"more than brush strokes"

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Within the context of an experiential course in the expressive arts for personal growth and transformation, adults explore the connection between the creative process and the unfolding of inner knowing. Through engaging in a series of intermodal expressive arts projects, the participants in this study explore creating symbols for the life of feeling, creating ways in which the inner life may be made knowable. To connect through creativity to this inner world of knowing, opens up possibilities for ways of being in the world.

The creative process itself involves a form of meditation in action, a mindful awareness of movement and gesture centred in present action; one in which the artist experiences a fusion into a feeling of wholeness, where material and oneself are no longer felt to be separate, nor is feeling and action, thought and sensation.

The deepest meaning of these encounters can be found in the fuller understanding of the two ways of knowing: the kind that separates the knower from the known, the seer from the seen and the kind that does not. This knowledge provides implications for both self-knowledge and educational practice.
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Introduction

No one can see who does not kindle a light of his own.

Buddha
Introduction

In writing this doctoral thesis, I am experiencing both an ending or culmination of what I have been moving towards, and new beginnings, in how I am interpreting and applying what has been significant for me in this process.

To borrow from the 'I Ching', this period can be compared to a 'lengthy trek up a mountain'. At some point before its peak, I will see, in detail, exactly how much farther I must travel and what is needed to reach the summit, with the help of my advisors, and because of my experience in the climb so far. Part of me anxiously strives to complete this journey; another part knows that when I reach the mountain's peak which has been in my sights for many long days, I will have done just that. To descend the other side will require a different kind of information and experience. The idea of the rebirth of creative power is key to this understanding. The journey to the peak ends with a new beginning. This can be compared to the generative power of creation -- conception, a primal directive which propels us to our destinies. And so it is, we travel throughout our lives in cycles of ascending, reaching a peak,
followed by new beginnings. The one constant here is our creative power which we must constantly draw from to make these transitions in our lives.

Our creative power is exceptional, in terms of the generation of inspiration, energy and will. This creative potential, in all of us, inspires us to further define ourselves and embrace the significant resources deep within.

I invite you, the reader, to travel with us, my participants and myself, along our creative journey, exploring the insights, discoveries and surprises that we have experienced along the way. Perhaps, they will relate in some way to experiences in your own life.

In Part I, ‘Orientation’, I look at the awakening of the artistic and visually minded self. I discuss the actual power of art, and how through creative encounters, we seek to facilitate our own personal evolution by beginning to experience what we truly can be.

In Part II, ‘The Body-Mind’, I concentrate on centring, meditation and awareness, connecting these with the experience of wholeness often missing from our modern lives.

In Part III, I discuss ‘The Research Study’, which evolved from a course designed around a series of creative and expressive arts encounters,
serving to encourage introspection and a creative response to life. I describe
the narrative approach adopted for this particular study.

In Part IV, ‘Explorations’, (Individual Analysis and Results) I examine
through the experiences of my participants, in their creative encounters, how
art and life reflect and inform each other by shaping our perceptions and
understandings.

In Part V, ‘Findings’, (overall results) I summarize how the creative
process serves to access inner knowing based upon what has emerged for
all the participants involved.

In Part VI, ‘Implications’, I emphasize how personal meaning can be
enhanced, and learning facilitated through the process.

Finally, in Part VII, I conclude with my understanding of the importance
of self-knowledge and how creative, expressive encounters can be a path to
the full awakening of the personality.
Orientation

There is a vitality, a life force that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time this expression is unique. If you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost.

Martha Graham
Orientation

Almost all traditional art endeavours are focused on producing art. The product of the creative endeavour -- a painting, a dance, a poem, a performance -- is the final fruit of the creative experience. Creativity is equated with results and therefore subject to analysis, evaluation, explanation and superimposed meaning.

This thesis is about connecting to our creativity. It is about process, not product, in which the defining moment is when you face the fertile white void (as in painting) or step onto the empty womb of the stage (as in dance and drama), or sit in front of the blank page (as in writing) and so on. Our openness and courage to step into that void, blank page etc., are all that matter. The power of this experience lies in the creative process itself, and is not focused solely on the resulting product.

The basic premise of this thesis is that the creative process is the doorway into a direct experience with an essential life force which is at the root of all expression. This is the power of our spirit (Cane, 1983, 9) -- our inner nature. The process itself, by the creative energy it releases and the perceptions it brings, provides a deepening connection to our innermost
being. In essence, this is the heart of the desire to paint, to dance, to write, to sing, etc., and to make this the focus of the creative act is a simple but profound experience.

This thesis is the outcome of a lifetime of forays into various expressive, creative experiences. It has grown out of my own personal journey into the creative process as well as interactions with my students that overcame situations and discovered in themselves the richness and freedom of their own creativity.

In our classes, in the expressive arts, we create a space for everyone to move, to paint, to write, etc., spontaneously and allow whatever instinctively is pushing for expression to flow, without judging or criticizing. This inner experience of creativity is the touchstone for everything that happens. Once the atmosphere and groundwork are established, something deep within relaxes and the real life transforming work can begin (London, 1989).

This thesis is not meant to be used as a course in creativity but as a catalyst -- to arouse your curiosity, your desire to create and to illustrate how readily available your creative expression is. It is about unlearning some things and relearning others. It is also about how our inner nature pushes for
actualization (Maslow, 1968). It is my hope as the chapters unfold, you will
discover a growing excitement about painting, dancing, writing and other
expressive media and find the instinctual urge to play with colours,
movement, improvisation and symbols as you did as a child. Play is a basic
and primitive element of the human psyche (Nachmanovitch, 1990) and the
expressive arts are basically a form of play.

It is from this spontaneous toying and exploration
that there arises a hunch, the creative seeing of life
in a new and significant way.

(Carl Rogers, 1961, 355)

After working with many different temperaments, my experience has
been that below the surface lies a hidden wave of passion longing to be
liberated from the pronouncements of talent, accomplishment, success,
failure or simply not being good enough. This thesis is about daring to speak
from your passion and reclaiming what every child knows and is educated to
dismiss -- the essential right to create without shame or interference.
The Context

The process of discovering inner dimensions of ourselves through expressive, creative encounters can be described as a series of ever-widening experiences which are deeply felt and which transcend theoretical, intellectual knowledge. The importance of experiential knowledge lies in the fact that it transcends the kind of everyday knowledge and awareness that we operate in, in which the person remains in the attitude of the detached observer, taking himself/herself as the object of the investigation. He/she is not in touch with, except when thinking about it, the wider, deeper, reality of the experience within himself/herself. This type of experiential knowledge is found in Spinoza's highest form of knowing -- intuition; in Bergson's creative consciousness; or, in Maslow's being cognition (Fromm, 1960, 111). Each of these categories of intuition transcend subject-object split knowledge.

My task in this thesis is a journey into rediscovering how we connect to our inner resources and our intuitive nature through spontaneous creativity.

Ultimately, it is about reconnecting with the Self and the importance of self-knowledge. Grundin (1990) eloquently expresses this need to understand ourselves:
If philosophy has given us anything of lasting worth, it is the injunction to self-knowledge. The ancient Delphic command, ‘Know Thyself’ calls for us to seek an elusive dignity . . . for without self-knowledge, or at least the effort to attain it, we can exist as higher animals blind to our weaknesses and unguided by our strengths.

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It is written for anyone -- teachers, art students, therapists, people who think they can't draw a straight line but want to explore the joys of connecting with their own creative expression.

This study explores the unfolding of a deeper knowing, through the expressive arts, for the purpose of enriching well-being, personal growth and transformation.
Values And Assumptions of The Author

We all have an inherent ability to be creative. We were created and in turn are meant to create (Rollo May, 1976). Creativity comes in many forms, whether it consists of preparing and arranging a beautifully presented meal, designing or maintaining a garden, creating pottery, art or dance, writing a journal, even our signature is a very personalized form of our own creativity.

Creativity is an essential part of our being -- it reflects who we are as individuals and collectively as a people (Campbell, 1988). It is filled with the 'power of our spirit' (Cane, 1983, 9) -- that essential part of us that longs for actualization (Maslow, 1968).

By developing an awareness of how to connect into our own creative flow, we are able to gain insight into who we are at our core. In this process, we can restore a unity of spirit with ourselves, and our connection to all life, nature and the rhythms of the universe. Henri Bergson (1960, 49 - 61) calls this connection 'Élan Vital' -- 'Life Force' energy, “an immersion in the indivisible flow of consciousness, a grasp of pure becoming” (in Murphy, 1992, 187).
Human evolution is creative, not materialistic or mechanistic and a path of contact with the 'Creative Force' in the universe. As a philosophy for living, creative expression is the priority of spirit over matter, freedom over determinism, spontaneity over mechanism. This process begins in our belly (Suzuki, 1960), not our heads, emphasizing intuition, an awareness of the continuous flow of life and an integral experience toward a state of being. These concepts will be more fully developed in the following chapters of this study.

There is some evidence that great musical talent, artistic talent, mathematical talent, etc., are more inherited than acquired (Maslow, 1968, 145). However, I am directing myself to a more widespread kind of creativeness which is the universal heritage of every human being born. Maslow calls this a self-actualized kind of creativeness, one in which each person can become more spontaneous and expressive. To become more open to experience, less inhibited, a fully functioning person, as Carl Rogers (1961, 351) phrased it, are important benefits of developing the creative aspect of ourselves.
Process vs. Product

When we tap into our inner sources of spontaneous imagination, we are experiencing our own creative process at work. This is where true art in the widest sense comes from (Nachmanovitch, 1990). It is a kind of free play of awareness as we draw, write, paint or dance with the raw material that is emerging from within ourselves.

When we paint or dance etc. for process it is an experience of faith -- trusting in what comes from the creative act/gesture. The impetus here is to find an expression that is completely fulfilling in the moment and staying with this expressing. In this way, we respond to what we need, not to what we want. It is the act of moving and connecting with our own inner feeling, “from integrity rather than what you think should be done” (Cassou & Cubley, 1995, 5).

London (1989) describes this experience as a time of trusting hand and heart to find their way, allowing the mind to follow not lead the hand. The eyes become the passive observers of our hands' movement, as in painting, or the body's gesture as in dance, drama, improvisation. In this process, it is our body that monitors the rightness of gesture. We will know when our
expressive act is right or complete because our body will register a sense of well-being, naturalness, quiet strength (ibid., 17).

Painting for process, for example, from what you feel -- colours, shading, line, form, tone, gives us a radical feeling -- the courage to just be with what you feel without judgement. In this sense, there is no need to try to be original because you already are an original and you have your own voice.

Originality is a false issue; and so is technique . . . they are impediments only to those who stand outside of art. Inside the creative experience is quite different. Inside is inquiry, the expansion of emotional depth, the tuning of the spirit and the quest for meaning.

(London, 1989, 18)

This is quite a different focus than working toward making a product -- something we can hang on the wall, use, sell, something to prove our talent or worth. To produce this type of art, a product, requires developing certain skills/techniques to train the hand, the eye, the body which will require hours and hours of time and practice. In this enterprise, we must plan, calculate every move. This can be more of a mental activity rather than a spontaneous, intuitive approach. The great masters spent years perfecting their techniques. They sought new ways or principles of design in order to express what they
were feeling. However, the price was high in terms of how their lives unfolded. When we look at the experiences Van Gogh had to suffer, and Rembrandt and Mozart, Beethoven and so on... it seems great talent is not synonymous with healthy, happy lives (Maslow, 1968, 135). However, all of these artists struggled with questions we all face concerning how to best give form to a feeling. Trying to reproduce or copy their style will not answer our need to find our own creative insights.

Painting and dancing (and other expressive media) for process allows us the freedom to listen to the magic of our own inner voice. We have the opportunity to play, to experiment with new and novel approaches. Since the purpose in this activity is more about understanding our inner feelings and connecting to self-knowledge, we can allow ourselves the freedom to adventure into the mysterious, the hidden, the unknown.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this is to relate one student's experience, in this approach as well as one of my own.

The following is an example from a fine arts student: This student was feeling completely blocked while writing a major term paper. She was pondering how best to present a philosophical approach to the understanding of sacred plays from the sixteenth century. She sat for several days, four to
five hours at a time and was only able to manage two sentences. In
desperation she decided to explore the expressive arts to see if it would help
her writing.

She describes her process:

At first I tried to organize my philosophy by thinking and
writing but the words would not come out at all and I felt
blocked on many levels. I became so frustrated that I
decided not to continue in this vein, so with a sense of
desperation, I put pen and paper aside and turned instead
to music and dance movement. However, I noticed that
my body was not moving in a free and natural way. I
turned my awareness to how my body was holding this
problem. Why was I not able to move in my own natural
rhythms, I mused?. After staying with this sensing for a
time, thoughts began to emerge. And then it came to me,
my philosophy was quite different than the one presented
in class and I was trying to fit myself into a structure that
would not accommodate my own background and area of
understanding, in the fine arts. As I explored this insight, I
began to feel my body move with a greater sense of ease
and I understood what my approach to this writing must
be.

My dancing had bridged my thoughts and feelings
providing a vehicle for new inspiration and for addressing
the direction of my writing.
This is a vivid description of how the creative process can release frustration and bring forth thoughts and insights from the unconscious. As she moved her awareness to the area in her body that was holding this experience, she began to explore her own core beliefs in terms of how her body was responding to these thoughts. Not only did her thought processes clear, but she was able to define the direction she should take to address her philosophical concerns.

One of my own early experiences in a class setting involved using charcoal and drawing from whatever I was feeling at the moment. I remember standing back looking at the seemingly huge expanse of white in front of me and thinking, “Where am I going to start?”.

“Go with your feeling,” the teacher encouraged, as I stood there looking slightly dazed by it all. Everyone else had been diligently working for several minutes on their paper. This was my first attempt and it seemed a little daunting. “Do I have anything worthwhile to express?”, I wondered.

I decided to go from that place -- the place of this feeling of emptiness and self-criticism. I began to fill the paper with layers and layers of charcoal. “What’s in here?”, I thought, “I don’t know, but it feels good.” Presently, I
began to see certain lines forming in my movements across the page. I stepped closer and outlined these lines to see where they were leading.

A darkly veiled person began to unfold in front of me -- eyes, nose, mouth, head and shoulders -- gazed out at me from behind a flowing black veil. “The lady of the veil -- interesting,” I thought. There was something familiar about this woman, as she smiled out at me. She had a haunting quality about her that drew me in. I reflected on this image and what it represented for me. Intuitively, I understood that I had brought a part of myself into consciousness and my body responded by registering a feeling of well-being in my acknowledging this part of myself.

Jung (1964, 174) writes about the shadow side that all human beings share. This is a part of ourselves that we have learned, through socialization, language, culture etc. to reject, hide or project outward onto other people. However, it is ‘power filled’ and by embracing it and coming to know this part of ourselves more fully, we can bring new energy for our daily living (ibid.). To become conscious of what is unconscious and thus enlarge consciousness means to get in touch with a reality, and, in a sense, truth, intellectually and affectively, that is your own. Thus I learned, in a symbolic way, to enlarge consciousness, in my expressive encounter meant to open myself, to lift a
veil, to bring light into darkness. In this process, we look to integrate and become more fully what we can be.

Figure 1, on the following page, is a representation of my drawing, 'Lady of the Veil', the dark side.
Figure 1: Lady of the Veil
For centuries, women/men have been socialized to control their twofold nature -- their lower and their higher; their creature-likeness and their God-likeness. Most philosophies and religions have dichotomized them, teaching the way to become higher is to renounce and master the lower. The existentialists, however, teach that both are defining characteristics of human nature (Fromm, 1960).

Maslow (1968, 172) concurs with this assertion:

Neither can be repudiated; they can only be integrated . . . But we already know something of these integration techniques -- of insight, of intellect, in the broader sense of love, of creativeness, of humor and tragedy, of play of art. I suspect we will focus our studies more on these integrative techniques than we have in the past.
The Body-Mind

Our feelings and our bodies are like water flowing into water. We learn to swim within the energies of the senses.

Tarthang Tulku
What The Body Knows

As I write this thesis, it evokes in me an image of a ceremonial journey -- a journey into the unknown. It is with a feeling of expectancy and excitement that five adventurers (participants in this study) and I travel along the river of our creative 'flow'. Csikszentmihalyi (1993) describes the 'flow' experience as a heightened state of awareness that "makes us receptive to the entire world as a source of new challenges, and as an arena of creativity" (181).

The source of our creative nature is not unlike a river into which many streams and tributaries flow, forming a current of expression. Many of the river's sources may be below the surface, while others are clearly visible to the viewer. Our physical, external senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch contribute to only a portion of the river's sources of information. Other important knowing lies in our bodies' internal awareness (proprioception) -- the positions it takes temperature, balance, rhythms and more. All is recorded in the 'felt sense', an inner network that encompasses the clarity, instinctual power and fluidity necessary to help transform experience.
Eugene Gendlin (1978) coined the term, felt sense, and describes it as follows:

A felt sense is not a mental experience but a physical one. *Physical.* A bodily awareness of a situation or person or event. An internal aura that encompasses everything you feel and know about the given subject at a given time -- encompasses and communicates it to you all at once rather than detail by detail. (32)

A felt sense is difficult to define in words because language is a linear process and the felt sense is a nonlinear experience. Therefore, dimensions of meaning can be lost while attempting to describe this experience (ibid., 33). In many ways, the felt sense is like our river which moves through an ever-changing landscape, altering its character and resonance with its surroundings. Where land is rugged and steep, it rushes with cascading energy, swirling and bubbling and crashing over rocks and other obstacles. In the flatlands, it meanders calmly. Spring rains can rapidly increase its volume. However, once the setting has been interpreted by the felt sense, we acclimatize ourselves into whatever conditions we find ourselves (Levine, 1997, 71).

The felt sense unifies a myriad of scattered data around an experience...
or situation and gives it meaning. Blending together most of the information that forms our experience such as where we are, how we feel, the overall experience of the organism, it is the experience of being in a living body that understands and interprets the nuances of our environment (internal and external) by way of our responses to the environment (Gendlin, 1978, 33-37).

The felt sense is vague, complex and ever-changing. It moves, shifts, transforms constantly, enabling us to shift our perceptions, to acquire new information, relate to one another and ultimately know who we are (Welwood, 1982). It is so integral to the human experience that often we take it for granted to the point of not even realizing it exists until we bring it into conscious awareness (Levine, 1997).

The felt sense is not always easy for some people to locate and unfold. One has to become mindful of how the body is holding this experience. A centring or meditative practice is involved in getting a sense of what this sense is all about, sensing it again and again and letting something come from it (Gendlin, 1996, 20). Gendlin developed a technique for this, which he called ‘Focusing’. Focusing involves paying attention to an as yet unclear felt sense underlying all one’s thoughts, emotions and familiar feelings about a particular experience or problem. This felt sense is a way of holding and
knowing many aspects of a situation -- subverbally, holistically, intuitively. It is concretely ‘felt’ -- in the body, as a ‘sense’ -- not yet cognitively clear and distinct. Focusing begins with locating the felt sense in the body and letting your attention rest on this sense. This phase of resting with the unknown, waiting and letting something emerge is often a difficult phase which takes practice and patience. Focusing cultivates mindful attention and is grounded in respecting the body while waiting respectively for words or images to emerge (Welwood, 1980, 127-129).

Developing a greater facility with the felt sense has many advantages - essentially, this sense aligns the body and the mind and it is through the felt sense that we experience well-being, peace, groundedness, connectedness. It can be a doorway to spiritual states. Most importantly, it is how we experience the ‘self’ (Gendlin, 1996, 273).

As our organism is continually modified by this interaction, by an ongoing process of exchange between inner and outer, so is the self. When we speak of the self, we are referring to a process not an entity. ‘Selfing’ (Basch, 1981, 168) would more aptly describe it.

... the pattern is new in every moment and every moment is a shocking valuation of all we have been.

T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets
In the next few chapters, I will discuss the importance of the connection between the body and the mind and how the expressive arts can play an important part of this process.
There is a force within
Which gives you life --
seek that.

In your body
Lies a priceless gem --
seek that.

If you want to find
the greatest treasure
don't look outside,
Look inside, and seek that.

Rumi
The Holistic Body-Mind Interaction

Reasoning knowledge is a type of knowing that emanates from information of which we are consciously aware, however, it is only a part of our total knowledge. Intuitive knowing proceeds from everything we are, we deeply know, from many levels of consciousness -- the total human experience (Nachmanovitch, 1990, 40).

One is associated with the mind, the other the body. The concept of body-mind is more Western, in the sense that Eastern tradition has never assumed that the body and mind are separate (Suzuki, 1960, 15). Western science in its mechanistic, positivistic phase, had promoted this division by placing emphasis on the reasoning, calculating, controlling mind (ibid.), while the body was considered secondary. I recall growing up in this period. We were taught to seek out objectivity -- everything must start from a point, a fact or a truth. Subjective knowing was considered less reliable. The paradox here was that the body (our subjective experience) must supply the reading of nature that confirms the evidence on which reasoning is based!

However, in watching children, dancers or athletes, we see glimpses of the indisputable fact that the body and mind are primordially one, not two
(Maslow, 1968). For example, almost any child can compose a song, or a poem, or a dance, or a painting, or a game spontaneously without previous planning.

My own experience as a figure skater supplied the necessary evidence that the body and mind must be in continuous harmony. It is the body that must attune itself to the timing, balance, spacial orientations in a split second to perform the jumps, spins, circles, etc. that make up a skater’s repertoire. Technique depends upon body movement and positions, along with the mind’s awareness of these actions. I use the term, awareness, because it involved a particular type of attention -- being present in the moment and allowing the body to perform what it had been trained to do without a lot of interference and negative chatter.

This is essentially a cultivation of consciousness, a type of mindfulness meditation in action (Knaster, 1996, 327), which results in a more effortless action -- something the Buddhists call ‘right action’ (ibid.). It is a state of awareness in which an action happens easefully; the dancer and the dance are one; the skater is the performance.
Lao-tsu relates this understanding in the following:

Practice not-doing
and everything will
fall into place.

Tao Te Ching

The disciplines of the East provide rich regimes for seeking unity. The purpose of these traditions is to provide a journey back to wholeness from where we all started. These disciplines are based on continuously balancing or integrating the opposing forces within each of us eg. masculine/feminine, rational/intuitive, active/passive and so on. Unity is not considered a continuous state and must be constantly cultivated. In the practice of hatha yoga, for example, we try to unify these aspects of our being. Hatha yoga, literally translated means joining the energies of the sun and the moon. If we practice aikido, we journey toward 'the meeting of the spirit', another literal translation (Beittel, 1997, 38). Both provide ways of moving toward a state of wholeness.

In his book, “Awareness Through Movement,” Moshe Feldenkrais effectively demonstrates how will alone can distort the body. Feldenkrais’ approach is through subtle disciplines of movement, so that the body can be freed and the mind educated toward increased awareness and integration. This is one Western approach, where he innovatively uses the mind indirectly
so that it can be enlarged and reintegrated with the body. This enlarging of the mind refers to a type of meditation in action, a mindfulness of movement and right relations between body and mind.

It is as though there is an external and an internal subtle self. The inner is intuitive, feeling, risking, immediate, playful and is opposed by a critical, realistic, purposeful and calculating outer self. The objective seems to be to have the outer self command the inner self to take over. Thus the outer uses its will against its will, just as in meditation, a meaningless mantra overrides the mind's restless willing (ibid.).

Love, art and play conjure up a body-mind that is unified and timeless (Maslow, 1968). In each of these, our outer and our inner (felt) sensing are spontaneously forming an alignment. As a result, we feel energized, connected to ourselves and others. Witness the caring attention as a mother gazes at her newborn, or a lover at his beloved, or an artist at her creation, exemplifying the full experiencing of a sense of unity, centred in the present. This centring may be described as a quieting of motion without loss of vitality -- a vibrant containment (Beittel, 1997). Meditation is a way of finding the mind's still centre (Suzuki, 1960).
But what is the connection between meditation, wholeness, holistic participation of the body-mind? Zen Buddhism postulates that chopping wood and wedging clay are the same (ibid.). When we are in love, caught up in dance, music, art, writing, we have no reason to meditate as though it were only one kind of activity. Holistic participation of the body-mind, centring and meditating are all one (Beittel, 1997, 39). The key is to be present minded in whatever we do.
Figure 2: Centring
Great dancers are not great because of their technique;
they are great because of their passion.

Martha Graham
Body-Mind Participation in the Expressive Arts

The expressive arts provide a microcosm of world and life for our meditation as action. There is an inner game of creative acts and gestures, and indeed there is a deep play as flow. Here the inner, intuitive self takes over from the wilful calculating self. As I perform a dance movement, play with charcoal, colours, line, tone, or form an improvisation and so on, my body-mind is participating holistically. Instead of deep rest in awareness, I am in full action with awareness. Both are meditation (Knaster, 1996).

We have all, as children, gazed into the sky on a summer day projecting shapes onto cloud formations. There are, in the seemingly random swirls of cumulous billows residing outside of ourselves, the patterns associated with our inner nature. The cloud educes or draws out of us, something related to what we know as children, but also different from or more than what we know, because we are both 'assimilating' the outside pattern to our desires (eg. we see an elephant, a face, a dragon, etc.) and 'accommodating' ourselves to the outside patterns (Piaget, 1969, 8). This is the continuous communion between making and sensing. Thus, we take the world into our body and our body into the world.
When our senses are caught by something, a beautiful sunset, the
scents of a forest grove, clouds forming and reforming patterns of our
imagination, a favourite piece of music, our mind and senses are fused in the
moment. We are in the full experience -- nothing else exists (Maslow, 1968).
We see this in the wide-eyed concentration of children at play, a teenager
composing on his guitar, an adult absorbed in creating something they enjoy.
In expressive arts, in the intensity of our focus, we can lose all sense of time.
We lose ourselves in the handling of the brush, the pen, the voice, absorbed
in the textures, resistances, nuances of the particular medium that we are in.

Buddhists call this state of selfless, absolute concentration ‘samadhi’
(Nachmanovitch, 1990, 52). Samadhi can be experienced in any endeavour:
walking, painting, skating, cooking, writing, love-making, etc. When the ego-
bound self withdraws, we become both entranced and alert at the same time.
Here the ordinary boundaries of our identity disappear and ordinary clock-
time stops (Maslow, 1968).

This total absorption in the expressive, creative act, this ‘play’ is ‘deep
play’ (Nachmanovitch, 1990, 52) -- the total immersion in the game. Gadamer
(1985) describes this experience in “Truth & Method” as the primacy of play
over the consciousness of the players.
The subject loses itself precisely . . . when it no longer treats the game as an object but as something it joins, gets caught up in, and finally belongs to.

I relate this experience to the total absorption I have felt when skating to a piece of music that I love, that touches me deeply. As I begin the performance, I feel the blade of my skate thrust and carve the circular motion of the edges with my entire body responding, moving and flowing into each movement, each action effortlessly. The music seems to penetrate my body, my whole being and my body responds by forming a unity of rhythms between myself and the music. Totally immersed, my expression moves back and forth between inner and outer sensing as something new and alive is created.

In such action, knowledge dwells within the body-mind. We learn to appreciate our feeling self as well as our directing self when we listen to our body-mind. Creative expressive activities allow us to experience our wholeness and enrich our lives.
The Research Study

The body tells the story.

It is, in fact, a living autobiography.

Elaine Mayland
The Research Study

Purpose

This research study grew out of my desire to understand how it is through spontaneous creative activities that we may be able to generate insights into our inner world. It is about how intuitive inspiration arises within us so that we are liberated to paint, to dance, to write and other expressive acts from our own authentic voice.

Specifically, I intend to explore how, it is, through our own creative activity that we may gain greater knowledge of ourselves.

This research will investigate the experiences of individuals who are engaged in the expressive arts for personal growth and counsellor training and asks the following question:

The Thesis Question

Does the gesture or act of expression in the expressive arts allow one to access his/her inner knowing/felt meanings, and, if so, how does this come about?
In keeping with the overall thesis question, I prepared additional supplementary questions to further explore my participants' experience and encourage dialogue about this phenomena.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS*

1. In what way, if at all, do the expressive arts allow you to:

   a) explore unconscious material and how does this come about?

   b) gain insight and clarity?

   c) gain awareness of the intuitive and spiritual dimension of yourself?

   Give examples from memory, or your journal, art etc.

2. Describe how the freeing up of the creative aspect of yourself affects: your body, your mind, your sense of self.

3. What is your experience with the 'focusing' technique?

4. Are the expressive arts different/similar to the way focusing allows you to get in touch with inner knowing/felt-meanings?

5. What works for you, what doesn’t and how have you come to know this?

*My interview approach, based on the Riessman (1993) model was for less structured interviews, open-ended questions that followed the interviewee accounts with a minimum of interruptions (see pages 57-60). However, I considered the issues and these supplementary questions gave me a structural map in addressing the main thesis question.
Setting

Included in this process were the logistical considerations -- where and how to best go about my investigation.

The expressive arts class that I teach at Lifespace Institute School of Psychotherapy provided the setting for the initial phase of this research. This course is an introduction into the expressive arts for personal growth and counsellor training. It is an elective rather than a required course. Because its purpose is to stimulate student exploration into their own creative process, the focus is experiential rather than theoretical in nature and it has no evaluation component. (Students receive a credit, not a grade, for participation in class and their projects, on completion.)

The course runs for ten weeks; classes are held once a week and are four hours in length. Each week we explored expressive media, gently building resources and awareness using an approach similar to Gendlin's focusing technique.

Focusing technique is a therapeutic process, developed by Eugene Gendlin, Professor of Psychology, University of Chicago, which involves reflecting on one's experience, often through locating feelings
in the body, and then stepping back and inquiring into them in a dialogical manner. In the course of dialogical inquiry, the experience in question would open up, hidden felt meanings would unfold, and feelings would shift, leading to important cognitive, affective and behavioural changes (Gendlin, 1964; Welwood, 1982, 108).

In the expressive arts, I use a similar process. For example, while working with some medium, I will often draw the students' attention to their physical sensations -- I will suggest: Let your body decide: What do you feel? Burdened? Light? Intricate and detailed? Would it feel good to make a large scribble? Our body has the answers to these sensations and we can sense this directly if we focus on these feelings and allow all manner of spontaneous images to arise. As we perceive these images, we can sense which ones give us energy or resonate with our feeling.

Each week, students would explore the unfolding of insights in at least two media.

The following is a typical class outline. This particular outline is for Class 5, in which we developed masks of a shadow character and then we utilized them in an improvisational drama. We explored
several media over the ten weeks and each medium had its own particular nuances and qualities.
LIFESPACE INSTITUTE
Transformation through the Expressive Arts (601)
November 10, 1997  Class: 5

THEME: Integrating the Light and the Shadow
MODALITY: Masks
INTERMODALITY: Drama

6:00  I. Gathering the Energies With Drums and Sound:
     Go round -- giving and responding; questions/answer; lead beat, off beat, no beat.

6:15  II. Warm Up Using Movement From Tableau to Tableau to Tell a Story.

6:35  III. Masks:
      A. Choosing a Story or Myth and Accessing a Shadow Character
      B. Making the Mask

7:35  BREAK

7:45  IV. Housekeeping:
      A. Discuss Extra Class
      B. Report on Ongoing Projects

8:05  V. MASKS with MOVEMENT and SOUND
      A. Developing Movement and Sound for Mask Character
      B. Create Mask Families, Stories, Tableaux and Execute With Movement

9:00  VI. Sharing and Journalling
      A. How Part Can Transform
      B. Gifts and Positive Qualities Gained From Mask Character
      C. Ideas for a Mask Representing Transformation of Shadow Character

HOMEWORK
1. Make transformed mask and keep for Psychodrama Class

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK

Article Reprints from last year: Read units on Art and Colour
Rogers, Natalie. Creative Connection. Chapters 5 & 8
McNiff, Shawn. The Arts and Psychotherapy. Reading under headings for Art and Colour
All students kept journals of their experience and artwork. An additional component of the course was the assignment of an on-going project. This assignment was to be undertaken by the students outside of class hours. The project was initiated to encourage students to explore a creative medium, of their choice, in more depth beginning about the third week of the course onwards and to be presented Week Ten. During the final class, each student presented a synopsis of their experience with their projects.

**Participant Selection**

Nine adults participated in the course, eight women and one man. Their ages ranged from mid-twenties to over fifty. One person dropped out at Week Five because this form of learning was not for her. They were of basically middle income level, Caucasian and one Chinese student. All students had at least one year of counsellor training and experience with the focusing technique.

After the tenth class and students had received credit for the course, I distributed an invitation and informed consent forms (see
Appendix A2 and A3, respectively) inviting participation in my research study.

Six people volunteered and eventually five were chosen as participants due to timing (one lived outside the Toronto area which made interviewing arrangements more difficult).

I shall give more information on my participants’ experiences in the class and with their projects in the chapter entitled, ‘Explorations’.

Research Methods

Choosing a research method is a journey unto itself. Finding the right balance and fit are important when considering the path ahead. I gained some insight into what to do while exploring this territory.

After considering various methodologies, I sought the most appropriate by addressing three broad paradigms based upon what was unfolding before me. These were: ontological (eg. What is the nature of reality and, therefore, what can be known about it?); epistemological (eg. What is the relationship between the knower and the known?); and, the methodological question (eg. How can the
researcher best go about finding out what can be known?) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 107 - 108).

Given the focus of this study, a qualitative method based in a narrative mode was used to examine the research question. This approach is relevant to this study because it seeks to understand this phenomena from the participant's own viewpoint. It is field-focused (Eisner, 1991) and provides a rich and full understanding of the participant's experience in a natural setting.

In addition I, as researcher, must be descriptive in my observations striving to collect data in a non-manipulative manner (Eisner, 1991) while at the same time being open to my own assumptions and goals. According to Hunt (1992), our intentions and perceptions need to be included because they are a powerful and sensitive means for recording and interpreting our research (116). Beginning with myself (Hunt, 1987), my personal reflections and insights are included and noted throughout the study.

Qualitative researchers analyze data inductively (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I do not search out data to prove or disprove hypotheses. Meaning is the essential concern. I seek to understand how my respondents make sense of their experiences and I do so by studying their narrative of these encounters.
Narrative Approach and Rationale

The construction of any work bears the mark of the person who created it. This study is no exception. Story telling is what we do with our research materials and what our participants do with us. The story metaphor is the way in which we create order and construct texts/transcripts in particular contexts.

My appreciation for the power of narrative goes back to therapeutic conversations I have had with children, teenagers and adults working as a therapist in schools, hospitals and therapy sessions. I had not always thought that therapeutic conversations could be research materials and systemically investigated. Most research investigations, that I had been a part of, had consisted of focus groups leading to more quantitative approaches or forms of qualitative methods.

Previously, in traditional qualitative methods, my approach had been to search the texts for common thematic elements for the purposes of codification, which was the common practice in these situations.

However, it was my experience, that in interviews, individuals, including my participants in this study, frequently knit several themes
together into long accounts that had coherence, followed a sequence and were very difficult to codify or categorize (Riessman, 1993, vi). I found myself not wanting to fragment these long accounts into a common set of thematic categories. While the basic rules still applied in social research, to standardize interviews, interview procedures, elicit data that were comparable and code these into distinct categories, I searched for ways for maintaining their coherence, rather than providing fractured and dehydrated versions of their former richness. This meant finding a method of studying these interviews as a form of narrative analysis.

More recently, I have found that others had been also interested in this approach. A group of U.S. scholars in various disciplines (Bruner, 1986, 1990; Cronon, 1992; Rosaldo, 1989; Sarbin, 1986b) and in Europe (Ricoeur, 1989, 1987, 1984; Bakhtin, 1981; and others) have turned to narrative as an organizing principle of human behaviour. Todorov (1969) coined the term, ‘narrantology’, to bring this form of research “to the status of an object of knowledge for a new science” (Godzich, 1989, ix).
Narrativization focuses, as its object of investigation, on the story itself (Riessman, 1993, 1). Although there are several approaches to this method, I direct myself, in this study, primarily to first person accounts by respondents of their experiences, rather than other forms (eg. researcher narrativizations, master narratives of theory and so on). The purpose is to see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events or actions in their lives (ibid., 2). Human agency and imagination determines what does and does not get included in narrativization and what is meaningful. Thus individuals construct past events and actions into personal narratives to form identities and construct lives.

How individuals recount their histories -- what they emphasize and omit, their stance as protagonists or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience -- all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives. Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned.

(Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992b, 1)

According to Bruner (1987), narratives structure perceptual experience, organize memory, 'segment and purpose-building the
very events of a life' (15). Individuals become the autobiographical narratives by which they tell about their lives.

Telling stories of past events is so universal that it is one of the first forms of discourse we learn as children (Nelson, 1989) and are used throughout life by people of all social backgrounds. White (1989) determined that this form is inevitable for any report on how things happened and becomes a solution for the problem of converting knowing into telling (1).

Research interviews are no exception. Respondents (including participants in my study) will hold the floor for lengthy periods and can structure replies into long stories. Traditional research analyses often fracture these texts into bits and pieces in the service of interpretation and generalization. This eliminates the structural and sequential features that are characteristic of narrative accounts (Mishler, 1986a).

The definition of narrative that I am using in this study refers to talk organized around consequential events. The teller takes the listener into a past experience and recapitulates what happened to make a point (Riessman, 1993). Narrators create plots from disordered experiences, giving reality 'a unity that neither nature nor the past
possess so clearly. By doing so we move into the realm of human values’ (Cronon, 1992, 1,349). Because they are meaning making structures, narratives should be preserved, not fractured, by investigators, who must respect the respondent’s ways of constructing meaning and analyze how this is accomplished (Riessman, 1993).

Because the approach gives prominence to human agency and imagination, it is well suited to studies of subjectivity and identity (ibid.). Subjectivity is mistrusted in the mainstream social sciences which favour more generalized explanations. However, in personal narratives, it is precisely this subjectivity, their rootedness in time, place, personal experience and perspective that makes them valuable to us (Personal Narratives Group, 1989b, 263-264). We can more clearly identify or relate to what is being said within the human experience.
Steps Along the Way:

1) Representing Experience

As researchers, we cannot have direct access to the experience of someone else. We deal with representations of it through talk, text, interaction and interpretation (Riessman, 1993). For example, using the Riessman (1993) model, there are at least five interconnected levels of representation:

![Levels of Representation in Research Process Diagram]

Levels of Representation in Research Process
I will develop this discussion of the process beginning with the primary experience by walking through what my students may experience as they enter the classroom around 6:00 p.m., some rushing from work, perhaps fighting traffic and so on.

I have spent some time before this altering the environment of the classroom itself. There is rhythmic music playing, I use lamps instead of harsh overhead lighting, a few candles, coloured cushions adorn the floor and window ledges are filled with cedar bows to provide a gentle fragrance. This world is already there before reflection begins, fashioned as a form of experiential oasis and harmony. Walking in, the student encounters it at a prelinguistic realm of experience (Merleau-Ponty, 1989, vii) -- images, colours, lights, sounds, scents -- fleeting sensations in the stream of consciousness. At this stage, we make no distinction between bodily perceptions and objects we are conscious of that comprise the room. We are in what Husserl, 1973 and Schutz, 1967 call a ‘natural attitude’ taking it for granted and not thinking or analyzing anything.
Attending to Experience

As the class begins, perhaps with a free-flowing dance movement, a person might begin to notice and isolate certain things like the beat of the music; an arm movement, a gesture; others might notice the scent of the cedar boughs; or, other people in the room, the space etc. Then we attend to and make discrete certain features in the stream of consciousness -- reflecting, recollecting them into observations (Riessman, 1993). By attending, we make certain phenomena meaningful. There is a choice in what we notice, a selection from the totality in the primary experience. Hearing and feeling may take predominance, in this instance (example), over seeing and smell.

If it were a painting experience, we might notice colours that we are drawn to or shapes or the tack of the paint itself. Ultimately, we choose in each experience what we find meaningful. We are actively constructing reality for ourselves in new ways at this first level of representation, by thinking (ibid.).
Telling About Experience

Following this is the telling, the performance of a personal narrative. In class, as we complete a piece, we discuss within the group what it means to us. Later, each of my participants individually relate his/her experience to me in an interview. Although the expressive endeavour happened several weeks ago, before the interview, he/she relates it as one who is inside the experience, enacting the action in conversation. Their account takes the form of narrative describing what happened -- their noting of experiences, perhaps insights, surprises along the way, while painting or writing or whatever medium he/she chooses to discuss.

Their rendering draws resources from their cultural contexts. As I urge the participant to say more about a particular experience, he/she, in turn, refashions the events in response to my cues, to make the importance of the actions real for the listener (Riessman, 1993). In telling about an experience, a person is also constructing a self -- how he/she wants to be known by the listener. Therefore, in talking and listening, we (speaker and listener) are producing a narrative together. The rendition may be slightly different depending on to whom we are
talking (ibid.). I recognize that talking to me as a teacher in the course may have an influence on how the respondent frames the response.

My interview approach is for less structure in interviews, eg. open-ended questions designed to produce narrative accounts; listen with a minimum of interruptions, repeating their words wherever possible. There is also in language the division between the experience as one lives it and any communication about it. Nietzsche (1972) refers to this as 'caught in the prison house of language'. While Merleau-Ponty (1989, 188) laments, there is no way to break through to the ideas to which my words refer because language is 'uncommunicative of anything other than itself'. However, without symbols -- words, sounds, images, the experience would cease to exist (Riessman, 1993).

Merleau-Ponty postulates:

Our linguistic ability enables us to descend into the realm of our primary perceptual and emotional experience, to find there a reality susceptible to verbal understanding, and to bring forth a meaningful interpretation of this primary level of our existence . . . By finding meaning in experience and then expressing this meaning in words, the speaker enables the community to think about experience and not just live it. (cited in Polkinghorne, 1988, pp. 29-30)
This brings us to the question of truth which can be approached differently depending on the philosophy of the narrative analyst. For example, from a phenomenological point of view, narrative constitutes reality. It is in the telling that we make real, phenomena in the stream of consciousness (Young, 1987, 186-210). Others concerned with the persuasiveness of language, contend that narrators inscribe into their tales their ideologies and interests (Langellier, 1989, 9).

For the purposes of this study, I will direct myself to the definition used by the Personal Narrative Group (1989a):

When talking about their lives, people forget a lot, exaggerate, become confused, and get things wrong. Yet they are revealing truths. These truths don't reveal the past “as it actually was,” aspiring to a standard of objectivity. They give us instead the truths of our experiences . . . Unlike the Truth of the scientific ideal, the truths of personal narratives are neither open to proof nor self-evident. We come to understand them only through interpretation, paying careful attention to the contexts that shape their creation and to the world views that inform them. Sometimes the truths we see in personal narratives jar us from our complacent security as interpreters “outside” the story and make us aware that our own place in the world plays a part in our
interpretation and shapes the meanings we derive from them. (p. 261)

According to Stivers (1993, 424) narratives are interpretive and in turn require interpretation. Our interpretations strive for believability not certitude, for enlargement of understanding rather than control. My participants provide narratives of their experience and reality as they have perceived it. I, in turn, reflect what is being said based upon my own construction and perception of this reality. Interpretation is reflected throughout each level of the process.

Transcribing Experience

Acting in my role as researcher, I made audio recordings of each interview. Audio is more selective than video, but neither method would completely capture the entire conversation (Riessman, 1993). Whatever form is used, I must now convert it into some kind of text. Paul Ricoeur (1989) calls this a ‘fixation’ of action. Transcribing then, like earlier levels, becomes incomplete, partial and selective. The reader will have no idea of how my participants really talk -- body
language, inflections, emphases, the character of English, pauses and so on.

I try to capture as much as possible the essence of the communication. Should I include silences, false starts, the rhythm of the speech itself? Not just technical questions but other choices of what to include, how to arrange and display the text will have a bearing on how a reader will understand the narrative.

Mishler (1991b) compares this to photography, which supposedly ‘pictures reality’ while the technology of lenses, films and darkroom practices, make possible an extraordinary diversity of possible images of the same subject.

A rough transcript, first draft of the entire interview was made getting the words and striking features onto paper (full transcript appears in the Appendix). I spent considerable time scrutinizing these rough drafts; features of these often jump out. I then need to re-listen to tapes and produce key moments in conversation. Then I went back and re-transcribed selected portions for detailed analysis.

Further, I have provided my participants with a copy of their interview for approval of the text. Guba and Lincoln (1985) maintain
that credibility is increased if the investigator's reconstructions are
tested and recognized as adequate representations by the
respondents from whom the data was originally collected.

Therefore, it is desirable to take back work to the participants to
see what they think of it and their responses can be a source of further
insight. Meanings may shift as consciousness changes (Riessman,
1993). If they do not agree, it is important to distinguish between my
views of the phenomena and my respondents' (ibid.).

Analyzing Experience

In the fourth level of representation, I, as investigator, must now
explicitly analyze the transcripts. I sit with pages and pages of
transcripts, looking for defining moments, turning points or epiphanies.
The challenge is also to identify similarities or differences across these
stories, something to form an aggregate, a summation.

I have to make decisions about the flow of talk -- what gets
included to create understanding and dramatic tension. There are
choices concerning form, order, style of presentation. An episode in
people's lives certainly does not come out as a ready-made book or
dissertation. The stop and start style (Riessman, 1993) of oral stories of personal experiences must get reconfigured into something different. In the end, I create a 'metastory' about what happened by telling what my interview narratives signify -- editing and reshaping what has been told into my own creation (Behar, 1993).

The narrative method of analysis offers several practical models. In fact, there are a spectrum of approaches to text that take narrative form. My preference for this particular study is an adaptation* of a model used by Bell (1988). I use this form to indicate how my participants transform their experiences, in the expressive arts, into the understanding of personal meaning.

A systematic analysis begins by not only looking at content but at the structure of the narrative -- how is it organized; why does the respondent develop his/her tale this way?

Bell’s method focuses on identifying core narratives within the larger narrative interview. Often in one narrative interview several stories are linked together, like episodes, either temporally or causally.

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*I have adapted Bell's model to fit the subject matter involved. Because I am analyzing a subjective art experience, it is important not to break the flow, so I have included longer sentence structures. Artwork is also included and commented on, as a reference to the text. I look at the content and the sequencing of their stories in which the respondent attempts to create personal meaning.
In this way, the teller explains how changes occur over time (ibid.).

These story sequences can be used as data to show how the respondent builds a framework to create meaning from an experience.

The core narrative deletes those parts of the discourse, such as extraneous descriptions, asides and interactions between listener and speaker. In the core narrative, utterances are parsed into clauses and lines which are numbered and the parts of the narrative are identified by their function, these being orientation, carry the action and resolution (Bell, 1988).

Bell’s story analysis can proceed in the following manner. First, the boundaries of the stories are identified. The stories are then parsed and interpreted as individual units and in relation to each other. Thematic and/or sequential connections between stories are identified. Together these stories constitute a respondent’s narrative reconstruction (Williams, 1984) of his/her lived experience.

My analysis of my participants’ interviews appears in the next chapter, entitled ‘Explorations’.
Reading Experience

The fifth and final level of the representation in the research is when the reader encounters the written report (Riessman, 1993). A draft is circulated to my advisors and others who bring their own meaning to bear. All texts are 'plurivocal, open to several readings and constructions' (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1987, 12). Written texts are created within certain contexts -- cultural, historical and so on. Therefore, they stand on 'moving ground' (Riessman, 1993). Meaning is always meaning to someone (ibid.). Truths are meaningful to specific interpretive communities in limited historical circumstances (Clifford, 1988, 112). Ultimately, it is unclear as to who really authors a text. Finally, we cannot ultimately speak with authority for someone else -- 'our respondents do not hold still for their portraits' (Wolf, 1992).
Explorations

Art is neither a profession
nor a hobby.

Art is a way of being.

Frederick Franck
Explorations
Individual Analysis and Results

In this chapter, I analyze my participants' narratives, individually, using an adaptation in Bell's (1988) model. During our interviews, my participants made sense of their experiences by narration -- telling stories that often linked at different points in the interview, one story building on the previous one.

I search these texts for core narratives in these stories, ones that describe the conditions and consequences of their experience. I look for several things -- critical moments, turning points and epiphanies. I also look for the logic that links each person's stories and whether they indicate movement or a transformation of consciousness.
Zarah's Story

Zarah is a middle-class Anglophone woman in her mid-forties, and is divorced with one grown son, who is in university. She is a psychotherapist who works with survivors of trauma and is studying for certification as an arts therapist in the ascura art tradition. She is a talented individual in the visual arts. She volunteered to talk to me about her experiences in our class and her expressive arts' experiences in general. The interview lasted about one and one-half hours and was tape recorded.

After careful study of the tape, and the rough transcription, I have determined that there are five main themes (stories) emerging from her narrative. The first story, which occurs at the beginning of the interview, reflects how she gets prepared to do artwork, the feelings she experiences. She relates this experience to other kinds of experience that she has had in the past.

All five stories or episodes are told in temporal sequence. Zarah tells her stories in a way that I can understand them -- a recognizable, patterned sequence typical of a Germanic language background (Gee, 1985; Michaels,
1981; Riessman, 1988). Each episode reports something that happens (the beginning) followed by a response (development) which in turn brings about some event or state of affairs, completing the episode (outcome).

The second story involves how she responds to the interplay between the art and herself; what is happening for her physically and emotionally. The third episode focuses on how Zarah gains insights in the creative process; the fourth relates to a way of looking at things, at encouraging the flow experience.

Finally, in the fifth story, Zarah moves into the realm of the spiritual. So taken together, all five stories transport the listener/reader through Zarah’s journey of transformation that is occurring in the process of engaging in expressive arts. (Full transcript begins in Appendix, A5.)

**Story 1**

*Abstract:*

001 Listener: Do the expressive arts allow us to access our inner knowing?

004 Listener: and if so, how does this come about?

*Orientation:*

005 Zarah: The first thing that happens to me is (um...)

006 ... a whole sense of getting prepared ...

007 ... like preparing to do artwork ...
Is the feeling that I get watching medicine men preparing for ceremonies

Action:

(um) ... a sense of creating a space for something important to happen

there is a delicious feeling that goes with that

... It's just kind of ... the whole thing of bringing a certain kind of order out of a randomness

... and... along that same theme, is the act of beginning to focus on doing art

It's a kind of a meditation... an open-eye meditation

Resolution/Coda:

The body just goes into another space altogether ... it's a centring feeling

... like my whole body and psyche is beginning to align to this whole process

I go into the rhythm of my body

... and my whole body wants to participate in this act

Zarah opens the first episode by describing how she moves into a certain feeling state, a body/mind alignment, when she is about to do artwork. She compares this state to the rituals of native ceremonies that she has been in. Csikzentmihalyi (1990) describes this as part of the ‘flow’ experience -- ‘they (the rituals) help participants and spectators achieve an ordered state of mind that is highly enjoyable’ (72). Zarah calls it ‘a delicious feeling’ and a bringing of some order into randomness, an ‘open-eye’ meditation. Her
attention is focused and centred in the body. Her whole body, she adds, ‘wants to participate in this act’. Not just her fingers, her wrist, her arm, but her whole body moves into the gesture (A6). There is a fusion (Thompson, 1997) of feeling and action. Zarah continues:

*Story 2*

Abstract: There is an interplay between the art and myself

Orientation: The art speaks back to me and then I respond to what I see in front of me

Action:

025 So, I am not totally imposing my will
026 ... I'm allowing the art piece to have its life as well
027 ... it's a dance I guess
028 (um) I'm always surprised at what comes out
029 ... it's never what I expect is going to happen
031 ... it's like a part of me is coming out into the world
032 and ... letting itself be known ... birthing into itself
033 it's a real mystery at what comes out ... I'm always surprised by how transformative this whole process is
034 In one painting I can go from pain into healing
035 I like to do a series of works ... for this reason
036 ... there is a progression

Resolution:

049 once you step into that river ... that creative flow, I'm taken on a magical dream
051 ... there's that rush, that thrill of knowing that you are
moving through a painting, a feeling and into new dimensions

In this second story, Zarah describes the thrill of moving a feeling through her body into some external expression -- a birthing of a part of herself. She is always surprised at what comes out. As the feeling finds external expression, it continues to transform and change in front of her eyes with each stroke of the brush. Here, Zarah is moving into what London (1989) refers to as the texture of life, its density, that far reaches of our personal reality, a territory of imagination that we don’t allow ourselves to enter in our ordinary way of thinking (29). Jung (1921) speaks of the need to suspend rational critical attention and move into a form of meditation, a state of readiness that brings new energy, as in the ‘rush’ of Zarah’s account, and new consciousness to the raw material that is emerging (par. 712-714).

This state of total body concentration involves not only oneself but also the experience of creating something (Milner, 1957, 111). Here, the pattern making force from within creates an active relationship with a medium, and imagination is brought to earth (grounded, becomes a tangible) (ibid.).

---

Figure 3 depicts a collage by Zarah depicting her theme of "birthing into itself".
Story 3
Abstract:
Listener: How do you gain insight through your expression?
Orientation:
055 Zarah: ... Well, (pause) lots of different ways
056 Sometimes just allowing what wants to happen, to happen
057 then I get to see what never could have spoken to me ... because it is a wordless realm
058 ... I like to move from one art form to another
059 that also gives me more information and insights
Action:
065 ... (um) I guess in a way, I have to let go of that whole neocortex approach to things
066 that reductionist approach to reality
067 my mind plays a part but ... if I bring it in too strongly, it crushes the whole process ...
068 it blocks the flow
070 otherwise the whole other way of finding information won't well out of its spring
071 ... a kind of sense ... of letting what has come out of the creative process
073 to speak back to me
Resolution:
073 ... there's a kind of knowing or lights of understanding
074 ... that come out of my body to speak through the art process
In Episode Three, Zarah speaks of the need to suspend rational, critical attention and move into a form of awareness; just letting whatever wants to happen, to happen, in order to give free reign to her imagination. Jung (1997), addresses this process in his commentary on the ‘Secret of the Golden Flower’, describing the first steps in terms of ‘wu wei’ -- the Taoist approach of letting things happen. Here, Zarah gives up the discriminating ego to move into another form of knowing, one which uses the image as a symbol of the feeling realm, or the gesture into a new set of behaviours. These are ‘wordless’ realms. Thus, by moving into this form of knowing, she creates the ability to perceive these symbols. She likes to move from one medium to another which gives her new insights. These gestures and symbols are very personal, expressions (Milner, 1957).

Lyddiatt (1971) encourages exploration of different materials; ‘different media have totally different qualities that serve distinct purposes’ (17). Clay, for example, is grounding -- gives us the feeling of earth. In the following two pages, Figures 4 and 5, Zarah explores what she calls ‘Finding Voice’, first in painting, then she took this experience one step further in the clay. She describes this as ‘a discovery, fully in my own being, as my desire to open myself as a communicator through my art’. The clay image she indicates, connects her to an embodied way of knowing.
Figure 4: Finding Voice
Figure 5: Finding Voice
Story 4 is a continuation of this theme:

Abstract:
087 My mind likes to get patterns going
and after a while you don’t really look at anything

Orientation:
088 We look at what we think it is ...
from an idea

Action:
089 I don’t really look at a tree anymore because I think
I know what a tree is
090 ... With art there is a whole underflow of immediacy
091 If I’m looking at a tree
092 I’m looking at every little curve, little vein
093 ... the grace, the ugliness of an angle

Resolution:
094 listening to what comes through from within into the
art process
095 not imposing any preconceptions
really allowing what is there to flow out
096 ... and have its own life that’s part of my life

In Story 4, Zarah talks about a way of looking at things. One normally
doesn’t really look at anything, only what we think it is, an idea of what we
see. In the expressive arts, there is a different way of looking, one that
involves connecting the knower to the known (Milner, 1957).

Zarah relates this to becoming aware of ‘what comes through from
within into the art process’. Jung (1930) speaks to this way of ‘looking’ using
the German word 'betrachen' which has a slightly different connotation and reflects Zarah's analogy. Betrachen means making something pregnant by giving it your attention and by doing so it becomes alive, it multiplies. In the case of an image, it is filled with living power (1930-4a, vol. 6). Zarah addresses this theme, 'really allowing what is there to flow out, to have a life of its own, that's part of my life.'

In this episode, Zarah directs her attention to how her senses are holding this experience and really opening to this awareness, allowing whatever is happening within to flow out and have a life of its own. But it is also a part of her life, it is her own personal experience that is being presented in the world.

In the final story of this interview, Zarah moves into the realm of the spiritual.

**Story 5**
**Abstract:**
100 ... You mention soul or spirit ...

**Orientation:**
101 (Um) ... when I'm with colours
102 ... I'm really conscious of being with my rainbow body
104 the idea that the endocrine system
being a pathway from the physical world to the soul world
these centres are connected with different colours

Action:

... the Bible talks about
the rainbow will be the covenant
I think the rainbow is our endocrine system
This rainbow coat .. that we wear on an energy level
We partly tap into
when we're working with colour
(Um) ... I think the images we are creating
... we are really finding our soul
Our soul is like ...
like a wonderful realm of images
I'm honouring and offering something back to my soul
... when I do my art
(and um) my body becomes more awake
... I become more sensitive to colour in my environment
... I find myself really seeing really listening

Resolution:

that sense of being in the now brings in a spiritual quality
... Our power is in the present
... change could come in the twinkling of an eye
In this episode, Zarah talks about colour and proposes that colour
nourishes her on a soul level. Kandinsky (1973) in ‘Concerning the Spiritual in
Art’, writes ‘for the sensitive soul, the effect of colour is intense and deeply
moving. Their psychic effect is to produce a corresponding spiritual vibration’
(24).

Zarah understands this spiritual quality of colour by linking it to the
rainbow and the endocrine system. In the first reference, she connects the
rainbow to the Bible, found in Genesis IX:13, where God said to Noah: ‘I do
set my bow in the cloud and it shall be a token of a covenant between me and
the earth’. In earlier times, people saw the rainbow less as a spectacle of
nature than as a sign sent from the divine world to communicate something to
humankind (Schindler, 1989). Even today, many people who see it are still
touched with emotion. Zarah also relates the rainbow to the endocrine
system. This is part of an Eastern philosophy, taken from ancient Sanskrit
writings which describe the body as having seven major energy centres
known as chakras. These chakras are located at the sites of the major
endocrine glands and are each responsive to a particular colour (Lieberman,
1991, 42). Figure 6 entitled, ‘The Chakra System’, illustrates the location of the seven chakras, their colour and the major organs associated with each. In Figure 7, Zarah connects to her sense of the colours within, by focusing on her sense of this in her body. In her painting entitled, ‘Rainbow Body’, she describes this process as being in her body and awakening to the rainbow colours. Obviously, Zarah has a deep sensitivity to the effect colours have on her which may relate to the spiritual vibration to which Kandinsky refers.

As she moves through her story, she talks about the effect of colours on her body, her perception, her state of ‘being’ in the here and now. The most significant part of this for Zarah is the ability to be focused in the present, at which point she feels fully integrated -- body, mind and soul.
Figure 6: The Chakra System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SANSKRIT NAME OF CHAKRA</th>
<th>Imaginative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAHASRARA Crown</td>
<td>Pineal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJNA Brow</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISSUDDHA Throat</td>
<td>Pituitary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANAHATA Heart</td>
<td>Conceptual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANIPURA Pancreas</td>
<td>Thyroid, Parathyroid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWADISTHANA Over the Spleen</td>
<td>Pharyngeal, Plexus Cervicu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MULADHARA Genital Sacral</td>
<td>Physical Sensation Level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sahasrara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vishuddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anahata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swadisthana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muladhara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7: Rainbow Body
### TABLE I

**ZARAH'S TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH THE EXPRESSIVE ARTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story 1</th>
<th>Story 2</th>
<th>Story 3</th>
<th>Story 4</th>
<th>Story 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>014</td>
<td>051</td>
<td>073</td>
<td>095</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it's a centring feeling</td>
<td>there's a rush that thrill of knowing that</td>
<td>there's a kind of knowing or lights of understanding</td>
<td>not imposing any preconceptions (will) really allowing what is there to flow out</td>
<td>that sense of being in the now brings in a spiritual quality our power is in the present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>052</td>
<td>074</td>
<td>096</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my whole body and psyche is beginning to align to this whole process</td>
<td>you're moving through painting a feeling and into new dimensions</td>
<td>that come out of my body to speak through the art process</td>
<td>and have a life of its own that's part of my life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table I, we see the sequencing of stories that Zarah uses to address the main thesis question, regarding how she experiences insights in the expressive arts. From Story 1 through Story 5 there is a progression; we see from the early stages of centring/meditation she begins to align her body and her mind, connecting with a feeling and allowing her felt expression and insights to emerge. The critical aspect of this process is moving into a state of being. She uses the phrase, ‘a sense of being in the now’, ‘our power is in the present’, to emphasize this point.

The language she uses to describe this experience is poetic in nature (Gee, 1985). By poetry, I am not referring to a technique or genre but something in the essence of all expressive language, whether written in blocks of prose, scattered syllables across a page or colourful talk. It is the power we feel in its language, by means of its shape, its metaphors, its imagery and its rhythm. For example, Zarah uses phrases like:

- I’m taken on a magical dream
- Once you step into that river of creative flow
- I go into the rhythm of my body, and my whole body wants to participate in this act
- ... not just my fingers, my wrist, my arm but my whole body moves into that gesture
- there’s a real joy in that, a real aliveness
the thrill of knowing that you’re moving through painting a feeling and into new dimensions
- It’s a discovery. It’s an adventure
- I can feel that rush that’s happening in my body
- to see it also coming into some kind of external expression
- even then transforming and changing in front of my eyes
- is wonderfully exciting and renewing

(Appendix A8)

There are many examples throughout her narrative. She makes the whole process come alive for the reader/listener. This language puts us in touch with the life of feeling.

To summarize, Zarah makes her experience meaningful by:

- describing moving into a state of awareness, different than ordinary consciousness
- connecting to a rhythmic capacity of herself as a psycho-physical organism
- creating symbols for a life of feeling, the experience of knowing from inside
- She has created something in the external world, making it significant by endowing it with form (a gesture, a symbol).
- Finally, she has given this form, life, by suffusing it with her own subjective psychic content, making it real, realizable.
- Thus she is creating the power to perceive it.

In this way, Zarah is able to connect to her inner knowing/felt meanings through the expressive arts.
Susan is a twenty-seven year old, English speaking female, originally from Vancouver, who has moved to Toronto to pursue an acting career and has begun studying to be an expressive arts therapist. Lately, she has discovered that creating mandalas offers a powerful means for self-understanding. Her narrative is focused somewhat differently than Zarah's, who speaks from a poetic voice, in that Susan relates what is happening over the series of stories (within the larger narrative), in a practical way to what is going on in her life at the time. Susan's stories are about how she relates and applies her new understandings.

Our interview lasted over two hours, was tape recorded, and I have selected stories within the overall narrative that reflect what is happening for Susan in the expressive arts process. The full transcript begins in the Appendix, Page A30.

**Story 1**

**Abstract:**

Listener: How, if at all, are you able to connect to an inner knowing in the expressive arts?
Here, Susan is making available symbols for a life of feeling (Thomson, 1989). She starts out with 'just a nagging feeling' and begins to express this with colours or shapes on a page -- 'going and going until she feels a release'.

She is creating ways in which the inner life can be made knowable, which, in her terms, is connected to the life of the body with all its complexities of tensions and releases. Once she has completed a piece, she
goes back and really studies it, to understand what is happening on another level (See Appendix, A30).

In this way, Susan is integrating two ways of knowing. The first is a spontaneous activity based upon internal feeling cues. In the second activity, there is more thinking involved; she brings these symbols from the feeling realm into words. New thoughts or comprehension arising from her active relationship with a feeling lead to a recognition on a cognitive level of the symbol created. In this instance, we see interplay between the feeling and the thinking realms.

In Story 2, Susan continues this theme in more explicit terms. She relates, in this episode, her new experience of creating mandalas.

**Story 2**

**Abstract:**

012 Often times . . . I had no idea what that feeling was about

013 (um) much less anything to do with what's come up in the work

**Orientation:**

014 My mandalas especially because

015 I don't often know what the centre is going to be

**Action:**

016 So when I get to the centre after doing the circles outside
Resolution:

024 It was a source of connection to myself
025 therefore 'Eye Am' came up
026
027 So this is about being.

Susan begins this story by describing how she moves a feeling through the outside circles* towards the centre of the mandala. When she gets to the centre, what she sees is her core. In Jungian terms, mandalas are the ultimate expression of dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious. They are the expression of self and the path to centre, to individuation (Jung, 1964, 196). Susan's experience corresponds to a natural tendency in every

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* In the East, mandalas acted as support for meditation whereby a person places his/her focus within the mandala, and thereby performs an act of concentration or alternatively seeks to discover a mandala within his/her own body, indicating a desire to identify with his/her 'mystical body' (this is related to the chakra system whose wheels or circles are regarded as points of intersection for the cosmic life and the mental life) (Eliade, 1991, 54).

The basic mandala form consists of concentric circles which suggest a passage between different dimensions. In essence, this becomes a gatepost, not only to the earth but the macrocosm and the microcosm -- the largest and the smallest structural processes (Arguelles, 1995, 12) the universe and the human.
human being to move toward Centre, toward his/her own centre in order to find integral reality -- a sacredness (Eliade, 1991, 54).

The centre of the mandala, which Susan calls her 'core', is symbolic of the eternal potential, the nucleus, the source from which all seeds grow, all cells realize their function (Arguelles, 1995, 13). It encompasses both space and time and the centre of time is now. It is the burning tip of awareness (ibid.).

When Susan focuses on the feeling and works it through her drawing, it becomes a meditative technique, thus centring, healing and growth are the rhythms of the mandala process (Jung, 1964). For example, she talks about the death of a friend and her sadness around this, when she decided to do the 'Eye Am' mandala (Figure 8, Page 101). She works through these feelings in the mandala:

027 (and) I remember . . . what was going on in my life at that point
028 Very profound in terms of what I found in the end
029 I was feeling lost . . . very depressed
030 I had lost my best friend
030 was feeling disconnected looking everywhere but inside
When she completed this mandala, working through some of these feelings of loss and disconnection, she finds the answer is about coming back to her own centre, living and being with the sadness but also the beauty from this relationship.

I just had to go back to being, knowing that I had the answer inside

Thus Susan learns, in this process, to be whole is to be in contact with this centre (despite what is happening around one), while assimilating and recreating experience, without losing touch with this vital source of her very being (Eliade, 1991). In Story 3, Susan moves into another experience, with her mandala, based upon a dream.

**Story 3**

*Abstract:*

Much of what I experience is through premonition and dreaming

*Orientation:*

Normally I don't dream but when I do it's a premonition

... knowing what's going to happen

... dealing with that discomfort

... could be a reason why I use expression as an outlet
**Action:**

115 I actually used my hands to create this mandala for over a week, I had an extreme feeling that everything was off kilter

118 I felt an extreme connection to nature and (ah) that I was going to be hit over the head with something quite powerful

121 I dreamt about a tree coming through my window, being part of my household

122 I felt that there would be a really big shift somehow, if I could connect with that tree

125 Two days later we had a huge thunderstorm

128 The next thing I knew, one of these branches had come in and lodged itself in my window

130 lightening struck the tree, there was smoke

131 it was bizarre

137 within 48 hours of this event, my life has completely switched

138 *and it was after this mandala was done!* I had five job opportunities, cheques came in the mail, and I had been struggling financially

**Resolution:**

139 It was a real awakening

140 If you’re not going to believe in yourself, no one else will

141 and there was the (mandala’s) title, ‘Belief Beckons’

146 I look at it as almost a cleansing
Susan describes again how she becomes aware of a feeling 'that everything is off kilter', 'an extreme connection to nature' and so on. She dreams about a tree becoming part of her household. From this dream she focuses on these feelings and creates a mandala (See Figure 10, Page 105). This time she uses her hands as a frame, like a window, around the outside of the mandala, creating a sense of focal point -- a tree in the centre of the mandala. This tree has a fiery branch coming from it; there appears to be rain. Fiery colours appear to move around the outside perimeter. She contemplates the feeling of the drawing and entitles it, 'Belief Beckons'.

Subsequently, two days later, there was a thunderstorm, high winds, and a branch of a tree comes through her window. The tree is struck by lightening. After the storm, she looks at her mandala and her title, 'Belief Beckons', and feels a greater sense of faith in herself.

The most important part of this story involves her understanding that she must believe in herself. That she has the answers inside and it is about trusting what comes from inside of herself.

Susan's experience speaks to one of the basic tenants of Jungian therapy, that unconscious aspects of our perception of reality exist that include the translation of sensed phenomena into perceptions, a process he
calls 'psychic events' (Feder, 1981, 29). Further, all products of the unconscious are symbolic and can be taken as guiding messages (ibid.).

She relates this idea of trusting what comes through this process, earlier in her narrative; comparing working with an expressive medium to simply dialoguing with herself:

078 I can do that little internal bit of dialoguing but it's verbal.
079 I don't know it to be true and I don't trust that that's the end of it or the actual essence of it,
080 until I've explored that feeling in another medium
081 . . . Otherwise, I'm not connected to it . . .
082 I feel like I'm potentially a character in a play with my lines and not knowing if I'm the playwright.

(Appendix A34)

This is a beautiful analogy, of how our language and culture provide a certain external reality however, she must go inside to find her own personal truth.

Story 4, continues on the theme of personal truth.
Story 4

Abstract:
188 Listener: How does it affect your body, your sense of self when you free up this spontaneous creative aspect of yourself?

Orientation:
190 Susan: lots of different levels
first off health-wise, body-wise

Action:
193 once I've let loose ... movement, writing
songs, painting
194 there's an actual difference ... 
195 (Ah) loosening of muscles, relief of headaches, circulation
196 an easing of nausea and anxiety
197 an overall relief and release physically and emotionally
198 a clearing, lightness ... groundedness or rootedness
199 to being in the here and now
200 Like in Tai chi, you're always moving from your centre
202 When doing expressive work
there's no way that I can lie
203 I'm going to catch myself, there's no escaping
204 It's a matter of really being in the now and really being truthful
205 because it's easy to rationalize, think of an excuse
206 I can't do that when I'm expressing in clay, on paper or songwriting
Resolution:

230 The essence of this work is trusting myself
270 I'm . . . allowing myself to bring in things that are going to create what I need to survive in the responsible real world

Susan moves through this process ‘as in Tai Chi, always moving from her centre’ (Line 200). She discovers through her creative work and her narrative around this, that in the end she finds a personal truth. There is no rationalizing away what is apparent, it is about accepting what comes, receiving it and knowing in the end that it will serve her in the everyday ‘responsible’ world, precisely, because she is in touch with her own centre.

Table II, on the following page, summarizes Susan’s transformation as related in her narrative.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story 1</th>
<th>Story 2</th>
<th>Story 3</th>
<th>Story 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>007  allowing myself to go and go until I feel a release</td>
<td>024  It was a source of connection to myself</td>
<td>039  It was a real awakening</td>
<td>206  Truth -- there's no way I can lie when I'm expressing in clay, paper, songwriting etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>011  By the time I'm finished, the work has done its own transformation</td>
<td>025  So this was about 'being'</td>
<td>040  Believe in yourself</td>
<td>230  The essence of this work is trusting myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270  allowing myself to bring in things that are going to create what I need to survive in the responsible real world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We see how Susan experiences a transformation of consciousness from initially finding a release through some creative activity to eventually finding her own truth. She finds a sense of her centre core and begins the process of trusting her own being. She understands the significance of being in the here and now, and what comes from this experience. Heidegger, in the ‘Thinker as Poet’, expresses this concept:

... we grow out of Being and reach into truth. It is the individual’s being in the world in his/her own authentic way, that is important. This relationship is about being at home in the world of our experience.

(213-229)
Figure 8: Eye Am Mandala
The Eye Am Mandala

This mandala exhibits a crossroads through the centre. The key notion is the relationship of having four directions pointing to the centre and through the centre to each other. 'Hence the symbolic meaning of the crossroads; that place in which all things are met and from which all things are possible' (Arguelles, 1995, 40). In Christian religion, the cross is symbolic of entering into the centre of one's own being, so that they may take a new direction (ibid.). It is significant that Susan experiences a powerful understanding -- 'So this is about being' (Table II, Story 2, Line 25).

Having an eye at the centre of a mandala is interesting, in that, the mandala is primarily a visual experience and the eye itself is a simple mandala form. According to Jung (1997), the 'eye may well stand for consciousness and as an organ of perception, which looks into its own background where it sees its own light and when it is clear and pure, the whole body is filled with light. Under certain conditions, consciousness has a purifying effect' (par. 593, p. 120).

The Bible speaks to this:

The light of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. \( \text{(Matthew 6:22; Luke 11:34)} \)

(In a mandala, the centred eye is in fact single.)

Concentric circles around this eye, the centre point, have been associated with the most potent expression of the divine, pervading all cultures and religions (Thames and Hudson, 1995).

Further, on the concept of seeing, in Sanskrit, the word, 'vedas', which relates to the book of the ancient 'seers', is understood as both 'vision and wisdom' (Arguelles, 1995, 23).
Eye Am Aware

Figure 9 is a continuation of this theme with a lighter, illuminating feeling in the soft heavenly blues that appear to light up the many layers and circles from the inside out. This mandala reminds me of an ancient passage dealing with the circulation of light, and the idea of union or oneness:

The light is not in the body alone, nor is it only outside the body. Mountains and rivers and the great earth are lit by the sun and moon, and all that is this light. Therefore, it is not only within the body. Understanding and clarity, perception and enlightenment, and all movements (of the spirit) are likewise this light...

The lightflower of heaven and earth fills all the thousand spaces. But also the lightflower of the individual body passes through heaven and covers the earth. Therefore, as soon as the light is circulating, heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, all are circulating at the same time.

Secret of the Golden Flower

The 'Eye Am Aware' title may speak to this message on an intuitive level, the vision of connecting to the 'all there is'. Susan speaks of a powerful sense of connection throughout this process. Within the mandala itself, we find traces of all these elements -- orange tones for the sun/fire; earth tones and triangles which could be mountains (or male and female symbols), light blues as in the heavens' illumination, and also water colours. There are also two canoes, which is interesting in that for shamanic travel from one state of consciousness to another, often the image of a spirit canoe is depicted.
Figure 10: Belief Beckons
Belief Beckons Mandala

Outside the centre of this mandala, there is a raging, flaming, movement. However, in the centre there is such a feeling of calmness. The tree represents a rootedness, groundedness. So this centre core appears to allow Susan to remain grounded despite what's raging around her. According to Thames and Hudson (1995), the tree at the centre of a mandala can also represent death and rebirth. This would seem appropriate given Susan's description of how events changed in her life and how a positive transformation occurred after the stormy night. The tree also can symbolize the cross and therefore faith, which relates directly to her faith in herself and to her title 'Belief Beckons'.

According to Jung, unconscious aspects of our perception of reality exist, that include sensed phenomena into perception, a process which he called 'psychic events'. The unconscious, he believed, is a friend and advisor that provides signs and symbols for our guidance (Feder & Feder, 1981, 28). Susan's mandalas are a way for her to access this guidance.
**Tiffany’s Story**

Tiffany is a primary school teacher, married to a doctor, and is training for certification as a psychotherapist. Tiffany, since childhood, has loved to do arts and crafts which gave her a ‘feeling of peace and connectedness’. Her narrative of her creative experiences is focused around what she continually refers to as a sense of flow. When she gets out of flow, her mind (will) takes over and interrupts this connection. Flow helps her integrate because in that state of deep concentration, thoughts, feelings and senses are focused on this action (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 41). This idea of being in flow plays a significant part throughout Tiffany’s stories. (Full transcript begins A14.)

*Story 1*

Abstract:

001 Listener: Does the creative gesture or act of expression in the expressive arts allow you to access inner knowing?

Orientation:

003 Tiffany: Usually, when I do some painting, I’ll just have a feeling

004 that this is what I want to paint or I need to express some colours (ah) and I don’t know what it’s about

Action:

005 I’ll do it. Sometimes I didn’t need
to get it into a conscious level
it just needed to be expressed
other times, I look at it afterwards
and say “Oh, I’m seeing this now”

Resolution:
So it’s like a vehicle for bringing something forward, so I can see it.

In Story 1, Tiffany talks about moving a feeling into some creative form of expression. She may not even understand on a conscious level, what that feeling was about. ‘It just needed, to get expressed somehow’. Further in her narrative, she explains, ‘it’s kind of like peeking’, but later when she looks back at the piece, ‘I know that that’s the path that led me here and it comes out in just the right steps for me to go into when I’m ready’ (A15). Other times, she recognizes the meaning of the symbol more immediately, ‘Oh, I’m seeing this now’ (A14, Line 7). So, it becomes a way of bringing something forward.

On this subject, London (1989) describes this experience, of ‘seeing’ something firsthand in art as a way of meeting the thing. ‘Seeing the thing (the symbol) directly is having the experience with all the complexity of thought and feelings and somatic reactions that accompany all [creative] experiences’ (53). Thus, Tiffany is able to meet her feeling and make it realizable (Milner, 1957).
In the process of expressing something creatively, Tiffany and her creations are enjoined. She suffuses them with her own subjective psychic content (ibid.). She describes the ‘joy’ of going back and looking at these pieces again and again -- ‘It’s almost like loving a part of you’ (A20). In these experiences, she finds peace, focus and connectedness.

In Story 2, Tiffany describes her experience around two paintings that she has created.

Abstract:
120 Listener: Can you reflect on these two paintings?

Orientation:
122 Tiffany: (um) This painting went with that one
(ah) one was an unresourceful state, the other resourcefulness

Action:
123 The first was me being in the darkness and really alone

124 Having no sense of myself
or really being connected to anything
or any sense of power

125 a sense of drawing into myself

126 (so) when I did this one
I had the energy and the power

127 still having some of the darkness within me

128 because it would be an illusion
to think it’s all gone
Recognizing that it's still in me and yet I can be powerful

Resolution:

I can have energy, can be in the world shine in the world, and it's just such a relief

when I am in this space everything is more flowing

Tiffany did a collective of two finger paintings, illustrating how she feels in an unresourceful state and then one focusing on the feeling of resourcefulness. The colours in each are dramatic and unmistakable. She describes her feeling in the unresourceful painting as 'being in the darkness, really alone, having no sense of myself or really connected to any sense of power' (A21).

The feeling Tiffany is describing in this story is a phenomena addressed by Goethe in 'Theory of Colour':

If we keep the eyes open in a totally dark place, a certain sense of privation is experienced. The organ is abandoned to itself; it retires into itself. That stimulating and grateful contact is wanting by means of which it is connected with the external world, and becomes part of a whole.

(1980, p. 2:6)

For Tiffany, the darkness enveloping her in this state appears to be all consuming. Her painting depicts a crouched figure huddled in a sea of
blackness. The figure itself gives the sense of some life apparently incubating there, peeking through the darkness in a reddish form (Figure 11). (It is more difficult to see this in the reproduction, because it had to be reduced in size to fit the thesis format, and the copy is much darker.) This feeling of an incubation period relates to something I have read in Taoist thought. Black, to the Taoist, can be seen as the consummation of all colours, in so far as it holds a reminiscence of all the colours that are consumed within it. In this view, black implies the internal presence of colour. The senses are drawn to an interior point of focus (Thomson, 1997, 30).

Tiffany describes a completely different feeling around her resourceful painting (Figure 12, Page 115). She talks about gathering and releasing the energy and the power, still having some darkness within, 'yet I can have energy, I can shine in the world and it is such a relief' (A21). In her unresourceful space she is disconnected but when she is feeling resourceful, the experience is more flowing (A23).

Here, we find an example of one of her flow experiences, in that, Tiffany is relating an experience of the movement of energy, like that of the breath, from inward to outward. Her paintings illustrate this idea and show a
powerful explosion of colour as she releases this energy to shine, as she says, in the world.

Her story around her paintings also gives witness to how light and darkness project their forces into every part of our experience, as we make our way through their circling influences. Their external manifestation in nature, the darkness of night and the light of day present themselves in continuous metaphor in our lives. Reflecting on the role of the shadow in the creative process, it seems my limited sense of self may have to dissolve in order for me to experience a transformation into another state of being. In D.H. Lawrence’s, Women in Love, Birkin describes how the mind must immerse itself in darkness:

> In our night-time, there’s always the electricity switched on, we watch ourselves, we get it all in the head, really. You’ve got to lapse out before you can know what sensual reality is, lapse into unknowingness, and give up your volition. You’ve got to do it. You’ve got to learn not-to-be, before you can come into being. (1950, p. 48)

In Theodore Roethke’s poem, ‘In A Dark Time’, the affirmation is made that the soul’s seeking may require a dark light.
Additionally, in 'Dark Night of the Soul', we read:

How, although this night brings darkness to the spirit, it
does so in order to illumine it and give it light.

Corinthians, ii, 10

Tiffany illustrates this transition of consciousness and the formidable
influence that darkness and light have in our lives in Figure 11 and Figure 12
on the following pages.
Figure 11: Feeling Unresourceful
Figure 12: Feeling Resourceful
Tiffany created mandalas for her on-going project. In Story 3, she talks about this experience.

**Story 3**

**Abstract:**

139 Listener: In this artwork with the mandalas... when you were drawing...

**Orientation:**

140 Tiffany: That was one of my early mandalas

**Action:**

141 (and ah) I started with a dot in the middle I drew these three tear drop sort of things

142 I was trying to get them the same size

143 They really weren't I was really unhappy with it

144 I was just ready to quit drawing when I started filling in things like the stars

145 By the time I came to the end, I felt really resourceful

147 ... somehow the flow of these other pieces

148 It was really soothing

151 I wrote that I had a lot of interruptions during the process But kept itching to get back to it

152 I was really dissatisfied I do a lot of comparing in my life

153 ... my mind gets in there and does the comparing

154 Once I centred myself back into the meditation
then it was fine -- I guess the interruptions would take me out of that flow

. . . once I got centred back into it, it flowed again

in the second mandala, I got the symmetry and the balance

and to look at that piece is very calming

Resolution:

it's a very centred, peaceful, whole state of connectedness

In Story 3, Tiffany illustrates how she becomes disconnected and then reconnected to the flow. Having interruptions during the creation of her first mandala breaks the flow for her, along with having her critical mind get into the act. However, once she settles back into a meditation and the rhythm of the action, she again connects to a 'flow experience' (Miller, 1994). For Tiffany, flow is related to a meditation in action (Milner, 1957). This meditation of flow involves a heightened state of awareness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) which includes a total connection. Tiffany describes this as 'a very centred, peaceful, whole state of connectedness'.

A notation on Tiffany's second mandala: She has created a cross at the centre of this mandala -- this drawing gives her a feeling of centredness, peace and connectedness. The cross is a universal symbol which appears in
nearly all cultures. A basic symbol of the Christian religion is strongly associated with the idea of a crossroads, at which point essential energy is concentrated. It is also the 'Tree of Life' with its inevitable connotations of, as above so below. (Thames and Hudson, 1995).

Whether Tiffany is aware of the potential energy associated with this symbol or not, her experience is one of having made connection, in the process, with her own centre and the energy flow associated with this. Like many others, from the ancients to today's artists, Tiffany has come to know the passage of consciousness from state to state through the creation of her own mandalas.

On the following pages, Figure 13 and Figure 14 are copies of Tiffany's first and second mandalas respectively.
Story 4 was somewhat more involved to analyze, in that, Tiffany talks about journalling throughout the entire narrative. So, I have pulled out the main ideas and those aspects that are repeated consistently.

**Story 4**

**Abstract:**
227 [I have learned about myself] primarily through journalling
secondly would be painting and drawing

**Orientation:**
223 This writing is such a clear vehicle for me

**Action:**
031 I'm doing a lot of journalling these past few months
032 Where something is just flowing
(ah) it's not just my fingers
033 . . . I'm plugged into something else
229 In journalling, especially if I'm doing non-dominant hand, things come up
230 I did it for two straight months
and then I got to point where
231 I didn’t have to use the other hand
232 . . . It started to become an open channel
238 because I work things out through my writing
240 if there's a problem, well there's this and this
241 I'll discover a pattern emerging
242 (but) it's really hard to pinpoint
(ah) it's like the ideas just come
but they’re not something from my mind
It’s like a little spring inside
. . . and they just bubble up

Resolution:
Like my analogy of plugging into the universal creative source
I just get my little energy flow through them
I don’t know. It just happens . . .

Finally in Story 4, Tiffany elaborates on her primary creative experience which is journalling. This is, in her words, ‘such a clear vehicle’ for her someday she will write a book. In journalling, she doesn’t have to think about what to write (or even use the non-dominant hand approach anymore), the ideas just bubble up, like a spring.

To give some background, the idea of engaging in writing for personal development is not new. Throughout the history of literature, there are examples of celebrated writers for whom the act of writing fiction, poetry, diaries and so on, provided an outlet for personal transformation. One such author, Virginia Woolf, also speaks about ideas just bubbling up in relation to her obsession with her mother and how she is able to write this out in ‘To the Lighthouse’:

It is perfectly true that she obsessed me, in spite of the fact that she died when I was thirteen, until I was forty-four.
Then one day walking round Tavistock Square I made up, as I sometimes make up my books, *To the Lighthouse*, in a great, apparently involuntary rush. One thing burst into another. Blowing bubbles out of a pipe gives the feeling of the rapid crowd of ideas and scenes which blew out of my mind, so that my lips seemed syllabling of their own accord as I walked. What blew the bubbles? Why then? I have no notion. But I wrote the book very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her.

(1989, 90)

She goes on to say that this writing ‘did for myself what psycho-analysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deep emotions. And in expressing it, I explained it, then laid it to rest’ (ibid.). For Woolf, conveying feelings and emotions in words was a central feature of her writing which was as much an attempt to find a clearer sense of self as it was a work of art (Roe, 1990, 44).

Herein lies the power of journalling for Tiffany. When she is plugged into the ‘flow’, as she phrases it, she is connecting into an emotion. She is enjoined with feelings and ideas that just bubble up from inside of herself. This means that instead of looking down at her feelings from an impersonal distance and soberly placing them in a proper syntactical system, she is able to recreate, on the page, her emotions from within. In this way, Tiffany is
emotionally participating in that which she expresses and her syntax, as it were, is the syntax of the feeling heart. She is able to tell her story with vivid immediacy and to stop and probe whatever feeling state puzzles or mystifies her. Tiffany reflects, 'It's obviously something I'm working through emotionally' (A28). Tiffany's reference to the non-dominant hand technique, is a technique used to integrate the two ways of knowing. This relates to the two modes of consciousness; these are the complementary workings of the intellect (rational thought) and the intuitive. The current physiological explanation of handedness is based on brain research into hemisphere functions. The left hemisphere of the brain controls the entire right side of the body; the right hemisphere controls the left side. There is a duality or differing characteristics in the functions of the two halves of the brain and body providing two ways of knowing. The left hemisphere/right handed connection abstracts, counts, marks time, verbalizes, makes rational statements based on logic. The right hemisphere/left handed connection understands metaphors, dreams, sees how parts make up a whole, is spatially oriented and creates new combinations of ideas (Edwards, 1988, 35). The practice of asking questions with right-hand and answering with left-hand is attempting to
link up the feeling emotional side of ourselves with the more controlled, in the service of self-communication and personal truth (Cappachione, 1988, 48).

There is a current misconception that so-called right brain processing is more creative than left-brain thinking. If creativity is defined only as inspiration, intuition and divergent thinking, then this may be so. However, if creativity is seen in the larger context of the creative process, this is not so. The definition of creativity that I am referring to is the ability to break through to new understanding or expression beyond what is currently known. This involves an expansion of awareness or shift into new ways of seeing things. This form of creativity is integrative using both kinds of knowing, logical and intuitive -- appropriately. Therefore, this type of creativity allows us to have vision, and then apply our vision to everyday life. Thus, we can receive an inspiration or have a vision but unless our logical side is also active, this vision may never be fully realized (Milner, 1957).

Tiffany uses this journalling technique (non-dominant hand) as a means of integrating the two ways of knowing. That is, through this exploration she is able, in an authentic way, to open a channel to a wider realm of experience, that relates to her way of being in the world.
Through her own practice, Tiffany can now tap into a deeper knowing, bringing images, metaphors and dreams into consciousness through journalling and her art. This provides her with both self-understanding as well as being able to apply what she is experiencing into her life, both on a personal level and tangible literary writing skills. She acknowledges and proposes that she will someday be an author.

Table III demonstrates Tiffany's narration of her own journey of transformation of consciousness through her creative experiences.
TABLE III

TIFFANY'S TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH THE EXPRESSIVE ARTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story 1</th>
<th>Story 2</th>
<th>Story 3</th>
<th>Story 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually when I do some painting, I'll just have a feeling or a need to express something</td>
<td>When I'm in this space, everything is flowing.</td>
<td>It's a very centred, peaceful, whole state of connectedness</td>
<td>plugging into the universal creative source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>008</td>
<td>245</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So it's a vehicle for bringing something forward so I can see it</td>
<td>I just get my energy flow through there. I don't know. It just happens . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Tiffany's creative experience, she starts by becoming focused on a particular feeling or emotion, moving into a state of awareness which she describes as a flow experience, sometimes becoming disconnected from the flow and later reconnected, then giving this feeling life or form in a concrete way -- either a visual form or written symbol. Ultimately, when she is connected with a flow, she has a sense of connection to something greater than herself (at least the self as is her normal state of everyday cognition).

For Tiffany, this is related to a very spiritual experience.
Edward is a retired associate professor of communications from Allegheny College, N.W. Pennsylvania. He enjoys taking special interest courses, particularly in the arts. He is a very creative individual and in our expressive arts class, he focused his on-going project on fiction writing. Our interview lasted about one hour. (Full transcript begins A51.)

**Story 1**

Abstract:
004 I feel that art is a direct expression of the person

Orientation:
005 When I'm performing or making something it has my own personal stamp about it

Action:
006 Even if I'm trying to avoid something, it has a way of surfacing
007 When I began to reflect on (and ah) try to understand something
008 it may give me a sense of . . . through colour in paintings or other visuals
009 how my body or inner being is responding to some aspect of myself
012 I can feel a release or connection to other experiences
013 such as how I feel when I'm up north walking by the lake
In Story 1, Edward gives us an introduction to how he is able to access his inner knowing through the expressive arts. In reflecting on this expression, he may get a sense of how his body is responding to some aspect of his situation. He often feels a release or a feeling of connection which he describes as 'a freeing sensation'.

He, like the other participants, notices how his body is holding this experience. He is also feeling a connection in the process of creating something expressive; he relates that he begins to experience, 'a freeing sensation, one of connection to myself and my surroundings'.

This is different than intellectual knowing, in which the subject and object have to be kept separate (Milner, 1957). This is a special way of knowing, the way of the poet, the painter, the lover, who transcends subject, object split.

In Story 2, he develops this premise further.

**Story 2**

**Abstract:**

Whenever we made masks or did an improv, I began to interact in a new way
(ah) . . . in one exercise, in improvisation, we were to think up a character and present a few minutes of his/her story

(ah) . . . I immediately had an image of a person called Carlos. One of our group jumped up and pencilled a thin moustache on me. I threw a multi-coloured throw over my shoulder and began to present a very masculine authoritative figure when interacting with others.

Who knows where this came from because . . . I don’t usually talk or act in this macho way? . . . Why did I happen to choose this character? Is this an aspect of something I want in my life right now?

The improv served to open this up . . . whereas through dialogue it might have taken longer to emerge.

I might have intellectualized it more.

By actually being Carlos, I can feel what it is like and how I’m feeling doing it.

So it is a much more connecting process and leaves a greater impact.
Edward spontaneously jumps into the character of Carlos. In this dramatic enactment, knowledge is gained through the embodiment of this character. Thus, it is not the mind alone which embodies itself in the action but it is the body which attends to this knowledge through itself (Booth and Martin-Smith, 1988, 155). Edward's arm discovers the appropriate gesture of throwing the multi-coloured throw across his shoulder. His posture and carriage attend to an appropriate set of movements to display a formidable presence. It is in and through this action that dramatic knowledge is gained (ibid., 156). In this spontaneous improvisation a way of being is known through this transformation. In it, Edward explores and activates an on-going process of forming and re-forming ways of being in his world.

Free spontaneous drawings, improvisation, dance movement and so on make available the free symbolic expression of unconscious ideas (Jung, 1964). Seeing with one's own eyes, whether painting, dancing etc., seeing the essence of people or events or things needs an act of the imagination. To know the truth of people, you have to select and combine (depending on your present moment view of any object) bringing all the partial glimpses you have experienced, into a relevant whole (Milner, 1957, 14).
To recognize and give life in improvisation to a living person, Edward creates with feats of the imagination, not only a physical presence, but also his past, present and future based inside his memories, hopes, ideas and so on (ibid.). Thus Edward is able to create a Carlos out of the experience that is himself (ibid.). In the process, he may then incorporate this new awareness into his life.

Witness Edward’s reflections, ‘who knows where this came from’, ‘why did I choose this character’, and ‘is this an aspect of something I want in my life right now?’ Thus he acknowledges these aspects for another way of being.

Edward focused his attention, in his on-going project, on short story writing. Both in Story 3 and Story 4, he unfolds these experiences with Story 4 building on Story 3.

**Story 3**

**Abstract:**

044 An aspect that comes forward in my short stories is often the plot revolves around something that I am struggling with in my own life

045 Orientation:

046 As the story unfolds, I begin to work through my own issues.
I may start out with an idea of the ending for the story but (ah) it never seems to work out that way because as I become involved in the characters, I come to appreciate them and something shifts, so the story evolves in a more natural way by allowing the characters to become who they really are.

The story has a better flow and begins to feel right.

These characters provide a way of seeing aspects of myself.

As I come to understand and appreciate them I begin to more fully accept my own characteristics.

What Edward is expressing here, if we look at it from a Freudian viewpoint, is that repressed material can often be accessed and worked through symbolically (non-literal representations). Celia Hunt’s essay, ‘Finding Voice -- Exploring the Self’, describes how the inventive use of metaphor can liberate some repressed material through fiction writing, and can be successfully used as an extended metaphor in the author’s real life (1997, 169-179). Thus, literary texts offer a double-face. On one face, they
can be works of art possessing expressive qualities and properties which we value aesthetically. On the other face, the words of these texts can appear as an expression or reflection of some aspects of the author's life and provide valuable insights (ibid.).

Edward was able to access some inner knowing by immersing himself in the characters of his short story. In this way, the discursive role of creative writing and the ability to centre himself in the characters of the story allows him to play in an imaginative way with something very personal in his own felt experience (ibid.). Here, Edward was able to engage more deeply with his inner life opening greater possibilities for self-understanding.

He reinforces this theme of self-exploration through fiction writing in Story 4.

*Story 4*

**Abstract:**

055 When I began to write my first short story

**Orientation:**

056 I just had a feeling, something that had come from a dream fragment

**Action:**

057 As it progressed, some unlikely things began to emerge

058 then it dawned on me

(ah) this is what this is all about
I realized my characters were acting out something significant in my life. I was accessing my own issues. It's funny, we think we have a certain kind of knowledge of ourselves, but through writing or some other expressive medium, something emerges from deep within. This added knowledge . . . can come as almost an epiphany and gives us another way of looking at things.

Resolution:

The whole process is very transformative . . . intuitively, I begin to unfold more dimensions of myself. There is a feeling of greater unity in my whole being -- a feeling of the freeing up of my own spirit.

Self-discovery is not something of which we can assure ourselves by careful planning, and whatever is lost or unknown in ourselves cannot be known in advance of the journey, including fictional journeys that we may undertake. Finding one's voice or story can only be achieved in enactment.

For a writer, finding voice is about writing with feeling (Hunt, 1997, 169-179). This allows the reader to animate the bare text with a feeling tone. A writer is also a guide and together, we are searching for lost and unknown tribes of
experience. For humans, experience is always felt experience (Gendlin, 1962). We don't just see a sunrise, we are elated by it; we don't just watch a raging sea, we are awed by it.

The value of writing fictional accounts seems to lie in the scope it offers for creating powerful images of oneself through a combination of fact and fiction, fantasy and reality.

Edward addresses this idea of moving from a feeling, sometimes from a dream, into a fictionalized story, allowing his characters to have a life of their own, which, in turn, is part of his life. In this process, he accesses his own issues, unfolding 'more dimensions of himself'. For some writers, such as Virginia Woolf, creative writing involves a conscious quest for self (Roe, 1990). The act of placing oneself and one's experiences on the page in fictional form can be, as in Edward's case, a means to a deeper self-engagement and self-understanding (Hunt, 1998, 10). The whole process can be very transformative.

In the following, Table IV, Edward's transformation of consciousness is recorded in relation to his four story episodes.
### TABLE IV

**EDWARD'S TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH THE EXPRESSIVE ARTS**

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>014 . . . a freeing sensation, one of connection to myself and my surroundings</td>
<td>035 I can feel what it is like, how I'm feeling</td>
<td>053 . . . seeing aspects of myself</td>
<td>066 feeling of greater unity in my whole being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>036 it is a much more connecting process</td>
<td>054 to understand, fully accept my own characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td>. . . a freeing up of my own spirit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To summarize, Edward creates meaning and indicates a transformation through the sequencing of his narrative stories. He begins Story 1, by describing the 'feeling' he experiences through the creative process -- 'a freeing sensation'. He continues into Story 2 discussing 'connecting' to himself, followed by, in Story 3, 'seeing' in a new way as he unfolds characteristics or aspects of himself. Finally, in Story 4, he experiences a greater sense of wholeness, a way of being, that gives him a sense of the 'freeing up of his spirit'.
Ann’s Story

Anna is a divorced mother in her early thirties, with one daughter, age 11. She has immigrated to Canada with her family from Czechoslovakia and although it is not her mother tongue, she speaks English fluently. Anna is currently studying at Lifespace Institute, Toronto, for certification in psychotherapy. Our interview lasted about 30 minutes. (Full transcript, A46.)

Story 1
Abstract:  Does the gesture or act of creative expression allow you to access your inner knowing, and, if so, how does this happen?

Orientation:
004 Anna: When I draw a picture, I am not always conscious or planning what I want to draw

Action:
005 I just let my hand paint it
draw it from a feeling (ah) not from my mind
006 When I am finished drawing
I may still not be able to
007 access in my awareness
the meaning of the drawing
008 In one exercise, we painted a mural
and laid it on the floor
009 I let my body slowly dance
across the picture with my eyes closed
I needed to get in touch with the feeling of the painting inside my body.

In Story 1, Anna makes a deliberate effort to let a mood speak without trying to control it and without being overwhelmed by it (Lyddiatt, 1972, 3). How is this done? Essentially it is the art of letting things happen or what Jung calls 'active imagination': the task consists solely of observing how a fragment of fantasy develops (Winsor and Newton, 1976, 9). Jung's teachings on active imagination grew out of his studies in word association, the active element being the engagement with some material -- paint, clay, sand or an activity such as writing, dancing or making music (Thomson, 1997, 19). It is a question of recognizing a feeling, then being absorbed and present in whatever is at hand. Through her activity, Anna is able to pick up a quality of the unconscious (ibid.).

Anna, like the other participants, begins drawing or painting from a feeling (Milner, 1957). She allows her hand to move in response to this feeling, not imposing her will. She may or may not be able to fully access the meaning of a drawing when she is finished. She gives the example of a mural that she painted in class. When it had dried, she laid it on the floor and began
to slowly dance across the painting with her eyes closed. She opened them only occasionally to orient herself and so as not to bump into things (A46).

Anna remarks she needed to dance, in order to get a sense of this painting, inside her body. She uses another medium -- dance to further access this feeling. Lyddiatt (1971), as mentioned earlier, recommends combining media in order to get more information. Each medium provides a way of accessing something from the unconscious (17).

In Story 2, Anna gives us a vivid example of movement expression in which the movement of our own body is the material. In every other medium, our inner experience is externalized in some material apart from ourselves. However, in movement, material and instrument and idea are one in our expressively moving body. She continues:

**Story 2**

**Abstract:**
013 When I closed my eyes I got the image inside of me

**Orientation:**
014 It was not quite the same as the painting

**Action:**
015 . . . it felt more real, as if I was actually in the flowers, the water, things I had painted
I was not detached, just looking at them
I was in the experience of being part of them
When I was in the water
I felt my body cooler, calmer
I had my eyes closed and I remember thinking
This is interesting -- what is this?
So I opened my eyes for a second
and realized I was dancing in the water
My body already had the experience of the water's coolness, calmness
before I consciously knew that I was on that part of the painting
when I moved into the flowers
my sense of smell was activated
It smelled as if I was standing in the garden

Resolution:
I was part of the picture
and I was in the picture
It is complex in that
I was both the water and in the water
There was no separation between myself and my experiencing

After the imagery phase -- Anna's painting, she begins dancing, moving with this image, bringing the visual experience into her body. This allows a physical identification to be made between internal sensations and
the imagined situation. Anna notes, 'it felt more real' (015), I was not detached, I was in the experience of being part of them' (016, 017). Here, Anna is in a receptive mode (Dosamantes-Aplerson, 1979b, 30) whereby 'internal-intrapsychic movement provides a bridge between less conscious and more conscious levels of experiencing' (ibid.). This idea centres around attending to the body, bodily felt experiences and felt movement; it is the process of connecting these bodily experiences to imagery and finally dance movement action (ibid.).

Anna notes a heightened state of sensory awareness even before she consciously knows what part of the painting she is dancing across. 'I felt my body cooler, calmer. My body already had the experience of the water's coolness before I knew I was on that part of the painting' (025). Her sense of smell is activated in the flowers.

Anna's experience also is reminiscent of Jungian active imagination, a method of freeing one's associations to allow in all levels of conscious and unconscious experience. Allowing an impulse, the inner sensation, to take the form of physical action is active imagination in movement, similar, to what following a visual image as active imagination, is in fantasy. 'It is here that the
most dramatic psycho-physical connections are made available to consciousness’ (Wallock, 1977, 48).

Mary Whitehouse (1911-1979), a major dance therapy pioneer, believed that active imagination in dance provided a means of releasing unconscious material through spontaneous expression:

While consciousness looks on, participating but not directing, cooperating but not choosing, the unconscious is allowed to speak whatever and however it likes. Its language appears in the form of painted or verbal images that may change rapidly, biblical speech, poetry (even doggerel), sculpture and dance. There is no limit and no guarantee of consistency. Images, inner voices, move suddenly from one thing to another. The levels they come from are not always personal levels; a universal human connection with something much deeper than the personal ego is represented.

(Ibid., 58)

Anna interprets her artwork through body movement, permitting her to experience projected aspects of herself on a physical level (Levy, 1988, 195). This also helps to organize her self-experience and express aspects of herself previously out of reach (ibid.).
As Anna proceeds to dance her theme, there is a merging of psyche and soma as well as the self and the not self. This is evidenced in her observation 'I am in the water and I am the water at the same time' (038). Mary Whitehouse describes this as the core of the dance experience . . . the sensation of moving and being moved; ideally both are present at the same instant. It is a moment of awareness, the coming together of what I am doing and what is happening to me (1963, 4). In this experience, Anna has temporarily relegated consciousness to a silent observing role thus allowing the unconscious to express itself via active imagination in movement.

In Story 3, Anna describes her on-going project, whereby she first started using dance/body movement and then would follow this by drawing a picture of her body.

**Story 3**

**Abstract:**
054 Listener: I remember you described dancing and then drawing a picture of yourself.

**Orientation:**
057 Anna: (well) . . . with my dancing, I think I saw my body as becoming more defined

**Action:**
058 The first picture, I remember was more hazy
059 the hands were close to the body
060 no movement, no energy (um)
My body looked like it was in a kind of armour
The last picture, the face was more alive, happier
The whole picture was just happier
colours brighter
a completely different feeling
Something on the inside was coming
to life as my dancing progressed
In one drawing, I recall
my body had different colours
of light shining around it
there was energy coming from this
I remember feeling this energy for several days
without even looking at this picture

When I am drawing, dancing, more senses are activated
It is not just my mind . . . but my whole body
Art has a deeper impact on me
Once something shifts
I move on from there
I focus on where my body image is now

Anna’s story addresses the close interrelation between muscular sequence and psychic attitude (Levy, 1988). As her dancing progresses, her drawings of her body image become, in her words, ‘more defined, more alive, happier’ (057, 062), ‘something inside of me was coming to life’ (065).
Anna’s experience relates to what Paul Schilders’ (1950) study of the body image found in the relationship between movement and the impressions of the senses. He believed that the mental image or topography of the postural model of the body, which is instantly being constructed and reconstructed, forms the basis of our emotional attitudes towards our body. All movement activities serve to build a stronger body image. There is a close interrelationship between muscular sequence and psychic attitude and every sequence of tensions and relaxations provokes a specific attitude. Thus, when there is a specific motor sequence, it changes the inner situation and attitudes (Schilder, 1950, 208).

On the following page, Table V represents Anna’s transformation of consciousness. Although her overall narrative is shorter in length, she basically moves through the same process as my other participants, in her own terms. The sequencing of her experience in the narrative moves from feeling to connecting or centring in herself and her surroundings, followed by a transformation in her self-understanding.
TABLE V
Anna's Transformation of Consciousness Through the Expressive Arts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story 1</th>
<th>Story 2</th>
<th>Story 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>010</td>
<td>I needed to get in touch with the feeling (of the painting) inside my body</td>
<td>038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>039</td>
<td>There was no separation between myself and my experiencing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In the next chapter entitled, 'Findings', I develop an overall interpretive summation of my participants' narratives around their experiences in the expressive arts.
Findings

Those lines, those surfaces, that play of light and shade, which painters call into being are not symbols of what he wishes to express, but become through the miracle of art, a direct medium of expression of his whole spirit, become his art. Art is direct expression.

Marangoni
(The Art of Seeing Art)
Findings
Overall Results

This dissertation began by examining the role of the expressive arts in accessing an intuitive, inner knowing. It had to do with exploring an integrative action, resulting from spontaneous efforts that let a mood or feeling speak, through our own creativity.

When I began writing, I assumed I knew something about the forces that produce these free improvised drawings, dances and so on. I associated these with Gendlin's approach of dialoguing with the felt sense of an experience or situation as in focusing oriented psychotherapy. I later found that dialogue, according to my participants, had little to do with any of these results.

For example:

Tiffany: I don't think I do focusing all that well. My mind tends to interfere . . . wants to get in there to figure it out (A17)

Susan: I can do that little bit of internal dialogue but it's verbal. I don't know it to be true and I don't trust that that's the end of it (A34).
Anna: Focusing is different than the expressive arts. It's more of a dialogue . . . when I am drawing more senses are activated . . . not just my mind but my whole body (A49).

Edward: . . . whereas through dialogue as in focusing therapy it might take longer to emerge . . . by actually performing Carlos, I can actually feel what it is like and how I am feeling doing it . . . so it is a much more connecting process (A52).

Zarah: . . . arts have a medium . . . another element is brought outside so that we can have a further look at it, adding another dimension. 'Baby in the womb and birth of a baby' (A13).

In their experience, insights had evolved through a process of connecting to a feeling on a deeper non-verbal level of the psyche and allowing whatever wanted to take shape in the form of some symbolic activity, to happen.
This initial **feeling state** is characterized by a certain sense of formlessness, an essential stage in which my participants reported a need to begin in a non-purposive state, perhaps a form of rudimentary playing (Winnicott, 1974), a state where unrelated thoughts were not organized into a communication.

Masud Khan (1983) gives the image of ‘lying fallow’, which he describes ‘as an alert quietude, a receptive wakeful lambent state’ (183). Lyddiatt (1972) compares this feeling to the quiet pondering of adults playing in streams.

My participants each describe their unique experience of feeling and formlessness in the following Table VI.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZARAH</th>
<th>TIFFANY</th>
<th>SUSAN</th>
<th>EDWARD</th>
<th>ANNA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A5, 009</td>
<td>A14, 004  a sense of creating a space for something important to happen</td>
<td>A30, 012  Usually when I do some painting ... I'll just have a feeling ... or just the need to express some colours and I don't know what it's about.</td>
<td>A51, 011  I can feel a sense of release ... a freeing sensation.</td>
<td>A46, 005  I am not consciously planning what I want to draw, I just let my hand draw it from a feeling not my mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6, 006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allowing whatever wants to happen, to happen</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Their observations stir memories of something I once read,

Look into the fire, gaze into the clouds, as soon as
the presentiments come to you and the voices
within you speak, surrender to them.

(Hesse, 1969, 103)

Once the silence is broken, a gesture has been made, a mark on
paper, colour on the page, or an impression in the clay, my participants move
into the next phase of this creative process, one of connection. The first
mark or gesture will call forth a second and so on. In the process by which it
is made, my participants encounter something other than their conscious will,
something which demands consideration. Here, everything is permissible,
everything the painting etc. calls for, every instinctive prompting in regard to
the work should be followed. This becomes not just ‘express your feelings’
but a two-way interchange between impulse and consideration. This phase
involves the integration of this material, in the painting, dancing and so on, by
means of dedifferentiation -- defined as a receptive watchfulness (Thompson,
1997). The primary process becomes an instrument for unconscious
scanning -- ‘a holding before the inner eye a multitude of choices until a
hidden order becomes apparent’ (Ehrenzweig, 1967, 105).
For example, Klee (1961) pictured the artist as existing in the trunk of a tree:

\[ \ldots \text{all he does in his appointed place in the tree trunk is to gather what rises from the depths and pass it on. He neither serves nor commands, but only acts as a go-between. His position is humble.} \]

He himself is not the beauty of the crown; it has merely passed through him.

(82)

This idea of connection was not lost to my participants. Their experience of the connecting took two forms -- one of connecting or aligning to themselves, their bodies, and the other, connecting to the process in which they were engaged. This is illustrated in their comments, in the following Table VII.
### TABLE VII
CONNECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZARAH</th>
<th>TIFFANY</th>
<th>SUSAN</th>
<th>EDWARD</th>
<th>ANNA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A8, 002</td>
<td>A16, 003</td>
<td>A30, 013</td>
<td>A51, 014</td>
<td>A46, 013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can feel that rush that's happening in my body and to see it also coming into some kind of external form and even then transforming and changing in front of my eyes is wonderfully exciting and renewing</td>
<td>When something is flowing, it's not my fingers -- I'm plugged in, I'm just the electrical wire and I'm plugged in to something else</td>
<td>My mandalas especially because I don't often know what the centre will be. The centre often really surprises me . . . It is a source of connection to myself.</td>
<td>I can feel what it is like, a sense of connection to myself and to my surroundings.</td>
<td>When I began to dance I got the image inside of me . . . it felt more real, as if I was actually in the flowers, the water . . . I was not detached . . . I was in the experience of being part of them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Common to their experience of encounter with art materials is the withdrawal from the interests that normally govern them and the attention the participants give to things. It becomes a temporary relinquishment of their more usual role as purposive agents. Schopenhauer (1963) relates 'for only thus can... situations, life itself, be seen in a new way, independently of the patterns and schemes and set responses of ordinary existence' (201-2).

This becomes a transformation of consciousness. All my participants' perceptions of colour, texture, shape, weight, movement, rhythms, when painting, writing, dancing etc., as well as thoughts, images, ideas about their creations and actions towards them, all seemed fused into a wholeness of being, which was different from their normal everyday state of consciousness. Thought was not drowned in feeling but rather thought, sensation, feeling and action were all together inhabiting and exploring the present (Milner, 1957).

One of Zarah’s reflections captures the essence of what is happening:

087 My mind likes to get patterns going
and after a while you don’t really look at anything

088 We look at what we think it is ... from an idea
I don’t really look at a tree anymore because I think I know what a tree is

... With art there is a whole underflow of immediacy

If I’m looking at a tree

I’m looking at every little curve, little vein

... the grace, the ugliness of an angle

listening to what comes through from within into the art process

not imposing any preconceptions really allowing what is there to flow out

... and have its own life that’s part of my life

From their creative activity, my participants experienced an aligning of the feeling self and the knowing self. The result was to open up a wider range of experiencing.

The following Table VIII, demonstrates my participants’ expression of this new way of being.
### TABLE VIII

A WAY OF BEING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZARAH</th>
<th>TIFFANY</th>
<th>SUSAN</th>
<th>EDWARD</th>
<th>ANNA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A9, 003 It has to do with respecting the wordless, respecting the process, a sense of letting what has come out in the creative art to speak back to me.</td>
<td>A26, 002 I got caught up in using the brush and the water colours . . . the motion had taken over . . . it felt so good I just stuck with it</td>
<td>A41, 016 When I express . . . in movement, painting, there's an actual difference in my body. It's an overall relief and release . . . physically and emotionally. A clearing, a lightness and a real groundedness or rootedness to being in the here and now. Like in tai chi, you're always moving from your centre.</td>
<td>A54, 012 The whole process can be very transformative . . . intuitively, I begin to unfold more dimensions of myself and in the process, there is a feeling of greater unity in my whole being . . . a feeling of freeing up of my own spirit.</td>
<td>A47, 015 There was no separation between myself and my experiencing. That is what I mean by saying I was a part of the picture and I was in the picture. It is complex in that I was both the water and in the water at the same time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A11, 005 I find myself really seeing, really listening . . . that sense of being in the now, our power is in the present</td>
<td>A24, 012 I notice during creating something it is a very centred, peaceful whole state of connectedness.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this exercise, there is no fear about making changes, adding something, because the painting (dance, writing, etc.) takes on a life of its own. Redon (1964) wrote, ‘nothing in art can be done by will alone. Everything is done by the docile submission to the coming of the unconsciousness’ (130). Edward exemplifies this notion in the following:

Interestingly, I may start out with an idea of the ending for my short story but it never seems to work out that way, because as I become involved in the characters I come to appreciate them and something shifts so that the story evolves in a more natural way. By allowing the character to become who they really are, the story has a better flow and begins to feel right.

(A53, 013)

Finally, there is the scrutinizing of the work, seeing it, coming to terms with it and its reintrojection into the ego (normal consciousness). My participants, at this stage, have the projection of unconscious material before them, as in Zarah's analogy, the transformation from 'baby in the womb, to birth of the baby'.

The work, which found echo in our psychic being, allows a sense of recognition, where the spectator experiences at one and the same time something known and something unknown (Thompson, 1997). For example,
Susan speaks about going back and studying her mandalas:

More than that, I think once I go to title them that's interesting, because one could get all sorts of things from that mandala, when I got to the centre and that eye appeared again. When I focused on the feeling of that eye, it was a source of connection to myself therefore 'Eye Am' came up. So this is about being.

(A31, 003)

While Tiffany talks about getting insights from her art, she adds:

Every once in a while there will be a piece where I'll look at it and go "Umm, what the hell is that all about?". I did a painting once and I still don't know what it is or why I was moved to paint that figure but most of the time... Like these paintings here for example, this would be one. Partly this is a lead one from a book but I didn't get it done because I don't know exactly what everything means in this one but it felt very good and very fulfilling doing it. There's a feeling while doing it of such peace and relaxation and just focus. When I look back now I know that that's the path that led me here and it comes out in just the right steps for me to go into it when I'm ready.

(A14, 016)
Lyddiatt wrote that when paintings or mandalas are produced sometimes they need to be lived with, so that one can come back to them and ponder over them (1972, 8). Hegel talks about the need for art where man ‘draws out of himself and puts before himself what he is (1975, 31).

The understandings that the participants received were about insightful reflections of life and spoke to them in a very personal way. Susan expresses the experience eloquently:

I've come to point where this is one of the few areas of my life that I don't strive constantly to create perfection. It's not about that. It's just about me and it's about being true to myself . . . I work very hard at keeping myself in expression mode not creating a masterpiece, not something I can frame and hang up on my wall, it's about the feeling, it's about what I get out of it by doing it and what I learn . . . allowing myself to bring in and find things that are going to create what I need to survive in the responsible real world as a functioning human being. (A44, 45)

In the following, Table IX summarizes all participants’ reflections on the symbols that they have created. This is an emergent Table taken from the data, where these participants relate the notion of knowing or understanding something in terms of seeing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ZARAH</th>
<th>TIFFANY</th>
<th>SUSAN</th>
<th>EDWARD</th>
<th>ANNA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A8, 006</td>
<td>A14, 008</td>
<td>A33, 001</td>
<td>A54, 001</td>
<td>A49, 004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes by allowing whatever wants to happen to happen, then I get to see what never could have spoken to me because it is a wordless realm.</td>
<td>I look at it afterwards and say 'Oh, I am seeing this now'. So it's like a vehicle for bringing something forward. The expressive arts are almost like that knock on the door that I need to express this.</td>
<td>This was about knowing that I had the answer within.</td>
<td>These characters (in my short stories) provide a way of seeing aspects of myself and as I come to appreciate them, in essence I begin to accept more fully my own characteristics.</td>
<td>With the dancing I saw my body as becoming more defined. Something on the inside was coming to life as my dancing progressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9, 006</td>
<td></td>
<td>A38, 008</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There's a kind of knowing or lights of understanding that come out of my body to speak through the art process.</td>
<td>it was a real awakening... there was the title 'Belief Beckons'.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The insights provided in my participants' narratives were about intuitive rather than logical reflections about living. Through their own action, they sought to express the wholeness of certain attitudes and experiences. As their insights unfolded, symbols were produced providing a bridge between lived experience and logical thought. This occurred through the journey of feeling and knowing. Many examples of this are related throughout the narratives.

In the following, Table X, 'Bridging Feeling and Knowing', the creative process of accessing inner knowing is summarized, emerging from all participants' narratives in answer to the thesis question:

Does the gesture or act of expression in the expressive arts allow one to access their inner knowing, and if so, how does this come about?

Although their stories describe their experience in a unique way, there is a common journey for all involved.

Figure 15, Page 168 presents my graphic interpretation of the process itself.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>FEELING</th>
<th>CONNECTING</th>
<th>BEING</th>
<th>SEEING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zarah</td>
<td>051 that thrill of knowing</td>
<td>015 My whole body and psyche begins to align with this process</td>
<td>124 that sense of being in the now</td>
<td>073 there's a kind of knowing or lights of understanding that come out of my body to speak through the art process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>052 that you are moving through painting a feeling into new dimensions</td>
<td></td>
<td>126 our power is in the present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>007 allowing myself to go and go until I feel a release</td>
<td>024 It was about connecting to myself</td>
<td>025 'Eye Am' -- so this was about being</td>
<td>139 It was a real awakening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>230 The essence of this work is trusting myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>003 Usually, when I do painting I'll just have a feeling or a need to express something</td>
<td>150 when I'm in this space everything is more flowing</td>
<td>170 It's a very centred, peaceful, whole state of connectedness</td>
<td>008 So it's a vehicle for bringing something forward so I can see it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward</td>
<td>045 ... revolves around something I am struggling with in my own life</td>
<td>035 I can feel what it is like and how I feel performing it</td>
<td>066 feeling of greater unity in my whole being</td>
<td>053 Seeing aspects of myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>036 it is a much more connecting process</td>
<td></td>
<td>054 understanding, accepting my own characteristics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>010 I needed to get in touch with a feeling inside my body</td>
<td>074 in drawing, dancing ... more senses are activated</td>
<td>039 there was no separation between myself and my experiencing</td>
<td>057 I saw my body as becoming more defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>075 not just my mind but my whole body</td>
<td></td>
<td>046 once something shifts I move on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>047 I focus on where my body image is now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 15: The Creative Process of Accessing Inner Knowing
I chose to represent this expressive, creative process in the symbol which represents white light because it incorporates the feeling of layers or levels of experience, that overlap, inform, project and ultimately refer to some aspect of physical form. Through this interaction of the primary colours encompassing white light, as a visual metaphor, we move towards centre, our core. This is not an easy task but requires an act of faith (allowing whatever wants to happen, to happen) in the blending of feeling, centred in meditative action, and a medium of expression. As these three aspects interact and overlap, deeper levels are activated -- connection, beingness and the seeing (epiphanies) of life experience in a new way.

In this state, we begin to illuminate and recover a sense of what is authentic in ourselves, a deepening. Clearly this is a transformative process and continuously evolving as new insights open to new feelings and areas of self-discovery.

In the next chapter, 'Implications', I will expand on this theme and discuss how this process affects our sense of self as well as implications for education.
Implications

How do I know about the world?

By what is within me.

Lao-tsu
Implications

The Self

In this thesis, I have explored, along with my participants, how under the particular conditions of expressive and spontaneous activities such as drawing and painting, dance movement and improvisation, creative writing and journalling, that something new, unexpected and insightful can emerge. The phrase, meditation or contemplation in action, seemed an appropriate description of an important aspect of the process. Meditation distinguishes it from practical expedient action; while action distinguishes it from pure contemplation, by allowing for the gesture involved in each activity. The essential point of the meditative mood, combined with action, is that it allowed each person to fully engage his/her awareness in the process itself. The essence of this was the awareness of giving life or form to a feeling.

While painting, dancing, writing, and so on, in this manner, something special happens. When this state of contemplation is achieved, we are no longer aware of ourselves doing it, in the sense of acting from our centre on an object as something remote. In fact, this something special happens to our sense of self. It becomes a surrendering of ourselves to deep spontaneous
responses within us. There is a feeling that the ordinary sense of self has disappeared. We have shifted from ordinary consciousness, a self-consciousness, to a more expansive awareness. We experience a fusion into a feeling of wholeness, where the material or object and oneself are no longer felt to be separate, nor is thought and sensation, feeling and action.

We discover that our perception of colour, shape, texture, the movements of our hands or gestures of our bodies, all seemed fused into this wholeness of being. All of my participants describe this experience of connection in their own way. Zarah, for example, provides this narrative:

I guess in a way, I have to let go a bit of that whole neo-cortex approach to things, that reductionist approach to reality. I know that my mind plays a part but if I bring my mind in too strongly it actually crushes the whole process. It blocks the flow, and basically everything grinds to a halt. It's important not to let the mind come in too heavily because otherwise the whole other way of knowing won't well out of this spring. So it has to do with respecting the process, respecting what does come out... a sense of letting what has come out in a creative act speak back to me and let me know what it is all about and because I really work from my body, there's a kind of knowing or lights of understanding that can come on as I allow my body to speak through the art, in the process, as it's happening. (Appendix A8)
We are constantly surprised at the understandings we receive in our painting, dancing, writing and marvel how it ever happened. It certainly did not seem that we are capable of this experience in our everyday self or way of being. Witness Edward’s amazement at his sudden portrayal of Carlos in a spontaneous improvisation, or Anna’s fascination with both ‘being in the water’ and ‘being the water’ at the same time. Tiffany describes tapping into a little spring that just bubbles up from inside in journalling and also the sense of connection and oneness when she has completed a creative piece. While for Susan, her mandalas became a path to centre, the ‘EYE AM’, in her words, was about ‘being’ and learning to be.

Having been exposed to another kind of order, other than that imposed by the external rhythms such as rules of an outside authority, the clock and daily commitments, we begin to respond, in our expressive encounters, to our own natural rhythms. Zarah describes her experience:

It’s like my whole body and psyche is beginning to align to this whole process and I find that what I do is I go into a rhythm. I go into the rhythm of my body and my whole body wants to participate in this act. If I can, if I’m painting, I like to paint standing up for that reason so that not just my fingers, my wrist, my arm but my whole body moves into that gesture and there’s a real joy in that, a real aliveness and ironically enough
there's a kind of subtlety that happens out of allowing the whole body to have a larger gesture that's brought into a very small gesture sometimes on the page.

(Appendix A6)

What a wonderfully freeing sensation, as we begin to connect to our own inner rhythms. This connection with the deepest springs of our own vital being, as experienced through our gestures, our images, suffuses our whole body. We begin to more closely align with our own sense of who we are.

Anna found that as her dancing progressed, her body image began to change dramatically, in her self portraits. Susan experienced this connection in many different ways and particularly health wise:

... once I've expressed or let loose in some way, movement, writing songs, painting, there's an actual difference in myself and my body, a loosening of muscles, a relief from headaches, circulation, an easing of nauseousness and anxiety. It's just an overall relief and release that takes place physically as well as emotionally. A clearing, a lightness and a real groundedness or rootedness to being in the here and now.

(Appendix A41)

The words, groundedness, connectedness, oneness, being in the here and now, are continuously expressed by my participants as a result of their
expressive encounters. Connecting to our own inherent rhythmic capacity, as psycho-physical organisms, can become a source of order that can be more stable than that imposed from the outside or by the planning conscious mind.

The work in the expressive arts is primarily symbolic. In this process, we created symbols for a life of feeling, creating ways in which the inner life could be made knowable. Since the inner life is also the life of the body with all its complexities of rhythms, tensions, movement, balance, spacial orientation, release, so our symbols essentially show in themselves a similar theme of tensions, balances and release. Through our creating, we make available for recall and reflection what we feel are the most important or valuable moments in this feeling life of our body-mind experience. We paint, dance, write about how it feels to be alive, the experience known from inside, of being a moving, living body and included in this is the very experiencing of the creative process itself.

Perhaps the deepest meaning of these creative, expressive encounters can be found in the fuller understanding of the two ways of knowing: the kind of thinking that separates the me and the not me, seer from the seen and the kind that does not. We know that the first kind of thinking, that follows the laws of reasoning, says that a thing is what it is and not what it is not and that
it cannot both be and not be. These laws work very well for managing
material in our environment. We divide what we see from ourselves seeing it,
and this works well in certain contexts. However, it does not work as well for
managing and understanding our inner world, particularly through aesthetics.
The phrase ‘art creates nature’ may shed some light on this. What we are
doing in this creative work is not just making again what has been lost but
creating what is, in the sense that we are creating the power to perceive it.
We are creating nature from our own patterns, our own perception. In art, if
we think about its capacity for fusing the subject and object, seer and seen,
we are giving symbolic form to the not-me material by suffusing it with me (my
subjective psychic content). We make it real, realizable. In this way, art does,
in fact, create nature, even human nature.

**Education**

Our traditional education tends to perpetuate separations, by
concentrating so much on only one half of our relationship to the world in
which we live. This is the part to do with intellectual knowing, the part where
subject and object, of necessity, are kept separate. This study explored the
embodied way of knowing, the one that traditional education of the academic
kind largely ignores.
When I looked at my own experience and those of my participants in drawing, painting, dance, improvisation and other expressive arts, there was no doubt that these expressive encounters did represent some sort of reflections about the human situation. This raised the question about thinking in the private language of one’s own subjective images (images come in many forms -- visual, poetic etc.) in contrast to thinking in the more formal language of words. It also highlighted the problem of the academic and over-linguistic bias of traditional education.

In order to understand this situation more fully, I will compare the relative advantages of thinking in words used logically versus thinking in imagery, including words used poetically and drawings, dance movement and so on.

The first advantage of thinking in images is, it apparently is much faster. Edward, for example, describes how his spontaneous improvisation of Carlos brought some insights and questions to the fore immediately. Whereas, if he had had to think about it, it may have taken much longer; he might have intellectualized it more. By actually being Carlos, he could feel what it was like and could connect more readily and with greater impact.
This brings up the second point, that images are much more comprehensive than verbal statements. Images extend through the whole of one’s experience and are presented in the glance of the eye, or a movement or gesture in a single moment. These images embrace a wider range of bodily experience than intellectual verbal statements ever can. By connecting with our senses of rhythm, balance, colour and movement, we get a sense of a deeper-rooted knowing, than any purely logical statement can provide.

Once we make sense of something, in an experiential way, and then when we step back and look at it from the point of reason, we feel that we have a much firmer understanding of it, than through just reasoning alone. Recall the early example of the master’s student (page 16), who worked through the difficulty of writing her paper by exploring the problem in dance movement, and then her dancing bridged her thoughts to new understanding, and became a vehicle for inspiration and words to address her writing.

When we receive knowledge that is not so rooted in our private store of images and experience, it seems to have a more impermanent quality. The drawings, improvisations and movements provided intuitive, rather than logical reflections, about living and were attempts to express wholeness about certain attitudes and experiences, which logic and science by their
nature could never do. Logic is bound to abstract from the whole experience and eliminate the totality of the personal.

It seems there is too little recognition of the essential role of the bridge between lived experience and rational thought: the bridge being the intuitive image. In contrast, too docile an acceptance of a particular public situation provided by an intellectual statement (e.g., justification for the hydrogen bomb, cloning humans, and so on) may leave the intellect cut off from the raw facts of lived experience.

When one tries to compare intuition and intellect it is obvious that we need both. One reaches for the whole of experience, the other tests, and organizes the knowledge so obtained. It becomes a joining of the feeling self with the knowing self. John Dewey (1934) lamented at the separation of art and science for this very reason. It seems that science and logic know a lot about the detached way of looking at life in which the self and another are separate. But it knows little about the way of fusion, becoming one with what is seen, because in order to study this, science would have to first experience it and that would mean science denying itself, to take the plunge into a different way of being*.

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*I am generalizing about the scientific approach here. Obviously, there are exceptions to this -- Einstein, for example, believed in the power of imagination; Archimedes, by accidental experience discovered his law, and so on. On the other hand, many of the early scientists were also artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci.
Finally, is it also possible that this more connected kind of self that grew out of these creative endeavours could have a bearing on one's relationship to a whole mass of other selves that we may come into contact with? Our sense of union and connectedness that resulted from our creative experiences, this transcendence of separations, could it not have its parallel in union with other people working together for common purposes? I know that the cohesiveness of my expressive arts group increased dramatically as the weeks went on.

Is it not possible that traditional education may increase the boundaries between people by emphasizing separation but not giving enough scope for the aesthetic way of transcending those boundaries. Perhaps more emphasis should be given to spontaneous co-operation in creative enterprises for the good of everyone. Educational techniques could include recognition of the change of outlook that the creative process brings. Creativeness welcomes the free interplay of differences and provides equal rights to be different, to be our own identity. Certainly, in a world where ethnic cleansing occurs, it is recognized how difficult it is for human nature to allow for such an interplay and the emotional forces working against it. However, by exploring the
feelings behind our armour-plated assertions, we may come to know another way of being, a respect for all life in the cultural mosaic.
Conclusion

And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot
Conclusion

When I began to describe this process of exploring our inner knowing through the expressive arts, I used the metaphor of a 'journey'. It was one that would take us, my participants and I, not down a superhighway but along winding country back roads. There was a sense of adventure in not knowing what we would discover together. The writing of this thesis was also part of this journey. Every day involved some new challenge while trekking through libraries and bookstores, researching, assimilating material, incubating and then new insights.

I began with some idea of a clearly thought out purpose of how the story would unfold, but as I became immersed in the twists and turns of the road ahead and the urge to follow certain trickles of curiosity wherever they might lead, something shifted and the writing itself became an embodiment of the process of creating.

As I listened to and wrote about my participants' free associations, it awakened in me my own thoughts, memories and images. Together, we travelled down untrodden paths which brought surprises and illuminations, and what was created, was not just the spontaneous images involved.
Through the writing of the thesis, without complete foreknowledge of where it would lead, came a new certainty of belief. Included in this belief was the realization that each time something new emerged, it seemed to say something in a very personal way. I am talking about the creative process and how it transforms, from just a piece of canvas, or lump of clay, notes on a page etc., into new concepts of space and humanity. Nietzsche wrote something about this concept -- 'the self consists of moments in the ring of eternal reoccurrences in which everything is connected' (1975, 61). It makes our experience into one of Kairos -- 'a point of time filled with significance -- charged with past, present and future -- an instance of temporal integration' (Thompson, 1997, 107). We may therefore regard our images created in art as soundings that puncture the experiences of everyday time, 'chronos'. 'The reverberations bring about a change of being' (Bachelard, 1969, 18).

This transformation doesn't always occur every time we begin to engage in the process. There appears to be a period of a state of grace, in which we must await upon whatever is going to happen, to happen -- as in the Taoist practice of 'wu wei' as discussed earlier.

However, when we do connect with that living creative matrix -- the self -- our perceptions ultimately shift. Rather than being defined by boundaries,
reality seems closer to a continuous process of interaction. The expressive arts support this interplay of vision and further the sensitivity and imaginative scope of this interplay.

Stanislavsky seems to capture the essence of this in ‘An Actor Prepares’ and writes:

I want you to feel right from the start, if only for short periods, that blissful sensation which actors have when their creative faculties are functioning truly, and subconsciously. Moreover, this is something you must learn through your own emotions and not in any theoretical way. You will learn to love this state and constantly strive to achieve it ... Our freedom on this side of the threshold is limited by reason and convention; beyond it, our freedom is bold, wilful, active and always moving forward. Over there the creative process differs each time it is repeated.

(1945, 293-4, 282)

My observations on how this process shapes our perceptions led me to the idea that awareness in our external world is itself a creative process. It is a complex creative interplay between what is coming from inside and what comes from outside alternating, fusing and separating. The fusion stage, to the intellectual mind is a state of illusion and not as easily allowed for in our
Western world, where it has been all important to keep oneself separate from what one looks at. This surely has implications for education. In our society, if the intent is to foster a capacity for its citizens to see the facts for oneself, rather than seeing only what one is told to see, it must also follow that we should understand the stages by which we reach such objectivity. In fact, we must also understand subjectivity, otherwise the objectivity that we aim for is in peril of a great distortion.
Bibliography

Everything without tells the individual that he is nothing, while everything within persuades him he is everything ... it is the feeling every one of us has when he sits quietly and deeply looks into the innermost chamber of his being.

D.T. Suzuki


Appendix

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands but in seeing with new eyes.

Marcel Proust
May 1, 1998

Dear Colleague,

I am very interested in learning how expressive arts therapy connects people to their inner knowing/felt meanings. I would like to be able to document this process while you are creating and learning in the expressive arts therapy course. My hope is that this study may contribute to making your experience and that of others in the future as meaningful as possible.

This study may provide an opportunity to further expand our understanding of the expressive arts and its application to our therapeutic practice. You will benefit from learning about your own process and those of others through sharing and discussions in the group. In addition, a copy of the study will be available to you.

To maintain your privacy, if you agree to share your journals, art and be interviewed, you will be given a pseudonym for all published material to preserve your confidentiality. If, for any reason, you decide not to participate or you want to drop out of the research, you may do so at any time. If you drop out, all of your material will be returned to you. You will still be a full participant in the course.

This study will not detract from the course itself; it is only intended to enhance our learning about expressive arts therapy.

The study is not about evaluating creative ability and is only interested in your experience in connecting with your own expressive and creative process.

This research will be part of my doctoral thesis for the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. In addition, I may wish to use the material from this study in possible future publications.

Should you have any questions throughout the course of this project, you can reach me at (416) 226-0706.

Thank you and I look forward to working with you on this project,

Sincerely,
THE INFORMED CONSENT FORM
ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION / UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

INVESTIGATOR: Diana Edwards

NAME OF STUDY: THE CREATIVE CONNECTION

I agree to be a participant in this research project designed to study the way in which the expressive arts are able to connect people to their inner knowing. I understand that my participation may be required in journalling my experiences as well as being interviewed and submitting artwork.

However, I further understand that I may refuse to provide any such information as I choose.

I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary, and that I may decline to further participate at any time. I further understand that the confidentiality of my participation will be honoured, and will not be revealed to anyone without my written consent. To ensure this confidentiality the following safeguards have been implemented:

_Pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of each participant. All interviews will be done on an individual basis._

I understand that after the project is completed, the researcher will share the overall results of the study as well as any benefits that may be derived from participation in the expressive arts for future reference should I begin my own career in psychotherapy.

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and know that I can do so throughout the course of this project. I further understand that if I have any questions about this project, I can direct them to the investigator, who can be reached by calling (416) 226-0706, or by writing to her at 22 Sydnor Road, Willowdale, Ontario M2M 3A1.

A copy of this form has been offered to me.

Participant's Name

Participant's Signature Date
LIFESPACEX INSTITUTE
Transformation through the Expressive Arts (601)
November 10, 1997  Class: 5

THEME:  Integrating the Light and the Shadow
MODALITY:  Masks
INTERMODALITY:  Drama

6:00  I.  Gathering the Energies With Drums and Sound:
  Go round -- giving and responding; questions/answer; lead beat, off beat, no beat.

6:15  II.  Warm Up Using Movement From Tableau to Tableau to Tell a Story.

6:35  III.  Masks:
  A.  Choosing a Story or Myth and Accessing a Shadow Character
  B.  Making the Mask

7:35  BREAK

7:45  IV.  Housekeeping:
  A.  Discuss Extra Class
  B.  Report on Ongoing Projects

8:05  V.  MASKS with MOVEMENT and SOUND
  A.  Developing Movement and Sound for Mask Character
  B.  Create Mask Families, Stories, Tableaux and Execute With Movement

9:00  VI.  Sharing and Journalling
  A.  How Part Can Transform
  B.  Gifts and Positive Qualities Gained From Mask Character
  C.  Ideas for a Mask Representing Transformation of Shadow Character

9:30  VII.  Poetry-go-round

HOMEWORK
  1.  Make transformed mask and keep for Psychodrama Class

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK

Article Reprints from last year: Read units on Art and Colour
Rogers, Natalie. Creative Connection. Chapters 5 & 8
McNiff, Shawn. The Arts and Psychotherapy. Reading under headings for Art and Colour
This is an interview with Zarah and we are going to begin with the question, "Does the gesture or act of expression in the expressive arts allow one to access his or her inner knowing, felt-meaning, and if so, how does this come about?"

This whole sense of getting prepared is like preparing to do artwork is the feeling that I get about it that I've had when I watch because I have travelled a lot and visited a lot of medicine men, and been in a lot of ceremonies, I have that same feeling when I prepare to do art that I have when I watch them preparing for the ceremonies. There's a sense of freeing the world into some order on a microcosmic level, sense of creating a space for something important to happen. So it's kind of a delicious feeling that goes with that. It's just kind the whole thing of bringing a certain kind of order out of a randomness. Along that same theme, is that act of beginning to focus on doing art. It's kind of a meditation. An open eye meditation.

The body just goes into another kind of space altogether.

**Are you feeling this in your body?**

Yes. Centring feeling.

It's like my whole body and psyche is beginning to align to this whole process and I find that what I do is I go into a rhythm. I go into the rhythm of my body and my whole body
wants to participate in this act. If I can, if I'm painting, I like to paint standing up for that reason so that not just my fingers, my wrist, my arm but my whole body moves into that gesture and there's a real joy in that, a real aliveness and ironically enough there's a kind of subtlety that happens out of allowing the whole body to take things to have a larger gesture that's brought into a very small gesture sometimes on the page.

I do something called colour focusing where I'll ask inside for the colour that feels right. I'll allow my body to move toward the colour that I want to use next.

There's an interplay between the art and myself so that the art reflects back to me and then I respond to what I see in front of me. So that I'm not totally imposing my will, I'm allowing the art piece to have it's life as well. And yet, it's a dance I guess. I'm always surprised at what comes out. It's never what I expect is going to happen. It seems to come from some place that's beyond words. I like to work from the felt-sense, letting that come through my arm and onto the brush or into the clay because then it's like a part of me is coming out into the world and letting itself be known, birthing into itself. Informing me in a way that I don't think that can be done in any other way. It's a real mystery what comes out and I'm always surprised by how transformative this whole process is. In one painting I can go from chaos and pain into healing. I like to do series of works for that same reason that there's a progression that happens and it's almost like once I'm given that medium in order to ... it's like I'm then I'm on the river, a river of creative flow coming from my body and my mind, my emotions.
How did you bring the healing process in, did it just happen, or did you just go in with idea that you were going to receive this or something that transpired in the process?

I think art is transformative work in itself. That’s just what it does but particularly with the idea that there’s a want to explore and find healing then I think that just speeds the process up.

If you go in without the feeling, do you get it anyway?

I think so because for one thing, art can be just beyond belief of having expressed something to the world. In an attempt to communicate has some element of feeling to it but I think that it’s the fact that colour itself ... they know from research, they know that colour heals. We are a rainbow body but even in that sense, you have to feel some kind of feeling happening.

I like that metaphor that you made of moving into the river of creativity. Can you enlarge that a little?

I guess I’m connecting that to the whole sense that art is a transformative process and once you step into that river of creativity from whatever point you’re starting in from, whether it’s a felt-sense from the body or an image that you take into the body and let it come through into the art, or even an idea, once you step into that river that creative flow, I’m taken on a magical dream, I don’t know where I’m going to end up but there’s
that rush, that thrill of knowing that you’re moving through painting a feeling and into new dimensions. It’s a discovery. It’s an adventure. I can feel that rush that’s happening in my body and to see it also coming into some kind external expression and even then transforming and changing in front of my eyes is wonderfully exciting and renewing.

So, how do you gain insight through your expression?

Lots of different ways. Sometimes just by allowing whatever wants to happen happen that I get to see what could never have spoken to me because it is a wordless realm. But sometimes I like to move from one art form into the other because that also gives me more information and new insights and it’s kind of like letting other parts of my soul come through and give expression.

Sometimes I’ll dialogue with my art. I’ll sit down and journal, I’ll dialogue it out. Sometimes I’ll just find the place in my art that has seemed the most alien to me, and work from there.

It seems like it’s a different way of making sense ... than to just sit down to figure something out rationally, how do you find insight in that sense making?

I guess in a way, I have to let go a bit of that whole neo-cortex approach to things, that reductionist approach to reality. I know that my mind plays a part but if I bring my mind in too strongly it actually crushes the whole process. It blocks the flow, that flow I was
telling you about and basically everything grinds to a halt. It's important not to let the mind come in too heavily because otherwise the whole other way of finding information won't well out of its spring. So it has to do with respecting the wordless, respecting the process, respecting what does come out in sort of a kind of sense of letting what has come out in a creative act speak back for me and let me know what it is all about and because I really work from my body, there's a kind of a knowing or lights of understanding can come on as I allow my body to speak through the art in the process as it's happening.

Looking at the mind and body connections in art, in the expressive arts, what is occurring for you?

I think there's a connection, the mind is part of it, you can't throw it away but I just think it's how you do the dance between your mind and your body and your soul that allows me to do the creative act.

Is it some sort of a balancing act?

Yes. I think what happens for a lot of us is that we really got into a split. A mind-body split and I think that for me art is one way for me to reconnect and not be dissociated and not be in the same old groove, that same old rigid structure of thinking that you already know. . . . oh I already know this, but when you explore something with art, learn something with art, it opens up a whole sort of lush field of possibilities that take
me beyond that form. My mind likes to get the patterns going and after a while you don't really look at anything. We look at what we think from an idea before of what we think it is. I don't really look at a tree anymore because I think I know what that tree is. I'm just looking at the idea of the tree and with art there's this whole wonderful underflow of immediacy. If I'm looking at a tree, I'm looking at every little curve, every little vein, the beauty of that grace, the delicious ugliness of an angle or ..... and the same with listening to what wants to come up through within into the art process, allowing what is there, not imposing any preconceptions but really allowing what is there to flow out and have its own life that's part of my life. I think that's really good state of mind to be in, not just for art but in relationships or in society this is something I would like to see happen in a bigger way.

How does this bring out a spiritual aspect?

When I'm with the colours I am really conscious of being with my rainbow body. Someone the other day, put out the whole idea, not a new idea, but the whole idea of the endocrine system in our body being the pathway from the physical world to the soul world. Apparently these are centres that are connected with different colours and in a sort of sense we have a rainbow body. In the Bible it talks about the rainbow will be the covenant. God's promise is that he has offered us a rainbow. I think the rainbow is our endocrine system. This rainbow coat of many colours that we wear on an energy level, what we partly tap into when we're working with colour I think the images we are
creating, we are really feeding our soul. Our soul is like a wonderful realm of images and I feel renewed. I feel that I'm honouring and offering something back to soul when I do my art and it nourishes me on a soul level. I can really feel that my dreams become more alive, my body becomes more awake and vibrates. I become more sensitive to colour in my environment and I find myself really seeing, really listening. I think that that sense of being in the now brings in a spiritual quality because if we aren't present in the now, our power is in the present, we don't have anything else but the present. Change could come in the twinkling of an eye and change could come through a movement, a breath, a colour coming out of your brush or just the allowing of some embodiment image to come through clay is what primal peoples have done throughout time and it's only recently that art has been taken away from spiritual practice and daily life, nourishing daily life. We are coming back, we have to integrate again. It's really weird, I think I'm destroying my own body so I think art is a medicine that we need to survive for our souls, our spirit, our emotions and our bodies.

That's very beautiful. So relationship is important in art as well.

I know of a whole school of thought that uses the great masterpieces of art to heal people who are sick in their souls or their bodies. Sometimes especially in their souls. They're taken to stand in front of the great masters and part of them must go back there to be with them. These masters speak to our souls through time.
By taking that person there in a sense and having a relationship with someone who lived a long time ago but still affects our lives through the art they have done, it can take a depressed person, it takes them out of themselves. That's the first step in relationship is to come out of your own stuff, have an outward focus. I've had a lot of fun sometimes just working in group art projects. It really is, the sense of creating something together and is a real high. Primarily, the act of relationship is with the piece of art that you're doing, the primary relationship is a kind of non-destructive, more expansive way of having a relationship with your own soul.

In what way do you learn about yourself in this process?

Well, one thing about art, it doesn't lie. If there's something about myself I don't want to see, the art has no problem showing me. Frightening things, or things that I couldn't have even known.

You hadn't thought about it?

Yes. Things that I don't even know on an intellectual level sometimes it seems that I'm tapping through the art some archetypal level, part of me that does know. When I get to that point because of a relationship again, I really feel connected, so connected to my ancestors, I feel connected to that whole body of knowing that part of being a human being is passed down through time and that feels magical to me when that happens.
How does this compare to focusing?

I kind of forgot about the focusing technique for a few years. It dramatically shifted things -- grounded me and helped get my life on track.

It is a similar process but arts have a medium, the art material, between you and the felt sense within -- you relate to your felt sense in the expressive arts. What is within is brought out and is looking back at us. In this way, another element is brought to the outside so that we can have a further look at it, adding another dimension to the information. For example:

Baby in the womb and birth of a baby.

What works for you, what doesn't and how have you come to know this?

Movement is most difficult -- moving combined with poetry -- I resonated with. I had a profound and amazing experience with this. So intermodal was good because I would not have been able to experience this. Poetry is the love of my life and by connecting the two it brought me right to an archetypal experience that occurs seldom in life. I can play at any one of these but some I am more drawn to and even this changes depending on the situation.
This is an interview with Tiffany and we are going to begin with the question, “Does the gesture or act of expression in the expressive arts allow one to access his or her inner knowing, felt-meaning, and if so, how does this come about?”

Usually when I do some painting or something, I’ll just have a feeling, that this is what I want to paint or I just need to express some colours and I don’t know what it’s about. I’ll do it. And sometimes I didn’t even need to get it into a conscious level, it just needed to be expressed and it must do something on some subconscious level because that’s all that was needed. Other times, I look at it afterwards and say “Oh, I’m seeing this now”. So it’s like a vehicle for bringing something forward so you can see it. The expressive arts are almost like that knock at the door that I need to express this.

And how does that come to you?

It’s hard to put into words because it’s still very much a felt sense. I just somehow have the urge to do it. The urge to do something. It will just be an urge to create like I want to paint.

And then when you do a piece and you looked at it, do you get some insights?

Usually. Every once in a while there will be a piece where I’ll look at it and go “Umm, what the hell is that all about?”. I did a painting once and I still don’t know what it is or why I was moved to paint that figure but most of the time... Like these paintings here for
example, this would be one. Partly this is a lead one from a book but I didn’t get it done because I don’t know exactly what everything means in this one but it felt very good and very fulfilling doing it. When I look back now I know that that’s the path that led me here and it comes out in just the right steps for me to go into it when I’m ready. There’s a feeling while doing it of such peace and relaxation and just focus. I’ve always had that ever since I was a small child. I tended to do more crafts than I did art per se so even just doing the crafts it’s such a feeling of peace and just connectedness to that creative source.

So you’re connecting with something inside?

Yes, and really feeling fulfilled. There’s nothing missing in me at that point.

When you say connectedness, I’m just wondering what ...

I think I feel it more on a spiritual level, like I’m connecting into some creative source within the Universe. I guess that is partly my body because it’s coming through my body but it feels like it’s more on a bigger scale.

So it’s a spiritual thing that’s coming through your body?
Yes. I do a lot of writing I told you, I do a lot of journalling so that’s sometimes why I’m not doing so much art per se but I’m doing a lot of journalling these past few months and it often feels the same way. When something is just flowing, it’s not my fingers, I’m plugged in and I’m just the electrical wire and I’m plugged into something else.

Other times I feel like I’m really forcing myself to write something it is like Grade 3 composition. This vacation I went to camp sort of thing. Whereas other times it just flows, it comes from inside. I don’t even think about it, it just comes out and I don’t need to think about choosing a word and often if I’m writing, I’ll be writing along and it’s like I’m connected to an emotion and it’s just going from there into the word. Sometimes I’ll be missing a word or I’ve got a felt-sense of it -- I can’t think of the word -- so I just know to leave it blank because I know my mind will get it down the road and it will come back within a few sentences like, “that was the word”, and I’ll go back. I really don’t need to think about it, it just flows.

Some of the most creative writing I do, a lot of it comes through dreams. All my life I can remember like another life at night. My husband will remember a dream a year kind of thing whereas I’m every night or second night I wake up in the morning, “I had the most interesting dream last night” and sometimes they are pure entertainment. It’s like going to the movies and sometimes it makes perfect sense in terms of what I’m going through and sometimes it’s like my favourite part is writing in my sleep where I’ve woken up and just written down what I’ve just dreamt about because it was like a creative story. I
wrote a whole children's story that way. Where I just woke up with the whole thing and I
dreamt it two or three times because it wasn't quite right and I needed to write down
what I just dreamt.

So one day I will actually publish it.

The creative part is easier than writing it out for the publisher.

In what way is focusing similar/different for the expressive arts? When you do
something creative like this, do you find that you get insights in a different way
than you would if you were doing focusing for example in focusing oriented
therapy?

I don’t think I do focusing all that well. My mind just tends to interfere. I think it’s easier
for me to do something more creative, because my mind is better at getting out of the
way. Whereas in focusing, my mind still wants to get in there to figure it out.

To rationalize.

Or just come up with the ideas rather than just letting these insights come up. But that's
something I must practice on. I try to incorporate that into my journaling that when
something comes up and I guess the fact that I've been working with my papers for
Lifespac and actually doing the focusing breakdown so I've been doing so much re-
reading of them and I've been thinking I've been really missing out here. So I've been
trying to put this into a venue that I already do, like with journalling so when something comes up, “OK, well I’m going to focus what is that whole sense? What is that all about?”. And then try to do the journalling with that.

How is that?

It’s OK. But it takes practice.

So you find it easier not to focus in on the felt-sense — just to journal? Because it’s coming back to the felt-sense anyway.

Yes. I think the same information comes up, but I’ve learned to disassociate from my body so focusing could really help with that so that I could have all of it. Really have it coming from the whole of me rather than just say from the mental me, the emotional me or spiritual me and then missing the body me trying to go back to do something to feel my body.

Let’s say you do one of these creative pieces and then when you look at it, does that you pull you back to your body? Do you get a felt-sense of that?

Actually I do get a sense of that energy in myself. So instead of going directly into the body, I’m coming in another way from the art and then I see it and it brings me back to my body.
I remember another example when we were doing an improvisation where we had to become an animal and I chose this fluffy cat. That was a really neat experience, that body sense of how luxurious that is to stretch. What a wonderful sense that is of just enjoying your body. Just enjoying being because he (my cat) really knows how to “be” well. That’s him having a long nap over there on the pillow and he does that for hours and hours. When I hold him, it’s like “here’s my tummy”, “do me baby”. That was really neat.

**How did that translate to you this feeling of ...**

By becoming this cat it was neat because for me that’s not a feeling I know how to have, so the cat was a model for me. Oh, so this is what this would be like in my body. I can enjoy this too. By doing that acting, becoming the cat, I was able to bring that into myself, or out of myself. But I should have that.

**You were stretching and you were feeling how good your body feels. That’s the cat ... but you were really ....**

But it was my body.

Since I’ve been working and doing some training I find sometimes things come up that I wouldn’t deal with, and then I’m going “Oh my God”. The art is the way around some of that fear. I find sometimes in my journaling something will come across, “Oh yeah, that
seems to be really true about me, I'll have to explore that one”. And then leave it. I keep things that I want to go back to on a cue card so I have a cue card both sides full of things I should go back to whereas in the art it gets past that fear. It's out there and it's been gotten out of you. Because I'm past the words, past having to think my way through it. It's in front of me and so there's nothing to fear anymore because I'm past there.

_When you have done a piece or written in your journal or whatever, worked in some clay, are you experiencing, some sort of shift?_

Absolutely.

_Can you describe that in some way?_

It's like a lighter feeling. It's like I was carrying something around and then it's just, like I'm carrying a weight around and now I just put it down. It's a lighter feeling and a very joyous feeling. When I create something, it doesn't matter if it's art or a craft -- I just love to look at it. I just go back and back no matter if it's the tiniest little craft thing I go back and back to look at it. It's there now. That's so wonderful! Such joy in seeing it. It's almost like loving a part of you.

_Can you reflect on these two paintings? In that particular piece do you remember what you felt after you had done it?_
This painting went with that one. The first was an unresourceful state, the other resourcefulness. The first was me being in the darkness and really alone, having no sense of myself or really being connected to anything or any sense of power . . . a sense of drawing into myself . . . so then, when I did this one, I had the energy and the power, still having some of that darkness within me, because it would be an illusion to think it’s all gone. Recognizing that it’s still in me and yet I can be powerful and I can have energy and I can be in the world, shine in the world. And it’s just relief.

In this exercise – the photo collage – did you get insights, were there any surprises?

Yes there were because it really made me think about the relationships a lot. It was that whole thing of what distance would you put from this person from yourself? Really, that sort of brought up things just like do they belong here, do they belong over here? I was surprised at some of the people who I thought I felt a lot closer to, like my brother, and I realized there was some distance and there are some things that have come up in the last six months that really have focused that even more.

So you got insights here?

Yes, without all the social veneer that we have every day. I think that’s what was so hard to look at because it made me realize about a lot of trust issues and there is a lot of distance between people that I hadn’t realized before.
But even with my husband, that was interesting too because I had different faces of my husband so to speak. It was like different personalities. OK this personality goes really close but this one, when you're this way, I'm this way. If I'm feeling really vulnerable, then that doesn't feel good.

You arranged his different personalities in order away from you or closer to you according to how you felt. (Pointing to the "Resourceful" collage.) And then in your resourceful space, this is how you feel when you're unresourceful and that's resourceful. So everything seems to be in a better flow.

Yes it really centres around me. It's all sort of more balanced, more flowing. I need those people and I have different aspects of myself too. For example, here with my parents, especially with my mom, I had fences, like an obstacle course but in my resourceful state it was just more direct.

So there are no fences when you were feeling resourceful in yourself?

It would be naive not have fences when I'm feeling resourceful in myself. But I guess I don't have to think about them. I don't have to make an effort around them.

Yes. I know that I can handle myself in those situations. When I'm unresourceful, I really have to put up the boundaries.
On this artwork with the mandala . . . when you were drawing this mandala ...

That was one of my early mandalas and I started off with a dot in the middle and then had things coming out of it. So I drew these three tear drop sort of things and I guess that I don’t have the greatest fine motor skills so I was trying to get them to be basically even, the same size. They really weren’t. I was really unhappy with it. I was just ready to quit the drawing. Then I started filling in different things in between like the stars, they were the same. By the time I came to the end I felt really resourceful. I guess I was feeling unresourceful part way through, thinking I can’t even draw three little arms coming out of here equally. By the end I was feeling really resourceful. Somehow with the flow of these other pieces coming out of there really it was soothing, just doing it.

I wonder when you start when you were doing the arms or whatever, the petals, and you couldn’t get them to balance, was that significant?

I wrote that I had a lot of interruptions during this process but I kept itching to get back to it because I was really dissatisfied. When I was comparing it, I do a lot of comparing in my life, and you know what that is -- my mind gets in there and does the comparing. However, once I centred myself back into a meditation, with music and visualizations, then it was fine. I guess the interruptions would take me out of that flow, my mind would get in there and go gee, come on Tiffany, who are you kidding here? Once I got centred back into it, it flowed again.
With the second mandala, not having the interruptions I got the symmetry and the balance and I felt really good about it, but this first one, it's so asymmetrical, although it still has more personality and other people have commented on that too.

Yes. And yet to look at that piece, it's very calming, to look at the more perfect one.

My mind has less to quibble about.

**Do you find you get physical sensations at all when you’re ...**

I do notice it afterwards. I guess before too. When you were asking earlier about if I just create something, what I do is I often plan. Like when I created a mandala, it had first started off in a different form and I just sort of let it lay in the back of my mind and it starts to change. It's like feeling like I'm holding something and then when I release it, when I've done it, it's just such relief in me, such lightness, such joy in having been able to express it. I really notice that at the end and I notice during the process of creating something. It's a very centred, peaceful, whole, state of connectedness.

Every thing is in the right relation.

Yes. All balanced.
We were just talking about different types of expressive arts and what we resonate with or not as the case may be.

Anything in water colour just draws me. There's something about those to me just to look at it is peaceful, like it just brings such a feeling of peacefulness when it's anything to do with water colours. My mother offers me pictures but she uses acrylic and I'm just drawn to anything with water. An astrologer I went to said she'd seen only one other person with so many water signs in their chart. Water really does it for me. But even when it's a water colour picture of something that's not water, like flowers, there's something so peaceful about it, so flowing.

So you get a sense of ...

So drawn in and such a feeling of peace and connectedness.

Like I said I don't do a lot of fine arts, but that is one thing that I have done, I've taken water colours out and played with it every once in a while. I get frustrated. My drawing skills are really lacking. It's a frustrating medium to work with if you're trying to make something that you actually want to hang on a wall. Otherwise, just doing it, I think it's fun, I like water colours over acrylic. In any other medium you can touch it up, put something on top of water colour you just spoiled the page.
In that sense it's frustrating but I just like to do it, sometimes just to feel it. Like with this collage, this was supposed to be my unresourceful one to start. I got so caught up in using the brush and the water colours and making that motion and then I finished and I thought this doesn't really look unresourceful to me. The motion had taken over what I was trying to do which was to represent something unresourceful but it felt so good I just stuck with it.

Well, it's important that you allowed yourself to feel that.

I even went out and bought myself a fan-shaped brush. When I play with my water colours, it feels so good.

What works for you and what doesn't and how do you know this?

In terms of different types of expressive arts?

The body movement not so much. I feel more self-conscious. Singing and chanting, and obviously, journaling really work for me. I went through a period for a few months where I was doing a lot of non-dominant hand journaling, asking with dominant hand, answering with non-dominant hand. I've learned to put colours into my journal. Like I only write with fine coloured markers in my journal rather than pen. As I switch ideas, I'll just grab another marker.
So do you have them colour coded in some way, like from a feeling you might pick blue and from another feeling you might pick green?

No. Blue and green are colours I really like but no. Well, red, when I really want to, I'll put it in big in red or hot pink otherwise I can look back in my journal and see how I was feeling that day.

**By how you're feeling that day you pick the colour?**

Yes.

Orange for me is often insightful, orange and pink. When I write and I really get something and I want it in big red and put stars around it.

**Red is a priority or something?**

Red is shouting, notice this, this is important, an amazing conclusion or realization or whatever.

**That's interesting.**

I guess maybe, I do colour code, now that I think of it. I have a gold pen and I use that when I start my journal. I'll put my date and I write a mantra. I'll use it if I'm saying a
prayer in my journal . . . a spiritual colour. It's kind of neat to be into art.

Sometimes it's obviously something I'm working through emotionally or it's really obvious, plain as day. Sometimes it's like a focal point.

**In what way do you learn about yourself from the expressive arts process?**

Primarily through the journalling. I think secondly would be painting or drawing. Sometimes something will turn up and I'll do a drawing.

In journalling, especially if I'm doing the non-dominant, things come up. I did that almost straight for two months and then it got to the point where I didn't actually have to use the other hand. I guess I got more of a felt-sense for it and didn't have to go to the other side of my body. It started to become an opening up channel.

This writing is such a clear vehicle for me and I've always known that I was going to write but I wasn't really sure what. It's so strange to say this now. I'm going to write a book.

**Great!**

**How do you experience something new about yourself or a situation through journalling?**
It just happens all time in my journalling and it's kind of hard to... because I work things through by writing. So it'll come up a lot more in my journals than my thinking about it. As I'm journalling -- Oh, yeah if there's a problem, well there's this and this and what's this about? Or I'll discover that there is a pattern emerging.

It's really hard to pinpoint. It's like they (the ideas, understandings) just come but they're not coming from my mind. It's like a little spring inside. And they just bubble up. Like that analogy earlier, like plugging into the universal creative source and I just get my little energy flow through there. I don't know. It just happens . . .

Thank you, so much for sharing your experience.
The purpose of this interview is to examine the way in which the expressive arts such as dance, drama, music, free writing, meditation etc. are able to connect people to their inner knowing.

This is an interview with Susan.

Does the gesture or the act of expression in the expressive arts whether it's dance, painting etc. allow one to access or connect to their inner knowing or felt meaning, and if so, how does this come about?

Overall, because it's not about the finished product or not about creating a masterpiece it's just very much for me. Sometimes I do some focusing with it before I start to bring up something potentially that I'd like to work with but often it's just a nagging feeling I have about something I just don't even know what it's about but I potentially feel irritated or anxious or something like that. It's really a question of, without talking to myself about it, just getting a piece of clay or a box of colours and exploring with that and allowing myself to just go and go and go until I feel a release and then I can go back and study it and really focus and hone in and see if it's changed or anything has moved inside. Oftentimes it's really not what I started out feeling but by the time I've finished the work it's done it's own transformation.

And does it tell you something, the work itself?

Definitely.

Oftentimes I wasn't prepared to go in that direction. I had no idea what that feeling was about, that I had when I first started the work, much less anything to do with what's come up in the work. My mandalas especially because I often don't know what the
centre's going to be so when I get to the centre after doing the circles outside and going from that emotion what I see is my core in the centre often really surprises me.

More than that, I think once I go to title them that's interesting because one could get all sorts of things from that mandala, when I got to the centre and that eye appeared again. When I focused on the feeling of that eye, it was a source of connection to myself therefore 'Eye Am' came up. So this is about being.

You had something else you wanted to say about the mandalas?

Yes, I can remember sort of the day and what was going on in my life at that point. Very profound in terms of what I found after the end result. This time I was feeling very lost, very depressed, I had just lost my best friend. I was not in touch with being at all. I was not in touch with even wanting to be. I was feeling very disconnected and looking everywhere but inside for what I wanted. After doing this this came up and 'Eye Am'. Everything else was all right. The sadness, everything else but not to be projecting it out there but to be looking inside and living with it and being with the sadness and the loss and also with the beauty of everything that came out of his death as well because of all that I had learned from him and the beauty in that relationship although it's ceasing in existence in the tangible sense, it's still going to grow.
I think with all of my work here it's very interesting when I look back and think about what was actually going on on those days . . . I broke up with my fiancé. But . . .

It wasn't about the break up it was about the reason within that because I couldn't figure out why it was all happening this way and the feeling I got from that because we were stagnant, clotted. We were having a lot of just not connecting, bashing each other to connect, forcing it. Therefore, everything that came up with that, that feeling when I started was about relationships and I wanted an answer I wanted to know the direction of where to go before making this decision. What came up from this mandala was clotted love. Therefore the answer was clear -- time to release. It confirmed everything I was already feeling subconsciously but hadn't had really the nerve to face those reasons.

So it was you who realized the relationship was clotted and you were feeling the clot in yourself.

In myself. I was feeling clotted, I was feeling suppressed, I was feeling that I was not growing anymore because I was stuck. This relationship was keeping me there. Every turn, everything we did, every session we did together in terms of how can we fix this, how can we work it, there was just a clot, a clot, a clot which just amalgamated into this huge clotting of two people trying to be together and it just wasn’t going to work.
So when you did this mandala and then you completed it were there shifts in you?

Absolutely. Like I said, this was about knowing I had the answer within. Back to this first mandala to be treated that ‘Eye Am’, that being, that knowing inside, not having to go outside to look for it but this really capped off all those feelings that I just didn’t want to deal with because having a relationship that isn’t working out is painful at the best of times. This confirmed that it no longer was healthy. We were not growing anymore, we were stuck. From there, the decision became easier. It didn’t feel like this horrendous mess or pool of all these things we had to work out. It was very simple at that point. We just had to go back to the being.

Having done this, was that all you needed at that time?

That and I did some writing and some guitar work, song writing. That was basically it. That moved it enough in the sense of the relationship in the sense of being connected to what I wanted, what I needed at that time. That was enough. And then with my guitar and my song writing, a few other things came out of that but more I sort of began coming to an OK place with a sense of a goodbye. This really confirmed it for me. It was like bashing your head constantly trying to figure out why why why isn’t this working? When I did this, it just became clear. It was like I was think, think, think, thinking ... trying to find out, why why, bashing my head ... there’s got to be a big reason here that I’m missing.
And then when you connected with a feeling in your body . . .

Yes, it was right there. I could feel myself clotted, I could feel the stuff in every part and I was severely suffering from migraines at that point and sickness.

All in the head until you started to move through that mandala or whatever, the music, into your body and making that connection between the two.

Absolutely, before it was just verbal diarrhea. Not any connection to my source.

How do the expressive arts compare with focusing?

Even if I used focusing to get in touch with something, I can do that little bit of internal dialoguing but it is verbal . . . I don't know it to be true and I don't trust that that's the end of it or that's the actual essence of it until I've explored that same feeling or that same issue in another medium. Otherwise I'm not connected to it. It could be anything. I feel like I'm potentially a character in play with my lines and not knowing if I'm the playwright.

You have to be the author of it in some way.

For me, the only way to do that is by expressing it in another form. Personally I prefer never to focus that way in terms of dialoguing, I prefer always to do it this way because
I get much better results, honest and I connect with it, I know it to be so. And then the dialogue comes later. Yes, that’s what works for me. I can dialogue later with such a clearer understanding because when I dialogue to begin with, I’m really not sure where it’s coming from.

Your imagination or whatever...

Yes, it could be a Law & Order episode I watched three nights ago, I don’t know. I don’t really feel it therefore I can’t say “Oh, so that’s what’s scaring Susan”.

The only way I can trust it is if it moves through me and I do something very tangible with it.

We talked about the unconscious material, is there anything else you wanted to add about, how you gained insight through these?

Absolutely. Much of what I experience is through premonition and dreaming.

Can you explain that?

Basically I have an unexplainable knowledge of things to happen at any given time. Normally I don’t dream, when I do, it’s a premonition. That is very helpful for me because oftentimes if I’ve had a premonition, I wake up that day pretty much knowing
what’s going to happen and I can sort of work my day accordingly. Oftentimes there’s a very horrific feeling with that because obviously it’s not always a good thing that’s going to happen so dealing with that discomfort is not always a great thing to walk around with all the time. That could be a lot of the reason why I use expression so readily because I need that outlet because it’s a big job to know things that you’re potentially not supposed to be privy to.

You have an intuitive sense that something’s going to happen to you.

No, it’s not always to me, people around me. I see people around other people that I don’t know. It’s like having a psychic ability with people and that very much affects I think when I express as well on that realm. If I go to express simply from the intuitive side it’s often very interesting what I have happen because it’s obviously not on a conscious level.

This is an entirely different kind of mandala.

What’s happening here?

I actually used my hands for that one to create the centre. Both hands on either side. I had an extreme feeling for over a week of very negative energy. Not knowing quite what was going to happen but I felt everything was off kilter. I felt an extreme
connection to nature and felt as though I was going to be hit over the head with something quite powerful.

I was very depressed. This negative energy was really bombarding me. I was picking it up off people. Just everywhere. I dreamt about a tree coming through my window. I'm really connected with trees. They have a spiritual essence for me . . . I think of them almost my gurus in a sense. I'm just really connected to trees. That dream with the tree coming through my window and then being a part of my household was very significant. I felt that from that dream there was going to be a really big shift if I could connect with that tree somehow.

Two days later we had that huge thunderstorm. Sure enough 4:00 in the morning I woke up and my whole apartment was rattling, I guess it was right over top. I lost a whole bunch of candle holders that had fallen off my window and smashed and I was lying there in my futon right at the window and I had taken off the two screens because there's no ventilation in here and I was hoping that without the screens there would be a little more air movement. The next thing I knew, from the wind, one of those branches had come in and because of the wind going back and forth had lodged itself in that window and was moving but it was stuck. It couldn't get back out because the wind had pushed it in and then the lightning struck that tree and there was smoke coming off that tree. We lost two large branches off that tree and I could just hear it cracking. It was a very bizarre happening and that tree was as in my dream come through my window.
With the lightning striking it ... I was terrified the entire time and I didn't connect it at all at that point at 4:00 in the morning. I couldn't get back to sleep. I was terrified. I fell asleep with the TV on. From the very next morning waking up I had a number of very very positive events that followed. I had about five job opportunities come my way, auditions, meeting with agents, money, I had cheques come in the mail, you know, reimbursements from things and I had been really struggling financially. Within 48 hours of that event, my life has completely switched. And it was after this mandala was done!

**Based on a feeling, a premonition you had.**

It really was an awakening of me. Snap out of this. You're in a rut and you're living in it. You're wallowing in this rut and if you're not going to believe in yourself nobody else is. And that was the title there, Belief Beckens. Within 48 hours everything changed and I woke up that following morning thinking I was going to be really grumpy and really horrible from not having any sleep and being terrified the night before and I literally felt like everything had shifted for me.

**The lightning and electricity were part of this.**

I look at it as almost a cleansing. It really knocked me out of that little hollow that I was in and it moved things. It started energy moving again ... the electricity of that event
and that's very much what that mandala was about when I dreamt it. Knowing the belief was there but not knowing how to obtain it. It seemed so hazy and far away.

It’s interesting that the tree is in the centre of your mandala and all this happened with the premonition of the tree. Do find that there’s a spiritual connection in your artwork?

I would have to say yes although spirituality for me is just something that is. I don’t belong to any organization in that respect. I’m very much my own little spiritual being.

My spiritual connection is through nature, energy, many things on many different levels. It’s not something that I put a lot of thought or energy into because I know that I am.

As in your first mandala.

Yes it's all encompassing. Absolutely, I think spirituality is at the core of many many issues in whatever level you choose to look at that. I've never actually done a piece that specifically concentrated on spirituality or spirits although in saying that a lot of those horrific clay masks in this painting have to do with spirits, the defeating of spirits, the questioning of spirits. But the darker side of that.

By illuminating the darker side, is there more clarity then? Release?
Unfortunately there are many many things that are far too clear. I wish I could make them hazy but in saying that, the beauty of having them so clear and having them so near, sort of constantly sitting on your shoulder is that you become very aware on many different levels because you have these little evil dudes hanging around just knowing you've been here, you know what we're about. It makes things a lot less fearful or scary, because you've already been there, you know what that is.

I think it's a very positive thing to explore and to create on that darker realm and incorporate that because that is where the power is as well not just in the love and the light and the smiling and everything is happy.

That darker spirit, that very empowering, sometimes, spiritual level that you can go to, I find is often where I do the most work.

They say in mythology, often Hades, the devil or the muses seem to come from the dark side. That was your source of creativity? Obviously you don’t always create from pain but ... is it a way of incorporating maybe the light and the dark, bringing them together into a balance?

I've been trying very hard trying hard not to create just from that dark realm because that's where usually I am. And especially after this year and the things that I've had happen, it's been very important for me to almost force myself to explore the lighter, more positive. The less dark of me. Because there's a lot of darkness there and I know
it very well so these are kind of newer things for me. To be using even colour ... I'm a big black charcoal kind of girl.

You have a lot of colour in your mandalas.

Yes. Sometimes I look at them I feel ill, especially the one I did with the flowers or the pinwheel. I just thought that's too bright and cheery. What was I thinking? What was I feeling when I did that? I don't remember feeling that great. But when I actually went back yes, I did, I loved moving to those light languid sounds, I did feel like that, I did feel like a pinwheel. I thought wow, that's very odd because my first instinct was to just stick with the one I didn't like.

We're going to recap a few things but could you describe the freeing up of the creative aspect of yourself? How does it affect you in your body, your sense of self when you free up this spontaneous creative aspect of yourself?

It happens on a lot of different levels. First off, health wise. Body wise. For me, because I am so in my body constantly. I am so intuitively aware. I'm never off even when I'm sleeping. I'm still receiving energy in that realm so I'm usually quite exhausted but once I've expressed or let loose in some way, movement, writing songs, painting, there's an actual difference in myself and my body, a loosening of muscles, a relief from headaches, circulation, an easing of nauseousness and anxiety. It's just an overall relief
and release that takes place physically as well as emotionally. A clearing, a lightness and a real groundedness or rootedness to being in the here and now.

Like in tai chi, you're always working from your centre.

**Do you feel in this creative work that you're moving from your centre?**

Yes, I can't get away from it. When I'm doing expressive work there is no way I can lie. There is no way I can get out of it. I'm going to catch myself, there's no escaping. It's a matter of really being in the now and really being truthful because it's easy to rationalize or think of an excuse. I can't do that when I'm expressing on paper or in clay or in my song writing because it just won't work.

**What about dance or body movement?**

I do shadow dancing and that is a wonderful experience as well because depending on where you put the candles or the light you become a very large person or a very tiny person and I always go for the light when I look really tiny. Movement is really fascinating. Just to discover movement and even in a staccato, I don't like moving that way and when I explore why I don't like moving that way it's because it's aggressive and I don't like aggression and within that there's so many things underneath that to explore. Layers and layers and it's fascinating. Without even rationalizing it, my body
does not like moving that way. My body tells me no. It just doesn’t do certain things and that’s fascinating to me.

**So you’re getting a bodily sense of all these experiences, feeling the physical sensations. In what way do you learn about yourself in this process?**

Sometimes I learn more than I care to know. I surprise myself often and oftentimes I don’t. It’s a relearning of what I already know but sometimes I’m not prepared to go there so by doing this kind of work it’s in my face and it comes up for a reason. It always comes up at the right time. There is no wrong time. In how I choose to adapt it or use it is my choice but I really am learning that through this kind of work, although it's spontaneous, it’s also very suited and very fitting for where I’m at or what I need. It really is a learning of self-trust. All sorts of things get explored. Through all artwork I think there’s a lot of sexual energy that goes in as well on a very very deep level. Spiritual energy although I don’t tend to focus on that. The essence of this learning is trusting myself.

**Coming back to your own core, what you really are .... the ‘Eye Am’.**

It becomes a trusting of the body and its impulses and its spontaneous actions. I trust my body more than I trust my mind. My body knows everything, my mind knows very little. My body tells me things before they even hit my mind. I live everything through my body... my happiness, it totally affects my physical body. I don’t do a lot of thinking, I do
a lot of feeling, as a person I'm a walking sort of felt-sense all the time. I have a hard
time rationalizing unless I really don't want to go somewhere, like I really don't to get
into it, then I can rationalize until the cows come home but that's when I know to get
your colours out or get your clay out and do what you need to do because you're
avoiding something.

Just to sum up ...
What works for you, what doesn't work for you and how did you come to know this?

The terms of expressing and allowing myself to have expression there's not a lot that
doesn't work for me. Even doing a form of expression that I'm not particularly interested
in becomes more of a question of am I not interested in it or I don't feel that I'm good at
it. I work very hard at keeping myself in expression mode not creating a masterpiece,
not something I can frame and hang up on my wall, it's about the feeling, it's about what
I get out of it by doing it and what I learn.

I've come to point where if this is one of the few areas of my life that I don't strive
constantly to create perfection or be responsible. It's not about that. It's just about me
and it's about being true to myself so all other things go out the window.

All the analyzing ...
Yes, what are doing? You’re 27. This isn’t what you should be doing on a Friday night. Even down to things as not having money and rather than going and getting cereal, I go and get a sketch pad sometimes because that’s going to help me in some way find how to get money to buy cereals. I’m working with myself for myself allowing myself to bring in and find things that are going to create what I need in order to survive in the responsible real world as a functioning human being.

It’s another way of nourishing yourself.

Yes. It’s like allowing yourself to have a party for yourself. You invite whoever you want. You do the games you want to play in that expression.

Fascinating. Thank you.
This is an interview with Anna and we are going to begin with the question, "Does the gesture or act of expression in the expressive arts allow one to access his or her inner knowing/felt-meaning, and if so, how does this come about?"

When I draw a picture (for expression), I am not always conscious or planning what I want to draw -- I just let my hand paint it, draw it from a feeling, not from my mind.

When I am finished drawing or painting and I look at the picture, I may not still be able to fully access in my awareness, the meaning of the drawing. For example, in one exercise we did in class, I painted a large mural type of picture and laid it out on the floor. I let my body slowly dance across the picture starting at one end with my eyes closed. I needed to get in touch with the feeling of the painting, inside my body. I found it was more powerful to do this with my eyes closed -- only opening them now and again to stay oriented and balanced so as not to bump into things.

When I closed my eyes, I got the image inside of me, it was not quite the same as the painting, in that it felt more real, as if I was actually in the flowers, the water, things that I had painted. I was not detached, just looking at them. I was in the experience of being a part of them.

I remember that painting -- it was a huge one -- with a lady bug, flowers and water that you danced across and were you feeling the different aspects of the picture when you were dancing?

Yes, in fact when I was dancing across the water, I felt my body cooler, calmer -- I had my eyes closed at the time and I remember thinking, "This is interesting -- what is this?"
So, I opened my eyes for a second and realized I was dancing in the water. My body already had the experience of the water’s coolness, calmness before I even consciously knew that I was on that part of my painting. It wasn’t conscious, it just happened.

And you felt the coolness of the water before you even realized by opening your eyes that you were there?

Yes.

Amazing, and you could sense that in your body. And then when you moved to other parts of the picture, did you realize anything?

Actually, the water sticks out in my mind the most because I was so surprised by what had happened. When I moved into the flowers, I remember noticing that there was a smile on my face and I remember that I smelled something — my sense of smell was activated. It smelled as if I had been standing in the garden.

So somehow you were expressing physically all that you had painted.

Yes, that is what I mean by saying I was a part of the picture and I was in the picture. It is complex in that I was both the water and in the water.
So, there was no boundary between yourself and the water — you were both the water and yourself at the same time.

Yes.

Do you still have this painting?

No. I hung it in my bedroom for awhile and then I felt I had moved on from there and discarded it.

It is like other pictures that I do. I only keep them while they represent where I am. Once something shifts and I move on from there, I no longer keep them. I focus on where my body image is now.

When you move on, what is happening, does something shift, how are you experiencing this?

Sometimes, I wake up in the morning and I look at my picture and I have this sense that it is time to move on -- at this time I try to get in touch with my body -- take another piece of paper and draw how I am feeling. This picture might be brighter, more distinct, and I take down the old one and put up the new. It is an evolving thing -- not totally conscious -- then I begin to see change and movement.
I remember when you first started using dance/body movement that you drew a series of pictures of your body, after the dance, and hung them in your bedroom, where you could see a progression happening. What did you experience?

With the dancing, I think I saw my body as becoming more defined. The first picture, I remember, was more hazy and the hands were close to the body, no movement, no energy. My body looked like it was in a kind of armour.

The last picture, the face was more alive, happier. The colour were brighter, the body was more defined, there was no more armour. The whole picture was just happier, colours brighter, a completely different feeling. Something on the inside was coming to life, as my dancing progressed.

In one drawing, I recall drawing myself -- my body had shining around it, different colours of light and there was energy coming from this. I remember feeling this energy around me for several days after this without even looking at this picture.

**How do you experience the focusing technique?**

Focusing is much different than the expressive arts. I am able to get in touch with the felt sense in focusing but it is much different. It is more of a dialogue that is happening. When I am drawing, dancing, more senses are activated. It is not just my mind that is activated, but my whole body. Art has a deeper impact on me. It involves all of my
senses. I am primarily a visual and a kinescetic person, so art has more impact on me. Focusing is good, it is just that it doesn't stay with me as long as the dance and the art.

What do you find works for you, what doesn't and how have you come to know this?

Highly structured work less so. I liked working within the group because I am being gently supported. Also, the energy of the group seems to bring out more feeling. Dance, painting, writing poetry are all good. Auditory -- sounds, toning is less so unless it is used in combination with some of the others. As I mentioned, I am more visually and kinescetically oriented.

Thank you so much for your time and sharing your experiences. I appreciate your allowing me to unfold your personal experiencing in my thesis.
This is an interview with Edward and we are going to begin with the question, "Does the gesture or act of expression in the expressive arts allow one to access his or her inner knowing/felt-meaning, and if so, how does this come about?"

I feel that art is a direct expression of the person. For example, when I am performing or making something, it has my own personal stamp about it. Even if I am trying to avoid something, it has a way of surfacing. When I begin to reflect on and try to understand something about what I have created, it gives me a sense through colour in paintings or other visual interpretations how my body or inner knowledge is responding to some inner aspect of myself.

*When you start to dance, how are you experiencing this?*

Well, I might feel self-conscious and that certainly tells me something, or I can feel a sense of release or connection to other experiences, such as how I feel when I go up north, and get out of the city and walk by the lake -- a freeing sensation, one of connection to myself and to my surroundings.

*We were talking about dance and art, so in what way do the expressive arts allow you to explore unconscious material and how does that come about?*

For myself -- whenever we made masks or did improvisation, I begin to interact in a new way.
For example, in one exercise in improvisation, we were to think up a character and present ourselves as this particular person, giving a few minutes of his/her story. For some reason, I immediately had an image of a person called Carlos. One of our group jumped up and pencilled a thin mustache on me and I threw a multi-coloured throw over my shoulder and began to present a very masculine authoritative figure in speaking and interacting with the others. Who knows where this came from, because I don’t usually talk or act in this macho way. So if I want to delve into that, I could ask myself, why did I happen to choose this particular character? Is this an aspect of something that I want in my life right now? Should I bring it forward, do I want this?

So, this was an aspect of you that just came forward.

I could have chosen anything but this is what came forward in the improv. It was all so spontaneous, even the mustache -- I questioned even whether I would want a mustache.

So, are you saying that when you chose to do Carlos that this was an aspect of something in you that came forward? How does this compare to focusing?

Yes, and the improv. served to open this up -- whereas through dialogue or talk as in focusing therapy, it might have taken a lot longer to emerge. If it had come forward through talking, I might have intellectualized it more. Here, by actually doing or being a
Carlos or whatever, I can actually feel what it is like and how I am feeling doing or performing it, so it is a much more connecting process and leaves a greater impact.

There is also an interesting element of syncronicity when creating something. For example, it was interesting that when I chose a character to write about in a short story, I had named the main character after a colleague in my dance class. In my short story this woman had rescued and cared for this cat which was injured and dying of infection. Well, when I mentioned this to my colleague that I had written this character using her name and some of her mannerisms and the story about the cat, it turned out that she had actually had this very experience only recently of which I had had no previous knowledge.

Another aspect that comes forward in my short stories is often the plot revolves around something that I am struggling with in my own life. And as the story unfolds, I begin to work through my own issues. Interestingly, I may start out with an idea of the ending for the story but it never seems to work out that way, because as I become involved in the characters I come to appreciate them and something shifts so that the story evolves in a more natural way. By allowing the character to become who they really are, the story has a better flow and begins to feel right.
These characters provide a way of seeing aspects of myself and as I come to understand and find an appreciation of them, in essence, I begin to accept more fully my own characteristics.

When I began to write my first short story, I just had this feeling, something that had come from a dream fragment. I began writing not knowing fully where this story was taking me. As it progressed, some very unlikely things began to emerge and then it dawned on me -- Ah, this is what this is all about. It began to become clearer. By immersing myself in this writing, I started to realize that my characters where acting out something significant in my life. I was accessing my own issues. It's funny, we think we have a certain kind of knowledge about ourselves, but through writing or some other expressive medium, something emerges from deep within.

This added knowledge of ourselves can come as almost an epiphany and gives us another way of looking at things. The whole process can be very transformative . . . intuitively, I begin to unfold more dimensions of myself and in the process, there is this feeling of greater unity in my whole being -- a feeling of freeing up of my own spirit, like the painting I did of the phoenix rising.

In another creative writing exercise, I rewrote Psalm 23 in my own experience, and received many insights. This exercise actually became a catalyst for my own commitment and connection to my faith. This writing was a translation, so to speak, of
the psalm, in my own terms via my own life experience. Before I had done this, I had not fully appreciated its meaning and richness. In my writing, I began to reflect on my life and what was significant. I also looked at my feelings around key turning points and transitions, including the passing of family and friends, some from AIDS. I began to realize how thankful I am for the blessings of life itself and in my own life.

I found that I was able to pull together feelings that I had had over time but was never able to fully articulate. This psalm embraces so much of life that the writing of my own version brought me into contemplation with important issues such as life and death, nature and our disassociation with its value, even the significance of the ritual act of communion . . . Most importantly, I was given an opportunity to appreciate my own roots and what my faith means for me.
Psalm 23

The Lord is my Shepard: I shall not want.

The Supreme Power of the Universe fills me -- gives me energy. Its abundance is there for all who believe in its power.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside still waters.

I breathe in peacefulness from the warmth and green growing lushness of a summer day. The cool depths of a pool bathe away my cares and restores my calm.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

My spirit grows and replenishes in communion with the body and blood of Christ, whose light shone a beacon for me to absorb and follow.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: For Thou art with me; Thy rod and staff they comfort me.

As beloved friends and family depart this earth, I feel death's shadow shrouding me, but your supreme radiance once again lights my life and I find strength and courage to fulfill the moments before me on this earth.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over.

Each day I marvel at the wondrous gifts bestowed upon me in the face of the abuses and impoverishment I witness about me. I have been blessed a thousand-fold.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

The spirit and gifts of Christ reflected in me will lead me through my days on earth to a fulfillment that will carry beyond my time here.