

# Regarding Intuition

An heuristic journey into a psychotherapist's  
experience of intuition

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## **Abstract**

Intuition is a well-known concept, however its intangible nature makes it hard to define. Its mystery appears at odds with the scientific view of the world. My research question 'what is the psychotherapist's experience of intuition?' has two points of focus; asking what intuition is and how it sits in our western culture, particularly psychoanalytic culture. These questions are explored via my subjective experience of intuition both personally and professionally as an intuitive psychotherapist. I include an examination of and differentiation from similar phenomena, a review of philosophical and psychoanalytic literature and an examination of the historical and cultural context of the phenomena of intuition.

Using a heuristic method and methodology I delve deeply into my subjectivity on an intuitive, creative, existential and systematic journey. I immerse myself in a search for meaning within my subjective experience of intuition via depictions of my personal experience. I explore, analyse and reflect upon my depictions and explicate themes that capture my experience of intuition. I find myself moving from the initial shame of being a 'bad witch' with its evil omnipotence and depleted 'flakiness', through a split with my intellectual self and finally finding a new freedom from self-persecution and the resulting trust in my sense of self, allowing a less inhibited and somewhat mystical connection with the other.

It was important to explore the familial, cultural and historical context of my research to gain understanding about whether my experience was unique or had elements of universality. This resulted in an examination of the regard for intuition in the context of our positivistic culture. The themes illuminated implications for psychotherapeutic clinical practice and psychotherapy training institutes about the need to examine how our culture may influence and inhibit our experience and use of intuition.

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## **Attestation of authorship**

I hereby declare this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, contains no material previously published or written by another person (except when explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), or material which has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or any other institution of higher learning.

Signed: Crista Schorr-kon

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## **Intuition** **ɪntjuˈɪʃ(ə)n**

**Origin: late Middle English (denoting spiritual insight or immediate spiritual communication)**

**(Google, n.d.)**

**“In the Everyman play, Five Wits was disparaged as a useless unreliable creature, while Knowledge was commended by the priests as Everyman’s true friend. And now Five Wits is getting disparaged again, for Science mistrusts these unregulated powers”**

**(Scott 1985, p.45).**

**“Intuition takes me there, intuition takes me everywhere”**

**(Lennon 1973).**

## *Chapter 1*

## *Introduction*

Research Question: What is the psychotherapist's experience of intuition?

The aim of this research is to explore my experience of intuition. As I will use the heuristic method and methodology my exploration will be a deeply personal one. I will also strive to elucidate an understanding of the context in which both myself and intuition sit, socially, culturally and historically. I intend to add to the understanding of the experience of intuition in the field of psychotherapy.

The origins of my question

When I was young I believed I was a witch. I seemed to 'know' things about people without understanding how. Because this felt sense was never acknowledged in my family I felt confused, was I imagining it? Was I the only person who had this experience? Typically of white western culture, in my family intelligence of the intellectual, scientific and rational kind was highly valued. My parents made sense of life and relationships from thinking and reasoning. Highly dubious of anything non-scientific or 'spiritual', my mother and stepfather were members of The Sceptic Society. There seemed no place for my 'irrational' knowings so I kept them to myself. As I individuated I realised that other people had knowings like mine and that some of them considered these knowings to be very normal, just part of everyday life. I am going to call these knowings intuition.

My experience of intuition and psychotherapy

Intuition is defined by The Oxford Dictionary of English 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (2010, p.918), as "the ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for conscious reasoning". It seems likely that having a strong felt sense or knowing about other people was one of the motivators and prerequisites for me becoming a psychotherapist, yet I am confused. I am still unsure as to whether intuition is 'allowed' in psychotherapy culture. In my training experience at AUT I found conflicting evidence both for and against the valuing of this phenomenon. My experience of the training is that we were mainly evaluated by our knowledge of psychotherapy theory and our understanding of how we were with our clients in relation to that; I never saw a learning outcome that said 'uses intuition creatively and thoughtfully to connect with the client'. Although on the training it was acknowledged that intuition was an important capacity required for the profession, little attention was paid to

cultivating it and learning how to work constructively with it. With the exception of a supervision report noting my “impressive intuition” this capacity of mine (and no doubt my colleagues) seemed to go unnoticed. My training placement in an agency where the funding was becoming increasingly reliant on adhering to Evidence Based Practices (EBP’s) did not support the use of intuition in practice. I questioned whether it was even real, let alone valuable, a repeat of my family experience.

This lack in my training perhaps inadequately prepared me for the realities of working in private practice which for me seems to require great creativity to make use of the images, thoughts and sensory/somatic experiences I get with clients, usually (but not always) when I am in the room with them:

*During the third session with Ms L, as she spoke about her job I became aware of something flickering in my mind. I couldn’t quite catch it. I felt something was there but I found it hard to focus on, it felt like a presence of something, something I ‘knew’ but didn’t quite know yet. As I listened to her words I let myself sense it, perceive it, as it tried to get my attention. It did not take shape at that point.*

*A few days later in supervision as I described Ms L to my clinical supervisor, I suddenly realised an image was in my mind. The image felt familiar, as if it had been there all the time but I had only just become aware of it, like a painting you have only just noticed in a room you have been in many times before. Ms L was standing in between two people, they were each a few metres away on either side of her. They were throwing a ball back and forth, over her head, to each other and although Ms L is very tall (in reality) and she was desperately trying to jump as high as she could, she couldn’t catch the ball. There was a frustrated and defeated feeling attached to this image. I knew it was worth describing, I knew it was important, I knew it was an aspect of Ms L’s experience, although I could not say how I knew. I knew in a calm and curious way. As I described it to my supervisor I felt like I had described it before, almost like *deja-vu*.*

To fully engage with and understand my experiences such as this with clients I felt not only a curiosity, but an urgent demand to notice and make sense and use of my intuitions, this has been the main focus of my very challenging supervision, over the last year and a half.

#### My supervisor’s acceptance of intuition

*After quite a few months in supervision my supervisor described me being very intuitive “you have access to a lot of information and I think what we’re doing here is helping you to make use of it”. My sense of relief was enormous, it seemed that my intuitive self was acceptable and useful in this profession after all.*

This experience of permission to acknowledge and use intuition in practice, got me curious and excited and in turn, resulted in my making what felt at the time like a very daring choice

to research intuition for my dissertation. Not long after making that decision I had the following dream:

#### My dream of supervision

*My supervisor invited me to lunch up the road with him and other people. We went in his car to a café where you didn't sit on chairs. There were others there - I had the sense I knew them vaguely through psychotherapy- I felt comfortable. We played with funny little animals that were like baby armadillos but with soft white fur instead of hard shells. After a while of getting quite absorbed in this environment I realised I had other things to do, perhaps work, but I didn't have my car and had no way of getting to it. I was enjoying myself there and didn't want to leave, I wanted to forget about my responsibilities and stay there.*

One interpretation of this dream is that it expresses my growing sense of the acceptance of intuition in psychotherapy culture in New Zealand, and the hope that I was acceptable in this culture. The last part perhaps points to my long-standing conflict or split regarding the 'irrational'/intuitive and the 'rational'/theoretical/scientific in my life and my own clinical practice. I have realised that this split is not unique to me, it is acknowledged by many psychoanalytic authors to be present in psychoanalytic thinking, historically to the present (Abrahams 2005; Cooper 2004; Keith 1987; Morf 1965; Lomas 2005). Before I describe more about this split in psychoanalytic psychotherapy culture it seems important to place psychotherapy in a wider context of western culture and our predominantly positivist, philosophical underpinnings. I will consider how our recent history may have set up inauspicious conditions for the valuing of intuition.

#### The positivistic world

Positivistic philosophy values logic and reason, according to the Oxford Dictionary 3rd Edition (2010, p. 1386), this philosophy recognizes "only that which can be scientifically verified or is capable of logical or mathematical proof", and therefore rejects intuition (the ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for conscious *reasoning*). When positivism was emerging in the Middle Ages, there was an effort to purge anything irrational or intuitive (Keith, 1987). Western culture has held to this worldview, the explanations of science replace religion as a way of explaining our world, our 'selves', and are perhaps a way of coping with human existential anxiety, seemingly replacing uncertainty with certainty. The scientific cannot be associated with the intuitive. Yet renowned scientist Polanyi (1962), saw intuition as crucial to scientific creativity and innovation. In describing the process of problem solving in higher mathematics he says, "the intuitive powers of the

investigator are always dominant and decisive" (pp. 130-131). Poincare also purported that good mathematicians must be gifted with intuition (Morf, 1965) and Einstein is said to have highly valued the intuitive in his process of discovery. Keynes remarked of Newton "I fancy his pre-eminence is due to his *muscles of intuition* being the strongest and most enduring with which a man has ever been gifted", as quoted in Scott (1985, p.56). Scott also describes Polanyi's lamenting that "a mistaken understanding of what science is has distorted our whole outlook and alienated man from their own powers of understanding the world" (p. 1).

### The witchy world

So where does psychotherapy fit in this world? There appears to be an underlying discomfort in psychotherapy culture regarding its uncertain place as a 'science' (Lomas, 2005). Dillon (2008) quoting Phillips says, "one of the dilemmas psychotherapy faces is that it tries as a treatment process to address the most marginal of human experiences while wanting as a profession to claim a place in the mainstream" (p. 94). Keith (1987) who acknowledges the importance of intuition in psychotherapy also describes this tension in regard to positivism. He suggests that because intuition has historically been derisively associated with mysticism and linked to witchcraft, it has to be distrusted by science and therefore western culture. Keith also links this to gender, witchcraft being the realm of women, leaving me wondering whether female psychotherapists carry an even stronger tension regarding their own intuition.

Foucault (2006) vividly describes the historical discrediting of the knowledge of witchcraft which includes medicine, alchemy, divination and intuition. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century witchcraft lost its status as powerfully evil by systematic discrediting; rituals and practice were stripped of meaning and witches labelled as heresayers and immoral tricksters. This form of knowledge was labelled an illusion of the mind and judged 'unreasonable'. Witchcraft then came to characterize the forbidden world and language of unreason, the opposite of positivism. Both Polanyi and Foucault describe an enforced alienation from our own tacit knowledge and intuition by a dominant paradigm that values the 'rational' over the 'irrational' and aims to shut down the thinking and speaking of the latter. Foucault suggests, "to one way of thinking, magic rites and profanity (*irreligious or irreverent*) patterns of behaviour become pathological from the moment that a culture ceases to recognise their effectiveness" (my italics added, p. 95). If this unrecognising of anything 'unreasonable' has

happened in western psychotherapy culture to some extent, are we then left with a reliance on science to understand people?

Can intuition be spoken?

It is possible that the labelling of the witchy, intuitive world as forbidden and its language as heretic and 'unspeakable' has left a paucity of descriptive vocabulary for the phenomenon of intuition. Or perhaps it is the inexplicable quality of intuition that leaves it hard to describe? Although we are all familiar with the concept of intuition and it is widely acknowledged in everyday life, I have found that people often struggle to describe it. This also seems to be true in psychoanalytic literature, though authors use the word it is not often defined (Ogden, 2015). When it is, intuition appears to be unanimously described as an unconscious, cognitive, internal process involving pattern matching (Abrahams 2005; Epstein 2010; Rosenblatt and Thickstun 1994). Unsurprisingly the most detailed efforts to describe the phenomenon of intuition attempt to be scientific, maybe hoping to "rationalize it away" as Morf suggests (1965, p. 81). I could not find a personal account in psychoanalytic literature regarding the tension around the use of intuition in clinical practice.

Can I speak to myself about intuition?

I am interested in knowing how my use of intuition in my clinical practice has been effected by culture, family and gender. It is possible that as a white female growing up in an intellectually-orientated family in a predominantly western culture that I have been alienated from my intuitive capacities and carry conflicting feelings regarding intuition. I have struggled with the shame of feeling like a bad witch in my early life and that has carried through to my psychotherapy studies at AUT and my work as a psychotherapist. Sometimes I have felt blessed and at other times, cursed. The mixed regard for intuition in psychotherapy culture and the lack of holding of this part of me at AUT created more confusion and self-doubt. I think now that I felt too embarrassed to talk to my lecturers about intuition as I feared I would not be taken seriously and this would discredit my work. Even after I chose to research this topic I feared I would be seen as 'flakey' and no one would want to supervise me.

Can I Speak to Others About Intuition?

Several months into this research I still have not asked my mother and stepfather what they think of intuition and my research, although I have spoken to my father, stepmother and

friends and colleagues. This research originates in my yearning to speak openly about intuition and to understand my own felt experience of this phenomenon and what may impede/encourage me from using it effectively in clinical practice.

By using the heuristic process to speak to myself and others, I aim to:

- heighten the awareness of intuitive experience in clinical practice
- create a vivid and descriptive account of the phenomena of intuition
- add to the understanding of this phenomenon in the field of psychotherapy
- encourage other psychotherapists to examine their own experience of and regard for the phenomenon of intuition

Individually I hope to:

- understand how my regard for intuition effects my use of it and my sense of personal and professional self
- deepen my engagement with a healing process regarding my shame about being a witch
- feel less prohibited to use my intuition in clinical practice
- learn to use my intuition more effectively in clinical practice

How I will speak about intuition in this research

**Chapter 2** sets out to describe my initial engagement with the topic and how it affects me as I review the literature. I realised early on that my mixed regard for intuition would be a dominant focus therefore this chapter also explores the history of the regard for intuition in psychoanalysis. I illustrate my early attempts to discover and describe the phenomenon with themes and how I differentiate it from similar phenomena. I also include excerpts from my journal and a depiction.

**Chapter 3** describes the heuristic method and methodology and its location in qualitative phenomenological research. I attempt to explain why I chose this method and illustrate my struggle with the process through depictions and reflections. I name the seven heuristic concepts and discuss the six phases of heuristic research, including my own unique experience of those phases. I conclude with the questions it raised for me.

**Chapter 4** sees me trying to make sense of my conflict and shame about intuition by examining my associations with it throughout my earlier life and my psychotherapy training, including depictions from those times and reflections upon them. I also wonder about other

therapists having similar experiences and examine why we may be conflicted from a historical, social and cultural perspective. I finally attempt to elucidate what interferes with using intuition.

**Chapter 5** moves on from the difficulties of chapter 4 into an easier place. In this chapter I explore a more mystical or spiritual interpretation of intuition, particularly that of Bion. I explore how Bion's concept of intuition relates to Maori spirituality, Jung and quantum field theory. I revisit my experience with the 'intuitive healer' and find a freedom with uncertainty and an enjoyable discomfort with the unfamiliar.

**Chapter 6** attempts to answer questions raised in Chapter 3 in my critique of the heuristic process. This involves revisiting my critique of positivism. I compare different approaches to the method, situate myself with those approaches and reflect on how the process was for me including revisiting a depiction from the immersive phase. I discuss the exposure entailed by the publication of such a personal narrative and conclude with some thoughts for further research/understanding.

**My creative synthesis** is a visual representation of this heuristic journey, comprised of meaningful images that spontaneously presented themselves to me throughout the research process.



Do I want to know?

I began this process in what could be described as a paranoid-schizoid state<sup>1</sup>. I felt very defensive of myself and ready for combat. My preconceptions were that the psychoanalytic literature would deride and devalue intuition. An article called “Let Intuition Be Your Guide?” (Gaudio, Brown et al. 2011), appeared to confirm my suspicions. This article documented a quantitative study examining the relationship between intuition and the therapist’s attitude towards evidence-based practices. The authors who purport that therapists who endorse intuition are likely to support “alternative therapies”, use words like “magical beliefs”, “erroneous” and “lack empirical support” to describe these clinicians’ attitudes towards health. I wondered if the reference to ‘alternative therapies’ was indicating the historical association of witchcraft and intuition as many people accused of witchcraft were healers. I also noticed the assumption that beliefs were ‘erroneous’ if they were not empirically ‘proven’. I think this article illustrates the split in psychotherapy regarding science and intuition. After reading this I wrote *“I feel insulted and hateful, judged and angry, this feels condescending and controlling to me”*. I wonder if I was also pleased to have ‘proof’ of my preconceptions. However another part of me hoped to be proved wrong by further searching. My literature search was motivated by the need to define the concept of intuition in psychotherapy and consistent with heuristic research, it was also driven by my desire to understand my own experience with the topic. I will describe in this chapter how my reading developed over my initial engagement with this process.

The history of intuition in psychoanalysis

Articles by Morf (1965) and Board (1958) were helpful in setting the stage for how intuition may be regarded in psychotherapy. Both value intuition, however they outline the historical context of what they see as the mixed regard for this phenomenon in psychoanalysis. They also offered me leads to follow towards further literature. Although my impulse was to pursue these leads immediately I slowed down and noticed the difference between impulse

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to Melanie Klein’s (1946) concept of the paranoid-schizoid position which is characterized by splitting and a sense of persecution.

and intuition. I let my intuition guide me in regard to not only what I read but *when* I read it. For now, back to Morf who observes the mixed regard for intuition:

*the phenomenon has been observed by scientists, by artists but also by common people. The creative ideas produced may belong to the realm of science, of art and religion, but also pertain to social life. The phenomena have been observed and described too often to be doubted. One would expect that this curious mental phenomenon would have interested the psychologists, but rather the opposite is the case. Most leading psychologists ignore it, some try to rationalize it away, very few freely acknowledge its existence (p. 91).*

Let us start at the beginning, with Freud. Board and Morf both argue that Freud was conflicted in regard to intuition. Board says this is due to psychoanalysis emerging from German romanticism; Freud's delving into the depths of the unconscious was a reaction against the "naïve, rationalistic view of mind prevalent in the eighteenth century" yet on the other hand he subjected the 'nonrational' to "the scrutiny of a methodically operating intellect" (p. 86). Morf proposes that Freud became suspicious of intuition after his break with Jung who openly valued intuition in clinical work. In Morf's opinion Freud spoke highly of intuition in his early phase even describing his important psychoanalytic discoveries being made by a 'prejudice' or 'preconception' rather than great intellectual effort. Morf argues that this describes Freud using a hunch, an impression reached by intuition and says provocatively "the birth of psychoanalysis out of a hunch – that is perhaps not a comfortable idea for our scientific minds, for us psychoanalysts" (p. 87). Here Morf introduces the idea that psychoanalysts see themselves as scientists and will therefore be uncomfortable with the mystical connotations of intuition. He goes on to say that Freud then rejected intuition when he became suspicious of anything occult or mystic. Morf uses phrases like 'Freud expresses his credo as a scientist', I wonder if Morf is suggesting that Freud rejected intuition as he was attempting to promote psychoanalysis as a science to gain acceptance from the dominant positivist paradigm. Morf quotes Freud as saying, "there is no knowledge to be *expected* from revelation, divination or intuition" (my italics, p. 88). The key word for me here is 'expected', I notice he did not say 'gained' which would be definitive. Perhaps Freud has left an opening to consider the validity of intuition. Morf describes Freud's suggestion that we must be ready to *investigate* intuition to test its reliability. He quotes Freud, "in this kind of work I do not think so much of so-called intuition; whatever I have noticed of it, seemed to be rather due to a certain impartiality of

the intellect.” I checked the original source and what follows is, “only that unfortunately people are seldom impartial where they are concerned with the ultimate things” (Freud, 2015, p. 234). I wonder if Freud could be seen to be cautioning against intuition being taken as infallible knowledge and is suggesting that we examine our intuitions to uncover potential impartialities, prejudices and unconscious motivations. I am not certain I agree with Morf’s view of Freud’s ‘ultimate apodictic rejection on intuition’, however it seems clear he was conflicted and that this was possibly due to the pressure to establish psychoanalysis as a science.

Morf argues that historically intuition was largely ignored or minimised by the desire to reduce mental processes to a mechanical model. It was commonly defined as unconscious pattern matching whereby inferences are drawn from latent material. Intuition was either de-mystified as an ‘ordinary’ phenomenon or derided as naïve and associated with children, ‘primitives’, artists and in the ‘academically unsophisticated’. Morf wonders if German psychologists had a higher regard for intuition due to the influence of German romanticism. Reik, a German psychoanalyst wrote *Listening with the Third Ear* (1948), which describes how psychoanalysts intuitively use their own unconscious to understand their patients. Reik emphasized the importance of listening to these intuitions saying “it is with the antenna of our own unconscious that we feel what is the essence of the thoughts and emotions of our patients, not with the tools of reasoning and logic” (as cited in Morf, 1965, p. 88). Finally it seems that intuition was described in a way that left room for the mystical, without reducing it to a mechanical process. Reik appears to hint at intersubjectivity well before the concept was named in psychoanalysis, “the same interplay of two unconscious results in the conjecture of hidden impulses”. This reminded me of Bion and Ogden and made me wonder about intersubjectivity and intuition. This felt important but I let the wonderings simmer away under the surface, not pursuing the connection consciously at this point.

Jung was another psychoanalyst who did not shy away from the mystical quality of intuition (Morf, 1965). He saw intuition as one of the four basic psychological functions of human beings, appointing it the same status as thinking and connecting it to the soul. He viewed the soul as a function mediating between the ego and unconscious and described the function of intuition in much the same way, a way of connecting the ego to what the unconscious already knows. Morf’s opines, “Jung gave intuition the status of a legitimate

child" (p.89), hinting at the shame that had previously been attached to intuition. Reading this I felt very excited and motivated to read Jung, however I was aware of an internal conflict. Something told me to wait, I sat with my conflict, not pursuing a conscious exploration with it. I realised during this heuristic process that much like the process of psychotherapy, the timing of self-exploration and self-discoveries could not be hurried. If there was a conflict such as this that was blocking a certain path, I learnt to wait until an opening appeared spontaneously. This was a very valuable learning from the heuristic process for me. I held Jung in mind and continued my literature search.

Both Board and Morf acknowledge the consensus throughout history of intuition as an unconscious process. Board sees intuition as a valuable tool and attempts a rational analysis of the phenomenon arguing that it should not be viewed as an alternative to methodical thinking but rather as an unconscious version of methodical thinking. Morf, however does not seek to 'de-mystify' intuition, he merely describes the different perspectives on it throughout scientific and psychological history. I scrutinised his article in search of clues to his regard for intuition and the closest I found was his closing paragraph "those who have enjoyed the benefit of intuitively obtained creative thoughts have practically put intuition on one level with inspiration. Many intuitions, as described by those who had them, were actually premonitions, anticipations of discoveries ahead and solutions to hitherto insolvable problems coming as a sudden insight" (p. 91), (Morf is referring not only to psychoanalysts but to the scientists and mathematicians he has described earlier). Perhaps this is Morf endorsing the use of intuition, he may have been reticent to make this explicit as this article was in a psychiatric journal in 1965, or maybe that is just my wishful thinking to find an ally in him.

Morf and Board acknowledge and attempt to make sense of the split in regard for intuition in psychoanalysis. Like others, they view this split as based in the association of intuition with the 'nonrational' and 'mystic' in opposition to the dominant positivist paradigm. My reading of their articles is that they propose that the analyst's regard for intuition is influenced by their philosophical underpinnings. If we see psychoanalysis strictly as a science then intuition may be viewed with suspicion, however if there is some openness to the mystic and uncertainty then intuition may be viewed more favourably. However these

articles were written more than half a century ago, I wondered what had changed in psychoanalytic literature since then.

Is intuition an internal process?

In searching for a definition of the phenomenon I had found that intuition is unanimously described as an unconscious, cognitive process. Rosenblatt and Thickstun purport, “intuition may be most usefully viewed as a form of unconscious pattern-matching cognition, which becomes conscious under certain conditions and which is only loosely related to primary process” (1994, p. 696). An automatic neuro-process of pattern matching takes place wherein a currently perceived pattern is recognized and matched to a stored pattern, only becoming conscious if the match arouses a sufficient level of affect or a larger, novel pattern is created. I noticed their link between intuition and affect. Epstein (2010) writes about intuition in much the same way, clearly valuing it as a tool, at the same time as seeking to de-mystify it, “intuition is neither magical nor mystical. It is simply the recovery outside of awareness primarily of tacit information acquired from experience” (p. 304). My emotional reaction was condescension, I wrote:

*“I feel sorry for them that they have to ‘understand’ intuition”. This was followed by “I’m aware as I write this that I feel intimidated by the explanations in this article, by the ‘science’, I fear that I can’t understand it, is this my own split between knowing and not knowing?”*

I think this illustrates my rapid swing between the dialectic of feeling superior (in my magical, witchy, intuitive powers) to feeling inferior (my fear that I cannot trust my intuition and am not intellectual enough). This split is typical of how I felt in this early stage of the research process.

The definitions described above capture something about intuition, however they did not feel sufficient, it felt like something was missing. So far intuition had only been described as an internal process, however I had been talking to friends and colleagues about the phenomenon during this time and had been to see an ‘intuitive healer’, the definitions did not encompass all the following phenomena of intuition that I had been noticing:

Qualities of intuition

- Knowing without conscious thought, without knowing how you know
- Seeing images that you know mean something

- Spontaneous insight
- Recognising with surprise or excitement something you already know
- Mystical, mysterious, uncanny
- Apprehending something illusive
- Connected to affect
- Connection with another: empathy, attunement, 'knowing' something about them
- A compelling quality
- A feeling that something is meaningful
- Knowing in your bones/heart
- Sensing

The Psychological Dictionary by Dorsch says under the heading Intuition: "originally vision, visual examination, later as much as a mental vision, a sudden insight similar to revelation, produced not by experience or conscious thinking but in a mystical way by direct apprehension of the nature of something real, an emotional experience of discovering a final truth which cannot be proven nor needs to be proven" (as quoted by Morf, 1965, p. 84). This definition added something about seeing visual images that resonated with my own experience of intuition such as the one described earlier of Ms L. However my intuition told me there was more than this.

Is intuition also an external process?

The definitions so far of intuition as a cognitive construct did not account for other uncanny experiences we have with other people. Why did I touch my stomach in the first minute of a skype session, only to have the client say towards the end of the session that she was in pain from her bloated stomach? How did I dream the gender of both my children before they were born? Why did I have the sudden impulse to have a glass of wine in session which was immediately followed by my client saying "normally I would cope by having wine." Once I began noticing these experiences I realised they were happening to me a lot.

“It’s like she knew that I somehow understood her without her even having to tell me”  
(Rosenburg, 2005).

The feeling of connection with another person, a kind of knowing of them that is implicit, and the strong feeling that this is meaningful are qualities of intuition that were becoming clearer to me through conversations with others, paying attention to myself and reading. The intuitive healer had explained her concept of intuition as a connection to the ‘akashic records’, a place where all the information about people is stored in a collective space. She believes that she can access this information via her intuition. Although I did not subscribe to this idea in such a concrete form it got me thinking. I had questions: is intuition a kind of connecting mechanism not only to our own unconscious but to other people’s unconscious? How is it different to empathy? If it is associated with affect is it a form of projective identification?

#### Intuition and empathy

Epstein (2010) is another psychoanalyst who associates intuition with affect, believing it to be motivated by the hedonic principle, thus making it inherently compelling. I wonder if the hedonic principle motivates us to connect with others if that is pleasurable? This could be especially true of psychotherapists as our job is to connect to the other. Does our intuition then motivate and enable us to connect with others via empathy?

Purcell (2014) links intuition and empathy. He describes a non-psychoanalytically trained nurse in a psychiatric hospital who he saw as deeply intuitive and empathic. He refers to her ‘common sense’, her ability to ‘think beneath the surface’ and her relatedness, her natural ability to *be* with patients. She was intuitively therapeutic, not guided by theory. He links intuition with an emotionally accurate connection to the other. I wonder if intuition guides us on how to *be* with someone? If empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another this is both a thought process and a feeling state. Intuition and empathy share these qualities and in that way are similar, however empathy is not normally associated with seeing images and does not account for premonitions like my dreams of my children. Empathy is not usually linked to knowing to do something or knowing that something is meaningful.

#### Intuition and intersubjectivity

Abrahams (2005) compares intuition and empathy and is convinced that empathy does not ‘close the gap’ that creates ‘unique connectedness’ in the way that intuition does. He

appears to come from an intersubjective, perhaps transpersonal perspective. I now had a more conscious focus on intersubjectivity which had always felt like a safe midway point between the witchy and rational for me. I had recently noticed an image that had felt meaningful:

#### The wave pool

*It was a film of people in a wave pool in China during a heatwave. They were all floating in rubber rings and packed in so tightly there was no space between them. As the camera panned out I realised there were thousands of people. The waves came through and the people undulated so beautifully and gently in such a synchronised way without colliding.*

My intuition had told me this image was important to my research and I had saved it. Now I was beginning to make sense of it as being about the connectedness of human beings, the mysterious and intangible connections we have to each other such as premonitions, visions, empathy and synchronicities. I wondered if these connections were made possible by intuition?

Abrahams (2005) understands these connections in clinical practice as his “intuitional awareness of connectedness with the patients” (p. 239). He notes the somatic quality often associated with intuition, he senses a ‘poignant expectancy’ in his chest and describes how in groups this often precedes the group becoming unified or connected. He says “central to that is the experience of connection on a simply human level, versus a state of alienation from self and others” (p. 247). He suggests that because his ‘intuimeter’ is activated when the client is out of sight and not speaking, that intuition is not necessarily visually or linguistically stimulated. He purports that this is due to people being “within the midst of fields of reciprocal influence” (p. 244), this was another reminder of Ogden. I also thought of quantum physics and field theory yet I was still experiencing a resistance to finding a scientific explanation for intuition. I was beginning to enjoy dwelling in the mystery and the unknown, it felt like I could ruin that sense of the mystical if I looked too hard.

**Bion and intuition: “the mystic is not troubled by knowing”** (Grotstein, 2015, p.2).

I turned to Bion for mysticism. To understand his perspective on intuition I read *A Beam of Intense Darkness*, by Grotstein (2007). Bion sees intuition as central to our work. He usurps thinking in clinical practice, replacing it with intuitive awareness which he describes as ‘non-sensuous knowing’ (p. 211). I found this interesting as intuition is often referred to as a sixth



sense, however Bion sees sense in opposition to intuition. He describes a left hemisphere use of observation and sense, versus a right hemisphere analytic technique using attention, reverie and intuition. The analyst listens with the left hemisphere and then experiences his own internal version of what the patient is suffering with his right hemisphere. Conscious thinking is seen to interfere with intuiting. Bion's concept of intuition is "a transcendental (a priori) entity that allows us to divine the beyond from the beyond within us" (p. 127).

Grotstein goes on to describe Bion as a 'mystic' (p. 129), not in a religious sense but as a psychoanalytic and epistemological one. As I read this I felt very excited, Bion had seemed so acceptable at AUT and now I was learning that he was mystical as well as scientific, could these two seemingly opposing epistemologies sit together? Was Bion a bridge between positivism and mysticism in psychoanalysis? Grotstein argues that during the heyday of positivism analysts strove to be knowledgeable about their analysands until Bion brought psychoanalysis into the realm of relativity and uncertainty with his embracing of the unknown. He finds it fascinating that the word 'mysticism' has acquired such prejudice arguing that in the positivist paradigm "the generally feared connotation of 'mysticism' has occurred through the projective identification of 'mystique' onto it by those who are, according to Bion, afraid of truth so mystify its clarity" (p. 129). Perhaps he is saying that people are so afraid of being acutely in touch with another's painful reality that they 'think' and intellectualise to avoid it and mystify the naïve and clear knowing of intuition.

In a rejection of positivism Bion sees conscious thought, or "irritable reaching after fact and reason" (p. 124), as secondary thinking and intuitive thinking as the only method of reaching 'O'/the ultimate truth (I will discuss this concept in a subsequent chapter). Bion's belief that intuition is one way to reach the inner world of the archetypal forms and 'noumena' (p. 331) felt reminiscent of what I read of Jung in Morf's article (1965). I was still not ready for Jung, however Bion's mystic science gave intuition new credibility for me. I felt a new sense of freedom as if something tightly bound inside me had loosened a little. It felt like he gave me permission to not know.

#### Intrusion depiction

I was still wondering about the difference between intuition and projective identification.

*I awoke at 4am feeling painfully lonely. This feeling would not go away despite me remembering that my kids were just up the road and my friends and family loved me. Yes I had been recently separated from my husband and now lived on my own half*

*the time but I had never felt like this before, not so acutely and so totally. The feeling became more and more intense. I began to 'know' that it was something to do with a client I had seen the night before. I knew he affected me more than others. But I didn't know it could be this bad. It was hard to trust that it was a painful projective intrusion from him that I was identifying with; at the same times as 'knowing' this intuitively I also had self-doubt. Although I 'knew' that this related to him my shame was intense, what kind of therapist am I if this happens to me? I'm weak and useless, I can't protect myself so how can I help others to protect themselves? I cried and cried. In our next session my client told me how lonely he was.*

### Intuition and projective identification

Was this intuition or projective identification? I 'knew' something about my client without 'knowing' how I knew, it could be either. Are they actually different phenomena? I looked to Ogden (1982), for answers. What I have understood from reading this book is that Ogden appears to describe projective identification as a four-step process:

- The person has a primarily unconscious fantasy of ridding themselves of unwanted aspects of the self
- They deposit those unwanted parts in another person
- The receiver has some resonance for what is being projected
- The projector recovers a modified version of what was extruded

Of course I could not ask my client if this is what he had done.

I venture that both projective identification and intuition are person to person processes that provide us with knowledge of the other's experience, both involving affect. This research was causing me to doubt the concept of projective identification. I was beginning to wonder it was just accessing an intuitive connection to the other, connecting with something very acute and intense, rather than them projecting it into me.

If the projective identification and the intuition of its meaning happen nearly simultaneously it could feel like they are the same thing. However often we do not make sense of the projective identification for a long time. In my depiction and as Ogden described in his book it took time to recognise that projective identification was even occurring. He says "projective identification constituted an important dimension of the therapeutic interaction between Miss R and her therapist, and the latter's *awareness* of this was central to his understanding of his countertransference response to the patient" (Ogden, 1982, p. 142). I

wonder if intuition was what led him to his 'awareness'? I venture that there are another two steps that allow us to make use of and contain projective identification:

- An intuition that the therapist's experience (of projective identification) is related to the client, including a feeling that it is meaningful
- Describing the essence of the phenomenon/phenomena to yourself and if appropriate, to the client

In this hypothesis intuition is again a connection to the other's experience and is vital to the therapist's containment of the projective identification (Bion, 1963).

I spoke to my therapist about my 'intrusion depiction' and we wondered about the similarities and differences between intuition and projective identification. She suggested that projective identification feels more directed at the receiver, as if you have been hit by something. This resonated with my depiction experience and many others I have had that were characterized by intense emotion, this feels different to an intuitive knowing. As described, we can be experiencing projective identification without knowing it, this is not true of intuition as it is defined by a sense of knowing.

Intuitions such as seeing images, suddenly knowing something is true as you are saying it and 'knowing something in your gut' are not associated with painful affect, we are not made to feel a certain way by these things. Perhaps projective identification is a phenomenon within the phenomena of intuition? I am uncertain, however Bion had allowed me more comfort with uncertainty.

#### Reliability of intuition

Freud warned us earlier of the dangers of 'impartiality', asking us to ascertain whether our preconceptions or desires are influencing our experience with the other, including our intuitive 'knowing' of them. Others share this caution; Abrahams (2005,) Board (1958) and Epstein (2010) argue that due to the unconscious nature of intuition, the task of validation is more difficult. Intuition is fallible as it is influenced by the correspondence between present and past experience stored internally. Although they do not use the word 'countertransference' I believe this is what they are referring to. What may feel like a strong intuitive knowing about a client may in fact be countertransferential, if it is our own unconscious material we are experiencing. However an intersubjective approach views any

countertransference as information about the client and would argue that there is no clear separation between our experience and the client's (Ogden, 1982).

Board questions the reliability of intuition stating, "intuition is likely to be heavily imbued with wishful thinking" (1958, p. 239). This does not fit completely with my experience of intuition, there have been many times when I have felt a very strong fear or dislike of someone immediately upon meeting them, in a situation that demands me to like them. I am also in disagreement with Board's suggestion that for intuition to be "a sound epistemology", this calls for "*reality testing* and retesting, to consensus" (my italics, p. 246), and his statement that, "once formulated intuition must make its way on an equal footing with other concepts. If it *proves valid*, it needs no other *justification*, either magical, mystical or irrational", (my italics, p. 239). Words such as 'reality testing' and 'proves valid' belong to the language of positivism. What Board does is in fact try to justify intuition in the positivist paradigm, whereas writers such as Bion allow intuition to exist as it is, without subjecting it to the scrutiny and judgement of positivism. I argue that intuition cannot and does not need to be 'tested' in the positivist paradigm as it belongs to a different paradigm, I will explore this in a subsequent chapter.

Thanks to Bion and others described in this chapter my paranoid-schizoid state softened into the depressive position<sup>2</sup>. My journey through the literature on intuition had got me thinking about the similarities and differences to other phenomena and made me curious to know more about the experience of intuition. Is it merely an unconscious mechanical process or is it something more mystical, an intangible way of connecting to others? I also wanted to understand more about my own conflicted feelings. My mixed regard for intuition was paralleled in the psychoanalytic literature, this was evidence that I was not alone in my conflict. I really wanted to explore how my familial experience and the historical, social and cultural regard for intuition had influenced me. I hoped this process would help to illuminate the origins and associations of my anxieties around being intuitive and be beneficial to other therapists who may have similar experiences.

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<sup>2</sup> This refers to Klein's (1946) concept of the depressive position, a progression from the paranoid-schizoid position that involves an enhanced capacity to hold a tension or conflict and therefore an integration of the previous split.

Heuristic research method - philosophy and phenomenology

In this chapter I will discuss the methodology I used in this research. I will outline the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of heuristics and provide a description of how I experienced each stage throughout this journey.

It was important to me that my chosen methodology lie at the heart of my experience of life and the way I practice psychotherapy. I hold subjective experience as of the utmost importance, therefore I was drawn to a qualitative, phenomenological approach.

Phenomenology is a philosophy based on the existential philosophies of Edward Husserl and Martin Heidegger (Grant and Giddings, 2002) that sees the first-hand description of experience as the closest you can get to the experience itself. This subjectivist approach makes phenomenology an anti-positivistic philosophy. A phenomenological approach to research aims to use human experience to describe the essence of phenomena. I hoped to describe intuition as I had noted its intangible nature. I also noticed that I was experiencing confusing emotional reactions to the idea of this topic and I wanted to understand more about that. As heuristic enquiry is based in phenomenology and emphasizes the researcher's connectedness and relationship with the phenomenon, it seemed a good fit. The heuristic enquiry is a journey of intuitive, introspective discovery so not only does it suit my way of being in the world but it also suits my topic. The researcher journeys through the heuristic process by continually analysing, reflecting and deepening into their own experience via an immersive and intuitive, yet focused rigorous and disciplined method. In this way it is the perfect fit for psychotherapy.

Moustakas (1990) developed the concept of heuristic research as a way to capture the nonquantifiable and meaningful aspects of human experience through a systematic approach. He describes it as a deeply personal investigation involving "self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery" (p. 11). The researcher aims to elucidate the experience of a phenomenon as well as elucidating their own experience of themselves in relation to that phenomenon. They strive to create qualitative depictions that capture the heart, depth and essence of their subjectivity and synthesize these themes and essences into a narrative of human experience. Sela-Smith (2002) acknowledges how the heuristic method allows this

internal subjective experience to be incorporated into research that had previously been dominated by a positivist philosophy. She describes the cultural and historical relationship between these seemingly opposing philosophies thus, “positivism became the authority in science, where objectively attained empirical evidence was the only form of knowledge, internal subjective experience was negated as a source of scientifically approved knowledge” (p. 59). The heuristic method attempts to bring the two together, to establish subjectivity as a valid and important form of research.

Because heuristic research is concerned with descriptively capturing the essence of human experience, the heuristic research method is truer to its philosophical emphasis on being experience-near than is the hermeneutic method. Heuristics goes one step further, the heuristic researcher uses their own experience as a part of the method. Whereas hermeneutic practice is interpretative, it searches for knowledge, heuristics aims to *give* knowledge through the interactive and explorative, vivid recreation of lived experience. The aim being that the reader will resonate with the aspect of universality inherent in every subjective experience, giving the research “ongoing life” as Moustakas (1990) suggests.

Tools of discovery: The seven heuristic concepts

The heuristic research process as conceived by Moustakas (1990) is essentially an intuitive one and therefore explicitly connected with my topic. This has been confusing for me at times as I have found myself unsure as to whether I am researching the intuitive research process or the phenomenon of intuition. However Moustakas (1990), Sela-Smith (2002) and Polanyi have all encouraged me to bear the uncertainty and confusion and to follow the trail of my inner knowledge wherever it may take me. Scott’s (1985) book about Polanyi’s philosophy of ‘Inner Knowledge’ was inspirational for me as it urged me to have faith in my tacit knowledge and ‘indefinable powers of thought’. Polanyi identifies tacit knowledge as the dominant principle of all knowledge. He ventures that all knowledge derives from the tacit dimension where we create and constantly reappraise and adjust the meaning of our experiences. Scott, describes Polanyi’s concept of tacit knowledge as “a sense by which we can be dimly aware of the direction in which we must seek for a solution, before we can formulate it” (1985, p. 46). Polanyi’s philosophy seems to describe a tension between knowing and not knowing and suggests we should hold both these states at the same time.

Moustakas used Polanyi's idea of 'tacit knowing' as the underlying concept of heuristic enquiry. He defines the other concepts of heuristic enquiry as: identifying with the focus of enquiry, self-dialogue, intuition, indwelling, focusing, and the internal frame of reference. I have felt confusion over the difference between the concepts of intuition and tacit knowledge, as perhaps does Moustakas. He states that tacit knowledge precedes intuition, suggesting that intuition is the bridge between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge, "one senses a pattern or underlying condition that enables one to imagine and then characterize the reality, state of mind, or condition. In intuition we perceive something, observe it, and look and look again from clue to clue until we surmise the truth" (p.23). Yet he also includes intuition as *contained within* tacit knowledge, "the deep structure that contains the unique perceptions, feelings, intuitions, beliefs, and judgements housed in the internal frame of reference of a person that governs behaviour and determines how we interpret experience" (p.32). I also find a similar kind of overlap between focusing and indwelling. However all these heuristic concepts are vital to heuristic enquiry, they ask the researcher to be fully present to themselves, in their experience of the phenomenon and the research process. Moustakas urges us to enter unknown inner territory and dwell there, to uncover new meaning through challenging and doubting ourselves so we can be open to discovering a new reality. As I will describe in the following pages, I discovered that my resistance to this method and the doubt it entailed paralleled my resistance to trusting my own intuition.

This resistance is perhaps an example of what Sela-Smith (2002) cautions the heuristic enquirer about. Our tacit dimension is built upon our experience and continues to adjust and reconstruct with each new experience, however we are often implicitly seeking a fit with our preconceived knowledge. In our attempt to construct patterns and make sense we may only take from the external world what fits with our existing tacit knowledge. Sela-Smith proposes that this tacit knowledge can be flawed by our dissociated and unexplored internal territories. Knowing this, I have continually held a tension between doubting my tacit knowledge and trusting it. This has meant that the heuristic concepts such as indwelling and focusing have been essential to my explication process regarding the meaning of my depictions (research data), as have the conversations with supervisors

(particularly my academic supervisor) who have provided a challenge to my preconceived assumptions/flawed tacit knowledge.

### The six phases of heuristic research

**Initial engagement: 'a passionate concern'** (Moustakas, 1990).

Towards the end of my studies at AUT I was enthusiastic about writing my dissertation on 'darkness'. My decision to change my topic to intuition came after nearly a year of clinical practice as my dialoguing with myself and my supervisor had uncovered my fascination with the mystery of intuition and my sense that it was vital to my practice. I also intuited that I had a struggle with this phenomenon and that a focused uncovering of this struggle would be transformative for self and practice. My choice of 'intuition' over 'darkness' was an intuitive one. My supervisor ventured that 'darkness' would be connected somehow and in the following pages, that connection (as I understand it currently), will be revealed. As described earlier my struggle with intuition began as a child and really came to the fore in my psychotherapy training, becoming 'a passionate concern' during my first year of clinical practice post-training. It is important that the topic represents a critical interest as the heuristic enquiry is such a personal quest. Although I was compelled by this topic and I sensed it would be of great value to me, I had no idea in this stage of initial engagement just how personal it would become. That it would in fact call me to question the nature of human/my existence. I resonate with Milner, as quoted by Kenny (2012) regarding the process of deepening understanding as "the gradual discovery and growth of a purpose which I did not know" (p. 6).

Of course it must also have relevance to the field of psychotherapy. By the time I fully engaged with this topic I had just enough assurance that intuition was widely used by psychotherapists and would therefore be relevant to other practitioners. This research is undertaken in a university context which I would argue sits in a positivist paradigm and therefore demands an objective truth as well as a subjective one. I hope to find both.

**Immersion: "surrendering to subjective experience and leaping into the unknown"** (Sela-Smith, 2002, p. 54).

After being led to their passionate concern, in this phase the researcher is invited to stay fully with the experience of the phenomenon (Kenny, 2012). Sela-Smith describes the continual fluctuation between inner and outer experience of the topic. I went between



reading the literature and writing depictions, reflecting on both via self-dialogue and supervision. Initially I felt stuck in a certain way of viewing or responding to what I was reading, as Sela-Smith says “personal myths let us see and experience what we have already decided is our view of the world” (2002, p. 62). Then I had an experience during a class at AUT that illuminated something about my resistance:

#### The ‘Keith’ depiction

*As my colleagues speak about their topics I feel terrified. I know it will be my turn soon. I am feeling so ashamed of my topic, so scared that Keith will see me as ‘flakey’, that AUT will finally discover that I am not intellectual enough to be allowed to finish the course. I want to disappear, I consider saying that I am not ready to talk about it yet but then I look over and see my supervisor nodding at me encouragingly. I fear I will let her down. And then I wonder – why is she being so encouraging about me and my topic – is she flakey too? Have I put my trust in someone as flakey as me? PANIC! It’s nearly my turn! I am convinced that Keith, the professor, the great intellectual, will think my topic is ridiculous and think me stupid. I felt angry and defensive at this perceived threat, protective of my witchiness. Then it was my turn. I blushed, I got tongue-tied, I lost my sense of self. To talk about my topic on a personal level felt way too risky and vulnerable, I defended it/myself with historical/political perspective on intuition. I hoped I sounded intellectual.*

After self-dialogue and talking to Margot I wrote this:

*I now realise I feel deeply ashamed of my witchy part. I also felt deeply ashamed because I was confused. Despite Keith having just given us a presentation on the **intuitive** heuristic research method and him appearing to value intuition I can’t accept this – it doesn’t fit with my expectations. So what I was experiencing at AUT was not fitting with my perception that the staff regarded intuition badly. It felt like my reality was being undermined. I tried to hang desperately on to my projection but it was crumbling. A horrible moment – humiliating and confusing. My supervisor was surprised the next time I talked to her that I still wasn’t getting that intuition wasn’t derided at AUT. The split runs deep. I realise now that no one at AUT/psychotherapy world is asking me to take a side (like I experienced in my family). It’s ok to have both my ‘rational’ and ‘irrational’ sides.*

Following my realisation that I was projecting my own shame about intuition onto AUT I found more freedom to immerse myself in my research. I ‘journaled’ and wrote depictions - going back and forth between them and my external experiences of intuition. I found that I wanted to stay in this phase longer than my time restrictions allowed. Being called out of this womb-like state by my academic supervisor felt premature. Throughout the process I found myself dipping in and out of ‘immersion’, continuing with focusing, indwelling, self-searching and self-disclosing.

Incubation: “retreating from intense and focused attention on the question or data” (Kenny, 2012). As described above I had resistance to retreating from the data/question. I experienced anxiety in this phase, it was difficult to sit with the uncertainty that resulted from a retreat from thinking. I wanted to jump ahead to the ‘explication’ phase. This parallels my process with resistance to intuition, wanting to find a way to ‘make sense’ of the phenomenon and the experiences of it, a move away from the uncertainty and shakiness of the ‘irrational’ to the seemingly solid ground of the ‘rational’. I stopped reading. Going to a psychoanalytic conference was a good way to distract myself with other lines of thought. I surrendered to the process and allowed my tacit dimension and intuition to silently work on clarifying and extending my understandings (Moustakas, 1990). I wonder if this was a time when integration of my rational and irrational parts began to take place, allowing me to deepen into the intuitive process?

Illumination: “the self and the world are experienced in brand new ways” (Sela-Smith, 2002, p.67). ‘The Keith Depiction’ illustrates a very important moment of illumination early on regarding my resistance to my topic and therefore the intuitive heuristic process. After this illumination I added the further narrative to the depiction. Illumination, according to Sela-Smith may allow such an integration of dissociated aspects of self, I think this has been an ongoing integration for me, continuing well into the later stages of the work and possibly will continue long after it is completed. Smith says “it may take place in a single moment or it may take place in waves of awareness over time” (2002, p. 67). Other illuminations have been gradual, subtly changing the ways I experience the world, for example the growing sense of what intuition might actually be and represent about the human experience. It was often when I was in nature that new understandings came to me. Riding my bike or walking allowed a meditative state in which the new could emerge spontaneously. I did not experience a chronological movement between the immersion, incubation and illumination phases but rather a continual spiralling through them, deepening into my ‘interiority’ with each spiral.

Explication: “the new.....take(s) up residence in the researcher” (Sela-Smith, 2002, p. 68). This phase asks the researcher to capture the essences of their experience with the phenomenon via conscious and focused examination. It was time to pay attention to ‘the new’ that had taken up residence inside me, noticing the presence of something novel or

the absence of something old. The demand to begin writing came early on in the process, it felt too soon for me. Perhaps this is why my explication involved the continued journeying in and out of the phases of immersion, incubation and illumination and continuing with the tools of heuristic research, recognizing meanings and resistances that were distinct to particular experiences and depictions.

Creative synthesis: a 'whole' is formed.

My creative synthesis was entwined with the earlier stages of the process. It is the dissertation itself and the images that spontaneously emerged throughout the process. Sela-Smith says of the creative synthesis, "there is something transpersonal about what emerges that seems to take on a life of its own. It is an amazing time of synchronicity, harmony, connection and integration." (2002, p. 69). I resonate very much with the creative synthesis 'taking on a life of its own'. I did not know what form it was going to take, I did not plan anything, in fact I considered presenting only the dissertation as the synthesis.

However the images that spontaneously presented themselves to me carried with them a strong sense of importance and meaning related to my process, it felt indisputable. I hope they show my transformation. Sela-Smith states that if a transformation emerges, one that is observable and resonates, this is an indication that the researcher has surrendered to the process, I argue this is what happened to me.

My unique process

Like Sela-Smith I notice the paradox inherent in Moustakas's method; he creates a methodological structure yet states that to be authentic the process must be free of methodological structures. Perhaps this is why I could not conform to the chronological process of the six phases. I may not have moved through this process in the linear fashion that Moustakas laid out, however I believe that I was philosophically congruent. Although obliged to write this dissertation to satisfy academic requirements, I was committed to getting as much out of the process as I could, self-transformation was my intention. I have travelled through the process with integrity and true to the "six key components" of heuristic research according to Sela-Smith (2002):

1. I have experienced what I have identified as my research topic
2. I have referred to an intense and passionate concern that drove me inwards in search of knowledge

3. I surrendered to the research and the question
4. I dialogued with my thoughts and feelings, uncovering resistance
5. My search was a self-search
6. There is evidence that I have experienced some sort of self-transformation

Twin Peaks depicts heuristic, a priori knowledge (Twin Peaks n.d.)

I chose a companion for this lonely process of heuristic research, someone I am fascinated by, Agent Dale Cooper from Twin Peaks. It was not until I began this research that I realised Agent Cooper uses a heuristic method of investigation. He opens himself up to the deepest level of intuition and the vulnerability of uncertainty. For me, this quote about Agent Cooper's method is reminiscent of the heuristic process, "the traditional detective's childlike wish to dominate the world is substituted by the liberating experience of letting go. The result of Cooper's oblique methods is..... a renewal of human desire for a miraculous world" (Blassman, 1999, p. 147). A heuristic enquiry demands a vulnerability from the researcher, not just the vulnerability of exposing ourselves in our deepest inner journey but the vulnerability of not knowing where this journey will take us. I struggled with this uncertainty at different times throughout the process. Although I admire Agent Cooper's method immensely I often felt extremely uncomfortable with journeying into the unknown. I found it hard to 'let go', to dare to trust my intuition and creativity and follow it wherever it takes me. I found it difficult to trust my self.

The research task called upon me to uncover the meaning of my own experience of intuition both as a person and a psychotherapist. I was asked to be subjective and yet also produce something that would add to the knowledge of psychotherapy, something subjective yet universal. This is a tension as my experience of any phenomena will be unique and I can easily lack a belief in the validity of my subjectivity. Is it worth offering? Can I see beyond my assumptions and produce a new knowledge that will have any relevance to other therapists? Are my assumptions unique or do they represent wider cultural assumptions? Is the heuristic method relevant if it is so subjective? Am I even relevant? These doubts are exacerbated by the familial, cultural and political stigma I experience regarding my topic of intuition, as described earlier.

I held these questions in mind, however I also took courage from Agent Cooper, Moustakas, Polanyi and the others who wrote about their own experience of intuition. I found that

other therapists' experiences had resonances with mine and I comforted myself with this knowing (Rosenburg 2005; Hammond 2016). The validation of intuition that I received from the literature and from conversations with supervisors, therapists, colleagues and friends motivated me when I was overcome with doubt. This heuristic process and choice of topic became a way for me to face my struggle with trusting myself and my experience of the world and perhaps, like Agent Cooper, expresses my 'desire for a miraculous world' or at least just some healthy mysticism.

## *Chapter 4*

## *Bad Witch*

I have divided the data of this heuristic process into two parts, the corresponding chapters are entitled 'bad witch' and 'good witch'. They roughly represent the respective positions I took in relation to my topic and my sense of self throughout the process and attempt to illustrate my transition from one position to the other. In this chapter I will describe the

difficulty I have had in trusting my intuition and what I have come to understand as the reasons for that.

During my initial engagement it became clear to me that the topic of intuition was bringing up some old associations of being a bad witch. I told my supervisors about the following depiction.

Killing someone with my envy:

*When I was thirteen I had my first crush on a boy. I took the risk of letting him know. A friend told his friend and the response I got was "Crista's quite cute but I like Liz". Everyone said Liz was 'really sweet'. I knew I wasn't sweet, I was outgoing and fun but I was also brimming with anger, disdain and envy. I began to hate and envy Liz. I repeated a mantra to myself "I hope she dies, I hope she burns to death, I hope she drowns or gets run over". She drowned a few months later. That confirmed what I already suspected, that I was a witch, a bad witch. Like sleeping beauty's envious stepmother, I had killed sweet Liz with my envious hate. I felt omnipotently bad, protecting my shameful and disturbing secret closely until decades later when I finally confessed to my therapist.*

How did I become a bad witch?

My bad witchiness felt so present in the beginning of this process. I wrote the depiction above knowing it was important but having no idea why. When I told my academic supervisor I once believed I was a bad witch, she sent me some readings by Berke (2012) and Bollas (1984). I looked to them for understanding. Berke talked about envy in a way that resonated with the depiction saying, "for the envious or evil eye goodness must not be preserved only attacked, spoiled or destroyed" (p.xvi). This is what I did to Liz. When my narcissistic teenage-self compared myself to her I felt inferior, my solution to this uncomfortable feeling was wishing her dead, out of existence, as if destroying her would eliminate my general feelings of hate and spite. Unfortunately she really did die, I can only imagine how terrifying this was for me at the time (I kept this terror out of consciousness). I inflated my inferior and terrified self by believing I had killed her. My witchy omnipotence felt indisputable, totally concrete. Sadly for me I also hated this part of myself, I was split, torn between being ineffectual/inferior or powerful/evil.

My earlier experience had set me up for becoming a bad witch, I had a lot of people to envy and hate and I felt hated. Perhaps as Martinez (2001) suggests, I was one of those people who had more difficulty screening out hate and had conflict over what I knew. Knowing that I was hated threatened my survival, it made me too vulnerable, I denied this kind of knowing. There had been no container for these feelings in my family. I 'knew' I was different in a shameful way, I hated and envied 'normal' people like Liz. Berke describes the typical view of a witch as "unsexed, bitter and vengeful" (p.7), this is the bad witch part of me that 'killed' her.

My identification with bad witches began at a young age. Fairytales such as Snow White, Rapunzel and Sleeping Beauty perpetuate the concept of the bad witch throughout the generations and caution us against becoming her. I loved these fairytales when I was young yet the witch inspired fear, did I identify with her even back then? It was not only that I felt 'bad', I also seemed to know or sense things (mostly about my parents), that were either denied or never spoken about. Typical of western culture, this kind of knowing was invalidated in my family, creating conflict for me. My 'knowings' went against family rules as they were 'irrational' and threatened to expose the dissociated, dark underbelly of our family life.

Physically I also had reasons to suspect myself, I had dark wild hair, white skin and my irises had a ring around them which was 'proof' of being a witch in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. My English grandmother shared a surname with a family of healers from Lancashire who were accused of witchcraft during the most famous witch trials in English history. Whether related to this family or not, I venture that the intergenerational trauma of the witch trials and the threat, shame and terror of being persecuted for witchcraft would be present in my grandmother's family and thus passed on to me. I linked my bad witch self to intuition, perhaps as this is what has been done culturally and historically. Research has shown that intuitive knowing becomes even more conflicted around adolescence, empathy and unconscious communication are denied (Martinez 2001). Perhaps when I 'killed' Liz my intuition became firmly fixed to a part of myself I hated, this part felt global, like it was all of me. Bollas (1984) argues that an ego syntonic use of self-hatred such as this provides a way to feel a coherent sense of self and identity. Adolescence is a time of searching for identity, my sense of identity became fixed in being powerfully evil. I persecuted myself.

It was understandable that I felt very defensive and prepared for combat at the beginning of this process, unknowingly I had chosen a topic that was to unearth deep shame and terror. In The Keith depiction we see my internal persecution of myself, whilst projecting this on to the AUT lecturers. I had experiences near the beginning of my training that were similar:

#### Drowning in an empty swimming pool

*Following my reading of a brief vignette from my work with my first client the class free-associated. A colleague said “I’m seeing an empty swimming pool”. It felt like this statement projected straight out of her mouth and into my gut. I became overwhelmed by acute existential anxiety, intense emptiness and loneliness. I began to cry. Recognizing I was experiencing a strong connection to my client’s pain I thought the tears would stop soon but they kept flowing down my cheeks uncontrollably, shame had taken over. “I shouldn’t be feeling this intensely, I should be able to control it, I’m weak, there is something wrong with me, this doesn’t happen to other people and THIS DOESN’T MAKE SENSE, I’M A WITCH”. I became so overwhelmed with shame that I fled the class. My lecturer came out to see me and said “I think this is projective identification”. Although it helped to have an ‘explanation’ I couldn’t quite accept it- old fantasies ran too deep, this was more proof of either my weakness or my witchy omnipotence.*

#### The conker seed

*Early on in my training I had an intense somatic experience with a client where it felt like something very prickly, large and dry was lodged in my throat, like a conker seed. As she talked I tried to swallow it away and wondered if I was going to have to cough it up. After a few minutes I realised it wasn’t really there and was probably a countertransferential response but I was rendered speechless until it faded away. I did not feel ashamed. In the training we had heard stories of therapists experienced this kind of very intense countertransference, I had envied them and wanted that to happen to me, now it was. I felt ‘special’, chosen and perhaps the envy of others.*

I wrote these depictions in the immersion phase and revisited them many times searching for fresh understandings. It wasn’t until I put them side by side that I realised they illustrate my conflict regarding my intense intuitive experiences of the other (I am naming them as intuitive as they fit with my definition of intuition described in Chapter Two, involving a



'knowing' of a connection to another person). In the first depiction I am ashamed yet in the second one I feel special and talented.

#### Intuition and shame

I was beginning to understand that my topic was connected to shame. I had read Marion Hammond's thesis on therapist shame (2016), during my initial engagement with this research. Although it did not specifically connect to intuition I was intuitively drawn to it. She does mention intuition saying "I argue that before we practice the skill we have to hold that intuition is of value. In my early training in my family of origin I learnt to override my intuition in favour of adhering to the family rules" (p.32). I resonated with her. As described earlier I came from a family that placed a high value on being intellectual and scientific, being intuitive would have been going against the family rules. It was comforting to know that other therapists might share my struggle with valuing intuition. Hammond also made me think about how my experience in my family may be colouring my experience with AUT. Perhaps this helped prepare me for a surprising illumination I was about to have that uncovered how my preconceptions were influencing my engagement with my research.

My assumption was that intuition was regarded warily by AUT, this was so entrenched that I was struggling to accept indications to the contrary. My academic supervisor had said she liked my topic, she seemed genuinely enthusiastic, and she had told me that Keith liked the topic too as intuition was written about extensively in Humanistic theory. Yet I still could not quite believe this or wondered whether they were untrustworthy and 'flakey' too.

Following a conversation with my academic supervisor it finally sunk in that the split regarding intuition was embedded in me. It was not until I realised this that I could begin to see the acceptance of intuition at AUT. A conversation with my therapist following this realisation revealed another layer. I came to understand that although a part of me was relieved that I was not being seen as 'flakey' by AUT, that I was in fact acceptable, another part was disappointed. If psychotherapists, including the lecturers, do value intuition and use it themselves then I lose my special witchy omnipotence, I become 'normal' (which means 'boring' in my family of origin). This was a shocking illumination for me, however it allowed me more freedom and flexibility in how I engaged with my research.

Can I be intuitive *and* intellectual?

Now I could explore another area of my interiority with my academic supervisor. We knew that I had deep shame about my bad witch/intuitive part, we wondered about the other side of the split. How did I feel about my rational/logical self? My supervisor said “you seem to have a strong logical side too”. This is true as this quality was encouraged in my family. By undertaking a Masters in Psychotherapy I was satisfying the familial internal demand to be intellectual yet at the same time I was satisfying the demand to be intuitive. I realised that I had been struggling throughout the entire course to hold these two parts in an internal coherence. When I was in my witchy part the intellectual part was derided and attacked and vice versa. This illumination left me feeling rather shaky in myself. Something quite concrete and stuck had become freer yet I found this slightly unnerving. My sense of self had shifted, my internal terrain had transformed like land changing shape after an earthquake. I now needed to navigate new territory.

The split is not just mine

This left me wondering how much I was projecting my internal persecution of my intuitive/witchy self onto AUT and psychotherapists in general and how much truth there was in my preconceptions. Because of the research I had already done that described a split regard for intuition in psychotherapy I suspected that aspects of my subjective experience were universal. I went to a psychoanalytic conference in the incubation stage of the research that confirmed this:

*At the IARPP conference I went to a talk where the speaker referenced Tustin, and Mitrani. The discussant critiqued the talk as “nonsense” and “unscientific” saying “it’s all wrong”. The shock in the room was palpable. I felt angry and threatened, shocked and confused – it felt like an attack – why does she attack? She said “we should only use empirically supported theory”. People responded passionately, challenging her. Questions were raised; why is there a need to have this split in psychoanalysis? Why can’t both science and intuitive/creative thinking exist together?*

In this environment it felt like she was representing a minority, however I imagine that there are other psychoanalytic environments in which she would be the norm. Purcell (2014) ventures “perhaps the idea of the therapeutic effect residing outside of technique and firmly within the emotional dimension of the relationship has seemed too dangerous, just

too unscientific” (p. 801). He shares my view that intuition is not sufficiently emphasized in psychotherapy training and suggests it is overshadowed by idealizations of theories and their techniques, external demands for evidence-based data and preoccupations with neurological explanations of experience. I have already argued that our predominant positivist philosophy lies at the root of this.

What interferes with intuition?

Clearly the positivist paradigm puts pressure on psychotherapists to ‘know’ through conscious reasoning and theoretical knowledge. If this causes a conflict around valuing intuition in psychotherapy practice I wondered how that might manifest in clinical practice. Martinez (2001) discusses ideas that arose from the American Psychoanalytic Association discussion groups regarding intuition, unconscious information and thought transference. She argues that our positivist underpinnings interfere with our trust in intuitive or ‘telepathic’ phenomena and the capacity to think about it, stating “the preconceptions that analysts start from do not allow freedom to think about certain things” (p.211). The possibility that children are taught to ignore such phenomena was considered. The discussion groups emphasized the importance of clinicians not dismissing the ‘irrational’ and the need to trust ourselves and our experience of our clients.

Martinez (2001) argues that embracing the sort of reality that includes telepathic awareness is deeply unsettling as it changes everything about one’s experience of people and the world. She refers to research about the synchronisation of brainwaves and autonomic phenomena between analyst and patient and reports that research participants experienced “terror” at the realization of their capacity to tune in to the other. The terror was seen as having to do with the loss of sense of a discrete self which borders on annihilation of the self. Looking back at the two depictions above (‘drowning in an empty swimming pool’ and ‘the conker seed’), I realised this fitted for me. The intense emotional connection to my clients was unsettling and disturbing. Was it only disturbing because I have been taught that it is not possible? Or is it also because the intense intimacy and feeling of merger it brings is terrifying? Does this then interfere with me using my intuition as it is easier to dismiss this unbearable feeling? I will discuss the lack of discrete borders between humans in the following chapter.

As described earlier I realised that for me shame was connected to intuition and this impedes my capacity to trust and use my intuition. As soon as I go into the acute self-awareness of the shame of being a witch and not intellectual enough I have lost contact with the intuitive connection to my client. Clients are of course also influenced by the positivist paradigm. The immense pressure they can exert to 'know' or 'fix' them hooks into my own vulnerability that I should be the 'expert', creating an anxiety to perform, to give 'answers' that make sense or are 'rational'. This anxiety interferes with intuition.

I also noticed that projective identification interferes with intuition, especially if the client is projecting their confusion, shame and fragmentation on to me. The intense pressure the projective identification puts on me derails my capacity for 'intuitive thinking'. This relational pressure is felt more strongly by females (Gilligan, 1982). This also links into the existential anxiety of annihilation of 'self' referred to previously. With clients who do not project so much or so strongly it is easier to find the space or state of reverie inside myself that allows intuition to emerge (Bion, 1962). Entering this state of reverie involves abandoning the certainty of the positivist paradigm. I was really noticing the relationship between intuition and embracing the unknown. Although intuition is defined as a knowing, to experience it we must abandon what we think we know to be in the state of openness in which intuitive awareness emerges.

#### Intuition and gender

The gender of the therapist may interfere with our freedom with intuition. The majority of people accused of witchcraft were women. Perhaps this has biblical roots as women were perceived to be more predisposed to sin, moral imperfections and more sexually powerful (Martinez, 2001). Perhaps, like me, female therapists are more likely to carry the shame of witchcraft, thus impeding our comfort with it. On the other hand it appears to be more socially acceptable for women to be emotionally connected to people. For men being emotional, dependent and connected can be seen as a sign of weakness, particularly in New Zealand I would venture, with its emphasis on men being invulnerable as illustrated in sayings like 'harden up mate' and 'she'll be right mate'. Perhaps men are typically associated with the rational and women with the intuitive. Does this interfere with male therapists' capacity to tolerate the vulnerability of intuitive connection to the other and feel comfortable with the uncertainty of the 'irrational'? Carol Gilligan's (1982), research into

women's psychological development showed that girls at latency have more intuitive relatedness than boys. This raises the question about whether this is a stronger inherent natural capacity for women or whether intuitive awareness is bred out of boys early on? Jung believed women were more intuitive (Morf, 1965), however we do not know if this is nature or nurture.

Thinking about the many factors that may interfere with our comfort and regard for intuition instigated me to compile the following themes:

Themes in regard to embracing intuition:

- Unlearning what one knows theoretically
- Not second guessing yourself or your 'knowing'
- Noticing the voices that say "I'm crazy"
- Taking the risk
- Embracing the unknown
- Understanding what gets in the way
- Not dismissing what is 'irrational'
- Getting back to something you once knew
- Tolerating being intensely connected to someone

Agent Cooper returns

In what I now wonder was an example of synchronicity, Twin Peaks Season 3 was finally airing (after a twenty year wait), during my research process. This time Agent Cooper, who had disappeared into 'The Black Lodge' for twenty years, appeared to be split into two different characters who I am going to call 'Good Coop' and 'Bad Coop'. Bad Coop kills without mercy, is driven, incurious and certain (no sign of hesitancy or conflict). He is so powerful he comes back to life unscathed after he is shot to death. Bad Coop is my 'bad witch', he is intuitive but omnipotently evil. On the other hand, Good Coop, although a grown man, is like an infant. He is vulnerable, curious and tentative. He exists experientially, not needing language, without goals, preconceptions and theory. He appears to embody the intuitive world without shame. He barely speaks to others yet he knows how to *be with them*. He seems to understand and even predict them, people feel comfortable with him. He lives in the moment (the original Coop was into Buddhism). Good Coop is my 'good witch' who I will describe in the following chapter.



Having relinquished the idea of myself as 'special' in my evil witchy omnipotence, in the previous part of the process, I now felt more open to where my intuition would take me in my research. I was more able to venture into the unknown which would take me to new, uncomfortable places. Uncomfortable not in the sense of being a shameful bad witch but uncomfortable as in unfamiliar.

Before he was split in two, Agent Cooper from the first two series of Twin Peaks said:

*"In the pursuit of Laura's killer I have employed bureau guidelines, deductive technique, 'Tibetan method', instinct and luck. But now I find myself in need of something new, which for lack of a better word, we shall call magic" (Thomson, 2016).*

I began to accept the 'magic' of intuition in the second part of the heuristic process, this part I am naming 'good witch' as I allowed myself to be 'magical' without being 'bad'.

The mystic

I remember the excitement I felt when my psychodynamic theory lecturer (who is also my mentor), introduced my class to intersubjectivity. I remember saying, "I feel like a whole new dimension has opened up". I felt the permission to explore this dimension where we are intimately connected to the other yet I was still tentative and self-conscious, conflicted by the positivist demand for 'evidence'. Mirror neurons may be this 'evidence', as they explain some of the seemingly magical connections between people, however they do not explain psychic phenomena such as predictive dreams or premonitions about other people. These types of connections are yet to be validated by science. This research forced me to look around and notice people who, unlike me, seemed to have an unselfconscious acceptance of this connection, like the intuitive healer, my cranio-sacral friend/colleague, certain theorists, non-western cultures and people in my community of psychotherapists.

"We inhale people"

One of those people, a speaker at the IARPP conference said "we inhale people", this had stuck in my mind, I knew it was relevant to my research. I was wondering if intuition was what enabled us to access what we knew unconsciously from, 'inhaling people'. Or what Sela-Smith (2002), refers to as "the unseen connective tissue that flows in and between people"? (p.55). This reminded me of the concept of 'Mauri'. I had encountered this concept

in my training and excitedly noticed the similarities to quantum field theory of which I had a very rudimentary knowledge. The Reverend Māori Marsden (1992) defines Mauri as “that force that interpenetrates all things to bind and knit them together and as the various elements diversify, Mauri acts as the bonding element creating unity in diversity” (p. x). That felt similar yet different to the concept of intuition as a connection between people. Is intuition what allows us to access what we know from the connection that Mauri provides? The three world view of Māori holds that there is Tua-Uri, the ‘real world’, existing behind this world of sense perception and impossible to comprehend by direct means. However Marsden states that people possess “faculties of a higher order..... which when properly trained can penetrate into the ‘beyond’” (1992, p.7). I wonder if intuition is one of those ‘faculties’? This felt reminiscent of Bion’s concept of intuition.

Seeing the world in a different way

I thought about how non-western cultures such as Māori that are not under the constraints of a positivist paradigm, have more freedom to consider intuition and our mystical connections to each other. I found this poem from Rumi, a 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet and Sufi mystic:

*What if a man cannot be made to say anything? How do you learn his hidden nature?  
I sit in front of him in silence, and set up a ladder made of patience, and if in his  
presence a language from beyond joy and beyond grief begins to pour from my chest  
I know that his soul is as deep and bright as the star Canopus rising over Yemen. And  
so when I start speaking a powerful right arm of words sweeping down, I know him  
from what I say, and how I say it, because there’s a window open between us, mixing  
the night air of our beings. (Rumi).*

I venture that Rumi speaks of how we communicate without words. Much like his fellow mystic, Bion (Ogden, 2015) he creates a meditative space that allows him to access the experience of the other. The ‘open window’ allows the ‘mixing’ or connecting of them to each other. In keeping with how intuition has been described earlier, a spontaneous knowledge of the other comes to him as he speaks and he knows it is true because of how he feels when he says it.



## Bion and freedom

I still felt hesitant straying into mysticism and spirituality, was it too far from the respectability of psychoanalysis? The spiritual worldview was unsettling, asking me to revise the way I saw the world and myself in that world. I was opening up to a new and mystical dimension. Not only a new external dimension but also a new dimension within myself, or perhaps the rediscovering of an old one I had dissociated. A dimension where I was in touch with the spiritual/mystic/uncertainty inside me. I returned to the mysticism of Bion to help me think about the place of intuition in the new dimension and perhaps to settle myself with his respectability.

I had a conversation with my clinical supervisor in which I asked him, “is Bion existential?” We discussed how Bion is concerned with being present to what is happening in the moment but also with freedom (an existential concern), our freedom to ‘think’ intuitively without being interfered with by the desire to understand or ‘know’. We identified that for me this involves a liberation from my persecuting introjects, allowing me the freedom to embrace my intuition. The understanding that not everyone was as ashamed and unsure of their intuitive capacities as me was really sinking in, I was noticing positive references to intuition in popular culture, psychoanalytic culture and with my friends and colleagues.

Back to Bion. In Ogden’s opinion (2015) Bion’s paper Notes on Memory and Desire (1967a), is in fact about intuitive thinking. Rational thinking, or what Bion called ‘after-thinking’, draws the analyst’s mind to conscious experience which evades the ‘truth of what is happening’ between the analyst and patient. Instead the analyst should rely on a different form of thinking and perception, intuitive thinking, or preconscious thinking, allowing us to “view experience simultaneously from multiple vertices” (p.293), much like the Maori worldview of multiple realities. Ogden states this is always part of an intersubjective phenomenon, not something the analyst can do separately. The analyst and patient are in a connected state of intuiting the psychic reality of the patient that he/she is unable to bear alone (2015). Again I was reminded of the vulnerability entailed by intense connection to the other.

“The mystic....is a thinker who claims the capacity for direct contact with O” (Bion, 1970). What felt really mystical in this paper was Bion’s concept of ‘O’. It had been referred to previously and I had been satisfied with thinking of it as ‘absolute truth’ or ‘ultimate reality’ (Bion 1967a), I had avoided exploring it in any depth, hesitant to approach anything too mystical. At this point in the process, however I was already considering spirituality and quantum theory, I had a hunch that ‘O’ might have similarities to a quantum domain or the new dimension offered by intersubjectivity and the Māori worldview, I wanted to find out.

I revisited Grotstein (2007) who described ‘O’ as “the Absolute Truth *about* Ultimate Reality” (p.41). I was aware that ‘O’ was thought of as the most mysterious of Bion’s concepts so I wanted to find a description of it that was succinct, however I began to wonder if that was an impossible task. Grotstein (1997) wonders the same, in his words “‘O’ is perhaps Bion’s most far-reaching conception. It designates an ineffable, inscrutable, and constantly evolving domain that intimates an aesthetic completeness and coherence” (p.1). I find this exciting. According to Grotstein, Bion is describing a new domain strongly characterized by the numinous. I also find this uncomfortable as my family was derisive of religion and spirituality. However I did not want to take part in that splitting anymore, I wanted to free myself from this concrete viewpoint. I sat with the tension.

I was really excited by the existential quality of Bion’s concept of ‘O’ and its lack of concreteness, its unknown, unknowable, unthinkable and indescribable nature. This feels like a mystical, spiritual experience to me. Is ‘O’ like god? Like Tua -Uri? Like a quantum dimension beyond the limit of our five senses? If ‘O’ is unknowable and infinite anything is possible. I thought of Linde Rosenberg’s thesis (2005) about inexplicable phenomena in clinical practice, which I had recently read. Is the fundamental universality of ‘O’ where these phenomena originate? To contemplate this mystical, spiritual experience without scepticism felt daring and exciting, yet not as taboo as it had felt previously. The following quote from Grotstein (1997) resonated with the heuristic journey I was on, venturing out from the confines of positivism and heading towards somewhere more mysterious and unknown, a place of doubt and wonder:

*“Bion left behind the preconceptions of the psychoanalytic establishment and ventured inward in a soul-searching, mystic journey. I have come to believe that this journey led him to transcend the positivistic certainty of psychoanalytic ontic*

*determinism and “messianically” return it to its proper home in numinous parallax and doubt where the mystic and relativistic ‘science of man’ truly resides” (p. 2).*

Intuition, Jung and quantum theory

Jung is another mystic in psychoanalysis. As described he kept cropping up in my research yet I was aware of my resistance to him. I think now that because Jung was not taught in my training I suspected that he may be frowned upon by AUT authority figures (perhaps another one of my projections). However by now I had managed to free myself to some extent from the persecuting introjects that impeded my capacity to follow my intuition into certain paths of research. Finally at this point in the process it felt like the right time to approach Jung, I was delighted to discover that he was associated with quantum theory. I had been fascinated by quantum theory for at least a decade. I enjoy and respect its embracing of the mysterious, and its capacity as a science to tolerate not knowing even as it endeavours to ‘know’. I am very aware that including a consideration of intuition and quantum theory may reflect my desire to justify intuition in a positivist paradigm, however I am concerned with healing my split, which means bringing together the positivist paradigm and the ‘irrational’.

Jung brings quantum theory and psychoanalysis together more explicitly than Bion or Ogden. He collaborated with a pioneer of quantum physics, Wolfgang Pauli (1900-1958), who was a nobel prize-winning physicist. This collaboration culminated in the clarification of Jung’s concept of synchronicity. I watched a two hour talk online that took place at The Helix Centre, between Jungian analysts and physicists discussing Jung and Pauli’s relationship and the relationship between synchronicity and quantum field theory (Helixcenter, 2014). Experiences such as thinking of someone and then immediately hearing from them or bumping into them unexpectedly are what might be seen as examples of intuition or synchronicity. Jung famously describes an occurrence of synchronicity with a patient when she is recounting a dream with a scarab beetle in it. At that moment a golden beetle knocks on the window by Jung, he opens the window and gives the beetle to her. They share a mystical experience together and proceed to discover the personal meaning inherent in it for her. This example of synchronicity clearly illustrates the “meaningful coincidence between a mental state and a physical occurrence” (Helixcenter, 2014) which characterizes synchronicity.

As discussed at the Helix Centre, in Jung and Pauli's time of the 1950's, with the birth of field theory, "things that seemed magical in science were now being transformed" (Helixcenter, 2014). Like intuition, synchronicity seemingly comes out of the blue, however Jung and Pauli sought to explain it with quantum physics. Their explanation is based on the idea that psyche and matter are two aspects of one thing, a quantum field of interrelated phenomena. Meaning is implicit in this quantum/electromagnetic field or neutral background/undistinguished domain of 'basic reality' but not yet explicated. Meaning unfolds by us making the distinction, connecting the mental state and physical occurrence into a correlation. This is an expression of the relational notion (all things are related). Perhaps intuition is what guides us towards the explication of meaning from these correlations, connecting conscious with unconscious, making meaning from what may not be a coincidence.

#### White magic

Jung's synchronicity still felt to me like it had a magical quality as does field theory, Bion's concept of 'O' and the Māori worldview. They all suggest a lack of discreteness in our experience of the world and the image of a collective human unconscious in which we are all connected. I was excited by the part that intuition plays in that concept. My thoughts turned back to the 'intuitive healer' who I had seen in the very beginning of the research process. At the time she felt too dangerous to be associated with or to take seriously as I had placed her firmly on the 'flakey' side of the split. It now felt safe to approach my experience with her again, near the end of the process. I re-read what she had said about intuition:

*"when we open ourselves up to listen to our own internal silence and we activate the files of the universe (the akashic records), the interdimensional index of all the mysteries of life, and we listen and then we get a download, through images, symbols, impressions, bodily sensations, pictures, verbal messages and we get downloads, automatic natural stream of consciousness". I ask her "like the transpersonal?" She replies "almost, like energetic transmissions that have been downloaded from the divine, stored in our DNA, in our unconscious – tuning into the vibrations of the cosmos...listening that goes beyond logic and empirical data into a transmission of information that has a sense of rightness to it. Whether it is chills, or that aha moment or deja-vu, you know where you just get an intuitional feeling of truth. You know that's it right because it's coming from some place deep inside you that transcends the mind or your personality. Paying attention to synchronicity to random events that happen to confirm our personal truth. And often intuition*

*transcends logic, the reasonable, pragmatic, sometimes it doesn't make any sense, it just feels right. And all of our body knows it feels right."*

What I had previously rejected as 'flakey' I could now read less suspiciously. I could accept the similarities in what she had said, to what I had uncovered in my research, such as the way we access intuition, the forms that it comes in, the spontaneity that characterizes it and the idea of a collective unconscious. At the beginning of this process I did not want intuition to be a 'normal' and integrated part of myself, this took away my 'specialness' yet neither did I want it to be associated with anything 'flakey' like intuitive healers. I was now at a point where I could take in the magic and the science and they could sit more comfortably together in my internal landscape.

I find it more difficult to describe the good witch aspect of myself than I do the bad witch, as the good witch is new and unfamiliar. I have not managed to capture all the qualities of it yet. I can sense an absence of something very conflicted, concrete and fearful. In its place is a new freedom and peace allowing me to be more present to my clients and my self. I feel a bit like I imagine Good Coop to feel; tentative, curious and a little at sea, vulnerable in the new dimension. The intimacy of the connected human unconscious at this stage of the research process did not bring up feelings of annihilation of the self for me, in fact it allowed me to integrate previously dissociated parts of self, as I hope I have managed to describe in these chapters.

I had journeyed into a deep internal space then outwards where I had begun to reconnect with the external world in a new way. I had been thinking throughout my research process about the parallel journeys I was on; my journey into my intuitive world and my journeying into the heuristic process. It was time to take a slightly more external perspective on those journeys, this discussion chapter is that perspective.

#### **Subjectivity and positivism**

Heuristic research is critiqued for its subjective nature. As Ings (2013) states in his discussion of heuristic research, “this highly subjective position stands in a dichotomous position to the tenets of positivism that have formed the substrate of much scientific...research” (p. 677). However others have raised questions about how objective/ethically neutral science really is. A research project was recently conducted by a social scientist in a lab observing scientists at work (Helixcenter 2014). When they were asked how they decided whether to do A or B, the scientists responded that they were not making decisions, they were ‘just doing the experiment’. After they were asked to be self-conscious in their work by observing their thought processes closely, they realised they were in fact continually making decisions. This research in fact showed that self-awareness actually improved the experiment. It also showed that it was impossible to banish subjectivity, as Griffiths says, “the self is inescapable” (as cited in Ings 2013, p. 676). Instead of aiming for an impossible ethical neutrality in research, heuristics acknowledges the presence of subjectivity and explores the effect of that on the research. If that effect is explored thoroughly, I suggest this enhances the ethical nature of heuristics.

As is perhaps suggested by the research project described above, the positivist paradigm obliterates the personal as it erodes our trust in what we ‘know’ intuitively and asks us to trust in ‘objective reality’. Wood, purports that “we often see ourselves as powerless individuals in the thrall of faceless corporations” (as cited in Ings 2013, p.676). This is an argument for the importance of subjective/autobiographical research in order to assert our

individuality and the validity of the personal. My research, which had begun as a personal journey, began to also feel like a political protest. I wanted to find the bravery to speak my own truth, to try to find language for my silenced inner knowings that are an important aspect of my individuality.

#### Authenticity

I discovered that finding that language involved trusting myself or valuing my own perceptions, as Polanyi encourages. It required taking a leap of faith. Ings (2013) encouraged me to find my 'idiosyncratic voice'. As I journeyed through the process and began to uncover the pressure I felt from the positivist paradigm to silence my inner voice, I realised how important this voice was. I aimed to illustrate my authenticity and integrity in this process through the depth of my reflections and the descriptions of my transformation, however ultimately only I can know my own subjective truth and the rigor to which I held myself in this process. Moustakas asks "does the ultimate depiction of experience derived from one's own rigorous, exhausting self-searching and from the explications of others present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience?" (1990, p.32). I have tried to represent what was known to me about myself at the time of writing, as truthfully, accurately and bravely as possible.

#### Subjective research and solipsism

My highly subjective truth could be seen as self-indulgent and of no value to others. Ings (2013) cautions against heuristics becoming a narcissistic or solipsistic pursuit, suggesting that the researcher explore every option. I cannot say that I 'explored every option' as they are infinite, however I followed my intuition. I believe my journey would satisfy Ings who states, "the researcher is completing .....a story of, and to, the self and others. Their internal pathway whatever its obstacles, must lead authentically and ethically, outwards" (p.690). What follows is a representation of my heuristic process that followed an outward path:

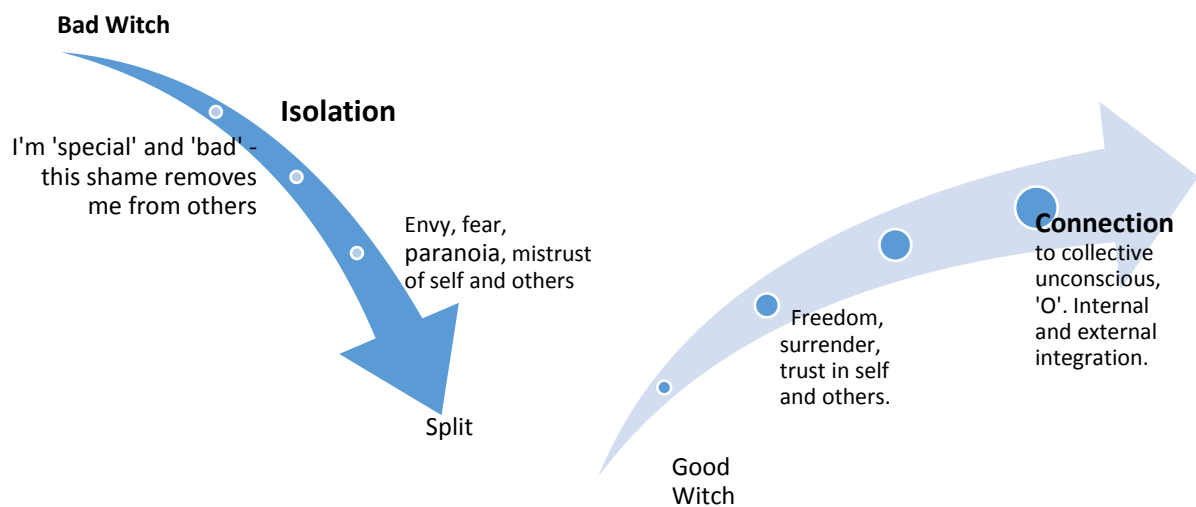


FIGURE 2: MY INTERNAL PATHWAY THAT LED INWARDS THEN OUTWARDS

Without co-researchers, the synthesis of the meaning and the essence of the phenomenon of intuition would have been solely based on my interpretation, my journey was more at risk of being the solipsistic one Ings (2013) cautions of. I needed to use triangulation. Rose and Loewenthal (2012) reinforce the case for additional support to address blind spots which, they suggest, can emerge especially in the immersion phase. My relationship with my academic supervisor echoed my relationship with trusting the heuristic process and my sense of self. I engaged with her in a split state, untrusting yet hopeful of being proved wrong, and moved through to feeling a comfort and sense of comradeship with her. My blind spots were supportively challenged by her after 'the Keith depiction', illuminating my flawed assumptions. My therapist and clinical supervisor helped me to shed light on other aspects of myself that had they remained unilluminated, would have made this research more narcissistic. Triangulating in this way enables a deepening of insight and a penetration through to another layer of the tacit dimension, as Sela-Smith (2002) says, "thus allowing the transformation to be more expansive" (2002, p.78). Other triangulations took place with my clinical supervisor, my therapist, literature (mostly personal accounts by other therapists), colleagues and my experiences with clients.



## Resistance and positivism

Sela-Smith (2002) a psychotherapist, critiques the positivist paradigm for its lack of self-awareness, in particular that it does not seek to uncover resistance. She has a more free-falling approach to the heuristic method than Moustakas. I think her approach suits the psychotherapy paradigm as she asks us to tolerate more uncertainty in a quest for deeper self-knowledge. Smith suggests that Moustakas had unacknowledged resistance preventing him from taking his process as far in reality as he advocated philosophically. She critiques him for compromising his method to fit the positivist paradigm which, with its focus on thinking, prevented him from feeling the pain that his resistance fiercely protected:

*“heuristics as a method of discovery, which ontologically predates positivist reification, appears to be interpreted for the most part from an exterior perspective even in the self-search method by focusing on thinking about and observing experience rather than self-focus on feeling an experience” (p.82).*

Sela-Smith sees self-transformation as the dominant component of heuristics research and believes that Moustakas’s transformation was hindered by his unconscious resistance to experiencing unbearable pain. This had helped me to think more about my own resistance, understanding that I felt safe in the shelter of the certainty of the positivist paradigm, scared to be fully immersed in the witchy world of intuition. I found this entry in my journal from my initial engagement: *“Moustakas so easily puts intuition and science together. I notice my discomfort with that, as if it is not allowed, I don’t want it to be, I want to take a ‘side’”.*

Like Moustakas my focus in an earlier part of the process was on the idea of the experience rather than my personal experience. I got caught up in defining the concept of intuition which made me feel certain, clear and definite. However something had foreclosed and I was not in touch with my self experience. My realisation of my resistance this time was precipitated by reading Sela-Smith (2002) and perhaps inspired by Agent Cooper who, in his fearless venturing into the unknown said:

*“I have no idea where this will lead us, but I have a definite feeling it will be a place both wonderful and strange” (Thomson, 2016).*

Unlike Agent Cooper I was fearful. But I kept venturing. I crashed into further uncertainty which allowed me to access a deeper and more excruciating experience of self-doubt than I had previously, I wrote this in my journal:

*Sitting on my sofa alone on a Sunday trying to write my dissertation. The methodology chapter. I am overcome with self-doubt. I want to give up. I want to halt the process, abandon it. This is really PAINFUL. I can't do it! I feel like I am really up against myself-doubt and I don't want to let it go. I want to give up. It's all too difficult, too hard. I'm not good enough, I can't do this. I have struggled so much with this, I want to escape but the dissertation won't let me. It feels like something has to shift but it won't.....I find myself noticing my ever-familiar self-doubt and wonder about self-doubt and intuition. Did I never learn to trust my sense of self? If I never got to trust my intuition then in some way I do not trust myself. It is risky to trust myself as there is no proof I am 'right' or that I 'know'. Has not trusting my intuition lead to my self-doubt (my biggest struggle in my work as a therapist)...is this why I have chosen this topic? As I write this the cloud has lifted outside – I can see it through my huge windows – there is more light in the room. A few minutes ago I felt hopeless and stuck, but as I write it is shifting, lightening up like the sky outside.*

In this depiction I struggle with my overwhelming pain and I do shift the focus to 'thinking about and observing experience rather than self-focus on a feeling experience' as we saw in Sela-Smith's (2002) critique of Moustakas, however this thinking brings about an illumination. Here I discovered how my resistance to trusting myself is largely my resistance to trusting my intuition. This was surprising to me. In choosing to research intuition rather than darkness, I think I had hoped to avoid truly painful self-realizations, yet I was taken to the core of my vulnerability. I think this depiction represents my struggle with identity. A large part of my identity was linked to my bad witch which held my sense of being unintelligent and 'wrong', unable to trust my sense of the world. How can I write a dissertation if I cannot trust my own perceptions? In this depiction I am frozen and I struggle to drag myself out of this stuckness. As Ings says, "when issues of identity are intimately and inextricably tangled in this dynamic, such inquiries can become comparatively fraught and at worst immobilising" (2013, p.681).

The validity of heuristic research

Not only am I asked to expose my subjectivity, I am also asked to justify my subjectivity in my research. The positivistic paradigm in which the university sits, asks me if my experience is 'valid'. Heuristic research cannot be measured quantitatively so it aims to meet positivistic criteria through rigorous self-examination. The researcher is asked to judge the significance

of their experience and distil and explicate accurate meanings and essences from that experience. The solipsism or researcher's bias (Djuraskovic and Arthur, 2010) can be tested by transferability, dependability and confirmability, prolonged engagement and persistent observation. Lincoln and Guba (1981) stress the importance of prolonged engagement and persistent observation as crucial to enhancing credibility, this involves continually re-visiting depictions and being in a reflective state of immersion in subjective experience. If I describe my experience in a way that enables the reader to feel what I feel, through authentic, evocative and rich description, this indicates the success of the transferability of my research.

#### Post-modernism and universality

Moustakas assumed transferability/universality in stating that he used his experience to explore and understand that of others. As I have found myself questioning the nature of human existence I think the post-modern perspective on universality is worth considering. Foucault (2006) questioned the idea of universality in subjective human experience suggesting that 'essences', sense, and unity are fabrications brought about by the suppression and denial of difference. This deconstructionist view point suggests universality is not achievable in heuristic research. Although this idea stirs up my existential anxiety I think it is worth holding in mind. However I also hold in mind the philosophy of Polanyi (Scott, 1985) who disputes the post-modern perspective and urges me to discover reality. I resonate with Kenny (2012) who derives comfort from the idea of some thread of universality in subjective experience as it "brings a sense of unity to the post-modern experience of fragmentation" (p. 11). And if we psychotherapists are trying to understand and accept the other, then maybe this sense of universality is important.

#### Culture and Context

I found myself thinking about universality and culture. I wondered if there was a contradiction in Foucault's thinking. He views the identification of historical, political and cultural context as important in understanding human experience yet also disputes universality. But does the idea of cultural identification not assume a degree of universality? This is not the place for an exploration of this argument, however it is important to think about the idea of cultural identification and universality in heuristics. If the researcher does not consider the cultural context of their research/themselves, the research can become

solipsistic. It may assume a universality that does not exist for readers of a different gender or culture (Kenny, 2012). It was important to me to include an awareness of my cultural context in this process, I have aimed to make it clear that my meaning-making takes place in a cultural, gendered and historical context.

#### Time and conflict

Another critique I find important and particularly relevant to the context of my research is time. I experienced the deadline for my research as counterintuitive and in conflict to the heuristic process. Sela-Smith (2002) agrees even though she took two years to complete her 'self-study'. I took less than half of that. The context within which I undertook this research had a very definite deadline. Moustakas (1990) purports "the heuristic process is not one that can be hurried or timed by the clock or calendar" (p.14). I felt the continual presence of my deadline. I wonder if this impeded my capacity to dive deeper into the process, into my interiority? I felt hurried by the deadline, which caused anxiety. I discovered that anxiety interferes with my intuitive ability in clinical practice and I believe that at times it interfered with my ability to surrender to this intuitive process, I felt confused. Sela-Smith says "when there is inner conflict.....confusion occurs" (2002, p.66). My conflict was between experiencing the call to dwell in the intuitive process and the pull to meet the deadline.

Agent Cooper says:

*"When two separate events occur simultaneously pertaining to the same object in inquiry we must always pay strict attention."* (Dale Cooper, n.d.).

I paid strict attention to my simultaneous experiences. I realised that a parallel process was occurring; the research and its deadline represented the external/positivist world and this felt in opposition to my internal/intuitive world. I wanted to trust the process but I had an external pressure. I wanted to trust my intuition but I had an external pressure. Trusting the heuristic process paralleled my process of trusting my intuition. Exploring this experience with time restraints and noticing how it related to my conflict regarding my topic was a valuable part of the process. It is possible that the deadline may also have precipitated my surrender; without the deadline I may have stayed stuck in the familiar, stuck in resistance, delaying the frightening surrender to the unknown.

## Surrender

There were many moments of surrender. I am not referring to the defeated sense of surrender but to a sense of letting go, which brought freedom and openness. I surrendered to the immense pressure I felt, to the loneliness of the process, to the confusion it brought. I had to surrender to losing aspects of my external life that I no longer had time for, and to losing my projections, my assumptions and aspects of myself that no longer felt authentic. When I felt overwhelmed my academic supervisor assured me it was part of the process, this allowed further surrender. Eventually I surrendered to having nothing but the faith that I could do this, without certainty faith was all I had left.

## Exposure and shame

As I have described throughout, this method risks “the opening of painful wounds” (Moustakas, 1990, p.14) and it asks for self-disclosure of these wounds. This I have done. The academic context requires that I publish my work, exposing these wounds to the public. Just writing this I feel anxious. I have also risked the exposure of the clients I have described, however I have obscured their identities as much as possible. I cannot obscure my own identity.

My anxiety is largely about clients reading about me (however unlikely this is I have to consider it as a possibility). They will read about me as a ‘real’ and vulnerable person. They will read about how unsure I can be sometimes. How would it be for them to know this about me? Can I bear them knowing how confused and self-doubting I can be, about my flaws? I feel ashamed of my vulnerability in this way. My ‘psychotherapy super-ego’ says “therapists should not be unsure of themselves as they are supposed to help others to be more sure of themselves”. I suspect my shame is more present to me in this early stage of my career than it will be later on when I am more confident in my practice and more open about my flaws with my clients.

As therapists we need to consider what is helpful and appropriate self-disclosure for each individual client. If I publish personal information I cannot control which clients get to know it and cannot necessarily talk to them about the effect it may have on them. However from an ethical perspective I value not just my subjecthood but that of others. If the authenticity of all people is my goal in my practice then I have to be prepared to be as authentic as I ask my clients to be. I have tried to hold the tension of this dialectic. As a result of this process

and feeling less ashamed, I have become less inclined to hide behind my 'professional self', my 'psychotherapy super-ego is quieter'.

#### Intuition, trust and sense of self

Not obscuring my 'self' with my professional self or 'outing' myself as Ings (2013), calls it, is also a result of a new trust in myself. One of the most important illuminations I had during this process was that my intuition was intrinsically linked to my sense of self. If I could not trust my intuition I could not trust my self. To be able to trust myself I needed to uncover and face my fear of upsetting the hierarchy of the positivist paradigm and all that it represents to me both historically and in the present: authority figures such as the church, science, lecturers, psychoanalytic theorists, the university, PBANZ, NZAP and ultimately my family. For me, abandoning these persecuting introjects has been a difficult but rewarding process. Unravelling the tightly bound cords of shame that held my intuition captive gave me the freedom to trust it and a new sense of my self, affording me a new freedom in my clinical practice enabling me to connect more fully to my clients.

#### The call for further discussion

This research was transformative for me. It not only challenged my understanding of myself but my understanding of the world. By freeing myself from complying with a positivist perspective I am now able to see the world through various lenses. The literature I read and experiences I had during this process clearly showed evidence of a mixed regard for intuition in psychoanalytic culture, which paralleled my own conflict. As I came to understand what prohibited my use of intuition, I found a new trust and awareness in my intuitive capacities. I was able to use it more freely and effectively in clinical practice. I wonder if this would be beneficial for other therapists. I would like to see further research on how the pressure exerted upon psychotherapists by the positivist paradigm effects our work, our sense of self and 'professional-self'-esteem. As funding for long-term psychotherapy in agencies continues to decrease and 'evidence-based practices' take over, this seems vitally important. I suggest that we need to support each other in the face of this pressure, to continue to question the authority of science and examine our relationship with this paradigm, both as a group and individually. I would like further research to include a discussion of the regard for intuition in both the positivist paradigm and the field of

psychotherapy and argue that it is important that this discussion takes place in training programmes such as AUT. Perhaps this would lead to what I believe is a much-needed emphasis on phenomenology in training programmes.

I would like to see further research on what causes certain people to be less inhibited with using their intuition. Whether it is solely the extent to which they can resist the pressure of the positivist call for 'reason' or whether their families/cultures were more open to intuition? Do they feel the longing for the phenomenological experience of collective connection that I describe in my Good Witch chapter? Perhaps this is what leads us to be more open to intuitive experience. An exploration of the phenomenon of and regard for intuition in different cultures may possibly shed more light on the prohibitions our positivist culture places on us.

As I surrendered and deepened into the intuitive process my focus became on my own experience. I would like to do further research focusing on the phenomenon itself, to heighten the awareness of intuition in clinical practice. My new awareness of how other therapists such as Bion use their intuition, enhanced my understanding of intuitive phenomena and gave me the confidence to use my own. I would like to know more about other therapists' experience of intuitive phenomena and how they use it in practice. It could also be valuable to interview children to gain an understanding of their experience of intuitive phenomena, previous to it feeling prohibited or mistrustful to them. I believe an awareness of the phenomenon of intuition and an understanding of what prohibits and enhances its use, is vitally important for not just our psychotherapeutic community but the wider community.

My process continues. I do not believe I have illuminated everything I could. Although less conflicted, I feel tentative about trusting my sense of self and intuition. The seed has been planted and it is growing, however it is a long way from being a tree. I will continue to nurture it and I will continue to transform. I am very aware that this research represents myself at this particular point in time. I resonate with this quote from Golden- Biddle and Locke, "authors can never choose to vanish from their texts; they can only pick the disguise in which they will appear" (as cited in Ings 2013, p. 677). My reflections and conclusions represent the 'disguise I have picked' for this research and all that was known to me at the time. However I see this as an ever-evolving, ongoing process. My continual experiencing of

the intuitive world and my intuitive self means this journey can never really be finished, there is no destination.

### *Creative Synthesis*

What follows is a visual representation of this journey so far. The images presented themselves to me spontaneously. I found and made meaning in these images, they helped illuminate, uncover and reshape and came to represent my journey through this surprising, unpredictable, difficult, inspiring and ultimately transforming process.



Figure 2: Bush Walk

***This image is of a walk I did for the first time in the beginning of this process. It represents my heuristic journey into an unknown destination, I feel tentative. The uncertainty is both***



***exciting and frightening. It is difficult to take the first step, I suspect pain and difficulty lie ahead. I have resistance.***



*Figure 3: THE WITCHY WORLD*

***My therapist sent me this photo when she was away in England during the initial stages of this process. This stone circle symbolised 'the witchy world' I was discovering inside myself and the significance of her sending it to me felt like a further invitation to explore this part of myself with compassion.***



*Figure 4: the horizon*

***This image struck me on a bike ride near my home, as described previously. The witchy world and my intellectual self were split. I struggled to be compassionate to both parts of myself and to find a way to bring them together.***



*Figure 5: THE SPLIT IS BLURRING*

***One day on the walk I loved (first image), there was a mysterious winter mist which blurred the water into the sky, I could not see the division anymore. The traveller (myself) is now in the picture. My internal split became less defined and something emerged.....***





*Figure 6: THE WAVE POOL*

***What emerged was the interconnectedness of people. As described, this image appeared at a point in the research process where I was beginning to wonder about intuition connecting us to other people.***



Figure 7: INTUITION

*I thought this final image would never present itself. I contemplated purposefully seeking out an image, however that was not in keeping with the synchronous process of this heuristic journey. I waited and hoped, I thought perhaps I would not have a final image, just an empty frame. Then my stepfather sent me this from my parents' trip to Italy. It is an image of a poster for an exhibition exploring how intuition has shaped art across geographies, cultures and generations. My stepfather is an artist. He sent it on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, approximately a month before the due date for this research. I was touched by the significance of him of all people sending this to me. This meant a lot to me. When he sent it I was finally able to ask him what he thought about intuition. Surprisingly he said "I value intuition highly. I think it's like another bodily sense, or perhaps a combination of the others. I haven't answered you fully, I know". This answer made me revisit my question about how much I projected my own devaluing of intuition onto others. Did I imagine my stepfather's derision of this part of myself? I thought about the incredible imagination my unconscious used to create myself as a 'bad witch' and how compassionate I now feel to this part of myself.*

Word count: 22,759

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