

3.7.4.2. Talk to Jill

- How did you get in touch with this discovery?
- Is it a basic doubt, disappointment in your story?
- What has happened to this thing you got in touch with?
- You are saying the not me, is me?
- You learned to be happy being looked at, you could do that well; you did that here, with your artwork?
- So, what challenged you?
- The other themes; have they given way to something else, more fundamental?
- Is there something about this voice that is confronting, and different?
- The beautiful adolescent, partly fake, has a voice needing to be heard, in a raw way, carrying a significant part of yourself?
- The shift of modes seems to have assisted hearing this voice.
- You never seemed to want to read the text; does this relate to not wanting to hear the voice?
- Did anything in this group process trigger your change?
- Using other eyes to question what is seen, asking questions.
- The discovery is in you.
- There seems to be the text of your arts work, then the text of our interaction-of our awarenesses-this seems to be where the surprises occurred.
- Having the choice of modes, being pushed to explore, these seem significant.
- The therapeutic element seems to me to be in the movement of experiencing across modes, which produces surprises that cant be predetermined.
- You could be as deceptive as you wished in any art form.

3.7.4.3. Talk to Jess

- You did not have the opportunity to spend the hour on your review today?
- Your voice does not project much.
- Your experience has one difference from the others; you have basically worked in an art form that was not comfortable for you?
- A strange harmony of contrasts, the sense of balancing a struggle, in the work
- You left your words — this feels very strong but not specific, and feelings flowing over the work.
- Something bound and something free?
- The essence of your work seems to be a very strong feeling, which is a powerful force.
- The challenge, you said, was to find the form to use, like you catching hold of your experience.
- The depth of blue colour and richness of sound in the cello suggest a merging.
- This might be your holding form so far.
- Would you comment on your use of the modes?
- Is it a process of attending to yourself or a process of finding form?
- Its the opposite process to those you are used to-you gave up the words, so there's something else in the experience of form.
- Is it a shift for you, in the mode of experiencing? In addition, is there a struggle for you in it, associated with not feeling competent?
- Telling a verbal story often controls the form — your search for essences of your experiencing seems to have put you into a search for form and meaning which are not predictable, and is a different way of being in it.
- You do not detail your story, just search for the essential meanings in it.

- Reducing things beyond details, to essences, seems to be what we've been doing, aware of restraint, questioning the experience, not prodding for details, supporting the searcher's journey into understanding from within.

3.7.4.4. Researcher Felt Understanding

*My journeying-
Dialogal questioning
Always staying within your text
In this interactive moment.
How so? What is happening?
What does this feel like?
The questions that challenge to
Search for the searing truth
That keep to the inner journey, not the story.*

*Statements of apparent understandings
Checking meanings, rephrasing, reflecting.
Understandings from the indwelling
Of your experiencing,
Your words, reconnected, to felt meanings.
Searching for the authentic reduction,
The best approximation of
Your own essential meanings.*

3.7.4.5. Researcher Integrative Synthesis

*An experiential journey
Shifts three human awarenesses
To contain and balance
New, contrasting self knowing*

*The aesthetic and the raw
Weave together in new connections
Felt and found
In the modal shifts of ways of knowing
Yield safe competence to risky discomfort.*

*Essences of self seen, heard, held
In less story, and more meaning
Give promises of new forms of being.*

*A dwelling within experience
Until clarity and truth
Are known and turned
Inside out.*

3.8. Participant Final Reflections

When the final text was delivered, the three participants were asked for the last time to return to their materials and make a further reflection. This occurred within the month after the last review session. They were asked to reflect on three questions:

1. WHAT happened, that was most meaningful to you, during these experiences?
2. HOW do you think these experiences were happening?
3. The ESSENCE of your experiencing, as a statement.

Extracts from the responses are provided below.

3.8.1. Jill

3.8.1.1. WHAT Happened, that was most Meaningful?

Playing with the art materials was immensely enjoyable.

However, these activities were too easy, too comfortable, I am a visual processor.

As a child, I had to be seen and not heard. To explore the unknown, I had to move from the visual into maybe sound/voice.

During the playback of my tape, I had a significant body reaction to hearing my voice — unpleasant, stomach wrenching. This feeling state connected me with feelings I had as an adolescent, producing associated memories. I felt vulnerable, less in control, feelings very different — it was a long time since I felt this way.

I felt connected to the others and felt the similarities of our journeys, and some differences. Being in their process was very instructive to my own journey.

The process was respectful of privacy, but allowed essences to be shared.

I experienced a shared journey through a series of critical issues.

In summary, three things stood out for me:

1. The experience of a strong-raw feeling state.
2. Learning from others.
3. Working with the essences rather than the particulars of each story.

3.8.1.2. HOW do You think these Experiences were Happening?

1. The Body experience happened when I moved away from a mode of representation that was easy and comfortable for me, into a mode in which I had very little comfort. This confirmed my scepticism about the value for me of making art as therapy, and what forms of expression-representation might serve me better.
2. Learning from others. I felt committed to people I could trust and like. I value relationships and learn from them. The process of working, respecting privacy and boundaries provided through shared rituals in each session, facilitated this.
3. Allowing essences to emerge seemed to happen through the process of making and representing; showing the representation and speaking about it; others being there to respond to or witness the maker's story. Communicating about the material, this allowed critical essences to emerge; offering a sense of control, empowerment, and integrity to participants.

Five photos, extracted from aspects of the art materials were presented as a visual summary, each having a title:



Figure 35 — Jill's picture, "Cries lost to the wind"



Figure 36 — Jill's picture, "Letting go"

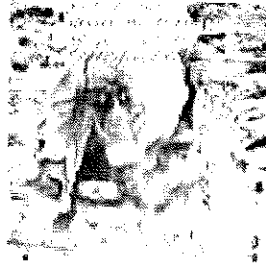


Figure 37 — Jill's picture, "Just as well you're in control of your own satisfaction"



Figure 38 — Jill's picture, "The identical twin got lost"

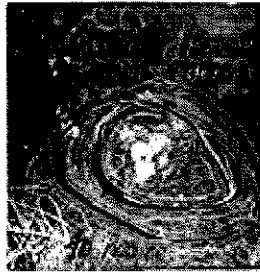


Figure 39 — Jill's picture, "It doesn't leave us much room to move"

3.8.1.3. The ESSENCE of Your Experience

To risk exploring the unknown; including unknown ways of representation, expression; allowing myself to 'sit' with the discomfort.

3.8.2. Adrian

3.8.2.1. WHAT Happened, that was most Meaningful?

Particular events within sessions and reflections between sessions were especially important, as well as accumulation of meaning through the process.

1. How to be, as a performer with this audience; what to do, what relationship to have-these issues re-emerged for me, in this context. These issues also reflected the personal and professional issue of giving myself time, energy and focus. What to do, was resolved by the re-emergence of an old content-the Wolf material. I was reluctant to make normal open communication with this group, and was acutely aware of my need for approval from this audience, like the driving force behind my own issues. The dynamics of this group proved to be the means of clarification and partial resolution of the issues.
2. The first drawn image of the wolf became an icon for myself-the scrawny naively drawn figure standing facing a blizzard. The work between sessions gained increased focus, balancing the need to please the group, but making a shift in content. Group questioning of my presentations increased my tension.
3. Talking into the tape became the avenue for straight talking to myself about this issue, including stating that 'I want this group.'
4. Sitting with all the materials on the review day was tremendously invigorating, and a powerful, clarifying experience. The focus shifted from myself as wolf to explorer, which was a more honest placement of myself at the centre of the story.
5. The stories and unique processes of others were significant to my engagement, as well as their support and provocation.

3.8.2.2. HOW do You think these Experiences were Happening?

1. Engagement in arts modality with expertise.
2. Content arising from interaction in naive art form.
3. Provocation from group members.
4. Solo reflection into a tape recorder.
5. Realisations and clarification from the review process.

These events are all the result of interaction between events, but it was also characterised by:

- being volatile
- being cumulative
- being multi modal
- being unpredictable

3.8.2.3. The ESSENCE of Your Experience

A multi modal experience of supervision in a group in which choices about art form were fluid and contained a regime consisting of meeting/reflection/representation.

A personal clarification of the power of pleasing the audience in my life, and an urgent reminder that this needs to be balanced with self-care and development.

An intriguing insight into issues and their representations in the life of peers.

3.8.3. Jess

3.8.3.1. WHAT Happened, that was most Meaningful?

I made a commitment to this group, feeling uncertain about skills, but being prepared to experiment with art forms.

Drawing which expressed the disturbance of strong feeling, allowed me to feel intensely and to know what to make, letting me leave it, feeling satisfied and freer to decide and act.

I found that I could represent my experience in an appropriate way, like a new tool I could use any time I needed it.

The most meaningful discovery of all was that we could pursue private, diverse journeys, yet do it together, challenging each other, but without intruding. The essences, rather than the circumstances of our lives were what we understood, feeling deeply connected to each other.

It was a new, surprising and valuable journey. It seemed that each one made a breakthrough when we left the known and comfortable forms of expression and ventured into a form less comfortable and familiar.

3.8.3.2. HOW do You think these Experiences were Happening?

By crossing over into less familiar modes of representation, we were challenged: this was a catalyst for change.

The group process was significant: supportive, respecting, non-interpretive, and appreciative.

My changes involved staying with images, feeling and imagination, abandoning words. The opposite move, to verbal modes was true for the others.

3.8.3.3. The ESSENCE of Your Experience

I cannot convey this exactly in words.

It was turning from a known way, into an untried way, representing my experience in an art form less familiar to me.

It was sharing separate journeys, encouragement, and challenge; sharing a plan of how to travel.

It was finding a third way aside from the forked road of choices; finding it through the arts therapy process, that allowed me to not take a choice I really did not want; being in the middle of powerful and opposite forces; a strange harmony of contrasts; a way of finding expression for feelings that avoided destructive acting out.

3.8.4. Last Statements

Participants were then provided with the entire paper to this point. They were asked to make one further indwelling, and then, to crystallise their own final essence, having read all their data and my attempts at reductions.

3.8.4.1. Jill

At the same time as I asked for the last step, Jill wrote:

'Having made my visual summary of the experience of "self as therapist", I now feel inclined to a further note regarding this last part of the experience. I've called it "another approximation: a statement about making the visual summary."

A feeling of excitement — what might emerge. I read the transcripts again, looked at the images I had made, putting comments and images together in intuitive fashion.

The image was photographed — the comment from the transcript was superimposed on the image (step 2) — a quite deliberate statement not biding the words behind the ambiguity (safety) of an image.

This process and my "attending" to the new image created distance from the original statements and images made during the sessions. As a final distancing; I had the photographs photocopied.

This process seems to "flatten" the image, and all this aided a kind of intentional looking. It is the first time I have really been able to distance myself from pictures I have made, to see them in a fresh light. This seems to be different from Betensky's process; another way of stepping out of the art form and moving to the verbal.

In essence, the process of doing this final summary reflected the process within the sessions. This leads me to ponder the value of attending to the making process and the aesthetic decisions made along the way (the roads taken and not taken) rather than just the work itself.'

Jill's response to my request for the last statement was:

A story

Clinging to the tightly woven thread of her comfort, she tries to sing. Her voice floats, thin and fragile, heard by a few who wait carefully, listening and accepting the song.

3.8.4.2. Jess

The problem —

*to find a way
to live creatively
with
opposite
desires*

The process —

*Held in it
through
challenge
and support,
I found a form
where images
honoured
and held
these opposites.*

The outcome —

*A way of being
in the midst
staying there
denying
neither
but not swept away
by either*

Yes,

*'another knowing'
the strange harmony
of contrast*

3.9. Reported Self-Knowledge: The First Discussion

The self-reports over time in the texts are the first source for crystallising the kinds of personal meanings and self-knowledge that were depicted by the participants.

Clearly, this was a cumulative process, located in the many ways of experiencing over time. The attempts to identify and describe these learnings are found most obviously in the Felt Understanding Reductions, Integrative Syntheses, and final Essences. Extracts from these as they occurred over time give the flavour of this self-knowing.

3.9.1. Session 1

The first session clarifies that each participant has a current search for meanings, as stated for each — sensed but not specified. Three people seek an understanding of a life tension: What it is? What it means? What to do with it?

3.9.2. Session 2

The second session deepens the explorations of experiences and their content, but without trying to specifically focus any issues, but asking questions regarding access:

- Could you stay with hot and cold?
- Performing and being?
- Is there something else that draws you?
- What is the question now?

...and directing back to their journey...

- The journey is your own.

3.9.3. Session 3

In session three Jill starts to make her issues concrete:

*Inside-out
Two journeys: nice and disgusting
Can the art work take me there?*

So too does Adrian:

*Something new is happening
That is not yet known
Could I choose?
For myself?
The inner-outer dialogue
Shifting
To the inner core.*

3.9.4. Session 4

In session four the emerging themes continue into further exploration.

For Adrian:

*We've come together in a cold-warmed space —
Their meeting is the possibility —
Just cohabiting
With myself
Speaking together.*

For Jill;

*Pervasive feelings of disjointed disconnection —
New images as yet unattainable —
Mysteries without the real meaning
Do not satisfy.*

3.9.5. Session 5

And in session five, Jill stays in the dilemma of not knowing her real concern,
and struggles with;

*Polarities of self-doubt and affirmation —
Precariously balanced
Around a question
Not stated.*

Adrian confronts an emerging issue, and states it:

*Present myself distinctively?
I choose the what and the how
I shall be known —
Then why the stuckness
Of how to be next for you?*

And Jess specifies a current life dilemma:

*My life's ambivalence —
A balancing of analytical-romantic opposites
Never resolved;
A balancing act
Still.*

3.9.6. Session 6

The tape talking reported in session six pushed Jill further into her dilemma:

*The price of self knowledge —
To lose control and gain discomfort —
And give voice to the not understood self —
Unlocking the unknown.*

Jess states her progress with her theme:

*The found image contains
Distances and secures —
To find a way of being
Within experience —
Connecting, energising
Through creative feeling.*

And Adrian, through his talking to self, clarifies his movement:

*Always balancing
A duality —
The solid core of me
Shifting —
Being in a different way —
A change of being*

The seeming commonalities of experience and of process were stated in the integrative reduction:

*Voices heard before
Take the air
Parts of the self
Able to be held now
Where possibilities of being
Might be considered —
Understanding — balancing placement —
You speaking with you —
Gestation.*

3.9.7. Session 7

In session seven the last clarifications from group process are made.

For Adrian:

*Changes —
Me talking with myself,
Finding myself my own victim.
Real parts of me, both
The aesthetic and the raw
The real new truths
Were in me talking to me.*

For Jill,

*Two of me
A forgotten self-reconnected
Fear-of being heard.
Connecting the outer to the inner self —
Words needing to be heard.*

For Jess,

*Beyond words, a form
Giving access to the inside
Finding how
To live with incompatible forces
Just a holding, a staying in.
A spontaneous freedom.
Surprisingly gained.*

3.9.8. Post-Experience Reflections

The post experiential reflections yielded the final statements, integrating these descriptions into their essences.

3.9.8.1. Jess

*The problem —
to find a way
to live creatively
with
opposite
desires*

*The process —
Held in it
through
challenge
and support,
I found a form
where images
honoured
and held
these opposites.*

*The outcome —
A way of being
in the midst
staying there
denying
neither
but not swept away
by either*

*Yes,
'another knowing'
the strange harmony
of contrasts*

3.9.8.2. Jill

*To risk exploring the unknown, (including unknown ways of representation and expression)
and allowing myself to 'sit' with discomfort.*

A story

*Clinging to the tightly woven thread of her discomfort, she tries to sing. Her voice floats, thin
and fragile, heard by a few who wait carefully, listening and accepting the song.*

3.9.8.3. Adrian

*My voice comes back to me —
Much smaller than I would like
And much stronger than I realise.*

Each participant also supplied, voluntarily, a visual statement together with
the last verbal essence.

3.9.9. A Final Comment

Two comments seem apt. The first is that the quality of the self-reporting
mirrors the quality of the experiencing; it was never stated like the detailed gut
spilling encounter group material. The experiences of each have clearly been
deeply challenging and have created important new consciousness about their
lives. However, disclosure was formed, as experienced, and as stated:

*We tell
Not the circumstances of our lives
But our understanding of them.*

4. RESEARCHING LIVED EXPERIENCE: A REFLECTION

A questioning reader might ask just how is this a living experience? It does not seem like common experiencing, and it does not seem quite therapy, yet it does seem to be real experience. Three people meet with a facilitator to examine personal meanings, a bit like a spiritual retreat, but its a personal one-trying to get more deeply into one's own life meanings.

People take the outer story of acting in the world, of being in relationships, of being at work-the daily stream of actions in life. This is the material of commencement, from which the dialogues of meaning emanate. To obtain a deeper level of understanding of these actions in life, focal points are selected, access is sought to felt-sensed, unknown possibilities, so that what comes into awareness can be understood more completely, and understandings can be synthesised into a more coherent pattern of meanings. These meanings are constructed from the inner-outer and other dialogues.

It brings one into a working relationship with oneself and selected others, and takes meaningful reflection and reexperiencing as the means of access to the fuller knowledge of the lived experience, going beyond actions. In is a process that remains under the control of the owner, not an other.

From this study, it is becoming clearer that being IN actions in life is an incomplete way of making meaning, and that some form of subsequent reflection is required in order to 'make sense of things.' That directs us to the notion of reexperiencing, and the suggestion that doing and understanding meaning are difficult to achieve simultaneously. Staying with or in a reexperiencing process is necessary to allow the unprocessed thoughts, images, emotions, felt and sensed apprehensions, into connection, and to

allow them to connect up, over time, with prior similar stored experiences. Being immersed in, indwelling this mix of recollection, are the ingredients from which a new coherent construction has the potential to develop. How this occurs is also to be learned in this type of context.

This form of inquiry, as exemplified here, is a research into the process of discovery and construction of personal meanings. Although it is similar to therapy, it is not the same. The contract is different-three people came to find this process, and I came to assist and try to deliver it. I did not bring a hermeneutic theory to bear on their life stories, and I did not try to identify any form of 'problem' or even existential concerns. I tried to engage them with their own dialogues, self with self, self with other, self with me, in order to gain forms of understanding that were derived from a deeper engagement with themselves and me. The activities of exploration were referent to their own lives in their living contexts, and understood in those terms.

The research derives from the form of inquiry that developed. I found the idea of creating and returning the text in thinking about how to hold a record of our interactions-not an original idea by any means. The use of multimodal approaches to expressing inner exploration is held by us all as common to being in our lives: to express, to externalise, to reflect is to use multiple forms of investigation and representation. There is no absolute or finished outcome: we seek to extend personal knowledge, so there is no construct of cause and effect. There could be constructs or themes, or just descriptions, but we did not know just how this would be, since we wanted the inquiry to find its own forms. In seeking economy and clarity of meanings, we took the dialogues as far as we could in the time and in the press for truthfulness in experiencing and representation, but the final revelations and their forms were always made and owned by those who lived them. I gave back my depictions, as part of the dialogues, but never tried to go beyond their data, such as identifying themes or what I thought as essential in their contents. I asked

them for this. However, I did give back my own felt sense of the import of our interchanges.

There was no attempt to identify anxious states or to relieve pain or assist people to make changes in their lives, as might happen in therapy. On the other hand, there was no predetermined construct to be studied and provide a summary depiction of, as in much phenomenological research. Value was placed on the major idea of understanding human life experiencing, as it arose for consideration. In this, we sought to establish some form of description of the aspects of the life story presenting itself, to move towards greater connectedness with this, and to extract the deeper structures of meaning within the emerging inner reexperiencing. These structures were constructed over time. The participant owns what she constructs. It is probably unfinished. We all contribute to it, but we each have different knowledge of that known by the owner. Nevertheless, we all felt responsible for honesty of engagement.

As researcher, I tried always to arrive at a feeling essence, from my own interactive experiencing, but not a content essence. I had no way of checking the facts of people's lives, nor was I interested in the outer story, as such. I regarded these as vehicles for the inner search, to be found in procedures to be generated. In my responses, I adopted the idea of 'reduction' from empirical phenomenology, but found intuitively my own forms of it, as a kind of verse form expressing my own felt sensing of the affecting feeling components of the interactions. This happened both in the sessions and intensified as I typed up the tapes and immersed myself in them, as a form of reexperiencing. As a researcher practitioner, I knew the dangers of colluding with the outer 'known' story, and tried to discover forms of access to the structures of feeling, which might connect the not quite known level of awareness.

This view of personal knowing considers that such knowledge will come in at first in a deeper than verbal level, so the contact with felt sensing, with emotion, with new connections, suggest that awarenesses and remembrances and resonances may carry vital information to be used in the reconstruction of experiences as they are reexperienced now. How to obtain access to such sensed awarenesses, how to create intuitively guided reexperience and discovery, these were procedures of inquiry to be created in the process of the search for meaning.

As Adrian said;

This is the genuine feeling of what happened to me — this was raw, not a conscious idea — the real emotional content, the other journey was something of me to show the people. I was surprised at the emotional quality of that. I had no memory of feeling like that. The understanding came in unexpectedly.'

The procedural issues were to do with creating a form of inquiry, to achieve personal exploration, which was not therapy, though in some ways they overlapped. The purpose was to gain understandings of lived experience, not to solve life problems. Perhaps the closest this procedure comes to therapy is the form of inquiry leading to understanding in experiential therapy, usually followed through to the possibility of life change, but this second aspect did not occur. It was not a problem focused activity, it was experiential-knowledge focused.

This view of personal knowledge was expressed by Jill:

It was that I reconnected with the feeling; a body sense — the conflict between feeling and doing — the issue of how to be really me. This is something else, all the others are connected to this.'

Her ownership of her exploration was stated clearly, as not therapy:

T'd never have come to it myself; yet no therapist could have done it for me — its within, this new knowing.'

Perhaps any sound therapy might result in this statement-personal ownership of inner knowing. Or is this claim particular to this group of people-educated, intelligent, autonomous, used to being in control of their lives, and wanting to increase this control by further self knowledge, resisting interpretations by others, but willing to risk being challenged? It may be that this is a set of procedures well suited to a group of people with these characteristics-that would be a useful understanding, but limiting.

It may also be that these kinds of procedures could be more widely used, or adapted to therapeutic purposes, as a way of increasing autonomy, decreasing dependency, and strengthening the capacity of people to understand their own life meanings. This application would lie in the field of experiential therapy, and with small community self help groups, and in life education.

The role of the researcher has overlap with the role of the therapist, but can be readily distinguished. This is best expressed in the verses written after the review session.

*My journeying.
Dialogal questioning
Always staying within your text
In this interactive moment.
How so? What is happening?
What does it feel like?
The questions that challenge to
Search for the searing truth
That keeps to the inner journey, not the story.*

*Statements of apparent understandings
Checking meanings, rehearsing, reflecting,
Interpretations from the indwelling
Of your experiencing
Your words, reconnected, to felt meanings
Searching for the authentic reduction,
The best approximation
Of your own essential meanings.*

In this series, I participated as a resonator, a clarifier, a questioner, an empathiser, a reflector, but also as one who attempted to engage their experience, passing it through my own intuitive, feeling self, as I experienced with them. The use of 'interpretation,' was thought to be inexact to describe this quality, a going beyond empathy, and has subsequently been revised, as the phenomenon of intersubjectivity became clearer. Their search and mine, was towards understanding, by resonating jointly in the materials. It was not until the second research, that this became much clearer.

Jess captured the feeling of this, when she wrote:

'Less is more — the restraint of not doing other people's work for them.'

I gave verse form reductions, felt understandings and syntheses, reaching as sharply and with such economy as possible, to the matters being explored, giving back my own sensing of a question being asked, something implicit worth following, drawing attention to something apparently unattended, conveying the feeling or emotion of an expression as I received it, and so on. I, and we, tried not to be interpretive, by which we meant not trying to tell someone else what their story meant, and determined never to bring any form of psychological theorising to bear. In the latter, I think we succeeded, but in the former, we struggled with just how to be respectfully, expressively, intuitively, thoughtfully present to each other, without asserting our knowing against theirs, or telling them their meaning, or competing for understandings. Being in the inner-outer dialogue was what was sought, contributing to understanding but never defining another's experiencing.

A critical aspect of self-exploration is the ways of gaining access. Exploration was found to begin and continue in any/all modes. Although each participant initially nominated a primary mode of searching, one in dance/drama, one in visual art, one in collage, each ranged across other modes of experiencing. Starting points were found in attending to, staying with, and representing

something presenting itself, both known and not quite known. Often the engagement would deepen by making a tentative representation, and having it explored by others: a question, a feeling response, a self-realisation, an emotion, a recollection stirred. Then staying in the process over time, led to reexperiencing, reflection and further representations. Examples of cues to access can be found in the texts. I asked, 'what is the question on the face of the sculpture?' 'Could you stay with the material of the tapes with something incomplete?' 'The moment of excruciating talking-the uncomfortable moment-is an entry point' 'Your taped talk seemed very profound' 'Could you tell us how it feels from the inside?' 'Is the repeating mouth powerful as a feeling?'

The reductions or felt understandings I used as my responses as I created the text, also tried to focus my sense of what was important to respond to. These contained a mixture of questions, affirmations, challenges, reflections, feeling responses, testing the unexplored edges, and so on. The self-talk of each participant also brought emergent awareness into visibility, becoming part of the movement from access towards meaning making. Access then, is as much a matter of gradual continuity in the material and the process, as it is a series of exemplary techniques, though some of these are identifiable.

There was no fixed pattern of gaining understanding, but immersion over time and continued self/self and self/other dialogues and representations were clearly parts of it. Understandings grew through successive approximations, and often were not crystallised until the choice was made to do so, in final review and subsequent dialogue. Before that, experiencing without closure continued.

It also implies a strong intention towards openness, and against defensiveness.

A condition of understanding was the placement of the self in contexts of fluidity and uncertainty, where a flow of experiencing is created, lived in, and

attended to. Cycles of entry arise, with mobility within, with presentation, reflection, withdrawal, internal settling, indwelling, moving in a flow of feeling, rather than with conscious control. Staying with the material, deepening access, persisting with indwelling, is also essential in arriving at new understanding. Allowing oneself to give up control to the inner dynamic — ‘an uncontrolled energy finding its way’ — allowed images over collapsed time to collect and connect, accompanied by feelings of discomfort, restlessness, loss of control, a forgetting of the focus on self, but staying in the experiencing.

The ideas of inner-outer dialogue, together with reexperiencing through representation and joint collaboration, all seem seminal to understanding.

Jess said:

‘What is new is the process of finding form, putting it outside, rather than reflecting within.’

It seemed that both inner connection and outer representation, firstly with self, then with trusted others, constituted an essential part of the process of forming-constructing the new structure in which meaning was discovered.

Merely introspecting was insufficient, just a first step. Representation gave holding form; collaboration gave conjoint reflection, possibly verification; and in these steps, new connections, new perspectives were developed, which shaped the experiencing in a reconsidered way. This is the sense in which discovery of structures of meaning is used. It is not a sudden insight, rather it is the movement through dialogues and holding forms, through continuous reflection, until a right ‘meaning aesthetic’ is arrived at. This stands truthfully right for the owner, at that time, and is the culmination of the continuous process of gaining understanding throughout, not a sudden result.

Another element of this type of understanding seems to be that there is no demand for detailed self-disclosure. The pressure is for inner confrontation with oneself-to discover and be with oneself first, in a continuing dialogue, brought to the social context in a more abstracted manner-a dialogue of meanings, more than contents. There is too, a perspectival element: standing both in and outside the dialogue, reviewing, questioning, often confronting. I waited often for this to be absorbed, for feelings to be accommodated — 'being angry about your question,' but making use of it. Patterns seem to come into being, as images connect and sort: the inner structures find themselves, and allow the thematic lines of understanding to develop, in a process of both recognition and discovery.

The texts and time both contribute to understanding. The records of the inner-outer dialogue are essential for indwelling and review, and provide the continuity of experiencing and its containment. Time is also essential: the processes of reflective understanding require accommodation, and the abandonment of product-outcome-now processes. Structural patterning can be observed in representations and texts, but cannot be guaranteed in fixed time.

Nor can we describe exactly what the processes are, though we observe the evidence of emergent structural patterning. Collapsed time refers to the relaxation of the ordering of experience in time, and brings experience out of time structures into connected meaning structures. Neither then or now is particularly important, rather the experience of the meanings-in-structure is what matters.

Representational forms are equally paramount in the movement towards understanding. The vehicles of the edges of awareness hold the potential for surprise, for discovery, for recognition, for deliberation. They stand as the witnesses to preintentional experiencing, and become the data for further reexperiencing. Externalisation provides a different basis for reflection than

introspection. In this case, it also engaged the social component of the small group of peers. This component led us into a new awareness of how to be present to another's process of self-knowing. As we understood this, we called it the intersubjective response (ISR) and the intersubjective dialogue (ISD).

What was delivered on the outside was engaged on the inside: the flowing together and melding of two streams of experiencing, brought back as resonance, but in different voice. The respondent returns it reexperienced, retextured, and qualitatively different. The violin and the cello play the same tune, in harmony, but with a characteristically different textural quality. In the small group exchange, this responding is like the slow burning candles of intuition, flickering in the drafts of exchanges, an invisible structure of dynamic sensing made articulate and visible. In this dynamic interchange, the lines of structure and meaning begin to form, until selective reconstruction is conferred, by the owner. A unity, yet a separateness, deep sensing, giving back the felt sense, but never 'telling you how you are.' Respectful inquiry, clarification, description, and exchange: these are not the same as interpretation.

I wondered how to describe my function in the ISR. Was it I who constructed their meanings, a kind of cipher? I thought not. Yet, I did focus certain things that I experienced as potentially benefiting from attention, so I felt the direction of some things. However, so equally, did they. I did stand positioned between their representations and their understandings sensing-feeling, empathising, challenging, but never defining, nor even directing. I think this role both brings focus, leads to deeper attention, and to amplification, to going beyond the immediate, in the search for inner connectedness.

Personal meanings do not necessarily exist in a prior articulate form.

Although meanings can be distilled as constructs in the abstract, how they take personal form, and in what structures or with what clarity, were not to be assumed. Meanings are not the same as beliefs and values, which might more readily be defined and stated in a more continuous and fixed form. However, this too, requires a lot of reflective effort over time. From a sensed awareness of something not quite known, an impulse or press develops, towards insights and understandings. When the activity of trying to understand the felt or sensed not known, in this work it found representational form, and was then mediated into consciousness, and into interpersonal dialogue. The phenomenon of experience was then moving into understanding.

So with Jill: 'the themes of childhood became incredibly clear — I became connected to an adolescent theme. What am I going to do with that? I just stayed with it — the feeling confusion in me did not matter.' This is understanding, many bits of understanding emerging from the experiences over time. When the pattern of these understandings develops more coherence, a sense of connecting meaning grows, which holds these experiential phenomena together. It is like a cord of integration to which all the understandings are attached as parts of it, but the whole meaning is what integrates. The current approximation endures as a proposition about the truthfulness of something significant in the life of the person. Her final statements of core meanings, revealed the voices of the self as the vehicles representation, within which a continuity of her being was found and stated. Thus, there is a step from understandings to integrated meanings. A meaning is not a statement of personal values or beliefs, though these may be implicit. It is rather making holistic sense of lived experiencing in a way which gets at the core structures in a number of understandings, as now perceived. It irradiates understandings, bringing them to a higher level. Meanings go beyond specifics or details: they formulate over time.

As Adrian said 'the wolf will lie down and give me his heart-I need you to understand that,' he offered us a metaphor which he was not yet to decipher, but which held a form of understanding. He also said 'this is my experience continuously, which I do not want tied down to meanings,' but which he later converted to his own constructed meanings. There is ambivalence about meanings, because they can confront and be uncomfortable. However, there is a balancing of the known and not known, moving through the edgy line from awareness into consciousness. Much of this process is kept at that edge, using visual symbols, metaphors, and poetic language. This is partly to protect privacy, but more directly because the processes of representation to understanding combine images is often uncertain, tentative, exploratory, during which ideas, understandings, and feelings clarify, and should not then be moved into meaning levels too quickly.

It is this level of experiencing that I try to push towards in the ISR. There is a sense of meaningfulness in something emerging-it is there that my selective responsiveness operates, not in the particularity of the meaning, which I cannot know. The meanings are latent, until attended to and indwelt. They are constructed through these procedures of reexperiencing, and of interpersonal sharing. They are not just there to be revealed, but are the product of this process of discovery and construction. While the social dialogues both witness, amplify and verify, the authenticity of the meanings ultimately has its own authority.

Although there is an aesthetic factor involved, it is not only an art form aesthetic. It is isomorphic in the goodness of fit, the rightness of form, feeling and meanings when stabilised; the sense of absolute correspondence, of unity between form, feeling and understanding. The meanings are now held safely and reliably by the owner and co-inquirers — it is a resting point. From an experimental viewpoint, there is evidence throughout the materials to show where and how the unfolding of these meanings has developed. It is

quite possible to trace this through each individual journey, if someone wanted to. It would look like a phenomenological pathways analysis of the texts of experiencing. Themes and constructs could also be adduced, as an alternative form of more formal empirical phenomenology. However, we decided to forego this, in the commitment to non-interpretive reduction, and in a further commitment to the proximal truthfulness of the purposeful personal search for meanings. Critics may argue that this is a victory of good procedures over uncertain outcomes, but the verifiability or truthfulness of the procedures in their content, is the essence of the form of inquiry. It is experiencing made visible, then made meaningful. The dedication of personal commitment and of the group process to authenticity is the main defence against pretence. The experiencing process and its display, was to be the pathway to understanding, not a formal phenomenological reduction.

4.1. Conceptual Discussion

Much of the self-representation was through metaphoric modes, yet the shared experiencing was deeply felt, well beyond voyeuristic discussion of details. The discoveries were personal, semi-private, yet quintessential in nature, by both observation and declaration of the participants.

Secondly, the pattern of discovery can be seen to be continuous and cumulative throughout the reports over the time. Although no attempt was made to identify themes in the sessions or the texts, growing self-understanding led the three to state confusions, dilemmas, or themes, as they stayed with their own experiencing. Thus, the experiencing has had continuity over time, presumably assisted by the intention to stay focussed in the life journey and the energy for knowing in the aspects of the self that emerged. Immersion in the contents reveals this continuity. This is in contrast to the description of Clarke (1991, b), where the creation of meaning 'refers to the creation of language, the act of which helps the patient to know

what he feels' (p140) in which 'the event is the particular verbal constellation of client verbal behaviour.'

The present data suggest that other modes of representation are equally powerful in the achievement of understanding felt meanings; that this can be achieved as much by a client controlled cyclical process over time, as by direct therapist verbal focussing at moments of meaning creation. Thirdly, there is agreement with Clarke that although empathy is an essential aspect of this process of making meaning, and although emotion is always aroused as an aspect of the process, the containment of emotion over time (what Clarke calls symbolisation) in various art form containers, allows a more gradual knowing to occur. This knowing comes about in a complex process of interaction amongst a range of modes of knowing, that is described in her activity of verbal therapy. This process has continuity, is assisted by co-researcher questioning, even confrontation, but leaves the access of understanding to the participant, not necessarily as a result of a moment of empathic focussing by the therapist, or in this case, the facilitator-researcher.

Taking up the questions of James about the relation of consciousness to the material of the person, it seems that there can be a cyclical inner-outer-other dialogue, in which experiencing and conscious knowing interact and enhance each other. This interaction provides something of a continuing oscillation between the felt knowing or prescient awareness, and the conscious declaration of knowing, revealed finally, in the essences or best possible current approximation to meaning, for the person. This is, of course, an intentional, not an accidental, discovery. Again, this description is remarkably similar to that of Husserl, referred to above, as the interactional relationship of acts of consciousness (noeses) and the objects of consciousness (noemata), providing the purest possible description of experiencing. Attaining an adaptation of this basic notion in a particular context depends on the methods of observation, description and clarification, and the degree to which

this introduces contamination, and how the essay towards truthfulness of information is managed. We did not attempt to bracket out our own experiencing of the other, we did the reverse, we tried, through the ISR, to bring into the interaction, our felt sensing, in a contributory but not dominant or interpretive form. Thus, the participants are as fully present as possible to the process, and no participant is in the position of pretending that his engagement is to be silenced. The co inquirer's experience is an amplification, not a distraction.

The movement seems to be from tacit awareness of the self, to more explicit understandings of those aspects of the self that emerged at this time. As these components of the experiencing self were introduced, the structure of their story, the way in which they were held as awarenesses of the self, and how they were transformed into conscious knowing about the self, are revealed. This personally referential material was thus understood and given coherence. The meanings were able to be discriminated and stated, as personal meaning, not as theory driven explanation. That is a contrasting manner of entering the deeper structure of personal meaning, through experiential essences, to the structures of meaning characteristically described in the studies of predesignated general constructs of human experiencing. We have no other-referent explanations: all the understandings are experience referenced, including the interpersonal dialogues.

The procedures of our inquiry cannot be simply linear. The processes used by these participants, are experientially 'stretched over the time,' occurring cyclically, revisited in a melding, recurrent activity. Thus accessing experience through these modes is always potentially recurrent, though especially important at certain times. Understanding occurs through oscillations, and interactive externalisations happen frequently to allow a process of staying with new possibilities, as they settle or create dissonance and become subject to validation, at different times.

The descriptions from the participants make it clear that finding a mode through which to represent emerging experiencing, was of crucial importance; and that changing the mode from comfort to discomfort allowed shifts in understandings. Neither the favoured mode, nor the verbal mode was more effective for representational understanding, than others. Being multi-modal in self-experiencing has been claimed by all participants to allow exploration and entry into domains of the self where there was uncertainty, fear, and anxiety. The use of chosen modes of representation also brought threatening experiences to containment through achieving holding forms, allowing confrontation of raw experiencing and distancing for further engagement, and acting as containers while processes of reflection and understanding germinated. No one used only one mode of experiencing. While the experiencing of emotion was deep and at the core of being for each participant, the expression of emotion was itself more in the private experiencing of representation than the telling about it. Thus, the pursuit of meanings was accompanied by emotion, which might be regarded as an indicator, but was not always achieved at moments of high emotion, and the time taken to achieve clarity of meaning understanding may involve quieter reflective periods of integration, (or Clarke's (1991 b) accommodation).

Clarke (1991, a), attempts to describe a performance model of 'the creation of meaning event,' building from Gendlin's (1962) notion of the 'felt sense,' adding Greenberg and Safran's (1987) view that new meaning is created by attending to existing emotional schemata, and symbolizing them explicitly (p396). She goes on to schematise this process in three phases, specification, exploration, and revision. Central to her argument is the notion that a cherished belief, confronted by a significantly discrepant experience, itself emotionally laden, will provoke a creation of meaning episode. In the present report, reexperiencing critical aspects of the self, in each participant, brought to awareness a central view of the self, which came to be amplified, rather than only revised. It was more that each person found a greater unity or

integration of polarities of the self, which at times did mean abandoning or revising a cherished belief, which usually had proved unserviceable. Dissonances or incongruities were attended to, explored, symbolized or represented, reexperienced, understood, given meaning and assimilated. And the indwelling over time, the withholding of attempts to specify or interpret, is regarded as a determining aspect of the process-the intrasubjective dialoguing with the self and its forms of representation. The role of emotion in the process of gaining meaning then, appears to be various, and may depend of a number of factors, especially the nature of the interpersonal interactive context and the range of experiential modes employed.

4.2. Experiential Trustworthiness

Can this interaction of consciousness with the experience of the self be trusted to arrive at a truthful account? Can external observers, challenge the meanings, as derived from the journeys? Would a hermeneutic theory driven interpretation produce a different or better explanation as to the meanings of these experiences?

The procedures of experiencing used in this study provide one kind of answer to these questions about validity. First, they involved an attempt by three people to deepen their personal understandings, using their own modes of knowing, focussed on current living in action, in the world. This was not just another piece of therapy. They made considerable efforts to immerse themselves in their experience, to enter it through different modes, and to push themselves into the anguish of uncertainty and the anxiety of not knowing what they would discover. They agreed to communicate their essential experiencing to others, in order to have the benefit of confrontation about their reports: this occurred constantly, as is evident in the data and the reductions. Certainly each participant records how others did not allow him or her to leave untouched issues of evasion and avoidance, or incompleteness

in the journey, while supporting them empathically. The role of the facilitator is constantly recorded as probing, summarising, drawing attention, for example, in session 2:

*Questioning, focussing the feeling
Stepping back to reconsider
And throwing up the keywords
Could you stay with hot and cold
Performing and being?*

*Drawing attention to elements
Words and their connections
Focussing and questions*

*Mirroring back sensed feelings
Drawing attention back for reconsideration
Noting details, asking questions,
Is there something else
Beyond these events
That draws you
And leads you on?*

Thus, the roles of each participant, their commitment to the struggle for authenticity and the attempt at consensual validation of each other's journey are key aspects of reaching trustworthiness.

The cyclical nature of the activity is another. Each participant started with an idea of HOW they would make the journey-through performance, through art, through collage. None was actually focussed on a particular issue at the outset. Various apparently important ideas gave way to deeper ones. For example Jill's recurring bird, memories of struggles for identity within her family, her horrifying birth experiences, might have been taken up and explored, in a manner that would have held up her process. Her story ultimately was directed by her, and assisted by our not trying to get her to stay in her reported experiences, as if they were somehow of special therapeutic importance. She had her own agenda of significant meaning, not always conscious, which we respected, and collaborated with. But she had many

cycles of interaction with her own inner self, representing these, reflecting upon them, bringing these experiential statements into the group, talking about their significance, having the group respond and question, refocussing, then going away and staying in her stream of experiencing, acted upon further by the text. The distillations of essences as final statements have a discriminating coherence of their own, as summations of the crucial lines of meanings generated by each person. This is the most telling evidence of validation.

This procedure is one of repeated cycles of collaborative authentication, and what Heron (1988, p.43) calls coherent discrimination, as a form of validation. He also describes this process as one of research cycling, between the experiencing and the cooperative group of inquirers. The attitude of respectful questioning, accompanied by acceptance of the individual's ability to take her journey honestly, if supported through it, seems fundamental to the issue of trustworthiness, in this context. It comprises the constant raising of awareness to understanding, and repeated intra-personal and interpersonal checking, throughout the highly sensitised stream of experiencing. It utilises successive approximations to meaning, until the participant declares goodness of aesthetic fit and personal meaning.

Similarly, it fits the description of Douglass and Moustakas (1985, p.39), regarding heuristics as human science:

Heuristics is a passionate and discerning personal involvement-- an effort to know the essence of some aspect of life through the internal pathways of the self-- it offers a disciplined pursuit of essential meanings connected with everyday human experiences-- a process that affirms imagination, intuition, self reflection and the tacit dimension as valid ways in the search for knowledge and understanding.'

This knowledge is of personal understandings, the meanings of the self for the self. Is it therefore impenetrable to 'other' observations? As with all intrapersonal contents, the co travellers have to both share and indwell the

journey, yet listen for the nodes of incongruity and incompleteness in it. These usually suggest themselves through contagion from the voyager, or are sensed by the listener. In this present report, the attempt was made to reveal as much of the intra-personal search for understanding, as possible. All the participants saw and indwelt that journey, seeking to understand its essence, rather than the details. Thus, essential meanings were the subject of questioning, not, what happened next. The conjoint search was towards the deepest truthfulness possible.

It would be possible to take the material of each participant, and try to interpret it from a theoretical perspective, both as the journey was taken, or subsequently. This would transform the research to a form of therapy, in which the subject's self disclosures were interpreted from an external system of meaning. Thus, the journey would respond to the theory and be contained very much within the control of its parameters. The validation of such a process then rests on the supposed validity of the theory, and the meanings gained would be hermeneutically derived, through the interaction of the person's story and the explanatory constructs of the system. In this procedure, it seems unlikely that a true phenomenology of experience could be gained or retained.

Implicit in this research, therefore, is the fundamental humanistic assumption, that people can be trusted, in this kind of context, to pursue their own truthfulness with integrity, and testing their attempts by submitting themselves to the social dialogue committed to that integrity. The method of achieving this level of trustworthiness comprises aspects of several methodologies. The phenomenological measures of obtaining detailed description, bracketing, and reduction to essences are used, but collaboratively. The collaborative group (Rowan and Reason, 1981) is certainly adapted, with its usage of recurrent cyclical checking. The attempt to move to explanation and meaning is heuristic (Moustakas, 1990), leaving the

coherent essence to emerge from the combined shared experiencing and all the pooled representations, stated through an interactive process by researcher and co-researchers, but always leaving the last synthesis to the participant. The notion of a temporary approximation to meaning became important, since it is also clear that the idea of 'experiential truth' is an absolute and unverifiable ideal, and because recognition has to be made of the struggle in human experiencing a victory of personal truthfulness over self deception and self maintenance. We are beings in search of meaning, and go as far towards this as we can: this is the journey to be described, aided by the greatest attainable transparency that subjective experiencing allows.

A contrasting search for a phenomenological therapy is reported by Puhakka and Hanna (1988). A more focused, specific technique is demonstrated, basically to reveal the interaction between the I and me of experiencing or, the meaning to be found by observing the structure of presenting mental objects, called a POD or phenomenologically observable dictate. The meaning is found from within the naturally arising client story, and the understanding is achieved by bracketing, by indwelling the experience, focussing it, and giving it form. The access is achieved by a particular, salient component appearing, such as a painful emotion, like fear or anger. The reports of Clarke, Puhakka and Hanna, as well as the work of Gendlin and Husserl, follow a line of experiencing into focussed specificity, towards the explication of meaning. In the present study, amplification of experiencing over time, through selected indwellings and multi modal representations, provides a holistic view of the phenomenological process of self-understanding. Yet, it is also clear that there were crescendo events, in which participants entered less comfortable modes of exploration to encounter and understand the aspect of self to be readmitted into awareness. Puhakka and Hanna suggest that this allows repression to be phenomenologically observable. Whatever the language, in conditions of determined search, access can be gained to detached or previously unavailable images of self

experience, and can be integrated. There may prove to be a range of possible conditions, techniques and contexts.

A similar approach, though less specific in technique, is reported by Bouchard and Guerette (1991). They describe their process as hermeneutic, making the now frequent, but unresolved argument, that meanings cannot be acquired merely by the description of phenomenological experiencing, and that understanding is only possible when the content of experiencing is interpreted, this process defining hermeneutics. They do distinguish reduction and amplification, however (p390), two processes observed in the current material—both are seen as aspects of the process of understanding inner phenomena—to open out symbols is to amplify and collect experience, and to reduce is to sharpen focus selectively. This might be done with specificity, as in the POD technique, or as is in Gendlin's focusing, or more essentially, as occurred here, as the phenomenological aspect of self knowing through indwelling over time—a sort of temporal reorganisation.

The neutrality of interpretation, emphasised by Puhakka and Hanna, does seem to be the point of potential clarification between the epistemology of phenomenological therapy and hermeneutic knowing. In hermeneutic knowing, personalised knowing — which is inner referential, bracketed, and still attempting naïveté — is in contrast to a hermeneutic interpretation, where the therapist constructs the client's meanings for him. In this latter, 'it remains to be seen whether such a narrative reconstruction meets the needs of the patient or not' (p391). What this suggests to the writer is that the hermeneutic attends more to the structure of experiencing, as object to be understood, than to the indwelling of the experiencing, which is more likely to yield up its own meanings to those engaged in the mutual act of indwelling. The data from this research seem to suggest that a theoretical and collaborative searching for meanings can be achieved without being driven by

psychotherapeutic theories, with people who can perhaps be described as being, broadly speaking within non-pathological states.

4.3. Implications for Practice

One important matter for research practice relates to the seemingly separate claims by a wide range of qualitative researchers, for distinctive formats and labelling. In this particular study, synthesis of technical aspects of procedures has been achieved, in a manner that was dictated by the activity. Thus, there is not a pure phenomenological approach, yet aspects of phenomenological research are employed, moving the activity into a mixed description of phenomenology and heuristics. Heuristics attends particularly to lived human experiencing, rather than constructs of human experience, controlled by the researcher. Yet, both these methodologies combined provided the best possible vehicle for this exercise in the exploration and discovery of personal meanings, in the broader realm of experiential psychology.

The nature of the exercise was neither teaching nor therapy, yet it is still an activity of human learning about the self. Continuing to seek the least contaminated understanding of human meanings has led this researcher to suspend the application of therapeutic systems to the search for this kind of knowledge. This was an activity for three sophisticated professionals, who wanted to engage a deeper sense of meaning in their everyday lives. Although it was connected to work recently done in supervision (Lett, 1993), it was essentially a personal development project.

Other extensions of this approach to consider lie in the field of the helping professions, where debriefing and self-understanding are constant issues. In a number of seminars, the author has used this approach with industrial and hospital chaplains, counsellors, school psychologists, rehabilitation counsellors, and therapeutic psychologists. Further applications continue to

be made within the field of psychotherapy, and small group counselling. The heuristic research method (Moustakas, 1990) and the phenomenological model of Moustakas (1995) already reveal adaptations to psychotherapy. The challenge of May (1987, p.49):

I do not believe that we are ready yet to build a bridge between phenomenology and psychotherapy,'

Appears to be more firmly in focus, as phenomenological psychologists do turn their attention more consciously to therapeutic applications, and look at the experiencing of the whole person, as a pursuit of meanings. Certainly this is the challenge pursued in the recent works of Spinelli (19889, 1997). The work here is really devoted to exploring a form of inquiry, rather than building a theory of personal knowing or of therapy. It is from this point that the subsequent research derives, rather than moving into a conceptualisation of therapy.

A final issue concerns the emphasis on multi-modality of experiencing. From within this data, it seems unequivocal that talking alone would have been a substantially different experience for all; using one art form, alone, again seems to have been a restriction. Being free to choose the manner of experiencing through to representation seems to have assisted the movement between comfort-discomfort, which yielded deeper personal shifts of understanding, in the context of empathic confrontation. The multi-modal possibility seems to have offered a more balanced range of self-explorations and self-knowing. The step to articulation of personal meanings also seems to have required continuous indwelling, reexperiencing, reflecting and approximations. The focussing of essential meanings is therefore a complex process, distilled from experience, over time, through multiple modes of knowing, and across interpersonal validations.

4.4. The Interpersonal Dimension

One feature that arose in this extended work is what might be called the dialogues of significance. I refer to the interpersonal dialogues, responding as they did, to the representations of intrapersonal dialogues. These have some distinguishing elements:

- About personal materials;
- Shared in order to allow the shift from private to social interaction;
- Spread over time;
- Occurred in variemodal forms;
- Attempted to be empathic, yet as direct as possible in the search for meaningfulness;
- Tried to employ a form of non-theoretical non-interpretive co searching;
- Tried to exchange experience and response as representations for as long as was necessary to arrive at satisfactory understandings.

What struck all of us was the remarkable potential in this form of exchange for making personal meaning. Such was the impact of the experience of this form of inquiry, that we began, immediately, to establish a wider group of participants, with whom to share the inquiry, and to engage in further researches of it.

This comprised what we called the Saturday Series, in which, over two years, between twenty and thirty other co-researchers engaged in similar explorations. What we wished to do was to develop more fully this form of inquiry, and to describe more clearly this method or procedure for exploring mulimodal ways of entering subjective experiencing in the search for personal meanings, in a context of this particular form of interpersonal exchange. This would bring together the epistemological contribution of the arts, the context of intersubjectivity, and the ontology of personal meanings. This subsequent activity is reported in Part II.

Part II — The Arts of Resonance

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and with grateful thanks to

all the participants, who remain anonymous.

1. EXPERIENTIAL INQUIRY RESEARCH & THERAPY

The paper that follows is drawn from research and practice so as to represent different ways in which experiential phenomenology can be used. The varieties of psychological work (training, supervision, therapy, self-therapy, self-education, verbal and multi modal forms of therapy) are all forms of experiential, phenomenologically based therapy. Each one has different modes of inquiry or researching the processes. In each case, the researcher is also the practitioner, in most cases with a collaborative group. The conception is well represented by a comment of Hoshmand (1989):

'The purpose of phenomenological inquiry is to describe and illuminate the meanings of human experience that constitute the activity of consciousness'

...and by Giorgi (1983):

'The phenomenological mode requires that the researcher immerse in the subject's reported experience, in a manner of indwelling' (p23).

Since the purpose of phenomenology is the same, whether as therapy or as research, when both function as one integrated activity, we have the opportunity to take part in a unique experience: the merging of therapy and research in the pursuit of the goal of understanding the process of exploring personal meanings as we remain immersed in a real life process of understanding personal meanings. Both the What and the How of inquiry operate symbiotically. Hawkins (1988) describes it as moving between epoch one and two: bracketing off your preconceptions and creating the What, and moving into the How of the data description, in trying to understand its meanings, as, in his example, in psychodrama used phenomenologically. Yet both processes work symbiotically, as well as sequentially, in this 'way.'

Although the purposes of experiential-phenomenological inquiry are common to therapy, personal knowing, research and supervision, it is obvious that the contexts, circumstances and relationships in these events may be different and therefore create different procedures. The agreements between researcher/co-researcher and therapist-client have in common the fact that there is a search for understanding of some aspect of human experiencing. In research, this is designated in advance as a construct, is under the control of questions by the researcher related to the field of inquiry, is of limited time duration, is limited in scope to discussion related to the designated topic, and may have limits set in the degree of invasion of privacy and disclosure. The purpose is to discuss the phenomenon in terms of the experience of it, in the life of the co-researcher, so that it can be clearly understood by both. This description will be checked subsequently by both, but ultimately becomes the

property of the researcher as data for integration and wider understanding of the construct, not the person.

In therapy there is not necessarily a construct to understand, though there may be a starting point designated by the client; but one aspect of life experience gives way to others which arise because of their seeming connectedness. There is no necessary limit to the experiences accessed into focus, or to the extent of their exploration, other than time, money and level of commitment to this task. The purpose is to draw experience into its patterns of relatedness, to show the inner structures of life experience of the person, and to come to such particular understandings and broad integrated meanings as are possible. The procedures of inquiry develop as the therapeutic relationship develops, and the limits to disclosure or privacy are negotiated within these structures. Understanding the life meanings of the person in his lived experience is the goal of their mutual activity.

Granted that the charter of the events is significantly different, and that the emergent procedures in therapy may be much more varied than in research, there is still the question as to whether there is a basic commonality in these procedures of inquiry, because they seek to return always to the essence of human experiencing, in the attempt to understand how meanings are constructed within lived experience. There is a sense in which the *what* (the subject or content), and the *how* (procedures of inquiry) will be expected to be similar across different charters of inquiry. If we explore the phenomena of emergent personal knowing, will our observations inform us about the nature of inquiry into human experiencing and meaning making, and assist us to see the commonality in the form of inquiry whether as research or therapy, and also allow us to see the differences, if they exist? In this research, we chose to explore these phenomena in a context where neither therapy nor research was dominant—it was a context in which personal knowing was the task: yet it was a research inquiry into personal experiencing without the focus on therapeutic

intervention. In addition, a small group consciousness was present, making the exploration procedures of knowing both personal and social. Our task was to create and discover procedures of inquiry into personal knowing, building on what we had so far observed.

Descriptions of experiential-phenomenological based therapy are so far few. The closest to that descriptor is found in the recent work of Moustakas (1995), in the last section of his work entitled 'Phenomenological Psychotherapy.' Drawing directly on phenomenology, he extracts the procedures of human knowing as research, to the procedures of therapy, more or less exactly, adapting them from his earlier work (1994) on phenomenological research methods, and adding a section on plans for action. However, the essential point here is that he adopts the procedures of his research inquiry as the basis for the procedures of his therapeutic inquiry.

'Each of the phenomenological processes and methods is presented in the context of psychotherapy' (p186).

'I am convinced...that the phenomenological approach to human science and to psychotherapy offers an illuminating methodology and processes for discovering knowledge and for resolving the stresses and problems of everyday living' (p223).

Descriptions of phenomenological research approaches are now quite plentiful. I shall briefly survey some of them in order to establish a connectedness to frames of reference for the research to be described later. Then follows a short survey of therapeutic writers seen as indicative or exemplary of phenomenological therapy.

1.1. Phenomenological Research Methods

Phenomenology is a research paradigm. That is to say, it contains assumptions about which aspects of human behaviour are significant, and worthy of study-that is, human consciousness. It provides a conceptualisation

of these particular contents as being experientially available, without a superstructure such as the topographical thesis, and suggests that the experiencing 'self' — in being — in interaction with others in context is the content of human experiencing for study. It provides a view of the methodology of studying such experience as involving the manner in which awareness can be investigated in the inner being or in interaction with another, so that the study of consciousness is a study of persons in process, never person as object. It carries basic assumptions about human motivation—that people can and do wish to arrive at the essential truthfulness of their own experiencing. It sees the role of the researcher as a joint participant in the process of inquiry, and construes the research as a collaboration, in which both struggle to become aware of presuppositions and sources of distortion. It sees the purpose of research activity as arriving at greater understanding of the meaning of experiential truths of that person's being in context, or of a designated aspect of experience of persons in context. It seeks to arrive at the best possible current approximation to meaning or goodness of fit, or representation of experience, that can be arrived at. It searches for the least contaminated or purest possible description of experiencing. It seeks living, experiential understandings, about human meanings, as they are held in human consciousness, through a process that is consistent with its assumptions. That is the nature of a paradigm: to be consistent with its own assumptions.

The significance of this statement is stressed by Romanyshyn (1971), who suggests that in the paradigm of natural science 'method is the framework within which an experiment is conducted and its results interpreted-- method has functioned as the ground rules in experimentation — it also determines the question of what is meaningful data — and determines which events are attended to while others are ignored' (pp98-99).

And finally, 'that there is a close relationship between the methods used in an experiment and the results gained.' For phenomenological inquiry, in therapeutic contexts, who (persons), when (in time), where (in place) how (in process) what (their experiencing), are all attended to as critical aspects of the research paradigm. Thus, phenomenological empiricism is experiential, designed to reveal the inner structure of the essence of experiential meanings.

The search for causal links is not the centrepiece of the methodology and a cause and effect chain is usually not the purpose of the research. Processes are adopted to gain understanding of the meanings of experiencing and the way that experiencing is being understood and held in active, contemporary consciousness.

Methodology, then, has as its main concern, the multiple ways of entering the process of direct experiencing likely to increase the process of understanding that experience, and gaining the least contaminated representation of its meanings. As Romanyshyn so aptly puts it, the method doesn't just haphazardly evolve, 'the method becomes an integral part of the problem studied: It is the unique demands of the problem which indicate the method rather than the method which limits the problem.' (p107). In addition, when the problem changes, so too does the method. Hence, the inherent flexibility of the phenomenological research paradigm is asserted, in pursuit of how something is to be understood, when it is unfolding, rather than fixed in advance.

Polkinghorne (1989) writes of the nature of phenomenological research:

'The purpose of phenomenological research is to produce clear, precise, and systematic descriptions of the meaning that constitutes the activity of consciousness' (p45).

He describes the inherent difficulties as being the fact that the contents of consciousness are a never static form of activity, which cant be stopped and

held like an object; that consciousness 'is an integrated ensemble of modes of presentation,' at different levels, making access to process complex; the interaction of researcher and subject on experience changes awareness, thus intrusiveness can occur in description and interpretation of material.

In describing his view of phenomenological research procedures, he proposes a general format which involves gathering naive descriptions from people having the experience under investigation, analysing these descriptions so the researcher grasps the constituent elements, and produces a report that gives a clear, accurate and articulate description of the subject of experience. He allows three sources of descriptions of the experience, the participants' oral descriptions, the researcher's own phenomenal reflections as a participant, and external descriptions of the phenomenon, such as literature, paintings, poetry, and myths provided by creative artists. The latter then requires a hermeneutic process for understanding. Polkinghorne does distinguish two types of phenomenological research. The first is to seek to know how objects are present in the mode of conscious experience (purely descriptive). The second is to ask how meaning presents itself in experience-this being the most common form. He and Giorgi both agree that face-to-face discussion or interviews, together with other participant statements, diminish the risks of one-person research, which is held to be unacceptable, because of the impossibility of verification. In his view, the researcher is still in control of the process, and the subject is not 'primarily involved, not held responsible for, the analysis and conclusions of the study.'

Citing Kvale (1996), Polkinghorne, agrees that the interview for research 'is designed to describe and understand the meaning of the central themes of the experience being investigated' (p49). It is theme oriented, not person oriented. It is worth noting that herein lies what must be a fundamental shift when we move to therapeutic research: the focus is on understanding the person-it is person oriented, and utilising significant life themes may well be

one means of understanding the structure of his being in the world. It certainly constitutes one approach to dealing with the concern for reduction of complex materials to essences in the subject's experience-another characteristic of the phenomenological paradigm. In referring to the findings of various studies, Polkinghorne stresses that the description must give a sense of the essence of the experience, so that the psychological meanings of the objects of consciousness are clearly differentiated. The reduction to essence is the process of moving from naive description to structural description, or thematisation, after Husserl (1913/31), and retitled explication by Van Kaam (1966).

Colaizzi (1978) describes a process of reading intensively to acquire a feeling for the construct, then selecting material most relevant, restating this in his words, and extracting the meaning, trying to reflect the initial statements. He then clusters the statements into connected themes, by zigzagging constantly amongst the data, yielding the final essential structural definition of the construct. This pattern of extracting meaning from naive descriptions of experience can be seen to be readily adaptable as part of the procedure for making meanings in therapeutic data. Colaizzi also makes a classificatory distinction between reflective phenomenology, involving utilisation of the researcher's own experiential participation as a formative part of the data and understanding, and empirical phenomenology, as practiced by the Duquesne group, basing their work on the empirical differentiation of meanings from many subjects (Tesch, 1990, p34). This distinction is, however, not clearly sustained, since Tesch then cites Fischer (1978, p168), who calls an empirical phenomenologist one who 'is open to all perceivable dimensions and profiles of the phenomenon that is being researched. Hence, the experiences of the subjects, as well as the researcher are acknowledged as potentially informative.' Thus, reflective phenomenology becomes a subcategory of empirical phenomenology, when it is used in human construct study, as distinct from living person study. In therapeutic research, however, this

becomes a matter for closer scrutiny, since the bracketing required of theoretical presuppositions is useful if the therapist is to retain the position of collaborator with least contamination, yet remain in the experiential exchange that is the core of intersubjective responding. It also bears on the distinction I will make between experiential and referential interpretation.

The study of a particular construct is exemplified in Giorgi's work on learning (1975), reported here by Polkinghorne, and described by Giorgi in chapter 6 of the same volume by Valle and Halling (1989). Giorgi gained a protocol or text from an interview in which a woman took as her context, learning from a friend about interior design. He used six steps to get to the essential structure of the construct, for that subject. This can be replicated with other subjects, increasing the possibility of seeing what is generally essential in understanding the construct.

The six (6) steps involve:

1. Reading the protocol to get a sense of the whole;
2. Reading again and dividing the material into self suggesting units, requiring that judgments be made, but maintaining a naive, non theoretical stance;
3. Transforming into his own language, the researcher's psychological understanding, the implicit meanings in the protocol;
4. Moving between step 2 and 3 to get more exactly the material responsive to the construct, learning;
5. Stating the meanings in the most succinct way and synthesising them into the essential description of the situated construct;
6. Generating a general description of the construct leaving out specifics of the situation in the previous step.

If there are numerous protocols, then a seventh step is required to produce an integrated synthesis of transformed meaning units into a general structural description of the phenomenon.

Polkinghorne reports that Van Kaam (1966) also used six steps for a study of 'feeling really understood' (p52). He acquired a large number of cases, drew a random sample, and then used judges to agree to a listing of the classification of the data into categories. Step 2 was the reduction and linguistic transformation of the selections into more precisely descriptive terms. Step 3 eliminated from these reduced statements material not dealing with the inherent nature of the construct. Step 4 provided the first attempt at definition and description, which in step 5 was then tested against randomly selected protocols, and further revision occurred. Step 6 is the final approximation to the meaning of the construct to be arrived at and held until subsequent data can be shown to invalidate it.

These studies are perhaps most typical of the Duquesne group's phenomenological research, and have in common, according to Polkinghorne, (p55) three similar steps: the protocols are divided into units; the units are transformed by the researcher into meanings that are expressed in psychological and phenomenological concepts; these transformations are integrated to make a general description of the experience. Thus, we have description, transformation and synthesis as the key procedures. Commenting on the mental processes in the acts of transformation, he suggests two 'thought processes' as occurring: reflection and imaginative variation. Reflection is the attempt to answer the question, what is the nature of the phenomenon, and seems to be a more cognitive activity, as with Van Kaam's study which he describes as 'closer to a logical deduction from the given protocols than a phenomenological analysis of a structure of experience' (p56)

Imaginative variation tries to push the possibilities of genuine meaning of the construct to or beyond likely limits of definition, through imaginative extension of the experience. Yet the next process is a more reductive one—bringing the description back to what seems essential, a more intuitive than deductive procedure, though still with a clear form of phenomenological logic. The process of zigzagging seems to provide an entry to imaginative searching, very much like the process of trying different modes of exploration of a potential meaning in therapy or supervision. Although we don't have a declared topic for definition, we have a latent theme seeking emergence into understanding; we adopt imaginative exploration in selected modes, in order to expose the phenomenon, through imaginative representation in different forms, and yet to reduce it at the same time, to a specificity which may aid description and definition.

Likewise, the more cognitive activity of logical deduction is frequently employed in dialogal interaction in therapy, both to follow, probe and expose emerging understandings, and also to reduce them to their essence, a natural process of clarification. Of course it would be expected, that in a holistic frame, necessitated by complex, non construct-designated therapeutic research, both types of procedures would occur in helical relationship. When a theme is identified, it is of course most likely that the exploration will resemble construct-designated activity. Methods become a creative response to the process of inquiry, in therapy, yet the paradigm of research can remain the same in principle, so long as it is clear.

Within the terminology empirical research, Tesch (op cit, p 35) also discusses an extension by Colaizzi (1978, p.65) of a procedure very much like the Giorgi notion of indwelling, the Merleau-Ponty idea of primitive perception, the Rogerian sense of felt meaning—an immersion in the experiencing which is prior to cognitive denotation, and which Colaizzi calls 'perceptual description.' Here we come very close to the central theoretical construct of

Combs (1990), in his theorising about phenomenological therapy, or perceptual-experiential therapy, as he calls it. Perceptual sensing or seeing, is as much a central part of collaborative participation in sharing another's inner journey, as is cognitive seeing: in my view they are part of the holistic symbiosis of joint experiencing, which is best described by the helical spiral of knowing in experiencing. A process of indwelling might be more cognitive at a certain moment, or more perceptual-sensing at another, but I suspect that they cannot actually exist without each other. The mental or multi modal activity of participation by a researcher or therapist can in this instance be seen as continuous. It becomes the basis of the process I shall call the intersubjective response-a central component of experiential therapy. Perceptual description, as labelled by Colaizzi, is simply another aspect of the phenomenological way, rather than a separate category of phenomenological research. It is occurring all the time in a phenomenological process of inquiry.

A very similar conception under the label heuristic, is the 'discovery process' of Moustakas (1981, p.207), which again resembles the description by Polkinghorne (1989, p.50) in that each uses access to literary forms as a hermeneutic way of searching for meaning in the pattern of the story, in an attempt to reach narrative portrayal of the experience (Tesch, op. cit. p35). Moustakas (1981, p216), himself concludes of his study of his own experiencing of loneliness:

I have tried to portray the research process itself from its initial steps to its final phases. I now believe in such a process of searching and studying, of being open to significant dimensions of experience in which comprehension and compassion mingle; in which intellect, emotion and spirit are integrated; in which intuition, spontaneity, and self-exploration are seen as components of unified experience; in which both discovery and creation are reflections of creative research into human ventures, human processes, and human experiences.'

Moustakas' study of Loneliness was first published in 1961, prior to most of the material surveyed here. His adoption, though later, of the terminology 'heuristic' seems to me to be accurate yet perhaps insufficient as a description of the method. His conclusions, as cited above, suggest the method to be an early example of the paradigm of phenomenological-hermeneutic research. His topic is a designated construct, loneliness. He explores his understanding of it experientially. He is both introspective and intersubjective, as he explores others' experiences of the same construct. He explores texts other than his own (basically in literary sources, as a way of amplifying his own meanings). He discovers his own and others' meanings as he creates a structure of the essences of his own experiencing. He also stresses that this is continually a holistic, unified process of all aspects of his modes of knowing in the search for meaning.

In his work, which, in the self-referenced phase is very similar to our *Self as Therapist* research, he is his own subject. Additionally, he maintains a dialogal relationship with his own experiencing, in an indwelling, focussed, phenomenological way, yet he enters the objects of others' creations of the experiential construct, in order to enlarge his potential perceptions of his experience and hence, his understanding. He does strive for psychological meaning, and he does seek to develop a generalisable psychological framework for his meanings. But it isn't a 'theory of loneliness.' He seeks to understand the meanings of his own experience, in a way that is externally referenced, yet experientially filtered, arriving at integrative experiential understanding of the construct representing his experience. Since five hundred people wrote to share their sense of identification with his description and understanding of the nature of the experience of loneliness, we can assume that he did arrive at a general and universal sense of the meaning of the experience. This sounds like a very important form of verification. It seems that even though the letters were about personal identification with the experience, he also had the correct construct of

loneliness implicit, so that both the experience and the construct were so right, that people could identify. I think this may be similar in conception, to the work of Aanstoos (1987) described as imaginal, using archetypal materials, and Landy (1994) who draws upon mythology in drama therapy, to provide tenancies or carriers for peoples' stories: it is a combined phenomenological-hermeneutic method.

Another report of work, which seems to be similar in style to that of Moustakas, was the work of Fischer (1978). She worked as researcher-practitioner to her subjects and to literature; but Fischer had continuous dialogal reworking with her subjects about the nature of privacy, seeking consensus on the description of the construct, through collaborative dialogue and growing understanding of the essence of its meaning, a format described similarly by Eckartsberg (1977). Fischer's is more restricted to the dialogal frame, Moustakas' is more generally referential, and mediated through his own deepening understandings. Yet, each uses dialogal interactions to establish verifiable approximations to construct meaning. An extension of this process is the Barrells' (1975) focus on getting the subject to make observations on her own experience of an identified kind, in different contexts, moving again into a genuine collaboration as co-researchers.

In the work of Van Manen (1990), the distinguishing feature is the use of writing by the participant, about his experience of a designated lived experience. These writings, or 'anecdotes,' become a text, which might be supplemented by interview, and are the materials for analysis for themes, which are used to construct a reflective interpretation of participants' meanings through the researcher's linguistic transformation. This approach is identified as both descriptive and hermeneutic, leaving the authority for meaning construction with the researcher. Van Manen emphasises that 'human science research is a form of writing. Creating a phenomenological

text is the object of the research process' (p111), the responsibility for which is the researcher's.

A group of researchers in their own phenomenological framework works at the University of Bath, in England. Two major publications reporting their research are those of Rowan and Reason (1981) titled, *Human Inquiry*, and Reason (1988), *Human Inquiry in Action*. Their interest lies in various research approaches — to people acting in social life problems. Heron's concern is to allow people to exercise their right to choose and give meaning to their experience and actions, but also to study them as persons. He advocates three interactive aspects of knowing: propositional knowing-about ideas and through language; presentational-knowing through apprehension of forms of reality; and experiential knowing-the construing of meaning through the interaction of these two processes, then creating experience and reexperience.

Stressing cooperative inquiry, there are five steps to their (Rowan & Reason) research cycles:

1. The group meets to discuss what it is they wish to research
2. They agree on ways of making participant observations, and do so
3. There is an immersion in the experiences, trying to bracket off the first two steps, while they engage each other in experiential knowledge
4. They return to reflect on the experience in all sorts of ways, including stories, pictures, art, literature and so on
5. They engage in further cycles of inquiry, and continue their process until the critical movement between experience and reflection is complete, and refined back to essences.

This is a phenomenological-hermeneutic procedure, based on group collaboration, defined by them as experiential.

Rowan's description of his approach, called dialectical research, is:

'One works in a field (Being) and finds a problem, then goes to the literature, and refines this (Thinking), devises a research plan (Project), carries out observations (Encounter), engages in data analysis (Making Sense), writes the paper (Communication), returns to one's world (Being), usually with a group fully involved' (p7)

Reason asserts that they have a new research paradigm, that of cooperative inquiry, which has three interrelated aspects:

1. It is participatory and requires holistic knowing-immersion is required in order to get the holistic sense of the relation of the parts;
2. It requires critical subjectivity, starting from a naive base, going beyond the subjective-objective split, raising consciousness and using it as part of inquiry, which honours individual experience (p12), and 'works to enhance that experience towards a critical subjectivity';
3. It is knowledge in action, rather than merely in reflection.

Heron, writing on validity concerns, suggests research cycles as a process of moving to and fro between experience and reflection, with the group sharing at each phase; repeating phases by different participants, allowing convergence and divergence, and utilising the devil's advocate at each phase. He is also concerned to allow distance between experience and reflection and is concerned with the dangers of becoming experience saturated. Thus, after the experiential phase, there must follow the descriptive, the evaluative and the practical. While description is pure phenomenology, reflection, evaluation and testing in practice may be hermeneutic, and tries to avoid collusion in the group process.

Like the American writers, there is also an emphasis on literary, dramatic and mythological sources as carriers of meaning. Hawkins writes of phenomenological psychodrama, and moving from the what, into the how the data is coming into consciousness, citing Moreno in his description of

tele, the empathy which allows us to reach into the life of the other. He uses any or all forms of arts experiences, and engages in fictive variations (Valle and King, 1978, p 16), to find what is in the underlying structure in a family sculpture. Referring back to Husserl, he wants to develop a new perspective from which to see oneself, exemplifying this by dialoguing sub-personalities, being seen by a third, a kind of self transcendental ego, through role enactment. The researcher, like a witnessing ego, stays with the process of their coming to know.

In a discussion of story telling, Reason and Hawkins suggest that expression is the mode of allowing meaning to become manifest (p80), and the inquirer must be immersed in this, but using vehicles-in the artistic modes-in which meaning can take shape, usually analogical or symbolic. They invoke the notion of connotative thinking-the elaboration of feeling, emotional imagery and intuition into created form and expression (pp82-83). In this description, they state clearly that this is a hermeneutic activity, the determination of meanings from mental productions. They see expression and explanation as part of a dialectic, and complementary: since all modes of inquiry start from experiencing, from memory to sensory experiences, they become data. There are then two paths of inquiry: from experiencing through explanation to general theory; and from experience through expression to myth and archetype, which includes the space for a theme to become a story.

Three questions arose for them:

1. To find a way of carrying forward the dialectics of expression and the response to it-not a neatly unified interpretation, but 'a way that holds this multiple kaleidoscope of meaning and expresses it as a whole';
2. A dialectic between expression and explanation, so as to develop a dialogue of clarity and depth, allowing the two components to interact and illuminate (p96);
3. Is meaning a creation or a discovery?

They argue that the meaning seems to be there, dormant, and suggest recourse to myth and archetype to provide meanings, putting 'forward story telling as a hermeneutic method of inquiry' (p97).

There is also, in Cunningham's work a discussion (1988, p164) of his view of dialogic research: two persons interacting and using their dialogue as a means of 'finding out.' He sees experiential research as that which has as its focus the direct experiencing of the person and researcher. He proposes two kinds of experiential research, the first of which is where the researcher and subject are the same; the second in which dialogal experience is shared with others, as a group-a collaborative process. He does not describe his research as hermeneutic, but as interactive, holistic research. He sees 'interactive-holistic research as an omni-focussed activity-the person, the problems, other persons, context, not simply person centred or problem centred.' His process is to experience one's own experiencing, and using replays to create meaning from them. This interactive holistic process has four components: existing theories or ideas; situations and contexts of human action research; dialogic or collaborative research; one's own self in process. His ideal is to run all these processes concurrently.

1.2. The Experiencing Therapist

The therapist occupies a place of extraordinary opportunity: to enter the private inner world of others. To go with them to their place of self revelation, and to be in that interaction and construct it in such a way as to enable the other to confront experientially the vital meanings in the struggle to be. To indwell the story yet detach so as to leave free the owner of the story. To elicit and share all the emotions released with the new openness to experiential knowing. To attend while the consequences of authentic meanings become the practice of new ways of being; this is the essence of the task, a description of the therapist's way of being.

This is as close as I can get to a common sense or simple description of what I think an experiential therapist does. However, of course, the language contains certain key words that indicate a conceptual position within the description. Clearly, this is a statement of a conception which places value on the search for understanding of meanings, and believes that clarification of personal meanings will allow choices for maintenance or change to occur in the ways of being in life. It also suggests that the therapist will be active in engaging in this pursuit, and deeply involved in the interaction and experiencing. It is a structure that is suggestive of certain qualities of the therapy, but it leaves quite open the procedures that might be employed within it.

What to call this type of therapeutic experiencing is problematic. One needs to be as clear as possible about what one thinks one is doing conceptually, and that this has clear relationship to what is being done in practice. Yet the need to be responsive with flexibility and creativity, which is the overwhelming constraint on working from a system, means that variations are constant, and that the conception of therapy is there to give a sense of strong but simple purpose, and to provide boundaries within which the whole endeavour is held. The closest I can come to an apt description of this, is to

call it experiential phenomenology, or experiential knowing; but I know that other terminology will, at times be more appropriate as an approximation to what actually happens, since there is a plethora of adjectives now attached to 'phenomenological' (Tesch, 1990).

One result of this approach is that understanding what one is doing as a therapist is similar to the process of understanding what is happening to the client. How this understanding is to be obtained cannot be set into a fixed paradigm in advance. There is no 'treatment system,' only a process of searching for meaning, which is infinitely variable and emergent. Thus, attempts to understand the process of searching for understanding must be similarly variable and flexible. So, understanding the process of indwelling (Giorgi, 1983), as therapist will be almost the same as the process needed to research what is happening to the client and between them. All these processes are emergent, yet there is some general likelihood that certain processes may occur, and certain qualities of experiencing will be present, and certain procedures common. In another sense, despite these stylistic predictabilities, the therapeutic events are always new and arise afresh from the *who, what, when, where* and *how* of this particular interaction.

The therapist who wants to understand more fully how his participation works, how his client gains meanings, how he can be most effective in supervision of others, will wish to be able to adopt a range of researcher-practitioner formats to keep himself, supervisees and the process honest. Of course, I write this for students who work with me as well as for myself, but I write it too, because this is one dependable way in which learning from true reflective practice can be mediated back into the therapeutic medium. In addition, I write because phenomenologically based therapies fall inherently into the researcher-practitioner format: seeking authenticity in the understanding of meanings is the purpose for the whole process and of the participants. Experiential understanding is the goal whether for client,

therapist or supervisee. I hope then, that formats described herein, will assist therapists to see themselves increasingly as therapist-researcher-practitioners, in an experiential-phenomenological way, not THE phenomenological way, because this is a contradiction.

The work presented below has a number of methodological procedures within the conception of experiential knowing. It draws variously upon procedures that are phenomenological, naturalistic, and heuristic, always bringing into confluence the epistemological and ontological elements of living experience. This work pursues the explication of meanings from what are essentially interactive and intersubjective experiences of living, shared between co-researchers, starting always with aspects of living experience in the life of the participant, nominated by her, in her own search for life understanding. The experiential method then is distinguished by an absence of prior designated constructs or phenomena, and by emergent foci of experience and forms of inquiry. It is also characterised by being multi modal in format, thus creating verbal and non-verbal texts and interchanges.

At the start of the second research programme, we took understandings gained previously, as reported in Part I, and tried to develop a more systematic and structured approach to the inquiry into personal meanings. The manner of proceeding is presented as it occurred, without prior conceptualisation. The development of the form of inquiry and the procedures to engage this that emerged, are presented following the description of the research.

2. THE NATURE OF A FORM OF INQUIRY INTO SELF-KNOWING

2.1. The Format of Self-Knowing Inquiry

Continuing from the original 1993 data, we wished to develop further the processes of self-exploration as a basic existential-experiential procedure; a format of self-knowing, and a form of inquiry into experiencing. This is an activity defined as an experiential pursuit of personal meanings. It aims to find meaning structures in depictions of life experiencing. It is a process of inquiry with either two communicants: an inquirer and respondent, or, as in this case a small group of collaborative co-inquirers.

A main task was the establishment of PROCEDURES to move from representation to meaning generation, and careful recording of these. These are described in what follows.

2.2. Description

It was important to achieve Description of the materials of self-inquiry especially the initial data of self-representation. Description forms the basis of all other aspects of the inquiry in self-knowledge.

This required a *methodological* activity, across art forms or modes of knowing, and decisions about how to collect data, how to create multi modal texts, how to achieve clarity without endless detail, yet avoid reduction at this stage.

2.3. The Development of Procedures Beyond Description

What to do beyond description, in order to arrive at support of the process of explication of personal meanings, was the next methodological issue. How it became a collaborative activity, how the group functioned to find its way in dealing with issues which arose in the dialogal process of giving back responses, clarifying what we understood, dealing with the process of finding meaning, became the issues. Resolutions came through reduction, thematic analysis, intuitive responding, opening up versus identification of issues, dealing with formats for final statements, allowing the client to continue the exploration without our creating closure, dealing with understanding without theoretical interpretation. What emerged was an intrinsic experiential methodology-phenomenology combined with heuristics, and going beyond both into emerging experiential procedures of inquiry.

2.4. Inquirers and Respondents

The use of Reduction was through the creation of an intermediary step from Description (of our particular kind), involving the adoption of Key Words and Images. This emerged as a compromise between phenomenological reduction, thematic analysis, and the more heuristic/intuitive researchers' sensed knowing, which lead ultimately to the idea of the intersubjective response (ISR).

The interactive nature of the procedures provided a researcher role that had to be described, and which derives from the ISR, but opens out into communicative exchanges in the search for experiential meanings. It is a balanced support role, between the inquirer's self-discovery and its unfinished possibilities, and the intuitive indwelling knowing of the respondents. It conveys the idea of socially interactive meaning construction.

2.5. The Construction of Communicative Formats

Finding communicative formats for the interaction of inquiry, was another issue for creative exploration, and assumed multi-modal forms. This was to understand and respect the content of the inquiry, and to maintain balance between levels of disclosure, clarification at levels of meaning that were sufficient for understanding, but not locked into particular content. This was not merely abstraction, but contained a search for existential personal truths for the inquirers. It balances respectfully, the matter of private versus public information, and seeks to find forms of understanding that convey meanings rather than detailed personal stories. It encapsulates the Gendlin notion that experiencing is interaction: is occurs between people in order to become fully authentic.

The purpose of these activities was to allow persons to achieve greater self-knowing: the reviews of their own materials and interactions aimed to find formats containing reliable/truthful understandings of particular meanings of their lives. How to find and show this procedure is a major purpose of the study.

2.6. Issues of Verification or Data Authenticity

The matter of verification became a continuing focus in the respondents' inquiries. This was achieved in several ways e.g. description-key word / image reduction, indwelling (as in Moustakas) to intuitive description, the exchanges with the inquirer, the review depictions-the whole process was itself visible and directed towards accuracy of personal meanings. The form of inquiry is in itself also the form of verification, since its purpose is the search for personal truths of experience. There are of course, limits to objectivity, hence the emphasis on finding meanings through representations and discourse.

The interviews were an additional source of verification-by an independent researcher, increasing the range of reflection upon the material from a more distanced perspective. Thus, two major forms of perspective were achieved — the intrasubjective and intersubjective dialogue, and the reflective, time distanced comments on and updating of the experiencing. Emphasis is placed on the notion of authenticity of data, rather than the positivist notion of validation.

2.7. Theory Building or Conceptualisation

There is an intention to contribute ideas towards conceptualising experiential inquiry: a structure, built upon procedures, developed to contribute to understanding of the experiential nature of self-knowing. What are constructed are the coherent patterns of personal knowing. This is a conceptualisation of holistic personal epistemology, as it is derived from the particular contents of experiencing. It does not claim to produce complete descriptions of persons-though it might do so if carried out extensively over time. It is not a theory of personality, and it is not a theory of self-knowing, and may never be that, since it is directed towards understanding the nature and process of inner experiencing, more than towards understanding a 'self.' It is certainly a conceptualisation of elements and procedures that can create the inquiry of self-knowing.

3. PROCEDURES OF THE INQUIRY

The central idea of these activities was to use all the elements of knowing, including the arts as the forms of inquiry for the purpose of gaining personal knowledge about one's own life experience. The phrase, Self As Therapist, was adopted to describe this intention, suggesting that one could engage in one's own 'therapy,' under certain conditions, and that learning about oneself was a form of self knowing or education parallel to aspects of therapy, but not necessarily the same. Pursuing one's own life meanings was thought to be an activity highly suited to multimodal forms of exploration. Finding a way of researching this process was also a major intention of the activity.

This form of the inquiry was first essayed by us in 1993 (Lett, 1994), continued as reported in Part I, to the present report which is written about one of a sequence of learning experiences provided within a series called Forms of Inquiry into the Arts in Therapy, conducted at La Trobe University over a two year period. The participants were a group of about thirty academics and students themselves interested in the arts as practised in therapy, and in ways of documenting such processes of experiencing. They met monthly for two years, but this material was collected within the middle four months of the first year, comprising the major segment of eight different learning activities about the arts in therapy. They worked as their own subjects, creating their own data, and allowing the four researchers to work with their data, over a period of a year. The results of the 'Self as Therapist' activities are the subject of this report.

The original research experience was described to the group. Two of the participants and the leader were involved in that, and were three of the four making up the collaborative team leading the present series. A handout was provided which gave instructions.

This is an opportunity for you to interact with your own life journey in a particular, reflective way. You will be provided with materials of various kinds, which would allow you to use collage, movement, art, writing, enactment, music, vocalisation, and to record any experience on audio or video.

From your current life story, allow yourself to respond to whatever is drawing your attention, and which you wish to stay with, as an entry point for your exploration. This may be a feeling state, an event, a dilemma, an uncertainty, an emotion, or something you wish to have reflective access to, and understand, as part of your journey of personal meaning.

Use any medium you wish to assist your entry into this material.

Stay with it, and as you indwell it, represent it in one or some external forms. You may change from one form of representation to others as much as you wish.'

It was also stated that,

'This is a private journey, not an encounter group: we tell not the details of our lives but our understanding of them.'

The quality of the interaction is to describe aspects of your process, without telling content in a fully disclosing way. You do the reflective work. The group might give you back an intersubjective response-how they respond to it, or what they feel in themselves. There is no attempt to interpret or give a meaning to someone else's work.'

Participants were asked to take one such experiential journey each week for four weeks, requiring about two hours each time.

They were asked to spread out and indwell their materials each time they worked, and to try to focus their emerging sense of their understanding of their experiencing, and to express this as they continued their reflective

journey. After their last session, they were asked to put all their work out for review, and to indwell it. Then they were to represent what seemed to be the essences of their self-understandings, and if possible, to make a final written statement of this.

The data were then submitted to the researchers / co-inquirers. All were tertiary educators. One was a visual artist teaching in an occupational therapy programme. One was a music educator teaching in early childhood music education. One was a dance-drama improvisational performer and teacher. One was a psychologist teaching counselling and arts therapy to graduate students. A fifth member, the interviewer, was a music educator-psychologist, also working in early childhood music education. The four met weekly over this data, to become a collaborative research cell. Their work on this data took a year beyond its submission to bring to complete research presentation.

The data came in at intervals, and was the subject of indwelling and responding. It was transcribed into computer format, distributed, and then became the source of responses that were documented and integrated, until a response was completed, and returned to the co-researcher, for consideration. Next, there was an interview, conducted independently of the collaborative cell, with agreed main questions. The co-researchers looked again at their work, and reflected back their understandings as they responded to the questions. This interview was taped, transcribed, and became the basis for the researchers' final indwelling and response to the co-researchers. This always included some verbal material, but did also include all forms of the arts. There were about twenty completed self as therapist protocols.

During the time of collaborative dialogue and exchange of data, the forms of 'analysis' or procedures for understanding, were developed. The main methodological issues discussed above were pursued and resolved during these deliberations. Because of the vast amount of data, selection had to be

made of a group of co-researchers' data as the best means of illustrating the experiential procedures and the research inquiry. Five detailed examples of inquiry into life experiencing are documented here. These are the data presented below. Each is important in its own way: they do not represent the whole group, but they represent the experiential procedures and methodology as forms of experiential knowing as they have been developed here.

4. MULTIMODAL EXPERIENCING

4.1. Co-researcher 1

This co-researcher held higher degree qualifications in music, and was employed as a tertiary researcher in musical aesthetics.

She was not trained in the counselling field. Although she began her explorations through musical improvisation, most of her self-representation came through poetry, a form she had never used before. However, she also adopted the practice of making reflective comments on her work, providing the fullest text. She also concluded the interactions with the researchers, by making final poetic statements, after our response to her interview.

4.1.1. Reflective Text Extracts (Co-researcher)

4.1.1.1. Session I

For half an hour, I improvised on the keyboard. It was an experience of discovery — I discovered that I could create something. The exploration of the qualities of sound without structure gives sound an independent existence, apart from your control. I forestall the punitive judgment that only some sounds are correct. Dissonance frees me expressively. I identify strongly with a flowing melodic cello line, an extension of myself. A strong and earthy voice calls out: this voice calls me deep into myself.

4.1.1.1.1. *Piano Improvisation I*

The first piece of music produced by co-researcher 1 is the longest — it runs for one minute and 18 seconds.

[\[Listen here\]](#)

Audio piece 1 — Co-researcher 1, *Piano Improvisation I*

4.1.1.1.2. *Piano Improvisation II*

The second piece of music is quite short — it runs for 28 seconds.

[\[Listen here\]](#)

Audio piece 2 — Co-researcher 1, *Piano Improvisation II*

4.1.1.1.3. *Harpsichord Improvisation*

This piece was produced with the electronic keyboard on a 'harpsichord' setting and is also quite short — it runs for 22 seconds.

[\[Listen here\]](#)

Audio piece 3 — Co-researcher 1, *Harpsichord Improvisation*

³ All the audio pieces were recorded in mono on a basic tape unit. Technical details of the digitisation are: 44,100Khz, 16bit — streaming at 64Kpbs in MPEG Layer 3 (*.MP3) format.

4.1.1.2. Session II

4.1.1.2.1. *The Body as Colour and Quality (Poem)*

Womb fire blazes, a sonorous vibration
Enchantress of a stiffened life,
Burning the torso with impassioned heat,
A cello within.

Rich and lonely the call,
A voice against others, expanding.
Hear me! vibrating,
A fire contained.

Burn, burn me with your fire.
Sing your vibrant melody.
I'm bending, burning, heeding you.
Destroy my empty grief.
Fire without a baby,
A song licks at my tears,
A womb of fire all empty
My baby was a sphinx.

4.1.1.2.2. *A Woman's Grief (Poem)*

Listen to the sound of a woman with child grieving.
The baby is dead.
Dead in her arms, she cradles him.
She names and baptises him.
Sing now for her grief,
A deep song full of life.

Listen to the sound of her body's empty cavern.
The womb vibrates with life.
Empty and hollow, it resonates.
She feels its song, and moves with it.
The mind would sing a dirge
But the womb insists on life.

Listen to the music that never was composed.
The child was unconceived.
The resonator has no chime.
Dies Irae echoes in her mind.
She buries this child, her song.
The 'cello vibrates with strife.

Listen to the funeral ode, the cello's cantus firmus.
It's vibrant in the night.
The low heat of a melody,
Oscillating string of the mind,
Sings now for her recompense,
New word, new song, new life.

4.1.1.2.3. *The Body as a Sound-Scape (Poem)*

The body is a sound-scape, but stiffened in a chair,
The strings will not vibrate.
The body's full of colour, but in a darkened room,
I am too blind to see.
The body has its rhythms, but trapped away from seasons,
No motion can be free.
The body sings of passion, but strapped in by legality,
The mind extracts a fee!
The body has its illness, a mute protest at misabuse.
Come now, let's set it free.

4.1.1.2.4. Her Commentary on Her Process

In improvising, the cello is my voice, bringing it into harmony with other voices. In writing I became interested in rhythm and tried to replicate it. In painting I followed the image of the womb as both fire and a sound source, bringing together visual and auditory images. In poem three I explored how sound and colour, rhythm and voice can be used to represent the body, and how I repress the purely sensuous aspects of sound. The initial outpouring of emotion began to seem controlled and formed, reconciled with my mind.

4.1.1.3. Session III

4.1.1.3.1. *A Church of Infertility (Poem)*

Solemn sounds in echoing space,
A gothic transference.
Grandeur and ritual swallow me,
Proceeding with insistent step.
Hypnotising memory.

My voice not heard, I'll not be seen.
Emptiness fills me.
No pain anymore, memory's loss
Beauty insensates forgetfulness,
The mind confounded.

A mother cradles her three months child.
"You work?" she inquires.
"My mind sings in a desert house
Its song is choked with envy
Oh let me hold your baby!"
(Well suppressed.)

Song, deep and guttural, in inner space,
A self-transcendence.
Hope and misery war in me.
Rhythmic but disorderly,
Invigorating memory.

My voice is heard. I now am seen.
Fullness swells me.
Pain returns, the strength of loss.
Passion restores impulsiveness.
A mind regained.

4.1.1.3.2. *Her Comments*

The transformation from prose into more metric lines required a lot of thought, which had the effect of increasing self-control over expression. Creating a rhythmic structure gave me the idea of creating mirror in the content as well. The structural impulse made me explore images further, and pushed me to greater resolution.

The pain of the conversation with a woman at church has been the motivation for this process. I have discovered that strength came from recognising the body's passion, than by seeking to overcome it in rituals. Impulsiveness itself, with pain, could be a source of mental strength.

In creating the poem, I transformed an experience that was distressing into one that I could control and assimilate. A burning physical desire was no longer a destructive force to be denied, but an energy to be directed.

4.1.1.4. Session IV

4.1.1.4.1. Love Child of Mind (Poem)

New voice, ecstatic and gentle, hear
A whispered love, a secret sound-
Delicious thought that trembles now,
Timid in an unknown sphere.

Suave sense can kiss her groom, the mind
Tickle and humour a dry conceit,
Caress his superficial skin to
Lust and birth a new, refined

Idea of love, who laughs at her
Most wanton lack of discipline.
"You feed from me, who gave you birth.
And turn from my delight in sense

To wean your thought on tough remorse,
The rigour of a mind that's bent
On self-destruction, true and strong."
He listens and resumes his song.

4.1.1.4.2. Her Comments

Playing Franck's Violin Sonata, and remembering Barthes' question, 'what if thinking were delicious?' I chose an image of marriage between the sense and the mind — a new idea of love. The images brought sexuality and conceptualisation together, against aesthetic and academic practices, minimising the body and instilling discipline. I allowed the body to speak for itself and chide the mind.

4.1.1.4.3. *Grieving and Birth (Poem)*

Hollow, empty, plane organum.
Fifths for cello-chanting loud,
An austere, rich and earthy sound
Of plain song.

Mellow, the bitter taste of loss remembered,
Piercing hate!
For those whose love enwraps us round
With suffering we might ne'er have found
If they did not restate their right
To love us even in their pain.

Strength was given. Strength was sought.
How they helped us to abort a dream.
That we had held so close
We did not know its loss could now
Exhaust our hope,
Until we found another love,
The strident sound of birth,
Surprise-tears of delight.

We will not now forego the fight
To wrest the music out of life.

4.1.1.4.4. *Her comments*

The rich chordal texture of the plain song brought me to the sources of love and loss, and my lost dreams. I rearranged the poem so that irregular patterns of rhythm and rhyme emerged.

I did not know what I wanted to write about before I started. I just followed images as they came to me. I was surprised by the strength and intensity of feelings expressed. I felt more distanced today. In some way the attempt to deal with sensory impulses to thought, constituted a resolution of my difficulties with being childless.

4.1.1.5. Session V

4.1.1.5.1. *A Brother Tortured (Poem)*

Sing violin of
Violent rupture
Rupture of pain in a
Perspectiveless space.
Baby brother's beaten.
Sadistic infliction
Of a man-
His father by grace.

Sing, violin of
Treachery, betrayal.
Capture the haunting
Of a strangled mind.
Child of my childhood,
Bruised and afflicted
By a priest-
Ordained of his kind.

Sing, violin of
Violating insolence.
Suture the wound of a
Spirit, too confined.
Fighting and resistant,
Reborn in animosity,
A brother-
Broken, to be tied
To the pain
Of a mother-
Your mother-
So weep !

4.1.1.5.2. *Her Comments*

Stimulated by a different life-event, it made me look at mothering in a different way, recognising the pain it can bring. My younger brother is the one baby I have known well, and his experience made me aware of my own maternal feelings. I was able to use poetry as a way of dealing with my anger about a human situation in which the 'rules' were broken: how rigid rules can do violence to a person's sense of self and inhibit self-expression.

4.1.2. Final Comments (Co-researcher)

4.1.2.1. Audio Reflection I

When I was improvising music, I discovered that I could create without anxiety concerning compositional rules, and that I could enjoy the purely sonorous qualities of sound. This is symbolic of an opposition between rational principles and sensory life. Life experiences over several months increased my awareness of my own sensuous qualities, bringing a confrontation with the nature of rules in my own sensory life.

I have continued to discover the sense of self that emerges for me in identifying with music, and which enabled me to gain access to my emotional struggle with infertility. The music opened up images for me, which I could explore poetically, feeling the rhythm and the suggestiveness of the words. The process of composing poetry brought my emotional and rational selves into greater harmony, and feelings of dislocation were lessened. Dealing with desires for pregnancy and motherhood were part of coming to grips with my sense of myself as defined by my body, and the sense of loss through my husband's infertility.

This process has made me feel stronger and aware of my own creative capacity. I have learned skills for accessing my feelings and bringing them to a point of expression and control through improvisation and poetry writing.

4.1.2.1.1. Voice Improvisation

The final piece of music was performed in voice. It runs for 21 seconds.

[\[Listen here\]](#)

Audio piece 4 — Co-researcher 1, *Voice Improvisation*

4.1.2.2. Audio Reflection II

4.1.2.2.1. Post Interview Response (Co-researcher)

Her final poetic responses came after the Interview, back to the co-researchers. They are cited in full, and no response was made to them.

4.1.2.2.2. Keywords

Grieving and integration

Loss and reconciliation

Finding a new voice.

4.1.2.2.3. Final Essence Statement

I am the baby
Eyes entwined in your gaze
I hold you to me
Being born.

I am the grieved one
Suckled and weaned
My psyche is ruptured
On pain

I transgressed the boundary
That kept me in you
In anger I failed
And sinned
I am the voice
Of the post-partum woman.
You gave birth to me-
I to you.

I broke the rules. I became a voice, a self. I confronted my grief and found in it the grief of birth to being a separate self. I claimed myself back from the mother I wanted to be.

4.1.3. Structure and Meaning (Researchers' Perspective)

One perspective on the reflexive/reflective experiencing of the co-researcher over time is how understanding was present, and how represented. From the data, it can be seen that she began with a musical exploration of controlled structure into creative dissonance, which yielded the innate awareness of the qualities of sound. Switching to the expressive line of the violin, brings her to the same conflict within her core self.

The remainder of the journey of self-reflection is contained within the paradigm of exploration to find forms appropriate for the thematic materials emerging. The representations are balanced in their concerns for aesthetic form, and metaphoric expressiveness. There is also a slightly masked, implicit quality about the actual material, throughout the poetry, reaching for rightness of feeling quality, of image, of form, and ultimately, of meaning. She speaks of discovering meaning, recognising her passion, outpourings of emotion, transforming the experience into one that she could control and assimilate. The union of the sensory and the intellectual is an outcome that proceeds from the earliest material of her struggle; but is an understanding arrived at from the whole engagement over time. This theme, is technically, more integrative than any other, but it also contains the others, since they provide the life experiencing content from which the meanings derive.

This whole activity of understanding meanings cycles both within itself and the forms and images, over time. Understandings become the accretions of ultimate succinct meanings.

In her final statements, the co-researcher is entirely explicit. She states her new understandings with utter directness and simplicity. In the absence of metaphoric images and the assertion of simple form, she displays the simplicity of her own validated meanings. Not only has she become clear in her self-understanding, she is also able to disclose her knowing. Her story carries a movement from uncertainty to clarity of self-knowing, and from complexity to simplicity in the exploration of form to convey knowing. This is a process of self-discovery, through cycles of indwelling and representation, over time. The understandings are particular, the meanings general.

4.1.4. Experiential Depiction (Researchers' Perspective)

A combination of indwelling and analysis of the co-researchers' representations and comments was made by the researchers. This produced a clear sense of the trail of inner connections that came into her structure as discovered understandings. This statement is reduced to the main structural lines, after deletion of amplificatory components.

Finding her own voice through cello improvisation. Discovery of creative capacities outside rule bound forms. The isomorphism of sounds and the deeper self through the forms of conceit and metaphor. The discovery of the oneness of intellect, body feeling and emotion. Dynamic movement between symbolic playing with life and reconciliation with her experiential reality. Increased flow between the inner/outer experiencing and balancing of a connected whole. What happened in the music and poetry, also took place in her core self, simultaneously.'

This depiction is clearly a psychological abstraction of the structure and constructs of her self-experience. It presents no detail of actual events, only an understanding of them. These are the meanings she has arrived at, as we saw them. They can be compared with her own description of these understandings of her own experiencing, as reported in her interview. In many ways, they are thinner than the more poetically sensed meanings given back in the intersubjective responses. However, this illustrates a major

difference between cognition as understanding, and the fuller sensed meanings mediated intersubjectively.

4.1.5. The Intersubjective Response of the Researchers

Here are reported our written comments back to the co-researcher:

4.1.5.1. Actual Texts Integrated

1. The experience of allowing yourself to explore sound without musical constraints and rules, allowed you to reconsider the possibility of creativity for you in your own medium. The expressiveness of the stringed voice elicited a sense of your own voice, the voice of yourself being drawn into lines of sound. It was also not just structured or pretty for public listening, but atonal, even dissonant, yet the 'you/not you' quality of it allowed sonorous memories to surprise you. A chant, and a voice from a dream brought unresolved tension and mesmerised you to attend to a voice that enchanted you, a voice to be found deep within yourself. This tension is not easily to be resolved or given expedient form, but is located in the interaction of the psyche and your emotions.
2. These poems are so dense and symbolic in one way, and so clear sounding in another, cradling an enigma-the sphinx, the destroyer of new life. To find the meaning of the death was both relief and confrontation: though it was not your child, the loss was as if it had been, and the resurgence of the body towards the passion of creativity and the promise of new life and a new voice, was like the filling again of the empty womb. All this too, came through the stirring sonorous image of the song of the cello, the burning fire of creation, the dirge like potential of the rational mind, and the irresistible movement of the womb yet sterile, but at last vibrating with the possibility of its own song of life. The surge towards freedom in the last line is again paradoxical: incantation like, it has no visible source, like the riddle of the lost child-my baby was a sphinx. A mystery, processes without a source, finding form in you. I feel the

continuity in your material; the struggle for freedom, thence to 'youness,' originality — a new VOICE, rising from deep within you. A life producing change. I did not read your Process comments, until I had completed the response to your poems. Your comments return you to a consideration of form, and you write about the manner in which emotion was given form, through images, rhythm, and the bridging of thought to feeling. I sense a distancing from the passion of your performance, a need to do so, to restore order; back to the sphinx. Yes, the cello was your voice, not now of dissonance, but returning you to harmony, absorbing the vibrations of strife. Order-disorder, harmony-dissonance, sterility-fertility-the score out of which this cello, the voice of the self, you, rises and also falls, in order to ...?

3. Familiar themes return through images of sound-the voice lost and regained, the pain of memory and loss, the envy of mothering, an inner conflict of hope but misery. And again, a miracle of self-transcendence, the regaining of a voice, a voice heard, leading to regeneration. The power of the regeneration comes through a voice heard, the self seen (though the voice is always there, deep within, never lost). My question returns, as before — By whom? How? A miracle by nature inexplicable? Or a dialogue of the self? Of the mind and passions? A struggle for control through form: a return to formal structure gives containment to a continuing struggle for balance and being. Your commentary places your deeper experiencing in a living context, which could not be known from your text. The shaping of the experience into form remains central, itself feeling like a mirror of the inner struggle for balancing forces. You identify one line of your experience as core in this reconstruction-your pain and envy at another's child. Around this theme come oscillations of the voices of the self, bringing you into the body memory, where you encounter the energy of passion, of impulsiveness, of pain, which may be entered without avoidance or fear. This realisation presents a further

hope of resolution, and of control, reached through the avenues of sound, embodied, within and without.

4. The Donne like conceit is evident in its control of form, and the way in which the writer plays with significant ideas and emotions, with the deftness of a seeming distance, which is the gloved hand of anxiety. Again, seeking new voices, she plays with the discovery of ecstasy-possibly romantic love-who woos the male voice of the mind, who laughs at her. She again returns to the theme of dissonance between the passions and the mind, the female and the male, but fearing the destruction impending from a life dominated by a rigorous mind, a mind not quite moved by this wooing. Levels of meaning abound: one is not quite sure of actual realities, only again one recognises the playing of the voices with themes imbued with essential struggles of a self at its work. This feeling is deepened by the return of the voice of the cello, and the plain song, and the remembered loss, seemingly in love, yet again played with as a conceit, exchanging one love for another, aborting a dream. The struggle continues-to unite aspects of the self, a vibrant passionate life with a mind controlled life of the intellect, moved into the qualities of the voices, clad in themes of lovers and their pain-is not only the birth of a coherent self, but also the experience of a self in the actuality of experiencing these issues of being.
5. Your reflection states more baldly themes glimpsed, sensed, and felt in the poems. You tell the manner in which you were able to access your inner experiencing, through music, association, using images and words, and building consciously into form, the growing awareness and understandings. You show how formal structures assisted you to shape and contain inner, emerging knowings, how understandings grew throughout these processes, to arrive at holding forms, through various approximations. Your reflections contain a sense of distancing, an affirmation of the now known, a quiet sense of resting in knowing, which is satisfied with the point of containment and understanding.

6. This poem comes as though it is an offshoot, a memory of sibling feeling, also of pain, of indignation, of irresolution, carried into adulthood, affirmed. The feeling of loss through love, in significant relationship, is shared, with seeming resignation, and a sense of 'this is the state of things, this is the work we must do.' First, recognise and be in the reality of the pain of intimacy, which I know too, and can share with you.

4.1.5.2. Creative Synthesis (Researchers)

The most sonorous voice-
The voice of the self
Echoes through stringed, atonal improvisation
To rest at last
With resolution;
An intention
Of harmony
Defined by a choice
From understanding
Through the places
Of pain, indignation, sadness and loss
To a new place
Where, So weep!
Can be sustained
From a new fertility.

Forms of reconstruction
Give birth
To a new sphinx
Named Janus.
And a twin perspective
Of oneness.

4.1.5.3. Further Note

I did not find the tape until after I had finished with the verbal text, so I did not have access to these direct comments you made on your own process, earlier in the proceedings.

What I have understood is that you have identified, in these activities, an understanding of your own dilemmas, exemplified in your working with music and sound. The search for a free voice is taken in an awareness of both the usefulness of structure and the manner in which this controls the

construction, leaving aside being in pure sound. This is, I think, just what you are also saying (later more definitely) about your life: the struggle with the formal, the intellectual, and the balancing of this with the pure, the emotionally freeing, the line of being which is 'right' without being just right by the rules. You also set the tone of exploring all your meanings through music and the structure that give it form.

4.1.5.4. Thematic Analysis of the ISR (Researchers)

A thematic/content analysis of the researchers' intersubjective responses reveals the following key issues, as they emerged in our responses. These occurred poem-by-poem, statement-by-statement, cumulatively, yet, in some sense, separately.

4.1.5.4.1. ISR 1

- i. The creativity vs. rules struggle
- ii. The search for a personal voice in the violin and cello
- iii. The tension between the emotional and cognitive self

4.1.5.4.2. ISR 2

- i. Loss in the bodily self vs. creativity in the body and a new voice of freedom
- ii. The search for forms of representation, again the cello as the deep voice of the bodily self
- iii. The struggle of the emotional and intellectual self
- iv. A question about unidentified, paradoxical meanings

4.1.5.4.3. ISR 3

- i. Loss of self, and finding a new voice and balancing energies
- ii. The question about the source of the new voice
- iii. The form of the struggle for self predominates
- iv. The struggle for resolution, balance.

4.1.5.4.4. ISR 4

- i. The acute concern with form, to explore significant material somewhat covertly
- ii. Anxiety about the dissonance of passion and the mind, male and female
- iii. The balancing of the search for the imagined vs. the real; what is real vs. what is play?
- iv. The voice of the cello returns to balance the struggle

4.1.5.4.5. ISR 5

- i. Thinking and feeling can be one, and have the quality of ecstasy
- ii. The struggle of body and mind for harmony
- iii. The dissonance in relationship from loss of fertility
- iv. The power of rhythmic structure to echo meaning, and the containment achieved through form.

4.1.5.4.6. ISR 6

- i. The feeling of loss, through misplaced love.
- ii. Dealing with the reality of pain in such loss.
- iii. The risks of being rule bound in the emotions.

4.1.5.5. Authentication

The detailing of the themes makes it clear that the respondents understood the themes that were clearly recurrent. This is particularly strongly emphasised with this inquirer, since she also wrote notes on her own processes and the themes and meanings contained in the poems, straight after their completion.

It is apparent that all of her themes are actually present from the beginning, and keep recurring, through exploration in different forms.

This activity is also central to her own self definition and resolution: to exercise her passionate self in a combined activity with her intellectual self, in which she finds balance, harmony, and a sense of personal unity, as well as a unity of form and content.

Since there was so much agreement between inquirer and respondents, it might be conjectured that the respondents contributed anything to her understanding. Yet the inquirer herself stated in her interview that the

understanding of the respondents of her struggles, of her playing with form and with reality, helped her to acquire a real sense of her own reality, and to distance herself finally from the gaminess of parts of her life. This questioning, honest confrontation of what was there somehow moved her into a stronger awareness of her life experiencing. The interactive communication functioned as a reality check, because of its straightforward but respectful honesty. This was achieved in the respondents through their careful indwelling and collaborative discussion of the materials: a discussion in search of authenticity.

This was a contributor to the concern regarding 'validation' of the inquirer's experience: the genuineness of her story including its gaminess, was experienced and given back as it was experienced by the respondents. The inquirer integrated this into her own reflections, because of her own need for authentic self knowing, not because she had been overpowered by the researchers, or because she wished to please them.

This is clearly demonstrated in her last two poems, in which she presents two balancing moods and resolutions. In Love's Trespass, she laughs at her own gaminess, but arrives in delight, as her affirmation. And in the final statement, she moves in a mood of extraordinary pathos and understanding, to her own personal resolution of loss in childlessness and asserts the new voice of her separateness. She affirms the ISR in her interview comments, that she would not have achieved this personal self-knowing, without the interactive responses, but would have remained in her previous state of being.

4.1.6. Interview: The Discovery Trail (Co-researcher)

4.1.6.1. Themes from Indwelling of the Interview of the Co-researcher.

A further indwelling of her interview by the researchers resulted in this delineation of themes.

- i. Finding her own voice, reconciled with her body, reflecting unity of body and mind
- ii. Acceptance of an unfulfilled desire for motherhood
- iii. Freedom for the energies of a creative self to emerge from integrative reconciliation of these aspects of herself
- iv. Facing reality versus playing with fantasies of life — the balancing of experiences during integration

4.1.6.2. Thematic Integration: Creative Synthesis from ISR by Researchers (A Final Depiction of Her Themes)

Through your musical improvisation, you entered a search for your own voice, a voice to harmonise your intellect and the emotions presenting themselves from your bodily self. From this realisation, you turned towards a greater acceptance and understanding of your unfulfilled need and strong desire for motherhood. You played with fantasies of life possibilities, but struggled to balance playful wishes with an increasing sense of your grounded realities, and the values you identified as powerfully yours. You became aware that a deep reconciliation of yourself was occurring, a new integration and oneness, with a consequent sense of release of creative energies and a freer personal style.

4.1.6.3. Comment: Authentication

Through the inquirer's process, the thematic content of her experiencing revealed itself, over time. As she herself explored, amplified, found metaphors, played with forms of representation, then moved to review her explorations in a focused, reduction to essence process, she distilled the real structure of her preoccupations, and came to state quite explicitly the understandings she had attained. The essential themes are also clearly

identified in the researchers' integration. There is a clear concordance about the meanings that have emerged.

What is the nature of this concordance? Is this to be seen as a form of verification? That is, two independently arrived at statements that verify that this is what has come to be known? Or is this not actually an appropriate construct to apply to this procedure? How can such understandings be 'verified'? Should they be? Are they independent outcomes acting as verification? Not really. They are not independent they are interdependent by nature. The intersubjective exchanges have the function of enlarging a growing understanding through exchange that both support and empathise with the exploration, and also, question, and confront the unknown. If there is accuracy in the responding, and attentiveness in the inquirer, this exchange must carry a high likelihood of promoting an authentic self-knowing. That is a different view of verification-it is a procedure of authentication of personal and interpersonal knowing-having a rightness made visible. Not all examples will show the same pattern of concordance as this one, and resistances, conflict, lack of highly developed concordance might as well occur. The 'problem of verification' then, would require a close check of the audit trail, through the representations and interactions seen in the texts. The kinds of contaminations to be looked for would include interpretation, leading to responsive submission, or resistance to capitulation; or evidence of an inquirer displaying dependency and accepting others' meanings as more powerful, acceptable and affirming than her own.

In the present instance, there is an apparent high level of authenticity in the emerging self-knowing, and the knowing of the researchers. This is due both to the extraordinary commitment of the inquirer to self-discovery, and to the trustworthiness of the interaction as it developed. This was also related to the aptness of the forms of interaction adopted by the researchers to the forms of inquiry utilised by the inquirer, and to the degree of both understanding and

questioning of uncertainties in the inquirer's text. Not only is this traceable in the text, it is also clearly stated by the inquirer: she was confronted by the understanding in the ISR, and took this courageously into her awareness, reflecting it back to interact with her own knowing. Being understood did not threaten her; she enjoyed our non-collusive awareness of playing, distancing, and protecting herself, while she searched through her experiences for meaning. In addition, she trusted it, this sense in the process of being knowingly companioned without being instructed or interpreted. This is the nature of a true and mutual understanding. It confirms itself in each other.

4.1.7. Roles in the Interactive Journey

One way of describing the structure of the activity of this experiential knowing is to see it as a reciprocal intention to engage in the discovery of meanings, in which participants undertake both separate and interactive roles. The roles and their interactions can be described, and provide the form of structure for the discoveries. This is expressed as follows⁴.

⁴ Subsequently, I observe that these procedures are less clear than those in the subsequent studies. I think we combined the description with the intersubjective responses, which we later managed to separate. This is in part due to the fact that this material was verbal, so description was less distanced in format. There is also a higher level of experience referenced 'interpretation' here, than in later subject reports, revealing the difficulty, later clarified, between an ISR and an interpretation, even though it may be at the experience referenced level.

4.1.7.1. The Co-researcher Role

The co-researcher makes a commitment
To an intention to pursue self-knowledge
In a process of self-discovery.
This commences with intuitive ranging over experiencing
Immersion and exploration,
Into focussed access
Making inner connections and reflections.

Bringing the inner to outer awareness
Involves representation-variemodal,
External patterns of emerging connectedness.

Within these-Indwelling,
The dialogue of reflexive-reflective
Experiencing, cycling over time
To new Understandings.
And repeated-drawn by the thread
Of emerging knowing.

The exchange of representations-
Vulnerable trusting brings
The constructed intersubjective response,
A knowing of others
Engaging a dialogue of interactive experiencing
And communicative representation.

Again, a cycle of indwelling,
Adaptation – reflection-reconnection
To reconsidered representation.
And Interview-
Questions of reflection
For cognition
To clarify, enunciate
The Understandings,
Themes of essential experiencing
And final distillation of personal meanings
To current approximations.

4.1.7.2. The Role of the Researchers

An intention
To facilitate self-knowing
Through variemodal experiencing
As co-researchers.

Propositions to assist
Access to self-exploration
And representation.

The receipt of
Privileged representations
Of self-inquiring texts.

The development of procedures
For indwelling, experiencing
Understanding and responding
To the felt meanings
Of others.

Detailed descriptions,
The source of intuitive knowing,
To reduction to key words, images and feelings.
The generation of felt responses
And construction of the form
Of interactive communication
From collaborative sensing.
Giving back-respecting the known
Signifying possibilities
Of the Unknown
Merging the subjectivities
Of this experiencing
But explicating understandings.

Possible repetition
Through further exchanges
Led by indefatigable
Intuition
The auger of knowing.

Arrival to approximation of meanings
Creative synthesis.
An authentication of the discoveries
Known and not yet known.
A resting point.