AN EXISTENTIAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE KIND OF THERAPEUTIC SELF-INSIGHT THAT CARRIES A GREATER SENSE OF FREEDOM

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ABSTRACT

The central aim of this study was to contribute to the clarification of the nature of self-insight in psychotherapy by means of a qualitative research design.

A pilot study provided direction by suggesting a psychologically relevant focus that was experientially specific; that is, the kind of therapeutic self-insight that carries a greater sense of freedom.

A phenomenological research method was used to describe and interpret in depth the experiences of eight clients who had been in psychotherapy. Their experiences were explicated to yield a psychologically relevant general description of the phenomenon.

The results indicated ten central constituents of the experience. Such themes included, amongst others, the role of language in providing perspective, the increased understanding of personal agency, the achievement of a more complex self-image, and the ability to express existing desires and motives within a more flexible or creative behavioural context.

The general description also indicated how phenomena such as memory, feeling, motive, metaphor, dreams and present behaviour interact in the co-constitution of this kind of therapeutic self-insight.

After dialoguing the results of the study with relevant literature, the thesis concluded with reflections on the intrinsic value of therapeutic self-insight, as revealed in this study, in relation to the spirit of of technology.

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DEDICATION

For Louise

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CHAPTER 1

THERAPEUTIC SELF-INSIGHT - DELINEATING THE FIELD

1.1 INTRODUCTION: SELF-INSIGHT AS A PERENNIAL ISSUE

The phenomenon of self-insight has been a perennial issue in philosophical and religious traditions from ancient times. The earliest myths in both eastern and western cultures carry both implicit and explicit messages about the vicissitudes of our capacity as human beings, to have insight into our own thoughts, feelings, motives, actions, our place in the universe and our relationship to others, nature and God.

Neumann, (1954) in his book, 'The Origins and History of Consciousness', notes the prevalence of stories from diverse cultures about the beginning of the world. Such 'creation myths' may, perhaps, be understood to reflect a universal need for a degree of self-understanding.

> "The symbolic story of the beginning, which speaks to us from the mythology of all ages, is the attempt made by man's childlike, prescientific consciousness to master problems and enigmas which are mostly beyond the grasp of even our developed modern consciousness....
>
> This original question about the origin of the world is at the same time the question about the origin of man, the origin of the ego; it is the fateful question 'Where did I come from?' that faces every human being as soon as he arrives upon the threshold of self-consciousness" (Neumann 1954, p.7).

Such 'creation myths' often progress into stories about how human-kind becomes aware to some degree of his/her own freedom,

and achieves some distance from nature. Such myths also usually consider the implications of such self-awareness.

For example, in the Judeao-Christian tradition, Adam and Eve's eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, may be seen to speak of our lost 'innocence', when our embeddedness in nature and our unity with 'God's will' was questioned.

A further implication of this story is that the question about our own place in the scheme of things is given by this myth to the first man and woman, thus implying an existential and universal dilemma.

In a section on the 'creation of man', Eliade provides examples of myths from a number of different cultures, from Polynesia, from the Zuni Indians of Mexico, and from the Shilluk of Africa, which all indicate a concern to understand and reflect on our place in the universe (Eliade 1967).

As one reads these myths, similar themes about the vicissitudes of self-understanding emerge: freedom and responsibility; a degree of discontinuity between self and nature, self and God, self and other; and finally an attempt to heal such discontinuity, to locate oneself meaningfully within a larger context.

The terms of such a drama have followed us through religion, through philosophy and now have come to be reflected and further differentiated in the splintered mirrors of Psychology.[1]

1.2 SELF-INSIGHT AS A RELEVANT TERM IN PSYCHOLOGY

Within a psychological perspective, terms such as 'self-insight' and 'insight' have been used within varying contexts and indicating different nuances of meaning. The terms have been used in the field of learning and perception (Ellis, 1950), in social psychology (Hutchinson, 1949), and in psychotherapy and developmental psychology (Erikson, 1964).

More recently, a further factor which makes a delineation of the phenomenon more difficult, is the use, often unquestioned, of related terms which emphasize a particular dimension of self-insight or even may sound similar but in fact refers to something quite different. A review of recent psychology dissertations (H.S.R.C. data base) reveals a prevalence of titles which include terms such as self-concept, self-perception, self-esteem, self-realization, self-actualization, self-awareness, self-experience, self-evaluation, self-instruction, self-regulation, and self-exploration. Such terms often exist within a specific theoretical framework and this makes it difficult to understand how the various terms relate to one another.

Rather than becoming excessively diverted by the attempt to bring some order into the diversity of terms, I would like to take a middle path between philosophy and psychology in delineating the

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1. In a provocative and stimulating paper entitled: 'Psychology in a Post-Modern Era', Bernd Jager (1989) discusses the lack of unity in Psychology.

phenomenon of the present study.

On the philosophical side, I would like to refer to the brief consideration of some of the vicissitudes of self-understanding suggested by myth. Such a perspective is helpful in that it does not lose a holistic concern to remember essentially related issues such as freedom, responsibility, meaning, etc. Such issues point to the fact that the task of understanding oneself cannot be artificially separated from the task of understanding one's place in the world. The danger of the term 'self-insight' is that it could be used to imply the understanding of 'internal' processes, as if the self was something-in-itself rather than an existential phenomenon that *is* an engagement with the world. Thus if I were to be fully faithful to a philosophical perspective, I would have to say that the most useful term for the phenomenon I wish to focus on is the 'understanding of personally significant self-world relationships'.

However, although I believe that Psychology can overly decontextualize its terms as suggested by the list of related terms, I also believe that a psychological perspective can bring philosophical issues 'down to earth' by highlighting how such issues relate to living human beings.

Thus with regard to the issue of 'self-understanding', Psychology, rather than focus on such over-riding concerns as our awareness of our place in the universe, has largely pursued more 'psychological' issues such as: 'how do we come to learn about ourselves?', 'how do we come to learn something new?', 'how much of the way that we feel and act is conscious?', etc.

It is in the acknowledgement of the value of a psychological perspective that the term, 'self-insight', is considered to be useful and relevant. It is a term that wishes to speak of *the way that self-understanding occurs*. The term self-insight is deemed a psychologically fruitful term for three reasons:

a) it speaks 'psychologically' in that it implies a particular form of *learning* which may be considered for investigation. Thus a consideration of the phenomenon of 'insight' in general as a form of learning may prove helpful.

b) it is a term that has been commonly used in the field of psychotherapy, the applied discipline which is perhaps involved more often with the issue of self-insight than other branches of Psychology.

c) it is a term that has infiltrated common, every-day usage and has generally come to function as a non-technical term for the way that self-understanding occurs. The approach of this study, as will be seen in the next chapter, favours investigations which take as their point of departure every-day understandings and experiences.

In order to delineate the focus of this study, that is, the phenomenon of *therapeutic self-insight*, it may prove useful to elaborate on two areas of relevant investigation in Psychology:

a) 'Insight' as a particular form of learning; and

b) 'Self-insight' as a term commonly referred to in the field of Psychotherapy.

1.2.1 'Insight' as a particular form of learning

We are indebted to Wolfgang Köhler, one of the founders of Gestalt Psychology for establishing the central importance of 'insight' as a valid phenomenon in learning and perception.

In a chapter entitled 'Insight' from his book 'Gestalt Psychology', Köhler (1947) defined insight as 'the direct awareness of determination'. By this he meant the capacity to immediately understand the relational significance of phenomena to each other and to oneself. In an attack on Behaviourism and its related philosophy of associationism, he wished to demonstrate that events are not experienced as isolated things, which are then given associational significance by means of an additional psychological act, but are experienced primarily and immediately as relationships of meaning.

An example that he gives helps to clarify his definition:

> "After a long walk, on a hot summer day, I drink a glass of cold beer. While I do so, I feel coolness and a characteristic taste in my mouth. Also there is great enjoyment. Now, is it necessary for me gradually to learn that in such a situation the enjoyment refers to the coolness and the taste? That it has nothing to do with the spider which I see on the wall, or with the size of the chair before me? Surely, no such learning is needed. I am no more directly aware of my enjoyment as such, and of the touch and taste by themselves, than I am of the fact that the enjoyment refers to just this coolness and taste. My pleasure is also felt to be an adequate reaction to these facts. Between the pleasure and its sensory basis I experience what is called in German their 'verständlicker Zusammenhang,' which may be expressed in English as 'understandable relationship'" (Köhler 1947, pp.325-6).

His conception of insight formed part of a coherent perspective in Gestalt Psychology in which the perception and experience of anything always reflected its 'field properties', that is, the holistic significance of things-in-relationship. These relationships are seen or experienced or understood all at once and are not gradually associated with each other in order to result in a coherent pattern.

In this conception, insightful learning cannot involve a passive reception of increasing bits of information. Rather, insightful learning involves a qualitative, holistic shift of perception or understanding in which some new organizing relationship is seen. Such a relationship can only be understood as an 'all-at-once phenomenon'. One cannot see only parts of the relationship and understand it as that relationship.

Within the natural scientific heritage of his time, Köhler and his companions designed an ingenious series of experiments to demonstrate that even animals had this capacity for learning by means of sudden 'gestalt' shifts in the way they understand things.

For example, in one experiment, (Köhler in Ellis, 1950) chimpanzees could only obtain food from a choice of a number of boxes if they observed, under changing circumstances, that there were two colours to consider in choosing the correct box, and that the relationship between these two colours (brighter or darker) rather than the colours themselves was the clue to successful choice. Köhler noted that, at some moment during its training, a chimpanzee would achieve a consistently correct

choice, even though subsequent boxes and colours-in-themselves were changed. He thus came to the plausible conclusion that once the relevant relationship had been understood, all subsequent events could be seen in terms of this relationship. Therefore, 'relationships' may be seen as a primary phenomenon of perception and understanding.

The term 'insight' as suggested by Gestalt Psychology reveals the artificiality of separating perception and cognition. 'Seeing', within this perspective always already involves the understanding of relationships. 'Insight' would thus appear to be an apt term which suggests both the 'all at once', spatially organized properties of 'sight' and the penetrating, 'in' metaphor that represents understanding. 'Insight' as a 'seeing-into' would thus appear to achieve the expression of a phenomenon which does not separate perception and cognition.

Although these studies may serve as a useful starting point for elucidating the phenomenon of insight in a definitional way, they did not progress to the stage where one can begin to address the complexity of this phenomenon within a human context.

Köhler indicates the large scope of this field in the following quotation:

> "...taken in its basic sense, the term insight refers to experienced dynamics in the emotional and motivational fields no less than to experienced determination in intellectual situation" (Köhler 1947, p.342).

I would suggest that he also implied that the phenomenon which I

will call 'self-insight', ie. insight into more *personally significant relationships for one's sense of identity*, may be a special type of insight which requires particular investigation. In a footnote reference to psychoanalysis, he wrote:

> "Recognition, which operates with perfect ease in perception, is surprisingly sluggish in the case of inner processes" (Köhler 1947, p.335).

This quotation alone could have stimulated a significant direction for psychological investigation. However, although relevant theories within a clinical context have arisen, it is only with the growth of phenomenology as a research method in Psychology, that studies related to the 'sluggishness' of self-insight are being undertaken (cf. Fischer's, 1985 study on self-deception and Parker's, 1985 study on conscience).

In a book entitled 'Productive Thinking', Max Wertheimer (1945), a colleague of Köhler's, considered the phenomenon of insightful learning within a human context.

With reference to the way that problems are solved in geometry, he traced the sequence of psychological events that lead to a new, insightful solution. The term 'insight' is used to indicate that the result was achieved by a new and wider perception of the 'situation-as-a-whole'. A change in the nature of the relationships of the elements of the problem - their place, role and function - are accommodated within a broader perceptual field which allows new possibilities of meaning to be seen.

In considering a number of different problem situations (including those of Einstein and Gallileo), he stressed the

centrality of an aesthetic sense in achieving a solution to these problems. Such an aesthetic sense involves an appreciation of general relational structures which gives active direction to achieving a perception of how elements fit or should fit together within a whole.

Wertheimer used a musical metaphor to explicate this concept:

> "A composer does not usually put notes together in order to get some melody; he envisages the character of a melody *in statu nascendi* and proceeds from above as he tries to concretize it in all its parts" (p.197).

Insight is thus achieved when a 'goodness of fit' is experienced:

> "S_2 (the situation where the problem is solved) is a state of affairs that is held together by inner forces as a good structure in which there is a harmony in the mutual requirements, and in which the parts are determined by the structure of the whole, as the whole is by the parts" (Wertheimer 1945, p.195).

This aesthetic sense of 'structure of the whole' also constitutes a motivation that can be strong enough to override old, repetitive and habit-bound ways of approaching the problem.

> "...they long for a structurally clear view in which the items find their clear place, function and role, do not disturb the main lines and the resulting direction of view and action" (Wertheimer 1945, p.200).

By elucidating these themes in a number of problem-solving situations, Wertheimer was able to document a sequence of psychological events that lead to insightful problem-solving.

To paraphrase:

1. A pre-insight setting of motivation for structural 'goodness

of fit'.

2. An awareness that one's existing view of the total situation - the relationship of parts to whole - are somehow insufficient.
3. A phase of thoughtful effort where there is a consistent consideration of the meaning of the various elements to one another.
4. During this phase, the whole focus may shift its centre of concern one or more times. (Wertheimer called this 'decentering').
5. New centres of concern (eg. size and acceleration rather than weight) may come into focus, allowing one's thinking or attitude to be rearranged by the new requirements or centres of concern.
6. Finally, a solution is achieved in a way that is different from the operations of traditional logic and associationism which are blind to the view of the whole.

Although Köhler, Wertheimer and their colleagues did not directly address the specific phenomenon of *self*-insight, the heritage of Gestalt Psychology at least established 'insight' as a valid form of learning with specific characteristics. Any study of self-insight would thus need to consider the possibility of qualitative shifts of understanding where *new* relationships are meaningfully perceived.

Such terms of reference give direction to this study's focus by helping to delineate self-insight as a *particular kind of learning* which understands something personally relevant in a

new way.

1.2.2 'Self-Insight' as a term commonly referred to in the field of Psychotherapy

1.2.2.1 Psychoanalysis

Freud's natural-scientific concern to demonstrate economic, dynamic and topographical aspects in the functioning of psychological life, (cf. Freud 1915) resulted in a heritage which talked about self-insight in very specific ways pertaining to its overall theory.

A brief review of some of the Encyclopedias of Psychology and Psychoanalysis reflect the theory-bound nature of the use of the term. Eidelberg's (1968) edition of the Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis offers two kinds of insight: analytic and emotional.

> "Analytic Insight denotes an awareness of the meaning and unconscious origin of behaviour and symptoms, especially as a result of working through the resistances in the psychoanalytic situation" (p.32).

In arriving at these definitions, Eidelberg used Freud's 1914 paper entitled "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through" as his source of reference.

Walrond-Skinner's (1986) Dictionary of Psychotherapy defines insight in psychoanalysis as:

> "...an awareness of the relationship between past experience and current behaviour, especially in relation to unconscious conflict now made conscious by interpretations and the working through process" (p.181).

This dictionary further paraphrases Meninger (1958) in defining psychoanalytic insight as the

> "...simultaneous identification of the characteristic behaviour pattern in three distinct situations: in the patient's childhood, in his contemporary behaviour, and in his response to the analytic situation" (p.182).

This brief review suggests that Psychoanalysis, in being centrally concerned with the unconscious and the historical determinants of experience and behaviour, has a reduced interest in the phenomenon of self-insight as a human experience; it is more interested in this phenomenon as it particularly pertains to its central theory and practice. Such circularity in Psychoanalysis (cf. Boss 1963) has resulted in a language which tends to obscure more than it reveals and has not been conducive to the elucidation of therapeutic self-insight in its own right. This point may be illustrated by a recent popular text on the theory and practice of psychoanalysis:

> "Our aim is to get the ego to renounce its pathogenic defences or find more suitable ones. The old defensive manoeuver proved to be inadequate; new, different or no defences might permit some instinctual outlet without guilt or anxiety. The id discharge would lessen the instinctual pressure and the ego would then be in a relatively stronger position" (Greenson 1986: p.29).

Such a sentence is fraught with terms which reify one another, and descriptions of insight within this body of literature have, likewise, been described in terms of the language of discharge, instinctual pressures and the relative operations of the 'id', 'ego' and 'superego'.

Let us consider the following quotations as illustrations:

"Insight can be effective only if the patient is

> able to maintain a reasonable ego" (Greenson 1986, p.27).

or

> "Slowly the patient will realize that the instinctual impulses of childhood which were overwhelming for a child's ego resources and were distorted by a child's superego can be looked at differently in adult life" (Greenson 1986, p.29)

Clarification of the nature of self-insight in psychoanalysis has also been hampered by the metatheoretical tensions within this movement.

To quote Rawn (1988):

> "How best to conceive of psychoanalysis, whether as a natural science with structures, entities, a concern for veridicality, or as hermeneutics with its multiple meanings, narrative creations and relativism, is an important focus in psychoanalysis these days" (p.509).

This controversy alone (notwithstanding other important debates such as the 'topographical' issue) carries with it vast differences of opinion regarding the nature and importance of self-insight. A natural scientific enterprise is likely to subscribe to a 'correspondence theory' of truth, and thus emphasize the importance of historical accuracy with regard to self-insight. The phenomenon of self-insight would then be formulated within a discourse of 'the facts of the matter...'

A more hermeneutic enterprise is more likely to emphasize the power of narrative and language to reveal meaning. The phenomenon of self-insight would then be formulated within a discourse of 'the meaning of the matter...' Having said all this, how do we evaluate the contribution of psychoanalysis to our understanding of self-insight?

I believe that although it has not provided us with a rigorous and coherent exposition, Psychoanalysis has been 'working with' the phenomenon in ways which have generated a rich source of relevant experience and observation.

A consideration of this essentially 'operational' interest may serve to recover some of the contributions of the psychoanalytic enterprise as an important background to the present study.

The controversy of what constitutes the nature of the therapeutic action in psychoanalysis (cf. Rawn 1988; Strachey 1934; Loewald 1960) has taken a number of turns.

In a dissertation such as this I cannot do justice to the complexity of the issues. This would necessitate a consideration of the differing developmental and motivational theories. I hope, however, to give sufficient detail to offer an interpretation of the nature and status of therapeutic self-insight within psychoanalysis. To this purpose, I will use Meissner's (1982) historical analysis as a useful framework:

a) <u>The Cathartic Model</u>

Freud's early work with Breuer, utilizing hypnosis, produced a cathartic model of therapeutic action (Sulloway, 1979). At this stage, Freud was hoping to formulate his understanding of psychological life in physiological terms as much as possible. In drawing on Helmholtzian principles, he wished to show that a traumatic event in the life of a patient could upset the neurologically-based 'homeostasis' to such a degree, that neural

energies would be used to cut off the memory of the trauma in order to protect the rest of the 'mental apparatus'. Such 'bound up energy' could be released by the therapeutic effect of abreaction, that is, the emotional reaction which occurs when facing the memory of a traumatic event.

In such a formulation, the extent of 'self-insight' involves a greater awareness of 'events' in one's life that had been forgotten. Although the emphasis in this physiological formulation would stress the release of bound-up energy as the major thrust of therapeutic action, one can also see the beginnings of a consideration of the importance of a *sense of historical continuity* for mental health. The importance of this theme has grown since its implicit beginnings at this stage of psychoanalytic theory. Within this perspective, psychotherapeutic self-insight facilitates a greater sense of personal, historical continuity.

b) The Repressive Model

Freud's interest shifted increasingly towards a consideration of repression as an ongoing, active phenomenon. Rather than the earlier, more passive, theory of a physiologically-based dissociation of early memories, he began to see repression as a defensively motivated process that was more psychological in nature. This consideration occurred in conjunction with Freud's observations of patients' often powerful resistance to his efforts to uncover the repressed traumatic memories. He thus became aware not only of a 'repressed' aspect of the psyche but of a 'repressing' aspect as well. This distinction formed the basis

for his topographical model where the psyche is seen to be divided into conscious and unconscious polarities, each governed by different motivational principles (the reality and pleasure principles) which were in conflict with each other.

Therapeutic technique then shifted from the emphasis on hypnosis and abreaction to 'free association', where the 'repressing' aspect is taken into account. In such a process, the patient would not only become more aware of the memories and 'impulses' that were repressed, but would also become more aware of how she was actively defending against their acknowledgement.

Although this phase of theoretical formulation saddled us with the dubious benefit of the topographical model of the conscious and unconscious mind, it also revealed a focus that has grown as a major theme in psychoanalysis; that is, *that psychotherapeutic self-insight often constitutes an increased awareness of our divided and conflictual psychological life.*

c) Infantile Sexuality

With such a focus there was also a shift in emphasis from memory to desire. It became clearer to Freud that what was being actively repressed, were the *significance* of the memories rather than merely the existence of the memories. The significance of traumatic memories, usually of sexual seduction, whether factually true or not, was that they revealed wishes that were unacceptable to 'conscious' acknowledgement.

His theory of infantile sexuality, although very specific and literal about the nature of desire, generated a further major theme of psychoanalytic discourse: that is, *that psychotherapeutic self-insight reveals and clarifies the nature of our desires.*

Freud also used his theory of infantile sexuality to throw light on the observation that patients became very attached to the analyst, often developing strong loving and erotic feelings toward the analyst. He believed that such feelings were 'infantile wishes' that had been repressed and were now being 'transferred' onto the analyst.

Although such a theory contains severely reductionistic components in its view of interpersonal life, it highlighted a phenomenon which would also facilitate fruitful directions for characterizing psychotherapeutic self-insight: that is, the phenomenon of the 'repetition compulsion'.

In his paper: 'Remembering, Repeating and Working Through', Freud (1914), describes how the 'repetition compulsion' functions in the process of psychoanalysis:

> "...the patient remembers nothing of what is forgotten and repressed, but [that] he expresses it in *action*. He reproduces it not in his memory but in his behaviours; he *repeats* it, without of course knowing that he is repeating it.
>
> For instance, the patient does not say that he remembers how defiant and critical he used to be in regard to the authority of his parents but he behaves in that way towards the physician" (p.369).

This description of the 'repetition compulsion' implies that

abiding patterns of behaviour may be organized in a meaningful way by desire rather than by conscious intention. Accordingly, another major theme of psychoanalytic discourse has involved the consideration of *psychotherapeutic self-insight which recognizes repetitive patterns of behaviour and their connection to desire.*

d) The Strength of the Ego

Freud's further theoretical development involved the elaboration of his structural theory of id, ego and super-ego, and its implication for his theory of psychological defence, the nature of the transference and the problems of resistance.

Throughout his work, Freud assigned a privileged position to the ego in characterizing it as the representative of the reality-principle. Such an agency mediates between the claims of the id and the imperatives of the super-ego, achieving a relative area of autonomy necessary for psychological growth and adaptation. The growth of the ego thus involves an increasing realm of flexibility where the psyche is able to integrate and 'bind' conflict. 'Ego-strength' then, refers to the developing capacity of the person to mediate between multiple desires and reality-oriented claims, and to differentiate and order these desires and claims with some sense of active participation. This phase of Freud's understanding of the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis is still essentially reflected by contemporary psychoanalytic thinkers who are faithful to Freud's work.

For example, Greenson (1986) summarizes the contemporary 'ego

strength' perspective as follows:

> "Abreaction is no longer considered a therapeutic goal but is valuable in other ways. The analyst still attempts to get beyond the barrier of consciousness, but he uses free association, dream analysis, and interpretation. The major field for analytic work is the area of transference and resistance. We hope to make the unconscious conscious, recover warded off memories, and overcome infantile amnesia. But even this is no longer conceptualized as an ultimate aim. The ultimate aim of psychoanalysis is to increase the relative strength of the ego in relation to the super-ego, the id, and the external world" (Greenson 1986, p.15).

I would like to propose that all the previous themes discussed so far and their implications for an understanding of therapeutic self-insight, become most coherent when integrated with a consideration of 'ego strength' as the goal of psychoanalysis.

Up to now, we have highlighted *what* it is that one has insight into: our sense of discontinuity, our divided selves, our repetitive behavioural patterns, our desires and how we deny and resist them. We have not yet articulated what it is about self-insight into all this that makes a difference that can be considered psychotherapeutic.

It is only with Freud's structural theory where he increased his contemplation on the role of the 'ego', that we are provided with a theme that integrates the previous themes of therapeutic self-insight.

Again, let us begin with a quotation from Freud:

> "...the neurotic patient presents us with a torn mind, divided by resistances. As we analyse it and

> remove the resistances, it grows together; the great unity which we call his ego fits into itself all the instinctual impulses which before had been split off and held apart from it. The psychosynthesis is thus achieved during analytic treatment without our intervention, automatically and inevitable" (Freud 1919, p.161).

Freud's growing emphasis on the ego can be seen to have its roots in his 'Beyond the Pleasure principle' (1920) where he considered the phenomenon of normal play. Here he discussed the desire for a child to achieve a sense of mastery over what has previously been passively experienced, by going over events again and again in the form of play. He showed how the content of play could include events that had previously been alien, unacceptable or unrelated to the child.

This consideration thus shaped the following focus of psychoanalytic discourse: *Psychoanalysis can facilitate the kind of self-insight which constitutes a sense of mastery by making sense out of experience.*

It is here that we find the possibility of a unifying movement in the divisions of self, the historical discontinuities, the unconscious repetitive patterns, and the confusions of desire.

This theme has retained its essential significance even though it has been elaborated using different languages and different metatheoretical constructs.

For example, Schafer, in proposing a reformulation of psychoanalytic theory within the context of a less problematic metatheory, formulates the concept of mastery in terms of the

increasing experience of oneself as an actor:

> "More often than before the analysand says, 'That's the way I see it', 'I decided', 'I chose', 'I know', and 'I prefer'. Leaving aside certain expansive assertions of autonomy, we recognize that these are the locutions of insight. They convey that the analytic understanding that have been achieved is not being manipulated by the analysand as something one 'has'; rather, insight has become something one does or one's way of being" (Schafer 1976, p.146).

I believe that it is with the theme of 'making sense' out of disparate experience that psychoanalysis most stimulates our consideration of self-insight. Disparate experiences become part of personal history. In this view, history is more than what happens to us, it is the *meaning* of our temporal situation. Again, to quote Schafer (1978): "I emphasize that for psychoanalysis, one *tells* a history; one does not *have* a history" (p.182).

This contemporary view of the nature of psychoanalytic history has become increasingly modified to de-emphasize the factual dimensions a la Freud in his 'seduction theory' phase. The *way* that personal history becomes re-organized becomes an important theme in defining therapeutic self-insight. *Thus therapeutic self-insight would seem to contain a creative dimension, what some have referred to as narrative truth (cf. Rycroft 1966), and this would involve the quest for meaningfulness within a total life situation and sense of self.*

This movement from history-as-event to history-as-story has also affected the psychoanalytic understanding of desire, notably within the French section of the movement.

In his hermeneutic re-reading of Freud, Ricoer (1970) reveals a far more intimate connection between self-insight and the vicissitudes of desire. *More than conceiving of self-insight as a power to order desire, the movement of self-insight is understood as addressing a deep desire that gathers up and gives unifying meaning to longings inadequately named.* Robert Steele, a student of Ricoer's, suggests that this deep desire can be named as the longing to become an "I". This involves the transformation of the merely 'natural' vicissitudes of what one 'has' (the disparate desires given with the body), into the more 'cultural' realm of social and historical participation. The potentially fragmentary thrusts of disparate desire are thereby gathered up within a larger thrust of significance.

To quote Steele (1985):

> "The desire to know, to have a life history without lacunae in its narration, is the substitute satisfaction offered by psychoanalytic interpretation for those carnal pleasures that can never be realized" (pp.323-324).

Contemporary developments in psychoanalysis such as in object-relations theory and in the self-psychology of Kohut increasingly reflect a consideration of how experience becomes meaningful, and how a continuing sense of self-identity occurs.

e) Object-Relations and related approaches

So far in considering psychoanalytic theory, we have not yet paid attention to Freud's theory of character formation and its implications for an understanding of self-insight.

Such a focus is carried forward most centrally by the 'object-relations' theorists with their emphasis on the developmental processes by which a person identifies with and differentiates from significant others, and how such development is crucial for an ongoing sense of personal identity.

Freud had raised the themes of identification and differentiation most when developing his theory of the oedipal conflict. For example, in the development of sexual identity, a male child achieves a significant success when he can identify himself with his father and become less 'cathected' or emotionally bound to his mother as his major locus of preoccupation.

The object-relations school focussed on earlier themes of identification and differentiation, and thereby brought not just sexual identity into the limelight but the very issue of identity *per se* or one's global sense of 'going-on-being' (cf. Winnicott 1965). In his book entitled 'Recent Developments in Psychoanalysis', Eagle (1984) characterizes the common theme in object-relations theory as follows:

> "A salient theme that is clear in the work of Mahler, Kohut and Fairbairn is that *the* central dimension of psychological development is the move from a state of complete dependence and lack of differentiation between self and other to increasing definition of self and to increasing independence (or, as Fairbairn prefers, mature dependence). Although different terminology is used and although there are different emphases and elaborations, all three seem to be talking of the same basic dimension" (p.185).

Loewald, another object-relations theorist, puts forward a similar perspective:

> "Problems of self-object differentiation, with its

> inherent issues of the polarity between individuation and emerging union, probably are not less but more universal and deep-seated than psychosexual conflicts of the oedipal nucleus of neurosis" (Loewald 1979, p.161).

The implications of this trend for a contribution to the issue of self-insight in psychoanalysis is that *therapeutic self-insight mirrors the process of development by constituting an increasing clarification of the boundaries of self-definition. This clarification of self-identity involves an activity of differentiation and re-integration.*

To quote Abrams (1981): "Insight-producing activity entails taking things apart and putting them back differently" (p.261). The action-language of Schafer (1978) is helpful in describing the clarification of self-identity within a more modern idiom:

> "Analytic insight always deals with an extended continuum of claiming and disclaiming. The analysand appears to have been engaged in both too much false claiming of action and too much false disclaiming of action. The desirable direction of change in personal psychoanalysis is the analytically convincing moderation of these excesses" (p.181).

Self-insight within this perspective liberates a person by highlighting the ways in which our feelings, thoughts and actions are still overly determined by the nature of our historical struggle to identify and differentiate ourselves. Object-relations theory provides compelling descriptions of a number of different developmental dilemmas and their impact on subsequent functioning.

Although the object-relations school has highlighted an important theme of therapeutic self-insight, it has increasingly de-

emphasized self-insight as the major focus of therapeutic action in favour of the 'corrective emotional experience'.

As a representative of this trend, Neville Symington (1986) takes another object-relations writer, Hanna Segal, to task for elevating insight as a precondition for lasting psychotherapeutic change:

> "Although insight is an integral part of psycho-analysis I believe that it is a misconception to view it as the foremost agent of change..." (Symington 1986, p.27).

Although the increasing clarification of the boundaries of self-definition is considered important, of greater therapeutic importance are problems surrounding the *toleration* of such clarification.

This emphasis echoes Freud's earlier concern with therapeutic resistance and the difficulties of maintainig a workable therapeutic relationship. In their practice then, analysts influenced by the object-relations school pay very close attention to the kind of therapeutic relationship that would allow the client to gradually and progressively tolerate the experiences of aloneness and intimacy that would accompany the clarification of self-identity. It focusses us on the emotional components of self-clarification where identification with another requires a willingness for intimacy, and differentiation from another requires a willingness to experience separation.

Without developing this theme further at this stage, suffice it to say that the contribution of this emphasis for our understanding

of self-insight points to the *important role that emotional factors play in permitting the kind of self-insight which constitutes a change of personal identity with its attendant experiences of intimacy and/or aloneness.*

f) Working-through

The final theme from the psychoanalytic movement which is pertinent to our interests involves the concept of 'working through' and the distinction between intellectual and emotional insight. In my view, the contribution in this area is questionable in that it does not do much more than merely name and define the differences between 'intellectual' and more authentic forms of insight. The concept of 'working through' is then resorted to as a recommendation for ensuring that insights 'take hold' and affect the person's life in a more pervasive way.

In his review of the history of Psychoanalysis, Fine (1979) formulates the issue as follows:

> "Since psychoanalysis had no adequate learning theory available with which to explain its results, it had to invent one. This invention led to the peculiar locution 'working through' introduced by Freud in his 1914 paper. Essentially, for Freud, working through meant repetition of the material, and analysis of any new material, until the necessary conviction was acquired by patient and he had changed" (p.525).

As an example of the questionable value of this concept, let me refer to Fromm-Reichman's use of the term:

> "Working through should be continued until the time is reached when the intellectual understanding of this problem, of its previously associated causes, and of its various interlocking mental and emotional

> ramifications is gradually transformed into real creative emotional insight" (Fromm-Reichman 1959, p.95).

In following a more phenomenological line of enquiry, Mendel (1975) does better in explicating the term:

> "Most clinicians understand by the process of working through, that the individual takes the new understanding, the new meaning he has assigned and makes it his own. He makes it part of his lived and experienced history. He makes it available for application to new situations in the future....The insight becomes a part of his history. It becomes a part of his lifestyle" (p.411).

The impression given in these and other psychoanalytic writings is that a self-insight becomes therapeutically significant to the extent that it is repeated and elaborated upon with regard to different specific situations in the person's life. I believe that such a perspective overly emphasizes a theory of learning which requires the gradual accumulation of more 'bits' of experience within the context of the new self-insight. Our consideration of the contributions of Gestalt Psychology would suggest that insight may function in a more immediate, perceptually organized way. The psychoanalytic concept of 'working through' may thus benefit from a greater consideration of the holistic, organizing power of perceptual changes that take place in the progression of learning.

This review of the contribution of the psychoanalytic movement has been far from inclusive. I have not, for example, referred to the more interpersonal and social emphases of Adler, Fromm, Horney and Sullivan. I have merely wished to indicate how the major thrust of the psychoanalytic tradition suggests themes of therapeutic self-insight that are in a process of ongoing clarification. As

it attempts more adequate descriptions, the psychoanalytic school is becoming less self-enclosed and increasingly approaches existential questions such as the nature of self-identity (cf. Erikson, 1964), the boundaries of human freedoms and limits (cf. Bion, 1962), and the centrality of language and meaning in human experience (cf. Lacan, 1977). A rigorous description of the experience of therapeutic self-insight may result in themes that require a more direct dialogue with these existential issues than psychoanalysis has so far given.

The themes raised by this review may also be given greater coherence by a phenomenological approach which is less wedded to the guiding influence of a therapeutic theory. By going back to individuals' experiences of therapeutic self-insight, it would depend less on the secondary reflections of clinical observers, however sensitive, and provide first-hand descriptions which can discipline our reflections.

1.2.2.2 Jung's Analytical Psychology

Although conceptualized within a notably different metatheoretical perspective, Jung also stressed the importance of the major themes discussed in the psychoanalytic section:

a) the importance of a sense of historical continuity for mental health;
b) the deep divisions in identity and desire within human experience;
c) the power of our history to perpetuate repetitively

problematic experience and behaviour;

d) the sense of mastery that occurs from making sense out of experience;

e) the deep desire that constitutes a quest for meaningfulness within a larger context;

f) the related developmental struggle to identify and differentiate ourselves, thus participating actively in the clarification of personal identity.

Jung gives interesting nuances to these themes and in some respects articulates them more clearly than his psychoanalytic colleagues who were constrained by their natural-scientific heritage.

For example, in replacing a causal-reductive viewpoint with a teleological emphasis, he was able to represent the primacy of a quest for meaningfulness from the very beginning of his break with Freud.

In this spirit, Jung made the following pronouncement about the prospective function of fantasy:

> "[If fantasy]...is understood *hermeneutically*, as an authentic symbol, it acts as a signpost, providing the clues we need in order to carry on our lives in harmony with ourselves" (Jung 1916, C.W.7, p.291).

Also, the sense of continuity which Jung articulates is not just a sense of continuity which elucidates the significance of the past, but a sense of continuity which is leaning towards the future.

> "The future, the teleology of life necessarily must be grasped synthetically and constructively. The 'constructive' standpoint asks how, out of the present

> psyche, a bridge can be built into the future" (Jung 1914, C.W.3, p.182).

Further, his concept of individuation directly names the deep universal desire within the human heart that is significant enough to give a unifying direction to the diversities of human experiences and actions. The hermeneutic emphasis of such a direction is acknowledged by the use of terms such as the 'symbolic quest' [cf. Whitmont 1969] and the 'symbolic life' [cf. Jung 1939, C.W.18].

Jung's recasting of these themes would call for a dissertation of its own, and I agree with Steele who points to the immensity of the task:

> "The path of individuation is a journey into oneself and any summary of Jung's writing on this topic is like saying that 'Ulysses' is about a walk through Dublin" (Steele 1982, p.304)

Rather than comparing the overall thrust of Jung's work with the psychoanalytic tradition, I would like to acknowledge a specific contribution to our interests that is more significant than the expression of the existing themes within a different metatheory. This contribution helps to deepen our understanding of how therapeutic self-insight can constructively deal with the divisions within human identity and desire, and is found in Jung's notion of the 'transcendent function'.

With Jung, Hegel's heritage of 'thesis, antithesis and synthesis' entered the realm of psychological theory.

The existence of polar opposites in psychological functioning is an important foundation of Jungian theory: the personal and the collective, animus and anima, introversion and extroversion, persona and shadow, etc.

He was thus acutely aware, on a more cosmic scale than Freud, of the possibilities for conflict and self-divided functioning in psychological life. His view of psychopathology left no doubt that the more one attempted to achieve a simplistic unity by rigidly asserting a partial profile of one's identity, the more the neglected profile or profiles were forced to be expressed in potentially destructive ways. The 'return of the repressed' did not just refer to the sexual libido of Freudian persuasion, but to multiple qualities of psychological functioning: whether one was too active or passive, too conscientious or uncaring, too public or private, and so on.

At heart, Jung was less of a scientist than Freud. He can be more centrally located within a shamanistic and religious tradition where one listens as receptively as possible to the messages of the gods. Such a tradition tolerates ambiguities of meaning and a complexity of orders. Jung studied the I Ching, alchemy and the myths of diverse cultures. In his personal life, he went through periods where he was clearly overwhelmed by complexities of images, thoughts and feelings (cf. Jung 1963) of which he struggled to make sense.

In both theory and practice then, he was courageous in opening himself to an awareness of the possibilities and complexities of

human experience. Awareness of such complexity is a great source of potential conflict.

Jung believed that an increasing awareness of complexity was one of the two fundamental facets of consciousness (cf. Samuels 1985, p.59), and therefore could not be avoided with impunity.

In his therapeutic approach he wished to help his patients become increasingly receptive to the complexity of their own identity. His theory of the archetypes was an attempt to acknowledge that, as humans, we are continuous with human themes that are not fully embraced by events in our personal histories.

Jung's faith was that a receptive awareness to more complex themes of human identity does not necessarily lead to endless conflict and chaos.

In this regard, Jung referred to the other facet of consciousness which was central to his therapeutic venture, that is, the capacity to hold the various possibilities in some sort of balance (ibid.). It is here that his contribution to an understanding of therapeutic self-insight is most relevant.

What Jung refers to within an excessively energetic language as the 'transcendent function', nevertheless describes a movement of psychological conflict-resolution in which the elements of the psychological conflict can be transformed from an adversarial relationship of differences to a mutually supportive relationship of complementarity.

If his philosophical heritage can be traced back to Hegel, his therapeutic sensibilities find a strong resonance in Taoism, the Chinese religion of balance.

The Ying/Yang symbol in Taoism is a visual representation of

opposites that need and support each other. The circle that contains the mutually supportive opposites represents a third, unifying perspective that acknowledges such complementarity.

In Jung's characterization of the 'transcendent function' he wished to give substance to the emergence of a psychological perspective which was broad enough to transform psychological conflict in a creative way. This could not merely be a cognitive achievement which was imposed onto the desires and affects within the human spirit. It required a hermeneutic work in which the affects that represented one side of a conflict were broadened by increasing exposure and familiarity with the affects and cognitions on the other side.

To quote Jung:

> "The shuttling to and fro of arguments and affects represents the transcendent function of opposites. The confrontation of two positions generates a tension charged with energy and creates a living, third thing" (Jung 1958, C.W.8, p.90).

It must be remembered that Jung did not have the benefit of an existential-phenomenological view of emotion where emotional

existence is intimately involved in understanding and revealing our specific mode of being-in-the-world.

He attempted to acknowledge the unity of affect and cognition by using the language of 'energetics' as Freud had done, and his use of the metaphors of alchemy also provided an emotional substantiality to transformations that could mistakenly be conceptualized in dry, cognitive terms.

Roger Brooke's (1988) dissertation on an existential-phenomenological approach to Jung's Analytical Psychology is helpful in articulating the 'transcendent function' in more hermeneutic terms:

> "[The transcendent function]...is a way in which the personal truths of one's identity (ego) are reconnected to their impersonal and primordial roots, but the hermeneutic tension in that link is maintained in that quality of experience called metaphorical" (Brooke 1988, p.195).

We are thus indicating a vision of psychological transformation which contains two phases:

a) the increasing achievement of a perspective that allows both sides of a conflict to be represented, not just cognitively, but in ways that acknowledge one's total participatory way of being-in-the-world. This can include affects, imagery, creative representations, ritual enactments, etc.

b) out of this process, the eventual achievement of a perspective which understands the complementary relationship of phenomena that were previously seen within an adversarial context. Such phenomena will thus be seen in a different way and different aspects of such phenomena will be emphasized.

Although Post-Jungians such as Willeford and Hillman (Samuels 1986, p.114) have de-emphasized Jung's theory of psychological opposition, the therapeutic sentiment to achieve a perspective that acknowledges the complementarity of different aspects of psychological functioning remains.

It may be helpful in clarifying Jung's view of therapeutic transformation by referring to his technique of active imagination. This technique involves an attitude which allows some form of dialogue between different positions in a conflict. These positions can be expressed and concretized in different ways - in dance, drawing, or clay modelling.

The function of such a dialogue helps to achieve an attitude of flexibility where one is receptive to more than one profile of a conflict. To quote Steele (1982):

> "The dialogue widens the boundaries of consciousness, reducing the egocentric subjectivism produced by clinging to one point of view and denying all others" (p.299).

In 'Boundaries of the Soul', June Singer (1973) described the case of Maureen who became increasingly aware of a central dichotomy in her identity. She expressed this dichotomy as that of an older girl who was being presented to the world and a neglected, younger girl who 'was in hiding' and who 'was a nuisance'. Initially she could not express the dilemma of living such a divided existence. Her analyst suggested at an opportune time that she may want to use crayons to express what she was feeling. This appeared to provide a means of expression that could get beyond what Singer calls the 'inadequate ego position' of the older girl who was

presented to the world. It was also a means of expression that helped her not get too overwhelmed by the affects and images contained in the under-represented, 'little girl' image. The crayons thus represented a third perspective, that of the transcendent function:

> "It was that aspect which could stand over the big girl and view them both, as well as the relationship between them" (Singer 1973, p.296).

Singer also provides a good example of the second phase of psychological transformation, that is, the achievement of a perspective of complementarity:

Charles, a rather intellectual man, was encouraged by Singer to look into the mirror and to imaginatively and spontaneously draw what he saw. What emerged were two figures looking at each other: one, an ape-like figure and the other, a rather sad, older man. A process of active imagination, where a dialogue was encouraged between these two images, finally culminated in a significant dream. Charles dreamt of the sad, older man who came to be called the 'pale man', being carried by the ape-like figure, the 'cave man', with great vitality and the 'pale man' was being held aloft by the 'cave man'.

This image from his dream produced a sense of great exuberance in Charles. In discussing some of the implications of the dream with Singer, Charles expressed how the 'partnership' of the cave man and pale man supported one another. Charles had not previously understood how the qualities of the 'cave man' could be productive. There was evidence that he had scorned such qualities in others and avoided them in himself. Now, however, he

emphasized not so much the boorish and uncouth qualities of the 'ape man' but rather its vitality. The 'pale man' is also appreciated and given a valued place. In response to a question from Singer, Charles answered:

> "[The pale man]...gives to the primordial energy a delicacy of expression which he has acquired through his long experience with the culture and the arts, through his training, his personal discipline" (Singer 1973, p.310).

Such a complementary perspective is achieved by an increasing familiarity with the meanings of apparently contradictory positions. It involves an empathic appproach, reminiscent of Dilthey's 'understanding science' where psychological phenomena are approached from within a participatory perspective.

The new, complementary perspective involves a shift of value. It retains the elements of the conflict in some way, neither repressing nor relinquishing these elements, but the *relationship* of these elements is transformed from an adversarial to a mutually supportive context. This requires a creative, hermeneutic work that gathers up different levels of human functioning: emotional, cognitive and relational.

Jung's contribution thus reveals therapeutic self-insight as a personal, creative, and hermeneutic activity that discovers meaningful relationships of complementarity amongst the diversities of personal, psychological life. Such an activity supports the differentiation of personal identity without ignoring the supportive relational components of such differentiation.

1.2.2.3 The Natural-Scientific Research Tradition in Psychotherapy

Natural-Scientific research relevant to the phenomenon of therapeutic self-insight has been designed to address such questions as the relationship between 'insight' and behaviour change, whether the 'truth' of an insight is therapeutically important, whether 'insight' is necessary for therapeutic progress, and the comparative merits of 'insight' and 'non-insight' oriented therapies for outcome. (cf. Roback 1974).

Such studies attempt to define therapeutic self-insight operationally in a way that can be treated as a variable that can be measured, and which can be compared to other variables such as a measure of change or outcome.

The general technological ideology behind such studies has been criticized elsewhere (cf. Kruger 1983, Kvale 1973) and I will limit my review in this section to specific problems in the conceptualization of therapeutic self-insight within the natural-scientific tradition.

a) <u>The problem of reducing the phenomenon to an 'operational definition'</u>

Attempts to measure insight have generated varying operational definitions of insight. Amongst others, such definitions as 'the congruence between a person's perceived self and the perception others have of him (Mann and Mann 1959), or the 'ability to understand the underlying motivation of others' (Tolor and Resnikoff 1960), or the "understanding of the relationship between

current behaviour and past experiences" (Roback 1972), have been formulated. Apart from the lack of consensus, which could perhaps be conceived of as a goal to be achieved, the formulation of such operational definitions can only result in studies whose terms are prescribed by the definition. Such studies only question the definition in retrospect as a theoretical exercise.

However, as one faithfully approaches the complexity of the phenomenon of therapeutic self-insight, one realizes that the definitional issues are of central concern. Our brief consideration of the psychoanalytic movement has suggested that therapeutic self-insight is a multidimensional phenomenon and cannot be reduced to singular definitions that are excessively prescribed by quantitative, methodological constraints.

Studies which are based on operational definitions of therapeutic self-insight cannot be said to result in conclusions that further our qualitative understanding of that phenomenon.

The definition of therapeutic self-insight itself thus needs to be a subject for research where characteristics of qualitative description can be centrally addressed.

b) <u>The problem of unexamined conceptions of 'truth'</u>

There is also a dialogue in this literature as to whether an insight needs to be 'true' in order to have therapeutic value (Hobbs 1962; Schonbar 1965; Roback 1972; Mendell 1964).
For example, Mendell (1964) designed an experiment which sought to

show that interpretations do not have to be accurate to bring about positive behavioural changes. In a clinical situation, Mendell gave six general interpretations to four patients in intensive psychotherapy. He considered the interpretations 'inexact' in that they did not follow specifically from the patients' verbalizations or behaviour. Mendell found that in most cases, the patients responded to the interpretations with a marked reduction in anxiety.

In contrast, Schonbar (1965) disagrees with this viewpoint. She argues that an insight must be 'true' in the sense that it accurately reflects motives and desires already within the 'psychic structure' of the individual, even if such motives and desires are as yet unconscious.

This debate is fraught with difficulties relating to its conception of truth. Our consideration of the development of psychoanalysis has shown us that when we enter into the realm of meaning, 'truth' is not something that one can objectify. If psychotherapy is to be properly found within the context of a hermeneutic endeavour, then the insightful interpretation of meaning cannot be evaluated in terms of natural-scientific conceptions of 'true' or 'false'.

The failure to adequately address philosophical questions about 'truth' in psychotherapy has resulted in unhelpful conclusions such as: 'belief' in the insight is more important than its 'correctness' (cf. Ulrich et al. 1963).

The question of whether a movement of therapeutic self-insight is

valid may have very different answers, depending on the values one adopts, e.g. behavioural, spiritual, or medical. Perhaps when the nature of therapeutic self-insight is more fully described, it may express an intrinsic value that may be different from technological values of adjustment or behavioural efficacy.

c) The problem of conceptualizing therapeutic self-insight as a 'cognitive variable'

The Behaviourist Movement intimately reflects a natural-scientific view of psychological life when it compartmentalizes human functioning into affective, cognitive and behavioural variables, and then, on the basis of accepting such distinctions, generates a language which explains how these different variables interact with one another.

This project has resulted in a form of theoretical re-ification similar to the problems of psychoanalytic jargon previously discussed.

For example, Bandura (1965) has reviewed studies which conceptualize self-insight as a 'cognitive variable' in psychotherapy:

> "While cognitive events undoubtedly serve as important discriminative stimuli in controlling overt behaviour, results of recent laboratory studies reveal that awareness in itself is not a sufficient condition for behavioural change. Whether cognitive mediators will facilitate or impede the acquisition and maintenance of instrumental responses and the magnitude of the effect, is partly a function of the nature, frequence and potency of reinforcing stimuli associated with given performances, the subjects' valuation of potentially available reinforcers (Spielberger 1962), the characteristics of reinforcing agents (Krasner, Weiss and Ullman 1961), and subject-related variables reflecting the social-learning history of the

individual (Farber 1963)" (Bandura 1965, p.44).

If one were to take this conceptualization seriously, one would have to try and imagine these different variables (cognitive events, overt behaviour, reinforcing events) as if they occurred in a pure way: behaviour separate from understanding, understanding separate from feeling, behaviour separate from an experience of value, etc.

Such conceptualization, although conducive to measurement, also serves to describe therapeutic insight excessively in terms of its cognitive dimensions. It obscures how 'variables' such as 'reinforcing agents' and 'social-learning history' are not separate from the movement of self-insight. It thus reveals therapeutic self-insight in a rather exclusive sense as if it is one thing among many that could be present or absent, rather than an interpenetrating phenomenon that cannot be conceptualized apart from cognitive, affective, interpersonal and behavioural ways of being-in-the-world.

d) The problem of conceptualizing therapeutic self-insight as a variable separate from 'therapeutic change'

Within a similar conception, Cautela (1965) separates the phenomenon of change from the phenomenon of self-insight. In questioning the sequence of change in psychotherapy, he proposes that insight is not a cause of change, but a possible result of change. By this means, he wishes to assert that change involves some other principle separate from insight, that is, desensitization. He thus sees self-insight as an unnecessary

epi-phenomenon which merely involves the understanding of changes that have already taken place due to a reduction of anxiety. By formulating a conception of therapeutic change that minimizes the role of self-insight, he is able to replace the theoretical construct: 'working through' with another one: 'desensitization'.

In a similar vein, a number of studies have sought to suggest a minimal role for self-insight as a therapeutic factor (Paul 1966; Hartlage 1970). In these studies, other 'therapeutic operations' such as 're-inforcement of desirable behaviour', are experimentally shown to be more effective.

Such studies create pseudo-distinctions which separate therapeutic change from self-insight. Such a pseudo-distinction contains both ideological and theoretical problems for our elucidation of therapeutic self-insight.

The ideology of the behavioural approach to research and practice may be characterized as a pragmatic, technical interest in 'what works'. Such an approach attempts to formulate psychotherapy in terms of activities that can be predicted and controlled. Thus there is an ideological interest in differentiating a product (therapeutic change) from its means of production (insight, desensitization and other therapeutic factors).

Such an ideology excessively perpetuates the theoretical problem, that is, the arbitrariness of the distinctions between therapeutic change and therapeutic self-insight.

Hesky (1984), one of the few researchers who has taken a phenomenological approach to therapeutic self-insight, clarifies the problem:

> "A theoretical basis for confusion is established when, prior to any investigation, a researcher arbitrarily splits personal insight from personal change. Once this variation on the mind/body split is in place, researchers can only argue about which came first, personal insight or personal change, which causes which, or whether they are causally related or totally unrelated. When one begins with this sort of split, the notion that personal insight and personal change might occur at the same time, as part of a single, unfolding process is ruled out by definition" (pp.7-8).

e) <u>The problem of the devaluation of the client's experience</u>

In a review of the natural-scientific research tradition in psychotherapy, Kruger (1986) notes how Eysenck's (1966) well-known research on the effects of psychotherapy failed to ask for the psychotherapeutic experience of a single ex-patient. The neglect of the client's experience in such studies facilitates a perspective of excessive distance in which the conclusions are expressed in technical terms that are unable to articulate psychotherapy as it is experienced.

The psychotherapist has generally been given a privileged position when it comes to the interpretation of psychotherapeutic events (Kruger 1983; Fessler 1983).

With reference to the phenomenon of therapeutic self-insight, such an approach has resulted in a view which defines 'insight-oriented

therapies' in terms of what the therapist does rather than what the client experiences.

For example Meichenbaum, Gillmore and Fedoravicius (1969) compared the results of a specific form of group insight psychotherapy with a specific form of group desensitization therapy. By clearly spelling out the operations employed by therapists in each of these groups, there is an assumption that client insight is occurring in at least one of the groups. Whether this group does well or not will then be said to reflect on the presence of insight as a therapeutic factor.

Fessler (1983, p.43), however, has presented evidence that what the therapist thought the client was experiencing is not necessarily what the client in fact experiences.

The present distinction between insight and non-insight oriented therapies may thus obscure the pervasive nature of the client's active and insightful participation in apparently divergent forms of psychotherapy.

In conclusion, the problems that are inherent in the natural-scientific study of therapeutic self-insight calls for an alternative approach. Kruger (1986) thus argues for an existential-phenomenological approach to psychotherapy research:

> "The answer to the question of how an existence is transformed in psychotherapy is to be sought in a systematic study of the experience of client and therapist. This should be done without the imposition of a conceptualization derived from outside the field of psychotherapy itself, for example, the division into process and outcome..." (p.58).

1.3. AIMS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present research follows a phenomenological line of enquiry which attempts to reveal psychologically relevant reflections about the experience of therapeutic self-insight as it is is lived by clients who have been in psychotherapy. The value of such an approach is that it proceeds by describing experience as the essential point of departure for understanding psychological life.

> "If I wish to know what a particular psychological phenomenon is, that is, if I wish to identify it, I cannot begin with or rely entirely upon the definitions provided by traditional psychology because, as we have seen, its operational definitions eliminate the phenomenon's experiential aspects. As a phenomenologist, I must begin by contacting the phenomenon as people experience it" (Collaizzi 1978, p.57).

The present study is intimately informed by this approach and for this reason the following chapter attempts to clarify its major assumptions. Such a consideration of 'approach' as a crucial and neglected focus of research (cf. Giorgi 1970) demonstrates the importance of disciplining one's preconceptions as much as possible. For this reason, I would like to report on this research in a format which reflects the way it occurred.

I did not start with a theory that I wanted to test. Rather, I experienced myself as already embedded in a 'hermeneutic circle' (cf. next chapter) with a very broad set of interests regarding questions of therapeutic self-insight. I thought that, from my reading and experience, self-insight was important to psychological development and well-being in some way. I did not have conclusive opinions on what it was about self-insight that

was important; eg. whether the content of only certain kinds of insight were relatively important (perhaps sexuality and aggression), whether there were important distinctions about the *way* self-insight occurs in the situation, or whether it is useful to focus on the term 'self-insight' as being the best term descriptive of a real experience.

From a phenomenological perspective, a technical term such as 'self-insight' must take its meaning from actual experience. In this study, I wished to focus on those experiences of insight which are of great enough personal relevance to make a difference to one's way of living, or one's view of life.

In further defining its focus, the present study progressed through two phases, both of which utilized people's descriptions of their own experiences of self-insight as a point of departure.

The first phase, a pilot study, focussed on an experience in any situation (not just in psychotherapy) where a person comes to realize something in such a way that it changed the way he or she viewed his or her life or changed the way he or she actually lived his or her life.

This pilot study resulted in a description which suggested a number of psychologically interesting questions such as the difference between the experience of self-insight in a religious and a psychotherapeutic context, the varying emotional dimensions of experiences of self-insight and the difference and similarities between sudden insights and insights which appear to 'gradually dawn' on the person.

One dimension of the general description emerged as a particularly interesting focus for further phenomenological research: that is, the way in which the experience of self-insight and a greater sense of freedom were related to each other.

This focus was chosen as it appeared to hold important implications for the theory and practice of psychotherapy, in which self-insight and 'feeling different' are usually considered to go hand in hand.

The major section of the research thus specifically addressed the situation of psychotherapy and the kind of self-insight which results in a greater sense of freedom.

The qualitative description that emerged from the study suggested a dialogue with certain specific themes that occur in existential-phenomenological philosophy and psychology. A second literature survey which focusses on these issues was then done to contextualize the study both within a psychological and philosophical endeavour.

> "The aim is not a conclusion, not to close the subject, but to open it further. This relation of horizons places us between the familiar and the strange, the near and the far, and is a dialectic of questions and responses" (Sardello 1975, p.280).

CHAPTER 2

APPROACH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In articulating my approach to this study, I would like to briefly elucidate some of the metatheoretical distinctions that make a phenomenological approach valuable. Although the scope of this dissertation does not permit a thorough review of the phenomenological movement, (c.f. Kockelmans, 1967) there are a number of philosophical distinctions regarding method and the subject matter of psychological life that may help the reader evaluate the aims, method and results of this study.

2.2 DILTHEY AND THE NATURE OF 'UNDERSTANDING

Within approximately 15 years of the establishment of Psychology as a separate discipline, the philosopher Willhelm Dilthey was already describing some of the unique problems that an acknowledgement of our human participation brings to the scientific study of ourselves. He was acutely attuned to how we are embedded in, and part of the psychological life we are trying to understand, and so cannot say that we begin 'objectively' as human scientists from an outside point of view. To quote Stephan Strasser (1963, P.114): "Man questions the world and the world answers according to the nature of the question."

Within this perspective our 'scientific'-psychological interests

are always already grounded in, and emerging from a pre-existing involvement in psychological life. It can only be in this sense that our psychological questions can be experienced and evaluated as relevant. In our humanness we are able to evaluate things because we have feelings and purposes; we are able to understand history in a meaningful way because we are historical beings. Dilthey thus called for a 'Geisteswissenschaft', an 'understanding science' which attempts to comprehend the nature of mental life from 'within' rather than from a perspective of an 'outsider', as if we were foreign to ourselves as experiencing beings. Methodologically, Dilthey wishes to begin from a holistic perspective in which human functioning retains its essential characteristic of experiential intelligibility. In this view a psychology that cannot find a language which discovers the "I in the Thou" (Dilthey, cited in Rickman, 1976 p. 15) has alienated itself from its subject matter from the beginning.

In contrasting an 'understanding' approach to psychology with that of an 'explaining' approach, Dilthey calls attention to the kind of presuppositions that one implicitly brings to bear on one's subject matter in the act of 'explaining'. Essentially, an 'explanation' attempts to look for lawfulness in the way that a theory or set of ideas in the consciousness of the 'explainer' can account for what is observed or experienced. In 'explaining' human phenomena, the 'explainer' thus 'looks for' the proof or falsity of his explanation. In relation to the study of human experience and action, the danger of the explanatory route is that "...formal structures of thinking become so routinized...." (Lieberman, 1986, p.46) that further questions relate to the

formal structures and not to the initial experience that stimulated the building of the formal structures. It also encourages a language that speaks in terms of 'variables' and 'causal relationships', that is, a language in which the explained relationships are viewed within a universe of natural objects in which there is only external intelligibility, thus decontextualizing the actor. Such a language can quickly ignore the centrality of the contextualization of the meaning of human phenomena within an internally coherent, actor-perspective.

In outlining the task of 'understanding', Dilthey thus emphasises the centrality of human context in understanding 'mental life, and notes how our starting point for understanding as human scientists begins from what we already understand as participants in the human condition.

> "If I had no emotions, I could not even begin to understand the love poetry of the Elizabethans, but I can only understand it properly by reading about that period. Once I understand the poems I can gain insight into the thoughts and emotions of people very different from me and this extension of my imaginative insight into human nature will, in turn, help me to understand my own muddled feelings better" (Dilthey, in Rickman, H. P., 1976, p.20).

This process of groping towards a fuller understanding from a less complete understanding is a description of the 'shuttle-cock' movement of what has been called the 'hermeneutic circle'. Such a notion clarifies how 'understanding' proceeds by telling us more about what we already understand, experience and live. In this way its task is to retain continuity with what is already experientially evident and familiar to us as 'commoners'.

The process of 'understanding' involves a reflective thematizing

on the world of meanings that are present in our human engagements and relationships.

This argument thus establishes the need to return to more concrete descriptions of human functioning and thus wishes to seek a disciplined method by which we do not become prematurely abstract in our psychological theorizing.

As a precursor to the phenomenological approach to psychology, Dilthey issued, in various degrees of explicitness, the following challenges to future psychologists:

1. Given our 'always already' engagement in psychological life, there are no absolute starting points, no self-contained self-evident certainties of 'knowing-in-advance' what a fruitful line of enquiry is or what the meaning of an experience is. We always find ourselves in the middle of complex situations about which we may have existing provisional assumptions which we may then revise in the process of experience and reflection. This is a circular, hermeneutic process. In this context, the first challenge may be formulated as follows: Where do we begin in our psychological enquiries? What defines our interests as psychologists?
2. If, as Dilthey wishes, we take understanding further in a way that can express the 'I in the Thou', and if, as the hermeneutic circle suggests, there is no intrinsic, obvious and final end point to the bounded expression of our understandings, where do we end? That is, what level of interpretations and expressions of understanding are relevant

in furthering psychological knowledge?

In responding to these challenges, Giorgi and other phenomenological psychologists have taken their cue from Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and other phenomenological philosophers in order to articulate the scope and practice of phenomenological-psychological research.

2.3 PHENOMENOLOGICAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH IS PROGRESSIVE BUT ALWAYS 'ON THE WAY'

It is to the philosopher Edmund Husserl that we owe our acknowledgement for rigorously developing the philosophical justification for the subject matter of a phenomenological psychology: the life-world ('Lebenswelt'). As a mathematician as well as a philosopher, he was acutely concerned about how theoretical and mathematical constructs can obscure and even forget the preconceptual and specifically experiential nature of phenomena to which these constructs refer. The popularity of a natural-scientific worldview was at this time romanticising an attitude of 'objectivity' in which different modes of human presence were seen as confounding 'subjective' variables to be controlled and even eradicated. Husserl noted that in this objectifying interest of natural-science, an essential primordial characteristic of the appearance of phenomena is lost: that phenomena are never originally separate from consciousness; that one cannot describe the world without describing experiential qualities such as far, near, red, small, hard; that all 'scientific' concepts like measures of space, time, temperature,

density, light, etc., only have meaning because of their reference to a world of experienced meaning.

In remembering this unity of consciousness and world, Husserl exhorts a phenomenological psychology to re-establish contact with phenomena as they appear in consciousness.

> "...we have to return to the world as it manifests in primordial experience, we must endeavour to find a 'natural' world, the world of immediate experience" (Kockelmans, 1967, p.34).

A respect for the 'Lebenswelt' thus involves the articulation of

> "...a philosophy for which the world is always 'already there' before reflection begins - as an inalienable presence; and all its efforts are concentrated upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing that contact with a philosophical status" (Merleau-Ponty in Kockelmans, 1967, p.357).

The 'Lebenswelt', which is neither originally 'mental' or 'physical', refers to experiential 'happenings' or 'occurrences' that we live before we know. Such 'happenings' cannot merely be described behaviourally from an external perspective as they irreducibly include understandings, feelings, perceived relationships; i.e., all the everyday phenomena of common experience. It is to this 'seamless' stream of living that we always have to return as a reference for any psychological distinctions we make. Distinctions such as angry, hot, change, only have meaning with reference to the authenticating power of the 'Lebenswelt'. The 'Lebenswelt' is thus forever qualifying distinctions. As psychological researchers, our ackowledgement of such a distinction-qualifying matrix of lived-meanings can

easily make us speechless. Such 'speechlessness' is an important component of the phenomenological approach to psychological research and assists us in defining 'where we begin'.

As a phenomenologically-oriented researcher, I do not begin with the 'Lebenswelt'. Rather, I have to get back to the 'Lebenswelt'. I begin as a psychologist who has psychologically distinctive questions that may arise out of a combination of contextual factors: previous research, clinical-practical interests, historico-theoretical terminology and questions, personal growth motives, to name a few. The psychological interest is considered appropriate when it is at least communicable within a community of scholars and interested people.

'Where we begin' as phenomenologically oriented researchers is to bring our psychological interest into the light of the 'Lebenswelt' in order that the phenomenon in question may be clarified. Thus, although the 'Lebenswelt' is most truthfully acknowledged in 'speechlessness' and in the suspension of our preconceptions, our reflective interests as psychologists wishes to bring aspects of the 'Lebenswelt' to language.

This tension between the 'lived' and the 'known' establishes the task of a phenomenologically-oriented psychology: to reflect and articulate psychologically relevant phenomena in a way that is faithful to the way these phenomena are already given in the life-world.

So, if for example, a psychologically relevant phenomenon such as

'anger' has been distinguished in human experience and named in human discourse, I may become interested in deepening our reflective understanding of this phenomenon. I then remember the 'lifeworld' and remember that the 'phenomenon' called 'anger' refers to a 'happening' that has its occurrence in a lived matrix of meanings that are not yet reflectively articulated or described but which are inseparable from the phenomenon. Thus, saying 'anger' presumes but does not yet know its human context. Any question about 'anger', in order to rigorously refer to the specific series of happenings which make up this phenomenon, has to relate to a DESCRIPTION of specific, lived occurrences.

Thus a phenomenological approach to psychological research does not operationally define in advance what 'anger' is, and then test the truth of this definition in circumscribed ways. Rather, it attempts to find_out, rather than prove, what constitutes the phenomenon. Such 'finding out' is a quest which involves descriptions of how the phenomenon specifically appears in concrete situations which are lived through. This involves not only a psychological interest in the phenomenon in question, but also an open-minded attitude, which suspends preconceptions as much as possible in order that the descriptions can reveal unanticipated relationships and meanings.

Giorgi refers to this attitude as one of "circumscribed indeterminateness" (1985, p.12) in which there is a balance between allowing for the unknown, and a general intentional set of some general criteria that is revelatory of the phenomenon one is interested in. Giorgi further characterizes such an attitude as

one of 'disciplined spontaneity' in which scientific endeavour is to be seen within the 'context of discovery' rather than the 'context of verification' (Giorgi, 1986a).

A scientific endeavour that has 'verification' as its prime motive has a specific end point in mind: a point at which it can say unambiguously that verification has occurred. If, however, one's subject matter requires a scientific endeavour in which the 'context of discovery' is highlighted, there is no specific end-point in mind. Rather, the emphasis is on the open-ended, qualitative description of the discovery in which there may be many ways of saying things and always more to say depending on the question and the context of one's interest. Therefore, the criterion of scientific progress depends on a qualitative evaluation of whether it takes current understandings further. It is always 'on the way'. This does not mean that the qualitative thematization that results from phenomenological research at any one time is arbitrary. The thematization reveals a specific, coherent structure (c.f. Merleau-Ponty, 1963) which defines the boundaries of the essential characteristics of the phenomenon. However, such thematizations do not have the status of being 'complete' in the sense of exhausting the meaning of the phenomenon in terms of its psychological significance (c.f. Ricoeur, 1970, pp.32-35).

The qualitative concern of phenomenologically-oriented psychological research thus affirms the inevitability of 'interpretation' as a valid activity in elucidating psychological phenomena.

> "Like a text, a descriptive protocol can be read by an indefinite range of possible psychologist-readers. The descriptive protocol, like the text, is an 'open-work' that awaits fresh interpretations from different personal perspectives and as history, in its unfolding, sheds new light on the experiences and events that have been described. The meaning of a text-analogue is in 'suspense' in the sense that its meaning is never totalized. The description of human experience and behaviour, like a text, is open to everybody who is capable of reading" (Titelman, 1979, p.186).

And again:

> "Since we understand always from within our own horizon, which is part of the hermeneutic circle, there can be no nonpositional understanding of anything. We understand by constant reference to our experience. The methodological task of the interpreter, then, is not of immersing himself totally in his object (which would be impossible, anyway) but rather of finding viable modes of interaction of his own horizon with that of the text" (Palmer, cited in Titelman, 1979, p.188).

Such an acknowledgement of the role of interpretation exposes the tension between Husserl's emphasis on fidelity to the lived world through suspension of preconceptions (the phenomenological reduction), and the perspectivity of the possible ways in which such fidelity may 'come to language'.

Husserl's concern to acknowledge the nature of the life-world on its own terms by means of what he called the 'phenomenological reduction' serves to discipline the act of interpretation. That is, the ways in which we as psychological researchers explicitly articulate the meaning of experiential phenomena must take into account, as rigorously as possible, the features of the concrete situation as they are given in the life-world. The interpretation is thus evaluated against such meaningfulness. Such a relationship between the concreteness of the life-world and

the possibility of language is lucidly expressed as follows:

> "Meaningfulness is not something that man gives to an object, it is what an object gives to man through supplying the ontological possibility of words and language" (Kruger, 1988, p.41).

And again:

> "...words are not wrappings in which things are packed for the commerce of those who write and speak. It is in words and language that things first come into being and are" (Heidegger, 1959, p.13).

Merleau-Ponty (1962, p.xiv) has noted the impossibility of achieving a complete phenomenological reduction. However, Husserl's overriding intention to 'get back to the things themselves' at least obliges a phenomenologically-oriented psychological researcher to go through a methodological phase of suspending technological and pragmatic interests in order to achieve an interest of '<u>understanding</u>' as articulated by Dilthey. The hermeneutic work of language can then reveal phenomena with a degree of freedom but remembers to serve the specific occurrence of the life-world.

The task of phenomenologically-oriented psychological research thus involves a qualitative, descriptive and hermeneutic work which:

1) begins within the hermeneutic circle with broad pre-understandings and psychologically relevant foci of interest. Such pre-understandings are usually generalized understandings;
2) acknowledges the primacy of the life-world as the

'place' where psychological phenomena have their life. This is an acknowledgement of the primacy of the 'specific occasion' as the valid ground for further generalisation, thus disciplining our reflections;

3) seeks to base all further reflections and articulated understandings on descriptions which characterize the qualitative, specifically contextual and irreducibly experiential nature of the life-world; and

4) ends with an articulated understanding which deepens and furthers our understanding of the phenomenon in general terms that are faithful to the specific occurrences. Such articulations also retain the experiential character of the life-world and are 'on the way' in that they usually lead to more refined questions regarding the phenomenon.

The discussion has so far indicated how the methodological status of phenomenologically-oriented psychological research is progressive but always 'on the way'. Further, a phenomenologically-oriented psychological research wishes to express its insights in a language that retains the general qualities of specifically human structures. It thus draws on existential-phenomenological philosophy regarding the nature of human existence in order to delineate some consistent and meaningful terms of reference. For example, if we were to consider it possible to fundamentally characterize a human as a computer, then language which expresses mathematical relationships will be central to meaningful research within this paradigm.

The next section of this discussion thus focuses on a view of humankind that emerges from a phenomenological respect for how the human order appears.

2.4 THE NATURE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE - SOME MEANINGFUL TERMS OF REFERENCE

Husserl's concern with the primacy of the 'Lebenswelt' began a line of inquiry which laid the foundations for the philosopher, Martin Heidegger to fundamentally characterize the nature of human existence as 'being-in-the-world'. Husserl appropriated Brentano's concept of 'intentionality' in such a way as to indicate the non-dualistic nature of consciousness and the objects of consciousness. In this conception the description of any moment of consciousness essentially involves a description of what is revealed in consciousness. Therefore, consciousness has its essence in its transcendence. It cannot be viewed 'in itself' as if it could be separated out from objects essentially beyond itself.

> "In the idea something is conceived, in the judgement something is recognised or discovered, in loving loved, in hating hated, in desiring desired and so on" (Brentano in Lawrence and O'Connor, 1967, p.334).

Consciousness can therefore not be viewed as an object that stands over and against the world as if the two exist independently of each other.

Although Heidegger moved away from Husserl's emphasis on consciousness, he retained the fundamental insight regarding the non-dualistic intentional nature of human and world.

Within this perspective we cannot define Man/Woman 'in him/her self' separate from the way he/she occurs in and as the world-relationships. Human existence is world-relatedness; they co-constitute each other and cannot be defined, except relationally.

Heidegger expresses this original relatedness of Human and World in the term 'Dasein', roughly translated as Being-in-the-world. Wo/man is not only secondarily related to the world as if s/he were a 'fixed substance' related to a 'fixed' outside world, but is already 'out there' in the world, being shaped, and shaping, and the world shows itself according to his/her possible modes of being. Human existence may be seen as ek-sistence in the sense of 'standing out' toward things and participating in bringing them to light in various ways.

> "Part of the definition of Dasein or human being is that it is already-in-the-world: Dasein does not emerge as Dasein unless it has already constituted its world" (Needleman, 1963, p.17).

This means that the human order is best described by describing the qualities of the world that emerge in the light of particular ways of being. The concept 'human existence' or 'Dasein' is not separate from the qualities-of-the-world-that--emerge-in-the-light-of-particular-ways-of-being. There is no 'Man/Woman' or 'World' behind qualities-of-the-world-that-emerge-in-the-light-of-particular-ways-of-being.

Being-in-the-world is thus a 'becoming' which shows itself in terms of experiential qualities, movements, and actions which

express a world essentially intimate with human presence.

> "One is no longer dealing with a material reality nor, moreover, with a mental reality, but with a significant whole or a structure which properly belongs neither to the external world nor to internal life" (Merleau-Ponty in La Pointe, 1972, p.250).

In the light of this analysis we are thus looking for categories of description which characterize being-in-the-world; that is, fundamental and general categories of human existence that throw light on qualitative modes of experience which reveals a world.

Heidegger, following a phenomenological line of enquiry, went back to reflecting on our everyday living in order to elucidate fundamental existential categories that are always already implied in the constitution of human experience.

Let us take a simple moment of human experience as an illustration:

I look at the table and see a box of matches. I am immediately aware that I understand what they are and experience them in a very specific way. Intrinsic to my experience is the way they occur within a particular bodily relationship to myself. They would emerge very differently if I had never handled them, struck a match with ease, confident that fire and warmth was possible. I have an immediate sense of access to a possibility of my body as comforted, warmed, and being able to engage in many benefits of fire-lighting activity. Although I choose not to reach out to the matches on the table, I have already participated bodily in what matches are. My sense of comfort is not separate from such bodily participation even though I am sitting still.

In this experience, the matches form a focus for a specific network of meanings. Although my pen and books are closer at hand, the experience of the matches invite my participation in a different situation. Although the specificity of the situation does not present itself (e.g., lighting a cigarette for another or sitting around a camp-fire), I feel called away from writing to a more interpersonal and leisurely situation. The matches thus constitute a form of spatiality which is figured by meaning, purpose, and feeling, that is, human presence. In this experience, the matches have lost their previous 'distance' when the books clamoured for attention.

The possibility that the matches present to me is intrinsic to the experience. Is this sense of possibility constituted by the past, the present or the future? In remaining faithful to the experience, I am immediately aware that I cannot separate these categories in a linear way as if independent or causally dependent on each other. The possibility that matches present to me has access to a future that gathers up the present and gives it a specific direction. A different future would change the quality of the present. So too, specific themes from the past both focus the present and are focused by the present and future.

All three structures 'stand out' towards each other, co-constituting the experience.

This short example may serve to illustrate structures of human

existence which, when used as descriptive references, retain the quality of being-in-the-world.

The description of the experience referred to the following dimensions:

1. The way the human body occurs.
2. The way the co-constituting of the temporal structures of past, present and future occurs.
3. The way that a human mood or feeling pervades and partially organizes the experience.
4. The way that the meaningful world of places and things occur, i.e. the way that human spatiality occurs in which things have a 'place' of distance, nearness, and relevance to self, others and other things.
5. The way that the quality of interpersonal relationships occur; the interpersonal description of the experience, of presence or absence, active or passive.

From reading the example, it can be seen that these structures do not refer to a notion of the body, time, space, etc., that can be measured quantitatively within a paradigm of natural objects. Rather, these structures reflect qualities of human presence which need to be described on their own terms.

In providing such existential structures, Heidegger elaborated on the work done in this regard by Husserl as well as other existentially-oriented thinkers such as Kierkegaard. Although subsequent psychologically-oriented phenomenologists such as Van den Berg (1972) and Binswanger (1963) have expressed these structures slightly differently, it is proposed that the terms

that have been considered are crucially helpful in providing some terms of reference that can inform an existentially faithful language of description.

In considering some basic propositions regarding the human condition, I have been concerned only to follow this line of enquiry minimally. Although acknowledging the value of the writings of existential philosophers, phenomenological-psychological research remains open with regard to many of the specific conclusions regarding psychological phenomena that these writers have put forward.

In conclusion, it may be said that phenomenologically-oriented psychological research fruitfully utilizes the above considerations regarding the co-consitution of human-being and world when engaged in its task of languaging the lived-world. Descriptions which retain this quality of being-in-the-world results in a psychology which affirms the validity of the psychological order in its own right without prematurely transforming it into physiology, sociology or computer science.

It is hoped that the philosophical distinctions made so far have, albeit too briefly, indicated some conceptions which will make the aims, method and results of the subsequent study intelligible.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will describe how the research was carried out. The phenomenological method is more than a technique; it seeks procedures and steps that will assist in its task of the discovery, understanding, and communication of meanings. A description of phenomenological method thus explicates its attitude and understandings as well as the specific sequence of steps taken.

The method followed guidelines that have been well established by Giorgi (1985) and the Duquesne School of Phenomenological Psychology. Variations of this method have been described by, *inter alia*, Stones in Kruger (1979), Hoek (1988), Collaizzi (1978) and Wertz (1985).

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

To begin with, a question was sought that, when asked of a person, would result in the disclosure of an experience of self-insight which had occurred in the person's life. The goal of such a question is to generate a text that can become the point of departure for psychological reflection - a point of departure that is faithful to the way the event was lived through.

The first step thus involved the adoption of Husserls' dictum: "back to the things themselves" (Husserl, 1970/1900, p.252).

> "...one interpretation of that expression means to go to the everyday world where people are living through various phenomena in actual situations" (Giorgi, 1985, p.8).

The question must be of such a nature that it asks a subject to describe the *concrete situation* of the relevant event. The focus on a *situation* is an acknowledgement that the meaning of an identified phenomenon such as self-insight, is much more than the subject's theoretical knowledge or conscious reflections of the experience. The subject's experience involves meanings that may be far greater than he knows and it is the task of the phenomenological psychologist to explicate such meaningfulness. A question that results in the description of a situation thus gives access to prereflective experience that carries with it a world that is pregnant with relational meanings.

Fischer (1982) gives a good summary of this concern to approach the 'life-world' in psychological research when writing about anxiety:

> "I do not uphold a metaphysics that conceptualizes the meaning of anxiety as residing independently in the event itself. Rather, I realize that the meanings are imminent in situations for my subjects, as well as for me. Hence, in my empirical-phenomenological work, subjects and I embark upon a collaborative enterprise, the ultimate purpose of which is to explore and raise to an articulate level of intelligibility the essential psychological meanings of anxiety" (p.66).

The question was also formulated in such a way that it allowed the subject to give a *retrospective* account of his/her

experience. This acknowledges that an experience is not some ahistorical, 'objective event'. Dilthey (in Kruger, 1988) is helpful in reminding us that the meaning of an experience becomes clearer with growing historical context:

> "One may call each encompassing unity of parts of life bound together through a common meaning for the course of life an 'experience' - even when the several parts are separated from each other by interrupting events" (p.26).

Thus an approach which tries to observe merely the moment of self-insight cannot be considered adequate to a description of the meaning of self-insight.

In a phenomenological approach we make no apology for allowing the subject to bring his/her historical experience to the situation.

Although a retrospective account of an experience by the subject is a transformation of lived experience, it is nevertheless grounded in an experience that has been undergone. There is no such thing as a 'pure' lived experience, as the meaning of an experience is always constituted by its ongoing history. Thus a concrete, lived occurrence *within* the context of history *is* the valid focus for phenomenological psychology.

3.2.1 Pilot Study

With these considerations in mind, I formulated a question that sought to ask about an experience of self-insight in a psychological way, that is, by utilizing language that referred

to an experience rather than a concept. For this reason, I preferred not to use the word 'self-insight' in my question. Rather, I began by defining my area of focus in terms of the following experiential parameters:

a) understanding or 'seeing' something in a new way; this pre-understanding was influenced by my consideration of Gestalt Psychology's definition of insight;

b) ....in such a manner that it changed the way one viewed or lived one's life; this pre-understanding was influenced by my consideration of psychotherapeutic literature, where the personal nature of self-insight is seen to make a difference to one's life.

The following request to subjects thus formed the basis for a pilot study:

> *Describe any situation in which you came to realize something in such a way that it changed the way you viewed your life or changed the way you actually lived your life. Please describe in detail the situation, what happened before, during, and after; what you thought, felt and did.*

3.2.2 The Central Research Question

By following the method described in this chapter, the pilot study resulted in a general description that was considered to be a good overall definition of the experience of self-insight. Although helpful in that it defined some important parameters of what goes to make up the essence of self-insight, it was too general to address itself to specific, more psychologically

interesting questions. The general description generated by this phase (see Appendix 2) was reminiscent of Husserl's quest to describe the essential invariants of a phenomenon. Thus, for example, to say that all experiences of guilt are characterized by a sense of responsibility for a ruptured relation to the world, provides a good philosophical definition of the essence of guilt. More psychologically relevant questions could follow from this general definition, (cf. Brooke, 1985), such as: what are some typical ways that people come to take responsibility for ruptured world-relations? In the same way, the general description of self-insight suggested an interesting direction that would require a more refined and in depth focus; that is, *the kind of self-insight that occurs in psychotherapy that constitutes a greater sense of freedom.*

One could argue that, in retrospect, the pilot study was unnecessary, and that I could have formulated this focus from the beginning. However, the results of the pilot study revealed the central role of a sense of freedom in relation to self-insight in a way that may otherwise have been overlooked. I felt that the kind of self-insight that included such a dimension may be of crucial relevance to a formulation of psychotherapy that expresses the unity of perception, cognition and feeling..

With this in mind, the following initial question, to be asked of psychotherapy clients, was formulated:

> *Describe a situation in psychotherapy in which you saw or understood something which carried with it a greater sense of freedom.*

This initial question was followed up by open-ended questions

that were informed by the following interests:

> *Describe in greater detail the situation, its history, what you said, felt and thought, what your therapist said or did.*
>
> *Tell me more about what you saw or understood.*
>
> *Tell me more about this greater sense of freedom.*

I thus asked questions that focussed not only on self-insight but also on the experience of felt-freedom. I could have asked a more general question without referring to freedom, and could have adopted that interest when I analyzed the protocols. However, the pilot study demonstrated that such a complex and interpenetrating subject could go in multiple directions. I therefore attempted rather to set a question that would not overly restrict the revelation of interpenetrating themes, yet at the same time would ask the subjects to hold in a figural way, a specific case of self-insight. The goal was to produce protocols which would be focussed enough to reveal psychologically interesting discriminations about the relationship between self-insight and felt-freedom.

3.3 SUBJECTS

A general guideline for choosing subjects in this research was that they were able to acknowledge a significant relationship with the phenomenon under study:

> "...when we obtain descriptions of phenomena we rely on the self-understanding of our subjects, i.e. our subjects already have some pre-articulate comprehension of being. The hermeneutic task then is to make these disclosures and subject it to further interpretation in

> the sense of what is being said and also what is not being said" (Kruger, 1988, p.39).

In the pilot study, six men and four women were chosen merely on the grounds that they were able to say that a relevant experience came to mind when I asked the question. I would also say that they were all relatively articulate although this was not something I was sure of in advance. I also did not know in advance the varying contexts that they would speak of regarding their experiences of self-insight. At this pilot study phase, I was interested to allow a variety of circumstances to emerge.

After having interviewed ten people, I realized that there could potentially be a great number of specific variations for the occasion of self-insight. However, enough protocols had been generated at this stage to achieve consistently unifying themes which defined the phenomenon in such a way that the place of the variations could be indicated.

In the central study, four men and six women who had been in psychotherapy for a minimum of four months were interviewed. The subjects had responded to the following request sent to local psychotherapists:

> Dear Colleague
>
> <u>STUDY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF SELF-INSIGHT OF CLIENTS IN PSYCHOTHERAPY</u>
>
> I am currently engaged in a PhD on the experience of self-insight in psychotherapy.
>
> As part of this project, I would like to interview clients who are presently in psychotherapy or who have been in psychotherapy.
>
> I would, therefore, like to ask you to help me recruit appropriate subjects for this project. This would involve

you thinking of three or four present clients or ex-clients who are:

a) articulate;
b) in your assessment 'doing psychotherapeutic work' or who have done;
c) would be willing to talk to me for an hour or so about their experience of self-insight.

I would then like you to send this letter or write a similar letter to them with the assurance that:

a) I will not know to whom you have sent letters.
b) They need not tell you whether they replied to me or not.

I acknowledge the ethically delicate nature of this research and would like to reassure all involved that utmost confidentiality and circumspection will be exercised regarding the identities of those willing to participate.

I would only ask you to indicate to me whether you are able to help me. I would like to carry out my interviews in the fourth term.

Many thanks.

If the therapist was prepared to assist, he sent the letters on to an undisclosed number of clients, a number of whom chose to reply. These letters were sent to psychotherapists without discriminating the specific school of psychotherapy to which they subscribed. It so happened, however, that all psychotherapists practised a dialogue form of psychotherapy where the interpersonal relationship is considered an important context for psychotherapeutic work, and where self-insight is considered to be facilitated in an indirect way. The research did not seek to make discriminations based on therapist-orientation.

Giorgi (1985, p.19) suggests that the more subjects there are, the greater the variations, and hence the better the ability to see what is essential. After ten in-depth interviews, enough repetition of important themes had occurred to suggest that a

stable articulation of psychologically significant constituents could be achieved. (cf. Wertz, F.J. and van Zuuren, F, 1987). The decision to stop recruiting new subjects is based on a tension between seeking new variations and concentrating one's hermeneutic efforts on the internal coherence of a few, revealing protocols:

> "A qualitatively limited text is a condition for a profound and systematic analysis of the content and structure of the text as well as for an analysis of one's own presuppositions and of one's questions to the text" (Kvale, 1987, p.28).

Although all ten subjects were found to be valuable informants of the experience in question, two did not provide enough situational context for an adequate description of *how* the experiences occurred. An analysis of eight protocols proved sufficient to provide a general structure that was consistently supported by the individual protocols.

3.4 THE INTERVIEW SITUATION

Utilizing the research questions as an initial stimulus, I interviewed each subject with the assurance that all significant identifying details would be changed or omitted. Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed in order to obtain the protocols which formed the basis for analysis.

The interviews were conducted in the spirit of an open-ended, collaborative dialogue with the goal of obtaining "...as faithful and complete a description of what was lived through by the interviewee as possible". (Wertz, 1985, p.161).

The interview situation, as collaborative dialogue, already participates in a world of shared meanings. It is thus different in status from that of a written text, which forms the traditional 'raw data' for hermeneutic enquiry. A qualitative research interview involves both the generation and interpretation of a text. (cf. Kvale, 1983). The dialogue is already a hermeneutic endeavour in that there is an implicit or explicit task to achieve a sufficient degree of shared understanding as to the integrity of the experience. It should be noted that this does not mean that we are asking the interviewee to explicate his/her experience at a general level and within a psychological attitude. These levels of explication are properly left to later procedures carried out by the phenomenological researcher.

The level of understanding that was considered sufficient for this phase of research, was that the description produced a joint sense in both interviewer and interviewee that both the parts and the whole of the experience were sufficiently expressed to say that the researched phenomenon had been addressed. More simply, this level of understanding can be called the 'story level' where an everyday description of the integrity of an experience is facilitated. The question at this stage is: 'How did it happen?' rather than 'what is its structure?'

Although natural-scientific researchers may take the view that an interview can be a great source of distortion (cf. Giorgi, 1986b), a phenomenologically-oriented researcher understands that the *meaning* of an experience is more likely to be enhanced through dialogue rather than reduced by it. The crucial distinction is

between *facilitative* and *non-facilitative* dialogue rather than between 'raw' and 'contaminated' data.

Facilitative interviewing can be understood by referring to Heidegger's notion that the essence of truth is freedom.

Within this context, a qualitative research interviewer interacts with the interviewee in such a way that the presence of the phenomenon in question is respectfully attended to by both interviewer and interviewee. Such facilitative interviewing requires skills that have sometimes been referred to as 'therapeutic'. In a recent article on the 'rhythm of therapeutic attention' (Todres, 1990), I characterize these skills as modes of being-with another, and highlight four such modalities: attentive, focussing, interactive and invitational. The primary goal of the qualitative research interview is, however, to reveal and not primarily to heal.

In a similar vein, Wertz and van Zuuren (1987) refer to the following 'clinical skills' that are required in a qualitative research interview: being able to listen in depth, to summarize and to take the whole context into consideration, to be sensitive to implicit aspects of human expression, and to create a research situation of mutual trust and understanding.

Hagan (1986) highlights the importance of these qualities, asserting that:

> "...significant knowledge of human life is obtainable by a genuine human relationship, not a technical one" (p.352).

Beyond this general perspective, Kvale (1983) provides further important characteristics of a qualitative research interview. As these characteristics informed my approach, a brief summary is provided:

1. One is theme-centred rather than person-centred; that is, interested in common structures revealed by the interviewee's life-world.
2. One seeks to understand the *meaning* of phenomena in the interviewee's life-world. In order to do this, one covers the factual as well as meaning level. Interviewer activities include the formulation of implicit messages, seeking confirmation of understanding, and asking for elaborative factual detail, together with its significance.
3. One is interested in the *quality* of the phenomenon; that is, one aims to obtain as many nuanced descriptions from qualitative aspects of the interviewee's life-world as possible.
4. One is *descriptive* in emphasis; that is, although interpretations and reflections may become part of the dialogue, the interviewer actively represents the priority to return to the description of the experience as lived.
5. One is *specific* in emphasis; that is, the interviewer encourages descriptions of concrete situations and action sequences more than general opinions and reflective conclusions.
6. One attempts to be open to new and unexpected phenomena; that is, the interviewer is critically self-conscious of his/her own ongoing presuppositions.

7. One is focussed on certain themes; that is, the interviewer represents what the focus of interest is, but within this, allows as much non-directive freedom as possible.

8. One is open for *ambiguities of meaning*; that is, when ambiguities of meaning arise, the interviewer helps to clarify the nature of the ambiguity and reflect it as such, or else clear up the ambiguity when it merely involves a misunderstanding.

9. One is sensitive to the ethics of the situation; that is, the interviewer should ensure that the experience is a positive one for the interviewee and that adequate ethical protection, such as confidentiality, is ensured.

In facilitative, qualitative interviewing, the crucial distinction is not between 'leading questions' and some hypothetical notion of a 'neutral stimulus', but between questions that help ground the dialogue in lived experience and questions that pursue a direction of excessive abstraction and theorizing. Both the researcher as well as informed reader, are usually able to evaluate the 'grounding' of the dialogue when reading the original protocols.

In conclusion, it should be said that the interview situation in this research cannot be objectified and described as if to suggest that each interview involved a replication of concrete operations. However, I hope that this section has indicated that the interview situation does require a specific discipline and has rigorous general criteria. Some examples of my verbalizations as interviewer are now presented in order to indicate the range of facilitative interviewing. I believe that the facilitative

interview will become increasingly crucial in phenomenological-psychological research as more in-depth and refined studies of experience are pursued.

Examples of Interviewer Responses

1. "That leads me on to another area of focus. You talked about the situation and then you talked about other kinds of examples that you said 'linked up' with the situation. Now you are saying that you can make a whole lot of links from this situation. Can you say a little more about how you became aware of these links?"
2. "Yes, it is clearer now. I can understand how this pervasive theme kind of restricted you a lot in the way you experienced the world and I can also understand how increasingly there had been these moments of freedom in which you had questioned the theme: 'I deserve to be punished and I am in the wrong and all that'."
3. "So it is not very clear when it frees you and when it sticks you?"
4. "You seem to be telling me that you were living in a certain way and then you realized it?"
5. "Was that important to you?"
6. What made you able to say that to him that you could never say that before?"

3.5 PROCEDURE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROTOCOLS

3.5.1 Goals of procedure

Eight transcribed protocols were analyzed according to a disciplined procedure designed to ensure that the details of individual experiences intimately contributed to an articulation of a level of generality considered to be psychologically relevant; this will be called the *general structure*.

In this final phase, context-related themes are expressed in such a way that a variety of readers may further their psychological understanding of the phenomenon in a way that is generally applicable. Such insights do not merely describe various elements or extract various features that correlate positively; rather:

> "...to describe the structure is to describe how the elements of a phenomenon function constitutively, how they interrelate to form the unity of the experience" (Reed, 1987, p.102).

Such insights are also not necessarily universally applicable, but apply within similar contexts.

Giorgi (1985) indicates a psychologically relevant, general level of understanding when he distinguishes this from Husserl's quest to articulate universal essences:

> "Psychologists are more interested in essences that are context related, or relevant for typical situations or typical personalities and so on, rather than the universal as such" (p.50).

And further:

> "One consequence of stopping short of universality is that the meanings arrived at are subject to change more

> than universal essences because the very relationship to contexts or situations that limits the range of the generality introduces a dependency that universal essences do not have. Nevertheless this dependency is understood as a price the psychologist has to pay in order to arrive at structures that are responsive to his interests" (p 50).

The major goal of the procedure in this section was to arrive at a general structure of the kind of self-insight in psychotherapy that carries with it a greater sense of freedom.

Such a general structure required that I, as phenomenological researcher, engage in a disciplined series of steps which would ensure that my interpretations are rigorously informed by the event and significance of the protocols:

> "It is the phenomenological psychologist who is responsible for analyzing the 'disjoined meaning' of the constituted data because he, not the subject (unless they too are phenomenologically sophisticated), possesses the conceptual tools needed to undertake the reflective task of transforming the descriptive protocols, or text-analogues - through a process that necessitates interpretation, as well as descriptive reduction and delineation - into its structural meaning" (Titelman, 1979, p.185).

The meanings that are articulated in the general description are never considered totalized. Fresh perspectives will undoubtedly further our understanding as different contexts of understanding take historical root. This is as it should be, as understanding always occurs within particular cultural and historical situations.

3.5.2 Steps of Procedure

The protocols were subjected to steps of procedural discipline similar to those pioneered by Giorgi (1975, 1985) and further

illustrated or modified by, *inter alia,* Wertz (1985), Hoek (1988) and Anstoos (1985).

Each step aids the task of understanding and explication by providing different occasions for emphasizing the specific and situated event, as well as occasions for emphasizing the implicit and referential meanings which cohere through different factual variations:

a) Obtaining a sense of each protocol as a whole experience

Each complete protocol was read as many times as was necessary in order to understand it as a whole experience. This involves the adoption of an empathic attitude which is attuned to the linguistic content, not merely in itself, but as revelatory of the lived experience which the description intends.

Such a reading is already active in two ways:

i) one immerses oneself in the *world* of the description by disciplining oneself to become *open* to such world. Such discipline requires the suspension of one's own preconceptions as much as possible. This constitutes a broadly phenomenological attitude.

ii) one, nevertheless, maintains an understanding that the description does not just reveal a world-in-general, but a particular experiential focus within that context; in this case, an experience of self-insight that carries with it a sense of greater freedom. This constitutes a broadly psychological attitude.

At the end of this stage I thus had an experience of understanding that the parts of each protocol did not just constitute a series of isolated events, but that they intimately spoke of the experience-as-a-whole. This did not mean that I was able, at this stage, to satisfactorily articulate what these relationships were, but rather that I was *present* to such relationships. This stage thus served to invoke the *presence* of the phenomenon in its specific occasions and served as an intuitive reference for later analyses.

b) Discrimination of 'meaning units' within a psychological perspective and focussed on the phenomenon being researched

This second step refined the contextual understanding achieved in the previous step by focussing on discrete changes of meaning within the larger context of each individual protocol.

Each protocol was re-read with the following question in mind: At what stages in the protocol is there a change of meaning of the situation for the subject with reference to the experience of self-insight and/or felt freedom?

This question reflects the adoption of a 'psychological attitude, in which the researcher was interested, in how the protocol said different things about the psychological nature of the phenomenon in question, that is, about qualitative changes in the experience for the subject.

At this stage the protocol was left intact: both the order of the units as well as the language of the subject remained.

Changes in meaning were merely numbered and referred to as "meaning units". The purpose of numbering each change in meaning was to indicate that the passage or expression was to be considered as a relevant constituent of the experience-as-a-whole.

The discrimination of 'meaning units' within this attitude is significantly different from a 'content analysis' where 'elements' can be listed separately from their interrelationship. 'Meaning units' are, rather, *constituents* which refer to a relationship to the context that has been adopted.

The 'meaning units' thus exist in relation to the attitude and set of the researcher. The goal of such a step is to act as a standard of discipline whereby as many nuances of meaning as possible can be taken into account when articulating the general structure.

In this study, the in-depth interview provided lengthy passages of context which were necessary but not directly revelatory of the phenomenon in question. Thus 'meaning units' were fairly large in that only changes in meaning relevant to the psychological nature of the phenomenon were emphasized.

c) <u>The transformation of subjects' everyday expressions into psychological language with emphasis on the phenomenon being investigated. (Transformed Meaning Units)</u>

Whereas in the previous phase, changes in meaning were expressed entirely in the subject's language, the present step transforms the 'meaning units' into a more psychological language with an emphasis on how each expression reveals something about the

meaning of self-insight and felt-freedom.

Each meaning unit was read with the following questions in mind: Within the total context of this protocol, what does this change of meaning tell me about his/her experience of self-insight and/or felt freedom? How can I express this quality in such a way that it does justice to the concrete situation, yet emphasizes its more general psychological properties?

The emphasis on the psychological properties of the expression requires further explanation. To quote Giorgi (1985):

> "A major obstacle for this process is the fact that there is no already established consensual psychological language" (p.19).

Like most phenomenological-psychological studies, I adopted a non-technical language when emphasizing the psychological properties of the experience. That is, I used every-day language to describe how a person in such a situation is feeling, thinking, acting, imagining and relating.

By means of reflection and imaginative variation, I considered the relationship of such feelings, thoughts, actions etc. to the phenomenon in question. The 'transformed meaning units' are thus expressions of the psychological 'role' of that specific theme within the context of the experience-as-a-whole.

In the example that is presented in Appendix 1, the 'meaning units' in the subject's language are given in the left-hand column, and the matching 'transformed meaning units' are given in the right-hand column.

d) <u>The synthesis of transformed meaning units into a consistent</u>

statement of the structure of the experience for each subject (situated structure)

In this phase, the psychological themes of the transformed meaning units are read in order to arrive at a consistent description of the structure of the experience for each subject. This involves an activity of synthesis and integration whereby the themes are highlighted in such a way as to reveal the unity of the experience as well as the specific, contextual factors which go to make up such an experience.

Each transformed meaning unit was read with the following questions in mind: How can I express the relationship between this meaning and the experience as a whole? Have the themes that I am synthesizing sufficiently included this particular meaning?

It can be seen that this phase participates in a 'back and forth' movement in which the generalities of the emerging situated structure are checked against the specifics of the transformed meaning units. A balance had to be struck between a level of generality that was not repetitive and a description that retained enough specific details of the context of the experience. This activity also necessitated the ordering of relevant meanings as well as the exclusion of irrelevant or repetitive expressions.

In this process I attempted to penetrate the meaning of the experience for each subject by reflecting not only on the explicit dimensions of what had been described, but on implicit dimensions as well. This involved a degree of insightful interpretation that is aided by a phenomenological and psychological background. In this way, themes could be found that gave greater coherence to

some of the explicit meanings. The validity of the situated structure can be judged intersubjectively by other readers who may evaluate whether the description is insightful and retains a good degree of specificity and internal coherence.

The 'situated structure' for each subject is presented in the 'Results' chapter.

e) Arriving at a General Description of the Structure of the Phenomenon (General Structure)

This phase involved the movement from individuality to generality. All the diverse cases of self-insight and felt freedom are understood to contribute towards a general understanding of its psychological structure. The aim is to establish what is typical of the phenomenon and to express such typicality in an insightful and integrated manner.

All the phases of analysis contributed towards this understanding. Practically, the individual situated structures were read with the following questions in mind: What are the general features of these individual structures? What occurs as persistencies of meaning through these factual variations? If this particular aspect was changed, would this phenomenon still be this phenomenon?

All these questions embody the attitude of considering how the individual variations contribute to a general understanding. This is an attempt to "...grasp the relation of the essential meanings

through their coherence". (Anstoos, 1985, p.92)

In this procedure these features that were essentially invariant across individual cases were thus retained. This involved the reflective penetration into individual psychological structures in the light of other ones in order to find common features that were sometimes implicit. In this regard, Wertz's (1983) suggestions for engaging in a general psychological analysis provided useful guidelines.

In essence, these guidelines refer to interpretive acts which seek to reveal the phenomenon in a language that is adequate to the human order (cf. previous chapter) and that elaborates the quality of the phenomenon within such a participatory perspective.

At this stage, I expressed my findings in ways that I thought would be relevant to a psychologically interested audience. I did this with the understanding that different readers would dialogue their own understandings with that of the general description:

> "...a hermeneutical mode of understanding implies a legitimate plurality of interpretations. Neither author, nor reader may fully know the context of a text. What meaning a reader finds in a text depends upon the questions he poses to the text" (Kvale, 1987, p.29).

The general structure is presented in the 'Results' section.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 INDIVIDUAL SITUATED STRUCTURES

Eight individual situated structures of the experience of self-insight in psychotherapy are presented. Each subject is referred to in the abbreviated form: S, and is identified by attaching a number to this letter, for example, S1, S2, S3, etc. The style of each individual structure begins with its most abstract expression and proceeds to indicate how the more specific features of the subject's experience clarify this structure.

S1: 25 year old male

The nature of S's insight involved the emergence of a series of understandings about his characteristic ways of relating, how these ways of relating occurred within a historical context, and how these ways of relating restricted him. These understandings progressively articulated a central theme, that is, S's expectation that he would be criticized or rejected. The insights further revealed how he was an active participant in repetitive patterns of responding. More centrally, however, from a therapeutic point of view, the insights worked to question the nature of his self-image which sustained such active participation. Such insightful progression opened up a freer engagement with the world that, in turn, led to further enabling insights. In this way, self-insight and freer engagement became a

dialectical movement.

The relationship with his mother characterized the central occasion where a typical interaction occurred. He would often feel ashamed, clumsy or foolish when criticized in some way by his mother and would behave accordingly. In the progression of becoming more insightful during his period of psychotherapy, he remembers an occasion when his mother was reprimanding him and he noticed how ready he was to 'take the reprimand in'. He felt the characteristic hurt and became aware, not just of the particularity of this situation, but of how his readiness to accept criticism and feel hurt happened in other situations as well, such as at school. Not only was he ready to accept criticism when it occurred, but he further realized that even in ambiguous situations, (such as a stranger walking towards him), he would anxiously expect to be hurt in some way. He realized a further implication of this expectation; that it may be the reason for his becoming anxious in crowded places.

In further following the implications of this attitude, he noticed how his behaviour can be understood in the light of this theme; that he attempts to please others in order to avoid criticism. A memory of what friends used to say to him (about taking teasing so seriously) also became understood within the context of this theme. He is now able to say that he became 'obsessed with perfection'.

S also realized that he had always responded to criticism as if he deserved a reprimand. He realized that, not only would he expect others to criticize or reject him, but that he was typically ready

to blame or criticize himself. He gives the example of how his readiness to blame himself makes sense of how he responded to his girlfriend breaking off their engagement. He gives two other examples in the course of the interview of how he is prone to blame himself excessively. Such details appear to be expressed in order to give further concrete validity to the sense-making power of the emerging self-image: I expect criticism and rejection and I am ready to blame myself.

From a therapeutic point of view, the significant part of discovering this self-image in both a general and detailed way, was that he realized that he had a choice. He did not have to passively accept all criticism, but could question it. Discussions with his therapist helped him question his deservability of criticism, and not just his passivity. He first saw this possibility in relation to his mother. Through talking about his mother in therapy, he had come to realize that, over the years, his mother had been unjustifiably harsh and unaffectionate. He realized that an alternative upbringing would have helped him cope better and would have made him more flexible. Further, in thinking over his past (not just his rejections at home, but rejections at school as well), he realized that he 'hadn't been dished out a fair deal of affection or support'.

Apart from psychotherapy, a warm and affectionate relationship with his girlfriend and his girlfriend's mother also helped him question whether he deserved rejection.

He cannot remember precisely when the theme became clear in

psychotherapy, but he gives one example which suggests that he realized different aspects of the theme at different times. In this example, one aspect of the theme, that is, his attempts to 'be beyond criticism' are highlighted when he talked in therapy of how the length of his whiskers became a subject of preoccupation.

At various points in the interview, he summarizes the insight in different ways relating to different aspects of his life. For example, at one point he indicated an awareness of how his expectation of rejection particularly affected his relationship with women, thus acknowledging a metaphorical link between interactions with his mother and women in general.

The experience of freedom appears to emerge progressively as insight reveals new possibilities, and further, becomes actively translated into a different engagement with the world.

S relates an experience of freedom which followed the insight that he did not have to passively accept criticism. His mother was criticizing him. He told her to go away and leave him alone. Later on, he defended himself to his father. He noticed that he started fighting back in this way and, further, developed personal arguments that could justify his defence.

Such an experience of freedom opened up a further emphasis of the insightful theme: that is, that he was 'too eager' to accept reprimands from other people.

In actualizing the possibility of greater defiance, further insightful possibilities presented themselves. He became aware

that learning to defend himself against criticism involves a process of finding the balance between being over-assertive and self-demeaning. He is aware at work, for example, how he needs to think about what is appropriate. He feels that it is necessary to learn to differentiate between when to fight and when not to fight. Knowing this difference has not yet become naturally implicit to his functioning.

S has also become aware that the growing freedom of questioning his expectations also carries with it a new kind of anxiety, that is, the kind of anxiety that acknowledges the ambiguity of situations. The awareness of his responsibility of becoming more open for ambiguity also, at this stage, makes him feel excessively preoccupied with his own manner of presence. The *fight* for more psychological freedom can obscure the sense of freedom.

The therapeutic situation was helpful in the growth of insight in that it was a permissive situation where he could talk about anything he wished. Things that he did not normally speak about were expressed. Themes became articulated with the help of the therapist. He found the therapist most helpful when he helped him question things without offering conclusions. Sometimes, however, it was also helpful when the therapist directly encouraged him to see the situation in another way. Both the therapist's supportive presence as well as his enquiring attitude encouraged S to feel that there was another possibility that was different from his existing feeling of rejectability. This feeling encouraged S to 'go out and fight the world'.

What was important to S was that the themes of the emerging insight were based on an authentic sense of the presence of his life. The therapist helped invoke such a sense of presence by bringing S's attention to his feelings and bodily sense of himself in situations. This gave the emerging insights regarding his restrictive self-image an integrity and believability they otherwise may not have had.

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S2: 33 year old female

The nature of S's insight involved the growing understanding of the relationship between a characteristic, unpleasant way of experiencing situations and her own active agency in experiencing such situations. She had previously lived according to an unquestioned project or self-image which pressurized her to feel and act in a burdened manner. As she came to see her own agency in this project, she was empowered to choose more and more not to live within the constraints of this self-image. Coming to see these relationships and her own agency in them emerged through a number of experiences within and without therapy, where the central themes of her self-project were revealed in a number of concrete details. Experiences of freedom from such self-project sometimes occurred before the understanding of these relationships. At other times, insightful understanding supported a freer engagement with the world. Insight and lived experience became progressively related by the coherence of the central themes.

When S first began therapy, she was expecting sympathetic confirmation that she had been a victim of certain situations. The feeling of having been 'one of life's victims' essentially involved a sense of self-pity with regard to a failed marital relationship. Such a mode of self-understanding also extended to family relationships and task situations. In all of these situations, she would 'generally feel victimized by everybody and everything'.

In therapy, she initially spent a significant amount of time talking about past hurtful feelings. Although she needed to share these experiences with someone, there came a time when she felt she wanted to distance herself from the past and 'move on'.

By exploring present relationships, present feelings and interactions, she began to see a theme that informed both present and past situations. The form of this theme was that she very much wanted to be a 'good girl', and in pursuing this image, she would willingly take on the role that others expected of her.

The theme of this self-image first became vividly articulated in terms of the therapist-client relationship. She became aware that she was trying very hard to 'produce the goods' in therapy in order to please her therapist. She then became aware of this theme occurring in other interpersonal situations as well. She was able to articulate the details of a number of different relationships in the light of this project. She saw these interpersonal relationships in a new way, that is, that she was

active in trying to live up to an image of a 'good girl' with all its successes and failures. A number of interrelated implications of this project became clarified at different times: that she tries to seek approval, that she tries to avoid conflict situations, and that she tries to protect other people. These are all necessary projects of the 'good girl'.

In her relationship with her therapist she also had experiences which were markedly different from her project to be a 'good girl'. With her therapist, she was at times 'emotional, disjointed, grabbing at things here and there, and not being coherent and logical'. Her therapist accepted these ways of being and this appears to have supported her freer emergence beyond her restrictive self-image in a very direct way.

At these times, it was important for her to think about these experiences between therapy sessions. This enabled her to gain some distance from her emotions and see herself differently. It would seem that, in this situation, it was important for her not just to be different from her restrictive self-project but to make such difference coherent as well.

Another direct experience of difference from her restrictive self-image occurred in relation to her therapist. At one point, she became aware that growing feelings of affection toward her therapist was restricting her openness with him. This led to frustration and she eventually expressed her feelings towards him. To her great relief, exploration of these feelings was encouraged by her therapist. Such permission further enabled her to articulate a longing for a 'strong supportive person to take

control of [her] life so that [she] could sit and let all be done for [her]'. A theme of 'dependency' became articulated between therapist and client, where the pertinence of this theme was related to her ex-husband, her friends and family. This experience stands out for S as the most significant in her therapy. What was of crucial importance, was that the expression of her affection did not scare her therapist away. She did not have to deny or be ashamed of her longing. She did not have to be a 'good girl' in this way. The nature of these lived experiences was that they were different from the kind of experiences that would be consistent with her self-project.

Her growing understanding of her self-world relationships also clearly led to a freer engagement with the world and other people. She would, in the past, become very hurt or guilty when she could not please her father. She is now more aware that wanting to please him so much is grounded in her desire to be the 'good girl' and to never show her more shameful or (what she considers) 'bad' side. She chooses more and more not to live within the constraints of this self-image.

There were other experiences both before and after her confession to her therapist that contributed to a growing realization that she could let the 'bad' out, ie. not just be the 'good girl'. She remembers that she once lost her temper with her niece just before a therapy session. She felt guilty and spoke about it in therapy. She felt like a witch, but in subsequent discussions she realized that her anger had not been significantly destructive to her niece. This insight further encouraged her to take risks by

expressing herself more openly with close friends. This is an ongoing endeavour for S.

The therapeutic situation was characterized as a permissive environment where all sorts of things could happen. The reliability and consistency of the therapist was important for her. Sometimes there were frustrations in their relationship. She wanted to be given more guidance, but she gradually learnt that this theme was part of her desire for dependence and passivity. The psychotherapeutic situation was often approached ambivalently in that S valued the therapy and the person of the therapist, yet sometimes found it uncomfortable and did not want to be there.

S gets depressed when she sees her restrictive interpersonal patterns still operating. She is grateful that she has more insight but is aware that her freer emergence is an ongoing process.

S3: 20 year old female

The nature of S's insight involved understanding the implications of some traumatic sexual experiences that occurred as a child. Understanding the relationship between these traumatic experiences and her subsequent ways of being, helped her to feel that certain of her behaviours and feelings were understandable under the circumstances. Previously, she had lived a 'guarded' way of being that carried with it the feeling that she was an unworthy person for some reason that she could not quite

articulate. In locating herself as having responded intelligibly to a traumatic situation, she began to feel more entitled to feelings that she had previously felt guilty about, as well as entitled to ways of guarding herself that had previously made her feel a failure. A self-image of 'I need to hide and protect myself for some reason that I cannot justify', began to change into the self-image of 'I need to hide and protect myself for a reason I can justify'. This emerging self-image of 'feeling justified' as well as a clearer knowledge of what she is guarding against, is beginning to function as a new foundation for feeling and action. In locating a clearer context for the necessity of her 'guardedness', S is able to increasingly differentiate situations where such 'guardedness' is unnecessary. This has opened up the possibility of greater trust in interpersonal situations. In more specific terms, S's understanding emerged, and freed her in the following way:

In a therapeutic session S had been expressing anger about her father in an intense but rather global and confused way. S was speaking in an undirected manner, without knowing where the session was going. She didn't like him, could not talk to him, did not know why she did not like him, and felt guilty for not liking him. Within the context of this anger, a vivid, shocking memory, in the form of an image suddenly presented itself to her. It involved an incident when, as a child, her father had made sexual advances to her. Her initial reaction to this memory was one of revulsion. She found it very difficult to share her memory with her therapist as she wanted to protect both herself and her father from adverse judgement.

However, she found the courage to relate her experience to her therapist. In verbalizing her experience, she felt a strong sense of betrayal by her father: a special feeling of trust that she had had towards him as a little girl was betrayed. She began to understand this sense of betrayal as a legitimate context for her anger.

In a later session, she was struck by the memory of similar occurrences with her brothers. In this regard, her feelings about the incidents still make it very difficult to discuss this topic in therapy. Like the incident with her father, these memories also constituted a sense of betrayal.

The emerging understanding between her previously unclarified anger and the context of betrayal, helped her understand some present difficulties she was having with her boyfriend. These difficulties were focussed around her sexuality and an unclarified sense of mistrust. Previous to these memories and insights, she had felt that there was something drastically wrong with her. This constituted feelings of unworthiness. Now she understood that these earlier betrayals had resulted in an understandable 'guardedness' (which at times, has taken the form of pretending that she is independent and coping). She now began to feel that her 'guardedness' was legitimate. She remembers times in her life where she had felt 'stupid' and 'bitchy' for expressing 'unreasonable' anger. She has at times, judged herself as being 'arrogant' and 'defensive'.

In making sense of her 'guarded' way of being, she also made sense

of a number of details in her life, past and present, such as an episode of anorexia and her feelings towards her body. She has been significantly 'on guard' with her father as she has been afraid that her father would become too demonstrative with her.

Her feelings towards her father have gone through different phases. When she knew the reason for her anger, she felt less ambivalent about the anger. She felt entitled to it. She felt less guilty and acted in an unambivalently angry way: she simply withdrew from him. She could have quite happily never seen him again.

Recently, she went home to visit her parents and during this time, a further understanding about her father changed the way she felt. Her mother told her of her father's longstanding drinking problem. Some of the anger towards him gave way to the feeling of pity. With the realization that he has his own problems, she is able to see him as a more vulnerable person and less of a villain. She says that she doesn't hold him completely responsible for what he did and feels that he would never remember it. She also now feels that he did not do it deliberately.

Her memories, and her understanding of how these memories relate to her sense of self and significant others, is helping her to question the necessity of her 'guardedness' in some situations. She still feels awkward and tense when her father hugs her.

Her 'guarded' way of being also seems to have been directly affected by her relationship with her therapist. First of all,

the fact that her therapist was a woman helped her to feel that she did not have to keep her guard up as much. The non-judgemental presence of her therapist as well as her even tone of voice and manner also helped S to express herself in a less guarded way.

She feels that learning to trust her therapist has also helped her to trust her boyfriend more. It is a relief for her to let down her guard and cry in front of her boyfriend at times. The themes of 'guardedness' and 'trust' have become central themes for insight and experience. The possibility for her to be both legitimately guarded and trusting in different situations appears to describe an emerging self-image which is more flexible than it was previously.

S4: 22 year old female

The nature of S's insight involved a new understanding of a significant relationship. She realized that she had been living excessively in accordance with a dependence on a significant other. Consequently, the validity of an existing self-image of 'interpersonal independence' was questioned.

This realization constituted an awareness of a difference between her existing self-image (that of independence) and her actual interpersonal engagement with a significant other (dependence). Awareness of such a disjunction became a vital area for further self-understanding. In the course of therapeutic enquiry, both

her inauthentic self-image and her actual way of interpersonal engagement changed. They began to reflect less of a disjunction.

S's new understanding carried with it an understanding of the restrictive qualities, as well as the value of her existing mode of engagement. As these qualities became more clearly thematized, S chose to actively affirm and live towards a more independent engagement with the significant other. Such engagement opened up a more ambiguous interpersonal world which was, nevertheless, less frightening than she had feared: others were more trust-worthy than she had expected and she found that she was more able to fight for herself than she had expected.

In the light of this freer engagement, further insights about the restrictiveness of her previous interpersonal style (avoidant) as well as the value of her emerging style (more vulnerable and engaging) have become thematized. Such thematization encourages further freer engagement, as her freer engagement, likewise, tends to validate her insights.

In more specific terms, S's understanding emerged and freed her in the following way:

S had not realized that she had had the need to emulate her elder sister until she started talking about it in therapy. This realization shocked her as she had always thought of herself as a 'terribly independent person'. This realization struck her with undeniable clarity. She had always known that she was fond of her sister (whom she had lived with since her parents had died when

she was of a fairly young age) and could rely on her, but it was new for her to see that she was dependent on her sister for a sense of confirmation.

In discussing this realization, S became aware of both the value and the restrictions of such dependence. She realized that emulating her sister had been stabilizing as it reduced her sense of aloneness and gave her a sense of security. However, in her discussions, S also gave an example where she noted an important limitation of such a relationship. She remembered an incident where her sister had called her 'childish' and S had become excessively preoccupied with this evaluation, and attempted to act in a way that would obtain her sister's approval. The important restriction that S thematized was that her emulation of her sister prevented her from being herself, even though it gave her a sense of security.

In acknowledging the concrete forms of her dependence and some of the implications, she located a strong desire to actualize a different possibility. She had always wanted to see herself as someone whom 'no-one could tell what to do' and the force of this sentiment was brought to bear on her subsequent life-project.

S found that her understanding of their relationship enabled her to talk to her sister with greater clarity. She actively attempted to achieve a different relationship between them. For example, she would say things to her sister like: "You treat me like a child..." and "I don't want you to treat me as if you were my mother". S had never previously spoken to her sister in this way. It was freeing for her to actively question their

relationship. Such active, freer engagement has helped S become less preoccupied with what her sister thinks of her. She now feels that she relates to her sister with less dependence and that her sister also treats her as more of an adult.

As the above specific issue became clarified, similar thematic movements and understandings occurred in other, more general aspects of her life. For example, she found herself claiming, even angrily, to her therapist and a friend, that she can defend herself and that she does not need somebody else to protect her.

Her emerging feeling that she wants to live more independently is also enabling her to become less withdrawn from others. Previously, she would avoid being hurt by withdrawing. Now she feels more able to defend herself and more able to recover from being hurt. She feels more prepared to fight when something terrible happens in her life. Previously, she would feel suicidal.

Not only does she feel able to trust herself more but she also feels that, through therapy, she has learnt to trust others more. It has been a relief for her to find out in actuality, that the ambiguity of interpersonal situations is less frightening than she had imagined. This emerging value of faith in interpersonal contact was validated by an experience where a fight with her sister was experienced in a far more positive light than previously. It was important for her to feel that the fight had not been destructive to affectionate feelings on both sides.

Her value of general interpersonal commitment has co-emerged with learning to trust her therapist over time. To begin with, the regularity of the appointment constituted a stabilizing factor for S. It was a relief for her to find someone to rely on. Although she did not look forward to therapy every week, it gave her a sense that there was something consistent and reliable in her life.

The therapist's respect for her own individuality and her need to express things in her own way and at her own pace, also helped her. It was very important for her not to be pushed.

The themes of her insights as well as her learning to trust her therapist provided a context for further insights at different times about her restrictive interpersonal style, and its difference from a more open one. In this regard, she has insightfully reflected on themes of loneliness, being-in-control, trust, and interpersonal risk. These themes are clarified on an ongoing basis against the felt-sense of difference between the interpersonal styles of avoidance and risk. The ongoing concrete details of her life are clarified in the light of these themes and this provides a foundation for further reflection and action. Such a foundation supports choice.

S5: 27 year old male

The nature of S's insight involved the emergent understanding of a possibility of relating that was more ambiguous than previously: that is, that it was permissible to be and act in a way that was

not only protective of significant women in his life, but more independently assertive as well. This realization also constituted a less restrictive experience of himself. He had previously attempted to adjust to a sense of powerlessness by negatively evaluating feelings and desired intentions that would be significantly assertive. This resulted in a rigid self-image that constituted a 'good' public self and a 'bad' private self. In coming to understand the possibility of a more ambiguous way of relating, he came to experience himself as more powerful, as well as entitled to such power. Some previous feelings of anger and guilt that were co-constituents of his powerlessness were put behind him in the mood of granting and seeking forgiveness.

The insight of a more ambiguous possibility emerged more specifically in the following way:

During a period of approximately six months in psychotherapy, S had come to see a theme of how he lived in a powerless position in relation to significant women in his life. Through discussion, S and his therapist participated in a dialogue which revealed how this theme occurred in the concrete details of his life, in his dreams, and in his concerns. For example, he came to realize how he had interacted with a previous, female boss as if he was a powerless child. This theme of his child-like powerlessness also made sense of a number of other life experiences. He became aware of how, in relation to his present girlfriend, he was afraid that if he expressed himself in a more assertive manner, this would be unacceptable to her and he would lose her. He also became aware that it was not just that he imagined himself to be unacceptable

to others when assertive, but that he could not forgive himself for being unacceptable and doing unpleasing things. He was thus engaged in a self-project that restricted and negatively evaluated independent and assertive self-expression.

At various points in therapy, discussions of dreams helped him to clarify the quality of his existence at the time. In this regard, a dream had been metaphorically understood to depict S in a polarized and dual manner: a 'good guy', that is more public and a 'bad guy' that is potentially destructive, of whom he is ashamed and whom he attempts to deny. In the process of therapy, S had further dreams which assisted in further articulating this disjunctive self-image.

A more ambiguous mode of relating appeared to be achieved in at least two ways: His self-image came to be re-evaluated in a more complex manner; and his perception of women, noticeably his mother, came to be seen in a more complex manner. From the protocol, it appeared that these achievements emerged dialectically rather than sequentially.

A more complex self image:

One of the things which had helped him become less ashamed of his 'bad side' was that he came to value some positive aspects to it. In therapy, this 'bad side' came to be articulated as his 'instinctual life'. The positive valuation of such 'instinctual life' was assisted by the discussion of a dream in which he came to value the importance of smell in his life. During this period,

his therapist challenged him to see if he could take a risk and follow his instincts in a more independent way. Although he initially resisted this challenge, he was subsequently able to move more in this direction. S gave the example of an incident in which he felt justified in hitting someone in a pub. He now feels less compelled to be only a 'nice guy' who fears the power of his more 'instinctive' possibilities.

As these exclusive categories break down, a more flexible self-image emerges which is more able to accommodate possibilities of both acquiescence and aggression. The accommodation of such possibilities describes a more unified and yet ambiguous sense of self.

A more complex perception of women:

In clarifying some themes of his powerlessness in relation to significant women, he had expressed an increasing amount of anger towards women, as well as doubt as to his entitlement to the anger. In discussing this theme further, he came to understand his anger towards women as having had the following legitimate context; that is, that as a child he had felt forced to 'be good' for a powerfully evaluative mother. He then came to understand that a fixed perception of his mother as powerful and evaluative had persisted into adulthood, and that this perception made him unable to see her in a more human and vulnerable light.

Some implications of this fixed perception became vividly

clarified in the discussion of an important dream. In the dream, he had in front of him a mosaic of a woman's face, one side black, and the other, white. This dream provided a graphic metaphor for illustrating both his one-sided perception of women as well as the possibility of a more complex perception. He realized that he was 'creating' the image of a woman in a polarized and disjunctive manner. In the dream, he also saw the image of this woman as a whole and how she was made up of these disjunctive aspects. In the subsequent therapeutic discussion, it was freeing for S to realize his responsibility in continuing to create the image of the woman in a one-sided manner.

Achieving such an ambiguous perception carried through into some actual relationships and further dreams which confirmed the value of such ambiguity. For example, in actual subsequent encounters with his mother, he noticed that she was more vulnerable than he had previously imagined. In both a subsequent dream and in his actual relationship with his girlfriend, he acknowledged that both he and she had done both good and bad things in the past and that both of them had been responsible for this. He further sought and granted forgiveness in this regard. He gives further examples from his life and from his dream-world of how he is more able to see his mother and other significant women as 'more human' and less powerful, with both good and bad aspects.

Apart from the insights into his relatively powerless relationships, he feels that the fact that his therapist functioned as a 'male role-model' helped to give him permission to take responsibility for more personal power.

S6: 44 year old female

The nature of S's insight involved a growing understanding of her own agency in perceiving significant intimate relationships within an expectation of threat and loss. In a therapeutic situation she increasingly came to clarify the context of such an expectation: that is, her own manner of presence as fearful and insecure, and her historical situation as threatening regarding the possibility of successful interpersonal closeness. The thematization of self and world in this way increasingly changed an experience of being overwhelmed by a global, unthematized sense of insecurity, into a more intelligible experience in which her own manner of presence became an issue. This increasing recollection of her own manner of presence raised the possibility of a dimension of her existence which was not necessarily inevitable, introducing an element of personal freedom. An indication of questioning her characteristic expectations occurred when S understood a recent dream to indicate the possibility of a different interpersonal destiny.

In more specific terms, S's understanding emerged and freed her in the following way:

S entered therapy after having heard that her youngest son, who she had left in another country to continue his university studies, had left university. She was confused and worried. S described her confusion and worry to her therapist in the form of a metaphor: "It is like looking in a mirror and I can't see

anything". S further described her experience of the situation as a "horrible feeling", that her one safe relationship had crashed and suddenly did not exist. She had also felt insecure when she heard that this son had started a relationship with a girl and that this prevented him from being able to visit S.

Her youngest son had been a very supportive figure in S's life. She had been divorced from her husband when this son was eleven and an elder son was fourteen. Previous to hearing about her son dropping out of university, she had believed that she had no feeling of insecurity about him (contrary to her relationship with her elder son). This most recent experience shook her belief that she had a secure relationship with her younger son. She was overwhelmed by these events and had not expected to find herself as unable to cope as she felt. She sought therapy because she was afraid of being overwhelmed by her situation. Before therapy, she was present to her situation in a powerfully emotive, yet unthematized manner. She was confused about the extent of her feelings. Her initial request to her therapist was that she would like her 'coping mechanisms' to be brought back into place.

In psychotherapy, her own manner of presence became an increasing focus of enquiry. She began to realize that it was not as much her son that she was worried about but herself. In enquiring into the meaning of her experience, she realized that she could not cope with a feeling of rejection, and a feeling of 'suddenly being irrelevant'.

Articulating more of her own manner of presence enabled her to become more specific about a previously less differentiated

experience: She realized that she was worried about her son in some respects and worried about herself in some respects. This helped her clarify her motives for wanting to go and see him and she became more resolute in this regard.

In acknowledging her own fear of rejection, themes from her history emerged as an increasingly intelligible context for these feelings. She realized that a pervasive angry attitude towards her ex-husband had obscured a 'huge grief' about what had happened to her and her children. Acknowledging such grief helped her in that she did not like to see herself as the 'sort of person who is always angry'. In opening up the theme of her grief, she began to experience her self-image in a more complex and positive light. Although she still saw her ex-husband in an angry way, she realized that her grief was a more central issue in her existence. The de-centering of her anger as a central determinant of her self-image was metaphorically expressed in the following way: "Behind the walls is not an overwhelming anger that is going to make me kill someone".

The articulation of the theme of loss further gathered together her present experience with that of of her history. Within this context, she spoke of the pain of a difficult relationship with her elder son, as well as the gruelling nature of her earlier divorce. She also remembered a dream that had occurred when her youngest son was small, which illustrated a great fear that she could lose him.

Her own agency in expecting loss appeared to become most explicit when discussing a dream which occurred after therapy began.

This dream was understood to show her another possibility. In discussing this dream, S came to realize that she had always expected unfortunate circumstances to hamper her relationships with her children, and that it did not necessarily have to be like that. The dream illustrated a more tranquil and accessible passage to pursuing her contact with her children. The dream and its discussion had a calming effect on S as her circumstance was portrayed in a more hopeful way.

This image of difference from her previous expectations helped S to articulate the nature of her previous expectations more clearly. She realized that she had come to expect significant relationships to be very painful, to be upsetting and to be easily threatened. Such nuances of meaning helped her understand her present feelings regarding her youngest son better: that she had 'catastrophized' a potential change in their relationship.

S's understanding about her expectations has freed her in that she sees her future in a more ambiguous manner: It does not inevitably involve the "storminess" and threat of painful and lost significant relationships.

The therapeutic situation was important for S as it was frightening for her to face the emotional implications of her present circumstances alone. She had initially been afraid to face some of these emotions and she was relieved to find that it wasn't as overwhelming for her as she had imagined it would be. Her therapist appeared to understand this fear and this helped her as he did not push her into them.

S7: 56 year old female

The nature of S's insight involved the recollection of her own mode of relating in such a way that she was able to value and confirm another way of relating to significant others. Coming to value and confirm another way of relating emerged in the following way: S became increasingly aware of her own role in perpetuating a significant, difficult interpersonal relationship. This awareness occurred hand-in-hand with an increased understanding of her role from the other's point of view and the effect of S's behaviour on the other. The theme of S's own criticalness, angry impatience and non-acceptance of the other was explicated between therapist and client. Further discourse and self-reflection served to reveal motives for this way of being that were understood to have intelligibly arisen in response to her historical situation with another significant other. In locating her motive in this broader context, she came to increasingly question the appropriateness of her own feelings and expectations.

Throughout this entire process she began to see a new possibility of relating, which, when carried out, yielded positive results. Such a different way of relating gathered most power when S understood the legitimate source of her anger and criticalness. This appeared to free her perceptions and expectations in the present relationship from its previous preoccupations. Such preoccupations, until recollected and cared for in some way, appear to have lived emotionally and behaviourally in an unquestioned and problematic manner.

In more specific terms, S's understanding emerged and freed her in the following way:

Before coming to therapy, S had been concerned about her relationship with her youngest daughter. She had experienced her daughter as having withdrawn from her in significant ways. S wanted a better relationship with her daughter as she would leave home in a year's time. S entered therapy after an angry outburst in which one of her two elder daughters suggested the need for it.

In therapy S discussed how she had often been irritated with her youngest daughter and that she would impatiently attempt to change her daughter's behaviour in a more desired direction. S felt that her daughter had never been disrespectful of S although the daughter had once indicated that she was frightened of her mother's tendency to become angry and impatient.

In discussing this relationship between herself and her daughter, S began to thematize her own role in this problematic relationship. As this emerged, a greater understanding and empathy for her daughter also occurred:

In retrospect, S realized that she had never given a lot of thought to her daughter's sensitivity, how she was feeling or what she was wanting to communicate. In discussing one particular interaction, S came to realize that her daughter had been attempting to communicate a meaning in an indirect way that S had not previously perceived or acknowledged. She had listened to her in an excessively literal way and this had obscured an important possibility for communication. A theme of S's own

impatience and readiness to criticize her daughter began to emerge.

S characterized herself as having had an authoritarian style of relating in her family: "What I say, goes". She acknowledged that she had often been angry and critical and did not give praise easily to her youngest daughter. S would often feel guilty about an angry outburst or a critical interaction.

S came to understand her daughter's 'withdrawnness' in this context: that she was inhibiting her daughter's expressiveness and individuality by means of her critical and impatient behaviour.

As this thematization of their relationship emerged, an increasing focus on S's own motives and feelings occurred. S had a number of interrelated realizations which made sense of these motives and feelings.

In considering her own manner of presence, S came to attribute her criticism of and impatience with her daughter to a fear that her daughter was similar to S's husband in ways that S disapproved. S talked about some major regrets concerning her marriage. She felt that for many years she privately harboured a great deal of anger and frustration about this relationship and that she had been helpless to do much about it. In contextualizing her feelings more fully, S was able to perceive her daughter in a way that was more separate from these feelings.

Such differentiation appeared to serve as a perspective which

helped S to inhibit her own impatience with her daughter to some degree. She gives an example of how inhibiting her impatience in such a manner allowed her to understand her daughter more deeply. Such an interaction confirmed the value of inhibiting her impatient behaviour. S had been excited to notice that since behaving with less criticism and more encouragement, her daughter has become more self-motivated and confident in her life and work. S gives a number of examples in this regard in which she contrasts an encouraging interpersonal style with that of a critical one.

S feels that what was important about psychotherapy was that she has come to question her own emotional reactions in a similar way to the way her therapist would. This appears to have added a perspective in which she more often considers the appropriate context of her feelings and this helps her in differentiating her behaviour in a more conscious manner. Such differentiated behaviour has become more valued and confirmed.

S8: 29 year old female

The nature of S's insight involved the understanding that a different and more personally valued interpersonal style was possible for her. Before psychotherapy, S had already been aware that she engaged in a repetitive style of relating which brought her guilt and despair. The gradual and often painful achievement of a different relationship with her therapist, opened up an alternative perspective which helped her to retrospectively clarify the nature of her previous problematic interpersonal

style. In this regard, the thematization of the motive that was implicit in her previous behaviour was of particular therapeutic value. It was a great relief for S to realize that this motive could be positively valued, but more essentially, that its behavioural intention did not necessarily require her problematic interpersonal style. She could value and carry forward her motive in a different way.

In already living to some degree this different possibility with her therapist, S implicitly experienced an interpersonal situation in which there was a less deterministic relationship between her motive and her behavioural intentions. The understanding of such a relationship constituted a more flexible and complex self-image that was less behaviourally compulsive, and consequently, less guilt-ridden and despairing.

In more specific terms, S experienced a different possibility and a greater self-understanding in the following way:

In psychotherapy S came to retrospectively thematize a problematic style of relating: She had felt guilty about the way she would 'manipulate' women to become sexually and emotionally involved with her. She would characteristically enter into an interpersonal relationship with a woman in which the achievement of intimacy was perceived as a power-struggle to be fought and won. Every time she went into a new relationship, she would expect this repetitive pattern of relating to re-occur. She felt that she had been behaving in a manner that she did not like and did not understand. She also could not see any other way of pursuing her motives at that time. Such a divided and compulsive

experience of herself reduced her sense of self-esteem.

When S entered psychotherapy, she experienced her therapist to be in a more powerful position than herself and doubted whether a good relationship with her was possible. She now remembers how she had wanted to know about some of the therapist's own interpersonal failures in order to reduce the perceived imbalance of power.

S gradually became aware of how her attempts to relate to her therapist were similar to the way she attempted to relate to other significant women peers. S experienced a great deal of psychological pain and preoccupation about the therapeutic relationship. S realizes in retrospect, that the pain involved her awareness that her attempts to gain intimacy in her characteristic ways could not work in this situation. She was greatly frustrated and at times felt that she did not know how to carry on. In the initial stages, S had not been aware that she was being 'manipulative'. As the theme of her way of relating became more explicit between them, S became preoccupied with this question, especially now that it was being demonstrated in the present therapeutic relationship. She developed a hopeless feeling of inevitability about her behaviour. It was also very painful for S to be exposed to her therapist, knowing that her therapist was also aware of her so-called 'destructive behaviour'. Although she disliked herself during this phase of therapy, she persisted. In restrospect, she feels that some kind of hope for a different possibility must have sustained her.

An increased understanding of S's motive for this behaviour

occurred after S had begun experiencing a different relationship with her therapist and the theme of 'care' became more explicit.

Although her therapist never explicitly said that she cared for S, somehow a sense of confidence grew that her therapist cared for her. A feeling emerged that her therapist cared about what she did and what she was. This way of caring helped S to understand that caring did not necessarily have to be in the way that S wanted it. It could be achieved in other ways. Acknowledgement of her therapist's care is a fairly recent phenomenon. S only gradually came to accept this form of care after a period of confusion and painful struggle in the relationship. S also realized that she had come to care for her therapist even though her therapist had not tangibly demonstrated her care in a way that had previously been necessary for S. This feeling of a different form of mutual caring constituted for S, a sense of victory over her previous interpersonal style. Insight into this new possibility involved the guilt-freeing realization that getting someone to care for her did not have to be done in a manipulative, power-seeking manner. S could not fully understand these themes while their vicissitudes were being worked out in the therapeutic relationship. It had only been in the last three weeks that the themes had become retrospectively clarified. S now feels on the same level as her therapist and feels good that she has achieved this sense of mutual care without having to conduct herself in ways that would make her feel guilty.

In thematizing this new possibility, as well as her previous characteristic style, S understood a common motive to both experiences: that is, the desire to achieve a sense of being

cared for. Having thematized her desire for care, S realized that she had previously been fighting for something that she had not fully understood. Her motive had been present mostly as an unthematized compulsion to achieve a form of interpersonal involvement she could feel some degree of control over. S further understood that this motive could be fulfilled without the inevitability of her previous power-struggle. This realization constituted a sense of hope that her previous interpersonal pattern was not inevitable. It was a great feeling of relief for S to understand that what she wanted did not necessarily have to be achieved in a way that would 'bring the other person down'.

Although therapy had been a painful process, S now values the pain as a worthwhile price to pay for learning about a form of care that was less dependent on strategy. The appropriation of such a possibility into her interpersonal projects has resulted in a more positive self-evaluation with greater optimism about the future.

4.2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE KIND OF THERAPEUTIC SELF-INSIGHT THAT CARRIES A GREATER SENSE OF FREEDOM

4.2.1 Style

After describing therapeutic self-insight as a dialectical movement of understanding and experience that is not as repetitively and restrictively theme-bound as before, ten characteristics of therapeutic self-insight are thematized. Although the order of these themes is presented in a logical

manner, they did not necessarily occur in such a linear sequence. The themes are to be properly read to imply one another, and a re-reading of the individual situated structures would demonstrate that these qualities of therapeutic self-insight arose in different sequences in different contexts.

A general description of each of the ten themes will be italicized and followed by individual examples from the situated structures which serve to clarify some of the specific nuances of each theme. Nine out of the ten characteristics occurred in all eight individual protocols. The theme about 'motive' (eighth theme), occurred in six individual protocols. The chapter ends with a summary of the General Structure.

4.2.2 Description

Therapeutic self-insight is constituted by a series of interrelated understandings about a personally restrictive mode of being. Such understanding emerges dialectically with a different and freer engagement with the world. The different engagement with the world confirms and validates the subject's thematic understanding of both his/her restrictions and the possibilities for living that they have been obscuring and, further, provides the experiential context for further self-insight.

Psychotherapy sometimes first directly facilitates a different engagement with the world (through the concrete relationship with the therapist) and then becomes a vital context for the thematic understanding of restrictions and possibilities.

At other times, the joint participation in conversation leads to

thematic understandings which support a different and freer engagement with the world.

Psychotherapy is thus a situation where language and the concrete therapeutic relationship make differences through the dialectics of understanding and experience. A difference in experience calls for a difference in understanding; a difference in thematic understanding calls for a different engagement with the world.

Changes in the subjects' living thus sometimes occurred before the thematic understanding of such changes. In these situations, self-insight served to value and empower such changes within the broader context of his/her life by articulating their characteristics and implications. This made the changes part of the subjects' self-image and thus an abiding reference for further living.

In cases where thematic understanding facilitated a freer engagement with the world, the power of self-insight was constituted by the awareness of choice where a less determined self and/or world was realized.

The series of interrelated understandings which cohere to make up therapeutic self-insight reveal a number of central characteristics:

1. *The thematic description of a problematic interpersonal situation is elaborated. Such a description reflects a*

greater awareness of both self and other, as well as the affective and behavioural qualities of the relationship. Memory, feeling and thematic description increasingly cohere to make sense of his/her experience.

S1 increasingly described how he characteristically felt ashamed, clumsy, or foolish in the presence of his mother. S2 thematized a sense of self-pity with regard to a failed marital relationship. S3 experienced a characteristic negative emotional reaction to her father which only became understood with the recovery of a crucial memory. S4 realized that she had the need to emulate her elder sister. S5 talked of how he had interacted with a female boss as if he was a powerless child. S6 gradually articulated a confused and overwhelmed feeling to refer to a more thematized and differentiated understanding, that is, a fear that she would lose the one safe relationship that she possessed. S7 increasingly clarified the nature of her relationship with her daughter, her daughter's withdrawal and her own critical attitude. S8 explored a sense of guilt about the way she manipulated women to become sexually and emotionally involved with them.

2. *There is a progressive articulation of a repetitive central theme which characterizes, not only this particular relationship, but other significant relationships as well. The articulation of this central theme is often co-constituted by historical events and relationships which provide a strong emotional quality to the theme.*

S1 realized how a characteristic theme of 'expecting to be hurt or critically regarded' occurred in ambiguous situations such as when a stranger walked towards him. S2 thematized how she would 'generally feel victimized by everybody and everything' and recalled a number of past events within the context of this theme. S3 thematized a sense of betrayal and mistrust, not only in relation to her father, but in relation to other significant men as well. The strength of this mistrust was crucially informed by traumatic historical events. S4 became aware of how a desire to break free of a sense of dependence on others occurred not only in her relationship with her sister, but also showed itself in relation to her therapist and friend. S5 thematized a repetitive theme of being afraid to assert himself with significant women in his life and how such theme was historically informed by a powerfully evaluative mother. S6 related a characteristic sensitivity to interpersonal loss to an abiding sorrow about the effects of an earlier divorce. S7 came to understand her characteristic tendency to become impatient and easily angered, to be related to a feeling of helplessness and regret about her marriage. S8 thematized a characteristic power struggle in the way she attempted to achieve intimacy, and painfully realized how this theme was occurring in her relationship with her therapist.

3. *Events in the subjects' life, from memory, dreams and present interactions, present themselves within the organizational context of the central theme, and provide a sense of detailed credibility to the emerging theme. The theme is progressively and mutually articulated with the description*

of dreams, emotional qualities, and typical behavioural interactions. Each description is recognized to coherently qualify and clarify the nature of the central theme.

S1 realizes further implications of the theme when he discusses how he attempts to please others in order to avoid criticism. After remembering further incidents within the context of this theme, he characterizes himself as being 'obsessed with perfection'. S2 used the metaphor of the 'good girl' to describe herself. Other implications of this theme were articulated: she became aware that she was longing for a strong supportive person to take control of her life and let all be done for her. A further metaphor of 'dependency' became articulated. Details of memories of her ex-husband were recalled within the context of this theme. In thematizing her 'need for being guarded', S3 came to understand further details of her life, such as her anorexia and her negative attitude towards her body. For S4, the contrasting interpersonal themes of avoidance and risk became metaphors which helped clarify behavioural details such as her tendency to withdraw and her progressive attempts to stand up for herself. A dream helped S5 to thematize a personal metaphor for his disjunctive way of being: a public 'good guy' and a private and potentially destructive 'bad guy'. S6 remembered a dream that had occurred when her youngest son was small which illustrated a great fear that she would lose him. She also came to thematize her fear of loss in terms of other implications such as a feeling of 'suddenly being irrelevant'. S7 came to characterize her interpersonal style of relating in her family as 'What I say,

goes'. She discussed specific implications of her style. For example, she came to realize in retrospect, that she had never given a lot of thought to her daughter's sensitivity, how she was feeling or what she was wanting to communicate. As S8 came to characterize her interpersonal style as manipulative, she became increasingly concerned about some of the specific implications of this style, such as the quality of intimacy that it produced.

4. *Intrinsic to the articulation of the central theme is a description of its value. The implications of the theme are usually understood to be restrictive to the subjects' living. In cases where the positive value of the theme is also articulated, its restrictive qualities are understood to outweigh its positive qualities. There is a desire for change and difference.*

S1 became aware of the inflexibility of his expectations when he responded to strangers in a characteristic way. S2 became aware that trying to please her therapist restricted her ability to reveal herself in a more honest and complete manner. Although S3 came to feel more entitled to her guarded interpersonal style, she also came to value being unguarded in some important situations, such as with her boyfriend. S4 came to realize that she was not as independent as she wanted to be. She realized how an avoidant interpersonal style restricted a more independent mode of being. S5 became aware of how the disjunction between his 'good' public self and 'bad' private self reduced him to a child-like powerlessness in relation to significant

women. S6 became aware of how her sensitivity to loss restricted her sense of optimism regarding the future of interpersonal relationships. S7 was aware of how her critical interpersonal style often made her feel guilty and she came to understand how it restricted her ability to empathically listen to her daughter. S8 had felt guilty and helpless about her 'manipulative' way of achieving intimacy, and was aware of the restrictive power of this theme to reduce her sense of self-esteem.

5. *There is an emergent understanding of the subjects own role in co-constituting the destiny of the repetitive theme. Such increased experience of his/her own agency sometimes involved an awareness of the problematic implications of his/her behaviour, but more centrally, involved an awareness of a characteristic expectation which informed his/her behaviour.*

S1 realized that, not only would he expect others to criticize or reject him, but that he was actively ready to blame or criticize himself. S2 became aware that she actively tries to seek approval, avoids conflict situations and tries to protect other people. Although S3 came to understand her entitlement to her guarded interpersonal style, she was aware of herself as being actively 'arrogant' and 'defensive'. S4 became aware that she perpetuated her dependence by the avoidance of personal assertion. A dream helped S5 to realize that he was 'creating' the image of a woman in a polarized and disjunctive manner. S6, also through the discussion of a dream, came to realize that she was active in always expecting unfortunate circumstances to

hamper her relationships with her children. S7 became aware of how she listened to her daughter in an excessively literal way and that this obscured an important possibility for communication. She became more generally aware of how she actively inhibited her daughter's expressiveness. S8 increasingly clarified how she was actively fighting to be in control of intimate possibilities. The nature of her active agency was clarified further by the thematization of her motive.

6. *The thematization of an abiding self-image which informs behaviour and expectations is articulated. Such self-image, before it is articulated, usually functions as a pre-reflective way of being. The self-image in its unarticulated form may thus be more accurately referred to as a self-project in that it functions actively in guiding the subjects' concerns and behaviour. In both the therapeutic situation, as well as in the subjects' life circumstances, the necessity or inevitability of this self-image is questioned. Such questioning constitutes an experience of choice.*

S1 realized that he lived as if he deserved criticism. His discussions and relationship with his therapist helped him question whether he indeed deserved criticism or not. He realized that he did not have to passively accept all criticism and this constituted an experience of choice. As he questioned the inevitability of his characteristic and usually implicit self-evaluation, further details from his life presented themselves and validated the existence of such

a self-image. S2 progressively questioned the inevitability of her 'good girl' self-project by risking other ways of being with her therapist. She was at times 'emotional, disjointed, grabbing at things here and there, and not coherent and logical'. S3's abiding evaluation of herself as somehow being unworthy began to be questioned after she remembered the source of her shame. S4 came to understand that there was a disjunction between her view of herself and actual way of living; she discovered that she was more interpersonally dependent than she had realized. The ambiguity of whether she was independent or dependent became a vital context for self-enquiry and more choiceful living. S5 came to question whether his 'bad' side was indeed bad when he discussed a dream which helped him to understand his self-image in a more complex manner: his 'bad' side also contained the value and vitality of instinctual life. S6 was able to question her self-image as the 'sort of person who is always angry' when she discussed her grief. S7's increasing awareness of herself as being inappropriately impatient helped her to inhibit her behavioural reactions and begin to earn a self-image of greater self-control and empathy. S8's view of herself as being inevitably and compulsively manipulative became questioned as her motives became clearer and as she was able to actualize a different possibility in relation to her therapist.

7. *A more complex self-image is realized in which the previous expectations and behaviour are less inevitable. The actualization of a more complex self-image also intrinsically co-constitutes a more ambiguous world where less theme-bound*

perception becomes possible. The felt-freedom of such complexity and ambiguity is acknowledged. Such felt-freedom refers to the affective quality of experiencing other profiles of self and world that are less informed by the previous restrictive theme. Sometimes the anxiety of such ambiguity is also highlighted as the price to be negotiated for less theme-bound perceptions.

S1 became aware that learning to defend himself against criticism involves a process of finding the balance between being over-assertive and self-demeaning. He also experienced a degree of anxiety in negotiating this more ambiguous relationship with the world. S2 came to accept that she could sometimes be a 'witch' as well as a 'good girl'. S3 became increasingly aware that she could be both legitimately guarded as well as trusting in different situations. Such a possibility described an emerging self-image that was more flexible than previously. It was a relief for her to let down her guard and cry in front of her boyfriend at times. After committing herself to a less withdrawn life-style, S4 was relieved to find out that the ambiguity of interpersonal situations was less frightening than she had imagined. She realized a self-image that was prepared to fight as well as withdraw. S5 came to feel less compelled to protect others from his 'bad side' when he came to re-evaluate this self-image to also contain sources of vitality and assertive power. This more complex self-evaluation enabled him to be both acquiescent and aggressive in different situations. The achievement of a more complex self-image also co-constituted a more complex perception of significant women. He became

not only attuned to their powerful possibilities, but became forgivingly aware of their human vulnerability as well. S6 came to perceive the future of significant intimate relationships in a more ambiguous manner. They did not inevitably have to imply the 'storminess', pain and loss that they had done in the past. S7 came to perceive her daughter not only in a critical and impatient manner, but could perceive her in an empathic way as well. This less fixed perception of a significant other also constituted a growing self-image of greater flexibility. S8 experienced a sense of victory and optimism when she realized that a caring relationship could be attained in a different way to her previous attempts. The world of intimate relationships was not just a battle to be fought, but could also be a gift to accept.

8. *A less general but notable characteristic is that subjects came to positively value the motive that informed their previous interpersonal style and self-project in such a way that the motive could be expressed in a different manner. This helped the subject to achieve a sense of continuity with his/her previous self-projects, but within a freer and more valued behavioural context.*

S2 came to feel less ashamed of her longing for a strong, supportive person when her expression of affection for her therapist did not scare him away. Such a re-evaluation of her motive has enabled S1 to relate in a different way to her father; a way that is less informed by shame. S3 had felt 'stupid' and 'bitchy' for feeling an 'unreasonable' degree of

anger towards her father. As she came to understand the source of this feeling, she re-evaluated a motive of mistrust within a more legitimate context. By feeling more entitled to her mistrust, she was able to direct this motive in a more differentiated and conscious manner. Whereas he had previously evaluated aggressive motives as being part of his 'bad, private side', S5 came to re-evaluate these motives within a more positive context. In re-articulating these motives as his 'instinctual life', S5 was able to support his assertive possibilities in a less ambivalent manner. S6's motive to avoid painful interpersonal loss, became more understood as an intelligible response to grievous situations in her life. In valuing such intelligibility, S6 was able to appropriate the past in such a way that it did not form the only determinant for future expectations. S7 came to understand the appropriate context for her anger and impatience. In contextualizing regretful and helpless feelings about her marriage, S7 was able to perceive her daughter in a way that was more separate from these feelings. Her motive to 'want to change things' became understandable within a particular context (ie. in relation to her husband), but misdirected within another (ie. in relation to her daughter). It was a great relief for S8 to discover that what she wanted, that is, an experience of intimacy, was not in itself bad. She came to differentiate between the positive value of her motive and the negative value of her compulsive behaviour. S1 and S4 did not appear to arrive at an explicit thematization of the positive value of an existing motive. Perhaps S1's 'desire to please' could become more explicitly valued when he has won more freedom

from its oppressive qualities. Perhaps S4 could find a way of appropriating her need for 'dependence' on others when she has reassured herself more about her independent qualities.

9. *The different and freer possibility for self-understanding and engagement is valued and confirmed by actual experiences in the subjects' life. The specific qualities of such an experience often provide a lived context for further refined understandings of the central restrictive theme. The central theme appears to be most clarified when it is described both in its restrictive qualities as well as in terms of the freer possibilities for living that it obscures. Thus, as the freer possibilities become more clearly thematized, the restrictive qualities become retrospectively clarified. Such thematic refinement of restrictions and possibilities provides an emerging, meaningful reference for living towards the future that is more differentially responsive than the subjects' previous theme-bound modes of living.*

For S1, a warm and affectionate relationship with his girlfriend and girlfriend's mother further helped him to question the theme of whether he deserved criticism. Also, after actively and successfully defending himself against his mother's reprimands, S1 further developed arguments that could justify himself against criticism. As a result of this experience, he came to realize that he was 'too eager' to accept reprimands from other people. A different way of being with her therapist (not just a 'good girl' but emotional, disjointed, grabbing at things) required S2 to reflect on the significance of these experiences between

therapy sessions. Also, after becoming angry with her niece, she realized a further implication of her theme-bound perceptions, that is, that her anger was not necessarily as destructive as she imagined. When S3 heard more about her father's problem-drinking, the understanding of their relationship became more complex. She was further able to refine the themes of blameworthiness, anger and guilt. S4, after having realized how much she tried to emulate her sister, talked to her sister in a more independently challenging manner. Her sister began to treat her as more of an adult and this helped S4 to further value and confirm the themes of her insights. A subsequent fight with her sister confirmed to S4 that she was more able to defend herself and this facilitated further insights about her tendency to withdraw. After realizing that the 'instincts' in his 'bad side' could also be a positive source of assertion and vitality, S5 took a risk in expressing his aggression in a justified situation. This experience confirmed the value of his insight. After having achieved a more ambiguous perception of women, S5 noticed in actual encounters with his mother, how she was more vulnerable than he had previously imagined. Some implications of this vulnerability became a subject for further insight (for example, the theme of mutual forgiveness). Having experienced a different possibility in her dream-world (of a more tranquil and hopeful contact with her children), S6 came to have further insight into her own restrictive expectations. This detail confirms Boss's (1958) assertion that one's dream-life and waking-life are both proper realms of human existence. The successful inhibition of her impatience with her daughter resulted in an experience

which confirmed S7's growing insight about her own restrictive interpersonal style. Her daughter's response to her inhibitions resulted in further insights about the possibilities for relating that had been obscured. The value of S7's attempts at a different mode of engagement were also confirmed by her daughter becoming more self-motivated. The experience of a different possibility of caring interaction enabled S8 to refine her understanding about her motives and their behavioural expression.

10. *The quality of the therapeutic relationship that is particularly valued by the subject, is a description of the way in which the therapist or therapeutic situation is different from the restrictive qualities of the repetitive theme.*

For S1, the nonjudgemental nature of the therapeutic situation was different from his expectation of criticism. For S2, the non-directiveness of the therapist was different from her desire for guidance and dependence. For S3, it was important that the therapist was a woman whom she could trust. This was different from her experience of betrayal by significant men in her life. For S4, the regularity of therapy and the consistency of the therapist was different from her fear that interpersonal life was unpredictable and to be avoided. Also, the therapist's respect for her 'own way' was different from her fear that others would perpetuate her dependence on them. S5's therapist functioned as a male role-model who encouraged S5 to take responsibility for his assertive power. This was different from a mother who made

him feel powerless. S6 emphasized the importance of having the security of another person present in the face of overwhelming emotions. This was a different experience from her fear of being left alone. For S7, her therapist's active questioning of her motives was different to her own reactivity and lack of self-enquiry. Although her therapist's frustration of S8's power struggle was painful, it was different from her usual theme of winning intimacy in this compulsive and guilt-ridden way.

4.2.3 Summary of General Description

The kind of therapeutic self-insight that carries with it a greater sense of freedom is constituted by its ability to:

1. descriptively thematize the quality of a problematic and significant self-other relationship that was less thematized, yet intelligibly embedded in unclarified emotional existence;
2. progressively articulate the quality of a related central theme which links and makes sense of various historical details, emotional qualities, and characteristic interpersonal interactions in the person's life. Metaphors and dreams assist in such discovery/creativity;
3. validate the credibility of the emerging theme by realizing its power to organize further dreams, memories and ongoing behaviour within a coherent context. This and the previous dimension are a mutually supportive and dialectical process;
4. understand the restrictive quality of being bound to the profiles of the theme;

5. thematize a level of personal agency and responsibility in perpetuating the restrictive qualities of the theme-bound existence. Such agency usually takes the form of realizing how personal expectations limit perception and behaviour;

6. thematize characteristic expectations about the world and evaluations about oneself into a coherent perspective. These thematizations may be described as a self-image (in relation to oneself) or self-project (in relation to one's engagements in the world). The necessity or inevitability of this self-image/project is questioned and constitutes an experience of choice;

7. articulates and actualizes, or actualizes and articulates a more complex self-image/project in which the freedom of greater ambiguity is experienced;

8. achieves a sense of continuity with one's previous, restrictive mode of being by finding a positive value in its motives and desires;

9. actively support freer engagement with the world. Experiences of such engagement, in turn, serve to confirm the value of the new self-image/project. The new experience also serves as a reference for further clarification of restrictions and possibilities. The future as 'potential' becomes empowered.

The difference from the restrictive interpersonal theme that the client experiences in relationship with the therapist provides one important lived context for the validation and support of the emerging themes. The relationship is an 'anchor' that also gives a 'foothold' to a new possibility.

These qualities of self-insight and a less theme-bound (freer) engagement with the world are mutually supportive. The 'cycle' can either begin with a freer engagement (achieved in the concrete relationship with the therapist) that calls for self-insight, or it can begin with self-insight that supports a freer engagement with the world.

Interrogating my emotional existence in the presence of another
I see more of you and me

In the light of other times, situations, and people
I give this light a name

That now helps me remember
another specific time, or was it a dream?

And this light that has a name
pins me down, would close my eyes.

For so long
that even were this light to lose its power,
I will pin me down, will close my eyes.

The name of this bleak light has named me
so finally, I question my name
my unidimensional grasp

and my name becomes part of a bigger name,
strange yet familiar

which mirrors a more coloured world
with in-between hue.

Yet something continues of my old name,
not in form, but valued in spirit,
modifiable forms, centrally thrust.

Changing movement of past into future,
future sees the past, that *changing* mother.

Thank difference for a difference,
for separating a space through which to see.

Let's turn the wheel and look again.

CHAPTER 5

RELATED EXISTENTIAL THEMES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It could be said that the existential-phenomenological tradition in philosophy and psychology has been dedicated to the remembrance of the inter-relatedness of human phenomena. Thus it is not surprising that a qualitative-psychological study of therapeutic self-insight should yield descriptions that imply and deepen our enquiry into related concerns. This chapter attempts to forge a further context for the discussion of the results by clarifying the related concerns that have been suggested by the general structure. These concerns include the interpersonal dimension, temporality, human freedom, emotional existence, and the existential status of language.

The chapter is essentially informed by the writings of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Buber, as well as those authors who have fruitfully carried their work further. Although there are important differences of emphasis as well as areas of contention amongst these thinkers, it is deemed possible to describe broad existential themes that are coherent enough to provide an enriching context for the results of the present study.

5.2 INTERPERSONAL EXISTENCE OPENS A SENSE OF HUMANITY AND PLACE: CONSCIENCE DESCRIBES OUR TASK

One of the implications of the term 'being-in-the-world', is that we always find ourselves already in situations. In eradicating Cartesian dualism, existential-phenomenology describes the fundamental intentionality of human existence: the definition of self is also always a description of the contours of the relationships which are there for us. The term 'there' describes the domain in which human existence occurs: not in him/herself but *with* the things and eventfulness of the world. Such 'thereness' can be analysed to contain dimensions such as temporality, spatiality, interpersonal existence, freedom and other fundamental qualities which provide the 'terms' of our existential situation.

The interpersonal dimension describes one of the primary co-constituents of a human situation. This section will attempt to explicate the role of the interpersonal dimension in the constitution of self-understanding.

5.2.1 Martin Buber: To experience one's humanity

In his radically interpersonal ontology, Buber finds the human situation primarily as human with human:

> "I am there if I am *there*, and where this 'there' is, is always determined less by myself than by the presence of this [other] being which changes its form and appearance" (Buber in Friedman 1964, p.224).

This perspective does not describe self and other as encapsulated entities that merely influence one another. Rather, in the very depth of one's 'ownness', the other is there. The 'space' of human existence in this conception emerges most fully in the light of interpersonal existence.

> "Human life and humanity come into being in genuine meetings. There man learns not merely that he is limited by man, cast upon his own finitude, but his own relation to truth is heightened by the other's relation to the same truth - different in accordance with his individuation, and destined to take seed and grow differently. Men need, and it is granted to them, to confirm one another in their individual being by means of genuine meetings. But beyond this they need, and it is granted to them, to see that the truth, which the soul gains by its struggle, is flashing up for the others, the brothers, in a different way, and equally confirmed" (Buber, 1966, p.47).

In finding the meaning of the personal *in* the interpersonal, Buber explicates how the experience of one's humanity is deepened. There is a tension *within* the interpersonal dimension which is sufficient to account for truly human development. This tension involves the dimensions of sameness and difference.

The human capacity to experience the essence of the meaning of interpersonal relation refers to our ability to experience another as one who is also open to the world like oneself:

> "When I confront a human being as my You and speak the basic word I-You to him, then he is no thing among things nor does he consist of things" (Buber 1970, p.59).

To regard another like oneself in this way, is to acknowledge a 'kinship', a relatedness, that confirms the essence of both self and other. Such confirmation describes an event in which you and I find our essential humanity neither in the social nor in the

personal domain, but in the unique 'space' of the 'between':

> "In the most powerful moments of dialogic, where in truth 'deep calls unto deep', it becomes unmistakably clear that it is not the wand of the individual or the social, but of a third that draws the circle around the happening. On the far side of the subjective, on this side of the objective, on the narrow edge, where I and Thou meet, there is the realm of 'between'" (Buber, 1966, p.55).

Such acknowledgement of human relatedness is also an acknowledgement of difference, that is, that the other, in being of a kind like oneself, also has his/her own world and situation. Acknowledgement of such difference provides us with an experience of personal vulnerability, that is, that we have to take the perspective of the other into account just as they have to take ours:

> "No man is able simply to confirm himself. He may be able to do without the admiration of crowds but he cannot do without the silent dialogue, often internalized within himself, through which he places his efforts within the context of a mutual contact with what is not himself" (Friedman, 1964, p.167).

The dual experience of sameness and difference reveals a human and vulnerable self which is always at stake:

> [We are dealing] "...with something which reconstitutes itself and recreates itself all over again upon each human encounter" (Marcel, 1967, p.43).

The interpersonal dimension, in being the source of an experience of personal humanity, and thus validity, has also been shown to be the source of vulnerability and thus of potential violence. In explicating the 'I-it' possibility of human relating, Buber has shown how our possibility of confirming each other in both 'kinship' and difference, can be distorted when we objectify one another. You can become a distant object, an 'it', for me when I

am unwilling to take your point of view into account, and thus make you merely an extension of my wishes. On the other hand, when I am subject to your narcissism in this way, I become fixed and may live or feel as the way you have imprisoned me to some degree. Self-definition is thus partially subject to the defining power, humanizing or objectifying, that the other can give. In a humanizing encounter, one gives the other both his/her kinship and a permission to be different. In an objectifying encounter, the other becomes merely a subject of one's 'category' or 'diagnosis' - an 'it' which loses co-constitutive power.

For Buber, the 'there' of between human and human, constitutes a 'space' where the dual experience of sameness and difference can either be embodied and lead to a mutual validating of authentic humanity, or it can be truncated and lead to the violation of such a possibility. In actuality, we seem to participate in both modalities all the time, and our experience of ourselves have been and continue to be the subject of both confirmation and dehumanization.

5.2.2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty: To experience one's place

Emmanuel Levinas (1967) has noted that "...although Buber has penetratingly described the Relation and the act of distancing, he has not taken separation seriously enough". (p.149).

The phenomenon of separation in this context refers not only to the capacity to allow interpersonal difference, but to the existential rupture in human consciousness that grounds our capacity for self-reflection. Such a capacity describes a

rupture because it requires a separation from oneself as merely looking out of one's own eyes. One sees oneself in the light of a context, and therefore, sees oneself *from* that context.

In the spirit of separation, Merleau Ponty emphasizes the 'other' as a reference for reflexiveness and reversibility:

> "...the body knows itself only through taking the position of another through which it comes back to itself" (Merleau-Ponty in Hoek [1988], p.203).

The capacity to become absent from oneself in order to find the 'space' to see oneself, describes the 'other' as an axial function: one's own 'shape' or 'place' can only emerge in terms of the boundaries that are given by such perspectivity.

Merleau-Ponty approaches the 'other' as a structure that is not separate from social and historical contextuality. The unique individuality of Einstein could not have emerged in the 16th century. He was dialoguing and differentiating himself from the physics of his time *in terms* of the physics of his time. In a sense, 'otherness' is our home and we are never that far from home.

For Merleau-Ponty, then, our ability to take the viewpoint of the other gives one a particular place within our common humanity: the 'there' is a story, and in 'borrowing' ourselves from others, we become a figure in the story.

Within this idiom, Robert Romanyshyn (1982) has vividly characterized one's self-identity as a 'familiar stranger' in that one both glimpses as well as loses oneself in the 'mirror'

of the story:

> "The self who I am is no longer safely encased on this side of the mirror. It is, on the contrary, already 'infected' with the viewpoint of that other who views the reflection" (p.67).

Self-definition emerges out of this confusion of self and other. If such alienation did not occur, truly psychological life as story, could never begin - the perspectives of both actor and audience are required.

In giving one a sense of place that can be both lost and found, the perspective of otherness returns one to oneself with greater self-understanding. One needs to lose one's established reflection because the mirror is changing and also because the mirror always has more to show. Thus one returns to oneself with greater depth and validity. Such self-understanding provides a further basis for meaningful participation within the unfolding story.

Hoek (1988) adequately summarizes the perspectivity of 'otherness' as follows:

> "...it is possible to understand the Other as a structure - not simply another person or thing - a structure which is paradoxical, in that unity, wholeness or integrity can emerge through difference: through a boundedness that at once separates us from ourselves, as Merleau-Ponty tells us, that perception of others is a means given me from being absent from myself, prior to *re*-turning back to myself, and that this reflexiveness, according to Mead, is the essential condition for the development of mind. The other as a mirror returns us to ourselves so that we may develop towards who we are. Visually, perceptually, we discover ourselves in one another" (p.55).

5.2.3 Martin Heidegger: To experience the call of selfhood

Whereas Buber could account for the vicissitudes of authentic human existence with reference to the tensions *within* the interpersonal dimension, Heidegger required a tension *between* the interpersonal dimension and other equally primordial existential structures, such as finitude and conscience, which provide a certain call to aloneness. The tension between being-with-others and the 'ownness' given by finitude and conscience is a 'space' within which authentic selfhood can occur. This section will attempt to explicate the nature of such a 'space' or tension.

Heidegger also begins by acknowledging the embeddedness of human existence within an interpersonal matrix. The world of otherness always precedes me: I individuate out of, and in terms of, the vicissitudes of being-with-others-in-general. Heidegger thus understands the structure of the other as "...the original unifying unity of what tends apart" (Heidegger, cited in Cooper, 1983 p203).

The structure of being-with-others-in-general is by nature a given and prereflective quality of our lives. We generally take it for granted that in everyday life we live out many customs, norms and attitudes that have been passed on to us: there is nowhere else to begin.

Heidegger refers to such a structure as *das man*, which can roughly be translated as 'man-in-general' or 'the common man'. Because we do not exist in an interpersonal vacuum, the

interpersonal matrix provides one foundation for the possibility of authentic human existence. However, in merely carrying out one's identity with *das man*, one is not yet carrying out an existence that is one's own. It is in the 'ownness' of one's life that authentic human existence is carried out. Thus inauthentic existence, in the sense of being identical with "...the common man, who is positively nobody and yet everybody, though not as the sum of all men" (Heidegger, 1962, p.129), provides the 'raw material' for authenticity:

> "Living a life not his own (being inauthentically in his everyday world) he can reach and reveal his own self....The inauthentic way of existence is needed to provide the grounds on which the authentic mode of being can be built. Authenticity is nothing but a modified inauthenticity" (Vycinas, 1961, p.42).

Conscience

It is given to us that our own existence is an issue for us. In the mood of anxiety we understand that we are not merely present, but that it is given to us to be aware of death as a personal possibility. Taking refuge in *das man* does not fully assuage our anxiety as it is given to us to notice that we cannot simply always live as another would. In being open for the issues of existence in this way, human existence can be described as 'care'. Care is an existential concept and not a moral one. The specific lack of caring for others is still a form of care in that some issue is being cared for: one cannot get outside of care.

Our openness to existence as care means that in the inauthentic mode of *das man*, one is excessively concerned with the other as a measure of oneself - one 'sacrifices' oneself to avoid the dimension of aloneness.

However, it is also given to us to care for our ownmost possibilities. Our openness to finitude is a structure which reveals 'ownness' in its most radical sense: I die my own death - I live others' deaths - others live my death. Such a structure speaks of my aloneness and separates me in a crucial way from my identity with *das man*. Being called back to one's ownmost possibilities in this way is one example of the work of conscience. Conscience is the call from one's ownmost possibilities and makes one aware of having fallen into identity with *das man*. Conscience and *das man* thus describe the terms of the tension or 'space' within which authentic selfhood can occur. This tension describes a creative conflict in which selfhood as care for the issues of existence is always already in dialogue with otherness:

> "By hearing the call of conscience, *Dasein* chooses itself and thus becomes free....We choose ourselves merely as being open for the call of conscience. This openness is readiness for the authentic way of existence" (Vycinas, 1961, pp.59-60).

There is a danger that a discussion of the inauthenticity of *das man* can give the impression that the structure of otherness is only to be understood in negative terms. It would thus be valuable to briefly dwell on some implications of the statement that authenticity is a modification of inauthenticity.

In this context, the structure of otherness can be formulated in

more positive terms: the many possibilities of existence are revealed to one by others; authentic existence is forged by resolutely choosing one's own path from among these possibilities.

The structure of otherness both gives and takes away. It gives by holding up a mirror to oneself:

> "The mirroring of experience through behaviour is not an identification of one's experience with the other's behaviour. It is rather a deepening of one's experience through that behaviour. The other's behaviour is the way in which my experience matters. It is the depth of my experience, just as my behaviour is the depth of the other's experience" (Romanyshyn, 1982, p.84).

Also, the 'other' takes away by our everyday tendency to get lost in the world of *das man*.

A balanced statement of the structure of the other is achieved by Parker (1985):

> "...it is only in the context of one's relationship with others...that one experiences not being true to oneself" (p.182).

In such a situation, the experience of not being true to oneself is constituted as an experience of discomfort or conflict. In this tension of *das man* and conscience, the other, in a sense, serves to call us back to ourselves. The other thus gives us a 'sounding board', a boundary or a mirror from which authentic selfhood can stand out. This tension of ground and figure is the space by which "...we become aware of the conditions of our lives and arouse ourselves to play an active role when things do not go

well" (Hoek, 1988, p.59).

It should be noted that in recovering ourselves from the world of *das man*, we do not achieve authentic existence as an irrevocable reality. It would be an exhausting destiny if we could never allow ourselves to be lost in the everyday world of *das man*.

Romanyshyn (1982) expresses the 'living together' of the everyday attitude with the attitude of self-recovery in the following manner:

> "...the reality of psychological life which must always be recovered from forgetfulness, from its hiddenness in habit and routine, is destined to be covered over again" (p.19).

Perhaps the psychological relevance of this tension depends on the degree to which one is oppressed by the world of *das man* and the degree to which one is freely open for the call of conscience.

In concluding the section on the interpersonal dimension, we could integrate the contributions of the three authors as follows:

We find ourselves *in* others and *from* others. We find ourselves *in* others by mirroring our humanity - by finding the 'I' in the 'thou'. We find ourselves *from* others by finding our place in a story and living further. Finding ourselves is given by the call of conscience in which both a shared world and its owned modifications are appropriated.

5.3 HUMAN EXISTENCE, IN ITS HISTORICAL DIMENSION, OPENS THE WORLD IN PARTICULAR WAYS

Existentially, the way time stretches before us, and comes to meet us from the past and the future, makes a great difference to the way we feel. We can be both oppressed as well as 'energized' by our particular temporal horizons. This section describes how an existential-phenomenological perspective of human temporality provides an essential parameter for self-understanding.

5.3.1 Time is not a series of now-points

It is possible to adopt an excessively abstract attitude and conceptualize time in an impersonal manner. Within this perspective, the 'march' of time is outside of us in that all events are to be fitted into its linear progression: the past is gone, the present is here, the future is absent. Only the present is real. The past was a now-point once, and the future will be a now-point in its day. The qualities of all times are equalized in terms of this status of 'nowness'. In such a linear perspective, we, together with the beings and things of the world, are 'in' time and thus time becomes an objective measure in which its quantitative dimension is paramount.

However, by taking a phenomenological attitude and letting time appear to us *as* it appears, we find that time does not simply appear as a series of now-points: rather, the past, present and future always appear in terms of one another. Medard Boss (1979) re-establishes time in its qualitative dimensions as

follows:

> "By indicating that time is always time *for* some-thing we name the first fundamental characteristic of time: significance" (p.94).

In finding a time *for* us and things, we, the past, present and future are always coming together to provide significance. We find time as 'eventfullness'. The dimensions of time are simultaneous and not simply successive: the past, present and future are co-mutually present. This means that the past is never simply gone but always here in some way; the present is not simply here 'on its own', but always together with the past and future in some way: the future is not simply absent but always here in its quality of 'coming towards us' in some way. Phenomenologically, all three modalities of time are present as the time we 'have'. Being *in* time only reveals its quantitative dimension: 'Having' time reveals its qualities:

> "Any time I 'have'. I have in such a way that I am expectant of which is to come, aware of what is present and retentive of what has been. This threefold mode in what I am constitutes 'having' time for this or that" (Boss, 1979, p.99).

It is in this spirit that Heidegger has referred to the three 'ecstasies' of time. This term is used generically to mean how past, present and future 'stand out' to one another in the openness of human existence.

Such 'standing out' also describes an inherent non-separation between human existence and the way the three modalities of time stand out. That is, past, present and future are qualitatively co-constituted in the light of human significance:

> "A past and a future spring forth when I reach out

> towards them. I am not, for myself, at this very moment. I am also at this morning or at the night which will soon be here, and though my present is, if we so wish to consider it, this instant, it is equally this day, this year or my whole life (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.421).

Human existence, in being intimately implicated from the very beginning in the appearance of the world as a world of significance, is also intimately implicated in the qualitative constitution of time. Time becomes temporalization:

> "...temporalization is not something we do in the sense of some special action, but something we are always 'doing', inasmuch as our understanding of ourselves and of our situation is always one of some possible action. In other words, in choosing and acting we are always temporalizing ourselves by committing ourselves to a particular future; and the action-character of temporalization is in the first instance that of having a future in the mode of choice" (Olafson, 1987, pp.92-93).

In revealing the time that is *with* us and for *us*, the phenomenological approach has provided us with a crucial constitutive dimension for describing the qualities of any human experience.

5.3.2 The significance of particular temporal orientations

If past, present and future are 'together' with us, this does not mean that their structure becomes merged. Rather, psychological life is sharply textured by the relative emphasis that each of the three modalities gives to any human experience:

> "At any given time, we are constantly bringing past, present and future together in a unique way....
> At various times, one or another of the dimensions will be most commanding, and at those times we enter into it much more than others. We may even be trapped in one of the three. Even then, however, the other two are never negated or destroyed but only deprived or

concealed" (Boss, 1979, p.100).

For example, Van den Berg (1972) has vividly demonstrated how, in a neurotic existence, the future is inaccessible and the past is chaotic. One can imagine the sense of 'dislocation' in having such temporal horizons: one feels meaninglessly suspended in a present that feels discontinuous with the past and uninvited into a future.

Boss (1979) also indicates a precise structural relationship of the three modalities of times when he writes of the 'shrinking' future of old people:

> "The events of their youth draw nearer to them than ever before, and their *Da-sein* goes out to remembrance of things past" (p.213).

The relative emphasis of past, present and future, their presence or absence, closeness or distance, thus constitute qualities of experience that can be oppressive or freeing. In this regard, the role of the past has often been overemphasized as an explanation of one's present behaviour, perception and feeling.

Within the phenomenological perspective, although the past is to be seen as a meaningful experience which is contained in the present in some way, it cannot properly be seen as a 'cause' of behaviour. This would give it a deterministic status that would obscure the more primary existential activity of the intelligible 'gathering together' of past, present and future in any behaviour. If behaviour is an intelligible phenomenon, then the meaning of the past is not simply given in itself as an 'independent variable', but rather is also vulnerable to the way

it is 'called forth' in the light of a meaning context which includes present and future. This means that in eradicating a deterministic view of the past, one gives the present and future co-constitutive power:

> "The existential approach refused to reduce the present to the past by describing the present as a mere repetition of a 'life-historical moment', but at the same time it was able to see in the present event a meaning-structure that linked it to the past" (Izenberg, 1976, p.139).

In human existence, the potential powers of the present and future give the past a possibility of being gathered up and moving forward. The past, although living in us by adding its texture to what we are open to in the present and future, is not inalienable. If this were so, then no conception of human freedom would be possible.

However, as one particular temporal possibility, a person's present and future may be excessively bound up with, and oppressed by the themes of the past. Such an existence is characterized by inauthenticity in that one is excessively living what has been merely passed on. The past becomes authenticated when it is 'owned' in some way either by choosing to be in continuation with it, or by choosing to depart from its theme.

Izenberg (1976) expresses the authentication of the past in the following ways:

> "If, instead of relating to historical tradition passively, as something that could not be renewed, adapted to changing conditions, or applied as a guideline for future activity, but merely copied, if instead Dasein were to view the past as possibilities once realized and capable of being chosen and acted

> upon again, a totally different attitude [is] possible" (pp.252-253).

And further:

> "The [authentic self] could ... go behind [rules] to the fundamental intentions they served and distinguish between the basic purpose and its current reified expression. Instead of being passively buffeted by historical events, it could then take them over responsibly and act on them" (p.253).

In conclusion, it could be said that the relative 'action' of the three modalities of time live in us as forms of engagement that significantly matter. How we 'have' time can be changed through engagement and self-understanding.

5.4 HUMAN FREEDOM MAKES A DIFFERENCE: THE AMBIGUITY OF THAT WHICH CLAIMS US

The experience of freedom as a psychological phenomenon is made possible by that freedom that is given with human existence. This section will attempt to articulate the circumscribed freedom that is a fundamental characteristic of being human. Such a description may be found to be helpful in delineating the qualities of a sense of felt-freedom that can arise with different world-engagements or greater self-insight.

5.4.1 Openness

The possibility of choosing and willing, phenomena which are often associated with human freedom, do not describe the essence of freedom. One comes closer to describing the essence of freedom when one asks: "what is the nature of that freedom that

is presupposed by willing and choosing?" For choosing and willing to occur, the world has to present itself in terms of what can and what can't be done; in other words, choosing can only occur when a multiplicity of phenomena show themselves.

In characterizing human existence as *Da-sein*, the *there* of being, Heidegger names the realm where a multiplicity of phenomena can occur: the *there* is an 'openness' or 'light' which is the precondition for the appearance of things. Such a 'clearing' is characterized by freedom in that it shows the realm of the possible. Thus freedom does not occur as a mere capacity of human existence. It is not something that we 'have'; rather freedom 'has' us in that it names the quality of that relatedness which essentially makes us what we are as a revelatory domain for world-possibilities. Everything only stands out *because* of freedom.

> "Freedom, namely the ex-sisting, revealing out of hiddenness (*entbergende*), world opening (*eröffende*) *Da-sein* possesses the human being" (Boss, 1979, p.124).

Thus, in the very intentionality of *being-in-the-world* where human existence is never self-enclosed but always together with world-possibilities, there is a freedom which grants possibilities to be: freedom is openness; and openness defines *being-in-the-world*.

5.4.2 Thrownness

When, in the openness of *Da-sein*, the world shows itself in terms

of what can and what can't be done, certain limits to possibility are also shown. In finding ourselves within the limits of being situated in time and space within a particular historical and embodied context, we find that possibilities are not endless or absolute. This existential quality has been characterized as 'thrownness' in that it is not as if, as human beings, we gradually enter a limited realm from the 'heights' of freedom. Rather, we find ourselves already 'thrown' into a human situation which carries with it the limits of death, *this* body, *this* set of interpersonal relationships, *this* environmental circumstance, etc.

Da-sein 'finds' the world as possibility but also finds itself as a specific and limited occurrence within such possibility. In this perspective, we are not radically 'transcendental' to the world as Sartre (within a Husserlian position), would have it. Rather our understanding of ourselves is a dialectical phenomenon, not just between self and other, but between freedom and situated ground.

5.4.3 Circumscribed Freedom

Both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have embraced a conception of circumscribed freedom in which human existence does not only *show* possibilities but takes its own possibilities *from* the world. Heidegger (1962) indicates how the structure of *das man* is one such limiting factor:

> "From this world it [*Da-sein*] takes its possibilities, and it does so first in accordance with the way things have been interpreted by the 'they'. This

> interpretation has already restricted the possible options of choice to what lies within the range of the familiar, the attainable and the respectable -- that which is fitting and proper. This levelling off of Dasein's possibilities to what is proximally at its everyday disposal also results in a dimming down of the possible as such" (p.239).

The nature of human freedom as circumscribed freedom defines the terms by which freedom becomes an issue or task in life. In acknowledging the circumscribed nature of freedom, we are confronted by the question of how we are to stand in relation to our 'thrownness', our limits. It is only in confronting 'thrownness' that we negotiate the task of finding that freedom that is possible for us. In such a task we may find limits that we are required to accept as well as restrictions that are not inevitable. The self-understanding of circumscribed freedom asks us to differentiate.

It is within this context that Heidegger understands the phenomenon of authentic willing and choosing. Authentic willing depends on choosing from possibilities that have been understood *as* authentic possibilities. If one has not owned a possibility *as* a possibility, then one is merely in a relationship of wishing for something vague. This is disempowering as it is unrelated to one's relational and owned possibilities; something is related to someone, but 'I' and the 'wished-for' are not specifically engaged.

Human freedom thus makes a difference not by ignoring limits and restrictions but by finding them. In writing about a freedom that is revealed in dialogue with one's context, Koestenbaum (1987) expresses himself in the following manner:

> "Freedom consists in understanding these roots and then rendering independent judgement on them. Further freedom consists in performing an act of cathexis or decathexis on them which will decide whether we are to recommit or restructure ourselves in our relation to our world and in the solution to the problems of existence. Once our roots are clarified, we are free to choose which ethnic structures to accept and which structures to reject" (p.13).

Thus, in the space of making differences, we are neither self-created *ex-nihilo*, nor are we merely bound to what is already there, as if we have some essential nature that is already fixed. By participating in both freedom and historical boundedness, we are engaged in a personally humanizing endeavour in which both freedom and limits are forged together to make a difference.

5.4.4 The experience of freedom: ambiguity and commitment

When the world is approached authentically, not just in its everyday taken-for-granted way, it is revealed as a 'falling away' - its parameters and meanings are never 'complete' or 'finished' as if it were a 'thing' that stood over and against us. We are part of its becoming as the 'holding apart' of what it is.

The fact that the world never achieves a totally unambiguous definition apart from us, names a source of both creativity and insecurity.

First, let us consider insecurity. Heidegger asserted that our freedom for co-constituting the world is most disclosed in the

mood of dread. In such a mood, one is overwhelmed by a world of possibility in which one's own self-participation is intimately implicated. Even the things which claim one most radically, like one's death and historical situation, are open for *how* one will stand towards them. Although we find ourselves 'thrown', such claims, although unambiguous in their existence, are ambiguous in terms of our possible relationships to them. This kind of ambiguity is a quality which names how we are free to constitute the world in any number of ways -- and it can be anxiety-provoking.

It should be noted, in passing, that the way the term 'ambiguity' is used here to indicate the quality of possibility, is different from the technical way that Heidegger used the term in *Being and Time*. He used the term to indicate an inauthentic form of understanding in which everything may appear clear and understandable to someone, but nothing is actually understood. It is a form of understanding that is taken-for-granted and has no depth.

Ambiguity, as a quality of experience that speaks of possibilities, describes a 'freedom from' previous unidimensional and repetitive profiles of self and world. Such a 'freedom from' essentially describes a freedom from having a fixed self or world -- it is the experience in which the 'given' is not merely repeated but shows its possibilities for departure. Such an experience of ambiguity can be felt as a sense of freedom, if the 'given' had been experienced as oppressive. It can also be felt as a sense of anxiety if the 'given' was, nevertheless, a source of security. The experience of ambiguity as 'freedom from' is

the precondition for 'freedom for': that dimension that fully names the phenomenon of creativity.

If one was to merely stand within the ambiguity of 'freedom from', then one would be guilty of not actualizing specific possibilities. As human beings, we cannot remain uncommitted in the face of all the possibilities that are open for us. The future calls us to participate in a *specific* future -- it asks us to choose:

> "The very notion of freedom demands that our decision should plunge into the future, that something should have been *done* by it, that the subsequent instant should benefit from its predecessor and, although not necessitated, should at least be required by it" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.437).

The event of commitment in which one becomes responsible for one's specific bearing is made possible by a 'freedom from':

> "Unless the individual is free to constitute the world in any number of ways, then the concept of responsibility has no meaning" (Yalom, 1980, p.220).

In other words, commitment as a creative activity cannot occur when one is excessively bound up with values and attitudes that have merely been passed on to one without question. In such a situation, action is more likely to be characterized by obligation than by a commitment which arises out of the authentic experience of choice.

Creativity begins in the 'freedom from' rigidity and actualizes itself in the 'freedom for' commitment.

These two dimensions of freedom provide the essential

characteristics of the experiences of oneself as a teleological agent -- a being that is not merely caused or 'driven' by the past, but who can act purposefully towards the future.

In conclusion, we could say that the authentic and responsible manner of 'taking on' that freedom that is ours, involves the capacity for tolerating the openness of things in the light of ambiguity (freedom from) as well as the capacity for tolerating the sacrifice of some possibilities in the light of commitment (freedom for). Such human freedom is not radically transcendental to the things of the world but rather defines a 'work of art' *with* the things of the world:

> "To grow in freedom towards mature or creative, integrated, responsive and responsible existence is to be progressively aware of, and decisively to accept, the limitations and influences, the heredity and environment, the real possibilities that are the materials of one's existence. It is in the decisive grasping of his own existence that the human being senses his identity, his whole being, and learns to know, create and continually recreate himself and his world" (Reeves, 1977, p.221).
>
> "Freedom can never be an *abnegation* of *law*, as though our 'will' operated only in a temporary margin of relief from determinism. But the planning, the forming, the imagination, the choosing of values, the *intentionality* are the qualities of human freedom" (May, 1969, p.269).

5.5 EMOTIONAL EXISTENCE PROVIDES AUTHENTIC ACCESS TO WORLD AND SELF: LANGUAGE PROVIDES THE POSSIBILITY OF TAKING WORLD AND SELF IN HAND

If one were to approach the task of self-understanding from within a Cartesian perspective, there is a danger that one would begin in an excessively theoretical manner. In considering the

world and self as independent phenomena, one would either try to see how the world 'fits into' one's self or brain, or how one's self 'fits into' the world. In so doing, one would arrive at theoretical conclusions about the logical relationships between such 'entities', but such conclusions would suffer from an objectification of self that loses its essential quality: that is, that self is nothing like an object which can be sufficiently described in the language of external relationships, as if from a non-participant viewpoint.

In approaching the task of self-understanding from a phenomenological perspective, one can never depart from the intimately participative and experiential nature of self-in-relation. We would thus authentically begin by attending to those dimensions which reveal the nature of our relatedness.

This section will attempt to demonstrate how emotional existence provides an authentic revelation of our mode of *being-in-the-world*, and how language works further to take our existence in hand in such a way as to give the power of self-reflection and a sense of personal agency.

5.5.1 Emotional existence as revelation

In its immediate concreteness, the appearance of things always first tells us about the state of our relationship to them. Before we reflectively abstract our understanding, we 'register' how we are in relation to things in a prereflective and unthematized manner. Such prereflective 'registration'

immediately gives a sense of one's situation-as-a-whole and thus functions as the background quality from which specific thoughts and actions proceed:

> "The zone of the prereflective...encompasses the lived body's sense of its own orientation in the world, hence encompasses as well an unthematized sense of the world as its situation, as background (or fond) of its being and doing. In this regard, there is an intimate link between the pre-reflective and the perceptual" (Dillon, 1983, p.26).

Immediate access to one's own situation, in being pre-reflectively given to perception, does not merely result in the appearance of the world and one's manner of presence in a *neutral* way:

> "Disclosure of *Dasein* is primarily not theoretical but rather mood-like" (Vycinas, 1961, p.43).

World and self-relatedness always originally and specifically appear in the light of a mood. Even in boredom or tranquillity, the world is never 'colourless' but shows a 'face' that emphasizes possibilities that are consistent with its mood. Heidegger has used the term *'befindlichkeit'* to refer to that form of prereflective understanding that interprets the mood-like disclosure of things.

To quote Olafson (1987):

> "The force of the notion of *Befindlichkeit* is that it interprets the work of feeling as an uncovering, a disclosure of where we are in the space of possibilities and actualities that is our world.... Such an uncovering presupposes a rich context of projects, preferences, empirical likelihoods, capacities, incapacities and vulnerabilities; but the import for me and my well-being of this whole complex 'involvement' (*Bewandtnis*) registers with me or 'encounters' primordially in the medium of feeling" (p.106).

Befindlichkeit has also been translated to mean state-of-mind, how one finds oneself, and felt-sense. In using the term, *emotional existence*, I wish to indicate not just specific emotions, but that general feeling dimension which has its own understanding, and which locates its particular manner of self-relatedness in different circumstances.

Gendlin (1978) indicates all these qualities when he writes of the kind of understanding that is *Befindlichkeit*:

> "This understanding is *implicit*, not cognitive in the usual sense. It differs from cognition in several ways: It is sensed or felt, rather than thought - and it may not be sensed or felt directly with attention. It is not made of separable cognitive units or any definable units. When you are asked, 'How are you?' you don't find only recognizable, but always also an implicit complexity. Certainly one can reflect and interpret, but that will be another, further step" (p.45).

Two particular implications of this understanding of emotional existence are relevant to our enquiries:

Firstly, attention to emotional existence reveals the quality of the way we are located in relation to our world - its circumstances, people, projects and possibilities. This means that it constitutes an authentic 'place to begin' for pursuing a task of self-understanding that is not merely theoretical. It gives access to the 'honest' or 'actual' state of how things are with us at any time. When asked the question 'how are you', it is here that we should take the time to look.

Secondly, being-in-a-mood carries with it the possibility of self-deception. It is possible to reflectively deny or

misinterpret one's prereflective sense-of-oneself-in-situations. One can be in a mood without knowing in a conventional sense that one is. This possible disjunction between the 'understanding' of *Befindlichkeit* and the 'understanding' born of reflective awareness, provides the possibility for self-division. In such a situation it is said that one is 'out of touch' with oneself. The potential 'gift' of *Befindlichkeit* is that it is the manner in which one can rediscover one's situational 'ground' and maintain authentic connection to one's lived-world. Such 'integrity' constitutes an undivided 'place' for further living.

5.5.2 Language as the 'House of Being'

It could be said that situations reveal themselves in language in a different way from the way they reveal themselves in unarticulated emotional existence. This section will attempt to show how language can preserve and continue our mooded perceptual life even while transforming it:

> "When an aspect is extracted by speech it is, at the same time, transformed: it is thematized and made explicit; it is made to exist for me in a way which is fundamentally different from its mute presence to perceptual experience" (Sallis, 1973, p.48).

The argument about language as the preservation and transformation of one's lived situation is best developed by beginning with Heidegger's conception of discourse (*rede*).

Language, in its most existential context, is to be found in the light of a situated person who is speaking in a shared world with others. This means that the lived-situation is the context for

language and, as such, language is not the primary mode of uncovering a world. We are perceptually and emotionally present to our situation before we speak. However, although *Befindlichkeit* reveals the quality of our being *in* a situation, it does not open that situation in a way that becomes 'ready-to-hand'. This term is used by Heidegger to indicate the particular way in which the appearance of things can become preserved as possibilities for significant self-world relatedness. Language thus not only interprets the *possibilities* of things within a totality of references (world) but *preserves* such possibilities for future understanding and engagement: in revealing the 'ready-to-hand', one's world becomes understood as a situation within which one can become intelligibly active. Heidegger expressed this in the following way:

> "Assertion communicates entities in the 'how' of their uncoveredness....This uncoveredness is preserved in what is expressed. What is expressed becomes, as it were, something ready-to-hand within-the-world which can be taken up and spoken again" (Heidegger, 1962, p.266).

In designating language as the House of Being, Heidegger was asserting that although language is not the primary mode of uncovering an entity, it is essential for preserving the significances of what is present:

> "Even if we had a thousand eyes and a thousand hands and many other senses and organs, and if our essence were not the standing under the might of language - then still all beings, ie. beings that we are no less than beings that we are not, would remain closed off from us" (Heidegger, cited in Vycinas, 1961, p.85).

Thus language preserves the disclosure of self and world by articulately showing the relationships that are there; it also transforms perceptual life from the mere passivity of being-*in*-a-

situation, to the potential activity of being ready-*for*-situations. The next two sections will attempt to demonstrate how the preserving and transforming potentials of language achieve their most psychological significance with a particular form of language, that is, poetical discourse.

5.5.3 Poetical Discourse reveals our relatedness

Language can be used as a tool merely to convey information to another. In such a situation, one generally speaks *about* the beings and things of the world without too much attention to one's own manner of presence and *how* things appear qualitatively to experience.

Although it is difficult in practice to delineate the boundaries of poetical discourse, Heidegger (1962) wished to indicate a mode of language which served the function of qualitatively thematizing *how* the pre-reflective world, as it is given, can 'come to language' within different situational contexts:

> "In 'poetical' discourse, the communication of the existential possibilities of one's state-of-mind can become an aim in itself and this amounts to a disclosing of existence" (p.205).

Poetical discourse thus creatively mediates between the pre-reflective and reflective modes of existence. Such reflection on experience wishes to be faithful to the qualities of experience and requires a standard of expression that is continuous with such qualities. In talking about this quality of expression with reference to psychotherapy, Gendlin (1978) formulates it as

follows:

> "...any statements and interpretations are effective only when they lift out something from the directly sensed and preverbally 'understood' felt complexity" (p.65).

And further:

> "The feeling knows how to speak and demands just the right words" (p.52).

Poetical discourse is thus a language which attempts to preserve presence - the expressed is grounded in, and refers to the inexpressed:

> "What is required is a speech which breaks the silence without betraying it" (Sallis, 1973, p.64).

In poetical discourse one's relatedness to existence is revealed in that one does not merely begin in one's distanced reflections. The experiential implications of remembering such relatedness is that it facilitates a sense of intelligible continuity with one's context. Such an experience of intelligible continuity, not just with one's history, but with all that goes to make up one's background context, is crucial to the experience of self-identity as going-on-being.

5.5.4 Poetical Discourse transforms our relatedness

Poetical discourse, although attempting to be faithful to our relatedness, and thereby preserving this quality, can never show in totality all that there is in pre-reflective experience in any moment. In saying something, it always leaves something unsaid; it cannot achieve complete self-transparency.

Poetical discourse is thus not just a continuity with, but also a distance from the complexity of our lived world. Such distance is a positive phenomenon in that it gives us something more than a sense of our intelligible involvement in situations. It focusses on a part of the pre-reflective complexity, and in so doing, interrupts the ongoing engagement and gains perspective:

> "So often he simply lives his totalizations without fully realizing what and how he is doing. Only in the articulation of the experiences does he gain the verbalization and distance, emotional as well as aesthetic, that he needs to see himself in the world properly: (Murray, 1974, p.482).

And further:

> "For the speaking subject, to express is to become aware of; he does not express just for others, but also to know himself what he intends" (Merleau-Ponty, 1974, p.87).

Poetical discourse is thus a work of self-clarification which 'stands in' the distance of perspective; in verbally characterizing an aspect of lived-experience, one is not merely part of the experience, but active as meaning-giver. Such agency that is given by distance names the transformative power of poetical discourse: it is not merely a mirror which passively reflects the world (cf. Heaton, 1972); it is rather an active gathering-together of some of the possible meaningful relationships that are inherent in pre-reflective experience. Kruger (1988) refers to both the uncovering and gathering qualities of language in the following way:

> "By speaking, we are able to let past and future be present; we are able to open up meaning qualities and motivational coherences because the human being is always addressed by what was and by what is and will be" (p.187).

Poetical discourse transforms our relatedness by recovering our own agency in 'punctuating' experience; experience is transformed in the light of such meaningful emphases. In such an endeavour one is both discovering, and creating out of what is discovered. It is in this spirit that Jager (1987) understands language as a way of "...inhabiting a distance in such a way that it is respected and at the same time also transcended" (p.30).

In finding ourselves as not just *in* things but in relation *to* things, we recover not just actuality, but also, possibility.

Within this context, poetic discourse can authentically transform mere facts and happenings into stories. Poetical discourse thus employs imagination. The way in which things are gathered together to weave a tale (cf. Romanyshyn, 1982), means that such discourse participates in a degree of freedom. Differences of emphasis show the potential multiplicity of so-called 'brute facts'. In introducing 'punctuations' in this way, poetical discourse has the nature of metaphor: it both is and is more than what it represents. If such 'possibilizing' of things was not given by language, psychotherapy would be impossible:

> "[Psychotherapy] is a communal search for metaphors, the right metaphors, that bespeak a man's life in a given situation, in a given context. And it is a search for new metaphors that will enable the person to incorporate the disparate, the atypical, the incongruous, the paradoxical, and maybe even the contradictory of his life in a humanly respectable, vitally liberating and aesthetically uplifting manner" (Murray, 1974, p.482).

In conclusion, it can be said that *befindlichkeit* and speech need one another. In our sense-of-ourselves-in-situations, we find an

authentic reference for self-understanding. Yet we have not yet taken hold of that understanding. In speech lies the possibility of making that understanding our own. Further, such understanding is not merely discovered but also 'interrupted' to make way for interpretation. In such a way, both our authentic relatedness to our context, as well as our ongoing creative agency are revealed. Within this context, language can be the source of experiences of both continuity and mastery.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to explicate some existential themes that were suggested by the general description of therapeutic self-insight.

Each section within the chapter exposed how we live within certain fundamental tensions.

In facing these tensions, self-understanding is constituted: in the space of self and other, freedom and limits, feeling and language, history and possibility.

Self-insight is 'about' these phenomena, and as such, is a broadly existential quest.

The chapter expresses agreement with Heidegger that one cannot reduce these multidimensional tensions to a 'space' that makes one of its dimensions (such as the interpersonal realm) primary. Rather, all dimensions are fruitfully understood to be equi-

primordial in that they (and others such as bodiliness) all form the tension or 'space' within which human existence sojourns.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 THE TERM 'THERAPEUTIC SELF-INSIGHT'

In the introductory chapter it was said that the definition of therapeutic self-insight itself needs to be a subject of research where the characteristics of its qualitative description could be centrally addressed.

In attempting to delineate a psychologically relevant focus, this research concentrated on a particular kind of therapeutic self-insight; that is the experience of self-insight which carries a greater sense of freedom. However, the phenomenological methodology was able to reveal the phenomenon in such a way that did not obscure the place of related issues, such as the place of language and the therapeutic relationship.

This research contributes to the definition of therapeutic self-insight by offering the dimension of felt-freedom as an important phenomenon for consideration. A full definition of therapeutic self-insight *per se* would have to consider how much this phenomenon is central, or merely one possibility of a heterogeneous range of phenomena. This concluding chapter reflects the conviction that a valuable and significant phenomenon has been delineated and studied. Whether the word 'therapeutic' should be reserved for those insights that carry a greater sense of freedom is a matter for further enquiry. Other

empirical-phenomenological studies will be helpful in this regard. For example, Hesky (1984) designed a phenomenological study whereby he could focus on the differences between effective and ineffective personal insights. He found that effective personal insights could be defined by the practical results that they achieved. The results of the present study would indicate that such effective insights (in terms of results) occurred at various times during the subjects' emergence into a more complex self and world. It would thus suggest that the practical results of therapeutic self-insight should not be the most central dimension of its definition, even though it may be found to be an important one. Another study by Hoek (1988) highlighted the role of the other in the constitution of self-insight. His results were consistent with the interpersonal dimensions of the present study and he was able to pursue the description of this dimension in greater detail.

All such studies produce psychologically interesting discriminations. I believe that the definition of therapeutic self-insight is best pursued by encouraging in-depth studies of certain qualitative dimensions of the phenomenon, and further by integrating these descriptions in a discriminating way.

A discussion of the results of this study will focus on relevant issues that have been raised in the theoretical chapters. Although the focus of the empirical research was on a particular kind of therapeutic self-insight, the results are also able to suggest a number of more general implications that are broadly relevant.

6.2 A DIALOGUE WITH GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY

The study focussed on the *way* that self-understanding occurs in a particular context. Gestalt Psychology indicated that the *way* insight into problems can occur, is by an immediate understanding of relationships as a whole. In problems of simple learning, the understanding of relational significance occurred suddenly; a shift occurred that produced a new stable and effective organizing theme. Learning about personal identity would appear to be different to learning to solve defined problems. The results of this study would indicate that learning about personal identity is not separate from the co-creation of personal identity; it is a 'solution' to be made and not merely discovered. The achievement of a new 'Gestalt' is thus not stable, but an existential phenomenon that is more complex and ongoing. It is thus not surprising that the new 'relational significances' which emerged were not totalized 'once and for all', but involved themes of changing emphasis. Contrary to more external tasks of problem-solving, insight into self reveals the multiperspectivity of self: the understanding of personal relational significance is an unfolding phenomenon in which one sees different sides at different times, and the coherence of a theme requires a creative 'broadening' as it accommodates new details. The unfolding of self-insight reveals the properties of the hermeneutic circle in a more central way than that acknowledged by Gestalt Psychology. With regard to this phenomenon we cannot thus rely on the 'closing of gestalts' for explanation; the gestalt is never closed and the open-endedness of existence can not be reduced to a principle of homeostasis, however subtle.

The results follow Gestalt Psychology as far as affirming that the themes that emerge have qualities of perception; that is, that relationships are seen as a whole rather than cumulatively thought out. The emphasis in the situated descriptions on metaphor and dreams bear this out by indicating phenomena that communicate images-as-a-whole. However, these phenomena also carry emotional qualities, thus affirming the existential-phenomenological perspective that all perception is also in the light of a mood, be it anger or the subtle hopes and fears of scientific enquiry.

Gestalt Psychology also refers to a 'broader field' of understanding in which new possibilities of meaning can be seen. The results of this study would indicate that such a broader field is achieved by a negative path: by becoming aware of the existing restrictions to one's living, a new kind of 'space' arises. Similar to the Gestalt pattern of problem-solving, this space expresses a gap in which something is required. What is required is first defined in a negative way - it must be different - and the clearer one sees the restrictions, the clearer one understands the contours of the space which must be filled. Such understanding can be said to require an aesthetic appreciation for what would fit. It is such sensitivity that would provide a validating foundation for new thematic possibilities.

This does not mean that the new possibility is merely created 'within' oneself. When S5 came to see that his desire for assertion was already there but frustrated, he began to find creative ways in which such a possibility could 'fit' into the

unique contours of his life. He both discovered a possibility that was already 'given' to him and was also creative in the way he concretized and integrated this possibility in imagination and/or action.

The unfolding of this kind of therapeutic self-insight may involve new and productive thoughts, but is more fundamentally described by the 'space' that is found for the new 'thought'. Without this space that is found by the negative path, new creative thoughts and behaviour may lack a felt-sense of credibility and perceptive foundation.

6.3 A DIALOGUE WITH DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY

6.3.1 The sense of continuity with one's past

The results of this study would suggest that memories from the past are called forth in the light of particular themes. The past thus never becomes accessible as an isolated event but always in the way it serves a sense of continuity. This is a dialectical movement. The theme opens up memories and memories validate or refine the theme. Forging a sense of temporal continuity appears to assist a more unified sense of self. Although this is a step forward, the subjects in the study first usually found a continuity that was repetitive and restrictive. A greater sense of *active* unity occurred when subjects could constitute a continuity that was progressive and not merely repetitive.

The psychoanalytic theme about the liberating effect of remembering one's past is thus most helpful when it is not construed as the central directive. Remembering one's past plays an appropriate role in the more fundamental task of temporalizing, and memories cannot be considered separately from this total endeavour. The forthcoming section on feeling and language will further explore how 'temporalizing' is only one form of forging a sense of continuity, and that an integration with one's present situation also provides such an experience. The experience of continuity is thus not only a historical phenomenon but more inclusively belongs to all the existential ways one is related - body, emotions, others, and nature.

6.3.2 The awareness of our divided and conflictual psychological life

The subjects in the study characteristically became aware of a disjunction between how they were living their desires and what they would value. This can easily result in a self-misunderstanding about the nature of one's desire - one may feel that the desire and one's value are contradictory and inherently conflictual. For example, S4 devalued her desire for reassurance in the light of her value to become independent. The results would suggest that the desires and values are not inevitably and essentially conflictual. They are only disjunctive within a particular interpretation that has been passed on to them. For example, S5 was made to feel that if he asserted his independence, he would not be loved. He therefore had to find independence in a secret way. Thus the hermeneutics of exclusivity require a way of expressing desires and values that

maintain their mutual exclusion. In this regard it has been said that Anorexia Nervosa is a secretive way that a person expresses the kind of independence that pretends no dependence.

For S5, the 'healing work' of self-insight was that it questioned whether it may be possible to actualize both independence and the need for love in a more direct and less mutually exclusive way. The new interpretation that was achieved in both understanding and action was that the previously conflictual desires or values were re-integrated within a more unifying and inclusive context.

In thematizing basic desires and values, one is in a more powerful position to separate them from their often problematic historical context. In this, the space of difference is made: There is a difference between the desire as a legitimate possibility and its problematic fortunes in the person's life.

In this conception there is not necessarily an inherent tension between the reality and pleasure principles - the tension is a self-misunderstanding based on the hermeneutics of exclusion. Such a hermeneutics may be found to be a universal tendency in earlier life. But this does not mean that it embodies an ontological truth that prescribes our possibilities and within which we must articulate a model of mental health.

The developmental perspectives of the psychoanalytic movement thus have the danger of progressing on the basis of a hermeneutics of exclusion. The existential-phenomenological perspective of beginning with a vision of human possibility, and understanding childhood development within this context, would

appear to be an important remedy.

6.3.3 The Repetition Compulsion

From what has been said so far, it is not that the client needs to remember something specific about when a particular problematic life-style began, but rather that the previous interpretation needs to be transcended. Whatever gave rise to the previous interpretation for living, whether the first occasion is remembered or not, the interpretation is *present*. The memory of its first occasion (even if this were possible) is not as important as the recognition of its present form and functioning. The results of this study indicated that the *theme* of the restriction is primary - the memories of its previous occasions were supportive or refining, but secondary.

Therapeutic action begins when the existing interpretation becomes clarified. Before this one merely lives tacitly on the basis of this interpretation. Such restrictive interpretations are unconscious, but not in the sense of being thoughts, feelings and perceptions that exist in an inaccessible place. Rather, interpretations exist as an active phenomenon which re-occur simply because other interpretations have not yet been carried out. In making previous interpretations 'conscious', one is thematizing existing actions, thoughts and feelings. Granted, such engagements have a historical and even mythical depth which can also be thematized. However, the content of what is being thematized is *there* in action, thought and feeling. It becomes further revealed in language, and as such is not hiding in the

'unconscious', but is always available to the receptive heart and the poetic tongue.

6.3.4 Strength of the ego

The results of this study would suggest that the 'ego' can be found phenomenologically as a sense of active participation in one's existence'; in a sense of freedom and responsibility; in the capacity to make sense out of experience; in the experience of mastery over tasks; and in the experience of personal continuity over time.

The 'ego' becomes itself through the gathering of a personal story. The word 'gatherer' may be a better word than 'ego' in that it denotes an active dimension: the gathering of time, intelligibility, and possibility. 'Das Ich' or 'the I', although expressing an 'ownness' to personal identity tends to over-emphasize object-like properties as if it were a thing-in-itself, and tends to de-emphasize how it belongs to things, people and places. A 'gatherer', or perhaps even 'weaver', grows in capacity with reference to what is gathered or woven together. The word 'together' gives the 'gatherer' its unifying properties. The sense of active participation in the 'gathered' gives 'ownness' and 'mastery'.

The results indicate that in making sense of disparate experiences, and by re-interpreting the possibilities of different desires and values, a sense of greater freedom is experienced. Such self-insight re-interprets one's own

possibilities whether they are engaged in, or left in reserve. The feeling of a freer self is 'in' such possibilities. The 'strength of the ego' is thus finally the capacity to interpret the personally possible.

6.3.5 Object-Relations

Although the object-relations school have not formulated it in this way, they have focussed on how the interpersonal dimension constitutes a central source for conflictual interpretation or what I have called the hermeneutics of exclusion. Such interpretation is engaged in the question of how can one both belong to others with all their different claims, and yet develop one's own unique destiny. Object relations theory, in emphasizing the kind of therapeutic context that allows the client to tolerate experiences of aloneness and intimacy is helping him/her to re-interpret the possibilities of interpersonal relatedness. The themes that may be formulated are: what is it possible to expect from others? What is not possible?

The results of this study show how the subjects characteristically approach the vicissitudes of a concrete relationship with a significant person in their lives. They become aware of a theme, not only with this person but with others, of how they are expecting to be related or unrelated in a problematical way. For example, S6 expected loss and S4 expected others to intervene too much. The subjects invariably found relief in testing out this expectation in relation to the

therapist and discovering that it did not have to be that way. For example, S2 expected criticism but found his therapist to be non-judgemental; S3 characteristically expected betrayal but gradually found her therapist to be trust-worthy.

This kind of therapeutic self-insight thus worked to re-interpret possibilities of intimacy and aloneness. From our review of existential issues, we see that experiences of aloneness are inevitable and support the possibility of authentic existence. We also see that intimacy is our primordial heritage, not only with others, but with the things and places of the world. Therapeutic self-insight, as revealed by this study, functioned to present the subjects with experiences of separation and relatedness which could be questioned. Often subjects were stuck in an exaggerated emphasis of either intimacy or aloneness, unable to appropriate the other possibility. Such questioning resulted in the loosening of the theme as an exclusively legitimate basis for future expectations. By standing in a greater ambiguity, subjects often found that separation does not exclude intimacy and vice versa. Such re-interpretations support a greater sense of freedom by introducing a discontinuity between the past and the possible.

6.3.6 Working-through

The results of this study would indicate that the themes of self-insight, of restrictions and possibilities are not 'worked-through' by understanding the theme in different specific situations. The theme is not complete but rather is itself

changing in relation to specific situations. For example, for S1 the theme, 'expecting to be hurt', was elaborated in relation to specific situations and became 'obsessed with perfection'.

Thus 'working through' should more accurately be termed 'circling through'. The term, 'through' is retained to indicate a forward movement, whereas the term, 'circling' is used to indicate how the theme itself is refined and disciplined in the light of specific situations, memories and experiences. We have thus described a spiral movement which is not the mere application of a theme to detailed situations, but rather the shuttle-cock, creative endeavour of hermeneutic activity. In this context, the thematizing work progresses holistically (a la Gestalt) in that the understanding of relationships is immediate and sudden, yet the new interpretation forms the basis for further, ongoing refinement or even change.

It could thus be said that this kind of therapeutic self-insight is emotionally, perceptually and cognitively holistic, yet has the open-ended, progressive qualities of an interpretative work-in-progress - it could not possibly be different as the story of personal identity only finishes in retrospect.

6.3.7 Jung's transcendent function

Jung's archetypal theory assists the interpretation of personal harmony'; it is a hermeneutics of complementarity. Myths and stories throughout the ages take root to the extent that they can harmonize the tensions of living. Such harmonizing requires the

development of a perspective that is more complex than an adversarial perspective. In an adversarial perspective, one side simply excludes the other, or a new possibility excludes the old one.

The results of this study would suggest that such a resolution occurs not as much from the 'energetic' holding of the opposites in a balanced tension, but more from a change in the interpretation of the total situation.

For example, a more complex interpretation was achieved when S5 could find a form of 'acceptability' in which both assertion and passivity could be accommodated. S8 achieved a vision of intimacy in which it was also possible to be passive and not just active.

Thus apparently exclusive desires and values come to be re-interpreted in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

In the work of thematizing more complex interpretations that allow a greater complementarity, a distance is initially forged from the way one has been living. The power of metaphor is that it is able to grasp the qualities of significant self-world relationships as a whole. In some cases, the metaphors name two modes of being in which one is conflictually engaged. For example, for S4, the metaphor of a conflict between independent and dependent possibilities was articulated in psychotherapy. However, the present study suggests that in most cases, the restrictive mode of being is metaphorized in a singular way. The theme is acknowledged as limiting-in-itself. In acknowledging

its inadequate horizons, the space of possibility is forged. Although the opposite of this theme may be imagined as an aesthetically pleasing counter-point, one cannot say that the polarity of the restricted and the imagined have been forces in active conflict. Rather, the absent possibility has been present only as the implications and effects of its absence.

S1, for example, in articulating the theme of 'not defending himself', was not initially aware of a conflict between passive and active sides of himself. He merely realized that being theme-bound in this manner limited a freer responsiveness to the complexity of life. In forging a new interpretation, he engaged in more defiant possibilities, something which may be considered 'opposite' to his previous mode-of-being. However, as his self-understanding and engagements became more refined, he was able to achieve a perspective in which the meaning of such opposition became blurred. This occurred as he found grades of engagement that were in the range between 'over-assertive' and 'self-demeaning'.

Although the approach of this study cannot support the essentialistic aspects of Jung's theory whereby the 'template' for the more complex and integrated self-understanding is in some sense innate, we could say that the hermeneutics of complementarity is an ancient endeavour, and that it is not surprising that the myths and stories of many cultures may assist us in our task. However, given the increasing complexities of industrial life, it is probable that new resolutions of the human and the technological will have to be forged in imagination and action.

6.4 DIALOGUE WITH THE NATURAL-SCIENTIFIC TRADITION

In the introductory chapter, a detailed critique of this tradition in relation to psychotherapeutic research was offered. It was said that a more hermeneutic approach would understand the 'truth' of psychotherapeutic self-insight in a different way to natural-scientific conceptions. It is in the light of an alternative perspective on truth that the present section will attempt to answer the question: in what sense were the subjects' self-insights true?

Heidegger's meditations on the essence of truth resulted in a perspective in which the 'true', in its most general sense, could not be simply defined by its opposition to the 'false' or 'untrue'. The possibility of truth is shown to rest on the free disclosedness of that which shows itself. Such disclosedness requires an open region in which the 'space' for something to be, is. Heidegger has characterized human existence or *Dasein* as the 'there' which is the domain of disclosedness. In locating disclosedness in human existence rather than in some abstract 'transcendental ego', one understands disclosedness as always attuned in some specific way; it never occurs (as if it were possible) from any and all points of view at once. Disclosedness of truth is therefore always situated.

Further, the nature of the disclosed, or what becomes specifically unconcealed, is made possible by what is concealed as a whole.

Thus truth, as the specifically unconcealed, is supported by the

concealment of many other things; there is always a 'more' to truth and this 'more' is hidden. Heidegger likes to say that truth and untruth always occur together:

> "The concealment of beings as a whole, untruth proper, is older than every openedness of this or that being. It is also older than letting-be itself which in disclosing already holds concealed and comports itself towards concealing" (Heidegger, 1978, p.132).

In this context, the question about the truth of self-insight is not properly formulated as: is this self-insight true or false? Rather, it may be better formulated as: what is the specific way that this insight reveals? This perspective bypasses the question of whether the truth of an insight is 'complete' or 'absolute'. Rather, it asks what is the nature of the situated truth that this insight brings?

The truths of therapeutic self-insight in this research study were not explicitly about the subjects' relationship to God, the chemistry of their own physiology under conditions of change, nor many other things which may enhance a sense of personal identity. Rather, the specific truths centred around the vicissitudes of their historical and interpersonal lives and questions about its value. Such questions included a consideration of whether the form of such historical, interpersonal life was inevitable in the future, and what obscured the actualization of a freer destiny.

In what sense can the answers to these questions be considered 'true' or false'? Clearly the insights freed the subjects to the extent that it showed them a way forward. They revealed a 'true' way forward. The question about other ways forward cannot, in the context of this argument, deny its truth. In the way forward,

the world opened itself and revealed further profiles of its depth. The 'letting be' of further depth may require us not just to resort to a criterion of truth, but also to 'merely' stand in wonder of yet another unknown face of things. As it flashes by, I ask 'was it true?', ready to invalidate in the endlessly reluctant mood of science.

6.5 DIALOGUE WITH RELATED EXISTENTIAL THEMES

6.5.1 Self and Other

(a) Buber

Buber proceeds by describing the most human possibilities of interpersonal relatedness, and then considers their possibilities for distortion and truncation. Object-relations theory, with its developmental emphasis, begins with immature forms of relating in infancy, and attempts to show how this develops into less objectifying relationships as one matures. One may engage in a debate as to the extent to which object-relations theorists are able to provide a vision of human relatedness in which the other is allowed to be radically other and not just an internal representation.

In Buber's existential-phenomenology, the other is never complete as an internal representation but always calling one from otherness to find out more about the humanity of the 'between'.

The results of this study would support a vision of the irreducible ambiguity of self, others and situations. It

demonstrated that the subjects in psychotherapy achieved a sense of freedom in the toleration of open-ended situations - where the 'between' could not be reduced to a predictable and totalized dimension. When old theme-bound patterns of relating were questioned, they were not simply replaced by a new definite expectation. New interpretations of living-with-others was allowed to historically unfold in a more open way; more than one possibility could occur. This multidimensionality which 'comes from' the future, allows an interpersonal other that may have a new face to show. To avoid such uncertainty is to avoid not only what is existentially given, but it is also the avoidance of a source of vitality and creativity.

Another implication of Buber's contribution is that he showed how our humanization (and dehumanization) is always a gift (or deprivation) from others. In talking about the psychotherapeutic relationship, the subjects of this study specifically noted how the therapist came to embody a possibility for human relating that was different in some important way from the way the client had objectified or been objectified by previous significant relationships. For example, S8 could not objectify the therapist as a 'conquest' and thus faced the limitations of her 'I - it' relationships. S1 characteristically expected to be an object of criticism and his therapist offered the 'gift' of a more non-judgemental gaze.

(b) Merleau-Ponty

Merleau-Ponty has lucidly described the productive distance from

ourselves that is given with human perception. The present research showed how the clarification of a self-image or self-project was central to the kind of self-insight that could establish a sense of personal agency and more choiceful living. Such clarification required the therapist and client to work together in such a way that the client could achieve the distance from his living in order to see her/himself within a context. The movement that is facilitated is from merely being *in* one's living and *as* one's living to being a familiar spectator who is taking time out to gain a metaperspective on one's living. Such productive distance is an essential component of psychological life. Romanyshyn has shown how our participation as a figure in a story requires times of distance as well as times of unreflective engagement.

In this study, S1 spoke of the importance of becoming aware of his own manner of presence. However, he also spoke of how a pre-occupation with his own manner of presence could prevent him from more spontaneous living. This suggests that the distance in which the self-image/project is seen, should not become overly valued as an exclusive goal to be achieved. Distance gives freeing power but should hopefully surrender itself again to more intimate possibilities of engagement. The gift of such distance to more engaged living is in the feeling of choice and 'owned' commitment.

(c) Heidegger

Heidegger's thoughts on *das man* and conscience provide a helpful perspective for considering the results of this study. The

descriptions have shown how the subjects became more aware of interpersonal forms of relating that they had not freely chosen. Such an understanding provided a standard for self-enquiry. The subjects invariably differentiated or refined their manner of interpersonal engagement. For example, S2 became increasingly aware that she could sometimes be a 'witch' as well as a 'good girl'. Such self-differentiation often requires people to risk the experience of greater aloneness or intimacy. S8 was required to face the potential vulnerability of real intimacy. In following a desire for greater independence, S4 risked the experience of separation by increasingly fighting for herself.

The question that may be asked is, why did these subjects not simply remain within their traditional and 'passed on' ways of relating? An in-depth qualitative study into the experience of 'wanting to seek psychotherapy' would be informative in this regard. It would provide some interesting profiles of how conscience ontically appears. In the present study there are some indications that the experience of 'not being true to oneself' had been vividly felt in some way. For example, S1 had already felt how much the world claimed him in terms of his pre-occupation. In other cases, subjects were only aware of forms of suffering in which the call from their 'ownmost' possibilities had not yet been recognized as such. S2 did not initially realize how much she was always trying to please others and how this was inhibiting a more uniquely personal expression; she merely felt victimized.

The results of this study would support the conclusion that we begin the movement towards more self-differentiated living by acknowledging the forms of our embeddedness in *das man*. The

distance of self-reflection questions such necessity and serves to open up other possibilities. The results further indicate that the new possibilities that are opened up often include some important motives and desires that were contained in the previous forms of interpersonal engagement. For example, S3 re-evaluated a previous motive of mistrust within a more legitimate context. S8 found a new possibility for actualizing her desire towards intimacy.

Finding some continuity with one's previous engagements in this way helps to preserve one's historical foundation and make such foundation one's own. If one were not able to 'positively reframe' one's heritage in some way, one may be condemned to become an 'astronaut', seeking excessive independence from one's old ways of being, like a perpetual adolescent.

6.5.2 Time

The descriptions of this study would suggest that although the subjects developed increasing insight into their past - how repetitive themes were historically contextualized - it was the implicit constitution of the future in the light of this past that restrictively informed their lives. The power of the past thus exists in the way it structures expectation. S3's guardedness was a 'bearing' that was informed by early sexual exploitation. Such a bearing lived most directly 'in' the implicit expectations she brought to new relationships.

As therapeutic self-insight unfolded, the subjects attained a

relationship to the future that was more authentic; that is, a future that could reveal new possibilities and not just the repetitive themes of the past. In such cases, the future became a realm of possibility which could attain a quality of progression. For example, a dream showed S6 a possibility in which her previous expectations of interpersonal loss were not borne out.

By remembering earlier occasions of a restrictive theme, we often find how decisions to conduct oneself in a particular manner may have been understandable and appropriate at the time. We may also come to understand how such forms of engagement can become a source of inflexibility in new situations. S5 became aware of how the disjunction between his 'good' public self and 'bad' private self, although historically intelligible, reduced him to a child-like powerlessness in relation to significant women.

The kind of therapeutic self-insight studied thus appears to appropriate temporal horizons in a more authentic manner - the present becomes open to the past as an informed foundation, and the present also becomes more open to the future as an inviting possibility.

6.5.3 Freedom

The descriptions of this study articulated a greater sense of freedom not just as a capacity for choice and will, but as an opening of a more ambiguous self and world in which a greater range of possibilities were shown. Such a range of possibilities became clarified as the nature of the restrictions were

acknowledged and thematized. Thus, consistent with the conception of 'thrownness', the subjects first found how they were already situated. The 'language' of possibility appeared to be formulated in response to such a theme. Generally, subjects found that restrictions were not as inevitable as their previous expectations had allowed. Indeed, in finding such restrictions, subjects already claimed a degree of freedom by becoming aware of their own agency in perpetuating the form of engagement. This helped to restore a sense of self as a teleological agent, rather than a merely passive recipient of unpredictable events. For example, in becoming aware of how she listened to her daughter in an excessively literal way, S7 paid more attention to the way she communicated, thus experiencing herself as less 'reactive'.

The kind of therapeutic self-insight that has been articulated in this research study is thus a 'negative path', in that possibilities are forged by *finding* restrictions, and not by avoiding them. Even in those therapeutic experiences where a new possibility was experienced before the previous restriction was fully thematized, the new possibility came to be articulated against the 'back-drop' of the restriction.

Although themes of restriction and possibility are dialectically articulated, this does not necessarily mean that there is an energetic thrust towards the complementarity of opposites, as Jung theorized. The 'vitality' of polarity may be better expressed as a phase of self-understanding in which a transition is being made. However, the world of more ambiguous possibilities is not itself inherently polarized; rather it is multiple and transcends polarized interpretation.

The kind of difference that can be made by the opening of a more ambiguous world is that it is inclusive rather than exclusive. It takes what is already there and recontextualizes it within a larger framework. In this larger context, there is something old and something new; something changed and something the same. For example, in re-articulating his motives as his 'instinctual life', S5 was able to find a place for his aggression, but the way that this feeling was expressed, changed.

The subjects in this study generally experienced both a 'freedom from' previous theme-bound ways of being, as well as a 'freedom for' new forms of engagement. For example, S4 achieved a greater sense of separation from her sister, and this freed her to engage with others in a new, less avoidant manner.

The greater sense of ambiguity that is opened up can facilitate both a sense of hope as well as a sense of anxiety; hope, in that new situations show themselves to have different qualities from that of the oppressive background; anxiety, because such new situations require a more different and complex response. In this regard it may be remembered how S1 found hope in questioning the authority of those who criticized him, yet also experienced the anxiety of not always knowing the difference of when to fight and when to relax.

Clients in psychotherapy may thus often pass through a 'twilight zone' in which the 'freedom from' previous restrictions is being achieved, yet the committed 'freedom for' new ways of relating are still being differentiated. In such a phase, the therapist needs to help the client tolerate the experience of ambiguity so that

he/she is not too tempted to cling to the old oppressive yet 'known' profile of things. It would also be important for the therapist not to provide too much direction at this phase. If the client's form of commitment and creativity is to be authentic, then it must carry the weight of personal choice. Otherwise, the duration of therapeutic dependence would be excessively extended.

The results of the present study would suggest that clients may have the most difficulty in achieving the 'freedom from' previous ways of being, and that the major therapeutic breakthroughs occur in this area. The capacity for commitment and creativity, the freedom-for, seemed to be easily taken up once a more ambiguous self-world relationship had been achieved. For example, after having achieved a more ambiguous perception of women, S5 committed himself further to his girlfriend by having a discussion with her about the need for mutual forgiveness.

6.5.4 Emotion and Language

The descriptions of this study indicate how unthematized emotional existence refers to a particular tacit understanding of one's personal situation. For example, S6's initial experience of confusion became thematized to help her understand how her own sense of stability was bound up with a secure relationship with her son.

The results would suggest that unthematized emotional existence constitutes an important point of departure for the pursuit of authentic self-insight. In this regard, it may be remembered how

S1 spoke first and foremost about his sense of shame in important interpersonal situations. Subsequent self-insight gained authenticity to the extent that it could speak to this sense of shame.

Emotional qualities thus serve as an ongoing intuitive reference for the kind of language that can authentically reflect one's concrete situation. In this study, metaphorical themes that were suggested by dreams and feelings, may be said to have the qualities of poetical discourse in that they retained continuity with the way things appeared in experience. For example, S4 metaphorized her confusion as a looking into a mirror and not being able to see anything. A dream which S5 had which showed him as both a 'good guy' and a 'bad guy' helped to clarify his sense of frustration. It could be said that dreams are one form of *Befindlichkeit*, in that they speak of our ways of being-in-the-world in a holistic manner.

In a poetical discourse where the qualities of experience are retained, there is both understanding and feeling. If such a balance is not respected, self-insights could be excessively cognitive. On the other hand, if feelings are merely evoked but not understood, then such feelings may be condemned to a literalistic expression with its short-term stress-release. In such a case, the truly de-literalizing work of the integration of nature (desire) and culture (self-making) would be thwarted. For example, in finding a language that could reflect her desire for intimacy more fully, S8 was relieved to be able to express this desire in a way that could accommodate others more fully than before.

The descriptions would also indicate how our reflective self-understandings can be out of touch with, and misinterpret the more prereflective understandings of our emotional existence. For example, S4's reflective understanding of herself had been that she was an independent person. Yet in attending to her emotional existence, she discovered that she had a need to emulate her elder sister.

Language which serves to connect the reflective with the prereflective dimensions of one's existence unifies our divided selves, and as such, facilitates a further movement towards unambivalent personal agency. By re-membering and thematizing the significance of her sexual exploitation, S3 felt less guilt-ridden about her 'guardedness'. She felt more unified and less ambivalent in taking on this stance.

A language that gives metaphorical qualities to experience also gives more possibilities for engagement. S6 metaphorized the 'contours' of his restrictions in such a way that revealed his partial perception of women, its historical context, a 'bad' private self, and assertive possibilities that were truncated. Such metaphorization already expresses things in terms of what can and cannot be done, and as such, provides the 'space' of possibility.

The transformative power of metaphor is thus in its possibility-making. Possibility-making de-literalizes our fate. Such language is the 'child' of freedom and extends the multiple horizons of things.

6.6 THE WAY THAT THERAPEUTIC SELF-INSIGHT TOOK AUTHENTIC ROOT IN THIS STUDY: SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THERAPISTS

1. The new possibility for being-in-the-world is authenticated by how it becomes validated by experience in the lived-world. In this regard, Dillon (1983) has some good advice for therapists:

> "At most one can point; the world must do the rest. At most one can show; the world must do the convincing" (p.30).

In this regard, unpredictable experiences may play an important role - there is always a place for the 'gods' in the growth of liberating self-insight.

As one important validating dimension in the world, the therapist embodies an invitation to a new possibility for relating. If such an invitation is to be willingly accepted, it would not have the characteristics of a mere confrontation. Rather, the therapist would respect the 'negative path' that makes room for such a possibility to be freely taken up.

2. Therapists can be helpful by not losing sight of the client's self as an active rather than passive dimension, even when the client has been discouraged and lost sight of his/her own agency. Even when the client is lost in being 'too responsible' for things, he/she needs to recover agency in this regard as well.

Therapists who are sensitive to the authenticating foundation of *Befindlichkeit* may help the client to begin to recover a

sense of agency by focussing him/her back on his/her own manner of presence to things.

3. Explanatory constructs such as 'catharsis' or 'cognitive restructuring', which separate the body, mind and emotions, may provide a focus for therapists that could limit their sensitivity to the complexity of existential appropriation. The hermeneutics of complementarity requires the appropriation of temporality, freedom, otherness and the other existential dimensions already discussed. As such, the appropriation of meaning is well assisted by a language that retains continuity with feeling and understanding, the reflective and the prereflective. An appreciation of poetic language as the language of the 'between' may be helpful in this regard.

4. Possibilities are authentically grounded in the clients' aesthetic sense of their existing situation-as-a-whole. New possibilities present their authenticity to the extent that they aesthetically 'answer' the need. Sensitivity of the therapist to this 'negative way' is helpful. If not, the client may be encouraged to take on a new possibility on the strength of rationality or on the basis of the therapist's vision. Such rationality or vision may be 'sensible' but it would be too theoretical and lack the necessary aesthetics.

5. An existential-phenomenological perspective on time may encourage the therapist to be theme-centred rather than event-centred with regard to the past. Also, it may be helpful for the therapist to be aware of how the past can be

re-appropriated in the light of emerging possibilities. A sense of the supportive interdependence of the three 'ecstasies' of time can be helpful in this regard.

6.7 THE VALUE OF THE KIND OF THERAPEUTIC SELF-INSIGHT THAT CARRIES A GREATER SENSE OF FREEDOM

In the introductory chapter, a hope was expressed that when the nature of therapeutic self-insight is more fully described, it may express an intrinsic value. In opening up more ambiguous horizons, the value of therapeutic self-insight may be understood as the recovery of a less specialized world and a less specialized self. By approaching the complexity of personal identity, the authority of the way one has been objectified is questioned.

The spirit of technology has required specialization and objectification. Whereas this spirit has been helpful in extending our arms and legs, our sight and hearing, our tools, it has also facilitated a distance from things. Things are to be seen by their specialized usefulness - the paper in the trees and the price of the land. 'Human resources' are acknowledged to be a crucial commodity in the design of production.

As such, the spirit of technology is in danger of prescribing a sense of our value - in our specialized usefulness - where we become subject to a task that can 'operationalize' our meaning. We may fix our vision on where we fit into this machine-like enterprise. We could adapt to such a reality, as stress-release

is provided, and deviations could be accommodated.

In this context, the value of therapeutic self-insight is anti-technological in the way it remembers personal identity. This does not mean that it denies technology a place, but rather that it asserts the primacy of unspecialized possibilities in the experience of self:

> "Psychotherapists must necessarily face the fact that while dominant cultural trends require us to adapt ourselves to a technological world, to be able to think technologically in order to survive at all, the other life of mankind goes on all the same" (Kruger, 1986, p.193).

Psychotherapy within this perspective can thus never be merely a psychology of adjustment or a psychology of behavioural efficiency. Rather, it is an emancipatory psychology which would exhort us to resist objectification and specialization as being inadequate to our essential calling.

6.8 CONCLUSION

The general description of this study describes therapeutic self-insight as a work of thematization, of poetical discourse. Such thematization preserves presence and forges possibilities; it is a circling through. It locates limits and freedoms; it temporalizes - gathering the three ecstasies of time to show a grounded future. It begins by a negative path - in clarifying restrictions in interpersonal engagements, expectations and feelings. It recovers self-agency while preserving a sense of historical continuity. The validity of new possibilities are supported by the invitational presence of the therapist and by

the lived authentication of its themes. It reveals a more ambiguous self-world relationship, making authentic choice visible. It recovers a non-specialized self that is 'for' many things - for self and other, freedom and limits, feeling and language, history and possibility. It thus wishes to recover the great self of 'care' and as such, would remember its beginnings before the machine of technology grants it a mere place within the specialized usefulness of things.

Appendix 1: An example of Meaning Units and their articulation into Transformed Meaning Units.

S2: a 33 year old female:

Meaning Unit	Transformed Meaning Unit
Subject (S): 1. What comes to mind when you asked that was the realization when I ended therapy, well sort of towards the end, was that I spent a lot of my time trying to seek approval, trying to keep people happy, trying to be a peacemaker, trying to avoid conflict situations, trying to protect other people. It took quite a while to get to that stage because in therapy sessions there was a lot to discuss, a lot to talk through and it was really what I expected what was going to come out. It wasn't a direction that I expected therapy to take at all. In fact it, I think why I found it unexpected was that there was, the onus was on me. I think what I came in expecting was a lot of sympathy and a sort of, 'there, there attitude', we are going to fix everything up and you are going to go out feeling better and yes, definitely the world is against you. But it didn't work out that way. I came to realize that I was creating situations myself that was problematic.	1. When S came into therapy, she was expecting sympathetic confirmation that she had been a victim of certain situations. She came to realize that, in this regard, she was also creating situations herself that were problematic. Realizing her active role in her interpersonal situation included a number of interrelated themes: that she tried to seek approval, that she tried to avoid conflict situations, and that she tried to protect other people.
Interviewer (I) Let's focus a little bit more on that. So you came to see that you had been living in a certain way and it was somehow important for you to see that you had been living in this way. Could you talk a little bit more about what you saw about the way you were living?	
S 2. It was very much a feeling that I am one of life's victims.	2. The feeling of having been 'one of life's victims

You know all these dreadful things happen to me. When I came into therapy it was a feeling of not coping really. I hand ended a very long relationship with a man. We had in fact been married and even though this had happened two years before I went into therapy it was something that I hadn't resolved yet. I still felt a lot of anxiety of what had happened. I certainly was in no position to get involved in any kind of intimate relationship with another man and that was beginning to worry me. I hadn't resolved that relationship. My feelings were, especially when I started talking about it again, a tremendous sense of self-pity and I think that I wanted my therapist to say to me, you have got every right to feel miserable, life has been dreadful, yes. In all sorts of other relationships, I felt that in family relationships, I was with my brother, his wife and my brother's step-daughter, that I was taking on a load of their emotional problems as well. Yes, this feeling that everyone was dumping on me. To a certain extent my mother and father, but that is something that I have resolved quite a long time ago. My sister's problems I was taking on. Also undertaking to do an Honour's degree and not feeling very confident about my abilities. Just generally feeling victimised by everybody and everything. Coming in feeling terribly sorry for myself just wanting to latch on to someone or somebody that can show me the way out.

centrally involved a sense of self-pity with respect to a failed marital relationship. This theme spread to other family relationships and task situations where she would 'generally feel victimized by everybody and everything'.

I
That is what you were hoping for and feeling you were wanting? And then you saw something and

realized something which freed you in some ways? Could you talk a little bit more?

S
3. This didn't happen very quickly, in fact it took quite a long time to get to that stage. Very painful as well. Initially it was a lot of unloading, there was a lot that I had to unload. At the age of thirty-three you have a lot to unload. I remember reaching the stage where I said to my therapist that I have actually had enough talking about the past now and I was really quite tired of talking about all these things that happened. I wanted to get onto something else and that does stick in my mind. Of course he didn't make any suggestions and things sort of developed from there.

3. It took her quite a long time in therapy to get to a stage where she saw things which freed her to some degree from this sense of 'victimization'. She spent a significant amount of time talking over the past.

I.
You seem to be saying though, just before we carry on, that it was somehow important that you talked about the past? Or you don't know about that? How do you feel?

S.
4. It was important because I was trying to convince my therapist that I genuinely needed to see him because I wasn't altogether sure that I really deserved so much of his time and that really I was just being whining and neurotic, so in order to justify my being there I felt that I had to bring out, just unload all this.

4. Talking over the past, especially her relationship with her husband, was painful, and there came a time when she had a clear feeling that she wanted to distance herself from the past.

I.
Are you saying that this was a question for you about whether you needed to see someone or not and this was a question in your mind and you were trying to work out this question?

S
Yes, I do remember on a number

of occasions saying to him that I am wasting your time and I really think that I should go. This isn't serious and I think that I was trying to get him to say, No, no, no, you do have a problem, do stay, and he never did say that. It was a case of leaving it up to me and I certainly felt that my problems weren't serious enough to warrant that kind of, to warrant therapy in any way.

Continuation of theme '4'

I.
You are saying that that came to a stage then when you said that you felt you had been talking about your past enough?

S.
Yes, at that stage I wanted to carry on. It took quite a while to get there, quite a few sessions. In the beginning I refused to talk about my relationship with my ex-husband at all. It was painful and I didn't want to talk about it. I spoke mainly about what was happening here and now and what brought me to see him and then it was inevitable, I had to bring all that up. So, to get back to what I was trying to say is that it took quite a long time to get there. But I did reach the stage when that was it. I didn't want to carry on digging and going through all the past. I wanted to move from there, it was a definite

Continuation of theme '4'

feeling that I wanted to get away from all that now. I wanted to distance myself from them and what tended to happen and quite comfortably so, was that there was a going back and looking at things and progressively seeing the things of my past in a different light. So there wasn't a refusal to go back it was just that it was a conscious decision to say, no more of the past, no more unloading.

I:
You said that you did come through this process and you did come to see your past in a slightly different light? Could you try and say a little bit more about that?

S:
5. Yes. Yes, by looking at and exploring present relationships, present feelings, interactions, I started making connections and would say to my therapist, you know this reminds me of when I used to do this and that with my husband, or I had this kind of reaction. Then I would dig that up again and would re-examine and re-explore. Also what tended to happen quite a lot was, in therapy sessions there was a lot of churning up and it was very emotional and I have never felt that I was thinking very clearly in therapy and it was something that I felt quite guilty about. I did have a feeling though quite a lot of the time that I had to produce the goods as well. I had to be a good girl and, oh my thoughts are going in a thousand directions, let me just follow that one up. This is something that I brought up with him. This wanting to be a good girl in therapy. And we made the connection that this was very much the way that I was reacting and a whole lot of my interactions with people wanting to please and trying to suss out in some way what they expected of me. What my role was meant to be, and then quite willingly taking on that role and being a person for other people.

I
Right, so you are saying that through going into your past and looking at your present as well, you made connections and you saw this pattern emerging in that not only were you doing this between you in therapy, that you were looking towards him to look for some kind of

5. By exploring present relationships, present feelings and interactions she began to see a theme that informed both present and past situations. The form of this theme was that she very much wanted to be a 'good girl' and that she would willingly take on the role that others expected of her. This theme first became articulated in terms of the therapist-client relationship. She became aware that she was trying very hard to 'produce the goods' in therapy in order to please her therapist. She then became aware of this theme occurring in other situations as well.

guidance about how you should be for him and you also realized that you did this with your other relationships with your ex-husband and this started, you started seeing all of this? What was it like for you to see this? Was this the first time that you were seeing this?

S:
6. Yes, because this is something entirely new. I didn't see that because I did regard myself as being passive. And doing that seemed quite an active thing to do. Actually doing something that I wasn't being done to, whereas I had always assumed that I was being done to, whereas getting that kind of insight, I was actually taking an active role.

6. Seeing this theme was something new. In seeing this, she regarded herself in a less passive way. The insight made her feel more active regarding the nature of these interpersonal relationships.

S:
7. But to get back to another point that I was making that in the therapy sessions, it was very emotional, very disjointed and I was grabbing at things here and there and there was no, I was not being coherent and logical, the good girl. But what I did find that after therapy when I was at home inbetween sessions, the sort of churned mud settled down again but it was never the same. My best experiences in terms of therapy happened outside of therapy. It was pretty painful in there while all this churning up was going on but afterwards it was all shaken up and it looked different and a lot of my thinking, my coherent thinking was done outside therapy based on what happened there.

7. Another significant component which appears to have supported her freer emergence, was that her mode of engagement in therapy was at times different from her project to 'be a good girl'. At times she was 'emotional, disjointed, grabbing at things here and there, not being coherent and logical'. She was able to order these experiences between therapy sessions and this felt to her to be an important part of the therapeutic experience.

I:
Was that important to you?

S:
8. Very important. To me that was the most important part. Things were brought up that I

8. Thinking about her feelings between therapy sessions was important because she could

could take back to therapy again. Yes, it was almost as though I created another side to myself that was acting as a therapist to me. In interactions with people there was an awareness that I had never had before. It had an echo in this other side that was being created for me. I could see myself more clearly in interactions, when I got upset, when I felt happy, I was constantly analysing myself which of course got to be a bit painful at times because it interfered quite a bit in my work and I was so pre-occupied with myself and in fact, I did end therapy early because of that, you know we were going to carry on for another month but I asked if we could end because with exams coming up I was a bit concerned about that. You know this pre-occupation about myself.

I:
Right, so this feeling that you started seeing that what you were doing in your life was much more active, this thing about feeling victimised, you came to see it as a much more active process than a passive thing? You are saying this in retrospect? Did it, was there a stage where it became clear as a kind of awareness as an articulate awareness or did this emerge fairly gradually?

S:
9. It did emerge gradually because I am still working on it. It didn't happen on a Thursday afternoon when I went out and said, well right this is the way I am working with people. I must talk about something else that happened in therapy which is actually quite harrowing to me and which really threw this whole thing up. That was what it was all about. I developed quite a strong attachment towards my therapist. This went on for

then gain some distance from her emotions and see herself more clearly.

9. An important breatkthrough occurred which facilitated further insights about her interpersonal style. She became aware that her growing feelings of affection towards her therapist were restricting her openness with him. This led to frustration and she eventually expressed her feelings towards him. Exploration of these feelings were permitted by her therapist, to her great relief. Such permission further enabled her to openly aticulate a longing for a 'strong supportive person to take

quite a while and started screwing up my therapy. I felt terribly dissatisfied with what was going on, simply because of what I was doing. I was holding him away. It was a kind of a flirtatious attitude, 'I am preserving the mystique, I won't let you find out the bad things in me, I will only let you know about the good things' and it was such a superficial interaction and I was, for about a period of a month, I was getting absolutely nothing out of therapy. I wasn't interacting at all. It was a terribly uncomfortable feeling and I was really quite willing to carry on until I knew therapy was going to end which meant a couple, like three months, and just realised that I couldn't carry on like this anymore. It was so stupid. So I told him about it which was an amazingly difficult thing to do. It really was horrendously difficult. I went through the most hideous anxiety and I told him how I was feeling and it was a tremendous relief once I had told him because at least it was out in the open and in a sense I felt right, there you are, you take it and see what you can do with it. Then based on that, connections started being made. Very, very pertinent connections with the past because what comes to mind was this strong dependency, wanting a strong supportive person to take control of my life so that I can sit and let all be done for me, and we spoke quite a lot about my relationship with my father once that came out, with my ex-husband, with my friends, male and female, with my family and the way that I was relating to my therapist was a duplicate of, so the similar kind of thing happening all over with all my relationships. But certainly that was, it sticks out as being the most significant

control of [her] life so that she could sit and let all be done for her'. A theme of 'dependency' became articulated between therapist and client where the pertinence of this theme was related to her ex-husband, her friends and family. This experience stands out for S as the most significant in her therapy. What was of crucial importance, was that the expression of her affection did not scare her therapist away. She did not have to deny or be ashamed of her longing.

Continuation of theme '9'

experience in therapy, was the development of this feeling towards him and actually not losing that feeling. Even though I have admitted it to him I expected to be rejected and despised and I really thought that I have frightened the guy off forever, but he was still there and because of that we were able to explore other relationships.

I:
There have been a number of really important experiences that have happened that churned you up that you had to work through which revealed certain themes which sort of emerged gradually. You seem to be saying that this experience with your therapist, and telling him about it, actually revealed a whole lot of new themes in connection with your father and your ex-husband and things like that. Did seeing these themes, did they free you in any way?

S.
10. Freeing me is a better way of putting it because I certainly don't feel free yet, I feel freer. Yes, there was, after I got over the intense agony of the whole confession, that was the first emotion, that, the horror of what I had done, once that had subsided and he was still there and everything was okay and we carried on working and I could sort of go around that experience and work with it, yes, then things started happening which started the whole freeing process and in relationships and interactions being with my family, there was, I could see what was happening, there was an exhilaration. I remember feeling this tremendous sort of bubbling up feeling like I know what is going on, I know what is happening.

10. It was exhilarating for her to have the understanding of what was going on between her and her family.

I:
Did that free you just knowing what was going on? Could you talk a little bit about how that freed you?

S:
11. It freed me from, and I must say again it is not a finished process. In interactions, my father, let's take him for example. Seeing, responding to my father in a certain way would make more sense to me and his response which would ordinarily hurt me and really tear me apart sort of found a place to stay inside me and that was alright and I could see why he was doing that and why in the old days I would react the way I had and that was, it was, there was sadness rather than hurt or anger or guilt in my interactions with my father. He could still say things that annoy me but now it is annoyance and a sadness rather than that searing hurt. Then because I hated him so much, feeling terribly guilty that kind of thing just doesn't, I don't think that it exists anymore now in our relationship and that to me was so meaningful because going home for weekends, I think, Oh! God! I hope he doesn't upset me this weekend. Now I go home and I don't even think that anymore. And when something does happen it is a ...

11. One example of how this understanding helps her is in her relationship to her father. She would, in the past, become very hurt or guilty when she couldn't please him. She is now more aware that wanting to please him so much is grounded in her desire to be the 'good girl' and to never show her more 'shameful' or (what she considers) 'bad' side. She chooses more and more not to live within the constraints of this self-image.

I:
What did you have to see about your relationship with him and people in general that actually freed you somewhat from the hurt and the guilt?

S:
With my father it was, it always was a feeling of, I want to be, all he wants me to be

and more. It has always been the way that my father does expect a lot from me and always wanting to be the very, very best for him and feeling so hurt in spite of all my efforts I could never be the best for him. I always fell short and constantly being reminded of the fact that I fell short of what he wanted. It was terribly hurtful. Never being able to talk to him about it. That was something else. Never being able to say, you know just leave me and being able to say to him that, you know I am me I am doing the best that I can and if it is not good enough for you it is your problem. It is not my problem anymore.

I:
What made you able to say that to him that you could never say that before?

S:
I think it was the realisation that I kept my 'bad' away from him. This is quite a difficult one. Never really letting him see, to the extent that I allow my mother to, never allowing my father to see the hurt, the sadness, the pain, the things that go on inside of me. Always presenting the cheerful happy daughter, working hard. When for instance, I hand in an essay and expect to do well and I don't do well, it is: 'oh! Dad I only got this mark', not saying: 'it hurt, Dad, I wanted a better mark'. Never wanting him to see the bad in me. Always being good, and bright and cheerful and the rest of it. I always felt that he couldn't handle it and I didn't want to make it worse for him. I didn't want him to see that side of me because it was just too threatening. Which is why I could never speak to him. Never admit to him that I am bad.

Continuation of theme '11'

I:
This seemed to be a theme that you talked about more than just in this context, that you wanted to keep the bad away. You wanted to keep it inside and I am interested in what enabled you to feel that it was okay not for you to have to keep it inside, there must have been some kind of feeling that you had to keep it inside and a place where you started discovering that you didn't have to keep it inside, and it wasn't as inevitable or that there was another way or something like that?

S:
12. It wasn't one thing.It was a number of things like it was incidents that were drawn together. It wasn't just one, it was a gradual realisation that I can allow the bad out. I remember just prior to a session with my therapist I lost my temper with my niece and I was terribly upset about it. I came to that session feeling raw because I screamed at the child and it was really dreadful. I don't lose my temper. I fear showing my anger. I must say that I don't anymore. I feared at the time to drop that good picture and behind it they will say: 'oh! my God! look what is behind there'. I just showed that child the witch behind the picture and felt hideously guilty about it and I think that I spoke about it the whole session and then I came back to him a couple of sessions later, and I said: 'oh! by the way, I am still my niece's favourite aunt'. I wanted to tell him that it had been resolved and then we picked up on that and then, and that is when I began to realise that I didn't destroy her. That bad inside wasn't that awful, we survived and then I decided to be braver because I was experimenting

12. There were other experiences both before and after her confession to her therapist that contributed to a growing realisation that she could allow the 'bad' out. She remembers that she had once lost her temper with her niece just before a therapy session. She felt guilty about this and spoke about it in therapy. She felt like a witch but in subsequent discussions, she realised that her anger hadn't been significantly destructive to her niece. This insight further encouraged her to take risks by expressing herself more openly with close friends. This is an ongoing endeavour.

with what I had found out. I wasn't going around losing my temper with everybody but it was, I have problems in new relationships and I started trying things and taking risks, that is what we called it. I started taking risks more with people and it was amazing because it worked. Not all the time but when it didn't work, it was something to think about and taking risks and showing even my close friends, close friendships that I have developed over this year, saying that I am going to show right now, I don't feel like doing that and I am going to show it and I am going to say it and finding out that it worked.

I:
This leads onto a further area that I want to ask about and that is whether you can talk a little bit about the situation of therapy, what it was about the way that you worked together or about the situation of therapy that enabled you to see what you saw.

S:
13. I think first of all it was, what I perceived about the person that I was talking to and, you know it is crazy I have it all in theory, I read about it daily in my books but actually experiencing it is just such an amazingly different thing. A person who can be warm, supportive and you can feel everything is okay. Actually seeing it happen was absolutely amazing, it can't be true. What have I done to deserve this and, it was that feeling that it was okay and "I am next to you and I will be there if you want me and just being able to go, just go anywhere and do anything."

13. The situation of therapy: A permissive space where 'all sorts of things could happen' and the feeling that the therapist would be there - his reliability and consistency.

I:
Earlier you said that what you

expected was someone just to be sympathetic, there, there and make you feel better? You are saying that this is slightly different to that? Can we focus on that a bit?

S:
Yes. Yes. When I came in that was what I wanted, what I felt I needed, what I would have liked. I certainly didn't get the 'there, there, Uncle will sort it all out'. I certainly did not get that. I did get that warmth and support what I was looking for and it was, I looked forward to my sessions sometimes but just to have that space in which it could all, all sorts of things could happen and the feeling that this person would not let me down because he never did. He was just there.

I:
Was there anything else?

S:
14. I got annoyed with him on a number of occasions because I didn't like him just to sit there and um and aar at me, I wanted him to say, yes you are right in thinking that or no,you are off the track. I wanted him to guide me in some way. Then again that was eventually revealed as being a problem of mine anyway. Looking for guidance and being scared to just do it myself.But there were occasions where he did respond, he did talk and was wrong. It wasn't right for me. He would go back on something that I said and come up with what he thought I said and then often times that it happened I thought just to please him I will say yes, that is what it was. That of course didn't work out in the end. Because invariably that was thrown up two or three sessions later but I did on a number of occasions not challenge him when he was wrong. There were occasions when I did challenge him and we would sort something out that way.

14. Sometimes there were frustrations in the relationship. She wanted to be given more guidance at times, but she gradually learnt that this theme was part of her desire for dependence and passivity.

S:
15. But he did on occasions, and I realised it, and I realised why he was doing it. He wouldn't allow me to drag him in because when he did it was an escape into my head and he would fall into the trap a number of times. I would get him to do it, especially when it was becoming painful for me, I would catch him unawares and I do admit that I played terrible games with him and I would trap him and immediately I was let off the hook and I could go into my head and leave emotions behind.

I:
You are saying that it was important for him not to always let you do that?

S:
Yes, in retrospect it was important that he didn't let me off the hook because I would reach a stage where to go any deeper would be really hurtful. If he had let me go, a lot of new things would have come out and we would have discovered things and worked out things but it was too threatening for me and I would use a whole lot of techniques that I found succeeded before. But not all the time, because he soon wised up to what I was doing. He refused to be drawn, he used to have these long silences which in a way, as soon as it became a contest of wills, I was let off the hook again because when I started talking it was way, way from where I was. So when he was quiet there were times where I thought: 'well I will show you'. I feel quite embarrassed telling you all this. I did develop quite a few techniques to get away from the very hurtful part.

I:
So you are saying that there were times although there was this warmth and acceptance there

15. There were times when he would challenge her to face her feelings when she was talking in an avoidant way. He would do this by refusing to get involved in this way, by remaining silent or by means of an interpretation.

were times where the interaction was quite challenging? They were quite painful at times? You weren't somehow saved from them? You wouldn't save yourself from it?

S:
16. From those very deep hurtful things? No, no, there were times when I couldn't get out of it and I was in a corner and I just stayed there and he kept me there.

16. Facing her situation was often painful and she often attempted to keep away from the hurtful parts.

I:
So therapy wasn't only the source of good feeling although there was this warmth and this acceptance? Some painful things...?

S:
17. There were some very painful moments and in spite of my trying to get out of them yes, I was kept there and it was right and once that had been gone through it was a tremendous feeling of relief and achievement, and that was very important, that sense of achievement in having done something scary and risky and painful and having come out and to find him still supportive and warm and not running away in terror.

17. She was also able to risk the discomfort of facing her situation and this constitutes a sense of achievement for her.

I:
So what enabled you to go through this painful uncomfortable kind of delving?

S:
18. You know it depended very much on what was happening in that particular session. It depended so much on my mood on my motivation, on what had happened before, how much thinking I had been doing inbetween sessions and the session would start off and I would be almost ahead of where we were and there was, it was almost as if the ground had been prepared and I wanted to get in

18. The psychotherapeutic situation was often approached ambivalently in in that S valued the therapy and the person of the therapist yet sometimes found it uncomfortable, and did not want to be there.

there and I would stop and I just needed that push to get going again because I wanted to get there and a lot of it was self-motivation to get in there. Times when I came in and I thought I am not going to go into that, I am really not going into that and I had a definite feeling of areas that I wanted to be in and where I did not want to be. That was where difficulties came in, where therapy sessions were just awful and painful and it was a tremendous conflict between the two of us and he would say it. He would say, "you are getting into your head you are not getting where your feelings are." And I would say, "Yes I know I just don't want to be there." So a lot depended on my frame of mind when I came into a therapy session. But also on a number of occasions I came in resisting going into a certain area and somehow, that changing, and somehow it not seeming so threatening. I don't quite know how that change ever took place but I do remember occasions where I was determined that that was a no, no area. But then thinking, alright, maybe let's just see, and then finding myself in there where I didn't want to be. I really don't know how that was brought out.

I:
The final thing that I just want to end off with , were there things that you saw or understood that actually resulted not in a greater sense of freedom but in a kind of a sinking feeling?

S:
19. Yes. I experienced this towards the end of therapy. It is a sense of unfinished business really. There was, is/was a man that I was interested in in and told my therapist about it and then discussing his personality and my needs, investigating, and

19. S gets depressed when she sees her restrictive interpersonal patterns still operating She is grateful that she has more insight but is aware that her freer emergence is an ongoing process.

then suddenly realising that I was repeating a pattern, that in spite of all the progress I have made, the freedom that I had achieved, there was one pattern that I was still going through. I was still looking for that strong powerful person and that was so depressing. But in spite of it being depressing I was just grateful that I had seen it. Which is why I say that it is unfinished business, it is something that I still need to work out.

Appendix 2: Results of Pilot Study

1. Situated Structures of ten subjects responding to the question about self-insight in any situation

S1:

In a situation of bereavement, S was overwhelmed by sadness and allowed himself to cry and be comforted by other people - something which he had generally restricted himself from doing in the past. This was experienced as a release from the previous way he had 'held' himself. With this experienced freedom, something which he had always 'known' became 'real' to him, that is, he realized how important it was to feel 'cared for' at times like this. In the light of this theme, there arose a series of insights regarding his relationships with significant others in terms of giving and receiving care.

S2:

In a situation of psychotherapy in which he experienced a 'safe' place where he and the therapist looked together in the 'same direction' at his life, S began to see a constricting assumption by which he lived his life (that he was unloveable). A whole sequence of past events in his life became intelligible in the light of this theme. Seeing this theme corresponded with an experience of care for his situation in the form of sadness. The experience of realizing, something which 'connected or joined many things in his life together' also culminated in an experience of hope with the horizon of a new direction for the future.

S3:

In a situation of 'spiritual direction', the director invited S to consider the possibility of unselfconscious and guilt-free sexuality as a 'spiritual' act. This offered S a new way to understand a potential of her existence which was not organized around her previous self-imposed restrictions arising out of her up-bringing. In 'being open' to his suggestions, she found that a whole series of realizations about her body, what it means to be a woman, and a more incarnate form of spirituality were revealed to her. Over time, this changed the nature of her lived sexuality into a more guilt-free expression of this potential.

S4:

After a prolonged period of depression in which he was caught up in an attunement of unworthiness, S underwent a period of psychotherapy during which he experienced more fully how painful his existential situation was. Quite a while after he had terminated therapy, he was 'seized' by a flower which showed its continuity and harmonious relationship with all things in the universe. This was experienced as 'everything coming together', in an ultimately benign way in spite of himself and without his efforts. This experience came unbidden and initiated a deep optimism that the 'ultimate ground' in which we arise is benignly ordered. It was only a number of years after this experience when he encountered a body of knowledge and community of people, who could articulate and validate such a possibility, that he felt 'permission' to relate the experience to his every-day life. In so doing, his priorities re-arranged themselves in the light of this experience and a number of insights occurred about his life in relation to transpersonal callings.

S5:

In a situation of group therapy, S experienced herself as helplessly rejected and related experiences of abuse by her mother when she was very young. In the group she felt very hurt as she located herselfas unloveable. She also raged against her mother. After having expressed how things were for her, she suddenly realized that she not only hated her mother, as she had previously thought, but loved her as well. This experience culminated in a number of insights related to the difficulties and vulnerabilities of the person that was her mother. This changed the way she viewed herself: she had previously appeared as the person who was intrinsically unloveable; now she appeared as not having been loved because of her mother's restrictions. This was a great great relief to her and opened up the possibility that she could be loved.

S6:

In a relationship with a woman who was very independent compared to other women of previous relationships, S was faced with a limitation about his way of being which had not arisen before, that is, that he needed the constant reassurance concerning his masculinity which was given by more dependent women. In this life circumstance, he was not reassured in previous ways and this challenged him to find alternative possibilities of relating to a woman. This experience 'opened up' a series of realizations which 'made sense of' earlier relationships and situations which previously did not connect in any significant way.

S7:

In a situation of group therapy where S listened to a group of significant others appreciate and acknowledge him for behaviour

they approved of, S felt trapped: He enjoyed being appreciated but felt misunderstood and patronized at the same time. This situation was immediately followed by the counter-expression of another member of the group, by whom he felt understood. In the actuality of being understood, he experienced the 'unintentional violence' of the rest of the group and this led to an exuberantly angry series of insights as to how he had previously always allowed himself to be 'blackmailed' into accepting and actualizing definitions of himself because of the seductive approval of others. This resulted in an increased sense of strength and self-acceptance and opened up a number of insights regarding the previously unquestioned basis of his morality.

S8:

After having felt 'in darkness', isolated and unworthy for a long time, S experienced despair of ever finding a brighter world and a brighter self. She had kept her hopes alive by the transforming possibility of a religious life which could lead to the experience of the unconditional love of a historical figure who expressed divinity. Alone in a chapel during a situation of retreat, she experienced despair about the success of her own efforts and attempts to find a brighter world where her religious convictions could feel authentic. Remembering an instruction from her 'Spiritual Director', she realized that she had no option but to agree with his direction to 'not struggle with the darkness - but to let it be and acknowledge that this is where she is'. As she let go into her suffering and acknowledged her 'wretchedness' she found that she could still acknowledge God's compassion in spite of her wretchedness and that her suffering did not spoil God or mean the absence of God's compassion, even if it did not make sense to her. She could not be the judge of God's compassion. This experience changed her implicit view or perspective - that to embrace suffering is to affirm the absence of God, and this led to increased spiritual faith.

S9:

After an experience of feeling truly cared for by his female therapist in a motherly way (an experience which was chronically denied to him), S felt that he was perhaps worthy of her caring, and felt strangely 'forgiven' and relieved. This experience freed him to recollect a series of past situations in relation to his mother, where he was made to feel guilty. This experience of 'feeling cared for in a motherly way' then resulted in a series of moods and insights where were related to the reasons for his guilt, and to seeing the fallacy of these reasons.

S10:

After having lived a life in which she was looking for something to give meaning to her life, S met a group of politically oriented people who validated her suspicion that she had been living a 'narrow' life. Their representation of an alternative possibility resulted in 'opening the door' to a series of insights about how these possibilities related to her own life and, in this way, her direction became reconstituted with a sense of greater clarity than her previous direction.

2. General Structure:

Seeing something in a new way that changed the way he/she viewed or lived his/her life occurred when the person experienced the necessity for freedom from an existing restriction to his life, (this occurred through a variety of circumstances); or when the person experienced permission to be free from an existing restriction. After having achieved a *sense* of freedom (in a number of ways), the person experienced insight or a series of insights which clarified the nature of his/her lived restrictions as well as possibilities.

The nature of the insight/s connected previously unrelated experiences in the person's past into a significant whole in the light of the theme of the insight, thus giving a previously unseen perspective or direction to the person's life - either in reaction to what he/she was blindly living, or in continuity with what he/she was already living, but blindly so.

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