DANCEATTITUDE: PROGRESSIVE PROCESSING TOWARDS AN AUTHENTICATED SELFHOOD

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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0-612-28064-0
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the philosophical and psychological aspects of achieving a more authenticated self in the day-to-day process of everyday living. The title of the proposed thesis is DanceAttitude: progressive processing towards an authenticated selfhood. Selfhood realization in order to be more authentic, requires the person to shift consciousness from goal orientation to process orientation. Therefore, everyday life situations are transformed into metaphorical dance-like compositions empowering the individual to become more authentic. This allows the individual to experience self in the present. It is this awareness in the "here and now" reality of the experience that leads to a greater awareness of the authenticated self. Authenticated selfhood which is central to this thesis means a gathering of conscious forces; a unifying of energy into a dynamic harmony between the observer and the observed. Individuals in the theatre of life become spontaneous dancers choreographing their own feelings and attitudes, transforming their lives into a living art form. Each experience would therefore, become a childlike journey providing a profundity of mental, spiritual and emotional validations. This enables all individuals to achieve authenticated selfhood through a humanistic process called a DanceAttitude. Teachers especially, already involved in their chosen vocations, are provided with the opportunity to enrich the lives of their students by becoming more aware of their own uniquely gifted talents. Abraham Maslow's humanistic perspective of "actualizing one's potential and one's full humanness" incorporates goals that add to the full intensity of life, allowing teachers and all individuals collectively to open self to the totality of everyday experiences. The formulation of a DanceAttitude through a broadening of an individual's perspective would also create greater harmony among individuals.
DEDICATION

For Dianna and Sean
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with gratitude and appreciation that I wish to thank my Thesis Committee:

* Professor R. J. Silvers, Department Chair
* Professor D. W. Booth, Thesis Supervisor
* Professor J. P. Miller, Internal Appraiser
* Professor M. Zola, External Examiner
* Professor L. R. Bartel, Other Department Representative
* Professor A. Jordan, Voting Member.

My heartfelt thanks to David Booth who constantly fascinated, delighted and stimulated me.

To Richard Courtney and Joyce Wilkinson, my deepest appreciation for allowing me to explore the shamanic dance of creation.

A special dedication to Dr. Eugene B. Sagan who taught me to honour the blankness.

Thank you Dr. Peter Moore, M.D. You truly are a friend for all seasons. To Dr. Alla Kashevskaya, M.D., thank you for sharing your special gift with me. To Steve Laform, Shaman, for inviting me into your magical world. To Peter Fogden, who inspired me to read somewhere on a beach outside of Rome. To Bill McCant, who allowed me to use his inspiration to foster my own.

To all of the people that have profoundly touched me with their own authenticity (wisdom, love and advice):

* Sandy Anatol                      * Lynda Onderisín
* Steve Burrows                    * Ish Prabdial
* Claude Breeze                    * Gabrielle Roth
* Don and Jean Daugherty           * Juanita Sagan
* Doug Heeman                      * Dr. Donald Sklar
* Ernie Jardine                    * Dorothy and Walter Stanwick
* Joel McCharles                   * John Strachan

To RMC Resources Management Consultants Ltd. for allowing the use of their services and facilities.

Last, but certainly not least, to my loving wife Dianna for her infinite patience in typing and retyping this thesis and for allowing the transformation of the dining room table into a space filled with notes and books while I waited for the muse. To my loving son Sean, whose positive enthusiasm was a powerful shot of adrenalin each time I faltered.
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THE DANCE UNFOLDING

I am writing this thesis from the perspective of my own personal narrative, using the model exemplified by F. Michael Connelly (1990) and D. Jean Clandinin (1990). "The study of narrative therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (Ibid., p. 2). I am selectively exploring certain experiences using my own idiosyncratic discourse to enable the reader to better understand how I arrived at my DanceAttitude premise or to borrow Heidegger’s (1962) phrase ... "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself" (p. 58 as cited in Manen, 1990, p. 33).

This thesis is not about the history of dance or dance therapy per se, nor is it a comprehensive treatise on religion and how dance was used in religious ceremonies. I am using the dancer as a metaphor for engaging the reader to choreograph his/her own dance of expanded consciousness. I am inviting the reader to vicariously participate in my journey (sometimes spiritual, sometimes shamantic) in order to achieve a greater degree of authenticity.

An explorative narrative suggests "that a reader of a story connects with it by recognizing particulars, by imagining the scenes in which the particulars could occur and by reconstructing them from remembered associates with similar
particulars" (Tanner, 1988 as cited in Connelly/Clandinin, 1990, p. 8). Hopefully the reader will be moved towards the particular of his/her own lived experiences and will be able to assign meaning to those particulars with which they connected. Meaning for Max Von Manen (1990) in the form of "meaning questions" asks for "the significance of certain phenomena" (p. 23). "Meaning questions can be better or more deeply understood so that, on the basis of this understanding I may be able to act more thoughtfully and more tactfully in certain situations" (Ibid.). Therein lies the premise of my DanceAttitude and its validity for the reader. However, since DanceAttitude as a process is not designed towards some imagined future (goal orientation), some limitations do apply, because according to Manen (1990) "meaning questions can never be closed down; they will always remain the subject matter of the conversational relations of lived life, and they will need to be appropriated, in a personal way, by anyone who hopes to benefit from such insight" (Ibid.). That appropriation is the logos of my questioning of the particulars of my own lived experiences through my own personal discourse.

But, what exactly is a lived experience? Dilthey (1985) suggests "that in its most basic form, lived experience involves our immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life: a reflexive or self-given awareness which is, as awareness, unaware of itself" (Manen, 1990, p. 35).
A lived experience does not confront me as something perceived or represented; it is not given to me, but the reality of lived experience is there-for-me because I have a reflexive awareness of it, because I possess it immediately as belonging to me in some sense. Only in thought does it become objective. (p. 223 as cited in Manen, 1990, p. 35)

The authenticity of the lived experience has a temporal limitation and can never be fully grasped in the immediacy of the moment but only through reflective past presence consciousness. Therefore this thesis will strive for the very essence of lived experiences as ".... a creative attempt to somehow capture a certain phenomena of life in a linguistic description that is both holistic and analytical, evocative, precise, unique and unusual, powerful and sensitive" (Ibid., p. 39).
SYNCHRONICITY: A NEOPHYTE'S INTRODUCTION

According to Carl G. Jung, synchronicity is based on a universal order of meaning complementary to causality. "Jung believed that causeless events were creative acts" as the continuous creation of a pattern that exists from all eternity, repeats itself sporadically, and is not derivable from any known antecedents" (Jung, par. 967 as cited in Storr, 1983, p. 26). Jung also believed that synchronicity is the archetype of "magical effect", whereby unexpected solutions appear to solve our problems, and people, places and things are attracted to us without effect as if by magic. This, of course, leaves the individual inspired, uplifted and, at times, awestruck. Randomness was never a choice for Jung since he believed that the universe was mirroring the individual's psyche, moving us from the unconscious towards the conscious.

Synchronicity, as it relates to my thesis, is the guiding force or gift from the universe, behind all my previous experiences that led me to John F. Kennedy University, Berkeley and ultimately to OISE. Had I not applied for a sabbatical I
would have missed the richness of experience in meeting and studying with Dr. Sagan. Had I not listened to my intuitive self then I would probably not have settled in Berkeley and would never have completed my M.A. All of the signs and guiding influences led me to a series of events in California which, upon completion, have continued to lead me in ways that are consistent with the original synchronistic event - applying for the sabbatical.

Much of what I studied at John F. Kennedy was spiritual in orientation. Through such courses as The Mystic Vision, Sacred Dance, Paradigms of Consciousness, Creativity and Personal Process, to name just a few, I was able to expand my own spiritual process and embrace new forms of expanded consciousness. After all, I was, and still am a creative person teaching Dramatic Arts, searching for a new paradigm, my spiritual quest that has enabled me to expand my thinking and my behaviour.

Gregory N. Hamilton’s (1990) book *Self and Others*, which is another example of synchronicity, was suggested and loaned to me by my personal friend and physician. Although the book is indeed a sophisticated clinical overview of psychiatric disorders, it does have relevance for my thesis in that it discusses the research category of self-psychology (Kohut. 1971). It deals with Object Relation Theories and the powerful feelings we have inside ourselves and how we relate
these to others. The people around us also affect us within ourselves and the exploration of others’ internal and external relationships is what is known as "object relations theory". Not only does it deal with the mentally ill but it provides valuable insights into the study of internal and external relationships in both healthy children and adults.

The word self historically has meant wind, breath, shade, shadow, soul, mind, universal self, transcendental oneness, one, the unmoved mover, spiritual substance, the seat of good and evil, a supraordinate agency, and so forth. More mundanely, it has meant body, a bundle of perceptions in constant flux, a person and all that pertains to a person. A word with such a history is bound to carry with it issues of spiritualism versus physicalism and mind-body duality versus mind-body unity (Ibid., p. 9).

Hamilton (1990) describes the merger of the self and specific object relationships as units. Thus a symbiosis is developed between the "good self, good object, and a loving affect comprise what is known as an all-good relations unit" (p. 15) as opposed to the opposite as in bad-self, bad object, bad relations unit so evident in mentally ill patients.

"In the psychological sense, symbiosis means a state of experiencing the self as inextricably intermingled with the object" (Ibid.). This sounds like mysticism. Traditionally, symbiosis is associated with pleasant feelings, such as love, warmth, satiation or even ecstasy, though it can also be related to unpleasant experiences.

From my perspective I am concerned with the more expanded consciousness that
results from this state of ecstasy that can be achieved through my *DanceAttitude* process. Hamilton states that "all mental life begins with symbiosis and that it is the matrix out of which our very selves emerge" (*ibid.*).

"The blurring of the ego boundaries" when the concept of time, space and reality dissolves, is similar to what individuals do when they meditate. "This merging of self and others in a welter of undifferentiated experiences is what Freud called "oceanic feelings" (Freud, 1930 as cited in Hamilton, 1990, p. 17). There is an effective description of this merging experience of a gray and twisted man who leans on his cane before Renoir's *Rower's Lunch* in the Chicago Art Institute. To quote just a little: "The flesh of wine, the warm shade, and the repose after exercise are his - all his, as if he were there, in the scene of nineteenth century France - which no longer exists, as depicted by an artist long dead" (*ibid.*, p. 16). By definition then, this oceanic feeling or empathy is "the power of projecting one's personality into (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation" (Webster, 1971).

Hamilton's definition of empathy really objectified much of what I think it means to have a merging of self-other boundaries; empathy requires the absence of self-other boundaries; empathy needs the blurring of the self-other boundaries.
Often when writing material for my thesis I became totally immersed in the process to the exclusion of sight, sound and time. The writing process just seemed to flow. I felt that I was definitely being guided by some super creative force. I try not to negate this process for it truly became a symbiotic merging (an oceanic feeling).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s (1990) theory of optimal experience, based on the concept of "flow", is a state in which people are so involved in the immediate experience of whatever they are doing that they become ambivalent to the surrounding environment. The ability to control the moment-to-moment reality closely parallels that of the Gestalt experience of being aware of the immediate here and now.

This parallels my DanceAttitude premise in that the individual becomes consciously aware of what he/she is doing and turns it into a dance. The joy of expanded consciousness comes from a person’s ability to find meaning in the ongoing experiences of daily living. It is this attitudinal change that must precede expanded consciousness, paralleling my DanceAttitude perspective. The only way expanded consciousness can be achieved is through the doing - immersing ourselves in the process.
GENESIS

The genesis of my thesis was conceived long before I was even aware of its conceptualization. "I'd always believed that a life of quality, enjoyment and wisdom was my human birthright" despite my dubious beginnings and that all "would be automatically bestowed upon me as time passed" (Millman, 1984, p.11). Time did pass and life synchronistically afforded me the opportunity to pursue my own personal form of expanded consciousness. This new paradigm of expanded consciousness would take the form of a Masters Degree in Interdisciplinary Consciousness at John F. Kennedy University in Orinda, California. "I never suspected that I would have to learn how to live, that there were specific disciplines and ways of seeing" (Ibid.).

These new specific disciplines and ways of seeing such as the Study of Reincarnation, the Law of Karma and the Law of Grace would now form the basis of my own personal form of spirituality and expanded consciousness. The approach that I am describing is a personal one and I ask the reader to journey with me.

The opportunity to finally grasp the flower, to pursue the dream of obtaining a Ph.D. degree was the ultimate path to self-enlightenment. After all, I was the student who had failed Grade 9 twice, achieving only a credit in glass blowing from
Central Technical School in Toronto and a credit in geography from Harbord Collegiate. None of this was, of course, directly related to my lack of intelligence but rather to my mother’s diagnosed illness of schizophrenia. She fulfilled her Karma and mine was yet to unfold.

Dropping out of school led to years of disillusionment and hopelessness and a countless number of inane, mindlessly routine tasks of physical labour in a work force unflinching in its negative attitude to high school drop-outs.

Synchronistically, life led me in the direction of finishing a night school high school diploma and a career in teaching. At last I was on the journey towards self-enlightenment and self-discovery, learning all that I could with the intent of reawakening my purpose in life.
SABBATTICAL

An all inclusive one year sabbatical allowed me to pursue a master's degree at John F. Kennedy University in Orinda, California. Initially, I had applied to San Jose University (incidentally the only university that had a one year master's program) which was nestled within the heartland of Silicon Valley. Intuitively I realized that this locale was not where I would like to spend one year of my life due to the negativity of the physical surroundings (a depressed economically abandoned inner city core).

Silicon Valley was ringed with low hanging mountains and I felt that I was living in a caldera of an extinct volcano. A feeling of being constantly lost due to no specific reference point such as an ocean on one side and mountains on the other led me to constantly feel dislocated and lost. I never had a clear sense of direction. Perhaps this was indeed a synchronistic experience, for it provided me with the necessary impetus to cancel my plans and head towards the ocean.

Desperate to find a school to justify my paid sabbatical I entertained the notion of going back to Canada, perhaps British Columbia. Any attempt to change the sabbatical from an educational mandate to that of a travel experience was quickly denied by the North York Board of Education. A cousin of mine who lives in
Concord, California had pleaded with me to make sure that I visited her while in California and since we were in Berkeley I decided to pay her a visit.

Once again the serendipitous nature of our meeting led to the discovery of a new university that had recently opened with, to quote my cousin, "a strange bunch of people doing all kind of weird things." I immediately become conscious of this stereotypical vision that most people have of the California experience.

John F. Kennedy University turned out to be totally opposite to any stereotypical vision that I might have harboured and was indeed an accredited university associated with the Western Association of Universities. Not only did they offer degree courses in Law, Transpersonal Psychology but a one year master's program with an examination and a thesis as the requirement for the degree. Officially enrolled in the degree program of Consciousness in the Arts, I was now free to pursue my spiritual quest. Only one small problem remained. Where were we going to live.

Sitting in a motel room and unable to find suitable lodgings, due to Berkeley being a popular university town, all means of securing a domicile, especially with a twelve year old son, was indeed daunting to say the least. As if once again guided
by some universal force I was immediately drawn to an ad in the paper that read "houseboat for rent".

The Berkeley marina was indeed an idyllic experience. My need to live near the ocean was now a reality. The owner of this magnificent two-story structure, moored and anchored permanently to the floating dock turned out to be an expatriate from Hamilton, Ontario, and his needs were simple and since he travelled extensively, he was in need of a "houseboat sitter." This meant that we had the downstairs facilities, complete with all the amenities, kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms etc. and he would occupy the large upstairs portion when in town. The arrangements were financially attractive to me and we also had the added advantage of living at the marina.

Our first evening the sounds of the metal halyards gently clanking against the masts, the distant echo of a faint fog horn, and the soft heaving to and fro of the houseboat responding to prescription from the sea was just the right potion to send us all to sleep with the emotional justification that there was indeed some form of divine intervention.

The community of houseboaters and sailboat owners turned out to be a stimulus of great joy to us all. Many were professional people such as one couple who had
decided to give up looking for the nuclear fission formula in favour of catching salmon.

Within the context of this academic environment is where I first met Dr. Eugene Sagan, Clinical Psychologist. Dr. Sagan, with his unique blend of humour and honesty, quickly became the mentor that I was so desperately searching for. Eugene B. Sagan’s (1965/1967) course in Creative Behaviour focuses mainly on an adaptation of Gestalt Therapy whereby the individual changes his perspective from a goal orientation to a process orientation relative to the kind of experience that that individual is having while creating in his/her chosen media. Much of Eugene B. Sagan’s work, in collaboration with his wife Juanita B. Sagan, was the inspiration which enabled me to formulate my DanceAttitude process. While the sophisticated Creative Behaviour Teaching Structure is a form of therapy, my DanceAttitude process while it does employ the Gestalt Therapy Role Playing structure and some of the techniques of Sagan’s Creative Behaviour Teaching structure, is metaphorically speaking a DanceAttitude process whereby the individual becomes the dancer creating his own mandala, ultimately leading to the dancer achieving a new paradigm shift in consciousness. Both the Gestalt Therapy process and the Creative Behaviour Teaching Structure rely heavily on trained professionals to achieve the necessary integration between the dichotomies that exist within the individual.
Sagan's synthesis and departure from Gestalt Therapy relies heavily on the individual integrating the experience through his various teaching strategies, whereas my thesis relies solely on the premise of a paradigm shift (new ways of seeing); no therapist is needed for this kind of dominant feeling to take precedence. While Gestalt Therapy aims at expanding the individual's immediate awareness as to his/her feelings, sensations, bodily positions, in order to achieve integration through expanded consciousness, DanceAttitude is primarily concerned with the quality of the experience that the individual is having and allowing the dominant feeling to emerge as a result of the paradigm shift.

Sagan's analogy would be akin to that of writing your name on a piece of paper - the physical act of writing. However, if you were to change the attitude to that of a personal trip with pen and paper then you would end up with your name on a piece of paper but the quality of experience would be very different. It is this expansion of orientation to provide a quality experience that provided me with the DanceAttitude thesis, namely different ways of seeing using the dancer as the qualifying metaphor.

Being misguided and trapped in San Jose led me intuitively to a different avenue of experience. I needed a more selective orientation and followed my instincts
towards a more profound quality of experience by settling in Berkeley and studying in Orinda, California.

The new frame of reference that I am using is a thesis that combines my adventures and their descriptive nature through the metaphor of a dancer. I am now choreographing the events in my life and living from the soul rather than the limiting boundaries of the ego. "Freeing the soul involves living out the authentic roles of the self, our human condition, our mandate: the role of the dancer, the singer, the poet, the actor, the healer" and the teacher" (Roth, 1989, p. 143).

Through my DanceAttitude process I now have the power to change the events surrounding my immediate here and now and transcend the usual stereotypical responses that I would normally use to achieve a solution. In changing myself through an integrated awareness and attitude, I am becoming authentic in the hologram of my own existence encompassing the unity of all my realities within my immediate consciousness.
INDIVIDUATION

"Individuation in Jung's view is a spiritual journey; and the person embarking upon it, although he might not subscribe to any recognized creed, was nonetheless pursuing a religious quest" (Storr, 1983, p. 229). Therefore, central to both DanceAttitude and Individuation are the unifying principles of "wholeness" and "integration." What follows is the central paradigm that organized my thinking and behaviour as I pursued my own "individuation", all the while oblivious to the guiding forces that would shape my life to come. It is a journey encompassing "....conditions in which all the different elements of the psyche, both conscious and unconscious are welded together" (Ibid.).

It is stated by the ancients that a person's life should be devoted to three questions: Who am I? From where have I come? Whither am I going?

I consider myself a neophyte in pursuing a spiritual quest, hoping to find at least some partially definitive answer to these profoundly solemn questions. My metaphysical explorative journey into the world of spiritualism embraces the basic tenants of both the Judeo-Christian and Sufi doctrines. It is, and has been, over the last ten years, a sojourn that deals primarily with "process" rather than 'form'. It is a process that transcends specific rigid dogma, embracing instead a paradigm of practical spirituality.
Hazrat Inayat Khan (1982) says that the way to get in touch with the real part of ourselves that is called our being, our true self, is to find a process that deals with what is the main objective of every soul - namely "spiritual attainment." "A person may go through his whole life without it, but there will come a time in his life when although he may not admit it he will begin to look for it. For spiritual attainment is not only acquired knowledge, it is the soul’s appetite; and there will come a day in life when a person will feel the soul’s appetite more than any other appetite".

The formulation of this process is based largely on my exposure to a compendium of literature that deals primarily with the awakening of the human spirit.

Find your own path and treat it with absolute faith and confidence. It is foolish to try and walk in someone else’s footsteps and try to imitate them in what they are doing. Until you know your own special path you will try one path after another - seeking, seeking, seeking always seeking but when you eventually find your path nothing and no one will be able to turn you from it and that path will carry you to the ultimate goal - your realization of oneness with me (Caddy, 1976, p. 145).

But how does one find this spiritual path and what does it mean to live a spiritual life? In order to re-orient one’s present form of consciousness towards the center, one has to work through the negativity and depression associated with an initiation process. Spirituality is the quality of oneness with spirit, a divine reality, while
religion, however, as a man made institution, is a system of earthly attitudes and beliefs about God that sometimes fosters a sense of separation.

Although being religious is often confused with spirituality, there is no correlation that automatically assures a profound level of spiritualism based solely on one's religious viewpoint. In fact, those who ascribe to the viewpoint that to be religious is to be spiritual, may cut themselves off from the very form of spirit that they wish to attain.

For me, the "spirit" is the essence of my spirituality, and has become the motivating force behind all my ideals, purposes, intentions, desires and incentives. Therefore, "spirit" is that "oneness of all force", not a neutral force but a force filled with light, life and love. "Spirit", then, is whatever I do based on my own form of spirituality which I will define in more detail.

The practical application that I am referring to deals with the daily practice of my own spiritual ideals, and the testing of those principles in everyday life situations for there is no present condition that I am aware of that guarantees the spirit of God awakening within us without putting those ideals to work. As John Randolph Price (1985) says, "Your power is only a theory until it is demonstrated" (p. 48).
This search for a practical form of spirituality is not in itself an idealistic approach, but a process that has started me on a path of self-discovery and self-development. Mark Thurston (1980) sums up this notion of self-development as being one of the great paradoxes of living on earth. We are here for our souls to grow and at the same time we are here to serve others, but we can never throw away either aspect of the polarity. If we try to serve without a sense of nurturing our inner selves, then our feeble efforts at service never evolve into a profound kind of loving that is possible. "If we hide our heads in the sand and just work on our own spiritual attunement, we do two things: first we shut down the channel through which that spiritual energy wishes to flow; and second, we deny ourselves the very opportunities which can provide us with the most significant spiritual growth" (p. 105).

The dilemma becomes: how to balance self-development inherent with all the changes that come with this kind of an endeavour and the pragmatism of these lofty platitudes in its direct application towards being of service to others. "When we commit ourselves to the work, which is sometimes called the Spirit of God, we commit ourselves, once and for all to change" (Feild, 1983, p. 11).

This commitment to spiritually change myself began with what Carl Jung refers to as "a synchronistic event" - that mysterious force operating outside the knowledge
of physics. Such a series of events actually occurred in my life which cannot be explained, .... "suggesting that there is a single mysterious force at work in the Universe - something that tends to impose its own kind of discipline on the chaos.... the importance of meaningful coincidences" (Watson, 1987, p. 32).

The events that led me out of that particular state of chaos and desperate determination, ultimately provided me with a venue for channelling my intuitive processes towards a higher degree of spiritual consciousness: consciousness meaning the total collection of a person's thoughts, feelings and belief systems all moulded into a structure of awareness. Higher consciousness implies a thorough understanding of the emotional, intuitive and intellectual levels of both the real world and the invisible world. "All that we are given has inevitably to do with the possibility of self-transformation. Everything, whether perceived consciously or not is part of this transformation process" (Feild, 1985, p. 21). I now realize the divine purpose behind these synchronistic events that led me to discover the teachings of Meher Baba, Edgar Cayce, Reshad Feild, and the Bible, to name just a few, and to pursue a path that would lead me to California and the stimulating environment of J. F. Kennedy University. California and my tenure at John F. Kennedy was analogous to a center of high vibrational consciousness - (good Karma) - which helped me to achieve my goals by putting me in touch with those that would provide loving assistance.
Exposure to these particular teachings and thoughts resulted in a symbolic baptismal: emotionally purifying my nature and helping to bring together a more unified alignment of my mind, body and soul. This cleansing process made me question my previous ideals by exposing my true self, forcing me to give up a much of my resentment, fear, unforgivingness, prejudice, selfishness, deceit, and especially guilt. It meant trying to apply all that I had become exposed to in purging myself of negative energy, replacing it with thoughts of forgiveness, unconditional love and the knowledge (through all my senses) that God is within myself and that God is Love. Consciously this knowledge became the cause, with the level of my belief as a vibrational barometer manifesting itself in direct proportion to that belief as the effect; the effect always is in accordance with the cause. The realization that this process of baptismal consciousness must be adhered to every single day of my life, was indeed a creative challenge. The Sufis have a saying "Take one step towards God, He takes ten towards you" (Feild, 1985, p. 64).

The Edgar Cayce readings (1969) provided me with a rich source of material which was to challenge the very core of my belief system forcing me to fuse this newfound knowledge into a deeper level of spiritual maturity. I became a channel and once on the path there was no turning back - a new set of laws, a new set of challenges, a new set of ideals - all awaiting a practical application, on a day-to-
day basis. Scratch one set of ideals that emphasized the pursuit of happiness primarily through the acquisition of material possessions and substitute a new set of spiritual ideals. You could say that this was the first step taken towards God-realization.

At best, my previous knowledge of God's existence was based on an intellectual hypothesis with no firm conviction from a personal experiential point of view. There was no momentous implication as to its validity for daily living. I was at an impasse filled with frustration and a sense of desperation. It was this state of desperation that Meher Baba speaks of that led me towards that first step toward knowledge - truth and ultimately my new belief in God. "Divine desperation is the beginning of spiritual awakening because it gives rise to aspiration of God-realization" (Meher, 1967, p. 15).

Thus, the spiritual ideals that form the basis of my belief structure are as follows:

- To love God with all my heart and to love my neighbour as myself.
- To be of service to all mankind no matter how insignificant that service may seem.
- To re-orient my life based on my belief of reincarnation as a guiding principle.
- To practice the Law of Grace in order to immediately alter the Law of Karma - inherent within the nature of reincarnation.

The Edgar Cayce Readings (1969) state that the most important experience a person can have is to understand that the spiritual ideal of Love is based on the
first commandment. "Our responsibility in being human is to come to understand that we are placed into this universe, on this planet in order to know how to love. It is only through the perfected man that the perfect Law of God can be brought to Earth" (Feild. 1985. p. 20).

Hazrat Inayat Khan (1982) in his book, The Awakening of the Human Spirit, states that "If love is pure, if the spark of love has begun to glow, then there is no need to go somewhere to gain spirituality: then spirituality is within. God is love. If God is love, love is most sacred, and to utter this word without meaning is vain repetition" (p. 80). To give meaning to the first commandment from a practical standpoint I first of all needed to understand what it meant. I began to internalize the notion that to love God, I must first learn to love myself and that the love of God is an orientation toward reality, the reality being that I must learn to love myself and others - right here and now, unconditionally. I needed to feel that no matter how badly I might have judged my past actions that each day my life begins anew. This understanding gave me considerable insight into the true nature of love - that to be in accord with the universe you must not only learn to love yourself but you must also view others as unfolding spiritual beings on their own journeys toward higher consciousness, and realise the implications that each unique individual is a direct source from which you can gain valuable spiritual lessons.
"Love of God is our orientation toward the Law, toward the universe, and it indicates our desire to be in atunement and in accord with reality, with the truth, with the way things are, with ultimate light and life and love which are the essential qualities of the universe" (Puryear, 1982, p. 84). Essentially, then, there must be an awareness that God exists and one's entire energy system must be filled with this Spirit of God's presence. Although God exists (based on my own personal viewpoint), he is not in one's experience unless there is an awareness and recognition of his divine presence. The love of God can only express itself in the real world through one's level of consciousness. Therefore, real love is simply the embodiment of patience, endurance, tolerance, sacrifice and above all service. It embodies gentleness, humility, modesty, nurturing and kindness. "God is all and all is God, love is all, and all is love" (Khan, 1982, p. 80).

However noble and lofty my sentiments may seem about love, the reality of putting this first commandment into practice was much different. How do I apply the notion of unconditional love to both myself and my attitude towards God, and my fellow human beings? After all, do we really live the kind of life that says if a man strikes you on the cheek you must turn the other cheek? Or if a man asks you to go a mile, you must go two with him, or if someone asks you for your coat, you must give him your coat also. What does it really mean to love God with all your heart, mind and soul? Even if love is the way - the way I live my daily life, my
attitudes, my attempt at a practical spirituality and my negative feelings - still give me problems. In the past it was my expectation that others should love me the way I am and that they should do the changing if they really loved me, and not expect me to change for them. I anticipate that such feelings of love may perhaps be universal. I came to the realization that a new spiritual possibility might exist.

The way to love then is to love "selflessly", and in a spirit of sharing. One needs only to plant the notion of loving God and others in their consciousness and the seeds of love will begin to sprout with the knowledge that the more one tries to learn to love God and one's neighbour, the more will be the realization that one is doing exactly what one needs to do to provide oneself with experiences for growing into higher consciousness. The key to the above is the instant emotional acceptance of the here and now - the emotional acceptance of that which was previously unacceptable.

No discussion however about the love of God would be complete without first having established the awareness of God as a first premise, that premise being that the consciousness of the oneness of all force is not the same thing as the consciousness of a one thing, but is a principle of the oneness of all force - a consciousness that implies a special kind of interrelationship among all things.

"The consciousness of the oneness becomes the basis of love. Oneness is a way
of defining the Christ Consciousness which is the awareness of the oneness of the soul with God" (Puryear, 1982, p. 83).

This insight has led me to understand that with each individual that I come in contact with, I realise more and more that this notion of love and divinity exists within each soul on earth which has led me to a deeper consideration of the integrity and oneness of each unique individual as a spiritual being. Despite the inherent difference between my neighbour (neighbour referring, of course, to all of mankind) and myself, in terms of our ideas, we must, according to Cayce (1969) ultimately come to share the same ideal. As I strive to love my neighbour I am more deeply aware of the oneness of our relationship, and how it enriches my own life as we are co-creators towards stimulating each others consciousness.

All souls in the universe must one day or one eon be brought into accord with the law of love. We are created in the image of love; it is our destiny to be conformed to that image. We are spiritual beings possessing free will, must one day manifest that accord through using our free will and co-creativity in total accord with the great commandment. We must one day come to love God with all our heart, mind and soul. Our neighbour must be defined as one who is in need, and so our love must of necessity come to include those whom we presently call our enemies (Ibid., p. 84).

If God is love and we delve further into the notion of God as pure energy, and believe that God is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient then we should come
to the conclusion that God is all that there is - a form of pure energy. God said according to the scriptures "I AM" - there is nothing else nor none other. Although this connotes pantheism, my belief is that God, as a form of energy and love, is manifested in everything that I see, touch, feel, experience and am consciously aware of. In essence, that force at work in all dimensions of the universe, is love.

Therefore, the only reality that immediately concerns me is the reality of love itself - "Love is." Trying to fathom this new spiritual significance has caused me to re-evaluate my previous relationships and to look at everything that I experience from a new standpoint. To refer to Meher Baba (1967), my pursuit for a spiritual reality couched solely in intellectualism has had its reverberation in the practical aspects of my life. My life now has become a real experiment with perceived spiritual values. "Re-evaluation of an experience amounts to a new bit of wisdom, and each addition to spiritual wisdom necessarily brings about modification of one's general attitude toward life" (p. 16).

In the Sufi tradition there are four aspects toward love: "the hearing" of the possibility of a new life. God is giving us free choice. We can attempt to take these old negative preconceived notions from the past into the future or we can discard them and move into something new. This then leads to the second option - that of trust in God. This implies giving up all knowledge, all concepts, absolutely
everything except the trust you have placed in God and the degree of your belief in that trust. After this comes conviction - not only outwardly but most importantly the inward conviction within ourselves. This leads to the fourth step where there is no further separation between God and man. "I and my Father are one. There is Just He" (Feild, 1985, p. 22).

I must confess that the Sufi ideal is a much harder manifestation to integrate than the Cayce Readings (1969). The Sufi precept that God is to be remembered in every moment of our lives, to breathe with God every conscious moment, has genuinely raised my awareness to the point that I now often thank God silently for all of the marvellous gifts that have been bestowed upon me at this moment in time. This self-remembering to pay homage to God has raised my level of spiritual consciousness. "For in awaking to what is present, we recognize who we are, and what we may become" (Feild, 1983, p. 27). At least I have been able to synthesize and integrate my intellect with my intuition with reference to my spiritual ideal.

Accordingly, the Sufis believe that when a man awakens to himself in the present moment, he can even begin to realize his relationship to God. "God whom he has been so desperately seeking is no stranger nor hidden and foreign entity. He is reality itself and not a hypothesis" (Baba, 1967, p. 16).
The last stage of my relationship to God as it applies to my paradigm of spiritual pragmatism has to deal with service - service not only to mankind but service to God. I often find myself also saying the words ‘Let thy wish become my desire.’ It is this selfless form of devotion that has made me realize how potentially materialistic and mechanistic I was in the past, thinking only of my own personal instant gratification. This understanding of service to others according to God's place and His will, has left me with a deeper sense of satisfaction, giving my present life a sense of direction and meaning. It has also given new meaning to the Lord's Prayer. Reshad Feild (1983) in *Steps to Freedom* sums it up most eloquently.

One day when 'the time is fulfilled', we will see Christ in every babe. But this can only come about when we dedicate our lives to the bringing of God's will on earth as it is in heaven, in order to fulfil our obligation in being men and women. The responsibility inherent in being men and women is to be able to say the word 'I', then to say 'I am' and finally to say 'I will'. Prayer, and devotion and the constant yearning of the heart, will bring us to partake of that responsibility.

When we begin to understand the law of service, we begin to be born. There is a sense of liberation and a freedom from the tyranny of thoughts and self-centred feelings. When we are open to the path of service, we are immediately filled with light and freed from the cocoon of habits which veil our essential selves. When we put ourselves last and put others first, consciously something happens - a revelation or insight that we are here for a higher purpose other than our own personal self-gratification and grandizement (p. 48).
My concern then as John Randolph Price (1985) discusses in his book *Practical Spirituality*, is to provide the greatest good to the greatest number of people without selfish motive or personal gain. Price quotes Meher Baba: "Do not judge others to decide whether they deserve your service. Find out only whether they are distressed; that is enough credential. Do not examine how they behave toward others; they can certainly be transformed by love. Service is for you as sacred as a vow . . . it is the very breath; it can end only when breath takes leave of you" (p. 110). The Tibetan Master, D.K., has written: "(The) Law of Service was expressed for the first time fully by the Christ two thousand years ago. Today, we have a world which is steadily coming to the realization that 'no man liveth unto himself', and that only as the love, about which so much has been written and spoken, finds its outlet in service, can man begin to measure up to his innate capacity" *(Ibid.)*.

Meher Baba (1967) so wisely cautions us, in a world which is dominated by material consciousness many other things which are of vital importance are neglected, with the result that life is spiritually impoverished. If there is no spiritual understanding underlying the notion of service to others as the highest of ideals then this service is limited in its conception. The highest form of service is that which is concerned with spiritual understanding "because spiritual understanding
includes the right perspective to all human problems and promotes their solution” (p. 126).

The solution for me then will be to continue to work with my students helping, nurturing, and facilitating their growth as much as I can, knowing that this fresh perspective is akin to a leap of faith, without any reservations or expectations of materialistic rewards. I am now in a position to provide genuine assistance based on my set of spiritual ideals.

No man is an island and the realization that I must employ my intelligence and intuitiveness in practicing my spiritual ideals has filled me with a sense of well-being and peace of mind. The mundaneness of my previous existence has now been replaced with a truly deep sense of my new self. As a result of letting go the old belief systems there has been an acceleration of new elements to replace them leading to the paradox that in letting go of what you think you had previously needed, the loss is regained in an entirely new and different form. The chrysalis of this new unfoldment is a new set of feelings, emotions, thoughts and beliefs all contained within and no longer outside the self. Thus, servitude with the proper spiritual attitude is now central to my thinking that forms part of the paradigm that I have been discussing.
The word Karma in Sanskrit means simply, "action" and according to the Laws of Reincarnation and Karma, everything that happens to an individual is the direct result of his or her action and is self-created. This portion of my paper will address itself to the Law of Reincarnation and Karma as it relates directly to this new found sense of self. Our past thinking has determined our present status, and our present thinking will determine our future status, for man is what man thinks. In the words of the opening verse of the Dhammanpada, "All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. Likewise did the Hebrew Sages teach, as in Proverb XXIII.7, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Wentz-Evans, 1927, p. 11).

These words have had a most profound and cathartic effect on my own personal philosophy begun when I first came across the idea of reincarnation and the law of karma in the readings of Edgar Cayce (1969) "what the entity is today is the result of what it has been in days and experience and ages and eons past" (p. 67). For, life is continuous, and whether it is manifested in materiality or in the realm of an individual alone, it is one and the same.

In essence we are carrying our past-life memories in our unconscious minds which are manifested in our present day attitudes, memories, emotions and physical
makeup. The reincarnation theory made me realize that my present circumstances were a result of my past choices (Ibid., 5753-1).

Herbert B. Puryear (1982) in his book, *The Edgar Cayce Primer*, further relates to the continuity of life of the souls of men, who are the children of God, and God’s continuing forgiveness as the Father of His children who have gone astray. A review of the parable, the Good Shepherd from the New Testament also reaffirms what Edgar Cayce is saying in so much that it is not God’s intention for any soul to perish.

> How think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish (Puryear, 1982, p. 92).

As Edgar Cayce (1969) has stated "If it (reincarnation) makes you a better person then work with it as a concept; if not, leave it alone" (p. 67). Not only have I accepted it as a truism, I have integrated the concept into my personal belief structure. It has for me become a conceptual model dictating my thoughts, actions and feelings rather than an idea to be argued philosophically or theologically. It accounts for much of my previous confusion and validates past life hypnotic
regressions that I experienced in California, giving new insights and meaning to previous irrational behaviour. It is a sort of psychological birth during this present lifetime, in which my psyche (the memories of past incarnations) has fused my personality with new directions, a sense of new energies, the resolution of mundane problems that before hypnotic regression seemed insolvable. Many people including myself desperately want to believe in the concept of life after death. Reincarnation through the medium of past life regression has provided a partial solution; if not spiritual then at least psychological. Confirmation for me however, has been validated spiritually as a result of involvement both through the Edgar Cayce Readings (1969), the teachings of other great writers and my own experiential perceptions.

However, simply knowing that you may have been a Roman soldier or an infamous scoundrel in the past does nothing more than offer a form of amusement. More important is what do you do with this new-found information about past lives; this is the key issue. Integration and its immediate effect in this lifetime upon attitudes must transcend the mere frivolity of the regression process itself. Synonymous with reincarnation is the set of laws called Karma that deals with "cause and effect" - it is this set of natural laws that gives meaning to reincarnation.
This law of cause and effect in operation with the volition of the individual, whether he/she makes a conscious choice or decision, is based on the principle that both negative and positive karma are etched in the ethereal dimension called the 'Akashic Records'. If this so-called print of mental, emotional, physical action is totally negative, then the individual will be influenced by this negative pattern throughout this or some other future life until it balances the scale with positive energy. The negative print will have to be worked out. Thus we are today a compilation of both negative and positive karmic patterns. As we are told by the Apostle Paul, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. As above, so below, as within so without" (Stern, 1984, p. 230).

The message, then, is in the 'art of living'. This does not mean that one need live a strictly morally controlled life, dedicated to humanitarianism and the total denial of the self, but rather that the individual be consciously responsible not only to himself, his/her thoughts, his/her actions but also how he/she relates to his/her fellow individuals, his/her fellow creatures and mother earth. The degree of responsibility in the present will determine the conditions in the future - for past, present and future are intertwined. This, of course, precludes any notion of acquiring "only good Karma" through cold-blooded cunning fashion but rather training oneself to react intuitively in the right manner no matter what the challenge or situation might be. As Meher (1967) Baba states, the law of karma is a form
of expression of justice as a reflection of the unity of life in a world of duality. "Karmic determination is the condition of true responsibility" (p. 91).

I would like to dispense with the aspect of Karma being strictly retaliatory, retributive and derogatory and concentrate more on the relationship of ourselves being co-creators with God. It is this relationship to the oneness with God simultaneously being co-creators with God that what we think and experience not only happens to us, but also becomes a part of us. Since it is part of our being, it becomes that issue which must be met and dealt with, as it stands between ourselves and our awareness of God. Thoughts from the past and the present will come to fruition in the future - perhaps generations down the line, in some distant incarnation. Essentially then, Karma is the law that forces us to meet "ourselves." "It was not someone else but ourselves, who in those experiences in the past established the patterns dictating the circumstances in which we find ourselves in the present" (Puryear, 1982, p. 94).

As Puryear further emphasizes, it is not the mistaken assumption often associated with Karma that we are paying for some indebtedness we have incurred in the past, but rather of coming to grips with that which the self has built. Since the whole purpose of life is growth, then Karma is the condition that allows us to meet our true selves.
Every person we encounter in our daily sphere of living represents some facet of our being: "You don't necessarily have Karma with that individual but with the facet of yourself that the other individual reflects" (Stern, 1984, p. 195). The answer to all our problems lies within, but to understand this and to do nothing is the greater of the sins. "It is not enough for an entity to have knowledge concerning the law - whether it be karmic law, spiritual law, penal law, social law, or whatnot. The point is, what does the entity do about the knowledge that it has. Is the knowledge used to evade cause and effect, or is it used to coerce other persons into adhering to the thoughts of self? Or is it used to bring help to others in their understanding of the law?" (Cerminara, 1967, p. 234). "Destiny or Karma, depends upon what the soul has done about what it has become aware of" (Ibid.).

How do we transcend these Karmic chains which appear fatalistic and move into the realm of the Law of Grace? According to the Edgar Cayce teachings, "Knowledge may not be put on as a cloak, but must be an internal growth toward that which has been determined as an ideal" (Puryear, 1982, p. 234). The nature of the law of grace as an ideal is as follows:

For the law of the Lord is perfect, and whatsoever an entity, an individual sows, that must he reap. That as law cannot be changed. As to whether one meets it in the letter of the law or in mercy, in grace, becomes the choice of the entity. If one would have mercy, grace, love, friends, one must show self in such a manner to those with whom one becomes associates. For like begets like.
There are barriers builded, yes. These may be taken away in Him, who has paid the price for thee; not of thyself but in faith, in love, in patience, in kindness, in gentleness may it be met.
That these have been the experience may appear to the entity as rather unfair. Is it? The law of the Lord is perfect. His grace is sufficient, if thy patience will be sufficient also (Ibid., p. 95).

The law of Grace therefore embodies three concepts: the setting of ideals, making choices in accord with these ideals and application of these choices.

It must be noted here that although Edgar Cayce refers to "the law of Grace" as an ideal synonymous with 'Christ Consciousness' - it is not the exclusive attribute of Christendom or of 'those who believe solely in Jesus Christ' but grace can be achieved by a Buddhist, Hindu, or a Muslim - the teachings are universal.
Similarly when the readings of Edgar Cayce mention "Christ Consciousness" they are referring to a psychological state which could have been called by a myriad of other names in various other religions. "The attainment of the Christ Consciousness of spiritual consciousness is the 'law of grace' that dissolves the exact retribution of karmic effect. "Spiritual consciousness 'fulfils the law' to use Jesus' phrase, in the sense that it annuls the error that was the source of the Karmic action to begin with" (Cerminara, 1967, p. 80).
Grace, then, as stated in the Bible, is a gift of God and freely bestowed. If we would manifest this law of grace in our daily lives then we must exhibit grace. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Puryear, 1982, p. 78).

But how easy it sounds and how tormenting it is when the daily application of this law is so hard to manifest. To forgive and come to the full realization of the attainment of this consciousness is not easy and fills me with pathos and remorse. I am at the present involved in the throes of trying to put this Christ Consciousness into fruition with members of my own immediate family. Perhaps this thesis is once again, according to Jung, synchronistic in its timing, for it is not enough to write about pragmatic spirituality: it must be used and applied. "Remember," says a reading, "there is no short cut to a consciousness of the God-force. It is a part of your own consciousness but it cannot be realized by a simple desire to do so. Too often there is a tendency to want it and expect it without applying spiritual truth through the medium of mental process" (Cerminara, 1967, p. 80). There are apparently no short cuts in metaphysics - you don't possess it; you must learn it.

How then does one learn it: by exercising free will and making a conscious decision to abide by the Christ standard - forgiving yourself, forgiving others without exception, and to try to love others by practicing unconditional love. Struggle to cancel out negative thoughts and feelings and strive towards making
every motive a positive one filled with a sense of love for the greater good of yourself and others. Hopefully, the slate will be wiped clear as we try to manifest the Spirit of God within our dealings with both ourselves and those that we come in contact with.

The process has been painful but at least I have made an attempt. There is a Sufi saying "Polish the mirror of your heart", but as I have come to realize it is difficult to polish a heart that is sometimes full of anger, remorse and bitterness. The responsibility to struggle and to keep polishing my heart is my responsibility and mine alone.

The cleansing process of losing your lower self and replacing it with the divinity of your higher self is a real threat to the ego. It will do everything in its power to "throw a curve at you" - even so far as to cause the pathological critic inherent within my psyche to cause me to doubt the very existence of my spiritual quest. The "traitor" aspect of my personality is constantly pushing for a regression to materialism and personal selfish motives.

Although my present odyssey may be considered as a partial gestalt, I am at least aware that I must not limit my experiences in any previous dogmatic fashion, for the dogma of spiritualism and reincarnation can be just as limiting as any religious
church doctrine. Invariably, regardless of how painful it may be to integrate and apply all that I have experienced on this quest, I have come to the realization that in the final analysis "I am the cause of my own reality" and thus the redeemer of my own self. As simple as this precept may sound, I realize that only through the transformation of the self can the situation be transcended. "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings" (Shakespeare).

If reincarnation is indeed the law of life whereby man evolves and becomes perfect - if this is indeed the simple truth about man, the simple key to the riddle of existence and of suffering - then all the theologies and all the psychologies of man will be seen to be like the curiously wavering distortions of the mirrors in an amusement park's Hall of Mirrors; the simple truth will be seen to stand in their midst like the person whose image is so strangely being distorted (Cerminara, 1967, p. 240).

I realize that I have not yet sufficiently evolved spiritually, to be capable of achieving in one lifetime the all-consuming, all-enhancing love which is the essence of the true Christ Consciousness, thus releasing me from my karmic chains. However, I am attempting to endorse, integrate and embrace an attitude that will at least allow me to celebrate the process. The educational experience has started my soul on the right path and "The use of affirmatives, meditation, and prayer, the study of the Scriptures, the practice of the virtues, and the rendering of service to ones fellowmen are methods often recommended by the readings for the attainment of a changed consciousness" (Ibid., p. 80).
The author Reshad Feild (1985) in his book, "Here to Heal", states that before we can understand the process of conscious birth we need to look at consciousness itself. "In all inner schools throughout the ages, great stress has been given to the notion that we are 'sleepwalkers', existing on the stage of life, until we are able to wake up to the 'real world' and thus participate in an entirely different way of life."

Of course, we have to realize that we are asleep before we can wish to wake up, and then as in any type of metamorphosis, the waking process can be painful.

In conclusion, then, this thesis is not about developing specific skills or techniques for acquiring a higher degree of spiritual consciousness in a material sense. As stated in my opening remarks I was concerned mainly with process rather than form - form being associated with traditional western psycho-religious affiliation, whereas my definition of process involves a way of perceiving.

For me, then, any religious significance must have an experiential basis prior to my being able to totally integrate it, for only through experiencing the tenets that I have described previously, such as "love of thyself" and concrete forgiveness of both myself and others, does it become rooted within my psyche giving "meaning" to the experience itself. Simply reading about concepts in great religious books does not in itself imply significant meaning. There must be involvement along with a practical application. Value needs to be experienced, felt, known, intuitively in
the heart rather than the mere literalization, abstraction and evaluation obtained solely from books.

Experientially, then, the person (I) progresses through a change in self-image, from a personal perspective to a more universal perspective. This universal perspective, then, corroborates the religious significance and validates the knowledge gained through reading, affirmation, meditation, etc. The person is no longer a mundane personality connected to achieving materialization as his goal but is transformed into a person who now has gained a profound new identity, giving new meaning to existence.

Tacit knowledge is defined in Webster’s (1971) dictionary as implied or not actually expressed - knowledge that more is intuitively known about something than can be expressed in words or thought. Epistemologically speaking, I am unable to offer rational proof of what I have written about just as I am unable to furnish the truth that God exists. However, my insights, and mini-satories are founded in tacit knowledge experiencing the significance of the things that have affected me profoundly. Awareness of the truth within the process as it has been presented to me, both consciously and synchronistically, is essentially based on my intuitive belief structure encompassing the benediction, expression and celebration of love. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that there is a universality in all that I am
learning. Each author, each dogma, each philosophy may express it differently but the message is essentially the same, acting as a catalyst to gain spiritual insight. Harmonizing the trinity of mind, body and spirit and utilizing this force towards all of mankind to be in tune with the spirit of the universe, by reacting intuitively to the power of love, no matter what the situation, is my greatest challenge.

Henceforth, I have and will continue to apply the precepts of my personal manifesto towards those whose condition is less fortunate than my own. When I look at the poor inner city students that I encounter, I am constantly trying to find that divine aspect within each child that I teach, no matter how troublesome or obtuse they may appear to be. A sense of caring and acceptance helps to give me a more a spiritual meaning as I approach each new experience. Living the spiritual life means putting more of yourself into life and those that you encounter, than the amount you take out.

It means to do the very best you can despite your present circumstances, to help others at every opportunity and to bestow upon them unconditional love. Above all, it means to consciously practice the Presence of God each day and to dwell upon, contemplate and love your Christ Self, with the intention of becoming a channel for the expression and manifestation of God; the power of God is moving through me in order to express the Divine principles of abundance, wellness,
harmony, love and forgiveness. Therefore, in being spiritual and living a spiritual life fills one with a sense of joy, exploration, celebration, jubilation and light heartedness.

... Say not, "I have found the path of the soul." Say rather, "I have met the soul walking upon my path." For the soul walks upon all paths. The soul walks not upon a line, neither does it grow like a reed. The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals (Gibran, 1923, p. 55).

Thus the most valuable treasure that I have acquired is the knowledge that I am not just becoming a human but a human becoming. This state of becoming is allowing more and more positive feelings to enter my personal kingdom. The state of becoming is simply allowing one’s self the virtue of daily existence, unobstructed by anyone else’s views, law, opinions and expectations. It is the knowledge that by allowing a free-thinking process you become more humble, forgiving and joyful. The knowledge that I have grown to love myself more and have allowed others to have their own particular viewpoints without restricting mine. The knowledge that I must not judge others because ultimately these people are mirrors reflecting in my own self - what you resent in them, you resent in yourself. The knowledge that my spiritual quest is a personal one and that I do not have to prove anything especially my self-worth to other people, but to just let myself exist. To learn to love myself and to be at peace with myself ultimately
helps me realize that I am a member of the human race and as such I embrace
the knowledge that I am part of the greatest miracle that God has ever created.
INTRODUCTION TO DANCE

Eugene B. Sagan (1967), defines dance as more than just a series of rhythmical movements but refers to the every day events as dance compositions. "I realized anything which had to be done in the every day world could be cast as a dance problem, if the person involved shifted his focus from a goal orientation to a process orientation" (p. 3). Therefore anything that we do from observing something to doing something concrete like peeling an orange could be conceived as a dance composition implying that the participant will be "interested, enthusiastic and involved." "The here and now becomes a rich, stimulating environment because we are involved" (Ibid., p. 4).

I have personally embraced Gabrielle (1989) Roth's notion of dance because it directly relates to the premise of this thesis. "Freeing the soul, freeing ourselves to be soulful, means empowering ourselves to really see what's going on in ourselves ...., looking operates on the surface; seeing probes beneath to discern the essence, the motion, the energy" (p. 145).

Gabrielle Roth's (1989) view of dancing is more holistic and embraces the taking of responsibility to "dance our own dance". Dance for Roth does not mean
initiation, whether the form is ballet, modern, or "James Brown funk". The focus
is not on someone else's steps" (p. 9) but on empowering the individual to become
free (unrestricted) though the creative process. "Freeing the body to experience
the power of being. Expressing the heart to experience the power of loving.
Emptying the mind to experience the power of self-knowledge. Awakening the
soul to experience the power of seeing. Embodying the spirit to experience the
power of healing" (Ibid., p. 2). "Dance is the most immediate way of expressing
the body's essential rhythms, dance is spontaneous, universal" (Ibid., p. 34).
Roth further discusses these rhythms as the five sacred rhythms "Flowing ...
staccato ... chaos ... lyric ... stillness" (Ibid., p. 35).

Each of these rhythms can be related to life's events, such as a birth of a baby.
From my perspective I relate it to the birth of this thesis. Flowing involves
everything with no sharp edges, just circles of endless motion each evolving into
the next. The genesis of the thesis and the subsequent writing is akin to the
flowing rhythm of a grounded experience coming to fruition.

Staccato defines the rhythm of sharp, pounding, pulsating energy with a definite
beginning and end. Chapter by chapter the thesis has progressed with waves of
intense inspiration, culminating in moments of exhilarating joy to that of complete
exhaustion. All of this, naturally, building in chaos, losing control in the frantic
search for more and more meaning. The dance becomes a race for time and the process so heartily embraced in the flowing stages has now become creatively process-oriented - more and more research, more and more writing, more and more working toward the goal to finish, despite my original thoughts of abandoning the goal orientation. The dancer has now been swept up in some primal rite of completion. The pen dances wildly across the paper, unable to keep up with the dancer's thoughts.

Finally the process stops and you dance away with a feeling of completion. Weeks go by and you return once more to the lyrical rhythm of the original dance. "This lyrical mood is delicious as fresh fruit, playful as an otter ... you swirl Isadora-like into graceful loops" (Roth, 1989, p. 33).

Stillness now prevails. The joy of being alive, the feeling that you have danced the dance and survived the chaos; the reward is that of radiant ecstasy. The thesis has completion. The process of writing has evolved through all of the five sacred rhythms.
DANCE AS METAPHOR IN QUANTUM PHYSICS

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes" (Marcel Proust as cited in Millman, 1991, p. 53).

Richard Courtney (1990) defines metaphor in several different ways, the simplest being: "a metaphor combines two thoughts in order to create a new meaning" (p. 65). "The second function of a metaphor is to provide us with a different form of perception, an alternative to perceiving through the senses" (Ibid.). Essentially then, according to Courtney, when we perceive a situation from a metaphorical form we change the way we think about things. The DanceAttitude premise uses the Dancer as the metaphor in that the person changes the problem by dancing metaphorically through a problem with new insights. Courtney further states that "it (metaphoric creative) can change our knowing and insight; it can enable us to re-play aspects of reality incorporated by its parts and the new whole; and it can give us a new perspective on events and experience" (p. 70).

Fritjof Capra's (1988) description of the parallels existing between physics and mysticism through the metaphor of the dance can best be explained in The Tao of Physics:

I was sitting by the ocean one late summer afternoon, watching the waves rolling in and feeling the rhythm of my breathing, when I suddenly became aware of my whole environment as being engaged
in a gigantic cosmic dance. Being a physicist, I knew that the sand, rocks, water, and air around me were made of vibrating molecules and atoms, and that these consisted of particles which interacted with one another by creating and destroying other particles. I knew also that the earth’s atmosphere was continually bombarded by showers of "cosmic rays," particles of high energy undergoing multiple collisions as they penetrated the air. All this was familiar to me from my research in high energy physics, but until that moment I had only experienced it through graphs, diagrams, and mathematical theories. As I sat on that beach my former experiences came to life; I "saw" cascades of energy coming down from outer space, in which particles were created and destroyed in rhythmic pulses; I "saw" the atoms of the elements and those of my body participating in this cosmic dance of energy; I felt its rhythm and I "heard" its sound, and at that moment I knew that this was the Dance of Shiva, the Lord of Dancers worshipped by the Hindus (p. 34).

"As with Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, we can alternate between two perspectives (actual and fictional) by switching from one to the other at will, although they may seem to exist simultaneously" (Ibid., p. 42).

Timothy Leary (1994) notes that the "Werner Heisenberg’s principle states that there is a limit to objective determinacy. If everyone has a singular viewpoint, constantly changing, then everyone creates his or her own version of reality" (p. 5). Gary Zukov’s (1979) *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, is a poetic framework incorporating Al Huang’s (1973) notion of interpreting Chinese symbols to form the basis of Zukov’s parallel between *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* and physics in general. "Tai Chi exemplifies the most subtle principle of Taoism, known as Wu-
Wei. Literally this may be translated as "not doing" but its proper meaning is to act without force (Huang, 1973, p. xii). The Dancing Wu Li Masters is a book of essence; the essence of quantum mechanics, quantum logic, special relativity, general relativity, and some new ideas that indicate the direction that physics seems to be moving (p. 8).

...."Physics = Wu Li
Wu Li = Patterns of Organic Energy
Wu Li = My Way
Wu Li = Non-Sense
Wu Li = I Clutch My Ideas
Wu Li = Enlightenment
Master = One Who Begins at the Centre not the Fringe

To Dance with God, the Creator of all Things is to Dance with Oneself" (Zukov, 1979, p. 7).

Therefore the notion of dance as an experience is akin to Zukov's notion that Quantum Mechanics shows us that we are not as separated from reality as we once thought. The nature of the Wu Li Masters Dancing in different tempos flowing freely "now becoming the dance, now the dance becomes them" (Ibid.)

Al Huang's (1974) Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain uses dancing as the basis for his brand of individual Tai Chi which is very different from the classical rote Tai Chi and its regimented and disciplined forms of movements. This form of Tai Chi
dance is similar to Ana Halprin's (1987) notion of dance: "namely that every activity in life can be viewed as a dance" (p. 11).

Huang's immediate here and now Tai Chi is similar to Perls (1960) in immediacy in gestalt therapy and to Barry Stevens (1970) in expanding consciousness to everyday life situations. Huang's (1973) premise is that you do not dance to something, i.e., music, rhythm, but you dance within the music "...true dancing is letting your awareness flow into the movement." (p. 90)

"The word quantum denotes a discrete jump from one level of a function to a higher level" (Chopra, 1990, p. 108).

According to Werner Heisenberger's "principle of uncertainty":

This principle governs the game of knowledge and existence. In its major application, although either the location of an object or its path as it moves through space and time is in principle knowable, both cannot be observed simultaneously. The actions taken by an observer to determine the object's location necessarily cause the object to split and journey along many separate paths simultaneously. The actions taken by the same observer to determine the path followed by an object render its position unknowable - or, in other words, the object with a well-defined path also splits and has many positions simultaneously (Ibid., p. 81).
Richard Courtney has succinctly stated that this quantum rule has serious implications, namely, that the "truth is relative, there is more than one way to discern truth and knowledge and that our mental structures decide how we order any kind of experience. Infinite choice is open at every second for me to alter the shape of the world, for it has no shape other than what I give it" (Courtney, 1987, p. 26).
DANCE AS PIRANDELLIAN

In Richard Courtney's Colloquium class, he suggested that I investigate and read Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. I discovered that there was an element of Pirandello in my *DanceAttitude* premise from the standpoint that Pirandello challenges reality. "Pirandello has embodied the notion that 'life is a stage' and has taught us how to see the drama in our own lives" (Paolucci, 1974, p. 63). *DanceAttitude* does precisely that - incorporating the individual as an actor in the everyday situation of life itself. The entire *DanceAttitude* premise, questions the authenticity and inauthenticity of the person playing the role with respect to which mask he is wearing in the drama of life. "Each of us" says the Father who is himself a naked mask, "thinks himself 'one', but it's not true. He is 'many', my friends, as 'many' as there are possibilities in us. 'One' with this fellow, 'one' with that other" (Ibid., p. 46). When an individual uses the *DanceAttitude* premise in re-examining old habituated tapes and uses the *DanceAttitude* mandala with its emphasis on Paradigm Shifting, he/she is using all the possibilities that are inherent within that individual's consciousness. It is precisely this new way of looking at things that Courtney attributes to Pirandello. "If we come with our existing categories at the ready, if we try to pigeon-hole events by past classifications, then we are denying Luigi Pirandello" (Courtney, 1988, p. 209).
Although the characters in Luigi Pirandello’s Six Characters exist, as Courtney suggests, ‘as if’ they are in life and they speak ‘as if’ they are living, ".... they do so within a theatrical framework that all of life is indeed a play" (Ibid.).

Individuals in real life also are acting ‘as if’ when they role play their parts in the DanceAttitude mandala. After the paradigm shift occurs they are acting out the newly expanded self ‘as if’; this is now the new individual without the previous mask. "The ‘as if’ experience is initiated by will and results in "penetration into the environment, total organic involvement with it in the moment of personal freedom (the here and now), when we face reality and act so that we re-structure the Self" (Courtney, 1989, p. 54). The individual fictionalizes the role playing and essentially, according to Courtney, "replays our experience and brings about a change in our understanding of it" (Ibid.).

Re-play for Courtney is recognition. "In other words, it is re-thinking ... if we re-play an event in our lives, something from our past, and we act it out in an improvisation, what we’re trying to do is to know it better" (Courtney, 1988, p. 210). This is precisely what the individual does with the initial problem and the corresponding Paradigm Shift that transforms the situation into a dramatic dynamic "Transformation is a dynamic that brings about learning" (Courtney, 1991, p. 25).
In conclusion the essential element contained within the dialogue of Six Characters is what Courtney describes as changing perspectives, "Perspectives changes - as the character changes and as the situation changes" (Courtney, 1988, p. 20). *DanceAttitude* individuals ultimately change their perspectives as they change their situations from old modalities to newly formed modalities as a result of their paradigm shifting. "Human personality is constantly changing ... but within such changes each one of us has our own perspective upon the human situation - and that is the fundamental Pirandellian Reality" (Courtney, 1988, p. 218).
DANCING TOWARDS THE SPLENDID CITY OF TOMORROW

I speed *Towards the Splendid City* (Neruda. 1972) with a reckless abandonment reminiscent of a generation long since past who embraced and believed in slick slogans of a Better Life Through Chemistry, never once considering I was leaving Shangri-la.

Abandoning my innate sense of truth in natural laws, I trusted the high priests of advertising, science and corporate loftiness who promised me a gleaming distillate antiseptic reality as viewed through beaker, test tube and filtration equipment, all in the name of progress.

Promises, promises, promises but at what expense. Those who would live in the splendid cities of the future world never have to toil and suffer. Luxury personified. Alas, the bubble shattered and I awoke to the reality of a world filled with pollution, violence, hatred, racism, war and peopled nations who were powerless.

Benjamin Hoff (1982) of *The Te of Piglet* equates this attitude of negativity with the Eeyore syndrome. Eeyore people are unharmonious, negative societies that are filled with fear, hypocrisy and dishonesty. "Eeyores are afraid -- afraid to risk positive, emotional expression, positive action, positive involvement in anything beyond Ego" (p. 56).
In essence they are against the Taoist belief that both feminine (yin) and masculine (yang) energies must be kept in balance and that "unhappiness is the result of being guided by illusions, such as the mistaken belief that man is something separate from the natural world" (Ibid., p. 108). "Modern man's difficulties, dangerous beliefs and feeling of loneliness, spiritual emptiness, and personal weakness are caused by his illusions about separation from the natural world" (p. 141).

Pablo Neruda (1972) confirms this truth in his Nobel lecture "that it is we ourselves who call forth the spirits through our own myth-making" (p. 25) which ultimately causes obstacles which arrest our own present and future development. He elucidates this point further: "We are led infallibly to reality and realism, that is to say to become indirectly conscious of everything that surrounds us and of the ways of change and then we see, when it seems to be too late, that we have erected such an exaggerated barrier that we are killing what is alive instead of helping life to develop and blossom" (Ibid.).

Present inhabitants of all the Splendid Cities would be wise to heed Pablo Neruda's affirmation that the formula which lays awaiting for him/her is not just "petrified words but an affirmation that explains himself to himself in relation to the natural world" (Ibid., p. 17).
Thomas Cleary (1989) in his book of *Balance and Harmony* reaffirms that the natural way of the "Tao is the general and specific law of the Universe. Everything has its Tao and every Tao is a reflection of the Great Tao, the universal Tao that underlies all things" (p. viii).

Why did the ancients cherish the Tao?  
Because through it  
We may find a world of peace,  
Leaving behind a world of cares,  
and hold the greatest treasure under heaven  
(Dreher, 1991, p. xiii).

It is important to realize that "The Tao leads outward, promoting successful action because it first leads inward" (*Ibid.*, p. xiv), which forces the individual to accept responsibilities for his/her own actions. It is this inward discernment of your own personal relationships to a world that surrounds you, that allows you to be aware of the natural rhythms within yourself and your immediate environment. As Benjamin Hoff (1982) explains, it is not a panacea that encourages abandoning and "rejecting-the-physical-world-approach" completely which would be an "extremist absurdity" leading to an impossible life threatening situation, but a heightened awareness of careful observation of natural laws in operation within the world around you.
Splendid City inhabitants need to look beyond the clamour and clutter of their dacron existence to honour natural laws and rhythms in order to acquire peace of mind and peace in the world. The Tao, then, is "the way" at once a path and principle of order" (Dreher, 1991, p. xv). Diane Dreher (1991) in the *Tao of Inner Peace* describes how seekers for centuries have found inner peace following the *Tao Te Ching* written by Lao Tzu over twenty-five centuries ago. "The Title of *Tao Te Ching* underscores the vital relationship between inner and outer peace. Ching means simply a sacred book. The word Te means virtue or character" (*Ibid.*).

"Transcending inner conflict, Te means living authentically, according to our true character" (*Ibid.*). Thus the "Tao Te Ching is a path that leads straight from the heart" (*Ibid.*). Much of the teachings of this lifelong path of harmony and peace is expressed in paradoxes that at first are difficult to discern. Their meanings are diffused and only after much careful contemplation does the meaning attain that enlightened 'ah ha' satori state.

Speeding along the polyester life line of progress *Towards the Splendid City*, I realized that I was no longer in control, that I was a disenfranchised, powerless captive of this elusive myth of scientific genesis, headed towards oblivion. Thundering within my synthetic environment was a pronouncement of absolute truth - a voice from the heavens proclaiming the validity of my journey towards the
Splendid City. This was no ordinary opinion or expression of feelings but a pronouncement equivalent to the Ten Commandments. How dare I oppose the coded information of genetics and microchip-disseminated information that was beaming its stellar information through tubeless (imagine tubeless) transformers and illuminated chips. “The Critic as the speaker of absolute Truth” (Stone, 1991, p. 32) had spoken to me, it’s message plain and simple. I had committed a sin and a crime, so dark and evil as to question the superiority of my present direction and where I was headed in the future. The fundamental doctrine advanced by my own self-effacing critic confirmed the Eeyore Effect discussed earlier.

Those abandoned parts of my primary self locked away in this vehicle of negativity now needed to be reclaimed. I needed to “Stop!” The return trip to Shangri-la would need a special formula of Taoism, Gestalt, T’ai Chi and a special blend of a mixture called *DanceAttitude*. This elixir of self-discovery is what Hal and Sidra Stone (1991) call the Aware Ego. “The Aware Ego is not a self; it is a ‘you’ that is not dominated by any self or set of selves. It is able to contain all the opposites that are you, to accept and to honour them approximately. It is a process, not a goal” (p. 19).

This process of becoming involved in the immediate NOW is what Gestalt Taoism, T’ai Chi and a *DanceAttitude* is primarily concerned with. The immediacy of the
given moments allows us to be involved in life as an active participant, experientially involved in the "here and now" instead of being merely an observer of life. Paradoxically "T'ai Chi exemplifies the most subtle principle of Taoism, known as wu wei. Literally, this may be translated as "not doing" (Huang, 1973, p. xii). The process of opposites forces you to understand that this "unlearning" of old ways allows you to be empty and rids you of your goal-oriented attitude. "Your focusing on goals separates you from true learning which is simply your awareness of the day-to-day doing" (Ibid., p. 74). "It is in this holism of self within the immediate environment that now constitutes what I call the DanceAttitude; the notion that communication and believability is possible if the person is authentically involved in the immediate here and now" (Ibid.).

Al Chung-liang Huang's (1973) description in Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain, substantiates my DanceAttitude premise by stating how thoughts and movements are interconnected. "Whether you are swimming or walking or diving, concentrate on transferring your mind process into what you are doing. If you turn a curve then let some of these thoughts curve too" (p. 73). Through the movement, a revelation or insight will be revealed to you, "noticing the correspondence between the movement part of your activity and your thinking and your ideas" (Ibid.).
T'ai Chi, like DanceAttitude is an individualistic process and the paradox of "not doing" does not mean that you are paralyzed into doing nothing but rather an over compensated "something" takes place which ultimately makes you feel inadequate as a direct result of your inner critic. Allowing yourself to give in to the immediacy of the present environment and observing your surroundings including your own inner critic will allow you the freedom to release the hold of the inner critic. Denial is giving a life force to its existence and gives power to the "I am afraid" or "I can't do it attitude." It is both the feeling of letting go and the feeling of awareness generated by your willingness to accept the situation" (Ibid., p. 18). DanceAttitude is the antithesis of thinking and worrying without having to prove yourself to anybody. It is a conscious searching of awareness that could be called a form of conscious meditation - being open to all that surrounds you now and having the wisdom to feel the process. "Wisdom is that particular emergence from your own spontaneity of an identification with what you know of the universe around you" (Ibid., p. 27).

The cyclical nature of all of these disciplines that I have mentioned is that they return the individual to the same place. There are no futile goals or destinations to reach so there is no anxiety. Huang refers to the process in T'ai Chi as "Childlikeness .... We want to keep alive, with all the openness and sense of wonder about life and about ourselves" (Ibid., p. 50). It is a reflection that you can
leave all the conflicts and confusions that you adopted in the Splendid City and reclaim your own unique individualistic balance. The process is not mystical, exotic or esoteric but it is "the wisdom of your own senses, your own body and mind together as one process" (Ibid., p. 52).

It is an integration of your awareness that produces the knowledge that comes from the inside not from the outside. Sonam Kozi, who was the interpreter for the Dalai Lama explained to Huang that "knowledge, true knowledge is like falling snowflakes into the pot of boiling water. They melt and disappear as they hit the surface of water. You don't see what you really learn - it dissolves in you and becomes you and changes you" (Ibid., p. 67). You are indeed changed when you absorb the experience, letting it dissolve in your psyche and you are uncluttered now, ready to experience any situation.

The road back to Shangri-la is not an easy road to traverse and we must all face the fact that claiming back our own centres is harder for some than for others. Many of us waste so much energy fighting the forces around us rather than adopting the easy solution of flowing with them. We do not realize that Shangri-la exists already within our present consciousness. It's immediacy of beauty, serenity and harmony was always there. We simply forgot how to look for it.
The notion that Shangri-la is a mythical place of dreams, exactly as you want it to be, a place of the ultimate world filled with gurus readily available to dispense instant enlightenment does not exist. We all want the promise of the Splendid City catechism filled with an array of apothecary-like, dazzling solutions to help solve our dilemmas and disillusionments. There is no such thing as "a method" or "the method" - as panaceas for the future.

Even the Tao does not resolve that it is the only way but "a way" that surely better than the Eeyore Technology of the Splendid City. Shangri-la does indeed exist but not in the cliched mythical reality of simple dreams. It exists here, right now on a place called earth. It is the terra firma of my and your reality - the wondrous, beautiful, greenish blue of a magical planet. All we need do is to stop reaffirming our disillusioned negative belief systems and start to honour our creative self in relation to the harmony and rhythm of a planet so wondrous in its complexity that it staggers the imagination. The magic elixir of holism as expressed through those concepts I talked about earlier such as a DanceAttitude is what being in Shangri-la is all about.

To embody the principles of a holistic existence in Shangri-la is to have the courage to live those principles on a daily basis. Old paradigms of Eeyore mentality embracing warlike belligerence, perpetrating old dualistic habits of
defensiveness, aggression and hostility will surely destroy our present Shangri-la and drive us again towards some other Splendid City yet to be created.

President Carter was quoted as saying that it is very difficult to wage peace; it is very easy to wage war" (Dreher, 1991, p. 277). Shangri-la for Mr. Carter is through the Habitat program of helping the homeless to build and rebuild homes for the poor throughout North America. Not only does the Tao teach us to think holistically but it reminds us that we are all part of a much larger whole, and by practising Wu Wei we are cooperating with the natural world around us. This elixir of awareness can be practised at home, at work, in nature and in the stillness of our own hearts. "As Dag Hommarskjold said "life only demands from you the strength you possess. Only one feat is possible - not to have run away" (Ibid., p. 278). Embracing the awareness of our ever present reality within Shangri-la is definitely not to run away but to acknowledge the process as Tao.

The process is indeed the path which leads me from the Splendid City back towards Shangri-la into - the area of wu - the magic elixir. Perseverance, as the Tao reminds, us is to be "strong and yielding as water. Remain open and centred, flexible as bamboo. Practice compassion and honour the cycles within and around you. Seek harmony with nature and all others in the world. Then surely peace will fill your life and flow forth to heal this planet" (Ibid., p. 279).
There is a story of a man who goes to a taoist to seek enlightenment. One of the master's disciplines is pottery. After he has been with him for some time, he begins to feel that he understands. One day he picks up one of his master's pots to admire, and he drops it. He feels a tremendous sense of loss as the pot shatters. The taoist says, "Why? You don't need to be remorseful. It's still there." The enlightened master recognizes that it is not the pot that matters, but the experience of making it (Ibid., p. 157).

Shangri-la does indeed exist. The process of experiencing it is indeed the process of enlightenment in the Here and Now.
DANCING THE IMPASSE THROUGH PLAY

Central to my DanceAttitude thesis as a progressive processing towards an authenticated selfhood is the very nature of the process itself - the ontological nature of the process as the very essence of the subject matter that I am describing. How does one become involved in the DanceAttitude process and apply it directly to a specific problem or sets of problems. The impasse that I am speaking about is how to translate months of reading and research on the nature of play and turn it into a chapter of my original thesis.

The answer although not obvious at the time allowed my pathological critic to polarize my better judgement by creating an impasse that filled me with self-doubt, anxiety and recrimination.

Not only did the constraints of being scholarly, the length of the discourse and an impending deadline add to the severity of the impasse but the discourse itself must be germane to the notion of play as it pertained to my original thesis. Restricting my research to the notion of the self and the premise of Gestalt psychology "here and now" reality as the basis of my DanceAttitude hypothesis I hesitated to entertain the notion of a new concept such as play being another valid option.
This new conceptual framework (play) allowed my impasse to flourish and create new anxieties so that I simply retreated back into the security and safety of doing exactly what I shouldn’t be doing - more research. What I needed to do was to write, but the writing only strengthened the original impasse causing further stagnation and I found myself procrastinating at will. Deepak Chopra (1993) in his book *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* refers to this state as "entropy, the universal tendency for order to break down into disorder" (p. 113). Traditionally, entropy is related to the Big Bang Theory of the universe, and implies that the process can’t reverse itself automatically but the counter force fending off the state of entropy is universal in intelligence, which, at the quantum level is far more than a mere mental phenomenon (*Ibid.*). Trusting my instincts I resorted to my traditional methodology of asking my Spirit Guides for help. Several days passed without any form of assistance and I even became doubtful of this process. Chopra states "There are basically two ways to cope with uncertainty - acceptance and resistance. Acceptance means that you allow events to unfold around you and react to them spontaneously without suppression. Resistance means that you try to change events from what they really are and react to them with familiar, safe responses" (*Ibid.*, p. 173). I decided to trust in the spontaneity of my plea for help to a higher source.
The reward finally came one morning in a flash of insight similar to what Richard Courtney (1968) talks about in his book *Play, Drama and Thought* as tacit or personal knowledge. "Personal knowledge includes feelings, hunches, guesses and intuitions" (p. 188). Pragmatically speaking I had the obvious tool at my disposal -my own personalized *DanceAttitude* process, capable of solving the problem simply by addressing the situation in the immediate here and now through a new perspective. This new perspective was to look at the writing process with an 'as if' attitude or to quote Proust with "new eyes." The new eyes turned out to be the *DanceAttitude* play process. To tackle this impasse from a playful perspective meant that these "new eyes" could be, metaphorically speaking, compared to a playful river scanning new worlds and gaining new insights. Herman Hesse in his spiritual novel *Siddhartha* refers to the river of change as the source of all enlightenment if only one would listen. *Siddhartha* searches throughout India finally seeking solace when his own inner self advises him to "love this river, stay by it, learn from it" (Hesse, 1961).

Like a river this new seeing process flows from the familiar rediscovering of new insights from old territory - changing from moment to moment - rediscovering the truth in the moment without any gaps by allowing you to flow with the playful process - willing to open yourself to knowledge that was overlooked in your old ways of seeing. "The word quantum denotes a discrete jump from one level of
function to a higher level" (Chopra, 1990, p. 108), with a higher degree of raised consciousness. It was this quantum leap that triggered my realization that I could indeed be more than what I already am - that I needed to explore the Gestalt of my every day experience with a new visionary experience.

To trust in the play process I once again turned to Courtney’s (1986) work where I discovered that the pragmatic American philosophers verified my DanceAttitude hypothesis. "C.S. Pierce says we conceive of possibilities in play, its meaning lies in what the player does" (Ibid., p. 52). Play for William James provides us with knowledge - "not within it, but as a result of it" (p. 52). John Dewey states that ‘learning by doing’ is purposive problem solving, one element of which being ‘as if’. Viola Spolin on the other hand, states that “the ‘as if’ experience is initiated by will and results in penetration into the environment, total organic involvement with it in the moment of personal freedom (the here and now) when we face reality and act so that we re-structure the Self” (Courtney, 1986,).

There is no doubt that I restructured the self - my self - when I applied the DanceAttitude play process and broke the impasse. The learning by doing and the knowledge gained in this very chapter is the one example that one can be a Dancer willing to choreograph one’s own unique experience.
This involvement in the ‘here and now’ is referred to as autotelic .... it needs no goals or rewards external to itself. "In The Gita, Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna to live his whole life according to this principle: "Let the motive be in the deed and not in the event. Be not one whose motive for action is the hope of reward" [2.47] (as cited in Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, p. 54). Essentially the person feels potential in complete control of his immediate environment.

Gabrielle Roth (1989) in her book *Maps to Ecstasy* states: "Metaphysically, dance becomes a rhythmic universal process, the soul, which involves a journey from the ghetto of the ego to the expanses of the full self, a level of awareness that floods everyday life with vital energy" (p. 3). Roth further elucidates this point where she talks about a body without a soul is a body without rhythm. It involves stepping out of unhabitual roles, our conventional scripts and improvising a dancing path. "The dancing path leads us from the inertia of sleep-walking to the ecstasy of living the spirit of the moment" (*Ibid.*, p. 3). Therefore I must play with the process, trusting that I will now be able to integrate all that I have read to build a new description of my *Dance Attitude* that does indeed encompass the notion of play.

The metaphor of the dancer gliding his way over the various buildings blocks (the research material) cementing them together to form a theatrical marquee (chapter
in thesis) is validation of the DanceAttitude process. Schematically, after being involved in Theatre, what could be more appropriate.

**NOW PLAYING**

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<td>Courtney</td>
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<td>Miller</td>
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<td>Gadamer</td>
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It is in this spirit of the moment that the dancer dancing the marquee becomes a shaman in his own right, on a journey of initiation requiring an attitude to become aware in order to discover the potentialities of the new expanded self. This could be a shammanic battle between the Dancer and the Pathological Critic (P.C.). Hal and Sidra Stone (1991) in their book *Embracing Your Inner Critic* refer to this super star P.C. as the voice of pronouncements - something like the Ten Commandments dispensing absolute truths. "So often when the Critic speaks to
us it is as though a sin has been committed, a crime has been perpetuated, or a
dark and evil deed has been done" (p. 32).

The shift to a goal orientation is the power that my P.C. is constantly threatening
me with. Be scholarly. This is a Ph.D. thesis. Stop drawing childish pictures.
Start quoting items such as "... the Inner Critic is unhappy, anxious, and deeply
concerned about what you are doing, feeling, or thinking. It fears that you will
experience pain, rejection or abandonment ... it is terrified that you are going to
look foolish and bring shame into the system" (*Ibid.*, p. 177). As previously
stated, Benjamin Hoff (1982) in *The Te of Piglet* equates this attitude of negativity
with the Eeyore syndrome. Eeyore people are unharmonious, negative societies
that are filled with fear, hypocrisy and dishonesty. "Eeyores are afraid -- afraid to
risk positive, emotional expression, positive action, positive involvement in anything
beyond Ego" (p. 56). The lights of the marquee are out. The conditioning to get
things done fast, to see the finished product is not the essence of this thesis, and
instant gratification - perhaps a definite sign of the times is the antithesis of my
DanceAttitude hypothesis. The genesis of the actual writing as being a playful fun process nurturing a DanceAttitude so intrinsic to Shamantic practices is what this DanceAttitude is really all about.

Analogous to theatre would be the blocking of a play before the nuances and the gestures become a reality. Writing the forty pages of a rough draft freed from concern for using quotations or trying to be scholarly, enabled me to tackle issues that simply flowed, such as the nature of play, dance, flow, integration, pathological critic, shamanism, and honouring the blankness. "Honouring the blankness" and just writing about the blankness has allowed me to play with the process of writing without any rewards, goals or limits. Sagan taught me how to "honour the blankness" and for this I am truly grateful.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975) in his article in Humanistic Psychology, Play and Intrinsic Rewards, states that "of all patterned human activity, play is supposed to depend least on external incentives. Philosophers from Plato to Sartre have remarked that people are most human, free and creative when they play (Brown. 1959; Sartre. 1956; Schiller. 1884 as cited in Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 42). "An organism at play can use his full range of genetic potential and while playing one is relatively free of the tyranny of 'needs'" (Ibid.). Mihaly further states that "play is both enjoyable and spontaneous" (Ibid.). Therefore the
definition that play is a process and not concerned with a definite means to an end is exactly the playful process that I used in working through my impasse.

Present research is based on the already established schema that describe play from birth to child under the age of fifteen. But since there are no longitudinal studies of the phenomenon, we don’t know what disguise play takes on in adulthood or if it does so" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990. as cited in Brian Sutton Smith, 1979, p. 259). "Ethnologists have remarked over and over again that adult organisms decrease their play or stop thinking about play and that play essentially disappears with age" (ibid.). Apparently I do not fit the statistics since I played with the writing of this Chapter.
It is not within the scope of this thesis to deal with the broad range of the nature of play itself as it relates to young children experimenting in a non-threatening environment on a trial and error basis" (Beach, 1945; Prekoff, 1972; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1970; Fagen, 1974)" (Ibid.) nor the development of a strong ego through symbolic manipulation of their environment" (Erikson, 1950; Mead, 1934; Piaget, 1951)" (Ibid.). Stephen Miller's (1973) concept of play, similar to Huizinga's (1938), is that the notion of play has its aim in itself. Process rather than goal or outcome is essential for Miller. The way of doing something assumes top priority and it is this way of doing something that takes precedence in my DanceAttitude 'process positive'. I use the term process positive because it implies the process as a means of actively being involved in the playful process all the while being positive or more importantly, creative.

Working through this chapter allowed me to play creatively with the metaphors that I have used throughout this chapter. But what exactly is play? What are the dividing lines between play and work? Can an activity be both play and work at the same time? Fergus P. Hughes (1991) in his book Play and Development asks if an activity can begin as one and gradually evolve into the other. If my thesis is correct then any boring, routine, mundane task can indeed be turned into a playful, choreographed dance. According to Hughes before an activity can be described as play it must contain five essential characteristics (Rubin, Fein. and Vanderberg,
1983). Firstly, "play is intrinsically motivated. It is an end in itself, done only for the sheer satisfaction of doing it." Second, "It is freely chosen by its participants. "A third essential characteristic of play is that it must be pleasurable." "A fourth is that it is non literal. That is, it involves a certain make believe particularly true of symbolic play where children or adults play out imaginary scenes." Finally, "play is actively engaged in by the player. The participant must be involved physically, psychologically or both, rather than passive or indifferent to what is going on." Therefore, play's five essential characteristics are inherent in my DanceAttitude process positive.

To elaborate, I will once again refer to the impasse mentioned earlier (not being able to write this chapter) and relate how these five essential characteristics relate to my impasse. Firstly, sitting down and writing about the impasse and honouring the blankness with a playful attitude (process orientation) regardless of outcome/goal orientation was intrinsically motivated. I wrote for the sheer playfulness of writing. This is what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975) calls flow. Flow denotes the holistic sensation present when we act with total involvement. It is the state in which action follows upon action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part. Essentially, according to Mihaly we experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction
between self and environment; between stimulus and response; or between past, present, future. Mihaly states that ideally flow is the result of pure involvement, without any consideration about results.

The second characteristic of play, that it must be freely chosen as it relates to this chapter is indeed apropos. I did indeed freely decide to play with the process of playful writing. If I continued to have the goal orientation of finishing this scholarly chapter, then I would not have been able to overcome the impasse.

Thirdly, I found the process of writing most pleasurable and symbiotically involved. Hamilton (1990) defines symbiosis in the psychological sense, "as a state of experiencing the self as inextricably intermingled with the object" (p. 15). The object of course is this chapter itself. Symbiosis, traditionally is associated with pleasant feelings, such as love, warmth, satiation or even ecstasy though it can be related to unpleasant experiences. From my perspective I am concerned with the more expanded consciousness that results from this state of ecstasy that one could achieve through my DanceAttitude process positive.

The fourth non literal aspect of play as it relates to this chapter involved the "distortion of reality to accommodate the interests of the player" (Ibid., p. 32). By acknowledging the pathological critic and the resulting original impasse; this
distorted reality was accommodating me, the original player, by inventing the
dancer vs the pathological critic as mythical combatants in a battle over my
creative thought process.

Lastly, play is actively engaged in by the player - certainly has credibility in this
chapter. There is no doubt that I was actively engaged in the research, the battle
between the dancer and the P.C. mentioned earlier and the writing of this chapter on
play as it relates to a DanceAttitude. To be actively engaged in the moment
to moment reality of the play process of the immediate environment not only
embraces Gestalt psychology of Frederick Perls (Perls. 1969) but also the
phenomenology of play itself. Phenomenology is the essence of moment to
moment awareness of a particular phenomena of what Richard Courtney (1987)
in The Quest calls "what-ness" (p. 31). "Edmund Husserl who founded
contemporary phenomenology, the science of descriptive analysis of subjective
phenomena" (Ibid.) is concerned with the inter-subjectivity as achieved through
empathy - viewing the world not as a private sector but "from the other's point of
view." Husserl's phenomenology is a method of inquiry that must attempt to
capture the on going present." Knowledge of the self and the world is what we
"live through" (Ibid.).
Courtney (1987) further defines phenomenology as negotiated reality and that what is negotiated is meaning and that this new found meaning is, in my case, achieved through the process of direct observation. Consciously being aware of the process achieved a negotiated reality of playful writing. Using my DanceAtitude process as a means towards achieving a more authenticated selfhood implies that the process must be enjoyable which is characteristic of play itself. The simple fact that play is joyful regardless of whether it discusses anxiety or increases competence, is indeed intrinsically rewarding.

Hans Gadarner (1975) however, raises the question that "in the last analysis is it not an illusion to think that we can separate play from seriousness and only admit it to segregated areas peripheral to real life" (p. 130). He further states that "play and seriousness, the exuberance and super abundance of life on the one hand, and the tense power of vital energy on the other, are profoundly interwoven. They interact with one another .... our capacity for play is an expression of the highest seriousness. For we read in Nietzsche, "Mature manhood: that means to have found again the seriousness one had as a child - in play" (Ibid.). "The reverse is also true for Nietzsche as the celebration of the creative power of life in the divine ease of play" (Ibid.).
Gadamer further states that a failure to recognize the universal scope and anthological dignity of play produces our abstraction that blinds us to the interdependence of both. Perhaps our present cultural alienation is the direct result of an insistence between life and art as separate entities. My DanceAttitude thesis maintains that by transcending routine, mundane experiences and becoming consciously aware on a moment to moment basis is what Gadamer refers to "Acting as if" - not simply an activity of instinctual behaviour but one that "intends" something" (p. 125). It is this "as if" modification which intends to make the DanceAttitude process as a choreographed dancelike art form. Transcending this obvious reality by turning it into something other than what is intended lends credence to the individual being actively involved in his/her own creation. The creation of a new, heightened awareness through the simple process of playing with the moment to moment reality.

Therefore, in conclusion, the writing of this chapter has that essential feature that Gadamer refers to as "something played" (Ibid.). The word Gebilde means "creation" rather than just a piece of work. This chapter fits that parameter as a self-sufficient unique creation. Therefore a DanceAttitude process implies, perhaps, that we should regain once again our childlike nature for it is in this childlike state that we regain our connection to the real world. Reclaiming the childlike state through a refined use of our senses would allow us to realize as Dr.
Chopra (1990) discovered in Quantum Healing, that we became the event. The analogy he uses of walking in the woods is not enough but the realization that you 'are' the woods becomes paramount. "It is not just sending signals to you from 'out there'; rather you are blending your own signals with it" (p. 247).

This new DanceAttitude paradigm is a radical departure leading us towards a higher level of consciousness through the process of experiential involvement, resulting in creative expression not yet thought of and a new reverence for all of life on mother earth.

My personal odyssey therefore, has been to pursue the authentic self through an understanding that a new frame of reference in any situation will produce; that tacit realization that I am master of my environment and that I truly can and do create my own reality. Creation of this reality is simply a matter of preference - I prefer to address myself towards a new situation with my mind spontaneously creating a new level of awareness in my body. The choice is mine and is achievable through the process called DanceAttitude.
I must now address the notion of authenticity since the word authentic appears in my thesis title. The authentic self refers to that degree of "aliveness" of the person that transcends the common notion of authenticity as it relates to the word "real". It would indeed be possible to be real and still be inauthentic. Actors who have not understood the Stanislovsky method of acting have presented real experiences as based on consummate acting "techniques" but have totally lacked the "aliveness" that is so necessary in the authentic attitude. Authenticity, therefore, implies that there be communication between the observer and the observed.

My desire to become more totally authentic from a holistic point of view, that is, the mind, body, spirit holism, conceptualized itself through the Gestalt psychology of wholeness. This integration of thinking, feeling and action lead me to a more authentic awareness especially in the immediate "here and now". This newfound attitude had to encompass and embody more than just a set of cliched gestalt experiences. It was this search for the orientation towards a more authentic self as described by Richard Courtney as "tacit knowledge .... or personal knowledge" (Courtney, 1987, p. 41). Courtney further elucidates tacit knowledge as being implicit; it cannot be formulated explicitly in words.
It is holism of self within the immediate environment that constitutes a *DanceAttitude*: the notion that communication and believability is possible if one is authentically involved in the *DanceAttitude* in the immediate here and now. When there is authentic involvement, then one is immersed in a *DanceAttitude* that accepts responsibility for one's immediate actions. In other words, is the person alive in his/her part since we are all playing some other part as William Shakespeare suggested in *As You Like It*. "Awareness is experience, experience is awareness" (Perls, 1969, p. 30). Frederick Perls states that "awareness is an experience of utmost privacy" and that the experience of a *DanceAttitude* follows the gestalt formation - "that of closure being satisfaction. Satis - enough; faction - to make: Make it so that you have enough. In other words fulfillment, fill yourself - until you are filled" (Ibid., p. 86).

Essentially, you are your own repository of feelings and emotions - your own laboratory so to speak. "Reality is nothing but the sum of all awareness as you experience here and now" (Ibid., p. 34). "When one is willing and eager, the gods join in" (Aeschylus: Millman, 1991, p. 17).

Herman Hesse (1951) in *Siddhartha* elucidates the *DanceAttitude* process in the transformation of the newly expanded self "learning something new on every step of his path for the world was transformed and he was enthralled."
The sun and moon had always shone; the rivers had always flowed and the bees had hummed, but in previous times all this had been nothing to Siddhartha but a fleeting and illusive veil before his eyes, regarded with distrust, condemned to be disregarded and ostracized from the thoughts, because it was not reality, because reality lay on the other side of the visible. But now his eyes lingered on this side; he saw and recognized the visible and he sought his place in this world. He did not seek reality; his goal was not on any other side. The world was beautiful when looked at in this way - without any seeking, so simple, so childlike. The moon and the stars were beautiful, the brook, the shore, the forest and rock, the goat and the golden beetle, the flower and butterfly were beautiful. It was beautiful and pleasant to go through the world like that, so childlike, so awakened, so concerned with the immediate, without any distrust (p. 37).

"Maya refers to the illusion of boundaries, the creation of a mind that has lost the cosmic perspective" (Chopra, 1990, p. 219). By incorporating the DanceAttitude, the world of Maya is diminished and the power of awareness incorporates the cosmic perspective that "in every atom there are worlds within their worlds. Demolishing one's own boundaries does not make the relative world vanish: it adds another dimension of reality to it - reality becomes unbounded" (Ibid., p. 220). No walls, no boundaries, but a DanceAttitude ready to fill the void of Maya.

Dr. Chopra states that there is no fixed connection, then, between what kind of experience you put into the body and the result that comes out - "your nervous system is set up for unboundedness" (Ibid., p. 222). "What you see you become .... just the experience of perceiving the world makes you what you are" (Chopra,
A DanceAttitude can therefore cause a reality shift similar to the shift that takes place on the healing level. Dr. Chopra's premise that every single cell in your body is intelligent - having a moment to moment reality of what is happening within the entire body and that the mind is capable of creating a state of stasis and health.

Therefore, "life is a field of unlimited possibilities .... the highest goal of existence then is to achieve two hundred percent of life" (Ibid., p. 228). Achieving this élan vital is possible through a DanceAttitude.

The exploration of our immediate environment through a DanceAttitude will empower the individual towards a journey of discovery embodying enthusiasm and a sense of trust. Thomas Huxley so aptly stated:

Sit down before every fact as a little child. Be prepared to give up every preconceived notion or belief. Follow humbly wherever, to whatever abyss nature leads. If you don't do this, you shall learn nothing (Solimar, 1992, p. 6).

Towards a DanceAttitude implies, perhaps, that we should regain once again our childlike nature for it is in this childlike state that we regain our connection to the real world.
For playing has a twofold aim
To grow and love a happening.
Or: happiness of growth
Denies stagnation
That comes from sameness and implosion.
That cliches, patterns which don’t change

They are secure and safe like death.
The rigor mortis, rigor vitae
Are so alike in many ways,
As Freud has seen.
Freud also saw the greatest thing:
That thinking is rehearsing, trying out
(Perls, 1969, p. 9).

Rehearsing is the antithesis of a DanceAttitude. "But what are we rehearsing for?
Without rehearsing we take risks, we are spontaneous, impulsive. To hell with consequences!" (Ibid., p. 16). Reclaiming the childlike state through a refined use of our senses would allow us to realize that like Dr. Chopra discovered in Quantum Healing, that we became the event. The analogy he uses of walking in the woods is not enough but the realization that you ‘are’ the woods becomes paramount.
It is not just sending signals to you from "out there"; rather you are blending your own signals with it" (Chopra, 1990, p. 247).

The implications of a DanceAttitude in the twilight of the 20th century with its chaotic territorial conflicts, ethnic cleansing and mass starvation due to depletion of the environment and over population might well add a degree of sanity if we could only look beyond our immediate sense of importance and learn to see the broader perspective from a holistic viewpoint.
This new *DanceAttitude* paradigm is a radical departure leading us towards a higher level of consciousness through the process of experiential involvement, resulting in creative expression not yet thought of and a new reverence for all of life on mother earth. Rilke states "that perhaps, then someday far in the future, you will gradually, without noticing it live your way into the answer" (Rilke, 1984, p. 23).

I believe we are now living our way into those answers and that through a *DanceAttitude* we can become aware of our internal processes by allowing for a greater self-understanding and a self-acceptance. It is through this honouring of our deepest life intentions (peace, harmony, love), that we can indeed discover new visions and untold manifested potential.

My personal odyssey therefore, has been to pursue the authentic self through an understanding that a new frame of reference in any situation (especially a *DanceAttitude*) will produce the tacit realization that I am master of my environment and that I truly can and do create my own reality. Creation of this reality is simply a matter of preference - I prefer to address myself towards a new situation with my mind spontaneously creating a new level of awareness in my body. The choice is mine and is achievable through the process called *DanceAttitude*. 
INTRODUCTION

At this juncture, I would like to include the writings that Richard Courtney inspired me to pursue regarding the nature of Shamanism, from the vantage point of different ways of seeing. The events that followed were not only once again synchronistic but are a testimony as to their veracity.

It was 4:00 a.m. Sunday morning when I awoke with a tingling sensation running down my left arm. I dismissed the sensation as having slept on my arm during the course of the night. Gradually I became aware of all my upper molars aching, similar to having the flu. My body was in a profuse state of perspiration and my pulse was racing wildly. A cold shower seemed in order but this did little to alleviate the now nauseating feeling that was permeating throughout my entire body.

The emergency room was cold, sterile and clinical. My involvement was that of a patient undergoing a heart attack in progress. My sense of the dramatic quickly gave way to the reality of the situation, but I was still not convinced that one could
actually be having the experience on an ongoing basis. I had always believed that if you had an attack that you were rushed to emergency - sirens blaring. Perceptually I found myself detached as if I was an extension of myself watching the gravity of the situation unfold.

The medical term for my condition was myocardial infarction with a prognosis of myocardial myopathy. This is, as it turns out, the worst scenario you could possibly be given, since no apparent cure exists.

Instead of asking why an illness occurs and trying to modify the conditions that led to it, medical researchers focus their attention on the mechanisms through which the disease operates, so that they can then interfere with them. These mechanisms rather than the true origins, are often seen as the causes of disease in current medical thinking (Capra, 1988, p. 167).

Thus began my pilgrimage into the world of alternative healing since the high priest of allopathic medicine had already subordinated me to the reality of a limited existence. In essence time was running out. The tenacity of my resolve to believe in magical medicine as an alternative to western scientific medicine as a palliative solution to my problem only strengthened my determination to seek an alternate cure.
A crisis of this magnitude filled me with anxiety, doubt and despair. I was longing for some personal guru who could transform me into an instant disciple. Where were the oracles of wisdom that would assist this neophyte with their magical potions? I was longing for some benevolent guru who could embrace me with his or her magical solution and lead me out of the catastrophic clutches of "dis-ease". "The guru will appear in different forms. He may wear the garb of a simple teacher or an itinerate healer, or, he may come upon the scene with the dramatic force of a prophet, a sage, or even a wizard depending upon the time and place of his appearance" (Kopp, 1988, p. 11).

My guru appeared in the form of a proprietress of a health food store specializing in Edgar Cayce Health Care Products. For reasons of personal privacy I am not at liberty to use her full name. "Gurus may at first appear to be 'the ideal bearers of final truths, but in reality they are simply .... the most extraordinarily human members of the community'" (Ibid.). Extraordinary she was. She had the gift of going into a light trance where she was able to contact her spiritual advisors. "The guru teaches indirectly, not by way of dogma and lecture, but by means of parable and metaphor" (Ibid., p. 12).

The message that I received from these higher beings was neither parable nor metaphor but simple advice. They informed me that I was to contact Alla and that
my present condition, though not as serious as I had thought, could indeed benefit from Alla’s intervention. I was told in simple language that I must relinquish all hate, negativity and resentment. If I failed to heed this advice, then the next attack on my heart would indeed leave me in a vegetative state. My reaction was one of extreme confusion. Was I to talk directly to God through some form of meditation since Alla is the Muslim word for God? Was there a message that I did not grasp? How could the entire medical profession be mistaken as to my present condition? The source simply advised that all is possible.

She quickly came back into reality and assured me that Alla was indeed a Russian Cardiologist who had recently arrived in this country. Although not licensed to practice Western Scientific Medicine she could help me with her own unique style of healing, and that she also had just recently met an Ojibway shaman. Intrigued with the prospect of meeting this doctor of cardiology, and an authentic shaman, I asked her if Alla was indeed schooled in the form of shamanism since the birth of shamanism occurred primarily in the Ural mountains of Russia. Steve LaForm was the name given to me by the source as the Ojibway shaman, not Alla. I was no longer reconciled to just reading about these magical sorcerers, but was finally about to experience their reality within the scope of my own life. My adventure was about to begin. I immediately thought of "The books of Carlos Castaneda, regardless of the questions that have been raised regarding their degree of
fictionalization, have performed the valuable service of introducing many Westerners to the adventure and excitement of shamanism and to some of the legitimate principles involved" (Harner, 1980, p. xvii).

**Therapy Immersion**

Dr. Alla Kashevskaya studied in the Soviet Union with such noted professors as Sirofin, Batkin, Geller and Ratner. While at the Cardiology Institute in Moscow she studied at the Institute of Experimental Medicine where she learned the basis of The Bio-Energy Healing Method. She then further expanded and perfected the technique to incorporate her own healing expertise.

**The Bio-Energy Healing Method**

The Bio-Energy Healing Method is derived from an ancient Eastern Therapeutic Energy Healing Technique which has been further developed and is now based on, and borne out by, modern scientific clinical research. It is a holistic 'prevention and cure' technique which uses no drugs, no chemicals and no medicine.

It is based on the premise that all living creatures have individual energy fields. However, many of us have blocked energy fields due to various factors (including stress, poor nutrition, lack of exercise, heredity, etc.), which result in blockage, malfunctioning organisms and, ultimately, "dis-ease". This technique promotes
health and well-being in our modern world by harnessing and strengthening one’s own energy field.

The Treatment

Dr. Kashevskaya possesses an extremely strong and positive bio-energy field and is capable of strengthening and re-orienting a patient’s low or negative energy flow. The patient’s bio-energy field radiates signals to a location and amount of disharmony in their body. The pain is transmitted to Dr. Kashevskaya through her hands, so that she can absorb the suffering and disease and can then increase the patient’s energy to cure him/herself.

All of the healing is done through Dr. Kashevskaya’s hands. She combines a "laying of hands" with the movement of her hands. These movements are extremely precise and follow natural patterns of energy within the body. Each disease or malfunctioning organism requires a different treatment and therefore an in-depth knowledge of anatomy and of "body dynamics" is required.

According to Cynthia Bend and Tayja Wiger (1987) who wrote the book *Birth of a Modern Shaman*, "Responsibility and acceptance promote power, power forms within to create your reality. For if you unconsciously had something to do with making things the way they are, then you can have a great deal to do with creating
things the way you want them to be". "More and more people are discovering that their minds follow their wills so they can make their own truths by accepting limitations conversely by extending their world towards infinity .... Shamanism is a leap beyond our cultural confines in which the powers of the ancients join with the power of the modern age. .... we do indeed influence outer events through the actions of our minds" (1987, p. 5).

"Illness can thus be understood as a lesson you have given yourself to help you remember who you are" (Brennan, 1987, p. 131). Frantically I thought of all the reasons in my past life that could have produced my present condition of disease. Perhaps the dimension of the problem lay in the scope of my own belief structure. I needed to include myself as part of the whole universe, beyond the dimensions of time and space and not just life in the physical body. "That is, a priori, the whole is made up of the individual parts, and the individual parts are therefore not only part of the whole, but like a hologram, are in fact, the whole" (Ibid.). Doug Boyd (1974), in his book Rolling Thunder states that "Every person is plugged into the whole works. Nobody is outside it or affects it any less than anyone else" (p. 244).

Alla is a 40 year old black haired woman of striking features who spoke in a broken Russian accent adding immensely to my vision of an esoteric healer. Her kind and gentle manner were more than reassuring yet she possessed a
tremendous conviction in her own healing possibilities. I sat in a chair and closed my eyes. Alla began by moving her hands around my body strengthening and re-orienting my unbalanced levels of energy.

This process of energy shifting was similar to the accounts that I had read where individuals attempted to deliberately alter their states of consciousness. Carlos Castaneda (1971) "In order to teach and corroborate his knowledge Don Juan used these well known psychotropic plants: peyote, jimson-weed and a species of mushroom" (p. 17). Fred Allan Wolf (1991) used "Ayahuasca which is a substance made from a vine that grows in the high and mid-Amazon jungle regions of Peru. It is used in shamanistic ceremonies by Peruvian shamans as a purgative. It can also induce visionary states of consciousness" (p. 17).

*Rolling Thunder* considered the peyote religious ceremonies as *serious business.* "It is used in a way that we want to cleanse our systems and our minds, so we can put ourselves on a higher plane in life" (Boyd, 1974, p. 247). The accounts of Aldous Huxley, John Lilly, and Timothy Leary inducing altered states of consciousness through their use of psychotropic drugs are legendary.

Although no drugs of any kind were used to alter *my* state of consciousness, the experience of powerful energy shifts produced extraordinary visual images of
exquisite colours and an expanding eddy of transforming shapes and forms. Nevill Drury's description of Michael Hollingshead's religious LSD trip was similar in magnitude to what I was now experiencing - all without ingesting any form of drugs. "He was now falling inwards beyond structure into energy; nothing existed except whirring vibrations, and each illusory form was simply a different frequency" (Drury, 1978, p. 67).

On one personal healing session I not only encountered the usual deep breathing and vivid array of purple colours (symbolic of spiritual visitations similar to green being the process of direct healing and red and black being associated with repressed anger, hate and fear), but I encountered the black monster of my subconscious who immediately waged war on my psyche. Rapid heartbeats were accompanied by a rise in temperature causing me to sweat profusely amidst a constant flow of spastic moaning deep from within the pit of my stomach.

I struggled to defeat this archetypal character from the depths of my subconscious and eventually contacted my spiritual guides for help. I relied on all my strength of faith that some deity would help me through this nightmare of nightmares. Time was suspended. The end of this ferocious battle finally came when a clear brilliant shaft of golden white light suddenly broke through and the blackness began to dissipate. I returned to a world of greenish hues, symbolizing the calming and
healing effects of this type of therapeutic cleansing. Alla's gentle reassuring voice gave credence to the fact that I did indeed do battle with my illness.

We decided to verify the experiment with an electrocardiogram to see if indeed we had progressed. A very small triangular indentation now appeared on this pink piece of paper clearly showing that we had altered the previous electrocardiogram. The progress may be considered insignificant by most doctors, but the fact is that we did at least make progress through the modality of this healing process. Although Alla denies any association with the true nature of shamanism, the healing process was remarkably similar.

The shaman is able to produce a healing vibration in the patient's body ... causing them to vibrate in resonance with themselves. By transferring vibrational energy from the patient to the shaman, the patient would heal (Wolf, 1991, p. 174).

Wolf further explains this vibrational process through his association with Candace Lienhart, a full fledged American Shamanka. "Organs in the body vibrate. Every organ runs at a different frequency and every body runs at a different rate of speed at different times. I use my hand as a receptor to perceive. My brain is an observer. As I move through the density of the body, any disturbance or any density that is dragging, I see as an interference" (Ibid., p. 158). "Just as it takes a courageous leap of faith into the unknown to heal oneself ... the awesome power
of the mind to rule over life, death and disease gives added responsibility for selecting the focus of our thoughts" (Bend, Wigner, 1987, p. 191). Within the cosmology of alternate healing the possibility for progress does at least exist.

**Shamanism**

I first met Steve LaForm, the Ojibway shaman, at his home in a suburb of Toronto. Upon my arrival I thought of Doug Boyd at his first meeting with Rolling Thunder and "perhaps I too expected a spectacular character in glorious feathers and beads" (Boyd, 1974, p. 3). Steve greeted me with an affectionate smile and a very hearty handshake and I was bemused at his curly locks of hair which reminded me of the American actor Gene Wilder. The rest of his dress was quite ordinary.

We sat in the study next to the fireplace and talked about how interesting it was that his father is presently living very close to the Mississauga Golf Club and that this was the ancestral home of the Six Nations Reserve that allowed the southern Ojibway tribes to camp on their grounds. He further explained to me that "collectively the Ojibway are also widely known as the Chippewa, from the name given to the southwestern bands in government treaties" (Brim, 1983, p. 57).
His address became an item of conversation in that Holegate, the name of his street, was similar to how Steve ventures into his *dream time*. He passes through a hole in a gate or tunnel into the world of an altered state of consciousness where he meets with his feminine spirit guide. Serendipitous - perhaps.

Suddenly embarrassed, I forgot the most essential element when visiting any shaman and that was to bring the sacred gift of tobacco. "Tobacco is the sacrament to the forces of the universe" (Sun Bear, Waban and Weinstock, 1983, p. 211). I apologized profusely. Steve graciously accepted and said "next time". His gentle manner involved a strong feeling of confidence within me and I felt his desire to cooperate with me reassuring.

Steve's father is an Ojibway and his mother is a devout Catholic. It was this dichotomy of opposing beliefs that produced a schism in Steve’s earlier years. He has now reconciled the Ojibway mythology which attributes creation of the first people, *Anish-inaubag*, to Manitou, the Divine Spirit, whilst embracing the Christ Consciousness of his mother’s teachings. I hesitated in suggesting that perhaps it was this dualism that so often provides the uninitiated with the mistaken belief that shamans are schizophrenic and suffer from severe psychosis. Steve elucidated that his initiation process had indeed been traumatic and that he was presently not suffering from any psychosis. "We are beginning to see that not only
is psychosis the outcome of a failure of the ego to deal with the unconscious, but also a state of potentialities greater than those of the normal states" (Naranjo, Ornstein, 1972, p. 111).

The stereotypical notion of a shaman being a witch doctor was also discussed.

... that Native medicine is comprised only of strange looking, sorcerers dressed in feathers and hides, shaking rattles, making remedies out of snake's tongues, frogs legs and other exotic ingredients that either kill or cure the poor ignorant patient. Others have taught that Indian medicine is "the work of the devil": evil, undermining and dangerous to all the civilization that the white man has built. Medicine men have been painted as heartless savages bound upon a course of human sacrifices, and as ignorant heathens who pray to the rocks and the trees. People of vision are often portrayed as dangerous lunatics (Sun Bear, 1983, p. 25).

The books of Carlos Castaneda, regardless of the questions that have been raised regarding their degree of fictionalization, have performed the valuable service of introducing many Westerners to the adventure and excitement of shamanism and to some of the legitimate principles involved .... Castaneda does not emphasize healing in his books although this generally is one of the most important tasks of shamanism (Harner, 1980, p. xvii).

Steve informed me that he did not follow the way of the warrior which emphasizes danger, hyper-alertness and harsh self-discipline but the way of an adventurer. The way of the adventurer, with its emphasis on hyper awareness and goal-oriented self-discipline, is intent on developing enjoyment and creating peace.

Steve insisted that what distinguishes the shaman from priest, medicine man,
prophet, psychic is his ability to transport himself to other worlds. "A shaman is a man or woman who is able, at will, to enter into a non-ordinary state of consciousness in order to make contact with the spirit world on behalf of members of his or her community" (Capra, 1988, 167). "Ideas such as the journey to the underworld, ascent to heaven, death and resurrection are not mere ideas in shamanism but actual experiences that are renewed generation after generation" (Naranjo, Ornstein, 1972, p. 96).

Steve discussed his ability to alter his ordinary state of consciousness by going into what Michael Harner calls Shamanic State of Consciousness. He achieved this latter state by beating on his drum, smoking his pipe and meditating. Transcending present day reality quickly led him into the dreamlike state where he would meet his female other self. She would guide him to their familiar place by a lake where he would sit cross legged beside the fire, patiently awaiting other spirit guides to help him answer his questions. It became evident to me that shamanism is not something that simply happens to you but is a process that begins with a journey. Steve stated that the process is akin to a vision quest "an ancient rite of dying passing through and being reborn" (Sun Bear, Wabun and Weinstock, 1983, p. xv). If you can 'pass through' your difficulties you will find yourself on the other side, enlarged and renewed, with direction and purpose.
I asked how I could pass through my hardships and perfect my ability to becoming more receptive. Steve suggested that I contact my own power animal. Apparently I was to dream the power animal and ask for his guidance. Manifestations of a pure animal nature could indeed occur in the form of eagles, bears and wolves. Once again I thought of Castaneda engaging in conversation with a coyote on his journey to become a shaman. "Among the Javoro [Javoro Indians of Ecuadorian Andes] in fact, if an animal speaks to you, it is considered evidence that the animal is your guardian spirit" (Harner, 1980, p. 59). Harner gives further evidence that the guardian spirit is sometimes referred to by native North Americans as the power animal as among the Coast Salish and the Okanagan of Washington. "The belief by shamans that they can metamorphosize into the form of their guardian animal spirit or power animal is widespread and obviously ancient" (Ibid.). Overwhelmed and dying to ask a thousand more questions I wondered what form my power animal would manifest itself in my future dreams. I left with a sense of wonderment.

**Divining - The Visitation**

The month lapsed and I continued to assimilate and integrate my extraordinary experiences. Amidst the mortar, brick and concrete temples of modern suburbia I had encountered two powerful people, a high priestess (a shamanka) capable of magical healing and a shaman capable of underworld sojourns, changing into
animals and astral projection. Intuitively I sensed the need to revisit Alla. One night after several meetings with Alla, I had this horrific nightmare which threw me into a state of sheer panic and fear. A black animal with human characteristics much like the gargoyles on ancient church buildings, thrust itself upon me and pulled the bed sheets over my face. I was suffocating -- the fear was overpowering -- I was totally paralyzed. My heart raced and I cried out into the stillness of the night with a shrill cry for help. At this point I simultaneously rolled over and seized control of my limp body. I awoke instantly. Sweating and visibly shaken I made myself a cup of herbal tea - Motherwort that Alla had suggested for strengthening and soothing the heart and nerves.

Later that morning a frantic telephone call to Steve confirmed my suspicions that I was indeed visited by an unwanted spirit. We discussed the symbolic imagery of the animal representing the darkest side of my psyche. That portion of me that I refused to accept. I was confused and was unable to attach any specific reference to what it was that I was denying.

Jung referred to the division between the masculine and feminine sides of a person's nature as the split between the persona and the shadow. The shadow was always the opposite sex of the person. When a man is in denial of his feminine shadow (his anima) he is in serious trouble. And similarly for a woman in denial of her masculine shadow (her animus animals) (Wolf, 1991, p. 141).
Perhaps Alla had shifted something deep within my psyche.

Sometimes this means opening up parts of ourselves that have been hidden away for decades, or even for a lifetime. And when this shift occurs, when we are able to reclaim parts of ourselves that have been disowned, reviled or feared, we may discover that we come to meet the divine more fully too (Anderson, Hopkins, 1991, p. 91).

Steve had suggested that many times these negative animal visitations are deeply rooted archetypal symbols and the shedding of light on the symbol would bring it out into the open thereby demystifying its power.

I felt a sense of anguish that I was just a contemporary pilgrim devoid of any magical skills. "The contemporary pilgrim is a person separated from the life-infusing myths that supported tribal man" (Kopp, 1988, p. 21). "Jung believed that the archetypes of mythic reality lay in the collective unconscious. Each of us had the memories of all of us, only they were categorized in terms of these archetypes" (Wolf, 1991, p. 228). "The shaman or ecstatics go on an inner journey and have encounters with their tribal ancestors or mythical archetypes, ....." (Drury, 1978, p. 69). I sensed the danger in even attempting to delve into this lower realm as I lacked all of the traditional shamanic training.

All shamans have the ability to use sound and vibration in apparently magical ways to alter consciousness. ... All shamans have teachers who were shamans. They all know the power of sacred places and plants I later discovered that there is a connection between sacred
places, plants, and where shamans appear in the world. ... They all have healing power that is based on some form of vibrational energy. They are all able to enter into a trance state and, somehow, visit other, possibly parallel, worlds. They can, in a way that seemed inexplicable to me when I began my journey, change their bodily forms when they enter parallel worlds. They also see into time, either the past or the future, of individuals or of the tribe. Often, in the past, they would be used in helping the tribe find new food sources or new places where they could live, if they were a migratory tribe. They are generally visionary. I also found out that shamans were probably born with these outstanding abilities. They also had to go through a near-death experience in order to develop them. They were able to access that realm at will. Finally, shamans are able to alter their consciousness to see into other worlds and to heal people (Ibid., p. 20).

Skills of this magnitude require years of enlightenment. Alla quickly balanced the negative energy that she felt around me and I was indeed baptized back into the physical world.

The Visitation

I had just finished reading about the art of divination, and I was extremely curious and doubtful as to the apparent claims of this ancient process. Dowsing or divining is the process of using a metal rod to divine the presence of water or minerals. The diviner uses his ability to tap into the unknown or future by using his intuition. Dowsing is therefore a way of knowing or a different way of perceiving reality. The dowser is not limited to divining just water or minerals but can dowse for any solution to a myriad of problems - the only limitation seems to
be the dowser's imagination. The creative visualization technique that I used quickly put me into a very mild state of altered consciousness. I noticed that this particular visitation session was intense to say the least and not unlike hypnosis. Not being trained in the process of divining, I decided to attempt the art of dowsing through the use of creative visualization. I closed my eyes and slowly altered my breathing whilst I concentrated on relaxing various parts of my body.

Suddenly before my eyes was an Indian Chief, resplendent in full ceremonial headdress and native costume. The apparition lingered and became clearer in my consciousness. He spoke telepathically to me instructing me to be more truthful with respect to my own nature. I was assured that all my problems would indeed resolve themselves and that I was loved beyond measure. Perhaps I had overextended my ability to relax and inadvertently summoned the Kundalini forces opening one of the Chakras just a bit too much. "...in activating the Kundalini energies of the Middle Pillar he may precipitate subconscious imagery of such force and impact as to leave his psyche in shreds" (Drury, 1978, p. 128). My psyche was not exactly in shreds but I felt elated at the prospect of actually experiencing a spirit from another dimension. Was I indeed dreaming?
Tale of Coincidence

My need to converse with Steve was frantic. A meeting was hastily arranged and this time I remembered to bring the sacred tobacco. Unable to contain myself, I blurted out my encounter with the Indian Chieftain as if I had undergone some deeply mystical experience. I forgot that I was talking to a shaman who was capable of travelling in parallel worlds. Patiently Steve listened to me, then he slowly and methodically stated that between the hours of 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. that afternoon, the exact day and hour that I had been dowsing he was drumming, smoking his pipe and went into his dreamtime space. I sat in awe and was visibly shaken. My mind catapulted between reality and fantasy - the rational side insisting that this was an overactive imagination or at best a hallucination. Intuitively I knew that the experience was authentic. "... we need to get away from beliefs and into knowing. Beliefs come from others, but knowing comes from the Self" (Bend, Wiger, 1987, p. 204). "There was the masculine logical, rational, conquering intellect which dealt with thinking and sensations, then there was the feminine, mystical spiritual, yielding consciousness which dealt with the intuition and feeling" (Wolf, 1991, p. 199).

Steve assured me that the Indian Chieftain came to him in "dreamtime" and was sent to visit me at precisely that chosen time. Synchronistically it was meant to be. I had forgotten that I had asked Steve at our previous meeting if he would be
kind enough to do a healing for me. True to form the healing was in the form of a visitation and its intended message. The message was that I was to accept responsibility for my own actions and that I was not to view past life or past events in the form of blame. Blaming myself would only lead to a world of guilt and sickness. The vibration of blame would send stormy messages throughout the body resulting in serious "dis-ease". Simplistic as it may sound it was highly prophetic in its relationship to my personal pilgrimage. I was deeply moved by this profound experience. A sense of joy filled my being and I felt as if I had experienced a satori: that was both sacred and illuminating. Perhaps this overwhelmingly authoritative 'peak experience' was mystical after all. We parted company with me clutching some audio tapes of Gabriel Roth's Indian drumming music and the notion that I should start my own vision quest.

**The Tapes**

Christmas Eve, with a light snow falling and a roaring fire, I decided to listen to the tape called *Totem* by Gabrielle Roth. The Walkman secured, I settled down to what I thought would be interesting but monotonous drumming rhythms similar to those used in shamanistic rites. Shamans use these methods to induce their trance-like states.

The repetitive sound of the drum is usually fundamental to undertaking shamanic tasks in the Shamanic State of Consciousness. With good reason Siberian and other shamans
sometimes refer to their drums as the "house" or "canoe" that transports them into the Lower World or Upper World. The steady monotonous beat of the drum acts like a carrier wave first to help the shaman enter the SSC, and then to sustain him on his journey (Harner, 1980, p. 51).

I was immediately catapulted into a world of illusions and images. Deeper and deeper I allowed myself to be drawn into the constant melodic rhythm of the drums, all the while allowing the incantations to gently bathe and massage my brain. A kaleidoscope of brilliant colours changed, and moved in and out of my visual periphery. My excitement increased as the experience became more acute. I felt as if I was in some initiatory process. Suddenly a horrific image appeared. I became powerless to stop the cascading images of black beatles and roaches that now took precedence over my consciousness. Struggling to escape, I was overwhelmed by the intensity of the experience. My body was now taking on a painful twisted musculature that was to hold me in its spell for a least half an hour. All reality vanished as I became one with this Kafkaesque nightmare. The pain increased in my hands and face which was now twisted all out of shape. Spasms of energy shot through my body as I writhed and twisted on the couch. Falling into a pit and being completely covered by black crawling beetles was the ultimate in fear. Longing for some form of escape, my salvation came in the form of a giant eagle. My brain reeled with confusion and at the same time a profound sense of relief as I rode on the back of this magnificent creature. The sights and sounds
of the horrible images receded into the distant past as I was swept into a golden white light far into the heavens.

*Metaphor*

The events of the past few weeks completely unsettled me. I knew from my readings that to tamper with the Kundalini forces could lead to madness. I was deeply afraid of insanity. My mind and body were now in an apprehensive state of anxiety. I felt vulnerable and paranoic as if I was now open to all forms of demonic possession. I remembered what Steve had previously stated and I decided to infuse the experience with the healing light of self-analysis. It became evident to me that falling into the inferno of black insects was symbolic of my own death -- the beatles being a metaphor for my own fears and that submission was the rebirth or resurrection. Surrendering to its reality without judgement became my salvation. The shibboleth that you have to *lose yourself before you find yourself* was now obvious and you must *die to be reborn*. These archetypal images of the black beetles were produced from my own cultural belief systems and were responsible for my ultimate redemption.

Castaneda found himself experiencing Mexican archetypes since these were associated with the cultural modes of thought which he was learning from his mentor and that we have been brought up in the Western Intellectual Traditional that this is a product of the thoughts (and archetypes) of ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, Scandinavia and Central Europe. These are the origins of our
culture. The gods and demons associated with these origins and thought processes are deeply embedded in the minds of all of us (Drury, 1978, p. 5).

Sleep was not forthcoming; I tossed and turned all night long.

**Alla Revisited**

Alla started to perform her balancing and healing later that day but to my surprise she informed me that something was dreadfully wrong. I had mentioned nothing to her other than I had had a sleepless night. Her hands were picking up stinging needles - shooting out of my body and into her flesh. It was extremely difficult to move her hands around my body. She struggled in vain. During the process of trying to re-balance my negative energy I became increasingly annoyed and angry. I felt extremely violent and a profusion of black and maroon shapes and colours now dominated the inner realms of my consciousness. The pain of this negativity was now overwhelming and I was afraid of losing control to this violent side of my personality. I began to fear for Alla and myself especially if I became out of control. I feared that I was going mad. As the anger became more and more directed I remembered my previous experience of trusting and letting go to a higher spiritual power. I made a conscious decision to fight this ground swell of hostility and anger by forcing myself to find a way through this nightmare. Instantly my faith in the process of surrender was rewarded and I was filled with a calming
sense of rebirth. A brilliant golden white light burst onto my consciousness and I suddenly realized that I was now riding high and secure on the back of this magnificent giant eagle. We floated upwards towards a brilliant sky and a feeling of warmth and rejuvenation filled me to capacity.

Alla and I discussed the negativity that she had experienced and we both were relieved that this was now behind us. She was surprised to hear about my negative insect trip and actually scolded me for doing two different forms of therapy at the same time. It was not wise to go through a shamanic experience while dowsing and shifting the energy with her bio-energy method. Three visits later the energy within my body was completely balanced. I felt integrated, calm and grounded.

**Conclusion**

"One must find the source of one's own self" (Kopp, 1988, p. 55) in order to do battle with your own personal demons. That source turned out to be the resolve to have the courage to trust in the process of the pilgrimage. Clearly, I now understood that all things are interconnected and by moving past the limited narrowness of my perceptions I was able to relate to the Great Spirit in everything, especially my own healing process.
Although Steve did not follow the ritualistic shamanic method of sucking out an evil spirit which may be the cause of my dis-ease nor did he scream and howl earth-shattering incantations, he was able to move from physical consciousness to a spiritual state and seek the advice of greater beings. There was no competition between Alla’s method nor Steve’s method, for ultimately, the experiential healing process was my own personal pilgrimage. “Healing is the goal and effectiveness is the criteria, not the proving of a particular system or method” (Kahili King, 1990, p. 78).

The burgeoning field of holistic medicine shows a tremendous amount of experimentation involving the re-invention of many techniques long practiced in shamanism, such as visualization, altered states of consciousness ... and mental and emotional expression of personal will for health and healing (Harner, 1980, p. 136).

My personal commitment was therefore in the form of what Rolling Thunder states as "involvement is the key to understanding" (Boyd, 1974, p. 93). Involvement in the form of surrender to a higher power during many of these involuntary unique experiences did indeed produce the knowledge that surviving and healing from within is possible. "The only important question you must ask is: Does the path have a heart" (Kopp, 1972, p. 187)? Accordingly the path did have involvement and heart - my own. Curiously the path started out in search for a healthier heart
and ended up being the heart of the heart. The pilgrimage itself turned out to be its own reward, regardless of the outcome. Steve LaForm, Ojibway shaman, left me with these words: "Next time we will smoke the long pipe."
THE VIEWER OBSERVED

Fred Allen Wolf (1991) in his book *The Eagle's Quest* states that in order for us to rekindle our lost senses to believe in parallel realities and that they do indeed exist, we need to change how we see and think about ourselves and our present reality. "Change the *how* of it and you change the *what* of it. Accordingly it is precisely how we observe that creates the reality we perceive" (p. 194).

The observer effect in quantum physics states that "the choice of an observer to measure a particular physical property actually creates it or brings the state of the property into existence merely by observing it" (*Ibid.*, p. 47). "What you perceive not only affects yourself, it affects the object of your perception. Both you and it are affected by the action of perception - by what you believe is *out there* (*Ibid.*).

There must have been a paradigm shift in my consciousness, which enabled me to perceive the vision of this Indian Chieftain. Steve was able to manifest his desire for me by observing the visitation in his *dreamtime* space thereby actually producing the desired effect. Astounded by the prospect that this was possible without the use of any mind altering substances, I came to the conclusion that I was able to receive this Indian guide as a result of my willingness to believe in parallel worlds.
This visitation changed my perception of reality thereby changing the reality that I was in, "thus the reality is altered by your altered perception of it" (*Ibid.*).

Momentarily, I was suspended in a parallel world - a different dimension where time stood still.
WAYS OF SEEING

To achieve this sense of knowing and experiencing other parallel worlds involves the intuition of different ways of seeing. According to the observer effect my observation of the apparition not only changed me but presumably the Indian Chieftain also. Exactly how I am not yet sure. "Imprisoned in the narrowness of our human scale, we are blind to the vast reaches of reality. Mysteries be all around us even within us, waiting to be revealed by a new way of seeing" (Naranjo, Ornstein, 1971, p. 208). Perhaps I was indeed cut off from the reality of other worlds and that the old shibboleth when the student is ready a teacher will appear was indeed true.

Up, quick if you can it's long past time to do. You've stayed so long you've lost yourself and now exist cut off from all that is around you, from all of you that's human, you're civilized beyond your senses: out of touch, narcotized, mechanized. Westernized, with bleached out eyes that yearn for natural light. The intellects turn tyrant on us all and make our daily lives neatly laid-out, over-intellectualized, over-technological exercises in sinister lunacy ... We are severed from ourselves and alien to our sensibilities, fragmented, specialized, dissected, pigeon-holed into smothering (ibid.).

"Author and theologian Carol Christ has observed that stories shape experience, and experience shapes stories" (Anderson, Hopkins, 1991, p. 7). My North American experiences have helped to shape my stories as I am a direct reflection of my own culture. This acculturation was responsible for the visitation of a male Chieftain and the fact that I had just visited an authentic male Ojibway shaman.
There are many states of consciousness: the unusual; the altered; the mystical and the ordinary state of mind. In order to discuss these non-ordinary states, we need a new definition of consciousness, what Fijof Capra calls "a true science of consciousness ... dealing with qualities rather than quantities and being based on shared experience rather than veritable measurement" (Capra, 1991, p. 7). R. D. Laing in Capra's book goes on to state that we also need a new language. Conventional scientific language is descriptive whereas language to share experience needs to be depictive" (Ibid., p. 139). This depictive language would be "akin to poetry or even to music which would depict an experience directly, conveying somehow its qualitative character" (Ibid.).

The quality of my own personal Indian apparition was akin to that of mysticism which regards "consciousness as the primary reality, as the essence of the universe, .... all forms of matter and all living things" (Capra, 1988, p. 135). It is based "on the experience of reality in non-ordinary modes of awareness and such mystical experience .... is indescribable" (Ibid.). My direct involvement with this experience from an ontological perspective (ontology meaning the logos of existence) was indeed very real. I was totally awash in the symbolic baptism of the moment. "The more potent the symbol, the more total the involvement of self" (Abner Cohaen in Polisini-Kase, 1985, p. 50). Stanislav Grof's (1988) description of this potent metaphysical experience was for me:
... based on the concept of a Universal Mind or Cosmic Consciousness which is the creative force behind the cosmic design. All the phenomena we experience are understood as experiments in consciousness performed by the Universal Mind in an infinitely ingenious creative play. The problems and baffling paradoxes associated with human existence are seen as intricately contrived deceptions invented by the Universal Mind and built into the cosmic game; and the ultimate meaning of human existence is to experience fully all the states of mind associated with this fascinating adventure in consciousness; to be an intelligent actor and playmate in the cosmic game. In this framework, consciousness is not something that can be derived from or explained in terms of something else. It is a primal fact of existence out of which everything else arises (Capra, p. 143).
CONCLUSION

For me the validation of the experience was in the knowing that I had shared a sacred moment with a spirit guide capable of transcending different realities. Richard Courtney says "it is what existentialists have called felt knowledge but more accurately, it has been called intuitive knowledge and personal knowledge" (Courtney in Kase-Polisini, 1985, p. 43).

"We all have to learn how to chart the inner and the outer cycles of our lives" (Hopkins, Anderson, 1991, p. 198) Perhaps it was now time for me to delve more deeply into that felt or intuitive cycle of my life with regard to my own personal belief structure. The knowledge that parallel worlds do indeed exist and that visitations are not that uncommon validates my felt or intuitive nature. Charting my inner and outer cycles as a way of seeing would indeed provide me with the tools and the opportunity to explore my existing reality with an attitude of a neophyte who is about to embark on a pilgrimage of discovery. Next time I am visited by an Indian Chieftain might well be an Indian Goddess whose name will be "Shekhinah: The Feminine Face of God" (Ibid., p. 2).
IN RETROSPECT

The apparition was a truly an aesthetic experience as Webster's dictionary defines aesthetic as rudimentary sensations - relating to the beautiful as distinguished from the merely pleasing - in valuing pure feeling or sensation especially in contrast to RATIOCINATION [the intellect works cold and aloof in dry light].

John Dewey (1979) in Art as Experience defines aesthetic as "appreciative, perceiving and enjoying" (p. 47) and further states that "there is an element of passion in all aesthetic experience" (Ibid., p. 49). From my perspective, the total Gestalt of the moment was filled with passion and enjoyment as I allowed myself to flow with the experience. As Dewey would say "that was an experience ... an enduring memorial ... complete in itself" (Ibid., p. 36).

The aesthetic as defined by Mathew Arnold "is pure and flawless in workmanship" (Ibid.). The vision was indeed flawless in workmanship as I became increasingly aware of the quality of the experience. The beaded ceremonial dress and flowing feathers in the head set were brilliant in their authenticity to colouration and detail. The very presence of the total image was overwhelming. A luminous glow encapsulated his presence and gave the spectacle a truly mystical quality.
NO REASON NOT TO DANCE THE DANCE AWAKE

In the process of achieving a more authenticated selfhood through a DanceAttitude perspective I have taken the reader on an idiosyncratic journey into the world of individuation as a result of synchronistic events. People and places were validated by my own personal experiences and were chosen by a source higher than myself. Essentially this thesis strived for authenticity through the narrative parameter of personal experience but at the same time a theoretic process was offered on how to achieve a DanceAttitude perspective. This was, of course, part of the mandate that this thesis be scholarly. Therefore by expanding my own consciousness it allowed me to see situations and problems from a different perspective.

As previously stated in my abstract, as individuals in the theatre of life we become spontaneous dancers choreographing our lives into a living art form. It is through this mandala of creative choreography that we are allowed to become aware of our childlike nature transforming each moment of our lives into a sacred dance of awareness. At the very core of this transformation is the metamorphosis of shedding this veil of separation (habitual behavioural patterns) which empowers us towards greater authenticity. We no longer need to dance the dance in the dark, and the willingness of the individual to explore the dance will, indeed, be involved in the finding.
Metaphorically the *DanceAttitude* perspective empowers the individual teacher to choreograph his/her reality of daily living into an art form that frees the individual from "the inertia of sleepwalking into the ecstasy of being in the spirit of each moment" (Roth, 1989, p. 3). It is in this spirit of the moment that the teacher is able to empower his/her own self by shedding the mask of inhibition and to be a "creative costumed player" choreographing his/her own dance. The process allows you to become real in the moment.

I met Gabrielle Roth at her dance workshop in Toronto and she gave me this advice. "Michael, dance your dance awake". In order for teachers to dance their dance awake, I refer to Nachmanovitch (1990) on what the Buddhists call Samadhi. It is in this effortless state of absorbed, selfless, absolute concentration that one achieves a *DanceAttitude* perspective. There are many forms of Samadhi such as a walking samadhi; a cooking samadhi, etc., so why not a teaching samadhi: whereby the limiting boundaries of the ego are dissolved and we become expanded individuals actively engaged in the moment to moment reality of teaching. The Sufis call this state fana - in fana, the characteristics of the little self dissolve so that the big self can show through.

Because of this transpersonal grounding, artists (and teachers - my insertion) ... are able to speak personally to each one of us (our students - my insertion) across
considerable gaps of time, space and culture" (Nachmanovitch, 1990, p. 52). The big self here refers to the potential of tapping into the human realization that as teachers the process is indeed one of beauty and expanded consciousness. "It is not until you have the courage to engage in human relationships that you grow" (Zukav, 1989, p. 248). In order to grow as teachers we need to become empowered.

Martin Buber's (1970) work on I/It and I/Thou relationship of the person and his environment closely parallels my DanceAttitude premise. In the I/It relationship the emphasis is on subject/object interaction whereby everything in the environment can be viewed with this object perspective. According to Martin Buber, the object of the environment, including people, become dehumanizing and the "otherness" becomes categorized, analytical and empirical.

More importantly, Martin Buber's I/Thou relationship is more directly related to the individual receiving a new direct frame of reference from this otherness in the environment thereby creating new perspectives. As teachers we should shun the dehumanizing analytical nature of teaching and empower ourselves toward greater authenticity.

Buber called this I/It a crisis of humanity .... in that most of us never achieve this I/Thou mode; rather we tend to be fixed in the
subject/object mode of meeting other people, meeting our world in a way which categorizes it and hence ourselves, as merely other (William Barnard as quoted in Darroch and Silvers, 1982, p. 33).

Barnard further states that if one is able to reach out and dialogue (Buber style) with the objects in the environment including humans, then the "otherness" becomes the vehicle whereby we enter into that mode of relationship and are then able to place this "otherness" experience within our new expanded consciousness. This is exactly the DanceAttitude premise. By adopting the perspective of a DanceAttitude you enter into a dialogue with the experience and then respond to it, becoming the experience itself and responding to the experience in a new fashion enabling you now to expand your own individual horizon through direct meaning.

Zukav (1989) states that "the journey to authentic power requires that you become conscious of all that you feel" (p. 243). "Give yourself permission to choose the most positive behaviour in each moment" (Ibid., p. 248). This means allowing yourself to be fully realized in the moment. "Keep your power in the now, in present time. Keep your power just in the day that you are living on Earth, and not on how to manoeuvre tomorrow" (Ibid., p. 242). For Zukav then, the empowerment for teachers lies in ".... your personal sphere of influence. Here your decisions .... are most effective and are felt directly" (Ibid., p. 111) by your students.
This "sphere of influence" must include your orientation towards becoming more compassionate and noble with your students.

You cannot become compassionate
With yourself without becoming
Compassionate with others, or
With others becoming compassionate
With yourself.
When you are compassionate
With yourself and others,
Your world becomes compassionate
You draw to yourself other
Souls of like frequency, and
With them you create, through
Your interactions a compassionate world
(\textit{Ibid.}, p. 128).

What noble aspirations, are easily achieved through a paradigm shift in attitude.

You not only see the divine in each of your students but you see their strengths and nobility because as you begin to see their virtues you begin to see them in yourself which is the basis of a \textit{DanceAttitude} perspective.

By confronting the divisions in ourselves we create a new framework: a framework of healing that involves the wholeness of our psyches. Therefore as Connelly (1990) and Clandinin (1990) have stated the teacher's own personal narratives are ..."metaphors for teaching - learning relationships. In understanding ourselves and our students educationally, we need an understanding of people with a narrative life experiences" (p. 3). These narratives of lived experiences is exactly what
Miller (1988) refers to as wholeness. ..."the teacher is aware that his or her own consciousness is connected and has an effect on the students' consciousness" (p. 26).

The sharing of these lived experiences with your students produces what (Rogers, 1961) calls congruency, genuiness or realness. Rogers ..."argues that teachers should be congruent if the students' growth is to occur. Thus, teachers should be real or genuine in their communications with students" (p. 135) as cited in Miller. (1988). Miller (1988) further states that "teachers should not be rigid role models, but instead engage in self-examination with regard to their own values and behaviour" (p. 136).

Holistically, then, for Miller, is the idea that teachers should be in touch with their own centres. "A teacher who is holistically authentic realizes there is a link between one's consciousness or inner life and other beings" (Ibid.). *DanceAttitude* processing will help to bridge the gap between teacher and student enabling the teacher to care more about his/her student.

In summation then, the process of teachers becoming more aware of their lived experiences as rich sources of personal data enabling them to shift their perspectives from a goal orientation towards a process orientation through a
DanceAttitude will, in the words of Miller (1988) "we can try to foster the spiritual growth of the student by working on ourselves as teachers to become more conscious and caring. By working on ourselves, we hope to foster in our students a deep sense of connectedness within themselves and to other beings on this planet" (p. 139).

I am reminded of a passage from Robert Fulghum's (1988) book "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten". Robert Fulghum is indeed a story teller par excellence. He uses his imagination to rearrange his experience into personal anecdotes that ultimately reveal the truth as it relates to the human condition.

Fulghum draws attention to "Emile Locard's Exchange Principal." In Principal it says that any person passing through a room will unknowingly deposit something there and take something away. Fulghum's Exchange Principal relates directly to that of life itself. "Most of this 'something' cannot be seen or heard or numbered. It does not show up in a census" (ibid., p. 117). This 'something' is what we as teachers initiate on a daily basis with our students - the love of learning, seeking the truth, sharing in a genuine, compassionate interchange, empathizing and most of all, communicating.
I thank you for your indulgence as an active participant in my DanceAttitude process. Therefore the journey ..."is the life long quest - not a vision quest, for vision is all around us - but our quest to learn to speak with our own voice" (Nachmanovitch, 1990, p. 4). I trust that you have gained some meaningful insights and that you too can dance your dream awake.

We have much to do together. 
Let us do it in wisdom, love and joy
Let us make this the human experience
(Zukav, 1989, p. 15).
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