

THE FORGOTTEN FEMININE:

A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF
PSYCHOTHERAPISTS/COUNSELLORS WHO WORK
WITH UNUSUAL PHENOMENA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Health Science

in the Auckland University of Technology

by Lauren Sleeman

Auckland University of Technology

2007

Attestation of Authorship

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

Lauren Sleeman (candidate).

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Charting new frontiers	1
<i>The journeyer</i>	7
Outline of the study	13
Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	16
The mysteries of life	17
The influence of religion	19
Consciousness – bravely exploring the landscape	23
Being conscious of consciousness	26
Being consciousness itself	26
Consciousness as a process and continuum	27
The struggle of encompassing consciousness	28
Consciousness and separation	29
The paradox of consciousness	29
The forgotten feminine	31
The dualism of consciousness and faith	33
Bringing consciousness into being	34
Interconnecting	34
Quantum physics and interconnectedness	35
The continuum of consciousness	36
Interconnectedness in other world views	38
New Zealand/ Aotearoa	40
The shaman	41
Mythologem	43
Spectrum of consciousness	44
Interconnecting in therapy	44
The Cartesian influence in therapy	45
Therapist's beliefs reflected in therapy	46
I am where I do not think	47
From a wider perspective	47
Authenticity	50
Potentiality in the therapeutic relationship	51
Covert spiritual foundation in therapy	52
Empathy and spirituality in therapy	53
Therapist's attitudes to spirituality	54
Therapist reflexivity and spirituality	54
Client awareness and insight	55
Client-led evolution in therapy	56
Transpersonal perspectives	57
Being more inclusive in therapy	58
Ideological challenges for therapy	58

Interconnectedness and methodology.....	59
Connecting hermeneutic phenomenology, psychotherapy and interconnectedness.....	60
Summary	61
Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY.....	62
Finding a map	62
Methodological philosophy	63
Hermeneutics	65
Lifeworld existentials.....	65
Lived time and lived space	66
Lived other.....	67
Lived body	68
METHODS	69
Boundary markers on the map.....	69
Rigour.....	69
Goodness	70
Representation of voice	71
The hermeneutic process; six research activities.	72
Turning to a phenomenon which interests us and commits us to the world	72
Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualise it	73
Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomena.....	74
Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting.....	74
Maintaining a strong, oriented relation to the phenomena	76
Balancing the research by considering parts and whole.....	77
The data.....	78
Selecting the participants.....	78
The participants.....	80
Interview and data collection.....	81
Analysis of the data	83
Data storage	86
Ethical considerations	86
Beneficence.....	87
Freedom from harm.....	87
Freedom from exploitation.....	88
Risk/Benefit Ratio	89
Respect for human dignity.....	89
Right to self-determination.....	89
Right to full disclosure.....	90
Informed consent	90
Respect.....	91
Justice.....	91

Fair treatment.....	91
Treaty of Waitangi - Te Tiriti o Waitangi	92
Right to privacy	93
Ethics Approval	95
Other boundary markers of rigour.....	95
Reflexivity	95
Transferability.....	96
Authenticity	96
Credibility	97
Summary	99
Chapter 4 UNUSUAL PHENOMENA AND KNOWING.....	100
Into the woods.....	100
The essential themes	101
The paradox of unusual phenomena.....	102
What unusual phenomena means to the participants	102
Unprompted	103
Being taken by surprise	103
Something imperceptible.....	104
KNOWING EMERGES	104
Expressing knowing.....	105
Finding the words	105
Lived experiences of knowing.....	107
Knowing as a message.....	107
Knowing as a foretelling.....	107
Knowing as a vision	108
Knowing and affect	108
How do we know ‘knowing’?	109
Is it imagination?.....	110
Describing imagination.....	110
The imaginal realm	110
Differentiating imagination from knowing.....	111
Is it intuition?	112
Intuition and lived experience	113
Is ‘knowing’ a mystical experience?	114
Mystical knowing	115
Therapist-as-mystic.....	116
Differentiating mystical knowing.....	117
Reflecting on knowing.....	118
Knowing is an experience recognized and defined by having experienced it.....	119
In the being	119
The greater other	120
Knowing in Māori culture	121
Cultural assuredness	122
The realness of knowing.....	122

Trusting knowing.....	123
Metaphor as our unique expression of knowing	124
Water metaphors	124
A river	125
A pond.....	125
Being a ‘knower’	126
Being a living paradox.....	128
Summary	129
Chapter 5 BRINGING KNOWING INTO BEING.....	130
Interconnectedness.....	130
Interconnectedness as awareness of the subtleties of knowing	130
Interconnectedness as a manifestation of knowing	131
Acknowledging connectedness	132
Merging in connectedness	133
The Rosarium.....	134
The paradox of merging	136
Resonance	137
Merger summary.....	138
A conduit of interconnectedness	139
The net of gems	140
The livedness of bringing knowing into being.....	141
The act of waiting	141
Receptivity	142
Gestalt	142
Gift	143
Joy and laughter in the knowing.....	145
Knowing the bigger picture.....	147
Humbleness.....	148
Gratitude and humbleness	150
EMBODIMENT IN THE KNOWING	151
The knowing body	151
The body as a template	152
Signaling knowing.....	153
Metaphoric embodiment.....	155
The heart metaphor	156
LOVINGNESS IN THE KNOWING	157
Agape and kairos	157
Lived experiences of lovingness	158
Lovingness as the superlative of knowing	159
An imperturbable love – the therapeutic face of love	160
Trusting lovingness.....	161
HEALING IN THE KNOWING.....	162
Therapists as part of a long line of healers.....	162
The wounded healer and lovingness.....	164
The authenticity of being.....	164

The speed of healing	166
Healing using other forms of therapy	167
Healing and cultural understandings	168
Healing from old patterns	168
Healing woundedness with lovingness.....	169
Summary	169
Chapter 6 BEING A DIFFERENT KIND OF THERAPIST	171
Going quietly about the work	172
It's a bit of a lonely walk sometimes	173
Cautious and shy	175
Being a pioneer	175
Quietness during training.....	176
Speaking the same language.....	176
Ethical concerns	177
Professional caution.....	178
Knowing and discomfort	179
Therapeutic modality or knowing?.....	179
Is conventional therapy enough?.....	180
The benefits outweigh the doubts.....	181
The benefit for clients of having somewhere to go.....	181
Knowing what to say and when	182
The issues.....	183
Summary	184
Chapter 7 REVIEW OF THE STUDY	186
Authenticity – the intersection of commonality	187
Reconnecting with the feminine	188
Subtleness	191
The significance of the wounded healer.....	192
Lovingness	193
Changing the face of therapy	195
Implications for education	197
Implications for practice	200
Changed as a therapist	203
Implications for my own practice.....	204
Limitations of the study	206
Strengths of the study	206
Ongoing research	207
CONCLUSION	208
REFERENCES.....	211
APPENDIX A: Advertisement	230
APPENDIX B: Participant Information Sheet.....	231
APPENDIX C: Consent Form.....	235
APPENDIX D: Confidentiality Agreement # 1	236
APPENDIX E: Confidentiality Agreement # 2.....	237
APPENDIX F: AUT Ethics Committee Approval.....	238

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to acknowledge and extend my gratitude to the participants in the study who gave their time and shared their stories so that I could create this study. I hope I have given voice to their experiences.

Many people in my life, perhaps unwittingly, have also contributed to the writing of this research paper. I read a saying a long time ago that everyone you meet is your teacher and this maxim has been one of my guiding principles. I am grateful to those teachers along the way who have inspired and encouraged me and made the journey so interesting.

Margot Solomon and Dr Lynne Giddings, my research supervisors, are the wise ones who knew just what to say and when, in the long and incredible process of writing a Masters thesis. I am very indebted to them. Prior to undertaking the thesis, Margot's thoughtfully designed Psychotherapy papers at AUT laid the all-important seeds for seeking my own therapeutic philosophy. Lynne's paper on Qualitative Research, which she delivered with such enthusiasm and clarity, helped me believe that doing a Masters thesis was possible.

The excellent Transpersonal and Jungian Psychology papers with Dr Lea Holford introduced me to world views and understandings that often matched my own, and provided depth and substance to the 'unseen world'.

A big thank you must go to Lea for her commitment in sharing her extensive knowledge of Jung, mythology and the many facets of transpersonal psychology. Thanks also go to Dr Liz Smythe and Linde Rosenberg for the pre-understanding interviews and insights, and to Liz for the exciting Practice Reality paper.

I would also like to acknowledge Russell Waetford, Kaiako, who during his time at AUT generously shared his experience and knowledge of Ko Ahau and encouraged my research project. This collaboration not only honoured the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, but it also enlivened my understanding of the abundant wairua of this land, New Zealand/Aotearoa and its peoples.

My very special thanks, gratitude and love go to my partner Ian, and my children Joseph and Lydia who supported my writing. They endured my general air of distractedness and absence from family life on many occasions. Writing a thesis is a lonely journey and I was grateful for their joyful, loving presence in my life when I would emerge from the writing process. Thanks too to my good friends who encouraged me and sent me cheerful texts and emails throughout the period of 'social withdrawal'. This has been the experience and opportunity of a lifetime. Thank you all.

Abstract

The topic of my research is the lived experiences of eight psychotherapists and counsellors who consciously work with unusual phenomena as it arises in the therapeutic encounter. Unusual phenomena in this thesis refers to felt experiences which are considered to be beyond the everyday in the Cartesian paradigm and are often referred to as spiritual and/or mystical phenomena. Exploring these phenomena brings to light the potentialities in the vastness of consciousness which is considered to be an integral aspect of human existence in the thesis.

I chose Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenological methodology for the research because it gives credence to the many and varied possibilities and potentialities both in particular lived experiences and in human existence as a whole. van Manen's lived existentials provides the framework in which the participants experiences are explored.

What emerged from the research is that unusual phenomena are not unusual for the participants. Although such phenomena are less visible and therefore less familiar in the everyday world, they are recognizable through their consistent presentation. This includes the participants having a powerful sense of 'knowing' which is all-encompassing and is beyond familiar landmarks such as the linear models of time and space. The participants bring their 'knowing' into the everyday world through

embodiment and through their acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of existence. The expression of interconnectedness is experienced by the participants as lovingness, from which the ability for immediate healing in their therapeutic work becomes apparent.

The participants' accounts show a capacity for accessing the subtleties of human existence which emerge in the phenomenological process as the forgotten feminine of consciousness. The feminine of consciousness is a term used to describe a fundamental state of 'being' in contrast to the everyday masculine principle of 'doing'. The research has implications for psychotherapy and counselling as it illuminates the need for a holistic approach which acknowledges the multidimensionality of human existence.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Charting new frontiers

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in seeing with new eyes (Proust, 1934, p.114).

As I set out to begin this thesis “The forgotten feminine: A hermeneutic phenomenological study of psychotherapists/counsellors who work with unusual phenomena”, I found an assignment I had written in November, 2002 for the AUT paper Science for Psychotherapeutic Practice, in which I discussed the phenomena of ‘encounters of the third kind’ in the therapeutic relationship. It became apparent to me that wanting to write about the relative invisibility yet the significance of these experiences in my work had been alive in me for some time. Therefore the decision to undertake research about such phenomena was something of a natural academic progression as well as reflecting my passion about this aspect of psychotherapy and counselling.

In the assignment I described the phenomena in question as those experiences during psychotherapy and counselling which challenge both accepted therapeutic practice with their ‘otherworldliness’ and take us beyond the rational and scientifically explainable. They are considered ‘unusual’

phenomena in that they are beyond the parameters of the everyday consensus of reality.

Researching psychotherapists/counsellors who work with unusual phenomena first requires exploration about what constitutes unusual phenomena. In simple terms these may be regarded as the ‘mysteries’ of life. They may be called spiritual, mystical, or transpersonal experiences, altered states of consciousness, and experiences of non-dual reality. They are experiences which are often difficult to define. As Proust (1934) suggests, they are experiences which require looking at the landscape with eyes other than those of everyday consensual reality.

Secondly, what is considered to be the everyday consensus of reality also requires further exploration. The paradigm within which an understanding of everyday reality is shaped in the Western tradition is frequently referred to as Cartesian-Kantian (Tarnas, 1991). This influence on Western epistemology and ontology is described by Spretnak (1999) as mechanistic, reductionist, deterministic, and materialist in which “what matters most is that which can be measured, counted and quantified” (p.135). She also describes the forceful intensification of the three discontinuities in Western thought, the break between humans and nature, body and mind, and self and the world as “the most significant feature of the modern worldview” (p.139).

It is my observation that these discontinuities in Western thought have in turn contributed to a hegemony of science which has excluded other systems of knowledge from making their full contribution to a cosmological understanding (Daniels & McNutt, 1997). Tarnas (1991) outlines for example that the cost of being immersed in a paradigm of discontinuities has meant the ratification of a state of consciousness in which experience of the numinous depths of reality has been systematically extinguished. This has in turn meant a devaluing and disavowing of subjective experiences, of emotions, poetry and dreaming; of the wisdom and understandings within different cultures and world views, that is, matters which lie beyond or challenge the Cartesian-Kantian paradigm, with its backdrop of disembodiment, hierarchical and power relations issues (D'Adamo, 2004). In other words science has given us much to know and do, but little to *love* (D'Adamo, 2004).

The Cartesian paradigm also leaves footprints in the therapeutic landscape. For example as Leonard (1994) observes, psychoanalytic theory, (the foundation of modern psychotherapy), evolved during an era where Cartesian influenced reductionist science was the dominant paradigm. He notes that psychotherapy “remains largely based within Cartesian conceptual thinking...and the essential Cartesian division between fantasy and reality which is based in Newtonian

physics” (p.20). He adds that unusual phenomena are therefore associated with occult ideas and dismissed today just as they were in Freud’s time.

Cartesian footprints are evident too in modern academic thought. Tacey (2003) describes modern academia as “profoundly secular and resistant to religion and spirituality” (p.61). He adds that spirituality within academia is treated as having “incredulous claims or unfounded propositions that have no basis in reality” (p.61). He goes on to say that studies and research indicate that assumptions of secularism in the general population have arisen because of dwindling denominational and traditional church attendance yet therapists and psychologists report a great deal of spiritual and religious feeling often ‘buried’ in the inner lives of individuals.

If, as research and anecdotal evidence suggest, spirituality and religion are alive but buried in the inner lives of individuals, yet Cartesian-influenced, secularist thinking has debunked such experiences, and traditional avenues such as the church are no longer inviting, how and where are such feelings and experiences explored, discussed, perhaps even, embraced?

It is becoming increasingly evident that it is psychotherapists and counsellors who are being called upon to enter this largely uncharted frontier in modern day therapeutic practice.

The lived experiences of psychotherapists and counsellors who work with unusual phenomena arise from the context of consciousness. This poses questions from both everyday and existential perspectives. For example, how are experiences beyond the parameters of 'everyday' consciousness defined? Is there sufficient everyday functioning in both our clients and ourselves for these experiences to be helpful rather than destabilizing? How do other ways of experiencing consciousness affect the 'boundaries' between client and psychotherapist and counsellor including the role of holding/containing the relationship? Where does this place us as psychotherapists and counsellors bound by Codes of Ethics? These questions may be kept in mind as the study unfolds.

Working with phenomena considered to be beyond the everyday in psychotherapy and counselling also prompts psychodynamic concerns such as: how do experiences of unusual phenomena and other experiences of consciousness correlate with psychotherapeutic issues such as transference and counter-transference; are clients and psychotherapists/counsellors who acknowledge and experience unusual phenomena, actually presenting with fantasies, infantile or narcissistic, omnipotent projections?

The range of potentialities within human existence and how these manifest in psychotherapy and counselling interests me deeply. As psychotherapists and

counsellors we may have been trained in various modalities and bring sound theoretical knowledge to our role as therapists, but mostly it is “ourselves” upon whom we rely to do what it is we do. This means that we bring all manner of possibilities to our work. One of these possibilities is what Bugental (1987, cited in Torii, 2005) suggests, “psychotherapists are regarded as the latest descendants of a long line of healers which can be traced back to historic times” (p.1). The idea of therapists as “healers” and individual therapists who potentially work in this way are the impetus for my study.

Heidgger (1977, cited in van Manen, 2006) says that hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy and methodology provide the opportunity for following an impetus by being able to “create one’s path, not follow a path” (p.208). An awareness of the plethora of possibilities in human ‘being’ beyond both the lenses of the Cartesian paradigm and the traditions of religion, is reflective of hermeneutic phenomenological understanding and is the basis for the study. Presenting the stories of therapists who work with unusual phenomena using van Manen’s (1990) ‘lifeworlds’ provides a framework whereby their lived experiences can be brought to light.

Creating a path in the lifeworld hermeneutic tradition requires mindfulness and transparency. The inquirer must be as visible as the inquiry. Inwood

(1997) says Heidegger explains this as “Every inquiry is a seeking...Inquiry, as a kind of seeking must be guided beforehand by what is sought. So the meaning (of Being) must already be available to us in some way” (p.27). Therefore, in order to understand this inquiry, this journey, it is time to meet the inquirer and to know something of what van Manen (1990) would describe as my ‘lifeworld’.

The journeyer

Know thyself (Inscription on the Oracle of Delphi, Greece – cited in Grof, 1988, p.xi)

The idea of being a journeyer in the research process arose from Smythe and Spence’s (1996) outline for doing phenomenological/hermeneutic research. They speak about writing out pre-understandings and revisiting them through the process of the research journey. Pre-understandings in the context of hermeneutic phenomenological research means identifying my own prejudices and historical influences. This ensures that the research is undertaken with a mindfulness about what is already alive in me that may influence the research, and how this might also limit me from “coming to understand in a new way” (p.1).

Smythe and Spence (1996) also recommend being interviewed by another researcher to help clarify pre-understandings by having a personal transcript.

I decided to have pre-understanding interviews with two researchers who represented different points of view before undertaking the research. I considered that my topic of exploring experiences beyond everyday frameworks required me to have as much clarity as possible. Having contrasting perspectives provided depth and insight into both my own understandings and into the hermeneutic phenomenological interview process. This enables me to present myself as a journeyer in a mindful and transparent way.

My ancestors were Celtic, Cornish and Welsh/Spanish with my surname Sleeman also being a familiar name in Arabic cultures. Somewhere in the blending of these cultures came the facility for either “seeing” things differently and/or having a far-reaching imagination. In my childhood I thought everybody experienced the things I did such as seeing people from all cultures who were not physically present, sometimes seeing colours and energies around people, having visions, and having a “sixth sense” about all manner of things. As I grew older I realized that other people did not appear to have these experiences, and I tried to block them out believing both the experiences and myself to be somehow odd and unacceptable. Apart from my mother, there was no-one to talk with about these experiences, and as my

mother had not encountered the experiences herself, she could only provide encouragement that it was not a type of “madness”.

I have explored various religions throughout my life but found difficulty identifying with what appeared to be largely patriarchal doctrine in which I could hear no significant women’s voices nor an understanding or acceptance of the experiences I had been having. It was not until I commenced counsellor training and began regular sessions with a psychotherapist that I was able to share these experiences openly. The psychotherapist was not only open to these, she too had encountered such phenomena and could speak from a comfortable and comforting place about them. Gradually I learned to manage their often overwhelming nature. This enabled me to make meaning of them, to see them as an aspect of my being and to accept such phenomena as potentially supportive, insightful and rich life experiences. According to van Manen (1990), in order to reflect on phenomena in the lived world, essential pre-understandings of the phenomena need to be present. I believe that my life experiences provide the essential pre-understandings to engage in a study of this kind.

I went on to become a psychotherapist/counsellor engaging in the same type of experiences with clients. These are often surprising in their diversity, and profoundly moving. In this way, “know thyself”, perhaps an epistemological

possibility, became an integral part of the ongoing journey in which I was no longer a stranger at times to myself or others. The ontological potential though was in the profundity of truly “Being-in-the-world”. Therefore the lived experience of being a therapist who works with unusual phenomena is “the intersection of commonality” which has evolved into a hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry (Crotty, 1998). van Manen (1990) describes this intersection as one part of the dynamic interplay of six research activities i.e. “turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world” (p.30). I could not think of a more fitting description for both my interest in the study and the topic as a whole.

Heidegger’s (1962, cited in Smythe, 1996) hermeneutic phenomenological observation that thinking is always situated and contextual means that I bring not only my present day beliefs and understandings, but that these have in turn been shaped by the situations and contexts in which I have both literally and figuratively, found myself. I am aware both as a therapist and researcher that the influence of the Christian tradition has been present throughout my childhood and adolescence here in New Zealand/Aotearoa. In rural Southland where I grew up during the 1950s and 1960s, the church was a pivotal part of the community. The cycles of nature and the interconnectedness of life were also apparent in this rural life.

I then attended an Anglican girls' boarding school in the 70s and participated in the rituals of daily morning and evening prayers, grace at mealtimes and church on Sundays. At this school the influence of the civil rights movement and feminism was evident in the attitudes and values of our teachers and we were encouraged both to inquire and to challenge status quo ideologies. Therefore in both stages of my life there were contrasts between the traditional (including religion), and 'other' (nature and differing worldviews). The outer contrasts reflected my inner world in which I held awareness of the expected and everyday, whilst simultaneously having experiences which were indicative of other ways of being.

As an adult I do not have a faith to which I solely affiliate myself. I have explored many systems of beliefs and ways of being, and I am aware of both the possibilities and limitations for me in each one of these. My awareness is of immense interconnectivity and of the widest expressions of love. My understandings have been greatly expanded by participation in the AUT courses Jungian and Transpersonal Psychology with Dr Lea Holford and both Knowledge and Science in Psychotherapeutic Practice with Margot Solomon. Academically, I am a curious seeker who desires to allow experiences to speak for themselves and for others to find and make their own connections. These thoughts reflect a natural leaning towards a hermeneutic

phenomenological approach which became apparent whilst doing the Practice Reality paper at AUT with Dr Liz Smythe (2002). She says a hermeneutic approach would never assume that there is only one way, or one interpretation, or one truth (Practice Reality Book of Readings, p.7). Hence hermeneutic phenomenology provides an expansive framework for journeying openly into research about unusual phenomena without specific religiosity and out from under the ubiquitous umbrella of quantitative scientism.

Sharing the journey are my supervisors, Margot Solomon and Dr Lynne Giddings. When asked to explain what unusual phenomena means to each of them they variously described such phenomena as “outside the construct of the everyday reality of what is expected; that some people are tuned into it; having a recognition that the ordinary senses don’t tell us all there is, and that we get so captured by what is tangible and accountable in the world that we overlook the part of us that can experience other ways”. Their stories enable me as the journey diarist in the hermeneutic phenomenological tradition, to also reflexively encompass their world views as the writing unfolds.

Outline of the study

The Literature Review (Chapter Two) establishes a context in which unusual phenomena or the mysteries of life may be discussed. The influence of religion is noted and the vast landscape of consciousness is explored in which differing existential and ontological perspectives provide contrasts to the Cartesian-influenced everyday world. The significance of the underlying phenomenon of interconnectedness in consciousness is examined and studies of the spiritual component of therapy are incorporated into the discussion.

In Chapter Three the hermeneutic phenomenology methodology for the study is fully outlined. The chapter introduces the philosophical background including Heidegger's work and van Manen's (1990) lifeworld existentials. In the methods section I draw upon Tobin and Begleys (2004) concept of goodness as an application of rigour in the study. The six research activities of the hermeneutic process are addressed, as is the collection and management of research data, and information about the participants in the study. I pay particular attention to the ethical considerations of the study in keeping with the requirements of the AUT Ethics Committee, the ethical principles of both the New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC) and New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists (NZAP), and the integrity of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Chapter Four begins the hermeneutic phenomenological journey of the study. In this chapter **knowing** emerges as *the* essential theme of the study and is the participants' description of their lived experiences of consciousness. (**Knowing** is written in bold font throughout the study to differentiate it from everyday knowing. **Being** is also written in bold font to denote **being** as existence.)

Other themes that arise in the study emanate from this fundamental experience of **knowing**. Chapter Four explores the many facets of the lived experience of **knowing** and examines the ways in which **knowing** is known. The inter-relationship between imagination, intuition and mystical experiences and **knowing** is made visible, and this is exemplified through the participants' use of metaphor to explain their experiences. The participants as **knowers** and the paradoxical nature of their **knowings** are also explored.

Chapter Five reveals the way in which **knowing** is brought into **being**. Interconnectedness emerges as a manifestation of **knowing** and is therefore an essential theme from which other themes subsequently reveal themselves. The chapter also includes love as the fundamental expression of both **knowing** and interconnectedness which is revealed as lovingness. In this regard, lovingness is also an essential theme. The embodiment of the lived experiences of **knowing** is discussed as an intertwined aspect of **knowing**

and the essential theme of healing in the **knowing** emerges as a natural flow from interconnectedness, lovingness and embodiment. The archetype of the wounded-healer also emerges as a significant aspect of healing.

Chapter Six explores how it is for the participants working with **knowing** in a profession and culture in which **knowing** is generally more peripheral than central. This leads onto Chapter Seven and a discussion of the findings of the study, along with the implications for practice, education and further research. The strengths and limitations of the study are reviewed and the study draws to an end with the conclusion.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To Look At Any Thing

To look at any thing
if you would know that thing,
You must look at it long:
To look at this green and say
“I have seen spring in these
woods,” will not do – you must
be the thing you see:
You must be the dark snakes of
stems and ferny plumes of leaves,
You must enter in
to the small silences between
the leaves,
You must take your time
and touch the very place
they issue from.

D. Moffitt (1971, cited in Anderson, Braud & Valle, 1996)

For me, the above poem explains my lived experience of both my research into the stories of therapists who work with unusual phenomena and the phenomena itself. The Literature Review chapter creates the foundation, the context, for what emerges in the findings.

The mysteries of life

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious.
(Albert Einstein, 1931, p.42)

I used the term “mysteries of life” when advertising for participants for the study (Appendix A). I was attempting to describe the mystery that is unusual phenomena in a broad and neutral manner. How do we describe the mysteries of life? Instead of the idea that the mysteries of life are beyond the categories of thought in human conception, mysteries are regarded as problems to be solved within the confines of the Cartesian-Kantian paradigm (Campbell, 1989; Boyer, 2002).

Keats (1817) said “One of the traits required for writing poetry is ‘negative capability, i.e. when a man (and a woman) is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason’” (cited in Schermer, 2003, p.129). It is my assertion too that where certainty resides and truth must prevail, there is little room for mystery or for experiences other than those prescribed as conceivable and believable in everyday reality. Heidegger’s work guides the study because his observation is that the transformation of truth into the certainty of representational thinking is characteristic of the Western tradition and his hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy provides an alternative view (Grenz, 1996).

The requirements of 'negative capability', of remaining in uncertainties, mysteries and doubts without reaching for something familiar and safe in the lingering influence of the Cartesian paradigm, means that unusual phenomena continues to be understood from a perspective which is often skeptical of its existence. Grof and Grof (1989) very aptly sum up my observation of this dilemma. They say:

In a universe where only the tangible, material and measurable are real, all forms of religious and mystical phenomena appear to be products of superstition that suggest a lack of education, irrationality and a tendency toward primitive, magical thinking (p.3).

Collectively, these difficult-to-explain phenomena are referred to as 'psi-phenomena', which Carter (2002) says represents scientists' requirement for demonstrability and concrete information, rather than the inner certainty that those who experience spiritual and mystical phenomena offer as evidence of their existence. Therefore explanations for, and interpretations of, mystical and spiritual phenomena continue to be presented in terms of the Cartesian paradigm which favours mechanistic, reductionist, brain and behavioural functioning descriptions. Examples of reductionist descriptions include: that consciousness emerges when tension is maintained in a perpetual vacuum; that oneness is created by the close-down of the boundary-making parts of the self; the sense of presence is formed by the splitting of the self system in

two and ecstasy comes from turning off the right amygdala (Carter, 2002, p.211).

It is my observation that interpreting mystical experiences, including those in the psychotherapeutic/counselling context, tends to use a Cartesian-Kantian epistemology. I assert that this epistemology makes the mistake of assuming that a mystical experience is a particular type of human experience and therefore subject to the same treatment as everyday human experience, while mystics insist that their knowledge is gained as a result of employing faculties which are not everyday human ones (Foreman, 1998). The dominance of the Cartesian-Kantian paradigm has meant that ancient knowledge which views science and spirituality as two aspects of the same mystery, is not only overlooked, but has placed the two domains in often hostile opposition to each other (Freke & Gandy, 1997).

The influence of religion

Paradoxically, despite the lingering influences of Descartes, and Newtonian scientism, in which all manner of unusual phenomena is generally marginalised, it is the diversity of beliefs under the umbrellas of religion and spirituality that are regarded as adding credence to the notion of unusual phenomena. Boyer (2002) says the diversity of beliefs act as an indicator that

some beliefs are plausible to some people, and that some concepts trigger our emotionality and connect our social minds. Tremlin (2006) supports this observation by noting that theologians and religious leaders cannot simply teach any ideas they want because people select only those ideas with the best fit for themselves.

Descriptions of the universe found in science-oriented chaos theory and complexity theory echo spiritual texts (Schermer, 2003). Both speak of creation, destruction, and the inexplicable, and offer diverse ways to observe and measure the same event. Drawing parallels between these understandings and the ongoing proliferation of religions throughout history, supports the premise that religions reflect *both* everyday human agency *and* the human urge and potential for transcendence.

The urge for religion and spirituality in our life, is explained by Spinelli (1989, cited in Heays, 2005) as our need to make the inexplicable less disturbing for ourselves and that provided the meaning we find is acceptable to us, it reduces the disturbance we experience. Other observations include that in one form or another each religion offers its followers something that leads them from the tangible world to the other unseen world, and that just as we anthropomorphise, so too do we “deity-ise”, that is, represent supernatural

agents as humanlike to make them intelligible to us (Geering, 1975; Tremlin, 2006).

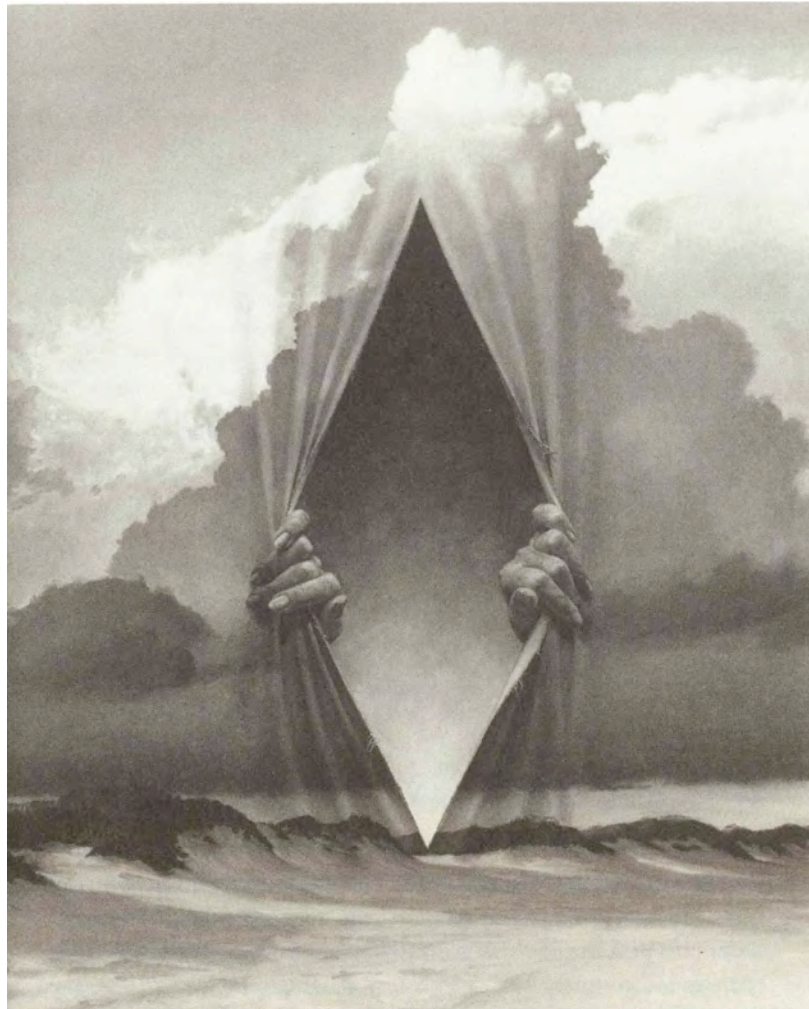
The rhetoric of the phenomenon of religion is the language from which unusual phenomena is more commonly sourced. It is a language through which we may make meaning of these mysteries of life. Unusual phenomena is variously described as mystical; spiritual; transcendent; God; the Divine; the Holy Spirit; transpersonal; psychic; experiences of profound nothingness; numinous; the ‘other’; visions; out of body experiences; the collective unconscious; the Great Mystery and the Absolute Mystery; and altered or ‘other’ states of human consciousness. Jones (1994) offers the teleological perspective that “religion structures our understanding of the ultimate context of our existence” (p.192).

Thinking about the ultimate context of our existence inevitably leads to existential and ontological discussion about the nature of consciousness. In a sense *consciousness* is the vast frontier in which the exploration of therapists who work with unusual phenomena exists. van Manen (1990) says “Consciousness is the only access human beings have to the world” (p.9). His thinking is influential in the study as his framework of lived existentials shapes the findings. He believes that “anything that presents itself to

consciousness, real or imagined, empirically measurable or subjectively felt, is potentially of interest to phenomenology” (p.9).

The study proposes that unusual phenomena are subjectively felt experiences and that such phenomena are unlikely to be empirically measurable. The phenomena in question may be deemed to be imagined and/or arise in what we refer to as our intuition. Nevertheless, such phenomena are experienced as being very real to the participants. Since the phenomena arise somewhere in the landscape of the vast possibilities of consciousness, some exploration of ‘what is consciousness’ ensues.

Consciousness – bravely exploring the landscape...



Second Opening by N. Witt (Hollis, 2000, p.85).

I particularly love the painting *Second Opening* by Nancy Witt because it evokes for me both a sense of the unknown-ness and perhaps the unknowable-ness of consciousness. As I commenced my study I wondered if

consciousness as I have come to understand it can be described and defined? The Collins English Dictionary (2003) defines consciousness as “denoting or relating to a part of the human mind that is aware of the person’s self, environment and mental activity” (p.359). Another definition of a similar nature is that consciousness is the state of mind in which we know our own mind (Cohen, 1996). Both reflect reductionist thinking in the tradition of Cartesian dualism, which presumes that consciousness can be intellectualized and confined into an explainable cognitive mechanism or brain/mind functioning. For example, neuroscientists believe consciousness can be explained by identifying neural correlates of consciousness in the brain (Goleman, 1997).

I took my lead from the Dalai Lama, whose Buddhist faith reflects centuries of awareness of consciousness. He says that from his perspective there are many degrees of subtlety of consciousness and science has looked only at the ordinary levels (Goleman, 1997, p.7). I remain unconvinced as to whether rational and/or neuropsychological explanations will be able to encompass the entirety of consciousness as I experience and understand it, therefore this study follows the more philosophical perspective of consciousness.

Phenomenological philosophers such as Merleau-Ponty (2002) define consciousness as our understanding of the world, as being “already there, as

an inalienable presence which precedes reflection” (p.34). In other words it is determined by lived experience of space, time and the world and is arrived at by description of its lived-ness and not by explanation or analysis. In terms of psychotherapy he translates this as manifesting in the intersubjectivity of therapist and client which he describes as an exploration of “my thought and his (hers) interwoven into a single fabric” (p.32). What he is describing is connected consciousness as a felt or lived experience in all possible modalities.

Other philosophers and people of faith also look at consciousness from the perspective of the lived experience of consciousness. Tart (1994) defines consciousness as “our very mode of being and the source of the values by which we live our life” (p.255). de Quincey (2000) says consciousness is a paradox, simultaneously being “our deepest mystery and our most intimate reality” (p.18). Aurobindo (1970) describes how Hinduism views consciousness as the fundamental thing in existence, and that the energy, motion and movement of consciousness creates the universe and all that is in it.

Cortright (1997) believes that consciousness is the intersection between spirituality and therapy because both practices explore, expand, deepen and enhance consciousness itself. Consciousness may be modified and conditioned by our self structures and the relational matrix in which we exist

hence the value of therapy. On the other hand, other forms of therapy such as Grof's (1990) holotropic breathing in which individuals de-emphasise everyday states of consciousness and directly access expanded consciousness, are a reminder that not all consciousness work requires a relational matrix.

Being conscious of consciousness

The goal of the journey is to discover yourself as consciousness.
(Campbell, 1989, p.94).

My experience(s) of consciousness may be best understood from the basis of the Dalai Lama's inherent subtleties (Goleman, 1997), from de Quincey's (2000) paradoxical view and from Tart's (1994) idea of consciousness as our very mode of being. The amalgamation of these views represents the idea that we have the potential to be consciousness itself.

Being consciousness itself

Discovering *ourselves* as consciousness is a challenging prospect in a predominantly scientific and/or theistic world. The words of poets make this concept more accessible. Houston (1987) draws on Rumi, the Sufi mystic and poet, who says:

Not only the thirsty seeks the water,
But the water seeks the thirsty as well (p.194).

Likewise Hollis (2000) quotes the poet Rilke who asks:

Why?” Why in this interlude of grace which we call our lives are we human? Human beings, doomed to die, are cursed and/or blessed with consciousness, yet cling fervently to their mortal fates, because this fleeting world needs us (p.46).

What Rumi and Rilke are suggesting is the possibility that we, as human beings, help creation by being agents of its consciousness, by giving it voice and by celebrating our ‘beingness’. To understand the topic of the study, it is necessary to consider the possibility that we live in a universe in which consciousness is an integral part. This includes the possibility that our presence, our form, our selfhood, and our beliefs are an integral part of, and mirror for, the universe itself (Schermer, 2003). In other words as Freke & Gandy (2001) summarize “The unknowable knows itself by manifesting as the knower and the known” (p.198).

Consciousness as a process and continuum

The unknowable making itself known by manifesting as knower and known is echoed by James (1962, cited in Modell, 2003) who sees consciousness as a *process* rather an entity, or a distinguishable single thing. My submission is that the expansive multidimensionality of consciousness offers the possibility that consciousness is more akin to a vast “continuum” rather than the Western dualistic epistemological baseline of so-called ‘normality’ from

which various ‘altered states’ are said to arise. Synonyms for continuum include all-present, ubiquitous, everywhere, infinite, presence and accessible (Roget’s Thesaurus, 2001, p.171). Such synonyms encompass endless possibilities. It seems that our differing awarenesses of a continuum of consciousness are part of our uniqueness, part of our contextual landscape. In a kind of paradox, because consciousness lacks specific content, regardless of how far our **knowing** of the continuum extends, there is always *more*.

The struggle of encompassing consciousness

Despite my wonderings and meaning making, I continued to struggle with the enormity of bringing the vast horizons of consciousness into discussion in the study. It seemed the more I pursued some means of explanation, the more expansive, elusive and overwhelming notions of consciousness became. As Maitland (1995) suggests “our frail intelligences try and simplify the whole thing (consciousness, speed of light, time, space and energy) to make the enormity of what we do not know, bearable” (p.30).

During a meditation I realized that much exploration of consciousness had already been done. People in ancient cultures and esoteric mystical traditions have been exploring the multidimensionality and subtleties of consciousness for hundreds, even thousands of years. I did not have to reinvent the wheel. I merely needed to return to those readings, those understandings and

knowings which resonated and offered meaning, in my early attempts to understand my own reality.

Consciousness and separation

My initial experience of struggle perfectly exemplifies being ingrained with the Cartesian sense of feeling separate from others. Garguilo (2006) says this is apparent in our striving to be individuated and in having a sense of consciousness in which we are alone, so that the possibility that this may not be so gets overlooked. He suggests our sense of self is constructed as a consequence of our emphasis on biological, psychological and historical individuation so that we progressively build an internal imaginative/cultural construct of “I”. Traditional therapy reflects the Western cultural construct of “I” as the locus of narcissistic needs and desires *within* the world, whereas for example, “I” for Buddhists is non-existent reality, an illusion. In my scampering for credible discussion of consciousness I got caught in the Western construct of “I” and forgot the bigger picture of consciousness.

The paradox of consciousness

Stolorow, Atwood and Orange (2002) also describe this experience of “I – ness” as our Cartesian inheritance and speak of the vulnerability inherent in a world view which separates the outer real world from our interior mind of

conscious psychic content so that our subjectivity is dichotomized and rigidified into inner and outer. On the other hand, Hollis (2000) proposes the idea that the dichotomizing and splitting of “I-ness” is the “paradox of consciousness” (p.96). His belief is similar to Freke and Gandy’s (2001) position that the unknowable knows itself by manifesting as *both* knower and known.

In other words, some experience of separation is required because as Hollis (2000) says, without the splitting of primal unity, consciousness cannot be birthed (p.96). Although differentiating consciousness may be necessary, it not only creates a splintered and separated sense of consciousness in which the outer world has primacy and greater credibility, but also creates the predisposition to vulnerability as described above (Stolorow, Atwood and Orange, 2002).

Therefore the way in which we know and experience consciousness is fragmented, which in turn is reinforced by language which stresses the difference between separate discrete items (Schermer, 2003). Firman and Gila (2002) add to the conundrum by stating that splitting is inevitably experienced in the dualities of right/wrong and good/bad, thereby creating the inner wounding which further compounds the sense of separation from the source of our **being**, also known as the continuum of consciousness.

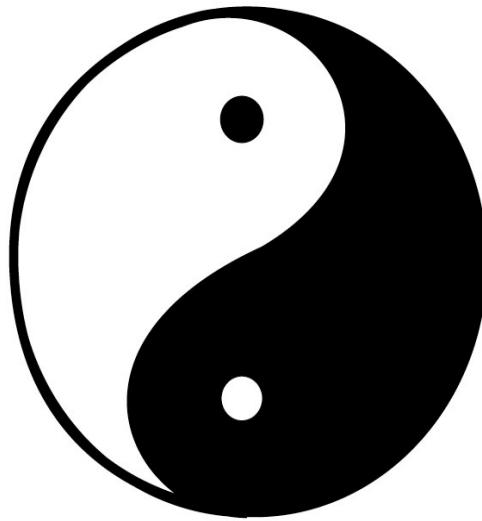
The mainstay of psychotherapy is considered to be the re-integration of those parts of the self which are wounded, split off, unacknowledged and unrecognized. My proposition is what if those split off part(s) represent a sense of something more, of 'other', and/or others, aspects of **being** which go unacknowledged in the predominantly Cartesian paradigm in which psychotherapy and counselling is situated? I am suggesting that 'other' already exists in us like a distant and far off memory we seek to recover. This may be described as a yearning, or a divine discontent. James (1994) describes this as an uneasiness in our lives, a sense that there is something wrong or missing in us. I call this possibility the forgotten feminine.

The forgotten feminine

The split off "other" is referred to by Winnicott (1971) as the feminine. He is not referring to the specific gender distinction but to the object relating of the feminine (in both males and females). He asserts that in contrast to the object-relating of the male element which presupposes separation, the object-relating of the feminine is the ongoingness of existence. Keller (2003) describes how separation has evolved to reflect the primary validation of positive masculine objectification, in contrast to the blurred boundaries between subject and object which are associated with the feminine.

This separation has resulted in epistemological quests being given priority over existentialism and ontology in the everyday world. In turn this has created a kind of crisis of consciousness in which a whole other aspect of existence, the feminine or ongoingness, is forgotten. The sense of separation is described as unleashing a longing and desire for completion, for reconnection (Nelson, 1994; Almaas, 1996; Keller, 2003; Epstein, 2005). Keller (2003) says the longing is for a return to the unity with mother. Nelson (1994) describes it as *Deus absconditus*, Gods absence. Epstein (2005) says it is ultimately a search for **being** and Almaas (1996) says it is the seeking of the Essence.

The forgotten aspect of existence has created an imbalance of consciousness which is compounded and made invisible by the primacy of the outer world inherent in our culture. In contrast, the ancient Chinese Tao symbol of the Tai Chi Tu commonly known as the yin/yang symbol represents an integrated model of consciousness.



Tai Chi Tu (from Freke & Gandy, 1997, p.83)

The Tai Chi Tu is believed to symbolise the Supreme Ultimate, an integrated cosmos which includes both feminine (yin) and masculine (yang) principles. Together these represent the interconnectedness of life in which the different parts contain the essence of each other and yet all are parts of the whole. It represents the resolution of all opposites and the reconciliation of all paradoxes (Freke and Gandy, 1997).

The dualism of consciousness and faith

The concept of integration as proposed by the Tai Chi Tu contrasts with dualistic notions of traditional faiths. Hillman (1975) and Deikman (1983) say that the dualism of Cartesian ideology is reflected not only in the

compounding of good and evil scenarios, but also in the way it mirrors the separate world of the individual and the object of their faith in traditional religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Deikman maintains that organized religions encourage the split between object and subject when they locate God as an outer phenomenon instead of what may be described as ‘that which may be experienced’ (p.7). Hillman (1975) describes the individuation effect as mirroring the psychological “monotheism of consciousness” in our culture in which the loneliness in our personalized subjectivity denies us the possibilities for diversity and connectivity that a polytheistic archetypal understanding and expression of consciousness may provide (p.41). These observations indicate that the pervasiveness of dualism is so entrenched that it belies other possibilities of being-in-the-world.

Bringing consciousness into being

Consciousness is our *being*. When we focus on that which we are, rather than on *what* we are experiencing, consciousness is both subject and object (Freke & Gandy, 2001, p.128).

Interconnecting

Freke and Gandy (2001) in the quote above are referring to the idea of consciousness as undivided oneness in which we are an integral part. Jung (1960) referred to this concept as the collective consciousness (p.116). By viewing ourselves and the world from a oneness perspective, or as part of the

collective unconscious rather than as a separate individual functioning in the world, we are able to acknowledge our connectedness with one another. Connectedness may be further expanded to consider what the Nobel award winning quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli (1925) proposed as being interconnectedness (cited in Heisenberg, 1974).

Quantum physics and interconnectedness

Pauli's (1925) discoveries about the functioning of the universe indicated to him, that the universe it is not separate and inviolate as originally thought (cited in Heisenberg, 1974). Other writers tell us that human beings and all living things are "a coalescence of energy in an energetic field" (McTaggart, 2001, p.1), and "that we exist in a seamless reality which is in constant flux" (Broomfield, 1997, p.69). Gough (1987) says that this infinite ocean of energy is known as the Casimir Effect and demonstrates a convergence between understandings of consciousness and science (electronic source).

In other words, mystics and shamans have been describing for centuries what quantum physics now tells us, that the cosmos is an organic, strongly interconnected integral system in which human beings and all living things are a conscious part (Laszlo, 2006). Sheldrake (2003) describes interconnectedness as phenomenon he calls the extended mind and he says this is possible because we exist in a field of consciousness he describes as a

field of morphic resonance. Prasinós (1992) says experiences of consciousness encompass a sense of **being** in which there is harmony or resonance with the beyond and, and that we are also a part of and belong to the beyond. Simultaneously being *a part of*, and *belonging to*, reflects the interconnectedness which I see as being a manifestation of the continuum of consciousness.

The continuum of consciousness

The idea of a continuum of consciousness supports James' (1994) proposal that normal waking consciousness, or rational consciousness, is only one type of consciousness, "whilst all about it, parted by the filmiest of screens" are other forms of consciousness of which we may remain unaware throughout life (p.94). Experiences in which we glimpse through the screen may also be called unusual phenomena and the mysteries of life. These may be encountered in the experience of the 'slowing down of time' or 'life flashing before us' during an accident or near death experience. These moments of 'timelessness' are included in van Manen's (1990) hermeneutic phenomenological methodology which he refers to as lived existential or temporality, our *felt* experience of time.

The phenomenon of “falling in love” alerts us to another unusual phenomenon in which our everyday sense of consciousness becomes greatly expanded. All of van Manen’s (1990) ‘lived existentials’ may be experienced in ‘intricate unity’ in the experience of falling in love. Lived time (temporality) and lived space (spatiality) take on different dimensions, the physical experience of being in love is almost visceral (lived body) and the awareness of lived ‘other’ (relationality) and self is hugely enhanced. Another such phenomenon is what Sheldrake (2003) refers to as our awareness to the ‘sense of being stared at’, experiences of the field of consciousness he calls the ‘morphic field’. These moments may be regarded as scientific anomalies but as James (1994) observes, such experiences also “forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality” (p.94).

In this study I have referred to these anomalies, these different accounts and experiences with/of reality, as “unusual phenomena” but as evidenced, these phenomena, these ‘accounts with reality’, are not unusual for some people, they are merely examples of other ways of “Being-in-the-world”. Heidegger (1962) coined the phrase Being-in-the-world or Dasein to refer to a person’s “pre-reflective awareness of their being in and of the world” (Orbanic, 1999, p.138). Lavery (2003) believes Heidegger (1962) interprets consciousness as

co-constitutional in which individuals and experiences are unable to exist without each other.

The Heideggerean view of a person as having an “ontological knowing of self” (Orbanic, 1999, p.139), contrasts with the Cartesian view which “rigidly separates an internal mental subject from an externally real world” (Atwood, Orange & Stolorow, 2002, p.281). The concept of Dasein supports my observation that there are *many* ways in which we construct and are constructed by our understanding of reality, of our “Being-in-the-world” (Orbanic, p.139).

Interconnectedness in other world views

The words of Sealth, Chief of the Duwamish, speak of **knowing** and interconnectedness from outside of traditional Western epistemology.

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and every humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people... the beast, the tree, the man, they all share the same breath (cited in Broomfield, 1997, p.56).

Exposure to other ways of **knowing** and **Being-in-the-world**, that is, other epistemological and ontological views provides the opportunity for standing outside our paradigmatic influences. Some researchers have studied

consciousness in terms of the contrasts between paradigms, as reflected in differing cultures and worldviews.

Goleman (1994) observes that other cultures, judged as not being materially productive are nevertheless far more knowledgeable in the intricacies of consciousness. Nelson (1994) notes that Eastern systems of healing incorporate the consideration of both the healers and the patients states of consciousness as being as significant as a physical examination in Western medicine. He adds that the Eastern mind “recognizes brain, psyche and spirit as manifestations of a vast, multilayered sea of consciousness immediately shared by all sentient beings” (p.xxii). D’Aquili and Newberg (1999) findings support Nelson’s observations. They observe that the cultures of the Far East tend to favour consciousness or subjective awareness as prior whereas Western cultures ascribe priority to external reality.

I believe what Daniels and McNutt (1997) are saying when they suggest that for knowledge to advance it is going to be necessary to consider the contributions of other, non-scientific approaches, which may have their origins in diverse times and cultures, is that in being aware of the many traditions in which the multi-dimensionality of existence, of **being**, is acknowledged, we allow for human diversity to be tolerated, respected and appreciated.

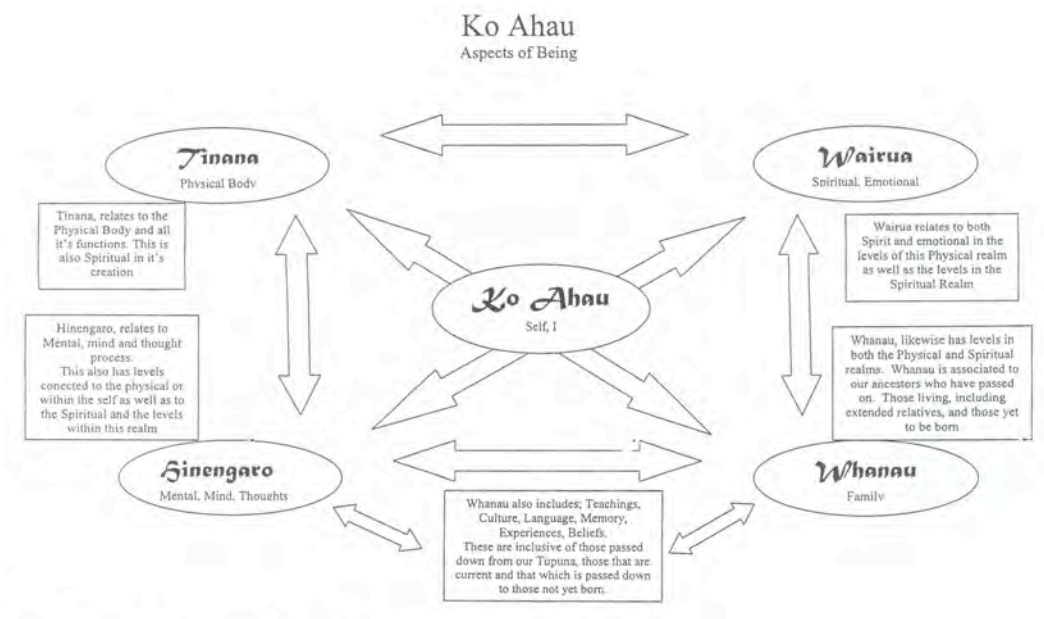
New Zealand/ Aotearoa

With this in mind, and in keeping with the context of the study being based in New Zealand/Aotearoa, the world view of the Tangata Whenua, the indigenous people of the land, Māori, represent just such a diversity. Turei (2007) describes Māori as being “a surviving earth culture” (New Zealand Herald, March 21, p.B4).

Māori is historically an oral culture where the precepts of **being** and tradition are also represented in the carvings and tukutuku panels of the wharenui on the marae. This culture offers to its people a wholly comprehensive understanding of the integration of mind-body-soul and past-present-future; along with the understanding of the interconnectedness both between people and with all of nature, which has maintained its own historical knowing because the ongoing and everyday evidence of its reality for Māori has withstood the test of time.

Russell Waetford’s (Kaiako, AUT) generous sharing and discussion of his understanding of Ko Ahau (aspects of being for Māori) (as outlined overleaf). Ko Ahau (Solomon & Waetford, 2007, p.17) includes the recognition of the physical, mental, spiritual, emotional aspects of being and also incorporates a wide sense of family and community as being integral to the Māori sense of

well-being. This includes awareness of differing aspects of consciousness including contact with the ancestors.



The shaman

Palmer (1998) makes the assertion that people in ancient civilizations may have “lived in a consciousness permanently unified with the environment – without benefit of an objectifying intellect” (p.4). Both traditional tikanga Māori, and the ancient activity of shamanism, which has been in evidence for thousands of years, supports Palmers assertion of perceptions and understandings of consciousness as being vast, unlimited, and where all is interrelated. Halifax (1982) describes the shamanic view as understanding the

“kinship of all life” (p.220) in which “nothing can exist in and of itself without being in relationship to other things” (p.220). Black Elk, a Lakota medicine man and visionary, describes this as “seeing in a sacred manner” (cited in Halifax, 1982, p.222). Other descriptions include the shaman as creating “transformations of consciousness” and living in “simultaneous realities” (Peters, 1989, pp.125 &130).

Drawing on studies of shamanic cultures, Kaspro and Scotton (1998) observe that the shamans’ use of ‘altered states of consciousness’ is perhaps the oldest healing technique known in which ordinary states of consciousness, with the attendant maladaptive patterns, are transcended and are powerfully transformed. Sabina (1997) describes the shaman as a go-between who learns through intense personal suffering and initiatory ordeals, how to transit between the world of ordinary reality and the non-ordinary realm.

The shamans’ experience is consistently described as one in which inner experiences rather than rationality become the source of solutions (Nicholson, 1987). Such experiences are also viewed as journeys into the imaginal realm, a term coined by Jung (1960) to describe the place of **being** in which rituals and the symbols that become significant, are guides in the healing process. Nicholson (1987) says that “people who are accustomed to

thinking in terms of more than one reality have no problems understanding the implications of the ‘shamanic state of consciousness’” (p.109) although TePaske (1997) also reminds us of the numerous varieties of shamanism and its extraordinary complexity (p.20).

Mythologem

Although there are many varieties of shamanic experience and it is a complex phenomenon, it is an appropriate metaphor for therapists who work with unusual phenomena. Other terms to describe these therapists may include seer, dream interpreter, visionary, mystic, healer, and medium. Jung (1960, cited in Sabina, 1997) sees such descriptions as archetypal images which he calls “mythologem” (p.46). He defines mythologem as “portions of the world which belong to structural elements of the psyche... constants whose expression is everywhere and at all times the same” (p.46). As Peters (1989) says there is always a cultural filter applied, but whether the experience of consciousness is called “theistic, monotheistic, pantheistic, Buddhist, or shamanic” is less important than the consistently transformative reports of such experiences (p.119).

Spectrum of consciousness

To create his comprehensive account of the nature of human consciousness, Wilber (1994a & 1994b) has also drawn on insights from various cultures and systems of belief, along with aspects of psychology and psychoanalysis, world religions, philosophy, quantum physics, neurophysiology and cognitive sciences. His view is that consciousness and **being**, and epistemology and ontology are inseparable and his writing offers an expansive overview of types and modes of consciousness which account for the enormous diversity of experiences of all human beings. He describes the continuum of consciousness as a “spectrum of consciousness” in which he outlines “a pluridimensional approach to human identity” (1994b, p.22). Wilber’s spectrum, though richly detailed and overarching, falls into the Cartesian paradigm trap of reductionism by categorizing and being hierarchical with a succession of stage-based phases of consciousness (Metzner, 1989).

Interconnecting in therapy

We work with being,
But non-being is what we use.
Te-tao Ching v.11 (cited in Hendricks, 1993).

According to Friedman (2003), Buber (1999), who is considered a deeply spiritual thinker, says the deciding reality (in therapy) is the therapist not the

methods. Cortright (1997) also considers the therapists state of consciousness to be of primary consideration in therapy because it is the instrument or tool with which we work. Consciousness may be regarded as the field which influences and mutually interpenetrates both the therapist and the client. This part of the study explores these possibilities in therapy. The implications of the forgotten feminine in consciousness referred to previously, provides a contrast to the Cartesian influence in therapy. The Cartesian influence keeps therapy within the constraints of everyday thinking. Although this is appropriate on many occasions, it may also preclude remaining open to the many dimensions of consciousness and how they may manifest during therapy.

The Cartesian influence in therapy

Although therapeutic understanding is showing evidence of change Tart (1994) observes, in spite of a hundred years of the general study of psychopathology and its associated therapies, the Western framework is still caught in the belief that there is “*normal, sane consciousness*” (p.49). Again, this is a reflection of the Cartesian idea of an individual mind and a fixed, stable external reality in which much therapeutic understanding is located (Atwood, Orange et al, 2002). These observations fly in the face of the postmodern shift to the deconstruction of grand meta-narratives, and the

exposure to a multitude of belief systems and worldviews, which have created a growing awareness that there is “something more to human experience than modifiable behaviours, intra-psychic conflicts and serotonergic imbalances” (Sperry & Shafranske, 2005, p.12).

Therapist's beliefs reflected in therapy

Because therapeutic interventions necessarily reflect a therapist's interpretations of the nature of reality, therapeutic connectedness is therefore traditionally seen in terms of theoretical constructs. These constructs include notions of intersubjectivity and relationality in which the relationship itself is the basis of therapy. Experiences of a ‘greater sense of other’ if not delusional, are regarded as idealized self-objects or deity-ised self objects. For example, Ogden (1992) speaks of the co-creation of a third subjectivity he calls the analytic third which belongs to neither analyst nor analysand but emerges from their being together. Although he is suggesting a kind of connectedness he nevertheless frames this in the intersubjective language of ‘other’, a third subjectivity, rather than presenting a wider picture in which both therapist and client have the potential to be agents of consciousness which manifests in ‘**being** together’.

I am where I do not think

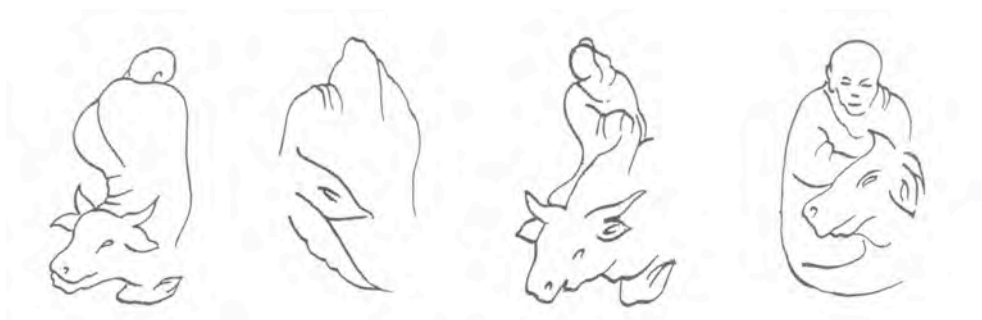
Lacan (1977, cited in Lancaster, 2004) may have been drawing on the wisdom of the Tao, that is, ‘we work with being, but non-being is what we use’, in his assertion that self is the lens of consciousness from which the dimensions of phenomenality, intentionality and accessibility arise and are focused. This translates into his aphorism ‘I think where I am not, therefore I am where I do not think’ and contrasts with the reductionist Cartesian ‘I think therefore I am’ (Lancaster, 2004). The Lacanian view represents a change in therapy towards the unfolding of otherness, instead of the focus on an integrated, ideal self but once again the overview remains intersubjectively based rather than in terms of the expansiveness and connectedness of the continuum of consciousness.

From a wider perspective

The psychoanalytic theorist Bion (1962, cited in West, 1997), writes from a perspective in which therapists and clients have the potential to be in some context or energy field that is somehow greater than just the therapist-client relationship. Bion (1970, cited in Eigen, 1993) uses the sign *O* to represent what he refers to as the thing-in-itself or ultimate reality. Bion’s aphorism “one cannot know *O*, one must *be* it” suggests to me that he has experienced

the wordlessness of being one with consciousness and has chosen an image or symbol to represent his experience.

Similarly, the ten symbolic ox-herding symbols of Zen Buddhism, as shown on the following page, represent multiple meanings of stages on the path to experiencing the wordlessness of consciousness (Vaughan 1980).

**1. Seeking the ox****2. Finding the tracks****3. First glimpse of the ox****4. Catching the ox****5. Taming the ox****6. Riding the ox home****7. Ox forgotten, self alone****8. Both ox and self forgotten****9. Return to the source****10. Entering the marketplace with helping hands**

Sheng-yen (1986) says the ox-herding pictures show the process of taming the mind so that eventually the ox disappears altogether (p.10). Vaughan

(1980) adds that true mastery is invisible and the enlightened one is perfectly ordinary but awake and aware of the intrinsic transpersonal nature of all beings (p.124).

Authenticity

Buber (Walters, 2003) juxtaposed the I/It and I/Thou to distinguish between relationships which contain elements of the everyday (I/It) and those which have the capacity to transcend the everyday and become encounters with what he calls 'the Absolute' (I/Thou). Friedman (2003) describes Buber's belief that greater wholeness may only be achieved by differentiating between mere existence and authentic existence. Friedman adds that Buber believes authenticity enables the direct contact of genuine relationship, the I/Thou, an intersubjectivity which allows for vast possibilities within human relations and creativity.

Although Buber's (Walters, 2003) potentiality in relationships is especially applicable to the therapeutic relationship it nevertheless also raises some of the therapeutic issues discussed in Chapter One (p.5) such as transference and counter-transference, projections, fantasies, boundariedness and the ability of both clients and therapists to function in the everyday world.

Potentiality in the therapeutic relationship

Rosenberg (2005) considers some of these questions in her study *Knowing reality: Psychotherapists and counsellors experiences of inexplicable phenomena while working with clients*, which she writes from a psychodynamic perspective. She observes that the symbolized and meaningful images or **knowings** that appeared to the participants did not emerge from a process of conscious thinking. She says that the participants' capacity for self-observation, as exemplified in their doubts about the validity of their perceptions, suggests that the phenomena in question were not especially illusory, magical nor omnipotent fantasies, as is usually suggested by psychoanalysis but rather that these experiences were beyond the parameters of psychodynamic explanation other than somehow "emerging out of relationship" (p.80).

This fullness of potentiality in the therapist-client relationship for unusual phenomena to be acknowledged and experienced is also observed by other writers. The shallow and functional relations in everyday encounters are contrasted by Lines (2004) with the relational encounter in therapy. He says there is the potential for a therapist and client to experience an extraordinary soul matching and that moments of the divine may be experienced.

A Jungian Buddhist therapist, Young-Eisendrath (2000, cited in Stevens-Long, 2001), offers a similar account of the potentiality in therapist-client relationships from another perspective. She says that acknowledging the illusions of separation and duality in therapy, both in such internal experiences as *both* oppressor and oppressed, rational *and* irrational, anger *and* hurt, along with the interconnectivity of the therapist and client, enables experiences of “the Absolute, of connection to others, even eventually to all living beings to emerge” (p.171). Lines (2004) and Young-Eisendrath’s observations are in keeping my experiences as both client and therapist.

Covert spiritual foundation in therapy

Prasino (1992) argues that “there has always been a covert, spiritual foundation to psychotherapy” (p.51). He suggests that the empathic healing stance is a phenomenological structure that organizes reality for many psychotherapists. He adds that this stance is essentially a spiritual position in the supposedly secular activity of therapy. One of the reasons for this becomes apparent when hermeneutic phenomenological pre-reflection makes visible the religious heritage of influential therapeutic writers and theorists. Lines (2004) found that Maslow, Klein, Berne and Buber came from orthodox Jewish families; Jung as being influenced by Eastern mysticism; and that Rogers, Winnicott, Rollo May and Elkins were former ministers.

Mijares and Khalsa (2005) observe that Freud's core elements of psychoanalytic thought reflect his study of the Kabbalistic teachings of the Jewish mystics and the Three Strands of the Soul. They also note that James, Maslow, Assagioli, Rogers, Grof, and Wilber all include a 'spiritual' dimension to counselling and psychotherapeutic practice.

Empathy and spirituality in therapy

In the wider population it is apparent too that spirituality is not, as Sperry and Shafranske (2005) point out, "something on the fringes of life, an option that only a few pursue or want to discuss in psychotherapy" (p.3). Instead, they observe that despite psychology's antagonism for spirituality, there is an unprecedented trend of psychotherapists being required to attend to spiritual issues in therapy. Amongst the echoes of religion and spirituality within the foundations of therapy, Jones (1994) adds that therapy may also be filling a void created by the waning influence of religion and the institutional church in answering questions of ultimacy (an ultimate being and/or existence), and providing moral guidance through the enactment of myths and ritual in therapy. Jones, like Prasino (1992) and Garguilo (2006), believes that these experiences are given power by the therapist's personal and authentic empathy. Garguilo sees empathy as creating a harmonious complexity in

therapy where we are able to experience ourselves in a wider framework, which mirrors the more transcendent urges of being.

Therapist's attitudes to spirituality

In light of the preponderance of spiritual issues being presented in therapy, the spoken and unspoken attitudes therapists have to faith, beliefs, religion and spirituality also become factors in client's disclosures of their spiritual issues. Jones (1994) study found that therapists "maintain a stance of neutrality or silence" toward issues of faith, religion and spirituality (p.195). Crossley and Salter's (2005) study found that therapists actively steered away from the area of spirituality because of the lack of training in this area, lack of personal reflexivity about spirituality and concerns about the professionalism of exploring such a complex topic. These attitudes in turn were considered as being potentially inhibiting for clients who somehow pick up on how to avoid topics with which their therapists are uncomfortable or to which they seem deaf (p.303).

Therapist reflexivity and spirituality

Discussion around spirituality in therapy does not require a knowledgeable or authoritative therapeutic position and may therefore be regarded as a potentially mutual aspect of the client-therapist relationship. Such discussion

is also likely to reveal aspects of the therapist's personal spiritual beliefs which may be disconcerting from the perspective of more traditional therapeutic alliances. A study of family therapists found that factors impeding the inclusion of spirituality into family therapy included the therapist's lack of personal reflexivity, their discomfort with less traditional modes of therapeutic engagement and their insensitivity to clients' spiritual resources and needs (Whittingham, 2004). In another study, psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic psychotherapists described the spiritual aspect of therapy as a "blind spot" in which both therapists and clients indicated they would like to have spiritual issues addressed in a similar manner to other matters, "not prejudged as infantile or pathological" (Simmonds, 2004, p.951).

Client awareness and insight

As the studies discussed above suggest, clients not only have clear insights into therapists neglect of spiritual issues, but they also recognise the concurrence of spiritual matters in their (the clients) emotional/psychological crises. Clients are reportedly aware that spiritual issues are part of the ethical obligation of therapists and are as significant to clients as race, ethnicity and sexual orientation to clients (Johnson, 2004).

West's (1997) study investigates therapists who work with phenomena including intuition, presence, inspiration, psychic, shamanism, altered states,

spiritual healing, subtle energy work, mediumship, channeling, use of spirit guides and transpersonal work. He found the link between ‘healing’ and therapy to be of huge significance in client’s lives yet one which continues to be habitually and overwhelmingly overlooked by mainstream therapists.

Client-led evolution in therapy

Such findings suggest that the nature of “therapy” is in a process of evolution and is perhaps being led at times by the clients themselves. The foundation of the therapeutic encounter has traditionally been the retrospective repair of past damage within the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship, thereby offering the client prospective hope for the future (Jones, 1994). I agree with Bolletino’s (2001) observation that many people now come for psychotherapy not only for reparative purposes, but also “seeking ways to touch something deep inside themselves that has been untouched in their everyday lives” (p.92). I also identify with Wheway’s (1999) description of Buber’s dialogical view of therapy in which the “primary objective is not understanding, but meeting, encounter – a living encounter by which each partner is changed” (p.108).

Transpersonal perspectives

The philosophical model which gives credence to the idea of ‘living encounters, of touching something ‘deep’ within, of healing, of notions of consciousness, interconnectedness and the many possibilities of human existence, is that of transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal psychology is defined as being the study of humanity’s highest potential, with the recognition, understanding and realization of unitive, spiritual and transcendent states of consciousness (Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992). Ferrer (2002) adds a participatory, enactive and pluralistic vision to the definition of transpersonal psychology which he says enables more open and inclusive participation in what he describes as ‘the Mystery’ (p.185).

A study titled *How transpersonal psychotherapists differ from other practitioners* (Hutton, 1994) investigated the different orientations various groups of therapists brought to their work. The study found that although personality profiles were similar between all therapists, the transpersonal group of therapists was distinguishable not only in terms of bringing their spiritual beliefs to the practice of psychotherapy, they also utilized more approaches in their psychotherapeutic practice, tending to be more eclectic or synthesizing than their counterparts. Hutton concluded that transpersonal therapy is a more inclusive way of engaging in therapy.

Being more inclusive in therapy

Just as a hermeneutic phenomenological approach represents a respectfulness for all the possibilities of **being**, a more inclusive approach in therapy is recommended by Schermer (2003). He says this is because the reductionism of biological and evolutionary determinism enables us to perceive ourselves in the context of biological and cultural evolution yet spirituality consists of *both* existence and essence. He suggests that integrating therapies including traditional, psychoanalytic, general systems therapy, and developmental psychology with altered states of consciousness and spiritual beliefs could lead to new formulations of human nature in this century.

Ideological challenges for therapy

McWilliams (2005) argues that far from being more inclusive and spiritual, therapists are instead being increasingly expected to comply with diagnostic and prognostic prescriptions which do not encompass the diversity of human experience. She says therapy is being reshaped by both influential academic criticism of healing therapies and by commercially oriented Western culture driven by biomedical corporate needs which reflect Cartesian reduction of symptoms as the rationale.

The previous studies of the challenges posed within therapy by spirituality, along with the challenges of a commercially driven culture being reflected in therapy, make undertaking research about therapists a significant way in which to preserve our humanity (McWilliams, 2005). Therefore, these ideological challenges require psychotherapists and counsellors to look at therapy with new eyes. I have chosen to do this by making therapists' experiences, rather than therapeutic methods, the focus of this study. This approach means that the research requires a sturdy and robust methodology with which to explore therapists who work with unusual phenomena. In the following paragraphs I discuss the connections between the methodology and the subject matter in the study. Methodology will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Interconnectedness and methodology

van Manen (1990) draws on Heidegger's philosophy to describe methodology. van Manen says that doing research from a phenomenological perspective is to explore the world's secrets and intimacies by bringing the world into being for us and in us, in other words by 'becoming' the world (p.5). Morgan (2007) reminds us that most research on psychotherapy has been based on the underlying inference that the effectiveness of psychotherapy is in the method or technique and not about the nature or

experiences of psychotherapists themselves. In considering both the changing nature of therapy and the potentially nebulous nature of the study topic, the telling of therapists' stories requires a methodology which enables both therapeutic and research credibility and accountability to be visible without losing the essence of the stories themselves.

Connecting hermeneutic phenomenology, psychotherapy and interconnectedness

I chose Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology as the methodology for the study because not only does it reflect my philosophical approach, it is also a way of 'becoming' the world I want to explore. It also offers psychotherapy a meta-model of human existence and a way to add to, and remain questioning of, the assumptions underlying theoretical models (Milton et al, 2003). Therault (2001) also correlates hermeneutic phenomenology philosophy with interconnectedness. He says since we are always interconnected with the world at any given moment, hermeneutics is a method that provides an opportunity to interpret our experiences from a position of interconnectedness rather than the position of disengaged self-sufficiency so common amongst therapeutic studies. The next chapter discusses the ways in which hermeneutic phenomenology methodology addresses the concerns of the research topic.

Summary

This chapter points to consciousness as being both an integral part of, and a mirror for the universe itself and is both a process and a continuum. The many degrees of subtlety of consciousness are acknowledged and represented in differing cultures and ancient beliefs, but are not so familiar in the influential everyday Cartesian paradigm of the Western world.

Consciousness and interconnectedness is the landscape in which the lived experiences of therapists who work with unusual phenomena are to be explored, particularly the aspect of consciousness referred to as the ‘forgotten feminine’. Other ontological perspectives of consciousness not only support the notion of the forgotten feminine but also provide alternatives to everyday epistemological understandings of existence. The discussion encompasses spiritual and healing dimensions of therapy which in turn pose ideological questions about the nature of therapy itself.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Finding a map

Maps have always been consensual hallucinations filled with imaginary borders, islands and oceans, not objective truths. (C. Malamud, 2000, electronic source).

The idea of a map seems to be a fitting metaphor for the methodology chapter. It is in keeping with the idea of the hermeneutic phenomenological research process as being akin to a journey in new and uncharted territory, and that in order to negotiate the territory some sort of a map is required. Malamud's (2000) assertion that maps are not objective truths but are consensual hallucinations, and McCotter's (2001) account that maps do not substitute for the experience of 'being there' support the ontological basis of this interpretivist inquiry.

Just as maps only show what was there on the day and tell the story that has been experienced by the mapmakers, so too is interpretivist inquiry one which acknowledges the existence of multiple realities that are constructed and can be altered by the knower (Lavery, 2003). The mapmaker and the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher give credence to the world as lived by a person, rather than the world or reality as something separate from the

person and their work shows what range of experiences are possible in the world (Valle & Halling, 1989; Mostert, 2005).

Hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy and methodology supports my own philosophy of life and as a study map enables the exploration of the lived experiences of therapists who work with the range of experiences I call ‘unusual phenomena’. The methodology gives credence to, and legitimacy for, these types of experience and for the many ways in which we express ‘Being-in-the-world. It also acknowledges both historical and cultural context; it integrates the reflexivity of the researcher so that biases and presuppositions are made transparent; and provides rigour and credibility within the research paradigm without getting entangled in the Cartesian requirement for ‘objective truth’.

Methodological philosophy

Phenomenology as a philosophy and a research method was introduced by Husserl who Dowling (2004) explains, drew from the Greek concept of epoche; the art of refraining from judgement or staying away from the everyday, commonplace way of perceiving things (p. 32). Lavery (2003) describes Husserl's philosophy as raising an epistemological perspective of questions arising in the relationship between the knower and the object of study. Husserl (cited in Lavery, 2003) coined the term “life world” to define

what we experience, pre-reflectively, without resorting to categorization or conceptualization.

Heidegger (1962) expanded on Husserl's (1982) work by introducing a more ontological perspective, shifting the focus of inquiry from Husserl's 'being' to a more comprehensive experience, that of "being-in-the-world" (Hein & Austin, 2000; Lavery, 2003). Heidegger's (Gadamer, 1994) description of himself as being "a Christian theologian" is indicative of the influence of religion in his life experience and on his thinking (p.182). Gadamer (1994) suggests that what motivated Heidegger's philosophical beliefs was that it would be intolerable to speak of God like science speaks about its objects, therefore, with his grounding in existentialism and phenomenology, Heidegger proposed that understanding is not how we know the world objectively, but rather the way *we* are *in* the world (my emphases). According to Lavery (2003) Heidegger's description of Being-in-the-world is about an individual's lived experience of the values, beliefs, culture and language of the world in which s/he is immersed. Therefore Heidegger's proposal is that hermeneutics is a method of interpretation that directs the investigator to Being (presence in the world) (Orbanic ,1999; Dowling, 2004).

Hermeneutics

During my reading about hermeneutics I noticed a certain resonance in relation to the study, not only in the fittingness of its methodological guidelines, but also in the history of hermeneutics. The idea that hermeneutics stems from the archetypal messenger of the Greek gods, Hermes, who is described as being able to move with ease between worlds, perhaps even to reveal aspects of life which are surprising and unsettling, seems to be analogous with the study (Downing, 1994).

The hermeneutic phenomenological method van Manen (1990) proposes for exploring lived experience is the framework of lifeworld existentials, a heuristic of discovery for revealing being and becoming.

Lifeworld existentials

The reality of lived experience is there-for-me because of reflexive awareness...Only in thought does it become objective (Van Manen, 1990, p.35).

van Manen's (1990) 'lifeworld existentials' approach draws on the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty who describes lifeworld existentials as guides to reflection (Mostert, 2005). van Manen defines these existentials, these lived experiences, in four ways: as "lived space, lived time, lived body and lived human relation or commonality" (p.101). Differentiation is possible

within these existentials but they are essentially what van Manen (1990) describes as “an intricate unity” referred to as the lifeworld, our lived world (p. 105).

The lifeworld existentials provide a framework for “recurring regularities” which Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) regard as a means by which to ensure rigour (p.388). By identifying the consistencies in the participants lived experiences, which include both commonalities and variations, the interpretation does not focus solely on the literal or explicit words used, but goes beyond those to reveal implicit or latent meanings which van Manen (1990) calls essences which become themes. The study then becomes an account through which lived examples and descriptions of the theme may be recognized by the reader in what van Manen (1990) refers to as an involuntary ‘phenomenological nod’ (p.36).

Lived time and lived space

Time and space form the boundaries by which we measure our experiences. We make sense of the world through an unbroken, one dimensional linear sequence and a Euclidean perspective of space, that is, a two or three dimensional boundary of perception and existence (Grof, 1979; Broomfield, 1997). van Manen’s (1990) existentials do away with ‘time’ and ‘space’ as binary and/or fixed notions. Lived time, for example, is our subjective time,

what it is like to live in our lives, in the present, historically and what might be (future). It allows for other ways of experiencing ‘time’, time as it is lived, the felt sense of time which also embraces the possibility of timelessness. The poem below speaks of a lived experience of time and space.

Time wants to show you a different country. It’s the one
that your life conceals, the one waiting outside
when the curtains are drawn, the one Grandmother hinted at
in her crochet design, the one almost found
over the edge of the music, after the sermon.

William Stafford (excerpt from *The Gift*, 1991).

van Manen (1990) describes lived space or spatiality as “felt space”, what being in our world *feels* like. This includes how we experience our day by day lives, how we feel in our homes and in the world or landscape in which we find ourselves at home.

Lived other

Lived other or relationality is essentially about the interpersonal space we share with others, what ever ‘other’ may be. Being-in-the-world is an interactive experience in which we not only remain connected to our origins and our environment but also speaks of our consciousness of each other. This is our lived experience of communality, of our connectedness with each other, a concept which Heidegger describes as being “co-constitutional” (1962, cited in Jones, 1998, p.58).

Merleau-Ponty (1962, cited in Dahlberg & Drew, 2001) calls the experience of lived other, intercorporeality, which he describes in terms of a more intimate inter-connectedness. He says intercorporeality is the common field of action where we transcend each other's worlds and thus form an infinite continuance of each other's worlds.

Lived body

The experience of lived body may be the most easily identified of the lifeworld existentials and may be the one which most often "calls forth" the other existentials (van Manen ,1990) Lived body (corporeality) is our sense of our physicality, our presence, how we 'front up' to the world, and also what we keep from revealing about our bodies. Feeling embodied is our connection with the world, it is the way in which we may be most aware of Being-in-the-world. We notice each other, and gather information both about ourselves and our experiences, and those of others, through our bodily responses and actions.

The next part of the chapter examines the methods through which the authentic research process has been undertaken. I have called this part 'boundary markers on the map'.

METHODS

Boundary markers on the map

The methods chapter is the one in which I create the boundaries of the study. It demonstrates the integrity and competence with which my mapmaker or researcher activities lead to the development of a trustworthy, credible and legitimate research study. This is what is referred to as rigour in the study.

Rigour

Several writers, including van Manen (1990, cited in Tobin & Begley, 2004), query the fit of the empirical notion of rigour in qualitative studies. Despite this, I would like to emphasize my commitment to rigour in the study. The topic of the study is generally considered to be beyond everyday consensual reality and as stated previously, I am interested in the findings of the study being able to be read with the phenomenological nod of recognition which van Manen (1997) says is indicative of a phenomenological reverberation (p.345). This requires that the study be presented with scrupulous attention to rigour as defined by Tobin and Begley (2004). They say rigour is the way in which we legitimize research and demonstrate the researcher's integrity and competence. They present the concept of 'goodness' as being an application of rigour and it is this application that I am following in the study.

Goodness

Goodness is seen as an integral and embedded aspect of the research process which represents situatedness, trustworthiness and authenticity. The essence of goodness is in the dynamic and interactive process of moving backwards and forwards between methodology and voice. It must be seen to be an integral feature of the complete study, not just a reference in the methodology section.

There are six ways in which goodness may be demonstrated. Firstly, by clearly showing philosophical and theoretical stances incorporated into the foundation of the study. Secondly, the approach or methodology must be specific and thirdly, the collection of data must be explicit. The fourth element is called the representation of voice in which I as the researcher reflect on both my relationship with the participants and the phenomena under investigation. The fifth element is described as the art of meaning making which is how new insights are interpreted and presented. Finally, the implications for practice and recommendations need to emerge at this point as a natural evolution of the goodness of the study.

Some of these elements such as the foundation, Heidegger's (2005) hermeneutic phenomenology, and the approach, van Manen's (1990)

lifeworld existentials have been comprehensively covered previously in this chapter under Methodology.

Representation of voice

Representation of voice in terms of my relationship to the phenomena under investigation is first made transparent by the undertaking of a pre-understanding interview. As indicated in Chapter One I engaged in two pre-understanding interviews because I wanted to ensure I had sufficient clarity about my own position to enable new ways of seeing the participants' experiences to emerge. I was interviewed by a researcher who had recently completed a Masters thesis on a similar topic, and I was also interviewed by a very experienced hermeneutic phenomenological researcher. Their differing perspectives enabled me to reflect on both the phenomena in question and my own transcriptions from contrasting points of view thereby creating openness to new possibilities.

Other evidence of representation of voice is in my commitment to, and familiarity with the phenomenon, so that I am able to represent the participants' voices from an insider perspective. The reflection required for this level of engagement ensures that the meaning-making process and the emergence of new insights are able to be outlined as essences and themes.

Being able to consider the research in terms of both its parts and its whole enables the relevant implications and recommendations to be made explicit.

The six research activities outlined by van Manen (1990) as being integral to the research process also incorporate elements of goodness or rigour.

The hermeneutic process; six research activities.

Along with lifeworld existentials as a map for the study, van Manen (1990) also suggests that the hermeneutic phenomenological research process may be guided by six activities. He advocates firstly turning to a phenomenon which is of interest to the researcher and is reflective of the nature of the researcher's lived experience of the world.

Turning to a phenomenon which interests us and commits us to the world

As indicated in the introduction chapter, I have a life-long interest in the whole topic of unusual phenomena, and I have a sense of my own familiarity about some of this territory. As the research process began to gather speed I was passionately curious about what other therapists might say about their experiences. I was "being-given-over to a quest" (van Manen, 1990, p.31). During the interviews, and later as I journalled my reflections, my sense of wonder kept expanding about the inspiring work the participants do, and the similarities and differences both between the therapists, and between myself

and each of the therapists. I was therefore pleased to read one of van Manen's (2002) more recent writings in which he says a sense of wonder is "at the heart of the phenomenological attitude" (p.249).

Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualise it

Standing in the fullness of life (van Manen, 1990, p.32)

I like van Manen's (1990) idea of the researcher standing in the fullness of life, of being fully in the world in order to investigate a phenomenon. The participants' stories often resonated with my own, or were both familiar and unfamiliar enough for me to mostly ask the kind of questions which expanded their descriptions. When it was apparent that I both recognized and was comfortable with their experiences, the sharing of their stories in the interviews became more detailed and personal, factors which reflect van Manen's (1990) advice to use personal experience as a starting point. I also followed van Manen's recommendation of seeking a variety of sources from which to investigate the phenomena being studied. To reflect the enormity and the emotion of some of the concepts in the study I incorporate excerpts of poetry, mythology, texts from ancient civilizations and different faiths, along with other media, to convey the participants' rich lived experiences.

Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomena

van Manen (1990) explains that using themes is a way of capturing a phenomenon under the spotlight. Noticing the emergence of themes meant keeping open and insightful to discovery. One of my supervisor's key phrases for reflecting on the study is to keep asking myself "so what is being brought to attention?" Capturing the essence of the participants' lived experiences is best described as a process of uncovering and discovering by creatively exploring each theme of the study as it emerges. The essential themes which finally emerge are intended to show the lived experiences of therapist's who work with unusual phenomena in a way which identifies the study as unique to the phenomenon, that is, "without which the phenomenon could not be what it is" (p.107).

Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting

To write is to be driven by desire (van Manen, 2006, p.721).

I relate to van Manen's (2006) observation that to write is to be driven by a compelling urge he calls desire. Crotty (1998) says we must seek out the phenomenon rather than staying trapped within the subjective experiences and to my mind the compelling urge of writing and rewriting enables this process to take place. The intention in the study is to create phenomenological descriptions which are transparent enough for the reader

to experience moments of commonality, what Gadamer (1976, p.110) refers to as ‘fusion of horizons’, an experience van Manen (1990) says is identified by a “phenomenological nod” (p.36).

It is the very act of writing, of fixing thought on paper, which externalizes what in is in a sense, internal reflection and allows for a fusion of horizons to be present. The writing/rewriting process and paying attention to the silence, that is, what is unspoken and needs to be drawn out, is especially relevant in a topic such as ‘unusual phenomena’ which explores the sketchily mapped territory of the vastness of consciousness. Consciousness is territory in which language is a tiny funnel through which to explicate both its enormity and the “felt” or lived experiences within this phenomenon. The deepening process of phenomenological understanding is conveyed in an excerpt from the poem, *Ancestors*.

We said goodbye

to our ancestors as we packed
up for the city of language
came down from the silent

high country, dark shadow of bush.

G. Lindsay (in *Spirits Abroad*, 2004, p.207)

Maintaining a strong, oriented relation to the phenomena

van Manen (1990) recommends not settling for superficialities and falsities in order to be strong in our orientation. It is my experience that the topic of the study is not able to be represented in a superficial or false way. The topic not only addresses the vast landscape of consciousness, it also addresses phenomena that may be described as being among the eternal mysteries of life. Reflecting on the 'realness' of the experiences in the participants' descriptions took me deeply not only into resource material to support the study, but also into my pre-understandings and my own journey, often to a confusing and overwhelming degree. Dahlberg, Drew and Nystrom (2001) say that for lifeworld researchers "confusion is good because it means we are still open to the phenomena" (p.109).

The way I maintained a strong, oriented relation to the phenomena was to hold a sometimes painfully overpowering tension of not-knowing, so that the layers of reflective thought would emerge. Gadamer also speaks of this tension which he describes as 'the place between familiarity and strangeness...the true home of hermeneutics' (1976, cited in Smythe, 1998, p.88).

Balancing the research by considering parts and whole

Our noontide majesty is
to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole.

Coleridge (Spurgeon, 1913)

The common realization that complex wholes and their parts are always inseparably intertwined is referred to as the hermeneutic circle (Leonard, 1994). This is analogous to a “gestalt” in which we comprehend a whole only by recognizing its parts, but the parts acquire their meaning only within the whole (Grenz, 1996).) Like a gestalt, the hermeneutic circle process takes each new understanding back to all previous understandings, in a to and fro process of taking parts to the whole and then breaking the whole into parts (Smythe, 1998). This is the part of the study from which implications, conclusions and recommendations may be drawn as per the final element of ‘goodness’ or rigour in the study.

Finding an end to the spiral process of the hermeneutic process is guided by what Kvale (1983, cited in Lavery, 2003) describes as reaching “a place of sensible meaning, free of inner contradictions, for the moment” (p.92). I interpret this to mean finding a place that feels like an authentic account of the participants’ stories, one in which they might recognize their parts, yet also see themselves as part of a wondrous whole.

The data

This section looks at the collection and management of data as the third element of the application of rigour in goodness.

Selecting the participants

The specific nature of the research topic required what is known as purposive sampling. This means that the participants were sought on the basis of specific criteria. In keeping with Lavery's (2003) recommendations I was seeking participants who were willing to share their stories which reflect their lived experiences of being therapists who work with unusual phenomena and whose experiences are diverse enough from each other to bring rich possibilities to the study. This means they needed to be counsellors and/or psychotherapists who identified themselves as working with phenomena I described in the initial advertisement (Appendix A) as being the mysteries of life, and in the Participant Information Sheet as unusual phenomena or "spiritual, mystical and/or transpersonal occurrences and experiences" (Appendix B).

The advertisement (Appendix A) was placed in the Auckland New Zealand Association of Counsellors newsletter (November, 2006) from which there were seven responses. Five participants were subsequently selected, with the

other two being excluded because their personal circumstances at the time precluded their involvement.

The participants contacted me by phone and email, outlining the work they did. A Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) was forwarded to each to ensure that they were comfortable with both my criteria and with the interview and research process.

Three psychotherapists were also invited to participate in the study. The timing of the study approval (October, 2006) meant that I missed the last advertising deadline of 2006 for the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists journal and as I would be unable to advertise for participants again until March 2007 it was decided to approach some psychotherapists directly. They are therapists who are known by the primary supervisor, Margot Solomon and I through collegial networks who fit the participant criteria as outlined in the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B).

An email invitation of participation was sent to one of the prospective participants and the other two prospective participants were contacted by phone and a full description of the study outlined. They all indicated their interest in being involved in the study. As indicated above, Participant

Information Sheets (Appendix B) were forwarded to confirm their comfort with both my criteria and the interview and research process.

The participants

Eight participants are involved in the study. Gender was not part of the selection criteria although of the 8 participants, 7 were women with only 1 man. This is reflective of the female/male ratios within counselling and psychotherapy. Gender differences were not apparent in the accounts and expression of the participants' lived experiences.

One of the participants identified herself as Māori and the other seven are Pakeha. This is a comparable ratio with the numbers of Māori and Pakeha within counselling and psychotherapy. Although each of the participant's accounts is quite unique, the Māori participant was able to refer to, and draw upon her culture as part of her lived experiences in a way that was not as apparent with the other participants.

A cross section of beliefs and faiths is also represented by the participants including Christianity, Buddhism, and some aspects of eastern traditions including meditation. Some of the participants have quite specific psychotherapeutic and counselling ideologies to which they subscribe

including guided meditation, dream work and dream-body work, and narrative therapy.

Two of the participants work in institutions and the remaining six are in private practice. The participants who work in private practice are able to choose the therapeutic modality which best reflects their particular abilities and capacities, and this is discussed in more detail in the study.

Interview and data collection

The lived experiences of the participants were collected (audio-taped) during individual interviews which were approximately one to one and a half hours in duration. These were conducted in the participant's home or work place with one interview being by phone.

Three of the participants were already known to me but not in a context where they had shared their experiences of the topic of the study. To enable the therapists' stories of unusual phenomena to emerge in the study, I initiated each interview acknowledging that 'unusual phenomena' was a term I had come up with, and asked each participant a variation of the question "what is 'unusual phenomena' for you?"

All the participants seemed delighted to have an opportunity in which to share their experiences. I experienced the interviews as relaxed and open

despite being frequently startled by the participant's stories. There were such recognizable parallels and similarities both between each of them, and also with my own experiences, and the topic so comfortable and familiar for both the participants and myself that I had to be careful to maintain an interviewing stance and not get sidetracked into interesting dialogue. I kept in mind Smythe's (1998) caution to not go in search of agreement for my own understandings but to look for those that were different because it would be in the place in between that new insights would arise.

The positive outcome was in keeping with hermeneutic phenomenological tradition of an interview process which supports the presence of a caring relationship (Lavery, 1993). The caring relationship meant that the participants seldom interpreted their experiences, instead describing them in the manner of one friend to another. The generous sharing of information was evidenced in the transcriptions from the study which are characterized by long tracts of participant narrative following questions and prompts. Familiarity with the experiences and 'language' of both counselling/psychotherapy and unusual phenomena allowed me to follow the participants' stories with ease which assisted in the analysis of the data.

Analysis of the data

Analysis of the data along with van Manens (1990) six research activities as previously discussed, incorporate the fourth element of goodness which is representation of voice. Being familiar with the topic of the study is emphasized by van Manen. The need for familiarity became evident from a completely practical perspective when the two transcriptionists I employed to do some of the transcripts both made so many errors in the unfamiliar territory of both counselling and unusual phenomena, that I had to do considerable modifications from the transcriptionists work and completed three of the transcripts myself. Throughout this process I also became very familiar with the participants voices and with the transcriptions. This was evocative in terms of getting to the essence of what I experienced the participants as conveying to me. van Manen describes this process as a holistic or sentient approach.

I kept a journal throughout the whole research process from the inception of the research idea through to the final writing stages. By writing and referring to my journal I was able to reflect on every aspect of the process at the same time as keeping a record of my own involvement during the process. I also discussed the findings at various stages with my supervisors who offered

something of their perspectives and encouraged me to keep asking myself questions.

As the participants responded to the interview questions and prompts, certain key words accompanied their descriptions. The process of reading and re-reading took me deeply into the phenomena and I followed van Manen's (1990) advice of using selective highlighting to indicate those key words and statements which initially stood out to me as revealing the essences of the phenomena. As I read and re-read the highlighted statements in the detailed line-by-line approach advocated by van Manen, the consistency of some of the highlighted material emerged into themes.

The participants' descriptions of unusual phenomena reflect both similarities *and* differences. The participants' experiences which they collectively identify as being a mystery of life and/or unusual phenomena, suggests a similar understanding about what it is they perceive. The participant's stories also share similar characteristics. The difference lies in the unique and distinctive manifestation and expression each participant has of their experience(s), and the ways in which these experiences differ from my own.

Sometimes the differences reflect culturally different perceptions and understandings, but it is my understanding that our uniqueness as human

beings is primarily in the way in which we express our experiences. In our unique expression we reflect our systems of belief and our world views in the language, metaphors and other symbols we create to manifest and embody our **being**.

As the writing and re-writing process of the actual thesis got underway, I used a cut and paste method to bring sections of the study together which facilitated a sense of continuity and flow to the content. As I wrote, I edited only repetitions, or utterances such as ‘you know’ which did not necessarily reflect the essence of the participants accounts. I maintained the stance prescribed in van Manen’s (1990) lived existentials of sticking closely to the participants’ experiences whilst drawing on my own lived experiences, rather than using observations and interpretations (mine and theirs) of the experiences.

I made use of the idea of hermeneutic imagination to continually deepen the writing/rewriting process and to expand my use of language (Tobin & Begley, 2004). I used analogies and writings from other cultures and other periods of history, poetry, and pictures to enrich the findings. New insights emerged from being attentive to the less familiar aspects of the phenomena of therapists who work with unusual phenomena, and from viewing the essences of the study from a collective perspective. These new insights were integrated

into the context of the work. This includes paying attention to what is absent and unspoken such as my experience of the humbleness of the participants despite their prodigious capacities and abilities.

Data storage

Storage of the research data follows strict protocol as outlined by the AUT Ethics Committee. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality are maintained, identifying material such as the interview tapes are stored separately from the Consent Forms and transcripts. These are kept in purpose-specific areas at AUT for six years in keeping with the research data storage requirements of the AUT Ethics Committee.

Ethical considerations

Finally, the rigour of research rests on the premise that it has been conducted with all consideration as to its ethicality. The nature of therapeutic work likewise relies upon clear ethical considerations. Both the New Zealand Association of Counsellors' (NZAC) Code of Ethics and the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists' (NZAP) Code of Ethics provide clear and concise guidelines as to the general conduct of counsellors and psychotherapists. Also included in both Codes of Ethics is the active support and respectfulness of the principles embodied in the Treaty of Waitangi.

These documents not only correlate with the ethical principles of research, they are also intrinsic to my way of 'Being-in-the-world' (Heidegger, 2005) and therefore underpin my involvement in the study.

According to Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) the main ethical principles in conducting research include: beneficence, respect for human dignity and justice. They provide clear guidelines with which to assess my commitment to upholding ethical considerations in the study.

Beneficence

Beneficence includes and represents the maxim familiar to therapists: above all, do no harm.

Freedom from harm

Although I did not envisage any harm would arise from the study of therapists who work with unusual phenomena, I nevertheless took steps to ensure that this would be the case. In my initial conversation with the participants and in the specific content of the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) I made reference to the caution required when engaging in an interview of a self-reflective nature. I advised that such encounters may evoke thoughts and feelings that may later need to be addressed with the participants professional supervisors. To the best of my knowledge this was

not required and as I had proposed on the Participant Information Sheet, the interviews were of a positive nature. The open-ended nature of a hermeneutic phenomenological interview meant that probing questions were unnecessary. I checked with the participants whether answers and/or discussion which may have been of a sensitive nature were okay to be included in the study and all agreed.

Freedom from exploitation

I was careful to explain to the participants both in person, and through the detailed outline in the Participant Information Sheet, what was going to be discussed and researched. The nature of the topic of the study means that it is a less common aspect of therapy. This factor had the potential to lend itself to the possible exploitation of the participants in two ways. Firstly, the participants may have experienced an 'allegiance' with me as a colleague (rather than a researcher) who is clearly familiar with the topic of the study and their work and disclosed more than they had intended. The positive aspect of this potential allegiance is that it fulfills part of the criteria of van Manen's (1990) lived existential framework in which the researcher needs to have lived experience of the research topic in order to fully engage in the study.

Secondly, the participant's disclosure about their work could have the potential for exposing them to professional criticism and judgment. Careful respectful attention to both the privacy and anonymity of the participants, and in the subsequent interpretation of the research material has been taken to ensure that any such exploitation is avoided.

Risk/Benefit Ratio

Apart from the ever present issues of anonymity and privacy for the participants, the risks attached to being involved in the study were minimal. A benefit of the research is as indicated previously, that the participants were able to share their experiences with a non-judgmental and open person. Another potential benefit is being able to write about the participants' experiences in a way which decreases their perception of professional isolation and affords some recognition, albeit not individually, for the work that they do.

Respect for human dignity

Right to self-determination

The participants were voluntarily involved in the study without coercion or risk of prejudicial concerns. Their right to be autonomous agents was respected at all times.

Right to full disclosure

The right to make fully informed and voluntary decisions about participating was made apparent during personal dialogue, and in the guidelines of the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B). In the introduction section of the Participant Information Sheet I offer an invitation to participate in the study, and an explanation of what the study is about. I also make reference to the proposed benefit of the study. I state in the guidelines what will happen in the research, what the prospective discomforts and risks might be, and what the costs may be in participating in the research.

Informed consent

Before commencing the interviews I checked that the participants had read and understood the information contained in the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix B) and if they had any questions or issues that required clarification before signing their consent on a separate Consent Form (Appendix C). To protect participant privacy these are kept separate from the interview tapes and transcriptions in safe secure storage in accordance with the requirements of the AUT Ethics Committee.

Respect

Conveying respect in research is where there is no concealment or deception in the way in which the research is conducted. Respect is also the experience of being held in regard during the interview process, not being talked over, interrupted and generally being listened to and interviewed mindfully. I am satisfied that the study has been conducted respectfully.

Justice

Fair treatment

Participants are entitled to fair and equitable treatment throughout the whole of their participation in the study. In keeping with the requirements of a legitimate research study fair treatment means ensuring that the selection of participants is undertaken in a fair and non-discriminatory manner. I did not have to decline any person's participation. Some of those who volunteered for participation were unable to take this further because of their own commitments and unexpected events in their lives.

Fair treatment also means honouring all agreements between the participants and myself as the researcher. An example of this in my study was that one of the participants requested a copy of the transcript for her records. Another example of fair treatment include me as the researcher checking that

supervision and/or other means of support is available to the participants should issues be raised that are difficult and/or challenging for them in any way. Participants were also reminded that they were free to contact me at any point in the study to clarify information. Fair treatment also refers to the commitment to debrief or divulge any information that arises prior or subsequent to the study that may be deemed pertinent to the study, and to the participant's involvement in the study.

Treaty of Waitangi - Te Tiriti o Waitangi

In keeping with the study being undertaken in New Zealand/Aotearoa it is respectful to honour the values and beliefs of the Tangata Whenua, the indigenous people of the land, Māori, as proposed in the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. The principles of the Treaty include participation, partnership and protection (Thomas, 2000). Guidelines for bicultural research in New Zealand/Aotearoa are set out in Thomas's (2000) paper *Bicultural Research Strategies*. These include ensuring protection for Māori participants in a study by not only seeking informed consent from the participant but also includes the consultation and seeking of advice and consent from other Māori entities involved in the protection of Māori in general.

One of the participants in the study identifies herself as Māori. Prior to, and during the interview process I sought consultation and guidance from the

Kaiako at AUT, Russell Waetford. He supported the study and assisted me by sharing his understanding of Tikanga Māori as it relates to the topic of the study. After Russell's departure from AUT I discussed the topic of the study in general without referring to the specifics of the study with a Kuia (Tainui) Taini Drummond to continue to be mindful of Tikanga Māori and to honour the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in the study. I have been given words of encouragement for the study by Pa Henare Tate, a Māori priest who is undertaking a doctoral thesis. He says my study is hohonu (deep).

Nevertheless, the research is consistent with the observations outlined in Thomas (2000) that even though research may involve a Māori participant, and the researcher has consulted with Māori, the research does not necessarily produce Māori knowledge. In the study I am attempting to explicate material which is decidedly non-traditional in a predominantly Western tradition, and it may be that this could have some relevance to the Tangata Whenua from the perspective of understanding differences in consciousness between cultures.

Right to privacy

Given that the topic of the study represents profoundly personal experiences, my aim for the study is to be as non-intrusive for the participants as possible. The participants all stated delight in sharing their experiences which put this

concern to rest. The anonymity of the participants was my second major concern. Therefore my biggest commitment to doing no harm in the study was in the protection of the privacy of the participants. I have ensured this occurs by having the data kept in the strictest confidence throughout the research process. I have not used names for the participants and the interview tapes and transcripts are coded by initials which were chosen by the participants and are not their own. In the study itself, I have used as few potentially identifiable participant characteristics as possible without losing the context of the research.

The exception to the anonymity is the visible nature of one of the participant's work which has the potential to reveal her identity. She has given her permission to use the references which I make to her and her work.

The transcriptionists (2) who assisted me in the study have signed Confidentiality Agreements (Appendices D & E) and both are experienced and familiar with the confidentiality requirements of this work. They were given no participant details other than the tapes for transcription which were returned immediately following the transcription process.

Ethics Approval

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the AUT Ethics Committee on 16th October, 2006 (Appendix F).

Other boundary markers of rigour

One of my initial concerns about undertaking the study is that the content of the study is of a relatively abstract nature. This raises issues of credibility and auditability especially where the researcher is embedded in the study as is the case in this research. As well as goodness being the primary application of rigour in the study I thought it prudent to consider some of the other factors associated with rigour in a qualitative study in order to make a transparent audit trail. Ballinger (2004) describes transparency as “the degree to which all relevant aspects of the research process are disclosed” (p.544). With this in mind I briefly discuss other boundary markers under a cross-section of headings which I believe best represent the interests of the study. These include reflexivity, transferability, authenticity and credibility (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001)

Reflexivity

Grant and Giddings (2002) discuss the importance of researchers adopting a reflexive posture to show they are “embedded in discourses just as much as

the participants” (p.10). I bring myself as the researcher into the study in the introduction chapter by briefly outlining my life story to date and giving a glimpse of my philosophical and phenomenological background. This enables my presence to be transparent throughout the study as I present the participants’ voices and stories through my voice. I am also aware of my embeddedness in the study so that I am constantly looking out from it as well as looking into it. This is the lived experience of a hermeneutic phenomenological researcher.

Transferability

Although it is argued that transferability is not as relevant in qualitative research because there is no single interpretation, enough descriptive contextual information has been provided in the study for it to be compared with other studies of a similar nature (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001; Koch, 1996). Purposive sampling means that the participants are drawn from both counselling and psychotherapy to provide a wider representation of both therapists and therapeutic backgrounds.

Authenticity

The abstract nature of the study makes authenticity a significant factor. To ensure that research data and interpretations are not researcher imagination

but clearly derived from the data, Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Tobin & Begley, 2004) propose the concept of research authenticity. They say research authenticity needs to incorporate fairness, that is, to show a range of different realities, with depictions of associated concerns, issues and underlying values (p.393). I have made every effort throughout the study to do so by incorporating what Tobin and Begley (2004) call ontological authenticity. This means contrasting the participant's accounts of unusual phenomena with other contexts (other cultures and periods of history) in which the phenomena in question are not only acknowledged, but are also considered meaningful.

Credibility

Credibility within the study refers to the fit between the participants' accounts and my representation of them (Tobin & Begley, 2004). I have used participant statements to match and support my descriptions throughout the study. Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) also recommend in purposive sampling to include participants who offer differing points of view. An example of this in the study is that the majority of participants generally choose not to disclose the nature of their work which contrasts with a participant who actively educates and promotes her particular type of therapy.

Although I have not discussed the specific content of the study I have engaged in dialogue about unusual phenomena with colleagues, with my therapeutic supervisor and with other associates such as Taini Drummond, Kuia (Ngai Tai). Their perspectives have been part of collaborative triangulation described as using multiple referents to draw conclusions about what constitutes the nature of the study (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001). These dialogues enhanced my lived experience as a researcher of unusual phenomena which van Manen (1990) says is 'adequate elucidation'.

I believe my credibility as a researcher is especially relevant in the study. As a researcher I am not only embedded in the research as the data gatherer and presenter, but I am also exploring a topic which is beyond everyday understandings of the world. This requires me to be transparent and requires my faithful adherence to the research framework of van Manen's (1990) lived existentials. All relevant information about me as the researcher is made as transparent as possible throughout the study. My professional background and my experience of the phenomena in question are outlined and the participants' stories are described as lived experiences rather than as observations.

Summary

I have undertaken a comprehensive approach to the methodology and methods chapter to ensure that the research has a clear audit trail, and shows sound research practices and ethical considerations. Hermeneutic phenomenology supports the premise of the study and van Manen's (1990) research guidelines have enabled me to research therapists who work with unusual phenomena in a legitimate and plausible way. Being able to draw on my own life experiences to augment and deepen the study has been a profoundly enriching experience. More powerful though has been my personal expansion and growth through the intimacy of experiencing these particular lived experiences through others eyes. It brings me back to the quotation at the beginning of the study:

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in seeing with new eyes. (Proust, 1934)

Chapter 4

UNUSUAL PHENOMENA AND KNOWING

This chapter introduces the findings of the study. The topic of unusual phenomena is re-introduced and the essential theme(s) that emerged in the analysis are discussed. These lead to a fuller presentation of the primary essential theme.

Into the woods...

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

(excerpt from *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* by
Robert Frost, in Parini, 2005)

As I began thinking about the questions and discoveries of the interviews, the enigma of the dark woods came into my mind. There is a certain likeness between exploring the topic of unusual phenomena, and being in the woods with its atmosphere of depth and mystery. van Manen (2006) says “the act of phenomenological writing, confronts the writer with the dark, with the enigma of phenomenality” (p.719). He refers to Heidegger’s (1977) idea of “following certain paths, ‘woodpaths’, towards a clearing where something could be shown.

The verse on the previous page also captures the reflective nature of the research process, the darkness and the deepness of the commitment, the thinking, writing and rewriting process; the loveliness of what is gathered and what emerges in the clearing; the promise or commitment to keep with the research topic and methodology, and the long path towards completion, ‘before I sleep’.

The essential themes

van Manen (1990) says essential themes are unique to the phenomena and incidental themes are related to the phenomena. In this chapter **knowing** emerges as *the* essential theme in the study because it represents the experience of the expansiveness of consciousness to the participants. **Knowing** is the theme in which other essential *and* incidental themes co-arise as inter-related and inter-twined manifestations of the same phenomenon.

This chapter firstly introduces the concept of unusual phenomena as it presents itself to the participants. Facets of the phenomenon of **knowing** are explored including the lived experiences which identify **knowing** to the participants’ and their experience of themselves as **knowers**. The second part of the chapter looks at how **knowing** is distinguished from imagination, intuition and mystical experience.

The paradox of unusual phenomena

Paradox is an integral part of the discussion of consciousness throughout Chapter One. For example consciousness is described as the paradoxical experience of being both our most intimate reality and our deepest mystery (de Quincey, 2000). On the other hand, the splitting and dichotomizing primal unity to give birth to consciousness is described as the paradox of consciousness (Hollis, 2000). Both descriptions suggest that the experience of paradox creates the space for other ways of viewing both a phenomenon and **being**.

The findings begin with the participants' unique accounts of their experiences of unusual phenomena. They describe being part of everyday reality yet somehow simultaneously creating the space for paradoxical experiences to emerge.

What unusual phenomena means to the participants

The following two participants speak about having experiences which are unprompted, and being taken by surprise. Unusual phenomena such as portrayed in the following examples may therefore be described as unpredictable, unsolicited, appearing as if from nowhere, and perhaps, as unexplainable.

Unprompted

A participant describes her experience of unusual phenomena as direct and visual:

For me it's things like the visuals that I get that are completely unprompted... I'll see a face superimposed on a client's face, its very distracting...or when clients come in for example with a whole host of people attached to them.

This participants' perceptions indicate that she 'sees' in a way that may be described as having a "third eye", that is, she sees beyond the everyday manner in which we usually 'see' others, in an unprompted way.

Being taken by surprise

The following participant has also had many experiences of unusual phenomena. She gives an overview in the context of her work:

Unusual phenomena for me in a therapeutic sense is something that's taken me by surprise or I feel that there's something greater taking place in the session beyond what I would have expected or theory would have explained.

She gives an example of what she is describing:

I was working with a client and it was coming to an almost make or break moment, I knew we were coming up for a very, very powerful one and there was a sort of silence in the room and we both nearly jumped out of our skins because a desk in the room let out three loud reports like a shot gun... the desk didn't change in appearance. She referred to that two or three times afterwards. The only other time I've heard of that, and I'm not acquainting the situation in any way at all, was I'd read about when Freud and Jung were together and a huge table between them just split in half.

What energetic force facilitated the desk inexplicably and loudly contributing to an intense therapeutic situation with no other observable antecedents? The table ‘splitting’ in Freud’s and Jung’s case preceded a parting of the ways in their personal and professional lives as if the table itself gave an indication of the unspoken state of their relationship.

Something imperceptible

During the interview the participant emphasized the words ‘knew’ and ‘very, very powerful’, and as her account suggests, it is as if she was almost expecting something out of the ordinary to occur, as if she already had a **knowing**, not just as an experienced therapist, but because she had a **knowing** that something imperceptible was in the process of taking place.

KNOWING EMERGES

The unprompted and unexplainable nature of unusual phenomena is more often described in terms of being something that the participants just **know**. Having a **knowing** about anything may be referred to as having a “sixth sense” or as being uncanny. One of the participants says:

I’ve always had an uncanny way of knowing.

This means having a kind of **knowing** about things, or having a perception of things beyond what is considered everyday knowing or knowledge. **Knowing**

suggests being able to access insights into reality in some way that is not usually accessed and/or accessible.

Expressing knowing

The **knowing** referred to by the participants is, in a sense, a reflection of the discussion of being conscious of consciousness in Chapter One (p.25). Consciousness may be described by the paradox of having no content yet at the same time being vast and multidimensional in which everything is **knowable**. The participants express their lived experiences of **knowing** in ways which draw the experience closer to the reader, whilst also enabling themes within **knowing** to emerge.

Finding the words

Despite their generous and vivid descriptions, the participants feel that they struggle to find words, images, and metaphors to convey the powerful, vast immensity of their experiences of **knowing**. They say things like:

I can't put it into words, it's beyond my words; it's difficult to talk about because it's so abstract; my words don't keep up with what could be expressed; it's actually really hard to quantify it isn't it?

The participants' sense of struggle echoes my own process and is a reflection of the observation of consciousness in Chapter One, that it lacks specific content. **Knowing** is a felt experience of the magnitude of consciousness

which to filter it into words and language is to almost misrepresent it. Sharp (electronic source, 2005) says that the presentation of any experience linguistically, immediately shifts the experience to a socially-constructed act of representation rather than a personal, holistic felt meaning or ‘intrinsic *myness*’. Rubin (1997) adds that from a therapeutic perspective “the English language offers an impoverished vocabulary for evoking non-self-centric states of being” (p.85).

I found myself wanting to find authoritative authors through whose voice and text I could explain the incredibleness of **knowing** without forsaking either the magnitude of the experience, or credibility and rigour in the study. The process not only required that I “come out of the closet” and utilize my own **knowings** to support the participants contributions, but also called on my deepest inner resources. At times I have followed van Manen’s (1990) advice and “borrowed” the words of others (p.113). Mostly though it is through the participants’ accounts, the fullness of their lived experiences of being therapists who work with unusual phenomena that we get a glimpse of what **knowing** might be.

Lived experiences of knowing

As previously outlined accounts indicate, lived experiences of **knowing** present themselves in different ways to the participants. Some examples include:

Knowing as a message

The following participant describes the phenomenon of **knowing** as:

being handed something that is not negotiable, a complete and utter knowing.

She gives an example:

I had an experience a little while ago I was talking with a client and I said "Do you know someone called Robert?" (1) And she said "oh yeah, that's my father and he's here isn't he?" And she said "He was an officer (2) and he died a while ago". It turned out to be really significant for her because the message at the time was what she needed.

(1 & 2: Identifying features altered).

Knowing as a foretelling

The participant whose desk suddenly made unusual noises had a sense of foretelling prior to the event. Another participant speaks of **knowing** before she has met the people concerned, also a kind of foretelling:

And sometimes even before they come to the door there'll be...something will just go bang, I'll be given a word and when I enquire further about that they'll sort of go "how did you know that", so it's not even a thought, it's faster than a thought.

Knowing as a vision

The experiences of **knowing** as outlined so far are characterised by a sense of timelessness, the **knowing** of things beyond the everyday realities of time and space, and a **knowing** beyond how we usually ‘know’ each other. An example is another participant’s description of **knowing** in relation to a client’s childhood:

I had a reasonably new client in, I’ve only seen her for I think 6 or 7 sessions and she was talking about being sad about something to do with her daughter. I said to her “look I’m getting this picture and I don’t know if it means anything. I just keep getting this picture of this little girl, probably five or six falling off a bike and it really hurt and she’s going running to mum and her mum turning and walking away”. And she said, “That’s exactly what happened to me when I was little” and it was her first really clear knowing of that emotional abandonment and neglect. As I talk about it I can still feel her sadness.

Knowing and affect

Knowing in this instance is accompanied by a strong emotional association. The participant still feels the client’s sadness as she recounts the experience. The connection between emotional content or affect, and **knowing**, suggests that we may be able to access **knowing** about each other by being open to the transmission of certain emotional **knowings** that are not evident in everyday being, or that in our primarily rational, thought-oriented world we may overlook. The participants lived experiences raise questions such as ‘how do they **know** what they know?’

How do we know 'knowing'?

We understand yet do not understand all that there is to be understood (Smythe, 1998, p.26).

Our everyday minds want to know in epistemological and ontological terms, what **knowing** might be, what **knowing** consists of, what predisposes individuals to experiencing **knowing** and is **knowing** self-constructed, an inner experience or is there 'something out there'? Heidegger says "we are custodians of deep and ancient thresholds" (1962, cited in O'Donohue, 1997, p.42). Walsh (1998) interprets this to mean we have "a deep seated inner **knowing** that precedes conscious knowing" (p.23).

As I read, reflected, wrote and rewrote I found myself asking questions from an everyday point of view. I wondered if the participants (and my own) experiences of **knowing** is the product of a highly developed imagination, an extension of the childhood visions of ghosts under the bed and fairies at the end of the garden; or if **knowing** is a form of expansive intuition? I also wondered if experiences of **knowing** are a way of describing what is often referred to as mystical experiences. The next part of this chapter will explore these queries.

Is it imagination?

Imagination is more important than information (Einstein, 1931, p.51).

Describing imagination

An imaginative experience, like the experience of unusual phenomena and **knowing**, is difficult to describe. Intellectually, we understand that imagination is, as the Collins English Dictionary (2003) defines it “the faculty or action of producing ideas, especially mental images of what is not present or has not been experienced” (p.813). What we do not fully understand is our capacity to do this. We know imagination to be the source of our individuality and we have evidence of imagination throughout art, science and culture. It is the means by which we personify images for understanding and to give form to those dimensions of life which remain intangible and wordless (Hillman, 1975). In short, we understand the characteristics of imagination but we remain unable to comprehend the complexities involved in our imaginative faculties.

The imaginal realm

Sometimes experiences such as those described by the participants, are described as taking place in the “imaginal world”, an in-between state, between the conscious and unconscious, between counsellor and client,

where images take the place of language (Rowan,1990, p.238). A participant speaks a similar language:

I found a way to go into the imaginal realm where the unconscious meets the conscious mind, the unconscious speaks to the conscious mind in pictures and images

Differentiating imagination from knowing

How do we differentiate imagination from **knowing**? Palmer (1998) asserts that “imagination is the primary faculty of perception for non-ordinary knowing” (p.81). One of the participants says of her experience:

It's often when I look back I can see what I couldn't see then, I guess that's a safeguard for me to make sense of these things, to be true to the experience at the time and then years later to go back and check 'now, is this imagination on my part or is this reality, was that a reality' and so often I have coming back 'no, this was a reality', there was a space to explore or to go deep or an invitation to go deeper.

The paradox for therapists is that while “imagination is the psychotherapists instrument of understanding” (Symington, 1996, p.35), the imaginative process may not always be trusted as being a reliable, credible or accurate source of information in the therapeutic encounter. Winnicott (1971) proposes that spirituality is the area in which imagination and reality converge in what he calls the ‘transitional space’ (cited in Schermer, 2003, p.26). The participant’s capacity to accurately **know** things beyond the everyday linear understanding of time makes **knowing** confirmable and

trustworthy experiences for the participants even though **knowing** may appear as part of an imaginative process.

It is apparent to me that it is through our imagination, our metaphors and imagery, that we interpret what is beyond the everyday, that wordless unknowable-ness that we can *only* imagine and never fully know. My sense is that imagination is the way in which we deepen intuitive insight by being able to translate what it is we intuit and that it is fundamental to our **being**.

Is it intuition?

Thoughts that come on dove's feet (Nietzsche, 1969, Pt.2, Chapt. 44).

Intuition may be described as **knowing** that seeps into conscious awareness without the mediation of logic or rational process, as experience which has become unconscious and which we either give primacy to or not. Welling (2004) says "intuition takes place in an intimate world, so subtle that we hardly ever take notice" (p.15). Characteristics of intuitive experiences include: the appearance of meaningful visual images, words, memories, kinesthetic images; uncanny feelings; inner knowing and incubation phenomena from which there is the sudden appearance of a solution (Welling, 2004).).

Intuition and lived experience

Although Welling's (2004) characteristics are in keeping with the participants descriptions they do not adequately reflect the depth and breadth of the participants' experiences. One of the participants says:

It's different from a gut sense, it's noticing things that I can't notice, that are beneath my threshold of capacity.

Walsh (1998) speaks of experiences of direct, non-conceptual intuition that are beyond words, concepts and dualities and says that it is these insights which collectively constitute the wisdom known as '*prajna* in Buddhism, *jnana* in Hinduism, *ma'rifah* in Islam and gnosis in Christianity' (p.21).

One of the transcriptionists spoke of having "the hairs stand up on the back of her neck" while she transcribed some of the tapes. Her response suggests that everyday understandings of 'intuition' as described above, only go some way in explaining the participants' experiences. Intuition may be the window or doorway through which **knowing** presents itself, and imagination the means by which **knowing** is translated, but neither seem to tell the whole story. It is as a participant says previously:

There was a space to explore or to go deep, an invitation to go deeper.

Is 'knowing' a mystical experience?

a sense sublime
of something far more deeply interfused,
whose dwelling is the light of the setting suns.

(Wordsworth in Hollis, 2000, p.8).

Mystical experiences have been variously described as peak experiences, exceptional human experiences and transcendent ecstasy (Maslow, 1962; White, 1994). Underhill (1914) believes that reality is truly apprehended in a mystical experience as opposed to everyday states of consciousness in which we only apprehend images, notions and aspects of things. In Western culture the mystical experience is believed to be one in which the ego or "I" construct of self no longer identifies with the contents of consciousness and is therefore transcended or deconstructed, which may be characterized by the affect of ecstasy. In contrast, the Buddhist experience of unfiltered consciousness known as *Samadhi*, is more of a meditative process and is not characterized by any specific affect other than peacefulness (Deikman, 1983; Epstein, 1995).

Describing mystical experiences is also the domain of visionaries and poets. Yeats' "trysting place of mortal and immortal, time and eternity", and T.S. Eliot's "the still point of the turning world" (cited in Nicholson, 1985, p.74) speak of mystical experience as one in which our sequential minds are

transcended and we become immersed in a kind of living infinity. The participants did not specifically refer to their experiences as mystical experiences but these descriptions, and the features Deikman (1972) lists as the principle features of mystical experience, fit with the participants' accounts. Deikman's features include "intense realness, unusual sensations, unity, ineffability and trans-sensate phenomena" (p.37). Likewise James's (1994) says that although mystical experiences are similar to states of feeling, those who experience them, also find them to be states of knowledge (p.49).

Mystical knowing

A mystical experience, like an experience of **knowing**, is a curious merger of human capacities. It is an experience which is singularly unique to the experiencer, and it is a reminder that there is much more to **being** than is apparent. The all-encompassing nature of such an experience is simply unable to be reflected in language. As Campbell (1989) says, a person who has had a mystical experience "knows that all the symbolic expressions of it are faulty" (p.73). The participants say:

It is beyond words; I can only give a little glimpse of what I'm talking about.

One of the participants describes a mystical experience in which she was called to write, to share her inner experiences:

What I experienced at the time... I didn't have meanings for it and subsequent to the experience I've had to actually live the experiences so I realize now I was called, I was given a map and it was a wonderful gift.

Therapist-as-mystic

Eigen (1993) says the ecstatic element of therapeutic sessions is rarely acknowledged yet may be the one of the most important. He asserts that ecstasy is feared by therapists because it changes the therapeutic dynamic. Bion (1962) proposes that sometimes a therapist is sometimes called upon to transcend conventional ideas and think thoughts that might be disturbing and unique. He says that a therapist-as-mystic in states of heightened awareness, can access the depths of the patients deepest self and facilitate growth and change. The participants' accounts of their work suggest that their **knowing** facilitates this level of engagement. What differentiates the participants from Eigen's assertion, and Bion's account is that the participants speak of the affect that accompanies such deep engagement. They speak about love. Bion's (1970) reference to Isaac Luria's words may be hinting at his understanding of the loving dimension of the therapist-as-mystic:

I can hardly open my mouth to speak without feeling as though the sea burst its dams and overflowed. How then shall I express what my soul has received, and how can I put it down in a book? (p.114).

Differentiating mystical knowing

Focusing on the mystical dimension of **knowing** draws attention to the realization that there are many different ways in which **knowing** may be experienced. Writers such as Katz (1978), Deikman (1972), Hillman (1975), and Wilber (1994) remind us that such experiences are further mediated by our cultural understandings, our epistemology and ontology and simply “by the kinds of being we are” (Katz, 1978, p.59). To this end Stace (1960, cited in Katz, 1978) differentiates between different states of mystical **knowing**. He says an extrovert mystical experience is that of a “Unifying Vision – where all things are one” whereas an introvert mystical experience is one of “Unitary Consciousness: the One, the Void; pure consciousness” (p.49). The participant who speaks of

it's past understanding and it really is the presence...the beingness,
may represent an example of 'Unitary Consciousness', whereas those who speak of

the intelligent...and loving universe; living in the mind of God
may be referring to a 'Unifying Vision'.

In summary, I agree with Bullis (1992) who says mystical experiences are not only experienced by mystics, but belong to a rich human tradition. According to research, thirty to forty percent of the population at any one

time report having had experiences beyond the everyday which they describe as mystical (Hunt, 2003, p.12). Not only do these findings support Bullis's assertion, they also challenge the marginalizing and/or pathologizing of such experiences in the Western tradition thereby raising the possibilities for other ways of **knowing** and **being** to be valued and regarded as significant life experiences.

The next part of this chapter looks at the ways in which the participants experience other possibilities of **knowing**, and how **knowing** is perceived by the participants, the **knowers**.

Reflecting on knowing

The poem "Standing and Knowing" conveys a sense of the timelessness, vastness and power of **knowing**, whilst simultaneously also conveying the paradox of **knowing**, that is, the subtlety in the perception of **knowing**.

Standing and Knowing

Wherever the mountains put their white gloves on
I know it is still, I know it is still.

Wherever the sea goes back to itself
I know it is still, I know it is still.

Wherever I find the deepest thought
I know it is still, I know it is still.

The land that stretches beyond this hill –
I know it is still.

W. Stafford (1992).

Knowing is an experience recognized and defined by having experienced it

My description of **knowing** is from personal experience. For me it is primarily an experience which is both recognizable and defined best by having experienced it. It is an experience in which all of the familiar and everyday landmarks with which I define myself and my life, my very being, no longer exists in that moment. A participant explains:

it's that state of being where all frameworks, all concepts, beliefs, ideas sort of get blown right out of the water.

She gives further insight as to what knowing is for her:

I can only give a little glimpse of what I'm talking about, it really is the presence, it's that state of being, being very, very present in the being and the beingness, and the deeper you are in the being the knowing is just there.

In the being

'That state of being' to which the participant refers may be described as being absolutely immersed in a type of endless moment, free of the limitations of thought, of boundaries, free of anything connected to our everyday experience. The briefest of comprehensions, a *glimpse*, of infinite, ever-present fullness and abundance is completely unlike any everyday experience we may have. The unequivocal contrast between everyday experiences and

being in the **being** gives the experience its feeling of other-ness, of something far greater than it would be possible for a human being to ordinarily encompass. For some of the participants this sense of other-ness is their experience of **knowing** and **being**.

The greater other

One of the participants talks about her experience of **knowing** as one in which she feels accompanied by energy far greater than her own:

I feel I'm working with beings of immense wisdom, divine beings, divine timing and love.

The sense of unlimited love is the essential theme of **knowing** which is constant throughout the participants' descriptions and will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Five.

Another participant says:

it's like the intelligent universe or the loving universe...and I want to align myself with that, it's beyond time, something bigger than us both comes into being.

The experiences are described with awe and a sense of having glimpsed unfiltered magnificence. They are experiences which are so intensely profound and loving that they evoke what we call a sense of the sacred, what we may refer to as knowing God, Jesus, of angels. A participant says that her experience is that:

we live in the mind of God.

Having a belief system, a faith and/or culture in which there is language that conveys the beauty and richness of these experiences overcomes some of the challenge of finding ways to describe them.

Knowing in Māori culture

One of the participants describes herself :

I'm seen as a bit unusual as a therapist where as a Māori I see, and I see people...I see the dead, they are able to communicate to me and they give me messages to pass on to people.

She describes what she sees as being like the Te Mana advertisement on local television in which there are young, predominantly Māori people, in training for their future and pictured in silhouette behind them, are their ancestors. Acknowledging ancestors as part of **knowing** and **being** is part of a cultural understanding amongst Māori and amongst some Pakeha. Having the ability to 'see' people who have lived in the past, (which may be verified by photographs, paintings and stories) provides an acceptance, a certainty and an assuredness about the experience of **knowing**. Because **knowing** in this way is also part of a system of belief for Māori, the cultural expression and language of Māori, Te Reo, provides a narrative for understanding and making meaning of experiences of **knowing**.

Cultural assuredness

Having a cultural framework in which there is both a history of experience and a language for unusual phenomena, for the experience of **knowing**, adds to a sense of assuredness for the participant. The participant says:

the three baskets of knowledge, I certainly feel like that's what I have.

She is referring to the Māori tradition of the Three Baskets of Knowledge, the names of which vary from *iwi* (tribe) to *iwi*. The Reverend Māori Marsden (Shirres, 1997) describes these as *te kete aronui*, the basket containing the knowledge of what we see, the natural world as apprehended by the senses; *te kete tuauri* contains knowledge that is beyond, the knowledge which 'stands under' our senses; and *te kete tuaatea*, the knowledge of that which is beyond time and beyond space, the knowledge of spiritual realities which are experienced in ritual (p.17). The Baskets of Knowledge provide both a meaningful framework and affirmation for this participant's experiences as evidenced in her description of her experiences as really, really real.

The realness of knowing

Winnicott (1971, cited in Hunt, 2003) says "the loss of contact with the world of shared reality is counterbalanced by a gain in terms of feeling real" (p.33). Underhill (1914, cited in Raff, 1997) describes **knowing** as "felt vision" not a

‘feeling’, nor emotion or psychological function but a kind of sixth sense, which perceives with such a profound sense of reality and intensity that no doubt can remain in the visionary that his (her) experience is more profoundly real than any other experience they have encountered (p.80). The participant’s experiences corroborate Underhill’s explanation and Winnicott’s observation. They say things like:

I know it’s there, it’s really real; I suddenly know what’s going on, it’s a knowing, it is very much a knowing; it’s a knowing, being tuned in with an intensity and a focus; I’m not guessing, it’s a knowing.

Trusting knowing

Underhill’s (1914, cited in Raff, 1997) description of the sense of reality and intensity of the experience is also reflected in the participants’ expression of certainty about their **knowing**. They each speak of their trust of **knowing**. They absolutely **know** what it is they know:

it’s just a complete and utter knowing; it’s an absolute knowing, it’s past understanding.

Frequently the realness of the experiences of **knowing** is confirmed by the person to whom the participants convey the information. This further imbues the participants’ experience of **knowing** with a trustworthy wholeness and vitality that can be elaborated upon through metaphorical descriptions of their lived experiences. Buber (1999, cited in Friedman, 2003) says that an ‘existential trust’ of one whole person with another is necessary for healing to

take place. He believes that the therapist's openness and willingness to receive whatever comes is necessary for a patient to trust existentially (p.63).

Metaphor as our unique expression of knowing

Knowing relies on the use of metaphor, symbols and creative imaginative processes to bring descriptive analogies back from its entirety. It is the descriptive, interpretive and meaning-making process which makes each experience unique to the experiencer. One of the participants says:

My metaphor is those seeing eye pictures, the magic seeing eye pictures where you have to defocus and suddenly you'll see the pattern, there's a shimmering sort of pattern...it's suddenly thrust into me.

Water metaphors

Water metaphors are used by two of the participants to convey experiences of **knowing**. Something about the images of water they present captures an essence of **knowing** which I interpret as representing the fluidity, vastness, endlessness and stillness of **knowing**. The ancient art of astrology uses the symbolic representation of the element water to describe one of four responses to life. Arroyo (1975) describes the water element as representing "the realm of deep emotion and feeling responses, in tune with subtleties and nuances many others don't even notice" and "in touch with the oneness of all creation" (p.97).

A river

The metaphor of a river as a lived experience of **knowing** is explained by a participant as:

there's a river I could dip into ...and a wisdom or insight, this huge flowing body of wisdom and insight.

This insight provides a 'glimpse' into the accessibility and the unlimited boundlessness of this participants' experience of **knowing**. It also elicits an image of being somehow immersed in the moment, and yet of also being open and fully available to all that arises. van Deurzen-Smith (1997) an existential psychotherapist writes in a similar vein. She says water is a metaphor which enables us to think of ourselves as "a channel, a river, through which the water of life flows" (p.9).

A pond

Another participant speaks of a pond:

being a still pond would be a metaphor, of that which seems to be arising, for coming from a deeper place, for receiving what it is... it's like time stops and a feeling of deep stillness takes place and I wait.... She adds: if you can think of the ocean, of waves like the confusions that are going on for a client that need to be addressed ...but I try to stay tuned to what's going on at the deep ocean currents.

This metaphor offers a different water analogy to the river, one in which the participant herself becomes the water, like a pond and/or the ocean as a response to both the energy that arises within her, and the client in front of her.

Deikman (1983) also uses pond and ocean images in a remarkably similar way as an analogy for human consciousness. He says we mistake the contents of our consciousness for our awareness of ourselves, and that instead we are the underlying awareness. He calls the awareness our observing self, which, like a pond, if still and quiet enough, is able to extend to a sufficient depth to resonate with the longer pulsations originating from the ocean.

Being a 'knower'

De rerum natura

So the lively force of his mind
Has broken down all barriers,
And he has passed far beyond,
The fiery walls of the world,
And in mind and spirit
Has traversed the boundless universe.

(Lucretius in Grof, 1990, p.51)

What differentiates the participants in this study from many other studies, is that the participants in this study are therapists who acknowledge and trust their capacities and the **knowings** that they experience, and they actively work *with* this phenomena as it arises. Their lived experiences are reflected in the ways in which they describe themselves.

A participant who is able to actively heal describes herself as being:

Sort of like a medical intuitive.

She is able to sense, to **know**, the source of both physical and emotional pain in a client's body. Another participant who works with deep meditation draws on the name of an ancient group of healers from Biblical times. She says she is:

A therapeutae, a healer, teacher and priestess.

She also heals by **knowing** what each client requires for their healing journey.

A further reference to healers from the past is made by the participant who refers to himself as drawing on shamanism and shamanic healing techniques as a source of **knowing**. A participant who sees and hears, in a type of clairvoyant and clairaudient capacity describes her experience of **knowing** as:

It almost feels like being a living channel.

Another participant acknowledges her familial legacy of **knowing**:

My grandmother told me that she was a healer, I feel like she's given that to me.

The participants' awareness and acknowledgement of themselves as **knowers** means that they are able to bring **knowing** into **being** in their everyday lives including their work as therapists. Although there are enough similarities in the participants' accounts for themes in **knowing** to emerge, the experiences remain unique to the participants and are not easily measurable in quantitative terms nor easily explained in the everyday world. A **knower** therefore learns to be with paradox, with the tension between everyday being

and **knowing**, because as the participants agree, **knowing** is the most real experience they have.

Being a living paradox

The paradoxical experience of **knowing**, yet also being part of everyday ‘beingness,’ is akin to constantly straddling two worlds. The lived experience is like being part of a marginalized minority group, of somehow living and working ‘at the edge of the village’. At times for me this has been what I call ‘crazy-making’. It is being a living paradox, a contradiction both in oneself and in the everyday world.

Lao Tzu (Freke & Gandy, 1997), a 5th century Taoist sage describes the paradox of **knowing**:

You can't see it,
Because it has no form.
You can't hear it, because it has no sound.
You can't touch it, because it has no substance.
It cannot be known in these ways,
because it is the all-embracing Oneness.
It is not high and light,
or low and dark.
Indefinable yet continually present,
it is nothing at all.
It is the formless form,
the imageless image.
It has no beginning and no end.
Stay in harmony with this ancient presence,
and you will know the fullness of each present moment.

Summary

The essential theme of **knowing** reveals itself as multidimensional and as subtle manifestations of consciousness for the participants. **Knowing** embraces both intuition and imagination, and relies upon the use of metaphor and imagery to bring it into existence. It is also paradoxical in that it is both a uniquely individual and yet universal experience which is both recognized and defined only by having experienced it. The fusion of imagination, intuition and the personal uniqueness of **knowing** are often described as being mystical experiences and part of a rich human tradition rather than being isolated and unusual phenomena. The lack of everyday familiarity about **knowing** in the Western tradition contrasts with the assuredness in cultures such as Māori where **knowing** is acknowledged and affirmed.

Something about the respectful and interactive hermeneutic phenomenological research process enables the lived experience of the paradox of **knowing** to come alive in a way which not only makes sense, it is also a validating experience. The next Chapter will explore how the participants' draw on their lived experiences of **knowing** and being a **knower** to bring **knowing** into **being**.

Chapter 5

BRINGING KNOWING INTO BEING

Interconnectedness

Exploration of the participants' stories, of their lived experiences, suggests that there are many ways in which **knowing** is brought into **being** and manifests in **being**. Jung (cited in Jacobi, 1973) refers to **knowing** experiences as archetypal and describes bringing **knowing** into **being** as 'synchronicity' which he says is "the occurrence of meaningful coincidences of an inner image with an outward event" (p.49). Einstein speaks of experiences of **knowing** as a being leaps of consciousness (Nicholson, 1985, p.165). Whilst the participants may at times experience bringing their **knowing** into **being** in these ways, their descriptions are more akin to connecting being-in-the-world-with-others with an accessible flow of **knowing**. I have called this experience interconnectedness.

Interconnectedness as awareness of the subtleties of knowing

The experience of interconnectedness is presented as part of the essential theme of **knowing**. Interconnectedness and **knowing** follows on from discussion in Chapter Two where interconnectedness is presented as being a manifestation of the continuum of consciousness (p.35). Bringing **knowing**

into **being** requires awareness of the subtleties of **knowing** as outlined in the levels of knowing in Sufism as *al-lataif* (Helminski, 1999), and in the Dalai Lama's (Goleman, 1997) account of the subtleties of consciousness from the Buddhist perspective.

The participants' accounts include descriptions of: how connectedness is acknowledged; the simultaneous paradoxical experiences of both merging with another and an 'unboundariedness' in connectedness; the resonance of **knowing**, and of being a conduit. Other manifestations of **knowing** emerge from the stillness and tension of waiting and receptivity, from which comes gifts, and a sense of a gestalt. **Knowing** is expressed by the participants in their joyfulness and laughter, and from within their gratitude of knowing the **knowing**, the unspoken quality of humbleness is revealed.

Interconnectedness as a manifestation of knowing

The world is forged in relationship, the universe is co-created, and we live our lives within the streaming mutual life of the universe (Buber 1958, cited in Broomfield, 1997, p.60).

Buber's (Broomfield, 1997) quote provides a philosophical overview of **knowing**, interconnectedness and the experiences of therapists who work in this domain. Like Buber, Spezzano and Garguilo (2003) also say "interconnectedness is the premise upon which existence itself is predicated"

(p.3). They point out that the shortcoming in the therapeutic ideal of an individuated autonomous “I” is that it overlooks our interconnectedness and negates those cultures, such as many indigenous cultures, for whom interconnectedness is fundamental to their being. Writing in 1922 Cooley argued that interconnectedness is so much a part of the humanness of human nature that it is taken for granted to the point of invisibility.

Aponte (2004) outlines five guiding principles of spiritually sensitive psychotherapy. These include: acknowledging connectedness, suspending judgment, trusting the universe, creating realities and walking the path with heart (p.282). The participants’ stories reflect these principles which become more evident as the study unfolds. I describe and outline their lived experiences of being connected and feeling connections as ‘acknowledging connectedness’. I also make reference to other theoretical understandings of connectedness in therapy as a comparison to the lived experiences of the participants.

Acknowledging connectedness

As the participants speak about the connection they experience, they do so from different perspectives, from their own unique frame of reference. One says:

It's in the relationship, it's in the connection.

Another participant speaks of her experience:

Together we experience what I call the greater other, it's that something that's evoked when two people are truly meeting at a heart level.

Schermer (2003) says Jung called these presences archetypal representations of the collective unconscious, and that Grotstein called them expressions of the ineffable subject.

Merging in connectedness

A participant shares an experience I describe as merging:

When it's a knowing it's like they almost go silent and they look at you... it's like a total connection, of looking past the story and just a knowing about each other, cause I think they know about me as well, you just have a connection that doesn't need words.

Merleau-Ponty (2002) writes about an empathic type of merging which involves a reciprocal insertion and intertwining of others in oneself and of oneself in them. Suler (1998) also refers to the state of **being** in which the self/other barrier dissolves which allows empathy and the transformation of merger to occur. Likewise, Buber (1970, cited in West, 1997) refers to two different types of relationship: the I/It in which one treats the other as different from oneself and the I/Thou, in which the other is treated as kin and where a more energetic merger between the two becomes possible and transcendent knowing is possible. He describes this experience poignantly as one in which “our essential humanness is laid bare”. Sullivan (1989) draws

on Jung's alchemical medieval imagery known as *The Rosarium* (as shown on the following pages) to symbolically illustrate the transformative potential of merging which she refers to as the unfolding of the transference-countertransference relationship (p.50). Sullivan implies that the transformative process *within* the person is mirrored between therapist and client.

The Rosarium



1. The Mercurial Fountain



2. The King and Queen



3. The Naked Truth



4. Immersion in the Bath



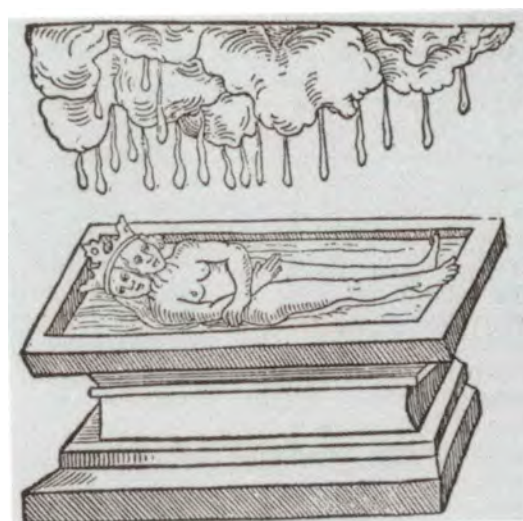
5. The Conjunction



6. Death



7. The Ascent of the Soul



8. Purification



9. The Return of the Soul



10. The New Birth

To my way of thinking the transformative process of *The Rosarium* encompasses the tentatively developing relationship and synergy of masculine and feminine principles to the ultimate integration of the two in The New Birth. Although aspects of this process are considered to occur in the duration of the therapeutic relationship, the participants refer to merging in **knowing** as being instantaneous, as incorporating all of the alchemical energies in the moments of **knowing**. Eigen (1993) says merging is an undifferentiated fusion of subjectivity, yet the participants' experiences are more like a recognition and acknowledgement of Field's (1991, cited in Torii, 2005) observation "It's not that we enter into states of merger, but that we already exist in a state of merger" (p.23).

The paradox of merging

The following participant's description of her experience of connectedness and merger mirrors Engler's (1998) observation. The participant says:

Those connection boundaries are more fluid when I allow myself to go into that expansive place, there's a tremendous support for myself, there's a tremendous support for my client.

Engler (1998) says the experience of interconnectedness is "A sense of ongoingness in existence – a sense of stability, predictability, and personal continuity across time, place and states of consciousness" (p.111).

Both the participants' and Engler's (1998) accounts refer to the paradox of a simultaneous presence of both distinction and union dimensions. Eigen (1993) adopts Milner's term of 'dual union' to describe the simultaneous dimensions which he says are co-constitutive and contain *both* everythingness *and* nothingness, presence *and* absence in the tradition of the mystical paths of *via affirmativa* and *via negativa* (p.174).

Resonance

Another participant describes her experience of merging and interconnectedness as a resonance. She says:

It's like we resonate with each other.

Welwood (2000) speaks about "letting the other person's experience resonate in and through me" (p.171) and van Deurzen (1998) also speaks of letting the client's life touch ours which she calls the art of resonance. Sheldrake's (2003) field of morphic resonance is also echoed in the participants' experience as is Rowan's (1990) analogy of the phenomenon when two pianos are positioned side by side, and as a note is played on one, the corresponding string on the other piano also resonates.

It may well be that the participants' capacity for the resonance of bringing **knowing** into **being** enlivens their clients' capacity for also bringing **knowing** into **being**. The participant adds:

by the end of the session they (*clients*) are in quite an altered state, an expansive state, and feel quite different from when they walked in.

Merger summary

The experiences of merging suggest that **knowing** and interconnectedness may co-arise in both the therapist's and client's capacity for bringing **knowing** into **being**.

Buber (1958, cited in Kramer, 2003) believes that it is through the interhuman realm that experiences of unity beyond all multiplicities is possible. He suggests that each person helps to bring about and renew the unity of the experience of God through genuine relationship. Sullivan (1989) says that all understanding involves identifying with and merging into the other at the same time as it involves thinking about the other from a distance (p.102). The participants' accounts are testament to the potential in the intimacy and uniqueness of the therapeutic relationship.

Another way in which to view merging is that it may be that the participants' aptitude and capacity creates the space in which the mutual experience can arise. This possibility fits with some of the participants' understandings of

how it is they bring **knowing** into **being**, that is, of being like a conduit of interconnectedness, of **knowing**.

A conduit of interconnectedness

Some of the participants' descriptions of bringing **knowing** into **being** are analogous with being a kind of conduit, that is, someone who is able to both access **knowing** and to manifest this in a living way. A conduit is defined as "an agency or means of access, communication" (Collins Dictionary, 2003, p.353). The participant who likens her experience to being 'a living channel' is describing herself as a conduit of **knowing**. Grof and Grof's (1989) description of a shaman suggests his (her) role is a kind of conduit in which "he perceives the pulse of the universe in himself" (p.95). A participant has a similar expression:

it's like the intelligent universe or the loving universe...and I want to align myself with that.

Other conduit references include a participant who says:

in a way I'm crossing both dimensions.

Another participant

dips into the river of consciousness.

Another says:

Sometimes it (knowing) will happen whether I'm tuned in or not depending on how much it needs to happen.

Cortright (1997) believes that taking care of and fine tuning whatever instrument of consciousness is used to bring **knowing** into **being**, is the essence of a therapist's work.

The net of gems

To conclude this part of the chapter I am presenting a particularly lovely metaphor which illustrates the participant's **knowing** and experiences of the mutuality of interconnectedness. The Mahayana Buddhist tradition refers to this experience as a net of gems known as the Net of Indra. The net is described by Campbell (1989) as having a jewel at every node on the net, and that each jewel reflects all the other jewels in an infinite process of reflection, where everything arises in mutual relation to everything else.

Deikman (2000) cautions that although we may be intellectually persuaded that a unified world exists, the difficulty is to experience that world. In a Cartesian dominated paradigm the terrain of interconnectedness remains fairly invisible in our everyday lives, so that even if it is glimpsed, the unfamiliarity of such an experience means that it is likely to be marginalized as being exceptional rather than part of what is possible in our everyday lives.

The next part of the chapter looks at other possibilities through which the participants express interconnectedness and unity, and bring **knowing** into **being**.

The livedness of bringing knowing into being

The act of waiting

The participants' descriptions of gestalt and gifts make frequent reference to the act of waiting. One of the participants says:

I'm sitting there with someone, maybe it's tense, maybe it's not, the tension is actually in not knowing, sitting and not knowing...and then suddenly I see into it, ..through it all.

The participant is describing an ability, if not a necessity of **knowing**, for tolerating confusion, uncertainty, and the unknown while waiting for the expansion of everyday consciousness, for **knowing** to emerge.

Eigen (1993, cited in Schermer, 2003) says the act of waiting in therapy reflects a faith that an answer will come and therefore constitutes an unspoken prayer. Trusting is also implicit in the act of waiting. A participant describes her **knowing** of this process:

It's not about head tripping and having ideas, it's about receiving in a still place and being open to being guided, it's like time stops, a feeling of deep stillness takes place and I wait.

Receptivity

The participant also says: it's about receiving. Receptivity is considered to be a necessary precondition for **knowing**. Writers describe the phenomenon of **knowing** as a receptive phenomenon and that **knowers** are frequently engaged in meditative practice or some other type of spiritual discipline that enables them to 'receive' (Walsh & Vaughan, 1993; Underhill, 1914 and Maslow, 1962). These observations are supported by the participants all having various belief systems upon which they base their understanding of **knowing** and **being**. A predisposition to receptivity in the participants also links with the healing empathic stance discussed in Chapter Two as enabling a mirroring of transcendent urges of **being** (Prasino, 1992; Garguilo, 2006).

Gestalt

Ibn Arabi, (cited in Said, 1995, electronic source) a 12th century mystic describes **knowing** as "perceiving and being that which is". He is describing the experience in which **knowing** is transformed into the whole, where the division between knower, knowledge and known is gone. This explanation also describes what we have come to know as a "gestalt". The dictionary definition of gestalt is "a perceptual pattern or structure possessing qualities as a whole that cannot be described merely as the sum of its parts" (Collins, 2003, p.682).

Three of the participants relate their experiences of **knowing** as being like a gestalt.

They say:

It's like I've been handed something that's complete; I suppose it's like a gestalt; I suddenly see the whole pattern before me, not that I could name it as such.

This kind of **knowing** is receiving information in a way which is quite incomparable to the everyday ways in which we receive, process and understand any sort of information. It is a calm and intense 'eureka' experience in which everything, every single detail that needs to be seen, known and understood is seen, known and understood in a fraction of a moment. A participant says:

What I see is like a holographic universe, it's almost like Gestalt therapy, the whole contains every individual part but every individual part contains the whole.

Knowing in this way is akin to being the recipient of a gift. The participants speak of both the gifts *of knowing* and the gifts *in knowing*.

Gift

Gift is defined as "a special aptitude, ability or power" (Collins, 2000, p.686). Bobrow's (2004) idea that we exist in a "field of potentiality", suggests that through interconnectedness it is possible to **know** deeply about things and

about each other, particularly if we have an aptitude or ability for doing so, something that might be experienced as being like a gift. The following account suggests the participant's gift is accessed by allowing an expansion into this field of potentiality, the continuum of consciousness, where everyday facilities for gaining information are somehow greatly magnified. A participant describes the gift of **knowing** as:

The gift or treasure is just waiting for you to touch if you allow it.

Another participant describes both the gift and the experience of the act of waiting:

The tension is in not knowing, sitting and not knowing...until the sudden known, a gift from somewhere.

The participant's account goes on to describe the information that was subsequently made accessible as:

it's as if my own mind has given me a gift at that point.

In contrast another participant refers to her ability to know as something she can access:

I say that I've got a lot of gifts in my basket.

What may be surmised from the accounts of gestalt and gifts is that the participants have an aptitude for bringing their **knowing** into **being-in-the-**

world. They are able to encompass ‘the whole’, a gestalt or **knowing** I have referred as interconnectivity in the continuum of consciousness.

Although the way in which **knowing** manifests as a gift differs in the participants’ accounts, the words gift and ‘treasure,’ reflect the delight, the joy of **knowing**, an experience we may associate with the receiving and giving of gifts, of finding treasure of unimaginable richness and the utter gratitude with which the gifts and gestalt are revealed. As I listened to the interview tapes, and read and re-read both my notes and the study transcripts, I noticed myself smiling and experiencing joy as I recalled the interviews. I noticed from the comments in my journal that I had also found myself smiling on the way home after the interviews, of the delight I felt in meeting the participants and hearing their stories. It became evident that joyfulness, and gratitude for the gifts of **knowing**, were manifest in the participants’ way of **being**. I felt that these traits mirrored their authenticity. I wondered too if these traits also somehow reflect capacities necessary for managing the ability to bring **knowing** into being.

Joy and laughter in the knowing

Let us live in joy (from the Dhammapada, Sayings of the Buddha, Byron, 1976)

The poet Kahlil Gibran (1997) says:

Your joy is your sorrow unmasked.
 The selfsame well from which your laughter rises
 was often-times filled with tears.
 And how else can it be?
 The deeper that sorrow carves into your being,
 the more joy you can contain.

Although the participants referred to suffering and painfulness in their own life stories, and in the lives of the clients with whom they work, there is a palpable joyfulness in their way of being and in their manner of engagement or relationality (van Manen, 1990). Evidence of this joyfulness is also apparent in their enthusiastic descriptions of their work. One says (with laughter):

I love it, I love it, I love it, there's miracles in it.

Another speaks of her 'joy in life' despite the suffering she sees in her work and that:

my hope for others is that they will find a path of joy.

Another participant laughs as she says:

my health's going well and I look well and fine... so I'm going to keep doing it
(being a healer) cause it works.

Laughter also characterizes the work of three other participants:

we have lots of laughter coming in here because you know, it's seeing the funny side as well.

Another says:

there's a huge amount of humour...my colleagues tell me off about how much laughter comes from my room, you know 'it cant be a proper therapeutic session because of the laughter'.

A third participant says:

there's peels of laughter... at being able to see the bigger picture.

Knowing the bigger picture

The participants' comments, the presence of joy at being in their company, and the laughter we shared in the interviews, brought to mind the following quote which seems most appropriate. "At the height of laughter, the universe is flung into a kaleidoscope of possibilities" (Shinoda Bolen, 2003, p.103).

Knowing *is* a bigger picture which enables the participants to be living examples of a kaleidoscope of possibilities and as such they portrayed hope and joy, along with an infectious love and appreciation of life in the interview encounter.

The other characteristic of the participants that was very apparent to me as the interviewer, was their gratitude for **knowing** and the humbleness with which they speak of their extraordinary experiences.

Humbleness

I live at the edge of the universe
like everybody else.

Bill Manhire (excerpt from *Milky Way Bar*, 2004, p.192)

van Manen (1990) directs the researcher to “pay attention to silence, the absence of speaking, the silence of the unspeakable and the silence of being, or life itself, as it is herein that one may find the taken for granted or the self-evident” (p.100). Although some of the participants spoke of their gratitude for **knowing**, they did not need to because their gratitude and their humbleness were evident to me in their authentic way of being.

A journal entry I wrote at the end of the interviewing process says “I can’t get over it. Here are these incredible... healers they are really, just out there quietly working away in such profound ways yet no-one really knows about most of them. It’s humbling stuff”.

It is a paradoxical experience to be alongside the participants and know of their healing capacities, and to experience a kind of ‘everydayness’ about

them too. Their personal stories indicate that they have encountered many of life's challenges and sorrows, and that they reflect deeply about themselves, their lives and their capacities. They are people who have an aptitude for **knowing** in quite incredible ways, yet they also go about their daily lives like everybody else. These kind of lived experiences speak to me of humbleness. Weber (2006) says that humbleness allows surrender and acceptance of living moment-by-moment (p.216).

The ability to regard life in this way, to be able to hold both joy and sorrow reflects the participants' ability to manage the sometimes overwhelming nature of **knowing** and the way in which they work. Their humbleness also represents what Ram Dass (1999) explains as "although it is hard to understand, spiritual freedom is ordinary, nothing special, and that this ordinariness is what is so special about it" (p.517).

Being humble or having humility is sometimes regarded as having the negative association of self-abasement rather than being a positive characteristic of the appreciation of life (Exline, 2004). Means and Wilson et al (1990) in their article *Humility as a psychotherapeutic formulation* suggest that there are four characteristics of humility including: being able to acknowledge one's inadequacies; recognizing one cannot control interpersonal relationships; a general attitude of gentleness and patience with

others, and humility as being a platform from which empathy is fostered. (pp.211-215). These characteristics mirror the experience of how I felt the participants present themselves and describe their experiences.

Gratitude and humbleness

A participant's description reflects her awareness of her aptitude and the limitations she is also aware of in the **knowing**:

The spiritual traps we get caught up in, you know, 'well this is how it is', building another ceiling, it's necessary and it's great cause you can look back and have a good laugh at yourself, it's very humbling.

Another participant acknowledges her ability:

mostly I can do this ...but I think it's really important to be a humble person as well.

A participant says:

I'm grateful for that capacity (*to know*) and I enjoy it a lot in my work.

Their humbleness brought to mind the famous Zen koan:

Before enlightenment,
chopping wood,
carrying water.
After enlightenment,
chopping wood,
carrying water.

(Yamada, 2004, p.41).

The koan depicts the participants' capacities for bringing **knowing** into **being** by being living examples of "the enormous richness and fertility" in themselves and in others, from which follows a vivid appreciation and compassion to work with others "exactly as they are" (Welwood, 1985, p.191). This is lovingness in action. The koan also speaks of the embodiedness of **knowing**, of being bodily 'present', of being in-the-moment. The participants' experiences of embodied and loving **knowing** will be outlined in the next part of the chapter.

EMBODIMENT IN THE KNOWING

Our bodies have knowledge. They know how to be born, they know how to breathe, they know how to grow, they know how to heal, they know how to love, they know how to give birth, they know how to die. Deep wisdom is available to us if we will but listen intently to our bodies (Broomfield, 1997, p.219).

The knowing body

Merleau-Ponty says "the body is the vehicle for being in the world" (1962, cited in Dahlberg, Drew & Nystrom, 2001, p.50). He argues against the dualism of the Western tradition which values mind over body, believing that the body participates in the way in which we create meaning in the world (1962, cited in Hamington, 2004). The deep wisdom of the body creating meaning in the world has long been familiar in the Hindu tradition of the chakras. The chakras are described as part of a subtle body system and refer

to specific power points in the body which are synchronistic with different states of consciousness, of **knowing** (Mindell, 1982; Freke & Gandy, 1997).

Sullivan (1989) describes bodily **knowing** as the feminine wisdom consciousness in which “**knowing** is the intelligence of the heart, even of the stomach, the wisdom of feeling” (p.24). van Manen (1990) refers to the embodiment of **knowing**, as corporeality, or the felt experience of the body and how we are bodily in and of the world. The participants’ lived experience of **knowing** is reflected in their bodies, because as both feminine wisdom and the chakra system indicate, **knowing** is awareness of all there is, and this includes our bodily lived-ness.

The body as a template

The first participant I interviewed describes herself as being like ‘a medical intuitive’ and exemplifies Broomfield’s (1997) observation of having deep wisdom in embodied **knowing**:

It’s the energy that I often feel in my body and sometimes what...also my clients feel going on in their bodies as well in sessions, I can feel in my body...where the emotions are being held in somebody...wherever the blockages are, the emotional storage, the unconscious patterns, it just gets released... at times it’s like laser surgery, you can feel it going in there, where the emotion is in somebody, and just dissolving whatever’s there.

The ‘it’ to which she refers is her capacity to heal in her client’s bodies what she **knows** in her own body. She is able to use her body as a ‘template’ to

feel her way into her client's experience. This ability may be described as being finely attuned to what may be a largely forgotten human capacity for implicitly understanding one another with our neuromuscular systems long before we express our understanding symbolically with language (Modell, 2003; Dhalberg, Drew & Nystrom, 2001).

Solomon (2006) also noted this capacity in some of the participants in his study of psychotherapists who meditate. He discusses this phenomenon in terms of a neurobiological capacity known as limbic resonance which is the ability of humans and other mammals to be aware of the emotional states of others (p.14). He also refers to the phenomenon of 'mirror neurons' in which self-other boundaries are dissolved as an empathic response surrender to suffering in others and an energetic surrender to what is evoked (pp.87 & 90). The participant's ability to not only **know** her clients pain, but also to heal it, is indicative of the immense potential in expansive, empathic states of consciousness.

Signaling knowing

Bodily awareness and body symptoms consistently signal **knowing** to the participants. A participant describes one of the ways which confirms **knowing** for her as: It's just like this pressure inside. Another explains knowing as: I often feel in my body extremely expansive sensations. These participants are

describing a bodily co-presence of **knowing** where there is a palpable change from the everyday way in which they experience their bodily awareness to a heightened sense of **knowing** and **being**. In other words they perceive **knowing** before they ‘know’ **knowing**.

A participant describes this more specifically:

The knowing comes from almost a contraction in time and that affects my body so that I feel the energy goes from my head into my heart area and a stillness and deepness takes place which feels like receiving, receiving not what I would necessarily want to hear but receiving what is.

A similar analogy is described by the following participant:

I'll have a really strong feeling of clairsentience in my body and I'm not in my head, I'm in every part of my body in those moments.

What may be described as a somatic experience of knowing is described by this participant:

When somebody's talking about something, it may not be particularly what they say, it may not be emotional or emotionally significant, they're just talking and suddenly I'll start to feel tears in my eyes or a bit of pain in my stomach.

Collectively speaking, the participants are explaining the sensation of their bodies feeling awakened, enervated and energized in some way as **knowing** emerges. Embodied **knowing** is akin to being more acutely and exquisitely alive in every pore of the body than is usually experienced in our everyday world. The physical sensation of orgasm is analogous to the bodily experience of **knowing** but unlike the *petit mort* of orgasm, that is, the

momentary abandonment of the senses, the **knowing** body is fully present in all the senses.

Mindell (1982, cited in Gendlin, 1982) outlines the various ways in which an expanded sense of our bodies may be experienced. He refers to this as the ‘dreaming body’ in which unusual experiences and altered states of consciousness are made known through somatic symptoms, movement impulses and synchronous messages from the world. Both Mindell’s dreaming body, and the participants’ accounts of embodiment, represent the wholeness of **knowing**, and that **knowing** requires the intricate unity of lived existentials to be explicated.

Metaphoric embodiment

Two of the participants spoke of the body in metaphoric terms. One participant likens her experience of **knowing** to expanded sensory awareness:

I guess you could call it a third eye being opened and seeing and hearing, being able to see things for the future and see things from the past.

The other participant explains her experience as being about heart:

So one of my guiding principles would be when my heart tells me that the client is searching, not just for answers to specific problems but that it’s coming from a far deeper place, like that is a searching of the soul at a heart level, I need to be open and present to the spiritual component of the search.

The heart metaphor

Welwood (2000) also refers to the heart metaphor in therapeutic work. His description of heart is an uncannily similar reworded version of the participant's description of heart and **knowing** "a direct presence that allows a complete attunement with reality, the capacity to touch and be touched, to reach out and let in" (p.163). His understandings of heart are echoed in Sufism which speaks of seven stages of **knowing** and describes the heart as an intelligence other than the intellect, that is, **knowing** that operates at a level described as *al-lataif* which translates as the subtleties. The heart is further defined as the meeting point, the place of suspension between the worlds the inner knowing or *bazin*, and outer knowing or *zahir* (Gough, 1987, electronic source).

Metaphors of the heart are generally associated with the universal experience of love. Along with the joyfulness and humbleness evidenced in the participant's way of being, I also experienced a lovingness about them. Love is a word seldom referred to in therapeutic literature (Morgan, 2007). I agree with Buytendijk (1947, cited in van Manen, 1990) who says that "love is the foundation for all knowing of human existence" (p.6). The next part of the chapter explores lovingness as the essential theme of **knowing** and another

way in which **knowing** is brought into **being**, as exemplified in the participants' accounts.

LOVINGNESS IN THE KNOWING

Love is what overcomes separateness and unites us to the Mystery which is Love (Freke & Gandy, p.177).

Agape and kairos

I have called love in the **knowing**, lovingness, not only to distinguish it from the many ways in which we experience and speak of love, but also to try to convey its universality and its lived-ness. Lovingness in the lived experience of the participants approximates what Campbell (cited in Flowers, 1991) describes as *agape*. Traditional Greek philosophy defined love in different ways in which *agape* is a transcendent love, a compassionate and spiritual as opposed to *eros*, love and physical attraction and *amor*, the personal experience of love. The lovingness is also akin to what Shinoda Bolen (1995) describes as being in *kairos*, that is, “being totally absorbed in the place, person or event without ego or judgement, a state which evokes love without thinking about it” (p.3). Being in *kairos* also reflects Buber’s (cited in Friedman, 2003) account of authenticity in a relationship. *Agape* and being in a state of *kairos* are analogous with participants’ accounts which show that the authenticity of lovingness is an integral part of **knowing**.

Lived experiences of lovingness

A participant describes **knowing** and lovingness in her words:

I've realized that its love that's there, you know loves not a feeling, it's not even a state its even beyond that and I can't put it into words, that presence of love – that's when it all seems to unfold or occur and its so simple, we'll go into the love, if I'm not in that real place of love and real love for my client it's not as profound, if I'm tired or not well, they're still getting help but its not the same as when they come and I'm fully present in that love.

A participant describes her experience of lovingness:

It doesn't matter how far you go you cannot go beyond unconditional love...I guess that gave me the confidence in working with clients...it doesn't matter how fearful they are they are still loved and their journey is about finding they are loved at the deepest, absolute, the deepest core of themselves;

Needleman (1995) believes “you can't experience the truth of another person without feeling love” (p.155). Participants speak of their feelings and sense of lovingness in their work, the love they feel for their clients. One participant says: Every single person that comes to me, I love them to pieces, I see the divine in them. Another says: I do feel love for my clients. They are describing an aptitude for being able to love *and* being able to acknowledge this as part of their therapeutic relationship with their clients.

A participant says in an understated, humble kind of way:

It's just being a human being and just being a loving human being with every person, just naturally, it just comes naturally.

She is making reference to the manifestation of **knowing** as lovingness, just coming naturally, as being such an integral part of **knowing** that it would not be possible to know **knowing** without lovingness. Other participants speak in a similar vein:

I can actually sense that whole well-being of love in my work; And I feel it, the love, the compassion as I sit.

Lovingness as the superlative of knowing

My experience of **knowing** and lovingness is that consciousness as **knowing** and **being** centres on the fundamental and eternal presence of a lovingness beyond our wildest imaginings. It is the orbit in which everything else revolves. This is love far beyond the passion of lovers and the visceral and unconditional love we feel at the birth of our children. These examples hint at the experience of **knowing** lovingness but its overwhelming magnitude is simply incomprehensible. It is a paradoxical simultaneity of serenity and ecstasy along with the capacity to somehow **know** lovingness as the most superlative **knowing** there is, eternally limitless and abundantly available.

There is a clarity in the participants' descriptions which is indicative of the simultaneous capacity for lovingness and what I have called the therapeutic face of love. This is not the mirror experience of love traditionally associated with mother and father love, nor the transferential-countertransferential sense

of love implied by the parental relationship in therapy. Lovingness as described by the participants is where it is possible to **know** love as being both within oneself and somehow simultaneously also beyond oneself, it is **being** love.

This experience may be defined as the essence of lovingness, that is, the **knowing** experience of lovingness enables the participants to love their clients without getting drawn into the entanglements of everyday interpersonal relationships. Welwood (2000) sums this up by saying, “therapeutic love is not a sentiment but a willingness to be open, a love of **being**, an imperturbable love” (pp.167-9).

An imperturbable love – the therapeutic face of love

There is a kind of food
not taken through the mouth:
Bits of knowing that nourish love.

(Rumi, 1991, p.50)

According to Welwood (2000) Freud admitted in a letter to Jung that psychoanalysis is essentially a cure through love. The relationship between therapist and client is unique in comparison to all of our other everyday relationships, especially in its intimacy, yet love and the possibilities for healing, remain curiously absent in most psychotherapeutic literature except

for when love is regarded as a problematic issue. Morgan's (2007) study of psychotherapy training found that the various dimensions of love are powerful keys to transformation and healing in trainees, yet its complexity and mystery make it difficult to manage in psychotherapy as a whole.

The therapeutic face of love may be analogous to what Post (2004) calls the altruistic love which furthers the existence, growth and presence of a sense of greater 'Other' (p.31). The participant's accounts shed light on lovingness and healing not only as a manifestation of **knowing** but also as an overlooked and underestimated aspect of therapy.

Trusting lovingness

A participant speaks of a kind of faith and lovingness, as exemplified in her trust of lovingness:

It's (love), to me, impersonal, I can be present but not get caught up in the melodramas but there because I care, I trust the greater other...its just like if you pull a butterfly out of its chrysalis you'll never have strong wings.

Similarly another participant describes lovingness from her perspective:

I hold the loving space but I don't get caught up in the illusions, the melodrama.

Another participant shares the same idea:

It's (love) not getting involved in all this other stuff...that's part of it but it's not real...from complexity down to the simplicity;

Lovingness in therapy as described by the participants has potency in terms of the capacity for healing. Healing emerges as the potential, if not natural outcome of the lived experience of **knowing** as it manifests in interconnectedness and lovingness.

HEALING IN THE KNOWING

Healers routinely speak of becoming one with the healee, connecting and blending. If we wish to understand how healing happens, we have to resuscitate our imaginations. We have to honour that part of ourselves that is unbounded in space and time...that unites us with all others...and think like poets and mystics

(Dossey, 1995, p.55).

Therapists as part of a long line of healers

The observation in Chapter One (p.6) that therapists follow a long line of healers (Torii, 2005) is supported by the findings of this study. One of the participants experiences herself as coming from a line of healers and that her deceased grandmother who was a healer:

comes and talks to me and tells me things.

A recent study found thirteen themes associated with therapists who heal. They include that the therapist: accepted suffering as part of life; saw love as a spiritual process that can heal; lives in the present; is creative; sees the

patient/client as a unique spiritual being; is comfortable with intimacy; believes in service and has a love of the work; has belief in the sacred, in mystery and has a veneration of the divine (Lulgjuray, 2003). Lovingness and healing as evidenced in the accounts of the lived experiences of the participants reflect these themes.

According to Symington (1996) psychotherapy means healing of the soul hence his assertion that the development of a person's emotional capacities needs to be central to any psychotherapy training. In other words, therapists are expected to explore and heal their own **being**. The archetype of the wounded-healer is therefore often associated with being a therapist (Wilmer, 1987, p.132). Hillman (1975, cited in Torii, 2005) speaks of the analogy of the therapist with Chiron, the archetypal wounded healer as being a more sincere representation of an authentic therapeutic relationship than the Apollonic split between the healer and the contaminated patient which dominates the Western medical and therapeutic model of health. The next section discusses **knowing** and the wounded-healer relationship.

The wounded healer and lovingness

The authenticity of being

Welwood (2000) quotes the poet Rilke who says “For one human being to love another, this is the most difficult of all our tasks, the work for which all other work is but preparation” (p.246). A commitment to healing emotional wounds is part of the journey of becoming a therapist and distinguishes therapists (counsellors and psychotherapists) from others who work in this way. The participants’ personal stories reveal wounding and healing experiences.

Some have faced serious health issues, tragic loss and other difficult life experiences. One of the participants speaks of her experience in near death situations as a child. She says:

As I've gone through my journey and healing I remember times as a child having spiritual experiences where angelic beings came and visited me and they rescued me from death.

Evidence of the participant’s journeys and healing is manifest in both their authenticity and in their unique capacity for lovingness, for **knowing** and for healing.

Torii (2005) maintains that the wounded-healer therapeutic relationship appears to enable “a unique intimacy, where love may be present, and in

which lies the possibility for healing” (p.12). Burkhadt and Nagai-Jackson (2001) add that the potential for intimacy and intrinsic connection is consciously evoked through our ‘presence’. In other words, healing enables an authentic lovingness in our **being** to manifest as a presence in which there is a corresponding potential for healing.

Healing presence

Resting in the middle of being means standing in pure presence.

(Welwood, 1996, p. 124).

Where **knowing** is at its most perceptible is in the manifestation we refer to as healing. Cortright (1997) says as we become more connected to ourselves in depth, our empathic potential extends and we become more present. In spiritual traditions such as shamanism, it is the healer’s presence, that is, the healer’s inner activities, such as his/her state of consciousness and contents of consciousness, which enables healing take place.

Rogers (1951, cited in West, 1997) added the quality he called ‘presence’ to his trio of core conditions for effective counselling (unconditional positive regard, congruence and empathy). He says:

I found that when I am closer to my inner, intuitive self, when I am somehow in touch with the unknown in me... then whatever I do seems to be full of healing...my *presence* is releasing and helpful...At these moments it seems that my inner spirit has

reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other...profound growth and healing energies are present (p.293).

A participant speaks of healing presence as:

It (the healing) really is being in the presence, being very, very present in the being and the beingness.

Her experience of healing presence resembles Rogers account:

The deeper I am in myself, the more the client will be able to bring themselves ...when I, depending on how deep I can hold that place, and how wide...then allows for the client to drop deeper and broaden deeper, that's been my experience.

Mearns and Thorne (1988) say that presence is the *way* we are with another or others in the midst of all our interactions (p.87). Gordon (2004) calls this “a spontaneous appreciation of the other’s presence in the room” (p.111).

The speed of healing

The significant feature of the participants’ presence is that despite the different ways in which they work, they all speak of the speed in which healing takes place within their practices. A participant speaks of the speed with which he accesses **knowing** for healing:

I don’t know whether you call this unusual but just how fast I sometimes seem to feel something in response to another ...when I do talk to other colleagues I get the impression that it doesn’t happen in quite that way for them.

The participant describes how this enables him to be ‘more potent’ in his work.

Other participants describe similar processes:

I find that the sessions are incredibly profound and powerful and we get to core deep levels in one session, it shortens the amount of counselling needed.

Another says:

It depends where the client is, if they were in that soul searching place, that deep to calls to deep happens immediately and you don't have to sort of go through a lot of other issues.

A participant tells her story:

I'm able to name something... usually within ten seconds or twenty seconds of meeting someone, so now clients coming to me for that purpose (healing), they actually want to go and expand into those other areas and we've had some intense deepenings that have just been profoundly beautiful, I'm in tears, they're in tears but it's a beautiful release and they are quite different when they leave, they look different and they feel different.

Healing using other forms of therapy

Some of the participants have chosen to work with less conventional modalities in their practices because of the wider horizon for healing their modalities offer. A participant who changed from working psychotherapeutically to working with meditative practices describes:

I can do in one meditation what can take two years in psychotherapy to even get close to.

Another therapist describes her experience of doing dream work:

And the method I use of speaking directly to one of the characters in the dream for example, brings out a whole lot more from the unconsciousness and you get a very powerful process...and they (the clients) are realizing how much potential and wisdom they have in them.

Healing and cultural understandings

Healing also draws on cultural beliefs and understandings. For some this can include the perceived presence of others as healing forces. A participant describes her experience:

This person has had a whole lot of trauma... and I just shared with her a sense that she wasn't alone in the room, there was someone there that wanted to encourage her and she said "oh, I know who that is, that's my mother on one side and my grandmothers on the other". And she said "why the hell are they talking to me now, they haven't done that since, you know, they've been dead all these years?" I said "just sit with that, be really open to it" and she was berating herself and what her mother was saying was so opposite. It was really powerful and she was just really blown away by the experience so that was nice to have a confirmation, and she ended up telling me in the next session a really painful story...and she could get some healing around it.

Healing from old patterns

Having a belief system in which the flow of energy through time and through generations which requires healing is honoured by one of the participants:

In my time with Māori clients generally...the dead come and talk to me, I have pictures, messages, and I impart them and usually they can be confirmed, I usually ask the family if it would be okay, if I have their permission to share something I'm getting a sense of and would they be interested in sharing the curiosity with me and generally people are really open about it...often it evokes a lot of feelings and pain or tears or a knowing...it's more around messages for people to reassure them or to help them understand some situation or if there's a makatu or there's a Māori relative or something from the past that's following to the present or explains some sort of event that's happening now and where it comes from.

Healing woundedness with lovingness

One of the participants' descriptions demonstrates not only a startling ability to heal using lovingness but also provides visible confirmation of healing taking place:

I just put my hand on her cuts, just with love and just lovingly, and she just dropped and dropped, right through the pain, it was so simple and I could feel the energy shift and she said 'oh, this is love'. And I could see it in her eyes. She really touched that love there for the first time and she saw what was really there, what was beyond all that wounding, that the wounding was just wounding and it wasn't who she was. And since then, she just knows where she's going.

The theoretical constructs inherent in the usual therapeutic encounter become redundant in the face of such experiences. Although there are many modalities of counselling and psychotherapy, few encompass lovingness and healing as a recognized therapeutic approach. These experiences inevitably raise questions about the many potentialities of therapy.

Summary

The participants' lived experiences of bringing **knowing** into **being** is described through the essential theme of interconnectedness which represents an awareness of the subtleties of consciousness that exist just beyond the parameters of everyday life. Intrinsic to interconnectedness is the lovingness and embodiment of **knowing**, and the ability to merge with another sufficiently in the **knowing** to enable healing to take place. An example of

healing from a Māori participant's perspective illustrates that not only is healing reflective of the participant's individual abilities and areas of interest, but that it also reflects particular cultural understandings of healing.

The participants' capacity for bringing **knowing** into **being** is accompanied by their personal traits of humbleness, joyfulness and receptivity. Some of the participants describe their abilities as gifts and they describe bringing **knowing** into **being** as analogous with a gestalt. The participants' experiences of bring **knowing** into **being**, and their response to life and work may be described as being different from that of everyday **being**. The next chapter looks at the lived experience of being a different kind of therapist.

Chapter 6

BEING A DIFFERENT KIND OF THERAPIST

It took me some time to complete this final part of the study. I was able to explore the **knowing**, interconnected, loving and healing experiences of the participants because their accounts brought these experiences to light so readily, and because it is familiar and enjoyable territory for me. The section in which I hesitated is the dimension of **knowing** about which all of the participants expressed their hesitations and concerns about as well. Jung (1965) might refer to this aspect as the shadow side of being a therapist who works with unusual phenomena, the discomfort of being a different kind of therapist.

I have previously described my experience of being a different kind of therapist is akin to living and working at the edge of the village. One of the participants says:

I've chosen to stay with my own processes... I think I'm fairly invisible out there.

My wondering is that the very subtleness of **knowing** and the humbleness it leaves in its wake, may paradoxically contribute to its lack of visibility and marginalization, especially in a culture which does not appear to ascribe value to these attributes. West's (1997) study of counsellors and

psychotherapists who work with healing found similar results. He found that therapists experienced a ‘taboo’ around discussing spirituality and healing, and that they reported feelings of professional isolation and loneliness.

The next section of this study looks at the participants’ lived experiences of **knowing** and **being** from the perspective of both living in a culture and working in a profession within the Western tradition, in which **knowing** continues to be regarded as a marginal experience. I call this section going quietly about the work.

Going quietly about the work

Paths so little used
we break cobwebs with our faces.

(excerpt from *Ancestors*. Lindsay, 2004, p.207)

During the interviews I asked the participants how it was for them professionally-speaking working with their experiences of unusual phenomena. For example, do they share their experiences with colleagues and how were these kind of experiences referred to during their training? What their responses reveal is a quietness in the way most of the participants go about their work. Although the quietness is reflective of the participants’ humbleness, it also reveals an unsatisfactory aspect of being a therapist who

works with unusual phenomena or one who works in a healing way. It lends an isolated aspect to the work. As one of the participants says:

It's a bit of a lonely walk sometimes.



Dame Whina Cooper and her granddaughter leaving Te Hapua at the start of the 1975 land march as she leads the Hikoī to Parliament (in White Feathers, 1990, p.125).

The lonely walk, marginalized experience of the participants reflects the dearth of training and exposure for therapists to the wider realms of consciousness and **knowing** despite the mounting evidence that experiences beyond the everyday occur regularly in therapy.

In keeping with the requirements of NZAP and NZAC, the participants all have supervisors with whom they share their accounts of **knowing** and healing. Some also have mentors, or involvement in small groups, with whom they continue to expand their **knowing**.

The general consensus is that apart from a few people in the participants' worlds, they do not discuss their work with others including colleagues. A participant says:

Within my work place it's a very difficult conversation to have, I don't know whether there's a lot of people experience what I experience.

Until undertaking the study, this too has been my experience. Although the participants' experiences speak for themselves, issues of professional credibility and mental stability prevent most of the participants from 'coming out' about the work they do. A participant describes this:

Most of the time I wouldn't mention them (experiences) to colleagues. I would be absolutely castigated or thought of as a nutter.

Cautious and shy

Other participants describe the caution they feel about speaking about their work. One says:

I'm cautious about putting my own stuff out there. Another says: I'm a little bit shy with colleagues to talk about how much it happens to me even though I don't think there's anything wrong with it.

These responses reflect several considerations. Firstly there is the participants' humbleness despite the potency of their work. Secondly, the participants' experiences reflect the paradox of living the contradictory position of being **knowers** who also negotiate the very different everyday world in which **knowing** is not valued nor easily understood which in turn raises issues of professional credibility and mental stability.

Being a pioneer

One of the participants has taken a different approach to the dilemma of credibility and professionalism in her work. She set about being well informed about dreaming and dream work in therapy, and is a well-recognised pioneer in this field. She emphasizes the importance of dreams, especially in therapeutic work. She says:

we have dreams going on every night... most people haven't learned enough about metaphor and so they don't get it.

Her observations are supported by the discussion in Chapter Four in which understanding and appreciating the language of metaphor and images as reflected in both dreams and in descriptions of **knowing**, enables access to the many layers of subtleties of consciousness.

Quietness during training

I was fortunate that my early training at the Human Development & Training Institute incorporated some reference to spirituality although it was not until I began participating in therapy that **knowing** became more acknowledged for me personally. My more recent participation in Jungian and Transpersonal Psychology at AUT introduced theoretical understandings to support experiences of **knowing** in both personal and professional terms. This is not the experience of most of the participants. One says:

It's certainly something that was never mentioned in my training or by my colleagues.

Another adds:

I've had to feel my way working with it...it wasn't in my training or anything like that.

Speaking the same language

Many of the participants emailed me, or spoke about how much they had enjoyed the interview. They expressed how seldom it is that they get to share

their experiences. I sensed that there was something in the telling of their stories for a research study that somehow validated what it is they experience. It was validating for me too to realize that there were other people in my profession who speak the same language. The participants' concern about openly discussing their work reflects both professional credibility and respect for the ethical considerations of therapy. Their concerns also address their personal well-being, that is, that sharing their experiences will be met with openness and respect. The next section called Ethical Concerns explores some of these issues.

Ethical concerns

Part of the participants' quietness about their work is also related to the understandable issues of ethics and professionalism including professional credibility. To my way of thinking, the inherent respectfulness and humbleness of **knowing** precludes the possibility of causing harm. Nevertheless it is my belief that having ethical guidelines is a significant aspect of our work as therapists and is as applicable to healing work as to any other aspect of therapy.

Professional caution

The advantage that therapists working with healing have is that they also have been exposed to learning about everyday human behaviour and the many aspects of being in relationship. This provides a groundedness from which to explore **knowing** and **being** from a more informed perspective. As one of the participants says:

the experiences do need to be validated somehow.

Another says:

I recommend to people ...if you are having these kind of phenomena, I do think that you need to try and anchor them some way so you don't head off into a stratosphere that disconnects you from people.

This awareness is evident too in a participant's ethical commitment:

It's important to me also to be a safe practitioner and hold very carefully the traditions and expectation of what a safe practitioner is.

Despite the eclecticism of many therapists work, the challenge of integrating healing/spiritual work continues to remain uncharted territory (West,1997). Grof and Grof (1989) rightly advise caution about working in the areas of healing and spirituality. They say while traditional approaches tend to pathologise mystical states, there is also a danger in glorifying and spiritualizing what may be an organic problem. My experience is that while **knowing** as manifested in mystical states for example, may be experienced

as ecstatic and profound in a positive way, such states may also be overwhelming, destabilizing and frightening. Being a **knower** therefore also requires a sense of groundedness in the everyday.

Knowing and discomfort

Being grounded means that ethical conflict also arises for the participants in terms of being challenged by **knowing** and their usual way of being a therapist. Not only do they face the ongoing juggle of remaining professional in their work yet acknowledging their **knowing**, they are also required to find ways in which to convey their **knowing** which are not always comfortable for them. A participant explains:

The messages I get, they'll often be quite strong...quite directive and I don't tend to be that directive in my work.

Another participant describes a similar experience:

Other people aren't in that place so I have to really just deliver the message and watch and see what to do with it and that's ok.

Therapeutic modality or knowing?

The conflict between working within a prescribed therapeutic modality, plus acknowledging **knowing** also arises. One of the participants talks about the challenge of being required to work within a particular psychotherapeutic framework in her work environment:

There's a lot of barriers particularly within the framework where I work, it's much more orthodox and knowledge-based so I'm really limited in my workplace to be able to operate on a bigger level.

Another participant who works primarily as a narrative therapist says:

The whole idea of a good narrative therapist is to have a 'not knowing stance', to not know what it's like for the other person and to not be able to understand their experiences until they explain them to us...so that causes a bit of conflict, because I come in, meet the person and immediately have a sense of knowing and so I have tell myself , no, I don't know what it's like for them and yet 90% of the time, by the time they explain to me what it's like for them, that's exactly what I had.

Knowing in this way ultimately raises questions about therapy.

Is conventional therapy enough?

Being alongside clients as they present legitimate everyday issues, whilst also **knowing** beyond the everyday, is both professionally and philosophically challenging. Participants describe the professional dilemma of realizing that the profession for which they have trained is not adequately addressing what it is they perceive. One of the participants says:

As I work more like this I become more convinced therapy just isn't enough, it's not holistic enough, it has such a limited perspective.

Another adds:

I always say 'look therapy is very useful, very useful and very helpful', but then there's a point where I don't think it is anymore.

These issues are not only indicative of the participants' straddling paradigms, but are also indicative of the gaps in the general theories and practices of

counselling and psychotherapy for holistic and inclusive models which reflect the diversity of human experience and potential.

The benefits outweigh the doubts

Despite the challenges faced by the participants in managing everyday therapy and **knowing**, their experiences show that working in this way becomes an almost compelling urge. One of the participants explains:

we are spiritual beings and if we neglect that side we're only addressing half of what's going on.

What the participant is saying is that once **knowing** is part of **being**, it cannot be overlooked, as it is as natural in one's **being** as breathing.

The benefit for clients of having somewhere to go

The reason for feeling that conventional therapy is not as sufficient emerges from the participants' accounts of observing and trusting the benefits of their work. One of the participants speaks of the relief clients express at being able to share their experiences of unusual phenomena or **knowing**:

I feel like a therapist who works with a different level of phenomena. I think it's actually a very common phenomena but not one we talk about. And I don't know whether it's just the clients who come and see me or whether it's common in clients that most of them have some experience of it. There are very few that don't and it's the relief that clients exhibit that they can actually talk about it at last.

Another participant tells a similar story:

And one thing I've noticed, my colleagues, I'll get them referring clients because they'll say 'oh no, go and see her, she's the spooky spiritual one, and I get clients who if they got someone else here (*in the participants workplace*) would have been terrible for them because they (*the other therapists*) just do not acknowledge anything to do with that.

These accounts support the discussion in Chapter Two that although the therapeutic relationship may create the conditions in which **knowing** may be evoked, some people come to therapy already aware of **knowing** and want to explore this further.

Knowing what to say and when

The participant who identifies herself as Māori is encouraged by, and trusts that her **knowing** is appropriate and beneficial because she has a cultural context in which to frame her **knowing**. Her account speaks of her cultural assuredness that **knowing** is being able to trust what to say and when:

I've never really had a bad experience with people around giving them the messages or the feedback...sometimes I get things I don't quite understand and I guess it's sort of knowing what to say and when to say it or to just sit with it.

This participant's experience is significant because it highlights the potentialities of working with **knowing** when it is supported by a cultural framework of understanding.

The issues

Prevailing psychodynamic, behavioural and cognitive theories and therapies are not necessarily compatible with experiences of **knowing**. Transpersonal psychology offers a comprehensive framework of experiences of **knowing** yet it remains marginalised in mainstream therapeutic contexts. The participants lived experiences of **knowing** in which the multidimensional subtleties of consciousness are accessible to them supports Palmer's (1998) premise that "although it may seem illogical, people are inexplicably drawn to the states of mind where inner knowing occurs" (p.4).

Palmer's (1998) observation is in keeping with Bolletino's (2001) assertion in Chapter Two (p.56) that many people now come to psychotherapy seeking something beyond their everyday experiences. I am also reminded of Cortright's (1997) observation in Chapter Two (p.45) that the therapist's state of consciousness is the instrument or tool with which we work. Frankl (1964, cited in Bolletino, 2001) says that the meaning of a therapist's work is what we bring to it as human beings, and Jung (1960, cited in Bolletino, 2001) says everything depends on the person, and little or nothing on the method.

Smolin (1997) says "we live in the ruins left by the overthrow of Newtonian science, trying to make sense of many new discoveries that have grown up suddenly like a lush forest among the scattered stones of an ancient temple"

(p.97). Newtonian science may be on the wane, the Cartesian paradigm may be undergoing deconstruction, but **knowing** appears to be like the scattered stones of the ancient temple – their presence remains subtle but scattered yet they represent ancient understandings of existence that continue to be overlooked.

Summary

Working with **knowing** both in the therapeutic context and within the everyday Cartesian paradigm emerges as lonely and isolated experiences for the participants. Very little reference was made to **knowing** experiences such as those described by the participants in their therapeutic training so that their experiences of **knowing** are kept quiet, and the potency of **knowing** remains largely unexplored as a significant potentiality within therapy for both client *and* therapist.

The quietness of the participants' work is partly related to ethical concerns including their professional credibility. Some of the participants also speak of the dilemma created between expressing their **knowing** which may not always be compatible with their therapeutic knowledge. The benefits the participants observe from the **knowing** encounter encourage them to continue with their work despite these challenges.

The next chapter is a review of the study in which the findings and implications of the study are discussed, including the impact of the study on me as the researcher. The strengths and limitations of the study are discussed along with the possibilities for future research. The study draws to an end with the conclusion.

Chapter 7

REVIEW OF THE STUDY

Unusual phenomena in the context of consciousness is a comprehensive territory to explore. The insight that we live in a universe in which consciousness is an integral part, and that the unknowable knows or reveals itself by manifesting as both knower and known, underpins the experiences of the therapists who work in this territory of consciousness (Schermer, 2003; Freke & Gandy, 2001). Their experiences of unusual phenomena reveal themselves not only in their work, but more significantly, their experiences reflect their way of **being**. The way in which they express their **being** is in an awareness of the process and continuum of consciousness from which their **knowing** emerges. Although the concepts of interconnectedness, lovingness, embodiment and healing are separated for the purpose of the study, they are integral aspects of the gestalt of **knowing**. This chapter reviews the study from the perspective that the integrated aspects of **knowing** reveal an authenticity of **being** which is representative of a reconnection with the forgotten feminine. Discussing authenticity brings the discussion back to its phenomenological and existential philosophical roots. This aspect of the study leads the discussion.

The chapter also outlines the ways in which presenting the participants' lived experiences has had an impact on me and the implications of their experiences for therapeutic practice and education. The strengths and limitations of the study are also reviewed and the study ends with the conclusion.

Authenticity – the intersection of commonality

The authenticity of **being** is what Crotty (1998) might describe as 'the intersection of commonality' between phenomenology and the ongoingness in existence. Mills (2003) describes Heidegger's view of authenticity as "a state of being that is active, teleological, contemplative, and congruent – an agency with quiescent potentiality" (p.117). Hunt (2003) equates Heidegger's authenticity with Jung's Self, Winnicott's true self and Almaas's essence (p.51). The experience of personal essence is called the pearl by Almaas (1998) which he describes as involving genuine autonomy, personalness, and a capacity for personal intimacy. Frie (2003) describes how the existential-phenomenological tradition emphasizes the notion of authenticity, essence and personal agency to illustrate an experiencing person in an interactive world who makes choices about being-in-the-world (p.15). The participants' accounts not only reflect this perspective, they bring it to life in their lived experiences.

Existential-phenomenological understanding therefore provides a context for the study but the participants' accounts of what Buber (1958, cited in Kramer, 2003) refers to as a relational 'Other' includes, yet is beyond that which is relational. Their accounts spoke of their capacity for empathic relationality, creativity and self-discovery but their experiences are part of a much more expansive and vast context, the all-encompassing 'everythingness' of the continuum of consciousness. Therefore, existential-phenomenology points the way to an understanding of **knowing** and **being** but it does not provide the whole context. This may be because existential-phenomenological thinking arises from within the everyday culture in which there is a long-standing, missing dimension referred to in the study as the metaphor of the forgotten feminine.

Reconnecting with the feminine

The spirit of the fountain never dies.
It is called the mysterious feminine.
The entrance to the mysterious feminine
Is the root of all heaven and earth.
Frail, frail it is, hardly existing.
But touch it; it will never run dry.

Lao Tzu (from Tao Te Ching, verse 7, Whitmont, 1990, p.147)

The participants' lived experiences are evidence of not only their own unique capacities, but also the potential in *all* human beings to recognise and

reconnect with the greater whole I call the continuum of consciousness, which manifests as experiences of **knowing**. I believe these experiences are a natural part of **being** which, because of a lack of familiarity in our everyday culture, are frequently marginalized and described as anomalies. Anomalous experiences give us glimpses of the continuum of consciousness I refer to in the study as the metaphor of the forgotten feminine.

As discussed in the Chapter Two (p.31), the feminine is described as an aspect of **being** which simply 'is' in contrast to the masculine which separates, objectifies and 'does' (Winnicott, 1971; Keller, 2003; Epstein, 2005). Winnicott (1971) frames his discussion of the feminine within the perspective of object-relating and identity from which the basis for **being** and the subsequent sense of self arise. His explanation highlights the difference between everyday knowing, and the knowing of **knowing** and **being**, which is more akin to 'not-knowing' and simply being 'alive'. Bion (1962) refers to the 'is-ness' as pre-conceptions, which in conjunction with a realization, produces a conception, an objectified 'doing-ness'. In other words, the potential conjoining of both feminine and masculine consciousness depicts the fullness of **being-in-the-world**.

It is my proposal that from the perspective of the continuum of consciousness in the Western tradition, the feminine, or ongoingness of existence,

represents that which is split off and almost invisible in consciousness, yet paradoxically it also represents a barely visible longing to return to itself. It is the yearning for something missing, for reconnection and completion referred to in Chapter Two (Nelson, 1994; Almaas, 1996; Keller, 2003; Epstein, 2005). As Sandhu (2004) adds “when we misidentify with socially constructed roles in order to provide meaning in life, we lose sight of our true centre of existence” (p.35).

Reconnecting with the feminine of consciousness presented itself in the participants’ **knowing** and **being** through the lived experiences of interconnectivity, lovingness and embodiment from which healing emerges. Their experiences are indicative of the vastness of consciousness which theory simply cannot explain or contain. Sullivan (1989) says the feminine values **being** in an organic, undifferentiated form, where all the components of the whole are equally valued and all elements dependent on all other elements (p.17).

Nixon (2003) suggests that it is our assertion into language that separates personal consciousness from which an objective world arises. Nixon’s suggestion supports Sharp’s (2005, electronic source) observation noted earlier in the study that linguistic interpretation immediately shifts the experience of **being** from ‘intrinsic *my*ness’ to a socially constructed

representation. The participants' descriptions of merging and resonance, and their accounts of **knowing** as being beyond words and beyond language supports the notion that the experience of differentiation and separation of personal consciousness does not exist in **knowing**. This awareness further illuminates the experience of separating and splitting off of consciousness into normal (masculine) and 'other' (feminine) which has come to be an accepted part of everyday being-in-the-world in the Western tradition.

Heidegger (Inwood, 1997) says "Illumination is never complete" (p.51) which is applicable in the context of consciousness. Illuminating consciousness reveals many subtleties and layers which I have referred to throughout the study as analogous with accounts of consciousness in ancient texts and in traditions other than in the Western world.

Subtleness

One of the reasons I believe the feminine or ongoingness of existence is less tangible and less visible, is because it represents the subtleness of **being**. Many of the participants' descriptions have a subtleness about them. For example, the ways in which they described waiting for **knowing** to emerge implies a quiet receptivity and openness to the illuminating contents of consciousness, and resembled descriptions of meditative states and mystical experiences. Kshemajara (cited in Shatananda, 2003), an 11th century

Kashmiri sage, describes this receptivity as an “acute attentiveness in which one lifts the veil of separation, glimpsing Consciousness at the moment of perception, a mountain of manifoldness that cannot be split by others” (p.224).

Being aware of the profound subtleness of **being** opens the participants to the deeper places of the ongoingness of existence in which awareness of the fractured nature of our experience of ourselves is transparent, as is the split between our everydayness and the ever-present potential for interconnectedness. It is my assertion that the splitting manifests in us and is recognizable as the archetype of the ‘wounded healer’.

The significance of the wounded healer

The challenge is to take one’s woundings and open them to the treasures they contain without becoming fixated...our woundings then seen in their fullness can be doorways leading us into a richer and more complex universe...in which usual bounded perceptions of space and time are stretched (Houston 1987, cited in Hunt, 2003, p.295).

The wounded-healer may be a phenomenon of Western culture but Jung’s long time friend and writer von Franz (1975) suggests the wounded-healer archetype is a universal experience and is the way in which we source our wholeness, our **being**. Jung (1965, cited in Wilmer, 1987) describes the wounded healer as being the outcome of the ‘divine drama of incarnation’ in

which we stop identifying ourselves as separate from others and recognize our universal embeddedness.

The insights gained from understanding and encompassing the vulnerabilities inherent in the wounded-healer archetype underpins the potential to reconnect with forgotten feminine. The participants' choice of therapy as a profession suggests that they recognize the connectedness and transformational potential of the wounded healer within themselves and within others. Therapy provides a context in which to express this transformational capacity. Each participant's unique and authentic therapeutic expression is a living illustration of our universal embeddedness to which I refer in the study as the net of gems, the Net of Indra (Campbell, 1989). Just as the Buddhist state of Nirvana and the Tai Chi Tu symbol represent the resolution of opposites and the reconciliation of paradoxes, it seems apparent that in the Western world, reconnecting with feminine through the wounded-healer archetype is a means through which we may access the same **knowing**. It also enables the capacity for lovingness to emerge.

Lovingness

The participants' ways of **knowing** things ahead of the everyday linear sequence of time including visions, messages, and foretellings suggests that

reconnecting with the feminine requires being inclusive of less conventional ways of being-in-the-world. An example of being less conventional includes the participants' lived experience of lovingness as not being limited to interpersonal experience, instead that it is a capacity which has a universal expression.

Langs (2006) in his book about love and psychotherapy argues that therapists need to be able to access deep unconscious wisdom both in themselves and in their clients in order to be loving in their work (p.181). Morgan (2007) says that despite the ever present interest in love, and the wealth of literature about it, there will always be a dimension of mystery within love (p.52). The findings of this study suggest that the mystery and the deep unconscious to which Langs and Morgan refer, are part of the feminine in which lovingness is an integral part. The deep unconscious and the mystery may be unconscious and mysterious in our everyday way of perceiving the world, but when we widen our understandings of consciousness, lovingness becomes one of the many possibilities in which we manifest **being**.

In the study, lovingness is characterised by the participants' capacity for union, to be merged and loving whilst simultaneously distinct and imperturbable in the everyday world. Lovingness in the participants' experiences created space for human potentialities such as the presence of

healing. The participants described the profundity of the healing in which its potency manifests in the speed in which healing takes place. Living examples of interconnectedness, lovingness and healing in the participants' work challenges the conventional dynamics of a therapeutic relationship. Their experiences provide the anomalies which have the potential to change the face of therapy.



Dharmachakra – Wheel of Truth (electronic source)

Changing the face of therapy

The participants spoke of the shortfall between therapeutic knowledge, and **knowing** which they refer to as a gestalt, a whole picture. Epstein (1995) draws a similar analogy of the gestalt of **knowing** with the Tibetan Buddhist Wheel of Life, the Dharmachakra, in which the entire mandala symbolizes

humanness and overcoming obstacles. It represents the eight tenets of Buddhist belief including right faith, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness and right meditation (electronic source). He adds that although various aspects of Western psychotherapy have addressed the sufferings of one particular realm of humanness, none have explored the entire wheel of human potential (p.20).

Epstein's (1995) view on Western psychotherapy addressing one particular realm of human suffering means that therapeutic constructs such as transference-countertransference, client-therapist boundaries and other partial and/or symptomatic approaches do not attend to the whole of **being**. Hillman (1975) asserts that attending to splintered aspects of being perpetuates not only the dualism inherent in the everyday world, but also the split in consciousness between what I refer to as the dominance of the masculine and the hidden-ness of the forgotten feminine.

Hunt's view (2003) is that the contrast between underlying narcissistic and schizoid conflicts which continue to characterize "our modern hyper-individualised society", and the formless dimensions of **knowing**, has the potential to stir up feelings of inadequacy and falseness (pp.2 & 28). I agree with his belief that Winnicott's object relations work and Kohut's self-

psychology offer therapy an everyday means with which to strengthen the sense of self necessary to manage both the vulnerabilities in oneself, and the unboundaried experience of **knowing**.

It is apparent from the participants' accounts, and from my own experiences, that the empathic, evocative and unique relationship between a therapist and client is potentially significant in terms of **knowing** and **being**. Swartz (2006, cited in Lapsley, 2006) observes that the intersubjective uniqueness of the therapeutic relationship allows for the emergence of repressed and oppressed subjectivities such as the forgotten feminine. I also cited evidence in Chapter Two that some clients come to therapy seeking experiences of **knowing** and that in an increasingly secular world, the unique relationship between a client and therapist may fill a void traditionally associated with spiritual practices within religion (s) (Sperry & Shafrankse, 2005; Jones, 1994).

These findings have implications for psychotherapy and counselling education and practice.

Implications for education

“Much of the mystery of life stares at us in the face everyday – but we insist on looking away and continue to miss it “(van Deurzen-Smith, 1997, p.107).

Given the findings of the study, attending to the feminine principle as being fundamental to existence needs to be a mandatory aspect of therapeutic training. In order for therapy to fully acknowledge *all* of human potentiality, obligatory learning about the many facets of consciousness in counsellor, psychotherapeutic, psychologists and psychiatric training is vital for comprehending **being** beyond the dominant paradigm as well as addressing clients changing needs. The findings of the study indicate that being able to stand outside everyday paradigmatic influences, and being accustomed to thinking in terms of more than reality, offers the opportunity for gaining insight into epistemologies and ontologies which reflect the diversity and multidimensional complexity of **being** and the dynamic evolving of human **being-in-the-world**. This is not only respectful practice but also highlights and clarifies the many paradoxes of human existence. Ontologies which attend to the subtleties of consciousness apparent in embodiment and in the use of imagery, symbols and metaphor in therapy provide a contrast to the materialism and discontinuities of the everyday world.

As discussed in Chapter Two, transpersonal psychology acknowledges the many possibilities of human existence and consciousness and is inclusive of other epistemologies and ontologies. It has an established body of literature and therefore warrants more than cursory acknowledgement in therapeutic

training. Likewise, Hunt's (2003) synthesizing of phenomenological, cognitive, personality and socio-cultural perspectives with transpersonal-humanistic psychologies in his existential-phenomenological exploration of therapy and secular western mysticism offers scope for therapeutic education. Sullivan's (1989) work points the way for psychotherapy to be grounded in the feminine principle. These are expansive perspectives upon which to draw for a more comprehensive therapeutic training.

More comprehensive psychotherapeutic and counselling training might include for example, meditation and ritual practice such as Vipassana mindfulness and shamanic drumming; bodywork such as Hakomi, yoga, ayurvedic healing, and chakra balancing; and exploring symbolic systems such as I Ching, astrology, guided imagery and archetypal dreamwork. Other areas of focus may include exploration of faiths and religions and the understandings and consciousness of ancient beliefs such as those of indigenous peoples of the world.

Greater awareness of consciousness and human potential would provoke philosophical and theoretical discussion about wellness from a more holistic perspective. It would also offer a more respectful understanding of those cultures whose world views differ from the dominant paradigm in which models of 'normality' and wellness are located. Expansive models would

provide the opportunity to embrace paradox and allow us to be confronted with as much of human existence as possible.

Implications for practice

It is apparent from both the findings of the study, and from discussion in Chapter Two, that psychotherapy and counselling need to be placed in the context of consciousness rather than perpetuating splintered aspects of **being** through many different therapeutic modalities. Sullivan (1989) offers a more holistic approach by attending to the feminine principle which requires beginning the therapeutic encounter from an actively receptive place of not-knowing, of experiencing, focused on **being** rather than doing (p.81). She considers that working out the dilemmas of human existence emerges from within the individual in which therapists facilitate a process that is already trying to happen. In other words, therapy is part of an existential quest.

Sullivan's (1989) observation that therapists facilitate a process already present in clients supports the discussion and findings of the study that clients coming for therapy may not only be seeking healing and discovery within themselves and their everyday worlds, but they may also be on an existential, perhaps spiritual, quest. In order to address this Sollod (1993) suggests focusing on collaborating with clients to create areas of experience, and associated thoughts and feelings that are satisfying and life-enhancing.

The findings of the study support Cortright's (1997) observation that a therapist's state of consciousness needs to be finely tuned because it is the instrument or tool with which we work. With this in mind, Sollod's (1993) suggestion that psychotherapists and counsellors should have sufficient awareness to be able to go beyond intellectual understanding and enter a variety of distinct states of consciousness is a progressive proposition. He suggests that an ideal primary state is self-observation or witness-consciousness which may be accompanied by access to conscious, deeply loving and compassionate feelings for the client. Additional therapist states of consciousness may include *conscious* accessing of intuitive knowledge, and *conscious* empathic fusion with the client. His suggestions correlate with the participants' accounts in the study.

Hunt's (2003) attention to the necessity of a robust sense of self means healing for everyday **being** also continues to be an essential aspect of therapy. It is by recognizing and acknowledging the many paradoxes of **being**, and reconciling universal opposites such as good/bad, right/wrong, that provides an expansiveness from which to explore the wounded-healer archetype in both therapist and client. From this perspective, the vulnerability of individualised experiences such as the fear of egoic disintegration and the potential for narcissistic self-idealisation (for both client and therapist) in

knowing, are able to be recognized within a larger framework of human existence, the consciousness of **being**.

The embodiment of **knowing** is a significant way in which reconnecting with the feminine, or accessing the subtleties of consciousness, is most apparent in the participant's accounts. This highlights the importance of body-centred therapies and acknowledges the bodily capacity for expression in the wordless domain of **knowing**. The subtleties of imagery, symbols and metaphor are also essential means through which therapists and clients can create access to each others unique expressions of consciousness.

In therapeutic engagement where healing is involved, the Codes of Ethics for psychotherapists and counsellors are especially significant as essential guidelines and safeguards for therapeutic work (New Zealand Association of Counsellors (NZAC); New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists (NZAP)). Although supervision and self-reflexivity along with ongoing personal and professional development are encouraged in NZAC and NZAP guidelines, this would need to be an emphatic part of therapeutic work where the wider dimensions of **being** and healing are involved. Supervision also necessarily includes being aware of the limits of both the capacity and the responsibility of a therapist in responding to the uniqueness of each client.

Changed as a therapist

Explorers and hermeneutic phenomenological researchers say a journey leaves the journeyer/researcher changed. I am changed by the exploration of the participant's descriptions of their lived experiences. I have had to find the courage to publicly acknowledge my own **knowing** in order to be a writer through whom the participant's voices can be heard with clarity and respect. I have been encouraged to do so by my thesis supervisors and by meeting with such inspiring colleagues and to know, that although we may be relatively isolated, other people who are also psychotherapists and counsellors have similar experiences to mine.

The challenge of the study has been attempting to describe experiences beyond the everyday using everyday language which as Schermer (2003) says, tends to reinforce separation rather than representing the inclusiveness of **being**. I have drawn on ancient knowledge, poetry, images and various metaphoric descriptions to try and capture the subtle and infinite spaciousness of the continuum of consciousness as pointed to by the participants.

Like the participants in the study, I am ever-mindful of the ethical considerations in this type of work, and the ongoing challenges posed by knowing theory and knowing **knowing**. It is my belief that in order to work

in this way, careful and regular supervision is paramount. It is still largely uncharted territory. I am grateful that I have a therapeutic supervisor who is well-versed in **knowing** and I am grateful to therapeutic writers who have shared their accounts of **knowing**.

Even though I may be regarded as a **knower**, personal issues continue to arise for me but in **knowing** they are somehow more visible and the backdrop or context more meaningful. I am aware too of needing to function in the everyday world, and that reflective practice must also involve reasoning and intellect. Castaneda (cited in Eigen, 1993) elegantly summarizes my personal experience as a researcher of this study. He casts a visionary expansion of consciousness which he says renders him more acutely sensitive to his own personal autonomy yet also more responsive to the nuances of existence as a whole.

Implications for my own practice

The study has taken me deeply into my own experience of existence which has had a profound philosophical impact on me as a therapist. I find I am more interested in an existential approach in my work in which I can more fully acknowledge the gestalt of **knowing** and the nuances of existence. This translates into trusting more of what arises in the moment and acknowledging **knowings** more attentively in the therapeutic relationship. For me, Sullivan's

(1989) writing *Psychotherapy Grounded in the Feminine Principle* provides depth and direction for encompassing and valuing the feminine principle in therapy whilst also acknowledging and valuing the role of the masculine principle.

Guidelines for therapy are also evident in Friedman's (2003) nine elements of dialogical psychotherapy based on Buber's I/Thou work. They include healing through meeting in a 'dialogue of touchstones' which incorporates mutuality of trust, concern and contact in which the therapist is able to fully 'meet' a client in the same manner as the participants union-distinction experiences in lovingness (Friedman, pp.57-62).

A more existential approach also enables greater scope with which to support the capacity in clients to find their *own* way in the world. The aim of Hinduism as outlined in the ancient Sanskrit writings of the Bhagavad Gita (Nicholson, 1985) best explains this view. It seeks to realize the unity of opposites by subduing intellectual distinctions and emotional polarities so that unity becomes a vivid experience. Although this seems more philosophical than therapeutic, it summarizes a **knowing** approach in a therapeutic relationship.

Limitations of the study

A limitation of the study is the small number of participants from which to draw themes and essential understandings in a topic which is almost defined by its vastness. This leads to the next limitation, that the vastness of the context of the study is only represented by my perspective of the participants' experiences. The participants' accounts of working with unusual phenomena emerged for me as being part of the bigger picture of consciousness which drew the focus more on how this manifests in the therapists themselves, as well as in the work they do. Another researcher may have brought a very different view.

The participants' clients' experiences not being included in the study is another possible limitation. The participant's client's accounts of **knowing**, interconnectedness, lovingness and healing would have contributed to a wider view of the potentialities of **knowing** in the therapeutic relationship.

Strengths of the study

Undoubtedly the greatest strength of the study is the generously shared lived experiences of the participants. Their accounts provide rich descriptions of their experiences, as well as steering me towards appropriate analogies with

which to expand their stories into themes which provide insight into an often overlooked aspect of therapy.

Another strength is that despite the cultural and spiritual influence of the Tangata Whenua, Māori in New Zealand/Aotearoa, and the anecdotal evidence of a burgeoning interest in spirituality in general, relatively few studies which explore therapy in the context of consciousness, and ideas such as therapists working with unusual phenomena, have been undertaken in New Zealand/Aotearoa.

Ongoing research

In light of the participants comment:

I don't know whether there's a lot of people experience what I experience,

it may be relevant to gather data about the number of therapists throughout New Zealand/Aotearoa who describe themselves as therapists who work with the subtleties of consciousness or the mysteries of life. I did not need to advertise extensively to find the eight participants in Auckland, and there were others who responded that were not able to be involved for reasons other than suitability. My sense is that there are many more therapists who work in this way and that bringing this aspect of our work to light will

promote greater openness and opportunity for discussion, training, support and further research.

A study of client's personal philosophies and spiritual beliefs, and their subsequent experiences in therapy, especially from an existential-phenomenological perspective, may provide a perspective of therapy other than the efficacy of specific modalities.

CONCLUSION

There are no unnatural or supernatural phenomena, only very large gaps in our knowledge of what is natural. (Edgar Mitchell, Apollo 14 astronaut cited in Kirkpatrick, 2000 p.128).

The realization that each of us exist as part of a web of mutually conditioned relationships, absolutely connected with all existence may be the next step in human evolution (Leonard cited in Vaughan, 1980, p.187).

The lived experiences of psychotherapists and counsellors who work with unusual phenomena have been explored in this study. The findings of the study concur with the astronaut Edgar Mitchell's observation that unusual, unnatural or supernatural phenomena are not so unusual, and that instead they represent gaps in our everyday knowledge. The gaps point to the significance of being aware of the continuum of consciousness as a backdrop to human existence, to **being**.

The participants in this study do not limit their experience of **being** to the matter-of-fact everyday world, instead allowing themselves to be present to what emerges in the continuum of consciousness. They are living examples of the realization that we exist as part of a web of mutually conditioned relationships. They are role models for **being-in-the-world** by bringing depth to everyday knowledge and illuminating the possibilities and potentialities in human existence.

The metaphor of the forgotten feminine emerges as the universal aspect of existence which represents all that 'is' and is the source which explains the participants' sense of **knowing**, and the interconnectedness, embodiment, lovingness and healing which co-arise in their **being**. Just as the yin/yang symbol of Taoism represents reconciliation of paradox and the resolution of opposites in the continuum of consciousness, reconnecting with the feminine in therapy offers the potential for similar awareness and insight.

As a result of the study, my vision for the future is that psychotherapy, counselling, psychology and psychiatry incorporate education and practice which fully acknowledges both the therapist's and client's capacity in, and for relationship, in the context of a continuum of consciousness. Therapy then has the potential to be a holistic undertaking which includes mind, body, soul/spirit and family/whanau, along with the awareness of our wider

interconnectedness in a dynamic universe. As therapists we have the unique opportunity to be role models, showing respect for all of human existence by addressing the diversity of **being**, encouraging social debate and acting as agents of positive social change in keeping with the Codes of Ethics for both the New Zealand Association of Counsellors and the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists.

I conclude this study with a participant's expression of optimism for the future:

I hope we evolve into some of the things we are capable of imagining.

REFERENCES

- Almaas, A. (1996). *The point of existence*. Berkeley, CA: Diamond Books.
- Anderson, R., Braud, W., & Valle, R. (1996). Disciplined inquiry for transpersonal studies: Old and new approaches Retrieved 28 September, 2005, from http://integral-inquiry.com/docs/disciplined_inquiry.doc.pdf
- Aponte, H. (2004). Spiritually sensitive psychotherapy. In F. Kaslowe (Ed.), *Comprehensive handbook of psychotherapy. Psychotherapy with adults* (Vol. 3), (pp. 187-205). Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Publishers.
- Arroyo, S. (1975). *Astrology, psychology and the four elements*. Sebastopol, CA: CRCS Publications.
- Atwood, G., Orange, D., & Stolorow, R. (2002). Shattered worlds/psychotic states: A post-cartesian view of the experience of annihilation. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 19(2), 281-306.
- Aurobindo, S. (1970). *The life divine. Book 2, Pt. 1* (6th ed. Vol. 18). Pondicherry, India: Ashram Press.
- Ballinger, C. (2004). Writing up rigour: Representing and evaluating good scholarship in qualitative research [Electronic Version]. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 67, 540-546. Retrieved October 25, 2005 from <http://www.ingentaconnect.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/content/cot/bjot/2004/00000067/00>.
- Bion, W. (1962). The psycho-analytic study of thinking. II. A theory of thinking. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 43, 306-310.
- Bion, W. (1970). *Attention and interpretation*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc.

- Bobrow, J. (2004). Presence of mind. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 1(1), 18-36.
- Bolletino, R. (2001). A model of spirituality for psychotherapy and other fields of mind-body medicine. *Advances in Mind-Body Medicine*, 17(2), 216-280.
- Boyer, P. (2002). *Religion explained*. London: Vintage.
- Broomfield, J. (1997). *Other ways of knowing*. Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions.
- Buber, M. (1958/1970). *I and Thou* (R. Gregory Smith, Trans. 2nd/3rd ed.). Edinburgh: Clark, T & T.
- Buber, M. (1999). *Martin Buber on psychology and psychotherapy: Essays, letters and dialogue*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Bugental, J. (1987). *The art of the psychotherapist*. New York: Norton.
- Bullis, R. (1992). Psychotherapists and the mystical process. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 22(1), 43-49.
- Burkhardt, M., & Nagai-Jackson, M. (2001). *Spirituality: Living our connectedness*. New York: Thomas Delmar Learning.
- Byron, T. (1976). *Dhammapada: Sayings of the Buddha*. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications, Inc.
- Campbell, J. (1989). *The power of myth (Flowers, B. (Ed.))* New York: First Anchor Books.
- Carter, R. (2002). *Consciousness*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Collins English Dictionary. (2003). (6th ed.). Glasgow: HarperCollins.
- Cooley, C. (1922). *Human nature and the social order*. New York: Scribners.
- Cortright, B. (1997). *Psychotherapy and spirit*. New York: State University of New York Press.

- Crossley, J., & Salter, D. (2005). A question of finding harmony: A grounded theory study of clinical psychologists' experience of addressing spiritual beliefs in therapy *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 78(3), 295 - 314.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- D'Adamo, D. (2004). *Science without bounds: A synthesis of science, religion and mysticism*. New York: Authorhouse.
- Dahlberg, K., Drew, N., & Nystrom, M. (2001). *Reflective lifeworld research*. Sweden: Studentlitteratur.
- Daniels, M., & McNutt, B. (1997). Questioning the role of transpersonal psychology. *Transpersonal Psychology Review*, 1(4), 4-9.
- D'Aquili, E., & Newberg, A. (1999). *The mystical mind: Probing the biology of religious experience*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- de Quincey, C. (2000). Intersubjectivity: Exploring consciousness from the second-person perspective. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 32(2), 135-156.
- de Quincey, C. (2006). Four gifts of knowing [Electronic Version]. *Life Positive*, Jan, 2006. Retrieved 17 July 2007 from http://www.lifepositive.com/Mind/Consciousness/Four_Gifts_of_Knowing12006.asp.
- Deikman, A. (1983). *The observing self*. NY: Beacon Press Books.
- Deikman, A. (2000). A functional approach to mysticism. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 7(11), 75-91.
- Dharmachakra Dharma Wheel. *Alternative religions*. Retrieved 3 September, 2007, from <http://altreligion.about.com/library/glossary/symbols/bldefsdharmawheel.htm>

- Dossey, L. (1995). Healing happens. *Utne Reader* (Sept/Oct), 50-59.
- Dowling, M. (2004). Hermeneutics: An exploration. *Nurse Researcher*, 11(4), 30-41.
- Downing, C. (1994). Gods in our midst. *Crossroad*, 49-66.
- Eigen, M. (1993). *The electrified tightrope*. New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc.
- Einstein, A. (1931). *Living philosophies*. New York: Simon Schuster.
- Epstein, M. (1995). *Thoughts without a thinker*. New York: Basic Books.
- Epstein, M. (2005). *Open to desire*. New York: Gotham Books.
- Exline, J., & Geyer, A. (2004). Perceptions of humility: A preliminary study. *Self and Identity*, 3(2), 95-114.
- Ferrer, J. (2002). *Re-visioning transpersonal theory: A participatory vision of human spirituality*. New York: Suny Press.
- Field, N. (1991). Projective identification: Mechanism or mystery? *Journal of Analytic Psychology*, 36(1), 93-110.
- Firman, J., & Gila, A. (2002). *Psychosynthesis. A psychology of the spirit*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Foreman, R. (Ed.). (1998). *The innate capacity: Mysticism, psychology, philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Frankl, V. (1964). *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Freke, T., & Gandy, P. (1997). *The complete guide to world mysticism*. London: Piatkus.
- Freke, T., & Gandy, P. (2001). *Jesus and the goddess*. London: Thorsons HarperCollins.
- Frie, R. (Ed.). (2003). *Understanding experience*. London: Routledge.
- Friedman, M. (2003). Martin Buber and dialogical psychotherapy. In R. Frie (Ed.), *Understanding experience* (pp. 52-76). New York: Routledge.

- Frost, R. (2005). Stopping by woods on a snowy evening (poem). In J. Parini (Ed.), *The Wadsworth anthology of poetry* (p.71). Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Gadamer, H. (1976). *Philosophical hermeneutics*. London: University of California Press.
- Gadamer, H. (1994). *Heidegger's ways* (J. Stanley, Trans.). New York: State University of New York Press.
- Garguilo, G. (2006). Ontology and metaphor: Reflections on the unconscious and the "I" in the therapeutic setting. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 23(3), 461-474.
- Geering, L. (1975). *The religion of the individual in the modern world*. Wellington, New Zealand: Price Milburn.
- Gendlin, E. (1962). *Experiencing and the creation of meaning*. Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Gibran, K. (1997). *The prophet*. London: Wordsworth Editions.
- Goleman, D. (1994). Psychology, reality and consciousness. In R. Walsh & F. Vaughan (Eds.), *Paths beyond ego* (pp. 18-21). New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Goleman, D. (Ed.). (1997). *Healing emotions. Conversations with the Dalai Lama on mindfulness, emotions and health*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Gordon, P. (2004). Night thoughts of a sceptical therapist. In P. Gordon & R. Mayo (Eds.), *Between psychotherapy and philosophy* (pp. 41-57). London: Whurr Publishers.
- Gough, W. (1987). Science and inner knowing. Retrieved 28 May, 2007, from <http://www.fmbr.org/editorial/scikno.htm>
- Grant, B., & Giddings, L. (2002). Making sense of methodologies: A paradigm for the novice researcher *Contemporary Nurse*, 13(1), 10-28.

- Grenz, S. (1996). *A primer on postmodernism*. Cambridge: Eerdmans.
- Grof, S. (1990). *The stormy search for self*. New York: First Tarcher/Perigee.
- Grof, S., & Grof, C. (Eds.). (1989). *Spiritual emergency*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Halifax, J. (1982). *Shamanism*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Hamington, M. (2004). *Embodied care*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Heays, D. (2005). *Dreams as an experience: An exploration of meaning-making*. Unpublished Master of Health Science thesis, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Heidegger, M. (1927/1962). *Being and time* (McQuarrie, J & E. Robinson, Trans.). Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Heidegger, M. (1977). *Basic writing*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Heidegger, M. (2005). *Introduction to phenomenological research* (D. Dahlstrom, Trans.). Bloomington: Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Hein, S., & Austin, W. (2001). Empirical and hermeneutic approaches to phenomenological research in psychology: A comparison. *Psychological Methods*, 6(1), 3-17.
- Heisenberg, W. (1974). *Across the frontiers*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Helminski, K. (1999). *The knowing heart*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Hendricks, R. (Ed.). (1993). *Te-tao Ching*. New York: Modern Library.
- Hillman, J. (1975). *Re-Visioning Psychology*. New York: Harper Row.
- Hollis, J. (2000). *The archetypal imagination*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press.
- Houston, J. (1987). *The search for the beloved*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Hunt, H. (2003). *Lives in spirit. Precursors and dilemmas of a secular Western mysticism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Husserl, E. (1913/1982). *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy* (F. Kersten, Trans.). Boston: Kluwer Academic.
- Hutton, M. (1994). How transpersonal psychotherapists differ from other practitioners: An empirical study. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 26(2), 139-174.
- Inwood, M. (1997). *Heidegger: A very short introduction*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Jacobi, J. (1973). *The psychology of C.G. Jung*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- James, W. (1962). *Psychology: Briefer course*. New York: Collier.
- James, W. (1994). The varieties of consciousness. In R. Walsh & F. Vaughan (Eds.), *Paths beyond ego* (p. 94). New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Johnson, C. (2004). Psychotherapy with troubled spirits: A consensual qualitative investigation of spiritual problems in therapy. Retrieved 7 April, 2007, from <http://etda.libraries.psu.edu/theses/approved/WorldWideFiles?ETD-674?Chaddissertation.pdf>
- Jones, A. (1998). Some reflections on clinical supervision: an existential-phenomenological paradigm. *European Journal of Cancer Care*, 7, 56-62.
- Jones, S. (1994). A constructive relationship for religion with the science and profession of psychology: Perhaps the boldest model yet. *American Psychologist*, 49(3), 184-199.
- Jung, C. (1960). *On the nature of the psyche*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. (1965). *Memories, dreams, reflections*. (R. Winston & C. Winston, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.

- Kaspro, M., & Scotton, B. (1999). A review of transpersonal theory and its application to the practice of psychotherapy. *Journal of Psychotherapy Practice and Research*, 8, 12-23.
- Katz, S. (1978). Language, epistemology and mysticism. In S. Katz (Ed.), *Mysticism and philosophical analysis* (pp. 22-74). London: Oxford University Press.
- Keller, E. (2003). Gender and science. In S. Harding & M. Hintikka (Eds.), *Discovering reality* (pp. 187-205). Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Kirkpatrick, S. (2000). *Edgar Cayce*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- Koch, T. (1996). Implementation of a hermeneutic inquiry in nursing: Philosophy, rigour and representation. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 24, 174-184.
- Kramer, K. (2003). *Martin Buber's I and Thou*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Lajoie, D., & Shapiro, S. (1992). Definitions of transpersonal psychology: The first twenty-three years. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 24.
- Lancaster, B. (2004). *Approaches to consciousness*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Langs, R. (2006). *Love and death in psychotherapy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lapsley, H. (2006). Two voices are just fine by me [Electronic Version]. *Feminism and Psychology*, 16. Retrieved 30th June, 2007.
- Laszlo, E. (2006). *Science and the re-enchantment of the cosmos*. Vermont: Inner Traditions.

- Laverty, S. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. [Electronic Version]. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2. Retrieved October 18, 2005.
- Leonard, V. (1994). A Heideggerian phenomenological perspective on the concept of person. In P. Benner (Ed.), *Interpretive phenomenology* (pp. 43-98). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lindsay, G. (2004). Ancestors (poem). In P. Morris, H. Ricketts & M. Grimshaw (Eds.), *Spirits abroad: A second selection of New Zealand spiritual verse* (p.207). Auckland, New Zealand: Random House.
- Lines, D. (2002). Counselling within a new spiritual paradigm. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 42(3), 102-123.
- Luljuray, D. (2003). *The formation of a soulful therapist: A heuristic study of the inner world and development of the spiritual therapist*. Union Institute and University, Ohio.
- Maitland, S. (1995). *A big enough God*. London: Mowbray.
- Malamud, C. (2000). Maps as metaphors. *Mappa Mundi* Retrieved 8 March, 2007, from www.mundi.net/cartography/Maps/
- Manhire, B. (2004). Milky way bar (poem). In P. Morris, H. Ricketts & M. Grimshaw (Eds.), *Spirits abroad: A second selection of New Zealand spiritual verse*. (p.192). Auckland, New Zealand: Random House.
- Maslow, A. (1968). *Towards a psychology of being* (3rd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- McCotter, S. (2001). The journey of a beginning researcher. *The Qualitative Report*, 6(2).
- McTaggart, L. (2001). *The Field*. London: Element (Harper Collins).

- McWilliams, N. (2005). Preserving our humanity as therapists.
Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 42, 139-151.
- Means, J., Wilson, G., Sturm, C., & Biron, J. (1990). Humility as a psychotherapeutic formulation. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 3(2).
- Mearns, D., & Thorne, B. (1988). *Person-centred counselling in action*. London: Sage Publications.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002/1962). *Phenomenology of perception* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Metzner, R. (1989). States of consciousness and transpersonal psychology. In R. Valle & S. Halling (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology* (pp. 329-338). New York: Plenum Press.
- Mijares, S., & Khalsa, G. (Eds.). (2005). *The psychospiritual clinician's handbook*. New York: The Haworth Reference Press.
- Mills, J. (Ed.). (2003). *A phenomenology of becoming*. London: Routledge.
- Milton, M., Charles, L., Judd, D., O'Brien, M., Tipney, A., & Turner, A. (2003). The existential-phenomenological paradigm: The importance for psychotherapy integration [Electronic Version]. *Counselling Psychology Review*, 17, 4-20. Retrieved September 17, 2005.
- Mindell, A. (1982). *Dreambody, the body's role in revealing the self*. Los Angeles: Sigo Press.
- Modell, A. (2003). *Imagination and the meaningful brain*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Morgan, M. (2007). *The alchemy of love: Recent graduates lived experiences of psychotherapy training: A hermeneutic study*. Unpublished Master of Health Science thesis. Auckland, NZ: Auckland University of Technology.

- Mostert, W. (2005). *Phenomenology: Discovering new meanings of pedagogy within the lived experience*. Toowoomba: University of Southern Queensland.
- Needleman, J. (1995). The sacred impulse. In R. Carlson & B. Shield (Eds.), *Handbook for the soul* (pp.155-159). Moorebank, NSW: Doubleday.
- Nelson, J. (1994). *Healing the split*. New York: New York State University Press.
- New Zealand Association of Counsellors. (2006). The code of ethics. New Zealand Association of Counsellors/ Te Ropu Kaiwhiriwhiri o Aotearoa. Retrieved 28th September, 2006, from <http://www.nzac.org.nz/ethics/4.html>
- New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists. (2007). The code of ethics. New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists/ Te Roopu Whakaora Hinengaro. Retrieved 4th March, 2007, from <http://www.nzap.org.nz/Pages/ethics.htm>
- Nicholson, S. (1985). *Ancient wisdom, modern insight*. Wheaton, Illinois: The Theosophical Publishing House.
- Nicholson, S. (Ed.). (1987). *Shamanism: An expanded view of reality*. Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House.
- Nietzsche, F. (1969). *Thus spoke Zarathustra: A book for everyone and no-one* (R. Hollingdale, Trans. 2nd ed.). London: Penguin.
- Nixon, G. (2003). Excavating the cultural construction of personhood [Electronic Version]. Retrieved 30 August, 2003 from <http://members.shaw.ca/docnixon/conf.persons.html>.
- O'Donohue, J. (1997). *Anam cara: A book of Celtic wisdom*. New York: Cliff Street Books.
- Ogden, T. (1992). *The primitive edge of experience*. London: Jason Aronson Inc.

- Orbanic, S. (1999). The Heideggerean view of person: A perspective conducive to the therapeutic encounter. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, XIII(3), 137 -144.
- Osbon, D. (Ed.). (1991). *A Joseph Campbell companion: Reflections on the art of living*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Palmer, H. (Ed.). (1998). *Inner knowing*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Peters, L. (1989). Shamanism: Phenomenology of a spiritual discipline. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 21(2), 115-137.
- Polit, D., Beck, C., & Hungler, B. (2001). *Essentials of nursing research* (5th ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Post, S. (2004). Conclusion to Part 1. In S. Post, G. Underwood, J. Schloss & W. Hurlbut (Eds.), *Altruism and altruistic love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prasinos, S. (1992). Spiritual aspects of psychotherapy. *Journal of Religion and Health* 31(1), 41-52.
- Proust, M. (1934). *Remembrance of things past* (Vol. 3). London: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Racine, C. (1997). Mystical experience of a counsellor: An autobiographical journey. *Women and Therapy*, 20(1), 61-69.
- Raff, J. (1997). The Ally. In D. Sandner & S. Wong (Eds.), *The sacred heritage*. (pp. 111-124). New York: Routledge.
- Ram Dass. (1999). On being nobody special. In M. Caplan (Ed.), *Halfway up the mountain: The error of premature claims to enlightenment* (pp.478-479). Prescott, Arizona: Hohm Press.
- Rogers, C. (1951). *Client centred therapy*. London: Constable.
- Roget's Thesaurus. (2001). (6th ed.). New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

- Rosenberg, L. (2005). *Knowing reality: Psychotherapists and counsellors experiences and understandings of inexplicable phenomena while working with clients*. Unpublished Master of Health Science thesis, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- Rowan, J. (1990). Spiritual experiences in counselling. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 18(3), 233-249.
- Rowan, J. (2002). A transpersonal way of relating to clients. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 32(1), 101-110.
- Rubin, J. (1997). Psychoanalysis is self-centred. In C. Spezzano & G. Garguilo (Eds.), *Soul on the couch* (pp. 79-108). New Jersey: The Analytic Press.
- Rumi, J. (1991). *One-handed basketweaving* (C. Barks, Trans.). Athens, GA: Maypop.
- Sabina, M. (1997). The book of knowledge in shamanism and mysticism: Universal image of the source. In D. Sandner & S. Wong (Eds.), *The sacred heritage* (pp.45-56). New York: Routledge.
- Said, A. A. (1995). Other ways of knowing: Discovering peace and conflict resolution. *Humanities Centre Lecture Series* Retrieved 20 April, 2007, from www.american.edu/academic.depts/acainst/cgp/pdf/saidart2.pdf
- Sandhu, J. (2004). The Sikh model of the person, suffering and healing: Implications for counsellors *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 26(1), 31-44.
- Schermer, V. (2003). *Spirit and psyche*. London: Jessica Kinsley Publishers.
- Sharp, C. (2005). Towards wholeness: The spiritual experience as an educative process [Electronic Version]. Retrieved 13 August 2006 from <http://k1.ioe.ac.uk/pesgb/x/Sharp.pdf>.

- Shatananda, S. (2003). *The splendour of recognition*. New York: SYDA Foundation.
- Sheldrake, R. (2003). *The sense of being stared at and other aspects of the extended mind*. U.K.: Hutchinson.
- Sheng-yen Ch'an Master. (1986). *Ox herding at Morgans Bay* (P. Kennedy, Trans.). New York: The Institute of Chung-Hwa Buddhist Culture.
- Shinoda Bolen, J. (2003). *Goddesses in older women: Archetypes in women over 50*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Shirres, M. (1997). *Te Tangata: The human person*. Auckland, New Zealand: Accent Publications.
- Simmonds, J. (2004). Heart and spirit: Research with psychoanalysts and psychoanalytic psychotherapists about spirituality. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 85, 951-971.
- Smolin, L. (1997). *The life of the cosmos*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smythe, E. (1996). *Evidence or understanding as the ethos of practice? A phenomenological, hermeneutic perspective*. Paper presented at the NERF Conference, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Smythe, E. (1998). *'Being safe' in childbirth: A hermeneutic interpretation of the narratives of women and practitioners*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North, NZ.
- Smythe, E. (2002). *Practice Reality Book of Readings*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology (AUT).
- Smythe, E & Spence, D. (1996). *Doing phenomenological/hermeneutic research*. Hermeneutic/Interpretive Phenomenology Book of Readings. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology.

- Solomon, M & Waetford, R. (2007). *Community Korero*. School of Psychotherapy. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology (AUT).
- Solomon, P. (2006). *A phenomenological study of the experience of therapists who meditate*. Unpublished Master of Health Science thesis. Auckland, NZ: Auckland University of Technology.
- Sperry, L., & Shafranske, E. (Eds.). (2005). *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Spezzano, C., & Garguilo, G. (2003). *Soul on the couch*. New Jersey: The Analytic Press.
- Spinelli, E. (1989). *The interpreted world*. London: Sage.
- Spretnak, C. (1999). *The resurgence of the real: Body, nature and place in the hypermodern world*. New York: Routledge.
- Spurgeon, C. (1913). *Mysticism in English literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stace, W. (1960). *Mysticism and philosophy*. London: Macmillan.
- Stafford, W. (1992). *My name is William Tell*. Lewiston, Idaho: Confluence Press.
- Stevens-Long, J. (2000). The prism self. In P. Young-Eisendrath & M. Miller (Eds.), *The psychology of mature spirituality* (pp. 161-174). London: Routledge.
- Stolorow, R., Atwood, G., & Orange, D. (2002). *Worlds of experience*. New York: Basic Books.
- Suler, J. (1998). Paradox. In A. Molino (Ed.), *The couch and the tree* (pp. 321-343). New York: North Point Press.
- Sullivan, B. (1989). *Psychotherapy grounded in the feminine principle*. Wilmette, Illinois: Chiron Publications.

- Swartz, S. (2006). The third voice: Writing case notes. *Feminism and Psychology*, 16(4), 427-444.
- Symington, N. (1996). *The making of a psychotherapist*. London: H.Karnac (books) Ltd.
- Tacey, D. (2003). *The spirituality revolution*. Australia: HarperCollins.
- Tarnas, R. (1991). *The passion of the western mind*. London: Pimlico.
- Tart, C. (1994). *Living the mindful life*. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala.
- TePaske, B. (1997). Eliade, Jung, and shamanism. In D. Sandner & S. Wong (Eds.), *The sacred heritage* (pp.19-62). New York: Routledge.
- Thomas, D. (2000). *Bicultural research strategies*. Auckland, New Zealand: University of Auckland.
- Tobin, G., & Begley, C. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(4), 388-396.
- Torii, S. (2005). *The wounded healer in psychotherapy: a systematic literature review concerning an issue related to the psychotherapeutic relationship interspersed with illustrations from clinical practice: a dissertation (thesis)*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology.
- Tremlin, T. (2006). *Minds and gods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Turei, P. (2007). *Maori as a surviving earth culture*. March 21. B4. Auckland, New Zealand: New Zealand Herald.
- Underhill, E. (1914). *Practical mysticism*. London: J.M. Dent.
- Valle, R., & Halling, S. (Eds.). (1989). *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology*. New York: Plenum Press.
- van Deurzen-Smith, E. (1997). *Everyday mysteries. Existential dimensions of psychotherapy*. London: Routledge.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience* (2nd ed.). Canada: The Athlouse Press.

- Van Manen, M. (1997). From meaning to method. *Qualitative Health Research*, 7(3), 345-369.
- Van Manen, M. (2002). *Writing in the dark*. Canada: The Althouse Press.
- Van Manen, M. (2006). Writing qualitatively, or the demands of writing. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(5), 713-722.
- Vaughan, F. (1980). Transpersonal psychotherapy: Context, content and process. In R. Walsh & F. Vaughan (Eds.), *Paths beyond ego* (pp. 182-189). New York: Tarcher.
- von Franz, M.-L. (1975). *C.G. Jung: His myth in our time*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Walsh, R. (1995). Philosophical hermeneutics and the project of Hans George Gadamer. *Nursing Inquiry*, 3(2), 231-237.
- Walsh, R. (1998). Hidden wisdom. In H. Palmer (Ed.), *Inner Knowing* (pp. 21-23). New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam.
- Walsh, R., & Vaughan, F. (Eds.). (1993). *Paths beyond ego*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Walters, J. (2003). *Martin Buber and feminist ethics*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Weber, S. (2006). Doubt, arrogance and humility. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 42 (2), 213-223.
- Welling, H. (2004). The intuitive process: The case of psychotherapy [Electronic Version]. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*. Retrieved 10 May 2007 from <http://namp.ist.utl.pt/documentos/intuition.pdf>.
- Welwood, J. (Ed.). (1985). *Awakening the heart*. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- Welwood, J. (1996). Reflection and presence: The dialectic of self knowledge. *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 28 (2), 107-128.

- Welwood, J. (2000). *Toward a psychology of awakening*. Boston: Shambhala.
- West, W. (1997). Integrating counselling, psychotherapy and healing: An inquiry into counsellors and psychotherapists whose work includes healing. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 25(3), 291-311.
- Wheway, J. (1999). The dialogical heart of intersubjectivity. In C. Mace (Ed.), *Heart and soul. The therapeutic face of philosophy* (pp.105-124). London: Routledge.
- White Feathers. (1990). Photograph of Dame Whina Cooper and her granddaughter leading a Hikoī to Parliament (NZ Herald,1975), (p.25). Christchurch, NZ: Hazard Press.
- White, R. (1994). *Exceptional human experience*. Paper presented at the Religion and Psychical Research Conference, London.
- Whitmont, E. (1990). *Return of the goddess*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Whittingham, N. (2004). Spirituality: The personal and professional experiences of ten expert family therapists. Retrieved 28 March, 2006, from http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.aut.ac.nz/dissertations/preview_all/3126259
- Wilber, K. (1994a). Psychologia perennis: The spectrum of consciousness. In R. Walsh & F. Vaughan (Eds.), *Paths beyond ego* (pp. 21-33). New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Wilber, K. (1994b). Paths beyond ego in the coming decades. In R. Walsh & F. Vaughan (Eds.), *Paths beyond ego* (pp.156-160). New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Wilmer, H. (1987). *Practical Jung*. Wilmette: Chiron Publications.

- Winnicott, D. (1971). *Playing and reality*. New York: Tavistock Publications Ltd.
- Yamada, K. (2004). *Gateless gate: The classic book of Zen koans*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.
- Young-Eisendrath, P., & Miller, M. (Eds.). (2000). *The psychology of mature spirituality: Integrity, wisdom, transcendence* New York: Routledge.

APPENDIX A: Advertisement

MYSTERIES OF LIFE!

I am undertaking research about therapists who work with what may be described as the mysteries of life i.e. spiritual, mystical, and/or transpersonal phenomena. If this describes you and you are willing to be involved it would be great to spend one to two hours interviewing you to assist me in my AUT Masters thesis project titled 'Therapists who work with unusual phenomena'. My name is Lauren Sleeman and I am a counsellor with a long held interest in this aspect of therapy. For further information contact me on laurens@baytech.net.nz or by phoning 021 777 561.

APPENDIX B: Participant Information Sheet

**Participant Information Sheet**

Date Information Sheet Produced:

24.8.2006

Project Title

Therapists who work with unusual phenomena: A hermeneutic phenomenological study.

An Invitation

As indicated in the advertisement I am an AUT Master of Health Sciences student about to research a topic about which I have been passionate for many years, namely, the stories of those who work with unusual phenomena. We may describe unusual phenomena as spiritual, mystical and/or transpersonal occurrences and experiences. Therapists talk anecdotally about such phenomena and the significant and deeply meaningful experiences such phenomena evoke both in themselves and for clients. However, those that specifically work with such phenomena are seldom interviewed and your stories remain untold. In our increasing secular and multicultural society in Aotearoa/New Zealand your story or stories are important in reflecting this diversity. I therefore invite you to join in this study so that your story may be told

What is the purpose and benefit of this research?

The purpose of the research is to bring to light the stories of therapists who work with unusual phenomena. Little has been researched and written about this topic and its exploration is designed to bring wider acknowledgement and accessibility to an aspect of therapist's work which is generally marginalised. Giving voice to therapists who work in the relatively uncharted waters of unusual phenomena allows for increased awareness and understanding of this aspect of therapy. The potential benefit of such a study is the acknowledgment of therapeutic credibility and professionalism in this area of work. This is paramount in an increasingly diverse society where individuals (and groups) seek someone with whom to explore unusual phenomena outside of a religious framework and without encountering medical/pathological definitions of their experiences. The successful presentation of the thesis will complete the requirements towards a Masters of Health Science degree.

How was I chosen for this invitation?

The invitation is open to all full and provisional members of NZAC and NZAP who identify themselves as therapists who work with "unusual phenomena" as defined above and are willing to participate in the interview process and subsequent study.

What will happen in this research?

The project involves a one to two hour audiotaped interview at a time and place as agreed between you and myself to be most suitable and convenient. This is likely to be either your place of work or residence. I will meet with you and go through the Consent Form to ensure that you are comfortable with the process. This will be followed by the taped interview which will consist of open questions and your responses.

What are the discomforts and risks?

It is anticipated that this will be a positive experience in which you are invited to share your story or stories of working with unusual phenomena. It is possible that the self-reflective nature of such an interview may evoke thoughts and feelings that you may later

wish to address with your supervisor. Participation in the study is voluntary and you are entitled to withdraw at any time without being disadvantaged in any way. You are not obliged to share any information which may compromise your privacy or cause any discomfort. The interview information will not be accessible to anyone other than myself and a transcriber who will have signed a Confidentiality Agreement as per the guidelines of the AUT Ethics Committee. Your participation will therefore be confidential and your name will be coded, or a pseudonym chosen by yourself will be used to protect your identity.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The time commitment to participate in the interview is fully and gratefully acknowledged, and it is with this in mind that the interview be scheduled at a time and place which incurs the least possible cost to you as the participant.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

If, after reading this information sheet, you think you would like to be participant and share your story or stories please contact Lauren Sleeman by email: laurens@baytech.net.nz or by phoning 021 777 561 and leaving a message if there is no reply. It is hoped that interviews will commence before the end of November 2006 so your earliest response is greatly appreciated.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If requested, a summary of the findings will be forwarded on completion of the study.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project must be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Head of Psychotherapy, AUT, Margot Solomon, msolomon@aut.ac.nz. 921 9999 ext

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Lauren Sleeman, laurens@baytech.net.nz 021 777 561.

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Margot Solomon, Head of Psychotherapy, AUT,
msolomon@aut.ac.nz

Dr. Lynne Giddings, Associate Professor, AUT.
lynne.giddings@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
on 13 November 2006

UTEC Reference number 06/182

APPENDIX C: Consent Form

Consent Form



Project title: Therapists who work with unusual phenomena: A hermeneutic phenomenological study.

Project Supervisor: Margot Solomon (Primary Supervisor) and Lynne Giddings (Secondary Supervisor)

Researcher: Lauren Sleeman

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 23.8.2006
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that the interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research (please tick one):
Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature:

Participant's name:

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

Date:

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on
13 November AUTEK Reference number: 06/182*

APPENDIX D: Confidentiality Agreement # 1

Confidentiality Agreement



Project title: Therapists who work with unusual phenomena: A hermeneutic phenomenological study.

Project Supervisor: Margot Solomon (Primary Supervisor) and Lynne Giddings (Secondary Supervisor)

Researcher: Lauren Sleeman

- ☒ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ☒ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☒ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them while the work is in progress.

Transcriber's

Fiddlow

signature:

Transcriber's

Fiona Liddlow

name:

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Home/work 479 4727
mob 0276004633

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Margot Solomon, Head of Psychotherapy, AUT. Ph: 921 9999 x 7197

msolomon@aut.ac.nz

Lynne Giddings, Associate Professor, AUT. Ph: 921 9999 x 7013

lynne.giddings@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13th November 2006

AUTEC Reference number 06/182

APPENDIX E: Confidentiality Agreement # 2

Confidentiality Agreement



Project title: Therapists who work with unusual phenomena: A hermeneutic phenomenological study.

Project Supervisor: Margot Solomon (Primary Supervisor) and Lynne Giddings (Secondary Supervisor)

Researcher: Lauren Sleeman

- ☒ I understand that all the material I will be asked to transcribe is confidential.
- ☒ I understand that the contents of the tapes or recordings can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☒ I will not keep any copies of the transcripts nor allow third parties access to them while the work is in progress.

Transcriber's signature: U E Sleeman

Transcriber's name: U E Sleeman

Transcriber's Contact Details (if appropriate):

1350 Whangaparoa Rd
Army Bay
Hibiscus Coast 09-428-1354

Date: 27/12/06

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

Margot Solomon, Head of Psychotherapy, AUT. Ph: 921 9999 x 7197

msolomon@aut.ac.nz

Lynne Giddings, Associate Professor, AUT. Ph: 921 9999 x 7013

lynne.giddings@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 13th November 2006

AUTEC Reference number 06/182

APPENDIX F: AUT Ethics Committee

Approval



MEMORANDUM

To: Margot Solomon
 From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTC
 Date: 16 October 2006
 Subject: Ethics Application Number 06/182 **Therapists who work with unusual phenomena: a hermeneutic phenomenological study.**

Dear Margot

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTC) at their meeting on 11 September 2006 and as the Executive Secretary of AUTC, I have approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTC's meeting on 13 November 2006.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 11 October 2009.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit to AUTC the following:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/ethics>, including when necessary a request for extension of the approval one month prior to its expiry on 11 October 2009;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 11 October 2009 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is also a condition of approval that AUTC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence and that AUTC approval is sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to the participant documents involved.

You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that any research undertaken under this approval is carried out within the parameters approved for your application. Any change to the research outside the parameters of this approval must be submitted to AUTC for approval before that change is implemented.

Please note that AUTC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all written and verbal correspondence with us. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the Committee and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Madeline Banda
 Executive Secretary
 Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Lauren Sleeman laurens@baytech.net.nz

Form 1000-0001 of
 Approved Form
 10/09/06
 10/09/06

Form 1000-0001 of
 Approved Form
 10/09/06
 10/09/06

Form 1000-0001 of
 Approved Form
 10/09/06
 10/09/06