



Belonging and Becoming: Voices of Harmonious Being

Young Women Steiner Students
Explore Their Lifeworlds Through
Goethean Conversation.

Althea Louise Lambert

A thesis submitted to
AUT University in fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

2011

Faculty of Applied Humanities

Supervisors

Dr. Beverley Clark

Associate Professor Sharyn Graham Davies

Artwork by Sophia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Attestation of authorship -----	vii
Acknowledgements -----	viii
Abstract -----	x
Chapter 1. Introduction -----	1
Introducing The Research Study-----	1
One Voice is Many Voices - The Whole Lives Within the Parts -----	4
Introducing The Voices of The People -----	6
Demographic Portrait-----	6
Individual Voice of Truth-----	8
My Own Voice -----	10
Who Am I - A Brief Background -----	11
The Birth of the Study and My Connection with Steiner-----	14
Inspirations, Questions and Aims-----	14
Love, Connectedness and Wholeness as Methodology -----	17
Concluding Comments-----	24
Thesis Structure - Chapter Summaries -----	26
Chapter 2. Steiner Education, Young Women and School -----	28
Steiner Education a Voice for Educational Renewal -----	28
"I love therefore I am": Beyond the Cartesian Paradigm -----	29
Positioning Steiner Education- Educations as a Social and Spiritual Impulse -----	30
A Living Education - The Aims of Steiner Education-----	33
Imagination, Inspiration, Intuition-----	35
Learning to Breathe in the Teaching-Learning Dynamic-----	38
Harmonisation and Learning to Breathe-----	40
Steiner education in the primary school -----	40
Steiner education in the high school-----	41
Truth, beauty and goodness -----	44
Young Women, Voice and Identity -----	46
Young Women's Voices -----	47
Identity Formation-----	53

A Sense of Belonging and Belonging at School -----	55
Research on Steiner Education -----	58
Adjusting to the Flow of Time -----	61
Concluding Comments: Education, Wholeness and Young Women---	63
Chapter 3. The Methodology has its Own Voice-----	68
The Entry Point - van Manen's Phenomenology-----	69
A Curriculum of Being and Becoming-----	70
Six Guiding Principles -----	70
Turning to the nature of lived experience -----	71
Investigating the experience as we live it-----	71
Reflecting on the essential themes-----	72
The art of writing and rewriting -----	72
A strong and oriented relation to the phenomenon -----	73
Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole -	73
Phenomenology as a Living Process -----	74
Becoming Something More-----	75
From van Manen to Goethe -----	76
Goethe's Science -----	78
A Phenomenology of Delicate Empiricism -----	80
Witness as Love and Connectedness -----	82
Wholeness -----	84
A Science of Belonging and Becoming-----	88
Linking Goethe, Steiner and this study-----	90
Gilligan, Voice and Relationship -----	92
Concluding Comments-----	97
Chapter 4. Methods -----	99
Study Design-----	99
A Note on the Design of Previous Narrative Studies with Young Women -----	100
The Study Aim-----	100

Pilot Conversations-----	101
The Invitation and The Timeframe -----	104
Depth of Connection -----	107
The Conversations -----	107
Beginning With Trust and Courage -----	108
Conversational Aims and Anchors -----	108
The Conversation as Space -----	109
The First Conversation-----	110
The Multi-Lemniscate-----	111
The Conversational Dynamic -----	112
The Conversation as an Inner Participation-----	113
A Goethean Approach to Conversation -----	113
The Very Process Of Exploring The Phenomenon Becomes An Experience Of The Phenomenon -----	116
Finding the Voice of the Phenomenon -----	118
The Four Stages-----	120
Earth -----	120
Water -----	121
Air -----	122
Fire -----	122
Key Ethical Considerations -----	123
My Ethical Position-----	123
Boundaries and Power-----	124
A note on how our conversations were different from counselling -	125
Concluding Comments-----	125
Introduction to Chapters 5 to 10. The Four Stage Goethean Layered Listening Process -----	126
Weaving an Understanding -----	126
Notes on Structure and Presentation-----	128
Conversational Excerpts-----	129

All Voices as One Voice -----	129
Chapter 5. Laura. <i>A Structure with Ribbon</i> -----	130
Prologue - <i>You Construct Your Own Identity?</i> -----	130
EARTH <i>Balancing Tears</i> -----	134
WATER <i>Balance is Lost and Regained</i> -----	149
AIR <i>I Am Becoming: The Core of True Self</i> -----	157
FIRE <i>Aurora</i> -----	157
Chapter 6. Lena. <i>Perfect Fit</i> -----	159
Prologue - <i>Being Popular</i> -----	159
EARTH <i>Not How I Really Am</i> -----	161
WATER <i>Everything Comes Together</i> -----	172
Fitting In -----	172
The Popular Girls-----	174
AIR <i>My Own Perfection</i> -----	178
FIRE <i>Perfection</i> -----	179
Chapter 7. Crystal. <i>The Butterfly</i> -----	181
Prologue - <i>The Butterfly Flutters In</i> -----	181
EARTH <i>The Butterfly Makes Space</i> -----	182
WATER <i>The Inner Butterfly</i> -----	189
AIR <i>The Butterfly Transforms</i> -----	194
FIRE <i>Butterfly Shimmers</i> -----	194
Chapter 8. Aries. <i>The Sounds of Silence</i> -----	195
Prologue - <i>Silence and Stillness</i> -----	195
EARTH <i>Silence Like Darkness</i> -----	197
WATER <i>Silence Becomes a Path</i> -----	202
AIR <i>Becoming Sound</i> -----	208
FIRE <i>Darkness Resolved</i> -----	209
Chapter 9. Sophia <i>Becoming Nothing</i> -----	211
Prologue - <i>I Don't Know</i> -----	211
EARTH <i>I Hate Having Nothing</i> -----	214

WATER <i>Nothing of Consequence</i> -----	223
AIR <i>Nothing Becomes Something</i> -----	225
FIRE <i>Something Aflame</i> -----	226
Chapter 10. <i>Working from within</i> and celebrating the child - the Steiner experience -----	227
Natalie. <i>Belonging</i> -----	228
Prologue - <i>Blossom</i> -----	228
EARTH <i>Not Born to Belong</i> -----	229
WATER <i>Belonging as Dynamic</i> -----	230
AIR <i>A Becoming Blossom of Belonging</i> -----	232
FIRE <i>Long May You Shine</i> -----	232
Becoming -----	233
Belonging and Becoming - Concluding Comments-----	239
Chapter 11. Belonging and Becoming as Harmonious Being-----	241
Belonging and Becoming as a Lemniscate-----	242
Belonging and Becoming With School -----	244
Belonging and Becoming: The Living Experience of Steiner Education -----	246
Young Women Steiner Students - Creative Acts of Becoming -----	250
Belonging and Becoming in Relationship -----	253
Individual Voice as a Young Woman Student -----	259
Concluding Comments-----	262
Chapter 12. A Flow of Many Ribbons -----	264
A Flow of Ribbons-----	264
The Voice of Freedom -----	265
Re/ Authoring the Text of Adolescence -----	266
On Truth -----	268
The Voice of Resistance -----	268
Natural Human Science - A New Voice -----	270
The Conversation -----	272

The Method Creates the Methodology -----	273
Limitations -----	274
Phenomenology and My Voice -----	274
Time-Space Limitations - The Window Gaze -----	277
Being With Research With Young People -----	278
Inspirations, Future Possibilities and Recommendations -----	279
Educational Renewal - A Challenge -----	282
<i>You Are Going to Have an Impact and it's Going to Change the World</i> -----	283
References -----	285
Appendices-----	297
Appendix 1. Mentor Meeting - Althea in Conversation with Jill -----	297
Appendix 2. References and Publications by Rudolf Steiner and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe -----	299
Appendix 3. Publications of Rudolf Steiner's Lectures and Writings On Education -----	301
Appendix 4. Madonna 1 - Pilot Conversations-----	303
Appendix 5. Information Sheet and Ethical Considerations-----	304
Appendix 6. Indicative key questions for the first conversation-----	310
Appendix 7. Laura 1 -----	311
Appendix 8. Althea's Comments on Laura 1 -----	312
Appendix 9. Laura 12d-----	313
Appendix 10. Lena 3a-----	315
Appendix 11. Crystal 5a -----	318
Appendix 12. Crystal 7a -----	320
Appendix 13. Aries - Steps of Silence-----	321
Appendix 14. Expressions of Gratitude-----	325

Attestation Of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no previously published material or material written by another person (unless quoted or cited) nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning. All transcripts and journal entries have been reproduced as original data and these and all other quoted material have been duly acknowledged and referenced appropriately.

Althea Louise Lambert

6 April 2012

Acknowledgements

Nothing is achieved in isolation. There are many who have contributed to this study; many who have given their time and love to make this possible. My deepest gratitude goes to all the people who have helped this research and this thesis, become and belong. To the young women whose voices are central to this study and who spent an intense year of conversations with me and stayed with it: Thank you for being courageous, passionate and true to your selves and for trusting me. To the many women throughout time who have been courageous in speaking their truths: you have laid a path for such as me.

To my entire family for their unwavering support and belief in me: I am blessed to have you all in my life. Thank you Warwick for believing in me, being my *pou* and giving me the space to create, for loving me no matter what and for trusting me to bring this study into being. Thank you Ronan, for all the afternoons after school and all the weekends and evenings you did without me; and for bringing me back to earth with your child's wisdom. To Rachel, Aaron and Bridget for continuing to say, *You can do it mum!*; and for being amazing and wise teachers in my life. Thank you to my wonderful mum Nancy, for editing the early versions of this thesis and to my dad, Dixie, for understanding my journeying; to both of you for your love and guidance. To Avril and Martin, my sister and brother, for listening to and encouraging my passion and enthusiasm for this study.

To Dr Beverley Clark and Associate Professor Sharyn Graham Davies, my supervisors: for your commitment to this research, and your warmth and honesty. Your strength and support throughout this journey has anchored me and given me the confidence to keep going in the tougher times. Thank you for your faith in me and for honouring my authentic voice.

To Dr Jill Poulston, my mentor: your support, guidance and availability has sustained me. Thank you for listening, truly listening to me, and for questioning me and challenging me and ultimately for understanding me with all my twists and turns.

To Professor Colin Gibbs and Dr marg gilling* for being my supervisors for the first two years of this journey: thank you for supporting me to create the structure to be able to do this work and encouraging me to trust my intuition and look beyond the ordinary. Thank you to Professor Nesta Devine for advising and guiding me in the later stages of my work and for reading and editing my manuscript. Your encouragement of my methodology has helped enormously. To Dr Andy Begg: thank you for reading my nearly-final draft of this thesis and for your salient guiding comments. I am also grateful to AUT University for their support through a Laptop Scholarship and the Writing Retreat in July 2010. I acknowledge the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) for guiding and supporting my ethics application for this research (approved by AUT University Ethics Committee on 7 November 2008, AUTEC Reference number 08/150).

My gratitude goes to the wider network of people I have contacted for guidance on this journey. To David Urieli, whose comprehensive grasp of Steiner education and anthroposophy is astounding. Your patience, wisdom, love and dedication as a teacher and friend have motivated and encouraged me at many points on this journey. To Four Arrows (Professor Don Trent Jacobs) for 'The Beauty Path' and for supporting me in an authentic dissertation; and to Professor Arthur Zajonc for his comments on Goethean science. My gratitude also goes to all those who engaged in collegial discussion including: Drs Sharon Harvey, Jan Wilson, Lynne Giddings and Liz Smythe (AUT University); and to Dr Robin Bacchus, Sue Simpson, Kate Bendall, Lisa-Jane Hay and Megan Seawright. In particular, to the school and school Principal where this research was located: my deepest gratitude for allowing me in as a researcher and supporting me so whole-heartedly. Thank you also to my Soul Voice colleagues for hearing me and being a loving container within which I can experience my own soul's voice and for reminding me how much this PhD matters. Ultimately, it is the people in my life who make the difference. With their love,

I remain connected and whole.

* lower case intentional at Dr gilling's request

Abstract

There are two central strands to this study, the voice of Steiner (or 'Waldorf') education and the voice of young women - voices rarely heard in the mainstream educational arena. Together they are the voice of 'harmonious being', a phrase which I have used to describe the phenomenon of the Steiner education experience which aims for harmonisation of the whole human being. Who the young person becomes is central to this experience yet there is little in-depth research exploring the Steiner student's voice. By addressing this gap and inviting young women Steiner students to explore this phenomenon through conversation this study achieves three significant visions. First, it raises the social voice of young women and challenges the negative stereotype of 'adolescent girl' proffered by the media. Second, it illuminates the *living experience* of an educational initiative that fosters connectedness and humankind's spiritual wisdom. Third, it demonstrates the value of simply talking and 'listening with spirit' to stay present in conversation and 'experience the other' through empowered and heart-centred relationships. As a consequence of doing this research, a fourth vision has emerged showing the value of love as methodology.

Over one school year (9 months) I met regularly with twelve young women secondary students (14-18 years of age) from a New Zealand Steiner school to explore the phenomenon of harmonious being through conversations about their lives. Our conversations advance an intuitive methodology of *love, connectedness* and *wholeness*, which is encapsulated in a new methodological mix combining Goethean phenomenology with Carol Gilligan's relational psychology. Together they invoke the recognition of our innate connectedness. Goethe's is an artistic science of witness and wholeness ('one voice resonates with all voices') focusing on the epiphany experience of the archetypal phenomenon. Gilligan's voice-centred relational psychology has provided a humanistic feminist lens through which women and men come together as 'human' as heard in the layers of conversations with these young women. In this study, epiphany moments were unfolded in detail in six conversations series through a four stage process of Goethean layered listening. The themes of

'Belonging and Becoming' that emerged were explored through the collective voices of the twelve young women.

The young women in this study offer insightful and rare views of their lifeworlds; voices rich with wisdom constructing 'adolescence' as a time of creative development. These young women show a remarkable interest in the world and a keen awareness of their social, cultural and physical environments locally, nationally and internationally. As evocative social agents they recreate the conventional 'moody adolescent' to a meaningful picture of what matters to a young woman as she authors her own life. What Gilligan calls 'the voice of resistance' is alive and well in these young women. Their experiences of 'harmonious being' transcribe a fluid lemniscate path of discovery between voice as self and their world-relationships: *a structure with ribbon*, says Laura. They describe an awakening to 'who they are' as a 'self-belonging', which creates *space* to become and belong more fully to 'who they will be'. Through the voices of young women Steiner students this study tells that the living spirit of Steiner education is alive and well in the 21st Century.

This research became the very experience of the phenomenon we were exploring, unfolding a *natural human science* that has shifted the voice of phenomenology from 'lived' to 'living' experience and revealed a relational methodology of an embodied dynamic voice, epitomised in the phrase: *belonging and becoming*.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Schools ... might be places of curiosity, imagination, and reflectiveness embodying a passion for the possible ... We might encourage the search for meaning by helping young people develop a capacity to look through a wider range of perspectives - the various disciplines, the array of arts and expressions, a diversity of people as well as one's own experiences ... the path of humanisation, the direction of enlightenment and liberation. (Ayres, 2005, p. x)

Introducing the Research Study

This study arose because of my passion for the kind of education described above; my commitment to raising the social voice of women and young women; my love of listening and my inclination to challenge the accepted norm. I combined these in order to profile two rarely heard voices in mainstream academia and education: those from Steiner education¹ and those from young women. As a student and a teacher, I aspire to the belief that education should truly transform and elevate the whole human being in body, mind, soul and spirit. As a teacher and a mother of teenage girls, I have learned that some young women are wise beyond their years and that the journeys of women, young women and girls are intimately connected. We learn from each other and that has been the way throughout the story of humankind. My vision with this research study was to explore in depth the lifeworlds of young women Steiner students to elucidate the living experience of Steiner education and re-voice how we see 'teenage girls' in the 21st Century.

Steiner education stands outside the mainstream and is often called holistic education or 'alternative'. 'Alternative' approaches to mainstream public education in New Zealand are still at times met with consternation and fear. Steiner education is no exception and while it serves a global community of over 1000 schools, it remains poorly understood by most educationists and academics outside its circles (Gidley, 2010a). This study was proposed against

¹ Dr Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) is the Austrian scientist-philosopher whose educational initiative of Steiner (or 'Waldorf') education is the largest independent school movement in the world (Steiner, 1997).

the background of a rising concern amongst education professionals that our mainstream schools are failing our young people (O'Connor, 2011; Vadeboncoeur, 2005b; Vadeboncoeur & Patel Stevens, 2005) and that educational transformation, which includes heart-centred, spiritually aware and arts-rich learning and teaching, is needed (Gibbs, 2006; Gidley, 2010a; Glöckler, 2006; Jones, 2005; Kung, 2007; Lindholm & Astin, 2008; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; O'Connor, 2011; Smith, 2005; Wright, 2001). Steiner education addresses this need through creative and spiritually aware learning experiences. Steiner schools often have a healthy arts component encouraging the exploration of visual and performance arts as well as languages and music in order to engage the balanced or harmonious development of the child.

In a Steiner education young people are guided to build their own inner resources, skills and abilities to go out into the world and contribute in meaningful ways in their everyday lives: who the student is as a human being and who they are becoming as they grow into adulthood, is of the utmost importance. While there is an abundance of literature outlining the principles and teaching practices of Steiner's educational approach, this lives alongside, but not in, mainstream education; and there is precious little which explores the Steiner student's voice². Through voice, as embodied connected expression, we can hear the quality of the speaker's relationships or relatedness. Given the intense focus of Steiner education on the teacher-learner relationship this is pertinent.

The teacher-learner relationship in a Steiner school creates a dynamic which has the quality of a breathing process as the young person moves between their relationship with themselves and their relationship with the teacher and others in their lifeworlds. Through that process Steiner education aims to facilitate 'harmonious development' or as I have called it: *the phenomenon of 'harmonious*

² In this thesis the word 'voice' will appear frequently and an understanding of the context in which I use it calls for further explanation. The voice provides a blueprint of who we are in relationship to ourselves and others - our belonging and being. The voice takes us, through the breath, beyond the separate self, to a spiritual and emotional connectedness to our inner psyche (Gilligan, 1997, 2004). The connection between voice and relationship is intimate.

*being*³. In mainstream education terms, this might be analogous to, but is not confined to, facilitating learner engagement through harmonising the 'head, hands and heart' so that the student independently begins to employ all three faculties in a more holistic learning experience. Thus learners experience a harmonisation of the head, hands and heart which belongs in them as who they are and serves them in their everyday lives as well as at school. The resonance of this harmonisation (or harmonious being) should be recognisable in their voices. By centralising the student voice the present study draws attention to the Steiner experience from the student's perspective and aims to impart the experience of living this phenomenon of harmonious being in their everyday lives.

I found no other studies that had sought to give young women students at Steiner schools a voice. Nor had I found any published studies exploring the lived experience of being a Steiner student and no studies that engaged such an intense conversational exploration of the experience of harmoniousness. Perhaps this latter point is not so surprising given the potential challenge of trying to engage conversation about such an abstract notion. And yet - is it not a certain harmoniousness that many of us seek in our lives? Are not the problems of our world - war, poverty, racism; domestic violence and youth suicide - symptoms of disharmonious ways of living? Perhaps symptoms of an inner disharmony and disconnection from the very essence of what it is to truly belong in the world and to become the fullest expression of who we are. And where do the voices of young women stand in all this? If the future belongs to our children, it is critical to give them an equal social voice. This study has therefore realised this and shown that young women hold a key to our understanding of our human connectedness.

³ At the outset of the study I called this phenomenon 'harmonious being' based on what I had heard more anecdotally than through the literature. I have not found the exact phrase 'harmonious being' in Steiner's writings. In discussing the aim of education with reference to human development and the knowledge of the whole the human being, Steiner talks about 'harmony', 'harmonious development' (Steiner 1973b), the 'harmonisation' of various developmental forces and 'harmonious feeling of well-being' (Steiner, 1995, 1997), for example, rather than 'harmonious being', yet somehow I had adopted this phrase. This is discussed further in the Literature Review, but briefly Steiner (1996) says that education guides our children towards the harmonious development of our spiritual, physical, emotional (or soul-ful) and intellectual forces.

Conversations with twelve young women over nine months have provided the foundation of this study from which six key conversation series with six young women have emerged as the core evidence of the phenomenon. We explored their lifeworlds and 'the *living* experience of being a Steiner student'⁴ - a journey of unfolding the layers of harmonious being. The methodology used evolved out of the relational process of our conversations. This is important. Taking a phenomenological approach (van Manen, 1997), I did not start with a particular methodological recipe, I trusted and watched and followed my intuition and immersed myself in the process of our conversations and in writing about that. I found that the methodology could be described through Goethean phenomenology (Barnes, 2000; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; Steiner, 2000). How I would explore those conversations (as a 'narrative analysis') was again at first, an intuitive process. I knew I had to listen many times to our recorded conversations and unfold the phenomenon layer by layer. Carol Gilligan's layered listening method, with her focus on relational psychology and voice (Gilligan, 1982; 1995; 1997; 2004), informed this process and together with Goethe's phenomenology helped me achieve the depth of meaning-making that I sought. I have called this way of exploring our conversations: 'Goethean layered listening'.

One Voice is Many Voices - The Whole Lives Within the Parts

All twelve young women have informed my thinking and provided the fertile ground within which I could identify moments of perceiving the phenomenon. By describing six conversation series in this thesis, I have illustrated the voices that carried an intense sense of the phenomenological power looked for in the narratives of a phenomenological study (van Manen, 1997). I have chosen to present these moments as six in-depth explorations (as the key findings of this

⁴ Two things are important here: First, I use the term 'living experience' as opposed to the standard term 'lived experience' to describe what is a dynamic relational experience in our research conversations. I elaborate on this in the methodology chapter. Second, the term 'Steiner student' has come from the young women, not from me. I avoided using this term because it felt to me like 'ownership' but I found that they were comfortable with it and used it themselves. Even more than this, the way they all positively identified with this term was very similar to a kind of kinship of which they seemed proud.

research study) as follows: five in Chapters 5 to 9 and a sixth in the first part of Chapter 10⁵. In order to uphold the integrity of the methodology and comply to the word limitations of this thesis, such a decision was essential for two key reasons⁶.

First, the methodology I use means that within each young woman's voice, resonates the voices of the other young women. This is a key methodological understanding underlying this study - that the whole (the phenomenon as a whole) resonates, or *lives* as Goethe said, in the parts. One way of understanding this is to use the analogy of how our own genetic material lives in every part of us as a distinct, identifiable and identical (in every part) blueprint. In Goethean science, and in phenomenology (van Manen, 1997), the part is 'the becoming whole' and the whole is never separate or distinct from the parts. This means that individual experience is centralised and valued above generalisations because in the individual voice is heard the voice of the whole, or, as in the present study, the voices of all the young women. So rather than making meaning from finding commonalities that would appear as generalisations, I have invited the voice of the individual to speak and in the experience of unfolding that speaking, listen for the resonance of the whole.

Second, in this thesis I wish to create an experience of the living quality of this research so that it is in the reading process that the power of the phenomenon is felt and builds from chapter to chapter. I have intentionally included the raw voice of our conversations in the body of this thesis and not as appendices, as these voices, these conversations, *are* the study, they make the phenomenon come alive and bring these young women into being⁷. In experiencing the raw

⁵ Chapter 10 also demonstrates the unity of voices by weaving together the voices from the twelve young women. My intention is to expand this thesis in a less academic style and publish a book of my exploration of all our conversations.

⁶ The philosophy behind this is described in more detail in Chapter 3 and the practical implications of this notion on the research design is discussed in Chapter 4.

⁷ Chapters 5 to 10 are presented as an experience not just as a report of evidence. I have specifically aimed to include transcripts which may conventionally be placed in appendices of a doctoral thesis ('authentic dissertation' is my aim with this thesis - see Four Arrows (2008)). This has meant that the word count of the thesis is towards the maximum rather than the minimum required because some 16,000 words are 'raw voice' in order to present the voices of the young women involved as authentically as possible.

voice of our conversations, it is as if the phenomenon is unfolding again and again in its various manifestations. This serves to help this research live and breathe and upholds the integrity of this study in keeping with my methodology not to bring only my rendered version of our conversations but impart a living experience.

Through passionate and intense conversations, the young women Steiner students in this study and I have unfolded a wealth of intuitive knowing and depth of insight in a voice previously unheard. The essence of their experience of harmonious being is expressed in the title of this thesis: *Belonging and Becoming*. In respect and gratitude for who these young women are becoming, I introduce their voices from the very beginning in the following section.

Introducing The Voices of The People

People are at the heart of this research study. In some cultures, like *tikanga Māori* in *Aotearoa*⁸ New Zealand, the first most important introduction is that of the people. *Māori* have a saying: *He tangata, He tangata, He tangata*. This simply translates as '*the people, the people, the people*'. It tells us that 'before anything and after everything it is the people who are important': the people in life, in relationships, as a voice to be heard above the hum of the systems and machines in our lives. This study begins and ends with the people that are its voice, the people that give breath and life to the words that you find here, so it is important for me to first introduce the people who *are* this research study.

Demographic Portrait

The young women are Aries, Crystal, Laura, Lena, Natalie, and Sophia - the six young women in the in-depth explorations - and Gabriel, Hera, Isis, Ruby, Sally and Zen⁹ - whose voices come through more directly in Chapter 10. All were between 14 and 18 at the time of the study. Their cultural backgrounds were varied and the ethnicities they identified with included *Māori*, Cook Island,

⁸ '*tikanga Māori*' means '*Māori culture*' and *Aotearoa* is New Zealand's name in the *Māori* language.

⁹ These are the pseudonyms they chose to use for the study.

Germanic, Latin American, New Zealand European, Canadian and Finnish¹⁰. All went to the same Rudolf Steiner high school in New Zealand. Only one of the young women had no siblings and in all cases the siblings of the others were either current students, past students or below school age. Most of the young women came from families who supported the philosophy and character of the school¹¹. Some of these families aligned themselves strongly with Steiner's philosophy of 'Anthroposophy'¹², which often meant lifestyle choices that included organic food, complementary or anthroposophical medicine, and low technology use (particularly for young children). It is interesting to note at least three of the young women did not have email addresses and did not belong to Facebook. Technology use was less for the younger of them and technology did not play a significant role in any of their lives. Most of the young women had spent their entire schooling in Steiner education, including kindergarten, but three of them had attended state primary schools for part, or in the case of one of them most, of their primary schooling. One of the young women who had been at Steiner school her "whole life", experienced one term in a State high school.

The young women gave their time willingly to talk with me over the 2009 school year (early March to late November). They joined the study either because they were interested to find out what it was about or they thought that being involved in this study would be a good thing to do, not just for them, but also as a social contribution. Most said that they wanted more people to know more about Steiner education. Thanks to their trust and courage we journeyed far together. Amazingly they kept coming back. Even when schoolwork

¹⁰ These are the ethnicities the young women said they identified with through their family genealogy and are not confined to one ethnicity per young woman as some of the young women identified with more than one ethnicity.

¹¹ Most Steiner schools in New Zealand have significant waiting lists for enrolments and in general parents who send their children to a Steiner school are doing so because they support the educational philosophy and culture of the Steiner school.

¹² 'Anthroposophy' means literally 'the wisdom of the human being' which Steiner called 'the wisdom of the human spirit'. For a general introduction to the philosophy of anthroposophy see *Anthroposophical leading thoughts: Anthroposophy as a path of knowledge* (Steiner, 1973 - listed as Steiner 1973a in the reference section). However, in many of the texts outlining Steiner Education such as *The Education of the Child* (Steiner, 1996) and *The Essentials of Education* (Steiner 1997) as well as *The Meaning of Life* (Steiner, 1999).

demands were great, they came to talk. Altogether we recorded 148 hours of conversation and still we could have talked more. When the conversations were over, the space lived on. I could still feel it tangibly and some of the young women could too. One day several months after finishing our conversations, I got a text from Natalie who, commenting on the demands of tertiary study, said *I could do with one our chats right now!* Like me, Natalie had not forgotten our space.

Individual Voice of Truth

In this section of the Introduction I bring in 'individual voice' so that each young woman is making an introductory statement as if 'introducing' herself. I can't break confidentiality and let them introduce details about themselves, but I can share conversational extracts. Each one has a voice here and from my own personal spiritual protocol this is important and sets the firm ground for the rest of this thesis.

It is our first conversation and I have asked each young woman to talk about her experience/s of truth, beauty and goodness. We are just getting to know each other and here each young woman is responding to a question about her experience of truth.

Aries: Just being really true to yourself at first and if you're being really true in what you are then you can be true with other people.

Crystal: Truth ... I always believe that (being) truthful kind of gets you a long way I guess. Staying true to yourself and who you are ... being truthful to others as well as yourself. You know you see so many people not being truthful and it kind of screws up what they're doing as well. Sometimes when you're truthful it can cause situations because people aren't ready to face the truth maybe. I guess the truth can be painful as well. You know they say the truth will set you free but only when you're ready maybe ... when people are being truthful they're probably more happy. When people are being untruthful they're just kind of creating this false reality you know just kind of acting out of things that are happening around them and you can just kind of see that I guess.

Gabriel: Honesty. If you actually look at the better side of life or the worse side of life. Truth is the basis of a better way of dealing with stuff.

Hera: Truth? Honesty, trust, I don't actually know. Truth - I've never even thought about it. I don't know, I don't know ... Oh yeah, yep it's kind of like

reaching [your] goal or you know [your] peak. I think I reached you know - my truth!

Isis: There's a quality of being truthful you know you tell the truth and don't present a fake image ... truth as in it's just there, there's nothing added onto it, it's not dressed up it's just there in its face value ... you know you tell the truth and that's it there's not little lies or dressy up bits ... When everything's just - I suppose you could call it - 'naked' it's just bare, it's just its essence ... You have those moments when you feel really, really good. Nature's really truthful you can't alter that.

Laura: Truth in word? A tree is true 'cause it is a tree ... Truth is a wonderful and terrible thing and should be treated with respect ... there is something somewhere underneath that is true, but it is disguised ... You have the truth that is plain most of the time and to a certain extent simple and if you go to its opposite it's completely covered.

Lena: I think of telling the truth, but I bet there's more to it, but I don't really know ... I think [some animals] are really beautiful and also quite truthful too 'cause most of the time they work for us.

Natalie: Truth? For me basically its just like a person is telling the truth and honesty that kind of thing, being true to yourself and true to others.

Ruby: Truth – is that like you believe or you are close or you trust? I probably trust my mum or my aunty or my grandmother all on my mum's side ... they're just around the corner really so I can pop over and see them and tell them issues and stuff.

Sally: Someone you can trust. Someone who you know will tell you the truth and will listen to you and not tell it to someone else if you ask them not to. Someone who you can count on to be there if you need help ... something that you don't want to share with everyone, that you know someone who will help you with something [that] maybe you're really struggling with.

Sophia: Truth makes me think of something very calm ... amongst the craziness or chaos that some of us tend to live in – or a vast lake or something. Something that is very strong and placed on the ground it's not distracted from anything or it's just there and everything moves around it.

Zen: Trust – definitely trust even love... You can't be seen as a good person if you're not truthful.

In the comments above the young women speak about the nature of truth as being *foundational* or *essential*, even *naked*. Through their voices we hear something of who they are. Messages such as 'you can't tell the truth if you don't trust someone or they aren't listening' live alongside the importance of *being true to yourself*. The truth is *plain and simple* and *everything moves around it*. The truth, says Laura, can be *covered* or *disguised*, but is discernable. 'Truth' for these young women seems to begin to mingle with beauty (Lena) and goodness (Zen) and relies on *trust, listening* and *love*. It is sacred: *calm, vast, strong, not distracted*. I don't think I could ask for more from a first conversation. These are profound insights. And at the end of nine months of conversations, Sophia said: *My experience of truth? Don't know. Right here in this space*. And that is what I had relied on. Our conversations being a space of truth.

My Own Voice

In this part of this chapter I introduce myself. I would like to give my own voice on truth. This is what I said about truth in a conversation I had with my PhD mentor, Dr. Jill Poulston, two-thirds of the way into the study conversations¹³. This conversation served a number of purposes, one was for me to experience being 'on the other end' so that Jill played the researcher role and asked me questions.

Jill: What is truth?

Althea: *What is truth? Truth is a perception. I don't think anyone can tell you but I think you can recognise it. And if you can recognise it there must be a resonance, a vibration, a sound of truth ... it would be like planets coming into alignment or sounds coming into the right spot that you go bang, maybe like an osteopath suddenly putting your bones back in order.*

So is it a space of where things are supposed to be? Can something become true too? I talk about human being versus human becoming. 'Cause 'being' feels like a static place. Becoming is like something that moves. Yeah and there is movement in living - we can't possibly be alive unless there is movement in many ways so everything is in motion and life is motion. So then can truth 'become' - rather than existing as some static thing - is it becoming?

¹³ I note that I was already well into my conversations with the young women when this conversation with Jill occurred. However, I had not elucidated whether I would use the extracts on truth presented above until well into the following year during the analysis of the conversations.

What I have said connects with what the young women in the study say as well: that there is no one static thing that is truth. I have also raised some key themes of this study such as the notion of truth as an alignment or a 'fitting together' (belonging), and the dynamic nature of being as becoming.

Who Am I - A Brief Background

Relevant aspects of my background include being a woman, a teacher, a scientist, a singer, a mother of four children who are between 10 and 26 (two girls and two boys), and a people-lover. I have worked in education, the natural sciences, music and sound to raise the voices of women and young women. My loves in life have led me to my work. During my first degree in animal science I loved working with goats and this led me to my Masters research. After completing my Masters in Agricultural Science, I came to New Zealand from Australia in 1987 to work as an animal scientist for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. Here I learned *tikanga Māori me te reo* (Māori culture and language) and was 'adopted' into the *Ngati Apa* peoples of the North Island through my 'pouako' (teacher) *Ohorangi* McKinnon. I remain forever grateful for the teachings he passed on to me, which connected me to the spirit of the people and the land of *Aotearoa*.

Alongside my formal position as a scientist, I also worked extensively in EEO (Equal Employment Opportunities) and became involved in profiling women and 'the voice of women in the science' through science publications and women's conferences as well as in a liaison and advisory capacity to 'management'. Here I learned about the moral voice of women and the divide between the aspirations that women had for themselves, that women had for other women, and that men had for women. My career in science began to take on a different hue more oriented towards the science of being human.

Towards the end of my career in the natural sciences I collaborated on a research programme in Mexico and worked with women and their sheep in the highlands of Chiapas for a year. The research programme I worked with took a multi-disciplinary participatory approach which brought the local women together with anthropologists, educators and natural scientists and placed the voice of the indigenous women at the centre of the decision-making. What I

learned in twelve months in Chiapas was life-changing and confirmed my trust in my own (inner) voice. A year after I returned from Mexico I left the natural sciences and trained as a tertiary teacher and began exploring my love of human communication through teaching and learning. My love of learning has been life-long and to discover my love of teaching in my late thirties was wonderful. I have learned so much about the teacher-student relationship and have held my teaching-learning space as a space of spiritual learning and personal growth as well as a space for the development of academic knowledge or practical skill.

I particularly love spoken language and believe in the transformative power of the sound of the human voice: good conversation, great oratory, free voice expression, song, performance and laughter. Recently my love of voice and my love of people has led me to train as a practitioner of the Soul Voice® method in which human voice as toned or 'sounded' is used as a modality for emotional release and to shift and heal physical, emotional and spiritual pain or blockages as well as to awaken passion and creative expression¹⁴. Through this method I have learned in detail how the power of the human voice and its subtle qualities has the potential to lead us to the very essence of our being. As I have mentioned, this is important because this research study relied on knowing the subtleties of the human voice.

In 2004, having combined my passion for language and people into teaching communications and English, I returned to Mexico as a university English teacher in regional Oaxaca. This was the second time I would ask my family to move to Mexico to follow my passion. By early 2006, back in New Zealand, I became interested in the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. I completed a year-long certificate in human development, art and health according to a

¹⁴ See Schelde (2009) and www.soulvoice.net. This training has been an astounding complement to my doctoral study and a profound personal journey. I do not go into further details about this method in my thesis but plan for sharing this dual journey in greater detail in a future publication.

Steiner-based curriculum ('The Art of Health - Anthroposophical Studies') at Taruna College¹⁵ and towards the end of that year this doctoral study was born.

What I have shared here gives some idea of who I am and the key stages on my life's journey that have led me to the point of undertaking this doctoral study. I illustrate the multidisciplinary path my career has taken and that my love has always been connected to my work. I also show that I like a challenge and often travel the road less taken. Unlike some I have not built my doctoral research on my Masters research nor have I had a long formal career in the social sciences. Nor do I come to this study with prior experience as a Steiner school teacher (or student) or with any substantial background in Steiner education. However, since deciding to undertake this doctoral study, I have become a Steiner-school parent as my youngest son attends a Steiner school (this occurred 'synchronistically' with this study rather than consequentially). This brings into focus the consideration of my status as a potential 'insider' in this research. Stated simply: to the Steiner teachers and anthroposophists I am not an insider, to others 'outside' the Steiner school communities, perhaps I am because Steiner's education philosophy resonates with me and I am a school parent. Being a parent at the school where the research was located and thus a visible member of the community, I believe the young women in the study were more 'ready' to trust and participate in this research. This helped our relationship, particularly in the initial stages. It also helped in my general access in the school and most likely helped in gaining the approval of the principal and upper school teachers in allowing this study to go ahead. A further point is that my research has been completely independently funded by myself, and thus apart from myself and the young women, there was no interested 'third party'.

In an intriguing way my life seems to have conspired to bring me to this point where my love of voice; my love of teaching and learning; my passion for the lineage of woman, her-story, and our human connectedness; my spiritual

¹⁵ Taruna College, in Havelock North, New Zealand is a centre for adult education offering formal and informal certificate and diploma level courses inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner: including Waldorf Education, Biodynamic Organic Agriculture, Anthroposophical Nursing, Art of Health and Biography training (see www.taruna.ac.nz).

knowing and my insatiable curiosity and love of challenge, come together in a doctoral research journey which has truly transformed me.

The Birth of the Study and My Connection with Steiner

My year studying at Taruna saw my first real exploration of Steiner's philosophies. As I was nearing the end of my studies I realised I wanted to know more. I was intrigued by how Steiner education might work and how we might 'see' it in the child. I began to write and read and four months later realised that there was potential for me to be engaged at the level of a doctoral study. I undertook a personal path of learning about Steiner's philosophies and Steiner education by being a participant on a number of workshops at Taruna and in a study group which read and discussed Steiner's book *Harmony of the Creative Word* (Steiner, 2001). This helped to give me some Steiner-related perspective. So in these ways, as a school parent and Steiner school community member, through significant conversations with students, teachers and parents in the school community, and through formal courses, I became more acquainted with the character of Steiner education. In the title of this section I refer to 'my connection with Steiner'. As an explicit philosophy and as a series of teachings, Steiner's 'work' is relatively new to me, however, the essence of his philosophy, founded in the human being's own wisdom of spirit, is not. Steiner's view of education centred in love and humankind's own wisdom of spirit, is resonant with my own.

Inspirations, Questions and Aims

My exploration of Steiner education began to raise questions. Three questions in particular inspired this study. The first concerned 'breathing'. I had heard that Rudolf Steiner had said that education is about teaching a child how to breathe. "*What is 'teaching a child how to breathe'?*" I wondered. My notes from that time show my line of thought. Inspired by what I had read and heard about Steiner education I wrote:

*Thinking, feeling and willing*¹⁶. What are we trying to understand in education? ... Freedom and education and breathing ... What is the measure of successful breathing? How do we know when a child is harmonious?

To speak we need breath – our breath gives us voice and through that voice we seek to be heard. By teaching children how to breathe, we teach them how to use their voices. (Althea, Journal Notes 1 February 2007).

In these journal notes I show my interest in the notions of *breathing*, *harmoniousness* and *voice* - all of which have remained central to this study. Through my writing and journaling I saw that I wanted to conduct this study through the voices of the Steiner students. I wanted to place the young person's voice at the centre of this study so that they felt empowered and heard. I wanted to enter into conversation and hear Steiner students talk about their lifeworlds and I wanted to do this with as few assumptions as possible.

I began to understand that the notion of 'teaching a child how to breathe' was closely related to what Steiner called developing a "certain harmony ... that must be furthered by education" (Steiner, 1997, p. 42). I saw that Steiner's focus on harmonisation through education had many physical and spiritual layers which aimed to prepare the child for her/his own experience of freedom through understanding her/his own inner life in relationship to the world (Steiner, 1997). Steiner placed a particular emphasis on education which developed the child's breathing during the primary school years. An important aspect of this was to achieve a harmonious integration of respiration and circulation leading into puberty and the high school years. Then in adolescence the child is more prepared with an inner foundation (a harmoniousness) to meet the world as the soul comes more fully into activity (Steiner, 1996, 1997, 2004). I called this harmonisation process 'harmonious being', though Steiner himself doesn't use this term, and so my second question became: *What is harmonious being?* (in relation to the experience of Steiner education).

I did not consider that an intense study of Steiner's writings; or an investigation of teachers' or parents' perspectives; or that a study of the Steiner curriculum,

¹⁶ *Thinking, feeling and willing* are the three-fold aspects of the human being that Steiner refers to in his educational philosophy. These are relevant because the harmonisation of these activities is one aspect of harmonisation that Steiner education seeks to achieve (Steiner, 1996, 1997). This is described and discussed further in Chapter 2.

would serve my aim of answering these questions. I had to go to source, to the human beings who were receiving the education. I wanted authentic voice. My investigation of potential research approaches led me to phenomenology. Here I found the foundation for my methodology and the terminology to explain what I wanted to do: *to investigate the nature of lived experience*. So my third question became: *What is the nature of the lived experience of harmonious being?* To me it seemed logical to look to the students and investigate their lived experience and therein listen for the resonance of harmonious being. I felt this would take me inside Steiner education. By locating the voice of authority with the students I also felt I could 'get out of the way' so to speak and let the phenomenon of harmonious being have a voice.

In getting out of my own way, I had to consider my motives for working with young women - *why teenagers?* and *why girls?* I asked. Two things came up for me around these questions. Firstly, my decision to explore the phenomenon of harmonious being in teenagers was met with a mixed response. Some Steiner teachers I talked with tried to dissuade me from working with teenagers. They were sceptical because 'teenagers are classically disharmonious' and because, they said, the harmoniousness that Steiner refers to might better be seen in an older-age group of past pupils. Also, it was suggested that it would be difficult to rely on anything teenagers said because they would change their minds so often. I heard this advice, but I felt sure there was something more, a creative tension was rising. I wondered what harmonious-being looked like during a life-phase described as 'classically disharmonious'.

Secondly, I experienced a kind of juxtaposed intrigue with Steiner girls. On one hand, I wanted to know how young women in a Steiner education were navigating their lives in 21st century New Zealand given their lifeworlds potentially occupy a very different time and space from that of Rudolf Steiner - a middle class, middle aged, white European man from the early 1900s. In my informal talks with teachers, students and parents at a Steiner school, I got the impression that the standard patriarchal 'story' still imbued the educational content. I wondered where feminism was within Steiner education, though I didn't intend to centralise that question, I thought I might get a sense of that in

our conversations. On the other hand, my casual observations gave me the strong sense of how different these 'Steiner girls' were to the mainstream images of teenagers portrayed in the media. Their dress and general appearance tended to be less mainstream. They participated in many school activities that foster closeness and community as well as spirituality. I got the impression that Steiner girls may be less influenced than 'other girls' by the media-driven images of the perfect woman (Gilligan, 1997; Oliver, 2001). So the aim of the study became to explore in creative conversation, the nature of harmonious-being through the lived experiences of young women who are students at a Rudolf Steiner high school.

Love, Connectedness and Wholeness as Methodology

With this aim I proceeded and in the process of the research, guided by the young women and myself, the methodology unfolded organically. My entry point was through Max van Manen's pedagogical phenomenology (van Manen, 1997) which helped me to initially frame my own methodological intuitions of *love, connectedness* and *wholeness*. My early journal notes show these three ideas time and time again as I muse over what education means to me and what educational research with children and young people should involve. These ideas are my early expression of harmonious being. They are my own exploration of the spirit of this research study as I sought to bring into form a foundation for exploring the abstract notion of harmonious being. For me, wholeness, as the Goethean scientist Henri Bortoft describes (Bortoft, 1996), is resonant with authenticity. A research study exploring the nature of harmonious being must then resonate with harmoniousness and I, as the primary researcher, must be authentic in that. Ironically, I was embarking on a journey to discover exactly what that was! My starting place was to be true to what I value in my life: love, connectedness and wholeness. These are, of course, not necessarily separate experiences and each one may be found in the other. And, like the phenomenon of harmonious being, they comprise many layers and are highly personal yet common human experiences.

Van Manen's approach to human science research (van Manen, 1997) truly inspired me and connected my initial methodological ideas to a stronger base in

the literature. In his writing I saw the key values of *love, connectedness* and *wholeness*. As van Manen (1997) reminds us, who we are directs our research. The phenomenological approach, he says, is guided by how we as researchers, guide ourselves and how we live. Van Manen (1997, p.5) describes research as a "caring act":

In doing research we question the world's very secrets and intimacies which are constitutive of the world, and bring the world into being for us and in us. Then research is a caring act: we want to know that which is most essential to being. To care is to serve and to share our being with the one we love ... and if our love is strong enough, we not only will learn much about life, we also will come face to face with its mystery.

From my perspective, this means that as we care, we love and as we love we connect and as we connect we discover our wholeness and the intricate ways in which we belong in the relationship to each other and the world we live in. As a phenomenological researcher this means my research can unfold the delicate layers of who we are to understand the nature of belonging to this human experience.

I loved what van Manen's writing had to offer and through it I began to understand phenomenology as a research approach. Yet I felt that the narrative analysis of the conversational process I was planning would need a different kind of treatment from that presented as hermeneutical phenomenology and I wasn't drawn to work with Heidegger. By allowing the methodology to have its own voice and unfold in the course of actually doing the research I found Goethean phenomenology. Based on the scientific approach of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe¹⁷, Goethean phenomenology invokes the recognition of our connectedness, our belonging together as human beings and our innate embodied spiritual nature. While van Manen's approach also carries these

¹⁷ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) is a well-known German poet famed for his literary genius. His literary works include the iconic play *Faust*, but he is less well known for his scientific achievements, though Goethe himself considered his work as a scientist his greatest contribution. Goethe's scientific method breaks with the Newtonian-Cartesian scientific path of placing an emphasis on reason and objectivity as the focus of science and attributing little or no credence to subjective and artistic methods and insights. Goethe does not separate the subjective and objective and considers the greatest path to science as being through art and the 'eyes of the spirit' (Barnes, 2000; Seamon, 1998; Steiner, 2000). Rather than work with the view that the world is a collection of separate parts (a paradigm of 'separation'), Goethe viewed the world as a connected whole (a paradigm of 'connection').

qualities, Goethe is intimately connected with Steiner and pre-dates Heidegger and, the father of phenomenology, Husserl. For me Goethe's was the original phenomenology. Goethean phenomenology has been described as a science of wholeness (Bortoft, 1996), of soul and spirit (Steiner, 2000), of inner participation (Barnes, 2000) and of witness (Shotter, 2005; Drury, 2006) and very clearly offers a pathway of love, connectedness and wholeness. Goethe did not publish his scientific theories as an explicit body of knowledge and much of what is accessed in this thesis comes from Rudolf Steiner's *Introductions to Goethe's Scientific Writings* (Steiner, 2000). An important note on the translation and publication of Steiner's and Goethe's works is given in Appendix 2 which, amongst other things, explains that as might be expected, new translations and publications of Steiner's and Goethe's works continues up to the present day.

It was from Goethe that Rudolf Steiner drew much of his inspiration for his own philosophy (Barnes, 2000; Steiner, 2000) and he employed and extended Goethe's methods of scientific exploration towards his own human science research. Goetheanism or Goethean methodology has an established following in the natural sciences (Bortoft, 1996; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; Shotter, 2005) but is only just emerging in the social sciences (Kaplan, 2005). While there is a wide potential application for Goethean science in the humanities, as Steiner himself envisaged (Steiner, 2000), there has been "little serious work ... with Goetheanism and the social sciences" according to Goethean scientist and physicist, Arthur Zajonc (Zajonc, 2010, personal communication).

Given that Goethe's methodology is considerably less well known than van Manen's, further explanation at this point is pertinent. As an artist, poet and playwright, Goethe expressed the philosophy behind his methodology primarily through his literary works (Steiner, 2000, p. 75)¹⁸. As a scientist, his devotion to love and the divine and sacred connectedness of all things, placed him apart from the scientific paradigm of his day as Goethe did not separate his

¹⁸ "If (Goethe) had claimed a scientific stance we could refer to it; but this is not the case. Thus our task is to consider all of the poet's work that is available, discern its philosophical centre, and sketch its salient features." (Steiner, 2000, p. 75)

religious devotion from his pursuit of truth in his scientific practice¹⁹. Goethe felt that the only way to truly know something was not solely through the intellectual analysis of its separate parts, but through perceiving its wholeness by utilising all our senses, not just our intellect. Goethe calls this the "difference between seeing and *seeing*" so that "the eyes of the spirit have to work in continuous living conjunction with the eyes of the body" (Barnes, 2000, p. 270). Steiner (2000, p. 5) tells us that Goethe "developed views which later led him to a productive understanding of nature in which idea and experience ... mutually enliven one another and become one whole." Goethe's approach sought wholeness so that there was no separation between what was sensed (including feeling) and the idea that was 'thought' (thinking): "...my perceiving is itself a thinking, my thinking a perceiving" (Goethe, quoted in Barnes, 2000, p. 271). From Goethe's perspective, there is no separation between epistemology and ontology: our ways of knowing are intimately connected to our ways of being (Dahlin, 2009)²⁰.

¹⁹ Goethe said: "The True is like the divine" (Steiner, 2000, p. 137). Steiner explains further: "What so many find necessary was foreign to (Goethe): the urge to pull things down to their level, to strip them of anything sacred. He had another need: to sense something higher and to work his way up toward it." (Steiner, 2000, p. 136). It is with the spirit of this kind - honouring our connectedness to our real human experience and working with love (or care) - that forms the foundation for the present study. This is a way of knowing and being that upholds the sacred in all living things.

Goethe opposed the scientific paradigm of his day, which was attributed to the influence of Newton's science and Descartes philosophy and saw the world as a collection of parts and the human being as an onlooker set to master and control rather than perceive and understand the delicate connections between all things (Robbins, 2005).

²⁰ Central to the idea of connection is that thinking and being are not separate experiences. Hoskins (2003, p. 320) refers to this connection as follows: "Too often we separate a way of being from a way of knowing. I would like to emphasize that how we experience and relate to the world is directly linked to what we know...This means that the ideas, perceptions, and misconceptions that we have about people will always show up in how we relate to each other, whether we are conscious of them or not."

The philosophical framework that I work with for myself and for the purposes of this study connects Thinking and Being, and thus epistemology and ontology. Dahlin (2009) writing in detail on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner compared to (and pre-dating) Heidegger's phenomenology, tells us that Thinking and Being "belong together" and exist through each other but retain their identities. Thus epistemology (what we can 'know', what it is to 'know', how we can be sure that we 'know' what we think we 'know') and ontology (a theory of being, how people become what they are and are 'being' in the world) need not be separate understandings (Dahlin, 2009). "For this very reason (thinking) cannot be an object of technological revisions...(though) all of this has been forgotten by human thinking, and more so precisely through the modern technological world conception" (Dahlin, 2009, p. 359). A purely instrumental, technological or rational view of thinking, says Dahlin (2009) sets the human

To recapitulate at this point, *love, connectedness* and *wholeness* are like three key notes which resonate throughout the present study sounding in the research process, and the research approach. These key notes resonate in Goethean phenomenology, and underpin the ontological and epistemological character of this study and my own worldview. A further important aspect of my worldview, of who I am as a woman researcher, is to raise the social voice of women. The nature of working with young women called for something more which I found in Carol Gilligan's feminist relational psychology (Gilligan, 1997, 2004, 2011).

Few contemporary voices in the social sciences have shown the importance of love, connectedness and wholeness, as strongly, as consistently and as passionately, as that of psychologist-educator Carol Gilligan²¹. Gilligan's work with women and young women for more than 30 years has been pivotal in raising women's voices and challenging the social and philosophical paradigms that have framed much of psychology, social science and education (Brown & Gilligan, 1992 Gilligan, 1982; 1990; 1997; 2004, 2011; Kiegelmann, 2009). Gilligan's research brought out an 'ethic of care' (Lee, 2005) that "begins with connection" (Gilligan, 1995, p.122) and is clearly evident in her inclusive, respectful methodology and in her vivid and sensitive portrayal of other people's lives. Her philosophy calls for us to acknowledge the integral importance of relationships in every aspect of our lives. Her research findings map a visible path beyond the paradigm of a separatist individualistic culture in which the primary authority is 'the rational male'.

Human lives are interwoven in a myriad of subtle and not so subtle ways ... from (which) standpoint, the conception of a separate self appears intrinsically problematic ... The rational man ... acting out of relationship with (his) inner and outer world ... (signifies) a disconnection from emotions and a blindness to relationships which set(s) the stage for psychological and political trouble. (Gilligan, 1995, p.122).

being apart from the wholeness of itself, from its Being-ness. Perhaps, says Dahlin, this "alienation" has now extended to the point of it seeming "natural".

²¹ Carol Gilligan is described as "an influential psychologist who, in 1996, was cited by *Time Magazine* as one of the 25 most influential people in the United States. Her work is interdisciplinary and she is internationally recognised among academics and practitioners, especially among second wave feminist scholars." (Kiegelmann, 2009, paragraph 2).

Gilligan's voice-centred methodology, and layered listening guide developed with colleague Lyn Mikel Brown (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1995, 1997, 2004)²², is a methodology based in what Gilligan calls relational psychology (Gilligan, 1997, 2004). This is relevant to this study as relational psychology honours 'connectedness through relationships'; our capacity for deep listening with love; and, like Goethe, no longer looks at the world through the Cartesian lens of the separate self. Voice-centred methodology centralises voice as connected-self. In Gilligan's work and in the present study, 'voice' means very literally the spoken communication as well as the individual signature imparted through communication. A person's voice has many layers which reveal the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual worlds of the speaker in the context of her social and cultural relationships.²³

Much of Gilligan's work has focussed on centralising the voices of women and young women as a knowing and wise healthy social imperative. With respect to the present study, I have been able to use Gilligan's research approach as a way to connect Goethe's phenomenology to the social sciences and extend the analysis and discussion of this study's findings. Through engaging with Gilligan, I have unfolded 'voice' at an intense and deeply personal level in six conversation series to show who the young women are and mirror the intensity I experienced in my conversations with them. Gilligan's methodology has provided a critical platform for understanding the lifeworlds of young women and their innate knowing as a meaningful social voice.

I have brought Goethe and Gilligan together under my ideas of love, connectedness and wholeness, which I also see in their methodologies. For Goethe, as for Gilligan, I believe, love, connectedness and wholeness are not necessarily separate ideas. Similarly for myself, to engage a philosophy of

²² Gilligan worked with Lyn Mikel Brown on the Harvard Project for Women's Psychology and Girls Development (Gilligan, 1997). This project involved many researchers and while I refer primarily to Carol Gilligan in my thesis or to Brown & Gilligan (1992), I acknowledge, as Gilligan does in all her work, the many researchers who have contributed to the Harvard Project and ongoing related research.

²³ Brown & Gilligan (1992, p. 18) describe voice as revealing the "harmonics of relationship" in that in one voice there are many voices: "We know that voice, as a channel of psychic expression, is polyphonic and complex". (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 23).

wholeness or connectedness means that everything is connected or, to borrow from Gilligan, everything is related. Goethe expressed his devotion to his scientific and artistic pursuits as 'love' (Steiner, 2000; Barnes, 2000; Zajonc, 2007). Art and science were not separate for Goethe. He visualised "a culture in which a living, experiential grasp of the creative spirit becomes the source of the revitalization of art and science ... (leading) us to a deepened religious relationship to the world" (Barnes, 2000, p. 281). The relational and co-creative nature of research and of human experience is the core of Gilligan's voice-centred relational methodology (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1995, 1997, 2004) and is pivotal to this present study, as I have explained.

When Gilligan explores her own relationship to voice (Gilligan, 2004 - detailed below) she inadvertently links directly with the kind of science that Goethe practised: what Barnes (2000, p. 221) calls "inner participation". It is the transformative activity of Goethean science, as experiencing the other (or 'object') of our inquiry, from the inside out in a revelatory moment:

In order to participate in the inner gestures and qualities of nature's beings, we have to awaken our inner life of feeling. The most mysterious and central aspect of all knowing, however, is the sudden inner lighting-up of the concept ... the most essential, intuitive aspect of cognition arises when we no longer experience the object from the outside but from its very center ... from the inside out. (Barnes (2000, p. 284)

I believe that this inner participation is what Gilligan describes as a "Proustean experience" when she relates a story of how, during her research, she felt a voice unlock in the centre of her body.

The sound of girls' voices unlocks a voice in myself. I experience an exhilarating sense of freedom. My voice is coming from the center of my body, untrammelled by second thoughts and revisions. I was simply in relationship, speaking for myself. (Gilligan, 2004, p. 136)

In the present study, the reciprocal effect of this unlocking of voice, this inner participation, is the living experience of the phenomenon in conversation as each participant (the young woman and myself) hears the other in herself as her own voice. This inner voice is an inner knowing and in the present study, inner knowing is truth. Goethe said: "If I know my relationship to myself and to the outer world I call it truth" (quoted in Steiner, 2000, p.112). By unlocking this

truth we retrieve "a voice that has been driven into silence" (Gilligan, 1995, p. 122) which "when (it) surfaces and comes into relationships ... sets off different vibrations and resonances." Thus, in the same way that Gilligan describes for her own research (Gilligan, 1997, 2004; 2011; Kiegelmann, 2009), I choose to focus on voice in this study because it unlocks truth and reveals relationship.

Here I come full circle to connect my own knowing. As I have described the methodology for the present study evolved through our conversational relationships and can be framed in Goethean phenomenology and Carol Gilligan's relational voice-centred methodology. The entry point based on the supporting literature, was phenomenology but before that was my own innate methodology which is contained by love, connectedness and wholeness. My connections with voice through my music; through parenting; through my love of language, learning and teaching; led me to believe I entered this study with an intimate familiarity with the subtleties of voice. What I have found has astounded me and awoken me to a deepened understanding of the difference between 'listening and truly *listening*' (to paraphrase Goethe)²⁴. Through this study I have learned to listen with my whole being.

Concluding Comments

This study is about transformation and challenging the status quo. It is about listening to young women from an educational culture that fosters human connectedness. It is about challenging the norms and developing empowered relationships which reframe our thinking towards a paradigm of love, connectedness and wholeness in education and in our lives. It is about the marvel of the human voice as the embodied expression of who we are.

In this chapter I have introduced the key people involved in the study and described some of the key influences on this study and on the research approach taken. Further elaboration of the key ideas of love, connectedness and wholeness, which have inspired and guided this study are given in Chapters 2 and 3. That the methodologies of Gilligan and Goethe have

²⁴ Earlier in this section I refer to Goethe talking about the difference between 'seeing and seeing' and how he had learned to see with "the eyes of the spirit" (Barnes, 2000, p. 270).

supported this study is perhaps not surprising for two reasons. Firstly, this study focused on and deferred to, the voice of young women and from the same kind of focus and inclusive approach, Gilligan's method grew out of her studies with women, young women and girls (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982, 1995, 1997, 2004, 2011). Secondly, because the young women were co-creative partners in this research, the resonance of their Steiner-education, imbued with much of Goethe's worldview, is bound to emerge.

In summary, by applying a different methodological lens of love, connectedness and wholeness, this research study aims to augment an educational and social voice rarely heard. The central focus of this study is to demystify the Steiner education experience through the voices of the young women Steiner students and to divulge to a wider audience the depth and resonance of who these young women are. As the real authorities on their own lives, these young women provide an insightful and rare view of their lives in the context of being Steiner students. Their views challenge our deference to the voice of adult authority which frequently dictates educational practice and social standards. Their wisdom as 'belonging and becoming' is a guiding force.

Thesis Structure - Chapter Summaries.

Following this Introduction chapter, the remaining eleven chapters of my thesis are outlined as follows.

Chapter 2. Steiner Education, Young Women and School

This chapter describes the contextual territory of this study and is divided into sections relating to Steiner education and young women. I discuss the key characteristics of Steiner education relevant to this study including: the notions of 'breathing' and 'harmonious being' in the teaching learning dynamic; and truth, beauty and goodness. I then focus on research relating to the journey of young women in adolescence and raise the significance of identity in this. I introduce Carol Gilligan's work and other narrative studies which profile the voices of young women. A fourth section helps to position the results of the study by a brief review of literature on the 'sense of belonging' at school (which is extended in the Chapter 11) and the concluding comments bring together 'young women' and 'a vision for wholeness in education'.

Chapter 3. The Methodology Has its Own Voice.

This chapter describes the philosophical character of this study. I describe how the research approach was birthed in the philosophy of pedagogical phenomenology and then turned to Goethean phenomenology. Goethe's scientific method (as presented by Steiner and others) as 'a phenomenology of delicate empiricism' is described in detail in relation to the key ideas of love, connectedness and wholeness. I then describe the importance of methodologically centralising young women's voices through the work of Carol Gilligan, which has provided the necessary bridge to link Goethe's phenomenology to the social sciences.

Chapter 4. Methods

This chapter describes in detail the study design and procedure to show how the method has shaped the methodology of the research. Conversation as method is described, in particular the idea of the lemniscate in conversation. I detail the who, where, when and how of the study and show how 'who

participates' shapes 'what is done' and describe the centralisation of 'voice'. I discuss conversations as evidence and describe the process of analysing the conversations through a four stage Goethean layered listening based on Gilligan's studies with young women and Goethean phenomenology.

Chapters 5-10

Chapters 5 to 10 present the key evidence of this study using the four stage Goethean layered listening. In chapters 5 to 9 five different conversational series with Laura, Lena, Crystal, Aries and Sophia are explored in an in-depth layered analysis, around different themes that illuminate the living experience of harmonious being. My aim in each chapter is to reach an understanding of how I have perceived each young woman's experience. In Chapter 10 the theme of Belonging is explored in a sixth conversation series with Natalie. In the second section of Chapter 10 the theme of Becoming is explored through key conversational moments from different young women in the study.

Chapter 11. Belonging and Becoming: The Living Experience of Harmonious Being

In this chapter I engage with the relevant literature and draw on the young women's voices and their key ideas explored in Chapters 5 to 10, to explore harmonious being as a re/creation of the discourse of adolescence. I address the relationship between Belonging and Becoming and bring that into an educational focus referring particularly to the Steiner school culture and the young woman student as a creative act of Becoming. By engaging with Carol Gilligan's work I discuss the young women's Belonging and Becoming in relationship and the voice of resistance.

Chapter 12 . A Flow of Many Ribbons

This chapter brings together the different strands of the study to conclude what inspirations, intuitions and imaginations arise because of this research. I discuss the key themes arising from the study and provide a critical reflection of my main intentions in doing this research. I position the methodological mix as new for the human sciences and a potential path for educational renewal; address the limitations of the study; describe my inspirations; propose future possibilities and give the final word to the young women.

Chapter 2. Steiner Education, Young Women and School.

This chapter outlines the contextual territory of the study reviewing the relevant literature relating to Steiner education, the world of young women and school as a space of belonging. In particular I discuss the key characteristics of Steiner education with a focus on harmonisation and the teaching-learning dynamic. I draw on studies which have sought to profile the voices of young women through narrative. In this section Gilligan is introduced further though her methodology is discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4. I also include a section on school as a space of belonging in order to position the results of this study which show the importance of having a sense of belonging at school. This discussion of belonging is extended in Chapter 11 where the themes of this study are discussed in relation to the literature¹. To conclude I bring together 'young women' and 'a vision for wholeness in education'.

Steiner Education - A Voice for Educational Renewal

...a change in voice which goes to the very foundations of knowledge and affects the structure of teaching and learning relationships. (Gilligan, 1997, p. 19)

In the words above, Carol Gilligan is not talking about Steiner education, she is considering the deeper implications of restoring the balance of social voice to truly include women. Yet these could have been Steiner's words. This is what Steiner worked hard to set in train - a change in our knowledge foundations, in the very foundations of being. To further contextualise Gilligan (1997), in the same article she says that change is not just a matter of voicing political correctness, for example, but a deep, resounding change of the 'voice of knowledge'. What I read in her words is the need for a transformation, a massive shift in the deep earth of what we have always believed was true and a change in how in the past we have imparted that knowledge through our relationships. Perhaps such a shift simply begins when we change our own

¹ These themes emerged because of the study and were not reviewed or looked for prior to the start of the field work when literature is normally reviewed.

voice and awaken the knowledge of who we are. It is on this very premise that Rudolf Steiner built his educational approach.

"I love therefore I am": Beyond the Cartesian Paradigm

Contemplating Steiner's work has led me to want to modify Descartes' famous phrase, "I think therefore I am" (Descartes, 1635)² because for Steiner, the deep knowing of who we are is a remembering and in that remembering we come to our spiritual wisdom, at the heart of which is love. Thus: *I love therefore I am*. Rudolf Steiner's educational initiative was birthed in a time of huge post-war social and cultural change (Wilson, 1964; Gidley, 2010a). His became a voice which sought to change the foundations of a society that had both created and suffered from the effects of the 1914-18 war, but he saw that the only hope for social action was through the education of the children³. Steiner believed that the epistemological and ontological assumptions that facilitated the war belonged to the Cartesian-Newtonian worldview which had begun to rule Western science and thus the realm of formal teaching and learning (Steiner, 2000, 2004).

The Cartesian-Newtonian worldview saw the "universe as a machine separate` from the souls of humans" (Robbins, 2005, p. 116) and was a world in which atomism prevailed so that things, including human beings, were understood by dissection into parts . Under the gaze of this paradigm human perception, the world of human senses and human experience is downgraded to an unreliable 'subjective' status because only 'objectivity is truth'. In Cartesian-Newtonian science: "The truth of the world is discovered ... through the quantitative analysis of phenomena in artificial, experimental conditions that are designed to isolate variables in order to determine cause and effect relations" and human

² "...I observed that, whilst I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and as I observed that this truth, I think, therefore I am (cogito ergo sum), was so certain and of such evidence that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search." (Descartes, 1635).

³ Speaking about this in 1922, Steiner (2004, p. 89) said: "One could see that not much could be done with adults in terms of society; they gained some understanding in Central Europe for a few weeks after the war. After that, they fell back on the views of their various classes. So the idea arose to do something for the next generation."

experience is separated from natural phenomena (Robbins, 2005, p. 116). In sharp contrast, Steiner's worldview presents as a 'change in voice' which centralises our connectedness with our own body, mind, soul and spirit, with each other, and with our world and the universe. Through his educational approach he began an impulse which has "become the largest non-parochial, independent educational movement in the world" (Barnes, 2000, p. 289). Steiner's vision was to change the foundations of knowledge through changing its knowers. His approach was to change the teaching and learning relationships so that in a holistic, loving and connected way children would develop harmoniously and come to truly know and love themselves which would lead to healthy relationships and positive social contribution. A Steiner school seeks to prepare children to become a social voice for the cultivation of harmony and freedom that they themselves have experienced through their education.

...every school should prepare children for the great school of adulthood, which is life itself. We must not learn at school for the sake of performance; rather, we must learn at school so that we can learn further from life ... What we foster in children often lives imperceptibly in the depths of their souls, and in later life it emerges. (Steiner, 2004, p. 12)

Steiner is said to have worked tirelessly to bring his educational initiative to many (Wilson, 1964; Finser, 1997). His vision for social change through education and integrated learning which incorporated spirituality, pre-empted much of what is considered to be holistic or integral education today (Finser, 1997; Gidley, 2010a). In the following section I position Steiner education as the impulse for change that Steiner envisaged.

Positioning Steiner Education - Education as a Social and Spiritual Impulse

Dr. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was teacher, a scientist, a philosopher and an artist. His background as a natural scientist became a foundation for his practical and incisive study of human nature and his philosophy of spiritual science, known as 'Anthroposophy' or 'the wisdom of the human being (Wilson, 1964). In the latter part of his life (1911-1925) Steiner directed his energies to practical initiatives in the arts, such as "drama, painting, architecture and

eurythmy⁴ and following the 1914-18 war, he focused on renewing "the social sphere" through practical initiatives in "the fields of education, agriculture, therapy and medicine" (Wilson, 1964, p. ix). Gidley (2010b) calls Steiner a "futurist and grand theorist (who) had a macrocosmic perspective on time in relation to what he called the evolution of human consciousness". Steiner's vision was indeed grand, however he was also able to practically apply his theories in structured, workable bodies of knowledge as his educational approach reflects.

In 1919, Rudolf Steiner took the opportunity of setting up the first Steiner school in Stuttgart in Germany, in response to an invitation from Emil Molt, the director of the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory, who wanted a school for the children of the factory staff. Since then over 1,000 Steiner or 'Waldorf' schools have been providing an alternative to orthodox schooling in over 55 countries (Simpson, 2004). Steiner's education initiatives were a direct and passionate response to the devastation of social order caused by a world war and his vision for social reform was to elevate education above a 'factory-like' institution (Gidley, 2010a). He spoke out against human oppression, particularly during the rise of Nazism, and positioned himself and his educational philosophy as non-sectarian and non-denominational (Wilson, 1964). Gidley (2007a & b, 2010a) positions Steiner in the first of three waves of educational reform in the 20th and 21st centuries⁵.

⁴ Eurythmy is a movement art. "Eurythmy lets the soul life flow outward, and thereby becomes a real expression of the human being, like language; eurythmy is visible speech" (Steiner, 1995, p. 108). It is considered to be part of the Steiner curriculum and is sometimes called 'visible speech' because through physical movement the tones and sounds of language are emulated. Steiner (1997, p. 48) explains that through eurythmy an "inner spiritual connection" can be made: "when we study the genius of speech, we recognize the human I-being." Steiner (1997, p. 48) describes two kinds of eurythmy for a school curriculum: "We divide it into tone eurythmy and speech eurythmy. In tone eurythmy, we evoke in the child movements that correspond to the form of the astral (soul) body; in speech eurythmy we evoke movements that correspond to the child's I-being. We thus work consciously to develop the soul by bringing physical elements into play in tone eurythmy; and we work consciously to develop the spirit aspect by activating the corresponding physical elements in speech eurythmy."

⁵ Gidley (2007a & b, 2010a) has identified three waves of educational reform in the 20th Century. These are outlined in more detail in Gidley (2010a). The first wave is described on the following page. The second wave, which began in the 1960's, is characterised by educational approaches which "were critical of the formal, modernist 'factory-model' of mass education (and) sought to broaden education beyond the simple information-processing model based on a mechanistic view of the human being to a more holistic, creative, multifaceted, embodied and

In the early 20th century, in response to the weight of scientific materialism, industrialism and secularism, there was Steiner and Maria Montessori in Europe, Alfred North Whitehead in the UK, John Dewey in the USA and Sri Aurobindo in India, all pioneering more integral, organic educational approaches ... They emphasised imagination, aesthetics, organic thinking, practical engagement, creativity, spirituality, and other features that reflect a new movement of consciousness. (Gidley, 2010a, p. 103).

Steiner education heralded a new consciousness which embraced, among other things, the centralisation of spirituality in and through education: "...once we begin to see how spirit weaves continuously in the physical, we will be able to educate in the right way" (Steiner, 2004, p.53). In 1924, less than a year before he died, Rudolf Steiner gave a series of five lectures which brought together the essence of his educational approach (Steiner, 1997). In an introduction to these lectures, published as *The Essentials of Education* (Steiner, 1997), Dr. Torin Finser⁶ writes: "(Steiner) education (should) not be thought of as just a 'method' of teaching or a way of getting through the challenges of the present, but ... a transformative, social impulse with far-reaching implications" (Finser, 1997, p. viii).

For Steiner, education as a social impulse was inextricably linked with education as spiritual impulse. Speaking on the spiritual basis of education in Oxford in 1922 (Steiner, 2004, p.4), Steiner began by saying "And what is the primary area of life in which we must come to terms with spirit? It is education." He continued:

Consequently, today's social issue is primarily one of education. Today we may ask ourselves, justifiably, what we can do that will make our society and social institutions less tragic and menacing. We have only one answer: those who have been educated through the creative activity of spirit must be given positions in the practical life of the community. (Steiner, 2004, p.4)

Steiner's answers were practical. Education, he said, was a spiritual and concrete, practical pathway to social renewal (Steiner, 1997, 2004). In the society

participatory approach." (p. 103) Though Gidley points out that not all these second wave approaches acknowledged spirituality in education or the conscious evolution of humankind, as does Steiner education. The third wave includes a list of 14 'clusters' which Gidley (2010a, p. 104) suggests have "four core pedagogical values: love, life, wisdom and voice/language."

⁶ At the time of writing Torin Finser, PhD, was "Director, Waldorf Teacher Training Antioch Graduate School, Keene, New Hampshire" (Finser, 1997, p. iv).

of his day, Steiner saw an increasing focus on what he called 'materialism'. For Steiner this meant that "in a civilisation bound by matter" and disconnected from spirit, human beings would become "isolated in soul" with the result that "the genuine, living method of teaching, the real life of education (becomes) frozen" (Steiner, 1997, p. 79). Thus he positioned his educational philosophy as a means of transforming society. Steiner's views on education are resonant with a significant number of other current integral approaches to education and are as relevant today as in 1919 (Gidley, 2010a; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). "Steiner education, underpinned as it is by a holistic cosmology, and spiritually based ontology, regards recognition of the interconnectedness of all things as a way of knowing" says Gidley (2010b, p. 140) and does not "subscribe to the fragmented nature of learning underpinned by instrumental rationality." The spiritual impulse in Steiner education serves to awaken and reconnect both the learner and the teacher to their own spiritual wisdom and thus becomes a critical social impulse towards the renewal of social and cultural harmony.

A Living Education - The Aims of Steiner Education

In the final lecture of 1924 Stuttgart lectures on education (Steiner, 1997) Steiner calls his educational impulse a 'living education' because it creates a 'temporally aware' teaching-learning space which lives *with* the children and focuses on the specific developmental needs of the child according to the social and cultural climate of the time.

Education ... is not something we work at in isolated activities, but something lived. Children develop in the right way in their growth to adulthood only when education is lived with children and not forced on them. (Steiner 1997, p. 69)

Education was for Steiner "an art that works with the noblest of all materials, the material that only the human being can work with—human life, the human being and human development" (Steiner, 1997, p. 3). The key to this art was to gain 'real knowledge' of humanity to truly understand the whole human being in her/his wholeness. "We are attempting to create such an art of education, solidly based on true understanding of the human being" (Steiner, 1997, p. 3).

Wholeness and unity are integral notions in Steiner education *because* it is the process of educating the whole human being (Steiner, 1995, 1997, 2004). The notion of wholeness is not necessarily difficult to understand and is also an

integral notion in many other pedagogies practiced outside the mainstream⁷ (Gidley, 2010a). For Steiner, the notion of wholeness begins with 'knowing the whole human being' from birth to death (and beyond⁸) (Steiner, 2004, p.2):

This education and curriculum is based entirely on knowledge of the human being. This knowledge spans our whole being, from birth to death. It aims to know all the suprasensory aspects of the human being between birth and death – every- thing that demonstrates the human place in a suprasensory world.

A significant aspect of knowing the whole human being in Steiner education is to know the nature of the child in each of the three 7-year developmental phases through childhood to adulthood (0-7, 7-14, 14-21 years). For the present study a basic description of these phases will illustrate the notion of wholeness and the aim of a Steiner education to harmonise the different aspects of the human being towards wholeness. The following descriptions are taken from Steiner's later lectures in 1922 (Steiner, 2004) and 1924 (Steiner, 1995, 1997). The different aspects of the human being may be understood in one way by the idea of the three-fold nature of the human being as incorporating *thinking, feeling* and *willing*. During childhood and adolescence, these three aspects 'unfold'. The temporal nature of this unfolding means that in the first life phase, 0-7 years, the focus is on the willing forces and the growth of the limb and metabolic systems. In the second phase, 7-14 years, the focus is on the development of the feeling forces and the integration of the rhythmic (respiratory) system with the limb and metabolic system so that 'breath and blood' harmonise (Steiner, 1996). In the third phase, which includes adolescence (14-21 years) the thinking forces are activated more fully and an integration of the nerve-sense system (centred on the brain and head) with the limb-metabolic and the rhythmic systems is sought. Accompanying this is the coming into

⁷ It is interesting to note that in New Zealand mainstream education, the understanding of wholeness through acknowledging our spiritual nature is fundamental to *tikanga* Māori-based New Zealand Early Childhood curriculum, *Te Whariki* (Ministry of Education, 1996).

⁸ Steiner's philosophy covers much relating to spirituality beyond death. The following is recommended reading on this: Steiner, R. (1993). *Knowledge of the higher worlds: How is it achieved?* (GA 10) (Original work published 1904). (6th ed.) (D. S. Osmond & C. Davy, Trans.) London: Rudolf Steiner Press.

being of the child's physical (body), etheric (energetic) and astral (soul) nature which ultimately leads into becoming the spiritual or 'I'.

Steiner education acknowledges and accommodates these processes so that harmonious development - a balanced integration of these aspects and forces - is achieved. Education then becomes not just a matter for the intellect or for feelings alone. Rather it should bring these together into a whole, so that actions (willing) become alive with the spirit of thoughts and feelings aligned with the true soul nature of each child (Steiner, 1997). The child then comes to understand herself "not through one aspect, but through the whole being" (Steiner, 1997, p. 81). Integral to the understanding of how Steiner education cultivates wholeness are the ideas of Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition, which are like a spiritual reflection of thinking, feeling and willing.

Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition

The capacities of thinking, feeling and willing have their respective spiritual expression in Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition (Barnes, 2000; Steiner, 2004)⁹. Called the "higher individuality of the young person" these three capacities unfold on the spiritual level between birth and 21 years (Barnes, 2000, p. 296). They are relevant to this study for two main reasons. Firstly, that to understand the character of the Steiner student in adolescence it is helpful to know how these spiritual aspects are "at work behind the scenes" (Barnes, 2000, p. 296); and secondly that Steiner education also works to harmonise these spiritual capacities thus cultivating wholeness by their integration with the capacities of thinking, feeling and willing (Steiner, 2004).

In early life the child lives strongly in her Intuitive capacity learning through imitation, able to live intuitively in the 'world'. Steiner suggests that at this time the child is almost "entirely sense organ" (Steiner, 2004, p. 9). During the years 7-14, children "no longer absorb what they observe in their environment; now they take in what lives in the objects of observation" (Steiner, 2004, p. 9).

⁹ Steiner uses these terms in very specific ways referring to higher or spiritual capacities. Note that Steiner capitalises these words to distinguish them from their everyday use and to acknowledge their spiritual dimensions. I do not intend to elaborate on the depth of their spiritual nature but refer interested people to Steiner (2001) in the reference list.

For children between seven and fourteen, it is far more significant to tell them about something in a kind and loving way than it is to demonstrate by proof. During lessons, kind humour and congeniality are far more valuable than logic. Such children do not yet need logic; they need us and our humanity. (Steiner, 2004, p. 10).

At this time by stimulating the child's imagination the forces of Inspiration arise, alongside the rhythmic forces, to 'inspire' interest in the beauty of life and in particular, "the musical powers of the soul" (Barnes, 2000, p. 297). Art, music, rhythmic speech and movement all help to awaken feeling and the child's own artistic nature.

A commonly recognised feature of Steiner education is the "cultivation of the student's imagination" (Gidley, 2010b, p. 140). Thus I discuss this third aspect, Imagination, both in relation to the young person and more broadly in relation to Steiner education as a whole. Barnes (2000, p. 284) writes: *The capacity of imagination is the mode of experience of which our thinking is but a pale reflection.* Imagination as the faculty unfolding between 14 and 21 years¹⁰, creates in the young person, "an unconscious yearning to experience the dynamic lawfulness at work in nature and human life" (Barnes, 2000, p. 297). What this means is that the young person awakening to morality begins to bring her/his own moral reasoning into action, to experience the 'lawfulness' they see outside of themselves in an inner way through action.

This principle of morality arises from what is already present in the human I, and a religious devotion toward the world arises in the spirit, which had been a thing of nature during the first period, and a thing of the soul during the second. (Steiner, 1997, p. 75).

After puberty, Steiner (1997, p. 72-73) says that education (in the upper school) "is actually a matter of bringing human beings to the point where find within themselves what they must understand—draw from their own inner being what was initially given as spontaneous imitation, then as artistic, imaginative activity." Thus the young person begins to act out of "their own inner being" as

¹⁰ "In this third period of life, we are directed to imagination, as in the other two toward intuition and inspiration. And now we have to look for the spiritual ground that makes it possible for us, as teachers, to work through imagination, inspiration, and intuition—qualities that enable one to act with spirit, not merely to think of spirit". (Steiner, 2004, p. 14).

their education incorporates a greater focus on self-directed thinking and creative-artistic and practical projects (Barnes, 2000).

Encouraging and developing the child's imagination is not an unusual feature of an educational approach, but in Steiner education imagination becomes so central, that children develop the habit of exercising their own powers of imagination as fully and completely as possible. For example, Imagination is cultivated by guiding children to bring pictures and stories 'out of themselves' (Steiner, 1995) rather than rely on fixed images such as toys¹¹ or on computer screens.

It is particularly good for children to be given the opportunity to add as much as possible to playthings out of their own fantasy. This enables children to develop a symbolizing activity. Children should have as few things as possible that are finished and complete and what people call "beautiful". (Steiner, 1995, p. 22)

The cultivation of imagination, though, begins with the teacher experiencing the freedom to exercise her own imagination, according to Steiner (1995). "Freedom that must prevail in the school can be seen in just such things as creating teaching matter out of imagination ... teachers have the feeling that it is not only a question of what they think about and discover out of their own imagination but ... in the moment of teaching each teacher feels that he or she is creating the plan of work" (Steiner, 1995, p. 30). When this occurs, says Steiner, then it has grown "out of a true knowledge of the human being (which) can really enter into the child" (1995, p.30).

Our teaching and education is to be built, then, on imagination... you must educate out of the very essence of imagination. (Steiner, 1995, p. 30)

To 'educate out of the very essence of imagination' is to hold a teaching-learning space of possibility, where there is a living relationship between

¹¹ This excerpt from Steiner's second lecture of seven in Torquay, August 13 1924 (Steiner, 1995, p. 22) is a humorous but poignant anecdote which illustrates the relationship between fixed images of 'popular beauty' and the numbing of the imaginative powers of the child: "Take for example the so-called beautiful dolls that are so often given to children these days. They have such beautifully formed faces, wonderfully painted cheeks, and even eyes with which they can go to sleep when laid down, real hair, and goodness knows what all! But this kills the fantasy of the child, for it leaves nothing to the imagination and the child can take no great pleasure in it...For the beauty of such a doll that I have described above with real hair and so on, is only a conventional beauty. In truth it is ugly because it is so inartistic."

teacher and learner. Thus the Steiner education approach centralises the *process* of this living relationship.

Steiner teachers facilitate the process of education by embodying the ideas underpinning Steiner's educational philosophy so that through the process of teaching-learning, the child comes to first experience the teacher's qualities and then to experience their own in themselves. The teaching-learning process as described by Steiner (and Steiner educators as detailed further on) takes place in the *space* between the teacher and the student. The notion of space is relevant to the conversational space created by the present study¹². Already, in the very phrase 'a living education' one gets the sense of 'breathing and flowing'.

Learning to Breathe in The Teaching-Learning Dynamic

Steiner describes teaching and learning as an interconnected dynamic process of discovery (also described in detail by Sommer, 2010a & b). This means that education involves "the discovery of a teaching method" by reading the nature of the learner and thus 'discovering' what was needed *in* (and *for*) the child (Steiner, 1997, p. 68). The teaching-learning process then becomes the dynamic or fluid space wherein the child (as 'Steiner student') learns by discovery and the teacher discovers the (best or most effective) methods by which to teach. There is a sense of rhythm and movement in this; a back-and-forthness between teacher and student which is not unlike a breathing process. In this (breathing) space, the teacher participates with the student and the student participates with the teacher (Barnes, 2000). This process accommodates possibility and is relational, conscious and embodied.

...students are persons ... (who) experience their conduct of life, their moods and processes of consciousness as embodied beings ... new ground which, when lived through (experienced), finely transforms a student into someone new. (Sommer (2010a, p. 21).

¹² The idea of *space* in the present study is central to our method and methodology, for example: conversational space, a space for voice, the phenomenological space. It also has significant meaning on many layers related to this study and for the young women in the study (for example: *The space to be yourself!* was how Crystal described her education).

The Steiner approach is 'learning by experiencing' so that the classroom becomes a 'space of opportunity' for the student to experience themselves *in* the world and *of* the world and *in* themselves and *of* themselves (Sommer, 2010a)¹³. Barnes (2000, p. 298) reiterates this saying that "learning in a (Steiner) school is entirely a participatory process and never an assimilation of abstracted facts."

The main subjects are taught through immersion in blocks of three to six weeks and are conveyed as living experience and knowledge by the teacher - not through textbooks. Instead of being presented with finished "objective knowledge" the students learn to actively create their own "personal knowledge". (Barnes, 2000, p. 298).

The 'Steiner' learning experience occurs in the dynamic between oneself and the world (this includes the teacher who emulates the world) so that to paraphrase Steiner 'to know ourselves we must go out into the world and to know the world we look into ourselves'¹⁴.

...a living ambiguity is characterised in which the students live: Looking outward - communication with the world, looking inward - in eccentric position - communication with oneself. (Sommer, 2010a, p.22).

The student is "learning to breathe" as she/he 'lives' in the dynamic field between these outward and inward poles (Sommer, 2010a, p. 22). Here we come to a critical point related to the present study - *that Steiner education teaches a child how to breathe*: "One goal of [Steiner] education is to achieve teaching that breathes and harmonises (these) communication processes with the world and with oneself" (Sommer, 2010a, p.22). It was *this* 'special character' of the Steiner school experience - to teach the child "to learn to breathe properly" (Sommer, 2010a, p.22) - that inspired the present study at its very inception (as discussed in Chapter 1). 'Learning to breathe' begins in the lower school teaching process where the aim is to harmonise rhythm and movement.

¹³ "(Steiner) education does not regard the learning process exclusively as a transfer of information where students, using their properly functioning senses, incorporate pieces of information in their inner world" (Sommer (2010a, p. 21).

¹⁴ This idea was originally from Goethe (see Robbins, 2005, p. 113).

Harmonisation and Learning to Breathe

...there should always be a certain harmony – a harmony that must be furthered by the education – between the rhythm developed in the breathing system and the rhythm it encounters in the interior of the organism ... This balance – the harmonization of the blood system and the breathing system – is brought about in the stage between the change of teeth and puberty. (Steiner, 1997, p. 42).

In a Steiner school, the lower school curriculum cultivates rhythm and movement to encourage healthy breathing and healthy circulation. In the above quote from Steiner we get a sense of the notion of harmonious being and see the relationship between learning to breathe and harmony in the child. The dynamic of this breathing space in the primary school years takes a certain form, different from that in the secondary years.

Steiner education in primary school

For children in the first 8 years of school (ages 7–14), Steiner (1996, 1997) emphasises the need to create physical and relational learning spaces which inspire a feeling of harmony and balance in the child. Simple examples of this in practice are: the incorporation and acknowledgment of daily, weekly, and seasonal rhythms in teaching and learning; rhythms in the way information is shared; movement between external and internal activities; a balance between structured physical movement and free play; and the teacher's awareness and accommodation of individual children's rhythms (Aeppli, 2001; Gilbert, 2002). As she moves between contrasting activities and learning experiences, the child discovers her own breathing rhythm. Steiner's (1997) discussion of the importance of speech, music and singing in primary school emphasise this. Through musical instruments and more importantly, a child's own voice, she experiences "the breathing rhythm".

The way we teach the child to speak and the way we introduce a child to the music – whether listening, singing, or playing music – all serve, in terms of teaching, to form the breathing rhythm. Thus, when it meets the rhythm of the pulse, it can increasingly harmonize with it. (Steiner, 1997, pp. 43-44)

Steiner frequently uses musical analogies to describe the process of harmonisation and to stress the importance of rhythm in childhood development. For him the human being becomes "the most wonderful musical

instrument" when we understand "the musical relationships" within and "perceive with spiritual musical perception"¹⁵.

Steiner (1997, p. 46-47) makes the connection between music and the physical-physiological aspects of breath, blood and harmonisation when he suggests we could approach physiology "not as a physicist, but as a musician" so that the "inner formative music" of the human soul can be gleaned.

Those who have insight into the human being have the ability to perceive that a musical element flows into harmony with the formative processes in the inner being of the child during the elementary years. (Steiner, 1997, p. 52).

The Steiner primary school curriculum aims to guide the child towards an inner harmony so that as she approaches puberty, she begins to beat with her own rhythm. In adolescence then, what was previously absorbed by the child from the outer world, becomes an inner music, as the soul "unfold(s) its independence" (Steiner, 1997, p. 65). Steiner refers to the adolescent life phase as 'the awakening of soul' (Steiner, 1979) during which time the intellect had much greater demands placed on it than in childhood (Steiner, 1997). During the seven year period of 14 to 21, Steiner (1979) says that young people "must be led to look out into the world" so that "questions about nature, about the cosmos and the entire world, about the human soul, questions of history" will "resound on and on within them around them"¹⁶.

Steiner education in the high school

The Intellect becomes active in its own way once children reach puberty ... it is actually a matter of bringing (them) to the point where they find within themselves what they must understand – draw from their own inner being what was initially given as spontaneous imitation, then as artistic, imaginative activity. Thus, even during the later period, we should not force things on the human being so that there is the least feeling of arbitrary, logical compulsion. (Steiner, 1997, p. 72-73)

¹⁵ "...when you follow the course of the nerves musically— understanding the musical relationships (everything is audible here, though not physically)— and when you perceive with spiritual musical perception how these nerves run from the limbs toward the spine and then turn upward and continue toward the brain, you experience the most wonderful musical instrument, which is the human being, built by the astral body and played by the I-being." (Steiner, 1997, p. 47) .

¹⁶ First page of article, but page number not specified as retrieved electronically.

Theoretically, the lower school Steiner curriculum has prepared the child for the journey of awakening to self in adolescence by helping in the integration of breathing and circulation (Steiner, 1996, 1997). The child is then supported to enter into adolescence, when the intellect becomes active, with a good physical and emotional foundation and a deep sense of well-being (Steiner, 1997; Childs, 1991). Here the teacher's role changes. As Steiner (1997, p. 72) puts it fairly bluntly: "we (teachers) are already practical philosophers of freedom, since we do not say: You must believe this or that of the spirit; rather, we awaken innate human beliefs. We become awakeners, not stuffers of the souls of children."

For Steiner this meant that education should mediate harmoniously between the inner and outer worlds to create an inner concord of what is encountered on 'the outer'. Therefore both the discovery of the self (or the 'I-being') and the discovery of the world, unfolds in a fluid dynamic between intra-personal and interpersonal relationships.

Only those who rediscover the world in the human being, and who see the world in human beings, can have a true concept of the world; because, just as the visible world is reflected in the eye, the entire human being exists as an eye of spirit, soul, and body, reflecting the whole cosmos. Such a reflection cannot be perceived externally; it must be experienced from within. Then it is not just an appearance, like an ordinary mirrored image; it is an inner reality. Thus, in the process of education, the world becomes human, and the human being discovers the world in the self. (Steiner, 1997, p. 81)

Steiner did not impart a specific curriculum for upper schools (as he did for the lower and middle school years) and Steiner educators since, have taken this role. For some Steiner teachers, this creates an opportunity to evolve and characterise the educational approach needed to meet the unique nature of transitional periods such as adolescence, particularly in the fast-changing information-rich world of today (Schwartz, 1999; Gilbert, 2002). Steiner teacher and education consultant Betty Staley is well-known in Steiner education circles for her work towards better educational initiatives for young people (Staley, 2009). She has helped the much needed evolution of a Steiner-approach to education for adolescents. Writing from this perspective, she asks: *What is truly needed for our young people to experience themselves, experiencing the world?* (Staley, 2002). Staley tells us that the adolescent life phase (between about 14 and 21 years of age) is a time of unfolding "everything that happens in relationship" -

relationship with others and relationship with self and "the tensions that occur between people" (Staley, 20002, p. 2). In the early high school years, Staley suggests, the 'self' "is busy trying to harmonize" the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual 'bodies' and "differentiation and growth are in constant dynamic interaction" (Staley, 2002, p. 4). Consequently, "we need to leave open the question, *Who will the high school student become?*" (italics mine) (Staley, 2002, p. 3).

Sommer (2010a, p. 22) explains that as young people become more discerning using their "heightened powers of reflexive distance", they willingly pass themselves "through the eye of the needle" in order to "develop their own viewpoints and identities". Teaching in the (Steiner) upper school is therefore focused on bringing this experience 'alive' time and again so that the dialogue "between the inner and outer worlds (can) unfold or even harmonise" (Sommer, 2010a, p. 22). The achievement of this harmonisation is the achievement of good health (Steiner, 1999, p. 81): "happiness, joy, delight and satisfaction" and that anything that results in "disharmony between external impressions and inner life is unhealthy".

An important fact then comes into play. Something that one had all along is ... supports puberty in the person who developed in a healthy way. All that was understood through images now arises from the inner wellspring. ... I now take hold of my own being within myself and through myself. ... In a healthy person, after puberty, a chord is sounded within the human being; it results in an awareness of one's self. And when there is this concordance between the two sides of an individual's nature, after puberty the person truly experiences inner freedom as a result of understanding for the first time what was merely perceived earlier. (Steiner, 1997, p. 66)

The 'awakening process' of adolescence, which I referred to earlier, is an awakening of the moral, artistic and spiritual (what Steiner calls 'religious') forces in the young person so that what has gone before in the first fourteen years of schooling, now over the next seven years begins to come together in a new way. Here the notions of truth (spiritual), beauty (artistic) and goodness (moral) become more real in the lives of young people, not just as living

qualities sensed by the student in the teacher¹⁷ but as living qualities in themselves.

Truth Beauty and Goodness

The True, the Beautiful, the Good – through all the ages of man's (sic) conscious evolution these words have expressed three great ideals: ideals which have instinctively been recognized as representing the sublime nature and lofty goal of all human endeavour. (Steiner, 1986)¹⁸

In this section I include a brief overview of the notions of truth, beauty and goodness and their importance in Steiner education. This is relevant to the present study because it is these notions which we took into our first conversations. While we didn't continue to talk explicitly about these notions, their presence lived on in the conversational space in a similar way that Steiner describes for the teaching-learning space in school. These notions are also highly relevant to the harmonisation process. In bringing the resonance of these together in a young person, or awakening the understanding of these notions in a young person's living experience, there can occur a kind of inner marriage, or harmonisation, of the three .

Children who cannot yet understand abstractly beauty, truth, goodness, and so on may develop this impulse through a sense that the teacher acts as the incarnation of goodness, truth, and beauty. When we understand children correctly, we understand that they have not gained any abstract, intellectual understanding for the revelations of wisdom, beauty, and goodness. Nevertheless, children see what lives in the teacher's gestures, and they hear something revealed in how the teacher's words are spoken. It is the teacher whom the child calls – without saying it – truth, beauty, and goodness as revealed in the heart. (Steiner, 1997, p. 70)

Underpinning Steiner's educational philosophy are truth, beauty and goodness. As the "goal of all human endeavour" Steiner considered that were 'ideals' that should be at the heart of education, not as "abstract concepts", but he

¹⁷ "We (teachers) must be for the children the representative of the good, the true, and the beautiful. The children must be drawn to truth, goodness, and beauty simply because the children are drawn to you yourself (the teacher)." Steiner (1995, p. 34).

¹⁸ This lecture is published electronically and has not been allocated page numbers. The 1986 publication date refers to the date it has been published in the Rudolf Steiner Archives (see Steiner, 1986) while the original lecture was given in 1923.

emphasises, as "concrete realities" connected to "everyday life" (Steiner, 1986). Thus they are not taught as 'abstract concepts' in the Steiner curriculum, rather their presence is (potentially) implicit in the *character* of the education, as described by Steiner in the quote above. They connect us to our spirituality, and in doing so foster 'harmonisation' of our inner and outer realities: the 'idea' meets with the concrete experience and the closer the alignment of the idea with the outer experience, the more harmoniously we live (Steiner, 1986). It is the task of education to bring this harmonisation about, says Steiner (1992).

For example, the embodied experience of truth connects us to our spiritual nature so that we experience an "intimate kinship" between our physicality and spirituality and feel "in harmony" with our "sense of being" (Steiner, 1986 - see footnote 18). Beauty does the same but on a more subtle level, working with the soul and our feelings (Steiner, 1986). Through experiences of beauty (it is not enough to merely 'gaze at beauty', says Steiner (1986, 1997), we must experience it) we can assuage a certain sadness that arises from remembering our 'spiritual past'. For me this sadness might translate as the sense of 'loss and longing' that is part of human experience (O'Donohue, 1999; Viorst, 1986). Again Beauty, like truth, connects us in a real way to the wholeness of our being (human). Goodness, then is our active route to achieving this connection. Goodness, that is "not confined to self interest", connects us to our morality and "can lead the soul into the qualities, nature and experiences of others" (Steiner, 1986- see footnote 18). Through our experiences of goodness we connect 'soul to soul' with others. Steiner (1986) relates truth to an understanding of our life's meaning, our past and thus who we are in relation to others; beauty as an understanding of the joy in life, the present and how we express ourselves creatively and artistically; and goodness is seen as morality, the deeds of humankind and our future potential - which of course is built on our experience of what sits rightly within us or what is 'good'. The denial of truth, beauty and goodness will leave us, says Steiner (1986), living in a spiritual poverty devoid of meaning (truth), bereft of light (beauty) and lacking moral substance (goodness), thus we become 'disconnected' from our lives and from the true living relevance of human existence.

In summary, truth connects us to our spirituality through the physical body, beauty through the artistic image and goodness through the action. It is important to cultivate beauty to achieve a moral relationship to the world

We educate children so that, through their relationship to the teacher, they are devoted aesthetically to beauty and internalize the images. Now it becomes essential that, in place of the religious element, a naturally artistic response to the world arises. This naturally artistic human attitude (which must not be confused with the treatment of "art as a luxury," which is so much a part of our civilization) includes what now would be seen as a moral relationship to the world. (Steiner, 1997, p. 70).

It is thus the task of education to foster truth, beauty and goodness so we remain connected human beings "sound in body, free in soul, clear in spirit" (Steiner, 2004, p. 105)¹⁹. The young person's discovery of their own beliefs and values takes place ideally at their own pace, in the dynamic (space) between teacher and student (Sommer, 2010a). In this space a young woman Steiner student awakens to her individual experiences of truth, beauty and goodness, as she begins to uncover her own ideas and beliefs about the world.

Young Women, Voice and Identity

Adolescence is seen as a dramatic period of transition, when rapid and marked physiological changes occur alongside transformations of a physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual nature (Lievegoed, 1985b; Muuss, 1988; Powell, 2004; Smith, 1998; Steiner, 1979). This process of growth is usually (between) thirteen and nineteen years of age (Powell, 2004) and essentially begins when physiologically normal puberty starts (Smith, 1998). During adolescence, young people experience significant height and weight changes; menstruation occurs; skin condition, hair growth, and voice quality all change (Smith, 1998). Puberty as the doorway to adolescence, brings immense physical and biological change, but there are also many social and cultural transitions occurring during adolescence as children begin to move away from 'home-centred and adult-

¹⁹ "No method of education however ideal it is must tear a man (sic) out of his connections in life. The human being is not an abstract thing to be put through an education and finished with, a human being is the child of particular parents. He has grown up as the product of the social order. And after his education he must enter this social order again. ... The point is so to educate the child that he remains in touch with present-day life, with the social order of to-day." (Steiner, Lecture 8, The Spiritual Ground of Education, August, 1922 (Steiner, 2004)).

controlled' lives (Scott, 2006). A young person's sense of belonging may be disrupted as the familiar world of home and family no longer contains the voice of their becoming selves (Noam, 1999; Pipher, 1994; Powell, 2004).

Young Women's Voices

As children become adolescents, a new voice begins to awaken within them and deep and searching questions arise (Hether, 2001; Noam, 1999; Pipher, 1994; Sommer, 2010a & b; Steiner, 1979). Adolescence, says Steiner (1979) is a 'growing out' of innocence when 'other forces', desires and urges awaken amidst a characteristic struggle with moral issues. Moral reasoning has been at the centre of a significant turn in psychology studies from a paradigm of separation towards one of connection through the research work of Carol Gilligan (Gilligan, 1982/1993; 1990; 1997; 2004, 2011). Her ground-breaking research on moral development and moral choice (Gilligan, 1982/1993), challenged contemporary psychological theories of moral development (posited by Kohlberg, 1980) by bringing the voices of women and girls more prominently into social research. A "huge methodological error" was exposed - "leaving out women from studies of humans" - because "men's and boys lives had served as the basis for theories of identity, morality, creativity, motivation and, most ironically, 'social perspective-taking'" (Gilligan, 1997, p. 15) but "...women's voices revealed that psychology was disconnected from reality" (Gilligan, 1997, p. 16). By including the voices of women and girls in psychological studies, Gilligan brought to the notice of psychologists, theorists, educators, researchers and the wider community, an *ethic of care* (Gilligan, 1982/1993).

This relational ethic transcends the age-old opposition between selfishness and selflessness, which have been the staples of moral discourse. (Gilligan, 1982/1993, p. xix).

Gilligan's early research (1982/ 1993) revealed a 'different voice' showing that girls and women make their (moral) choices based less on *justice* and more on *care*, which operates in a 'network' of relationships and a climate of 'connectedness'. However, Gilligan reminds us, it is not that *only* women care or that *only* men focus on justice.

... it is absurd to say that men don't care or that women are not invested in justice. The different voice ... is identified not by gender but by theme. Its difference arises from joining reason with emotion, self with relationships. (Gilligan, 2011, p. 24).

The ethic of care has now become mandatory inclusion in readings of moral development (Lee, 2005)²⁰ though, revisiting her work, Gilligan (2011, pp. 18) wonders why the ethic of care still remains "embattled".

What is the academic debate over care vs justice about? And what is its association with women and more generally with people's lives? (Gilligan, 2011, p. 18)

Gilligan (2011) discusses these questions in the light of misreading her work to incorrectly attribute the 'different voice' to a gender binary. In fact, in her *Letter to Readers* published as a Foreword to the 1993 edition of *In A Different Voice* (1982/1993), Gilligan writes:

When I hear my work being cast in terms of whether women and men are (essentially) different or who is better than whom, I know I have lost my voice, because these are not my questions. Instead, my questions are about our perceptions of reality and truth ... about voice and relationship ... about psychological processes and theory, particularly theories in which men's experience stands for all of human experience ... and shut out women's voices. (Gilligan, 1982/1993, p. xiii).

Rather than Gilligan's work being seen to expose a gender difference, Gilligan asks us to listen past the layers in "the gendered universe of patriarchy"²¹ (Gilligan, 2011, p. 19), to a voice that says an ethic of care is a human ethic. Listening to women, Gilligan says "will change the voice which we hear and name as human" (1997, p. 15), but rather than hearing the ethic of care as 'feminine', it can be "heard in its own right" as a "human voice" (Gilligan, 2011, p. 25). What I hear in Gilligan's voice is a call to remember our humanity and a

²⁰ Lee (2005) suggests that Gilligan guides us to ideally move between care and justice in our decision making and value-forming. "Whether we commit to justice or care, if we commit solely to either, we can no longer see the possibility of peaceful co-existence between love (care) and rights (justice)" (Lee, 2005, p. 88).

²¹ Gilligan (2011, pp. 18-19) traces "patriarchy" to "a hierarchy or rule of priests in which the *hieros*, the priest, is a *pater*, a father. In a patriarchal family or religion or culture, power and authority descend from a father or fathers, and human qualities designated masculine are privileged over those gendered feminine."

reminder that if we continue to keep women's and men's voices apart we perpetuate a divisive paradigm. What Gilligan's research suggests is that our lived experience of patriarchy is separation and the manifestation of this separation is a "relational crisis" (Gilligan, 1982/1993, p. *xxiii*; Gilligan, 2011) which appears in girls in early adolescence, but has typically occurred earlier for boys (around four or five years old).

The 'crisis' for young women is their "struggle against losing voice and against creating an inner division or split" (Gilligan, 1982/1993, p. *xxiii*) which results in a disconnection from their own inner voice, their own wisdom and knowing and the withholding of this voice from relationships. From Gilligan's perspective, and from that of the present study, this is a key as to why young women's voices have value in the social arena. Here we meet the question Gilligan poses in her more recent work:

Are women's voices still key in freeing democracy from the vestiges of patriarchy? (Gilligan, 2011, p. 32)

The answer is 'yes'. And young women have a key role to play in this. As young women struggle with the division between expressing voice and falling into silence, resistance to the "culturally mandated separations" is heard as a voice "more articulate and robust ... more resonant" than that of boys in early childhood; and young women's voices speak of both "women's and men's desires for relationships" (Gilligan, 1982/1993, p. *xxiii*). The value of listening to young women in adolescence maps the territory of how, when, why and for whom voice is given up and may then act as a guide for restoring a more human social voice.

(Young women) can more readily give voice to aspects of human experience that otherwise remain unspoken or unseen. But we can also understand the pressures on girls when they reach adolescence, not to say what they are seeing or know what they know and to cede an honest voice in the interests of having relationships ... (Gilligan, 2011, p. 39)

Gilligan's research has been followed by increased attention to research about, or with, girls²² as having different adolescent journeys than boys (eg. Bloustein,

²² Issues (or challenges) identified by these studies include but are not limited to: moral choice; dealing with scepticism and hypocrisy; conflicts between self, family and peer groups;

2003; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Halse, Honey, & Boughtwood, 2007; Nelson and Buchholz, 2003; Oliver, 2001; Pipher, 1994). Nelson & Buchholz (2003) found that the development of morality in girls progresses from a concern with survival towards a focus on goodness then "to an understanding of care as the most important guide in resolving interpersonal conflicts" which contrasts with the development of male morality being focussed on issues of justice, progressing to understanding rights and rules (Nelson & Buchholz, 2003, p. 425). During adolescence, girls are often faced with the conflict of meeting their own needs as well as the needs of others (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) and therefore a conflict of 'who to care for first' can arise. As Pipher (1994) suggests and as shown by Brown & Gilligan (1992) girls frequently struggle between doing the 'right' thing according to a family or cultural expectation and doing what feels 'right' for them as individuals while keeping everything in balance and in 'right' relationship. In this space between child and woman, between 'her voice' and the voices of others, a young woman explores who she is and where she belongs as she creates (or re-creates) her identity (Bloustein, 2003; Oliver, 2001; Vadeboncoeur & Patel-Stevens, 2005).

The identity question has been explored in detail by education researcher Kimberley Oliver (1999, 2001). Through a critical inquiry approach, Oliver (1999) explored girls' perceptions of their identities in relation to desirable body images (fashionable interpretations of beauty and perfection in women) as part of a physical education curriculum. In her studies Oliver (1999, 2001) found that 'image was a powerful source of knowing' for the girls and that they accepted these fashionable images (and thus the cultural stories behind them) often at

navigating 'voice' within relationships; self-concept, body image and self-esteem; compelled conformity; suicide and self-harm; eating disorders; anaemia; and violence and bullying in schools (Allen, 2005; Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Fortune & Hawton, 2007; Fortune *et al*, 2007; Gilligan, 1982; Halse, Honey, & Boughtwood, 2007; Helen & Read, 2005; Martini, 2004; Nelson & Buchholz, 2003; Pipher, 1994; Smith, 1998; Oliver, 1999, 2001; Steiner, 1979). Awareness of these issues is relevant to the present study, but this study is not about tackling these issues *per se* - rather it is about hearing about these or any other experiences that are raised, and how they might be viewed and navigated by the young women in the study. However, it is possible that participants, the researcher and the wider community may benefit from insights (around these issues) gained from the present study and explored in future publications from this research.

face value. For girls, questions about identity are often intimately associated with body image (Oliver, 2001) and thus fashion trends and a 'model' physiognomy can become absorbing pursuits through which girls begin to construct meaning - of their bodies and within their lives (Oliver, 1999). Such intense focus on their bodies is strongly connected to the physical changes girls are experiencing during puberty and adolescence (Oliver, 1999) as size, shape and hormonal structures change (Oliver, 1999). For example, the onset of menstruation can also bring a new dimension of physicality including abdominal pain, back pain and headaches for some girls (Smith, 1998). Girls experiment and explore during adolescence as they try out different roles (similar to trying on clothes) as they seek to understand just how they fit into society (Oliver, 1999).

Oliver (2001, p. 145) says that "given the ways in which our culture uses women's bodies to perpetuate the oppression of women we are not surprised at how girls learn to become so concerned with the way their bodies look." Images of 'beauty' portraying at best "slim and muscular bodies" (Oliver, 2001) and at worst "white supremacist images" (hooks, 1995, as cited by Oliver, 2001, p. 145) are pedalled by the media for the aspiration of women and girls²³. Oliver urges educators to spend more time "helping adolescent girls to critically examine culture's "normal" stories ... in the hope of offering a wider view of who healthy women are" (1999, p. 243) - and here is a critical aspect of the present study. We need to learn from girls' stories and listen to how they visualise and unfold their own identities, be it around body image or other aspects of their lifeworlds. Oliver's studies (1999, 2001) demonstrate girls' pre-occupation with their self-image, their bodies and themselves and suggest that because of this, adolescent girls are potentially easy to engage in critical inquiry around identity and that participants benefit from the opportunity to explore their ideas and experiences more deeply. More recent in-depth studies such as those reported in *Girl Making* by Gerry Bloustein (2003) and *Re/Constructing "the*

²³ The high incidence of eating disorders amongst girls and young women (Abraham and Llewellyn-Jones, 2001; Halse, Honey, & Boughtwood, 2007) and the high incidence of deliberate self harm (Payne, Swami, & Stanistreet, 2008) suggests there are significant challenges to the psycho-social and general well-being of young women.

Adolescent" (Vadeboncoeur & Patel-Stevens, 2005) also suggest that through exploring their experiences, young women may gain a better understanding of what shapes their identities and 'place in the world'.

These studies all help in a significant way to inform the present study and show the willingness of young women to communicate their attitudes, values and beliefs *and* commit to a research study for a considerable period of time²⁴. This is significant given that the prominent ways in which women have been 'compelled to conform' (Martini, 2004) are through *silence* (eg. *choosing not to speak; not being given the opportunity to speak; and not being heard*) and *secrecy* (eg. *encouraged ignorance; keeping parts of themselves secret; and not being told 'the truth'*: Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1997; Oliver, 1999, 2001; Martini, 2004). The culture of 'silencing', secrecy and hidden agendas is powerfully debilitating for young women (Gilligan, 2011; Martini, 2004; Oliver, 2001). As Gilligan reminds us, when young women reach adolescence they "struggle against losing voice" (1982/1993, p. xxiii) as they resist conforming to a social norm of disconnection which accompanies the initiation into adulthood in a patriarchal culture. No wonder then, that a recent study reporting the opinions of young New Zealander's about our high youth suicide rate (Heled & Read, 2005) reveals that 'pressure to conform or perform' is considered to be the most significant cause of suicide and that help in the form of an increase in social awareness of, and support services for, suicidal and troubled youth is pertinent. Given that adolescence is the developmental stage during which the beliefs, norms and values related to gender roles are internalised (Nelson & Buchholz, 2003) the present study may provide critical tools and understandings which will facilitate the development of healthy beliefs, values and behavioural norms; which in turn may lead to an intellectual and social competence that empowers women beyond the conventional stereotypes and male-power structures still proffered by the media (Oliver, 2001) and by our schooling and education systems (Gilligan, 1997; Halse, Honey & Boughtwood, 2007; Oliver, 2001).

²⁴ I elaborate on this in the Methods chapter.

The Western cultural background has leaned towards 'telling' children and young people (what to do and how to behave) rather than 'asking' them what they think or feel (Hill, 2006). Young women in particular are 'bombarded with messages' telling them what they should believe, how they should behave and what they should look like (Oliver, 1999, 2001; Vadeboncoeur, 2005a). " (These) pervasive discourses" says Vadeboncoeur (2005a, p.2) "... simply, but effectively serve to control young people, covertly and overtly restricting their bodies, relationships, affiliations and opportunities and ultimately, limiting their possible life pathways." Myths constructing the character of adolescence are thus perpetuated: "...the social construction of adolescence is unstable, ambiguous, contingent ... Puberty is a fact; everything surrounding that fact is fiction. We construct the myths, and just like that, the myths construct us" (Ayres, 2005, pp. ix-x). With this in mind the present study invited young women to speak about their lives and explore *harmonious being* at a time in life which is constructed as 'disharmonious' and potentially a significant time of identity formation (Erikson, 1968; Kroger, 2004; Muuss, 1988).

Identity Formation

The focus of the present study on exploring the lifeworlds of young women during adolescence, inevitably raises questions about identity formation. Erik Erikson's historical contribution to understandings of adolescent development through his psychosocial theory of identity formation in adolescence (Erikson, 1959, 1968) then becomes a valuable viewpoint for informing my research. Erikson's theory of identity formation describes the acquisition of an ego identity as a core concept of the process of identity formation, which moves between the polarities of identity awareness and what Erikson calls 'role confusion'. For Erikson, navigating between these polarities, it is possible to arrive at a 'successful' integration of identified selves - 'role integration' instead of 'role diffusion'. Such integration means having an awareness of, or maybe 'embracing', a sense of sameness or continuity in one's self (or integrated selves) - what Erikson calls "a feeling of being at home in one's body, a 'sense of knowing where one is going' ... an inner assuredness" (Erikson, 1968, p. 165). Within Erikson's framework, I get the sense that identity formation means 'how I fit within myself'; and this we discover, according to Erikson, only through

relationship. Thus, identity formation includes integrating not only who I am for myself, but who I am for others as well. As Erikson says, it is a sense of being recognised as 'somebody' in one's own eyes and in the eyes of society (Erikson, 1968; Kroger, 2004).

For Erikson, the adolescent identity 'search' was central, but not exclusive to adolescence (Erikson, 1968). He described an integration of childhood selves with one's emerging 'adult selves' into a new identity. For some, Erikson's work served to perpetuate the image of 'storm and stress' suggested by G. Stanley Hall, the American psychologist whose two-volume work on adolescence marked "the beginning of the field of adolescence as an area of scholarly and scientific research" (Arnett, 2006, p.186). This negative image of adolescence surprisingly persists so that even today adolescence is constructed as highly problematic (Vadeboncoeur & Patel-Stevens, 2005). For others, Erikson's work has laid a foundation for our understanding that identity explorations, while intensifying in adolescence, begin earlier than adolescence and continue throughout human life; and that identity, although a highly personal and individual creation, can only be understood in the light of our cultural and social environments (Erikson, 1968; Kroger, 2004).

Many since Erikson have approached the task of describing the journey of adolescence. Whether they concur directly with Erikson or not, studies that have raised the voices of young women exploring identity in adolescence (eg. Bloustein, 2003; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 2011; Nelson & Buchholz, 2003; Oliver, 2001; Vadeboncoeur & Patel-Stevens, 2005) have extended and enriched Erikson's framework to draw attention to the importance of relationships and connectedness. One such portrayal describes the process of identity formation as an attempt to integrate one's inner and outer worlds (Nelson & Buchholz, 2003). This relates directly to what Steiner (1997) describes in the process of harmonious development (as discussed earlier in this chapter) as a connecting of the inner with the outer worlds. This links to the idea of 'breathing' in teaching and learning relationships and the young woman moving between her relationship to herself and her relationship to the world.

Returning then to Carol Gilligan, to unfold the context of Erikson's theories further. Gilligan (2011, p. 28), who worked with Erikson, says "the hand of patriarchy remains hidden in these accounts of (human) development".

In the theories of Freud, Erikson, Piaget, Kohlberg, and their contemporary offshoots in psychoanalysis ... the separation of self from relationships, the elevation of mind over body, reason over emotion ... (are) splits (that) have become naturalised and mistaken for development. (Gilligan, 2011, p. 28)

Where Gilligan is taking us is towards connection; towards challenging that the naturalisation of dissociation and disconnection as par for the course of human development, was ever actually 'natural'. My initial sense from reading Erikson's stage-descriptions of human development was one of a dizzying hopelessness imagining spending my life always navigating between polarities that seemed so far apart, anxious that my 'failure' to establish my identity clearly as a teenager, had ruined my chances at every other later stage. Fortunately, Gilligan has given me new eyes and ears for Erikson and I find instead now an appreciation of how identity formation can be understood at many levels in the intricately layered process of human development. One such understanding, described in the next section, attributes a sense of belonging to the realm of identity formation.

A Sense of Belonging and Belonging at School

Psychologist Gil Noam (1999) suggests that the 'search for belonging' in young people has overtaken Erik Erikson's (1968) widely adopted 'search for an identity' during this life phase. Noam's ideas support the voice already well-established by Carol Gilligan and her colleagues (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1990, 1997, 2004, 2011)²⁵ - that which speaks beyond the gender-binary and acknowledges our belonging together as humanity. Noam proposes the

²⁵ The 'psychology of belonging' for adolescents received a significant coverage by Gil Noam (1999). It is interesting to note that Noam (1999, p.66) concludes his 19-page article suggesting that therapists working with adolescents take a more relational 'strategy' so that "the power of finding solutions (is located) neither in the patient nor in the therapist but in their relationship". It is a "new era in our understanding of adolescents" he says (p. 66) and this should be combined with "a new theoretical view focussed increasingly on context, relationships and multiple worlds." By the time Noam's article was published in 1999, Carol Gilligan's work was well known and nearly 20 years had passed since she had called for a re-framing of psychology towards a relational psychology.

introduction of "a new developmental epoch" - *The Mutual Inclusive Self: Belonging versus Rejection* - a kind of addition to Erikson's eight life cycle stages²⁶ between the fourth (Competence: Industry vs. Inferiority) and fifth (Fidelity: Identity vs. Role confusion) stages.

One central new theme of the adolescent experience I want to label a sense of belonging - identity less self-chosen and individualistic and more a form of group identification. So powerful is this desire/motivation that it needs to be described not only as a modern (many would call it postmodern) phenomenon but introduced as a new developmental epoch that has been missing in Erikson's brilliant description of the life cycle. (Noam, 1999, p. 54)

As a consequence of decentralising the 'identity search' as the key quest of adolescence, Noam suggests that young people are now asking 'Where am I?' rather than 'Who am I?'

For many adolescents ... the question is less "Who am I" or "What am I committed to?" and more "Where do I belong?" "What am I part of?" "Who accepts me?" "Who likes me?" "Who provides me with self-esteem?". These adolescents want to know that they are popular, wear the right clothes and listen to "cool" music. (Noam, 1999, p. 56)

As the young person's circle of belonging expands, new and often more intimate relationships are formed outside the family (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1997; Noam, 1999; Powell, 2004; Smith, 1998). A key space for this exploration is school.

The present study elucidated the importance of belonging at school and while this was not explicitly looked for, or initially reviewed in the literature, it has taken a central place in the findings and discussion of my research. Thus a review of some key studies on this topic is pertinent. It is only relatively recently that young people's sense of belonging with (or *at*) school has received attention in educational research. Belonging would seem implicit in a Steiner education which centralises the importance of wholeness, connection and the development of caring teacher-student relationships (Steiner, 1997), though

²⁶ The 8 stages are: Hope: Trust vs. Mistrust (0-1 year); Will: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (2-3 years); Purpose: Initiative vs. Guilt (3-5 years); Competence: Industry vs. Inferiority (6-11 years); Fidelity: Identity vs. Role Confusion (12-19 years); Love: Intimacy vs. Isolation (20-40 years); Care: Generativity vs. Stagnation (45-65 years); Wisdom: Ego Integrity vs. Despair (65+ years). *Source: Erikson, (1959, 1968).*

there are no studies which have explicitly investigated a sense of belonging in a Steiner school, though Sommer (2010a & b), whose research explores the teacher-student dynamic from the perspective of the teaching approach, suggests that one reason for the success of the Steiner method is that students 'feel at home' in school.

'Belonging' at school is described as: "school attachment, sense of relatedness, sense of school community, or school membership" and an individual's feeling of personal value (Cemalcilar, 2010, p. 245). In the last ten years or so (Faircloth, 2009; Cemalcilar, 2010) research has shown that a well-developed sense of belonging at school is a positive central feature of successful educational achievement and academic engagement (Anderman, 2003; Faircloth, 2009; Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; Osterman, 2000; Pittman & Richmond, 2007; Vaquera, 2009). Faircloth (2009, p. 323) describes "the indispensable nature of belonging" as a foundation for achieving at and staying with school. Overall, research on school and a student's sense of belonging has shown that students with a stronger sense of school belonging experience lower levels of anxiety and loneliness and have a higher opinion of self, better social relationships, a brighter outlook, are more self-motivated and self-directed as well as being appreciative of their education and their lives (Eccles, Midgley, & Wigfield, 1993; Ireson & Hallam, 2005; Osborne & Walker, 2006).

The importance of fostering a sense of belonging at school is most clearly recognised perhaps by the negative effects on motivation, behaviour, academic achievement and well-being of students who experience isolation, and not fitting in or having a place at school (Faircloth, 2009). Central to the experience of belonging are a student's social relationships at school with peers, teachers and non-academic school staff; and the contextual and environmental aspects of these relationships (Cemalcilar, 2010; Hamm & Faircloth, 2005; Pitman & Richmond, 2007). Cemalcilar (2010, p. 245) suggests that a deeper understanding of the social experience and contextual factors at school would "extend our understanding of the dynamics underlying students' adjustment in school and their general well-being". In pursuit of this understanding, Cemalcilar (2010, p. 251) undertook an extensive research project which used a "structural equation model" (based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) social-ecological

model) to statistically examine "the combined effects of the school climate factors on students' school-related feelings, and ... the relative and joint contributions of satisfaction with social relationships in the school and satisfaction with the school environment on students' sense of school belonging". The results of this project showed a strong positive association between the social relationships at school, especially between the teacher and student, and a student's positive feelings about school. This meant that "when in caring and supportive school contexts, students are likely to be more engaged in academic work and like their schools" (Cemalcilar, 2010, p. 262). The second main finding of Cemalcilar's project relevant to the present study was that the quality of school environment significantly affects a student's sense of belonging. "Since students spend a considerable amount of time in the school on a daily basis, then not only the academic amenities provided, but also the quality of the physical environment as comfortable, stimulating, and safe become critical for them to like their school" (Cemalcilar, 2010, p. 263).

To conclude, Cemalcilar (2010, p. 265) tells us what I believe we already know: "better experiences within schools are associated with students' positive feelings towards their school ... (which) are strongly associated with positive behaviours in schools". The message is simple, care fosters care, love begets love, yet Cemalcilar's evidence fills a substantial need to inform those in education, health and social services, of the important fact that when students feel good at school their actions follow. Such extensive statistical and quantitative mainstream evidence (Cemalcilar's study involved 799 students) provides a substantial complement to the qualitative focus of the present study.

Research on Steiner Education

Although "there has been no shortage of Steiner-related writings and publications ... since Steiner's death", it is still rare to see Steiner-related academic research in the mainstream (Gidley, 2010a, p.101). The reason for this appears to be two-fold. In the first instance, there is relatively little mainstream Steiner-related research (Gidley, 2010a; Hugo, 2010) and secondly, what publications are available outside academic circles and the mainstream are largely targeted at "Steiner-informed" audiences.

While all this material is theoretically available for the wider public to read, most of it is written with audiences in mind who are informed by anthroposophical literature and/or Steiner/Waldorf pedagogy. The language used is that which is understood by "Steiner-informed people" and more often than not no attempt is made to translate what could be called "Steiner jargon" to a mainstream audience. Unfortunately, much of this material today appears anachronistic to many academics and mainstream teachers and may serve to deter rather than facilitate dialogue between Steiner and 21st century academic discourses. (Gidley (2010a, p. 101)

As I have also found in my experience²⁷, publications related to Steiner education, often stay within their own philosophical, professional and school communities and are lesser known in the mainstream. Since the advent of a new (2010) online journal, *Research in Steiner Education*, there is an emerging presence of quality Steiner-related research positioned in the mainstream (eg. Büssing, 2010; Dahlin, 2010; Gidley, 2010b²⁸; Hugo, 2010; Sommer, 2010,). There is also a stronger base of Steiner-related studies in post-graduate research in both the southern hemisphere (Gidley, 2010a) and northern hemisphere (Hugo, 2010). However there are no published studies (at the time of writing) which have sought to explore the lifeworlds of young women Steiner students or the phenomenon of harmoniousness in Steiner students. The present study meets the call for a higher profile of Steiner-related research in the mainstream and as well as bringing Steiner education to dialogue (in a very concrete way through conversation) with other social science perspectives, in particular those relating to young women.

Gidley (2010a, p. 104), working from Australia, calls for "a larger dialogue between Steiner education and the mainstream academic and educational discourses" and this is echoed by Askel Hugo, from the north.

Ultimately we need public research in order to communicate and dialogue Steiner education in a world where education - lifelong and flexible - has a

²⁷ Over the last four years as a researcher and parent in a Steiner school community, I have attended a major international conference which brings together the pedagogical and medical sections of Steiner's initiatives (International Kolisko Conference, 2010, *Connecting with Today's Children Healing body, soul & spirit*, 10 - 14 July 2010, Cambridge, New Zealand) and several workshops and short courses for educators or parents and community members. The quality and depth of the information shared on these occasions is rich though rarely do the general public access these.

²⁸ Jennifer Gidley's Steiner-related futures research has been well-positioned in the mainstream for more than ten years (Gidley, 2007a).

growing focus of attention for both governments and business corporations.
(Hugo, 2010, p. 96).

Both Gidley and Hugo are strong voices in support of "developing a culture of research in touch with the core of Steiner's pedagogical impulse" (Hugo, 2010, p, 96). Hugo suggests a research strategy specifically for Steiner education and warns against "shaping an academic profile from what is expected and commonplace" and therefore losing contact schools in general and with the impulse of Steiner education (Hugo, 2010, p. 96).

Four methodological qualities are encompassed in Hugo's (2010) research strategy. The first quality is "a widened concept of Action Research" which firstly, closes the gap between the teacher and the researcher and promotes practitioners *as* researchers and secondly, extends 'action' to include "inner attentive action" involving soul and mind and engaging one's spiritual life in the research (Hugo, 2010, pp.96-97). The second quality employs the tradition of phenomenology to achieve an "extended concept of observation (which) implies an emphasis on the schooling of the senses" to include observations like the soul quality in students "thereby bridging the spheres of soul and science and pointing to an extended concept of schooling" (Hugo, 2010, p. 97). The third quality is an extended concept of schooling which involves acknowledging what and how Steiner education is 'schooling' the child (the depth and breadth of the Steiner education approach) and seeing that as present in the schooling of the researcher through the research process. The fourth quality extends the concept of communication to include the phenomenology of love in education and the communication between inner life and outer life, particularly with regard to the development of the researcher through the research: "the inner life of the researcher - his moods and movements of soul and spiritual attention - is in touch with outer life" (Hugo, 2010, p. 98).

I make particular mention of Hugo's research strategy as it is resonant with the methodology of the present study. Both mine and Hugo's methodology has a strong Steiner-impulse, but it is important to note that my research (fieldwork) was complete prior to the publication of Hugo's strategy. Hugo (2010, p.96) urges educators and researchers to "build on" the "strong oral culture of educational practice" in Steiner schools, by 'voicing and embedding' this in a

"continuous written culture of enquiry." The present study is doing just this by staying connected to the lifeworlds of the Steiner students and exploring a core phenomenon of the Steiner educational impulse. Taking this one step further than perhaps Hugo envisaged, by investigating the lived experience of 'being a Steiner student' through conversation with the students, I sought to 'build on the strong oral culture' and invite the voices of the students who, after all, are central stakeholders in education. In their voices I expect to hear the resonance of Steiner education. The research traditions of phenomenology (van Manen, 1997), narrative methodology (Riessman, 2008) and anthropology (we can come to 'know' a culture and its related phenomena through the lived experience or 'personal stories' of individuals) (Jackson, 2008) also support this expectation.

Though Rudolf Steiner's philosophies on education have been applied for 90 years, it is only comparatively recently that Steiner education is being legitimised in mainstream university courses (Gibbs, 2006; Hugo, 2010). In 2005, AUT University, in Auckland, New Zealand, offered a specialist Steiner stream in the Bachelor of Education programmes for primary and secondary teaching, and subsequently the Masters of Education programme as part of its initiatives to focus on 'holistic education'. This is a unique initiative for the southern hemisphere, though there have been a steady stream of Masters and Doctoral Steiner-related research studies in Australia in the last 25 years (Gidley, 2010). At the same time (2004-2006) in the north, the "Nordic Master Degree Programme in Waldorf Education" was developed in Norway (Hugo, 2010). The present study is timely in following up the way paved by these higher education initiatives so that what has been on the periphery of educational studies and educational research, is uncovered for a wider audience (Hugo, 2010) and contributes to supporting the evolution of Steiner education from its inception in post-war Germany into a 21st Century global initiative.

Adjusting to the flow of time

Waldorf education works with the mysteries of time. Whether looking at life between death and rebirth²⁹ or simply asking teachers to consider the effects of

²⁹ Steiner believed in reincarnation (see Steiner, 2001).

temperament on a child's later life, Steiner urges us to consider our present actions in terms of both the "before" and "after." More than any other form of education I am aware of, Waldorf education works with the flow of time. (Finsler, 1997, p.viii)

The temporal nature of Steiner education invites its own evolution through an astute awareness of what is needed developmentally by the child and also what is needed in the environment of the child locally (by the child, the school, the community), nationally and internationally. It is this latter notion of the environment and time itself that I wish to mention briefly here because the present study seeks to give a picture of, and support the evolution of, Steiner education in the early 21st Century.

An awareness of local temporality relates to 'reading human nature' which Steiner says, "will gradually reveal the human being so that we can adjust our education to what is revealed to every step of the curriculum and schedule" (Steiner, 1997, p. 68). This local or immediate need³⁰ is an essentially moment-to-moment awareness of the flow of time which engages the flexibility of the teacher within the discipline of the lesson. Nationally and internationally the temporal nature of Steiner education means that the curriculum reflects and changes with the social and cultural climate to accommodate the wider global and social perspective of the era which the education serves (Steiner, 1997). Steiner was emphatic that education meet this need (Steiner, 1995, 1997) and now, early in the 21st Century, researchers and educators in Steiner education (Gidley, 2007a & b, 2010a; Hugo, 2010; Sommer, 2010a & b; Staley, 2002) have responded with the same imperative. Their collective aim is to bring Steiner education to meet with a wider educational and academic audience and to inspire and motivate Steiner schools and Steiner teachers to meet with the needs of today's young people.

³⁰ By 'local' and 'immediate' I mean that the process of Steiner education pays attention to the community social dynamic and the changing nature of the children and the teacher from day to day, season to season , year to year.

Concluding Comments: Education, Wholeness and Young Women

In this section I conclude the chapter by positioning the present study (and myself) as a proponent of educational renewal in the sense of raising awareness of real educational initiatives that educate the whole human being and cultivate loving connectedness and meet the needs of our rapidly changing social, cultural and natural environments.

Let's work toward a culture in which there is a place for every human gift, in which children are safe and protected, women are respected and men and women can love each other as whole human beings. Let's work for a culture in which the incisive intellect, the willing hands and the happy heart are beloved. Then our daughters will have a place where all their talents will be appreciated and they can flourish like green trees under the sun and the stars. (Pipher, 1994, p. 293)

The vision offered in the above quote from Mary Pipher, whose book *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls* (Pipher, 1994) contributed significantly to raising the voices of young women in health and education, is resonant of the vision for Steiner education. In this vision are school cultures where students feel they belong, where both the human and the natural environments are conducive to living and learning in positive healthy life-long ways. In Western societies, children are compelled by law to spend a lot of time in school. As Ehrensals (2006) reminds us, the right of every child to an education has become a legal obligation. It seems worthwhile then to explore how children, or young women as in the present study, experience their schooling. In particular, elucidating key phenomena in the Steiner school experience, such as harmonious being and learning to breathe in the present study, may provide insightful guidance for creating teaching and learning environments which cultivate a greater social harmony, as was Steiner's vision of the social impulse of education.

As described earlier, integral to Steiner education is the idea of wholeness. As Gidley (2010a) points out, this and other themes within Steiner education are extant in a significant number of current educational approaches. The idea of wholeness in education is often expressed as interconnectedness or 'integral education' (Gidley, 2007a & b; Palmer, 2010). Parker Palmer's educational philosophies are becoming widely known and quoted in the mainstream (Giles, 2008). His recent book co-authored with Arthur Zajonc (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010)

brings together his own with Zajonc's Steiner-resonant educational approach. Zajonc's educational philosophy is deeply connected to Goethe, Steiner's core inspiration. In offering a vision of interconnectedness for education, Zajonc (2010) re-states Steiner's educational philosophy which seeks to bring together the 'true whole' in a harmony of inner and outer, subjective and objective and matter with spirit (Steiner, 1996, 1997, 2004).

We are well schooled in 'seeing (things)' into parts ... What kind of attentiveness will enable us to see a true whole? What is the pedagogy for beholding interconnectedness as a primary reality and not a derived one? What are the implications of a deep experience of interconnection for knowing, teaching, learning and life? (Zajonc, 2010, p. 77)

A pedagogy of interconnectedness looks beyond the paradigm of separation and calls for renewal in education that restores or re-invents an integrative or holistic approach (Gidley, 2008; Gidley, *et al*, 2010; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). The integrative approach re-evaluates our assumed knowledge foundations towards a more inclusive representative voice which fosters a dynamic of connectedness and caring resonant with the philosophy of Carol Gilligan (Gilligan, 1995, 1997, 2004). Such a philosophy put into practice (like Steiner education) will "consciously shift the global epistemic paradigm from one of fear and fragmentation to one of hope and integration" (Gidley, 2007, p.8). This 'call' breaks with the long held (Western science) tradition, since Newton and Descartes, which separates 'mind from matter' and sees the world as a collection of parts (Bortoft, 1996; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; Steiner, 2000; Barnes, 2000; Palmer, 2010; Sommer, 2010).

For certain women philosophers such as Carol Gilligan, the 'dynamic of separation' is the voice of the 'patriarchy' (Gilligan, 1997) which underpins our mainstream educational institutions (in philosophy and curriculum) (Gilligan, 1997; Gidley, *et al*. 2010; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). This is hard to underplay given that Western philosophy (as still enacted in schools and universities) is largely built on the voices of men (Gilligan, 1997; Hawthorne, 2003). Our social voice, thus our 'education voice', should include all voices, all perspectives at every level of society (Blackburn, 2005; Gilligan, 1997, 2011). Specific to the present study then, is to profile the voices of young women.

As Oliver (1999, p.221) reminds us, in profiling the voices of young women we can rise above the "silenced dialogue" to empower (young) women. Oliver's plea is mine:

I am left wondering, when are we as a culture, and more specifically as a collective group of educators and scholars, going to admit to the devastation that we are creating and take active responsibility for supporting the kinds of change that might create more socially just and healthy environments in which adolescents, girls and boys, can grow up? (Oliver, 2001, p. 144)

In addition to the perceived social need of the kind of education offered by Steiner schools, there is a potential pathway for fostering the values expressed in the New Zealand (NZ) Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2006), which explicitly values 'innovation, enquiry and curiosity' towards the competency of 'thinking'. This relatively new curriculum values *cultural tolerance, communicative competence, integrity and respectfulness* as 'key competencies' (Donnelly, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2006), and consequently the present study is timely as it explores the character of young women from a school culture which supports and values these 'competencies' or qualities. Glöckler says (2006, p. 8) that we 'need' this "form of education...which, just as much as promoting achievement-gearred motivation and intelligence, contributes to the development of joy in life, courage, responsibility and the so-called soft skills of social competence".

Steiner education is often called 'holistic' education because it supports and fosters the integration of physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual faculties of the human being towards a "harmonious development" (Steiner, 1999). As previously discussed, Steiner says that education should connect us to our lives, to our 'sense of being' and to our 'being in the world'. The importance of 'belonging with school' has been discussed and the evidence which supports the positive effects of feeling a sense of belonging at school, also implies the negative result of not feeling that sense.

Lack of belonging ... has been associated with feelings of alienation and loneliness, even hostility, low academic achievement, negative school-related attitudes, behavioral problems, risky behaviors, low school attendance, high rates of juvenile delinquency, and dropping out of school. (Cemalcilar, 2010, p.247)

These are real and current issues in our Western societies and are contributed to by factors such as an increasing distance from the natural environment; an overdose of being entertained; media hype and information overload; and a paucity of spirituality in everyday life (Dahlin, 2009; Gidley 2007; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Schwartz, 2000; Staley, 2002). Such are the symptoms of disconnection or as Dahlin (2009, p. 541) puts it 'alienation', and apartness from others which has, in Dahlin's opinion, become almost a habitual way of thinking in a purely "instrumental", technological or "rational" way³¹. Perhaps the more serious social issues of youth suicide, self harm and mental health problems (Gidley, 2005; Hawton & Fox, 2004; Payne, Swami, & Stanistreet, 2008) reflect a lack of belonging in adolescence ³². Gidley (2005, p. 17) describes hopelessness, depression and suicide as symptoms of a "deep cultural malaise"³³. 'Disconnection' from Steiner's perspective is disconnection from the spiritual in our lives, though he is by far not the only voice to have identified, or to be identifying, this (Childs, 1991; Gidley, 2005, 2008; Glöckler, 2006; Glöckler, Langhammer, & Weichert, 2006; Jones, 2005; Kogan, 2000; Kung, 2007; Lindholm and Astin, 2008; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Wright, 2001).

As with Jennifer Gidley (2005, 2007a & b, 2008; Gidley, 2010a & b; Gidley et al, 2010) my work is focused on the future of humanity on planet earth and in particular the healthy future of our children. The literature shows that young people want to be heard (Allen, 2005; Bloustein, 2003; Gilligan, 2011; Helen &

³¹ "Within the framework of instrumental rationality the human being is alienated from Being, and therefore from herself. The experience of alienation may create the impetus for appropriating Being in a new way. On the other hand, in our times this alienation has perhaps gone so far and become so widely spread that it passes for the normal state of things, as "natural", as the way things are." (Dahlin, 2009, p. 541)

³² Research suggests that in many cultures around the world, the contemplation of suicide arises for the first time around puberty and in adolescence (Payne, Swami & Stanistreet, 2008; Treichler, 1989). Girls and women are twice as likely to be involved in self-harm (Payne, Swami & Stanistreet, 2008) and 2-3 times more likely to attempt suicide (Saunders & Hawton, 2006), but only half as likely to complete suicide (Payne, Swami, & Stanistreet, 2008).

³³ Gidley (2005) actually gives her focus to 'hopefulness' and 'remedy' alongside a realistic Causal Layered Analysis of youth suicide which draws our attention not only to the layers around youth suicide but also remedial action based on 'envisioning the future'. Her balanced presentation acknowledges that the voices of youth are also raised towards a search for new spirituality: "*many young people are beginning to recognize this void and seek to find meaning through a search for spiritual values*" (p. 21).

Read, 2005; Hill, 2006; Oliver, 2001). The voices of young people identify "a spiritual vacuum" and a "planetary crisis" which "the modernist model of formal education" fails to address (Gidley, 2007b, p. 8). As teachers and researchers, parents, and adults in general, we can provide a forum for the voices of our students and children, respectfully and inclusively inviting their participation to make education an empowering and liberating experience for teachers and students (Blackburn, 2005; Giles, 2008; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Vadeboncoeur, 2005a & b). We can provide school cultures and curricula that engage students in "the task of learning to love ... learning to live in true peace and harmony with others and with nature" (Zajonc in Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, p. xi). As Gidley puts it (2005, p. 24) an inclusive educational renewal will "facilitate for and with young people, a cultural renewal, inspired by the hopes and dreams of these young people...(so) that that young people can be empowered by processes that allow them to create new stories of hope for the future." This, says Gidley (2005, p. 22) "would involve finding models for education and welfare that transcend the factory and "repair shop" models; and views of human nature...which foster human potential and the evolution of consciousness." Similarly, my work seeks to explore the character of the educational opportunities we can provide, through love, connectedness and wholeness as valuable imperatives which are ecologically and spiritually essential social and cultural foundations. Listening to young women's voices can awaken and alert us to what we have silenced; our human desire for connection and for healthy balanced relationships in a society where all voices are heard.

Chapter 3. The Methodology Has Its Own Voice

I describe the methodology of the present study as 'having its own voice' because the way we worked together was to listen and allow the character of the research process to 'speak' in the course of doing the research. I centralise the voices of the research participants (the young women and myself). For me this study could not be otherwise because unless it worked for the young women, it could not in my view, work at all. So it was essential to let their voices shape the research methodology. My intuition guided me and I allowed the method, through our voices, to shape the methodology, which unfolded organically once we had begun our conversations. The structure that guided us was conversation. We were unfolding the phenomenon of harmonious being by exploring human experience and thus the research approach was phenomenological and we let the phenomenological process evolve in a fluid way. In my initial proposals and formal paper work I called our conversations 'interviews' but soon realised as I began my pilot study that the word interview would not fully describe what we were creating together. We all started knowing that we were committing to a series of conversations. I invited the young women and they agreed on this basis. How we would conduct our conversations and where they would lead us was yet to be seen. So until the conversations actually began I was not prepared to define my research according to a fixed methodology and I found no single methodology that seemed to 'fit'. Thus, this study needed to accommodate its own evolution in an organic sense. As the research unfolded the methodology did take its own shape and find its own voice.

This is to be expected in a phenomenological study as Van Manen (1997, p. 162) reminds us: in human science research we must remain open to changes in "directions ... techniques, procedures and sources that are not always foreseeable at the outset of a research project". In the case of the present study the method led to the methodology in that through conversation we, the young women and I, found the 'directions, techniques and procedures' we needed to nurture and grow our relationship over an intense nine months of conversation. So I put aside my inner voice of the academic conventions I had learned and

enjoyed the freedom that the phenomenological approach gave me and trusted that the methodology would be articulated in more detail following the fieldwork. With support from the literature I proceeded knowing that in a phenomenological study: "a detailed methodological excursus of the study" could be written after "the actual study (was) completed" (van Manen, 1997, p. 162).

As I have introduced in Chapter 1, I found a way to articulate my methodology as a mix of Goethe's scientific method (as 'a phenomenology of delicate empiricism') with Carol Gilligan's voice-centred layered listening method thus enfolding my key ideas of love, connectedness and wholeness. These ideas are central in the work of both Goethe and Gilligan. By aligning my methodology to Goethe's I connect directly with Steiner's philosophy as Goethean methodology underpins Steiner's pedagogical approach. Therefore I experience in myself a harmonious resonance between the purpose (to explore the Steiner student's experience of harmonious being) and the context (Steiner education) of this study and the way in which it has been conducted (in a Goethean manner). By including Gilligan's methodology I have been able to apply a lens which focuses the same depth and intensity I felt in our conversations into the written analysis and discussion of the conversations. Gilligan's philosophy of relational psychology and her voice-centred methodology with women and girls helps to contextualise the methodology of the present study as having evolved out of relationship with young women. In the same way as I felt for Goethe's methodology, I experienced a harmonious resonance between Gilligan's methodology and that of the present study which centralises the voices of young women. Gilligan has provided the necessary bridge to link Goethe's phenomenology to the lifeworlds of young women in a Steiner education setting.

The Entry Point - van Manen's Phenomenology

My methodological entry point into this study was inspired by Max van Manen's phenomenology. As a key figure in shaping pedagogical phenomenology (the phenomenology of teaching) as a research approach in the human sciences, Max van Manen (1997, 2002) is accessible and relevant to this

study. Van Manen's approach to phenomenology is briefly discussed here to provide an understanding of the context within which this study began. I read Max van Manen's phenomenology (1982; 1997; 2002) and found something beautiful and true in his writing; resonating with the key ideas of this study. His presentation of phenomenology as a philosophy and a research methodology has the sense of being thorough, rich and sound.

A Curriculum of Being and Becoming

Phenomenology studies people in their uniqueness: "(It) is, in a broad sense, a ... *theory of the unique*" in that "it is interested in what is essentially not replaceable" (van Manen, 1997, p.7). Phenomenological research "begins in the (everyday) lifeworld" (van Manen, 1997, p. 7) and invites rich descriptive data through personal stories and opinions about the experience of phenomena in everyday life. It deliberately involves moral judgement, explicating truth, not as external and objective, but as personal, subjective and intrinsically oriented (van Manen,1997). The relational focus of phenomenology fosters an ethic of love and connection in that through phenomenology we find cause to act mindfully and tactfully towards others. What this means in the present study is that the personal opinion, inner knowing, and personal judgement of every participant, is esteemed. Consistent with his pedagogical focus, van Manen (1997, p.7) aligns phenomenology as human science research with "a kind of ... curriculum of being and becoming" in the sense that we are able, through phenomenology, to know and to transform ourselves.

Six Guiding Principles

Van Manen (1997, p. 31-33) gives six guiding principles for phenomenological research: turning to the nature of lived experience; investigating experience as we live it; reflecting on the essential themes; the art of writing and rewriting; maintaining a strong and oriented relation to the phenomenon; and balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. By briefly describing these principles in the context of the present study, I illustrate the connections between van Manen's phenomenology and the present study.

Turning to the nature of lived experience

Turning to the nature of lived experience means that someone, in this case me, is 'turning to' or 'interested in' an aspect of our human experience as lived (not as theorised). In turning to lived experience we seek to understand it. Lived experience is the source of the expression of the phenomenon. It is "the breathing of meaning ... a constant heaving between the inner and the outer, made concrete ... in my reflexive consciousness" so that it "has a certain essence, a 'quality' that we recognise in retrospect" (van Manen, 1997, p. 36). Lived experience can only be grasped reflectively as a "past presence" (van Manen, 1997, p. 36). Through phenomenology we then assign meaning or significance to the 'presence of this experience past', to bring its essence to life for others. The aim is to share this experience with others, primarily through writing, but not only through writing¹.

I do this in the context of my background, my "social and historical life circumstances" (van Manen, 1997, p. 31), as a teacher, parent, a researcher and a woman. In all these faculties my primary orientation is as an educational researcher. In relation then to the present study my interest is in the teaching-learning phenomenon of harmonious being. It is not *only* an educational phenomenon, of course, it is an ontological 'question' about the very experience of being human, but I initially approach it from the educational perspective wondering at the lived experience of the 'harmoniousness' that Steiner (1996) talks about developing in children. I ask: What are its qualities as experienced by young women Steiner students?

Investigating the experience as we live it

Investigating the experience as we live it is to investigate the fullness of that experience as it is actually lived not as we might suppose or theorise that it is lived. The investigator takes the attitude of "re-awakening" to the experience so that he or she gathers from various sources the "practical wisdom" related to the

¹ Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on writing and re-writing (van Manen, 1997). In the present study I do not adhere to a pure hermeneutic approach but as explained further on in this chapter, a phenomenological approach which is Goethean.

experience (van Manen, 1997, pp.31-32). Sources of the lived experience may include the researcher's own life experience; the experience of others retold or shared in a written or spoken form (through interview or conversation); artwork; personal diaries or observational anecdotes. In the present study the lived experience under investigation is that of harmonious being as a young women Steiner student. I am asking: *How does the phenomenon of harmonious being present itself in the lives of young women who are students in a Steiner school?* The source of the lived experience is the young women's story shared in conversation as well as the conversational experience itself. Thus I receive two kinds of evidence: the living experience of the conversations and the stories that are related in the conversations.

Reflecting on the essential themes

By *reflecting on the essential themes* of the phenomenon we are asking "What is it that constitutes the nature of this lived experience?" (van Manen, 1997, p. 32). Here we reflect on the things that give the experience of that particular phenomenon its own special significance or essence. The essence of the phenomenon is both seen and sensed. We look for the expression of the phenomenon in its manifestations. We sense what is living within what we see, like reading between the lines. In the present study I am reflecting on the themes (as essences) that arose through our conversations. The initial themes (as explicitly discussed in our conversations) of truth, beauty and goodness gave way to other themes. We began talking about truth, beauty and goodness in order to have something to talk about initially and as a way of grounding the study in notions which embodied the philosophy of Steiner education. Our conversations evolved from that point and various themes transpired. Of course, themes don't arise in isolation. There are inter-connections between themes and themes within themes. These inter-connecting themes are like the strands that are woven together to make the picture of the whole phenomenon.

The art of writing and re-writing

The art of writing and re-writing is the application of "language and thoughtfulness" to bring the phenomenon to light (van Manen, 1997, p. 33) and show its qualities. Ironically, the writing activity of phenomenology has been

called 'writing in the dark' (van Manen, 2002) because through written language the phenomenologist is trying to explicate something that is ultimately ineffable. Nevertheless, it is through language that we come to know the world of experience and the experience of the world more profoundly. Van Manen (1997, p. 112) guides us to "listen to the language spoken by the things in their lifeworlds". In the present study I am listening literally and metaphorically to the language of the young women. The application of language and thoughtfulness occurs in two ways: through conversation and through writing. The conversation itself is the container for the experience of the phenomenon of harmonious being and through conversation ('talking and re-talking') we bring the essence to life. Thus lived experience becomes *living* experience through conversation as a living medium for experience. Voice is at the heart of this study - the spoken word, the interleaved silences, the tone and style of voice, sighs, laughter and tears. Later, much later, I use written language so that I can somehow 'translate' the multidimensional experience of our conversations. Then, through writing and re-writing the conversations I elucidate "the motif that gives this (conversational) experience its particular quality (central idea or dominant theme)" (van Manen, 1997, p. 37). I dress and undress, redress and address the page with words in an effort to make the living experience of the conversations, come into being for others.

A strong and oriented relation to the phenomenon

A *strong and oriented relation* to the phenomenon means we stay on the path of the fundamental notion - in this case harmonious being. Van Manen advises that we do not "settle for superficialities and falsities" but stay oriented towards the phenomenon and become "animated" by it in a "full and human sense" (p. 33). For me this suggests deepening and a 'dwelling with' the phenomenon. In the present study, by meeting with each other in conversation time and time again, we deepened our talk and stayed with the same 'threads' in our conversations.

Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole

Balancing the research context by *considering parts and whole* is, for me, to keep the wholeness in full sight and also focus on each part as whole and worthy in

itself. The plan, the structure, the overall phenomenon and how I describe it are like a portrait. The phenomenon of the Steiner teaching-learning dynamic has been described as a breathing in and out where the student experiences a going out into the world and a coming in to self. The sense of this is like a lemniscate (horizontal figure eight) motion. The path it transcribes, or its dynamic, is what I have called the phenomenon of harmonious being. In effect this may also be the experience of being human but in this study it is the experience of being a Steiner-educated human. Ultimately, I am asking about the essential experience of being human but have refined² this to the experience of being a Steiner student.

Phenomenology as a Living Process

In van Manen's phenomenology, the researcher's views and pre-conceptions are identified and initially put aside as much as is consciously possible, and the voices of the participants are given the stage. However, during the study the researcher will engage in a reflective process (often through journaling) and that also becomes a part of the results of the research. This is extremely important in the present study as the dialogic relationship creates the study, what is revisited is not just text, it is *voice*. All voices are 'participants', with experiences only having meaning because they are being shared between those people, at that time, in the space created. It is the meaning those shared experiences have that carry over into the next conversation resonating through it as relationships deepen and deepen, as trust evolves and as veils slip away. We look and look again, perhaps many times. In this way phenomenology is a living process. When we commit our evidence to writing, we are taking a look at a certain point in that process. Much has gone before, much will come after, but to stop at a certain point and survey what we see around us orients us in the process of looking.

² An example of refining the focus is given by van Manen (1997, p. 166) . He explains how one may wish to look at the phenomenon of pedagogy, which involves the experience of both parenting and teaching. By refining the focus to parenting, the phenomenon becomes more manageable. A further refinement might be to wonder about a specific aspect of parenting in relation to pedagogy such as "what is parental hope?" and how might that differ from the hope of a teacher.

Van Manen has brought phenomenology beautifully into human science research of the present day. His expert guidance serves to deepen my understanding of phenomenology as methodology. Van Manen's approach is deeply inquiring; respectful of the phenomenon and the participants at the centre of that inquiry; rigorous, flexible and warm and he has managed to bring together some of the significant strands of phenomenology from different schools and weave them into a useful whole. That whole becomes a way of being and knowing that can be applied as a phenomenological inquiry to gain a deeper insight into human experience, expanding our knowledge about a phenomenon. We might ask, 'What we can do with this knowledge?' In answer, van Manen (1997, p. 45) paraphrases Heidegger: "from the point of view of instrumental reason ... it might be quite true to say that we cannot do anything with this knowledge ... rather we should wonder: Can phenomenology, if we concern ourselves deeply with it, do something for us?".

Becoming 'Something More'

As I began to engage with the young women in this study something more began to bubble to the surface. The young women and the tone of the moment set the course of our conversations. I wanted them to 'take the reins' and for our 'space' to be one in which they could 'reign', as the voice of authority. The 'something more' was the changing shape of the research as it began to really take on its own unique form. Just as Kaplan (2005, p. 313) writes about his own research as he applies Goethean methodology to 'conversation as social inquiry', "...that 'more' (its *character*) - is never at rest, always in change, always in a state of becoming". Yes, the methodology was 'becoming' - which made perfect sense to me. The study had to 'become' *what* the young women made it, in the *way* that they guided it.

I saw certain patterns emerging in our conversations and a certain 'spirit' that was growing between us as conversational partners. I heard the voice of this 'something' and I needed to somehow explain what I heard and find the language to portray these experiences and this process. I looked again at my methodology. I revisited feminist methodologies, Mikhail Bakhtin's work on dialogic analysis (1986) and space and (hybrid) identity concepts originating

from Homi Bhabha (Ikas & Wagner, 2009; Shumar, 2010). These helped but didn't fully fit the spirit I felt moving in this study. Eventually, immersed in conversational data I followed a hunch. About six months into our nine months of conversations, a series of events and encounters brought me to see that we were working in a Goethean way³. It was like a lightening bolt hit - *why hadn't I thought of this in the first place?*

From van Manen to Goethe

To back track a little from Goethe, I found that the shape that this study was taking had a kind of 'Steiner character'. I thought that this was truly phenomenal, as my journal entry below illustrates; that by doing (or 'being in') a study on the living experience of Steiner education, it was that character that emerged through the methodology from the young women Steiner-students.

What is phenomenal here is that ... I let the research study speak of its own accord and it said this ["it said this" means that the study 'said' or revealed the Steiner-character]. I follow my intuition, my heart, my better sense, I listen into the space, I let the conversations just go and - they found their own life. (Althea Journal, 5 May 2010)

I looked to who inspired Steiner and I found Goethe. I was aware that Steiner was deeply influenced by Goethe, but I had not understood the scope or extent of this influence. Steiner actually said in one of his lectures that he would have like to have called his philosophy 'Goetheanism' (Barnes, 2000). By the time I began to explore what was a huge amount of 'evidence' in the form of hours and hours of conversations, I had found a good variety of examples of Goethe's method applied in the natural sciences (Bortoft, 1996; Hoffman, 1998; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998) and some examples (two) in the humanities (Cameron, 2005; Kaplan, 2005). Goethe's method gave me a way to work with the layers of the phenomenon that resonated with the deeper impulse of Steiner education.

In Goethe's worldview I found a framework for my own values. I had approached my study with love and reverence in a way that is similar to Ann

³ Perhaps not so surprising, given that the cultural context of my study was Steiner education and Goethe's methodology is implicit in Steiner's philosophies (Steiner, 2000).

Klein's (2002) approach to work as love as my journal notes show⁴. For me, as for Goethe, my ethics drive my research and thus research for me is a moral activity, an activity of love as I described in Chapter 1. Steiner, in describing 'Goethean morality', positions research as a moral activity and a force of love.

*Goethe sees morality arising from the human world of ideas ... ideas that are clear in themselves, through which we give ourselves our own direction ... we follow these not out of obligation ... Rather we serve them out of love. **We love them as we love a child.** We want to see them realised, and we intervene on their behalf because they are a part of our own being ... Love is the driving force in Goethean morality. (bold type my addition). (Steiner, 2000, p. 216)*

To say that I began this study with love as a parent for a child, is true. I held and nurtured the way for the 'child' to grow. Van Manen's phenomenology and Goethe's phenomenology are not so very different at the core. My key ideas of love, connectedness and wholeness resonate deeply in them both (Bortoft, 1996; Barnes, 2000; van Manen, 1997; Steiner, 2000). Throughout his writings on phenomenology, van Manen (1997, 2001) emphasises the ethic of love or care in his research. For him it is a fundamental premise of phenomenology that we care for the persons we are meeting in research and carry a moral responsibility for, and a loving connection with, that person. A phenomenologist is seeking to know the nature of human experience, the very essence of being, and this can only be achieved with "someone for whom we care" (van Manen, 1997, p. 6). Both van Manen's and Goethe's approaches 'perform' a rendering of the phenomenon so that through a loving connection we elucidate its essence as experienced by a person. That is, we are looking to find the essence in the experience. We ask: *How is the phenomenon actually lived or how is it living in the experiences of this person?* What van Manen calls the essence, Goethe might call the archetypal phenomenon but from both perspectives we seek the essential living experience of the phenomenon.

⁴ This journal entry, although a little prosaic, is a heartfelt expression of my connection with this study. Journal: 29 March 2007: "...The challenge of this work (where 'work' can also be synonymous with 'love') is to act as a weaver to bring into harmonious being this thesis using the raw materials of individual voice and the adhesive of loving intention to illuminate and not obscure, to make plain another's truth ...".

In Goethe's phenomenology, in van Manen's phenomenology and in phenomenology in general, when the living experience of the phenomenon is grasped by the researcher, it is said to be glimpsed, or seen (Amrine, 1998; van Manen, 1997; Zajonc, 1998). Gadamer (who informs van Manen's work) for example tells us that it is a radiance that shines forth (Gadamer, 1986) and Goethe refers to the "fundamental appearance" of the phenomena in a moment of "*aperçu*" or "insight" (Zajonc, 1998, p. 26). The implication is that at the moment of grasping the truth of the phenomenon, we experience an enlightening, an inner seeing, which is nothing less than transformative. It is this insight that is the experience of the archetype or the essence. Where we go with that experience is, to Goethe, of secondary importance. Rather it is the experience that counts and according to Goethe, we should not seek to explain the phenomenon outside of our direct experience of the archetype. It is this kind of awakening experience that brought me to Goethe's methodology. In the present study, the moment of seeing or awakening is, for me, also a moment of hearing - I grasp the phenomenon through its sound or resonance. I suggest that this is because of the central focus of the present study on voice and harmoniousness as well as the significance for me of the term resonance. Resonance implies vibration, layers of meaning, sound, space and movement. It has a multidimensional quality, a depth and breadth, and it exists only in the dynamic of giving and receiving breath, sound and silence. After I encountered Goethean phenomenology I became aware of its resonance all around me.

Goethe's Science

Goethean phenomenology has a certain resonance that once heard, seems to sound into every corner of life. (Althea Journal: 22 July 2010)

Well-known for his iconic play, *Faust*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) is celebrated as one of Europe's greatest literary geniuses - a playwright, poet and artist. Yet Goethe was also a scientist, and he saw his greatest contributions to humankind in his scientific endeavours, though his scientific theories were never published by him in a formulated whole.

...in admitting without reservation that Goethe never expressed his basic principles as a coherent whole, we in no way intend to validate the claim that his worldview fails to spring from an ideal centre that can be formulated in a rigorously scientific way. (Steiner, 2000, p. 90)⁵.

In the above statement Steiner is saying that although Goethe did not publish his methodology as a whole body of knowledge, Goethe's worldview derived from rigorous scientific study and not just from abstract thought. Goethe sought a new path for science which engaged with nature in concrete and empirical ways, but also acknowledged the metaphysical nature of life on earth. He did not consider himself a philosopher, but a scientist who saw that by 'observing' the qualities of something and connecting with its wholeness he could unfold its true character (Bortoft, 1996; Zajonc, 1998).

In the last 20 to 30 years there has been an increasing interest in Goethean science as a viable methodology which restores human-connectedness, wholeness and spirituality to the mechanised "torture-chamber"⁶ model of modern 'objective' science (Seamon, 1998, 2005; Robbins, 2005). As this phrase depicts, Goethe believed that the science during the Enlightenment (the intellectual environment of his time) had forgotten the beauty and majesty of nature and the cosmos⁷. Goethe (quoted in Zajonc, 1998, p. 17) lamented this loss in saying that the "system of nature" proposed in the Enlightenment, left him feeling "hollow and empty ... in this atheistical half-night, in which earth vanished with all its images, heaven with all its stars." A science without art and spirituality was, for Goethe, bereft of meaning.

Those who have contemporised Goethean methodology in the natural sciences have sought to restore meaning and reawaken an interest in the true nature of scientific discovery. They have described the experience of a Goethean practice

⁵ Steiner's interpretations of Goethe's scientific and philosophical writings as well as of his poetry and prose, are a key source for the present study. Steiner spent fourteen years collating and publishing *An Introduction to Goethe's Scientific Writings* for Kürschner's Edition of German National Literature (Barnes, 2000).

⁶ In Goethe's own words as he talks about "defending the rights of nature": "The phenomena must be freed once and for all from their grim torture chamber of empiricism, mechanism and dogmatism" (Goethe, quoted in Hoffman, 1998, p. 174).

⁷ During the Enlightenment there was a "rise of an essentially secular, materialistic philosophy" (Zajonc, 1998, p. 17).

as *authentic wholeness* (Bortoft, 1996); *intuitive perception* (Heitler, 1998; Bywater, 2005); *indwelling* (Barnes, 2000; Kaplan, 2005); *inner participation* (Cottrell, 1998; Barnes, 2000); *cultural therapeutics* (Robbins, 2005); *relationally-responsive understanding* (Shotter, 2000); and *contemplative inquiry* (Zajonc, 2006; 2009).

A Phenomenology of Delicate Empiricism

Goethe's methodology has been situated as 'phenomenology' although it "preceded Husserl's work by over a century" (Seamon, 1998, p. 9)⁸. David Seamon, an existential phenomenologist and environmental architect, suggests that Goethe's style of phenomenology is similar to existential phenomenology because it does not have the cerebral focus that Husserl gave his tradition, but instead focuses on "real-world existence". Goethe's methodology guides the scientist to begin with, and stay with, the experience of the phenomenon which then "becomes the descriptive basis for ... interpretation" (Seamon, 1998, p. 9). Where Goethe's methodology departs from existential phenomenology is in his interpretation. Goethe saw the world, and thus all experience, as a fluid interplay between spirit and matter (Steiner, 2000; Shotter, 2005) unified by a harmonious and divine principle.

In this sense, existential phenomenologists can find many points of methodological similarity. On the other hand some existential phenomenologists may feel much less comfortable with Goethe's ontological and metaphysical conclusions which suggest an interlinkage and harmony among all things of nature, including humankind. (Seamon, 1998, p.9)

Goethe's scientific approach "stands in stark contrast to conventional images of science as a means to gain mastery and control over the natural world" (Robbins, 2005, p. 115).

Goethe contrasted his empirical 'method' with that of Francis Bacon's "empiricism" (nature under inquisition being forced to "give up her secrets") and Rene Descartes' "rationalism" (a mechanistic view of humankind and nature measureable by disassembly "turning ... all relationships into equations")

⁸ Fritz Heinemann writing in 1934 (cited by Seamon, 1998, p. 13) suggested that "Goethe's phenomenology may have some real value for ... an age whose watchword is 'the return to the concrete', for the transition from Husserl's abstract phenomenology to the concrete phenomenology which will be needed to prepare the ground for reformation of philosophical problems".

(Bywater, 2005, p. 295). His contemporaries were the German idealists and nature philosophers such as Hegel and Schelling, though Goethe did not align himself with the idealists (Steiner, 2000) and suggested that attempts to explain nature through pure thought were incomplete:

...it is useless to attempt to express the nature of a thing abstractly ... we should try in vain to describe a man's character, but let his acts be collected and an idea of the character will be presented to us... (Goethe, quoted in Zajonc, 1998, p. 19)

Goethe's scientific approach guided the scientist to employ all her or his senses and faculties (not just thought) and "remain as open as possible and allow his or her way of seeing to be shaped by the phenomena" (Amrine, 1998, p. 37). In what Goethe saw as a co-creative process, the scientist could eventually see the essence of the subject of research with a kind of inner sight so that she or he felt a connection to it, a belonging, as if identical.

Goethe's [methodology] teaches a mode of interaction between people and environment that involves reciprocity, wonderment and gratitude. He wished us to encounter nature respectfully and to discover how all its parts, including ourselves, belong. (Seamon (1998, p.9-10)

Goethe believed the character of the subject would present itself providing that the scientist persisted gently and rigorously always remaining present to that which was being observed, which for Goethe was nature itself (Zajonc, 1998). These qualities of gentle but rigorous investigation are embodied in the phrase 'delicate empiricism' (or 'zarte Empirie') which Goethe used to describe his science⁹.

There is a delicate empiricism which makes itself utterly identical with the object, thereby becoming true theory. (Goethe, quoted in Seamon, 1998, p. 11)

Robbins (2005) explains that there are two key aspects to delicate empiricism: it "gives primacy to perception" and it is "ethically responsive to the observed" (p.

⁹ While calling his method delicate empiricism, Goethe was reluctant to label or categorise too highly and worked and wrote in a descriptive rather than definitive fashion (Steiner, 2000). However, Goethe offered guidelines which, in true Goethean style, we could as researchers bring into being the individual inner sense of what his methodology means to us and our work and turn that 'out' to become a characterised way of doing science - the process much more important than the name given it.

118). What this means in practice is that the researcher engages in "prolonged empathetic looking ... grounded in direct experience" (Seamon, 1998, p. 2) crediting his or her own perceptual powers as if they were an exact instrument (Steiner, 2000). 'Perception' to Goethe meant using both inner and outer senses - not only to make observations *about* the phenomenon but to experience oneself *with* that phenomenon: an experience that more recently has been called *witness* (Shotter, 2005; Drury, 2006). The term *witness* synergises the experience of delicate empiricism: the scientist with all his or her senses alert is present with the phenomenon and thus connects to its essence with a reverent and loving attitude.

Witness As Love and Connectedness

A 'witness' science would not have us searching for what is hidden and more 'real' ... Instead Goethe invited us to make ourselves utterly identical with 'Other' until we gain a sense of 'Other' as process-in-context. (Drury, 2006, p. 180)¹⁰

How do we become 'utterly identical' with another? Goethean scholar and physicist Henri Bortoft describes this as a physical movement which brings our "bodily attention" into the chest and solar plexus (the heart space) to develop our "capacities for felt attention" (Cameron, 2005, p. 189). In other words we become physically aware of, and direct our attention to, our feelings so that we touch and are touched on all levels as we engage with the 'other' (Cameron, 2005). Thus we receive a bodily understanding "unavailable to us as disengaged spectators" (Shotter, 2005, p. 153) which guides us further to learn how to proceed in this relationship. There is an evolving, unfolding, 'becoming' quality about our relationship just as we can experience in a 'living' conversation where we can "make a receptive space for the phenomenon" to speak through us - "expressing itself in human consciousness" (Cameron, 2005, p. 190). Therefore there is a dialogical quality to our relationship with the phenomenon as we engage in what Bakhtin (1981, quoted in Shotter, 2005, p. 141) calls a "living dialogue" and our expression of the phenomenon becomes a living experience.

¹⁰ Neil Drury is a New Zealand clinical psychologist with whom I have met and discussed Goethe's method. He belongs to an international group of psychologists who are developing Goethe's method as a way of practising psychology.

...witness (dialogic)-thinking is a form of reflective interaction that involves our coming into living contact with the living (or moving) being of an other or otherness - if it is a meeting with another person, then we come into contact with their utterances, their bodily expressions, their words, their 'works'. (Shotter, 2005, p. 145):

'Witness' in a living conversation also has a certain anticipatory quality oriented "toward *what has not-yet-happened*" (Shotter, 2005, p. 141). As we are 'with' the other we can become guided by our anticipation of the possible, the unsaid, and thus we become open to "spheres of creative activity previously utterly unfamiliar to us" (Shotter, 2005, p. 151). This opens a space *within* (us) for the creative expression of the phenomena - not just as an observed appearance outside of ourselves (or within another) but as *an inner movement which can ultimately co-create pathways of knowing*. This is relevant in the present study where we sat in open living conversation with each other and allowed the conversation to have a life of its own, ebbing and flowing according to the mood of the moment. We listened and allowed, without the need to interrogate or explain, following certain threads inspirationally and intuitively rather than dutifully. We moved in and out, "up close and away, looking from this angle and that" (Shotter, 2005, p. 151) so that the connections we built created the picture of the phenomenon.

Witness is also called a 'dwelling-in' or 'in-dwelling' experience which means we are dwelling with the person (or object) and also we allow them to live in us (Barnes, 2000). Van Manen (1997, p. 43) refers to this when he says as phenomenological researchers we "become" the (research) question. So as we are being with the phenomenon we are also becoming the phenomenon. We 'dwell with' the phenomenon with the person, who is no longer 'other', and "gain an orientation toward them as their inner nature becomes more familiar" - which takes time because we must "find our 'way around' something that is a mystery to us - an unsolvable mystery that might remain so" (Shotter, 2005, pp. 153-154). This is an important point - 'an unsolvable mystery' not a problem to be solved but a mystery (a phenomenon) to be described. In this study there was no guarantee that I would find my 'way around' and any unravelling of 'the mystery' depended on the willingness of my conversational partner, the young woman, to engage. I would add further that, with respect to the present

study, dwelling in (the methodology of) phenomenology has meant that I must dwell more fully in myself. Dwelling in myself, I hear my authentic voice - an expression of my own truth. As I recognise and express my authentic voice, so I create the possibility for others to do the same.

In summary, witness as connectedness means relatedness within and without. It is relatedness within one's own being, between the conversational partners and between the different threads or manifestations of the phenomenon. In a witness space I am connected to myself, potentially, what Goethe would call, 'spirit in matter'. Witness as love means to employ this connection as an attitude and truly be with another in reverence, an attitude which Goethe called love or devotion (Steiner, 2000). In this space of reverence we are listening, looking and learning to see what becomes of ourselves, each other and the phenomenon. We do so in the understanding that we look for the phenomenon to reveal itself within us, not outside of us, as a divine principle, a spirit that moves within.

Wholeness

*Who would study and describe the living starts
By driving the spirit out of its parts
In the palm of his hand he holds all sections,
Lacks nothing but the spirits' connections
... How all within the whole are weaving
Each in the other working, living...*

(Goethe, from *Faust*, quoted in Steiner, 2000, p. 6)

Goethe's prose and poetry give great insight into his worldview and the epistemological foundation of his methodology (Steiner, 2000). As shown in the lines from *Faust* above, Goethe knew the importance of wholeness or a 'holistic consciousness' (Bortoft, 1996). He saw the need to unify what he saw as the separateness and multiplicity in nature, through the "connecting power of the spirit" (Steiner, 2000, p. 121). Goethe approached not only his scientific studies but his life with the deep belief that the divine lives in all things as an active inner principle (Steiner, 2000). It is this belief that has given cause for philosophers to connect Goethe with Spinoza (1632-1677). According to

Steiner's reading of Goethe, Spinoza influenced Goethe deeply in that through Spinoza, Goethe found a language to articulate his way of being and his scientific approach to his study of nature: a connection that Steiner (2000, p. 139) calls "a deep, inner harmony between Goethe's being and Spinoza's teachings". Like Spinoza, Goethe believed that the divine, as spirit (or God), was living in the world, not in some external heavenly location, and that to know the world and all its things was to connect with the knowledge of the divine. So when Goethe says he sees with the eyes of the spirit (Barnes, 2000) he is acknowledging that he sees the connectedness of the divinity of all things which is not just a collection of separate parts, it is wholeness. Goethe invites us to look with our spirit to see the inner spiritual lawfulness which is wholeness (Steiner, 2000). The importance of wholeness¹¹ is reiterated in the writings of Goethean scholars and scientists (Bortoft, 1996; Seamon & Zajonc, 1998; Hoffman, 1998; Shotter, 2005; Zajonc, 2006).

Henri Bortoft's coverage of Goethe's science as a practice of 'authentic wholeness' (1996) is no doubt the most significant published work on the resonance of wholeness in Goethe's methodology and worldview.

(Goethe) worked to achieve an authentic wholeness by dwelling in the phenomenon instead of replacing it with a mathematical representation. (Bortoft, 1996, p. 19).

Bortoft gives three examples which help to illustrate the difference between what he calls authentic wholeness and counterfeit wholeness. The key difference is in the relationship between the whole and the parts. In authentic wholeness the whole lives in every part and we understand the wholeness of something by knowing its parts. In counterfeit wholeness, the whole is seen as something constructed from a number of parts in a linear fashion and therefore as potentially separate from the parts in that it might be extant before or after the parts come together. In the first example, that of the hologram, Bortoft (1996, pp. 4-5) describes that the whole is present in every part of the hologram: "The entire original object can be optically reconstructed from any fragment of

¹¹ 'Wholeness' and 'fragmentation' are also clear themes in the work of van Manen (1997) and Gilligan (1997).

the original hologram ... so that it would not be true ... to say that the whole is made up of parts". In the second example, the starry sky at night, Bortoft (1996, p. 5) describes the night sky as a "space which is one whole enfolded in an infinite number of points and yet including all in itself". We see the night sky because "the light [is] carrying the stars to us" therefore the whole night sky is "present in the light which passes through ... into the eye" (Bortoft, 1996, p. 5). Bortoft goes on to explain that in modern physics, the view that the universe (as a whole) is composed of separate bodies of matter (that the sum of these parts make the whole) has been supplanted by the view that each body of matter reflects "the rest of the universe" (p. 6). We can understand the whole (universe) by looking more deeply into its parts. The third example Bortoft gives of wholeness is closer to the character of the present study as it describes the hermeneutic circle in relation to reading and writing a text. Using the example of writing, this notion of circularity (of a text) is that in order to write a coherent text we must know the meaning we wish to convey and yet it is only through the writing that the parts (of a sentence for example) will lead us to the whole meaning.

We reach the meaning of the sentence through the meaning of the words, yet the meaning of words ... is determined by the meaning of the sentence as a whole.
(Bortoft, 1996, p. 8)

Then in the act of reading, we progressively grasp the meaning of the whole through the meaning of the parts so that the essence of the whole may live for us in a particular phrase or sentence. Through reading the parts we have gleaned the whole as it lives in a part (a sentence) of the text. What the hermeneutic circle shows us is that an understanding of the meaning of the text is not equivalent with analytical or logical reasoning such as a step by step linear examination of the parts would give, rather it is holistic. "Authentic wholeness" says Bortoft (1996, p. 24) "means that the whole is in the part; hence careful attention must be given to the parts instead of to general principles. In contrast, an [analytical] approach ... begins by seeing the phenomenon as an instance of general principles." As I described earlier, in order to see the phenomenon in a Goethean way we must look with the eyes of the spirit to see its connectedness or, as Bortoft describes, we must practice "seeing

comprehensively" to see its "belongingness" (Bortoft, 1996, p. 290). However, our scientific tradition of employing the analytical mind to try to understand something has led us towards objectifying our world so that we explain it as a collection of isolated parts rather than unfolding its essential intrinsic connections. We replace understanding something with explaining it. When we explain something we are trying to "put *together* what already *belongs* together" (Bortoft, 1996, p. 290) by making external connections rather than letting the intrinsic ones be revealed in an understanding which we receive rather than go out and get.

This is a significant theme in the present study - where the phenomenon is revealed by receiving it through conversation. It unfolds as an understanding of each individual's living experience, not as an instance of general principles that can be sought from one (individual) and applied to another. I focus on the voice of the individual as I look for the emergence of the phenomenon in each of the young women's voices: "...the character of this emergence is the 'unfolding of enfolding', so that the parts are the place of the whole where it bodies forth into presence" Bortoft (1996, p. 11). From Goethe's perspective, this is how we can truly see the phenomenon - *all within the whole are weaving, Each in the other working, living.*

The whole depends on the parts to be able to come forth and the parts depend on the coming forth of the whole to be significant instead of superficial. (Bortoft, 1996, p. 11)

Thus the whole is not superior to the parts and the parts are not superior to the whole, they are interdependent, connected and they belong together. As we see this belongingness, we experience the wholeness of the phenomenon as a divine or higher principle.

The aim must be to see the belongingness of the phenomena and so to encounter the phenomena in the mode of wholeness instead of separation. This wholeness, which begins to be experienced through seeing comprehensively, is then recognised as being a higher dimension of the phenomena. (Bortoft, 1996, p. 291)

Goethe called this higher dimension, the *archetypal phenomenon* or the *Urphänomen*. The *Urphänomen* is "the essential pattern or process of a thing" (Seamon, 1998, p. 4) which for Goethe was the ultimate experience of the

phenomenon. The 'ur' denotes 'the primordial' and refers to the "deep-down" or "essential core of a thing that makes it what it is and what it becomes" (Seamon, 1998, p. 4). The experience of the archetypal phenomenon can be a revelation or an epiphany (Steiner, 2000; Robbins, 2005). As mentioned earlier, such an experience is often felt physically, emotionally and spiritually. The experience of the archetypal phenomenon is that moment when we do become utterly identical with the other and experience the spirit of the other's wholeness dwelling in us and us in it. It is an insight, a knowing that moves 'one's entire being' (Steiner, 2000), an "experience of truth ... as epiphany" Zajonc (2007, p.8)¹².

For Goethe, this revelatory experience meant that he had seen the true nature of that which he was studying. For example he describes the archetypal plant as "the most marvellous creature in the world" saying that it has "an inner truth and necessity" (Goethe, quoted in Amrine, 1998, pp. 39-40). In the revelatory moment where "one instance is often worth a thousand" (Goethe quoted in Seamon, 1998, p. 3), the mystery of the phenomenon unravels some of itself. As we gaze with "the eyes of the spirit" which, Goethe says, must "work in perpetual living connection with those of the body" (Goethe, quoted in Seamon, 1998, p. 3) we are to see the wholeness of the phenomenon as a "perpetual living connection" between body and spirit. *Truly seeing* in the Goethean way requires a shift in consciousness (Bortoft, 1996; Steiner, 2000; Cameron, 2005) - a transformation of the scientist as she discovers some new faculty in herself.

A Science of Belonging and Becoming

What I get from Goethe's methodology is that the things that 'fit' what one is researching are the things you use - observe and observe carefully, live in to it and work with what works - that there are pieces within the whole that resonate

¹² Zajonc's 'contemplative inquiry' (Zajonc, 2007) incorporates Goethe's science. As Zajonc (2007, p.4) describes it, contemplative inquiry is "neither dispassionate analysis nor disembodied asceticism and turns "isolation to empathetic connection"; "lively ... attentive and engaged" in a full relationship founded in "love"; "deeply participatory" making "itself utterly identical with the object". Zajonc describes 8 stages of contemplative inquiry (2006; 2008), which he also calls the eight essential characteristics of an epistemology of love (2007). These are: Respect, Gentleness, Intimacy, Vulnerability, Participation, Transformation, *Bildung*, Insight. For further reading see Zajonc's book *Meditation as Contemplative Inquiry*, (Zajonc, 2009).

and those are what we as individuals go with, we begin wherever we can begin and move forward in our observations ... things unfold, they become towards a feeling and there are not words - this is the greatest task to put into words what is an essence, a flicker of light, an inner movement, the flutter of a butterfly's wing, the beat of a heart ... the words are such empty vessels that do not hold the beauty or sound forth the truth of this moment ... such a moment is surely what Goethe talks about as our 'inner experience' of a thing - we begin looking and after a time, who knows how long, we suddenly see this thing anew as if for the first time and yet we are, in that moment of seeing, transformed as we see or even hear, its depths, its very nature and wonder awakens in us anew. (Althea Journal entry: 21 May 2010)

Although the contemporary practice of Goethe's approach has been more prevalent in the natural sciences than in the humanities, at the heart of the methodology itself is the essential understanding that art and science belong together. Goethe's methodology is the interdisciplinary link that may "close the gap between natural science and the humanities" and inspire a "vision of ourselves 'at home' and belonging with the things of the natural world...a vast organism which is constantly in the process of becoming" (Robbins, 2005, p.124). Goethean methodology demands our attention as a 'culturally therapeutic' (Robbins, 2005), ethically and ecologically responsible science for the 21st century (Seamon, 1998; Kaplan, 2005; Wahl, 2005; Drury, 2006). Robbins (2005, p. 118) compares Goethe's approach with "the contemporary movement of Deep Ecology (Devall & Sessions, 1984" in that there is 'integration' of the human being with nature. "We can relinquish our separateness ... and participate in our world in a richer, more responsible and poignantly beautiful way" (Macy, 1991, p. 14 quoted in Robbins, 2005, p. 118).

Goethe's science places humankind at the centre as 'the knower', the true instrument of science.

Insofar as he makes use of his healthy senses, the human being is the greatest and most precise scientific instrument that can exist. And precisely this is the greatest disservice of modern science: that it has divorced the experiment from the human being, and wants to know nature only through that which is shown by instruments - indeed, wants to limit and demonstrate nature's capacities in that way.(Goethe, quoted in Amrine, 1998, p. 37-38).

Continuing this line of thought Steiner (2000, p. 212)) suggests that it is "only out of ourselves" that we bring about conclusions concerning the world as we

allow "the essential nature of things ... to speak through our own mind", which I would extrapolate to 'speak through my own voice'.

These subjective experiences may even assume a completely individual character. Nevertheless, they express the inner nature of things. (Steiner, 2000, p. 214)

In Goethe's scientific approach, what matters is not that we have the same experiences (or voices) or interpret them in the same way, but rather that we can communicate our experiences (or voices) and by doing so enable others to recognise something of their own experiences (or voices) in ours. Such is the tone of qualitative research which counts human experience over "*that which is shown by instruments*" - a tone resonant in van Manen's (1997) writing about human science research: it "begins in the lifeworld" and "edifies the personal insight ... contributing to one's thoughtfulness and one's ability to act towards others" (p.7). This research process, says van Manen, is transformative allowing us to "remake ourselves in the true sense of *Bildung* (education)" (1997, p.7). Goethe says the same thing: "Every new object, clearly seen, opens up a new organ of perception in us." (Goethe, quoted in Robbins, 2005, p. 113). And this was my experience, as shown in my journal notes above, seeing the phenomenon as if with new eyes.

Linking Goethe, Steiner and this study

Rudolf Steiner was one of the first scientists or philosophers to recognise the vast importance of Goethe's methodology (Barnes, 2000). Steiner was recommended by his university professor to edit and introduce Goethe's scientific writings for Kürschner's edition of German National Literature, and with Steiner's intense interest in scientific investigation and in matters spiritual, "in Goethe he recognised one who had been able to perceive the spiritual in nature" (Wilson, 1964, p.vii). Steiner, like Goethe was "at home in the realm of science ... as well in the world of the human spirit ... spiritual experience had become concrete ... physical experience had revealed its spiritual dimensions" (Barnes, 2000, p. vii). Steiner, who had a deep love and respect for Goethe and his works, spent fourteen years collecting, collating and publishing Goethe's methods of knowing and working in science and the arts.

The result of Steiner's work was a comprehensive series of introductions to Goethe's scientific works, which were published between 1883-1897. Goethe had not explicitly stated his philosophy, so Steiner himself published *The Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World-Conception* in 1886. Ultimately, Steiner applied Goethe's science practically through education, agriculture, medicine and the arts (Barnes, 2000)¹³. The close connection between Steiner and Goethe is highly relevant to the present study. It is to Goethe that Steiner 'unreservedly' attributes his worldview and his approach to the sciences. Steiner took 'Goetheanism' to the point to where he believed Goethe was headed - to describe in detail the spiritual nature of phenomena rather than just to apprehend its manifestations. In education, Steiner applied "Goethe's method to the phenomenon of the human soul" (Barnes, 2000, p. 283).

Steiner's real-world applications of Goethe's world-conception were motivated by his desire to see and describe the "weaving and working of the spirit" (Steiner quoted in Barnes, 2000, p.283) as a conscious reality. My motivation to do the same has led me to describe the weavings and workings of how young women Steiner students and I unfolded the phenomenon of harmonious being. Our way of unfolding experience, of being in conversation was strongly resonant of Goethe's methodology applied in living experience - a 'participation in the deeper impulses' of the lifeworlds of the young women. This is then supported by applying Goethe's methodology to a layered analysis of the conversational data (as described in Chapter 4). By unfolding these moments when the voice of the phenomenon is truly heard, then with a 'Goethean gaze' we can see (or hear) the ways in which the phenomenon lives and works in actual experience. This gives us deep insights into the character of the young women. In this way we see her real-life 'deeper impulses', her 'workings and weavings'. This is where the research of Carol Gilligan has had a profound influence on the methodology of the present study. Carol Gilligan's research and writing has provided the doorway into a young woman's inner world and

¹³ Steiner's work had three main phases (Barnes, 2000). The first was to lay the knowledge foundation bridging the material and spiritual, called by Steiner '*spiritual science*'; the second to 'enliven' this knowledge through artistic media and the third to develop its practical application. In Waldorf education we see the most widespread application of this.

a contemporary framework for positioning Goethe's methodology as a voice in the social sciences. Through Gilligan, this study has shifted the voice of phenomenology from the 'lived experience' focus of hermeneutic phenomenology to a 'living experience': a relational phenomenology of presence in the here and now, which accommodates fluidity and change, and living, embodied sound through voice.

Gilligan, Voice and Relationship

The sense of division which is prevalent now in many areas of the human and social sciences comes from the fact that there is a real disagreement, not about interpretation, but about reality. Thus people are speaking and writing about different worlds. (Gilligan, 1997, p. 23)

Gilligan's research and writing brings to life the worlds of women and young women through a voice-centred and relationship-focused methodology. By centralising 'voice' as the living modality of 'knowing', Gilligan (1997) offers a relational methodology that fosters connection in the face of our Western cultural dynamic of separation (Gilligan, 1997). Instead of the word 'self' Gilligan proposes the use of the word 'voice' because the voice, as alive and resonant, connects to an actual human being. The voice will divulge the particular orientation of the person speaking to what is being said and the voice is oriented to the society and culture that surround the person to whom *it* belongs. Our voices speak the truth of who we are, the reality of our world.

...voice ... reveals a psyche in connection with both the natural and social world. Listening to voice reveals the relation of the person speaking to what is being said because voice carries the tell-tale signs of where a person is in relation to what he or she, or she/he, is saying. The resonances, or lack of resonances, reveal the societal and cultural frameworks, and also the connections or disconnections of the voice with breath or sound. (Gilligan, 1997, p. 17).

Gilligan's studies (Gilligan, 1990, 1995, 1997, 2004, 2011) with girls and young women in adolescence followed up her earlier research findings (Gilligan, 1982) that women tend to dissociate themselves from their own inner voice in order to stay in some relationships. In other words, Gilligan found that women will forgo their own voice, their own knowing (or truth) in order to keep the peace in, or sustain, a relationship. Thus, in doing so they forsake their relationship

with themselves in order to keep relationships with others. Gilligan and her colleague, Lyn Mikel Brown, completed a five-year study¹⁴ exploring the relational worlds of adolescent girls in order to understand the phenomenon of what women describe as a relational crisis (Gilligan, 1982) of "giving up of voice, an abandonment of self, for the sake of becoming a good woman and having relationships" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 2). For Gilligan, voice became the key to unlock the worlds of young women to see whether they too experienced this relational crisis. For the young women Gilligan worked with, voice was a way of 'speaking who they are' and rising above the potential voicelessness of dissociating from themselves (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). "Voice became a key insofar as girls feel pressure to become selfless or without a voice in relationships, and the experience of self in the sense of having a voice became central to girls' experience of authentic relationship" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, pp. 20-21). Thus Gilligan sought to conduct her research interviews as an experience of authentic relationship so that the young women could find their own voices to describe the qualities of their own relationships. To this end Brown and Gilligan (1992) stood back and let the young women in the study guide the process of their talking space.

Through their research interviews Brown and Gilligan (1992, p. 20) 'heard' the girls "enacting and describing psychological processes such as dissociation" and witnessed "the onset of relational struggles". The key to interpreting their many interviews with young women was to employ a layered listening that unfolded the many layers of voice (the voices within the voice). This layered listening method (called "A Listener's Guide" in Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 25 and later called "The Listening Guide" Gilligan et al, 2003) became integral to understanding the relational struggles of the young women and to elucidating whether they were describing the process of dissociation (Brown & Gilligan 1992). This interpretive method of 'listening through the layers of voice' has been encapsulated in the phrase "the harmonics of relationship" (Brown and

¹⁴ This study published in Brown and Gilligan (1992) was part of a larger ten-year project called "The Harvard Project on Women's Psychology and Girl's Development" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. vii)

Gilligan,1992, p.18). Through the Listening Guide, four listenings of audiotapes (which accompany readings of transcripts) are recommended to align to four sequential questions about voice, which "attune one's ear to the harmonics of relationship":

(1) Who is speaking? (2) In what body? (3) Telling what story about relationship - from whose perspective or from what vantage point? (4) In what societal and cultural frameworks? (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 21)

By asking these questions, connections are made to the young woman as an individual embodied self as well as to the social and cultural worlds she navigates. The questions acknowledge that there are different layers (or voices) within any one person's voice (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) and that through voice we can hear a person's relational connections because our relationships influence what we say and how we say it (as well as when, where and to whom we say these things). For example, to ask 'Who is speaking?' may bring the simple response 'the young woman'. When we unfold the layers further we may also hear the social voice of her peer group, or the young girl speaking to her parents. When we listen to ourselves speak sometimes we hear our own layers: the mother, the teacher, the inner child, the academic. It is as if we can metaphorically, as well as literally, hear the different aspects of our social and cultural upbringing in our own voices. Sometimes we can even make a categorical guess as to the professional background of a speaker based on her voice (for example, my family and friends are quick to point out my 'teacher's voice').

The above questions, however, are not intended to categorise the speakers in an objective way. Rather the purpose of the questions is to elucidate what is true for the person speaking and for the person listening: what truths emerge in the telling of the story.

We ask not only who is speaking but who is listening, and this relational understanding of the research process shifts the nature of psychological work from a profession of truth to a practice of relationship in which truths emerge. (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, pp. 22-23)

Thus, like Goethe's, Gilligan's methodology does not seek general principles but looks to reveal the whole (the social and cultural influences) through the

relationships revealed in the parts (the individual voice). The 'practice of relationship' means that rather than providing a "fixed framework for interpretation", Brown and Gilligan (1992, p. 22) invite the listener and speaker on a journey into relationship - a "fluid, ever-changing, and unique experience". By "speaking about human experience in a way that re-sounds its relational nature" and "grounding [this] work empirically, in experience and in the realities of relationship and of difference, of time and place", Brown and Gilligan (1992, p. 23) re-voice social science to include a previously marginalised voice. In a similar way the present study seeks to unfold and profile a voice of an educational culture that has previously been heard only in the margins thus, like Gilligan's research, this study seeks to "change the voice, the body and also the story ... shifting the societal location and ... attempting to change the cultural framework" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 22).

While I did not follow the Listening Guide closely in my interpretations in this study (as explained further in the next chapter) Gilligan's work did inform my methodology at many levels. There are six key aspects of Gilligan's voice method that are deeply resonant with the present study. First, that voice is centralised both in the research conversations as well as in the method of interpreting those conversations. Second, through the method (by talking with the girls or women in their studies) the methodology evolved. They found that it was only *by* listening that they could find *how to listen*. Third, the 'layered listening voice method' fosters connection and acknowledges difference and can only unfold in a climate of love and connectedness: "we let the voice of another enter our psyche, we can no longer claim a detached or objective position ... we gain a ... connection with another person's psychic life" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 28). Love and connectedness mean that we willingly engage and receive another, though it doesn't define or guarantee that our response or what is initiated within us, will be to our liking: we may "feel sad, happy or jealous or angry ... bored or ... hopeful" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 28). Fourth, that the voice method is relational both in the process of engaging in the research conversations and in the character of the evidence it generates. The fifth aspect is that this is a feminist method that is deeply concerned about the

effects of "men's power ... on girls and women as speakers and listeners, as knowers and actors in the world" (Brown & Gilligan, p. 24). Finally, the sixth aspect is that this method uncovers the voice of healthy resistance (in both the young woman and me) so that awareness is raised as to the socially constructed ideals of feminine and masculine and we "extricate ourselves from the constraints of a patriarchal logic, to create a space to...'revision' the experience of self and the nature of relationship in a way that is in tune with the voices of both women and men" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 30).

The present study makes a space for young women to be heard. For me to hear them, for them to hear me and to hear themselves and through this thesis and subsequent publications, a formal channel becomes available for listening to young women's voices and the voice of Steiner education. The relevance and resonance of Gilligan's work with this study is outstanding. Her research also explains my personal journey and my position as a researcher. In my research proposals I wrote, as I have said, that I wanted to 'hear voice' that I wanted to centralise the voices of the young women in this study as the 'knowers' and that it was *their* 'realities' that were valid. I knew this before I 'knew' Gilligan but until I found her work, I felt a progressive 'doubting' of my knowing as I struggled to see my innate way of working, my personal methodology, in the methodologies I encountered. I then found Gilligan's work, which opened up a space for my own voice.

Gilligan's discussion of the way women and young women disassociate themselves from their own knowing explained my own journey. The process of dissociation that Gilligan has described (Gilligan, 1982, 1990, 1997, 2004, 2011) was exactly what I experienced. In order to stay 'in relationship' (for me) with the formal processes associated with 'having a methodology' I began to disassociate myself from my own knowing. What intervened was the 'knowing' of the young women in the study. I listened and learned from them and they guided us in our conversations so that what was revealed was that we were working in a Goethean way. So by 'staying in relationship' with the primary '*knowers*' (the young women) in the research process, and by 'staying out of relationship' or distancing myself from the conventional voices of academic

research, I was able to connect with the authentic voice of my own methodology.

My journey into Gilligan's, and Brown and Gilligan's work, has reinforced and refreshed my own philosophy and strengthened my resolve to elevate the voices of young women. Methodologically, Gilligan's research supports and strengthens the aim, direction and process of the present study as well as providing a pathway to connect Goethe's phenomenology with the social sciences. Also, as mentioned in Chapter 1, and elaborated on in Chapters 4 and 11, Gilligan's research and writing has provided a crucial platform for the discussion of themes in the findings of the present study. The bigger picture of Gilligan's work and my research is that by "bringing (young) women's voices more fully into the world ... the social construction of reality - the construction of the human world that is institutionalised by society and carried across generations by culture - will be built by and acoustically resonant for both women and men" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 7).

Concluding Comments

The methodology of the present study emerged through its method. The method that guided us was conversation. The conversations were the structure or space within which the phenomenon unfolded its becoming. As we proceeded so did the way become clear. That is: by doing (talking) we were able to characterise how we were being (our manner, our dynamic), where we were going and what the meaning of our doing, being and going was. Through conversation, the voices of the young women and myself, spoke the process and the procedures which would develop our relationship further and therefore further profile the different layers of the voices in the conversation. Through the act of voicing, the voice is heard as embodied self and it transcribes its own path towards illuminating the living experience of the phenomenon being explored. For me this is the way of a living, evolving science. It relies on deep listening and makes a space for all voices to be heard and for the phenomenon to map out its own path, perhaps the best path by which it can be understood. As Gilligan found in her studies, by letting voice take centre stage, we are

connecting to the deeper impulses of being human and the inner territory of the psyche to elucidate the social and cultural relationships which describe the phenomenon being explored.

At the risk of being bold, I would posit that in Gilligan we are perhaps seeing the women's voice of a Goethean phenomenology. For me Gilligan's methodology applies Goethe's method in the way Steiner suggested was needed - to explore the phenomenon of the human soul. It does this because through voice-centred relational methodology we are invited to participate in the deeper impulses of being human. There are strong parallels between Gilligan's work, Goethe's methodology and Steiner's educational aim of teaching a child how to breathe: all of which can meet in voice. These parallels include connectedness, love and wholeness and they meet on a relational pathway which authenticates voice as the channel for inner knowing or truth. Gilligan validates women's knowing as valid and voice as the vital, embodied expression of who we are. Goethe's method relies on the archetypal phenomenon speaking through the scientist and centralises the perceptual and intuitive powers of the scientist as the voice of individual truth. In Steiner education the notion of 'teaching a child how to breathe' is perhaps making the space for the child's voice to develop harmoniously.

Chapter 4. Methods

This chapter describes in detail the study design and procedure. There are three main sections: the design, a discussion of conversation as method and the third, a description of how conversations were explored using Goethean layered listening. The essence of the study design is straightforward - I talked with young women about their lives to explore the *living experience* of harmonious being in conversation. Thus, a significant part of this chapter is on the conversational method. Through discussing the different aspects of conversation as method, I show how 'who participates' shapes 'what is done'. By placing voice and therefore relationships at the centre of the research method, the methodology is embodied and enacted, in that the love, connectedness and wholeness that grew between us in our conversations (method) imbues the methodology (the method makes the methodology), which in turn imbues the whole research study. The final sections of this chapter cover the explorations of the conversational material, the ethical considerations of the study and the introduction to Chapters 5 to 10, which report the evidence of this study.

Study Design

The present study is based on a phenomenological gathering and analysis of voice as the central feature of the research. The structure around that voice is a simple design, which was basically aimed at making a space to talk and then to unfold ('to unfold' may be seen as 'to interpret') that talking so that the nature of harmonious being could be seen in the young woman Steiner student. The main study involved individual conversations between myself and the twelve young women introduced in Chapter 1, over a nine-month period of four school terms, starting in early March (4th) 2009 and finishing on the 27 November 2009. All were aged between 14 and 18 years and they were all students at the same Rudolf Steiner high school in New Zealand. Prior to the main study I undertook some pilot conversations with three young women students at the same school.

A Note On The Design Of Previous Narrative Studies With Young Women

Published studies of a similar nature have informed the study design, as follows. In general these studies show that greater depth and richness of narrative data is achieved with relatively small numbers of participants. In one doctoral study, the researcher attended the school all day, every day for a 5-month period and held a series of in-depth interviews with 10 students (girls and boys) over this time (Martini, 2004). Oliver (1999) conducted a critical inquiry over 15-weeks during which time she met with a group of four girls twice a week (50 minutes per session). Her tools included audio-taping group discussions, journal and free-writing and biographical and narrative stories. In a later study, Oliver (2001) worked intensively with 8 girls (in two groups of 4) over an entire school year for an hour per week (group time) and used similar tools to those in her previous study. Another study involved in-depth life-history interviews with 24 anorexic girls and 24 parents (Halse, Honey, & Boughtwood, 2007).

Larger studies, which gathered information using surveys and questionnaires, including self-evaluation questionnaires, have involved: 49 girls (perceptions of goodness and badness: Nelson & Buchholz, 2003); 1180 senior students in 15 New Zealand schools (suggestions for improving sexuality education: Allen, 2005); 384 first-year undergraduates at The University of Auckland (opinions about causes of, and solutions to, suicide: Helen & Read, 2005); and 6,020 UK secondary students from 41 schools (views on preventing self-harm: Fortune, Sinclair, & Hawton, 2008). Collectively these studies show that research involving in-depth and personal inquiry, longer timeframes, and a higher frequency of contact with participants, can be done effectively with relatively small numbers and therefore support my choice to work with twelve young women over one school year as an in-depth personal inquiry.

Study Aim

This study aimed to illuminate the nature of harmonious being as lived by young women who are Steiner school-educated and as heard through their voices. Voice is at the centre: personal voice, the voice of experience, the voice of authority, voice as living connectedness; the voice of harmonious being.

Harmonious being is my term for the experience of being a Steiner student from a holistic perspective, not just being a student in school, but also being a person in life, which is the aim of Steiner education - to educate the whole human being in the world and of the world. Through our relationships as conversational partners over many months, we dwelt with the phenomenon. Together, the young women in this study and I created a conversational space in which young women's voices could become visible as legitimate knowing. By centralising the voices of young women from a cultural setting of a Steiner school, I aim to profile a voice rarely heard so that a different view of young women, and of education, may be shared.

The wider aim of the present study is to foster our human connectedness and perhaps find ways to navigate better cross-generational relationships and a more balanced social voice (Gilligan, 1997). Prolonged and intense conversation in a non-judgemental space is a potentially empowering experience for young women and a potentially transformative exchange for both participants (researcher and young woman) (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). This study also contributes a voice to the call for renewal in education (Gilligan, 1997; Gidley, 2007, 2010; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010) which "seeks knowing, teaching and learning" that "embraces every dimension of what it means to be human ... looks at our world through a variety of lenses and educates our young people in ways that enable them to face the challenges of our time" (Palmer, 2010, pp. 20-21).

Pilot Conversations

In order to build my own confidence in what I expected would be an intense conversational journey, and in order to find my own voice within this new communication dynamic, I undertook some pilot conversations. I hoped this would help bring my manner and language to a place where I could meet young women authentically and hold a space for them to speak of themselves. My experience as a teacher and a mother of young women, as well as the perspective I had gleaned from the literature (Bloustein, 2003; Brown & Gilligan 1992; Martini; 2004; Nelson & Buchholz, 2003; Oliver, 1999, 2001; Pipher, 1994;

Powell, 2004; Vadeboncoeur, 2005) supported my idea of some pilot conversations.

A small pilot involved individual conversations with three young women from Year 13 (2008) at the school where the study was located. This helped to crystallise my ideas about how and why the proposed conversations might work to unfold the phenomenon. All three had been through both primary and secondary Steiner schooling. These three young women volunteered to talk with me after an open invitation was extended to the year 13 (female) students at the school that provided the location of the main study. In early December 2008, I talked with Madonna (aged 18), Kate (aged 18) and Tessa (aged 19) (these names are pseudonyms). Madonna and I met twice and Kate and Tessa met with me only once. My conversation with Tessa was not recorded at her request. I spoke with Tessa at her home, and the conversation was insightful but less formal. I had asked Year 13 students as I felt they were likely to be old enough and confident enough to give me honest, open feedback about the purpose, content and manner of our conversations.

I talked with Kate first, then Madonna on the same day at school. A week later I spoke with Madonna again and in between I had my conversation with Tessa. Our conversational anchors, which I also used in my first conversations in the main study, were to ask about their experiences of truth, beauty and goodness. What I found though in my very first conversation (with Kate) is that I felt uncomfortable to come straight in and ask about 'experiences' of truth, beauty and goodness. To ask about an 'experience' suddenly felt like prying into their personal lives and so I found other expressions to ease that feeling such as asking about their perceptions or feelings and trying to soften the impact of what I felt was too direct. This is illustrated in the following excerpt which shows how I lead into a question, find my feet and 'test the water'.

Kate (K) & Althea (A)

A: [43 seconds into the conversation] Some of the key concepts that I am interested to explore in a bigger way without necessarily having to talk about them directly, if that makes any sense, are truth, beauty and goodness and what they might mean to you whatever ideas you might have about them or perceptions of those.

K: *Three words?*

A: Of those words, or feelings or experiences, you know -

K: *Compared to my education?*

A: Yeah - during - obviously during your life so far. It's not just limited to school the idea is that it filters out into your life - but if you give me examples you've got to be comfortable to give those examples and if you have examples in school is good.

K: *But in terms of where I find my truth or?*

A: Yeah.

K: *Being true to myself I guess. And I think truthfulness is really important kind of interlinked with honesty*

[Kate proceeds to talk in depth about her experience of truth in general and gives an example of truth in her peer group].

Having already had the experience of talking with Kate, I changed my tack slightly with Madonna and invited her perspectives on her journey through school.

Madonna (M) & Althea (A)

A: So - thank you very much for coming I'm going to sound really formal to begin with because that's how I do - but its really fine - we can be quite relaxed and ...I'm quite interested in your reflections of your journey through Steiner education particularly looking at - your - I guess - feelings or perceptions around truth, beauty and goodness.

M: *Yeah.*

A: So it would be like - I could come straight in and say 'what's your understanding of truth' - right?- and you could give me some reflections on that um or we could just start more generally by just saying 'ah well - this is how I've found my educational experience' - would that be a good place to start? just to - to talk - I mean how has it been for you - Have you enjoyed it?

M: *I think it's been really good...*

[Madonna continues talking about her journey for some time and we arrive at a point where it is appropriate to ask about truth].

Through my conversations with Madonna, Kate and Tessa I was able to explore modes of question-asking and see how a young woman might respond to being asked about experiences of truth, beauty or goodness as well as discuss her experiences in schooling and life in general. These pilot conversations also showed me the confident manner in which these young women were able to engage in conversation as well as what might and might not work in subsequent conversations. Our conversations became a fairly easy exchange where stopping points and gaps were used for further questioning to deepen the discussion or provide a reflection or summary. By summarising and

paraphrasing I was able to gain clarity about meaning. I also found that this summary or a simple question often led to a further unfolding of layers. An example of this is given in Appendix 4 where Madonna is having what I have called an "externalised internal debate" as she discusses herself by making a statement and then retracting it and modifying it as she has a brief debate with herself. In this example Madonna seems to be sorting out her ideas and beliefs and establishing where she stands with herself. I had set an approximate time limit of between 45 and 60 minutes for each conversation, ensuring that each young woman had an hour of time available. Kate and I talked for 49 minutes and Madonna and I talked for just over an hour each time. This showed me that in this timeframe, it was possible to go quite deeply.

The experience of doing the pilot conversations provided me with an anchor for knowing better how to approach and conduct the conversations for the main study. I found that we could explore experiences and meander flexibly while still holding the central threads (like an experience of truth) and that often the young women were inclined to relate what they were saying to their educational experiences. I realised that through allowing or encouraging general discussion that experiences of truth, beauty and goodness would likely arise quite naturally. I saw that I needed to stay present and aware every step of the way and actively listen and engage with all of me. In this way I could hold and follow through on certain conversational threads without interrupting narrative flow. My experience of having a second conversation with Madonna showed me that she was interested in what we had talked about and had reflected on her own voice in our conversation as well as on my manner and voice. Our second conversation deepened our understanding of the first and I hoped that was an indication of things to come.

The Invitation and The Timeframe

In early February of 2009, the first week back at school after summer holidays, I posted invitations on the high school notice boards for young women to come to a short presentation and question and answer session about the study. I also spoke to the whole high school assembly to introduce the study and invite participation. After two introductory talks, seven young women had come

forward, and after a third, I had 12 young women interested in participating in the study. The introductory talks had a two-fold purpose. Firstly to introduce the study and provide written information and secondly to act as a re-connection site for those who had been to a previous talk and wished to come and hear more or make an appointment to talk further. At the talks I introduced and explained the research idea, the planned conversational format and provided the Information Sheet (see Appendix 5) and invited questions.

Some of the young women said they would like to find out more and we set up individual interview times so that we could go step by step through the Information Sheet and Consent forms. I allocated 20 minutes for this process and was able to talk with two young women each lunch break. Following this, the young women took their forms home to discuss with their parents and guardians. Once they had all returned their Consent forms, they and their parents or guardians were invited to an after school meeting. At this meeting I presented an outline of the study and invited questions. This was attended by five young women and their parents. My initial idea for the study was that all the young women would have been attending a Steiner school for their entire school life (from kindergarten through to their current year of schooling). Of the twelve young women who came forward, three had come into Steiner schooling during their primary years and I could not justify excluding them nor did I want to. More important, I believe, was the fact that all the young women showed a willingness to talk and an interest in conversing with me for an entire school year.

The plan was to meet three times per term, a total of twelve conversations for each young woman over the nine months. This meant I was theoretically accommodating 36 conversations every term (meeting three times with each young woman every term) during times when the students were not in class (lunchtimes and after school). What actually happened was that with some I talked more and with others I talked a little less. Several of the young women met with me significantly more than 12 times (the highest number of conversations was 21) and that was at their request. One young woman and I only met 10 times, though the depth and quality of our conversation was rich.

A schedule of conversations was worked out each term with every young woman to ensure that the timing and regularity of the conversations was workable for both parties. If for any reason a young woman did not show up for a planned conversation, I did not follow this up on the day and only at their request did we make time for a substitute conversation. Otherwise we just didn't have the scheduled conversation. If the same young woman missed a meeting twice in a row then I would follow up with a text or email (which was less invasive than a phone call) to check that they were ok and still wanted to continue meeting. At no time did any of the young women say that they wanted to discontinue our conversations and I checked with them all regularly about this. The demands and unexpected curvatures of everyday life meant that things changed and such fluidity was part of this research process.

As the nature of this study is phenomenological in that its purpose is to explore lived experience, the key aim was to achieve depth rather than breadth of information. The idea was that over the time of four school terms, a more detailed and resonant picture of each young woman could emerge - a picture of the change over the four seasons in an environment of 'deepening'. It has been important that the conversations have taken place over enough time to capture the change in voice as different experiences are explored. Because we met again and again there became less emphasis on 'getting it done' and 'getting it right' than there did on 'just allowing and sitting with' each other or an experience. I found we were able to approach our conversation from different angles, witnessing ourselves, and each other, in the moment.

As I have said, the timeframe of one school year gave the opportunity for a fuller, deeper meaning to emerge around the data. Relating this then to Goethean phenomenology which encourages the development of a relationship (with 'what is researched') over an annual cycle to experience the seasonal changes in plants, and animals, as well as in the cosmos and in our own character and mood. As well as this, the teenage years are constructed in the literature as a time of great change and ideas, perspectives, feelings, and sense of identity can change rapidly in a relatively short timeframe. This enriches the study towards gaining a fuller portrait of who these young women are and towards hearing or seeing the picture (or expression) of harmonious being

across changing inner terrain. We can see that in both an outer sense and an inner sense this may facilitate either looking across time to perceive recognisable or familiar threads in the whole picture or looking at a certain thread across time to perceive how the picture changes.

Depth of Connection

It is important and relevant to acknowledge that the depth of conversing and the connection we achieved, was not the same in each conversational partnership. Basically, we could only ever 'go' to the depth that each young woman wished to, and some wished to go further than others - so I could only enter territory that I was invited into. Throughout our months of conversations, some of the young women and I experienced revelatory moments (moments during our conversations that we both experienced as revelatory or that inspired revelatory experiences in either or both of us at the time, or when reflected upon in subsequent conversations). These moments were my guiding lights, but they were not guaranteed nor contrived and I could not have known at the start of the study with whom and how often they might occur. As it was, my conversations with six young women in particular continued to preoccupy me. They kept reverberating in me with a kind of 'phenomenological power' (van Manen, 1997). Therefore I have included the conversations with those six young women in detail. This has kept with my original intentions for this study to achieve depth and intensity and follow my intuition towards 'the core of the phenomenon' (van Manen, 1997).

The Conversations

In the first term conversations took place in a small private room used for 'extra-lesson' tutoring, in the high school. In the second term we moved to a small private room in a building associated with the school, directly across the road from the school. We stayed using this room for the rest of the year. All conversations were audio-taped using a digital recording device. At the beginning of our conversations we explored the idea of creating visual self portraits to complement their verbal self portraits. This idea is consistent with the notion of doing a 'creative response' to a certain learning theme - a common learning tool in a Steiner school. Most of the young women volunteered

artwork, poetry, prose or song as creative expressions of who they are though the creative responses were not mandatory. They provided anchors for the young women to talk about themselves and facilitated the process of self-exploration. However, the scope of this thesis does not allow a coverage of these artefacts as discourse in their own right and there are some ethical considerations related to doing so. While some artwork is referred to in the Chapters 5 to 9, a more complete interpretation is targeted for a future publication providing the ethical considerations related to this are clarified in consultation with the young women¹.

Beginning with Trust and Courage

When we started our conversations the primary quality of our relationship was trust followed closely by courage; as we walked into the unknown we had to trust and have the courage to go forward - neither knowing exactly what nor who the other would be or where we would take ourselves. This puts an interesting light on the quality of trust. We often hear it said that in order for us to open up to each other, to show our innermost thoughts, we need to gain trust in another and indeed we need to trust ourselves. It is of note then that these twelve young women were open and trusting enough to have committed to a journey with someone they barely knew into territory none of us could predict with any certainty. I also trusted that I could be authentic in my conversations and invite authenticity and full, free and reciprocal participation. For me, authenticity requires transparency of intention. I agreed to be clear and open with the young women about my intentions in relation to the study. How we worked, the methodology we used came from our relational base - from what we allowed to grow and evolve.

Conversational Aims and Anchors

Our aim in our conversations was to explore the young women's lifeworlds. Nothing was specifically taboo in our conversations and we talked about anything and everything. Yet some things remained hidden and it was very

¹ Written permission and verbal permission has been given for using the artwork in Chapters 5 to 9.

clear when we encountered walls or dead ends in our conversations. This included periods of silence. Some of the young women were willing to go into the deeper places and some were not. They all continued to surprise me. An example of this was when I found out in our second last conversation that one of them was adopted. I asked her why she didn't tell me earlier and she said she thought 'everyone knew'. Another example is about boyfriends. To my knowledge only three of the young women had boyfriends. One never mentioned hers, the other two did occasionally.

The conversational 'anchors' that initially helped us to focus in our first conversations while we began to get to know each other, were 'experiences of truth, beauty and goodness'. Basically, we needed something to talk about and my pilot conversations had shown that talking about these ideas would serve to achieve this. These three ideals, which Steiner said underpin his educational philosophy, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. By talking about them as living experiences, I had also hoped that the right climatic conditions would be created in conversation for the harmonious being of Steiner education to appear. At times in our conversations I specifically asked about things that interested me and so did they. An example of the former is my inquiry into feminism. When asked what feminism meant to them, only two of the twelve expressed an explicit awareness of feminism. The others then set about asking me to explain it further, which I did briefly. Many of them also began our conversation, after we got to know each other, with asking me how I was. I loved the process of our emerging voices as we got to know each other. The sense of their individuality came through strongly and they shared their thoughts and feelings progressively more easily. They were all outspoken about wanting to be heard by the adults in their lives.

The Conversation as Space

In our conversational space there was the opportunity for the young women to speak their minds and not be judged. It was not school, not home, not friends,

not anything they (nor I) had framed up before². This was a new space, perhaps a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994; English, 2005; Hoskins, 2003) where, in-between other spaces in our lives, a new identity could be birthed³. Metcalffe & Game (2007) talk about this kind of space as a 'presence' space where 'the I' can truly meet 'the Thou' without preconceptions and desires, but with an openness to not knowing⁴. In this space the motivation for communication is love rather than desire - a love of learning rather than a desire for knowing. Hoskins (2003, p. 325) refers to such a space as "sacred and worthy". I experienced it as a breathing space between what Pipher (1994) refers to as a young woman's sense of self (individual voice) and the social and cultural conventions (worldly voices) that press from the outside. In this space identities could be explored and created anew by allowing things 'not to be known' and to just sit with an unfolding mystery.

The First Conversation

The first conversation for each young woman had a special quality - it was the very first time we had come together in this and in some ways set the tone for

² All the young women said that they enjoyed having our talking space *because* it wasn't family, or friends or school.

³ 'Third space' is a notion that has received attention in anthropology, education, health care and feminist research (English, 2005) due to the work of Homi Bhabha (1994), who discussed identity reconstruction occurring in a third space in post-colonial environments as cultural reintegration takes place. In this third space, a between space, we are able to renegotiate our identity from what we may have known as a native identity (potentially a first identity) and the identity of the new environment or authoritative culture (potentially a second space). From English (2005, p. 87): "*Third (space)* refers to the constructing and reconstructing of identity, to the fluidity of space. In cultural studies literature, *third* is used to denote the place where negotiation takes place, where identity is constructed and reconstructed, where life in all its ambiguity is played out. Third space serves as a rebuttal or corrective to regulating rigid views and suggests that identity is a complex, ambivalent, negotiable, and somewhat contested space where polarities do not apply." English (2005) points out that third space is also a 'space of resistance'. Interestingly, Gilligan (1982, 1995, 1997, 2011) also centralises the voice of resistance in her philosophy as a potentially healthy sign that women and young women are speaking out with a resistance to conforming to the social and cultural norms and the prevailing (patriarchal) paradigm.

⁴ "In an *I-Thou* meeting there are no identifiable subjects, objects and desires. It is not that these are transcended, but rather that no identification can be adequate, no identity can serve as a conclusion of knowing. What I know in the eternity of the meeting is not an endless amount of knowledge but a knowledge of the mystery, the no-thing-ness, of the whole" (Metcalfe & Game, 2003, p. 44)

what was to follow. I discuss the special quality calling it the 'first voice' in a recent publication (Lambert, 2009, p.2) describing it as follows:

This 'first voice' was resonant with a promise of things to come and yet stood in its own right. The promise lives in the story, as yet untold, of how their voices unfolded over the rest of the school year as well as in the potential of their unfolding womanhood. ... Their first voices were imbued with courage emerging as innocent yet knowing; vulnerable yet empowered; secretive and yet incredibly open.

For each first interview I used a set of guiding questions (Appendix 6) the wording of which was fluid and flexible to work with what was most effective 'in the moment'. In the following section I describe the conversational process in detail providing examples of the ways we worked together to create a conversational space that suited each different individual with the aim of being comfortable to 'just talk'.

The Multi-Lemniscate

The conversational flow was breathing in and out which for me seemed to transcribe the image of a lemniscate (the infinity symbol, sometimes called a 'lazy eight') or multi-lemniscate. Zajonc (2008, p.6) describes this in his contemplative inquiry (which is based on Goethe's methodology) and calls it "cognitive breathing"⁵. The lemniscate becomes the diagrammatic representation of how we connected to each other when we talked. As we gave our attention to our conversation partner, we created a unity between us, a spacious whole within which our conversations could travel. We allowed the conversation to have its own life and thus our conversational relationship deepened and became a fluid exchange as we talked about whatever was at hand. As our conversations proceeded we explored intuitively through the layers into 'that which lived beneath'. We explored the things that were 'on the heart' as well as 'on the mind'. When I explained this idea to Laura and Sophia they said they had experienced something similar. Laura took this analogy

⁵ "We can bring our highest humanity to the phenomena or people before us in a single-minded and focused manner. We give them our full and patient attention. ...The phenomenon or object of contemplation is the object of our full undivided attention. We unite ourselves with it fully, participate with it, allow it to shape and mold us. Having fully given ourselves into the phenomenon or situation, we release and open our attention as fully as possible." (Zajonc, 2008, pp. 6-7)

much further with her coloured bubbles and threads (see Chapter 5). Sophia was 'doodling' on a blackboard with coloured chalk during one of our conversations and ended up drawing the lemniscate (see the title page and the final page of Chapter 12). It was as if the centre of the lemniscate held the momentum of the conversation and that the energy trail of our words, and of the intention that goes out with the words and their meaning and how the listener receives them, transcribed a 'multi-lemniscate' - a multi-dimensional conversational pattern.

The Conversational Dynamic

The conversational dynamic was different on any one day, but we could always navigate the mood of the day. Sometimes my immediate after-impression was that we had had a fairly ordinary conversation, however when I returned to the conversation (through listening) I heard other layers emerge. I aimed to stay present, attentive and aware during our conversations. Initially it felt like I was 'holding the reins' in our conversations as I was the one who initiated the study. The following excerpt illustrates an early conversation with Lena where she is deferring to me and unwilling to 'take the reins' as we are still finding our feet together.

Lena (L) & Althea (A)

A: Could you relate any of that to beauty and goodness?

L: *Well - I don't really - like - know exactly what you want but -*

A: I don't - I want what you experience - there's no set thing.

L: *(laughs) I fell off once....*

[Lena goes on to describe a sporting experience]. (**Lena 4**)

As we developed our relationship, we followed a more relaxed conversational path. My general style remained relatively consistent for all the young women, but as time went on each relationship developed its own special character. Undoubtedly some of our conversational relationships moved more freely than others each having its own unique dynamic.

Overall, the more we talked, the easier it got and we grew more relaxed and open in our relating. This seemed to be both a factor of time and personality. However, there were noticeable changes in mood and attentiveness from time

to time and I paid careful attention to recording my impressions of how the conversations were going so that, primarily, I would stay mindful of whether interest in being involved in the study was wavering. I checked in with each young woman at the beginning of each new school term as to whether she was still happy to continue. This I did face-to-face, but they also had the opportunity to text or email me if they wanted to discontinue in the study; and I reminded them of this at the end of every term so that they could think it over in the holidays and contact me if they wished. As I said in the Introduction to this thesis, none of the young women withdrew from the study. This is humbling. Even when I thought interest was waning, I was happily mistaken.

The Conversation as an Inner Participation

There is nothing new about understanding human experience through individual's stories. Interpreting people's stories dates back to at least Aristotle (Riessman, 2008) though using stories as research evidence is a twentieth century development in the human sciences (Riessman, 2008). Similarly, using conversation as a research method is a more recent advent in the social sciences (Riessman, 2008) and it is considered both a narrative and a phenomenological approach (Riessman, 2008; van Manen, 1997). Gilligan's voice-centred relational method described in Chapter 3, shows the value of guided conversation over structured interviewing in building deep relationships with research participants (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, et al 2003; Riessman, 2008). I have added to this the dimension of Goethe's phenomenology, which seeks an inner participation with the other in conversation. This is a new methodological mix and although I believe I am the first to bring Goethe's and Gilligan's methodologies together, there is the work of Allan Kaplan (2005) who has applied Goethe's method to conversation as social inquiry in a group process. In the following section I have outlined Kaplan's study and its relevance to the present study.

A Goethean Approach to Conversation

Kaplan (2005, p. 319) describes using a Goethean approach to "free but focused, intelligent conversation" as a social inquiry process at an annual gathering of social development practitioners. The gathering sought to explore the

phenomenon of development as a living process over five days of conversation. The key was to have vibrant engaged conversation: "...investigating a living phenomenon ... our conversation must be as alive as our subject" (Kaplan, 2005, p. 319) and therefore enable "the phenomenon to stand vividly before us" (p. 321). What Kaplan describes is deeply resonant with what I experienced in conversations in the present study as I also aimed to "rekindle a living awareness" of the phenomenon (Kaplan, 2005, p. 330). By briefly relating Kaplan's five-day process of Goethean conversation here, I aim to show two things. First, how Goethe's methodology has been applied in a phenomenological inquiry using conversation; and second, how similar the process of unfolding the phenomena in living conversation is to unfolding the phenomena through the four-stage Goethean layered listening method that I have used in the interpretation of the conversations in the present study.

Kaplan (2005) describes the first day of the conversational process as bringing people together on a very different level where the seeds of the process are planted and the phenomenon is observed in its outer apparel. The second day brings the participants to a more inner experience "so that people are viscerally affected" (p. 323) as challenging questions stir emotions: "it is as if we are waking up" (p. 324). The third day takes an interesting turn towards a very personal focus by looking at the relational threads each person may have with the phenomenon so that people may see how "the story, the thread, the 'more', the meaning of the narrative ... the parts belong(ing) together is the phenomenon of (one's) life" (p. 326). By the fourth day the 'gesture' of the phenomenon is seen as they seek "the heart of the matter" (p. 326) through new ways of seeing and thinking so that the invisible aspect of the phenomenon is explored. Participants are encouraged to move out of their heads and into their hearts and make a space of possibility to live the phenomenon. The fifth day is felt deeply, like a reverent silence, as the "cycle of cause and effect" is broken (p. 330) and the experience of the phenomenon is fully felt.

Kaplan (2005, p.330) warns that no words, no amount of writing, will bring the reader to the experience of this process.

This characterisation is but a pale rendition of the direct awareness of the phenomenon that now lives so palpably amongst the participants ... Nothing can

substitute for the experience itself; as Goethe warned: "How difficult it is ... to refrain from replacing the thing with its sign, to keep the object alive before us instead of killing it with the word. Kaplan (2005, p.330)

In summary, Kaplan asks: "Is it possible that this kind of conversation itself, an organic exploration of the gesture of the development sector, might lead us closer to perceiving the invisible intention that forms a developmental practice?"(p. 330). What Kaplan is saying here, is that *the very process of exploring the phenomenon through conversation becomes an experience of the phenomenon itself*, of discovering, or perhaps only glimpsing, the invisible intentions of a larger phenomenon as a personal, inner experience, an awakening to the practitioner's own practice.

The process is still alive in me, re-creating itself anew as I work. Through a more conscious interaction with my context, my practice is emerging. (Kaplan 2005, p. 330)

The process of working with Goethean methodology for social inquiry, has enabled Kaplan to emerge with "new organs of perception" (Robbins, 2005, p. 113), which was the phrase used by Goethe to describe the result of employing his methodology. Kaplan (2005, p. 332) found "other ways of thinking (that) demand the development of entirely new faculties of perception".

"Social phenomena" writes Kaplan (2005, p. 314) "are complex and emergent, not linear but simultaneous ... (they) are even more complex than natural ones ... particularly because they entail the element of self-consciousness." Kaplan (2005, p. 314) outlines his method of "working with social organisms" which treats the "social" as a "living whole" and not a complex collection of "fragments" that can be manipulated through an instrumental, quantitative approach. The basic premises extrapolated from Goethe's methodology that underlie Kaplan's approach, are that: relationships are at the heart of all phenomena; that phenomena can unfold in multifaceted or multidimensional ways; that phenomena are not predictable, but can be anticipated, are not controlled, but perhaps guided; and that social practice, and therefore social research, is centred in human freedom.

The understandings gained from Kaplan's description of this process, have helped to shape my understandings of the key features of my conversational

method, as well as provide significant guidelines for analysis of our conversations. Kaplan's situation however was as a group process, which asked for focused individual engagement over a five-day period, but unlike the present study, did not continually revisit the individual's character and changing lifeworld over several months. Nevertheless, Kaplan's method resonates deeply with the present study in the following ways. At the heart of this study is human voice and the conversational dynamic which makes a space for sharing personal experience as an expression of our inner world which in turn is where we experience the phenomenon being explored. In the present study as in Kaplan's study, the conversation and therefore the phenomenon, unfolds in a space of love and respect, honouring connectedness between human beings and the relationships which map the territory of the phenomenon as a whole. The key for this study, for Kaplan and for Goethe and Gilligan, is that through our relationships we know ourselves and therefore we can know the world and the phenomenon being explored. Two things that Goethe said are relevant here: "If I know my relationship to myself, and to the outer world, I call it truth" (quote in Steiner, 2000, p. 112); and "Truth ... does not appear directly; rather it must be apprehended through its manifestations." (quoted in Steiner, 2000, p.83). Therefore, through our relationships we experience the truth of the phenomenon as it lives in us and we relate to it and it to us⁶.

The Very Process of Exploring the Phenomenon Through Conversation Becomes an Experience of The Phenomenon

Central to the present study is Kaplan's insight that *the very process of exploring the phenomenon through conversation becomes an experience of the phenomenon itself*. This experience of the phenomenon was tangible and real, transformative and unforgettable. The moments when I felt this experience were revelatory. In the light of Goethe's methodology, these are moments when the *Urphänomen* moves

⁶From a Goethean perspective, we are seeking to characterise relationships between phenomena. We could call the 'phenomena within the phenomenon' the 'sub-phenomena' (Steiner, 2000) in that they are the phenomenal strands that make up the 'looked for' phenomena. Working with the premise that everything is connected means that no phenomenon exists in isolation and thus neither does the human being.

within; what Zajonc (2006) calls 'epiphany' or 'real knowing'. For me they were also moments of seeing and hearing, of bodily insight as if a series of electrical circuits connected, like the truth of another's being manifesting in mine.

My sense of knowing this truth was also a sense of knowing myself in ways that I may not have seen previously. There is no forcing or contriving these moments and they can not be conjured up. They can only be recognised, like those in the six conversations series I have explored in Chapters 5 to 10, which demanded my attention and 'asked' for me to unfold them further. As Goethe suggests I felt 'responsible' for them. For me they are the true evidence of the appearance of the phenomenon and by unfolding these moments we can 'see' the essence of the phenomenon as it manifests in its various guises. The threads that draw together to create these moments of insight are like the relationships within the phenomenon. These moments are like windows through which we can glimpse the archetype. They are transformative. The quality that surrounds them (what leads to them and what resonates in their wake) holds its own inner lawfulness⁷.

As a final comment in this section I return to what Bortoft (1996) said about the experience of authentic wholeness in the act of reading. For me, Bortoft's authentic wholeness illustrates exactly what I experienced in our conversations: both in the actual act of conversation and in the layered listening process. One word or phrase or sentence would resonate so that I heard the essence of the whole in it. Suddenly, through this word or phrase, I understood a deeper meaning of our conversation and gained an insight into the young woman. I glimpsed something from the corner of my eye or felt a movement in me, and knew I had touched the phenomenon, just like suddenly understanding the meaning of a piece of writing after reading a certain phrase. The initial revelatory or epiphany moment in the six conversation series in the following chapters, when followed through the conversations back and forth through

⁷ Steiner (2000, p. 122) describes the appearance or experience of the archetypal phenomenon as when "the inner principle of the phenomenon responds in a certain way to a particular external influence ... anything that happens is the consequence of *inner* lawfulness."

time, led to other moments and when several of them came together I began to glean the whole as it lived in the parts.

Finding the Voice of the Phenomenon: Exploration of Conversations with Goethean Layered Listening

Goethe's phenomenological approach helps us enter the currents of creative forces in nature and so become the voice of the pure phenomenon or the phenomenon's dimensions of unity; science and art can be understood as each representing a different "speaking" of that unity. (Hoffman, 1998, p. 169)

My purpose in exploring our conversations is to become the voice of the phenomenon and to show that, through both a dialogic analysis and creative response (science and art together), the wholeness of the phenomenon can be experienced. I do this by entering the "currents of creative forces" in the dynamic of six conversation series, using a four-stage Goethean layered listening approach - my adaptation of Goethe's methodology to the social sciences facilitated by, but not adhering to, Gilligan's Listening Guide (Brown & Gilligan, 1992)⁸. By listening intensely through the layers of voices, through the sounds and silence of our conversations as recordings and transcripts, I have unfolded the phenomenon in its various manifestations over four stages. The end point of this method is the voice of the phenomenon as a unification of many voices; as a whole experience or an experience of wholeness that is like a symphony composed of many tones and colours.

Through this analysis the phenomenon of harmonious being becomes a living voice from young women in Steiner education. Riessman (2008), gives an interesting angle on layered listening, which resonates with Goethean methodology. As Riessman (2008, p.105) describes, the story becomes a "complex choreography" (the dynamic dance of engaged conversation) in the context of *who* is speaking (layers of voices), *when* it occurs (the importance of dwelling with the phenomenon over time) and *what purpose* it has (to elucidate the phenomenon of harmonious being) as the "investigator becomes an active

⁸ As described in Chapter 3, Gilligan's voice-centred layered listening (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) provided a platform to explore the many conversations from this study using a Goethean method, however the Listening Guide, though a constant inspiration, was not adhered to as method in this study.

presence" in the co-creation of a conversation. Goethean methodology leads us to the point of co-creating our complex conversational choreography. Through this dance, we catch glimpses of the archetype from the corner of our eyes and these are the moments when we touch the essence of the phenomenon or it touches us. In conversation, the glimpse of the archetype is the moment when we recognise 'the other' in an intimate way (Steiner, 2000). In the context of the present study this glimpse is an insight into the phenomenon as it lives in the character of the young women. So I am seeing the truth of the young woman, and of the phenomenon, as I experience it. Over time in conversation and as I listen through the layers of voice I connect the key threads, or key notes, together in a symphony.

The first three stages of Hoffman's method draw these threads closer and closer and harmonise what at first seem like parts or steps in our process of understanding the phenomenon, but later merge into one picture or one sound. The final stage, the fourth, is the point of merging, the unified sound or the voice of the pure phenomenon. It is the moment of 'seeing' the essence or archetype. Hoffman (1998) calls it a point of fire when the pieces come together and then are almost consumed in their expression of themselves. To get to this point, I have unfolded layers around certain key points or moments that have resonated with the phenomenon. Interestingly, the path of unfolding (my conversational explorations) could also look like a lemniscate as I have moved back and forth in our conversations to explore the connections and weave the whole. It is an intuitive process which relies on listening again and again to the conversations. It is a lemniscate process of elucidation. How I do this is by using a four-stage Goethean method which I have adapted from the natural sciences (Hoffman, 1998). As per the phenomenological methodology of this study, the conversations in this study were focused on meaning-making rather than on retrieving actual narratives. Meaning emerges on many layers and by listening time and time again to conversations it was possible to unfold these layers. Ultimately, the best way to understand the Goethean layered listening is to experience it by reading through these in the subsequent chapters.

The Four Stages

Environmental scientist, Nigel Hoffman (1998) has suggested four stages of elucidating the phenomenon, which he applied to his botanical studies. Hoffman (1998) started with 'the plant' and not with 'the idea of the phenomenon' and by doing so discovered or experienced the archetype. His study of the plant involves an intense, staged, observation which connects with the plant in order to understand the archetypal gesture of the plant in its natural environment. The understanding occurs when one truly sees the essence of the plant in a phenomenological sense. The four stages he used are *earth, water, air* and *fire*. For the purposes of the present study, these four stages represent four layers.

Earth

The first stage or layer is the earth stage where observations are made but interpretations are not sought. It is a grounding stage, which when applied in this study means that conversational excerpts are used to describe or transcribe the development of the conversation around a particular thread which has been a revelatory moment for me. For example, in Chapter 5, I present this process with conversational moments between Laura and myself. The epiphany moment, which inspired my choice to work with Laura's conversations, occurred in a conversation with her. I asked her a blunt question, as was often the dynamic between us: *How does a young woman construct her identity?* Laura said to me: *Construct? You construct your identity?* I experienced a revelation. The rest of this story can be read in Chapter 5, but in short I took this revelation as my springboard from which I traversed our conversations back and forth to further explore its essence and depth.

The first stage is about noticing, not interpreting. That is, the character of the conversation is noted and illustrated with raw conversation, but interpretation is not entered into. Noticing here, like Brown and Gilligan (1992) suggest, involves noticing one's own voice and the other's voice; who is speaking (what voice or aspect of voice) and what they are saying. It is the longest stage when significant chunks of raw conversation are used to unfold the phenomenon so

that the experience of the phenomenon is felt in its livingness through voice. It is not until the second stage that the other is 'entered' and interpretation begins.

Water

The second layer is the water stage, which is where engagement occurs and interpretation starts. It is a fluid stage, which asks for inner participation, sensory imagination, sensitivity and deep engagement. This stage is what Goethe calls 'exact sensorial imagination' (Hoffman, 1998). To enter this second stage, is to open to the different qualities of the character of the other as experienced in our relational dynamic and to grasp how one quality connects to another (thus how one part relates to another) so that we experience another's experience of time and space as an inner dimension of ourselves. In the water stage it is as if we are perceiving qualities as movements or perhaps vibrations or sensations which have a certain fluidity. If we consider that we are (as human beings) in continuous movement, and thus continuous metamorphosis, then the qualities we 'see' in our experience of another are like "frozen moments in a continuum of metamorphosis" (Hoffman, 1998, p. 133). At any one point in time we see a moment of who someone is and we can store it like a framed picture. Rarely do we allow our experience of another to be fluid, a moving metamorphosing picture made up of many relational movements towards one overall movement.

As applied in this study, it is where I flow into my conversational partner and my inner voice meets her inner voice. In doing this I try to understand the form of 'the other' and sense who she is. This stage and the first stage are likely to generate more written information than stages three and four. To build on the example in the earth stage, here in the water stage I engage with the conversations with Laura on a deeper level. I begin to write what I sense. This stage (and the next 2 stages as well) can begin to look like stream of consciousness writing as my intuition leads me in my writing. An extract from the water stage in Chapter 5, exemplifies this:

...with no opportunity for reflection, I received Laura's comment without resistance and immediately saw the folly in asking my question the way I asked it. Yet I also did not relent - I wanted to hear Laura tell me about her experience of creating an identity, and so I continued. At the same time, I realised that

identity is an assumption. I had to immediately, internally do a retake on identity. I also hear in my question an assumption that Laura will know what identity is. But why should she? (Althea from Chapter 5)

Air

The third layer, the air, invites thoughtfulness. This is where I move even deeper into the phenomenon and allow artistic inspiration to move me and emerge as an expression, perhaps as sketches, suggests Hoffman (1998), but for me in the present study my artistic expression has been in the form of poetry, prose and song. Here we can give life to the gesture of the phenomenon. In this layer we begin to experience the ungraspable nature (like air) of the phenomenon and in ways try to depict its transparency. Using the same example with Laura, although I wrote poetic expressions for the Air stages of some of the six young women, I actually couldn't write over Laura's voice so I referred (or deferred) to her and used her own words as in the following where she is describing a *core* which she perceives as identity:

...core is something that has certain qualities but the qualities - this is (authentic) thought idea - very - the certain qualities are subject to what is going on around themselves and outside but inside they're like, you've got say these certain qualities but it depends on the intensity -whatever - strength, weakness of them from what is around. (Laura from Chapter 5)

Fire

The fourth layer is the stage of fire where the archetype lives. It is the centre of the epiphany, the point that is not a point, often the ineffable, the invisible creative void. This is the theory of the phenomenon - not "as anything bounded or fixed" but as a "creative potency" (Hoffman, 1998, p. 135). Here silence reigns and very little is said or written. It is a knowing that defies description. Hoffman suggests employing poetry or painting to "actualise" this stage, just as Kaplan (2005) employed the writing of haiku as the penultimate expression after his social inquiry. In Chapter 5 I have used a brief heart-felt expression that I wrote for Laura to articulate what I saw in her essence. As is the Air stage, the expression in the Fire stage is poetic rather than academic.

These four stages, as layers for listening into the conversation, have helped trace and characterise the relationships between the epiphany moments and the archetypal expression of harmonious being. Despite its elusiveness, we can

actualise the theory of the phenomenon by proceeding through the four stages towards its essential expression (Hoffman, 1998).

Key Ethical Considerations

In research with young women there is a considerable amount to be considered ethically. All ethical considerations and procedures related to the present study have been covered in the relevant ethics application as described in the Acknowledgements section of this thesis. In this section that follows I comment on some aspects of the ethics that have inspired my further contemplation, but also direct the reader to the second part of Appendix 5 which includes a more lengthy discussion of my ethical considerations.

My Ethical Position

This research is deliberately and explicitly about acknowledging, respecting, valuing and honouring, the identities, beliefs and values; the ideas and experiences; attitudes, cultural practices and special ways of 'knowing' and understanding, that belong to or are experienced by young women. The heart of this research is 'the experience of the participant' and thus it is vital to maintain and protect the wholeness of each and every participant's experience (by 'participant' I refer to the young women and myself). I have done this to the best of my ability during our research process, and continue to carry this responsibility forward into this thesis and into future communications related to this study.

To state very clearly: the narratives that are the substance of this research, are pieces of people's lives - experiences that are not just words, or facts or figures, but parts of the young women, and the people in their lives, that they have been generous enough to share. Every aspect of what is shared is treated with respect and integrity for the individual and for the culture(s) with which each participant identifies. While many ethical considerations can be pre-empted and predicted I have found in this study that my actual experience of certain ethical situations or concerns has shed a different light on their nature, which I discuss as follows.

Boundaries and Power

Once each young woman had agreed to participate we made a date for our first conversation. Conversations were expected to take between 30 and 40 minutes and such was the case for all lunchtime conversations. However, by the beginning of second term, some of the young women found the lunchtime too time-constrained and asked if we could meet after school. The feedback from them was that this worked extremely well and Aries, Laura, Sophia, Hera and at times, Sally met with me after school and we sometimes talked for an hour or more at their request. This is an important aspect of this research, that I wanted them to discover what worked for them so that they would find the right space to relax and express themselves. I was acutely conscious of their stories about feeling disempowered by the adults in their lives and 'not feeling heard' and I wanted to make this a welcome space in which to explore at their own pace.

There is an important point here about 'power' and boundaries in collaboration. Reissman (2008) discusses that there exists a view that interviews and conversations with (research) participants can be framed as 'empowering' because they are telling their own stories in the way they want to, however she cautions the researcher not to consider that they are ultimately 'giving power'. It would be very easy to assume this latter role in this study as the young women in conversation with me all expressed their gratefulness for the space to share their experiences. But it is neither appropriate nor useful for this to be assumed. After all, no one gives power and any space where we can express ourselves and feel heard and be acknowledged, be it even just for a moment, is a space wherein we might feel our own power. To step into our own power is a personal and momentary choice and even if a 'benevolent researcher' creates a space in which someone might want to express themselves or raise their own voice, the choice to express, and the expression itself, cannot be forced. Suffice to say in this section that boundaries can serve, when clear, to encourage creative tension and clear guidance for how to be (or behave). Boundaries can tell us what is expected of us in human interaction and their clarification is important. However, the occasional loosening of them and even dropping of some of them altogether (for example having no time limit or language

guidelines in a conversation) can serve to facilitate the discovery of our own potential as well as our own limits.

A note on how our conversations were different from counselling

I feel it is important to comment on how this research is different from counselling. Counselling, according to the definition of 'the nature of counselling' given by the New Zealand Association of Counsellors Code of Ethics (NZAC, 2009), seeks to "bring about change" in the lives of clients and "develop more resourceful ways of living". This study did not explicitly aim to bring about change in the lives of participants, nor explicitly look for more resourceful ways of living.

This study did explore the depth of young women's experiences and thus their understanding of 'self', but did not specifically seek resolutions to their life issues or challenges. Rather, experiences as they arose, including issues and challenges, were discussed and allowed to just 'be there' without needing to be resolved or hidden. It is important to note that for two young women, the option of seeking counselling to discuss certain issues further, was suggested and promoted several times. One of the two young women pursued this option through the school. The other said she preferred not to.

Concluding Comments

This chapter has described the design, the conversational method and the analysis of this doctoral study. The aim of my research is to profile the voices of young women Steiner students in order to unfold the phenomenon of harmonious being. Through nine months of conversations twelve young women shared their lifeworlds and remained engaged with the study. The conversational method was characterised by a Goethean phenomenological approach which invited the conversational partners to sit with, accept and dwell with the other so that an inner participation occurs as the conversation moves in a multi-lemniscate fashion or a multidimensional back-and-forth fashion in the dynamic between partners and over time. This unfolds the living experience of the phenomenon in the conversation and opens the possibility for revelatory experience as seeing the archetypal phenomenon.

By focussing on such revelatory moments it is then possible to elucidate the phenomenon through explicating its relationships within and between the conversational threads that connect to the revelatory moment. The application of a four-stage Goethean layered listening explores the meaning of these relationships for six conversation series and express the voice of harmonious being as a living experience for young women Steiner students. By bringing this voice to a wider audience I aim to profile young women as a legitimate social voice of knowing and to raise the profile of Steiner education as a voice which answers the call for renewal in education.

Introduction To Chapters 5 to 10. The Four Stage Goethean Layered Listening Process

In Chapters 5 to 10, I unfold the phenomenon of harmonious being as experienced by six different young women as well as bring together the voices of all twelve young women to illustrate the themes of belonging and becoming. I do this by using the four stage Goethean layered listening process to unfold key epiphany moments in five conversation series in Chapters 5 to 9 in detail. These five individual voices are presented as evidence of the living experience of harmonious being, the key resonances of which are supported by Chapter 10. The sixth exploration is more succinct as it speaks directly to the heart of the phenomenon, and is presented in the first section of Chapter 10. In the second section of Chapter 10, voices from the wider group of twelve young women are drawn upon to illustrate the theme of becoming. Chapters 5 to 10 are presented as an experience not just as a report of evidence. I have specifically aimed to include transcripts which may conventionally be placed in appendices in a more orthodox style of thesis presentation. As this has always been my intention with this study, to profile the voices of the young women involved, I make no apology but raise the reader's awareness of this. All transcripts and interpretations included in this thesis have been read by the young women concerned (see further comment in Appendix 5, section on Ethical Considerations).

Weaving an Understanding

By exploring each epiphany using the four-stage Goethean layered listening method described in Chapter 4, I explore different themes that relate to the phenomenon of the living experience of harmonious being. My aim in each chapter is to reach an understanding of how I have perceived each young woman's experience.

In Chapters 5 to 9, for Laura, Lena, Crystal, Aries and Sophia, I explore and interpret our conversations in detail to show how the theme reflected in the epiphany (as a resonance of the archetype) can be experienced or heard through the layers of our conversations as different sub-themes and thus how the whole resonates in its parts. I have taken the epiphany and worked with the key piece of conversation around it and then I have woven this thread (as a theme) back and forth within and between conversations. This process mirrors the lemniscate process of the conversations. So for each of the four stages I connect to the theme and its sub-themes and unfold it layer by layer. The process of working through each stage is similar to a phenomenological reduction as I take the layers of the theme into my inner dimensions and give them meaning. I immerse myself in the conversations and dive deep through the layers and at the same time, I emerge up through the layers bringing the threads with me and weaving an understanding as I go. However, unlike a phenomenological reduction, I am weaving in and out of many different conversations rather than revisiting one particular transcript or story.

My first way of listening through the layers of our conversations has been to listen in my heart for what still resonates months after our conversations have finished. Not to return to transcripts or to audio-files, in the first instance, but to listen for the phrases that live in me and sense the dynamic that I could still hear resonating somewhere: In the ethers? In my memory? In my ears? In the layered listening and writing process I did not address every phrase or insinuation or unfold all the meanings, but sought to impart a real sense of the living experience of our conversations and follow through on what I experienced as key threads which led to understanding each individual and thus the whole in the parts.

Some of the keys to understanding the relationships around the phenomenon are present in our first few conversations, though I would never have known their significance if it wasn't for having talked over a much longer period of time. I can only understand at this depth because I can go back and find the keys in the earlier conversations - I couldn't do this if we hadn't talked over the whole school year. The comments, notions, feelings, and expressions from each young woman, have a richer meaning when seen in context and when the various relationships around them (the layers) are better explicated. I have done this with my own words and with their words. Often, in fact, I have used the young woman's own words in this explication (or reduction) process which takes place in the Air and Fire stages.

Notes on Structure and Presentation

The presentation of conversations in Chapters 5 to 9 and the first section of Chapter 10, follows a particular format. I begin each chapter with a Prologue which introduces the young woman, our conversations and the key ideas. I have applied Goethean layered listening to explicate the meaning of epiphany moments. Each chapter is titled according to the key idea around the epiphany. Two examples are: *Chapter 6. Lena: Perfect Fit*, is about my conversations with Lena and it unfolds the key themes of 'perfection' and 'fitting in' towards related epiphany moments. *Chapter 5. Laura: A Structure With Ribbon*, is about my conversations with Laura as it unfolds the meaning of her *structure with ribbon* towards certain themes such as identity. After the Prologue, each chapter consists of four main sections: Earth, Water, Air and Fire. These sections have additional titles which are representative of the layers of each theme and are in themselves manifestations or themes within the phenomenon. For example, in Chapter 5, the Earth section is entitled: *Earth: Balancing Tears*. In some cases there are sub-headings identifying sub-themes, under a particular stage. How these four sections explicate the conversational narratives is described in Chapter 4. I have written each section in the present tense with an active voice and included a significant amount of actual conversation, so that I express and encourage engagement with the living experience of this research. In the first section of Chapter 10, I have also followed the four stage process though the sections are briefer.

Conversational Excerpts

I have numbered the conversations in a chronological order so that beside the pseudonym of each participant, the chronological number of the conversation is given, followed by a letter to show the order of where it appears in our conversation. For example, *Crystal 5a* is the first piece of dialogue quoted from our fifth conversation, *Crystal 5b* is the second piece of dialogue quoted from our fifth conversation, and so on so that *Crystal 5d* would be the fourth quote from our fifth conversation. Quotes are not necessarily given in order of occurrence within the relevant conversation. This system of numbering is consistent throughout the thesis so that, for example, there is only one *Crystal 5a* in the thesis though a certain part of *Crystal 5a*, may be mentioned again in the discussion of the conversational explorations and be written as 'from *Crystal 5a*'.

In each dialogue quote, the young woman's voice is in italics and mine is in plain type. For example in *Crystal 5a*, the italics is all Crystal's voice. Where plain type appears in brackets it indicates an action or explanation and where italics appears in brackets the original word used by the young woman has been changed by me to maintain confidentiality or to facilitate the reader's understanding. In the text, italics, but no quotation marks, are used to indicate the young woman's actual words. As per the ethics application (see further comment in Appendix 5) conversations used in this thesis were used with the permission of the young women involved.

All Voices as One Voice

As described at length in Chapter 3, the perceived parts (each individual young woman) resonate with the whole (all young women in this study). This is congruent with Goethean methodology and means that in the individual voice there resonates the voices of all the young women and what all the young women have said, also resonates in each individual voice. Yet this does not mean the individual voices lose their uniqueness. Quite the contrary - it is their unique expression which gives the phenomenon its unique array of sounds or its many colours (like Laura's *structure with ribbon*, in the next chapter), in a symphony of voices. I bring this symphony together in the second section of Chapter 10 to show their interconnectedness as a voice from Steiner education.

Chapter 5. Laura. *A Structure with Ribbon*

Prologue - You Construct Your Own Identity?

Laura's is a voice rich with metaphors and she loved our conversations. We talked and talked and met more times than any other young woman in the study, at Laura's request. The depth and intensity of our conversations possibly reflect Laura's commitment to the study. She treasured our space and she gave herself to it, to our conversations, in a way that I can only describe as fiercely loyal. In our first conversation she tells how our lives are like *a structure with ribbon...a little bubble that's our little world and big long things that we have to do; things that can be abused; things that we scurry to and from as we try to be better, stronger, brighter* (see Appendix 7). In the conversations that follow through the year, the *structure with ribbon* comes up time and time again in various forms and the *bubble* becomes a common reference point. In some almost prescient way, Laura's short monologue on the structure with ribbon is like an archetypal statement on how she experiences her being in the world, though I didn't know that in the beginning. This evocative image continued to live within our conversations and within me; and our conversations became, at one level, a process of discovering its meaning. The structure with ribbon has inspired several epiphany moments throughout our conversations and beyond. As I traced its presence in our conversations, I found it alongside other poignant moments. One such moment was when I asked Laura about identity.

I begin the Earth stage of my layered listening for Laura with this identity moment: just over half way through our 21 conversations. This moment of epiphany suddenly unfolded for me another layer of meaning around the structure with ribbon. In fact it is in this conversation, our twelfth, that I have asked Laura to read and comment on a piece of my writing about her structure with ribbon (see Appendix 8). I read it to her and invite her response. She is happy with what I have written but also says: *Often I speak of things (I) don't observe but sort of imagine - but yeah sweet*. Laura's imagination proves to be an important part of who she is. As her voice unfolds in this chapter, we see that

her imagination seems to sustain her and help her navigate a path through what is sometimes very challenging terrain.

As the twelfth conversation unfolds, Laura is almost compliant, rambling a little in a quiet breath and I suddenly notice that after I share my writing with her, I am doing most of the talking. So I ask her perspective on the value of education, a topic which we had book-marked from the previous conversation, and she tells me: *Always the biggest teacher is life*. We talk about Laura's experience of staying with the same group of people all the way through primary and secondary school (which is characteristic of Steiner education) and this leads into the question of identity. I tell Laura that I have been doing some reading and writing on identity and she says:

That's pretty much the first main lesson you do when you come into the high school - Iden-TIT-Y!

I guess I'm really interested in your take on that - what is identity, what happens to identity. It's such a funny word - the more I say it, it sounds weird like a 't-t-t-t-t' (laughing) like it dances like this - um - "

And yet it is dancing - it's almost like the heart rate. (Laura 12a)

We talk about how words, or the sounds of words, create pictures and then go off on a tangent where Laura tells a story about the boys in her class. It is after this brief reprieve that I say:

So we got there from (long pause) - how did we get *there*?

[Laura laughs]

So what do you think - how do, how does - I could ask a real academic question like - I can't do that with everybody -

Like?

Like - How does a young woman construct her identity?

Construct?

There's a - that's a - real - masculine word - I guess!

You CONSTRUCT your OWN identity? (Laura 12b)

This was an epiphany moment. Part of me doesn't even know where the question I asked came from, but as soon as Laura responded, the world around the question shattered. Laura's first response - one simple word: "*Construct?*" - seemed to challenge the notion that identities can be actually 'constructed' and her second question ("*You CONSTRUCT your OWN identity?*") challenged who

was involved in doing the construction. As the text indicates, Laura's tone of voice placed strong emphasis on the words 'construct' and 'own'.

At that moment I stood in the stark realisation that I had genuinely assumed these things. Laura's comment gave me 'cause for pause'. My immediate response to her first comment was to blame 'the patriarchy' - a kind of fallback position which I saw only in the instant of saying it - as I faltered and almost stuttered: "That's a - real - masculine word - I guess". My next response took us further as I quickly rephrased the question (see extract below) and Laura, in a commanding voice picks up the thread. Laura had suggested that the word 'identity' sounds "*almost like the heart rate*" and in the discussion on identity that follows below, she leads us to the heart: to what she called the "*core foundations that will stay there ... that true self that is sort of there inside*".

Ok. How - where - do you get your identity from - there you go - or what does identity mean to you?

Quote - DNA maybe!

Ahhh.

I think a lot of it obviously comes from whoever is around you in that small time - especially like from zero to seven - in that time when you are so young and you're going to imitate a lot of the things that you see around you.

And that of course is part of that, but then I think that, that you sort of, kind of break free - not break...But you sort of make your own identity when you're coming much more into the ages of like 21 to 28 and your really leaving everything else and having time with - I mean - obviously you're not going to leave everything - there are those sort of core foundations that will stay there but there'll be new stuff when you've found that true self that is sort of there inside, but sort of conflicted maybe by other things that are around you.

Mmm mmm - so there is this kind of core of true self?

I hope so. [We laugh] (Laura 12c)

Here Laura's description ends on a positive note. She "hopes so". This small statement, said in a quiet voice suddenly becomes highly significant - Laura hopes; there *is* hope. The particular significance of this for Laura lies in what these conversational texts *don't* impart to the reader - the sound of Laura's voice. Throughout our twelfth conversation, Laura is weeping on and off most of the time. Her tears become a backdrop to the conversation. Laura's tears, she says, come from a kind of winter depression, a feeling of *gloominess*, which pervades much of her life during this season.

For about two and a-half months, Laura navigates this gloominess and makes no attempt to hide her tears. We meet in the afternoon after school and have long conversations at Laura's request. Over winter, Laura's tears become the norm - she doesn't try to hide or dismiss them in our conversations and we both just allow them to be there. By exploring, what I called in a later conversation, Laura's 'valley of tears', I follow an intuitive hunch that perhaps the tears, as the backdrop to our conversations, like the spaces between the words, will guide me to the core of Laura's true self.

Between the 1st of June (our seventh conversation) and mid-August (our thirteenth conversation) Laura's tears have become a regular part of our conversational space. By our fourteenth conversation the gloominess is gone and we have a long, non-teary and very quirky conversation. During our eighth conversation in mid-June, her crying becomes intense, so much so that our planned 45 minutes during lunchtime extends into an hour and half as I decide that she is in no 'space' to go back to classes so we discuss her staying on and missing the next class and she is comfortable with that and I write a note to explain her absence.¹ At one point in our eighth conversation as we are talking directly and in detail about her 'gloominess' and she is describing herself and her actions to me, I tell her she has a remarkable ability to notice herself:

They're sort of the words that are almost like some other outside authority speaking to you and yet you're saying them - you know what I mean like standing outside yourself...(Althea in Laura 8)
--

A significant part of the following section, the Earth stage, is focused on this eighth conversation. By listening through the layers and following the threads of the structure with ribbon, I have returned to this particular conversation, to find the layers of Laura's own voice witnessing herself and unfolding many rich insights into her experience of navigating her identity.

¹ It is important to say that more than once I asked her whether she wanted to go and talk with someone like a counsellor and she said 'no', but it did transpire that an adult friend who was studying homeopathy worked with her as a client. Laura said many times that she valued the conversational space we held with each other and that it helped to just come and talk.

EARTH Balancing Tears

It is in our eighth conversation in mid-June that we address Laura's tears directly. At no other time does she want to talk in any detail about her 'gloominess'. As Laura says very pointedly, in our twelfth conversation: *I'm happy to talk about anything - minus my condition!* We begin our eighth conversation with a discussion about a creative response that Laura has brought along as a self-portrait. She has called it '*Balance is Lost and Regained*' and it is a series of photos that she has taken of a young boy approaching then walking on a small stone wall and subsequently falling or jumping off and then lying on the ground. In the centre photo, the boy is being attended by his mother, though she is not necessarily comforting him. Laura reads out what she wrote about her photo collage:

Little boy jumped up onto the wall, he stood a minute, seemingly his mind was focused on something in the distance. Then a call, he turned. The ridge was unexpected and he fell. The ground was hard and stony and he cried out. A sick child curled up, the long day ahead doing nothing. His mother, though, will help him. He will get better and jump up and run off again. (Laura 8a)

Laura describes and discusses the process of creating this portrait and what it says about her and her experience of herself. She describes herself 'as the child' and 'as the parent'; and her experience of 'the wall' and the *space in-between*. Laura's descriptions lead us into a deeper discussion about how she experiences her *gloominess* as *falling down*. What follows is an intense and starkly honest conversation about Laura's inner world.

We start where Laura elaborates on her idea of the wall as a bridge. I ask her to tell me about what the wall means to her. She says her original idea for this series of photographs was to have the wall in-between the mother and the father and the boy on the wall showing a sense of him going somewhere, but also the wall both as dividing and as a bridge.

If you were to summarise and say -

About the wall - the whole wall?

and you say it represents a bridge and -

A bridge between there and sort of like there's this place in the middle it is really I mean like a wall could be like in the middle of a moat or something kinda like you have the sea on one side and the cliff on the other and you have a little bit of a tiny path that goes on

the edge of the cliff - that's like my wall. Between these two people there is a space in-between where this child is.

That's beautiful - it's poetic. (Laura 8b)

I go on to ask her what she sees as the difference between falling off the wall (as depicted in her piece of writing in *Laura 8b*) and jumping off the wall (as shown in the photograph in her montage) and then take that directly into a question about the relevance of this to her life.

So in relation to that...we've got this wall. We can fall off the wall or we can choose to jump off the wall. What's the difference?

Well if you choose to jump off you know you're going to jump off. If you're going to fall off, you don't choose to fall off generally, you only fall and when you're falling you know you're falling off and um kinda like with any sort of thing you can choose to take the risk and that's sort of like jumping and then if someone else sort of puts you in the situation where the risk has already been taken you can't do anything about it, that'd be more falling for me.

Right ok good - 'cause that's the next place that I wanted to go to ask - how is it relevant to your life? and you?

Probably that would have to be for me before winter really.

Aha.

And so I was just there - and then sort of - there was a while ago, a couple of Wednesdays ago, when everything just seemed alot too much and it was like I turned around to have a look and then of course it all sort of came down on me and I was like 'ooohhhh' and that sort of put me in a bit of that and I was sick and I was sick mentally and there was the whole sort of duvet, you know, long day.

Uh - hmmm.

Yes long day - that's the one - the whole falling down - and then just last week I had the privilege of talking to (my friend) for a good couple of hours and so now I'm back on my feet!

Ok - there's a whole lot in there 'cause last time we talked the word gloomy came out -

Yes - it would have been that picture [She points to the boy lying down face staring] and the other one was just completely face down.

I love these - thank you for bothering to put these together....There's something I want to ask you - about the duvet and the long day - in fact in winter we get the shortest day. Tell me about 'long day' - what does 'long day' mean?

When I was really depressed - I would be like waking up in the morning and then you think about it whoa - there's so much I have to do in a day and you don't want to get up you just want to be in bed BUT if you stay in bed it's such a long time there's nothing to occupy you and you're like 'that's a long day.'

It's almost like you can hear the clock ticking.

You can hear the semi-seconds and everything!

[We laugh.]

So that's the experience of the long day.

Yup, sort of thing, or I could come home from school and I could just sit there and just be really glum and sort of thinking about not really anything but stuff - and it'd all just be sort of glum, gloom and doom. And that's also sort of like - you're not really going anywhere and it seems a long time.

[Laura talks about the air being humid and "pressing in" and her feeling "like a feather" in that].

So if you think - you're like a feather trying to navigate your way through that (really thick air).

A feather being something that is light?

Light and directed more by the wind.

So that in fact you don't have a lot of - ?

You seem very small and powerless - these big sort of oppressive sticks.

And you're relating that to how you felt not so long ago?

The long day - the long day.

You did say the word 'depressed'. Is that how you qualify how you were?

There was a time when it just felt too much, then I was sick, then I was alright, and then I went through a whole time of asking massive questions like 'what the hell is the reason to go on' that sort of question. So that would have been depression.

Ok - yep - and you know that - um - ah - I'm just in this place where I kind of need to say that - I hear what your saying and I very well might know, but if I don't ask for clear descriptions -

You can't come out and say it for me.

Yeah. This is so that I understand from your perspective - in fact it's about you and your voice describing your world its not about my assumptions - that's why I'm trying to draw forth your descriptions...So how do you recognise - how does a girl of your age - understand the qualities of depression? How do you know about it? (**Laura 8c**)

Laura talks about other people she knows with depression and how that has helped her recognise it in herself (though I have not included this part of our conversation for confidentiality reasons). Laura goes on to talk more directly about herself.

One of the things was that I didn't feel like eating I had to force myself to eat. I'm usually a really good eater so its like 'what the hell is wrong with you' for me - because it's really odd. I don't want to eat.

They're sort of the words that are almost like some other outside authority speaking to you and yet you're saying them - you know what I mean like standing outside yourself saying: "What the hell is wrong with you?"

Yeah.

Are you frustrated at the same time with your own self?

It's kind of like - I know it is wrong, but maybe there's no motivation to do anything about it 'cause it's just good being glum right now. It goes back to all the other things like - if there's no white there's no dark - all that sort of stuff.

So in one way - being in it - 'cause you started that sentence with "I know it's wrong -" so we have to ask the question "what's wrong?"

What's wrong? What's wrong is that for whatever reason - I really, I did- have to force myself to eat.

What's the wrong part? Not eating or - ?

I'd say that wrong is too general a word because it's really different for me to suddenly not want to eat.

Right - so that told you that there was something more going on?

It's more imbalance - something somewhere had been disrupted.

Right. So ok then -

That's part of it and I kinda blamed it on being sick.

...(we discuss being sick)...

So then - then you're in this gloom?

We looked up S.A.D - seasonal depression and it was interesting to look at - and also being really tired, sad, not eating, putting on weight, losing weight - all those things can - it's kinda like walking through fog in that you can't see what it is that you -. If you can see the end of the path, you're good, you know where you're going. If you're walking through fog you don't know. There's not a lot of - a lot left for me - motivation - to get through because I can't even see. I can't even get any idea that there's anything after that - so why bother.

Right. So you get to the why bother stage and then what?

Well I think there's sort of - I can go - I can go - well there's just so many reasons why you should. There's all those people that you love, that love you and all those things that you love to do and if you're not there, you can't do them and - you can kill yourself - and sometimes you're just like, yeah, why are you trying to kid yourself. Give it up! But at that time you're not going to believe that - but yeah.

So you're talking about - I don't want to make an assumption - is it ok to keep talking about this?

Mmm! It's always very good to get it out.

Ok. Good - I just need to check and -

Yep.

So - you're saying these are the reasons you're giving yourself for living. Is that right?

The ones that I mentioned - yes. Yep.

Because you're thinking what is the point - as you said before - what is the point of living? Is that a question that you ask yourself?

Well for a while I was going - sort of - what is joy in life? How does one find joy? Because then it was just like 'oh my god - I'm not having a great day, I've not done anything and I see myself in 20 years, a workaholic, and disregarding everything else...

(Laura 8d)

Here Laura is crying softly and she breaks into a reflection on her wanting to study law since she was ten and then through this (last) week not wanting to, but then "reviewing" and asking: *Was that really a right decision?*. Laura said that this felt *like waking up - like Odysseus going down into the underworld*. I am aware that she has been studying Odysseus in her main lesson at school I comment on that and Laura responds with gusto, drawing in a parallel between being involved in the PhD study (*a study about balance*), her learning about Odysseus and his travels to the underworld and a series of recent deaths that have touched her.

That was interesting that that happened almost at the same time.

Yes - I'm going' oh my god I'm doing a study about balance, a whole main lesson about Odysseus and his travels and whatnot and I'm sort of - god - I'm in - sort of like coincidence' - my piano teacher's mother has just died, two relatives of my dad have just died, and a friends relative, like a cousin along with like a parent and a sister (were in a car accident) and they're dead - and one of my friend's mother's really sick as well - and I'm sort of going - wow!

So what does that bring into your awareness?

and my teacher's brother's just died.

Oh really. Ok.

I just find it really amazing that - sort of - I'm not saying I think this but its sort of - odd thought - I just came out of mine and you have some other people going into theirs. So the balance of - you could live off someone else's happiness - so say I'm with a friend and they're really happy, but I'm down and sort we can just balance each other and be in the middle and I might get happy and they might get down.

Uh Hmmm - that sounds like the way we are with our friends - but when the friend goes away what happens?

...families are really, really great things and sometimes I go 'oh my god I wish I didn't live here I wish I lived with my (extended) family' because I just have my immediate family ... and they're great all those family people and of course with friends - can always make new ones, if people all go away...find something in someone else that you can sort of see the light in and - yeah - light your candle.

Uh-hmmm. Um - so you're - it sounds like you're kind of empathising with other's experiences - do you find you were more open to that - is that more acute - when you're in the gloom?

It depends - some you can notice and sometimes you're just wrapped up in yourself.

So the duvet is about - what?

The duvet is to do with thinking of a day when you were sick - whatever had a terrible cold or stomach ache for instance - and you just want to curl up in your bed with a cat and a hot water bottle and sleep but you couldn't sleep because you know I can't sleep in the day so you just have to curl up into bed and be happy with that and can just look out the window and...have your mind a wander...it sort of reminds me of the grass, the willow tree and the river. Just sitting there and looking out into the distance.

Does that bring you a certain peace?

Yeah - it's not sort of 'being there' and you'd be able to see everything it's not all clear and maybe a bit pensive and nostalgic - ? but it's not like for me being really depressed it's sort of being there and having to look through the fog when you can't see anything.

So - you were in there - you kind of intimated about talking with your friend and that helped you -um - was it that or were there other things that brought you back out?

I think like with me I'm a real sticker for school work and stuff and I'm really terrible with that - and I had a day off but I'm still sort of ...I'm real bad at having a day off 'cause I'll be at home and I'll be in bed and I'll probably think of my school the whole day - and it's just like this is not a day off I might as well be at school doing work. So yeah I had a day off and I didn't work for a week (at out of school jobs) and I dropped some of my things- and then sort of ... I looked - when I felt everything was too much - I looked at everything I was doing and went what can I give up? What do I not want to do? And I looked at all of them and I found that I didn't really want to give any of them up...and like I was like well ok well I'm doing things I really like so throw myself into them and give them some good energy and then you give and (it) comes round.

So if you give them good energy they feed you back or ?

Hopefully from somewhere else it comes back - yeah.

So instead of giving them up did you choose to change your attitude towards them is that what you're saying?

Kinda - well I did stop work for one week.

(Laura didn't elaborate on this but began talking about how her English teacher as an example of someone who didn't stop work when Laura felt she should have just taken time to be *really, really sad*). (Laura 8e)

Our conversation meanders a little as Laura talks about other people and I attempt to pull the conversation back to her what helped her come through her gloominess. I ask her whether she also found inner resources that helped her and she says she experienced a kind of *re-finding that energy I have to keep going* and acknowledging that she didn't have *a lot of spare time*, but what she had was

precious. You enjoy all the little things Laura says about emerging from her gloominess. She then talks about a movie she saw while she was *in it* and that if she saw this movie again now she would *re-see* it and look at it differently. I go on to say that that has the resonance for me of "what is on our inside, affects how we see the outside world" and Laura agrees (she says *totally*).

We move from discussing Laura's gloominess directly to finding a path through it and then talking of the value of friendship and how being listened to can help - even over and above the kind of responses you receive, she says. Laura put it down to being able to ask questions out loud.

I think even when you ask the wall a question, the whole thing of asking it, saying it - and hearing it and everything - having it come back almost - can almost always be good

Wow - that's very insightful - what - it's like voicing the question?

Voicing your thoughts can make it so much clearer, writing it down, hearing it when you say it - all that sort of thing. It's like -ah - it was a poem that someone wrote about telephones and having your question hurled around the world.

Mmm. No I don't know that.

SO you're hurling your question out you're letting everyone - the whole, all these Beings that you may not know of - hear it, but you're presenting it! [Here Laura's voice is loud and strong]. It's not just some odd thought in your brain anymore because you've let it out.

So that brings to the fore your beliefs - So you believe that there are other presences hearing you - tell me about them or your beliefs around them?

Some of the things we were thinking of - like why is a tree a tree? How do we know that it doesn't understand us? Just because it doesn't communicate in some way that we understand. Studies even can show that when you swear it may not be the word but it's the power you give the word, but it can leave you in a bad mood. Do you know what I mean?

I know what you mean and I'm struggling not to quickly go into my place of knowing but to keep questioning - What's the power? Where does it come from? You've got a word and you've got a person.

And it's the person who can give the power to the word.

So you're giving the power to the word - through?

Speech. You can do it through writing as well - then it's up to the person whose reading it as how much power they feel is conveyed to them and then that can change.

Is it easier to get the right expression with speech?

It's also depending on the person and yeah it's like the feeling that it can come across - sometimes it can come across or sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes people just sort of have that tap in with everything they can just sort of sense.

...But going back to Beings the only things I think don't really live are things that we - are man-made.

Like this? No - Like this - this piece of weaving?

Yes in a sense but then, then comes the whole thing of giving it the power of life... Things that live go into one category...then there's also man-made things that we can give power to in the sense that if no one had met a man-made object before they don't understand it and it could be just that odd thing on the ground - disregard it completely but if they look at it and they go 'wow - what is that?' 'How did it become like this? or whatever then you're giving it something to feed on in a sense.

Right. So as soon as you begin interacting with it?

Yeah kinda - though you might not call it interacting - you know thinking about it even if you just look at it, the whole looking at it has already started something. (Laura 8f)

Laura wants to finish her comments about the *Beings* she senses are there.

Some people might sense them more than others. It's also if you really believe, then you may get to see. If you believe so much then it can be there! But if you're to like - 'whatever - I could believe that but nah' - it's highly unlikely that you'll - you might think you get a glimpse but when you look back - it's not there! (Laura 8g)

Our conversation continues at a fairly intense level and we finish with Laura's response to me asking about winter, silence and stillness, which I introduced to take the focus off Laura somewhat and conclude what was a long and extremely intense conversation. As it happens Laura is a little risqué to begin with and offers one of her poetic twists and then laughs. The conversation however, still manages to finish on fairly sombre note, as it teeters on a discussion of life and death.

They all relate...in winter there is this silence and everything is still. In the silence one might find winter and a certain stillness. In the stillness because nothing is moving, it is silent and therefore one might find winter.

(We are both silent and then Laura laughs.)

I'm just basically having fun with it - it depends on if it's you interpreting the silence - maybe you're in a room where there's so many people they're all chattering, but it's all silent. Maybe they're not saying anything that means anything for you so it's silent. Same thing - they could be all moving around and yet they're not going anywhere.

So you could be experiencing stillness?

Then it sort of goes to almost truth - if it's silent - are they moving around? Are they alive? Are they dead?

What defines being alive and what defines being dead?

Depends how far you want to take it and whose perspective you want to take it from.

Good - how about your perspective?

Sometimes one doesn't create one's own perspective one sort of just accepts others' perspectives and doesn't question them entirely until one is past. One is dead when they're not alive and no one thinks about them. (Laura 8h)

By our next conversation, this intensity has diluted considerably. There are few tears and Laura discusses her new 'rules' for herself, which she has put together to help her navigate which include *not holding onto things and letting go*. She talks passionately about other people interfering in her life and wanting to say to them *Well, who are you to tell me!* and about people not saying what they really mean (*It's all the things they didn't say*) and about being aware of her own personal qualities and the different relationships she has to navigate and the different 'selves' with which she identifies. Laura is relating a story about certain peers of hers being *annoying* to teachers *no matter what the class* and yet being *okay* in a social situation.

That's a dimension to discuss. School self versus social self versus home self.

Yep.

Who are these people? Do you see different selves?

Mmm! They busy - oh yeah!

Which self do you show here?

Here? A little bit of school I reckon. Not a lot of home either, but sort of maybe yeah probably my social self.

And social self gets divided up into peer, wider social circle - right? So what you show here won't be the same as what you show with your peers?

Mmm.

How do we live with all these different selves?

(Laura shrugs and puts her hands in the air).

Hands in air insinuating question mark (we laugh) - come on give me a one minute answer - how do we do it - how do we navigate our way through things with all these different selves?

But if we're happy with the same person everywhere, maybe we wouldn't get along with as many people as we do, or get along as well with the situation as we do when we can be someone else- it's the same thing - you can give two people the same situation but each may react into a different way and so you can say something to somebody that you can't say to someone else. So if we don't adapt and we don't sort of sense that and be aware of it, we're just the same person the whole time - um - we sort of lose some opportunities maybe.

...So we learn the different ways. Does it split us up inside?

Maybe - I think it depends on the person whether they think they're really split up inside. Perspective.

It is isn't it? We could talk more about that.

Can't we always talk more?

Yeah.

(We schedule our next meeting and I go on to say) That's a whole amazing area - the other and the self.

Oooh a quote - "You've spent so long being what other people want you to be or being this sort of person for other people that you don't know who you are anymore." Well that's not really a quote it's a paraphrase.

That's a pretty good paraphrase. Can you relate to that?

Yeah! Also going away from your parents, you find out' who you are without them' - maybe who you really are! (Laura 9a)

In this ninth conversation we talk about 'selves' directly, but in many of our other conversations Laura's reference to 'self' and 'others' comes through her analogy of *bubbles*. It was the bubble that came along with the *structure with ribbon* in our first conversation (the *little bubble that's our little world*) and towards the end of our eighth conversation, we talk about people 'living in their own little bubbles'.

If we do live in our own little bubbles, how do we feel the edge of our bubble? Can you feel the edge of your bubble?

Sometimes. I think you feel the edge when someone else taps the edge or when maybe you cross the edge or you come into contact with the edge - otherwise it's like a big duvet.

So it can be a protective bubble?

It can be whatever you want it to be.

I wonder if that's where our bubbles are - at the end of our fingertips?

I don't know 'cause there's more than our fingertips that reach out. (Laura 8i)

Bubbles come up in several of our later conversations, though as the second excerpt below shows (*Laura 17a*), Laura is not always prepared for where the bubbles will lead.

Having two worlds merging is like 'me and my bubbles', you have the small ones for thoughts, conversations and then you have those massive ones that can be worlds. There are places where of course they overlap and they are places where you can travel from one to the other. (Laura 15a)

From our seventeenth conversation, this discussion begins with bubbles as Laura comments on growing up.

It's like a joining of bubbles - of seeing not just the little world, opening up to more ... There's lots of little bubbles which are not only people but ideas, concepts.

At what age (does it begin to change)? Thirteen? How does it feel to look back on being thirteen?

I think it's far enough to look back on being fourteen!

What do you see yourself as, back at thirteen or fourteen?

In some ways I was more open and some ways I was more closed. In some ways I've grown and in a way become more - and in some ways - I've just lost things.

[There is a pervading silence and Laura's voice is fragile. My voice also becomes quieter].

What sort of things do you think you've lost?

I think trust would probably be part of that. And I think for most of us the innocence gets put behind layers of things.

So it's still there? The innocence is still there?

I think with all of them they're not completely lost, sort of covered with the autumn leaves.

So trust as well is also covered to some extent?

Mmm!

What sort(s) of things happen to make you lose your trust or change your way of trusting or something?

Maybe something you relied on for a long time wasn't there - not that anything happened to me - or sometimes you can just notice things that you didn't notice when you were younger.

Things ? Ways that people are?

Yeah probably - and how people treat others. (Laura 17a)

The atmosphere in this discussion is intense and we are talking in very quiet subdued voices with long silences. I venture a little further, but find that for once Laura has no comment.

So trust is one of things that changes. Can you recall any experiences of that?

Not particularly.

[Silence]

Anything else - what else has changed since you were 13 or 14.

A lot of things it's how you look at them they always sort of change - sometimes its just hard to notice. (Laura 17b)

Laura is not forthcoming here and seems to have closed down a little. So I try to draw things together.

You said in some ways you've found more and in some ways you've lost some things - what are some of things you've found?

Sometimes I also think that with age comes trust as well. There are certain things you can start doing - can be a task or duty but depends how one sees it.

Can you give an example of something you've embraced or welcomed with age? (**Laura 17c**)

Here Laura does not give an example of something she's embraced or welcomed, but talks at length and quite sharply about her relationship with her parents and the communication difficulties she experiences. In the pursuant discussion there are several tangents and Laura explains that visiting places, as a teenager, that *one knows from childhood* can help to trigger memories because *memories can get so 'blogged' up like drains*. I ask her to tell me about that.

If every memory was a printed out little file ... some are coloured and the rest are just black and white - sometimes all the black and white ones merge together and become a slush that sits in the drain but then there's some of those black ones that are like sticks that that clog the drain. There's those little petally white - not white - pink or yellow, green or blue (ones) - blue ones are best - that float to the top like petals.

Ah - and they're the ones you like to look at?

They're the ones that are most memorable that are happy ones and the sticks that are ones that are not so great.

But they're still there?

Definitely!

Blocking up the drain?

Definitely!

Is there any way of clearing them?

Sometimes it needs to be going back and look and let go and sometimes you can do the 'right in the now'.

When it happens? How can you do it right in the now?

*Maybe understand what they had to tell you - and find it as a good one - changing the way you're looking at it. (**Laura 17d**)*

The 'coloured petals' arrive just in time as if they are an answer to the earlier question that she couldn't answer ("Can you give an example of something you've embraced or welcomed with age?" from *Laura 17c*). The 'something' isn't detailed, but the presence of the coloured petals seems to acknowledge that it is there.

Here Laura is looking at both sides of her experience and has come out of the stuck and silent place she was in earlier in this conversation. I note the contrast of moods seemingly represented in her words - the *little petally ones* with the *black ones that are like sticks*, the former as the *happy ones* and the latter as the ones that are *not so great* - and I refer to something she said at the start of our conversation about the in-between space: *That little space where you have peace is almost lost*. This then reminds me of an earlier conversation in which Laura makes a classic comment on 'balance' while talking about navigating the many things in her life.

It's always a balance mate! That's what I'm saying at the moment - everything is just a bloody balance! (Laura 11a)

The theme of balance emerges. In our eighth conversation when Laura talks about her 'depression' she says poignantly: *It's more imbalance - something somewhere has been disrupted*. In our fourteenth conversation:

Knowing balance point depends on - what sort of state do you have you be in to know balance point?

'Parsh bal'

Sorry you'll have to translate.

You have to be in a partially balanced state.

Right - to know balance - to know the point of balance.

Balance between really really happy, really 'grad' and really sad

Mmm.

'Cause without two concept can't understand.

So - can point of balance pass you by 'cause you're not paying any attention to it?

(Silence)

More information needed.

(Laura laughs)

E.G. - really really tired don't notice need balance don't notice when enough (is) enough -

Circle, circle revolution.

Not a revolution - oh no! (laughing)

Wish! Wish was!

So what are symptoms of not recognising when you're past your balance point?

Past it?

Mmm - on either side I guess.

Depends on situation - past it as in didn't see or past it on the balance scale - you notice you're really tired and need a rest - if at that point can rest then go have a rest if not get it no - get this done right now and then have a rest - understanding difference it can be very very complex in my opinion. (Laura 14a)

In our nineteenth conversation we come full circle. From tears and "fog" in winter to a place where there is more energy, more positivity and no tears. There are still some 'issues' for Laura (though she dislikes the word she uses it) - mainly with her parents - but she is working with them. We are having a quirky conversation and Laura is drawing because she *has lots of energy* and she says her *hands are very restless*. She is being contrary and quite mischievous with her conversation and we are discussing Steiner education and her identity as a Steiner student. I remind her of her comment in our twelfth conversation and we discuss it.

I asked you that question: How does a young woman construct her identity and you said 'Construct?'

I'm sorry - are we going back to this again?

It was great! Never be sorry for that -

I love that you love it.

I do and - because it blew something out, it blew something up, it exposed something, it went *pchooooo* - which is exactly what I want!

Holes in the curtains!

So are you - because you're Steiner students - putting together your identities differently from main stream students?

...I think that in some ways our school has got more of say a family idea incorporated into it - per se - being with same class all the time - so that you connect quite strongly with them.

What if you don't?

If you don't then maybe Steiner doesn't work.

...it's about belonging?

(Laura is making lots of distracting comments and being very playful and I say:)

God I should get a medal for this!

Ha (we laugh).

I'm sorry! You chose to do it!

...a bit later...

(We are talking about the feeling of belonging at different ages and how some angst about belonging had been expressed at times in our conversations. I say to her:)

There was a time (this year) certainly for you where this kind of "valley" came - if I was drawing a picture of the year -

I love it!

The valley?

It's a wave too.

Yeah but - we can always flip it - hey - and a time of thoughtfulness and reflection? It feels like you're on the other side of that? Yes?

(No answer).

Are there times during that valley period when you felt 'where do I belong', 'what am I doing'?

I think in a peer group ... there are times when it really matters who you hang out with and you're more concerned with whose cool rather than who we really belong with...doesn't matter if you're a person who doesn't hang out with everyone. You don't need to do that. It's up to you who you connect with. There's gonna be people who you do and you don't. It's alright! How you feel is how you feel about it. I feel it's important though that you're not going to feel diminished in relationship.

Wow - that's a great way of saying it.

How do you find the resources, the inner resources not to feel diminished in relation to them.

I have no idea. I think that sometimes it'll be certain things and certain people - for instance I probably mumble less when I'm talking to you. Sometimes it's maybe sort of an awareness that you come to. In some ways I think that people who don't have many friends are much stronger as they have lived without - also - it doesn't matter how many friends, things still happen to everyone.

There's different things and different qualities in both of them. (Laura 19a)

Here Laura brings us back to 'balance' to demonstrating her understanding of balancing her relationship with others and her relationship with her self within the flow of life. Maybe here are some keys as to how she navigated through her valley to come to a place where she can acknowledge it, honour it and still move on from it - richer for the experience.

WATER Balance is Lost and Regained

Laura has many colours and many shades. She is often playful in our conversations - playing with words and sounds, trying out different accents and different moods. Laura is adventurous and usually willing to go into uncharted inner territory and explore her experiences from different angles. Not much gets past Laura though strangely she has berated herself for not noticing some things saying: *at times I can be damned dense (Laura 11b)*.

I can also hear now after multiple listenings, a certain impatience at times in Laura's voice as we go through our conversation sometimes in slow steps which, it seems to me, *I* create. I believe I am doing this in order to more fully understand Laura's experience. I ask her in more than one way to explain things and tease them out and every now and then I hear her say, *Yeah anyway*, as I am talking, to kind of hurry me along or I hear her mutter something like: *I did tell you before but anyway*. Whether I noticed these or not during our conversation it doesn't sound in my voice or show in my words: I seem to keep my thread regardless in the face of those comments - almost doggedly.

At the time in the flow of our twelfth conversation, with no opportunity for reflection, I received Laura's comment without resistance and immediately saw the folly in asking my question the way I asked it. Yet I also did not relent - I wanted to hear Laura tell me about her experience of creating an identity, and so I continued. At the same time, I realised that identity is an assumption. I had to immediately, internally do a retake on identity. I also hear in my question an assumption that Laura will know what identity is, but why should she? I was very much in the space of treating Laura as an equal, of wanting her 'take' on identity almost as if she were a colleague of mine. For this though, I do not apologise. I point it out to illustrate the kind of relationship we had developed and the very open space in which we talked. We seemed to approach our conversations often on an equal footing though it is clear from some parts of our conversation that this was not always the case. Laura's willingness to discuss and converse at length and to answer my slow and detailed questions shows she is comfortable with our conversational forays and if there are quiet times I am the one who takes the fore and holds the conversational thread or

starts a new one - and she lets me. Laura's playfulness in conversation at times feels to me like a power-play to some extent, where she appears to be 'calling the shots'. She dances around with her words and conducts and performs at the same time. There are times though too when she senses, as if respectfully and compassionately, that a straight answer would help me, and the conversational flow, and she takes a more serious guise.

Laura possesses an in-depth understanding of the human character and a deep love of language and words. At least that is my deep and lasting inner impression of her. Her ability to describe her experiences and then explore them in detail is astounding. Laura's *structure with ribbon* emerges in many of our conversations and stunningly I found out from my mother some 16 months after that first conversation with Laura, that the word lemniscate can also mean "bedecked with ribbons". The lemniscate so aptly transcribes the (energetic) path of conversational flow (in all the research conversations in this study not just Laura's) and it seems as if Laura's structure with ribbon pre-empted this. The feeling of discovering this alter-meaning for lemniscate was just like fitting in a piece of a puzzle that suddenly gave me the sense of what the bigger picture looks like. Another epiphany: in this 'piece' there lives, to paraphrase Goethe, 'the essence of the whole'.

From early on, as the text illustrates in *Laura 12a* and *12b*, two significant things stand out about how Laura and I conduct our conversations: *tangential thought and language processes* and *imagination*. We allow a healthy number of tangents as we talk, but are mostly able to return to the conversational thread. In amongst our tangents are lateral paths which extend and are extensions of our imaginations. These paths have helped both of us navigate the personal and the conversational terrain. The following is an example of tangents, lateral thought and language and imagination (this is written as it sounds in that we are talking over one another initially so that Laura's voice in italics is occurring at the same time as mine in plain type):

<p><i>Tangent! Tangents!/Tangent!/ Queen of the tangents./Can you just -/ Just fabulous tangents/ it was probably what you've already said but -</i> <i>Friend friend - very good - caught on tangents. Let's continue (laughs).</i></p>
--

'Why would someone want to hear what you have to say' was what I wrote - literally!

Right - good note to self!

(We laugh and comment on our unique language then Laura talks about how she loves language and particularly New Zealand Maori slang).

Sweet mate!

(She is laughing a lot).

OK right - I'm going to find it wherever it is - is there a thread?

(She is laughing, I am trying to hold the threads and we are both having fun).

(Laura 14b)

Talking with Laura certainly brought out my tangential nature. It was fun and at the same time quite hard work to hold the conversational threads (as evidenced above). Laura's rich use of language is given a generous stage with our lateral adventures. In fact, we both love language and it shows. We play a lot with our words and have almost come to a point where we have our own secret language.

In our fourteenth conversation we play extensively with this language, which is basically just shortening words (leaving off the endings of words) and leaving out articles and conjunctions *and*, interestingly, personal nouns and pronouns. We are very clearly having fun and performing to (or for) each other. At times this conversation seems like a game to see who can leave out the most words and word-endings and who gets confused first. Laura 'wins' this part when at one point she loses me as she responds to my question about knowing your balance point and says, *parsh bal*, which I have to ask her to translate (see *Laura 14a*) - she does: *You have to be in a partially balanced state.*

We started playing with our secret language very early on in our conversations and it became a bond between us. Listening to this (fourteenth) conversation and writing about it (now) it feels to me that through performing our sparse language we are *essentialising* what needs to be said. This resonates strongly with me, as if some truths are easier to speak when they are performed or staged outside of one's self, in that, by not using "I" or "you" we are able to separate ourselves from what we speak of, to some extent. An example taken from *Laura 14a*, follows:

E.G. - really really tired don't notice need balance don't notice when enough enough -

Circle, circle revolution.

Not a revolution - oh no! (laughing)

Wish! Wish was! (from Laura 14a)

I don't know how difficult it is for the reader or an outsider to understand this, but both Laura and I know exactly what this means and we revel in it. It makes me smile even as I write. With her comment, *Circle, circle revolution*, my sense is that she is saying, at one level, that I am going round in circles (ie. that this has already been covered) and at another level, that the 'balance' thing can be a kind of vicious cycle (*refer Laura 14a*; ie. you're tired so you don't notice you're off balance *and* you're off balance so you don't notice you're tired). It feels to me there are other layers of meaning in there as well and in the one word - "*revolution*" I hear so very much.

Of course I am teasing when I say "Not a revolution - oh no!", but I am also alluding to non-conformity, rebellion, resistance and Laura knows this and picks it up. I believe that Laura's "*Wish!*" is a very real one - a wish for revolution; a wish for dramatic change, maybe for something out-of-the ordinary to happen. Perhaps a wish that she herself speaks out her out resistance. One area where Laura seems to want to speak out but feels that she may not be heard, is in her relationship with her parents. She talks about her frustration with communicating and her resistance to being 'regulated':

The way it is necessary to communicate with parents. I just don't like it at the moment and all these regulations that must be made in order to have this supposed order - in order to have order - I don't like to criticise or anything but in order to have this, this - perfect idea of a home! (Laura 20a)

And she talks about the consequences of 'speaking up':

I don't generally always (speak up) but if I do then it just goes in a big screw that goes upwards which is, you know, tornado, typhoon. (Laura 20b)

And her dislike of being told what to do:

There's so much of their [her parents] character which is of course embedded in their lives - that I think it's very, very hard to differentiate that from how we [the children] are - of course we are going to be damn similar [to our parents]. All this fear - 'What if they do this or what if they do that?' or you know. Say - I'm a pretty mature person. I'm like, what the hell, they're half the time more silly than I am!

...I think that us as individuals generally we're beyond being told simply what to do - we're not going to listen as much straight up and we want a better reason about it and so it's not 'all good' if you just tell me 'do this now' no questions or 'don't talk to me about that because I don't want to hear it'! It's very much like 'ok why do you want me to do that?' ...I'm actually quite happy to do that, but I want to know why! (Laura 20c)

Earlier, in our seventeenth conversation, Laura talks about wanting change and about trust.

They won't just wipe the slate clean and give me a fresh start. And so it's sometimes quite hard to ask them to change something and get them to agree - not to ask them but to get them to agree because they won't trust - it's more out of fear than love...I think it's a concoction of fear and love and it's hard to separate the two. (Laura 17e)

As Laura navigates relationally she is discovering the pinnacle experience of being human - balancing love and fear. She suggests that 'not trusting' comes more out of fear than love and earlier, in the same conversation, she talked about growing up and *losing* trust but she doesn't elaborate save the analogy with coloured petals and black sticks. My sense is that maybe there are a few black sticks that are connected with Laura's experiences of trust being lost. As Laura intimates, it doesn't actually matter what they are, it just matters that we know they're there and therefore can go back and *look and let go*. Although Laura doesn't say as much, my feeling is that the black sticks are like fear and the coloured petals are more like love.

The sphere of home is not the only area Laura seeks to change and it is my impression that her deeper sense of the wish for revolution is within. As a *mature person* Laura demonstrates in-depth intellectual, emotional and spiritual self-awareness. She is aware of her own territory and wants to defend it. She wields her own power and faces her own vulnerability *and* she has the gift of seeing balance hearing her own voice of resistance. Laura thinks deeply about her experiences and is able to articulate those thoughts in poetic detail.

Yet there is something she is struggling with as if it lives alongside her, like her tears did in winter. Is it depression? Is it the 'something' she once lost that she has no particular recollection of, the something that is *hard to notice* (see Laura 17b)? Whatever *it* is, just like her *condition*, she is happy not to talk about it. In fact, it seems Laura is happy to talk about anything and everything but,

perhaps, 'that', and thus the tangents, the lateral adventures and the word games feature.

All of Laura's meandering still help her navigate her way through what I call her 'valley of tears'. Laura emerges, potentially stronger and with a deeper sense of awareness of the core of her true self. Laura says she 'knows' her tears and her depression. I suggest that she knows it with a deep familiarity. She knows this other self that unfolds in the winter months recognising it as if it is a member of her family. In a way it is: her 'family of selves'. This winter though, this particular winter that we talked our way through, she has for the first time let this depressed self into a more public arena - she has let someone else see her not just once or twice, but many times. She has let me share in her tears, her tangents, her twisty language and her triumphs.

But what is the truth of Laura? What is her true core self? Knowing Laura, I know that I cannot have the last word on this, I cannot be the one to answer. I did hear her when she said: *I don't like them telling me what I need to do!* (Laura 19b). Laura has let me see her vulnerability and her strength and her hopefulness. She is like a brave and bold captain of a fantastical multi-dimensional ship. She is brave as she explores her shadows, as she descends into the underworld, her valley of tears, as she is *taming the dragon* (her own words). She is bold as she calls out her questions into her future; and she is hopeful, playful and creative as she navigates between and within the bubbles. As she explores and creates at the same time, her structure with ribbon, she is becoming in her voice as she becomes in the world.

Navigating my way through Laura is like an intricate dance over partially hidden stepping-stones on quicksand - the key to which only Laura holds. I'm never quite sure if the step will hold me and if I sink, how far in will I go, not to mention - *did I get the pattern right or could I have taken a better route?* Of course some steps surprise me, some disappoint, some scare me and some bring great sadness and great joy. It is an exciting and engaging journey, which has indescribable rewards at its end.

Just like Laura has forewarned - I am left with a sense of what she didn't say even though we recorded nearly 24 hours of conversation. What did I miss?

What were the things she couldn't tell me? What were the black sticks? Were there many of them? Why couldn't she and her parents find a balance when she seemed so good at understanding balance?

I am also wondering what I didn't say. Did I cover enough? Every time I listen to one of our conversations I hear more - which has made this an incredibly difficult section to write. When do I stop - when is enough, enough? How do I find a balance in this? Ah yes - the balance! Balancing on the wall, the wall between Laura and I, between Laura and the world. The wall that you can speak your questions to, and feel 'heard'; or the wall of tangents and tricky words. The wall that can be a bridge between the tangents and the threads in our conversations; between you and me; between me and Laura; between Laura and others; or between the different selves that Laura seems to know. The wall-bridge between love and fear, between balance and imbalance, between knowing and not-knowing. The bridge that links childhood and adulthood - *innocence and inner-sense* - 'in-a-sense' that is (to use Laura's words) - a bridge of hope rather than a wall of confusion, disconnection or despair.

I certainly had in my background agenda in those winter months, when it felt like I accompanied Laura on a descent into the underworld, a desire to foster hope and get to a place where the sky looked mostly sunny rather than partly cloudy. At our nineteenth conversation we finally emerge from the centre of the lemniscate, from the winter valley, into a light-ness and a newness that belies the challenge of the journey we have covered. But then - as Laura says, in her inimitable authoritative way, it's all about *perspective*.

What I experienced and still experience on listening to the small part of our conversation in the extract *Laura 12b*, is not justly reflected in my conversational response. Later, in our eighteenth conversation, in early November, we talk about this significant moment from our twelfth conversation and I let Laura know that it has become a pivotal point in my writing and that it has meant a lot to me.

Your comment has become a central point in my writing. That (comment) stays with me so intensely because it's such a good challenge of the words we assume everyone uses. So I've called it 'identity creation' instead of 'identity construction'.

I like that.

Strongly in response to your challenge - and it's that kind of thing that makes this whole study completely worthwhile. And that's really, really beautiful. It's like a moment of revelation, and a moment of beauty for me and truth ...and even goodness. (**Laura 18a**)

Laura has said so much about so many things that for me to try to represent her with just my words, becomes unreal and it is not in keeping with the character of Laura. Maybe it's best for her own words to speak for her. In the following section (Air) Laura describes the core of true self. Her voice is at first poetically represented and this is followed by the relevant section of conversation, which is appropriately, our twelfth conversation, the one with which this chapter started. In this part of the conversation I begin with a jovial reference to the structure with ribbon and then Laura explains her ideas about core self to me but I am not getting it straight away. She perseveres almost as a mother to a child or a teacher to their pupil and she is in her power, taking me step by step through her world. We finish where we started - *the structure with ribbon* - but we see it more clearly, perhaps in a softer light - it is simply 'bubbles with threads' which suddenly seems much less daunting than *big long things that we have to do*.

I hear: her humour, her warmth, her authoritative tone, her powerful lateral thinking, her experience of her 'core self' or 'true self'; her many colours and shades, her explanation of 'a structure with ribbon' and even her powerful ability to call herself back from her 'valley of tears'.

And there is laughter - we are having fun amidst the one long conversation where there were more tears than in any other, we laugh and step lightly navigating our way towards an understanding of the core of true self guided by Laura who becomes, in this moment, the right voice with which to command her life.

AIR I Am Becoming: The Core of True Self

I think. I THINK!

Core is something that has certain qualities but the qualities

... are subject to what is going on around themselves and outside

but inside they're like it depends on the intensity of them from what is around

it's like having - basic colour

its a green

its a blue

its a yellow

and it's a red,

but it could be a baby blue,

it could be a warm red

it could be physical, mental, emotional -

although we are this core...we can still change

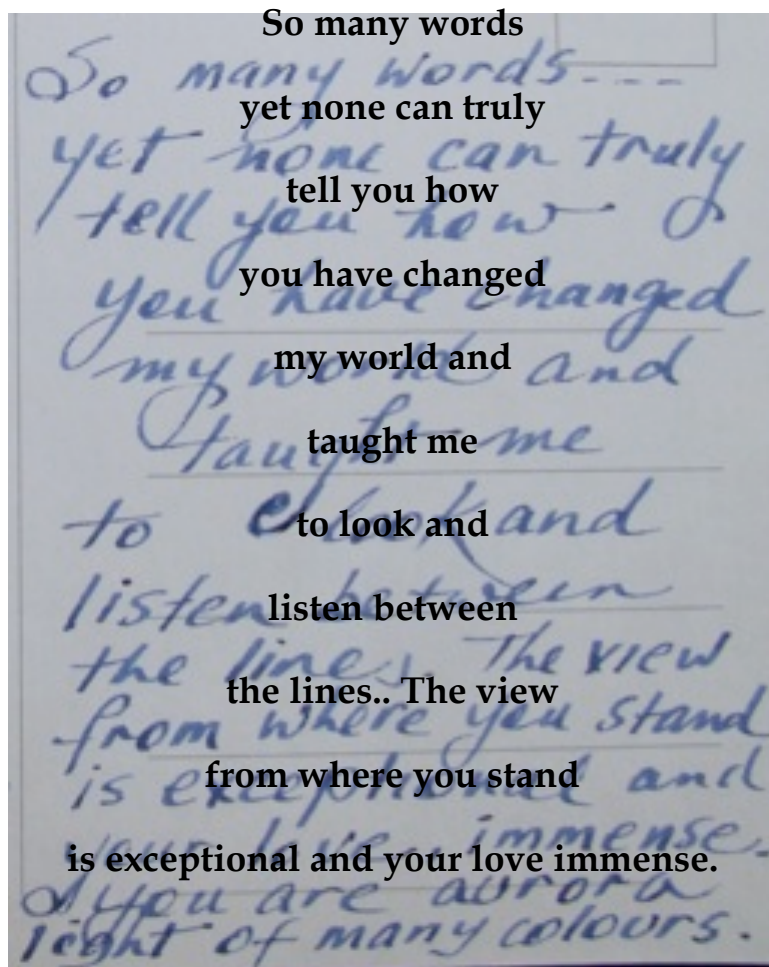
*always going and always changing. (taken from **Laura 12d**)*

FIRE Aurora

Aurora light of many colours.

Some awareness somewhere has been made by this.

The archetypal expression of Laura for me is 'Aurora'. Below are the words and the picture I gave to Laura as an expression of gratitude at the end of our conversations. I include these as an expression of how I experienced Laura after all our conversations, but before I undertook the Goethean layered listening. The above words are mine (on the first line) and Laura's (on the second line). These words of Laura's are taken from our last conversation and she is expressing what she would like to see come from 'all our conversations'.



You are Aurora

light of many colours.

Chapter 6. Lena. *Perfect Fit*

Prologue - Being Popular

Lena loves going to see her extended family and many of our conversations hold stories from her past overseas trips and a sense of anticipation as Lena looks forward to going again. Lena prefers to be overseas where, she says, she is *more myself*, where she truly feels she fits in. Juxtaposed with this atmosphere is Lena's niggling *worry* that she doesn't fit in at school. Lena and I had twelve conversations. The last two were separated by a two and a half month period, during much of which she was overseas.

Our sixth conversation, in mid-year, touched on a theme that I saw recurring in conversations with some of the other young women: *being popular*. By unfolding the layers of Lena's voice using Goethean layered listening I demonstrate the application of this method to follow a theme which led to an epiphany rather than to unfold an epiphany which then leads to themes (as in Chapter 5, for example). Contrasting this with Laura's voice in Chapter 5: Goethean layered listening was a way of explicating Laura's *structure with ribbon* and bringing what was an abstract, but real experience of the phenomenon of harmonious being, into a more concrete form through Laura's voice. In the present chapter with Lena, Goethean layered listening has followed the threads of a theme into other themes and led to an epiphany and in some ways, a more abstract idea.

During our sixth conversation, Lena describes her sense of not fitting in at school, saying that, *at school I'm just not how I really am* (from *Lena 6a*). As she says this, I hear her voice in our previous conversation telling me about being popular and layers unfold. The notion of popularity has been prevalent in our conversations, discussed alongside, but not directly in connection with, Lena's worry that she doesn't fit in. If then, at school Lena is not how she really is; and if at school (like she says) she is not one of the *popular girls*, then maybe *how she really is*, is popular. Or to put it the other way around: if she sees herself as unpopular at school, that is *not how she really is*.

Lena seems to recognise *how she really is* more clearly, when she is *where* she wants to be. This is significant. Lena's experiences of belonging and fitting in

fill much of each conversation around three main topics: *belonging* overseas; *fitting in* at 'school' (with her peers); and horse riding. For her, horse riding is nearly always a place of belonging. She feels *good* on horseback. She loves riding and says in our first conversation that when *the horse and the rider* are *working well* together then *you can see things are harmonious*. She also tells how she gets the same feeling in relationships: *When I get on with someone really well it works and when I don't, it doesn't*. Brief anecdotes about her riding experiences thread in and out of our conversations. Horse riding, like our conversations, seems to be a space in-between the other spaces in Lena's life. On either side of horse riding live the spaces where Lena feels she does fit (overseas) and doesn't fit (at school). Lena talked about wanting to fit in at school, yet she also loved her school. So what does fitting in really mean for Lena?

Fitting in is Lena's own expression. Lena doesn't use an elaborate array of words yet her consistent use of certain words and phrases, provide a clear pathway to help unfold her fitting in. One of these words is *perfect* and another is *balance*. Other words like *different*, *fun*, *cool*, *popular*, *weird*, appear regularly and references to *fitting in*, *not (being) valued*, *the popular girls*, and *(being) different* are all key threads which help unlock the meaning of Lena's experiences. In our tenth conversation, the 'master keys' arrive, another epiphany. In describing a picture she has painted *in her own time* (as she says no one asked her to do it) she talks about perfection and balance (the full excerpt is in *Lena 10a* further on in the text). Does Lena tell us that when things are in their right place, they are in balance, they are perfect, and they fit?

it's all like perfect ... That's sort of me. Not me as in I'm perfect, but that I like things perfect ... like if something's not in the right place I don't like it ... it makes you feel good I guess when something's in balance or perfect...(from Lena 10a)

My conversations with Lena have inspired me to wonder at the experience of harmonious being as a process of fitting in, of concord between our own knowing of who we are and others impression of who we are, or others expectations of us. I ponder the connection between fitting in and perfect balance; between fitting in on the outside and fitting in on the inside. Lena's fitting in, however, does not seem static. As the word balance implies, there is

motion, a back-and-forthness, a negotiation, between our own voice and the voice of the world; and when they meet then perhaps the sound is perfect.

Lena's story depicts this balancing act: On the one hand Lena seeks to fit into something that calls from outside of her, a voice of the world- the popular girls - which in the end turns out to be an empty promise that she has no desire to be part of. On the other hand she hears her own inner voice which resists being silenced and niggles away at her in a quest to help her fit herself. Lena's story is one of fitting in, of belonging to something and somewhere slightly out of her reach - a place that is perfect. It isn't until our very last conversation when Lena has returned from overseas, that she discovers the perfect balance in herself.

EARTH Not How I Really Am

School for Lena is source of pain and possibility - she looks forward to it and yet it brings challenges and can *make her sad*. She doesn't understand why she doesn't fit in or why she's not *popular* but she knows that she is *different* at school or as she says: *not how I really am*. In our sixth conversation Lena says quite clearly that her school self is not *totally myself* and that she always has a little worry niggling away at her.

At school I'm always sort of like - tense. Like I'm not, I don't really, totally - I'm not totally myself when I'm at school. I'm a bit different. So yeah - sort of - I always have a worry sort of. Even if it's not a major thing you are never - it's hard to explain (laughs).

I actually - I think I understand. However, I am really interested also in getting you to explain it because I can't make the assumption that I do.

Like at school - ah - I always actually notice it when I come home I'm really different.

Aha.

Um yeah. (Pause)

So - are you more - relaxed at home or - ?

Yeah you could say so - at school I'm just not how I really am - or - I am like that because I am like that at school, but like - I'm different than I am at home.

Yeah - ok. And you can see that. It's almost like your standing outside yourself seeing that?

Yeah.

When you said you always have one worry on your mind -

I don't know how to explain it.

Is it the same one?

Well it's like (it's) a tension it's not like a worry like I have to make my bed or something, it's more like - yeah - it's often when I go to bed that I actually - I always think for a while before I go to sleep. I'm trying to get rid of that habit 'cause it makes me lose a lot of sleep. (Lena 6a)

In our previous conversation (our fifth) Lena had said, *when people are by themselves they're really different*. She went on to talk about her feeling *different* from her peers, not fitting in and finding the situation *weird* and then wondering if she is *weird*.

What do you talk about with your peer group?

Well - I'm going through this time when I'm not really - I don't know why but I'm being really - I don't want to but I'm sort of being hindered to talk like - I can talk but I just don't fit into what they're talking like even if it's horses or if it's something I can talk about, I know about, it's so sort of - like at lunchtime I think it's really boring and I really don't agree with it but ... the whole class just sits there the whole lunchtime ... it's just really boring and of course the popular girls all find it really fun 'cause they've always got something to do and they've got somebody to talk to but the other people it's sort of - like I do talk about things like just one on one, but in a whole group no one would listen to me...we do talk about a lot of stuff - my class is really - I don't know - I don't really understand my class it's sort of weird.

So what does that mean for you as far as belonging or fitting in?

Um not very - nice I guess because sort of just those three girls that all wear the same clothes - they're all tight jeans tight tops I mean I dress like that too but they're always just they're all the same basically - just how they dress not how they are of course, but - and - they just sort of take it away I guess.

Take the whole class away or - how do you mean?

Take the whole fun of it - not away but they're just - don't know how to explain it but - they're just really - I don't know they make me sad because they're really - they're just - no one's cool enough for them I guess and yeah - weird! (Lena 5a)

According to Lena, being *popular* is being *cool*. In Lena's exploration of how she does or doesn't *fit in*, this idea of popularity comes up many times. It is a thread I pursue and sense as a potential key to understanding Lena. In our seventh conversation I take my moment and ask Lena directly about 'being popular'. She is in fact not very comfortable talking about it and she loses her thread at times. As the conversation deepens her voice wavers, but she still finds a resolution: *...some people that aren't popular make good people*.

It's quite an interesting thing - you're not the only one to talk about popularity and 'being popular'... What is being popular?

Um well - um popular is being - um people like you. Um often people who are popular seem to be the way they want to be, like, and people in my class dress quite popular, but I don't think popular people actually dress like that because popular people are popular so they don't need to dress like that.

[We laugh].

That is a gem!

They don't need to dress popular... how the fashion wants them to because they're popular!

So why are they popular...Can you see any similarities between all those popular people?

[Silence].

Well they - well, in my class, dress - they are similar but I don't know in what way. I guess all the popular people hang out with popular people ... I always find that when I hang out with the group, which is not that many people - at the beginning it's big -four girls - what was I going to say?

When you hang out with them?

Oh yeah, I think 'I'm going to hang out with the popular group'. I want to be cool, I guess, but whenever I go there I'm actually so unhappy - it's not fun. I - it's not fun so I walk off. I did that in the last two weeks 'cause my friend wasn't at school. I was a bit lonely. (Lena 7a)

I go a little further to unravel this mystery of popularity and ask Lena if she has ever seen a popular person become unpopular and whether she could say how many people in her class are popular. Interestingly she answers the question with, *Yeah I am*, and then goes on to talk about a girl in her class not apparently realising she has said, *Yeah I am* instead of *Yeah I have* (which would have been the correct phrase grammatically). It is clear from Lena's comments that she views popularity as very important as she: *wouldn't want to underestimate people and say they're not popular.*

Have you seen a popular person become unpopular?

Oh yeah I am - well I don't know if you (say) unpopular but these groups they are sort of - there's one girl in my class she's sort of ... now they're not being as nice to her she just told me she's feeling a bit hurt - she's only becoming unpopular between those few girls - I don't know.

Would you say - how many people would have the title popular?

I think everybody's popular for some people...our class only ten (but) it's so hard to say because I wouldn't want to underestimate people and say they're not popular...I think that some people that aren't popular make good people (Lena 7b)

This part of our seventh conversation links directly back in with Lena's comments in our fifth conversation (see *Lena 5a*), where we talk about her

'place' in the class and her belonging and fitting in. I return to our fifth conversation to illustrate Lena's subsequent unfolding of the layers of belonging. Lena explains further and says, in relation to *not really fitting in*, that she has *never really been valued*.

Was the class different prior to the teenage years?

Yes - I was thinking about this - yesterday I think. I have been friends with all the girls that are popular now and I've sort of just slipped away and not really fitting in - well I do with some people but it's not like - them! Yeah well - the people have changed but they've still, I still never, I've actually found that I've never really been valued - I have - but not - just not properly that's what I feel. (Lena 5b)

Lena talks for a few minutes about her specific friends and how one of them *let her down*. She goes on to say that *with a lot of the girls I'm always on and off and I'm actually really - not jealous - but really annoyed ... they judge you with everything ... they just take everything to heart and I think that's not really necessary*. Her voice sounds defiant, annoyed and vulnerable at the same time, so I ask her directly about her balance.

So what does that do for your balance and harmony at school? How does it feel?

Well - in the morning - 'cause I actually really find it hard at school like to - fit in I guess - and in the morning I always start with a fresh view and I try to be happy and try to start again and in the first three days it wasn't good and then the second two I had a really good time - I sort of hate starting a day like that - it doesn't give me any hope for the - (pause)

Any hope for - the day? and your social interaction?

I don't know how people find it talking to me because if no one talks to me then I must be like weird - uh!

That's the conclusion that you -

Well that's what I think because like - 'cause I was really annoyed 'cause no one ever invites me ... I either invite myself, which I find is really weird - otherwise with my friends I don't really get invited. I never get asked - and all the people [girls in her neighbourhood] they all go - it's like they've forgotten me - I don't think they have but -

So do they - seem like they're going to ask you ever or is it just a clear thing that they don't.

I think that the two or the three girls are never going to ask me that's clear - I don't know with the other people.

Ok so I would imagine that must be quite hard.

It is.

And you've got these two main friends, but you're saying that even within these friendships -

I don't get invited - and I - uh - it's weird. (Lena 5c)

Lena says that this situation doesn't *give me any hope* and her voice portrays that. She is exasperated and seemingly at a loss to know why she is *forgotten* and isn't *invited*. As the discussion continues below, Lena suddenly connects the dots: *she isn't invited so she isn't valued or good enough and so something must be wrong and they don't like her*. She wonders whether someday this *weird* mystery will be solved and finds the hope she said she didn't have and says that *one day her strengths ... will shine out*.

Maybe they're not doing anything anyway.

Even just inviting you to come their house ...it doesn't seem like I'm really being valued or I'm good enough - but there must be something wrong that they don't invite me or they don't like me or something? (Pause) I guess I'll find out someday!

I guess you could ask straight up.

I think I might but I'll find the time when it's proper.

Mmm it's the kind of thing - as human beings we make the assumption that we're not good enough...when you look at people's lives - it's often the people that have felt like that - that have made a real difference in the world that these people didn't fit in for one reason or another. Who's doing the fitting? Maybe it's certain strengths of yours that the others are having trouble with.

Yes I think I do have strengths that other people don't and I'm quite proud of those but they don't know and I do believe that one day it will shine out. (Lena 5d)

As we reach our eighth conversation, we are still talking about the social scene at school, but Lena's conversation becomes less focused on what others think of her and more focused on what she thinks of herself and her schoolwork. She leads right to the heart of her looking at herself - literally - as she relates her experience of doing her own self-portrait for art. At the beginning of our eighth conversation, Lena talks about school being *stressy* so I inquire further.

It's not that I have heaps to do...but it's more I don't know - it's being at school is stressing, stressy - if you know what I mean?

I could say 'yeah I know exactly what you mean', but because I'm not exactly in the role of 'understanding everything', but rather I'm really interested to hear you explain what is it that's being 'stressy', I'll continue to ask you questions about that if that's alright.

I don't know it's sort of hard to explain. I think - even little things like a small maths problem ... really stress me.

So it's the being at school you mean the schoolwork, not the being at school from the social point of view?

Well yeah it is sort of the social thing. Um yeah - I guess.

Do you want to talk a bit more about that?

It's not like I stress about it but like some days I have really fun days you know like where I talk and it's fun and everything, but some days it's just like really 'blercch' you know like just go to one class and the next class and it's like - mmm but yeah. (Lena 8a)

Our conversation weaves in and out and the balance seems to swing between the schoolwork and the school socialising, both of which it seems might be a bit stressful depending on the day or the subject. Mondays are 'cool', Lena says, because she is with the class-group she likes doing the subjects she likes.

So is it when you talk and laugh and have fun - is that during class or is it in the breaks?

It's not like during class. Like today, I quite like Mondays - not 'cause it's - I don't like Mondays 'cause it's the first day of the week- but because the class is the people I like being with...we do 'Handwork' and I like that. (Lena 8b)

Our discussion about school leads onto talking about the subjects that are 'cool' and Lena talks about art and doing a self-portrait.

I used to like art, but now it's really, really boring - apart from socialising - um - 'cause, I don't know we have to do a self-portrait and that's really hard, that's horrible.

Ha - did you see me jump off my chair then?

(We laugh).

When did you do that?

We did it half way through this term, but 'cause I found it really hard I hate looking at myself and drawing myself - so last week (my art teacher) said I should just get a face from a magazine and draw that first before I draw myself. (Lena 8c)

We go on to have an interesting conversation about her experience of doing her self-portrait.

Have you done the self-portrait or not?

I sort of did half of it and it looked really bad and so I gave up.

Right. How did you do it? Did you look in the mirror or use a photograph?

In the mirror.

So would you be willing to share it with the study?

Well I haven't actually finished it - drawing myself - I sort of mucked it up.

So would you be willing to share it?

With the study? If it's good I will.

Tell me about that. Tell me about the 'if its good' thing.

Well if it's good I'll share it - if it's not I won't.

OK. What makes it good?

If it looks a bit like me and if it looks real not like some alien.

Have you thought about the possibility that however it looks its still 'you drawing you'?

[Silence].

If you were given a photo of yourself...given an hour to draw it ...whatever it is would be whatever it was! Only when someone comes along and says, 'Wow cool!' then that might change what it is. It's funny how when we do a piece of art we don't like, we want to hide it away.

Yeah. Well like - 'cause when I started it I was like - this is going to be good, but then it's like - bad!

...So with your self-portrait - were there any good points about doing it and what were they - like even as far as you got. What was interesting or good?

When I started I was like - this will look good 'cause I - I think I started with my eyes 'cause first I did the lines - and you know then I started doing the eyes and the eyes looked quite good and then I mucked everything up with the lips and the nose, and yeah-

How did you feel about looking at yourself in mirror a lot?

I hated it [laughs] like yeah.

Why?

'Cause you're so self-conscious if you're looking in the mirror and it's like you know you see a spot there and you stop concentrating on the painting, but more on you and its really hard to get -

But you must look at yourself to do your hair and to - everyday right?

I do, but - I said before - some days I think I look really good and some not.

Do you think there'll be a time when you go back to look at it when you think 'oh it's not as bad as I thought it was' ?

I don't know - it will look really bad now because I put little teardrops and wrinkles on it.

Why did you do that?

'Cause I was angry.

What do you get angry about during that sort of process?

When it doesn't work its just annoying.

Because?

Well I get angry 'cause it doesn't look how I want it to.

Do you have the expectation of yourself that you will be able to make it look how you want it to?

Well I thought so 'cause the eyes looked good but it doesn't. I think it might also be I'm not good enough to draw myself yet. I haven't got the techniques or - I don't know - that might also be why. (Lena 8d)

Here we talk a little about artists and the techniques differing between different artists and different people and Lena says that one thing she is really good at is aboriginal dot painting. Interestingly Lena makes the same *faux pas* that she makes in an earlier conversation (see *Lena 7b*) when she says *Yeah I am...* instead of *Yeah I have*: in the following extract Lena corrects herself from *...just 'cause I'm...* to *...cause it's...*, but she nearly says, *just 'cause I'm exact you know perfect*.

I know one thing I'm really good at - that you don't really need much artistic skills for it - that's why I'm good at it - but um it's the aboriginal dot painting - I did that just in my free time at the farm in the holidays - and I was really good at that like it turned out really well - just 'cause I'm - 'cause it's - exact you know perfect - but it wasn't very artistic. Just the colours you know had to match.

What do you mean when you say it wasn't very artistic?

Well like the shapes - you had to make up the shapes, but it means like drawing a face is way different than just making a dot.

Uh- huh. I guess though in some cultures they won't think that maybe.

(Lena 8e)

Lena had done the dot painting (see below) in the holidays between Term 1 and Term 2 but here in our last conversation for Term 2, she mentions it for the first time. We don't discuss it for long and I don't pursue it as a strong thread at the time or even invite her to bring it along to our conversations. Nevertheless she does bring it to our tenth conversation and we discuss it (see *Lena 10a*).



It is then I realise how important it is to her - the balance and the perfection. The painting seems to 'meet' Lena and speak about her. She loves this painting and said in our eighth conversation that she much preferred doing this (type of) painting than her self-portrait. When we had talked about her drawing herself in our eighth conversation she said that it did not turn out to be a good experience and she ended up 'burning' it because 'it didn't work out'. Here though is something that she loves because it's *all perfect*. In the following extract from our tenth conversation, Lena talks about why she likes her dot painting and what it says about her.

Even though it's not balanced it's all like perfect - if you know what I mean.

You say its not balanced - what's 'balanced'?

How the left side has the yellow and the other side doesn't (but) all the dots are still perfect. That's sort of me. Not me as in I'm perfect, but that I like things perfect.

So...why would you want balance in the picture?

It's hard to explain in the picture, but like in sort of life. Like my room it's not sort of balanced, but its perfection 'cause I'm kind of perfectionist for my room. It's quite bad actually 'cause I do it too much - like if something's not in the right place I don't like it, I don't know, it makes you feel good I guess when something's in balance or perfect.

(Lena 10a)

Lena says that she *likes things perfect* because *when something's balanced or perfect then it makes you feel good*. That's sort of me, she says. When Lena describes herself it is usually succinct: *that's sort of me* or *different* or *more myself*. In our eleventh conversation, when asked to elaborate on what is *different* about her, Lena has considerable difficulty finding the right words and this leads us to a discussion on teenagers in general as she takes a fallback position and says, *Well, you know how teenagers are!* In the process of explaining, Lena talks about *being cool* and uses the example of wearing *the ugliest clothes ever* at home and her *good clothes* amongst her peers at school (where she said she is *just not how I really am*). Lena has told us that she is *not totally herself at school* and that at home she is *different* and, in the following conversation, says that when overseas she is also *different to how I am at school*, but we are left wondering whether that *different* overseas-self is the same as the *different* at-home-self.

I'm definitely different to how I am at school.

Can you say in what way?

Well at school you sort of act as if you're totally you know - you try to act cool 'cause that's the way you have to be, but in (overseas) I don't know um...

[Here Lena is a little lost for words and we dance around a bit trying to find the right question which helps her explain the 'difference'].

...Maybe describe - how is the day different?

Um - [silence]

Ah - I do different things. All I can think now is that I'm different my personality is really different when I'm over there.

I would always choose (overseas) over NZ - not 'cause of the weather or anything, but because I like it over there. Just the feeling of being there I don't actually feel like a tourist.

...when I'm in (overseas) I'm more myself - when I'm around friends in (overseas) I'll still act a bit like I do at school - all I know is that my personality when I'm over there is different. (These are) hard questions to answer - well you know how teenagers are?

Ha! That's at the heart of one of the questions of this study! ... I wonder really 'cause lots of adults do think they know how teenagers are, but I'm wondering if that's really correct or if there's a different view. That's why I'm asking you because you are one! So tell me - how are teenagers?

I don't know (laughs). There's no word for it really is there?

No there's probably not one word for it, but what's around it you know how sometimes you can't look at something and describe it directly, but you can look around it.

Um - you know - being cool like acting cool, like what's cool at the moment sort of thing.

Like liking certain sorts of music?

Yeah like following the trend is cool.

We've talked about this -

Yeah like at home I dress in the ugliest clothes ever 'cause - and often with heaps of my friends they keep their good clothes on, but I really look after my good clothes.

Like my jeans - I don't wear them anywhere but around people my own age. On weekends I don't dress like that 'cause I don't have to. (Lena 11a)

Our twelfth conversation ends up being our last (due to Lena's commitments) though we don't know it at the time. We haven't seen each other for two and a half months, 7 weeks of which Lena was overseas. In this forty-minute conversation she talks for more than half the time about her holiday giving details of things that were *good* and not so good. She talked about doing things with other teenagers and how she would like to have *done more* with them (*it wasn't enough*) and of how she felt lonely.

I was a bit sort of um lonely sort of thing cause yeah sort of - but yeah like we went - we did heaps of stuff. That's just some of the things. (Lena 12a)

Lena doesn't say exactly why it was lonely, but continues to talk about all the things she did highlighting what was cool and often using the word 'interesting' to describe the things that weren't so cool and she often puts in comments like: *I did other stuff so don't think that's all I did but anyway.* I ask her how she views her belonging either there or here (in New Zealand) now, since coming back.

So your holiday sounds wonderful. Before you went you know we talked a lot about you looking forward to it and how you felt you belonged in (overseas) more than you feel you belong here - how does that feel now?

Well I must say that when I came back I was like the first night total depression basically - it was - sort of - it wasn't like, that nice. (Lena 12b)

Lena went on to say how tired she was and *unbalanced* but how after sleeping she felt better but not *at all in New Zealand* and that when she first *spoke English (it) felt really weird.* She says that over the last few weeks if she hadn't had the opportunity to go riding so much that she would have been *really, really depressed.*

Because every night I was always a bit sad...but if I hadn't ridden, because riding makes me happy wherever I am, I would have probably been really, really depressed sort of - but I rode heaps which makes me feel better. (Lena 12c)

We finish our conversation with Lena telling me about her new friend (a girl who has recently joined her class).

I don't know it's really weird but since (my friend) came I'm having way more conversations with boys ...it's fun.

That's good 'cause we've had some pretty in-depth conversations about how you've been feeling in the class, hey, and there's been some times when you were like 'well I don't think I feel valued' - has that changed?

Sometimes like I sort of find like you said, not valued, but since I've got (my friend) I always feel, I don't know, really cool! ... I laugh way more! (Lena 12d)

In the end Lena is happy because she has found a friend and, just like the *popular girls*, she is having fun and laughing. In the end she is cool.

WATER Everything Comes Together

Over many months, my conversations with Lena, which consistently feature her longing to *fit in*, tell me that this is no passing phase. She believes she belongs elsewhere (overseas where her family lives, where she is *more (her)self* and her *personality is really different*) and she waits, confident that when she finally gets there she can truly be herself. Although the lead-in time to her trip overseas is long (about seven months) it comes into nearly all our conversations in second and third term. Who Lena is in connection with her family overseas and 'who' she is when she is physically there, is vital to her understanding of herself. That Lena is the Lena with whom she most identifies, the self that she notices and remembers, the self she 'invites' to be her and the rest of the time (which is in fact *most* of the time, at least linearly) Lena experiences a *worry* about fitting in with her peers or as she puts it, *at school*. Yet if Lena is focussing significant attention on the self she is when she is overseas, then most of the time she is unlikely to really feel at home in herself. Maybe she has forgotten herself and maybe when she has her close friend she connects enough to remember how she fits with herself.

Fitting In

Lena gives the impression that she cares what others think and that includes me. She tells her story about her overseas holiday in detail but takes care not to say too much about the negative things, even though she does make a point of saying them - just not too much about them. It feels like she wants me to get a certain impression and if she thinks she has strayed from that she covers over or 'corrects' her comments with a generalisation. An example of this is her comment about being lonely, which she didn't take to completion but covered with *...we did heaps of stuff...* (see *Lena 12a*).

It seems almost as if she balances out what isn't good with comments which kind of placate. But who is she trying to please? Whether those comments are actually directed at me is not clear. Another example is when she talks about her feelings of not being *valued* and not *fitting in*: *... it's like they've forgotten me - I don't think they have but-*. Lena is trying to be positive and, over and above the

worry that seems to lurk in the background, she looks towards things that make her happy.

Well - in the morning - 'cause I actually really find it hard at school like to - fit in I guess - and in the morning I always start with a fresh view and I try to be happy and try to start again... (from Lena 5c)

It seems that a significant source of Lena's worry comes from not fitting in her peer group. Lena used the term - 'popular' to describe some people in her class and seems to be comparing herself to them. She doesn't say whether she feels herself to be in that category of 'popular' or not. At first she almost implies she isn't, but then as we see in our seventh conversation, she gives the impression that she is possibly able to choose whether she *hangs out* with the popular people or not: *I think 'I'm going to hang out with the popular group'. I want to be cool, I guess, but whenever I go there I'm actually so unhappy.* The promise of being popular may be more attractive than the actual experience and Lena seems to be trying to reconcile this: it looks like fun; it sounds like fun, so why doesn't it feel like fun? Something is happening here: the picture that Lena has of being popular doesn't fit the experience. There is a fitting-in problem. Some answers to this lie in Lena's dot painting.

When Lena uses her dot painting as analogy to explain her life-world I hear that she likes things in their *right place* - in her *room* and in her *life*. It is as if she has an idea of where things should be and how they should look and when the outside reality matches her inner reality (her expectations) then things are *in balance or perfect* and she feels *good*. Conversely, if something is *not in the right place* she doesn't like it (see *Lena 10a*). It is reasonable to consider that for Lena her room is an extension of her. This is not an uncommon human experience that we like our private, special and intimate spaces to be just right for us - messy or not they need to fit us. For Lena, her room with the right things in the right places is a place of fitting and the order of things in this space is an expression of who she is. Taking this one step further it is my sense that Lena also has a preconceived notion or expectation of how (or where or what) she would like to fit amongst her peers.

Lena knows she has *strengths* and my impression is that she is bewildered as to why her peers don't see them and therefore notice or value her. As I live into

my experience of Lena I sense '*the importance of being seen and heard by others*'. For Lena a significant indicator of fitting in, is to be noticed and that means that she is valued - when other people talk to her and when she herself can talk and feel listened to. When Lena talks directly about talking to her peers, in *Lena 5a*, it is like a balancing act: *I can talk* (but I don't know what to say); *I do talk* (but no one listens). Lena recognises herself not fitting in, but she tries. The heartfelt speech from Lena in *Lena 5a*, has an unhappy ending though - the popular girls take up the talking space, take away the fun and she is left feeling sad.

Lena's drive to really understand the *popular girls* may be the outer manifestation of her wish to know her own heart. Lena says they are *weird* but she also calls herself *weird*. Twice Lena has put an "I" where she meant to say "it": she nearly say *I am popular, I am perfect*. The things she sees in her peer group are perhaps reflections of what she sees in herself. As I participate in the inner sense of Lena the evidence for this unfolds.

There is a sense here that Lena longs to be accepted in order to accept herself, to be popular with others so she is popular with herself, perhaps. Underneath her desire to fit in and be valued on the outside, is her desire to fit in and be valued within herself. This, of course, is oversimplified but shows how Lena weaves back and forth between fitting in with herself and fitting in with the world. As she balances what she thinks she wants and what she 'knows, or what she thinks she should know, or not know, and what she does truly know, it is her voice versus the world voice. Lena's sounding board is popularity.

The Popular Girls

The popular girls (with their *tight jeans (and) tight tops*) is a powerful and evocative image. Being *popular* has a far-reaching resonance in many cultures and societies and seems to be a particularly important pursuit in the teenage years (Noam, 1999). Fitting in and being popular can seem to go hand in hand. Lena speaks of *the popular girls* with some disdain, but there is also a yearning in her voice. To be a *popular girl* seems like something she wants (she is *jealous*), but doesn't want (she is *annoyed*) at the same time. Her ambivalence is portrayed in the comment below:

...with a lot of the girls I'm always on and off and I'm actually really - not jealous - but really annoyed that all the other girls they just all sit in and they never have huge - 'cause I even asked one of the girls do you ever have huge arguments where you won't talk to each other for like two weeks and they don't and I really wonder why I'm in that group of people that are all really - I guess they judge you with everything - um - I don't know they just take everything to heart and I think that's not really necessary because - um [she stops talking] (Lena 5e)

Revisiting this conversational moment - the pieces begin to fall into place. As I read this I hear Lena's voice saying nearly these exact words - *jealousy* and *annoyance* - and I am suddenly reminded of an early conversation we had. Yes she has told me this! It feels like I have suddenly discovered a deep secret. It is in our third conversation. Stunningly this conversation takes us inside to get the inner sense of Lena and glimpse her 'wanting and not wanting', her knowing and her not knowing. In the extract above the phrase towards the end - *they take everything to heart* - is my missing link.

At the time of our third conversation, she is telling me about one of the symbols she has drawn. She has created a series of symbols as a self-portrait showing *the types of feelings that (she) came across in the last 2 weeks* and is describing them to me. This particular symbol is a heart with wings. She says it represents a feeling she had while watching a movie. Our discussion is a poignant portrayal of how Lena and I unfold the layers of something in her heart that eludes naming. In the following rendering of our discussion, I have included only Lena's voice as she explores what I experience as the ineffable sense of becoming harmonious being, even though Lena says explicitly that the feeling is *not really harmony*, she also tells of her ambivalence, her love-hate relationship with this feeling (see Appendix 10 for the full text of this part of our conversation).

Sometimes when you just sit somewhere and your heart feels like really, really full - when you think about something...when your heart feels like it's just going to burst - sort of in a good way - it sort of hurts like

I don't know how to name it

Not really...harmony

Its sort of like...it's not a nice feeling - sort like jealousy and annoyance.

Full like full also physically so that it really hurts

and [sometimes] it's too full so its dripping.

I don't know how to explain it but you sort of- you want it but you don't want it to feel like that...

I felt it for maybe a minute...you feel it and then it goes away and you don't feel it anymore and it just slides past really...and when you get it again it sort of comes in.

You don't want it to be totally sad and not any of that in it, but you sort of want it balanced you don't want it - over - over flowing sort of thing.

I guess when you find the solution to solve it...I didn't solve it - I've never solved it.

I sort of want to 'cause it's sort of horrible like not nice - I don't like it

I think it's just my emotions...Its like an obstacle that you have to sort of...get over it really you know go over it...you just keep it to yourself and no one notices.

...so touching that it hurts!

When sort of like all your emotions happy, sad, everything comes together. (Lena 3a)

There is a Becoming in Lena's heart: an elusive, balancing movement which creates and is created by Lena's longing for her own belonging (to herself, perhaps). Her acceptance of her own light and shadow, her own love and fear, delicious and bitter at the same time, an obstacle which slides past, a barely graspable feeling of unity which leaves her wanting in its wake. Lena's experience is clearly very raw and very real. Her point of balance: *When...everything comes together.* When Lena wakes in the morning and *starts again...with a fresh view.* The picture this creates for me is a bit like this:

Lena wakes up in the morning and her 'pieces' (the pieces of her) fall into place.

Sometimes they are in the 'right' place, sometimes not.

She goes to school and she fits in as a 'piece of the class' - sometimes well, sometimes not so well.

Her feeling of fitting in with her class affects how she feels. When she fits school is good, and when school is good, then if things are good within her class. And things are good within her class when she has someone who sees her and hears her, someone who is her friend...and when that happens she can see and hear herself.

Can you see this picture? It is so beautiful: Lena, misty and angelic, is sleeping in her bed, in her room where everything is in its right place, even her, and around her glows innocence and boundless potential. As she opens her eyes she begins to solidify and as she rises like some mystical lady of the lake the pieces of her fall together in a certain order and there she is - on a good day - whole and happy. As she says: *in the morning I always start with a fresh view and I try to be happy and try to start again...* and when it works for Lena, she has a good

time at school, but when the pieces don't fall together in quite the right order then she *hate(s) starting a day like that* because *it doesn't give (her) any hope*. It does seem though, that ultimately the deciding factor on whether it is a good day at school or not, is how Lena fits in as a piece of the class. Even if she is starting fresh and her pieces seem to be in the right place in the morning at home, how she fits in with the class on any one day will dictate how she is feeling and have more impact on her than she has on herself. Again - her voice versus the world voice, and in this instance Lena is listening more to the world voice than her own.

It is not completely clear whether Lena's balance is usually good before getting to school or whether at times, she does start the day with a less than perfect balance. The suggestion is though, that Lena gives a considerable weighting towards what her peers think of her or perhaps, what she *thinks* her peers think of her. Thus Lena is potentially locating the responsibility for her happiness outside of herself, maybe 'diminishing herself in relationship' as Laura said in her comment about teenagers¹. She waits to be remembered: *they've forgotten me*; and invited: *no one ever invites me*. But has she forgotten herself? When she doesn't get invited, is she not inviting herself to participate in her life?

Perhaps it is just that Lena has high standards. She had said in our sixth conversation when we talked about role models, that she admired a girl in her class because *she can stand up for herself* and she was (apparently) unaffected by the ups and downs of the class and that no-one bothered her or teased her. Lena implied she would like to be like that. Perhaps this is the balance point where Lena envisages herself 'unaffected' by the others and able to hold her own. She seems to seek meaningful conversation and reciprocity in relationships. Her ability to distil what is good and bad about her life and to

¹ Refer to Laura 19a where talks about the importance of not feeling "diminished in relationships": "I think in a peer group ... there are times when it really matters who you hang out with and you're more concerned with whose cool rather than who we really belong with. It doesn't matter if you're a person who doesn't hang out with everyone. You don't need to do that. It's up to you who you connect with. There's gonna be people who you do and you don't. It's alright! How you feel is how you feel about it. I feel it's important though that you're not going to feel diminished in relationship."

recognise the balance point is potentially one of her strengths. She demonstrates an awareness of the world at large and is bewildered when her peers don't seem to connect with that in the same way and thus she doesn't connect with them. But are her standards too high?

The sense of seeking and recognising perfection is strong in Lena. She talks about *liking things (to be) perfect* and says that 'is sort of her'. She recognises perfection in her art - both its presence and its absence. If she feels that something in her artwork is 'perfect' she likes it and if it isn't, she doesn't. As Lena says *it makes you feel good I guess when something's in balance or perfect*. In fact when her self-portrait drawing loses its perfection, she says she feels angry. In Lena's quest for perfection she imparts a beautifully simple philosophy (paraphrased here by me):

"Things make you happy, things make you sad. Minimise the sad, maximise the happy. And even in the face of feeling sad every night or not fitting in, Wake up in the morning and start with a fresh view."

Lena has learned to get back on her horse and try again and in the process she discovers harmony.

I fell off once ... she did a little buck and I went up and landed on my feet - that was when the harmony was broken. Then I noticed that there was actually harmony, but before I just took it for granted. (from Lena 4)

In this brief moment Lena understands. She lands on her feet and notices harmony. As if by falling off her horse, she falls into herself and all her pieces come together and fit - perfectly!

AIR My Own Perfection

Perfection is a feather floating towards earth, beautiful and compelling in its freefall flight. We want it. We want what it has to offer. We want to be it. Yet as soon as we hold it in our grasp it no longer dances. A feather is nothing unless it flies. Is it not in the watching of the feather that we receive perfection within? The experience of the moment enters our soul and we are in that moment nothing less than perfection. We are the feather and we are the flight. Our hearts are full and everything comes together. Yet we only really understand this when we experience the 'not coming together' when things

don't work. It is there, but we don't experience its fullness until it leaves us. It is most present when it becomes absent.

Where I meet my own shadows
I am become.
When just one other person will see me
hear me, value me, fit me
I am become.
Happy is feeling my own power like riding a horse
being in control of my life, my destiny
belonging - you hear me and see me
when you fit me, I fit myself
my voice rings out and claims my beauty
what obstacle darkens my thoughts
blackens my mirror
clouds my beauty
- nothing but my own fear
a small scratching insect that awakens in my centre
and natters at night
doubting
my own perfection
to see past that which I am not
to where I belong
in my heart.

(My words in the poem above are my experience of Lena's sense of perfection.)

FIRE Perfection

Sweet Perfection, my quest for you is bitter wrought.

Your promise

mocks my game.

You slip from my grasp and fall.

I catch you empty-handed

Yet smile,

For I am on my feet and you

You fell into my heart.

Below are the words and the picture I gave to Lena as an expression of gratitude at the end of our conversations. I include these as an expression of how I experienced Lena after all our conversations, but before I undertook the Goethean layered listening.



**Thank you for
sharing your world
with me.**

**You are a gift
of great value
to all who feel
the warm glow
of your light.**

**Shine on
Beautiful Star
and run free
to follow your heart.**

Chapter 7. Crystal. *The Butterfly*

Well everything's connected. Everything's, you know, they say...that a butterfly's wings flapping here can alter something over there, but everything's connected into each other like if you put a positive thought out there then something positive, you know, if you put a thought out there then sometimes things actually happen ... and if you put a negative thought out ... lots of times something like that will happen ... throw-away comments that if we thought about at the time - we probably wouldn't make.

(Crystal 4a)

Prologue - The Butterfly Flutters In

Crystal and I had thirteen conversations. The butterfly first flutters in, in our fourth conversation at the beginning of second term (the end of April). At this point neither of us realises the significance of the butterfly, but we both embrace and enjoy the reference to the 'butterfly effect'. It is as if by mentioning it, Crystal has sent out ripples and 'called' in the butterfly - just like the effect she was describing. The butterfly lives more in the margins of our conversations than in the centre and only revisits us twice more as an explicit conversational topic. However, it becomes an active agent in Crystal's experience of her own personal space as Crystal tells that she has a fear of butterflies.

As shown above, the butterfly enters our conversational space under the guise of 'an effect' which describes the connectedness of all things - strangely Goethean. Just prior to this, Crystal has related an experience of a *mystic, outlandish, otherworldly beauty* she felt while tramping on Mt Ruapehu and we are discussing connection to nature and being part of, not separate from, the natural world; and so Crystal begins her comment with: *Well everything's connected*. When I ask whether 'the butterfly effect' has been a direct experience of hers, Crystal says very definitely *yes*. She talks about getting back *what you put out there* and she is adamant that one person can affect the *larger picture* and even *change the course of history* if you *follow your dream*.

The second time the butterfly enters is in our seventh conversation when Crystal is talking about her experience of doing a needle-felting workshop with her mother, where she chooses to make a small butterfly. This is where she tells

of her fear of butterflies. Not just a small fear, but a passionate aversion to butterflies: *I wouldn't even pick up a dead one.* Her mother, on the other hand, Crystal says, *loves butterflies* and collects them: *She's the butterfly lady.* Crystal relates an experience of having gone to a butterfly farm with her mother. She had gone at her mother's request, but she didn't enjoy the experience and found she was *quite overwhelmed.* Her voice resonates with distaste, almost disgust. As our conversation ends there is the pervading sense of unwelcome butterflies.

At the beginning of our next conversation (our eighth) Crystal says triumphantly, *I've brought the butterfly.* Here the butterfly enters as a piece of art which Crystal seems proud of. It is felted in blues and greens similar in size to a real butterfly (see picture next page). While I take photos of it, Crystal talks about her reflections on why she might be scared of butterflies: *I was thinking about - why I'd be - with the butterflies.* Interestingly, she actually omits saying the word for what she 'is' *with butterflies.*

...the only thing I really came up with was maybe something to do with control and not being able to have any control over a situation or something like that ...because you know like with butterflies all around you it's totally taken out, you know, they can just come at you or do everything, you don't really have control of your surroundings or things around you.

...But some people, like your mum, did she like that?

Mmm she was just like wanting them to land on her and...(she stops talking)

Right so she didn't feel, um, invaded or something?

No, but maybe it was like an invasion for me, felt like an invasion of personal space ... you know it's my space you know like ...I have quite a strong sense of that. (Crystal 8a)

Crystal compares her experience at the butterfly farm to an invasion of personal space and the layers unfold.

EARTH The Butterfly Makes Space

After the butterfly actually manifests as a piece of art, it seems to be always fluttering on the edges of our conversations. Crystal even wears a butterfly hair ornament one day, though she says she *didn't think about it* until she



saw me and then *she knew*. Following on from her comments in *Crystal 8a*, Crystal relates butterflies to people who she doesn't like coming into her personal space.

It's like if someone you don't feel you, you know, like or are friends with ...or you (don't) feel that close to, standing way too close to you and you're just like that's sort of your space and you don't feel they can come into that kind of space...you know it was sort of an experience like that... (Crystal 8b)

At this point I ask Crystal whether there are people who can come into her personal space anytime and she won't mind. Crystal is silent then breathes in and says *uh - I guess*, pauses and continues:

...there's always times when you totally want to be alone and you'd push anyone out kind of thing, so I guess it just depends on how you're feeling emotionally really as to whether you're going to let someone in if you want to, you know, if someone's going through lots maybe you know like problems and you were going through, you might not want to face that or deal with that or something.

What about mums and dads do they -?

Yeah - whenever really - you just sort of give in 'cause they're mum and dad but - you know, 'cause they have a right because they've made us everything that we are so I guess they have some sort of parental right. (Crystal 8c)

Many of our conversations include references to 'space' particularly 'personal space' but it has taken the butterfly to bring them more clearly to my attention. I am drawn back to our fifth conversation where Crystal responds passionately to an emerging discussion on adolescence and tells about her own personal space as a young woman in relation to school and her peers. She almost launches into a comment on making space for herself and 'speaking out about who you are'. As illustrated below (given in full in Appendix 11), she speaks clearly about her values and her experiences around upholding them. The following sequence of comments was over a period of about seven minutes. Here I have omitted my part of this dialogue in order to convey Crystal's voice more clearly.

All I say to people is just to be yourself but I guess you have to have the space to be yourself and I guess its other people allowing you to be yourself...

... but if they've got other people constantly throwing different messages at them and saying you have to be like this then it takes a stronger person to rise above that and be yourself but if you've been given the space to be yourself then you get to express yourself, you know there's so many mixed messages out there I guess - young girls and women... heaps of people just get sucked in.

... believe in yourself and that you can do stuff...

... my parents and ...the education I'm going through ... we get the space to be ourselves.

... to make that space you have to step out there and be different and not worry so much about what people think...if they have a problem with how I am then it's their problem not my problem...if someone wants to hate you then they're wasting all that energy...

...everyone's on a different path of learning about their awareness of how they're acting... (Crystal 5a)

She says that *awareness of how (you're) acting* is partly about *making decisions*: *The decisions you make affect lots of things ... you can do things but also - not doing things as well.* Crystal says this with reference to the decisions she sees some of her peers make and how they 'act out' and are *fake* doing things because that's what they think teenagers do: *Like they have a boyfriend because that's what you're meant to do.* But she reiterates her earlier point in *Crystal 5b* and says that: *people should be less worried about what others think of them.*

I really don't like it when people have this idea of popular - like this whole idea that people are better than them and that they're worse than someone else - how can you think that...what makes you better than someone? People sometimes say to me 'oh you think you're better than me' and I don't even answer. It's not even like that. I just don't want to be doing what you're doing...Instead of looking at (it as) if someone's better or worse, I feel its just different levels of awareness. (Crystal 5b)

Although I have got the message loud and clear by now, Crystal again passionately claims her individuality telling me in our sixth conversation that she won't: *ever be the stereotypical teenager. I can see what it's like and I have no desire to do that.*

Why do we want to grow up so quickly? People want to rush into being adults...I don't want that. (Crystal 6a)

Crystal is not interested in the media images of young women nor in the *clones* she sees 'downtown'. I ask her where, then, does she get her idea of how she wants to be and Crystal tells me with a laugh: *Instinct!* In our next conversation (our seventh) Crystal alludes to her instinct: *It's like you have some inborn sense of consciousness.*

One way that Crystal explores her different identities is to dress up as a clown and perform at children's parties or public gatherings. In several conversations, we discuss the clown. She says she likes to be able to be someone else: *you put something on and when you're that - you're that!...You're more liberated from what*

other people think. In being the clown you are free - not complicated. In our tenth conversation she brings photos to show me her different personas - the clown, the lady and the punk. It becomes another side, she says, and the clown balances the other two. We discuss the different qualities of each character which leads into a deeper discussion on identity. Crystal's voice takes on a level of authority.

The word identity - starts with I so it's talking about who you are and everything. What I'm thinking about is it's like leadership...is leadership something you can learn or is it something that's natural already in you?

So it's like you can have your identity - the basic things come when you're born and you pick up, you're given - and you sort of have a personality already then circumstances and people and different challenges can affect your identity and change it and I think some people probably fight against their identity or who they are because they don't want - the hardest thing is to look at yourself and sort of be judgmental - well - look at yourself really because - yeah [stops]

In a way that what?

Well to look at yourself you sort of have to face up to who you are and your problems and the good things and the bad things and things that don't work and things that do work and you know it's easy to face up to the things that do work...but you know it's facing up to those things before you can move on.

How do we know what our identity is? What's it made up of?

It's made up of the things you experience that affect you and your decisions - I guess your identity's basically everything - almost every thing - everything about you - you know - yeah.

Uh-ha! So - ?

So you sort of think - who am I and then you can go - I guess there's different levels of describing who you are - physical, mental, emotional - you can describe your characteristics ... or what you do - there's different levels - who you are in respect to everything, you know your identity is such a small part of such a big thing, world, universe, space.

Your identity is such a small part of a big thing - what's the big thing? Is the big thing you or is the big thing around you?

I don't know - its how you look at it (as) to whether you are a part of that thing or you're a part in that thing...you know like people - we're part of the world but ...are we necessary - you know? To keep the whole thing running?

That's a pretty good question. Some people would say yeah everyone has an important place.

[Laughing] and you wonder sometimes what people's places are!

...and is that part of the identity? Some people say we construct an identity.

Yeah we show different people different identities...Not that you're being untrue its just a different part of yourself that they can relate to better. (Crystal 10a)

Crystal is aware of being different *but she believes in what [she's] doing*. It's *always something that has been there*, she says, *...everyone isn't the same*.

If everyone's in a line and for someone to step out...people are obviously going to look at you...make judgements. (Crystal 10b)

Crystal is clearly passionate about being herself regardless of other people's opinions or judgements, but she is not unaffected by them. More than once in our conversations her voice is charged with emotion when she tells of conflict or being judged by her peers.

Like I had an instance today with a boy in my class and we've both got strong personalities and we just like clash you know...and I was walking along and he - I was walking to get next to the wall and he was walking sort of slightly there. He was the one who kinda had to get out of the way and he sort of just walked straight like made a thing so he was going to walk into me and I wasn't. I just kept walking straight 'cause I was next to the wall so I wasn't going to move out and around kind of thing - he just walked straight into me and I didn't do anything. I just kept walking straight you know and then he's like 'oh you fucken bitch' and I was just like 'Uh'! You know really offensive I was just like - I didn't say anything like people have no respect whatsoever - you know? (from Crystal 5a)

She also tells of how losing friendship caused her to question who she is. Crystal describes how her best friend and her have drifted apart because *something changed* in their relationship earlier that year. It is obviously still painful to talk about. *It can separate you*, she says as she describes how *gradually, their paths went different ways*.

You are going to go back to your identity and ask 'who am I'...its just 'cause things are changing it's not necessarily 'cause you've done anything. (Crystal 10c)

Identity comes up again in our twelfth conversation and Crystal talks again from a deep place. We discuss identity during adolescence and the way terms like 'identity crisis' have developed.

Maybe because a lot of attention is put on it, it makes it into something it isn't in some ways. People already have an idea about it and think they can twist things to be in that idea...Maybe it's describing change and how people react to change.

...I guess we have an identity. If we didn't there'd be nothing. It's the part that sets us apart, that we get to create. (Crystal 12a)

As Crystal talks I feel something in me drop into place. She is speaking again from deep knowing. She touches the *essence* as she tells about *people creating the identity they want as a shield ... to protect themselves but ... not what they wanted to*

be and then elaborates in a way that seems to put a new light on identity creation in adolescence.

You have all these identities where you're a different person for all these different situations and people, but it's like - who are you when you're with nobody, when no-one makes any demands of you, when you're totally alone and you don't have to be anything for anybody. I guess that's maybe when you are your true identity ... Your kind of essence of kind of 'cause I guess when you're with other people there's different [stops talking].

Even people close to you?

Yeah they still want something or you're giving something...so only when you're by yourself, can you be your true identity.

...Maybe when you cut off your connections to other things maybe that's when you're your true identity. Like maybe you're your true identity when you die, when you've cut all connections with the physical world or maybe closer to your true identity when you're born. (Crystal 12b)

I tell her how, in relation to identity, her comment about Steiner school being *the space to be yourself* has stayed with me.

Yes - the space to be yourself and be allowed to have your own identity 'cause people aren't, you know, always kind of, we get the space it's not right or wrong we just get the space to do that.

Does that mean you don't get judged?

Oh no not at all. I mean people make judgements wherever you are...It's just if you're happy with something then it doesn't matter...you know, possibly. 'Cause I mean obviously you do get affected by what other people think, I mean it's your choice whether you want to be affected or not, you can let it affect you or you can just let it pass. (Crystal 12c)

I remind Crystal of the moment in our first conversation when it seemed that she was deeply affected by her peers judgement.

If you think about earlier in the piece and that extract that I took out - you are talking about how sometimes you're being - you feel like your goodness is being - viewed as being bad.

Yeah.

And that's about how people are seeing you?

Yeah.

And then all the way through our conversations you've shown - my impression is that you've shown - a strength or something, a strength of being yourself.

Yeah. I mean I guess I've always sort had the desire not to be like everyone else - just - I don't know - it just sort came, just sort of there, like, you know, to be different. To be - yeah I guess it was, just sort of, I don't know where it came from or sort of where it stems from it was just always something that was just kind of there I guess...I mean

'cause some people are very happy just to float along or, you know like, just sort of be told what to do and in some instances you know that's, you know you just want to be told what to do and da da da but I mean, yeah I sort of - to be sort of interesting ...everyone isn't the same, but I guess there's different levels - maybe it gets back to confidence as well. (Crystal 12d)

Here Crystal describes being different. She has alluded to it many times during our months of conversations but now in our second last conversation she unfolds it to, what appears to be, its core. This is an unusual piece of conversation for Crystal. Usually she is more able to articulate her point. Here she seems to be trying to describe something indescribable: her deep sense of something that she is trying to put into words for my sake. In our next and last conversation, she simply says: *I know I'm different and I embrace that.*

In our final conversation we revisit many things we have talked about over our time together. An air of resolution prevails as if our rhythm and flow has led us perfectly to this point and all that we needed to say, has been said. Crystal seems in command and I find I am not wanting to let go. I have loved our conversations. Crystal tells me that she is in a *slightly more happier state of where I am* and that she has *stepped away* from the things that bother her *and focussed on what I want to do.*

Yeah sort of working things out. Learning to communicate more ... and creating a balance and more harmony I guess. (Crystal 13a)

When I ask how her relationship with her peers is now, she says that she doesn't give it as much attention because *people are only going to move when they move and change when they change* and that *you don't have any power over that.* She tells how she has taken this philosophy into her relationship with her (ex) best friend, the girl about whom she talked in our tenth conversation. She says that (now) she wonders *what I can do to make things easier* because she *recently realised* that she hadn't *communicate(d) that easily* and *internalise(d) things.* Now, Crystal resolves, she can *move away happily instead of not knowing...just understanding...if ever we need to...there was a space we could go to.* At the end of our last conversation we return to butterflies, but only briefly. I ask Crystal how she feels about butterflies now.

I don't know, I um - I'm still kind of scared of them en masse, but really love things with butterflies and collect them. (Crystal 13a)

As Crystal says, in this same final conversation: *A whole year's gone by and some things change and some things don't.*

WATER *The Inner Butterfly*

Crystal seems drawn to the butterfly as an image, but is repelled by the actual experience of butterflies in her space. Yet she suffers the trip to the butterfly farm for her mother's sake and ends up making a felted butterfly which, Crystal says, her mother loves and wants because *it is just her colours*. My sense is that perhaps the butterfly represents some of Crystal's feelings relating to her mother: as something that 'flutters' on the edge of her space but also invades it at times. She likes the image (of the butterfly-mother) but not always the concrete experience of it.

My impression is that while Crystal says that her mother, as a parent, has a 'right' to enter her space, that she may not always want that, but feels, maybe, obliged to let her parents in because *they made (her) everything that (she is)*. Having her own space is important to Crystal. My impression is that space means not just having time on her own where she can experience her *true identity*, but also space to be an individual, space where she is seen and heard (and maybe loved) in her own right. Space where she can stretch and grow and try on different identities and not be judged.

Crystal's passionate assertion of her difference is possibly easier for her to embody at school than at home. Perhaps her love and gratitude to her parents for 'making her *everything she is*', means that she is less likely to explore her difference at home. She tells me that, where her parents are concerned, she is *a good girl* and does what is expected of her. She says she *can't think of a time when (she) intentionally* went against her parents expectations. So as she speaks the following, is she 'stepping out' from home, out from what is expected of her, and asserting her difference in a school environment that she says, gives her the space to be herself.

...I think to make that space you just have to step out there and be different and not worry so much about what people think and just be like - if they have a problem with how I am then it's their problem not my problem kind of thing that's what I often think...like if someone's got a problem with me then I'm not going to worry about it

unless it starts to affect me kind of thing - if someone wants to hate you then they're wasting all that energy on it you know if its not affecting you then you don't need to worry about it. (from Crystal 5b)

I notice that Crystal says she is *not going to worry about it unless it starts to affect me*, which it would seem *is* the case with the butterflies, with her mother, and with her peers: they do affect her and she shies away from it. So on one hand Crystal is making a bid for her own space, the *space to be (her)self* where she can *step out and be different*, but on the other hand she is still exploring what, or who, she is exactly. She may be worried that, in order to assert her voice or express her identity, she may need to step outside or beyond the Crystal that others (particularly her mother) know.

Crystal seems to be moving between the image she has of herself and the image others have of her. She shows remarkable insight as she navigates what is at times a rocky road between socially acceptable ideas, peer conformity and her own feelings or level of awareness. Crystal's treatment of identity in our tenth conversation is thoughtful and also a little whimsical. She seems to enjoy the exploration and is able to laugh and cry wholeheartedly in the space of half an hour. This is possible I feel, because she fully engages with our conversation and because she is able to stand back and look at herself in her life. She uses the second person 'you' frequently in our conversations, especially as her passion rises.

On the one hand I see this as her not fully connecting with her own voice as an "I", but on the other hand I see this as being so engaged with what she is saying that it is as if she is speaking to the 'you' that may be the target of her message. The obvious one: *the space to be yourself*; and many others: *You have all these identities where you're a different person...You don't have to be anything for anybody...it's your choice whether you want to be affected or not...if its not affecting you then you don't need to worry about it....so only when you're by yourself, can you be your true identity*. It seems as if Crystal is standing outside of herself and telling herself these things. Maybe she is the 'you' that she targets.

She is probably being the many facets of herself, experiencing being in the world (I) and of the world (you). There are times, like when Crystal is describing being different (see *Crystal 12d*) that she mostly uses "I" though with

this particular conversation comes a level of unsureness as she says, many times, phrases such as: *I guess, sort of, you know, kind of, I mean*. By our final conversation she seems much more certain - *I know I'm different and I embrace that* - sounds like a clear bell. As if Crystal has (finally) found the inner space to express her voice and hear the notes of her *true identity*. For Crystal her difference is her identity: *the part that sets us apart...The part that we get to create*. And Crystal's space to be herself is her courage to be different and to live that difference.

Crystal tells me that her parents brought her up to *always do more than was expected of you* which, she says, *makes others happy* because they didn't expect as much in the first place. *So I've experienced that - and been very happy because you get the results*, she says. Mostly, Crystal says, she does what is expected of her at home and at school and is *a good girl!* She says this tongue-in-cheek, but I hear more. I hear our first conversation where Crystal told me through tears that it was hard being good when her classmates saw it as 'bad'. In this conversation, Crystal asked for the recorder to be switched off. It was a poignant moment. My journal entry from the time describes what happened.

Writing about the interview today...with Crystal ...I thought it was seeming difficult and she seemed distracted then halfway through she became emotional and I turned off the recorder...I said "are you ok?" and then I said "we can turn this off if you like" and she had tears in her eyes and she put her hand to the recorder as if to block it so I turned it off. And then we talked - I asked her to just say what was happening for her and said that this was just an open space for her - she talked about how the question about what was (her experience of) goodness had set her off - about how some people see you as good but that is like bad thing as if you are being too good and ...she is the oldest one in her class and sometimes it seems the others are just mucking around and she is trying to get on with things - I got the feeling that she felt peer pressure to behave in a certain way which went against her being true to herself...we talked about how being true to yourself can be hard (under those circumstances)...it was a difficult moment and it left some open silent spaces.

(Althea Journal on Crystal 1)

In fact the recorder was turned on again some minutes later (with her consent) and so we have by accident, as it were, a tangible space between her voices. The experience of this space can only be relayed by me and by Crystal's voice through me, but some sense of this space is also gained from listening to what occurred on either side of it. With the understanding that text can never replace

the experience of voice and gift the reader what the listener experiences: the silence, the stilted breathing, the sighs and gasps, the sounds of tears emerging, being there and slowly subsiding, this is what Crystal said:

People always say um you know like being good and everything – but sometimes they actually say that like a bad thing. And like – yeah like – that’s a bad thing. I guess that’s all from how people look at things...

[recorder stopped for a few minutes then recorder started again]

*Finding a place that – everything’s happening and finding my place in that. When everyone’s being kind of noisy. You just want to get on with it. Sometimes it’s hard to be yourself when others are – um yeah. I try to be true to myself. (from **Crystal 1**)*

An obvious question is: What was it that brought Crystal’s tears out? Maybe it was her experience of others perceiving her as ‘bad’ because she is ‘good’. Maybe it was her suppressed self that is ‘trying to be true’ but feeling the squeeze of other’s judgements? In this space between the flow of words, Crystal ‘dissolved’.

What is remarkable is that Crystal had the wherewithal to keep going, that she was able to stand outside of her feeling-self and show an understanding of the conversation purpose by consenting to the recorder being turned on again. Her words and her tears and the spaces between them clearly show her experience of navigating between her voice and the social voice and her (apparent) struggle with ‘finding her place’. Throughout the first conversation there was a quality to Crystal’s voice which carried ‘hidden or emerging tears’ - a fragility. Crystal’s first voice showed her vulnerability and her strength, not to mention her ability to witness herself and courageously continue in exploring her experience in front of someone she had only just met. The experience of living into this conversation brings me a sense of humility and gratitude. In the place where Crystal and I began unfolding together for the first time could live the first glimpse of harmonious being. Like a butterfly encased, alive in the space between Crystal’s words, watered by her tears, it begins to emerge.

We can take the butterfly metaphor to many levels. While her mother and other people flutter on the edges of her space like butterflies, occasionally invading, there is also an inner butterfly for Crystal. In Crystal, the butterfly is sometimes fear, a fluttering in the chest, anxiety, a shaky voice and many times a deeply emotional resonance and tearfulness. The emotion comes in waves -

fragility, pragmatism, fragility, strength - like the movement of wings. I can hear this so vividly in her voice. The quality of Crystal's voice is impossible to impart through a textual medium. Her insightful and sensible words stand in their own right, but the sound that frequently accompanied her deeper feelings and passionate statements had a mix of tears, fire, frustration, vulnerability and fragility as well as some kind of warm, central strength. Her hands would move in curvy lines around her body - usually to create the words she could find no actual speech for and her exasperated breathing, deep sighs and honest laughter punctuate and complement her insights. In a way *space* is also her inner butterfly, that dimension that Crystal feels, the sense of something that's always been there, the space to be different. Crystal says that she both has and wants *the space to be yourself*. She knows she is different (this is the space she has) and she is *learning to communicate* and *creating balance* (this is the space she wants).

She describes in detail, in our seventh conversation (coincidentally the exact midpoint of our 13 conversations) an experience of finding her point of balance. Given in detail Appendix 12, this is a beautiful speech from Crystal, clear and articulate, words and voice that reach into my soul. It is also a stunning example of Crystal's living experience of harmonious-being. In this description Crystal talks about bringing *everything in...to a point where it's all still* and then moving out to meet the world from that point of stillness. *It's something like being in balance, she says*. As the midpoint of our year of conversations it seems to hold and balance everything else, like the centre line of the butterfly where potentially there is stillness.

So I am left with my inner experience of Crystal as 'butterfly' though it was not me who brought this image to our conversations. Yet it is me who chooses, after all, to find Crystal as 'butterfly'. I couldn't say it is her 'true identity' yet it has become something that I identify Crystal with. It has become her Becoming. In that stillness something is forming, or *transforming*.

AIR The Butterfly Transforms

The young woman experiencing her beauty as a balance between her inner and outer worlds, her inner and outer shape; strong in her ideas about who she is, fragile and vulnerable as she flits and flutters in long horizontal spirals, sampling the nectars of life towards an unknown destination as she becomes. Butterfly Crystal finding her own space, her own voice, her own difference. Fragile beauty becoming.

FIRE Butterfly Shimmers¹

Shimmering as

Tears dissolving

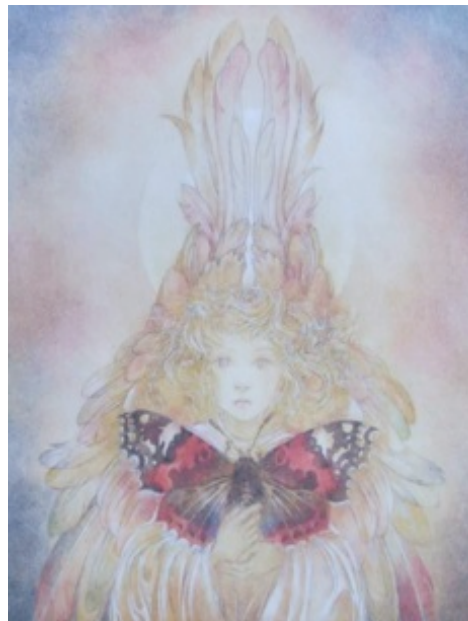
Vibrant wings

Out

Only for me

Out

I Am



her essential

self

layers she dreams

to flutter

unwelcome Ones Only here

Only

Here

"You have taught me to belong to myself, to laugh and to cry and to love myself for being alive and celebrate the many voices within us. Thank you for your precious gifts, your openness and astounding insight in showing me what really matters." (from Althea to Crystal)

¹ Just as in the picture I chose to give her as 'thank you' at the end of our study, the butterfly flutters in her and around her, but it is not her. For me, this picture by Sulamith Wulfing entitled "First Butterfly" represents my feeling of Crystal. Even though it is perhaps a bold possibility that Crystal would, as the girl in the picture does, physically hold the butterfly, metaphorically Crystal does carry the butterfly. The original words that accompanied this picture are given below it. The poem around it below is my final creative expression that transpired from writing this section. It is the point of fire, of me experiencing Crystal in me.

Chapter 8. Aries. *The Sounds of Silence*

Prologue - Silence and Stillness

Any conversation is composed of moments of sound and moments of silence. The sounds of silence¹ - the sounds *within* the silence, *because of* the silence and *around* the silence - are myriad. In fact it is the interplay, one might say 'the harmony', between the sound and the silence that gives a conversation its particular quality. In the meaning-making process of interpersonal communication, we tend to focus (at least consciously) on the sounds and movement within the conversation - that is the words, the way they are delivered and the body language that accompanies the delivery. We give our attention to what is said and the inflection of someone's voice and the momentum of where the conversation will take us. Less attention, perhaps, is given to listening to the silence and stillness in communication, though I believe much can be learned from doing so. Just as silence has its own sounds, stillness has its own motion. Sometimes silence is prolonged and presses in on us from the outside, the air around us seeming to hold its breath. Thoughts gather, emotions well up, knots tighten, but no words are spoken. Sometimes silence seems to well up from within when our minds 'go blank' or we experience a kind of void of feeling or thought. The frequency of silent moments in any one conversation and the quality of them, can tell different stories. When silence and stillness converge, the moment is tangible.

In this chapter I have chosen to listen directly to the silence. I work closely with one particular conversation to explore what silence, and the dynamic between sound and silence, says about the phenomenon of harmonious being. I listen around the silence to see what the sound tells me about the silence, rather than to see what the silence tells me about the sound. It is my twelfth conversation with Aries that provides my opportunity to go further into the sound of silence in conversation. In doing so I don't presume to be saying that 'this is all there is'

¹ The phrase '*the sounds of silence*', is borrowed from that the song of the same name written by Paul Simon in 1964.

of Aries, rather to say I hear the resonance of one of the ways she experiences harmonious being through the sound of her silence and here in this chapter I unfold the sense of who she is in that silence.

Aries and I met 17 times, usually after school and often for longer than an hour at any one time. We covered many topics in our conversations and often talked easily though I am left with an overall sense of 'not quite getting there'. I don't know exactly where 'there' is but I know the feeling of getting there. It is a familiar sense of place or space that is possible in conversation when speaking and listening reach beyond the surface and we begin to communicate soul to soul. Maybe 'not quite getting there' is in fact more like 'not quite getting her' and so I am driven to try to understand Aries further. To see her comprehensively, in her authentic wholeness.

I consider this conversation to be an example of something reasonably rare because rarely do we, in our everyday lives, stay with a conversation that doesn't really seem to be going anywhere and seems sluggish and difficult. In deciding to include this conversation, and my experience of Aries, I am also motivated by my own need to understand her. So often Aries said that she couldn't *be bothered* and I now, in living into who she is, in listening through her layers, am driven to take the alternate position and *be bothered* to go beyond the silence and explore what on the outside seems a halting conversation about fairly everyday things. And this is difficult because in meeting the inner layers of Aries, I meet my own silence and stillness and literally have trouble finding the flow and motivation to write.

Our twelfth conversation was a Friday afternoon in late August and we talked for nearly an hour and a half that day. Throughout the whole conversation there was a pervading silence. Alongside the silence, or perhaps because of it, there was a stillness that pulled at our edges as if we couldn't find the momentum of the conversation, until at the end of an hour and a half, we came to a quiet, empty stop. I tried, but I couldn't even make Aries laugh at the end of our conversation. Significant parts of the conversation were about the difficulties Aries was having with friends *being fake*. She said that there seemed to be very little that she was enjoying *at the moment* except her experiences of

awkward silence which strangely, our conversation seemed to embody. Then, just over half way through our conversation, the 5Ls emerged and they seemed to split through the darkness and heaviness of the silence: *love, learning, laughter, letting go, light*. Other than this brief reprieve though, the experience of the conversation was like navigating in the dark, groping for possible topics that may hold her interest and bring her voice out and into the open, into the light. The heaviness is so tangible that I fumble in the dark looking for something to 'lighten up' our conversation. In the end, the silences become stepping stones for understanding.

EARTH Silence Like Darkness

We talk about many things but none of them for long. Comments on her home and family; her friends and school, punctuate the silences of our conversation. Aries and I weave in and out of a discussion about a close friend at school (let's call her 'Mary') who is *going through a stage at the moment* and who she is *really angry with*. The word 'connection' comes up several times in our conversation and Aries frequently mentions that she *can't be bothered* connecting with her peers, particularly with friends who are *fake*. We also discuss her difficulty with getting enough sleep and 'being tired'. The conversation is slow and has stops and starts punctuated by silence. We even talk briefly about silence as a topic. We discuss music, school and life. She is *fed up and tired* with life; *sick of the place* and *fed up with friends* at school. I ask whether there are any friends in her peer group that she "can connect with in the way you want to connect". She answers: *Don't really think I can with them - no-one really at school. All the people that I want to (connect with) are just far away it seems*. I ask her what is it she is looking for in a good connection or satisfying relationship.

I don't know. I just want to be able to talk to someone - whatever I want to say...Just be myself. Lots of people are just fake these days - tend to be someone else. I don't really want to go into that so I don't pretend to be their friend. Authenticity! (Aries 12a)

We meander for a brief while and then I ask her: "What are the characteristics of the fakeness?"

Fake smiles. You can always tell when someone's not really smiling...if you know lots of stuff has happened and they just ignore it and just talk about things that don't get to the truth or whatever. They just skirt around it so they don't want to get into the danger

path or whatever. They ask 'How are you?' but they don't really want to know. I answer them how I really am - but most of the time they don't even hear me so it doesn't matter. (Aries 12b)

Aries explains how when she doesn't respond to what her friends say, it creates an awkward silence.

I just make an awkward silence. I quite like that actually. [Laughs] It makes them uncomfortable. I'm really liking 'awkward silence' at the moment.

So what do the other's do in the awkward silence?

Walk away if they can, just try and avoid it, make some stupid comment.

Why don't we like awkward silences?

I don't know - I love them!

That probably means they're not awkward for you.

No - not really - Kind of because they're not feeling good. I just kind of laugh at it. I normally find myself smiling when they're all awkward. It's kind of funny.

(Aries 12c)

I acknowledge what she has said here with an "mmm" but don't pursue the subject any further. Here there is a small silence. Returning to our conversation about connecting, I ask: "So have you not been met by anybody - at your level?" and she says, *Not really ... not in the class.* I say: "I wonder what that is?" No answer. I say: "You know how the more used we get to somebody, sometimes we just don't notice them in a way. Do you think that happens in the class group?" No response. I ask: "Do you think that you did have any gutsy close connections?"

Yeah I did - with Mary. She's going through a stage at the moment - she's not even acting like a proper teenager. The other people in my class are getting sick of her too. She's just over the top and stupid. I'm really angry with her.

What does she do that is over the top and stupid?

She's always texting guys...just typical slutty stuff.

Can you see anything behind that - sometimes people take those paths because of a need inside?

Yeah. (Aries 12d)

Short comments like *Yeah* are succeeded by silence. I ask her if she can talk a bit more about her experience of having to work through her problems with Mary.

I don't know what to do with it. She's not noticing that you need a friend.

Do you think friendships change shape, maybe you move on?

I want to stay her friend, but not at the moment. It's hard 'cause I'm with her all the time. (Aries 12e)

Aries explains that they are at school together *all the time* and I ask her whether she only has two options: "You are either friends or you hate each other?" She says, *No we could just be on speaking terms but I don't want to. I'd like to get along with her.* Here I am quiet for a while letting the silence just be there. I acknowledge her earlier statement that she *just want(s) to be able to talk to someone* and ask whether it helps to "just sit in this environment and just talk."

Yep - I guess.

So - if you had someone that you were talking to, what would you - what else would you be saying, what more would you want to talk about?

I don't know - anything - I'd just see what I talked about.

Which is kind of what's happening now in some ways - yeah?

[And - she laughs and I laugh and there is a kind of awkward silence].

So?

[I leave a space but she is silent]. (Aries 12f)

So we move onto talk about something that has come up in nearly every conversation - her relationship with sleep and insomnia. I suggest that maybe "the sleep thing" doesn't help her current feelings. I ask if anything has come up on that and she says, *Like me going to sleep you mean?* and I laugh and then apologise for laughing and say, "You do sleep? But not what you perceive as enough?"

We discuss the possibility of doing some meditation. The conversation is sluggish - in that she is mildly responsive, but not talkative and I am initiating the conversational pathways. Her voice is sounding flat and disconnected - like she is tired or bored. So I ask her: "What is exciting you in your life?" She says the possibility of going away to do an exchange and a specific out of school involvement she has, but that they are *far away*.

So - if you pulled it back to now, the next few days?

Nothing! [laughs]

What about the music? The chance to perform?

Yeah. I was excited. There's not really anything alive in me at the moment.

(Aries 12g)

We explore this last statement a little but to no ends and I ask whether the "stuff" between her and her friend is the thing weighing most heavily on her and she says *Probably*. We continue to discuss her immediate plans to see her friend and the conversation is still slow with me needing to push it along. Lots of silence and slow talk, but we go quite deep. We kind of get into the flow of this and Aries is a bit more engaged talking about her friend. I ask her whether she thinks her friend needs to step back and work with something that's going on for her and maybe it's not just about Aries she hastens to say, *Oh yeah - it's not about me at all.*

The one thing Aries continues to talk about is her friend: *She wants to make a big drama so everyone feels sorry for her ... and then I think well how am I even her friend? She's not like that all the time, but it's been going for so long that I kind of think that's who she is - and I don't like this person.* I say that maybe her friend is just showing a different face and ask Aries if she has ever shown her friend a different face?

Yeah - I've just been really myself and that would be a different face to her - can't be bothered being fake - just for other people just pretending to be someone else - it's just naturally happening everyone does it ... just can't be bothered anymore - so that's probably a different face to her - she doesn't really notice.

What did you 'used to show' before you showed yourself?

Well I did show myself - yeah I don't know. [Silence]

Is it being more outspoken? That you express opinions more readily?

She doesn't want that, but I do it 'cause I don't care anymore.

Is it something you now more confidently do? Just say what you think.

It's not kind of confidence it's just that I don't care - anymore - it's not really confidence, I feel kind of uncomfortable but I just do it 'cause I'm just kind of over it.

Over the fakeness?

Yeah. Just over what they think of me anymore.

But where did that happen? Is it something that has happened during this year?

Yeah - I don't even know if it does happen or not I'm just talking ... I just say what I think. I just say it, but they don't hear me anyway. I could just say whatever and they won't realise what I've said, but it hasn't always been that way - I think it's just Mary - it's not they. I'm a bit confused.

Do you think there's a positive side to being confused?

[Laughs] *Maybe!*

From that can come understanding?

Or you could just have an understanding? Without being confused? (Aries 12h)

The conversation is still hard to get flowing. She is silent then says: *It's weird. The people I get along with are never here.* I say that things have their time too, things have their lifespan and friendships have their life and that people change so that the friendship changes, and she says: *I kind of want to let go of her.* I ask, "Do you think we have little things that help us grow?" She is silent. I am silent too as I search for something else to say and I remember a conversation with my son that morning. I tell her that he asked me: "Mum, what are the 5Ls in life?" I say that I came up with "Love" and "Learning" and ask Aries what she thinks the rest are. She says *Laughter* and then is silent. I ask "What we were talking about - life is a learning curve about love? Sometimes you have to - ?" and she says *Let go?* We smile and then are both silent searching for the fifth L. I look up to the ceiling and say "ah" and together we whisper *Light!* Then she says *light and darkness.* That's it - a strange kind of interlude in our conversation that lasts for about 2 and a half minutes. We are both silent and so I ask more about Mary.

So do you think you could learn to be in a different way with your friend?

Yeah sure, but I don't want to.

Right -because?

I don't know - I just want her to change and her to fix it. I can't make her change.

What's best for you? You can't place your well-being in the hands of someone - waiting for someone else to come and fix it.

[Silence]

Or doesn't that make sense

[quietly she says - barely audibly] *Mmm, yeah kind of-*

[Silence]

Yeah - I don't really want to be friends with her anymore. If I had my choice I'd just leave and not see her, not try and change her, just wait. To me it seems like its not going to happen for a while.

These are the times when we learn a lot about human relations - there are times when we want to just chop something off and get away, but you can't exactly so you have to navigate your way through it, but you've got a lot of skills and a lot of heart.

I'm just sick of trying.

Do you want to be helped or met?

[Silence]

Do you ever think sometimes in our lives we have these bigger life tasks or purpose?

Yeah.

[Silence]

Or is it different karma?

[Silence]

I think some people maybe carry a bigger torch a bigger purpose - that must be the case 'cause some people plough through heaps of crap and make amazing change and bring incredible love and light to the world - as if its their destiny.

And there's people that make crap - like Mary. (Aries 12i)

She goes to the toilet. The door squeaks and the room is silent. My thoughts in the silence are: the atmosphere is low energy for her, but I am bright. She comes back and asks (referring to the study): *What would happen with this if I leave?* "Nothing" I say " it just stays if that's ok. Whatever happens in people's lives is part of the bigger picture."

[Silence]

[I mention the an education conference I'm going to]. That will be the first time I go and share what's happening in this study.

[Silence]

I think and write about what we talk about - and find amazing things like - what happens in the quiet times - how silence is as much a part of conversation as words - and things like that. (Aries 12j)

Aries continues to be silent. My voice sounds like I am talking to an answer-phone, not expecting a reply. There is none even though I leave spaces. I tell Aries I will miss her if she goes away. She says *Yeah*. I try to make her laugh, she doesn't and we finish.

WATER Silence Becomes a Path

As I step into the water stage, I try to sense into what is moving in Aries. Outside of me, sitting over there, as a person separate from me she appears like a flat board with an occasional sharp nail sticking out. The nails are just there and they, like the narrow scope of topics Aries wants to engage in, are waiting, still and sharp. Her voice is flat, disengaged and passionless most of the time, like the board, like she *is* bored. When she is engaged, when something grabs

her attention, her voice peaks and there is more emotion, but sharpness underlies her voice during these peaks. She seems tired and apathetic. There is very little that really comes to life in this conversation. As she says, *There's not really anything alive in me at the moment.* The most alive part of the conversation is the place where we co-create the 5Ls and, that is short-lived virtually forgotten as we return to the same conversational atmosphere that we had before they came.

I notice that I get tired listening to these conversations, but as I listen again and again, I see into the silence more and into the spaces between the words. What lives there, in what she is not saying? What sounds are there in the awkward silence that hangs around us, that she laughs at and says she likes? I can hear the interplay between us - the rare moments when she is interested and passionate and keeps talking and the (more frequent) flatness of voice. I can hear when we hit a kind of stasis and it becomes difficult to move along like we are hovering in one spot.

It is almost a breath-holding silence. Awkward at times, yes - awkward in the way neither of us knows what to say next, in the silence being a tangible space between the words, a space full of unsaid things, perhaps things too 'hard' to say. *Not* awkward in being uncomfortable, because we have been here before, we just 'are' with this and letting it be, navigating it together, yet it is her momentum that dictates the pace and it is slow and heavy.

Her comments about her friends resonate of being *tired* and *not bothered*. She is unhappy about how things are with her friend Mary and she wants Mary *to change and Mary to fix it.* She says she has stopped caring, and yet is still caring enough to feel hurt and to hold on when she also says she would let go if she could if it was 'her choice', though it is not clear why she thinks it is not her choice. Following each silence, I try to pick up a thread to move the conversation along. I keep doing this throughout our conversation until I finally run out and we finish. We literally run out of things to say.

One way to explore this further is to create a picture of where the silences come. I have done this by copying the text for the Earth stage and capitalising and highlighting the word silence or silent and then reducing the to a small (8 point)

size (see Appendix 13). This gives me a different perspective and now the highlighted words look like stepping-stones on the text. They give me the sense of pause and gathering and they stand out like lights along a dark path. By turning the patches of silence into lights, they can now act as a guide to help me navigate the territory of our conversation and of Aries herself, and make what was, in the act of conversation, 'a navigation in the dark' into a sign-posted journey illuminated by the silences along the way.

What I see and hear in these silences are 'pregnant pauses' full of possibility and a voice waiting. They create in me a feeling of anticipation, even of hope - waiting and wanting for speech and movement to occur, for something, anything to come out. In this particular conversation, when something does come tumbling out I grab it and try to run with it, try to weave that thread into our conversation. I will it to take hold and grow. The threads don't take hold and the silence returns. But I know the possibility that lies dormant in the darkness of the silence. This possibility is beautifully illustrated in our second conversation, which shows an engaged, lyrical Aries. The background to this is that in our first conversation when I asked her about her experience of harmony Aries said:

Harmony – oh god I really don't know...I was wondering - I don't know I don't really know what it means. (Aries 1a)

We got no further in that conversation: Aries 'did not know'. However, in our second conversation 19 days later, she did. When I asked her again about harmony she shared some thoughts she had written down to bring to our meeting.

Ah - fine light, connections with another soul, exquisite sky of sunset beauty, music, surface on a still lake, time spent doing what you love, a fragrance of flowers and clean clear waterfalls, harmony is art, a roaring fire, glistening auras, warm flames, and the sound of gentle rainfall. (Aries 2a)

These words are such a contrast to her 'not knowing' and her silence! In this second conversation prior to sharing her words on harmony, Aries talks about a song she has just written called *Who'm I Gonna Be?* and this discussion gives another clue to the possibilities that lie in the silence. It also shows that the thread of "I don't care" appears very early in the conversational process and

unfolds another layer of what that means. We pick up the conversation where she is explaining her process of writing the song.

I haven't actually found any other way so far in my life to get questions out and things out other than in songs and I was sick yesterday...so when I am sick I just don't care anymore so I just get everything out.

Aha...you say like everything comes out - is it like the barriers come down or -?

Oh I just don't care anymore.

You don't care and so - ? And yet from a not-caring point of view something really that is hugely caring comes out!

Yeah.

How does that work?

I don't know - it just happens.

[We both laugh]

I don't know...I had a fever, when I have fevers - I talk in my sleep and heaps of stuff just so comes out and so when I'm not so sick I can't do anything, I try and get it out in song.

Where is all that stuff otherwise?

Oh god - [laughs] well it seems like it's in my head, tumbling round in my head, but I don't know, some spiritual place probably.

Aha, yeah, so it's around you somewhere, but it's not always in you?

It's connected to me somehow, it's not really in me all the time. (Aries 2b)

My journal entry that night talks of secrets and it tells me now that I sensed a 'hidden-ness' of knowing in Aries, as if she was holding something she wasn't going to share immediately, if at all.

Who am I is the question, The secret history of me,

The secret life of me, Secrets in harmony. (Althea Journal on Aries 2)

Aries does say a number of times that she feels she has *knowledge* that she can't always share and that potentially makes her *different*. What I feel in me of her is a need to get the secrets out (*to just get everything out* as she says at the start of *Aries 2b*). It is a need to be heard, a need to be seen. This could be related to her feeling of disconnectedness from her friends and even from her life (*There's not really anything alive in me at the moment*) as she seems disconnected from her feelings, her deeper thoughts, from her joy of life. She is still, however, connected to her anger about her friend (*I'm really angry with her*) and her feelings of disenchantment or disillusionment with people's *fakeness*. So in

tandem with that disconnectedness is a connectedness to some intense feelings. Even her intense 'not caring' shows she is feeling on the one hand, but with the other hand, she sweeps this away from her: *I can't be bothered* and *Most of the time they don't even hear me so it doesn't matter*.

Again I get the sense that by inverting the actual (*the actual* as what we read in the words), its opposite might be revealed (as in what we hear in the silence). What that means is that just like I turned the patches of silence into signposts, instead of being like black holes in our conversation they invert to being guiding lights; Aries comment about it not mattering that (or because) she isn't heard by her friends tells me that in fact it does matter and that she wants to be heard. When she says she doesn't care, I hear a deep caring. Aries seems to care but not care; to know but not know. When she is silent she is holding so much to say. She seems to touch into deep knowing spaces and then stop. She says she 'knows', that she is aware of the relational dynamics around her and that she has the skills to navigate them, but that she 'can't be bothered'. Sometimes she says she doesn't know and then elaborates it seems like she is caught between knowing and not knowing which culminates in her being *confused*: *Yeah - I don't even know ...I just say what I think... I just say it, but they don't hear me anyway. I could just say whatever and they won't realise what I've said but it hasn't always been that way - its not they - I'm a bit confused* (see Aries 12j).

This sense of contradiction emerges frequently through our conversations. The contradiction - when Aries backtracks on a statement or seems to shift her viewpoint - is a kind of a hallmark and for me paints a lemniscate picture of her swinging around the neutral middle ground of 'not caring' towards 'not knowing' or 'knowing', from believing one thing and then claiming the 'opposite'. The pattern I see is that as soon as her position is looking like it is polarised or established, she seeks to shift it. Aries describes an intense dislike of being *labelled* - a discussion about which comes up in several of our conversations. In our final conversation Aries reiterates her stance - she doesn't like being labelled. In the following conversation, which discusses labelling and her views on the experience of adolescence, is again the pattern of the lemniscate as she fluctuates between knowing and not knowing around not

caring and yet still finding she is *bothered* by what people think. In the very first comment below Aries says virtually in the same breath: 'I don't care but I do'.

I don't really care what people think - part of me just doesn't give a shit - like whatever - it's their own issues...but like it still bothers me, you know...I just wish the whole view of people could change 'cause that's just about the past, but it's way different now. They think of that stuff because of the past and how we're brought up etcetera, over the years....I just wish that things could change that kind of like bothers me.

Can you explain that further - who are the people and what in the past?

Like that teenagers are going through moodiness and labelling it like that, instead of seeing it was something different. I just wish they could see it was different...that's what bothers me. I just wish they could see it was different, see the real thing not just what they think about it...and that's why it bothers me what people think. It doesn't change how I am. I'm not going to change 'cause they think that, but it does bother me...'cause everything has changed.

How can you get people to see things differently?

I don't know. Just do little things, keep trying all the time.

Is (it) the people closest to us that we'd like to be able to see us most importantly?

Mmm. This woman ... talks to Mum and says - 'maybe she's just going through a hard time - just leave her alone'. But maybe we don't want to be left alone at this time - even though we say we do - but then I just want to close the door and be left alone. Maybe just being seen.

Acknowledged?

Yeah.

But not talked to very much?

Yeah not labelled - that's what it is ...Yeah 'cause in my case it could be something way more than that and they just think you'll get over it. (Aries 17a)

The strong sound of Aries voice saying *I just wish they could see it was different ... that's what bothers me. I just wish they could see it was different, see the real thing* resonates with a tangible invisibility which is also present in her earlier conversations (such as in Aries 12j where she says, not for the first time, *I just say it but they don't hear me anyway*). She is not *heard*, she is not *seen*, by her friends, by those that matter. This sense of invisibility is as pervasive as the silence: the silence - where things are not heard; the darkness - where things are not seen. And in this invisibility is an intense longing to be seen. Is Aries saying here - I just wish they could see *me*? Is she the *real thing* that she wishes could be seen? To be seen and heard and not *left alone*?

Aries has much to say when she does speak about something that matters to her: her friend Mary; her dislike of being labelled and in our many conversations much about her family; her spiritual connections and her personal journey of grief and healing through family violence. Her love of music and her inclination to write songs and "*get everything out*" carried her through the year so that by our seventeenth conversation she had written and performed many songs. Her song, "Thank You Darkness" brings her into the light, and she claims her own power of knowing and caring. Her songs have very literally brought her into visibility in her community, among her peers and thus, in the world and perhaps, more importantly, she has begun to see herself. Through singing out her words to others, through performance, she is finally heard. Aries has her voice and it is strong and clear.

So how do the 5Ls fit in? They seem unrelated to the overall gesture and yet they are steps to understanding, signposts on the path imparting a sense of hope. They are like wild cards, which for a moment, capture our attention and draw Aries and me away from our selves. They elevate us to a space of connection with all humanity. These 5Ls are the high point of this conversation, the centre from which everything else spins out. The 5Ls were unexpected gifts that popped out of nowhere and then stayed hovering around us as spaces of possibility. They offer a reprieve, a space, an opening where possibility steps out and manifests into clear pathways, ways of being and actions to take. Each of these five resolve some aspect of Aries and live as gifts of possibility. The Light resolves her darkness, the invisibility; the Laughter resolves the silence; the Love resolves the 'not caring'; the Learning resolves the 'not knowing' and the Letting Go takes our 'pregnant pauses' into the birth of herself.

AIR Becoming Sound

But is this all there is? Only despair, only a pit, just a flat wasteland where you stand hugely alone as if you are in the centre and it all turns around and around spinning faster and faster until you finally cry out and it is lost in a void - a soundless, nameless voice. Is this all there is? Your tiredness and your sickness are your cave of making where you become as you weave your songs to take out into the world. I can hear you in this 'getting-there' place. I can hear you

hearing yourself, howling out across your ancestor's mountains. A voice from the belly, which booms out across the sands of time. I can see you in there, shadow upon darkness, waiting...waiting...spinning silence into laughter, becoming sound.

FIRE Darkness Resolved

a drum beats and there is a clay path
tears should fall
yet it is dry
desert plains stretch flat lifeless

bounded by silence
a flower flaunts her beauty
dares love, learning, laughter, light
lets go - into silence

in a breast that heaves
huge sighs of disbelief at the world
and spins around a point of caring
so deep - it hurts.

(poem by Althea)

These are the words and picture I gave Aries at the end of the study.



This you have
taught me:
Everywhere there is
a path if we let
our feet carry us,
no terrain too difficult,
nor too vast. There is
beauty in everything,
even when our shadows
see larger than us
they must always
follow after us
on the road
we have chosen.

we have chosen.

Chapter 9. Sophia. *Becoming Nothing*

Prologue - I Don't Know

Sophia and I meet after school and talk. Very quickly we settle into a space that we enjoy and the conversation flows easily. Our conversations average about an hour and a half with our longest one lasting for just over two hours. We meet 17 times. Sophia is expressive and talks passionately about many aspects of her life. She is particularly moved by a desire to give to others and spends a significant amount of time during our 'year' working with special needs children, particularly those with autism.

Sophia is animated when she talks and her words are punctuated by many different sounds and the explicit use of her breath to emphasise important points as well as expressions of frustration when the words aren't available to her. What we encounter in our third conversation takes us both by surprise. It is a revelatory moment that explodes into our midst and then becomes a resounding *Nothing*. We both experience a significant shift in our conversational space and in ourselves. It is an epiphany and yet it is unnameable and elusive. This moment haunts the rest of our conversations as I look for it to take form, but it doesn't. Instead, Sophia seems to become around it. This chapter unfolds the layers around 'the Nothing moment' as it slowly becomes; then weaves together the poignancy of this moment as a catalyst for Sophia's becoming.

At the beginning of our third conversation, Sophia tells me she is exhausted. *There's too much stuff everywhere*, she says, as family and school demands loom. She wishes she *could freeze this thing here and that thing there - that would be fantastic!* We talk about simplifying life.

How do we simplify our lives or do we like to complicate our lives? So when you feel there's lots of stuff - what is it that's happening in you, you know, in you?

Exactly - you can't give your attention (to) or focus on something you might want to focus on. You have to do it in general perspective - a little bit here and a little bit there - and its just sort 'bochhhh' - not really anything - I don't know um. (Sophia 3a)

This is the first of many times when Sophia will say *I don't know* in this conversation. As the conversation unfolds towards the Nothing, Sophia's 'not

knowing' builds to a crescendo and then becomes the focus of her *hate* as she tries to articulate her experience of the Nothing moment. Our conversation continues on and for nearly an hour we talk. We dance around different topics and while it's not hard to talk, it is hard to hold the focus and deepen our conversation, as Sophia has unwittingly predicted in her comment above. Often Sophia loses her thread. Just as she seems to be on the track of something, she stops and says *I don't know* and it feels like we slip back to square one and start again on a different angle or a new topic. So we talk about her philosophy main lesson at school and again she seems to come to a halting stop. She is telling me that she didn't enjoy her lesson and then she stops abruptly and says: *Yeah - I don't know what I'm on about.* Finally, I bring this to her attention.

You keep saying that - have you noticed that? When you listen to these (conversations) you're going to hear that statement a lot of times - 'I don't know!' It's quite interesting, but I actually think you do. (**Althea in Sophia 3b**)

Sophia doesn't respond directly to my comment but goes on to talk about her class and again her words come to a stop. I seem to be asking a lot of questions to try to get things going. Sophia tells me she wants *to say all this stuff* then doesn't finish her sentence. I ask her "What happens? Does it actually form thoughts?" *Yeah, sometimes I can get it all out and it's all good and sometimes it just dissipates and I have to quickly catch it.* Minutes later she says in a frustrated way: *Where is my mind today - its gone!* Then a little further on: *There are some things, no there isn't - ahhh oh my god.* And again: *Something's wrong with me today I cant focus. What was the question again?*

Again we change tack. We speak of right and wrong and moral stance. I give an example of an argument between two children and one being mistakenly blamed for hitting first and then having to say sorry. I mention the phrase 'moral stance'. Sophia is right with me and responds clearly, but then quickly loses the thread.

Well you didn't need to hit back in the first place! Of course when you're a kid you don't really tend to comprehend those questions but - um yeah - sorry I can't even remember what you said - what was I meant to be saying? (Sophia 3c)

Sophia was not *meant to be saying* anything, but she is clearly distracted. I tell her that I will try to shorten my comments and that I'm trying to get her "to talk

a bit longer than me!" At the same time I am trying not to have an expectation of what our conversation should be like, but I also find I am beginning to wonder how on earth to engage Sophia. With that thought I start another thread and ask her: "Have you ever felt you wanted to do something even though it was against other people's expectations?" *Yeah*, she says and stops. "Example?" I say and she says: *Mmm - these examples aren't coming to me today are they?* In fact straight after Sophia says that, she gives an example of how she would have liked to have done an extreme school project (*like skydiving*) but that *would be frowned upon by parents - not deep enough or something* and then she pauses and says *or maybe it wouldn't*. Then she pauses and seems stuck for words and breathes deeply and makes some sounds like *Ah* and says *Hang on*, but then says no more.

I suggest that we should "develop a little signal" when she wants me to talk (if she is stuck for words) so I don't interrupt her thought flow, though neither of us mind sitting in silence. She gives me the signal and I talk a bit about someone's school project we both are familiar with and then say: "Just trying to get you to talk about you and what makes you tick" and she says *I'd like to know that too!* but stops. Although we seem to be stuck in a cycle of 'I don't know's', I persist in trying to get Sophia to follow through. "Ok here's one from left field" I say,. "I was listening to the radio ... and a lot of the stuff I'm hearing I'm thinking 'this is just crap - people talk crap'. You know - where is the truth? Do you ever ask that question and do you have any answers for it?"

Here we are standing on the edge of 'the nothing' that takes us by surprise and suddenly we are in much deeper than either of us expected. There is a certain tension in the air as if we somehow know where we are headed. As Sophia responds to my question (see Sophia 3e below) asking her where truth is, a space opens and we get a glimpse of what Sophia says she has noticed: [the thing that] *just dissipates and I have to quickly catch*.

EARTH I Hate Having Nothing

I don't think we can know the absolute truth, in this one, in this world. Maybe we go into other dimensions spheres, whatever - you can sort of tune into something else.

Do you?

No - I'm just me at the moment - haven't quite reached that height.

Is it a height?

Stage. Seems like a height though to be able to do that.

It does - we're given that impression anyway.

Yeah do you have to really be that - [whispers] oh god- crap jargon of today's youth yerrgh -shit vocabulary!

What was the crap jargon?

These little things we just like twist all these words and have different meanings - destroy them basically. Um anyway - What were we talking about? Other realms - yeah do we really have to be wise and know about stuff exactly to be able to experience that?

That's a good question. So, ah, talk a bit about your philosophy. You must by now, you must have a bit of a philosophy about life.

Ha ha ha - uuuuummmm - guess you sort of take other peoples or what's kind of given to you and interpret that in your own way - um.

[6 secs silence]

I can't actually, you know, name all my philosophies or what I live by.

I don't mean fancy names for them, but I mean just talk about - how do you live your life?

Ha. Ha. Well um [blows out breath]. I don't know you try to [blows out 'whooooo'].

[8 seconds silence] (**Sophia 3e**)

Then a great sob comes. Sophia is crying and she whispers very quickly *Sorry!* Deep breaths and deep silence lead into this moment. The tears take us both by surprise and Sophia tries to swallow them and dismiss them, apologising. In our conversational space, there emerge long silences indicated here by a count of seconds in brackets.

[Crying, whispers] *Sorry*

No - do. do.

[21 seconds]

Um sorry - ok!

You needn't be sorry for that. It's a really important part of being human

[5 seconds]

Where does it come from?

[Whispers] *I don't know.*

[8 seconds] *Um.*

We can stop if you want.

It's ok.

Or you can let it happen

Um what were we saying - oh yeah life philosophies. I guess you try to, I don't know, do things to make other people happy, comfortable.

How about making you happy and comfortable?

Yeah sure, but its always others first.

[5 seconds] [whispers] *Oh god.*

[5 seconds] *Um - um.*

[10 seconds] *I can't even- I don't have- maybe I do - have philosophies I don't even know - huuuh. Oh I hate the phrase 'I don't know'. Um (pew) I can't think of anything to say. Ah useless.*

Just give me the signal. I've got lots to say.

Yeah ok - say -say on!

First thing if it's possible - crystallise the thought that was in your mind when you just suddenly like...your energy changed and tears came. Do you know what thought's there?

S: Nothing! There's Nothing! Um I don't know.

But something in the question triggered something. Ok - but we don't have to keep talking about it.

No its ok. I - don't worry. There was abs- nothing - I just - UHHHH! I hate having nothing. I mean that was such a crap statement, um, 'course I have everything. I hate having nothing! Ohhhh!

There could be some truisms in here.

The thought that Nothing is in my head. Oh god. Help! [blows out - wheeeeeooooo]
(Sophia 3f)

Here Sophia gives me the signal for me to talk and I explain about the two sides of the brain and how if we are under stress then sometimes we can't access things we know in our stored memory so when we're placed on-the-spot and trying really hard to think sometimes we can't find what to think. She seems a bit calmer so I ask her whether she heard the statement she made about doing for others first. She says *Yes* and that she's *pretty sure of that* and I ask, in the

light of her saying that, about what she does for herself and she says *too much*. I ask her to clarify what she means.

You think you do too much for yourself, you're saying or it's too much to think about?

Ahh no - first one. Um - I don't know - yeah - no! Um - uuuuhhhhh - the terrible idea is actually no matter what you learned or supposedly learned or taken in or read or - experienced if there's nothing here (claps her hands) there's nothing there!

That's wonderful! I think you're going into territory that not many people go into - and that's a wonderful thing! [Silence] You said you were maybe going to do Buddhism - remember? In Zen Buddhism, you'd have achieved enlightenment! [She laughs]. You realise that - that's amazing to have nothing. I'm sure Steiner says the same thing. That whole amazing place to be.

(Sophia 3g)

Things are quiet and Sophia talks a bit about Buddhism while still crying. She admonishes herself for continuing to cry and says *Oh god*, whispers, makes little sounds and then says, *Oh fuck stop crying*. While we are both silent and I am writing something down she says *Oh sorry it's real crap speech today*. I don't know what to say as that is certainly not what I think, but I start with "Um - it - what do I say-um - I think" and she interjects with *Um - I didn't really answer any of your questions*. What follows is largely me letting her know my perspective and giving a reflection of the conversation.

Um I'm trying to think where I start but sometimes it's hard to put things in the right order. I think it was magnificent today. If I have questions - everything you say is an answer. I mean they're just guides to try to explore something that in a way resists being explored. 'Cause these are nebulous concepts, you know, they don't really want to be seen in the light of day, you know, so if I'm trying to look at harmonious being, it doesn't want to come out and go "Hi - here I am" it lives and breathes around us, yeah, but it's not something you can expose to the stark light that sometimes is almost called for in research, but that's not what I'm trying to do, I'm not trying to 'stark-light' things even though, you know, sometimes I'll ask very direct questions. Um - Sophia - there's - you know - be easy on yourself - Yeah. If you're willing I'm privileged and honoured to sit here and listen ok? If you're willing - it's great.

(Althea in Sophia 3h)

This is where our recorded conversation ends.

Seven days later Sophia and I meet again and she apologises almost immediately for her tears last time. The first thing I say is "How are you?"

Good. Very good!

How were you after last time?

Oh yeah I'm so sorry about that. Oh my gosh - I can't believe I had that - hahhh - melt down. Even before that I don't think I was very focused and answering questions very well but anyway - last time don't remember what happened I think I just went home and did the dishes and made dinner or something, I don't know. I don't remember - nothing really. (Sophia 4a)

Throughout our subsequent conversations there are points where Sophia says she can't think of anything to say or loses track: *Oh my gosh - why am I blanking?* Her tears return in our fifth conversation¹ and again they are accompanied by 'blankness', a 'not knowing'. We have been talking for about 20 minutes and are discussing her school project and her experience of working with autistic children.

Ok so the important point is you like going there 'cause it's a different environment. Are you learning something up there though?

Ah - yes - way more up there than I do at school.

In what way?

Well obviously about autism and there's things that maybe you absorb subconsciously like um [stops] - I don't know just adding to the - ah - phew god - um [tears come]. Ahhh! I don't know! I have no idea - yes I do -

So something is different up there and you're learning, learning about autism because that's important for your project?

Yeah.

[There is a deep silence for 33 seconds as if we are both holding our breath].

We do have a signal remember?

[Silence]

¹ Two important ethical considerations should be mentioned here. First, I have checked with all the girls about using the more emotional sections and they are all happy for them to be used. I have let them know they may look back and cringe or feel strange but so far they are all happy to go ahead. Second, in every situation during our conversations where any of the young women were upset I suggested (a) counseling through school and (b) counseling through AUT (online or phone) and (c) any other form of guidance or counseling they might wish to have that I could help organise. I did this with each young woman (not *every* but *each* as appropriate) whenever 'something' significant came up. Only one of them took the option of counseling and that was near the end of our 9 months. Also because these moments were significant I thought and wrote about them and took my notes and thoughts back to our discussions so that not only did I ask the young women could I use these after our conversations had finished, but also during our conversations I said many times how significant I thought these moments were and that I was likely to write about them more and in my thesis..

Right project - yeah I guess it's my project - [She sounds detached].

[Silence]

Do you want to stop - or?

No it's fine. Sorry what was the question? Yeah it's my project. Hah!

What's happening - do you want to talk about what's happening right now?

Uh - nothing - ok - um

[Silence]

Oh! WAAH! Jesus! Sorry! OK - I'm better! Next question!

Sophia - I don't want our conversations to be interrogation and sometimes I feel like that -

No it's fine. That's good. I'm happy.

I feel like I'm asking question after question to try to find a place where we can get a flow.

No that's good. That's what you should do.

But I'm concerned for you and it's not about me, it's you, you know.

I'm - I'm ok.

I don't mind anything that you are in here it's totally fine, but the reality is that something is moving, you know, when we cry something is moving within us hey.

Yup - probably! [Still crying]

Is that a truism for you?

Yup.

Do you feel like you're carrying a lot of things at the moment?

Silence.

Ah yeah, but it's nothing of consequence. It's alright.

What is of consequence? What's important - to you?

Oh - ah - friends and family - people. [Still sounding detached].

Uh huh. So um - where do you put yourself in that? Friends, family, people - of course 'people' is very general -

The world. The world then - Where do I put myself?

Yeah - on the importance spectrum.

Um - I don't know - the end? (Sophia 5a)

As the text here depicts, this is a slow and difficult conversation for me with long silences. Sophia refers to *nothing of consequence* and places herself at *the end* of what I have called "the importance spectrum". The significance of this fifth conversation becomes much clearer in our subsequent conversations where we

further discuss Sophia's place in the world and her view of herself, what she does (or doesn't) do for herself, and her strong drive to do for others.

The mood of our sixth conversation contrasts dramatically with the fifth. We discuss music and harmony and I take an opportunity to tell Sophia that she does 'know' (which I do intentionally because of our earlier conversations where she is adamant that she doesn't 'know').

Musically what makes harmony?

The flow and the combination of notes - really beautiful sometimes - classical music in particular - um

Can you have harmony with one note?

Yeah.

In what way?

Well one note ringing out sounding out - it brings harmony to the place that it's sounding out in - it's merging - um - ok - it's merging the two - merging itself into the environment and so that kind of brings the harmony between the two - like bringing feeling to what is happening...typical example a film - it brings forth more depth to the environment and what is happening there.

Wow that's great - see you do know - you do know - keep telling yourself - I know, I know. (**Sophia 6a**)

Sophia even talks warmly, albeit briefly, about herself *shining*.

Do you ever feel another person's light?

Yes - their enthusiasm for something, their will to drive and change, help others understand something - um yeah their um -

Where does it come from on the body - or your own light where does it come from?

Heart.

[then a little further on]

Do you see the light coming from others?

Guess they shine in your mind.

Do you feel like you shine sometimes?

Yeah - shining as in the feeling that I feel in a certain moment - just when you're you. (**Sophia 6b**)

Heart comes again in our seventh conversation when I ask Sophia what "the phrase 'to follow your heart' means" to her. She sings back to me: *More than just do what you want to do. Ah - doing what you enjoy to bring a better world for others I*

guess...To help humanity - help - yeah - that's following my heart, I don't know. Still she tags this with I don't know.

Her tears don't come again until our tenth conversation and when they do, she accepts them much more easily, even remarking on how salty they are. In this conversation, she just lets her tears be there without trying to downplay them, even though we are talking about matters of the heart.

So what does your heart say?

I don't know.

It's trying to speak?

Ah - I've been suffocated -

Ahhh

(Tears come). I don't know...mmm salty - I've always liked the taste of tears. Why are they salty?

Because we have this whole ocean inside of us.

Ah yes - all our waters. (Sophia 10a)

During our tenth conversation Sophia becomes impassioned about *making others feel*. We are talking about her doing things for others and her perspective, which she had just offered, on seeing herself as self-obsessed and yet very focused on going into a caring profession.

I'm very remiss - not very - but I'm just sometimes too caught in my own bubble. Oh god - brrrr - self obsessed!

Do you really think so?

Yes sometimes I really think so!

....And you're considering going into a majorly caring profession...on one hand - there's a contradiction...the (third conversation) when you cried - some of the triggers were around doing for others - others before self.

I don't remember. I feel I'm so self-obsessed I should try and do that - I don't know. I want to bring that - of course there needs to be a balance, but yeah it's - I don't know, that's the whole point isn't it?

Is it?

(We talk at the same time here.)

I guess that's what I'm kind of really interested in unfolding. / If everyone did that the world would be fantastic wouldn't it?

Is that your whole point...something pushing you in this working for others or doing for others?

I mean that's what I want to do anyway so that's good?

Doesn't have to be good or bad - where is it coming from in you? Is there an inner voice?

Inner voice - silence - I mean yeah - doing what my heart tells me. That's the big picture...making others FEEL something in this frikkin world!

That's really a telling thing - even though you deliver it in a kind of jovial way there's the sound of truth in there. What is that? Do you meet lots of people that aren't feeling and you want to make them feel?

I guess so to a certain extent - I just wear my heart on my sleeve and whatever comes out comes out! As New Zealanders - I just feel like everyone 's so reserved in a weird way...we are meant to be relaxed easy going, but I think that's crap. (Sophia 10b)

Whatever comes out comes out seems to resound in my conversations with Sophia. There are seven more conversations following our tenth and we become very frank and direct with each other. At the very beginning of our last recorded conversation (our seventeenth) Sophia tells me that she is *grumpy* and not in the mood for talking: *I've just been extra silent today*. She says this is unusual for her as she *loves talking*. Nevertheless, we talk for an hour and a half that day. We move straight into a discussion on an assignment she has just done and she says she is disappointed in the presentation she did as it was so *'uneloquent'* and *not well written* and then hurries to say, *disappointed but oh well - moving on*.

I'm good at that 'moving on' thing.

You're good at - well my impression is that you're quite good at um - being self-critical.

Well you've got to be. You've got to be.

I don't mean that you're overly self-critical but you're good at looking at yourself and possibly you might be a little harsh -

[Laughs] *Guillotine all the way! (Sophia 17a)*

Following this we make a cup of tea and then Sophia asks me how I am and I answer for longer than I might have expected. We go on to chat about Steiner school and whether you come through (a Steiner school) with better self-esteem. Sophia says, *I don't know - I've always had that impression ... By the time you come to the end of it, but so many things come into play*. We meander into different territories and the conversation is slow and calm, almost lazy. Sophia talks about self-expression being something she has received from her education.

Yeah. Yes, expression of self. Selves.[Silence] I don't know why my mind's not - something's there though - I can't quite reach. (Sophia 17c)

This brief comment is a contrast to the 'nothing' that was so overwhelmingly there in the third conversation. She nearly touches the edges of the something here, but without trauma or tears. We don't know it at the time but this is our last recorded conversation as for various reasons Sophia is unable to meet with me again, even though we had scheduled in 3 more conversations. Our last ten minutes of this last conversation, ends up having a certain quality of closure. We venture into truth, beauty and goodness and she says *And harmony?* We end up having a poignant conversation which is strangely resonant of our journey into the nothing in our third conversation, but here it happens in a very different way. There are no tears and the answers come.

Harmony is there anyway - what I've worked out is the more you ask explicitly about things, they disappear...you know you can see something out of the corner of your eye, but when you turn to look at it, its gone.

Yes! I see them all the time.

You know the story about Eurydice?

What was her husband's name - um - you know she was killed and he had to go to the underworld to get her back?

Orpheus!

Yes - Orpheus! Yeah! And as long as he didn't look behind him on his way out ...there's different stories but the general thing is he couldn't help himself and he turned around and she disappeared. So that is the best thing to try to illustrate how certain phenomena disappear when you try to look at them.

Yes!

So anyway - let's look at truth, beauty and goodness - does anything come to mind?

Didn't we talk about this in the first one?

Yes - that's why I'm going there.

I wonder what I said? That would be weird.

I don't want you to know.

[Silence]

There's truth in everything or the essence of it is there - so many layers of people's perceptions - that come into a situation - but yeah its there.

How do you experience truth?

Fleeting moments.

Mmm.

I think if you analyse it too much, which I tend to do then it just becomes, blah, nothing, which is what we were talking about. Like you know, if you always have that question

in your head, you know, 'Well was it really true anyway?' Or what - You can't - it's just a vicious circle you just get stuck. Um - hah - good at that! Um - my experience of truth? Don't know. Right here in this space. Just even in other people's - just in one comment - that maybe they're not even aware of - and you can see sort of past that and read between the lines that's quite poignant sometimes...

Mmm. So you notice it - you hear it?

Feel it, smell it, taste it - maybe?

Mmm. I think so.

Some goodness.

What about beauty?

Um - everything's beautiful.

You probably said that the first time too.

[We laugh].

It's all beautiful. We're all beautiful...I don't feel like I have anything to say. I feel silly.

So do you never come across anything that isn't beautiful?

Depends what you define as beautiful - but there's always that other side to it. Yeah - you can always find beautiful qualities in the thing whatever it is.

Even in pain we can find beauty?

Yeah - even in pain.

[Here our conversation ends].(Sophia 17d)

WATER Nothing of Consequence

Time and time again Sophia draws a blank in our conversations or loses the thread and as I try now to articulate how I experience Sophia on the inside it is as if I also meet temporarily with that blank space. We cover an amazing amount of ground and venture into some rare territory. We seem to be able to traverse metaphysical territory with ease and often talk very laterally. All the while Sophia seems to be on the brink of becoming as if standing on the edge of possibility, looking into her reflection in the pool of Nothing.

Sophia frequently uses the phrase *I don't know* and yet such rich and poignant truths emerge from her knowing. Even as we venture into talking about 'things disappearing as you glimpse them', she is not lost but enthusiastically says *Yes!* - she knows exactly what this is: *I see them all the time*. Her presence is strong in me and I can easily conjure her voice inside my head but as I look for clarity, I lose her in my grasp. Perhaps what I initially believed was her - including her

open bubbly nature - may not be all it seems. She is passionate about her life, her relationships and the world. Something though is not being said.

In our conversations, she seemed to have an idea of how she should perform, but it was not for me that she was performing. Rather it felt to me like she often performed a 'bubbly' self. She even said at one point that she was in her *own bubble*. Yet in our conversations, some of those bubbles burst and there was something else bubbling under her bubbiness, under her very well crafted performance. This 'something else' which was perhaps what Sophia called *Nothing*. Was it *Nothing (that she wanted anyone to know about)*? Maybe 'being bubbly on the outside' masked a something that she didn't want to bubble up.

When we try to address this '*Something*' directly in the fifth conversation, Sophia is trying hard to dismiss her tears. This is a very hard conversation filled with spaces of silence in which the struggle is tangible. It feels to me that Sophia is wrestling with something and she is working hard to get it back in its cage and *move on*. As she notes in our final conversation, she is *good at that moving on thing*. I am direct and I am concerned. I ask Sophia what is happening for her. She answers that it is *nothing of consequence* and tells me that she places herself *at the end* of the importance spectrum, after friends and family. Has she *literally* put herself *at the end* as if she is at the bottom of the heap? Is it she who has become *nothing of consequence*?

Sophia said she wanted to *make others feel*. Is that because she herself wants to feel? Is her *Nothing* related to 'feeling nothing'? Or is she feeling so much that it seems incomprehensible when she sees others apparently not feeling? In the *Sophia 10b*, Sophia is almost demanding that people should feel - that feeling is the most important thing to do in life. She rejects a common (New Zealand) social behaviour - politeness. *Screw politeness!* she says in favour of *making others feel in this frikkin' world!* *Making others feel, doing for others* - the theme of 'others' is woven throughout our conversations and there perhaps is our resolution.

Her experience of putting others before herself may be the way she actually experiences herself - her 'true' self, maybe. Is she the *one note ... sounding out* bringing harmony, *merging the two* to bring *harmony between the two, bringing feeling to what is happening*. Is this when she experiences herself shining; when

you're just you as she puts it? Her deep caring and humanitarian philosophy tells her how she can *follow her heart* and *help others* and perhaps by making others feel, she herself will feel.

As I hear Sophia tell me that her experience of truth is in *other people's - just in one comment - that maybe they're not even aware of* and that *you can ... read between the lines*, I know that I am doing just that. I find my own truth resonating in her words and as I read between her lines, listen into her silent spaces, I find the *Nothing* is the space of enlightenment - where I am enlightened by her wisdom, her love for humanity; where there is the potential for everything. For me this is archetypal. What could be more primal than an experience of *Nothing*? Yet what is this actually? Is not *Nothing* only recognised by the qualities of the things around it - by its pregnant potential, its possibility? As I listen through my conversations with Sophia I hear her recognise her own voice through her relationships with others. I am reminded by Sophia, who of course deserves the last word, that the experience of truth is *right here in this space - in the fleeting moments* of our lives; but ... *if you analyse it too much, which I tend to do then it just becomes, blah, nothing.*

AIR Nothing Becomes Something

Finally we see beyond the words that seemed to evade Sophia, and into the void of *Nothing*. In the *nothing* we glimpse ... something, the edges of an idea, the hem of Eurydice's robe. But it is gone again, ungraspable. Whatever it was, was tangible, breathable. Its essence is in Sophia's tears. In its wake is again - *Nothing* - a resounding echo bouncing around the vast realms of our conversations. No - I don't know what it was. Yet I recognise its *Becoming*. It evaporates before my eyes and becomes air. Through the air I begin to see the light and through the light, colour. The *Nothing* becomes *Something* becomes *Nothing*, which then becomes *Something*. I can only rely on our sense to *feel it, smell it, taste it ... though - I can't quite reach ... truth in everything or the essence of it ... fleeting moments ... so many layers of people's perceptions* but somehow through the layers, in the *inner voice*, the *silence* there is one true note *ringing out, sounding out...it brings harmony.*

FIRE Something Aflame

Impossible to touch it burns
In me, Your Nothing
Becomes
My Something - Aflame.
A Flame
Explodes in our midst.
Fed by your Breath - Quelled by your Tears - Ignited by Passion
Becoming - Disappearing - Becoming
Eternal, Primal
One.
(poem by Althea)



Such a space I never imagined
Such a space I never
Wisdom I could only have dreamed of
imagined wisdom
You brought me across thresholds
I could only have dreamed of
Now to gaze out, To greet the world
you brought me across thresholds
anew - Rekindled
now to gaze out
The fire in my heart
rekindled the world
Sustenance for my soul
the fire in my heart
I stand again on the threshold
sustenance for my soul
Not knowing yet free.
I stand again
Oh yes - the world is feeling
on the threshold
Because you are here.
not knowing yet free.
Oh yes - the world is feeling
because you are here.

These are the words and the picture that I gave to Sophia to express my gratitude at the end of our conversations. The words, as is the poem in the Fire stage, are my expression of the flame that Sophia has become in my heart. The picture - which stands me, which stands Sophia - on the edge of knowing and not knowing; on the threshold of nothing and something; in the freedom of possibility, as she, as I, experience the Unravelling.

Chapter 10. *Working from within and celebrating the child* - the Steiner experience

Working from within instead of being pressed from without ... (Kate 1)

Steiner (school) celebrates the child and lets the child be ... evolve and come through in their own time instead of being forced. (Crystal 10)

From a phenomenological viewpoint, *all* our conversations are about the Steiner experience, yet there were certain times in our conversations when each young woman talked quite explicitly about this. My exploration of five conversation series in Chapters 5 to 9 unfolded key details and sub-themes of this experience as the phenomenon of harmonious being. Using Goethean phenomenology I listened for the voice of the pure phenomenon, a voice that is the expression of the phenomenon's unity¹. What I heard in the unity of voices in Chapters 5 to 9 were 'Belonging and Becoming' as the two key resonances that were my experience of the pure phenomenon, the archetype, as I participated in our conversational journeys in an inner way.

In this chapter I hope to demonstrate these two key resonances and then discuss them more fully in the next chapter. In this first section, called Belonging, conversations with Natalie are unfolded with a four stage Goethean layered listening. I profile Natalie's wisdom, as one voice that sounds with many voices as Natalie touches the essence of the phenomenon. As Natalie speaks of belonging she weaves in the idea of becoming. The theme of becoming is then unfolded in the second section of this chapter by referring to conversations with all the young women. The second section provides a forum for the young women to share some insights on their Steiner education experience. I present some of these conversational moments in a format which is like the Earth stage of the Goethean layered listening, though I have added a little Water through my interpretations and through some discussion. All my

¹ From Chapter 4: "Goethe's phenomenological approach helps us enter the currents of creative forces in nature and so become the voice of the pure phenomenon or the phenomenon's dimensions of unity; science and art can be understood as each representing a different "speaking" of that unity." (Hoffman, 1998, p. 169)

listening has been layered listening, though I have not taken the conversational moments in this second section through the four stage method because my intention here is breadth. I have aimed to ground this section in the young women's wisdom. The character of what these young women are saying means for me, that I avoid interpreting (or *interrupting*) too much. The insights voiced are sometimes brief, sometimes lengthy, and I engage with them in a brief and direct way which, unlike the detailed presentations in Chapters 5 to 9, does not fully reflect the layers of listening and the many conversations that have occurred to get to these moments.

Natalie: Belonging

Prologue - Blossom

Looking back over 13 years of Steiner schooling and two years of Steiner kindergarten, Natalie speaks warmly of her education, of connection and inner concord and of how she has come to know herself.

I think I feel I've found myself and (I'm) ready to move on ... feel grown up and know what I want ... had my thing (and) blossomed into who I'm meant to be at this stage.
(Natalie 5a)

As our conversations unfold, Natalie's message is consistent: she knows who she is and she loves connecting with other people. She speaks passionately about the world, and herself in the world. In our eighth conversation she reiterates what has come through many times in earlier conversations, that she is *willing to connect with others* and concerned about how she sees a growing separateness in society where people will *shut off someone*, something she says she won't do. Her strong awareness of her connection to herself is clear as she talks about 'choosing' her actions.

What happened to the good old days - being willing to connect with others 'cause if we lose that you know - the world is already turning to silence. It's just like assuming that people don't like each other by not saying anything to each other. People just assume they're immediately judging each other - that really frustrates me ... sometimes I just want to tell people and say look I'm not looking at you 'cause I'm judging you I'm actually looking at you 'cause you've got a really nice face and I'd quite like to draw you - or something - except that you couldn't say that to someone.

Do you not think that you emanate that anyway? That you put that out there, that you radiate that?

Radiate? um I try to. But I think it's kind of a natural defensive thing that people have that they automatically put a guard up.

My impression of you is that there's nothing false about you at all. You are warm and open towards others and also bright. You have a mirth or a joy about you.

Yeah. My friend said that there's something about my smile when I come into a room that's welcoming and I quite like that - I do go out of my way to - I don't want to shut off someone - I'm not going to let what they think dictate how I'm going to act. I'm just going to choose what I'm going to do. (Natalie 8a)

As our eighth conversation progresses Natalie's insights on belonging blossom in our midst.

EARTH Not Born to Belong

At first Natalie says she doesn't *particularly like that word 'belong'* and asks *do I have to belong to something*. She is frank and fresh with her comments saying that *one of the hardest questions is Why am I here?* By asking this question she seems to open the opportunity to discuss her own belonging.

I'm really not sure - I don't know if I particularly like that word belong - it's kind of like 'do I have to belong to something' you know, but I actually honestly don't know. I suppose maybe I belong to a creative world that's all part of 'the world' and that's where I'm supposed to be.

I think for me that one of the hardest questions is: 'why am I here?' - your purpose and what am I meant to do and all this kind of thing. I don't know. I don't think you're born to do something particularly - I think it happens - you know throughout life...I think it's just something you come to. Maybe there is a bit of luck in life that kind of heads you in that direction, but I think luck is a certain amount of preparation and then it meets an opportunity. (Natalie 8b)

The thread continues in our ninth conversation a week later and what unfolds is astounding. At the time of our conversation I was awestruck. My words to Natalie about two thirds of the way through this conversation give a sense of the profundity I feel in what Natalie says.

So ...that was amazing! I just sit here in awe. In fact, almost very intense emotion comes into me and for me that's the sound of truth and if I can, I hope, (to) honour this work that we've all done together this year in its - you know, to the best of my ability, (and) to call on the wisdom that all of you have given in our conversations not to keep going outside to say 'well someone else said this' but rather to make it the first voice... (Althea in Natalie 9a)

Despite her apparent resistance *to belong to something* Natalie paints a heartfelt picture of belonging. Natalie moves between her resistance to belong (to something in particular) and her deep connection to her family as the *strongest*

belonging - a kind of *spirit* she says. It is this belonging, which Natalie says is the basis of *everything* she is.

You're not born particularly to belong somewhere, but you become who you are.

I think belonging is kind of the key thing when people (are) a little bit lost in life and they're like 'where do I belong' and I think it's that discovery of a love or who you are ... and that's when you discover where you belong – it might even be a place.

I think your whole teenage life you're kind of like 'where do I belong' where's my niche - that and 'who am I'.

Maybe you need somewhere to belong to find out who you are.

I think you really need the sense of belonging to something to... be grounded and it might even just be your family 'cause I'm sure if you feel out of place in your family that you're going to feel really lost.

...There needs to be somewhere that you know is yours that keeps you grounded and that you can always go back to and find yourself again – you know, a safe place I guess.

I can see it working in different aspect for-one of my friends-who had her mother die when I think she was 13 or 14 and her family is you know they're always there for each other and they share everything ...but I don't think she gets the warmth she needs and I think coming to the school she's found somewhere she belongs and that's kind of helped her find out who she is and become a person...really strong about who she is and what she wants to do...an individual.

...I don't like the word belonging 'cause it's kind of like a tie you're tied to something. I think you should always have that freedom.

.....I think that I'm extremely independent...I don't like to tied down to be anything - I don't like to be tied down my whole entire week

If I think about belonging I think there's 2 things I think. One of them is this whole creative side and creative world and ...bringing up new ideas and new ways of looking at things... I think I'll always belong to a group of people with a creative mind – they can do anything, but they think about it differently. I belong to that type.

The strongest one for me is my family in the kind of, the spirit...

Having these moments...there's this one moment where there's understanding ...there's this understanding...that's my home that's where I'm meant to be...it's kind of like grounding – where I belong...to a group of people. It's where I started and everything I am is because of that basis. The older siblings and where I lived and then it gets bigger - the school and friends and stuff and because all of that makes you who you are, that's why you belong to it...but not so much you can't belong anywhere else.

(from Natalie 9a)

WATER *Belonging as Dynamic*

For Natalie, Belonging seems to be a dynamic thing - a lemniscate moving in and out as she moves between herself and her beliefs and the people and structures around her, which includes the school as a significant space of

belonging - it becomes as she becomes. It is clearly relational and involves the sense of 'fitting 'in somewhere' or 'with someone', and an orientation towards her sense of self. By way of checking I ask Natalie at the end of this conversation whether belonging is a "thing that limits" and she says *No* rather she says it *grounds* her.

Natalie talks about belonging in the light of *getting the warmth [we] need* when she talks about her friend experiencing belonging at school. This gives me the sense of belonging being a warm feeling, but also a nurturing experience. This in turn speaks of 'intimacy', closeness, connection and love with other human beings. Warmth has the quality of receiving and being received. It also suggests that belonging is associated with life as we can only give and receive warmth when we are, in fact, alive. There is also a strong aspect of choice in what Natalie says and thus a freedom - we can choose what we belong to and what we acknowledge as contributing to our belonging and this can change throughout our lives. We can belong through our way of looking at things as Natalie says - she *belong(s) to that type* who will always *think* about things *differently* - differently from what? The implication is 'differently from the common view', perhaps. So by knowing belonging in the first place or recognising where we don't belong or where we don't feel connected, we can go on to connect and/or belong in myriad ways with the world.

Our belonging gives us an anchor, a place from which to go out and experience the world: *other places and other things*. Yet Natalie also tells of belonging in relation to being tied down and not being free. She steps back from belonging at first and says it seems to be a *key thing* in life when *you are a little bit lost*, though I don't sense she is talking about herself here. Perhaps it is because she doesn't feel lost, that she may have sensed belonging as initially remote from her - that is until she starts to talk about it. It is almost as if Natalie is able to stand back and really look at belonging because she feels secure enough in her own belonging, to do so. She says very clearly that she knows who she is and suggests that is because of her belonging.

What Natalie 'tells' me, or what I 'hear' in her voice, is that belonging is connected to being a part of something bigger than yourself - a bigger whole.

For Natalie that 'something bigger' is her family, her friends, her school and a community of artists (*a group of people with a creative mind*). Natalie's voice matters. The voices of all the young women in this study, matter. What Natalie says is true and speaks for itself - *she* speaks for *herself*. That is one of the crucial points of this study, that Natalie's knowing *is* knowing and that she has articulated her knowing. The fact that Natalie and the other young women are able to access and communicate their knowing is testimony to 'who they are', to their becoming as young people². And their becoming has been shaped by belonging and their belonging...has been shaped by their education and the wider world. The message seems to be: we are not limited by belonging, but acknowledge it as something in us and because of that we can create the space to be ourselves, 'regardless of', or 'because of', the things that we belong to.

AIR A Becoming Blossom of Belonging

I belong to things that make me who I am (my school has helped make me who I am so I belong to it) I am not limited by the things that make me (everything that makes me who I am, I belong to). As I flow back and forth between myself and the world, I transcribe a becoming blossom of belonging. (If I were to draw this stage, it would be a multi-lemniscate creating the image of a blossom; weaving back and forth to a belonging-becoming melody.)

FIRE Long May You Shine

Your passion for life is a fire
fuelled by the certainty that you belong to who you are
the simple truths you have shared create spiritual awakenings.
Long may you shine.

² In the next chapter I connect the voices of these young women to a more academic voice from the literature though I do so not to lend credibility to their voices, rather to position their knowing in the wider frame of what academically, is considered to be knowing. However, the knowing that these young women share, their wisdom, is the central voice of this study. The credibility afforded by the discussion in Chapter 11, is for my academic benefit.

Becoming

It's been like the biggest connection. I've made my connections there 'cause I had nothing ... Steiner school is one of the greatest gifts (my parents) have given me. (Hera 10a)

For all the young women, the notion and experience of being connected to something bigger than themselves, in which they also feel they have the space to be individuals, was strong. 'Connectedness', 'individuality', 'creativity', 'imagination', 'being different', 'a love of school', and 'wholeness as a human being' were sub-themes all connected to the voice of becoming in an education experience which these young women say gives them *the space to be your self* (Crystal 5a in Chapter 7).

It's more so than if I was in a state school - 'cause we get freedom of expression through uniforms - you know like not having a uniform and just other things - heaps of kind of creative things I guess which is expressing yourself. Maybe if I was, you know, in another school where it so kind of regimented you wouldn't have that space...then you'd have to make the space yourself. (Crystal 5d)

Crystal's reference to space seems to include both outer and inner space. She says that *the education I'm going through* (see Crystal 5a) gives her the opportunity to expand and grow, to experiment and stretch her wings and experience freedom of voice. She specifically relates that to not feeling *regimented* and not having *to make the space yourself* which would intimate that Crystal does not feel forced, pushed, limited or held back and she doesn't have to fight for her own space.

For Hera, having the space to be yourself is about individuality.

I think one of the things that Steiner tries to bring through is individuality... Just being yourself...doing the things you like to do instead of trying to portray something else, trying to be more superior. I guess Steiner people just accept who they are...they're pretty secure really.³ I like being an individual and I guess Steiner brought that out!⁴ We're just individuals connecting with other individuals.⁵

³ Hera 6a

⁴ Hera 3a

⁵ Hera 9a

What struck me about the way all twelve young women looked at their schooling was their ability to see it from both their 'insider' perspectives and the perspective of an outsider. They were aware that others particularly other young people, often viewed Steiner schooling as something unusual. As Hera articulates this, what again comes through is the importance of being an individual.

People say you know Rudolf Steiner is abnormal and what do they get taught. You would think that though - you know you have these schools that have the same curriculum, everything's done with the same kind of system and then you have this one school that's different - but I think it's more normal - you're individuals whilst there you're stuck into the system. (Hera 3c)

Laura said that *people think we're some kind of cult ... we all sit under the trees and smoke dope*. What is notable here is that Laura is completely nonplussed by this attitude and instead it tickles her sense of humour⁶. I have described Laura as fiercely loyal (see Chapter 5) and she loves her school and sees it like a family. She also is able to see quite clearly that a Steiner education is not for everyone.

...I think that in some ways our school has got more of say a family idea incorporated into it - per se - being with same class all the time - so that you connect quite strongly with them.

What if you don't?

If you don't then maybe Steiner doesn't work. (from Laura 19a)

Ruby is also protective of her school and its image. Her comment suggests that she found in her Steiner school, a safe space.

People say when I say I go to Steiner, 'oh that crazy school with all those crazy people' and I say - 'Nup, only your school's like that! 'Cause I used to go to a state school and I absolutely hated it. I used to get bullied and stuff, but I really like it here. (Ruby 6a)

For Hera, coming from a state school into a Steiner school (during her primary years) was *weird to start off with* but she *tuned in to it*.

⁶ There are still academics and educationists who fear the differentness of Steiner education and more than once I have heard the term cult used by those who should know better. There are also active anti-Steiner publications (see Robinson, 1992, 2008).

When I was at state school everyone was like clones they all talked about the same things and it's boring...Rudolf Steiner school was like - considered weird - and then mum introduced it to me - so I thought I'd give it a go... it was weird to start off with - more the philosophy - but I've just kind of tuned in to it. It's quite good. (Hera 1a)

In nearly every one of our conversations Hera talks about the impact of 'Steiner school' on her life and often compares it to her experiences in state school.

People that go to Steiner are a lot more decent than a lot of the state school people...

At a state school you choose subjects whereas...at Steiner you do everything. Things like eurythmy that kind of seem a bit weird and some of the main lessons like The Odyssey and stuff, Parsival - they're a lot about your self. They don't really do that at state schools. You know Steiner, everyone's in themselves - kind of altogether...We do practical, we do camps. Everything's done in a kind of self-expressing way. (Hera 3b)

Hera speaks disparagingly of the state system where her experience was being 'forced' to 'do it' *their way* and compares it to Steiner where she is *free* and *creative*. Hera says she *learned to be creative* at Steiner school, even though *it didn't come naturally*. In the following comment Hera connects her experience of being at Steiner school with 'learning to be creative' which she then connects with having helped her in her *life in general*.

In Steiner you're just free to present your book the way you want - tidily but ...when I was at state school everything had to be ruled. You had to rule everything! Even your maths books ... state schools are kind of forcing you to present your book the way they want it which is this way and neat - but with Steiner as long as you get all the content they don't really mind - at Steiner you can be more creative but you're not allowed to be creative at state school they just want it done their way.

What does that do for you as a person? What happens to you either in the Steiner environment being able to do that or in the State environment having to do this business (using hands to explain the 'ruling')?

You can be more creative. I don't know - when I came to Steiner I wasn't very creative, but over time I've become more creative because they encourage you to do creative responses. Your main lesson books are creative. I've got used to it now it's more enjoyable that you can do what you want with your work. Yeah - state school is just kind of restricting.

So would I be correct in saying you think that's a good thing? Being able to be creative?

Yeah - and in the end being more creative in life in general. So you can learn to be creative. 'Cause that's what I did I guess, I learned to be creative. That didn't really come naturally but after time it has. (Hera 6b)

In our eighth conversation we are talking about peer conversations and Hera relates being "a Steiner person" to being "spiritual" which she connects with being "caring". An interesting twist is that after Hera has said something poignant, she follows it with a statement of not knowing.

So do you talk about thoughts or understandings about spiritual things - you know - spirituality?

The only time our class uses spiritual is when they're mocking it (like) they say 'we'll be there in spirit' but I don't really know what that means.

It is said that Steiner fosters the human spirit - have you got any thoughts on this?

No. I don't - um (long pause) well, now that you've said it - yeah equality - um ah caring? I don't know. If you said spiritual you'd think of a Steiner person - very caring about the environment, about themselves and about other people. [Pause] Nup I don't actually really know. (Hera 8a)

Isis, who like Hera has experienced both the state school and the Steiner school environments, also talks about creativity and the feeling of being 'free' at Steiner school where, she says, it is *unpressurised*. Isis connects her education at Steiner with 'enjoying learning' which she then connects to 'remembering' the learning, which connects to 'feeling good' and to helping her *grow as a person*.

At state school I would have already had to choose what classes to take for the future and you can feel that pressure building already in your life.

Since coming here have you felt more space?

Yes definitely! The state school is like a factory - you go in at one end and come out the other with some qualifications.

Did you notice that when you were there or since coming here?

I went from a Steiner school to a State school then to a Steiner school for three years then back to a state school (before coming here). You really notice it when you go from a Steiner school to a state school. Being a bright student there was always that pressure to come up to teachers expectations because you'd be classed on your abilities...by Year 9 they have careers day...it really kind of weighs you down when you feel that responsibility that you're growing up. I really enjoy it here - we're all in one class people of different abilities we're all really good at different things instead of just one thing and that pressures really gone. Otherwise I would have been doing NCEA this year which I thought was quite crazy. You're constantly having information that you had to memorise and when I came to this school there's room to move within the topic.

Does that mean that the subject is delivered in a different way here?

Yeah it definitely is. Like you have main lesson time and it's focussing on one topic for nearly two hours and you can learn quite a bit but it really gives you room to do something creative about what you've learnt. You can present your book nicely instead of just formatted. Yeah stuff like that - it's a lot more free in a way.

Ok. Well - Rudolf Steiner would be very happy to hear you say that! Does that mean then that you're not just memorising information here?

Mmm. I think they give it to you in such an unpressurised way that you enjoy learning information and if you enjoy it you remember it and you feel good at it and you kind of grow as a person and you know all this information instead of just one set. A lot more knowledgeable about what goes on around you instead of just little things.

Does that mean your learning is related to the wider world?

Yeah definitely. (Isis 2a)

Zen tells how there is a certain *smallness and closeness of the Steiner community* (connectedness) and that the Steiner child is like no other: *A Steiner child is so much more imaginative and creative than other children(Zen 4a)*. She remembers her sense of freedom in kindergarten and early primary school where she felt she was *being at one with the earth*, where she could *play and be creative*. Then, she says, she stopped caring about her school work and *just dribbled into the high school* and labelled herself *dumb* - until she changed her mind.

I was actually really bad – and then one year I decided I'd try and I did really well... Compared to other schools they think we are dumb (but) I reckon here there's more of a chance to get better. Well its your choice and if someone who tells you like that you're dumb all your life you kinda feel like you're labelled and that's what you are and you gotta accept it. (Zen 4b)

Zen has had the freedom not to suffer under a label. She actively chose not to be dumb and through her schooling decides to choose her own path.

They teach us to think for ourselves so that's what we do. (Zen 12a)

For Sally making her own path is looking attractive, but scary, as she says she is wanting to leave school and *fly off*⁷. As she talks about going she discovers her deep connection to her Steiner education. In her first comment here, Sally is telling how the idea of going into the big ocean (leaving school for the wider world) scares her. In listening through the layers, I notice two things in particular. Sally is using a story to illustrate her point - a common medium in Steiner teaching and (secondly) in telling the story she leads herself to unfold her love of school.

Now that I've got to 16 I just want to spread my wings and fly off and do something else...It kind of scares me though...one of our teachers...talked about (the journey

⁷ Sally does not leave school and continues to end of high school.

through school as) coming from the little family circle into the lake and how the class 12 students are going from being in the lake to the ocean with the wider world, kind of thing. I guess that kind of sits really big in a way for me 'cause it seems really truthful the idea of going into the big ocean. (Sally 8a)

She said she feels ready to experience the wider world and relates a story of how her last main lesson at school inspired her to *broaden her horizons*, but she is torn between her connection to her school and class group and wanting to experience the world.

Getting new perspectives of things...broadening your horizons and seeing what we do have and don't have...this was our last main lesson.

Do you think the Steiner school has given you different ways of looking at the world or what would you say it has given you?

Ah something I like about the Steiner school - nothing compares to Steiner ... the way they teach it is different not lecturing and stuff, but letting your imagination work with the different ideas of what their world would look like. I think with state schools it's probably like you get the idea and you don't really broaden your horizon with it. You get the image and it just kind of sits there.

So now then is something lost, if you're wanting to leave, is something missing for you?

I feel like I've learned enough for me ... not to do with the fact that it's gotten old or anything, it's just I've kind of filled myself up with amount of knowledge I need to know. (Sally 8b)

For Gabriel, there are very few *negatives* about her Steiner experience, *though we do miss out on getting to know a larger group of people, like in a state school*, she says. Overall, *I think we've gained*, she says. In her comment below, the sense of freedom and individuality that Zen spoke of, and *the popular girls* (Lena's phrase), emerge when she talks about some of *the positives* of her Steiner experience.

I think we're freer to create our own identity 'cause there's not so many people so there's not that kind of click where you know you dress the same way as a whole bunch of people...whereas everyone's fairly individual at our school 'cause there's not many people so there's not really groups to be in ... like when I was at [state] school you'd have the 'emo group' and they dressed kind of dark and they were a bit weird and then you'd have the popular girls and they dressed kind of the same ... they kind of get an identity as a group instead of as an individual ... [at our school] I think people are freer to do what they want, to not really be judged by what they wear ... there's that sense of belonging with the class and the community. (Gabriel 12a)

I conclude this section on becoming by picking up the voice that is in the title of this chapter, a voice that came to me early in the study - Kate's. Kate was

involved in the pilot study and we had a long conversation one afternoon, just a week before she was going to walk out of the school gates for the last time. Like Natalie, she had been at Steiner school for her whole kindergarten and schooling life, more than 13 years. Her phrase *working from within instead of being pressed from without* imparts the essence of Steiner education and speaks volumes for the kind of educational experience that fosters connectedness, love and wholeness in each human being and their relationships with the world. Kate's voice resonates with the voices of the other young women - the space to be yourself, connection, individuality, creativity, the chance to learn, imagination, depth - and with the beauty, truth and goodness that belongs in her becoming.

Working from within instead of being pressed from without - not having things thrown at us - I mean you come out with a more certain feeling of self I guess ... You see it in someone's eye, you know you can see them they've gone that bit deeper or something, you know and it's kind of like, I don't know, I meet people and you can tell that the relationship isn't going to go any further and it's just going to be this 'Hi, hug, how are you?'. But you can meet people that are just that little bit deeper and we've had that chance somehow. You know somehow this education has given us that chance I don't know if it's got to do with camps and nature and all these beautiful gardens and giving us the space and time to develop ourselves, whatever, but I think in doing that and not imprinting things on us we've been able to develop our own goodness. (Kate 1)

Belonging and Becoming - Concluding Comments

Belonging and Becoming are the expressions of harmonious being, the living experience of being a Steiner student for the young women in the present study. As I have said, it was through the voices of the young women in this study, through our conversations, that I was led to Goethe's methodology, which has at its heart, belonging. We aim in Goethean methodology "to see the belongingness of the phenomena" within the phenomenon, because (otherwise) a "single phenomenon on its own is an abstraction" (Bortoft, 1996, p. 291). As we experience the belongingness, we experience the phenomenon in its wholeness because *we* approach it in the same way, that is in the "mode of wholeness" (Bortoft, 1996, p. 291). And as belonging is intrinsic in Goethean methodology, so is harmony.

For in Goethe's worldview, the ultimate experience is harmonious being - to experience belonging with nature as belonging within one's own being, not as an abstraction, but as a living experience of a becoming of harmonious concord between what we perceive as our inner and outer worlds. Steiner (quoted in Barnes, 2000, p. 281) spoke of this saying that what many people see as separate ideas, Goethe sees as one preeminent 'Idea', so that "the idea of truth ... the idea of beauty...the idea of goodness" all come from the same source which "manifests sometimes as human goodness, then as beauty, and at other times as truth".

Goethe saw something far more alive and spiritual than the abstraction that many people today think of as the 'idea', He perceived the idea as ensouling nature herself in a living way, as what human beings also find within themselves when descending deeply enough into the depths of their own being. (Steiner, quoted in Barnes, 2000, p. 281)

Through Goethe's method "we come to experience the *belonging* together of the phenomena instead of introducing connections which make them belong *together*." We are allowing the phenomenon to become in us as an experience of the internal relationships within the phenomenon rather than putting together connections which are "added externally" (Bortoft, 1996, pp. 301-302).

In the following Chapter (11) I discuss belonging and becoming in significantly more detail, but here I have introduced them as the dual resonance of the phenomenon at the heart of this study. Their becoming is a relational navigation between 'being in and of the world' and 'being in and of themselves' so that even when they feel they know who they are, as Natalie says, the subtext tells us that it is only *at this stage* - they are changing. Becoming relates to the dynamic nature of the space afforded these young woman Steiner students, to grow, learn, develop, experience, create and imagine their own beauty, truth and goodness not as discrete experiences, but as fluid expressions. Their belonging is a connectedness to internal roots. It is a belonging to a core that sounds like identity, but the core is a structure in motion, a becoming structure with many coloured ribbons.

Chapter 11. Belonging and Becoming: The Living Experience of Harmonious Being

I think your whole teenage life you're kind of like 'Where do I belong, where's my niche?' That and 'Who am I'. (from Natalie 9a)

The voices of the young women in this study communicate deep insights about the character of young women Steiner students and what matters to them in their lives. In describing their experiences of navigating the terrain of their relationships, with themselves and with others - at school and more generally as young women in the world - they transcribe a lemniscate path of *Belonging and Becoming*. This path is like a fluid dynamic between the young woman and the world - between her own voice and the social voice (Gilligan, 2011). Belonging, as 'Where am I?', lives alongside Becoming, as 'Who am I?', (Noam, 1999), as the predominant experience of adolescence for these young women.

What these young women tell us is that as they discover their belonging to 'who they are now', they create space to become more fully 'who they will be' (Vadeboncoeur, 2005a) and can therefore explore *one of the hardest questions ... 'Why am I here?'* (from *Natalie 8b*). Belonging 'in the now' seems to anchor their becoming towards their futures. Thus, the tired view that adolescence is a "wasteland" and adolescents are the "ones who don't belong" (Vadeboncoeur, 2005a, p. 1), is refreshed by a voice that says: *All of that makes you who you are and that's why you belong to it* (from *Natalie 8b*). This new landscape of adolescence is more relational, more fluid, more empowering. The Eriksonian picture of Identity versus Role Confusion in adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Noam, 1999) is extended by a more colourful possibility. Imbued with a young woman's voice, adolescence becomes a softer and less imposing time of creative development, not fraught with having to succeed at making an identity, but opening to allowing that identity to emerge. The 'storm and stress' of G. Stanley Hall's (1904) adolescence becomes more harmonious when seen as Belonging and Becoming.

In this chapter I engage with the relevant literature and draw on the young women's voices and their key ideas explored in Chapters 5 to 10, to explore harmonious being as a re/creation of the discourse of adolescence

(Vadeboncoeur & Patel Stevens, 2005) for young women. First, I address the relationship between Belonging and Becoming and bring that into an educational focus referring particularly to the Steiner school culture and the young woman student as a creative act of Becoming. Next, I address the focus of this study on young women, voice and relationship and engage with Carol Gilligan's work to discuss the young women's Belonging and Becoming in relationship. Finally, I position the 'voice of resistance' (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1997, 2004, 2011) heard in the present study as a powerful voice for reclaiming the journey of young woman; and as a challenge to the "narrow" and "negative discourses" which "cast (a young person) as an objectified entity, in need of (adult) leadership, guidance and control " (Vadeboncoeur, 2005a, p. 5).

Belonging and Becoming as a Lemniscate

To be human is to belong. Belonging is a circle that embraces everything; if we reject it, we damage our nature. The word 'belonging' holds together the two fundamental aspects of life: being and longing, the Longing of our being and the Being of our longing. Belonging is deep; only in a superficial sense does it refer to our external attachment to people, places and things. It is the living and passionate presence of the soul...Our life's journey is the task of refining our belonging so that it may become more true, loving, good and free ... The most intimate Belonging is Self-Belonging. Yet your self is not something you could ever own; it is rather the total gift which every moment of your life endeavours to receive with honour.¹ (O'Donohue, 1998, p.3-4)

Belonging and Becoming resonate in me, not as a generalised conclusion or as static themes, but as a living vibrating lemniscate. Thus is the process of Goethean phenomenology, that "I am not left with either information or conclusion, but insight and resolve. The process is still alive in me, recreating itself anew as I work" (Kaplan, 2005, p. 331). Belonging and Becoming are not discrete experiences, they co-exist as the whole experience of harmonious being. In the quote above, Irish philosopher-poet John O'Donohue celebrates belonging as a 'natural' wisdom which we can receive rather than force in our lives. He intimates an effortlessness, a surrender, an allowing of belonging. It

¹ I have included a rather long quote from John O'Donohue's book "*Eternal Echoes. Exploring Our Hunger To Belong*" (1998, pp. 3-4), as his words sing out in support of this whole study.

is natural, it is human, it is the "crucial *essence*" of who we are and like us, it is ever-changing as we move between our own voice and the world.

The young women in this study describe the lemniscate-like experience of breathing in and out, from 'self' to 'the world' and back again as a becoming process anchored by belonging with school and belonging with self. The experience of belonging was described as 'grounding' and 'safe': *somewhere that you know is yours that keeps you grounded and that you can always go back to and find yourself again, you know, a safe place* (from Natalie 9a). And from this safe place: *You become someone ... they become themselves* (from Natalie 9a). Through Belonging they experience Becoming and through Becoming they experience Belonging - one is implicit in the other. Like partners in a creative process, Belonging and Becoming are visible in the different parts they play, yet always acting together, they are in relationship. This is a living relationship, moving and changing in space-time (Vadeboncoeur, 2005b). Belonging and Becoming are in fact, like space and time, respectively. The young women in this study describe how 'belonging with school' creates a space, a container, for their own becoming over time.

Belonging and Becoming, were also implicit in our conversational process, as were space and time. Not only that together, each young woman and I held a space for conversation over linear time, but also that, like the experience of harmonious being, the phenomenon that we were exploring, that we unfolded, became our living experience in conversation (van Manen, 1997). The conversational space became a container of 'belonging to the study', of 'belonging to a space where *I can talk*'. In that space the young woman authors her own life -"each act of speaking is also an act of authorship" (Vadeboncoeur, 2005b, p. 127). Employing the theory of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1986) whose literary analyses are a map for understanding human relationships, Vadeboncoeur (2005b, p. 127) describes how we craft who we are through what we say, just as a writer crafts a text: the "ultimate act of authorship" being the "text that we call our self". In our conversations we have authored identity and alterity in a social space which in some ways was timeless (Vadeboncoeur, 2005b).

This sense of timelessness in Becoming is crucial to how each young woman authored herself. Her identity is not to be "captured", like a "snapshot" and her "history and future ... collapsed into a singular static image" (Vadeboncoeur, 2005b, p. 128). The plea from these young women is please don't label me: *It's annoying when people label it' oh you're just a teenager going through stuff, you're moody'. It really doesn't help at all! ... it really ... stirs me up or something 'cause its not just that - at all - like its a lot more! ... it's not just the teenagers it's everyone else too and they're just blaming the teenagers but they don't see* (from Aries 17b). Identity - in its *essence*, at the *core of true self* - is a Becoming, a process of discovery and creation: *you become who you are*. The voices of these young women remind us that it is not just in adolescence, but across all stages of our lives we are engaged in the dynamic of belonging and becoming (Noam, 1999) because life is relational, a temporal-spatial process of connectedness (Gilligan, 1990, 1995, 1997, 2004, 2011). We are constantly changing and becoming. *We are and then, we are again*.

Belonging and Becoming With School

For the young women in this study, the sense of belonging with school and their connection to being Steiner students, was related to having the *space* to be *an individual, to become who you are*. They tell of the importance of belonging to themselves and belonging to the world. A "true belonging" that seems to emerge from "the inner music of the soul" and seek harmony with the world (O'Donohue, 1998, p.4)².

For all of them school was important. So important that Sally rated it above home:

My education and development, you know, everything I've learnt has been through Steiner ... Steiner's kind of like a home I guess, in a sense, like there's school and there's everything we do out of school which for some reason connects back to school, I don't know why. There's school and that's like the whole bulk of everything I've done and learned and experienced and everything

² A 'true belonging' as John O'Donohue (1998, p. 4) describes: "True belonging comes from within. It strives for a harmony between the outer forms of belonging and the inner music of the soul."

and even though home's a pretty big thing for most people, its just the kind of the thing on the side. (Sally 12a)

Through their sense of belonging with school, the young women in this study speak their becoming, as identity which is constantly being negotiated and navigated, created and recreated, forgotten and remembered (Gilligan, 1997, 2011). The relationship between a sense of belonging at school and a young person's sense of 'self' or identity has been explored by Faircloth (2009) though prior to her study, she says, it had "never been investigated" (Faircloth, 2009, p. 322). Faircloth (2009) looked at the effect of encouraging belonging, through identity exploration in the classroom, on motivation and achievement at school. Like *Becoming* in the present study, Faircloth also elucidated the dynamic nature of identity.

... individuals' life stories are their identities, for stories – and identities – are constantly being renegotiated and reassessed as new experiences shed light on and help make meaning of the old ones ... Identity, then, from a life-story perspective, is inherently dynamic, developmental, and reciprocal, shaping the identity in the telling of the story itself. (Faircloth, 2009, pp. 342-343)

She found (Faircloth, 2009, p. 342) that students' "sense of self, of their own voice, and their connection to class seemed to enlarge as a result of being able to "speak" their identity." For these high school students to have the space to voice who they are and to be able to connect that to classroom learning was empowering says Faircloth (2009). This reflects the close link, also apparent in the present study, between language, self-expression and identity for young people (McAdams, 2001; Williams, 2006).

Of the five themes that Faircloth identified in her study, two are particularly relevant to the methodology of the present study. First, that the students really valued "connecting" their own lives to their classroom work and second, that their stories needed to be told.

Another powerful connection between their sense of themselves and their learning emerged from the enjoyment, insight, and empowerment they gained from drawing from their backgrounds, families, and culture. However, not only did students value connecting their individual stories to their work in English class but also they needed to "tell" those stories. (Faircloth, 2009, p. 342)

The young women in the present study also had stories they needed to tell: *what I tell you is different...I don't say this to anyone else (Sally)*. They said they

valued the conversational space: *it just shows how you feel about things more ... what my opinions are and what matters (Gabriel); it does help, a space to be heard in, it's beautiful what get's done in here (Laura); it's a breathing space you come here and you can bring up these questions ... and I come away rejuvenated (Sophia)* - which provided the opportunity to go *beneath the surface and not feel judged*. These comments show the sense of belonging that has emerged through our conversational space and the value that the young women placed on that. It was a space that we held sacred. Our conversational space, as a phenomenological space, invited the exploration of 'becoming' in the world.

We use the conversation to enhance our thinking so that we may see through ... to the relationships and movements which also are there; so that the phenomenon is apprehended not only as finished product but in its 'process of becoming'. (Kaplan, 2005, p. 320).

In our space, as in their school space, becoming mattered for these young women. They spoke of school being *the space to be yourself (Crystal); a caring environment...calm and smooth (Isis); like a family (Sally), the biggest connection (Hera), a place where the teachers know us and its not just about educating us with knowledge, but educating ourselves about ourselves (Sophia)*. This speaks volumes about how these young women value their school as a space of becoming and so it makes sense: where they feel valued, where they feel they can explore their identities, is where they experience belonging (Cemalcilar, 2010).

Belonging and Becoming: The Living Experience of Steiner Education

All the young women in this study showed a warm and genuine connection to their school. At times the strength of this belonging, and it was strong, was expressed by comparing their own school with 'state school'. These young women did not identify with the 'clone-like' teenagers who went to state schools (Crystal, Hera, Isis and Gabriel all used the term *clone* to refer to teenagers they saw on the street or knew were from state schools). Such sentiments present as quite a severe generalisation, even a judgement, and yet it also becomes a way of belonging: by not being 'the same as everyone else' a 'togetherness in difference' is experienced. As Zen tells us with her calm and even tone, such a clear statement of belonging:

Us Steiner people we're different. Not so mainstream. We like to think deeply about things more. Not so on the surface. (Zen 10)

Maybe for these young women, it is a way of affirming their identity, in that by setting others apart from them they can define themselves more clearly. It is also a statement of individuality - 'we are not clones, we are individuals'. They proudly, even fiercely, all call themselves Steiner students.³

Belonging at school was also expressed as a sense of 'being privileged', like being 'lucky' not to have to go to a state school. When Ruby tells us in the findings (*see Ruby 6a*) that 'her school is not crazy, but the state schools are', she shows a loyalty and a protective gesture towards her school - one that all the young women in the study (even Aries who was *sick and tired* of school) embodied. Even though at times their peers, or the teachers, the school work, or the rules annoyed them, all these young women really loved their school.

For some, their sense of belonging at school was like an anchor even when home and family or friends and community could not provide spaces of belonging the young women needed. Natalie (from *Natalie 9a*) tells us that her friend gets *the warmth she needs* at school having *found somewhere she belongs* which has helped her *find out who she is and become a person*. Hera was initially rebellious in high school, she 'shut out' the teachers and, because she felt her parents were restricting her freedom, home was often the 'last place' she wanted to be *and yet* she said that the *greatest gift* her parents ever gave her was *Steiner school*. I recently had the opportunity to remind Hera of this, two years after she said it, and I asked her did she really mean it. She said: *it was true - it really was the greatest gift*.

Aries and Sally throughout most of the year of conversations, were strategising how they could leave school and 'get on with their lives' yet they didn't because they felt such a strong connection there and their class was 'like a family'. School for them felt like a "home base" from which they could move out into the

³ What lives beneath the layers of 'we're different but all recognisable as Steiner students' bears further examination, which I will undoubtedly do in more detail a future publication. Suffice to say for now that I am aware of this and that Steiner education, as a culture, will have certain characteristics that are recognisable in those that belong to the culture.

world: "*Part of the need to belong is to continue to belong during separation ... the affirmation (of) a home base while exploring the world*" (Noam, 1999, p. 60). For these young women, belonging *with* school has provided an important space which has held them through some of life's challenges, even when that challenge is wanting to leave school⁴.

Sommer (2010a, p.21) writing in detail about the character of Steiner education at secondary level tells that students "feel at home in their school". The Steiner-based teaching approach, says Sommer (2010a, p. 21), focuses "acts of learning through which students, in a climate of concentration, rise above themselves, finding new ways of communicating both with themselves and the world." Sommer (2010a, p. 22) explains that this means students develop the ability to take a "reflexive distance" and watch themselves communicating with the world. In this way, new faculties emerge in the individual which facilitate new ways of meeting the world, and the young person is changed which in turn creates more new ways of communicating (Steiner, 1996).

This ability to take a reflexive distance is reminiscent of Laura in this study. Throughout our conversations Laura uses what I referred to at one point as the: "...sort(s) of words that are almost like some other outside authority speaking to you and yet you're saying them ... like standing outside yourself". Perhaps the most numerous examples of this were seen in our discussions about Laura's depression where she could look at her *condition* as a whole in its various manifestations (not wanting to eat; wanting to *stay in bed all day*; the *black sticks*; the *tears*; the *gloominess*) and describe herself in them. In this way she began to have a dialogue with herself alongside or inside our conversation as if 'experiencing herself experiencing her world'. The character of Steiner education aims to impart exactly this, says Sommer (2010a & b) - the young person communicating back and forth in the dynamic between 'self' and the world. This is learning to breathe or harmonious being in Steiner education. However, this is not achieved through explicit interventions (Hether, 2001; Sommer, 2010a & b), but through the living experience of the teaching-learning

⁴ Aries, like Sally, wants to leave school but doesn't.

dynamic. A dynamic which guides "students to learn to breathe properly" and achieve harmonisation in their "communication processes with the world and oneself" (Sommer 2010a, p.22) - or Belonging and Becoming!

The quality of being able to 'stand back and look at yourself' came through time and again in conversations with the young women in the study. While I believe this does reflect the character of Steiner education, it was also the central purpose of our conversations, that is, for the young women to talk about themselves and explore their experiences. The point is that the *way* they did this often had the particular quality of 'witnessing', for example, talking about an experience from different viewpoints. The quality was one of going into and out of an experience, like breathing in and out.

The present study is unique in having found that it is in fact a deep sense of Belonging which makes the space for Becoming, describes the living experience of Steiner education. Specifically, the sense of belonging is resonant as a 'self-belonging' or a young woman's sense of her own voice. Belonging raises questions such as "Where do I belong?" "What am I part of?" "Who accepts me?" "Who likes me?" "Who provides me with self-esteem?" (Noam, 1999, p.56) and what the present study shows is that at the centre of the answers is 'Me!' First and foremost, it seems, these young women belong to themselves. They describe a self-belonging which they say is their individuality. Lena did not compromise her individuality just to be popular. Aries admonished young people around her for being 'fake' and refused to participate in that. Crystal talked about being *accepted* and *liked* and was dismayed at how her goodness was called 'bad', but she *embraced* her difference and stayed *true to herself*. The powerful sense of belonging in these young women, does not negate the 'who am I' question, as psychologist Gil Noam (1999)⁵ would suggest it does, but rather strengthens the focus on identity to embrace it as an implicit part of belonging.

⁵ "For many adolescents...the question is less 'Who am I' or 'What am I committed to?' and more 'Where do I belong?' " (Noam, 1999, p.56).

Young Women Steiner Students - Creative Acts of Becoming

"What if" we are a world of:

continuously flowing activities ... dynamically inter-mingling and intertwining with each other (able to) spontaneously create within ... the interplays occurring in the regions and moments of their meeting. (Shotter, 2005, p. 134)

For me this has the sense of 'water' an ever-changing form always whole, but always changing and moulding its form. Water is dynamic and yet always intrinsically recognisable as water. This, says Shotter (2005, p. 134), would be a "world of Becoming" instead of "Being" and then Becoming is then a creative act. This is the world we hear through the voices of the young women in this study. Madonna, who was with the pilot study, describes the tension in this creative act of becoming:

I don't think I've still found quite the "I" yet - that's something - to actually find who you are and who you are supposed to be, but not supposed to be because you want to be 'who you really are' - I think that will take me a lifetime really. (Madonna 2)

Madonna seems to think there is a person or an *I* that she might be *supposed to be*; somebody that she has to *find*. As if there is some external idea of who she is and she just has to discover it while practising being who she is and who she is not, but that discovery process will 'take a lifetime'. What isn't portrayed in this text is the hopeful and buoyant sound of Madonna's voice and the laugh at the end, which for both us releases the tension of the moment. Perhaps Madonna does have a sense of who she *really* is (aside from external influences) because she knows she hasn't found it yet.

I take this further in a conversation with Natalie near the end of the study and ask: "Do you think you're ever completed - as a human being? Do you ever think you'll get to the point where - that's it - 'I know who I am and that's who I am and that's that'?" Natalie laughs:

Not really how boring would that be. What would you do?... What are you going to do if you're not going to do anything new? You'll never be complete because you'll constantly be doing different things or exploring things differently you're never just 'this is you'! (from Natalie 9e)

What this text doesn't fully communicate is the joy in Natalie's voice. Her way of communicating seems to be exactly what Sommer (2010a, p. 21) is talking

about being the 'character' of a Steiner education resonant in its students as they "learn with creativeness and joy" and "apply what they have learned independently and joyfully". This way of learning comes about rather it is in the very fabric of the teaching and learning approach (Hether, 2001). Through her doctoral research which compared "the moral reasoning (capacity) of high school seniors from diverse educational settings", Hether (2001, p. 150) found that the Steiner schools she studied employed "practices that are interwoven into the school day on a continuous basis over a span of years". She concluded that (Hether, 2001, p. 155):

...what (the Steiner school) does that nourishes and enhances moral development, is to continually remind students, via the most detailed nuances of its practices, of what it is to be a whole human being, a wholeness that encompasses a spiritual connection and includes a moral dimension.

Natalie describes her experience that in her last year of high school she is beginning to understand the *reason* behind her education.

I'm starting to realise we do things for a reason and that sort of thing. I do feel we're better people because of it and ... more rounded ... in a sense and I think we've kind of got a better understanding because we learn about so many different subjects that there's so many different aspects of life that even if you don't fully understand it, you still have like an idea about it, you know you've still got that word in your head. Like when I'm around other teenagers I feel a whole lot older like I feel I have more idea about the world than maybe they do yeah I think I do feel like a rounder person and more grounded because and more open to other things. (Natalie 10)

Natalie's use of the words 'rounded' and 'grounded' give a sense of being whole. She mentions a very important aspect of the secondary Steiner curriculum: that all the students study all the subjects throughout high school. The fact that Natalie, who had talked to me many times about not being 'allowed' to specialise in a certain subject, sees the benefit in having learned so many different subjects and thus so many different aspects of life, is a testimony to her education giving her the ability to take a "reflexive distance" (Sommer, 2010a, p. 22).

In Chapter 10 the young women described their experience of Becoming in their Steiner school culture, as a strong sense of individuality, of freedom to imagine and create in their own way so that they had the time and space to develop themselves. Vadeboncoeur (2005a) reminds us that 'child' and adult' project a

certain finished quality, but that adolescents have to navigate this social construct of being almost permanently in transition, of having the quality of being 'unfinished' until they are adults. Whether this is boon or bane remains to be seen and may not actually matter.

Simone de Beauvoir is said to have stated that "one is not born a woman, but becomes one". Through this iconic quote de Beauvoir is perhaps emphasizing the role of 'nurture' over 'nature' in establishing the gender characteristics we ascribe to a woman. As one of the fore-mothers of feminism, de Beauvoir, I believe, was supplying us with many layers of meaning. Of course when we are born we are not women we are girl-children usually by a biological classification, and then the shaping and becoming begins. We are socialised into our roles as girls and women and thus gender becomes more of a social construct than a biological fact. Perhaps de Beauvoir was also telling us that in 'becoming a woman' we are also self-creating, free-willed individuals who write the stories for our own lives in the process of living them.

When Natalie talks about identity as 'becoming' we straight away hear de Beauvoir (who, by the way, Natalie had not heard of)⁶.

I don't know if we're born with a definite something, in a way, like a purpose. Maybe we are. I'm kind of open to the idea of it. I think it's not necessarily a set kind of thing, but you grow into it. You become someone...grow into who you're meant to be and that's when you shine. (from Natalie 5a)

'To shine' was an expression used by a number of the young women in this study and it became my experience of them as well. For me, it was as if their becoming was 'beauty', like a phenomenological 'radiance shining forth' (Gadamer, 1986). In my written expressions of gratitude at the end of our conversational journey⁷ I refer to many of them as 'shining' or 'radiant'. I consider that these brief expressions are my Goethean 'points of fire', my 'seeing

⁶ When I took this part of Natalie's conversation back to her to say how extraordinarily like de Beauvoir it was, Natalie said she had never heard of Simone de Beauvoir.

⁷ At the end of our nine months of conversations, (in late November) we had a farewell lunchtime get-together as a way of closure and for me to express my gratitude en masse and for them to say anything they wished. On the night before this gathering, I wrote each of them a card with a few words to individualise and 'essentialise' my experience with each one. I have placed some of these at the ends of Chapters 5 to 9 and in the first part of Chapter 10. The rest are in Appendix 14.

of the archetype of the phenomenon' (Hoffman, 1998). I heard the star-light and fire-like quality in their voices, the "clarity and strength" of a young woman's knowing (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 217), as they spoke about their lives.

What I wrote on their cards seems to express my inner experience of these young women as 'resolved in light'. Examples of what I wrote are: "the warm glow of your light"; "shine on beautiful star"; "aurora, light of many colours". I acknowledge the "shadows" and how Sophia becomes a "fire in my heart". One is "a star shining" and to another I say "the dark recesses will bear your light". I tell Natalie that "her magic sparkle" has unfolded joy in me and that her "passion for life is a fire". *Stars, fire, aurora* - these all have the quality of radiance and also of constant change, of transformation. They are *becoming*, dynamic and in constant motion.

All twelve young women showed deep gratitude for the character of their education. It is of interest to note that many of them used the word *education* when referring to their schooling, which to me indicates it wasn't 'just school' for them, but an experience with depth. Alongside their gratitude and their love of their school they were also able to express and discuss the things that did not work so well for them. They could speak out about what annoyed or frustrated them at school and in their lives and yet they did not necessarily have to denigrate these things or the relationships involved. This suggests a balanced way of seeing their relationships, or 'the world', a theme which came up time and time again in our conversations. We are told very clearly by Laura that *it's all about ... balance*. I now discuss this further in relation to the balance between her own voice (or individual voice) and the social voice through the work of Carol Gilligan.

Belonging and Becoming in Relationship

Carol Gilligan's studies (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982, 1995, 1997, 2004)⁸ expose a paradox voiced by young women which ironically was about

⁸ I focus on the work of Gilligan and Brown but acknowledge, as they do, that there are many others involved in their work and other researchers who have worked or are working towards the same aim of raising the voices of women and girls towards a balance in social, cultural and academic voice.

voicelessness: they stayed silent because if they spoke they would lose relationship and if they didn't speak they would lose relationship. This was "a relational impasse ... a paradoxical or dizzying sense of having to give up relationship for the sake of *relationships*" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 216). The sense of dizziness, Gilligan (2004, p. 134) later describes as "an overwhelming sense of vertigo and shock" which results from her "seeing clearly" through her own (perhaps 'inner') lens what she had been looking at with 'double vision' like "wearing my glasses over my contact lenses". Ironically it is the double vision that has seemed 'normal', says Gilligan. The 'glasses' provide a metaphor for the "new set of lenses" (Gilligan, 2004, p. 134) that, Gilligan's research showed, young women 'acquire' when entering adolescence. This has the chilling feeling of a type of 'correctional perception' which effectively removes, readjusts or 'takes out of focus', the young women's own innate perceptive ability (and self-perception) in favour of a double vision which is adopted as the 'right' way to look at things. Young women learn to 'take on' a 'culturally prescribed' lens as a matter of growing up into 'acceptable and right' women (Oliver, 1999)⁹.

The psychological (read 'emotional, mental, spiritual') cost of this "forces an inner division or chasm and creates a profound psychological shift" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 216) the result of which is dissociation. Young women learn to dissociate themselves from their inner knowing and feeling, from their own perception, and begin to forget or cover over "what as girls they have experienced or known".

I would hear girls who were developing well according to psychological measures and functioning well in their lives speak of shocking experiences of loss and betrayal and then veer into confusion, because it looked on the surface as if nothing has been lost, or at least nothing of value. (Gilligan, 2004, p. 135).

'Nothing of value' is Sophia's voice saying *nothing of consequence* as she did in our fifth conversation (see *Sophia 5a*) when I asked her whether she was

⁹ Pipher (1994) and Oliver (1999, 2001) refer to this as girls trying to navigate between their own sense of self (their own perception, their own voice) and what is culturally and socially prescribed as 'right and acceptable' for women.

'carrying a lot' because she was crying¹⁰. Sophia, at 18, says she is 'carrying nothing of consequence' and a few moments later she tells me quite matter-of-factly that she places herself *at the end* of the things that are *of consequence* in her life. As Sophia's voice unfolds in me, the *Nothing* resounds, echoing a something which is like the 'dissociation or disconnection' that Gilligan's work found. Sophia's frequent use of *I don't know*, is from Gilligan's perspective, a key marker that she struggles between knowing and not knowing. Gilligan (1997, p. 21) tells us that 'I don't know' is a verbal marker of dissociation: "Instead of signifying ignorance or humility, the phrase 'I don't know' often signified knowledge - that is thoughts and feelings which girls were covering up". Young women say they 'do not know', as they cover what they 'know' (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1990, 1997).

A poignant example of this is when in our in our tenth conversation, I ask Sophia 'what her heart says' and she says, "*I don't know*", to which I respond with encouragement: "It's trying to speak?" and she finds her knowing: "*Ah - I've been suffocated*" she says, and then cries. Here, is Sophia telling me that her "I" has been suffocated? For Sophia, and it seems for Laura and Crystal as well, tears seem to accompany such discoveries, as if an inner knowing is accessed. It is as if whatever has been suffocated (the 'I', the sense of self) has been kept alive in some salty fluid which can't help but accompany the birth of her own voice.

Gilligan (1997, p. 21) tells us that "pressed slightly (young women) reveal what they (know)" and here, and at other times in our conversations, Sophia did reveal her knowing. But to do this she had to find her *Nothing* first. Once she says *Nothing* and walks into that space, it is like she is suddenly letting go of it. With time her ability to speak to that *Nothing* or of the *Nothing*, improves and new worlds begin to unfold. Sophia talks of *other realms* and spiritual beings (as does Laura at length) and in one conversation Sophia even speaks of having sensed her grandfather's spirit *standing behind her* guiding her to write a school

¹⁰ Sophia in our third conversation touched an inner 'well' so deep that she can't stop crying yet declares it is "nothing".

project. "We were astonished to discover," says Gilligan (1997, p. 21) that "girls and women know ... a human world which is said to be unknowable."

Sophia 'knows' and 'doesn't know' frequently. She moves in and out of that knowing with greater ease over our nine months together, still hitting blank patches, but recognising herself more and more. Finally in our last conversation, she senses 'the something': *Something's there though - I can't quite reach*. And she finds names for the things she thinks and feels which take her beyond the *Nothing* and she 'sees' them. She describes the impasse - *it's just a vicious circle you just get stuck - but instead of being stuck there, she can see sort of past that and read between the lines*. She sees *the expression of her many selves*. She sees that truth has layers and that it is related to perception: *There's truth in everything or the essence of it is there - so many layers of people's perceptions - that come into a situation - but yeah it's there*. And she sees beauty, even in pain.

Even by our tenth conversation she says, her heart is *on my sleeve* and she acknowledges the need for *balance, I don't know, that's the whole point isn't it?* She still says her *I don't know*, but she moves right past it and shows she *does* know, and *feel*. A passionate cry to 'make others feel' is awakened in her. When I ask her where the urge to help others by working in a 'caring profession' comes from I mention inner voice and Sophia names it initially as *silence* but then hears her heart. She actually sees the silence that has been sitting in her, names it and speaks.

Althea: Where is it coming from in you? Is there an inner voice?

Inner voice - silence - I mean yeah - doing what my heart tells me. That's the big picture...making others FEEL something in this frikkin world! (from Sophia 10b)

We frequently discuss matters of the heart and the way Sophia describes it, her knowing is stored in her heart (Steiner, 2001). In her passion to want others to feel, she is finding ways to describe what she feels. So what is going on here? There is no doubt that conversations with Sophia unfold strong evidence of a relational impasse. Sophia is almost suspended in time and space as she tries to 'know' what the nothing is that has suddenly appeared in her. This is a deeply moving and transformative time in our third conversation as Sophia has uncovered 'nothing' and can't place it. It seems at the time as if it will almost

drown her and calls out: *The thought that Nothing is in my head. Oh god. Help!* Yet when we see each other again, seven days later she quickly apologises for her *melt down* and then says she doesn't remember what happened when she went home afterwards, not just once but twice she doesn't remember: *last time don't remember what happened I think I just went home and did the dishes and made dinner or something, I don't know. I don't remember - nothing really.* Again in our tenth conversation I remind her of those intense moments and she says *I don't remember.*

Is this not exactly what Gilligan refers to as she says in the quote given earlier that speaking of "shocking experiences of loss and betrayal" can "veer into confusion, because it looked on the surface as if nothing has been lost" (Gilligan, 2004, p. 135). Young women, says Gilligan (1990, 1997) cover their knowing and then forget that they know. Sophia is telling herself 'not to remember', that it is 'nothing' and if she stays on the surface, she can believe that, but she continues to talk and the covers keep falling open. Something is trying to get out, to speak. Something is trying to get beyond the relational impasse.

Emerging through her lack of focus, her confusion and not knowing, is her vitality and passion, her consistent almost adamant demonstration of love. There is not a time I have seen her (and these times are many) that she hasn't hugged me and looked me straight in the eye, willing to connect. When we discuss love she says, *If everyone did that the world would be fantastic wouldn't it?* So, beyond the relational impasse, of Sophia having disconnected from her knowing and making her voice 'inconsequential' she also 'talks back' and says she genuinely cares for other people, and wants to 'help humanity' which is, for Sophia, *following her heart.* Yet Sophia does continue to disconnect and 'lose focus' (this phrase from Sophia is strangely resonant of the 'dizzying sense' that Gilligan talks about), but she also has lucid moments of deep insight. She continues to say *I don't know*, but I, like Gilligan found herself doing, allow them and assume she does know anyway.

Through our conversations Sophia and I meet with her *nothing.* Sharing in this initial intense experience was transformative for us both. Our conversations

and our conversational space yielded many treasures and Sophia's nothing became 'something', possibly several 'somethings' which she was able to see, even if only from the edges at times. She found ways of speaking her knowing. She breathed into and out of her own voice to find her own harmony. As a gifted musician she describes confidently how harmony even with *one note* is possible (*from Sophia 6a*): *one note ringing out sounding out - it brings harmony to the place that it's sounding out in*. Here is her connection, the possibility of merging: *Merging itself into the environment and so that kind of brings the harmony between the two - like bringing feeling to what is happening*.

Questions still hang for me: *Is Sophia merging with her own voice and hearing herself? Or is she dutifully merging with the environment around her as she merges her lens with the 'culturally prescribed' one?* Perhaps what occurred a year after our conversations finished, is telling. Sophia breaks with what is expected of her, with 'the good girl' (Brown & Gilligan, 1992), and decides to leave university to work, save and travel and ten months later (two years since the study conversations finished) is now living and working overseas.

There is a clear connection between the findings of the present study and the key findings of Gilligan's and Brown's studies (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1990, 1997). This is that girls in adolescence describe a struggle of voice as they experience a process of dissociation and disconnection from their own voice in favour of adopting a social voice. In doing so, girls and young women are 'taking parts of themselves out of relationship, in order to save relationship'. What Sophia describes, enacts and embodies as her living experience in this study is the discovery, or perhaps 'release' of her hidden inner voice that has become 'inconsequential', 'suffocated', 'nothing'. Her tears validate the truth of this voice. Sophia's struggle is tangible and through it she finds a voice beyond the relational impasse.

Her love, her passion and her caring carry her through. She speaks out to the world to get past the social niceties when she says "*Yes - hah, politeness? Screw politeness!*". She resists what she calls 'the sleepiness' of the culture around her and her loud and insistent voice calls for people to 'Wake up!':

As New Zealanders - I just feel like everyone 's so reserved in a weird way...we are meant to be relaxed easy going, but I think that's crap...WHY WOULD YOU NOT BE REAL EVERYWHERE! ... Even in the Steiner school, I mean for God's sake , we've been with each other for twelve plus years ... you talk to someone by themselves, and I think in particular it's with the boys in our class and not just me everyone notices that, you talk to them by themselves, completely different, with their mates - what the hell is that, I mean, [she yells] WHO THE HELL ARE YOU? (from Sophia 10)

Sophia's voice rings out 'resistance', loud and clear. Sophia has experienced 'not knowing' yet she also speaks out her knowing in a voice of resistance that Gilligan (1997, 2011) suggests is often lost by late adolescence. A "healthy resistance to losing voice and losing relationships" becomes a "psychological resistance" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 217). The result is that young women do not speak out and therefore 'do not know'. Eventually, says Gilligan, they forget that they have disconnected from their knowing. Young women are:

...separating themselves or their psyches ... dissociating their voice from their feelings and thoughts ... taking themselves out of relationship so they could better approximate what others want and desire ... (some) ideal image (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, pp. 217-218).

This is the *I don't know* that we hear with Sophia and she tells of *doing for others* and her actions follow when, after school in the year following our conversations, she undertakes a course of study that she thinks will please others. But *something* in Sophia won't rest and we hear remarkable passionate resistance. She does 'cover', she does struggle, she does tell herself she has forgotten, but she also opens and accesses her knowing, she speaks out not only in our conversations, but to her peers and her community¹¹ and she really does remember.

Individual Voice as a Young Woman Student

With a young woman's clarity and strength (Brown & Gilligan, 1992) the individual voices in this study describe 'being a Steiner student' as *being more in themselves, as accepting who they are* and *being pretty secure*; as having the *space to*

¹¹ Sophia has written and spoken out in her school community and through her academic work about, amongst other things, the importance of 'connecting with our hearts' and of caring for others.

be yourself and having freedom of expression and not being a clone but being an individual.

I think that us as individuals generally we're beyond being told simply what to do. We're not going to listen as much straight up and we want a better reason about it and so it's not 'all good' if you just tell me 'do this now' no questions or 'don't talk to me about that because I don't want to hear it'! (from Laura 20c)

This is a strong voice! For Laura this strong voice is not out of character. Laura's voice of resistance is well-developed and yet as we have seen, seems to stand in stark contrast to her self-labelled depression. As I describe in Chapter 5, however, Laura shows the remarkable ability to stand back and look at her journey, her life, and breathe in and out of her different situations. She genuinely feels a *core of true self* which she gives voice to. Let no one tell her what to wear or how to behave. Yet she has far from disconnected from her joys in life¹². Not without struggle and pain, but with determination and a core voice of authority, she has emerged on the other side of 17 aware of creating her own balance in life and still strong in her individuality and voicing her resistance.

Like Sophia and Laura, the other young women in this study spoke out. They said that they were *individuals with strong opinions* and connected that to being Steiner students. This is an important aspect of this study. It is the young women who make the connection between who they are becoming and their belonging to a Steiner school. They are individuals, *able to voice what we think, because of their education, they say, not in spite of it; and this is apparent (even blatant) not just from my own perception, but in their telling, as Gabriel's story below illustrates.*

With the state school you don't have that opportunity so much where you can interact and voice your opinions with the teachers ... we are able to voice what we think more easily and feel comfortable to do that as well ... and feel heard most of the time ... there was one time when Mr. X (teacher) wanted an idea brought forward and I disagreed with it ... I had to have a talk with Mr. X to get an idea of what he was meaning and stuff ... it was completely to do with us and our schooling ... I didn't say outright it was a bad idea or anything I just said it

¹² While facilitating a workshop for women on 'our own voice' Gilligan (2004, p. 131) hears that the hardest place for women to go is joy.

wasn't for the top three classes ... like I didn't think they should be bringing more (practical/manual) work into our curriculum ... like it would interest a few boys but that's it. We already do handwork, woodwork and art ... we've got thirteen subjects and we don't want more on top. (Gabriel 11a).

The kind of relationship Gabriel describes is one that opens the roles of teacher and student to extend their "static identities" towards mutual learning in an interactive, fluid educational dynamic (Blackburn, 2005, p. 268) where student voice counts, where individual opinion counts. We learn from each other in sharing our ideas, our opinions, our stories and our difference (Blackburn, 2005; Reissman, 2008; van Manen, 1997). It is an imperative in healthy teaching and learning that there is room for voice and space for difference so that not only are "multiple perspectives" shared but we "allow one another to change our minds" (Blackburn, 2005, 268). In the present study we hear Crystal describing her deep feeling of being *different* and telling how at school she had the *space to be herself* and Zen was able to 'change her mind' and shed her self-labelled 'dumb' to dux her class.

To honour individual voice is "crucial to identity" (Patel Stevens, 2005, p. 275) for two key reasons. First, that it allows young people to say how it is for them rather than be 'packaged' into a mould. Secondly, it brings the changeability, relationality and subjectivity of human experience as temporally and spatially contextual (Vadeboncoeur, 2005b) to the foreground. The theory that identity is an "internally negotiated, fixed and positivist construction" has marginalised human beings into "socially significant groups" such as 'adolescents' (Patel Stevens, 2005, p. 275). "Naturalised, restricted, packaged and sold" (Vadeboncoeur, 2005a, p. 1) there is little hope for becoming *who you're meant to be* (*Madonna*) as a young person. Post-modern epistemologies and feminist perspectives have brought identity from the rigid focus imposed by developmentalists to a more fluid process-oriented space which Patel Stevens names as "'subjectivity" - a centralisation of individual voice - which "contains a conceptual saliency previously unknown in academic research, and educational conversations about young people" (Patel Stevens, 2005, p.276).

The individual voice tells of a fluid identity that is subject to the relationships to which it belongs: what Gilligan's voice-centred relational psychology describes

(Gilligan, 1997) and what the young women in this study experience as Steiner students. Beyond the tightly-bound concept package of identity then is Belonging and Becoming - *the space to belong to and to be/come yourself*. In such a dynamic, where student and teacher learn and teach together and the freedom of individual voice is respected, education becomes a vehicle for human empowerment, harmonious engagement and social change (Blackburn, 2005; Gidley, 2010a & b; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010; Steiner, 1996).

Concluding Comments

As the young women in this study tell us, the ultimate sense of belonging is *belonging to yourself*: no matter how many worlds you move in; no matter how many different selves you negotiate or colours you have; no matter how many relationships you navigate. Perhaps in their self-belonging these young women have succeeded at what Erikson called 'identity formation' and have heard their core sound - Erikson's ego identity. Potentially under Erikson's framework then, that means they have identified the sense of the reality of self, or voice, in relation to the social reality or social voice. Their sense of (ego) identity is perhaps what Laura calls the 'core'.

According to Erikson, failure at finding one's identity can result in self-doubt, role confusion and role diffusion. The young women in this study all express self-doubt to some extent, but perhaps their understanding of their different roles (student, daughter, sister, friend - and others such as dancer, artist, singer) is clearer; or they are able to navigate their relationships and retain a clarity of identity. But I suggest that the fluid nature of how they experience identity, as 'becoming', as possibility, can accommodate the doubts and the potential role confusion as long as there is space for a young woman to return to 'her own voice'.

The message from the young women in this study is to stay true to yourself - to the truth of who you are becoming - not necessarily an integrated 'one self', but more a harmony of selves which emanate from a core or centre of true self - like *a structure with ribbons*. This fluid core is felt or 'known', glimpsed but never grasped. It is the thing that we feel but don't see, that *slips away* (Lena) before

we can 'real-ise' it in an external way or we get a glimpse but ... look back (and) it's not there (Laura).

Quite often when searching for it you won't find it ... if you left it alone ... it might actually come to you ... might think harmony is this thing but it's another thing ... when you're on that search for harmony ... you might avoid situations that might be disharmonious ... but it might actually make you harmonious.
(from Isis 3a)

So Isis could be telling us that harmony is neither an external pursuit nor one particular thing and it cannot be grasped outside of oneself. Rather, she suggests, it is in an allowing, a letting be, perhaps a coming home to yourself. Is 'Belonging and Becoming' what Steiner aimed for - the coming together of spirit with matter, a harmony of our material and spiritual being? This study suggests that for these young women, the core of true self is an inner knowing, for some of them, a spirit of self, or the spiritual self that moves and changes in time-space. It is their own unique voice of truth, their personal beauty, each one's 'resident goodness', not something that is searched for, but something you become!

Chapter 12. A Flow of Many Ribbons

You have taught me to belong to myself, to laugh and cry and love myself for being alive and celebrate the many voices within us. (from Althea to Crystal - see Chapter 7).

The many voices of this study sing to my heart. The voices of twelve young women, live in me as if they are my own voices from my own youth (Gilligan, 2004); voices from which I am still learning the true value of belonging and becoming. The joy of sitting in conversation with these young women for nine months has been to receive their wisdom and life insights, and map the journeys of their challenges and triumphs. Now, as I try to cast off and bring our wanderings to a close, it feels truer than ever, as I said to Sophia in our first conversation, that they have been my spiritual teachers. Forever their voices will live in me weaving a flow of many coloured ribbons, a beautiful familiar landscape of human possibility.

A Flow of Ribbons

This study has indeed been 'a structure with ribbon' - the structure more like a 'flow'. The central flow belongs to the lemniscate, a path of infinity transcribed by the fluid relationships we developed. The ribbons become as we become. Emerging, growing, flowing, changing shape, changing direction, but still attached to the core. The core though is fluid. It changes and we change. We change and it changes. In the lifeworld of a young woman in this study, the ribbons might be pathways out into the world and bridges back to self. The ribbons might transcribe her circles of belonging or represent the voices of her soul. For me the ribbons have, on one level, been the themes that have emerged from our conversations. On another level they have been the eclectic mix of methodologies that have come together in this study. On a further level the ribbons may mark the limitations of this study, stretching only so far out into the world; or they may become the inspirations and future possibilities that arise because of this study for me personally and for the young women; and on the wider landscape of research and education. In some ways I am now that

structure, that flow, connected to the coloured ribbons that are the voices of twelve young women who were good enough to grace me with their wisdom.

The Voice of Freedom

My intention with this study was to 'dive deep' and unfold the inner worlds of young women students at a Steiner high school in the hope of hearing the voice of harmonious being. It has been important to me, perhaps even more important than it is to the young women in this study, to bring *their* voices to the front. I hope I have done so in a manner that befits the beauty of who they are becoming. What I have presented here is the essence of what I heard without trying to listen, as well as what I intently listened for in an effort to understand. I have aimed to impart my inner sense of who these young women are as they experience harmonious being, through a methodology that transcends our perceived separate existence and instead invites empowered interconnectedness through voice.

In the beginning, way back at the very spark of my inspiration for this study, before it really took form as a doctoral research possibility, I mused over something in Steiner education and its people, that caught my attention: composure. I caught hold of this phrase 'harmonious being' and I wondered 'Was this it?' Did it mean that we would all aspire to be the same composed (I was thinking 'bland'), peacefully balanced individuals? Harmonious being troubled me and intrigued me. My need to know harmonious being became more pressing as did my need to see what it meant for young women in an environment that seemed neither to actively encourage nor discourage raising girls' awareness of women's voices. The composure I saw in the Steiner adults, is not what I heard as harmonious being for the young women in this study, though I believe that there is a connection between the young women's experiences and the 'composed space' of the school (and of self?) as a container for becoming and a space to discover who you are. By further unfolding our conversations, and through further research, I intend to explore how the voices of desire, passion and resistance, for example (as experiences which I consider, contrast with composure) fit with (or within) this composure, if they do at all and if indeed it is composure.

What these twelve young women do show is a remarkable interest in the world around them and a keen awareness of their social, cultural and physical environments locally, nationally and internationally. They all show a deep respect for humankind and awareness of the human character and an inner conviction that we are all connected. They speak openly about enjoying being 'happy' and wanting a life where things go smoothly yet they also acknowledge that life has its ups and downs and that sometimes we gain a true appreciation of life's harmony only when it is *disrupted* as Lena says. So - do they manage their lives better than other young women of the same age?

Are Steiner girls *better, stronger, brighter* (as Laura said of human aspiration in our first conversation)? Is their self-proclaimed difference an advantage or a disadvantage? Are these experiences really harmonious being? Answers to questions like these live partly in the light and partly in the shadow, like the experience of harmonious being. The answers live in the interplay within relationships and answers that rely on acknowledging relationships are fluid changing possibilities - they depend on human connection, on love. The young women in this study speak about their own awakenings to who they are becoming and describe how they manage their belonging - in relationships with themselves and others. They demonstrate self-awareness and their right to exercise their voices though they don't always say they claim that right in every situation. They do say they are aware of such a right and that they are exploring it. Their experiences of harmonious being entertain a fluid freedom between their own awareness of belonging to themselves and their own becoming in the world. Indeed, what has this research shown if it has not shown us ourselves - unfolded, de-layered - our common human-being-ness. The questions are then superfluous because they separate and compare us, they limit freedom. And perhaps that is the key: the awareness of the voice of freedom. A freedom of the soul.

Re/Authoring the Text of Adolescence

Research on women and girls provides evidence of psychological capacities and relational knowledge that raises the most fundamental questions about the nature of cognitive and emotional and social development; otherwise it would seem impossible that they know what they know. (Gilligan, 1995, p. 123).

The voices of these young women re/author the text of adolescence rather than learn by heart a worn-out script. Like rainbow letters in the sand, their stories are colourful, varied and impermanent. They are always becoming, not conforming to a prescribed hegemonic discourse (Vadeboncoeur, 2005a & b; Patel Stevens, 2005). Speaking from the space of belonging to who they are, these young women discover their lives through their relationships (Gilligan, 1997, 2011). The young women in this study contribute to the re-creation of the social construction of young women and adolescence which is already underway (Artz, 1996; Bloustein, 2003; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1997, 2011; Martini, 2004; Oliver, 2001; Vadeboncoeur & Patel-Stevens, 2005). In education and schooling concern with poor motivation and low academic achievement at school (Faircloth, 2009); with youth depression and hopelessness (Gidley, 2005); or more extremely a disturbingly high incidence of youth suicide and self-harm in New Zealand (Heled & Read, 2005) means we still have work to do. Can we as educators, as parents and adults, provide a forum for the voices of young people and respectfully acknowledge their suggestions and invite their participation to make education an empowering experience? Can we do more than this? Can we extend ourselves to consider truly listening to their truths and open the possibility that perhaps what we have constructed as 'adolescence' over the years, is not the full story, or 'not even' the story? Are the stories we construct constructing us (Ayres, 2005)?

How often has humanity in the form of the conventional social authority figures such as academics, scientists, religious and government leaders, been wrong? What value do we gain from limiting and labelling if not trying to have control over that which we do not fully understand? As the authentic voice of living experience, the real authorities on their own lives, the young women in this study offer a different construction of 'adolescent' and of 'young woman'. These young women have spoken out. This 'voice' challenges the way we have created 'adolescent' and our deference to the voice of adult authority in giving us 'the real story'.

On Truth

The present study offers insights into the life-worlds of young women to weave a picture of how they see their lives and who they are. They share their truths about their 'adolescent' journey; what 'works' for them and what doesn't and what fosters hope and nurtures beauty and goodness in their lives. The truths presented here are their truths and my truths - truths which have grown/ developed/ emerged/ unfolded through our conversations. These truths re-create the conventional picture of 'moody adolescent' and high school student, to show a meaningful picture of what matters to a young woman and how she navigates her relationships in and out of school. The truth is, that for these young women, they are sick and tired of being labelled, cajoled and compelled to conform to an image that doesn't fit. They speak passionately and authentically about what matters in their lives - on the inside and on the outside. All of them face challenges; all of them find ways to navigate the challenges in their lives and their relationships; and all of them show an awareness of how they achieve balance.

And what of the trio of truth, beauty and goodness? Where are they in the ending of this story? I believe that these three notions began to live in our conversations, surfacing every now and then, but mostly just mingling in the background of our conversations, like truth does, like beauty does, like goodness does, in our lives. Because we gave our attention to truth, beauty and goodness, they began to belong in our conversations and we began to belong to them. A similar force is described by Natalie in this study when she says (paraphrased) 'whatever I belong to is who I am and who I am is whatever I belong to'. To fully unfold the living experiences of truth, beauty and goodness in the voices of the young women in this study, is a future pursuit to which I look forward with enthusiasm.

The Voice of Resistance

The picture of these young women warm, communicative, willing and able to navigate their lives, balance their relationships, is one that perhaps belies the struggles they also experience. Theirs is not necessarily a bed of roses and it is

not my intention to paint such a picture. That all of the young women in this study had their struggles, their difficulties, is exemplified in Laura's *gloominess*; Crystal's *goodness as a bad thing* and her loyalty to her *difference*; Lena's wish for a *perfect fit*; Aries' heavy silence and sudden passion about *not being labelled* and Sophia's *nothing of consequence*. Alongside their struggles was their intense belonging to themselves and willingness to voice that belonging.

In hearing this voice, I hear a marriage of inner and outer worlds (Gilligan, 1995) their own sense of belonging to themselves and belonging to the world. I hear this, as the listener, as the participant in their lives, as their voices resonating in me. I hear them calling forth an inner voice of becoming to match what they are hearing in the outer world. Gilligan (1995, p. 124) tells us that adolescence girls are "pressed from within and without to take in and take on the interpretive framework of patriarchy". The young women in the present study may experience this also, yet there is something more working within them that is perhaps creating rather than pressing. We hear the voice of the young woman Steiner student say, as if in conversation with Gilligan, that her education is a process of *working from within instead of being pressed from without* (Kate). In this way discovers *a more certain feeling of self* (Kate).

A recent conversation I had with Aries about this study, demonstrates just how strong that certain feeling of self can be. I spoke with Aries at the recent school Spring Festival, an unplanned conversation. She asked me how 'the PhD' was going. I said that I was close to finishing my writing. I said something like: "I've written about how you all say that, in this education, you have been supported to develop your own individuality" and she looked at me, defiant. "What?" I said, "You don't believe that?" *Well*, she said, *I've done it on my own. It's not like the school's helped me*. She briefly reiterated that she had made her own way, not supported by the school. "Ok", I said, "well, maybe we need to have another conversation!" and we laughed. I wanted to talk more, but the public nature of our surroundings meant I wasn't going to pursue this there and then.

I have taken Aries' comment in and turned it over and over in me. More than her words was her look, her energy - piercing and resistant. She didn't say

much, but she looked and I felt her silence - still her silence - tangible and charged. Was I wrong? I felt at the time like some benevolent researcher who had enthusiastically shared a sugar-coated version of the truth expecting the enthusiasm to be returned, while at the same time feeling the coating slowly cracking as I spoke. I heard her. She has made her own way, no thanks to her school! And I believe, she was also saying, no thanks to me either! Ok, I think now, what does that mean? How can I make it mean anything? Perhaps the school is like the 'master' who has been surpassed by 'the pupil' who is so empowered that she (the pupil) forgets she ever had the guidance of the master. *What school? What support? I am who I am because of what I have done for myself.*

What more is there to be said? I hear passionate self-belonging. I can comment on Aries, as a researcher, as her conversational partner, as an adult/teacher/parent, but I doubt she wants my comment. So I can only satisfy my own need for conclusion and integrity and say: I believe she is a strong young woman with a good voice. Aries speaks her mind, allows silence, and is a passionate voice of becoming. Aries would seem to have maintained her connection to herself, not forgoing her own voice to lose her "psychological vitality and courage" (Gilligan, 1995, p. 124) but "say(ing) what she want(s) and know(s) without being left all alone" (Gilligan, 2011, p. 160). She is not alone because I hear her even in her silence. She has taught me to "question silences" (Gilligan, 2011, p. 160) and to see silence in a new way. My questioning of silence, does not mean I relinquish it, rather I ask what speaks in the silence, what is becoming. And here Aries is telling me it is something you do for yourself.

Natural Human Science - A New Voice

The methodology of the present study has brought together a late 18th-early 19th century German natural scientist-poet (Goethe) with a 21st-Century feminist psychologist from the human sciences (Gilligan, 2011). An unusual mix at face value, yet perhaps not so unusual given the central voices in this study - those of Steiner-educated young women. Goethe's phenomenology has provided a means of belonging in conversation and of exploring human experience and connecting in an open free and loving inquiry with another. It has opened up worlds of possibility for dwelling with the wholeness of our

living experience and with the world as a way of life that honours and respects the harmony of all things redressing what Gilligan calls (2011, p. 76) the "false memory" of divided lives in a divided world.

The feminist lens provided by Gilligan's voice centred methodology has felt natural for me. It has given me a framework for exploring the experiences of the young women in this study so that their lifeworlds are drawn outside of the Steiner-circle into the world of young women in general, though there is more for me to do here. In particular, the strength, depth and breadth of the psychological focus of Gilligan's research and methodology, has supported the in-depth unravelling of some of our conversations and offers significant scope to support further exploration of the experiences of the young women in the present study. As I have described, the methodology evolved naturally out of the study process, guided by the dynamic between the people (myself and the young women) who *were* this study. So perhaps it is not so strange that through the character of *connectedness* that this study embraces, two seemingly different worlds were connected.

Both Gilligan and Goethe, emphasise the importance of the *connectedness* of all things - of each person within themselves, of humankind to one another and of human beings to our environment - and thus of wholeness. They both speak of *love* as the motivational force for their research; of *participating with* and experiencing the 'other' (as the focus of the research) within as an *inner movement* and awakening and they both centralise *intuitive knowing*, the *inner voice* as authority. Furthermore, both Gilligan and Goethe, centralise relationships at the heart of the phenomenon of human experience¹. Through Gilligan and Goethe, this study has shifted the voice of phenomenology from the 'lived experience' focus to the *voice of living experience*: a relational phenomenology of connectedness and presence through voice. I have added Gilligan to Goethe by naming 'Goethean layered listening' and suggested the

¹ Goethe tells us that relationships are at the heart of all phenomena (Barnes, 2000): and Gilligan explains (Kiegelmann, 2009): "if your goal (is) to discover the structure of another person's inner world ... then you (have) to come into relationship with them".

term *natural human science* to describe the methodological mix of Goethe and Gilligan, though this new voice in social research is really more of a spirit than a set of labels.

The methodologies came together in the common space of conversation. Goethean conversation is a practice of love, connectedness and wholeness: where truth is discovered in process through creative and intuitive speaking and listening, and silence is revered as much as sound. In Goethean conversation, truth becomes in the belongingness of the conversation: a living experience which opens "a new organ of perception" (Goethe, quoted in Robbins, 2005, p. 113) in us so that our senses are refreshed and we are able to see differently.

The Conversation

No sooner had the Snake beheld this reverend figure, than the King began to speak, and asked: "Whence comest thou?" "From the chasms where the gold dwells," said the Snake. "What is grander than gold?" inquired the King. "Light," replied the Snake. "What is more refreshing than Light?" said he. "Speech," answered she. (Goethe, 1795)

Goethe wrote in his fairy tale *The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily* (Goethe, 1795), that speech, also sometimes translated as 'conversation', is more refreshing than Light, thus elevating what he called true conversation to an almost grail-like position as the "the art of arts" (Spock, 1983, p. 73). In conversation, Goethe saw the opportunity for spiritual connection through a co-creative process by which participants "enter the world of living thoughts together" in a "special atmosphere ... of supernaturally attentive listening...of the most receptive openness to the life of thought" so that "the consciousness of all who share (the conversation) shapes itself into a single chalice to contain that life" (Spock, 1983, pp. 74-75). The conversation then becomes a spiritual connection, a work of art. The life of the conversation then, is "given form within a framework" so that it doesn't "straggle on amorphously" (Spock, 1983, p. 81).

In conversation two human beings create - an experience, an epiphany, a moment of knowing, a connected space. In true conversation, we become and we sense the other's becoming. True conversation is not a discussion. A

discussion carries a different resonance, engaging the intellect and tending to separateness (Spock, 1983). True conversation engages the heart and "the tendency of hearts is to union" (Spock, 1983, p. 82). In the present study, we engaged in the possibility of experiencing this union. How connected we became depended on the openness and willingness of each participant. I approached our conversations with each of the young women significantly in my heart-mind. I was dwelling in our conversations, I entered my sleep with them and woke to each new day imagining, creating, musing and worrying with them. I navigated them before, during and after I actually had them and the whole of our conversations were actually about navigation. And what we navigated were relationships.

The Method Creates the Methodology

In relationship we discussed relationships. Relationships were at the heart of the methodology, the method and the conversations. The central modality was conversation - a co-creative (ad)venture which locates the power of *finding out* (investigative research) in our conversational relationship. Through our co-creative conversations we elucidated our methodology. My recent journal notes show my exploration of this phenomenon of 'method creates methodology' by using the analogy of singing a song.

I have to engage in the act of singing, the physical embodied voice, in order to hear the song. As I sing I hear how the song takes shape, how the melody and the words fit together. I experience the fluid interplay of the words, the melody and the way in which I sing it. By singing the song I begin to understand exactly how I want to sing the song so that I show myself in it, so that I present the uniqueness of how the song lives in me. What this illustrates is that through the action (the act of singing or the act of conversation) I elucidate the spirit of the action (the way in which I sing or manner with which I converse) and the meaning of the song, the phenomenon that the song unfolds, becomes clear. (Althea Journal Notes, August, 2011)

As we let ourselves belong together in conversation, we let the method create the methodology - a Goethean science of belonging. The appearance of 'belonging' as a manifestation of harmonious being is not surprising. It *was* already present as the foundational premise of the methodology, but only made visible or actually experienced in the process of doing the research. That "things already belong together" is the aim of Goethean science (Bortoft, 1996, p. 290).

The aim must be to see the belongingness of the phenomena, and so to encounter the phenomena in the mode of wholeness instead of separation. This wholeness ... is then recognised as being a higher dimension of the phenomena. (Borfoft, 1996, p. 291)

In the same way, Gilligan's methodology (Gilligan, 1997; Kiegelmann, 2009) acknowledges belonging from the very beginning of the research process: research is caring, it is connected, it honours wholeness, and as qualitative human science, it is relational: belonging in the interplay of voices in relationship.

Limitations

The limitations of this study relate largely to the overall research approach (phenomenology); the dynamic notion of an always changing time-space window through which we 'do' research; and the difficulty of *being with* research *with* young people (not doing it on young people) while still unavoidably having an adult lens. From my perspective, and as has been the very essence of the way myself and the young women have conducted this study, 'limitations' are the boundaries we set ourselves to create safety and certainty. Like the safe container of the school for the young women in this study, beyond the limitations are the possibilities of growth and learning and, most importantly, adventure into the unknown wilds of life. But like the safe space of school, the container which transcribes our limitations is necessary so that, like the cocoon of the emerging butterfly we have something, some substance, to push against in order to experience our own emerging metamorphosis, our own becoming.

Phenomenology and My Voice

The limitations of the phenomenological method include the very individual way that the voices (of the young women) are interpreted by me and my particular 'gaze' over the layers of conversations. Goethean phenomenology calls for my inner participation with each voice, my inner sight as I experienced each young woman. Chapters 5 to 10 of this thesis are testimony to how the intensity of my gaze (as my choice of interpretative methodology demanded) limits the number of individual 'stories' that it is possible to present within the limitations of the thesis document. Therefore some of the young women are

more highly profiled in a detailed way than others. What was also a key aspect of our conversations was that we could only ever go as far as the individual young woman wished. I experienced this very clearly. Even when I wanted to explore something further, I could not if the young woman concerned was not willing. I described this in a recent conversation with my supervisor, Dr. Beverley Clark, as "not having the power" to travel into territory that the young woman did not wish to explore.

'Balance in all things', I am reminded by the young women in this study, and the balance lies in the wholeness of the methodology. In every part there is the whole, in every voice the others speak and because I am the channel through which these voices emerge here on paper, I carry the resonance of every one of 148 conversations into my interpretation and through my voice, many voices speak. In this way, I know that in one voice there is the harmony of many. The joy of my future publications will be to unfold these many voices further and further.

My own eye and my own voice prescribe a particular bent to the research. In plain English this is 'you see what you want to see'. Is this valid in research? Does this translate as a limitation? The phenomenological method centralises the individual voice yet it does so on the understanding that somewhere in every (other) human experience is a recognisable aspect of our own (van Manen, 1997). Perhaps we are not so very different at the *core of true self* (Laura) yet the myth of separation is perpetuated in our everyday lives as "divisions among women" and the no-win "argument as to whether women are different from or the same as men, and if different, who is better" (Gilligan, 2011, p. 76). Goethean phenomenology and Gilligan's relational psychology take us beyond this myth to a place of love, connectedness and wholeness as the universal, and ultimately healing, experience of being and becoming human.

Perhaps my best way of bringing this 'limitation' to a conclusion for this thesis is to refer to a recent conversation² I had with Laura about this. I gave Laura her

² In May of 2011 (two years after the research conversations had begun) I spoke with Laura over the phone and we met on two occasions to discuss her section of the Findings and this methodological dilemma of 'seeing what you want to see'.

chapter to read and asked her to honestly comment on anything she wished to. Laura read it once and asked some basic questions about format and what was my point in 'doing all this'. I then asked her for feedback on whether there was anything in it she wouldn't want to have in the thesis, anything she wouldn't want 'someone else' to know and she read it again. She said the following³, speaking at first about whether she would let this be read or included in the thesis at all and thinking back to 'then' - two years ago when we were having our conversations.

At first I thought if it was back then I might have gone 'nah', if people knew that much about me, that's scary. But now, it's cool. I guess that's what you're trying to do. That's the point. To show someone who I am. (from Laura, reflections on her conversations)

I asked her opinion of how I had 'treated' and interpreted our conversations and whether there was anything that was wrong or unfair. Then she read it a third time and said the following.

It's a funny thing. Now I understand. This interest in people I've taken into my life. I want to do this for everyone. I want to find it all out! I've absolutely loved some of your reflections, some of the imagery. Like the idea of the bridge going into everything - I love that. (from Laura, reflections on her conversations)

I asked her whether I had leaned too far to one side of her personality. Was I too positive or too sunny in my portrayal of her or conversely had I focused too much on darker more painful aspects? For instance, did I talk about her 'valley of tears' too much? Laura said she thought it was a balanced look at her. No I wasn't too focused on the sunny or the darker aspects; the valley of tears was there, she said, and *you talked about it, that's ok*. Laura's reflections tell me that the methodology worked. That through caring and connected conversation I was able to participate in an inner way (Goethe) with 'the other'; and connected with the other's 'psychic' (Gilligan) or 'spiritual' (Goethe) life. I would like to say that this experience was mutual. I believe for some, like Sophia and Laura, that it was. We became the world of the living experience we were unfolding (van

³ Laura's words are taken from my written notes while we were talking. The quotes I have used here have been read and approved of by Laura.

Manen). So that in Laura's case, at any rate, it is not so much that I 'see what I want to see', but rather that we are both seeing the same thing.

Time-Space Limitations - The Window Gaze

In all research we are limited by the time-space of 'who, where, when and what' the research involves. This I call the 'window gaze' because all research is truly just a moment in time-space when we are gazing through the window (or lens of our methodology) out onto the landscape of our research project. The Goethean phenomenological approach of the present study requires an intense gaze encouraging depth within individuals rather than breadth across individuals. However, if we see depth as the space that we explore into (through the layers of the individual), then breadth is achieved across time. Thus relatively few 'participants' can be accommodated compared to a quantitative study for example. Twelve young women from one particular Steiner school, is a small sample by quantitative standards, though not so from the perspective of a phenomenological study. A further limitation is that this study explores the uniquely 'New Zealand' experience of Steiner education, in one location in New Zealand. It is possibly very different from the experience of a young woman in a Steiner school in Stuttgart, the original home of Steiner education, for example. How exciting it would be to explore this further.

Another aspect of the window gaze is the age range of young women I chose to talk with. My questions about learning to breathe and harmonious being were initially posed about all children in the Steiner school, but my specific focus fell on the upper school for two reasons: my interest in seeing the child after the primary years when the 'groundwork' had theoretically been done and my attraction to the potential tension between the 'discordant' adolescent journey and the experience of harmonious being. So I decided on a 14-18 age range, but acknowledge that a similar exploration in younger children and in adults who are ex-Steiner pupils would unfold an understanding of this phenomenon further. This brings me to a very obvious limitation of this study: that this study was only inclusive of young women. Whether young men experience harmonious being (and their Steiner education) in the same way has yet to be seen.

Being With Research With Young People

By whose gaze does the adolescent become an object of research? What counts as evidence in this paradigm? Whose perspective and subject position is privileged? Who benefits? Who is silenced? (Vadeboncoeur, 2005a, p. 5)

By seeking to profile the voices of the young women in this study I am faced with a balancing act between their voices and my own, at times even forgetting whose is whose. The intense conversational methodology and layered listening, has meant that from my perspective, our voices have intertwined. By including a significant amount of raw voice (their voices), I have hoped to show who these young women are by their own voices, and how they navigate their lives, but I offer this research "wary of co-opting them through adult and research lenses" (Vadeboncoeur, 2005a, p. 2). The phenomenon of "young woman Steiner student" that is described here is perhaps a story *created* by this study, as much as it is *unfolded*, though I believe that the portraits given here err on the side of 'her story' rather than mine. I have intuitively and intentionally included and explored discourses that challenge the conventional social construction of 'adolescent' and 'adolescence', as well as discourses that challenge me. I have hoped to show through my writing here, my voice in conversations and my journal notes that I hold a genuine love for the entire being of this study and for the young women who have made it possible. Yet nothing - not my methodology, not my voice, not their voices, not the portrait of harmonious being - should be taken for granted. For then we would cease to challenge it, and, as Vadeboncoeur (2005a, p. 8) warns, "socially axiomatic" scientific knowledge becomes dead knowledge. That won't do because this is a living study about a living changing phenomenon. And it is not solely about knowledge, it is about human experience as a spiritual-material journey. We should never stop questioning, as the symphony of voices from the present study suggest, life is a dynamic becoming. One may say at this point that this is all very well for such young people, of course they are just embarking on life's journey and the world is their oyster, but older and more hardened by life's challenges, us adults have a different experience. In case my message hasn't hit home - this study is saying that our lives are about the relationships we share and when we share in young women's journeys, listen to their voices, we learn about our own becoming and see ourselves and the world anew. We may find

the courage to consider the myriad possibilities that we can become, not through knowing more but through understanding more. We might unfold "the courage to understand what we (already) know" (Lindqvist as quoted by Gilligan, 2011, p. 76).

Inspirations, Future Possibilities and Recommendations

To say that I have been transformed by this study is not enough. I, who looked to understand what it is to teach a child how to breathe, have discovered the breathing space of Goethean conversation. In unfolding the voices of the young women in this study I have unfolded my own. In the way that some of the young women in this study described our conversations - as holding a special space between school and home - I also found it special and developed a love of that space which warmed me and challenged me. I revered every conversation. Some were hard work, most were not, all of them taught me about myself, about young women, about Steiner education and about connected, loving and transformative conversation.

I learned early in our conversational relationships how liberating it was to hand over the reins and not have a specific agenda except for to talk. I learned how to give the very thing I wanted to receive - open natural conversation. I learned how to listen between the words and to love and respect silence. I learned to navigate my own feelings of acceptance and rejection when for some reason, one of the young women did not show up for a conversation. And I learned to unfold my own voice in myriad ways within my conversations with the young women, within my collegial network, within research and education and my own life, to speak out and "strengthen (my) honest voice and my courage" (Gilligan, 2011, p. 160)

In this thesis I have presented and discussed some of the coloured ribbons that stood out for me, though there are many more. There is a wealth of insight, knowledge and wisdom that has yet to be divulged and that in itself is part of the 'becoming' quality of this study. I can only plan for future writing and publication to unfold more stories and other meanings. At one point I discussed with some of the young women, the possibility of a performance piece which

would be a play of three acts: truth, beauty and goodness. The play would impart the sense of what it is like to be a young woman navigating harmonious being. Inspirations such as this buoy my journey. I have also been inspired by my ongoing connections with some of the young women in this study who have followed their passions in visual arts and design, photography, anthropology, music, and sound and voice work. I had the pleasure and privilege of mentoring one of the young women through her final year school project on 'finding her own voice' in the year following our conversations and continue to stay in touch with most of them.

The young women in this study offer wise counsel on how we can navigate our cross-generational relationships. With reference to exploring her own communication with the adults in her life, Crystal said to me: *Love is learning to listen*. Other young women said: *make time, make space and don't label!* As we listen, make time, make space - we participate not only in the being of another, but in our own being - perhaps our own harmonious being. Belonging and Becoming as manifestations of harmonious being, speak to me of time and space. I imagine belonging as space and becoming as time - not discrete experiences, but one, like the Māori word 'Wa' (normally written *Te Wa*) which means both space and time. Interestingly '*waha*' is used for 'mouth' in Māori language, and is the amalgamation of time-space (*wa*) and breath (*ha*). There is something to be unfolded here in the notion of time-space in human experience and what it means for young women, in Steiner education and in education in general.

Vadeboncoeur (2005b) uses the notion of time-space as 'chronotope' (developed by Bakhtin (1981, 1986) to analyse or explore the experience of time and space in literature) to explore both individual and institutional identity narratives in educational contexts. Her work was particularly focused on raising awareness of schools that operated an alternative chronotope to the mainstream and she profiled an individual narrative of a young woman within one such school. She asks "Why is it that the comprehensive high school model seems to fail so many young people?" (Vadeboncoeur, 2005b, p. 145). Her portrayal of the time-space experience within the school and for the young woman, showed how a different (from mainstream) approach to time and space can open up

opportunities for self-expression and identity experiences. By having the space to 'author her own identity', the young woman student exposed "the falseness of social custom and the underside of gendered expectation as a moment for imagining something 'other' - a different non-apologetic way of performing 'girl and 'woman' " (Vadeboncoeur, 2005b, p. 142). There is clearly something very significant here and I plan to work with the notion of chronotope to explore and unfold the narratives of the young women in the present study. An important complement to this would be to explore the chronotope of the Steiner school site of the present study and of other Steiner schools and of course, Steiner students.

I am of course left wondering how young women in other school cultures would author this story and envisage the opportunity to take my own methodology, as well as the chronotope, out to explore other school cultures. I imagine taking Goethean layered listening out to grow and develop as a research methodology for the human sciences, starting with exploring the living experience of educational cultures. My vision is to work with young women and girls - in different cultures and different educational settings, and I would hope to inspire my male colleagues to explore the worlds of young men. Given that we are now, at least in New Zealand, expressing concern for how well boys are doing in our schools, perhaps we should talk with young men and boys to find out what their experiences tell us.

There continues to be deep concern expressed by teachers, students, academics and education professionals that our formal mainstream schools are not meeting the needs of our young people and that we are raising a generation who see bleak and overwhelmingly challenging futures with an increasing material and intellectual focus (Gidley, 2010b; Palmer & Zajonc, 2010). I believe it is possible to renew and refresh our educational cultures towards ones which educate for the love, connectedness and wholeness of being and becoming human.

Educational Renewal - A Challenge

What do we wish for as we set out on the path of education? As teachers, as students, what do we hope will be achieved? With the advent of imposed standardised testing in New Zealand public schools, we seem to have fallen into draconian times. Even though "our schools remain in desperate need of transformation", are we to see the future of education follow a "narrow...road to education failure" by forcing "a grinding never-ending focus on literacy and numeracy" at the expense of creative inspiration, individuality and imagination through "the power of the arts" (O'Connor, 2011, p. B5)? Associate Professor Peter O'Connor, at Auckland University, tells us that there is "a vision of education far richer than our tired repetition of testing, national standards and a narrow focus on literacy and numeracy" (O'Connor, 2011, p. B5).

As educationists; as teachers and learners; as philosophers and scientists; as human beings surely we aim to uplift rather to enslave the human spirit. We ignore our deep longing for love and connectedness at our peril. Love, like the light of the spirit, cannot be measured and weighed, nor standardised and nationalised. Nor can imagination be installed. Yet is it not love that is at the heart of inspirational life-long teaching and learning? "What should be at the center of our teaching and ... learning ... What is our greatest hope for the young people we teach?" asks Zajonc and finds his answer with the poet, Rilke :

To take love seriously and to bear and to learn it like a task, this is what [young] people need ... For one human being to love another, that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks, the ultimate ... the work for which all other work is but a preparation. For this reason young people, who are beginners in everything, cannot yet know love; they have to learn it. (Rilke, quoted by Zajonc in Palmer & Zajonc 2010, pp. x-xi)

The methodology of Goethe with Gilligan - what I have called *natural human science* - can be positioned as a proponent of educational renewal by raising awareness of real educational initiatives that educate the whole human being and cultivate loving connectedness and meet the needs of our rapidly changing social, cultural and natural environments.

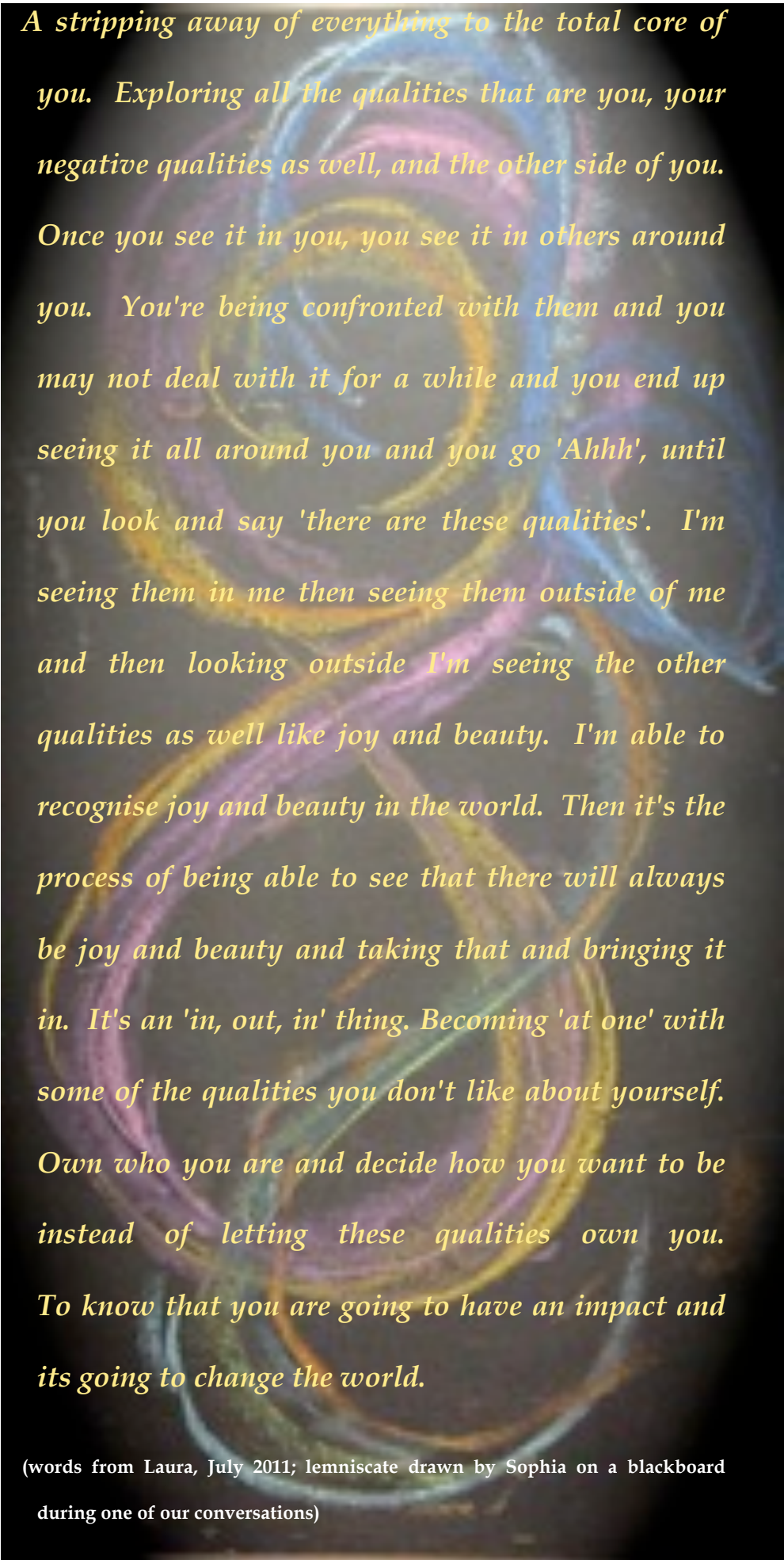
Goethe's methodology has an inherent belonging with the human sciences - as a methodology for educational research and as a way of truly understanding the

possibilities we may have for our educational futures as becoming human kind. Goethe's vision of artistic science partnered with Gilligan's relational psychology, may offer a pathway to develop our grace and perspicuity to navigate our human becoming harmoniously and to foster the greatest of all abilities - that of knowing oneself. It may be possible then to take natural human science, into many educational cultures, for it is not bound to any religion or creed. It is an easy open philosophy that asks for human beings to acknowledge our interrelatedness and seek to experience the world by dwelling with its many facets. In the face of the advancing wall of technological bondage, a way to live and learn which is inspired by creative, artistic and astute perception through intuition and imagination is becoming an imperative for these are capacities that can ever only be organically human. Education and educational research can be transformative should we choose to remember our connected, passionate human voices.

You are Going to Have an Impact and it's Going to Change the World

The final word belongs to the young women and it is fitting that it should be a creative act of becoming. Here I have returned to Laura, artist of 'a structure with ribbon' and a caring, connected, courageous young woman. In reviewing her chapter in this thesis, she described her thoughts on the process of this study's methodology as 'a stripping back to the core'⁴. In the words below, Laura shows how she took that notion into her own lifeworld and then expressed it as a more universal human experience. In this spontaneous reflection Laura speaks the essence of harmonious being as a breathing-becoming process and from her core of belonging in her own voice, she emerges to belong with the world. The wondrous thing is that, having taken herself inwards, she is the one who has discovered her 'core', her own voice, and she is the one who takes herself on her outward journey to connect to the world of human experience.

⁴ Laura gave her description in spoken, not written form.



A stripping away of everything to the total core of you. Exploring all the qualities that are you, your negative qualities as well, and the other side of you. Once you see it in you, you see it in others around you. You're being confronted with them and you may not deal with it for a while and you end up seeing it all around you and you go 'Ahhh', until you look and say 'there are these qualities'. I'm seeing them in me then seeing them outside of me and then looking outside I'm seeing the other qualities as well like joy and beauty. I'm able to recognise joy and beauty in the world. Then it's the process of being able to see that there will always be joy and beauty and taking that and bringing it in. It's an 'in, out, in' thing. Becoming 'at one' with some of the qualities you don't like about yourself. Own who you are and decide how you want to be instead of letting these qualities own you. To know that you are going to have an impact and its going to change the world.

(words from Laura, July 2011; lemniscate drawn by Sophia on a blackboard during one of our conversations)

REFERENCES

- Abraham, S., & Llewellyn-Jones, D. (2001). *Eating disorders: The facts*. 5th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Aeppli, W. (2001). *The developing child: Sense and nonsense in education*. Great Barrington, New York: Anthroposophic Press Inc.
- Allen, L. (2005). 'Say everything': exploring young people's suggestions for improving sexuality education. *Sex Education*, 5 (4), 389-404
- Amrine, F. (1998) The metamorphosis of the scientist. In D. Seamon & A. Zajonc (Eds) *Goethe's way of science: A phenomenology of nature*, (pp. 33-54), New York: State University of New York Press.
- Anderman, L. H. (2003). Academic and social perceptions as predictors of change in middle school students' sense of school belonging. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 72(1), 5-22.
- Arnett, J.J. (2006). G. Stanley Hall's adolescence: Brilliance and nonsense. *History of Psychology*, 9 (3), 186-197. DOI: 10.1037/1093-4510.9.3.186
- Arnheim, R. (1986). *New essays on the psychology of art*. Berkeley: University of California Press. As cited by Robbins (2005).
- Artz, S. (1996). *The life-worlds and practices of violent school-girls*. Dissertation Abstract, PhD., University of Victoria, Canada, Retrieved 20 March 2008, from <http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/pqdlink?did=740044361&Fmt=7&clientId=7961&RQT=309&VName=PQD>
- Ayres, W. (2005) Introduction. In J.A. Vadeboncoeur & L. Patel Stevens (Eds) *Re/constructing "the adolescent": sign, symbol, and body*. (pp. ix-xi) New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.) Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bakhtin, M.M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays*. (V. W. McGee., Trans.) Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). *The location of culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Barnes, J. (2000). Essay: Participatory science as a basis for a healing culture. In Rudolf Steiner, *Nature's open secret: Introductions to Goethe's scientific writings*. US: Anthroposophic Press, pp. 219-301.
- Beaty, L.A., & Alexeyev, E.B. (2008). The problem of school bullies: what the research tells us. *Adolescence*, 43 (169), 1-11.
- Blackburn, M. (2005). Talking together for change: Examining positioning between teachers and queer youth. In J.A. Vadeboncoeur & L. Patel Stevens (Eds) *Re/constructing "the adolescent": sign, symbol, and body*. (pp. 249-270), New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Bloustien, G. (2003). *Girl making. A cross-cultural ethnography on the processes of growing up female*. New York: Berghahn Books.

- Bortoft, H. (1996) *The wholeness of nature. Goethe's way towards a science of conscious participation in nature*. New York: Lindisfarne Books.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development : experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Brown, L. M., & Gilligan, C. (1992). *Meeting at the crossroads: Women's psychology and girl's development*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Büssing, A. (2010). Aspects of spirituality, god images, and the 'self-centredness' in 17-years-old adolescents attending religious education at high-school. *Research on Steiner Education*, 1 (1), 75-84. [Electronic version] Retrieved 25 January 2011 from, <http://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/viewFile/10/53>
- Bywater, B. (2005). Goethe: A science which does not eat the other. *Janus Head*, 8(1), 291-310, Retrieved 21 July 2010, from <http://www.janushead.org/8-1/Bywater.pdf>
- Cameron, J. (2005). Place, Goethe and phenomenology: A theoretic journey. *Janus Head*, 8(1), 174-198, Retrieved 21 July 2010, from <http://www.janushead.org/8-1/Cameron.pdf>
- Cemalcilar, Z. (2010). Schools as socialisation contexts: understanding the impact of school climate factors on students' sense of school belonging. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 59(2), 243-272. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2009.00389.x
- Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary. (1901/1948). London: W. & R. Chambers, Ltd.
- Childs, G. (1998). *Steiner education in theory and practice*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.
- Cocks, A. (2006). The ethical maze. Finding an inclusive path towards gaining children's agreement to research participation. *Childhood*, London, Sage Publications, 13(2), 247-266.
- Cottrell, A. P. (1998). The resurrection of thinking and the redemption of Faust: Goethe's new scientific attitude. In D. Seamon & A. Zajonc (Eds) *Goethe's way of science: A phenomenology of nature*, (pp. 255-275), New York: State University of New York Press.
- Cox, M.V., & Rowlands, A. (2000). The effect of three different educational approaches on children's drawing ability: Steiner, Montessori and traditional. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 70, 485-503.
- Dahlin, B. (2009). On the path towards thinking: Learning from Martin Heidegger and Rudolf Steiner. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 28, 537-554. doi 10.1007/s11217-009-9147-1
- Dahlin, B. (2010). Steiner Waldorf education, social three-folding and civil society: Education as cultural power. *Research on Steiner Education*, 1 (1), 49-59. Retrieved 25 January 2011 from, <http://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/viewFile/8/51>

- Descartes, R. (1635). Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences. [Electronic version] Retrieved 2 November 2011, from <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/descartes/1635/discourse-method.htm>
- Devall, B. & Sessions, G. (1984). The development of natural resources and the integrity of nature. *Environmental Ethics*, 6, 302-303.
- Dockett, S., & Perry, B. (2007). Trusting children's accounts in research. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 5, 47-63.
- Donnelly, K. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum 2006: A submission on the draft for consultation 2006*. Wellington, NZ, Education Forum.
- Drury, N. (2006). The delicate scientist practitioner. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 27 (4), 177-186.
- Ebach, M.C. (2005). Anschauung and the archetype: The role of Goethe's delicate empiricism in comparative biology. *Janus Head*, 8 (1), 254-270, Retrieved 21 July 2010, from <http://www.janushead.org/8-1/Ebach.pdf>
- Eccles, J.S., Midgley, C., & Wigfield, A. (1993). Development during adolescence: The impact of stage-environment fit on young adolescents' experiences in schools and in families. *American Psychologist*, 48(2), 90-101.
- Eckersley, R. (1993). The West's deepening cultural crisis. *The Futurist*, 8-20.
- Ehrensall, P. (2006). *Constructing Silence: (De)Legitimizing Children's Voices in School*. Paper Abstract. Retrieved 30 April 2007, from [http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ejrot/cmsconference/2003/abstracts/silence and voice/Ehrensall.pdf](http://www.mngt.waikato.ac.nz/ejrot/cmsconference/2003/abstracts/silence%20and%20voice/Ehrensall.pdf)
- Ehrich, L. C. (1999). Untangling the threads and coils of the web of phenomenology. *Education Research and Perspectives*, 26 (2), 19-44.
- English, L. (2005). Third space practitioners: Women educating for justice in the global south. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 55 (2), 85-100 DOI: 10.1177/0741713604271851
- Erikson, E. H. (1959) *Identity and the life cycle*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity, youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.
- Faircloth, B. (2009). Making the most of adolescence: Harnessing the search for identity to understand classroom belonging. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 24 (3), 321-348.
- Faircloth, B., & Hamm, J. (2005). Sense of belonging among high school students representing 4 ethnic groups. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence*, 34(4), 293-309. doi:10.1007/s10964-005-5752-7
- Finser, T. (1997). *Introduction*. In R. Steiner, *The essentials of education*. (pp. vii-xiv) (GA 308) (T. Finser Trans.). (First published in English 1926 Original translator unknown) [Five lectures April, 1924, Stuttgart]. New York: Anthroposophic Press.

- Fortune, S., & Hawton, K. (2007). Suicide and deliberate self-harm in children and adolescents. *Paediatrics and Child Health*, 17 (11), 443-447.
- Fortune, S., Stewart, A., Vikram, Y., & Hawton, K. (2007). Suicide in adolescents: using life charts to understand the suicidal process. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 100, 199-210.
- Four Arrows (AKA Jacobs, D.T.). (2008). *The authentic dissertation. Alternative ways of knowing, research and representation*. New York: Routledge
- Gadamer, H-G. (1986). *The relevance of the beautiful and other essays*. (N. Walker, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gibbs, C. J. (2006). *To be a teacher: Journeys towards authenticity*. Auckland, New Zealand: Pearson Education.
- Gidley, J. (2005). Giving hope back to our young people: Creating a new spiritual mythology for western culture. *Journal of Futures Studies: Epistemology, Methods, Applied and Alternative Futures*, 9(3), 17-30.
- Gidley, J. M. (2007a). Educational imperatives of the evolution of consciousness: The integral visions of Rudolf Steiner and Ken Wilber. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 12(2), 117-135. doi:10.1080/13644360701467428
- Gidley, J. (2007b). The evolution of consciousness as a planetary imperative: An integration of integral views. *Integral Review: A Transdisciplinary and Transcultural Journal for New Thought, Research and Praxis*, 5, 4-226.
- Gidley, J. (2010a) Turning tides: Creating dialogue between Rudolf Steiner and 21st century academic discourses. A brief report on Steiner-based academic research in Australia in context commissioned by the Rudolf Steiner Schools of Australia: an association (RSSA). *Research on Steiner Education*, 1 (1), 101-107. Retrieved 25 January 2011 from, <http://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/viewFile/17/58>
- Gidley, J. (2010b) Holistic education and visions of rehumanized futures. *Research on Steiner Education*, 1 (2), 139-147. Retrieved 23 May 2011 from, <http://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/viewFile/37/70>
- Gidley, J.M., Hampson, G.P., Wheeler, L., & Bereded-Samuel, E. (2010). From access to success: An Integrated approach to quality higher education informed by social inclusion theory and practice. *Higher Education Policy*, 23, 123-147.
- Gilbert, H. (2002) Phases and transitions in Waldorf education. *Research Institute for Waldorf Education*, 7 (1), 1-5.
- Giles, D. (2008). *Exploring the teacher-student relationship in teacher education: A hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry*. PhD Thesis, AUT University, Auckland.
- Gilligan, C. (1982/1993). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Gilligan, C. (1990). *Joining the resistance: Psychology, politics, girls and women*. The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, delivered at The University of Michigan March 16, 1990. Retrieved 10 May 2011, from www.tannerlectures.utah.edu/lectures/documents/Gilligan_91.pdf
- Gilligan, C. (1995). Hearing the difference: Theorizing connection. *Hypatia*, 10(2), 120.
- Gilligan, C. (1997) Getting civilized. In *Who's afraid of feminism? Seeing through the backlash*. Eds. Ann Oakley & Juliet Mitchell (eds.) New York: New Press, pp. 13-28.
- Gilligan, C. (2004). Recovering Psyche. *Annual of Psychoanalysis*, 32, 131-147.
- Gilligan, C. (2011). *Joining the resistance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Glöckler, M. (2006). Education – a pathway of “silent” healing. In M. Glöckler, S. Langhammer, & C. Weichert (Eds.) *Education – health for life*. Dornach, Switzerland, pp. 9-23.
- Glöckler, M., Langhammer, S., & Weichert, C. (2006). Forward. In M. Glöckler, S. Langhammer, & C. Weichert (Eds.) *Education – health for life*. Dornach, Switzerland, pp. 7-8.
- Goethe, J. W. von. (1795) *The Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily* (Thomas Carlyle Trans. 1832). [Electronic version]. Retrieved 3 October 2011, from <http://wn.rsarchive.org/RelAuthors/GoetheJW/GreenSnake.html>
- Hall, G. S. (1904). Adolescent girls and their education. In G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: It's psychology and its relations to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion and education*. Vol. 2. [Electronic version] Retrieved 30 November 2009 from, <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Hall/Adolescence/chap17.htm>
- Hamm, J. V., & Faircloth, B. S. (2005). The role of friendship in adolescents' sense of school belonging. *New Directions for Child & Adolescent Development*, 107, 61-78.
- Hancox, R., J., Milne, B. J., & Poulton, R. (2004). Association between child and adolescent television viewing and adult health: a longitudinal birth cohort study. *Lancet* 364: 257-262 (Dunedin School of Medicine, University of Otago, NZ).
- Halse, C., Honey, A., & Boughtwood, D. (2007). The paradox of virtue: (re) thinking deviance, anorexia and schooling. *Gender and Education*, 19 (2), 219-235.
- Hawton, K., & Fox, C. (2004). *Deliberate self-harm in adolescence*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers..
- Hawthorne, S. (2002). *Wild politics*. Melbourne: Spinfex.
- Heitler, W. (1998). Goethean science. In D. Seamon & A. Zajonc (Eds) *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature*, (pp. 55-69), New York: State University of New York Press.

- Heled, E., & Read, J. (2005). Young people's opinions about the causes of, and solutions to, New Zealand's high youth suicide rate. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviour*, 35 (2), 170-180.
- Hether, C. (2001). *The moral reasoning of high school seniors from diverse educational settings*. PhD dissertation. Saybrook Graduate School & Research Centre, USA.
- Heled, E., & Read, J. (2005). Young people's opinions about the causes of, and solutions to, New Zealand's high youth suicide rate. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviour*, 35 (2): 170-180.
- Hill, M. (2006). Children's voices on ways of having a voice: Children's and young people's perspectives on methods used in research and consultation. *Childhood*, 13(1), 69-89.
- Hoffman, N. (1998). The unity of science and art. Goethean phenomenology as a new ecological discipline. In D. Seamon & A. Zajonc (Eds.) *Goethe's way of science: A phenomenology of nature*. (pp. 129-175). New York: State University of New York Press.
- Hoskins, Marie. L. (2003) What unites us, what divides us? A multicultural agenda within child and youth care. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 32(6), Human Sciences Press, Inc.
- Hugo, A. (2010). Nurturing human growth - a research strategy for Waldorf education. *Research on Steiner Education*, 1 (1), 96-100. [Electronic version] Retrieved 25 January 2011 from, <http://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/viewFile/16/57>
- Ikas, K. & Wagner, G. (Eds). (2009). *Communicating in the Third Space*. Routledge Research in Cultural and Media Studies No. 18. London: Taylor & Frances.
- Jackson, M. (2008). The shock of the new: On migrant imaginaries and critical transitions. *Ethnos*, 73 (1), 57-72.
- Jones, L. (2005). What does spirituality in education mean? Stumbling toward wholeness. *Journal of College & Character*, VI, (7), 1-7. Retrieved 30 April 2008, from <http://www.collegevalues.org/pdfs/spirit%20in%20ed.%20jones%20formatted%20final%202.pdf>
- Ireson, J., & Hallam, S. (2005). Pupils' liking for school: Ability grouping, self-concept, and perceptions of teaching. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75(2), 297-311.
- Kaplan, A. (2005). Emerging out of Goethe: Conversation as a form of social inquiry. *Janus Head*, 8(1), 311-334, Retrieved 21 July 2010, from <http://www.janushead.org/8-1/Kaplan.pdf>
- Kiegelmann, M. (2009). Making oneself vulnerable to discovery. Carol Gilligan in conversation with Mechthild Kiegelmann. [82 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10(2), Art. 3, Retrieved 12 May 2011 from, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs090234>.

- Klein, A. C. (2002) On love and work: a vow of wholeness in writing. *Hypatia* 17 (2), pp. 133-144.
- Kogan, M. (2000). Teaching truth, beauty and goodness. *Monitor on Psychology*, 31 (11), 1-3.
- Kohlberg, L. (1980). Stages of moral development as a basis for moral education. In B. Munsey (ed.) *Moral development, moral education and Kohlberg*. (pp. 15-98) AL: Religious Education Press.
- Kroger, J. (2004). Identity in adolescence. The balance between the self and other. East Sussex: Routledge
- Kung, Nancy. (2007). *Exploring teacher educators' perceptions and experience of spirituality and the teacher-student relationship*. Doctoral Research Seminar, 8 May 2007, Auckland University of Technology
- Lambert, A. (2009). The 'first voice' of young women secondary students in a Steiner school. *Proceedings of New Zealand Research in Education Conference* 30 November - 4 December 2009 (CD Rom).
- Lee, N. (2005). *Childhood and human value development, separation and separability*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Lievegoed, B. (1985a). *Man on the threshold: The challenge of inner development*. Stroud: Hawthorn Press.
- Lievegoed, B. (1985b). *Phases of childhood: Growing in body, soul and spirit*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.
- Lindholm, J.A., & Astin, H.S. (2008). Spirituality and pedagogy: faculty's spirituality and use of student-centred approaches to undergraduate teaching. *The Review of Higher Education*, 31 (2), 185-207.
- Macy, J. (1991). *World as lover, world as self*. Berkeley: Parallax Press.
- Martini, M. (2004). *Students at risk: The lived meaning of compelled conformity*. Dissertation Doctor of Education, Boise State University, Retrieved 21 February 2008, from ProQuest Information and Learning Company, New York database.
- McAdams, D.P. (2001). The psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(2), 100-122.
- McPhail, J.C. (1995). Phenomenology as philosophy and method. *Remedial & Special Education*, 16(3), 1-12.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1963). *The structure of behavior* (A. L. Fisher, Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press. (original work published 1942), as cited by McPhail (1995).
- Metcalfe, A. & Game, A. (2007). Becoming who you are: The time of education. *Time & Society*, 16 (1), 43-59.
- Ministry of Education, (1996). *Te Whariki: He Whariki matauranga o nga mokopuna o Aotearoa*. Early Childhood Curriculum. Wellington: Learning Media.

- Ministry of Education. (2006). *The New Zealand Curriculum Draft for Consultation 2006*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Molz, M. & Gidley, J. (2008) A transversal dialogue on integral education and planetary consciousness. Markus Molz speaks with Jennifer Gidley. *Integral Review*, 4, (1), 47-70.
- Muuss, R. (1988). *Theories of adolescence*. (5th ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Nelson, A.K., & Buccholz, E.S. (2003). Adolescent girls' perceptions of goodness and badness and the role of will in their behavioural decisions. *Adolescence*, 38 (151), 421-440.
- Noam, G.G. (1999). The psychology of belonging: reformulating adolescent development. In A.H. Esman, L.T. Flaherty & H.A. Horowitz (Eds.), *Adolescent Psychiatry. The Annals of the American Society for Adolescent Psychiatry*. (pp. 49-68) Hillsdale, New Jersey: The Analytic Press.
- O'Conner, P. (2011). Narrow focus road to education failure. *The Dominion Post*, July 27, 2011, p. B5.
- O'Donohue, J. (1998) *Eternal echoes: Exploring our hunger to belong*. London: Bantam Books.
- O'Donohue, J. (2003) *Divine beauty: The invisible embrace*. London: Bantam Books.
- Oliver, K. (1999). Adolescent girls' body-narratives: learning to desire and create a "fashionable" image. *Teachers College Record*, 101 (2), 220-246.
- Oliver, K. (2001). Images of the body from popular culture: Engaging adolescent girls in critical inquiry. *Sport, Education and Society*, 6 (2), 143-164.
- Osborne, J.W., & Walker, C. (2006). Stereotype threat, identification with academics, and withdrawal from school: Why the most successful students of color might be most likely to withdraw. *Educational Psychology*, 26(4), 563-577.
- Osterman, K.F. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(3), 323-367.
- Palmer, P. (2010). Toward a philosophy of integrative education. In P. Palmer & A. Zajonc (Eds) *The heart of higher education: A call to renewal*. (pp. 19-33) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Palmer, P. & Zajonc, A. (2010). *The heart of higher education: A call to renewal*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Patel Stevens, L. (2005). ReNaming "adolescence": Subjectivities in complex settings. In J.A. Vadeboncoeur & L. Patel Stevens (Eds) *Re/constructing "the adolescent": sign, symbol, and body*. (pp. 271-282) New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Payne, S., Swami, V., & Stanistreet, D.L. (2008). The social construction of gender and its influence on suicide: a review of the literature. *Journal of Men's Health and Gender*, 5 (1), 23-35.
- Pipher, Mary (1994). *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls*. New York: Ballantine Books..

- Pittman, L.D. & Richmond, A. (2007) Academic and psychological functioning in late adolescence: the importance of school belonging. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 75(4), 270-290.
- Powell, K. (2004). Developmental psychology of adolescent girls: conflicts and identity issues. *Education*, 125 (1), 77-87.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for human sciences*. San Francisco: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Robbins, B. D. (2005). New organs of perception: Goethean science as a cultural therapeutics. *Janus Head*, 8(1), 113-126. Retrieved 21 July 2010, from <http://www.janushead.org/8-1/Robbins.pdf>
- Robinson, I. (1992) The Rudolf Steiner threat to Victorian education. *The Australian Rationalist*, 30, 5-11.
- Robinson, I. H. (2008) The delusional world of Rudolf Steiner. *The Australian Rationalist*, 78, 2-5.
- Schelde, K. (2009). *Soul Voice: Liberate your voice, enhance communication & unlock creative expression*. Wellington, NZ: Steele Roberts Ltd Publishers.
- Schwartz, E. (1999). *Millennial child: Transforming education in the twenty-first century*. No Publisher Stated.
- Seamon, D. (1998). Goethe, nature and phenomenology. In D. Seamon & A. Zajonc (Eds) *Goethe's way of science: A phenomenology of nature*, (pp.1-14), New York: State University of New York Press.
- Seamon, D. (1998). Goethe's way of science as a phenomenology of nature, *Janus Head*, 8(1), 86-101, Retrieved 21 July 2010, from <http://www.janushead.org/8-1/Seamon.pdf>
- Seamon, D. & Zajonc, A. (Eds) *Goethe's way of science: A phenomenology of nature*, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Schelde, K. (2009). *Soul voice*. (2nd Ed.) Wellington, NZ: Steele Roberts Ltd. Publishers.
- Scott, W. (2006) Improving urban environments: why children's voices should be heard. Retrieved 30 April 2007, from <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/esrcinfocentre/po/releases/2006/july/urban.aspx?componentid=15723&sourcepageid=13404>
- Sepper, D. L. (2005). Goethe and the poetics of science. *Janus Head*, 8 (1), 207-227, Retrieved 21 July 2010, from <http://www.janushead.org/81/Sepper.pdf>
- Shotter, J. (2005). Goethe and the refiguring of intellectual inquiry: From 'aboutness'-thinking to 'witness'-thinking in everyday life. *Janus Head*, 8 (1), 132-158, Retrieved 21 July 2010, from <http://www.janushead.org/8-1/Shotter.pdf>
- Shumar, W. (2010). Homi Bhabha. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, 5 (2), 495-506. DOI: 10.1007/s11422-010-9255-9
- Simpson, R. (2004). Demystifying Rudolf Steiner education: a personal journey. *Taruna College Newsletter*, April 2007, 1-4.

- Smith, A. (1998). *Understanding children's development: A New Zealand perspective*. (4th ed). Wellington, Bridget Williams Books.
- Smith, M.K. (2005) 'Parker J. Palmer: community, knowing and spirituality in education', In *The Encyclopaedia of Informal Education*. Retrieved on 28 April 2008, from www.infed.org/thinkers/palmer.htm
- Sommer, W. (2010a). Upper-school teaching at Steiner Waldorf schools: Cognitive challenges for the embodied self. Part 1. *Research on Steiner Education*, 1 (1), 19-32. Retrieved 25 January 2011 from, <http://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/viewFile/4/49>
- Sommer, W. (2010b). Upper-school teaching at Steiner Waldorf schools: Cognitive challenges for the embodied self. Part 2. *Research on Steiner Education*, 1 (2), 43-52 . Retrieved 30 May 2011 from, <http://www.rosejournal.com/index.php/rose/article/viewFile/50/83>
- Sorsoli, L. (2007). Like pieces in a puzzle: Working with layered methods of reading personal narratives. In M. Bamberg, A. De Fina & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *Selves and identities in narrative and discourse* (pp. 303-324). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company New York.
- Spock, M. (1983). The art of Goethean conversation. In *The green snake and the beautiful lily* (various authors), (pp. 73-82), Gloucester: Hawthorn Press.
- Staley, B. (2002). What are the physiological, soul, and spiritual changes in youth today? *AWSNA Teachers' Conference Kimberton Waldorf School* Monday, June 24, 2002, AWSNA Publications. Retrieved 17 October 2007 from, <http://www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org/pdf/WESpirChangesBStaley.pdf>
- Staley, B. (2009). *Between form and freedom: Being a teenager*. (Revised 2nd Ed) Stroud: Hawthorn Press
- Steiner, R. (1964). *The philosophy of freedom: The basis for a modern world conception* (GA 4) (Rev. ed.) (M. Wilson, Trans.). Spring Valley, New York: The Anthroposophic Press. (Original work published 1894)
- Steiner, R. (1973a). *Anthroposophical leading thoughts: Anthroposophy as a path of knowledge* (GA 26) (1st English ed.) (G. & M. Adams, Trans.) [185 Leading thoughts]. London: Rudolf Steiner Press. (Original published work 1924)
- Steiner, R. (1973b). *The riddles of philosophy* (GA 18) (4th ed.). New York: The Anthroposophic Press. (Original work published 1914)
- Steiner, R. (1979). *Education for adolescents*. (GA 302a). [Lecture, Stuttgart, June 21, 1922]. *Journal of Anthroposophy* Spring, 1979. Retrieved 26 March 2008 from <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19220621p01.html>
- Steiner, R. (1982). *The spiritual scientific basis of Goethe's work*. (GA 35). (1st English ed.) [Lecture, London, England, July 10, 1906] New York: St. George Publications. Retrieved 25 May 2011, from http://wn.rsarchive.org/Articles/SSBoGW_index.html

- Steiner, R. (1986). *Truth, beauty and goodness*. London: Rudolf Steiner Press. (GA 220) [Lecture, Dornach, Switzerland, Jan 19, 1923] Retrieved 30 April, 2007, from <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19230119p01.html> (Original work published 1927)
- Steiner, R. (1993). *Knowledge of the higher worlds: How is it achieved?* (GA 10) (Original work published 1904). (6th ed.) (D. S. Osmond & C. Davy, Trans.) London: Rudolf Steiner Press.
- Steiner, R. (1995). *The kingdom of childhood*. (GA 311) (H. Fox, Original Trans. 1982; Anthroposophic Press Trans. 1995) [Seven Lectures Given in Torquay, August 12-20, 1924]. New York: Anthroposophic Press.
- Steiner, R. (1996). *The education of the child and early lectures on education* (2nd ed.) (G. & M. Adams, Trans. for 'The education of the child' (GA 34) (Original German work published 1907); Various translations for 5 lectures given 1906-1911, Berlin & Nuremberg), New York: Anthroposophic Press.
- Steiner, R. (1997). *The essentials of education*. (GA 308) (T. Finser Trans.). (First published in English 1926 Original translator unknown) [Five lectures April, 1924, Stuttgart], New York: Anthroposophic Press.
- Steiner, R. (1999) *The meaning of life*. (Rudolf Steiner Press Trans.). [Seven lectures 1907-1919], London: Rudolf Steiner Press.
- Steiner, R. (2001). *Harmony of the creative word: The human being & the elemental, animal, plant, and mineral kingdoms*. (Original title: *Man as symphony of the creative word*) (CW 230) (3rd ed.) (M. Barton, Trans.) [12 Lectures, Dornach, Switzerland, Oct 19 to Nov 11, 1923]. London: Rudolf Steiner Press.
- Steiner, R. (2004). *The spiritual ground of education*. (GA 305) (Anthroposophic Press Trans.) [Nine Lectures, August, 1922, Oxford] New York: Anthroposophic Press.
- Treichler, R. (1989). *Soulways*. Stroud: Hawthorn Press.
- Vadeboncoeur, J.A.(2005a). Naturalised, restricted, packaged and sold: reifying the fictions of “adolescent” and “adolescence”. In J.A. Vadeboncoeur & L. Patel Stevens (Eds) *Re/constructing “the adolescent”: sign, symbol, and body*.(pp. 1-24) New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Vadeboncoeur, J.A.(2005b). The difference that time and space make: An analysis of institutional and narrative landscapes. In J.A. Vadeboncoeur & L. Patel Stevens (Eds) *Re/constructing “the adolescent”: sign, symbol, and body*.(pp. 123-152) New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Vadeboncoeur, J.A. & Patel Stevens, L. (2005). (Eds) *Re/constructing “the adolescent”: sign, symbol, and body*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- van Manen, Max. (1982). Phenomenological pedagogy. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 12 (3), 283-299.
- van Manen, Max. (1991). *The tact of teaching*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- van Manen, Max. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action-sensitive pedagogy*. New York: State University of New York Press.

- van Manen, Max. (2002). *Writing in the dark: Phenomenological studies in interpretive inquiry*. Ontario: Althouse Press.
- Vandenbroeck, M., & Bouverne-De Bie, M. (2006). Children's agency and educational norms: a tensed negotiation. *Childhood*, 13(1), 127-143.
- Vaquera, E. (2009). Friendship, educational engagement, and school belonging: comparing hispanic and white adolescents. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 31(4), 492-514. DOI:10.1177/0739986309346023
- Viorst, J. (1986). *Necessary losses*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- von Heydebrand, C. (1932). On the real nature of will in the child. *Anthroposophical Quarterly*, 7.
- Wahl, D. C. (2005). "Zarte empirie": Goethean science as a way of knowing. *Janus Head*, 8(1), 58-76, Retrieved 21 July 2010, from <http://www.janushead.org/8-1/Wahl.pdf>
- Weichert, C. (2006). Educational tasks for adolescents. In M. Glöckler, S. Langhammer, & C. Weichert (Eds.) *Education – health for life*. Dornach, Switzerland, pp. 219-224.
- Williams, B. (2006). Pay attention to the man behind the curtain: The importance of identity in academic writing. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 49, 710-715.
- Wilson, M. (1964). *Introduction*. In R. Steiner, *The philosophy of freedom: The basis for a modern world conception* (Rev. ed.) (M. Wilson, Trans.). Spring Valley, New York: The Anthroposophic Press. (Original work published 1894) p.vii-xxii.
- Wilson, F. (1998). *The hand: How its use shapes the brain, language, and human culture*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Wright, A. (2001). *Spirituality in education*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Zajonc, A. (1976) Goethe's theory of colour and scientific intuition. *American Journal of Physics* 44 (4): 327-333. Retrieved 23 May 2011 from, <http://www.arthurzajonc.org/uploads/AJP%201976%20Goethe%20Color%20Theory.pdf>
- Zajonc, A. (2006). Cognitive-affective connections in teaching and learning: The relationship between love and knowledge. *Journal of Cognitive Affective Learning*, 3(1), 1-9.
- Zajonc, A. (2008). *What can we know? Knowledge between science and spirituality*. Lecture given at the Systemic Constellations Conference, "Coming Together" in Cologne, Germany, May 27, 2007. pp. 1-7. Retrieved 23 July 2010 from, www.lorian.org/Documents/library/ArthurZajonc1.doc
- Zajonc, A. (2009). *Meditation as contemplative inquiry: When knowing becomes love*. New York: Lindisfarne Press.
- Zajonc, A. (2010) Attending to interconnection: Living the lesson. In P. Palmer & A. Zajonc (Eds). *The heart of higher education: A call to renewal*. (pp. 77-99) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Appendix 1. Mentor Meeting - Althea in Conversation with Jill

In September 2009 towards the end of the year of fieldwork, I had a conversation with my mentor, Dr. Jill Poulston, where she took the role of facilitator as if she were me and I was one of the young women in the study. We were having our regular mentor meeting when Jill suggested that it might be interesting for me to get the sense of what was like to be in the alter-role so she began as if she were facilitating the conversation and asked about the notions of truth, beauty and goodness. The following extract gives insight into how I experience truth, beauty and goodness.

Jill: I want to know the relationship between for example, truth and goodness or beauty and goodness. Are they the same or they different expressions of the same thing? Truth, beauty and goodness are they all different expressions of the one thing?

Althea: *Sometimes I think they are, except we can and we have kind of developed ways to spread them out or tease them out so that we almost say 'this is beauty'. Beauty is what - a piece of art. Beauty is a feeling. Beauty is the spirit of truth. Um Beauty is how I feel some times. Beauty is a sunrise.*

J: Is beauty a response? Whereas is goodness a response or is it what it is?

A: *Mmm. I think beauty might be what it is as well.*

J: Oh do you. Well then wouldn't we both look at something and you might think its beautiful and I might not.

A: *Mmm. So it's what I carry within and is mirrored back to me.*

J: Do you know what subjective and objective are?

A: *Mmm. So - but I don't necessarily believe there's a clear boundary between objective and subjective you see.*

J: So you couldn't camp one of these three attributes into either subjectivity or objectivity.

A: *No I couldn't camp any of them. I think they're all subjective. They're very, very subjective.*

J: Even truth.

A: *Yeah*

J: So there's no such thing as truth.

A: *Absolute truth?*

J: *Mmm.*

A: *I don't think so. In some ways.*

J: What is truth?

A: *Yeah - what is truth? Um. Again truth is a perception.*

J: *Yeah - I don't know what truth is I'm hoping that you'll be able to tell me.*

A: *I don't think anyone can tell you but I think you can recognise it. And if you can recognise it there must be a resonance, a vibration, a sound of truth.*

J: *Mmm. When my father was building something. He used to look at something the way it was lined up and say 'yes it's true'. So I wondered if truth was something that was accurate and all lined up.*

A: *That's a lovely way of seeing it and yet it is and yet it isn't.*

J: *Mmm that's true.*

A: *and yet it is 'cause it would be like - planets coming into alignment or sounds coming into the right spot that you go bang, ah, yeah maybe like an osteopath suddenly putting your bones back in order.*

J: *yeah they're putting them back true - where they're supposed to be*

A: *Yeah so is it a space of where things are supposed to be? Can something become true too? I talk about human being vs human becoming. 'Cause being feels like a static place. Becoming is like something that moves.*

J: *You're on your way to something*

A: *Yeah and there is movement in living - we can't possibly be alive unless there is movement in many ways so everything is in motion and life is motion. So then can truth 'become' - rather than existing as some static thing - is it becoming? The word authenticity comes up as well.*

J: *and honesty - my mother used to look at a piece of art and say its very honest...she used to say naive as well - like an honesty that comes with youth that disappears later.*

A: *Innocence*

J: *Innocence yeah so used to wonder whether truth was something to do with that.*

A: *There is - like - a new born baby - there's a truth isn't there. There's a goodness, and a purity - untrammelled and*

J: *uncontaminated*

A: *uncontaminated by the world*

(Mentor meeting 8 September 2009)

What I said shows a connection to belonging and to what the young women in the study say as well: *that there is no one static thing that is truth, that is beauty, that is goodness, but that they are all each other, less able to be separated than they are able to be brought together in one form.*

Appendix 2. A Note on References and Publications by Rudolf Steiner and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

A note is provided on references from Steiner and Goethe specifically because these references are all translated from German and have been mostly published posthumously.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)

It is important to explain that all references to writings, lectures and publications by Dr. Rudolf Steiner are translations from German into English. In these translations the use of the term 'man' or 'men' or 'mankind' as generic is frequent. I do not concur with the use of this terminology and prefer the terms 'human' and 'humankind' however, I also respect original text so I have not adjusted the original language as translated. I have also not continually placed 'sic' beside these terms as I believe the inclusion of this introductory explanation is sufficient. Steiner was a prolific writer and speaker and between the years 1883 and 1925, he gave more than 5,000 lectures (5,105 of which are published) and published 33 books as well as numerous journal and newspaper articles and essays (Rudolf Steiner Archive <http://www.rsarchive.org>). Steiner's collected works are catalogued according to "GA" numbers which are given in the reference list. Steiner's lectures and publications have been published many times and continue to be published. Between 1919 and 1924 (the year before his death) Steiner dedicated himself to establishing a sound practical foundation for his educational philosophy. His main medium of dissemination of this body of knowledge was through lecturing and he undertook a gruelling schedule in order to reach as wider audience as possible. Appendix 3 in this thesis provides a list of the prominent publications from his lectures and writings on education. His published lectures provide a wealth of information on his philosophies and applications of these though the language is often more wordy than one would find in a text which was originally written and not spoken. In the reference section of this thesis the original dates of the lectures or publications. One publication that I refer to frequently in this thesis is 'Steiner (2000)' which is John Barnes' and Mado Spiegler's translation of Steiner's *Introductions to Goethe's Scientific Writings* and is published under Steiner's name as *Nature's*

Open Secret (Steiner, 2000). This publication also includes an 'essay on participatory science' by John Barnes, (Barnes, 2000) which brings together Goethe's science with Steiner's philosophy and educational and social initiatives.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Similar to Steiner's writings, all Goethe's writings are originally in German and quotes given here are translations into English. Goethe is better known for his literary contributions in poetry, prose and plays (Seamon, 1998) and although he diligently recorded his scientific studies, and wrote profusely, he published very little of his science: his *Metamorphosis of Plants* (published in 1790) and *Theory of Colour* (published in 1810) being his most well-known (Steiner, 2000). Rudolf Steiner was among the first to collate much of Goethe's writing in science, methodology and epistemology and ontology and he spent fourteen years doing so under commission for Kürschner's Edition of German National Literature (Barnes, 2000) (this is referred to in more detail later in this thesis Chapter 3). Steiner's interpretations and collations of Goethe's methodology form the basis of my understanding of Goethean science as well as more contemporary sources on Goethean phenomenology, such as John Barnes (2000) in *Nature's Secret*; David Seamon and Arthur Zajonc's book *Goethe's Way of Science* (1998); Henri Bortoft's book *The Wholeness of Nature: Goethe's Science of Conscious Participation in Nature* (1996); and articles from the journal *Janus Head* which focussed a special issue (2005) on Goethean science.

Appendix 3. Publications Of Rudolf Steiner's Lectures And Writings On Education (Source: Steiner, 1997, pp. 88-89)

- I. *Allgemeine Menschenkunde als Grundlage der Pädagogik. Pädagogischer Grundkurs*, 14 Lectures, Stuttgart, 1919 (GA 293). *Previously Study of Man. The Foundations of Human Experience* (Anthroposophic Press, 1996).
- II. *Erziehungskunst Methodische-Didaktisches*, 14 Lectures, Stuttgart, 1919 (GA 294). *Practical Advice to Teachers* (Rudolf Steiner Press, 1988).
- III. *Erziehungskunst*, 15 Discussions, Stuttgart, 1919 (GA 295). *Discussions with Teachers* (Anthroposophic Press, 1997).
- IV. *Die Erziehungsfrage als soziale Frage*, 6 Lectures, Dornach, 1919 (GA 296). *Education as a Force for Social Change* (previously *Education as a Social Problem*) (Anthroposophic Press, 1997).
- V. *Die Waldorf Schüle und ihr Geist*, 6 Lectures, Stuttgart and Basel, 1919 (GA 297). *The Spirit of the Waldorf School* (Anthroposophic Press, 1995).
- VI. *Rudolf Steiner in der Waldorfschule, Vorträge und Ansprachen*, Stuttgart, 1919–1924 (GA 298). *Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf School: Lectures and Conversations* (Anthroposophic Press, 1996).
- VII. *Geisteswissenschaftliche Sprachbetrachtungen*, 6 Lectures, Stuttgart, 1919 (GA 299). *The Genius of Language* (Anthroposophic Press, 1995).
- VIII. *Konferenzen mit den Lehren der Freien Waldorfschule 1919–1924*, 3 Volumes (GA 300). *Conferences with Teachers* (Steiner Schools Fellowship, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989).
- IX. *Die Erneuerung der Pädagogisch-didaktischen Kunst durch Geisteswissenschaft*, 14 Lectures, Basel, 1920 (GA 301). *The Renewal of Education* (Kolisko Archive Publications for Steiner Schools Fellowship Publications, Michael Hall, Forest Row, East Sussex, UK, 1981).
- X. *Menschenkenntnis und Unterrichtsgestaltung*, 8 Lectures, Stuttgart, 1921 (GA 302). *Previously The Supplementary Course – Upper School and Waldorf Education for Adolescence. Education for Adolescents* (Anthroposophic Press, 1996).
- XI. *Erziehung und Unterricht aus Menschenkenntnis*, 9 Lectures, Stuttgart, 1920, 1922, 1923 (GA 302a). The first four lectures available as *Balance in Teaching* (Mercury Press, 1982); last three lectures as *Deeper Insights into Education* (Anthroposophic Press, 1988).
- XII. *Die Gesunder Entwicklung des Menschenwesens*, 16 Lectures, Dornach, 1921–22 (GA 303). *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education* (Anthroposophic Press, 1986).
- XIII. *Erziehungs- und Unterrichtsmethoden auf Anthroposophischer Grundlage*, 9 Public Lectures, various cities, 1921–22 (GA 304). *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 1* (Anthroposophic Press, 1995).
- XIV. *Anthroposophische Menschenkunde und Pädagogik*, 9 Public Lectures, various cities, 1923–24 (GA 304a). *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy 2* (Anthroposophic Press, 1996).

- XV. *Die geistig-seelischen Grundkräfte der Erziehungskunst*, 12 Lectures, 1 Special Lecture, Oxford 1922 (GA 305). *The Spiritual Ground of Education* (Garber Publications, 1989).
- XVI. *Die pädagogisch Praxis vom Gesichtspunkte geisteswissenschaftlicher Menschenerkenntnis*, 8 Lectures, Dornach, 1923 (GA 306). *The Child's Changing Consciousness As the Basis of Pedagogical Practice* (Anthroposophic Press, 1996).
- XVII. *Gegenwärtiges Geistesleben und Erziehung*, 4 Lectures, Ilkeley, 1923 (GA 307). *A Modern Art of Education* (Rudolf Steiner Press, 1981) and *Education and Modern Spiritual Life* (Garber Publications, n.d.).
- XVIII. *Die Methodik des Lehrens und die Lebensbedingungen des Erziehens*, 5 Lectures, Stuttgart, 1924 (GA 308). *The Essentials of Education* (Anthroposophic Press, 1997).
- XIX. *Anthroposophische Pädagogik und ihre Voraussetzungen*, 5 Lectures, Bern, 1924 (GA 309). *The Roots of Education* (Anthroposophic Press, 1997).
- XX. *Der pädagogische Wert der Menschenerkenntnis und der Kulturwert der Pädagogik*, 10 Public Lectures, Arnheim, 1924 (GA 310). *Human Values in Education* (Rudolf Steiner Press, 1971).
- XXI. *Die Kunst des Erziehens aus dem Erfassen der Menschenwesenheit*, 7 Lectures, Torquay, 1924 (GA 311). *The Kingdom of Childhood* (Anthroposophic Press, 1995).
- XXII. *Geisteswissenschaftliche Impulse zur Entwicklung der Physik. Erster naturwissenschaftliche Kurs: Licht, Farbe, Ton – Masse, Elektrizität, Magnetismus*, 10 Lectures, Stuttgart, 1919–20 (GA 320). *The Light Course* (Steiner Schools Fellowship, 1977).
- XXIII. *Geisteswissenschaftliche Impulse zur Entwicklung der Physik. Zweiter naturwissenschaftliche Kurs: die Wärme auf der Grenze positiver und negativer Materialität*, 14 Lectures, Stuttgart, 1920 (GA 321). *The Warmth Course* (Mercury Press, 1988).
- XXIV. *Das Verhältnis der verschiedenen naturwissenschaftlichen Gebiete zur Astronomie. Dritter naturwissenschaftliche Kurs: Himmelskunde in Beziehung zum Menschen und zur Menschenkunde*, 18 Lectures, Stuttgart, 1921 (GA 323). Available in typescript only as "The Relation of the Diverse Branches of Natural Science to Astronomy."
- XXV. *The Education of the Child and Early Lectures on Education* (A collection) (Anthroposophic Press, 1996).
- XXVI. Miscellaneous.

Appendix 4: Madonna 1 - Pilot Conversation

M - Madonna and A - Althea - Pilot Conversation

[Leading on from a discussion on goodness, Madonna ties in 'her own sense of truth' and describes her education having supported her to "*being able to find myself, having my own space in the class, having been accepted for who I am*".]

M: But I think I'll be quite at peace with myself as the years go on - I don't think I'll have big problems - that sort of thing (pause)

A: Why?

M: um - because - I - do things how I think they should be done, what I think is right - or I try to - actually I don't always - but - nobody's perfect! (laughing). I try to follow what I think is right thing and people sometimes don't understand that because they just want to go and do what's just being - silly! and sometimes I think being silly's the right thing because you don't - I don't intellectualise everything - it sounds like - I'm always thinking "this is the right thing, oh, this is the right thing" - that's not what I do, I just do what I feel - just what I think is right! Ha.

A: So in other words its a certain degree of self-awareness? Would it be - or?

M: um - probably - I find it quite difficult talking about myself 'cause I'm not very - I don't know if I'm self-confid...I'm not very confident? sometimes - ah - I'm not so sure - I'm getting a sense of confidence now when I have to perform on stage, I'm doing it alot now...

Madonna goes on to describe her development of performance confidence and talking about performing music.

Appendix 5: Information Sheet and Ethical Considerations

Information Sheet

for participants
AND for parents and guardians



12 February 2009

Would you like to participate in an interesting study and talk about your experiences as a student at a Steiner school? If so read on.

Hi - my name is Althea Lambert. I am doing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Education at AUT University and I am interested in what 14-18 year old girls at a Steiner school say about harmony.

If you are someone who likes to share their ideas in creative ways, you might consider being part of this study.

The title of the study is:

Towards truth, beauty and goodness: adolescent girls' perceptions of harmony in their lives at a Steiner school.

What are the aims of the study?

- To explore harmony through interviews and creative expression
- To explore the ways that truth, beauty and goodness contribute to the experience of harmony
- To profile 'the student voice'

About the study

- This study seems to be the first of its kind in the southern hemisphere.
- This study *does not seek* to compare students or collect statistical data.
- The methods used acknowledge the individual and their inner and outer experiences of the world.

Who is being invited to participate?

- Female students at XXXXXXXXXXXX School; up to fifteen girls aged between 14 and 18 years preferably who have been to Steiner primary school and kindergarten.

When will the study take place?

2009 school year (early February to late November 2009)

What does the study involve? What do you have to do?

The study involves having 12 interviews with me over one school year (three per term). The idea is to build a picture of harmony through your eyes. In order to help build this picture I will also ask you to create a self-portrait each term – one for each season. You decide what you will use to create this portrait. This phase will involve 10-15 girls. The interviews will be held at lunchtimes, after school or during free periods and I will record the interviews on video. We will sit and talk and I will ask you some questions. Your answers will help shape the direction of our discussion.

Is it possible you might feel uncomfortable because of the interview? If so, what can you do?

Examples of discomfort are when a conversation or an atmosphere becomes too personal; or you feel challenged, or upset. If you do feel uncomfortable you can stop the interview and have a rest or finish that session. There is no pressure for us to achieve a certain amount and no need to continue an interview if you don't want to. You can terminate the interview. You can ask to see the school's Student Guidance Coordinator. Counselling is also available through AUT University free of charge.

We agree on how to have the interview

One way to avoid or minimise discomfort is to make an agreement on how we would like to run our interviews.

What if I want to stop being part of the study?

You can withdraw from the study at any time up to the end of data collection. Once you withdraw from the study you cannot re-enter it.

Your name won't be used

Your real name won't be used in the results of this study and you can choose a name that will be yours for the course of the study. This is called a 'pseudonym'.

Confidentiality & Protection of Privacy – Parent/ Guardian Consent

All information shared will be treated as private and confidential. In all reported material, including written, oral, audio and visual material (for example, the final thesis, publications, conference presentations, etc.) your pseudonym will be used and all potential reference to your true identity will be omitted.

Any visual material (including photos, artwork, videos, *any* visual image) generated about the participants or by the participants, in the course of the study, will need the written permission of the participant and the participant's parent/ guardian if it is to be included in any report or publication. Please see the "Consent and Release Form for visual material including photographs, videos, DVDs and artwork".

What is my time commitment if I participate in this research?

Phase 1: Three interviews of 45 minutes each.

Phase 2: Three interviews per school term - which is 12 interviews in total for the school year. Each interview will be about 45 minutes long.

Ethics

I will work according to the New Zealand Code of Ethics for Registered Teachers. This is my ethical guide.

What are the benefits to you?

- You get to be involved in a unique study and share your ideas.
- You will have the opportunity to explore some of your experiences in depth and learn techniques or ways of describing, understanding and finding meaning in life experiences.
- You get the experience and satisfaction of producing and completing artistic work of your choice.
- You are likely to gain an increased awareness of your self and your well-being.

How long do I have to consider this invitation?

You have two weeks following the introductory information sessions (2 sessions a week apart). An information evening for parents and whanau of interested students is also planned. You can show your interest by responding in any of the following ways:

- A returned signed Consent Form from the participant and from the parent/ guardian.
- A phone call or an email to Althea
- A request for more information

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you are 16 or older, please READ and SIGN ALL the Consent Forms (attached) and ask your parents/guardians to sign their form (16 - 20 year olds should have parental approval).

If you are under 16 please READ and SIGN the Assent Form AND your parents/guardians MUST sign their form as well.

Please note that by giving your consent to participate in this research, you are not obliged to share private or confidential information, just your ideas about how you see things and your experiences relating to those ideas.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes. All original information shared by you from your personal and individual involvement will be available to you only, but a summary of the research will be available to all participants.

All visual, written and audio evidence that directly relates to you will be available to you and you are entitled to keep original material providing the researcher has a copy.

What do I do if I want to talk about the study?

If you have any questions about this study, at ANY TIME, please feel free to talk with the researcher, Althea Lambert (contact details below).

For Parents : There will an information evening for parents and guardians (and adult *whanau*). You will be advised of when this is going to be held.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details: Althea Lambert; Ph. 021-0478260; Email: lambert_althea@yahoo.co.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details: Dr. Beverley Clark, School of Education, Faculty of Applied Humanities, Auckland University of Technology, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1020, Ph+64-9-9179999 extension 7936, Email: beverley.clark@aut.ac.nz

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, *Dr. Beverley Clark*, address given above.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the **Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda**, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 8044. AUTEK is Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 7 November 2008, AUTEK Reference number 08/150

Ethical Considerations

The purpose of this section is to describe the additional ethical considerations of this study not included in Chapter 4 and explain how in some instances, my understanding of these has deepened as a consequence of undertaking this research.

Confidentiality and the use of names

Pseudonyms chosen by the young women themselves have been used throughout this thesis. Some young women were very interested to use their real names and were adamant that they had nothing to hide. I loved this almost fierce resistance, but I explained that they may not feel the same several years hence and that I was ethically bound to protect their identities. Two key considerations occur to me here. The first is that in our efforts to conceal the true identities of research participants, we are perhaps walking a fine line between saying 'we want to hear your voice' and 'but we don't want to see your face' or 'speak out but don't show yourself'. The second is a broader consideration about what identity really is. Here in this study it has several aspects: voice, face, relationships, studentship, name, artwork, connections, for example. I don't propose to pursue this discussion here in this section, but I believe that through the present study, we have come some distance in unfolding the meaning of identity for young women. I make one further comment that I believe my relationships say more about my identity than my name does.

Audio-clips and Video

As per the ethics application, the use of audio and video recording of conversations was approved prior to the fieldwork. However in conversation with the young women once the fieldwork started, it was decided that no video

(dvd) recording would take place. Audio-recording of conversations occurred and because of the salience of certain conversational moments and the authentic nature of the actual voice with breath, sighs, laughter and tears, audio-clips of digital audio files were extracted and laced together in a kind of audio-interplay of voices. With the permission of the relevant young women, I used this audio play at some conference presentations. I did this in order to impart the essence of authentic voice so that when I shared a conversational extract it was not my voice reading their voice, but their own voices speaking. The result was exciting and the response from conference participants was very positive. I believe that no flat text could ever capture the alive quality of the spoken word and that for me the living experience of the voice is essential. The audio and visual material consent forms (Appendix 5) allow for the use of textual and audio excerpt to be shared for academic purposes and publication.

Age Identification

Given the small number of young women participants and the relatively small school community they come from, the age of each one is not given alongside her pseudonym. However, where pertinent I have noted the ages of some of the young women where I am illustrating a particular point in Chapters 5-11. It is likely that following examination indicative age will be removed from its proximity to the young woman's name.

Transcripts from Conversations

Transcripts used in the thesis have been approved by the young women concerned.

Transcripts from conversations used in the thesis were checked to ensure that the following types of data were edited out:

- all identifiable information such as names of people or places; specific events; dates and references to specific identifiable projects

Reference to anything sensitive or personal, has been approved by the young women for inclusion where it is an essential part of their story, or it has been removed.

Irrelevant information (such as small talk or conversational fillers) is taken out in text where it adds nothing to the meaning of the extract being presented though I have preferred to leave the narrative as raw as possible because I believe this really imparts a sense of the living experience of the conversation. However, it should be noted that certain 'tags' in conversation such as 'I don't know'; 'you know'; 'I guess'; 'sort of' and 'yeah/ yes' are often more meaningful than we initially realise and can indicate different layers of knowing and 'seeing' (Gilligan, 1997). Visual material used in this text are used with permission of the relevant young woman.

Full Reciprocal and Free Participation

In summary, the following aspects of the research design enable full, reciprocal and free participation by everyone involved:

- the young women must give informed consent

- the young women will be given the opportunity to contact the researcher to ask questions at any time during the study
- the young women can withdraw from the study at any time up to the completion of evidence collection
- the young women participate on an individual basis in one-to-one open conversations with the researcher during which an open and free dialogue is explicitly encouraged
- the young women will be made aware that they can seek independent advice or guidance in relation to concerns about the research, either from the doctoral supervisors or from AUT University or within the school pastoral care system
- the young women can choose their media of expression
- the researcher encourages self-respect and respect for others as the foundation for this research
- confidentiality is ensured (in adherence to the ethical requirements concerning this study)
- clear guidelines for the conduct of conversations were developed in partnership between myself and the young woman at the first conversation so that conversations can proceed in an individualised and easy fashion with high priority being given to the young woman's specific needs or concerns;
- the conversation process is flexible and open;
- language is appropriate, warm and encouraging;
- a safe, comfortable and private physical environment (room) was used for conversations;
- my manner is open and non-judgemental and clearly supportive of partnered conversation and effective listening

Discussion of Conversations and Interpretations with the Young Women

The longitudinal nature of the study meant that in each new conversation we usually discussed previous conversations and summarised the main talking points from them. Any questions or concerns were aired. Sometimes I would bring a specific transcript from a previous conversation to discuss and nearer the end of the study I asked some participants to respond to things I had written about what they had said in a conversation. Examples of this are in Chapters 5 to 10. My interpretations of our conversations in Chapters 5 to 10 were read and approved by the young women concerned.

Appendix 6. Indicative key questions for the first conversation.

Note: These questions were a guide only. As I have explained in Chapter 4 methods, the way I phrased the questions and how and where I introduced them in the first conversation varied according to the conversational flow and my sense of what would work best for each young woman.

Have you ever done a self-portrait? Can you tell me about it?

What did you learn about yourself through doing the self portrait?

What do you understand by truth? *or* What is truth for you?

Can you give examples of how you see truth in yours and other people's lives?

What do you understand by beauty?

Can you give examples of how you see beauty in yours and other people's lives?

What do you understand by goodness?

Can you give examples of how you see truth in yours and other people's lives?

What do you understand by harmony?

Can you give examples of how you see harmony in yours and other people's lives?

Appendix 7: Laura 1

Imagine say a soprano melody it's like a kite flying in the sky, but it needs a harmony to guide it and help it stay attached to the ground so that children can enjoy it again and again - it kind of balances out.

Aha - is that that your idea is that an idea that was shared with you by somebody else?

That is mine...(it's) kind of something that is true to it's path it knows where it's going and it has a destination, a goal and it's not rushed. Like say it has this little protective bubble - being able to go on your path with harmony.

And then harmony with other people for instance, is kind of like music high and low finding a place where you can be in the middle and accepting the differences and working with that.

Wow - Amazing. Thank you for sharing those things. What about - is there any opposite to harmony?

Well - I think - it may not be entirely but - many of us nowadays are very, very caught up in our little lives and its got a little bubble that's our little world and big long things that we have to do - a structure - and you believe that is what you need, kind of thing, a structure with ribbon. And all those things can be in a sense abused as in we're scurrying always trying to get to the next one trying to be better, stronger, brighter sort of thing and not being able to stop for a minute and just look at what you have and not being able to appreciate that instead of wanting always more, kind of, in a sense or (being) disharmonious kind of - you need the comparison to have one or the other. (You) can't really appreciate the one without the other.

Thank you - wow. What a great gift already - for me.

Laura 1a

Appendix 8. Althea's Comments on Laura 1

from Lambert (2009).

This part of our conversation was about two-thirds of the way through the interview and while Laura was saying the above, her voice took on a changed quality. From being soft and kind of ‘under stated’ she moved into a place of knowing and power with a concomitant increase in strength, volume, clarity and (interestingly) a slight change in accent towards a British inflection. This excerpt from her first interview was delivered less like a 15 year old to a 48 year old and more like ‘colleague to colleague’ in academic discussion. Yet behind her words and the sound of her voice was the feeling that she was being pushed along by life and that the experience of harmony was an abstract possibly elusive ‘kite’ out of her immediate reach.

Laura’s ability to articulate her thoughts was (and continued to be) exceptional. Her structure with ribbon is an evocative image, though it is unclear whether she is endeared to or feels burdened by this structure. It is likely that the ribbon relates to the ‘*big long things that we have to do*’ (duty? responsibility? burdens? life-tasks?) and the structure is the ‘little bubble that’s our little world’ (vulnerability? separateness? self?). Her voice brings forth a wisdom, which might seem to be beyond her years and yet can’t be. Here is also the sound of a sense of smallness and resignation (“*big long things we have to do*”; “*we’re scurrying*”; “*little lives*” yet also a bigger picture of possibility (“trying to be better, stronger, brighter”), hope even destiny (“*something that is true to it’s path it knows where it’s going and it has a destination*”). Here it feels like Laura is negotiating the space between a perceived reality (how life is) and an ideal (the possibility of harmony).

Appendix 9. Laura 12d

Yeah - I mean it's an understanding that some of us carry - and around that there's kind of like - a whole lot of coloured ribbons -

(We laugh) possibly - sorry I just love that imagery it's just done something for me.

That's good then.

So thank you for that.

You're absolutely welcome.

It feels like around us, you know, there can be different possibilities that contribute to 'our self' but maybe the core is unchanging?

I think. I THINK! Anyway - um core is something that has certain qualities but the qualities - this is authentic (authentic) thought idea - very - the certain qualities are subject to what is going on around themselves and outside but inside they're like, you've got say these certain qualities but it depends on the intensity -whatever - strength, weakness of them from what is around.

Right it's like an interaction. That quality could be expressed in a different way.

Now I'm losing you.

I'm losing me too.

(Laura laughs).

'Cause in fact - it would be a quality that might come out or might not come out - is that right - depending on what is happening.

Think it will. It is there! But it is affected by what is around you as to the strength maybe or the type.

There's something there - I'm not sure I could - I think I probably have to process that.

They're all little labels - it's like having - so its basic colour its a green its a blue its a yellow and it's a red, but it could be a baby blue, it could be a warm red - all those sorts of things?

I like that. Mmm.

You know - in colours - but it could be the quality of strength physical, mental, emotional -

Spiritual

All those sort of - yeah!

Ah-ha.

Are you with me a bit more.

I am - yeah - I can see it...you're using just the right things to connect me with it - 'cause I can see now the colours and shades of colours - yeah? and depending on the circumstance?

In a way yeah.

Then a certain shade will be in use

Yes

or be shown or whatever

Yep - you're getting it.

Yeah I am.

Yep. It's like my little visions of bubbles with threads.

Laura 12d

Appendix 10. Lena 3a

Sometimes when you just sit somewhere and your heart feels like really really full - when you think about something - (she giggles) I won't tell you why but - sort of when your heart feels like it's just going to burst - sort of in a good way - it sort of hurts like.

Aha - oh that is just beautiful. What qualities are around that? What could you say you're feeling? Are there names for those feelings?

I don't know -um

Does it relate to a feeling of love inside?

Sort of yeah - I don't know how to name it.

You know what - there's so many things that are unnameable.

Could you relate it to harmony?

Not really 'cause it sort of gives you like - I don't know - harmony for me is going in a good flow and it all working and that doesn't really work 'cause its not how I want it to be.

Do you want to talk about that a bit more - that's interesting.

Its sort of like um sort of when you that feeling when you just- I don't know it's just like it's not a nice feeling - sort like jealousy and annoyance but -

Ok so - can I just reflect back to you what I've heard? That's a symbol and it relates to your heart feeling full -

Mmmm - full like full also physically so that it really hurts.

Full - so that there's this physical feeling of like pushing against you?

Yeah yeah.

Like your tummy being full - maybe?

Mmm - and these two go together (Lena points to a similar symbol) and here its too full so its dripping.

Ah. At first I thought I heard you say it was a nice feeling and I'm trying to just dig in a little bit and see and then towards the end of what you were saying you're saying well its not a nice feeling?

It's sort of both yeah.

Mmm uh huh - is it full of different emotions all at once?

Sort of.

Mmm - ok - but are you sitting there waiting for it to go. [Here I am trying not to say too much and Lena is not saying very much].

Well I don't know how to explain it, but you sort of, you want it, but you don't want it to feel like that.

Uh huh. Is it kind of like sometimes um - (silence) I can't think of something that it's like - I think I know what you mean but I cant be 100% sure and that doesn't matter - I don't have to know what you mean but I guess that's what our challenge is to try to find words - around the pictures, around the feelings

around the experiences - that help us and ultimately other people you know, when this whole study is written up, understand a bit about your experiences, your story if you like.

I know. How long might it last?

The feeling? As long as you feel it (laughs)!

For instance do you remember how long that one lasted?

It was in a movie and I felt it for maybe a minute.

...Ok so it's a momentary thing - you feel it and it goes away.

What happens afterwards when it goes away?

Um well when that feeling sort of starts - you feel it and then it goes away and you don't feel it anymore and it just slides past really.

Mmm.

And when you get it again it sort of comes in.

You've had it before? So you recognised it this time?

Yeah mmm.

Do you know when you first recognised that sort of feeling? Like what age?

Oh it was like when I was getting older.

Ok in the last couple of years? Could it be possible that fullness of heart could lead to some kind of emotional release?

Yes - you don't want it to be totally sad and not any of that in it but you sort of want it balanced you don't want it - over - over flowing sort of thing.

Yes - so how does it release - I'm sort of visualising this balloon like a heart balloon -

Well when you - I guess when you find the solution to solve it - um.

Ah - and did you?

I didn't solve it - I've never solved it.

So does it come and visit you every now and then.

Yeah

Aha - and then - do you feel like you have to solve it?

Yeah I sort of want to 'cause it's sort of horrible like not nice - I don't like it.

Do you think its just your heart being alive?

I think its just my emotions - um yeah.

I read a book the other day and it talks about your heart speaking to you and in the book the young person has a conversation with his heart...and they become friends - so do think its just like your heart speaking to you?

Um - I don't know.

But does it feel like it's - do think it's leading somewhere?

It's like an obstacle that you have to sort of - you have to sort of - I mean - get over it really, you know, go over it.

You just keep it to yourself and no one notices? Mmm- that's something there, it's interesting! For me, if I was watching a movie I would use an example and say - it touched me... yeah that makes more sense - so touching that it hurts.

Yeah and you can actually physically feel it here. When sort of like all your emotions happy, sad, everything come together.

Lena 3a

Appendix 11. Crystal 5a

You know we were talking about issues in adolescence - do you have ideas on that?

Yeah I was thinking about that - there's so many things and you see it really close to you and then far away as well and it's, it's (pause) - all I say to people is just to be yourself but I guess you have to have the space to be yourself and - I guess its other people allowing you to be yourself.

That's a really key point isn't it - the space to be yourself.

Mmm 'cause you can say to people - be yourself - but if they've got other people constantly throwing different messages at them and saying you have to be like this then it takes a stronger person to rise above that and be yourself so if you've been given the space to be yourself then you get to really express yourself ... there's so many mixed messages out there I guess - young girls and women...so many things - heaps of people just get sucked in.

Uh-mmm

It's just like believe in yourself and that you can do stuff like ...its just like - you know - uh ah (expressing frustration) you know

Yeah - that is beautiful - how do you get that across ...first I'd ask - how do create the space to be yourself?

Well - I guess ...if it comes like to me - I've been lucky that my parents...and the education I'm going through that we get the space to be ourselves.

At school not just at home?

Yes...I think -more so than if I was in a state school - like we get freedom of expression through not having a uniform and other creative things ...maybe if I was in another system where its so regimented you wouldn't have that space so then you'd have to make the space yourself

...I think to make that space you just have to step out there and be different and not worry so much about what people think and just be like - if they have a problem with how I am then it's their problem not my problem kind of thing that's what I often think....like if someone's got a problem with me then I'm not going to worry about it unless it starts to affect me kind of thing - if someone wants to hate you then they're wasting all that energy on it you know if its not affecting you then you don't need to worry about it...

Mmm - coming from you ...I mean you appear to be someone who isn't particularly offensive or doesn't dress in horrible or ugly or offensive ways - if you look at those sorts of things that sounds reasonable...but if you look at someone who actually seems to be behaving in a really offensive way, but they're saying "I'm just being myself so you can just lump it 'cause that's who I am": What's your comment about that?

Well I guess everyone's on a different path of learning about their awareness of how they're acting - like I had an instance today with a boy in my class and we've both got strong personalities and we just like clash you know...and I was walking along and he - I was walking to get next to the wall and he was walking sort of slightly there he was

the one who kinda had to get out of the way and he sort of just walked straight like made a thing so he was going to walk into me and I wasn't - I just kept walking straight 'cause I was next to the wall so I wasn't going to move out and ...around kind of thing - he just walked straight into me and I didn't do anything - I just kept walking straight you know and then he's like - oh you fucken bitch - and I was just like - Uh - you know really offensive I was just like - I didn't say anything like people have no respect whatsoever - you know?

(her voice is emotional)

Wow that's a very strong statement to make ...what do you think's going on for him then?

Well no one really likes him but - I guess he doesn't really know that (the sound in her voice has softened markedly!) - and ...most people have a tiny bit of respect for other people ...just enough to get out of the way - if they were walking next to the wall...I struggle trying to understand coz I don't like hating people you know...

Appendix 12. Crystal 7a

Stillness as in not moving...I think of a pond or something. In Bothmer¹ gym we did this exercise.. imagine you have a pond inside you - and then you're so still there'd be no ripples (like) that moment of absolute stillness before you do something...that stopping of everything and just sort of tuning in to your...like total silence and you shut your eyes and tune into your breathing and just be totally still ...going into something with a clear mind say if you're in a situation and if you're not sure how to respond and you sit back and just be still and you have time to think of something you know, being still in yourself...You can't really say what it achieves but its almost sort of like a composing thing like we're sort of still and just that little bit of composure before you do something. Sometimes it will just come to me, like before a test or something: 'it doesn't matter just be still'. Like I don't consciously know - can't say the result of what you, you know, but it's like composing things - bringing everything - (she moves her hands around her body and laughs).

Bringing everything where?

Sort of to one 'in' maybe or to a point where it's all still. It's something like being in balance before you're going to encounter something, you know, like sitting out and being in balance so that if things come at you they're not going to throw you off balance. You can sort of hold onto something that has you know some semblance of balance. It's also an assessing thing as well its almost a before thing.

Can it happen quite rapidly?

Yes - it can be an automatic response to situations or you can consciously do it

Do you think that your schooling has helped you get that?

The whole concept came from doing Bothmer gym ...its a kind of like a typical cliché Steiner thing.

Crystal 7a

¹ Bothmer gymnastics is a form of movement that was developed on the teachings of Rudolf Steiner. It is taught in some New Zealand Steiner schools.

Appendix 13. Aries - Steps of Silence

We talk about many things but none of them for long. Comments on her home and family; her friends and school, punctuate the **SILENCES** of our conversation. Aries and I weave in and out of a discussion about a close friend at school (let's call her 'Mary') who is *going through a stage at the moment* and who she is *really angry with*. The word 'connection' comes up several times in our conversation and Aries frequently mentions that she *can't be bothered* connecting with her peers, particularly with friends who are *fake*. We also discuss her difficulty with getting enough sleep and 'being tired'. The conversation is slow and has stops and starts punctuated by **SILENCE**. We even talk briefly about **SILENCE** as a topic. We discuss music, school and life. She is *fed up and tired* with life; *sick of the place* and *fed up with friends* at school. I ask whether there are any friends in her peer group that she "can connect with in the way you want to connect". She answers: *Don't really think I can with them - no-one really at school. All the people that I want to (connect with) are just far away it seems*. I ask her what is it she is looking for in a good connection or satisfying relationship.

I don't know. I just want to be able to talk to someone - whatever I want to say...Just be myself. Lots of people are just fake these days - tend to be someone else. I don't really want to go into that so I don't pretend to be their friend. Authenticity! (Aries 12a)

We meander for a brief while and then I ask her: "What are the characteristics of the fakeness?"

Fake smiles. You can always tell when someone's not really smiling...if you know lots of stuff has happened and they just ignore it and just talk about thing that don't get to the truth or whatever. They just skirt around it so they don't want to get into the danger path or whatever. They ask 'How are you?' but they don't really want to know. I answer them how I really am - but most of the time they don't even hear me so it doesn't matter. (Aries 12b)

Aries explains how when she doesn't respond to what her friends say, it creates an awkward **SILENCE**.

*I just make an awkward **SILENCE**. I quite like that actually. [Laughs] It makes them uncomfortable. I'm really liking 'awkward **SILENCE**' at the moment.*

So what do the other's do in the awkward **SILENCE**?

Walk away if they can, just try and avoid it, make some stupid comment.

Why don't we like awkward **SILENCES**?

I don't know - I love them!

That probably means they're not awkward for you.

No - not really - Kind of because they're not feeling good. I just kind of laugh at it. I normally find myself smiling when they're all awkward. It's kind of funny. (Aries 12c)

I acknowledge what she has said here with an "mmmm" but don't pursue the subject any further. Here there is a small **SILENCE**. Returning to our conversation about connecting, I ask: "So have you not been met by anybody - at your level?" and she says, *Not really...not in the class*. I say: "I wonder what that is?" No answer. I say: "You know how the more used we get to somebody, sometimes we just don't notice them in a way. Do you think that happens in the class group?" No response. I ask: "Do you think that you did have any gutsy close connections?"

Yeah I did - with Mary. She's going through a stage at the moment - she's not even acting like a proper teenager. The other people in my class are getting sick of her too. She's just over the top and stupid. I'm really angry with her.

What does she do that is over the top and stupid?

She's always texting guys...just typical slutty stuff.

Can you see anything behind that - sometimes people take those paths because of a need inside?

Yeah. (Aries 12d)

Short comments like *Yeah* are succeeded by **SILENCE**. I ask her if she can talk a bit more about her experience of having to work through her problems with Mary.

I don't know what to do with it. She's not noticing that you need a friend.

Do you think friendships change shape, maybe you move on?

I want to stay her friend, but not at the moment. It's hard 'cause I'm with her all the time. (Aries 12e)

Aries explains that they work together (in an after-school job) in the *same tiny room* and that it *wouldn't work if they hated each other*.² I ask her if that is the only option: "You are either friends or you hate each other?" She says, " *No we could just be on speaking terms but I don't want to. I'd like to get along with her.*" Here I am quiet for a while letting the **SILENCE** just be there. I further acknowledge her earlier statement that she *just want(s) to be able to talk to someone* and whether it helps to "just sit in this environment and just talk."

Yep - I guess.

So - if you had someone that you were talking to, what would you - what else would you be saying, what more would you want to talk about?

I don't know - anything - I'd just see what I talked about.

Which is kind of what's happening now in some ways - yeah?

[And - she laughs and I laugh and there is a kind of awkward **SILENCE**].

So?

[I leave a space but she is **SILENT**]. (Aries 12f)

So we move onto talk about something that has come up nearly in nearly every conversations - her relationship with sleep and insomnia. I suggest that maybe "the sleep thing" doesn't help her current feelings. I ask if anything has come up on that and she says, *Like me going to sleep you mean?* and I laugh and then apologise for laughing and say, "You do sleep? But not what you perceive as enough?"

We discuss the possibility of doing some meditation. The conversation is sluggish - in that she is mildly responsive, but not talkative and I am initiating the conversational pathways. Her voice is sounding flat and disconnected - like she is tired or bored. So I ask her: "What is exciting you in your life?" She says the possibility of going away to do an exchange and a specific out of school involvement she has, but that they are *far away*.

So - if you pulled it back to now, the next few days?

Nothing! [laughs]

What about the music? The chance to perform?

Yeah. I was excited. There's not really anything alive in me at the moment. (Aries 12g)

)We explore this last statement a little but to no ends and I ask whether the "stuff" between her and her friend is the thing weighing most heavily on her and she says *Probably*. We continue to discuss her immediate plans to see her friend and the conversation is still slow with me needing to push it along. Lots of **SILENCE** and slow talk, but we go quite deep. We kind of get into the flow of this and Aries is a bit more engaged talking about her friend. I ask her

² About 6 weeks after this conversation Aries actually quits her job. She says she got sick and couldn't go to work and then they were unhappy with that so she decided she didn't like it anyway and quit.

whether she thinks her friend needs to step back and work with something that's going on for her and maybe its not just about Aries she hastens to say, *Oh yeah - its not about me at all.*

The one thing Aries continues to talk about is her friend: *She wants to make a big drama so everyone feels sorry for her...and then I think well how am I even her friend? She's not like that all the time, but its been going for so long that I kind of think that's who she is - and I don't like this person.* I say that maybe her friend is just showing a different face and ask Aries if she has ever shown her friend a different face?

Yeah - I've just been really myself and that would be a different face to her - can't be bothered being fake - just for other people just pretending to be someone else - its just naturally happening everyone does it...just cant be bothered anymore - so that's probably a different face to her - she doesn't really notice.

What did you used to show before you showed yourself?

Well I did show myself - yeah I don't know...[SILENCE]

Is it being more outspoken? That you express opinions more readily?

She doesn't want that, but I do it 'cause I don't care anymore.

Is it something you now more confidently do? Just say what you think.

It's not kind of confidence it's just that I don't care - anymore - its not really confidence, I feel kind of uncomfortable but I just do it 'cause I'm just kind of over it.

Over the fakeness?

Yeah. Just over what they think of me anymore.

But where did that happen? Is it something that has happened during this year?

Yeah - I don't even know if it does happen or not I'm just talking...I just say what I think. I just say it, but they don't hear me anyway. I could just say whatever and they won't realise what I've said, but it hasn't always been that way - I think its just Mary - its not they. I'm a bit confused.

Do you think there's a positive side to being confused?

[Laughs] Maybe!

From that can come understanding?

Or you could just have an understanding? Without being confused? (Aries 12h)

The conversation is still hard to get flowing. She is **SILENT** then says: *It's weird. The people I get along with are never here.* I say that things have their time too, things have their lifespan and friendships have their life and that people change so that the friendship changes, and she says: *I kind of want to let go of her.* I ask, "Do you think we have little things that help us grow?" She is **SILENT**. I am **SILENT** too as I search for something else to say and I remember a conversation with my son that morning. I tell her that he asked me: "Mum, what are the 5 L's in life?" I say that I came up with "Love" and "Learning" and ask Aries what she thinks the rest are. She says *Laughter* and then is **SILENT**. I ask "What we were talking about - life is a learning curve about love? Sometimes you have to - ?" and she says *Let go?* We smile and then are both silent searching for the fifth L. I look up to the ceiling and say "ah" and together we whisper *Light!* Then she says *light and darkness.* That's it - a strange kind of interlude in our conversation that lasts for about 2 and a half minutes. We are both **SILENT** and so I ask more about Mary.

So do you think you could learn to be in a different way with your friend?

Yeah sure, but I don't want to.

Right -because?

I don't know - I just want her to change and her to fix it. I can't make her change.

What's best for you? You can't place your well-being in the hands of someone - waiting for someone else to come and fix it.

[SILENCE]

Or doesn't that make sense

[quietly she says - barely audibly] *Mmm, yeah kind of-*

[SILENCE]

Yeah - I don't really want to be friends with her anymore. If I had my choice I'd just leave and not see her, not try and change her, just wait. To me it seems like its not going to happen for a while.

These are the times when we learn a lot about human relations - there are times when we want to just chop something off and get away, but you can't exactly so you have to navigate your way through it, but you've got a lot of skills and a lot of heart.

I'm just sick of trying.

Do you want to be helped or met?

[SILENCE]

Do you ever think sometimes in our lives we have these bigger life tasks or purpose?

Yeah.

[SILENCE]

Or is it different karma?

[SILENCE]

I think some people maybe carry a bigger torch a bigger purpose - that must be the case 'cause some people plough through heaps of crap and make amazing change and bring incredible love and light to the world - as if its their destiny.

And there's people that make crap - like Mary. (Aries 12i)

She goes to the toilet. The door squeaks and the room is **SILENT**. My thoughts in the **SILENCE** are: the atmosphere is low energy for her, but I am bright. She comes back and asks (referring to the study): *What would happen with this if I leave?* "Nothing" I say "it just stays if that's ok. Whatever happens in people's lives is part of the bigger picture."

[SILENCE]

[I mention the an education conference I'm going to]. That will be the first time I go and share what's happening in this study.

[SILENCE]

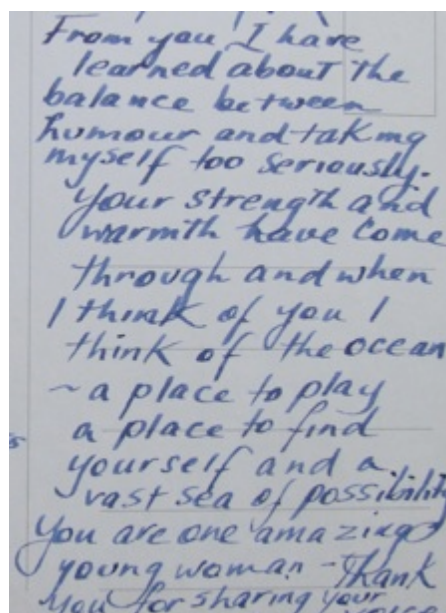
I think and write about what we talk about - and find amazing things like - what happens in the quiet times - how **SILENCE** is as much a part of conversation as words - and things like that. (Aries 12j)

Aries continues to be **SILENT**. My voice sounds like I am talking to an answer-phone, not expecting a reply. There is none even though I leave spaces. I tell Aries I will miss her if she goes away. She says *Yeah*. I try to make her laugh, she doesn't and we finish.

Appendix 14. Expressions of Gratitude: Given to the young women at the end of our conversations.

In this Appendix are the expressions of gratitude for Gabriel, Isis, Hera, Natalie, Ruby, Sally, Zen. For each young woman I chose a picture from my collection and wrote on the back of it as a card. These were given at the same time as those which are at the end of each of Chapters 5 to 9 for Laura, Lena, Crystal, Aries and Sophia.

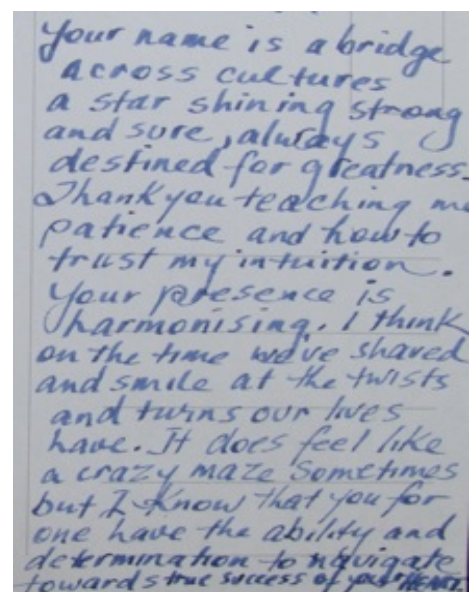
Gabriel



From you I have learned about the balance between humour and taking myself too seriously. Your strength and warmth have come through and when I think of you I think of the ocean - a place to play a place to find yourself and a vast sea of possibility. You are one amazing young woman - Thank you for sharing your voice.



Hera



Your name is a bridge across cultures a star shining strong and sure, always destined for greatness. Thank you teaching me patience and how to trust my intuition. Your presence is harmonising. I think on the time we've shared and smile at the twists and turns our lives have. It does feel like a crazy maze sometimes but I know that you for one have the ability and determination to navigate towards true success of ~~your~~ ~~team~~.

Isis



Strong river
running so deep
Life is truly your
adventure
the dark recesses
will bear your light
no corner of the
earth too far
for you to wander
Thank you for your
insight, you have
created new meanings
and broken the
bonds of old thought
to view, anew, this great
life.

Natalie



Your magic sparkle
has unfolded a new
sense of joy in me.
Your passion for life
is a fire
fuelled by the certainty
of who you are.
The simple truths
you have shared
create spiritual
awakenings
- Long may you shine.

Ruby



May you dive deep
for the treasures of your heart.
Thank you for showing me
the spirit of caring
and playfulness.
Your gentleness
lives with me
and your strength
will carry you
to the shores
of your dreams.

Sally



I hear your voice of
courage, strength and
clarity
sounding in me
and conquering doubt.
Thank you for your
wonderful stories
your willingness
to share openly
and honestly.
Your beauty is rare.
and all who see it
are blessed.

Zen



I don't know why exactly but this
picture made me think of you.
Something in you has taught
me about grace and balance
and reaching towards what
you really want.
You carry yourself
with a certainty of
knowing your voice
yet you are a gentle
companion, true at
your heart.
Thank you for truly giving
of yourself.