

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI[®]

Spirituality and Art Therapy

Christine Doyle

A Research Paper

in

The Department

of

Art Education and Creative Arts Therapies

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada**

April, 2001

© Christine Doyle, 2001



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 0-612-90369-9

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 0-612-90369-9

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this dissertation.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de ce manuscrit.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the dissertation.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

ABSTRACT

Spirituality and Art Therapy

Christine Doyle

This paper reports the findings of a heuristic inquiry into the relationship between spirituality and art therapy. The data presented in this research paper have been gathered from three primary sources, including appropriate literary works, personal material from the author's immersion in her own experience of spirituality and art therapy, and, thirdly, the words and images shared by four art therapists, as well as the author, in response to the question, "How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?" The findings indicate that, in keeping with the longtime secularization of the mental health system, the art therapy community is hesitating to introduce explicit spiritual discourse into its training and practice. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that explicit spiritual discourse is possible and worthwhile, at least amongst art therapists on a one-to-one basis. An argument is made that spiritual discourse can play an important role in facilitating the spiritual healing and growth of art therapy clients, particularly as it serves a meaning making function. The art therapy community is encouraged to continue making space for spiritual discourse, particularly as a self-reflective process, with the ultimate intention of better serving clients.

Acknowledgments

This research paper has been developed in collaboration with four other art therapists. Their collective participation represents the better part of the original findings in this inquiry and their contribution is reported in the Results Chapter under the subheading, Profiles of the Participants.

Furthermore, this work has been generously supported and guided by my research adviser Denise Tanguay, a faculty member of the Creative Arts Therapies Department at Concordia University.

And, of course, there are many other seen and unseen contributors. I am very grateful to all.

Table of Contents

List of Figures / vi
Introduction / 1
A Brief Overview of the Contents of this Research Paper / 1
A Summary of My First Year Literature Review / 3
Methodology / 8
Adopting a Qualitative Research Approach / 8
Choosing the Heuristic Model of Inquiry / 9
Formulation of the Research Question / 9
Operational Definition of Spirituality / 10
Criteria for Selecting the Participants / 10
Research Procedures Using the Heuristic Model / 11
Results / 17
The Immersion Phase / 17
Speaking out about spirituality / 18
Science versus religion / 21
Art as process and product / 22
Spiritual wounds, healing and growth / 27
Profiles of the Participants / 28
Loria / 29
Lucille / 37
Ariane / 43
Thérèse / 53
Christine / 61
Discussion / 70
Common Threads / 70
Spirituality in words and images / 71
Transcendence and immanence / 73
The search for unity / 75
Personal Threads of Meaning Revisited / 79
Keeping the Spiritual Discourse Going / 83
The life of this theme / 83
Nurturing the life of the research theme / 85
References / 87
Appendix #1 Participation-Release Agreement / 90
Appendix #2 Consent Information / 91

List of Figures

Figure One / 24

Figure Two / 25

Figure Three / 26

Figure Four / 31

Figure Five / 34

Figure Six / 36

Figure Seven / 39

Figure Eight / 42

Figure Nine / 49

Figure Ten / 52

Figure Eleven / 53

Figure Twelve / 60

Figure Thirteen / 68

Drum sound rises on the air,
its throb, my heart.

A voice inside the beat says,
"I know you're tired,
but come. This is the way."

- Rumi

"THE NATURE OF SOUND Sound is considered to be of two kinds, one a vibration of ether, the other a vibration of air. The vibration of ether, which cannot be perceived in the physical sense, is considered the principle of all manifestation, the basis of all substance, the "music of the spheres." It forms permanent numerical patterns which are the basis of the world's existence. This kind of vibration is not caused by physical shock as are audible sounds. It is therefore called *anahata*, "unstruck." The other kind of sound is an impermanent vibration of air, an image of the ether vibration. It is audible and always produced by a shock. It is therefore called *ahata* or "struck." "Struck sound is said to give pleasure, unstruck sound leads to Liberation." (Narada Purana.)

- dj Cheb I Sabbah, Shri Durga

"Let us please each other with words like poetry, the honey of the soul, so sweet and soothing, so restful for our spirits. Let us invent the way we use speech again and make it beautiful and silent at once, like music that entertains us and awes us into a hushed and still calm, as though every moment was the moment of creation, when the Word had not yet been given" (p. 79).

- Manuela Dunn Mascetti

Introduction

As a graduate student in the Creative Arts Therapies Department at Concordia University, I was required to conduct research in each of my two years in the program. This paper reports on my second year of research. The work presented here is an extension of my first year of research in which I completed a literature review looking at how spirituality is currently being incorporated into art therapy practices. For the most part, this review examined the topic in theoretical terms and gave little attention to the practical matters that might arise when spirituality is addressed within an art therapy context. My intention was to follow up this theoretically-based study with an investigation of the “ethical and pragmatic ramifications of...spiritually informed approaches to art therapy” (Doyle, 1999, p. 25). In this way, I hoped to compile a useful set of guidelines that would be of benefit to art therapists who were, at some time and in some measure, dealing with spirituality in their professional work. However, as my research efforts got underway in the second year, the scope of my inquiry shifted substantially. There were a number of reasons for this change and I offer my full explanation in the methods section of this paper. Primarily, however, the scarcity of information on this subject led me to conclude that it would not be possible to develop a compendium of pertinent ethical and pragmatic matters at this time. Moreover, the limited amount of research in this area indicates that it is still in its infancy as a field of study. Consequently, any investigation of this matter is likely to be characterized by a certain naiveté. Thus, I ventured into a very tentative, open-ended exploration of spirituality and art therapy. Using a heuristic model of research, I tried to better understand the different ways in which spirituality might be encountered in the art therapy process. The sources for my research included extensive self-reflection, in-depth interviews of five art therapists, of which I was one, and a further examination of various literary works that touch upon spirituality, art and healing. Implicit in my research effort is my profound desire to establish a means by which we can somehow connect with each other on this topic. It is my hope that by making these connections we can deepen our spiritual awareness and presence in this world to the betterment of both ourselves and our clients.

A Brief Overview of the Contents of this Research Paper

In order to help orient the reader to the subject matter, a summary of my first year literature review is presented in this introductory chapter. I also cite several additional references which are germane to this

second study. The second chapter contains an account of the methodology used in this investigation, beginning with an explanation of why I chose to conduct a qualitative study rather than a quantitative one. I further outline my reasons for using a heuristic model of inquiry. This is followed by a discussion of how I formulated my research question. Special consideration is given to the operational definition of the word *spirituality*. I also describe the basis for selecting the participants whose collective contribution form the core of this work. Finally, this second chapter includes a thorough description of the procedures used in this study and, in doing so, provides more explicit information about the heuristic model that was used in this inquiry.

In the third chapter I report on the results of my research. In the first part of this section I relate the details of my own experiences and understandings of spirituality and art therapy. I look at how I have come to research this particular area and what significance it has in my life. In the course of this introspective work, four main categories of concern emerged for me. Briefly, these categories include my hesitation to speak of spirituality in the context of art therapy, the challenge of positioning myself within scientific and religious domains, the spiritual significance of art both as a process and as a product, and finally, the nature of art in relation to spiritual wounds, healing and growth. Then, in the second half of the results section, I report the findings of the individual, in-depth interviews of four art therapists and myself as we each responded to the question "How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?" This data is presented in the form of separate profiles of each interviewee's verbal and artistic responses. Moreover, at the close of each profile I also incorporate a few words and art work of my own to represent my reaction to the expressions offered by each of the other participants.

In the fourth and final chapter, I discuss the course and outcome of my heuristic inquiry and relate it to the literature whenever appropriate. Three main areas are covered in this section starting with a look at the important themes that are evident in the in-depth interviews. Next, I consider what I have learned by doing this study, particularly in relation to the four main categories of personal concern that I describe in the results section. In the third and closing segment of the discussion, I reflect on what future direction of research seems likely, interesting and worthwhile in the continued effort to understand more about spirituality, art therapy and, ultimately, myself.

A Summary of My First Year Literature Review

While most psychotherapeutic approaches have become quite secularized in recent decades, many authors have observed that an increasing number of mental health professionals are striving to consciously incorporate spirituality into their work (Bergin, 1991; Dennis, 1995; Elkins, 1995; Hart, 1994; Horovitz-Darby, 1994; Lovinger, 1984; Randour, 1993; Salmons & Clarke, 1987; Shafranske & Malony, 1990; Spero, 1990). This growing interest in spirituality seems to be in keeping with the overall trend exhibited by the American public (Bergin & Jensen, 1990; Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1988; Spretnak, 1986). In spite of the enthusiasm by lay persons and professionals alike, the blending of spiritual and psychological dimensions may not be an easy one. The cautionary words of Dennis (1995) should be kept in mind.

The sometimes stormy, and more frequently estranged, relations between religion and psychology should temper hasty tendencies to find these areas compatible. Overly ambitious programs calling for an integrated religion and psychology in the absence of cautious and critical deliberation likely will do more harm than to help the status of spirituality in psychology over the long term. (p. 62)

Indeed, the psychotherapeutic community often demonstrates an uneven and, at times, contradictory attitude towards spirituality as it transitions from a secular perspective to a spiritual one. For example, a decade of research by Allen Bergin (1991) revealed that mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, social workers, and marriage and family therapists

show an unexpected personal investment in religion...77% of those surveyed agreed with the statement, 'I try hard to live by my religious beliefs.' and 46% agreed with the statement, 'My whole approach to life is based on religion.' In light of these findings, it was surprising that only 29% of therapists rated religious content as important in treatment with all or many clients. (p.396)

Add to this, the findings of Shafranske & Malony (1990) whose survey research led them to conclude that "clinical psychologists appreciate religious and spiritual concerns; view religious and spiritual issues as relevant to clinical practice; utilize interventions of a religious nature to varying degrees; and receive limited training respective of religious and spiritual issues" (p. 78).

In fact, they note that only 5 % of clinical psychologists report spiritual issues being presented in their training. It is difficult to fathom why clinical psychology, as a field, fails to provide the appropriate education on a topic it seems more than willing to recognize as important to its practice.

Likewise, the subject of spirituality has raised some intense and ambivalent feelings amongst members of the American art therapy community. Cathy Moon, the organizer of the 24th annual conference of the American Art Therapy Association, which was entitled "Common Ground: The Arts, Therapy, Spirituality," observed that the word spirituality is, in itself, a loaded one. She explained,

controversy surrounding the conference theme does not seem to stem from a repudiation of the spiritual in life. Nor does it seem to rise primarily from a rejection of art as a point of access to the spiritual....The controversy seems to arise instead from the multiplicity of responses and reactions to the word 'spirituality,' and to the images this conjures up relative to how it would become manifest in the practice of art therapy (Moon, 1993, p. 21).

A few years later, having attended the 27th Annual Conference of the American Art Therapy Association in 1996, British art therapists Andrea Gilroy and Sally Skaife (1997) made the following comment.

American art therapy seemed to us to be quite polarized: on the one hand art is used to elicit material for diagnosis, prognosis and treatment, whilst on the other hand the making of art is viewed as inherently healing via a shamanic, spiritual and soul-making, studio-based tradition.

There appeared to be some conflict between these two main approaches. (p. 58)

Yet even those who endorse a spiritual or soul-making approach to art therapy have demonstrated a substantial degree of difference amongst their ranks. For example, while some use the terms *spirit* and *spirituality* quite readily, Shaun McNiff has voiced a strong preference for the word *soul* (Luzzatto, McNiff, Moon, Robbins, & Robbins, 1996). His position is aligned with the thinking of James Hillman (1989) who contends that imagination and psychopathology fall within the province of soul rather than spirit. Hillman elaborates on the distinction between the two such that *soul* is said to assume an immanent perspective of the divine, favor a unified mind-body concept, and entail the feminine principle. *Spirit*, on the other hand, assumes a transcendent understanding of the divine, holds a dualistic view of mind and body, and involves the masculine principle.

Three models of spiritually informed approaches to art therapy were examined in this literature review. The underlying theoretical framework of each of these models was found to vary according to whether they favored a perspective of *soul* or *spirit*. One model drew upon archetypal psychology and was grounded in the notion of *soul* (McNiff, 1992). A second model was rooted in developmental theory and was considered to emphasize the aspect of *spirit* (Horovitz-Darby, 1994). Finally, a third model was based on a combination of existentialism and archetypal psychology and embraced both *spirit* and *soul* (Moon, 1994, 1997).

Beyond the choice of words and the theoretical assumptions they imply, some art therapists question the need to speak directly with a client about spirituality at all. During a panel discussion in 1996 Bruce Moon stated his reticence in this regard.

One last thing, I don't know if I ever spoke the word soul to a patient. We did it. We made soul. I'm not sure if it needs to be part of the language of the therapy encounter, but rather a part of the behavior of the therapeutic encounter. (Luzzatto et al., 1996)

Also on the panel, Michael Robbins echoed this sentiment and spoke of his concerns from a clinical perspective.

I think that basically spirituality or soul comes into the therapy world through our presence and I agree totally with Bruce that you don't even need to use the word. In fact, I think the word will often be used as a defense. Even the practices that are in spirituality can be used as a defense and I've seen them used as a defense. And I've used them as a defense. (Luzzatto et al., 1996)

Nevertheless, the omission of spiritual dialogue in clinical training and practice may impose something of a taboo on spirituality in the psychotherapeutic process. Noam & Wolf (1993) have drawn attention to this problem in their observation that a taboo on spirituality is first communicated to the clinician during training. The authors state that "no one ever told us not to pursue spiritual issues, but not one of our many gifted teachers ever suggested we do so" (p. 197-198). They further suggest that the clinician, in turn, transmits the taboo to the client by a similar absence of discourse. By contrast, other art therapists are supportive of promoting spiritual discourse with their clients. Horovitz-Darby (1994) reports her exploration of a more verbally explicit style with clients in her book "Spiritual Art Therapy."

A review of the literature reveals that, overall, the American art therapy community exhibits a wide and changing array of attitudes, experiences and expectations as its members strive to position themselves with respect to the matter of incorporating spirituality into their clinical work. Perhaps this diversity and variation can be understood as phenomena situated within the larger context of our changing times. In recent years our society has been undergoing a dramatic shift in its most fundamental paradigm, that of the sacred and profane. For the better part of this century, most of our institutions and disciplines have been founded on the assumption that these two poles, the sacred and the profane, are mutually exclusive from each other. However, recent developments in the field of quantum physics, feminist discourse and world ecology have all begun to challenge our long held understanding of this paradigm. Until recently, our world view has been based on the principles of classical physics. As such, the scope of science is thought to be limited to the physical realm. The physical realm is, in turn, exclusively identified with the profane. However, the theoretical tenets of quantum physics have blurred the dividing line we have traditionally drawn between physical and non-physical realms. Matter and energy are no longer held as distinct phenomena. Body and mind have become unified. The sacred and profane may now be regarded as two sides to the same coin (Dennis, 1995).

Similarly, the feminist critique is playing a pivotal role in restructuring our society's concept of this fundamental polarity. In keeping with the predictions of author Naomi Goldenberg (1979), feminism is encouraging a unified view of body and mind as well as an immanent perspective of the divine in which case "divinity inhabits and is the very essence of the substance of the universe" (Campbell, 1973, p. 53). Once again, this obscures the boundary between the physical and non-physical dimensions. Moreover, the physical is regarded as inherently sacred and this contradicts the assumption that the physical realm is exclusively identified with the profane.

Finally, many of our popular beliefs and values are being called into question as we are confronted with the ever-escalating manifestation of environmental disaster. Some have cited our dualistic paradigm as the primary reason we are being propelled along this destructive path (Dowie, 1995; Spretnak, 1986). They hold that our common world view, in which the non-physical is sacred while the physical is profane, allows us to flagrantly abuse and exploit the material world. They further assert that it is only by adopting a unified

perspective, and thus cultivating a reverential appreciation for the physical world, that we shall cease to mistreat our planet.

Overall, it would seem that quantum physics, feminist discourse, and world ecology are collectively indicating a radical shift in our paradigm of the sacred and the profane. While these revolutionary forces suggest a uniformity to the nature and direction of our paradigm shift, the late renowned neuroscientist Roger Sperry is less definitive in his assessment. He notes that “beyond a growing sense that we are in a period of fundamental change, we lack any consensus regarding the precise nature of this change, its exact cause, what it means, or where it may be leading” (p. 8). This uncertainty is making for exciting and yet confusing times. Encompassing all three domains of art, science and religion, spiritually informed approaches to art therapy are fully involved in this dynamic process of change. Consequently, the theoretical and practical work in this field seems rich with possibility, controversy, transformation and diversity. Given such a manifold and mercurial state, it seems that research in this area requires a very open, exploratory attitude. As the next section on methodology will hopefully show, it is precisely this attitude that I tried to adopt in the course of this study.

Methodology

The essential aim of this research project was simply to discover and understand more about how spirituality is manifest within the theory and practice of art therapy. This methodology section describes my process for attempting to learn more in this respect. It is comprised of six subsections. The initial two subsections introduce my reasons for choosing a quantitative, heuristic research design. Next, I describe the formulation of my research question. This is followed by another two subsections each of which explains my criteria for defining the term *spirituality* as well as for selecting participants. The last subsection is a detailed account of my research procedure using the heuristic model of inquiry.

Adopting a Qualitative Research Approach

In my previous academic training, I was taught to value the highly disciplined and rigorous methods of classical science. Quite naturally I assumed that, even if I did not conduct an exclusively quantitative study, I would still incorporate many aspects of this approach into my research. As I prepared my proposal, however, it became clear to me that such a research style was not well-suited to my inquiry for a number of practical and philosophical reasons. Most importantly, I considered this research work to be inspired by and rooted in my own experience of spirituality and art therapy. Consequently, I saw my investigation as a continuation of my own spiritual growth which is an intuitively guided, self-exploration concerned with letting go or surrendering to the unknown. In this sense, the attributes of rationality, impersonality, prediction and control, which are associated with quantitative research, were antithetical to the essence of my research endeavour.

Moreover, while many art therapists acknowledge that spirituality is a vital part of their work, seldom does one encounter a detailed presentation of how, exactly, it is manifested or handled in the practice of art therapy. The subject of spirituality typically receives very little in-depth attention during professional training and is, to the best of my knowledge, almost never a main focus of consideration amongst colleagues when discussing therapeutic intervention. Given such a limited data base, the postulation of any hypothesis was extremely difficult, if not impossible. I considered extrapolating the findings of other psychotherapeutic professions to the practice of art therapy. However, many writers suggest that art holds a uniquely inherent relationship to spirituality (Lipsey, 1988). This made me reticent to generalize the findings associated with

the talk-based therapies to that of art therapy. Since the formulation of a hypothesis is a requirement of the quantitative method and the insufficient data base prohibited such a formulation, I concluded that a quantitative study was inadvisable at this time.

Choosing the Heuristic Model of Inquiry

Having realized that the qualitative approach was the best choice, I began to look for an appropriate research model by which to conduct my investigation. Thus far, three issues had emerged as core aspects of my inquiry. First, I knew that my own experiences of spirituality, art and healing would be intrinsic to my research process. Second, I was keenly aware of my own deep longing to share in a dialogue with other art therapists on the topic. Third, I felt an absolute commitment to ground my efforts in the creative process, thereby practicing what Shaun McNiff (1998) has called “art-based research.” The heuristic approach, as described by Douglass and Moustakas (1985) seemed most fitting. The authors indicate how the heuristic model would take these three core features of my research process into consideration. They explain that, “through exhaustive self-search, dialogues with others, and creative depictions of experience, a comprehensive knowledge is generated, beginning as a series of subjective musings and developing into a systematic and definitive exposition” (p. 40). The authors go on to observe that “perhaps more than any other component, passion in the process of discovery distinguishes heuristic search from other models of human science” (p. 41). This was, above all, the single most important feature of heuristic inquiry to me, particularly because I regarded this research to be a spiritual endeavour. I anticipated that my soul would be fully engaged in the work that lay ahead of me. It was, without doubt, a passionate and personal undertaking.

Formulation of the Research Question

As I have noted in the introductory chapter, I abandoned my initial question, “What are the practical and ethical issues associated with incorporating spirituality into an art therapy framework?” Instead, I embarked on this investigation with a very general desire to learn more about spirituality and art therapy. Characteristic of the heuristic method is the starting point of the self. In this initial phase, there is an open search of one’s own experience. It is called the immersion phase (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). In the course of my immersion in this area, I realized that the fullest expression of my own spirituality was

deeply inspired by the presence of an extremely non-judgmental, unconditionally accepting witness. Consequently, I developed a very open-ended research question that was intended to explore the relationship between spirituality and art therapy in as boundless a fashion as possible. That is, I decided to conduct individual, in-depth interviews of art therapists who were responding to the question, "How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?"

The Operational Definition of Spirituality

In keeping with my resolve to approach this inquiry from a position of openness, I did not generate an operational definition for the term *spirituality*. Furthermore, I did not want to limit the scope of my inquiry to my own current understanding of the word. Given that this research process is a continuation of my own spiritual growth, it did not make sense to restrict my exploration to what I already knew. Rather, I was wanting to go beyond my present state of understanding. It was my assumption that each participant would implicitly provide their own meaning for the term *spirituality* in their response to the research question.

Criteria for Selecting the Participants

Since spiritual matters are still not as overtly considered in practice or in training, I had trouble identifying art therapists who were especially attuned to and experienced in the spiritual dimension of art therapy. I was also concerned about whether or not potential participants would even be willing to risk expressing themselves freely and honestly in light of the taboos and reservations that still seemed to dominate mental health circles. In a practical sense, this prevented me from establishing any systematic rationale for selecting participants. It also disagreed with me to assign a label of *spiritual expertise* to anyone, for the same reason that I did not assign a definition to the word spirituality itself. It seemed contradictory to the spirit of openness for me to impose my own biases about who was able to impart valid spiritual knowledge. Therefore, I set a minimum prerequisite for participants whereby they needed to have graduated from an art therapy program accredited by the American Art Therapy Association. I waived this requirement for myself as I needed to complete this research in order to graduate from the AATA approved program at Concordia University. This educational precondition, along with a willingness to respond to my research question, was all that I required.

Research Procedures Using the Heuristic Model

In 1990, Clark Moustakas organized the heuristic research model into six phases. However, I chose an earlier article by Douglass and Moustakas (1985) in which only three main phases are described. I selected this previous work on the basis of its simplicity. I reasoned that the simpler design would also prove to be the more flexible one, allowing me greater freedom to spontaneously follow any emerging paths that might appear in the course of my inquiry. This earlier article provides a concise outline of the heuristic approach, highlighting its main attributes. In this section of my paper I give an overview of my research procedures and punctuate this account with relevant excerpts from the Douglass and Moustakas (1985) article. These quotes underscore the chief characteristics of the heuristic method. They have served as important and meaningful guideposts to my research effort. In some cases, they validated my own inclinations and intuitions. In other instances they actually determined what course of action I needed to take in order to further my inquiry.

In this earlier version, the first phase of the heuristic model involves “self-dialogue, and self-exploration” with the understanding that this “initial grounding in the self is an affirmation of subjectivity, and the most objective assessment is one that takes the personal viewpoint fully into account” (Douglass and Moustakas, 1985, p. 43). In keeping with this *immersion phase*, I began by reviewing the threads of healing, art and spirituality that ran through my own life. I looked at my art making process and product, my own healing experiences, including my time as an art therapy client, my spiritual history, as well as my education in psychology and art therapy. I sifted through my collection of various documents including books that had a profound impact on me, my personal journals, art work and memorabilia. I reflected on the synchronicities, insights, pivotal events and unspoken constants that gave my life its shape and meaning. I saturated myself in my own past and present experience in an effort to develop a deeper and clearer understanding of what spirituality and art therapy meant to me.

Douglass and Moustakas (1985) advise that, at some point in the immersion process, the researcher will have a “clear sense of the direction in which the theme or question is moving and will know (tacitly) what is required to illuminate it” (p. 48). This marks the beginning of data collection, called the *acquisition phase*, in which the researcher may be drawn to a variety of other sources that will “extend understanding of

or add richness to the knowing of the phenomenon in question” (p. 48). In my case I had already outlined a data collection strategy in my research proposal which I submitted prior to commencing research. However, as I began to involve myself in the second phase of the research process, my approach to data collection began to deviate from my original plan. I had initially proposed that I conduct confidential, individual, and in-depth interviews of several art therapists. Overall, the research committee accepted my proposal but countered with the suggestion that I collect my data from a focus group, rather than individual interviews. This idea really appealed to me as I was very eager to foster an open discussion of spirituality in the psychotherapeutic community, particularly amongst art therapists. Yet, my enthusiasm was thoroughly exhausted as I attempted to organize such a meeting. The problems were two-fold. Only three art therapists responded positively when I approached them through telephone and electronic mail. Secondly, my efforts to find a common meeting time amongst those three individuals were thwarted several times over. I could not seem to find a single time slot that was suitable to all three individuals. In the course of these logistical complications, my own interest in conducting a focus group began to flag. Moreover, I had wanted to have a minimum of six members in the focus group, including myself. I still needed to find two more participants. Another art therapist was recommended to me by a classmate. I approached this person by telephone and asked if he would be interested in participating in a focus group. His response was unequivocal. “No thank you.” However, he did have quite a few comments to make about spirituality and art therapy. For twenty minutes he spoke with passion and insight. I thanked him for his remarks and hung up. I was excited by his thoughtful observations, yet frustrated by his unwillingness to attend the focus group. Somehow, my attempt to organize a meeting concerned with spirituality and art therapy was not working out.

In his book “The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success,” Deepak Chopra talks about the “Law of Least Effort.” Based on Vedic teachings, the main principle of this law is summarized as “do less and accomplish more” (Chopra, 1994, p. 54). Unfortunately, things appeared to be completely the reverse at this point in my research. I was doing more and accomplishing less. Why? So often, in the past, I have spent an exorbitant amount of time and energy pushing on the locked doors of life while the open ones stood nearby, patiently waiting for me to cross their threshold. I had planned to run a focus group and so, with

determination, I pushed and pushed. Thus far, my efforts had been futile. Was the focus group a locked door? Or was the universe asking me to rise to a challenge? If I were conducting my research according to the rigors of classical science I would have held steadfast to the task of establishing a focus group. The research procedure would have been outlined on the basis of some logic and it would behoove me to adhere to the predetermined structure. However, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) explain that "learning that proceeds heuristically has a path of its own. It is self-directed, self-motivated, and open to spontaneous shift. It defies the shackles of convention and tradition" (p. 44). At that moment I felt that I was struggling against the universe. In my effort to learn more about spirituality and art therapy, I had concluded that my education was to be delivered via a focus group. However, in the course of my telephone conversation with this "declining" art therapist I began to understand that the universe had other plans. I decided to surrender, that is, to give up pushing on the locked door in favour of walking through the open one. Two hours after our initial conversation, I phoned this man back and asked if he would agree to an individual interview. He accepted without hesitation.

In short order, I scheduled individual interviews with a total of four art therapists. I met with each of these individuals at a mutually agreed upon location. As it turned out, I interviewed all four participants in the settings in which they performed their work as art therapists. I originally planned that the interviews should be no longer than 1.5 hours in duration. However, I readily extended the interview if the participant continued to respond to the research question beyond the scheduled time.

I assembled a small kit of art materials to be laid out prior to commencing the interview. The participants were told that they were welcome to use the materials at any time during the interview, though it was not a requirement. Moreover, they were also informed that they could use their own art materials if they preferred. The art materials that I supplied included a set (18 colours) of gouache water colour paints with various brushes, one set (25 colours) of Nupastel dry pastels and one set (25) of Pentel oil pastels. In addition, I provided a 9" x 12" tablet of watercolor quality (90 lb.) paper and one 9" x 12" tablet of premium quality drawing (80 lb.) paper. If art was made in the course of our meeting, the participant was invited to reflect on its significance during the interview. If needed, I retained the art work for research purposes with the understanding that it would be returned to the artist upon completion of this paper.

At the beginning of the interview, I explained that my research question was “How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?” I elaborated on the question whenever it seemed necessary. For example, on two occasions I clarified that the participant’s response might reflect their own experiences and/or that of their clients; that they could describe their experiences in physical, emotional, intellectual and/or spiritual terms; that they could respond verbally and/or visually; and that their responses could include the artistic, therapeutic, and/or spiritual aspect.

After each meeting, I made a verbatim transcript of the interview. The time taken to draw up each transcript varied depending on the length of the interview and the quality of the recording. The printed versions of the interviews were completed no more than two weeks after the interview. Shortly after completing the transcript I would read it over completely. Immediately following this reading, I would create an image that expressed my response to the transcribed interview. I used my small kit of art materials for this art making exercise as well. I also sent each participant a completed copy of their transcribed interview. I asked them to read their interview and invited them to make changes to their comments in whatever way they wished. This step allowed them to censor any material that, in retrospect, they did not wish to have included in the study. Likewise, it was meant to give them the opportunity to elaborate on or modify their remarks after seeing them in written form. At this time, I also asked participants for clarification if I was unsure of the wording or meaning of a particular passage.

I was in contact with each of the participants after they had the opportunity to review and make changes to their transcribed interview. This second contact, in which I received feedback, varied with each person. In one case we conducted a second recorded interview. Additional art work was not made by the participant during this second interview. Nor did I create any image after transcribing this second session. In another case the participant reported over the telephone that she did not have any changes to her transcript. We did not require a follow-up meeting. I met the other two participants individually to receive their edited transcripts. During our meetings, they both verbally elaborated on the changes that they had written down, however, I did not audio tape-record their comments.

After completing all four primary interviews, I asked one of the participants if she would interview me on the topic, posing the same question “How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?” I asked

this particular participant because she was a classmate of mine and I had developed a good rapport with her. We conducted this recorded interview in my home. Art was not made during my own interview. As with the other participants, however, I made a transcript of my interview. Several days later, I reread the transcript, edited my comments as I saw fit, and then proceeded to make an image in response to my own interview.

After gathering the data, I entered the last phase of the heuristic research study, which is known as the “realization phase.” Here, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) say that

the challenge is to examine all the collected data in creative combinations and recombinations, sifting and sorting, moving rhythmically in and out of appearance, looking, listening carefully for the meanings within meanings, attempting to identify the overarching qualities that inhere in the data. (p. 52)

This meant spending many hours simply looking at the art images and writing my spontaneous reflections as I observed them. Simultaneously, I read each of the transcripts many times over. In total, there were 275 pages of transcribed interview. Consequently, I codified, selected, analyzed and organized the verbal material according to the “constant comparative method” of data analysis introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967). I referred to Maykut and Morehouse’s (1994) application of this method as a technical resource. I direct the reader to the original references to understand this approach to handling qualitative data. I chose this particular method because the authors reported that this inductive analysis of qualitative data allowed them to understand their research subject with a “minimum of interpretation”. Even though they conducted “rigorous and systematic analysis of the data,” they were still able to “stay close to the research participants’ feelings, thoughts and actions” (p.135). This is appealing because it promises to help preserve the essential integrity of each participant’s unique contribution.

I examined the data on two levels. First, I looked at the data on an individual basis. I organized the response material of each participant into a separate profile which highlights the “overarching qualities associated with the individual (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985). These profiles are presented in the results chapter under the subheading “Profiles of the Participants.” Second, I considered the data on a collective basis. Here the “overarching qualities” are expressed as key themes which were shared by all participants. I

provide an overview of these themes in the discussion chapter under the subheading "Common Threads."

Owing to the small number of participants, these findings are more speculative than conclusive. Therefore, I have chosen to include them in the discussion, rather than the results chapter.

In order to further safeguard the sum and substance of each participant's work, I gave them a first-draft copy of their profile, inviting them to make any changes they felt were needed. I hope that their ongoing and evolutionary participation in this research helps them to feel accurately and fully represented in the final presentation of this study. I have also quoted each participant verbatim as frequently as possible. In this way, and through my own participation as an interviewee, I also hope to minimize the distinction between subject and researcher common to the conventions of traditional quantitative research.

Results

I have divided the presentation of the results into two parts. In the first part, I highlight some of the understandings that I first arrived at while in the immersion phase of this research. These understandings have been organized into four subsections that represent my core personal themes which emerged during the initial stage of this inquiry. These themes include the matter of talking about spirituality within a psychotherapeutic context, the need to find an acceptable balance between scientific and religious perspectives, the spiritual value of the art process and product, and lastly, the nature of spiritual wounds, healing and growth.

Following my account of the results gathered in the immersion phase, I report the findings of the acquisition phase in which data was gathered by conducting individual, in-depth interviews of five art therapists, including myself. The results are presented in the form of individual profiles of each interviewee's response to the question "How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?" The profiles consist of both the verbal discourse and art work presented by each participant. Additionally, I complement each profile with a brief commentary and drawing of my own that expresses my reaction to the material shared by each participant.

The Immersion Phase

The immersion phase is, indeed, a difficult process. There is no predetermined formula outlining the course of action one should take in order to arrive at a greater understanding of one's chosen subject. I spent untold hours wading through personal documents, sifting through memories and attending to the present experiences that constitute my life. Often I was completely lost, overwhelmed, and frustrated by seemingly endless and unconnected streams of minutiae. I was trying to find the place and meaning that art, healing and spirituality all held in my life. With persistence, some understandings eventually arrived. Many themes, or what Patricia Fenner (1996) calls "personal threads of meaning" emerged in this process. Using the "constant comparative method" of data analysis by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and applied by Maykut and Morehouse (1994), I was able to organize these themes into four main categories. They are entitled "Speaking out about spirituality," "Science versus religion," "Art as process and product," and "Spiritual wounds, healing and growth."

Speaking out about spirituality.

When I first entered the art therapy program at Concordia University I was certain that my research efforts would be concerned with some aspect of domestic violence. For me, this has been a long-standing area of interest and I did not anticipate any change in my direction. However, during my practicum, my path took a sharp turn when I was alone with a patient for the first time in the role of an art therapy intern. As he picked up an oil pastel and the image began to manifest on the blank sheet of paper I felt a profound sense of awe. Although it had been two decades since I gave up Catholicism, I recall stifling the inexplicable urge to make the sign of the cross. I was witnessing one of the most sacred moments I had ever known in my life. With little more than a month of art therapy training under my belt I hesitated to say too much about the experience. The high ideal of maintaining at least the outward appearance of “clinical detachment” was uppermost in my mind. I dreaded being discovered as the inapt and bewildered novice. I decided to reserve my shuddering amazement for more confidential circles and, instead, tried to present a more poised, worldly manner while attending class and supervision.

My previous academic background had taught me to be cautious about making any mention of spirituality in relation to psychotherapy. I had been an undergraduate student in the humanities during the late 1970's. Back then, I prided myself in partaking in the secularized cause of establishing the “modern science of psychology.” Like many of my contemporaries in psychology, I believed that effective therapeutic interventions would best be discovered through quantitative, positivistic, empirical research. Reasoning that the soul could not be subjected to such scientific scrutiny, I regarded it as an intruder in the psychological domain. Yet, in spite of my fervent enthusiasm for the quantitative approach, I was continuously plagued by the aching sense that something essential was always missing from my exploration of the human condition. In my final year of school, my burning passion for psychology suddenly reduced itself to a few warm ashes and I walked out of university with a baccalaureate and no intentions of pursuing graduate work.

As I began my studies in the art therapy program some twenty years later, I reflected on how much had changed in my life. Although I was, once again, involving myself in a healing profession, I was now in art therapy and not clinical or experimental psychology. Nevertheless, I was doing my art therapy practicum

in a psychiatric hospital and was presently joining the staff team of mental health professionals. In this way, it appeared that I had once again become a member of the wider discipline of psychology. Even though it seemed probable that the biases, assumptions and conventions of psychology might also have changed over the past two decades, I highly doubted that the discipline had lost its secularized, scientific roots altogether. This added to my conclusion that my best course of action was to lie low and let my teachers, supervisors and colleagues broach the subject of spirituality first. Once they identified spirituality as a legitimate concern of psychotherapeutic work, I would then step forward and share my experiences and observations. And so I waited. And I waited. However, the subject of spirituality was never raised by any staff member during the team meetings I attended at both of my practicum sites. Nor did our class discussions, readings and assignments ever specifically address the topic of spirituality.

Although spirituality was conspicuous by its absence in these formal situations, it was very much a part of my experience as an art therapy student. I had many informal conversations with my classmates on the topic. Moreover, I might also recount that several staff members at one of my practicum sites confided in me that prayer was a routine part of their therapeutic strategy even though such efforts were never acknowledged during our weekly team meetings. Thus, spirituality seems to be alive and well amongst a considerable number of psychotherapeutic practitioners and yet it fails to be openly discussed. Regardless, however, of whether or not the broader community of art therapists choose to speak of the soul, or use the word spirituality, my clients brought their spiritual questions and understandings to our sessions. "Where does the soul go when someone dies?" "I don't want to practice the same faith as my parents." "How will I ever forgive them?" "Why is God doing this?" These questions were confronting and challenging. I was not sure how to respond. Were they, as Michael Robbins proposes, simply defenses or might they be also be understood as the sincere searching of the soul (Luzzatto et al., 1996)? I struggled.

Indeed, during my second year in the program, my supervisor worked hard to try and help me find a philosophical position that suited me. It was often a painful and frustrating process. Many times I felt really at odds with most of the psychological theory that was presented in our course and practicum work. It was as if I was looking for something else, perhaps another model or frame from which to practice healing work. As an intern, I sensed that many moments of the art therapy process were pregnant with spiritual

significance. Still, I scarcely knew how to negotiate the issue for my client and/or myself. My own spiritual awakening was so recent, that I was not sure of my ability to provide the necessary support to my clients in this regard. Even if I were to explore spiritual issues with my clients, the relative lack of the subject in my training led me to believe that I couldn't rely on receiving the necessary supervisory and academic guidance in this regard. Perhaps I was being overly pessimistic, but the simple truth was that my supervisors and teachers did not formally bring the topic of spirituality into my training. It seemed to me that, by its omission, the matter was not meant to be part of my work as an art therapist.

Nevertheless, spirituality was very present in my private conversations with clients, classmates and practicum colleagues. This contrast between what happens overtly and what takes place covertly inspired my desire to foster candid, open discourse on spirituality within the art therapy community. After some earnest deliberation, I decided to make spirituality the focus of my graduate research. As I started to prepare my proposal, I discovered that there were a sizable number of published art therapists who freely discussed the spiritual dimension, or the "soul," of art therapy (Allen, 1995; Horovitz-Darby, 1994; McNiff, 1992; Moon, 1997). While their writings were rarely on our required reading lists, I was heartened to know of their contribution. I submitted my research proposal and, somewhat to my surprise, found that the faculty did not seem to have any resistance to my exploration of what I called "spiritually-informed approaches to art therapy." On the contrary, they were generally quite enthusiastic and supportive. At the time I puzzled over why, as an individual student, I was being encouraged to research an area that was never directly or specifically addressed in our curriculum. Although it was recognized as a legitimate avenue of study, it didn't somehow seem to warrant a formal place in our education. I wondered if many other art therapy students felt something was missing or was I really only one of a few who longed for the opportunity to learn more about spirituality in relation to the practice of art therapy? Why weren't we all clamoring for our program to include readings, assignments and discussion on such an essential aspect of our human existence?

Perhaps I will never find the answers to any of these questions. However, one thing I do know is that my initial practicum experience taught me that spirituality is, without question, a very palpable and powerful presence in the context of art therapy. Consequently, I want to learn more from my peers and principals about their notions and experiences in this regard.

Science versus religion.

Through the self searching process of the immersion phase, I became keenly aware of my long-standing and intense struggle to position myself in relation to both traditionally scientific and religious perspectives. As a child I had been raised in the Roman Catholic faith. Like many of my peers, I questioned the core tenets of this religious doctrine. Still, I observed its teachings and was an active member of my church in my early twenties. During this same period, I was studying psychology at university. It was the latter half of the 1970's, a time in which psychology was busy trying to establish itself as a scientific discipline. Although something about this endeavour felt inauthentic to me, I was very committed to the effort. Cognizant of my religious affiliation, one of my psychology instructors challenged me to examine and compare the philosophical roots underlying science and religion. In keeping with the prevailing paradigm of that time, I concluded that science and religion were mutually exclusive domains. The acceptance of one domain necessarily implied a rejection of the other. When confronted by this absolute division between science and religion, I ultimately decided to abandon the pursuit of any endeavour that required me to espouse one particular perspective over the other. That is, I was not able to persuade myself to adopt a purely religious attitude, nor could I embrace an exclusively scientific assumption of reality. By 1980 I had left both the church and the human science of psychology. Since that time, however, Western society has been demonstrating something of a paradigm shift. More specifically, many institutions and disciplines appear to be making a philosophical reconciliation between science and religion. This change is rooted in the theory of modern or quantum physics. Since it was first presented in the 1920's, this "new science" has yielded a number of discoveries that are prompting us to reconsider the dividing line once thought to separate physical and non-physical phenomena (Dennis, 1995; Elkins, 1995; Horovitz-Darby, 1994, Sperry, 1995). The infiltration of quantum physics theory into our common understanding is resulting in the creation of spaces which integrate both scientific and religious realities. Art therapy, particularly when it is practiced in a spiritually informed way, appears to be one of those recently emerging, integrated spaces.

In taking this introspective journey, I have come to a clearer understanding of why a spiritually informed approach to art therapy is so deeply satisfying to me. Its appeal lies in the fact that it holds great promise as a holistic therapeutic model that integrates the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual

dimensions of human nature. It is my personal philosophy that much of the pathos of our lives is a result of being in a *dis-integrated* state, whereby one's emotions, sensations, ideas and soulful passions are compartmentalized, often with the expectation that these aspects can function independent of one another. By drawing an absolute division between science and religion, Western society has reflected and perpetuated these disintegrated states. This fragmentation, which is so prevalent within us as individuals and as a culture, often results in painful conflicts and imbalances between mind, body, heart and soul. Accordingly, I consider the primary goal of therapy to be the restoration of the person to a wholesome state of integration, harmony and balance. Yet, I ask the question, "How can we recreate integrated, harmonious and balanced wholeness in our lives and the lives of our clients if our therapeutic model is not founded on such principles to begin with?" Spiritually informed approaches to art therapy seems more than preferable. In fact, they seem utterly essential.

Art as process and product.

A second important area that became evident during the immersion phase concerns my dual appreciation of art as both a spiritual process and a spiritual product. In my research last year, I observed that many art therapists who embrace a spiritually informed approach to art therapy often place a good deal of emphasis on the therapeutic gains derived from an investment in the art making process (Allen, 1995; McNiff, 1992, 1998; Moon 1997). I am wholeheartedly enthusiastic about this perspective since I have consistently experienced both spirituality and healing as a salient and inherent part of my art making process. Twice in my academic career I've been asked to make formal statements about my reasons for making art. Until recently, art making has occurred very sporadically throughout my life. Initially, my artistic expressions emerged as intuitive, spontaneous responses to moments of extreme emotional hardship. The healing benefits of art were unquestionably apparent to me. I concentrated upon the healing aspect of art making the first time I responded to this question. Eventually, I became quite conscious of the spiritual dimension of my art making. The following quote is excerpted from an artist's statement that I presented the second time I answered the question, "Why do you make art?"

My art expression has become an increasingly private spiritual practice for me. To speak of my exploration of art is to give equal reference to my search for an authentic, personal spirituality.

They are inextricably woven efforts, perhaps even synonymous. Given the intimate nature and profound mystery of the subject, it is difficult to publicly attach words to my spiritual art experiences, but the verbal terms would be those of worship, of reverence, of prayer, of divinity, of awe...

I consider all my art pieces to be ephemeral. It is the process that matters most. As ritual, it is only during the making of art that I am in full dialogue with the divine. Preparing for and reflecting on my art work is secondary to the ecstatic experience of being actively engaged in its creation....I have questioned whether the word "art," itself is appropriate, meaningful or necessary for me to use. Ultimately, when I consider making art, I realize it is simply my way of praying.

When I wrote this statement I was quite convinced that my engagement with my finished art works was less spiritually significant than my engagement in the art making process itself. I became less certain of this as I continued my research.

Throughout the immersion phase I reflected upon the images that I had made in the past, especially those which I created while I was an art therapy client. It was then that I began to question my contention that the process of making art was spiritually more important than the contemplation of the completed work. I speculated what possibilities the images held for furthering my own spiritual growth and healing. Moreover, I wondered how to go about realizing their potential. There is some controversy amongst art therapists about how best to treat the finished art work. Various philosophies and approaches have been put forth. Some art therapists suggest that the remaining image, in its physicality, provides a quantifiable record which can serve as the basis for clinical diagnoses, assessment and evaluation (Case, 1998; Feder & Feder, 1998; Gantt, 1998; Williams, Agell, Gantt, & Goodman, 1996; Kramer & Iager, 1984). While the majority restrict their analyses to the emotional, intellectual and physical dimensions, Horovitz-Darby (1994) presents an assessment tool for estimating the spiritual belief or disbelief in God in her book "Spiritual Art Therapy." Others, such as Shaun McNiff (1992), remain cautious, if not critical, of reductive approaches to works of art. He declares that "when the images in art are labeled, my reactions are emotional. There is a sense that something sacred has been violated" (p. 80).

With these various standpoints in mind, I tried to develop a deeper understanding of what my own art work means to me. I entertained many possibilities. I contemplated whether or not my images are the “ensouled” beings, or “angels” that McNiff (1992) describes. I also considered that they might be the outward manifestations of my intellectual, physical and emotional states and abilities. Alternatively, I looked at them as the remaining physical documents which give testimony to my encounters and experiences with other spiritual energies. I wondered. Perhaps, all these different perspectives could be applied to each one of my images. In the context of these possibilities, I reviewed my past experiences and art works as an art therapy client.



Figure One

For example, the image in Figure One reawakened some long-forgotten and painful memories concerning a conflict I had with one of the nuns in my parish. Although my image was concerned with a difficulty that arose during my time in a parochial school, my examination of this image remained within the limits of a secularized perspective. In other words, I did not consciously consider the spiritual significance

of the image, but looked at it in emotional and intellectual terms only. I recall feeling satisfied with the process that my art therapist and I conducted as we explored this image together.



Figure Two

In the instance of Figure Two, on the other hand, I remember feeling frustrated after trying to look at it during one of my art therapy sessions. For me, this image was, and still is, the embodiment of a spiritual presence. Nevertheless, the nature of this mystical figure and the spiritual reality that it holds for me was never verbally identified in the session. I left the appointment feeling empty and restless. What I most wanted to do was to somehow be a witness to this ensouled being. Yet, in my naiveté at the time, I did not know how this could be accomplished. I felt as if the very essence of the image had been overlooked. Happily, Shaun McNiff's (1992) "image dialoguing" process has since provided me with the means to interact with the image in a way that acknowledges and respects the truth about it as a spiritual presence in my life.

Finally, Figure Three reveals an image which, in retrospect, may have been equally frustrating to my art therapist. In a variety of ways, she raised questions about the shaft of light that reaches through the open

doorway, barely tangent with the rose. I had described the rose itself as something of a self-portrait. Though I was eager to contemplate the symbolism of my art work, I was equally puzzled by my art therapist's persistent interest. "It's a ray of light," I explained concretely after her third attempt to encourage me to elaborate on its signification. I still recall her dropping the matter. As the session came to an end there was

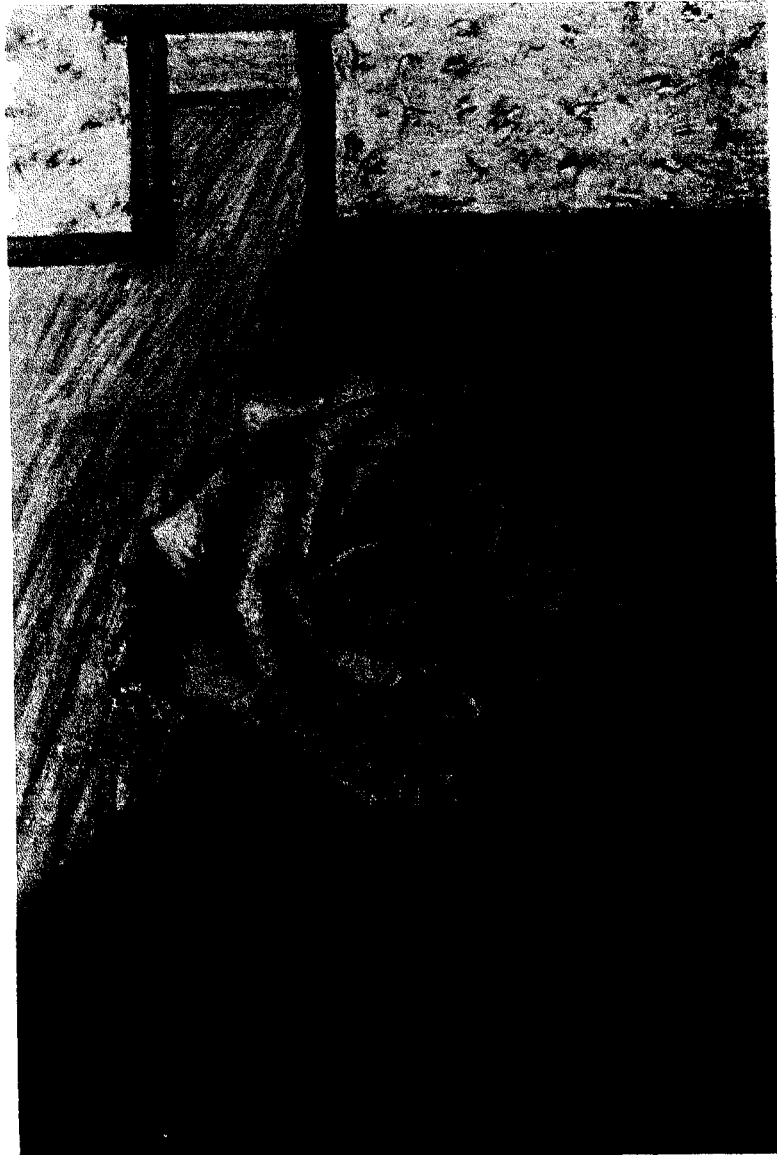


Figure Three

an unfinished feeling hanging in the air. Two years would pass by before I would have a flash of insight. My revelation came unexpectedly as I read an article by art therapist Deborah Good (1993). She observed that, in working with terminally ill patients, "spirit guides appeared in the upper left-hand corner of the paper" (p.

12). I immediately recognized the shaft of light as a representation of the illuminating spiritual guidance that was active in my life at the time. When I made this particular image my life was characterized by an unprecedented number of synchronicities which nurtured and directed my effort to become an art therapist. I see Figure Three as a record of my experience with a spiritual force that was instrumental in shaping the events of my life. This does not preclude me from interpreting this image in emotional or intellectual terms. Nor does it prevent me from regarding it as an ensouled being. All three perspectives seem valid. Thus, as I see it, both the process and the product of art making hold rich and complex spiritual possibilities.

Spiritual wounds, healing and growth.

A third area of personal meaning emerged while I was in the immersion phase of this research. It concerned the matter of trying to identify and understand the nature of my own spiritual wounds, healing and growth. I wondered how to define my own spiritual wounds. The literature contained a number of descriptions. For example, some discuss the spiritual woundedness of those who have been exposed to severe physical and/or emotional abuse (Hunter, 1990). Some suggest that extreme mistreatment can result in a robbing of the soul. Still others have highlighted the pervasive "loss of soul" that is taking place in our current cultural milieu. They suggest that we incur this loss because we are alienated from participating in the activities and processes that are essential to the creation, or at least nurturing, of our souls (McNiff, 1992; Moon, 1997; Moore, 1992). Spiritual wounding is also seen, by some, to be perpetuated through religious organizations. Thom Hart (1994) talks about *bad* spirituality, in which the ultimate authority of God is used to dominate or manipulate individuals into meeting the agendas of "mere human ideas" (p. 30). Others speak of wounds that arise from being reared in a faith that does not resonate with one's authentic spirituality (McGaa, 1990). Feminist writers have also drawn attention to the injuries that arise when a religious system implicitly or explicitly assigns varying degrees of spiritual worthiness to its members, women generally being of less value than men in traditional religious organizations (Ballou, 1995; Goldenberg, 1979).

It was in the course of my own therapy that I first consciously got in touch with the pain of my own spiritual wounds. Before involving myself in art therapy, I had been doing my personal healing work with a psychotherapist who employed an eclectic approach. Primarily, he emulated a Rogerian attitude, used

cognitive-behavioral techniques and emphasized “inner child” work as outlined by Charles Whitfield (1987). After having addressed many of the issues that had challenged me over the years, my therapist posed the question “What about your spiritual life?” Although I had come to trust this man to unprecedented levels, I suddenly felt myself recoil. “Or do you want to remain a *spiritual child* forever?” he continued. I was stinging. Then, very gently he suggested that I simply try writing out my spiritual history. This I did.

For the purposes of this heuristic inquiry, I asked myself what I had gained by exploring my spirituality in this psychotherapeutic frame. Retrospectively, I concluded that expressing my authentic spirituality was the ultimate act of liberation. I was exploring this dimension in the context of a therapeutic relationship that I had come to know and trust for its Rogerian *unconditional positive regard* (Rogers, 1959). I was not being judged or corrected as I opened myself up to honestly give voice to my own unique spirituality. In doing this, the nature and proportions of my spiritual wounds became apparent. Moreover, as I identified my wounds, I began to see the path I would need to take in order to promote my own spiritual healing and growth. In consequence, I felt a dramatic increase in my ability to realize joy in my life. The true nature of my soul was being welcomed and accepted by my therapist, and more importantly by myself. To-date, it remains the single-most empowering experience I have had in the context of my own psychotherapy.

As I progressed through the immersion phase, many aspects of my own spiritual nature became much clearer. With this clarity I was, in turn, better able to envision the next stage in my research, that is the acquisition phase. It was through a concentrated exploration of my own experience that I realized that my primary aim was to cultivate a formal and open dialogue amongst art therapists. As I embarked upon the acquisition phase I hoped that the insights and discoveries I had garnered during the immersion phase would help me to better appreciate the profound and personal knowledge that was shared by each participant.

Profiles of the Participants

The introspective orientation of the immersion phase helped shape the course of my inquiry as I progressed into the acquisition phase. Especially important, was the insight that my own spiritual exploration was best nurtured by the presence of an unconditionally accepting witness. This was precisely the role filled by my therapist. It was under these circumstances that, perhaps for the first time, I was truly

able to freely experience and express my authentic spiritual voice. This had two streams of influence on my research approach. First of all, I was committed to creating an environment that was as open and unconditionally accepting as possible. I felt this would better allow each participant to share something of their own spirituality in whatever way they wanted. Thus, I formulated my question in an open-ended way and did not define such words as spirituality, art therapy or art. Rather, I left it to each person to respond to the question "How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?" according to their own definitions and understandings of these terms. Secondly, I realized how important it had been for me to have been witnessed. With this in mind, I decided to ask one of the participants to interview me in the hope that their witnessing would allow me to look more deeply and consciously into my own spiritual frame of reference. As a result, I have also included a recounting of the thoughts and art I expressed in the context of my own interview.

In this section I present a separate portrait of each participant's verbal and visual responses to the question "How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?" Although they are extremely condensed, I hope that these profiles will provide an accurate and sufficiently comprehensive representation of the essential qualities and knowledge each person so generously shared. As much as possible, I quote the exact words used by each person in order to best preserve the precise meaning intended by the original speaker.

Loria.

I spoke with Loria for approximately one hour before he proceeded to create an image with dry pastel. In total, the interview lasted 2 hours. As he generously shared his thoughts and experiences, he revealed a long and committed search for an authentic spiritual life. From his early childhood on, he was exposed to both Eastern and Western religious teachings. At different times over the years he has been actively involved in both Buddhist and Christian practices. Ultimately he has not embraced one theological perspective over the other, but seems to have affinities and difficulties with both.

Maybe all my life there was always this dual thinking. I went to school to learn one thing and when I came home it was something else. It was as if I was always experiencing a counter, an opposition. It's as if I had to fare my little way and try to keep my head together with what I was learning in school and not be influenced by what was thought at home. But at the same time, at the

seminary it was the reverse. I said, 'You know, it seems to me that we're not talking about Eastern thinking here.'

In addition to questioning the limitations of an exclusively Eastern or Western spiritual perspective, Loria has also examined the underlying reasons for his investment in organized religion.

I've just gone through a period where, for the last 10 years, there's been a process of a kind. A javelage [bleaching] ...where you actually operate a kind of transformation in maybe logical child thinking in terms of religion, in terms of spirituality, because I think that...I really turned to religion all the time during my life because it was my escape, it was a way for me to find solace.

Further considering his participation in organized religion, Loria found value in Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

You begin with the Pre-conventional phase where you are part of everything—an embeddedness. You're a baby so you don't really have any distance and then you're into impulse. You just do things. It's the doing that is attractive or whenever you see something you want to touch it. Then [there is] the phase which is more intentional, the Conventional phase, [where] you do things because you want to be loved or you do things because you learn to manipulate, you learn to have intention. I realized that Conventional also has to do with clans and sects, where [there is] the sense of belonging [and of] wanting to belong. So [there is] the gang, and then the group, and then the religious group—being secure by following the rules within a group. Then the Post-conventional means becoming able to make a decision because it feels right and it doesn't matter if the whole group is in accord or not. You feel strongly that this is what needs to be done and how, maybe, things should be looked at. No longer [are you]...so much in need of being recognized or approved of, a sense of approbation and all that. And then the last one is Radical Empathy. Well it's like Mother Theresa, where it's not even whether you're in accord or not in accord. You're not needing approbation. It's an immediate response in the heart.

In a similar stream of thought, Loria talked about the notion of relationship and its relevance to spirituality.

There's another definition of spirituality which I entertained for a while and which I like. It was that the spiritual is also the relational. That, to me, is also another avenue where, "How do we

relate?" "How can we relate?" Because religion is supposed to be about relating. But it was somehow related to something up there....So it's as if this experience of having to talk about the spirit is like bringing me on the territory of the relationship with the other— the other with the big O and the other with the little o.

Certainly, his art work (Figure Four) and his spoken observations are both concerned with a spiritual connection between the self and the other.



Figure Four

You know [the baby] looks like it's praying....It's inside the womb and it's praying. That felt like the birth channel... it also feels like there's a silence and a stillness and a quietness right now. Also they say that the baby has a sense of light through the skin ..otherwise it's darker inside. It's

something that makes me feel serene... Well, I don't know if the word praying....it's...it's... the baby is actually recognizing. It's as if...it's like the Hindu gesture, he's recognizing. He is recognizing this light and...it's not thankful. It's just recognizing. It's just staying and worshipping or respecting what's there, what's coming....The baby is saluting the light. What comes to me now is, "How can it be so simple?" You know, half the time you try to communicate and somehow...either what's coming is difficult to just allow in, or...what you're saying is not recognized as valid.

He also suggested that art and art therapy can play a special role in the experience we have with the other.

Art therapy is keeping some sense of anchorage in the mental world, in the world of images, in the world of what has always been so difficult to imagine or to have some grasp on. Where somehow the capacity to make images is maybe what's the closest to our relationship with the invisible.

Since the dawn of ages people have been making pictures to try to have an image of what is other than us.... It's as if I have to create the image for the image to be with me. If there is going to be any spirituality, it's as if you have to keep inventing it, investing in it. We give it existence by recognizing that it's there and we do the reverse, if we don't recognize that there is something outside [ourselves], even of the other person.

Moreover, he brought spirituality, art and therapy together in the following passage.

It's as if spirituality, to me, becomes, maybe here, a dialogue with yourself and things created become...the mirror. ...The image somehow helps [one] to feel connected. To feel connected because the feeling was oftentimes a difficulty to feel alive (depression) or a difficulty to tolerate the feelings. Emerging in art therapy, because I had done art before and somehow it wasn't the same, it's as if it's a permission. It's an invitation to reveal yourself...to put something on paper which is like an echo of what's inside. I found release. I found that I could transform a state of malaise. Upon the suggested habit, I would come home and I would spend an hour just drawing and feeling that, if there was some tension, all of a sudden I felt it was gone. So it had somehow a certain healing power. A certain power to heal, maybe, something inside.

Indeed, our meeting occurred within the context of spiritual art therapy. Loria explained,

I'm moved by the whole process. It's very strange. It's as if I was doing some art therapy which I haven't done for a long time, but from a different set up. It's presented to me differently. "Hey you need to do some art therapy, I'm going to send you somebody!"...Because I couldn't have done this by myself. I needed some kind of a preliminary of some sort, you know, to set me up and find where I am.

In some measure, I had become a mirror to Loria. He went on to describe more about the efforts to experience the mirroring of others.

For instance, I was struck by the fact about how our mates are also other attempts to have this mirroring and idealizing transference that we never really had and, of course, at first it's bliss that you have somebody that looks at you and then life goes on and babies come and maybe there's not as much of a mutual admiration kind of society. But it's as if you're a new person and you come in and it's as if...I'm constantly [thinking], "Oh here, somebody that wants to look at me." And, gee, something inside is really there pitching....It's as if it's a gradual laying down of defenses and showing the need. I'm surprised. It's like it's beautiful like that too.

Loria then talked about the consequence of not being mirrored. In addition, he described how the images we create can reassure us through their capacity to serve as mirrors.

I'm reading a book on the Self that insists so much on the process of empathy, on image and mirroring and so the importance of *le regard de la mère et du père*. If that looking is not adequate and there is someone that is not invested enough, then the person...kind of turns in on themselves. They have to become self-absorbed because there is nothing from the outside to keep them in the mirroring, which is a growth mirroring in a way. So they're left to just look at themselves in a way that they are self-absorbed. ...it's maybe that you stop thinking that there is something that's looking at you and, therefore, you no longer invest in this rapport and so become self-absorbed. It's like I said, what is, is what I feel or what I am or what I do, but there is more. When you do the art somehow, you [create] something that looks back at you and somehow this is reassuring. This is where the image becomes something that comes back. It offers mirroring.

In these next passages, Loria elaborated on the painful consequence of not being mirrored. He expressed this as a feeling of abandonment. Poignantly, he viewed his image in the horizontal position and commented, "It's almost like Moses in the basket on the Nile....abandoned but protected and somehow abandoned to some kind of a destiny."



Figure Five

Keeping the drawing horizontal, he spoke more about his own sense of being an abandoned infant.

I almost needed to go back into the womb to talk with you....it's like I want to show you my baby....I need somebody to see the baby.....Maybe this is the inside of me and there's a distance because it's hard to, well, maybe unconsciously I shrink back to being the baby. The baby that was not wanted. The baby that was...somehow I felt abandoned.

Loria explained that abandonment occurs in different ways, observing that "just like our parents somehow managed to desert us and frustrate us, also the whole world of spirituality and religion does the same thing". More specifically, he depicts his orientation in relation to the other as an inner as well as an outer

experience. Referring to a painful time in his life, he later remarked, "I was very disenchanted and gradually suicidal and...I called inside to God for help all the time." He continued,

I find I still have this kind of inner dialogue, it's as if it's a crazy dialogue, but sometimes it's the only possible dialogue. When things cannot be handled from a rational perspective, there's like this calling inside, this trying inside to be in contact with something that can make things clearer, somehow put meaning or put perspective in what seems to be totally chaotic.

He gave an example of a television program which illustrates the inwardly and outwardly turned duality of relating to the other. The program profiled a men's personal growth and healing group.

[Fathers] got together and they danced and they did all these rituals and things and tried to restore some sense of being in touch with the deep nature, the soul....There were, later in the program, the young boys [who] then talked together about their experience of their fathers, what their fathers were like with them. Then the fathers made a promise that they would have a better, more meaningful kind of relationship with their sons....It felt like trying to connect with in there and out there.

After re-reading the transcript of my interview with Loria, I sat down and proceeded to make an image (Figure Six). Several weeks later I was struck by the resonance between my drawing and the following quote by Loria. This excerpt was particularly surprising to me because I had forgotten the passage and was not conscious of it at the time I made the image.

They say that the therapist often times can't make it because he has personal feelings which come between the client and himself. So when the client really has this narcissistic...need to be appreciated and is able to express his exhibitionistic need to be somebody, then sometimes the therapist can get either bored or annoyed because for some reason he has a hard time being totally generous. And something inside of him prevents him. So it frustrates the needs of the client.

There is an example of the client who brings his personal life story to the therapist....and the therapist... couldn't hide his annoyance of this book being presented to him. He saw it as a distance in the process. And the same night the man had a dream that he had caught a big fish and brought it home to show his father and his father had made remonstrances...he had reproaches

instead of appreciating the catch. So he had a second dream, this was about Christ crucified. So, same thing, relationship with the father. It's like crucifying himself to please the father so...we're feeling crucified. We're abandoned by the father. So that struck me a lot, that image, this relationship with the therapist who was not able to hide his incapacity to totally be able to hold, or [provide] the good-enough holding. So the client felt kind of not safe and he had a dream about dying, being abandoned.



Figure Six

As I looked at my drawing and thought about Loria's comments on feeling abandoned, I recognized my own feelings of spiritual abandonment. Being raised in the Catholic faith, I had watched men and boys conduct religious rituals while we women and girls looked on. Our contact with the divine seemed somehow more removed, less vital. In this sense, I had felt abandoned. In turn, I eventually abandoned the Christian faith. Somehow, it was not a "good-enough" mirror for me. It did not hold or reflect the image of my soul. On the other hand, Loria's spontaneous and open way of sharing provided a clear reflection that allowed me to see this spiritual wound from my past. My own sense of abandonment was reflected back to me. In the

same instant, however, I also encountered an unspeakably deep feeling of communion. It is a mysterious quality of the mirroring process which allows one to simultaneously experience these two contrary emotions. As our interview came to a close, I believe Loria articulated a similar sentiment while he contemplated his image in which the “abandoned” infant waits alone in the dark, oriented toward the rays of light that are reaching toward it (Figure Five). “Somehow this [interview] has made me able to express something about not feeling abandoned and recognizing that something is there shining.” Indeed, Loria, the light in me salutes the light in you.

Lucille.

My interview with Lucille lasted for two hours. She spoke while she worked on her painting which was a combination of watercolour and dry pastel. Similar to Loria, Lucille shared a very personal account of her life and spirituality. One comment in particular stands out in my mind. While the details are not shared here, suffice to say that they lend strong support to her declaration that “when your talking spirituality, I’ve lived very many, many unexplainable experiences.” Perhaps it is because of these unexplainable experiences that Lucille elaborated,

Well, I’ve never really done anything on my own. It was always God given....It came very easily....I didn’t realize I had so many gifts because...I had quite a few learning disabilities, through primary school. And everything I have has come with a lot of hard work, that I won’t deny...I work hard but...I couldn’t conceive of where I am today. Myself, I could never have conceived that.... [Until deciding to become an art therapist] I hadn’t heard much about therapy. I didn’t live in that kind of a world....I never thought I would be a professional. When I decided to go to university, it came sort of as a surprise to me. So all of these things came to me as surprises. Although she described herself as surprised, she simultaneously seemed to possess a certain confidence, a deep inner knowing that one might call “faith” as she worked towards becoming an art therapist.

I had a friend, who is a psychologist, [who] said don’t go into art therapy, we don’t hire art therapists....I said, “I’ll be okay, I’ll get a job.”...Think of it...how many people have jobs in art therapy today? Do you know too many? Well look at me, I got a job. I’m not saying that in a facetious, bragging [way], but I’m telling you it was in my path.

Indeed, the events that unfolded in her life validated her confidence. She went on to more precisely qualify the nature of her faith, if you will.

I don't think spiritualism gives you things. You don't pray for money or pray to win the lottery. You won't get that. But, if you're spiritual enough, you will pray that you're on the right path. You will pray that you're making the right decision, that it's the decision you should be making now, in this life. I do believe you're there because that's where you're supposed to be. And I'm here and this is where I'm supposed to be right now....So if you talk about spirituality in that sense, I'm very convinced that you have a path and when you're on the right path things happen that guide you to that path and once you're on it things open up and keep you there.

In speaking of a "right path" and her own heartfelt desire to follow such a path she brought attention to the notion of a synergistic interplay between divine providence and one's own personal resources.

I do believe that if I make up my mind to do something that the path will be there....There's no point in worrying "How am I going to do this?....It'll take care of itself. Honest to God. Once I've made my decision...everything will fall into place. Because it's there, I prepare it as I go along. I know I do. I'm a collector. I gather things and things fall in my path....Well, like I plan too, I mean I can say that I plan. But like, I'm planning now for my retirement. And I have to do this, I'm asking God, or the Universe or whatever you want to call it, to guide me because I feel there's more for me to do.

Later in the interview, as we looked at her painting [Figure Seven] she returned to this matter of making life choices that would keep her on "the right path." Achieving a clear attunement to the guidance of God or the Universe seemed essential for her to make important life decisions. Although she very much felt a desire to act, she was definitely holding out for the necessary clarity. In these next passages she explained how she oriented herself in order to receive such guidance. She then went on to explain some of the practical pressures that are surrounding her decision to act. All in all, I had the impression that this waiting period was quite a challenging process and a test of her faith.

Now I haven't focused on exactly what I will do and so all kinds of things are stopping me....So I have some fear, although you wouldn't see it in this painting would you?...As I'm looking at it, I

think the water's definitely not calm. And that's more or less how I'm feeling right now. Because I'm sort of frightened of the things that I'm going through at this stage in my life. And I'm scared even though, as you said, I might feel that I'm not alone....[Re: the feeling of being cared for] sometimes I don't trust it and that's when I fall astray. I mean I have to trust the fact that I care for myself too and I really believe that God, or whatever you want to call it, it's within you. There's nothing out there, there's no angels flying around and all that. I never believed that....It's not part of my belief. It's just that whatever that somebody is, it's inside me. I just feel that spirit and God and everything is inside you. That's why it's so different for everybody. But, even though there may be somebody out there that looks after me, I'm always scared to make a mistake, especially the wrong decision....And although I've always been a very spiritually connected person, I have great faith, now at the end of my life, I haven't got time to make mistakes. I have to make the right choices.



Figure Seven

Lucille expanded on the notion of making the right choices and being on the right path as she introduced the related idea of "becoming." She explained how becoming is a necessarily spiritually-guided process.

Well, I think if you want to give that picture a name you would call it "Becoming."...Becoming, the next stage, the next step....I've always believed in the becoming if you want. That's why I liked Frankl and Jung because I think that their way of looking at psychology is always becoming more than what you are right now. And, in my opinion, unless you have a spiritual belief I don't know how you can become more than you are now. With the spiritualism, you have something to get yourself beyond yourself. But without the spiritual dimension, well, how can you go beyond yourself? There's only you, so you're going to stay where you are.

Similarly, Lucille also described the creation of art work, the 'becoming' of the image, as a spiritually-guided process.

Many times I'll do a painting and I look at it "Where did that come from?" You know? "Where did it come from?"...Nobody taught me how to do that....That's what I call "beyond knowing", you know, that noological dimension....But like the painting downstairs when you go down you'll see it, that is the kind of painting where I feel I can touch my spirituality because ever since I've learned to express myself with art materials, when I produce something exceedingly beautiful I get lost in the doing of it. And sometimes I sit back and I say, "Thank you God because you did it through me."... I just allow myself to be open to what, you can call it, some people call it inspiration. I think it's...for me it's all inspiration. If I'm not inspired my skills aren't that great....Most of the pieces that are good, I can't tell you how I did them.... There is a point where the person loses themselves and expresses themselves, what's in their deepest, deepest thought....Getting engaged in the process. And allowing things to express themselves that you wouldn't think of expressing if you were doing it intellectually....I think that's spiritually guided myself. I don't think it's intellectually guided.

I then asked Lucille, "When you're working with clients do you get a sense of presence or of something spiritual happening at times?" She replied,

At times I've had a good feeling, of feeling so full. And they've left and I think, "Now that was a good session." A presence? No, except that feeling of good. Now that feels good. And then it makes my life worthwhile. When I get that feeling that it was a good session, I don't know, you

feel your getting somewhere with the person, you know?...Sometimes there's such an intensity of engagement, commitment to their art work, that you know that work is being done. You just feel that and then you leave with that good feeling. That good feeling, that joy. I was telling that to my friend the other day. I said, "Did you ever get in touch with your joy—with your own personal joy?" And I think, if you're in therapy and you never get in touch with your own personal joy, therapy didn't work, you know. I think your own personal joy of being, that essence of your life, maybe that's spirituality. But that joy that you will never let go...you might have some sad times, you might get depressed, that's normal, but once you've experienced that joy of being, you won't allow anything to get in its way.

As she continued to speak, she further defined her understanding of spirit, her sense of place in the world and the source of her joy.

What is that feeling of joy that you encounter in life? Let's hope that everyone has encountered a feeling of pure joy of just being alive. I don't think people that aren't spiritual encounter that. I don't know, but everybody that I know that's encountered something more than themselves, something more than just the everyday going to work and the pleasure of having gotten a new car, who encounter the pleasure of getting up in the morning, who encounter the pleasure of doing some art work, who encounter the pleasure of looking at a sunset or gazing at a mountain, that's spiritual....I remember once we had the choice of going to church or going to a service in the forest. And I chose the going to the service in the forest. It was the best service I have gone to, I could never have gone to as beautiful a service in a church as I did in nature. With things that grow and things that live. To me, that's the spirit....I think...life is like spirit, I mean it's the water it's the rocks and it's us too you know. But it's not as much as we like to believe. There's much more than you and I. We're just very little.

In reflection, I was most touched by Lucille's sense of faith, courage and integrity. These were expressed through her willingness to hold fast and wait for the clarity of spiritual guidance, in spite of her growing anxiousness about the approach of her final years of life. Indeed, she seemed to be anticipating some difficult choices. What is one to do when the call to personal joy comes from more than one direction?

Lucille describes this situation in the following passage. It was this particular excerpt that inspired my response painting (Figure Eight).

Part of me wants to just maybe go and live in a little cabin near the ocean and just go and do something very, very adventurous. Adventurous in the experience of being removed and with God. Sometimes I go camping all by myself and people say to me 'How can you do that, go camping by yourself?' But so, I'm thinking, at the same time, I want to be close to my children because I've invested a big part of my life to my children....I want to be there for them too. But part of me just wants to take off there. That's what this is all about. I can see myself sitting on that rock over here. I can see myself there.



Figure Eight

The commitment to the right path is not always an easy one. Although a spiritually dedicated life can give us comfort and support, it can also call upon us to lay naked and vulnerable to the unknown for indefinite periods of time. Perhaps we aren't always moving along the right path, but are sometimes expected to just

sit patiently at the side of the road. This requires a particular strength of character which seems to have been a core part of Lucille's own 'becoming.'

Ariane.

I interviewed Ariane on two occasions. Our first interview lasted a total of three hours. She created a collage during the last hour of our first meeting. Ariane later commented that the discussion we had in regard to her image did not, in retrospect, correctly reflect the true significance it held for her. Consequently, we met for a second interview and she provided a more accurate interpretation of her image. Ariane has devoted a considerable amount of time and energy exploring spirituality and art therapy in her own process as well as with clients. Owing to her particular interest and involvement in this area, there was much ground to cover. At one point during our second interview she exclaimed, "We get into so much stuff we can't possibly do it in an afternoon." Indeed, we didn't even begin to do it all in the two meetings we had, though we seemed to be touching on a wide range of issues. For brevity's sake, however, much has been omitted from this account. Still, these excerpts of Ariane's interview reveal her very thoughtful and rich understanding of spirituality and art therapy. She began her response to the question, "How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?" on a very personal note.

The first thing that comes to mind is my own personal experience in art therapy. I had some very, very strong experiences....One in particular that I remember is [when] I had a breakthrough in the session and it was like I realized that I had an internalized attitude that art was self-indulgent. So it was a real breakthrough because I could see this as something that was holding me back from the artist side of my personality. And I went up, that day, to a park where I really like to go which is near a river. I went down on the rocks beside the river and I had my paints with me and I sat down and I was totally engrossed with the art and painting. It was near the rapids and a dam as well, and suddenly the water started coming up on the rock where I was sitting which was very close to the water's edge and I was in this zombie state painting with water colour. I started gathering all my things up and my body was just shaking all over. And so it was not just the painting, it was this synchronous event of the dam opening in me and in life. So, for me, that was a really powerful experience. The actual art work was one that you could make out a bird image. I paint kind of

automatiste [style], painting from the unconscious. I never know what's going to come up and in this case it looked like a bird and a couple of days later I went to a conference or something and I saw a book about the phoenix as a symbol of transformation. After, I went home and I looked in an archetypal type dictionary I had, a symbolic dictionary, and I read about a phoenix and one of the things that distinguishes the phoenix is a crown of five [tufts] and this is what I had in my painting. I just knew it was a phoenix and it was a symbol of rebirth, coming out of the dead ashes and transformation. So for me that was just like being seized by something. And so that happened to me another time too, after this art therapy session, I did another [painting] which was like an explosion of colour and light and again my whole body was engaged and shaking as if I was seized and possessed by something other than myself.

As our conversation progressed, Ariane explained, in spiritual terms, how she understood the process of therapy and the meaning of this intense experience.

I do agree with the idea that the long term goal is to have the person become increasingly in contact with their spiritual centre. I definitely see it as a spiritual process, although it may take time [before] it becomes that....Initially it may be resolving very basic complexes but I think gradually the person will become more and more in contact with their centre. So in this particular case I guess I had overcome something...that was holding me back....So [it was] putting me in touch with...the true self that was connected with this centre and that's where the energy was coming from and the feeling of being seized.

Ariane then described how her art making, which is rooted in an art therapy context, is a spiritual process in which healing takes place.

I remember one time I was working with gold paint or something like that and it spilt and the spill was a definite form, a very clear form, but it was not done by me. It was uncontrolled and that's where I have a really strong sense of something other than me operating and a real dialogue with something. We can call it the unconscious, but I guess I have the idea of the unconscious being the soul or the spiritual essence that has a wisdom and that has a sense of our destiny. [It] knows more than we do and in dialoguing it can bring that up and we can actualize our potential and become

everything that we can be. I see [it] as being spiritual and sometimes it can be earthshaking, the contact with that....The way that I've developed painting [the] more automatic style, was an outgrowth of art therapy....And I've been fascinated about how clear images come up with their own character and I haven't done [them] consciously. So I really have a strong sense of this other and I learn about it through doing art. I learn about it's nature. It teaches me more than anything else I've done. So...to recognize that our inner life is apart from us and really has it's own...[character] is really exciting and really meaningful. I feel that...a modern day malaise is suffering from a feeling of meaninglessness or...an emptiness. I think that...[to see] that there's something alive in us, other than us, that we haven't made and is coming up to dialogue with us is the healing. That, to me, is where the healing takes place, when we have this sense of something beyond. We're not alone and it's not something we control. So that, for me, has been a very exciting adventure in art and definitely a spiritual process.

In this next passage, Ariane further defined the spiritual significance of art. Again she raised the matter of a widespread spiritual impoverishment and she introduced her conviction that art therapy has a role to play in helping the world return to a healthier state.

I think that the language of the soul or the unconscious, or whatever you want to call it, is symbolic...and it can express itself through the art. I have an idea that there's this guiding force and it's not just through art that it communicates. It communicates through other ways as well, like dreams...synchronicities...relationships, you name it, but...we need to be attuned to it. I think that through that process of really listening and being aware of that guidance that we become in contact with ourselves and that, generally speaking, our society is running without that. It's like a machine with it's head cut off just going full tilt and we're not living in harmony with these rhythms of this universal soul. And, for me, that's very dangerous and I think that our goal, if you want to put it that way, is to help individuals...[to realize] that there is something more and we need to harmonize and respect it [in order] to live in a healthy world....And I think art therapy, through activating this dialogue, with the inner self contributes to that....I think spirituality [is] not...about being good, maybe that's part of it—loving everybody, but it's more about really being true, being who you are

in the world, doing whatever your vocation is, actualizing it. I believe everybody has something that they are meant to do, that they can be happy doing....Maybe I'm idealistic, but I think [that] if the world was organized along those lines, it would help teach a person to really realize that essence, their soul essence. Then the world would take on a much healthier form....And I think that's what we help people do in therapy—put it out there and not suppress it, affirm it. Live there as closely as they can to their true being in the world as it exists, which will in turn transform the world. I just sense that if everybody was doing that it would naturally fall into a balance.

As she continued, Ariane stated that “working with art puts you in touch with your instincts.” Until then she had made reference to intuition only. I asked for her definition of instinct as compared to intuition. She explained,

I think the instinct is something bigger. I mean intuition is like the connector [between conscious and unconscious], but the instinctual seems to be involving your whole self, it involves your whole body. It's a response involving your whole self....It's an embodied intuition, maybe....It's neat to realize that the really healing power is, for me, organic. It's instinctual and it's creative and it's coming from a spiritual source. So if that's the case we need to speak to it in it's own language, which is the language of art therapy....Working openly in art, spontaneously in art, puts you deeper and deeper in contact with your instinctual self, which for the most part, I think many have become cut off from because of the over valuation of reason [and the] rational. So I think art therapy has a very important role to play in healing the world.

Although she spoke at length about the healing potential of art therapy, Ariane did not limit the role of art therapists to being that of the *healed* treating the wounded. Viewing healing and growth as an ongoing part of the process for both client and therapist, she described the relationship between the two parties as something of a spiritual contract or bond.

I see that we're interconnected in some way, that our destinies are bound, that changing the client is also changing myself. I think it's chemistry somehow....I guess I think it's spiritual in that you're connecting, that it's not only the client being healed through the relationship as well, so there's that exchange or something. It's like your destinies are linked and the healing process is taking place in

that relationship. You're healing the world and you're healing something larger than that relationship. But somehow you're meant to be together. It's not just any therapist that that connection will happen with. So I don't know if you'd call it a soul-mate relationship and that's why we can get so hooked and love our clients...because we're somehow healing part of ourselves and they're the key.

She went on to reveal aspects of her own personal growth which are being nurtured by her work as an art therapist.

As a therapist working with clients...and witnessing somebody else's spiritual journey...I almost feel that the healing process is being channeled through me and I'm really trusting intuition more and more and more. I feel that it is a channeling of this... healing energy. The fact that I can just open to it and it comes through me, like something beyond me, is a spiritual experience and that it works and that it moves the session, it moves the process on and it's nothing I've learned, technically speaking, [about] how to do art therapy. It's really something very different. It's just that I get a feeling in the session that I need to, for example, show [the client] an image and then that will trigger something in them and then they will show me something and that will take us further and it will be exactly what they need to work on, where they need to go. Or I'll have a feeling that I need to go read a passage or, it's just a feeling, it's an intuition and it's a creative process. I think creative process for me is really important and it's linked with spirituality....I think the spiritual self is instinctual and I think it's creative. So that when I'm working this way, it is instinctive. And it's letting things come and going with them and following intuition which is essentially a creative process. So for me that's been my learning process, as far as giving myself over to what is to me essential in art therapy, which is at the bottom a spiritual, creative process....and it's a hard thing to do because it's totally unknown each time and you have no idea and you just trust, you have to trust a lot, that this will come when it's time and you don't have to think about what to do or have some idea or whatever. It's just going to be there and it's more an opening and letting yourself become...a channel. And that is becoming stronger and stronger in me and it's a really exciting tool.

Through her work, Ariane is discovering her own particular style as an art therapist which relies increasingly upon intuition and instinct. By intuition and instinct one is attuned to a guiding spiritual energy. She encountered this healing spiritual energy while she herself was engaged in her own art therapy as a client. She regards the ability to connect with this spiritual source via intuition and instinct as essential to the art therapy process. However, she felt that the development of these qualities were overlooked during in her training as an art therapist.

What I experienced in the art therapy process itself, my personal art therapy process, and that was what was healing and meaningful for me, was the recognition that that was what existed—spiritual power...as a guide and as a directing force and an energy, you know, having an energy. And when I studied, when I went to do the program there was none of that. Also in my [personal] art therapy process I learned more [the value of] *being* needs, introspection, just being with my self and being attentive to that inner self. When I went into the program it was non-stop, busy, busy running all over the place, which didn't allow for that and for me that was what I was trying to heal from and I could not. It had nothing to do with what I'd experienced in art therapy [as a client]. Also the way of learning was, for me, information overload and it wasn't going with the student's energy, which was guided, if we could say, by this spiritual destiny force. So for me that also was just totally incongruent with my experience in art therapy....But then there's a part of me that's saying "Yeah, but I'm certainly in a different place than I was when I started." It just gave me the confidence....Because I feel like I resolved a conflict and I grounded my ideas....I grounded my approach I suppose by going through a process of it being affirmed in an academic environment [with] and by witnesses, just generally speaking....but not everybody might need that.

Whatever challenges she may have faced in her training, Ariane seems to be deriving a deep sense of satisfaction in practicing her profession.

I feel like I found my true calling. It's a vocation. I have no doubt this is what I'm meant to be doing and I feel very lucky to have found that and I think as far as a spiritual inclination [goes], that was something that drove me.... I was very driven to find my calling and my passion in life from a very early age....I had to find my passion. My work would be my passion. And it was funny, I

never worked at anything longer than two years because I didn't find that. And now, after a long, long struggle or journey, I have. And so for me that is fulfilling my spiritual nature. It is living that and doing that and putting those ideas into practice....It's more important than making money or whatever, you know....It's my expression of my soul and I've always been like that. That is, to me, my definition of spiritual fulfillment.

After two hours of discussion, Ariane turned to art making and created a collage (Figure Nine).



Figure Nine

As she was contemplating her image, Ariane said, "I have this sense of spiritual heights here [with] the mountain and it's funny cause...I'm more going into the swamps, like that side of things....So it's kind of interesting to see that mountain there." Associating the leopards with the "instinctual", she went on, "So I think I've been working more here [pointing to the leopards]...and that something in our conversation has brought this up [referring to the mountain] and I don't know what it is." In general, I have reservations about interpreting someone else's art work. However, Ariane's imagery seemed to me to be dangling an unquestionably obvious symbolic meaning right under my nose. Eschewing my own principles I gave way to

temptation and eagerly suggested that the mountains might be expressing a more “transcendent” notion of spirituality while the leopards and giraffes might be expressing an “immanent” perspective. These ideas come from Joseph Campbell (1973) who explained that all religions align themselves with either an immanent or transcendent point of view. In the transcendent perspective the deity is conceived to be separate or outside the world. Whereas in the immanent perspective, “divinity inhabits and is the very essence of the substance of the universe” (p. 53). Ariane was not familiar with these particular concepts and I prided myself in being able to introduce her to them, thereby helping her to ‘unlock’ the mystery of her own art work. Her curiosity piqued, she asked for a copy of Campbell’s (1973) article, which I forwarded to her along with a transcript of her interview. Although she had received my suggestion quite readily, I felt as if something was amiss. I made my response drawing and decided to let the whole matter incubate. It was Ariane’s telephone call that opened the way for clarity. She had read Campbell’s paper and was very excited to tell me that she now understood the significance of the mountains. After creating another collage, she came to realize that the mountains were not about transcendence. We scheduled a second appointment and this is what Ariane had to say,

I read over Campbell’s article and I probably read over my interview as well, and then I did this collage. And I think as you can see there’s a lot of mountains on it....I wrote about this Joseph Campbell quote....I knew as soon as I read this that this was what the mountains were about.

This is the quote to which Ariane refers.

Many, indeed most, of the Old-Testament kings, one after another, left the ways of righteousness to worship on the mountain tops the deities of the great nature world whom everybody else was worshipping, and the priestly scribes of Yahweh’s cause railed against them for this treason. Nature is a difficult power to resist. And within ourselves, as well, nature — Mother Nature — is a difficult power to resist. Nor is she an inferior guide to virtue and to the glory of life.

What I think history has proven is that this local social set of laws against the laws of nature can no longer hold as a guide to conduct: if, indeed, it ever did hold. Its whole history is of fanatic violence. For in its unrelenting thrust against the laws of nature religions, such a tension was built up that nature was indeed corrupted, the inward nature of the mind....so that when you

are young and full of the wonder of nature, every single thing that you spontaneously wish to do is condemned as sinful. This brings into our religious life a type of agony that I think is peculiar to our tradition and distinctly pathological. Only in certain rare periods (of which the Renaissance was one) and in certain rare spiritual geniuses, do we find that there have been people, within the fold of this tradition who have found a way to pass — often through fire — to a reconciliation of its jejune spiritual lore with the glories of the world of life (Campbell, 1973, p. 57-58).

In her own words, Ariane went on to explain her personal perspective of life which very much resonates with this cited passage by Joseph Campbell.

An idea I often have [is] that what is common, what is usually perceived as being normal, is somehow not healthy. Something healthy needs to be created still....But basically it's interesting because that was the same sense that I had that there was something, the social set of laws, there's something that's not healthy, something not natural. Like going against them perhaps is a healthy instinct, if you want to put it that way, and maybe you're following something that's more whole, in a way. Anyway so that, for me, was telling me the meaning of the mountains....what it comes down to is that for me the mountains are more connected with nature religion and it's more of an energy, a communication between that and the instinctual self, that is being portrayed here. And in my own terminology I would call that the individual soul [the woman, giraffe and lions] and the world soul [the mountains]....I just feel this is clearly not representing the oppositional terms, immanent and transcendent, it's more...an expression of the immanent in both of them, on the individual level and the universal level, and the circulation between them.

It was after this meeting that I reflected on my response image and arrived at a deeper understanding of the symbolic significance (Figure Ten) it holds for me. As I experience this image, I feel that the figure on the far left, much bigger in scale, is in communication with the smaller figure via a celestial cloud, suggesting a spiritual connection. The smaller figure is positioned inside the mountain—as if housed in the earthly temple of “the great nature world” (Campbell, 1973, p. 57). A fully blooming rose is growing out of the back of the earth dwelling snake. The snake is delivering the rose to the being who resides in the mountain.

Symbolically, the opened rose emulates the essence of completion, wholeness and fulfillment. In the spirit of

transformation, adorned by the head of a bird (the phoenix), the larger figure on the left appears as the universal soul who is guiding the smaller being (the individual soul) to reach into the fire and take hold of the rose.

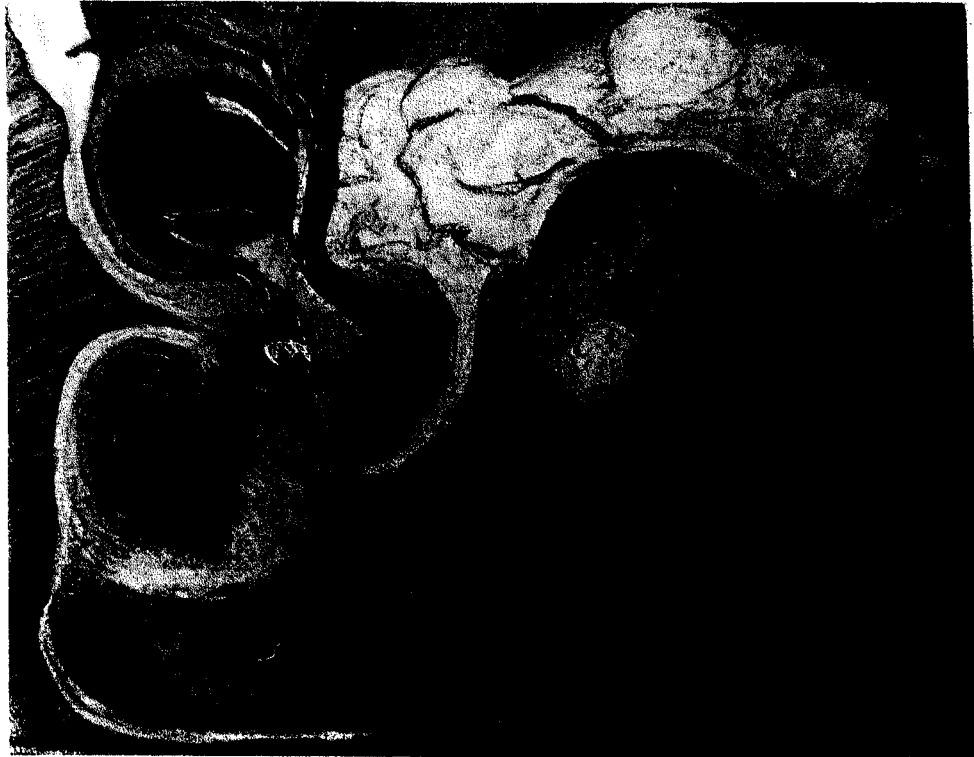


Figure Ten

This gesture of reaching through the fire in order to grasp the fullness of the rose that springs from the earthbound serpent very much reminds me of Campbell's (1973) observation that

...in certain rare spiritual geniuses...do we find that there have been people...who have found a way to pass — often through fire — to a reconciliation of its jejune spiritual lore with the glories of the world of life (p.58).

Indeed, Ariane spoke with a fiery sense of passion and vision as she unfolded her personal understandings of spirituality, art and healing. Her conviction and ardour were highly contagious. Each time I return to the words and images of our interview, I find myself increasingly moved by my own desire to cultivate and realize the sort of healing work that she so enthusiastically imagines.

Thérèse.

Talking about one's spirituality can be an extremely challenging endeavour. I very much appreciate each participant's effort to express their experience in this regard. I feel it was a struggle for everyone on some level, particularly as they paradoxically tried to share their knowledge of the "unknowable." Thérèse's first impulse was to begin our three hour interview with the creation of a painting. She went on to explain the importance of this inclination as she reflected on her final image (Figure Eleven).

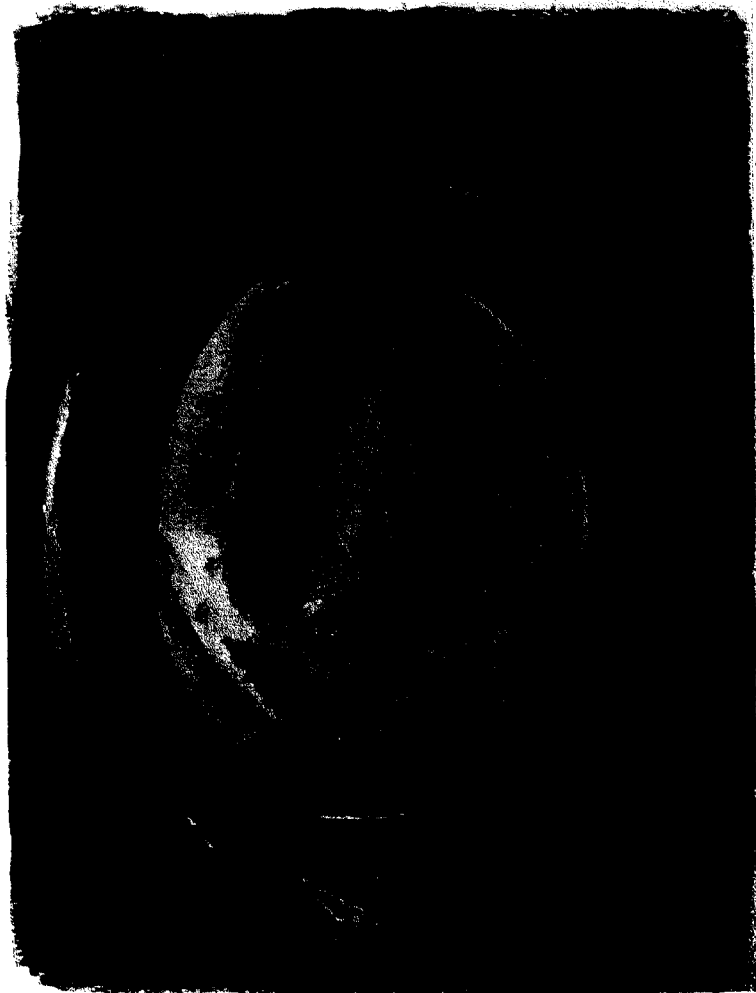


Figure Eleven

It's funny the urge at the beginning...was like, 'Oh I have to start by drawing.' because the question you asked was just too much...I think I had to. Not too uncomfortable, but maybe it was like....it gave me a big emotion, so I thought it was a good thing to do....The effect of the question went

right away really deep and, for me, it became round, like everything is related to everything....I find that the circle is very...I don't know if it's healing. It probably is because when I do that it's almost like it's mechanical, but it's not mechanical. I mean it's a tendency...I like doing that. I like doing spirals, I like doing round....it really feels whole when I do that. I really feel like I'm at home, you know? It's something I know how to do. For me art is like a house. It's like a home. You know, I don't feel at home here. I don't feel at home on earth even. I don't feel at home in life, in outside life in general. I feel more like a stranger that's on vacation, not even vacation....But for me, creation is home. I think home has something to do with where you feel comfortable, where you feel confident, where you feel you have some kind of a mastery...When I feel confident I feel connected with myself, with a part of myself.

As she expressed herself verbally, however, Thérèse had some misgivings and doubt which largely seemed to be related to the limitations of words.

The words feel weird...it's almost like as soon as they come out [of my] mouth they don't sound the same as they do inside....Like when I say confidence, for me, it's a feeling. Confidence is a word that comes the closest to the feeling, but the feeling is different than the word, because the words are limited. They also have a connotation. I think that's why we do art. It's a form of expression that encloses a lot more....When you put words on spirituality, it's almost like the words don't hold the notion properly.

For me, spirituality is something that should never be confronted. Because for me confrontation is like a battle. It's like there's a winner and there's a loser, you know, the confrontation. And when you confront something you try and find the weak point. There's a competition in it. It's oppositional and I find that to put things into words is to put it on that level too you know. Like words confront concepts....And while the words are being put out, I mean, I don't know how I sound, but there's a perception. You have a perception of me, of the words I say. I have a perception of the questions you ask, of the words you say. So it's not like when you just sit with it in the silence, it's unconditional. But when you talk about it, it becomes a

discussion....I think you become self-conscious. In a way it's like what I feel, "Is that okay to feel like that?" "Is that what you mean?" "Am I being self-righteous?"

By myself, I mean, I have my rituals every day, all the time....It's not so much the stuff, it's more the ritual. Like if I have to do something difficult...I [light] a candle...and it's like the gesture brings me into the thought of God. It's not the candle that's important, it's what it reminds me of.

While it may be impossible to fully convey her spirituality in words, Thérèse was able to clearly voice her deep need to observe the words of Joseph Campbell (1988) and *follow her bliss*. To follow one's bliss, Campbell says, is an undertaking in which you "go where your body and soul want to go" (p. 118). While she stated that this path "is the one I choose to follow," adherence to this way of life sounded, in some respect, rather essential for Thérèse.

I'm realizing more and more it is important for me to live my life according to my perception of things....it's important to really, more and more, trust my process....if I live here in this life, in this dimension, well I have to find a way to be comfortable in it and the way I am comfortable in it is when I'm connected to my own process and that is very much related to my perception of things—how I perceive things, how I'm affected also by things, maybe my way of doing things, my way of sensing. Because....it's almost like...it always brings me to the same thing, if I don't do it I'm dead. If I'm not comfortable somewhere it's like "Hey, open the door."...I feel like it's a question of life and death. I don't think about any money, I have to pay my rent, I have to eat. It's like all these things become secondary. The primary thing is I'm dying....I have a high intolerance for something that doesn't fit....that's where I become lost, completely lost. I get in a state where I can cross the street and have myself killed. I'm not there. I don't see. I don't see cars. I go into shock....I need to find significance, to be connected.

Art therapy has been instrumental in helping Thérèse stave off the painful state of being disconnected.

My biggest difficulty would be...to be cut off from my own expression. For me it would be like suicide and every time in my life that I got myself in a situation that I was cut off...I wanted to die....That's why it was imperative that I do art therapy. It was because...after years and years of

trying out, trials, repetition, always going through the same pain...[I was] like a fish with no water. I had to reconnect, that is, go back to the starting point....Because the feeling I get with art is exactly the same as I get with the dreams that I work on. [It's] exactly the same process. It's a creative process, for me. Maybe it's not the way everybody goes about it. But for me....oh the high, it's like the connection is the same....It's the only way for me. It's the only way that I know of that feels comfortable for me....I think that what I like about art therapy or therapy or any kind of process is the deep layer. It is a means to access the inner self. That's what I like. You know, the feeling, the energy that it gives you when you recuperate part of yourself. For me that's what life is about, to become whole....It's not so much that I want to improve myself as I want to really live with every part of myself...That is what's the most significant.

In the course of the interview, Thérèse revealed other, more subtle threads of spiritual significance which are woven into her efforts to be an art therapist.

For me just to make the decision to do the masters in art therapy was like a spiritual quest. But I would say a real active one. I think that it took me out of the fear of confronting myself to myself....Until then it was always like just a dream you know, like something that was put high somewhere and to do it was a real shift. So for me it's real. Everyday now it has become part of me. It stays with me. It sticks with me. Because I think I'm active. You know, I've done it, instead of being in my head....For me the art therapy program is very symbolic. It's not the art therapy in itself. It's what it represented for me....I know there's something very symbolic for me....It touched on the recognition of something that's of a deep longing, but of something that is not explainable because I think it's the search of the self and also it's the real self, not the authenticity, but the truth in me, you know? Just before I started [the art therapy program] I was in group therapy, a small group. And I realized from that group that what was the most important thing for me was truth. No matter what it is and no matter how painful it is, for me truth is always waiting to come first....The greatest thing I think for me was to confront myself with reality. It's probably the biggest thing that started what I would call my journey, my spiritual journey...To be a therapist, for me,...the most important thing is to be truthful because it cannot be, it cannot hold, if

it's based on a lie or if it's based on a front. I notice that until now it's been for me very difficult, you know, like "Who am I?," "Where do I stand?" "What's my style?"...All these questions we had to look at about "What is it I want?" "What is it I am?" and "What is it I need?"

According to Thérèse, reflecting on these questions is an essential part of her work. As an art therapist she is continuously being brought into "relation with the other." She finds this to be a position which "starts with the relation with yourself." She elaborated on this process as it occurs in the therapeutic relationship.

It is the word of the client, associated with my thoughts and feelings and awareness, that go in all at once. For me it can become an experience because I feel in touch with myself at the same time in touch with the other....Let's say something's happening or somebody's saying something that...will trigger an interrogation, or a reaction, or a judgment....I know that if I have a judgment, if I have a reaction to something that somebody's saying, my tendency will be to check it out right away....because...for me it's not real comprehension to just comprehend something from the head....I have to take it in deeper I would say. And if I cannot at the moment, because it's going too fast or it's too complex to reflect on the spot, I'm going to [do it] later on.... So this thing of taking it in, of checking it out on the inside and feeling it is part of relating with myself first, to then be able to relate to the other.

This next passage is comprised of a series of quotes in which Thérèse described what might be considered a core construct of her personal spiritual philosophy. Broadening her scope to include all her encounters with other people, Thérèse acknowledged the potency that this process of "taking it in" and "checking it out" has for revealing the truth about herself. She then went on to explain what implications these truths have for her in terms of her own growth and development. In addition, she points out the spiritual value she derives from doing this rigorous, introspective work.

You know something that really touches me is when I notice that I have all the bad things on earth. All the good things I have, too. It's like I have everything, pieces of everything....Okay, look...Let's say I'm riding my bike or I'm walking and I see somebody doing something bad or saying something bad and I pick it up. Then I ask myself, "Okay, have I ever done that?" For me it's a game. It's automatic. As soon as I judge something I ask myself, "Have I ever done that.?"

And all the time...I'm amazed...it's incredible, the feeling of being surprised because, yeah, I've done it. Being surprised because it feels so remote. It feels like I've done it but I've never recognized it until now, so that's why it feels remote. It's surprising....And even worse than that, let's say you react to something, let's say you slam the door on an old lady. I find that even that, it's hard, but it's something. It's exactly where you have to be right now because...finally it just reflects the state of mind you're in. When it happens to me I always find that, "Oh yeah, I'm really pissed off or I'm really bitchy today and when I'm pissed off or I'm stressed out I do stupid things like that."...[I see] how weak I am....I see it and I cannot deny it. So now it's like part of my life to see how weak I am....I'm just too imperfect....I'm brought to that all the time, all the time, all the time. It's true.

It's so much that there's just no way that I'm going to be able to improve myself in such a way that it's going to please me. For me that's not a goal anymore. Like okay "I'll change, I'll try and change this. I'll work on this."...That's probably where letting go really means something. It's really significant you know, to accept who I am with all my demons....If I have to put energy somewhere, it's not in changing my demons but loving my demons. To recognize them. To work with them....Sometimes you're on the verge of acting out, but then there's a delay and so you have the choice of [either] acting out or [doing] something else....it happens a lot that I see that there's the delay...and I have the choice. And even though I have the delay, even though I have the will, often I choose to act out....That's what I mean by the demons, hey?...I don't know if it's love or just recognize that it's there....For me, that's what truth means, my truth is to reclaim all those things...It doesn't just happen with things that I would judge negatively, but it happens with all kinds of things, even very positive things....And I really like doing that. For me there's something so nourishing. When I do that I really feel like I'm close to myself. I'm close to God. I'm close to the heart of something, to the heart of things. That's where life becomes significant.

One might think that the challenges of facing her own shortcomings and witnessing those of others with such raw directness might be overwhelming. However, Thérèse indicated that the unflinching examination of the harshest of truths is, in fact, inspiring.

I find that when it is painful that's where it's the most truthful too. Because that's the thing, the truth is not that perfect thing....For me, it's beautiful because I see it. I see it as it is. It can be something else for somebody else but for me it's the truth of that moment and it touches me in exactly the same place. Even though my life may seem different, a part of myself can associate with their pain. [It is] to see that we all fail....[It's a spiritual process] because I find that the witness cannot but see the sacred in the things around or the people around....When things become transparent, when people become transparent, [they] become beautiful. The worst thing is going to be beautiful....It comes back to that thing of not wanting to change anything—the uselessness of wanting to change anything because, in fact, what is there is beautiful.

Thérèse understands her pursuit and perception of the truth as a uniquely personal experience and wanted to make this clear.

I mean when I say I see things, I'm not saying like, "I see *the* truth." What I mean is I see *my* truth. I see stuff that is significant for me and I'm well aware that it's not necessarily the same for everybody and that my life is not more significant than any other person's life. It's just my life.

In her search for the truth, she stated that "the most important thing [is] knowing who I am. It is to take the veil away." In this effort, Thérèse focuses much of her attention on the delicate and mysterious interface between inner and outer experience. As she has noted, the outer experience often involves other people. However, it may also concern other events or objects. She explained,

This thing about noticing how the environment is always a reflection of the inner space or inner self, for me it's proven every day....I kind of see it as what happens in my awareness, in what I perceive, everything that happens, often it's going to have a resonance in something I was wondering or a question I had during the day or something that occurred in the journaling. [It happens] everyday, hey? And every time it's almost like being in discussion, you know, life answers back. You ask a question by yourself and something happens. To see things like that, somebody else will not connect it, will see it just as a hazard. And usually, I choose not to believe in hazard because for me it makes no sense. Because for me everything's connected. And that...is why I would say I'm hooked on the awareness thing. Because it's like having an invisible

companion, you know when you're a kid? It's the same thing, I think. I never had an invisible companion but I would see it like that. It's like "Hey, cool, thank you, thank you for this."

It was the following quote by Thérèse which captured my attention so profoundly. Somehow, it seemed to encapsulate the essence of her personal journey. This particular passage, I felt, resonated strongly with my response drawing (Figure Twelve).

I feel like I'm constructing something even though it's not changing....I don't feel like the "who I am deeply" has changed. I feel like I'm basically the same person, even if I went through this and that....What is different though, is these parts....It's probably because I feel like I was always scattered, but I feel like I'm just putting the stones back. I'm just rebuilding whatever was there from the beginning. It's not less. It's not more. It's just like it was all broken and I'm re-piecing it.

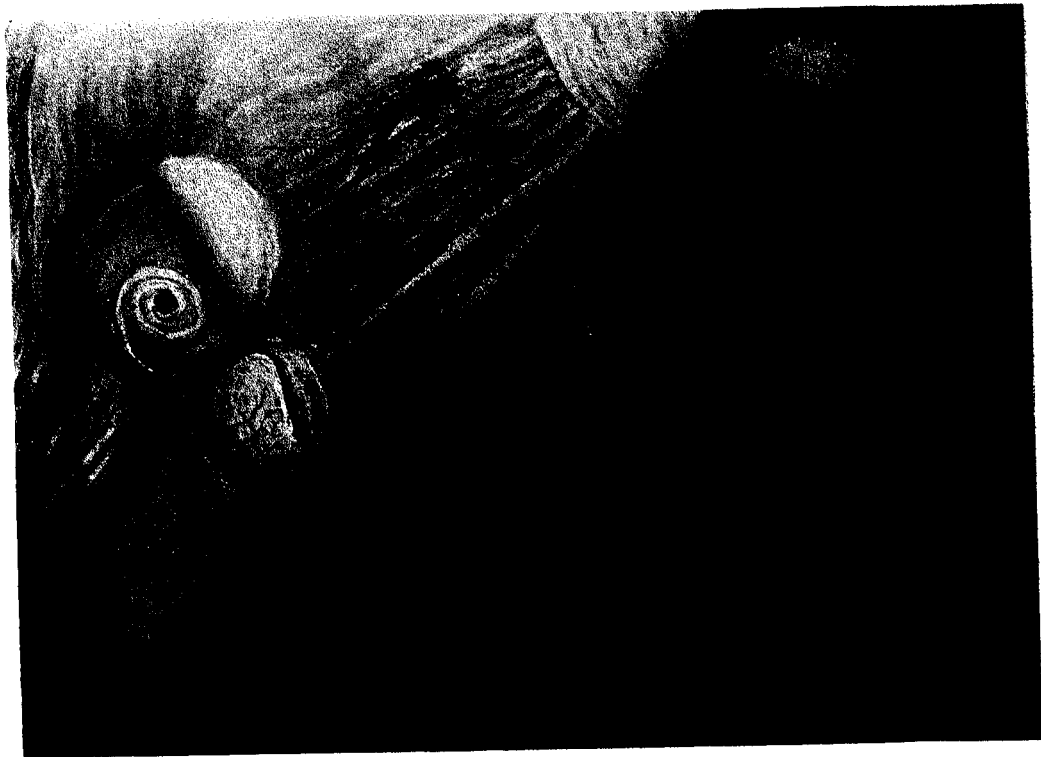


Figure Twelve

Thérèse's spiritual quest for self-revelation is characterized by a remarkable sense of discipline and profound zeal. I was fascinated and inspired by the way she freely dismissed any intention of investing in our culture's

popular preoccupation with self-improvement in favor of acceptance and wholeness. Nevertheless, she paradoxically seems to have arrived at a place of compassion, humility and gratitude that would be a worthy destination for anyone who is in search of self-improvement.

Christine.

The decision to be interviewed was a rather spontaneous one. Although I, too, wanted to respond to my own research question, my repeated efforts to make my thoughts and feelings explicit were somehow stymied. I remembered how helpful it was to be witnessed by my therapist when I first looked at my own spirituality. Consequently, I decided to ask Thérèse if she would be willing to interview me. I approached her after I had completed my interviews with everyone. Thérèse agreed to participate in this way as well. Our meeting lasted just over one hour. I did not make art during the interview but did create one image after typing up the transcript. Like other participants, I have modified and edited my own statements to enhance the accuracy and coherence of my ideas. Still, I have also been careful to preserve the essence of my original comments. I have not found this to be an easy task. Each time I review my transcript I find my perspective has moved a little more and I wish to keep adding, subtracting, and following yet another avenue of thought. This is, indeed, an endless process since my spiritual voice is automatically transformed by the very act of speaking.

Similar to the other participants, I began my interview on a personal note. I explained how, through life experiences, I have come to associate both art and healing with spirituality.

A few years ago, I started doing this workbook called "The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity" (Cameron, 1992). The book came to me through a series of synchronistic events and I hoped to realize my plans of becoming a writer. Instead, I found myself dragging out an ancient set of oil pastels and experimenting with them for many untold hours. For me, it was really the beginning of my serious experimentation with art making. One of the primary exercises in the book involved the daily reading of Ten Basic Principles. Each of these reads like a meditation and they repeatedly affirm an intrinsic relationship between spirituality and creativity. So my own artistic expression was initiated within a spiritual context....At the same time, I was doing my own therapy and I realized that I had spiritual wounds that also needed to be addressed. The most

difficult thing for me was having been raised in a religious environment which...organized my spirituality in a way that ran counter to my true nature. I was limited and constrained and boxed into a frame that was not right for me, for my soul. As I looked at my spiritual history and life, I developed an understanding that, for me, the hardships I had experienced in life were, in fact, all spiritual matters. By extension, I awakened to the notion that healing is really a process that is inherent to spiritual growth. In other words, I see healing as a spiritual practice.

Given that I experienced both creativity and healing as spiritual practices, it is not surprising that I eventually found my way to art therapy. This allowed me to explore and develop my own sense of how art, healing and spirituality come together.

So then I became interested in art therapy and decided to learn about it by becoming an art therapy client. Oddly enough, I rarely ever looked at the art work specifically in terms of spirituality, but it was always implicit in what I was doing. I guess I kind of understood it to be a spiritual thing, but I didn't look at it with the art therapist and said "Oh this is really how I feel about God." And yet there were some images where I could see that my spirituality was present in the work somehow. There was one in particular where I was sure I had created a portrait of a spiritual guide. Still, I can't say I was really conscious of it at the time I was making it. Usually when I make art, it's as if I'm in another state, not observing, just doing. I let go of my conscious awareness. The making of the art itself is a transporting, spiritual experience.

I remember when I was first getting into making images, I felt like something was waking up in me, spiritually speaking. It would appear in the process of doing the art, as well as in the art product itself. It was as though, when I did the art, the spirit or whatever it was, came alive through me and then at the end it was as though the image was an imprint of that interaction. So there's a record. Sometimes, though, when I look at the image...I think it's still very alive. Like, for me, I experience the character in this drawing (Figure Two) as one who has a very animated existence and is now completely separate from me. But in doing it, in making it, I felt that we were one and the same. I feel that I have shared intimately with this character because our spirits have been fused somehow and I guess that's kind of how I've been experiencing art. It's the same with

that rose (Figure Three). To me, it's really a character and the light that creeps in, all those elements have some kind of persona or presence. It's as though I've been in communion with them, as if the process of making the image is a process of being one with some other spirit, some other energy. Perhaps it's the idea of the muse visiting and, so, in making art I am blending with or infused by a divinity. That union, that joining of one's own spirit with the spirit of the other, that's the healing, I feel. I suppose you could call it grace or the Holy Spirit, or it could be conceived of as bliss or ecstasy. In making art, I feel I have the experience of coalescing with this other kind of energy or spirit and somehow it mysteriously mixes with me. You could say it is God or Goddess, or you could call it an inner wisdom or an external spirit that I am inspired by. I'm not really sure how to say it. But, when I'm making art, there is something of my essence meeting with some sort of essence that is beyond me. To me, that is when the healing occurs. Then, when the image is done, there is a sort of separation. I'm separate, again, from that other energy, that other force or spirit.

Prior to my work with the art therapist, I had been busily making images on my own. As I explained in my interview, my creative endeavors were very healing for me. However, as I began to work with the art therapist, I experienced my art work on another level and it raised some questions.

When it comes to art therapy, though, I wonder about there being a distinction between healing and therapy. I guess it is in...the consciousness. In other words, you can make art and heal from it, but being conscious of the healing, it seems to me, that's when it becomes therapy. I mean I was doing these images on my own and they were very healing to me, but I never looked at them consciously until I went to an art therapist. However, by doing art therapy, I consciously met the entities that I've been fused with and I became awake to the changes that have arisen out of our union.

My personal experiences and understandings as an art therapy client have influenced my work as an art therapy intern. Moreover, the writings of authors such as Shaun McNiff (1992) and James Hillman (1996) have also been important resources.

In working with patients at the hospital who were in states of extreme psychological crisis, it seemed to me that they had almost no boundaries, or ego or defenses in tact. It was as if they were

completely open or porous, so that there was some kind of heightened receptivity. The first time I was with a patient who made art it seemed so clear to me that he was having a shared moment with some other presence. It was as if an 'inspiration' had arrived in a time of desperation and there I was witnessing it and trying to be sensitive, not just to the patient, but also to whatever spirit had come to animate his creative gesture. I think that's part of what the art therapist does, they not only witness the client, but they witness their client's experience with some other essence or what James Hillman and Shaun McNiff call the 'daimon'. In the context of this spiritual perspective, I would pray to my client's daimon to come to their assistance, particularly through the creative process. I saw myself as being there...as a kind of medium or something, trying to facilitate the relationship between the client and their daimon or their angel or spiritual guide....It was as though a healing experience was being generated through their mutually creative action.

Then there is the reflecting on the art work afterwards. This I see as the therapeutic process. Where reflecting on the art work would allow the client to become conscious of the healing that was taking place. In making the process conscious, I don't mean that I say, "By the way I was praying for your daimon." But my focus is on helping them to consciously receive and accept the significance of their art work. They take from it what they need and are able to take from it.

Generally, I am referring to psychodynamic insights here, rather than spiritual ones. But that doesn't mean that the spiritual ones don't exist or can't be addressed in the art therapy framework. Some people, though certainly not all, are interested in consciously considering their art work in spiritual terms.

I think once you do all that psychodynamic work you may want more....There are other layers and I think that psychotherapists often neglect that. Then we're not addressing the whole thing. It doesn't make sense not to include it in the process of therapy. But I realize that it is also a matter of timing and preference. Not every client is going to walk in and say "I want to do spiritual work." But I think it's always there and maybe...we could learn more about how to incorporate it into our practices as art therapists so that people can look at it in their art work if they are so inclined or if they want or need to be supported in that way.

Looking consciously at one's spirituality within a psychotherapeutic context is not something that everyone is seeking to do. This needs to be respected. At the same time, I also proposed that some resistance to this sort of self-reflection may be a protective posture stemming from past injuries. I recalled my own guardedness and fear around "coming out" spiritually.

When I first began to explore and express myself spiritually many things came out which were counter to the way I was raised as a Roman Catholic. My sister has stayed Catholic and so I'm still reminded of some of the rules, like animals can't go to heaven. And here I am carrying rocks around going "I really feel like this rock has a spiritual presence. It's a being with it's own kind of wisdom." Well, try saying that to a priest. At the time, I didn't know why I was saying or feeling this, but I was just going with what let my soul breathe its deepest. So, as my spiritual awakening was happening...I was looking back and seeing that I had been living with some sort of spiritual oppression which was rather wounding. It made me very suspicious of anything or anyone that wanted to touch upon the issue of spirituality with me. And now I wonder if this is what has happened to a lot of other people, too. It doesn't necessarily have to be people raised in a religious system. It could be people who are raised in an agnostic environment or an atheistic environment. It's just that the presented perspective is out of sync or against the grain of the natural, authentic inclination of the individual soul. I don't think our society has a way of cultivating and affirming the individual's special understanding of things, their own unique, inherent spirituality. Instead, the most common alternatives seem to involve participation in an organized religion or adopting a secularized attitude of agnosticism or atheism....But I think that the ultimate challenge for each of us is to realize our own idiosyncratic essence. Still, I think that people are in situations over and over again where there's some kind of criticism, censorship, neglect or indifference which makes it difficult for them to manifest their spirituality in their own original way. So that when the topic of spirituality is raised there's often this kind of recoiling as if to say "I know I'm going to get hurt." or "I know there's not going to be room for me." or "I'm not going to be able to say who I really am and still be loved." It's hard because I feel that many people have been spiritually wounded and

have not come to terms with it. A consequence, perhaps, is that they anticipate even more wounding.

I then went on to describe, more precisely, the value that art therapy might have for encouraging and assisting in the discovery and development of each individual's unique spirituality.

Our society has not found ways to be supportive and accepting of the individual, in spiritual terms.....Many people have not had their soul awakened and nurtured in ways that are specific to them. [However,] I think that art, at its best, and certain approaches to therapy both have the potential to do that very well....When I went to art school I remember being so taken with the ideal of openness, in which there was an acceptance of everyone's creative endeavors. I'm talking about an ideal. I don't say that the academic system or the art world is necessarily living up to the ideal. But there is an underlying principle or value that advocates for an openness to other people's explorations and expressions...and I think to myself, "Here's a model for spirituality." Perhaps through the highest intentions of art, we can create a space....that accepts everybody's spirituality. A place where everyone's individual spiritual path and wisdom is respected. I feel that art therapy is implicitly rooted in this ideal already. The creative work of the client is not judged but is, instead, unconditionally accepted and honored.

These notions of non-judgment and acceptance are also essential aspects of a client-centered approach to therapy. The point isn't to tell the person not to understand what they understand or feel what they feel....Instead, you allow it and give it space. You witness it, reflect it back without judgment, trusting the person's process....I just think that accepting and allowing a person to be as they are is how we heal. I think that's the key to therapy. So again it's the matter of acceptance, whether it's someone's creative expression, their emotional state or their spiritual perspective. If they say they're an atheist, maybe that's who they are here to be, that's where they are right now. That, for me, is what I'm learning over and over and over again. I'm trying to get past those control issues where I think, "Oh I'll help this person over that." More and more, I feel that it's not about figuring out how to get somebody somewhere. I feel that it's about simply...witnessing someone with acceptance and love for who and where they are. Ironically,

though, that is something that seems to move them. I'm repeatedly learning to trust that it moves them in the direction that they are most meant to go in and that is the most healing for them. It seems to me that it is all we're really meant to do for each other and for ourselves....So I think that client-centered therapy could equally serve as a way for promoting the exploration and realization of an individual's particular spirituality.

Through the practice of client-centered art therapy....I really believe that there is a way of making common space that respects and supports people with all their spiritual diversity. And I also believe that, through this approach, we can develop models which will enable us to come together as a group and share our own unique spirituality without conflict or threat....I believe that it's possible.

Undeniably, it is a different experience reviewing, analyzing and presenting my own transcribed interview. I have felt quite aware of those things that I have not been able to articulate. Still, my participation in this manner has brought fresh new insights which, in some way, I have expressed in my response drawing (Figure Thirteen). Unlike the profiles of the other participants, I did not select an excerpt from my transcript to present with my image. However, this drawing does prompt me to recall a pivotal moment in my spiritual history. When I was twenty-one I consciously gave up any active pursuit of the divine. I felt that I had been raised with other people's understanding of God and that every effort to seek enlightenment would only yield other peoples' version of spirituality. I wanted my own understanding. I remember I said something to the effect that, "If God wants me, God knows where to find me. I'm not searching for God." And so I chose to wait. Then, some seventeen years later, I found myself making art and spending several hours a day walking in the forest with my dogs. I was waking up, spiritually speaking. There was a profound change happening in my awareness and understanding of things. I was really being spiritually nurtured, really becoming alive. Suddenly the essence of trees and rocks and animals seemed very present to me, they seemed very vital. I felt completely immersed in the whole experience of creation. I felt as if God had finally come to wake me up.

In the course of this research I feel I am, once again, waking up much like a seed germinating after a period of dormancy. The witnessing by Thérèse has been a powerful catalyst in stimulating the birth of

new understandings and insights. The careful reflection of my own transcribed material during the "realization phase" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985) brings these new ideas more fully into my conscious awareness.



Figure Thirteen

As I look at my response image I see the human figure resting in the earthy darkness. The body appears to be sprouting out of it's encasement which is an organic form that I look upon as the seed husk of a plant. The deer appears as a gentle helping spirit who is struggling to move through the almost impenetrable rock mass in order to reach the vulnerable, still sleeping figure. The deer's first point of contact will be with the feet of the slumbering being. The feet are the mode of mobility and movement, indicating that the figure will be aroused to consciousness and, perhaps, subsequently follow a certain path. Nevertheless, the deer's foreleg dips into the same water which flows into the seed-bearing plant, suggesting that an unconscious connection already exists between the two beings. In this way, the image speaks of my relationship with the divine which is both eternal and unconscious as well as intermittent and conscious. The deer has become a significant animal for me in a number of ways. In this case, however, I have embedded

an intimation in the image through a play on words. In my daily journaling, which has really evolved into a sacred practice, I refer to the divine as "Dear One." So it is that I am waiting to be awakened, once again.

Discussion

In light of the data gathered during the immersion and acquisition phases of this study, as well as the insights gleaned from the relevant literature, I present the final discussion of this research. It marks the last phase of this tripartite heuristic inquiry which Douglass and Moustakas (1985) call "realization." They state that "this is a quest for synthesis through realization of what lies moes undeniably at the heart of all that has been discovered" (p. 52). My discussion of this synthesized understanding has been organized into three main sections. The first section, called "Common Threads," looks at the key themes contained in the interview material. This is followed by the second section, "Personal Threads of Meaning Revisited," in which I reflect upon what I have learned as a result of conducting this inquiry. I give special attention to those issues which I identified as being of personal significance in the results chapter under the subheading "The Immersion Phase." In the concluding section of this chapter, entitled "Keeping the Spiritual Discourse Going," I consider future avenues of research. Specifically, I look at the possibility of exploring spirituality in the context of an art therapy group process.

Common Threads

By its design, the heuristic model of inquiry allowed me to explore my subject matter both on my own while in the immersion phase and with others during the acquisition phase. This gave me the opportunity to learn more about the nature of my own spirituality, creativity, and healing within the context of these two circumstances, solitude and communion. Undoubtedly, there is a place for both in my life. However, my deepest satisfaction came from the process of shared discovery which occurred in the course of interviewing and profiling each participant. I felt a special comfort and joy as the details of each person's life experiences and understandings were revealed. On the one hand, I was impressed and fascinated by the uniquely intricate, coherent, and self-contained quality of each participant's story. At the same time, I was equally moved by the profound resonance I felt within myself as I witnessed each person respond to the interview question. It was by attending to this inner resonance that I first detected the presence of common threads which seemed to be running through the spiritual lives of all five of us. As noted in the methodology chapter, I implemented the "constant comparative method" in an effort to distinguish key themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). There were a number of topics that appeared with

considerable frequency in the response of all the participants. From these I have identified three relatively distinct themes. They are presented under the following subheadings as “Spirituality in words and images,” “Transcendence and immanence,” and “The search for unity.”

Spirituality in words and images.

While each person may have their preference for one or the other, art therapy generally involves a combined use of words and images. As I have noted in the introduction, however, a number of art therapists have expressed some reservations about speaking of spirituality in their art therapy practice (Luzzatto et al., 1996; Moon, 1993). For instance, Bruce Moon has questioned whether spiritual discourse is needed in order to meet therapeutic goals. Not only does Michael Robbins agree that we don't need to speak of spirituality during therapy, but he also suggests that such dialogue might even be a defense that circumvents the therapeutic process (Luzzatto et al., 1996).

None of the participants in this study made a point of opposing the use of spiritual discourse in the practice of art therapy. However, they did indicate that, when it comes to expressing the spiritual, images may have an advantage over words. During her interview, Thérèse talked most directly about the difficulties of trying to speak from the soul. She seemed to capture the essence of the problem in the simple observation that “when you put words on spirituality, it's almost like the words don't hold the notion properly.” It is because of this shortcoming Thérèse suggests “I think that's why we do art. It's a form of expression that encloses a lot more.” Asserting that “spirituality is something that should never be confronted,” she points out that we are placing spirituality on the level of confrontation when we put it into words. She explains, “When you just sit with it in silence, it's unconditional. But when you talk about it, it becomes a discussion....I think you become self-conscious.” In this way, Thérèse reasoned, spiritual discourse is subjected to questions such as “Is that okay to feel like that? Is that what you mean? Am I being too self-righteous?” At first Thérèse chose to respond to the interview question by making an image. Words did not seem to have the capacity to contain her answer. Nevertheless, she did move on to talk about her spirituality and concluded the interview by saying, “I feel I was able to communicate what is, I would say, dear to me.” I am glad that Thérèse was ultimately satisfied by the interview process. Yet, as I write

this paper, I fully appreciate and share in her frustration with words and their failure to “hold the notion properly.”

Likewise, Lucille talked about how the image had a special ability to contain the spiritual. She remarked, “Many times I’ll do a painting and I’ll look at it, ‘Where did that come from?’ You know? ‘Where did it come from?’...Nobody taught me how to do that....That’s what I call ‘beyond knowing,’ you know, that noological dimension.” Echoing Lucille, Loria highlighted the human desire to make the invisible visible. He explained that “somehow the capacity to make images is maybe what’s closest to our relationship with the invisible. Since the dawn of ages, people have been making pictures to try to have an image of what is other than us.” In a like-minded fashion, Ariane also commented that “the language of the soul or unconscious, or whatever you want to call it, is symbolic...and it can express itself through the art.” Just as Ariane proposes a relationship between the image and the unconscious, I introduce an association between words and consciousness when I refer to the process of reflecting on the image. Declaring that art making is healing, I go on to talk about the process of reflecting on the art work afterwards. “This I see as the therapeutic process, where reflecting on the art work would allow the client to become conscious of the healing that was taking place.” Therefore, if the image is a spiritual expression, the words we use to speak of that image are in the best sense one means by which we can consciously appreciate the spiritual qualities of the image itself. I consider the relationship between the words and the image to be a delicate one that must be treated with the utmost care. Roger Lipsey (1988) addresses this point, stating that the “spiritual in art requires strategies for its protection. It is easily debased, or simply mislaid, by too many or incorrect words” (p. 307). But what are the correct and incorrect words? Shaun McNiff (1992) has quite adamantly condemned the “practices of art therapy that attempt to ‘fix’ the work in definitions,” adding that “when images in art are labeled, my reactions are emotional. There is a sense that something sacred has been violated” (p. 80). Alternatively, McNiff has developed a method he calls “image dialoguing” in which he recommends we talk *with*, rather than *about*, the image. In his experience, the implementation of the image dialogue procedure “always expands the possibilities for being influenced therapeutically by paintings and dreams” (p. 109).

Overall, it seems that there may be some resistance to the inclusion of spiritual discourse in the practice of art therapy. If not resistance, then at least a favoring of images over words. Nevertheless, this study sought to cultivate such discourse and, to the best of my knowledge, was a positive experience for those who participated. However, while conversations were often quite personal, they were intended and conducted as interviews and not therapy sessions per se. Regardless of whether the dialogue is in the form of an interview or an art therapy session, we need to exercise great sensitivity and care when we are speaking of spirituality. While it is not necessarily the only approach to use, perhaps Shaun McNiff's method of image dialoguing is one that might allow for the discourse to take place in a way that respects the spiritual process within the art therapy context.

Transcendence and immanence.

My previous literature review indicated that our culture is in the process of a major paradigm shift. One aspect of this shift entails the transition from a transcendent model of spiritual understanding to that of an immanent model (Doyle, 1999). Joseph Campbell (1973) has explained that all religions align themselves with either an immanent or transcendent perspective. In the case of transcendence, the deity is conceived to be separate or outside the world. Whereas, the immanent perspective holds that "divinity inhabits and is the very essence of the substance of the universe" (p. 53). While conducting this inquiry, I was curious as to whether or not the theme of transcendence and/or immanence would be apparent in the response of the other participants and myself. In retrospect, it might be said that I was eschewing the advice of Shaun McNiff (1992) in my impulse to "fix" the responses of the participants into a defined category of either transcendent or immanent thinking. Nevertheless, I proceed to report on my efforts to label the findings in this regard because, ultimately, it casts some light on the foibles of such an attempt.

As it turned out, only once was this theme explicitly addressed in the interviews. As I reported in the results section, it was I who introduced the matter during my interview with Ariane. We both became quite confused in our effort to identify the transcendent and immanent themes in her response material. After considerable deliberation and a second interview, Ariane concluded that she was presenting an immanent model in her art work. This strong inclination towards an immanent perspective is, perhaps, further reflected in her statement that "there's something alive in us, other than us, that we haven't made and

is coming up to dialogue with us.” Specifically, her reference to something being “alive in us” echoes Campbell’s (1973) description of divine habitation. Yet, Ariane also described this something as being “other than us.” I associate this description with Campbell’s definition of transcendence whereby the deity is conceived of as separate or outside of the world and, therefore, “not to be identified either with the substance of the universe or with one’s own most inward form of forms” (p. 54).

For the most part, the responses of the other participants, including my own, seem equally ambiguous in regard to transcendence and immanence. Lucille, for example, appears to endorse both perspectives. On the one hand, she explicitly upholds an immanent viewpoint when she declares that

I really believe that God, or whatever you want to call it, it’s within you. There’s nothing out there, there’s no angels flying around and all that. I never believed that....It’s not part of my belief. It’s just that whatever that somebody is, it’s inside me. I just feel that spirit and God and everything is inside you.

On the other hand, however, she indicated an equivalent investment in a transcendent point of view. This appeared in her previously cited assertion that we need to believe in something that is “beyond us” in order to support our process of “becoming.”

Loria also revealed a dualistic position when he spoke of relating to the other, saying “It felt like trying to connect with ‘in there’ and ‘out there.’” My own uncertainty and duplicity show in the following passage from my interview.

In making art, I feel I have the experience of coalescing with this other kind of energy or spirit and somehow it mysteriously mixes with me. You could say it is God or Goddess, or you could call it an inner wisdom or an external spirit that I am *inspired* by. I’m not really sure how to say it. But, when I’m making art, there is something of my essence meeting with some sort of essence that is beyond me.

This theme was, possibly, the least apparent in the response by Thérèse. Nevertheless, some subtle allusions were present. For instance, an immanent notion was conveyed in her description of trying to be a witness to life around her. She noted that “the witness cannot but see the sacred in the things around or the people

around.” By contrast, a transcendent point of view may be implicit in her reference to having what seems like “an invisible companion.” Thérèse explained,

...how the environment is always a reflection of the inner space or inner self, for me it’s proven every day....I kind of see it as what happens in my awareness, in what I perceive, everything that happens, often it’s going to have a resonance in something I was wondering or a question I had during the day....And every time it’s almost like being in discussion, you know, life answers back.

You ask a question by yourself and something happens....it’s like having an invisible companion.

It would seem that this ‘invisible companion’ is separate from Thérèse and also distinct from our materially-bound world, in so far as it is “invisible. In this way, it is suggestive of a transcendent deity.

When it comes to the expression of the soul, regardless of whether it takes the form of words or images, it may be futile to make definitive statements about its nature. David Elkins (1995) remarks that the “soul cannot be defined in operational language...each of us must seek to know the soul personally and experientially, and only from this kind of knowing can the common understanding we seek emerge” (p. 84). Perhaps the common understanding being suggested in these findings requires us to simply recognize and accept that the soul is paradoxical and that it communicates this as readily in speech as in art.

The search for unity.

A core theme that characterized all the interview responses in this study concerns the search for some sort of unity. That is, for each participant, there seemed to be a central intention of achieving union either within the self or with another presence or entity. It was stated in a number of ways, including wholeness, harmony and connectedness. In Loria’s case, he proposed a definition of spirituality in which “the spiritual is also the relational.” He described the relational as manifesting in many different forms, including the mirroring offered by an art work, “*le regard de la mère et du père*,” and the experience of “being in touch with the deep nature, the soul.” Loria also noted that the alternative to being in relation and feeling connected is the painful feeling of being abandoned. His art work speaks of these two experiences such that a connectedness is expressed when the image is in a vertical position where “the baby is saluting the light.” Whereas, when the image is put into the horizontal position, Loria explained that the baby was “somehow abandoned to some kind of a destiny.”

In referring to our meeting he observed that “it’s as if this experience of having to talk about the spirit is bringing me on the territory of the relationship with the other—the other with a big O and the other with the little o.” Loria’s sense that he was entering into a relationship with the divine at the same time as he was entering into a relationship with me recalls a frequently cited passage from the bible in which Jesus says, “For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them” (Matthew 18:20, New International Version). Though it was not included in her profile, Lucille had also mentioned this quote during her interview. She voiced some regret that the original research plan to form a focus group had not happened.

I thought if we’d had a time together as a group then you would get more an idea of spirituality than you would ever get with people doing some work like this because you would have the energy of the group. You would have the spirituality of the group.

Hence, through our communion with each other, we invoke the presence of what is “other than us.”

Espousing a strong belief in our destiny to become more than we are, Lucille explained why we need to be attuned to what is other than us in order to achieve this “becoming.”

...in my opinion, unless you have a spiritual belief I don’t know how you can become more than you are now. With the spiritualism, you have something to get yourself beyond yourself. But without the spiritual dimension, well, how can you go beyond yourself? There’s only you, so you’re going to stay where you are.

Throughout her interview, Lucille revealed her steadfast commitment to live her life in accordance with the guidance of “God, or the Universe, or whatever you want to call it.”

...if you’re spiritual enough, you will pray that you’re on the right path. You will pray that you’re making the right decision, that it’s the decision you should be making now, in this life....So if you talk about spirituality in that sense, I’m very convinced that you have a path and when you’re on the right path things happen that guide you to that path and once you’re on it things open up and keep you there.

Therefore, it appears that the essence of Lucille’s search for unity lays in her effort to be in harmony with the wisdom of the divine.

In a similar sense, Ariane's search for unity entails a concordance with the divine forces of the universe in the service of "becoming." Her understanding had much in common with the perspective voiced by Lucille.

I have a really strong sense of something other than me operating and a real dialogue with something. We can call it the unconscious, but I guess I have the idea of the unconscious being the soul or the spiritual essence that has a wisdom and that has a sense of our destiny. [It] knows more than we do and in dialoguing it can bring that up and we can actualize our potential and become everything that we can be.

Just as Lucille feels that making art is a spiritually guided process, Ariane stated that she feels that "this guiding force" communicates symbolically through art. She goes on to define the role of art therapists within this spiritual framework.

I think that through that process of really listening and being aware of that guidance that we become in contact with ourselves and that....our goal, if you want to put it that way, is to help individuals...[to realize] that there is something more and we need to harmonize and respect it [in order] to live in a healthy world.

Therefore, as we come together for the purposes of art therapy, we are entering a spiritual relationship. Ariane spoke of this when she further described the nature of the client-therapist contract.

I see that we're interconnected in some way, that our destinies are bound, that changing the client is also changing myself. I think it's spiritual in that you're connecting....It's like your destinies are linked and the healing process is taking place in that relationship. You're healing the world and you're healing something larger than that relationship.

This notion that we are healing ourselves and also healing something larger than us again recalls Loria's reference to being in relationship with the other as both the big O and the little o. This suggests that, as we enter into our relationships with our clients, we are at once entering into a relationship with the divine. As we find unity with others, so we find unity with the divine.

This experience of oneness can also be expressed as unity within oneself. This is, in effect, the primary way in which Thérèse portrayed her search for unity. She commented,

For me that's what life is about, to become whole....It's not so much that I want to improve myself as I want to really live with every part of myself....I feel like I was always scattered, but I feel like I'm just putting the stones back. I'm just rebuilding whatever was there from the beginning. It's not less. It's not more. It's just like it was all broken and I'm re-piecing it.

Thérèse talked about identifying and reclaiming these parts of herself in two ways. One is through the exploration of processes that put her in touch with the "deep layer," which include dream work, art making and psychotherapy. It is through these processes that she gains "access to the inner self."

A second means of discovery and recuperation of the self involves her relationship with others. As she comes into contact with those around her, whether they are clients, friends, family or people on the street, she simultaneously comes into contact with herself. In her words, "I feel in touch with myself at the same time in touch with the other." As she identifies things in others, so she identifies them in herself. This has led to her realization that "I have all the bad things on earth. All the good things I have too. It's like I have everything, pieces of everything." She continued to explain,

...my truth is to reclaim all those things...It doesn't just happen with things that I would judge negatively, but it happens with all kinds of things, even very positive things....And I really like doing that. For me there's something so nourishing. When I do that I really feel like I'm close to myself. I'm close to God. I'm close to the heart of something, to the heart of things.

In this way, Thérèse has indicated that her experience of self unity is intrinsically bound to her unity with God.

Finally, my own search for unity is made known in various ways throughout my interview. It is particularly evident when I discuss my art making experiences.

[It's] as if the process of making things is a process of being one with some other spirit, some other energy. Perhaps it's the idea of the muse visiting and, so, in making art I am blending with or infused by a divinity. That union, that joining of one's own spirit with the spirit of the other, that's the healing, I feel. I suppose you could call it grace or the Holy Spirit, or it could be conceived of as bliss or ecstasy.

As an art therapy intern, I felt a profound connection to both my clients and the divine healing forces that were integral to their creative process. I describe my first experience with a patient in this way.

It was as if an 'inspiration' had arrived in a time of desperation and there I was witnessing it and trying to be sensitive, not just to the patient, but also to whatever spirit had come to animate his creative gesture.

As I strive to connect with both my clients and the spiritual presence that comes to assist them, Loria's dualistic notion of a big O and a little o emerges one more time.

While the contents of my interview are revealing, it is this research work itself that provides the most salient example of my search for unity. Through my inquiry, I am attempting to foster spiritual communion amongst members of the art therapy community. Moreover, I believe that the success of such communion will rest upon our capacity to witness the spiritual in each other "with acceptance and love for who and where [we] are." My vision and optimism in this regard are contained in the closing excerpt from my interview.

I really believe that there is a way of making common space that respects and supports people with all their spiritual diversity. And I also believe that, through this approach, we can develop models which will enable us to come together as a group and share our own unique spirituality without conflict or threat....I believe that it's possible.

So it can be seen that my ultimate hope is to create a context in which people can come together for the purpose of mutually exploring and sharing their unique spiritual journeys. I present my ideas for creating such a context in the closing section of this chapter, under the subheading "Keeping the Spiritual Discourse Going." However, before I proceed to this final commentary, I would like to reflect a bit more on the new understandings I have acquired in the course of this research endeavour.

Personal Threads of Meaning Revisited

During the immersion phase of this research, I identified four main themes that were of importance to me. I described these themes, or what Patricia Fenner (1996) calls "personal threads of meaning," under the subheadings of "Speaking out about spirituality," "Science versus religion," "Art as process and product," and "Spiritual wounds, healing and growth." As a result of my immersion I have become much

more aware of my own desire to explore spirituality through a shared and open dialogue with others, particularly clients and colleagues. I also arrived at a clearer understanding of my longtime difficulty with a fragmented world view that splits science and religion into mutually exclusive domains. I am grateful to be living in a time, at last, where these two realms are being reconciled into an integrated paradigm. Furthermore, while I have long been aware of the spiritual potency of the art making process, I have also come to deeply appreciate the spiritual significance of the art product itself. Finally, I had a number of insights concerning my own spiritual wounding, healing and growth. Specifically, I realized that the unconditional witnessing by another human being was instrumental in helping me express my authentic spiritual voice.

As I progressed into the acquisition phase, I recognized that these “personal threads of meaning” were inextricably woven into all aspects of my inquiry. These aspects include my motivation for conducting this research, the questions I ask, my efforts to obtain answers, the data that I choose to highlight, the interpretations I place on the findings and the conclusions I make. So it is that my research process is intrinsically embedded within my “internal frame of reference” (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p.47). It is not surprising, then, that the themes I first identified in the immersion phase were often reflected in the themes that I later extracted from the data gathered in the acquisition phase. For example, I describe my own struggle with a fragmented, either/or way of thinking in the immersion theme “Science versus religion.” I later re-encountered this same struggle in the acquisition theme, “Transcendence and immanence,” when I unsuccessfully tried to label the response of each participant as either transcendent or immanent.

In the immersion theme “Speaking out about spirituality,” I detailed my personal longing to connect with others through spiritual discourse. Once again, this longing for connection on a spiritual level was echoed in the acquisition theme entitled “The search for unity.” It is, above all, this particular theme that describes the very core of my inquiry and learning. My desire to cultivate spiritual communion with others through talking raises questions about the power of words to convey spirituality. Throughout this investigation, the image was repeatedly credited with the capacity to embody the spiritual. By contrast, words did not often seem to be attributed with the same capacity. As Thérèse had observed, “it’s almost like the words don’t hold the notion properly.” Laying at the very heart of the matter, is the word

“spirituality” itself. At the outset of this research and oftentimes throughout its course, I tried to create my own definition of spirituality. However, time and again words failed me. How can we define the unknowable, the unspeakable? How can we set boundaries and limits to the infinite, the inconceivable?

Nonetheless, in the course of this inquiry, all five interviewees were able to speak at length about spirituality, including myself. So, although I ultimately did not arrive at a definition of spirituality, I did develop a definition of “spiritual discourse.” This definition is paradoxical in so far as it describes spiritual discourse as both a matter of comprehension and mystery. That is, I came to the conclusion that when we are engaged in spiritual discourse we are expressing *our understanding of what cannot be understood, but only experienced*. So it is that, by my definition, when we are talking about spirituality with each other, we are poised on a double-edged blade of both comprehension and mystery. Two quotes by well-known physicists seem relevant here. Firstly, Steven Weinberg has stated that “the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless” (Davies, 1983). Secondly, Albert Einstein has observed that “the most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious” (Cameron, 1992). When we are speaking of our comprehension of the universe, rather than experiencing its beautiful mystery, are we really running the risk of being condemned to a sense of pointlessness? Perhaps it is the dread of this pointlessness which underlies the reservations some have about discussing spirituality.

On the other hand, maybe our discourse on spirituality holds the possibility of enriching our souls in some way. I would like to propose that talking about spirituality might be one of the ways in which we derive meaning from our spiritual experiences and I would further suggest that this meaning helps guide us towards future soulful encounters with the mysterious. In this way our experiences give birth to new meanings. In turn, these new meanings give birth to new experiences. On these grounds I would recommend that art therapists understand and value spiritual discourse, as well as spiritual experience, in order to best serve those they are intending to help.

Not everyone has as high a regard for the attainment of meaning. Joseph Campbell (1988), for instance, compares our desire for meaning to our desire for experience in the following passage,

People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences

on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive (p. 5).

Rather than seeing meaning and experience as having a complementary dynamic, he formulates them as a choice of one over the other. I disagree with this perspective. Moreover, I take issue with his generalization about our preference for experience over meaning. It is with a kindred sensibility that Bruce Moon asserts that spirituality needs to be part of "the behavior of the therapeutic encounter" yet remains uncertain about whether it needs to be included in the "language of the therapy encounter" (Luzzatto, et al., 1996). Once again, I advocate for valuing and including the language of spirituality in the therapeutic encounter. I take this position because, as I see things, our spiritual conversations are one way in which we consciously derive a sense of meaning from our experiences. As I have noted already, I feel that our sense of meaning helps guide us on our path toward other spiritual experiences. The intricate relationship between meaning and experience was apparent in this inquiry as all the participants talked at length about their personal experience of spirituality. For instance, Loria responded to the interview question, "How have you encountered spirituality in art therapy?" by speaking quite spontaneously about his own life history. He explained that he was trying to "clearly see the leading thread of [his] experience with the subject of spirituality." Later on, after reviewing a transcript of his interview, he wrote the following comment on the last page, "All the hesitations seemed [like] a kind of babbling which remind me of primal screaming where sounds come first as a babble and gradually form words, sentences, meaning." Thus, Loria's remark highlights his own evolutionary process of forging meaning out of experience by way of spiritual discourse.

Perhaps this process of making meaning is more important to some than others. It has been noted that Joseph Campbell (1988) minimizes, if not dismisses, our desire to find meaning. However, the late existential psychoanalyst Viktor Frankl (1948/1975), argued passionately and persuasively for our inherent need to derive meaning from life. He referred to this need as "the will to meaning" (p. 80). As for myself, I feel strongly that as art therapists we need to be able to foster spirituality on the levels of both meaning and experience, language and behavior, speaking and art making. In general, it would seem that the art therapy community is ready, if not eager, to accept its responsibility to cultivate spiritual experiences by encouraging creative experiences. In fact, many hold that the creative encounter is the spiritual encounter (Cameron,

1992; Luzzatto et al., 1996; McNiff, 1992; Moon, 1993; Moon, 1994, 1997). Perhaps then, to fully support the spiritual healing and growth that we initiate in our clients through the art process, we ought to prepare ourselves to nurture their efforts to make meaning out of the creative/spiritual experiences we are encouraging them to have. In referring to being prepared, of course, I am suggesting that we teach ourselves how to engage in spiritual discourse with our clients.

In the course of this inquiry, I have come to personally recognize the importance of this dialogue from the perspectives of both a client and an art therapist. Moreover, I feel that the research interviews themselves provide convincing evidence that it is possible, and even desirable, to open up this spiritual discourse within the art therapy community. Finally, I have proposed that the meaning making power of spiritual discourse is a primary way in which it promises to play an important role in the art therapy process.

Keeping the Spiritual Discourse Going

In the final phase of the heuristic search, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) explain that a synthesis of findings takes place in which

the theme, question, or problem being explored is recognized as having a life of its own. The challenge is to nurture that life, letting it grow and mature in a way that is consistent with its true nature, as it is revealed experientially through the researcher's own internal processes and those of intimate collaborators. (p. 52)

Throughout this heuristic inquiry, I have been exploring the very loosely defined theme of "spirituality and art therapy." According to the above quote by Douglass and Moustakas (1985), this theme has a "life of its own." With this in mind, I would like to conclude my research paper in two steps. First, I plan to very briefly summarize what I have come to understand as "the life" of this theme. Second, I would like to make a recommendations about how to proceed to "nurture that life." Basically, my recommendations constitute what is more commonly known as suggested avenues for future research.

The life of this theme

As I have noted, the theme of this inquiry has been loosely identified as "spirituality and art therapy." In keeping with the model of heuristic research outlined by Douglass and Moustakas (1985), I intend to identify "the life" of this theme. Since motion is a primary attribute of life, it is useful to

understand what sort of movement is happening in the area of spirituality and art therapy. In order to do this, I will first look at where art therapy has been throughout the 1990's. In 1993, Cathy Moon surveyed seventy-five art therapists on their views about spirituality and concluded that "the responses leaned heavily toward the side of acknowledging if not an inherent connection between art therapy and spirituality, then at least an interrelationship" (Moon, 1993, p. 20). A review of the literature reveals an abundance of art therapists who were nurturing the spiritual healing and growth of their clients through the creative process (American Art Therapy Association, Inc., 1993; Gilroy & Skaife, 1997). There were fewer examples of art therapists reporting on the spiritual healing and growth of their clients through explicit spiritual discourse (Horovitz-Darby, 1994). In fact, a number of art therapists stated a preference for connecting with and supporting their client's spirituality through the artistic process rather than the verbal one (Luzzatto et al., 1996; Moon, 1993). Even Shaun McNiff (1992), who regarded the image as an "ensouled being" and encouraged his clients to talk, was very specific about how to speak as he introduced his approach for "image dialoguing." Yet, as a whole, the professional community of art therapists endorsed the use of both verbal and artistic means to support art therapy clients (American Art Therapy Association, Inc., 1999). To sum up the situation of the past decade, then, it seems that the art therapy community was often inclined to specifically exclude explicit spiritual discourse from its therapeutic practice. However, in this heuristic inquiry into my "own internal processes and those of intimate collaborators" there lies the suggestion that a change is in the wind (Douglass & Moustakas, p. 52). Explicit spiritual discourse may be on its way to becoming a regular part of the art therapist's professional dialogue. It is precisely this change that constitutes "the life" of this theme.

Likewise, my previous literature review reveals that this change is part of a widespread revolution in our Western society's understanding and experience of spirituality. The mounting pressures of a worldwide environmental crisis, the continued impact of the feminist movement, and the introduction of quantum physics, have all been catalysts in the transformation of our most fundamental paradigm, that of the sacred and the profane (Doyle, 1999). The precise nature and dimensions of this change are uncertain at present (Sperry, 1995). However, it appears that we are developing an increasingly unified and holistic perspective of the universe. Most particularly, the boundaries we have long assumed to split body from

mind, matter from energy, and science from religion are being dissolved by the new paradigm (Dennis, 1995; Elkins, 1995). Without these divisions, the flow of spirituality becomes pervasive, inclusive and integral to all manner of things. Consequently, our many institutions and disciplines, including psychotherapy, are beginning to search for models which integrate mental, physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions. As more inclusive and unified models of therapy are developed, it is likely that explicit spiritual discourse will also become increasingly prevalent amongst mental health professionals and their clients. Some of the more recent literature shows that this is, indeed, the case with art therapy (Franklin, Farrelly-Hansen, Marek, Swan-Foster, & Wallingford, 2000; Koepfer, 2000; Zammit, 2001). I return to my intention to describe “the life” of this theme, spirituality and art therapy, in terms of movement. The movement, it seems, can be identified as the growing presence of explicit spiritual discourse in the practice of art therapy.

Nurturing the life of the research theme.

Having described the life of this research theme, Douglass and Moustakas (1985) further advise that “the challenge is to nurture that life, letting it grow and mature in a way that is consistent with its true nature.” This heuristic inquiry reveals that the “true nature” of this life is characterized as the increasing inclusion of explicit spiritual discourse in art therapy. Given this revelation, the question we need to ask now is “How do we keep this spiritual discourse going?” The simplest answer is that we need to create more space for this discourse to happen. The interviews presented here are just one way of making this sort of room. We might further expand the space by choosing more comprehensive parameters in future research designs. For example, with one exception, the data was gathered by conducting one-time interviews. There would be much to learn from a series of in-depth interviews with the same individual over an extended period of time. Perhaps this would allow us to learn more about the interrelationship between spiritual discourse and spiritual experience as it occurs over time. Furthermore, this study was limited to an examination of the individual and did not, as Lucille said, include “the spirituality of the group.” An exploration of spirituality within a group context would also present a worthwhile avenue of research. By bringing people together for the specific purpose of sharing their spiritual life, this research has potential to provide important insights into the differences between religion and spirituality. It might also reveal more

about the capacity of a group to stimulate spiritual growth and healing through unconditional witnessing, as well as by evoking the presence of the divine through spiritual communion with others.

The spiritual discourse explored in this inquiry took place between art therapists and did not include any art therapy clients. Given the longtime absence of spirituality from psychotherapeutic training and practice, as well as the largely secularized attitude of our culture, I suggest that we continue to concentrate much of our research effort on learning more about our own spirituality. Assagioli (1989), for example, contends that therapists will not be able to assist the client beyond the limits of their own spiritual development. In a related manner, Koepfer (2000) has suggested that our sensitivity to the spirituality of others depends largely on a heightened awareness of our own spirituality. As a result of this inquiry into spirituality and art therapy, it seems very likely that art therapists are soon going to find themselves faced with a rising demand to support their clients on a spiritual level. In light of this likelihood, we need to find ways to better educate ourselves in this area in order assist in the healing and growth of our clients as well as ourselves.

This heuristic inquiry was initially inspired by my own desire to talk about spirituality within an art therapy context. It is my hope that this research will somehow open the door to more conversations on spirituality and art therapy. The insights and revelations presented here are a result of the sincere and generous collaboration of Ariane, Loria, Lucille, and Thérèse. I am extremely grateful to each of them. In the course of this inquiry, I have found myself spiritually challenged and enriched to unprecedented levels and I am certain that I will continue to profit from what each of us has shared in this work. I hope that this will be true for my four colleagues as well.

References

- Allen, P. B. (1995). Art is a way of knowing: A guide to self-knowledge and spiritual fulfillment through creativity. Boston: Shambhala.
- American Art Therapy Association, Inc. (1993). 24th Annual Conference. Common ground: The arts, therapy, spirituality. Mundelein, IL: Author.
- American Art Therapy Association, Inc. (1999). Art therapy: The profession. [Brochure]. Mundelein, IL: Author.
- Assagioli, R. (1989). Self-realization and psychological disturbances. In S. Grof & G. Grof (Eds.), Spiritual emergency: When personal transformation becomes a crisis (pp. 27-48). Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher.
- Ballou, M. (1995). Women and spirit: Two nonfits in psychology. Women & Therapy, 16 (2/3), 9-20.
- Bergin, A. E. (1991). Values and religious issues in psychotherapy and mental health. American Psychologist, 46, 394-403.
- Bergin, A. E., & Jensen, J. P. (1990). Religiosity of psychotherapists: A national survey. Psychotherapy, 27, 3-7.
- Cameron, J. (1992). The artists's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Campbell, J. (1988). The power of myth. New York: Doubleday.
- Campbell, J. (1973). Man and myth: Imagination and its relation to theological enquiry. Paris: Desclee.
- Case, C. (1998). Brief encounters: Thinking about images in assessment. Inscape, 3, (1), 26-33.
- Chopra, D. (1994). The seven spiritual laws of success. San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen.
- Davies, P. (1983). God and the new physics. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Dennis, D. (1995). Humanistic neuroscience, mentality, and spirituality. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 35 (2), 34-72.
- Douglass, B. G., & Moustakas, C. (1985). Heuristic inquiry: The internal search to know. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 25 (3), 39-55.
- Dowie, M. (1995). Losing Ground: American environmentalism at the close of the twentieth century. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Doyle, C. (1999). Three models of spiritually informed approaches to art therapy based upon archetypal psychology, existentialism, and developmental theory. Unpublished manuscript, Concordia University at Montréal.
- Elkins, D. N. (1995). Psychotherapy and spirituality: Toward a theory of the soul. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 35 (2), 78-98.

Feder, B., & Feder, E. (1998). The art and science of evaluation in the arts therapies: How do you know what's working? Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Fenner, P. (1996). Heuristic research study: Self-therapy using the brief image-making experience. The Arts in Psychotherapy, 23 (1), 37-51.

Frankl, V. E. (1948/ 1975). The unconscious God. (V.E. Frankl, Trans.). New York: Simon and Schuster. (Original work first published 1948).

Franklin, M., Farrelly-Hansen, M., Marek, B., Swan-Foster, N., & Wallingford, S. (2000). Transpersonal art therapy education. Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 17 (2), 101-110.

Gantt, L. M. (1998). A discussion of art therapy as a science. Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 15 (1), 3-12.

Gilroy, A., & Skaife, S. (1997). Taking the pulse of American art therapy. Inscape, 2 (2), 57-64.

Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Goldenberg, N. (1979). Changing of the gods: Feminism and the end of traditional religions. Boston: Beacon Press.

Good, D. (1993). 1993 Distinguished Service Award. Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 10 (4), 12-13.

Hart, T. (1994). Hidden spring: The spiritual dimension of therapy. New York: Paulist Press.

Hillman, J. (1996). The soul's code. New York: Random House.

Horovitz-Darby, E.G. (1994). Spiritual art therapy: An alternative path. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Hunter, M. (1990). Abused boys: The neglected victims of sexual abuse. New York: Ballantine Books.

Koepfer, S. R. (2000). Drawing on the spirit: Embracing spirituality in pediatrics and pediatric art therapy. Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 17 (3), 188-194.

Kramer, E.S. & Iager, A. (1984). The use of art in assessment of psychotic disorders: Changing perspectives. The Arts in Psychotherapy, 11, 197-201.

Lipsey, R. (1997). An art of our own: The spiritual in twentieth century art. Boston: Shambhala.

Lovinger, R. J. (1984). Working with religious issues in therapy. New York: Jason Aronson.

Luzzatto, P., McNiff, S., Moon, B., Robbins, A., & Robbins, M. (Speakers). (1996). The soul and art therapy: A meeting place for cross-cultural currents. (Cassette recording). Mundelein, IL: The American Art Therapy Association.

McGaa, E. (1990). Mother Earth spirituality: Native American paths to healing ourselves and our world. San Francisco: Harper.

- McNiff, S. (1992). Art as medicine: Creating a therapy of the imagination. Boston: Shambhala.
- McNiff, S. (1998). Art-based research. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: Using the constant comparative method (Chapter 9, pp.135-158). Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide. Washington, DC: Falmer Press.
- Moon, B. L. (1997). Art and soul: Reflections on an artistic psychology. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Moon, B. L. (1994). Introduction to art therapy: Faith in the product. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Moon, C. (1993). Mystery: The guiding image. Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 10 (4), 18-22.
- Moore, T. (1992). Care of the soul. New York: Harper Collins.
- Moustakas, C. (1990). Heuristic research: Design, methodology, and applications. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Naisbitt, J. & Aburdene, P. (1988). Megatrends 2000. New York: Viking.
- Noam, G. G., & Wolf, M. (1993). Psychology and spirituality: Forging a new relationship. In M.L. Randour (Ed.), Exploring sacred landscapes (pp. 194 - 207). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Randour, M. L. (Ed.). (1993). Exploring sacred landscapes. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rogers, C.R. (1959). A theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships as developed in the client-centered framework. In S. Koch (Ed.), Psychology: a study of a science (pp. 184-256). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Salmons, P. H., & Clarke, D. J. (1987). Cacodemonomania. Psychiatry, 50, 50-54.
- Shafranske, E. P., & Malony, H. N. (1990). Clinical psychologists' religions and spiritual orientations and their practice of psychotherapy. Psychotherapy, 27 (1), 72-78.
- Spero, M.H. (1990). Parallel dimensions of experience in psychoanalytic psychotherapy of the religious patient. Psychotherapy, 27 (1), 53-71.
- Sperry, R. (1995). The riddle of consciousness and the changing scientific worldview. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 35 (2), 7-33.
- Spretnak, C. (1986). The spiritual dimensions of Green politics. Sante Fe, NM: Bear.
- Whitfield, C. L. (1987). Healing the child within. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications.
- Williams, K. J., Agell, G., Gantt, L., & Goodman, R.F. (1996). Art-Based diagnosis: Fact or Fantasy? American Journal of Art Therapy, 35, 9-31.
- Zammit, C. (2001). The art of healing: A journey through cancer: Implications for art therapy. Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 18 (1), 27-36.

PARTICIPATION-RELEASE AGREEMENT

1. I agree to participate in the research study of Christine Doyle as outlined in the attached narrative. I understand the purpose and nature of this study and am participating voluntarily. I understand that my name and other demographic information which might identify me will not be used.

I agree to participate in an individual interview to be conducted at a mutually agreed upon time and place, with the understanding that this meeting will be no longer than 1.5 hours. I also agree to participate in a follow-up review which will require approximately 2 hours of my time. I understand that my comments will be audiotape recorded and I grant my permission for these recordings.

☐ yes☐ no

2. I grant Christine Doyle permission for my audiotaped comments to be used in the process of completing a Masters degree in the Creative Arts Therapies Programme at Concordia University, including a thesis manuscript and any other future publication.

☐ yes☐ no

3. I grant Christine Doyle permission for my art work to be photographed and to be used in the process of completing a Masters degree in the Creative Arts Therapies Programme at Concordia University, including a thesis manuscript and any other future publication.

☐ yes☐ no

Signature of Research Participant

Signature of Primary Researcher

Date

Date

Consent Information

The study in which I have asked you to participate will provide the data for my research in the Department of Art Education and Creative Arts Therapies at Concordia University. The purpose of the study is to acquire a better understanding of the philosophical, practical and ethical issues associated with spiritually informed approaches to art therapy. I am interested in learning more about your experiences as an art therapist in this regard.

If you agree to participate in this study, there will be one audiotape recorded interview, no longer than 1.5 hours in length. In addition, there will be some follow-up review in which you may be asked to clarify, modify or censor material contained in transcripts of your comments during the interview as you see fit. While you may decide to take longer, I estimate the follow-up will require approximately 2 hours of your time.

During the interview, I will be inviting you to share your experiences and understanding of the relationship between art therapy and spirituality. I am interested in learning how you might encounter spirituality in your practice as an art therapist. Through words and art, you may reveal whatever pertinent details you feel comfortable to share. You may disclose or withhold information as you wish. You are welcome to withdraw from the study at any point in time for any reason.

The information obtained in this study will be held in the strictest confidence. All audiotapes, transcripts and any other data will be identifiable only through a master list. The master list will be kept in a secure and separate location to which only the researcher will have access. You may review your tapes, transcripts and other materials any time you wish. I would like to keep any art works produced during the interview as a research resource while I am completing my thesis. I will return the work to you when my thesis is approved by the research committee at Concordia University. Other than myself, the only individuals who will be allowed to see the transcribed interviews are members of my research committee at Concordia University.

If you have any questions at this point or at any point during or after the study, please do not hesitate to ask. You will be given a copy of this information and consent form to keep, should you wish to contact me at any time about this research project.

Christine Doyle
Creative Arts Therapies Programme
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec

Telephone: