

Marion Milner and Creativity: A Thematic Analysis

by

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the very best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Puckey', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Signed

Jane Puckey

Date: 26 November 2014

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Abstract

This dissertation analyses literature written by the psychoanalyst and artist Marion Milner, in relation to creativity. The focus of this research is Milner's personal, creative process in order to bring further understanding as to how a psychotherapist can facilitate creativity for optimal practice. An interpretative methodology informed this study, which utilised a method of thematic analysis. The themes identified in this study have been conceptualised as a psychological model (*Ego, Duality and Oneness*) which addresses the way we can process lived experience to elicit psychic growth through an act of creative surrender – in order to develop the capacity to think unknown thoughts and to further awareness and freedom. The significance of creativity for clinical practice and a critical reflection of this research are discussed.

Structure of Study

Chapter 1 introduces my research topic, the aim and rationale for this research and the formulation of my research question. I also discuss my initial ideas about Marion Milner and my own personal, creative experience.

Chapter 2 gives a background to Milner both personally and professionally and discusses her theoretical perspectives.

Chapter 3 discusses how this research is conducted within the interpretative paradigm using the qualitative methodologies of hermeneutics and thematic analysis.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of how I implemented the first stage of thematic analysis (familiarisation with data), resulting in 22 chapters from four of Milner's books being included in the data set.

Chapter 5 outlines how initial codes were generated and numerically organised, resulting in 1,838 initial codes from the entire data set.

Chapter 6 describes how I derived first-order themes from initial codes through a rigorous method of sorting and analysis, resulting in 884 first-order themes.

Chapter 7 conveys the practical application of Braun and Clarke's (2006) fifth phase of thematic analysis resulting in 521 second-order themes, 380 third-order themes, 164 fourth-order themes, 44 fifth-order themes and 10 sixth-order themes.

Chapter 8 involves the naming of three final seventh-order themes and provides a rich definition of them by describing the associated sub-themes within each. Also I introduce a diagram (Figure 5) illustrating how these final themes and sub-themes relate to each other.

Chapter 9 contains a written analysis of research results in relation to my research questions. Research strengths, limitations and ideas for further research are also discussed, followed by a conclusion.

Writing Style

This dissertation is an exploration of Milner's literature on her experience of facilitating creativity, with the intent of furthering understanding of how creativity can be optimally used in psychotherapy practice. I have included long quotes from Milner's poetic writing throughout this dissertation, to substantiate my research findings and also to share her inspirational work. Aside from chapter 8 where my focus is on the depth, flow and richness of Milner's text, I made the decision to write about this very personal subjective process predominantly in the first-person. I made this decision in order to acknowledge that I am not a distant observer, nor an authority in this qualitative work, but rather that my own life experience and subjectivity, and that of Milner's, are embodied in the data and any meaning made will result from a combination of us both. Caulley (2008) supports my decision. In writing about qualitative research, he recommends Gutkind's (1997) advice: "if your presence is integral...then obviously, write in the first person. If, on the other hand, the writer's presence interrupts the flow of the narrative, then obviously the third person is the preferable point of view" (p. 72).

I wish to clarify at this point that when the term client(s) is mentioned in this research, I am not referring to any one particular client, but rather to a generic client or an amalgamation of all the clients that I have ever been aware of. In this dissertation I have used APA 6th referencing as required.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Practitioners of psychoanalysis and many other disciplines have shown a lot of interest in and made enquiries into the nature of creativity but little interchange has taken place between them to consolidate any findings. In defining creativity, Rothenberg (1983) writes “to create is to bring forth an entity that is *both* new and valuable” (p. 56). According to this definition, psychoanalysis is creative because it is engaged in facilitating a mutually creative process so that something new and valuable might be produced in, and of, the patient’s personality (Rothenberg, 1983). These new personality qualities and organisations work to alleviate illness and to further a client’s well-being beyond their premorbid functioning so “are clearly valuable to the individual and to society” (Rothenberg, 1983, p. 57). Therefore, I think that understanding as much as possible about creativity and the conditions in which it comes about is of crucial importance, and was of much interest to Marion Milner.

Milner was a psychoanalyst, author and artist and gave direct testimony as a creative person which allowed her to present her understanding of creativity from diverse perspectives. My aim in this dissertation is to explore Marion Milner’s conceptual understanding of creativity as being fundamental to the process of change and healthy development rather than arising secondarily from loss, in order to further the understanding of how creativity can be used for optimal psychotherapy practice. In this qualitative research I use the method of thematic analysis to study literature written by Milner that is relative to my research questions.

Milner made significant contributions to psychoanalysis as a result of her lifetime of research into the areas of creativity, intersubjectivity and analytic method (Letley, 2014). Her discoveries (made seventy years ago), such as discursive and intuitive knowing, have been confirmed by current brain research (McGilchrist, 2009). However Milner’s innovative work is

no longer widely read or taught. I find this perplexing, given the relevance of her concepts, not just for psychoanalytic practice, education and various other related disciplines, but for general everyday living and well-being.

Aside from the mere fact of being a woman, perhaps Milner has been marginalised because she was openly explicit about what are often considered spiritual experiences (which are commonly feared or ridiculed as they can be confused with madness). An unease in psychoanalysis with spirituality and religion goes right back to Freud (1927), who considered “religion...the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity” (p. 43).

Research Rationale

My inspiration in beginning this exploration of Milner’s work originated mostly from my own process of creativity as a practising artist. I paint from photos which for me represent a breathtaking, in-the-moment experience of feeling as one with what I see – generally these photos depict beautiful aspects of coastal New Zealand which I love. In desiring to express this ‘felt’ beauty, I draw an outline on canvas of whatever I decide to paint, and often I am able to totally distract my conscious mind by listening to music and other audio recordings or by talking to a friend – and let my body paint my painting. I find when I attain this alternative and very enjoyable way of being – when I somehow forget myself – that there is fluidity and liveliness within my work which is in striking contrast to those over which I labour self-consciously and painfully.



Figure 1. Two Suns Rising - a painting by Jane Puckey.

Often the resulting painting like the one above in Figure 1 of pohutukawa at Mahurangi (Puckey, 2013) surprises me, as I do not feel as though I created it, whereas when not in this alternative state I tend to produce a stilted, dead-looking piece of work which, generally, I paint over.

These experiences while in nature, and especially the alternative way of being I have regularly felt while painting, along with a profound in-the-moment experience of connection with my therapist, me and strangely everything, as a client in a psychotherapy session, made me wonder what creativity is. In particular I wanted to know if my felt sense, while painting and as a psychotherapy client in the aforementioned instance, were the same. They certainly felt similar and were beneficial for my well-being on many different levels. So, I wanted to understand more about the nature of creativity in and of itself, and how it comes about, and to learn how to use it for optimal practice as a psychotherapist. All these aspects brought me to the eventual subject of this research – *Marion Milner and Creativity* – and formed my research questions:

What is the nature of creativity? What conditions are conducive for creativity in a psychotherapy session? How can creativity be used for optimal practice by a psychotherapist?

I initially heard about Marion Milner at a talk in Auckland given by Neville Symington (2012). I decided to focus this dissertation on her because she was a psychoanalyst and, with her passion for creativity and painting, seemingly held both aspects I was thinking about. With my questions about creativity in mind, I began to systematically read all literature written by Milner. I hoped to identify and explore any themes, both implicit and explicit within her writing, to assist in clarifying my own and others' understanding of creative phenomena. Thematic analysis was a good method to explore Milner's writing as it emphasises a rich description of the data set, captures intricate meaning within the text and highlights subjective experience as a paramount objective of study.

I discovered that Milner wrote richly and was also very generous in giving a personal account of her experience which both inspired and resonated with me emotionally. I love her writing and found myself particularly interested in her perceptions, feelings and general experience of facilitating creativity within herself. Milner quotes from literature throughout her books and the passage below by Joseph Conrad from his book *Lord Jim*, (as cited in Milner, 1934/2011) resonated with me and felt important, although I did not understand why nor quite what it meant until many months later.

A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavor to do, he drowns – *nicht wahr?*...No! I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up....In the destructive element immerse. (p. 1)

It seems very strange in hindsight but when I first commenced this research – even though I had done some general reading and exploration into Taoism, Buddhism, Kabbalah and

other spiritual philosophies – I had no concept that what I was enquiring into can also be considered spirituality.

Summary

In this chapter I have introduced my research topic on *Marion Milner and Creativity* and why it is important to understand more about creativity in psychotherapy. The aim and rationale for this research have been expressed, along with my initial ideas about Marion Milner, my personal experience and background of creativity. I have also explained how I formulated my research questions: *What is the nature of creativity? What conditions are conducive for creativity in a psychotherapy session? How can creativity be used for optimal practice by a psychotherapist?*

CHAPTER 2: MARION MILNER

In this chapter I will introduce Marion Milner by writing a brief biography, along with a concise account of her psychoanalytic perspective in context within psychoanalysis.

Biography

Marion Milner (1900-1998) was born in London as Nina Marion Blackett. Due to her love of nature as a child she yearned to be a Naturalist, however due to her family being unable to afford tertiary education she began work as a tutor, which led to an interest in the work of Montessori and her studying for a year at a Montessori training college. Encouraged by a friend, Milner obtained a post-war training grant and began a university degree studying psychology and physiology. Graduating in 1923 with a First Class degree, Milner became an industrial psychologist with a specific interest in the field of education. Two years later, aged 26, Milner (1987a/2011) began an introspective journey through diary-keeping and discovered the unconscious mind. This process resulted in her first book *A Life of One's Own* (1934/2011) – published for reasons of diplomacy under a pseudonym Joanna Field – which represents an important phase leading her to psychoanalysis. Milner married Dennis Milner in 1927 and had a son, John, in 1932 (Letley, 2014).

In 1938, just prior to the Second World War, Milner attended a lecture by Donald Winnicott which prompted her to begin Freudian analysis with Sylvia Payne and to apply for, and begin training (in 1940 during the war), with the British Psycho-Analytical Society. Correspondence between Winnicott and Milner suggests they had a very close friendship and – in what I find a very unusual arrangement (especially according to current practice) – Milner engaged in a second analysis with Winnicott who had also analysed her husband. In 1943, Milner began practising psychoanalysis and became a distinguished, well-respected

psychoanalyst of the Middle School at the British Psycho-Analytical Society. Aside from Winnicott, Milner knew and studied with many other influential and creative thinkers in psychoanalysis such as Anna Freud, Klein, Khan and Bion (Letley, 2014).

Throughout her long life, Milner continued to work as an analyst and author, seeking to understand the deeper meanings of human experience from a broad range of disciplines, resulting in a total of eight published books (Milner 1934/2011; 1937/2011; 1938; 1950/2010; 1969/2011; 1987a/2011; 1987b), one of which was published posthumously (Milner, 2012), and numerous journal articles.

Milner's Perspective

I found that much of Milner's (1952) theoretical and clinical work revolved around the fundamental question of how an individual bridged the gap between inner reality and external (shared) reality. This led me to think that Milner had a similar stance to Winnicott (1953), as she believed the key to creativity, alleviating anxiety, and human growth throughout the life span, lay in the overlapping relationship between these two spheres of experience.

This perspective led Milner to value a dimension characterised by permeable boundaries allowing creative interplay between dialectical opposites – such as self and other or an individual's conscious and unconscious process – which she believed broke down false inner organisation “in order that a better one may emerge” (Milner, 1969/2011, p. 431). Personally and professionally, she observed that this change of state required a letting-go and a stepping into the unknown. She found that this process, which she often referred to as “surrender to the ‘not-self’” (Milner, 1937/2011, p. 132), needed to be contained within a safe frame of reference like the structure around the psychoanalytic session or a special kind of concentration, which seems to me to be akin to the Buddhist practice of mindfulness. I think this surrendered state is also

similar to what Thomas Ogden (2004) calls (between therapist and client) “the analytic third” (p. 167) – an intersubjective reality privileging the client’s psychic experience and growth to help them better connect with themselves and the world. In the introduction to her book *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men: Forty-Four Years of Exploring Psychoanalysis*, Milner (1987b) writes

the aim of healthy living is not the direct elimination of conflict which is possible only by forcible suppression of one or other of its antagonistic components, but the toleration of it – the capacity to bear the tensions of doubt and of unsatisfied need and the willingness to hold judgement in suspense until finer and finer solutions can be discovered which integrate more and more the claims of both sides. Thus it is the psychologist's job to make possible the acceptance of such an idea so that the richness of the varieties of experience whether within the unit of the single personality or in the wider unit of the group, can come to expression. (p. 10)

This view is confirmed by the current neurology writer McGilchrist (2009) who summarises features of unhealthy modernism – which he views as resulting from imbalance due to lack of integration within oneself – as: “an excess of consciousness and an over explicitness in relation to what needs to remain intuitive and implicit; depersonalization and alienation from the body and empathetic feeling; disruption of context; fragmentation of experience; and the loss of ‘betweenness’” (p. 397). Milner’s personal and professional study led her to believe that, through a surrendered in-between state – an innate, unconscious, human striving for an ideal state could be realised. Eigen (2004) writes:

The relationship she cultivates to such states is one of extreme trust, as if the chaos they represent implicitly contains a profoundly spontaneous ordering process. She stands nearly alone in psychoanalysis in seeing plenitude rather than distress as the central source of personal growth. (p. 157)

Milner (1969/2011; 1952) criticised Freud’s (1923) conceptualisation of primary process (the unconscious, instinctual, visual part of the psyche) as a separate and lower form of psychic

activity to secondary process (logical, conscious mental functioning) and counterposed the Kleinian conception of mourning (Klein, 1940). Furthermore, Milner theorised that while an individual's relationship to the world (other) can be furthered by pain and separation as espoused by Klein, that harmonious development fundamentally arises from an unconscious, joyful, creative, undifferentiated state of no-self. In this regard, I think Milner's concepts are similar to affective matching and attunement as emphasised by Daniel Stern (1985), explicating a direct line of development from Milner to empirical investigations of intersubjectivity. Today, Milner's writing remains largely unexplored. Exploring her point of difference from a new perspective will bring further understanding for clinical practice.

Summary

This chapter portrays Milner's personal and professional development, her valued standing amongst her contemporaries and lifetime dedication to human growth and well-being. Her theoretical perspective, which has furthered knowledge in the field of psychoanalysis, has also been discussed in comparison with other theorists. What I have outlined in this chapter reveals Milner, in many ways, to be a woman ahead of her time. She inspires me. In the next chapter, I will outline the study design and methodology of this research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter outlines the specific methodologies used in this research within a wider philosophical framework and gives a rationale as to why these specific choices are appropriate for this research.

Interpretivism

The intention of research is to advance knowledge on any given issue beyond established views, mere intuition, and any given authority, by formulating a question and sound “study design in order to provide the best views of a particular issue so that conclusions can be derived from available evidence” (Grbich, 2013, p. 4). A philosophical framework (paradigm) underlies, informs, and provides a basis from which to explain research findings and make any subsequent research decisions, i.e. such as appropriate methodologies.

I will conduct this research within the interpretive paradigm which seeks to understand “the world of human experience” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 36). Interpretivism assumes that people experience the same things differently, and therefore multiple versions of reality exist within different people’s minds (Grbich, 2013). This philosophy considers that individual and shared knowledge of lived experience are subjectively constructed “and based on the shared signs and symbols that are recognised by members of a culture” (Grbich, 2013, p. 7). From this position, research involves exploring and understanding how people subjectively make sense of their lived experience, which makes this approach well-suited to both my research questions and qualitative methodologies.

In undertaking qualitative research within an interpretive paradigm, I recognise Milner as having greater knowledge in regard to her creative experience, and acknowledge that my own

life experience and subjectivity, along with hers, will be incorporated in the data – thus any data interpretation will be from an amalgamation of us both (Grbich, 2013).

Qualitative Methodologies

Qualitative research assumes and values the subjectivity within experience and is usually viewed as the best approach to explore and further understanding of behaviour in a natural environment, particular phenomena from the perspective of research participants and changing culture. Unlike quantitative research, which measures and statistically analyses observable data, qualitative research can provide detailed, insightful information into the meanings people ascribe to their lives, and reduces uncertainty and prejudice by using rigorous transparent approaches (Grbich, 2013; Hart, 1998). Even though replication and generalisation are unlikely outcomes, qualitative research can often provide a poignant demonstration of what might have remained only an abstract principle. This view is verified with qualitative case studies, which have been the corner stone of psychological theories and the basis of mental health care since the time of Freud (Stickley & Phillips, 2005; Kazdin, 2010).

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics and phenomenology provide a philosophical base for interpretive research (Bleicher, 1980). Hermeneutics or “the art of interpretation” (Ferraris, 1996, p. 1) is also a specific methodology (Bleicher, 1980), and as such suggests how to make sense of, and find meaning within qualitative textual data. The hermeneutic task can also be understood as the use of text as symbols to help us develop more of an understanding of our lived experience. As Ricoeur (1991) writes, “text is the medium through which we understand ourselves” (p. 87).

A hermeneutic methodology is well suited for this research which seeks to find meaning from an analysis of Milner’s rich, descriptive writing, which is sometimes difficult to understand.

From a hermeneutic perspective, words contain hidden meanings and also provide a way for these meanings to be communicated between people. Interpreting text in this manner involves an in-depth engagement with the text and entering what is called a hermeneutical circle, based on three main methodological steps inspired by Paul Ricoeur's theory of interpretation (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). The advantage of this method is that there is a dialectic interchange between the parts and the whole – “between understanding (a nonmethodic pole) and explanation (a methodic pole)” (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004, p. 149). Gadamer (1989) writes, “the movement of understanding is constantly from the whole to the part and back to the whole...The harmony of all the details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding. The failure to achieve this harmony means that understanding has failed” (p. 291). Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) that incorporates this hermeneutical circle of understanding to practically answer, specific research questions.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is recognised as a flexible, qualitative, research method (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which can be used in various theoretical frameworks to identify and analyse themes within data, and to arrange and describe the rich essence of a data set in detail. Typically, thematic analysis is applied to the text of transcribed interviews. However, in this research I will be adapting and utilising this method to find meaning within published text. Thematising meaning can be seen as an essential generic skill in all qualitative analysis (Holloway & Todres, 2003) to elicit awareness of the meaning individuals make of their experience. However, thematic analysis

is among the most systematic and transparent forms of such work, partly because it holds the prevalence of themes to be so important, without sacrificing depth of analysis. Thus, TA [thematic analysis] not only forms the implicit basis of much other qualitative work, it strives to provide the more systematic transparent form of it. (Joffe, 2012, p. 210)

Themes in thematic analysis are specific patterns of meaning within selected data, comprising both manifest and latent content, derived from both the speculative ideas that are brought to research (which to varying degrees constitute a deductive approach) and organically, from the data itself (an inductive approach) (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Joffe, 2012). Joffe (2012) argues the importance of deliberately using a dual inductive-deductive approach, in order to begin research with some knowledge “to avoid ‘re-inventing the wheel’” (p. 210) and to thoroughly analyse unexpected findings to potentially further and transform knowledge in any particular research field. Joffe (2012) views thematic analysis as a way to systematically explore research issues by looking at “manifest themes as a route to understanding more latent, tacit content” (p. 220) using “existing theoretical constructs to look at data while also allowing emerging themes to ‘speak’ by becoming the categories for analysis” (p. 220).

While my bias will inevitably and necessarily influence my research findings, I will intentionally conduct this thematic analysis (to search for readily apparent and latent meanings) with an inductive approach, which means any identified themes will be firmly linked to raw data (Patton, 2002). Due to inductive analysis being data-driven, the themes I identify may have little similarity to my research questions as I am not trying to make themes fit my existing beliefs and experience; rather, I want to expand and deepen my knowledge.

Patton (2002) asserts that interpreting meaning from raw data is a creative act which in “qualitative analysis transforms data into findings” (p. 432) and furthermore that “no formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe...The final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when – and if – arrived at” (p. 432). With the above in mind, I will systematically generate research findings and transparently document my analysis process to demonstrate the worth, reliability and validity of this research. I think the simplest

way to do this will be to write a formal detailed account of my process in conjunction with the practical implementation of the method of thematic analysis (so what I actually do and think is fresh in my mind), and also to include enough data evidence within the body of my writing to clarify the connection between it and my interpretations (Greenhalgh & Taylor, 1997).

In this research, I will follow the model of thematic analysis as delineated in six phases by Braun and Clarke (2006), which entails the following:

Phase one involves familiarisation with the data, an immersive process which transpires by actively reading and re-reading the data searching for initial meanings and patterns.

Phase two involves generating the initial codes by systematically recognising and collating interesting and meaningful features of the data relating to the research question.

Phase three entails collating and grouping the different codes according to various aspects of meaning in relation to the research question hence forming potential themes.

Phase four involves reviewing themes to determine if each theme has enough data to support it and also if themes accurately reflect meanings evident in the data set.

Phase five defines and names to identify “the ‘essence’ of what each theme is about” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92).

Phase six comprises a final written analysis demonstrating merit and validity of the research by delivering “a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93).

Summary

This chapter discusses how this research will be conducted within the interpretative paradigm, using the qualitative methodologies of hermeneutics and thematic analysis which

together form an appropriate approach to explore and further understanding of an individual's subjective experience, and are therefore well suited to this research.

CHAPTER 4: SELECTING DATA SET

Becoming familiar with the data is the first phase of Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase process for thematic analysis. Aspects involved in this particular stage of the process are outlined below.

Familiarisation with Data

Literature search. I began this research with a broad search of the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) library, using the term "Marion Milner" and the AUT library search facility Summon, which comprehensively searched the library's entire digitised and printed text collection listing all available full text literature. This search returned an unhelpfully large number of results (3,116). With the intention of refining results to a more manageable quantity, I specifically sought Marion Milner's sole publications by using the term "Milner, Marion" with a search criterion of 'author' in the following electronic databases – Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing (PEP), psycINFO a psychology database, PsycEXTRA – along with the search facility Summon. I hand-searched the results of these searches which consisted of Milner's books and journal articles, for further literature which amounted to 22 individual data items (Appendix A), making what Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) define as a "data corpus".

Familiarisation with data corpus. I carefully reviewed each of the 22 items making up this data corpus to gauge its relevance to the research topic. I noted that some were tributes to colleagues, relating to education, termination in psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis with children, or written in German.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria. From this initial assessment I applied exclusion criteria to reduce the data corpus by excluding any material related to working exclusively with

children, education, tributes to colleagues, termination in psychoanalysis and literature published in any language other than English. Then I read in their entirety the residual eight literature items that formed the data set (Appendix A) – seven books and one journal article. The significant reduction in data at this stage of the process came about because I found that numerous journal articles formerly included in the data corpus were published in one of Milner's (1987b) books, *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men: Forty-Four Years of Exploring Psychoanalysis*. This data set was introduced to my dissertation supervisor and supervision group where I was advised (due to the volume amassed by including seven books) to further reduce the size of the data set so that a thorough thematic analysis could be conducted. On the basis of inclusion criteria being *Milner's experience-near account of what is involved in facilitating a state of primary creativity within herself*, I considered the following to be additional exclusion criteria: painting techniques, Milner's own client work, art therapy, psychoanalytic theory, poetry, dreams, fairy tales, mythology, and stories from various philosophical and religious traditions. I also did not include Milner's chronological life history and detailed descriptions of her memories and daily function when they were irrelevant to this research topic.

Data Set

I read the eight data items again. As I grew more familiar with the text it became evident that, due to Milner's evolving understandings across her life-span, much of her early writing was reiterated and restated in greater depth in her later literary work *Eternity's Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (Milner, 1987a/2011) – hence the prevalence of data from this one book. After I applied the additional exclusion criteria, I selected from four of Milner's books, 23 chapters that best represented the diversity of her experience and ideas expressed in her writing. If a chapter met inclusion criteria but introduced no new material relevant for this research it was not

included. I read the data set (Appendix A), consisting of these 23 chapters, once more and briefly summarised and numerically organised them (as below) to give a context of the data content in relation to the research questions.

1. The chapter “Fear of a dragon” in the book *A Life of One’s Own* (1934/2011) describes Milner’s investigation into the underlying origin of her fears, in relation to her discovery of two ways of thinking – “narrow-looking” and “wide-looking” (p. 109) – leading her to conclude that her primary fear was prompted by her continual urge to “let go” (p. 115) to the unknown which felt, metaphorically, like an inescapable death of her personal identity.
2. The chapter “More outcasts of thought” in the book *A Life of One’s Own* (1934/2011) gives an account of how Milner explored the obverse shadow-side of her conscious experience. This enabled her realisations that viewing irreconcilable opposites of thought together allowed for more realistic, discriminatory thinking rather than habitual, “all-or-none” thinking (p. 122) – along with the sometimes terrifying awareness that her mind had thoughts and needs of which she was not consciously aware, and which sought expression.
3. The chapter “Discovery of the ‘other’” in the book *A Life of One’s Own* (1934/2011) describes Milner’s discovery that all her sources of happiness depended on her perceiving experience from a state of relaxed, purposeless detachment, which required an underlying prerequisite of security. She believed that a lasting sense of

security could only arise from surrender to all that is other, along with being prepared to accept annihilation of her sense of self.

4. The chapter “Retrospect” in the book *A Life of One’s Own* (1934/2011) portrays Milner’s evolving understanding of happiness as being intuitively indicative of living in a way which met her unique, inner needs. By active and passive observation she explored the depths of her emotional experience, discerning between what she called “blind thinking” (p. 157) (based in fear and confusion) and the unconscious wisdom of her mind (expressed via imagery), by knowing both states.
5. In the epilogue of the book *A Life of One’s Own* (1934/2011), Milner describes bisexuality in the human psyche. She surmised that the interaction of opposing feminine (i.e. receptive, creative, introverted) and masculine (i.e. active, purposeful, extroverted) principles created a natural rhythm of awareness necessary for the conditions of growth – growth, from her perspective, being learning how to give up effort.
6. Chapter 7 in the book *An Experiment in Leisure* (1937/2011) gives an account of how Milner sought to come close to “the other” (p. 67) in herself. She determined that her terror of the other in herself arose from confusion between the ego (and the desires contained therein deprived of the integrating power of awareness) and the unconscious wisdom which was quite apart from ego. She hypothesised that increasing awareness involved a continual sacrificial act of letting go desire and

purpose – a voluntary surrender – the absence of which resulted in involuntary submission.

7. In chapter 9 in the book *An Experiment in Leisure* (1937/2011), Milner illustrates the inevitability in life of death, by describing a Spanish bull-fight – the plunge of the sword into the bull named “the moment of truth” (p. 87) by Spaniards. From this encounter she learnt that, if she was able to relinquish a desired mastery of any experience and instead have utter acceptance of psychic pain, seeing nothing beyond it and plunging into an internal nothingness, her fears were vanquished and she instead felt imaginatively alive.
8. In chapter 15 in the book *An Experiment in Leisure* (1937/2011), Milner describes her memories of naturalistic observations which enthralled her, surmising that these symbolic images conveying living, creative processes were also true of the unconscious mind – a living wisdom as ‘other’ within herself, and mysterious force by which she believed one is lived. She called this wisdom the “answering activity” (p. 138), whose richness came only when she met experience without expectancy or hope.
9. The chapter “Reciprocity and ordered freedom” in the book *On not Being Able to Paint* conveys (1950/2010) Milner’s discovery of internal, spontaneous, ordering forces by “free drawing” (p. 83) (drawing without consciously willed effort and purpose). She learnt that the capacity to trust in an ordered result arising from a

special mood-state of reciprocity (the interplay of differences that remained in contact) involving whole-body awareness, depended partly on a willingness to accept chaos as a temporary stage.

10. In the chapter “Rhythm and the freedom of the free drawings” in the book *On not Being Able to Paint* (1950/2010), Milner imparts how the role of conscious planning and will-power can actively interact with chaos to bring about creative activity. The former provides an internal framework by preventing internal and external interruptions, maintaining the kind of attention which creates a gap in time, along with a willingness to wait and see what new thing emerges from this framed emptiness within.

11. In the chapter “The concentration of the body” in the book *On not Being Able to Paint* (1950/2010), Milner describes the wide-focused concentration necessary for any properly balanced wholeness in a “free drawing” (p. 123). This, she says, is a condition of the spirit, essentially enveloping the whole body (the imaginative body) and also what is being drawn. She believed this rhythmic relationship of two differences was symbolic of one’s internal, pattern-making force working in active relationship with the environment to attain wholeness of the organism if conscious will allowed the conditions for natural rhythms to grow instead of imposing artificial ones.

12. The chapter “Painting as making real” in the book *On not Being Able to Paint* (1950/2010) describes how Milner experienced a delightfully different way of being, by allowing equality amongst a reciprocal interplay of differences while free drawing. This embodied what she called “‘contemplative action’” (p. 163). She believed that to make other people and their uniqueness ‘real’, the paradox of creativity was to be simultaneously one with the other, and separate, as one’s adversary is one’s co-creator.
13. In the chapter “Postscript: What it amounts to” in the book *On not Being Able to Paint* (1950/2010), Milner writes how activity creates purpose through the creative interplay and equality of differences, rather than the common misconception that our conscious purpose creates a deed. She believed the aforementioned, more advanced level of maturity is not so easily reached due to both the mental pain involved in the complex alternation of fusing and separating, and the intellectual mind’s negative perception of the fusing stage of the creative process.
14. In part 1 of the book *Eternity’s Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011), in the chapter “Telling the beads”, Milner describes a change in the quality of her consciousness – from turning contemplative attention inwards into the cells of her body – resulting in a feeling of inner blessedness from this meeting and subsequent mutual interchange. She describes this inner space she was sometimes able to encounter as dark, womb-like and undifferentiated – a place where inherent

potentiality could be unfolded and ‘being’ fully realised, with a sense of richness, renewal and great peace.

15. In part 1 in the book *Eternity's Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011), in the chapter “The gypsy and the soldier”, Milner writes about how it was sometimes so difficult for her to make contact with and relate to what she called the answering activity within, even though to do so was both nourishing and stabilising. She believed the answering activity to be a wise, inner, guiding force in which she could trust, and, by patiently and watchfully letting purposes have her – she watched herself be lived by this something that is ‘other’.

16. The chapter “The nature of the ‘Answering Activity’” in the book *Eternity's Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011) describes how Milner found the answering activity to be like plugging into an active presence – that was both her and not her – and finding spiritual expansion and liveliness. Exploring her idea of an inherent fertility cycle of body-mind rhythms Milner found readiness to be crucial, as it was only by experiment that she found herself in harmony with the death and resurrection phases of her creative process, which allowed new vistas to surface to conscious awareness.

17. In the chapter “And Answer Came There None” in the book *Eternity's Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011), Milner explored why sometimes she could not make contact with the answering activity via a process of surrender, even when she

believed, from continual experience, in this “creative unconscious” (p. 65) that could perform far finer tasks of integration than the conscious mind if it was asked to.

18. In the chapter “The dancing girl of Mykonos” in the book *Eternity’s Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011), Milner describes the central task as creating an inner space through the meeting of soul and body – the psychic equivalent of a womb-state – a place of transformation where something new can grow. She viewed this process as a kind of resurrection of the body, the mysterious body that is other and part of Mother Nature – the body that must be trusted, even though it would slay her conscious self with old age and death.

19. In the chapter “A fourth visit to Greece” in the book *Eternity’s Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011), Milner describes how she struggles with relinquishing conscious control and allowing herself to be breathed along with the internal act of shifting her attention and living from her middle – a base which accepts that joy and woe are woven together, in contrast to her conscious mind’s perception. She concludes that she must be willing to leap into the unknown and to accept not knowing.

20. In part 2 “Diary keeping between holidays (A-Z)” in the book *Eternity’s Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011), Milner arranged in alphabetical order the ‘jottings’ she had made over the years, that could be seen as sign-posts on her life journey, describing her process of psychic creativity.

21. In the chapter “A moment of eternity” in the book *Eternity’s Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011), Milner describes sensory experiences allowing her to acquire a capacity to bridge different levels of psychic functioning – allowing her to perceive the world “new-made” (p. 176). She believed it was space she was learning to relate to and become one with – bringing immense joy, – along with the realisation of having to face the silence of her death. A torture-house survivor imparted to her that, by wiping himself out and letting go the desire for control, pain could not secure a hold and he gained all that comes in the moment of truth.
22. The chapter “The source of transformation” in the book *Eternity’s Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011) conveys Milner’s understanding of what she calls the “imaginative body” (p. 187) – perceived by her as infinitely expandable – arising from the deliberate meeting of spirit and body. She viewed the imaginative body as being fundamentally crucial for all true loving, a capacity which one continuously limits – seemingly for one’s safety, but in actuality out of denial of one’s own death.
23. The postscript in the book *Eternity’s Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary* (1987a/2011) recounts Milner’s questioning of why she often forgets to risk going down into the body’s darkness, becoming the emptiness, becoming the pain – which brings such outer richness. She reflects on a lifetime of learning to relate to the not-me in the outer world and within the inner space of her own body, along with relating to

whatever continuously generates her body (a living process beyond her conscious self), and infers that from a meeting of two, an invisible third arises.

Familiarisation with data set. I scanned and accurately converted all aforementioned chapters of the data set to an editable digital Microsoft Word format using ABBYY FineReader (computer software which provides optical character recognition) in preparation for coding. This process identified that the volume of the data set was large, with a word count of 83,179 (Appendix B), nearly a quarter of which consisted of a single data item – part 2 “Diary keeping between holidays (A-Z)” in Milner’s (1987a/2011) book *Eternity’s Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary*. I read this particular data item again, and realised that much of its content was reiterated in other data items. Due to this repetition and the volume of the data set, this data item – even though being rich in content – was excluded in order to limit data to a level feasible for a comprehensive thematic analysis. This left 22 data items in the data set.

Braun and Clarke (2006) state that immersion in the data is vital in order to comprehend the “depth and breadth” (p. 87) within the data content prior to the coding process, and suggest that this “immersion involves ‘repeated reading’ of the data, and reading in an *active* way – searching for meanings, patterns and so on” (p. 87). This initial step of familiarising myself with the data was comprised of reading the data set three times with the intent of firstly focusing on text content and then, in later readings, primarily placing emphasis on my emotional and intellectual responses and corresponding associations. Tuckett (2005) believes engaging with the literature in this way enhances analysis by sensitising one to subtle aspects within the data. From these readings I identified potential patterns.

My first impression was of the primary terror Milner (1934/2011) described – which she called “fear of a dragon” (p. 108) – which she believed was prompted by a continual urge to

surrender to the unknown, which felt metaphorically to her personal identity like inescapable death. I was also personally impacted by Milner's (1934/2011) realisation and practice (illustrated by her description of the inevitability in life, of death, in a Spanish bullfight), that in relinquishing a desired mastery over experience, and instead utterly accepting psychic pain, seeing nothing beyond it and plunging into an internal nothingness, that her fears were overcome and she felt 'imaginatively alive'. I thought parallels between Milner's writing and Eastern Philosophy were also evident (Leaman, 1999).

I wrote a comprehensive description of my thoughts and decisions along with writing about the practical application of thematic analysis on Milner's literature throughout this research process, and also noticed that I began to put into practice various aspects of Milner's work on both a personal and professional level.

Summary

In this chapter I have given a comprehensive account of how I implemented the first stage of Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis, by familiarising myself with the data. This process involved an initial literature search, collection and selection of data (through careful reviewing, reading and re-reading of data and the application of exclusion criteria), so a thorough thematic analysis could be conducted. Twenty two chapters from four of Milner's books were included in the final data set and have been summarised to give a context of the data content in relation to my research questions. My initial impressions and ideas about the data have also been stated. In the next chapter I will discuss how initial codes were generated from the data set.

CHAPTER 5: CODING

In this chapter, I discuss the second phase in Braun and Clarke's (2006) model for thematic analysis, which is the generating of initial codes.

Generating Codes

At this stage of the process, I had read all 22 data items three times and used highlighters to identify segments of data with potential patterns of interest (Appendix C). I began the coding process by systematically reading every sentence in my data items again (which met research inclusion criteria) and examining them to identify interesting features within the data (both semantic and latent content) relevant to my research questions to produce initial codes. In this research, an initial code refers to "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63).

At this point, I was unsure how to differentiate between Milner's reflective and descriptive account of her experience and when her thoughts about her process extended into an aspect of research exclusion criteria, namely psychoanalytic theory. I decided that, when Milner writes in intellectual, psychoanalytic terms regarding her experience – as in the following highlighted data extract as opposed to the non-highlighted data extract in Table 1 – this data would not be coded. This decision was based on my particular research method – thematic analysis – which is good for experience-near data, not for highly theorised pre-digested concepts.

Table 1
Illustration of Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Exclusion criteria – psychoanalytic theory	Inclusion criteria – an experience-near account
<p>“Thus it seems that, behind the states that are often rather loosely talked about by psychoanalysts as auto-erotic and narcissistic, there can be an attempt to reach a beneficent kind of narcissism, a primary self-enjoyment which is in fact a cathexis of the whole body, as distinct from concentrating on the specifically sexual organs; and which, if properly understood, is not a rejection of the outer world but a step towards a renewed and revitalised cathexis of it” (Milner, 1987b, p.196).</p>	<p>“Just in so far as I held myself still and watched the flickering movements of the mind, trying to give them expression in words or drawings, just so far would I become aware of some answering activity an activity that I can only describe as a knowing, yet a knowing that was nothing to do with me; it was a knowing that could see forwards and backwards and in a flash give form to the confusions of everyday living and to the chaos of sensation” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 51).</p>

Finding initial codes. Data extracts containing potential codes were copied from a digital Microsoft Word format, having been converted from scanned PDF files using ABBYY FineReader, pasted into the third column of a four-column table and divided into sentences. The four columns were given headings – data item, page, data extract and initial codes – to indicate where the data extract and subsequent initial code came from within the original text, in preparation for analysis (Table 2, p. 43). It was vital to organise a numerical system so I could easily trace a basic segment of data back to its origin in the data set as a whole, as I frequently referred back to the original text throughout this research analysis. This process of referring basic elements of meaning back to the whole from which they originated was initially to ensure the validity of individual codes and themes. However, it also became a way of trying to preserve the meaning and intent conveyed in Milner’s writing from being overly affected by my subjectivity throughout the increasing levels of abstraction involved in this research.

Initially I was unsure what a code in reality actually entailed and felt overwhelmed by the magnitude of my up-and-coming research process. After a discussion with my supervisor I was

invited to email a page of my first coding attempt to him and my supervision group. The feedback I received was to stay close-to-text and to shorten my codes while retaining the overall idea of the data extract from which they were taken – accordingly, I discarded my initial coding attempt and began the coding process again. This time, each initial code was fairly short and kept as close to the original text as possible to reduce personal bias at this fundamental stage of the research. I recognise that the meaning I derived from the data extracts, and the context in which I coded the words I was drawn to, was a subjective process and another person would have had quite different outcomes.

To retain the idea of the original text in the corresponding code, I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) key advice for this phase by coding for multiple themes from individual data extracts and also by using information from the surrounding data context so Milner's meaning was not lost – especially when she referred to aspects of spirituality and the unconscious. For example, I coded "It also had the capacity to fit itself exactly into the contours of one's actual body" (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 188) as *The something which happened when spirit and body met also had the capacity to fit itself exactly into the contours of one's actual body* – as Milner had previously written about the something which happened when spirit and body met in the same paragraph.

I highlighted sentences of data extracts and subsequent initial codes in alternating colours to easily recognise the relation of one to the other (Table 2). Overall, 1,838 initial codes were identified from across the entire data set.

Table 2
An Example of the Initial Coding Process

Data item	Page	Data extract	Initial codes
2	116	Also, although I had first come to observe the 'back of my mind' thoughts as a kind of silent chatter I gradually found that many of them were even more difficult to observe, for they were not in the form of words at all but consisted of a confusion of feelings and fragmentary images. It was like a dream which immediately eludes you the moment you try to describe it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I observed the 'back of my mind' thoughts as a kind of silent chatter. 2. I gradually found many back of my mind thoughts even more difficult to observe 3. Back of mind thoughts could consist of a confusion of feelings and fragmentary images. 4. Many back of mind thoughts were feelings and images, rather than in the form of words 5. These back of my mind thoughts were like a dream. 6. Back of my mind thoughts were difficult to describe. 7. Back of my mind thoughts were vague and elusive

Summary

In this chapter I discussed how initial codes were generated, by staying close to the original data extracts of Milner's writing. This process resulted in 1,838 initial codes from the entire data set. These codes were numerically organised so they could be traced back to where they originated in Milner's books, to check for their congruence and validity with the meaning and intent within Milner's writing. In the next chapter, I will explain how I found themes from these initial codes.

CHAPTER 6: FINDING THEMES

This chapter describes how initial codes were numerically identified, labelled and manually sorted into groups to find first-order themes.

Searching for Themes

The third phase in Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model is the grouping of codes according to various meanings in relation to the research question, to form potential themes.

Potential themes. I numerically identified and labelled all 1,838 initial codes so they could be easily traced to their origin in Milner's text, as the fifth column in Table 3 below demonstrates.

Table 3
Numeric Identification of Initial Codes

Data item	Page	Data extract	Initial code	Numeric code identification
18	75	This so mysterious other that the body is, this body which is part of nature. 'Tho' he/she slay me yet will I trust in him/her.' And she will slay me, this body which stops me doing all the things I want to do because it's getting old.	1565.The body is a mysterious other. 1566.This body is part of nature. 1567.Though this body will slay me yet will I trust in him/her. 1568.She will slay me this body which prevents me doing all the things I want because it's getting old.	18.75.1565 The body is a mysterious other. 18.75.1566 This body is part of nature. 18.75.1567 Though this body will slay me yet will I trust in him/her. 18.75.1568 She will slay me this body which prevents me doing all the things I want because it's getting old.

All 1,838 initial codes were then printed out and individually cut up with a Stanley knife into separate pieces of paper, in preparation for analysis and arrangement into possible themes.

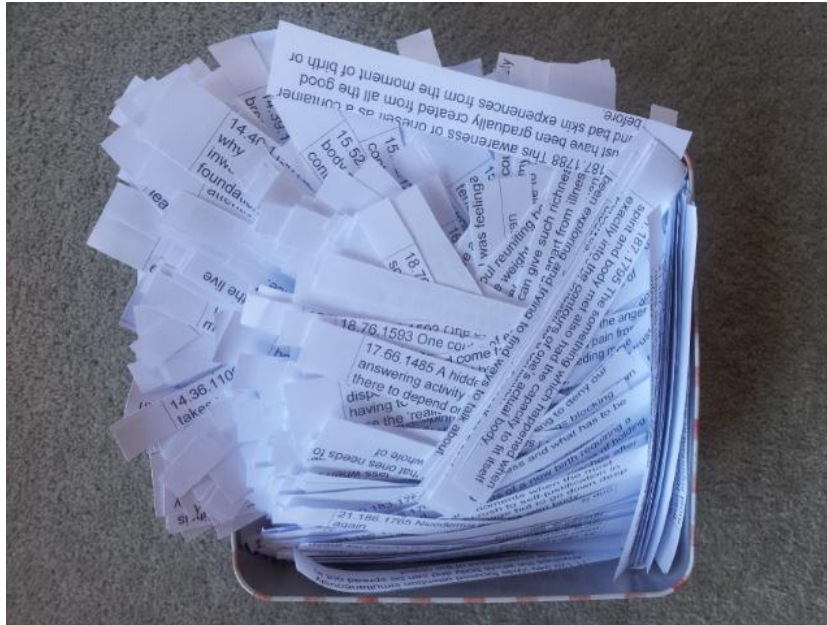


Figure 2. Initial codes (1,838) in a large cake tin in preparation for analysis.

Then I spread all my initial codes onto the floor and, over a three-day period, analysed each code to ascertain whether it fitted into any previously identified themes, or to determine what a new theme could be called to contain the code in question. Codes were organised into a total of 133 potential theme-piles according to various aspects of meaning in relation to my research question. I found that some codes could be included in more than one theme-pile, so I hand-copied these onto separate pieces of paper and then placed them into as many as three different theme-piles. Each theme-pile was placed in an individual envelope and given a generalised label according to its contents. Then I spread all 133 envelopes out on the floor to provide a visual representation to assist my thinking about the relationship between codes, themes and diverse levels of potential themes, as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest at this relatively early stage of analysis.

Reviewing Themes

Phase four of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model involves reviewing potential themes at two different levels, by determining whether each theme has enough coded data extracts to support it, and also whether individual themes accurately reflect the data set as a whole.

First-Order Themes

I read and analysed all the initial codes (coded data extracts) within each envelope. I did this to further my understanding of Milner's meaning in her writing, due to the ineffable subject of spirituality that she writes about, and because she writes about the same process "in as many different terms as possible" (Milner, 1937/2011, p. 129) to remind her to practise it (which initially was confusing for me as a reader). From this initial review process I found that many envelopes contained different and sometimes opposing aspects of meaning relating to the same overall topic. For example, the envelope titled 'Surrender' had such themes as freedom in surrender, relating to death's silence, conscious self must surrender, letting oneself be lived, and desire for control and willingness to let everything go. Braun and Clarke (2006) write that reviewing all codes is necessary as "data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes" (p. 91).

My data did not cohere within each theme so I decided that initial codes had been condensed prematurely into 133 themes. Again, I individually analysed each initial code in every envelope (as the example in Table 4 below demonstrates), to determine an appropriate label for a first-order theme that could contain the particular code being analysed. I used additional envelopes to store initial codes pertaining to any newly-found first-order themes.

Table 4
Example of Initial Codes and First-Order Theme

Envelope label	Associated codes	First-order theme
Surrender	8.138.740 I must surrender my conscious self and utterly trust this wise internal 'other' to shape my life 20.181.1729 'He who would save his life must lose it...' 16.60.1390 The expedient discursive ego being ready to die or admit it doesn't know 8.132.682 All real living must involve recurrent moments of surrender to the not-self. 10.115.866 Giving oneself up to the swing of the thing brought delight and freedom 20.181.1730 One must be ready to be nothing	Conscious Self must Surrender to not-self

At this stage of analysis the process was once again recorded and organised using tables in a Microsoft Word document, with some codes fitting into one or more first-order themes, as Table 5 below demonstrates.

Table 5
An Example of First-Order Themes and Associated Code

Envelope label	Associated code	First-order themes
Surrender	8.138.740 I must surrender my conscious self and utterly trust this wise internal 'other' to shape my life	Conscious Self must Surrender to not-self Trust 'Other' to Shape Life Divinity that Shapes My Life Creative Process was Something Lived

I assigned the code 8.138.740 *I must surrender my conscious self and utterly trust this wise internal 'other' to shape my life* to four different first-order themes. The highlighted themes associated with this code were my interpretations based on my familiarity with the data set as a whole. I knew that, when Milner referred to a wise internal other, she was referring to what she

understands as a divine spiritual aspect within herself which could live creatively through her – and, she believed, through each of us – if one’s individual ego recurrently surrenders to death. My interpretations could be confirmed by tracing this code numerically back to its origin on page 138 in Milner’s (1937/2011) book *An Experiment in Leisure*, where she writes about giving up purpose and letting this wise something (which at this point in her life she thought would be impudent to call ‘God’) be a guiding force in one’s life. I frequently referred to Milner’s original text throughout this analysis process, and also with each increasing level of abstraction from the data set, to ensure the legitimacy of identified codes and themes, with the intent that Milner’s original meaning would not be lost nor unduly influenced by my subjectivity.

At this point I noticed my reluctance to reduce and abstract codes to a limited number of first-order themes conducive for thematic analysis, due to my enjoyment of Milner’s rich metaphoric language which had so many layers of meaning which I did not want to lose. My process furthers my understanding of Milner’s when she describes how science helped her observe and compare experience, but could not convey what was important in her experience which depended on “unanalysable and incommunicable wholes” (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 159). Milner (1934/2011) writes:

When I considered anything that happened to me in terms of science, I had to split it up into parts and think only of those qualities which it had in common with others, so it lost that unique quality which it had as a whole, the ‘thing-in-itselfness’ which had so delighted me in wide perceiving. (p. 158)

In order to let the process of thematic analysis continue to evolve I decided to garner for a theme what I saw as being the essence within a code (Table 4), and to assign codes to more than one theme only when a code contained significantly different meanings (Table 5). This analysis resulted in 884 first-order themes.

Summary

In this chapter I have clearly articulated my process of how first-order themes were derived from initial codes in alignment with the third and fourth phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Finding initial themes involved labelling all 1,838 initial codes with numeric identification in preparation for later analysis, cutting these codes up individually and grouping codes according to aspects of meaning in relation to my research question. Groups of initial codes were organised in envelopes and then reviewed for coherence of codes within potential individual themes and the potential themes were also reviewed for congruence with the data set as a whole. This process resulted in 884 first-order themes. In the next chapter I will discuss how these first-order themes were further analysed to find prominent themes from the data set in relation to my research questions.

CHAPTER 7: REFINING THEMES

This chapter describes how subsequent levels of increasingly condensed themes emerged and evolved from the first-order themes discussed in the previous chapter.

Refining, Defining and Naming Themes

Refining, defining and naming themes is Braun and Clarke's (2006) fifth phase of thematic analysis and revolves around identifying the essence within themes, both individually and collectively. Undertaking this process involves the following: further theme refinement, naming each theme, and a written definition of each final theme incorporating what the individual theme denotes in isolation and as an aspect of the data as a whole.

Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth-Order Themes

Second and third-order themes. I continued working according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis model with further repetitive levels of refinement and abstraction of the 884 first-order themes, resulting in 521 second-order themes, 380 third-order themes, 164 fourth-order themes and 44 fifth-order themes. Although time-consuming, I chose to refine themes slowly in this way to ensure a thorough representation of themes that were prominently evident in the data, as well as to ascertain how they fitted together to convey a story about the data set in relation to my research questions. Grbich (2013) believes that good qualitative research depends on "detailed analysis and presentation of rich in-depth information via emerging rather than imposed themes" (p. 19).

First (884), second (521) and third (380) order themes were analysed in a table format on the computer, stemming from my organisation of initial codes into envelopes for first-order themes. Due to my familiarity with the data set, often seemingly-separate themes or themes I viewed as having significant overlap were consolidated into one higher-level theme, as the

example in Table 6 below demonstrates. I discarded duplicate themes. Keeping within this organised envelope system, while dealing with relatively high numbers of themes, allowed me to easily refer back to the original text using the numbered, initial codes to consider the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set as a whole.

Table 6
Sample of Second and Third-Order Themes

Envelope label	Associated first-order themes	Second-order themes	Third-order themes
Surrender	Delightful freedom in Surrender	Delightful freedom and bliss in Surrender	Surrender brought Delight, Freedom and capacity to Truly Love
	Surrender to other brings freedom		
	Surrender is blissful	Letting go all to truly love	
	Letting go everything on earth to truly love		
	Losing oneself in perceived other desirable	Surrender is desirable	
	Surrender not masochistic		
	Conscious self must surrender to not-self	Conscious self must surrender to Not-self/Creative	Conscious Self must surrender to Not-self/Creative
	Surrender to creative unconscious	Unconscious	
	Imagining oneself dead to face death	Conscious Self must be ready to accept	
	Conscious self must be ready to die or admit not knowing	Death/Not Knowing	Unconscious with a readiness to accept Death/Not Knowing

Table 6 illustrates the highly subjective and creative nature of thematic analysis. Another researcher would most likely have made other interpretations from the broad range of possible options, and identified different themes. Saldana (2009) writes that “each qualitative study is context-specific and your data are unique, as are you and your creative abilities to code them” (p. 30). One example of a subjective decision I made in Table 6 is that I chose to use the word

‘accept’ in the second-order theme *Conscious Self must be ready to accept Death/Not Knowing*, to express what the two first-order themes embodied. Using a thesaurus as a frequent reference tool I found that ‘face’, as well as meaning ‘to confront’ was also ‘to accept, realise and come to terms with something’. By using this word ‘accept’ I implied the importance of receptivity towards both psychic and physical death from Milner’s (1937/2011) perspective. This could be validated by referring back to her original reflections on death in a Spanish bull-fight where she writes “that the acceptance of the sword and plunge into nothingness really was the ‘moment of truth’” (p. 89).

Fourth and fifth-order themes. A further way to evaluate the trustworthiness of my interpretations was to discuss my analysis dilemmas with various colleagues who were themselves familiar with thematic analysis. I found these discussions throughout my research both supportive and invaluable, especially in these latter stages of analysis, to help me find better associations between codes, themes and overall data set. I agree with Saldana (2009) who writes that “discussion provides not only an opportunity to articulate your internal thinking processes, but also presents windows of opportunity for clarifying your emergent ideas and possibly making new insights about the data” (p. 28).

At this stage in the analysis I amalgamated all 380 third-order themes by arranging them alphabetically, printing them out, individually cutting them up, ordering them into piles and then naming the piles of themes. My intent was to move away from my envelope system to gain an overview of remaining themes, to assess again how accurately they reflected the data set as a whole and also to see just how pertinent these themes were to my research questions. The above sorting process resulted in 164 fourth-order themes and was repeated again, producing 44 fifth-order themes (Table 7).

Table 7

44 Fifth-Order Themes

-
- Accepting Temporary Chaos Allows Mature Unconscious Expression
 - Active Purpose Deadened Experience and Prevented Surrender
 - Aiming for Objectivity could result in Deceptive Reality
 - Is death insignificant when oneself is recognised as a microbe belonging to a larger whole?
 - Creative Interplay of Differences allows Inherent Pattern Making Force Expression for Mature Mind/Awareness/Growth/Newness/Wholeness/Full and Reflective Living
 - Creative Unconscious/Interchange of doing and dreaming when body and spirit meet is a reality of potential wholeness one can become
 - Deliberately Relating to inner Not-Self/Spirit through Creative Concentration/Active Passivity for Renewal/Riches
 - Divine Self/Other Living Through Our Consciousness as True Experience of Life
 - Facing the Certainty of Death to Escape Powerful Fears
 - Fact of separate Body Entity to be established/accepted before further Psychic Development
 - Fear of spirit drowning in instinctive life
 - Fear/Perception of separateness prevents emotional relationship and spiritual awareness
 - Formless Oneness with Dark Inner Bodily Space Dissolved Pain and gave Stability/Strength/Joy
 - Frame/Planning/Willed Attention/Inherent Control a Pre-requisite for security/safety so opposing creative forces can interplay towards newness/wholeness
 - Fusion with Other with no sense of Existing Delightful/Transformed Conscious Perception
 - Happiness indicative of unique needs being met
 - Inner Spiritual/Creative Cycle Fluid and Elusive
 - Inner/Outer Destructiveness or Raw experience without Awareness hindered Relaxation
 - Intellect's narrow attention could fuse parts of experience into meaning increasing terror of Unknown
 - Love/Trust for body, nature, spirit to be truly human
 - Mind's Narrow Passive Attention Maintained Primitive Cruel Parts of Self
 - No Surrender Prompted Unconscious Submission
 - Not-self simultaneously incorporated Nourishing Life and Destructiveness/Death
 - Observing Dual Aspects of Mind/Experience allowed Discernment increasing Awareness and Freedom
 - Oneness Required to Make the External Real/Whole/Meaningful/Rich
 - Only Attention Potentially Controlled by Will
 - Paradox of Naming Experience and Letting Word Go as Powerful Force for Change and Freedom
 - Passive/Blind Thinking prevented contact with Real Inner/Outer Experience
 - Powerful Unconscious Sought Expression of True Needs through Imagery
 - Present Moment Activity creates purpose
 - Purpose-driven to Prevent Feared Vulnerability/Emptiness/Death
 - Relating to the not-me and whatever created the not-me
 - Relaxation/No effort
 - Self-Absorbed Separateness to Manage Anxiety is True Death-like State
 - Silence simultaneously enables spiritual awareness and oneness with inner spacelessness
 - Spiritual identity infinitely expandable enabling felt awareness of other during Oneness State
 - Strong pull to stay in Oneness state
 - Suffering prompts desire for change
 - Surrender to breathing a Divine meeting with Source Enhancing Whole Body Awareness and Wellbeing
 - Surrender/Psychic Growth Torturous to Ego
 - Surrendering Ego to Spirit by Accepting Pain/Death for Real Living
 - True faculty of knowledge is the faculty which feels/experiences (Creative Unconscious)
 - True Happiness Includes Pain
 - Unconscious Expression/Voice True with Self-Abnegation
-

I reviewed all fifth-order themes for validity by referring to previous themes and the initial codes from which they each derived, again using Patton's (2002) criteria of internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity to assess if all data within a theme reflected the same concept, and to see if individual themes were mutually exclusive from one another.

Due to my accrued understanding of Milner's meanings stemming from the data, and the broad, intangible nature of my research topic, only one fifth-order theme (listed below) was considered perhaps unhelpful in illuminating what is involved in facilitating a state of primary creativity (or felt spirituality):

Is death insignificant when oneself is recognised as a microbe belonging to a larger whole?

The above theme, which is arguably a dissertation topic in its own right, digresses with a cursory glance to another area of enquiry quite apart from my research question. However, further investigation revealed how it was associated with numerous other fifth-order themes also listed in Table 8 below.

Table 8
Fifth-Order Death Themes

Is death insignificant when oneself is recognised as a microbe belonging to a larger whole?
Not-self simultaneously incorporated Nourishing Life and Destructiveness/Death
Surrendering Ego to Spirit by Accepting Pain/Death for Real Living
Facing the Certainty of Death to Escape Powerful Fears
Fusion with Other with no sense of Existing Delightful/Transformed Conscious Perception
Purpose-driven to Prevent Feared Vulnerability/Emptiness/Death
Surrender/Psychic Growth Torturous to Ego
Self-Absorbed Separateness to Manage Anxiety is True Death-like State

My interpretation of these death themes is that they refer to the certainty of physical death – and hence death of one's sense of self – as being the underlying terror of all life's anxieties. I think the above themes also convey that, in attempting to manage death anxiety

through self-absorbed (Ego) striving, a true death-like state occurs – that of separateness. I think Milner's premise in these themes is that through one's ego surrendering to spirit/not-self by accepting death, a state of delightful fusion (primary creativity) with a larger wholeness can be realised, giving life-transforming, conscious recognition of being part of an ultimate and divine oneness (which simultaneously incorporates life and death). Whether or not a felt realisation of needing and belonging to a larger whole makes death irrelevant, rather than something to be terrified of or denied, is beyond the scope of this research. However, after exploring what the theme *Is death insignificant when oneself is recognised as a microbe belonging to a larger whole?* implies by placing it in context with related themes, I decided to keep it to further supplement the meaning inherent in the other 43 fifth-order themes in order to answer my research questions.

Sixth-Order Themes

To find broad themes consistent with the data, my method of printing and cutting individual themes and sorting them into piles was once again employed with the 44 fifth-order themes. I began this process as I had previously – by randomly selecting a single theme, placing it on the table and then randomly selecting another theme. I then made a comparison between the two themes to see if they were synergistically inclined, one with the other. If I established a similarity, the two fifth-order themes were grouped together in a pile, creating a new sixth-order theme. If no similarity was found, I began a new pile for a potential sixth-order theme. I made no effort at this stage of the sorting process to give any names to the developing theme-piles. This sorting practice was utilised to organise all fifth-order themes until each had a designated place in an existing or new theme-pile. I then reviewed each theme-pile on separate occasions with different colleagues for their input, to further my awareness of what these potential sixth-

order themes reflected in themselves and in relation to each other. These discussions over a two-week period led to five themes being written out by hand so that each could be placed in more than one theme-pile due to its relevance for another potential sixth-order theme-pile, and to various themes being moved to different piles altogether. Once I was reasonably satisfied that this process was complete, 10 different theme-piles remained.

Working titles for themes. I then considered the contents of each sixth-order theme-pile to find an appropriate working title to capture the essence contained therein, as in Figure 3. I wrote possible titles on pieces of paper and placed them alongside each theme-pile to see if the wording aptly represented the fifth-order themes in each pile. This led to the renaming of some piles, and to moving several fifth-order themes to other piles, resulting in the 10 named, sixth-order theme-piles as illustrated (Figure 3). The theme-pile that I named *Frame* could have also been called “Containedess” or “Container”, as reflected from the lower order themes and Milner’s (1950/2010; 1987a/2011, pp. 186-187) original text from which this sixth-order theme was derived. I chose to title this theme “Frame” because of Milner’s exploratory work in drawing and painting, which helped her make sense of the creative process, and also because it aligns with my own experience of being an artist.



Figure 3. Sixth-order theme-piles with working titles.

Theme associations. I had immersed myself in Milner's writing and wisdom and had tried to 'bracket' my prior knowledge, especially around spirituality, so as to not unduly influence data analysis. At this point, however, I saw fundamental principles of Taoism, Wairua, Buddhism and essential spiritual concepts within Christianity, Kabbalah and other religions apparent in the sixth-order themes. I think these associations between Milner's understandings and various significant spiritual traditions are exciting and worth further exploration, however such exploration is well beyond the scope of this dissertation (which centres on Marion Milner's experience-near account of facilitating primary creativity). Therefore, any spiritual associations will be referred to only if Milner herself does so in her writing.

Coherence in and between themes. I studied the sixth-order themes in Table 9 to ascertain whether there was coherence in and between them, and whether any overarching

theme(s) connected them together in any meaningful way. What became immediately apparent through my familiarity with the data was the connection between the two themes *Ego* and *Suffering*, and also between the three themes *Surrender*, *Frame* and *Duality* – the rationale for which I will describe in the next chapter.

Table 9
Sixth-Order Themes

Creative Unconscious Expression
Death
Duality
Ego
Frame
Oneness
Suffering
Surrender
Triadic Relationship
True Happiness

Summary

In this chapter I conveyed how I applied practically Braun and Clarke's (2006) fifth phase of thematic analysis through a process of refinement and abstraction, resulting in 521 second-order themes, 380 third-order themes, 164 fourth-order themes, 44 fifth-order themes and 10 sixth-order themes. My decisions throughout this process have been clearly documented, demonstrating the subjective and creative nature of thematic analysis. Sixth-order themes were given working titles and I also discussed my associations with these sixth-order themes and the connections I saw between them. In the next chapter I will discuss and define the final themes that resulted from this analysis.

CHAPTER 8: FINAL THEMES

In this chapter, I will refine my sixth-order themes to form three final, seventh-order themes. These I will name and define in detail by describing the lower sixth-order sub-themes and how they relate to one another within each of these three final themes. I will also introduce a diagram (see Figure 5, p. 61) that orders and illustrates my three final seventh-order themes and will describe the connection between them in the Research Results section of this chapter.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) fifth phase of thematic analysis continued at this point with the final refinement – the naming, and individual definitions of the three final themes along with the lower-order sub-themes contained in each of them.

Seventh-Order Final Themes

The overlapping connections between sixth-order themes that I described at the end of the previous chapter generated new thinking about higher-order themes, so my exploration of Milner's experiential concepts continued by sorting the 10 sixth-order themes by hand into theme-piles (or groups) as described previously. I repeated this sorting process, beginning with randomly selected sixth-order themes, at least ten times over a period of a week. On two different occasions I consulted helpful colleagues and together we swapped these 10 themes around and discussed which themes, when grouped together, seemed most in harmony with the other sixth-order theme-piles and in relation to the data set. I wrote down the various theme combinations which were under consideration throughout this procedure. The results of this process, both individually and with other people, were that some theme-piles came to the fore consistently, seemingly demanding acknowledgment as a group. The three theme-piles in Figure 4 below frequently occurred, with each theme-pile cohering meaningfully internally and in

relation to the other two theme-piles. Other theme organisations which lacked this harmony were discarded.

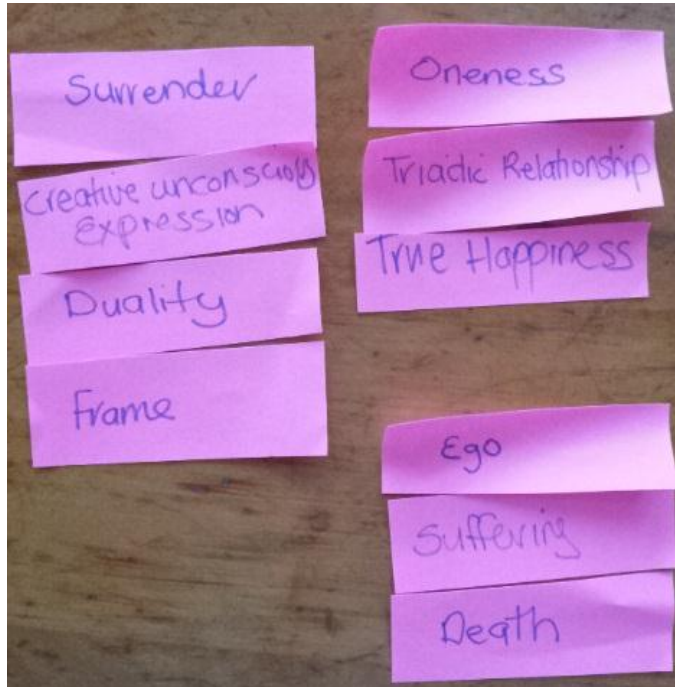


Figure 4. Seventh-order theme-piles.

Naming seventh-order final themes. I set about naming these three final, seventh-order themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend that “names need to be concise, punchy, and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about” (p. 93). With this in mind, I called the three final themes *Ego*, *Duality* and *Oneness*, with the lower-level sixth-order themes playing an auxiliary role to give structure and hierarchy of meaning to each of these large and complex final themes. This structure of lower-order themes within the three final, seventh-order themes are arranged sequentially with two-way arrows, to illustrate the fluidity between each final theme as shown in Figure 5 on the next page.

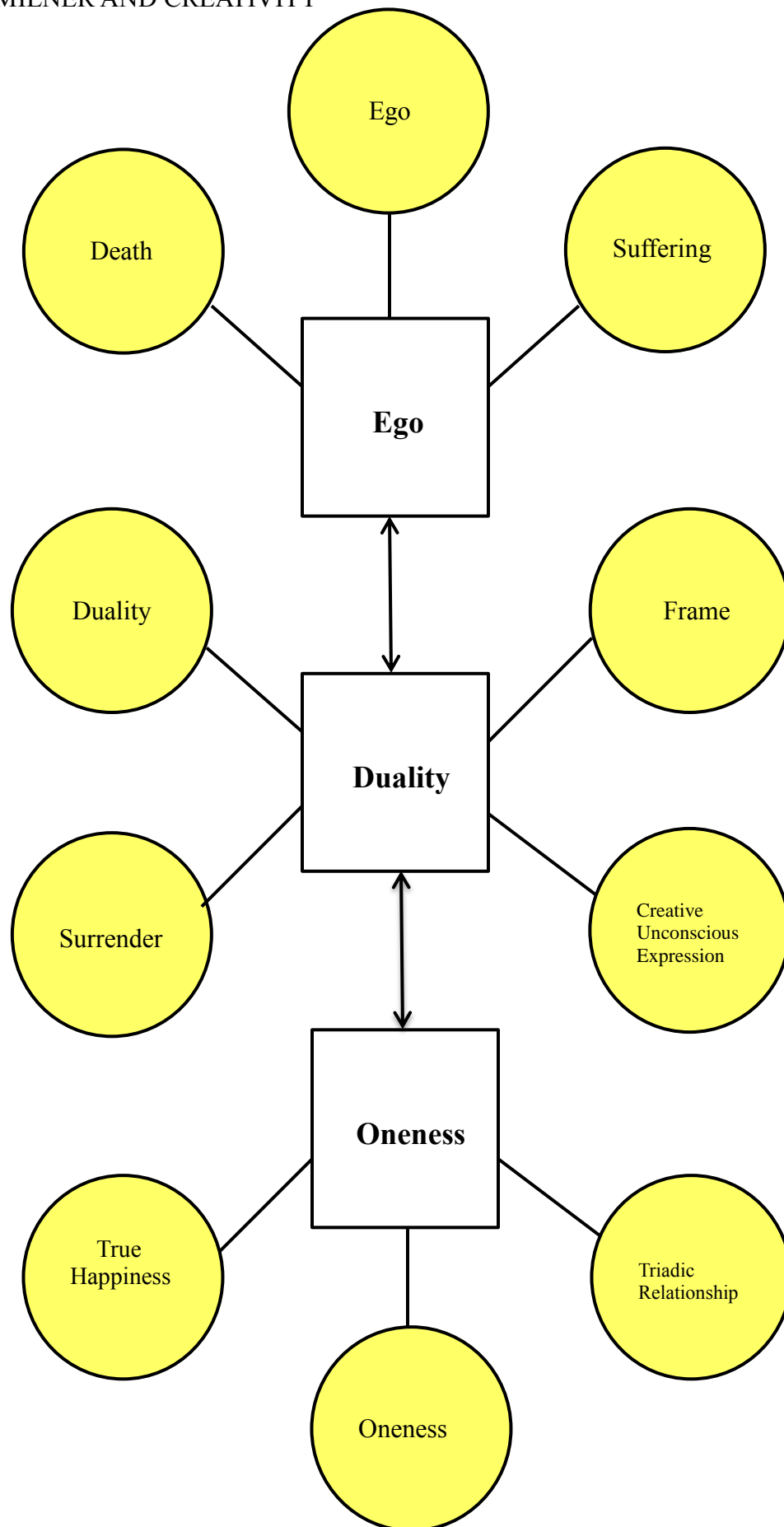
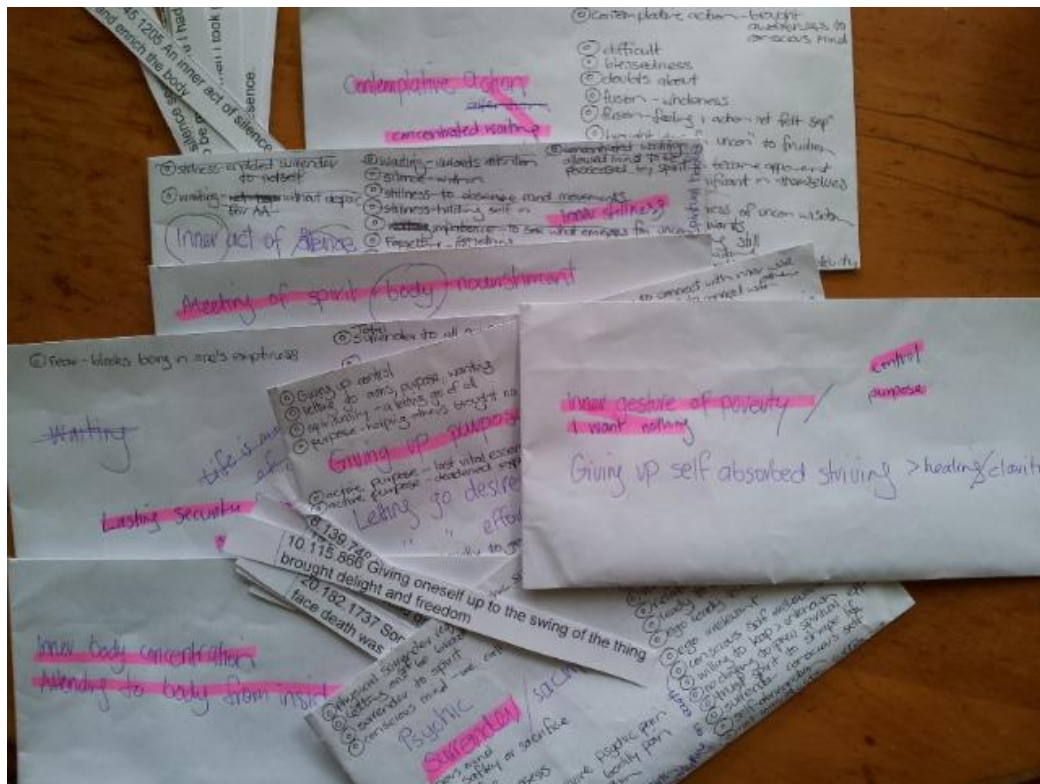


Figure 5. Final themes and sub-themes.

Defining Final Seventh-Order Themes

At this stage of the process, I read the whole data set again to ensure coherence between the three final themes (parts) and Milner's concept as a whole. I will define each of the three final themes illustrated in my diagram (Figure 5, p. 61) later in this chapter by explaining how the lower-order themes interrelate within each final theme, determining which aspect of the overall data each lower-order theme captures, and by using original data extracts to identify "the 'essence' of what each theme is about" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92). Lastly, I will discuss how each final theme relates to the other two final themes in relation to my research question and overall 'story' of the data.

Writing theme definitions. To write a definition for each of the 10 (sixth-order) sub-themes incorporated in the three (seventh-order) final themes, I once again went back to my envelope system (Figure 6) which organised all 1,838 initial codes respectively into first-order themes (from which all subsequent, higher-order themes were derived). When I defined each sub-theme I grouped, compared and used information from every initial code, using my envelope system and the numbers on each initial code to trace the code back to the original text. In this way, I stayed close to the initial codes and therefore to the rich depth of the original text, as a way of verifying that my writing aligned with Milner's rich, descriptive, experiential accounts, and so I could also include them. I realise however that, due to my subjectivity, another researcher would still most likely come up with not only different definitions for each sub-theme but entirely different sub-themes too. My focus on the richness of the initial codes and on the original text is evident in my change in writing style.



First Final Theme – Ego

Ego. Through self-analysis, Milner (1934/2011) observed that the conscious mind – a construct Freud (1923) defined as Ego and that we generally consider to be our everyday sense of self – has two ways of thinking arising from perceiving “everything with the narrow vision of personal desires” (p. 108): one, in which a factual world is recognised as being independent of our wishes; and the other (a childhood legacy) of which we are usually unaware, that is unreasonable and has distorted ideas of the self and the world. Of the latter, Milner (1934/2011) writes:

I would perhaps be all day in that state which, as children, we were told was the result of ‘getting out of bed the wrong side’, I would be floundering in a morass of self-pity and be exasperated to tears if anyone spoke to me, wildly struggling to regain serenity. (p. 109)

Milner (1934/2011) found that the conscious mind split up experience as a whole, and made a whole meaning from narrowly focusing attention on a single aspect of internal or external experience, based on knowledge from past experience. She surmised that such splitting originated from a necessary splitting stage which allowed consciousness to develop in order to recognise “that what is happening to oneself is not necessarily happening to everyone else as well...one’s own viewpoint is one’s own and not necessarily shared” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 108). Splitting experience into parts and making meaning from a part(s) in this way provided temporary comfort and security when facing life’s problems, by increasing the capacity to understand the small part being looked at. But also produced distorted and habitual all-or-nothing/either-or thinking, and increased emotional imbalance rooted in fear and confusion due to the unknown aspects of experience outside conscious awareness. Milner (1934/2011) writes:

Thus the more I turned my attention to details in order to save myself by scrupulous care from these monstrous fears of failure which lurked in the wide field, the more terrible the monsters became, and the more terrible they became the more I dared not face them, which alone would have destroyed their power. (p. 112)

And blind thinking was the enemy of this unconscious wisdom in the sense that it became so muddled between itself and other people that it never knew which was a mere matter of fashion and which the dictates of an inner knowledge. It could, of course, talk glibly about Inner Light and easily give to its egocentric impulses and confused imaginings a false authority. It could make me pretend I was being true to myself when really I was only being true to an infantile fear and confusion of situations; and the more confused it was the more it would call to its aid a sense of conviction. (pp. 163-164)

Blind thinking which cannot see beyond itself – and by its very nature not only distorts one’s own underlying needs but also involves selfish behaviour as it cannot recognise other people’s real needs either – prevents true emotional relationship. The certainty and unconscious

splitting integral to blind thinking also means that unconscious, primitive, cruel parts of one's everyday self are retained (by projecting them into other people) alongside, say, a conscious attitude of collaborative objectivity – leading to self-righteous self-justification which so easily urges for violence and revenge. So, potentially, someone can commit the most heinous act with the utmost conviction they are right. Milner (1987a/2011) writes, “Savagery to make people share one's own beliefs, it must surely be because if anyone believes differently it threatens the absoluteness of one's own certainties” (p. 103). Milner (1987a/2011) believed there is “always the need for spotting one's own arse-thinking, one's own unregenerate urge to blow one's enemies to smithereens” (p. 186) in an attempt to prevent such deeper, hidden madness.

Milner (1987a/2011) discovered in herself a deep, unconscious anguish and despair, which she believed arose from the loss of a perceived omnipotence in relation to her mother in early childhood, and which was triggered by any deprivation later in her life. Milner (1987a/2011) thought this aching pain, which could “feel like a great, black, spiny sea urchin, filling one's middle” (p. 41) was generally denied by relishing the concept of independence (a way in which we all struggle to deny our weakness); or, an attempt was made to avoid this pain through anger, as if anger could somehow undo the loss. Fearing and fighting this pain, along with believing there is no other within to depend on, prevented inward attention and surrender.

Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

This battle against accepting an inner dependence on something, whatever one is going to call it – one's creative unconscious, the in-dwelling Christ, the Divine Body – isn't it partly too a battle against the forgotten infant agony of dread of all support failing? The forgotten memory of for the first time being forced to recognise one's utter dependence, instead of thinking oneself totally the king (or queen), totally in command? (p. 65)

Upon further investigation into the underlying origin of her feared vulnerability and accompanying feelings of inadequacy and inferiority – using a free association technique such as Freud (1905) devised to reveal unconscious thoughts and emotions – Milner concluded it was both physical death and hence death of her personal identity that she was unconsciously fighting. She writes:

In my mind was a vague picture of an Indian wooden fish, a whale? its jaws painted red and green, Jonah and the whale, a dragon, Fafnir, the jaws of death. Jaws of death. What did that mean? At first I had seen it only in terms of a literal death, forgetting that the ideas of my automatic self were nearly always metaphorical. Then I began to see it as a fear that my personal identity would be swallowed up and then, gradually, I began to feel sure that it was really this fear which had made me purpose-driven. (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 115)

Death. After watching a Spanish bull-fight, Milner (1937/2011) expressed the huge impact on her psyche of watching the certainty of the bulls' deaths being played out in front of her, as giving her an immense sense of the reality and inevitability of physical death and hence death of one's sense of self as a fundamental aspect of life. Milner (1937/2011) writes:

Incidentally, I am told that the Spaniards actually call the act of plunging the sword into the bull 'the moment of truth'. Was this just an accident, or was it possible that this was what the Spaniards were acting out Sunday after Sunday in every city of Spain, that one final and inescapable truth of life, the certainty of death? (p. 87)

Milner (1987a/2011) describes her body, which she considered a part of nature, as bringing her great joy, although at other times during illness and/or pain and with the knowledge of approaching death she felt her body to be a bitter enemy or "the crucifixion, the cruel tree" (p. 64). In spite of this, Milner (1987a/2011) believed she had to trust her body. She writes:

This so mysterious other that the body is, this body which is part of nature. 'Tho' he/she slay me yet will I trust in him/her.' And she will slay me, this body which stops me doing all the things I want to do because it's getting old. (p. 75)

In one instance, Milner (1934/2011) described feeling so terrified of the finality, loneliness and emptiness of death that she was unable to sleep:

Last night in bed I felt a panic fear of death, the loneliness and emptiness. I had an impulse to turn to mother or R. D. for security but knew there was no help in that, there was no help anyway. I couldn't believe in anything after death. (p. 114)

She determined that her horror of death stemmed from clinging to the prevalent misconception that one's conscious thought and endeavour is all there is (Milner, 1987a/2011). Milner (1934/2011) believed that this denial of other arising from an immaturity of mind caused a state of spiritual separateness which was "in fact the truly death-like state" (p. 152) and made death of oneself a complete extinction. She writes, if "part of one has got stuck in an omnipotent denial of the 'other', so that oneself is all there is, then one's own death does become a total annihilation? And this just because there would be nobody there to remember that one had ever existed?" (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 182). We fear being nobody with no body to be buried (Milner, 1987a/2011).

Milner (1987a/2011) believed that fear must be faced and that facing the finality of one's death – such as feeling "something of death in every parting" (p. 108) or even to the extent of imagining oneself dead – is the final ordeal to escape from blind thinking with all its associated suffering. Drawing an analogy of the aspect of blind thinking within human experience to a bull in a bull fight, Milner (1937/2011) writes: "For to me it did seem that it was the suffering bull which was the really human thing, hemmed in by forces he could not understand, spending his superb energies in charges against the air" (pp. 85-86).

Suffering. Milner (1934/2011) was sure that her egocentric anxiety – originating from the pain of self-absorbed separateness and maintained by a lack of awareness – was what caused her to be driven with purpose. She named her monstrous, self-absorbed beliefs of inadequacy

and inferiority, along with the associated conviction that she was a miserable sinner deserving of eternal punishment, “a taskmaster in hell” (p. 112). After some consideration she thought these negative self-beliefs, along with the pursuit of activity and efficiency, were a mistaken technique from earliest childhood to manage unwanted thoughts and emotions. Milner (1934/2011) writes:

For, whenever I felt guilty or worried about something, instead of admitting it and trying to be quite clear about the ways in which I had failed myself, I had turned my face the other way and feverishly tried to expiate my failure by some other activity. So my efforts were concerned with tasks which would compensate for my sins, but my emotions lingered behind me, cringing before the ghouls. (p. 112)

Milner (1934/2011) named these unwanted thoughts and emotions which are split off from conscious awareness through narrow attention of mind, “outcast” (p. 115) or “back of my mind” (p. 110) thoughts. Disowning her perceived failures (all-or-nothing blind thinking) and trying to atone for them with activity left Milner (1934/2011) unable to know what she truly needed – as this requires a capacity to compare one experience with another – and kept her immersed in emotional stress “perpetually drifting at the mercy of circumstance” (p. 159).

She noticed that emotional suffering both prompted her to attempt an alternative way of being which she called wide-looking or “wide attention” (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 109), and also made any change difficult to achieve. Milner (1934/2011) described the startling change in the quality of consciousness that this desirable state of wide-looking brought her, leaving her feeling “contentment beyond the range of personal care and anxiety” (p. 108). In contemplating why emotional suffering made it difficult for her to alter her state in order to gain relief, Milner gave an analogy of the conscious mind being like a mud-worm. Milner (1934/2011) writes:

And perhaps I was not always able to make it because the worm might be burrowing so deep that it could not reach the air just by raising its head. Often it seemed even to forget that it had ever seen the daylight, or the surface of the land, thinking that mud was all there was. (p. 109)

Compounding her egocentric fears was Milner's discovery of an inner urge to surrender, which felt like a destructive death drive. Milner (1934/2011) writes:

I had the desire always to be getting things done to prove to myself that I existed as a person at all. So it was only very rarely that I had felt safe enough to give up striving, particularly as the enemy was really within my own gates. For this urge to let go and let the sea in, which I had discovered when I first set out to explore myself (I was continually dreaming of being in a town that was threatened by a tidal wave), seemed to be ever driving me on towards inescapable death. (p. 115)

Milner (1937/2011) named this unconscious inner destructiveness (which she believes exists in everyone), a fearsome beast or a destroying dragon which desired to dominate and hurt or, when recognised in others sought to be dominated and hurt by them, leaving her feeling threatened from within and without. She "guessed that if one did not satisfy this dark desire for surrender of the will in a ritual sacrifice, it would find its own way out" (Milner, 1937/2011, p. 73). Milner feared this imminent psychic death until she could understand its real underlying meaning – which she began to discover by exploring the obverse shadow side of her conscious experience – and find expression for her outcast thoughts.

Second Final Theme – Duality

Detached observation of the duality within all experience gradually increases awareness, potentially bringing about a realisation of the profound, creative, intuitive wisdom of the unconscious mind seeking to live through both psychotherapists and clients. This other intelligence expresses itself indirectly through sensory imagery during this state of reverie, and when living each of us (when the conscious mind or ego surrenders and is accepting and in readiness for death), potentially brings us into our true experience, indicated by a fundamental sense of happiness. This act of surrender requires a created, framed space, such as a psychotherapy session, a painting, or space within one's body.

Duality. Milner (1937/2011) focused her intellect on her unknown outcast thoughts, which made themselves known to her by unexplained terrors and depressions seemingly unconnected to any current concerns, and discovered them to be trivial difficulties she could easily overcome. Milner (1934/2011) writes:

Like a traveller in a dark forest, my imagination seemed able to people the unknown with fearsome creatures, malevolent faces and sounds of evil intent, ghouls which vanish only when in the light of his lantern he recognizes them for familiar things, for twisted tree trunks and the creak of branches in the wind. (p. 111)

Initially Milner (1934/2011) observed her outcast or back-of-my-mind thoughts to be like a silent, self-centred chatter blocking connection to her real needs and circumstances and leaving her prone to living in a distorted world of make-believe. However, gradually she found that many back-of-my-mind thoughts were elusive and dreamlike, consisting of confused feelings and fragmentary images which could not be directly expressed in words.

In the belief that no thought can be absolute, and any familiar pattern of thinking implies the possibility of its opposite, Milner (1934/2011) devised methods for actively catching these elusive, unknown thoughts. These methods involved deliberately recognising *all* outcast thoughts, especially those disparaged or found unpleasant by one's deliberate self, allowing them expression and accepting them unquestioningly, through keeping an opposites diary, dream analysis, and free association writing and drawing techniques.

In contrast to what Milner (1934/2011) considered distorted, all-or-nothing blind thinking which arose from passivity towards thinking, these actively passive methods allowed her to simultaneously view and compare irreconcilable opposites, and to realise that neither extreme could represent all the facts, and enabled her to make a new, higher thought-pattern embodying what was useful in both extremes. Milner (1934/2011) writes:

I saw that to see only the ridiculousness of humanity was just as misleading as to see only its dignity, that what one said or thought about a thing must always be a distortion, that the mistake was to believe that any one expression could be the last word, for experience was always bigger than the formula. (p. 121)

Although difficult and sometimes frightening, practising these methods of detaching from and watching her experience increased Milner's (1934/2011) awareness beyond ordinary consciousness. This allowed her to discover that unconscious thought sought independently to make itself known to her through an indirect, sensory, organic language which could have many rich, simultaneous meanings, indicating her unique inner needs which differed from those her conscious mind assumed important. The realisation of the profound, intuitive wisdom of her unconscious mind which, when lived, brought her into her true experience – indicated by a fundamental sense of happiness – prompted Milner to discern between this unconscious wisdom which she called the other or not-self and the confused, deceptive certainties of blind thinking by knowing both states. Milner (1934/2011) writes:

Yet for all its parade there was as much in common between its certainties and the fundamental sense of my own happiness as between the windy flappings of a newspaper in the gutter and the poise of a hovering kestrel. And only by experience of both, by digging down deep enough and watching sincerely enough, could I be sure of recognizing the difference. (p. 164)

Milner (1987a/2011) experienced intense, conflicting feelings towards the other, both a yearning love for closeness, and terror that the other or not-self would destroy her. She determined that what she called the fearsome beast or destroying dragon within was actually her own ego's power to destroy, which she kept from conscious awareness. Milner (1937/2011) writes: "unformulated experience...nature in the raw, nature shut off from awareness, is this the dragon? But isn't nature – that is, human nature, as one feels it in oneself – isn't it desires? Desires without the integrating power of awareness...the destroying dragon" (p. 72).

Milner (1937/2011) believed that her own capacity for destructiveness needed to be accepted and digested before she could deal with her internal and external fears, and trust herself to the other within that was not Ego. After reading the Tao Te Ching, Milner (1937/2011) hypothesised that letting go all desires and purpose seemed to be the mysterious sacrifice which had to be repetitively practised in order to grow awareness.

After some deliberation, Milner (1934/2011) believed that her “main purpose was to have no purpose, to learn how to give up effort” (p. 168) and, furthermore, to expect absolutely nothing in order to connect with, trust, and allow herself to be lived by the other or not-self for greater awareness and true happiness. However, giving up all desires and purpose felt torturous to her conscious mind. With regard to surrender, Milner (1987a/2011) writes “there seems to be some big block against it. The phrase ‘hung, drawn and quartered’ comes to mind. One’s inside drawn out by force” (p.80). She named the act of surrender “the fire-sacrifice” (1937/2011, p.73) and used the concept of bisexuality in the human psyche to gain insight into the two opposing active and passive attitudes which made the act of surrender so frightening and problematic.

“Sex equality is no myth, for we are each of us essentially whole” quotes Milner – from T. J. Faithfull’s book, *Bisexuality* (as cited in Milner, 1934/2011, p. 167) – and describes the deeply engrained female and male aspects in their entirety seeking an outlet from the depths of our psyches. Milner (1934/2011) described experiencing this feminine aspect – a felt subjectivity – when she felt great delight through wiping out her identity and passively letting the subject of her vision take possession of her. In contrast, she understood her obsession with purpose, activity, control, efficiency, success – objectivity – to have come about from unknowingly accepting the assumptions of her inner male aspect. Milner thought these two

opposing, fundamental ways of approaching experience were both necessary for real living, and believed it was her conflicting ideas about them that prevented her from reaching the fullness of either. Milner (1934/2011) writes:

What was the source of this fear of surrender in terms of the bisexuality of the human psyche? Was it that for blind thinking, with its inability to see more than one thing at once, the satisfaction of the female meant the wiping out of the male for ever? To satisfy the desire for surrender to the full without the loss of one's individuality, perhaps this was an idea beyond the powers of blind thinking to grasp, since for it things must be either one or the other. And in its terror of losing the male in the female it had in fact lost both. (p. 170)

Frame. Milner (1987a/2011) believed that the experience of surrender to the not-self required “a previous state of containedness, a place of holding” (p. 186). She thought this undoubtedly began with the crucial and fundamental fact of a separate body entity being accepted and established “on which to build one's sanity” (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 166). Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

Certainly this experience was something to do with the awareness of oneself as a container, an awareness that must have been slowly fashioned out of all the good and bad skin experiences from the moment of birth or before, leading to the slow discovery of oneself as solid flesh and bones and blood enclosed in a limited space. (pp. 187-188)

Thoughts of boundaries that contain led Milner (1987a/2011) to think about the protective function of boundaries. With this in mind, and inspired by Lao-Tze's writings – “he who, being a man, remains a woman, will become a universal channel” (as cited in Milner, 1934/2011, p.168) – Milner came to believe that reflective thinking required a natural rhythm of awareness resulting from “a subtle balance of male and female activity” (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 172). Milner (1950/2010) called this creative balance between male and female activity various names, such as, a “mood of reciprocity” (p. 86), “contemplative action” (p. 163) or “wide focus of attention” (p. 18). Or, said another way, an interactive relationship between objectivity and

subjectivity where the unconscious mind is “brought into conscious relation to one’s reason, a marriage of true minds, two minds, the deliberative and the spontaneous” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 58). Milner (1950/2010) writes:

It was a mood which could be described as one of reciprocity; for although it was certainly a dreamy state of mind it was not a dreaminess that shuts itself off from the outside world or shuts out action. It was more a dreaminess that was the result of restraining conscious intention, or rather, a quick willingness to have it and then forgo it. (p. 84)

Milner (1937/2011) emphasised the need for this rhythmic duality – an inherent form of control. So the not-self (within which was not ego), this mysterious force by which we are lived, could express one of its most fundamental urges, “the urge to form, to wholeness of pattern within ourselves” (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 129). This process of creating new patterns, to gradually achieve wholeness of the human organism to attain full and reflective living, necessarily depended on our willingness to tolerate chaos and uncertainty as a temporary stage, and required safe and secure holding (Milner, 1950/2010).

Milner (1950/2010) thought objectivity provided this necessary, protective and containing framework (like a frame around a painting, a meditative state or the safety of a psychoanalytic session), by actively willing attention to maintain a gap in which something new can grow, by shutting out internal and external interruptions. This gap allowed differences (opposing creative forces) to spontaneously confront each other through a dialectic repetition of sameness of experience balanced by the impulse to change. Subjectivity allowed a capacity to surrender and wait, and to trust that a previously unknown wholeness – a newness – would result from this creative process. Present-moment creative activity (unlike expedient activity) creates purpose and progress. Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

the kind of attentions which alone can encompass the contraries, hold together the dark

and the light, the love and the hate, the unity and the separateness, the joy and the woe. And only so can they create something new which is a resolution of their contradictions and therefore a true progression. (p. 178)

Milner (1950/2010) understood life to be the facing of differences – with one’s opponent being one’s co-creator – and that as well as there being conflicting feelings and desires, and the conscious mind in contrast to the not-self (unconscious mind), there were also opposing impressions of people from early childhood relationships to be held together. Her inner seeking had “produced Madonnas but also the terrible Agave” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 187). Such splitting illustrates the either-or thinking tendency inherent in immature thinking which persists because it is easier and avoids the “acuteness of the pain to be endured when such splitting was on the way to being mended and one had to accept the fact of love and hate for the same person” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 187).

“I had to swallow and digest the cross, the interplay of the opposites” writes Milner (1987a/2011, p. 187), who then expresses just how important is “a friend’s capacity to help one laugh at oneself” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 187) or the psychoanalyst’s couch, when opposites cannot be held together alone.

Creative unconscious expression. Milner (1934/2011; 1937/2011; 1950/2010; 1987a/2011) discovered that the interplay of opposites (a surrendered state) allowed the not-self to make itself known via indirect metaphorical expression which had simultaneous, implicit meanings. This fertile imagery indicated her true needs and previously unknown understandings and, when followed, connected her with her unconscious mind, allowing her to live reflectively, freely, and in a state of true happiness. Milner (1950/2010) writes:

Thus it was not until I had given up looking for direct help, either from intellectual concepts or factual observations of the external world, and concentrated first upon images, that I had begun to live at all, in any real sense. It was by following up all the

apparently unconnected, but rich and sensuous and many-coloured images that the mind continually deposits on the shores of consciousness, like a sea upon its beaches. (pp. 161-162)

The bridging capacity (to the wisdom of the unconscious mind) within rich imagery is associated with intense, blissful, sensory experiences. Milner (1987a/2011) called these her “beads”; they came when she asked herself what was most important in her day, and could finely integrate different levels of functioning such as “mind and body, thinking and feeling, concepts and percepts, reason and imagination” (p. 172), through conscious expression of these lived experiences. Milner (1937/2011) writes:

Yeats was right, that in fact the forms in which man expresses his sense of being alive are as powerful a force for change, though in a different way, as any deliberate attempt to get things done, because it is these which change men’s hearts – particularly one’s own heart. (p. 140)

Milner (1987a/2011) called this unconscious wisdom or not-self – which she believed shaped her body from a single cell and intuitively sought to powerfully guide and live her life (if asked) through performing far finer and subtler integration than she could – the answering activity. A knowing which felt – a goodness – that she could trust to comfort her in distress. Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

Of course ideas about a goddess which flow into one’s psyche must start with one’s mother’s devoted care and with the warm flow of milk from her breast or the bottle. But now one must find it inside, once one has accepted the loss of the outside mother. (p. 64)

By patiently letting purposes have her, she could watch herself “being lived by something that is ‘other’” (Milner, 1937/2011, p. 138). Milner (1987a/2011) called connecting with the answering activity “contacting one’s source” (p. 55), (implicating this force within her as the goodness of ultimate reality). She found that, paradoxically, if she wanted to find and receive

life-changing illumination from this profound, bodily wisdom, she must seek it in a state of total self-abnegation, expecting nothing – even to the extent of, after naming the experience, of then letting the word go.

Milner (1987a/2011) reflected on a lifetime of learning to relate with the answering activity, the not-self, internally and externally – as a child asking God for help, and as an adult receiving answers to questions arising from the unconscious so silently she almost did not notice them come. She considered it imperative to find a way to consciously and continually relate, without fear, to the not-self (her inner life source) and to remember to ‘plug’ into it with wide attention (which she considered her unconventional form of prayer) as it freed her from egocentric preoccupations.

Milner (1937/2011) saw this self (not her everyday self) by whom she was lived, reflected in the richness of the earth as it seemed to use material from everywhere, including her own body, to become a visible form. Milner (1934/2011) writes

sometimes the meaning of an experience would only begin to dawn on me years afterward, and even then I often had to go over the same ground again and again, with intervals of years between. In fact, I came to the conclusion that the growth of understanding follows an ascending spiral rather than a straight line. (p. 33)

Milner (1934/2011; 1937/2011; 1950/2010; 1987a/2011) found that many sensory experiences from her passions and loves in nature (including love relationships with people) were not solely physical, but heralded her yet-to-be-known experience and, when followed, could be a way of gathering all the scattered parts of herself. Milner (1937/2011) reasoned that these natural processes were symbolic “of the truth that all real living must involve a relationship, recurrent moments of surrender to the ‘not-self’” (p. 132). She believed that beyond mystery or mysticism lay ordinary human experience, – the spiritual nature of which –

everything else merely reflects to help us understand it. After many years of exploration she surmised that she had been trying to comprehend the mysterious, amazing fact of being alive and thought perhaps the whole universe is necessary to provide pictures for this understanding.

Milner (1937/2011) writes

these memories lie in my body, not in my head – looking out from this train at that June chalk bank – the blue milkwort and trefoil and grass – it gets deep inside me, under my skin, into the marrow of me, as if I was actually made of it – but didn't Blake say: 'Out of every plant and beast man's self cries to him'? – I thought at first that meant a poetic way of stating the fact of evolution, but now it seems to be true in a more intimate way, that these loves are the images which your dim sense of what you are takes to clothe itself, they become the very texture of your sense of being. (p. 130)

Surrender. Bodily awareness is central to relating through surrender with the not-self, the answering activity. This awareness, through various types of quiet, inward-turning attention to what being, breathing and weight feel like from the inside of the body, all depend on a practice of relaxing all straining (Milner, 1987a/2011). Milner (1950/2010) called this new way of relating to her inner body “creative body concentration” (p. 129) or “concentrated waiting” (Milner, 1937/2011, p. 137). Creative body concentration is a step towards redeeming and resurrecting the body as it creates an inner space for a meeting of body and spirit, “like when one takes hold of the tiller of a boat and heads it in a chosen direction so that the wind can fill the sails” (Milner, 1987a/2011, pp. 97-98). Milner thought the meeting of body and spirit (a spiritual incarnation of the body) was a very vital and practical matter – an aspect of which is described below.

Milner (1987a/2011) found attending to her breathing required her to let the out-breath take her into the dark depths of her body and risk waiting in readiness for a new breath to come – or not – equating to relinquishing control of her very life and trusting herself to be breathed, to

be lived, as it brought her into a “direct facing of this mysteriousness at the source of one’s going on being at all” (p. 39). Milner (1987a/2011) suggested that the important stage of waiting for a breath in the still emptiness deep in her body was affiliated with stilling self-centered mind chatter in order to create an inner space and inner silence. This creative surrender – a recurrent willingness to face pain and death, and accept not knowing, and a readiness to leap into the unknown (bringing about annihilation or wiping out of the discursive ego) – subsequently leads to a divine meeting of body and spirit. Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

To be ready to be nothing, to be annihilated. Yes, but not to stay there, in the darkness, in mindlessness, surely it’s only a stage of what looks like empty fields, when the farmer has to wait for the first shoots to reach the daylight. But so often I won’t wait, I even forget I have planted the seeds. (pp. 181-182)

The meeting of body and spirit (if waited for) enabled Milner (1987a/2011) to gain a conscious sense of union with (or occupation by) this divine, inner potentiality, making her conscious self entirely irrelevant. Milner (1987a/2011) had many names for this inner divinity, all of which she considered inadequate descriptions – such as “Mother Nature” (p. 64), “Soul” (p. 80), “Poetic Genius” (p. 189), “the in-dwelling Christ” (p. 65), the “Divine Body” (p. 65), “the Answering Activity” (p. 63), or the “Creative Unconscious” (p. 65). This spiritual incarnation of the body – a state of fusion into never-before-known wholeness – brought her rich, new, inner and outer awareness resulting in great peace, delight, well-being and freedom, to the extent that she describes her incoming, rising wave of breath as feeling like a “coming of the god” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 39). Milner (1934/2011) writes

until you have, once at least, faced everything you know – the whole universe – with utter giving in, and let all that is ‘not you’ flow over and engulf you, there can be no lasting sense of security. Only by being prepared to accept annihilation can one escape from that spiritual ‘abiding alone’ which is in fact the truly death-like state. (pp. 151-152)

In contemplating this paradox of relinquishing all, being truly humble and forgoing an attempt to glorify her own self-image (the opposite of self-absorbed striving) in order to receive richness, Milner quotes Lao-Tze: “to be on a level with the dust of the earth, this is the mysterious virtue” (as cited in Milner, 1934/2011, p. 170), and paraphrases the writings of Blake, “Little creature, made from joy and mirth, Learn to love without the help of anything on earth” (as cited in Milner, 1987a/2011, p.189) and the Bible “He who would save his life must lose it” (as cited in Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 181). Milner (1987a/2011) believed that, through surrender, she had slowly been learning to relate to the silence of her own death.

The miraculous meeting of the body with spirit through surrender – consciousness suffusing the body – created a rich, new place of transformation and creation within the body, gradually bringing every cell truly alive and leaving “one’s body humming like contented bees in a summer garden” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 75). Milner (1987a/2011) writes

as if by this meeting of ‘soul’ and ‘body’ something new is created... This deep source of something, all its cells taking part both as being fed by one’s awareness of them and as themselves feeding, being sources of food, of psychic nourishment. (pp. 76-77)

Milner (1987a/2011) found that what seemed like a quiet room or inner spiritual sphere created within the space occupied by her body (when body and spirit met), was also a “potent way of dealing with wounds, wounds to one’s self-esteem, wounds to one’s heart” (p. 37) as, by utterly accepting and holding any painful situation or fact in this space, becoming one with the emptiness, even one with the pain, transformed experience, dissolved any pain and illuminated how she could surmount her difficulties.

In describing this created space within her body, Milner (1987a/2011) writes how it was not actually empty:

One can even feel the whole body is full of light. Sometimes. Though it can also be a dark inner sea, when looking out from behind one's eyes. Sometimes it can even be a 'deep but dazzling darkness', or a richness, like the treasures of Atrium or the St Mark's d'Oro background. (p. 72)

Third Final Theme – Oneness

A state of surrender, for clients and therapists alike, potentially allows a meeting of body and spirit, a relating to other or not-self, bringing a subjective sense of experience as a whole fused together. From this sense of oneness with experience comes awareness of relating to the background of experience also – a triadic relationship – heightening awareness and bringing great love, delight and freedom, or true happiness.

Oneness. Milner (1987a/2011) also described a sense of oneness with the not-self or spirit as feeling like she was actually formless, black mud in the created space within her body. This, she linked to Lao-Tze's writing "to be on a level with the dust of the earth, this is the mysterious virtue" (as cited in Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 170). Feeling one with this inner, benign, undifferentiated chaos, through deliberate surrender, gave her stability, strength and, strangely, comfort.

Of this inner created space, she writes: "The task is surely to learn how to hold one's bones gently – as once one was held in one's mother's arms? A kind of creating an inner space that is different from outer space, just as picture space is" (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 72). Over time, Milner (1987a/2011) found that the spiritual sphere – arising from body and spirit meeting, which she named "the imaginative body" (p. 187) – not only fitted exactly into the contours of her physical body but also encompassed it, resulting in some unusual changes to her sense of self and her body. Milner (1987a/2011) describes one such experience as

feeling as if moving within a sphere, a kind of cocoon of light – yes, like a spinning sixpence. This egg shape made of light, its boundary seems to be immaterial – yet I feel

it can be torn, when I move beset with purposes and forgetting it because I'm so busy getting things done. And then it has to be restored, somehow, perhaps resting and relaxing – or even sleep, to knit up its ravelled edges. (p. 72)

Milner (1950/2010) believed that, after one had accepted and established the basic fact of a separate body entity, the “demarcation of the boundaries of one's spiritual identity are not fixed, they do not have to remain identical with one's skin” (p. 166) and, being infinitely expandable, can take on the form of whatever is perceived. Initially, Milner felt afraid when she first discovered she could “spread wide the invisible feelers of mind” (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 149) and push herself out, for example, into a landscape, tree or flying bird.

This sense of expandedness (an inner, ‘spaceless space’) when she surrendered her conscious self and let the not-self or spirit possess her, allowed her not only to think about what she perceived, but to feel it too and feel alive – an incredible transformation. To feel it, in her very being, as if it was her and she was it. These moments when separateness could be suspended, this state of “fusion into a never-before-known wholeness” (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 165) with the perceived object – experience as a whole fused together – whether it be listening to music, dancing, painting (Appendix D), another person, a building or nature, left Milner feeling great love and delight, heightened her awareness, gave her a sense of freedom by forgetting her conscious self and a sense that her world was newly-made. Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

I came to the beach feeling sick and cold...then slowly the waves became a delight, white reflections on wet sand, the rhythm with which they follow each other and seep back, the seethe and crispness that I taste on my tongue. So – I inherit the earth...then I let the sun and sky and waves possess me and emerged feeling they were part of my being . . . ‘conceived by the Holy Ghost’ . . . One does want to swallow and be swallowed by one's love. (p. 176)

During this state of wide attention, Milner (1950/2010; 1987a/2011) could wordlessly ‘feel’ herself into another person through a direct, emotional interchange, thus feeling their

identity, mood and need – without the distortions of her own personal interests – which also affected the other person’s inner state. She writes “a person’s mood would change when I had made no outward movement whatever, only spread internal feelers” (Milner, 1934/2011, p. 153). Milner had found that the enhanced bodily awareness – arising from the imaginative body encompassing the physical body – incorporated the usually inhibited experiences and related memories and dreams of movement, posture and internal bodily states intimately connected with emotions (she called ‘body dreams’) – not only her own, but of another human being – and noticed that the more perceiving she became, the greater the sheer pain of another’s misery she felt.

Paradoxically, Milner (1987a/2011) found that in spite of feeling a merging with the other which lived her she did not lose the ‘I’ that knew what was happening. She exalted in the mix-up to the extent that the desire to stay in a state of ‘oneness’ was very strong, although she did not know she had been in it until she came out of it. Furthermore, Milner felt that “this transforming force making for wholeness...whatever one is going to call it, whether God-language or some other” (p. 102), was both herself and not herself simultaneously – her very being, an expression of this unity. Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

But also the paradox of the Answering Activity. Paradox, something the schizophrenic can’t tolerate. This feeling of partnership, of plugging in to a presence, an active ‘something’ that is both ‘I’ and ‘not I’ and which gives me the feeling that I am not alone. But of course, though this feels like an inner fact, a reality, for me, yet it doesn’t say anything about ‘ultimate reality.’ Or does it? (p. 57)

Triadic relationship. Milner (1987a/2011) reflected on a lifetime of learning how to relate to the not-self through cultivating subjective awareness both of her inner world and the outer world (which included her own body), along with relating to an emergent, invisible third in the space between. Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

relating to whatever it is that creates this body and goes on creating it, since this is certainly not me, not the conscious me anyway, I only look after it, I don't make it happen. So, out of a meeting of two emerges an unseeable third, a duality becoming a trinity. (p. 197)

With the realisation of relating, through surrender, with an invisible third, Milner (1987a/2011) believed it was space – the background of experience – that she “was becoming one with, and with great joy, while at the same time” (p. 178), feeling she was one with whatever experience or expression of itself that it contained. In one instance the experience was a tree she was looking at and feeling herself to be “like it, darkly rooted in the hillside” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 179) – a simultaneous spiritual envelopment of her whole body and perceived object(s).

Milner (1987a/2011) found this process towards true loving or, said another way, the human “journey from chaos to cosmos” (p. 101), did “seem to mean going through all the agonies of ‘Why hast thou forsaken me?’ some time or other” (p. 126), as it required childlike trust and dependence on what often seemed like an elusive void which incorporated both life and death. Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

To plug in, which is trusting, like a child, to something...that ‘creates’ the beauty of the flowers...Or the sparrows who tear up the yellow crocuses?...The only way to real ‘blessedness’? To the Kingdom of God, to the pearl of great price? For only from there can true loving come?...Surely it means trusting? Which also means accepting dependence. Ultimately, dependence on this ‘other’, this other mind? Vanquishing this inner devil ‘that thinks he does it all himself’ that is, with his conscious mind. (p. 111)

But these seasons, weather in the soul, not easy to forecast, to know when to lie fallow, when to sow, this only to be found by experiment. To notice, remember, that’s so hard, because the heavenly bodies, whatever they are, don’t seem to move according to a fixed calendar. Of course, the winds of the spirit...So easy to despair, if one casts one’s net in the wrong place and at the wrong time, so easy to feel there is nothing to be caught. (p. 61)

This nothing, or no-thing, silence, the formless, the unconscious, and that which seemed to be emptiness or of which she was simply unaware, needed to be contacted and utterly trusted, for Milner (1987a/2011) considered it to be “primary chaos – but also the ground of creation, which has to be faced before any real new beginning” (p. 101), change, or birth of something new could be conceived of spirit (in a safe transformative place as described previously, such as the created space within a psychotherapy session, within the framed space of a painting or a created space within her own body).

Milner thought Blake’s writing – “As the true method of Knowledge is Experiment, the true faculty of Knowing must be the faculty which experiences” (as cited in Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 189) – described this unknowable, un-manifest, underlying reality. Blake’s “poetic genius” (as cited in Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 189) which as the background to experience, or as the faculty which experiences, is true Knowing or pure consciousness – with all religions being derived from the many receptions and interpretations of this ineffable, ultimate, spiritual potentiality. Milner (1987a/2011) writes:

This word God, how my heart sinks when people hold forth about Him, him. Would it be better if they said ‘She’? Or is ‘It’ better? Who said, ‘He, she, or it living its own life through each of us’? That sounds better. ‘The Tao of which we speak is not the real Tao’. That sounds better still. Yes, of course, the other day I found myself saying: ‘God is all right if no one says anything about him’. (p. 56)

True happiness. Milner (1934/2011) found that true happiness arising from deep within was independent of environment or circumstance, depended on a state of surrender, included both the pain of loss and the pleasure of finding and was indicative of whether what she was doing was right for her. These still moments when the conscious mind and unconscious mind (spirit or other) melded – when conscious choice was actually possible – brought her rich, new awareness essential for balanced, reflective living and all true loving, of one’s “body, nature,

mother nature, because only from there can one properly love other people” (Milner, 1987a/2011, p. 75).

Milner (1950/2010) called this transformation of everyday reality through the cessation of difference (a vital, subjective illusion when subject and object seem to become one) – the “transfigured world” (p. 163) – a world which held all unrealised potentialities both inside and out, and which she considered more real and important than its opposite – an objective, separate, or common-sense reality. Spiritual sustenance and awareness arising from this essential meeting of differences (an experience of unanalysable and incommunicable wholes) which allowed otherness to be significant in and of itself (quite apart from an individual’s personal ambitions) is something initially achieved by a

willingness of someone in our original environment of persons, in the actual home of our infancy, to fit in with our dreams...who would temper the implacable otherness of externality to fit our needs, temper it for us until such time as the external did come to grow happily significant. (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 161)

This illusion of oneness between self and other, while an illusion in a physical sense “is not necessarily an illusion in the social sphere” (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 166), and can be achieved throughout our lives by allowing “the poet and artist in us, by their unreason...seeing as a unity things which in objective reality are not the same” (p. 161). The creative arts perform this essential function. For they bring a sense of union (a transcendence of separateness) by allowing us to see experience metaphorically. Seeing experience metaphorically provides us with a half-way point to external reality – a space to enjoy peace and respite from life (the facing of differences) – and creates the world for us to be inquisitive about and try to understand by feeling it (not just knowing it), which makes it real. “Art creates nature, including human nature” (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 162), with the paradox of creativity, and subsequent awareness of

the external world, being a complex interchange of fusion and separateness – temporarily breaking down the barriers between self and other, yet simultaneously maintaining the space between. Milner (1950/2010) writes:

For in order to ‘realise’ other people, make them and their uniqueness fully real to oneself, one has in a sense to put oneself into the other, one has temporarily to undo that separation of self and other which one had so laboriously achieved... in one’s own imaginative body one feels the identity of one’s opponent, who is one’s co-creator. But to do this and yet maintain one’s own integrity, neither to go wholly over to the opponent’s side, nor yet retreat into armour-plated assertion of one’s own view-point, that is the task demanded. (p. 167)

Milner (1950/2010) thought that maturity of mind – which involved this capacity to identify, allow and base all actions on a creative interplay of opposites or contraries – involved mental pain and was only achieved, if ever, through prolonged “battles with in-loveness, expectation, high hopes, and with feeling one’s love betrayed, disillusion and despair, battles which had begun in the earliest years of our lives” (pp. 170-171).

Emotional ups and downs – joy and despair from the interplay of contraries – are essential, creative phases of the spiritual cycle without which there is no true progression for humanity. In this regard, Milner quotes Blake (as cited in Milner, 1987a/2011):

Man was made for joy and woe

And when this we rightly know

Thro’ the world we safely go. (p. 159)

Of what to do with peak experiences of joy, Milner (1987a/2011) once again offers us something originally written by Blake; *she* writes “kiss each joy as it flies said Blake, and live in eternity’s sunrise” (p. 62).

Research Results

These results, which evolved from a thematic analysis of Milner's experience-near account of her creative process, have vastly expanded my awareness of creativity, psychotherapy, and simply what it is to be human. I will explain in further detail what I have learnt in the discussion chapter of this dissertation, for here I want to outline what I make of the results of this research in relation to my research questions, namely: *What is the nature of creativity? What conditions are conducive for creativity in a psychotherapy session? How can creativity be used for optimal practice by a psychotherapist?*

I now understand that creativity in psychotherapy – two people coming together to make something new – has infinite creative possibilities (*creative unconscious expression sub-theme*) for, potentially, psychotherapy is a creation or furthering of a self-aware, creative mind (*oneness theme*). The three final themes *Ego, Duality and Oneness* and 10 sub-themes *Ego, Death, Suffering, Duality, Frame, Surrender, Creative Unconscious Expression, Oneness, Triadic Relationship and True Happiness* resulting from this research method demonstrate this creative potential and have been defined and illustrated in detail (Figure 5, p. 61).

I placed the main theme of Ego at the beginning of my diagram (Figure 5) because this separate state of being is a necessary pre-requisite for any further psychic development to occur (clients in a state of psychosis need therapeutic assistance to first reach an ego state). In my experience, most clients come to therapy with mind-states predominantly governed by their egos – in a state of suffering, and seeking relief – stemming from an inability to connect well with themselves and others (*suffering sub-theme*). The two-way arrows between my themes of ego and duality (which is positioned in the middle of my diagram) represent how central it is in psychotherapy to give such clients a safe space, where they can potentially learn (*duality theme*)

how to be in relationship with external reality (*oneness theme*) and in doing so enrich their lives – through creative surrender. I think that in psychotherapy this space created through surrender initially needs to be contained by the therapist, held within the space of the therapeutic frame (*sub-theme frame*), allowing a client's unformulated experience in the form of imagery (*creative unconscious expression sub-theme*) to arise from the unconscious mind so it can be consciously thought about and (when the timing is right) made known to them in a usable form. I think these results also illustrate how awareness (*true happiness sub-theme*) arising from union (*oneness and surrender sub-themes*) through an act of surrender simultaneously furthers awareness of unity with external reality (*triadic relationship sub-theme*), as demonstrated by the two-way arrows between the duality and oneness themes.

Of course there is a constant flux amongst these three themes, and the containing space of a psychotherapy session and overall therapy (*duality theme*) potentially needs to hold a client's plummeting into an ego state – for example, of terror, or rage, to peak moments of love and connection (*oneness theme*) – along with everything else in between.

Summary

In this chapter I have refined and named the three final seventh-order themes and defined them in rich detail by describing the lower sixth-order sub-themes and how they relate to one another within each of the three final themes. I also introduced a diagram (Figure 5, p. 61) that orders and illustrates these 10 sixth-order sub-themes – *Ego, Death, Suffering, Duality, Frame, Surrender, Creative Unconscious Expression, Oneness, Triadic Relationship and True Happiness* – within the three final, seventh-order themes of *Ego, Duality and Oneness*, and explained the connection between the three final, seventh-order themes in the Research Results section. In the next chapter, I will discuss the results of this research in relation to my research questions.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION

In accordance with phase six of Braun and Clarke's (2006) model of thematic analysis, this chapter contains a final, written analysis in relation to my research questions regarding the nature of creativity, conditions conducive for creativity within psychotherapy, and how to utilise creativity in psychotherapy for optimal clinical practice. I will also discuss research strengths and limitations, along with my ideas for further research, and give a conclusion.

Discussion Writing Process

This discussion is my response to the findings of the thematic analysis of Milner's understanding as to how an individual can foster the development of their creativity and subjective awareness for greater well-being and true happiness. This research specifically focuses on Milner's own personal process as I was particularly interested in the development of the person of the therapist. In the following three sections – The Nature of Creativity, Conditions Conducive for Creativity in a Psychotherapy Session, and Creativity for Optimal Psychotherapy Practice – I will bring myself more fully into my writing to discuss what I make of these results as both a psychotherapist and artist.

The Nature of Creativity

Once, I seriously thought that creativity was only about 'paint brush on canvas' to create a painting, or other creative arts like music, dance or poetry. However, from my experience of psychotherapy as a client and psychotherapist, in combination with these research results, I have increasingly realised that psychotherapy – two people coming together to make something new – has infinite creative possibilities (*creative unconscious expression sub-theme*); for, potentially, psychotherapy is a creation or furthering of a self-aware, creative mind – a life-giving practice which increases wellbeing and freedom – arising from a therapist truly relating with his or her

client through moments of recurrent surrender (*duality and oneness themes*). Milner (1987a/2011) considered this creative surrender to the not-self to be a surrender to the unconscious, as she believed the not-self to be everything other than the conscious mind. Milner (1934/2011) explains that

until you have, once at least, faced everything you know – the whole universe – with utter giving in, and let all that is ‘not you’ flow over and engulf you, there can be no lasting sense of security. Only by being prepared to accept annihilation can one escape from that spiritual ‘abiding alone’ which is in fact the truly death-like state. (pp. 151-152)

I think these results show that a capacity for creative surrender or reverie (Ogden, 2004) is a necessary, intermediary state for each one of us to relieve the strain, and initiate relationship, between our conscious mind and our lived experience (the external, shared reality). These in-between states are moments in which the conscious mind surrenders and melds with the unconscious mind, allowing the artist in each of us (*surrender and creative unconscious expression sub-themes*), to see symbolically a unity in “things which in objective reality are not the same” (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 161). This rich imagery indicates our true needs and previously unknown thoughts and, when followed, increases awareness, freedom and a capacity for true happiness. I love how Milner describes this process simply as “art creates nature, including human nature” (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 162).

Conditions Conducive for Creativity in a Psychotherapy Session

These research results show just how vital a protective and containing frame is for creativity to safely occur through surrender within a psychotherapy session (*sub-theme frame*). Milner (1987a/2011) thought that surrender in relationship needs “a previous state of containedness, a place of holding” (p. 186), beginning with a separate body entity being accepted and established “on which to build one’s sanity” (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 166). The following

from Milner (1987a/2011) illustrates how important bodily awareness (*sub-theme surrender*) is to a state of creative surrender, and how she believes it originates:

Certainly this experience was something to do with the awareness of oneself as a container, an awareness that must have been slowly fashioned out of all the good and bad skin experiences from the moment of birth or before, leading to the slow discovery of oneself as solid flesh and bones and blood enclosed in a limited space. (pp. 187-188)

Ideally, I see an analogous process of surrender happening while an artist is painting (appendix D), with all the tangible holding aspects of the psychotherapy frame (paint and canvas) along with the containing space within the therapist's body (artist's body), to provide and maintain safe, preliminary holding and containment for clients so that new, on-going awareness in and of themselves can occur (like a series of paintings).

Psychotherapy frame. Metaphorically, I see a psychotherapy frame as an expanding system of concentric circles, such as when a small pebble is dropped into still water. I think the innermost circle of containment is my whole body (mind) as a therapist; the second, the physical aspects of the actual therapy room; the third, the predictability and consistency of sessions (with all that this entails); and, from there, such factors as the community agency where I work, my training and theoretical preferences, belonging to a professional body, abiding by a code of ethics and so forth. I believe these widening circles of containment, if functioning well, protect and support both client and therapist by shutting out external interruptions and allowing a safe place for a client to express their sometimes volatile and/or forbidden feelings – which might be quite unfamiliar to them – and for a therapist to really relate with them through a state of surrender.

Creation of a therapist's mind. In hindsight, before I began psychotherapy as a client, it was as if I was asleep. I did not know how I felt or what I really liked, or simply who I was – it was as if much of myself was dead to me, so really in relationship with myself and with others

I was dead, even though I did not know this. How could I have? I had little or no reflective capability (*ego theme*). Milner (1934/2011) explains how this immature either-or thinking distorts experience by splitting off unwanted parts and increasing fear and confusion due to a person being unable to compare the familiar with aspects of their experience outside their conscious awareness.

I came to psychotherapy seeking relief from emotional distress after an encounter with death. My therapist – who had a creative, reflective mind – met me where I was and patiently helped me face my fears so I could (very painfully at times) wake up to my life (*ego, duality and oneness themes*). It has been the in-the-moment, connective experiences (states of surrender) in therapy that have brought me new awareness and freedom – from recognising previously unknown parts of myself through imagery – and helped me grow in spite of myself. Milner's (1987a/2011) optimistic, analytic perspective to personal growth suggests that this is due to the profound wisdom of the unconscious mind (the not-self) seeking to intuitively guide, integrate and live my life. She had found that by patiently letting purposes have her she could watch herself “being lived by something that is ‘other’” (Milner, 1937/2011, p. 138) – an ineffable, ultimate, spiritual potentiality (*creative unconscious expression, surrender sub-themes*). I can relate to this as I certainly feel I have been ‘lived’ and set up to grow this year through engaging in this research. I really had no idea I would end up exploring my personal and professional self in such depth – perhaps due to my method of thematic analysis – let alone writing about it.

When I look back at how I was before I started my whole psychotherapy process which has taken me into the depths of myself, I am so very grateful for my new awareness and freedom (*triadic relationship and true happiness sub-themes*). I also whole-heartedly agree with Milner (1987a/2011) in her association of the act of surrender with “the phrase ‘hung, drawn and

quartered”” (p. 80) and in her naming it a “fire sacrifice” (Milner, 1937/2011, p. 73).

As a therapist, I need to be willing and able to help contain my client’s conflicting feelings and desires, and their conscious mind in contrast to the not-self (unconscious mind), along with all their opposing impressions from people in their early childhood relationships (*sub-themes frame, duality and surrender*). I think the fundamental proviso for creativity in psychotherapy is a therapist’s own creative capacity and whatever growth is yet to happen in the mind of the therapist can happen in the work with their clients. I feel very thankful to my clients for what they have taught me to date. However, I think the more I can grow a reflective space in my own mind, which can consciously distinguish between self and other through practising creative surrender (Milner, 1987a/2011), the more I can be present and truly relate with my clients (*sub-theme surrender*).

These research results show that rich imagery arising from the unconscious mind, through a state of surrender – akin to Bion’s (1967) idea of a mother’s or analyst’s reverie – can be a bridge between the conscious mind and the wisdom of the unconscious mind. Such images provide a symbolic representation of an individual’s unknown thoughts and feelings in relation to their lived experience, which can then be consciously thought about and known, to further psychological growth and freedom. Milner (1950/2010) explains that following such rich imagery was how she learnt to truly live:

Thus it was not until I had given up looking for direct help, either from intellectual concepts or factual observations of the external world, and concentrated first upon images, that I had begun to live at all, in any real sense. It was by following up all the apparently unconnected, but rich and sensuous and many-coloured images that the mind continually deposits on the shores of consciousness, like a sea upon its beaches. (pp. 161-162)

I really identify with the above because, in spite of being an artist, I have often sought

help in how to live from intellectual and factual observations. This way of being has been quite unhelpful over the last two weeks as I have fruitlessly tried to write this discussion. As I sat quietly today I noticed an image arising from within myself (from my unconscious mind), of a dishevelled old bag-lady weathering the elements and unsuccessfully scouring a rubbish dump (*creative unconscious expression*). I did not see how this image connected to me but, seeking to grow my mind and live in a real sense as Milner describes above, I followed up on it and wondered how a bag-lady on a rubbish tip might feel. I thought perhaps exhausted, dirty with the grime of life, exposed, beyond caring what others might think, and maybe desperately wanting it to all be over, or somehow unrealistically to be saved. These thoughts brought to mind my own exhaustion from working and studying intensively for nearly a year now. My current struggles with writing (trying to find something worthwhile from the vast array of information littered in my head), feeling exposed and beyond caring about this work, simply wanting it to be finished, to be over, and having quiet thoughts that getting an extension might save me. These thoughts connected me with painful feelings of vulnerability and a realisation of my need for the support I am receiving from others at this time. All of this subsequently, to my relief, led to a flow in my writing.

In objective reality, a bag-lady on a rubbish dump and I are not the same. However this experience literally illustrates how creative, unconscious expression can arise (Milner, 1950/2010) with “apparently unconnected, but rich” (p. 162) imagery which, this afternoon, accurately symbolised an aspect of my lived experience of which I was not fully aware. Connecting with and knowing my own pain and vulnerability through imagery arising from a state of surrender in this way is vital, not only for me to truly feel and live but for my clients too, as it furthers my capacity to meet and be with their pain and vulnerability too. Milner

(1987a/2011) explains it is only a state of creative surrender which can “encompass the contraries, hold together the dark and the light, the love and the hate, the unity and the separateness, the joy and the woe” (p. 178) so they can “create something new which is a resolution of their contradictions and therefore a true progression” (p. 178).

Safe practice. Maintaining my mind as a safe containing space for my clients and myself continues to occur, through a willingness to regularly explore my internal world using imagery as described above (when I discovered my unknown, dishevelled old bag-lady part) and exploring my clients’ internal world, with someone else in my own therapy and supervision. I also participate in case management meetings at the community agency where I work, and have peer supervision. Other aspects which ground and deepen my work are the ideas and experience of others gained through reading (for example, studying Marion Milner and creativity) and also from forums, through being part of a professional community. On a broader level, I keep a healthy life balance through painting, being in nature, and spending time with friends and family.

Ultimately, I think that enactments originating from my clients’ and my own vulnerabilities are unavoidable and the subsequent noticing, clarifying and transforming of authentic, emotionally-charged encounters – a disruption and repair process – are catalysts for change and healing, and depend on not only my client, but also me, being deeply engaged.

Creativity for Optimal Psychotherapy Practice

These research results are not lofty spiritual ideals for the very few, but rather about learning how to truly be in relationship through creatively cultivating awareness through surrender in order to truly live. In a surrendered state Milner (1950/2010) could feel herself wordlessly into another person through a direct emotional interchange and feel their identity, mood and need without the distortions of her own personal interests – which effected the other

person's inner state (*oneness sub-theme*). This state of surrender really intrigues me and seems similar to what Ogden (2004) calls in clinical practice "the analytic third" (p. 167), an intersubjective reality privileging the client's psychic experience and growth to help them better connect with themselves and the world.

Within the psychotherapy frame, I think it is important as a therapist from the first instance of contact with a client to carefully observe their way of being in the world, not just consciously with my eyes and my ears, but in a surrendered state, actively listening with my whole body too (*duality theme*). When I practise this by somehow taking myself down into my body and temporarily putting myself aside I increasingly notice strong, bodily sensations i.e. tensions, or a sudden heaviness or a pain in my chest, and since I seem to 'think' in pictures I experience a lot of visual and various other cognitive associations (*surrender and creative unconscious expression sub-themes*). In the community agency where I work many clients have experienced traumas throughout their lives and especially with these clients I feel in my body strong emotions of sadness, fear, anger, bewilderment or sometimes for a time I simply cannot think.

When I practise sensing a client's experience I notice when what they say is incongruent with the felt state within my body. From these research results, (specifically the *sub-theme ego*), I believe that when this happens I am experiencing a client's split off part of themselves, a part they do not want, and when this feels very intense and/or sudden, that my client is actually projecting a primitive part of themselves into me, in an attempt to be rid of it.

I often find receiving and containing communication from my client's internal world to mine through this felt surrendered state a confusing, painful and fascinating process. At times I wonder what emotions or sensations are theirs and what are mine, and often I have to stay with

what feels like a jumbled mess. There are all the bits and pieces of clients that they themselves do not want or know, mixing also with yet-to-be-known aspects of myself, so I get to feel something of my client's experience and more of my own. Ogden (2004) explains this to some extent when he writes that, though the analytic third often limits the capacity of therapist and client to think as separate individuals, it can also be very productive and enriching, which coincides with Milner's (1950/2010) thinking that creating new patterns of awareness through the interplay of opposites depends on a willingness to tolerate, and contain chaos and uncertainty, as a temporary stage. I consider supervision to be part of my third space as it allows me the distance to reflect and think about my client work to prevent confusion and fusion with clients. This maintains safe practice.

These research results suggest that creativity for optimal psychotherapy practice involves me providing preliminary containment, through a state of surrender, for clients' unconscious or unknown thoughts and feelings. Then, waiting in this in-between state for imagery to arise from my unconscious mind (or theirs) that symbolically represents such unformulated lived experience, so it can then be consciously thought about (like the above example of an old woman on a rubbish dump) and, when the timing is right, made known to them in a usable form. See Bion's (1967) concept of container-contained.

I think my main task as a therapist is to offer a reflective space that is alive to creative potential, and which supports my client's yet-to-be-known emotional experience to arise. This helps them grow this in-between state of surrender so they can potentially further their connection to themselves and others (external shared reality or the unconscious/not-self) through deepening and expanding their emotional response to being alive, and increasing their capacity to express and consciously reflect on this themselves, hence enriching their life and increasing

their capacity to truly live. Milner (1937/2011) writes:

Yeats was right, that in fact the forms in which man expresses his sense of being alive are as powerful a force for change, though in a different way, as any deliberate attempt to get things done, because it is these which change men's hearts – particularly one's own heart. (p. 140)

Study Strengths

I began this research with the intent of conducting a deep enquiry into the nature of creativity, as understood by Marion Milner, to find how creativity can be used for optimal practice in psychotherapy. The method of thematic analysis was ideal for this purpose as it emphasises in-depth immersion to recognise, analyse and report on key themes which emerge and evolve from patterns within the data.

This research method not only organised and described the data set in rich detail (see chapter 8), but interpreted unanticipated aspects in relation to my research questions from the data itself (Boyatzis, 1998), due to the line-by-line coding and subsequent levels of abstraction involved in the theming process. By this I mean that, due to the original text being reduced to “the most basic segment...that can be assessed in a meaningful way” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63) through coding, that chaos ensued (Figure 2, p.45). Although this lessened with each subsequent theme reduction, it meant I was unsure as to what new patterns (themes) would evolve. I found this inductive approach (although difficult) especially valuable, as it considerably reduced my personal and prior assumptions of creativity, and brought an expansion to my awareness.

This research was made transparent by detailing my personal (see chapter 1) and theoretical values (see chapter 3) that underlie and inform this research, along with giving a clear, detailed account (see chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7) as to how the process of thematic analysis was

deliberately and rigorously conducted following the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006). All of this furthered the integrity, accountability and validity of subsequent research outcomes.

Study Limitations and Further Research

A main limitation of thematic analysis is its subjective nature (Boyatzis, 1998), which renders it difficult for another researcher to repeat and get the same results. While, to the best of my ability, I made sure the implementation of this method was rigorous to ensure validity (Braun & Clarke, 2006), it would have been helpful to expand on the insight given by various colleagues and actually work in tandem with another researcher for more collaborative, less subjective results. An idea I have for further research could simply be the replication of this research by a researcher(s) to consolidate and expand on these research findings.

Paradoxically, one of the strengths of thematic analysis – the way it enables a rich, detailed and complex analysis of any given topic – is also limiting (and time consuming). I found that it generates so much material (codes and lower-order themes) that I had to use a lot of exclusion criteria in order to conduct a thorough analysis. In this research, which revolved around Milner's personal creative process, this meant that obvious aspects relating to the research questions were excluded, such as art therapy, Milner's (1969/2011) own client work, the collection of her psychoanalytic papers in her book *The Suppressed Madness of Sane Men: Forty-Four Years of Exploring Psychoanalysis* (Milner, 1987b), and any writing about Milner and creativity from other authors. These excluded aspects could all be considerations for future research and I would be particularly interested in seeing a comparison between the work of Milner and Bion, Milner's concepts and Taoism and, in a New Zealand context, Milner's 'lived' spiritual experience and Wairua.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I have explored Marion Milner's experience-near account and understanding of how she facilitated creativity in order to comprehend more about the nature of creativity, conditions conducive for creativity in a psychotherapy session, and how to use creativity for optimal practice as a psychotherapist. My personal incentive for studying this topic and subsequent formulation of my research question has been expressed along with a concise biography on Marion Milner and her analytical perspective in context within psychoanalysis. I have outlined the interpretative paradigm that underlies and guides this qualitative research, a hermeneutic methodology as my way of enquiry, and the method of thematic analysis to collect and analyse data – all of which were collectively well suited to answer my research questions.

I included a clear, detailed account of the practical implementation of thematic analysis in this research, following the six phases of Braun and Clarke's (2006) model along with my in-depth reflection on this rigorous process. This method involved a data selection, the generation of initial codes, searching for themes and reviewing themes, refining, defining and naming themes and a subsequent written analysis. This systematic process resulted in a data set containing 22 chapters being selected and summarised from four of Milner's books which generated 1,838 initial codes from raw data extracts. I then thoroughly sorted and condensed these initial codes numerous times using both computerised and manual techniques resulting in 884 first-order themes, 521 second-order themes, 380 third-order themes, 164 fourth-order themes and 44 fifth-order themes. Further refinement yielded 10 sixth-order themes – *Ego, Death, Suffering, Duality, Frame, Creative Unconscious Expression, Surrender, Oneness, Triadic Relationship and True Happiness* – and three final seventh-order themes – *Ego, Duality and Oneness* – which have been illustrated (Figures 5 and 7) and defined in detail.

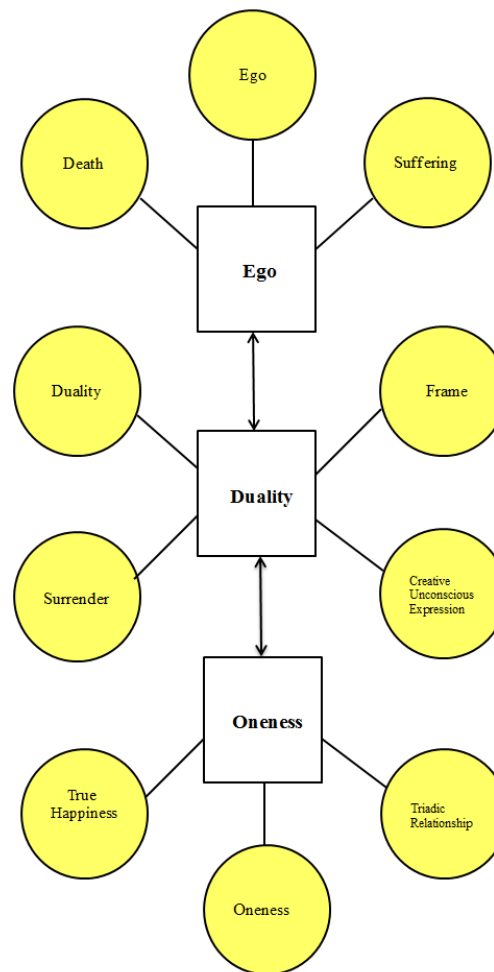


Figure 7. Final themes and sub-themes (Figure 5 reduced).

My diagram (Figure 7) which sequentially arranges these three final seventh-order themes and auxiliary, lower sixth-order sub-themes captures a model of psychological growth for reflective living and freedom. I think that in psychotherapy this involves a therapist providing preliminary and necessary containment for clients through an intermediary state of surrender which allows symbolic representation of a client's unknown psychological experience to be consciously thought. This process potentially deepens, expands and enriches a client's emotional response to being alive, and grows his or her capacity to consciously reflect on life, thus increasing their capacity to live.

Through this research, I established that creativity is fundamental to the process of change and healthy development, and therefore just how important a therapist's capacity for creativity is, for the wellbeing of their clients. This study has easily surpassed my previous understandings, as it illustrates that, potentially, psychotherapy is a creation or furthering of a self-aware, creative mind (a life-giving practice which increases wellbeing and freedom), arising from a therapist truly relating with their client through moments of creative surrender.

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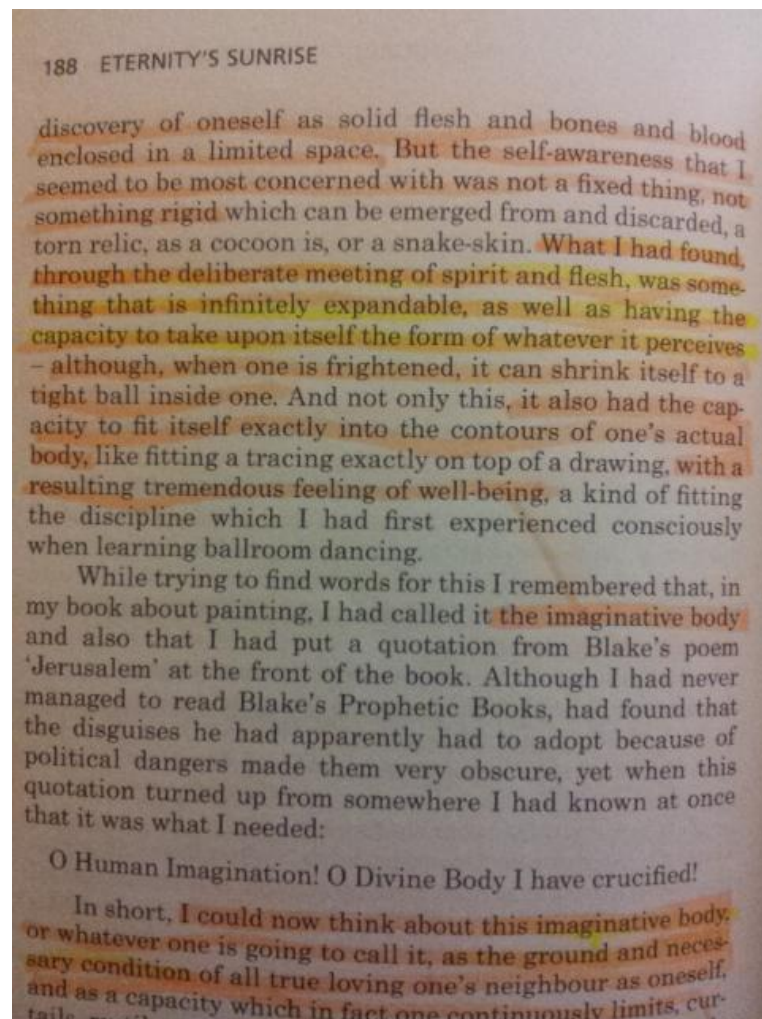
Appendix A – Literature Searches

	Search result	Included in data corpus of 22	Included in interim data set of 8	Included in final data set of 23
PsychINFO Milner, Marion (search criteria: author)	12	After repetition in base search removed 10	5	5 chapters in <i>On not Being Able to Paint</i>
PEP Milner, Marion (search criteria: author)	12	After data item repetition from previous search removed 5	After data item repetition from previous search removed 0	0
PsychEXTRA Milner, Marion (search criteria: author)	1	1	0	0
AUT Summon search facility Milner, Marion (search criteria: author)	22	Data only pertinent to Marion Milner psychoanalyst and data item repetition from previous searches removed 5	After data item repetition from previous searches removed 3	3 chapters in <i>An Experiment in Leisure</i> 10 chapters in <i>Eternity's Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary</i> 5 chapters in <i>A Life of One's Own</i>
Hand search of literature in data corpus		1	0	0

Appendix B – Data Set Volume

Book	Data Item	Word Count
A Life Of One's Own	chapter 11	3,058
	chapter 12	4,911
	chapter 15	2,656
	chapter 16	3,545
	Epilogue	2,736
An Experiment in Leisure	chapter 7	3,499
	chapter 9	2,999
	chapter 15	4,468
On Not Being Able to Paint	chapter 9	2,234
	chapter 12	3,957
	chapter 13	2,051
	chapter 17	3,573
	Postscript	1,255
Eternity's Sunrise: A way of Keeping a Diary	part 1 chapter 4	5,062
	part 1 chapter 5	2,643
	part 1 chapter 6	2,950
	part 1 chapter 7	1,169
	part 1 chapter 8	3,674
	part 1 chapter 9	2,183
	part 2	17,432
	part 4 chapter 2	4,985
	part 4 chapter 3	1,735
	Postscript	404
	Total	83,179

Appendix C – Highlighted Data Item in Original Book



Appendix D – Text Excerpt of Painting Experience

It was that I had discovered in painting a bit of experience that made all other usual occupations unimportant by comparison. It was the discovery that when painting something from nature there occurred, at least sometimes, a fusion into a never-before-known wholeness; not only were the object and oneself no longer felt to be separate, but neither were thought and sensation and feeling and action. All one's visual perceptions of colour, shape, texture, weight, as well as thought and memory, ideas about the object and action towards it, the movement of one's hand together with the feeling of delight in the 'thusness' of the thing, they all seemed fused into a wholeness of being which was different from anything else that had ever happened to me. It was different because thought was not drowned in feeling, they were somehow all there together. Moreover, when this state of concentration was really achieved one was no longer aware of oneself doing it, one no longer acted from a centre to an object as remote; in fact, something quite special happened to one's sense of self. And when the bit of painting was finished there was before one's eyes a permanent record of the experience, giving a constant sense of immense surprise at how it had ever happened: it did not seem something that oneself had done at all, certainly not the ordinary everyday self and way of being (Milner, 1950/2010, p. 165).