold to be reclaimed. The Blind Self may reflect

aspects of ego complexes, which are visible to others but are as yet undifferentiated and, as such, unrealized, “as the subject gets rid of painful, incompatible contents by projecting them [onto others]” (Jung, 1921/1971, p. 457). The work involves seeking nonjudgmental feedback, potentially leading to a reduction of self-ignorance. The Unknown Self might be equated with the collective unconscious, composed of world and archetypal layers, culturally repressed and forgotten. In an embodied Sacred Mandala practice, the first frame of the Open Self becomes enlarged through mindful acceptance of a larger, more inclusive self, wherein the tension of the so-called opposites—reframed as “co-relative or co-existent” (Hillman, 2013, 9:38)—may be held compassionately in nonduality, providing a broader horizon.

Although Sacred Mandala inquiry is nonlinear, for clarity’s sake, on the following pages, I have endeavored to lay out the principles, practice, and process as linearly as possible, utilizing the structure of the Sacred Mandala, while weaving in method/ological considerations and first-person experience. Please note that nonlinear events and reflections on the rings are woven throughout, but a simplified, linear version for inquirers and mentors is appended (see Appendix C) for clarification as needed and for consultation when undertaking Sacred Mandala inquiry.

Principles of Ritual Mandala Painting

Madeleine Shields embraced clear rules for accepting students wishing to take up mandala painting (see Appendix C for mandala student criteria). When engaging in Sacred Mandala Inquiry, it is important for the student to honour the following principles, which I have come to understand as constituting the essence of the inquiry. Inquirers may look through differing academic and personal lenses within their own inquiry; however, the following principles are essential to this particular practice. Removal of any principles takes from the essence and essential practice, which then constitutes something other than Sacred Mandala

Inquiry as outlined in this dissertation. The following rules and principles were taught to me by Madeleine Shields. Jack Wise's influence in these postulates is confirmed through her personal journals:

1. Approaching the work with an attitude of respect and sacredness of the process.
2. Respect for materials and selection of high-quality paper, paint, and brushes.
3. Intention to be sensitive, to work with care, and to attend to the aesthetic.
4. Contemplating the significance of each region before painting, engaging with nature and life experience in order to embody the structure. For example, as the inspiration for the initial stage, The Ring of Fire, the student builds a fire and meditates on flame shapes.
5. Cultivation of a beginner's mind; continuously remembering we do not already know.
6. Working one step at a time, allowing the work to unfold organically, without preplanning; completing each step before going on to the next.
7. Maintaining a progressive clockwise movement, moving ever inward, from outer rim to center.
8. Developing complete attention to where the brush meets the paper—indicated by a state of present awareness and also timeless absorption.
9. Using instinct and intuition in making choices in a process of discovery, rather than imposed control or intellectual concepts.
10. Willingness to take risks, make mistakes, and make repairs.
11. Abandoning goals, time pressures, future orientation, and value judgments.
12. Expectation of commitment shown through sustained practice. (Shields, n.d.)

In truth, there is no beginning to an inquiry and no end. Although beginning to paint could be seen as the initiation of the hands-on process, for the purposes of the inquiry, the "beginning" is when students find themselves strongly drawn to the mandala and form the *intention* to engage in the painting and writing practices of Sacred Mandala Inquiry. This is the "call" to which the inquirer intends to heed. The inquirer feels pulled by a numinous (holy) resonant internal response to the symbol—a feeling of being magnetized.

In phenomenology, as in all things, the only way to know a thing is to do it. Post-phenomenologist Donald Ihde (1986) writes, "Without doing phenomenology, it may be

practically impossible to understand phenomenology" (p. 14). Likewise, without painting a Sacred Mandala, it is not possible to fully apprehend the experience and meaning of doing so, as "the map is not the territory," and our perception of reality belongs to us individually (Bateson, 1972; Korzybski, 1990). Drawing from Korzybski (1931), Bateson described reality as not an individual phenomenon but in a radical way, the collective 'map' or 'mind' of the system. For example, a culture in which the individual is complicit. In this manner, no map represents the territory as reality or absolute truth (Bateson, 1972), but rather, 'differences which make a difference' to the system as a whole.

The practice and process of Sacred Mandala inquiry invite the students to map their own lived territory, perhaps "a curricular cartography that will be more of the 'uncharted' type; invoking images/sounds/feelings/smells/memories rather than presenting the dream of exacting territory" (Hurren, 2003, p. 112). In the sections to follow, I provide descriptions of the steps in this practice which include illustrative examples of my own and others' differently lived experience of the process. I offer these examples and the integration of relevant literature for deeper understanding of the Sacred Mandala as a method/ology of inquiry.

The poem "The Breeze at Dawn," by Rumi (n.d), removed for copyright reasons; see bibliography for source information

At the outset, inquirers are instructed to engage in generative activities relating to the quest, arising from where they are "positioned in life," their point of view, and their interest (Oberg, as cited Chambers & Hasbe-Ludt, 2008, p. 143). The structure of the Sacred Mandala

involves development of one's particular path of being and of perceiving possible other realities. In the words of Maturana and Varela (1984/1987), "all doing is knowing and all knowing is doing. . . . This circularity brings about a world" (pp. 26-27). Psychological readiness occurs with targeted generative activities and the collection of material (see Appendix C for a list of supplies). As one's psyche becomes increasingly activated through directed intention, psychological processes will also naturally be incubating with these activities.

Generative Activities

In familiarizing myself with gouache (opaque water colour) while developing a preferred palette, I began to feel comfortable with a brush through the creation of a colour chart. There are various ways to organize a colour chart (see sample, Appendix C, Figure 42), and many samples can be found online for a palette example, with the specific colours to mix into personally preferred shades).

As per Madeleine's direction, the second activity I undertook was the creation of a separate chart, linking colour with emotion and personal experience (see example, Appendix C, Figure 41). The colour chart and emotional colour became resources when selecting colours over the long course of the inquiry.

Generative activities and writing sessions prior to working directly with the Sacred Mandala may be helpful for germination, as writing itself is a form of research (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). In writing coach Natalie Goldberg's (1990) book, *Wild Mind*: *Living the Writer's Life*, she describes the difference between journal writing as being analytical and deliberate and free writing as getting "below the discursive thought to the place where—not your or my mind but mind itself—is original and fresh" (p. 39). In order to know one's own "wild mind,"

Goldberg recommends cardinal rules for free writing (pp. 2-4), 20 minutes per day, which I have adapted here:

1. "*Keep your hand moving*." Set a time and write, without stopping, about whatever arises in mind, disregarding any impulse to censor content, in order to move through resistance.
2. "*Lose control*." Allow your writing to become wild, authentic, substantial.
3. "*Be specific*." Move away from the general and into the particular, naming type, colour, texture.
4. "*Don't think*." Stay with your immediate fresh thought, rather than your considered thinking about your thought. Stay with your words, in the moment.
5. "*Don't worry about spelling, punctuation or grammar*."
6. "*You are free to write the worst junk in the world*."
7. "*Go for the jugular*." "Write hard and clear about what hurts. Don't avoid it. It has all the energy" (Hemingway, as cited in Goldberg, 1990, p. 4).

Much that has been written about the processes of opening up subterraneous streams for renewal may be applied to Sacred Mandala Inquiry. From an analytical perspective, for example, psychotherapist Ira Progoff (1992), who introduced journal workshops in the 1970s, provided an excellent method for journal writing, which could be paired with accessing meanings embedded in emergent mandala images. Progoff's method supports growth with its detailed instructions for creating dialogue between the conscious and unconscious through exploration of the relationships between people, one's body, events, situations and circumstances, society, dreams, inner wisdom, and the *now*.

Inquirers may also be inspired or compelled to engage in generative activities particular to their inquiry question. As an example of a vital generative activity, in the year leading up to beginning my Sacred Mandala Inquiry, I felt compelled to travel back to Alberta to (re)place myself in the physical environment where the origins of my research on child-loss through adoption occurred, to see what, if anything, might emerge in place-based memory (Till, 2008). This return to Calgary was the part of an ongoing soul-retrieval, in a sense—a generative, concrete, physical ritual of my intention to reclaim memory along with rejected and abjected aspects of self (Kristeva, 1980/1982). This abjected aspect was, as feminist critic and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva (1980/1982) writes, "radically excluded" and drew me "toward the place where meaning collapses" (p. 2). Regarding my situation, it is difficult to comprehend the dreadfulness of what happened by today's norms. "In Canada alone, approximately 300,000 unmarried mothers were impacted by the mandate . . . routinely and systematically separated from their babies at birth for adoption" (Andrews, 2017, pp. 1-2). To bring immediacy to my narrative, I offer it in the present tense below, in keeping with a depth practice of retelling and my shared understanding that memories "are not 'done' but rather each of them and together, are intersecting worlds, yours, mine, and others. Each one, a 'portal' that you can revisit and seek new meaning" (J. Thom, personal communication, December 19, 2018). Although this work supports honouring mindful healing and renewing practices, the examples of lived experience may be triggering for mothers of loss.

I revisit the home and School for Unwed Mothers, where I had been sent in 1971, and Holy Cross Hospital where, as a teenager, I gave birth to my son, who was removed from my care, according to the norms of that time. Returning now to the city of Calgary and to the banished scenes of my youth, I am aware that I am exposing myself to the wounding time. With

my training as a clinician, I know exposure is a way to reduce traumatic memory. I am at ground zero at Holy Cross hospital where, as an unmarried teenager, I gave birth to my son. Standing between the old stone pillars, my body remembers the weighted emptiness of my arms as I left the hospital, and in my imagination, I see a procession of thousands of empty-armed women passing through these same pillars. This is also the exact place where my son's other mother (now known and beloved to me) held out her arms to receive him from the congratulatory social worker—strangers, all.

From the hospital, I drive the streets in search of the school I attended, 350 miles from my family home—far from everyone and everything known and loved. It takes time to find the academy, but it still stands, and I recognize it instantly. The history plaque reads "School for Unwed Mothers." I sit on the cold cement steps, remembering the other exiled young mothers who passed this way, wondering what has become of them all. Enough women to fill a city. I sense I am travelling in space and time and also, as philosopher Michel Serres (1990/1995) seems to suggest, bringing the obsolete into currency to see it contrasted with the prevailing era.

As it is Sunday, and the school is closed. I crouch down and pull back the flapping metal grate to look into basement windows. I want to see the room where we young unmarried mothers received careful group instruction regarding "relinquishing" our children. We are being taught to call our growing babes "the" baby. "The" baby needs two parents, the woman says. "You wouldn't want the baby to be called a *bastard*, would you? You are doing a wonderful thing for an infertile married couple who have the resources to provide the baby with a better life than you. *Good* people. Someday, you will have *a baby of your own*." We all understand that 'unwed mothers' who keep their children are psychologically disturbed and that keeping your baby is proof of the disturbance—proof that you do not really love your child. I hear Gregory Bateson's

(1972) voice speaking the double-bind: “If you love this baby, you will not keep it.” Returning to the school for unwed mothers I now see the lone young woman with her precious son, cuddling him close and smiling into his eyes. No one is fussing over her or her baby. We all look away, feeling sorry for him having a crazy mother who does not love him enough to give him away.

As I peer into the room, the ghost of a young Jane sits quietly at long table, listening intently, alone and full of unspoken fear. But time is a trickster, and as I shift my position, I find that the window simultaneously reflects my image back to me so that I am now looking through an overlay of my face into the room beyond. The now-Jane, looking so intently into the past, is a woman in her 50s—long silver hair framing an open face with penetrating dark eyes. And in those eyes, I see an openness and curiosity and love. Who is this “I”? Am I the I that crouches in front of the window, or the I of the young Jane, or the I now thinking these thoughts? What time stream am I stepping into just now? I sit back on my heels and consider how I have travelled across mountains and years to look into this window in time, into my past–not past. This is the place of wounding, and I am here to comfort and reclaim the parts left behind. Is this even possible?

While living at the Home for Unwed Mothers, I become friends with “Ruby,” a quiet Cree girl. One crisp winter day, she invites me to join her in saying hello to her uncles, who are at work in a metal foundry in the heart of Calgary. Upon our arrival, her uncles look up and wave, one taking a momentary break from the sweltering work. He joins us, wiping his sweaty brow with a red bandana. Ruby introduces me, and he smiles warmly, nodding at my ripening belly. Reading his expression, Ruby says, “Jane is not keeping her baby.” The man drops his smile, and he stares hard at the ground, shaking his head. He looks up, directly into my eyes, and in a quiet yet fierce tone hisses, “It’s not right, it’s not right.” I feel shock, as his repeated words

are in direct opposition to the concepts I am being taught. I have not heard these words before. No one I trusted, much less with such great certainty, has uttered these words to me. I am suddenly terribly confused and plunged even further into shame, not knowing what to say or do. It is my turn to drop my head. Ruby's uncle turns and walks away, not looking back. In time, I understand the truth of his words and the overlap in shared experience of family loss.

The truth of his words arrives slowly, informed through my body—a great shock. Ruby's uncle and I learn how the phallogocentric language (Derrida, 1996/1998) of governmental agencies and religious, colonial, ethnocentric policies have attempted to rid the world of the "Indian problem" and "the unwed mother." Psyche, in uncovering my memory of Ruby's uncle, seems to want me to pay attention to this experience *right now*. The images connect and somehow also relate to the image of the grave that recurs. "Don't bury this!" As I now circle back to reflect, I consider the memory of the uncle as an image bringing wholeness. The arrival of this memory now is perhaps a reminder and encouragement for inclusion in research on marginalized voices, internal and external, carrying the burden of cultural truth forward.

In Calgary, I succumb to the urge to visit the Royal Tyrrell museum outside of Drumheller. The long drive quiets me. The prairie whispers to me of the Jane that was, and somehow, I am her again. Wide blue sky, magpies, tumbleweeds, and the smell of rich earth and wheat stubble evoke longing in me for that early sweet time, and I am opened up. Once inside the museum, I stand in awe of the resurrected dinosaurs—so enormous I could be swallowed whole. Gazing upon the massive assemblages of bone, I realize the tenacious years of delicate and painstaking work invested in the unearthing and intricate re-membering of these articulate ancient skeletons. For what purpose? To know our past? A labour of love to honour the past? To know that species come and go and that change is the only constant (Darwin, 1861)? Are we

possibly amongst the next to become extinct—our past and future to coexist again in nothingness? Suddenly, I am the archeologist. I am also in the landscape where the asteroid hit. Paradoxically, I am the bones *and* the scientist who studies them. What do these thoughts mean? I think of Serres (1990/1995) writing, "The whole world acts together as guided by an invisible hand" (p. 16). Hermes, is that you?

Inside the dinosaur, the skeleton is a cage, its ribs the social constructs: ossified rules and ideas. Millions of women, like me, the world over, are imprisoned inside these ideas, bred into this bone.

I, too, appear to be reassembling and rearticulating the dinosaur, perhaps so that generations who did not know about or witness this beast can now view it and wonder too. As I sit, I ponder on how the time I have lived, am living now, and will live may peacefully co-exist and also contribute to the conversation on healing and wholeness within the context of adoption separation and reunion.

I sense that I have been in an archeological excavation of the self—what Jung (1976b) called the "two million-year-old man" (p. 93) alive in each of us—hosting unconscious images and, in some sense, climbing the phylogenetic ladder of being into the present. I also consider that I have been "re-articulating the dinosaur" in exploring a dark time in culture where a mechanistic view, religious ideology, and patriarchal language split families and cultures apart—perhaps so that others might also see the beast for themselves and wonder. The persisting images also seem to point to a future where something new might be constructed with these old bones.

In paying attention to the luminous phenomena arising in memory, deeper layers reveal themselves and link to the work upon which I am embarking. I am struck by the convergence of images that arise and remain, seeking inclusion—the grave of my Métis friend and the Cree man

who stepped forward for one moment to speak an unheard, foreign truth—and also the uncovering of ancient remains. The memories and images, and the language used to communicate them, along with their conceptual ordering of the world into which I am thrown find me, and I them. There is an intuitive "sympathetic resonance" (Anderson, 2001, p. 37) between these experiences, which transpersonal psychologist Rosemary Anderson (2001) introduced by analogy:

> If one plucks a string on a cello on one side of a room, a string of a cello on the opposite side will begin to vibrate, too. Striking a tuning fork will vibrate another tuning fork some distance away, (p. 37)

Furthermore, somehow, these vibrations seem to hang in the air as sustained notes yet to be consciously tuned into, somehow still available through attuned listening and harmonizing with one's current range of hearing. I experience the truth of Moustakas's (1990) perception that "an unshakable connection exists between what is out there, and its appearance and reality, and what is within me in reflective thought, feeling, and awareness" (p. 12).

My return journey to Calgary and seeing once again the Home for Unwed Mothers where I lived, the School for Unwed Mothers I attended as well as visiting the Holy Cross Hospital where my son was born to me, connect me powerfully to what will later become my research question on the experience of painting Sacred Mandala while exploring the topic of adoption. The experiences and writings generated form the background to my inquiry, leading up to painting the Sacred Mandala.

Following the initial generative activities, which mark the beginning of the inquiry, the student is then advised to collect materials with which to build a fire in a fireplace or outside, if permitted. A gas fireplace is also acceptable, should a wood fireplace not be available. If building a fire is not feasible, the student may meditate on the flame of a candle. This is sacred

ceremony during which the meditator pays close attention to the flame(s) and, in the mandala journal, makes sketches of any pleasing shape(s) that catch the eye (see example, Figure 4), which will later be referenced while painting the Ring of Fire.

Figure 4. Mandala journal sketch by the author.

As my fire was wood fueled, when the flames burned down, various colours and images came in and out of form within the embers. I made notes about what I observed, also jotting down my associations with the figures. Three questions guided the written part of the meditation, while tending to the fire: "In what way is my life like this fire? Where is the fire in my life right now—and in myself? Where do I see transformation occurring in my life, or needing to occur?" (M. Shields, personal communication, September 15, 1994).

Focusing Question

During and after the writing sessions described above, the student may notice themes, metaphors, symbols, areas of interest, and emerging questions. From these writings, a phenomenologically oriented guiding question for Sacred Mandala inquiry may be formulated or clarified. The inquiry question should be framed positively and open ended: for example: "What is the experience of love?" or "What is the meaning of wisdom?" While she was painting Sacred Mandala, Susan Breiddal's (2013) phenomenological dissertation inquiry as a palliative counsellor was "*What is the lived experience of encountering mortality in a palliative care*

context?" (p. 59). The question should arise out of a genuine area of interest that has claimed the inquirer's attention; the topic should feel potent and right, given that much time and energy will be invested, along with understanding that deep change can occur. As Yakushko and Nelson (2013) observed, "The research will create the researcher" (p. 291).

My initial question, "What is the experience of painting Sacred Mandala while focusing on child-loss by adoption?" continued to unfold while writing about the process, after my painting had been completed. In reading Moustakas's (1990) *Heuristic Research*, I found resonance with the related theory, steps, and descriptions of the process he laid out. He explains that "from the beginning and throughout the investigation, heuristic research involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery; the research question on the methodology flows out of inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration" (p. 11). I would add that there is no real ending to the investigation, though an artificial boundary is necessarily circumscribed.

Moustakas (1990) elucidates the process of formation of an inquiry question with this example: "If investigating delight, then delight hovers nearby, and follows me around, it takes me fully into its confidence and I take it into mine. Delight becomes a lingering presence; for a while there is only delight" (p. 11). In offering additional perspective, I would say that experience operates as a whole. For instance, when reflecting on love, our thoughts will also naturally turn to the times when we felt a longing for love or for a lost loved one, or perhaps a time when we ourselves could not love well. In my inquiry, my question was "What is the experience of painting Sacred Mandala while focusing on child-loss by adoption?" In this, I included the unconscious experience that was still dynamic in dream life, in health issues, and in waking life, represented in fears of child-loss. I did not wish to focus on suffering in my inquiry, though I know suffering is unavoidable.

Throughout the first stages of my inquiry, the intensity of experience, dreams, thoughts, and emotions were disruptive enough that I shifted my question to "What is the experience of painting Sacred Mandala while focusing on *healing* from child-loss by adoption?" Even with shifting the question, there is no way to control fully what might happen, given the complexity and nonlinear, self-emergent quality of an inquiry. Yet I now more fully understand the importance of choosing a question wisely, as much will be constellated. Everything related to the topic, including the so-called opposites, will present itself to consciousness, often through symbols revealed for consideration and the possibility of integration. This emergence and integration of psychic material is discussed below along with an unfolding, synchronistic example.

During my Sacred Mandala Inquiry, I experienced a transformation through my topic. I had purposefully entered into the adoption community of marginalized grievers, in which conflict, sadness, anger, rage, and activism are prevalent. Throughout painting the Ring of Fire, in the burning away of ignorance, I was continuously upset, being in communication with many who were still searching, and also those who had found family once lost through shaming social mores of the era. For some there was great joy, yet for others, the wounding was such that healthy reunions were not possible, for many reasons. In confronting the darkness consciously and suffering it deeply, I feel great empathy with anyone experiencing unending "disenfranchised grief" (Doka, 2002, p. 160), living in what I have termed "zombie grief."

Adoption experiences of mothers have commonalities yet are unique to each person, given the complex interactions of any number of factors, an important one being the character of the adoptive parents. Very fortunately, I have been able to develop strong bonds with my son's adoptive family. Through exploration of connection within the adoption community, while

compassionately watching myself do so, I came to a mythic understanding that everything that happened in my Sacred Mandala Inquiry was pointing to death and rebirth, which I understood as symbolic of an unfolding unconscious process. I discuss the emergent symbolism further on in this text. Through an evolving process, I came to a new sense of purpose in my research, as my interest pulled me in a different direction: writing about the Sacred Mandala itself as an inquiry model. My original question, "What is the lived experience of painting Sacred Mandala while focusing on child-loss by adoption?", ultimately shifted to the title of this dissertation, *Sacred Mandala Inquiry: The Lived Experience of Painting a Mandala as Research*.

The Sacred Mandala Structure

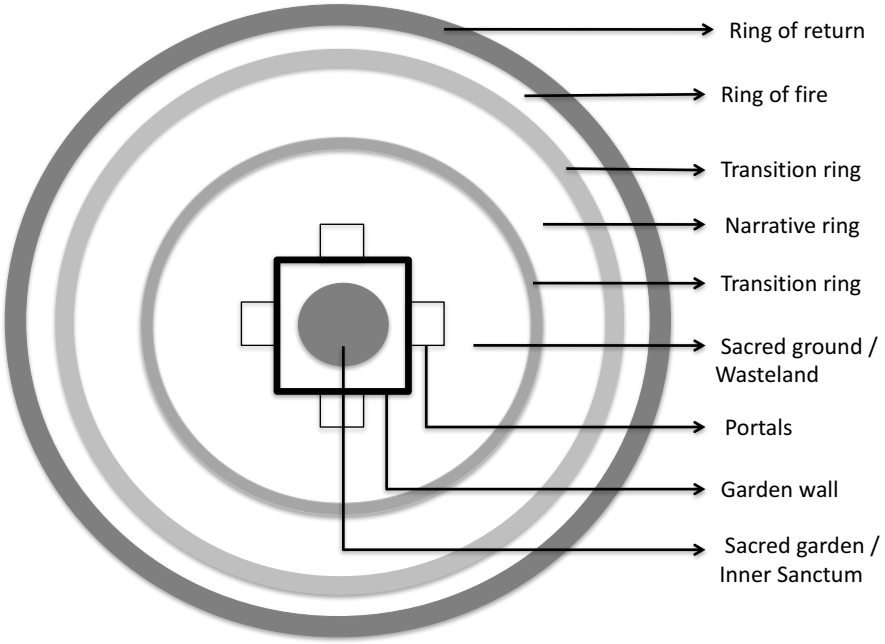

Figure 5. Adapted Structure of the Sacred Mandala, Jane Johnston, original by Jack Wise and taught to Madeleine Shields in 1983. University of Victoria Special Collections & University Archives Madeleine Shields fonds, SC587, Accession #2018-078

Figure 6. *Sacred Synergy*, by Madeleine Shields, 1996. University of Victoria Special Collections & University Archives Madeleine Shields fonds, SC587, Accession #2018-078

In the following sections, I present the structure of the Sacred Mandala (see diagram, Figure 5; example, Figure 6) as it is prepared and painted according to the method, rules, and postulates: Preparing the Ground, Ring of Fire, Narrative Ring, Transition Ring, Wasteland, Portals, Garden Wall, Sacred Garden, Center, and the Return. Supporting method/ologies and personal experience are woven throughout to anchor the practice of a Sacred Mandala inquiry associated with each ring. It should be understood that the framework helps structure the journey, provides the steps, contains the process, and supports comprehension of the foundation of the work; there is an intermingling of form, process, and content.

Ritual mandalas may vary in size, but the Sacred Mandala is approximately 22 inches across; the basic structural elements include concentric circles, a square, and four portals, depicting the intersection of spirit and matter (Walcott, 2006; see Figures 5 & 6). (See Appendix C, "The Sacred Mandala Structure," for scribing instructions and materials list.) At a glance, the structure and principles may seem, to the uninitiated, unduly prescribed, yet, as noted by Adaline O'Gorman, mandala mentor and past student of Madeleine Shields, within the "harness" of the

mandala (as cited in Johnston,1997, p. 76), there is continuous freedom involving choices in colour, figures, patterns, and sacred narratives.

Attention to Initial Dream

The Sacred Mandala inquirer makes special note of any powerful affect in dreams occurring just prior to beginning to paint, which may also point to the work being undertaken, depicting engagement with the unconscious. For instance, the night before entering the Ring of Fire, I received a difficult dream in which I was pregnant, in labour and being pursued. I was led into a wood where I believed I would be safe, but was captured and pinned down. My child was to be removed by knife, without anesthetic. A matricide.

I awoke in a sweat with my heart pounding. The feeling tone of the dream was one of terror resulting from mind-numbing collusion by a group seeking to take my child, with no way to prevent this. Although consciously, I felt I had integrated the experience of loss and reunion, I continued to suffer residual nightmares and health issues. This dream expressed the unending unconscious experience of child-loss by adoption, and revealed to me, in no uncertain terms, the difficulty of the undertaking. A teaching in depth-psychology is that the powers of the unconscious treat us the way we treat them, and thus I turned my attention to unfolding the dream, in a loving way.

I understood that I was entering the fire in psychic anticipation of painting the Ring of Fire. The following chapter takes the reader through the process of Sacred Mandala Inquiry, illustrated with examples of my experience as an initiate.

Sacred Mandala Inquiry: Practice and Process

Entering the Ring of Fire

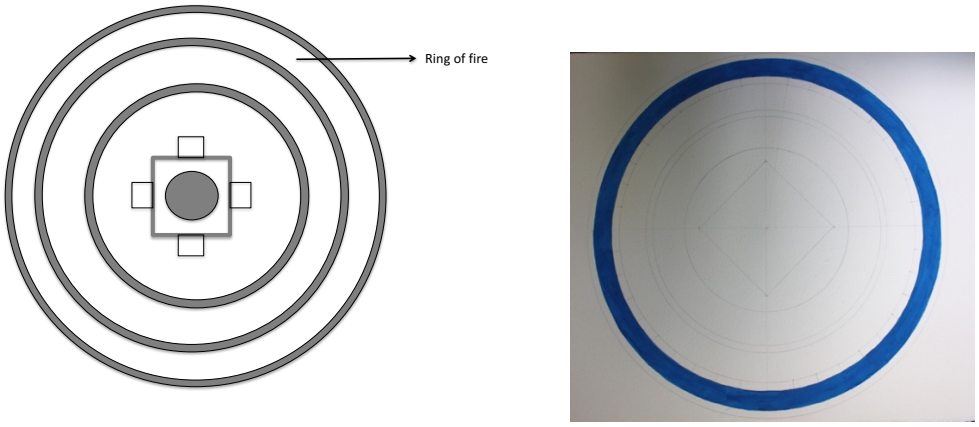

Figure 7. Structure: The Ring of Fire, situated as the second ring, painted as a blue base; example from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

As shown in Figure 7, the first area to be painted is the Ring of Fire. It should be noted that the outermost ring (the Ring of Return) is painted last as the completion of the Sacred Mandala. The outer line that forms the circle creates a sacred boundary for the work to come. Madeleine Shields taught that the Ring of Fire not only provides a protective zone around the work to be done but also symbolizes transformation through the burning away of ignorance.

When the question feels correct, entering the fire may be experienced as a relief (Rumi, trans. 1995). From a depth-psychology perspective, turning toward that which calls as well as that which is defended against carries the telos or the meaning, the results of which may free up energy. The defense itself may be against experiences, beliefs, other ways of knowing, cultural and familial assumptions, or received knowledge. The following excerpt (see Appendix D for full poem) from Persian Sufi poet Rumi's (trans. 1995) poem, "The Question," speaks to me of the defense against soulful ways of knowing, culturally instilled though an excess of reason, and of the need to burn away ignorance of profound interconnectedness:

But for the sake of conversation, I'll tell you a story.

An excerpt from the poem “The Question,” by Rumi (1995), removed for copyright reasons; see bibliography for source information.

On the day of beginning the Sacred Mandala, I proceeded with a final sacred ceremony of fire building and meditation. With the Sacred Mandala structure drawn out, and the question in mind, I was ready to begin painting the Ring of Fire. (See Appendix C for detailed instructions on steps.)

As structure and rules are introduced in this ring, one’s inner position in relation to authority will become apparent. In an academic inquiry, experiences of resistance or rebellion toward the rules may arise, for example, through struggling to understand philosophical concepts and in acquiring academic language, learning highly particular APA formatting, and using technological programs encompassing structure of all kinds. Internalized and habitual attitudes coming through culture and family will be made more conscious as the painter wrestles with the rules and practices. Learning to handle a brush, following the principles as laid out, remaining in a mindful state, keeping a journal, and discussing what comes up with a mentor all allow inquirers to see their relationship to structure, discipline, and authority.

This circle, the Ring of Fire, “also delineates what is within and outside the scope of the inquiry” (S. Breiddal, personal communication, February 1, 2016). Traditionally, outside the circle

is chaos, and inside, an emerging order. The periphery is intimately connected with the centre, and "rather than being dualistic, . . . 'center and periphery' implies the whole of reality" (Van Gordon, Shonin, & Garcia-Campayo, 2017, p. 1). In addition, "this burning 'fire ring' band represents the wisdom of complete emptiness" (Walcott, 2006, p. 77).

As I began to paint the Ring of Fire, intuitively, I selected the background colour and made note of this colour in my journal. Employing a ½-inch-wide brush, I carefully painted the base coat of the Ring of Fire, clockwise around the circle, staying within the band. This carefulness is part of the meditative work in bringing one's full attention to the point where the brush and paper meet. Once the base coat was dry, I commenced the process of painting the simple shape around the circle, in a thin white gouache (see Figure 8).

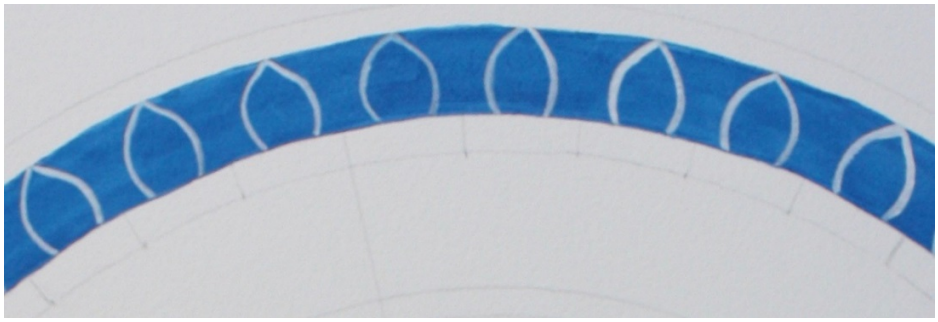

Figure 8. Initial flame shapes in white gouache, detail from Ring of Fire, 2012

I measured out equal distances between the flame shapes, and touched the brush down, creating a small mark both at the bottom and the top of the ring ensuring the spaces were even. It is important to note that the basic flame shape is not meant to be final but should and will evolve with each recursion around the mandala, in a fractal-like, organic way. Each step around the entire ring involves making one design choice at a time; thus, the flame shape organically evolves (see iterative progression of flame shape in Figure 9).

Figure 9. Flame shape, iterative progression, example from mandala by Madeleine Shields, 1992. University of Victoria Special Collections & University Archives Madeleine Shields fonds, SC587, Accession #2018-078

I proceeded slowly and carefully, painting as exact an image as possible around the circle, while being aware of the negative space—the background—and distances between flames (see Figure 10). In her archived mandala journal, Madeleine noted that repetition is important and is akin to "rhythmic chanting" (University of Victoria Special Collections & University Archives Madeleine Shields fonds, SC587, Accession #2018-078). This 'chanting' invokes a mindful state of awareness.

Figure 10. The Ring of Fire, example from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2011.

Biologist Jon Kabat-Zinn (2005), renowned for his work in the field of mindfulness, credits Buddhist scholar and monk Nyanaponika Thera with the definition that the cultivation of

mindfulness "can be thought of as moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a specific way, that is, in the present moment, and as non-reactively, as non-judgmentally, and as openheartedly as possible" (p. 108). Mindful embodied painting is the practice begun in the Ring of Fire. The process is what happens to either help or impede the practice, which is then made conscious as information about how the inquirer is in the world, particularly in relation to structure, authority, and discipline (M. Shields, personal communication, October 30, 1997). As such, while painting, I quietly observed my thoughts and feelings and documented my observations in my journal as the painting progressed. Various times I felt acceptance, neutrality, or resistance regarding the rules. I experienced positive and negative judgments about the quality of my work, which, in part, may have reflected the internalized teachings of my mentor, Madeleine Shields. I cultivated a mindful awareness.

Kabat-Zinn (2013) distills the constituents of mindfulness into the shedding of habitual reactions simply in order to be present with what is arising in mind; reflecting on the importance of not striving towards goals at the cost of being in the present; embracing a beginner's mind, which refers to the practice of allowing one's self to not already know; developing a balance in attitude between trust in one's own thoughts, feelings, and experiences and trust of external knowledge and transmitted authority; and cultivating acceptance and letting go, allowing phenomena to rise and fall without the clinging of mind. Although this may seem simple enough, the practice is not always easy. The description of mindfulness further embraces three key aspects: intention (purposefulness), attention (directed awareness), and attitude (open and nonjudgmental) (Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, & Freedman, 2006). These tenets are consistent with the phenomenological attitude of a return to the things themselves (Husserl, 1913/1970) "and to the essences, . . . the consciousness and perception of the human world" (Koch, 1995, p. 828).

Mindfulness is not a technique to reduce and relieve stress, but rather an established set of practices that reveal the illusion of a permanent and individual self, considered the core source of suffering (Brown, Ryan, & Cresswell, 2007; Khong, 2009; Varela et al., 1991). Notably, movement away from habitual functioning and cognitive bias may be a practice outcome (Burgess, Beach, & Saha, 2017), coupled with an experience of increased equanimity (Desbordes et al., 2014, p. 356), nonreactivity, compassion, patience, and trust (Brown et al., 2004).

As I was not an especially skilled painter, I experienced a range of unexpected emotions in learning to handle a brush and paint. The initial learning stage—attempting to control and coordinate my brush, hand, and eye while following the principles and reflecting on the work—was messy, both on paper and emotionally. The guiding principle of going back to make repairs serves this ring well. The work requires faith in an unfolding process whereby the choices lay a good foundation for future choices.

As the flames developed, my sense of investment and commitment grew, and concerns of making the wrong choices and ruining the project naturally arose and needed to be worked through, as with any inquiry. Overall, increasing control of my hand-eye coordination developed in conjunction with an increased capacity for being in the moment in mindful observation. In a sense, the paint taught me to paint and to see where there was inattention, as where my mind wandered, there was a visual record of wavy lines, misplacement, variation in thickness of lines, colours that were slightly dissonant or inconsistent in tone, and other anomalies.

The Ring of Fire also grounded me in the Sacred Mandala principle of taking risks and being willing to go back and make repairs, akin to the process of research, wherein numerous iterations are worked and reworked in a refining process. As in life, each choice made changed the whole. Increasing levels of complexity emerged in the Sacred Mandala with each recursion.

Mirrored by the developing visual patterns were the parallel processes of unfolding complexity in layered events in my lifeworld related to the inquiry question. As the image evolved, the inquiry took form. I noticed connections linking "inner" and "outer" events, often in a meaningful way, involving others, and mirroring the unfolding process. These experiences, thoughts, and feelings are a part of the holistic process of discovery relating to repeating themes, archetypal patterns, and ways of being in one's mind, in context, and in the world. Noticing and suspending belief about what is arising is consistent with the phenomenological attitude or reduction. Contemplation on what shows itself and how these experiences reflect the inquiry question is part of the practice. How we have been trained to think about phenomena may create biases and determine some of what can be seen, or valued, and as such this practice calls for a kind of radical attention.

For example, a reciprocating image emerged within the flame shape in which my perception flipped back and forth between the two-images-in-one, dialectically (see Figure 11). I will say more about this later. Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) referred to this experience as "reversibility" (p. 48), a phenomenon that occurs visually, such as in the reversing face or vase image. The concept, which emerged out of Gestalt psychology, is one where images cycle between figure and (back)ground, depending on viewer focus. I believe this reversibility also refers to what is unconscious, or pre-reflective, and what is consciously seen. Rather than using the term *unconscious*, Merleau-Ponty employs the term *pre-reflective* and relates it to figure or ground, wherein symbols and meanings arise from experience prior to reflection. As such, rather than *conscious* and *unconscious* he uses the terms *reflected* and *un-reflected*.

Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) writes, "Perception . . . is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them"

(p. xi). The oft-referenced examples are that of one hand overlaying the other, with the focus of feeling a shifting, cycling between being felt and feeling, in turn. From this experience, we know ourselves as both subject and object—an entwining. He conceived of the body as a "chiasm" (as cited in Low, 2009, p. 207), combining objective and subjective experience; a reciprocal middle way, enmeshed in a crisscrossing both through language and perception (Low, 2009). In his final writing, *The Visible and the Invisible*, cut short by his death in 1961, Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) sought to underscore the nondual nature of reality and of our shared "flesh of the world" (p. 144), not limited to the human world. In *The Spell of the Sensuous*, Abram (1996) poetically speaks of this flesh, offering his own experience: "Whenever I quiet the persistent chatter of words within my head, I find this silent or wordless dance always already going on in this improvised duet between my animal body and the fluid, breathing landscape that it inhabits" (p. 53). By attending to the wordless dance, the quiet hum beneath all things may be cultivated.

Thompson (2015), who has a special interest in Buddhism, in discussion of deeper levels of phenomenal consciousness, or subtle consciousness, posits the unconscious as conscious and states that "subtle levels of phenomenal awareness could be made accessible through meditative mental training" (p. 8), an observation that resonates with the contemplative nature of painting the Sacred Mandala while in a flow state (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). While in flow, deep absorption leads to a state of timelessness. Inquirers may find themselves cycling between mindful awareness of the present, alternating with timeless absorption of flow. The negative space in the painting is perhaps akin to perception/awareness operating in the background, with the images as what we turn our attention toward, allowing for what is being foregrounded in the inquiry. It should be understood, however, that the canvas is a whole in which lived discoveries are made, in context; the whole, as Aristotle said, is indeed greater than the sum of its parts—a

gestalt. When the Ring of Fire is complete, the student may take time to reflect on the practice and process.

In their Sacred Mandala journals, beginning with the Ring of Fire, students describe their experience in detailed ways, making note of the colour choice; why that particular colour is selected; and what is evoked in emotions, thoughts, and sensations through the hue. Reflecting on how the ring looks, once painted, the painter gives consideration to the aesthetics, whether it pleases or displeases, and how this emotion reflects an inner narrative or pattern, including acceptance of or resistance to the principles, excitement, frustration, joy, and any other responses. Importantly, the inquirer asks how these ways of being may speak to the question held, making note of any words or phrases that might suddenly occur. At this time, the inquirer answers Madeleine's three suggested questions one last time: "In what way is my life like this Ring of Fire? Where is the fire in my life right now—and in myself? Where do I see transformation occurring in my life and in me?" (personal communication, September 15, 1994). Within these mindful reflections, inquirers begin to locate, give voice to, and witness themselves in the act of seeing. Connections are tracked between the so-called inner world and outer world, observing the mirror-like qualities.

Madeleine Shields taught students to attend closely to recurrent themes for their subjective meaning. Of this she said,

> The unconscious mind is trying to bring something to the student's attention by repeatedly providing messages, through daily events, through the images in the paint and the dialogues, and through dreams. Throughout the mandala, both dialogues and journal writing are done, in order to make subjective sense of the painting. (as cited in Breiddal, 2012, p. 88)

Whatever happens is part of the inquiry and is to be held in gentle awareness; the burning away of ignorance has begun. Following Figure 11, showing detail of the painted ring, is an example

of writing from my Sacred Mandala journal pertaining to the Ring of Fire, which illustrates the experience of reversibility.

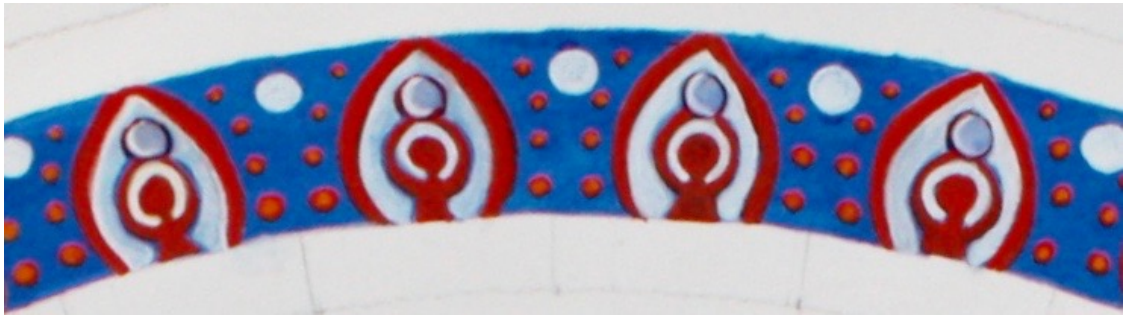

Figure 11. Individual flames, detail from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2011.

> I have selected blue as the base colour of the Ring of Fire. I reflect upon my associations with this particular shade of blue and realize it reminds me of childhood catechism images of Mary's holy gown, and the endless summer skies in northern Alberta. I begin with a simple flame shape against the blue ring. It occurs to me that painting 40 flames is the ideal number—one for each year since the birth of my son. An image emerges inside of the flame and feels so right. I paint the shape inside each one with a strong feeling of resonance. The periphery of the flame is cadmium red, inside is a light blue, and the figure is also red. The image within the hot fire is of a person—from the waist up—arms held above their head. As I paint, the words "in the surrendering position" come to me. I then see the surrendering position as relating to adoption and how this early loss operates in the background, shaping interpretation. Simultaneously I understand the surrendering position is the non-grasping gesture of spiritual practice.
>
> There is so much going on in this Ring of Fire: the flame shape and the figure in it are suggestive of a birth to me, as, the figure, at times, looks pregnant. When looking at the image, it suddenly reverses—if the moon is the head, then instead of holding up and surrendering, a larger figure now appears to be holding a smaller person in front. There is reciprocity in this image—surrendering and holding—being pregnant, being born; simultaneous and bidirectional. This image actually fits with the feeling state I lived in and I find it perfect that psyche, activated, produces this picture at the outset of painting the mandala—in the ring of fire itself. Clearly it is I being contained and purified in this ring. It is I being reminded of my wholeness and connection within the Mystery. (Author's journal, October 4, 2011)

These mandala journal writings depict the phenomenological experience of painting, allowing worlds to come into being while remaining open, curious, and receptive. Simultaneous to tending to the inner experience of novelty, I also tracked outer world events. For example,

after my chapter (Johnston, 2011) had been published in the anthology *Somebody's Child: Stories About Adoption* (Gillespie & Van Luven, 2011), I was invited by the editors to speak publicly, in various venues, in promotion of the book. These talks occurred while I was painting the Ring of Fire, and though not easy, I began public speaking on the topic of adoption in the context of life writing. In doing so, I was met with a range of responses. My essay focusses on my relationship with my son's other mother—primarily as a way of demonstrating what is possible when asking the question "Who belongs to the child?" The diversity of responses to my work only heightened the experience of the burning away of ignorance within the Ring of Fire. I understood myself to be entering a transition.

The First Transition Ring

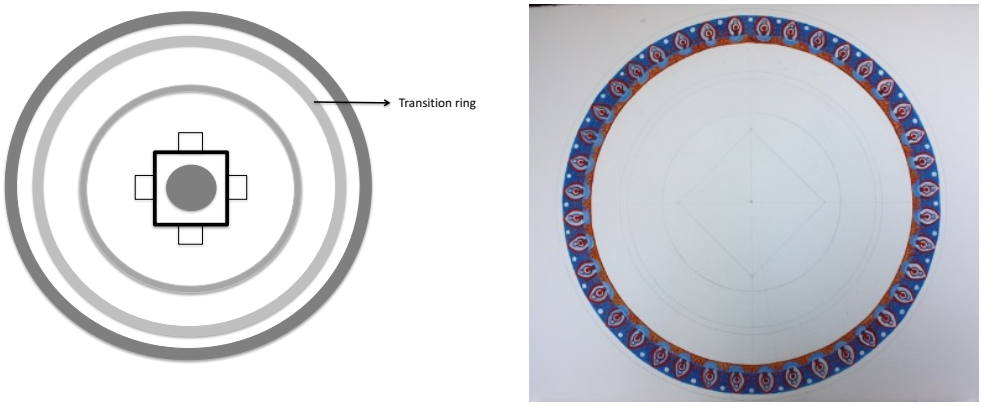

Figure 12. Structure: The First Transition Ring, situated as the second ring; example from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2011.

I was then located in the narrow second ring between the protective Ring of Fire with its relationship to structure, discipline, and authority and the Narrative Ring where, as Madeleine taught, our unconscious stories, themes, and revelations are to be brought to awareness through emerging images, words, and experiences (see Figures 12 & 13). My journal writing for the transition ring involved contemplation on thoughts and feelings about transitions, small and large, responses to them, and any areas of transition which were occurring.

Figure 13. The First Transition Ring: detail from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2011.

Additionally, I considered the question, “What feeds the fire?” What fed the fire was the motivating force behind the question: my personal life experiences generating the call, and following through, honouring my instinctual knowing. I noticed what excited me and brought energy to the inquiry. I also sensed the transitional area may be about lingering in the borders and liminal spaces between the known and unknown, between the questions and (often temporary) answers, between consciousness and unconsciousness, between structure and freedom, and between self and world. In my mandala journal, I wrote,

> What feeds the fire is fire. I begin painting the next ring, and select a whiter (hot?) blue as it ‘seems right.’ I am noticing I want to 'protect' the figure in the flame and so begin painting a small crescent under it to do so. Right away, this gesture and image feels correct. I now notice the figure appears to be standing in water—the crescents becoming ripples. The word "melting" comes to me, and I realize the colour blue seems also to represent frozen aspects. I paint in the flames around the transition ring, which meet up with the sparks. Being more connected to the source of the fire feels important and right. As I look at the whole image now, I feel a true sense of mystery—I can trust psyche to unfold this process. I don't have to over-think anything—psyche, continuous with our world, knows to produce reciprocating images embedded with multiple meanings. This understanding is profoundly comforting. (Author’s journal, October 9, 2011)

Leaving the space of transition, I was now ready to move on to the Narrative Ring where The Sacred Mandala inquirer’s stories, conscious and unconscious, come to life.

The Narrative Ring

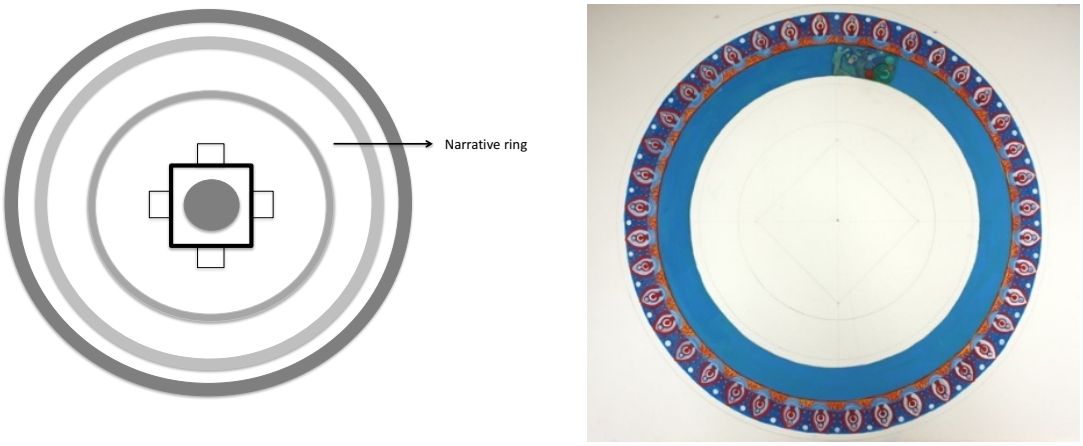

Figure 14. Structure: The Narrative Ring, situated as the third ring; solid blue area in example from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2011.

Once again, I began by selecting the background colour and mixing enough paint, in the correct consistency (not too thick or too thin), to complete the whole ring. The Narrative Ring is comprised of many small panels—much like a strip of film (see Figure 14). For the sake of consistency and aesthetics, I decided in advance to make the panels about 2 inches wide. I placed dividing markers with a very light mark, once the background was dry.

> Jung (1964) writes,
>
> As scientific understanding has grown, so our world has become dehumanized. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos, because he is no longer involved in nature and has lost his emotional 'unconscious identity' with natural phenomenon. . . . [There] is no longer the voice of an angry god, . . . no river contains a spirit, . . . no snake the embodiment of wisdom, no mountain cave the home of a great demon. No voice now speaks to man from stones, plants, animals, nor does he speak to them thinking they can hear. His contact with nature has gone, and with it has gone the profound emotional energy that this symbolic connection supplied. (p. 85)

In the Narrative Ring (see Figures 24 & 25), figures begin to emerge and tell their story through a unique method of image retrieval involving a projective practice, which is described further on. Yet the practice is not solely projective; information exchange appears to be bidirectional as contents seek expression through the inquirer, each irreducible to the other. Jung (1950/1972)

observes that people, in encountering their own (imagined, dreamt, or painted) images and symbols “that express an idea or situation which their conscious mind can only grasp with difficulty . . . realize for the first time the reality of the collective unconscious as an autonomous entity” (p. 77). We ourselves are reanimated when images and words locate us, wherein snakes, rivers, mountains, and caves find voice and audience once more, returning to a more vibrant imaginal ecology (Richtscheid, 2006), a concept derived from Corbin’s (1998) idea of the *mundis imaginalis*, or imaginal world. Hillman (1981) conceived of a mythic understanding of the world, an *imaginal knowing*. Of this knowing, Abram (1996) writes,

> As a Zuni elder focuses her eyes upon a cactus and hears the cactus begin to speak, so we focus our eyes upon these printed marks and immediately hear voices. We hear spoken words, witness strange scenes or visions, even experience other lives. As nonhuman animals, plants, and even “inanimate” rivers once spoke to our tribal ancestors, so the "inert" letters on the page now speak to us! This is a form of animism that we take for granted, but it is animism nonetheless—as mysterious as a talking stone. (p. 131)

The following is a simplified example of image retrieval:

Figure 15. Blotches (lt.) and progressive outline of images retrieval (rt.).

First, I twisted a white paper napkin and had it at the ready. Then, I selected a pleasing colour, mixed it with a little water to a medium consistency and painted over a test scrap. Standing above the paper, without too much delay after laying down the paint, I firmly pressed the crumpled or twisted paper napkin into the wet paint, removing directly upwards so as to not

smear the paint. The napkin can be turned and pressed in again to remove more paint as needed, but the painter should be careful to not remove too much paint, or the procedure will have to be repeated.

Images began to be observable within the blotches (much as in clouds or puddles), given the rough texture of the paper, the crumpled paper's imprint, and the mind's projective ability. Once comfortable with the test procedure, I moved to the Sacred Mandala to apply colour on the first panel, between the white spacers previously lightly painted, and efficiently covered the base coat, as the new layer will dry fairly quickly. If too dry, the gouache will not pull off to reveal images.

Once selected, the idea is to stay true to the images. For instance, if an image of a one-legged person arises, it is advisable to allow that image to remain one-legged. (I provide an example of why this is so in the next section.) Corbin's (1998) advice is appropriate at this stage: "You must not walk as if you are a conqueror. You must not wish to give a name to things, to everything. Things will tell you who they are, if you listen, surrendered like a lover" (p. xxxii).

Like the image of a one-legged person, images are surprising, and the student may not yet know what they may mean, how they relate to each other, or the focus of the inquiry, yet meanings will become more apparent in the next stage of the work. The images are to be carefully painted in, either by outlining them with a lighter or deeper shade or by blocking them in from the edges with the colour used, a different shade of the colour, or a completely different colour. Details such as designs on clothing and background patterns can be later added as wished.

Although I was not initially a skilled painter, through practice and resonance, the work "felt right" and developed (see Figure 16). In having looked through Madeleine's many albums

of student work, I consistently found the images compelling and beautiful, though painted by novices.

In finding images, eyes know what to do. Perceptually, eyes and brain see emerging patterns, and the mind makes meaning of those patterns. The experience is one of the painter uncovering the image, while, simultaneously, the image reveals itself to the painter. Nurturing the chaos in these blotches brings the co-present forms (Berry, 2017) into relief, allowing for creative connections.

Figure 16. Painting the Narrative Ring, M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

Eisner (2004) also employed similar projective techniques to elicit, make conscious, express in words, and make meaning of personal material. He described steps in which students are provided a cup of water into which a drop of red dye is then placed. Eisner explains,

> Unlike many tasks in school this exercise has no single right answer. . . . Seeing is necessary in order to have a content to express. Expression is necessary to make public the contents of consciousness, and so what we have here is an imaginative transformation of a perceptual event that is imbued with meaning whose features and significance the students tried to transform into language capable of carrying that meaning forward.

> . . . Often in the processes of representation new ideas will emerge that are themselves the subject of expressive aims. (p. 39)

Images present themselves, and many figures and elements of all manner arrive: landscapes, humans, animals, mythological creatures—things as yet unseen. (See Addendum for examples of images from my Sacred Mandala, *Surrender: Return to the Source*). There is an authenticity in that the images are not something consciously determined but emerge from the blotches in an *aha*! moment. Images can appear highly detailed, partly due to the texture of the paper, with the eye/mind filling in elaborations. It is up to the painter to decide which figures to bring into relief. Madeleine Shields taught that images that carry the most emotional charge or resonance are good candidates to bring more fully into being. If there is an image that is disturbing to consciousness, it can be wiped out or realized, depending on the painter's choice. The student may keep in mind that images are often not solely representative of what they initially seem to be pointing toward—their meanings becoming increasingly accessible and multileveled once painted in, "objectively" described in writing, and followed by the dialogue process. Images may appear, and reappear, in evolving, self-clustering themes. Images and their meanings continue to unfold indefinitely, given their verticality—the depths of archetypal origins—coupled with personal resonance and unfolding experience.

Attending to the images is part of the enactive meditative process in bringing full attention to the end of one's brush. The painter continues to work with the images until they feel right, completing each panel fully before moving on to the next one. There is no set amount of time for this process; one small panel could be painted in an hour or a week. The essential principles should be considered at each stage and guide choices. When the panel is complete, the inquirer will then turn to the journal.

The use of the journal is to record experience of the work—the blocks that occur, the obstacles and irritants, and the discoveries and how they were met and handled (M. Shields, personal communication, October 11, 1994). The following guidelines will aid the inquirer in image exploration.

1. Write down a general factual description of what you see in the panel, describing the scene and each figure. Think about the facts of the panel, as if a camera were scanning it, or as if you are a lab partner objectively describing a step-by-step process of what you are seeing. For instance, "In this panel I see a female hooded figure with her arm reaching forward. In the figure's hand appears a round container."
2. Write down your thoughts, feelings, sensations, and intuitions relating to the process itself.
3. Consider your feelings in the present when you look at the whole.
4. For each figure, describe what it looks like or reminds you of and what feelings are aroused. Are you attracted to it or rejecting of it?
5. Note how the emergent images speak to your inquiry.

The factual description of the image panel allows the painter to look at the scene anew and to see what is really there. I provide an example below. Inquirers, in considering foreground and field, may ask themselves how it came to be that these particular shapes emerged out of all possible shapes. Initially, the painter may see only blobs, yet suddenly, images emerge that become stable, as if they had always been present, waiting to be seen. Others looking at the same blots would not necessarily see the same images, unless pointed out. In this Sacred Mandala practice, both the phenomenological coming-into-being of the images and then the images themselves are

of interest to the painter. Both may amaze. As Oliver (1984) wrote, “Pay attention./ Be astonished./ Tell about it” (p. 37).

Throughout the Narrative Ring in my Sacred Mandala Inquiry on adoption, many images emerged, bringing with them synchronistic experiences that utterly defied reason and yet were undeniable in uncovering previously unrealized connections across time and space in a meaningful way. Observable both to me and those around me were clusters of related experiences, between external and internal events and psychological processes, which could be called *moments of complexity* (Cambray, 2002, p. 15*).* Not infrequently, I was in a state of astonishment, which resulted in flashes of the knowledge of timeless interconnectedness and oneness. Experiences of synchronicities related to adoption have been documented by perinatal psychologist LaVonne Stiffler (1993), herself an adoptee. Stiffler’s article, “Adoptees and Birthparents Connected by Design: Surprising Synchronicities in Histories of Union/Loss/ Reunion,” is a study of the experiences of 70 participants in reunion, detailing the high probability of synchronicities occurring within the adoption experience. Stiffler considers various axes on how these meaningful coincidences might be further considered. She writes,

> Synchronicity as an acausal principle of the unconscious organizing of archetypes (Jung) or as a unifying correlation by affinity (Kammerer) may be balanced with causality: the psychology of separation and loss reactions; prenatal memory; identity and the loss of self; a system in need of information; the architecture of developmental behavioral genetics; and cognitive meaning making from numinous experience. (p. 267)

Stiffler (1993) provides the example of her mother (not her adoptive mother) having passed away 10 years prior to her adoption reunion with the family. Upon learning the date of her mother’s death, she recalled having had a strong emotional reaction to a feeling that someone close to her had died, and she had documented this at the time. When consulting her journal, she found that “the dates were indeed the same” (p. 268). Stiffler depicted the separation as on a two-

sided Mobius-strip twisted 180° and connected by the mutual event of loss, with arrows "representing the life course direction of mother and child [who] may be thought of as moving away from each other in opposite directions; yet they remain somehow constantly connected" (p. 267). As psychologist Dan Hocoy (2012) summarized, "these experiences of illumination include such deep, direct knowing that there is no doubt in the person experiencing them that there is an intimate and sacred correspondence between our innermost life and the functioning of the universe" (p. 471).

The Möbius-strip seems an important visual image for describing the idea that we are both inside and outside of everything. Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) claimed, "Inside and outside are inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself" (p. 407); in other words, we are not just another object in the world but are chiasmically intertwined. The world acts upon us and we upon it, so that when asking a focusing question, unexpected patterns may emerge, disrupting notions of time and proximity, relating to the question. My question on child-loss appeared to activate a collaboration of multiple synchronicities. Complex events transpired, in which the past, present, and future became meaningfully entwined, with me as astonished witness. The telling is difficult, given the nonlinear structure of events and the nature of the cluster.

The following is my account of what unfolded while painting one panel of the Narrative Ring (see Figure 17). Following this telling, I return to a more linear progression, continuing to lay out the structure, practice, and process of a Sacred Mandala inquiry. I offer this particular sacred narrative theme in part as an example of the unintended consequence of harnessing a question on loss. Though many synchronicities were positive in nature, this cluster was difficult, involving a theme of unexpected deaths, and may be disquieting to the reader, given natural

human empathy. To bring immediacy to my narrative, I offer it in the present tense below, in keeping with a depth practice.

Figure 17. The Fortune Teller, detail from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

> Strange things are afoot in the mandala. In this panel, five figures have emerged against a full moon night scene, starry or snowy. On the left, a dark-haired woman kneels in front of a young boy. She wears a white-sleeved rose coloured gown, with a pink veil, or wings, flowing to the earth. Both the boy and the woman wear red caps. The boy smiles while holding a white globe. The Kneeling Woman holds her hands above the ball, her expression neutral. To the right, a white-haired woman stands within a circle of flames, her right arm pointing skyward, her left hand hidden. [Part of her right arm was missing but I felt compelled to complete it due to a difficult association related below]. A ghostly female form emerges from the flames, wrapping around the white-haired woman from behind—extending over to the boy. The apparitions' hands are placed on his back; supporting him, unseen from behind. In the foreground, beneath the ground (or ice), lays the outline of a body, deceased or frozen. Around the fire, wave lines appear. The feeling of the panel is one of deep mystery with the accompanying question, "What will come?" I entitle the scene *The Fortune Teller,* and say aloud*,* "He holds his fate in his hands" and "Her feet are in the fire." (Author's mandala journal, December 27, 2011)

The day I retrieve these images, while on a winter retreat in California, I am invited to an evening gathering of dear friends. My friend "Sophia" has something to tell me—the small clay figure of the Bee Goddess I gifted her many years ago has somehow "flown" off a shelf above her sink where it had been sitting in the same cup since it was received. Sophia reports standing at the sink in the morning when the strange flight occurs, ending in a crash, in which the Bee goddess's arm is severed above the elbow. Sophia excitedly remarks on the strangeness of this happening at all and, stranger still, that I, the gift-giver, should now be in California when it occurs. As a depth psychologically oriented therapist, she recognizes the crossover event as

synchronistic and asks me what I think it might mean or portend. I, too, am startled and respond that in the morning, while painting my mandala, an image emerged of a woman with half of her right arm missing. While painting, I had felt compelled to fill in the missing part of her arm, and did (see Figure 17).

Figure 18. The Bee Goddess, with repaired right arm. Photo by author.

I had associated the Half-Armed Woman with a difficult image pertaining to my women's group friend, "Carole," who had lost her adult son in a skiing accident. "Ben" had been skiing at night, out of bounds, when he accidentally went over a cliff and fell to his death on the rocks below.

I recount to Sophia that the night before our women's group, I had dreamt of a woman, crying out for help, agonized by the bloody severing of her right arm—just above her elbow. I puzzled over the difficult dream with a friend, on the way to our group. Carole (the bereaved mother) had set up a ceremonial altar, and I received a shock upon seeing the centerpiece sculpture of a woman, missing half of her right arm. Later, when the image of a Half-Armed Woman became visible in my mandala, I therefore painted in the missing part of her arm, not liking the association of Carole's devastating loss of her beautiful son, Ben.

Hearing my account, Sophia shivers and asks me about the Bee Goddess and what she represents. I recollect that she was Greek—and that her priestesses danced in states of ecstasy

and prophesied when honey was consumed. Sophia and I consider the Bee Goddess's fall a shared synchronistic event. As we contemplate the synchronicity, we wonder if events may unfold further, providing additional meaning.

The following night, Olivia and I attend a housewarming gathering in her friend "Lawrence's" home. Lawrence is a fine luthier, and as I am appreciating the pleasing form and luster of his maple-wood guitars on display, he approaches me. In conversation, I ask if he has encountered a family friend, "Helen," a prominent North American luthier. We briefly converse about her fine instruments and the fact that he greatly admires her work and has communicated with her a few times. I relate that she is not only exceptionally talented but also a very lovely woman, full of heart. This conversation is to return to me a great many times over the years as I ponder the events and their meaning.

During the early part of the housewarming, police come to the door, and Lawrence is informed that his son, who had purchased an ATV the previous night, has been reported missing in the desert since then. A team will begin searching at daylight. Hearing this, a feeling of dread comes over me. My phenomenological Sacred Mandala question involves child-loss, and strange things are happening. I am thinking about sudden death and the arrival of the Half-Armed Woman—in my dream, on the altar, in my mandala painting and in Olivia's kitchen the previous morning. As I well know, posttraumatic symptoms resulting from decades of child-loss and intense searching may be activated, so I remind myself to not interpret my feelings of growing concern prematurely as child-loss for Lawrence's family.

Upon return to my vacation home later in the evening, I go online and look up the symbol of the bee goddess. Randomly, I pull up a particular description and image (see Figure 19).

> For a watchful eye, the relationship between the queen bee and the Goddess and her priestesses, dressed as bees must have seemed irresistible, and in Minoan Crete 4,000

> years later the Goddess and her priestesses, dressed as bees, are shown dancing together on a golden seal found buried with the dead. In Crete, also the bee signified the life that comes from death, as did the scarab in Egypt. Probably for this reason, the gold ring seal was placed in a tomb. Here the bee goddess, the figure in the center descending to earth among snakes and lilies, is being worshipped by her priestesses, who, characteristically, take the same form as she does, all raising their 'hands' in the typical gesture of epiphany. Honey was used to embalm and preserve the bodies of the dead. (Douglass, 2009, para. 2)

Figure 19. Gold seal ring, c. 1450 BCE. From a tomb at Isopata, near Knossos. From "Bee Goddess," by T. T. L. Douglass, April 2009. Copyright 2009 by Ordo Infinitus Orbis. Retrieved from http://www.templeoftheola.org/bee-goddess.html

I now look at the surrendering images within the flames in the Ring of Fire in my Sacred Mandala, their hands in the air, and suddenly consider them as also depicting epiphany, or multiple epiphanies. Fore-armed is fore-warned? Over the days to follow, I have little appetite, I am distracted, my sleep is fractured, and I feel an overwhelming urge to join the search for Lawrence's son, a feeling I know too well. I am warned by the media that the desert terrain is dangerous, as many abandoned rotting mining shafts, unmarked and long covered over with bramble, await like traps. Instead, I join a family-and-friend internet support group and remain in close communication. Finally, the boy's body is found, 4 days into the ordeal, 500 feet down a canyon. Joyriding on his brand-new all-terrain vehicle along with his friend, in the desert at

night, they did not see the approaching sheer cliff of the canyon wall. This was a devastating outcome for his family and community, rippling outward forever more.

Thirty-three days later, I receive the call from my sister regarding the luthier Helen's stepson's death. "Thomas" had a fatal snowmobiling accident, also occurring on the day of purchase. Snowmobiling at night in the country, the young man lost his life when hitting a telephone pole at high speed, dying instantly. His family were plunged into a profound and lasting grief, their love of him with nowhere to go. How am I, or anyone else, to interpret this unsettling cluster of strange and difficult losses?

I ponder the effects of Susan Breiddal and I painting our Sacred Mandalas over the same time period. As we notice important crossovers in our emergent images and dreams, I consider the possibility that we have entered into what Rupert Sheldrake (2006) refers to as a *morphogenic field* or extended mind. For example, Susan is painting hers in relation to her doctoral research, harnessing a phenomenological question on facing death within a palliative care context. An unexpected shared theme of zombies emerges in dreams, one that we recognize as pointing to a personal and collective theme. Susan relates that on the eve of the 19th anniversary of her infant son's death, she is given a dream about him. In the dream, her son Dante has been taken by others and is to be brainwashed, later to be returned, but not as the person he would have been—but as a zombie. Susan writes, "I go to the door of the house and begin to shriek into the darkness of the neighbourhood, 'Help me . . . help me. . . . I am in terrible trouble!' But no one is listening" (Breiddal, 2013, p. 205).

There are many ways to tend to the images in this dream, with no completely correct interpretation. (For one interpretation, see Breiddal, 2013, p. 204.) An alternate possible

interpretation emerges between us: Susan is being given the experience of a mother separated from her taken child.

I had long considered a mother's grief as "zombie grief," as it was undying. Around this time, I too dream of a city-wide invasion of zombies. Early into the dream . . .

> an older woman and I are warning each other about the zombie invasion. I try to get back to my car, but I now see I have left my purse and car keys near the door, by the pool, where some zombies are present. I see they have now captured the older woman and are drowning her in the pool. I feel sick, wondering if and how I can rescue her and how I myself can survive.
>
> As I can't escape, I pretend to be a zombie. These zombies talk, and I am conversing with one, a man, I think. I am acting like what I imagine zombies would act like, speaking slowly. The man looks at me suspiciously, and I can tell he thinks I might not really be zombie. As we are talking, I begin to cry. He says "Well that does it. When I first became a zombie and did the orientation, I was told I would never be able to cry again." I could see I was going to be in trouble.
>
> I awaken, briefly ["pay attention to this!"] and then re-enter the dream.
>
> *Part 2*: I make my way outside of the house and am approaching the car. A younger zombie woman comes over and bites my head. I put my hand to my scalp and see a small amount of blood on my fingers. My heart sinks as I know that's all it takes. I'm now a zombie.
>
> I am back in the house, crowded now with a zombie meeting going on. I spontaneously stand up and address the group saying that I think biting people is wrong and completely unnecessary, and I am tired of the whole thing. The man who is in charge of the meeting says, "But we are zombies—it's what we do." I respond by stating I'm not going to bite people, and I can't be the only one who thinks this way. I turn and ask the group if anyone else feels the way I do. Most of the zombies put up a hand.
>
> I suddenly realize that I will now be spearheading a kind of liberation movement within the zombie population. (Author's journal, Feb 10, 2012)

I think of Aluli Meyer (2008) saying, "If knowledge is power, then understanding is liberation" (p. 229). As three generations are present in my dream, I have a sense that the dream is pointing to an epigenetic, transgenerational theme involving an old woman, myself, and the younger woman. I also have a strong feeling that the old woman (old way of thinking), submerged in so

much (contained) emotion, is going through a transformation by being present—held under—by undying ‘zombie’ feelings. The submersion becomes a baptism. There is a new twist—a humorous aspect to the dream, though missed by the dream ego. The dream ego is capable of crying, demonstrating the fact that she is not a zombie. Although bitten, she refuses to act like a zombie, seeking instead not only her own liberation but also that of others.

I now consider the dream as providing future direction for working with Sacred Mandala Inquiry. There are many ways in which people may become deadened—through losses, technology, materiality, and rationality—while at the same time suppressing the relational, imaginal, emotional, ecological, or spiritual. Sacred Mandala Inquiry may provide an opportunity to engage in an enlivening process, a hermeneutic waking-up through the creation of a new and living myth: a mythopoesis.

These startling experiences lead me into the next phase of an epoche, portending something essential being revealed. The sentence “A mother loses her right arm” comes to me. As I circumambulate this holographic image, I consider that the archetypal Great Mother expressed in the Bee Goddess has become personalized in the Half-Armed Woman, revealed with the leaping of the figure and her right arm breaking off. These simultaneous events trigger an awakening through strong and repeated synchronistic experiences, revealing an underlying connectedness, perhaps activated through an archetypal Mother complex. I am being shown participation in a personal and transpersonal experience evidenced in layered “dis-arming” events. In recalling the unusual name of the artist who sculpted the original woman with a severed forearm, I perform an internet search and discover the artist is a resident of a small island where we summer in our cabin. The artist’s work focusses on identity, mental health, and disability. Each unfolding event appears to be nested and unfolds further still. I am also aware

that someone else encountering this constellation of events may not witness the pattern the same way. Much like in the image retrieval process where different inquirers see different images, whereas I see Ursa Major, others reading this may see random stars. The "text" will be interpreted differently. Circling back to my orienting question on child-loss by adoption, I clearly understand *this* repetition is the experience made conscious. Sacred Mandala practitioners, however, may have their own experience of the archetypal entwining revealed.

As indicated earlier, readers should also be understood that these Sacred Mandala experiences continue to unfold over time. Today, years after the events that occurred during my visit to California, while I am immersed in reflection upon and writing about this cluster of synchronicities involving the loss of three young men, I hear a decisive knock on my front door. The Victoria Police ask if they may access my property in search of a young man who has been reported missing. He was last seen 4 days ago near my home. A dive team arrives within minutes to search the waters around my dock (see Figure 20).

Figure 20. Victoria police search team. Photo by author.

The following morning, having had a troubled sleep, I send the narrative I am writing to my filmmaker sister back east to see what might be her response to the cluster of synchronistic events. I receive the following reply:

> I am writing about the bee goddess. A character named Bea. I was yesterday. And then I get this from you. I think I am channeling you. The story is mine but in the middle of

> another script, this came through. Also, Helen [the luthier] messaged me for the first time in months. She told me I have mail. I went over and spoke with her for the first time in months. So, you are bleeding through.

Over the four days to follow, once again, I have little appetite and am distracted, my sleep is fractured, and I feel an overwhelming urge to join the search for the young man. I monitor the news and the water, which now seems to take on a darker hue. I talk to neighbours, feel incredibly sad and also spooked. I am being shown this repetition, but why? What meaning? Clearly, I have no part in creating these events, yet I sense that the psyche/the world is disclosing this theme to me. I feel implicated somehow, being the common observer/element in these synchronicities—the witness—*as only I know* of the correspondence between these disparate happenings as they enter the explicate realm. I have to wonder if, in this recursion, reflecting upon and writing about these difficult events, I am once again constellating an archetypal response.

In a hermeneutic return to the literature, I again find the ancient Greek culture's powerful interpretation of the bee as symbolizing divine concepts of life, death, and rebirth; regeneration; and transformation (Ransome, 2004). Words find me again: "The grave is open." I recall the Bee Goddess as one of the themes running through my Sacred Mandala. One iteration was an emerging image of a woman with an elongated head who suddenly appeared to be wearing a beehive on her head, with rivulets of honey flowing down behind her. While I was painting the detail of buzzing bees, a drop of gold gouache had accidentally fallen onto the blue figure's outstretched hand, which I outlined, giving it attention. This drop was now feeding the dove from the Wise Woman's open palm (see Figure 21).

Figure 21. *A Beehive for a Bonnet, The Honey Taster*, detail from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

Depth psychologist Patricia Berry (2017) outlines various moves for tending to elements of dream images relating to texture, reversals, and repetition, amongst other consideration (pp. 55-77). I find her guidelines useful when hosting emergent images within the Sacred Mandala—in this instance, the *when/then* technique in tending to dream images, as a way of understanding how phenomena co-arise and how structures become constellated in nonlinear ways. I write, "*When* my palm is open, *then* the gift of honey drops. *When* the gift of honey is offered, *then* the peace-dove arrives to be nourished (Author's mandala journal, February 5, 2012). Images are nonhierarchical and reversible. The figures speak to me of peace, of potent compassion for others, of a large container created through conscious suffering, and of the requirement of offering others in the hive what I myself know and require: loving understanding. *When* I love, *then* I am loved. The Wise Woman speaks of the drop of honey, allowing a seeing into the heart of the image, in which I, as a perceiver, and the essence of my experience are one. This night, I am given the powerful affect-laden dream entitled "I Shall Bee Released":

> I am running up an ancient, narrow stone staircase, winding ever tighter to the top of a tower. Reaching the pinnacle, I throw open the balcony doors and step forward into the sunshine and fresh air. I hold up my right arm and open my hand. To my surprise, a honey bee flies out and spirals off across the flowering fields below and into the distant horizon.

> I awake feeling light and joyous. In the Beehive for a Bonnet panel [see Figure 21], I have been shown an image symbolizing the remaining loss as a "bee in my bonnet"—in fact a whole hive. The topic of adoption can be very upsetting to me, and within a certain community of mothers of adoption loss, the rage is barely contained. In the dream, I find myself in an ancient "complex," and with great effort, I am able to take steps to scale the edifice from the inside and ultimately go beyond the limits of the complex, unexpectedly releasing the bee from atop this ancient structure. *When I open my hand, then the bee is released*. Psyche appears to be offering back the bee image as an agreed-upon multidimensional symbol, bridging my waking and sleeping selves, and communicating this healing movement. My felt sense of relief is immense. The dream is honey to me—a distilled sweetness and nourishment, a healing gift from the stings of a disturbed hive. I feel I have awoken from a fairy-tale and a bad spell is being cast off. The bee is free to return to the colony, and freed to do the work of pollination. The pinnacle experience is of letting go of anger—it is within my grasp—and when I do, my vista is enlarged. (Author's mandala journal, February 5, 2012)

A depth-psychological approach emphasizes the need for personal transformation through imagination and expression of emotional and spiritual dimensions, linking archetype and instinct through "tending" images—our constant companions (Aizenstat, 2011).

Jung understood the dialogues not as interpretation but rather inviting the unconscious forward and experiencing and "extending the conscious horizon" (1928/1966, p. 219). This move is achieved through establishing and maintaining contact with the structures of the unconscious, through recognition of, naming, and dialogue with one's images, in order to connect with affect, uncover meaning, and reclaim projected content (Boyd & Meyers, 1988; Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranston, 2006; Hillman, 1975; Moore, 1994, 1996; R. Johnson, 1986; Jung, 1928/1966, 2009; McNiff, 1992; M. Stein, 1996; Watkins, 1984). "Otherness," or alterity, according to McNiff (1992), is important to the practice of tending one's images, as the "other" tells us who we are—and this idea extends to internalized images (p. 2). Given this background regarding tending the image, the questions when approaching the Narrative Ring might include "What am I not seeing? Who am I not hearing?" (Coppin & Nelson, 2017, p. 103), as these invited animated images and stories can be experienced as sacred healers, as sacred texts, returning wonder to experience.

Jung (1955-1956/1970) states that when practicing active imagination, “although to a certain extent, . . . [the imaginer] looks on from the outside, impartially, he is also an acting and suffering figure in the drama of the psyche. This recognition is absolutely necessary and marks an important advance” (p. 529). The animating of images and dialogue steps as taught to me by Madeleine Shields are as follows:

Steps to engaging with the structures of the unconscious.

1. Here you will bring the action to life and see as a drama, in which you are the observer, entering dialogue with each character. Close your eyes—become inwardly quiet—notice your breathing and deepen it, allowing it to become rhythmic and flow from your center. Scan your body—breathe into, and let go of, tension.
2. In your imagination, bring the scene into the room as if it is a drama unfolding before you—larger than life and three dimensional. You are on the periphery observing and not judging. Notice how you feel observing the whole scene.
3. Select a character, or any object, you wish to speak with and welcome it to your mandala. Ask “Who are you?” Wait and listen for answers. Then ask, “What are you doing in my mandala?” followed by “What message do you have for me about my inquiry?” Ask any other clarifying questions you may wish to ask, and also invite the character to ask questions of you.
4. Characters may also be invited to speak to each other to gain further information about dynamics.
5. When the dialogue with each character is completed, thank them for coming with their wisdom or information before saying goodbye. When the whole process is completed, dissolve the image before opening your eyes.
6. Ask yourself how you are feeling now, and what in your life this reminds you of. Take time to write the dialogues and experiences. (M. Shields, personal communication, October 10, 1994, adapted by J. Johnston, June 16, 2018)

Writing down what comes is also akin to individual frames being processed in the darkness, to then be viewed through the animating light of attention. These narratives are not to become fossilized versions of a self-story, but rather, are moving frames of reference, ever changing and illuminated by the mysterious life-force or essence shining through each of us, lighting up immediate awareness and the meanings of lived experience. Merleau Ponty (1945/1962) notices

that, “while not necessarily having an exact idea of where a discussion is heading, ‘as if by magic,’ the words flow and slowly become a cogent whole, . . . the sum relation of all networks” (p. 177). From a phenomenological perspective, engaging in writing dialogue with multiple personifications of psyche, as Hillman (1975) might phrase it, could be viewed as imaginative variation, a process of inquiry that Moustakas (1994) describes as being playful and “seek[ing] possible meanings through . . . imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions . . . [when] describing [its] essential structures” (pp. 97-98).

One way of experiencing imaginative variation is through poetics. Poetics scholar Carl Leggo (2008) understood poetic process as akin to research, important to human knowing, and embracing language of the heart. Of this process, he wrote,

> If we think about the prefix “re” in researcher, we understand that our questing/ question is always a return, or turning again. This is a ruminative process . . . and experience of lingering with memory and emotion and heart and story, a process of leaning on language in order to seek understanding of wisdom, a process of attending sensually and sensitively to life. . . . Poetry is a way of knowing and living, a way of examining lived experience by attending to issues of identity, relationship and community. (p. 171)

In tending to the various voices arising through the images in Sacred Mandala, spontaneous poems may also emerge while writing. Utilizing the repeating structure of the Malaysian verse form *pantoum* (“Pantoum,” 2017, para. 1) provides unexpected turns and additional meanings as the poem unfolds. The following is an example of a pantoum emerging from the constellation or cluster of images within the panel *The Blue Girl in the Corner* (see Figure 22), the results of which surprised me while they unfolded. Hers is an important voice for me to acknowledge and honour as a primary source relating to my phenomenological question on the experience of adoption.

Figure 22. *The Blue Girl in the Corner*, detail from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

A Happy Family Scene

The blue girl in the corner
barely visible in her form
beholds the happy scene
Such joy!

Barely visible in her form
yet present nonetheless
Such joy!
unshared with all the rest

Yet present nonetheless
she knows what is unseen
not shared, and much unrest
in the beauty of this scene

She knows she wasn't seen,
the blue girl in the former
broken-down dream,
frozen, in a happy family scene

Arts-based researcher Patricia Leavy (2009) writes, “Poetry is particularly useful for its ability to play with, expose, highlight and undermine power” (p. 240). To this I would add its ability to expose the introjected or internalized power imbalances *within oneself* and to restore balance through reclamation of power, in part through honouring images and texts. A more nuanced and complex understanding of the inner experience of adoption from the perspective of

mothers, and for mothers themselves, is called for, in a restorative act. I therefore offer this image (Figure 22) and poem as an example of one possible pathway to fulfilling the phenomenological purpose of creating understanding, action, or social change.

The Second Transition Ring

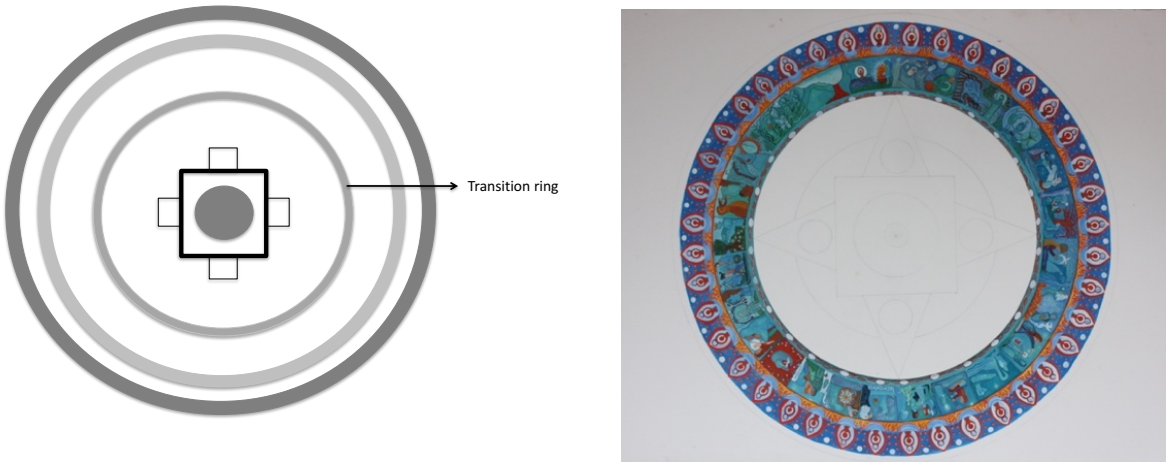

Figure 23. Structure: The Second Transition Ring, situated as the innermost ring; example from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

The Second Transition Ring in the Sacred Mandala (see Figure 23) allows for a time of transition and reflection on what has been made conscious thus far. By this point in painting my Sacred Mandala, I had learned something of the obstacles faced in order to come to a new understanding, both in research ideas and as a way of approaching life. Connecting patterns emerging from the inquiry question and practices became increasingly visible. As the Second Transition Ring may also represent change through consciously and intentionally expanding beyond potentially outmoded beliefs, once more, my journal writings included contemplation on noted areas of transition, while anchoring back to the inquiry question.

I began by painting, and first selected the background colour (not too dark or too thick), then mixed enough paint, in the correct consistency, to complete the whole ring. Painting in a clockwise manner, and as before, I made one design choice selection at a time, painting in a

symbol which reflected my inquiry. I chose to paint eggs, around the Second Transition Ring, followed by a DNA strand, connecting them (see Figure 24). These design choices were an honouring of observable (through dreams and synchronicities) entanglement at the unconscious level and of the unbreakable genetic connection of family and of shared traits, characteristics, and talents arriving through the double-helix—the Möbius strip where inside and outside are one.

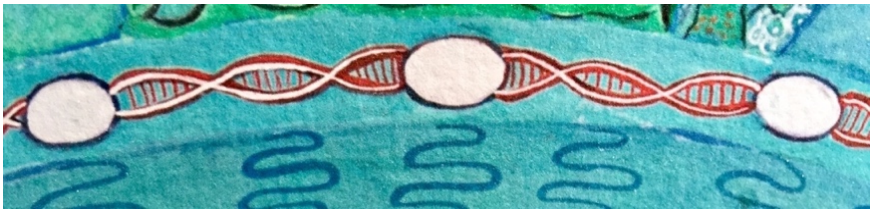

Figure 24. Second Transition Ring, Double Helix, detail from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

The Sacred Ground, or Wasteland

Figure 25. Structure: Sacred Ground or Wasteland, situated at the center of the outer rings; example from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

For the Sacred Ground, or Wasteland (see Figure 25), I mixed and laid down a medium basecoat of colour. Image retrieval is not practiced in this region. Having become increasingly more adept with painting, I experienced an optimal, creative sense of flow—characterized by a satisfying, focused, emotional involvement and immersive timelessness (Csikszentmihalyi,

1996). Present-moment attention is a component of both flow and mindfulness. Flow necessitates total engagement with the project at hand, and mindfulness involves neutral awareness of sensory experience, thoughts, and feelings arising in the moment. Working within this meditative flow, an emergent repetitive pattern built to an increasingly complex visual field.

In the language of Heidegger (1949/1998), this Wasteland area provides a *clearing*, an opening to the possibility of new understanding (p. 257). Madeleine taught that this region represents both a Wasteland and Sacred Ground in which the student experiences a solo, often lonely journey wherein the comfort of old narratives are left behind. In the Wasteland, I struggled with the question "What now?" in the space of tension between old and new, between introjected teaching and embodied knowing, between internalized values and allowance of relational understanding, and between myself and other. This area represented a time of radical subjectivity, wandering the Wasteland, weighted by the fallacy of the old story but not yet knowing what would come. My attention jumped from one thing to another in an attempt to distract myself from the discomfort of inner conflict; yet, as Friere taught, "Conflicts are the midwife of consciousness" (Horton & Friere, 1990, p. 187).

In the Wasteland, my practice involved patiently noticing confusion and giving it *attention*—the primary creative act—and allowing "intention to turn toward the implicate and generative orders" (Bohm & Peat, 1987, p. 224). I did not hurry but rather allowed the inquiry to brew and corrective thoughts and feelings to percolate. Growth and transformation are often preceded by periods of pain, as the way to the self begins with pain through the experience of the *coincidentia oppositorum* [coincidence of opposites] (Jung, 1973a, p. 375). This was the time to suffer the tension of opposites consciously, while asking what needs to be learned. Whitmont (1991) explained that the adversarial may become helpful when "that which hitherto has been a

threatening or destructive entity . . . become[s] cooperative and reveal[s] its constructive potential when we risk finding a place for it and when we seek its inmost core of meaning" (p. 264). Whitmont elaborates when speaking about Jacob in the Bible wrestling the demon and saying, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me" (as cited in Whitmont, 1991, p. 264). Hillman (1975), too, says that "wrestling with ideas is a sacred struggle, as with an angel" (p. 130). The student may wrestle with issues, persevering until a breakthrough or blessing comes.

This region is also Sacred Ground, which the wanderer traverses in approach to the portals leading to the Inner Sanctum. It is in this space, while holding the tension of the opposites, that inquirers are encouraged to reflect further on their own attitude toward the sacred. In approaching the portals, an open and reverent attitude is important, allowing that there is something greater than the conscious ego (Singer, 1994; Whitmont, 1991). Figure 26 shows a detail from my painting of the Wasteland—the area surrounding the two sides of the triangle.

Figure 26. Detail of Sacred Ground/Wasteland, from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

The Wasteland was, for me, immensely difficult to paint; much painting and un-painting ensued, until I entered a flow state. I represented the various stages of my process with the gradient of colour rings ranging from murky blue, to a crackled green, to orange and red.

During this time, I began to consider the parallels between the felt need to simultaneously go back and work and rework in repair of a basic truth in my life, while also trying to consciously move forward in my Sacred Mandala and inquiry. These reciprocating movements were not separable. It was in this region I came to more fully appreciate that Sacred Mandala painting practices, lived experience, and the Inquiry itself were one.

I then painted snakes around the periphery, as the winding gestural movement was what my hand and eye seemed to want, while experiencing a productive "interplay of passion and play" (W. E. Doll, 2012, p. 110), making the structure my own. In ancient Greece, amongst other meanings, snakes were considered protectors of the household, and they symbolized processes seen and unseen (below and above ground). I summoned their protection. Importantly, snakes can be dangerous yet also represent regeneration as they cast off old skin, emerging anew. For me too, there was a visual trace of having been cast out of the garden of Eden after biting into the apple of knowledge. In my journal I wrote,

> I have been challenged in finding my flow right up until painting small bright circles in orange and red. Suddenly, I am one with the experience. When completing the Wasteland and looking back, for the first time, I see the inner region as a kind of 'magic carpet' of hot coals, which I was flying and creating at the same time—transported to another life—and have since consciously chosen to fire-walk—purifying alchemical fires; my ego in service of my Self.
>
> I am leaving the territory of the old unconscious narrative now, as the dreams I am being given are about getting lost, but finding my way home. Deep transformation is occurring, having actively turned towards, and consciously suffered, my own mothering losses, while also helping others in their searches—a coming together.
> (Author's mandala journal, August 25, 2012)

Leaving the Wasteland/Sacred ground, the inquirer is readied in approach of the four portals. Madeleine taught that the obstacles in one's inner work may become openings into the Inner Sanctum.

The Four Portals

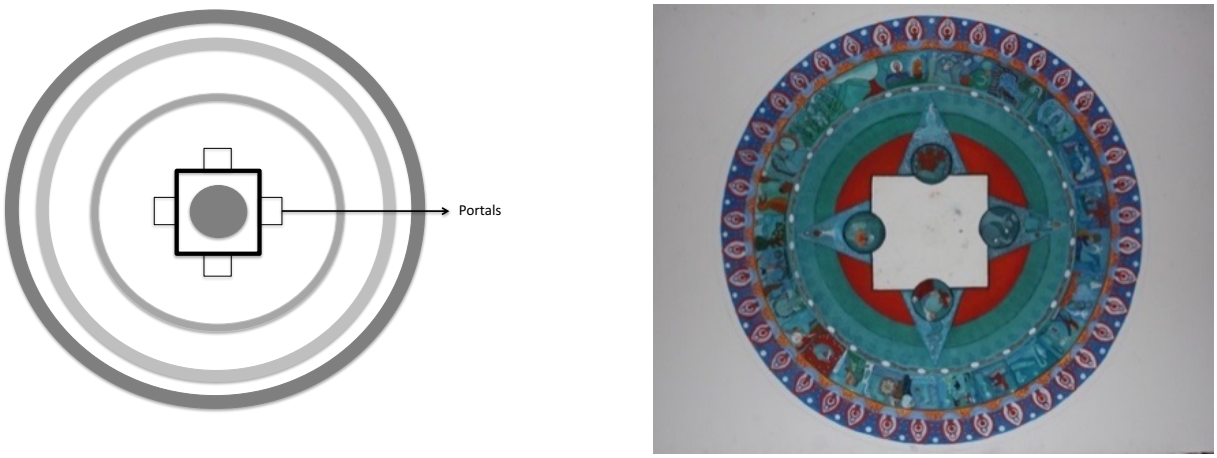

Figure 27. Structure: The Four Portals, situated on the four sides of the Sacred Garden Wall; example from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

Once the wall was painted in, I began to paint the portals (see Figure 27), completing each one fully (see Figure 28). I entered into dialogue with the images before moving on.

Figure 28. Guardians at the Four Portals: (lt. to rt.) *The Enchantment*, *Beehive/Behave*, *Felines Held, Surrender the Surrendering*, from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

Once more I engaged in the technique of laying down gouache and removing it with crushed paper, revealing the mysterious figures who declared themselves as guardians of the portals. The images did not make immediate sense and were akin to visual koans; riddles that defy solving through logic, but rather lead to contemplation. Upon describing the scene and

images “objectively,” glimmers of recognition began to occur—inviting me to look anew. The images make visible the structures of phenomenal consciousness.

Each portal represented a cardinal opening—a way into the sacred through feelings, thoughts, intuitions, and sensations. In depth-psychological processing, it is understood that whatever we defend against carries the *telos*, the meaning (Hillman, 1978; Jung, 2009). In linking inner affect with the emergent symbol, energy is released as holistic knowing arrives (R. A. Johnson, 1991; R. Stein, 1996). In an imagistic approach (Hillman, 1997), I stayed close to the intrarelated images, allowing connections to emerge and resonate with multiple meanings. The images also spoke for themselves.

The Guardian Figures appeared to function as bridges between seemingly irreconcilable aspects, ultimately allowing for the expression of something new. Jung (1958/1969) called this phenomenon the *transcendent function*, linking the conscious and unconscious, carrying the possibility of a solution, an integration, or a liberation. For example, each of the figures arriving in my portals revealed themselves as unseen helpers offering sacred narratives eliciting much quiet reflection, and indeed, my thinking and feeling was reorganized. The following is the image of a portal (see Figure 29), a sampling of the description, and (abbreviated) dialogue process. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have selected a dialogue and panel titled *The Enchantment*, as the figures speak to me of the wisdom of pre-reflective knowing arising in my intelligent body, giving voice to the world, and emerging in my question, “What is the experience of painting a Sacred Mandala while focusing on child-loss by adoption?”

The portal titled *The Enchantment* appears as a triangular shape with a circle in the center (see Figure 29). The circle is an ouroboros: a snake swallowing its own tail in eternal renewal. The bottom of the circle penetrates the level below.

Figure 29. Portal 1: (*Bear Witness to*) *the Enchantment*, from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012

Above the circle is a swan-like human figure in a swirling blue gown. The figure faces sideways, looking over a shoulder. Within the ouroboros, four figures appear against a star-filled night sky. A large-bellied red-brown bear and two cubs of the same colour sit upon a blue woman, who is holding a small baby. The blue woman is clothed in a starry skirt and her feet are star-studded as well. She, too, faces sideways, toward the right, both floating and grounded. My dialogue with her goes as follows:

> *Jane*: (to the swan-like figure) Can you tell me about yourself? Why have you arrived in this mandala portal?
>
> > Hello Jane. I am a visual reminder of your transformation in time. Inside the spell that was cast, I am the swan who becomes a woman and a woman who becomes a swan. Your animal nature is beautiful and fierce. This portal is a celebration of transformation. I wear this gown—a wedding gown—a commitment to self-knowledge which embraces all things. Your bodymind, once wed to a great sadness,

> is partner to joy as well. Grief and love entwined. Never forget the great gifts you have received along the way. To claim them you must bear witness to the profound effects.
>
> Please, enter and speak with the figures who await you here.

Jane: I will, thank you and bless you. I do find it challenging to bear witness, yet I now know it has been given to me to do so.

Jane: (to the bears) And tell me bears—why are you here?

> I am Mother Bear, and I, too, come as a reminder of your acute senses and animal nature. Never come between a mother and her cubs! Every instinct you have felt about your cubs is real and natural. Everything you knew in your body was exactly so, before the language to express it arrived. There is healing in acceptance of what you had to bear, power in your body and knowing, and joy in playing with your cubs!

Jane: Yes—thank you for reminding me of my nature; not all can or should be intellectualized. I love my children! And what of the figure below you? Who are you?

> I am The Blue Woman, grown from The Blue Girl in the Corner, who now lays beneath the powerful mother bear and her playful cubs, holding my baby. As you can see, longing and sadness are not separable from joy. Your sadness was another's joy. Yet, joy and sorrow are carried together in this one image and always will be. Embrace this life you hold, and protect it well.

Jane: (to The Blue Woman)**:** Yes, it's true. I know now that this pain will never fully leave me, nor do I expect my joy to evaporate. I have learned they can and do coexist, for all time, and can never eradicate each other.

> Yes, the swan spell is about your own disenchantment and also remembering your own nature, time and again, in a cycle of eternal return. Something ugly becomes something beautiful. Transformation occurs through understanding that everything is true at the same time; held in unison. The past has not fully passed but is transforming, always, evidenced by all you are experiencing and opening to, within and beyond conscious awareness. The starry night is the constellation of a complex configured around child-loss and instinctual wounding, but it is also a starry night!
>
> *Jane*: Thank you and bless you.

After dialoguing with the images, I consulted mythological symbol texts wherein startling information, connections and patterns were revealed, given the a priori existence of archetypal structures and the phenomenological content. I further integrated aspects of self, arising into

conscious awareness, was further represented in imagistic, poetic, healing language. Psyche knows what these images mean and will illuminate them further. According to Varela (2001), structures of consciousness are not solely limited to one's cranium, but rather extend into the natural world, into timeless experience, revealed in relationships of all kinds; an extended subjectivity.

For example, much later, while consulting the works of Maturana and Varela (1972/1980), I was startled to learn that Varela took up the symbol of the ouroboros as his guiding image. The ouroboros—the symbol of a snake swallowing its own tail—is an important alchemical symbol appearing in many cultures (see Figure 30). Amongst various interrelated meanings, the ancient symbol depicts the eternal cycle of birth and death, the integration of opposites, and the understanding of wholeness as the unity of the spiritual and physical (von Franz, 1990/1992).

Figure 30. "Ouroboros drawing from a late medieval Byzantine Greek alchemical manuscript," by anonymous illustrator, 1478. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org

Varela considered the ouroboros the ideal image for his ideas on circularity, self-reference, self-generation, and renewal (Maturana & Varela, 1972/1980). In ancient Egypt, "the Ouroboros is depicted on tombs as guardian of the Underworld. There it represents the liminal

moment when death encounters resurrection" (Marks-Tarlow, Robertson, & Combs, 2002, p. 31). Again, the theme of death and resurrection shows itself.

In my meditation upon the metaphor of the ouroboros image, in conjunction with Maturana and Varela's (1972/1980) ideas on autopoiesis, a connection with the image and a situation replicating itself arrives. The knowledge-experience of loss continued to be created both in the inner and outer realms, represented by the snake swallowing its own tail in constant renewal. Reflexively thinking about themes, then, also becomes a way of stepping back and disrupting this circular order of replication. I am struck by the convergence of meanings between the ouroboros and the Bee Goddess—death and renewal—and sense the direction for contemplation being indicated. A question linking back to the presenting image of the open grave arrives: "What aspects of my own self need to die and be renewed?"

The Garden Wall

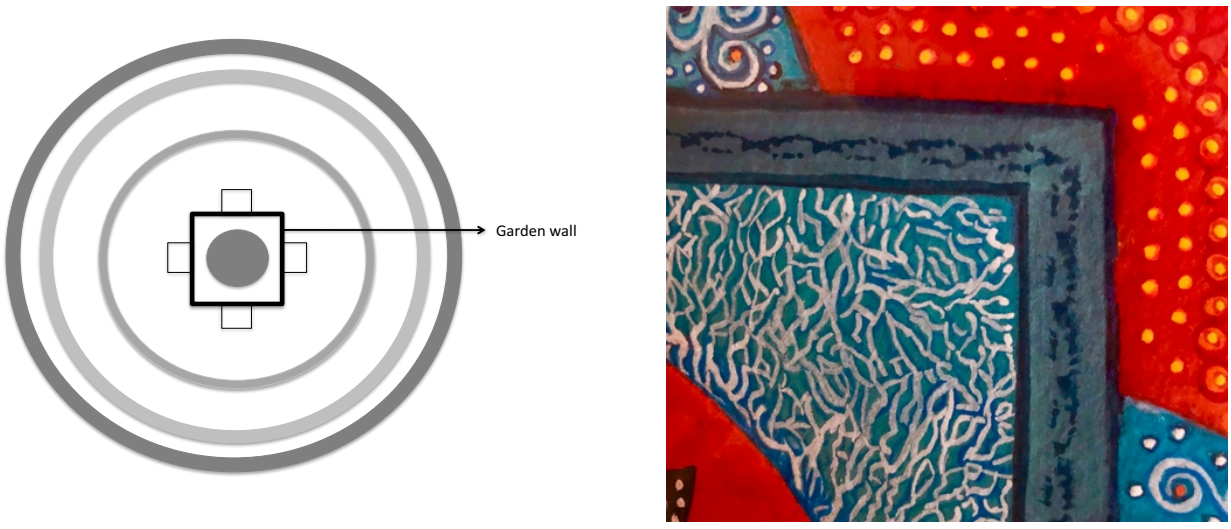

Figure 31. Structure: The Garden Wall, with detail, *Rusted Chain on Garden Wall* (blue-gray, angled band), from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

The garden wall (see Figure 31) represents both protection and defense against other ways of knowing, be it somatic, emotional, intellectual, intuitive, or spiritual, and also

symbolizes the protected area of our innermost sacred region. While painting the Sacred Garden wall, realizations may occur, which the student notes in the Mandala journal as they arise, later further articulating in writing the experiences of defense and protection as a journal entry. This is a time for acknowledgement and respect for one's own power to defend. Defenses are important, yet outmoded defenses may block growth, preventing passage into deeper ways of experiencing self-knowing and relating in the world. The Inner Sanctum region represents transformation of old stories and understanding ourselves in a new way.

While painting the Sacred Garden Wall, I experimented with dabbing an upright, semidry, stiff brush around the painted square. This movement surprised me by leaving a light image resembling a rusting chain with broken links (see Figure 31). I immediately associated this image with a breaking apart of old culturally forged links—the shackles—linguistic and lived, understanding that how I have experienced the world is inextricably linked with historical consciousness (Heidegger, 1953/1996) and deeply connected with the torture of closed records adoption. The shunning social mores and social policies arising from a puritanical, patriarchal, sexist, and ageist cultural worldview had coalesced within the crucible, forging links. I imagined these links as the long causal chain forged before my existence—and how my perception had been changing through deep self-inquiry, sacred narratives, synchronicities, claiming experience, revealing myself to myself, entering healing relationships, and bearing witness in a loving way. Images of support and memories of care were also uncovered, bringing with them an embodied sense of gratitude. In approaching the Sacred Garden, my banished Eve recognized her return. With the arrival of the unexpected image which felt joyous to me, and perfectly correct, I was ready to proceed to the center.

The Sacred Garden/ Inner Sanctum

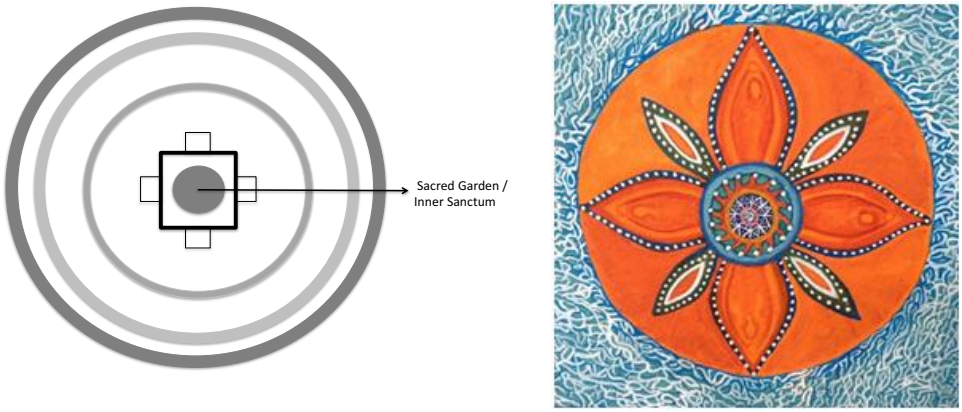

Figure 32. Structure: Sacred Garden/Inner Sanctum, situated at the center of the Sacred Mandala; example from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

After completion of the Garden Wall, I moved inward toward the Sacred Garden/Inner Sanctum (see Figure 32). Madeleine taught that this region symbolizes the garden of Paradise and the inner depths of the soul. In this region, inquirers enact their finest painted work (M. Shields, personal communication, May 10, 1994). The work is considered the 'finest' in that, ideally, they have gained increased mastery of painting and mindfulness practice. The Inner Sanctum also provides a gentle resting place, or Inner Sanctum, to hold the inquirer/inquiry (Breiddal, 2013). Depth psychologist Katherine Morrow (2007) explains that in the mandala, "the essence of the centre is emptiness, which is the immortal life force of all manifestations that are made visible through the limitations of time" (p. v). In this meditative space, the knowledge that the student of the Sacred Mandala has given the inquiry process its due during this time is experienced as deeply satisfying, and a sense of integrated well-being may be strongly felt.

In my Sacred Mandala Inquiry, in approach to the Inner Sanctum, I painted a blue grey backdrop, after which I repetitively followed the fibrous lines in the paper with white paint (see Figure 32). This process became a mindless/mindful meditation between eye, hand, and paper.

Based on my readings in neurobiology (Siegel, 2010), the lines suddenly appeared as neurons, also mirroring self-organization due to the embedded patterning in the paper, and as wild, due to the fact that I could not fully control where the lines went, given the preexisting structures. I wanted these new neurons to make visual sense, to be symmetrical and pleasing, yet they took on their own shapes, which I discovered I could improve upon but not perfect. This then also felt right and spoke to me about my ability to shape my own brain through the intention of my mind through a variety of ways including the bodily act of painting and writing practices and through relationships and conversations with my painting partners—creating long-term associations and pathways for peace. Awareness of preexisting structures, archetypal realities and reconsidering life events within my lifeworld and inquiry opened new networks of relations within the intertwined web. This reorganization, which is cognitive but not limited to the cranium, involved personal, ethical, and social realities. I realized, too, I was in the process of changing how I thought, not only what I thought (Berger, 2004).

The Sacred Mandala became a mirror, in a sense, both reflecting and converting self into other and other into self. Through contemplation, I felt a movement away from the mirage of individual existence into an experience of sacred inclusion. I was readied to proceed to the very centre of the Sacred Mandala. In my journal, I wrote,

> Moving inward, four large blue petal openings appear, and four small ones between them. They call out for dots and I feel a relief painting them. . . . Inside the larger petal portals appear fading orange and red images of the Surrendering Woman, a motif which has spontaneously arisen, is in evidence all around me, and runs through my Sacred Mandala. The words "Surrender the surrendering" comes to me and feels *just so*. The smaller petals appear open and empty and protect a lustrous pearl tipped lathe. Inside the lathe is an intersecting web of peace and connects at the bottom to a reddish white dotted ring. Within that ring, a new and ancient light emerges into visibility, simultaneously expanding both outwards and eternally inward. (Author's mandala journal, Nov 21, 2012)

As I relate this, I spiral back, reflexively considering my ongoing emergence within the fractal-like qualities of the painting experience, where the whole is present in the parts, and each image is somehow limitless in scale, going infinitely inward into the personal and outward into the collective and cosmic.

The Ring of Return

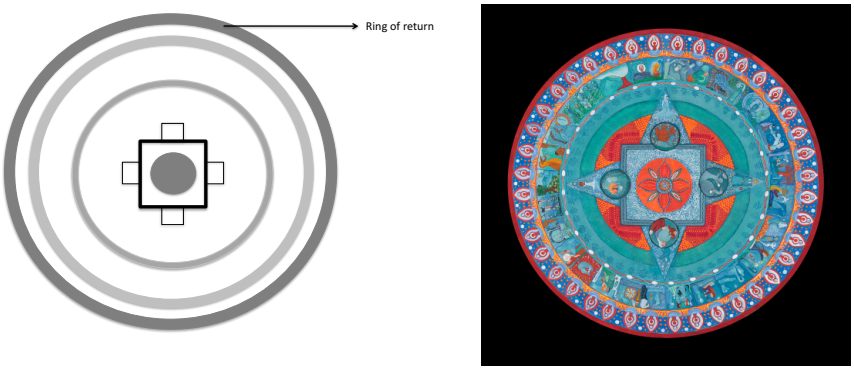

Figure 33. Structure: The Ring of Return (to Belonging); example from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

I painted the ring at the outermost edge (see Figure 33) in a solid colour, intuitively selected, which signified the culmination and completion of a long cycle of inquiry. At this stage, I was then able to stand back and contemplate the overall effect, over an extended period of time. I considered many aspects: colour; feeling tone; balance; verticality; proportionality; reversibility; connectivity; personal, cultural, archetypal, and repeating images; numbers; animals, people, minerals, associations; time, synchronicities, prognostications; work to be done; missing elements; revealed healing; myths and numinous symbols; narratives old and new; and meanings made (knowing more would unfold). As well, I noticed that long-term practice had strengthened my ability to be mindful, which also "pervade[d] the lifeworld" (Tobin, 2016, p. 5), allowing for increased awareness of the ripple effect of my own being in the world and the interconnectedness of all things. As Merleau-Ponty (1960/1964) so beautifully articulated,

"whenever I try to understand myself, the whole fabric of the perceptible world comes too, and with it comes the others who are caught in it" (p. 15). Painting this ring imparted a sense of wholeness or inherently relational connection between myself, community, and world in which we are all embedded.

I named the final outer ring of the Sacred Mandala "The Ring of Return," as I returned to the beginning of the Sacred Mandala changed, expanded, and, along with our universe, spiraling outward. The Ring of Return brought with it the gold and an increased sense of both connection and individuation. I will discuss this further in the final chapter. While considering all that emerged in the inquiry, the name *Surrender: Return to the Source* occurred to me, inspired by the cultural teachings of Indigenous Harvard scholar and educator Aluli Meyer (1995) that deeply affected me while in studies with her on the Big Island of Hawaii and learning of the practice of Ho'oponopono. Ho'oponopono relates to the forgiveness processes situated in Hawaiian culture, the core idea being to return to the source of the conflict and to untangle it through self-responsibility and truth telling, in a righting of wrongs. I felt a strong resonance with this practice as a way of being and brought aspects of this learning to my own Sacred Mandala inquiry. The error and ignorance of separateness was burned away, the ripple effect witnessed, and the spiral of initiation complete, though not final.

Through the practice of Sacred Mandala painting, I gained the understanding that the phrase "artists see the world differently" is not just a saying about a particular kind of temperament; seeing differently also became literal, as intricate details of the material world came more fully into visual relief. The careful attention to seeing and working with paint on fibrous paper translated into generalized experience noticed in such things as the veins in leaves, the colour shading in the waves of water, the delicate shapes in clouds, the differing hues of

vegetation, and various textures. The whole world appeared changed, wherein seeing was sensuous and enlivening. The rigorous, artful, and reflective practice of Sacred Mandala Inquiry is evidenced in the following examples of my Sacred Mandala and those painted by Madeleine Shields and my colleagues (see Figures 34-37).

Figure 34. *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012.

Figure 35. *Gift of the Darkness*, by Madeleine Shields, 1987. University of Victoria Special Collections & University Archives Madeleine Shields fonds, SC587, Accession #2018-078

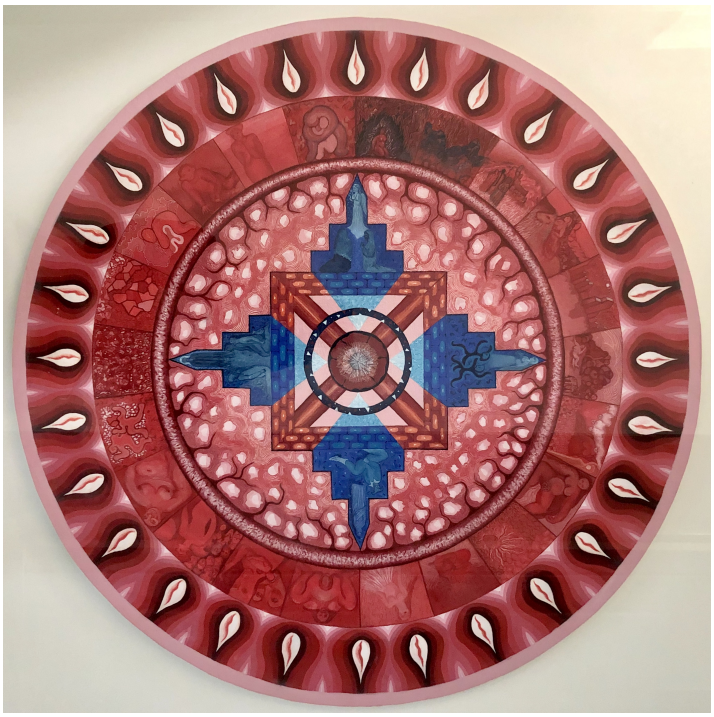

Figure 36. *Passion Flight*, by Susan Breiddal, 1984.

Figure 37. Sun Mandala, by Karen Guilbeault, 1987.

The Unending End

In this research, I have laid out the principles, practice, process, and structure of Sacred Mandala Inquiry. I have provided examples of phenomenological hermeneutical Sacred Narrative writing, image retrieval, dialogue with images as well as examples of synchronicities and meanings made. In this chapter, I pull back and consider the greater whole. Although my personal experience is profoundly meaningful for me and continues to unfold, the larger purpose in the work has been to present this holistic model for inquiry. Readers will now have some understanding of the depth and complexity of conducting such an inquiry, guided by their own phenomenologically oriented research question, the precepts of the work through the structure of the Sacred Mandala.

Contributions of the Research

This research contributes to the academic community through provision of an expanded way to access knowledge, construct meaning, and honour realities beyond limited awareness: the unsayable and unknowable. Sacred Mandala Inquiry weaves theory and practice, encompasses scholarship, complexity, emergence, emotion, spirituality, intuition**,** and embodiment, allowing for a broader, richer expression of human experience. Integration of seemingly disparate aspects may occur through disruption of binaries revealing inherent complexity. A rebalancing of an overly rational cultural view provides a sense of spiritual renewal. Importantly, long term practice may strengthen one's ability to attend in present moment awareness. As well, profound experiences of complexity relating to the guiding question supports cultivation of tact, or "knowing what to do when you don't know what to do" (van Manen, 2015, book subtitle), through inner experience and personal knowing of the paradoxical. Akin to arts-based research in phenomenology, this research method/ology not only informs but brings about potential for

inspiring social change by sensitizing readers or practitioners to respond sensitively (van Manen, 1991, 2015).

I experienced my Sacred Mandala inquiry, and mentoring work with others, as a radical activity in that I cultivated the realization that we are all free to explore and evolve our own understanding through a practice of wholeness, poetic language, and tending to emerging images resonating with multiple meanings, led by that which seeks our attention. There is a liberating beauty in knowing that we do not already have to know all the answers: there is no perfect, objective reality that humans can know, yet there are relationships to attend to respectfully and to deepen.

Within a Sacred Mandala inquiry, although a mentor helps guide the student, each individual inquirer constructs unique meanings. The perennial Hero's journey matures into the hero's-journey-in-relation (Johnston, 1997), one in which the student, mentor, or group discovers and rediscovers partnership with forces unseen. The luminous waves of resonances informing the evolution of the work may unify previously disparate thoughts and experiences and disciplines into coherent, meaningful wholes within an emergent network, providing new meanings.

From a human educational perspective, each inquirer, although of the same species, is completely unique and perhaps best considered as a foreign continent. Landing on the shores of this other calls for attending closely in order to learn something of the local customs. This understanding can be applied to individual inquirers as well, as psyche's images emerge as the *other*, seeking attention, integration, redemption, and transformation as needed, evolving the collective dream that is ongoing. As transformative curriculum educator and student of the mandala Michele Tanaka offered,

> what the world needs right now are ways of solving complex issues with honesty and integrity. To change our (often unconscious) patterns, to transform, we must find ways to

> hold gently and come to know the wisdom of our emotions. The Sacred Mandala may provide such space. (personal communication, June 14, 2019)

The complexity of Sacred Mandala Inquiry encourages border crossings—a shift away from silos and specialized knowledge—to networks of internal knowing, based on deep exploration, eruptions, bifurcations, and experiences of the multiple paradoxical aspects of self, which, when cultivating mindfulness, may in in turn give rise to authenticity and humility. Importantly, over the long process of inquiry, core concepts of Sacred Mandala practice move from conceptual to internalized and embodied; the structure, practice, and process becomes a living part of one's personal psyche, illuminating the darkness.

Suggestions for Future Exploration

While painting, I was engaged in writing about adoption from a depth-psychological perspective; however, the Sacred Mandala may offer a creative space allowing inquirers to look through other lenses involving a phenomenological attitude that includes a poetizing of the world, looking again, re-searching. The concept of transferability in research may be understood by the inquirers themselves once called, as they imagine their way into the work. I do not know how the work will be taken up—or what might unfold—only that it will be psyche led, complex, and self-emergent. The resonance, structure, practice, and process will create the research and change researcher(s), researched, and the reader. Each inquirer will proceed with unique generative activities and resulting unique questions, yet each student will need to adhere to a phenomenological foundation as well as the principles of Sacred Mandala Inquiry, in preservation of the essences.

Sacred Mandala Inquiry could be taken up by a group of inquirers studying topics through the lens of varying disciplines, while also tracking emergence. For instance, during the fifteen months of painting, while formally meeting with my mandala group each month, I began

to notice cross-over themes in our images and dreams, despite the fact we were not actually painting together. As pictured below in Figure 38, Susan had painted skeleton fingers symbolizing what remains of a life. Suddenly, the boney fingers transformed into ripples for her. She then related this to a shape-shifting of stories and of the effect of retelling upon past events.

This interpretation was very meaningful to me as I was studying the psychic consequences of adoption through re-articulation of the skeletal remains of the adoption mandate. From this time on, I began to note the interpenetration of topics, which led me into reading about synchronicity, field theory and extended mind. The "ripple effect" became a shared theme evidenced throughout, and beyond, as in the lower portion of these images.

Figure 38. First Transition Rings, 'Ripple Effect' Susan Breiddal (lt.); Jane Johnston (rt.) (2012)

Upon reflection on educators Brent Davis and Elaine Simmt's (2003) conception of complex systems as adaptive, self-organizing, and emergent, as well as the claim that such systems are systems that learn, an area for further exploration might include observing and rendering the continuous dynamic adaptations within a learning context.

Although I employed a depth-psychological lens, examples of transferability possibly include teachings from poetic inquiry (Leggo, 2008; Prendergast, Leggo, & Sameshima, 2009), mythopoetic inquiry (Dirkx, 2008; M. Doll, 2008; Shann, 2015; Wright, 2008), contemplative learning and inquiry (Gunnlaugson, 2014), visual research inquiry (Sullivan, 2005), sacred narrative inquiry (Dundas, 1984; Hendry, 2009), mindfulness inquiry (Woods, 2013), relational

inquiry (Doane & Varcoe, 2015), appreciative inquiry (Bushe, 2013), visual narrative inquiry in eco-arts and place-based study (McGarrigle, 2018), durational-performance inquiry (Pelias, 2008), self-emergence inquiry (Chang, 2004), transformative inquiry (Tanaka, 2014), and a/r/tography (Irwin & Cosson, 2004), amongst others. Inquirers themselves will understand how the work may be taken up within their own disciplines and topic, yet employing a phenomenological hermeneutic orientation, while adhering to the principles of the Sacred Mandala, is important. (See Appendix C for proposed dissertation outline.)

Returning to my own experience, I found that my Sacred Mandala inquiry involved a nonlinear, creative, highly complex process. Describing the powerful and rich lived experience of painting a Sacred Mandala exceeds the limitations of language. Importantly, for me, creating space for 117 figures to emerge and tell their tale allowed for healthy diversity within the whole, mirroring the fullness of life experiencing itself. Indeed, so much occurred during my inquiry that I have chosen only a few examples to illuminate facets. Each image was akin to a wormhole into another realm. At every turn, my lifeworld reflected back to me the unfolding processes of nondual psyche. I see more clearly the participatory nature of perceived reality, all of which remains as continually unfolding images in the 'completed' Sacred Mandala.

For example, in reflecting on the long and complex unfolding Bee Goddess story with the startling attendant synchronicities, I discovered that, amongst other meanings, the Bee Goddess represented death and rebirth—her icon placed in ancient Greek graves, her honey used to embalm. For decades, I called the experience of adoption separation 'zombie grief,' as it never died. Adoption reunion is akin to a return from the dead, a joyous one for many, yet can also be a mixed experience. The child is not the child who was lost to the mother. That child reincarnated as a different version than the one who would have been and is thus the known/unknown child.

The unconscious symbolizing work of the Sacred Mandala, in my example, has been represented in the theme of the Bee Goddess, death, zombie liberation movement, and rebirth. I have myself experienced something deep within me returning to life, having responded to the call of the Sacred Mandala. In hosting the images of psyche and allowing sacred narratives to become more conscious, I have further differentiated myself from the historically conditioned, habitual, linguistic, religious complex—thus tending to my essence.

Humans naturally take part in the myth-making, providing richness and wisdom lived out in astonishing, symbolic stories. There are many stories to live and be lived by, and I believe it is important to develop a response-ability to walk with those stories, asking for a healing and renewing narrative. To make sense of one's experience of healing means releasing one's bodymind from reductionist ways of thinking and speaking. In other words, stepping back and thinking about variations in images and stories involves a moral choice, a response-able choice, and in my case, I chose to partner healing stories through "the design I consciously wove" (K. Guilbeault, personal communication, March 15, 2018), of "thinking with" the narratives and "letting stories breathe" (Frank, 2010, pp. 152-153), thus increasing integration amongst the competing parts.

Engaging in artistic processes has the power to reveal truths about our human condition, where we too may experience Heidegger's (1949/1998) lived understanding that language speaks us, that art speaks us. We speak and are spoken, write and are written, and paint images we may not fully intend, yet we are shown aspects of ourselves to ourselves. Further, Gadamer (1960/2004) claimed that the "work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience changing the person experiencing it" (p. 103). In attending to the numinous processes of the unconscious, my nightmares involving child-loss have greatly receded. As much as I have

worked the material, the material has worked me. Both hosting and being hosted by the images, narratives, and poems, I see and understand that the ancient structures for loss remain and will be with me always. There will be no rush to premature closure in this undertaking—and yet, I have changed. As in the dream of releasing the bee, the door at the top of the structure is ajar, with a long view.

In experimenting within the support of my Sacred Mandala community, a prosthetic space of art (Garoian, 2013), and reflecting on multiple meanings, on one axis, I have come to consider the painting and writing practices and tending to the phenomenology of the unconscious as replacement for absent memories. Weighted words and images emerge and express symbolically, in what Merleau-Ponty (1993) calls "the visualization which renders present to us what is absent" (p. 132), with the possibility of a redemptive view; the fragments reflect a holographic, coherent, meaningful whole. As Zimmerman (2015) summarized,

> art helps us identify and understand previously invisible forces that shape our lives and thus to deal with them. In what is perhaps the greatest gift to us, art makes possible *recognition* of power allowing us to say "Yes, that is how it is. Now I understand." (p. 56)

The emergent images continue to speak to me of the wounded divine Feminine, represented in the disabled Half-Armed Woman, denied the hands-on experience of mothering her firstborn, releasing her shock, rippling outward into the psychophysical world, returning as awareness of synchronicities and nondual experiences. By engaging in Sacred Mandala Inquiry, a prosthetic arm was formed—a re-membering of my mothering self—which allowed me to pick up and examine the lost years somehow, all the while dwelling within a sacred, protected process, and viewing it unfold in the *now*. I sensed strongly the requirement of noticing my thoughts and interpretations and their hidden ethical dimensions. The experience of a developing equanimity through attentive mindfulness practices supports this reminder.

In a poem about working with the unconscious, sociologist and women's studies scholar Patricia Ticineto Clough (2000) writes about "imagining there is another perspective—for oneself" (p. 318). In the work of the Sacred Mandala, I was able to imagine another perspective by allowing psyche's experience to become visible through sacred art coupled with meditative, poetic, and sacred narrative writing practices. What has become increasingly evident and true for me, since completion of the Sacred Mandala and the writing I have engaged in so far, is an increased awareness, through the lived experience of the multiple layers and interconnectedness of all things in all realms, that I was separated from my son but not separate. My glimpses of the shimmering web revealed the relational aspects of psyche across time and space; many forces, seen and unseen, guiding and even protecting; the reciprocating nature of the perception of reality predicated upon the viewing orientation; the transient nature of self-image based on chosen narrative and meaning; and the ripple effect of affect and choices. The power embedded in a loving, protected approach in Sacred Mandala Inquiry has allowed the images of psyche a redemption, giving voice and turning a wound into a work of healing art (Romanyshyn, 2010). I am reminded of the dancing bees, mapping directions for sources of nourishment for the hive. Perhaps too, the archaic in me leaves this painting, this healing art, this dance, on the cave wall (the world-wide net) for those to later find, indicating "I came this way. . . ."

In meditating on the completed Sacred Mandala as a whole, I realize that the immensity and intensity paradoxically scaled the historical event of being separated from my son as the defining story of my life into only one of the many powerful stories weaving through my life. The words that come are "I gave this process its due," all the while knowing there is no place to arrive. Making the darkness conscious provided my intelligent body with a clearer voice arising from lived experience.

I am also more aware of the ongoing effects regarding choice/no choice and, given the formative experience of being a mother of loss, how paralytic the act of deciding can be for me, showing me the remaining structures. This purgatory-like descent into the unconscious and pre-reflected content offered a cleansing, a healing, and a rebirth, and in this rebirth, I would not have foreseen that I would become deeply involved in online genetic genealogy community and support separated families in finding one another. Participating in healing social change in this particular way resulted from trusting in the emergent processes of Sacred Mandala Inquiry.

Now, in revisiting the body of this study and reflecting on the various philosophical texts I have struggled to understand, I wonder what will remain as guiding light. What does comfort me is Jung's (1976a) knowledge that "your vision will become clear only when you look into your own heart. . . . Who looks outside dreams, who looks inside, awakens" (p. 33). In this awakening, having turned my gaze outward, I also strongly acknowledge the relationship between the wounded mother and the wounded earth, and of the need for great care. In consideration of the difficult initial Ring of Fire dream of matricide and all that unfolded in my Sacred Mandala inquiry, I have come to consider the lifelong reactions of mothers separated from their children as natural, and the cultural situation necessitating adoption losses as pathological. As mothers' personal psyches reflect the selfsame ecosystem of psyche in which we are embedded, whatsoever is done to harm the system quite naturally has effects. I see now the adoption mandate as on a continuum with the plunder of the seas and forests and land, a practice not limited to the past or to one continent. As ecofeminists Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (2014) stressed, we are living through the Anthropocene—the time of great human effect upon the Mother. We are entwined, and the work of waking up to our own ripple effect is critical.

However, not everything is under human control. As I found in my Sacred Mandala Inquiry, psyche will unfold processes, with or without conscious cooperation. Abandoned emotions and disregarded ways of knowing are important to attend to as sacred healers when they are reflected back in patterns in the 'outer' world, recognized or not. Joining intellect and heart is critical for acknowledging complexity, reclaiming shadow content, providing the embodied understanding that mindfulness practice allows the ripple effect increased visibility. As allowed, expansion of my horizon and perspective occurred wherein I experienced the visible structures of my own consciousness and glimpsed the reality of undivided unity: there is no separation between my mind and the body of the world.

Being increasingly aware of the ripple effect, and through my knowing and doing, I have consciously chosen love so as to participate in bringing into being a version of a world I wish to inhabit. Finally, as alluded to, I have experienced an embodied understanding that I am a microcosm and my research into the wounded mother has arisen from the deep suppression of the Feminine element in our shared world. The emergent work of the Sacred Mandala has been about creatively connecting with the feminine ground of Being, while giving voice, in a sacred marriage of intellect and emotion, intuition and sensation, beyond hierarchy.

As previously indicated, Hermes is a trickster. After submitting this dissertation, and awaiting feedback, I reread what I had written, marveling over the many synchronistic events, documented and undocumented, which unfolded in my inquiry and beyond, pointing to the work and the meanings made. Suddenly, my eye caught the reflected light of a shimmering scarab-type beetle by my foot on the cabin floor (see Figure 39)—an astonishing moment!

Figure 39. Scarab-like beetle. Photograph by author.

I was at once brought back to Jung and his famous synchronistic encounter involving a scarab, one which successfully punctured too great of a rationality, so that the real work could progress. As my committee member reflected back to me upon seeing the image, "a confirmation of the work done" (W. Hurren, personal communication, April 28, 2019).

I end with a blessing that appeared to self-organize out of particular phrases in Aluli Meyer's writings (2003, 2015), meant for those who resonate with Sacred Mandala Inquiry and wish to take up the practice and process, brush and pen, and carry forward the work, perhaps being more consciously lived by the powers we do not understand. Radical attending is required. As you feel called to go forward into your own Sacred Mandala Inquiry and with appreciation and respect for Manulani Aluli Meyer's knowing,

> *May your painting and writing open a space for the epistemology of spirit to enter*
> *May sacred energy flow through you and animate your research*
> *May earth's intelligent bodymind educate*
> *May you experience and nurture human and nonhuman realities*
> *May you know your work is a sacred object for family and community*
> *Let our experience of psyche matter*
>
> Be a lamp, or a lifeboat, or a ladder. Help someone's soul heal. Walk out of your house like a shepherd. (Rumi, n.d., No. 3090)

References

Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than human world.* New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Aizenstat, S. (2003). Nature dreaming: Depth psychology and ecology. Retrieved from https://dreamtending.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/naturedreaming-new.pdf

Aizenstat, S. (2011). *Dream tending: Awakening to the healing power of dreams.* New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal.

[Aluli] Meyer, M. (1995). To set right: Ho'oponopono, a Native Hawaiian way of peacemaking. *The Compleat Lawyer*, *12*(4), 30-35.

Aluli Meyer, M. (2001). Our own liberation: Reflections on Hawaiian epistemology. *The Contemporary Pacific, 13*(1), 124-148. doi:10.1353/cp.2001.0024

Aluli Meyer, M. (2003). Hawaiian hermeneutics and the triangulation of meaning: Gross, subtle, causal. *Applied Research and Social Justice*, *30*(4) 54-63.

Aluli Meyer, M. (2008). Indigenous and authentic: Native Hawaiian epistemology and the triangulation of meaning. In L. Smith, N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies* (pp. 217-232). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Aluli Meyer, M. (2014). Hawaiian epistemology. In D. Goghlan & M. Brydon-Miller (Eds.), The SAGE encyclopedia of action research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Aluli Meyer, M. (2015). *Hooulu: Our time of becoming.* Retrieved from uhpress.hawaii .educulture

Anderson, R. (2001). Intuitive inquiry: Interpreting objective and subjective data. *ReVision*, *22*(4), 31-39. Retrieved from https://www.gale.com/c/academic-onefile

Andrews, V. (2017). *White unwed mother: The adoption mandate in postwar Canada.* (Master's thesis, York University, Toronto). Retrieved from https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca /xmlui/handle/10315/

Arguelles, J., & Arguelles, M. (1972). *Mandala.* Boulder, CO: Shambhala.

Bak, P. (1996). *How nature works: The science of self-organized criticality*. New York, NY: Copernicus.

Barone, T., & Eisner, E. W. (2012). *Arts based research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind: Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology*. San Francisco, CA: Chandler.

Berry, P. (2017). *Echo's subtle body: Contributions to archetypal psychology* (3rd. rev. ed.). Thompson, CT: Spring.

Bohm, D. (1980). *Wholeness and the implicate order*. London, England: Routledge.

Bohm, D. (1998). *On creativity* (L. Nichol, Ed.). Abingdon, England: Routledge.

Bohm, D., & Peat, D. (1987). *Science, order and creativity*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Breiddal, S. M. F. (2013). *Dwelling in the realm of death: The lived experience of counsellors' encounters with mortality in a palliative care context* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database. (UMI No. 1519719314)

Berger, J. G. (2004). Dancing on the threshold of meaning: Recognizing and understanding the growing edge. Journal of Transformative Education, 2, 336–351.

Brentano, F. (1995). *Psychology from an empirical standpoint* (L. L. McAlister, Ed.) (A. C. Rancarello. D. B. Terrell, & L. L. McAlister, Trans.). London, England: Routledge. (Original work published 1874)

Brown, K. W., Ryan, R. M., & Creswell, J. D. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry, 18*(4), 211-237. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/10478400701598298

Boyd, R. D., & Myers, J. B. (1988). Transformative education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *7*(4), 261–284. https://doi.org/10.1080/0260137880070403

Buchalter, S. (2013). *Mandala symbolism and techniques: Innovative approaches for professionals*. London, England: Kingsley.

Burch, R. (1993). On the topic of art and truth: Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and the transcendental turn. In G. A. Johnson & M. B. Smith (Eds.), *The Merleau-Ponty aesthetics reader: Philosophy and painting* (pp. 348-370). Northwestern University Press.

Burgess, D. J., Beach, M. C., & Saha, S. (2017). Mindfulness practice: A promising approach to reducing the effects of clinician implicit bias on patients. *Patient Education and Counseling*, *100*(2), 372-376. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2016.09.005

Bushe, G. R. (2013) The appreciative inquiry model. In E. H. Kessler (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of management theory* (Vol. 1, pp. 41-44). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cambray, J. (2002). Synchronicity and emergence. *American Imago*, *59*(4), 409–434. https://doi .org/10.1353/aim.2002.0023

Cambray, J. (2009). *Synchronicity: Nature and psyche in an interconnected universe*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press.

Cambray, J., & Carter, L. (2004). *Analytical psychology: Contemporary perspectives in Jungian analysis* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203492048

Chambers, C. (2004). Research that matters: Finding a path with heart. *Journal of Canadian Association of Curriculum Studies, 1*(3), 1-17.

Chambers, C., & Hasbe-Ludt, E. (with Donald, D., Hurren, W., Leggo, C., & Oberg, A.). (2008). Métissage: A research practice. In J. G. Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 141-154). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chang, J. H.-Y. (2004). Mead's theory of emergence as a framework for multilevel sociological inquiry. *Symbolic Interaction, 27*(3), 405-427. https://doi.org/10.1525/si.2004.27.3.405

Clarke, J. J. (1994). *Jung and Eastern thought: A dialogue with the orient*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Clough, P. T. (2000). A familial unconscious. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *6*(3), 318–336. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040000600302

Combs, A, & Holland, M. (1996). *Synchronicity: Through the eyes of science, myth and the trickster* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Da Capo Press.

Coppin, J, & Nelson, E. (2017). *The art of inquiry: A depth psychological perspective* (3rd ed.). Putnam, CT: Spring.

Corbett, L., & Whitney, L. (2016). Jung and non-duality: Some clinical and theoretical implications of the self as totality of the psyche*, International Journal of Jungian Studies*, *8*(1), 15-27. https://doi.org/10.1080/19409052.2015.1092460

Corbin, H. (1998). *The voyage and the messenger: Iran and philosophy* (J. Rowe, Trans.). Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Cowlie, A. (2017, December 28). *Norse serpent slayers of the psyche* [Web log post]. Retrieved from https://ashleycowie.com/new-blog/norse-serpent-slayers-of-the-psyche

Creswell, J. W. (2007*). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London, England: Sage.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Cummings, S. (2012, August 7). *A checklist of biographical and critical materials for the periods 1965-1987 on Jack Marlowe Wise, R.C.A*. University Archives, University of Victoria, British Columbia. Retrieved from https://dspace.library.uvic.ca

Darwin, C. (1861). *On the origin of species*. London, England: Murray.

Davis, B., & Simmt, E. (2003). Understanding learning systems: Mathematics education and complexity science. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 34*(2), 137-167. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/30034903

Davis, B., & Sumara, D. (2006). *Complexity and education: Inquiries into learning, teaching, and research*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum.

Derksen, A. M. (2000). *Mandala: Tool for transformation and transcendence* (Master's thesis). University of Victoria, BC. Retrieved from http://voyager.library.uvic.ca

Derrida, J. (1998). *Monolingualism of the other; or, the prosthesis of origin* (P. Mensah, Trans.). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (Original work published 1996)

Desbordes, G., Gard, T., Hoge, E. A., Hölzel, B. K., Kerr, C., Lazar, S. W., . . . Vago, D. R. (2014, January). Moving beyond mindfulness: Defining equanimity as an outcome measure in meditation and contemplative research. *Mindfulness*, *6*(2), 356–372. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-013-0269-8

Dirkx, J. M. (2008). Care of the self: Mythopoetic dimensions of professional preparation and development. In T. Leonard & P. Willis (Eds.), *Pedagogies of the imagination: Mythopoetic curriculum in educational practice* (pp. 65-82) [eBook version]. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4020-8350-1

Dirkx, J. M., Mezirow, J., & Cranton, P. (2006). Musings and reflections on the meaning, context, and process of transformative learning: A dialogue between John M. Dirkx and Jack Mezirow. *Journal of Transformative Education, 4*(2), 123-139. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344606287503

Doane, G. H., & Varcoe, C. (2014). *How to nurse: Relational inquiry with individuals and families in changing health and health care contexts*. Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Klewer/Lippincott.

Doka, K. (2002). *Disenfranchised grief*. In K. J. Doka (Ed.), *Living with grief: Loss in later life* (pp. 159-168). Washington, DC: Hospice Foundation of America.

Doll, M. (2008). Capacity and *currere*. In T. Leonard & P. Willis (Eds.), *Pedagogies of the imagination: Mythopoetic curriculum in educational practice* (pp. 223-230) (eBook version). Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4020-8350-1

Doll, W. E. (2012). *Pragmatism, postmodernism, and complexity theory: The "fascinating imaginative realm" of William E. Doll, Jr.* (D. Trueit, Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Douglass, T. T. L. (2009, April). Bee goddess. Retrieved from http://www.templeoftheola.org /bee-goddess.html

Dundas, A. (Ed.). *Sacred narrative: Readings in the theory of myth*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Eddy, W. (2008). *Re-discovering identity: A phenomenological study exploring the ontological complexities of being gay* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from Proquest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3324879)

Edinger, E. F. (1972). *Ego and archetype*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Eisner, E. W. (1979). *The educational imagination. On the design and evaluation of school programs.* New York, NY: Macmillan.

Eisner, E. W. (2004). *The arts and the creation of mind.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Eliot, T. S. (1934). *The rock: A pageant play*. New York, NY: Harcourt.

Fessler, A. (2006). *The girls who went away: The hidden history of women who surrendered children for adoption in the decades before Rose v. Wade.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Fidyk, A. (2016). Seeing with an unconscious eye: The poetic in the work of Emily Carr. In K. T. Galvin, M. Prendergast, & F. C. Biley (Eds.), *Poetic inquiry II: Seeing, caring, understanding: Using poetry as and for inquiry* (pp. 3-20) [eBook version]. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-316-2

Finlay, L. (2012). Debating phenomenological research methods. In N. Friesen, C. Henriksson, & T. Saevi (Eds.), *Hermeneutic phenomenology in education: Method and practice* (pp. 17-37). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.

Frank, A. W. (2010). *Letting stories breathe: A socio-narratology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Franklin, M. (1999). Becoming a student of oneself: Activating the witness in meditation, art and supervision. *American Journal of Art Therapy*, *38*(1), 2-13.

Freire, P. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: Continuum. (Original work published 1968)

Friesen, N. (2012). Experiential evidence: I, we, you. In N. Friesen, C. Henriksson, & T. Saevi (Eds.), *Hermeneutic phenomenology in education: Method and practice* (pp. 39-54). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.

Gadamer, H. (2004). *Truth and method* (2nd ed, rev.) (J. Weinsheimer & D. G. Marshall, Rev. trans.). London, England: Continuum. (Original work published 1960)

Garoian, C. R. (2013). *The prosthetic pedagogy of art: Embodied research and practice*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Gillespie, B., & Van Luven, L. (Eds.) (2011). *Somebody's child: Stories about adoption*. Victoria, Canada: Touch Wood.

Goldberg, N. (1990). *Wild mind: Living the writer's life*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Gunnlaugson, O. (2014). *Contemplative learning and inquiry across disciplines*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Haldane, J. B. S. (2002). Possible worlds. In *Possible worlds* (Reprinted ed., pp. 260-286). New York, NY: Taylor.

Hannah, B. (1981). *Encounters with the soul: Active imagination as developed by C. G. Jung*. Santa Monica, CA: Sigo Press.

Heidegger, M. (1971). The nature of language. In *On the way to language* (P. D. Hertz, Trans.). (pp. 55-108). San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco. (Original work published 1959)

Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and time* (J. Stambaugh, Trans.). Albany: State University Press. (Original work published 1953)

Heidegger, M. (1998). Letter on "Humanism" (F. A. Capuzzi, Trans.). In W. McNeil (Ed.), *Pathmarks* (pp. 239–276). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1949)

Heisenberg, W. (1971). *Physics and beyond.* New York, NY: Harper.

Hendry, P. M. (2009). Narrative as inquiry. *Journal of Educational Research*, *103*(2), 72-80. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220670903323354

Hillman, J. (1975). *Re-visioning psychology*. New York, NY: Harper.

Hillman, J. (1977). An inquiry into image. *Spring*, 62-88.

Hillman, J. (1978). *The myth of analysis: Three essays in archetypal psychology.* New York, NY: Harper.

Hillman, J. (2004). Archetypal psychology. In *Uniform edition of the writings of James Hillman* (Vol. 1). Thompson, CT: Spring.

Hillman, J. (2013, August 7). In J. Billington (Chair), *Carl Gustav Jung and* The red book*: Part 1* [Video file], 8:22-41:31]. Symposium conducted at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Retrieved from https://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc .php?rec=4909

Hocoy, D. (2012). Sixty years later: The enduring allure of synchronicity. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 52*(4), 467-478. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167812436427

Hopcke, R. H. (2009). Synchronicity and psychotherapy: Jung's concept and its use in clinical work. *Psychiatric Annals, 39*(5), 287-293. http://dx.doi.org/10.3928/00485713-20090424-01

Horton, M., & Freire, P. (1990). *We make the road by walking: Conversations on education and social change* (B. Bell, J. Gaventa, & J. Peters, Eds.). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Hurren, W. (2003). Auto′●geo′●carto′●graphia′ (A curricular collage). *Counterpoints, 193*, 111-121.

Husserl, E. (1970). *The crisis of the European sciences and transcendental phenomenology: An introduction to phenomenological philosophy* (D. Carr, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. (Original work published 1954)

Husserl, E. (1970). *Logical investigations: Volume 1* (2nd ed.) (J. N. Findlay, Trans.). New York, NY: Routledge. (Original work published 1913)

Ihde, D. (1986). *Experimental phenomenology: An introduction*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Ingwersen, M. (2017). Towards a trickster science/fiction: Complexifying boundaries with Neal Stephenson and Michel Serres. *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews, 42*(3), 255-268. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03080188.2017.1345148

Irwin, R. L., & de Cosson, A. (Eds.) (2004). *A/r/tography: Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver, British Columbia: Pacific Educational Press.

Jaffé, A. (1964). Symbolism in the visual arts. In C. G. Jung & M.-L. von Franz (Eds.), *Man and his symbols* (pp. 255-322). New York, NY: Dell.

Johnson, G. A. (1993). Phenomenology and painting: "Cezanne's doubt." In G. A. Johnson & M. B. Smith (Eds.), *The Merleau-Ponty aesthetics reader: Philosophy and painting* (pp. 3-13). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Johnson, M. (2000). Heidegger and meaning: Implications for phenomenological research. *Nursing Philosophy, 1*(2), 134-146. https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1466-769x.2000.00027.x

Johnson, R. A. (1986). *Inner work: Using dreams and active imagination for personal growth*. San Francisco, CA: Harper.

Johnson, R. A. (1991) *Owning your own shadow: Understanding the dark side of the psyche*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Johnston, M. J. (1997). *Remembering wholeness: The hero's-journey-in-relation: A mandalic study.* Unpublished manuscript. Pacifica Graduate Institute, Carpenteria, CA.

Johnston, M. J. (2011). A mother out of time. In B. Gillespie & L. Van Luven (Eds.), *Somebody's child: Stories about adoption* (pp. 179-188). Victoria, British Columbia: Touch Wood.

Jung, C. G. (1959). Psychological aspects of the mother archetype (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 9i, 2nd ed., pp. 75-110). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1954)

Jung, C. G. (1963). *Memories, dreams, reflections* (Rev. ed.) (A. Jaffé, Ed.) (R. Winston & C. Winston, Trans.). New York, NY: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1961)

Jung, C. G. (1966). The relations between the ego and the unconscious (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 7, 2nd ed., pp. 123-241). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1928)

Jung, C. G. (1967). Commentary on "The secret of the golden flower" (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 13, pp. 1-56). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1957)

Jung, C. G. (1967). The philosophical tree (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 13, 2nd ed., pp. 251-349). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1954)

Jung, C. G. (1969). Appendix: On synchronicity (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In *Synchronicity: An acausal connecting principle* (M. Fordham, Ed.) (2nd. ed., pp. 104-116). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1962)

Jung, C. G. (1969). Conscious, unconscious, and individuation. In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.) (Vol. 9i, 2nd ed., pp. 275-289). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1939)

Jung, C. G. (1969). Instinct and the unconscious (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 8, 2nd ed., pp. 129-138). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1948)

Jung, C. G. (1969). On the nature of the psyche (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 8, 2nd ed., pp. 159-234). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1954)

Jung, C. G. (1969). The psychology of the child archetype. In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.) (2nd ed., Vol. 9i, pp. 151-181). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1951)

Jung, C. G. (1969). *Synchronicity: An acausal connecting principle* (M. Fordham, Ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1969). The transcendent function (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read. M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (2nd ed., Vol. 8, pp. 67-91). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1958)

Jung, C. G. (1970). *Aion* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 9ii). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1951)

Jung, C. G. (1970). *Mysterium coniunctionis* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.) (H. Read et al., Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 14, 2nd ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1955-1956)

Jung, C. G. (1971). Psychological types (R. F. C. Hull & C. F. Baynes). In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 6). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1921)

Jung, C. G. (1972). Concerning mandala symbolism (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, & W. McGuire (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 9i, pp. 355-384). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1950)

Jung, C. G. (1973a). *C. G. Jung letters: Vol. 1, 1906-1950* (G. Adler & A. Jaffé, Eds.) (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). London, England: Routledge.

Jung, C. G. (1973b). *Mandala symbolism* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1975). *Selected letters of C.G. Jung, 1909-1961* (G. Adler, Ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Jung, C. G. (1976a). *C. G. Jung letters: Vol. II*, *1951-1961* (G. Adler & A. Jaffé, Eds.) (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). London, England: Routledge.

Jung, C. G. (1976b). The Tavistock lectures. In G. Adler & R. F. C. Hull (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 18, pp. 56-182). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1977). Forward to Harding: "Women's mysteries" (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). In H. Read, M. Fordham, & G. Adler (Eds.), *The collected works of C. G. Jung* (Vol. 18, pp. 518-520. New York, NY: Routledge. (Original work published 1947)

Jung, C. G. (1979). *Word and image* (A. Jaffé, Ed.). Bollingen series 97:2. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (2009). *The red book, liber novus* (S. Shamdasani, Ed.) (S. Shamdasani, M. Kyburz, & J. Peck, Trans.). New York, NY: Norton.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005). *Coming to our senses: Healing ourselves and the world through mindfulness. New York, NY*: Hyperion.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain, and illness. New York, NY: Bantam Books.*

Kellogg, R. (1970). *Analyzing children's art*. Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.

Keltner, D., & Haidt, J. (2003). Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion. *Cognition and Emotion, 17*(2), 297-314, https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930302297

keyele. (2010, October 22). Manu Aluli Meyer on epistemology [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmJJi1iBdzc

Khong, B. S. L. (2009). Expanding the understanding of mindfulness: Seeing the tree and the forest. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 37*(2), 117-136. https://doi.org/10.1080 /08873260902892006

Koch, T. (1995). Interpretive approaches in nursing research: The influence of Husserl and Heidegger. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 21*(5), 827-836.

Korzybski, A. (1990). *Alfred Korsybski collected writings, 1920–1950*. Englewood, NJ: Institute of General Semantics.

Kristeva, J. (1982). *Powers of horror: An essay on abjection* (L. B. Roudiez, Trans.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. (Original work published 1980)

Kunzel, R. (1993). *Fallen women, problem girls: Unmarried mothers and the professionalization of social work 1890-1945.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2*(3), Article 3. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690300200303

Leavy, P. (2009). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Leggo, C. (2008). Astonishing silence: Knowing in poetry. In J. G. Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 165-174). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lorenz, H., & Watkins, M. (2003, Winter). Depth psychology and colonialism: Individuation, seeing through, and liberation. *Quadrant: Journal of the C. J. Jung Foundation for Analytical Psychology*, *33*, 11-32.

Low, D. (2009). Merleau-Ponty's body of work as a developing whole. *International Philosophical Quarterly, 49*(2), 207-227. https://doi.org/10.5840/ipq200949227

Luft, J. (1969). *Of human interaction: The Johari model*. Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.

Main, R. (2007a). *Revelations of chance: Synchronicity as spiritual experience*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Main, R. (2007b). Synchronicity and analysis: Jung and after. *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling, 9*, 359–371. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642530701725924

March, K. (2014). Birth mother grief and the challenge of adoption reunion contact. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *84*(4), 409-419. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000013

Marks-Tarlow, T., Robertson, T., & Combs, A. (2002). Varela and the uroborus: The psychological significance of re-entry. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing, 9*(2), 31-47.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2011). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maturana, H., & Poerksen, B. (2004). *From being to doing: The origins of the biology of cognition*. Heidelberg, Germany: Carl-Auer. (Original work published 2002)

Maturana, H. R., & Varela, F. J. (1980). *Autopoiesis and cognition: The realization of the living.* Dordrecht: Reidel. (Original work published 1972)

Maturana, H., R. & Varela, F. J. (1987). *The tree of knowledge: The biological roots of human understanding* (R. Paolucci, Trans.). Boston, MA: Shambhala. (Original work published 1984)

Maturana, H. R., & Verden-Zoeller, G. (2008). *The origin of humanness in the biology of love* (P. Bunnell, Ed.). Exeter, United Kingdom: Imprint Academic.

McGarrigle, J. G. (2018) Getting in tune through arts-based narrative inquiry. *Irish Educational Studies, 37*(2), 275-293. https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2018.1465837

McNiff, S. (1992). *Art as medicine: Creating a therapy of the* imagination. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

McNiff, S. (1998). *Art-based research.* London, England: Kingsley.

McNiff, S. (2005). *Art heals: How creativity cures the soul.* Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of perception* (C. Smith, Trans.). London, England: Routledge. (Original work published 1945)

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964). *Signs* (R. G. Mc Cleary, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. (Original work published 1960)

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The visible and the invisible: Followed by working notes* (C. Lefort, Ed.) (A. Lingis, Trans.). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. (Original work published 1964)

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1993). Eye and mind (M. B. Smith, Trans.). In G. A. Johnson & M. B. Smith (Eds.), *The Merleau-Ponty aesthetics reader: Philosophy and painting* (pp. 121-164). Northwestern University Press. (Original work published 1961)

Methodology. (2016). In *Oxford living dictionaries.* Retrieved from https://en .oxforddictionaries.com/definition/methodology

Methodology. (2019). In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved from https://www.merriam-webster .com/dictionary/methodology

Mies, M., & Shiva, V. (1993). *Ecofeminism.* London, England: Zed Books.

Miller, J. (2004). *The transcendent function: Jung's model of psychological growth through dialogue with the unconscious*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Moore, T. (1994). *Care of the soul: A guide for cultivating depth and sacredness in everyday life.* New York, NY: Harper.

Moore, T. (1996). *The re-enchantment of everyday life*. New York, NY: Harper.

Morin, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Morrow, K. L. (2007). *The mandala of great delight: Happiness at the threshold of time* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (UMI No. 3264659)

Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic research: Design, methodology and applications.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nagel, T. (1986). *The view from nowhere.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Oliver, M. (1984). *American primitive.* New York, NY: Back Bay Books.

Ouroboros drawing from a late medieval Byzantine Greek alchemical manuscript. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=Ouroboros, 1478&title=Special:Search&go=Go#/media/File:Serpiente_alquimica.jpg

Pantoum. (2017). In *Encyclopedia Brittanica.* Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/art /pantoum

Pauli, W., & Jung, C. G. (2001). *Atom and archetype: The Pauli/Jung letters, 1932-1958* (C.A. Meier, Ed.) (D. Roscoe, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Pausanias. (1918). *Pausanias' description of Greece* (W. H. S. Jones, H. A. Ormerod, & R. E. Wycherley, Eds.). London, England: Heinemann.

Pelias, R. (2008). Performative inquiry: Embodiment and its challenges. In J. G. Coles & A. L. Knowles (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research* (pp. 185–207). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pietsch, N. (2012). Good mothers, bad mothers, not-mothers: Privilege, race and gender and the invention of the birthmother. In F. Latchford (Ed.), *Adoption and mothering* (pp 26-41). Bradford, ON: Demeter Press.

Plato. (1981). *Apology* (G. M. A. Grube, Trans.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

Prendergast, M., Leggo, C., & Sameshima, P. (Eds). (2009). *Poetic inquiry: Vibrant voices in the social sciences*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.

Progoff, I. (1992). *At a journal workshop: Writing to access the power of the unconscious and evoke creative ability* (Rev. Ed.). New York, NY: Tarcher/Putnam.

Ransome, H. (2004). *The sacred bee in ancient times and Folklore.* Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

Ressurreição, S. B. da, & Sampaio, S. M. da R. (2018). The reconfiguration of the educational self in the context of higher education. In G. Marisco & L. Tateo (Eds.), *The emergence of self in educational contexts: Theoretical and empirical explorations* (pp. 61-78). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Richardson, L. (2001). Alternative ethnographies, alternative criteria. In L. Neilsen, A. Cole, & J. G. Knowles (Eds.), *The art of writing inquiry* (pp. 250–251). Halifax, NS: Backalong Books.

Richardson, L., & St. Pierre, E. A. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook* of *qualitative* research (3rd ed., pp. 959-978). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Richo, D. (1998). *Unexpected miracles: The gift of synchronicity, and how to open it*. New York, NY: Crossroad.

Richtscheid, K. (2006, Summer). Imaginal ecology. *Sacred Web, 17*, 146-156. Retrieved from http://www.sacredweb.com/online_articles/sw17_richtscheid.pdf

Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

Romanyshyn, R. D. (2007). *The wounded researcher: Research with soul in mind*. New Orleans, LA: Spring Journal Books.

Romanyshyn, R. D. (2010). The wounded researcher: Making a place for unconscious dynamics in the research process. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, *38*(4), 275-304. https://doi.org/10.1080/08873267.2010.523282

Rumi, J. (n.d.). *The diwan of Shams of Tabriz*. Retrieved from http://gnosis.org/library/diwa.htm

Rumi, J. M. al-D. (1995). *The essential Rumi* (C. Barks, Ed. & Trans.). New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Sagan, C. (1980). *Cosmos*. New York, NY: Random House.

Sardello, R. (2001). *Love and the world: A guide to conscious soul practice.* Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarne Books.

Selig, J. L. (2014). *Depth psychology as 'terrible trouble' for researchers*. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, *7*(3), 287-288. http://dx.doi.org/10.5172/mra.2013.7.3.287

Serres, M. (with Latour, B.). (1995). *Conversations on science, culture, and time* (R. Lapidus, Trans.). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. (Original work published 1990)

Shah, I. (1983). *The exploits of the incomparable Mulla Nasrudin*. Octagon Press.

Shann, S. (2015). A mythopoetic methodology: Storytelling as an act of scholarship. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *43*(2), 128-142.

Shapiro, S. L., Carlson, L. E., Astin, J. A., & Freedman, B. (2006). Mechanisms of mindfulness. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 62*(3), 373–386. https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20237

Sharp, D. (1991). *C. G. Jung lexicon: A primer of Jungian terms and concepts*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.

Shawyer, J. (1979). *Death by adoption.* Auckland, New Zealand: Cicada Books.

Sheldrake, R. (2006). Morphic fields. *World Futures, 62*(1-2), 31-41. https://doi.org/10.1080/02604020500406248

Shields, M. (n.d.). Mandala journal. University of Victoria Special Collections & University Archives Madeleine Shields fonds, SC587, Accession #2018-078.

Siegel, D. (2010). *Mindsight: The new science of personal transformation*. New York, NY: Bantam.

Singer, J. (1994). *Boundaries of the soul: The practice of Jung's psychology*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

Smith, D. W. (2018, Summer). Phenomenology, In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy.* Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/phenomenology

Socrates. (1989). *Symposium* (A. Nehemus & P. Woodruff, Trans.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

Solinger, R. (1992). *Wake up little Susie: Single pregnancy and race before Roe v. Wade.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Spear, S. B. (2014). Conscious cooperation with the individuating adult learner. *Journal of Transformative Education, 12*(3), 226-247. https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344614544374

Stein, M. (1996). *Practicing wholeness.* New York, NY: Chiron.

Stein, M. (2006). *The principle of individuation: Toward the development of human consciousness.* Wilmette, IL: Chiron.

Stein, R. (2007). Initiation as surrender: A twelve-year analysis. In T. Kirsch, V. B. Rutter, & T. Singer (Eds.), *Initiation: The living reality of an archetype* (pp. 63–81). New York, NY: Routledge.

Stevens, A. (2006). The archetypes. In R. K. Papadopoulos (Ed.), *The handbook of Jungian psychology* (pp. 74-93). Hove, England: Routledge.

Stiffler, L. H. (1993). Adoptees and birthparents connected by design: Surprising synchronicities in histories of union/loss. *Pre-and Perinatal Psychology Journal, 7*(4), 267-286.

Sullivan, G. (2005). *Art practice as research: Inquiry in the visual arts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Suzuki, S. (1970). *Zen mind, beginner's mind* (T. Dixon, Ed.). New York. NY: Weatherhill.

Tanaka, M. T. D. (2015). Transformative inquiry in teacher education: Evoking the soul of what matters. *Teacher Development, 19*(2), 133-150. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2014.992459

Tarnas, R. (1991). *The passion of the Western mind: Understanding the ideas that have shaped our world view*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

Tarnas, R. (2006). *Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a new world view.* New York, NY: Viking Press.

Thompson, E. (2004). Life and mind: From autopoiesis to neurophenomenology. A tribute to Francisco Varela. *Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences 3*(4), 381–398. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:PHEN.0000048936.73339.dd

Thompson, E. (2015). *Waking, dreaming, being*: *Self and consciousness in neuroscience, meditation, and philosophy*. Columbia University Press.

Till, K. E. (2008). Artistic and activist memory-work: approaching place-based practice. *Memory Studies*, *1*(1), 95-109. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698007083893

Tobin, K. (2016). Mindfulness as a way of life: Maintaining wellness through healthy living. In M. Powietrzynska & K. Tobin (Eds.), *Mindfulness and educating citizens for everyday life* (pp. 1-14) [eBook version]. Retrieved from https://www.springer.com/gp/book /9789463005708

Tucci, G. (1961). *Theory and practice of the mandala* (A. H. Brodrick, Trans.). London, England: Rider. (Original work published 1931)

Van Gordon, W., Shonin, E., & Garcia-Campayo. (2017). The mandala of the present moment. *Mindfulness*, *8*(6), 1720-1722. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-017-0779-x

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

van Manen, M. (1991). *The tact of teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

van Manen, M. (2007). Phenomenology of practice. *Phenomenology and Practice, 1*(1), 11-30. https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr19803

van Manen, M. (2014). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

van Manen, M. (2015). *Pedagogical tact: Knowing what to do when you don't know what to do*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Varela, F. J. (1996). Neurophenomenology: A methodological remedy for the hard problem. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *3*(4), 330-350.

Varela, F. J. (2001). Intimate distances: Fragments for a phenomenology of organ transplantation. In E. Thompson (Ed.), *Between ourselves: Second person issues in the study of consciousness* (pp. 259-271). Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic.

Varela, F. J., & Shear, J. (1999). First-person methodologies: What, why, how? In F. J. Varela & J. Shear (Eds.), *The view from within: First-person approaches to the study of consciousness* (pp. 1-14). Bowling Green, OH: Imprint Academic.

Varela, F. J., Thompson, E., & Rosch, E. (1991). *The embodied mind: Cognitive science and human experience.* Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

von Franz, M.-L. (1964). *The process of individuation*. In C. G. Jung & M.-L. von Franz (Eds.), *Man and his symbols* (pp. 158-229). Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

von Franz, M.-L. (1980). *On divination and synchronicity: The psychology of meaningful chance*. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.

von Franz, M.-L. (1990). *Individuation in fairy tales.* Boston, MA: Shambhala.

von Franz, M.-L. (1992). *Psyche and matter* (M. H. Kohn, Trans.). Boston, MA: Shambhala. (Original work published 1988)

Walcott, S. (2006). Mapping from a different direction: Mandala as sacred spatial visualization. *Journal of Cultural Geography, 23*(2), 71-88. https://doi.org/10.1080/08873630609478223

Watkins, M. (1984). *Waking dreams* (3rd ed.). Woodstock, CT: Spring.

Watkins, M. (2000). *Invisible guests: The development of imaginal dialogue*. Woodstock, CT: Spring.

Whitmont, E. C. (1991). *The symbolic quest: Basic concepts of analytical psychology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Wilhelm, R. (Trans.). (1924). *I ging: Das buch der wandkungen* [I ching: The book of changes]. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Woods, S. (2013). Building a framework for the practice of mindful inquiry. Retrieved from https://slwoods.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/aframeworkformindfulinquiry dec2012.pdf

Wright, D. (2008). The mythopoetic body: Learning through creativity. In T. Leonard & P. Willis (Eds.), *Pedagogies of the imagination: Mythopoetic curriculum in educational practice* (pp. 93-106) [eBook version]. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4020-8350-1

Yakushko, O., & Nelson, E. (2013). 'Teaching' depth: Reflections on the challenges and rewards of integrating depth psychology into research methodology. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, *7*(3), 289–299. http://doi.org/10.5172/mra.2013.7.3.295

Zabriskie, B. (2001). Jung and Pauli: A meeting of rare minds. In C. Meier (Ed.), *Atom and Archetype: The Pauli/Jung Letters 1932–1958* (pp. xxvii-l). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Zimmermann, J. (2015). *Hermeneutics: A very short introduction*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Appendix A

Invitation to Participate

As you know, I am engaged in doctoral studies in the in the Faculty of Education: Curriculum and Instruction, the University of Victoria. I was a mandala student of mentor Madeleine Shields, as were you, and I am now working towards creating a form of inquiry based on the painting and writing principles and practices of the Sacred Mandala. I will be applying a phenomenological lens to the work – looking at the first-person subjective experience of painting a mandala as an embodied way of knowing, incorporating mindfulness practice.

In order to illuminate various aspects of the practice, I hope to learn more about your experience of painting a Sacred Mandala, in order that this understanding will help support the creation of the methodology. My hope is to contribute through writing my dissertation and in academic journals, as well as possibly through presentations at academic and professional development conferences and workshops. To do this, however, I am making an application to the University of Victoria ethics committee.

The study will not take any work time, or require any special equipment, and therefore there are no costs. Participants will respond by email to cue words, on their own time, describing their own experience of painting a Sacred Mandala. Given my association as a Clinical Counsellor where confidentiality is very rigidly followed, together with my experience as a Registered Nurse, I am certain that I have a sensitivity to issues of privacy and can ensure protection of all identities.

The study is considered to have minimal risks to the participants, as both potential participants are in the practice of sharing personal process as a way of self-care and growth, with me and with each other. We have participated in group work together, co-mentoring a dream group and a mythology group.

It is possible however, that participants could feel fatigued by writing. To counteract the potential for fatigue, I will suggest that as much time as is needed to answer the cue word questions will be taken. Another potential harm is that a participant might in some way feel uncomfortable about an aspect of their response to a cue. It will be explained beforehand that all data is in their control, and can be deleted before sharing with me. Should harm of any kind occur for the participants, I will be available for debriefing, and I will also ask each participant to identify for themselves an individual they will turn to should anything unpleasant arise.

Participants will benefit by being given an opportunity to give voice to their own unique experience and perspective on the practice and process of Sacred Mandala painting. Their resulting awareness and understanding may contribute to adult learners who are drawn to the work and who wish to take up this holistic methodology for inquiring into phenomenon, and cultivating a practice of mindfulness.

I assure you that should you not wish to participate, or wish to withdraw from the study, for any reason, it will not be held against you, or influence our relationship.

I would like to give you time to think about this, and to raise any questions or concerns. Please contact me directly in the next few weeks at xxxxxxx or by phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you have any questions or concerns that can be answered by my supervisor at the University of Victoria please feel free to contact them as follows:

Wanda Hurren, Email: xxxxxxxx Phone number: xxx-xxx-xxxx
If you would like to communicate with me, please email, phone, or arrange to meet me in person. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Appendix B

Ethics Review: Informed Consent for Potential Participant

Informed consent for:
Study name: Sacred Mandala Inquiry
Researcher: Jane Johnston, PhD Candidate, University of Victoria, Department of Curriculum and Instruction.
Contact: xxxxxxxx
Supervisor: Wanda Hurren, PhD. Email: Wanda Hurren: xxxxxxxx, phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this research is to explore the lived experience of painting a Sacred Mandala, in the hopes that describing this experience, and understanding the meaning from your perspective, will help those who wish to engage in their own Sacred Mandala Inquiry. You have been approached because you were a student of mandala mentor Madeleine Shields and took up the practice of mandala painting. Through your consent to speak with me, I hope to further elaborate on what it is like to paint a mandala as a form of inquiry. It is also hoped that you will benefit from the process of articulating your experience and that discussion about this topic will be stimulating. Overall the experience of participating in this project is designed to be affirmative.

What you will be asked to do in the research:

•You will sign an informed consent form.
•As a participant, you will be asked to respond, in writing, to up to 6 cue words about your experience in painting a Sacred Mandala. These prompts will include: “meaningful images,” “synchronicity,” “themes,” “mentoring,” “practice,” and “what remains?” You may write as little or as much as you like about each prompt, and to whatever depth is satisfying to you. Participants may be asked follow-up questions by email to clarify any points made in the first correspondence.
• You will not need to be concerned with writing style, punctuation, grammar etc. My focus is only on the content of what you have to share and not the style in which you share it.
•This process of clarification may occur over a period of one to two weeks commencing Feb 15th, 2018, however these dates can be adjusted should you require more time. I estimate a total of approximately 5-8 hours to respond to cues and clarifications, as well as sending select images and journal entries, though the time invested is up to each participant.
• If representing others in your writing, you will agree to keep confidential their identities by not naming them personally, nor their specific relationship to you. For instance, if writing about a marriage partner, the words “family member” may be employed. I will work with you to ensure identities are kept as anonymous as possible.
•You will review anything I have selected to use in my dissertation, to ensure that you feel comfortable with the content, that confidentiality has been protected both for you and for others, and that your thoughts have been expressed correctly. You will provide feedback, and give your verbal consent that you wish to continue and to have your material included.

Data Collection:

The data for this study will primarily be generated from my own Sacred Mandala Inquiry, with inclusion of diversity from your written responses to word prompts and clarification of possible follow-up questions. You will have the option for your responses to be presented anonymously in my dissertation, however you may expressly choose to be quoted with your real name. Where requested, confidentiality will be provided to the fullest possible extent.

Permission to use photographs of your completed mandala (with or without giving you credit) will be requested, should you wish their inclusion, understanding others may recognize your images if you have shared them in the public domain or with friends and family.

Risks and Discomforts:
The study is considered to have minimal risks to the participants as you will be providing reflections upon and discussion about your own experience painting a mandala and you may determine for yourself what you wish to include. This work is taken up by students who are willing to be self-reflective, and your experience with painting mandalas demonstrates this willingness. A potential harm is that you might in some way feel uncomfortable about an aspect of your practice, or about your writing. It is also possible that readers in the public domain may have un-anticipated reactions to work, given the subjective nature of interpretation. I want to assure you that you are in control of what you say, and of images you may decide to include. You can review your writing before sending it to me and delete any content that you don't wish to share. My purpose in receiving your offerings is to understand your experience, not to evaluate the writing itself, the quality of painting, or your practice.

Researcher's relationship with participants:
I am both your colleague and a co-participant in this study, which may make it easier to share sensitive material, and add to a sense of trust and confidence. It might also mean that more is at stake, should for any reason, the research not be experienced in a positive and affirming way. I assure you that should you not wish to participate, or wish to withdraw from the study, for any reason, it will not be held against you, or influence our relationship. To prevent any feelings that either of us carry that might affect our working relationship, we can turn to a mutually selected counsellor as a resource. I am fully committed to keeping a good relationship with you. I want to remind you that, although inclusion of your work may add to the richness or the study, the main data is from my own work; there is no pressure for you to contribute should you choose to withdraw at any time.

Benefits of the research and benefits to you:
By participating in this research, it is my hope that you will find the process enriching through self-reflection, identification of themes, illumination of aspects of a long-term practice, and through writing reflections in these areas. You will also be potentially helping others in that this study will be shared with academia, professionals and adult learners in communities who may wish to take up the practice of a Sacred Mandala Inquiry. You will be helping this mode of inquiry to become a legitimized methodology for inquiry.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Deciding not to participate, or withdrawing your consent at any time will not influence your relationship or the nature of your relationship with me, or the University of Victoria, either now or in future. Withdrawal by a participant will not be a detriment to the ultimate formation of the model of Sacred Mandala
Inquiry.

Withdrawal from the study:
You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to decline answering particular questions, will not affect your relationship with me. In the event that you withdraw from the study, you will be consulted about whether you want all or part of the data that has been collected thus far to be included or destroyed. If at any time you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at xxxxxxxx.

Dissemination of results:
I intend to disseminate results in the form of a PhD dissertation. Additionally, I intend to publish results in academic journals, at academic and professional development conferences and workshops, and I may decide to rewrite my dissertation as a book following graduation. The results, as synthesized in the dissertation, will be made available to participants and readers.

Confidentiality:
If you choose to discuss your contributions with others, then it might be possible for them to identify your comments in the final written version of my dissertation. Nonetheless, every effort will be made to protect the identity of participants in this study, should they wish anonymity.

Questions about the research:
If, as a research participant, you have questions about the research in general, or in your role in the study, please contact me at xxxxxxxx or contact my supervisors at the University of Victoria:
Dr. Wanda Hurren: Email xxxxxxxx Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx

You may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix C

Practice and Process of the Sacred Mandala Inquiry

Recommended Criteria for Undertaking Mandala Exploration Program

* Personal maturity in age and life experience;
* Ongoing personal growth work; Seriousness in Spiritual Quest
* Training and experience in a form of Meditation that emphasizes stillness;
* Experience with art of craft and a strong attraction to art as a form of expression;
* Experience in keeping a journal or a willingness to begin;
* Clarity of motive for undertaking Mandala work;
* Stability in lifestyle to allow for the work;
* Willingness to accept guidance, and to approach the work with a Beginner's Mind. (Shields, n.d.)

Colour/Feeling/Association Chart

Select colours from personalized colour chart, paint a sample, and describe feeling evoked and associated memory.

Paint Colour Swatch in Square	Feeling Evoked	Associated Memory
Yellow		
Red		
Blue		
Sienna		
Cobalt		
Green		

Figure 40. Template for colour/feeling/association chart. Adapted from instructions by M. Shields.

Add as many columns as desired. Include and expand on this work in the Mandala Journal, exploring particularly evocative memories, thoughts, feelings, intuitions, and sensations, while paying attention to that which may connect to a possibly inquiry.

Sample Colour/Feeling/Association Chart

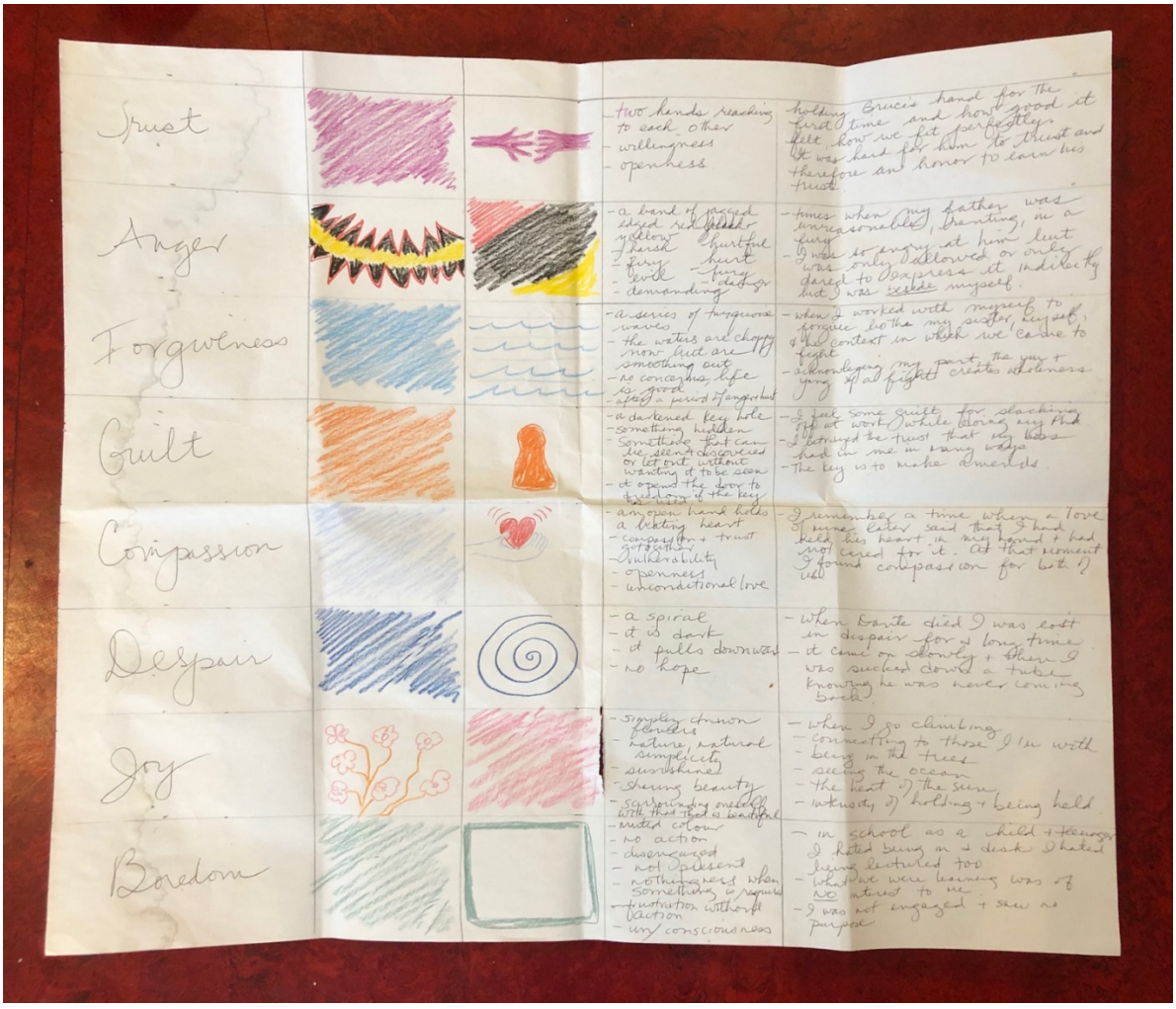

Figure 41. Sample colour/feeling/association chart, by anonymous. Reprinted with permission.

Sample Personalized Gouache Colour Chart

Figure 42. Sample personalized gouache color chart, by M. Jane Johnston, 1994.

Gouache is a water-based, opaque, high pigment paint and dries into a matt finish.

To learn about the properties of gouache, develop a preferred palette, and begin to feel comfortable with a brush, it is important to create a colour chart. There are various ways to organize a chart. The example above is in accordance with Madeleine Shields's direction for mixing colour to discover preferred shades created by mixing primary colours.

The eleven Winsor Newton colours used and mixed are as follows:

Alizarin Red, Flame Red
Spectrum Yellow, Lemon Yellow, Cadmium Yellow
Ultramarine Blue, Prussian Blue, Cobalt
Burnt Sienna
Black
Titanium White
Windsor Newton gouache (opaque water colour paint) is the gouache M. Shields advised students to use. Do not purchase water colour paint or gouache acrylic paint as their properties do not allow for image retrieval.

In addition, pre-mixed tertiary colours may also be selected. It is best to select professional quality permanent gouaches as inferior quality paint will fade.

"Permanence in the main refers to lightfastness. Some of the most vivid pinks and violets are only moderately durable and are more suitable for designers' artwork than fine artists who usually require greater permanence.

The permanence of a colour is described by Winsor & Newton using the system of AA, A, B and C. AA being Extremely Permanent and C being Fugitive where Fugitive means 'transient' and some fugitive colours may fade within months. For permanent paintings, it is recommended that only AA and A colours are used as these are not expected to fade. Light Purple has a B rating and Parma Violet a C rating, fading over a 10-year period would not be unexpected with these colours." http://www.winsornewton.com/na/discover/tips-and-techniques/gouache/permanence-of-gouache-colours

If you do select colours that will fade, you can have your work scanned to preserve a copy.

List of Supplies

Bell

Wood for fire, or candles

1 sheet white D'Arches water-colour paper, 22"x30" 300-pound, rough texture

scrap paper

4 Winsor Newton sable paint brushes; very fine pointed: 00 series 7, medium pointed: series 4, ½

inch wide pro, and wash size.

HB pencil

Soft eraser

Large compass

Ruler

Triangle with 90-degree angle

Sharp scissors

Foam core

Adhesive

Easel or table

Light, painting lights or headlamp if natural light not available

Water jar

Paint tray, pallet for mixing

Paper towel

Parchment paper

Apron

Mandala Journal

Headlight, if desired for working in artificial light, or at night, to prevent shadows.

Foam core

Adhesive (to attach foam core to back om Sacred Mandala

The Sacred Mandala Structure

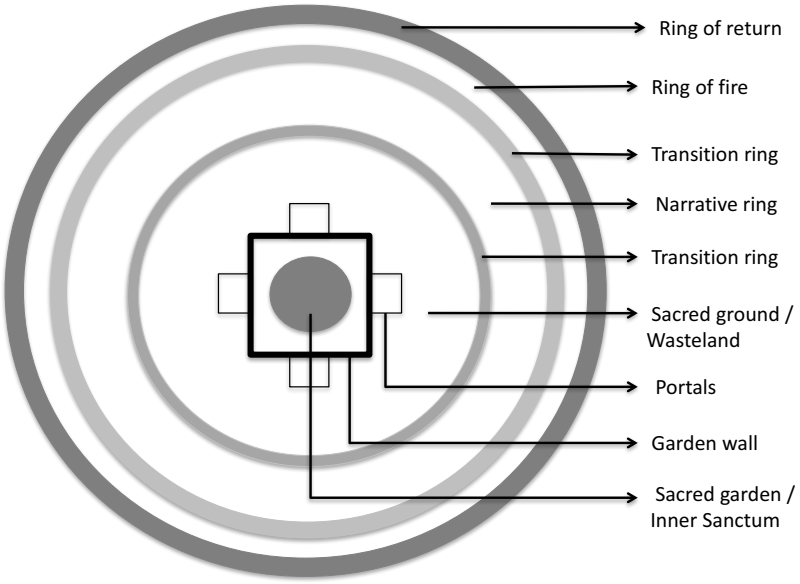

Figure 43. The Sacred Mandala structure, by Jack Wise as taught to M. Shields in 1983 (Shields, n.d.)

The specific dimensions and steps for drawing the structure of the Sacred Mandala are described below. Figure 44 is an example of a completed Sacred Mandala.

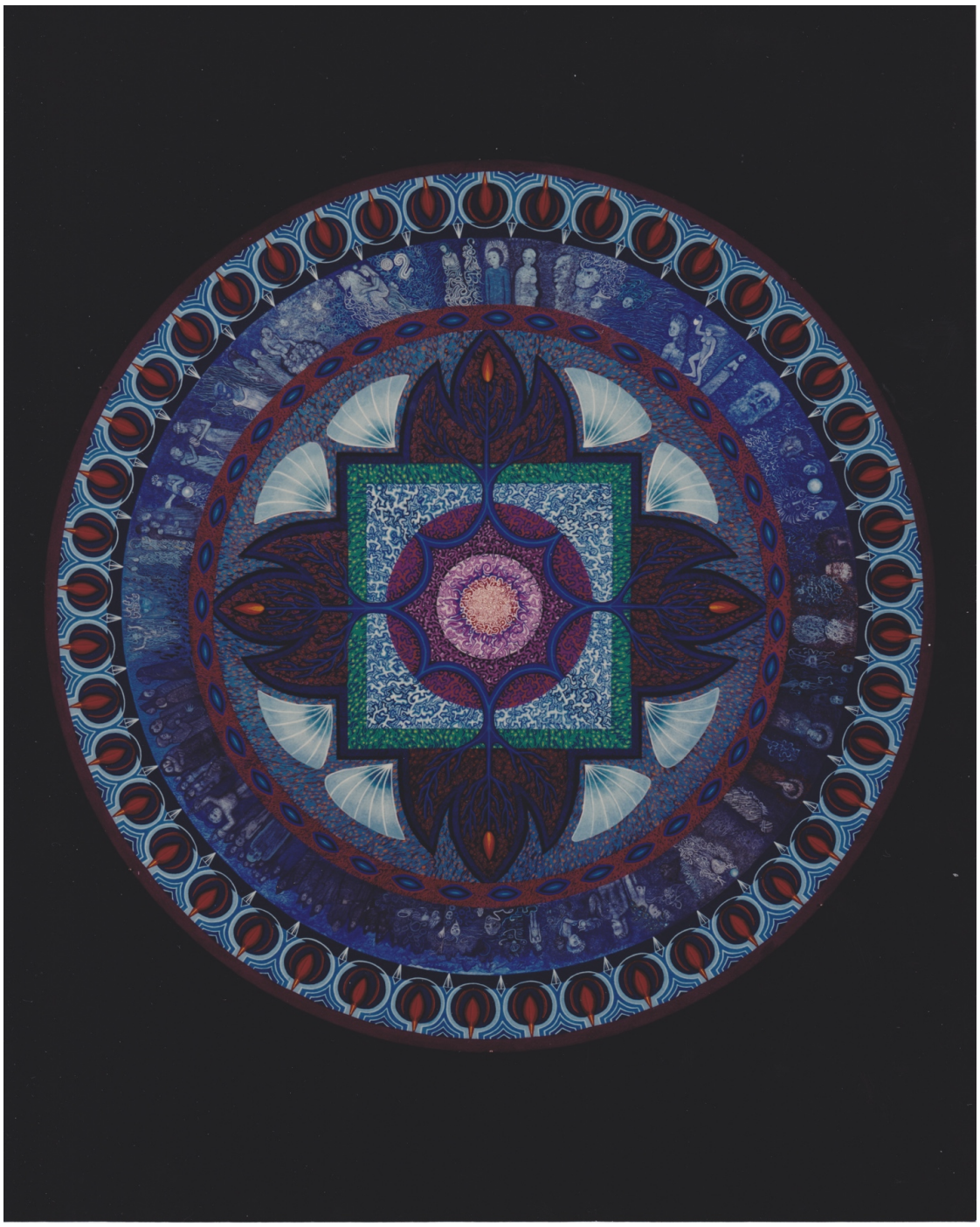

Figure 44. Inner Jewel, by Madeline Shields, 1989. University of Victoria Special Collections & University Archives Madeleine Shields fonds, SC587, Accession #2018-078

Mandala Principles

1. Respect for materials and selection of high-quality paper, paint and brushes which reflects an attitude of respect and sacredness of the process.
2. Intention to be sensitive, to work with care, and to attend to the aesthetic.
3. Contemplating the significance each region before painting, engaging with nature and life experience in order to embody the structure. For example, as the inspiration for the initial stage, The Ring of Fire, the student builds a fire and meditates on the shapes of the fames as inspiration.
4. Cultivation of a beginner's mind; continuously remembering we do not know.
5. Working one step at a time, allowing the work to unfold organically, without pre-planning, completing each step before going on to the next.
6. Maintaining a progressive clockwise movement, moving ever inwards, from outer rim to center.
7. Developing complete attention to where the brush meets the paper–indicated by a state of timeless absorption.
8. Using instinct and intuition in making choices in a process of discovery, rather than imposed control or intellectual concepts.
9. Willingness to take risks, make mistakes and to make repairs.
10. Abandoning goals, time pressures, future orientation, value judgments.
11. Expectation of commitment shown through sustained practice.

These principles were further adapted for Sacred Mandala Inquiry purposes (Breiddal and Johnston, personal communication, May 20, 2018).

Drawing the Mandala

Scribing the circle: Begin by locating the center of the 22" x 30" sheet of 300-pound rough texture Arches water-colour paper and mark it with a tiny pencil dot (the sheets come slightly over-sized allowing for a 22" circle). Using a compass with a sharpened HB pencil, press the pivot point into the dot and scribe a 11inch radius which becomes a 22-inch circle.

Then, scribe a second inner circle at 10 5/8's radius, creating a 3/8" deep band. Continue on to scribe a third circle at 9 5/8" radius, creating an inch-wide band which will become the **Ring of Fire**. Note that the outermost small ring – the **Ring of Return** is left unpainted until the very end of the mandala process. The next area is the **Transition Ring**, which will measure

approximately 3/8 inch. This is followed by the **Narrative Ring** which is approximately 1 and 5/8th inches.

Establishing the cardinal points: Using a straight edge and a protractor, establish the four cardinal points on the circle. To do this, use a straight-edge and lightly draw a line from one edge of the circle, through the center-point, to the opposite edge. Using the protractor, establish a point 90 degrees from the line just drawn and then lightly draw a straight line through that point and the center continuously from edge to edge of the circle. Bear in mind these two lines are for layout only and will be erased once the layout is complete. See diagram, as well as examples for creative variations in portals.

Squaring the circle: After deciding the size of your square and the size and shape of the portals, mark the four points that represent the square. This is done by measuring an equal distance along each of the four straight lines radiating from the center of the mandala. Once marked, connect the lines to form the square which becomes the Garden Wall.

Designing the portals: There are many examples of portals and they can take on a myriad of shapes, such as circles, diamonds, petals, etc. The key element to keep in mind is that, no matter their shape, there will always be four portals and they will always be symmetrical with the square previously drawn.

Drawing the Sacred Center: Scribe a 4” diameter circle in the very heart of the mandala.

Trimming: The Sacred Mandala may then be carefully cut out. Foam core cut to the same size and affixed with the proper glue to the underside creates stability and a flat surface for painting. This process may also be done by a framing shop.

Proposed Instructions for Sacred Mandala Inquiry as Dissertation Project

Mandala	Dissertation
• Preparation for beginning the mandala: gathering materials, ritual beginning by lighting a fire, drawing the circles and squares	• Reading, preparing for exams, writing a proposal
• Ring of Fire	• Writing the first chapter.
• First Transition Ring	• Writing the second chapter.
• Narrative Ring	• Gathering the data and analyzing it.
• Second Transition Ring	• Submitting a partial first draft, of the data analysis, getting feedback.
• Sacred Ground or Wasteland	• Resting, thinking, reviewing, integrating
• Portals	• Refining my understanding of the data through thinking, painting, and writing. Writing about my experience with the mandala, adding to the literature review.
• Garden Wall	• Writing the final chapter.
• Inner Sanctum or Sacred Garden	• Readying for submission.

1. Germination

Begin with generative activities and free-writing in a designated mandala journal daily for at least two weeks before working directly with the Sacred Mandala. Make a fire and mediate on the flames, jotting down what comes and sketching the shapes which catch your eye.

Three questions guide the written part of the meditation, while tending to the fire:

a. In what way is my life like this fire?

b. Where is the fire in my life right now—and in myself?

c. Where do I see transformation occurring in my life? (September 15, 1994)

2. The Phenomenologically Oriented Question

During and after writing sessions, the student may notice themes, metaphors, symbols, areas of interest and emerging questions. From these writings, a phenomenologically oriented guiding question for Sacred Mandala Inquiry may be formulated and clarified. An inquiry question is open ended—for example— "What is the experience of love?" or "What is the meaning of wisdom?" For example,

while painting a Sacred Mandala, Susan Breiddal's (2013) phenomenological dissertation inquiry as a palliative counsellor was "*What is the lived experience of encountering mortality in a palliative care context?"* (p. 59). The question should arise out of a genuine area of interest which has claimed the inquirer's attention; the topic should feel potent and right, given that much time and energy will be invested.

3. See materials listed above

4. Structure of Sacred Mandala

Scribe the Sacred Mandala structure on the designated Arches water colour paper, measuring as laid out.

5. Formalize Intention

Light a candle/ring a bell, speaking the inquiry question aloud. Write the question in the designated Sacred Mandala Journal.

6. Ring of Fire

Begin by selecting the background colour (not too dark or too thick), mixing enough gouache paint, in the correct consistency, to complete the whole ring. Paint with care, in a clockwise manner, and allow to dry.

Refer to your mandala journal for flame sketches. Paint an outline of a flame shape, using thinned white gouache, with a small brush. Carefully repeat the same shape around the Ring of Fire, giving due attention to the negative space between the flames which should also be equidistant.

Next, select a flame colour and paint over the white line, covering it. Repeat around the circle.

Add another aspect to the flame in any chosen colour, and then replicate this new aspect, as closely as possible, clockwise around the Ring of Fire. Complete the entire ring before making the next design choice. Continue to elaborate the flame shapes this way, with as many cycles of iteration as wished, continuing to give attention to the negative space between the flames. Design features may also be added in the background (the negative space) between the flames. The Ring of Fire is complete when it feels right to the meditator. Take as much time as is necessary, returning the practice daily.

Mindful embodied painting is the practice. The process is what happens to either help or impede the practice, which is then made conscious as information about how the inquirer is in the world and particularly in relation to structure, authority and discipline (M. Shields, personal communication, October 1997). As such, while painting, thoughts and feelings are to be quietly observed and continuously documented as the painting progresses. As Jung (1954/1959) noted, “Emotion is the chief source of consciousness” (p. 96). There may be an acceptance, neutrality

towards, or resistance of, the principles. There may be positive or negative judgments about the quality of one's own work.

Jot down anything thing which arises in mind related to responses, colour, shapes, memory, experience, text, dreams, conversations, synchronicities; anything which seem important or in any way speaks to your Sacred Mandala Inquiry. Continue this practice throughout the inquiry.

7. Transition Ring

Once again, begin by selecting the background colour, mixing enough paint, in the correct consistency, to complete the whole Transition Ring. Carefully paint clockwise around the ring and allow to dry. When dry, a repeating pattern or symbol which reflects the question of what feeds the fire (the Inquiry) may be painted in.

Take time to quietly reflect on and write about current transitions in your life/inquiry, what feeds the inquiry, and what is revealed in awareness.

8. Narrative Ring

Once again, begin by selecting the background colour and mixing enough paint, in the correct consistency, to complete the whole ring in a clockwise manner. Carefully paint and allow to dry.

The Narrative Ring is comprised of many small panels—much like a strip of film. The painter may decide in advance what size to have the panels around the ring by placing dividing markers at this time with a very light mark. It is recommended that the size be around two inches per panel, for the sake of consistency and aesthetics.

9. Image Retrieval

Crumple or twist a white paper napkin or square of paper towel and have it at the ready. Then, select a pleasing colour, mixing it with a little water to a medium consistency and paint over the test scrap. Standing above the paper, without too much delay after laying down the paint, deeply press the crumpled or twisted paper napkin into the wet paint, removing directly upwards so as not to further smear. The napkin can be turned and pressed in again to remove more paint as needed, but the painter should be careful to not remove too much paint or the procedure will have to be repeated.

Images will begin to be observable within the blotches (much as in clouds or puddles) given the rough texture of the paper, the crumpled paper's imprint, and the mind's projective ability. If images are not initially observed, it is advisable to sit with the blotches for a while until the figures begin to reveal themselves.

Once comfortable with the procedure, move to the mandala and apply colour on the first panel, or small area of perhaps two inches, efficiently covering the base coat so the new layer does not dry too quickly and thus cannot be pulled off to reveal images.

(Gouache can be removed, if no images emerge. In this case, carefully brush on clear water, allowing it to sit a minute, then press a clean white paper napkin into the wetted area and lift the paint. Removal can be done a few times, but it should be noted that the fibers of the paper will eventually break down. Allow the paper to dry before beginning again.)

Once an image or images are seen, the idea is to stay true to them, painting what you see. The meaning of this will become apparent in the next stage of the work. Details such as designs on clothing and background patterns can be later added as wished. The images are to be carefully painted in, either by outlining them with a lighter or deeper shade or by blocking them in from the edges with the colour used, a different shade of the colour, or a completely different colour.

At every step, allow the Mandala Principles to inform your choice.

10. Journal

The use of the journal is to record the experience of the work—the blocks that occur—the obstacles and irritants, the discoveries and how they were met and handled (M. Shields, personal communication, October 15, 1994).

11. Exploring Images

The following guidelines will aid the inquirer in image exploration:

a. Write down a general factual description of what you see in the panel, describing the scene and each figure. Think about the facts of the panel, as if a camera were scanning it, or as if you are a lab partner objectively describing a step by step process of what you are seeing. For instance, "In this panel, I see a female hooded figure with her arm reaching forward. In the figure's hand appears a round container."
b. Note your thoughts, feelings, sensations, and intuitions relating to the process itself in the journal.
c. Consider your feelings in the present when you look at the whole.
d. Noting each figure—what does it look like or remind you of, and what feelings are aroused—are you attracted to it or rejecting of it?
e. Note how the emergent images speak to your inquiry.

Steps to engaging with the structures of the unconscious:

a. Here you will bring the action to life and see as a drama, in which you are the observer, entering dialogue with each character. Close your eyes—become inwardly quiet—notice your breathing and deepen it, allowing it to become rhythmic and flow from your center. Scan your body—breathe into, and let go of, tension.

b. In your imagination, bring the scene into the room as if it is a drama unfolding before you—larger than life and 3 dimensional. You are on the periphery observing and not judging. Notice how you feel observing the whole scene.
c. Select a character, or any object, you wish to speak with and welcome them to your mandala. Ask "Who are you?" Wait and listen for answers. Then ask, "What are doing in my mandala?" followed by "What message do you have for me about my inquiry?" Ask any other clarifying questions you may wish to ask.
d. Characters may also be invited to speak to each other to gain further information about dynamics.
e. When the dialogue with each character is completed, and thank them for coming with their wisdom or information before saying goodbye. When the whole process is completed, dissolve the image before opening your eyes.
f. Ask yourself how you are feeling now, and what in your life this reminds you of. Take time to write the dialogues and experiences. (M. Shields, personal communication, adapted by Johnston, June, 2018)

12. Second Transition Ring

This space in the mandala allows for a time of transition and reflection on what has been made conscious thus far. Once more, journal writings may include contemplation on any noted areas of transition currently occurring, anchoring back to the inquiry question.

13. Mandala Wasteland/ Sacred Ground

This region represents both a wasteland and sacred ground. Mandala mentor Madeleine Shields taught that the wasteland represents a solo, often lonely journey wherein the comfort of old narratives may be left behind. The inquirer may struggle with the tension of 'what now,' the tension between old and new, between introjected teaching and embodied knowing, between internalized values and allowance of relational understanding, between self and other. This area can represent a time of radical subjectivity, wandering the Wasteland, weighted by the fallacy of the old story but not yet knowing what will come. Attention may jump from one thing to another in an attempt to distract oneself from the discomfort of inner conflict.

Mindfully mix and lay a light or medium base-coat of colour, again in a clockwise direction. Image-retrieval is not practiced in this region, but a design may be painted in which feels correct and is aesthetically pleasing to the meditator.

The inquirer, becoming increasingly adept with painting, may experience an optimal, mindful, creative sense of engagement and flow. Working within this meditative flow, an emergent repetitive pattern builds to an increasingly complex visual field.

Once more the student engages in Journal work relating to what has emerged in experience, memory, texts, etc. attending to the Sacred Mandala Inquiry question.

14. The Four Portals

There are various ways to design portals. (For an example, see Addendum, Figures 52 & 53.) Image retrieval is practiced in the portals. Each Portal is to be completed, and the images entered into dialogue with, before moving on to the next portal. Within these portals, once again, visual koans emerge, and often represent a synthesis or integration of materials; a new way forward, once grasped.

15. The Garden Wall

The boundary of the garden wall represents both protection and defense against other ways of knowing, be it somatic, emotional, intellectual, intuitive, or spiritual, and also symbolizes the protected area of our innermost sacred region.

This is a time for acknowledgement and respect for one's own power to defend. Defenses are important yet outmoded defenses may block individuation, preventing passage into deeper ways of experiencing self-knowing and relating in the world. The Sacred Garden region represents transformation of old stories.

While painting the wall, the student reflects on their experiences of defense and protection, making note of anything significant in the Mandala journal. Once the wall has been painted in, the student may begin to paint the portals.

16. The Sacred Centre

In this region, the painter enacts their finest work. In stepping back and meditating on the whole, the inquirer may now see at the overall effect which includes: colour; feeling tone; balance; verticality; proportionality; reversibility; connectivity; images–personal, cultural, archetypal and repeating; numbers; animals, people, minerals, associations; time, synchronicities, prognostications; work to be done; missing elements; revealed healing; myths and numinous symbols; narratives old and new, meanings made; new networks of relations (knowing more will unfold).

17. The Ring of Return (to Belonging)

The outermost edge is now to be painted, clockwise, in a solid colour, intuitively selected, and signifies the culmination and completion of a long cycle of inquiry.

While considering the emergent themes arising in Sacred Mandala Inquiry, a name for the mandala can now be chosen.

The sacred work of the inquiry may be shared with others, both for phenomenological intersubjective validation, and as communal knowledge—in the form of a project, thesis, dissertation, book, poetry, music, dance, slideshow—to share light, insight, inspiration, and wisdom gained.

Appendix D

"The Question," by Rumi (C. Barks, Trans.)

The poem "The Question, by Rumi (1995), removed for copyright reasons; see bibliography for source information.

The poem, “The Question” (continued) removed for copyright reasons; see bibliography for source information.

Addendum

Sample Images From Sacred Mandala Inquiry

These selected images (Figures 45-54) from *Surrender: Return to the Source*, by M. Jane Johnston, 2012, present examples of emergent, retrieved imagery in the process of Sacred Mandala Inquiry.

Figure 45. (lt. to rt.) *In a Newborn Night*, *The Severed Wonders*, *Midden of Ancient Surrender.*

Figure 46. (lt. to rt.) The Fortune Teller, The Red Tree Night, Honey Taster.

Figure 47. (lt. to rt.) *Spiral, Across the Divide, Blue Mummy, Fearlessness.*

Figure 48. (lt. to rt.) *Pathways for Peace, The Gaze, In the Center Turns the Wheel.*

Figure 49. (lt. to rt.) *A Young Tree Grows, Return to Joy!, Happy Family Dream, New Maps.*

Figure 50. (lt. to rt.) *The Veil of Tears, A Breed Apart, The Care and Feeding of Psyche Immanence.*

Figure 51. (lt. to rt.) *Beneath, All's Quiet, Surrender Bright*.

Figure 52. *Bear Witness to the Enchantment, Beehive/Behave.*

Figure 53. (lt. to rt.) *Felines Held, Surrender the Surrendering*.

Figure 54. Sacred Centre: Return to the Source.