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RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND SCHIZOPHRENIA
IN MODERN MAN

AN EXPERIENTIAL THEORETICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In this study the psychological structures of two categories of religious and schizophrenic experience were examined from a phenomenological-existential perspective.

Existing theories describe schizophrenia as an un-free, rigid experience with limited possibilities for selfhood. Some theorists believe, however, that some forms of schizophrenia can be seen as potential growth experiences which could facilitate existential renewal. These forms of schizophrenia are mystical, mythical or spiritual in nature.

Religious experiences are, according to the literature, essentially renewal experiences facilitating existential growth and transformation through a particular system of thought and devotional relationship shared by a group of people.

The Duquesne phenomenological-psychological method was used to analyse seven case studies, four of which involved schizophrenic experiences and three which involved religious conversion experiences. The general psychological structure which emerged through this analysis showed both schizophrenia and religious experience to have specific implications for the personal, social, material and mystical dimensions of being.

The description of a specific psychological structure of experience which could optimally facilitate existential growth and transformation was attained by examining psychological structures where the subject's experience

culminated in existential growth and transformation (such as religious experience and certain schizophrenic experiences). As both these categories of experience displayed a strong mystical component, a psychological structure of experience which facilitates a transformative mystical experience was described.

It can be concluded that an experience involving a mystical dimension could be transformative if the general psychological structure of the person displays (a) an openness towards reality as it presents itself (b) an experience of oneself as having a measure of existential freedom (c) a certain sense of security in one's own selfhood and (d) a social world which could understand, support and reflect inner experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

The study of the human psyche involves investigations into the different manifestations the psyche can take on in the existence of the human being. This study will concern itself with two such manifestations - the manifestation of a mode of existence generally referred to as schizophrenia and the manifestation of a person's experience of religion. Although these two modes of existence are different in almost all respects, it is the similarities between them that prompted this research project.

Schizophrenia is one of the more dramatic of human existential manifestations. It is widely regarded as a serious mental disorder with extreme pathological features, and as such attracts a lot of attention from mental health workers and laymen alike. What is of importance here is that schizophrenia nearly always displays a metaphysical depth (van den Berg, 1986) which shows itself in the magical and symbolic thinking, clairvoyance, superstition, cosmic perceptions etc. of the schizophrenic. The structure of the schizophrenic experience has led theorists to conceptualize the condition as a religious experience (Boisen, 1952), mystical experience (Laing, 1967) or a mythical experience facilitating existential renewal (Perry, 1974, 1976; Lukoff, 1985).

The aim of this study is to examine this spiritual, mystical character of schizophrenia by relating it to the structure of the religious experience. This might shed some more light on the mystical experiences encountered in both schizophrenia and religious experience, which might, in turn, reveal a general structure of religious experience as it manifests in schizophrenia.

Chapter I will provide a general theoretical background of schizophrenia and religious experience. The concept of schizophrenia will generally be approached against the background of existing phenomenological and existential theories of schizophrenia. This approach will promote an understanding of the experience of schizophrenia in terms of life-contexts and life meanings, rather than models which en-

deavour, in the last instance, to reduce the complex experience to defence mechanisms, childhood fixations, neurological deviations, physical constitutions, chemical conditions and so forth.

Religious experience will be examined against the background of two important criteria. Firstly, the Christian religion is seen as representative of the most common of religious experiences encountered in modern western humans. Secondly, while the religious experience as a whole is studied, the lead offered by James (1902) will be followed by focussing on an intense manifestation of religious experience, representative of religious experience in general. The religious conversion experience will be examined in detail, assuming that it is somehow representative of a wide array of other religious experiences. The theoretical background will examine existential re-creation or transformation through religious experience.

In Chapter II, a brief outline of the specific research method which will be used to uncover the structure of specific experiences, the Duquesne phenomenological psychological analysis, will be given.

In Chapter III, seven case studies, four of schizophrenia and three religious experiences will be presented. These case studies will be analyzed according to the phenomenological method in order to reveal the general structures of experience of these two categories of experience.

In Chapter IV, will be a discussion of the material revealed in chapter III. The specific experience of the world as it is encountered in schizophrenia and religious experience will be explicated and related to each other in order to gain insight into the two conditions.

Finally, Chapter V will address the mystical dimensions of experience encountered in schizophrenia and religious experience.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 SCHIZOPHRENIA

1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Although the first mention of a condition similar to what is today known as schizophrenia, was made over three centuries ago (Geldenhuys and du Toit 1971) the concept of schizophrenia as we know it today, was initially defined by Emil Kraepelin in 1898. He conceptualized the condition as a deterioration of human faculties and used the term "dementia praecox" to describe what were, for him, the two major aspects of the disturbance namely an early onset (praecox) of a progressive intellectual deterioration (dementia).

The term "Schizophrenia" was coined by Eugen Bleüler in 1908. He chose this term, meaning 'split mind', to depict the emotional disturbances and disruptions in associative functions of the individual suffering from this disorder. Bleuler's approach to defining the condition by focussing on the essential features (or symptoms) rather than on the course of the disturbance is still widely used today. (Davison and Neale, 1984).

1.1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE CONDITION

In order to define the limits of the concept "schizophrenia", a description of the characteristic behavioural and cognitive patterns encountered in people manifesting this existential condition are offered here along the lines of the influential "Diagnostical and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Third Ed.)" of the American Psychiatric Association (1980). The DSM III defines Schizophrenia as the presence of certain characteristic symptoms, which are the following:

THOUGHT DISORDERS: This term refers to problems in form of thought (the organization of ideas) and content of thought (the actual ideas). Form of thought includes loosening of associations in which ideas shift from one subject to another completely unrelated or only obliquely related subject, without the person showing awareness that the topics are unconnected. Speech then becomes incomprehensible and inadequate, because it conveys little real information. Problems with content of thought involves delusions that are often multiple, fragmented and bizarre. Delusions can be described as "holding beliefs that the rest of society

would generally disagree with, or view as misinterpretations of reality" (Davison and Neale, 1982). These include the beliefs that one's thoughts are broadcasted, that other people's thoughts are inserted in one's head, that thoughts are removed from one's head and that one's actions are controlled by outside forces. These delusions often take on religious or magical forms.

PERCEPTUAL DISORDERS: The major disturbances in perception are various forms of hallucinations "sensory experiences in the absence of any stimulation from the environment" (Davison and Neale, 1982). The most common are auditory hallucinations where the individual hears voices arguing with him or her, running commentary on his/her actions or making insulting statements. Visual hallucinations are also sometimes reported.

AFFECTIVE DISORDERS: The disturbance often involves blunting, cluttering or inappropriateness of affect. In blunted affect there is severe reduction in intensity of emotional expression, while flat affect indicates that there are no signs of emotional expression.

MOTOR SYMPTOMS: Disturbances in motor activity includes strange facial expressions, peculiar mannerisms which involve complex movements of finger, hand and arm, and a decrease in reaction to the environment, called catatonic stupors.

SENSE OF SELF: The sense of self that gives the normal person a feeling of individuality, uniqueness and self-direction is disturbed. This is sometimes referred to as a loss of ego boundaries and is frequently manifested by extreme perplexity about one's own identity or by some of the specific delusions described above, particularly those involving control by an outside force.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE EXTERNAL WORLD: Frequently there is a tendency to withdraw from involvement with the external world and to become preoccupied with egocentric and illogical ideas and fantasies in which objective facts are obscured, distorted or excluded. This is commonly called a state of autism.

LIFE-FUNCTIONING: Schizophrenia always involves deterioration from a previous level of functioning in areas such as work, social relations and self-care. There is some disturbance in self-initiated goal-directed activity which may take the form of inadequate interest or drive, or inability to follow a course of action to its logical conclusion. Goal-directed activity can almost cease.

DISORIENTATION: The condition is usually preceded by a prodromal phase in which there is a clear deterioration in a previous level of functioning. This phase is characterized by social withdrawal, peculiar behaviour, impairment in personal hygiene, disturbances in communication and a general change in personality as noted by family and friends.

During the active phase of the condition, the symptoms as mentioned above, are displayed. The onset of this phase is often associated with a psychological stressor.

Usually a residual phase follows the active phase of the illness. The clinical picture of this phase is similar to that of the prodromal phase, although affective disturbances are more common in the residual phase.

1.1.3 DISCUSSION

The description of schizophrenia as given above, clearly articulates the medical viewpoint of schizophrenia as a set of symptoms regarded as signs of a disease or illness. When the individual's behaviour co-incides with this description, the behaviour is seen as falling within the boundaries of schizophrenia and the person is diagnosed as suffering from the illness.

Schizophrenia can, however, also be seen as a useful guide towards understanding a specific person's existence, and that is the option that will be taken here. This position is possible due to a phenomenological approach to psychopathology which regards the individual as a unique, whole person and makes it possible to have an openness to the patient's experience as valid and potentially useful. This approach will therefore seek an understanding of the structure of schizo-

phrenic consciousness in an attempt to make explicit the specific mode of existence categorized as schizophrenia.

The nature of a phenomenological-existential view of man will be discussed throughout this study, but it will suffice here to give some brief outlines of its philosophy. Van den Berg (1972) describes a phenomenological psychopathology. From this point of view, man is seen as inseparable from the world in which he lives. Man and world are always mutually implicated by each other. All behaviour is relational and intentional and man thus lives both in and as his relationships to objects, to his body and to his fellow men. This is also true for pathology which is an expression of the nature of the sufferer's relationships.

Human behaviour therefore cannot be comprehended in terms of a boxlike psyche or encapsulated entity (Boss, 1979). Human behaviour is the expression of the person's way of relating to his world his fellow men, the objects surrounding him, his body etc. Mental illness, then, is a set of relations the person carries out, and the specific nature of the mental illness (schizophrenia in this case) is an indication and expression of the specific nature of the person's relationships in his world, towards others in his world, things in his world, and so forth.

When conceptualizing schizophrenia from this point of view, the condition clearly acquires a new meaning. Schizophrenia becomes more than the manifestation of symptoms indicating a disease, it becomes the person's expression of the nature of his or her own existence at a particular time. It becomes an index of the person's relationships with others, the world, things and himself.

In what follows, an attempt will be made to explicate some aspects of Schizophrenia from an existential-phenomenological point of view. The perspectives offered by a few theorists will be discussed in order to come to an understanding of certain constituents of the phenomena underlying the complex set of experiences commonly referred to as Schizophrenia.

A. Ronald Laing (1967) defines schizophrenia in terms of social relations. He states:

...."the experience and behaviour that gets labelled schizophrenic is a special sort of strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation. The person has come to be placed in an intolerable position. He cannot make a move or make no move without being beset by contradictory pressures both internally, from himself, and externally, from those around him. He is, as it were, in a position of check mate." (p. 95)

Schizophrenia is therefore the result of problematic relationships with others. Laing sees the primary disturbances occurring within the family nexus and states that if one looks at the disturbed behaviour and patterns of communication displayed by the person, one can clearly recognise them as a reflection of the disturbed family pattern.

Boss (1979) sees as a characteristic of the schizophrenic experience the discrepancy between demands imposed by the existential situation on the person, and his ability to cope with these demands. Boss describes the schizophrenic as somebody who has been existentially overtaxed, thereby giving a related perspective on the experience of helplessness in the face of overwhelming and contradictory pressure from the environment as discussed by Laing.

Boisen (1952), describes the onset of schizophrenia "appearing as despair and hopelessness in view of personal failure in the world", while Rogers (1963) sees it as an inability to fully experience the noxious aspects of one's relationships with the world.

A characteristic of the schizophrenic episode is therefore the expression of the person's hopelessness and despair due to his or her inability to cope with the demands and pressures (often contradictory in nature) of the world and relationships in that world. The specific expression of this troubled existence can be found in the specific structure of the schizophrenic experience to be discussed below.

B. According to Boss (1979) the essential feature of schizophrenia is the abrogation of the most basic existen-

tial givens of man - his fundamental freedom and openness towards other human beings and towards the whole realm of the phenomena in the world. It is the primary realm of openness that makes possible any relation to that which is and will be encountered. A phenomenological view of the existence of a schizophrenic reveals him or her to be unable to sustain or maintain that open, worldly realm of the ability to perceive in the way that healthy human beings do. Neither in encountering nor in confronting their fellow human beings and the things that constitute the world of experience are they able to maintain the free stance characteristic of healthy people and healthy relationships.

Binswanger (1975) gives some insight into the schizophrenic's loss of openness. According to him, the basic concept in the schizophrenic existential pattern is a breakdown of the consistency of natural experience. This inconsistency manifests itself as a loss of openness to the world. According to Binswanger, natural experiences are the unreflected, unproblematic and unnoticed chains or sequences of events that characterize life. It depicts our sense of being in harmony with things and circumstances with others, things and ourselves, and manifests in our letting beings and things be as they are. This is the ability to reside serenely among things, to (in Boss' terms) respond with all faculties to the significance or meaningfulness of things and events and by this maintain a perceptive responsive openness. It is the ability to maintain a free stance towards things, an openness to what is encountered in the world and a will to help it unfold to its fullest extent. (Boss, 1979)

The inconsistency of natural experience, as often found in the schizophrenic consciousness, is an inability to let things be in the immediate encounter with them, the inability to reside serenely among things. These people are suffering from the fact that things are not the way they wish them to be, according to Binswanger. They persist in dictating the way they should be, and their mode

of behaviour is that of mere wishing and chasing after an ideal, an ideal of how things should be. Following the previous argument about schizophrenia as an expression of an unlivable existence, it is clear that this longing towards an ideal originates in there being no way out of existence (p. 253). The schizophrenic experience is a particularly dramatic and tragic representation of this state of having no way out, and the person is, in fact, tormenting himself in the search for ever new ways out, ways that cannot be effective because of the patient's particular life-situation. Even when it comes to a deed as a way out of the unendurably entangled life-situation, its futility is easily seen in its inappropriateness to the life-situation. (Binswanger, 1975; p.253). This is the essence of schizophrenic experiences.

Not being able to bear the inconsistency, the experience is now split up into alternatives, a rigid either-or. The person intentionally follows one side of the alternative through thick and thin, accounting for the extravagant ideals found in the schizophrenic consciousness. The ideals are extravagant in that it is completely inappropriate to the total life-situation and does not, therefore, represent genuine means. Being torn between both alternatives in which the aspect is split, it becomes a matter of being able to pursue the Extravagant ideal, or of giving it up completely. Following the ideal would result in failure due to its inappropriateness to the life-situation, while following the alternative also implies failure. The process is further complicated by attempts of the person to cover up the intolerable side of the alternative with a view to undermining the supremacy of the overstrained ideal. By this the ideal is buttressed (Binswanger, 1978).

Another characteristic of the schizophrenic experience is then the lack of openness towards the world, the disturbance in natural experience towards things which culminate in an inability to be with the world and things while letting it be what it is.

C. A further feature of the schizophrenic is already implicitly stated above. Since human experience itself is seen as open, responsive, ecstatic, it is this openness of human existence that makes possible any relationship to that which is and will be encountered. Herein is human freedom. When the openness of experience is encroached, the person is unable to maintain a free stance between his/her perception of what he or she encounters (Boss, 1979). Instead of being able freely to choose how to respond to the invitation of the world, the person has become a captive of certain features of his world openness, signifying a limited being in the world (Binswanger). His freedom is severely limited due to this extreme narrowing down of existence to a relatedness to one very limited aspect of his total world (Kruger, 1979).

The schizophrenic patient's lack of freedom explains his radically different experience of the phenomena in the world. What he encounters engulfs the schizophrenic, his whole being is threatened by others and things which overwhelm him. In this process his or her selfhood is being destroyed (Boss, 1979).

The loss of freedom as encountered in the schizophrenic consciousness also involves the person's experience of all his acts and intentions, his thinking, watching, listening as something passive, that is, he is being watched, being thought about, being listened to. His thoughts and actions are not his own, but are performed by others; he experiences himself as an object of the psychic activity and intentional acts of other people. This is an extreme expression of loss of existential freedom (Frankl, 1973). The depersonalization and loss of selfhood encountered in schizophrenia often culminates into an extreme effort to maintain a sense of selfhood, to hang on to identity.

D. This process of selfhood's being threatened, is explicated by Kimura (1984). The schizophrenic disorder reveals itself as the expression of an endangered possibility to be a self. The concept self has two different but inseparable aspects. In the first instance it refers

to that sameness of identity, the way in which, unbarred by never-ending inner and outer metamorphosis, "I always remain the same" (p. 193). "This aspect is not a completed given, but it is something that must be maintained. The second aspect of the self is the ever to be repeated act of returning to the self which thus enables one becoming oneself". "The identity of being a self owes its continued existence to the continuous renewed repetitions of becoming a self." (p. 193) This can only be accomplished if identity has already been firmly established. A dynamic complementary relationship therefore exists between the two aspects of the self, the one is based on the other which in turn is made possible only by the one. This is consistent with Kierkegaard's postulation that the self is a relationship which relates to itself.

The act of returning to the self "requires actualization through the encounter with the other.... the self must always put up for itself the "between" as a task to return to itself and fulfil this so that it can continue further its selfawareness up to now" (Kimura, 1984, p. 194). The schizophrenic patient suffers from an impaired identity of being, that sameness of being a self that makes this return to the self through the "between" possible. Because they are in no position to have confidence in their own being-a-self, they always endeavour to anticipate every intention of the other and every change of the "between". They cannot let things of the "between" be (Binswanger) but plunge forward in order to save themselves. For them "everything depends on seizing absolute initiative in every encounter with the other so that they can continually prevail" (Kimura). They must return to themselves at all cost.

This essential process is also explained in the work of Laing (1960). A split in the self occurs and the person sees the self as an act of returning or self in the between (Kimura) as a false self in relationship to others. The person's self relationship as it is encountered in the "between", his relationship with others becomes a false one through the treating of the interpersonal self as an

alien part of one's existence.

The person therefore becomes ontologically insecure. The person feels differentiated from the world, and ordinary circumstances of living become threatening to the person's identity of being-a-self. The person has what Laing calls a "low threshold of security" and experiences intense anxiety manifesting in three forms namely engulfment, implosion and petrification. Engulfment is anxiety about any relationship with another person threatening to overwhelm the person. The person's sense of self will be destroyed by relationships. The only way to maintain the self is to seize initiative in social situations in an attempt to control the situation and keep the self from being engulfed by the other.

The second form of anxiety implosion, is a feeling that the world is liable at any moment to crash in and obliterate all identity. The individual feels like a vacuum, where his emptiness can be invaded by reality. The person's relationship with his world is therefore based on fear. Petrification, the third form of anxiety is the dread of being turned from a live person into a dead object like a rock. This possibility is encountered in other human beings and relationships with them, and the only way to survive this onslaught is to depersonalize others in the world, thereby robbing them of their power to annihilate one, or to forego one's own autonomy so not allowing another person to take it away from one. The person becomes limited in his full humanity and leads to passivising of the own experience. The person may become a vehicle of a personality that is not his or her own due to the fact that he is forced to take on the characteristics others place on him.

E. Another dimension of the schizophrenic consciousness is related to all the previous aspects and is an overall expression of a troubled existence. It involves the concept of existences' being worn away, the culminations of antonymic tensions involved in no longer being able to find a way out or in, which takes the form of a resignation or

a refusal to carry on life involving such insoluble problematics. This is expressed by a resignation or refusal to carry on life and takes the form of an existential retreat. (Binswanger, 1975).

This "existential retreat" takes on the form of an extreme regression in all structures of existence. The depersonalization of the person takes place, not allowing him to maintain relationships with those around him any more. The person completely surrenders his selfhood in the hands of the world and others in it (Binswanger, 1975).

In this process the person's usual boundaries of existence disintegrates, "confronting the person with the boundlessness which is the true and ultimate form of our existence which in this then, reality presents itself to the person in a different profile." (Kruger, 1979, p. 152). In this "impossible" existence, following the work by Laing, the person can no longer share socially validated reality. However, he does not thereby cease relating to the world or perceiving the world in a meaningful fashion. The world just presents itself in a radically different fashion, in a completely different reality. (p. 162).

This different reality is often described as hallucinations or a loss of contact with reality. To say, as conventional psychology does, that an hallucination is a perception without an object, would be to overlook the nature of the experience of being able to hallucinate. Describing it as a subjective perception, is simply a way of discrediting the person's experience. The alternative offered here, is to "see the hallucination as a perceptual act by which an alternate profile of reality appears." (Kruger, 1979, p. 163). What is important in hallucinations, is that the person is alone in his perceptions. He is not able to share this radically different reality with someone else. He is therefore the only one experiencing a certain reality, therefore his experience is negated as a schizophrenic hallucination due to the fact that it cannot be validated by anyone else.

Similarly, the person who is misinterpreting his world

due to the processes of loss in natural experience and openness as described above, is alone in his world. His world consists of a different reality filled with meanings and possibilities not open to others who can share it with him. The person's experience is therefore described as delusional.

F. The final aspect of schizophrenic experience is therefore that it involves a social labelling process which leaves the individual isolated and excluded from interaction with others.

According to Boisen (1952), the schizophrenic is isolated from others in his world through a social judgement which he or she accepts and pronounces on himself or herself. The labelling-process of schizophrenic persons is explicated by Scheff (1966). According to his theory, the crucial factor in schizophrenia, is the act of assigning a diagnostic label to the individual. This label then determines the reactions of other people to the individual's behaviour. If the person is seen as disturbed by other people, his behaviour may be influenced by their view of it and the person may now accept the role of being crazy. The influence a diagnostic label has on the individual, may be permanent. This labelling process as a cultural phenomenon, is shown in the work of Rosenhan (1974).

The role of society and especially the mental health establishment in assigning the role of schizophrenia to the person is extensively covered by, among others, Szasz (1965) and Laing (1967). Once this label is attached to the person, he has no alternative but to accept the diagnosis and live as is expected from him by others. The role of society in labelling people as mad and then rejecting them or sending them to asylums, highlights the fact that schizophrenia is an essentially isolated form of existence, (v.d. Bergh, 1972), in which the person's experiences and behaviour are rejected and seen as symptoms of disturbance and illness.

The manifestation of schizophrenia is both a consequence of social isolation following the labelling of certain experi-

ences as mad, and the expression of the person's loneliness and isolation from his fellow human beings due to his radically different way of being-in-the-world. Loneliness can be seen as the central core of the sufferer's illness (v.d. Bergh, 1972), where the person's illness is both an expression and condition of his loneliness.

The question now arises whether the approach, as outlined here, can account for the psychiatric conception of schizophrenia as an illness, indicated by thought disorders, disorders in perception and affect, impairing in life-functioning, a loss of sense of the self and deviant motor behaviour as described earlier. The answer to this question can only be found by entering the disturbed person's world, conceptualizing his experiences and hallucinations as meaningful and coherent expressions of his experience of reality. Through this process the entities of health and illness become less and less important.

Because the individual having a schizophrenic experience can't share his reality with those around him, it is obvious that the others in his world will be suspicious about his concept of reality's differing from the concept of reality shared by the majority of people. From this vantage point, people will look at his behaviour as deviant and judge it to be indicative of a disorder of some sort. The behaviour of the schizophrenic makes sense when seen in the context of his experience of the world, but others, living in a different world, might judge that behaviour according to their experience of the world. In this judgement, the person's behaviour, affect and thought might seem inappropriate to the situation or world as experienced by the observer.

Herein lies the essence of phenomenology. To judge or evaluate a person according to either one's own experience of the world or the socially acceptable experience of the world is tantamount to understanding the existence of the person, and must therefore be overcome by different ways of observing people.

1.1.4 SCHIZOPHRENIA AS A HUMAN GROWTH-PROCESS

The conceptualization of schizophrenia as an existence in a different reality, as well as the dramatic recovery made by some people after a schizophrenic episode, led some researchers to believe that schizophrenia might be a human growth-process. The basic postulations of this viewpoint are generally as follows: The person, facing unbearable, often contradictory pressures and demands from his world, capitulates and withdraws into a different reality which enables him to "find his real inner self" and make sense out of his unlivable life-situation through mystical, symbolic and general religious experiences. Upon returning to the concept of reality being shared by the majority of people in society, the person has now mustered enough strength to face the pressures extended on him by his world, and a self-healing process has thus taken place.

Some of the major proponents of these views are Boisen (1952), Laing (1967), (1969), Perry (1974, 1976) and Luckoff (1985, 1986). The postulations of these theorists will be discussed in an attempt to come to an understanding of the major aspects of schizophrenia as a growth-process.

BOISEN

Anton Boisen (1952) formulated his theories after a few acute schizophrenic experiences in his own life for which he was hospitalized. He later recognised the schizophrenic episodes as sources of personal growth and renewal. According to Boisen:

... Many of the more serious psychoses are essentially problem-solving experiences which are closely related to certain kinds of religious experiences... (p. 54)
"They are attempts at reorganization in which the entire personality to its bottomest depths, is aroused and its forces marshalled to meet the danger of personal failure and isolation. According to this hypothesis the primary evil in functional disorders lies in the realm of personal relationships, particularly to that (relationship) which is for most men represented by the idea of God. The individual is characteristically one who has found within himself such marked deviation that he has been unable

to face the inner bar of judgement except at the cost of severe emotional experience... he is facing what for him are the great and abiding issues of life and death and of his own relationship to the universe. (p. 59)

According to this view then, man is faced with problems in his relationships with the world, others and God. These are manifested in the individual feeling himself isolated from others in his world, a feeling which is often caused by the individual's inability to sustain normal social interaction due to deviant aspects of the self. In an attempt to resolve the sense of personal guilt and failure as well as the intolerable loss of self-esteem, the person resorts to a different experience often culminating in a schizophrenic episode.

The emotional disturbance serves to break up malignant sets and attitudes and to make possible a new synthesis. Schizophrenia serves as

...attempts by regression to the lower levels of mental life to assimilate certain hitherto unassimilated masses of life experience. They represent the deliquescence of the old sets and attitudes which make possible new formations..... The acute disorder thus represents nature's attempts to get rid of the malignant sets and attitudes that are blocking development. (p. 54)

The acute schizophrenic reaction can therefore provide the person with a new set of attitudes or a new frame of reference which would provide the context for the person to reconstruct his or her reality in a positive, healing way. This reconstruction and personality growth can only take place during a period of disintegration of self, due to the fact that the person may need a dramatic breakdown of his previous personality structure.

Boisen also regards schizophrenia as an essentially religious experience. Religion provides man with a body of assumptions in regard to himself and the universe, which serves as the foundation of the reasoning process. There can be no mental functioning without a body of assumptions, and schizophrenia is an experience providing man with a set of assumptions which may form the foundation of his new

world-view. This accounts for some of the mystical features in schizophrenia, which serve as the context through which a fundamental reorientation in the development of the individual might occur.

LAING

R.D. Laing (1967) presents schizophrenia as a natural curing process, which is labelled as madness by society. According to Laing the person is threatened by contradictory pressures in his world. This leads to the formation of schizophrenia, which he sees as a split of experience into what seems to be two worlds, inner and outer. The "inner world" is the subjective way of seeing the external world and also includes all those realities that have no external objective presence like imagination, dreams, fantasies, trances. It is the realities of contemplative and mediative states. These are the realities that modern man, for the most part has not the slightest direct awareness of.

The "outer world" is the external world, the interpersonal world and the realm of human collectivities. This world is estranged from the inner world. The outer world is also fragile, superficial and likely to "burst", forcing the person to disintegrate in the presence of stress. Under the stress of the person's life-situation (a position of checkmate where the person cannot make any move without being beset by contradictory pressures) the person will stop experiencing himself in terms of the superficial, false self and will stop behaving as is expected of him by society. The person now retreats from reality (outer world) into his inner world.

Madness then, is a curative natural process which is:

....the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self completely adjusted to our social reality; the emergence of the "inner", archetypal mediators of divine power, and through this death a rebirth,which leads to the eventual re-establishment of a new kind of ego-functioning." (1967, p. 119)

This natural death and rebirth of the self is seen by Laing as a journey into inner space and time which entails:

A voyage from outer to inner
 from life to a kind of death
 from a going forward to going back
 from a temporal movement to temporal standstill
 from mundane time to aconic time
 from the ego to the self
 from being outside (post birth) back into the
 womb (pre-birth)

And then subsequently occurs:

A return voyage from inner to outer
 from death to life
 from backward movement to forward movement
 from immortality back to mortality
 from eternity back to time
 from self to a new ego
 from a cosmic foetalization to an
 existential rebirth.

The regressive changes passed through in schizophrenia therefore serves to provide the person with an authentic identity once he returns to reality. The ego, which is the instrument for living in the world, must first be broken up, destroyed, so that the person may be exposed to his inner world. Once the person has undergone this process, the encounters in the "inner world" may be the basis of a new, authentic self.

Laing sees the schizophrenic episode as a mystical, religious experience. The content of the inner self consists of long-lost and forgotten mystical, religious realities. Due to the secular characteristics of the world, one cannot believe in religious realities any more because it is not evident in the world. One must thus turn inward and make contact with the mystical realities of the inner world. This is a religious process, due to the fact that the schizophrenic experience co-incides with the notion present in all major religions of the experience of madness in a womb-like state to which one has to die and from which one has to be born.

The problem occurs for Laing when society invalidates this religious, mystical journey by calling it schizophrenia or madness. The person is therefore not understood by others, and this incomprehension in others, causes him to feel isolated and terrified. Because of the secularization of the world, society is unconscious and frightened of the

aspects of the inner world. Society has also lost touch of the natural healing process, and devaluates it by equating it to madness. The schizophrenic can therefore find no context for his journey of self-discovery.

Laing argues that society should accept the patient's experience as valid, understandable and potentially meaningful. The patient should be guided through this journey, and also be allowed to experience it in full.

PERRY

John Perry (1974) conceptualizes schizophrenia as a self-healing process, taking place in the intrapsychic realms of the self. Although he regards social labelling as a component integrated into the schizophrenic process itself and thereby influencing the progress and outcome, he finds no further grounds for looking at the schizophrenic experience in terms of interpersonal relationships and dynamics. He regards the relationships of the individual as exactly those aspects that went wrong, leading the individual to withdraw from interpersonal relationships and dwell in the intrapsychic while experiencing psychosis. The essence and nature of schizophrenia can therefore be found in the intrapsychic realms of the self.

Perry (1976) describes the self-image as it is encountered in people suffering from schizophrenia as a component in need of transformation. These people usually "have looked down on themselves as somehow faulty, not worthy of other people, unlovable and guilty." The self-image of these people involves a whole cluster of emotional issues concerning the self, and there is therefore a strong need to dissolve the self, to transform it. These people therefore strive to undo the unsatisfactory self-image, one that is not serviceable to the psyche under its current conditions, and to synthesize a new self-image that can meet the needs of the coming phase of the personality development.

Nature spontaneously provides a way for transformation of the self-image. This intervention is the cataclysmic turmoil of psychosis, which is designed to enforce developmental changes and a profound reorganization of the self.

The already weak ego, not free to create a satisfactory world for itself, is swept back during the schizophrenic episode into a state where components needed for growth present themselves and intrude into the field of awareness.

These components are presented in the forms of archetypal images, the only factor that has the transforming power necessary to make profound changes in the psyche and acts as a vehicle for all that must happen on the personal level. The person in this form of the renewal process, is participating in a ritual drama emerging spontaneously from the psychic depths, in which these inner images and processes of the inner psyche life interacts.

Perry asserts that our modern outlook resulted in people growing out of touch with these images and the process of renewal from our inside sources. This process involves emotions and feelings under the surface of consciousness. In the renewal process the archetypal image represents, actuates and transforms the emotions in the integrative process. It takes the form of a dissolution and reconstruction of the affect image of the inner center of the self, which culminates in a radical transformation of one's feelings about oneself; one's self-worth and one's self-image. This new integration on an emotional level is brought about by the schizophrenic episode itself.

Each transition from stage to stage in the human existence is a "rite of passage with an image sequence of death and a new birth, and thus each is an emotional cataclysm with more or less upheaval and distress". (1976, p. 40)

The schizophrenic episode follows this cycle with a specific sequence of rites and images common to the sequences found in ancient myths and religious metaphorical tales. It takes on the following form:

- (a) CENTER: A location is established at a world center or cosmic axis as the locus of where it occurs.
- (b) DEATH: Themes of dismemberment or sacrifice signifying a symbolic death, occur.
- (c) RETURN TO BEGINNINGS: A regression is expressed that takes the person back to the beginnings of time and

the creation of cosmos.

- (d) COSMIC CONFLICT: There arises a world conflict of cosmic importance between opposite forces of good and evil, light and darkness, or order and chaos.
- (e) FEAR OF OPPOSITES: There is a feeling of a threat resulting from the reversal of opposites.
- (f) APOTHEOSIS The person experiences an apotheosis as a king or messianic hero.
- (g) SACRED MARRIAGE: The person enters a sacred marriage as a ritual or mythical union of opposites.
- (h) NEW BIRTH: A new birth takes place as a reconciliation of opposites.
- (i) NEW SOCIETY: A new order of society as a prophetic vision is envisioned. This order has an ideal or sacred quality.
- (j) NEW WORLD: A new structure of world forms is established.

This myth is a metaphor for the schizophrenic experience undergone by the individual. The mythical nature of the experience is an indication of the holy, religious nature of schizophrenia, as conceptualized by Perry.

LUCKOFF

In this recent approach to schizophrenia as transformative or growth-experience, Luckoff (Luckoff and Everest, 1985, Luckoff, 1985) analyzes the symbols present in schizophrenia. There is a similarity in the symbolism found in schizophrenic episodes and the symbolism occurring in mythical journeys. He takes this as an indication that the so called "Hero's Journey" in mythology might provide us with a metaphor for psychoses. Psychosis can be conceptualized as a "journey into the psyche", following the broad outline of Perry's theory.

According to Luckoff, certain psychotic episodes follow the three-stage structure of the genre of the Hero's journey in mythology, and it further parallels the imagery found in myths. The 3 stages as metaphor for psychosis are as follows:

1. SEPARATION

Myths of the Hero's Journey begin when the protagonist re-

ceives the "call to adventure" and moves from the world of the common day to an unfamiliar zone.

This state involves a separation from society, a form of being not associated with being socially acceptable. This stage has a striking resemblance to the prodromal phase in the course of schizophrenia, discussed earlier.

2. INITIATION

The hero next enters into the realm of the supernatural, into worlds filled with spirits, demons, mythical powers and miraculous happenings. There he must survive a series of tests with the aid of newly acquired powers.

The characteristic "symptoms" of schizophrenia occur in this stage, where the person is existing in a reality clearly different from others. Symbolic imagery, resembling the metaphorical Hero's Journey essentially can be found in this stage.

3. RETURN

Having survived the initiatory ordeal, the hero must relinquish the mythical powers and return to the ordinary world, but with some enhanced qualities.

This stage has begun when the person sets foot into everyday conceptual reality. In contrast to the Initiatory stage, which is usually brief, years of additional work are usually required to integrate the experiences into the person's social roles and conscious values.

Luckoff uses examples to show how the person chooses a myth to guide and contain his or her experience. The tendency of psychosis to include symbols lacking universal relevance, is according to Luckoff an indication of personal symbol-forming. The symbols operative in the episode as well as the myths can act as corrective influences, mirrors which schizophrenic individuals can use to get their psyches, their minds, their lives more organized.

Luckoff (1985) distinguishes the transformative nature of psychosis or schizophrenia as a certain type of schizophrenia. He expresses the need for a new diagnostic category called "Mystical Experiences with Psychotic Features"

to be differentiated from "Psychotic Disorders with Mystical Features".

CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA AS A GROWTH EXPERIENCE

Drawing on the work discussed above, we can come to the following conclusions regarding the concept of schizophrenia as a Growth Experience:

1. Schizophrenia always involves an attempt to transform the self in the light of pressures exerted on the person in his or her relationship to the world, others, and self. In this, schizophrenia as an expression of a person's inability to cope with demands and pressures in his relationships is essentially the same for all schizophrenic experiences.
2. Some forms of schizophrenia involve a person's withdrawing into the intra-psychic aspects of the self in order to find answers to his existential problems. Eventually the self is transformed through the experiences encountered in the realms of the intra-psychic self. All four theorists quoted above, postulate this aspect to account for the radically different reality experienced by the schizophrenic.
3. The content of the person's experience is essentially spiritual, religious or mythical in nature. These three terms can be loosely associated together to signify the basic mystical character of the experience. This is another point of consensus among the theorists, and can also account for the different realms of reality in which the experience presides.
4. The mystical, spiritual or religious characteristic of the experience is something not openly and generally experienced in contemporary western society. Man's estrangement from the spiritual realms of his existence is the main reason why he has to resort to the radically different and highly distressing experience of schizophrenia to make contact with this aspect of his life. Western man's general estrangement from his spiritual aspect also explains the incomprehension and misunderstanding by others, and it

also explains the social isolation surrounding the schizophrenic.

5. Upon returning to the socially acceptable sense of reality, the person resumes a different set of relations with the world and others around him, largely due to the disintegration of his previous sense of self and its dissolution into a new sense of self. The person also assimilates the aspects of his experience into his new identity which eventually culminates in a different world view, conceptual framework or sense of reality.

The intrapsychic nature of the renewal process, as discussed in point 2 above, leaves one with a few problems. It assumes an inner process of inner drives and aspirations residing in a capsulelike psyche. This is, according to Boss (1979), an inadequate and inappropriate conceptualization for understanding human existence, largely because it is "hidden from view and therefore not open to real scrutiny." Theories about inner aspects largely rely on hypothetical constellations and philosophical constructions, which often represent the world view of the theorist. It further doesn't always provide qualitative, adequate understanding of the totality of human existence due to its reductionistic forms.

Interpreting this issue in terms of Husserl's notion of intentionality might open up a new perspective, though. If consciousness always intends an object, an investigation of the specific objects of an individual's intention might reveal a structure of consciousness which in turn will shed some light on the dynamics of the individual's existential transformations and growth experiences. Exactly this is what was attempted by this study.

1.2 RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

1.2.1 Religion as object of psychological enquiry

The psychological enquiry into man's religious aspects is severely hampered by the fact that religion has something of a supernatural nature, defying definition, comprehension or conceptualization on a psychological level. Much has

been said and written on this subject, and it will be a sidetrack to the real concerns of this study if this matter is pursued in depth. A brief clarification of the point of view expressed in this study is however necessary to outline the field of enquiry.

According to Batson and Ventiss (1982) religious experience, like other experiences, leaves observable "tracks" in the life of the individual. The psychologist (or sociologist or anthropologist) can study these tracks, as long as he or she is careful not to confuse the tracks with the originator of the experience. The religious experience, not the experienced (i.e. God) is amenable to scientific research. In the words of Kinget (1975), while man's religious concern is a "natural" phenomenon, open to psychological scrutiny, the object of that concern or urge lies in the realms of the supernatural and involves a set of attitudes and conditions of the person's faith which has special significance on another level. A psychological enquiry into religious experience will therefore limit itself to the psychological level, the person's experience.

1.2.2 Definition of religion

Psychological theories of religion are numerous and divergent. As early as 1912, James Leuba was able to catalogue forty-eight different definitions of religion, doubtless one could list many more today. A working definition must therefore be chosen carefully.

In choosing a definition to be used here, the following must be taken into consideration. Firstly, the definition should be wide enough to reflect the uniqueness, complexity and diversity of the religious experience. (Batson and Ventiss, 1982). The definition to be used should therefore be one encompassing as many elements as possible from the wide variety of psychological definitions of religion. Secondly, the definition must be functional or operational. It should, in other words, be open to phenomenological investigation.

A definition seen to be closest to these requirements, albeit not satisfactory in the fullest sense, is offered

by Erich Fromm (1950). He sees religion as "... any system of thought and action shared by a group which give the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion." (p. 29). This definition will be examined in more depth by focussing on each of the essential constituents.

Religion as frame of orientation: According to Kinget (1975) every man, whether he is religiously inclined or not, has his own ultimate presumptions, whether they are called ideologies, philosophies, notions or merely hunches about life. Such presuppositions exert creative pressure upon his awareness with questions as to "what all this is about" and "what is the meaning of it all, where is it all leading to". Questions like these arise out of man's need for completeness in the process of living. Man must give account to himself, of himself and of the meaning of existence (Fromm, 1950), he must answer questions indicative of ultimate concern (Kinget, 1975). Man must strive for understanding of the supreme value of his existence (Oates, 1973). Man has a universal striving towards an encompassing frame of reference, a system of orientation, a mental picture of the totality of his existence in time and space. This movement towards absolute understanding, this will to a synthesis and integration of all the dimensions of being, is man's ultimate search for the meaning of his existence (Fromm, 1950).

The universality of this religious urge is amplified by the universal occurrence of religion in history. The question, therefore, is not whether man is essentially religious, the question is what kind of religion is encountered in man (Fromm, 1950). Man's individual expression of the universal religious urge is the factor which accounts for the diversity of religious experience and it is these different expressions which attract interest from a psychological perspective. A psychological investigation into religion will therefore revolve around understanding how an individual personally comes to grips with specific existential questions confronting him or her.

This may pose a problem to the psychologist studying religion as it manifests itself in man, due to the diversity in existential questioning both across individuals and within a certain individual over time. The religious experience also takes on different manifestations and intensities across and within individuals. William James (1902) suggests that the approach in studying religious experience in man is to focus on the most dramatic and intensive experiences, for in them one finds most clearly displayed the psychological process also present in less dramatic experiences, both across and within individuals.

According to James, there is a certain process that characterizes all religious experiences, especially in its intensive and dramatic form. It consists of two parts (1) an uneasiness and (2) its solution. The first part takes on the form of an existential questioning, while the second involves a complicated existential resolution.

Religious concern from this perspective, is a manifestation of the individual's problems with reality, and his or her attempts at solving these problems involve an evaluation of the individual's existence within that reality. This evaluation culminates in existential questions about the nature of reality and the ultimate meaning of reality, questioning which is central in any philosophy of life. Meaningful resolution of personal problems will occur within the context of the conceptual framework or system of orientation arrived at by the existential questioning. The person's philosophy of life, and according to our definition, his or her religious understanding, will therefore be reflected in the resolution of personal problems.

Religion as being related to an object of devotion: This dimension of religion in man constitutes the essence of the object of man's religious urges. It takes on the nature of the Holy, and revolves around a sense of being grounded in the source of one's existence (Loder, 1981). As such it takes on the faces of God, Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed and so on, thereby accounting for the diversity in the practice of religion.

Freud's view of religion was based on reductions to this dimension of the object of man's religious urges. He conceptualized the Judeo-Christian concept of God as Father as an illusion based on man's childhood wishes for protection against threatening forces. Religion was therefore a danger according to Freud, as it was responsible for the impoverishment of intelligence and free will and it further puts morality on shaky grounds as one's ethical considerations depended on this relationship with a projected father-figure. (Fromm, 1950).

Jung's basic definition of religion as it occurs in man, involves a process of submission to powers higher than the self, a process of being seized and controlled by a power outside the self (Fromm, 1950). He awards the individual more personal freedom than Freud though, by depicting the process as a careful consideration and observation of certain dynamic factors that are conceived as "powers": Spirits, demons, gods, laws or whatever name man has given to such factors, and a devotion, love or worship to the factors considered meaningful, powerful or helpful. The experience of this God-image is given substance and form by organized religion, providing for the deep human needs of expressing the living process of the unconscious in the form of the drama of repentance, sacrifice and redemption. As such religion is a form in which the unconscious archetypes are expressed. (Fordham, 1966).

In this context, religion is the core around which one's frame of reference, system of orientation and set of beliefs are centered. It also provides substance and content to the orientation system weaving it all into a coherent whole around the source, the giver of experience. As this source (the Holy) lies on a transrational level of the supernatural, it is only indirectly approachable through psychological reflection. The specific form that a person's devotion to God takes on gives an indication of the psychological devotion, but it tells us little about the object of that devotion. Although the Christian Judaic concept of God as protecting Father may give rise to a

satisfaction of man's dependency needs, it is only an expression of the needs encountered in the person displaying this form of religion, it is no indication of religion as a whole.

This form of religion is what Fromm (1950) calls an authoritarian religion, a religion robbing man of his freedom because it was made in order to escape an intolerable doubt, it is a decision in search of security. Without a doubt this form of religious devotion as proposed by Freud accounts for the nature of many individual and group expressions or experiences regarding religious devotion, but it must be seen as pathological expressions of the religious urge in man and cannot be seen as an universal aspect.

In this context of this study the devotional aspect of religion is seen in terms of Fromm's concept of a humanistic religion, a religion conceptualizing God as a symbol of man's ultimate form of being. Man enters into a devotional relationship of respect with God in an attempt to gain understanding of himself and his world. God is a source or giver of reality around which man builds his system of orientation and forms his conceptual view of reality as a whole. Through interaction with his source, man is encountering the possibilities of a meaningful interaction with reality as it is manifested in his life. (Fromm, 1950).

Religion as shared reality: These are the conditions according to which any system of thought or emotion is classified as a religion. Beliefs and experiences, irrespective of their contents, are considered to be of a religious nature if they are shared by a group of people. Religion is therefore regarded as a social phenomenon, binding people with compatible experiences and thoughts together. By a common sharing of experience, the individual can make sense of his own experiences and belief systems and by this the individual's life is enhanced.

According to this social definition of religion, any shared system of orientation may be seen as a religion. Thus

Vitz (1977), argues that modern humanistic psychology functions as a religion, since it is a shared system of thought among millions of people. It also provides them with a framework of orientation (its implicit world-view) and an object of devotion (its commitment to the functioning and improvement of the self). Along the same lines one might argue that most modern movements or philosophies function as religions. Here one can think of Capitalism, Marxism, extreme Nationalism etc.

It is important here to note that the first two parts of the definition of religion discussed earlier, depend exclusively on this aspect. Any system of thought or orientation, any object of devotion can only be a religion if it is shared by others. Similarly this shared reality by a group of people can only be seen as a religion when it involves a system of orientation and an object of devotion.

This aspect of religion accounts for the tendency in modern religion for the move towards social forms of religion, "horizontal" models of religious concern where the emphasis lies on the sharing of religious experiences and the improvement of the self in its relationships with others. This model was preceded by a "vertical" model where the emphasis lay on the one to one individual nature of the spiritual relationship between the individual and his creator (Kinget, 1975).

The socially shared reality is therefore the place where the individual's experiences are validated as religious in nature. Depending on one's others in the world, certain experiences can be interpreted as either religious or deviating, the latter interpretation leaving the person isolated and confused.

This holds a special significance for the person suffering from schizophrenia. The DSM III states that delusions and hallucinations are difficult to distinguish from beliefs or experiences of members of religious groups, advising that where "such experiences are shared and accepted by a subcultural group they should not be considered evidence of psychosis" (A.P.A., 1980, p. 188). This under-

lies the conceptualization of psychopathology as the science of loneliness by v.d. Berg, discussed earlier. It secondly poses definite questions about the limits of normality and abnormality: As long as the individual is living in a different reality from others around him/her, he or she is considered mad, but as soon as it can be showed that his/her reality is shared by a few others, he/she may be considered to be having a religious experience. Abnormality is therefore not always something dependent on the person's experience, it depends on the social context within which his or her experiences occur.

1.2.3 Religious experiences as personal re-creation

Religious experiences essentially involve the restructuring and transformation of being in an attempt to deal with existential questions (Batson and Ventis, 1984). In the religious experience all dimensions of man's existence aims to disclose a new view of reality which in turn calls for new interpretations of reality and existence in it.

According to William James (1902) there is a certain "uniform deliverance" that characterizes all religious experiences. It consists of two parts: (1) an uneasiness, reduced to its simplest terms, i.e. "a sense that there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand and (2) the solution, a sense that we are saved from the wrongness by making a proper connection with higher powers" (p. 383). This then is a view of religion as a system of orientation grounded in a devotional relationship with the supernatural.

This sequence of uneasiness and solution can best be explained by following the lead of Batson and Ventis (1982) and Loder (1981) who described it as analogous to those stages involved in the creative problem-solving process of man. In this view, religious experience of personal transformation and re-creation is essentially a creative solution for an answer to life's problems and as such follows the creative process. The stages of the process are as follows:

1. CONFLICT

Religious experience is rooted in a dissatisfaction at an existential level. There is a discrepancy between what is and what ought to be, with regard to one or more questions of existence (Batson and Ventis, 1982). This dissatisfaction is initiated and brought to the fore by a conflict, signifying the dissatisfaction the person had had all along but didn't recognize. It must be added that this dissatisfaction, this discrepancy between what is and what ought to be, can be described as the primary dynamic that constitutes human life (Frankl, 1967) thereby pointing out that it is continuous ongoing tension.

2. SCANNING FOR ALTERNATIVES

At this stage the individual is searching out possible solutions, taking apart errors, keeping parts, discarding others (Loder, 1981). Sometimes the individual may try to overcome this discrepancy by using present or past modes of being in order to generate a solution (Batson and Ventis, 1982). At this stage the conflict is seen in all its facets and fuller or more comprehensive implications of the conflict are understood. By this the conflict is defined (Loder, 1984) and the intensity of the search for alternatives intensifies as the individual begins to realize that past and present modes of being might not apply to the existing conflict situation.

3. SELF-SURRENDER

Finding no viable solution within one's existing reality, one is driven to a point of despair and hopelessness. At this stage one's old way of thinking about the crisis loosens, and there is a general feeling that the self is no longer able to generate a solution. (Batson and Ventiss, 1982).

In the words of Wilber (1981), the self must "release or negate its exclusive identification" with the previous and present modes of existence, in order to allow a higher identification with a new mode of existence. The existing way of being must be dissolved in order to find new ways of relating to the world. This is necessary because the individual's structure of existence is too rigid, too de-

pendent on present structures to accommodate the possibilities of new structures of experience and eventually to assimilate these possibilities into the structure of existence itself.

There is therefore a disintegration of previous structures of experience in order to allow new structures to appear.

4. NEW VISION

This stage of the process can be described as illumination. It transcends the old ways of thinking based on old structures and permits a new way of looking at the elements of the crisis, and a new truth is revealed. (Batson and Ventiss, 1982). It is by this central act that the elements of the ruptured situation are transferred by a new perspective, perception or orientation-system.

The resolution of the crisis is conveyed by an insight, intuition or vision appealing to the person. Because it involves a transcendence of thinking, the new vision often seems to come from a transcendent realm outside oneself (Batson and Ventiss, 1982). It can be called a "constructive act of imagination" (Loder, 1981) by which the aspects of faith such as hope, belief, trust, are realized in the appearance of this vision, this act of approximating the existing problem within the context of one's belief-system. This is a manifestation of the sum of the content of one's religious orientation as it is applicable to the existing situation. It is an expression of the entire problematics as related to one's belief-system.

Here appears the aspect of religion dealing with the relationship to the supernatural, the Holy. It is through communication with this power, this source that the whole existence is grounded into a new, more complete, context, providing meaning and coherence in ultimate terms. During this phase the mystical aspects of religion commonly occur.

5. INTEGRATION

This step in the sequence is marked by the opening of the individual of him or herself to the contextual situation. This is the response of consciousness to being freed from an engrossing conflict. It is also made possible by re-

lease of all previous structures (stage 3). The individual, being more aware of the new elements in the situation, resolves the situation by integrating all insights attained up to now into the situation. (Loder, 1981). By this the individual's consciousness is transformed and a new understanding is created by a dramatic shift in reality. The occurrence of a dramatic shift in reality transforms existence, and the problem is resolved.

In this stage an integration of the whole process is researched. This is made possible by a "leap of faith" (Oates, 1973) through which one accepts the religious aspects of the religious nature of the problem-solving process. Summing up this process, the new vision allows the religious individual to return to the socially shared world with a new perspective which enables him or her to decide positively and effectively with the crisis-situation as well as a wider range of experiences than before. The person is transformed, recreated. This transformation can take on a negative appearance as well, causing pathological views of reality, when the individual returns to the socially shared world not being able to deal with life-situations or even worse, when the person doesn't return to the socially shared reality. (Batson and Ventiss, 1982).

1.2.4 Religious Experience as a Relationship

The explanation offered above gives an explanation of a series of changes or motions a person goes through when having an experience of a religious nature. The act of personal re-creation within a religious context is, however, also characterized by specific experiences about the self, God, the others in one's world etc. The specific nature of these experiences are what sets this experience aside from other transformative and growth experiences and give to it the character of a religious experience.

As indicated by the definition of religion described above, a religious experience has specific characteristics. It has the experience of the self entering into a devotional relationship with God, while there also takes place an experience of a new relationship with others in the world

who share similar beliefs. Changes in a person's frame of orientation takes place within this context, and must therefore be taken into consideration when religious experiences are studied. It is with this aspect in mind that a systematic study of the experiential structure of religious experiences must proceed.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study can broadly be defined as an attempt at understanding, from a psychological point of view, the ways certain modes of existence are lived by certain people. The research orientation to be used in this endeavour must therefore satisfy a number of specific requirements in order to fully achieve this aim. Firstly, this is a psychological study, therefore the phenomena under scrutiny must be understood more completely and comprehended more clearly than the way they are understood and comprehended in ordinary experience (Keen, 1975). Secondly, the phenomena under investigation will have to be conceptualized in terms of life-contexts and life-meanings. Other ways of viewing the phenomena might result in the reduction of complex human phenomena to neurological deviations, physical-chemical conditions, learnt responses, childhood fixations and defence mechanisms.

Thirdly, the individual's way of living his or her existence will have to be understood. This understanding must be as free as possible from hypothetical constructs and pre-conceived ideas which might change the way the individual's existence as lived by him or her, is understood. All attempts at understanding must therefore be directed towards the person's own subjective experience of his or her own existence. Fourthly, a comprehensive psychological structure of these experiences needs to be uncovered in order to attain a fuller understanding of the phenomena as a whole. This is the objective of psychological inquiry in general.

2.2 PHENOMENOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY

The term phenomenology refers to the psychological school of the same name, rooted in an European school of philosophy. Major proponents of this orientation are Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Satrè. Phenomenology investigates the ways events appear (reveal themselves) to people when all existing pre-conceived ideas and pre-reflective opinions are put aside by the researcher in an attempt to come to an undistorted understanding of the phenomena under examination.

This is, in Husserl's words, a "going back to the things themselves", an attitude where one is "letting the phenomenon speak for itself" (Miziak and Sexton, 1975). The phenomenological method is therefore concerned about the phenomena themselves and not theories about the phenomena which are obscured by one's own theoretical suppositions.

Implicit in phenomenological examinations are, however, some basic "minimum" suppositions about what it means to be human. Being a human being implies that one is responsible for one's own life, and that one is free to live it the way one wants to (Kruger, 1979). There is also the primary belief that all human behaviour is intentional, that is directed towards someone or something outside the self. This intentionality reveals the nature and structure of the individual consciousness, and the existence of the individual can therefore be found in the relationships he or she has with that which surrounds him or her, the life world. The concept of life-world is traditionally divided by phenomenological psychologists and philosophers into the "umwelt" (physical/material world), the "mitwelt" (social world) and the "eigenwelt" (personal world) (Valle and King, 1978). A brief definition of these dimensions will be given in order to provide a framework from which understanding will proceed.

The Personal world: At the root of the experience of all human beings lies a sense of self-awareness, an experience of selfhood. This is brought about by humans' reflective consciousness, their capacity for reflecting on their own experiences and how they relate to their worlds. Herein lies the basis of the self as a relationship which relates to the self (Loder, 1981). This reflective awareness of their world serves as an orientation of their experiences in that world, and provides humans with a centre of reference in their relationships, it gives them a sense of identity, an experience of a selfhood (Kinget, 1975). Being human, therefore, implies experiencing experience as part of a process of being a self, an identity. Reflection on own existence also involves an experience of being a self

in time. Time is part of existence in a special way. It gives a sense of orientation and continuity by providing the self with a sense of who it was, who it is and who it will be. Timeness is that aspect which provides a person with a stable orientation about himself or herself against other aspects of the world which change and move.

The Material World: The world inhabited by human beings also consists of physical things made up of matter. Being in the world implies existing amongst and with the physical or material proportions and things of that world. This material dimension of the world is further lived and experienced in the individual physical body. Existence is in this context defined by space, which is created by material entities or the absence thereof, as well as the nearness or farness of things. Human existence is this co-constitution between human beings and their surrounding world. The material world is experienced differently by different people, people are therefore subjectively involved in their worlds. These different ways the world presents itself to different people are the physiognomy of their worlds (Kruger, 1979), and it is also in this subjective dialogue between people and their worlds, the physiognomy of their worlds, that the nature of individual consciousness can be found. By revealing the ways the things of the world present themselves to a person, his or her nature can be understood (v.d. Berg, 1972).

The centre of interaction with the world is the physical body. The body therefore provides a sense of identity by being a concrete aspect of the self within the world (Laing, 1960). The way a person stands out towards his world can be found in his bodily posture (Kruger, 1979), in the way his or her body express his or her relatedness to the world.

The Social world: Human beings share their worlds with other human beings, and it is in this relationship with others that another dimension of human existence can be found. The extent to which a person's experiences are shared by others in his or her world will influence the very nature of the experiences themselves. The other per-

sons in a person's world have the task of confirming or disconfirming individual experiences (Keen, 1975). Others in a person's world can, by sharing his or her experience bring that experience alive and substantiate it as something real, existing and true. Similarly, the other person can invalidate, negate or disconfirm that experience by not sharing it, and thereby defining the experience as false, unreal, unimportant and so forth. By this act the individual's experience is destroyed, and he or she loses a part of the sense of self-hood (Laing, 1960) which is essential in the person's experience of his or her personal world. The physiognomy of the world also changes in accordance with the relationships with the others (v.d. Berg, 1972). The other can make the world appear differently due to the relationship he or she maintains with the individual. Even the extent to which a person feels part of his or her bodiliness changes through relations with other people.

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHOD

The phenomenological method works towards a description of observed phenomena. The phenomenological description has three specific components namely, intuiting, analysing and describing (Spiegelberg, 1972). Intuiting indicates an intense concentration on, or attentative internal gaze at the phenomena, analysing is finding the various constituents of the phenomena and their relationship, and describing is giving an account of the intuited and analyzed phenomena so that they can be understood by others.

The method of research which was used in this study is based on phenomenological psychology research methods developed at Duquesne University, Pittsburg U.S.A., and the specific framework provided by Giorgi (1985) is adhered to here. The framework contains four essential steps, which are generally expressed as the following:

1. After obtaining a description of the experience, the researcher reads the entire description in order to grasp a general sense of the whole statement (Holistic grasp of data).

2. The researcher then goes over the data with the specific aim of discriminating between certain units of meaning from within a psychological perspective and with a focus on the phenomenon being researched.
3. The researcher then expresses psychological insight contained in the different units of meaning directly in a organized whole.
4. Finally, the researcher synthesizes all the transformed meaning units into a consistent statement regarding the experience. This is usually referred to as the structure of the experience in psychological terms. (Giorgi, 1985).

The analysis of case studies are structured in the following way:

- A. The data is read through in order to grasp the holistic constitution of the description.
- B. Meaning units are discriminated within a psychological perspective and focus on the phenomena under analysis. By this the texts are broken down into manageable units. Meaning units usually discriminate between the different meanings present in the description with psychological criteria in mind, and are spontaneously perceived discriminations within the subject's description arrived at when the researcher assumes a psychological attitude towards the description. The descriptions are seen as examples of the phenomena under observation, and on analysis of the text "involves, the individual way in which the subject lives - that is behaves and experiences - situations" (Giorgi, 1985, p. 12). Each time a transition in meaning is perceived in the text with regard to this psychological attitude towards the phenomenon, the text is delineated. After this a series of meaning units can be discriminated. The specific meaning units are regarded as constituents of the total experience within a certain context, and shows how the experience is structured. This leads to a qualitative grasp of the personal, natural experience of the lived situation for the subject.

- C. The third step is the transformation of the subject's everyday expressions into psychological language. The intent of this step is to arrive at a general category of the description by going through the concrete expressions of the descriptions. These transformations are necessary because the descriptions of the naive subjects expressed, in a cryptic way, multiple realities and it is important to elucidate the psychological aspects appropriate for the understanding of events. The process takes place through a process of reflection and imaginative variation. One reflects on the possibilities offered by the meaning units in order to gain understanding into the structure of the experience. The essence of a meaning unit is searched for in order to estimate how the total experience is structured. Through discarding the different possibilities of meaning and experience through criticism and imaginative variation, one arrives at more general dynamics underlying the structure. This is expressed in general, psychological language.
- D. In the final step, the researcher synthesizes and integrates the insights contained in the transferred meaning units into a consistent description of the psychological structure of the event, firstly, specifically as related to the subjective experiences, and then more generally, as it is related to a specific phenomenon across individuals.

2.4 SELECTION OF CASE-STUDIES

The data of phenomenological investigation are, for the most part, written protocols or tape recorded protocols which are later transcribed into written form. The data contain descriptions by the subjects of their lived experience and behaviour in one or another situation(s). The written protocols are the "residue of the subject's experience which is available for the scrutiny of the investigator and his/her colleagues (Titelman, 1979, p. 84). The sources for data in this research were case-studies available in the literature. In the selection of specific case-studies, preference was given to descriptions where

the actual experiences of the individual were clearly articulated and/or adequate descriptions of the experiences were provided.

Three main types of case studies were used, based on certain criteria for selection. In the first type of experience to be examined, two cases of schizophrenia were presented. The criteria for selection here were case studies of persons displaying symptoms meeting the criteria for a diagnosis of schizophrenia, while also showing an accompanying decrease in life-functioning normally associated with schizophrenia. In the second type of case-studies, cases of persons experiencing positive existential transformation through religious experiences were presented. Religious experiences in this context provided the individual with a successful resolving of crises and conflicts in his world. In a third type of case-studies, two cases of people displaying symptoms of schizophrenia while experiencing positive existential growth and transformation following the schizophrenic episode were used. These people showed the same consequences as the second group while displaying symptoms of the first.

The case study material included direct case-studies from the literature, but there were also interpretations from texts. There were problems with a phenomenological analysis as far as certain cases were concerned, especially the case-studies of schizophrenia. The existence of people commonly referred to as being "schizophrenic" are described earlier as isolated, lonely and far removed from other people's experiences. It is sometimes difficult to get any meaningful information on the experience and meaning of experience from people suffering from this type of disturbance due to their often incomprehensible speech or sometimes lack of speech. Since the focus here is also on the degenerative course of life-functioning, there is very little self-expression on the actual experience of a full-fledged schizophrenic episode available. Consequently, case studies reported in the literature are usually given from the author's point of view and are interlaced

by interpretations of the behaviour and symptoms of the person. The actual experience of the person is reconstructed by "filling the gaps" created by his/her inadequate self-descriptions with interpretations of the behaviour and symptoms on display.

For this reason, the present study used case studies presented in the literature in a cautious way. The conceptualization of the person's mode of existence as displaying schizophrenia, were retained from the literature when that conclusion was satisfactorily reached by the author. Descriptions of the actual personal experiences of the subject as reported by the subject were analyzed according to the proposed method only when it could be asserted that the representations were relatively interpretation-free and value free, thereby making sure that the information was relatively true to the person's natural experience.

The presentations of the case-studies in the literature were also given in a form describing the people's experiences in psychological terms. These presentations of the data were retained thereby implicitly accepting the original author's attempts at presenting the case studies as closely as possible to the subject's own experience. Another problem arose from the fact that some data were obtained from texts and works of literature. The interpretation of texts branches into the domain of hermeneutical psychology but since the texts used consisted of directly-reported experiences by the authors, no clearly different methods of interpretation were indicated. Both case-studies and texts were regarded as a representation of the subject's unique, natural experience regarding the phenomena to be studied, and were therefore deemed suitable for a phenomenological-psychological analysis.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS FROM CASE STUDIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The results of a phenomenological analysis of the case studies as discussed in Chapter II will be presented in this chapter.

Case study A will be analyzed in full to give an example of the use of the phenomenological way of analyzing data. The method proposed by Giorgi (1985) is adhered to here. Only the situated structures of experience of case studies B through to G will be presented in the chapter. For an exposition of the naive descriptions and other steps used, see Appendix A.

3.2 NAIVE DESCRIPTION AND MEANING UNITS

CASE STUDY A: SCHIZOPHRENIA

This study is taken from Laing (1967, p. 120-134). It is a direct report of a schizophrenic episode in retrospect.

"Suddenly I looked at the clock and the wireless was on and the music was playing. And then I suddenly felt as if time was going back... the greatest feeling I had at that moment was of time going backwards. I even felt it so strongly, I looked at the clock and in some way I felt that the clock was reinforcing my own opinion of time going back,..although I couldn't see the hands moving...

I felt alarmed because I suddenly felt as if I was moving on a kind of conveyer belt - and unable to do anything about it, as if I was slipping along and sliding down a chute as it were and unable to stop myself. This gave me a rather panicky feeling... I remember going into the other room in order to see where I was, to look into the mirror at myself, and I looked in a way strange. It seemed as though I were looking at someone who was familiar but very strange and different from myself... Then I had extraordinary feelings that I was quite capable of doing anything with myself, that I had a feeling of being in control of all my faculties, body and everything else and I started rambling on ..."

(Then his wife became concerned and worried and he was taken to a psychiatric hospital.) "I was put to bed and I had the feeling that I had died. And I felt that other people were in beds around me, and I thought they were all people that had died and there they were - just waiting to pass on to the next department..."

I had quite extraordinary feelings of living, not only living but feeling and experiencing everything relating to something... I felt I was something like animal life and so on. At one time I actually seemed to be wandering in a kind of desert landscape as if I were rather a large animal... I felt as if I were a kind of rhinoceros or something like that and emitting sounds like a rhinoceros and being at the same time afraid and at the same time being aggressive and on guard... And then I went back to further periods of regression and even sort of when I was just struggling like something that had no brain at all and as if I were just struggling for my own existence against other things which were opposing me... And then at times I felt as if I were like a baby, I could even hear myself cry like a child...

All these feelings were very acute and real and I was aware of them in a vague sort of way. I was a sort of observer of myself but yet experiencing it... I found that I had periods when I came right out of this state that I'd been moving into, and then I had comparatively lucid states...

I found I couldn't read newspapers, because everything I read had a large number of associations with it. I'd just read a headline, and this will have very much wider associations in my mind. Everything that caught my attention seemed to start off everything moving into things so that it became difficult for me to deal with that... Everything seemed to have a much greater significance than normally. I had a letter from my wife. She said: "the sun is shining here"... and I felt that if it were, she was in a quite different world, a world that I could never inhabit any more - and this gave me feelings of alarm and I felt somehow that I'd gone off into a world that I could never move out of...

I had this intense feeling of being able to govern myself, my body and so on... I tested my powers with the man opposite me... I used to sit in my bed and make him lie down by sort of looking at him and thinking about it, and he used to lie down. I felt I had sort of tapped powers that I in some vague way I had felt I had...

I had a feeling at times of an enormous, fantastic journey in front and it seemed that I had got to an understanding of things which I'd been trying to understand for a long time, pro-

blems of good and evil and so on, and that I had come to the conclusion that I was more - more than I had always imagined myself, not just existing now, but I had existed since the very beginning in a kind of - from the lowest form of life to the present time, and that was the sum of my experiences, and that what I was doing was experiencing them again... Occasionally I had this sort of vista ahead of me and feeling ahead of me was lying the most horrific journey to the final sort of business, being aware of, and I felt this so strongly, it was such a horrifying experience that I immediately shut myself off from it because I couldn't contemplate it, it shrivelled me up. It drove me into a state of fear. I was unable to take it... There was no way of avoiding this, facing up to the journey I had to do.

I was aware of a higher sphere, another layer of existence lying above the present, lying above anything else. I wasn't living on the moving moment in the present, but I was moving and living in another time dimension added to the time situation in which I am now. I was moving backwards and forwards in time, and I could much more easily go back than I could go forward, because the forward movement was a bit too much for me to take...

I had feelings of gods, of beings which are far above us, capable of dealing with the situation that I was incapable of dealing with, that were in charge and were running things...

At the end of it everybody had to take on the job at the top. It was this business that made it such a devastating thing to contemplate, that at some period in the existence of oneself, one had to take on this job, even for only a momentary period, because you had arrived then at awareness of everything. At the time I felt that God himself was the madman because He's got this enormous load of having to be aware and governing and running things and that all of us had to come up and finally get to the point. Where we had to experience that ourselves. He was the one that was taking it all at that moment...

The journey that is there, every single one of us has got to go through it, you can't dodge it. The purpose of everything and the whole of existence is to equip you to take a step and another step and another step and so on. Many more things have got to impinge upon us until we gradually build ourselves up into ac-

ceptance of reality, and a greater and greater acceptance of reality what really exists. Dodging of it could only delay the time. I remembered all night struggling with some sort of curiosity or willingness to open myself up to experiencing this, and the panic and insufficiency of spirit that would enable me to experience it... During that time I went through the stations of the cross, although I'd never been what you might call a really religious person - I'm not now - and I went through all that sort of feelings.

This experience went on for quite a time. They kept on giving me sedatives to make me sleep. One morning I decided that I was not going to take any more sedatives, and that I had to stop this business going on because I couldn't cope with it anymore... I sat on the bed and I thought, somewhere or other I've got to sort of join up with my present self very strongly. So I sat on the bed, I clenched my hands together tightly... The nurse wanted me to take sedatives, and I said, "I'm not taking any more because the more I take of that the less capable I am of doing anything now - I shall go under." So I sat on the bed and I held my hands together - I suppose in a clumsy way of linking myself up with my present self, I kept on saying my own name over and over again.

All of a sudden, just like that I suddenly realized it was all over. All the experiences were finished and it was a dramatic ending to it all... Then the doctor came along and I said: "I don't want any more of that sedative. I'm quite capable of running things normally now, I'm all right." And he looked at my eyes and he said: "I can see that".

From that moment I never had anymore of these feelings.

(The subject reports his perspective on the entire experience:)

At the time it was so devastating and it taxed my spirit to the limit that I'd be afraid of entering it again... I was suddenly confronted with something so much greater than oneself with so much awareness, so much that you couldn't take it... I didn't have the capacity for experiencing it. I experienced it for a moment or two, but it was like a sudden blast of light or wind against you so that you feel that you're too naked and alone to be able to withstand it.

You're not strong enough. I was facing things that I just hadn't got the equipment to deal with. I was soft, I was too vulnerable.

Meaning units.

1. Suddenly I looked at the clock and wireless was on and the music was playing. And then I suddenly felt as if time was going back... the greatest feeling I had at that moment was of time going backwards. I even felt it so strongly, I looked at the clock and in some way I felt that the clock was reinforcing my own opinion of time going back although I couldn't see the hands moving...
2. I felt alarmed because I suddenly felt as if I was moving on a kind of conveyer belt - and unable to do anything about it, as if I was slipping along and sliding down a chute as it were and unable to stop myself. This gave me a rather panicky feeling...
3. I remember going into the other room in order to see where I was, to look into the mirror of myself and I looked in a way strange. It seemed as though I were looking at someone who was familiar but very strange and different from myself...
4. Then I had extraordinary feelings that I was quite capable of doing anything with myself, that I had a feeling of being in control of all my faculties, body and everything else, and I started rambling on.

Psychological Expressions.

- The subjects's experience started with a feeling of going into the past. This experience was reflected and reinforced by his experience of a clock indicating a going-back-in-time.
- S was unable to control his own experience and was unable to stop himself experiencing it. He panicked.
- He experienced himself as a changed entity, yet retaining a sense of former identity.
- He experienced his body as something with increased abilities over which he had control.

5. (In hospital) I was put to bed and I had the feeling that I had died. And I felt that other people were in beds around me, and I thought they were all people that had died and there they were - just waiting to pass on to the next department...
- S went through a dying process, and perceived others in his world as going through the same process.
6. I had quite extraordinary feelings of living, not only living but feeling and experiencing everything relating to something...
- S had a heightened awareness of existence in a world of increased relations on a higher level.
7. I felt I was something like animal life and so on. At one time I actually seemed to be wandering in a kind of desert landscape as if I were a rather large animal... I felt as if I were a kind of rhinoceros or something like that and emitting sounds like a rhinoceros and being at the same time afraid and at the same time being aggressive and on guard.
- His experience could be related to the existence of an animal. S could experience himself as behaving like an animal, being simultaneously aggressive and alert.
8. And then I went back to further periods of regression and even sort of when I was just struggling like something that had no brain at all and as if I were just struggling for my own existence against other things which were opposing me ... And then at times I felt as if I were like a baby I could even hear myself cry like a child...
- He experienced his own existence as further back in the past where he has a life form without ways of maintaining his own existence.
9. All these feelings were very acute and real and I was aware of them in a vague sort of way. I was a sort of observer of myself but yet experiencing it.
- S experiences himself as a subject, experiencing the situation as well as an object of his own observations of the situation.

10. I found that I had periods when I came right out of this state that I'd been moving into and then I had comparatively lucid states.
- This experience included periods of existing outside this experience.
11. I found I couldn't read newspapers, because everything I read had a large number of associations with it. I'd just read a headline, and this will have very much wider associations in my mind. Everything that caught my attention seemed to start off everything moving into things so that it became difficult for me to have a much greater, very much greater significance than normally.
- Objects in the world acquired a much greater significance than before and were associated with an endless amount of possibilities of meaning. This made it difficult to deal with one idea at a time.
12. I had a letter from my wife. She said "the sun is shining here"... And I felt that if it were she was in a quite different world, a world that I could never inhabit any more - and this gave me feelings that I'd gone off into a world that I could never move out of...
- S experienced the characteristics of the world to be in stark contrast with other people's experience of the world, which led him to the conclusion that he was in a different world which was holding him captive.
13. I had this intense feeling of being able to govern myself, my body and so on... I tested my powers with the man opposite me. I used to sit in my bed and make him lie down by sort of looking at him and thinking about it; and he used to lie down. I felt I had sort of tapped powers, that I in some vague way I had felt I had...
- S's existence was characterized by an intense feeling of being in absolute control of himself and his body. He even had powers to control others in his world.
14. I had a feeling at times of an enormous, fantastic journey in front and it seemed that I had got to an under-
- His experience is interpreted as a process in the future of gaining new understanding of things which were problematic before.

standing of things which I'd been trying to understand for a long time, problems of good and evil and so on.

15. I had come to the conclusion that I was more - more than I had always imagined myself, not just existing, now but I had existed since the very beginning in a kind of - from the lowest form of life to the present time, and that was the sum of my experiences, and what I was doing was experiencing them again...
- Existence is conceptualized as a developmental process where previous existence is re-experienced on a higher level of consciousness and awareness.
16. Occasionally I had this sort of vista ahead of me and feeling ahead of me was lying the most horrific journey to the final sort of business being aware of, and I felt this so strongly, it was such a horrifying experience that I immediately shut myself off from it because I couldn't contemplate it, it shrivelled me up. It drove me into a state of fear. I was unable to take it... There was no way of avoiding this, facing up to the journey I had to do.
- The experience is seen as a commitment to a process in the future. Although this process had a horrifying and devastating appearance, he couldn't avoid the negative consequences it would have on him.
17. I was aware of a higher-sphere, another layer of existence lying above the present, lying above anything else... I wasn't living on the moving moment in the present, but I was moving and living in another time dimension added to the time situation in which I am now. I was moving backwards and forwards in time, and I could much more easily go back than I could go forward, because the forward move-
- S became aware of a different structure of existence which couldn't be associated with his previous and present existences. This structure was linked with his present existence. He was alternating between living in the past and living in the future, but preferred living in the past because the future was too threatening and devastating.

ment was a bit too much for me to take.

18. I had feelings of gods, of beings which are far above us capable of dealing with the situation that I was incapable of dealing with, that were in charge and were running things...
- S felt the presence of superiour beings and forces that were controlling the situation and aiding him at times.
19. At the end of it everybody had to take on the job at the top. It was this business that made it such a devastating thing to contemplate, that at the same period in the existence of oneself, one had to take on this job, even for only a momentary period, because you had arrived then at awareness of everything.
- One is committed to entering the highest sphere of existence, which took on a devastating appearance, yet one cannot avoid the responsibility of entering this absolute state of awareness.
20. At the time I felt that God himself was the madman, because He's got this enormous load of having to be aware and governing and running things, and that all of us had to come up and finally get to the point where we had to experience that ourselves. He was the one that was taking it all at that moment.
- God was the focal point of the whole experience and he had to fully experience and control the process. He had to lead people into experiencing the process. This was a superiour task which demanded abnormal capabilities.
21. The journey that is there, every single one of us has got to go through it, you can't dodge it. The purpose of everything and the whole of existence is to equip you to take a step, and another step and so on. Many more things have got to impinge upon us until we gradually build ourselves up into an acceptance of reality,
- S saw his experience as an unavoidable commitment to an evolving, gradual heightening of awareness of reality and an acceptance of that reality which is the ultimate purpose of existence.

and a greater and greater acceptance of reality what really exists. Dodging of it could only delay the time.

22. I remembered all night struggling with some sort of curiosity or willingness to open myself up to experiencing this, and the panic and insufficiency of spirit that would enable me to experience it...
- S is struggling to attain this process and goal, but experiences himself as inadequate for this task.
23. During that time I went through the stations of the cross, although I'd never been what you might call a really religious person - I'm not now - and I went through all that sort of feelings.
- S acknowledges the religious nature of the process, although he didn't experience himself as being a religious person.
24. This experience went on for quite a time. They kept on giving me sedatives to make me sleep. One morning I decided I was not going to take any more sedatives, and that I had to stop this business going on, because I couldn't cope with it anymore...
- He saw the taking of sedatives prescribed to him as a facilitator of the experience, which he now saw as threatening to himself.
25. I sat on the bed and I thought, somewhere or other I've got to sort of join up with my present self very strongly. So I sat on the bed, I clutched my hands together tightly.
- He experienced a need to abandon the process and return to a more integrated-with-self existence in the present.
26. The nurse wanted me to take sedatives and I said, "I'm not taking any more because the more I take of that the less capable I am of doing anything now - I shall go under.
- S acknowledges medication as making him unable to assume control of his experiences.

27. So I sat on the bed and I held my hands together and as - I suppose in a clumsy way of linking myself up with my present self, I kept on saying my own name over and over again.
- S tried to return to his identity and experience of being a self, by repeating his name over and over.
28. All of a sudden just like that I suddenly realized it was all over. All the experiences were finished and it was a dramatic ending to it all.
- The whole experience ended abruptly.
29. Then the doctor came along and I said: "I don't want any more of that sedative. I'm quite capable of running things normally now, I'm all right". And he looked at my eyes and he said - "I can see that". From that moment I never had any more of those feelings.
- S gets acknowledgement of the end of his condition from an outsider who is seeing it from a medical point of view.
30. At times it was so devastating and it taxed my spirit to the limit that I'd be afraid of entering it again.
- S acknowledges the situation as strenuous and threatening. He wouldn't like to experience it again.
31. I was suddenly confronted with something so much greater than oneself with so much awareness.
- He was confronted by an outside force of superior appearance.
32. So much that you couldn't take it... I didn't have the capacity for experiencing it. I experienced it for a moment or two, but it was like a sudden blast of light or wind against you so that you felt that you're too naked and alone to be able to withstand it. You're not strong enough. I was facing things that I just hadn't got the equipment to deal with. I was too soft, I was too vulnerable.
- The extremity of the experience left the person defenceless and open. He lacked personal strength and ability to fully experience the process.

3.3 SITUATED STRUCTURES OF EXPERIENCE

GROUP I: Schizophrenia

SITUATED STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE: CASE STUDY A

The subject's experience started with intense feelings of living back into his own past. He felt out of control of his experiences while on the other hand also experiencing his body as something with increased powers and possibilities over which he had absolute control. Through this experience, the self changed into a new form of existence, yet retaining some aspects of former identities. The subject experienced himself as related to the existence of an animal where he was being aggressive and alert at the same time. At times his existence was experienced as going further back into the past where he was a life form without ways of maintaining his own existence against forces threatening it. The overall feeling was one of existential death, and he saw others in his world undergoing the same death and entry into new realities.

The subject experienced a developmental process where the previous existence from before birth until the present was re-experienced on a different level of consciousness and awareness of reality than before. This process was an experience of timeness as a passive commitment to the gradual increase in consciousness and awareness of existence in a reality, which was something different from all previous and present experiences of reality. This process led to an ultimate and extreme awareness of reality which took on a devastatingly threatening and superior appearance. Although this appearance of reality urged one to try and refrain from experiencing it in full, one couldn't escape the commitment to experiencing it. In this context, the experience could be lived only by accepting it as inevitable.

In this process of becoming aware, the world took on a personal appearance where things were perceived to be radically different from other people's experiences as well as ones own previous experiences. The world was also seen as having much more and deeper potential mean-

ing and associations than previously. The whole process took on a spiritual nature, entering realms of values and meanings. There were also religious forces and beings operative in this process and the focal point of the whole experience was God who, through superior, abnormal capabilities experienced, controlled and led the process.

S experienced himself as inadequate to fully open his existence towards experiencing the different reality, and realized that his experiences were threatening his existence. The extremity of the experience left him defenceless, and he lacked personal strength to fully experience the process he was undergoing. He therefore consciously and intentionally resumed his former identity in order to escape from the process he had experienced.

SITUATED STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE: CASE STUDY B

After a short intensive illness, followed by a period of rest, the subject suddenly found himself invaded by ideas entering his consciousness from an outside source. He arranged these ideas in the concrete form of a poem, which expressed his discontent and dissatisfaction with his current being in the world, and also recognized that entering a new reality, described as madness, could change this being in the world. By intentionally focussing on this poem, the subject felt that he could bring about this transition into a new reality.

The subject then experienced a transformation into a new reality, regarded by him as a dramatic rebirth into a cosmic sphere. Although others in his world regarded his experiences as problematic, he saw himself as taking part in a cosmic investigation, and he decided to intentionally continue his experience. Through this experience of reality, the world took on a symbolical, mythical and religious appearance which reflected his cosmic experiences. By anchoring symbols of his new experiences into the concrete earth, S then gave his experience substance and completed his transition into a new reality. His sense of identity took on a symbolic quality, depicting his movement into new realities.

Although others in his world couldn't share his new sense of reality S found support and validation of his experiences in the appearance of the world around him. He was committed to continuing his experiences under the guidance of external powers. Upon completing the task of entering the cosmic reality, he experienced himself as the focal point and centre of the universe. This experience transcended all physical realms of the material world.

The subject felt a need to maintain his transition by enacting symbolic rituals signifying power and energy, and by focussing on his transition. Signs from his surrounding world also reinforced his convictions about his experiences. He also found himself with significant magical powers and influence over others in his world.

The medical community didn't share his experiences of reality, which compelled him to record and communicate his experience in a different way than through the medical method. Upon realizing that the medical profession would continue invalidating his experience, he decided to return to his former mode of being-in-the-world and existence before the experiences he had had.

His exploration into the meaning of his experiences began after a while of being back at his previous way of existence. He saw the symbolic, mythical quality of his experience as instrumental in coming to new experiential relationships with aspects of his hidden self. He felt a need to share this with others, but significant others in his life were not able to share his experiences and considered it symptoms of mental illness. He refrained from discussing it with them, and after some time found a religious structure which gave him the opportunity to integrate his experiences. He permanently continued to explore the meanings of his experiences after that.

SITUATED STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE: CASE STUDY C

The specific experience of the subject involves an uneasiness about the possible consequences and meanings of a few casual sexual experiences he had in the past. There is also concern by the subject about his sexual orientation, as these sexual experiences were both homosexual and heterosexual in nature. After experiencing himself as becoming more and more the focus of other's interest and conversation, the subject becomes anxious and suspicious, especially since he can find no reason for their behaviour.

Through a flash of insight, the subject suddenly recognized an explanation for the situation. A group of others in his world had documented his homosexual behaviour and then produced and distributed this documentation. They further exploited the situation by using the profits from the film they made to aid a terrorist group in killing several people. The subject became anxious about his indirect involvement in this. His awareness of the situation also put his life in danger, as his conspirators would kill him if they were aware of his insights. These beliefs were supported by different aspects in his world. His picture had been on the cover of a popular magazine, and the movie was discussed inside. An encounter with a distant relative under coincidental circumstances can only be explained according to this belief of his. The situation of people's appearing to recognize him while he didn't know them, could also be explained only through these beliefs.

Associated with this process, he now found himself in a situation where he heard the voices of people discussing his sexual behaviour and arguing about what action should be taken against him for these transgressions. Closer investigation proved these perceptions to be groundless. He also found himself becoming socially isolated, and spending more and more time with himself, daydreaming. He further found himself invaded by thoughts and ideas regarded by him as alien to his own value system. The only way to correct these thoughts would be to repeat sequences of self statements which would correct the initial thoughts.

SITUATED STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE: CASE STUDY D

The subject's experience revolves around a problem in the relationship with God, a situation brought about by acting in a way perceived by herself as being in conflict with the wishes of God. In this instance the subject sinned against God by entering into a marriage with someone she didn't love and then having his children. After realization of the transgression against God, there is the expectation that God will react with punishment by convicting the person responsible to enduring the negative effects of the transgression forever. She, together with her children will have to endure their unhappy family-atmosphere forever. This insight into the situation is revealed by special occurrences in the surrounding world. Firstly, two pieces of cutlery lying across each other resembles the shape of the cross, symbolizing the subject and her children's immortality. Secondly, a rerun of a television series portraying marital discord and conflict, indicates an endless repetition of her own marital conflicts, just as the conflicts between the characters in the series keep reappearing on the television screen. Thirdly, an observation that the pupils of the eyes of the subject and her children were fixed in size is a sign revealing their immortality.

After recognition of God's punishment, attempts are made to get Him to put aside the punishment. The subject constantly communicates with God and forces her children to stay with her and read from the Bible all day. Her husband regards this behaviour as inappropriate, and abnormal and he demands that she is hospitalized. The psychiatrist in charge of her case interprets the subject's whole experience as indications of a schizophrenic illness. He prescribes medication upon ceasing to express the experiences mentioned here, the subject is considered better, and discharged from hospital. Upon returning home, her behaviour and mode of existence is judged to be inadequate. Realizing the inadequacy of her mode of existence, she realizes her dependence on her husband for life-functioning, and she accepts her marriage situation.

B. GROUP II (Religious Experiences)

SITUATED STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE: CASE STUDY E

The religious experience of the subject started with a realization that trust put into him by someone else warranted a type of behaviour not associated with his identity, as regarded by both himself and the social group present. Even though his behaviour led to the disapproval of the social group, the subject experienced a feeling of well-being and goodness because he saw his behaviour as correct, even though it entailed a contradiction of his current identity.

The subject then saw significance in the fact that another person had some hidden power to resist fear and anxiety provoked by a situation S himself experienced as threatening. This led to negative feelings about the self, as well as a process where S intensely reflected on the negative aspects of his former existence. This whole process of reflection and negative experience of self were under the control of an extremely strong outside power. S couldn't comprehend or understand his experience, but found evidence of the outside force similarly operating on the social group and emotionally affecting them.

After accepting the religious message offered, and intentionally attempting to immerse himself in a religious structure, S found himself again a passive object of external power, causing him to behave inconsistently with his previous existence. Seeing a significant other reflecting his own emotional feelings, he found himself involuntarily expressing himself emotionally, and although he felt out-of-control-of-himself, he accepted the situation.

Under communication with God, S found himself involuntarily expressing his need to transform his existence under the influence of God. This led to another intense emotional catharsis, interpreted by S as being immersed in love. He then intellectually and emotionally experienced his being-in-the-world as something characterized by loving relationships, and recognized his previous existence as one characterized by lack of self-love.

Later, he recognized his former existence as replaced by a new existence in which his former way of relating to the world did not apply anymore.

SITUATED STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE: CASE STUDY F

The subject had a negative attitude towards a certain group of people (of which his wife was a member) who had an experience of religious rebirth. He regarded this group of people as hypocritical and religiously presumptuous.

On a particular day he had an opportunity to see this stand being taken by someone on TV. This happening was experienced by him as a confirmation of his beliefs, and increased the feelings that he was justified in having those beliefs. Beginning with the transformation of the TV which now addressed him exclusively and personally, he had an experience where he identified himself as someone taking a stand against Christianity. He became aware of certain negative traits in his own self, and this new perspective on himself revealed him to be aggressive, negative, undesirable and sinful. He then realized that he was audacious in criticizing something that was superior to him.

He maintained a mood of expectancy, and a few hours later was given an opportunity to discuss his stand with someone else, who was a re-born Christian. Although he maintained his previous beliefs, his earlier experience made him more receptive to arguments taking the opposite stance.

Someone handed him a written note containing a prayer. This prayer expressed a realization of guilt, a request for forgiveness, an acknowledgement of the principles of Jesus Christ. Upon reading this in private the subject lost all doubt he had about Christianity and committed his life to Jesus Christ. He recognized this act as a major occurrence in his own life.

SITUATED STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE: CASE STUDY G

The subject experienced his own life as disastrous and meaningless. He felt worn-out, destroyed, hopeless and didn't want to continue his life. Although he realized that religion might give an answer to his problems, none of the religions he was aware of appeared to be adequate, sufficient or distinct enough to warrant his life's commitment to them. He couldn't accept Jesus Christ either. He recognized a desperate need to change his life, but realized that other people couldn't help him with this.

On an occasion when he was presented with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the subject became intensely aware of his own sinfulness. He also, for the first time, came to see Jesus Christ as someone who is alive, who is God, and someone who has direct relevance for his life. On that occasion, just as he lost all hope for his future, at a crucial point where he was confused, Jesus spoke to him. God commanded him to relinquish all control of his own life and accept His authority. The subject realized he had to make a choice which turned out to be the biggest decision of his life. Accepting Jesus Christ was the only alternative for his life at that moment, so he reached out and started believing in Christ. He realized that he had controlled his life inadequately until then, and therefore he surrendered control of his life to Jesus. He began to fear God and see Him as Holy. He realized his commitment was permanent, regardless of future difficulties.

3.4 GENERAL STRUCTURES OF EXPERIENCE

At this stage of the phenomenological analysis a general description of experience is pursued. All the situated structures of experience are re-examined in order to determine how the situated structures of experience are exemplifying processes that are generally true for all persons having a religious or schizophrenic experience. This leads to a description of the general psychological structure of the two experiences.

The criteria used to determine which processes were indicative of schizophrenia and which of religious experience were taken from the descriptions and definitions of these conditions discussed in Chapter I. All the case studies were however approached with an open mind in order to arrive at general structures. If someone was, for instance, diagnosed as a schizophrenic, but still had a religious experience which met the criteria for religious experience as described in Chapter I, the religious aspects of his or her experience were included in the general description of the structure of religious experience. The fact that someone is displaying a mode of existence indicating schizophrenia doesn't exclude him or her from having an authentic religious experience, and vice versa.

3.4.1 GENERAL STRUCTURE OF EXPERIENCE: SCHIZOPHRENIA

The schizophrenic experience usually revolves around a troubled or problematic life-world. This experience can be vague and directed towards the life-world in general, or it can be specific and directed towards certain areas of the life world. There is the process of experiencing own existence which takes the form of a continuous reflection on past and present dimensions of personal existence.

There is the manifestation of outside forces which appear to be superior to the self. These forces can be mystical or spiritual in nature, or they can be a combination of human efforts making it extremely strong and superior. They usually address existential concerns by condemning, threatening, criticizing or passing comment on existence. These forces can, however, also serve to support inner experiences of own existence.

At this stage signs and symbols appear in the social and material dimensions which have specific meanings for the self. These signs or symbols are often regarded as either direct communication from outside forces, or indirect indications of outside forces' involvement in the life-world. The signs and symbols may serve to elucidate and explain experiences of the world, or they can support and validate existing experiences as real and true. Generally they give the individual insight into his or her existential position.

The surrounding life-world becomes progressively overwhelming, and are threatening exploitation, destruction, punishment and obliteration of existence. There is a passive experience of existence where the self is rendered inadequate and helpless, while involved in a struggle for the maintenance of a sense of identity or selfhood which can be brief or prolonged, and is characterized by instability and change. At times the self is experienced as having superior powers beyond human capabilities, at times the self is on the brink of obliteration and is struggling to maintain itself as a human entity.

Others in the individual's world are continuously defining his or her experiences of reality as different from experiences of reality shared by others. Through this process the individual's experiences of reality are denied, negated and invalidated, thereby destroying his or her sense of being a self and existing in a particular world.

These social definitions of reality can be recognized by the individual as real and true, forcing him or her to view his or her experience of the world as invalid, and indicative of pathological illusions. This realization is often regarded by others as indications of insight signalling a recovery from illness. There is often a conscious attempt by the individual to "let go" of his or her experiences and return to this socially defined reality. The individual can, however, refuse to negate and deny his or her experiences of reality. This failure to regard experiences as different and therefor nonexistent, often forces the individual to remain in a state of turmoil and

conflict which is accompanied by feelings of unreality. These experiences can also be regarded as a different and potentially powerful experience of own existence. By exploring this experience and integrating it into socially shared experiences of reality, existential growth and transformation is achieved.

3.4.2 GENERAL STRUCTURE: HAVING A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

An experience of religious renewal or conversion often starts with an intense experience of an aspect in the surrounding world acquiring very specific meaning by addressing a specific aspect of the individual's conception about him- or herself. This occurrence in the world can disconfirm or confirm previous conceptions about the self. The individual now engages in a critical appraisal of previous existence up to the now. There occurs a process whereby the individual is passively drawn into a confrontation by specific images, exposing his/her own past and present existence in an extremely negative light. This new vision opens up a different perspective on own selfhood which is experienced as sinful, ugly, negative and evil.

During this stage the inner experiences are reflected by, and experienced as part of the social and material dimensions of existence. With these reflections the inner experiences are supported, validated and confirmed. There is an awareness of the spiritual or religious nature of these experiences. There is a communication of and confrontation by outside forces of superior nature, which demands submission and commitment. The individual becomes engaged in a situation where he or she either chooses to maintain control and management of the own life, or relinquish all control and management to a higher power. Upon submission and commitment to this higher power, intense feelings of contentment, satisfaction and emotional release are experienced. There is also an inner conviction that the right choice was made. There is a sudden awareness of the relevance of specific religious figures and mediators for personal existence. These religious figures are experienced as erasing all negative

aspects of the past, and cleansing the self by removing negative implications of existence.

There is a realization that a major transformation has occurred in own existence. Spiritual realms of reality were entered, and are offering new insights into and new hopes for the future. A completely new and changed identity is experienced.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Experiences never occur in a vacuum, neither are they isolated moments in an individual existence. They occur in the context of the individual's specific relations with his or her existence at a specific point in time. As explicated in Chapter II, human existence can be conceptualized as a relatedness to the personal, social and material dimensions of being. It is therefore through an understanding of the human's experience of his or her relatedness to these dimensions of the life-world that an understanding of the complex processes of schizophrenia and religious experience can be found.

The analysis of the research material has, however, revealed another experience of reality which cannot be categorized in terms of the above dimensions of the life world, as it transcends and encompasses them. This dimension involves an experience of the world as a mystical reality with cosmic and spiritual proportions. This mystical experience needs to be elucidated before a discussion of the schizophrenic and religious experiences can proceed.

4.2 THE MYSTICAL WORLD

The general structures of both schizophrenic and religious experiences, as revealed in the previous chapter, clearly articulates an experience of the supernatural, spiritual or mystical realities operative in the individual's life-world. This experience is an expression of the human being's capacity for religiousness and spirituality (Kinget, 1975) and as such represents an encounter with the Holy (Loder, 1981).

It is a particular characteristic of modern life that these experiences are often regarded as presiding beyond "ordinary", day to day human existence. As these experiences defy conceptualization and articulation in rational, human terms, they have been categorized as belonging to the sphere of the transpersonal or transnational levels of existence (Wilber, 1979).

This study, however, is concerned with religious or spiritual experiences as it appears in the life world of the individual. These experiences will therefore be conceptualized as the experience of the mystical (see chapter 5.1) dimension of the life-world.

The mystical world lies beyond the personal, social and material worlds, and encompasses them. The person becomes aware of the mystical world through its manifestations in the personal, social and material worlds, but as soon as he or she recognizes these manifestations as indicative of the mystical world, some or all entities of the personal, social and material worlds are experienced in mystical terms. By this the person becomes involved in a radically different experience of reality, a mystical experience of reality where 'ordinary' rules, laws and principles don't apply any more. The person now regards this experience of reality as real and true. The mystical world is therefore not limited by the personal, social and material worlds, it transcends these experiences of the world.

Operative in the mystical world are powers and forces which are superior to the individual. They become involved in the individual life, and address his or her existential concerns. These forces are characterized by their superior and often supernatural manifestations and powers. They can take the form of angels, demons, God, a muse, or even a global conspiracy or power. Their function in the individual's life varies, but they are generally conceptualizing the individual's existential condition and guiding him or her towards insight into his or her condition. The forces can also propose ways of dealing with existential problems, and overcoming existential shortcomings of absences.

4.3 THE SCHIZOPHRENIC EXPERIENCE

The Personal World: The schizophrenic experience is one of reflecting one's own existence and regarding it as troubled, problematic. This experience can be generally directed towards existence as a whole, entailing feelings of dissatisfaction, emptiness and purposelessness. It can also be directed towards specific areas of the personal existence such as one's integrity, choices and acts, with accompanying experiences of guilt, failure and evilness. Central to the experience of one's personal world as troubled, lies a sense of things not being the way they

should be, a situation either brought about by inappropriate or inadequate actions of the self, or brought about by unfavourable life-situations.

In this reflection on one's own existence there often is a pre-occupation with past existence and aspects that went wrong. The schizophrenic experience is therefore often dominated by a "regression in time", a continuous re-living of the past. The person now becomes a victim of his or her past, not free to escape its negative implications (van den Berg, 1972). By this act the future of the person becomes inaccessible, closed through the domination of the past. The person now becomes involved in attempts to control time in order to regain possession of the future (Kimura, 1984).

The personal world, involved in processes of self-awareness and identity formation is also continuously threatened by possibilities of non-being, of voidness. The concept of the "void" can be described as the ultimate aim of all processes leading to a state of nothingness (Loder, 1981). This experience of the void, of nothingness, presents itself as a threat to the personal experience of being a self, and manifests itself in the individual existence as intense anxiety in the light of possible nothingness. The schizophrenic experience is primarily aimed at eliminating the intense threat of non-being, nothingness against the self, especially in the light of problems encountered in the personal world. The person becomes involved in a struggle for survival, for maintenance of the personal world against impending obliteration of the self. This experience is described by Laing (1960) in terms of three specific experiences of anxiety about the possibility of non-being. They are implosion (Fear of the world crashing in on one and obliterating all aspects of selfhood), engulfment (Fear of being engulfed by other experiences and thereby losing own experience of identity) and petrification (Fear of being turned into a lifeless object such as a rock.

It is against this background that the depersonaliza-

tion of the schizophrenic must be evaluated. The person's identity or sense of selfhood is being taken away by the aspects of his personal world. He or she is in no position to find a way of restoring the sense of selfhood which will be able to repair the fast disintegrating personal world. The person's struggle for personal survival, for maintenance of a sense of selfhood is destined to fail, since it is only concerned with protecting the self against personal threats and cannot find a way to let go of previous conceptions of the self in an attempt to generate solutions for the existential predicaments.

This act of releasing all previous holds on the self, of letting go of all pre-occupations about maintenance of previous identity, is seen as an essential process in the solving of existential problems, in a way which may lead to existential growth (Wilber, 1979; Kimura, 1984). The schizophrenic is therefore caught up in an endless loop. On the one hand he is confronted by a personal world which is rapidly disintegrating and threatening to destroy all aspects of selfhood, and on the other hand it is the act of protecting the self against this possibility which is keeping the person from transforming the personal world and eliminating this possibility.

The person now finds him or herself a captive of the surrounding world. The self is no longer serving as a mediator of experience as the surrounding world is overwhelming the self. The person is unable to escape the consequences of the surrounding world, and the only viable alternative left is to hang on to the last few remaining threads of the personal world. The personal world shrinks considerably, and the person's existence becomes very limited and constricting. The person is surrendered to his or her surrounding world with little or no personal powers to resist this process.

The Material World: The material world of the individual suddenly acquires new and different meanings than before. There is the appearance of signs and symbols with special significance for the person in the material world. These signs may serve to confirm the person's inner ex-

periences at the time, such as a clock on the wall indicating a going back into time, a mountain area becoming the 'bowels of hell and the portals of heaven' thereby reflecting a cosmic reality, and the cover of a magazine exposing a global conspiracy. These signs can also serve to give one insight into one's condition of the personal world by explaining it. The vague, general experiences are therefore given substance and form. Examples are a knife and fork lying across each other in the form of a cross indicating the nature of one's spiritual dilemma, a television screen indicating that one's sexual behaviour has been recorded on film, the stars and moon proclaiming one's cosmic rebirth and so forth. Generally these signs are concrete support for the person's inner experiences, and they are indicating that he or she is experiencing something that is real and true.

The appearance of signs in the surrounding world are regarded as indications of the involvement of outside forces or powers in the individual's life. These can be indications of direct communication from forces

attempting to transfer a specific message through the sign or symbol. These may also be indirect indications of external involvement, in which case the signs are clues or tracks the individual can use to construct a 'theory: of what is happening to him or her.

The schizophrenic's surrounding material world becomes a place where interaction between the self and external powers or forces can be staged. The material world provides for images which are used to convey messages and meanings. These messages are conveyed through the medium of the objects of the material world. Through this dimension, the material world which is regarded as encompassing all that is real and true, acquires a mystical, cosmic quality.

The schizophrenic therefore experiences a relatedness to certain aspects of his or her material world in a very special way, as these aspects carry specific meanings for the individual existence. This relatedness also leads to the person's no longer being free to experience the

things of the world in all its potential fullness (Boss, 1979). The person can no longer experience the world for what it is and live with it as it is, he or she cannot exercise his or her individual freedom and unique perception in living with the things as they reveal themselves to be anymore (Kruger, 1979). The person is surrendered to his or her particular way of experiencing the things of the world, and this experience possesses and overpowers him or her. The person has no more freedom other than being dominated by this world design (Binswanger, 1975).

The individual world design is enormously restricted because it is ruled by one, or a very few themes (Binswanger, 1975). The limitedness of the person's world design is elucidated by the situated structures from the case studies. The themes of the world designs may for instance be concerned with specific issues such as guilt and survival, and are interpreted along these lines only. All other interpretations are rejected, and the person therefore loses his or her openness towards the things, an openness that would allow him or her to experience the things in as many meaningful ways as possible.

The changed physiognomy of the world is mirrored by the changed experience of bodiliness. Because there are signs and symbols indicating that one has become the object of external powers and forces, the body becomes an object among objects. This is clearly manifested in the appearance of signs and symbols in one's own body. The self becomes separated from the body, as the body becomes part of the process of reflecting signs and symbols. The body now belongs to the world of material objects. This is an experience of the self as disembodied (Laing, 1960), an indication of the loss of continuity between self and the material world.

Because the person's body has become an object of external powers on the one hand and an object among objects on the other hand, the person now finds himself or herself as powerless to oppose this process. There is a passive experience of own existence, and the person

finds him or herself controlled by aspects of the world (Frankl, 1973). He or she becomes a passive spectator of processes going on around him or her, and all control is lost. The person is no longer able to stand out towards the world as a living body, related to a wide array of material entities.

The Social World: The general structure of experience clearly reveals the individual's isolation from his or her fellow human being throughout the schizophrenic episode. The experiences of the person are mostly met by others with incomprehension. They become alarmed and concerned about the individual's mental health, as these experiences are interpreted as indications of psychological disturbance. After a while the other persons start to actively undermine these experiences, trying to stop the person's experiencing them.

Others in the schizophrenic's world are therefore involved in the process of disconfirming his or her experiences which are considered unreal. By denying, invalidating and generally not comprehending the individual's experiences, these people are implying that the experiences are false, unreal, non-existing. Through this act the person's experience is systematically destroyed and by having the experience destroyed, he or she loses the sense of selfhood which functions in the personal self (Laing, 1962). Similarly, the material world as it was experienced by the schizophrenic, is rendered unreal and non-existing. The person now finds his or her surrounding material world as it is experienced at that time not accessible any more, as the previous being-in-the-world in a material sense, is regarded as being based on false assumptions. His or her material world is now made inaccessible by the others' sharing it with him or her (van den Berg, 1972).

This process can provide a way for understanding schizophrenic hallucinations and delusions. In the absence of any meaningful way of interaction with the things of the world, it is a "human" process to start creating experiences of the world, to start hallucinating in order to escape the emptiness of an empty world. This was seen

in experiments examining stimulus deprivation in which people in completely stimulus-free tanks started hallucinating (May, 1981). The schizophrenic finds his world empty of all things, his experiences of the world were taken away by others. The person now become involved in creating his own world, he or she is replacing the world taken away by others (van den Berg, 1972). These hallucinations are real objects to the person, and they fill his or her emptiness. Similarly, delusions are also an expression of the person's hanging on to certain limited perceptions of his or her world in the absence of any other ways of experiencing reality. The person needs the delusion because every other experience has been taken away from him or her (van den Berg, 1972).

The others' experience of the schizophrenic's condition goes beyond mere incomprehension and disconfirmation. The sufferer's experiences are not only destroyed, but they are also forcibly replaced by something else (Laing, 1967). The schizophrenic is expected to return to socially shared experiences of reality before his experiences are confirmed by the others again. He or she is therefore forced to conform to these socially shared experiences of reality. The others in the world are justifying and maintaining this position by diagnosing the person as mentally ill owing to his or her different experiences of reality. They then hospitalize the person and subject him or her to all sorts of therapy in order to get him or her to conform to socially shared experiences. The minute the person reaches this goal, he or she is regarded as cured of all illness. His or her new socially shared experiences of reality are then confirmed and validated as real and true.

The schizophrenic experience is an extreme example of psychopathology as an expression of an individual's loneliness and isolation in the world (van den Berg, 1972). It is also clear that the isolation of the schizophrenic is instrumental in the initial establishment of the condition, as it is often problematic experiences in the social world which bring about the experience. The schizophrenic

way of existing is then an expression of this loneliness, but it also takes the unfortunate sufferer further away from the others in his world as he or she tries to resolve his or her existential problems. Loneliness is then both a reason for and a consequence of schizophrenia.

The Mystical World: Central to the schizophrenic consciousness is the experience of being confronted by superior external forces or powers. These powers announce themselves through the material world where they are engaged in a communication process with the individual. They generally appear to be mystical in nature such as God, a muse, angels or demons, but they can also manifest in other magical forms such as a global conspiracy against the individual. The manifestation of these powers and forces are external to the individual, and they appear to be superior to the self. They also operate in a way uncomprehended by ordinary experience and therefore maintain a mystical appearance.

These external forces involved in the individual's life announce themselves through signs and symbols appearing in the material world of the individual, but they can also appear in the individual's social world. These forces address the person's existential concerns in the personal world by commenting, condemning or threatening the individual existence. In some instances these forces can also play a supportive role by guiding and leading the person towards new experiences.

By experiencing outside forces as becoming involved in the personal existence, the person is entering a new and different dimension of existence. This is a reality where ordinary rules of existence don't apply any more. The person becomes involved in a magical and cosmic reality with superior dimensions. Others in the world are negating and disconfirming the individual's experience of the mystical world, but the appearance of the material world supports the individual's experiences as part of a mystical, magical reality. This experience of reality is regarded as real by the person and he or she shapes his or her life according to this reality. Even the personal

appearance of the person changes with this experience as he or she has a change in identity when becoming part of the mystical reality. The person becomes a cosmic, mystical entity which engages in contact with the mystical world. As this world is not part of ordinary reality, the identity must change in order to accommodate an existence in the mystical world. The person now often finds himself or herself with supernatural powers which take on cosmic proportions. He or she is a changed identity in a mystical world.

The schizophrenic transforms all aspects of existence into this mystical reality. The material, personal and social worlds become part of the mystical world, and the contents and processes of these worlds are experienced in mystical, magical terms. This can account for the different and often bizarre ways the schizophrenic lives his or her existence. The behaviour, emotions and thoughts of the person are not part of the socially shared reality any more, they have become part of a mystical reality which is inaccessible for others in the world. Because this is a different world, one's existence changes.

The other people in the person's social world are however continuously negating the person's experience of the existence of a mystical world. The experience of the mystical world is therefore an isolated one not comprehended by others, and the person is pressurized (often through different forms of therapy) to believe that his or her mystical experiences are illusions. As long as the person regards his or her experiences as real and true, he or she remains within a mystical reality. As soon as he or she recognizes the experience of the mystical reality, a resolution of the schizophrenic episode might be evident. The person might remain fixed in the mystical reality, but he or she can also abandon the experience of the world as a mystical reality. In this case he or she can either identify the entire experience as pathological and invalid, or regard the experience as a valid, but a different experience of reality from what he or she went through. In the former instance, the person is regarded

by others in his or her world (as well as often by him or herself) as 'cured' from schizophrenic illness. In the latter instance, the person will conceptualize the mystical experience as a potentially valid source of self-awareness uncovering essential dimensions of being, in which case he or she will continue exploring the experience in order to find a way of integrating it with the socially-shared view of reality. The person also has an experience of existential growth and development which has taken place.

4.4 THE RELIGIOUS CONVERSION EXPERIENCE

The Personal World: The specific structures of religious experiences clearly reveal a critical evaluation of one's own existence within the sphere of the personal world as an important starting point in the religious experience. The appearance of a specific occurrence in the social or material dimensions of existence forces the person to appraise and evaluate previous conceptions he had about his existence. The occurrence is experienced as something which has specific meanings as it relates to very specific images one has about oneself. In the act of self-reflection which follows the occurrence, the person can experience his or her conceptions about personal existence, his or her self image, being either confirmed and justified or disconfirmed and invalidated. The process is, however, experienced as a reflection on the implicit assumptions which constitute the foundations of selfhood.

While engaged in this process of reflection on own existence there is the appearance of specific images depicting certain aspects of personal existence up to that specific point in time. These images are experienced involuntarily and passively, that is the person cannot control the images and he or she cannot refrain from experiencing them. The content of these images is exposing specific aspects of personal existence in an extremely negative light, and a person experiences him or herself as sinful, inhuman, inadequate and evil. This experience culminates into an even more intense reflection on own personal existence. It is essentially an experience in the

dimension of own timeness, where the person is reviewing past modes of being. As this evaluation reveals the self to be an ineffective, inadequate agent for organization of experience, the future of the person is experienced by him or herself as inaccessible and unlivable. Due to failures, negative characteristics and transgressions of essential human values, the future presents itself as a continuation of these processes. Herein lies an experience of the void, where there is no hope for any meaningful existence in the future.

This experience is the realization that previous and future modes of existence are inadequate to maintain further meaningful existence in the world (Loder, 1981), which culminates in despair and hopelessness about the self's lack of ability to function effectively (Batson and Ventiss, 1982). This realization plays an important role in the religious experience and the accompanying existential transformations. The person, unable to live his or her own existence any more, now comes to the realization that major transformation of the self must occur in order to change this situation. The person now releases all previous conceptions of the self in order to allow new experiences of the self to develop, which will in turn facilitate new ways of relating to the world (Wilber, 1979). The person must 'let go', he or she must surrender aspects of the personal existence in order to allow new modes of existence to manifest in the personal world. These changes in selfhood will accommodate new, more effective ways of existing in the world, and will lead to an expansion of the personal self. This is an essential condition for the act of existential transformation in the direction of personal growth.

The opposite of the releasing of previous elements of selfhood is the act of preservative of selfhood (Wilber, 1979). By hanging on to previous conceptions of the self, all opportunities for personal growth and development are denied. The person's low security in being a self, his or her inability to let go of the self culminates

in a pre-occupation with protection of the self against the surrounding world which is trying to take away personal identity (Kimura, 1984). The person resorts to rigidly maintaining the self as it was, even though the self's mode of existence and its ways of experiencing the world is inappropriate for the specific situation. By this the possibilities of opening the self up to new meanings and ways of relating to the world to enter consciousness are lost. The person will attempt to initiate existential change in the situations of the surrounding social and material worlds. This will culminate in the person's attempting to control the dimensions of the surrounding world while still hanging on to previous experiences of the world. The self, as centre of the world, will therefore remain unchanged while the person will strive for existential transformation through the manipulation of the outside world.

The act of existential growth therefore needs as its essential ingredient, an act of self-release, an act of surrendering the previous conceptions one had about oneself in order to discover new ways of being a self. In the religious experience, this act takes on a special meaning as it implies a surrender of the self to an experience of the mystical world. It is through the mystical experience that new meanings and values are allowed to impinge on the personal world and transform selfhood into something new. The acceptance of the mystical world and its implications for the self is then integrated into the personal world to signify that growth and transformation has taken place. Through this experience, the future of the person is being made accessible once again. The experience of the mystical world will be discussed in more detail later.

The Material World: The religious experience as an essentially spiritual experience transforms the material world of the person. This is elucidated by naive descriptions of the experience itself, describing the changed physiognomy of the material world. Firstly there are the appearance of signs and symbols in the material world which

have specific meanings for the person concerned, as it serves to give him or her insight into his or her existential condition. Through the appearance of signs, the person is led to derive new meanings from his or her existence, he or she is addressed by the things of the material world.

The religious experience is sometimes accompanied by an expansion of the material world. The world which was seen as constricting, and threatening, becomes wider, more open. The naive description of the world in case study E changes the physical appearance of a "room (filled by hatred)" to a "massive arena". This clearly expresses the subject's experience of his material world's becoming more open and accessible.

Similarly, a person may find his or her body changing its posture towards the world, taking on a kneeling or other submissive positions, indicative of the Christian experience of God as an almighty figure who must be feared and respected (Kruger, 1979).

The religious experience also changes previous experiences one had of the material world, allowing the things of the world to appear different from before. Although these changes are brought about by the experience of the mystical, the experience of a changed material world validates the experience the person had as an essential growth experience. A different experience of the things of the world indicates that one's personal existence among the things was transformed.

The Social World: As a religious experience is by definition a socially shared experience, the experience of the social dimensions of existence is of central importance. Firstly there is the experience of personal experiences being comprehended and shared by other people in the world, normally a congregation of people being bound together by the experiences themselves. The person therefore find his or her experiences validated, confirmed and supported. He or she is led to believe that his or her experiences are not only true and real, but are also high-

ly desirable truths about life in general and the specific experience of the individual, appearing to him or her. This expresses the definition of an experience as religious when it is shared by others in the world (Fromm, 1950).

Secondly, the person often finds his experiences interpreted to him or her by someone who acts as a mediator between the person and the world. Apart from validating the individual experiences, this person or persons are interpreting and translating the individual's specific experiences by pointing out the specific meanings attached to the manifestations of the personal, material and mystical dimensions of reality. The person is guided as well as supported throughout the religious experience itself, and the integration of the mystical and other experiences of the world is seen as one of the functions of the congregation of Christians, the church (Wilson, 1966).

The religious experience is therefore an expression of togetherness, of sharing with others. Although there are instances where one is engaged in a one-to-one communication process with figures in the mystical world, such as God, the content of this process as well as the structures can always be validated by others who had similar experiences.

The Mystical World: It is through the specific experience of the world as a mystical reality that the person's experience is defined by him or herself, as well as the social world, as an essentially religious experience. All religious experiences have assumptions about a mystical reality at the foundations of their dogma, as only an acknowledgement of the existence of a supernatural godly figure presupposes a dimension of existence which transcends ordinary human experience and therefore fulfils the criteria for a mystical experience of reality.

The individual has the experience of being communicated to by a higher supernatural force which addresses the very core of his or her own experience. This force is aware of the person's innermost existential predicaments and therefore the communication from the supernatural

force is regarded as extremely relevant for the individual life-situation. The supernatural force can speak directly, in understandable words to the individual concerned, but the communication can also be indirect through a sign or an event in the surrounding material and social worlds. In all the instances the person feels his or her personal existence as being addressed by a superior power.

The supernatural powers of the mystical world may take over the person's control over his own existence at times. This leads to a person's experiencing him or herself as a passive object of external powers. He or she can become involuntarily involved in thought processes where certain thoughts are perceived to be inserted into his or her mind. These thoughts include negative images depicting his or her past, as well as the experience of involuntarily expressing certain ideas. Similarly a person can find his or her body being controlled by external powers, forcing him or her to kneel down, fall down etc. This process is also regarded as a direct indication of the involvement of supernatural powers in the individual life.

The content of the communication from the external supernatural force addresses the individual's existential concerns, but it also offers new ways of dealing with those concerns. Through the mystical experience of reality the person is already aware of a new way of experiencing the own existence. He or she also becomes aware of the relevance and meaning of specific aspects of the religious message offered through this mystical reality for his or her life. Religious figures and prophets are seen as meaningful for the own, personal existence. The person is often commanded by the external force to surrender and commit the self to God. This commitment is presented as a way out of the existential predicament of the present, and it also involves, in this respect, new perspectives on the problematic and sinful past where the person's transgressions and inadequacies are forgiven and taken away. This realization offers a new hope for the future. The person sees the commitment to God as the only alternative for his or her life, and relinquishes all control he or she held

over dimensions of existence. This is a constructive act of imagination (Loder, 1981), a realization of aspects indicative of faith such as hope, belief and trust in the Godhead. The commitment to God is essentially an act of faith.

By this act the person becomes involved in a new experience of reality, an experience of love where one is involved in a unification with all that is loved and one (Boss, 1984) where one is lovingly grounded in one's own source (Loder, 1981). The religious experience is then essentially an experience of finding the essence of all that is, an experience of becoming one with the universe due to the own relatedness to it by virtue of the acceptance of the ultimate grounds of existence.

By accepting the experience of the self as related to a mystical reality, the person's experiences of his or her other dimensions of existence such as the personal, social and material dimensions of existence are transformed. The person now realizes the existence of a mystical reality encompassing these dimensions and thereby transforming the meanings they hold. All that are existing are now experienced along the ultimate, essential reality presented by the mystical world.

The final act in the religious experience is the integration of the mystical dimension of existence with the social, personal and material dimensions. Although the essence of existence is revealed by the mystical experience of reality, an exclusive identification with this dimension to the exclusion of all the other dimensions of being will lead to a limited, constricted existence in the world. The person must therefore integrate the experience of the mystical world with the other dimensions of the world as it presents itself to man. This will facilitate new meanings and experiences of the personal, social and material world to manifest in the individual's existence. By this act the person experiences existential growth through religious transformation. This process of integration of the mystical and other experiences of reality

is also the implicit aim of all religious activities where one is continuously engaged in a process of fully integrating the truths revealed through the mystical reality with all the dimensions of existence.

4.5 CONCLUSION: SCHIZOPHRENIA AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

As indicated by this chapter, the schizophrenic consciousness can essentially be characterized as a loss in continuity between self and world, the two aspects that checkmate, through their relatedness constitute human existence, being-in-the-world. This discontinuity is expressed by the schizophrenic's withdrawal from the world and his or her pre-occupation with the self. A personification of this process can be found in one of the more extreme forms of schizophrenia namely catatonic schizophrenia, a condition articulating the schizophrenic's refusal to be in or with the world.

Schizophrenia can be attributed to the loss of one of the essential givens of being human, the person's openness in experiencing his or her world (Binswanger, 1975); (Boss, 1979). This constitutes the ability to freely perceive the world for what it is, to allow it to manifest itself in as much potential meaningfulness as possible. The lack of schizophrenic consciousness as it was revealed here can be attributed to the person's experience of his or her world as limited, controlling, inaccessible and overwhelming.

The world as it presents itself to the schizophrenic, is no longer a rich, holistic reality which offers a wide array of potential meanings to the individual. The world presents itself to the individual as a specific set of relations designed to address his or her existential concerns. In this regard the world acquires very specific meanings, limited to their relatedness to or relevance for the individual existence. This rigid, inflexible way of experiencing the dimension of the world drains the world of its potential meaningfulness, as it limits the individual to experiencing the world according to a few themes (Binswanger, 1975) which are perceived to have significance

for the individual.

Related to the limited experience of the world is an experience of the aspects of the world's controlling the individual existence. This is an expression of the schizophrenic being in a position of existential checkmate, not being able to exist without experiencing sets of pressures from him or herself and the surrounding world (Laing, 1967). The person has lost all freedom in existing as he or she wishes.

The schizophrenic's world is an inaccessible entity, from which he or she is progressively barred. All dimensions of existence become closed for the person due to his or her limited way of experiencing the meanings of the world, and the systematic way in which others in the world are negating and disconfirming his or her total experience. The person finds him or herself controlled by a limited world with no chance of escaping this experience as all avenues of escape are blocked by the self and surrounding world.

The person now finds him or herself locked up in an experience where he or she has no alternative but to experience it as it presents itself. This experience overwhelms the person, it threatens him or her with obliteration of all identity or selfhood. The person has no choice but to struggle to defend the last remaining threads of identity in this shrinking, constricting context of reality. It is, however, exactly this act of attempting to maintain a sense of self which is both an expression of and condition for the schizophrenic existence.

The schizophrenic consciousness can therefore be described as an expression of the lack of freedom, openness and identity experienced by the person. The specific world of the schizophrenic is shaped by these experiences, and they structure his or her existence.

In contrast to the schizophrenic experience the religious experience involves an increase in the person's openness towards the different dimensions of his or her world. This is a process brought about by the religious experience itself, as one of the pivotal constituents of

the religious experience involves a self-reflecting process. All previous conceptions of the self and the world are broken down in order to facilitate a more open perception of the world in which the self examines surrounding dimensions of existence to allow new meanings to manifest in the world (Batson and Ventiss, 1982). This openness then allows the person to find new meanings in his or her world.

The religious experience is also essentially a social experience where the individual experience is continuously validated by others, and where others can get involved in guiding the person through his or her experiences. Through this aspect, all dimensions of the individual's life world are experienced as accessible to him or her. There is an expansion of the person's world in which his or her world is offering wider meanings than before (Loder, 1981).

The self is also perceived as undergoing growth and transformation. In this process the self is perceived to become free and to gain more control over the life-world. The self has therefore no need to protect itself or to maintain selfhood at all costs, which enables it to be in the world in a open, perceptive and free way.

The religious experience as examined in this chapter is conceptualized as indicative of specific structures which facilitate human growth and development through transcendence. On an existential level these are structures and processes which are indicative of human development and growth in general, whether the people involved are theistically inclined or not. This doesn't mean that the atheistically or secularly-inclined individual cannot experience positive existential growth, since the religious experience is simply representative of a general structure which can be found in many different forms. It is neither implicated that all forms of religious experience automatically lead to positive existential growth. Many religious experiences can take on pathological manifestations (Fromm, 1951), robbing man of his freedom and dignity. Religious experiences can in some forms even prevent posi-

tive existential growth, causing man to regress (Oates, 1973).

The schizophrenic experience, can be characterized as indicative of certain general structures which facilitate a movement away from growth, namely regression. The two processes of religious experience and schizophrenic experience therefore point to two divergent ways of existence with different eventual outcomes, respectively human development and human regression away from development and growth. The concepts of human beings' capacity for freedom, openness, and being a self among others are instrumental in these two different experiences.

Since these two experiences are two different experiences, it is only in the dimension where they are similar (the experience of the mystical) that these differences in openness, freedom and selfhood, among others, acquire specific meanings. By examining this dimension which occurs in both experiences of reality, an understanding of the metaphysical, spiritual and mystical character of schizophrenia can be gained.

CHAPTER V

THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE IN
SCHIZOPHRENIA
AND
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The general structures of both schizophrenia and religious experience revealed an experience of the world as a mystical reality.

Criteria for the identification of an experience as mystical can be conceptualized by examining definitions in the literature. The word 'mystical' is anchored in the concept of 'mystery' which indicates all that is incomprehensible, strange, inexplicable, obscured and beyond human understanding. The entity mystical refers to an attempt to gain insight into the self and the world through an immediate contact or union between the self and the 'larger than self' called God, the Cosmos, the Absolute (Leuba, 1912). A mystical experience can therefore broadly be defined as having two dimensions. Firstly it involves contact with superior, supernatural forces and secondly this contact has a revealing, uncovering character where things become comprehensible, understandable. An elucidation of the manifestation of the mystical in schizophrenic and religious experiences will contribute to a more complete understanding of these two experiences themselves. It will also serve to clarify the place of these mystical experiences in the total structure of the two categories of experience, and this will shed some light on the 'mystical, spiritual qualities often encountered in the schizophrenic experiences' (van den Berg, 1984).

5.2 THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

There are numerous starting points from which to proceed in describing the experience of the mystical. It must be kept in mind that descriptions of mystical experiences are often complicated by descriptions in theological terms which don't apply to the field of psychology and are highly theoretical and abstract. The most accurate and concrete descriptions of mystical experiences are provided by self-reported accounts of mystical experiences (Luckoff, 1985), and this avenue will be utilized here.

Firstly, the mystical experience is an experience of the involvement of superior forces and/or gods in the individual's life. The person becomes more and more aware of the involvement of a superior force in his or her life. This involvement can take the form of direct communication between the force and self, or it can be indirectly manifested in the individual's surrounding world, in which case the force communicates through happenings, social interactions or things of the person's life world. The initiative in this encounter lies, however, with the supernatural force (Loder, 1981), and the person has no control over the communication process with the force. The person is left with no alternative but to become involved in the communication process. The person finds him or herself controlled by the supernatural forces at specific times during the experience, or throughout the experience as a whole. He or she passively becomes the object of the intentions of these forces, and is therefore surrendered to them. He or she also has no choice but to experience the powers of these forces and to be obedient to them.

The specific involvement of the supernatural forces serve to conceptualize the individual's existence in all its dimensions. The person finds his or her existential concerns being uncovered through this process. The supernatural forces may take on a supporting role, guiding and leading the person towards new experiences and knowledge, or they can react negatively to the person's existence. Often the supernatural forces engage in a dialogue with the individual in which his or her existence is discussed.

Secondly, the mystical experience is characterized by the way it involves the person's surrounding world. The supernatural forces involved in the individual's life manifest themselves in the surrounding material, social and personal worlds. The appearance of the life-world is changed by the involvement of these forces, and transformed into a mystical reality. This transformation can affect

the complete life-world in all its dimensions, or it can affect only certain areas of the world. Aspects of the material, social and personal worlds acquire different and more intense meanings than before. The world may take on a mythical character (Perry, 1974) or the world can also acquire a Biblical content or cosmic appearance (Luckoff, 1985).

The world becomes a scene set up by the supernatural forces to enact a mystical drama, and is therefore arranged to facilitate interaction between the self and the supernatural. In this process the self changes as well. The self enters a mystical state, and identity often changes (sometimes for only a short time span) in order to exist in this reality. At times the individual experiences him or herself as a mythical figure. He or she can also acquire supernatural powers over others and the material world, even over the own body (Perry, 1974).

Although the above description involves dramatic experiences of a mystical nature, less dramatic experiences of the world can also indicate a mystical experience of reality. Changes in the physiognomy of the world indicating changed relatednesses to the surrounding entities are often accompanied by an experience of these entities as indications of the involvement of mystical forces.

The third characteristic of the mystical experience is that it essentially involves an experience of ones personal existence over time. Through the experience the past aspects of existence are evaluated through their relatedness to the present (Loder, 1981). Owing to the past dimension of being, the future is often experienced as inaccessible. The mystical experience seems to serve as a process of going back into time whereby the future is being made accessible once again.

A fourth characteristic of the mystical experience is the fact that it reveals new views of reality. Reality and all that is, are experienced as never before (Luckoff, 1985). This constitutes a new vision on all that is,

leaving the person with new revelations about the self, the world and God (Loder, 1981).

New perspectives are given to the person about life and reality, and his or her vision is therefore widened, the dimensions of being are opened up to reveal much more meaning than before (Loder, 1981). This experience is generally directed towards life and reality as a whole. At the time it has, however, relevance for the individual life and personal existential concerns. Through the opening up of reality, these concerns are revealed for what they essentially are, and they are presented in the ultimate context of reality.

In this respect, the mystical reality essentially involves the realm of values and meanings. It has to do with ultimate truths and all-encompassing values, the totality of being. This is a quest for the understanding of all that is (Kinget, 1975) a search for the meaning and value of own existence within that reality (Frankl, 1967). As such, an experience of this dimension, of the mystical world, involves a judgemental attitude towards the own dimensions of existence. Values and meanings are explored in order to reach a total synthesis of what it means to be-in-the-world.

In the fifth place, the mystical experience requires a commitment or a surrender to it by the individual. The person will have to decide whether he or she is going to identify with the mystical view of reality by accepting it and by becoming part of it. This is a realization of the person's freedom of choice, in which he or she decides to integrate the self with this new perspective, or not. This culminates in the person's experiencing the mystical reality as either discontinuous with the self or as continuous with the self. This is an act of faith, of believing in the mystical reality as it presents itself (Oates, 1973) and integrating it with the concept of self.

Finally, the mystical experience is an experience of personal transformation in the light of a new integration into the world. The new experience of reality as revealed

through the mystical experience requires integration into the structures of the person's being-in-the-world in order to acquire meaning in existential terms. The insights revealed to the person retain only mystical, essential meanings, until they are anchored in the existence of the individual. Through this act of integration they are given meaning, as the dimension of existence in the world can be the only place where these insights are realized and manifested. The inability to integrate the mystical dimension of being with the other dimensions constitutes a pathological withdrawal from reality (Batson and Ventiss, 1982) which severely limits the individual existence.

Through the realization of the insights revealed by the mystical experience in the other dimensions of existence, the person finds new meanings and values in his or her personal existence which enables him or her to exist in what is perceived to be a much more integrated, meaningful and complete way than before. With this experience which appears in the personal, social and material dimensions of being, the experience is defined as a transformative growth experience.

5.3 PRODUCTIVE AND UNPRODUCTIVE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

The mystical, spiritual qualities often encountered in the schizophrenic experience have in the past led to conceptualizations of schizophrenia as a mystical experience (Laing, 1967; Perry, 1974, 1976), a mystical experience with psychotic features (Luckoff, 1985) or a religious growth experience (Boisen, 1952). The identification of certain features of a schizophrenic episode as mystical is, however, a difficult task since the mystical dimension of existence is often perceived to lie outside the field of psychology. Furthermore, the identification of mystical qualities in a schizophrenic episode is often hampered by the fact that the manifestation of the mystical can be in a variety of forms, ranging from the mythological (Perry, 1976) to religious, and even technological contents (Luckoff, 1985).

It will be argued here that any manifestation of the

mystical which fulfils the general criteria for mystical experiences (which involves having a revealing or uncovering experience of reality through contact with supernatural forces) can be regarded as an essentially mystical experience. This opens a new avenue for examining mystical dimensions of the schizophrenic experience, where no judgement is rendered on the specific contents of the experience itself.

An investigation into mystical experience should focus on the outcome of the experience, determining whether it produced a growth experience in the other dimensions of being or not. This is a potentially useful guide for the evaluation of the mystical experience as it allows for an investigation into the dimensions where the person's mystical experiences are realized and where they acquire meaning for the individual's existence, the person's being-in-the-world. This criterium leaves open the possibilities of regarding an experience which has no positive outcome as an unproductive mystical experience. It also removes the need to focus on the content of the specific features of the experience in order to determine whether the presence or absence of a certain feature indicates that the experience is or is not a mystical one. The structure of the experience can be related to the outcome of the experience in order to understand the phenomenon as a whole, and by this all evaluations on the true existence or not of mystical features are evaded. This allows for a maintaining of the spirit of the phenomenological method, a method accepting, respecting and valuing all phenomena as they are subjectively experienced by the individual for what they are (Keen, 1975). If a person, therefore, reports a mystical experience, no judgement is made regarding whether he or she is really having a mystical experience or not, as long as the experience meets the two criteria outlined above. The outcome of the experience as it is manifested in the person's being-in-the-world is examined in order to determine whether the experience is productive or not. The structure of the experience is then related

to the outcome in order to come to an understanding of the experience as a whole.

Following the criteria outlined above, it is clear that the mystical component in certain schizophrenic experiences can be regarded as unproductive, while others can be regarded as productive mystical experiences. In the case of unproductive mystical experiences, the person's experience reflected a mystical dimension, but the mystical experiences themselves were never realized or fully given meaning through a transformation or growth in the individual's being-in-the-world. The mystical experiences were real, but they were unproductive. As such, these specific forms of schizophrenia can be regarded as expressions of the individual's inability to fully experience and utilize productive mystical experiences.

The explication of a psychological structure of experience which would optimally facilitate a productive mystical experience can be attained by examining psychological structures of experiences where the person's experience of the mystical led to an experience of existential growth and transformation (such as religious experience and certain "schizophrenic" experiences.) The underlying structures of these experiences can then be contrasted with the structures of experiences in which no such positive growth was experienced by the persons concerned, mystical experiences which were unproductive. This method will uncover some of the underlying constituents of these structures, which can be conceptualized as conditions for a productive mystical experience.

These conditions involve the specific structures which would allow the person to fully experience and utilize the mystical experience as outlined above. A productive mystical experience can be conceptualized as an experience which facilitates the following:

A new experience of reality and the world where the appearance of aspects of the world are changed and by this offers a new perspective on reality and the individual's place in it over all dimensions of individual timeness. In this experience the person allows super-

natural forces to involve themselves in his or her life, and he or she surrenders all control over own existence to these powers. Finally, this mystical experience is integrated into other dimensions of existence, and a new way of existing is attained through the new perspective on reality and one's place in this reality.

An unproductive mystical experience involves a changed experience of the surrounding world in which a new perspective on reality and the person's place in reality is offered through the person's experience of his or her timeness. There is also the involvement of external supernatural forces in the individual existence. There are, however, a few constituents missing in this mystical experience which eventually culminate in the experiences being unproductive. There is, firstly, an unwillingness to accept the perspectives of the world and reality offered by the experience. Secondly, there is an inability to surrender the self to the superior forces which form an integral part of the experience. Finally, there is not an integration of the mystical experience of the world into the personal, material and social dimensions of the world. The experience is therefore unproductive.

It can be hypothesized that the specific structure of experience of the world can either facilitate a productive mystical experience or not. The specific constituents of the structures of experience of the world which play a role in this process will now be briefly discussed.

The first essential constituent of a structure of experience which could facilitate a productive mystical experience is an openness towards reality as it presents itself. This openness can be defined as an attitude towards the surrounding dimensions of existence which allows for the specific meanings manifested through the appearance of these dimensions to appear as they are, not distorted by own conceptions about the way they should be. The manifested meanings are therefore allowed to open up new meanings to the person concerned, to change him or her. The manifestation of mystical realities are then regarded as potentially new meanings to the self. They are also

allowed to show themselves for what they are, and the content of these experiences are accepted as real and true. The person will also allow these experiences to reveal new realities and meanings.

The opposite of this structure involves a lack of openness, in which the person rigidly maintains a few limited conceptions of his or her world and perceives the appearance of the surrounding worlds through these few limited themes. The person loses the openness to perceive the manifestation of new meanings in his or her life-world. The appearance of mystical experiences is therefore subjected to the few limited themes and meanings which form part of his or her experience at a specific time. The mystical realities which are encountered in the world are then, in a rigid and fixed way, related to existing experiences of the world, and not allowed to manifest differently. The mystical experience will therefore not change the person, it will only amplify and confirm existing experiences of the self and the surrounding world. It is clear that this attitude will not lead to growth but to stagnation and even regression.

Related to the open experience of the world is the concept of human freedom of existence, the second constituent facilitating productive mystical experiences. The act of openness, of allowing the things of the world to be as they are, is an expression of man's freedom in allowing the world to be for him or her. This is the freedom of relating to all dimensions of reality (including the mystical dimension) in all its potential meaningfulness, to allow oneself to identify with the manifestations of the world and thereby to expand the potential ways of relating to the world.

The opposite of this is a progressive limiting of the meaningfulness of the world which offers the person fewer and fewer ways of meaningfully relating to the world. The person now finds him or herself in a constricted, limited situation where fewer opportunities for existence are offered. The person's existence is ruled by the few themes

through which he or she perceives the life-world. The world now acquires a threatening appearance, which cannot be escaped from, as it offers very few existential alternatives for the person. The person now finds him or herself in an unfree situation, a situation which overwhelms the person as it limits the own existence to these few themes which cannot be escaped from.

A third unfavourable structure for the productive mystical experience is related to the expression of the person's lack of freedom. It involves the person's low security in being a self. The surrounding worlds are threatening the person and constricting his or her own existence. The person must therefore attempt to keep on maintaining a sense of identity, a sense of selfhood against the threatening world. He or she loses the ability to freely exist among the surrounding world. The person now attempts to regain control of the world around him. These attempts at seizing control will eventually fail, as they are constructed according to the very limited themes of reality. The person nevertheless keeps on attempting to be a self, trying to regain a sense of freedom of being in control of the own dimensions of existence.

This lack of security in being a self culminates in an inability to surrender the self to the mystical world and immerse the self in the mystical entities. By this the possibilities for existential growth and transformation are severely hampered. The person with a sense of security in being a self finds the process of surrendering the self to the realities of the mystical world a natural process in which there are no dangers of extermination or obliteration of selfhood, only the potential for growth.

Finally, the particular structure of the person's social world excludes the experience and the utilization of mystical experiences. Other people in the person's world are not comprehending the full extent of his or her experiences, and are therefore negating, invalidating and disregarding his or her experiences of the mystical. This forces the person to regard his or her experience as not

real and true. This increases the lack of openness and freedom in regarding the meaningful aspects of the mystical experience. The person is forced by society to disregard the experience.

Furthermore there cannot be a easy integration of the mystical experience into the other dimensions of being. Modern psychology and psychiatry forces the person to refrain from these experiences by regarding them as unreal and administering medication to 'help' the person to stop experiencing it. The mystical experiences are (if they are recalled afterwards by the person) regarded by him or her as separate entities of existence, not part of it. Only some people find structures in their worlds which facilitate the integration of these experiences into life as a whole.

The inability to integrate the mystical reality with the personal, social and material worlds is a cultural phenomenon of modern western society. The human being of today is living in a secular, materialistic world which complicates experiences of a mystical nature. In this sense the schizophrenic experience can be seen as an extreme paradigm of modern human beings' inability to fully experience the mystical, and to utilize this experience in a productive manner. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

5.4 MYSTICISM AND SPIRITUALITY IN MODERN WESTERN SOCIETY

The reality of the world surrounding modern human beings has changed considerably over the past few centuries. In earlier societies the world was seen as a static entity, subjected to the rule and grace of God. The world was seen as the creation of God, and as such was (along with humans) in existence solely to serve God. All relationships with others and with the world were regulated by God, and humans' dimensions of existence in the world were part of a fixed order and system being controlled by God himself. With the rise of the mercantile, manufacturing and eventually capitalist systems, this fixed world view became more and more incomparable with a fast changing society,

and a new world view was needed. This was provided by the rising natural-scientific theories of the time which were largely materialistically inclined, and provided a radically different view on reality. These natural-scientific theories soon began to challenge the implicit assumptions of the (then prominent) Christian world view, and finally succeeded in providing human beings with a world-view which excluded God's hold on human affairs. Society soon accepted this world-view as "natural" and "real", and by this act removed God from the world. (Rose et al 1984)

A modern human being is someone who generally experiences his world in terms of these natural-scientific views on reality (Romanyshyn, 1982). The expansion of science and the fact that science presents "proof" of the existence of things led to a new pragmatic test for world-views, which culminated in a different attitude towards the world and God (Wilson, 1969). Since modern science provided humans with "provable" explanations of the world, the need to believe in God became irrelevant in modern Western society. As the world wasn't seen as under the control of God any more, God was intentionally removed from the world (v.d. Berg, 1974 a). By this act, though, man created (in van den Berg's words) both a heaven and a hell for himself. The heaven man created has to do with man at last experiencing himself as equal to God. He could for the first time, control, manipulate, explain and use the world as he pleases by virtue of his scientific knowledge and insights into the processes that regulate the earth and everything in it. The hell humans created lies on the psychological level, and involves alienation from and dissatisfaction with all dimensions of being.

Existence within the modern world is not as comfortable as would be expected, taking into consideration the great technological enterprise of "making life easier for anyone". More and more people are today questioning their own existence within the world, and trying to make sense out of their lives. Maddi (1967) reported that an increasing number of people are reporting a "lack of meaning" in their existence. A feeling of emptiness or worthlessness

is accompanying their attempts to understand their own existences. Frankl (1961, 1975, 1984) describes the experiences of emptiness in modern Western humans and quotes staggering figures to indicate that the occurrence of experiences are a general phenomenon in Western society. He calls this constellation of experiences an "existential vacuum" signifying the lack of any meaningful experience about ones own existence. May (1975) describes man's large-scale alienation from his world, his fellow men and himself, and articulates the increasing experience of loneliness, emptiness and anxiety accompanying man's alienation. It therefore seems that the modern human is no longer peacefully co-existing with his world anymore, as a matter of fact, it seems as if his particular being in a modern, technological world became a source of distress to him or her.

In this distressful situation man is searching for ways to assist him in existing more adequately in the situation. Of primary import in this context is man's search for meaning (Frankl, 1975), his attempts at understanding the world and his place in it. Man is striving for a vantage point from which he can observe reality, a frame of orientation which would give him an ultimate view of his existence as a whole. The nature of reality revealed to him by this vision would contribute to his existing more meaningfully in his world situation. By getting some insight into the essence of his being, man seeks to rise above the situations which confront him daily. By seeing it in the context of a total world-view, man feels that he can adapt to his world once again.

Paradoxically, one of the essential structures which could guide man on this quest, the spiritual structures of existence, were exactly those structures destroyed by man in the creation of his "new" world. By taking away the mystical, supernatural, spiritual character of reality (Laing, 1967), man closed one of the most important avenues for finding a meaningful, authentic existence. This is what van den Berg (1974 a) means when he says that

men created a hell for themselves. By intentionally removing God from the world, man made it impossible for God to appear in the world anymore. Man hereby doomed himself to forever existing within the distressing situation he had created.

An ultimate view of reality in cosmic, spiritual terms became a reality inaccessible to man, leaving him impotent in his present, materialistic world.

Humans are naturally still striving for meaningful ways to exist in this world. The rise of the science of psychology is testimony to man's attempts at finding himself and finding a place for himself in the world. Today the preoccupation with the establishment of an authentic, actualized individual existence through development of the self, bears witness to the search for insight into the human condition. Ironically, the appearance of this type of self-theories coincided with the manifestation of the self appearing more and more weak, powerless and impotent in the modern world (Jacoby, 1975), leading one to suspect that the tremendous emphasis on self-theories today can be seen as indicative that the answers to human needs cannot be found in insights into and development of the self (Frankl, 1967). Not satisfied by the answers to his existential dilemma offered by psychology in general and self-theories in particular (Vitz, 1977), man began to realize that a solution to his existential questions lay in a realm of values and views of reality beyond the present world, and beyond mere development of self. This signifies a renewed interest in religion (May, 1981; Loder, 1981), culturally expressed by the rising interest in Eastern religions, meditative practices and altered states of consciousness, among others (Vitz, 1977).

The problem of these realms of existence being inaccessible to man remains, and man is still finding it increasingly difficult to regain the realities and experiences offered by spiritual realities. Due to his changing view of the world, man's religious urges and practices are not part of natural experience any more, they are something

that he must continuously strive for.

It might very well be that the inaccessible nature of religious realities are reflected in the schizophrenic experience. The mystical, spiritual character of the schizophrenic episode might be an expression of the lack of exactly these aspects in human existence as a whole. Little wonder then that the schizophrenic, upon finding the spiritual, religious and supernatural realities of the world inaccessible, experiences a lack of openness when being confronted by the mystical. The structure and content of his or her experiences bears witness to the inaccessibility of the mystical reality for human existence. It might also very well be that the experience of the mystical itself, although incomplete and distorted is an expression of one of the long-forgotten essential givens of being human - the human being's integral and basic spirituality and religiousness. This dimension of being human is no longer accessible to humans, and society is becoming more and more closed against this spiritual, religious reality. In this sense then it might also be that the schizophrenic consciousness is representative of the consciousness of modern western humankind.

Paradoxically, this lack of openness towards the world and fellow man which makes the meaningful experience of spiritual realities in the world almost impossible, can be accounted for by the lack of a religious structure itself. A religious relatedness with God is much more than an emotional feeling of well-being, it is a directness, a relatedness, a way of existing in the world. This relatedness with a supernatural figure provides a person with an openness towards the world as a whole, notwithstanding the risks attached to that openness (Du Toit, 1969). By virtue of this spiritual, ultimate frame of reference, humans are provided with the mechanisms needed to open themselves to the world in order to find meaningful relatedness to it. This is what Tillich meant when he said: "He who is reunited with God, the creative Ground of Life, the power of life in everything that lives, is reunited with life. He feels accepted by it and he can live it." (1965, p. 11

in Geldenhuys and du Toit, 1971). It is therefore by relatedness with the spiritual reality that one is prompted through experience of ultimate grounds to open oneself even more to a widening reality. Religion provides man with an experience of being related to the world, fellow man and reality in a special way, owing to relatedness with the overall source of those realities and his own existence in totality. A person thus feels free enough and secure enough to risk his existence by opening himself up to that reality, because he is intrinsically already part of that reality, grounded in it and accepted by all the dimensions of it (Du Toit, 1969).

These religious structures are not easily accessible to modern humans, and existence is influenced by this lack in a dual way. While experiencing the spiritual reality of being-in-the-world as inaccessible, he or she is simultaneously deprived of those structures which could provide grounds for an openness towards exactly those realities, an openness which would make those realities accessible once more. This tragic set of circumstances is lucidly expressed through the schizophrenic consciousness, a consciousness characterized by its lack of openness towards an inaccessible world.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter was to explore the mystical experience as it occurs in schizophrenia and religious experience. By moving away from the tendency to evaluate mystical experiences exclusively in terms of specific contents, the focus of psychological inquiry can shift towards uncovering psychological structures which could contribute towards a productive mystical experience, that is, an experience culminating in existential growth. This process may have specific relevance for some schizophrenic experiences. The material covered seems to suggest that some psychological structures might be functional in facilitating a mystical growth experience. These are: (1) An openness towards reality as it presents itself; (2) A degree of existential freedom in which a person allows

himself or herself to live the alternatives of the world in its potential fullness; (3) A sense of security in the own selfhood which would allow the self to experience fully and (4) A social world which understands, supports and reflects the mystic experience.

These structures could partly be cultivated through interaction in the psychotherapeutical encounter. The present psychological structure of modern Western society will, however, to a large extent remain unsympathetic, unsupportive and ignorant of the mystical, suggesting that a psychotherapy of and for the culture is urgently required. The bewilderment and disorientation of some members of society (whom we sometimes label as schizophrenics), is the bewilderment and disorientation of us all.

APPENDIX A: CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY B: SCHIZOPHRENIA

This is a study of Howard Everest, and involves a self-description of a psychotic episode. It is described in Luckoff (1985, p. 127-143).

After school, the subject decided not to continue his formal education, and began traveling in hopes of gaining first-hand experience of life. In 1973 he stayed for the summer in a small village in Mexico. "After hitchhiking back into the United States from Mexico, I developed a very high fever. At this point I entered the episode which led to my hospitalization. I stopped off at the house of an aunt and uncle for a couple of days until my fever went down. When I started hitchhiking again, various lines of verse began to filter into my mind. These words seemed to enter me from an outside source... Upon arriving at my parent's home, I put these one-liners together in a poem... There seemed to be a single word missing... I showed it to my mother that evening, and she suggested (a word). The first stanza of the poem expressed my current mode of experiencing life, the discontent I felt, the sense that something was not right in this world or in my relationship to the world. However, by summoning "Heaven's madness", I could enter a frame of mind that would give me a new sense of reality, described in the second stanza...

After composing these verses, I realized that the poem itself could be used to catapult me into a state of madness, into the mental odyssey. By concentrating on it to the exclusion of all else, I would push myself into that state. During the next twelve hours, I pecked away at my typewriter, turning out copy after copy of the poem, with my attention rivetted on its elements.

By morning I was in a state of rapture. I felt I had experienced a rebirth; the poem was my "birth announcement" I was at the crux of transitioning from "the flight through nausea" to "wheeling and gliding" joyously through the cosmos. My thoughts turned to my mother's crucial contribution which completed the poem, and I thought, "How gracious of the universe to allow my own physical mother to be the midwife of my rebirth, for even though I am now a child of the universe, yet she had a hand in her own son's rebirth. Thus she had been spared the full pain of the loss of her child.

That morning I greeted my parents with the

announcement. "I have been reborn. My father is the Sun, my mother is the Moon, and I am a child of the universe. My experiment is a success." I viewed myself as a guinea-pig in a self-designed experiment which was now taking on cosmic importance. Although my parents did not say anything to me, I sensed their anxiety and concern, but I just wanted to plunge ahead to wherever the experience was taking me. For the next four days I engaged in spontaneous rituals to keep the elements of the poem in my mind.

Two days after writing the poem, a hike with a friend became a journey filled with significant occurrences. Preparing for the trip to a nearby mountain, I packed a few small items in a can. A harmonica, blue bandana and other items were "power objects" - symbols of my newborn self. I took these elements to bury them because I needed to incorporate them into the very earth itself. If I don't marry my rebirth to the earth, it won't be anchored and it will dissipate...

Arriving at the gate, the point where we started walking... I told my friend, "these are the gates of Hell and we are going to walk through the bowels of Hell"... Later we came to a river "we've passed through the bowels of Hell", I said, "now we climb out into the wilderness"... I felt the need to leave my friend... I followed the road for a while and then cut through a thicket which got me back where I started. Every detail in the journey was significant. I asked myself "why have I gone a full circle in the wilderness? I can't stop here, I must continue this quest. I must go to the gates, the portals of Heaven." So I started up the hill toward two prominent trees. At times I felt weary, and wanted to stop and rest. I thought the Devil was trying to prevent me from reaching the summit so I kept pushing myself. Finally I reached the trees... I went to the base of the trees and buried the can, not in the wilderness... but in the realms of Heaven. "Now my experience is part of the earth, it is anchored. It is real..." Nearby, to my left, I saw a great slab of rock. I walked over... and noticed a place carved into the rock. It looked just like a little chair. "This is my rightful place in the Kingdom of Heaven". As I took my place in the seat I felt I had arrived... My task completed, I proceeded down the mountain, met my friend and we drove back.

I proclaimed my accomplishment to my family and friends saying, "I have been through the bowels of Hell, climbed up and out and wandered a full circle in the wilderness. I have ascended through the portals of Heaven, where I established my rebirth in the earth itself, and now have taken my rightful place in the Kingdom of Heaven". I cannot remember the exact words my parents spoke in response to this proclamation, but I sensed their increasing concern and bewilderment.

Throughout this period, I frequently used symbolic speech containing mythic words: "I am the albatross, you are the dove." I said to one friend. Being an albatross involved flying over large expanses of waters to distant shores and then returning. This was my process. Thus the albatross became the symbol which carried me into these new experiences.

I hoped my friends would make a similar connection and enter into an odyssey themselves. I urged them to create their own mythical vehicles and use them as guides into an odyssey as I had done... My friends became quiet, and I sensed the same fear in them as in my relatives. Undaunted, I continued to talk about the success of my experiment.

On the fourth day of the odyssey, my father, a general practitioner, asked me to go to the hospital. "We'd like to run some tests on you", he said. I agreed, thinking about the potential value for science and humanity. The medical community should look at the experience I am having and learn something from it... At the psychiatric unit, I signed a paper thinking it was a consent for tests. Then my father left me with an attendant. I suggested we start the tests since I had to finish my experiment. "Take it easy, he said, "settle in. You'll be here for a while"...

He took me to my room and left. I sat down and immediately removed my I.D. bracelet. I was not the name they had written in plastic. I had been reborn. I was the albatross... Later, I left my room and went to the main door which was locked. A woman came down the hall, and as she neared the door I asked, "Would you please let me out?"... Pointing to my wrist I showed her that I was not wearing a wristband... She opened the door. I walked through, and went to the elevator. Even though no one else was waiting and no one was in the elevator, the doors opened the instant I got there. This

another affirmation that the world was with me...

I was on my way home to finish the odyssey. I did not know exactly what it entailed, but I was sure my muse would guide ... Arriving home, I could sense the heightening of my parent's distress as I told them I would continue my experiment. I would do whatever I needed to do to fulfill my destiny...

Outside the night was dark and starry. Still retaining the feeling of release, I started across the field behind our house. While I ran, I rode this sensation as I had learned to do with other feelings during the previous four days. My sense of release grew and grew. Reaching a vacant lot near the house, I looked up at the sky and saw the star of my newborn self fixed in the heavens. "This is it. This is the peak. Now it is complete. I am beyond. I entered a new dimension of the odyssey, one beyond symbols, beyond words...

Feeling ecstatic and clear headed, I returned home. "It is complete, I am the centre of the Universe", I said... In my room, I turned on some music and lay down to sleep. I awoke a short while later when a policeman walked into my room, my mother with him. Knowing why he had come, I got up immediately and dressed... I did not really object to being taken to the hospital this time. The experiment was finished. I was now at the center of the Universe regardless of where I was placed. At the hospital I went to sleep immediately...

At first I met with the psychiatrist every day. I had hopes that he as a representative of the psychiatric community, would understand the significance of my experience... He showed no response... Throughout my stay at the hospital, I sensed that the psychiatrist did not want to talk to me at all. Our visits became less frequent and briefer over the duration. During most of the two months I saw him twice a week for perhaps five minutes at a time... At the end of my stay, I do not remember talking with him or even exchanging goodbyes.

Despite the lack of validation from the psychiatrist and staff, I never questioned the positive value of my experience. In fact, throughout my stay I found many ways to keep my mental odyssey alive and flowing. I persisted in processing my experience in terms of symbols. The symbol of infinity ("8") symbolized for me

the flow of energy in the process of becoming, and therefore represented the universe and everyone in it. In the hallways, I walked in figure eights enacting the cosmic drama of time and space. I told others to watch me doing this. Sometimes I kicked an orange around the halls in a figure 8... it was my belief that orange was the colour of power, so this ritual reinforced my personal power.

In the privacy of my room I regularly conducted rituals to invoke the Four Forces of the square. I began by facing north, held my arms straight out to the sides, whistled four times and then yelled yu... then I turned to the south... east... and west... Then I waited for the forces to manifest. Through this and other spontaneous rituals, I kept my attention on continuing the mental odyssey. I also encountered signs which strengthened my conviction that I was on the right path. While in my room with my eyes closed, I saw three yellow birds flying against a brilliantly yellow sky while another bird crossed their path. In several places around the ward whirring vortexes suddenly appeared which I knew to be my muse. Occasionally part of the face of someone I was looking at dissolved and was replaced by portions of someone else's face.

It became apparent to me that no one on the staff was interested in understanding or recording my experiment. If this were to have any value to others, I would have to create a definite "key" for understanding the universe based on the elements from my odyssey. My parents had brought me a copy of the book "Finnegon's Wake" its inside cover seemed the right location to inscribe this symbol key.

I had cordial associations with the other patients, but I never developed a close relationship with any of them. I felt they did not understand my experience any better than the staff did. In fact, it was obvious that most of the other patients were seriously troubled. At times I tried to help them, but I did not actively intervene in their situations. There was a shirt I would wear sometimes, thinking "In this shirt I will heal them."

At one point a male Mexican patient arrived whom I thought had been placed on the ward to test my will. At times he projected a ray inside me and I would feel the pain in my gut. I could ward off the ray of death by rubbing my stomach and stamping my foot on the

ground.

After six weeks, on the advice of my psychiatrist, my parents proposed a transfer to a hospital in San Francisco for an additional 3-6 months of treatment. For an instant, I turned over this possibility in my mind. Perhaps a different group of doctors would truly monitor and document this mental odyssey, thereby preserving it. I still wanted to help to chronicle and understand the many incredible experiences in my journey. Then I realized there was no guarantee that another hospital would be different from the barren continent of my present surroundings. "I don't need another hospital. I want to leave. I'll do just fine outside." I said.

After two months, I left the hospital, and immediately returned to the same state of consciousness I had been in before the odyssey...

Firstly, I had to regain the ability to concentrate and function. I was totally exhausted physically, emotionally and mentally... I took a job... It was ideal for strengthening myself. About this time I began to explore the meaning of my experience... I found Campbell's "Creative Mythology". Immediately I realized that was exactly what I had been doing - creating mythology... During training me to see the relationship between experience and mythical symbols in a new way. It also provided me with references for further exploration.

My biggest breakthrough came when I read Campbell's "Hero with a thousand faces." Immediately I realized that I had been on a Hero's Journey. I, too had come into an experimental relationship with archetypes, had returned and had knowledge to share with others.

Periodically, I tried to share my new found knowledge with friends and family, but it was not well received. I could see I was still considered "crazy". I have learned not to talk about these matters with others. When we discuss other subjects, my relationships with those who witnessed my experiences have been fine, I have not felt like an outcast.

(I worked at different locations, and finally after a few years, got involved with a church, which finally gave me the opportunity to integrate insights. Now, 12 years later, I still continue to explore aspects of my mental odyssey.)

Meaning units

1. After hitchhiking back into the United States from Mexico, I developed a very high fever. At this point I entered the episode which led to my hospitalization. I stopped off at the house of an aunt and uncle for a couple of days until my fever went down.
2. When I started hitchhiking again, various lines of verse began to filter into my mind. These words seemed to enter me from an outside source... Upon arriving at my parent's home I put these one-liners together in a poem. There seemed to be a single word missing - I showed it to my mother that evening, and she suggested a word.
3. The first stanza expressed my current mode of experiencing life, the discontent I felt, the sense that something was not right in this world or in my relationship to the world. However, by summoning "Heaven's madness", I could enter a frame of mind that would give me a new sense of reality, as described in the second stanza.
4. After composing these verses, I realized that the poem itself could be used to catapult me into a state of "madness", into the mental odyssey. By concentrating on it to the exclusion of all else, I would push myself into that state. During the next twelve hours, I pecked away at my typewriter, turning out copy after copy of the poem, with my attention

Psychological Expression

The subject's experience started after a short, intensive illness followed by a period of rest.

S became aware of certain ideas entering his consciousness from an outside source. He arranged these ideas in the concrete form of a poem. There was a single word missing, and S showed the poem to his mother, who suggested a word.

This concretization of ideas was an expression of his existence, and depicted his sense of discontentment and dissatisfaction with his being in the world. He recognized that by entering a new reality, described as madness, he could change his being-in-the-world.

He recognised that the concretization of the expression of his problematic existence and the entrance into a new reality could be instrumental in transforming his reality. He focussed on this concretization to the exclusion of everything else.

riveted on its elements

5. By morning, I was in a state of rapture. I felt I had experienced a rebirth; the poem was my "birth announcement". I was at the crux of transitioning from "the flight through nausea" to "wheeling and gliding" joyously through the cosmos.

After some time, S experienced a transformation from his problematic experience of reality into a new reality. This was seen as a rebirth, symbolized by the poem he wrote.
6. My thoughts turned to my mother's crucial contribution which completed the poem, and I thought "How gracious of the universe to allow my own physical mother to be the midwife of my rebirth. For even though I am now a child of the universe, she had a hand in her own son's rebirth. Thus she had been spared the full pain of the loss of her child."

He saw his experience as a rebirth into a cosmic reality. His mother's contribution towards finishing his poem is regarded as a significant indication of her role as contributor to his transformation.
7. That morning I greeted my parents with the announcement "I have been reborn. My father is the sun, my mother is the moon and I am a child of the universe."

S announced to his parents that he was a product of cosmic powers.
8. My experience is a success. I viewed myself as a guinea-pig in a self-designed experiment which was now taking on cosmic importance.

S viewed himself as an object of his own investigation which was taking on cosmic importance.
9. Although my parents did not say anything to me, I sensed their anxiety and concern, but I just wanted to plunge ahead to wherever the experience was taking me.

S's experience of himself as taking part in an experiment is negated by staff members.
10. For the next four days I engaged in spontaneous rituals to keep the elements of the poem in my mind.

S felt a need to keep his intentions and thoughts riveted to the concretization of his experience.
11. Two days after writing the poem a hike with a friend became a journey with significant occurrences.

12. Preparing for the trip to a nearby mountain, I packed a few small objects in a can. A harmonica, blue bandana and other items were "power objects" - symbols of my newborn self. I took these elements to bury them because I needed to incorporate them into the very earth itself. If I don't go through this ritual, if I don't marry my rebirth to the earth, It won't be anchored and it will dissipate.
- S felt a need to perform a symbolic act whereby signs of his cosmic rebirth could be incorporated into the earth in order to give it substance.
13. Arriving at the gate, the point where we started walking... I told my friend, "these are the gates of Hell and we are going to walk through the bowels of Hell". Later we came to a river. "We've passed through the bowels of Hell", I said "now we climb out into the wilderness"... I felt the need to leave my friend... I followed the road for a while and then cut through a thicket which got me back where I started. Every detail in the journey was significant. I asked myself "why have I gone a full circle in the wilderness. I can't stop here, I must continue this quest. I must go to the gates, the portals of Heaven". So I started up the hill toward trees. At times I felt weary, and wanted to stop and rest. I thought the devil was trying to prevent me from reaching the summit so I kept pushing myself. Finally I reached the trees.
- S saw the world in cosmic mystic and religious terms.
14. I went to the base of the trees and buried the can, not in the wilderness but in the realms of heaven.
- He gave his experience substance by linking symbols of his experience to the concrete earth.

It is anchored. It is real...

15. Nearby, to my left, I saw a great slab of rock. I walked over... and noticed a place carved into the rock. It looked just like a little chair. "This is my rightful place in the kingdom of Heaven". As I took my place in the seat I felt I had arrived"... My task completed, I proceeded down the mountain, met my friend and we drove back.
16. I proclaimed my accomplishment to my family and friends saying, "I have been through the bowels of Hell, climbed up and out and wandered a full circle in the wilderness. I have ascended through the portals of Heaven, where I established my rebirth in the earth itself, and now have taken my rightful place in the kingdom of Heaven". I cannot remember the exact words my parents spoke in response to this proclamation, but I sensed their increasing concern and bewilderment.
17. Throughout this period, I frequently used symbolic speech containing mythic words. "I am the albatross; You are the dove", I said to one friend. Being an albatross involved flying over large expanses of waters to distant shores and then returning. This was my process. Thus the albatross became the symbol which carried me into those new experiences.
18. I hoped my friends would make a similar connection and enter into an odyssey themselves. I urged them
- He saw himself as someone preciding in religious realms, the ultimate form of existence within his world.
- S interpreted his experience to his significant others in cosmic terms, and experienced their confusion and concern.
- S used symbolic speech and mythical words which were an expression of his own experiences and transformations. His identity also took on a symbolic nature, depicting his movements into new experiences.
- S wanted to share his sense of reality with his friends, but they also responded by being worried.

to create their own mythical vehicles and use them as guides into an odyssey as I had done... My friends became quiet, and I sensed the same fear in them as in my relatives. Undaunted, I continued to talk about the success of my experience.

19. On the fourth day of the odyssey, my father, a general practitioner, asked me to go to the hospital. "We'd like to run some tests on you", he said. I agreed, thinking about the potential value for science and humanity. "The medical community should look at the experience I am having and learn something from it"...
20. At the psychiatric unit, I signed a paper thinking it was a consent for tests. Then my father left me with an attendant. I suggested we start the tests since I had to finish my experiment. "Take it easy," he said, "settle in. You'll be here for a while". He took me to my room and left.
21. I sat down and immediately removed my I.D. bracelet. I was not the name they had written in plastic. I had been reborn. I was the albatross...
22. Later, I left my room and went to the main door which was locked. A woman came down the hall, and as she neared the door, I asked "Would you please let me out?"... Pointing to my wrist I showed her I was not wearing a wristband... She opened the door.
23. I walked through, and went to the elevator. Even though no one else was
- S agreed to going to hospital because he believed his experience could benefit mankind as a whole.
- S recognizes his identity had changed and experiences himself in symbolic terms.
- Happenings in his world signified that the world was supporting his experiences.

waiting and no one was in the elevator, the doors opened the instant I got there. This was another affirmation that the world was with me...

24. I was on my way home to finish the odyssey. I did not know exactly what it entailed, but I was sure my muse would guide me... Arriving home I could sense the heightening of my parent's distress as I told them I would do whatever I needed to do to fulfill my destiny.
25. Outside the night was dark and starry. Still retaining the feeling of release, I started across the field behind our house. While I ran, I rode this sensation as I had learned to do with other feelings during the previous four days. My sense of release grew and grew.
26. Reaching a vacant lot near the house, I looked up at the sky and saw the star of my newborn self fixed in the heavens. "This is it. This is the peak. Now it is complete. I am beyond. I entered a new dimension of the odyssey, one beyond symbols, beyond words"...
27. Feeling exstatic and clear headed, I returned home "It is complete, I am the centre of the universe", I said.
28. In my room, I turned on some music and lay down to sleep. I awoke a short while later when a policeman walked into my room, my mother with him. Knowing why he had come, I got up immediately and dressed.
- He was committed to continuing the experience (notwithstanding resistance from significant others) under the guidance of external powers.
- He learnt to fully experience feelings. He experienced feelings of release and intense freedom.
- S saw a symbol in the world depicting his experience of transformation, which pushed him into a new reality.
- S saw his transition into a new reality as a completion of a task. He saw himself as the focal point of cosmic powers.
- S voluntarily goes back to hospital.

29. I did not really object to being taken to the hospital this time. The experiment was finished. I was now at the centre of the universe, regardless of where I was placed. At the hospital I went to sleep immediately... He experienced a cosmic identity transcending all physical realms and restrictions of the material world, rendering these restrictions irrelevant.
30. At first I met with the psychiatrist every day. I had hopes that he, as a representative of the psychiatric community, would understand the significance of my experience... He showed no response... Throughout my stay at the hospital, I sensed that the psychiatrist did not want to talk to me at all. Our visits became less frequent and briefer over the duration. During most of the two months, I saw him twice a week for perhaps five minutes at a time... At the end of my stay, I do not remember talking with him or even exchanging goodbyes. The subject experienced the medical profession as not understanding his experiences and negating it.
31. Despite the lack of validation from the psychiatrist and staff, I never questioned the positive value of my experience. In fact, throughout my stay I found many ways to keep my mental odyssey alive and flowing. He nevertheless continued to believe in the positive value of his experience and sought different ways to maintain his transition.
32. I persisted in processing my experience in terms of symbols. The symbol of infinity ("8") symbolized for me the flow of energy, in the process of becoming, and therefore represented the universe and everyone in it. In the hallways I walked in figure eights, enacting the cosmic drama of time and space... I told others to watch me doing this. Sometimes I kicked an orange around the halls in a figure 8... it was my S needed a symbolic enactment of energy and power associated with his experience to keep the transition into a new reality ongoing.

belief that orange was the colour of power, so this ritual reinforced my personal power.

33. In the privacy of my room, I regularly conducted rituals to invoke the four forces of the square. I began by facing north, held my arms straight out to the sides, whistled four times and then yelled yu... then I turned to the south... east... and west... Then I waited for the forces to manifest.
34. Through this and other spontaneous rituals, I kept my attention on continuing the mental odyssey.
35. I also encountered signs which strengthened my conviction that I was on the right path. While in my room with my eyes closed, I saw three yellow birds flying against a brilliantly yellow sky while another bird crossed their path. In several places around the ward, whirring vortices suddenly appeared which I knew to be my muse. Occasionally part of the face of someone I was looking at dissolved and was replaced by portions of someone else's face.
36. It became apparent to me that no one on the staff was interested in understanding or recording my experiment. If this were to have any value for others, I would have to create a definite "key" for understanding the universe based on the elements from my odyssey. My parents had brought me a copy of the book Finnegans Wake; its inside cover seemed the
- He performed rituals to invoke cosmic forces.
- He tried to keep his concentration or intention on his experience.
- He saw signs reinforcing his belief that his experience was going along the right lines.
- Because the medical personnel didn't share his reality, he feared that he needed a different way of making an explanation of his experience possible in a concrete form, so that it could be understood by others and have value to them. He then drew a schematic/symbolic representation of his experiences.

right location to inscribe this symbol key.

37. I had cordial associations with the other patients, but I never developed a close relationship with any of them. I felt they did not understand my experience any better than the staff did. In fact, it was obvious that most of the other patients were seriously troubled.
- S felt isolated from other patients due to their misunderstanding of his experience.
38. At times I tried to help them, but I did not actively intervene in their situations. There was a shirt that I would wear sometimes thinking "In this shirt I will heal them".
- He sometimes experienced himself as having magical powers.
39. At one point a male Mexican patient arrived whom I thought had been placed on the ward to test my will. At times he projected a ray inside me and I would feel the pain in my gut. I could ward off the ray of death by rubbing my stomach and stamping my foot on the ground.
- He experienced himself as the passive object of other's intentions, but could respond by magical rituals which served to protect him.
40. After six weeks, on the advice of my psychiatrist, my parents proposed a transfer to a hospital in San Francisco for an additional 3-6 months of treatment. For an instant, I turned over this possibility in my mind. Perhaps a different group of doctors would truly manifest and document this mortal odyssey, thereby preserving it. I still wanted to help to chronicle and understand the many incredible experiences in my journey. Then I realized there was no guarantee that another hospital would be different from the barren environment of my present surroundings. "I don't want to leave,
- S realized that a medical environment would be unable to understand his experiences, and would not be able to make them comprehensible.

I'll do just fine outside",
I said.

41. After two months, I left the hospital and immediately returned to the same state of consciousness I had been in before the odyssey. He left the hospital and returned to a previous state of being-in-the-world, before the present experiences.
42. Firstly, I had to regain the ability to concentrate and function. I was totally exhausted - physically, emotionally and mentally... I took a job. It was ideal for strengthening myself. He began to strengthen himself on a bodily level, and began functioning in a job.
43. About this time I began to explore the meaning of my experience... I found Campbell's "Creative mythology". Immediately I realized what I had been doing - creating mythology... During the time it took me to finish reading the book, its concepts were training me to see the relationship between experience and mythical symbols in a new way. It provided me with references for further exploration. His exploration into the meaning of his experience began, and led him to see it in mythical terms with symbolic value.
44. My biggest breakthrough came when I read Campbell's "Hero with a thousand faces". Immediately I realized that I had been on a hero's journey. I, too had come into an experiential relationship with archetypes, had returned, and had knowledge to share with others. He recognizes that he had come to new experiential relationships with aspects of his hidden self, and that he could share this with others.
45. Periodically, I tried to share my new-found knowledge with friends and family, but it was not well-received. I could see I was still considered "crazy". I have learnt not to talk about these matters with others. When we discuss other subjects, my relationships with those who witnessed my experiences S still found significant others not being able to share his experience, he therefore refrained from discussing it with them.

have been fine, I have not felt like an outcast.

46. I worked at different locations, and finally after a few years got involved with a specific church, which finally gave me the opportunity to integrate some insights. Today, 12 years later, I still continue to explore aspects of my mental odyssey.

He finally found structures which offered him the opportunity to integrate his experiences. He is, however, still exploring aspects of this event.

CASE STUDY C: SCHIZOPHRENIA

This study is taken from Neale, Oltmans and Davison (1984, p. 166-168). The subject is a 25 year old single, unemployed male living with his sister and brother-in-law.

The subject's sister encouraged him to seek professional help for his peculiar behaviour and social isolation. He spent most of his time day-dreaming, often talked to himself and occasionally said things that made little sense. The subject made an appointment with a psychologist to please his sister, although he insisted that he didn't need psychological treatment. He also assured the therapist that his problems would be solved if he could stop day-dreaming and become better organized.

After several weeks of therapy, he began to discuss social contracts and expressed concern about his sexual orientation. Although he had a lack of close friends, he had some limited and fleeting sexual experiences, both heterosexual and homosexual in nature. He was quite concerned about the possible meaning and consequences of his encounters with other males. He also mentioned that at frequent although irregular intervals throughout the day, he would find himself distracted by intrusive and repetitive thought, alien to his own value system. He felt compelled to repeat a sequence of self-statements that he had designed to correct the initial intrusive thoughts.

The subject then began telling the therapist about a different problem. Shortly after moving to his sister's house, the subject realized that something strange was happening. He noticed that people were taking special interest in him and often felt that they were talking about him behind his back. These puzzling circumstances persisted for several weeks during which he became increasingly anxious and suspicious. The pieces of the puzzle finally fell into place late one night as he sat in front of the television. In a flash of insight he suddenly came to believe that a group of conspirators had secretly produced and distributed a documentary film about his homosexual experiences. Several of his high-school friends and a few distant relatives had used hidden cameras and microphones to record each of his sexual encounters with other men.

The subject further believed that the film had grossed over 10 million dollars at the box of-

face, and that this money had been sent to the Irish Republican Army to buy arms and ammunition. He therefore held himself responsible for the deaths of dozens of people who had died as a result of several recent bombings in Ireland.

He felt extremely guilty about the bombings, and was also afraid of the consequences of his knowledge about the affair. He believed that the conspirators agreed to kill him if he ever found out about the movie. He therefore feared for his life.

His fear was exaggerated by the voices he had been hearing for some weeks. He frequently heard male voices discussing his sexual behaviour and arguing about what action should be taken to punish him. He was not familiar with the voices, and didn't know where they came from. For example, one night he was sitting alone in his bedroom when he overheard a heated argument in the next room in which one voice kept repeating "He's a goddammed faggot and we've got to kill him." Two other voices were arguing with the first voice. Later, investigation proved the room to be empty.

The person also found support for his beliefs in the fact that his own picture had been on the cover of TIME-magazine, and the movie was discussed in length inside. He had also ran into a distant cousin accidentally on a subway two years earlier, which was proof that his cousin was following him in order to make a secret film about his private life. He also remembered someone looking at him in an elevator one morning and asking him if they didn't know each other. The subject didn't know the person, and took this occurrence as further proof of the fact that the person saw the film recently; he insisted that no other explanation made sense.

Meaning units

1. The subject's sister encouraged him to seek professional help for his peculiar behaviour and social isolation. He spent most of his time day-dreaming, often talked to himself and occasionally said things that made little sense.

Psychological Expression

Certain aspects of the subjects's behaviour which are considered peculiar by his sister, as well as his social isolation leads her to encourage him to seek professional help.

2. The subject made an appointment with a psychologist to please his sister, although he insisted that he didn't need psychological treatment. He also assured the psychologist that his problems would be solved if he could stop day-dreaming and become better organized.

S does as is expected of him by her, although he at first denies having any real problems.
3. After several weeks of therapy he began to discuss social contracts and expressed concern about his sexual orientation. Although he had a lack of close friends, he had some limited and fleeting sexual experiences, both heterosexual and homosexual in nature. He was concerned about the possible meaning and consequences of his encounters with other males.

He is concerned about the consequences and meanings of a few casual sexual experiences, homosexual and heterosexual in nature. S is concerned about his sexual orientation.
4. He also mentioned that at frequent, although irregular intervals, throughout the day, he would find himself distracted by intrusive and repetitive thoughts, alien to his own value system. He felt compelled to repeat a sequence of self-statements that he had designed to correct the initial intrusive thoughts.

S also finds himself invaded by thoughts and ideas regarded by him as alien to his own value systems. These thoughts can be corrected or erased by repeating sequences of self-statements.
5. The subject began telling the therapist about a different problem. Shortly after moving to his sister's house, the subject realized that something strange was happening. He noticed that people were taking special interest in him and often felt that they were talking about him behind his back. These puzzling circumstances persisted for several weeks during which he became in-

He became anxious and suspicious after experiencing himself as becoming more and more the focus of other's interest and conversation. He could find no reason for this, and the situation continued for some weeks.

creasingly anxious and suspicious.

6. The pieces of the puzzle finally fell into place late one night as he sat in front of the television. In a flash of insight he suddenly came to believe that a group of conspirators had secretly produced and distributed a documentary film about his homosexual experiences. Several of his high-school friends and a few distant relatives had used hidden cameras and microphones to record each of his sexual encounters with other men.

S suddenly gained insight into the situation. He immediately understood that a group of people whom he knew distantly had conspired against him by producing and distributing a film about his homosexual experiences. They went about this in a clandestine way.
7. The subject further believed that the film had grossed over 10 million dollars at the box office, and that this money had been sent to the Irish Republican Army to buy arms and ammunition. He therefore held himself responsible for the deaths of dozens of people in several recent bombings in Ireland.

These people further exploited his experiences by using the profits from this film to aid a terrorist group in killing several others. S therefore held himself responsible for these people's deaths.
8. He felt extremely guilty about the bombings, and was also afraid of the consequences of his knowledge about the affair. He believed that the conspirators agreed to kill him if he ever found out about the movie; he therefore feared for his life!

He felt guilty about his indirect involvement in the killings of people. His knowledge about the whole affair also put his own life in danger as the people responsible for it would kill him if they became aware of his insights.
9. His fear was exaggerated by the voices he had been hearing for some weeks. He frequently heard male voices discussing his sexual behaviour and arguing about what action should be taken to punish him. He was not familiar with the voices, and didn't know

His fear was further exaggerated by voices around him continuously discussing his sexual behaviour and arguing about what action should be taken to punish him. The voices were all male, but he was not familiar with them, and didn't know where they came from.

where they came from. For example, one night he was sitting alone in his bedroom when he overheard an argument in the next room in which one voice kept repeating "He's a goddamned faggot and we've got to kill him." Two other voices were arguing with the first voice. Later investigation proved the room to be empty.

10. The person found support for his beliefs in the fact that his picture had been on the cover of TIME-magazine, and the movie discussed inside. His beliefs were supported by his observation that his picture had been on the cover of a popular magazine, and the movie discussed inside.
11. He had also run into a distant cousin accidentally on a subway two years earlier, which was proof that his cousin was following him in order to make a secret film about his private life. An encounter with a distant relative under coincidental circumstances is proof of the conspiracy against him.
12. He also remembered someone looking at him in an elevator one morning and asking him if they didn't know each other. The subject didn't know the person, and took this occurrence as further proof of the fact that the person had seen the film recently; he insisted no other explanation made sense. People appearing to recognize him while he doesn't know them is further proof of this process.

CASE STUDY D: SCHIZOPHRENIA

This study is taken from Neale, Oltmans and Davison, (1984, p. 187-189). The subject is a 39 year old housewife with 2 children, age 7 and 4.

The subject was brought to the hospital by her husband. For the past week she had refused to let her son go to school, insisting that he and his sister stay at home with her and read aloud from the Bible all day.

Her husband had become accustomed to her strange behaviour, but this was too much for him. After a long and heated argument where the husband threatened to call the police if she did not cooperate, S agreed to accompany him to the hospital.

Upon arriving at the hospital, the subject told the psychiatrist in charge of her case that the problem was strictly between her and God, and that she did not need psychiatric care. Because she had never been in love with her husband, she had committed a mortal sin by marrying him and bringing his children into the world.

As a punishment God made her and her children immortal, so that they would have to suffer in their unhappy home-life forever. She had come to this realization one evening while she was washing the dishes. Looking down into the sink, she saw a fork lying across a knife in the shape of a cross; suddenly she knew she had become immortal.

There were two other pieces of evidence supporting this belief. One was that a local television station recently begun to re-run old episodes of a 1950's situation comedy in which the main characters often argue and shout at each other. The subject saw the re-appearance of this series as a sign that her own marital conflict would go on forever, just as the conflict between the characters in the series were replayed time after time. The other clue to the subject and her children's immortality was her observation that the pupils of their eyes were now fixed in size and would neither dilate nor constrict.

The subject explained that ever since she had recognized the punishment that had been imposed, she and the children had been reading from the Book of Revelations in the Bible, and praying that God would have mercy on them.

The psychiatrist in charge of the case diagnosed schizophrenia and prescribed anti-psychotic medi-

cation. Within 2 weeks the subject stopped talking about the ideas mentioned above, and she was discharged from the hospital.

At home she continued to exhibit serious occupational and social impairment. Most of her time was spent aimlessly watching television or sitting alone in her room. Household and parental duties were taken over by her husband. Recognition of the fact that she would have a difficult time living on her own and caring for the children, the subject no longer asked for the divorce she had demanded for years.

Meaning units

Psychological expression

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. The subject was brought to the hospital by her husband. For the past week she had refused to let her son go to school, insisting that he and his sister stay at home with her and read aloud from the Bible all day. Her husband had become accustomed to her strange behaviour but this was too much for him. After a long argument where he threatened to call the police if she did not cooperate, she agreed to accompanying him to the hospital. | S forces her children to stay with her and read from the Bible all day. Her husband regards this as an abnormal mode of behaviour, and demands from her that she goes to a hospital. |
| 2. Upon arriving at the hospital, the subject told the psychiatrist in charge of her case that the problem was strictly between her and God, and that she did not need psychiatric care. | S acknowledges that she has a problem with her relationship with God, but she sees this as something lying outside the field of psychiatry. |
| 3. Because she had never been in love with her husband, she had committed a mortal sin by marrying him and bringing his children into the world. | She committed a mortal sin by marrying someone she didn't love, and then consummating this relationship by having his children. |
| 4. As a punishment God made her and her children immortal, so that they | God was going to punish her for this deed, by convicting her to endure the negative ef- |

- would have to suffer in their unhappy home life forever.
5. She had come to this realization one evening while she was washing the dishes. Looking down into the sink, she saw a fork lying across a knife in the shape of a cross; suddenly she knew she had become immortal.
6. There were two other pieces of evidence supporting this belief. One was that a local television station recently begun to rerun old episodes of a 1950's situation comedy in which the main characters often argue and shout at each other. The subject saw the re-appearance of this series as a sign that her own marital conflict would go on forever, just as the conflict between the characters in the series were replayed time after time.
7. The other clue to the subject and her children's immortality was her observation that the pupils of their eyes were now fixed in size and would neither dilate nor constrict.
8. The subject explained that ever since she had recognized the punishment that had been imposed, she and the children had been reading from the Book of Revelations in the Bible, and praying that God would have mercy on them.
9. The psychiatrist in charge of the case diagnosed schizophrenia and
- fects of the relationship forever.
- S came to this insight after two pieces of cutlery lying across each other took the appearance of a cross symbolizing her and her children's immortality.
- There were other pieces of evidence supporting this belief. A rerun of a television series portraying marital conflict, revealed to S that her own marital conflict would be repeated time after time, the same way as the characters' conflicts kept re-appearing on the television screen.
- Her and her children's immortality were also revealed to S when she observed that the pupils of their eyes were fixed in size and would neither dilate nor constrict.
- Since she recognized the nature of God's punishment for her and her children, she constantly communicated with God in an attempt to get Him to put the punishment aside.
- Her psychiatrist sees her experience as indicative of schizophrenic illness. He

prescribed anti-psychotic medication. Within 2 weeks the subject stopped talking about the ideas mentioned above, and she was discharged from the hospital.

prescribes medication, and when the subject doesn't display the experiences any more, she is considered better, and discharged.

10. At home she continues to exhibit serious occupational and social role impairment. Most of her time was spent aimlessly watching television or sitting alone in her room. Household and parental duties were taken over by her husband.

Upon returning home, the subject's mode of existence is considered inadequate against what is expected of her.

11. Recognising that she would have a difficult time living on her own and caring for the children, the subject no longer asked for the divorce she had demanded for years.

Realizing her dependence on her husband for life-functioning, she decides not to ask for a divorce any more.

CASE STUDY E: RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Case taken from self-description of the occurrence by Cruz and Buckingham (1971). It involves the dramatic conversion of Nicky Cruz, a one time New York street-gang leader, to Christianity.

Wilkerson (an evangelist) began to speak: "This is the last night of our citywide youth crusade. Tonight, we are going to do something different. I'm going to ask my friends, the mau-Maus to receive the offering." Pandemodium broke loose. Gang members all over the auditorium knew our reputation. For the Mau-Maus to take up the offering was like asking Jack the Ripper to babysit. The people began to laugh and shout.

I was on my feet in a second. I'd been waiting for some opportunity to show off, to draw attention to myself in a big way... Wilkerson bent down and handed each one of us a big ice-cream carton. "Now, he said, "I want you to line up here in front of the platform. I'm going to ask the people to come forward and give their offering. When it is finished, I want you to come around behind that curtain and up onto the stage. I'll wait here until you bring me the offering. It was too good to be true. There was no doubt in anyone's mind what we would do. Anyone who didn't take advantage of a situation like this was a fool...

When all had come forward... we marched out the right side of the auditorium through the drapes that hung along the wall. Right above our heads was an Exit-sign. It was noticeable to everyone and as we disappeared behind the curtain, the laughter in the auditorium began... we could hear it rising to a crescendo until the whole auditorium was engulfed in gales of laughter at the poor preacher... The boys looked at me expectantly, waiting for me to tell them "Let's run, let's take this money and get out of here". Something inside me was tugging in the other direction. The preacher had singled me out and had shown confidence in me. I could do what was expected of me by the crowd, or I could do what he trusted me to do.

The preacher's trust ignited a spark inside me... "Come on," I said, "Let's take the loot to the skinny priest". We walked onto the stage. A lot of kids began to boo. They thought we were going to make a fool out of the preacher, and were sorry we hadn't ducked out of the door as

they would have done. But it gave me a warm satisfying feeling to know I had done something right. Something honourable. For the first time in all my life, I had done right, because I wanted to do right. I liked the feeling.

Wilkerson spoke for about 15 minutes. Everyone was quiet, but I didn't hear a single word. I kept remembering that warm feeling I had when I handed him the money. Inside, I was reproaching myself for not having taken off with the loot. But something had come alive inside of me and I could feel it growing. It was a feeling of goodness - of nobleness - of righteousness. A feeling I had never experienced before...

I was interrupted in my chain of thought by a disturbance behind me. Wilkerson had reached a point in his sermon telling us we ought to love one another - he was saying that the Puerto Rican ought to love the Italian, and the Italian ought to love the Negro and the Negro ought to love the whites and we all ought to love one another... The room was suddenly charged with hatred... (people were shouting, swearing and threatening one another... all of us were on our feet. The room was charged with hatred... I was looking for a way into the aisle.) A full scale riot was building.

Suddenly I had a compelling urge to look at Wilkerson. He was standing calmly on the stage. His head bowed, his hands clasped tightly in front of his chest. His knuckles showed white against the skin. I could see his lips moving. I knew he was praying... Something clutched at my heart. I stopped and looked at myself. All around me the bedlam continued, but I was looking inward. Here was this skinny man, unafraid in the midst of all this danger. Where did he get his power? Why wasn't he afraid like all the rest of us? I felt shame, embarrassment, guilt.

Something was happening to me. I was remembering. I remembered my childhood. I remembered my note for my mother. I remembered the first days in New York when I ran like a wild animal set free from a cage. It was as though I were sitting in a movie and my actions were flashing in front of my eyes. I saw the stabbings, the hurt, the hatred. It was almost more than I could stand. I was completely oblivious to what was going on around me. All I could do was remember. The more I remembered, the greater the feelings of guilt and shame. I was afraid to open my eyes for fear someone would be able

to look inside and see what I was seeing. It was repulsive.

Wilkerson was speaking again. He said something about repenting for your sin. I was under the influence of a power a million times stronger than any drug. I was not responsible for my movements, actions or words. It was as though I had been caught in a wild torrent of a rampaging river. I was powerless to resist. I didn't understand what was taking place within me. I only knew all the fear was gone. Beside me I hear (my best friend) blow his nose. Behind me I heard people crying. Something was sweeping through that massive arena like the wind moving through the tops of the trees. Even the curtains on the side of the auditorium began to move and rustle as if stirred by a mysterious breath.

Wilkerson was speaking again. "He's here! He's in this room. He's come especially for you. If you want your life changed, now is the time!" Then he shouted with authority: "Stand up! Those who will receive Jesus Christ and be changed, stand up! Come forward!" I was on my feet. I turned to the gang and waved them on with my hand. "Let's go"... We stood around the stage looking up at Wilkerson... He dismissed the service and told us to follow him to the back rooms for counselling.

... A man talked to us about the Christian way of life. Then Wilkerson came in. "Allright fellows" he said, "Kneel down right here on the floor!" I thought he was crazy. I never had knelt down in front of anyone. But an invisible force pressed down on me. I felt my knees buckling. I couldn't remain erect. It was as though a giant hand were pushing me down until my knees hit the floor. The touch of the hard floor brought me back to reality... I opened my eyes and thought to myself "What are you doing here?" My friend was beside me, weeping loudly. In the midst of all this tension I giggled. "Hey, you're bugging me with that crying". He looked up and smiled through the tears.

As we looked at each other, I had a strange sensation. I felt the tears welling up in my eyes and suddenly they spilled over the sides and dripped down my cheeks. I was crying. For the first time since I cried my heart out... when I was little, I was crying. My friend and I were both on our knees, side by side with tears streaming down our faces, yet laughing at the same time. It was an indescribably exotic feeling. Tears and laughter. I was happy, yet

I was crying. Something was taking place in my life that I had absolutely no control over... and I was happy about it.

Suddenly I felt Wilkerson's hand on my head. He was praying - praying for me. The tears flowed more freely as I bowed my head and the shame and repentance and the wonderful joy of salvation mixed their ingredients in my soul. "Go on. Nicky," Wilkerson said, "go ahead and cry. Pour it out to God. Call on Him". I opened my mouth, but the words that came out were not mine. "O, God, if you love me, come into my life. I'm tired of running. Come into my life and change me. Please change me". That's all it was.

I felt myself being picked up and swept heavenward. Marijuana! Sex! Blood! All the sadistic, immoral thrills of a million lifetimes put together could not begin to equal what I felt. I was literally baptised with love.

After the emotional crisis passed, Wilkerson quoted some scripture to us. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new!" It made sense. For the first time in my life it made sense. I had become new. I was Nicky and yet I was not Nicky. The old way of life had disappeared. It was as though I had died to the old way - and yet I was alive in a new kind of way. Happiness, Joy, Gladness, Release, Relief, Freedom. Wonderful, wonderful, freedom! I had stopped running. All my fear was gone. All my anxieties were gone. All my hatred was gone. I was in love with God... with Jesus Christ... and with those around me. I even loved myself. The hatred I've had for myself had turned to love. I suddenly realised that the reason I treated myself in such a shoddy way was I didn't really love myself as God intended for me to love myself...

Late that night I climbed the steps to my room as a new person. It was a little after 11.00 p.m. which was early for me - but I was anxious to get back to my room. There was no more need to run. The streets had no appeal to me. I had no more need to be recognised as a gang leader. I had no more fears of the night.

Meaning units

1. Wilkerson began to speak: "This is the last night of our citywide youth crusade. Tonight, we are going to do something different. I'm going to ask the Mau-Maus to receive the offering". Pandemonium broke loose. Members all over the auditorium knew our reputation. For the Mau-Maus to take up the offering was like asking The Ripper to babysit. The people began to laugh and shout.
2. I was on my feet in a second. I'd been waiting for some opportunity to show off, to draw attention to myself in a big way...
3. Wilkerson bent down and handed each one of us a big, ice-cream carton. "Now", he said, I want you to line up here in front of the platform. I'm going to ask the people to come forward and give their offering. When it is finished, I want you to come around behind that curtain and up onto the stage." It was too good to be true. There was no doubt in anyone's mind which we would do. Anyone who didn't take advantage of a situation like this was a fool.
4. When all had come forward... we marched out the right side of the auditorium through the drapes that hung along the wall. Right above our heads was the Exit-sign. It was noticeable to everybody and as we disappeared behind the curtain, the laughter in the auditorium began... We could hear it rising to a

Psychological expression

S finds Himself in a situation where a certain way of behaving is expected of him by a specific person... The large social group of which he is part, expects a type of action from him which would be in conflict with the former expectation. This is due to their existing conception of him.

The subject saw the situation as an opportunity to focus the attention of the social gathering on himself.

A specific (deviant) action is expected from the subject and his immediate associates by the larger group of people.

The large group of people are sure that the subject and his friends have fulfilled their expectations.

crescendo until the whole auditorium was engulfed in gales of laughter at the poor preacher...

5. The boys looked at me expectantly, waiting for me to tell them "Let's run, let's take this money and get out of here".
S realizes that others are waiting for him to take the initiative and to do what is expected of them by the social group.
6. Something inside me was tugging in the other direction. The preacher had singled me out and had shown confidence in me. I could do what was expected of me by the crowd, or I could do what he trusted me to do. The preacher's trust ignited a spark inside me...
"come on", I said, "Let's take the loot to the skinny priest".
S realizes that the trust put in him by an individual warrants a different type of behaviour. The trust must be realised.
7. We walked onto the stage. A lot of kids began to boo. They thought we were going to make a fool out of the preacher, and were sorry we hadn't ducked out of the door as they would have done.
Others in the larger social group disapprove of his behaviour which is contrary to their own expectations of their own and his behaviour in the situation.
8. But it gave me a warm, satisfying feeling to know I had done something right. Something honorable. For the first time in all my life I had done right, because I wanted to do right. I liked the feeling.
S experiences well-being because he behaved in a way he experienced as correct. He also recognizes that it was his choice.
9. Wilkerson spoke for about 15 minutes. Everyone was quiet, but I didn't hear a single word. I kept remembering that warm feeling I had when I handed him the money. Inside, I was reproaching myself for not having taken off with the loot. But something had come alive inside of me and I could feel it growing. It was
S continues to reflect on his feeling of well-being. He experiences this as a contradiction to his current form of existence, but recognizes a new experience of righteousness manifesting itself in him.

a feeling of goodness, of nobleness, of righteousness. A feeling I had never experienced before...

10. I was interrupted in my chain of thought by a disturbance behind me. Wilkerson had reached a point in his sermon telling us we ought to love one another. He was saying that the Puertorican ought to love the Negro, and the Negro ought to love the Whites and we all ought to love one another... The room was filled with hatred... people were shouting, swearing and threatening one another... All of us were on our feet. The room was charged with hatred. I was looking for a way into the aisle. A full scale riot was building.

The content of the social situation is challenged by the group which leads to the explosive eruption of violence.

11. Suddenly I had a compelling urge to look at Wilkerson. He was standing calmly on the stage. His head bowed, his hands clasped tightly in front of his chest. His knuckles showed white against the skin. I could see his lips moving. I knew he was praying... Something clutched at my heart. I stopped and ~~and~~ looked at myself. All around me the bedlam continued, but I was looking inward. Here was this skinny man, unafraid in the midst of all this danger. Where did he get his power? Why wasn't he afraid like all the rest of us? I felt shame, embarrassment, guilt.

S is reliving his past in lucid terms and in its bare reality.

12. Something was happening to me. I was remembering. I remembered my childhood. I remembered the first day

in New York when I ran like a wild animal set free from a cage. It was as though I were sitting in a movie and my actions were flashing in front of my eyes. I saw the girls, the lust, the sex, the stabbings, the hurt, the hatred.

13. It was almost more than I could stand. I was completely oblivious to what was going on around me. All I could do was remember. S finds himself focussing entirely on his own reflections into his past. The content of the reflection was overwhelming.
14. The more I remembered, the greater the feelings of guilt and shame. I was afraid to open my eyes for fear someone would be able to look inside and see what I was seeing. It was repulsive. His experience of his past is seen in negative terms and leads to feelings of guilt and shame. S wants to conceal the negative appearance of the past from others.
15. Wilkerson was speaking again. He said something about repenting for your sin. I was under the influence of a power a million times stronger than any drug. I was not responsible for my movements, actions or words. It was as though I had been caught in a wild torrent of a rampaging river. I was powerless to resist. S experiences himself as passively controlled by an extremely strong power he couldn't control.
16. I didn't understand what was taking place within me. I only knew all fear was gone. The person couldn't understand the fact that he had no fear.
17. Beside me I hear (my best friend) blow his nose. Behind me I heard people crying. Something was sweeping through that massive arena like the wind moving through the tops of the trees. Even the curtains on the side of the auditorium began to move and rustle as if stirred by a mysterious breath. S finds evidence of a force operating on the group of people and emotionally affecting them.

18. Wilkerson was speaking again. "He's here. He's in this room. He's come especially for you. If you want your life changed, now is the time". Then he shouted with authority: "Stand up! Come forward!" I was on my feet. I turned to the gang and waved them on with my hand. "Let's go..." We stood around the stage looking up at Wilkerson... He dismissed the service and told us to follow him to the back rooms for counselling.
- He responds to a challenge by the evangelist to change his life by openly following his instructions.
19. A man talked to us about the Christian way of life. Then Wilkerson came in. "Alright fellows", he said. "Kneel down right here on the floor". I thought he was crazy. I never had knelt down in front of anyone. But an invisible force pressed down on me. I felt my knees buckling. I couldn't remain erect. It was as though a giant hand were pushing me down until my knees hit the floor.
- S is asked to perform an act he regards as not consistent with his identity. He refuses, but finds himself the passive object of an external power.
20. The touch of the hard floor brought me back to reality. I opened my eyes and thought to myself, "What are you doing here?"
- S gains some momentarily distance from his experience and questions the appropriateness of his behaviour.
21. My friend was beside me, weeping loudly. In the midst of all this tension I giggled. "Hey, you're bugging me with that crying". He looked up and smiled through the tears.
- He saw someone associated with his previous existence acting appropriately to the situation and responds in a way he regards as inconsistent with the situation.
22. As we looked at each other, I had a strange sensation. I felt the tears welling up in my eyes and suddenly they spilled over the sides and dripped down my cheeks. I was crying. For the first time since I cried my heart
- S found himself involuntary showing an emotional expression largely regarded as inconsistent with his previous existence. He saw his experience mirrored by the behaviour of a significant other. He ex-

- out... When I was little, I was crying. (My friend) and I were both on our knees, side by side with tears streaming down our faces, yet laughing at the same time. It was an indescribably exotic feeling. Tears and laughter. I was happy, yet I was crying. Something was taking place in my life that I had absolutely no control over... and I was happy about it.
23. Suddenly I felt Wilkerson's hand on my head. He was praying - praying for me. The tears flowed more freely as I bowed my head and the shame and repentance and the wonderful joy of salvation mixed their ingredients in my soul.
24. "Go on, Nicky", Wilkerson said, "go ahead and cry. Pour it out to God. Call on Him". I opened my mouth but the words that came out were not mine. "O, God, if you love me, come into my life. I'm tired of running. Come into my life and change me". That's all it was.
25. I felt myself being picked up and swept heavenwards. Marijuana! Sex! Blood! All the sadistic, immoral thrills of a million lifetimes put together could not begin to equal what I felt. I was literally baptized with love.
26. After the emotional crisis passed, Wilkerson quoted some scripture to us. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new". It made sense. For the first time in my life it made sense. I had become new. I was Nicky and yet I was
- perceived mixed emotions and expression of emotion. Although he had no control over his emotional catharsis, he felt happy about it.
- Under the power of prayer from another, S has more emotional expression as the process of shame, repentance and salvation occurs.
- S finds himself involuntarily uttering words he has no control over. This expresses his need to be invaded by God and to transform his existence.
- S experiences emotional feelings more intense than any previous emotional experiences. He attributes this feeling to being immersed with love.
- S experiences himself as a new person where his former way-of-being were replaced by a new existence.

not Nicky. The old way of life had disappeared. It was as though I had died to the old way - and yet I was alive in a new kind of way.

27. Happiness. Joy. Gladness. Release. Relief. Freedom. Wonderful freedom. I had stopped running. All my fear was gone. All my anxieties were gone. All my hatred was gone. S experiences his new existence as free without any negative experiences of the past.
28. I was in love with God... with Jesus Christ... and with those around me. I even loved myself. The hatred I had for myself had turned to love. I suddenly realized that the reason I treated myself in such a shoddy way, was I didn't really love myself as God intended for me to love myself... He experiences love and relives his experiences of others in his world. He also realizes that he accepts himself and part of his former existence (regarded as deviant) was due to lack of acceptance and love of self.
29. Late that night I climbed my steps to my room as a new person. It was a little after 11.00 p.m. which was early for me - but I was anxious to get back to my room. There was no more need to run. The streets had no appeal to me. I had no more need to be recognized as a gang leader. I had no more fear of the night. He recognizes that his former existence is replaced by a new existence where his previous way-of-being didn't apply any more.

CASE STUDY F: RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

This study is taken from Pollock (1984). It is a self description of the author's conversion experience.

It was Sunday evening, August 1st, 1982. It had been an ordinary day and as my wife busied herself with the final touches in smartening herself for church, I grabbed an ice-cold dumpy of lager, unscrewed the cap and flopped on to the TV couch. There was no doubt that she was looking forward to the service as I nestled into the couch, savouring the beer.

...That tell-tale music introducing religious programmes came on the air... This type of stuff wasn't for me... and my instant reaction was always to switch it off... I kept the TV on this time and in fact immediately became interested because the topic under discussion was the charismatic movement and being 'born again'. On the panel was R.B. the well-known evangelist, and S.G. critic and self-confessed cynic. He immediately showed himself to share the same sort of views as myself on these self-righteous people who claimed to be closer to God than the rest of us.

(My wife) had been a Christian for just a month, and on a couple of occasions I had expounded to her about the hypocrisy of her new found faith... now on television S.G. was saying most of the things that I propounded. I called her suggesting that while she couldn't be blamed for not believing me, now that my views were being confirmed on TV she had no option but to agree!

...She was, however, spared too much agony because a car drove up the driveway and a hoot suggested that her lift had arrived. She could now escape my clutches and those of S.G. and seek the haven of her church. I thought to myself, "Typical, they (Christians) can't see the blunt facts of reality of life. They are always running away".

This left me on my own in front of the television, and suddenly frighteningly I found myself deeply transfixed. Slowly but clearly it was as if that whole TV set was speaking only to me. Looking at R.B. I saw clean-shaven freshness and innocence. I saw peace and deep tranquility and I saw a power, strength and confidence which seemed so out of place hidden behind that smiling countenance. Then I looked at S.G. and suddenly, in his place I saw myself transposed on the screen and there,

rudely exposed, was the ugly real me... I saw the cynic, the know-all, the ego so full of pride, the selfishness and the one-track ambition that seeks recognition and gratification, no matter what the expense. Yes, I had a killer instinct and I understood that 'nice guys came second'. Those are the rules of the rat-race. It all came before me, like a flood, and what I saw was ugly - ugly as sin.

But worse, sitting there alongside S.G. I had the cheek and audacity to question what Jesus Christ stood for, there represented by R.B. Indeed, there I was seemingly pointing a finger from out of the mud and darkness at the shining light of Jesus Christ. Inside I felt sick, sick, sick, the type of nausea that is empty and self-destroying. Indeed, I had never before seen myself so clearly exposed, cut through the centre by a surgeon's scalpel. On display, those disembowelled innards, oh so ugly, shook me to the core. I sat there stunned and silent and in deep meditation. It was a vivid experience and that ordinary Sunday was starting to become very extraordinary.

Time flashed by, for the next thing I remember was the telephone ringing and my wife inviting me to come up the road to (friend's) house to have coffee. Normally I would have been in bed and asleep by this time but somehow I knew this phone call was coming and I was drawn like a magnet. When I arrived there was H.H. and his wife M. who is a counsellor at a church. M set out to explain to me how wrong I was in some of the blasphemies that I had resorted to in my arguments... That experience in front of the TV set had opened my ears. I was still very aggressive but at least I listened. Very much later, somewhere near midnight, as we got up to leave, M slipped a little piece of paper into my pocket with a tender 'Just in case you need it' and a smile. I don't know if others noticed, but only later, once we had got home and my wife was in the bathroom, did I read the note. It was the 'sinners prayer'. I had no doubt at all. I found a quiet spot and committed my life to Jesus Christ. These are the words I prayed as I followed exactly M's hastily written transcript.

'Lord Jesus

I come to you today just as I am. I thank you that you accept me just as I am. I recognize that I am a sinner and I repent of my sins in the past.

Thank you for dying on the Cross for my sins and please come into my life and become my Lord and Saviour. I surrender my will to you now.

Thank you for coming into my life and forgiving my sins'.

... I was born again. I had opened the door for Jesus Christ to come in and in so doing I had taken my first step into a spiritual and eternal existence which is the ultimate destination of any truly fulfilled life.

Meaning units

Psychological expression

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| 1. It was a Sunday evening, August 1st 1982. It had been an ordinary day and as my wife busied herself with the final touches in smartening herself for church, I grabbed an ice-cold dumpy of lager, unscrewed the cap and flopped on to the TV couch. There was no doubt that she was looking forward to the service as I nestled into the couch, savouring the beer. | On a particular Sunday S relaxed in front of the television while his wife prepared herself for a religious meeting. |
| 2. That tell-tale music introducing religious programmes came on the air... This type of stuff wasn't for me... and my instant reaction was always to switch it off... I kept the TV on this time and in fact immediately became interested because the topic under discussion was the charismatic movement and being 'born again'. | A religious programme appeared on the TV screen. Although S usually refrains from watching religious programmes, the topic under discussion involved religious rebirth, and this interested S enough to warrant his attention. |
| 3. On the panel was R.B. the well-known evangelist, and S.G. critic and self confessed cynic. He immediately showed himself to share the same sort of views as myself on these self-righteous people who claimed to be closer to God than the rest of us. | One of the panel members expressed a point of view which co-incided with S's thoughts. Reborn Christians were described as self-righteous and religiously pretentious. |

4. My wife had been a Christian for just a month, and on a couple of occasions I had expounded to her about the hypocrisy of her new-found faith... now on television S.G. was saying most of the things that I propounded. I called her suggesting that while she couldn't be blamed for not believing me, now that my views were being confirmed on TV she had no option but to agree.
- S's wife had converted to Christianity a month earlier. On previous occasions he had argued with her about the hypocrisy of her religion. He now called her, and pointed out that his arguments were publicly confirmed and therefore had to be agreed upon by her.
5. She was, however, spared too much agony because a car drove up the driveway and a hoot suggested that her lift had arrived. She could now escape my clutches and those of S.G. and seek the haven of her church. I thought to myself, "Typical, they (Christians) can't see the blunt facts of reality of life. They are always running away".
- The conversation was interrupted by his wife's lift to church's arriving, forcing her to leave. S interpreted this happening as indicative of Christian attitudes which avoided reality and confrontation and withdrew into themselves when threatened.
6. This left me on my own in front of the television, and suddenly, frighteningly I found myself deeply transfixed. Slowly but clearly it was as if that whole TV set was speaking to me.
- While on his own in front of the television, he suddenly experienced the TV as having a new, special meaning for him and focussing on him exclusively.
7. Looking at R.B. I saw a clean-shaven freshness, and innocence. I saw peace and deep tranquility and I saw a power, strength and confidence which seemed so out of place hidden behind that smiling countenance.
- He suddenly experienced the evangelist on the screen as representative of innocence, peace and tranquility while also displaying power, strength and confidence (which to him seemed out of place).
8. Then I looked at S.G. and suddenly, in his place I saw myself transposed on the screen and there, rudely exposed, was the ugly real me... I saw the cynic, the know-all, the ego so full of pride, the selfish-
- He then experienced himself as transferred to the place of the other member of the panel, and he saw his own inner ugliness exposed. He saw himself as cynical, egocentric, selfish, overambitious. He recognized that

ness and the one-track ambition that seeks recognition and gratification, no matter what the expense. Yes, I had a killer instinct and I understood that 'nice guys came second'. Those are the rules of the rat-race. It all came before me, like a flood that I was ugly - ugly as sin.

he had always regarded these qualities as necessary for achievement in modern life, but he suddenly regarded them as indicative of his own ugliness and sinfulness.

9. But worse, sitting there 'alongside' S.G. I had the cheek and audacity to question what Jesus Christ stood for, there represented by R.B. Indeed there I was seemingly pointing a finger from out of the mud and darkness at the shining light of Jesus Christ.

In the light of his own sinfulness and falseness, he suddenly realized that his criticism of Christianity was misplaced and audacious, as he was criticizing something superior.
10. Inside I felt sick, sick, sick, the type of nausea that is empty and self-destroying. Indeed, I had never before seen myself so clearly exposed, cut through the centre by a surgeon's scalpel. On display, those disembowelled innards, oh so ugly, shook me to the core. I sat stunned and silent and in deep meditation.

S had intense feelings of emptiness and self-destruction. He had never before seen the negative aspects of his self exposed so clearly. He was severely affected by the negative appearance of his inner self, and fell into silent meditation.
11. It was a vivid experience and that ordinary Sunday was starting to become very extraordinary.

The vividness of the experience gave the day a special meaning.
12. Time flashed by, for the next thing I remember was the telephone ringing and my wife inviting me to come up the road to (friend's) house to have coffee. Normally I would have been in bed and asleep by this time but somehow I knew this phone call was coming and I was drawn like a magnet.

S had a feeling of expectancy, and changed his usual routine. His expectations were met when his wife called to invite him to the house of friends.
13. When I arrived there was H.H. and his wife M. who is a counsellor at a church

These people started to discuss some of his previous arguments (against re-born

M set out to explain to me how wrong I was in some of the blasphemies that I had resorted to in my arguments ... That experience in front of the TV had opened my ears. I was still very aggressive but at least I listened.

Christians). Although he still retained his opinions, his experience in front of the television lead him to give their beliefs some consideration.

14. Very much later, somewhere near midnight, as we got up to leave, M slipped a little piece of paper into my pocket with a tender 'Just in case you need it' and a smile. I don't know if others noticed, but only later once we had got home and my wife was busy in the bathroom, did I read the note. It was the 'sinner's prayer'.

One of the people gave him a little written note with the sinner's prayer on it and invited him to make use of it if he felt the need.

15. I had no doubt at all. I found a quiet spot and committed my life to Jesus Christ. These are the words I prayed as I followed exactly M's hastily written transcript:

Upon reading the note he lost all doubt, and committed his life to Jesus Christ. He used the exact words on the note for praying to Jesus.

16. 'Lord Jesus
I come to you today just as I am. I thank you that you accept me just as I am. I recognize that I am a sinner and I repent of my sins in the past. Thank you for dying on the Cross for my sins and please come into my life and become my Lord and Saviour. I surrender my will to you now. Thank you for coming into my life and forgiving my sins.

The prayer reflected a thankfulness for being accepted unconditionally, an awareness of one's own sinfulness, a repentance of these sins, the realization of the relevance of the crucifixion for the forgiveness of the sins and a surrendering of one's own will to Jesus.

17. ... I was born again. I had opened the door for Jesus Christ to come in and in so doing I had taken my first step into a spiritual and eternal existence which is the ultimate destination of any truly fulfilled life.

S experienced himself as born-again. He allowed Jesus into his life, and started fulfilling his destiny by entering a spiritual and eternal existence.

CASE STUDY G: RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

This study was taken from Stones (1979, p. 71-77). It is a description of conversion by a member of the "Jesus-people"-group.

... There were many religions that I read about and was told about, but nothing really seemed to be the answer. There was nothing radical to change me and to make me give my life completely for this. There was nothing real enough, or radical enough, that proved itself enough to me, to give my life to, and like I say my life ended up in a complete disaster. At a young age, I felt like a old man. I felt I had done so much, I felt so destroyed - I had no hope. I didn't really want to carry on and I started turning, like I say to religion at the end, hoping there was something, but I couldn't accept Jesus. And all I can say, is that a time came in my life when God really started to break me. He really started to work in my life beyond my comprehension. I couldn't understand what was going on - but I realized such a need in my life. I realized that I needed to be changed from myself. I needed a change. I realized that other people couldn't give it to me. I desperately needed a change if there was such a thing. All I can say is that three and a half to four years ago, for the first time in my life, I believe I was presented with the Gospel, with the good news of Jesus Christ, with his message of hope, and there one night at the Invisible Church, as the word of God was preached to sense my own sinfulness so intensely like I never had before. I began to see Jesus Christ as I had never seen before. I began to see him as more than just a historical person, more than just a man - someone who lived and was born to die for me, and someone who rose from the dead. Someone that is alive. And so I began to see that Jesus was God, and that He demanded my life - and I remember so distinctly that night, it was such a similar experience as what happened to Peter and Phillip - the apostles, where Jesus said to them "Follow me" - and that's just simply what it was. I realized my own condition. I had no hope to carry on, but Jesus spoke with such authority. He commanded and said, "follow me - I demand your life, I demand that you come out of your own rulership, to my authority". It was the greatest decision I've ever made -

In the midst of all my confusion Jesus spoke to me, and it was a crucial moment in my life. It was a choice I had to make one way or the other. This night, I realized that this was the truth that Jesus Christ was the way - that there is no other way. That night, I saw it so clearly, and I still do, that Jesus Christ is the only way and, in my helpless state, in my unbelieving state I just reached out to the Lord and began to believe for the first time. I reached out and took hold of Jesus as He said "Follow me" and I committed my life - I said, "Lord, take control of my life - take every part of my life Lord - Lord, I've been living my life for 19 years until now, and it's been an absolute disaster, an absolute mess." And I began to fear God, I began to see God as a Holy God, and so that night I committed my life to Jesus Christ and I realized this decision was for always - that there was no turning back, no matter how hard the going got,...

Meaning units

Psychological expression

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|---|--|
| 1. There were many religions that I read about and was told about, but nothing really seemed to be the answer. There was nothing radical to change me and to make me give my life completely for this. There was nothing real enough, or radical enough, that proved itself enough to me, to give my life to, | None of the religions known by S appeared to be sufficient and distinct enough to warrant a complete commitment of his life. |
| 2. and like I say my life ended up in a complete disaster. At a young age I felt like an old man. I felt I had done so much, I felt so destroyed - I had no hope. I didn't really want to carry on | He experienced his life as disastrous, meaningless, worn-out, destroyed and hopeless up to a point of not wanting to carry on with it. |
| 3. and I started turning, like I say to religion at the end, hoping there was something, but I couldn't really accept Jesus. | S hoped religion would solve his problems but he couldn't accept Jesus. |
| 4. And all I can say, is that a time came in my | God started asserting influence in his life beyond |

life when God really started to break me. He really started to work in my life beyond my comprehension. I couldn't understand what was going on but I realized such a need in my life. I realized that I needed to be changed from myself. I needed a change. I realized that other people couldn't give it to me. I desperately needed a change if there was such a thing.

his comprehension. He became aware of a need for changing his life, but realized that other people couldn't help him. He desperately needed this change.

5. All I can say is that three and a half years to four years ago, for the first time in my life, I believe I was presented with the Gospel, with the good news of Jesus Christ, with his message of hope, and there one night at the Invisible Church, as the word of God was preached to sense my own sinfulness so intensely like I never had before. I began to see Jesus Christ as I had never seen before. I began to see him as more than just a historical person, more than just a man - someone who lived and was born to die for me, and someone who rose from the dead. Someone that is alive.

On an occasion when S was presented with the Gospel of Jesus Christ he became intensely aware of his own sinfulness. He also came to see Jesus Christ as someone who is alive and has direct influence over and relevance for his individual life.

6. And so I began to see that Jesus was God, and that He demanded my life - and I remember so distinctly that night, it was such a similar experience as what happened to Peter and Phillip - the apostles, where Jesus said to them "Follow me" - and that's just simply what it was. I realized my own condition. I had no hope to carry on, but Jesus spoke with such authority. He commanded and said, "follow me - I demand your life, I demand that you

S began to see Christ as God. On that occasion where he had lost all hope for his future, God demanded him to relinquish control of his own life and accept His authority.

come out of your own rulership, to my authority".

7. It was the greatest decision I've ever made . In the midst of all my confusion Jesus spoke to me and it was a crucial moment in my life. It was a choice I had to make one way or the other.

At the crucial point when he was experiencing confusion, Jesus spoke to S. He realized he had to make a choice which turned out to be the biggest decision of his life.
8. This night I realized that this was the truth that Jesus Christ was the way - that there was no other way. That night I saw it so clearly, and I still do, that Jesus Christ is the only way

Accepting Jesus Christ was the only alternative for his life.
9. and in my helpless state, in my unbelieving state I just reached out to the Lord and began to believe for the first time. I reached out and took hold of Jesus as he said "Follow me" and I committed my life - I said "Lord, take control of my life - take every part of my life Lord - Lord, I've been living my life for 19 years until now, and it's been an absolute disaster, an absolute mess."

In his helplessness S started believing and accepting Jesus. He realized he had controlled his own life inadequately up till now and surrendered control of his life to Jesus.
10. And I began to fear God, I began to see God as a Holy God, and so that night I committed my life to Jesus Christ and I realized this decision was for always - that there was no turning back, no matter how hard the going got,...

He began to fear God and see Him as Holy. He realized that his commitment was permanent, regardless of future difficulties.

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