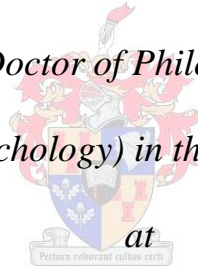# A TRANSPERSONAL EXPLORATION OF THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP IN TRANSITIONAL LIFE CYCLES

by
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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained herein is my own original work, that I am the author thereof (save to the extent explicitly stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

DATE: 20 November 2012

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- My father would have been proud; I thank him in loving memory;

- And then there is Blom. We will go for more and longer walks now!

ABSTRACT

The mother-daughter relationship and the feminine principle in the process of individuation are explored in this study. The mother-daughter relationship as the focus of the study is presented as the womb where the stories and experiences are in gestation. In presenting this research as a transpersonal exploration, the principles and practices of transpersonal psychology and transpersonal research are used as the lens through which the process of research is viewed.

The study tells the stories of adolescent daughters and their menopausal mothers and their lives as girls and women in transitional life cycles. It also tells the stories of the author's mother and of herself, and offers their shared experiences of being daughters, and remembering that they are also the daughters of daughters, the mothers of whom have passed away a long time ago. The stories are presented in the mode of a narrative inquiry, becoming an exploration in itself.

The author looks into the stories of what has been written by those who have mapped the territory of the transpersonal and narrative landscapes in psychology, education, research and psychotherapy. A research collage of the mother-daughter relationship, transitional life cycles, and also of aspects of the feminine and the process of individuation is created. Images of alchemy, archetypes, mythological figures and archetypal goddesses are added to allow this collage to become its own story. The study combines research methods used in transpersonal research and narrative inquiry. Data were gathered by making use of journal writing, mandala drawings, interviews, visual imagery and photographs, collage, writing letters, personal documentation, dreamwork, working with words and personal mythology. Transpersonal principles such as meditation, reflection, mandala drawings, intuitive listening and so forth were applied in working with the data. The researcher also used principles of narrative inquiry to assist in the process of processing the information and finding the stories.

The research findings that emerged indicate that a mother and daughter can hold up a mirror to each other in order to see that there are experiences of abandonment and dependency in their relationship; another mother and daughter pair related to each other from a basis of limiting self-experience; and yet another mother and her daughter were seen to have a relationship that contains powerful potential for individuation through the process of growth and transformation. These findings may be relevant to the therapeutic and educational spheres of psychology, in training and in application.

This research journey is an adventure that can be seen as symbolically walking the labyrinth, following the circular path towards the centre, and then back again, out into life. This journey is symbolic of the process of individuation as based on the mythology of the serpent Ouroboros that swallows its tail in order to become whole. The process of alchemy in psychology forms the container for this journey into wholeness.

Like Theseus, beloved of Ariadne of antiquity, I took the golden thread in hand and stepped into the labyrinth. The journey could begin …

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie verken die moeder-dogter verhouding en die vroulike beginsel in die individuasieproses. Die moeder-dogterverhouding as die fokus van hierdie studie word voorgestel as 'n houer vir die bewaring van belangrike aspekte van die vroulike beginsel. Die modus van transpersoonlike sielkunde en navorsing is gebruik om as 'n lens te dien waardeur hierdie proses ondersoek is.

Die narratiewe navorsingsmetode is gebruik om die stories te vertel wat in hierdie studie aangebied word. Hierdie stories gaan oor die navorsingsreis, die reis van dogter-wees en moeder-wees, die reis van vrou-wording en vrou-wees in die oorgangsfases van vroue se lewens. Dit behels stories van adolessensie en die menopouse. Daarnaas geplaas is die stories van my moeder, van myself, en van ons verhouding. In hierdie vertelling oor die moeder skryf ek dit as die dogter van 'n dogter wie se moeder lank reeds oorlede is.

Ek onderneem 'n reis deur die landskap van die literatuur en neem daaruit stories van aspekte van vrou-wees, van die vroulike beginsel, asook van transpersoonlike sielkunde en transpersoonlike navorsing. Dit gaan ook oor die narratiewe wyse van ondersoek en die waarde van stories in narratiewe terapie word bespreek.

Hierdie navorsingsreis is 'n speurtog; soos in 'n labirint is dit 'n sirkelvormige reis, wat die mitologiese slang, Ouroboros, wat sy eie stert insluk om heel te word weerspieël. Die labirinte van die mitologie en argetipiese vroubeelde en godinne stem tot nadenke oor die sielkundige ervaring van individuasie. In die nadenke is daar, soos met die alchemiste van weleer, 'n soeke die goud in die lood en die bevindinge wat die navorsingsreis oplewer, word bekendgemaak. In hierdie reis is gebruik gemaak van transpersoonlike en narratiewe navorsingsmetodes en beginsels om die inligting te verkry waarmee die stories vertel kon word. Hierdie metodes maak onder meer gebruik van joernaalskryf, mandalas teken, onderhoude, visuele beelde en foto's, *collage*, briewe, persoonlike dokumente, droomwerk, woorde en woordassosiasie en persoonlike mitologie. Transpersoonlike werkswyses soos meditasie, refleksie, intuitiewe luister, joernaal skrywe en so meer is gekombineer met narratiewe werkswyses om die inligting te verwerk en die stories te ontgin.

Die navorsingsbevindinge dui op ervaringe van afhanklikheid en vrese van verlating; van 'n moeder en dogter wat gebuk gaan onder beperkende ervaringe van selfvertwyfeling en die

implikasie wat dit het vir hulle vrou-wees; van 'n moeder en haar dogter wat die potensiaal vir die proses van individuasie in hulle verhoudinge met hul vroueliggame vind. Die implikasies van hierdie bevindinge mag moontlik van belang wees vir sielkundiges en opvoedkundiges wat hulle in hierdie sfere van hulpverlening bevind.

Soos Theseus, beminde van Ariadne van ouds, het ek die goue draad ter hand geneem en daarmee die ingang van die labirint betree. Die reis moes begin …

I don't know any other way to live now. My dreams provide the rudder for my life. My work is to find my own authenticity and then to surrender that to a higher purpose. It is at the place of wounding that we find ourselves connected to each other in love, and it is here that I open to loving other people, loving the planet, loving the cosmos. I think the future of our planet depends on human beings discovering their own light, becoming conscious of the universe as one soul.

(Marion Woodman, 1993, p. 109)

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PRELUDE

Myth is a universal language. Myth provides an opening into the telling of the story of being human; it explains the origins of the world inhabited by humans. It has been said that mythology is a validation of the spiritual and psychological dimensions of human experience (Baring & Cashford, 1991; Campbell, 2008). It has also been said that "myths are universal human truths" (Lonegren, 2001, p. 53). In the words of Atkinson (1988),

> [a] living mythology contains symbols, motifs, and archetypes that speak to us on a very fundamentally human level; they reverberate beyond the personal and into the collective realm. They carry a power that connects us with that deepest part of ourselves (p. 9).

This research journey echoes the mythology of Ouroboros, the serpent swallowing its own tail. Von Franz (1980, p. 70) describes Ouroboros, the symbol of the circumbulation of the Self, as an alchemical work of individuation.

In this study, I include the myth of the Minotaur, Theseus and Ariadne, the myth of Demeter, Kore and Hecate, and the myth of Inanna in order to provide a pathway for the telling and receiving of the universal stories of the relationship between mothers and daughters and of Being Feminine, as this forms the heart of the study. I explore some of these stories in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

THE MYTH OF THE MINOTAUR, THESEUS AND ARIADNE[1]

> From the sea, Poseidon sent the King Minos of Crete a magnificent white bull. The King should have sacrificed the animal to the god but he decided to keep it and killed another in its place. When Poseidon saw this, he punished Minos by making Pasiphae, his wife, fall in love with the bull. Unable to control her desire, she found a way to mate with the beast and so gave birth to a son, half human and half bull, who was called the Minotaur. When Minos saw what happened, he had the monster imprisoned in a maze called a labyrinth designed for him by the

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[1] I have used the version offered by Virginia Westbury (2001).

architect Daedalus. Every nine years he exacted a tribute from Athens of seven youths and seven maidens to sacrifice to the Minotaur in the labyrinth. One year, Theseus, the son of the King of Athens, vowed to slay the monster and volunteered to become one of the men to be sent to Crete. Arriving on the island, he was greeted by Ariadne, daughter of Minos and Pasiphae, who fell in love with him and offered him a ball of golden thread with which to find his way out of the labyrinth. Armed with that and a spear, Theseus slew the Minotaur and escaped. He and Ariadne then fled to the island of Naxos, where he abandoned her before heading back to Athens to become king.

THE MYTH OF DEMETER AND KORE AND HECATE[2]

The myth begins with Kore playing with her friends in a meadow, gathering flowers. In the distance is her mother, Demeter. Kore spies a fragrant flower, the narcissus, which Earth caused to grow at her father Zeus's request to entice the girl for Hades. As Kore reaches out her hands to take the lovely blossom, the earth opens, and out leaps Hades, lord of the underworld. He seizes her and bears her away, weeping and wailing, in his golden chariot.

As Demeter hears her daughter's cries, "a sharp pain seizes her heart" and she speeds like a wild bird over land and sea, searching for her child. No one wants to tell her the truth. For nine days, she wanders over the earth with flaming torches in her hands, fasting, her hair untied. "Not once did she taste ambrosia or the sweet draught of nectar, for she was grieving, nor did she once plunge her body in bath." Hecate, goddess of the crossroads, tells Demeter that she heard Kore's cries but did not see who carried her off. Together they go to the Sun, who tells them that Zeus gave Kore to his brother Hades.

For as long as Kore is lost, Demeter causes the earth to be barren. When it becomes apparent to Zeus that the human race will perish and the gods will be denied their honour should Demeter not be appeased, Zeus is forced to send Hermes to the underworld to bring Kore back. Hades allows her to go but not without affirming himself as a worthy husband and her as Persephone, queen of

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[2] I have used the adapted version of the hymn by Homer (7th century B.C.). This adaptation is by Virginia Rutter (1993).

the underworld, by slipping her a pomegranate seed to eat so that she would have to return to him. Hermes takes her back to her mother who is waiting at her temple in Eleusis.

They spend the whole of that day with hearts united, and they warm each other's hearts with many gestures of affection. Hecate joins the mother and their daughter in their reunion and, from that day on, attends Persephone. The ecstatic Demeter makes the ground fertile again and bestows two gifts on the Greek people, the gift of grain, or corn, and the gift of the Mysteries.

Postscript: Kore is the generic word for 'girl' in Greek.

THE MYTH OF INANNA, QUEEN OF HEAVEN AND EARTH[3]

In this myth, Inanna is the queen of heaven and earth. She has a sister, Erishkigal, who is the queen of the underworld. Inanna decides to visit her sister who is mourning the death of her husband, Gugalanna. Inanna wisely prepares well for her journey into the underworld. She takes her servant Ninshubur with her, giving very specific instructions, should she not return to earth within three days. Ninshubur should "cry in lamentation, play the drum, wander through the houses of the gods, tear at her body and wear rags". It is clear that she has to be in mourning. Furthermore, she also has to visit, taking turns, Enlil (Inanna's paternal grandfather), Nanna (her father) and Enki (her maternal grandfather). She has to beg their assistance in saving Inanna's life.

For her descent into the underworld, Inanna wears royal robes and beautiful jewellery, all of which symbolise her sacred powers. In order to be granted access into Erishkigal's chambers, Inanna is required to shed something at each of the seven gates she has to pass through. She arrives before her sister naked, where she is killed and her body hung on a hook from the wall.

After three days Ninshubur follows the instructions left to her by her queen, exactly as she was requested to do. She is refused by Enlil and Nanna. Enki, however, understands that Inanna is in grave danger and comes to her rescue. He creates two androgynous creatures from dirt under his fingernails and names them Galaturra and Kurgarra. Enki gives these two creatures "the life-giving water and the life-giving plant", with the instruction to creep into the underworld and to join the moaning Erishkigal. She will be mightily pleased with their moaning and offer them gifts. They are to refuse the gifts and ask for the rotting body of Inanna instead. Their request is granted and the water and food of life is sprinkled over Inanna. She comes to life, but in order to leave the underground, she has to make a sacrifice (someone has to live in the underworld). Her choice falls on her husband, Dumuzi, as he is stuck in his upper-world absorption of power and accoutrements. The story goes that Dumuzi's sister Geshtinanna has great compassion for his suffering and offers to share his time in the underworld, where each of them resides for six months of the year …

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[3] I have used the story as retold by Sylvia Senensky (2003).

PROLOGUE

Listen. To live is to be marked. To live is to change, to acquire the words of a story, and that is the only celebration we mortals really know. In perfect stillness, frankly, I've only found sorrow (Kingsolver, 1999, p. 385).

These words written by Kingsolver led to an exploration of the possibility of creating a story of aspects of women's lives, which, in turn, inspired looking into the wonder of stories. Personal stories change as people grow and can capture meaningful changes in their lives. This study is commenced with a prologue. The meaning of the word prologue points toward a preliminary discourse whereby an idea is outlined before the main offering as an introduction (Paperback Oxford English Dictionary, 2006). The purpose of this prologue is to sketch the background against which this study and the dissertation that is presented can be offered.

Embarking on this scholarly journey demanded a conscious decision to don the hat of authenticity, to be true to my Self,[4] and to be transparent about what I was able to create, as well as to be clear about what it is that falls inside the boundaries of my own capacities and capabilities. In this prologue the intention is also to introduce the two pathways along which my scholarly exploration was unfolding: a convergence of academic and personally lived paths. Conle (2000) said that her "lived and academic routes became one road. The lived quest lent itself to inquiry because its telos was tacit" (p. 191). It is thus important to see in this study two scenes moving simultaneously across the same screen in a quest for knowledge and understanding through inquiry. The concept of reflexivity can take various forms in the tradition of poststructuralism, adding a voice to scholarship and innovation (Richardson, 1996). Speedy (2008) says that everything we do and write (in research) is reflexive, and reflects both sides of the spaces between the researcher and what is researched. I experience a sense of kinship with Pelias, as cited in Leavy (2009), who suggests that research which is heartfelt, matters. He writes that he speaks "the heart's discourse because the heart is never far from what matters. Without the heart pumping its words, we are nothing but an outdated dictionary, untouched" (Leavy, 2009, p. 2). It is for these reasons that I chose to create a study based on research practices that fall outside the norm of traditional inquiry.

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[4] Please refer to the glossary for an explanation of the use or the capital 'S'.

I was inspired to explore the research methods that Leavy collectively refers to as "arts-based research practices" because a transpersonal exploration of the mother-daughter relationship, the feminine principle and the individuation process, according to my experience and understanding, represents fundamental aspects of human experience. Such an exploration may be exceptionally difficult to conduct through traditional research methods. From Leavy's work I understood that arts-based research practices are methodological tools which are used by qualitative researchers across the disciplines of social research. These are used throughout the current research journey and include methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. Arts-based research methods are also employed in the representation of the study, its findings and how these are reported.

In this study and with this dissertation I consciously walked into the intersection within the research community where passion and rigor meet. I became a researcher working with new tools, merging my interests while trying to create knowledge based on resonance and understanding, as pointed out by Leavy (2009). I was particularly interested in the meaning-making dimension of these research practices through narrative inquiry. I thus took the role of a research *bricoleur*; my work is an example of research *bricolage* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Bruner, as cited in Clandinin (2007), argues that, when researchers became interested in the nuances of meaning, the focus on using numbers (possible in positivist, traditional research) restricted opportunities for making meaning from their research. In this study, I explored information that provides meaning in a different way. Guided by the researchers mentioned here, I strove towards creating methods whereby meaning may be found in a creatively intricate, relational way with subtle expression of information. I turned to words in telling stories of the relationships between mothers and daughters, telling intimate stories of women's lives in transition and looking deeply into the stories of aspects of women's lives that allow them to make meaning of their experiences of being women. Narrative inquiry assisted in this process. In order to be as expansive as possible in this research endeavour of 'bridging a methods gap', I have also included the inquiry of transpersonal research. Transpersonal research is in itself augmented by non-traditional research practices (Braud, 1998).

To adhere to the principles of qualitative research, I am compelled to reflect just briefly on the issue of trustworthiness as researcher. Narrative inquiry and transpersonal research praxis insist on reflexivity as a guideline in establishing ethical, accountable and transparent

research practice. As such the researcher would scrutinise the relational aspect of herself/himself in proximity to the co-researcher and the data gathering and analysing, as well as presentaton. I discuss this issue in the 'chapters' *Lapis Philosophorum* and Red Sulphur, in addition to constant reference to this as I wander along the labyrinth of the research journey.

The use of mythology and the process of alchemy in the study serve as an approach to allow the symbols of the feminine principle and the process of individuation to reflect the journey of life and the discovery of its transitions and transformations, while simultaneously acting as a mirror to reflect this research journey. Genie Palmer as cited in Braud and Anderson (1998) suggests that labyrinths are powerful symbols of a journey or a pilgrimage. She says that, "[a]s a visual image the labyrinth symbolizes the extent and the depth of this (transpersonal) methodology" (p. 171). My first experience of walking the labyrinth is coupled with the exhilaration of stepping into the mystery of discovering something yet unknown, not only about myself, but about conducting research, about the experiences of doing the field work, exploring the stories of the co-researchers, and more. Eason (2004) suggests that walking the labyrinth may be experienced in stages of ignorance, learning and understanding. My experience of the journey of the research process and my personal quest for individuation have been similar in character.

The use of alchemical symbology and metaphor throughout this dissertation is based on this process of Becoming (whole). The data obtained by using transpersonal research methods such as mandala drawings, meditation and dreamwork presented images, symbols and guidance which assisted in informing the process of becoming, as is indicated in the aim of the study. I go into great depth and detail in describing these in the 'chapter' *Coniunctio*. The presentation of this dissertation is ordered according to alchemical symbology. Narrative inquiry is encouraged to steer away from a more conventional application of chaptering (Josselson, Lieblich & McAdams, 2003). In lieu of a standard practice of chaptering, I use aspects of alchemy to indicate the development of the research process.

The study is a collaboration; the voices of the co-researchers, the girls and women whose stories have been continued to be heard. Writing this dissertation requires that I honour them by expressing my gratitude for the gift of their stories. The power of the story of another person's life and exposure of their souls create a deep sense of reverence in me and, like Rutter (1993), I feel responsible for keeping this information safe and contained.

In concluding this prologue I present this research project with reference to the central theme in so many mythologies world-wide: "The hero's struggle to enter the woods of unknowing, to confront oppositions and aids, and to return to his/her community with the boon of new knowledge" (Slattery, 2008, p. 7).

CHAPTER 1

PRIMA MATERIA:
BACKGROUND TO THE JOURNEY

A child called Lilly stood with her mother on the mesa in the evening light. "Mother", she asked, "Does the woman who lives in the earth know the weaver who lives in my soul?" "Yes, I think she does", her mother answered. Lilly watched the silver creek slide through the soft dark green of the cottonwoods. "And what" she asked, "does this weaver weave in the middle of my soul?" Sarah smiled and looked into her daughter's eyes. "She weaves a story that is hidden beneath all your thoughts and dreams," replied Sarah (Wolfe, 1996, p. 171).

This quotation captures various nuances of this study, such as the relationship between mother and daughter, the process of individuation, and the possible meaning that stories may have in the exploration of lives.

In my consultation room I have an old-fashioned portrait of a beautiful young woman and a beautiful young man. From their embrace it is clear that there is a very deep bond between them; they seem to be connected to each other by an almost tangible expression of oneness. This picture has been a source of inspiration to me for many years. The image of their union tells me the story of becoming whole, of being one with Self. In the context of the safe space of this room it becomes a symbol of individuation. In alchemical language the union is referred to as *coniunctio,* which Jung has formulated as the process of individuation (Von Franz, 1980, p. 272). In conducting this study, I have been *looking under the rocks for the words*[5] in an attempt to understand the experiences and the meaning this may have for the girls and women who became involved in the research process. I explored their experiences which could pertain to the process of individuation and how they found meaning within this. My own quest for meaning in the process of individuation was pursued along the storyline of the personal pathway, as mentioned in the prologue.

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[5] This expression echoes the words of Maclean (1976), please see Chapter 3.

In the very early stages of preparing to embark on this journey of continuing my studies, I wrote in my journal[6]:

> *The fertile soil of imagination within the psyche receives the seeds of the archetypal experiences of Self. The non-authentic personal selves are being arranged along the divide of fear and love. I like the symbol of the seed. This inspires me to allow this blessed seed to grow. And so begins the journey towards the Self. Walking the labyrinth. Being a mandala. Becoming Ouroboros. This is the circular path that leads towards the centre of my Self, my luminous essence of Being. Individuation is the psycho-spiritual task of growth and becoming. Alchemy in terms of self-mastery is the transpersonal process which allows me to change like gold through fire ...*

In her study on the feminine principle in goddess archetypes, the Jungian psychotherapist and feminist Jean Shinola Bolen (1984) wrote that "[s]imilarly the heroine's journey is an individuation quest. Travelling this path the heroine may find, lose and rediscover what has meaning to her" (p. 293). In the individuation process, the journey along the circular path towards the centre of Self, the pilgrim is a hero or heroine. Our personal mythology evokes a reality which may be real or imagined, and it remains our personal quest to find the myth and its meaning. Such might the process of individuation be. One might postulate that the process of attempting to find meaning in one's own life, as well as in the lives of others, might assist in dealing with the paradoxical experience of chaos and ask whether psychological chaos is the loss of meaning and purpose (Weiner, 1991). Harris (1996) stresses this point by suggesting that we, within the state of paradox, have no difficulty in believing things that might seem contradictory. She summarises the possibility of connecting a "chaos theory" to the process of individuation by saying that "the slow dynamics of evolution through iteration or reverberation of events over time, appear to produce ordered wholeness by way of a teleological process of growth …" (Harris, 1996, p. 189). I understand that it may be that order therefore is obscured in the chaos, because it is part of a large, unfolding pattern, much like what I suspect the pattern of the individuation process may signify. It may also be that an understanding of the experience of meaning is necessary to assist the process of individuation. Richards (1989) says that it takes courage to grow up and turn out to be who

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[6] My own inscriptions in my journal are written in italics throughout the dissertation.

we are. She also argues that our becoming, this process of individuation, is based on the original, internal story of our Being: "We can become only what we already are! We can learn only what we already know! It is a matter of realizing potentialities!" (p. 125).

This study hence originated and developed from the witnessing of individuation stories in my practice as educational psychologist, reflecting aspects of my own story of becoming and Being.[7] It became a deep and genuine desire to explore, in various dimensions, the unfolding story of the experience of the meaning of Being a Woman. I thus embarked on this study in an attempt to find a way to make a contribution towards the education and empowerment of young girls and women. Some knowledge and understanding of the mother-daughter relationship and of the feminine principle, the individuation process, and also of the transitional life cycles and psychobiology of women, can be of assistance to educators, psychologists, therapists and other professionals involved in women's education, their wellbeing, growth and development, empowerment and health. Mao proclaimed that "[w]omen hold up half the sky" (Kristoff & Wudunn, 2009, p. 229). This statement inspired me to work towards making a contribution in the realm of the education and psychological wellbeing of girls and women, women's issues and studies. The work done by Kristoff and Wudunn is focused on finding solutions to problems of disempowerment faced by women across the world, in order to educate both women and men about the necessity for the emancipation of women in order to allow the unlocking of women's power.

From a feminist and poststructural perspective on women's studies, Lather (1992) writes that studying women from their own perspectives and delving into their own experiences are important features in planning and conducting research for women. By this means, women's issues are explored with different nuances, rather than merely conducting research *about* women. This notion is also expressed by the transpersonal researchers Hartelius, Caplan and Rardin (2007) who say that research about woman and aspects of the feminine is strengthened by the participation of women doing such and related research: "There is no way one can have a fully informed understanding of the feminine that is within and around human culture without the strong participation of women" (Hartelius et al., 2007, p. 19). To have women studying women and women working with women seems like a reasonable fit for working towards empowerment of women in an academic and therapeutic as well as a practical way.

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[7] I use the capital in 'Being' in order to echo the experience of 'Self', as explained in the glossary.

In this study, an attempt has also been made to contribute to a metacognitive cognition about the emotional and psycho-spiritual experience of women's wellbeing by using transpersonal practices to discover the stories of the girls and women, daughters and mothers who were involved. These tools and techniques for self-exploration and self-understanding are being conveyed and made available to researchers, teachers, therapists and other practitioners. Such tools could be used for their own intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal exploration, and also, as in the case of psychologists and therapists, with their clients. Cunningham (2007) says that, "[b]y opening avenues of expression that increase one's sense of worth and power, individuals become more likely to take steps in their own lives to express their ideals in whatever way is given them" (p. 50).

These words took me towards the exploration of a personal pathway. The journey undertaken through this study is an authentic expression of my own quest for wholeness. In the course of the study I have reflected on my own process of individuation. My own story is woven into this dissertation to serve as a road of discovery within the parameters of this particular study and research context. Richardson (2001) states that research narratives become a way of "getting personal" (p. 35). I understood that, by allowing my own story to emerge, I was being authentic in this research endeavour. O'Dea (1994) states that living one's authentic life opens a way to being liberated. I concede to that. Josselson and Lieblich (2003) remind us that narrative research is a voyage of discovery. The researcher makes a discovery of meanings that cannot be known at the outset of the research process The voices of the co-researchers revealed the stories which became the heart of this research. In this research journey, scholarly and personal discoveries were made. The research process simultaneously also allowed me to look into my own stories of becoming.

Von Franz (1980) interpreting a story about a Chinese sage, concluded that the greatest human achievement is simply to fulfil one's destiny. Alan Bleakley (1984) making use of a myth, retells the story of Parsifal in search of the Holy Grail and refers to the brutal battle that takes place between Parsifal and his "dark brother" (the shadow) Firefiz before he enters the grail castle. The symbolic meaning is significant in that one must "initially ride against, encounter and engage with, or confront the shadow before entering the castle where the secret of the grail may be revealed" (Bleakly, 1984, p. 16). Woodman refers to this as learning to speak with one's inner voice through the process of individuation (Woodman). Braud (1998) writes that, in original research projects, the transpersonal researcher gathers information

from his or her own experiences, as much as from those of the co-researchers. According to this author, in doing so, the researcher honours the "beyondness of trans", because this is a way of exploring new ways of knowing, being and doing (p. 6). Moreover, it creates the opportunity for new information and knowledge to emerge, thus contributing to the development of the particular discipline of inquiry.

As this study includes my own unfolding story, it also includes the story of my mother, as well as her stories of being a mother and a daughter. Richardson (2001) says that writing is a major feature in an academic's life. I understood that the writing of our life stories could have meaning and may possibly even expand into having meaning for others. Richardson (2001) sees autobiography as a valuable genre, and suggests that we can aspire to enrich the lives of others by being willing to share our own stories. Freeman (2002), in Clandinin (2007), writes that autobiographical writing is a powerful way to explore particular features and challenges of narrative inquiry. I concur with his notion that this form of exploration in the study of lives can be a valuable way of exploring and possibly even of understanding the human condition. I concede that "[autobiography] can help show how and why narrative inquiry might lessen the distance between *science* and *art* and thereby open the way toward a more integrated, adequate, and human vision for studying the human realm" (Clandinin, 2007, p. 120). The researcher's self, with its fantasies, biases and horizons of understanding, is the primary tool of inquiry. Therefore, self-knowledge and self-reflection become necessary to the project to tease out the aspects of what that is studied derives from the researcher (Clandinin, 2007).

I tell my story in this study to weave my authentic voice into the cloth of exploration; it is an attempt to demonstrate a process of psychological alchemy in the process of individuation. The words of Conle (2000) echo my experiences during the unfolding process of embracing and conducting this study:

> I came to accept my past at the same time as I understood and began to enact an alternative to a life lived under the constraints of that past. By working on my life in this way, following Dewey, I was simultaneously attending to my life, doing research, and bringing about an aesthetic creation … Inquiry, art and lived experience were linked. Form and content were linked (p. 199).

In addition, the autobiographical contribution in this study may be seen as an extension of the notion of accountability. In this regard I do not refer to the idea of accountability as a form,

perhaps, of justification; rather as a matter of looking back in the process of reflecting; of taking responsibility for what has been and what can be done, for what has been written is being dissolved and is also in the process of re-emerging through what has been written subsequently. I was thus attempting to be "truth"ful, my ethics based in personal veracity. My thoughts are eloquently echoed by Freeman (2002) who says that autobiographical writing becomes a matter of wrestling with one's own inner demons. I agree that it is crucial for the researcher to assess oneself according to one's own standards and aspirations, also including one's ideals (Clandinin, 2007). Gratitude and a sense of integrity may emerge when, on looking back over the landscape of my life, I see what I have done and been, what I have made of my unique attributes. There, however, can also be shame, resentment, and despair in viewing a life retrospectively when one considers that one could have fallen so sorely short of one's own potential.

In the light of striving to find meaning in the process of conducting and presenting this study, I have been keenly aware of what Freeman (2002) in Clandinin (2007) refer to as accountability. These authors bind accountability to a dimension of knowing and, more specifically, self-knowing, which they suggest can be found in the form of autobiographical reflection. I also found these words useful to anchor the notion of accountability in allowing my personal voice to enter this study: "Autobiography [therefore] presupposes a writer intent on reflection on this inward realm of experience, someone for whom this inner world of experience is important" (Clandinin, 2007, pp. 128, 129). This statement can be used to embellish an argument that researchers in the arena of narrative inquiry are invariably dealing with, namely the notion that there is no 'text' outside the self. The issue really is about how to deal with this in a way that facilitates turning such accounts into data that others might read and perhaps even benefit and learn from.

This study is about women and about various aspects of the essence of being a woman. It is also about becoming a woman, and about experiencing the changes which happen naturally in this process of development. In this study, the focus is on the mother-daughter relationship. A woman can reconnoitre[8] the feminine experience in relationships with other women, and in this way turn inward to herself. I agree with Rutter's statement that "This essential psychobiological relationship between mother and daughter, daughter and mother is the unconscious ground of feminine psychology and of a modern woman's life" (Rutter, 1993,

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[8] I choose to use this word in order to capture the meaning of exploration which hints at 'recognition' (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2001).

p. xv). Vermaak (1998) emphasises the significance of this relationship when she says that the daughter meets the inconceivably powerful force of the mother archetype in her relationship with her own personal mother. In the relationship between mother and daughter lie generations of genealogy where the threefold timeline of maiden-mother-crone continues to write a story of transpersonal initiations. Jung placed this relational aspect of the feminine consciousness at the heart of the feminine principle, using the archetypal Demeter and Kore concept (Rutter, 1993). In this study, I use the myth of Demeter, Kore and Hecate to serve as symbol of the relational and cyclical nature of the feminine being.

Mothers, in sharing the stories of their own and their mothers' lives, the stories of the births of their daughters and other related stories, can create the space for meaning, experience and understanding. In this study, the unique and intricate relationship of mothers and daughters is considered in the context of the research question: "What can be found in an exploration of this relationship constellation that is reflected by (or reflects) the feminine principle and the process of individuation?" The process of becoming and being a woman whilst in this relationship with the other, being a daughter and, for some, being a mother simultaneously, is fundamental to the exploration of the feminine principle in this study.

Writing about the stories of mothers and daughters and also telling the story of my mother and myself, as well as her story about her relationship with her mother, potentially holds the promise of revering some significance and relevance in the heritage of feminine wisdom. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, *cantadora* and psychotherapist, says that stories are medicine. She explains how stories have such power; they do not require that we do, be, or act anything, but only that we listen in order to benefit from the wisdom of the remedies (Estes, 1992).

All human lives are constantly in transition, because we are able to grow and become our authentic selves. The *aim* of this study is to explore an understanding of *meaning* in the experience of *being* a woman, as well as to explore meaning in the experience of *becoming* a woman. The story of a woman's life is about change. Each cycle of change introduces the possibility of making meaning, of finding the voice of Self. Each cycle of transition is an experience, perhaps with meaning, of the mysterious dimensions of becoming. This story of change is explored through asking another research question: "What can we learn about the cycles of transition in adolescence and menopause against the background of the mother-daughter relationship?" In the Paperback Oxford English Dictionary (2006), transition is described as the process of changing from one state to another. Transition is a natural,

essential aspect of cycles of change. Chuang Tzu expressed the wisdom of the Tao when he stated that "[t]he essential feature of the universe is the constant flow of transformation and change" (Speerstra & Speerstra, 2005, p. 122).

What else did I hope to see in their stories? I also wanted to explore whether there was an echo in the stories of cycles; I wondered whether it was possible to draw more than one circle in a given mandala. It sometimes happens that the circles in a mandala overlap, creating an almond shape in the centre. This is known as a *mandorla* and when it appears in a mandala, it is an indication of growth and grace (Fincher, 1991). Thus, what was being explored in the stories of the co-researchers, was whether unresolved issues about and of ourselves during adolescence reappear in menopause in order to be resolved, so as to intensify the process of individuation, much like overlapping intersections in the circles of our lives, which are symbols of ourselves.

Northrup (2005) suggests that menopause and puberty are reversed stages, which reflect the hormonal changes and fluctuations of each cycle. She further acknowledges the overlap between the beginning of puberty and the onset of perimenopause by saying that this creates "an enormous opportunity for healing at both ends of the mother-daughter spectrum" (p. 428). Adolescence and menopause provide rich content within which to explore the process of individuation; at the heart of these transitional cycles lies the search for Self, for meaning and for authentic identity. According to Bolen (1994) the path of individuation is an expression of authenticity. She says that, in this process of seeking wholeness, we become who we authentically are, bringing our inner world and outer expression in harmony. The transitional life cycles of adolescence and menopause could provide a framework for researching aspects of human experience that are relevant to individuation. According to Jungian psychology,[9] the psychological development of the stages of life is relevant to the estimated achievement of individuation, indicating a person's potential for full psychological development. Stein, as cited by Papadopoulos (2006) explains that an innate striving for becoming a centred and whole individual related to the transcendent and concrete realities of human existence is present within this process of human metamorphosis. He refers specifically to the life cycles of adolescence and menopause, stating that major crises of individuation may occur during these cycles of transition. The experience and meaning of such crises experienced by the co-researchers, my mother and myself are written into our

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[9] I address the issue of including Jungian theory in a poststructuralist study in the literature review.

stories in order to enhance an understanding as such, but also to expand and deepen this research and its possible significance.

In this chapter, these phases are dealt with just briefly, as I delve thoroughly into the heart of the experiences of adolescent girls and menopausal women when I venture into the landscape of literature in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 4, where the stories of the mothers and daughters taking part in this study are explored.

Pipher (1994) does not hesitate to cut to the bone when she describes adolescents as being in a foreign land, in being between the two worlds of childhood and adulthood. More specifically, she describes adolescent girls as: "saplings in a hurricane" (p. 52). It makes the heart cringe and I ache for these girls, for their mothers, and also for myself and my own mother, but this is something that I will deal with later, when I find the courage to open the closet where I stored the over-sized clothes and army boots and the wild red hair which I no longer wear.

The medical jargon for menopause is 'climacteric' (Glenville, 2004). Climacteric refers to the period of transition when the function of a woman's ovaries declines and stops releasing reproductive cells in the form of ova. Northrup (2001), a medical doctor concerned with women's health, writes about the reproductive hormones in a woman's body which change sufficiently to allow her to find the courage to express herself in a more expansive way (rather than merely playing dutiful roles like being a wife and mother). She, like Pipher, has a strong voice when she refers to midlife as "a volcanic energy " (p. 9).

The walk along this circular path of exploration reveals that the passage of midlife offers a choice: either to embrace the meaning and purpose of our lives, or to turn away from the opportunity to meet our Selves in the centre. The circumbulation of finding the sense of self in Self intensifies, and the serpent's mouth is reaching for its tail, perhaps in resemblance of entering the circular path of the labyrinth, walking towards the centre. The metaphor of the labyrinth seems appropriate here, as it forms the central symbolic motif of this journey: the path of individuation, also echoed by the process of alchemy. Senesky writes that,

> [b]ecause the labyrinth is a container wherein movement can occur; it provides us
> with a boundary we can bump against. This boundary creates a certain amount of
> tension, which provides the heat that stimulates transformation, just as fire

catalyzes the alchemical transformation of base products into gold (Senensky, 2003, p. 37).

Delving into an exploration of an understanding of women and the feminine principle can honour the essence of a woman's nature, her experience of her relationship with her body and its wisdom and the power of creativity that springs forth from there. Alice Howell (1987) writing about the mystery of the feminine principle, suggests that there is meaning and understanding in the experience of being feminine. She uses the moon as a symbol for the feminine and suggests that the feminine principle is more than a mere indication of gender. Howell points out that the feminine principle also pertains to a process of receiving, growing and transforming, and that the feminine principle can be seen as bringing forth life, or bringing it into manifestation through birthing. Bolen (1994) describes a woman's womb as an organ of fertile creativity, and as a symbol of the feminine principle. She suggests that a woman must have a sense of herself as being a woman to be an embodiment of the feminine principle. Bolen (1994) favours the term 'blood mysteries' to refer to various aspects of menstruation, pregnancy, menopause and so forth. The exploration of the blood mysteries of women may reside in these spaces of having a sense of Self in becoming and being a woman.

Exploring and revering the feminine heritage may retrieve our authentic identities, alchemically. Menses is explored in this study to honour the meaning and understanding of the experience of the feminine mystique. The personal stories of the maiden, the mother and the crone are woven into the red cloth of the menarche and the climacteric, honouring the cyclical ritual of menstruation.

In describing the origins of this study, various aspects were introduced to prepare the way for the reader to enter more deeply into the background of the study. The weaving of this cloth and piecing together of the details of the research quilt continues. James Hollis (1993) gives an interesting account of what he refers to as "the question of reality" when playing with glass prisms as a child (p. 9). He was led to reflect on the lens through which we look into the realities which constitute our lives, and pondered whether this lens does indeed determine our reality. The transpersonal lens provides an appropriate approach for this study as albeit becomes possible to study aspects of the human nature of Being in as much depth and detail as is appropriate. This lens also shows that there is a fractal in this journey: there is an appearance of repetition in the presentation of the study due to the nature of self-similarity. These aspects on which I focus all form parts of the whole. Wholeness is the focus of the

process of individuation; a circular tendency emerges and the transpersonal lens becomes a mandala in itself. The process of retrieving one's own authentic Self from the mysterious crypt of the human unconscious is a symbol of the process of intrapersonal alchemy. This process is circular and ever-unfolding. The transpersonal researchers Braud and Anderson (1998) state that, in scrutinising the original meaning of research, we find a circular tendency. They come to the understanding that "… the image of the circle suggests completeness, wholeness, regularity, order and, indeed, disciplined inquiry itself" (pp. 25-26).

The etymological roots of the word transpersonal signify beyond the mask (Braud & Anderson, 1998). The transpersonal experience of meaning is fundamentally about exploring one's highest potential and one's authentic identity. Wilber (2004) refers to this aspect of individuation as being the very depth of the transpersonal Self that is "pushed through", that the transpersonal Self is giving way to the universal or ultimate Self (p. 105). In transpersonal psychology the aim is to disclose and develop the source and deeper nature of identity and being. Based on Jung's psychological theory of individuation, Johnson (1986) argues that it is essential to learn how to work with one's unconscious in order to connect with the essence of who one is and who or what one is meant to become. With this in mind he writes that "[we] connect with the source of our evolving character; we co-operate with the process whereby we bring the total self together; we learn to tap that rich lode of energy and intelligence that waits within" (p. 9).

My understanding is that this task forms the focus of transpersonal psychology. In this study, an attempt was made to establish whether weaving the thread of words, stories, meaning and experience into the transpersonal fabric could create a pathway which may allow access to that dimension where transformation takes place. Anderson and Braud (2007) argue that the transpersonal vision for research emphasises personal growth and transformation. In continuing to explore and searching for stories and for inspiration, I found the following and was grateful to those who have walked ahead of me:

> We seek not rest but transformation.
>
> We are dancing through each other as doorways.
>
> We are ripples crossing and fusing, journeying and returning
>
> from the core of the apple, the eye of the mandala,
>
> the cave in the heart of the rose,
>
> the circle without boundaries centered on silence.
>
> Marge Piercy, as cited in Andrews (1985, p. 80)

The process of individuation has an audible voice in this study. Here, however, it is considered just briefly as it is dealt with in much greater depth in Chapter 3. In his continuous exploration of the inner lives of men and women, Carl Jung found that, as life unfolds, an extensive web of psychological factors forms specific patterns. He referred to these patterns as the process of individuation. He declared that individuation is an expression of the process by which everything that has life is destined to become that which it was originally meant to be (Stevens, 1990). Thinking about the place where an acorn is an oak tree, I am reminded of the fact that Jung based his life's work on the theory of the principle of growth and development. The quest for individuation is thus based on the goal of the Self, which is wholeness.

It is important to anchor the study with firm roots of substance in the fertile soil of growing knowledge. Traditional ways of creating knowledge have been challenged by, for example, poststructuralist schools of thought. Poststructuralism allows for research outside of the norm of the positivist research context and this is the voice that was followed for this study. Non-traditional practices relating to the methodology, research practices and presentation are therefore found in the approach to and application of sampling,[10] validity, trustworthiness of data, data analysis and the trustworthiness and integrity of the findings, 'truth' (or verisimilitude), reflexivity and autobiographical contribution and ethics, as well as in my style of writing. I discuss these issues in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 where I weave in elements of poststructuralism and where I explore the threefold crisis confronting qualitative researchers in the human disciplines: the so-called "triple crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). William Braud (1997) poses an interesting analogy regarding the shift away from traditional positivist research towards more expansive

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[10] I am aware of the use of positivist language, which might seem like a contradiction. This is addressed in the discussion of the threefold crisis.

approaches to knowing by making reference to leys[11] (ley lines) and labyrinths. He suggests that the ley becomes a metaphor for the straight-to-the-goal approach; the traditional, empirical, numbers-orientated research approaches; and that the labyrinth becomes the symbol for the research approach which is patient, meandering, indirect, but always approaching the centre goal. This description is in alignment with how I relate to this study.

Much like the appearance of the almond-shaped *mandorlas*[12] in mandalas, it was in the confluence between a transpersonal exploration and conducting this study in the realm of narrative inquiry that I found a gap in the construction of knowledge where I am hoping to make a contribution. I explore the symbolism of mandalas in greater detail in Chapter 4 where I describe the work of the co-researchers; here it is sufficient to acknowledge the spontaneous appearance of symbolism. The *mandorla* symbolises a hidden treasure (like the almond in its husk) that suggests a harmonious merging which transcends duality (Chevalier & Gheerbrandt, 1996, p. 17). What is this *mandorla*, this *coniunctio* of the transpersonal approach and the narrative mode of inquiry? How scientific is this way of exploring, delving, finding and communicating findings? These were important questions that I have continued to reflect on.

I searched for inspiration in answering these questions and I found a muse in Jung's (1995) autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. He tells the story of how he experienced the now famous visions he had in 1944 after fracturing his foot and being hospitalised. He describes deep and profound transpersonal experiences which were not bound to a (time) frame of temporality:

> We shy away from the word 'eternal', but I can describe the experience only as the ecstasy of a non-temporal state in which present, past and future are one. Everything that happens in time has been brought together into a concrete whole.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that experience happens narratively, and that temporality is a key term in narrative studies. They explain that the narrative agenda allows space for the understanding that human experiences are not bound to the time in which they occurred. Life is experienced on a continuum of one's past, present and future. Geertz, as cited in Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refers to this as "temporal change" (p. 6). My

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[11] Ley lines are ancient, straight tracks, as opposed to labyrinths which are circular structures (Braud, 1997).

[12] Robert Johnson (1991) refers to the interface of two circles as a *mandorla,* the Italian word for almond.

understanding is that this temporal continuum is also circular, that there are only the cycles of life and death and rebirth, that is, the alchemical flame of transmutation.

More answers were found in the suggestion by Braud and Anderson (1998) that narrative inquiry is particularly relevant to the field of transpersonal exploration. They point out that our stories "[p]lumb the depth of the human psyche", searching for meaning and, possibly, an interpretation of the meaning. They say that, "in telling a story, the past as remembered and retold sheds light on the present and implicates the future" (p. 23). They refer to the *narrative projectory* as being the movement between timelines. This notion is strongly anchored in a transpersonal consciousness as they postulate that it is possible for a new awareness to develop in the telling, retelling (and possibly reliving) of the story. As such, new awareness may allude to growth and transformation. I agree with the understanding that in the research context a similar process of transformation and growth can occur in the lives and experiences of the researcher and the co-researchers.

This study is placed within the three-dimensional inquiry space particular to narrative inquiry. These three dimensions as identified by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) are temporality, (past, present and future) the interactional (personal and social) and the matter of location. I ventured to identify three areas of overlapping focus, as there is a fractal in the research puzzle. I have indicated that this study explores the transitional life cycles of adolescence and the menopause (temporality); that the mother-daughter relationship is the container within which these cycles are explored (personal and social); and that I locate the study within the reflection by the feminine principle in order to see how and if, or if and how, this will serve as an impetus for the individuation process to unfold. In Chapter 4 a clear picture emerges when I tell the story of the research journey and discuss the findings in the light of this fractal.

Experts in narrative research, like Clandinin and Connelly (2000) are clear about the fact that, for them, narrative inquiry is the best way of representing and understanding human experience. I relate to their statement that "… experience is what we study and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it" (p. 43). According to their colleagues, narrative researchers have a common quest to discover and describe the meaning of experience (Lieblich & Josselson, 1997). In an earlier contribution, Lieblich and Josselson (1994) also say that telling one's story is a means of becoming, just as much as having a story to tell is significantly part of the

story. Their statement thus echoes the transpersonal way of thinking. It may be that as we imaginatively live our stories, and as we develop a new awareness or expand our consciousness of ourselves, we may find ourselves in the process of individuation. From a transpersonal perspective, the nature of growth and, more particularly, human growth, it is argued that human nature needs to change and evolve (Cunningham, 2007).

Prinsloo (2003), whose study falls into the same genre as mine, cites Poplin (1996) who argues that research is a moral task and that it ought to reflect a merging of, amongst other dimensions of human experience, the intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of things. I felt at ease with the suggestion that research is not merely about accumulating knowledge but that it is also about the wisdom which is gained from the process; that the deeper wisdom is in knowing that it is often the unseen that is most important in life. I was relieved and felt reassured that it was possible to be both a scholar and a pilgrim. It therefore became even more important that the research design in this study would mirror the circumbulation of the Self in order to seamlessly constitute a discovery of meaning in the process of conducting the research. In this regard Josselson and Lieblich (2003) take a firm position, stating that the research design is intended to assist the research process to unfold, rather than to be limited in its natural evolution. This I agree with, especially considering that I wear the hat of research *bricoleur*. I embraced the words of Carl Rogers (1989) as cited in Schroll, Krippner, Vich, Fadiman, and Mojeiko (2009) who said that it appears that, if one desires to become a scientist, the first step is to immerse oneself in the phenomena of the particular field in which one has developed an interest. Rogers further states that the more the researcher becomes immersed in the task and the more the field of research is embraced and 'prized', the more likely it is that new knowledge may be discovered.

Journalising formed an important part of the research process. Giovannoli (2004) cites Progroff (1975) who has developed a method to foster personal, psychological and spiritual growth by means of intensive 'journalising'. He refers to this method as a "self-adjusting compass, seeking the true north, the special meaning and direction of each individual life" (p. 31). In using the practice of journalising I was seeking the true north of my research practices. Braud and Anderson (1998) refer to inner reflection as ways in which one's focus pertaining to research issues deepens. I was inspired to draw a mandala of my research design as a way in which I could create a map for this journey. The symbol of *Ouroboros* formed the

outline of the mandala. Inside the circle I drew a vessel shaped like a woman's body and in the centre of the vessel I drew a labyrinth.

This enhanced my understanding and gave me more clarity concerning how to proceed with my field work. As I continued to plan and prepare and read it became clear that the work required continuous reflection on my responsibilities as a researcher. This brought me to the point of looking into the ethical considerations of this journey again. The researcher's ethical responsibility in conducting research is highlighted right from the point of entering into transpersonal research and narrative inquiry. In Braud and Anderson (1998) it is made very clear that transpersonal researchers need to evaluate their research by using the international (American and British) psychological associations' ethical guidelines for research with human participants.

As a registered educational psychologist, I have undertaken to adhere to the ethical guidelines for researchers in psychology of the Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in doing my research. I also required ethical clearance and approval to conduct this study from the relevant ethical committee as authorised by Stellenbosch University. Following the University's prescriptions and the guidelines of the HPCSA as stipulated in detail in the Government Gazette (4 August 2006, Nr. 29079, Form 223) allowed me, in accordance with my own sense of integrity, to create a consent form for the co-researchers. They were informed of the purpose of the study; the procedures to be followed; and that potential risk and discomfort may occur. Their confidentiality was guaranteed and they were assured that they could withdraw from the research without any consequences. I respect the strong message expressed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) when they remind researchers that it is crucial in narrative inquiry to consistently and continuously reassess the ethical dimensions of the research process. I concede that ethics lie far beyond consent forms or official gazettes. It is a matter of intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal relations.

In Caplan, Hartelius and Rardin (2003) it is stated that, from a transpersonal viewpoint, the issue of ethics is connected to the experience of reverence for life and all living creatures. I agree that transpersonal experiences can become a catalyst to a shift in consciousness which enables broader and deeper perspectives in the area of ethics. My own sense of ethics is linked to the internal locus of control of integrity. This is how I intended to conduct my research and every other aspect of this study. I reflected on this and considered the ethical implications and responsibilities regarding my relationship with the co-researchers. I felt

assured that my transpersonal practices and my research ethics and practices were in agreement.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) say that researchers are thrown back on their own ethical resources. From this I understood that researchers need to take responsibility in their relationships with co-researchers and the work that is being done, as well as how it is being represented in their research texts. Regarding the aspect of ethics, O'Dea (1994) pursues the question of 'truth' in narrative research. She states that, amongst other notions, "narrative researchers are bound to honour the settings in which their research stories occur", when she refers to the task of interpreting the stories as they are related by co-researchers or as they are expressed by the researcher (p. 165). I agree that researchers are compelled to honour the details and incidents that actually happened. In this study I also followed and applied the guidance of Giles (2002) who addressed some fundamental issues regarding ethical research pertaining to the issue that co-researchers in a study ought to be given the opportunity to read the transcripts or stories before the study is published, in order to consent to its publication. I applied this guidance after I had written the stories; I discuss their responses in Chapter 4.

My intention in the research process was to create an environment in which the co-researchers could feel safe, contained and revered. It is important to understand that being the witness to another's story is an honour and a responsibility. Being in the field, conducting interviews and having conversations about the stories of our lives, reminded me of the intimacy and immensely sensitive space of the therapeutic experience. Rutter (1993) describes this as the context of a meaningful relationship in which a woman can find "… a container in which she can unite body, soul and self-image" (p. 20).

The nexus between being a researcher and being a therapist is an important tension to address. According to Warne and McAndrew (2010), there are some parallels between narrative inquiry and psychotherapy. They state that a 'symbiotic' relationship exists between being engaged in doing narrative inquiry and being engaged in doing therapy. Their argument is based on the shared activities of listening, hearing and responding (by the researcher/therapist). They also suggest that engaging in research or psychotherapy is focused on searching for something, that, perhaps, is missing or lost. The researcher is searching for new knowledge and understanding, whilst the co-researcher may be searching for understanding or meaning, particular to what the research is about (Warne & McAndrew, 2010). As researcher in this study I was often grateful for my background and experience as

therapist, as this enabled me to create a safe space for the co-researchers to share and tell their stories. I was very clear with myself, though, about my responsibility as researcher to provide a safe emotional environment for them, but simultaneously not to blur the boundaries and expand that space into therapeutic sessions. During the course of the fieldwork, this nexus was challenged in working with one of the mothers. I tell this story in Chapter 4. I concede that, "[i]f the ultimate aim of either the research or the psychotherapeutic encounter is to 'do no harm', … the possibility of the research encounter being therapeutic needs to be acknowledged rather than avoided" (Hunt, as cited in Warne & McAndrew, 2010, p. 505).

As time continued its cycle, opportunities presented themselves and three mother-daughter teams were selected to participate in the study (how this came about is told in depth in Chapter 4). These mothers and their daughters were resident in the Western Cape and all of them live in ways that reflect transpersonal values and practices. This was a very important aspect of their compatibility with this study. In the realm of transpersonal psychology, a core practice includes meditation, mindfulness and contemplation (Davis, 2003). Some of them meditate, others dance and study Martial Arts, others make drawings or create beautiful spaces, and some write poetry and some design clothes. Mandala drawings tell stories in the pages of their journals. In accordance with transpersonal values, they are mindful in their communication and authentic in their relationships. Wilber (2004), a pioneer in the realm of transpersonal psychology, writes extensively about the transpersonal experiences and value of creating and experiencing art: "[A]rtwork reminds us of our own higher possibilities, our own deepest nature, our own most profound ground, which we are all invited to discover" (p. 219). In reflecting on this, I was also taken back to the words of Davis (2003) who writes about diversity in transpersonal psychology, saying that transpersonal psychology's primary focus is on the meaning of the transpersonal experiences. Creating art can facilitate these experiences.

The participating mothers and their daughters offered me their time, their stories, their experiences, their tears and their laughter. In the intimate contact between my self as researcher and the co-researchers, I was reminded of the transformative experience of doing research. Braud and Anderson (1998) describe this very succinctly: "Research, clinical practice, and personal transformation exist in synergistic interrelationship, with each contributing to, drawing from, and informing the other" (p. 242). As I looked deeper into the eye of the mandala, I found a model for this thinking where similarities and synchronicities

appear, affording yet another example of transpersonal psychology and transpersonal experiences. This model is presented by Braud and Anderson (1998) in the form of a mandala drawing made by Winona Schroeter who refers to this as "A Model of Transformative Integration" (p. 243). This model has five major features common to research, application and self-development. These features pertain to being mindful, discerning, appreciative and understanding of one's transformation of self and the transformation of others.

In conducting transpersonal research, living and working in a transpersonal way and consciously being involved in the process of individuation, I began to dream about the research process. One night I dreamt of a circular snake resembling *Ouroboros*, the tail-biting serpent; from it I understood that I had begun to engage with my own symbolic process of individuation. This is described in Chapter 4, when I journey into the heart of the research process, the *coniunctio*. Dream work forms a significant part of working with one's Self. In the transpersonal paradigm, working with the symbolic realm of dreams allows us to consider our own mythology. Joseph Campbell (2008) has written extensively about the interplay between our personal and our collective mythology. He says that "… by a little miracle, so will each whose work is the difficult, dangerous task of self-discovery and self-development be portered across the ocean of life" (p. 17).

Our stories were compiled by accessing information from transpersonal sources. This is how I reflected in my journal about the process of doing the research long before the actual field work started. Many months later, I understood more about the merging of the transpersonal and the narrative realms in research. I understood how similar these forms of gathering information and stories are. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that narrative inquiry in this field is a way of life. I agreed with how this allows the researcher to make sense of the meaning of the storied experiences of all the co-researchers and reflected again on the research design by writing in my journal. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state that journals are a way of creating field texts. I was inspired by their example of a narrative researcher turning to her journals to create field texts and used my journal entries to serve as a so-called reality check in order to give some form of structure to my thoughts, impressions and experiences as the research design changed and evolved. This is where I also identified the various ways of creating and expressing stories, such as interviews, conversations, letters, poems, journal writing and any other means of recounting experiences, all of them relating to

words and spaces. These sources are found in dream work, using visual imagery, mandala work, making collages and performing rituals.

Josselson et al. (2003) state that it is important to be able to conduct interviews and have conversations with one's co-researchers with the intention to construct the experiences related by them in a meaningful and succinct manner. They suggest that a narrative study would not be possible without detailed stories of the lives of co-researchers. What did I expect to find in this journey, walking alongside the storytellers? They started to tell their stories long before this study was initiated and surely will continue long after my ink has dried. These stories needed to reveal ways in which they found meaning in their lives and how they understood their experiences and their lives. I saw growth and transformation through the flow of words and tears when my mother one day said conversationally that she was grateful for the opportunity to review her life. For this I am grateful.

In narrative inquiry the emphasis is on the content and the meaning of the content. The content may be seen as the experiences of the co-researchers in the study. Narrative inquiry is a hard taskmaster; it calls the researcher to the point of self-disclosure and integrity. The practice of reflection is essential. I sensed that it also allowed me as a researcher to be vulnerable to the scrutiny of my own integrity and my original research intention, which was to create and present a study that would be useful and meaningful. It also gave me as a researcher the responsibility of bringing the co-researchers to the attention of the reader. The readers of this work are given the opportunity to care about the experiences of the girls and women who were co-workers; their stories may even touch the lives and self-experiences of the readers.

Transpersonal research and narrative inquiry create a space for the research process to meander, to turn back on itself and then to continue following the course of its flow. I was not able to predict the outcome of this journey; I was not able to control the journey. I was only able to explore the stories and the meaning of our experiences in a way that mirrors a significant aspect of the research; that the feminine principle pertains to allowing, receiving and holding (Braud & Anderson, 1998), much like the research journey itself. As this journey continued, I unravelled the stories from the storytellers' looms, and I continued to weave the threads of words and silences and memories, dreams and symbols into a dreamcloth of

research experience. How do we track the songlines,[13] and where do we find our stories and their mysteries which hold the messages of meaning? I explore this in great depth in Chapter 4 when I enter the field where these stories are buried under the rocks in words and images.

In this dissertation the Prologue introduces the study as being non-traditional and Chapter 1 introduces the background of the research, the focus and significance of the study and the plan of inquiry. In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework of the 'renewal of qualitative research' is viewed with particular emphasis on poststructuralism, narrative inquiry and transpersonal psychology and research. This includes an attempt at bridging the worlds of transpersonal psychology and transpersonal research with the richness of narrative inquiry and the mysterious world of story. I also look at Jungian psychology against the background of poststructuralism and feminist theory and research. In Chapter 3 I offer a review of literature that frames the study and that grounds this work into a theoretical basis where different strands of scholarly thought and agendas can be woven into the cloth of my own original contribution. I delve into the literature about the mother-daughter relationship, the feminine principle and the process of individuation. I wander through the terrain of literature on adolescence, menopause, transition, and I use mythology, alchemy and symbolism to serve as a reflection of these aspects of the study. Chapter 4 tells the story of the research journey. This includes the story of how the data were gathered and processed; it reveals the findings and it also offers a contribution to creating stories on transpersonal alchemy. Chapter 5 presents the story of my mother and myself. In Chapter 6, we have come full circle, because the beginning is the end, and then it starts all over again. Addendum A includes the visual images I asked the co-researchers to work with, as described in Chapter 4, and it includes a model of a compendium which I designed in order to capture a visual description of the 'little seed' included in Chapter 4.

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[13] An Australian expression referring to ways in which stories are told (Chatwin, 1987).

CHAPTER 2

LAPIS PHILOSOPHORUM:
THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE[14]

Research is articulated as a developmental process. Across methods there is a commitment to recursive reflection and review of the data, the codes, the interpretations, and the writings. Such a commitment extends seeing the unseen, hearing the unheard, and speaking the unspeakable. And there is a recognition that different methods indeed produce different kinds of data and that this variation is useful for – not a distraction from – theory building (Daiute & Fine, 2003, p. 70).

"I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail". These words by Maslow, as cited by Anderson and Braud (2011, p. 116). These words seem like an apt description for the positivist ideology that has been informing research and research methodology historically. Major changes in the academic landscape were precipitated by social justice movements in the 1960s and 1970s. The "common outgrowth" of these changes and progressive movements resulted in what Leavy describes as "a thorough re-examination of *power within the knowledge-building process* in order to avoid creating knowledge that continued to be complicit in the oppression of minority groups" (Leavy, 2009, p. 7).

SHIFTS IN CONSCIOUSNESS REGARDING NEW AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) have considered the issue of shifts in research paradigms in depth using qualitative research as the point of entry to argue the need for innovation and expansion in this field. They say that

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[14] Joseph Campbell (1990) described the philosopher's stone as a model and catalyst for the process of alchemy which is ever continuing. I see the process of grounding this study in a theoretical framework in a similar way.

> [t]he politics of qualitative research create a tension that informs each of these traditions. This tension itself is constantly being re-examined and interrogated as qualitative research confronts a changing historical world, new intellectual positions, and its own institutional and academic conditions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 13).

Leavy (2009) suggests that methodological innovations typically develop with the shifting of research paradigms and the emergence of new insights into the social world and practice of research and new theories. She points out that, with this in mind, new methods or approaches to research may come out of a methods gap (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). It makes sense to me that the need for methodological innovation also addresses the issues arising from new theoretical insights. The paradigm of arts-based research as an evolving genre of qualitative research thus asks for a shift in research paradigms towards methodological innovations and development of new theories and insights about the process of knowledge building.

Feminist research finds a place in the major shifts in the western world(s) of capitalism, bringing into questioning the role of intellectual work and academia. Alison Jones (1992) writes that a fundamental turning point in social inquiry leads to a notable shift in addressing the issue of 'what it means to know'. She writes specifically about the issue of 'voice', which marks aspects of feminist thinking. When women become authors, writing and expressing their voices about issues which matter to women, much liberation happens. She speaks of the personal voice and calls for an acknowledgement of self-reflexivity, and then cautions against ignoring the issue of power implied in knowledge making.

I share Patti Lather's (1992) interest in exploring and supporting research which has at its heart the intention to empower those involved in research to *change* as well as to *understand* the world. She suggests that a different approach to research is required, which, as I understood it, gives more responsibility to the researcher to make a different practice possible. This may happen when researchers create a different kind of scholarship that enables us to tell better stories about our world which seems to be so elusive and difficult to know, and perhaps is even unknowable (Deakin University, 1998). Lather (1992) writes from a feminist, poststructural point of view that research methods and methodologies are increasingly being called into the arena of reassessment and change. I like the use of her word "reconfigure" in the introduction to her argument; it has an expansive and yet succinct tone to

it. She then says that "It is a time of openness and questioning of established paradigms in intellectual thought" (Deakin University, 1998, p. 89), a statement with which I agree.

My contribution through this study was aimed to bridge a methods gap as has been stated before, by creating a merging of the transpersonal framework and the 'research plan' of narrative inquiry and also by creating, conducting and presenting the entire study within the realm of arts-based research methodologies. I have to ask whether I have fulfilled my responsibility as researcher by making an innovative contribution to the field of educational psychology by offering what I have explored and possibly discovered in the course of the research process, or whether I have merely added to the piles of theoretical texts that are used again and again. My intention as researcher was, to explore the possibility of making a contribution to the meaning and understanding of the experiences of adolescent girls and menopausal women who are daughters and mothers in relationship with each other during this chaotic and challenging time of their lives. My intention was also to learn as much as possible about "… narrative inquiry from the doing of narrative inquiry" as well as from transpersonal research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 47).

How this relates to a changing world and how research assists in the process of effecting change in the world needs to be examined. I concede Leavy's (2009) suggestion that arts-based research practices can be used to create a critical awareness and that it has the capacity for raising consciousness. In transpersonal studies the conception of raising and changing consciousness is a core element. I see more clearly now how important it is for research methodologies and the worldview within which these are framed to be compatible, like, for example, transpersonal studies and narrative inquiry. The manner in which I conducted this study was aimed at contributing to knowledge building within this framework of innovation and diversity, but was also chosen because it represents my authentic voice as scholar and psychologist. It would have been naïve, though, to consider the possibility that the turn towards a new and, in this case, arts-based research orientation and praxis would not be met with criticism. This notion has been dealt with extensively by scholars such as Denzin and Lincoln (2008) who invested in supporting the growth of the changing face of qualitative research paradigms. I encountered this when I stepped into the moment of blurred genres where I was met with the tensions and crises relating to representation, legitimisation and praxis (regarding social change), the so-called triple crisis. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) refer to the "moment of blurred genres" where boundaries between research theories, perspectives,

methodologies and approaches to research become blurred and expanded the conceptualisation of qualitative research and its application into innovative research practices. In this regard Clifford Geertz (as cited in Josselson et al., 2003) referred to a mixed genre. His description entails that narrative research marries science and the humanities, integrating systematic study of phenomena with literary deconstruction of texts and hermeneutic analysis of meaning.

Considering the 'nature' of an academic discipline and its relationship to how it can be studied, previously supposed a 'fit' between the object of what is studied and the discipline that defined it. Within the framework of reassessment of and changes in research paradigms, such assumptions also need a closer scrutiny. The philosophy of poststructuralism allows for such expansion. Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) argue that the process of inquiry creates the object that it studies rather than the object of study being defined by the inquiry as such. This then is the result of an inversion of a traditional perspective on academic disciplines. Reflecting on this, I continued to read about the contribution made to feminist studies by trail-blazing Patti Lather. Her notion of research-as-praxis resonates with me. She describes this as research that is built on the notion that research is born from the notion that (a) practice is an ongoing process rather that a mere application of theory (as cited in Peters & Burbules, 2004).

The history of narrative inquiry presents four themes that emerged with regard to the turn towards a more expansive research paradigm. These themes are also referred to as *narrative turns* (meaning a change in direction from one way of thinking towards another) and pertain to the relationship between the researcher and what is researched; moving away from numbers and towards using stories and words as data; a shift from the general to the particular; and the emergence of new epistemologies or new ways of knowing. Pinnegar and Daynes are cited in Clandinin (2007) and in Leavy (2009) in stating that the emphasis in research is shifting towards a concern with humans and their experiences; recognising the power of understanding the particular; and that old ways of doing research and previous strategies for research seem inadequate for the task of understanding humans. My choice to embrace a research methodology which honours human experience falls into the category of this consciousness. I was also intrigued and inspired by the view taken by Noel Gough (1994) (who cites Reid) that research not only signifies an endeavour to collate old facts, etc. by

using an empirical study or critical investigation, but that it also describes the means by which a discipline or art develops, tests, and renews itself (Deakin University, 1998).

In order to expand on this, I need to journey deeper into the terrain of poststructuralism. Poststructuralism has been seen as being challenging from a point of terminology, vocabulary, obtuseness and being extremely abstract (Peters & Burbules, 2004). This may or may not be the case; however, poststructuralism has a 'power'ful ability to bring accepted ways of thinking, writing, speaking, seeing, and even 'being', out of a comfortable place of complacency. Poststructuralism offers a critique on an unexamined, taken-for-granted "scientific pretension of social inquiry". "Poststructuralism provides a philosophical corrective to the confidence with which mainstream theorists allow these concepts or terms to remain unexamined and unreconstructed in the face of the demise of epistemological foundationalism" (Peters & Burbules, 2004, pp. 4, 5), somewhat like the hammer and the nail-inertia. The concepts that they are referring to include 'truth' 'objectivity', 'progress'. They concede that language becomes a signature concept in the poststructuralist philosophy and that it aims to expose (previously) dominant structures of power and knowledge.

These authors are biased towards the renewal of practices which encourage new and experimental forms of reading and writing (texts). I concur with their notion that

> Poststructuralism as a contemporary philosophical movement offers a range of *theories* (of the text), *critiques* (of institutions), *new concepts,* and *new forms of analysis* (of power) that are, as we try to show here, highly relevant and significant to the study of education (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 5).

Considering this statement, I would like to add the study of educational psychology. My own partiality towards poststructuralism was aligned with a quest for change and transformation. I found a home in narrative inquiry, and as such feel comforted by the possibility that a poststructuralist view may seem to offer a way of understanding the complexities and contradictions that influence and shape our experiences of the world (Gavey, 2011). A closer look at poststructural perspectives on narrative inquiry brought me to the understanding that there are indeed other ways of knowing which merit scholarly recognition. It has taken me a very long time to lift the veils which obscure a clear understanding of poststructuralism, of which I am, 'truth' be told, still rather in awe. However, in the application of the research practice(s) in this study, I felt intuitively at home and secure.

The relationship between knowledge and power is far-reaching, also in allowing one to contemplate the notion of how much power knowledge may have, and who carries the power to 'administer', teach and allow knowledge to be researched, taught, etc. The 'power/knowledge' theme in poststructuralism has a distinctive Foucault trademark in being politicised: "the institutional licensing of some person of being entitled to offer knowledge-claims and the concomitant exclusion of others, coercive forms of extracting information from and about certain persons and groups, and so on" (Peters & Burbules, 2004, pp. 48, 51). What is power in the context of claiming knowledge and knowledge-creation? According to Peet (1999), power is inherent in all human relations (general) and also in certain institutions (or individuals) (specific). He poses that a Foucauldian perspective of poststructuralist critique of modern knowledge indicates a tendency towards truth claiming, totalising, normalising, being essentialist, oppressive and so on, all pointing towards a pursuit of power in knowledge production.

From a feminist poststructuralist perspective, Fardon and Schoeman (2010) argue that feminism brings to poststructuralism the ability to question power issues from a social perspective which includes the question of how transformation can take place within certain social relations relating to class, gender and race. Their research was aimed at deconstructing mainstream content in History as a subject in South African schools by using feminist poststructuralist thinking in order to create an expansion of gender awareness in learners. They say that they marshalled feminist post-structuralism as a mode of producing knowledge which uses post-structuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions in order to understand existing power relations and also to identify areas and strategies to create change.

That power and knowledge imply one another becomes clear and, as I understand it, encourages an "epistemic and methodological diversity in social sciences" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 54). Helen Malson (1998) did research on the issue of creating theories about women by virtue of exploring anorexia nervosa in women from a poststructuralist perspective. She agrees with Foucault (1977) that power and knowledge are intricately linked, that knowledge is produced by power and that power and knowledge imply one another. Malson works from a feminist poststructuralist perspective and argues that discourses create social regulation by constituting certain power relations, arguing that poststructuralism allows for a re-evaluation of how women's experiences are conceptualised.

According to her, feminist poststructuralist research is not concerned with an exploration of authentic feminine experience, but rather with an analysis of the way in which women's experiences are "discursively constituted and regulated", as such clarifying aspects of the power/knowledge tensions pertaining to gender issues (Malson, 1998, p. 39).

Nicola Gavey (2011) also writes about feminism, poststructuralism and the intricacy of understanding one's experience of the world and how this is being shaped. She says that a feminist poststructuralist approach seems to offer a "sympathetic theoretical" basis for making sense of the complexity of our lives, which is not offered in traditional positivist methodologies (Gavey, 2011, p. 185). She comments on the knowledge-power nexus by aligning with the notion that we can do something about something that we can make sense of. She says that by challenging and transforming the cultural imperatives on offer, we can contribute to changing and expanding knowledge. I concur with Gavey, as I understand that, through such consciousness we have more freedom to explore a wider diversity of ways of being in the world, which I understand as an experience of power, in Being.

Poststructuralist thinking on how knowledge is produced creates new questions about ways in which the justification or legitimation of knowledge is not inseparable from the matter of who is investigating it, and with what motivation or agenda. Leavy (2009) addresses this issue by asking how knowledge is evaluated when it is constructed by using innovative methods. She writes that arts-based practices produce "partial, situated and contextual truths". It is thus important to modify and adjust the methods of evaluation. 'Truth' is a cornerstone concept in poststructuralist culture. Deconstructionist thinking, in its intimate relationship with language, writing and words, has directed me towards a manner of thinking that suggests that no absolute truth is possible in the field of knowledge, possibly due to the vagaries in language and how it is used. Gergen (2001) says that we can not know a word unless we also scrutinise and get to know the words surrounding the initial word of interest. As such, the meaning of those words in a particular relationship to each other is prone to change. In narrative inquiry this becomes very significant. Josselson et al. (2003) state that "narrative research is a meaning-making endeavor with multiple truths" (p. 43).

What is 'truth' then, as experienced by the co-researchers and by myself as a witness to their stories? Is 'truth' a construct of something external to individual experience? Does narrative inquiry reflect 'truth' in the experience of telling and receiving stories? O'Dea (1994) says that the authenticity of a story will contain the meaning-value of the experience as told in the

story, as such implying honesty and reliability. She wrote an article entitled "Pursuing Truth in Narrative Research" in which she points towards the notion that, in narrative writing, "compellingness, accessibility and moral persuasiveness might be seen as the very notion of truth" (O'Dea, 1994, pp. 161, 162). Is this a strong enough foundation for the scholarly communities? I find resonance with what is proposed by Clandinin and Connelly as cited in O'Dea (1994). They refer to verisimilitude (the appearance of truth) as a realistic approach to the issue of evaluation. I can go along with the approach of veracity because, again, it gives the researcher the responsibility to be grounded in a set of ethics and authenticity.These authors stress that, regarding the issue of 'truth', it is required of the researcher to go beyond reliability, validity and generalisability and instead identify alternative criteria such as apparency, transferability, and plausibility (O'Dea, 1994, p. 162).

I have also entered the terrain within the poststructural milieu where features of narrative inquiry are emerging, directing me towards the place where I started – the story and how it is told and written. I understand deconstruction within the tradition of poststructuralism to work this way: I write something, then I erase it, then I write over that. Because I have already written what 'is', the dissolved status of what 'has been' still has a story and forms the foundation of what I write about the story. My audience has access to what has been dissolved through erasure by reading what appears.

THE TRIPLE CRISIS

Changes in the research culture seek new ways of linking experience and text as well as evaluation: "Issues such as validity, reliability, and objectivity, previously believed settled, were once more problematic" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 25). From this statement I entered the crisis of legitimisation where I explored the very precarious nature of 'truth' in research, amongst other concerns. The crisis of legitimisation refers to the evaluation of postmodern[15] research in asking what makes a study valid and reliable, and how to assess the trustworthiness of studies if it is argued that the traditional (positivist) criteria previously employed have become inadequate? Denzin and Lincoln (2008) also ask these questions in order to determine how qualitative studies can be evaluated in the contemporary, poststructural moment.

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[15] At times the words 'postmodern' and 'poststructural' are used interchangeably.

Recalling the four themes which precipitated the turn towards narrative inquiry, I turned to Pinnegar and Daynes as cited in Clandinin (2007) for an understanding of the notion of several ways of knowing and understanding human experience (they refer to 'blurring knowing'). According to them, the understanding of the variety of ways of knowing leads researchers away from a secure base. They state that by shifting towards new ways of knowing, researchers in the paradigm of narrative inquiry can thus consider indicators such as authenticity, resonance and trustworthiness to establish a stamp of validity on their research. They say that

> [t]he acceptance of the relational and interactive nature of human science research, the use of the story, and a focus on a careful accounting of the particular are hallmarks of knowing in narrative inquiry … In making this turn, narrative inquirers recognize the tentative and variable nature of knowledge. They accept and value the way in which narrative inquiry allows wondering, tentativeness, and alternative views to exist as part of the research account (Clandinin, 2007, p. 25).

In considering this carefully, I reflected on an article by Carola Conle (2000) who asked "What is the inquiry in Narrative inquiry?" in which she held an inquiry space for herself by allowing the discomfort of exploring foreign territory in research methods to inform her academic quest. She writes:

> The dialectic between tension and telos, between the emotional discomfort of disruption and the desire for some particular harmony, I now see as the essence of my inquiry process and perhaps the driving force in any narrative thesis that works with experiential stories. I also believe something new was gained through it (Conle, 2000, p. 197).

'Other ways of knowing' thus certainly open a space for discussion about the crisis of legitimisation. Leavy (2009) suggests that attaining trustworthy research findings can not be standardised in innovative research practices, but that the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions ground his/her perspectives in how to attain authentic and trustworthy results. This made sense to me and again ethics and integrity came to mind.

According to Giovannoli (2004), a valid account could be seen by ordinary definition as a reasonable and believable account. As scholars we want more and as narrative researchers we want to be able to ground our account (of what we have done and found) in some form of sound academic foundation. The issue of evaluation has been addressed by Lieblich and her colleagues (1998) who suggested four possible criteria for the evaluation of narrative studies regarding validity and also relevance. These are "the comprehensiveness of evidence; internal and external coherence; insightfulness and innovation and parsimony" (Lieblich et al., 1998, p. 173). What I found interesting here, then, is that consensual validation where one shares one's views and conclusions and finds acceptance in the eyes of a community of researchers and interested, informed individuals could serve to be criteria for the validation of narrative studies. What is important to me in this suggestion is that it leaves the researcher and the audience with the responsibility of being open to pursue further research in this field; to go into the field of investigation of innovative and explorative future orientated research paradigms.

The notion of blurred genres, as mentioned earlier, is seen by Alverman (2000) to usher in the crisis of representation. My understanding is that the crisis of representation refers to whether the lived experience of someone can be captured by someone else. How I understand this is to ask what the (assumed) link is between the experience of a human being (or 'subject' in poststructural parlance) and the text that has been created (as in the case by the researcher and a research report such as a dissertation) to represent/indicate/ become the voice of our subject? There is the narrative that tells the story of the person's life and then there is the text that represents that story. The presence of the audience is also to be included in the argument of what is being represented; listening to or hearing the story *via* the text bestows responsibility on the reader as well. Does this have to do with interpretation? I found myself in the borderland of blurred boundaries, where I was dealing with layers of voices, narratives and ethnographics. Alverman (2000) argues that it is the blurred boundaries between the personal narrative and ethnographic writing that forms the essence of the crisis of representation. She writes that this crisis dismisses the assumption that narrative approaches directly capture lived experiences and instead allow the researcher to create these experiences. Derrida is cited in Trahar (2009, p. 81): "By positioning our 'selves' within the text, *alongside* the stories others tell about their lives, and viewing those stories within the contexts of dominant discourses" we create new and reflexive knowledge".

King (1996) also acknowledges the value of reflexivity in the process of creating new knowledge. She suggests that researchers ought to be encouraged to become aware of their feelings, biases and personal limitations and to scrutinise these closely. This dimension of reflexivity not only acknowledges the affective component of research but can also be used as a source of insight for the purposes of scholarship and innovation. Elliot (2005) refers to reflexivity as the ability and tendency to critically examine the nature of the research and the role of the researcher within the research process. As such new knowledge can be created or further research inspired.

The purpose of reflexivity in inquiry as an awareness (of our selves, our thoughts, feelings, culture, environment, intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal faculties, and so on) which informs the research process, may add to an expansion of rigour in non-traditional research paradigms (Etherington, 2004). In this study I used reflexivity to inform my position as researcher, as method, and also because it encourages me to display the full interaction between my self, the co-researchers and my relationship with the topic of inquiry and the stories we generated. In this way the study can be understood, "not only in terms of *what* we have discovered, but *how* we have discovered it" (Etherington, 2004, p. 82). In addition to this, as a reflexive researcher, using my self in the research process, I am able to be transparent and to take responsibility for my position as researcher and the dimension of personal involvement in the study, especially as I add the story of my mother and my self, where I allow my position as daughter in the mother-daughter relationship constellation to inform my position as researcher. In Chapter 4, I continue with an account of the use of reflexivity and the research process, as it pertains to data collection, analysis and so on.

I have shown that reflexivity is an important tool for self-assessment as researcher and for personal growth. I understood my own fear in this regard, as it related to the fear of reconstructing the stories of the co-researchers in this study. It was the fear of not doing it correctly, referring once again to the fear of nothingness which I discuss in Chapter 4. The value of reflexivity, then, is that it allows me to grow by listening directly to the voice of the lie through fear. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state that we, as narrative inquirers, work with our co-researchers as much as we work with ourselves; we listen to and hear our own stories. "In narrative inquiry, it is impossible as a researcher to stay silent or to present as a kind of perfect, idealized, inquiring, moralizing self" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 62).

Clements (1999) presents another angle to this notion. He cites to Abbs who suggested that, by allowing an inward quest to discover one's own values, one can bring these values to one's work. Clements also refers to the value of a personal reflexive diary and says that "it might appear therefore, that only when we recognise our own personal baggage can we arrive at an objective truth about our work" (p. 23). He thus introduces the autobiographical voice of self-schemata: how we view ourselves. Our 'private faces' (as researchers) may have a valuable story to tell in the research process. What I learnt from Clements (1999) was that, in having the courage to bring my authentic self to the research experience, I may be able to allow the voices in the stories to emerge. This could allow for an unexplored layer of meaning to emerge, which could widen the lens of exploration.

The third aspect of the triple crisis is the so-called crisis of praxis. Can research actually effect change in the world? When I embarked on this journey of research I commenced with the firm intention of doing a study that had meaning and potential to make a contribution to a changing research environment, a contribution which I was hoping could assist in the empowerment of girls and women to know themselves and as such to grow and transform and individuate, allowing their authentic voices to be heard. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) ask if it is possible "to effect change in a world if society is only and always a text" (pp. 26, 27). How can this issue be addressed? I have already dealt with the historical background to the shifts towards an emergence of a research consciousness which is innovative and which reflects some changes in the social milieu, resulting in the advancement of alternative research methodologies and praxis. What became clear to me was that changes in research need to reflect the changing needs in society and the world in order to represent an authentic reflection of the world we live in.

Leavy (2009) states that health care researchers, special education researchers, psychologists, and others in related fields have increasingly turned to the arts for their therapeutic and empowering qualities. Exploring arts-based and arts-informed research praxis in narrative inquiry brings to mind that, if researchers such as Anderson (2001) and Leavy (2009), De Mello, Bach, Freeman and Josselson, as cited in Clandinin (2007), to name but a few, are correct, this genre is becoming a strong research voice in the quest to serve society and the world, thus answering to the crisis of praxis. In this study I was also guided by Josselson et al. (2003) who suggested an 'up close and personal' framework for narrative research in psychology. I was particularly inspired by their suggestion to work within a framework of

creativity and flexibility. In what follows, I focus on aspects of research practices which I have used in this study, against the framework of narrative inquiry and transpersonal research, which resonate with arts-based and arts-informed praxis. Clandinin (2007) stresses that such inquiry pertains to and includes creative field text gathering and creative research text presentation as well as empowering one's co-researchers and inviting readers to make their own conclusions. In this manner the construction of personal knowledge is supported and the notion of multiple perspectives is honoured.

In Chapter 4 I present the story of the research journey which expands on all of the points mentioned in the previous paragraph. These points pertain to a very small group of girls and women as sample; the research methods I have employed referring to data collecting and analysing; writing style and presentation; and a prominent autobiographical contribution and reflexivity. With this study I attempted to produce rich data with many nuances and deep personal voices. Narrative inquiry rooted in arts-based methods can achieve that. Leavy (2009) said that "Narrative inquiry often relies on small sample sizes but produces rich case studies" (p. 28). Josselson et al. (2003) concede that they are clear about the ambiguity of this feature, stating that the number of participants is inversely proportional to the intensiveness of the study. They acknowledge that the question of the number of co-researchers is one of the 'thorniest' when sampling in research is discussed.

Josselson et al. (2003) refer to a plan of inquiry as opposed to collecting data, for instance. I discuss the arts-based nature of my plan of inquiry in depth in Chapter 4. I am aware that I am crossing boundaries and moving into strange and unfamiliar territory in how I present this dissertation. In writing this dissertation, I find resolution in the voice of authenticity. Leavy (2009) refers to scientific artistic expression in presenting research information. She draws from the work of Richardson (1997) who theorised about the possibilities of experimental writing as representation of research data. Leavy (2009) agrees with Richardson and says that narrative inquiry draws more explicitly on the arts than traditional qualitative research. Josselson (2003) concurs that scholarly storytelling includes characteristics of the arts and suggests that such writing must be done gracefully, with an appreciation for beauty and with precision and insight.

In the process of this study I learnt that writing is an experience of absolute faith and trust in the power of words; in the wisdom of surrender; in the mystery and promise of the not-knowing of the next word. Writing has become my nemesis and my muse, I alternate between

being terrified and inspired by the process. Writing this dissertation made me laugh and it made me shed tears of fear and sorrow. It allowed my own process of deconstruction to become a personal reality which in itself became a voice of reckoning. Writing the dissertation became a transpersonal experience. During the process of writing this dissertation I learnt to respect writing. I could relate to what Richardson (2001) says about being grateful to writing and respecting the power, mystery and complexity of writing. She states that writing poststructurally directs one to a (reflexive) understanding of oneself and also that it points one towards the possibility of discovering layers of nuances in the story being written.

From a feminist perspective, Jones (1992) refers to the importance of writing with an authentic voice, which she suggests is a key to understanding and deconstructing the authority of texts, in response to a particular distanced style of academic writing which often results in not liberating the way of thinking and writing that can be a signature of changes in praxis. As I explored the nature of poststructuralism through-out the journey of doing this study, I found that the notion of deconstruction creates a place or makes more space, allows more, opens up more exploration for authenticity, and for going deeper, more confidently.

NARRATIVE INQUIRY

In narrative inquiry, life is examined as it is lived. I want to bring the attention back to what lies at the heart of the narrative enterprise; telling the stories of human lives in order to explore meaning and the meaning of experience and the experience of meaning. Narrative inquiry allowed me to walk into the blurred boundary of art and science, of self and other, of "narrowing the gap between experience and words" (Freedman as cited in Clandinin, 2007, p. 141). Clandinin (2007) cites Spanbauer: "The only thing that keeps us from floating off with the wind is our stories. They give us a name and put us in a place, allow us to keep on touching" (p. 35). According to Roberts and Holmes (1999) stories are a major source for learning about and gaining access to the worlds of experience of others: "Our stories nest in each other like Russian dolls" (p. 20). This reminded me of all the various aspects of ourselves and it also reminded me of the various aspects of this study which 'lean' into each other, connecting, binding, being. Stories construct our experiences. Researchers, educators, psychologists, therapists and caregivers can draw from the power of stories to understand life as experienced by those we are professionally (and personally) involved with. Narrative

inquiry allows people to live their lives in a storied manner. Lieblich and Josselson (1994) postulate that it is possible that this notion of 'storied lives' may become a core idea in the evolving field of narrative inquiry. In this study, narrative inquiry made it possible to look into the lives of the co-researchers as they have been lived**.** This also relates to how the meaning of (their) lives can take form. Josselson and Lieblich (1993) cite Ricoeur in this regard: "[I]t is only in the story that the meaning of life really takes form" (p. 5). Ospina and Dodge (2005) say that stories are compelling in their ability to allow researchers to tap into knowledge which enables the exploration of, for instance, personal identity, life-course development, issues of social and personal nature, and so on. They state that narratives have been used by scholars to get in touch with aspects of experience that pertain specifically to particular contexts unique to aspects of the human condition. This tacitly suggests a hidden/holding power that stories have in the ability to create knowledge, which adds an extra layer of nuance to the richness of narrative inquiry.

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) create a central point of focus in narrative inquiry which they refer to as a constant. For them this is the study of experience. They say that the point of constancy that is taken as their point of departure is the observation that narrative inquirers study experience. Clandinin (2007) says that the word experience

> … is, I repeat, a notation of an inexpressible as that which decides the ultimate status of all which is expressed; inexpressible not because it is so remote and transcendent, but because it is so immediately engrossing and matter of course (Clandinin, 2007, p. 38).

Connelly and Clandinin (as cited in Clandinin, 2007) observe that arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry are inspired by a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead "storied lives" (Clandinin, 2007, p. 37). In my therapeutic practice, I witness the stories of people's lives and, through direct experience, have learned that people's life experiences hold meaning not only for themselves, but also for research practices and the evolution of human consciousness. Where meaning is absent, there is emptiness. In the exploration of our stories nestles the potential for the exploration of our lives. Braud and Anderson (1998) state that our personal stories form the core of our identities. In this study, narrative inquiry gently lifts the meaning and the experiences of meaning out of the stories, in order to explore not only the power of the narrative, but also the

power of transformation, of the transpersonal story of alchemy, the story of the process of individuation.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state that narrative inquiry studies the stories of the experiences of people's lives. They also say that narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. In narrative inquiry the researcher and co-researchers tell their stories, reliving and retelling the stories of their life experience: "Simply stated, narrative inquiry is stories lived and told" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). According to Squire (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2008) experience-centred approach to narrative research allows for narratives to be sequential and meaningful, to make human sense, to be able to reconstitute as well as to express experience and to be able to display transformation or changes that took/take place. She stresses that this approach has many positive features which allows for an expansion of narrative research within the paradigm of social research, but that it is important to pay heed to the caution of over-interpretation. I have shown elsewhere that reflexivity is an important task and responsibility of the narrative researcher, which may assist in the task of looking into the analysis of the stories being explored. In undertaking this study and conducting the field work it was essential that the co-researchers felt safe and secure, and that they had an opportunity to experience meaning in telling their stories. Miller is cited in Clandinin (2007) saying that "[a] principal value, then, of both the interview research and the psychotherapeutic experience is in being heard". He expands his argument by saying that the primary issue at work here is that someone (else, a witness) is trying to understand their experiences. Especially relevant to the study I undertook was the fact that these women and girls were being offered the opportunity to explore themselves, to increase their awareness, to find meaning and to be understood.

As I progressed with this study, I hoped to show how making meaning of life through the storied experiences of our own selves and our lives offers an opportunity for examining our purpose in life. Leavy (2009) says that, simply put, a narrative is a story. She expands on this statement by saying that narratives are about something that took place, something, as I understand it, that has meaning to people on a personal and social level. She cites Clandinin and Connelly who state: "In its most basic form, narrative inquiry is the description and restorying of the narrative structure" (Leavy, 2009, p. 27). As I understand this, narrative inquiry is the exploration and expression of the storied experiences of human lives.

Josselson and Lieblich (1993) state that they are not so much concerned about finding a definition for narrative inquiry; they are more interested in the intelligent application of the use of the narrative and its use for the understanding of human lives. Daiute and Fine (as cited in Josselson, Lieblich & McAdams, 2003) describe narrative inquiry as an interpretive and developmental discourse. They say that the stories we work with "… create lives in the interpretive search for meaning". Citing Bruner (1986), they report that "[t]he narrative process is a search for meaning, so the telling and the told, the hearing and the written, are inextricably linked, as is the individual narrator in the social milieu of discourse" (Josselson et al*.,* 2003, p. 63).

From this point on, I explore and express aspects of the story of the meta-narrative; how the research story in narrative inquiry is created. This is the story about how in narrative inquiry, the researcher goes about the gathering of the data for stories, the possibilities for finding stories (looking into the stories for the knowledge), and then telling the story of these stories in narrative inquiry. Christine Bold (2012) adds the dimension of the researcher as practitioner. in this study I am a researcher, exploring the stories as they unfold in the inquiry. In my capacity as an educational psychologist and psychotherapist, I am able to 'contain' the stories of the co-researchers, by virtue of my training and experience as practitioner. I regard this dual nature of my professional presence as a positive contribution which I can bring to the study. In this regard I am 'jointly living' the narrative of the work of storying lives.

Going deeper into the story of how to do narrative research, I find along the circular paths of reading and reflecting on literature that a certain theme emerges: the theme of "storying the stories"[16] (McCormack, 2005). This theme is about analysing narratives and narrative analysis. This researcher makes a distinction between narrative analysis and analysis of narratives. She suggests that, in the analysis of narratives, researchers seek stories as 'data' and then analyse those stories for themes that appear across stories. She describes narrative analysis as resulting from actions and events being described as 'data' which are then used to generate stories. In this study I found myself in a place of confluence between these ways of narrative practice, with both narrative analysis and analysing narratives being applied to 'story our stories'.

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[16] I borrowed this term from McCormack in this context to play with words, serving as a preamble to discuss the practice of narrative research in greater detail.

It may be useful to reflect for a moment on the analysis of research data *per se*. In this study, analysis is performed to create an understanding of the meaning of the co-researcher's lives. More specifically it is to gain some insight into the mother-daughter relationship, to understand the feminine principle and/in the process of individuation, how relating in cycles of transition may be conducive or not to growth, to deep and significant self-exploration and self-experience, and so forth. What to do and where to go with such understanding or insight? I would like to take hands with Bold (2012) who says that "it is purposeful for the context in which it took place and has significance for others in similar contexts and places" (p. 121). Bold is referring to research which is done with very small numbers of co-researchers, such as in this study that I am presenting. The emphasis is not on generalising, rather on understanding and focusing on the particular (as discussed earlier). As narrative research relies on interpretation, analysing data has to concede the possibility of subjectivity. Much reflecting, working and reworking of the data takes place in order to allow 'pictures' to appear.

Dodge, Ospina and Foldy (2005) address the issue of interpretation from the point of considering the relationship between interpretation, rigor and relevance. I find resonance with their suggestion that "interpretative rigor takes the researcher outside the academy and into the world" in addressing the issue of relevance. Their argument is about collaboration between the researcher and co-researcher; about what may be interpretively rigorous and how narratives preserve rather than fragment the meaning-making structures of the experiences of the co-researchers. I agree with them that narrative inquiry can produce quality scholarship and I concede that interpretation of a research story is not an agent of 'power' that is held and controlled by the researcher without being opened to the scrutiny of reflexivity and collaboration with the co-researcher(s).

My own understanding of 'storying the stories' in the process of narrative research practice is reflected by McCormack's (2004) description of how the co-researcher has the initial experience, recalls it, tells the researcher about this experience (by various ways of storying) and then the researcher reconstructs the experience and interprets it. When the co-researcher reads the story which the researcher has created, further experience occurs, and so on. She then says that "Knowledge constructed through this process … values transformation at a personal level, individual subjectivity and the researcher's voice" (McCormack, 2004, p. 220). The value also of narrative research and the analysis of story can be found in the

researcher's interpretation of the story in order to allow the underlying narrative to emerge and the storytellers to find a voice; for themselves to find a potential place for self-exploration and self-understanding, as well as self-expression and, as such, perhaps an experience of autonomy (Riley & Hawe, 2005). These authors suggest that the analysis of stories has become a point of research interest and can aid in the quest to show that narrative methods may provide particular insights into the complexity of human experience, a notion which I support.

The value of collaboration in narrative research should not be overlooked; a valuable resource of knowledge and knowing may be found in the engagement between the researcher, co-researchers and the researched. Narrative collaboration lies at the heart of this inquiry. Gubrium and Holstein (1998) say that a sensitive analytical vocabulary is required to expand the scope of narrative analysis into the places where stories happen and are told in contemporary life. Narrative research is complex, and the field of practice is analytically constituted, utilising the vocabulary of narratives as they are practised where personal experience finds a place in stories.

The world of narrative inquiry is rich, complex and transparent, open to be deconstructed; deep enough to carve towards the bone, there is always more to look into.

ADDRESSING A TENSION IN THIS STUDY

Many voices and many nuances and layers of exploration in this study urge me to venture into the troubled waters of Jungian psychology and the fiery debate of Jungian psychology, poststructuralism and feminism.

First I focus the lens on Jungian theory and psychology, which I deconstruct through a feminist filter. This part of the discussion is important to me because I explore the process of individuation, as well as the feminine principle as important features of this study. I have a deep respect for aspects of Jung's contribution to depth psychology, but as this study progressed and my relationship with it deepened, I also became disillusioned by other aspects of his work. These I will accentuate as I go along. I allow the discussion to amble and turn, to widen and contract, merely because I need to include the theory of the process of individuation. The archetypal theory prominent to Jungian psychology also makes it necessary to explore the feminine principle by looking into the anima. In this regard, feminist

theory is especially important as a guiding voice in addressing the tension between Jungian theory and poststructuralist thinking. I also attempt to deconstruct aspects of Jung's psychology by looking critically at another aspect of Jung, the Jung who offends through misogynistic application of the feminine principle in the archetypal anima, for example.

According to Papadopoulos (2006), the major contributions Jung made to Western psychology can be found in his theories about the collective unconscious and archetypes; his vision of psychotherapy (according to which he suggested that the 'symptom' is the agent for transformation); and the implications of his ideas to wider existential and cultural considerations. These aspects of his work reverberate soundly in the realm of transpersonal psychology. The importance of his suggestion that "one's epistemology is not an abstract theoretical construct, but is embedded in one's individual and collective realities" can not be overlooked (Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 17).

Papadopoulos created an epistemological model for Jung's psychology, which includes the collective dimension of knowledge; the teleology of knowledge in the making; and an epistemology of archetypal teleology (2006). In brief, this model indicates Jung's theories about the collective unconscious and the use of (amongst others) human teleology which, according to Papadopoulos refer to "the purposeful direction human beings have towards psychological development", which I understand to be a reference to the process of individuation. His theories about the patterns of archetypal psychic activity, which are mutually interconnective, ultimately create a circular form, resembling a mandala. Papadopoulos (2006) expresses clarity of thinking when he says that "After all, it should not be forgotten that the pattern of mutual influence is the essence of Jung's alchemical model, where the circle (mandala) was the symbol *par excellence* of wholeness" (Papadopoulos, 2006, pp. 27, 31).

Jungian psychology describes the Self as an archetypal image which represents the goal of union between the unconscious and consciousness. The essence is that, happening within the psyche, is a process of inner guidance and striving towards realising this union in wholeness. In my understanding, this is the basis of the process of individuation. Robert Johnson (1986) writes extensively about the unconscious, the archetypes and individuation. He describes individuation as "our waking up to our total selves" (Johnson, 1986, p. 11). Johnson seems convinced that a remarkable sense of security develops in an individual through the process

of individuation. He also stresses the importance of exploring one's own unique, inborn nature in order to be one's own Self.

The relevance of this to my study compels me to turn my attention to yet another important aspect of Jung's work: the relationship between alchemy and individuation. Harris cites Jung (1963), who explained the process of individuation and the procedures of alchemy in his magnum opus, Mysterium Coniunctius (Collected Works of C.J. Jung, Vol. 14): "The entire alchemical process could just as well represent the individuation process of a single individual, though with the not unimportant difference that no single individual ever attains the richness and scope of the alchemical process" (Harris, 1996, p. 108). Marlan (as cited in Papadopoulos, 2006) describes how Jung delved deeper into the quest for understanding alchemy as a psychological process, and that, as his own individuation process deepened and expanded, he became aware of how the unconscious (as a psychological construct) is a process of transformation. Jung's insight into and understanding of the mirror reflection between the process of alchemy and the transformative process of the unconscious gave birth to his exploration of the symbolism of alchemy and individuation, of which his work with dream symbols and mandalas are examples.

The relationship between individuation, the alchemical process and psychotherapy has been explored in many ways by researchers and therapists alike. Harris (1996) writes about the parallels between alchemy and the therapeutic process which she identifies as the therapeutic frame or container; the stages of therapy and the stages of alchemy; and, thirdly, the concerns of transference/countertransference[17] and analogous ideas in alchemy (Harris, 1996). As an ardent follower of Jung and a scholar of his work, Edward Edinger (as cited in Papadopoulos, 2006) expressed his appreciation for the contribution that an understanding of alchemy brings to the therapeutic process as well as to the process of individuation.

Holmes (1999) explores the criteria which may link effective psychotherapy and 'a good story', constituting the narrative in therapy. He suggests that psychotherapists constantly use their intuition to sense the accuracy of the stories offered by their patients. This is a transpersonal faculty which I also employ in my own therapeutic practice. However, I can not agree with his notion that the immediate goal of psychotherapy is to remove symptoms. I support the notion that psychotherapy is aimed at facilitating the process of individuation. Johansson and Kurtz (1991) suggest that the psychotherapeutic process "… hopes to reinstate

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[17] Please refer to the Glossary for a brief description.

awe through encouraging trust in the inner authority of our own experiences which connect us with ourselves and the world around us" (p. 21).

Bolen (1979) describes psychotherapy as an opportunity to grow beyond the limiting beliefs we hold about ourselves and the world. Growth is the essence of therapy. McLeod (1997) agrees, emphasising the value of the narrative in psychotherapy. He states that our stories allow for the retrieval of meaning, and he suggests that this lies at the heart of the therapeutic process. Braud and Anderson (1998) say that "stories plumb the depths of the human psyche, as if searching among the many narrative possibilities for interpretation and subtleties of meaning" (p. 23).

Hoffman, Stewart, Warren and Meek (2006) claim that a shift in knowing relates to a shift in understanding the self. They believe that contemporary psychoanalysis is becoming a different psychology due to the emerging self being the result of interaction between therapist and client, again bringing the emphasis on the relational aspect of being. Jones (2003) cites Homans who said that Jung's analytical psychology emerged from the modernist era, and that a new engagement with psychology, especially narrative psychology, resonates with a distinctively different tone. It seems that it is important to honour a dialogue between human consciousness and what is inherent in the person. She says that: "Again, a comparison could be drawn with the Jungian notion of individuation and, indeed, the wide application of the metaphor of the hero's journey to ego development in analytical psychology" (Jones, 2003, p. 361). Rowland (as cited in Dobson, 2005) describes the existence of Jung's concepts being "under erasure", and suggests that some areas of his work need to be seen as projects for deconstruction. This statement is a conflation of transpersonal, Jungian and poststructural thinking, bar the reference to an internal world.

There are numerous critiques of Jung's work. Many intellectuals and Jungian analysts who are feminists find it increasingly difficult to feel comfortable with their Jungian approaches (Young-Eisendrath, 1995; Jones, 2003; Dobson, 2005). I wanted to direct the focus onto a discussion about the feminine and the anima, as presented by Jungian theory and challenged by poststructural and feminist thinking. I also linked this discussion to the postulation suggested by Wehr (1987) that the individuation process for women may be marred due to Jung's distorted visions of the feminine, women, the anima and the relationship to the male (principle). I understand this challenge to include the issue of power based on gender differences. Young-Eisendrath (1997) says that an almost universal gender difference is

found in men having more power in the world than women and that this affects how people feel about themselves and others.

Young-Eisendrath (1997) cites Jung (1951, CW, 9, p. 15):

> I have called the projection-making factor in women the animus, which means mind or spirit. The animus corresponds to the paternal Logos just as the anima corresponds to the maternal Eros …. In women … Eros is an expression of their true nature, while their Logos is often only a regrettable accident. It gives rise to misunderstandings and annoying interpretations in the family circle and among friends. This is because it consists of opinions instead of reflections, and by opinions I mean a priori assumptions that lay claim to absolute truth …. No matter how friendly and obliging a woman's Eros may be, no logic on earth can shake her if she is ridden by the animus. Often the man has the feeling and he is not altogether wrong that only seduction or a beating or rape would have the necessary power of persuasion (Young-Eisendrath, 1997, p. 45).

Regarding women and the poststructural self, Young-Eisendrath (1995) argues that the modernist theory of Jungian archetypes is grounded in theoretic universals, whereas poststructural theories are in conflict with that, also because of the notion that no ultimate (universal?) truth exists. I have been thinking of Jung's depiction of the feminine and how he invariably wanders off into a two-step journey of discussion of women *per se* and the anima in men, as if belonging in one voice (Wehr, 1987).

According to what I have learnt, I tend to agree with the notion that Jung's theory about the anima and his apparent general description of women is not aimed at the empowerment of women *per se*. I am especially intrigued by his ambiguity in describing how a woman can be a man's inspiration, can be his muse, etc., but simultaneously is degraded to objectivity and clumsily elevated but again for the betterment of men. Wehr cites Jung (1959) talking about femininity and the yin principle and how it is aimed at men (Jung, CW, 9(1), p. 98):

> I speak here as a man … and such a female is fate itself. A man may say what he likes about it, be for it or against it, or both at once, in the end he falls, absurdly happy into this pit, or, if he doesn't, he has missed and bungled his only chance of making a man of himself (Wehr, 1987, p. 106).

Richards (1973) finds it interesting that Jung perceived the feminine aspect of the soul "as least developed" (p. 56). Richards' sense is that it is the task of women today to consciously develop this feminine principle in ourselves. She suggests that in life itself there is a capacity for being open and receptive, like the feminine principle In this openness we can create a new consciousness which may point us towards that place, I suspect, where transformation occurs and where we grow into becoming who we are. The expansion of our consciousness pertaining to the empowerment of the feminine is a central theme in the current study.

Jung thus comes perilously close to being patronising and also to ironically disempowering himself. Such is the face of the 'other Jung' I found. I still have to travel deeper into this terrain of the feminine, which I will do in Chapter 3.

TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND TRANSPERSONAL RESEARCH

Exploring transpersonal psychology and transpersonal research took me to the insight of Miles Vich, a pioneer in the field of transpersonal studies, who, during a conversational forum on transpersonal psychology at its 40th anniversary in 2006, said that those very things in transpersonal psychology that have created, affected, improved, and even at times destroyed civilizations, as seen in history, affect our lives personally and collectively. Even arts and literature have had to deal with transpersonal issues. The transpersonal orientation expands into diverse disciplines such as quantum-relativistic physics, biology, medicine, anthropology, art, ecology, politics and others. Numerous books and scholarly articles are being published in various academic journals, but despite the professional and erudite status of contributions made in the field of transpersonal studies, professional scepticism and criticism about transpersonal work as a scientific endeavour remain. This is his voice of reason: "Shouldn't we know something about it?" (Schroll et al., 2009, p. 47).

The seriousness of these words has not escaped me and I was compelled to explore the potential power of this field in more depth. Lajoie and Shapiro (1992) created a study in which they explored a summary of descriptions and definitions from this field. They offer the following comprehensive and rich definition of transpersonal psychology: "Transpersonal psychology is concerned with the study of humanity's highest potential, and with the recognition, understanding and realization of unitive, spiritual, and transcendent states of

consciousness" (Hartelius et al., 2007, p. 14). I appreciate how this definition serves as an eloquent introduction to various central themes in the field of transpersonal studies.

TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Transpersonal psychology as a discipline embodies the paradigm shift in psychology which took place during the sixties and seventies. This shift was based on increasing dissatisfaction with the orientations of behaviouristic and Freudian psychology and led to the development of the humanistic approach to psychology (Grof, 2008). Humanistic psychology indicated a multidimensional perspective of human psychology and emphasised the whole person and the potential for attaining self-actualisation. Despite the popularity of humanistic psychology, Maslow and Sutich, its founders, acknowledged that the important aspect of the spiritual dimension of the human psyche needs to be included in the conceptual framework of a holistic (honouring the whole person) psychology. In 1967, transpersonal psychology was originated in California by a group of psychologists, psychiatrists and researchers which included, among others, Stan Grof, Abraham Maslow, Sutich, Fadiman, Vich and Margulies. The Institute of Transpersonal Psychology was established in 1975 and in 1978 the International Transpersonal Association was founded (Grof, 2008, p. 47).

It has been said that transpersonal psychology has not developed a coherent scientific frame of reference and, despite attempts to adequately define it, serious ambiguity regarding its scope and appropriate methodology still remains. This results in the misconstrued belief that little progress in understanding transpersonal psychological phenomena from a scientific perspective has been made since its inception (Cunningham, 2007). Cunningham cites Hart, Nelson and Puhakka (2000) and Palmer and Braud (2002) who point out that transpersonal psychology is scientific in the 'Jamesian sense'[18] because its foundation is empirical (empirical data are obtained from direct experience); its inquiry uses a scientific methodology, for example "problem identification, literature review, hypothesis construction, operational definition, research design" and so forth. Cunningham also says that transpersonal researchers use a variety of innovative research methods that are as 'creative and expansive' as the subject matter that is to be explored. This can include creative expression, direct knowing, dream and imagery work, integral inquiry, intuitive inquiry, meditation, organic research, storytelling, and transpersonal-phenomenological inquiry. I

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[18] Referring to the 'father' of transpersonal psychology, William James.

describe how I used some of these research practices, such as creative expression, dream work, and meditation, like a *bricolage* sculpture, in Chapter 4 and show how these became the voices for the storytellers allowing me to see the stories of their lives.

In June 1992, Stan Grof presented a paper titled 'Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Transpersonal Psychology' at an international conference at which he addressed the issue of the scientific foundation of transpersonal psychology. At this event he stated very clearly that the transpersonal orientation could be viewed scientifically as a theoretical system of thinking and that it could also serve as an approach to important practical problems (Grof, 1992). Grof later wrote that "Careful systematic study of transpersonal experiences shows that they are ontologically real and contain information about important, ordinarily hidden dimensions of existence, which can be consensually validated" (Grof, 2008, p. 49).

Following the outlines of his discussion, I describe the basic cartography of transpersonal psychology regarding its theory, central themes and concerns and its application in praxis, research and therapy. The 'discourse' naturally flowed into exploring aspects of Jungian psychology, as Jung's theories of the (collective) unconscious, complexes and spiritual aspects of the psyche are included in the transpersonal paradigm; Jung's work leaves ample room for exploring transpersonal psychology (Harris, 1996, p. 7). Transpersonal psychologists, psychiatrists and researchers agree that the conceptual framework of the theory of transpersonal psychology is based on stages of the development of human consciousness (Capra, 1988; Grof, 1992, 1997, 2008; Kasprow & Scotton, 1999). According to Grof, the unconscious, collective unconscious and transpersonal dimensions of consciousness in humans develop through stages of existential experiences: the psychodynamic domain which involves a reliving of emotionally relevant memories from various periods of an individual's life; the domain of perinatal experiences which relate to one's process of birth; and, thirdly, the domain which is generally known as the transpersonal where an individual has access to an "entire spectrum of experiences going beyond individual boundaries and transcending the limitations of time and space" (Capra, 1988, p. 103).

The work of Ken Wilber goes beyond this description and into a realm of nine positions in a developmental sequence. Wilber (1983) is cited in Rowan (2001a) describing the transpersonal 'state' as the *centaur*. This he describes as the existential self which is autonomous, integrated and authentic. I do not support this aspect of Wilber's theory as it is based on a hierarchical constellation. I find more resolution in the circular motif, in the

Ouroboros symbolism depicti*ng* the process of individuation, which seems to provide a more seamless fit in this study. Capra (1998) cites Laing, who suggests that the language with which to explore the transpersonal domain can be said to be depictive*,* rather than the descriptive language of a more conventional scientific approach (Capra, 1998). Fritjof Capra is inspired by the notion expressed in a conversation with Grof, who finds factual language inadequate in the realm of the transpersonal. He tells how Grof believes that mythological language often seems to be more likely to capture experiences in the transpersonal milieu (Capra, 1998, p. 105).

I support Grof's criticism and questioning of Wilber's suggestion that the psychological problems of individuals need to be diagnosed in a linear and compartmentalised fashion and also treated therapeutically in this way (Grof, 2008). Transpersonal psychology aims at attempting to facilitate healing, wholeness and transformation. Kasprow and Scotton (1999) say that not all theorists endorse linear and/or hierarchical models. They indicate that the developmental model presented by Washburn can be regarded as a spiral. In Chapter 4, I present a fuller version of the symbology of the spiral which revealed strong resonance with some of the co-researchers.Washburn is cited in Kasprow and Scotton (1999), stating that Jung emphasised that there is an inherent tendency towards growth in one's psychological process which ought to be trusted. Washburn's model is derived from a Jungian perspective of human development, making his postulation relevant to this study, particularly regarding the process of individuation.

The central themes in transpersonal psychology pertain to nonduality, intrinsic health, self-transcendence, and inclusivity (Davis, 2003). Some researchers in the paradigm of transpersonal psychology point out three themes that have emerged from current research: psychology that refers to matters beyond the ego; psychology that is integrative and holistic; and psychology that aims at transformation. I am comfortable with the suggestion offered by Hartelius, Caplan and Rardin (2007) that these three themes in transpersonal psychology merge within the realm of wholeness and transformation. True to the nature of transpersonal psychology, these themes form an interdependent and "mutually supportive cycle of inquiry" (Hartelius et al., 2007). These researchers say that the vision of transpersonal psychology is of great relevance to the contemporary human condition. Essentially, the themes of transpersonal psychology can be regarded as shifting away from the conventional view of the

ego and (its) pathology towards a holistic and integrative psychology and the transpersonal realm of consciousness that serves as a catalyst for human transformation.

Stan Grof (1992) outlined some important areas studied in transpersonal psychology. These areas are very relevant to the application of this field with particular reference to therapeutic intervention and transpersonal research. According to Grof these areas involve ritual life; spiritual practice and the mystical traditions (with specific reference to shamanism); and clinical and laboratory consciousness research. He specifically refers to transpersonal psychotherapy (such as hypnosis); thanatology or the study of death and dying; and psychospiritual crises or spiritual emergencies. Grof includes the areas of parapsychological research and transpersonal research, as well as the evolution of consciousness and human survival, which also pertains to an expansion of ecological awareness (ecopsychology) and reverence for all life forms (Grof, 1992). It seems clear from this contribution, as well as from the spectrum of the work of the above researchers and authors, that transpersonal psychology is holistic and multidimensional.

Let me briefly look at some contributions made by other pioneers in the transpersonal arena. William Braud (1998, 2001a and 2001b, 2010) has dedicated decades to research and publishing in transpersonal studies and transpersonal psychology. He states that transpersonal psychology makes an extensive contribution to the expansion of an understanding of human consciousness on levels far beyond the ordinary approach to psychology and especially psychopathology. Braud (2010) writes about the notion of the human capacity for expansiveness in Being. He says that transpersonal psychology explores ways in which individuals, societies, and disciplines might be expanding beyond a typically egocentric way of being and thinking by the inclusion and recognition of the spiritual aspects of being. He states that, "[i]n brief, transpersonal psychology seeks to address the 'Mores' of being truly human: ways of going beyond the usual skin-encapsulated ego, with its narrowly constrained forms of knowing, being and doing" (Braud, 2010, p. 6).

The reference to 'skin-encapsulated ego' is popular amongst transpersonal writers and was coined by the philosopher Alan Watts. Grof (1992) also writes about this, saying that we stay within the confinement of the skin when we experience our lives in an ordinary state of consciousness. In contrast to restricted experiences of ourselves and our environment, we have the option of expanding our experiences by exploring a transpersonal consciousness (Grof, 1992). Braud and Anderson (1998) suggest that there is a particular focus on

understanding the factors and dynamics that encourage or limit transpersonal experiences and the effect of these on the individuation process and the integration of the Self. They elaborate on this by suggesting that the transpersonal paradigm may possibly prove to be effective in describing and understanding, rather than attempting to predict or control our lives and the experiences we create in such a way.

Ken Wilber (2000b) made a significant contribution in his groundbreaking work on transpersonal worldviews in which he refers to the interconnectivity of all aspects of life as "One Taste". He writes about the transpersonal realm as extending far beyond the personal and the individual. Wilber also refers to the 'skin-encapsulated ego', saying that everything in the cosmos touches and affects everything else, far beyond the experience of what the ego may restrict one within (Wilber, 2000b). He describes the essence of transpersonal consciousness and interconnectedness by citing the following poem:[19]

> As the wind sways the swallows
> Velvet beads move in the air.
> As the rain falls on the pear blossoms
> White butterflies lilt in the sky

> (Wilber, 1998, p. 42).

William Braud (1996) also writes about the significance of interconnectedness. He points out that the meaning of trans is 'beyond and through'. This indicates that transpersonal implies the existence of and connectedness to something beyond the individual. The 'throughness of trans' implies a connectedness among various aspects of the self, thus referring to our intrapersonal relationship(s) (Anderson, Braud & Valle, 1996). My understanding is that one's intrapersonal relationship is naturally transpersonal in character, as it includes the aspect of being spiritual. This being transpersonal is described by William Braud (2001) as aspects of the self which allow and encourage us to realise and appreciate the full extent of who we are. These aspects of the self are identified as relating to the recognition, understanding and realising of an expanded consciousness of one's Self and the environment. Capra (1998) says that transpersonal experiences involve an expansion of consciousness

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[19] No source other than 'Zen' is given for this citation (Wilber, 1998).

beyond ordinary boundaries, and includes a larger sense of identity, wide enough to include experiences of interconnectivity.

The orientation then, of transpersonal psychology, as clearly expressed by John Davis (2003) is inclusive: It values and aims at an integration of ordinary psychological development which also includes the personal and the transpersonal realms; it promotes exceptional mental health; and it acknowledges ordinary experiences and states of suffering. It has room for ordinary and extra-ordinary states of consciousness which pertain to aspects of modern Western perspectives (such as analytical intellect) and Eastern wisdom traditions (linking it to contemplative ways of knowing, (some) postmodern insights, and many indigenous traditions (such as shamanism). The fullness of this outline indicates the comprehensiveness and depth of the paradigm of transpersonal psychology, thereby creating a landscape which I was inspired to investigate.

How is transpersonal psychology translated into practical application? How is it practised? In what follows, I look into the arenas of transpersonal modes of therapy; inquiry in research; and more general transpersonal practices. It is truly important to understand that the application of all of these expressions and experiences of the transpersonal are interconnected and overlap, again creating *mandorlas* in the circles. The underlying consciousness of transpersonal life is one of healing, transformation and evolution.

I identify with the statement by Kasprow and Scotton (1999, p. 16) which serves as a neat description of transpersonal thinking:

> Transpersonal research and practice explores the therapeutic use of altered states of consciousness to facilitate connection with levels of the psyche that are often unavailable through exclusively rational or cognitive approaches. The use of imagery, meditation, breathwork, psychedelic medications, and other techniques to produce altered states of consciousness may play a significant role in the advancement of psychotherapy, but much research remains to be done.

For the purpose of this study, I prefer the terminology of non-ordinary states of consciousness as opposed to 'altered states' because the latter may allow the reader to infer that only ordinary (mundane) states of consciousness are 'normal' (Grof, 2008) and also because non-ordinary states of consciousness refer to the transpersonal realm in particular.

Transpersonal psychotherapeutic practices can be placed within three dimensions of application. Davis (2003) cites Vaughn who identified these dimensions as the content, process and context of the therapeutic process. The application of the discipline of transpersonal psychology in the context of therapy requires skilled and well-trained professionals who are well versed in transpersonal psychology, from its theoretical framework and into its application. It is my strongest contention that transpersonal psychologists are (ethically)[20] bound to accepting the responsibility of working with one's Self towards healing, growth and transformation. (In Chapter 4, I offer a compendium of transpersonal self-mastery which explains this notion in greater detail).

Transpersonal theory provides a framework which enables the psychologist who provides therapeutic support to understand that what may ordinarily be seen as pathology,[21] such as psychosis or psychotic symptoms, may in reality be profound experiences of a transpersonal nature. If correctly understood and facilitated, the individual (client) can be guided to transform these experiences into healing growth and transformation. Stan Grof became disillusioned with psychoanalysis as a therapeutic tool with which he experienced a very low success rate in his psychiatric practice. Upon request from a Swiss pharmaceutical company, he volunteered to conduct experiments with LSD as part of a research project. What he found was that the drug allowed him to access a state of non-ordinary consciousness which enabled him to understand the psyche's capacity to transcend one's ordinary limited sense of self-experience and simultaneously to expand into an experience of moving into wholeness. In an interview for *Kindred Spirit Magazine* (1997) Grof explained that

> Essentially, LSD increases the energetic level in the psyche and the stuff you see emerging is basically in the psyche anyway. It releases deeply held contents of the unconscious, from realms far beyond anything described in traditional psychiatry. Not just repressed memories … but also very powerful experiences related to birth and the opening of the collective unconscious, the archetypal realms, elements from human history (*Kindred Spirit Magazine*, 1997, p. 20).

My intention in including this element of Grof's work is to give a description of the development of his own theories and practice of transpersonal psychology. In my

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[20] In this particular context I refer to integrity.

[21] Strictly speaking, these terms are not in alignment with poststructuralist thinking. I use these here in order to demonstrate my point …

understanding, the essence of Grof's discovery of a transformation of consciousness also forms the foundation of how transpersonal psychotherapy is practised. By experiencing a state of non-ordinary consciousness, one is able to expand one's sense of Self (moving beyond the 'ego' and its limitations) and one's place in an interconnected universe (of Being), thus experiencing healing growth, transformation and also evolution. Grof (1997) expressed the idea that these non-ordinary states have a healing and transformative potential in that they allow for bringing resolution and integration in the 'psyche' (Kindred Spirit, 1997). In alignment with what I have said before, Brown (2001), who cites Ferrucci, Grof, Scotton, Chinen and Battista, and Vaughan, suggests that practitioners of transpersonal therapy attempt to use transpersonal practices such as creativity, imagination, intuition, illumination and revelation to help clients awaken and develop their internal resources.

Another therapeutic modality called psychosynthesis was developed by Robert Assagioli in 1965. In psychosynthesis two aspects of functioning are questioned; the question of free will (where is my will?) and the question pointing towards which aspect of the self is dominant in a given moment (Ozu & Akpinar, 2010). Brown (2001) points out that psychosynthesis is a model which understands how consciousness expands and transforms (without the use of psychedelic drugs) and that it provides safe and effective ways for use in therapy. This author has extensively explored research conducted with regard to psychosynthesis. He suggests that therapists include the use of symbols (and symbolism), mandala art and mandala work, as well as dream work[22] as a form of making contact with one's Self in the therapeutic process (Brown, 2001).

I could see how spontaneously the practice of transpersonal psychology flowed from its theory and orientation in its application in therapy and inner work, daily practice and daily life. Core elements of the practice of a transpersonal worldview pertain to meditation, mindfulness and contemplation. Central to transpersonal practice is the use of ritual. A valuable description by Davis (2003) explains that ritual is a means of discovering and developing intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal connections. For Davis, ritual has the power to reveal deeper significance in our actions and relationships because it creates a sense of meaning. My own practice of ritual allows me to agree that it offers a sense of sanctuary; it creates a safe space when I work with potentially difficult or wounding

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[22] These are methods that I have used in this study, albeit not from a therapeutic vantage point, rather to serve as ways of data collection, as well as to assist in my own process of reflecting on my experiences as researcher. My experience in using these methods is that they provided powerful, profound and rich information which also enabled me to gain access into the experiences which give meaning to the lives of the co-researchers.

experiences. In writing these words I was reminded of how similar this description is to my personal ethos and professional integrity regarding the practice of psychotherapy, and I was struck by the 'one taste-ness' of the expansiveness of transpersonal psychology. I might add that the practice of transpersonal philosophy circles around the core concept of an expansion and extension of consciousness. In addition to what has been mentioned already, any form of practice or activity which may lead towards such experiences, for instance listening to beautiful music; witnessing the birth of a living being; walking in nature; being in the presence of the process of death; or merely being touched by the smile of a young child, may be seen as experiencing the transpersonal realm.

TRANSPERSONAL RESEARCH AND INQUIRY

Hartelius and Friedman (2009) address transpersonal research in a philosophical way when they ask the question of how the transpersonal approach can construct approaches to inquiry that are deeply informed by experience yet carefully examined through critical analysis. I concur with Anderson (1996), who states that scientists and psychologists need to value rigor, precision and clarity. She takes it further by saying that a new science of research psychology must also give hope and expand an awareness of human life to be lived in fullness, richly textured in meaningful experiences (Anderson et al., 1996). Braud (1998) explores the nature of the word *research* by playing with words, much like creating a word mandala. The etymology of the word suggests a 'circling around', bringing the roots of the word *respect* into view, and shines light on its meaning (of) 'looking again, honouring without bias'. This takes us to the word *revision,* which means *'*to see again or to look again'. Braud links these ideas of circling and re-looking around a topic with a quotation by Jung, who expressed this in his autobiography as "[t]here is no linear evolution, there is only the circumbulation of the self" (Jung, 1995, p. 196). Regarding this, Braud (1998) also suggests that research may share commonalities with individuation). He argues that transpersonal research provides the researcher with a rich understanding of his/her subject matter, which may be useful in studies of "concepts of self and individuation, concepts of healing and wholeness …" (Braud, 2001b, p. 1).

In looking at this description I found a sense of richness and fullness hidden in the process of doing transpersonal research. It is important, however, to notice the possible danger of distortion or bias (despite the etymology of research*)* by virtue of the researcher's self-

reflection, narration and subjectivity. Transpersonal research requires that researchers develop personal skills that enable qualities such as being present, clarity, mindfulness, discernment, thoughtfulness, reverence for the participants and the research process, and also the environment.

As I have said before in the discussion of transpersonal therapy and therapists, I support the notion that transpersonal researchers need to take up the challenge of understanding who they really are, as all of who one is interconnects with everything else, which has ethical implications for appropriate interaction with oneself, with others and with our environment (Anderson et al., 1996). I also understand that transpersonal psychology and its practices can assist the researcher in developing and honing the required skills to do this. When one consciously allows the process of healing, wholeness and growth, a transpersonal consciousness develops and, I suspect, supports the process of individuation.

Cunningham (2007) explicates and responds to certain critiques of transpersonal psychology and research about the possible metaphysical nature of transpersonal psychology and the effect this may have on the strength of research emerging from this paradigm. He states that hidden metaphysical assumptions may well be found behind methods of inquiry, research findings and scientific theories pertaining to psychological realms and the human experience within that. For him it is the very nature of transpersonal experiences which 'validates' the knowledge of what the research brings forth.

Anderson and Braud (2007) developed a transpersonal vision for research which aims to expand current definitions of transpersonal psychology and research. This expanded vision not only includes personal growth and transformation, but also extends to community and global transformation. In support of this vision, they state that transpersonal research incorporates nonverbal approaches, by which they refer to the use of art, image symbolism, myth and other similar forms of signification. An additional expansion incorporates narrative and storytelling approaches, both of which are extensively used in this study. I like this apparently seamless conjunction of transpersonal and narrative approaches in psychology, research and therapeutic intervention, as well as the harmonious and tacit understanding within the transpersonal research community about the nature of transpersonal research.

In this chapter I have ventured into the borderland of theories, paradigms and disciplines offering an opportunity to explore the confluence of research methodology, theoretical

paradigms and the application of these in this study. I attempted to look critically at what I have discovered. I also, however, did not attempt to obscure my resonance with a transpersonal worldview or my appreciation of the non-traditional approaches and research methodology offered by narrative inquiry. I have been drawn to ways of thinking of and doing research which allow for a synergy with the *zeitgeist* of poststructuralist perspectives. I have explored voices of poststructuralism as expressions of narrative inquiry. In full awareness of the contradictory nature of Jungian Psychology to poststructuralism, I included two major components of Jungian psychology: the feminine principle and the concept of the process of individuation. As such I have attempted to deconstruct these aspects of Jungian theory and I crossed the border into the terrain of feminist theory and feminist approaches to address these aspects of Jungian psychology, along with exploring the transpersonal and poststructuralist views. I kept this exploration as simple as I could by focusing my lens on the concept of (the) Self, and that of the feminine 'archetype' of the anima. Clearly within each of these reside a multitude of possible detours, convergences and more exploration.

It is important to state that narrative inquiry asks of the researcher to be able to allow for merging with the subject matter through the writing of it. In narrative inquiry, it is possible to weave the exploration of the literature review into the researcher's work continuously, allowing for an expansion of how salient features of the study are addressed (Conle, 2000). In Chapter 3 I go deeper into the literature pertaining to the heart of this study. I titled this chapter 'Red Sulphur, The Wingless Bird: Preparing for the Journey' to serve as a metaphor for the underlying foundation in the drive to individuate. The literature I explored became part of the inquiry, part of the unfolding story, part of the alchemical process.

CHAPTER 3

RED SULPHUR: THE WINGLESS BIRD – PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

Eventually all things turn into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by waters (MacLean, 1976, p. 104).

Narrative inquiry asks for a clear trajectory. Reflecting on MacLean's (1976) words, I think about the wonder of the nature of how things change in order to become 'one'. MacLean's words allowed me to reflect on this journey, its vastness and its convolutions and I felt inspired to find the "words that are theirs" (MacLean, 1976). This study has given me the gift of story. Scheub (1998) says that stories take the shards of our lives and create a narrative that allows us insight into our lives (and experiences). I could relate to that, and in doing this literature review, I was able to gain more insight into the field of this study and into the origins, the "basement of time" (MacLean, 1976) which anchored the theories and methodologies of the inquiries I have embraced. I ordered this chapter by exploring the concepts of the self and individuation, the Feminine, the mother-daughter relationship and adolescence and menopause as transitional life cycles.

THE CONCEPT OF SELF

I explore the concept of self from the viewpoints of transpersonal psychology and poststructural theory and then also Jungian theory and psychology. At times there will be overlapping in my discussion. For this I call on the reader to bear in mind the nature of the fractal which is congruous with the nature of writing and presentation encouraged in narrative inquiry, as discussed elsewhere. Preparing to write this section of the literature review involved reading many articles, books, parts of books and so forth about the various lenses with which the concept of self have been viewed. What I understood is that there is no simple understanding, explanation, description or revelation of the elusive nature of the self. What did appear, in this literary search 'for self' is that there are mutual features which can be

looked into. These features pertain to the self as a constitution which relates, is embodied, seeks identity, needs expression, grows, evolves, is able to experience a wide variety of light and dark experiences, is dual and non-dual, is personal, non-personal, and beyond personal. The self is a myth and a construct, and is not a construct and so on (DeCicco & Stroink, 2007; Daniels, 2002b; Frewin, 2002; Lang, 1993; Piirto, 2004). It seems that it may be important to create a consciousness of expansion and openness in this attempt at theorising the self. DeCicco and Stroink (2007) mention that the concept of self in the field of psychology has been an extensive focus of research.

The concept of a transpersonal self has been given a prominent position in research and major theories on transpersonal psychology. Diverse references are made to the 'wider self', 'higher self', 'whole self', 'deep self' and so forth (Daniels, 2002a). Historical movements and evolutionary development indicate that the mutual thread that runs through the various notions of what the transpersonal self is and how it is constituted, is that all these concepts relate to significant and shared human experiences. These concepts in transpersonal psychology revolve round a central understanding or acceptance of a notion of soul, or spirit (Daniels, 2002a). The mutual feature of all the literature that I have consulted on the transpersonal self is the notion of self-experience. Suffice it to say that experiences of the transpersonal self can be found in sleeping and dreaming, non-ordinary human experiences, intuition, inspiration, creativity and so forth. Extensive contributions to this field were made by Stan Grof (1993), Ken Wilber (1995, 1999) and Michael Washburn as cited in Daniels (2002b), as well as William Braud and Rosemary Anderson (1998, 2011), among others. I concede with Daniels (2002a) who suggests that transpersonal psychology has a responsibility to ground itself as a discipline in direct experience, such as research, to obtain 'the data of experience', rather than to make metaphysical assumptions about the soul being the self.

How does transpersonal psychology feature regarding the concept and exploration of individuation? Regarding our transpersonal experience of becoming, Stein (1998) refers to Jung (1959), who suggested that the total experience of wholeness over an entire lifetime is the emergence of the self. A central theme in transpersonal psychology is non-duality. From a transpersonal point of view, the task of individuation thus becomes our responsibility. In this regard, Hollis (1993) also refers to Jung (1959), who said that an individual person is not just a single, separate being, but also in his being part of a collective relationship. The process of

individuation is then not merely an isolated individual experience; it also reverberates into collective relationships. Stan Grof (2000) draws from Jung's psychology (particularly from a therapeutic point of view) to suggest that the self is a higher aspect of the psyche that is guided by an inner intelligence which knows how to heal itself, as the individual psyche takes part in a cosmic matrix which I suspect refers to an inclusion of the collective unconscious. The ability of the psyche to attain holotropic states of self-experience would presumably be involved in the individuation process. Transpersonal psychologists find aspects of a transpersonal self in Jung's theory. These aspects refer to experiences such as intuition, inspiration, psychological rebirth and holotropic experiences. They do, however, find it difficult to relate to Jung's insistence that the self could not be fully known. Jung was adamant that the unconscious was unfathomable and unknowable, which means that the self can never be fully known due to the nature and extent of the unconscious (Daniels, 2002a). If I consider the evolution of the psyche as a transcendent psychological function, I may be able to grasp the possibility of self-realisation. My sense is that this refers to becoming, to Being.

Johnson (1986) asks why this process is referred to as individuation. For him the resolution is found in the unique way in which each human being weaves his or her special and individual story into the greater cloth of the universal human condition. Stevens (1990) says that individuation means that one chooses one's own uniqueness (Stevens, 1990). I share his opinion that the process of individuation includes the process of self-differentiation. My sense of self, then, is that I am able to explore my identity. Hollis (1993) says that "I am what I choose to become," (p. 97), but what I can not understand, is how one can live who one is, if one is not able to fully know that?

Jung was insistent in that individuation is the purpose of one's life: "Individuation is the *raison d'être* of the Self" (Stevens, 1990, p. 41). Stevens also cites Jung in saying: "The call to individuate is the call to become authentic – to live and affirm consciously one's own unique individuality" (Stevens, 1990, p. 293.) However contradictory this may be to having to "know thyself" and not being able to, the transpersonal message confirms the unavoidable task of answering to the psyche's urge to walk along the path of self-exploration towards wholeness (if the notion of the self as an actively growing life-creating principle is accepted).

Stein (1998) says that it is possible not to accomplish the task of individuation. For him it is a matter of integration or confusion; integration or being divided into the multiple aspects of selves. Hollis (1993) concedes this when he refers to the denizens of the swamplands of the

soul, those experiences of loneliness, grief, loss, doubt, depression, sadness and resentment, amongst others.

As Hollis says, what we see depends on the lens through which we look (Hollis, 1993). The poststructural lens, particularly when handled by the deconstructive views of Derrida, focuses on human consciousness as an inscription which is constitutive of experience (Lang, 1993). This experience (of self) can only be expressed as text. She discusses this reductionist view against the background of shamanic experiences where the 'metaphysics of presence' is found in the psyche's experiences as guided by a vital-magical level of awareness. Frewin (2002) brings the self into view by turning away from empirical 'self-issues' such as self-esteem, toward a relational self. Accordingly, self becomes a social concept, particularly as proposed by Gergen (as cited by Frewin, 2002) as a self through relationship. The relational self, if I understand this correctly, expresses itself through language. From a feminist perspective, the self is a relational concept which develops interpersonally, and not within the individual, and asks for a strong cultural context for healthy identity development. Young-Eisendrath (1997) draws from the work of, among others, Harre, MacMurry, Strawson and Taylor to understand a more poststructural 'self': "The self as a set of attitudes, beliefs, images, and actions that permits a person to sustain the sense of being and individual subject, of operating as a separate center of action" (Young-Eisendrath, 1997, p. 52).

Young-Eisendrath (1997) does, however, address the archetypal Self which she links to Zen Buddhism in identifying the (mutual) goal of transformation by virtue of the organising principle of unity, thus moving from Self to no-self. She argues the point of dissolution of an isolated sense of self in order to allow for the no-self which is connected to all of existence. I understand her argument, albeit from a transpersonal perspective of interconnectivity. She views the process of individuation as moving into a sense of self-awareness of one's 'multiple selves' and taking responsibility for creating a sense of unity from that (Young-Eisendrath, 1997).

Does this mean that I become a self-person because I relate, because I narrate, because I am/become a storied self? This is what narrative inquiry draws from; my storied life gives meaning to my experience. Is this of life or of self? In the psychology of phenomenology where lived experience sits comfortably, poststructuralism shifts uneasily. The notion of experiencing self 'from the inside' raises suspicions of uncritical alignment with individualism and, I suspect, may take away from the stronghold of the corporeal (Frewin,

2002). From the transpersonal viewpoint of embodiment, this is a conflict. What I feel comfortable with, is the notion expressed by Frank and Sampson as cited by Frewin that "For example, a somatised embodied discursively constructed self offers a transformative understanding of social practices and humanity, plus enables transformative research rather than research on the body" (Frewin, 2002, p. 27).

Looking further into a poststructural self, I ponder about the value of meaning. Poststructuralists would argue that language creates a matrix within which meaning can be made. Still, what is meaning, who decides? Hoffman, et al. (2006) cite Gergen who argues that the self is threatened by an overload of social interaction, where the agency of relating infiltrates the space for introspection. From the vernacular more specific to transpersonal psychology, I see this dilemma as the intrapersonal domain of self being overpowered by the interpersonal, not allowing transpersonal experiences to guide one towards health and wellbeing. My sense is that meaning in self-experience can be derived from creating a balance between the various aspects of the 'personal' domains in order to create meaning in the text of being, however not-poststructuralist that may be. Frewin (2002) adopts the view that attempting to create definitive theories of the self could be best left to a notion that the "theories of the self create the selves that we are" (p. 7).

Leaning into the similarity between poststructuralist thinking and existential perspectives, I reflect on the premise of an inherent impermanence in our existence. Again I allow my bias towards the fluidity of self, endlessly sliding into cycles and circles of life and death and rebirth – psychologically speaking – to support the psychology of myth to become a narrative in symbols. The way I understand the effectiveness and significance of employing myth as daily psychology practice, is that it may serve in adding value to communal and individual properties of self and/in culture and to give structure to our lives. In this study I have used the story of personal myth by asking each participant to collect and engage with personal symbols in order to explore themselves and, as such, also to express that which gives meaning to their experiences in their lives (Hoffman et al., 2006). These authors still believe that myth is an integral part of western society, not easy to erase. Self is myth …

THE FEMININE

What, then, is the feminine and what is the mystical affiliation with being a woman? Is the feminine principle different from the essential feminine nature? What is this, the essence of

the feminine? What is inborn in woman, that authentic spark, perhaps, of psychic energy that makes a woman uniquely and vitally feminine?

Let me widen this lens of exploration; let me open the kaleidoscope. Rumi, as cited in Barks (2001, p. 132), says that

> … the core of the feminine comes directly as a ray of the sun. Not the earthly figure you hear about in love songs; there's more to her mystery than that. You might say she's not from the manifest world at all, but the creator of it.

According to Chevalier and Gheerbrandt, (1996), the 'Eternal Feminine' is described as "the name of love itself", as being a major cosmic force. Additional descriptions refer to her as being the "pearl of the cosmos", "having courage, idealism, a capacity for happiness" (p. 375). They also describe another side to feminine psychological tendencies such as "vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, the capacity for personal love, feelings for nature and a strong relation to the unconscious". It is necessary to balance this description by allowing the 'dark Madonna' to emerge in this study. Is the dark Madonna the disempowered feminine? I include the myth of Ariadne in this dissertation to serve as a symbol of the disempowered feminine on some level, as she was betrayed by Theseus, despite her assistance in leading him out of the labyrinth (Westbury, 2001). According to Senensky (2003), Ariadne could also be seen as the feminine aspect (anima) of people who are unconscious of the power of the shadow within themselves (symbolised by the Minotaur in the heart of the labyrinth) and, as such, unable to relate to themselves and the world with their feminine principle. As the story goes, there would be death in the descent into the darkness of self, but no rebirth, as in the case of Persephone and Inanna.

According to Robert Johnson (1989), the goddess Aphrodite is the symbolic representation of femininity. He refers to the magnificent painting "The Birth Of Venus"[23] by Botticelli, displayed in the Uffizi gallery in Florence, Italy. (Please refer to Addendum A, Figure 1, to view a print of this painting). In this painting one sees the archetypal form of the feminine principle being born, emerging from the ocean and standing on a shell (Johnson, 1989). Bolen makes extensive use of the power of mythology in her work about goddess archetypes. She uses these archetypes to describe the essence of what drives women in their feminine

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[23] Venus is the Roman name for Aphrodite.

expression. She argues that it is essential for women to become conscious of these patterns, that is, to liberate these from the unconscious, in order to become empowered and centred in their intra- and interpersonal relationships (Bolen, 1984). She describes Aphrodite as an alchemical goddess with enormous power to facilitate transformation and growth. She describes the inner patterns, as symbolically represented by Aphrodite, as the "Pygmalion effect". Rosenthal a research psychologist, originally used this terminology to describe the effect that a 'vision carrier' (such as a psychotherapist, according to Rosenthal) has on others in that it allows them to develop into their most magnificent selves (as cited in Bolen, 1984).

Marie-Louise von Franz (2000) refers to the "anima-woman"; that is the woman who allows the projections of a man's anima onto her self-experience of being a woman (as cited in Saguaro, 2000). Von Franz writes that, in matriarchal India (Mother India), women have a natural confidence in their womanhood, as they know their importance and their essential differences from men. My perception of this is that the feminine principle in all of us (including in men, by virtue of the anima) is the psychic energy that allows us to grow and transform. Therefore, I suspect, and postulate, that the feminine principle is an essential energy in the process of individuation. The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols defines the feminine principle as the eternal female which is "… an energy especially favourable to self-development, to the enrichment of the self in so many increasingly spiritualized ways" (Chevalier & Geerbrandt, 1996, p. 375), thus placing the feminine principle in the lap of the transpersonal self.

Johnson (1989) refers to this transformative aspect of the feminine principle as *Luminea Natura*: woman's natural consciousness of illumination which allows her to see what *is* (Johnson, 1989). Alan Bleakley (1984) refers to this aspect in a woman as her natural "healing and visionary propensity". He also describes the feminine principle as being present in "flow or rhythm" (pp. 6, 242). Woodman's (1993) description echoes this tempo of flow. She writes about the feminine side of our being as slower and less rational. Woodman says that our feminine side contains a part that is more spontaneous, natural and receptive. She also refers to the light of the feminine principle, stating that it is our challenge today to discover what conscious femininity means in order to find "the light in the matter" (pp. 23, 93).

At this point I need to separate the archetypal energy of the anima from the feminine principle. My intention, just for a while, is to focus merely on the feminine energy of being a

woman. I want to focus on the psychology of the Feminine in order to proceed to the relationship between the aspects of being a woman and the relationship between mother and daughter. Eric Neumann (1994) writes that transpersonal, archetypal forces have a natural preponderance in children in their primal relationship with their mothers. He also states that a daughter's relationship with her mother is fundamentally different to a son's relationship with his mother. Neumann argues that an understanding of this fundamental difference makes an essential contribution to what could be called women's psychology and men's psychology. He writes that by using the mythical story of Demeter and Kore, Jung describes a matriarchal psychology that specifically determines the relationship of a woman to the feminine. Jung says that the mother-daughter relationship, as symbolised by these mythical figures, extends the feminine consciousness upwards and downwards (Neumann, 1994).

My interest in Neumann's statements centres in the presence of the archetypal feminine principle in girls operating in their relationships with their mothers, and that of their mothers in their relationships with their own mothers – and how this energy gives life to the process of individuation. When I look closely at what Jung and Neumann have written, I see that the psychic energy of the Mother archetype is fundamental in the feminine principle. Jung says that the mother archetype is a mandala in itself, a holding or containing vessel (Jung, 1982). The dual nature of the mother archetype is once again highlighted, as the containing vessel can be a uterus or a sarcophagus, a *yoni* or a grave. This duality gives us the opportunity to gain more insight into the nature of projection. It is essential to dissolve the unconscious projections which can come alive in our relationships, restoring their contents to the individual in order to individuate from there (Jung, 1982). Jung described Eros as the psychic energy that enables us to relate to one another, whether it be authentically or through projection. Hollis (1998) describes projection as "a natural process whereby an unconscious characteristic of one's own is perceived in an outer object or person" (p. 146). The solution to the problems most people encounter in their relationships (based on unconscious projections) can be found in how we relate to ourselves. The best thing we can do to grow our relationships with others, then, is to become more conscious in our intrapersonal relationships.

The personal mother carries the archetypal image of the feminine, and her daughter can directly identify with the image of the duality of this archetype, be it luminous or dark. Jung states that it is a psychological fact that, as soon as we get in touch with the nature of

polarities, we enter the realm of the syzygies or paired opposites, which leads to wholeness. In the words of Jung this is "… a field of personal experience which leads directly to the experience of individuation, the attainment of the self" (Jung, 1982, p. 155). Let me focus on the mother-daughter relationship against the background of Jung's (1982, p. 170) words: "We could therefore say that every mother contains her daughter in herself and every daughter her mother, and that every woman extends backwards into her mother and forwards into her daughter". Jung draws his argument into an ancestral line of genealogy and ultimately comes to the conclusion that individuals find a sense of belonging and meaning in the generational order, eventually finding a sense of wholeness in this experience. Northrup (2005) echoes Jung's statement in saying,

> Our bodies and those of our daughters were created by a seamless web of nature and nurture, of biology informed by consciousness that we can trace back to the beginning of time. Thus, every daughter contains her mother and all the women who came before her. The unrealized dreams of our maternal ancestors are part of our heritage (Northrup, 2005, p. 3).

THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIP

The mother-daughter relationship is the focus of this study. In this dissertation the myth of Demeter, Kore and Hecate symbolically represents the archetypal mother-daughter relationship, as well as aspects of the feminine encapsulated in this relationship configuration. The psychological value of the Demeter-Kore-Hecate myth is that it contains the essence of the feminine principle in the mother-daughter experience; in its exclusion of the anima it is pure *femme.*

In Eleusis, Greece, the enactment of the Demeter-Persephone[24]-Hecate myth has been taking place as a sacred initiation ritual for thousands of years. During these rites, a symbolic passing of going underground (into the underworld) and coming back up (into new life, or rebirth) is enacted (Kidd & Taylor, 2009). This myth, performed in a profoundly sacred manner, celebrates the aspects of psychological experiences which are explored in this study. I look into the stories of separation (between mother and daughter, and aspects or experiences of self); being at the crossroads (specifically the cycles of transition of adolescence and

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[24] Kore and Persephone both refer to the same goddess, I understand the transformation of the goddess after she was abducted and after eating pomegranate seeds given to her by Hades to be reflected in these names.

menopause); and then reunion (with self, as an experience of individuation). The story of this myth assists in the appreciation of the mystery of the feminine. It lends a voice to the budding promise of the maiden, perhaps indicating innocence, to the 'beingness' of the mother, that force that presents and protects the feminine to/in the world, and to the crone who carries the wisdom of the blood mysteries of women.

This story of the three-fold nature of the feminine has many nuances, many voices even. In the story of this dissertation, I focus on the psychological aspects of the separation between mother and daughter in their relationship and of self; the crossroads of the descent into the underground which follows the separation and then the re-union or rebirth, normally after an initiation has been experienced in the form of the rites of passage of adolescence and menopause.

The myth of Inanna, goddess of heaven and earth, supports the Plutonian[25] descent into the underworld, the place of the crossroads, the place of the crossing point. According to the myth, it is in the underworld that transformation happens, that psychological process of 'dying to what we have been' in order to 'become who we already are', as I have briefly shown in Chapter 1. Inanna's majestic presence is important to the Feminine, and significant in this study. Inanna is described as a mythical goddess whose

> presence draws us into the realm of the inner life. She is the guide who insists that
> we face our shadowy contradictions, that we own who we really are in our painful
> and wonderful complexity. As the goddess of paradox she is the model of unity in
> multiplicity (Meador, 2000, as cited in Senesky, 2003, p.154).

In Chapter 4, the stories of the co-researchers echo these themes and become a celebration of the mother-daughter relationship in itself.

My interest in this study lies in the relational aspect of the mother-daughter dyad and the exploration of the feminine within this constellation, in an attempt to understand the process of individuation in women in transitional lifecycles better. Adrienne Rich wrote in her famous book *Of Woman Born* (1986) that both mothers and daughters need to acknowledge how fundamentally formative this relationship between them is. Their identities and their definition of themselves as women are born from this union. She says that "the cathexis

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[25] The reference is to the site at the Eleusis where the descent into the underground symbolically takes place.

between mother and daughter – essential, distorted, misused – is the great unwritten story. Probably there is nothing in human nature more resonant with charges than the flow of energy between two biologically alike bodies, one of whom has lain in amniotic bliss inside the other, one of which has labored to give birth to the other" (Rich, 1986, p. 225).

Hirsch (1989) refers to the "feminist family romance" referring to various aspects of this relationship-dyad, especially as she deconstructs psycho-analytic perspectives around it, aiming at creating an understanding of the mother-daughter relationship outside the assumptions of patriarchal, logo-centric structures. However, it is important to take into account that psycho-analytic theory may fall short of opening a wider feminist lens on mothering, especially from the point of being an adult mother (and daughter). Hirsch states that a mother is also a daughter and a mother and a woman and a mother. She is 'powerful and powerless', she nurtures and is nurtured, she is dependent and depended upon, and so on. In the light of this description, "maternal discourse is necessarily plural" (Hirsch, 1989, p. 196). The transformation of mothering is an important theme in feminist research in woman's studies.

I concur with Gold and Yanof (1985) who conducted a study about mothers, daughters and girlfriends. They state that women get to know themselves by being intimately connected to other women. This may enable women to get to solve the question of who they are. Mendell studied the impact on the mother-daughter relationship and women's relationships with men. He describes the mother-daughter relationship as the most ancient, the most challenging and in some ways also the most important and enduring relationship in a woman's psychic life (as cited in Fenchel, 1998). From mythology to anthropology, psychology and biology there seems to be a central theme in the child's separation from the mother. In this discussion, I attempt to show that the psyche's urge for the emerging Self towards individuation requires a separation from the maternal voice. In my professional experience as psychologist, I have been trusted with many stories in women's lives which support Mendell's description. I have also witnessed the psychological and spiritual growth of women who, in their healing process, were able to separate from the symbiotic, primordial connectedness with their mothers. Within the motif of circular symbology I can see how the two ends meet: separation and connecting in the relationship between mothers and daughters are both relevant. Burch (1996) says, "Nevertheless, there is also a shift for the daughter as the oneness with mother

gives way to a greater degree of separateness from her" (p. 479). This notion gives a positive tone to the ideation of separation as it seems to be centred in the power of transformation.

Literature from the perspectives of psycho-analytic theory (Fenchel, 1998; Burch, 1996), developmental theories (Peterson & Roberts, 2003; Gold & Yanof, 1985), modern test theory (Schmitt, 2000) and social constructionism and grounded theory (Lesch & Kruger, 2005) indicate a central theme which pertain to the *relational aspect in* the development of women. The study by Lesch and Kruger (2005) indicates that the relationship between adolescent girls and their mothers is maintained by way of disapproval and deception (regarding sexual conduct). Such disapproval and deception may deprive them of an interactional space in which they can freely explore their mother-daughter bond. My sense is that this is not a positive experience of separation, but rather that it is based on control and fear. These researchers argue that there may still be space and potential for maintaining the connectedness between mothers and daughters: "Even though mothers may not always have an emotionally close relationship with their daughters, they can still provide a safe space for daughters to talk about feelings and experiences around sex and men" (Lesch & Kruger, 2005, p. 1080). I am unsure how this space will be created if there is an existing undertone of mistrust and mutual fear, as indicated in this study. I concede their notion that "… they can empower their daughters by giving them space for reflection, giving them words for experiences and facilitating ideas about what is beneficial for the girls" (p. 1080).

In a study done by Winograd (2010), the mother-daughter relationship was explored within the context of adolescent development after the daughter was raped. The author grounds the study in the myth of Demeter and Persephone and explores the developmental task of separation from the point of the daughter's task of awakening sexuality in order to mature. In the event of the trauma of rape as an initiatory experience into the adolescent girl's sexual awakening, the pain and conflict of separation is augmented. Winograd argues that the issue of protection of the daughter by the mother becomes a central point of acute conflict and pressure. The study indicates that mothers whose daughters have been raped feel ashamed and guilty, and feel that they have failed in their task to protect their daughters. They also report experiences of profound sadness on behalf of their daughters' initiation into an adult sexual world. Daughters are reported to experience shame, sadness, loss and betrayal. The mother-daughter relationship can become severely compromised at this point. On reflecting on this study, I concur that the nature of the mother-daughter bond can influence the tasks of

separation (and individuation) and that the mother-daughter relationship *per se* is an ever-evolving and changing constellation (Winograd, 2010).

My understanding is that the separation urge is a powerful and important aspect in the journey towards individuation. It is crucial, however, from a psychological point of view, that the separation process is a positive experience in order to minimise trauma and to create a space for expression and communication, as Kruger and Lesch (2005) argue. I encourage the facilitation of mother-daughter relationships which are centred and grounded in clear, honest and authentic communication and relationship boundaries in order to minimise projections and maximise the taking of responsibility for one's self-experience and self-expression.

A developmental study conducted by Peterson and Roberts (2003) investigated the similarities in narrative style between mothers and daughters and came to the understanding that older daughters and their mothers share a similar linguistic style in narrating salient experiences in their lives, especially if they are emotionally close. These researchers further argue that research by Reese and Fivush (1993) indicates that mothers are more likely to encourage their daughters to talk about and reminisce about their experiences than they would encourage their sons. They suggest that it is important to acknowledge that daughters talk to their mothers within the context of a close relationship, which may indicate that both mothers and daughters share similar narratives (Peterson & Roberts, 2003). According to Schmitt (2000), the concept of attachment between daughters and their mothers or mothers and their daughters indicates an emotional closeness which is a current experience in their relationship. Schmitt argues that it may be possible that a daughter's reflection about family cohesion in the past may influence her positive or negative experience in the present. In thinking about this, I ask the question of whether separation may occur 'more positively', more naturally, against the background of a strong and secure mother-daughter bond.

In another study, Maor (2012) explored the mother-daughter relationship against the background of the development of body image and identity. Maor strives to understand the forming of the identity of fat women. She points out that, in contemporary Western society the mother-daughter bond is the most significant source of communication regarding puberty. The study points towards the emotionally charged dialogue between mothers, daughters and society about fat, body image, health and identity. A pattern was found in the data analysis: the mother's perception of and relationship with body image and identity was embraced and internalised by her daughter. The study reveals a notion that an antidote to this tendency can

be found in the mother conveying and demonstrating a message of self-acceptance (Maor, 2012).

Is the developmental tasks of separation empowering?

Against the background of Maor's study, I want to explore the notion of power in relationships between mothers and daughters. In a study done by Stone (2011), the suggestion is that mothers wield enormous power in this relationship. The focus of discussion in Stone's study is the daughter's need to differentiate from her mother, which can emerge in resistance to maternal domination and control. Stone explores the work of Battersby (1998) who advocates a female subjectivity of the daughter as the norm in the reconfiguration of maternal power in relations (Stone, 2011). According to Stone, the daughter's need to differentiate and the subsequent ongoing process of transformation that happens is a dynamic and regenerative force field. I understand this as the intrapersonal dynamics of union within the self, to reclaim the power of the Feminine.

At this point I want to return to the questions I asked in and about this study. A woman entering the phase of menopause and midlife may find herself in a strange place of uncertainty, desolation, loss, despair and pain. She may be reflecting on her life, retrospectively and wonder about possible lost opportunities (or lost youth), especially pertaining to her physical beauty, sexual power and general vitality. It may also be that her pubescent daughter simultaneously is changing from a little gangly-girl-child into a swanlike womanly creature, a sexual, powerful energy emerging from the depths of her self-being. The daughter may be wistful about these changes and may perhaps want to find certainty about her future, about her own nature. Both women descend into a place of deep changes within themselves, which may also create profound changes in their relationship, although this may also be due to the natural characteristics of the cycles of menopause and adolescence, which I embellish on later in this chapter.

Is it here that separation (transformation) occurs? Could it be that it is during these cycles where both mother and daughter deepen their process(es) of individuation, rebirth and reunion? During times of transition, such as adolescence and menopause, there is a need within the psyche to draw away from the projection of the other in order to assist the process of individuation. Stevens (1990) also says that it is essential and natural to grow away from the mother and separate from her, but, simultaneously, draw from the love and security that

she represents. It was after reading a memoir by a mother-daughter team (Kidd & Taylor, 2009) that I understood the significance of the triangulation of the Ariadne, Demeter-Persephone-Hecate and Inanna myths and saw how my research questions were reflected in these stories.

A woman's initiation into growth and transformation often occurs during cycles of transition or experiences of profound loss and grief, such as losing a parent, child, a beloved, a pet, or some form of severe trauma such as being raped or getting divorced. The same applies to the initiations that come with finding true love, being pregnant, birthing a child, getting married and other major events. Bolen (1994) states that a woman's mysteries are of the body. Owen (1998) argues that the physiological processes that are uniquely feminine, such as menstruation, lactation and giving birth, are alchemical and that this could allow women to naturally understand transformative processes. I support her suggestion that women are accepting of mystery as we contain such mystery in our bodies. I wonder if this may be the very essence of the feminine mystery which enables women, by virtue of the feminine principle, to embrace the process of individuation and to grow into who we already are.

These experiences of initiation are like the symbolic sloughing of skin, like the snake itself. During the time of moulting and growing new skin, snakes are very vulnerable and exposed. In this study I explore the skinless state of women's initiations, as much as I explore the strength in authenticity that possibly results from these experiences. I am fascinated by the rich symbolic content of the serpent-snake. My heart was racing when I read the passage in Bruce Chatwin's book *The Songlines* (1987) where he tells the story of an encounter with a king cobra in Australia's Outback: "What I have not yet seen was the head of the king-brown, about to strike, rearing up behind a bush. I put my legs into reverse and drew back, very slowly … one … two … one … two …". Chatwin's response to this experience was etched into his face, as a friend commented later upon his return home: "You look shattered, mate" (p. 226).

My fascination with the serpent has a lot to do with the symbology of transmutation that it offers. The cycles of life and death meet in the *mandorla* at the centre, in the mandala of wholeness, symbolising the experience of rebirth. Carl Jung (1969) says that "mandalas are birth-places, vessels of birth in the most literal sense" (p. 130).

Some kinds of experiences have the capacity to change us, to touch us. Bolen (1994) describes this as being initiated into a new way of experiencing ourselves and our world whereby we can never be the same as before. Bleakley (1984) says that, for a woman to realise her feminine nature, she must change. He writes that women are able to create change and renewal and makes interesting statements regarding the relationship between change, renewal, death and the meaning of life. He argues that, only if we are able to give value to experiences, can we find meaning in those experiences, bringing us to the question of the meaning of death (Bleakley, 1984). The meaning of death positions the meaning of life on a continuum of opposites. By bringing together the opposites of life and death, we create a mandala of wholeness.

In Chapter 1 I wrote that the core argument in this study is that the mother-daughter relationship is a container which may facilitate transformation, growth and individuation during the transitional cycles of menopause and adolescence. Against this background, I now want to unravel two threads from this argument and to explore that against the background of a transpersonal understanding of individuation and the feminine principle.

Unpicking the first thread of that argument I enter the place where light and dark intersects. This is the place of the chiasma of life and death, change and renewal. It is at this place of crossroads where the goddess Hecate is a *dakini*, guarding over the life-death-rebirth cycle of transmutation. This is the crossing point.

I can explain the concept of the crossing point by referring to the image of a carrot growing in the earth.[26] The old adage of 'as it is above, so it is below' applies to this concept. The growing carrot needs to be anchored firmly in fertile soil in order to grow into the beautiful, bright carotene root that feeds and nourishes us. Simultaneously and interdependently, the soft green foliage above the ground dances upwards towards the light and absorbs the radiant energy of growth, then sending it all the way back into the chthonic belly of the earth mother, feeding the carrot. A circulatory rhythm of energy is established. This energy is dependent on the forces of centrifugal and centripetal movement. I am beginning to see that at the centre of the opposites, in the crossing point, we find the growth principle. Upwards, downwards, light and dark, feminine and masculine – this is the meeting place where Ouroboros finally swallows its tail. Rudhyar (1978, p. 201) says:

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[26] M.C. Richards's book *The Crossing Point* (1973) inspired my own understanding of this concept.

> Everywhere we meet and are dealing with 'wholes' – complex units of existence. These wholes are organised fields of activity, and as their component parts become functionally interrelated and constantly interacting within the boundaries of the fields, consciousness takes form.

It is the consciousness of wholeness that draws me towards the crossing point of growth. At the crossing point of earth and moon are the blood mysteries, this place where women change and grow, release and renew in becoming an embodiment of an essential aspect of the feminine principle. Bolen (1984) describes the archetypal image of the feminine life force, light and dark, as the Great Goddess, creating and destroying life. Bleakley (1984) also remarks that, in mythology, the symbology of light and dark is that we have to integrate in our task of individuation. He is referring to the 'dark' and unacknowledged aspects of the self which Jung described as the archetypal shadow. Instead of leading the reader through a maze of Jungian theory about the shadow, I would rather go into the cave of Hecate, the dark old crone. I need to tell the tales of the Earth Mother before I can ascend again towards the lunar realms of lumination in my story of the feminine.

INTRODUCING EARTH

> The Mother of us all,
> The oldest of us all,
> Hard, splendid as rock.
> Whatever there is of the land
> Is she who nourishes it …
>
> – Homeric hymn to the Earth, 6500 BCE
> (Speerstra & Speerstra, 2005, p. 19).

Jung (1969), in his essay 'The psychological aspects of the Kore" (CW Vol. 9) writes about an Earth Mother who seems to be depicted in myth and folklore as dark or deep red (possibly alluding to blood sacrifices?) of hue. He describes this frightening-looking woman as exceptionally powerful, being a daemon of transformative potential (within the feminine principle). My understanding of this is that the mother archetype is also polarised in the unconscious (like moon and earth) and that, in the experience of relating, this archetypal

image is often projected into an experience of a loving or terrible personal mother. Jung (1969) writes that both "[t]he underworld nature of Hecate, who is closely related to Demeter, and *her daughter*[27] Persephone's fate point to the dark side of the human psyche" (p. 186). Sylvia Perera (1981) conducted extensive research into this matter of death and rebirth with regard to aspects of the feminine and the status of women in contemporary society. Her description of how the descent into the underworld represents women's initiation into the mysteries of being feminine resonates with me. She includes Eric Neumann's work in her argument, saying that this life-enhancing *circulatio* pattern is a function of the feminine Self (Perera, 1981). It is becoming more and more clear to me that the circular motif of the process of individuation as well as the feminine principle may be pointing to an interconnectivity, an overlapping of psychic energy, reiterating my postulation that the feminine principle in all of us may be a prominent feature of the individuation process. Let me return to Neumann.

Neumann (1994) states that the unitary character of the Feminine rests upon the symbolic Earth and Moon, representing the dark and the light, as already discussed. He says that "the night sky and the Earth form the great egg-circle of the matriarchal Ouroboros, in the center of which stands the moon that, as silver egg, represents and illuminates the dark egg orbiting it at a higher level" (Neumann, 1994, p. 77). Authors such as Perera (1981), Bolen (1994), Neumann (1994), Howell (1987), Owen (1998) and Bleakley (1984) refer to the repressed feminine as pertaining to limited consciousness upheld by patriarchal societies and cultures. To me this seems to be representing an aspect of the negative feminine. I also think of the negative feminine as she who is held hostage in her body, either through acts of exploitation, abuse or rape, or a negative self-experience based on repressed, unacknowledged aspects of the self which is silenced into the shadow. Marion Woodman (1993) writes about conscious femininity and how that is repressed by way of eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia (Woodman, 1980, 1993). Bleakley (1984) makes a poignant point regarding this issue when he says that the more difficult these negative aspects within the feminine, the more potent the potential which is hidden. The gift of transformation, and thus individuation, is concealed in the shadow of the negative feminine and can be given conscious attention through the depth exploration of psychotherapy (Bleakley, 1984).

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[27] My italics

The second thread I unravelled from my core argument is woven on the loom of cycles, transition and transformation. In this discussion I need to 're-member' (put back together) the anima to allow for a fullness of reflection of self to other, and back to self. I continue with this discussion by allowing the symbol of the moon to become a voice. Neumann (1994, p. 110) says that:

> The moon has a feminine manifestation as the highest form of the feminine spirit-self as Sophia, as wisdom. It is a wisdom relating to the indissoluble and paradoxical unity of life and death … it is a wisdom that is bound and stays bound to the earth, to organic growth and to ancestral experience. It is the wisdom of the unconscious, of the instincts, of life and of relationship.

The phases of waxing and waning of the full moon and the new moon form the foundation of many ancient calendars. It is important to acknowledge the lunar waxing and waning, as this is a reminder of our own human cycles and journeys of change. The moon's cycles also mirror the menstrual cycles of women (Speerstra & Speerstra, 2005). Rutter (1993) cites Esther Harding who wrote: "In the course of one complete cycle which strangely corresponds to the moon's revolution, the woman's energy waxes, shines full and wanes again. Life in her ebbs and flows, so she is dependent on her inner rhythm" (p. 31).

Reflecting on the moon brings me to the initiatory mysteries of woman as briefly mentioned earlier, as well as the cyclical nature of life and thus also to the exploration of transition as an initiation into the heart of individuation. It is important to expand the parameters of exploration of the feminine principle as much as possible in an attempt to gain in-depth understanding of the experiences particular to women. I include the following 'mysteries' for discussion: menstruation, pregnancy, giving birth (labour and delivery), breastfeeding (or not), and women's relationships with their physical bodies. The aspect of (changing) bodies is highly relevant for this study with regard to the sphere of shifting templates in the cycles of transition of adolescence and the menopause. Experiences of feminine mystery unexpectedly and spontaneously manifested themselves in this study in events such as losing a husband through death and becoming a widow; divorce; being confronted with the sexual orientation of male homosexuality in a partner; being a single mother; having an abortion, having a hysterectomy; and the initiation of adolescent girls to using birth control pills and intrauterine devices (surgically inserted) to subdue the pain associated with menses.

BLOOD MYSTERIES OF WOMEN

Now it is time to focus my lens on the blood mysteries of women, and also to explore the transitional life cycles of adolescence and the menopause. I wanted to find an understanding of how the story of 'sensitive chaos' is possible (Schwenk, 1996). Can the chaos and confusion of transition precede a woman's transformation towards individuation? Bolen (1994) makes a distinction between the blood mysteries of the female body and the physical realities of menses. The essential difference is the mystical affiliation with the feminine principle as it is reflected by the archetypal feminine goddess (Bolen, 1994). My interest in this discussion involves the significance of these mysteries. I was searching for the stories that lead us to the place where the experience of being feminine is understood and revered. I was looking for the place where the ritual of being a woman is accepted as a powerful transformative aspect of alchemy which takes us towards individuation. Alan Bleakley (1984) writes a moving description of how menstruation enables women to access their internal wisdom by allowing the process "of some possible transformation" of psychic energy to be turned into creative inspiration. He also draws our attention to the notion that this creative release of psychic energy can manifest in symbolic language, which can then be made conscious through dreams, and, I would like to add, mandala work; walking the labyrinth; exposing oneself to the transformative power of creating artworks; and undergoing psychotherapy (Bleakley, 1984).

The Red Tent by Anita Diamant (1997) spoke to me a lot about the wisdom of women. I learned about the wisdom and beauty and grace of menstruation. I learned about how women, since the beginning of time, have known about the importance of honouring their blood mysteries. The 'red tent' is a symbol for the place where women menstruate together and where they sing and share stories. This is where they teach their daughters the rituals of menses, of life and death and rebirth. In the 'red tent' girls become women and women grow gracefully into the wisdom of the climacteric where their blood remains in their bodies and feeds their souls. It is also in here where children are born and the loss of lives mourned.

> In the ruddy shade of the red tent, the menstrual tent, they ran their fingers
> through my curls, repeating the escapades of their youths, the sagas of their
> childbirths. Their stories were like offerings of hope and strength poured out

before the Queen of Heaven, only these gifts were not for any god or goddess –

but for me. I can still feel how my mothers loved me (Diamant, 1997, p. 3).

The 'red tent' shelters the initiate against the blistering heat of turning women's wisdom into women's curse, the taboo story of women's power. Bleakley (1984) acknowledges the tabooed characteristic of women's menstrual blood and warns against the possibility that the creative energy, which needs release at this time, can be obstructed by non-authentic self-experience. This could then result in the repressed feminine, the festering, hidden blood-wound. His suggestion of the hidden power of transformation in the menstrual flow is reassuring and inspiring. Owen (1998) argues strongly in favour of liberating menstruation from repressive beliefs and attitudes. She honours menstruation as a ritual, offering women the power of healing, renewal, restoration and transformation. She says that menstruation has been revered since antiquity and that uterine blood was believed to have magical power. Owen also refers to cosmic cycles such as the waxing and waning of the moon resembling the periodic flow of menstruation. I am a strong advocate of the inclusion of ritual in the mundane events of life in order to create a deeper and more reverent sense of meaning. I also experience from my own way of life that living with ritual gives voice to my story. In the sacred space of the ritual, the task of writing this dissertation became a part of my story. It gave a deeper sense of meaning to my scholarly experience; in fact, it became a transpersonal experience. Braud (1997) writes that ritual is in itself a form of knowing, which I understand from a point of non-traditional research practices. Throughout her book Owen (1998) puts forth the argument that the power of menstruation needs to be recognised for women to accept the mystery of the feminine. This acceptance, I suspect, is what prepares one for transformation towards self-mastery and individuation.

Rutter (1993) mentions that in contemporary society the ritual of storytelling, often revered in traditional societies, is absent. She argues that this ritual could serve as a place of reference where a woman's experience of her blood mysteries can find expression and meaning. It takes us back to that place where we find significance and meaning in telling our stories and having our stories received. This is why I found the stories in *The Red Tent* so moving and inspiring. Rutter uses the paradigm of therapy to serve as a replacement for the ritual of storytelling. From having observed this in my practice rooms for over two decades, I agree with her notion that women are often deeply wounded in their relationships with their blood mysteries and their bodies. My sense is that a lack of acknowledgement of the menarche can result in a

diminished sense of meaning and significance of this rite of passage. This can result in shame, disgust, embarrassment, fear and other similar emotions. Rutter (1993) states that "such alienation from her ever-changing nature and its intrinsic relationship to moon cycles requires a healing that consists of a deep realignment to a basic female spiritual nature" (p. 32).

The menarche calls for particular attention. The word refers to the girl's transition from childhood into womanhood. Rutter (1993) points out that a woman's first initiation into a new life cycle occurs with the menarche, the first menstrual period or cycle. This is a physical, intrapersonal and transpersonal experience of the embodiment of the feminine principle. It has an immensely significant and valuable implication for the girl's development as a woman, specifically with regard to her sense of herself as Feminine (Rutter, 1993). Bolen (1994) concedes, and suggests that the first menses should be celebrated, so that the young girl would know that she was beginning to "resemble the Goddess". Bolen sings the praises of this rite of passage by saying that the blood of menarche should be held in awe as it becomes a symbol of fertility and that life can now come forth from her. Owen (1998) also says that the first menstrual period of a girl should be greeted with joy and pride. Bleakley (1984) says that the first blood has the potential to show the way towards self-motivation and independence. He further states that the blood of the girl's first menses releases an enormous power of creativity.

In contemporary Western society, the celebration of such a significant rite of passage seems to be less prominent than in more traditional cultures. I suspect that the ritual of performing initiation rites is an experience of crossing a threshold of consciousness, moving from one cycle of growth into another. Stevens (1990) reveres the pioneering ethnographic work of Arnold van Gennep (1908-1960) who demonstrated that rites of passage are essential to assist human beings when undergoing the crises associated with transitional life cycles. Stevens (1990) writes: "Because these rites were sacred institutions, they provided a divinely sanctioned meaning for the life of each individual" (p. 63). This statement made me think about the possible link between experience, ritual and the transpersonal dimension of change and transformation towards individuation. I deliberated whether to include such a 'dated' source, but upon reflection I came to appreciate the timeless value of Stevens' contribution to the field of ethnographic research. More recent studies show that the Senofu people live on the Ivory Coast of Africa, and amongst them lives a society called the Poro. The Poro people

revere the Feminine, and as part of a female initiation ceremony, the initiates perform a Nogoron dance, signifying their rite of passage into womanhood (Beckwith & Fisher, 2009).

In the following chapter of this dissertation, I record the menstruating girls and their mothers telling stories of painful menses. Their experiences of their menses, as an initiation into their feminine mysteries, are embedded in pain, discomfort, inconvenience and embarrassment; it is a matter of hiding, rather than celebrating the becoming of their feminine selves in their changing bodies. Owen (1998) suggests that women can address painful menstruation by honouring the natural cycles of their bodies and by being willing to be open about their experiences. I have accepted this notion and would like to take it further by suggesting that women may be more empowered by listening to the dialogue or their bodies' stories, rather than dulling the pain with analgesics or painkillers. Susan Weed, a herbalist, demonstrates this point by describing how she meditates and holds dialogue with her body when she is menstruating. She is cited in Owen (1998), saying that "[v]isionary states of consciousness are more accessible when I am menstruating, that is when insight comes" (pp. 158, 159). Owen agrees and says that menses is an integral part of a woman's spirituality, individually and collectively. I hold the notion that menstruation can be a transpersonal experience and I therefore agree with these women authors.

As the menarche is a rite of passage into womanhood, the climacteric is the rite of passage into the phase of menopause. Each woman contains within herself the seed of three aspects of the Feminine: maiden–mother–crone. In mythology this is the Kore-Demeter-Hecate triad. The crone is generally known to be a 'wise woman'. Owen (1998) refers to the Celtic tradition of post-menopausal women being seen as wise, because the blood wisdom stays inside of them (Owen, 1998). Nancy Blair describes Hecate as the mythological "Holy Crone", the guardian of the tri-path crossroads. She is believed to bestow wisdom on those who revere her for being the "menopausal woman who no longer bleeds with the moon" (Blair, 1995, p. 112).

The Krobo people living in Ghana, West Africa, are highly respectful of their elders. Their crones are referred to as "wise ritual mothers". These elders serve as guides or mentors to young girls undergoing the Dipo ceremony that initiates them into womanhood. The transition of life cycles is clearly indicated as a powerful and empowering rite of passage. Beckwith and Fisher (2009) describe a custom relating to the Dipo ceremony in which an elder/crone shaves the heads of young initiates in order to honour the ending and beginning

of new life cycles. Rutter (1993) writes that significant transitions in a woman's life has a bodily origin and reverberates into her mind and soul. She stresses that a ritual acknowledgement of these transitions honours the meaning these may hold for women.

Owen (1998) argues that during their fertile years of menstruation, women gather wisdom from their blood mysteries. She says that "[t]he perpetual round of the menstrual cycle tunes a woman into the pulse of the earth and the rays of the moon. It gives her a knowing, in her body, of the cyclical nature of all life" (p. 74). Women are naturally attuned to the cyclical nature of life, thus these cycles do not end with the cessation of menses. The mystery of menses is transmuted into wisdom, grace, patience, compassion, tolerance, understanding, and, hopefully, a sense of meaning in one's purpose in life. Eric Neumann (1994) writes that development (as in the cycles of life) relates to transpersonal transformation. He describes how the Self gathers the impetus to emerge from a symbiotic relationship with the mother in order to separate from her and become an authentic adult. My understanding is that the onset of menses and the cessation thereof, as seen throughout this study, is a circular event during which the polarities of life and death meet at the crossing point of rebirth.

TRANSITIONAL LIFE CYCLES

Transition is inevitable. We may associate transition with words like *passage, move, transformation, conversion, metamorphosis, segue, shift, progress, development, evolution, flux*, and similar concepts. I see the possibility of flow without interruption as suggested by the Italian word *segue* that signifies the echo of a note in music flowing harmoniously into the sound of the following note. Everything in life is based on change, that much we know, that is the precision of life. According to McAdams et al. (2001), it is essential to understand how we make meaning out of the transitions in our lives. These authors suggest that we can add meaning to the experiences we have during the transitional phases of our lives by constructing and sharing our stories about the times when we encountered "turns in the road". They go on to say that

> … the stories we make and tell about the major transitions in our lives contribute to our identities, help us cope with challenges and stress, shape how we see the future, and help to determine the nature of our interpersonal relationships and our unique positioning in the social and cultural world (McAdams et al., 2001, p. xv).

Stevens (1990), in writing about personal development and the stages of life, says that life's purpose lies within the progressive becoming of the Self. He states that one passes from one stage of the life cycle to the next when new aspects of the Self become salient and demand to be expressed. With regard to this aspect of the study, the focus is on the transitional cycles of adolescence and the menopause. It is well documented in a diverse body of literature that both these cycles are characterised by turbulence, chaos and confusion.

Eric Neumann (1994) made valuable theoretical contributions regarding conceptualisations on personal development and individuation. He writes about the developmental stages of life with the primary (final) goal of individuation. He argues that each cycle of transition is accompanied by some form of resistance determined by the inertia of the psyche. My sense and understanding of this is that the struggle and resistance could manifest in (age-) appropriate expression, which may then describe the crises of each developmental stage. Stein (as cited in Papadopoulos, 2006), says that the specific problems and attitudes experienced during this phase (of quickening in the individuation process) can be described as "impatience, rebelliousness, feelings of inferiority, being marginalised, and frustration" (p. 204).

In Chapter 1 I asked what we can learn about the cycles of transition in exploring the stories of adolescent daughters and their menopausal mothers. I searched for the story of similarity between these cycles. What I want to look into is whether some traits of development required for the process of individuation may have been left either incomplete or unresolved in adolescence, subsequently falling into a deep sleep. What I wonder about is whether it may be that the turbulence of the menopause may have an impetus to re-awaken the 'daimons' in order to look into the mirror of Self and, from there, to deepen the process of individuation, or the becoming of the Self. Stein (as cited in Papadopoulos, 2006), writes that two major crises of individuation occur in the cycles of adolescence and midlife: "The two major crises of individuation fall in the transitions between these stages,[28] the first in adolescence and early adulthood and the second at midlife" (p. 199). Now I refocus my lens and look more closely at adolescent transition. From there I will shift the focus to the midlife transition and individuation in the menopause.

Janet Sayer (1998) says that psychology is very much an adolescent subject, in the sense of one becoming acutely aware of the Self. Sayer, who works with adolescent girls, tells her

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[28] Referring to three main stages of individuation (Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 1999).

story of being a therapist, saying that her recollections of this work pertain to that of the divided selves of girls, their divided loves and their relationships. She writes how "I would still be there, session after session, to go on talking about, experiencing, and piecing together with them the bits and pieces, fragments and divisions involved" (p. 157).

Erikson is cited in McAdams et al. (2001) regarding his work on identity development in adolescence. According to Erikson, this development is precisely what is required to construct a sense of oneness with oneself, and that adolescence therefore becomes the central transition period in an individual's development (McAdams et al., 2001). Naomi Wolf describes it as follows: "I thought of the Young Woman, noting myself from the outside: here she is with her whole life waiting inside her" (Wolf, 1997, p. 102). Pipher (1994) says that the adolescent girl's task is to explore her experience of her sense of self outside the family and parental context. She bases her argument on developmental reasons, saying that girls turn inward, that there is a self-absorption and fascination with their physical changes and the mystery in the exploration of identity and related matters. Stevens (1990) writes that girls, when they start menstruating, come to a realisation, an introverted awareness of themselves as women. He says that "… she is *creative on the plane of life* and she is granted access to a realm of sacred experience that a man can never know" (p. 124).

I understand this to be a transpersonal experience of *knowing* of the feminine principle within. I reflected on this statement and it occurred to me that a woman's predisposition to menstruate on a cyclical basis from the womb of her feminine being, connects her to the principles of life, death and rebirth.

The developmental experiences of adolescent girls occur in the physical, emotional, intellectual, academic, social and spiritual realms of their lives. Pipher wrote an informative book titled *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of adolescent girls* (1994). The title immediately captures the dramatic tone accompanying this stage of life. She writes that adolescence represents a border between childhood and adulthood which is immeasurably complex and intense; she says that it is a wasteland of changing bodies, the soft, soft underbellies of low self-esteem and self-doubt, the torture of the fear of being exiled from the group, and other similar concerns.

In Volume 1 of the series *The Narrative Study of Lives*, Josselson and Lieblich (1993) cite a study by Gergen and Gergen about the 'Gendered body in autobiography'. These researchers

point out that to be a woman means to be embodied. They in turn cite Adrienne Rich, who has said that she knows no woman for whom her body is not a fundamental problem. These authors also point out that their research yielded results which allowed them to infer that "the discourse for embodiment sets the stage for deep unsettlement during puberty and for a more profound sense of aging in later years" (as cited in Josselson & Lieblich, 1994, pp. 200, 214). They state that, for adolescent girls who seem so identified with their bodies, the experience of bodily changes become an enormous issue of identity formation. I agree with Pipher (1994), who writes that girls who remain true to themselves will accept their bodies to be their own and resist others' attempts to define their bodies by appearance.

Ultimately, in order to grow and develop and individuate, self-acceptance would become a rite of passage. Exposing the pain of the perception that one's body and appearance need to be sculpted by the voice of an external master is essential and could be achieved by teaching young girls, adolescent girls and their mothers that the essence of a woman's nature is based on the feminine principle of the wisdom of her body. I also agree with Rutter (1993), who says that a woman should not be denied the essence of her relationship with her body and its wisdom "… because from that wisdom she brings forth her own power and creativity in every realm of life" (p. xvii).

I now address the transitional cycle of menopause. Midlife could be described as a time of great transition which results in an increased sense of integration and individuation (Kroger, 2007). Bolen (1994) describes midlife as a place at the crossroads, halfway between youth and old age. She says that it is here that we need to go into the well within ourselves in order to find clarity about the authenticity of ourselves and our lives. Midlife is a time of adjustment and confusion. Much like adolescence, it is marked by profound physical, emotional and psychological changes. Women enter midlife through the phase of perimenopause, which is characterised by hormonal changes, resulting in enormous physical adjustments, emotional turmoil and psychological opportunities to become authentic. It is the invitation toward conscious individuation. Northrup (2001) says that,

> externally and internally, this period is a mirror image of adolescence, a time when our bodies and brains also go through major hormonal shifts that give us the energy to attempt to individuate and become the person we are meant to be … at menopause we pick up where we left off in adolescence (Northrup, 2001, p. 41).

Hollis (1993) reminds us that this process of wandering in the wasteland, seeking bits and parts and aspects of ourselves is the "unfolding which is the purpose of life" (p. 65). The process of individuation is a crisis of death and rebirth, it is an experience of being at the crossing point, without being able to see clearly until one emerges from the fog of illusion. Clarity is found in the acceptance of one's authentic Self. My sense is that the rite of passage which anchors this momentous journey into a place of meaning and illumination is an individual experience of insight; increased intuition. It is a liberation from the repression of aspects of self and limiting self-experiences; an acceptance of the shadow within oneself; and a conscious experience of being authentic. Stein (as cited in Papadopoulos, 2006) writes that the Self which has transcended the ego "emerges from the inner world of the psyche in the form of dream images, intuitions, inspirations, remembered ambitions, fantasies and a strong impulse toward personal meaning, gradually destroys and replaces the persona" (pp. 209, 211).

A discussion of menopause, midlife and individuation would be incomplete without including the psychological process of alchemy. Marlan comments on the reflection between inner work and alchemy (as cited in Papadopoulos, 2006), while Bleakley (1984) describes alchemy as a transpersonal process, with which I agree. He uses menstruation to describe the symbolism of transformation in alchemy and the human body, coming to the conclusion that this is the *opus* for the transforming psyche (Bleakley, 1984). In midlife and the menopause, an understanding of the alchemical process of transformation towards individuation may make a difference, if only to give a sense of hope and a stronger sense of meaning to this process. The goal of undertaking the passage into midlife is, as Hollis (1993) says, "to find that person who is the goal of the journey" (p. 42). Stevens (1990) refers to this experience as "coming to Selfhood" (p. 190).

At this point I began to understand that the research process is indeed a circle of exploration and transformation. Both the transpersonal framework and narrative inquiry aim at finding the meaning of the co-researchers' experiences. Both lend themselves to research contributions that hold opportunities for enhancing health and psychological wellbeing. There is scope to recognise, honour and share experiences, all of which has the potential for discovering meaning (Anderson et al., 1996). They emphasise the importance of the need for meaningful experiences. Citing Abraham Maslow: "There is no substitute for experience, none at all" (p. 24).

CHAPTER 4

CONIUNCTIO:
WALKING THE LABYRINTH –
THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

> When we walk the labyrinth, we go over the same ground many times but always at a different angle, or facing a different direction, or after having traversed some pathways already. We sometimes take great strides forward, only to find ourselves returning to where we have already been. At other times, we seem to move back and forth in small spaces. We never know who or what we will meet on the path. The unexpected is always present (Senesky, 2003, p. 10).

Melissa West (2000) a psychotherapist who uses the labyrinth to provide a therapeutic experience for her patients, describes the labyrinth as an "archetypal map" (p. xii). The labyrinth represents a journey. More specifically, it represents a sacred journey, a safe and sacred space, a *temenos*. She cites Joseph Campbell who refered to such spaces as "places where people can come to acknowledge and focus on who they really are, and in what, or whom, they place their ultimate trust" (p. 38).

My understanding is that, by walking the labyrinth, one can explore the possibility of self-awareness and self-discovery. I was thinking about the mystery of the labyrinth for some time, but in the process of conducting interviews, gathering stories, interpreting dreams and listening with my senses to sounds, voices, colours and symbols, it remained in the realm of mystery. I was deeply involved in the research process and my field work was taking shape and form. Then, early one morning in April I dreamt of a labyrinth with eleven petals on the outside and with a female form resting in the centre. I contacted a labyrinth expert and we discussed a labyrinth ritual as part of the field work.

When this ritual took place, the presence of the ancient medieval labyrinth was enormous and inspiring. It has eleven circuits and in the centre waits the six–petalled flower. As a group[29]

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[29] I refer to the group of girls and women who took part in the study; my supervisor was also included in this ritual.

we circumbulated the outer lunation three times. We were silent as we walked in awe and wonder. Then I was asked to open the walk into the labyrinth. Slowly and with much reverence, I stepped into the entrance. The cry of a fish eagle pierced the silence and once again I became aware of the presence of something sacred, significant, but as yet, unknown. My feet found their own way into the labyrinth and I opened myself to the experience. Reflecting on this experience retrospectively, I understood these words: "To go through a labyrinth is to set out on a path of transformation" (Candolini, 2003, p. 120).

In preparing to write this chapter, I was exploring the mythology of crop circles to find patterns, symbols and mythological references. This is how I discovered the wondrous world of Benoit Mandelbrot, founder of the concept of fractals. This property is generally known as self-similarity. Mandelbrot describes a fractal as "a rough or fragmented geometric shape that can be split into parts, each of which is (approximately, at least) a reduced copy of a whole" (Mandelbrot Set Explorer, 2007). Braud and Anderson (1998) state that transpersonal research resembles a self-similar, fractal landscape. Self-similarity in this research journey presents itself, once again, in the symbolism of *Ouroboros*, the labyrinth, the mandala, and also in the glyph for the feminine symbol: a circle superimposed on a cross.

My research argument is presented as a fractal, consisting of three parts:

- The mother-daughter relationship serves as a powerful constellation from which healing, transformation and individuation can transpire;

- During times of transition, such as adolescence and menopause, transformation and growth can occur that may support the process of individuation;

- The feminine principle is constituted in a positive and negative way. At the heart of this composition is a crossing point: the place where transformation takes place and wholeness is found.

I have chosen to explore my research argument of transformation through the transpersonal lens, directing the focus to the constellation of the mother-daughter relationship. I sense that the nature of this relationship is significant; that it could facilitate powerful stories about the feminine principle and the individuation process.

The story of this research journey is presented in five steps, reflecting the path of the labyrinth**.** Labyrinth experts agree that there are five steps in walking a labyrinth: preparing to walk; on the way in; at the centre; on the way out; and after the walk (Curry, 2000). According to Hogan (2003), the actual walking of the labyrinth entails three distinct parts: into the labyrinth; time in the centre; and the walk out of the labyrinth.

STEP ONE: PREPARING TO WALK

> All journeys begin with a single step. All adventures begin with fear.
> Within the unknown is understanding. Each day is the beginning
> of a season of growth for each of us.
>
> (From the *Book of Reflections*, as cited by Curry, 2000, p. 37)

In preparing to walk into this study, the story of my own journey started like this:

> The dream is rather beautiful. In the dream the story is told. The story being told is the dream. In the story there is a little girl who feels very clumsy; she feels stupid and boyish. She certainly does not want to wear pretty patent leather shoes and not-to-mess-up frilly socks. This little girl likes to run free, she likes the feeling of the soft, damp earth under her feet. She likes the roughness of the stones and the way the grass teases her bare legs. She loves the colours and smells while she is running free and wild. Then her mother calls her. The mother is calling her to tell her that she has to stop playing the fool now. To be responsible. Not to eat with her hands. But she likes to feel the stickiness of honey and breadcrumbs. She loves to suck her fingers. She is always hungry. She loves the way a plump tomato bursts from its skin when she bites into the flesh; she giggles when the juice trickles down her chin. She sticks her fingers into the jam pot and she licks the spoon; she never feels that she has had enough to eat. Then her mother tells her to stop eating now, for there are dishes to be washed.

> And so she plays with the bubbles and the rainbows in the water and she knows that magic is everywhere. She calls her mother to come and see the magic. Mother is too busy and reprimands her for wasting time and not being focused.

This is how she learns that magic is wrong and that she is stupid. She learns that to play is bad and foolish. She learns to be afraid of loving beautiful things. She does not understand why her mother tells her that she is such a mess and that she should try to be like the other little girls who are always good. She learns that she is not good. Beauty and magic and rainbows and bells and stories and hearing the leaves rustling, playing tunes in the wind – that is not good. She is confused, because she knows what it feels like to be surrounded by magic.

Then, when she is no longer a little girl, she rages and rages like the fires she loves so much. She thunders like the storms that bend the trees and leave the poor people homeless. She rages and thunders until she leaves her mother's home. Only then does she allow the skies to grow dark and spew forth flames and smoke and thunder and rain. She spirals down below the surface of her world. This is no wonderland. This is a journey into the underground graveyard of her own destruction. She plunges deeply into the blackness of desolation and grief. Into the Other world. And so the story proceeds …

Then there is the night when a wise old woman walks into her room. The young woman is startled and afraid. The wise old woman fixes her warm, green gaze into the soul of this frightened and furious young woman: "You have to learn how to carry the medicine bundle[30] now. I am here to teach you about the medicine of alchemy and story. You are a medicine woman".

The young woman bowed her head in silent gratitude and unrolled the bundle ...

During the winter of 2008 I found myself in the depths and darkness of self-doubt and despair. For the past few years I had plundered my inner chambers of peace and grace, tortured myself by dancing with my Shadow, but by then had reached a place of total surrender: I was being called by my soul to open my life and to become who I am. This is what the Sufi poet Rumi (as cited in Barks, 2001) says: "Put your vileness up to a mirror and weep. That's when the real art, the real making, begins. A tailor must have a torn shirt to practice his expertise" (p. 261).

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[30] "A medicine bundle is usually a large piece of cloth or hide wrapped around medicinal objects and then securely tied with a thong, yarn or string. The material used for the wrap is considered sacred and should not be used for anything else" (Sunbear, Wabunwind & Mulligan, 1991, p. 97).

I meditated daily and I took long walks on the beach, I was open to be guided towards the next step of my journey. I drew mandalas and I wrote and reflected in my personal journal. I wanted to find the way back into my centre. Then, one morning, as the dark clouds lifted and a rainbow embraced the mountains where I live, I gained clarity and I knew that I needed to embark on my doctoral studies, because I would stagnate if I continued to refuse to hear the voice of my calling. The transpersonal researcher Kremer is cited in Braud and Anderson (1998) as referring to this kind of transpersonal experience as finding one's "tale of power". The authors embellish on this by saying that it refers to "one's personal trajectory" (p. 131). Stan Grof (1992) wrote that "deep experiential self-exploration can result in full conscious experience and transformation of the destructive and self-destructive forces in the human psyche" (p. 22). He refers to these experiences as psychological death and rebirth; 'concepts' which I have personally experienced. I also recognise these as experiences connected to my midlife passage. James Hollis (1993) says that the middle passage is often experienced in frightening and desolate ways.

After this experience of revelation and clarity, I opened a book by Jack Kornfield (2000) lying on my table: *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry*.This is what I read: "When we accept our place in the mandala of the whole, we come back to just where we are" (p. 171). Kornfield describes how he and his wife, Liana, were discussing a book they had read "so that we can talk about the different aspects of feminine energy and the parenting of a girl" (p. 224). They were discussing Jean Shinola Bolen's book *Goddesses in Everywoman* (1984). It was in that moment that I knew what the topic for my studies would be.

STEP TWO: ON THE WAY IN

> When you come to the edge of all that you know, you must believe one of two
> things: there will be earth to stand on, or you will be given the wings to fly.
>
> (Unknown author, as cited by Artress, 2006, p. 84)

Braud and Anderson (1998) say that, in telling our stories, we remember the past; that this retelling illuminates our present, which then implicates the future. My own experiences of the deconstruction of my life compelled me to make meaning out of them. I have become intensely aware of the danger of self-sabotage and self-destruction and of walking the very tight rope of the difference between destruction and deconstruction. The difference? Alchemy. I now also know that this is the path of individuation on which I have embarked.

To enter the walk into the labyrinth, I needed to earth myself in the heart of the narrative. I needed to settle into the sanctuary of silence like a meditation chamber. The Greek word for inner chamber is *thalamus*. In the human brain, the thalamus is the centre for (amongst other sensory receptive functions) the appreciation of primitive, uncritical sensations of pain. I had a need for this story of transition to become a source of meaning, to be a vessel for the process of alchemy.

The narrative seemed to become a transpersonal experience for me in this journey. Jerome Bruner is cited in Braud and Anderson (1998) to have advocated the importance of narrative and stories as they facilitate meaning in experiences. According to Braud and Anderson (1989), our stories form the essence of our personal identities. De Vries (2004) used narrative inquiry to do research with a family living with HIV and Aids. She refers to her own experiences of becoming "visible with our own lived and told stories" in the process of doing research (p. 10.) Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also indicate that narrative researchers work with themselves as much as with their co-researchers in allowing their own personal stories to be brought into the light. McLeod (1997) cites Sacks and anchored this point for me in my attempt to become surefooted in this study: "Each of us is a singular narrative … To be ourselves, we must have ourselves – possess, if needs be re-possess, our life stories. We must 'recollect' ourselves, recollect the inner drama, the narrative of ourselves" (p. 105). I concede to the notion that narrative inquiry is a respectful way of gathering stories and gaining insight into those stories (De Vries, 2004).

In deciding how to conduct and present this research, I based my choice of inquiry on my belief system which has taken deep roots during the darkest times of my intrapersonal and transpersonal struggle. Braud and Anderson (1998) say that transpersonal psychology contains a sense of wonderment about daily life and accepts life as precious and also as magical.

Rutter (1993) says that "[w]omen need to find their own voices and tell their own stories" (p. xviii). I agree with her that women have been deeply repressed by a patriarchal attitude of women being inferior. My interest in this particular study was also guided by an authentic desire to make a meaningful contribution to a transformation of consciousness pertaining to the upliftment and empowerment of girls and women. Furthermore, I believe in story. I believe in the healing nature of authentic self-expression and in having one's voice heard and respected. Braud and Anderson (1998) describes a narrative study with nine women about

their individual processes of personal transformation. They describe aspects of the experiences of the narrative researcher in the study, who chose a narrative approach in gathering the data for the study because she believed that the material she sought would be readily found. She reports that she was not disappointed in narrative inquiry.

STEP THREE: AT THE CENTRE

> To enter the center of the labyrinth is to enter the belly of the soul where the darkness illuminates the light.
>
> From the *Book of Reflections* (Curry, 2000, p. 72).

When I was walking the labyrinth shortly before I went on a retreat to reflect on my research journey and to begin to process the field work, I experienced an immeasurable sense of trust and assurance in this journey. As I was entering the centre, everything around me spiralled into silence. Marti Cain, who works with labyrinths, refers to this as "the spin". She says that "the self pulls us inward to our essence … it focuses us upon our inner journey and can be understood as a spinning center or 'pole'" (cite in Speerstra & Speerstra, 2005, p. 222). The rest of the group was still walking, following the coiling path. I sat down in the centre, in the fourth petal, and reflected on this experience. This was when I knew that I had to just follow the path and that I would come to the centre. I knew that I needed to trust in that.

And this is where I am, writing this dissertation. I am about to tell about the co-researchers or storytellers; about how I encountered the stories; how I engaged with the stories, and then I will tell our stories. Connelly and Clandinin (2000) state succinctly: "Our principle interest in experience is the growth and transformation in the life story that we as researchers and our participants author" (p. 71). Braud and Anderson (1998) write about words and how words assist the process of coming closer to an understanding or interpretation of the topics being investigated. They mention that the meaning of research is to thoroughly investigate a topic. They describe transpersonal research as a way in which these methods not only honour human experience, but that it also honours the research endeavour (Braud & Anderson, 1998). In doing research we move around our topic, looking at it from various perspectives until we eventually gain a more complete understanding of what we are actually examining. Is this another fractal in this journey of *Ouroboros*?

My original intention was to involve clients from my therapeutic practice who may volunteer to participate in the study. Retrospectively, I now realise that such participation may have changed the research process; the researcher-therapist-co-researcher dynamic may have ordered a different unfolding of the story. Of course I do not know if this is so, but, as the story goes, research plans can never be cast in stone, and I found the storytellers in a different way.

Reflecting on my research argument and research questions, I decided to employ a sample selection method which is secure within the paradigm of qualitative research. Purposeful[31] selection was chosen (Belk, 2006). This method of selection seeks co-researchers who will help in understanding the research question(s) most effectively (O'Donnell & Gormley, 2012; Bahl & Milne, 2006). The co-researchers in this study were pre-specified, consistent with the requirements of being adolescent or menopausal, being a mother-daughter team and being familiar with transpersonal ways of life and practice.

I gathered stories from six women and girls, and also from my mother and myself, and I wove our stories on the loom of meaning and understanding and experiences. I was keenly aware that I worked with a very small group of co-researchers. At this point it is important to bear in mind that I adhered to the narrative turn that speaks of working with the particular, rather than opening the lens wide into an attempt of the generalising of facts searching for 'research truths'. In being able to witness a timeline of stories of the girls and women, my mother and myself, I was able to gather rich data by penetrating deeply into the fertile soil of lives lived and told. Leavy (2009) says that the narrative method is a collaborative method in which the co-researchers are engaged in creating the unfolding story. In my experience during this study, the fact that the number of co-researchers was small, enabled me to be open and receptive to, as I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the unexpected and the unrevealed. I found this to often open up into a slender thread leading the way to more meaning in their stories. In choosing this approach of the particular, I aimed to work within the rich creativity and depth narrative inquiry offers.

How did I find the co-researchers then?

I was introduced to Phoebe by a mutual friend. On occasion we were talking about the menopause and relationships, generally sharing our stories. I told her about my intended

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[31] Some authors refer to 'purposive' selection (Belk, 2006).

study and I shared some of my ideas with her. As she was very interested in my study I asked her if she would consider taking part in it. She departed with the idea of discussing their possible participation with her daughter, Viola. Both of them consented and committed themselves to become involved in the study.

During the time of working on the preparation of my plan of inquiry, I met a woman who was at university with me many years ago. During our conversation I told her about the nature of the study. Ciska was particularly interested in participating, because of the study's transpersonal orientation. Her daughter Simone was very willing to participate as she was interested in dreams, mandalas and drawing.

Some time after that I was in my consultation room one morning, preparing for the day's work. Elizabeth, a woman whom I had met some months before, worked in the same building. She came into my room to greet me and we started to have a conversation about how our bodies change as we get older. I told her about my study. She listened intently and then said: "Summer and I could become involved, you know".

The three teams of mothers and daughters were found and I could continue with the design of my plan of inquiry and prepare for the fieldwork.

I need to revisit a crucial element of ethical concern in research: confidentiality. All the co-researchers gave their consent to be identified by their first names and ages, except one girl. I have not used their real names due to the personal details and the depth of their self-exposure in their stories. However, I still want to tell the following story in order to revere the growth of this girl. One of the adolescent girls wanted to be referred to as *jane* (deliberately using the non-capital "j". During our last phase of working together she said one day that it actually would be a good idea to use her real name, that she felt proud to be a part of the study. She would prefer to be identified by her true name. The formation of identity is one of the major psychological challenges and developmental tasks in the transitional cycle of adolescence (Kroger, 2007). "The most important feature of synthesizing the data is the intuitive breakthroughs, those illuminating moments of insight when the data begin to reveal and shape themselves" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 92).

Finding ways of gathering the stories of the mother-daughter relationship, becoming and being a woman, of the feminine principle; the journeys of the process of individuation; relationship stories; stories of loss and love, hope, grieving, victory; stories of life; the life

stories of three women and their daughters, all being in a phase of transition; stories of my life and my mother's life – these held my attention and occupation in this research journey. I had to gather and collect these stories like driftwood on the beach. I recall a story I read some time ago by Rodger Deakin (2007), a masterful *raconteur*. He writes about an artist who created sculptures from driftwood. She was a petite little crone, a ninety-year old woman who lived in her studio in Suffolk. The way he describes driftwood reminds me of how our stories are so deep within us, so much part of our internal fibre, our inner being. Deakin (2007, p. 186) wrote:

> Driftwood is full of the tonal colour and depth of years of flaked or peeling paint, half revealing a deep strata of soft pigments from generations of painters and decorators. They are collections of silent stories. Each piece of driftwood carries its secret history that begins with the seed of the unknown tree it came from … .

In the preparation phase of this study, I made the following notes in my research journal as a way of planning and reflecting on how to gather the stories I needed:

> *Stories can be told, heard, seen, written and expressed in the form of dialogue. I intend to make use of interviews, conversations, family documents, letters, poems, journal writing and discussion to facilitate such expression. Interviews will be* recorded *and transcribed. Co-researchers are encouraged to listen to their own interviews. Words as visual imagery i.e. blood ... flow, uterus, and then to let the words become images creatively. ...*

> *Dream work will be an important aspect of data gathering: everyone will be encouraged to deepen their dreamwork by adding creative expression to the recording of their dreams, such as drawing, making collages, working with clay, making jewellery, working with fabric, beads, making mobiles, etc.) *Photos of these could be taken and included in the dissertation, with consent from the co-researchers *I may want to consider creating a manual/workbook as an addendum.*

Visual Imagery: Photos are very powerful to allow the flow of information and storytelling (i.e. I am the daughter of the daughter of the daughter of ... genealogy).

Each person will receive an inspirational file with images which may facilitate/provoke their response pertaining to their experiences and understanding of the above-mentioned concepts, etc. Free writing, discussion, collage making and so forth can induce expression and provide information. Each one may create a visual diary to document their experiences, also of the process ...

Mandala work is an important way of finding a story, hearing the voices of the storytellers. Rituals such as building mandalas as a group towards the end of the project as a shared experience (should they be willing). The same could be done in the form of walking a labyrinth as a symbol of feminine mystery (I have interesting literature on this to substantiate). Individual/mother-daughter rituals to establish trust and commitment, expressions of love and caring, etc. I will document these and include the meaning and experiences in the dissertation. Work pertaining to rites of passage, which is symbolic and may be very healing? Personal mythology and symbology: drawings, mandalas, dream work, making a dream cloth, etc. Individual rituals, i.e., the youngest participant has not yet had the menarche, a ritual for self-expression as feminine, etc.

Casey (1995) indicates that, in narrative inquiry, researchers use autobiographical and biographical material including diaries and journals, life stories, interviews, life documents, and so forth. Prinsloo (2003) says that it is difficult to categorise narrative ways of gathering information, because it embraces a variety of disciplines. She says that the essence, which is to interpret the meaning of the experience, remains the same. In formulating that experience, we structure experience and construct reality. In this study I gathered stories from the following sources: journal writing and keeping personal diaries, mandala drawings, interviews, visual imagery, photographs, personal documents, collages, letter writing, the labyrinth ritual, dream work, personal symbols and personal mythology, observation, words (word mandala) and conversations.

In addition to this, working with the literature review gave me a lot of stories. I felt assured that I was exploring research inquiries aimed at finding meaning in experiences pertaining to personal growth and transformation. Leavy (2009) suggests that literature review plays an important role in arts-based research work. She says that an arts-based project may find its inception in a work of art that may have been the source of 'discourse' (elsewhere). In this study I have used "The Birth of Venus", the magnificent painting by Botticelli as a muse in exploring the feminine principle in collaboration with the expected sources of, for instance, psychological references such as in Jungian essays. In reading literature dealing with this painter and the painting I was able to expand my understanding of various aspects of the feminine principle. In addition to this, it also helped me to decide on including visual imagery as another source of gathering stories. From there, I selected visual images based on aspects of the feminine principle and included that in the field work from which field notes and later research texts were created.

In what follows, I describe in more depth how I gathered the data.

JOURNAL WRITING

Journal writing is a powerful way of documenting information. I agree with May Sarton (as cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) who states that "… journals are a way of finding out where I really am …. They sort of make me feel that the fabric of my life has a meaning" (p. 102). At this point I need to mention that I refer to journal writing and keeping personal diaries as activities similar to preserving personal information about our lives. Sosin who is cited in Josselson and Lieblich (1993), conducted research about diary-keeping *per se*, and came to the conclusion that adolescent girls use their diaries (journals) as a symbolic form of self-discovery during this cycle of transition. She also states that "diary writing is a phase-appropriate developmental phenomenon" (p. 32). From a point of personal experience, I have been making daily entries in my personal journal/diary since 1997, and I have come to understand that it brings a sense of meaning to my life; that the recording of events, feelings, impressions, thoughts and the like orders the daily mundane and magical experiences of my life. It feels like having a silent witness, which gives me a sense of oneness with life.

MANDALA DRAWINGS

Mandala drawings were used to gather stories about how we see meaning in our lives, how we make sense of our experiences, especially during these powerful phases of transition that

we were investigating. David Fontana (2005) says that a mandala represents that which lies all around one and deep inside oneself. Mandala means "center, circumference or magic circle" (Fincher, 1991, p. 1). Jung (1969) wrote in his autobiography that the self is like a monad which is one's world. The mandala represents this monad and "corresponds to the microcosmic nature of the psyche" (p. 196). He also said that he saw the mandala as the path of individuation (Dahlke, 2001). It seemed that the inclusion of mandalas as a way of finding stories is apt and relevant in this study. I have been drawing mandalas every day for as long as I have been practising journal writing and meditation.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews and conversations formed a very important part of gathering stories, for "… interviewing provides a way of generating empirical data about the (social) world by asking people to talk about their lives. In this respect, interviews are special forms of conversations" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003, pp. 67, 68). In alignment with the narrative and transpersonal lenses of inquiry, I conducted interactive interviews with the co-researchers. Gubrium and Holstein also point out that participation in interviews involves meaning-making work and is inevitably collaborative. During the interviews, I did not use a particular, structured form of questioning or follow a questionnaire-type interviewing style. Instead I allowed the relationship between myself and the co-researchers to become a collaboration. The questions I asked often emerged naturally in discussing dreams, collages, mandalas, photographs or visual imagery, or followed from journal writing and so forth. Atkinson (1988) believes that preset questions can be the downfall of the interview. He says that "[d]irect and simple questions that are designed to get at the person's own deep experience will bring forth the richest stories" (pp. 30, 31).

Regarding the use of photographs in interviews he says that they "… can be used as springboards to all kinds of wonderful, maybe even long-forgotten, stories". Using photographs during an interview with a co-researcher, an adolescent girl who lost her father at a very young age, was helpful in assisting her to remember her father in other and, to her, meaningful, ways, as she said that she had trouble remembering him and that it worried her that she may forget him. She experienced relief from that research session and expressed her gratitude for the healing that had occurred due to this experience in the research process.

These interviews were recorded and transcribed. At times I also made notes during conversations and interviews, later referring back to them for additional information whilst listening to and transcribing recordings. Atkinson (1988) says that "the life story is in itself primarily an artful endeavor, it should be *interpreted* as an art form" (p. 21). What I found when I was conducting interviews during this study, was that it felt as if I was creating a sculpture, or even making a collage, selecting pieces and images, phrases and impressions and that stories appeared in the flow of questions and responses.

VISUAL IMAGERY AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs and visual imagery were used to assist me in finding the threads from which the stories had been woven. Prosser (1998) supports the notion of working with image-based research. According to Prosser the essence of working with images in research is found in the capacity of images and words to assist with the exploration in order to reach an understanding of aspects of the human condition. In Addendum A, I show the images which I asked all the co-researchers to work with. They were asked to write in their journals about their impressions, feelings and thoughts about these images; I welcomed their opinions and contributions without any particular prescription as to how to use these. The images could be included in their collages; it could be used to assist in the making of their word mandalas and so forth. I selected photographic pictures and prints of paintings which capture aspects of the feminine principle; relationships between mother and child; and of individuation. Noe is cited by Leavy (2009) saying that art can be an effective tool to support knowledge building. Leavy writes that "if researchers working from a phenomenological framework are interested in accessing experience, and experience now occurs within a visual landscape, experience is embedded within its visual context" (p. 226). I included visual imagery as a research tool in order to access information which became stories. I am not sure that this would have been the situation in a traditional interview, or questionnaire, for example. Amongst the visual images I selected for the co-researchers to work with, I included a photograph of a majestic tree. (Please refer to Addendum A to view this image). My intention was to see whether this image would facilitate descriptions of growth. Jung (1982, p. 159) wrote about the tree, indicating that,

> … [i]n the history of symbols this tree is described as the way of life itself, a growing into that which eternally is and does not change; which springs from the union of opposites and, by its eternal presence, also makes that union possible.

I encouraged the participants to select photographs of themselves, their mothers, their daughters and any other relevant aspects of their lives that were meaningful to them and could help to tell their stories. I wanted to gather family stories, women's stories, rites of passage stories, and more, from these conversations that we would have. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) also regard the use of photographs as important and describe them as field notes. Using photographs to gather information is regarded by Mello (as cited by Clandinin, 2007) as an example of creative field text gathering. He, too, refers to the collaborative reflection that takes place between the researcher and co-researcher(s). Bach (as cited in Clandinin, 2007) says that using photographs allows him to get inside the experiences of his co-researchers. He writes that "I am able to hear stories that matter to them. Dialogue can arise from story-telling in a shared research space" (pp. 290, 192). I share this experience. Many times during the months of participating in the field work photographs provoked profound responses and experiences in our working together. Photographs tell stories, they are stories. I found them to be useful in this study.

COLLAGE

The use of the collage as a form of working with visual imagery is based on the same notion as that of Prosser (1998), who makes use of images in research. According to the New Oxford American Dictionary (1998), the word collage is derived from the French word *coller*, meaning 'glue'. Collage is a form of art in which various materials such as photographs and pieces of paper and fabric are glued together, also described as an art form consisting of an assemblage of different forms, creating a new whole. Leavy (2009) cites Diaz who describes collage as a method in arts-based narrative inquiry research in this way: "Collage combines our everyday reality – bits of photographs, newspaper, found objects from everyday life – with paint or ink, this merging the illusionary with the actual, art with society, aesthetics with everyday/every night life" (p. 222). In the way it is used by Diaz, collage as a research tool is blended with text in an attempt to create a reality and find meaning, thus becoming a work of art as well as bearing information. Some of the co-researchers in this study spontaneously followed the same approach, thus allowing for expansive conversation about their lives, which, in its own way, then became stories of their lives. I often use collage making as a therapeutic tool in my therapy practice and have had very meaningful results where clients gain deep and unexpected insight and understanding of intrapersonal experiences and of themselves.

WRITING LETTERS

In narrative inquiry, writing letters is regarded as a way of giving accounts of ourselves and our lives; of making meaning of our experiences; and of maintaining relationships. I have asked each of the mothers to write a letter to their daughters and the daughters to write a letter to their mothers. I wrote a letter to the participants with this request: *"Mothers, please write a letter to your daughter about your pregnancy with her, about birthing her, then also write about anything you would like her to know about you, about her, about your relationship.*" To the daughters I wrote a letter asking them to *"please write a letter to your mom about how you see her as a mother, how you feel about being her daughter. Please ask her questions about her experiences when she was an adolescent girl; tell her about how you experience this phase of your life*". Clandinin and Connelly (2000) concur that it is acceptable for researchers in narrative inquiry to write letters to their co-researchers, and for the co-researchers to write letters to each other. Sylvia Perera in the introduction to a book on Jungian symbolism, writes: "Letters are an important way to share knowledge. Often, and perhaps especially for women, they enable (like private journals) the release of creativity …" (Howell, 1987, p. viii).

I tell my mother's story and the story of our relationship in the form of a letter. This letter forms the outline of Chapter 5. I use this form of presenting her/our story in order to allow my field notes to be seen in full disclosure and also because the letter in itself reveals much about the intrapersonal conditions of our thoughts and experiences, and the meaning of the experiences of our stories.

PERSONAL DOCUMENTATION

Personal documents in the form of personal memos, newspaper cuttings (from my mother's folder which she presented to me, containing information about experiences and events which held value and meaning for her), birthday cards, mother's day cards, other items that trigger memories and reflections, all serving as a keeper of stories, were shared during our sessions. Most of these conversations were recorded and later transcribed. Much value was found in these rich sources of information. These have become relevant as research documents and as a collection of stories. "We have lived; our moments are important" Goldberg (1986, p. 44).

DREAMWORK

Dreams became a very important source of story: "The dream is a little hidden door in the innermost and most secret recesses of the soul" (Jung, as cited in Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 244). Frank (2004), a contemporary educational psychologist, wrote a very useful book on dreams. She says that, "[a]s every person is also a story, the dreams of an individual provide us with access to the story of his or her inner world" (p. 124). Because dreams tell us the stories of ourselves, I was able to include dream work in the process of gathering our stories. The transpersonal nature of dreams added another dimension in that it gives a voice to the existing content in the subconscious, the dream images and symbolism made the 'translation' of the transpersonal dimension possible. All the co-researchers shared their dreams during the period of the fieldwork. They were all committed to recording their dreams in their journals. Discussing these dreams often provided access to more depth in their stories and their experiences of themselves.

WORKING WITH WORDS

According to Braud and Anderson (1998), "[d]welling more deeply on a few additional words can convey a great deal about the nature of several approaches to research" (p. 26). I asked the participants to make a mandala, using words to describe or depict their experience, association and understanding of the feminine principle, the nature of the feminine and of being feminine. Jung worked with the word association technique with surprising results, stumbling upon the theory of the unconscious and "shared unconscious structures" which are enabled when people relate to each other (Papadopoulos, 2006, p. 28).

PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY

Joseph Campbell (2008) became renowned for his groundbreaking work on comparative mythology. He writes that mythology is psychology that is misread or mistaken for, amongst others, anthropology or cosmology. He suggests that, in the contemporary practice of psychology, much depth can be found in translating mythological figures into human character(istics). I have attempted to find stories in the personal mythology of the co-researchers. Working with personal mythology was also an important means to assist in understanding the co-researchers' dreams and their dream symbols. All the women and girls were asked to draw or describe or identify or find visual imagery of their personal myths and symbols. Campbell (2008) says that symbols of mythology are spontaneous productions of

the psyche, while Harris (1996), citing Whitmont, says that symbols are also expressions of spontaneous experiences that point towards meaning that is only partly "conceivable". I am intrigued by the link between symbols and myths and our personal stories, and how it may perhaps create meaning in our lives. Stevens (1990) states that "myth is more individual and expresses life more precisely than does science" (p. 267).

At this point we need to revisit the *temenos* of this research process: each co-researcher allowed me to gain access to her innermost being. This is a profound privilege and responsibility. It also requires trust and courage. I am reminded of the notion held by transpersonal and narrative researchers that our research can be meaningful in that it holds the potential to touch us, allowing us to grow or be transformed, as in the case of the researcher and co-researchers in the study.

GATHERING THE STORIES

I reached the centre of the labyrinth, and was poised to begin the tale of how I gathered the stories. I thought about this in the language of narrative inquiry; the storied experience of doing the field work; the experience of gathering the stories; of relating to the co-researchers; of becoming part of their stories and of their stories becoming part of my story. And then there were my mother's stories that she offered me, as well as the story of my mother and myself, all waiting to be told, retold, and relived.

It was in the early days of summer that I received the long-awaited call from my supervisor to tell me that the ethical committee of the University had granted me permission to start my field work. Consent had been given to secure the participation of the mothers and daughters in the study, and I could proceed. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) say that the beginnings and endings of narrative inquiries are dramatic. At this stage of the research journey I related to their words. And then I found these words: "You need not fear the journey. Something is about to be finished, now. And something else is poised to begin" (Speerstra & Speerstra, 2005, p. 35).

Are we ever ready? I planned the outer structure of the field work in such a way that it would accommodate the mundane[32] realities concerning myself and the co-researchers. I decided to have an initial meeting with the mothers and their daughters in order to discuss the best way

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[32] I refer to day-to-day realities.

forward into the field work. These meetings were held in comfortable and informal surroundings, with me visiting the mother-daughter teams in their homes. In the case of one team we met at a bakery-deli in the beautiful fishing village of Kalk Bay. This was a practical solution to a logistical difficulty. During this first meeting we discussed ethical concerns and logistical issues (everybody had very busy schedules and I found that time management and flexibility would become very important features during this period). We agreed on where and how our future meetings and interviews would take place, how much contact time we needed, and how much time would be required for drawing mandalas, journal writing, dream recording, and other related activities. I enjoyed this process. It felt like selecting beautiful pieces of colourful fabric, as well as paper and pictures for creating a research collage. This is how it can be described: "I like collage when I want to have a lot of choices of images and textures, need to feel some control, and want the option of changing my mind" (Malchiodi, 2002, p. 62).

This is how I reflected on my first meeting with one of the teams:

> *We discussed the logistics of time, location, schedules and so on. We also talked about* the *work, the content, about doing the field work. It felt good to be there with them. We played* with *words about being feminine. So much information was already offered, about being ...*

The outer structure of the field work was like the board on which I was making my research collage. I had conducted multiple and lengthy interview sessions with all the mothers and all the daughters. My mother and I also met for interview sessions. Mother-and-daughter sessions were planned and scheduled. We met for conversations, for sharing life stories. We talked about the mother-daughter relationship, the feminine principle, transition, adolescence and the menopause; we talked about menses and the mysteries of the female body. We discussed relationships and the loss of relationships. We had conversations about mothers, about our mothers and our relationships with them, we talked about being a mother, not being a mother, and mothering. We told our stories of being a daughter and being the daughter of the daughter of …. I heard and listened to the stories of how these mothers relate to their daughters, their love, their hopes and fears and aspirations for their daughters. We poured over photographs and pictures. We discussed dreams, mandalas and collages. At each session each storyteller was there – present with her stories brimming with meaning and life, even

when we discussed death. There were so many surprises; I continued to be touched and knew that doing research about the stories of peoples' lives, their becoming and their being, would continue to grow and transform me.

During the times when the co-researchers were working independently, they wrote in their journals, made collages, recorded their dreams, drew mandalas and worked with words, using their visual images (the prints I had supplied – all of them had the same pictures). They all had the same agenda. They wrote and drew and painted and created expressions of their experiences of being feminine, being mothers and daughters, about their relationships with themselves and with each other. They expressed their experiences of transitions in their lives, of menstruation, of the menopause. I found that our interviews were often connected to this work that they had been doing. This created an abundant harvest of stories. We had regular meetings or sessions in their homes or at my consultation rooms. There were times when it was necessary to have conversations in a coffee shop, because the logistics were more manageable that way. Life took its course while I was doing the field work. The girls wrote exams, had slumber parties, played sport, dated boys, or thought about dating boys. The mothers got onto planes and travelled to India, to Johannesburg, to the Transkei. Yet, because of the nature of our research plan and the nature of the inquiry, fluid as it was, everything created the potential and possibility of being valuable in terms of creating field texts.

Bruner says that the whole narrative process is a search for meaning, which means that the telling, the hearing and the writing of the stories are inextricably linked (as cited in Josselson, Lieblich & McAdams, 2003). Through the months of doing the field work and spending time with the co-researchers, something started to happen to me. It is difficult to explain; all that I was aware of was that I was developing an intense awareness of the significance of meaning, and the meaning derived from experiences. I also became very conscious of stories. I started to experience stories. In my psychotherapy practice I became aware of how becoming a researcher teaches me to listen to my clients in a different way. I was listening from a place of stillness. I listened for the meaning of the experience that they were relating in the safety of the consultation room. Listening to life stories has become a transpersonal experience. I honour stories in a very different way now. Ettling is cited in Braud and Anderson (1998) saying that she seeks the sacred wisdom in ordinary lives through listening to life stories in her work as a researcher. I relate to what she says; it has become my experience as well.

PROCESSING THE INFORMATION: FINDING THE STORIES

I want to tell more about the storied way. I want to tell about the conversations. I want to tell our stories. For that I need to move deeper into the centre of the research journey. The centre of the labyrinth is the heart of the journey. Earlier on I wrote about walking into the centre towards finding the stories. This is where we are when I start to tell about finding the stories.

During the process of engaging with the data, I applied transpersonal principles, including a personal daily ritual, journal writing, meditation, creative expression, intuitive listening, reflection, daily spiritual practice and walking meditation. In her research report, Sophie Arao-Nguyen (as cited in Baraud & Anderson, 1998) recounts how she worked with her data in similar transpersonal ways. They describe how Arao-Nguyen, in working with the data, used "nonordinary techniques of rituals, dream work, bodily knowing, creative expressions and intuition to augment and inform the more conventional ways of using the interview materials" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 175). Leavy (2009) cites Berger who used narrative research methods in working with sensitive subject matter. My experience as researcher echoes her view that "[t]his kind of research requires high levels of reflexivity and openness on the part of the researcher throughout the process, as well as an ability and willingness to interpret the data through different lenses" (Leavy, 2009, p. 39).

I organised the folders containing the data into three groups, each consisting of a mother-daughter team. I started to unpack Elizabeth's folder and, reading through her journal, I made notes on my intuitive insights and understanding. Following that, I read through all her dreams, studied her mandalas, looked at her artwork on the feminine principle and other matters – all the time making notes and reflecting on my own process of engaging with the data. After this process, I opened her collages with photographs. Using that as a background voice, I listened to and transcribed the interviews I had conducted with her. After having worked with Elizabeth's data, I started with her daughter Summer's folder. In retrospect, I now realise that I intuitively worked in this order. I understand that it happened naturally in the order of Summer being the daughter of the daughter of the daughter of ... Northrup (2005) refers to this as a "matrilineal" learning opportunity. She says: "You must be willing to drink at the place in the earth from which your lifeblood sprang, your relationship with your mother and your maternal inheritance" (p. 36).

The particular order of first engaging with the mother's stories and then with the daughter's, allowed me to gain access into that space where I gained insight guiding me to the essence of the findings which are presenting shortly. I had not planned to work this way; it flowed spontaneously and then formed a pattern. The image that comes to mind is that this pattern, this way of working, engaging with the field texts in order to find the stories in the voices in the photographs, mandalas, collages and so forth, appeared like crop circles in the field. It just happened that way and then it became a 'method' in itself.

I followed this routine for all the co-researchers. During this time of being intensely focused and deeply engaged with the process of receiving stories, my own story found its voice, wandering through the landscape of words and images and elements; water, fire, air, earth. My personal process followed its natural course. During this *nigredo* stage, this stage of blackness where I could not see, there were times when I really struggled to make sense of it all. I meditated and wrote in my journal to reflect on this daunting experience. And then I read the words of Braud and Anderson (1998) who state that it is more dangerous in transpersonal research to think that we know what we are doing, or to be overly confident or to even have specific ideas about the findings of our research. They also say that "The nature of transformative experience often demands periods of confusion to be more fully understood" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 85). I was relieved and returned to the field notes and research texts, knowing that the stories were there.

I read and reread my research texts, my notes and the inscriptions made by the storytellers. I spent more time working with the information, adding more depth to my exploration of their dreams and their mandalas, delving far down into their inner landscapes. I noted themes and similarities as well as differences, discovering unique and beautiful aspects and dimensions to their Beingness. I created more notes and wrote even more research texts from my field notes. At night I dreamt about my research texts which were revealing more information. With the stories of these women and girls I was able to walk further along this research pathway. I felt honoured that I was carrying their stories.

I was strongly motivated to do an inquiry into the meaning of the experiences of the life cycles of adolescence and menopause, because I had noticed, in my capacity as researcher, my personal life and my professional life as a psychologist and transpersonal therapist, how some menopausal women and adolescent girls reveal similar intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal issues or challenges. I wondered about how this reflected my thoughts about

the opportunity and gift of the menopause. I see this gift as an opportunity to complete any unresolved or neglected personal identifications in order to embrace the process of individuation as expansively as is authentically possible. In his description of the tasks of midlife, Hollis (1993) includes the necessity to withdraw one's projections (as a parent) from one's child. It is important to be willing to do this, as it liberates both parties. He says that one's unfolding in life (my understanding of this is one's becoming) is the purpose of life; that we should allow ourselves and our children to be the individuals who we and they are, for we are "worthy of being different". It is this separation process that facilitates individuation, difficult as it may be (Hollis, 1993, p. 65). Rutter (1993) articulates it as follows: "As a woman individuates, her feminine ego will emerge from the unconscious. The dependency will lift" (p. 48). Northrup (2005) says that every daughter carries the consciousness of her mother and all the women in her maternal genealogy within her, seamlessly woven by nature and nurture.

Let me begin with the stories I have gathered, the stories of the mothers and daughters and the web of stories told before them.

THE STORIES OF PHOEBE AND VIOLA

Phoebe is a 51-year old woman living in the lap of the ocean in False Bay. She has led an interesting life, she tells me. She is the eldest of four sisters. This is an important factor in her growing-up years. When she was two years of age her mother, who used to dote on her and made her feel completely loved, gave birth to her sister, a sickly baby. Her mother withdrew all her energy from Phoebe and focused only on the new baby. Phoebe experienced a sense of abandonment which was to become a very powerful voice in her own life story. It became a thread that wove itself into her stories of relationships with men, her relationship with her body and her relationship with her daughter, Viola. Her relationship with her mother was marred, and in an attempt to find significance in her sense of Self, she, in turn, tried to be the son her father longed for. She tells me how her body was thin, sinewy and strong, like that of a boy. She had no time or affection for her sister. This relationship took a long time to heal. During the process of doing the field work, Phoebe and her sister went through another period of estrangement. It hurt and angered her. During one of our interview sessions she shared the story of her relationship with her sister with me, while she was staring out of the window at the expansive turquoise ocean. She was upset that day. Also, her menopausal symptoms seemed to be returning. Her face was flushed with emotion, and her sadness and

irritability were obvious. We talked about how she could process her feelings and how she could come to a place of resolution within her Self about this relationship. I had already received her contribution in dreams and poems and mandalas and much more when, some months later, Phoebe wrote two poems about their relationship. Here are some extracts:

> We are so connected you and I but yet
>
> so different – like 2 sides of a coin
>
> I am so active, decisive and energetic, brown amber
>
> You so white and blue, a sensitive moonflower.

She continued to embellish on their differences and then her voice, clear and strong, found the medicine:

> So here we are these 2 sisters
>
> Put together to learn from each other
>
> To see ourselves in each other
>
> To love each other
>
> To grow the opposite sides.

When Phoebe reached puberty, the family had relocated twice between South Africa and England. It is significant that each relocation corresponded with an important transitional cycle in her life, such as just before she went to school for the first time, and then again upon entering high school. She experienced a lot of frustration and anger at her life being disrupted. The seed of trauma-in-transitions was planted.

Back in Johannesburg, enrolled at a prestigious school for girls, she settled into a life of being an unusually intellectually and politically astute teenager. She was considered 'weird'. Phoebe told me how she became extremely rebellious, drinking alcohol, smoking dagga, dating boys, never asking permission from her parents and never telling them about her life. She shunned her mother and withdrew from family life completely. She was not very interested in her appearance, but she was curious about menses and had prepared herself for the menarche by reading about it. Her first menstrual cycle occurred when she was thirteen or fourteen. Her changing body intrigued her and she even asked for a "padded bra". As puberty settled into

adolescence, she was set on exploring her life as a rebel. She loved listening to music, reading and befriending boys. And drinking, and taking drugs.

At the age of 17 she left school, having completed her matric with university exemption. When she was 18 she was arrested for smoking and being in possession of dagga. She was sent to jail. Her parents were mortified. In turn, Phoebe was mortified about the fact that her mother was concerned about how the social status of the family would be affected by this situation. Shortly after this episode she enrolled at a university, but she was smoking dagga all the time. Then she met a man who fell in love with her. She left Johannesburg and went to Australia where she married this man and almost lost her life completely. When we were looking at photographs from this period in her life, it became very clear that she had found herself in trouble, that she had withdrawn from her Self. Her hair was dyed black, she was very skinny, her eyes were empty. As we walked along this song line of her life, she suggested that this period, lasting seven years, marked her initiation back into herself. Phoebe managed to escape from her husband and return to Johannesburg. At the age of 27 she continued her academic studies and simultaneously held a full-time position which entailed managing an educational programme for children living in the townships. During the tumultuous time of her life in Australia she had also fallen pregnant and had an abortion. It was many years later, in an interview session during the field work, that she told me about this experience. She told me about a dream she had about this baby, whom she called "cold baby". Because she had dreamed about "cold baby" during the time of this study, she felt it had enormous significance for her. She felt that the wound of aborting her first baby was starting to heal. She wrote the dream into a poem:

Cold Baby

I know a place where you can get a baby
I said to my friends
Come – I will show you

I took them to the back door of a hospital
I knocked a secret knock
And waited – the hospital was pastel green,

A nurse came out – we want a baby I said

She went back inside and closed the door

A long time passed – then out she came

And handed us a bundle.

I opened it quickly and took out

A tiny cold black baby

Still as a doll

This is what you must do, I said to my

Friends

I held it close to my cheek

And murmured, cold baby, cold baby

For a long time

Slowly it warmed up and came alive

I was holding a lovely, warm baby

I handed it over to my friends.

If you were to meet Phoebe, you would understand that she is a rather unconventional person. She is a single mom of two adolescents, the eldest being a boy. Her daughter, Viola, was born twelve years ago. When Viola was two years old, her father announced his homosexual status and left the family to live with his new partner. Phoebe felt abandoned again. She experienced a further sense of abandonment and deep feelings of betrayal when she later learned that Viola's father was also heavily addicted to drugs. He subsequently went into a rehabilitation programme and has been in a recovery programme since that time. He lives in a different city and Phoebe and their children, have regular and healthy contact with him.

This unusual family live their daily lives in a most balanced way, often involving rituals and "making magic". As a family they have long and controversial conversations about contemporary issues; they swim in the sea right across the road from where they live; they love going to the movies; they walk their dog, they socialise, they quarrel and they support one another. Phoebe is a successful businesswoman, owning a business in the recruitment sector. She is also a sangoma and spends a lot of time mastering intricate sequences in the

martial arts. She performs traditional dances to the ocean goddess, in traditional African lore referred to as Mandau. She recently walked on hot coals during a fire ceremony to honour her teacher's birthday. This is what she says: "I am a force to be reckoned with." She also talks about her tendency to take control, referring to herself as "a slave driver".

I asked her about her experiences of being pregnant and giving birth to Viola against what Northrup (2005, p. 41) writes:

> The circumstances of a mother's conception, pregnancy, labour and birth with her daughter form the original imprint that her daughter encodes about what to expect as she moves … on her life's journey. Yet it is the baby who initiates labour, and the mother whose body must relax into the process.

Because Phoebe was diagnosed with a rare condition of the liver after returning from Australia, her pregnancy was challenging but well-contained. When the time arrived for her to give birth to Viola, the entire process turned into a very traumatic experience, mostly due to Phoebe's poor health. Natural labour was not an option, as the safety of both mother and child would be compromised. Viola was born by Caesarean section, with her mother being under full general anaesthetic. The baby was immediately placed in an incubator, as she was diagnosed with pneumonia. Phoebe had to leave Viola at the hospital for five days before she could go home to her family.

Viola is a pretty young girl with golden-brown curls and luminous eyes. She is slightly built, almost childlike still. She is a young adolescent, 12 years old, but with uncanny, old wisdom. She loves wearing comfortable clothes, Indian-styled harem pants, loose-fitting t-shirts, little camisoles and sneakers. Sometimes she wears very tight-fitting, bright green denim jeans, a jersey that is too big for her, and sneakers. She is rather gangly and awkward. She giggles when her friends are around and they snigger behind their hands when her older brother and his friends come into the house.

We talked about her experiences of being an adolescent, about the not-knowing and uncertainty of things, and we talked a lot about change. She told me that she was the only girl in her social group and in her class at school who had not experienced the menarche. When I asked her about that, she was ambivalent. She was neither daunted nor excited by the prospect. She told me that the reason for not being scared was that her friends who have had

"theirs" said that it is just a bit scary in the beginning, but that one got used to it. She was not excited either, because her friends told her that at times "it is quite sore and can be messy".

Viola loves drawing mandalas and she was very interested in our discussions about them. During one of our interview sessions she mentioned that she thought adolescents should be taught at school how to use mandalas as life skills for conflict resolution and anger management. I agreed, and promised to give her the titles of reference books that I use. I noticed that some of her initial mandalas had purple centres. Kellogg, as cited in Fincher (1991), suggests that "purple speaks of the psychological unity with the mother …". I also noticed that she drew a mandala in the centre of her collage of the feminine principle, and in this mandala she made the centre red. Kellogg says that "[t]he psychological separation from the mother is revealed by the appearance of red when once there was purple" (as cited in Fincher, 1991, p. 62). However, Kellogg also suggests, on the basis of Jung's work on alchemy and mandalas, that red could indicate a "will to thrive" (p. 48). I found this significant in the light of Viola's highly dangerous illness at birth. Viola has allowed her story to be spoken of by her mandala drawings as well as her dreams. She expressed a very strong need to be close to her mother. Phoebe has told me that she had experienced post partum depression after Viola's traumatic birth and that she became emotionally withdrawn. After Viola's father left them when Viola was two, Phoebe had gone off on a personal quest, "journeying", as she called it. Even though she was still at home with her children, her psyche was searching for her soul. It was only after one of her family members pointed it out to her that she realised that Viola was distressed about her mother's psychological absence. Phoebe described Viola's behaviour at the time as clingy, needy, insecure and demanding. She described her daughter as still having dependency issues and confidence issues.

At this stage it is very important to draw attention to a thread that seems to work itself into a possible pattern. When Phoebe was two years old, she suffered a major experience of abandonment from her mother; and when Viola was two years old, she was left by her father, while her mother was emotionally unable to contain her own experiences of the grief, desolation, betrayal and hurt of being abandoned yet again. She simply could not be available for Viola.

These experiences of abandonment and the need for attachment consolidate in dependency-related issues which I explore later in this chapter when I elaborate on the findings.

I still have more of Phoebe's and Viola's stories to tell. There are stories about being feminine and also the story of their relationship. Phoebe was very intrigued with the dark or negative feminine and created a beautiful snake mandala to depict this. She resonates strongly with the snake as a personal symbol, along with elemental medicine, particularly water and fire. Her own story of transformation is analogous to the sloughing of the snake's skin. According to Speerstra and Speerstra (2005), "[t]he serpent image carries deep symbolic meaning and can be found in every culture" (p.26). In their exploration of this symbolism they refer to *Ouroboros*, stating that the early Greek alchemists used this symbol to point out how all of creation dissolves and is transformed in self-restoring creative energy. Sams and Carson (1988) refer to a symbolic link between the mythology of the serpent and the element of fire: "Through accepting all aspects of your life, you can bring about the transmutation of the fire medicine" (p. 61). According to The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols, fire is a "strong symbol of purification and regeneration" (Chevalier & Gheerbrandt, 1996, p. 382). I also understand this as a symbol of psychological alchemy, the sloughing of the snake's skin.

While I was still on my sojourn, I went on a 'walk-about' every day. During one such walk just before sunset, I suddenly saw, right in front of me, the entire sloughed skin of a golden Cape Cobra. At that moment I felt the presence of the snake. Sams and Carson (1988) say that "[t]he transmutation of the life-death-rebirth cycle is exemplified by the shedding of Snake's skin. Such is the energy of wholeness" (p. 61).

Such then, is the story of Phoebe's process of unfolding. The story of Phoebe's transformation has many layers. She relocated from Johannesburg to Cape Town some time ago. Her menopause revealed itself three months after she arrived here with her family. During our first interview she showed me the mandala she had painted. It told the story of her menopause. In crimson and turquoise to blue and the red of fresh blood she told the story of her body's mysteries. In the centre there was a dancing figure, radiating heat. The page was vibrant with her experiences. Her words were:

> I am on track with my menopause. It is challenging, yes, but I enjoy it, it is a coming together of things for me. All that blood that was spilt, I wonder how it can be transmuted into something useful, like wisdom. My hot flushes feel like a gaining of everything that needs to come back in. It is an experience of heat to boiling point and then the cooling … that is such a relief, the whole experience is so worthy.

Phoebe reached her climacteric some time earlier. She has said that she cannot remember when she had her last menstruation, her perimenopause slid into menopause almost undetected. She had never had a regular menstrual cycle and she likes the ancient belief about containing her blood wisdom. She uses only certain Chinese herbal remedies to allow the balancing of the yin and yang energies of her endocrine system. She described a confluence of experiences regarding her shamanic dancing and her ageing process: "I look very old when I am dancing – Nina told me – my face hangs off the bones. It transforms me into an ancient crone. I now try to make that dance more graceful."

Phoebe did not enjoy working with the visual imagery and the focus on the feminine principle. She told me one day that she was experiencing some difficulty with the subject matter, as it has never been important to her to look or be feminine. Since she had committed to taking part in the study, she felt more aware of this and it was not an easy matter for her to deal with. While we were looking at photographs of her and her children, she remarked that she found it interesting that Viola was so extremely feminine in her appearance and demeanour. She described Viola as being really soft, that she had the softest way of touching, almost like a whisper. Our conversation continued to flow around the research topics, much like a river flowing round ancient rocks. I remember how we said that under the rocks were the words. I was beginning to find the stories from gathering the words …

Phoebe recalled that she had never felt pretty as a child or an adolescent. Even though this work in taking part in the research was uncomfortable at times, she said that it was good for her to look at these issues. She said that it was authentic for her to be more masculine in her approach and the way in which she conducted her life; she felt that it allowed her to be overtly assertive: "I know that I am a bossy-boots but I have to have my say." Life continued to unfold and in the course of the field work, the veil was lifted even further. When we met again some weeks later, Phoebe was wearing a very feminine blouse and interesting jewellery. She looked radiant and relaxed. When I commented on her appearance, she remarked that she had been doing a lot of inner work, and that the issue of femininity had come to the surface again. She had decided to focus on working with the negative feminine energy in order to balance her own experiences in this regard. Then she told me about a dream that she had had since our previous meeting. In the dream she was in a little hut on the embankment of a canal. She was about to cross the canal when she saw something shiny in the roof of the hut. She knew intuitively that she needed this shiny object (she could not

identify it) in order to cross the canal safely. As she reached up to take it from the roof, she knocked against something else. It fell on her legs; she could not move and neither could she manage to remove the object. To her absolute horror, lying on her legs, was the huge decomposing corpse of an unknown man. The flesh was stripped from the bones as the corpse came down on her. She screamed as she woke up, and found her daughter Viola lying on the bed with her, reading a book. Viola had her legs draped over her mother's legs. Braud and Anderson (1998) cite Berry who conducted research on dreams suggesting that our dreams allow us to get in touch with ourselves, giving us a sense of direction for our lives. My sense is that this dream may be suggesting that Phoebe is making peace with her *animus*, and that this may be an indication of transformation taking place in her. By working with the repressed 'negative' feminine aspects in herself, she is allowing the feminine principle to be restored to attain more balance in her experiences of her Self. These are her words: "I think things are changing for me. It feels like it is moving from the unpleasant to the pleasant. I think I have edged it out. Something is sloughing off."

Viola loved working with the visual images. She made a collage and described the feminine principle as "being beautiful, proud, light, confident, pretty, kindness, fierce or fearsome, some girls are hardcore and nasty, faithful, affectionate, graceful, lovely …". She wrote on her collage: "I feel a bit scared about going through the changes of becoming a young woman. But I know it has to happen and there is no point denying it." During the time of doing the field work, Viola had some dreams the meaning of which I sensed may be significant. I am reluctant to interpret her dreams as she is a young adolescent and she has had to deal with many coils and turns and unexpected traumas, such as discovering her father's drug addiction. Frank (2004) writes that it is important to work with the dreams of children (Viola is not a child, however, but I feel compelled to follow Frank's guidance in this situation) as if they are real. She suggests that it is good for the (child) to take a stand about the dream. This particular dream made me pay very close attention:

> I am twelve years old. I am with my best friend E, from Johannesburg. We are
> standing at this huge lake, it is as big as False Bay. This lake is a source of life.
> People can come and wash themselves clean of their problems. My friend E was
> upset because she only got 55% for Maths and her brother was teasing her about
> it. He told her that she fails her Maths. A few years later there was a small
> wooden jetty at the lake. Only women were allowed to go there. I was somehow

given this job there (I was a grown woman now). Women were having their babies at the lake and then they would throw them into the lake, to be reborn. The babies then turn into little seeds to become plants. The seeds (they have three prongs, like a fork) were completely submerged into the water. My job was to dive all the way down into the water and to bring the seed back, the seed then becomes a baby. I had to breathe into the seed for two hours and then it becomes a baby. I had to hold it all the time and breathe into this little seed and then it came to life. I really like this dream …

Brown and Gilligan work with pre-menarche girls and have defined this age as that "at which a girl child is still in touch with her own power and initiative before the societal pressures to conform to a limited view of womanhood have begun to be felt in their extreme" (as cited in Rutter, 1993, p. 44). It was after telling me about this dream that Viola said to me that she need not be identified as jane in this study. She said that she thought this dream was telling her she is growing. She seemed to be taking a stand about where she found herself in her life. She then drew a mandala about the dream. It had seven circles and in the centre is a flower with four yellow petals attached to the green calyx. This was encircled by blue, green, purple, emerald and red rings, the outer lunation being a bright and beautiful blue. While searching for information about using blue in mandalas, I came across the following sentence, once again becoming convinced of how the transpersonal dimension of life is also found in synchronicity: "The plunge underwater then becomes a metaphor for the eclipse of the ego by the unconscious, and suggests the personal transformation that may occur with such an event" (Fincher, 199,1 p. 51). The story told by this mandala can be summarised in Fincher's words: "The number seven trails its luminous past into our mandalas where it brings us the good fortune to find ourselves" (p. 105).

When we spoke about symbols and personal mythology, Viola said that she resonated with the symbology of the butterfly. It is rather well known that the butterfly is associated with metamorphosis, suggesting the stages of life. "By its grace and airy lightness, the Japanese make the butterfly an emblem of womanhood" (Chevalier & Gheerbrandt, 1996, p. 141). In her autobiography, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1997) tells the story of a trip that she had taken to Poland and how she wound her way towards Maidanek, where she visited the gas chambers and the barracks where children were kept during Hitler's notorious reign of death. Everywhere on the walls were butterflies, engraved crudely, but undeniably there. She was

haunted by this. She knew that it had a special meaning, but it eluded her. On her deathbed, twenty-five years later, she knew, because it had changed her life. This is what she wrote about her understanding, so many years later, of why the children drew butterflies on the wall: "Our only purpose in life is growth. There are no accidents" (pp. 80, 283).

Phoebe and Viola have said that they have a healthy and trusting relationship. They like each other and they also like being with each other. Viola describes her mother as someone who allows her daughter to live her own life; her mother does not interfere in fights that she has with friends, neither does she embarrass her by being overly affectionate. She trusts her mother. She feels that she can tell her mother everything. She feels very close to her. She loves her mother and tells her so. We had scheduled some time on a Friday afternoon for a long conversation with both Phoebe and Viola being present. I intuitively sensed that this session would yield powerful information and I was not disappointed. I asked the question: "Phoebe, is there anything about Viola that you feel uncomfortable with, and Viola, is there anything about your mom that makes you feel uncomfortable?" This part of the story of their relationship undulated like a serpent, slithering stealthily towards my research arguments.

Initially Viola found it difficult to talk about it and Phoebe offered to start with her story. This was when she told us about the trauma she had experienced with Viola's birth and then again when Viola was two years old. The point she was making is that she felt smothered by a tendency of Viola's to display a particular behaviour, such as feigning helplessness. Viola then proceeded to share with us that she felt very insecure when her mom shouted at her when she did not understand how to do Maths. She also wanted her mother to spend more time with her. They went to and fro between their stories. Observing them in this conversation was almost like watching a photograph developing in an acidic fluid, until slowly but surely a picture started to emerge. Suddenly it became clear to me: Phoebe and Viola reflected each other like images in a mirror, containing unconscious patterns, needs and scripts. I saw the wounds of abandonment being reflected by deep-seated psychological dependency needs. I considered their individual dreams of babies coming alive and I was very touched by this.

I finish their tale with a poem that Phoebe wrote to Viola at the end of the field work:

> To my darling golden daughter
> I hope you learn to play

In both the fire and the water

In the night as well as day

I know that in your own way

You will help to heal the earth

To sweeten the foul air

That clouds the planet of your birth

I wish for you only the best

Of love and life and joy

I pray your heart stays pure

The way it is and full of love

May you always shine with beauty

From within and from without

May you walk a path that's steady

With a mind that's free of doubt

May you waken up along the way

Learning through life's countless tests

May your center hold quite firm though

Through the storms and wars and quests

May you be a graceful woman

Something I did not get right

Learn to say "oh I don't know" and

"Well perhaps you may be right".

But inside you will be strong as steel

Although you might shed tears

And you'll know that when there is joy and love

There also would be fear.

So embrace the dark side with the light

Yield when you can, but only.

Then set firm your eyes on your desires

And never give your power to a man.

This is where we leave Phoebe and Viola for the moment, in their house overlooking the ocean. I include mandalas and artwork made by the co-researcher below.
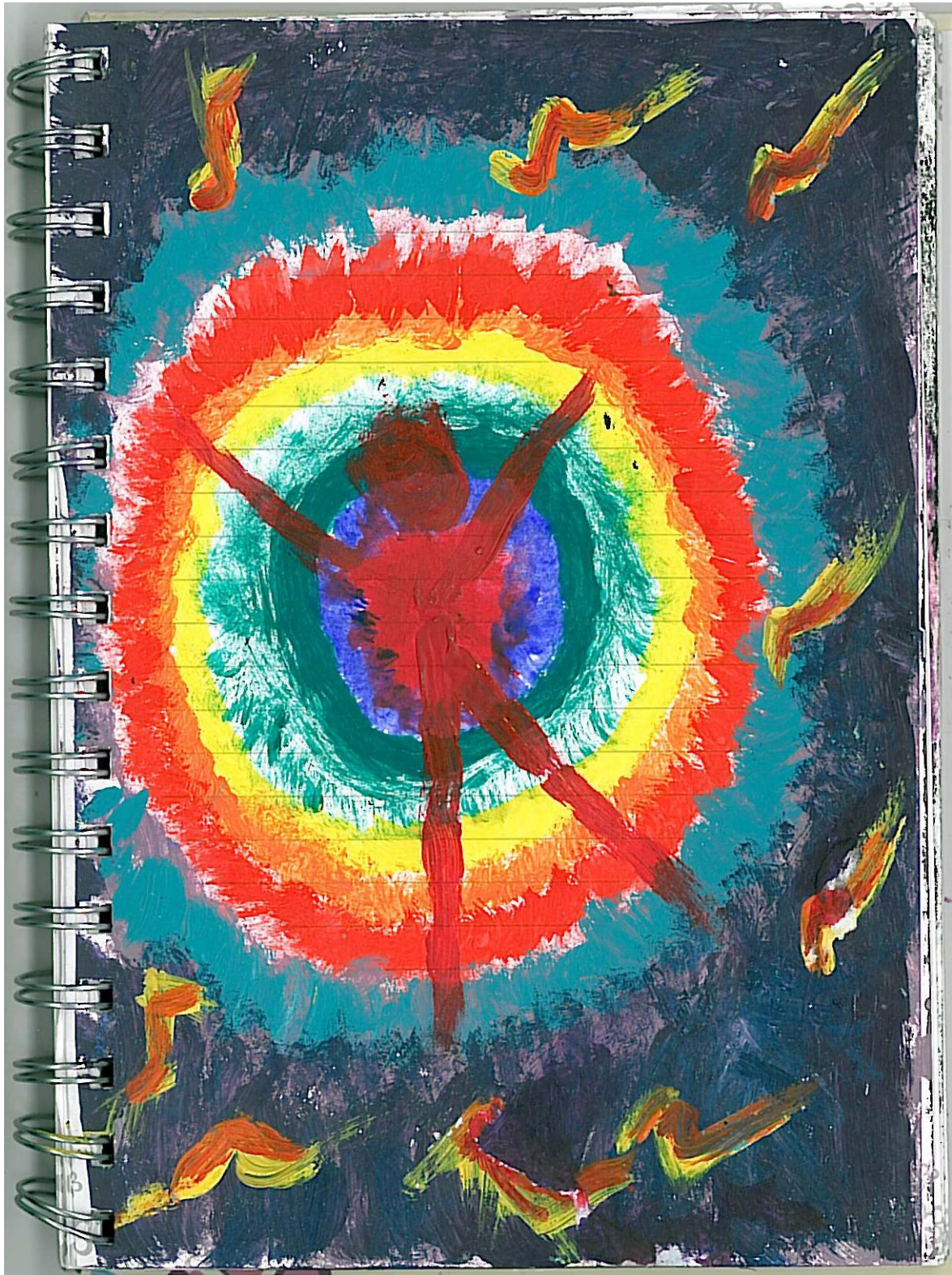

Figure 4.1:   Red 'blood' mandala by Phoebe

Figure 4.2:   Mandala by Phoebe: The dark feminine

Figure 4.3:   Mandala by Viola: Feelings about menstruation

THE STORIES OF CISKA AND SIMONE

Let me introduce Ciska and Simone, and their stories of cycles with what Stevens (1990) states about Jung who saw the whole of life's cycles as a mandala of growth. The thread running through all our life stories is the principle of growth, individuation, becoming. "As the life cycle unfolds, so we accept and incorporate into our personalities our personal experiences of living. But what you and I experience as the whole process is only the end result" (Stevens, 1990, p. 53).

Ciska is a 49-year-old woman. Her life is in transition in various ways. She lives in two towns in the Western Cape. This is a difficult position to negotiate, because she needs an anchor in her life. Her daughter Simone, is 15 years of age. She had to change schools at the beginning of the year of our research as she could not continue to go to school in the small town where she was born and where she has grown up, simply because the town does not offer schooling after Grade 7. Subsequently she was enrolled at a prestigious school for girls in Cape Town where she was a weekly boarder. This proved to be too difficult a milieu for her; she could not adjust and after three weeks Ciska and Simone decided that she should be transferred to another school. They were able to find a more suitable placement for her. Still she found it very difficult to be away from the comfort and ease of being at home; she wanted to live with her family. During this time, which lasted for the school year, Ciska also missed her daughter very much and was especially aware of how Simone was entering mid-adolescence, and how "everything was changing very rapidly". The family decided to relocate to a much bigger town where they could all live together as a family and Simone and her two siblings were placed in different local schools, Simone being enrolled at a co-educational mainstream school. Over weekends and during holidays the family goes to their other home in the small town, for they have all become rather attached to living there. While Simone was trying very hard to adjust and to put her roots down in her new school environment, she confessed to be missing the school she had left at the end of the previous year, because she missed her friends. Mother and daughter were able to communicate their feelings about this upheaval in their lives and both admitted that they were not convinced that they had made the right choices, but that they were willing to try to make it work. Ciska was grateful to have her daughter living with them again and Simone was pleased to be able to live at home, where she "can be herself". As the field work progressed and a thread started to weave itself into a story, I began to understand how significant these words were.

Ciska grew up in a family with very strong paternalistic influences. She is the only daughter of five children, born to her parents in 1960. They lived in a farming community in the Northern Cape. Her father was almost always absent. Her mother raised her children according to very traditional and conservative values. This was very difficult for Ciska, as she had always been a rather unconventional person, being free-spirited and very unusual in her approach to life. She was close to her mother as a young girl and they had a very strong emotional bond. Once she reached puberty, she started to rebel against what she described as her mother's subservient acceptance of the male dominance of her father and four brothers. She told me that, while she was growing up, she was particularly disturbed by how her mother had suppressed her own true needs and did not pursue a career of her own; she thought that it was expected of her, because that is what women did in those days. "It suited my father – of course, and he used it to the full and did not appreciate it as he should have", Ciska told me during an interview one day. She also told me then, in her own beautiful and thoughtful way, "that the result in my mother's psyche was a certain level of resentment and anger – and I adopted some of that. It angered me as a child that my brothers could go camping on their own by the river, but girls could not". This issue resulted in her becoming emotionally separated from her mother when she became older, reaching puberty and adolescence. They both found it very painful, with Ciska constantly experiencing feelings of being criticised, of being told how she needed to change and to conform, "to be more like this and to be less like that". Consequently, Ciska saw herself as inadequate, not good enough, and unequal. She had become emotionally insecure and in need of being affirmed. This was particularly relevant in the emotional dimensions of her relationships with men, resulting in a fear of losing these relationships. After she left school she went to university where she could spread her wings and allow herself to "be more herself". It was only after she had left university that she really opened her Self and her life. She accepted a lecturing position at a university far away from her home town, and later went to Europe to follow a silver thread of love.

Ciska's relationship with her mother formed an important point of reference for us in this study. This was strongly connected to her relationship with being a mother to Simone. A picture of triangulation was beginning to appear. Ciska was very aware of a generational pattern emerging, pertaining to the process of individuation. Stevens (1990) has pointed out that "[i]ndividuation is essentially about waking up, becoming conscious and being constantly alive to the possibility in one's life for growth and development" (p. 186). Ciska

was concerned about how Simone was negating her own voice in trying to become part of her peer group at her new school. She struggled with the values which her daughter did not embrace authentically, but tried to embrace in order to belong to the group. She also remembered how she had struggled with her mother during her own adolescence, but more so because she felt her mother was not being authentic in her relationship with her own father, and Simone mentioned, during an interview session, that she was concerned about how her mother at times was subdued by the voice of her partner.

Both Ciska and Simone were aware, by their own account, of how they were in the process of working with their deep need to be close to each other without being entangled in each other's intrapersonal dynamics. Both were eager to explore themselves as authentically as possible during these turbulent times of transition and change, as they both felt that their lives were in crisis. In her journal (about her participation in this study) Ciska wrote that:

> I wanted to do it because it is always important to me to have space to explore my inner world, my relationships, what is happening, how to grow through it … to me it came as a gift, an opportunity to explore what is going on with Simone, to engage with how she is doing and dealing with this big move … it is a big change for a 15-year old. She is so individualistic, so strong her sense of identity. But she is so incredibly fearful of opinions, so intent on making everyone like her. Did I teach her that? Am I like that?

Neumann (1994) in his article on 'Stages of Women's Development', writes: "More transpersonal than personal factors are operative in the primal relationship since the child is subject to a preponderance of transpersonal, archetypal forces" (p. 4). Ciska is an adventurous and richly textured woman. She has travelled far and wide on the continent of Africa and far beyond its boundaries into Europe and Australia. She has always been attracted to mystery, mythology, the unknown and the sacred. She met her first husband shortly after she returned from France. They formed a very strong and deep bond and felt that they belonged together. They got married and settled into a harmonious and fulfilling life.

Simone was born a few years later, much to the delight of both her parents. When she was three months old, the family moved away from Cape Town and started a life in the small rural village where they still have their house and garden, now overgrown with lavender, bougainvillea, fig trees, herbs and vegetables. A little boy was born four years after Simone.

This house where they now live on week-ends and during holidays contains the family's stories of much laughter and much pain. It was in this house where Ciska's husband, Simone's father, was first diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. It was in this house where, a mere two years later, they had to relinquish him to death. This transition was almost too difficult to bear. Not only did she lose her husband, and not only had Simone just started going to school and simultaneously went into a very strange phase of acting out behaviour, but Ciska's own mother suffered a bad stroke and could not support her child emotionally. At the same time her father, Simone's grandfather, was diagnosed with prostate cancer. It was also during this period that it became clear that Ciska's mother was suffering; she went into significant decline and was subsequently diagnosed with an aggressive form of Alzheimer's disease. Ciska was widowed, had two young children who had lost their father, while she herself had two very ill elderly parents. She was in deep mourning, and only forty years old.

When we had these conversations, tears flowed freely between us. Being a witness to these stories could only move me, touch me, make me humble. When I started this study it was, and still is, important to me that this work would be meaningful and useful. I am grateful that Ciska told me that it helped her to be telling me these stories, as she could relive them, feeling that it alleviated the pressure of keeping it all inside. We talked about how Simone felt the need to start dressing up in revealing clothes after her father's death, and how she tended to be coquettish in the company of men. She was just a six-year-old little girl. Because of Ciska's way of life and her innate transpersonal consciousness, she went into therapy during this time and we could talk about these experiences on a very deep and transpersonal level. In the words of McAdams et al. (2001, p. xii):

> Meaning is generated by the linkages the participant makes between aspects of the life he or she is living and his or her understanding of these aspects. The role of the researcher is then to connect this understanding with some form of conceptual interpretation, which is meaning constructed at another level of analysis.

The storytelling flowed like rivers of words and much was revealed about the lives of this mother and daughter, their stories being so poignant and sensitive. Yet both of them were strong and courageous. The theme of their stories was clear: they were at the 'turns in the road'; their lives were in transition. The potential for their transformation, based on the chaos

of the transitional phases of their lives, adolescence and (peri)menopause, was contained by the authenticity of their experiences of their struggle.

Ciska told me about a dream that she had at the time of the field work. She was standing at the fig tree in her garden. This happened to be an actual tree that she had planted, watered, nurtured and cared for since it was a little sapling. In the dream she reached out to pick figs, only to find an enormous green snake on one of the branches. Nothing happened and she woke up. According to the Penguin Dictionary of Symbols, figs are symbolic of abundance, bountifulness (Chevalier & Gheerbrandt, 1996). The Element Encyclopaedia of Symbols describes the fig tree as symbolic of fertility and abundance. It is revered in many cultures as significant and holy, and some cultures regard the fig tree as representing knowledge, referring to the Bodhi tree (Becker, 1994). We had explored snake medicine in our previous story and I felt hopeful and assured about Ciska's passage into midlife, considering the possible meaning of transformations suggested by the symbolism in this dream.

Life ran its course after the devastating loss of her husband. Ciska confided that it was by sheer will of a mother's instinct that she managed to take care of her children in the months following his death. She slumped into the darkness of mourning, her grief a little black seed tightly stitched into her heart. In working with these stories, she allowed her sorrow to find a voice. While she managed to find pieces of life and pictures and fragments to sew into her life's collage, she met her current partner. Relating helped her to heal. She gave birth to another little girl. Her father recovered from his illness, the cancer retreating into remission. Her mother, however, continued to weaken and Ciska found the shifting processes of her life extremely challenging to manage. Then there was the time when she had to go away from home for a week or more to tend to the demands of her work. Her little girl had to stay at home, and did not manage very well with her mother being away from her. Simone was at boarding school in Cape Town. Ciska had barely arrived home from her trip when she received a phone call from her father, saying that her mother needed to see her straight away. Her mother was living a twelve-hour journey away from her. However hard she tried, she could not get there that night. As she was about to board a Greyhound bus early the next morning, a call came through to tell her that it was too late. She never said goodbye and her life became a very dark place overnight.

It was a mere matter of months after this experience that we started our field work. The stories were fresh on the bones.

When Simone was born, her mother had bonded with her straight away. Stevens (1990) writes about the mother's preparation that takes place whilst the foetus is *in utero*. He also says that the baby is archetypically prepared for the moment of meeting its mother. He cites Leslie Kenton, a mother who had just given birth: "There, in the midst of all that clinical green and white, I had discovered what love was all about. It was a meeting of two beings. We touched each other, in utter honesty and simplicity. We'd met. Just that. Somewhere in spirit we were friends" (Stevens, 1990, p. 79). Stevens adds that mothers and infants have experienced their intimacy as something transcendent and transpersonal, something coming from beyond themselves. Such was the bond between Ciska and Simone. Ciska recalled an occasion two weeks after the birth when Simone was asleep in her arms. The baby started to cry, inexplicably. On the deepest and instinctive level (might this be archetypal?) Ciska knew that the baby was dreaming and was in sorrow about something that she, her mother, could not know of; she could only revere the baby's experience. Her own experience was already being shaped by *Ouroboros*: "That was when I knew that I am bound to you emotionally, your pain has become mine, as is your joy". Ciska wrote these words in her journal, reflecting on her relationship with Simone. During the field work she wrote in her diary that she knew that she had to separate from her daughter on this level, she knew that she had to live her own life: "I have to let her go …"

Our conversation followed a winding course in the story of being a mother. She said that she missed her own mother, her heart felt orphaned. Ciska described her own experiences of being a mother as challenging, referring in particular to being pre-menopausal and mothering an adolescent daughter. She told me that "… being a mother forms a part of individuation". She indicates that her biggest challenge was to consciously allow her own transformation to take place and to take shape. She spoke openly about her fear of nothingness, that is, her fear of not being good enough. She acknowledged the influence of her mother's patterns of projection, the absence of unconditional love and acceptance and how this had become dangerously close to repeating itself, albeit not by projection onto her daughter. (She started a journal for Simone shortly after she was born, with anecdotes and little snippets of stories; this she allowed me to use as part of her data contribution. I read how she had told Simone that her aunt had given her a letter which her mom (Simone's grandmother) wrote to her shortly after she (Ciska) was born. She told how she had felt more loved and less "not good enough" when she read how her mother referred to her as "a little miracle"). Ciska was concerned about how she was teaching Simone about self-sabotage through her own

example. I asked her whether she knew what Simone's unconscious fears might be. Her eyes were wet when she whispered: "not to be good enough". Marie-Louise von Franz (as cited in Hollis, 1993) notes that working with one's own projections requires a search into oneself, however painful that may be. The oracle in the temple of Apollo at Delphi said "Know thyself".

Ciska knew that she had to make a decision about her professional life, that she had to take a stand in her relationship with her authentic self, her Self. She said that she felt alienated from the views held by her family of origin, but that she had a great desire to be loved and thus she knew that she stretched her boundaries to please others at times, only because she obscured her sense of self and what she wanted in life. Ciska wanted to allow the alchemical process of individuation to run its course in her life. "Seizing permission to live one's reality is essential at midlife" (Hollis, 1993, p. 44). While I worked the threads and yarns of data into this story of her life, I sensed that Ciska's internal diaspora could shift, that she could travel through the no-man's land of midlife and be reborn, victoriously, into being who she already is. Her personal symbols portray their own mythology, seamlessly reflecting the story of her life in transition. These symbols she identified as being the seed, shells and the honeybee.

> From the seed grows a root, then a sprout, from the sprout, the seedling leaves, from the leaves, the stem, around the stem, the branches, at the top, the flower … we cannot say that the seed causes the growth, nor that the soil does. We can say that the potentialities for growth lie within the seed, in mysterious life forces, which, when properly fostered, take on certain forms (Richards, 1989, p. 36).

I merged the story of the shell with another story which is still to come. According to the Element Encyclopedia of Symbols, the bee has various symbolic meanings, based on cultural interpretation. However, a more universal interpretation of the bee is that of death and rebirth, much like the bird Benu or the mystical Phoenix. The suggestion of innocence in the symbolic meaning could be derived from the fact that the honeybee lives off blossoms and the fragrance of flowers (Becker, 1994). I was looking at Ciska's collage. It provided me with rich content for understanding the meaning of her experiences as a woman. Cathy Malchiodi (2002) regards collage as "a way to create order from chaos and to birth new images from old" (p. 62). It resonates with me when she says that making a collage is a form of visual biography. It reminds me of why I included this form of narrative data collection. Ciska's

collage told the story of a woman who loves the earth, who believes in the values of caring, protecting, nurturing. Her collage depicted the cycles of a woman's life; the vibrant colours of Masai women trekking across the Serengeti tell us the story of her work. She included many images which were centred in circles, wheels, the moon, the earth as a ball, anchoring a person becoming a tree. I understood that she was a woman in transition, that her body was changing as much as her life. I understood that she had many resources to help her through the darkness of uncertainty. I understood that she, her Self, is the seed growing down into the dark moist soil of her midlife transition and, simultaneously, up into the light of becoming who she is.

Simone is a very attractive, tall adolescent girl. Her long dark hair is shiny and healthy, her skin is radiant. She filled her pink research file with mandalas, dreams, words, conversations, images and more. She gave a lot of herself during this process. She was very confident when she told the tales of being her mother's daughter, of her experiences of the menarche, and of her changing body. She was not "boy crazy but there is a cute boy in her class". He also featured in her dreams as the hero figure. Simone described how she has accepted that menses is an important part of being a woman. She described her menarche in detail, a beautiful story of surrender. She had been prepared very well for the occasion; Ciska had discussed all the facts with her, shared her own stories of menses and provided her with the necessary sanitary products. When she experienced the menarche at the age of thirteen, she immediately shared the experience with her mother. They both acknowledged the significance of this event. According to Sayers (1998), this is a very important factor in healthy adolescent psychology. She cites Kirsten Dahl who writes that "first menstruation revives in girls a longing for continuing closeness with their mothers, longing to be physically looked after by their mothers just as their mothers looked after them as babies" (pp. 69-70).

Owen (1998, p. x) writes that

> [i]n the majority of cases, menarche remains an unritualized, uncelebrated non-event, and as a society we have a long way to go toward making the first period a time which supports a young girl and ushers her successfully into her adolescent years and indeed, her womanhood.

When I had an interview with Ciska about Simone's adolescence, she said that her child was "growing exponentially, so fast", that she was a woman already and at times it was difficult to let go of the image of the feisty little girl in her pink fairy dress.

Simone was less confident when we addressed the issues of appearance, her peer group, value systems, fitting in or falling out. She told me how difficult it was for her to negotiate her intuitive sense of herself as a leader, as unconventional, and as having astute political, societal and environmental opinions with the desire to be accepted; to fit in with the group; to adhere to the group's rules of superficiality; spending time shopping in malls; wearing trendy clothes; and "being thin" – especially being thin. She was horrified by how many girls she knew who were bulimic and anorexic, or who "cut themselves". She did not like tattoos and skin piercings. She was a girl-woman who loved the earth, who loved their garden, who loved dogs and babies and who believed that skin colour does not matter. She found it extremely difficult to have to negotiate her authenticity in order to fit in with a group she did not belong to and, in truth, did not feel comfortable with. Her collage expressed this issue. Simone's collage mostly was an assemblage of images relating to womanhood and femininity. The commercial and external values of the collective are depicted in bottles of expensive perfume, shoes with polka dots and bows, and glamorous evening gowns. Her internal struggle was juxtaposed with images of river stones and pink flowers. She drew golden wings and a halo onto a monochromatic picture of a baby, while she used black ink to draw a sleeping foetus in the womb of its pregnant mother. She placed a caged bird to the left of the page.

It is important to remember that this struggle is the kernel of the search for self in adolescence, and mostly the essence of adolescence *per se*. Mary Pipher (1994) writes that "[t]his is a time of deep searching for the self in relationships" (pp. 67, 69). She adds that "girls who were unpopular were considered to have germs". During our final interview, Simone told me that she knew that her fear of being rejected by "the group" at school was a trap. She knew that she preferred to be authentic and she was trying to find a way back to her Self; she knew that she wanted to be confident about herself again. Pipher (1994, p. 71) sees it as follows:

> Girls who maintain their true selves resist peer pressure to be a certain way. Lori wanted to be liked, but she was unwilling to make concessions necessary to be super popular. She could see clearly that to be accepted by everyone she would have to give up too much of herself.

We spent many hours talking about changing bodies, hormonally developing bodies, mood swings, ideal weights, health, beauty, and the present emphasis on "being thin". Simone is a tall and strong-boned adolescent girl. There is not an ounce of fat on her body, although she is not petite either. She felt that she was fat and that she needed to lose weight. Marion Woodman did extensive research and authored many books and articles on this particular subject. Woodman (1993) talks about eating disorders, a distorted body image and the feminine principle. She says that, when we are dishonouring our bodies through too little or too much food, we are separating ourselves from our bodies: "We have a tremendous sense of something within us being shut off, abandoned. This is our own self, our own soul" (p. 15). Simone still wanted to lose weight around her tummy and thighs …

Simone dreamt a lot and has a strong ability to recall and record her dreams. An important aspect of her dream work was that she had recurring dreams. She also told me that sometimes a section of a dream would repeat itself just as she had finished dreaming about that. Frank (2004) explains that recurring dreams may occur during periods of change and stress, especially in children and young people. Simone called some of her dreams nightmares. As with Viola, I was reticent about interpreting Simone's dreams. I was aware, however, that her dreams were providing important messages, and sensed that these messages were related to fear and trauma. Frank (2004) writes that: "[f]ear keeps you trapped. Fear keeps our self-defeating defence and coping mechanisms in place. Fear is the single most noticeable attribute of nightmares" (p. 160). She continues to discuss fear and trauma and then says that she is struck by the similarities between trauma and grief. "What is real grief but trauma?" (p. 161). During our field work we often spoke about the loss of Simone's father and how she felt about that. Simone was still missing him, but she felt extremely guilty about the fact that her visual memory of him was fading. She was also not resolved about the new father figure in her life. She felt conflicted about this; although she likes him, she does not want to accept his authority as a father. An example of a dream that Simone recorded in her journal follows:

> I am outside in some field. The grass is brown and dead. Around me I see some houses, all of them being very dilapidated and unkempt. These houses have no windows or doors. Nobody lives there. I am sitting in this dead field next to a middle-aged man. We are looking at a big barn in front of us. We are just talking. Then he says that I should go and look inside the barn. I go inside. It is pitch-dark inside. I am all alone. Then there is this big screen and I start watching a film. The film is about this man's wife and a little girl, his daughter. They are being shot. I watch the film until the end and then the film starts again from the beginning …

Simone enjoyed working with photographs and visual images. In this way she told many precious family stories. I learnt a lot about her relationship with her mother and also about her experiences around losing her father. A wealth of information emerged from the picture of her mother asleep with Simone in her arms. We spoke about how her hairstyles changed over the years and during certain phases of her young life, we laughed about the "pixie cut" she first wanted and then "hated". She told me about her grandmother and how she used to wear feminine clothes and old-fashioned brooches. I learnt how much she missed her granny. Then I was introduced to her paternal lineage and I met the grandmother in Europe. Real life. Real stories. Tales of transition and transformation. Prosser (1998) says that "photographs may not provide us with unbiased, objective documentation of the social and material world, but they can show characteristic attributes of people, objects and events that often elude even the most skilled wordsmiths" (p. 116). I am grateful for this medium.

Simone's preferred mode of working during this study was to draw mandalas. Jung employed this technique in his own inner work, as discussed earlier, and also in his analytical work with his patients. He said that

> individual mandalas make use of a well-nigh unlimited wealth of motifs and symbolic allusions, from which it can easily be seen that they are endeavouring to express either the totality of the individual in his inner or outer experience of the world, or its essential point of reference (Jung, 1969, p. 5).

Simone's mandalas were mostly drawn in black and white ink. Initially I was alarmed by this, but upon reflecting on the predominant theme of her story, namely the theme of transition, I

came to understand her mandala stories. These mandalas were filled with symbols such as the cross, petals, flowers, more circles, diamonds, a wheel. I explored the meaning of her experiences, and I saw that there was undiluted potential in the darkness inside the seed, the nothingness that is everything. To be in a transitional cycle is to be at a crossroad in one's life. When she drew a mandala in colour, the page was aglow with light, yet the cross and the spiral reappeared. She told me that the spiral was a personal symbol for her. We have seen before how the spiral represents an urge to unfold, to become. "Spirals call forth vortices of energy. If we look at *Ouroboros* and imagine it spinning, the motion represents a desire to go back into our oneness" (Speerstra & Speerstra, 2005, p. 58).

Simone wrote a moving letter to Ciska:

> Dear mommy
>
> The thing that I appreciate the most about our relationship is the unconditional love that you give me. That I know that whatever I do wrong won't change how much you love me. And I love that we can talk about things, about anything and I always enjoy your company. We can work on patience and tolerance with each other. You have taught me to find happiness within myself and not to look for it from people or things. From you as a woman I have learnt to be myself and that people will love me for me, I have learnt to look at challenges with a half-full glass approach. You are my teacher and my role model …
>
> Love, Simone

In Ciska's letter to her daughter she wrote that

> I like that I like you so much, you could be my friend if I was not your mom … For years now I have been listening to you about how important it is to you to "fit in" and especially at the moment it makes me feel desperate and hopeless, that you criticise yourself so much. I grew up with such criticism, I really wanted you to have a different experience, to have a positive self-image. All I can think of now is my own struggle to rise above being critical and negative towards myself, to express myself authentically. I know that you get mad about injustice towards others, I know that you have enough courage to go against the mainstream. I see so clearly how you are struggling with all the things that I struggled with and still

struggle with, now in this phase of my life more so than ever before. And I know I have to let you go to fight your own battles and I have to conquer mine. My dearest wish for you is that you need not try to be content or happy, but that you can be yourself.

Love, mommy.

As their stories came full circle, a picture was formed through the eye of the needle. Both Ciska and Simone were at the crossroads in transition. They reflected the very painful experience of the fear of not being good enough to each other. I was reminded of an ancient healing practice in Siberian shamanism where the client tells her story to a *curandera*, who then takes hot wax and drops it into water. As the water cools down the wax, it solidifies and takes on a certain shape, containing the story of the woman's soul (Kharitidi, 1996). In the story lies the resolution. In these wax shapes of Ciska and Simone's stories, I see the emerging story of a journey of growth and transformation. Stevens (1990) writes about the metaphor of the departure on a journey, the journey itself and the return from the journey. He speaks of "…the departure, so full of the sadness of separation and excitement for the adventures to come, the journey, a series of hazards and transitions, of setbacks and triumphs; the return, marked by final transformation, fulfilment and completion" (p. 64).

I leave the story of Ciska and Simone here, for now, at the turn in their road. Below, I also include an example of collages made by this mother and daughter.

Figure 4.4:   Collage made by Simone (Daughter) and Figure 4.5: Collage made by Ciska (Mother).

THE STORIES OF ELIZABETH AND SUMMER

I introduce their stories by using the words of a wise man:

> But whether small or great, and no matter what the stage or grade of life, the call rolls up the curtain, always, on a mystery of transfiguration – a rite, or moment, of spiritual passage, which, when complete, amounts to dying and a birth. The familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand (Joseph Campbell, 2008, p. 43).

Elizabeth is 50 years old. She is gentle and fair, her eyes reflecting the colours of the sea. She was born in 1959, right at the southernmost tip of Africa, at the confluence of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. She has always loved water, the beach, rivers, fields, paddocks, animals, flowers – the natural world. Elizabeth is the youngest of a sibling tribe of three girls. She describes her father as gentle and poetic, her mother as elusive. Her sisters were much older and she spent most of her childhood alone, playing on the beach or in the garden. She said she was a happy child, running free and unperturbed about her mom and older sisters not being interested in her life. When she was older she was sent to boarding school. She made some friends and her life ran its course. She is naturally very feminine, she enjoyed having an exceptionally good figure effortlessly. She worshipped the sun and spent many hours as an adolescent girl and young woman lazing on the sand or on rocks or on the banks of rivers or at pools, just Being.

Elizabeth described her adolescence as a time of ambivalence. She was mercilessly teased by her family for wanting to look pretty, painting her nails and doing her hair. When she started menstruating, it felt as if she had lost her youth. She says that she "started late", around the age of fourteen. She described her menarche as a non-event, unacknowledged, certainly not celebrated and certainly not revered. She was well-prepared with information and sanitary products, but nothing prepared her for the pain, nausea, headaches, fainting and heavy bleeding, sometimes lasting more than five days at a time. Every month. She felt tortured. She described it as "the curse". Bleakley (1984) says that a woman's creative energy contracts and relaxes during the menstrual period. The inner child (a symbolic being of potential creative energy) is injured and frustrated during these cramping and disabling menstrual

experiences, and "dies". The child, the woman's "puer" is cursed by the bloodline of her genealogy, her grandmothers. "The child is cursed and the period then becomes the 'curse'.

The profile of Elizabeth's gynaecological history showed how her experience of menses remained clouded by pain, restriction, limitation, humiliation and debilitation. For her, the only positive aspect of menses was that it allowed her to have babies. This was her experience until she decided, at the age of 45, to have a hysterectomy. She said that the relief was enormous; she felt grateful and she did not feel "less feminine in any way". She added that "… being feminine is an identity, my femininity is in myself".

During her adolescence her feminine beauty had developed into a natural and unselfconscious sensual magnetism. She told me that this became rather problematic for her, as she found it extremely difficult to form close interpersonal relationships with people. She enjoyed being beautiful and sensuous, but she could not lift the veil to disclose her Self. Yet her alluring beauty and golden luminosity attracted people to her, without provocation on her part. She said that she had a very natural understanding of her sexual awakening, but felt no need to explore her sexuality in a careless, promiscuous manner and preferred to spend her time in the sun or in the swimming pool. She told how boys had no idea how to approach her and what to do with her, as she was simply not available. During this time she could not discuss her intrapersonal discomfort with her mother. She described her mother as a lovely, gentle, yet astute woman who also did not open herself. She could not let Elizabeth in. While we were discussing this earlier during our field work, Elizabeth had told me how she always used to wonder about her mother's real Self; she wondered whether her mother had a secret aspect to her Being. Mother and daughter loved each other and Elizabeth respected her mother very much. They just could not be close. She said her mother was a rather complicated person, and certainly not very affectionate. Elizabeth confided that her sisters were the same; there was no sense of "sisterhood" amongst the four women in their family. She described how, on the contrary, envy and jealousy further impaired their relationships which were already awkward and uncomfortable.

When we were gathering stories through working with her photographs one day, I commented on how beautiful and serene her mother appeared. Elizabeth was taken completely by surprise. She peered into the photographs and then told me that she found this process of participating in the study very valuable. She said that there was so much value in telling these stories, that the telling of the stories and being heard was very therapeutic for

her. She looked at the photographs differently then and memories came rushing back to her. Prosser (1998) writes that "… the research photograph is a method of seeking discovery, rather than a technique of documenting life instances and object relationships" (p. 150). Anthropologist Christie Kiefer is cited in Prosser, as saying "… people construct and reconstruct their biographies and their histories, explaining to themselves and others in the process how they came to be who they are" (p. 229).

One of Elizabeth's albums contained a photograph, in old-fashioned black and white, of a meandering river. It whispered that it needed to be included in Elizabeth's' work and I asked her to write in her journal on the meaning of the photograph (the meaning that it held for her) while she was away, as she was about to leave on a trip. Speerstra and Speerstra (2005) included meander as a symbol in their book on sacred symbols. This is how they describe its symbolic meaning: "Everything flows – but not always forward. Meander shows how water bends and twists back on itself, all the while flowing at its own pace" (p. 70).

Our conversation continued to meander and we started to discuss her relationship with her mother in more depth. She told me that she was a planned baby, that her mother wanted to be pregnant, that she wanted another baby and that she was sure she was going to have a little boy. Mommy really wanted a little boy.

Then she disclosed how she used to be very friendly and flirtatious as a little girl, in a very innocent way. She intuitively knew she could make people laugh and relate to her; she was such a radiant, beautiful child. "There was something about my very femininity that she did not like, and that I was a self-assured, confident and expressive little girl." One day, she recalled, her mother stopped her from rushing to talk to people, saying to her*:* "You are such a little tart." Elizabeth was five years old. This was a turning point. It was a turning point for her on a subliminal level, as she pushed her luminous feminine essence into a dark and hostile dungeon. It was also a turning point in her interpersonal relationships. Something had shut down.

This was also a turning point in our field work. Elizabeth looked at me that day and opened her soul to this study. As I reached into the transpersonal realms of my own Being, I intuitively understood what had happened and I knew that I had to remain centred and just be with her. I experienced the same sensation as the one I have previously described as "spinning" in the labyrinth. Elizabeth asked me if I understood what had happened, why she

had slipped into a dissociated intrapersonal space. (A therapist had once explained to her that she "has a dissociated state".) Dell and O'Neil, (2009, p. xix) explain that

> [d]issociation is a partial or complete disruption of the normal integration of a person's conscious or psychological functioning. Dissociation can be a response to trauma or drugs and perhaps allows the mind to distance itself from experiences that are too much for the psyche to process at the time.

I explained to her that she had lost her "Aphrodite". Bolen (1984) says that, "[a]s a child, the little Aphrodite may have been an innocent little flirt. She may have an unconscious sensuality that made adults comment" (p. 243). She further writes that "mothers too can develop a 'jailer' mentality toward their Aphrodite daughters" (Bolen, 1984, p. 244). We discussed how Aphrodite, as a symbolic and mythological representation of her innate beauty, creativity and feminine essence, served to illuminate her Being, allowing her, as a child, to intuitively trust all of these principles within herself. When it dawned upon her that she had suffered an enormous loss, she wept. This experience could have profoundly significant potential for individuation. In the alchemical process, this is the stage of *nigredo,* the stage in which, with particular reference to the psychological process of alchemy, the darkness precedes the light of clarity (knowing oneself). Von Franz (1980) explains that "it describes a state of utter confusion, of complete unhappiness, which at the same time is the beginning of alchemical work" (p. 208). Then Elizabeth asked me: "How did you know this?" Because I abide by personal integrity and honesty, as well as by a professional code of ethics, I told her that I work on the transpersonal levels of intuition, and that I knew because I was guided along the way towards this insight and understanding. She was very sad and vulnerable and we concluded our work for the day. The following day she left on her trip to India. This experience took me back to the words of William Braud (1998, p. 3):

> … selecting a topic that is very meaningful to one's likely participants – and this usually involves choosing a topic of great relevance, heart, and meaning to the investigator, as well – can allow the participants to re-visit, examine, assimilate, and integrate important areas, concerns, or issues of their lives. A 'research' session, in other words, may become an opportunity for practical application – a clinical or educative opportunity.

Later, when I reflected on this experience, and also in reflecting again while writing Elizabeth's story, I was considering the ethical issues regarding this process. Susan Chase, as cited in Josselson (1996), states that "[n]arrative research is a contingent and unfolding process, the results of which we cannot anticipate or guarantee. An informed consent form cannot possibly capture the dynamic processes of interpretation …" (p. 57). Elizabeth's vulnerability allowed for a personal breakthrough in her own story, and granted me the enormous gift of an authentic transpersonal research experience. The understanding of her experiences and the potential meaning that it contained added to the findings of my research and affirmed one of my research arguments. I hoped that, by including this experience in the writing of her story, I would be able to expand the value and usefulness of this study.

Elizabeth met her beloved after she had completed school. She allowed herself to be pursued by him and found that they were well-suited and shared very many interests, especially their love of the sun and the sea and being out of doors. They also discovered how well they travelled together. They explored magical, exotic and faraway places. And then they got married, a beautiful young couple with hopes and dreams and aspirations. Her wedding photographs tell the story of a bride in white lace, her hair adorned with wild orchids.

Elizabeth, in a letter written to her daughter Summer as part of her contribution to this study wrote:

> What an overwhelming rush of emotions you brought into my life! After 9 months of hellish nausea I was wondering how I was going to cope with a new baby … I need not have worried. Taking care of you was the most natural thing in the world … you slept on my chest and no threats from the nurses could change that. We lay like that for 3 days, and when they saw that I hadn't squashed you, they let us go home.

Summer grew up close to where her own mother was born. She was, just like Elizabeth, an exceptionally beautiful child. Her early life was easy, free and comfortable. Her younger brother was born while she was shooting up like a string bean, healthy, lithe and strong. As with her mother, people were magnetically drawn to her charm and warmth. She had many friends and loved being with people. She still does. All the photographs on her collages and in her journals show pictures of her with other people, never alone. I have not included any visual contributions made by Summer. My motivation is an ethical consideration: everything

she gave to me to work with in gathering stories included photographs of herself, her mother, the family and friends. Her identitiy will be exposed.

Puberty came to Summer rather late. She recalled that she was close to fifteen years old, the last girl in her class to experience the menarche. She told me that her life changed after that. She had to deal with incredibly painful menses. Her skin erupted, angry and depressive mood swings haunted her and she started to gain weight rapidly. Adolescence became a daunting experience for her. Her changing body became a source of anxiety and marked apprehension. Owen (1998) shows an understanding for this: "… for some women, the pain that comes with menstruation has an excruciating and seemingly unbearable intensity" (p. 61). During one of our early interviews Summer also told me that her body had seemed to get out of control after she started menstruating; her breasts developed very rapidly and became a source of discomfort, embarrassment and unhappiness. She said that she was "too much woman too soon", as she was only sixteen. After some time, her mother agreed with her that she needed more physical and emotional comfort and Summer was happy when their medical practitioner prescribed a contraceptive pill to balance her hormonal and endocrine system. She was on this medication for almost twelve months, but it did not agree with her and she once again had to cope with the difficulty of hormonal challenges. At the time of the field study she was much more at ease as an internal device had been surgically fitted into her uterus.

Summer was in the late adolescent phase; she was 19 years old. She was experiencing some transitions within the container of the transitional cycle of adolescence. She had a new boyfriend, who had been a childhood friend. She had just started college and most of her friends were either travelling abroad or were in relationships themselves. She told me that she was becoming more content, even though her body was still going through changes. She was enjoying the process of maturing. She had had no menses after the surgical procedure was performed. During our second meeting, however, she revealed that she had unexpectedly, after many months, had a menstrual period again shortly after we started doing the field work. It was interesting to me as researcher from the perspective of a psyche-soma connection, that she recorded another menses that had occurred on the day of the labyrinth ritual, when the field work was drawing to a close. I believe that the body speaks the mind and that menstruation, being an essential element of the feminine principle, has a voice in the process of individuation. Dethlefsen and Dahlke (1990) say that it is important "... above all

else not to lose sight of the *whole* person as a psychosomatic unity" (p. 4). I agree with their argument about how our consciousness can make itself known by way of symptomatic responses in the physical body. This is what they write:

> Thus, just as the entire material world is merely the stage on which the play of the archetype takes on form and so becomes 'like a metaphor', so by the same token the material body is the stage on which the images of consciousness force their way into expression (Dethlefsen & Dahlke, 1990, p. 7).

Summer has always been very creative and artistic. She embraced the ways in which we found our stories and decided to make two journals, one a visual diary. In the other journal she recorded her thoughts, impressions, feelings and so forth, about her participation in the research. She documented her ideas about the feminine principle, and she drew a beautiful mandala to depict her impressions of herself during this process of doing the field work. This mandala was drawn almost entirely in various hues of pink and some orange, the centre depicting the symbol of the heart. Fincher (1991) points out:

> Women seem to be closely influenced by their biological state and are aware, at a subliminal level, of what goes on in their bodies, they may use pink at times of menstruation, even though they may not speak of any pre-occupation with the body (p. 64).

I also noticed how the circular centre of the mandala was contained in a square. This was very significant against the background of individuation. Jung referred to it as "the squaring of the circle" (Fincher, 1991, p. 135). He regarded this as an alchemical process of synthesis and suggested that it was evidence of the archetypal Self that regulates the harmony of a person's psychic life. Cirlot is cited in Fincher (1991) explaining the symbolic meaning of hearts in mandala drawings: "The heart was once considered the centre of being and the true seat of intelligence" (p. 128). The alchemists equated the image of the heart with the radiance of illumination in gold.

Summer also drew pictures and created a photo-timeline of her life, as well as of her mother's life and their life together. She was living at home with her family and did not consider moving out of her family home at the time. Her pages spilled over with pictures and images

of her mother; her collage was almost entirely devoted to her mother. In working with their collages, I noticed that theirs were almost identical, not only in theme, but also in content and presentation. Their collages were virtually the same, although they did the work completely independently from each other. Elizabeth and Summer told me that they were very close and that their relationship is such that they communicate well; sometimes they disagree, but they hardly ever fight. In a letter to her mother, Summer told her mother that she knew she could trust her with anything, and how her mother always seemed to know what to do or say to make her feel better when she was not feeling good. She continued to say that

> … sometimes I worry that I am so close to you – this can even bring me to tears – because I feel like if I were to ever lose you my life could possibly come to an end all together. Just the thought of losing you makes me physically feel pain.

During the course of the field work, Summer told me how the boundaries between herself and her mother sometimes become diffuse. She has developed such a deep attachment to Elizabeth that she develops an asthmatic reaction, migraine, nausea and post-nasal drip symptoms. In her journal she wrote: "I always seem to start feeling slightly sick whenever my mom leaves home – I think it might be because I actually worry so much about her for some reason."

At that stage in our field work Elizabeth and Summer had not yet read each other's letters. Summer did not know that Elizabeth had written to her that

> It must have been hard for you during those times when you were young and I fell into those withdrawn, dark moods that only years later I understood it to be depression. My wish for you is that if you ever do find yourself in a 'dark hole' that you do not fight it alone but recognise it for what it is and not pretend it is not happening.

Janet Sayers (1998) cites Clarissa Pinkola Estes who tells

> female-centred stories to draw attention to the strength and independence women can secure through confronting and working to resolve the divisions and mixed feelings of love and hate between themselves and their mothers in becoming separate whilst also remaining close (p. 146).

At this point I was drawn back to Elizabeth's story. I needed to continue the story of her relationship with her mother. It is important to tell how she found relief and resolution in understanding her intrapersonal dynamics and how that interacted with her relationship dynamics with her mother.

Jung (1982) wrote about the significance of the personal mother, not only in terms of the theories on "personalistic psychologies", but also in the individual's psyche. He says: "Because the mother is the first bearer of the soul-image, separation from her is a delicate and important matter of the greatest educational significance" (pp. 97, 126). Elizabeth had ambivalent feelings about her mother, as I have already shown, but she told me that she had always maintained a relationship of respect and kindness with her mother. They were involved in the daily matters of each other's lives, albeit not on a meaningful relational level. They honoured birthdays and occasions, shared meals and holidays, but they did not really talk about themselves or their own relationship.

It was during one such holiday that Elizabeth invited her mother to join them. Her father had long since passed on. They were having dinner when her mom choked on her food. It became a serious crisis, resulting in Elizabeth and her mother flying home from the Eastern Cape to Cape Town. An ambulance was waiting at the airport and she was taken straight to hospital. A minor surgical procedure was performed, but complications developed and her mother sadly enough died a few hours later. Elizabeth recalled how she just went numb. She had to focus on her life; she had two young children, a husband and a business to take care of. She said that she never really allowed much emotional support and also that, as the years progressed, she had never really dealt with her feelings about her mother's life or death.

Ten years later, when we started doing this field work, something began to stir. The numbness slowly began to thaw. As I was working with Elizabeth's journal, I found a wealth of stories in her mandalas, dreams, snippets of news, clippings of thoughts. She had pasted the photograph of the meandering path down towards the sea into her journal. This was her inscription: "What to write about this photo? A feeling of constant movement, paths winding back and forth. Tides moving in and out. Things hidden. Things revealed. What is just outside the frame of this photo?" Elizabeth created a beautiful mandala at the beginning of the field work, totally intuitively. She initially resisted the idea of working with mandalas, because it was unknown territory for her. We discussed this at length and I invited her to allow herself to be taken by the circle, and to let the process reveal itself. Fincher (1991)

writes that "the subliminal experience of circular movement, like the memory of our mother's womb, is encoded in our bodies. Thus we are predisposed to respond to the circle" (p. 3). When Elizabeth handed in her journal, I was amazed. This was the story of her blue mandala (Figure 4.6).

In mandala work, blue is strongly associated with the feminine principle. It refers to characteristics such as compassion, devotion, loyalty and love. Fincher (1991) further indicates that the "mother principle" is depicted in blue; the principle includes, for example, the qualities of patience, protection, nurturing and caring. She also cites Kellog who suggests that the watery milieu of the uterus connotes the experience of protection and being cared for. My understanding of Elizabeth's story, as told by her blue mandala, was that her unconscious patterns and scripts were forming a rhythm of ebbing and flowing, like that of the sea, creating a wave of movement towards the completion of a cycle and the unfolding of the next phase of her life. Her individuation process was in motion; there were the stirrings of new life and there was the containment of the familiar. The strong presence of the turquoise background within which the flower was contained, became an ally to my suspicion. "Turquoise often appears when healing is necessary in order to get on with life" (Fincher, 1991, p. 70). The central flower had eight petals, held together by the suggestion of an X-cross. In this connection Fincher says: "Eight in mandalas reveal the strong influence of the archetype of the Self. You may find that eight in your mandalas represents an exquisitely balanced organisation of paired opposites, ideas or persons, that presages significant changes in your life" (p. 106).

I was reflecting over Elizabeth's personal journey after the day on which she made the breakthrough of gaining insight into her loss of Aphrodite. Following that experience, she left for India in search of silk and stories. Because I had been to India myself, I sensed that she would find her stories, although neither of us could know how they would be revealed. During my own travels in India I had kept a diary which I retrieved after Elizabeth had returned home and we picked up the thread to continue with our weaving. I read my inscriptions about the paradox of India. I read about my experiences in the holy city of Varanasi, previously known as Benares, where the holy water of the river Ganges offers her Self to pilgrims in search of redemption. I had witnessed many rituals in this river; my breath was taken away by the inexplicable contrasts of beauty and horror, cruelty and grace, death, life and rebirth.

Elizabeth had planned to go to Varanasi to purchase antique silk *pashminas* and saris. She was disillusioned by witnessing the dreadful conditions under which people work in dark basements of ancient, filthy buildings on the banks of the Ganga. She was told by some merchants that she would only be able to experience the city's real truth and beauty from being on the river itself. She was travelling with a very close friend and they agreed to hire a boatman to enable them to witness the magnificence of the sun rising from the early morning mist on this mysterious river. And so a slender thread[33] was thrown onto the water when the boatman took them far down the river towards the bridge where, according to custom, a sacred cremation site was kept. Sitting in the boat, marvelling at the river's course, she was called towards the shore. To her own astonishment, she heeded the call and allowed herself to be taken up the embankment by an unknown man who worked there as an undertaker. He took her right into the site where a family was preparing the shrouded body of their mother to be cremated. She saw the body being blessed with sandalwood and put onto the pyre. When the fire was lit, custom prescribed that she had to turn away, and she was escorted back to the boat.

By that time the sun was much higher in the sky. And then the heat of the fires, the sounds of bulls and bells and little boys and older men chanting nearby, the colours of the cloths already laundered by the wash-whallas and the smells of sandalwood and death all merged into a spiral of intensity, which overwhelmed her. She lay down in the boat and covered her face. And this is how, after ten years, her tears became a river of grief as she was finally able to mourn her mother's death. This is what she wrote in her journal that evening: "I was finally saying goodbye to my own mother. I had the strangest feeling of my mom being right there for the first time since she died so long ago". "When a mother passes on, a midlife woman is freed to take the best of her, leave the worst behind and become wholly her own person" (Krasnow, 2006, p. xiv).

Back in Cape Town we continued to work and delve into her experiences of the menopause. It was important to know that her hysterectomy, five years earlier, had induced her menopause. Northrup (2001) writes: "When a woman has her uterus, or uterus and ovaries, removed, her body goes into instant menopause, which can be a shock to the hormonal system" (p. 251). Elizabeth related how she noticed some hot flushes, disturbed sleep, mood swings and weight gain. She went deep into the "beauty myth" when she talked about how

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[33] Robert Johnson (1998) created this metaphor referring to synchronicity.

her body is no longer slim and waiflike, how she feels her physical beauty is fading. In her journal she wrote: "I had an almost overwhelming feeling one evening in India of great sadness that it is only now that physical beauty has faded that I am finally getting to be at ease enough with myself to really enjoy it".

Antjie Krog writes in her acclaimed volume of poetry, *Body Bereft* (2006, p. 28):

> I really don't know how to write your ageing body
>
> without using words like 'loss' or 'fatal'. I don't know.
>
> I don't know why the word 'wrinkle' sounds so banal
>
> I simply do not know how ageing should sound in language[.]

Elizabeth found a personal symbol in the shell. The very protective nature of the shell resonates with that aspect of her mother-being that is fiercely protective of her children, as we often discussed during the months of doing the field work. She used the symbol of the shell to create a mandala of the feminine nature and described it in these words: "strong and self-protecting, many layers, warning, defensive, curved and smooth, beauty within, hidden, inviting, irresistible, adaptable to many situations". All these words were written into the curves of her shell. The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols states that the shell holding the rising figure of Venus as depicted in the painting by Botticelli, "The Birth of Venus" (c. 1486) was formed in water and thus refers to fertility. The authors, Chevalier and Gheerbrandt (1996) also point out that, in classical antiquity, the shell referred to or symbolised the female genitalia. In Greek mythology Venus is the Goddess of Love and beauty; she *is* the feminine principle. The authors also mention that the pearls which are formed in the watery womb of the shell refer to Aphrodite.

Another symbol introduced by Elizabeth as indicative of her personal mythology was that of the egg. To capture this, she made a drawing of a serpent, in green and black, spiralling out from the centre, which was an egg. The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols refers to the symbolism of the spiral as being "linked to the cosmic symbolism of the moon, the watery symbolism of the shell. In short, it stands for the repetitive rhythm of life, the cyclical nature of evolution and the permanence of being beneath the flux of movement" (Chevalier & Gheerbrandt, p. 907). On the symbolism of the egg, the Element Encyclopedia states: "As the seed of life, the egg is a symbol of fertility. In alchemy, the philosophical egg played an important role as a symbol of PRIMA MATERIA" (Becker, 1994, p. 94). I offer these

symbols as windows into her Beingness, wanting to allow them to speak for themselves in Elizabeth's story of Self in the process of individuation. Joseph Campbell (2008) wrote that symbols are vehicles of communication, convenient in their ability to aid us in an understanding of their reference.

The relationship between Elizabeth and Summer is strong and close. Yet it is important to consider how Elizabeth yearned for a sense of separateness, even as a young mother. In her journal she wrote about her struggle with depressive episodes and how she was unsure of the effect which these dark spells may have had on her daughter and/or their relationship. She wrote that "the more she clung to me, the more I withdrew". During one of our last interview sessions, Summer started to discuss her concerns about her mother. The session was unexpectedly interrupted by the return of family members and she never brought it up again. Retrospectively I remain unsure about whether I should have pressed the matter in follow-up research sessions in order to complete the story. At the time, amidst the intensity of doing the field work, I decided to let it be a silent voice.

When I began the process of working through the data and finding the stories and the findings from the stories, I started to see an image of a polarised reflection appearing between Elizabeth and Summer. Dethlefsen and Dahlke (1990) draw attention to the consciousness of polarities by describing how, for example, the inhalation of breath determines the exhalation of the same breath, without which no further breath can be taken. This establishes a rhythm, which is the basic pattern of life. What I was very curious about, reflecting on this rhythm in Elizabeth and Summer's relationship, was the possibility of a co-dependent aspect to their relationship: "The one pole depends for its life on the other. If we take one pole away, the other disappears also" (p. 16). I wondered how this may have helped Summer to express more fully how she feels about her mother's episodes of emotional withdrawal, especially as Summer presented with unconscious somatic responses to being "without" her mother. Dethlefsen and Dahlke (1990) wrote: "The more deeply we penetrate into human symptomatology, the clearer it becomes that the whole of human life hovers between the two poles of 'letting in' and 'letting go'" (p. 189).

After completing the labyrinth walk on that Saturday in May when the autumn light drew pictures in gold and red and purple leaves amongst the vineyards, we held a finishing ritual. Our facilitator had asked each one of us to draw an oracle card from a pack of goddess archetypes to serve as guidance on our walk. After the walk we sat down in a circle and

spoke about our experiences of this ritual. The facilitator asked each of us to share with one another what our goddess archetypes were. Elizabeth was guided by Aine and Summer by Aphrodite. I had another transpersonal experience of deep knowing within myself that Elizabeth's alchemical healing process could be found in claiming her Aphrodite, while Summer's unconscious fear of being abandoned by her mother could be healed by being her own Aphrodite. As Lauren Artress (1995) says: "In the labyrinth our life patterns become clear" (p. 102).

The images below are examples of Elizabeth's mandalas, symbols and personal mythology. Considering the ethical aspect of confidentiality mentioned above, I am not able to include artwork or mandalas made by Summer, as her identity will be exposed by photopraphs and real names in the artworks.
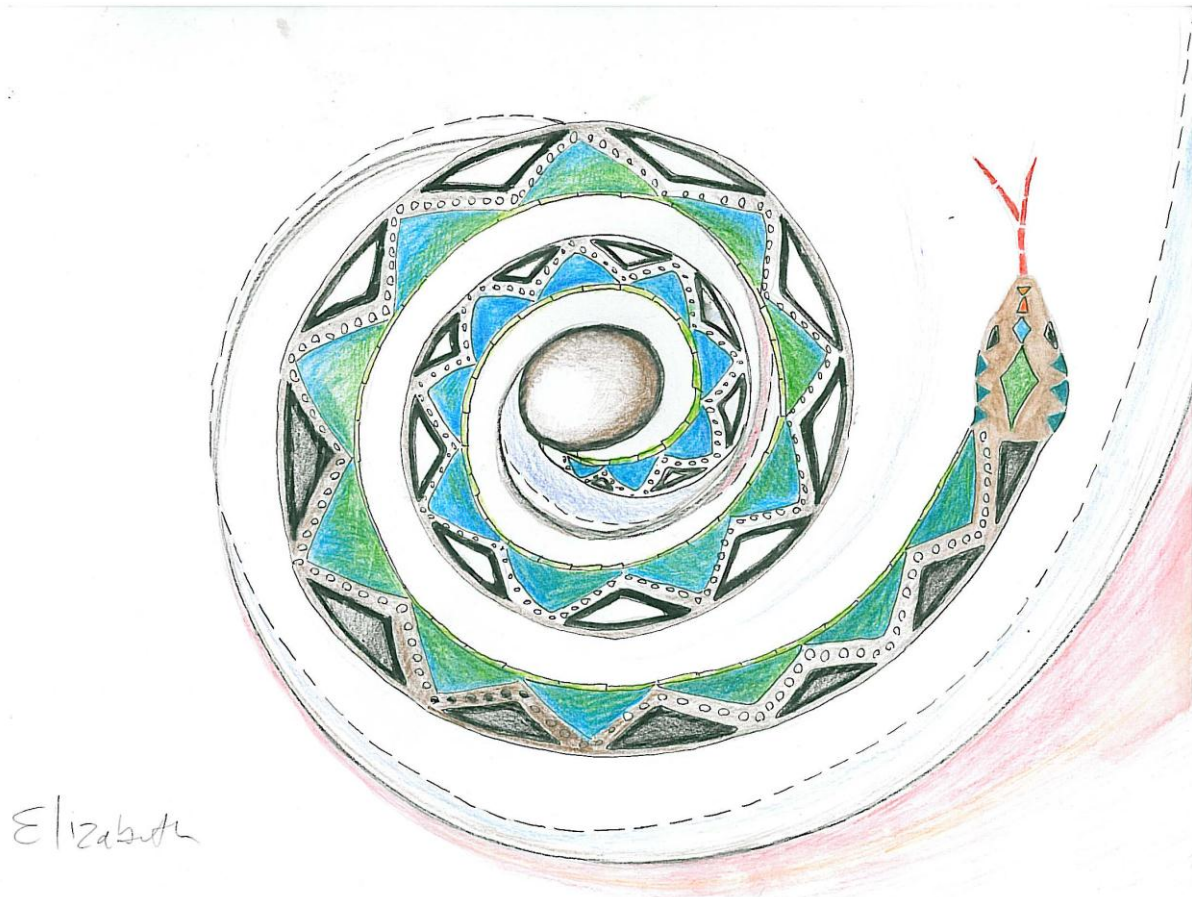
Figure 4.6:   Blue mandala by Elizabeth

Figure 4.7:   Artwork by Elizabeth: Personal symbols and mythology

Having re-told the stories of the co-researchers, I now had to walk outwards along the path of the labyrinth. As I prepared to leave the centre of the labyrinth, I sensed that I was in the process of transformation induced by this research journey. Braud and Anderson (1998) see research as "an opportunity for change and transformation of the researcher" (p. 242). I understand this, as I have experienced it myself.

STEP FOUR: ON THE WAY OUT

> Often a feeling of strengthening and integration occurs. Symbolically you take back out into the world what you have received (Artress, 2006, p. 40).

Leaving the centre of the labyrinth was a time for reflecting on what I had found. I started out on this research journey wondering about the echo of the sound emitted by the story of adolescence and reverberating into the story of menopause. What I did not expect to find was the echoing of voices between mothers and daughters, and the daughters of the daughters.

Braud and Anderson (1998) write that researchers must be open towards these experiences: "When embarking on a research project, the researcher should be open to arising possibilities that may not have been anticipated in the original research plan" (p. 208). Such was my experience.

I read the myth of Ariadne again, the woman who provided her beloved with the golden thread, the ancient story about how to get to the centre of the labyrinth, and the secret of how to get back out again. As told in the Prelude, Ariadne was betrayed by her beloved, Theseus. I often wondered, as I was walking with her thread in hand through the winding pathways of this scholarly journey, whether Ariadne has become a symbol of the feminine principle that involves (her) self in relating and thereby allows a process of deconstruction – the deconstruction of the self, before the emergence of the Self. I do not know this but I do know that I have chosen her story to be a symbol of the feminine principle at the crossing point where light and dark converge and self grows into Self, where perhaps the little girl self becomes the woman Self. It may even be that, through the transmutation process of life and death and rebirth, Ariadne is also Demeter and Kore and Hecate and also Inanna, transmuting through the alchemical fire of life in Being. The symbol of the thread made me think about the thread woven between the mothers and daughters in this study. It also made me reflect on how the threads that they were holding could be woven into the braid of my research argument, and of the possibility of working these threads into a story of transpersonal transformation and growth. When I paused at the last step before leaving the labyrinth, I would consider this possibility.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

I present my research findings in a threefold reflection of the stories that have been explored. Braud (1998, p3) writes:

> Choosing a personally meaningful and important topic – which is virtually guaranteed, if one is addressing transpersonal issues – helps assure that one's findings will have applicability to others (will generalize well) and will be of use to others (will have pragmatic validity).

My research findings weigh heavily upon my sense of responsibility. I initially set out to see what we could learn from or about the cycles of transition in adolescence and menopause

within the container of the mother-daughter relationship. When I look at the stories offered by the co-researchers about their becoming and being women, mothers and daughters, I notice the trace of a thread appearing, slowly spiralling towards a centre. I notice also, as my research arguments are expanding, that the mother-and-daughter relationship forms a powerful vessel for stories of healing, growth and transformation, as the nature of these cycles of life are powerful enough to induce movement and stirrings in th*e* psyche, like water for chocolate.[34] And then, drawing the thread of the feminine principle into the centre of the spiral, I noticed a crossing point in the exploration of the positive and the negative feminine. At this point I want to refer briefly to the words of Clandinin (2007) who said that "… using the interpretative lens of the three-dimensional narrative space allows researchers to both present and interrogate findings and allows the narrative inquirer to represent the contingent, nuanced and symbolic aspects of the findings" (p. 20). I arrived at these findings unexpectedly, but not blindly. Let me bring the research findings into focus.

Phoebe and Viola's stories spoke of abandonment and dependency; Ciska and Simone struggled with feelings of "not being enough", while Elizabeth and Summer experienced dissociation and separation anxiety. It seems that the underlying mutuality between the experiences of all the participants reveal a pattern of fear. Reflecting on this statement, I turn to Hollis (1996), who states that as humans, we develop a response to the trauma of birth, where we are separated from the womb, which in turn, separates us from the cosmos. This explanation may clarify the presence of fear in our stories. My understanding of fear is that it is a belief system that develops from experiences. According to Judith (1996), fear is a presence that serves to teach us about our sense of self-worth and self-preservation. Senesky (2003) brings the Feminine as archetypal image into view and reminds me about the cycles of life and death, saying that fear follows when we live outside the acceptance of the cyclical nature of Being. According to her, the experience of fear allows us to shut down and become smaller, rather than to grow and expand. In this regard Mindell (1993) says: "Fear had become my barrier" (p. 188). Josselson and Lieblich (1993) cite MacIntyre that "[w]e live our lives according to a script, which secures that our actions are part of a meaningful totality" (p. 7). In the presentation of my findings I attempt to show how this may be a foundation for some of the experiences I observed in the responses of the co-researches. These responses emerge in the stories of the co-researchers as patterns of fear. The patterns may be linked to experiences of being abandoned, failure, feeling unworthy or insignificant and feelings of

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[34] An expression which refers to an exact fit, a perfect match.

inadequacy. According to Senesky (2003), these patterns create inertia and it becomes very difficult to change one's behaviour and also one's sense of self. Mindell (1993) says that "Fear is usually wrapped up with the loss of identity" (p. 93).

Phoebe's story showed how her very early experience of abandonment by her mother left her with a deep emotional need to control her environment. This manifested in her attempts to make sure that her boundaries were strong and that she was not taken advantage of, turning her into "a slave driver". We saw how she rebelled against her mother during her own adolescence and how that resulted in self-destructive behaviour. As an adult woman, she learned to take care of her own needs by being overtly assertive and driven, taking on a very masculine way of expressing herself. Her original behavioural patterns to subdue her fears were rebellion and control, which were being transformed through the wisdom of her menopause. She was learning to be softer, to yield more and to allow her feminine self to emerge. She was transmuting the harshness of her experiences into self-reliance and the authentic experience of her credo "to take responsibility".

Viola was entering adolescence with dependency issues, as we discovered earlier. It was possible to identify a fear pattern which mirrored that of her mother directly: the fear of abandonment. Her behavioural pattern for controlling her fear was to be emotionally dependent on Phoebe, who rejected this. Viola resorted to behaviour that showed learned helplessness, which only resulted in provoking her mother's withdrawal from her. Viola and her mother were very authentic in their relationship with each other and they consciously communicated these issues. The result is that both of them experienced liberation, personal empowerment and personal growth.

In Phoebe and Viola's dreams, mandalas, collages, drawings and descriptions of the feminine principle in using the visual imagery, I found that they revealed a strong resonance with the positive and negative feminine. This observation took me to insight in and understanding of the crossing point of my research argument.

I discovered that the nucleus or seed pattern of the labyrinth is the equal-armed cross, followed by four angles and four dots. Saward (2003) writes: "Conveniently named the 'seed pattern', this simple method for reproducing the labyrinth design has been used wherever and whenever the symbol occurs. Easily memorised, it is an ingenious drawing trick that has been passed on from person to person, from one culture to another, for thousands of years" (p. 16).

I also found a reference to the dark mother who lives in the labyrinth, the "bone or death goddess", a symbol for the possibility of working with one's Self at the crossing point. Eason (2004) says of this: "That is why the mysterious labyrinth form can be used to explore hidden aspects of ourselves …" (p. 44). The dark goddess could be seen as a symbolic reference to the capacity within the individual's *eros* to regenerate and transform, as part of the individuation process. Reflecting more about this, I resonate with the description by Kidd and Taylor (2009) that the 'bone goddess' could refer to the 'older women' we become, after the heat of the menopause has cooled down.

Ciska and Simone reflect to each other how difficult and yet how important it is to be authentic in their self-experience as well as in their self-expression. Ciska has borne the torture of self-doubt for most of her life. This is transferred in the concern that she has inculcated this in Simone. Simone has expressed her feelings of being weighed down by the experience of reflecting a *persona* in her life outside of the family, especially at school and socially. My understanding is that they are both trapped in a pattern of feeling insignificant. This seems to manifest in the fear of not being good enough. The behavioural patterns with which they try to control this fear has always been to create new relationships, and to relate externally to others. Their relationship with each other contains the resolution: an unconditional acceptance (of each other).

During the particular experience, life being in transition in their current reality, the inner transition of their phases of life seems to be emphasised. One could argue that the transitional phases of adolescence and menopause augment their fear of being insignificant or not good enough. My research argument that there may be a link between the chaos and turbulence in the phases of adolescence and menopause, being instances of transition, and the impetus that these factors may have towards individuation, may apply here.

In the last phase of our work together, Ciska, Simone and I discussed how they would be able to transform this painful sense of Self. Intellectually, they both know that they are unconventional; astute in their consciousness; very interesting to talk to; very good at their work and schoolwork; and so much more. They also know that they are deserving of the experience of being good enough. The gift of their fear script is that they can transform their self-experience, through self-acceptance, into a mantra, an internal refrain such as 'I am enough, becoming more'. They can therefore refocus the lens of exploration toward an intrapersonal experience, allowing their relationships with themselves to heal and transform.

Elizabeth has lived most of her life in a state of disconnected self-experience. She has not really been able to trust herself enough to trust others, and to relate to others in a natural and intimate manner. She has allowed herself to be removed from the dialogue that her physical body has been trying to have with her for many years, and eventually she severed the vocal cords of her symptomatology. Her fear of being unworthy and inadequate may have resulted in cycles of depression during which no one could gain access to her. She felt as if she had nothing to give and that she was undeserving of receiving much. Her dissociated state seems to have disallowed the natural voice of the feminine principle and that of Aphrodite: to receive, to be creative and to relate on an abundant and sensuous level with life and with other people. She controlled her fear by living in the disembodiment of her physiological reality, as well as to mistrust. When she allowed herself to mourn the death of her mother in the holy city of Varanasi, the ice began to melt around her sense of being who she is. The guidance of the archetypal goddess Aine involves taking a leap of faith and to trust (Virtue, 2004). The time has come for Elizabeth to trust her Self in the knowing that she is enough, and that being feminine is natural and being beautiful is not wrong.

Summer is on her way out of the cycle of adolescence. It is appropriate for her to gain more independence from her family, and especially from her mother. Kroger (2007) cites Peter Blos who termed this event the process of "separation-individuation" (p. 90). I understand from her separation anxiety and her physical symptomatology that Summer exhibited a fear-of-abandonment pattern: hence her issues around separation. She controlled the fear of separation psychosomatically. Her body has a strong voice. Dethlefsen and Dahlke (1990) identify a connection between fear, anxiety and asthma. They postulate that people who suffer from this condition may have a subconscious desire to "shut off" from particular aspects of life. My understanding is that Summer may be shutting off the fear of being separated from her mother and thus of being more independent. As with her mother, the gift of her fears and possible behavioural patterns, may be found in learning to trust her Self. Summer has the additional task, however, of learning to trust and allow the natural emergence of separateness.

Elizabeth and Summer have a very powerful relationship. Based on the findings from this research, my understanding is that their relationship is in itself an impetus towards their own individual individuation processes, similar to the relationship between Elizabeth and her own

mother. My research argument points towards the relationship between a mother and her daughter as a powerful constellation in which healing, growth and transformation can occur.

THE LAST STEP OUT

When I was walking the labyrinth that day in Stellenbosch, I experienced an unexpected lightness in my being. And then I almost missed the last coil of the path. I became aware of this, retracted and then completed the walk. Later that evening I reflected on the occurrence in my research journal. I knew it meant something, that it was the labyrinth's way of indicating something important. It is not in my character to leave things incomplete; I am tenacious by nature. As I was creating the grid for writing this part of the chapter, I found another slender thread in the form of Helen Curry's (2000) book on labyrinths. The caption "The Last Step Out", made me sit up, as I remembered my own experience. I read words that lifted another veil for me: "The path out symbolizes this sense of the meeting of opposites and gives us a symbol to bring back into the world. The ending is the beginning" (Curry, 2000, p. 89).

From my exploration of alchemy in psychology, I understand that the gold in the base metal of my own story is to have the courage to heal my own fear pattern: the fear of being insignificant and inadequate. For many years I have been using the treacherous devices of self-sabotage, deconstructing my life towards the point where I "walked on the wire".[35] According to the alchemists of antiquity, the gold they were seeking was already there, in the lead. It was a matter of retrieving it. The process of retrieval is the process of transformation which happens in the cycle of life and death and rebirth.

During this process of transmutation in my own life, I have contemplated life and the purpose of life, as well as my own purpose. I meditated and I studied and read and explored; I facilitated workshops and practised transpersonal and metaphysical modalities of healing and therapy. I observed and studied myself, my teachers, my clients, friends, family members and strangers. During these years I saw a picture emerge, a picture which may help to understand the scripts of the patterns of fear and the behaviour that controls and subdues these fears.

My 'last step out' was to find the courage to bring my "symbol back into the world", as Curry (2000, p. 89) had said. Stepping out of the labyrinth, I am offering a postulation ('my

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[35] Being on the edge of…

symbol') of how to understand fear scripts, how to recognise behavioural patterns and how to position this within a transpersonal psychological framework.

My postulation is that, based on experiences in our childhood, an imprint is formed in our unconscious which writes a script to direct us in our lives. This script is linked to how we experience ourselves; more specifically, it is a perception of how we experience ourselves. This script becomes the foundation of our basic belief system about ourselves, our lives, our relationships, our rights, responsibilities, and more. This script is linked to the experience of fear or fear patterns. These fear patterns are contained within an anchor: the fundamental experience of the fear of not enough – the fear of being inadequate.

The fear of inadequacy can be translated variously. It can be experienced by the individual as the fear of not Being enough and/or the fear of not having enough.

The *prima materia* of my argument is that everything is polarised. Until we have mastered the tension of opposites, no wholeness is possible. In order to become whole we need to heal the very basis of our fears. I postulate that the essence of our perceived fears is the fear of not being or having enough, in other words, of not being able to survive or thrive.

Within the experience of duality there is a behavioural plan in the form of particular self-experiences and self-expressions. What I have noticed, is that 'the fear of not enough' is projected into four basic forms of intrapersonal and interpersonal feelings, thoughts and behaviours. These are also polarised into "teams" of particular characters: the Victim role is polarised by the Rescuer role. They share the experience of feeling undeserving, helpless, fearful, inferior, inadequate, limited, abused, insignificant, and more. The other team of characters is that of the Rebel and the Tyrant. Their issues are mostly about authority, power, aggression, competition, boldness, dominance, control, manipulation and so forth. These self-expressions cleverly disguise the feelings of not being or having enough. The fear patterns are the same, but are projected differently and in a more extroverted way than the more inwardly, introverted expressions of the Victim and Rescuer roles.

To live according to a fear-based life script is not conducive to growth, transformation and individuation. One way to bridge the divide and heal the split is through intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal self-mastery. This means that an individual who is able to live within the expansive experience of an authentic identity is liberated from feelings of insignificance, negative thoughts of lack and limitation, and behaviour driven by

compromised ego impulses. The transpersonal process of alchemy draws strongly upon two sources of self-mastery: engaging in authentic relationships and practising conscious communication. Authentic relationships refer to a style of relating where there is no need to play games; where transparency is grounded in honesty and sincerity of motive; where manipulation has no place; where equality is a given; and where mutual respect forms the foundation of relationships. Conscious communication includes a strong aspect of meta-cognition; listening pertains to receiving the other, allowing the voice and the message of the other, and also the voice of the collective. The spoken word is employed with the intention to uplift and not to destroy; the aesthetics of words and language is heeded and personal space is not usurped by meaningless chatter. Conscious communication also implies taking responsibility for one's feelings, thoughts and actions. It means that one consciously chooses to be authentic, as opposed to reverting to one of the archetypes discussed above, on both an intrapersonal and interpersonal level.

Transpersonal self-mastery refers to the process of personal transformation in the individuation process where those aspects of Self which are in alignment with one's capacity for spiritual experiences, such as trust, joy, ecstasy, intuition and synchronicity are consciously revered as significant and necessary, and also used in the process of becoming a whole person. Transpersonal self-mastery results in being authentic.

In this regard, the alchemical activity refers to the process of working with oneself in such a way that profound healing and significant changes and growth can occur. This transformation allows the self-experience of self-acceptance, forgiveness, personal empowerment and liberation. It is a process that moves away from a linear experience of fear towards a circular experience of perpetual growth and individuation. I have created a compendium[36] of a model of transpersonal self-mastery and transformation to illustrate 'my symbol', this postulation of self-mastery.

This is my understanding of how the mythical serpent grows in spirals, from tail to mouth, constantly sloughing skin in cycles of life and death and rebirth, resting in the crossing point.

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[36] See Addendum C.

STEP FIVE: AFTER THE WALK

Narrative research does not end with a conclusion, but with an open ending, which would hopefully stimulate new research and new stories. I now understand the words of Curry (2000), that the ending is the beginning, differently. Muller (2001) says that "[r]esearch creates its own story with new possibilities" (p. 13). Looking into the research journey through the transpersonal lens has become a transformative experience for me, and, as reported by the co-researchers, also for them. I agree with Braud and Anderson (1998) who said that research becomes something more than increasing knowledge, as it holds the potential for transformation for the researcher and for the possible transformation of the co-researchers and the readers.

Should these findings be useful in an application of a general understanding of women's issues and be applicable in therapeutic settings, I will be satisfied as researcher. On the evening after completing the ritual of walking the labyrinth, I reflected in my journal:

> *I am grateful that we have come to this point in the work – it is a celebration of the field work, my intention for offering this ritual is to express my gratitude towards the mothers and daughters for offering their stories. The labyrinth has become a powerful symbol in the process of my research and the journey. The labyrinth has become the womb, the circle, Ouroboros.*

I am about to leave this chapter but not the story of this research journey. The story of my mother and myself still needs to be told. Her story also needs to be told. My mother said, one day while we were discussing symbols of femininity: "A woman's uterus is the cosmos". Her response was prompted by a photograph of an arum lily which I showed to her as an example of one of my personal symbols. Our stories are still nestling in the spathe of the lily. Rumi (as cited in Hollis, 1998) wrote: "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there" (p. 66). At this point I take you to the field of arum lilies, where I shall be meeting you with the our stories.

CHAPTER 5

AUGMENTUM PLUMBI: REFLECTING ON A STORY OF GROWTH

But it is towards her[37] – and especially towards her culturally – repressed aspects, those chthonic and chaotic, ineluctable depths – that the new individuating, yin-yang balanced ego must return to find its matrix and the embodied and flexible strength to be active and vulnerable, to stand its own ground and still to be empathetically related to others (Perera, 1981, p. 7).

I have already written about the crisis of representation and the role/and or place of reflexivity in narrative inquiry. Before I tell the stories of my mother, myself and my grandmothers, I want to explore the value of reflexivity and autobiographical contribution in research just a little more. I also want to focus on the transpersonal notion of 'transforming self and others through research' (Anderson & Braud, 2011). Elliot (2005) said that:

The aim is for researchers not simply to provide their readers with detailed confessional accounts of their experiences of conducting research, but rather to produce an analytic discussion of how their own theoretical and biographical perspective might impact on their relationship with research subjects, their interpretation of research evidence, and the form in which the research is presented (p. 155).

My relationship with my mother has been an important aspect of what informed my role of researcher in the context of transpersonal psychology and research and the responsibility of becoming a reflexive researcher in the process. In including the story of the relationship of my mother and myself, I am striving to be transparent in the process and to contribute to what Anderson and Braud (2011) refer to as transformation on a communal and personal level as an outcome of research that is based on projects that have personal meaning and in which the researcher can become involved. Such a research project is based on an expansive and

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[37] The reference is to a feminine source-ground such as goddess.

inclusive research approach. Narrative inquiry and transpersonal research allow for an approach where the researcher is able to identify research skills which enable self-awareness and, as I understand it, to take responsibility for these experiences by being open about it, as in the method of reflexivity. It is reflexivity then that informs my positioning of my self in this study and the dissertation.

The stories of my mother and our relationship and her own mother-daughter story are told in the form of a letter. In this story the voices of my mother and her mother, and also of her mother, speak clearly and openly. I use letter writing to compose this research text in order to honour the perspective of 'multiple aesthetic perspectives' in art-based narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2007). De Mello (1999) suggests that using tools such as letter writing may promote a place for the construction of knowledge and also may expand the boundaries of debate, which, in turn, may open doors to look at the world differently (Clandinin, 2007).

I have now come to the lilies in the field, those beautiful arums gracing us with their simple beauty.

Dear Mamma,

The moon is almost full. Soon she will complete her cycle in full luminous regalia. Your birthday is on Christmas day; today it is almost four months before you will be eighty years old. A few weeks ago I turned fifty-two. This is such an important time in our lives; for both of us it is a rite of passage. We are both living in the realm of Hecate, the crone. We are both custodians of the wisdom of our blood mysteries. I sense that we have come to the crossing point in our lives. I want to tell your story now, and I want to tell you my story. For me, telling our stories is a rite of passage in itself. When I read the letter you had written to me as part of our research and field work, you said that it was a difficult task. I can understand that now, as I am pushing through the resistance. I want to birth my story. I need to experience the lightness of Being that comes with finding meaning and significance in aspects of ourselves and in our lives.

In order to tell my story, I first have to tell your story. Thank you for making this possible. Thank you for allowing me to look into your life through the transpersonal lens of exploration and for showing your life in a storied way. I am grateful for the opportunity to include you in this process, for you to be a part of this study. I know that it means a lot to you. In your family the story goes that you have always wanted to be a scholar. You have

always wanted to leave your mark, because you are very intelligent and very ambitious, and because you have such an authentic desire to be of *seva*. Seva means service; I learned the word from my friend Pritam, the lady with the turban who teaches yoga. It actually means selfless service, but wait, I am getting distracted. You wanted to study to become a social worker, but *Oupa* would not let you; you had to go to a secretarial college. Your brother loves telling us stories of how serious you were about your schoolwork when you were a child.

He always tells the story of the time when you were preparing for your final examinations; in those days you were 'writing matric'. How we laugh every time he tells us about that time when you got up very early in the morning to study, by candle light. He says that you studied so hard that you fell off your chair! I think you may have fallen off your chair because of stress, low blood pressure or low blood sugar. I think you were hungry, actually. You were very poor, like most families living on farms shortly after 'the war'.

I feel sad when I sometimes recall your story of abandonment. When you were six years old, your own mother went to Cape Town with *Oupa* one day. You and your siblings were taken to the neighbours to stay with them for a few days. You thought that your parents had gone to Cape Town to do shopping or to visit relatives. In those days parents did not really discuss things with their children. You were so excited when the *tannie* later told you that your father would be coming to fetch you and your siblings to take you to Cape Town with him. You thought that you were going to visit your mom, or do something wonderful.

When you arrived in Monte Vista at the house where your father had dropped you off, you could not understand why you had to try on this strange little white dress. It was very demure; you told me how the stiff little black collar was scratching your neck. You did not like this dress, even though it had little black buttons all the way down the front. Your sister had a dress exactly like yours. Where was your mother?

Your trip to Cape Town was a journey into the pain that you have carried in your body for a long, long time. That day you buried your mother, at the Wolraad Woltemade cemetery. I read the letter that my *ouma* had written to her sister the night before she died, lamenting about her cervical cancer and how she was devastated about losing the little baby that had been growing inside her for four months. Your mother cried in her letter; she was so worried

about you. After the funeral your father took you back to the farm and had no idea what to do next.

The period that followed was bleak and hollow. There were many questions; no one whom you could ask, and no answers. You were left with the neighbours on their farm again for long periods while *Oupa* was working as a contractor, building roads. You missed the farm where you had been growing up; you missed your father, but you missed your mother in a way that you could not express. It stayed inside your heart like a cold, black pebble. Then came the day, six months later, when your daddy came home with this strange woman, saying that this was your new mother and that you had to listen to her and be a good daughter to her. Mamma, I know that broke your heart into all the pieces of the puzzle that you would be struggling with for so long.

You told me how difficult it was for you to see your new mother wearing your mom's hairclips and silky women's things, and I can understand that. Your life was never easy then, and you worked very hard. You laboured in the house and on the farm, you and your siblings walked the seven miles to school in the cold, and you studied very hard because you wanted a different life for yourself. You hated your birthdays, because nobody ever remembered them, and as it fell on Christmas day, you never received any presents. Sometimes you would have a fried egg. That was a real treat. But not enough. Never enough.

The transition from a little girl into a young woman was very traumatic for you. Nobody had told you about menstruation. There was no one to help you ease the pain in your tummy or to hear about your fear of what all this blood might mean. Can you remember how we cried the day you told me these stories? We were sitting at the round dining room table, having tea from the special pink and gold cups. There was a vase filled with beautiful white orchids bearing witness to our process of reconciliation and our reaching out to each other. I switched off the recorder when you told me certain things that were almost impossible for you to bear. And then we laughed as you were telling me about the sanitary products that were available when you were growing up. We also spoke about my menarche that day. I can remember that so clearly. I had just turned eleven. It was icy cold and we were on our homeward journey after holidaying in the Free State. When we arrived in Johannesburg, I was having such painful cramps. You had prepared me well; there was no fear, and I was feeling like a princess, and very special too. You even allowed me to lock the bathroom door from then on.

That felt like a rite of passage. You had told my father about this and he was very proud. Thank you Mamma, for that acknowledgement.

The story of your love and life with my father is beautiful and clear. You found a place of meaning. You felt validated. You started to work and you created a beautiful home for your family. Your life was good. You had three children, my brothers and I. When I was born your doctor, old doctor Cohen, put me in your arms and said "Now you have your pigeon pair!" You told me that the pregnancy was very challenging and that it occurred very soon after you had given birth to my brother, for whom you had waited seven years. My brother was only eighteen months old when I was born. You know, for a very long time I carried that story inside me, like a stone. Until the day when you told me the story of my brother running across the road …

I am so grateful that we shared this work in the research journey, it gives me so much clarity. It allows me to receive the gifts of forgiveness and releasing guilt. It also helps me to see you in another way. The gift of this study and the work with you is that it allows me to see you as a woman. It allows me to see the woman who was deprived of a personal mother and who invested in the projection of the negative mother archetype, as Jung had described it. I wrote about it in Chapter 3, should you be interested to read more.

I enjoyed having those discussions with you when we talked about transpersonal research, the narrative way of inquiry, the feminine principle and how all of these would merge in this research collage. You did a sterling job as you poured yourself into providing me with information to work with, thank you.

I was asking you about symbols and so forth when you told me about the arum lily. On Friday I bought a beautiful bunch of arums, because I knew that I was going to write our story today. The lilies have become a custodian of peace for us, for me. Your blood mysteries are also rather complicated. I think you have been part of that patriarchal consciousness where symptoms of the body and mind are separated, and where symptoms are merely taken care of by way of severance or anaesthesia. You had a full hysterectomy long before you turned forty, Mamma. That must have been so severe. It put you into an instant menopause. I think that I unconsciously reacted to that in my adolescence, rebelling against the loss of softness that I held in my experience of you. I did not know and neither did I understand what was going on during those years. All I know is that I could not find my Mother and that I

wanted her back. My own negative projection of the mother archetype started taking place, and in my feverish pubescent mind you became a stepmother, just like *ouma* A. Do you realise that you always tried to correct everything I said and did, and that I was terrified of being the wrong daughter with the wrong mother?

It was very difficult to be an adolescent at that time. I was so very insecure and you were so very strict. I was so soft and you were so hard. I was so vested in my own rebellion to subdue the painful fear of not being good enough. My only experience was of you being the tyrant. I had no way of understanding that you were haunted by the same demons. I did not know that your *daimons* were in Wolraad Woltemade. That is why I am so grateful now, for this transformation. I appreciate the process of this transpersonal research and the way we tell our stories, reliving our stories in a very different and humble way.

There was the day during an interview session when you asked me whether we were going to work with my own adolescence. I now understand how important it was for you to gain entry into my life, my thoughts. I know now that you wanted to have me back. Just like I have always wanted my Mother back. I had to tell you about the cigarettes and smoking from the age of thirteen, about drinking alcohol from the age of sixteen. You were horrified and I understand that. I was terrified for such a long time. I only started surfacing from the underground cave of self-despair and self-loathing, and the fear of nothingness, when my own menopause started. I was forty when my perimenopausal symptoms turned on the heat in the form of a hot flush that took my breath away. I have told you about that time.

On our next meeting, while my field work was in progress, you brought me some letters, special cards and notes that I had written and given to you over the years. This was very helpful for the 'ordering' process, materially speaking. It also helped me to recall experiences, feelings, thoughts. Here is part of a letter that I had sent to you during that dark time of despair when I believed you did not love me, which made me so angry and so sad:

> MacArthur park is melting in the dark
>
> All the sweet green icing flowing down
>
> Someone let the cake out in the rain
>
> And I don't think that I can take it
>
> Because it took so long to make it
>
> And I will never have the recipe again

Oh no

Oh no …

(Jimmy Webb)

Mamma, do you remember that time when I was living in Johannesburg after *Pappa* had passed away and I asked if you would be willing to take part in the ritual at my brother's house in Noordhoek? That ritual is called a *padla*, which is a deeply revered ceremony in the African medicinal tradition to appease our ancestors. My intention with having this ceremony was to ask for forgiveness from our maternal lineage, for my own destruction and for my alienation from you. This was very important, because I wanted to start practising as an educational psychologist again, taking up the responsibility of my calling and making peace with my Self, and with you. And you were there. You were wearing your purple blouse and skirt; you still brought a tiny little ceramic vase from your own mother's home, a beautiful antique plate and some photographs. You took part in the ceremony, completely committed. I honour you for that, and I am grateful.

That day when we held the *padla* for our maternal lineage of seven generations back, was the day of my climacteric, my last menses. I went back to Johannesburg with a firm resolve to return to Cape Town at the end of that year, for my soul was running dry. I went back, gave up smoking, went on a trip to India and then returned home, to Cape Town.

So much has happened since that ceremony, Mamma. I am no longer able to hold onto my fears. I can no longer abuse myself, my body, or my mind. I no longer need toxic relationships or experiences. I am grateful for all my experiences, as they are my teachers; they all helped me to grow. I still have a lot of growing to do, but here I am now, in this moment of peace and grace. On my desk is a photograph of your mother and the skull of a *Steenbokkie* resting on those crocheted cloths she made; you know, those round ones with the shells. Next to the skull is a tiny little vase with snowdrops and sweet ballerina flowers from your garden. These objects create a ritual, which in turn anchors the transpersonal experience of our relationship for me.

I am very touched by your life and I am touched by a message that you slipped into the envelope with all the research material. You write that you had not planned my joining the family at the time when you became pregnant with me. In this inscription from your personal journal you write how you knew that you had been given a girl child. You say that while you

were expecting me, you have been told that I would be different and stubborn and follow my own way. You say you were also told that I would do work with meaning and purpose. Mamma, I accept this as a blessing.

I found another meaningful card that I had sent to you when I was a first-year psychology student at Stellenbosch University, in 1979! I would like to describe this card. The background is lavender blue; we both love this colour. In the centre is a wreath of golden leaves forming a mandala. In the magenta centre of the mandala is a bird in flight, possibly an eagle or a falcon, looking down onto the road below. Inside the card I had written:

> May the road rise to
> greet you and may the
> sun be always at your
> back … and may peace
> be with you.

> And this is where we are now, my Mamma.

> Thank you.

> With love,

> I am Marleen,
> Daughter of Christina Johanna,
> Daughter of Johanna Magdalena,
> Daughter of Christina Johanna.

For a very long time I lived in the cold, feeling like an orphan, not feeling loved by my mother. It was only when I realised, as in the words of Nancy Friday (1977) that "[t]he work to be done is inside each of us", that my reality started to change (p. 17). During the year of doing my internship as an educational psychologist, all the interns were required to undergo a series of therapy sessions. I chose to start therapy with a psychologist who was also a lecturer at the university. I stayed in therapy with her for a long time, until she left South Africa to live in another country. Through her I learned about the feminine mystery between two women, that safe space which I did not experience with my personal mother. Virginia Rutter addressed this issue of female therapists working with female patients in her book *Women*

Changing Women (1993). It was in the heart of this therapeutic space that I started to understand that I was creating a reality that was not conducive to the way that I really wanted to live, that it was absolutely non-authentic. This needed to change.

This poem of transformation: "The Journey" by Mary Oliver (Housden, 2003, p. 9) has become a source of inspiration:

> One day you finally knew
>
> what you had to do, and began,
>
> though the voices around you
>
> kept shouting
>
> their bad advice –
>
> though the whole house
>
> began to tremble
>
> and you felt the old tug
>
> at your ankles.
>
> "Mend my life!"
>
> each voice cried.
>
> But you didn't stop.
>
> You knew what you had to do,
>
> though the wind pried
>
> with its stiff fingers
>
> at the very foundations,
>
> though their melancholy
>
> was terrible.
>
> It was already late
>
> enough, and a wild night,
>
> and the road full of fallen
>
> branches and stones.
>
> But little by little,
>
> as you left their voices behind,
>
> the stars began to burn
>
> through the sheets of clouds,
>
> and there was a new voice

which you slowly

recognized as your own,

that kept you company

as you strode deeper and deeper

into the world,

determined to do

the only thing you could do –

determined to save

the only life that you could save.

Working with the wisdom of the myth of Inanna helps me, as researcher, to understand that, from the point of transpersonal and narrative methodoloy, it is essential to have a strong sense of who I am, or who I might be, and to enter the underworld for the purpose of transformation and to be able to return to the world of growing knowledge, hoping, striving to make a contribution to the growth and transformation of research methods and skills. Allegra Taylor (1992) did an expansive study about the archetypal crone, and travelled to far-flung corners of the earth to find the stories of women in cultures where old age is revered. She travelled from America and India to Polynesia, Australia and Columbia to gather stories. In her book, *Older Than Time,* she gives a heartfelt account of these stories about being a crone. This is what she writes:

> In my quest for wise old role models I want to keep in touch with the beautiful qualities that are essentially female – empathy, sensitivity, surrender, willingness to admit vulnerability – while at the same time discovering new strength, confidence and power. I want to hold hands with the child that I was and the old woman that I will become (Taylor, 1992, p. 168).

I resonate with her desire. I also want to continue finding stories in the lilies of the field and in the heat of the fire. I want to hear the stories of more girls and women, more mothers and daughters, assisting in a process of a changing world where women are empowered and liberated to pursue their purpose.

In the chapter that follows, I walk further along the winding path of the labyrinth of this research journey, reflecting on the study.

CHAPTER 6

OUROBOROS
– THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SELF

When a woman accomplishes her initiation, becomes herself, she emerges, a woman who walks in beauty, carrying a torch, radiating light … whatever the timing or the place, then and there she is able to drift into her own being, listen and hear her own voice (Rutter, 1993, p. 227).

Today the moon is full. The full moon is a symbol of arrival and departure, the crossing point of life and death. I titled this chapter "Ouroboros – The manifestation of the Self", to serve as a symbol for the process of the research journey having come full circle. Early this morning when I sat down in my study to start writing this chapter of the dissertation, I reflected on the research journey. I discovered these words to which I relate: "I found my dissertation process was a wonderfully creative and transformative experience" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 198). My quest was to find meaning and significance in the research journey. It was important to me to conduct research that touched the lives of the co-researchers, while being touched by their stories myself. My intention was to do meaningful and useful work. Sitting in the lap of the moon today, I am aware of how much I have learned and how deeply I have been transformed by this journey.

Casey (1995) writes about the importance of conducting research within a framework of methodology which allows the researcher to be authentic. For me, this was a very important factor in the research journey. The conflation of a transpersonal exploration and a narrative inquiry allowed me to conduct research and present this dissertation in a way which reflects a 'way of living'. I refer to my professional life as a researcher, as an educational psychologist, as well as to my personal life as a scholar and pilgrim; a woman on her way, growing, learning and exploring Self and life and the human condition in the womb of stories and experiences. I agree with Richardson (2001) who said that the bifurcation between what is objective and subjective in the production of knowledge does not give cognisance to the actual practices of how knowledge is produced. Conducting and presenting this study allowed

for a lived experience. Howell (1987) says: "It is feminine to tell stories or to clothe the facts within a uterus of lived experience" (p. 108).

Throughout this dissertation, I use metaphor, symbolism and mythology to create depth and enhance the consciousness of the study. Marion Woodman (1993) says that using metaphor in this fashion has a transformative value. In this study, it has psychological importance as it becomes a healing agent: "… And there is the healing process – you go from one sense of wholeness to another through the metaphors" (p.54). The symbolism of the process of alchemy and the myth of *Ouroboros* become a metaphor for the story of change and transformation. It is important to focus the attention on the fact that the stages of alchemy are also reflected in the stages of this research journey. The chapters in this dissertation reflect the process or aspects of the process of alchemy. Using alchemical symbolism in this regard serves as a way to create order and to give structure in the dissertation.

In the chapter *'Prima Materia'*, I described the background to this journey and how it all started. I stated that the aim of the study was to look into the meaning of the experience of being a woman, as well as to explore meaning in the experience of becoming a woman. The focus of the study is the relationship between mother and daughter, both being in transitional life-cycles, that of adolescence and menopause. Against this background I wanted to explore the feminine principle in women and the individuation process. My core argument throughout the study was that the mother-daughter relationship forms a constellation which may facilitate transformation, growth and individuation during these cycles of transition. I asked research questions based on this argument: "What can we learn about the cycles of transition (adolescence and menopause) within the context of the mother-daughter relationship?" and "What can be found in an exploration of this relationship-constellation and the cycles of transition reflected in the feminine principle?"

I explored the transitional cycles of adolescence and menopause in order to see whether there may be some similarity between these phases, both symbolising perhaps a point of entering a new life experience by exiting what came before that. I also wondered if the cycle of adolescence casts upon the waters a reverberation of unresolved psychological content, to emerge again in menopause. In the voice of Northrup (2001) I found support. She writes about the turmoil experienced when women first enter perimenopause, the harbinger of the full menopausal force. She states it clearly, as I have indicated before:

Externally and internally, this period is a mirror image of adolescence, a time where our bodies and brains are also going through major hormonal shifts that gave us the energy to attempt to individuate … and become the person we are meant to be. At menopause we pick up where we left off in adolescence (Northrup, 2001, p. 41).

In the chapter '*Lapis Philosophorum:* The Philosopher's Stone', I introduced the study with its transpersonal research lens and included stories of narrative inquiry. I added nuances and voices of poststructuralist perspectives and I included the voice of feminist research and theory. This study would not be authentic without an exploration of the feminist voice, as it encouraged me to look at aspects of the feminine, mothers, daughters, bodies, sex, communication and relating from a point of empowerment and liberation. It added to my understanding of the need for women to reconnect with and become identified with the feminine heritage, being grounded in our feminine identity and unlocking our transformative potential to 'hold up half the sky'.

This review followed a winding course, like a river, looking at a landscape of deconstruction and the nexus of power and knowledge. I also attempted to deconstruct the face of modernist Jungian psychology and theory as applying to this study and I lingered in the wondrous world of narrative inquiry and story. Narrative inquiry and the narrative trajectory presented me with many surprises. I was unprepared for the seamless fit between transpersonal research and narrative inquiry. (I titled Chapter four "*Coniunctio"* for this very reason). I wrote about transpersonal psychology and transpersonal research as the lens of the worldview through which I looked at the study, and also as a research paradigm forming part of a shifting, changing landscape in human science, towards which I am transparently biased. An essential aspect of the literature review highlighted the search for ways of creating knowledge that simultaneously lean into transformation of the research, the researcher and the co-researcher; a collaboration towards growth and change.

In the chapter 'Red Sulphur: The Wingless Bird: Preparing for the Journey', I created a *mandorla* in which I placed discussions and various views about the concept of the Self. I also walked into the sacred site of Eleusis in honour of the myth of Demeter, Kore/Persephone and Hecate, in order to cast a wide lens, capturing the reflection of the themes of separation, descent/transformation and reunion/rebirth with which I explore the

mother-daughter relationship. This background casts a relief against the background of the transitional cycles of adolescence and menopause as an important aspect of the study. The significance of this understanding of the myth in its relation to my study is the notion of the unification of the Feminine, and the beginning of a profound change in a woman's life. I also refocus the lens and look into various aspects of the feminine principle. Working with the theory and the literature formed a major component of conducting this research. For many months I have reflected on how to bring these stories into focus, how to widen the lens of exploration by giving due consideration to the feminine principle in order to gain more clarity, understanding and insight. I could not have known, from the field work alone, what a crucial role the feminine principle played in the process of individuation.

The chapter '*Coniunctio'* tells the story of the research journey, how I travelled the winding course of the labyrinth which took me into the very depths of the study. The experience of the task of gathering, processing and writing the stories became a transpersonal act of creativity. The ethical implications of the entire process constantly deepened my reflections, and also my self-reflections. I observed my relationship with the co-researchers. Often I found myself writing 'my co-researchers', only to replace it with 'the co-researchers'. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) write about this and say that "[b]eing in the field allows intimacy" (p. 82). Writing their stories became a means of honouring these girls and women. It was very important to continuously reflect on how I portray their stories. Do I convey the stories as they experienced them? Am I able to do justice to their stories? Am I able to do justice to their experiences and the meaning thereof? O'Dea (1994) states that narrative researchers are able to speak the truth(s) about the lives of the story-tellers when they themselves are willing to be authentic. She points out that "[s]ituated thus, in the context of authenticity, they achieve epistemic relevance and so respectability" (p. 164).

By taking responsibility, also on an ethical level, for an authentic representation of their stories, I allowed myself to be touched and changed by their stories. In addition to this, while reflecting in my journal, I realised how much I had become involved with this research journey. This close involvement urged me to investigate the nexus of researcher-therapist, considering the ensuing ethics, as well as going beyond 'do no harm'. It allowed me to probe into the safe space I attempted to create for the co-researchers, without opening a space of therapeutic intervention, despite the potentially therapeutic value of being heard and one's story being revered. The tension between these two aspects of my professional self also

involved how I cared for the co-researchers, for myself and also for our relationship (Warne & MacAndrew, 2010). I was mostly challenged in this regard in working with Elizabeth, because her experience of a "dissociative state" became a story in itself, a story I could see clearly and which touched me deeply. In order to keep a safe space for the research process, I did recommend that she continues with her therapeutic process, outside of the research process.

Richardson (2001) says that, in the Social Sciences, people who write inevitable write about their own lives. Initially I was rather daunted by the prospect of writing my own story for a number of reasons – self-disclosure and exposure being main concerns. However, the mere fact that I was presenting this study with the process of individuation as a reflexive theme anchored me to a place of transformation. In writing the stories of the co-researchers, and of my mother and myself, I experienced, on an intrapersonal, transpersonal, intellectual and professional level, that this research journey was bringing me closer to the experience of what the feminine principle might be.

In '*Coniunctio*' I presented my research argument as a triangulating fractal. I wanted to see whether a window of possibility, in the context of the mother-daughter relationship was opening for the experience of transformation and growth. As I am preparing to leave this research journey, I am gaining a certain clarity about the matter. As this research is wrapped in the cloth of transformation, my research argument has become a fractal of threefold transformation possibilities:

- I wondered what we can learn about these cycles of transition, and if the transitional nature of cycles would facilitate change, perhaps in the mothers or their daughters, or in both mother and daughter. Would it impact on their relationship? Is there room for transformation and growth within the turbulence and chaos of being adolescent girls and menopausal women? Is transition in itself an agent of transformation?

- This brings me to the second fractal in this quest: the crossing point. The exploration of the feminine principle in the literature, as seen in the chapter 'Red Sulphur: The Wingless Bird: Preparing for the Journey', brought me to a deeper understanding of how the dark side of the Moon hosts the light. I am deeply indebted to the work of M.C. Richards (1989; 1973) who illuminated my Aha! moments in this journey. The myth of Inanna also

served me with the gift of understanding the transformational potential in the descent into the 'underground'.

- The mother-daughter relationship contained a seed for the exploration of the feminine principle. I now understand that I was exploring the possibility of transformation and individuation. What I also understand now, is the powerful transformational potential in the reflection of the unconscious content of the mother archetype, as projected between daughters and mothers. This projection hinders growth, as we have established from the work of James Hollis (1993, 1998). Again I am grateful for the dawning of the light in working with the Demeter-Persephone-Hecate myth.

I want to take you once more, and very briefly, to the storied lives of the girls and women encountered in this research journey. These stories have led me to the place where I reached an understanding of the storytellers' experiences, which, in turn, led me to the findings as presented in '*Coniunctio'*.

Phoebe and Viola shared with me the tale of transformation that can come about when a balance is found in the crossing point of the light and the dark aspects of the feminine principle. They brought me to the threefold manifestation of the Kore-Demeter-Hecate archetypal experiences of the Feminine; the daughter-mother-crone aspects of ourselves.

The story of Phoebe and Viola enabled me to see that they mirror to each other their own experiences of abandonment and issues of dependency. For them the resolution was found in accepting their abilities to take responsibility for themselves and to practise unconditional acceptance of the other. Their relationship has become a healthy container for the crossing point: they were able to grow and to transform their fears into new patterns of wisdom and wellbeing. They now strive towards having a liberating and authentic relationship.

The stories of Ciska and Simone graced us with the immense vulnerability of lives in transition. I am grateful for their contribution in this regard; my understanding is that transition creates space and psychic energy for the process and manifestation of transformation. The findings based on their stories take me towards an understanding that this mother and daughter relate to each other against the background of the pressure of transition and confusion – from a fear-based experience of themselves by which they were harbouring the fear of not being good enough. This hampered their ability to relate to themselves, to each other, and to other significant people in their lives from a central point of authenticity. Their

firm resolution to embrace self-acceptance is their strategy to achieve transformation and gain more clarity about the directions of their lives.

In the stories of Elizabeth and Summer I found a powerful embodiment of the feminine principle in their experiences of themselves and of each other, and especially in their relationship as mother and daughter. Their relationship contains the potential for individuation through the process of healing and transformation.

Recognising this aspect of my findings in the stories of Elizabeth and Summer, I was able to see that their mother-daughter relationship indicates a paradoxical emotional need within each of them, which seemed to be manifesting in similar symptoms in their bodies. Their stories told me of the pain of dissociation and the fear of separation, resulting in a co-dependent relationship structure. Their relationship is, however, based on deep love and respect for each other. I sense that their healing process, growth and transformation may come from an individual place within themselves, and, as such, enable them to transform their relationship into a growing consciousness of liberation.

In the chapter '*Augmentum Plumbi'* I tell the story of my relationship with my mother and I also tell her story. I employed the autobiographical aspects of narrative inquiry and heuristic inquiry in transpersonal research practice in order to bring these stories forward. As I have written throughout this dissertation, I draw from the reflexive skills characteristic of narrative inquiry in order to deconstruct a position of perceived power in the relationship with the co-researchers and the research topic. I can make no claims to a perfect, all-together-healed relationship with my mother, and as such I have much to learn and much to experience in the cave of Inanna. Through the story of my mother and her experience of mothering, I have reached a better understanding of her personally, and of my own experiences in terms of how I had been mothered. Against the background of being transformed by the research process, I sense that this journey has been fundamental in bringing about transformation and healing for my mother and for myself. Through the experience of including our relationship in the research process, and in presenting the story of my mother and myself, I have come to understand our story from a different perspective. I now understand that during the transitional phase of my adolescence and her menopause, we reached a major point of crisis in our relationship. This is similar to what I sometimes witness in the therapeutic process when my clients find themselves in a healing crisis: there is no other way through the process, but to go into the darkness in order to grow into the light.

The limitations of this study deserve illumination:

I am aware of the limitations of my study. It occurred to me that the three mother-daughter relationships that came under discussion were all positive and 'good' relationships. I also sense that the inclusion of a mother-and-daughter story based on a difficult and challenging relationship experience could be very informative, apart from creating a more balanced account of mother-daughter relationships. It is important to add, however, that I had no way of knowing or predicting what the nature of the mother-daughter relationships was when these girls and women walked into the halls of these research chambers; neither did I know what I would find. If I had opened the research teams to greater numbers, I may have received many more stories, but I may have lost much richness and depth and I would not have been able to wrestle with the 'issue of sampling', a process which allowed me to travel deeply into the history of the changes in qualitative research.

Retrospectively, I also understand that I could use the myth of Demeter, Kore and Hecate in greater depth had I elaborated more on the Triple-Goddess energy in all of us (Senensky, 2003). More could also have been done to depict the relational aspect of the mythological story. Here my focus was more pertinently on the transitional (and transformational) aspect of a woman's life. I am also beginning to see the scope of working with the wisdom of the Demeter, Kore and Hecate myth by dealing in greater depth with an exploration of each cycle in connection with the feminine principle operating during that cycle. This could also be taken into other cycles in order to allow for more fullness in the experience of being a woman. An entire study could be devoted to the many-layered potential of psychological exploration in the myth of Inanna, in this study I focussed on the 'going in and returning' aspect of being at the crossroad.

Another limitation in this study can be identified in the absence of the exploration of power in the mother-daughter relationship. Had I explored the power aspect of this constellation, I would have been able to link that with poststructuralist perspectives and feminist theory about mothers and daughters. I could also have burrowed deeper into communication styles between mothers and daughters with power/authority issues being very relevant in the emergence of feminine consciousness.

Another limitation in this study is that the mother-daughter relationship may not have elaborated in sufficient depth about the Mother *per se*. Adrienne Rich's (1950-1974)

statement that "the woman I need to call my mother" (Perera, 1981, p. 7) may allude to the expansiveness of this aspect of the Feminine, this relationship, this complex, this longing, and so forth. I would therefore like to point towards further areas that could be explored by researchers, such as the relationship between the mother archetype and the experience of mothering, that is, being a mother and styles of mothering. Another possibility would be to explore whether the essence of the feminine principle is to be found in the mother archetype. The essence of the feminine principle in itself is a subject to be explored more. I would also be interested in conducting research about the transformative aspect of the mother archetype and the feminine principle. There is so much that still lies hidden in the germinating seed.

Am I making a contribution to the production of new knowledge with this study?

I want to draw attention to an important feature of the study: my attempt to make a contribution to a transformative vision of research. Anderson and Braud (2011) say that, "[t]o enact a transformative vision of research, the scholarly community needs to make several changes about how we think about our academic pursuits – and in particular, academic psychology" (p. 304). In the presentation of my study, I took a deep breath and plunged into a reservoir of courage I would now like to add to my bag of research tools. I courageously hope to make a contribution to an innovative way of creating knowledge of the mother-daughter relationship, the feminine principle and all that allows for the process of individuation to unfold.

I have presented the findings which were derived from this study in the chapter *Coniuntio*. These findings could be explored by psychotherapists and psychologists who do therapy with girls, women and mother-daughter constellations. More research could also be done around these findings. This study and the findings which I have presented may be specifically relevant to the therapeutic and health-related fields. Educational psychologists, as well as family and other therapists, may benefit from having insight into the mother-daughter relationship. Relevant treatment and therapeutic programmes aimed at facilitating healthy intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal development in adolescent girls and menopausal women can be developed and applied, should this study provide them with deeper understanding. Teachers and educationalists working with adolescent girls may enhance their understanding and improve and expand their knowledge of these highly significant developmental phases; even more so if these teachers and therapists are in the transitional cycle of menopause themselves, or are the mothers of adolescent girls.

In exploring the cycles of adolescence and menopause within the context of the mother and daughter relationship, I hope to succeed in addressing a knowledge gap. My study highlights the effect of 'mirroring' between adolescence and menopause, showing a similarity in experiences of changes and challenges on physical, emotional, psychological and transpersonal levels. In the context of family therapy, parental guidance, sexual education, intrapersonal and interpersonal self-mastery and so on, much can be gained from these findings. In the current context of the emerging of feminine voice, an understanding of these cycles and this relationship-dyad can serve many women who struggle to release the grip of being silenced, not being revered, being sexually exploited, economically disempowered, educationally held back and diminished in other ways.

I concur with the scholars and researchers who paved the way by showing that the process of individuation is a life-long journey, and that the feminine principle in this process refers to "articulating one's soul" (Woodman, 1993, p. 105). *Four Quartets,* the poem by T.S. Eliot (Reynolds, 1989, p. 85), describes this well:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

The magnetism of the full moon gives me the courage to leap into the arms of a statement made by Nicolas Berdiaeff in 1927: "The Eternal Feminine draws us to the heights. Women will have a major part to play in the future period, not women adopting male characteristics, but the Eternal Feminine" (as cited in Chevalier & Gheerbrandt, 1996, p. 163). With this study I hope to contribute to assisting women in achieving this. My understanding is that the Feminine (principle) which has been repressed, based on a fear of the feminine (Neumann, 1994) and mostly in patriarchal societies, is anointed by the emerging of a conscious femininity. Woodman (1993) describes the principle in her work *The Pregnant Virgin* (1985), saying that the individuation process in women relates to the increasing urgency for women to find their own voices. Allow me to take you back to the words of M.C. Richards (1973) "And it was interesting to the psychologist Jung that the feminine aspect of the soul is least developed among us; part of our task today is to develop it consciously" (p. 56). This is the thread to weave with, possibly making new cloths or just adding texture and dimensions,

images and symbols to the cloths already woven. Woodman (1993) has certainly woven deeply into the emerging consciousness of the dark Madonna and the crone. She uses these aspects of women to demonstrate that there is no need to fear the feminine (which I sense is the total feminine at the crossing point, not the anima or anima women): "She brings people into that soul space where all outer conflicts dissolve and they can experience their own essence" (Woodman, 1993, p. 87).

Bolen (1984) has shown me that goddess archetypes, as defined and described by mythology and psychology, are present in all girls and women. Woodman (1993) suggests that it is the goddess energy that has been emerging to allow women to ascend from the chthonic dwelling place within themselves, releasing the impotence of voicelessness. She concurs with Bolen: "We are either going to make a leap in consciousness or we aren't going to be here" (Woodman, 1993, p. 97).

Bleakley (1984) states that the more difficult or concealed certain aspects of ourselves are, and the deeper they are repressed in the shadows, the more potential for growth they hold when brought into the light. I suspect that this may have been the musings of the alchemists of antiquity, knowing that lead, as a base material, is the resting place of luminous gold.

William Braud (1998) suggests that, in transpersonal research, researchers have the responsibility to take their findings directly to those who can most use them, which is why it is important that the transpersonal researcher publishes findings also in professional and public lectures, workshops and training situations. If my study and the stories of our journeys serve to inspire teachers, educators, researchers, psychologists, gynaecologists and other professionals working with women and women's issues to focus on the wholeness of women, honouring the connection between their bodies, minds and souls, I will be grateful. If my study allows for an expanded view of the feminine principle in order to liberate the feminine, to stop the fear of the feminine, to allow women to have more confidence in being authentic rather than trying to fit into a prescribed way of thinking about being feminine, again I will be grateful.

In the literature review and in the story of the research journey I described the tools that I used in the field work to gather the stories. Here I would like to add an expanded aspect to these tools, beyond the dimension of research methods. I hope to make a further contribution to the production of knowledge by virtue of offering tools for self-exploration, which in turn

may serve and expand transpersonal research. Woodman (1993) says that we can not see ourselves without the use of a mirror. It is possible to use these tools as a mirror to explore ourselves and our inner worlds in order to understand our external realities in a different way. By making use of reflection one can gain access to the world of self, which in turn can assist in the process of personal growth and transformation towards individuation. These reflective tools include journal writing, mandala drawing, meditation, dream work, collage making and other creative ways of allowing the images of self to emerge. Working with visual images is a powerful form of self-reflection. McNiff (1992) says that "[i]n practising self-inquiry through art, I realized that I was not revealing 'myself' as much as I was enacting dramas of my inner life with its varied characters" (p. 69). The essence is that self-exploration is an essential aspect of self-understanding and that the reflection of oneself as mirrored through these tools, may assist in the process of leading one to authenticity. Evans (2002) reflects on relevant and useful research and suggests that this, as such, may refer to elucidation, awareness raising, professional development and transformation. With this study I aspired to be able to do and present research which may meet these standards.

In reflecting on my work, on my possible contribution to the field of transpersonal psychology, educational psychology, women's studies, adolescent development studies and related fields, I am ready to position myself at the crossing point of my work. To me it was important to conduct the research and to present my readers with findings that could make a contribution to the fields in question. I wanted to touch the lives of the co-researchers, and also of my readers. It is my intention to use the understanding and insight which I gained from this study to continue my research into the relationship between mothers and their daughters, and the wisdom of the feminine principle in the individuation process. In my therapeutic work with clients I propose to teach young girls and their mothers (as well as fathers, sons and brothers) about a consciousness of authenticity in the process of becoming themselves, thereby educating and empowering them, if possible.

The major challenges along this research journey were mostly of a psycho-spiritual nature. In the many hours of being confined to my chair, reading, writing, contemplating and exploring, I learned to relinquish control. I learned to become still in the daunting experience of facing my own fears and limitations. I learned to create a container for scholarly discipline, rather than allowing myself to be overwhelmed by the prescribed ways. I learned to find solace in my own company. I learned to write my experiences of this journey into the story, I allowed

myself to be written. I am grateful for the expansive nature of transpersonal research and the exquisite freedom I found in narrative inquiry. I have learned to become grateful for stories. These words echo my experiences in this regard: "Because of the expansive nature of transpersonal perspectives and methods, I felt I was given latitude and permission to pursue novel approaches in research methods" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 199). In addition, I was constantly challenged by the ethical considerations of writing the stories of others, but I have elaborated on this in other parts of my dissertation. It is with gratitude and reverence that I offer you our stories.

Mary Caroline Richards (1973, p. 54) wrote a poem called *Rune 6*, which I place at the entrance of the labyrinth as I prepare to leave …

I wake after a long sleep
to catkins, snowdrops, daffodils.
The night within
turns to day, and yet
the lightness of its knowing
flows within the light.
On waking
I may no more separate my night from day
but feel them breathing
inward and outward.
On waking now
I may not leave the night behind
but see it grow in the ovary
as the snowdrop wilts –
night darkens the white petals,
swells in the seed.
In waking
I stand in the door.

GLOSSARY

Alchemy:	in psychology it refers to the process of psychological development.
Anima:	Jungian term referring to the feminine archetype in men and women
Animus:	archetypal male aspect, based on Jungian psychology
Augmentum Plumbi:	A stage in the alchemical process that indicates that a stage of conflict has been transcended. From there onwards, it is effortless; it grows by itself from here, like a child inside its mother. In the context of this dissertation I use the symbology to serve as container for the story of my mother and myself.
Becoming:	come into being, beginning to be
Cantadora:	custodian of stories, the keeper of stories
Coniunctio:	the sacred marriage, traditionally between the male and female elements. In the context of this study it serves as a reference to marrying the transpersonal and the narrative in the research journey.
Climacteric:	onset of menopause
Crop circles:	geometrical designs mysteriously appearing in crop fields such as those of wheat and barley
Curandera:	medicine woman
Daemon/daimon:	guardian spirit
Dreamcloth:	a cloth woven by a seamstress in order to bring dreams into manifestation.
Eros:	life force, essential life principle, essence of the creativity of life; a Jungian term
Fractal:	a curve or geometric figure which has the same characteristics of the whole that it reflects, or is a part of; also means self-similarity
Femme:	feminine
Hosanna:	an expression of joy
Individuation:	individuation refers to 'the unconscious coming to terms with

one's inner centre of Self'; it is a Jungian term

Mandala:	a Sanskrit word meaning circle
Menarche:	first menstrual bleeding
Menses:	menstruation
Metacognition:	the capacity to think about one's thoughts
Monad	single unit, one
Nigredo stage:	blackening stage in the alchemical process; darkening
Opus:	vessel, body of work
Ouroboros:	the circular snake biting its tail. Signifying the eternal round. In alchemy it stands for the undifferentiated material to be transformed through the alchemical process. In this study the ending is the beginning …
Persona:	Jungian term meaning 'mask'
Prima Materia:	an image of the disorganised beginnings of analytical work; a state of conscious confusion typical of the beginning of both the alchemical work and the process of individuation.
Projection:	a fundamental mechanism of the psyche; it means 'to throw before'
Red Sulphur:	the wingless bird: an underlying factor of the inner psychic life; the inner drive which serves as an impetus to fulfil the ambition to individuate. In the context of this study it serves as a symbol for working with the literature.
Raconteur:	storyteller
Sat nam:	greeting in Gurmuki (derivative of Sanskrit) meaning "I am truth, truth is my identity"
Self:	the origin and goal of ego-consciousness. This is a fundamental principle in Jungian psychology; the capitalised Self refers to the state of individuation and the experience of psychological wholeness.
Shadow:	Jungian archetype pertaining to repressed psychic matter in the Unconscious, a part of ourselves that is still in the dark
Shamanic:	an anthropological term referring to a range of beliefs and practices regarding communication with the spiritual world
Sojourn:	temporary stay

Songlines:	invisible pathways which connect people and their lives, telling of stories of their cultures, histories and the land
Synchronicity:	Jungian term for meaningful coincidence
Teleological:	by the purpose or design it serves, rather than a postulation
Temenos:	safe or sacred space, like a temple
The Philosopher's Stone:	Mostly seen as an elusive symbol of the so-called elixir of life, seen by some alchemists as the gold in the base metal.
Transference/ countertransference:	the feelings between client and therapist
Wash-whallas:	laundry vendors in India
Wholeness:	the emergent sense of psychic complexity and integrity that develops over the course of a complete lifetime
Yin and yang:	generally known as female and male energy flow, derived from the Chinese Tao

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TRANSCRIPTIONS OF INTERVIEWS, ROUGH FIELD NOTES AND JOURNAL INSCRIPTIONS

An example of some transcriptions of interviews with Elizabeth:

These are notes I made while I listened to the recordings of the interviews. I also made notes during the interviews and used those in creating field texts as well.

Elizabeth says that it's hard for her to remember … menstruating the first time … it was a non-event … she remembers Summer's menarche, it was an amazingly special time … they all went out for supper … (MdV asks about E's own menstruation history again) it was always a hassle for me, I did not like it, I had very heavy bleeding, sometimes for 5 days, I even fainted sometimes; it was my choice to have a hysterectomy at 45". She says it was the best thing she has ever done; it is a liberation, menstruation is "a curse".

"How I feel as a woman (about myself), a strong femininity, it is ingrained in me, who I am: like a goddess ... relationships with people, intimacy is very hard for me, sensuality is a very strong force for me", intimacy and self-disclosure is a BIG ISSUE."

"Mom was rather complicated, not very affectionate, she regrets not being very demonstrative, it worried her later". She says that it did not influence her negatively. She felt no sense of sisterhood with her two sisters, they did not know how to show affection, there was jealousy.

Elizabeth says that there is value in talking about her stories, it is a therapeutic experience …

"Taking the plunge (re loosing virginity) was not easy for me, I am not mainstream …" she says that her experience of her own sexual awakening as an adolescent girl was quite strong, that she was teased by her family for doing her face and nails, …" We discuss more about her sexual awakening, E continues to stress that intimacy, getting close to people is very difficult, we talk about fidelity and so on, she feels very sad during this interview about what she describes as "a sadness for myself, about being unable to relate ..." she describes her first sexual experience with her now-husband as a turning point for her but that it did not leave her feeling ecstatic, as she was too busy surviving on an emotional level. E then describes that she has a "terror" of something, but she does not know why, a therapist had once said she has a 'dissociated state' but she doesn't know why …

We continue to talk about her relationship with her mother, whom she says, "wanted a boy"…and then E says: "something about my very femininity she did not like, I was a self-assured, expressive little girl who would go up to people and talk to them, she once stopped me and said: "you are such a little tart" … I shut down then, it is so sad …

MdV: I had a deep transpersonal experience in that moment of hearing her mother's words: "E lost her Aphrodite" … the goddess of love and beauty …

An example of some transcriptions of interviews with Summer:

Summer tells me that she had a period after our first interview, despite having a "Maryna", she has not menstruated for six months. She has recently started a new love relationship, which makes her happy, etc.

Her transition from being a child into puberty went fast, very fast …: so much changes ..." it is very drastic, it is so fast … today I hate my boobs, they are very big, it is very uncomfortable … I don't like wearing a bra ... I am selfconscious about my body, how I look, I want to look better, food is NB, it is a shock not to be so thin anymore … I gain weight with the Maryna, my body is still changing, when I was 16 I was too much woman too soon".

We discuss her first menses, which she describes as being "a little late" (age 15) and not traumatic, and then she discusses "her boobs" again, indicating the significance of their size, and so on. she tells me that she went on to "the pill" because she experienced very painful menses for about two years, currently she experiences no pain.

Summer speaks about her mother with admiration and respect, and tells about her experience when her mother 'goes away' "I get sick, I have nausea, post-nasal drip" (she also had asthma attacks with her mother being away), we continue to discuss "Mother", I want to hear how she describes the mother, etc, she says that "a mother would do anything for her children" we also work with the visual images, discussing Madonna's picture, etc.

Later she says "I want to be just like my mom: fostering independence, encourage and allow, trusting, no need for rebellion and to disobey, given choices, I don't need to do drugs, I just know I don't like it, it is not right for me" … "teenage pregnancy scares me … I am not mature enough to have a baby … me and mom never really had that conversation, she didn't have to explain it to me, I just know …"

Notes taken from my research journal:

1 June: from field texts to research texts …

2 June: stories recorded, stories transcribed, stories received …

3 June: Breakthrough in discovery: every mother has a particular (wound) issue in her story; every daughter picks it up and lives it, somehow …

Elizabeth+ Summer: dissociation, intimacy, lost Aphrodite, Aphrodite (labyrinth experience) painful menstruation …

Ciska + Simone: wounds of loss, loosing identity in adolescence (letters)

Phoebe and Viola: taking responsibility, (see letter to mom), abandonment, juxtaposed, male/female.

Mom and me: aspirations of scholarship

So what is this all about? Write it into the story of each woman, m/d.

Nb: discuss with Rona re discovery, she suggests to "put under findings" …

ADDENDUM A[38]

1.   **Figure 1: Birth of Venus**

2.   **Visual images used by co-researchers**

3.   **Figure 2: Compendium**

4.   **Figure 3: Ouroboros mandala**

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[38] Please refer to DVD, Addendum B.

ADDENDUM B

LETTER OF APPROVAL AND ETHICAL CLEARANCE TO SERVE AS PERMISSION FOR THIS STUDY

UNIVERSITEIT·STELLENBOSCH·UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

15 January 2010

Tel.: 021 - 808-4622
Enquiries: Sidney Engelbrecht
Email: sidney@sun.ac.za

Reference No. 245/2009

Ms M de Villiers
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Stellenbosch
STELLENBOSCH
7602

Ms M de Villiers

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL CLEARANCE

With regards to your application, I would like to inform you that the project, *A transpersonal exploration of the feminine principle in the individuation process: Mother-Daughter relationship and transitional life-cycles*, has been approved on condition that:

1. The researcher/s remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal;
2. The researcher/s stay within the boundaries of applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines, and applicable standards of scientific rigor that are followed within this field of study and that
3. Any substantive changes to this research project should be brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee with a view to obtain ethical clearance for it.

We wish you success with your research activities.

Best regards

MRS. MALÉNE FOUCHÉ
Manager: Research Support

ADDENDUM C

CERTIFICATE: LANGUAGE CONSULTANT

HESTER HONEY

LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER

91 BRANDWACHT STREET, STELLENBOSCH 7600

TELEPHONE / FAX 021 886 4541

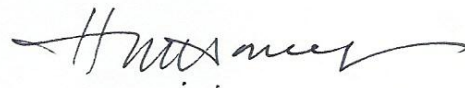E-mail: hestermh@netactive.co.za

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I, Hester Honey, hereby declare that I have personally read through the dissertation titled

A TRANSPERSONAL EXPLORATION OF THE FEMININE PRINCIPLE IN THE PROCESS OF INDIVIDUATION: MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS AND TRANSITIONAL LIFE CYCLES

by

Marleen De Villiers

and have made suggestions to be implemented by her.

H M Honey

(5/09/2012)

ADDENDUM A

1. Figure 1: Birth of Venus

2. Visual images used by co-researchers

3. Figure 2: Compendium

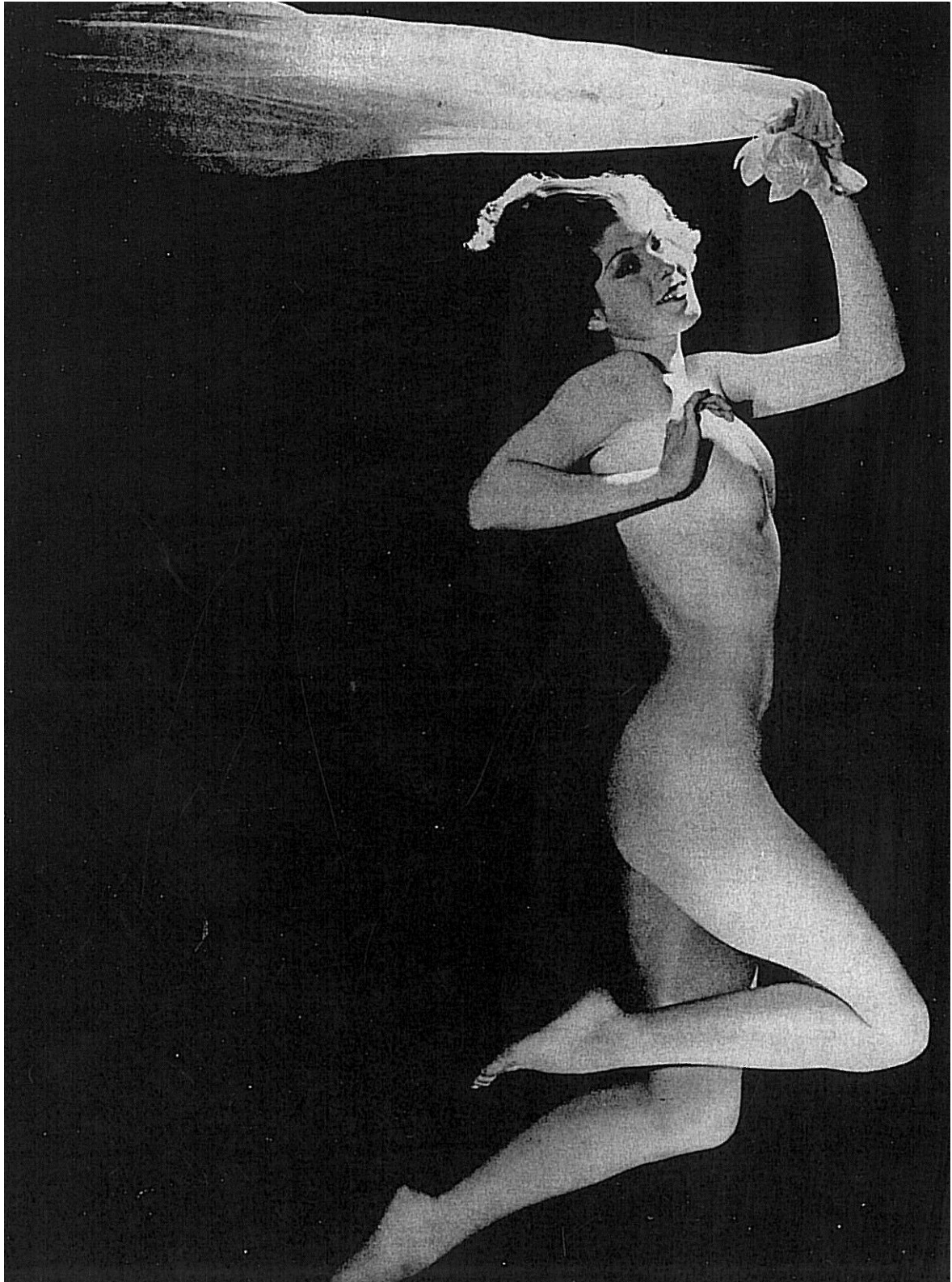## 4. Figure 3: Ouroboros mandala
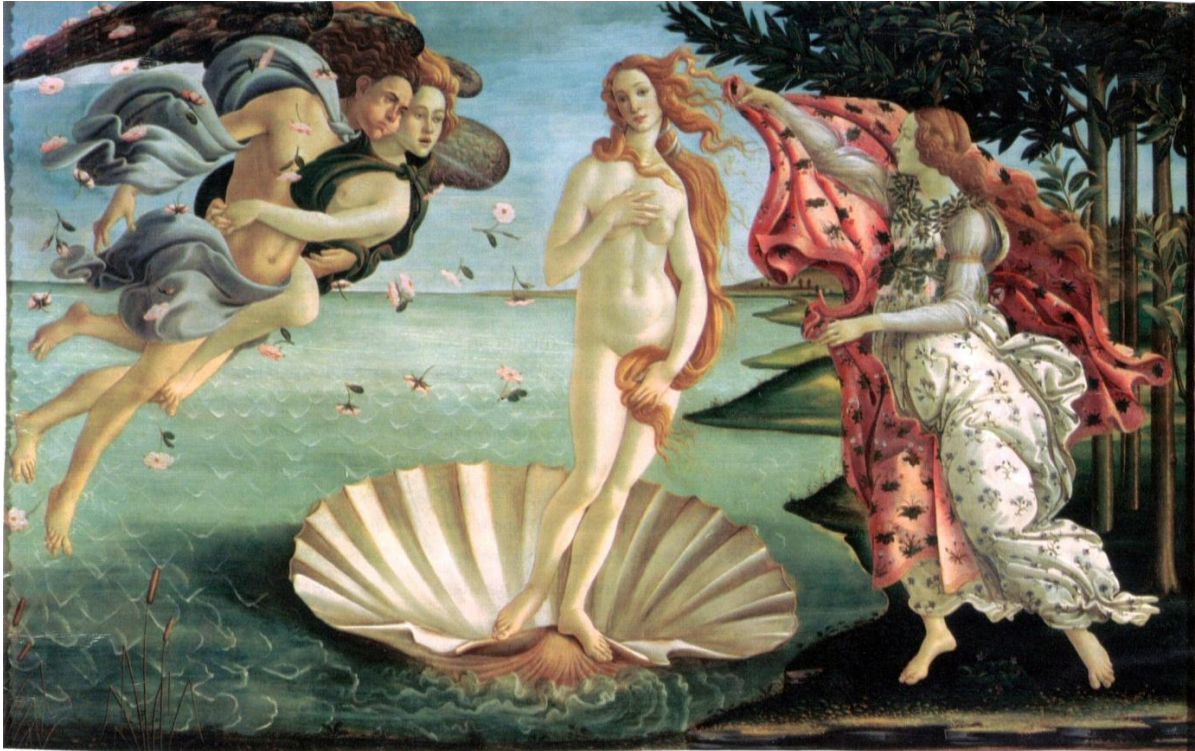
The Birth of Venus

This image is included to serve as the archetypal image of the feminine, as discussed throughout the dissertation.
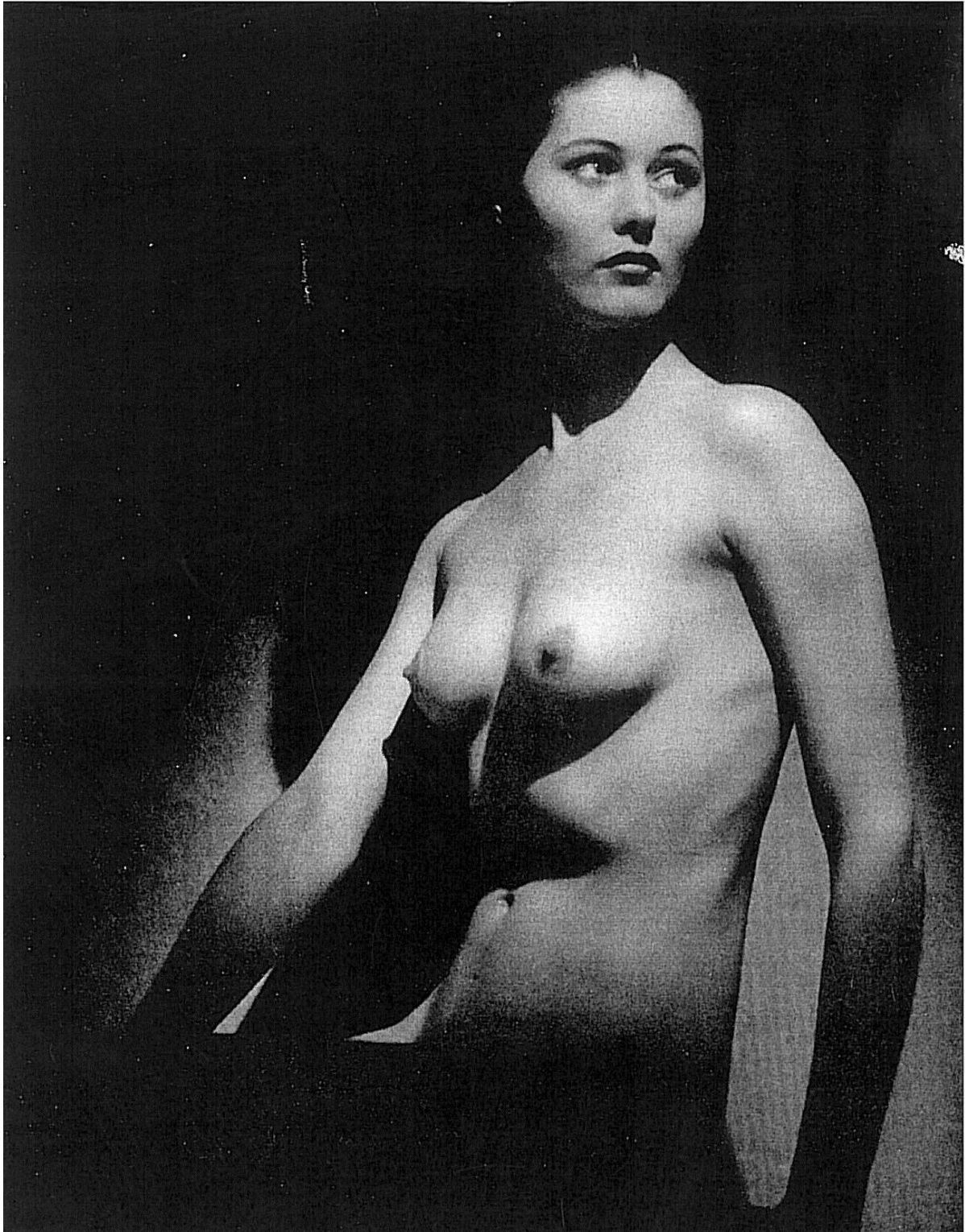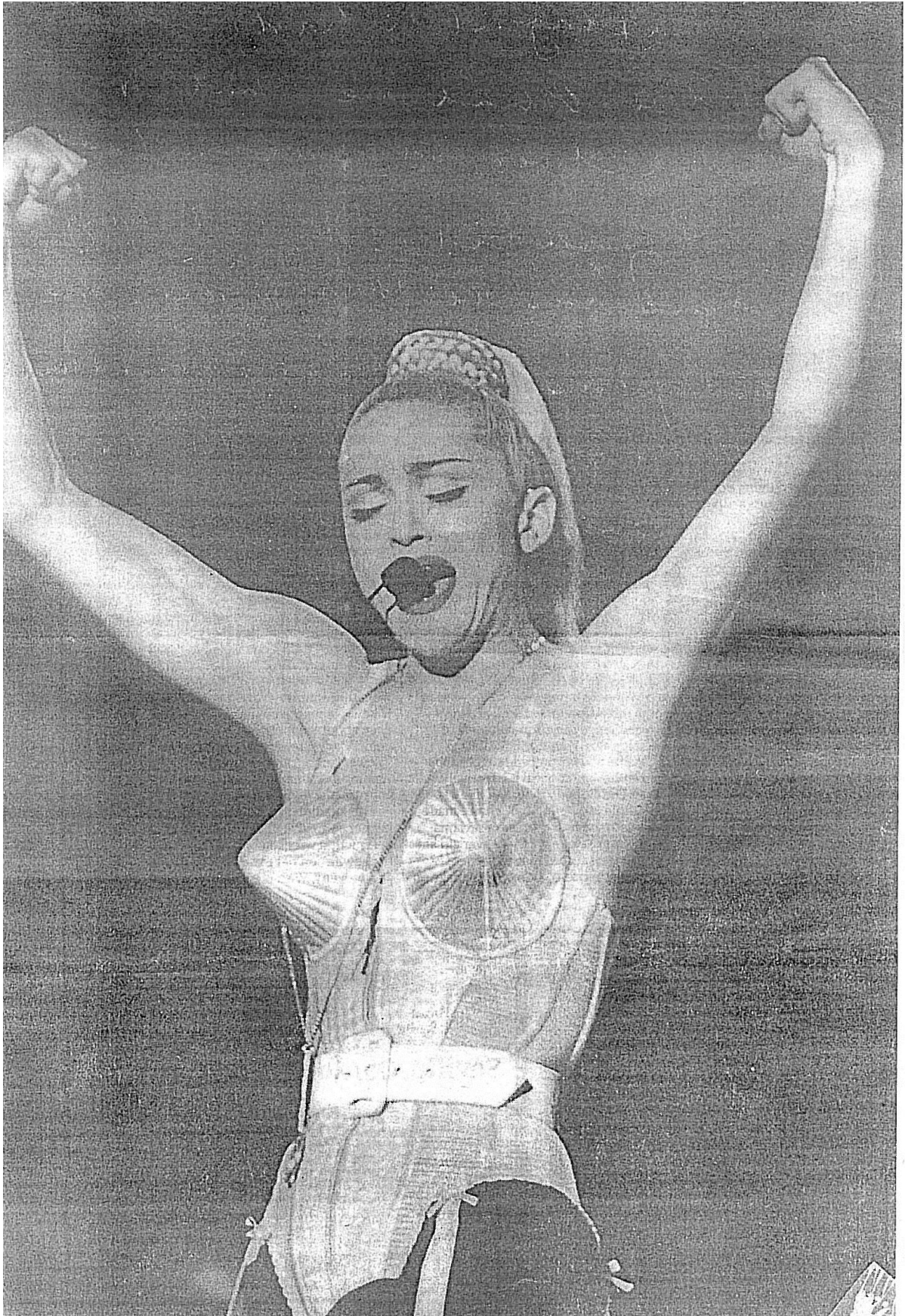
3
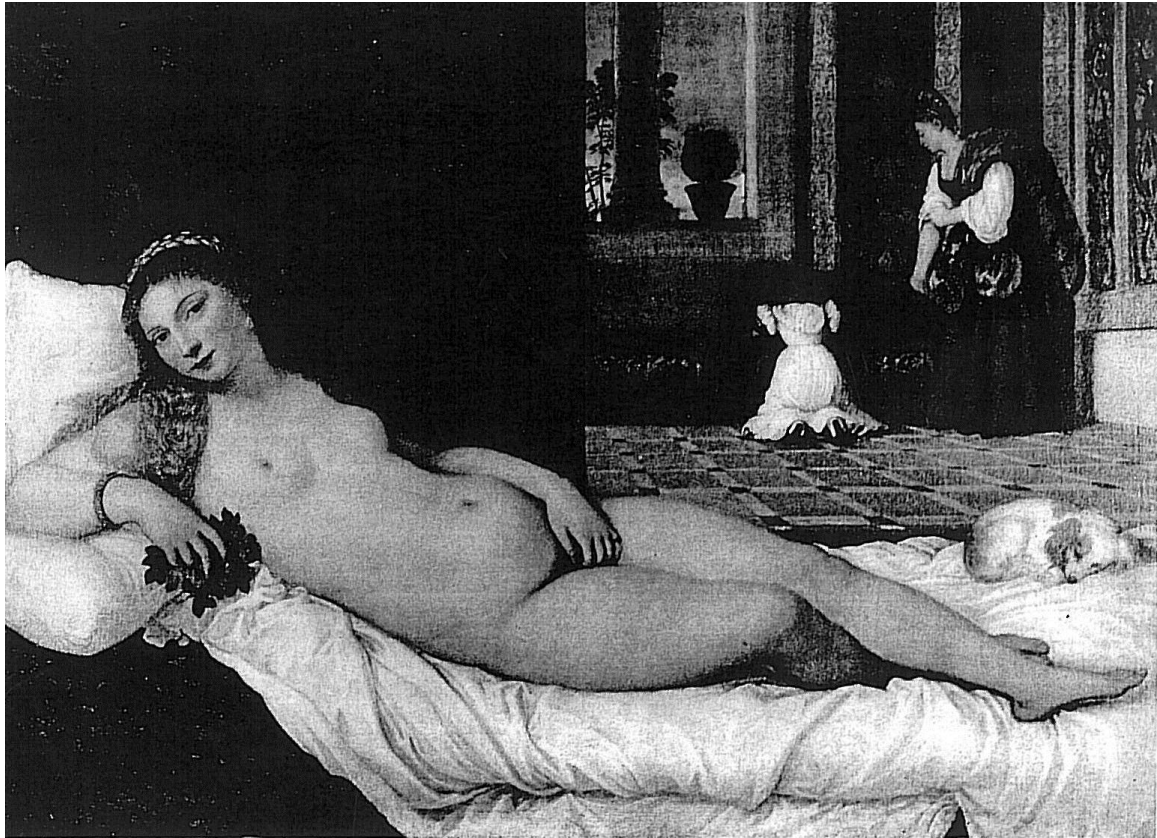
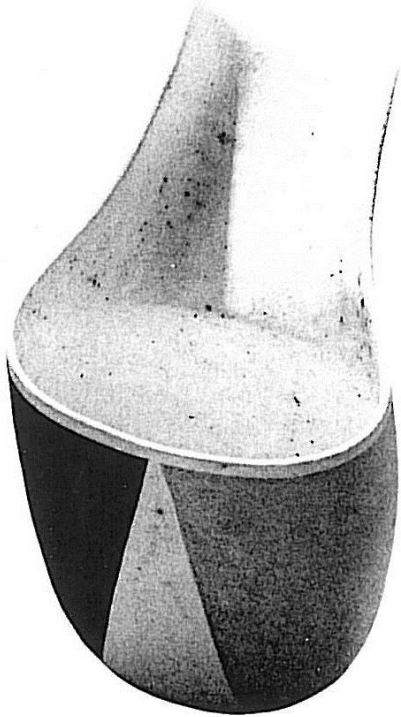« Urbino's Venus » by Titian. Painted in 1538 for Duke Guidobaldo II of Rovere.

SANDRO BOTTICELLI
LA MADONNA DEL "MAGNIFICAT"

1609
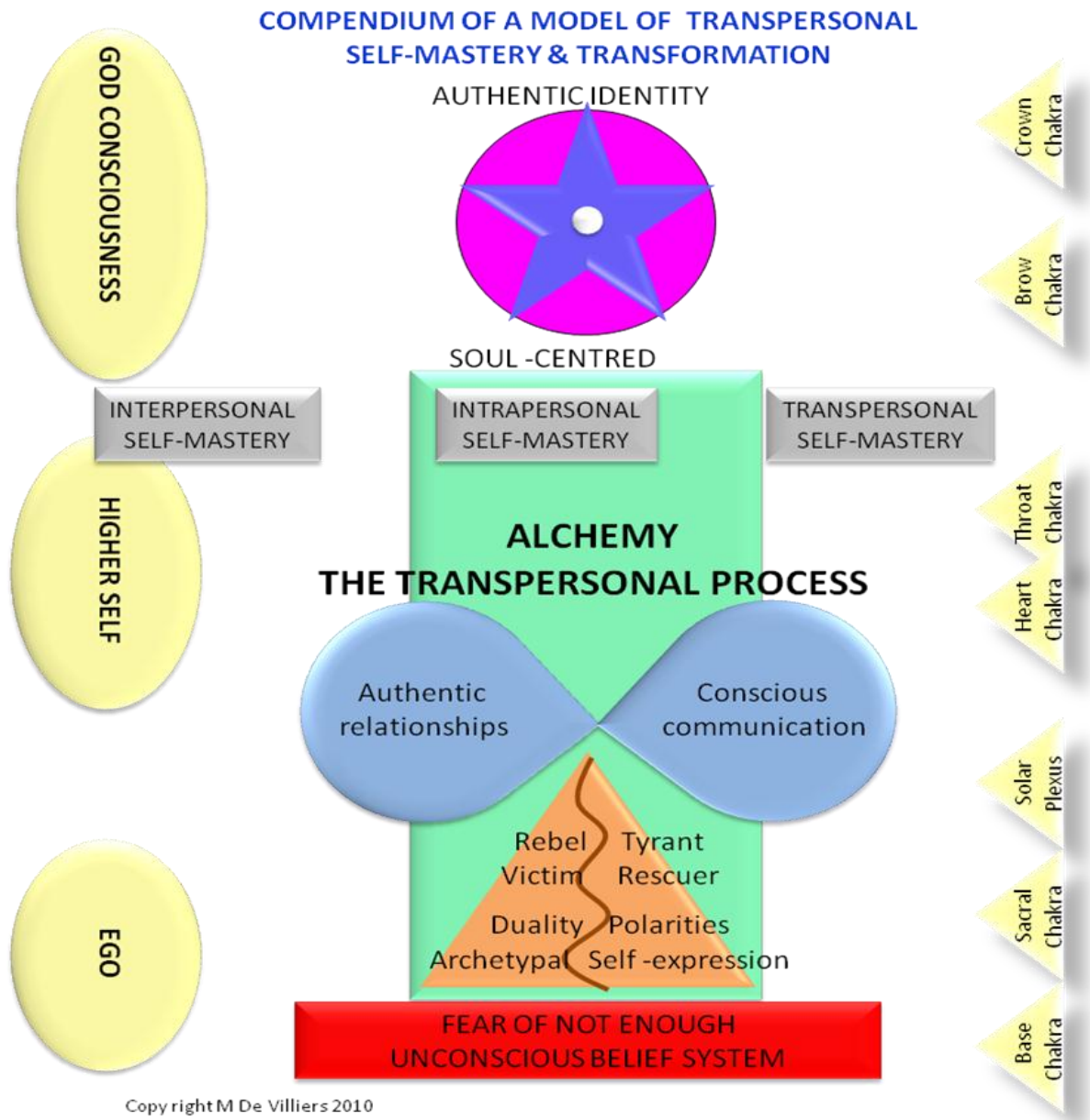
(Above) *Pot by Elizabeth Fritsch*.

(Right) *Wine jug from the Belgian Congo, Africa. 25 cm.*

Tree: Symbol of Individuation

COMPENDIUM OF A MODEL OF TRANSPERSONAL
SELF-MASTERY & TRANSFORMATION

AUTHENTIC IDENTITY

SOUL -CENTRED

GOD CONSCIOUSNESS

HIGHER SELF

EGO

INTERPERSONAL
SELF-MASTERY

INTRAPERSONAL
SELF-MASTERY

TRANSPERSONAL
SELF-MASTERY

ALCHEMY
THE TRANSPERSONAL PROCESS

Authentic
relationships

Conscious
communication

Rebel   Tyrant
Victim   Rescuer
Duality Polarities
Archetypal Self -expression

FEAR OF NOT ENOUGH
UNCONSCIOUS BELIEF SYSTEM

Crown
Chakra

Brow
Chakra

Throat
Chakra

Heart
Chakra

Solar
Plexus

Sacral
Chakra

Base
Chakra

Copy right M De Villiers 2010

Marleen de Villiers

Ouroborous holding Rebirth Egg &
Moon of Blood Mysteries

Mandala: Ouroboros: Marleen de Villiers