Liberation of Desire

by

Kathleen Mary Wilson

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Psychology

Meridian University

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This dissertation has been accepted for the faculty of
Meridian University by:

___________________________________________
Aftab Omer, Ph.D.
Dissertation Advisor

___________________________________________
Melissa Schwartz, Ph.D.
Dissertation Chair

_______________________________________
Shoshana Fershtman, Ph.D.
Doctoral Project Committee Member
ABSTRACT

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This research sought to understand individuals’ experience of images and affects associated with stifled desires to see if this process would promote liberation of desire. The Research Problem was: In what ways can engaging with stifled desire release one from pseudoinnocence? The Research Hypothesis was: By attending to shame one releases the contraction of pseudoinnocence.

The Literature Review explores the notion that desire serves to motivate and define one’s being. It addresses unattended emotions, especially shame and the healing role of perversion. Imaginal approaches to desire show links between desire and daimon, myth, nature, and spirit. There is a lack of experienced-based research which approaches desire as striving to recover acquaintance with one’s Being.

The study’s methodology utilized Imaginal Inquiry. Seven participants met for two individual meetings. They experienced images of stifled desire through exposure to film, guided meditation, artmaking, and reflexive dialogues.

The study’s cumulative learning was: Shame lifts, and desire moves when desire is aligned with the desire of one’s daimon and divine Beloved Other. Five learnings emerged. First, desire to retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition, to avoid affective experience, notably fear, anger, shame, and imagery around death, maintains a
pseudoinnocent stance, which cuts one off from actualizing power. Second, impacted by unattended affects of anger, grief, fear, and shame, pseudoinnocence is expressed through conflictual and unsatisfying reactive enactments. Third, attending to imagery, especially elemental imagery of fire, gives access to energy and creates psychic movement, enabling one to attend to painful stories of powerlessness, failure, resentment and victimization, along with the affects of anger and shame. Fourth, shame lifts when one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon. Fifth, engaging the daimon figure is accompanied by images from the natural sensuous world, which are inherently energizing, empowering, and bring psychic movement because desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of one’s daimon and divine Beloved Other.

The study’s reflections focus on desire’s story through the myths of Persephone and Marquis de Sade. Mature connection with darker emotions linked to the desire of Daimon can challenge power structures in creative, transformative ways.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research Topic

I am interested in desire. I am interested in the liberation of one’s desire—one's emergence into desire in all its ambiguity. I am interested in desire in its human form, desire in its divine form, and when they overlap what those images might reveal. I wonder how desires can be known. I wonder in what way hidden desires can reveal new aspects of identity, which would gift one with ways to recover the uniqueness with which they were born. I wonder how re-collecting this uniqueness can help give direction to the soul’s purpose or fate. I wonder in particular how this remembered uniqueness would assist one in participating in the way in which one is uniquely called to participate in the world.

In this study, I sought to understand how desire might be liberated from a pseudoinnocence stance, a common defense strategy for living used to avoid admitting or confronting one’s power. Specifically, this inquiry considered and addressed the inner experiences of adults’ stifled desire. It examined their experience of creating and engaging images and affects associated with their unacceptable hidden desires, those that one might find repelling or difficult to reveal to others. “Desire defines us,” states Joann Stroud. Gerald G. May finds that desire is “what characteristically attracts and repels us; the things we hope for and the things we fear; what gives us pleasure and pain.”

Sigmund Freud viewed desire as libido, a sexual and biological term indicating life force, which pulls one toward the true purpose of one’s life. Jacques Lacan sees desire as a
constant force that arises out of the unconscious desire to alleviate the lack, which gives one an unconscious longing for something to fill and alleviate the pain of what is felt as missing. He finds that desire pulls one toward meaning through the desire of the other. Carl Jung alleged that every desire is understood as a phenomenon of psychic energy, by nature *daimonic* (both God and devil). Desire can manifest in several ways: as a self-preservative instinct, a power drive, as spiritual interests, the desire to learn, or as the drive toward self-realization (individuation). In cross-cultural research studies conducted in the United States, Denmark, and Turkey on passionate consumer desire, it was found that the true target of desire is the hope for a potential for self-transformation; the target is not necessarily the particular object desired. Here researchers posit that the subject’s inherent motivation could possibly be a quest for transcendent sacredness.

In early childhood, avoidance of the painful feelings related to loss with its myriad of related affects can contribute to blocking or inhibiting desire. Both John Bowlby and Aftab Omer find that when separation from the mother has been traumatic, one becomes blocked from the unfolding of their autonomous desire. The capacity to symbolize death is also lost. Henry Staten adds that transcending mourning is related not to fear of the loss of a beloved object but to loss of self. Feelings related to loss of self (formlessness) can be anger or fear. In contrast, as research on the experience of meditation indicates, feelings of bliss, ecstasy, rapture, and exaltation results in an experience of the total satisfaction of desires.

Defenses arise to ward off painful feelings but result in one’s loss of power, which inhibits desire. Rollo May posits that pseudoinnocence is a defense strategy that links powerlessness with a desire to retreat from negative emotions, as Omer conceives,
from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition.\textsuperscript{12} Robert Jay Lifton posits that psychic numbing is used to defend and protect against feelings related to horrific situations, including death.\textsuperscript{13} M. Guy Thompson finds that splitting is used to relieve one’s self from the burden of desire.\textsuperscript{14} Research by John T. Jost et al. explored psychological variables that relate to political conservatism in 12 countries indicated how pseudoinnocence manifests in different cultures. These researchers found conservatism is motivated by needs to manage uncertainty and threat; there was resistance to change and justification of inequality.\textsuperscript{15}

Emotions both subvert and transform desire. Gerald G. May, Marion Woodman, Thompson, Donald Nathanson, Omer, Louis Stewart, and James Hillman find that desire enters awareness felt as an emotion. By the time it enters awareness, it is transformed to a mental event with its own set of expectations and intentions that can cause disturbed perception, which can then subvert desire. Thompson contends that emotions can deaden one’s desire for recognition as the object of the other’s desire.\textsuperscript{16} But Hillman views emotions as transhuman imaginations of desire valuable for transformation.\textsuperscript{17}

In the literature, it is revealed that shame is one of the most noxious painful affects. Shame pertains to the perceived value of one’s entire being that limits sociality, thereby negatively impacting desire. Shame is hard to detect because it is often associated with subconsciously defended deep-seated feelings such as inadequacy, incompetence, or failure. It can also be bound to other affects such as anger, fear, or distress. Sylvan S. Tomkins discovered that one makes a cognitive decision to reduce the level of shame by reducing the level of interest toward contentment or desire in anticipation of the rejection and/or humiliation to be experienced.\textsuperscript{18} From an archetypal perspective, Mario Jacoby
and Nathan Schwartz-Salant contend that shame is elicited by one’s lack of response—
one’s failure to attain an ideal state—which may be connected to the ego’s failure of
attending to demanding desires of the daimon (Inner Self) signaled by the darker
emotions.19

Perversion is imagined as an intelligence that plays a potential healing role in
allowing desire to take one beyond narrow limits, a form of individuation through
imagination according to Thomas Moore, Hillman, and James Grotstein. The imagination
of artists, such as Mathew Barney, is one example of this intelligence made visible.
Thompson, Michael J. Bader, and Robert J. Stoller connect perversions to lack of
relationship with oneself and failure of intimacy. They recognize the symbolic role that
constructed fantasies can play to counteract psychological variables that stifle desire if
one can extract the power in the fantasy.

Imaginal approaches of desire in the literature show links between daimon, myth,
nature and spirit. Myths of Persephone and Empedocles point to the necessity for
initiatory descent into the darkness of the fiery underworld as a process to confront one’s
darkest daimonic feelings and emotions, which leads to a ritual dismemberment and
regeneration of one’s body. The wisdom of Persephone takes her compassionate place in
the hearts of those willing, if needed, to psychologically descend. As Henry Corbin
contends, visual symbols of nature involuntarily draw one toward the inherent Light in
earthly images thereby actualizing the reciprocal desire to know each other, creature and
Creator. Robert Sardello writes:

Desire is a way of dwelling with the earth, as the word-story, the etymology of
“desire” itself shows. The word “desire” is related to con-siderae, meaning “a
careful observation of the stars.” To gaze upward simultaneously gives
consideration to the ground on which we stand. The constellations passing
overhead bring the experience of time to earth. De-sire means “away from the stars” and thus establishes desire as the return to earth taken up as a reflection through the heavens. Desire then is our place between heaven and earth.20

Relationship to the Topic

In my early 40s I spent the Thanksgiving holiday with my husband and some of our personal friends on their beautiful farm in Indiana. My fun, adventurous, fearless life, always happy and optimistic, came to a halt when grief grabbed hold of me. The mother of our friends was dying of cancer. At that Thanksgiving dinner, a number of her children and grandchildren came together and delivered to her the most touching array of poems and songs. I cried and could not stop for four hours straight. I knew I was in deep emotional trouble as unattended grief took hold of me. I eventually came to understand that I chose only the emotions that felt good over experiencing a full range of emotions that might be more painful. My grief was a response to my own unattended losses. These included my father’s quick death, a conflicted relationship with my mom, my loss of connectedness with self, and loss of creative, spontaneous loving acts from the heart, shared between family members.

My own experience in my childhood home was starkly different from my experience with the friends and family on the farm that Thanksgiving. That family had the capacity and courage to lovingly and creatively express their sadness and grief—to be with death in a way that seemed paradoxically so vitally alive to me. The following is an excerpt from some automatic writing that speaks to my contrasting childhood experience, which has guided me in the researching and writing of this dissertation.

My own desire most steamy, summer, silent days, as a kid, was tucked away somewhere as I watched those ants constantly move up and down that tree that was breaking into the sidewalk causing concrete upheavals, which created perfect places for them to build their hills. No broken connections in their line-up with
each other, as they set about their tasks, each carrying the tiniest bits of stuff, each belonging in their own unique way. No boredom for them, their imaginations intact and guiding them to create that world with each other, buried in that hill that I so wanted to get a glimpse inside of and in some way even participate in the creation of. As I watched, something felt right out here, something felt wrong back in there. There was so much more life out here to counteract and help me to stop feeling the un-understood sadness of my house where depression and addiction broke the connections with each other.

Also guiding my interest in this topic is a question that my grade school teacher, a Catholic nun, answered in response to my question. She said, “Yes, it’s true, only if your non-Catholic dad becomes a Catholic will he be able to go to heaven.” Also implied in the teachings of the church, at that time, was that any impure thoughts, deeds, or actions on my part would also prevent me from going to heaven. These teachings had a strong impact upon me as a child. The love I had for my dad enabled me to believe that they were definitely wrong about him, but I was not so sure about myself. Could I take a chance on never being in the presence a God whose presence I felt so deeply during the ritual of the mass? I loved that amazing gold container swinging back and forth emitting that century old scent of incense, the silent thickness of the infused air pressing around my body, and the feel of the holy water my fingers dipped out of the cool marble fountain at the door as I entered and left. I was conflicted, afraid to move this way or that. I thought it best to remain frozen with no impure thoughts of anything. It seemed best not to know what I felt or thought about God, the church, or anything else.

As a child I trusted enough in my own core wisdom to know that nuns’ teachings were wrong when it came to my father but there was not enough self-trust to accept the light, spirit, or God within myself. Every time I rose driven by pure joy someone in my home or that church lowered a thick ceiling over me, powering and pushing my being down, and driving my ankles deeper into that kind of mud that grabs hold of your boots.
This process was unknown to me and probably to them. Subtle undue criticism, unfair assessments, and consequential subconscious memories of betrayal and shame led me to keep my most authentic feelings inside my own internal museum. Revealing my heart, my feelings, my vulnerability, and my own inner spirit was too painful. Knowing what “I felt” atrophied like an unused muscle, complicated by only accepting the emotions and experiences that felt good. I gave up needs and lost my power. I started trusting my mind more than my heart. My trust in what my inner being knows was shaky in many instances but still remained brilliant in others.

During my high school and college years, I was confronted with new themes of misuse of power. I postponed and kept my desires safely hidden through my denial of the darker experience and emotions that are part of human existence. I was impacted by violence and its relationship to death, especially in relation to psychically important and powerful male figures in my life. My grandfather died when I was a freshman in high school. The next year President Kennedy was shot. The following year my father died from wounds originally received in the last ground battle of World War II in France. My grandmother died in my senior year. A year and a half later, Martin Luther King was shot. Soon after seeing Bobby Kennedy at my university, he was shot and killed. In addition, my brother went to Vietnam and male peers vanished in Vietnam. Finally, a National Guardsman pointed his rifle at my windshield while I was driving home during the 1967 riots in Detroit. I continually, to this day, watch my city tragically disintegrate and disappear as entire beautiful old neighborhoods are bulldozed. The tragedy of existence of place and life took its toll on me. Feeling became unbearable, as the world and my world turned more crazy, sad, and violent.
Whitewashing my feelings soothed and became an alternative to meeting and dealing with fear, guilt, grief, evil, death, and witnessing the violence inflicted on others. False innocence kept me from life. In-nocere in Latin means not to hurt or not to be hurt. Like the Marquis de Sade’s character, the innocent Justine, I was not capable of aggression and would not intentionally hurt anyone under any circumstances. I had a compelling need to see myself and to be seen as beyond reproach. I banished harsh realities to their own side of my psyche giving up psychological ambivalence in exchange for a false sense of peace and insidious guilt. Masochistic assertion against self showed up in so many messy ways including distorting my power drive—the primal creative energy of life. Death struck again: the victims were my desire and power, my voice, and my imagination. My own artwork suffered spontaneity and a loss of depth.

Dead imagination is how I began to describe my experience after enrolling in a Graphic Design program at the California College of Arts in my late thirties after taking an early retirement from my beloved job of fourteen years as a flight attendant. I planned to become a flight attendant when I was eight years old. I planned my first trip to Europe in the fifth grade. Personal freedom, flexibility, mobility, and a chance to experience many places and cultures in the world became my mantra and drew me to flying. It was fun and I loved every minute of it. But I had a sense I needed to pursue something different. It was just time. That deep intuitive wisdom that I did trust let me know that something was pulling me forward toward something I knew was important. A next step felt so right, even though I had no idea what it might be. I knew I would miss my job. Without much thought or deliberation, I chose art school because I already held a bachelors degree in fine art with a major in painting before I started flying. And, my dad,
who once had a small advertising agency, gave me so much support in so many ways to pursue art in grade school and high school that desire for this was probably the right choice. He would have been happy. His desire would have been the same as mine. But I got caught. As much as I enjoyed it, my desire to pursue graphic design was not uniquely my own. It was not coming from a deep place within me.

My time spent at the California College of Arts was a stepping-stone for me. They stressed that successful design is conceptual. This was in contrast to my earlier experience of painting imagery, which came unthinkingly from the gut. Design found me longing to come up with a symbol or image, anything that would touch someone deeply in order to communicate something between human beings, to forge some connection.

My partner in our graphic design office had a copy of Jung’s book, *Man and His Symbols*. I would spend hours reading about and wondering about those symbols: how do you access them, how do you read them, what the heck are they, and where do they come from? And how do you use them to communicate some deeper understanding? Those wonderings were far more intriguing than my design projects. I turned to my 1960s college textbook, which I still have, *A Modern Book of Esthetics*. Rereading it was getting me closer to some understanding, but not quite. In it I found a paper I started to write in 1968 on the meaning of the soul. I needed and craved a different kind of experience. All was not well. That Thanksgiving with its gift of layers of unresolved grief told me so. I made a commitment to delve into my emotional life. But my follow-through was not effective.

I stayed in a mind-numbing state of movement—traveling, having fun, seeing friends, skiing, and running marathons. I even fulfilled a lifelong dream of learning to
ride a horse in order to work a cattle drive for eight days. At this time my marriage started to have problems. I let my own desire slide because my husband had a lot of needs, until one day I just could not. During this same time period I was also avoiding my grief. Something needed to slow me down—an accident passed through my mind—nothing too serious. I did not want it to hurt or to lose anything important. I had never been ill or in the hospital (that is, until the horse I was learning to ride reared up, both of us fell, and I ended up beneath her). It did not hurt. After five days in the hospital and resulting recuperation time, I received my time to slow down. My marriage continued to deteriorate.

Desire then struck in the most painful way it could. It pierced my false innocence as it mercilessly toyed with my morality that originated as my Catholic good-girl image. I found that my innocence was cut off from shadow. It was not innocence at all. It was only posturing. I had to make a choice to transgress my deepest personal beliefs around marriage or not. I checked into therapy for the first time, helpful, but received no real answers regarding whether I should take action or not. But I had such intense desire! I turned to all sorts of rules, regulations, biographies, books, and philosophies—anything that my mind could use to make sense of what I was experiencing.

The first year of therapy was over. Nothing yet helped. I then turned to the incredible myths that Joseph Campbell had just introduced to me. I must have read Tristan and Isolde a dozen times, but how dare that love story not offer me a clear answer to my dilemma. I had to dive deeper. Descent was needed. I learned how hard it was to learn to accept the qualities that match the ego ideal as well as those that fall short of it. It is difficult to hold those opposites together simultaneously. My marriage ended, my
identity on so many levels stripped to the skeletal remains. Alone, but with great friends and optimistic at my core, I trusted that I could figure out how to sculpt flesh back onto my skeleton of an identity—to give it form.

So, art again, but art therapy this time. In the early 1990s, I started the doctorate program in psychology at Meridian University that promised what I needed and felt drawn to. There was talk of soul, a lot of direct experience, which started to get me out of my head. Together for four years with a cohort of classmates, I explored the messiness of relationship and related affects and emotions. I wanted to recover awareness of my feelings and my desire. Without access to this internal world there is slight possibility of “transforming the tragedy of existence into metaphysical beauty,” states Mikhail Shwydkoi. The imagination that I had declared dead in me had kept me from trusting the minutia of images or the signs of a divine existence everywhere including my own core. I wanted my true innocence back.

These life experiences led me to bring attention to the liberation of my own desire and the liberation of the desire of others as a research topic. Hence, I became interested in an experiential process in which following and paying attention to one’s perverse forms of desire and appetite could be linked to the liberation of the desire of one’s core identity. I became interested in how imagination can help develop the capacity to differentiate between desire as deficiency—the desires that have been shaped by negative social conditions constructed within society—and those desires that are unique, personal, and intimately related to one’s flourishing potential. I wanted to know what new action for myself and for others is motivated by the desire of one’s core identity, which Omer refers
to as “the unique endowment of particularities that unfold, mature, and guide transformations of identity through the life span.”

**Theory-in-Practice**

Hillman posits that desire is holy, because, as motivation, it touches and moves the soul toward the necessary interactions that are required for realization. Similarly, Russell Belk, Guliz Ger, and Soren Askegaard led an expansive cross-cultural study on consumer desire and found that desire is an aspiration for transformation that relies on the imagination. Corbin posits an imagination of desire that accepts that desire is the reciprocal desire of the creature for the Creator and the Creator for the creature: desire is structurally shared between the creature (human) and an invisible absent Creator. This other (eternal individuality) can only become known as one gains more (psychological) knowledge of oneself.

Stifled desire can be imagined as a key to the liberation of desire because, according to Moore, it is a “call from Eros who is evoking it for the purpose of unveiling the stirrings of love in places that seem void of it.” The perverted image has the emotional power to stir darker feelings. The effect is increased due to the constraint on desire elicited by an indescribable fear of the force of Eros. Janine Chassequet-Smirgel posits that perversion exists in any form of social activity. It is a solution that helps one to avoid their human destiny. It is a solution that helps one re-find that destiny.

Trustworthy desire is understood though Claudio Naranjo’s existential view of the human condition. He posits that desire overflowing out of basic satisfaction is the striving that expresses the desire to recover one’s sense of Being which he believes is the key to liberation and ultimate fulfillment. He describes desire driven by deficiency motivation.
Often at the core of one’s experience is a felt sense of lack experienced as emptiness—a *being-loss* (a lack of selfness) so stark that one is not even aware that there is a loss. The dim apprehension of being-loss motivates one out of deficiency to recover one’s sense of being that has been lost through forms of self-interference related to one’s character. Judith Butler believes the appropriative function of desire is not consumption, domination, or the ecstatic enthrallment with another. It is the godlike authorship of the world, the recreation of natural objects into reflections of their maker. So trustworthy desires are those that are unique, personal, and intimately related to one’s flourishing potential, which is linked to one’s other eternal individuality.

Embedded in an individual’s storied identity is a pseudoinnocent stance that prevents one from hearing one’s trustworthy desire. Pseudoinnocence, according to Rollo May, is a condition of powerlessness, a common defense strategy for living, the purpose of which is to avoid admitting or confronting one’s power. One can then retreat and escape tragedies, complexities, difficult feelings, and emotions by remaining in a literalist stance, naive to other viewpoints that are held by the round of figures making up one’s soul. Omer recognizes it as a form of fundamentalism, “*misplaced attachment*—a retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition.” Paul Tillich believes that, like idolatry, one substitutes “preliminary for ultimate concerns.”

Unattended negative affect, related to shame, blocks individuation, according to Nathanson. Psychic movement is impaired. Rafael Lopez-Pedraza believes psychic movement can be elicited through a process of being hermetically moved out of repetitive paralyzing fixations brought on by an individual’s painful history or experience. Imagery coming from the most repressed undignified parts of one’s psychic nature
compensate for the “dullness and repetitive superficiality” implicit in their one-sided experience. New images emerge enabling participation in life, enriching one’s personality through a deeper more consistent awareness of the personality. Shame is an affect most directly linked to the undignified parts of one’s psyche.

According to Silvan Tompkins and Nathanson, shame is the painful innate affect. It is often linked with other negative affects that pertain to the perceived value of one’s entire being, rather than to a specific act of the self. It is linked to the fantasy of being exposed to degradation either by the other or by oneself. From an archetypal perspective, Schwartz-Salant posits that since shame is a response to a sense of failure to attain some ideal state, it may be an indication that the desires of the daimon are not being attended.

Daimon is imagined as a guiding figure, a wholly imaginal reflection of oneself, in which the divine twin likeness that one’s unfolding individuality and biography is a metaphor. Hillman also contends that this demon/daimon stubbornly motivates, persists, protects, and invents in order to instigate one to re-imagine one’s misplaced attachment to beauty. Attachment to the beautiful is related to Eros—passionate, physical love, yet also spiritual love. Daimon imagined as the poet Federico Garcia Lorca’s duende is linked to Eros as the inspiring spirit of the arts. Rollo May believes that beauty is impossible if one cuts loose their connection with the nether world, with its expressions of the demonic/daimonic. Without access to this world, possibility of “transforming the tragedy of existence into metaphysical beauty” is slight.

Hillman posits that the daimon is part of the eros spectrum in its capacity of the “devilish duplicity of consciousness.” The double aspect of demon/daimon provides
psychic intervention by instigating a pattern of action and then inhibiting it through its interrupting, redirecting, and symbolizing behavior in order to bring the psychic world into reality, furthering individuation. Located in one’s emotional center, one can converse with it, as it offers conscious reason or verbal account.  

Access to the demonic/daimonic world is entered through the imagination. As William Blake states, “The imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself.”  

Omer posits that the loss of imagination is the loss of the image as doorway to creating the possibility of meaning, self-understanding, and shared interpretations. The closure of images brings forth a loss of experience and a loss of metaphor. As a result the potential opening to the invisible part of the Mystery is lost.

**Research Problem and Hypothesis**

In regard to gaps in the literature, purposeful engagement of dark objects of desire as a way to liberate desiring through imagination is not addressed in experienced-based research. The literature does not address desire from the a perspective that operationalizes desire as a striving to recover acquaintance with one’s Being—that divine other that might be found through engaging dark imagery linked with the daimon and associated with one’s stifled desire. Hence, the theorists and artists who attempt to close the gap between desire and lack through the use of dark body imagery are explored. These perversions are fantasies that heal the psyche. The purpose of this study was to collect adults’ experience of creating and engaging images and affects associated with their unacceptable hidden desires and to find out if there would be a liberation of desiring. The Research Problem in this study was: In what ways can engaging with stifled desire
release one from pseudo-innocence? The Research Hypothesis was: By attending to shame one releases the contraction of pseudo-innocence.

**Methodology and Research Design**

Using the methodology of Imaginal Inquiry, developed by Omer and anchored within the participatory paradigm, I explored the liberation of desiring. Imaginal Inquiry recognizes that participative consciousness reflects one’s true nature. This method of inquiry has four phases—Evoking Experience, Expressing Experience, Interpreting Experience, and Integrating Experience.

I told participants that I was conducting a research study on desire and longing. I sought those who self-reported a current experience of any sense of unexpressed desire in an important sector of their life or a major block in their life. I also asked participants if they have struggled with core conflicting feelings or points of view for a period of time. Although I had intended to post informational flyers and ask friends to ask their friends—not part of my circle—to participate in the study, I ended up having enough participants simply through the word-of-mouth approach. The research was ultimately conducted with seven participants—four women and three men.

Two research meetings were held and all seven participants attended both two-hour and 10 minute meetings. Demographically, they were all European-American (white), ranging from 42 to 62 years old. Their socio-economic status ranged from lower income to upper middle class.

The criterion for validity in the participatory paradigm is authenticity. The research was designed to evoke the direct inner experience of stifled or perverse desire and explore the affects and imagery evoked in relationship to that stifled desire. Activities
at both meetings used quick response drawings to captured affective experience after an evocative experience. The drawings captured immediate authentic direct experience related to feelings unhindered by intellectualization. Data was limited to the participants’ verbal narratives about their art gleaned through interviews that followed. Film clips were utilized, which portrayed an array of provocative, evocative, violent, and potentially disturbing human situations to evoke experience of stifled desire. A guided meditation was used to evoke a guide figure. Participants expressed their experience through drawing, a reflexive dialogue, and interviews. The participants’ responses to activities were audiotaped and transcribed.

The co-researcher and I interpreted the data by analyzing, responding to, and discussing the transcriptions and artwork. We met after each meeting to share our reactions and how we were each affected by our participation in the research. Also, we each read the transcripts separately and then met on a number of occasions to discuss our reactions, analyses, and insights as we looked at key moments and happenings that emerged for us. We paid particular attention to our divergent as well as parallel responses, both intellectual and emotional, in order to facilitate deeper awareness.

I spent many hours independently reading and analyzing the transcripts while considering the data in the context of theories related to depth psychological perspectives on desire; attachment, loss, and affect, especially shame; and imaginal approaches to desire. My purpose was to identify additional key moments in the participants’ stories of their experiences. I also used principles of narrative analyses to analyze the data. While listening for participants’ most vital experiences, I listened for stories of past actions and
inaction related to their desire, their memories, feelings, and how they interpreted and storied their experience of both their stifled and liberated desire.

In order to integrate their experience, participants were encouraged to continually share meanings and feelings related to their art images, in which both stifled and freed up desire were made visible. Art activities and reflexive dialogues, besides being designed to evoke experience, were also designed to help integrate experience. At the beginning of the second meeting, participants were asked to share anything that emerged between meetings that felt connected to their experience. Participants were also invited to tell their story of their art image of the next step they might take in their life toward their desire. If they did not offer, I asked about their feelings in regard to their capacity to accomplish the step. I also reflected to them what I noticed, in particular about capacities or creative strengths that I felt might serve them in the next step they described. It is hoped that the Learnings from this research will be conveyed to constituencies beyond the school, such as educators, psychotherapists and veterans of war, all discussed in Chapter 5.

**Learnings**

Five major Learnings emerged, all pointing to participants’ stifled desires being strongly tied to feelings of shame bound with anger, grief and fear. Shame was lifted when one’s desire was more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon and divine Beloved other counterpart, which brought new images of personal power and psychic movement.

The first Learning states: The desire to retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition, to avoid affective experience, notably fear, anger, shame, and imagery around death, maintains a pseudoinnocent stance, which cuts one off from
actualizing power. Experiences of stifled desire and related affects were evoked followed by interviews that revealed a pseudoinnocent stance—the unique way that each of them denied the power held in their image of stifled desire. Participants were aware during discussions that they were emotionally disconnected or emotionally conflicted, numb to experience, or in a state of inertia declaring they had no desire. They were either not aware at all or barely aware of any shame. There was also fear around moving beyond their stifled impulse of desire.

The second Learning states: Impacted by the unattended affects of anger, grief, fear, and shame, pseudoinnocence is expressed through conflictual and unsatisfying reactive enactments. An experience of aliveness is created to counteract the deadness experienced by lost access to psychic energy, or libido and one’s actualizing power. It was evident that unexamined negative affects fueled participants’ desires toward unsatisfactory experiences and feelings leaving them with more shame, anger, grief, depression, and fear.

The third Learning states: Attending to imagery, especially elemental imagery of fire, gives access to energy and creates psychic movement, enabling one to attend to painful stories of powerlessness, failure, resentment and victimization, along with the affects of anger and shame. Participants explored images of powerlessness, shame, and anger in their artwork related to their image of stifled desire. As participants engaged with their images, new images of movement, related to the emergence of the elemental image of fire, contrasted with the previous blocked images of stifled desire. Images of suns, lightning bolts, or flames growing out of water led to participants’ brief ability to hold opposites, re-direct hostile power, and lift feelings of failure of self and lost
creativity. All of these experiences counteracted the powerlessness connected with 
resentment, victimization, and failure.

The fourth Learning states: Shame lifts when one’s desire is more deeply aligned 
with the desire of their daimon. Personal body drawings were used to capture feelings 
related to both stifled desire and new feelings around that particular desire after an 
evoked inner figure offered guidance to the participants. Participants’ stories and 
drawings, filled with images of a shameful, defective, or ruptured sense of self shifted 
with the guidance and compensatory images this figure offered related to increased 
power: feelings of relaxation, confidence, guiding energy, and advice to be more 
compassionate and less guarded; father energy that advises to just be you; trust in this 
relationship which holds conscious hate and rage as a source of power; and acting 
spontaneously from the heart. Particularly noteworthy was that the guide/daimon often 
took on a visual and a storied shared identity with the participant.

The fifth Learning states: Engaging the daimon figure is accompanied by images 
from the natural sensuous world, which are inherently energizing, empowering, and bring 
psychic movement because one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their 
daimon and divine Beloved Other. After the experience with the daimon/guide figure, 
participants were asked to draw an image of a possible next step they might take in their 
life toward liberating their image of stifled desire. Images of energetic light such as 
sunrays and lightning bolts, which often lead to other images from the natural sensuous 
world also worked to liberate participants’ desiring. Images of next steps such as writing, 
experiencing an open compassionate heart, movement toward descent and passage 
occurred through images of rocks breaking up, streams flowing, flowers growing out of
granite, and wind and rain storms. These vital images were linked to feelings of well-being and freedom experienced by participants while satisfied in the moment. These feelings did not result into a concrete movement towards change. The next concrete steps seemed to be reflective of participants’ innate desires that felt good and right for them even though there was some hesitation about their ability to move forward.

Significance and Implications of the Study

This study is relevant to those who feel unexpressed desire or a major block in an important sector of their lives or for those who harbor aberrant desires to commit harm or violence. The results of exploring perverse, stifled desire and its link to shame and other negative affects can create an opening to daimonic transformation of one’s desire. This personal exploration may significantly impact the status quo linked to a pseudoinnocent culture that does not like darkness and has a tendency to prefer the literal. It is hoped that this study may contribute toward understanding how unattended affects keep one from deeper relationship with self and other, and when attended through relationship with a daimonic figure, frees desire to seek the reciprocal recognition by the other.

The authentic personal power achieved through deeper understanding of one’s negative emotions and a forged link with one’s fullest daimonic potentiality can challenge existing cultural power structures in many creative and transformative ways. For instance, cultural and political values and morality would presumably take an action not dependent upon collectively formed ideas. A broader personal understanding of desire’s motives would continue to challenge and illuminate ways to imagine and build one’s personal beliefs related to the existence or non-existence of God, which, because of its emotional impact, would affect the personal, local, and world community. Finally, the
inter-relationships between desire, identity, elemental imagery, and daimonic intelligence can affect one’s personal values, which might then effect one’s social action.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction and Overview

This chapter reviews the literature that explores desire and, in particular, the relationship of stifled desire to the liberation of desire. Desire, identity of the subject of desire, pseudoinnocence as powerlessness, the association of shame with stifled desire, and the capacity for imagination to reveal and release one’s unique desire will be discussed. The Research Problem is: In what ways can engaging with stifled desire release one from pseudo-innocence? The Research Hypothesis is: By attending to shame one releases the contraction of pseudo-innocence. The Literature Review is divided into three clusters: Depth Psychological Perspectives on Desire; Desire, Attachment, and Affect; and Imaginal Approaches to Desire.

The first cluster, Depth Psychological Perspectives on Desire, is a review of Freud, Lacan, and Jung’s definitions of desire and their conceptualizations of the subject of desire. Desire is motivation that moves the soul toward the necessary interactions required for realization. This research study focuses on engaging images of stifled desire and what psychic movement might liberate desiring. Hence, it is relevant to explore theories on blocked desire within the psyche and what comprises realization and transformation of identity that is motivated by desire. How the subject’s built-in urge toward death, as well as life, impacts desire is included.
The second cluster, Desire, Attachment, and Affect, is a review of the literature regarding attachment to and the pain of separation from Mother. Dependent attachment to literal mother stifles autonomous personal desire, which keeps one from discovering the identity of their true subject of desire. The pain of separation from mother is stored in the imagination. I wondered if attending to shame would release a person from the contraction of pseudoinnocence. The literature on pseudoinnocence relates to powerlessness, a symptom of denying one’s negative emotions. It is relevant because desire is the starting point of action and personal power is needed to enact desire. Affect and shame in particular is explored because it has the power to pull one away from anything that one desires, which negatively impacts identity. Shame may also be an indication that one is not attending to the archetypal relationship with the desire of one’s inner self (daimon).

The third cluster, Imaginal Approaches to Desire, includes literature on Perversion, daimon, myth, imagination, and autonomous Spirit. This study explores whether engaging imagery and affects associated with unacceptable hidden desires (stifled desire) would lead to more freedom and focus in one’s desiring. The emotional power of the perverted image has the capacity to stir darker feelings, which give desire more effect. Literature on perversion is not relegated to sexual relations alone because it (perversion) exists in any form of social activity that helps one to avoid their human destiny and paradoxically its fantasies can also help one re-find that destiny. Desire, as it moves one toward realization, defines one. Literature related to daimon, myth, imagination, and Spirit contribute to an expanded concept of the limits of the self. Daimon, explores this figure’s link to the self’s realization, including its association to
one’s biography and destiny, emotional life, personal power, and as protector and persecutor. The myths of Demeter/Persephone and Empedocles, which link underworld imagery, nature, and fire to the unfolding complex self and radical desire, are discussed. Finally the Imaginal World of Autonomous Spirit presents an expanded radical vision of the conceptual limits of the Self that is material but other. Important to this research is the conceptualization that desire is shared between the creature and Creator, or an eternal individuality as psychological individuality. Not all desire is equal in the way it defines one.

**Depth Psychological Perspectives on Desire**

Desire is the very articulation of that which roots us in a particular destiny…It keeps us on the track of something that is specifically our business.

—Jacques Lacan in Henry Staten *Eros in Mourning*

The purpose of this study was to explore desire and in particular images of stifled desire that if engaged might produce some psychic movement. Desire is conceptualized as motivation that moves the soul toward the necessary interactions required for realization. The work of three main theorists define desire, conceptualize the subject of desire as source and motivator, present theories that indicate how desire becomes blocked within the psyche; and speak to the transformation of self motivated by desire.

This cluster, Depth Psychological Perspectives on Desire, is divided into two subclusters. The first, Psychoanalytic Theory, focuses on the work of Freud and Lacan. The second subcluster, Jungian Theory, focuses on Jung. The theorists through their differing theoretical lenses explore desire (libido) as a powerful form of energy or constant force, the movement of which is impacted by the subject’s built-in urge toward
death as well as toward life. They also discuss desire as it defines one’s personal path that leads to becoming what one authentically is.

**Psychoanalytic Theory**

Briefly, Freud’s conceptualization of libido (desire) as the sexual instinct (Eros) is presented followed by Herbert Marcuse’s contributions on the death instinct. Next Lacan’s placement of desire within an intersubjective context (desire and otherness) is presented followed by related studies that explore parallel concepts of desire (passionate consumer desire, longing, and desire for desire).

Freud used the Latin word for desire, libido, largely as a sexual and biological term indicating life force. Freud recognized instincts as forces born of the tensions caused by needs originating in the id, which expressed the true purpose of one’s life. Driven to satisfy these innate needs, one must wrestle with these somatically felt instincts. Freud had three steps in the development of his libido theory. First, sexual instincts (object libido, i.e., love) were directed toward an object. At times and in a conflicting way, certain amounts of this instinctual energy would be withdrawn from the object, introverted, and directed onto the ego, called ego-instincts (ego libido, i.e., self-preservation). Next, Freud came to recognize that the ego was the true and original reservoir of the whole available quota of libido. He described this libido as narcissistic (instinct of self-preservation), which was conceptualized as both primary and secondary narcissism. His theory extended further as he recognized the sexual instinct as Eros, the preserver of all things in life. Opposing and struggling with these life instincts (Eros)
were ego instincts, which transformed to death instincts (aggression, hate). Regarding his thought process that led him to this last conceptualization, Freud wrote,

> With the hypothesis of narcissistic libido and the extension of the concept of libido to the individual cells, the sexual instinct was transformed for us into Eros, which seeks to force together and hold together the portions of living substance.  

Freud came to recognize at an even deeper level the somatic roots of libido and libido as energy of the instincts, or anything under the umbrella of love. He thought that Plato’s Eros coincided with the love-force, the libido of psychoanalysis. Freud alleged that the origin of the sexual instinct could be traced to a need to restore an earlier state of things. He thought that this is the one condition whose fulfillment human beings desire.

Libido doesn’t always follow a smooth unblocked course of development in one’s life. Its mobility can be stopped when it becomes fixated on certain objects and cannot pass from one object to another. Often this fixation can persist throughout life.

Freud noted that everything we know about the behavior of the libido is known through its relationship to the ego, in which all available libido is stored in primary narcissism. He compares this experience of primary narcissism to the oceanic feeling.

> [T]he restoration of that oceanic feeling, in the form of boundless narcissism, is often longed for throughout life: “The development of the ego consists in a departure from primary narcissism and gives rise to vigorous attempts to recover that state.”

Freud theorized that libido remains primary narcissism until the ego begins to concentrate emotional energy on objects, to transform into object libido. He thought that narcissism should be viewed as “the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation, a measure of which may justifiably be attributed to every living creature.” With this statement he seemed to infer a relationship between
narcissism and self-regard, or self-esteem. Freud said, “We must recognize that self-regard has a specially intimate dependence on narcissistic libido.” 12

If libidinal development has suffered some disturbance, one will seek one’s own self as a love-object, a phase he called secondary narcissism. 13 If self-regard becomes inflated, the realization of impotence results in one’s inability to love and lowers self-regard. 14 Freud thought that when original narcissism was disturbed one would avoid love out of fear. Fear of loss of love can be traced back to anxiety experienced in relationship to absent mother. Later in life, this fear and anxiety can repress instinctual impulses. 15

Marcuse reminds that Freud proposed that civilization is based on the permanent subjugation of the human instincts. Libido is deflected to socially useful activities and expressions, which creates culture. For Marcuse, the Nirvana principle, of which the pleasure principle is an expression, takes over and dominates one’s mental life. 16 Operating under the Nirvana principle is the death instinct, which brings forth the desire for a mental state that experiences no tension, no wants, and constant gratification. The pleasure principle steps in to suppress excitement, but this tendency toward equilibrium cuts off one’s instincts and desire—life itself. 17 Instincts are drawn into the orbit of death. 18

Lacan believes that desire is a constant force, not a kinetic energy, not a life force, and not related to a biological function. 19 He posits that desire comes out of the unconscious desire to alleviate lack. Lacan finds that desire can never produce the means to relieve lack because desire, and the lack that drives it, does not relate to an object that is missing. Instead, lack occurs when trauma or loss result in desire. 20 This relates desire
to Lacan’s *symbolic order* and starts man on his conquest of the symbolic. The symbolic order for Lacan encompasses law, language, and culture. It “forms the unconscious, which is structured of signifiers and as language to which the subject becomes ‘subject’.”

Lacan proposes that there are two results of this conquest: the subject comes into being, which is “an effect of the symbolic”; and the subject is conceptualized as split between conscious and unconscious and between subject as *being* and subject as represented in language.

Lacan revises Freud’s basic structure of desire (libido) by placing it within an intersubjective context. This sets up a tension between *desire* and *otherness*. Lacan contended that a person is their desire. The subject of desire is not an ego but rather a void at the heart of being. Conceptually, the phenomenologist perceived the *unconscious* as a metaphor, a figure of speech—“a hidden subject that lies at the heart of intentionality itself.” This subject is constituted by his desire to be something, however, a desire that can never be satisfied. There is always a primordial lack, which gives one an unconscious longing for something to fill and alleviate that pain of what is felt as missing.

So according to Lacan, it is impossible for desire to recover the lost object due to the primordial nature of the lack. “This fundamentally alienated desire is the desire not of the individual but of ‘his’ or ‘her’ divided part, with which he or she can never fully coincide: the subject.”

Lacan also sees desire as the desire of the Other, which can be understood as either the desire for the other’s approval (the subject desires to be desired by the Other) or the subject desires what the Other desires. Lacan describes the dialectic between desire
and the Other: “In short, nowhere does it appear more clearly that man’s desire finds its meaning in the other’s desire, not so much because the other holds the keys to the desired object, as because his first object(ive) is to be recognized by the other.” 30 He implies a deep innate need and desire for recognition, “Man desires what the Other desires, which also implies that I want the Other to desire me.” 31

Omer, through Thompson, summarizes Lacan’s orientation:

If I cast my desire toward things, I will, in turn, become a thing … So, if man wants to rise above self-objectification, he must turn, not to objects to discover himself … but rather to desire itself, which can only be another human desire. Finally, to desire another’s desire is to desire to be the object of the other’s desire, in order to be recognized by the other as desirable or, as a subject of desire. 32

The subject’s wanting is always directed toward anything but itself. Subjectivity is always intersubjective. “If I hide from my desire for the other’s recognition, I can only do so by putting forward another in my place, an ego which the other is then bound to objectify because I have already objectified myself.” 33

The unconscious is structured like a language through the signifiers of primordial Others. 34 In contrast to “empty speech,” Lacan refers to “full speech” as ideal because it is closer to the real desire. Both types of speech however are based in a search/desire for a lacking object. 35 To listen to the complex subject of the unconscious carefully is to hear its motivations because this language reveals a mode of desiring of which the conscious subject is unaware. 36 The subject’s perpetual wanting and the dialectical structure of desire necessitates a dialogue that is not entrapped in the defiles of one’s ego. If the symptom is not speaking, speech can function to give one access to a desire that is uniquely theirs. If the symptom is speaking, Lacan views this as an absence of speech which “is manifested in madness by the stereotypes of a discourse in which the subject, one might say, is spoken instead of speaking.” 37
Lacan also links desire and death declaring, “that the desire of death was not sleep or the dream, but the awakening. You awaken to desire and that desire is death—who would not want to remain asleep, if only for a few minutes?”

Consumer research done by Belk, Ger, and Askegaard aligns with and offers an expanded and different perspective on Lacan’s orientation, especially in regard to discovering one’s self by turning to objects. These researchers allege that casting desire toward consumption of things can become a source of inspiration, transcendence, and redemption. They state, “Consumer desire, in all its destructive capacities, is also constructive and creative.” Their study on consumer desire revealed that the true target is that one holds out hope for a potential for self-transformation—a desire that is ultimately non-material. They also assert that the subject’s inherent motivation could possibly be a quest for transcendent sacredness.

Researcher’s conducted a cross-cultural study collecting data from people in urban environments in the United States, Turkey, and Denmark. Their phenomenological account of consumer’s experienced desire used qualitative and interpretive methods and captured fantasies, dreams, and visions of desire from participants who also freely associated desire with other constructs such as admiration, intense wanting, and longing. Phenomenologically, they found that when participants focused their consciousness on a desired object, the interplay of imagination and bodily feelings—experienced as passion and as a highly positive emotional state—was palpably felt and permeated one’s whole existence. The fundamental appeal of desire was in the promise of the achievement of an altered state, which lends a great deal of transformative power to the desired object. The researchers point out that, “in each case the desire is to escape to something far better, to
a life diametrically opposed to the one currently being lived, to a condition of sacredness that transcends the profane present.”  

Researchers believe that “the phenomenon of desire originates from and is perpetuated in the imagination, even if it seems that the thing desired has some magical ability to arouse these feelings in and of itself.”

Researchers found that a “desire for Otherness” evident in the desire for a transformation of self involves hope. If participants were passionately transfixed by a certain desire for an object or experience, either explicitly or implicitly, their hope would be that their compelling desired object would be a conduit to social relations, which included: obtaining desired interpersonal responses from other people, joining with idealized others, directing one’s social identity, and for becoming an entirely different person. Participants would hope to be supplied with the love, respect, recognition, status, security, escape, or attractiveness they desired. One seeks to be or feel like one of the others.

The data revealed that the self-monitoring of desire takes place since acting on certain desires can have dangerous personal and social consequences. One is forced to attempt to maintain a delicate balance between pursuing one’s pleasurable desires and how they may be transgressing their internalized limitations on what is appropriate social behavior. Desire can be stifled by its unhealthy practices and addictive behaviors or in the fear being perceived as indulgent, immoral, weak, or bad, by self or other.

Researchers also found that participants interested in an altered state and the hope that this cycle would result in a passage kept the cycle of desire alive. The cycle of desire is seen as a process that produces changes in emotion especially as desires are realized. The cycle initially involves self-seductive imagination. By building up sensory
anticipation for a consumer object, the imagination is fueled and desire is enhanced because sensation and imagination are feeding each other, which fiercely excites longing. For example, a young American boy desired a fishing trip with his father and family. He “inflamed his own passion” by rehearsing what it would be like to obtain the object of his desire. He purchased specialty magazines, listened to stories from mentors, and acquired “true fisherman” gear in preparation for what he told himself would be his first encounter with the “Great Montana River.” As an adult he recognized that his becoming an accomplished fisherman was a rite of passage.49

Researchers also believe that the re-initiation of the cycle of desire appears to involve a desire to desire. It is the positive nature of hope that leads to desire for desire.50 Desire is experienced more positively in its anticipation stage. After a participant had acquired a strongly desired object, they were left with negative feelings related to the experience of being disappointed with the object or feelings of emptiness due to the disappearance of the hopeful state that preceded the acquisition of the object. The cycle of desire could not be kept moving if there was no hope since hope was a motivating factor of desire.

These researchers suggest that the self-seducer within one yearns for control, yet wants to lose control to their desires.51 Not recognizing that they are their own seducer, people externalize the power of desire by thinking that the power lies in the object of desire itself. But, the self-seducer is a self-managing subject who really has the power. The constructive and creative aspect of consumer desire, in spite of its destructive capacities, is in the call to deal with basic existential beliefs implicated in one’s struggle between seduction and morality. In conclusion, the researchers suggest that, “rather than
envisioning reduced consumption as a necessary sacrifice, opponents of consumerism might do better by attempting to envision equally compelling sources of desire and hope.”

Harold Boris finds that hope longs to possess while desire aims to give and get pleasure. Boris theorizes that hope arises from misconceptions of how experiences should be. He asserts that when preconceptions and actuality are too far apart, hope can emerge separate from desire and have the effect of constraining desire. He explains this by arguing that hope fears fulfillment as much as frustration and consequently produces hopelessness.

Li Ravicz conducted a study on the human experience of longing. This researcher describes longing as a dynamic state of consciousness during which the awareness shifts among the following four interrelated themes: Reaching For, Desired Object, Barrier, and Bittersweet feelings. Beneath these four fluctuations of awareness is another state of consciousness experienced by the subjects. They experienced the As Is mode of consciousness concerning the phenomena existing in the world and the As If mode concerning any experiences or objects regarded as products of fantasy or imagination. These paradoxical interrelationships, found in the complex phenomena of longing, express and instantiate its transformational aims.

Anthony O’Shea, drawing on the work of George Bataille, argues that desire as a continual cycle of experience is the basis of the human condition. Bataille imagines an inhuman desire that desires only desire. One does not possess desire; it is desire that takes one, contaminates one with the sacred, but returns one to the profane world “not enough” for the sacred. Desire reveals the sacred as a transcendental immanence, occasionally
captured in experience rather than a psychic ideal. It forces one to socialize in order to communicate their experience of desire so that they may know, understand, and express desire.\textsuperscript{55}

Since, according to O’Shea, desire does not stem from the human, it cannot be controlled. When one transgresses society’s rules and taboos, one does not make the choice to transgress. As sacred desire strikes, one transgresses because of the excessive movement of desire, an experience that can later makes sense when returning to the profane.\textsuperscript{56} O’Shea links the experience of the transgressive nature of desire to death. “The profane social world with its rules exists to distance us from but cannot deny or negate death. Desire momentarily reveals the sacred, exposes us to death and places us beyond being and transgression.”\textsuperscript{57} Georges Bataille states, “We have in fact only two certainties in this world—that we are not everything and that we will die.”\textsuperscript{58} Beside the experience of the certainty of death, he says one also suffers from a fear of death.\textsuperscript{59} O’Shea makes sense of this fear as he relates it to one’s separation from the natural world due to one’s attempt to negate or deflect the violence of the natural world.\textsuperscript{60}

The review of the literature in this subcluster, Psychoanalytic Theory, brings forth Freud’s subject and all its instincts stored in primary narcissism. This falls under the umbrella of Eros (the sexual instinct), an instinct common to both God and man, and is related to developing the true purpose of an individual’s life. Lacan places desire in an intersubjective context as he recognizes a hidden subject of the unconscious, which finds the meaning of its desire in the desire of the Other as it works to be recognized and desired by the other.
Research also revealed passionate desire for consumer objects linked to individuation, rebirth, and hope for an ideal object envisioned as a transformed and ideal self. Loss of desire for consumer objects equals a state of hopelessness experienced as practically the same as death. Hope is the motivating factor of desire. It keeps the cycle of desire moving. Hope leads to desire for desire. As one awakens to desire, it momentarily reveals the sacred and places one beyond transgression. Here one discovers that desire is metaphorical death. Fear of death can result, which can impede the movement of desire. Also, if the death instinct is allowed to operate impacted by the Nirvana principle, where a state of constant gratification is always desired, the lack of felt tension will produce a state without want, which stops the movement of desire.

**Jungian Theory**

This subcluster, Jungian Theory, focuses on the work of Jung. Jung’s subject as Self, as source of psychic energy of which every desire is a phenomenon is discussed. Jung posited that every desire can be understood as a phenomenon of psychic energy and thought of it as analogous to physical energy, a continuous life urge. When he speaks of libido, he means psychic energy. This psychic energy, by nature daimonic (both God and devil), is related to its psychological value. It can manifest itself as the self-preservative instinct, the power drive, as spiritual interests, the desire to learn, or the drive toward self-realization.

The source of this psychic energy and power that transcends consciousness is the Self, a central point within the psyche, which Jung conceptualized as the center of the personality. He also refers to it as the *supraordinate personality*. Individuation is the
innate urge in life for man to be himself. One’s individuality has an a priori unconscious existence, a peculiar and unique grouping and combination of psychic elements, which can exist consciously only as far as one’s individual nature is present and consciously distinct from other individuals and the collective psychology. The libido (desire) is the psychological energy in its natural instinctual form that first appears out of the unconscious and pulls one toward this development of a personality through discrimination. This all-embracing totality of one’s true individuality is inclusive of the idea that God wants to become man.\(^{65}\)

The psyche needs new understanding in order to develop the personality. The transformation of libido—that is, its conversion into meaningful activity through symbol—takes a continuous parting and uniting of two conflicting elements.\(^{66}\)

Jung believed that libido can become regressed and in some cases stay regressed for an inordinate amount of time, allowing no movement and manifestation of an inner will or desire.\(^{67}\) He conceptualized introversion of libido as a mechanism of the psyche that can be active or passive. If one is able to pay conscious attention to hints and whispers, the introversion of the libido is active—that is, there is a voluntary shutting of oneself off from external objects so one can attend to their subjective world.

However he believes that passive introversion is not voluntary. When a psychic process is conditioned by unconscious motivation, instinct is suppressed or repressed either out of fear of the very real external dangers of this world or of inner reality (i.e., the world of the unconscious).\(^{68}\) He posits that this fear is “the deadly fear of the instinctive, unconscious, inner man who is cut off from life by the continual shrinking back from reality.”\(^{69}\) Phenomenologically, a person experiences “a standstill (“I am
stuck’), a loss of energy and enjoyment (‘the zest—libido—has gone out of life’), or a depression.” The cause of this process of being robbed of energy is extremely obscure, and making it even more so, is that it is “complicated by all kinds of external factors and subsidiary cases, such as difficulties in work, disappointments, failures, reduced efficiency due to age, depressing family problems, and so on and so forth.”

When introversion of the libido is passive, one painfully experiences a lack of external objects and is forced to seek substitutes in one’s own psyche because they are unable to restore to the object the libido streaming back from it. There is no movement and manifestation of an inner will or desire. Real solutions are rejected for fantastic internal substitutes. One can spend as much time as one would like engrossed in mere imagery or active observation of fantasy, but it will be to no effect if there is no vivid libidinal participation. Jung said,

The world is empty only to him who does not know how to direct his libido towards things and people, and to render them alive and beautiful. What compels us to create a substitute from within ourselves is not an external lack, but our own inability to include anything outside ourselves in our love.

Jung believes that the disposable libido must be detached from the thought, leaving the libido wholly objectless, no longer related to anything that could be a content of consciousness so it can be freed to sink into the unconscious, “where it automatically takes possession of the waiting fantasy material, which it thereupon activates and forces to the surface.” One willfully prefers to repress this urge that prefers the present, leading one to overlook and avoid unpleasant facts.

Jung suggests that determining the quality of one desire from another, whether exalted longing or human passion, both are the objects of a passionate desire. He said, “(I)t remains to be seen whether the nature of the object alters the quality of the libido, or
whether it is the same desire in both cases, i.e., the same emotional process.” The object desired holds some importance, but how important depends on what kind of desire it is inwardly. Jung links the quality of desire with values. He said,

The quality of the desire is important because it endows its object with the moral and aesthetic qualities of goodness and beauty, and thus influences our relations with our fellow men and the world in a decisive way … Values are chiefly created by the quality of one’s subjective reactions. This is not to deny the existence of objective values altogether; only, their validity depends upon the consensus of opinion.

Whereas Freud held a personalistic view of psychic events, Jung says that it is the gods who have great desire, interest, and investment in co-creating with man the psychic conflict needed to come to terms with one’s inner life and that establishes the connection between God and man. He implies that man does not have total conscious control of his libido. He says that anything psychologically powerful is invariably called God. He adds that it is Love, the power of fate par excellence and one of the mightiest movers of humanity, as it is the instinct most deeply rooted in human nature, that is common to both. And if “God is a psychological fact that happens to people,” then it is human consciousness that reveals God. Psychologically, he recognizes that “God is the name for a complex of ideas grouped around a powerful feeling.” Intensity and power are the phenomena of psychic energy (libido) that make up this feeling-tone. For example, the images of fire, sun as visible father of the world, the great generative force of nature and light, are mythologically synonymous with God. They are material expressions of power and intensity for this psychic energy manifesting as libido. Jung clarifies his ideas relating psychic energy and the God-image in the human soul.

I am therefore of the opinion that, in general, psychic energy or libido, creates the God-image by making use of archetypal patterns, and that man in consequence worships the psychic force active within him as something divine…To carry a
god around in yourself means a great deal; it is a guarantee of happiness, of power, and even of omnipotence, in so far as these are attributes of divinity.87

Discovered from the reviewing of the literature on Jungian theory is that every desire is a phenomenon of psychic energy or libido. Jung’s subject of the unconscious is the Self, a supraordinate daimonic personality, whose every desire pulls one toward the development of a personality, consciously distinct from other individuals and the collective psychology. Libido can become regressed out of unconscious motivation allowing no movement and manifestation of an inner will or desire due to fear of real external dangers or of the world of one’s instinctual unconscious nature. Converting regressed libido into vivid libidinal participation through the unconscious symbol of the Self takes a continuous parting and uniting of two conflicting elements or opposites. Fantasy material needs to be forced up from the unconscious to consciousness and encountered psychologically. Jung equates the image of the Self with the God-image in the human soul (not God as such!). Coming to terms with psychic conflict in one’s inner life establishes the connection between God and man. Finally, it was found that the quality of a particular desire is related to values, which are chiefly created by the quality of one’s subjective reactions to an object of desire. This is important because these values influence relations with fellow men and the world in a decisive way.

Review of the literature in this entire cluster, Depth Psychological Perspectives on Desire, revealed that desire is a phenomenon of a powerful form of energy (libido) or life force, an irresistibile compulsion demanding action, that can include transgression. Desire pulls one toward the true purpose of an individual’s life according to Freud, individuation according to Jung, and meaning through the desire of the Other according to Lacan. Research finds that passionate, consumer desire for certain objects or experiences are
linked to hope for a transformed self, which is achieved through sociality. Also
discovered was that awakening to desire links desire to death, the fear of which then
impedes desiring. Finally, Jung found psychic energy (desire) a power analogous to
nature and fire.

In regard to gaps in the literature, Freud viewed movement from secondary
narcissism to primary narcissism/Eros as healing. In Freud’s theory, libido is largely a
mortal biological proposition in the sense that Eros is only hinted at towards the end of
his life. While Freud contributes to important ideas about what desire is and what inhibits
it, he doesn’t speak to what desire may have to do with one’s Soul and Spirit life. Lacan
posits that desire is based on a desire to alleviate a lack, which is irreparable and he
names that which animates human action as ineffable. Acknowledging that one’s divided
part can never be fully known, he links its unfolding with listening to the desire of the
Other (the unconscious). He alleges meaning is made when one listens to the unconscious
Other and when desire is reciprocally recognized by each other. Yet he acknowledges no
connection to desire motivated by a divine impulse. Jung viewed libido as a psychic urge
toward becoming one’s Self, a daimonic personality, both God and devil. He theorized
that relationship with archetypal images would guide one toward relationship with Soul
and Self. He suggested that anything psychologically powerful is invariably called God,
but did not theorize about how the freeing of libido (desire) might be positively impacted
by implicit relationships between libido and Spirit.

Finally, cross cultural studies on passionate consumer desire find that the true
target of desire is the hope for a potential for self-transformation. Researchers suggest
that the subject’s inherent motivation could possibly be a quest for transcendent
sacredness. They, however, do not offer how this understanding of desire’s motivation as having to do with less tangible and less obtainable targets of desire can be more purposely brought to the subject’s consciousness.

**Desire, Attachment, and Affect**

The subject jumps from the frying pan of the mother only to land in the fire of the symbolic.  

— Henry Staten  
_Eros in Mourning; Homer to Lacan_

The purpose of this study was to explore how (or whether) engaging images and affects associated with stifled or unacceptable hidden desires would release one from the contraction of pseudoinnocence and lead to some psychic movement. Since pseudoinnocence is related to a sense of personal powerlessness, this cluster begins with the literature related to the mother and loss, since dependent attachment to her can stunt the unfolding of one’s autonomous desire, which requires action and power and an acknowledgment of death. This study also explored whether attending to shame would release a person from the contraction of pseudoinnocence. Pseudoinnocence is investigated because it is a defense strategy linking powerlessness with a desire to retreat from negative emotions. Affect and shame, in particular, are explored because desire enters awareness felt as emotion, which can motivate and fuel desire or subvert desire.

The first subcluster, Attachment and Loss, focuses on attachment to mother and how she can block her child’s struggle toward autonomous desire. Literature then turns to loss, which explores the fear of the loss of a beloved object (mother) and its link to fear of loss of self, negatively impacting desire. The second subcluster, Pseudoinnocence, includes literature related to powerlessness and other defenses such as psychic numbing.
that are attempts to deny negative emotions and stop desiring. The third subcluster, Emotion and Desire, focuses on emotion as related to desire. The fourth subcluster, Shame, explores a painful innate affect that is often linked with other negative affects that can subvert desire. Shame’s phenomenology and defenses are discussed.

**Attachment and Loss**

The first subcluster, Attachment and Loss, focuses on attachment through the work of Norman O. Brown, Bowlby, Maud Mannoni, Mary Watkins, and Omer that relates to mother and how she can block her child’s struggle toward autonomous desire. Imagination is explored because the pain of separation from mother is stored there. The review then turns to loss and includes the work of Greg Mogenson, Staten, and Butler who link fear of the loss of a beloved object (mother) to fear of loss of self.

Psychic suffering, according to Brown, originates in one’s need to deny the painful knowledge of dependence and separation. Suffering begins when the ego realized that it depends on the gratification of its needs outside of itself. These limits are intolerable for the ego. Brown contends that the denial of dependence expresses itself in the longing and desire for a blissful reunion with the mother. The experience of a subjective dream of loving union with the world, which is first experienced during that oceanic feeling of oneness in the womb of the mother, contrasts with this objective fact of dependence. One seeks a state of being undisturbed even by desire, which Freud described as the death instinct. For desire as free energy, moving about according to the pleasure principle, is preferred over the conflict of mental functioning. This death instinct seeks a complete cessation of tension and therefore leads to a denial of
separation, dependence, and death.\textsuperscript{91} This fixation to the infantile past is the core of the human neurosis.\textsuperscript{92} Brown finds that a price is paid by this destruction of the biological unity of life and death. “If death gives life individuality and if man is the organism which represses death, then man is the organism which represses his own individuality.”\textsuperscript{93}

One’s uniqueness and individuality cannot be lived. The resulting problem of this denial is a repression of Eros. Brown states,

\begin{quote}
Eros, on the other hand, thrives on obstacles to complete gratification, as Freud (and many others down through the ages) has reminded us. Eros seeks union with an object, but only after acknowledging separation and the otherness of the other. Thantos denies separation all together.\textsuperscript{94}
\end{quote}

Bowlby realized a correlation between the emotional attachment between mother and child, the experience of separation from, or loss of her, and its effect on the forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance experienced later in adulthood. He notes that the initial formation, maintenance, disruption, and renewal of these affectional bonds (attachments) produce the most intense emotions (anxiety, sorrow, and anger), which can result in an over-ready elicitation of attachment, resulting in anxious attachment or a partial or complete deactivation of attachment behavior.\textsuperscript{95}

According to Judith Feher Gurewich and Michel Tort, Lacanian theory recognizes that the child struggles to come to terms with the frustration of mother’s absence by organizing his experience so as to replace what is missing. The child goes through a process of finding words to name and control the loss and they represses the cause of their sadness. This repression symbolizes the leaving and returning of the mother and brings the unconscious into being. All of the signs and affects that unite mother and child go underground into the unconscious as traces that will continue to affect one throughout one’s life. The process of separating from mother needs to be repeated again and again
before it can be completely achieved—that is, if it ever is. Dependency on the Other, which is severed and perpetuated through these unconscious traces, continues to inform one’s desire throughout one’s life.96

Thompson posits that attachment behaviors that result from failed satisfaction deaden the desire for recognition as an object of the other’s desire and thereby leave one unable to ultimately discover oneself.97 True subjectivity, a coming to oneself, comes to flourish only through reciprocal recognition. Butler points out that the mother’s gaze, her self-consciousness is the first one of many who provide the acknowledging look of the Other that confirms one as a subject of desire. Butler suggests that the mother’s gaze must not be empty or competitive, it must discover, enhance, and reflect to her child the essence of its uniqueness in the form it inhabits in the world and of the forms it creates of the world.98

The mother’s fantasy and history, her desire and fear, according to Mannoni, are engraved in the body image, symptoms, and verbal and artistic expressions of an emotionally troubled child.99 The child’s desire must be separated from the dependent attachment to literal mother, because this attachment can stunt the unfolding autonomous personal desire that is key to the individuation process. Mannoni points out that, for Donald Winnicott, this two-fold aspect of one’s destiny, begins to take form in the “potential space,” or the place of the experience of one’s inner core, in which the subject questions who he is.100 Mannoni writes, “If there is no play and no maternal counter-play, the transition from dependence to independence is impaired.”101 A defensive armor is formed by the child, which puts the child at risk of developing into the echo of the
mother’s false self. The child acts contrary to its own desire stunting the process of individuation.

Based on Lacan’s conceptualization of the “I” as dynamic, divided, enmeshed, and active within the intersubjectivity of language and desire, Mannoni realizes that autonomy is not a given. She suggests that one must make one’s speech, emotions, fears, art, dance, etc., one’s own. This said, Lacan reminds that desire depends on prohibition; a lack is created in the acceptance of one’s symbolic castration, which in turn, opens out onto desire.

Feeling repressed and accepting that repression causes one to respond emotionally in a manner contrary to one’s own desires. According to Watkins, children develop an inauthentic affect because the mother, due to her own narcissistic wounds, needs to have a child’s desires correspond to her own. She will withdraw her attention and affection from the child until the child mirrors her intentions by producing a false but convincing affect, pretending that their desire is happily the same as mother’s. The child loses access to their own personal inner life, to feelings, affects, and emotions—to their imagination.

Omer suggests that the ramifications of the loss of imagination are paramount, as desire is energy activated through imagination. Expressive adaptations occur when a child is not able to imagine the traumatic event of separation into an experience. By remaining unconscious, the child will tend to underestimate cruelty yet exaggerate and literalize the terrors. Both truths and lies are assimilated into experience and woven into one’s personal story. According to Omer, it is the mother’s task to insure that the child experiences numinous attachment of love and is liberated in such a way that the event of
separation does not leave narcissistic wounds that block libido, take away wanting, and disrupt the depth, diversity, and cohesion of its experience of self. Omer warns that if separation from the parent is traumatic, the child can immerse into a lifelong depression or melancholia. This repression of the libido into narcissism leaves the ego poor and empty.\textsuperscript{105}

Omer posits that the re-weaving of one’s story allows one to experience the inherent multitude of personal desires that fuel personal power, allowing one to direct their desires into action and toward reflexive participation.\textsuperscript{106} Omer states, “The act of remembrance (undoing of repression) is not the abandonment of fantasy for actuality or the recalling of a forgotten fantasy, but rather the rejoining of fantasy and actuality through imagining events into experiences.”\textsuperscript{107} Pain of separation is attended to in this fictional rewriting of one’s story and identity expands as the ego accepts and deals with the multiplicity of desires and the disagreement between them.

Omer also asserts that the child wants to experience confirmation, recognition and acknowledgment of his true self, but they need to be able to experience the other in order to experience the recognition they desire. However the child is preoccupied with his own death, which creates his dilemma because awareness of other (separation) is linked to awareness of death. Omer asks the question, can Narcissus “learn to live without merging with the other or othering the other?”\textsuperscript{108} Omer expands on these ideas:

For a child, separation from mother can literally mean death. The child needs to emerge from the symbiotic merger with mother without being so overwhelmed by his growing awareness of separateness and mortality as to permanently recoil from participation; he needs preparation to embrace a culture of participation rather than recoil into the cult of Narcissus. This requires a steadily growing capacity for immortality symbolizations, which are decisively linked to libidinal symbolizations… Immortality symbolizations enable us to love life and living while simultaneously accepting death.\textsuperscript{109}
Mogenson posits that the painful experience of loss, from the psyche’s point of view, is the most generative for soul-making. One’s intuitive craving for the absence of what once was, sets one up for what ought to be. He recognizes the connection between mother, desire, and the infinite in his re-imagining of Freud’s narcissistic cathexis of libido as an extramundane cathexis of libido. He refers to it as a God, called by analytical psychology the self and by psychoanalysis narcissism. He states that this lost loved one enters our lives from the archetypal realm of the Gods setting up the conditions for the individuation of the soul. One must discover how to relate to it as Other, the true parent of the soul. Images of empirical mother along with father, grandparents, and the shades of all past ancestors act as a priori creative factors to animate and structure one’s current perception, cognition, memory, and affective states in order to move the soul forward in finding the divine Eros rooted in mortal Eros.

Staten contends that Eros will be agitated by the threat of loss as a mortal being feels desire for another mortal being. He refers to a dialectic of mourning, which he imagines as a field of movement that begins with the process of attachment to a love object, of which the mother is the first of many. He feels that all affective phenomena are determined by this promise of loss that the self would rather avoid and so economizes against strategies such as deferral, avoidance, or transcendence. The task of desire is to lift itself free from the lure of the reality of the object and set itself in relation to a signifier. According to Lacan, in relation to the mother, this means that one “jumps from the frying pan of the mother only to land in the fire of the symbolic.”

Staten suggests there is danger—that the mother’s essence threatens destruction in two different ways. One can feel anxious, overwhelmed, and destroyed by mother no
matter whether they choose attachment or separation in regard to her.\textsuperscript{115} If one stays psychically attached to her as libidinal object, and doesn’t transition from need to demand to desire, one will not become the true subject that one always was. Lacan calls this the absolutely inaccessible Thing, “the prehistoric Other that is impossible to forget.”\textsuperscript{116} However if one attempts to make that transition to true desire by giving literal mother up, the self by which one knows one’s self is also annulled because it has been re-appropriated. In a sense, it has been taken over by the “unspeakable particularity of the subject,” which comprises one’s true desire. A growing sense of this Object beyond specificity, from which one has been separated, destroys one as they know their self, which also produces anxiety, overwhelm, and feelings of death.

In the deepest sense at a radical limit, Staten believes that transcending mourning is related not to fear of the loss of a beloved object but to this loss of self.\textsuperscript{117} An intuition of unmediated presence presents a moment of great anxiety, a horrendous discovery of the body’s dissolution, its hidden secret. \textquotedblleft You are this … this which is the ultimate formlessness.\textquotedblright{}\textsuperscript{118} At that moment one peers into the most radical beyond. Staten points out that Lacan’s desire pulls one to individuation beyond that which matter can bestow since it is the pull to the very being of nothingness. Desire pulls one toward a symbolic death related to the way one knows and thinks of oneself. He believes that death is the undoing of distinction, the vanished immortality of the sexed individual.\textsuperscript{119} The feeling of a symbolic suicide occurs if one authentically follows their desire.\textsuperscript{120} Ultimately, the final revelation of \textit{You are this} occurs at the limit of all speech and all relation— “there is the frustration of all desire for self-presence.”\textsuperscript{121}
Butler posits that self-consciousness cannot derive an adequate reflection of itself since the structural similarity of the Other is not immediately evident because of its hidden-ness. One reads their personal negativity in both the physical objects and the human others they desire in the highly charged emotional way that they find them desirable, detestable, solicitous, or rejecting. She finds that these others, including the mother, mirror one’s ontological insufficiency.

Butler attests that this hidden-ness contributes to the feeling of emptiness and lack, which makes the first experience one has of the Other’s similarity one of self-loss. One is set up to search for that which would fill one up in order to alleviate the agitation and pain of loss. But this loss is not only related to what is thought of as personal “real other.” It is also related to the symbolic, the “the primordial and recurrent (non) substance out of which is woven Being-toward-death.” Butler thinks that phenomenologically, self-consciousness—seeking a reflection of its own identity—can find itself wholly absorbed by the ecstatic experience of the enslaving and engulfing potential of this powerful Other. This experience gives rise to a feeling of being consumed by the Other producing anger along with the ecstasy. She posits that this experience feels as if this Other has occupied one’s own essence (even stolen it) since this Other is like itself. Initial self-consciousness, interested in laying claim to its autonomy and thinking that freedom is its exclusive characteristic, is offended by the independent freedom of this Other.

This feeling of being occupied or enslaved by the Other can be described and confused in relationship to literal mother in her paradoxical essence as destroyer and life-giver. As a counter point, this conceptualization and the feelings related to loss of self
(formlessness) seem to relate to phenomenology associated with descriptions of the ineffable experience of mystics. However instead of feeling anger, ecstasy, and fear of loss of self they experience feeling bliss, ecstasy, rapture, and exaltation. They speak of losing themselves in a sublime sense of union, a place where a total satisfaction of desires is experienced.

Researchers Andrew Newberg and Eugene D’aquili used SPECT scans to study the brains of meditating Buddhists and Franciscan nuns at prayer. At the most intense mystical moment of a Buddhist’s meditation the subject described a deeper, simpler part of himself emerging, an inner truer part of him that never changes, experienced as literal, constant, and real. When preoccupations such as worries, fears, and desires are stripped away, this inner self, experienced as inextricably connected to all of creation, remains. One meditating subject stated, “There’s a sense of timelessness and infinity. It feels like I am a part of everyone and everything in existence.” The Franciscan nuns described this moment as a tangible sense of the closeness of God and a mingling with Him. One nun said, “I possessed God so fully that I was no longer in my previous customary state but was led to find a peace in which I was united with God and was content with everything.”

The awareness of the usual subjective sense of self was freed from the sense of the spatial world resulting in a state of pure awareness stripped of ego. All of which one knows of themselves by their emotions, thoughts, memories, and unformed intuitions becomes undone and dissolves into the underlying pure awareness, one’s deepest, truest universal self.

From the reviewing of the literature in this subcluster, I discovered that the child wants to experience recognition and confirmation of its true self. As these theorists point
out, if separation from the mother has been traumatic, attachment behaviors that result from failed satisfaction block one from the unfolding of one’s autonomous desire. The mother’s gaze must reflect the child’s unique desire to them. The mother is the first one of many who provide the acknowledging look of the Other that confirms one as a subject of desire. If the child is not confirmed as separate from mother and autonomous, Narcissus teaches that they will not be able to experience the other in order to experience the recognition they desire. Omer acknowledges that awareness of other (separation from mother) can feel overwhelming because it is linked to awareness of death. Awareness of one’s mortality can cause one to react instinctively with fear and horror and keep one from desiring and participating in life. As a counterpoint, the developing capacity for immortality symbolizations allows one to love life and simultaneously accept death.

It was also discovered, through Staten, that transcending mourning functions to alleviate the pain of loss, which is related not to fear of the loss of a beloved object but to loss of self. Mogenson, Butler, and Staten determine that attachment to the empirical object mother keeps one from experiencing loss with its myriad of related affects. This is ultimately related to discovery of one’s true desire conceptualized by Lacan as “the unspeakable particularity of the subject” always represented by emptiness. Finally according to Butler, anger and fear are related to loss of self. However, a study supported that feelings related to loss of self (formlessness) can, through the ineffable experience of mystics, be experienced as bliss, ecstasy, rapture, and exaltation. These meditators speak of losing themselves in a sublime sense of union, which results in an experience of the total satisfaction of desires.
Pseudoinnocence

This subcluster explores the work of Rollo May and Omer who examine pseudoinnocence as a retreat from one’s power, which adversely affects desire. Explored is the connection of this naïve stance to denial of negative emotion and experience, evil, aggression, avoidance of conflict, loss of creativity, and loss of the original power of Being linked to self-esteem. Naranjo’s concept of psychospiritual inertia is presented as a parallel concept for pseudoinnocence. Next, as an example of how pseudoinnocence manifests culturally in the psyche, two studies are presented that support a connection between psychological variables that relate to right-wing authoritarian beliefs and political conservatism to aspects of pseudoinnocence and defenses against negative affect and the need to manage uncertainty and threat. Finally, defenses used to avoid negative affect such as dissociation and splitting are presented. These include Lifton’s concept of psychic numbing.

Rollo May describes pseudoinnocence as a common defense strategy using powerlessness to avoid admitting or confronting one’s power. Driving this defense is the desire to escape awareness of horrendous and real dangers inherent in the human experience, such as the endless dialectic between good and evil, joy and woe, both in one’s soul and in human history. Rollo May points out that powerlessness is a fixation on a utopian childlike past that parallels the innocence prevalent in neurosis. This strategy was learned out of necessity in childhood as protection from hostile, unloving, or dominating parents.

He suggests that this state of powerlessness is marked by an inability to accept responsibility for the effect of one’s intentions. Until one accepts that human existence is
joy, anguish, sadness, despair, affliction, misery, and wretchedness, they will not be able to accept responsibility for the effect of their intentions, nor recognize that their intentions will sometimes be evil. Destructiveness not recognized as part of self is projected onto the other. Jean-Marie Colombani uses the term “corrosive cocktail” in describing the mixture of power and clear conscience noting that one remains free from conflicting feelings of guilt or sin.

Rollo May attests that being more sensitive to both good and evil is a dialectic that is essential for one’s creativity, and requires an inner aggression within the self and against the self. He recognizes this as the daimonic at work that forces one into an internal struggle out of which comes creative power and vision.

Rollo May indicates that “power can be identified only with the original power of being itself, from which being gets its start.” Power is the source of self-esteem, and one’s being is made more visible only through the process of actualizing one’s power.

From an ontological perspective, Rollo May believes this power is the first of five levels of power present as potential in every human’s life, and one must discover how to be it. The second level of power is self-affirmation. If one does not affirm the significance of one’s own being with a cry for recognition in the quest for self-esteem, grief will accompany the lack of self-esteem. When self-affirmation is blocked or meets resistance, greater power is required to self-assert, which is the third level of power. If self-assertion is blocked, aggression becomes the next step. One uses one’s power to move into the territory of another and take possession of some of whatever is desired for one’s self. Finally, if efforts toward aggression are ineffective, violence can explode.
Rollo May also links pseudoinnocence with fear of death. In a neurotic way, fear accompanies growing into greater maturity because each step brings one nearer to death.

Naranjo’s concept of psychospiritual inertia is parallel to the concept of pseudoinnocence. Naranjo’s existential view of the human condition accepts that neurosis is a search and loss of Being. He posits that there exists a state at the core of all character orientations operating as styles of defense. The Greeks described it as accidia—psychospiritual inertia marked by laziness of the psyche and spirit or the loss of the sense of being so stark that one is not even aware that there is a loss. In theistic language it is a forgetfulness of god, a spiritual laziness related to one’s mystical core. Psychologically, accidia manifests as a loss of inwardness or interiority, a resistance to change, and a refusal to see. This state can be marked by a lack of fire, a phlegmatic lack of passion. He posits that the defensive loss of inwardness is expressed in the following ways: intellectually, through a lack of imagination and subtlety; emotionally, by a deadening of feelings; and cognitively, by a deafening to one’s inner voices, a loss of instinct. The dim apprehension of being-loss (a lack of selfness) motivates one out of deficiency to recover one’s sense of being that has been lost through forms of self-interference related to one’s character. He refers to this deficiency motivation as “a basic oral drive that sustains the whole libido tree.”

Omer recognizes pseudoinnocence as a form of fundamentalism, or a “misplaced attachment—a retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition.” Omer refers to this form of fundamentalism as something much larger than the different sects of
religious fundamentalism. It is “a human susceptibility that is trans-cultural, trans-historical, and a potential of our neurological makeup.”

The following two studies explore psychological variables that relate to right-wing authoritarian beliefs and political conservatism and provide a glimpse of particular groups that manifest some of the aspects of pseudoinnocence. However, these variables are present in all human beings regardless of political or cultural orientations. As Omer purports, this susceptibility is evident in the human’s neurological makeup. The propensities that show up in the studies align with descriptions of pseudoinnocence: the need to retreat from life’s difficult conditions, defending against negative affects, difficulty dealing with internal conflict, intolerance of ambiguity, impulse toward aggression, and powerlessness leading to feelings of helplessness.

The first study by James Crouse and Douglas Stalker traced back right-wing authoritarian beliefs and attitudes to psychological conflicts. These conflicts resulted from defenses against negative affects aroused by four impulses: the impulse toward self-preservation, mastery, sexuality, and aggression.

Next Jost et al. conducted their study through a meta-analysis covering 88 samples, 12 countries, and 22,818 cases. Analyzing political conservatism, they determined that the core ideology of conservatism is motivated by needs to manage uncertainty and threat. This conservatism also stresses resistance to change and justification of inequality. The psychological variables found to predict political conservatism were: death anxiety; fear of threat and loss; dogmatism-intolerance of ambiguity; lack of openness to experience; lack of tolerance around uncertainty; needs
for order, structure, and closure; and system instability. Integrative complexity and self-esteem were negatively correlated.\textsuperscript{151}

Lifton defines psychic numbing as a protective survival mechanism that arises when one is confronted with difficult experiences or horrific situations, including death. One suddenly ceases to feel anything, deciding to shut off the mind through psychic numbing. However, it becomes maladaptive and threatens survival in situations where one possesses the capacity to deal with their experience successfully by partaking of the process of creating and re-creating images and forms within the mind. He defines it as, “A form of desensitization, an incapacity to feel or confront certain kinds of experience, due to the blocking or absence of inner forms of imagery that can connect with such experience.” \textsuperscript{152}

Splitting, according to Thompson, is a mechanism that the subject of desire uses in order to relieve one’s self from the burden of desire. Splitting arises from one’s ambivalence of the inherent split at the core of one’s being between desire and the ego. The ego takes on the role of protecting the subject of desire by eliminating unbearable frustrated desire through replacing it with illusory salvation, what Thompson describes as, “imaginary machinations of his egoic identity.” Thompson recognizes this as a form of murder, the split between life and death.\textsuperscript{153}

Nathanson links dissociation to the avoidance of negative affect. He posits that intense noxious and negative affect can overwhelm and push one beyond the limits of tolerance. He notes that these affects are so intense and enduring that one reaches a point where normal distractions will not work to alleviate the painful experience. One must ameliorate the experience by moving into something else such as alcohol, drugs, food,
consumption of material goods, or immersion in addictive physical activity. This avoidance or shift in consciousness happens, he believes, through dissociation.¹⁵⁴

Discovered in the review of this cluster is Rollo May’s concept, pseudoinnocence, as a condition of powerlessness. It is a childlike defense strategy used to avoid taking responsibility for one’s intentions. It is due to a wish to deny awareness of horrendous and real dangers, internal conflicts, and to avoid negative affect that arises in the psyche when one is faced with the use of their power. The defenses of psychic numbing, splitting, and dissociation are used to ameliorate the negative affect and support pseudoinnocence. Desire is thus negatively affected: one does not confront the personal power that is necessary to provide action to manifest desire which ultimately keeps one from connection with important others in one’s life and therefore desire. Denying personal power negatively impacts self-esteem. Similarly, Naranjo’s psychospiritual inertia manifests as a loss of inwardness, resistance to change, and a refusal to see, which is so stark that one is unaware that there even is a sense of a loss of Being.

**Emotion and Desire**

The gods are strewn throughout the world as the emotion in things, awaiting to be remembered. The re-remembering cannot take place directly; it must take place through Eros who alone can connect each thing with its god. That is, the emotion of each thing needs to be given back to Eros who connects it with its appropriate divinity. Eros, in this sense, is the image-maker.¹⁵⁵

—Robert Sardello, in Joann Stroud

*The Bonding of Will and Desire*

This subcluster, Emotion and Desire, explores the work of Gerald G. May, Woodman, Thompson, Nathanson, Omer, Stewart, and Hillman. They conceive that desire enters awareness felt as an emotion, transforms to a mental event that causes
disturbed perception, and then subverts desire. Gerald G. May links emotion to desire and equates desire with attachment. Woodman discusses the contrast between emotion and the personal defining quality of feelings related to one’s Being-ness. Thompson speaks to how emotion deadens the desire for recognition as the object of the other’s desire. Omer and Nathanson each offer concepts of transformative scripts and imaginal structures. Stewart contributes a model of emotions regarding the existential and spiritual crises of life. And finally, Hillman views emotions as transhuman imaginations of desire valuable for transformation.

Gerald G. May defines desire as “what characteristically attracts and repels us; the things we hope for and the things we fear; what gives us pleasure and pain.” Desire enters awareness felt as an emotion, and over time it becomes a state of mind with its own set of expectations and intentions that can cause disturbed perception. He posits that all emotions can be traced to desires or fears. The psychological response to these desires is referred to as attachment—either to a desire for or fear of an object or person.

Thompson understands that affect has a profound effect on desire because it motivates. Conversely affect also has the power to produce limitations in human development. Both positive and negative emotions become “a substitute for the gap that desire demands to be reckoned with.” He posits that emotions are basically “defense mechanisms” because their purpose is to transform a desire by destroying it. In the negative sense, emotions transform desire by denying it, in the positive sense, by fulfilling it.
Thompson finds that emotions, when paired with certain mental operations, deaden one’s desire for recognition as the object of the other’s desire. For example, hostile feelings are often disguised appeals for recognition. One longs after what is loved, but emotions can get in the way to stop longing. Also “resentment brings deliverance from a conflict between impotence and desire by effectively subverting desire altogether.” In regard to resentment and anger, he adds, “While anger does not prompt the development of resentment, surely it occasions the experience of resentment, occurring, as it does, at those moments when our desire has not met its mark, moments when we clearly experience the other as an impediment to its realization.” The positive emotions in their innocent forms are available to help one to achieve a respite on the relentless path of desire, whereas these same mechanisms of defense can be used as a substitute for one’s encounter with everyday living.

Nathanson recognizes that humans experience an enormous range of possible emotions because of the transformative ability of Tomkins’ nine affects to combine with a variety of human experiences forming what he describes as higher-order scripts. As Tompkins informs, “The reason that emotion is so important to a thinking being is that affect controls and acts upon the way we use thought, just as it takes over or influences bodily actions at the sites specific for it.” Affects are the biological component of human experience whereas emotion is the biographical component. Nathanson’s scripts can be understood as “sequences of lived moments characterized by a variety of needs, affects, and responses.”

A different way to think of these scripts is to understand them as imaginal structures conceptualized by Omer as follows,
Imaginal structures are assemblies of sensory, affective, and cognitive aspects of experience constellated into images; they both mediate and constitute experience. The specifics of an imaginal structure are determined by an interaction of personal, cultural, and archetypal influences. These influences may be teased apart by attention to the stories that form personal character and the myths that shape cultural life. During the individuation process, imaginal structures are transmuted into emergent and enhanced capacities as well as transformed identity.  

From an archetypal perspective, Stewart understands that affects make us who we are and who we can become. Through the innate function of the archetypal imagination, affects develop from their source (the primal self) toward their goal (the realized self). Evolving as a kind of self-protecting system, “these affects sensitize the psyche to the fundamental existential and spiritual crises of life, namely: loss of a loved one (grief); the unknown (fear); threat to autonomy (anger); rejection (contempt/shame); and the unexpected (startle).”  Joy and interest are the two remaining affects, a pair of opposites that flow into every aspect of life as the twin streams of the libido (desire), and when they “erupt in their extreme intensity as ecstasy and excitement, they may potentiate the archetypal imagination in the cultural form of a vocation in its original meaning as a calling.”  

According to Woodman, one finds out who they authentically are by sorting the seeds of one’s own feeling values and separating them from one’s emotions, the affective responses determined by one’s personal complexes. Emotions are momentary reactions to a situation whereas feelings are more directly related to what is important to one and is worthy of one’s personal energy. Determining and describing one’s feelings reclaims personal desire from that of the other, discovers their Being, and will give one the flexibility to be always Becoming. She indicates that the strong ego container needs to safely take direction from the inside, to listen to the thoughts of one’s heart,
opening up the capacity for one to know deeply the meaning and feeling value of an image and what it reveals to one’s understanding of oneself. Differentiation of one’s desire from that of the other allows for one’s authentic truth and results in the courage to take responsibility and to act on what one feels is true.\textsuperscript{173} Woodman links this capacity to the innocence of the mature virgin archetype, the mature feminine. She posits that in the virgin’s receptive world, one can relax into one’s own Being-ness, give up the struggle for self-identity, and allow life to come.

Hillman finds that emotion, while ungraspable, is the way energy appears to consciousness.\textsuperscript{174} He views emotions as imaginations of desire, which when the personal work of continually confronting the why of emotion can lead to transformation.\textsuperscript{175} From an archetypal perspective, Hillman believes that emotions are the theme of earthly life, imaginations of behavior, fantasy, intention, and desire. They are of major value because they force unconsciousness on their subject as they move the psyche to a deeper and epiphanic connection with the world.\textsuperscript{176} If experienced as a symbolic event versus blindly acting out, “wilder emotion can be tamed by conscious emotion … only through emotion can emotion be cured.”\textsuperscript{177} Conflict results as opposites are forced to clash, according to Jung, which gives purpose to the fire of emotion.

Discovered in the review of the literature of this subcluster is that desire enters awareness felt as emotion and that emotion motivates desire. But emotion can negatively transform desire by destroying it. Nathanson and Omer show that the personal cognitive story connected to prior experience with its set of expectations and intentions causes distorted perception (personal complexes). As Thompson indicates, when linked with distorted perceptions, emotions become a defense that deadens one’s desire for
recognition as the object of the other’s desire. Woodman ascribes to differentiating the momentary reactions of emotion from one’s feelings. She posits that feelings are more closely related to one’s values and therefore worthy of the energy of one’s desire, which makes them a guide available to aid in the discovery of one’s Being. Finally Hillman suggests that emotion appears and discomfort follows in the form of conflict and disorder. If one takes the responsibility to confront the uncomfortable emotional aspects and brings non-rational imagination to conscious conflict from blocked or resisted emotions, then new and creative psychic organization of movement occurs.

Shame

This subcluster addresses the literature on shame—a painful innate affect often linked with other negative affects that can subvert desire. Theorists including Nathanson, Michael Lewis, Tangney et al., W. Gerrod Parrott, and Gershen Kaufman distinguish some of the phenomenology of experiences of shame and guilt that are often confused. Next in this subcluster are the phenomenology and defenses of shame discussed through the theoretical lenses of Tomkins, Nathanson, Kaufman, Lewis, Jacoby, and Schwartz-Salant. These theorists concur in their different approaches that shame negatively and painfully affects identity and pulls one from their desire. Nathanson discusses shame-scripts functioning as a system of defense that result in a sense of a defective self. Kaufman links internalized shame with stopping the deepening bond between individuals and with shame-affect binds. Jacoby imagines shame as a guardian of dignity, discussing shame-anxiety and shame-desire. And finally Schwartz-Salant, archetypally relates shame to one’s relationship with their daimon.
Nathanson believes that shame can be confused with guilt. Shame is about the quality of one’s person or self, often associated with feelings of incompetence, failure, or inadequacy. Guilt is the emotion triggered when one becomes aware that they did something to bring harm to another person. It can also be triggered when one believes that they have violated some important code or laws.\textsuperscript{178}

Lewis proposes that shame is a \textit{total} self-failure in regard to a standard, goal or rule, accompanied by a total focus on one’s own feelings and oneself instead of the feelings of other. Guilt, on the other hand, is produced from a \textit{specific} self-failure. One feels badly about what they have done and their focus is on the feelings of the other, on how their behavior affects the other.\textsuperscript{179}

June Price Tangney, Patricia Wagner, Carey Fletcher, and Richard Gramzow recognize that shame and guilt are easily confused. To distinguish between the two, they compared shame and guilt with anger, hostility, and aggression in two independent studies. They found that shame and guilt are two distinct experiences in relation to anger and hostility. A person prone to shame was more prone to anger, suspiciousness, resentment, and irritability. They also had a tendency to blame others for negative events, and could express hostility indirectly (but not directly). A person prone to \textit{shame-free} guilt had an inverse relationship to externalization of blame and some indices of anger, hostility, and resentment. The differences between shame and shame-free guilt were the experience of the pain of shame and a loss of self-esteem relating to a denouncement and negative evaluation of the global self.\textsuperscript{180} Shame-free guilt, on the other hand, is a less painful affective experience because it is associated with negative behaviors that do not involve a negative evaluation of the global self. The guilt-prone individual’s response is
more often linked with the capacity of interpersonal empathy, which diffuses the anger and hostility and motivates restitution.\textsuperscript{181}

Discussed next are the phenomenology and defenses of shame as they relate to subverting one’s desire and one’s power. Tomkins, who formulated nine innate affects, said of the affect \textit{shame-humiliation}, “shame is inevitable for any human being insofar as desire outruns fulfillment sufficiently to attenuate interest without destroying it.”\textsuperscript{182} In anticipation of rejection and/or humiliation experienced in relation to acts of interest or toward contentment or desire, one can make a cognitive decision to reduce the level of shame by reducing the level of their interest. However, this contact-refusal limits intimacy and empathy. It operates as an innate modulator of affective communication. Shame shuts down the mutualization of the two other affects of \textit{interest-excitement} and \textit{enjoyment-joy} that power sociality. Shame also interferes with neocortical cognition (one can experience confusion to such a degree that one is unable to speak).\textsuperscript{183}

According to Nathanson, shame is a painful innate affect that pertains to the perceived value of one’s entire being, rather than to a specific act of the self, as it is linked to the fantasy of being exposed to degradation either by the other or by oneself.\textsuperscript{184} Nathanson says, “If shame creates a sense of a defective self, it therefore creates in us a sense of \textit{an other who sees us as defective}, no matter what that person really thinks of us.”\textsuperscript{185} Shame affect is presented in the form of a reaction pattern that an individual develops to modulate hurt feelings experienced by a \textit{jolt to the self}.\textsuperscript{186} It can impact love:

Shame haunts our every dream of love. The more we wish for communion, so much more are we vulnerable to the painful augmentation of any impediment, however real or fancied. To love grandly is to risk grand pain. Intimacy with the other validates the value of the self, and any impediment to intimacy causes severe injury to self-experience.\textsuperscript{187}
Nathanson observes that shame affect often is so intense and enduring that one reaches a point in which normal distractions will not work to alleviate the painful experience. One must avoid or shift consciousness through what has traditionally been called dissociation.\textsuperscript{188} One does whatever they can to draw attention away from a centrally damaged self-concept. He posits that one will tend to favor one or another of the following systems of defense: withdrawal, attack self, avoidance, or attack other.\textsuperscript{189} The systems of defense and the four resultant scripts make up what Nathanson describes as the \textit{compass of shame}—all of which are essential to the birth of the self.\textsuperscript{190}

\textit{Withdrawal} provides a rapid and total escape from the painful physiological events that occur all over the body. This includes flooding thoughts related to prior experiences of shame and the painful moments that accompanied the experience.\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Attack self} uses maneuvers such as ridiculing self, putting oneself down, describing one’s own actions with disgust, or exhibiting anger toward oneself in order to accept a moment of self-inflicted shame. One uses these defenses against self before the other can use them in order to prevent those painful anticipated affects and ideas of the other person. Shyness, deference, conformity, and masochism are forms of this defense that keep the shame experience totally under one’s own control.\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Avoidance} is a slow and deliberate move away from shame, as one chooses to turn to whatever might take the attention away from anything that might possibly produce more shame.\textsuperscript{193} Often due to a history of feeling unloved, there is a defective sense of self, which produces a self-inflicted noxious feeling that can only be overcome by improving oneself or drawing attention away from oneself. The concept of the self is false, which produces comparison, competition, and the impulse to borrow pride by identification with the efficacy of desired others.\textsuperscript{194} \textit{Attack}
other is indicative of thoughts that disclose information about one’s sense of inferiority, which tend to be mitigated by a stance that confirms that, “Someone must be made lower than I.” This comes from a learned trigger marked by feeling both “bare and unloved, suddenly endangered and in need of forceful protection.”

Kaufman recognizes that shame breaks the interpersonal bridge, a deepening bond, between two individuals that facilitates mutual understanding, growth, and change. Trust allows one to be open to vulnerability until shame blocks the mutuality of response imperative to feel wanted as a person for whom they really are. Rage and anger as a means to cover the ruptured self come out of feeling exposed. Internalized shame can become a major source of identity to the point that a trigger from another is not needed for the shame experience to occur. Conscious or semiconscious expressions of this kind of shame can be pervasive loneliness, feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, rejection, or feeling guilt-ridden or unlovable as a person. Even in isolation one feels deeply defective, never good enough as a person, which results in the internal shame spiral.

Kaufman also posits that when anger, fear, or even enjoyment is followed by a parental response that induces shame, Tomkin’s affect-shame binds become internalized within the emerging personality. A fear-shame bind is experienced when a child feels scared and the parent’s response is “stop that—big boys are not scared of silly things.” The child feels badly and ashamed, like there is something wrong whenever he feels afraid. Fear and shame are triggered together. The self feels so exposed (even to itself). This can even silence and erase the very experiencing of that particular feeling (in this case fear). Another example is the distress-shame bind that stems from the parent silencing a child’s crying or experience of distress. Sadness or hurt now activates shame.
When experiencing hurt, sadness, and grief (all manifestations of the affect of distress), the self will feel deficient.\textsuperscript{198}

According to Lewis, the cause of shame is cognitive attribution. The child moves along cognitively forming goals and constructing standards that stand parallel (in stark contrast or not) to what the child is actually doing. Shame is elicited through socialization by the parents and other family members setting standards, rules, and goals for their children, and by how they respond in evaluating their child’s performance or violation of some standard or rule. The things said may follow them into adult life along with a shame-based identity.\textsuperscript{199}

Jacoby says, “self-esteem refers to the worth or dignity that one ascribes to oneself.”\textsuperscript{200} He posits shame is the guardian of dignity, the preserver of personal integrity. Any type of questionable or undignified behavior experienced as degrading will evoke shame-anxiety. He suggests that this shame-anxiety is “the fear of being shamed through one’s own fault, one’s own carelessness, adverse circumstances, or ‘coming on too strong’ to others.”\textsuperscript{201} Fear of shaming experiences can lead to the reactions of excessive shyness or inhibition.\textsuperscript{202} Shame-desire is another inhibiting phenomenon described by Jacoby. It is the mixing of shame with desire (e.g., when one suddenly finds oneself complimented and the center of attention), one can feel embarrassed along with a narcissistic rush of delight. Shame-desire expresses the conflict, which is the ambivalence experienced in that sudden moment of unexpected, enthusiastic affirmation. One desires to be seen, but at the same time fears having that need become too obvious and cause shame.\textsuperscript{203}
Jacoby also sees humiliation as another variation of shame, which is felt more acutely than embarrassment or shame-desire. Humiliation is the loss of autonomy and free will. It is oppression by those who wield power and is linked to experiences of power and powerlessness. Often at the base of this experience is an overpowering person who has violated or held open disdain for one’s human dignity. For example, Jacoby speaks to the humiliation from emotional or physical rape as *shame beyond measure*.

According to Jacoby, Adam and Eve took action by searching for a remedy for their nakedness and painful feelings of shame, which resulted in their first creative act—the creation of protective clothing—when they decided not to remain helplessly subject to shame. They had a capacity to alter what is given by nature, which shows that shame, like anxiety can be imagined as a creative driving force of civilization.

Jacoby also links this story with the idea that humanity took a fall from unity with nature, which keeps man from enjoying the condition of acting naturally in relation to that which is natural. God knew that the sin of consciousness had taken place. Their nakedness was now an awareness of interpersonal distinction, which resulted in a loss of paradisal “unitary reality.” This gave birth to the process of individualization. Jacoby suggests that differentiation has occurred between a consciousness centered in the ego and a consciousness of *something larger within us*. Adam now recognizes that God is a power separate from him. From the Gods’ perspectives, a certain amount of “god-likeness” is present within humans as a result of knowledge of good and evil. But from the human’s perspective, this growth in consciousness makes him fearfully uncomfortable of the limitations he feels before God, a nakedness that creates a fear of being subjugated to something larger and more powerful. The ego, without humility and
consciousness of its limits, can fall into delusions and fantasies of grandiosity. Jacoby posits that as an alternative, the ego would be better off standing in relationship with that something larger within one, the Self and a self-confidence in the deepest sense.

Schwartz-Salant relates shame to one’s relationship with their daimon. He attests that shame is a response to failing to attain an ideal state, and may indicate a lack of attending to the desires of the daimon. The darker emotions, such as shame, are not only about what others might think, but are also a signal that one is failing to recognize the demands of one’s inner self.

From an archetypal perspective revealed through the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Demeter-Persephone myth, Schwartz-Salant suggests that the inevitable and natural loss of the transcendent Self-connection naturally drives man to regain it in any number of ways including mystical, philosophical, or psychological endeavors. However, too much loss of the Self generates extreme vulnerability to the negative archetypal emotions, such as Demeter’s grief and rage over the loss of Persephone. The narcissistic character defends against (avoids) these dark emotions of fear, grief, rage, depression, and suffering. The unconscious becomes split. The psychic unconscious carries imagery and spiritual value while the somatic unconscious is largely the residue of emotions. Schwartz-Salant indicates that the essential belief of the Eleusian way is that these dark emotions are of immense value. Only through these dissolving energies is an embodied soul gained. Otherwise one is left with the disembodied way of mystical ascent or the narcissistic solutions of idealization and grandiose control.

Schwartz-Salant speaks to the compassion needed to deal with these painful strong emotions related to that which is important to one’s inner self.
The darker states of despair, loss, failure, pain, and suffering are important creative features of life. Whereas the untransformed sun of narcissism only knows inflated or deflated values, the purified sun represents a state in which defensive idealization is transformed into compassion for one’s own and another’s imperfection. In the light of compassion, guilt, anxiety, and shame cease to be linked to what others may think of one. Instead, seen through compassion, these emotions signal to the ego its failure to recognize and relate to the demands of the inner self.\(^2\)

Through different theorist’s lenses in this subcluster, it was discovered that shame is experienced when one shows interest or desire for the other expecting mutuality or connection that is not returned. One’s emerging sense of self feels abandoned, most often through early parental responses that have evoked shame. But interest in, and desire for, promises of eventual joy does not go away, even though the desired other feels strange and alienating. Inhibition and susceptibility to shame grow along with defenses and emerging fantasies, especially those of a defective sense of self, which then limit sociality. Desire is subverted, as one feels ashamed to have had any needs for mutuality in the first place and then decides in the future to keep those desires to one’s self.

Also discovered is the interlinking archetypal relationship between shame, fear of power, and one’s human nature. First, Jacoby finds that a growing consciousness of something larger within us creates fear and discomfort in the face of the shame and limitations one feels in comparison to this deepest level of self-confidence. It is ego’s fear of being subjugated to something larger and more powerful. Next, he found that shame protects one’s dignity. At the same time, shame creates a restraint that can yield a creative response so that one does not remain helplessly subject to shame. One has inherent drive and capacity to creatively alter what is given by nature. And finally, Schwartz-Salant links shame with one’s lack of response, one’s failure to attain an ideal state. Shame is connected to the ego’s failure of attending to demanding desires of the
daimon (Inner Self) signaled by the darker emotions. With this conceptualization he is positing that shame is not only linked to what others think of one, it also suggests that one is failing to recognize the demands of one’s inner self.

That dependent attachment to mother can stunt the unfolding of one’s autonomous desire was discovered from reviewing the literature in this entire cluster, Attachment, Loss and Affect. Painful separation from mother negatively impacts one’s capacity to symbolize and accept death, which keeps the energy of desire moving toward the types of pleasure that will never satisfy desire. It was also discovered that one’s attempt to transcend mourning in order to alleviate the pain of loss and related affects of anger, fear, and ecstasy is linked not to fear of the loss of a beloved object (mother as first empirical object) but to a deeper symbolic fear of loss of self. Also discovered was that pseudoinnocence is a defensive approach to life marked by avoidance of difficult overwhelming conditions of life, especially through avoidance of internal conflict that is engendered through experience with negative emotion. Access to Being or power to be-BE is lost through this naïve powerless stance, impacted by psychospiritual inertia and a sense of a defective self, brought on by shame.

In regard to gaps in the literature, it is understood that shame, along with its defenses and emerging fantasies, especially of a defective sense of self, limits sociality, which subverts desiring. Shame is also linked to turning a deaf ear to the desires of one’s daimon. Watkins, Gerald G. May, Naranjo, Hillman, Jacoby, and Schwartz-Salant recognize that power linked to affect is the power of Being. What the literature does not address is experienced-based research that attends to active relationship with this Being or daimon. Neither does the literature address any liberating effect that it, along with
acknowledgement of negative affect, including shame, has on subverted power (pseudoinnocence) and stifled desire.

**Imaginal Approaches to Desire**

Desire is a way of dwelling with the earth, as the word-story, the etymology, of “desire” itself shows. The word “desire” is related to *con-siderae*, meaning “a careful observation of the stars.” To gaze upward simultaneously gives consideration to the ground on which we stand. The constellations passing overhead bring the experience of time to earth. *De-sire* means “away from the stars” and thus establishes desire as the return to earth taken up as a reflection through the heavens. Desire then is our place between heaven and earth.215

—Robert Sardello cited by Aftab Omer

*Narcissus’ Dilemma: Towards a Culture of Participation*

The purpose of this study was to explore whether engaging imagery and affects associated with participants’ unacceptable hidden desires (stifled desire) would lead to more freedom and focus in their desiring. All desires and the personal desired outcomes that they are directed toward are not equal when it comes to liberating desire and producing a fully engaged powerful self. Literature related to perversion, daimon, myth, and spirit that contribute to an expanded concept of the limits of the self and its capacities were explored. There are four subclusters in this section. The first subcluster, The Perverting Image, explores images related to perversion because of the emotional power the perverted image has to stir darker feelings related to desire. In the second subcluster, Daimon, the daimon’s link to the self’s realization is explored. The third subcluster, Myth, discusses the myths of Demeter/Persephone and Empedocles, which link underworld imagery, nature, and fire to the self and desire. In the fourth subcluster, Imagination of Desire: Imaginal World of Autonomous Spirit, an expanded radical vision of the conceptual limits of the Self and its desire are explored.
The Perverting Image

In the broadest sense, literature on perversion is included because perversion is not relegated to sexual relations alone. It exists in any form of social activity. It is a solution that helps one to avoid their human destiny. It is a solution that helps one re-find that destiny. The perverted image has the emotional power to stir darker feelings, which give desire more effect than it would have in a cultural world that attempts to constrain desire because of the indescribable fear that the force of Eros can elicit. The link between the symbolic role of fantasies behind perversions and the freeing of desire are explored in the first part of the subcluster. Moore, Hillman, and Grotstein talk about the intelligence inherent in perversions that relates to one’s individuation through imagination. Chasseguet-Smirgel links perversion with avoidance of inescapable reality. Thompson, Bader, and Stoller connect perversions to the lack of relationship with oneself and a failure of intimacy. Bader and Stoller focus on the symbolic role of sexual fantasies constructed to counteract psychological variables that stifle desire.

Discussed next is the healing potential of the perverted image citing the imagination of artists Barney and the Marquis de Sade. The role of perversion that allows desire to take one beyond narrow limits is also addressed. Chasseguet-Smirgel and Nancy Spector speak to the power of Barney’s imagination, the dark images that provide meaning for self, culture, and the Oedipus myth. Octavio Paz and Hillman explore the link between Sade’s expression of perverse desire and an exasperated deadening imagination, loss of freedom, and security.

In the spirit of the mythologist and doctor of the soul, the Marquis de Sade, Moore says, “If nature has placed some desire or behavior in our hearts then in some way
He asks two thought-provoking questions, “When the heart is freed from its benevolent captivity in ordinary reality, then what does it want? Where does its freedom take it?” Moore draws on the imagination and unique nature of de Sade. Because of its primeval emotional power to stir one’s feelings of revulsion and disgust, he finds the perverting image gives desire more effect than it would have in an actual world governed by fear of desire. Moore believes Sade shows how important the erotic delights of the “life-giving but ill-mannered heart” are to desire and sexual attraction in his recognition that individual and collective sexual fantasies symbolically depict the human psyche.

Sade’s characters would stop at nothing to track down their erotic needs, those turns of Eros, which most others would like to avoid or conquer in their sentimentality, Puritanism, or enthronement of the good and pure. Putting sexual fantasies aside, desire and longing for violence, love of power, dominance, submission, deep fascination in accident and misfortune, selfishness, argument, separation, addiction, lust, flattering for one’s own purpose, are all objects of the perceived “negative” side of desire that appear in one’s heart at one time or another. These dark objects of desire, if hidden beneath repression, can find life and visibility in one’s symptoms and fruitless behavior. Moore suggests that one must bring imagination to these perversions because they are being evoked by Eros to unveil the stirrings of love in places that seem void of it.

Grotstein identifies intelligence present in the perversions recognized as spiritually motivated. He found that the psychoanalytic study of psychic presences needed to be expanded to include spiritual, ontological, and mystical perspectives. These
aspects of the self seem to be superior in knowledge and hold a quality of unusual authority in comparison to one’s more ordinary self. The inner voice of the spiritual dimension in the later moral development approximates the deity and relates to guilt as well as to ideals. He points out that Melanie Klein envisioned an apocalyptic portrait of the unconscious in the way she described the ego, internal objects, the archaic superego, and the death instinct. Her conceptualization of the unconscious “more approximates the demonic (i.e., the persecutory), pre-guilt consequences of our primitive intentionality, phantasmal as well as real.”

Grotstein describes the demonic impulses of this primitive superego as follows:

Kleinians find clinical evidence for primitive superegos that are demonically impulsive as well as compulsive and that, at the same time, seem to impose absolute moral authority over the ego. The Greeks understood this paradox when they portrayed their gods and goddesses as corrupt and corrupting. Spirituality, in other words, is often ignoble, corrupt, and even perverse.

Perversion and individuation are inextricably linked. According to Hillman, certain areas of the psyche have been profaned and debased by attaching the term *perversion* to them. If one can embrace their psychopathic potential within a wider range of psychic space—find the fantasies in their inhumanities—one can then recognize in these images just what these propensities are striving to enact. Self-realization involves the long therapeutic labor of realizing in consciousness the psychopathic potential one prefers to call inhuman. This making of soul requires putting events through an imaginal process of any of the following: art, mythical speculation, alchemy, a free run of fantasy, or the pathologizing of depression. As one brings attention to the mythical background of psychopathy, one finds that one’s inhumanity can be tamed by dreaming. Self-acceptance grows as one becomes more transparent and freed from paranoid concealment.
In contrast, Chasseguet-Smirgel finds the pervert is the *prototype* for those who go in for falsity. The ingenious, artful creation of a false world of lies and illusions allows both the pervert and the normal, or neurotic, person to get around the inescapable nature of human destiny. They opt for the perverse solution—to deny or reconstruct the links with reality through the defense of idealization—replacing the love for truth with sham. This masks the self, acting as a balm for wounded narcissism and dissipating feelings of smallness and inadequacy. The perverse in human relations can exist in any form of social activity; it is not relegated to sexual relations alone.

Required for a perverse attitude, according to Thompson, is “the lack of a true subject of desire as an object of desire, a lack which is perpetuated through the objectification of the other by effacing a desire for their recognition.” The uniqueness of each person is not discovered, nor realized because, in the spirit of Martin Buber, one does not relate to a Thou. One evades deep encounters because psychologically one has difficulty in one’s relationship with oneself.

Bader thinks that fantasies are often hidden, playing a symbolic role in counteracting particular psychological forces that hold back desire. For example, a particular personality trait in another person, an air of arrogance or innocence, when noticed, can play a role in hidden fantasies. He states, “The stories we make up to ensure our arousal reflect the reworking of our core fears and wishes. Some fantasies seem aimed at guilt and worry; some at shame, helplessness, and rejection; and still others at the problem of over-identification and transference.”

Stoller noticed that the same dynamics were present in the erotic excitement and pornographies of everyday life in his perverse patients as well as his nonperverse
patients. Basically, he thinks that what differentiates perversions from lesser perversions is whether the erotic excitement that one experiences brings one toward or away from sustained intimacy with another person.\textsuperscript{233} He imagines perversion as the solution to a failure of intimacy. Non-perversion is defined by one’s acceptance of the selfhood, that is, the humanness of those one might need.\textsuperscript{234} This person does not fear that intimacy will lead to a merging that swallows up identity.\textsuperscript{235}

Stoller thought that perversions are habitual preferred aberrations, fantasies usually acted out, but occasionally restricted to daydreams. Perversions, an erotic form of hatred, are stories or scripts constructed to undo childhood traumas, frustrations, and conflicts as they convert early painful experiences to present, although fantasized, triumphs.\textsuperscript{236} Sexual intimacy can be experienced as threatening as one imagines danger coming from the anticipation of attack and humiliation. One is reduced to reliving traumas and frustrations never outgrown. Humiliation provides the excitement of revenge as a payback for others having humiliated one.\textsuperscript{237} Excitement is produced when hostility is introduced into the fantasy, and as a result one experiences gratification, rather than anxiety, depression, guilt, or boredom.\textsuperscript{238} Stoller points out that not all of erotic excitement has hostility. Also, what he refers to as the hostility mechanism in normal or minor perversions appears only as a trace element adding surprise, fun, and piquancy. He adds, “It works to keep pleasure from spoiling.”\textsuperscript{239} He explains the dynamics of how excitement can emerge only between two possibilities (poles), which limit a territory within which energy vibrates.

Beyond the poles are experiences not of anticipation but of consummation, either present or guaranteed. Excitement is uncertainty; certainty brings pleasure, pain, or no response, but not excitement. Beyond too much lies fear/terror/panic, one’s knowing something awful is occurring. Beyond too little is boredom. Straight
through leads to pleasure. The task put to us in the experiences we call aesthetic is to constrict the situation so that, no matter how accurately we move, we stay inside the poles. Otherwise we are uneasy or uninterested.

Chasseguet-Smirgel’s work regarding the healing potential of the perverted image is discussed next. She views perversion as one of the essential means that man employs to go beyond the narrow limits of his condition. In general, they are dimensions of the human psyche; the perverse core latent in each person, the purpose of which is to unsettle reality and push man forward toward the frontiers of what is possible. Many perverts are gripped by a need to create. The Sadeian assumes the position of God and creator by giving form to dark eroticism, and creating a new kind of reality through a process of destruction. To escape from reality is a defense from a psychoanalytic point of view. It is the perverse solution appropriated to avoid the pains involved in maturation. To unsettle reality, on the other hand, is a creative impulse that can result in a deepening of one’s complexity. Both of these approaches relate to the desire to not want to accept reality As Is.

Chasseguet-Smirgel points out from an alchemical perspective that man originates from primordial matter, which can transmute from one element into another creating a new kind of reality out of chaos. She links this belief with perversion, in particular with the intersexual disguises of Dionysiac rites. According to Mircea Eliade, these rites aim at “regression to primordial confusion … and their goal is the symbolic restoration of chaos, the state of unity without differentiation that preceded the Creation.” Furthermore, she hypothesizes that this confusion between the sexes and the generations often manifests itself in times of political and social upheavals. Hope for a new social reality appears to go hand in hand with an attempt to destroy sexual reality and truth. She describes a state of utter smoothness that is desired by closing the gap between the
insurmountable distance that separates the relation between parents and children as well
as the sexes. She states, “The dismantling of structures gives rise to a world of utter
smoothness, in which the subject can move freely, without hindrance, constraint or
asperity, recovering his place in a maternal body rid of all paternal contents: penis or
babies.”

Chasseguet-Smirgel believes that the impulse toward the desire for fusion with
the mother is tied to Lacan’s idea of Jouissance, that state of absolute voluptuousness, a
boundless ecstasy that “comes up against the prohibition of incest and castration.” But
the attainment of total sensual pleasure, similar to Freud’s oceanic feeling, is not
accessible and will never be attained by the human being. The utopia of Jouissance is the
fantasy of a psyche in which all organization is absent.

It is recognized in the field of psychology that the impulse toward a state of unity
without differentiation is in the refusal of the Oedipal impulse. Freud explained his
understanding of the impulse to regress to the anal-sadistic stage and its relationship to
the pervert. The anal-sadistic phase of sexual development represents a child’s attempt to
move toward adult genitality. Due to disturbances, the child defies reality and regresses
to the anal-sadistic stage. The ego splits; portions of the libido do not advance with the
rest and remain fixated to pregenital objects and aims. The result is a pervert—a person
who has desires exactly like sexual ones but who disregards their sexual organs entirely
or the normal use of these organs.250 Psychic pain disappears. One no longer has to
experience feelings of smallness, inadequacy, helplessness, castration, absence, and
death.251 Remaining regressed in the anal-sadistic stage enables one to avoid maturity
and subsequent normal development gained with the forward projection of primary
narcissism in the form of the Ego Ideal and its maturation, which rejects make-believe. Instead the pervert or neurotic adopts an alternative solution. They accept the world of sham. Their Ego Ideal takes a short path, “merging with the mother is going to take place here and now, without the need for evolution and growing up.”

Contemporary artist Barney, in his personal quest to overcome the strictures of the self and through visual narrative, explores the anal-sadistic universe and inverts many of the terms in the Oedipus story to expand it into a more contemporary creation myth. According to Spector, Freud describes this fundamental compulsion as the most extreme form of the pleasure principle, a longing for undifferentiation. Spector points out that Barney, through giving form to his personal quest to transcend the status quo, discovered that no short path to utopia exists. There is always an internal struggle. It is difficult to resist the inexorable impetus toward division with its accompanying passages from full ascension to complete descension.

Barney’s work in his final Cremaster 5 film “intimates that the descent may be false or that differentiation is a dialectical process, one state always containing and completing its opposite.” He drew on the creative potential of perversion in order to create this imagistic narrative to contemplate these conflicts inherent to the process of differentiation and the utopian promises of its reversal. Barney, through his five films and accompanying sculpture and drawings of the Cremaster Cycle, makes visible in images the abandonment of Oedipus by embracing the anal-sadistic universe of perversion. The ultimate potential of the human body is inherent in Barney’s imagistic narrative. As a former football player, used to disciplining the body, he knew that desire grows when subjected to self-imposed restraint. The Marquis de Sade said, “There is
nothing that can set bounds to licentiousness … The best way of enlarging and multiplying one’s desires is to try and limit them.” 257 This idea is linked to the integration of Lacan’s law of the father, which entails the process of discipline applied to raw potential. 258

All of Barney’s male protagonists undergo rites of passage that demand that they overcome physical and emotional constraints. Through his films, the feminine emerges more as energy to be absorbed and less as an impediment to be removed. Schwartz-Salant would distinguish that masculine, solar life finally acknowledges the power of Luna and recognizes that the power of the feminine is not only to harm but also to transform. 259 Similarly the patriarchal side of the Oedipal triangle is not played out in the identification with or the murder of the father. In the Cremaster 3 film, for example, the architect father figure is not killed off. Barney’s masculine protagonists who progress from candidacy to apotheosis, “allude to an outcome very different from that prescribed by Oedipal development, which privileges the genital over the anal or oral stages.” 260

On the biological level, these characters either have miniscule, amorphous penises or lack them entirely. Their anatomy points toward the male by scrotum alone. “As bodies without organs,” they hover on the edge of gender identification, propose the possibility of self-generation, and imagine a space without difference. These perverse creatures are successfully unformed; their testes are tethered with the cords of pure potential. 261

Separation, which requires differentiating, distinguishing, and naming oneself, proceeds as a requirement of the individuation process. Chasseguet-Smirgel believes that the ancient ancestor of The Oedipus story may be the creation myth Genesis in which the process of separation, division of the primal chaos, and naming is the main subject matter. This is also true of the Old Testament and the Jewish religion in which separation plays a creative role. What one names becomes distinguished from chaos. She sees
Oedipus as the main story to which all Western Civilization plots relate. Her connection paradoxically recognizes that desire directed toward a return to fusion with the mother and to that place where there exists no gap between the ego and the environment, is a religious impulse.

For clarification purposes, Huston Smith finds this impulse is universal to all human beings regardless of religion, or for those without one. Smith informs that this impulse pushes human beings to ask four of life’s ultimate questions: Where are we? Why are we here? What does it all mean? What, if anything, are we supposed to do? These are questions that relate to value.

The future promise of Oedipal desire, more than its prohibition, is unbearable. As Chasseguet-Smirgel says, “Even if it is said that desire is marked by a lack (a Lacanian concept), it is nonetheless the bearer of the infinite.” She imagines the relationship between Oedipus and Genesis as follows:

My hypothesis is that Genesis, which is a division and naming, is a projection of the early formative phase of the psychic apparatus. The pleasure principle can be compared to primeval chaos, fusion with the mother in a universe, which has not yet been subjected to differentiation and separation. Whatever impairs the original unity is virtually paternal in nature. The mind is in a state of “father expectation” so to speak, or we can say in Bion’s terms (1962), that there exists a “pre-conception” of the father.

According to Spector, the story of Oedipus Rex has been the ur-narrative of Western culture or the paradigmatic plot that defines all others. It articulates the formation of self within a patriarchal structure premised on binary thought, but in doing so, it sets up an unbridgeable gap between desire and lack. Spector informs that Barney’s five-part Cremaster Cycle could expand the Oedipal story into a more contemporary creation myth. “Born out of a performative practice in which the human body—with its psychic drives and physical thresholds—symbolizes the potential of sheer
creative force. The cycle explodes this body into the particles of a contemporary creation myth.”  

Barney’s perverse imagination has contributed to a growing capacity to find a way to look beyond the plot, to reach the other side of consciousness, form, or definition. This points to a capacity described by Hillman, “To desire and to see through desire.”

Paz notes that the perverted erotic acts of the Marquis de Sade’s libertine, which always require the presence of a victim or accomplice, is an expression of desire and an exasperated imagination. Libertines, philosophically, were the intellectual critics of religion, customs, and laws. The Spanish word *libertino* originally meant son of a freedman, and only later designated a person who led a licentious life.

Paz understands that extreme sensations and passion are not what the perverse libertine endeavored to experience. Paradoxically, through their lively sense of fantasy and driven by a maniacal imagination, they searched for a state beyond the law and sensations. They were able to maintain their imagination, and the tastes and standards of society did not have an effect on them.

Philosophers believe that moral sense, or the voice of the super-ego, is implanted from a higher source. As Moore points out, imagination can be confined and bound by moral narrowness, taste, and control of Eros, all of which squelch freedom. Sade’s vision was not one of unbridled erotic freedom. In his stories of perversion, he challenged a culture of limiting assumptions with its requirements of accepted ideas and attitudes that would promote this deadening of imagination. He was aware that the single safe idea helps one to resist against the subtlety and complexity of their unique life. It is only the internal world of one’s strange imagination that provides one with security. Sade’s special anima was the Persephone-like Laura, a darkly beautiful, decaying putrefaction of
romantic love. She was a mother figure that held his cravings for depth and the vision of the underworld, providing security that comes from imagination, not life. For Sade was driven by an aversion to the idealization of romantic intimacy and mutual caring. The heart neglected by the conventional attention to the romantic needed tempering by mood, desire, and meaning, which required the necessity of violence and destruction.  

This review of the literature on perversion revealed that dark objects of desire, if repressed and hidden, manifest in one’s symptoms and unproductive behavior. Grotstein calls this primitive intentionality linked with spirituality. Moore calls it Eros, the purpose of which is to unveil the stirrings of love in places that seem void of it. The perversion, depending upon its severity, can bring one toward or away from sustained intimacy with self and the other. Paradoxically the restraining and limiting of desire also enlarges and multiplies desire serving as a healing potential. As evidenced in the work of artists Barney and de Sade, when imagination is brought to repressed dark desires, including violence and destruction, desire is given more freedom, released from cultural limiting assumptions, and transgresses to where it wants to go. Driving desire is hope of reaching some form of utopia where there is no gap between desire and lack, a state beyond sensation driven by a craving for depth. This hope will likely not be entirely fulfilled because, as Barney discovered through giving form to his personal quest to transcend the status quo, no short path to utopia exists. There is always an internal struggle. There exists an unalterable momentum toward differentiation, a dialectical process marked by conflicts in which one state always contains and completes its opposite.
Daimon

All theorists in this second subcluster recognize the daimon as an innate image directly linked to one’s biography and therefore their desire. Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci’s research on happiness link the daimon with desire, which only then yields a sense of well-being. Hillman explores the daimon as carrier of one’s destiny through his Acorn Theory. Steven A. Diamond links the denial of the daimonic with habitual or chronic suppression of the intense negative emotions of anger and rage. Donald Kalsched conceptualizes the protective and persecutory form of daimon as the “psyche’s archetypal self-care system.” The poet Lorca recognizes what he calls duende as daimon linked to one’s creativity.

Ryan and Deci point out that the eudaimonic view of an individual accepts that subjective happiness cannot be equated simply with well-being. All desires, with their personal valued outcomes as pleasure producing, are not equal when it comes to yielding well-being. Rather, one must live in accordance with their daimon or true self. They operationalize this view three ways: 1) either as an assessment of one’s psychological well-being (PWB), which is based on six distinct aspects of human actualization including autonomy, self-acceptance, personal growth, life purpose, mastery, and positive relatedness; 2) as happiness plus meaningfulness; or 3) as a set of wellness variables such as self-actualization and vitality.277

Hillman’s Acorn Theory recognizes that people have an innate image, selected by the daimon, that lives their biography. These innate images are realized in one’s desire(s). Desire motivates the necessary interactions required for achieving one’s potential.278 Desire is holy because it touches and moves the soul.279 He says,
The soul of each of us is given a unique daimon before we are born, and it has selected an image or pattern that we live on earth. This soul-companion, the daimon, guides us here; in the process of arrival, however we forget all that took place and believe we come empty into this world. The daimon remembers what is in your image and belongs to your pattern, and therefore your daimon is the carrier of your destiny.\textsuperscript{280}

Hillman believes that Gods (archetypes, which are transcendent) together with daimons (complexes, which are immanent) contribute to all existence and are structured by imagination.\textsuperscript{281} Located in one’s emotional center, he believes one can converse with the daimon, as it offers conscious reason or verbal account.\textsuperscript{282}

As part of the Eros spectrum, daimons signify the “devilish duplicity of consciousness” and provide psychic intervention by instigating a pattern of action and then inhibiting it through its interrupting, redirecting, and symbolizing behavior in order to bring the psychic world into reality and furthering individuation.\textsuperscript{283} Through the process of individuation, which includes acknowledging the dark imagery of one’s personal torturing daimons, the soul comes to more deeply know itself as one attempts to lift repression from the inhumane aspects of human nature.\textsuperscript{284}

According to Hillman, establishing harmonious relationship between two parts requires an experience of ambivalence. This ambivalence is the natural consequence of returning to psychic wholeness. He writes,

Living in ambivalence is living where yea and nay, light and darkness, right action and wrong, are held closely together and are difficult to distinguish … Ambivalence rather than corrected may be encouraged toward encompassing ever-profounder paradoxes and symbols, which always release ambivalent feelings that hinder clarity and decisiveness. Paradox and symbol express the coexistence of polarity within the archetype, its plus and minus and the fundamental two-headed duality that is both logically absurd and symbolically true. Ambivalence is the adequate reaction of the whole psyche to these whole truths.\textsuperscript{285}
Diamond defines the daimonic as an energy that has the power to take over the whole person; it can be potentially perilous yet absolutely indispensable. Diamond proposes that frustration sets in any time the creative daimonic forces are habitually suppressed over a long period of time. If an individual, subculture, or entire society cannot express anger and rage constructively, according to Diamond, it will be acted out. If chronically suppressed, it will result in an epidemic of depression and apathy. He views depression as compensation for the absence of deep passion, which in turn, comes from conscious relationship with the darker emotions that underlie depression. Anxiety becomes a signal to the ego that suppressed unconscious drives, ideas, or emotions are pressing toward consciousness. He also refers to daimonic anxiety, which is manifested as a replacement for repressed anger and rage. He believes that the difficult battle between anxiety and anger/rage is rewarded as one courageously approaches these repressed urges to reveal new goals, ethical insights, and possibilities.

According to Diamond, how one responds to the relative truth of their subjective human experience through conscious choices made during the process of coming to terms with the daimonic, helps one to define one’s humanity and the being behind one’s symptoms. This being is not the ego; it is the wholly other inner One. He believes that one must be willing to take the responsibility to make an arduous descent to become more consciously aware of their personal daimonic inclinations and capacity for evil. One’s destiny is tied to this descent. He defines spirituality as a capacity to love the daimonic. Conceptually, a pseudoinnocent lacks the capacity to love the daimonic and experiences anger and rage as unspiritual and taboo. He clarifies:

When I speak of “spirituality,” I mean psychological growth and emotional maturation. In this case, spirituality is the antithesis of pseudoinnocence:
Spirituality entails the capacity to see life as it is—wholly, including the existential realities of evil, suffering and the daimonic—and to love life nonetheless.  

Kalsched explored the phenomenology of a “daimonic figure” encountered in the unconscious material of adult patients with a history of early childhood trauma. He found that, for the uninitiated ego, the daimon takes on both a protective and persecutory form as the “psyche’s archetypal self-care system.” Kalsched understands that the psyche responds inwardly to traumatic overwhelming life events. In order to survive feelings of total annihilation, it develops primitive dissociative defenses such as psychic numbing, splitting, projective identification, idealization or diabolization, trance-states, switching among multiple centers of identity, and depersonalization. He links the daimon and these defenses. It is the daimon, as defined by Kalsched that “appears to personify the psyche’s dissociative defenses in those cases where early trauma has made psychic integration impossible.”

Kalsched recognizes that this daimon manifests in the psyche as a dyadic structure made up of the mythologized images of the progressed versus regressed parts of the self (personified beings) in order to produce some breakthrough from the unconscious. The progressed part of the personality becomes a sort of daimonic savior-god as it takes on the responsibility to care take the regressed part by pulling the personality out of life in the world. This Daimonic caretaker attacks new life opportunities as a threat of re-traumatization. One part of the ego regresses to the infantile period remaining shamefully hidden as the innocent remainder of the whole self. Another part of the personality, which he refers to as the false self, becomes progressed. He believes that this false self grows up too soon and becomes precociously adapted to the outer world. Since it is identified with the mind, it can become over-identified with perfectionistic
ideals ruthlessly attacking and sabotaging the ego. This false self can take over and prevent all further experiences of dependency, which would allow for psychic growth and maturation.

Kalsched finds that desire is stifled by this personification of the daimon. Realistic danger is not faced as the child grows up. This daimonic protector figure operates at the original level of awareness experienced at the point of original trauma or traumas. Fantasy becomes a defense against dreaming and living. It allows one to live a dissociated life, while still seeming to engage with the other. He believes that the archetypal self-care system resists the loss of control over inner feeling states—reality is kept out of the encapsulated numinous world. One is not able to be with the dialectical tension necessary to generate meaningful experience. He feels that this leaves one both incredibly needy and proudly self-sufficient.

The poet Lorca searches for duende, a demonic earth spirit embodying irrationality, earthiness, and a heightened awareness of death. This spirit offering “momentary bursts of inspiration, the blush of all that is truly alive,” helped him infuse his poetry as he attempted to produce what he described as “poetic emotion which is uncontrolled and virginal, free of walls, a freestanding poetry with its own newly created laws,” and a world of mysterious images “without explainable causes and effects.”

The literature on daimon reveals an innate image that is linked with one’s biography, destiny, power, emotions, creativity, and therefore desire. Hillman imagines the daimon as an invisible innate image, at times darkly torturing, linked with the gods and realized in one’s desire(s) whose purpose is to bring one’s psychic world and destiny into reality through its symbolizing behavior. Personal emotion and feeling, inclusive of
psychopathic potential one prefers to call inhuman, is where this image makes its power felt. According to Diamond, anger and rage are daimonic images, if habitually denied and allowed to remain psychologically unconscious, manifest in violence, depression, anxiety, human evil, along with the loss of destiny, sense of purpose, and the power of the being or inner One behind one’s symptoms. Kalsched asserts that the daimonic figure personifies the psyche’s dissociative defenses by taking on both a protective and persecutory form. This manifests as both a regressed shamefully hidden remainder of the whole self and as a progressed false self. This figure’s intent is to save one from the threat of re-traumatization. However it stifles desire, by preventing experiences of dependency that allow for psychic growth and maturation. Finally, Lorca identifies *duende* as daimon, a figure that offers inspiration through uncontrolled emotion available for one’s creative endeavors.

**Myths**

The third subcluster, Myths, explores the self in relationship to fire, initiation, visionary experience, darkness, sadness, death, and immortality through the myths of Demeter/Persephone and Empedocles explored by Carl Kerenyi and Peter Kingsley. Next reviewed is misdirected desire in relation to Tom Cheetham’s link of non-descript sadness with a *receding divinity*. His following ideas are discussed: the impact of Jung’s conceptual lack of differentiation between soul experience and spirit experience; distinctions between two darknesses; and the conceptualization of a celestial personal Guide to help one approach darkness in dangerous disorienting realms where the divine and the satanic remain ambiguous. In addition, nature’s elements imagined as darknesses to be integrated as powers into consciousness are discussed.
According to J. E. Cirlot, fire is an image of energy linked to desire. It can be found on the level of animal passion and also on the plane of spiritual strength. Fire is an agent of destruction and regeneration.\(^{304}\)

The Mysteries of Eleusis is a concrete historical fact. Individuals, in their concrete reality, achieved an inner light by means of the outward ceremonies that prepared them for the accomplishment of the Mysteries. Kerenyi tells the story of Demeter-Persephone in which the goddess Demeter’s searches for her daughter Persephone (also known as the Kore) who has been abducted, raped, and taken as a bride by the underworld God, Hades.\(^{305}\) Meredith Chivers says of rape, understood strictly as a fantasy, “It’s the wish to be beyond will, beyond thought—to be all in the midbrain.”\(^{306}\)

A specific part of the story finds Demeter wandering in a state of mourning after hearing her daughter Persephone’s lamentations. Her grief turns to anger. She decides to leave the gods and go among mankind. Down by the virgin’s well, she takes the form of an old woman beyond childbearing years and offers her services to Queen Metaneira, who decides to place her young son Demophoon in the care of Demeter. Under Demeter’s care, he grows and thrives like a god even though he is not nursed or fed. Demeter secretly lies him down in a fire like a log each night. His parents start to notice his godlike appearance. The Queen secretly watches Demeter to discover what she is doing. The Queen is horrified and laments for her son.\(^{307}\) Demeter becomes angry, takes the child out of the fire in the hearth, and lays him on the floor. She reveals herself as goddess and proceeds to reprimand not only the queen but also all of mankind. The queen’s mistrust is an example of how unknowing mankind is. Demeter’s strange action of laying Demophoon in the fire would have made the queen’s son immortal, allowing
him to know whether good or evil approaches—a message specifically given to thoughtless humans at Eleusis.

Evident at the historical Sanctuary of Eleusis in the Telesterion was a curtain of fire (Persephone’s fire) visible to the outside world. This announced that an initiate had courageously chosen to go down to the dark fiery underworld through dream work, take the hand the goddess kindly offered, to die before they died, and to emerge with a vision. The vision of the Kore at Eleusis is of the innermost divine maiden that lives in the heart of all mankind. Demeter yearned for her own girl-child, the Kore. In the secret of the beatific vision, the Two became One. Initiates, both men and women entered into the role of the mourning goddess Demeter searching for her daughter. Great importance was attached to their unity, the questioning one and the found one. In these mysteries both men and women envision the feminine source of life. Those initiates, who received the vision through their subterranean journey, could now live life with a personal experienced certainty of her existence. The world above has been full of plant food and hope for mortals since Persephone’s descent and marriage to Hades in the underworld. She opened up the path to the underworld and joined heaven and earth on earth. If one participated they were guaranteed “life without fear of death, of confidence in the face of death.” Both the individual and the community could now live in joy and also die with better hope.

Kingsley notes that Empedocles’ cosmological poem identified Persephone with the element of water. She descended into the fiery underworld and subsequently married the fire god Hades. Her imagery fit together somewhat like a mysterious puzzle, with the other divinities and each of their elements (Zeus/air, Hera/earth, Hades/fire, and Nestis
also known as Persephone/water). It came together to form a creation process that lead to the birth of man and the universe as a whole. All of existence, for the first time in the history of Western ideas according to Kingsley, could be reduced to these four fundamental elements of nature.

Empedocles was supposed to have entered immediately into the world of the gods by voluntarily leaping into the fires of the volcanic Mt. Etna, thereby celebrating immortality in the fire. All that was found of him was one of his sandals thrown up from the volcano, which had turned to bronze—a tell-tale sign of his miraculous death. Kingsley states that the bronze sandal is the first symbol that directly links underworld symbolism with fire. For the Greeks, bronze had a special affinity with the dead, the demonic, and the underworld.

Kingsley posits that Empedocles believed that the source of daylight and illumination derives from the dark depths of the underworld. Empedocles repeatedly uses the visible sun as his chief example of elemental fire on this earthly plane. Fire originates in the bowels of the earth that eventually rises up to become the sun. Empedocles stated that one of his disciples learned from these ideas that “You will be able to fetch from Hades the life-force of a man who has died.” The dead would be brought back to life through an actual descent into the underworld.

Kingsley notes that one must be willing to go through an initiatory scenario of death, which includes descent to the underworld for a ritual dismemberment of the body followed by its reassembly and regeneration. The process asks one to not only confront their darker feelings and emotions and bring them to the light, but to go deeper through the darkness to what lies at the other end. There one finds the source of light that
is at home in the darkness, that darkness which is the supreme place of paradox where all the opposites meet. He finds that vulnerability is required to be able to face one’s over-attachment to who they believe they are. When one speaks from the place of experienced descent, going through death while still alive, there is something different in their words upon their return.

For death is the place where all words come from—like sparks that have their origin in fire. Then what’s said has a certain power, but not because the words mean something outside them or point somewhere else. They have power because they contain their significance and meaning inside them.318

Kingsley suggests that, “Our longing is so deep and immense that nothing in this world of appearances can ever hold it or contain it.”319 In not sensing that longing has to do with finding one’s own link with the divine, one’s desiring will be directed toward substitutes to fill the void. He points out that one attempts to satisfy desires with will power, struggle and effort, yet these never really satisfy. If one finds the courage to face their sadness, they discover that it speaks with the voice of one’s deepest longing. Kingsley is convinced that if one is able to stay with this voice for longer periods of time, one finds that it will teach them the way to attain what they desire. The purpose of depression is to call one away from everything one thinks that they want or desire.320

If it does take place at all in modern culture, initiation occurs in a different manner than in ancient times. For example, it can happen in certain psychotherapeutic settings, which function in the service of spiritual development or through transformative learning (a contemporary term for initiation).321 John Wellwood believes that if psychological and spiritual work were re-visioned as mutually supportive allies, they would be two vitally important branches to help evolve humanity towards its potential: the liberation and complete embodiment of the human spirit.322
Cheetham attests that ongoing, perpetual descent as the soul’s antidote to one’s pathologies of motion, emotion, restlessness, and drive is often not taken in this culture because it is too hard to descend into darkness and plurality. One would rather keep moving, running from here to somewhere better. Cheetham relates that deeply felt non-descript sadness leaves one unconsciously chasing after a receding divinity, which leads toward misdirected material satisfactions. He proposes that distractions, due to a lack of knowing how to seek innerness as well as the fearful and anxiety-producing estrangement from one’s body and from nature, keep one from descent.

Cheetham finds lack of willingness to take a necessary descent into Hades, what the alchemists called the Nigredo, is due to the fear of coming face to face with the dual terrors of annihilation and meaninglessness that is marked by depression, constriction, anguish, failure, and death. Cheetham suggests that the soul’s ultimate desire is to develop relationship with the Self, one’s Angel, and bring into being the celestial Earth. It is descent into the dark that offers a way out of the literal with the promise of more life. To be linked with this figure is essential because it is important to be able to more clearly distinguish the darkness of the abyss from the luminous Black Light.

According to Cheetham, the darkness of Jung’s Shadow is complicated by opposites—the polar presence of undifferentiated divine and satanic images, which then remain ambiguous and cause disorientation during descent. The consequence of the failure to differentiate between levels of being in the unconscious is that Spirit experiences can go unrecognized. One is then cut off from their Guide, who is the Image and the mirror laying dormant in one’s body that helps one gain experience so they will be able to intercept more light. It is prudent to have a Guide in darkness because many
opportunities come up as a result of ignorance caused by not remembering one’s true identity and where one should be heading.\textsuperscript{329}

Cheetham posits that initiation into the mysteries leads to the path of Resurrection. This is the mystical poverty of the ego, which has opened to the influx of its Angel that defines one’s individuality.\textsuperscript{330} This relationship provides attentiveness to the universe through subtle discrimination, silent attention with all the senses, and careful, watchful feeling. Cheetham notes that this attention becomes one’s moral center from which values are determined from a sacred, authentic, and most personal place within one’s psyche. This discrimination, having come from a matured sense of freedom and beauty, provides one with the capacity to refuse that, which is destructive, dangerous, and dominating.

Nature’s elements (Earth, Air, Water, and Fire) are imagined as undiscriminated darknesses of the psyche to be integrated as potential and powers into consciousness. Cheetham states that one is buried underneath these forces until they can differentiate and separate themselves from these darknesses. One does this by opening to them and by integrating the power and essence of each one of these aspects of Nature that relate personally to their psychic unfolding. The psyche that is found in nature, says Cheetham, “often has this openness to darkness as a kind of sadness.” He quotes Robert Bly,

> The psychic tone of nature strikes many people as having some melancholy in it. The tone of nature is related to what human beings call “grief,” what Lucretius calls “the tears of things,” what in Japanese poetry is called \textit{mono no aware}, the slender sadness.\textsuperscript{331}

Cirlot finds that symbolically, fire implies a desire to annihilate time and bring all things to their end, and makes it ultra-life. Because all things derive from and return to fire, the alchemists understood it as an “agent of transmutation.” It is a mediator between
forms, which vanish and forms in creation. Another aim of fire is the purification or
destruction of evil forces. Cirlot makes this connection and distinguishes between two
different axes of fire. Axis fire-earth represents eroticism, solar heat, and physical energy.
Axis fire-air is linked with mysticism, purification or sublimation, and spiritual energy.
These two different axes of fire parallel the symbolism of the sword. Cirlot informs,
“There is an exact parallel here with the ambivalent symbolism of the sword (denoting
both physical destruction and determination of spirit).” 332 Finally, fire, for most
primitives emanated from the sun, its earthly representative, which relates it to the ray of
light, lightning, and also to gold. 333

J. C. Cooper finds that the symbolism of constantly rising and setting suns and the
sun’s rays can be vivifying or destructive. It symbolizes both life and death and the
renewal of life through death. 334 The rayed sun and rayed heart are imagined as symbolic
of the Center as pure being, the inner place, the seat of illumination and intelligence. 335

Review of the literature in the subcluster, Myth, revealed the initiatory process of
the descent to the underworld that asks one to confront their darkest feelings and fearful
emotions, to wrestle with plurality, paradox, and conflict. Depression brings out the voice
of one’s deepest longing, pulls one away from their desires, and if listened to, starts the
process. Through descent one can find one’s own earthly link with the divine, to die
before one dies, to no longer live on the surface of oneself, which really provides
satisfaction. Courageous descent is the antidote to pathologies of motion, emotion,
restlessness, and drive—desire’s misdirection toward material satisfactions. Fire is
nature’s element linked to desire, an agent of destruction and regeneration linked to the
voice of Persephone. If both men and women personally envision and listen to her as the
feminine source of life, her voice teaches one the way to attain what they desire. If this link with personal relationship with the power of fire is not forged, desire will be directed toward substitutes to fill the void. However the darkness encountered in descent is dangerous. Cheetham suggests a guide, because the undifferentiated divine and satanic images that remain ambiguous cause disorientation during descent. He feels Spirit experiences need to be recognized as such. One can lose their way due to ignorance caused by not remembering one’s true identity and where they should be heading.

Imagination of Desire: Imaginal World of Autonomous Spirit

In this fourth subcluster, Imagination of Desire: Imaginal World of Autonomous Spirit, imagination is discussed because the energy of desire is activated through the imagination. Lopez-Pedraza’s concept of psychic movement through the lens of a mythical imagination is presented along with Gaston Bachelard’s material imagination. Omer and Watkins speak to ramifications of the loss of imagination. Corbin’s cosmology of an expanded vision of the concept of the Self is presented. He accepts the idea that desire is shared between the creature and Creator. He explored the idea that visual symbols of the natural sensuous world are the way that the missing absent divinity objectively shows itself. The mental operation of *ta’wil* will be discussed because it transmutes everything visible back into symbol and reveals ultimate meaning.

Lopez-Pedraza posits that psychic movement occurs when the psychotherapist looks at a person’s conflicts through the lens of a mythical imagination based on the archetype Hermes, the elusive and undignified archetypal guide. Hermes provides initiation into the repressed unconscious nature through his psychic interventions. Lopez-Pedraza suggests that one can be hermetically moved out of repetitive paralyzing
fixations brought on by the person’s painful history or experience. He finds that imagery coming from the most repressed undignified parts of one’s psychic nature compensate for the “dullness and repetitive superficiality” implicit in their one-sided experience. New images emerge enabling one to participate in life and enrich one’s personality through a deeper more consistent awareness of the personality.

Hillman finds that healing is tied to one’s sense of fiction, one’s capacity to de-literalize the stories of one’s wounds and create a new story based on images that emerge for one from one’s imagination. True imagining makes use of reflection, but it requires more than an introverted retreat to fantasy; vivid libidinal participation is required.

Bachelard finds that imagination is the “faculty of deforming the images offered by perception, of freeing ourselves from the immediate images; it is especially the faculty of changing images.” He recognizes a material imagination, which “materializes the imaginary.” Matter, the mirror of our energy, becomes the provocation of a basic relationship between subject and object because closer contact with a substance stirs one’s energy. Recognizing that organic materialism is active in the unconscious, he imagined a psychology of resistance. He notes that, “If, in the world of symbols, resistance is human, in the world of energy, it is material.” He does not suggest, as psychoanalysis often does, that symbols should be translated only into human terms of a social nature. He purports in the autonomy of symbolism.

So, he attests imagination of resistance is born in confrontation with material objects. For example, Bachelard compares a sudden fire-bolt metaphorically with the incisiveness of sudden anger that he sees as a far different phenomenon from resentment,
which accumulates. Through this conceptualization, he finds fire a force, so sudden, that it is akin to a divine and joyful wrath that is sheer action. In reference to lightning, he points out that everything that makes one see, sees; “The flash which illuminates, looks.”

He quotes Lamartine, “Lightning flashes ceaselessly through the cracks of my shutters, like the blinking of a fiery eye on the walls of my room.” Also, he states that words in their softness or their violence that find fire, will potently express what is written with enflamed eloquence. In terms of water he says, “Water is too readily servile: it cannot be a true obstacle.” Bachelard links aquatic joy to softness and rest. He also links water with vision. “If things should look at us somewhat softly, somewhat gravely, pensively—that is the look of water.” Eyes are equivalent to “that unexplored pool of liquid light, which God placed in the depths of ourselves.”

According to Omer, desire is energy activated through imagination. He posits that the loss of imagination is the loss of the image as doorway to creating the possibility of meaning, self-understanding, and shared interpretations. Experience and metaphor are lost because the image has been closed. As a result, the potential opening to the invisible part of the Mystery is lost. Omer states, “Images as icons are doorways … The image offers the promise of opening us to the invisible part of the Mystery. We can either have an iconic or an idolatrous relationship to an image.”

According to Watkins, imagination can simply be a substitute for a harsh deficient external reality instead of the construction of imaginal realities. Imagination as substitute lowers the telos of desire to wishing as means to adapt to a reality in order to make peace with what is perceived as real.
Corbin describes Active Imagination as the organ that produces symbols and apprehends them by placing the visible and the invisible, the spiritual and the physical in sympathy.\(^{353}\) It is the organ of the intermediate world, between heaven and earth, as real and as objective as the sensible world, that consists of Idea-Images, archetypal figures, subtle substances, and “inmaterial matter.” It is a world of theophanic visions where the spiritual takes body and the body becomes spiritual unifying spiritual love and physical love.\(^{354}\)

This imaginal approach to imagination presupposes, that “psychology is indistinguishable from cosmology; the theophanic Imagination joins them into a psycho-cosmology.” According to Corbin, God’s Image is not outside of oneself, it is at the core of one’s very being. It is the form of the particular Divine Name one brings with him in coming into being. The forms that desire takes in one’s personal life are dominated by this Image of the Divine Beloved Other that invests one’s whole inner being. However, this Image remains veiled because its nearness is so excessive—“Love is closer to the lover than is his jugular vein.”\(^{355}\) Because this Image is veiled, one’s desire sends one looking for it outside of oneself. Mother, as the first divine representative of this love, along with others ranging from love relationships to objects of addiction, attempt to fill one’s imaginal internal space by the lack of relationship with one’s Divine Other.

That is why the inexperienced novice, though dominated by the image which invests his whole inner being, goes looking for it outside himself, in a desperate search from form to form of the sensible world, until he returns to the sanctuary of his soul and perceives that the real Beloved is deep within his own being; and, from that moment on, he seeks the Beloved only through the Beloved.\(^{356}\)

The name given to the Angel, who is the personal part allotted to each individual, is Khidr. “He is associated with every aspect of nature’s greenness.” Khidr’s mission, according to Corbin, is to guide and enable an individual to tap into the interdependence
of the dual nature of the Self. He acts as a personal guide to help develop the capacity in each person born into his true Self.

Personal Sensuous Symbols are the Intuitive Image-Configuring Evidence of One’s Invisible Celestial Self. The visible symbols of the natural sensuous world profoundly stand for the sacred, which includes a multiplicity of images related to the missing absent divinity. For Ibn Arabi, the sacred, as a manifestation of something that does not belong to the reality of one’s world, shows itself in objects. He understood that it is possible to transmute everything visible back into a symbol through a mental operation, which is called ta’wil, the carrying back of a thing to its principle, or of a symbol to what it symbolizes. It is the intuition of an essence or person in an Image that has nothing to do with universal logic or sense perception. It does this through symbolic language, a discourse that captures and lifts the veil to reveal ultimate meaning by the proper application of hermeneutics, which creates a bridge between philosophy and religion (scripture).

Ibn Arabi explained that his favorite personal symbols are mysteries. He believed symbols that captured his attention, those visual symbols of the natural sensuous world felt as a kind of sadness, are images that arouse sympathy by involuntarily drawing one toward the inherent light in that particular earthly image. They actualize the reciprocal desire to know each other because structurally there is shared fundamental nature at many levels of being, which produces sympathy between self and other. This cosmology’s Godhead is also structurally linked with the Feminine principle, which makes liberated capacities and potentials inclusive of the power of beauty and the creative feminine. Sympathy, he says, is “the only means by which we may know, or gain an intimation of
this invisible self, just as the fragment of an arch arouses a mental image of the missing part of the arch.”

The review of this subcluster found that imagination is for the construction of imaginal realities. If imagination becomes a way to adapt to the perception of one’s harsh deficient external reality the telos of desire is lowered to wishing. There is a loss of the image as a meaning-making doorway to invisible mystery. Alternatively, as Lopez-Pedraza posits, if one’s conflicts are viewed through the lens of a mythical imagination, the imagery coming from the most repressed undignified parts of one’s unconscious nature liberates the psyche toward movement. One way to understand invisible mystery was found through Corbin’s imagination of desire. Corbin posits that desire is structurally shared between the creature (human) and an invisible absent Creator. This other (eternal individuality) can only become known as one gains more (psychological) knowledge of oneself. This cosmology’s Godhead is also structurally linked with the Feminine principle. It was also found that images from nature play a role in making visible invisible mystery because man, the absent Creator, and nature share the same structure. Visible symbols involuntarily draw one toward the inherent Light in earthly images thereby actualizing the reciprocal desire to know each other. Bachelard also relates that psychological confrontation with images from nature “materializes the imaginary.”

A review of the literature in this entire cluster, Imaginal Approaches to Desire, revealed that the perverse image, evoked by Eros, is a dark object of desire, which paradoxically can release constraints on desire when put through an imaginal process in which one can extract the power in the fantasy. Conceptualizations of the daimon were found to be linked to dark objects of desire, including bodily affects of shame, anger, and
rage that, if habitually denied, turn the energy demonic. The daimonic power of the being or inner One behind one’s symptoms is lost through this denial. This being is linked with one’s destiny, biography, and sense of purpose. It was found that through an initiatory process of descent to the underworld one confronts their darkest feelings, fearful emotions, and conflicts, which is the antidote to desire’s misdirection. This descent is a way toward developing relationship with one’s own earthly link with the fire of the divine. Without descent, one’s desire sends one looking for this relationship outside of oneself. Anything from love relationships to objects of addiction attempt to fill one’s imaginal internal space created by the void of relationship with one’s Divine Other. If both men and women personally envision and listen to Persephone as the feminine source of life, her voice teaches one the way to attain what they desire.

Found gaps in the literature revealed that recent empirical research on the eudaimonic view of an individual links relationship with one’s daimon to development of distinct aspects of human actualization. Researchers do not explicitly link the daimon to dark emotions, nor to descent, nor to Being or divine other. The literature does not operationalize desire as a striving to recover acquaintance with one’s Being—that divine other that might be found through engaging dark imagery linked with the daimon/guide and associated with releasing one’s stifled desire. Not addressed in the literature is experienced-based research that evokes images of perverse desire for the purpose of eliciting affective imagery that might lead to the release from pseudoinnocence and the freeing of desiring.
Conclusion

The review of the literature in this chapter was divided into three clusters: Depth Psychological Perspectives on Desire; Attachment, Loss, and Affect; and Imaginal Approaches to Desire.

Literature from the first cluster, Depth Psychological Perspectives on Desire, reveals desire as a phenomenon of a powerful form of energy that demands action. The compulsion and urge of desire is to become what one is, which for Freud is linked to Eros, for Lacan to recognition by the Other, and for Jung to vivid libidinal participation linked with the supraordinate part of one’s personality, the Self. However desire can become stifled, which the theorists all link with shutting down of relationship with self and other: Freud’s through secondary narcissism; Lacan’s by deadening one’s desire for recognition; and Jung’s by desire turned inward to thought and fantasy limiting vivid libidinal participation. The literature indicates that the motivation of desire is to give more definition to yet unseen aspects of an ideal self through sociality. But gaps in the literature become apparent. Freud links desire with Eros but doesn’t link desire with one’s Soul and Spirit life. Lacan recognizes desire as emanating from the unconscious Other (one’s divided part) which he describes as “ineffable,” but does not indicate that it is motivated by divine impulse. Jung acknowledges that anything psychologically powerful is invariably called God, noting that one should worship the psychic force active within one as something divine. But Jung did not theorize about how libido (desire) might be positively impacted by implicit relationships between libido and Spirit.

Research on passionate desire for consumer objects supports the idea that the motivation of desire is to give more definition to yet unseen aspects of an ideal self
through sociality, noting that it is not really the object that is desired. One desires relationship with others, which somehow by association leads to a transformed and ideal self. This is so impactful that if loss of desire for consumer objects is stifled then one loses hope; it feels like death. This, linked with fear of death, also indicated in the literature, implies a connection between desire, death, and the sacred. Gaps in the literature become evident with the discovery that these consumer researchers suggest that the goal of consumer’s desire for transformation could be a sacred motivation. They have not performed experienced-based research attempting to find out if this is a valid assumption. They have not investigated if it is valid how this understanding of desire’s motivation linked with less tangible and less obtainable targets of desire can be more purposely brought to the subject’s consciousness. Finally, fire is an image in the above study’s title. Jung connects fire to the God image, which he associates psychologically with the Self and the phenomena of psychic energy (desire). But nothing in the literature speaks specifically to engaging images of stifled desire through experienced-based research in order to release and liberate desire to become what one is motivated by a divine impulse.

The second cluster, Desire, Attachment, and Affect, conveys that traumatic separation from the mother results in attachment behaviors of failed satisfaction that block one from the unfolding of their autonomous desire. The child, lacking access to its uniqueness, is kept from its deepest desire, the recognition and confirmation of its true self. Separation from mother is linked to awareness of death, which the child cannot symbolize. This awareness of one’s mortality causes one to react instinctively with fear, which keeps one from desiring and participating in life. In addition to fear of loss of a
beloved other, Staten discovered a deep symbolic fear of loss of self. It was also found that avoidance of internal conflict, negative emotions, and difficult overwhelming conditions of life is a defense of powerlessness conceptualized by Rollo May as pseudoinnocence. Because desire defines one, this avoidant stance is problematic. It enters awareness felt as conflicted emotion, which causes distorted perceptions that deaden one’s desire for recognition. Shame has a particularly deep impact because it not only creates a defective sense of core self (which impacts sociality), but it is also bound with darker affects. Affects such as grief, fear, and anger, from an archetypal perspective, are a signal to the ego that demanding desires of one’s daimon (Inner Self) are not being acknowledged. Impacted by what Naranjo referred to as psychospiritual inertia, access to Being or power to be is lost through this naïve powerless stance.

In regard to gaps in the literature, it is understood that a pseudoinnocent stance closes down access to one’s desire linked with one’s power. Watkins, Rollo May, Naranjo, Hillman, Jacoby, and Schwartz-Salant recognize that power is the power of Being. However, they do not link desire directly to desire motivated by a divine impulse. Although it is found that shame protects one’s dignity by creating a restraint to desire out of which can develop a creative response so one does not have to remain helplessly subject to shame, nothing in the literature offers experience-based research that elicits this creative solution to freeing desire. It was also found that one reason shame works to subvert desire is that it alleviates the ego’s fear that arises from being subjugated to something more powerful—what Jacoby referred to as something larger within us. However, nothing in the literature offers experienced-based research that would bring this to consciousness. Hence, nothing in the literature addresses experienced-based research
that questions the following: the active relationship with this Being, the liberating effect, and the acknowledgement the negative affect may have on subverted power and stifled desire.

The third cluster, Imaginal Perspectives of Desire, covers literature on the perverted image, the daimon, myth, and imagination of desire. Review of literature in this cluster revealed that the perverse image can release constraints on desire if put through an imaginal process where one can extract the power in the fantasy. These perverse dark objects of desire, which can include affects, violence, and psychopathic potential, are linked to desire of the daimon that if habitually denied can be acted out through demonic energy. Myths of Persephone and Empedocles point to the necessity for initiatory descent into darkness of the underworld as a process to confront one’s darkest daimonic feelings and emotions, which leads to a ritual dismemberment and regeneration of one’s body. Uniting with fire brings trust and certainty of Persephone’s existence, the feminine source of life, so that death is no longer feared and desire can be pursued. It was also discovered that desire for material satisfactions, love relationships, and objects of addiction fill one’s imaginal internal space because one lacks relationship with one’s Divine Other. This Other can be discovered through the development of psychological individuality. Finally, Corbin’s belief was discovered that desire is the reciprocal desire of the creature for the Creator and the Creator for the creature. Visual symbols of nature involuntarily draw one toward the inherent Light in earthly images, thereby actualizing the reciprocal desire to know each other. He posits that each person has a Guide who enables an individual to tap into the interdependence of this dual nature of the Self to help one unfold one’s personal image in which “God describes himself to us through ourselves.”
In regard to gaps in the literature, recent research on the eudaimonic view of an individual links relationship with one’s daimon with well-being, which is determined by development of distinct aspects of human actualization. However, researchers do not link the daimon to the darker emotions. Nor do they acknowledge any relationship between daimon and Being or divine other. Perversions are explored by theorists and by artists as fantasies to heal the psyche. They attempt to close the gap between desire and lack in search of a state beyond sensation through the use of dark body imagery. However, the purposeful engagement of one’s dark objects of desire as a way to liberate desire through imagination is not addressed in experienced-based research. The literature does not address this type of research from a perspective that operationalizes desire as a striving to recover acquaintance with one’s Being—that divine other that might be found through engaging dark imagery linked with the daimon and associated with one’s stifled desire.

This study, in contrast, focused on images of stifled desire as a way to release and liberate desiring conceptualized as motivated by divine impulse. It sought to explore creating and engaging images and affects associated with one’s unacceptable hidden desires to find out what, if anything, would release one from the contraction of pseudoinnocence. In this study, participants engaged in activities to evoke their unacceptable hidden desires. It was my intent to explore participants’ inner experiences of affect and story related to the evoked stifled desire to mine for insight into what might facilitate psychic movement toward the release and freedom of their desiring.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

As we approach chthonic life, it threatens the light of our solar-rational nature, and this light does, in fact, go out as we enter our bodily depths. Actually, only lunar consciousness, imaginal light, will suffice to see in the dark; and usually this form of vision means a consciousness that comes from the heart.\(^1\)

—Nathan Schwartz-Salant

*The Mystery of Human Relationship: Alchemy and the Transformation of the Self*

Introduction and Overview

The design of this research study on the exploration of the liberation of desiring was intended to evoke experiences that provided collectable data in response to the Research Problem: In what ways can engaging with stifled desire release one from pseudoinnocence? The Research Hypothesis states that by attending to shame one releases the contraction of pseudoinnocence. Seven participants came to the study aware that some aspect of their desires felt stifled.

This study was conducted to collect participants’ primary subjective experiences of stifled desire. As one’s direct experience has a quality, a liveliness, and vitality experienced in a particular moment in time, its momentary meaning must be grasped in that moment. Imaginal Inquiry has four phases to collect and analyze data. These phases of evoking, expressing, interpreting, and integrating experience required participants to attend two individual research meetings each lasting two hours and 10 minutes. During these meetings, Susan Flatmo was present as a co-researcher. She helped facilitate the meetings and also assisted in the interpretation and integration of the data.
The method of Imaginal Inquiry, anchored within the participatory paradigm, recognizes participative consciousness as our true nature. It is an appropriate methodology to access and create knowledge related to stifled and liberated desire because phenomena related to the energy of desire that I was interested in evoking resides outside the normative personal identity. Difficult authentic moments of direct experiences of shameful stifled desire needed to be evoked and experienced at the research meetings in order for the findings to be valid. Participants benefit from this methodology because they have a deeper learning experience. They discover the ideas embedded in the inquiry through their own experience. The research of this methodology also opens to the possibility of creative action, a principle linked to an interest in this study—the possible liberation of desiring. Psychological maturity of the researcher is also required, particularly the capacity of reflexivity, which Omer defines as, “the capacity to engage and be aware of those imaginal structures that shape and constitute our experience.”

To investigate ways that engaging with stifled desire might release one from pseudoinnocence required the evoking of participants’ experiences. At the beginning of the first meeting, an opening ritual evoked intentions for the day. A personal experience of stifled desire was evoked for participants by viewing four film clips that portrayed an array of evocative scenes all related to stifled desire. Participants’ drawings of stifled desire, including a personal body drawing, were used to evoke their affects and narrative stories of stifled desire for the interviews. Finally at the end of the first meeting, the placement of all of their drawings on a large piece of paper hung on the wall allowed participants to view all of their images together and to talk about any new feelings elicited from viewing these images.
Another opening ritual was held at the beginning of the second meeting, immediately followed by a guided meditation in which participants listened to two songs used to evoke their inner guide (daimon). The guide evoked participants’ deepest knowing about their dynamic, purposeful, unfolding of how they relate to their desire. This other body drawing captured images of the evoked knowing, and the body image was placed up on the wall with the participants’ other images from the first meeting. They then proceeded to draw any relationships they felt between all of the images contained on the wall. This process evoked a reflexive dialogue that provided affects and stories of desire for the interviews. The essence of the daimon then evoked two more drawings: one of participants’ new images of stifled desire along with an image of the next step each participant felt they might take in their life.

In both meetings, participants expressed their experiences first through drawings. After their experience was evoked, they were asked to go directly to the art materials without speaking. Images made concretely visible through the art process always arrived as a surprise and offered ever more elaboration, which is due to the nature images have of no final or fixed meanings. The expression through art captured more direct pure experience unhindered by intellectualization. Because the experiences of shame related to stifled desire, the expression of participants’ experiences through art allowed them to capture an authentic affective experience privately, which they could decide just how much they were willing to share. Some participants did experience discomfort or shameful feelings in regard to their finished drawing even though I had let them know beforehand that it did not have to look a certain way and that it was not about a finished art product.
Participants’ explorations of imagery was fundamental to uncovering the meaning and nature of their stifled desires, which they later expressed during the interviews. Within the method of Imaginal Inquiry it is recognized that non-skewed data is most likely obtained through allowing participants’ responses “to emerge with as little shaping as possible.” Immediately after each drawing, we moved from the silence of the art process to the interview. I utilized open-ended questions to encourage the most diverse and extended range of personal responses from participants in regard to their images. If my co-researcher sensed something unsaid, she also asked the participant about their experience related to their imagery. We used a tape recorder to capture the complete interview related to participants’ feelings and thoughts around their images of desire. Susan and I also expressed our experience, after each meeting was over, by writing notes related to our experience with each participant. We did this in silence followed by a short discussion.

Certain steps were required to capture the participants’ personal stories and interpret experiences to uncover the meaning of their stifled desire. I made an effort to ensure that participant interviews were accurately transcribed by taking that task upon myself. That process deepened me into the subtlety of their language and affect that was part of our shared experience. Interpreting experience is a process of clarifying and deepening the researcher’s understanding of what has been transcribed. With this intent in mind, my co-researcher, Susan, and I read and re-read transcripts for key moments or happenings, which we each identified intuitively and subjectively. We did this both alone and together after all the data had been collected. Theory was discussed in the context of the key moments in participants’ stories of their imagery. After each research meeting
and in the hours of mining for key moments, we paid attention to any counter-
transference, projective-identification, or projection that emerged. We also brought focus
and interest to moments that touched us both in the same way and to any place where we
disagreed.

Assisting participants in integrating their experience of stifled and liberated desire
was accomplished in the integrative phase of the study. Close attention to the art image as
orienting point throughout the interview process facilitated integration by keeping
participants close to the image and then to the emerging images that awaited their further
exploration. During both meetings the participants placed all of their images on a large
piece of white paper hung on the wall for viewing in order to elicit an integrative
experience. They were then asked to reflect on the experience with their imagery. On the
second day, they did an additional drawing directly on the white paper wall between the
images to create an integrative story, which was followed by a reflexive dialogue. The
purpose of the last drawing of the second day was to ask about a next step a participant
might take in their life’s unfolding. After drawing these images, participants were invited
to tell their story.

Susan Flatmo was present at each meeting and was invited to ask questions or
make observations as a co-researcher in the process. Her questions and observations
added depth and clarity to research participants’ stories. Susan was qualified for her role
to assist in data collection and interpretation because she is a graduate of Meridian
University and is familiar with the methodology of Imaginal Inquiry. For more than eight
years, she has been involved with me in many conversations around desire in a deeply
curious and soulful way. Additionally Susan and I have spent years collaborating on her

Due to the small number of participants (seven), the study is limited in terms of generalizing to a broad population. However, the depth of learnings make up for this limitation. Variables such as age, race, economic status, or addiction experience were not considered. As I was interested in the experience of stifled desire in the general population, the participants chosen for the study simply had to come forward with a self-reported experience of a desire that was stifled. The psychological awareness of the participants ranged from very little to extensive. Also, the design required expressing immediate responses to evoked experience through art. The hypothesis included the possibility of shame. The experience of being observed and having their art observed by researchers would possibly inhibit participants’ expressions.

Another limitation was the restricted time available for the deep experiencing and for the knowledge I was after that was not part of one’s normative identity. I was attempting to collect data related to desire that might be construed as perverse, and stifled or unexpressed in important sectors of participants’ lives. These desires might be difficult to personally access or shameful to admit, especially in the presence of two relative strangers. Quick access to experience was necessary for acquiring enough data to contextualize the interpretations in order to enlarge my understanding of the stifling and liberation of desire in their lives and social worlds.

The evocative films and the guided meditation were designed to induce deep affective experience quickly. The introductory rituals helped to create a ritual space, which provided a safe container so difficult experience might be more freely expressed.
A delimitation of this study was the use of quick response drawings to capture affective experience after an evocative experience. This was a powerful way to express experience. Data however was limited to the participants’ verbal narratives about their art. Participants’ verbal narratives attained a level of depth because the drawings captured immediate authentic direct experience unhindered by intellectualization and the fear of exposure to shame relating to participants’ perverse or deeply joyous desires. The image was private until the participant was willing to share it with researchers. While participants had the option not to tell their true felt experience of the image, it would still remain part of their authentic experience. These art images often were experienced as a surprise to participants, which rendered them vividly alive and linked them to their deepest desire. I sensed the surprise also kept participants curious about the unfolding of new imagery throughout the research meeting.

Possible emotional overwhelm related to the research design was another delimitation of the study. It was imperative to maintain a balance between the participants’ emotional safety, containment, and evoking enough affect in order to elicit collectable experiential and alive data. Participants experienced and discovered difficult emotions. Parts of themselves were brought to consciousness through the evocative activities, especially the selection of film clips. It was made evident to participants during the screening process that difficult emotions might be elicited. It was also made clear to them that they needed to have access to emotional support should difficult feelings come up because this research was not considered therapy. The first scene from The Piano was particularly violent and appeared at the start of the viewing. Participants were warned of this in order to prepare themselves. The last scene from Angels In America was very
powerful and somewhat fantastical. It also contained some humor, which limited the possibility of evoking too much affect.

**Participants**

Seven research participants took part in this study. This inquiry called for participants who were experiencing a sense of unexpressed desire in an important sector of their life or as a major block in their life. Demographically, there were three men and four women ranging from 42 to 62 years old. They were all European-American (white). Their socio-economic status ranged from lower income to upper class. As part of the research design, my co-researcher, Susan, and I met with individual participants on two different occasions. Each meeting lasted two hours and 10 minutes.

I had intended to invite participation in the study by posting informational flyers and also asking friends to ask their friends who were not part of my circle to participate in the study (Appendix 5). I simply told friends and acquaintances that I was conducting a research study on desire. I never posted the flyers because there were enough participants who came forward through the word-of-mouth approach.

I contacted prospective research participants by phone to discuss the nature of the study. Trust began to be established by mindfully listening to prospective research participants’ responses to the phone screen (Appendix 6).

I was interested in depth responses. Due to the evocative and potentially disturbing aspects of the film clips, the sensitive nature of the experience evoked, and the experiential nature of this design, inclusion and exclusion variables were utilized to screen participants with capacities congruent with research design requirements (Appendix 6). I asked prospective participants if they were experiencing any sense of
unexpressed desire in an important sector of their life or a major block in their life. Through self-report, I determined that prospective participants had access to a desire that they described as stifled. When asked for an example of what gets in the way of expressing their deeper desire, their responses ranged from, “I want to fly my airplane more and I want a relationship” to “I feel no desire.” It was difficult for some prospective participants to immediately clearly express what exactly blocked their desire or even what that desire was. It was also clear by their expression that something was not quite right, and they seemed eager to find more out about it. Participants also had to have struggled with core conflicting feelings or points of view for a period of time.

Safeguards and precautions were in place that precluded the interviews from digressing into psychotherapy, including the following: research participants’ consent forms clarifying that this was not psychotherapy but a research study; in the event psychological material was triggered during the interview process, agreement to have emotional support in place for themselves prior to the study; and awareness from the informed consent process that the researcher was not available to act in the capacity of a psychotherapist.

If the participant fit criteria after the phone interview, I set up the time of their first meeting. My intent was to have the second meeting take place within a week of the first one. I was able to accomplish this for the most part. One participant did have to wait almost two weeks between meetings. All of the original participants attended both meetings. I informed participants during the phone conversation that I would be sending them a consent/confidentiality agreement in the mail, which they would sign and bring to
the first meeting. I also informed them that there would be time to ask questions prior to the start of the meeting.

The meetings were held in the lower level of a friend’s home. The house had a separate entrance. The owners were not living in their home during the duration of the study. I used a large room on two levels with large windows opening to a private garden. The television was set up on the lower level where there was also a bathroom. Up three steps was a small kitchen and large living area. The meeting space was divided into five sections: television viewing, a space to do art, a table to sit at during the interviews, a wall space with a seven foot high piece of white paper upon which was drawn a circle measuring four feet in diameter, and an area to sit or lie down during the guided visualization.

At the first meeting, Susan and I introduced ourselves and greeted the research participants. They were introduced to the space. The researchers and the participants sat on the upper level of the room around a small round table with two tape recorders, flowers, and a candle ready to light. The large circle drawn on blank white paper was attached to the wall across from the table. Placed on the floor close to the circle were art materials, which included: black, white, and colored paper; chalk pastels, oil pastels, scissors, and tape ready for use. The participants were again informed that we were not concerned with art as product. There was no wrong or right way to express through art what they might feel or sense. They were to just trust whatever came through them. If it would make them feel more comfortable, they were offered a chance to try the art materials before we started (Appendix 8). Bottled water and snacks (dried cranberries,
almonds, and chocolate) were available. The room was set up in the same way for the second meeting.

Participants were mailed an informed consent/confidentiality agreement to read and sign before coming to the meeting (Appendix 4). Parts of it were reread and discussed for clarity at the beginning of the first meeting and then collected prior to commencing with other activities. I also had blank copies with me in case someone forgot theirs. I again reminded them that for confidentiality purposes I would change their names to protect the privacy of their identity. They were reminded that I would keep tapes, transcripts, and artwork locked and protected in an area to which only I had access.

I reminded them that they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason and that referrals to mental health professionals would be provided if needed. Also, they could stop during the process if they started to feel in any way uncomfortable, as Susan and I were committed to providing a safe and supportive environment. Time was taken to respond to questions. Participants were then informed about the schedule and activities for the day (Appendix 8).

The four phases of Imaginal Inquiry are discussed in the remainder of this chapter. The activities that occurred immediately before and after the interviews are described in order to show how the interpretations were prepared.

Four Phases of Imaginal Inquiry

Evoking Experience

A simple ritual to create a sacred space for this inquiry and to set intentions was chosen to evoke experience at the beginning of both meetings. The purpose and logistics
of lighting the candle were explained, and participants were then asked to light the candle and engage in setting an intention for the day. I shared my interest in their experiences as a means to learn more about what keeps us from our deeper desire and frees us to move toward it. They were then invited to share their intent for the day. My co-researcher was also invited to share her intent (Appendix 8).

The major activity was viewing the film clips at the first meeting, which was designed to evoke the experience of the participants’ stifled desire. These clips portrayed an array of evocative, violent, and potentially disturbing human situations in addition to provocative nude scenes, all related to stifled desire (Appendix 10). Each film clip was chosen based on emotional responses it evoked in me along with intuiting how others might respond. Right after the opening ritual, I informed participants we would start by viewing four film clips. Before beginning the clips, I encouraged participants to open up to whatever feelings arose as they watched and let them know they would move in silence to the art materials when the clips ended. I would then ask them a question, which they would answer only through their drawing. I also informed them that the first clip was disturbing and to prepare themselves for that experience (Appendix 8).

In the first film clip, *The Piano*, the main character Ada, a pianist, has just had her finger chopped off by her enraged husband. Another scene is of her attempted suicide in the ocean that shifts as she chooses life instead of death. Her stifled desire was a schizophrenic attachment to the piano. It kept her so fulfilled that she was not able to attend to other desires that were speaking to her in her life (i.e., her daughter, husband, community involvement, etc.) The second film clip was from *Man of Flowers*. Scenes include a young, innocent, feminine woman playfully undressing for an exquisite older
man in his home infused with the perfect beauty of art and flowers. The stifled desire apparent in this clip is the repressed sexual desire born of being shamed by authentic expression of exploration of his senses as a child. The third film clip is from *Eyes Wide Shut*. Scenes capture a momentary break from the symbolic fictions of marriage, husband, and wife that constitute a normative cultural identity. The wife tells her husband of a simple gaze shared between her and a young naval officer. Through her confession of passion, her longing, craving, and intense desire she demonstrates a willingness to destroy her world, to sacrifice herself as mother and wife through a different exotic desire and death drive. The fourth clip comes from *Angels in America*. A powerful fantastical angel crashes through the roof of the New York apartment of a young man sick with AIDS demanding that he find and dig up a buried chest in his kitchen that holds tools that will help him discover what he is to do in his life. It hints at awakening one to an aspect of some hidden nature. The clip ends with the two of them in a fiery embrace making love.

A guided meditation was the main activity designed for evoking experience at the beginning of the second meeting. Participants’ inner guides (daimon) were evoked through two interventions, a guided meditation and listening to music (Appendix 13). The purpose of evoking this daimon was to connect participants to their deepest knowing about their dynamic, purposeful, unfolding of who they are related to their desire. It was to offer some insight into an alternative to their stifled desire. I facilitated the guided meditation and followed it immediately with two musical selections, *Pastorale* and *Song From A Secret Garden*. The guide was to offer prompting, leadership, or anything that would help participants to connect with the dynamic purposeful unfolding of the core of
who they are, and who they are to become (Appendix 12). At the end the guided portion of the meditation, as the two songs were played, the participants continued to listen for sudden words, spontaneous knowings, or images related to their desire through the guide that appeared in the meditation. One participant found himself smirking at this idea, saying that this was pushing him too far. After offering him some reassurance and letting him know that even if nothing may come, I would appreciate it if he could try. I told him, that if nothing else, it might be relaxing just to close his eyes and listen to some music. He did go through with the meditation with interesting results.

Expressing Experience

The main data-collection instrument within the research design was exploration of imagery from participants’ drawings. Immediately after drawing, participants were asked to take part in an audiotaped interview, which was later transcribed. After each meeting, Susan and I wrote notes reflecting our experiences, which was followed by a brief discussion. We also met on a number of occasions to read the transcripts and discuss our experiences.

In meeting one, the first expressions of experience took place after the film clips. The participants were asked to locate a stifled desire they might not want to tell anyone. Immediately after finishing, they were asked to do another drawing expressing their feelings and raw thoughts related to their expression of stifled desire. The next phase of expressing their experience was an interview. Their art was used as an orienting point throughout the interview. I asked participants to tell the story of their images of stifled desire (Appendix 8). Since the drawing they had just completed before the interview
captured their thoughts and feelings around their stifled desire, they were prepared to speak about their affective experience of stifled desire. If not addressed spontaneously, I indirectly inquired about participants’ experiences of shame. For instance, I asked if their image of stifled desire was something they felt they could not tell someone about or let them see. If that was their experience I inquired about those feelings. Or I asked them how their image of stifled desire made them feel in their body. If they were winding down their story, and I felt curious about a particular part of either of their drawings in relation to their narrative, I asked them about the story of that imagery. If I felt I wanted more of their story, and they did not spontaneously bring up memories or feelings related to the film clips, I asked them directly. If my co-researcher sensed something unsaid, she also asked the participant about their experience related to their imagery.

The final expression of experience at meeting one was a body drawing of feeling the feelings of stifled desire. Participants then cut out the drawing in any shape they chose and placed it together with the other two drawings on the large circle on the wall. Another interview captured participants’ feelings and thoughts of how their figure related to their stifled desire and any new noticing of how the story of their life had been affected. They recounted their experiences of the images in their own story-telling process. To the degree possible, I wanted research participants’ uninterrupted stories and their independent discoveries of new relationships and meanings. Sometimes I had questions about participants’ meanings. In these instances, I paraphrased to them what I had heard. There was a back and forth exchange until I understood their meanings and until participants felt completely understood.
In meeting two, the first expression of participants’ experiences came after a guided meditation to evoke a guide and the playing of two songs. Participants felt into the figure that revealed itself to them in the meditation. They then drew their own body while feeling the feelings of the daimon figure followed by the creation of an image of the heart of this figure on the same drawing. The next expression took place after they cut their figure out of the paper on which it was drawn. They placed this body drawing on the wall with all of their stifled desire drawings from meeting one. They then connected with their feelings in response to all of the images that were contained on the wall and then expressed through drawing what was happening between the images. A reflexive dialogue followed between all of the figures and images found in their artwork contained on the wall (Appendix 9). Often this dialogue needed to be modeled for participants because they were not familiar with this process. The participants were each asked to move from chair to chair, speaking as a figure or a feeling in different voices. This seemed difficult for most participants who instead chose to speak while they sat in the same chair. When they felt like the voices had finished, participants then discussed with the researchers their experiences. They expressed felt differences in their desire and differences in shame and other affects. If they had not yet done so themselves, they were also prompted to describe more distinctly any images that I recognized as possibly related to their story of desire.

The next expression of participants’ experiences came when they were asked to draw a new image of stifled desire after having the experience with the daimon figure and the subsequent drawings that emerged from that experience. Participants were invited to tell the story of this new image of desire. Finally, the last drawing of the research design
captured participants’ plans for the next step they were to take in their life. They were asked to feel into the heart of the daimon figure to get a sense of what the figure wanted them to do next in attending to their life. In the final interview of the research design, the participants then shared with us the next step they would be taking in their life. All interviews were taped and later transcribed.

**Interpreting Experience**

It is not our business as psychologists to base our insights on historical or biological facts. We are not historians, and we are not (or ought not to be) concerned with empirical, but with psychological truth, that is to say with the imaginal. And it is therefore from the imagination that we should derive our knowledge.  

—Greg Mogenson  
*Mourning and Metapsychology: An Archetypal View*

The next phase of the Imaginal Inquiry process was making meaning from the research experience of the participants. Interpretations were derived from transcriptions of the interviews and the researchers’ processes of clarifying and deepening their understanding through additional private notes, meetings, and discussions. Interpreting experience within Imaginal Inquiry methods includes four steps: 1) identifying key moments or happenings during data collection; 2) responding to those moments through reflexive participation; 3) exploring differences and parallels through collaboration between researcher’s and co-researcher’s responses; and 4) contextualizing with theory and myth.

Identifying key moments began when Susan and I met immediately after the participant left the meeting. We wrote notes in silence, which included our reactions to
the experience and the determination of what particular happenings intuitively stood out for us. A conversation followed during which we shared our reactions and ideas. Our friendship has always been based on both vigorously agreeing and disagreeing with each other, which was helpful in our subjective engagement with the data and resulted in parallel and divergent ideas. We chose the intuitive approach to identify key moments in the spirit of Hermeneutics, one of the research methods from which Imaginal Inquiry draws. Through four years of psychology classes, including group processes, we had practiced using our senses and intuition to help choose, reflect upon, and make use of our reactions to our experience in the spirit of discovery.

I transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews. That process deepened me into the subtlety of the participants’ languages and affects that was part of our shared experience. I was able to live the interview again by listening to pauses, inflections, emphases, and unfinished sentences, all of which enabled me to again constitute meaning from key moments and my response to those moments. For instance, in the stops and starts and softer voices, which seemed to want to disappear, I could discern shame. When the transcripts were finished, Susan and I read and re-read them for key moments, which we each identified intuitively and subjectively. Key moments were also discovered when we remembered a certain theory that felt congruent with a participant’s storied experience that included their feelings, images, and memories. We met several times and also had many phone meetings after the study ended. We shared our independent new and shifting reflections, contemplated how they fit into what we thought we discovered, and then re-analyzed parts of the data.
Independently I spent many hours going over the transcripts while considering the data in terms of my accumulation of theoretical principles and concepts in order to identify additional key moments in the participants’ stories of their experiences. I also used principles of narrative analyses to analyze the data. I listened for stories of past actions and inaction related to their desire, their memories, feelings, and how they interpreted and storied their experience of both their stifled and liberated desire. This gave me a glimpse into participants’ subjectivities.\(^6\) Listening to the narrative and ascertaining the participants’ self definitions determined by desire was important. As one tells about an experience, one creates a self.\(^7\) Nathanson and Omer understand that emotion, especially shame, negatively transform desire and subsequently one’s story, hence story forms personal character. Emotion and shame, in particular, are often not spoken about in clear distinct terms. This may occur because emotion and shame are not recognized as such. Or, in the case of shame, the painful vulnerability of having it be seen by another in a perceived unfavorable way inhibits such speech. Hence, I had to search through stories for moments that I might not have asked about specifically in the interview in order to mine for additional hidden instances of participants’ experiences related to painful affect.

I found myself deciding how to paste together the participants’ experiences into their meaning, which was complicated by the nature of the stop-and-start style of oral stories. I experienced a sense of overwhelming responsibility because of the beauty and complexity of participants’ stories. I felt I was coming up with a limited portrait of them. I finally became “comfortable enough” with the idea that, in the spirit of narrative analyses, even though the participant was central to composing their narrative, meaning is
ambiguous. All participate—participants, researchers, transcribers, and readers. As Catherine Kohler Riessman says, “Although the goal may be to tell the whole truth, our narratives about others’ narratives are our worldly creations.”⁸

After all data had been collected, Susan and I met in person and on the phone to respond to the key moments. We paid attention to how we were personally affected by our subjective engagement with the data and stories of the participants. We explored and brought focus and interest to moments that touched us in a similar manner and to any place where we disagreed. If we felt stuck, we would take a few minutes in silence to write our own Reflexive Dialogues embodying the images and affects that captured our attention. This was followed with a spirited discussion. On a couple of occasions, our disagreements led to a more complex and multifaceted understanding of the data as we both fought for our perception of what we experienced. Our personal experiences of stifled desire and shame were painful and different. Instances in which one of us missed something, the other was often able to discern a subtlety in a story that helped to elaborate our awareness of a participant’s experience.

There were various concepts and principles that I applied to the data, which helped contextualize the learnings. In this research, I employed three primary theories of desire. One was Hillman’s theory of desire as motivation that touches and moves the soul toward the necessary interactions required for realization and for achieving one’s potential. His conceptualization of the daimon linked to one’s biography and therefore one’s desire helped me make meaning of the data. The second was Lacan’s theory, which recognizes that desire can only be the reciprocal desire of the other. The third was Jung’s theory that recognizes desire as a phenomenon of psychic energy by nature daimonic
(both God and devil)—an energy shared between man and God. To help identify stifled desire, I used Rollo May’s concept of pseudoinnocence, a retreat from one’s power and Being, marked by denial of negative emotion and difficult experience. To deepen the understanding of how affect, especially shame, subverts desire, I used Nathanson’s phenomenological descriptions of the shame experience and its defenses along with Kaufman’s theories of how shame can be difficult to discover because it can be bound with other affects. From an archetypal perspective, I looked at Schwartz-Salant, who posits that shame may be an indication that the desires of the daimon are not being attended. I needed to mine the data to help understand how perverted or stifled desire could be imagined as key to the liberation of participant’s desire. Moore’s conceptualization of dark eros, an intelligence inherent in perversions that relates to one’s individuation through imagination, looked at through the lens of the Marquis de Sade, was applied to the data. Additional theoretical concepts and principles I applied to the data related to: emotion, attachment and loss, perversion, daimon, and imagination.

Myth was also used as a backdrop to make meaning of the data. The Greek myth of Persephone/Demeter through Kerenyi was chosen due to the presence of pseudoinnocence and fire in the imagery of the participants. In this myth, the initiatory process of descent to the underworld asks one to marry fire in order to personally envision and listen to Persephone as the feminine source of life. Her voice teaches one the way to attain what they desire. Also, through the Empedocles’ myth, Kingsley connects Persephone imagery with images from nature to be integrated into the personality. He calls for descent to confront one’s darkest feelings and fearful emotions, to wrestle with plurality, paradox, and conflict, all of which pseudoinnocence wishes to
avoid. Finally Corbin’s imagination of desire, which posits that desire is structurally shared between the creature (human) and an invisible absent Creator and is often recognized through one’s attraction to images in nature was drawn upon to make sense of the data.

**Integrating Experience**

A number of steps were taken to ensure that participants would be able to integrate their experience during both research meetings. My hope for this research design was that participants would experience some shift of their stifled desire and offer them more freedom and focus in their desiring. The experience of evoking their darker desires came as a surprise to participants, who expressed that they thought they had come to the research process to explore their desire for the future. It was a surprise even though I had inquired in the screening process about a potential stifled desire. Going through their darker desire to get to more freedom in their desiring brought them into contact with difficult dark affects including shame, which needed integration. My hope was that they could experience them safely, recognize the shame and related affects that were part of the experience of their stifled desire, and use them as an empowering aspect in regard to their future desiring.

During each meeting, the sharing of the meanings and feelings related to their art images in the interviews reminded the participants of their part in the unfolding of their personal comprehensive story of their stifled desire. Close attention to the art image as orienting point throughout the interview process facilitated integration by keeping participants close to the image and then to the emerging images that awaited their further
exploitation. Time was taken for them to be with and integrate the pain that emerged in the process. Tears were silently witnessed until they were ready to continue.

The final expression of experience at meeting one was a body drawing created from capturing participants’ feelings of stifled desire. This drawing could be thought of as an integrating experience since the participants’ body images were created by the feelings and thoughts that surrounded their recently discovered stifled desire. Stifled desire was made visible in their bodies, which allowed them to really see what it looked like and the toll it was taking in their bodies and lives. I also provided time at the end of the first meeting for an integrative experience. Participants were asked to place all three of their drawings on a large piece of white paper anywhere that felt right to them. Some participants asked if the drawings all had to be contained within the circle that had been drawn on the paper. They were told that it did not matter. They were then asked to sit for a few moments, to view, and to reflect on the experience with their imagery. I then asked them how they felt affected by this process and if they felt comfortable enough to leave the process after sharing their intense stories.

At the beginning of the second meeting I wanted participants to be able to integrate any experience that emerged for them over the one to two week period since the first meeting. As participants entered the room, they immediately saw their drawings on the wall as they had left them at the end of meeting one (the large white piece of paper that contained the first two drawings done in meeting one along with their body drawing). I asked them to sit in silence for a few minutes to spend time with and reflect on their art images from the last meeting. I then asked them to share anything that emerged since the last time we met that felt somehow tied to or connected to their experience. Susan and I
listened to participants’ responses. A couple of participants had experienced fairly intense dreams related to their art and stories. When they were finished, we moved forward with the series of drawings and interviews for that day.

The participants’ body drawings done immediately after the meditation, which expressed their experience of the guide/daimon in their body, could be thought of as an integrating experience. Similar to the last body drawing, the participants’ body images were created by the feelings and thoughts evoked by their recently discovered inner guides who offered insight and new discoveries linked to their first images of stifled desire. Some freeing of desire and shifting of shame was made visible in their bodies, which allowed them to really see what that freedom felt and looked like in their bodies. Immediately after that drawing, they placed the body images anywhere they wanted on the wall with all of their other previous drawings. Their next drawing was done directly on the white paper wall and connected all the drawings in any way they wanted. This created an integrative story, and participants then told the story of their images through a reflexive dialogue. Some participants commented later that they could visibly see the difference between their two bodies. Others noticed immediately that they placed the guide drawing directly over the stifled desire body drawing and commented that they did not know why but found that interesting.

The last drawing of the second meeting also presented an integrative experience. Participants felt into the heart of the figures that appeared in their meditations and drew an image of what that figure’s perception of their next step in attending to their lives. After drawing these images, research participants were invited to tell their story of the next step they might take. The myriad of responses included simply taking a step. In
order for participants to integrate that experience, if they did not offer, I asked about their feelings in regard to their capacity to accomplish the step. Some recognized they were up against aspects of themselves that had stopped them in the past, but they were ready to move forward. If I noticed something in their drawings they might not have brought up, I reflected to them what I noticed, in particular about capacities or creative strengths that I felt might serve them in the next step they had described.

The Reflections Chapter includes my future plans to incorporate what I learned from my participants’, my co-researcher’s and my own experiences from this study that explored our stifled and freed desiring. I will use our comprehensive learnings with broader constituencies in order to integrate what I have learned.
CHAPTER 4

LEARNINGS

Introduction and Overview

This research seeks to collect adults’ experience of creating and engaging images and affects associated with their unacceptable hidden desires to find out if there would be a liberation of desire. The Research Problem is: In what ways can engaging with stifled desire release one from pseudoinnocence? The Research Hypothesis is: By attending to shame one releases the contraction of pseudo-innocence. Five major learnings have emerged from the data collection.

**Cumulative Learning: Shame Lifts and Desire Moves when Desire Aligns with the Desire of One’s Daimon and Divine Beloved Other**

Five major Learnings emerged, all pointing to participants’ stifled desires being strongly tied to feelings of shame bound with anger, grief and fear. Shame lifts when one’s desire aligns with the desire of one’s daimon and divine Beloved Other which brings new images of personal power and psychic movement.

Shame is so noxious and painful, because it pertains to the perceived value of one’s entire being.¹ Tomkins discovered that one makes a cognitive decision to reduce the level of shame by reducing the level of their interest toward contentment or desire in anticipation of the experience of rejection and/or humiliation.

Shame is also linked with other negative affects. For example, rage and anger, as a means to cover the ruptured self, come out of feeling exposed.² Kaufman posits that
when anger, fear, and distress (grief) are followed by a parental response that induces shame, Tomkin’s affect-shame binds become internalized within the emerging personality. This internalized shame stops the development of a deepening bond between individuals. As Thompson reasons, when linked with distorted perceptions, emotions become a defense that deadens one’s desire for recognition as the object of the other’s desire. Desire cannot be liberated. Individuation is negatively impacted because desire is the soul’s motivation that continually works to define the self, which happens through the social principle of reciprocal recognition.

Daimon is imagined as a guiding figure, a wholly imaginal reflection of oneself. According to Hillman, daimon is the divine twin likeness that one’s unfolding individuality and biography is a metaphor. From an archetypal perspective Schwartz-Salant contends that shame is elicited by one’s lack of response, one’s failure to attain an ideal state, which he links to the desire of the daimon. The ego fails to attend to demanding desires of the daimon, signaled by unattended darker emotions. Diamond refers to “daimonic anxiety,” which is manifested as a replacement for repressed anger and rage. He suggests that if an individual cannot express anger and rage constructively it will be acted out, and if chronically suppressed, result in an epidemic of depression and apathy. Desire is arrested. Psychic movement is curtailed. Alternatively, attending to the darker emotions brings attention to the double aspect of demon/daimon. According to Hillman this figure provides “psychic intervention.” Daimon does so by instigating a pattern of action and then inhibiting it through its interrupting, redirecting, and symbolizing behavior in order to bring the psychic world into reality, furthering individuation.
Corbin speaks to another level of desire’s relationship to reciprocal recognition. His imagination of desire posits that desire is structurally shared between the creature (human) and an invisible absent Creator. The forms that desire takes in one’s personal life are dominated by the Image of the Divine Beloved Other that invests one’s whole inner being.\textsuperscript{10} This other (eternal individuality) can only become known as one gains more (psychological) knowledge of oneself. One’s daimon provides “psychic intervention,” which leads to this deeper understanding. Also, Corbin contends that visual symbols of nature involuntarily draw one toward the inherent Light in earthly images thereby actualizing the reciprocal desire to know each other, creature and Creator.

The first Learning states: The desire to retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition, to avoid affective experience, notably fear, anger, and shame and imagery around death, maintains a pseudoinnocent stance, which cuts one off from actualizing power. Participants were aware that they were emotionally disconnected or emotionally conflicted, numb to experience, or in a state of inertia declaring they had no desire. They were either not aware at all or barely aware of any shame. There was also fear around moving beyond their stifled impulse of desire.

The second Learning states: Impacted by the unattended affects of anger, grief, fear, and shame, pseudoinnocence is expressed through conflictual and unsatisfying reactive enactments. An experience of aliveness is created to counteract the deadness experienced by lost access to the psychic energy of desire and one’s actualizing power. It was evident that unexamined negative affects fueled participants’ desires toward unsatisfactory experiences and feelings leaving them with more shame, anger, grief, depression, and fear.
The third Learning states: Attending to imagery, especially elemental imagery of fire, gives access to energy and creates psychic movement, enabling one to attend to painful stories of powerlessness, failure, resentment and victimization, along with the affects of anger and shame. Participants explored images of powerlessness, shame, and anger in their artwork related to their image of stifled desire. As participants engaged with their images, new images of movement related to the emergence of the elemental image of fire, contrasted with previously blocked images of stifled desire. Images of suns, lightning bolts, and flames growing out of water led to participants’ brief ability to hold opposites, re-direct hostile power, and lift feelings of self failure and lost creativity. All of these experiences counteracted the powerlessness connected with resentment, victimization, and failure.

The fourth Learning states: Shame lifts when one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon. Personal body drawings were used to capture feelings related to both stifled desire and new feelings around that particular desire after an evoked inner figure offered guidance to the participants. Participants’ stories and drawings, filled with images of a shameful defective or ruptured sense of self, shifted with the guidance and compensatory images this figure offered. Images related to increased power included: feelings of relaxation, confidence, guiding energy, and advice to be more compassionate and less guarded; father energy that advised to just be you; trust in this relationship which holds conscious hate and rage as a source of power; and acting spontaneously from the heart. Particularly noteworthy was that the guide/daimon often took on a visual and a storied shared identity with the participant.
The fifth Learning states: Engaging the daimon figure is accompanied by images from the natural sensuous world, which are inherently energizing, empowering, and bring psychic movement because one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon and divine Beloved Other. Images of nature were found to be strikingly present as participants imaginably engaged with their images of daimon, stifled desire, and the next step to take in the unfolding of their life.

Pseudonyms are used throughout this chapter to protect the participants’ privacy.

Learning One: Stifled Desire: Emotional Retreat and Inertia

The primary claim of this learning is: The desire to retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition, to avoid affective experience, notably fear, anger, shame, and imagery around death, maintains a pseudoinnocent stance, which cuts one off from actualizing power. Participants were asked to create a series of drawings in response to questions that centered on their desire stifled. Participants’ stories revealed a pseudoinnocent stance, the unique way that each individual denied the power held in their image of stifled desire. Three participants’ stories (“Marianne,” “Sylvia,” and “Ron” (pseudonyms)) are presented in this first learning that emerged within the class of psychodynamics: dissociation and psychic numbing.

1. What Happened

Marianne—Emotional Disconnection: Candy-coated. In her drawing of stifled desire, Marianne described dark spaces and light spaces; feelings of “anger and fire.” She said she wanted to integrate the extremes she feels and described herself as constantly
working “to hold two poles, dark and light, male and female.” She made crying type sounds and kept repeating that this is an “ouwy place” while telling the story of her drawing. The only peaceful place was in a corner “that is just sort of out there.” Her father, who she is most like, is in a slow process of dying and her mother is scared about finances. Marianne, also afraid, is not pragmatic about the realities of life and caring for herself financially. Her image of stifled desire was the desire to be held during disruption.

She describes her drawing:

I feel dark spaces and light spaces but kind of a desire to hold it all instead of pushing it out or away … I’m trying to not subdue but to, um … I feel myself dipping into this darkness and feeling a lot of fear and yeah … fear more than anger so that’s another emotion that comes up. Grief, a lot of grief, but it kind of comes and goes. I’m trying to ride the wave of emotions.

The light space in her second drawing dealing with her feelings around stifled desire also contained a small image of white light located in a corner she called bliss. When I asked her to describe this, she responded, “Everything would be sort of candy coated.” She acknowledges that her “way of connecting with everything is meditating.”

Describing her experiences as an artist, she stated she often found herself covering everything on her canvas white. When I asked what she wanted to whitewash she responded, “pain, suffering and death.” Noting that the “light” might be “a good thing or a bad thing,” she says, “I’m not quite sure because, it could be just not wanting to feel stuff—the raw vibrant colors. It might be just like … can’t take that … we’ll just, we’ll just, you know, mitigate that …”

She acted uncomfortable when I asked her to draw feelings of stifled desire in her body. This might be related to her body weight, but she exclaimed that she did not have any imagination. Then after seeing the drawing of her body feeling the feelings of stifled desire placed together with her first two drawings on the large circle, Marianne says, “I
see a lack of grounding at the expense of going for the light.” Describing her body image she says, “It seems like I am going out into outer-space,” noting that she feels that way half of the time. In referring to the large stomach of her figure, she explained it as something that was trying to ground her. Susan asked what the most powerful images from the films were. She chose two; the violence in the “cutting off” of the finger, and the “fire” of the sexual act with the angel, an image she describes with great delight as “unity and fire.”

Sylvia—Psychic Numbing: Silent Scream. Sylvia described her image of stifled desire as “a really loud scream” without sound and with pent up tears similar to the woman in the movie who got her finger cut off and did not scream. Sylvia added, in a slow observer-like tone, that one could see that the scream was in her eyes. She said that she felt like a pillow was held over the scream. She displayed no emotion while telling her personal stories of parental neglect, poverty, medical problems, rape, and abandonment. It was almost as if she was checking each one off of her list. She said that there were times in her life when she wanted to scream, but could not and was silent instead. She said, “Life is survival and I’m struggling and I’m reflecting on it.” She said that she often has thoughts that revolve around things getting worse.

Sylvia’s drawing of her feelings and thoughts around her stifled desire revealed art images of a body lying on what looked like a funeral pyre above flames. She said she felt as though she was slightly above the fire that was about to consume her. When asked, “What could the fire do?” she said, “It would kill you, it would consume you, it would burn you up.” She describes the drawing in the following way:

It’s the feeling of burning but you’re not burning … It’s sort of like you can’t get down to where the cool earth is, because the fire is always there stopping you and
the only thing that’s saving you is … those messages from above. That’s what’s keeping you cool and not hot, that’s what’s keeping you from burning up because if you could go down to where it’s cool and green you’d be okay.

After attempting to give voice to the image of the muffled scream during the reflexive dialogue process, she told us that she was “starting to split and go somewhere else.” We took a break and asked her if there was something that could help bring her back. We told her it was okay if she needed to stop. She answered, “Yeah, I definitely am suffocating. I think I’ve been suffocating since I was an infant.” Then she said that “There’s something stopping me, suffocating me, from doing, from going, from moving, from going forward, from really like, going all the way.” She acknowledged failure to use her imagination and having wasted it. The book, the art, and all of the gifts have been lost.

Ron—*Inertia: Abortion in Himself*: Ron’s stifled desire was revealed through a lily that was not like a literal flower. He described it as “three-dimensional … something to pass through … the dark center of it even though you don’t know what’s on the other side.” He said that the petals were “definitely some female form.” He associated the lily with an image from the movie, *The Piano*: “When she goes off and her will says so, she passes through death and, you know, into a kind of a surprise for herself … and she didn’t know that was coming.” As he continued to describe the drawing he spontaneously states, “But, as far as desire, I’m not feeling … desire.”

Ron’s drawing of his feelings and thoughts around his stifled desire was represented with the image of a shape similar to an hourglass. He associated the image with breaking through inertia to something. He shared that approximately two years ago a partner broke up with him. When they started seeing each other, she was separated from her husband but not yet divorced. Toward the end, she had become pregnant with Ron’s
child and decided to have an abortion. He said that what pained him most was his response to the news of the pregnancy, of “oh no” and being completely “at sea about what to do.” He described his experience of the end of their relationship as like “an abortion in himself.” It was like a death—frozen, rejection, and shame.

Regarding the break-up, he said, “The first couple of years were completely blocked, it was hopeless.” Admitting his inertia in relation to passage he states, “I do have a lot of inertia so if I wanted to make this escape, I could find a way.” If he wanted to take the passage, he is not sure where the door is and he does not know what is on the other side. “But I have … a big picture of like, why bother, in a big sense. So it’s kind of like … breaking through that …” He remembered what his therapist had said to him: “sanity is balancing the carnival with the holocaust.”

Ron looked at his constricted body drawing feeling his stifled desire. He noted how much strength it takes to stay static talking of “freedom of the heart … reaching, coming through that funnel to the other side,” which he refers to as ascension. Of the position of his body he says,

You could call that a handicap or something, I mean, I don’t know how some people are able to live freely and others don’t. Sometimes I look at that and I go well ignorance is bliss, you know, do I want to be ignorant in order to be blissful? And in a way you can’t really do it, you can’t forget yourself. But, so, I don’t know exactly how to reach through that. So there’s a certain handicap there. I feel like I have lots of potential but not able to exercise it freely.

2. How I Was Affected

I found myself frustrated with Marianne’s spiritual language and commitment to meditation. I felt a struggle between a whitewashed surface happiness and the feelings around pain, suffering and death that wanted to bleed up through the thin veneer of the
ungrounded spiritual. I wanted to counter her belief system, but was silent. I felt deep compassion for her struggle and hope for her because of the intelligence that came through in her art images that were intent on not letting her get away with whitewashing.

Susan, my co-researcher, had an image in relation to Marianne of a distressed Persephone tied to a sky-bound hawk. “Fragile” and “emotionally raw” were other images that emerged. Susan recognized Marianne’s strategy of emotional disconnection as one that Susan used herself when she had not yet developed the “crust” necessary to personally and emotionally relate with people.

I felt deadness, the absence of hope, and a calculated resignation as I listened to Sylvia. At times I wondered about the truthfulness of her stories, specifically if she had exaggerated both the number and tragic details of the stories. But, at the same time, the specifics did not matter because the effects of them on her were starkly evident. Susan and I were both struck by the nonchalant, disconnected way that Sylvia told the story of her tragic and painful life experience. The sadness and grief that I felt was somewhat alleviated. My hope was restored for her by witnessing her curiosity and the way she attempted to, at least, make intellectual sense of the hints offered by her amazing images.

I felt compassion for Ron as I witnessed his emerging insight about the craziness involved in staying static and the difficulty of making any movement into some unknown future. His intellectually sharp mind contrasted with what I felt—a lack of passion. I felt his pain and shame of remaining “at sea” about his incapacity to participate in the decision of abortion and in life itself. He seemed stuck in the in-between place where one prefers not to breathe or look because of the painful experience of trying to hold awareness of the simultaneous existence of the harshness and the beauty that life
simultaneously includes. I felt grief for whatever might be lost for him because of indecisiveness and lack of commitment to “passage.”

3. Imaginal Structures

Marianne, Sylvia, and Ron reflected how I had postponed my own desire in my pseudoinnocent denial of the darker experience and emotions and death that are part of human existence. I was not capable of aggression. My power drive—the primal creative energy of life—was distorted. I gave up psychological ambivalence. My power, imagination, and my own art suffered spontaneity and a loss of depth.

4. Theoretical Concepts

The theories and concepts important to this learning are of pseudoinnocence with its denial of power and the defenses of psychic numbing and dissociation that sustain it. Also covered are relationships between fear and death, fear and desire, hopelessness and death, and defensive loss of inwardness and imagination.

Rollo May notes that power is the source of one’s self-esteem as it is linked with self-affirmation and self-assertion. From an ontological perspective he asserts that the power to be is the first of five levels of power present as potential in every human’s life. He posits that one’s being is made more visible by actualizing one’s power. One must learn how to be “it.”

Loss of power in all participants’ stories related to their avoidance of affective experience. Rollo May describes pseudoinnocence as a common defense strategy for living that uses powerlessness to avoid admitting or confronting one’s power. Driving
this defense is the desire to escape awareness of horrendous and real dangers inherent in
the human experience. Rollo May posits that the blinders of pseudoinnocence produce
naiveté, which is perpetuated by the defense of splitting. He suggests that being more
sensitive to both good and evil is a dialectic that is essential for one’s creativity. This
idea is relevant to Marianne who claims that her imagination is dead, her art-work
suffers, and she prefers to whitewash difficult feelings and life experiences. Rollo May
also links pseudoinnocence with fear of death. He notes that fear accompanies growth
into greater maturity and awareness with each step taken in which one comes closer to
infirmity and death.

Bachelard speaks to the importance of psychological ambivalence in regard to the
poles of desire and fear. Ron’s fear of passage and Marianne’s inability to hold emotional
poles keep their desire from moving to its next image of interest.

A matter, which does not elicit a psychological ambivalence cannot find its poetic
double, which allows endless transpositions. It is necessary then to have a double
participation—participation of desire and fear—participation of good and evil,
peaceful participation of black and white—for the material element to involve the
entire soul.

Jung’s subject turns desire inward to thought, which is impacted by fear of the
instinctive unconscious and the conflicts between opposites that it creates. Marianne,
Sylvia, and Ron’s stifled desire creates inertia because of their engrossment in mere
imagery or active observation of fantasy, which has no effect because there is no vivid
libidinal participation.

Marianne’s lack of imagination, subtlety and embrace, Ron’s loss of instinct, and
Sylvia’s deadening of her feelings are explicated by Naranjo’s idea that the core of all
character orientations operating as defense (which the Greeks described as accidia) is
psychospiritual inertia marked by laziness of the psyche and of the spirit. This loss of the
sense of being is so stark that one is not even aware that there is a loss. Psychologically, accidia manifests as a loss of inwardness or interiority, a resistance to change, and a refusal to see. He posits that the defensive loss of inwardness is expressed in the following ways: intellectually through a lack of imagination and subtlety; emotionally, by a deadening of feelings; and cognitively by a deafening to one’s inner voices, a loss of instinct.

Lifton defines psychic numbing as a protective survival mechanism that arises when one is confronted with difficult experiences or horrific situations, including death, which seems especially relevant to Sylvia’s tragic history. One suddenly ceases to feel anything, deciding to shut off the mind through psychic numbing. Lifton defines it as, “A form of desensitization, an incapacity to feel or confront certain kinds of experience due to the blocking or absence of inner forms of imagery that can connect with such experience.”

In terms of Marianne’s large stomach as a grounding mechanism to keep her from “floating away,” I turn to Nathanson, who links dissociation to the avoidance of negative affect. He posits that intense noxious and negative affect can push one beyond the limits of tolerance. One must ameliorate the experience, move away from it into something else such as alcohol, drugs or food, consumption of material goods, or immersion in addictive physical activity.

Splitting according to Thompson is a mechanism that the subject of desire uses in order to relieve one’s self from the burden of desire, a concept that relates to all of the participants’ stories.
In regards to all of the participants’ relationships to denial of death and its impact on their lack of vivid libidinal participation in life that keeps desire from its course of movement to define their individuality, I cite Omer:

The child needs to emerge from the symbiotic merger with mother without being so overwhelmed by his growing awareness of separateness and mortality as to permanently recoil from participation; he needs preparation to embrace a culture of participation rather than recoil into the cult of Narcissus. This requires a steadily growing capacity for immortality symbolization which, is decisively linked to libidinal symbolizations … To accept death—that is, to have come to terms with death, is linked to a coming to terms with separateness.²⁹

Regarding Marianne and Sylvia and especially Ron’s fear of passage through some dark center that had some female form, I turn to Persephone’s myth. According to Schwartz-Salant, the essential belief of the Eleusian way of Demeter and Persephone is that darker states of despair, loss, failure, pain, and suffering are important creative features of life and of immense value.³⁰

5. Interpretations

This Learning states that the desire to retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition, to avoid affective experience, notably fear, anger, shame, and imagery around death, maintains a pseudoinnocent stance, which cuts one off from actualizing power.

I heard in participants’ stories how they retreated from their painful, often overwhelming experience of life. It seemed difficult for many participants to emotionally connect with their experience; many appeared psychically numb to parts of their stories. A theme of death, both literal and metaphorical, emerged. There was emotional loss of
parents, the impending death of a father, the death of an unborn child, and the death of self. I sensed an inability to symbolize life, death, and immortality.

Marianne—Marianne’s image of stifled desire was the desire to be held during disruption; her pseudo-innocent stance was emotional disconnection. I sense that this defensive life strategy drives her to whitewash emotions as a form of deadening them in order to escape from the pain of death, suffering, anger, grief, and fear of the undifferentiated darkness. All of these deeply affected her due to her father’s impending death. Unable to subtly describe her feelings or to hold polarities, her desire is to attempt to experience all of her feelings that hold transformative power for her soul’s necessary interactions required for realization. But her impulse is to avoid the pain and go directly toward happiness and bliss. Avoidance of the affects is, I believe, also evident in her use of food as a way to mitigate the intolerable feelings. While Marianne uses meditation as a form of transcendence, it is not adequately holding her through her experience of loss, as it seems to be used to avoid or escape the darker emotional experience.

The lack of capacity to hold the psychological ambivalence between good and evil, masculine and feminine, both positive and negative emotions, all due to her discomfort and reluctance to look inward, negatively impacts her imagination. Her lost creativity instincts and access to her unique power comes from the inner aggression between the self and against the self. It is this loss that leaves her ill equipped to find ways to deal with her father’s death, and I suspect to symbolize her own immortality. It leaves her bereft of means to rediscover and embody her own power. Also lost is her ability to find her unique place in the world as artist, and finally to discover appropriate work in the world that would support her financially. The fear she experiences could be
related to taking these steps forward in her development because of the growing
awareness that each step toward maturity brings her closer to frailty and death that is so
evident now from observing her father’s process of dying. My sense is that she
semiconsciously recognizes that power as being and the “holder” during times of
disruption, is analogous to the image of “unity and fire” in the movie *Angels in America.*
Her grief and shame may be indicative of lack of relationship with this powerful part of
herself.

Sylvia—Sylvia’s image of stifled desire was “a really loud scream” without sound
and with pent up tears; her pseudo-innocent stance was psychic numbing. This life
strategy acts as a protective survival mechanism for coping with the horrific and
inescapable life situations that are a part of her story. She desensitized herself by standing
back and reflecting on her experience, denying herself a scream of anguish, pain, and
betrayal and the grief associated with a lost childhood and life. Like Marianne, she spoke
of her imagination as being dead. For Sylvia, the dead imagination means not feeling
unbearable pain. It means she has no access to that inner being with the power to create a
new way for her to engage with her life story that is both bearable and beautiful. Her
incapacity to access inner forms of imagery keeps her from connecting to and confronting
the difficult experiences evident in her life story.

The fire she describes, I think, may represent the anger she ceased to feel as a
measure of protection from horrendous external circumstances and also as a protection
from being burned up by her own rage over those experiences. She seems to recognize
that her feeling of “burning but not burning” keeps her just slightly above the fire, which
stops her from getting to an okay place. She seems to intuit that allowing herself to feel
the anger may consume and kill her. At the same time, the fire may also be related to future transformative aspect of anger. She does not understand the purpose of what she describes as “jolts of connection” and compares them to the cool green earth, which she links with being okay. She is prevented from getting to the cool earth because the fire is right below her acting as a barrier. Perhaps these “links” are the instinctual voices associated with her power to be, the potential linked to her self-affirmation and self-assertion and creativity.

Ron—Ron’s pseudo-innocent stance was psychospiritual inertia most recently brought to consciousness through the loss of his girlfriend, the abortion of his unborn child, and the way he did not deal with her news of the pregnancy. He describes an “abortion in himself” that he associates with feeling frozen, rejection, and shame, and a sense “why bother” because things look so gloomy. All are indicative of why he says that he does not feel desire. There is no vivid libidinal participation in his life.

His described image of the lily (linked with the feminine) is associated with his fear and refusal to take an initiatory journey to the underworld where one meets and embodies the dark emotions and darker states of despair, loss, failure, pain, and suffering attained through an experience with the image of Persephone, whose eventual gift is to live in one’s heart as the feminine source of life. This is supported by his “static” and “clenched” body image that made him think about “freedom of the heart” that could be gained by reaching through the funnel image to the other side. He was aware that he was not living freely, and was forgetting his self. This is evident in his wondering about two similar choices to living life, which keep him from taking the passage: living in ignorance as bliss or being ignorant in order to maintain the bliss. At the same time this recognition
could be the beginning of a willingness to see and perhaps feel less resistance to change. He seems to recognize that this laziness of the psyche is what keeps him from freely exercising his potential.

He also believes that if he wanted to make an escape from his inertia, he could find a way but he is aware that he has not yet found it. Perhaps the hopelessness experienced in the first two years after his breakup is still negatively impacting his desire because hope motivates desire and to be without hope feels like death, as he described.

6. Validity

I personally transcribed each participant’s taped conversations. Participants’ transcripts were read with the intention of determining what factors maintained stifled desire. I had a hunch that embedded in the storied identity of participants was a pseudo-innocent stance that actually prevented them from hearing their trustworthy and holy desire. Consequently, they were read and re-read several times, as I wondered about participants’ pseudo-innocent stance and how this stance might stifle desire.

Citing Evangelous Christou, Sardello contemplated the validity of learning within the imaginal realm. He wrote, “Psychological experience, like dramatic experience, is observable only if the observer has participated in the event, that is to say, has registered the event as experientially meaningful …” 31 In the spirit of Christou, the usefulness of what I learned was necessarily linked to Susan’s and my ability to imagine the experience of participants. Questions asked after taking time to imagine participants experience included: Was this plausible? Were there any loose ends? Was anything “off” or not attended to?
Learning Two: Stifled Desire: Unsatisfying Enactments of Aliveness Counteract Deadness

The primary claim of this learning is: Impacted by the unattended affects of anger, grief, fear, and shame, pseudoinnocence is expressed through conflictual and unsatisfying reactive enactments. An experience of aliveness is created to counteract the deadness experienced by lost access to the psychic energy of desire and one’s actualizing power. Asked to create a series of drawings in response to questions that centered on desire stifled in them, the next four participants’ stories revealed a pseudoinnocent stance—the unique way that each individual denied the power held in their image of stifled desire. These four participant’s stories (“Peter,” “John,” “Lillian,” and “Stella” (pseudonyms)) are presented in this second learning that emerged, which expressed pseudoinnocence through conflictual and enacted dynamics.

1. What Happened

Peter—*Resentful Bow to Authority*. Peter’s drawing of stifled desire revealed an image of a church with a large “No” symbol over it. He stated emphatically that organized religion inhibits our belief structures, our society, and our actions. Having served in Vietnam, he is against how governments take the world to war. Furthermore, he said that institutional authority like the church “splits” right and wrong, heaven and hell, instills fear, and that these authorities keep one from their potential.

Peter professed a desire to create things and appreciate nature—things he has little time for as a successful businessman. I asked him specifically how the church and these institutions got in his way of doing what he wants to do. He responded with a theory that
we are a success-oriented culture and one is doomed if seen as a failure. The he stated he has a fear of failure and of vulnerability for which he holds the institutions responsible. He described his vulnerability as “showing yourself and maybe not being all that you thought you were to other people.”

In his drawing of his feelings around stifled desire, one half of the page contained a small non-gendered stick figure with images of parents, the government, and the church all pointing arrows down towards its head. Next to that figure were the figures of a small stick man next to a larger woman depicted only with an upper torso and breasts. Underneath them was written “right, wrong, and control.” When I asked what these words meant, he said that people in relationships are inhibited from seeing one another as individuals rather than as stereotypes. In the course of his story, he revealed that he tried to achieve harmony in relationships by letting each person have their own position; no one is right, no one is wrong.

Peter’s body drawing of feeling the feelings and thoughts of stifled desire revealed the image of a stifled “peacemaker.” He stated, “the heart connection is important … the big one for me.” He stated that he feels stifled that he did not give himself the opportunity to do more in the world for others, particularly children. He said that he does not think he feels guilty about this, but possibly disappointed in himself sometimes.

John—Fear of Being Trapped. John excitedly described the art image of his stifled desire as flying an F-18 fighter jet and firing missiles at bad guys. When I asked whether it was flying or getting bad guys that made him happiest, he responded, “Neither. It was the feeling, the power of the feeling, the adrenaline.” “Sit long and die,” he added.
The other art image contained in his drawing was a sword, which he said was for use as a gladiator. When I asked why he wanted to be a gladiator, he said, “It’s exciting because you’re working for the king and have access to great equipment and hot women. You get the adrenaline, and you actually help people, or you could.” He went on to say,

[Gladiators work on] a purpose rather than listen to the common people or the rule of the day of why you should do things. I try to not to get caught up in that but then you have to sometimes … You know, so many people try to change everybody and put them in their box, which would work, but it’s tough to do that.

When I asked him to say more about how he experiences being put in a box, he responded, “Oh, mostly just through relationships.”

John’s drawing of his feelings around stifled desire revealed images of homes, specifically, one with a moat and the other high atop a mountain. He said that both were safe and secure because of their vantage points: He could keep his eyes on things, keep his freedom, and do what he wanted to do. When invited to elaborate on this strategy, John talked about his relationships with women. He stated that he could not experience freedom and independence, excitement, and adrenaline while in significant relationship with women. He says that if you, “stay true to excitement and adventure, then you’re lonely.” He explained that this was the case because he “got in trouble” for “being strong” and “not being compassionate.” Appearing agitated, he stated that if he were “true to himself,” he would be considered “selfish.” Rather than being unhappy in relationship, he said that he kept busy with various adventures.

Between meetings, John reported that he had a dream about his dead father. He said that his father drank a lot, and that in the dream, his father appeared with gladiator-like hair, but looked a little downtrodden. His father told him to drink less. When asked if
he felt like the message might be relevant to him, he said that any advice about drinking
would not be useful to him.\textsuperscript{34}

John’s body drawing of what stifled desire felt like in his body was a muscle-bound, Herculean figure cut out in the shape of a triangle for its energy. When asked about the image of the figure, he said in a soft voice, “It’s … a strong, you know, a strong person.”

Stella—\emph{If Only: Ghostly Empty Images of Hope}. Stella described her stifled desire as the “core of sexuality.” Her drawing of stifled desire included images of “blood,” “the vaginal opening,” and “a penis coming down and touching right at the core place.” She clarified that her desire was not exactly stifled, but inactive because she lacked a partner who could “spark and ignite,” “spark her core,” and make her “feel her aliveness.”

Stella told stories of her shyness as a child and how she lost her own direction, her compass, and living life in accordance with what she felt others wanted of her. She said that this pattern continued well into adulthood. For instance, she said that she did her best to meet the expectations of her husband all the while feeling as if she were in a “Miss Pleasantville kind of a box.”

Unable to experience orgasm with her husband, she experienced orgasm for the first time (in her life) with her therapist. He became the only one who could “spark her core” and make her “feel her aliveness.” After eventually reporting her therapist to appropriate boards, getting a divorce, working on having good relationships with her former therapist and her husband, she said that she was unable to have a sustainable relationship with her former therapist. Instead, she said that he had become her secret intermittent lover. She explained, “It’s like this guy that started me off in this process,
would say, we can’t be together, we’d just burn each other up, you know, the energy is just too powerful, to like, live with all the time.”

Stella’s feelings and thoughts around her stifled desire revealed images of a fireball (the sun), the dark black void of the universe, and the “big bang.” She associated the images with going into the middle of her vagina and hitting a bulls-eye there. She remembered knowing as a kid that what is inside of her, that creative source, is also out and up there. She described this core aliveness in relation to the experience of the drowning woman in *The Piano* who gasped for breath when she came up out of the water, surfacing out of nothing and coming back to life. Stella described the gasp as a cosmic boom after one has been dying.35

In a body drawing that explored Stella’s thoughts and feelings associated with her stifled desire, art images revealed a faded grey, vaguely defined figure sitting like the Buddha with slight red color near the heart and throat. She described the red as a place of centered peacefulness in the midst of the fire that I feel, in the midst of the energy that I feel, allowing it, allowing it to burn like a good campfire would burn, taking those breaths, not drowning in it, not drowning in the emotions, not getting burned up in the emotions …

When I asked her to say more about her emotions, she responded in a tentative and quiet way that she was apprehensive about even thinking of being with a specific person because of the feelings of sadness or hopelessness she might feel as an outcome of “getting caught up in the desire.” As she talked about the important people and events in her life, she frequently used the phrase “if only.” 36

Between meetings she said she became more aware of her tendency toward melancholy. She connects the feeling of if only back through her own life and mentions her father.
[S]o if you take it way back to when I was born and conceived and everything, there’s this place of, if only my father had been there, if only I’d had that person in my life that I didn’t have, if only, then life would be better, you know. But you can trace that back a whole life, my whole life, saying, there’s that little place in me that said, oh, if only then, then there’d be this other place released, so, and that could be in the face of everything wonderful around it, but if I hold to that precious little place that as a child that I didn’t have that, like holding it precious, perhaps that …

Lillian—Hatred softened and buried. Lillian’s stifled desire was, “really pure hatred.” Through a constant flow of tears she described the image,

Well, I think, you know with the colors I couldn’t get it red enough and I couldn’t get it dark enough. And I really wanted all the edges to be really straight and really sharp and really precise and not soft, you know, not cushioned, not puffy or round in any way. Like feelings, you know, when you look at the pink and you add the compassion it gets soft and … you can take anger or you can take hatred and then you add compassion and then there is softness to it.

Still crying, she added, “There’s so much hatred in there … [it] just gets held back.”

Later she disclosed that hate felt like a shameful feeling for her because it was void of compassion, sympathy, and understanding. She said that her understanding was that hate came from ignorance and close-mindedness and was therefore a bad emotion.

I asked Lillian if the hate was directed toward something. She said, “I hate men, I so hate men … Pure, pure, pure hatred, just for men …” When she was asked to elaborate, she disclosed her history of being abused by men: Not being listened to, beaten, molested, and raped. She explained that letting those abuses slide by and softening them in her head resulted in the grey weight and fog that appeared in her drawing of feelings around stifled desire.37

In spite of hating men, Lillian said that she loves her husband. Adding to her ambiguity, Lillian described herself as a lesbian who did not get to be one. She said,

I’m lesbian and maybe that’s part of it too, you know, it’s all that put together and there’s so much holding down and so much shame and I didn’t get to be a lesbian because, you know, it just wasn’t going to fly in my family and it was my mom
who pretty much was just so afraid that I was lesbian, but I think it’s mixed up all in that …

2. How I Was Affected

I felt sadness and grief for Peter as he described his loss of power (ability to spontaneously express love, heart connection, etc.) as an outcome of his relationship with institutional authority. I was aware of my own inner conflict and unspoken blame toward the Catholic Church for keeping me from trusted relationship with my divine other because of their rejection of my non-Catholic father. Susan described it as if there was no room to imaginally engage the “facts.” She stated that she felt the grip of control in Peter’s story and wanted to hear more from what Peter described as the voice of the free spirit that dwelled in him.

I loved seeing the taboo image of hate in Lillian’s art and in what felt for me such a pure form with determination. As Susan and I have spent years working on her dissertation, on re-imagining hatred, we learned to love and respect the intelligence embedded in the image of hate in that process. As I listened to Lillian’s conflicted feelings as she described how she targeted her hate towards men, I wondered if some of her fear of hate was connected to my imagining her experience of self-hate and shame. A strong remaining image of the interviews with Lillian was her determination to participate in this process the “right way,” and her many apologies for possibly hurting feelings for directing attention to one or the other of us.

I was struck by the tenderness, loneliness, and aggressiveness of John’s manner and tone. Susan and I felt pain and powerlessness as he described his body image, house
images, and inability to experience ease and a sense of well-being with himself in relation to women.

Stella wore a serene smile while talking about “the core of sexuality” and images of fire. During these same moments, I felt anger and rage and wondered if anger and rage were asking to be voiced, but were denied expression. At the first meeting with Stella, I sensed idealization in her description of what felt like commitment to orgasmic aliveness. With regard to that same image, Susan sensed in her a fundamentalist stance that “there was nothing better than her historic experience of this cosmic aliveness.” Susan said that she felt fragility in the stance and a need to be careful with Stella. She sensed that something was heavily defended, perhaps a wounding of belonging. I felt grief when Stella disclosed that she was postponing her desire for relationship because of feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Her description of holding on to a “precious little place” that as a child she “didn’t have” felt familiar to me, and I was sad that she hung onto this place even when she said things were wonderful for her. I felt grief too when Stella said, “If only [her] father would have been there, [her] life would have been better.” I thought of and felt grief for the loss of personal father but also the loss of that often fleeting, indescribable, numinous sense of personal Otherness.

3. Imaginal Structures in Use

I was touched by what Peter said, “you have to be what you are, whatever you do, and hope that that is …” This reminded me of my own struggle to develop deeper levels of trust and making it safe to reveal hidden parts of myself.
Stella reflected to me how I have postponed desire in certain ways. I have been stuck in a state of *If only*. There is a way that I used to seek and not have, which may have had something to do with the death of my father. I have been stuck in a tension of longing and not having, stuck in a state of “sort of wanting” a deep emotional relationship with a man. It is like I was stuck in the loss; almost like a cathartic, re-run situation fixation. Repetitions fueled my desires. Some of this goes back to my character structure, which at its core was self-forgetting. Shame at not remembering my self and my own divine nature has pulled me forward on my quest to heal and open the heart of the isolator figure.

Lillian’s experience with power-denied reminded me of my conflicted relationship with power because of its implication in aggression and violence as it related to my father and other powerful male figures in my life who lost their lives because of how power was misused.

## 4. Theoretical Concepts

The theories and concepts important to this learning are aspects of pseudoinnocence related to regressed libido; power and aggression; shame linked with anger, fear, and grief; the relationship of desire with hopelessness and death. Each is discussed below.

Rollo May posits that a mark of pseudoinnocence is difficulty with the “inescapable ambivalence of human life.” 38 The conflict posed by opposing ideas, attitudes, or emotions, such as Lillian’s hate and compassion experienced at the same
time is difficult and uncomfortable to deal with, along with the uncertainty one feels due to mental conflict.

Relative to all participants, Rollo May acknowledges a need for greater power used to self-assert when self-affirmation is blocked and when aggression becomes the next step used to shift and restructure power in one’s interest.\(^{39}\) John’s conflicted relationships with women is evident in Rollo May’s theory that finds negative aggression comes forth in overt conflict pitting one’s interest against another’s interest as an attempt to bring some resolution in the conflict.\(^{40}\)

In regards to John’s external/internal battles that resulted in his isolation and loneliness, I turn to Rollo May’s idea that aggression can also be experienced against the self. A rebellious part of one’s self inwardly looks for a “fight,” aware that creative power and vision come out of this struggle, an impulse that Rollo May links with the daimonic.\(^{41}\) In regard to both Stella and Lillian not affirming their own being, their need for recognition resulted in grief as well as low self-esteem.\(^{42}\) Rollo May also believes that power has been scorned because it has been used as force, compulsion, and coercion, in a sense to destroy the spontaneity and identity of the other person, often with violence, as is especially the case with Lillian, and I suspect John.\(^{43}\)

I turn to Jung to understand how participants’ conflictual relationships with their stifled desire produce a loss of energy and feeling of deadness. He posits that Libido can become regressed and in some cases stay regressed for an inordinate amount of time, allowing no movement and manifestation of an inner will or desire.\(^{44}\) When a psychic process is conditioned by unconscious motivation, instinct is suppressed or repressed out of fear of the very real external dangers of this world or of inner reality.\(^{45}\) Jung says,
“Whenever a damming up of libido occurs, the opposites, previously united in the steady flow of life, fall apart and henceforth confront one another like antagonists eager for battle.” 46 Neither instincts, causing the damming up of one’s life, rational thinking, or logical arguing can be applied to this task. A new *transcendental way* comes symbolically from lingering with these opposites and the energy lost to them.47

Staten refers to a dialectic of mourning, which he imagines as a field of movement that begins with the process of attachment to a love object that will most certainly die, literal mother being the first of many. He suggests that all affective phenomena are determined by this promise of loss that the self would rather avoid (and accordingly strategizes against with deferral, avoidance, or transcendence). This idea made me think of all participants but most specifically of Stella’s loss of her father as it relates to her stifled desire. Staten posits that transcending mourning is related not to fear of the loss of a beloved object but to fear of the loss of self.48

Lillian’s fear of her desire to feel her hatred is illuminated by Belk, Ger, and Askegaard, who found that the self-monitoring of desire takes place because acting on certain desires can have dangerous personal and social consequences, as one may fear being perceived as indulgent, immoral, weak, or bad by themselves or by the other.49

Linked to all participants’ experiences, Kaufman posits that when anger, fear, distress, or even enjoyment is followed by a parental response that induces shame, Tomkin’s affect-shame binds become internalized within the emerging personality. For instance, a fear-shame bind is experienced when a child feels scared and the parent’s response is “stop—that big boys are not scared of silly things.” The child feels badly and ashamed, like there is something wrong whenever he feels afraid. Fear and shame are
triggered together. The self feels so exposed (even to itself) that this can even silence and erase the very experiencing of that particular feeling (in this case fear).  

I turn to Moore to understand Stella’s courage to not turn down Eros and find her sexual freedom through a taboo relationship with her therapist. He asserts the Marquis de Sade shows how important the erotic delights of the “life-giving but ill-mannered heart” are to desire and sexual attraction in his recognition that individual and collective sexual fantasies symbolically depict the human psyche. He notes that imagination can be confined and bound by moral narrowness, taste, and control of Eros, all of which squelch freedom.  

In regard to all participant’s estrangement from their bodies but especially John and Peter, I turn to Cheetham, who suggests that one will not take the descent as the soul’s antidote to one’s pathologies of motion, emotion, restlessness, and drive because it is too hard to descend into darkness and plurality. Distractions keep one from descent due to not knowing how to seek innerness and the fearful and anxiety producing estrangement from one’s body and from nature.  

Boris differentiates hope and desire, which explicates Stella’s experience of hopelessness that kept her from fulfilling her desire. Boris theorizes that hope arises from misconceptions of how experiences should be. He asserts that when preconceptions and actuality are too far apart, hope can emerge separate from desire and have the affect of constraining desire. He argues that hope fears fulfillment as much as frustration and consequently produces hopelessness. In this process, he sees hope becoming vested rather than experienced.
5. Interpretations

This Learning states that impacted by the unattended affects of anger, grief, fear, and shame, pseudoinnocence is expressed through conflictual and unsatisfying reactive enactments. An experience of aliveness is created to counteract the deadness experienced by lost access to the psychic energy of desire and one’s actualizing power.

Peter’s image of stifled desire was a church with a large “No” symbol over it, which he asserted took away the beauty that can be in the world. His pseudo-innocent stance was a resentful bow to authority. Peter appeared to direct his anger outward toward institutional images of authority (the church, governments, schools, and marriage). I saw a desire to view the world as split in terms of innocence (i.e., bliss, joy, play, dancing, singing, love, peace, and beauty), and the powerful “others” that he held responsible and blamed for taking those away. He didn’t seem to be able to deal consciously with his own inner conflict relating to lack of power manifested in his fear of disapproval, loneliness, vulnerability, and feelings of not being enough, which was evident in his verbal descriptions and the image of his small stick-figure body drawing. The larger feminine figure next to him (upper torso only with breasts) seems to point to fearful and anxiety-producing estrangement from his body and from nature, a lack of contact, which may be related to a conflicted relationship and attachment with the mother image. There seems to be a denial and repression of the darker feminine and sexuality along with conflict with authoritarian power possibly related to father image. Paradoxically desire does depend on prohibition. I suspect that if he could experience in some other way the lack that is created in the acceptance of his symbolic castration, he may open to desire.
The power that would fuel Peter’s desired creativity remains stuck in a state of inertia and the union or integration of opposites in his psyche are left unattended because his internal battle is being fought externally with authority. The beauty and good of the world is still separate from the evil entities “out there.” Perhaps being a busy successful businessman has allowed him to forget that one needs to develop relationship with the unconscious, which must be joined to the conscious. I sense the fear he refers to stems from this lack of relationship with the unconscious and the darker imagery, which would contrast too dramatically with his more innocent idealized worldview. Beauty seems to awaken his soul to act. He doesn’t seem able yet to take responsibility for experiencing painful feelings and imagery related to the unfolding of the powerful self that is a part of true beauty that knows about darkness. His desire seemed to be directed outward to helping others. The guilt he described for not doing “enough” and feeling disappointed in himself may be shame for not directing that help inward to his “potential.” He has not flashed a light into his own dark place of fear in order to integrate his gifts and talents into his life—to integrate polarities and oppositions internally and externally.55

John’s images of stifled desire were flying an F-18 fighter jet while firing missiles at bad guys and a sword representing gladiators. The feeling he underscored in these two images and throughout his interview was his desire for feelings of power, adrenaline, and excitement, and a sense of purpose. John’s negative aggressive inclinations toward overt conflict seem to be indicative of an inner rebellious part of him that is looking for a fight “literally” instead of manifesting his aggression inwardly within and against the self in a more creative way, which might give him access to purpose. He seems to be unconsciously craving conflict as a force to help him find and call on his inner power,
which he seems unaware of possessing. So he is left taking power from the other for either self-protection or to increase his own sense of power. I sense that his imagery, including his Herculean body image and fortress-like home, along with having an alcoholic father, indicate that his self-assertion has been blocked, his self-esteem negatively impacted, and his power not actualized. So he is left with taking power any way he can. A vicious cycle is put into motion as grief accompanies a lack of self-esteem and power linked with being, which in turn calls for more excitement and adrenaline to counteract the lack of power. Exploration of what might live in the gap between desire and lack is avoided through all the noise of motion, movement, and external conflict.

For John, most situations that steal his freedom, adventures, and excitement and make him feel powerless involve women that matter to him. His “getting in trouble with them” may be indicative of the control he desires that is manifested in the subtle and not so subtle behavior that allows him to maintain power in the relationship. This kind of control through negative aggression blocks off sensitivity and understanding of these women’s experience indicated in their accusations of John’s lack of compassion. It also keeps him isolated, lonely, and unable to fulfill his desire for a relationship. And it blocks manifestation of the sacred impulse of his gladiator figure.

Stella’s image of stifled desire was the “core of sexuality.” Her pseudo-innocent stance was if only, a strategy of idealizing empty images of hope. It seemed that Stella’s hopeful desire to be in relationship with a partner similar to the therapist that “sparked her core” lead to preconceptions that were too far apart from actual experience. She seems to bypass the more real, often conflicted human experience of intimate relationship both with herself and with a lover. Rather than desire, Stella seemed left with the
experience of hopelessness; she appears to be fearful of fulfillment and frustration. This is evident in her apprehension about being with a specific person because of “feelings of sadness or hopelessness” she might feel as an outcome of “getting caught up in the desire.” This seems connected to the feeling of if only her lost father would have been in her life, then that “other place” in her would be released. This dynamic seemed to be mirrored in her powerful idealized intermittent relationship with the secret ghost of her therapist lover. Her focus on looking for her idealized partner “out there” may have distracted her from developing any consistent partnership with her own “aliveness,” a divine spark of being that dwelled in her and the true source of her creativity and power.

Stella’s desire, dating back to her childhood, has been lived in accordance with what she felt others wanted of her and contrary to her own. She appears to be caught in melancholy evidenced in her faded grey, vaguely defined body image and her related comment that acknowledges that she does not want to get burned up in emotions and drown. It seemed that unacknowledged grief, anger, and fear contributed to keeping her idealizations intact, frozen in inactive hope, with no access to her “aliveness.”

Lillian’s image of stifled desire was hate. Her pseudo-innocent stance was the attempt to deny, bury, and “keep secret” hate in her heart and labeling it a “bad emotion.” Lillian’s conflicted view of hate was that it was taboo, not nice, and that it had to be tempered with compassion and understanding. But the compassion that she tried to find for those “men” who harmed her appeared to be oppressive to the image of hate that held a much needed power for her, particularly, the power to move in the world with determination and without apology. Her aggression seemed to be kept within herself and actually experienced against the self. I believe that violence and aggression against her
contributes to a conflicted feeling about the use and manifestation of her own power and creates inertia and the heavy grey fog that enveloped her. Trying to avoid feeling hate, she “buried” it along with her anger and grief. The self-silencing of her hate and anger robbed her of actualizing her power, which is the source of self-esteem and may be viewed as an echo of all of the ways that she has been harmed, violated, and oppressed in the past. I sense that her image of hate is an excessive movement of sacred, transgressive desire, which when returned to the profane world needs to be made sense of within her self.

Different from the self-silencing of her hate and anger, Lillian seemed to be giving voice to the lesbian part of her identity that she is and did not get to be. The conflicted identity due to self-silencing of who she is co-exists with the love and commitment she voiced for her male husband, in spite of her pure hatred just for men. It seemed that in the telling of her entire story that she became less “holding herself down.”

6. Validity

These participants’ transcripts were read with the intention of determining what factors maintained stifled desire. Again I had a hunch that embedded in the storied identity of participants was a pseudo-innocent stance that actually prevented them from hearing their trustworthy desire. Consequently, I read and re-read the transcripts of the interviews several times wondering about the participants’ pseudo-innocent stance and how this stance might stifle desire. Susan and I then met to go over these findings to determine if she experienced the meaningfulness of each participants experience in the same way that I did. We collaborated to expand understanding, imagining together the
participant’s experience in order to add more complexity, filling in what either might have missed in their stories. We also remembered and discussed more of our own personal stories related to the dynamics found in the learning.

**Learning Three: Elemental Imagery: Access To Energy and Movement**

The primary claim of this learning is: Attending to imagery, especially elemental imagery of fire, gives access to energy and creates psychic movement, enabling one to attend to painful stories of powerlessness, failure, resentment and victimization, along with the affects of anger and shame. Participants were facilitated in exploring images of powerlessness, shame, and anger in their artwork related to their image of stifled desire. As participants imaginally engaged with their images, they gained access, through elemental imagery, to some understanding of how the stifled energy of their desire negatively impacted aspects of their lives. Excerpts from Sylvia, John, Marianne, and Lillian’s stories are considered below.

1. **What Happened**

    Sylvia—Sylvia attended to her stories of neglect, poverty, medical problems, rape, and abandonment by way of a reflexive dialogue with the images in her artwork. Then through a meditation that invoked a daimon figure, Sylvia was invited to draw her stifled desire again. This time she drew a flame directly above connected to a deep body of water. When I asked her to describe what she noticed about the drawing, Sylvia said, “I keep thinking, well are you fire or are you water? Make up your mind.” When asked to say more about her sense of the relationship between the fire and water she said,
It’s sort of like, fuck it, you know; it’s sort of like the blaze, you know, the blaze. And maybe it’s not about a choice. Maybe it’s about the cool water and the flame. Maybe it’s about both, because I won’t give up the water, but I won’t give up the flame either. I think it’s about the fighting for it.

I suggested to Sylvia that the two images appeared somehow bound together. She said,

You know that line that connects them is very strong. It’s not going anywhere. You know what, at first I thought the flame was going down to the water but after I drew it, I knew the flame was coming out of the water … Out of really strong roots.

I asked her to describe her sense of what bridged the flame and water, she replied, “a stem.”

Toward the end of the second interview Sylvia was asked to consider her first and second drawings of stifled desire and comment on her sense of what, if anything had changed. She stated, “The pillow came off the scream,” which was her original image of stifled desire. A conversation ensued in which I asked if the flame was a metaphor for what was suffocated. She said, “Yes. You can think your way out of the rage and you can calm it, but it’s always there.” She said that the rage was in response to experiences in which she felt powerless. She also noted that her rage was something that made her feel powerless in its own right. She explained,

[Rage comes up in response to] … real things that hurt you. Real things that destroy you, that are trying to destroy you. And rage has its own power … And sometimes all you have is rage to keep you going … And it can destroy you. It can be like poison in your veins.

Still reflecting on both drawings Sylvia discerned that powerlessness was not a part of the flame drawing, rather, it was an image connected with the first drawing of the really loud scream without sound and pent up tears. Then she pondered out loud whether powerlessness was the best way to describe her experience:
I don’t know if powerlessness is the wrong, the right word. It’s more like, maybe victim is a better word. I mean a victim doesn’t have power, so they can’t feel powerless because they don’t have power.

I asked if victim was an aspect of the flame drawing. “Victim,” she said, “belonged in the first drawing of stifled desire.” It was reflected to Sylvia that she seemed very clear about this idea of a stem that connects the fire and water.

John—In response to a clarifying question about images of stifled desire that emerged in his artwork, I asked which he liked better, flying fighter jets, fighting as a gladiator, or shooting bad guys. John said “neither” and explained that it was “the power of the feeling, the adrenaline” that made him happiest. It is not about blowing things up. He said, “It’s fire-power.” His feelings around stifled desire revealed images of castles surrounded by moats perched on top of mountain peaks.

Throughout the interview John talked about his resentment of feeling trapped when he was in relationship with women and his feeling of futility around the energy it took to maintain them. John said that he felt manipulated by women with whom he was involved when they accused of him of being “non-sensitive” or having a “lack of compassion.” Then he lost respect for them. Susan reflected to him that it sounded as if he gave something up in relationship. He responded,

You do, or you make compromises, whatever you call it. You can do whatever you want. But when you take care of this, this, and this, and start taking care of everybody … fine. And then when you stop, then they think well, you know, it’s not right. So then people take advantage and so then that’s where the anger comes in, or the jealousy. Then you get angry after a point. They can push you. Then they don’t know when to stop. … You can hit a dog with a stick. Pretty soon he’ll bite you.

In the drawing of how the daimon that was evoked in the meditation felt in his body, John drew a large mass of yellow “energy.” This Angel advised him to “Live a life” and be “more compassionate and less guarded.” John was asked to draw a second
image of what stifled desire felt like now. Describing his drawing he said, “It’s the sun, the energy, that’s the universe, that’s the world, nothing gets in your way …” When asked if it felt hopeful he said, “Yeah, right now … [there is] energy, you’ve got the universe, you’ve got the whole world.”

Marianne—Marianne identified anger, fire, and wanting to be held through disruption as the images in her initial drawing of stifled desire. She said that she felt agitation. Regarding the extremes of her emotional experience, she said there was “a desire to hold it all instead of pushing it out or away.” Later she reflected that the drawing emitted “a lack of embrace.” Fear, anger, and grief filled the dark areas of her drawing.57

She acknowledged that she hardly knows what anger is, and that she did not even feel it until she was 35 years old. When I asked what she wanted with anger, she said, “Well there’s energy behind it, so I probably need the energy to get out of the dark, the dark hole, because I don’t have an easy time attaching anger to anything.” She said that she has trouble distinguishing between fear and anger. When asked if she was scared of being angry, or angry about not being scared in relation to her father’s impending death, and having to deal with the financial pragmatics of her life, she struggled with finding and distinguishing the source of the feelings. Some feelings were directed at her mom, who is no longer in a mother role because she is in a “freaking out role” regarding finances. When I asked if there was any anger in relationship to this whole experience, she responded,

I don’t know because … Well, maybe there is some anger about not being fully known. You know, I think there is a desire to be fully known by everyone, you know, whether it’s your parents, or your friends, or lovers, or whatever. There is this tendency to want to be fully known …
My co-researcher Susan asked if there was any anger about not being fully known by her dying father. Marianne said, “Yeah, well I’m not angry with my father, you know, but I’m really messed up about him.” Marianne stated that prior to talking with her father, she typically had to first write out what she planned to say to him and then read it to him. She stated that she “lost her voice” with her mother too.

Marianne also described feeling “caught” having a desire for two men who in the course of conversation mentioned that they were married or involved.

In a reflexive dialogue with images in her artwork, she identified a brown color that was part of her daimon drawing as “father energy … in that whatever Being that was up there trying to help.” She told us that this father energy told her to, “Relax … it’s all okay,” after which she made a distressed choking sound. When I asked her to give voice to what she was experiencing she said, “I can’t, I just can’t. I don’t have the energy and the um, intelligence, I mean, I’m not tapped into my full intelligence and it’s uncomfortable.” She admitted to having been depressed, which felt like: “The flame is really dim.”

Marianne’s final drawing of stifled desire, done after her daimon drawing, was a soft peachy yellow egg-shaped image with an interior bright yellow band of color that contained a horizontal green shape with bright orange droplets coming out of it. She called the droplets “realizations.” When I asked her about the image she said, “Hope and happiness, all … held in something.” She added, “This is the support of the, of that Being out there.” She concluded:

Well this could be sort of the center of my being, kind of. Ah ha! It would be nice to identify with this. I do identify with this. This is not me [sic]. Well any of this—no, it’s all me, it’s all me, its all me.
Lillian—Throughout the first interview, tears pored out as Lillian told her story of stifled desire, her pure hatred. She repeatedly apologized for her tears.

In reference to her body drawing of thoughts and feelings associated with her stifled desire, Lillian asserted that letting abuses by men slide by, explaining away abuses in her head, attempting to feel compassion for those men, not hate, and not allowing her self to feel “the shame-inducing feelings of hatred” had resulted in depression that held her back. Reflecting on her constricted body image of stifled desire, she notices that there is so much anger and terrible sadness and that is what is really constricting her. She said her shame was also about not being able to let go of the hatred and the incidences that created the hatred. While pondering her depression she stated:

I just think there’s so much stuff I have to look at and then there’s responsibility of being at this place and not taking care of all this stuff. I’ve allowed it to hold me back and keep me, you know, from doing so much and, you know, that’s my responsibility, that’s my waste. … I’m kicking myself for letting it weigh me down.

I asked Lillian, “If hate wasn’t being judged as shameful, what would you hear from hate, or feel, or see?” Lillian said that when she first started to draw her image of stifled desire, she saw an image of a strong goddess with snakes. Although she felt the strength of it at first, she did not draw that image because she realized that she could not maintain the feeling of strength. She said, “It might look like strength, but it wasn’t the way I felt … I didn’t feel strength from it, I felt weighted and so much sadness from it.” She said that it was the hatred that felt more powerful than the goddess image in that particular moment, and that for that reason she needed to draw the hate.

In the next moment, she reflected that the two images, hate and the goddess with snakes, when felt together, felt powerful. There was no apologetic stance that I often heard during her interviews. As Lillian recognized her appreciation for a power that does
not apologize, she also appeared to get interested in how to be responsible with that power. At the second meeting, Lillian revealed that she had a nightmare about her father, who had been one of her abusers. She stated that after the nightmare she wrote for a while. It then occurred to her, for the first time, that to feel hatred was not the same as being hateful.

Lillian’s final drawing of stifled desire appeared as a lightning bolt. She said it felt very powerful, positive, and exciting. She described the feeling as a magnificent thing instead of a terrible burden or a bad thing. She added,

The hate is always there. … I don’t know how we’re going to live till 90 without feeling that hate and I think I have to let that be and have it, let it be okay, because it’s always going to be there about something … I don’t want that to be my source … it seems like it’s transforming now that I’m able to say, this is lifting me up, this is pushing me forward, this is, and maybe keeping me safe.

She acknowledged that she wanted to be responsible about her relationship with hate and indicated a certain amount of overwhelm stating, “I never want to leave it behind, I just want to clean it up and have it packed in my suitcase in a more manageable way.”

2. How I Was Affected

An image that arose while listening to many of Sylvia’s stories, particularly on the first day, was a set of cold metal bars denying desire its passage out. When Sylvia told the story of the stem rooted in water that connected fire and water, the image of the cold metal bars was replaced by a new image: A nutrient-filled stem passing through her spine, running up and down the whole length of her body. I was in awe of Sylvia’s images and, at times, felt myself greedy in my desire for her to enter into relationship
with the images and find meaning from them. My co-researcher Susan wondered if perhaps this feeling was something that was resonating in me as an outcome of the intersubjective field that we created. Greedy-desperation, an unregulated hunger for care can be part of the experience of a lifetime of survival. Terrible violence had been inflicted on Sylvia in her life. However, I believed that the meaning these images carried for me had more to do with their potential to heal Sylvia’s imaginal body than greedy-desperation. Her image felt so powerfully beautiful, balanced, and right.

I so wanted Marianne to expel that “loser” figure from her life. I wanted her to find her anger and get angry at that figure and not at herself. I wanted those two to go through a separation. I felt such empathy for her and grief for those lost parts of her. I remembered how chaotic a muddied relationship with an internal figure like that could be. I also imagined in her great anxiety about not yet recognizing, believing, and trusting what her gifts and talents are, and once recognized and accepted, how they would translate into financially rewarded work in the world. I sensed in her the humiliation that comes with rejection and a desire to disappear when she shared her experiences of being “caught” and unmet in her desire. Susan and I both felt gladness as Marianne began to explore relationship with a benevolent, divine father, particularly at this time of impending loss of her dad. I loved the light evident in her glowing yellow egg and felt hopeful.

It seemed to me that when Lillian spoke about the fleeting image of the goddess figure with snakes in her hands, she had an intuition about the potential power hate offered. I wanted to exclaim, “Trust that you are so close and on to something. Don’t you see? She’s you! See what you already know? Why are you denying her? A part of her is
standing tall within you.” Then I experienced some sadness for all the times I ignored that powerful inner feeling in me. I also respected Lillian’s integrity for recognizing and staying with her true feelings in that moment.

Susan described feeling very happy for Lillian as she described her “aha.” Just because Lillian felt hate it, did not mean that she had to engage in hateful acts; it was possible to simply use the energy to mobilize her toward new action.

3. Imaginal Structures in Use

The primary imaginal structures in this learning were linked with inner limitations due to fear of revealing my true self to others, which stifled my desire. This limitation grew out of my own story connected to what I perceived as rejection stemming from undue criticism or unfair assessment of myself. Manifestations of this would appear in situations in which my artwork would be seen and I would have to talk about it. I sort of wanted someone to see it. I also wanted to keep it safe from judging eyes. After a few years, I recognized that my embarrassment was a form of shame. As I continue to learn to listen only to the truth of my own core, I am able to be more myself and not think too much before acting, which continues to lift the restrictions on my impulses. The energy of my desire is freed up to more freely express emotions and act on my ideas, positively impacting my creativity and my power. I was also afraid of my own power and aggressiveness. That fear limited the expression of my anger, which also negatively impacted my creativity and my capacity to be an autonomous powerful partner in an intimate relationship.
4. Theoretical Concepts

The theories and concepts important to this learning are: healing fiction, archetypal rapprochement, anger and desire, humiliation, shame, desire for Other, and theory related to the image of fire. Each is discussed below.

In imaginally attending to images in participants’ stories, healing fictions were created. Hillman writes, “Man is primarily an image-maker and our psychic substance consists of images; our being is imaginal, an existence in imagination.”  Healing is tied to one’s sense of fiction, one’s capacity to de-literalize the stories of one’s wounds and create a new story based on images that emerge for one from one’s imagination. True imagining makes use of reflection, but it requires more than an introverted retreat to fantasy; vivid libidinal participation is required.

Sylvia’s image of fire and water were both symbols providing an opportunity for archetypal rapprochement. Jung developed the idea that the libido’s conversion into meaningful activity through symbol takes a continuous parting and uniting of two conflicting elements. According to Hillman, establishing harmonious relationship between two parts requires an experience of ambivalence, and this ambivalence is the natural consequence of returning to psychic wholeness. He writes,

Living in ambivalence is living where yea and nay, light and darkness, right action and wrong, are held closely together and are difficult to distinguish. … Ambivalence rather than corrected may be encouraged toward encompassing ever-profounder paradoxes and symbols, which always release ambivalent feelings that hinder clarity and decisiveness. Paradox and symbol express the co-existence of polarity within the archetype, its plus and minus and the fundamental two-headed duality that is both logically absurd and symbolically true. Ambivalence is the adequate reaction of the whole psyche to these whole truths.

Lopez-Pedraza posits that psychic movement occurs when the psychotherapist looks at a person’s conflicts through the lens of a mythical imagination based on the
archetype Hermes, the elusive and undignified archetypal guide. Lopez-Pedraza believes that one can be hermetically moved out of repetitive paralyzing fixations brought on by the person’s painful history or experience.\textsuperscript{65} He finds that imagery coming from the most repressed undignified parts of one’s psychic nature compensate for the “dullness and repetitive superficiality” implicit in their one-sided experience.\textsuperscript{66} New images emerge enabling one to participate in life and enrich one’s personality through a deeper more consistent awareness of the personality.\textsuperscript{67}

Thompson’s theory on anger and desire is useful to understand John’s resentment of women. Thompson writes,

While anger does not prompt the development of resentment, surely it occasions the experience of resentment, occurring, as it does, at those moments when our desire has not met its mark, moments when we clearly experience the other as an impediment to its realization.\textsuperscript{68}

The trap that John so wanted to avoid might better be framed as shameful degradation. Jacoby writes,

Humiliation revolves around experiences of power and powerlessness. One is brought low or oppressed by those who wield power from above. There may be a loss of autonomy as one is made subservient, a kind of slave. Whether such a loss of autonomy and agency is experienced as shameful degradation depends on the extent to which one values one’s freedom.\textsuperscript{69}

Marianne articulated her desire to be known by the other/Other. Lacan theorized that desire could only be the desire of the Other. On the danger of Marianne’s desire to disappear when rejected or humiliated, Thompson writes, “If I hide from my desire for the other's recognition, I can only do so by putting forward another in my place, an ego which the other is then bound to objectify because I have already objectified myself.” \textsuperscript{70}

Attending to the affect of shame in regard to Marianne’s running into a roadblock in her desire for relationship with men, Nathanson’s work offers,
Shame haunts our every dream of love. The more we wish for communion, so much more are we vulnerable to the painful augmentation of any impediment, however real or fancied. To love grandly is to risk grand pain. Intimacy with the other validates the value of the self, and any impediment to intimacy causes severe injury to self-experience.\footnote{71}

In terms of Lillian’s rapes and John’s possible emotional rapes, I thought of Jacoby’s concept. With regard to humiliation from being subjected to emotional or physical rape, he recognized the onset of what he called shame beyond measure.

[T]he rage that ordinarily rises in defense of one’s self respect was stifled. In its place profound shame sets in. This shame beyond measure is caused by a sense of having been humiliated and defiled.\footnote{72}

Lillian learned about the value of hate in her life as a sacred image. Sardello credits Eros as a partner in this task:

The gods are strewn throughout the world as the emotion in things, awaiting to be remembered. The re-remembering cannot take place directly; it must take place through Eros who alone can connect each thing with its god. That is, the emotion of each thing needs to be given back to Eros who connects it with its appropriate divinity. Eros, in this sense, is the image-maker.\footnote{73}

According to Cirlot, Fire is an image of energy linked to desire. It can be found on the level of animal passion and also on the plane of spiritual strength. Cirlot notes that an aim of fire is the purification or destruction of evil forces. Two different axes of fire (axis fire-air and axis fire-earth) parallel the symbolism of the sword. He informs, “There is an exact parallel here with the ambivalent symbolism of the sword (denoting both physical destruction and determination of spirit).”\footnote{74} Fire is related to its earthly representative the sun, along with the ray of light, lightning, and also to gold.\footnote{75}

5. Interpretations

This Learning states that attending to imagery, especially elemental imagery of fire, gives access to energy and creates psychic movement, enabling one to attend to
painful stories of powerlessness, failure, resentment and victimization, along with the
effects of anger and shame.

Sylvia—Sylvia’s initial image of stifled desire was a stifled scream, an image of
numbly reflecting on a lifetime of chronic, and at times, violent victimization. Sylvia’s
second image of stifled desire now was an image of blazing fire rooted in water. In the
latter image, Sylvia appeared to find a sense of rootedness and strength. As Sylvia
imaginably engaged with the water-flame image, she found a desire to “fight for it.”
Perhaps the “it” was the peace one feels while rooted in a sense of vastness while
simultaneously experiencing seemingly opposite ways of responding to life (i.e., rage and
cool intuitions, hopelessness and hope). She exclaimed that there was “no victim” in the
flame drawing; that it belonged, instead, to the stifled scream drawing. This act of
discernment seemed to illustrate the beginning of acting upon power. It was perhaps also
a means by which she could begin to separate herself from habitual identification with
her numbness.

John—While listening to John tell his story of ways that he felt frustrated in
relationship with women, he seemed powerless to relate with them in a way in which he
could be both connected to them and simultaneously free. In this context, the images of
his stifled desire conveyed a sense of protection, as if in his psychological war with
women he felt the need to protect his personal kingdom at all costs. With this lens, the
feeling of adrenaline for which he yearned seemed a compensatory fantasy. I sense that
his imagery of vengeful fantasies, heard throughout his story, reflected the anger that he
uses to mask his impotence or his real feelings of powerlessness, which prompted his
anger in the first place. He spoke on the first day about gladiators with swords. That they
had a purpose appealed to him; nobody told them they should do anything. His attraction
to this imagery along with re-claiming the feeling he gets from firing missiles at bad guys
made me wonder if humiliation had been part of his experience, since humiliation
revolves around experiences of power and powerlessness. Perhaps he has felt like he has
been made a slave in some way by another holding power over him. Under these
circumstances the loss of freedom, which is so important to him, could be experienced as
shameful degradation.

The sword is an ambivalent symbol, related to fire that denotes both physical
destruction and determination of spirit. This image also relates to a healing intelligence
coming through him that offers a shift from a sense of unconscious hostile power sourced
from anger to an energized embodied sense of power related to Being. The sense of
masculine archetypal abundance available for creative endeavor in the second drawing of
sun, energy, universe, and confidence was in sharp contrast with his earlier drawing
containing images of weapons for war.

Marianne—The dominant image of powerlessness in Marianne’s story was her
inability to hold herself through anger and disruption—the chaos she felt when hit with
waves of emotions. She also felt powerlessness in relation to her father’s death and the
consequent separation and dependence on his emotional and financial support. Another
image of powerlessness was the “loser voice,” a result of anger and hatred turned inward.
This figure was her own self-creation of an impediment to her desire, causing her desire
to never be realized. Her inability to understand her feelings of anger, fear, and grief
remained knotted up with her power. I sense that the appearance of anger was to act as
power to loosen the knot of undifferentiated affects. As she imaginally engaged with her
images of anger, fear, grief, low self-esteem, and self-betrayal, I sensed that there was a slight inkling that her anger had deeper messages of clarification for her. She had said that anger would help provide the energy to get her out of the dark hole. In addition, her parents have done so much for her financially, and now, faced with losing that support, she began to sense that it has been at the expense of her own power, her competence, and leaving her gifts and artistic talents unseen by the world evident in her description of a “flame” that was really dim.

Shame, which left her powerless, also emerged in her story in a variety of images: no voice with her parents; not using the gifts she has been given; and feeling “caught” in having a desire and not being met in that desire. It was not hard to imagine her wanting to disappear and not be discovered. Perhaps the unreciprocated feelings of desire were echoes of previous experiences of not being met by the other. In addition, her strategy of wanting to disappear made it harder for people and herself to know her. Marianne’s daimon body drawing with father energy that said to her, “Relax, it’s all okay” represents the beginning of her struggle to accept and find relationship with her intelligence and talents in order to fuel and brighten the flame that she describes as really dim. This is inextricably linked with the image of father as power, which is related to finding one’s place in the pragmatic world. Perhaps the bright yellow of the egg that held the intense orange droplets of her realization that she is both self and Being, separate and one, provides her with some belief in her capacity to hold herself through experiences of emotional disruption.

Lillian—Initially, Lillian seemed strongly identified with the idea that having compassion for the men that abused her would somehow make everything okay. Lillian
tried to mask over her hate with more acceptable compassion, but her compassion lacked respect for her total experience. She considered hate shameful and taboo because it was “not right” to hate, and denied herself access to the power imbued in the image of hate because of this taboo. As Lillian emotionally explored her shame, grief, and anger in relation to her conflicted feeling of hate, it seemed that she was able to newly partner with the image as a source of strength.\(^{76}\) “A stance without apology” seemed a healing message for her to consider while contemplating what the images of the goddess with the snakes and hate had to say to her. The image of divine power, which had been locked up in her taboo desire to hate, was brought to her consciousness through the image of the lightning bolt.

6. Validity

In this learning, attention was brought to the question of what happened when pseudoinnocence (i.e., unattended powerlessness, shame, and anger) was imaginally attended in the context of this research design. The paradigm used for this design was participatory; consequently, capacities of reflexivity were relied upon to learn from shared psychological events. The largest validity question of this section is how I differentiated between participants imagining and my subjectively perceiving their brief experience of psychic movement elicited from attending to their imagery. Christou says, “Psychological experience, like dramatic experience, is observable only if the observer has participated in the event, that is to say, has registered the event as experientially meaningful to him.”\(^ {77}\) I used my senses to listen to their stories based on experiences of my own cycle of stifled and released energy of desire in order to notice any shifts out of
paralyzing powerlessness toward participation in life. My aim was to differentiate, for purposes of understanding, our shared experience. Participants’ descriptive language of relationship with their stifled desires along with the articulation of their emotional experience of shame, anger, and grief and any psychic movement in their stories of powerlessness combine to support the largest part of the plausibility of my interpretation of what happened. Theories of pseudo-innocence and power, the importance of an imaginal perspective, shame, anger, and the symbolism of fire also contributed.

Learning Four: Aligning Desire with Daimon

The primary claim of this learning is: Shame lifts when one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon. During the first meeting, participants were asked to draw an image of their body feeling the feelings of their stifled desire. During the second meeting they were asked to draw an image of their body feeling the essence of the guide that appeared in their meditation, which was evoked to offer a new image of their stifled desire. A difference between the two body drawings was apparent. Particularly noteworthy was that the guide/daimon took on a shared identity with the participants. I noticed indications of shame present in their stories and images relevant to their first body drawing and a lifting of shame in participants’ second body drawings feeling the essence of their daimon. Excerpts from all participants’ stories are considered below.
1. What Happened

John—John’s images of stifled desire included shooting at bad guys and brandishing a sword as Gladiator, all in service of having the power of the feeling and adrenaline. John’s body drawing of what stifled desire felt like in his body was a muscle-bound, large Herculean figure, cut out in the shape of a triangle, which he liked because “it had energy.” When I asked about his figure he said in a soft voice, “It’s just a … (long silence) … It’s … a strong, you know, a strong person.” When I commented that the figure had a feeling of readiness about him, John responded, “Well if you’re physically fit and then you’re mentally aware, then you can accomplish things, you can do that, and even if that’s not how you are, that’s probably what you’d want to be.”

John drew yellow “energy” and called it his angel in the drawing depicting how the daimon felt in his body. In the same drawing, he, as a small figure carrying a large sword, walked through the woods directly below the extremely large mass of yellow color he called “angel.” He said that the angel evoked in him a feeling of relaxation and confidence. John then revealed that he had a long-standing relationship with his angel and that she offered him “good guiding energy.” When I asked what the angel was right about in his life, he said that he should be “more compassionate and less guarded.”

Marianne—Marianne’s drawing of what stifled desire felt like in her body revealed an image of two large red circles that took up most of the space within a round head. Marianne described the red circles as cheeks. She stated, “I guess there’s a lot of shame there, you know, for not making more of the gifts I’ve been given.” When I asked about the intense redness of the cheeks, she described it as her intellect sort of struggling. She noted that the large stomach on her body image was probably trying to ground her.
because so much of the time she feels like she is floating out into outer space, as this figure indicates.

Marianne described the drawing of what the daimon felt like in her body as having father energy in it. When I asked her what the figure had to say, she said, “Just be you. It’s okay.” Later, when she was instructed to place the images anywhere on the larger circle she placed the daimon figure directly over her initial image of stifled desire, the image that she had earlier acknowledged “lacked embrace.”

Lillian—Lillian’s drawing of stifled desire resulted in a grey weight of depression that held her back. She described her body image as “having a curved back, a head curled down and in the body curling in on itself, looking down, shut down, long hair covering the body; it’s being on your knees.” She said that she felt cowed by the shame of it, acknowledging that her shame was also related to not being able to let go of the hatred and the incidences that created the hatred. She admits to “kicking herself” allowing herself to be held back. She adds that the body is also weighted “not so much with the anger, but just the results of the anger, the sadness of that; the sadness, there’s just terrible sadness.”

Lillian met her daimon figure on a protected, non-challenging, narrow, pounded-dirt path, which leads to a wide-open space where she says that you are more vulnerable but you can see a lot more. When you get up ahead, it is a lot more challenging and more beautiful. I asked Lillian to tell me about her guide after pointing out that there seemed to be two interlocking figures and she also placed the drawing slightly over her previous cowed body drawing on the large circle. She said, “We do overlap.” She identified the daimon figure’s heart as the capsule in the large hand that was placed gently on Lillian’s
back. Lillian said the hand held all of the painful things from her previous experiences that now help her to move forward. Lillian feels that this capsule containing these affects was actually her own healthy core related to gathered wisdom from difficult experiences, instead of the debilitating thing that she thought it was before. She called the capsule a safety mechanism, a shield that is “keeping the core,” the “source of her energy,” a “protector.” Lillian now recognized that by viewing her hatred as debilitating, she created it to be debilitating. She describes her guide,

She’s very strong and she’s very wise and we are walking side-by-side but more than side-by-side. She’s leading, she’s a little bit ahead of me, so she is leading because at this moment I’m shuffling my feet a little bit, not wanting—still with some trepidation about walking down the path but, as you see she has quite a large hand on my back prodding me toward the clearing up ahead and the widening of my path which just has been so incredibly narrow.

Lillian adds, “I have just a ton of strength behind me … which is incredible power.”

Ron—Ron’s body drawing had an image of a body hunched forward into itself with its back raised and the head slumped forward. The body was suspended inches off the ground by tightly locked arms and one hand flat on the ground holding up his entire body weight. He said, “What kind of insanity would make you want to stay static and … have to stay clenched?”

Ron’s daimon figure appeared as the image on the label of the Johnnie Walker Scotch label, which he kept redrawing. When comparing the daimon figure, “the walking guy,” to his handstand man, Ron said that “The walking guy, you know, in the first drawing his head’s down, his head’s lower into his shoulders and that’s where I was trying to figure out some way to get his spirit to be more jaunty.” When he first drew the cloak of “Johnnie Walker,” it looked soggy, like he was walking into a wind or a rainstorm. He noted that there was no life in it and wanted it more fluid, more
I asked if the “Johnnie Walker” figure had something to say to him? The figure told Ron, “I can’t pre-choose it.” When asked what else he had to say, Ron replied, “Just keep walking … Lighten up and it doesn’t matter which direction you’re going.”

Stella—Stella’s body drawing that explored her stifled desire revealed a faded grey, vaguely defined figure, which was sitting like the Buddha with slight red color near the heart and throat. With regard to the red color, she said there were “no crazy, scattered, depressed feelings there.” She described the red as a place:

of centered peacefulness in the midst of the fire that I feel, in the midst of the energy that I feel, allowing it, allowing it to burn like a good campfire would burn, taking those breaths, not drowning in it, not drowning in the emotions, not getting burned up in the emotions…

Stella’s body drawing of how the daimon figure felt in her body appeared as a wiggling playful fish inside a large purple and gold heart. When given voice, the daimon said, “I want to ignite within you and together to dance with life and to bring the heart and the strength for whatever you encounter on your path and I’m a big heart that can accomplish a lot and … I want to entice you to come out and to really expand your path.” I asked if she could go directly to that place right now or would there be anything stopping her? She admitted that she might get panicked and scared. She says,

You know, it’s like space, it’s like incredible power, I mean, sounds good to me but if I put myself in an actual situation physically with my body doing it, I’d like, Ohhhhhhh I don’t know where this is going kind of a feeling. I don’t know.

Sylvia—Sylvia’s body drawing revealed an image of a large heavy rounded body whose feet were cut off the bottom of the page, a head tilted back at an impossible angle, and eyes, wide open, staring upward. Another younger body was contained in it, feet on, and intense blue eyes in deep sockets staring straight out to the observer. When I asked about the image, it was difficult for her to come up with descriptions, as she
seemed detached from it emotionally. I asked specifically about the head of the figure. She said, “I saw just, sort of that head being kind of broken off, or stretched back, like pulled back, like it was on, but ripped back off.” Then she found herself drawing this other person inside. I asked her what those deep blue eyes of the apparently younger figure see. She responded, “I don’t know, maybe just a way out.” I also pointed out that she got the young figure’s feet on the drawing. She said, “I made sure I got her feet on.” I also asked about the yellow color in the young body. Sylvia said she hates the color yellow but, weirdly, it seemed totally right when she was using it.

Sylvia’s daimon drawing of the essence of a loving figure was an image of two long tunnels, soft and gentle inside, “a nice place.” She said that a green figure she saw during the meditation was at the end of the large tunnel and it looked like somebody’s eye. It was facing her. She could not quite sense if it was coming or going but decided it was going. When asked if the figure had anything to say to her, she said, “Bye.” I then asked if the figure wanted to leave her with an image. She responded, “It never got close enough. It kept disappearing.” I noticed large amounts of intense red color coming from the area of the figure in the large tunnel, which led me to ask about any imagery she experienced while feeling into the essence of the heart of the figure, which she was asked to do right after drawing the daimon figure. She described red blood spilling out.

As soon as you said about the heart I could just see red blood, spilling; that’s all I could see. And I could just see it just spilling out. That’s what I saw so I just drew it. And then it became kind of like lava to me because when I got to the end of the blood spilling out, it was like it hardened, like lava does when it reaches the ocean; it gets real hard and prickly, like that, and it cools, like its cooling in the blue at the edges—cooling, yeah.
Peter—Peter’s body drawing revealed the image of “peacemaker” with a large connecting heart, which he described as wanting to do more in this world for children and to create his own music. The art side of him is “atrophied,” inhibited by his fear of failure and incapacity to see the steps needed to be a musical success. “Yeah, rejection … We’re all so vulnerable aren’t we?” I asked him what that heart knows. He responded, “When you are in touch with your heart and you are coming from the heart, you are coming from your soul, you’re what-do-you-call-it, you’re oneness, you’re higher self … living in the moment, coming from the heart, spontaneity—what stops all that?” Asked if its the church that gets in his way, he responds, “Well, vulnerability, failure … I don’t know whether it’s just a rationalization or whether it’s real, so I’ll just say I chose a path in life in the business world.” Regarding activities that are important to him, he says, “You know, it’s that I haven’t done enough, I haven’t really done enough you know. And I don’t feel guilty about it I don’t think … disappointed sometimes in myself.”

His daimon body drawing revealed a small blue stick figure lying on the ground bathed in rays of light from a huge heart filled sun above. Peter said it was like a light, “it was just feelings I was getting, I didn’t try to do anything, but I felt like I was being accepted unconditionally; the energy seemed to be saying, ‘it’s okay’ and just seemed to be total love, total compassion.” He said,

Well, it’s so trite, but you hear your whole life that the answer lies within, whether it be Buddha, or Jesus Christ or … whoever it is and yet all those other things, you know, keep distracting, they keep me from going in.

Regarding his experience of the music played during the meditation to evoke the daimon figure, he said,

There were some times when I felt like it was like a yearning or a longing, you know, and sometimes I went with it and other times I felt myself saying wait, I don’t want to go there, I want to stay over with this light because I was starting to
feel not maudlin but kind of sentimental or, you know, kind of oh, just sad and… 

But he then goes on to admit that some of his best writing and poetry is written from pain, when his heart is being torn in half and the poetry comes from that spot.

2. How I Was Affected

I felt such a lack of freedom looking at the body images of stifled desire. That the affect of shame could design and create a material façade that becomes one’s own body and keeps one from what they desire seemed almost too simple and absurd, that is, if the pain was not so evident. The feelings of constriction, pain, and stubbornness in Ron’s and Lillian’s body images were particularly hard for me because I can remember those powerless postures, how unaware I was of my feelings, and the great amount of energy it took to maintain the posture. The road to freedom from shame is not so simple because of its hidden-ness. From Stella’s Buddha body image, I was reminded of the confusion that can exist between the self that wishes it was a spiritual image and the self that does not understand that its body’s shape is related to its lack of understanding of the affects that plague them.

I felt awe, power, excitement, and the beauty of violent determination in Sylvia’s ripped back head. I could finally breathe and wanted to look as I watched her inner figure, which felt so numinous to me, take shape. I felt so in awe of her image of spilling blood that I started to really probe to help her find meaning until Susan stopped me. Susan recognized that it was such a complex image and Sylvia needed to slowly discover her meaning. Through this body and her “Green Figure,” I was both reminded and trusted even more so the non-visible intelligence within others and within myself. The daimon
seemed cleverer, more brilliant and real, with each new body it reconstructed exchanging shame for more momentarily available parts of their psyches. I sensed it might not be understood as such, and the feelings might be fleeting as I listened and watched participants struggle with conflicting feelings, but the image of a body free of shame felt very concrete to me in those moments.

3. Imaginal Structures in Use

I so desired and trusted a connection to some invisible entity and I never felt truly alone, but my trust was shaky, evidenced in my unrecognized shame and un-accessed potential lying dormant. Shame was present, perhaps bound to fear, which I never experienced, due partly to early events in my home where affects were rejected. My difficult experiences with early Catholic educators also left me bereft of a solid internal spiritual foundation. I noticed that “New Age” approaches to spirituality more often than not left practitioners with high ideals but a lack of understanding of their own emotions, evidenced by observations of how human relationships were often so problematic for them. I hovered intellectually above all this. I sensed what did not work for me, but did not know with what to replace it until I started dealing with my own locked, entangled dark emotions that had left my heart, at times, bereft of its natural open spontaneity.

4. Theoretical Concepts

The theories and concepts important to this learning are related to the concept of the daimon and shame, and also to power. Each is discussed below.
Relating to all participants, Hillman’s Acorn Theory recognizes that desire motivates the necessary interactions required for achieving one’s potential that is linked to one’s daimon as guide. He says,

The soul of each of us is given a unique daimon before we are born, and it has selected an image or pattern that we live on earth. This soul-companion, the daimon, guides us here; in the process of arrival, however, we forget all that took place and believe we come empty into this world. The daimon remembers what is in your image and belongs to your pattern, and therefore your daimon is the carrier of your destiny.

Located in one’s emotional center, Hillman alleges one can converse with the daimon, as it offers conscious reason or verbal account. As part of the Eros spectrum, daimons signify the “devilish duplicity of consciousness” and provide psychic intervention.

Sylvia’s green figure related to the Angel or the personal divine part allotted to each individual, which is Khidr. “He is associated with every aspect of nature’s greenness.” Khidr’s mission, according to Corbin, is to guide and enable an individual to tap into the interdependence of the dual nature of the Self, creature (human) and Creator (divine). Corbin speaks to what is offered if one seeks imaginal relationship with a guide. The voice of Ibn Arabi’s Angel said to him,

If then you perceive me, you perceive yourself. But you cannot perceive me through yourself. It is through my eyes that you see me and see yourself. Through your eyes you cannot see me.

Pertaining to all of the participants, Schwartz-Salant finds that shame is a response to failing to attain an ideal state, which he believes indicates a lack of attending to the desires of the daimon. Shame is not only about what others might think of one, it is also a signal that one is failing to recognize the demands of one's inner self.

I thought of Jacoby’s theory in regard to all participants but especially Stella, Peter, and Lillian’s impulses. Based on the story of Adam and Eve, differentiation has
occurred between a consciousness centered in the ego and a consciousness of something larger within us. This creates fear and discomfort in the face of the shame and limitations one feels in comparison to this deepest level of self-confidence. The ego fears being subjugated to something larger and more powerful.  

Lillian, Sylvia, Stella, Peter, John, and Marianne’s stories relate to Kalsched’s theories. He found that the daimon “appears to personify the psyche’s dissociative defenses in those cases where early trauma has made psychic integration impossible.”  

One part of the ego regresses to the infantile period remaining shamefully hidden as the innocent remainder of the whole self. The other false self, since it is identified with the mind, can become over-identified with perfectionistic ideals and ruthlessly attack and sabotage the ego. The archetypal self-care system resists the loss of control over inner feeling states, leaving one unable to be with the dialectical tension necessary to generate meaningful experience.  

For all participants, Rollo May believes Power is the source of self-esteem, which is linked with self-affirmation and self-assertion. One’s being is made more visible only through the process of actualizing one’s power. One’s creativity requires an inner aggression, within the self and against the self. He recognizes this as the daimonic at work forcing one into an internal struggle out of which comes creative power and vision.  

In regard to Peter, Marianne, and Stella I turned to the poet Lorca, who searches for duende, a demonic earth spirit embodying irrationality, earthiness, and a heightened awareness of death. This daimonic spirit offered him “momentary bursts of inspiration, the blush of all that is truly alive,” which helped him infuse his poetry.
5. Interpretations

This Learning states that shame lifts when one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon.

John—John’s shame was apparent in his body drawing. It was an image related to powerlessness and the shame that creates a sense of a defective self. It made me wonder about the use of shame to protect his dignity. His compensatory muscle-bound figure in the pyramid offered a fantasy of power and the feeling of energy that he desired but was stifled in him. His soft hesitating voice, very different from his strong persona, describes his figure as a strong person, but in keeping with some sense of a defective self and the possible presence of fear-shame bind, he adds that one would want to be this even if they were not.

Evident in his image of shooting bad guys is his choice of a defense against shame; attacking other. It was interesting that John’s immediate reaction after drawing his fighter jet to attack bad guys was to draw a sword to fight for the King. Metaphorically, this points to one of those shifting dynamic contrary images from the daimon, a psychic intervention to bring John’s psychic world into reality. It seems that the daimon might want something else from John in regard to his aggressive hostile inclinations and misuse of power. The daimon instigated a pattern of action in the image of the fighter jet. Then it was inhibited and redirected to a more aesthetic response in the ancestral, symbolic, and religious image of the sword.  

The sword also appeared in his daimon body drawing but this time as a very large sword held by him as a much smaller non-Herculean figure. I believe this indicated a shift of power to his Inner Self, leaving John free, at least in that moment, of having to
defend against feeling exposed to shame. His Angel (daimon) was present with the gift of huge amounts of “yellow energy,” representing the energy he desired. Shame was replaced with feelings of relaxation, confidence, guiding energy, and advice to be more compassionate and less guarded. Compassion for his own and for the other’s imperfection is what is needed for John to deal with the shame, guilt, and anxiety—the painful, strong emotions that relate to the demands of his Inner Self.

Marianne—Marianne’s shame is related to forgetting that she was born with a soul-companion, a unique daimon she was given before she was born. I say this because she feels such a “lack of embrace.” Her shame is also related to desire not to experience the extremes of daimonic emotional experience, which are transformative and creative features of life. She does intellectually recognize this and wants to be able to hold herself through these dark emotional experiences but her tendency is to go toward the light and bliss. Her stifled body drawing shows a recognition that the shame she experiences is related to not using her unique gifts. However, she does not connect her unfolding potential to relationship with her daimon, who is the carrier of her destiny. Her shame is mostly experienced in terms of what others might think of her. This was evident in pictorial representation of her physiological response of blushing cheeks and her body floating away from the jolt she felt when she exposed herself to us and when admitting connection between her red cheeks and conflict between feeling and thinking.

Marianne’s daimon drawing counteracts the sense of a defective self that shame created in her. Its advice, “Just be you. It’s okay,” and her intuitive placement of this image over her earlier image of stifled desire that “lacked embrace,” indicate some sense
of relationship with the daimon figure. That figure, also because of the father energy, points to some shift from powerlessness to power.

Lillian—Lillian’s depression is compensation for the absence of deep passion, which comes from conscious relationship with creative daimonic anger, hatred and shame. Her shame came from not letting herself feel the negative emotions toward her abusers, which then created great sadness and held her back from life. On one level, it protected her from the potential ramifications of being rejected by others in her social world for showing her rage/hate to others. On another level, she was put in touch with that shamed part of herself that allowed her to sit in silence not protecting her deepest truth and integrity. Shame in her drawing was evident in the postures of all her bodies chosen to protect from vulnerability and to save the ruptured self from feeling exposed. A particularly poignant image of powerlessness was her “being on her knees,” which may be a result of humiliation from emotional and physical rape resulting in shame beyond measure.¹⁰³

Her daimon figure offered trust—a large hand at her back guiding her on her path to a less protected open area where she would be more vulnerable but challenged. This relationship alleviated the threat of shame even when she would be more visible and vulnerable. She was willing to be seen in spite of her trepidation. Shame was replaced by “shared yellow energy” representing a “new part and a new day” as a result of her now overlapping relationship with her daimon, which she said, yielded “incredible power.” This power exists because she has at least momentarily integrated conflicting feelings of hatred, compassion, and shame that now manifest as wisdom. The figure of the Daimon
now contained the hate/rage in a way that its power could be manifested and called upon when appropriate.

Ron—Ron’s shame was evident in his constricted body hunched forward into itself with his head slumped forward, a posture that worked to keep him literally static and defended against moments of shame through withdrawal or avoidance. Ron’s shameful inertia also points to dealing with rejection and one of the fundamental existential and spiritual crises of life. I sense shame created a restraint in Ron to teach him something about rejection. That would allow him to move forward in his life through developing relationship with the desires and demands of his Daimon that he is not yet recognizing. Relationship often comes through an initiatory passage, where one is daimonically forced into an internal struggle out of which comes creative power and vision. His lack of willingness to even take the passage induces shame.

Ron’s Johnnie Walker Scotch-inspired “walking guy” is metaphorically related to spirit. By re-working his drawing and trying to make him “more spirited and jaunty” Ron seemed intuitively determined to lift the shame by bringing more life into this figure. He related this to fluidity and optimism or two images diametrically opposed to his inertia. Lighten up and keep walking was the advice offered from the daimon. The shift of power was evident. The powerless clenched body gave way to a walking figure headed into a rainstorm but moving nonetheless. It seemed that he might be heading for some type of passage, which would bring meaningfulness to his life.

Stella—Stella’s shame was inevitable because her desire, in anticipation of experiencing humiliation or rejection, exceeds her capacity to fulfill her desire for a perfect relationship that would bring alive her core self. She decides to reduce her interest
in order to avoid deeper levels of shame. I believe her body drawing represents this lack of passion. This spiritual figure seems to keep shamefully hidden the innocent remainder of Stella’s whole self. What should be her embodiment of a powerful religious figure is not. Stella does not see that the red near the heart and throat of her body drawing indicate unspoken and unacknowledged daimonic anger and shame. If she could stop resisting a loss of control over her inner feeling states, the anger and shame would produce the dialectical tension necessary to generate meaningful experience and hence aliveness and power.\textsuperscript{104}

The large heart in Stella’s daimon drawing was filled with the wiggling playful fish, another spiritual image that desired to ignite in her, to dance with life, expand her path, and to bring heart and strength. This image was void of shame. She described it like “space”—“incredible power.” However, it was difficult for her to sustain that feeling. She admits to the presence of panic and fear around really experiencing this power as a presence in her body. From her ego’s perspective, she may fear a loss of sense of self that comes from being subjugated to something more powerful within her, which would induce shame. Her anxious discomfort may also stem from unconscious awareness that she may feel shame and limitations when she recognizes that it is her personal task to ignite her own creative core instead of depending on a lover. I sense this could also be daimonic anxiety, exhibited as a replacement for repressed anger and rage that has to be experienced to receive the “incredible power” that she describes.

Sylvia—Sylvia’s shame was evident in her large body without feet, eyes wide-open staring upward. Her self-loathing, indicative of a sense of a defective self, created by the shame, was evident in the second inner figure’s desire to escape from Sylvia’s
self-suffocating self. This younger figure, whose intense blue eyes stared straight out—looking for a way out—seems to personify the shamefully hidden innocent remainder of Sylvia’s whole self. Her use of the yellow color, which Sylvia usually “steers away from,” seems indicative of the appearance of this inner numinous self. This signaled that Sylvia might possibly be starting to recognize the demands of her inner self, which would desire that she lift the pillow off of her emotions buried in the silent scream.

Sylvia’s daimon body drawing revealed a green figure at the end of a gentle tunnel, a far softer moderate figure with a kinder nature. This figure indicates less shame than was present in Sylvia’s suffocating body drawing that needed its head ripped back for escape. Also, being seen and, even, seeing can be negatively impacted by shame. Since shame can indicate that the desires of one’s daimon are not being attended, her daimon figure’s association with an eye, in addition to the younger figure’s eyes that are looking for a way out, could indicate imaginal relationship with her daimon that is lifting some shame. The figure may be letting her know that, through her own eyes, she cannot see her daimon.

The heart of the figure also left an interesting gift for her in the image of red blood spilling out, which, I believe, is indicative of some sort of shift in shame, the meaning of which only Sylvia could explore and know. However, if looked at poetically, the image of blood in an afflicted psyche is linked to mystery, suffering, tragedy, pain, and death. But living blood can be “valorous” and is associated with what is “in us between the flesh and the soul: our human water charged with force and spirit, the burning dark blood.” I wonder if something shifted from tragedy and death, which has been Sylvia’s life experience, to force and spirit when that blood spilled out and cooled in
the blue edges. I wondered about a connection between poisonous daimonic rage and blood. The day before she had spoken of rage, which has its own power. With this insight shame can lift resulting in the emergence of different forms of personal power.

Peter—The heart connection stifled in his body drawing was linked to shame for stopping the spontaneity that comes from his heart. He names the source of this spontaneity as his soul, oneness, and his higher self. This indicates that he had failed to recognize the demands of his daimon. Peter’s shame is evident in his sense of a defective self, which created in him another who sees him as defective, indicated in the way he describes his experience of rejection, vulnerability, and fear of failure in the world. Also the recognition that he does not feel guilty—but rather disappointment in himself—is indicative of the global experience of shame, which relates to the quality of his person and his feelings of failure, incompetence, and inadequacy. His blame of church, parents, and society for inhibiting his music and other things he would have liked to accomplish is a defense against the moment of shame through his arguments and justification used in attacking these institutions. Also Peter admitted being prone to anger. One who is prone to shame is more prone to anger arousal along with resentment, and they have a tendency to blame others.

Shame was lifted in Peter’s daimon drawing conveyed in his description of the feelings he was getting from a huge heart-filled sun, which he compared to light. He did not “try” to do anything but still found himself unconditionally accepted by an energy that said, “it’s okay,” which he described as total love and compassion. This was in contrast to the shameful defective self, both disappointed in what he has not accomplished and stuck because he cannot seem to act spontaneously from his heart. He
became more aware that the concept of “the answer lies within” had been sabotaged by his own distractions that kept him from going “in.”

However, because of Peter’s propensity to prefer the light and his inability to tolerate the sadness, which is linked to a deeper experience of the daimon, he will continue to struggle with the Angel. Feeling hurt equals deficiency, so when experiencing hurt, sadness, and grief, he could feel deficient again, instead of in relationship with his daimon. His intuition that his best writing and poetry is written from his heart’s pain informs him, on some level, that his daimon imagined as duende is linked in sadness. I believe Peter’s shame will stay lifted only if his unique daimon, which carries his destiny, will be given life through full relationship with all of his emotions and gifts. If not, Peter will be left with the “disembodied way of mystical ascent” or the “narcissistic solutions of idealization and grandiose control.” His newly felt power from the “energy” he referred to as “light” could stay locked in his shameful disappointment in himself. Peter’s soul, oneness, higher self, whatever he names it, is made more visible only through the process of actualizing his power.

6. Validity

In this learning, attention was brought to the question of what happened to any shame that was discovered in the participants’ stories of their body images before and after imaginally attending to them by way of a meditation invoking a daimonic figure. Since shame is bound with different affects and it is related to a sense of a defective self, it is difficult to feel, to describe, and to allow it to be discovered. So the largest validity question was to determine what was shame in participants’ images and stories and how to
determine if it had lifted in the story of the second body drawing. Susan and I drew upon experiences of our own personal shame, which were different, along with our bodily responses to the images and stories. We noticed and talked about how congruent what we saw in their images felt when compared with how they told stories about their images as we listened for plausibility, coherence, and how affectively alive their responses were. Trusting our interpretations had to be situated in both our own and the participants’ social world, especially relating to the social, psychologically slippery, and shifting nature of images of shame, desire, and daimonic experience. Validity depends upon some consensus of opinion. The daimon as a psychological experience was quite experientially meaningful to me. So I depended on Susan’s input to check on what I differentiated between participants imagining with my own subjectively in perceiving their brief experience of shame before and after their experience with the daimon figure.

Learning Five: Desire of Daimon and the Divine Beloved Other

The primary claim of this learning is: Engaging the daimon figure is accompanied by images from the natural sensuous world, which are inherently energizing, empowering, and bring psychic movement because one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon and divine Beloved Other. Participants were facilitated to explore images of a daimon figure evoked through a meditation while considering how their stifled desire would be affected or changed after engaging with this figure. They were asked to draw an image of a possible next step they might take in their life. Images of nature were found to be strikingly present as participants imaginally engaged with their images of daimon, stifled desire, and their next step. Excerpts from Peter, Ron, Stella, Lillian and John’s stories are considered below.
1. What Happened

Peter—Rays of light from a heart within a large sun shown down upon and blanketed Peter in his daimon drawing. He described feeling a light that was soothing him like he was being accepted with total love and compassion. The things that kept him distracted from “going in” were being “drained out.” He said, “He didn’t know how to draw a transformation but it did seem like a lot of the things … how I was feeling at the end of the exercise, they were gone.” When I asked about the four smaller circles filled with hearts on his body drawing, Peter said the best way to describe it was, “Like there was an infinite … I think I was seeing, feeling creation, that there were pieces of the whole split off and it’s the same … image, smaller but just all around.”

The final drawing of his stifled desire was a meandering stream with forests on its banks and leaves floating in it. Peter described that it was how he feels about stifled desire—a fast moving stream, like a rock that has just been broken. No blockages exist; there is total acceptance; it is healthy; “you’re not packing stuff inside you;” and all streams lead to the ocean, the ultimate, to the one source. In his drawing of the next step, he described as “parts of being for me.” Images included were: the peacemaker, women, music, heart, tree, poetry, and finally fatherhood and grandfather.

Ron—Ron’s body drawing that felt the essence of the daimon figure was “Johnnie Walker,” who was walking through a rainstorm. Ron describes his final drawing of stifled desire: “It’s this circle, but think of it as a globe, more spherical, with weight … and my hand’s holding it … it’s resting in my hand, but the hand is supporting it, holding on to it.” He then looks over at his body drawing of stifled desire which is curled in on itself being held up only inches off the ground with one hand and notices a difference. He
says, “That’s funny, because if you relate that to that drawing, there are no free hands there.”

The images of what the daimon wanted him to do next were footmarks—steps across the page through wind, fluffy clouds, and rain. His gait was one step at a time on the left foot walking off the page. He noticed that it was difficult to walk in that particular restricted manner (on one’s left foot). I pointed out that he could put one foot in front of the other in a specific, deliberate way. He responded, “Take some responsibility.” And he agreed that a walking meditation would be a good way of thinking about this “because it implies some consciousness, deliberateness with acceptance, so that’s the supporting the weight and letting it rest.”

Stella—The image in Stella’s daimon drawing, a playful wiggling fish represents the core of her creative spirit. Stella’s art image of her stifled desire after experiencing partnership with a daimon was a “quiet flower” growing out of granite. She recognized the granite as the granite of Half Dome in Yosemite, which made her think of Yosemite through the seasons, especially “the cycles and to accept the seasons when they come.” She describes the area where it is growing, “There’s a million trees, and there’s a blue sky, so it’s not in the middle of a lightning storm or anything.” I asked, “So this desire that is you is natural and alive and in nature?” She responded, “But it had to grow up through the layers of the granite, you know, it had to find a crack.” Hope emerged as she pointed out that every spring new flowers rise, fragile and with quiet strength, and in need of someone to speak for them.

When I asked what her next step would be, she responded, “Who Knows! It’s a question of where it comes from and the fullness with which I do it.” 107 She admits she
is not going “to be in a steady state of openness” but she did feel a “YES” when she saw her daimon guide on the path, who said to her, “Come on. Let’s go. There’s only so much life. You’ve got to live it, so wherever you are stifling on the path let’s work with that!”

Lillian—Lillian’s image of stifled desire after this partnership with the daimon was a lightning bolt. When I asked about her feelings around her stifled desire, she said, “Well there’s quite a transformation, it feels very powerful and exciting … so totally different. It feels like a magnificent thing instead of a terrible burden, a bad thing.” While the image of hate was the same shape on the page as her lightning bolt, Lillian points out that so much more power in the intense black and red color of the lightning exists. Comparing it to her image of hate, she says, “There’s no pink about that, there’s no excuses, or softening about that. It’s just really pure, but, really positive, yeah.”

Her next step revealed the words “write” surrounded by grow, move, and learn. She is aware this is not going to be easy because writing is what she only does in her head. She admits this fear has existed most of her life. Even if no one else saw it, she is her own worst critic. When I asked her again what the next step is, she responds, “Lightning bolt transform. It better be sooner more than later. Seize the moment.”

John—John’s daimon image was the bright yellow angel energy out in a forest, which was in contrast to the protected Herculean figure that craved energy. John describes his final image of stifled desire after partnership with the daimon as, “Yeah, it’s the sun, the energy, that’s the universe, that’s the world, nothing gets in your way and you can … It’s just pretty relaxing and easy to go on your adventures and you won’t be stifled.” He said he feels that now he has nothing holding him in his castle, he is free, and
the sky is the limit. I asked, “So there is nothing holding you in your castle?” He responded, “I’m just flying around in my plane around the world and I’m at ease.”

His next step revealed the image of a house on a lake with a boat, parents, and two children on a dock ready to go water-skiing. Both Susan and I commented that the roof of the house seemed very cathedral-like. Susan said to him, “You know, when you take a second and you’re with the angel, and you’re listening to what’s next for you … there’s something about a home.” John responded, “But you have to have a home to go home to,” and excused himself. We both noticed that there were tears in his eyes. Upon his return, he added, “So, yeah good to get the angel back.” After letting him know that we appreciated his vulnerability, he said, “Yeah we got the picture.”

2. How I Was Affected

Throughout this process I was always left with the truth of the participants’ felt experiences of numinosity in the room and in the nature imagery. I felt relief from feelings of constriction, more acceptance of the complexity of life that includes difficult feelings, and a more openhearted acceptance toward oneself and the other. I had deep trust in my own, my co-researcher’s, and the participants’ felt experiences of the fleeting moments of light in the simple elements of nature.

3. Imaginal Structures in Use

Nature continues to teach me about desire; its elements operate only according to innate patterns, and so should I since I am innately a part of it. I can now say that with embodied daimonic trust, which I have earned through the years of this dissertation
process, its topic, and the gifts of my participants’ narratives and imagery. The fire of desire, that has enflamed my philosophical and experiential exploration, has tempered my subtle fear of being shamed. Linked to my learnings, newly found fire pulls me toward my next level of more active participation in the world, unafraid to stick too far out of nature because I am structurally related to it.

4. Theoretical Concepts

The theories and concepts important to this learning are: fire psychologically and mythologically linked to God-image as powerful feeling; intimation of an invisible self through nature images; and psychic movement toward liberated energy of desire linked to integrating nature imagery as potential and powers into consciousness.

All participants’ imageries were viewed through Jung’s ideas that libido (desire) is always formed into images. If an image is alive and animated for someone, it has a numinous quality; it is soul charged.\textsuperscript{109} Psychologically, he recognizes that “God is the name for a complex of ideas grouped around a powerful feeling.” For example, the images of fire, sun as visible father of the world, the great generative force of nature and light, are mythologically synonymous with God. They are material expressions of power and intensity for this psychic energy manifesting as libido.\textsuperscript{110}

For all participants’ attractions to nature imagery, which put them in touch with more powerful and peaceful parts of themselves, I thought of Corbin’s imagination of desire. He posits that desire is the reciprocal desire of the creature for the Creator and the desire of the Creator for the creature. He attests that intimation of this invisible self cannot be contemplated independently of a concrete being or of visual symbols of the
natural sensuous world. Images from nature arouse sympathy by involuntarily drawing one toward the inherent light in that particular earthly image, thereby actualizing the reciprocal desire to know each other.\textsuperscript{111} The forms that desire takes in one’s personal life are dominated by this Beloved Other, which remains veiled because its nearness is so excessive. So one’s desire sends one looking for it outside of oneself.\textsuperscript{112} Pertaining to the evocation of the guide that resulted in the so many empowering images from nature, I found Corbin’s conceptualization helpful. He suggests that each person has a Guide, the personal \textit{part allotted} to each individual who guides and enables an individual to tap into the interdependence of the dual nature of the Self.\textsuperscript{113} This Guide has been called Khidr, Hermes/Mercurius, Adam, Kadmon, \textit{homo totus}, and the Anthropos.\textsuperscript{114}

For all the participants’ images of nature, I draw on Cheetham, who posits that nature’s elements (Earth, Air, Water, and Fire) are imagined as undiscriminated darknesses of the psyche to be integrated as potential and powers into consciousness, as they are a part of each human being.\textsuperscript{115}

I especially thought of Kingsley’s understanding of Empedocles’ Persephone when viewing Peter’s imagery of “feeling all of creation.” Identified with the element of water, she descended into the fiery underworld and married the fire god, Hades. Her imagery fit together somewhat like a mysterious puzzle, with the other divinities and each of their elements of nature (air/Zeus, earth/Hera, fire/Hades, and water/Nestis also known as Persephone) that all came together to form a creation process that lead to the birth of man and the universe as a whole.\textsuperscript{116} All of existence in Western civilization could be reduced to these four fundamental elements of nature.\textsuperscript{117}
For all participants, in regard to either the appearance or non-appearance of fire in their imagery, I thought of The Greek myth of Persephone/Demeter. It teaches that individuals, through initiation, can achieve an inner light by means of descent. This occurs if they courageously choose to go down to the dark fiery underworld through dream work to emerge with a vision, the innermost divine maiden that lives in the heart of all mankind. The divine maiden is also known as the feminine source of life.  

Cirlot finds that fire is the element linked to desire, as it is an image of energy. Persephone’s fire imagery felt congruent with his finding that symbolically fire implies a desire to annihilate time and bring all things to their end, which makes it ultra-life.  

John’s imagery of the sun is identified with conscious awareness, and heroic activity. For Peter, the rayed sun and rayed heart are imagined as symbolic of the Center as pure being, the inner place, the seat of illumination and intelligence.

All shifts noted in participants’ stories of stifled desire before and after their experiences with the daimon were noticed in terms of Bachelard, who says,

Imagination is always considered to be the faculty of forming images. But it is rather the faculty of deforming the images offered by perception, of freeing ourselves from the immediate images; it is especially the faculty of changing images.

In regard to linking all of the participants’ images of nature that emerged to their psychic movement toward liberated energy of desire, I turned to Bachelard’s work for inspiration. He called matter the mirror of our energy. Matter for him, becomes the provocation of a basic relationship between subject and object, because closer contact with a substance stirs one’s energy. Recognizing that organic materialism is active in the unconscious, he imagined a psychology of resistance. He contends that, “If, in the world of symbols, resistance is human, in the world of energy, it is material.” He does not
suggest, as psychoanalysis often does, that symbols should be translated only into human terms of a social nature. He believes in the autonomy of symbolism. An imagination of resistance is born in the confrontation with material objects.

Bachelard can explain Lillian’s possible fear of allowing herself to see and be seen through her creative work and her lightning image. He posits that everything that makes one see, sees and says, “The flash which illuminates, looks.” He quotes Lamartine, “Lightning flashes ceaselessly through the cracks of my shutters, like the blinking of a fiery eye on the walls of my room.” Relating to John’s desire to live around water, Bachelard believes that water is related to vision, “if things should look at us somewhat softly, somewhat gravely, pensively—that is the look of water.” Eyes are equivalent to “that unexplored pool of liquid light, which God placed in the depths of ourselves.”

M. Esther Harding’s work was applicable to all participants but especially to Peter’s final imagery related to his stifled desire, which he described as a rock that’s just been broken up. She says that plucking out the heart of the stone after it has been broken is analogous to the rescue of the dark spirit from the gross matter. The imprisoned spirit must be awakened and warmed so that it acquires lightness and life. Psychologically, it is the rescue of the spirit, or energy, from the unconscious.
5. Interpretations

This Learning states that engaging the daimon figure is accompanied by images from the natural sensuous world, which are inherently energizing, empowering, and bring psychic movement because desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon and divine Beloved Other.

Peter—Peter’s image of his daimon linked to the heart inside the sun with rays is imagined as the visible father of the world, the Center, pure being, the inner place, and the seat of illumination and intelligence, all of which is mythologically and psychologically synonymous with the God-image. During Peter’s moments of receptivity, the energy from the light infused him with unconditional acceptance and total love and compassion for himself, which his father could not provide. This counteracted his sense of a defective self.

Relationship with his daimon birthed Peter’s final image of stifled desire, also from nature, in the form of a rock that has been broken-up, which metaphorically, like his free flowing stream, allowed the arteries to open up so his heart can spontaneously react with freedom. Alchemically, the stone is the symbol that contains the imprisoned spirit. Novices were told to split a stone open, reach into its inner parts and pluck out its heart. This awakened and warmed the sleeping spirit so that it could acquire lightness and life, an image close to Peter’s when he acknowledged that he just wanted to lie there under that sun because it felt so good. Psychologically it is the rescue of the spirit, or energy, from the unconscious, evident in his statement that he no longer felt he had to “pack things inside.” The stone, in its original form, seems to represent what he previously
stumbled on in the form of anger, blame, and disallowing his receptivity to sadness, which would not let him rest in the peace under his sun.

Peter will have to see what he can make of his newly found momentary experience of freedom of his heart’s expression in regard to his next step, his collected images of his “parts of being.” For him, the tree represents nature, which he says he could not take out of himself, because there would not be much left. If he can hold on to the felt experience of that sentiment, I sense it would serve him in holding on to the feelings of unconditional acceptance experienced as he lay under his sun.

Ron—Ron’s daimon image of “Johnnie Walker” making his way through a rainstorm led to his next step in his life, to take steps. I sense that nature’s elements of earth, air, and water, configured as blustery weather that one must move through, are undiscriminated darknesses of Ron’s psyche to be integrated as potential and powers into consciousness. They bring life and nourishment to a melancholic world overcast with clouds and rain. He spoke of difficulty holding images of the holocaust and the carnival together, which I believe are indicative of emotions that need integration. Fire, absent from his imagery, is a material expression of power and intensity for psychic energy manifesting as desire. He admits he feels no desire. Marriage to this missing element of fire would create his potential desired spirited energy that he attempted to create in the Walker figure.

Ron’s original image of stifled desire was a flower type structure to pass through. Because of not knowing the outcome, he was not willing to go through. I thought of Persephone’s descent in relation to this impulse of passage. Metaphorically, I imagine that Ron’s psychic rape is related to the impetus supplied by his story of the pain of his
indecision in regard to his girlfriend that brought him a deep wish to be beyond his thoughts and mind. I believe this semi-conscious desire brought him the image of passage in spite of his fear. I sense it is a promise of possible movement toward descent into the dark that was offered by his rain-soaked daimonic “Johnnie Walker” figure as a way out of the literal through the emergence of new ways to participate in life through potential relationship with fire.

Relationship with his daimon got his paralyzed body up off the ground by freeing his hand that held him there so he could take steps. With his free hand now supporting his life, taking responsibility with consciousness, deliberateness, and acceptance he could now “trust” to take steps, even though he still has no “faith” in the outcome. There is always a conflict between aims and desires, around which Ron will have to make a choice. But I believe that if he remains mired in indecision, consciousness, which only arises at the point of discomfort, will escape him and keep him from his true target of desire.

In reference to walking meditations, it would be helpful for him to find that spirituality is the capacity to love the daimonic, to see life as it is as a whole. Existential realities of evil, suffering, and the daimonic exist together with what is so beautiful and joyous. He needs to discover how to love life in spite of the reality of suffering and evil.

Stella—Stella’s daimon in the form of a fish gave her access to what she described as the “core of her creative spirit,” which birthed her final image of stifled desire, a “quiet flower” growing out of not just granite but the granite of Half Dome in Yosemite. In terms of Bachelard’s imagination of resistance born in the confrontation
with material objects, I thought of Stella’s wise intuition around a second type of harder
more majestic granite from which her flower grows.

Stella recognizes that this flower, as metaphor for her self, had to work hard, and
grow up through layers of granite. It had to find a crack to find a place. This may indicate
readiness for a type of provocation that asks her, through non-rational means, to acquire
more nuances in her psychic life through approaching her dynamics of internal opposition
related to unexpressed affects. She admits she still has to overcome her fears and shed old
self-images so she can flower. However, she makes a point of locating her flower where
there is no lightning storm. This may be indicative of fear of confrontation with the
powerful energy of desire represented by the lightning, energy that is birthed through
ongoing development of relationship with her conflicting emotions, especially ones that
would be illuminated by the light that she may not be ready to see yet.

I think of descent, marriage to fire, and Persephone’s return to earth in springtime
with her gift of hope for mankind. Regarding her flower image Stella says, “They rise in
spring, fragile, with quiet strength in need of someone to speak for them.” Perhaps she
has an intuition that when she speaks from the place of experienced descent, going
through death while still alive, there will be something different in her words upon her
return related to her acquisition of power, especially related to re-claimed anger. As
Kingsley informs, “death is the place where all words come from—like sparks that have
their origin in fire.” 131

Lillian—As a result of relationship with the daimon, Lillian’s stifled desire and
her conflicted feelings of hate transformed to a bolt of dark red lightning outlined in
yellow on a dark black background. Just as quickly came an image of hate. She so
courageously experienced her feelings, a stroke of lightning arrived. The particular red color of her lightning reminded me of Bachelard’s distinction of fire that as a force, so sudden, is akin to a divine and joyful wrath that is sheer action.\textsuperscript{132} This lightning seems indicative of a transformative shift in Lillian, no longer a burden, because she experienced her new image of her stifled image of hate as powerful, exciting, and a magnificent thing with no excuses, softening, or apology present.

In regard to her next step of writing, this fire is not so much a substance as it is a passionate force that will infuse Lillian’s writing with enflamed eloquence and any other forms of creativity she is willing to pursue.\textsuperscript{133} Hopefully, her emphatic sentiment, “Lightning bolt transform—it better be sooner, more than later—seize the moment,” is the energy garnered from transformed anger and hate that will serve her. She will hopefully develop a personal relationship with this force and energy of fire to help counteract her fear of judgment or criticism from others and from herself in regard to letting her creative work be seen.

If her fear is more deeply complex than the painfully anticipated peering response from another or self, then allowing herself to see and be seen creates the recurring endless exchange between the visible and the invisible. I believe the Self that is material but other structurally shares desire between the creature (human) and an invisible absent Creator. I believe the lightning image helped actualize the reciprocal desire to know each other. Lillian’s other can only become known to her as she gains more knowledge of her self, which her creative endeavors will offer her. She will find it more difficult to hide from the eyes of this most powerful other that threatens the annihilation of her sense of self, as she knows herself.
Identifying with her hot red lightning may make her feel as frightened as the Queen was in the Persephone myth. When Demeter laid the Queen’s infant son directly in the hot fire to become immortal, the Queen’s fear stopped the process.

John—John’s relationship with his daimon’s mass of yellow angel energy gifted him with the energy and connection that gave him the sense of freedom he desired. The imagery of his transformed stifled desire, his airplane flying freely all around his universe was symbolically noteworthy because it all took place up in the air, not attached to matter and related to one’s freedom. Air is also the substance of superhuman joy. John’s description of feeling relaxed, free, and at ease because there is nothing stifling him and keeping him from his adventures are indicative of this felt freedom gifted him through the air and the sun. The sun was always at the top of the pages shining down in previous drawings, while it was placed in a lower corner in this one, which made me think of the symbolism of constantly rising and setting suns. Its rays can be vivifying or destructive as it symbolizes the renewal of life through death. I wonder about initiatory descent for John in regard to finding a different relationship with his anger and lack of compassion, which would provide him his true freedom.

The earth’s sun is identified with conscious awareness and heroic activity. Heroes are often armed with swords, as John was in his daimon drawing. Swords are spiritually and symbolically associated with fire. They are an antithesis to perversion, a positive power granted to man by deities, which signify a fight to free consciousness from the unconscious. I believe John’s need for deliverance from his unconscious relationship with his anger may correspond to his lowered sun, which still needs to set and rise through a few more cycles. I believe his acquired freedom combined with his heroic imagery points
to a momentary felt awareness of connection with the other to whom he is structurally related—the Creator with whom he shares desire. I sense he wants his feelings of freedom and power to continue, which this relationship provides. However a conscious heroic quest of experiencing and understanding his loneliness, anger, and lack of compassion, especially in regard to women, is required if John is to develop and sustain connection, awareness of, and relationship with this other.

The house on the lake with a family appeared as his next step. There was no visible sun in that drawing, but both Susan and I felt numinosity from the drawing and both thought the roof reminded us of a cathedral. It seemed as if the vivifying light from his previous drawings gave birth to this image, which in itself contained the light as Cathedrals do. The aquatic joy related to softness and rest also contributes to John’s sense of feeling relaxed and at ease. In addition, living on a lake provides a reflecting pool to look into at all times. My hope is that John will look into that timeless lake and explore the depths of himself to give himself a softer less guarded form, matter spiritualized by fire available from transforming his fiery passionate ill-used anger.

As expansive as John’s universe seems in the moment, it still seems pretty limited and I was not sure how much room in it there is for a particular woman who is important to him. In regard to the picture of the lake house, he said, “We got the picture.” He was also glad to get the Angel back. Hopefully he will listen and engage in a heroic battle with her and self-reflect in order to develop a deeper relationship so he can achieve both the metaphorical and literal “house to go home to” that caused him his tears.
6. Validity

The emergence of participants’ nature imagery did not always have objective truth, but they found subjective meaning. A palpable felt sense of at least momentarily dissolved blocks to their desire and some sense of an enhanced sense of being that came forth through their imagery and stories.

I turned to Bachelard, who is adamant that all psychological symbols require multiple interpretations: “an interpretation through passion; an aesthetically oriented interpretation; and a rational and objective interpretation.”[^134] In order to attend to validity, I attempted to combine these types of interpretations. I aesthetically linked emotional experience to elements of matter in nature. Since I was so passionately interested and biased about work with the daimon, I often consulted my co-researcher, Susan, after each participant left and during the process of reading and interpreting the participants’ experiences from their transcripts. My intent was to look for consensus and divergence in terms of creating an experientially valid narrative that captured vividly alive experience related to relationship with this guide figure. Literature linking nature images with psychological processes and theory, myths and initiation, and sacred symbolic imagery linked to desire, lent credibility to the interpretations and the process of healing fiction that took place in relation to participants’ stifled desires.

Also Lopez-Pedraza contends that a person’s conflicts, if “looked through” the lens of a mythical imagination, by one who is in tune with their own mythological background via their own psyche, will encourage psychic movement. The myth of Persephone is a myth akin to my own nature, history, and personality. It is one I have
lived in relation to my own complexes. So I have “looked through” the participants’ experiences through my own lens, which I believe offers validity.

Conclusions

The learnings from this research indicate that shame lifts when one’s desire aligns with the desire of one’s daimon and divine Beloved Other which brings new images of personal power and psychic movement.

This research sought to understand ways in which engaging with stifled desire could release one from pseudoinnocence. It was found that participants’ engagement with stifled desire brought feelings of shame bound with anger, grief, and fear. Attending to shame releases the contraction of pseudoinnocence opening a path to actualizing power. Attending to all of these darker emotions brings attention to the demanding double aspect of demon/daimon. Aligning with the daimon figure provides “psychic intervention.” This intervention and alignment briefly lifts shame, furthering individuation through psychic movement. After an experience of alignment with the guidance of the daimonic figure, images from nature also pointed to a deeper connection with the desire of one’s divine Beloved Other. The resulting images provided energy, empowerment, and movement toward the participants’ next steps to take in the unfolding of their lives.

The first learning states: The desire to retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition, to avoid affective experience, notably fear, anger, shame, and imagery around death, maintains a pseudoinnocent stance, which cuts one off from actualizing power. The second learning states: Impacted by the unattended affects of anger, grief, fear, and shame, pseudoinnocence is expressed through conflictual and unsatisfying reactive enactments. An experience of aliveness is created to counteract the
deadness experienced by lost access to the psychic energy of desire and one’s actualizing power. The third learning states: Attending to imagery, especially elemental imagery of fire, gives access to energy and creates psychic movement, enabling one to attend to painful stories of powerlessness, failure, resentment and victimization, along with the affects of anger and shame. The fourth learning states: Shame lifts when one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon. The fifth learning states: Engaging the daimon figure is accompanied by images from the natural sensuous world, which are inherently energizing, empowering, and bring psychic movement because one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon and divine Beloved Other.
CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS

The imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself.¹

— Blake in Gaston Bachelard
On Poetic Imagination and Reverie

Introduction and Overview

In this chapter, I focus on the significance and implications of the learnings that emerged from this study. In the first section, I speak to the significance by reiterating the major learnings from the study. This review is followed by a discussion of the ways in which the learnings support my Research Hypothesis and point out its discrepancies. In addition, the impact of the learnings on my original Research Problem is delineated. In the second section, I explore the mythic and archetypal dimensions of the liberation of desiring. Throughout, I discuss how the research has affected me, how it has personally changed me and impacted my future. In the third section, I address implications for various constituencies as well as how I was impacted by the study. I begin with a discussion of the implications of the study on participants, who experienced a range of stifled desire and a range of liberation of their desiring.

The implication of this research for participation in the wider local and global community is addressed next. I begin with the relevance of this research for self, education, culture, morality, justice, religion, spirituality, and new atheists. I bundle these under the umbrella of an “emotional” approach to morality (moral imagination), as it relates to the liberation of desiring. The research and methodology of this study has the
potential to help individuals to develop a personal emotion-based intuitive decision-making capacity based on relationship with one’s deepest desire and developed daimonic emotional intelligence available for making value and moral judgments. Individual responsibility related to action based on cooperation in one’s local and global community might be enhanced.

Next, I elaborate on the relevance and design of this study specifically focusing on the relevance of imaginal practices for education and more specifically at-risk kids, the profession of psychotherapy, and the discipline of psychology. I address the relevance of the research for veterans of war as a possible means of integrating both their painful and extraordinary experiences as they re-enter a mostly pseudoinnocent culture. I end with questioning how the liberation of desiring might contribute to the creation of a sacred culture—important in a time of heated and conflicted feelings—related to the question of the place of religion in the modern world. I believe that desire is inextricably related to a religious impulse and exploring desire’s vital impulses and related feelings may shed light on human emancipation and trust in the unseen.

**Significance of Learnings**

**A Review of Learnings**

Five major learnings emerged in the process of exploring adults’ experience of creating and engaging images and affects associated with their stifled desire. In the first two learnings, participants’ stories reveal their pseudoinnocent stance, the unique way that each individual denies the divine power tied to their soul’s unfolding held in their image of stifled desire. These two learnings reveal various ways in which participants’
stifled desires manifest in their lives through pseudoinnocence marked by the avoidance of difficult affective experience that brought them pain and the expression of avoidance through conflictual and enacted dynamics. The last three learnings uncover some psychic movement, empowerment, and liberation of desiring. These are related to attending to elemental imagery and relationship with a daimon figure that allowed participants to attend to painful affects, especially anger and shame, and stories of powerlessness.

The first learning states: The desire to retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition and to avoid affective experience, notably fear, anger, shame, and imagery around death, maintains a pseudoinnocent stance, which cuts one off from actualizing power. This learning reveals various stances of powerlessness discovered through engaging with participants’ images of stifled desire. Participants used emotional disconnection, psychic numbing, and inertia to avoid and side-step relationship with painful, difficult life experience and dark affective experience, including shame, which stifled their desire. Two participants declared their imaginations dead.

The second learning states: Impacted by the unattended affects of anger, grief, fear, and shame, pseudoinnocence is expressed through conflictual and unsatisfying reactive enactments. An experience of aliveness is created to counteract the deadness experienced by lost access to the psychic energy of desire, and one’s actualizing power. Various stances of powerlessness were discovered through engaging with participants’ images of stifled desire. The participants’ desires and power remained blocked in the following ways: 1) They were stuck in a state of inertia due to blame, anger, and conflict with the authority of the church for being kept shamefully from creativity. 2) They were locked up because it was angrily directed toward overt conflict and attraction to danger in
order to attain desire for feelings of power, adrenaline, and excitement, which would counteract shame and powerlessness. 3) Sexual desire originally brought alive by a secret affair with therapist, which precipitates a search for this aliveness in another lover instead of self, produced shame and grief. And 4) a buried, denied, and secret desire within conflicted feelings of hate for men who had harmed in the past, and a form of false compassion that oppressed the available power in the hate left deep shame, anger and sadness.

The third learning states: Attending to imagery, especially elemental imagery of fire, gives access to energy and creates psychic movement, enabling one to attend to painful stories of powerlessness, failure, resentment, victimization, along with the affects of anger and shame. Four participants, by imaginally engaging with images, understood how the stifled energy of their desire negatively impacted aspects of their lives. New images of movement, related to the emergence of the elemental image of fire, contrasted with the previous blocked images of stifled desire.

The fourth learning states: Shame lifts when one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their daimon. For all seven participants, shame lifted and an increase in power was evident in their second body drawing done after an evoked experience with their daimon/guide figure. This was in contrast to their first body drawing of feeling the feelings of stifled desire. For instance, to counteract shame and a defective or ruptured sense of self, the daimon offered compensatory images related to increased power.

The fifth learning states: Engaging the daimon figure is accompanied by images from the natural sensuous world, which are inherently energizing, empowering, and bring psychic movement because one’s desire is more deeply aligned with the desire of their
daimon and divine Beloved Other. Psychologically the daimon, through nature images, asked for the rescue of the spirit, or energy from the unconscious. Images of energetic light were present in sunrays and lightning bolts, which often lead to other images from the natural sensuous world that also worked to liberate participants’ desiring.

**Reflections on Research Hypothesis and Research Problem**

I entered the data collection with the Research Hypothesis: by attending to shame one releases the contraction of pseudoinnocence. The data collection and interpretations yielded learnings that supported this hypothesis, but within a range.

Research participants’ stories revealed shame in some way and to some degree after imaginally attending to their art image of stifled desire. However for most participants, shame was difficult to name and distinguish and often bound with other negative affects of anger, grief, or fear. While evident in their stories, body drawings, or their own bodies’ physical responses, some participants would not acknowledge shame at all. The five participants that acknowledged shame mentioned it almost as if in passing. Shame arose as they attended to their stories of stifled desire, yet always in combination with other negative affects. The more participants allowed themselves to feel and tolerate the negative affects, including shame, the more they would be able to experience at least a glimpse of their more trustworthy desire.

That said, six of the participants came to this process with stories of the desire to retreat from life’s intrinsically overwhelming condition that maintains the powerlessness of a pseudoinnocent stance; their tendency was to avoid negative affects. These participants did engage with their affects to some extent and immersed themselves into
their story through this process and achieved psychic movement. In contrast, one participant, Lillian, in becoming aware of her shame, was able to allow herself to deepen into the difficult affects of shame, grief, and anger; and to feel and tolerate them. Working with the sensory dimension of affective experience, as she did, allows a deeper liberation from stifled desire than the psychic movement that occurs when affects are attended without engaging the sensory dimension of experience.

Both of Lillian’s art images of stifled desire, hate, and a goddess figure surprised her, and she had the courage to engage with imaginally even though she was ashamed of her hate. She was one participant who experienced liberation from the taboo of her pseudoinnocent stance. The accompanying image of power embedded in her hate, the goddess figure with the snakes was a key to liberation. This, however, did not occur until the second meeting when she recognized and felt the power of that goddess image in her body.

I had a strong feeling that an experience with the daimon would alleviate the experience of shame and release participants from at least some of the contraction of their pseudoinnocence, an idea that I did not include in my hypothesis. From an archetypal perspective, Schwartz-Salant posits that shame may indicate that the desires of one’s daimon are not being attended. I believe that Nathanson’s concept of shame—an affect that pertains to the perceived value of one’s entire being rather than to a specific act of the self—also describes an experience predicated on whether one feels in alignment with the innate image, the daimon, that unfolds as their unique biography unfolds. As Hillman understands, the daimon is one’s soul companion and one is answerable to this innate image as one fills out their biography. As participants imaginally engaged with their
images of daimon, their subsequent stories and imagery supported psychic movement apparent in the body drawing feeling the essence of their daimon.

Being, power, and reality were invested in their imagery, a result of the numinous quality of them. As Hillman points out, images are numinous because they are soul-charged. As I stated earlier, less shame comes forth when one is more in alignment with the soul twin. This lifting of shame was visually evident in their daimon body drawing even if a participant did not engage viscerally with the shame and related affects that existed in their previous body drawing feeling their stifled desire. Lillian had more felt partnership with the daimon that I attribute to her viscerally attending to her shame and related affects than other participants.

A limited experience of some psychic movement associated with their new image of liberated desire occurred when participants drew a new image of their stifled desire after experience with their daimon. Relationship with one’s daimon released desire and offered specific images of new steps participants could take in their lives echoed by embodying a relationship with a figure that is wholly an imaginal reflection of oneself. Fertile ground for the work with the daimon was placed by engaging with their affects and through intense immersion into their story that resulted in a shifted image of previously stifled desire.

The study also uncovered other nuanced findings not included in the hypothesis. I found that breaking and engaging taboos released desiring. Personal loss motivated desire. Loss of imagination occurred due to a loss of access to one’s full range of feelings. Contact with elemental imagery, especially fire also released desire.
I noticed, that within pseudoinnocent stances, taboos kept power locked up. When participants would break through what was binding them by breaking a taboo with another one, psychic movement occurred. For instance, Stella “pretended away” much of her instinctual sexual desire beginning in childhood. This “good girl,” fascinated with behavior that was naughty as a child, finally opened up to discover her sexual desire through a taboo sexual relationship with her therapist lover. During the study, she recognized that the power she continued to crave and thought she could achieve through another lover could be found within herself. Ron’s desire and pseudoinnocence, which kept him from taking active steps in his life, was cracked open by a taboo relationship with a friend’s wife who was separating from her husband when they began their relationship. In Ron’s mind, it was an adulterous relationship because she was still married. This left him painfully conflicted, yet unable to say “no” to the relationship. His desire was ripped open. She became pregnant with Ron’s child and had an abortion because he was “at sea” about what to do about the pregnancy. This combination of devastating experiences left him feeling no desire. An image around descent and passage, as a step toward a deeper exploration of his psyche emerged.

I believe these taboo experiences touched and motivated the souls of these participants toward the necessary interactions required for the further exploration of their soul’s needs. According to O’Shea and Georges Bataille, desire does not stem from the human; it cannot be controlled. One transgresses society’s rules and taboos, not by choice, but because the excessive movement of desire, and an experience that can later makes sense when returning to the profane.
Two other participants had direct experiences with taboos as part of the study: one experienced some liberation of power around the taboo; one did not. Lillian dared to experience her taboo feeling of culturally and personally offensive hate with its accompanying shameful feelings. She opened up to the power in the goddess, viscerally attended to her affects, and was liberated from the taboo. John, however, fantasized about using his power to shoot the bad guys (those women who want to control him) from his fighter jet. His other image of a sword to fight for the King as a gladiator, also existed in the image of the fighter jet, was not fully liberated. He did not work with the sensory dimension of his affective experience and blame around his aggressive and taboo desire to shoot people. During the first meeting, his sword (an image of Venus) remained locked up in the fighter jet. However, an aspect of the Venus image was evident after his experience with the daimon in his final drawing. I will speak to the Venus/Mars relationship further in the Mythological and Archetypal section of this chapter.

I had a hunch that loss would also be present in every story; and it was. Loss exists so that hope can be kept alive as a motivating factor of desire, which keeps the cycle of desire going. Mogenson finds the painful experience of loss, from the psyche’s point of view, most generative for soul-making. The intuitive craving for the absence of what once was sets one up for what ought to be by animating and structuring one’s current perception, cognition, memory, and affective states in order to move the soul forward in finding the divine Eros rooted in mortal Eros. Participants’ stories revealed personal losses of the following: body to age, an unborn child, belief in one’s capacities of intellect and talent, the fairness of life, being financially taken care of, self-regard, loss of lover, sexual orientation, joyousness and profound deep laughter, heart connection,
loss of fathers to death, loss of relationship to father because of his fundamentalist religious stance, loss of deep complex connection to beauty sensed in the craving for beauty, and loss of participation in life based on one’s unique capacities. Finally, there was loss of vitality of life because of fear of death, which I believe is tied to loss of imagination in the most profound sense. This loss is tied to my biggest assumption—loss of self due to loss of a creative and personal relationship with one’s divine counterpart. Too much loss of Self, according to Schwartz-Salant, generates extreme vulnerability to the negative archetypal emotions. One either stifles them or acts them out instead of finding out what they want.

Hillman says that imperfection is in the soul’s essence. We are complete only by being in want. What it wants illuminates the biographical story of one’s unique desires. It is imperative to remember that the soul wants. I believe that participants’ experiences of an inferior self, with its related experience of shame, are innately part of the experience of never ending loss and resulting want. We will always make mistakes in regard to the soul. Fail we will. Some shame will be part of one’s experience. As such a painful affect, it will drive one to a creative solution linked to their soul’s healing. Stella mirrored this wanting, shame, and drive for a creative solution in her search for the desired literal lover “out there” who would spark her core and make her feel her aliveness. Her personally experienced and daimonically inspired colorfully alive angel-fish-body emerged because she allowed herself to feel so deeply the wanting held in her sadness and loss. I believe that her determined search for her idealized lover pulled her forward toward the ghostly hidden divine lover, beyond finding, but forever sought. Literal lover “out there” was exchanged for her own core of creative power, which would hopefully serve in the
continuing unfolding of her deeper capacities. It became more and more evident to me that feelings of deep loss and powerlessness are conditions of the void of relationship with a daimon figure.

I was also surprised by the elemental images from nature, especially fire that accompanied daimonic imagery. Images of energetic light of sunrays and lightning bolts are spiritually and symbolically associated with desire, fire, and divine imagery. In addition, an image of a flame of fire grew out of water. Participants linked these vital images to feelings of well-being and feelings of freedom. Noteworthy was, that while these feelings seemed so satisfying in the moment, they did not result from doing or achieving anything concrete. The next concrete steps that did emerge were reflection of innate desire, which felt appropriate in spite of hesitation about moving forward. I believe it is possible that, in those brief moments, each participant’s Self, that is material but other, structurally shared desire with the Other—that personal part allotted to them which is linked to the invisible absent Creator. It seemed that desiring offered a type of sustenance through a momentary feeling of vitality and was freed to move toward one’s potential and a continuing filling out of one’s biography.

Also participants’ feelings and images related to fire were often linked with images of the heart. Sylvia’s shifting dynamic contrary images of blood/water/flame, reflects Moore, who says, “Since ancient psychology usually located the soul around or with the heart, your heart holds the image of your destiny and calls you to it.” When I asked Sylvia about any imagery she experienced while feeling into the essence of the heart of the daimon figure she had drawn, she described red blood spilling out, which hardened like lava does when it hits the ocean and cools. Her next drawing of her stifled
desire after the experience with the daimon figure was an image of water rising up through a stem that transformed into a flame. I had a sense that her precious blood boiled from unattended anger/rage and then hardened in psychic numbness, which after an experience with the daimon changed into life-giving water and gave life to the flame. Her feelings of victim hood were absent.

Bachelard’s concept that “Images and things exchange their powers” brings profound insight to the awe I have for the natural healing inherent in the psyche that produced so many images of fire and nature linked to the daimon. Pondering the image of a flame, he saw it as both alive and vertical and appearing “stretched toward the beyond, toward an ethereal non-being,” a “beautiful instance of illustrated metaphysics.” He calls upon a poet to describe this exchange, which I imagine as a most trustworthy and profound exchange of powerlessness for power, pseudoinnocence for true innocence offered through imaginal relationship with images of the natural world: “Bridge of fire thrown between real and unreal, constant co-existence of being and non-being …”

Mythic and Archetypal Reflections

At the beginning stages of research, I wanted to destroy the way God is understood, which is definitely linked to my personal myth. I always had almost undeniable trust in the existence of an invisible intelligence and power that exists in the visible world. I did not trust my personal sense of letting that part of me flow out into the light of day. Hindering this capacity was the lost access to a full range of my more painful feelings, and I feared something that I did not know I even feared—a subtle fear of being shamed. Growing up, I loved the feelings I got when I went to mass and other
rituals of the Catholic Church. I sensed power that felt deeply true, but I was conflicted about the greatness of a God who seemed very exclusionary. Researching desire would help me make sense of the world and re-claim my deepest desire.

Desire at its core is the motivation shared by every human being. Similar to desire, a religious impulse is also shared by almost everyone, conscious or not, and for many ages and across all cultures. Many conflicting ideas and heated emotions have always existed around the idea of God (or the existence or non-existence of God), which Jung posits is in itself proof that the idea and the impulse exist.\textsuperscript{10} I wondered about and came to suspect that this impulse is inextricably linked to desire, but I did not know exactly how. From the literature, I discovered that desire defines one. Desire is the soul’s motivation that continually works to define the self, which happens through the social principle of reciprocal recognition. What or whom someone literally wants points back to who they are and who they are becoming. So if those two impulses are linked, as I suspected that they might be, I wondered and continue to wonder about the phenomenology of the self in relation to its desire and the religious impulse. Myths, as I found out when I attempted to make sense of a troubling aspect of my moral life related to my burning desire, offer insight without easy answers.

Myths are those century-old stories that reflect the conflicting impulses that work to define the self and develop the capacities that do so. The mythic but literal interpretation of the idea of God is causing a lot of trouble in the world. Warring psyches that will not fight their inner battles have shrill voices with tremendous consequences. And here I am adding to the divide from my side. But I have to. It is my part to play and tied to my personal myth. The imagination with its outpouring of imagery, that I had
declared hidden away in me, had kept me from trusting the minutia of images, which gift signs of a divine existence everywhere, including my own core. Trust in a fierce Eros, stripped of its sentimental pseudoinnocence, and tied to the full range of affects wants life out of me. Through this dissertation process I have gained and continue to gain even deeper levels of that trust.

I call for the re-instatement of an aesthetic imagination. I believe that opening to the mystery of the image, paying attention to what it wants metaphorically through each of one’s unique desires and related affects offers a trustworthiness that will add up to the creation of an expanded personal and cultural myth. Feelings and emotions, along with desire, are constants until death. One’s individual stories, fueled by those, bounce up against another’s stories to co-mingle and create ever-expanding myths.

In regard to desire’s capacity to define the self, I find interesting the timing of a recently surfaced—after 1,700 years—Gospel of Judas from the mystical Gnostic sect. It portrays Judas as a favored disciple and willing collaborator of Jesus, who entrusted him with special knowledge and not as Christ’s betrayer. Three days before Passover, Jesus said to Judas, “But you will exceed all of them (the disciples). For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me.” Scholars say that Jesus seems to have meant, “in helping him get rid of his physical flesh, Judas will act to liberate the true spiritual self or divine being within Jesus.” It is my bias that the aim or telos of desire is this liberation of one’s true spiritual self, which is basically a psychological endeavor linked to discovering the intention of one’s affects and feelings. It then follows, I believe, that the same applies to the prophets and divine figures of all the great religions of the world and to anyone with religious affiliations or not.
Jung had a similar intuition regarding the Gnostic Gospel of Judas and the true spiritual self. According to Edward Edinger, Jung says, “that the modern mind can no longer conceive of a psyche that is oriented exclusively upward, as was the original pneumatic attitude of the church.” He believed that the human being exists as a mediator between God and the world. Jung says, “Only through Christ could he [man] actually see this consciousness mediating between God and the world, and by making the person of Christ the object of his devotions, he gradually came to acquire Christ’s position as mediator.”

According to Edinger, Jung is expressing “the remarkable idea that one becomes that upon which he mediates—man’s worship of Christ the mediator functions as a kind of prelude to his assuming that role himself.”

Edinger concludes with,

The numinous reality of the psyche will no longer be carried by religious communities—the church, the synagogue or the mosque—but instead it will be carried by conscious individuals. This is the idea Jung puts forward in his notion of a continuing incarnation, the idea that individuals are to become incarnating vessels of the Holy Spirit on an ongoing basis. He developed this idea more fully in the next work he wrote, “Answer to Job.”

I object to the literal and/or the exclusionist nature in many organized religions. However, I support the beauty, ritual, and depth of ideas, and the profound experience of worshipping together in community. I also want to emphasize that all water carriers do not and will not emerge only from a Christian background. Some religions’ exclusion of the other indicates that the practitioner does not recognize a divine nature inherent in the other. To me, this indicates a lack of recognition of that practitioner’s true spiritual self or divine being. Desire asks that we recognize ourselves in one another. That is why I deeply appreciate religions that take love as a main teaching and practice that in their lives. For instance, a study shows that religion/spirituality plays a role in building strong
families. Families taking love as their main teaching, practiced their religion by living the true meaning of the word love and developed the following capacities:

These religious families practiced the recognized constructs of strong families: clear, honest, open communication; commitment; appreciation and affection; quality and quantity time together; coping with stress and crises successfully; and spiritual well-being, including oneness with God, family, humankind, and the world. They shared a functional religion with ethical values and principles guiding family members through life challenges. Most respondents perceived people had attributes similar to God. Nurturing these God-like qualities of love, spirit, mind, principle, and life inspired them to transcend egocentric behavior to spiritual maturity and wholeness.\textsuperscript{15}

Pseudoinnocence takes its tragic toll in its lack of recognition of the other. Potential evil impulses result because violence is inextricably linked to desire. Personal, cultural, and individual country’s myths, if steeped in pseudoinnocence, dangerously impact local and world communities. The God, religion, violence and the myth in which America is steeped, seems to be asking for more complexity to counteract pseudoinnocent posturing. I feel that God and America have something they are working out with the rest of the world. When I metaphorically listened to the written words of Bin Laden and President Bush in the days after September 11\textsuperscript{th}, I heard the same voice, the same desire, the same blame, and I could not distinguish them. Where does love live in pre-emptive war, I wondered? Classical mythological gods want war also and I wonder what their myths can contribute to the complex problems faced by this nation that demand responses. The forceful god Mars does not like belief, since belief, ideas, and prior conclusions all pull one into action and swell the urge to reach for the weapon, often a little too quickly. Printed on our money are the words, “In God We Trust.” Our forefathers are speaking of our loving God, Christianity’s God, America’s God. I have struggled with the deep meaning of that phrase because I sense that the literalism, the innocence of belief, and runaway sentimentality are wreaking havoc in our country and
around the Globe. I believe it would serve us as a culture for each one of us, in our own unique way, to find the mystery, treasure, and unknown future knotted up with that phrase that passes over our palms every day. This is important, because we are a violent culture.

Desire, violence, and pseudoinnocence tragically played out at Columbine High School. I felt such compassion and deep sadness not only for the victims but also for the two young shooters. Part of this violence was birthed from painful isolation and rejection. I also suspect it is a suburb steeped in pseudoinnocence with parents and teachers who did not know how to listen for the painful gaps in the stories of these two young men. I believe false innocence and a lack of a deep understanding of the importance of imagination and its link to desire contributed to the tragedy. Desire is based on the principle of reciprocal recognition. In order to discover the nature of one’s desire, it is necessary that the other recognize it. “Hegel believed that the anxiety of doubt behind this question is so great that men are willing to kill in order to resolve it.” Violence and desire are not separate. The “deceptive rush” for the weapon caught hold of those two young men.

Desire, potential violence, and pseudoinnocence were impacted by the classical gods in a research participant on a personal level. Both Mars and Venus almost simultaneously dropped into John’s psyche after I asked him about his stifled desire. These gods share desire with the human. They too want something through our lives. It was interesting that John’s immediate reaction after drawing his fighter jet was to draw a sword. He later said that he would use it in his mythic gladiator role to fight for the King. Metaphorically, I believe this points to one of those shifting dynamic contrary images
from the daimon, which recognized John’s pseudoinnocence in regard to his aggressive inclinations. The daimon instigated a pattern of action in the image of the fighter jet and then inhibited and redirected it to a more aesthetic response in the form of the sword that would please Venus. I say this because the cult of the sword, as Hillman points out, is an aesthetic expression: ancestral, symbolic, and religious.17

The aesthetic is also a force. Venus joins Mars when the graceful sword replaces the gun. As Hillman says in regard to the function of military aesthetics, “They place the mad dog in an Aphroditic halter.”18 He makes a point to differentiate this Venus victrix as the one who tames the madness of the god (Mars) in contrast to the seductive deceitful Venus that simply wants to, in a pseudoinnocent response, dress up or mask the ugliness of war. This is not about appearances, but about “passion and a sensate fury.” Perhaps an aesthetic culture with an aesthetic imagination can put restraint on explosive violence. Violence will always exist, but the fight then becomes as Hillman describes, a “danger-laden ballet” instead of raw violence, “not the shield of aesthetic value, but the fury of aesthetic engagement.”19

Vividly portrayed in the movie Quills is the explosive violence that occurs when desire and an aesthetic imagination is repressed. In this particular story, the Marquis de Sade is incarcerated in an insane asylum. Eventually his writing materials and the inmates’ privileges to create and act in their own plays are withdrawn. The Marquis de Sade finds that his “strong reproductive imagination” could make, hold, and sustain inner pictures of his desires, both perverse and not, in consciousness and could cause his earthly world to become more vividly alive both for himself and for his readers. So much
so, however, that a certain kind of particular dangerous life was given to his images and they no longer remained as “disembodied abstractions.”

Sade was forced to verbally and secretly pass his stories along in order to get them to the outside world where people were hungry to read them. The stories were told from one inmate of the insane asylum to another through their cell walls so that a young women could then write them down and take them to the outside world to be published. His imaginative spoken language that simultaneously embodied thinking, feeling, and action became so vividly and kinesthetically alive in each of his cellmates that one inmate, who did not have the ego capacity to hold that kind of imagery, started a fire. This fire, linked to repressed desire, precipitated confusion in which that young woman was killed violently by another inmate.

The Marquis de Sade’s literal and psychic life depended upon his telling of the stories. His personal myth was an extremely demanding and treacherous one to live out. Moore points out that a utilitarian mode of communication for de Sade was far less important than his imaginative language. The world is not a collection of objects, it is a living, metamorphosing, creating activity. One better take care and responsibility with what one creates.

Through the individuality of each of the characters in this movie, it becomes clear to me that evil is pervasive in the human world; it is like death, everyone takes part, but it is no longer so easy to delineate where good and evil separate. The character in charge of the insane asylum denied the inmates’ creative imaginative outlets for their desire. His creative imagination must also have been denied him. Standards of a pseudoinnocent society can lead to their own perverted expressions of desire because of exasperated
imagination. Literalization becomes the soul’s only alternative. I believe that discovery of one’s personal perverse desire through an imaginal practice is far more important than trying to maintain innocence and purity of soul by denying what lives within, including violence.

The ancient Greeks offered a solution to pseudoinnocence that is tied to descent. Persephone’s Initiatory descent to the underworld to marry Hades/Pluto gave her the fire needed to understand the difference between the approach of evil or good. If willing to explore one’s soul through conscious initiatory descent, dark emotions and desire’s conflicting opposites can be transformed into power from deep relationship with the goddess Persephone imagined as the feminine source of life, an energy that exists in the heart of all mankind if searched for and found.

Also, descent and its resulting fire heats and crisps one’s human core and edges giving way to more embodied capacities linked with immortality. Symbolic imagery around death, lacking in the participants in this study, is enhanced through descent. If one is willing to die metaphorically before they die, then one’s desire and longing will no longer be stifled by running so feverishly toward life and a particular sentimentalized version of it. One’s personal power would be re-claimed from the clutches of literal fear of separateness and of death. As one accepts death, one’s human mortality, one’s individuation is positively impacted because one is now psychologically freed from shame and fear to be seen in the world separately in all of one’s uniqueness. Desiring is freed up. Helping this is a forged relationship with the goddess Persephone imagined as the feminine source of life. One comes to realize they are not separate and alone, they are personally deeply related to immortal life. Desire is gifted its true target based on
reciprocal recognition. Moore points out that Sade’s special anima was the Persephone-like Laura, a darkly beautiful, decaying putrefaction of romantic love, a mother figure, which could hold his cravings for depth, the vision of the underworld with security from imagination, not life.\textsuperscript{20}

As Judith Butler believes, the appropriative function of desire is not consumption, domination, or the ecstatic enthrallment with another; it is the godlike authorship of the world, the recreation of natural objects into reflections of their maker.\textsuperscript{21} Desire asks one to struggle for recognition out of a desire for and by another. Descent offers relationship with the feminine source of life, which brings one closer to a culture and community based on a darkly beautiful love that has a capacity to see, listen, and feel in a more expanded way. This heart that loves, contrasts with idealization of romantic intimacy and mutual caring. It is tempered by mood, desire, and meaning, which requires the necessity of violence and destruction.\textsuperscript{22} This source offers the deep compassion that I believe facilitates one toward becoming more conscious of one’s fiery negative affects including shame that could foster the unfolding of a culture of which the Venus victrix would approve. In turn, while the desire for consumer goods, sociality, competition, or property would remain, they would be based on desire’s principle of reciprocal recognition and fiery compassionate responsibility for the welfare of all.

**Implications of the Study for Various Constituencies**

**Implications for Research Population**

Through the evocation process, seven participants, surprisingly to themselves, discovered and experienced an image of their desire that was stifled. They authentically
and directly experienced their stifled desire, related shame, and negative affects within a safe container, held and witnessed by the co-researcher and myself. Each participant, at minimum, glimpsed their power embedded in their more trustworthy desire. They noticed a difference in their two body drawings and some spoke directly to the newly noticed power as compared to their images of powerlessness. They experienced a felt sense of relationship with something powerful within themselves. One of the participants, reticent to partake in the meditation with the daimon, stated that nothing came to him except the image on the label of a bottle of “Johnnie Walker” Scotch sitting behind a cocktail bar. However, he later pointed out how he noticed the difference between his body drawings: one body was constricted and rolled in on itself with only one hand attempting to hold it just off the ground, which contrasted with his daimonic image of a freed and upright “Walking Man.”

Participants came away with a concrete idea of a next step they could take toward satisfying their desire. They also became aware of myriad emotional responses including fear, anxiety, and excitement relating to their capacity to accomplish their next step. They had a better sense of how their contracted pseudoinnocence negatively impacted their desire. I do not know whether or not they will act on newly noticed power related to their desire. But they did seem to discover that it is relationship with self and the other that satisfies deepest desires. When asked about stifled desire, participants always linked their image back to a personal missing capacity that kept them from relationship with themselves and with the other.
Implications for Self, Education, Culture, Morality, and the Religious Impulse

I believe morality remains constricted when impacted by shame and other affects such as anger, fear, and grief bound to it. I suggest that direct emotional experience with the desire of one’s daimon/Creator may enhance an emotional approach towards morality. I suspect that connecting to daimonic experience can lead to greater awareness of shame, an affect that not only protects one’s dignity when needed, but if left unconscious, keeps one emotionally shut off from deeper relationship with oneself and the other.

Bringing these results and research methodology of this study into the social institution of education, for instance, might positively impact a student’s personal desire and action taken, their potential, morality, character, and hence relationships with self, other, world, and culture. In a continually expanding global economy and world population, many personal and public policy decisions are made that oppose one’s desire against another’s. For example, Mark C. Taylor considers the complexity of future developing problems related to the natural resource of water that will need to be dealt with creatively through philosophical, religious, and ethical lenses. He suggests that,

In the coming decades, water will become a more pressing problem than oil, and the quantity, quality and distribution of water will pose significant scientific, technological and ecological difficulties as well as serious political and economic challenges. These vexing practical problems cannot be adequately addressed without also considering important philosophical, religious and ethical issues. After all, beliefs shape practices as much as practices shape beliefs.

My research is relevant in that it facilitates the development of an emotion-based intuitive decision making capacity. The process for making moral judgments can be achieved by taking action on one’s desire from one’s daimonic emotional intelligence. This individually responsible action would be based on cooperation, connectedness, and
relationship, linking social nature and moral intuition. I believe that relationship with the
daimonic figure could help shape personal moral emotion, and the capacity to respect a
multi-pluralistic world with different people, traditions, communities, and religions.
Desire, based on the principle of reciprocal recognition, would perhaps find its most
wanted expression. The possibility is enhanced when one is more in touch with one’s
own desire and affective responses including anger, grief, fear, and shame.

I believe that this deeper emotional connection to oneself leaves one feeling less
vulnerable and more generously open to self, the other, and to the world. Barriers exist
and relationships are distorted between self and other because of unconscious fears,
anxieties, and problems of attachment, which end in the pain of separation. I believe that
the resulting sense of well-being that occurs when one’s desire is aligned with their
daimon/Creator, and hence personal biography, potential, talent, and destiny, heals the
pain of separation. One feels a deeper connection to something that is larger within one’s
self. It could possibly leave one with an openness of heart that allows one to make moral
judgments and take action not dependent on collectively formed ideas. One’s response is
more vividly alive, creative, and relevant to the situation asking for action. Furthermore, I
suggest that the daimon’s possible link to one’s divine personal other counterpart, or the
Creator with which one reciprocally and structurally shares desire, begins to account for
the feelings of transcendence, awe, joy, patriotism, altruism, and self-sacrifice central to
most people’s moral experiences. 25 If one is more connected bodily and consciously to
desire and the broad range of feelings that drive patriotism, for example, decisions
relating to the rest of the world may be more complexly affected.
I also believe that a daimonic/Creator emotional approach to morality and character would challenge the more extreme forms within world religions that believe in a hyper-rational adherence to the literal meaning of their Book’s texts. That said, I also believe that a daimonic/Creator emotional approach adds complexity and “challenges the new atheists, who see themselves involved in a war of reason against faith and who have an unwarranted faith in the power of pure reason and in the purity of their own reasoning.”  

Also, this daimonic relationship may deepen the experience of those who desire and practice different forms of alternative spirituality but have a tendency to desire mystical ascent and enlightenment to the exclusion of experience with darker emotions. I believe it might also creatively enhance and extend the experience of those who do not believe in a transcendent God but accept the beauty in religion as a source of inspiration and practical wisdom about how to live in the world. Harold Bloom describes this idea of religion not as the opium of the people but the poetry of the people. Scripture is read as though it is poetry and people learn from it.

Implications for Education

Specifically, I believe the results of this study and its methodology would help expand the capacity for an internal moral compass in the education of adults, children, young adolescents, and at-risk kids. This kind of self-reflection could perhaps counteract the lack of deep attention prevalent in a society pulled toward the immediate newness that the Internet and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter provide. This methodology given in workshop format could offer at-risk kids a creative outlet to help deal with a range of darker inclinations and desires they might experience. Dark desires
take and wreak havoc, violently, and in direct relation to how much they are held back, denied, and not engaged imaginally. Becoming more of who one is meant to become is to bring to consciousness any hint of an unforgivable desire that lives within but repressed.

What would children, young adults, and, in particular, at-risk kids learn if they were invited and allowed, in the realm of the imagination and within a ritualized container, to follow their darkest curiosities and desires, including any demonic desires, which might include, at the extreme, inflicting violence or death upon themselves or others? By experiencing this imaginal process, kids would perhaps gain access to an Eros figure, a mediating, intermediate being, that could change and shift shape as needed and that they could call upon for the unfolding future tasks of their soul. Called by any name, their drawing would perhaps offer them a divine archetypal figure, which could now be contemplated because of the concreteness—sensible or imaginal. Hopefully there would not be as much retreating from Eros and idolizing of her replacements or addictions.

I am contemplating designing and personally facilitating a workshop based on this study’s methodology that could be brought into a range of educational and community settings. This study’s design, which helps develop relationship with one’s desire linked with one’s daimon, may help develop emotional intelligence, character, potential, and how to be a more complex and convivial member of the community and the world. Perhaps facilitating one into relationship with their deepest desire and related affects could be integrated into the teaching of art. The design may also be thought of in terms of a tool for school guidance counselors.
Implications for Psychology

Relevance for psychotherapy would focus on the client’s relationship with their perverse dark desire as a means to facilitate psychic movement that could lead to personal power and liberated desiring. The design itself was highly focused to evoke and bring images and affects to the surface in a short time. Psychotherapists could use this or a similar design as a way to discover, bring to consciousness, and attend to their client’s perverse desire and related affects. Therapists may find ways to evoke the daimon around identity issues and to assist clients in clarifying life purpose including finding a personal sense of meaning and well-being. Shame, if understood as having more to do with the desires of one’s daimon not being attended, may bring more compassion to a ruptured sense of self. Some clients may benefit from linking of the liberation of one’s desire to a relationship with a divine affiliated figure.

The direct experience of the image that comes quickly through art after being evoked through other imagery opens a deep direct door to the unconscious healing image. My own experience in my personal therapy and my participants’ experiences testified to this. The intellect cannot get as caught up in its old telling and re-telling of one’s story.

Implications for Veterans of War

My father was wounded in the final battle of World War II in France. He suffered from those physical and emotional wounds and died at the age of 42. I was 16 years old when my father died and never got to ask him about his experience. A short few years later my brother chose to serve his country in Vietnam, which he can rarely talk about.
Having been touched by war myself, feeling how it affected those that I love and my family system, I wonder if the design of this study could be of any service to returning vets and their families. Their lives and their children’s lives are so affected by that silent invisible wound of horrifying experience that is so unspeakable.

Hillman speaks to the sublime transcendent experience of the Other that veterans often experience on the battlefield. I assume that the unspeakable depth of this kind of experience would make it difficult for them to function back home in a pseudoinnocent culture ill equipped to contain their experience. In regard to their battlefield experience, Hillman says, “The veteran can not talk about these moments both because it was so terrible and because it was so loving.”

Hillman helped make this abstraction of Corbin’s creature/Creator and Hegel’s and Lacan’s desire of the other concrete in his example of the soldier in war. “Being reveals itself at war,” Emmanuel Levinas declares cryptically. The Other is the soldier in battle willing to die for the other, for the love of the Other. Hillman says that the unquenchable desire to help on the battlefield is an altruism that turns the idea of subjectivity based on itself and ego psychology on its head. Survivors insist that the experience of themselves shifts, that their experience was sublime in its transcendence. Levinas describes this altruism when he says, “The I is bound to the not-I, as if the entire fate of the Other were in our hands.”

I think of the possibility of the design of this study as a therapeutic tool for veterans and reciprocally for myself. And I think about it in terms of future research conducted only if I was convinced it could be healing for them. I sense they could teach a great deal through the gift of their stories of their experience of the Other—their images
related to desire in all its sacred vicissitudes through their battlefield soaked hearts and eyes. Perhaps the complexity of their nuanced personal responses to their experience and stories could teach and offer insight about any connection between desire’s relationship to the identity of the self and the idea that death may be made powerless through relationship to the developing potentiality of this self.

**Implications for the Culture**

Culture is profoundly affected by the desires we acknowledge and which ones we deny. As Andrew Samuels informs,

> An individual person leads not only his or her own life but also the life of the times. Jung was supposed to have said that “when you treat the individual, you treat the culture,” meaning that persons can not be seen in isolation from the cultural matrices that played a part in forming them.\(^3\)

Evidence in this study shows that shame is always linked to a ruptured or failed sense of self. I believe that attending shame and the desire of the daimon/Creator could contribute to a shift in the American cultural self-identity.\(^3\) I also sense a shift in identity occurring collectively. My bias makes me wonder how the American individualist can shift toward an identity that Ralph Waldo Emerson termed in his essay of the same title, “Self-Reliance?” Bloom, who recognizes what he refers to as Emerson’s mature religious stance, posits that self-reliance is linked to power as agent, which he links to the recognition of the God within us, rather than “only” the worship of the Christian godhead. Emerson says in his essay, “Inasmuch as the soul is present there will be power not confident but agent.”\(^3\) I wonder how developing one’s personal power, which I
assume is attributed to embodied shared desire between the individual and their
daimon/Creator, could contribute to a shift in America’s cultural self-identity?

America is faced with economic distress, ecological environmental concerns,
continuing violence, and re-imagining itself after policies of pre-emptive war and
allegations of using torture. Rafael Sanchez Ferlosio argues that the fusion of faith and
American patriotism, and the absolute conviction of being a “fundamentally good”
country have led to demonizing and de-humanizing the enemy and a tainted morality.\textsuperscript{35}

What un-examined emotions in the individual psyche are driving decisions related to
policy? I believe that self-reflection is important right now. I offer that future research,
which can possibly provide a more nuanced and expanded understanding of desire and its
related affects allow for different ways to perceive the relationship between self-identity,
the divine, personal power, and how America wields its power internally and throughout
the world, and struggles to define its morality.

As David Spangler reminds, our experience on this planet is holistic. It is my
belief that a deeper more sacred aspect of culture will be made visible as a result of
attending to the manifestation of one’s desire linked and fiercely lived in relation to one’s
innate image, the personal daimon/Creator. This kind of self-reflection might lead to what
Butler referred to as “the godlike authorship of the world,” the re-creation of natural
objects into reflections of their maker.\textsuperscript{36} This not only saves the function of desire from
consumption, domination, or the ecstatic enthrallment with another, it helps create a
vision of what a planetary spirituality might look like.
Implications for Future Research

Desire can be understood as the soul’s motivation that continually works to define the self. Hence, how can this understanding of the motivation of desire, that has to do with less tangible and less obtainable objects of desire, be more purposely brought to one’s consciousness and culture? How can a continuing deeper understanding of desire as a source of identity lead to also looking inward for sources of personal meaning, power, and hope? What links play between desire and religion or the religious impulse, especially related to the role affects, such as sadness, anger and shame, which are related to one’s personal desire? Can the concept of desire in the field of psychology begin to be more widely thought of in terms of a religious impulse, and what future research can be done to provide support for or disagreement with this assumption? Finally, can more research be done based on the results of this study implicating direct experience with the daimon that contributes more understanding to the ongoing research on eudaimonic well-being and happiness?

Next, I wonder if inter-relationship between desire, identity, elemental imagery, personal power, and relationship with daimonic/Criator intelligence be linked to a “yet undiscovered aspect of morality” that would possibly account for feelings of transcendence, awe, joy, patriotism, altruism, and self-sacrifice, which are central to most people’s moral experiences?37

I also have had concerns that the Internet and related technology is both serving and hindering the individual. In a new study, Antonio Damasio notes that feelings linked to our moral sense awaken slowly in the mind. Can the fast pace of today’s media and the Internet have an emotional cost to developing brain of young people? Researcher Mary
Helen Immordino-Yang says, “If things are happening too fast, you may not ever fully experience emotions about other people’s psychological states and that would have implications for your morality.” 38 I wonder if the impulse of admiration would be more freely felt, appropriately targeted to that which has personal value for one, and expressed by a developing relationship with one’s desire partnered with one’s daimon/Creator? I wonder if the developing relationship of the self with its desire linked with this other identity would allow one to morally respond more intuitively and hence quicker? I wonder if a lifting of shame and any other affect bound to it, that is associated with one’s stifled desire, would free up more admiration and compassion for self and hence the other? I wonder how the findings and methodology of this study might be useful to educators who, according to Immordino-Yang, “are charged with the role of producing moral citizens who can think in ethical ways, who feel responsible to help others less fortunate, who can use their knowledge to make the world a better place?” 39 And, I might add from a deeply sourced and authentic altruistic desire. This is in contrast to citizens who choose to be of service out of need that stems from having by-passed their own emotional development.

Next, I wonder if desire’s found inter-relationship with identity, elemental imagery, personal power, and relationship with daimonic/Creator intelligence can be used to explore one of Christopher Alexander’s assumptions, “Matter itself is not a mechanism: It is a potentially soul-like materiality which is essentially what we call self.” 40

Finally, can the relationship between desire, identity, elemental imagery, and its relationship with daimonic/Creator intelligence be explored for its effect on values, which
might then influence personal and public policy decisions that impact the environment and planet? Could this provide support for or disagreement with another of Alexander’s assumptions?

If self or I is woken up whenever living structure appears in matter, what we think of as value may then be described as the protection, preservation, nourishment, of the precious self of the universe; This paves the way to an ultimately personal view of the world. Matter is personal. We then treat all creation—of buildings, gardens, roads—as the protection of the personal which resides in matter, and which, through our actions, may see the light of day.41
APPENDIX 1

ETHICS APPLICATION

Participants

I will recruit seven participants. I am looking for men and women. I am interested in those who are experiencing a sense of unexpressed desire in an important sector of their life or a major block in their life. Participants will also have had to struggle with core conflicting feelings or points of view for a period of time. It is required that participants have psychological insight and are equipped to cope with negative affects that may arise during the course of the study and afterwards.

To recruit participants I intend to post informational flyers. I also intend to ask friends to ask their friends, who are not part of my social circle, if they would be interested in participating in the study.

Procedures Involving Research Participants

Once a prospective research participant makes contact, I will make telephone contact to introduce myself as a student of Meridian University. I will describe the nature of the study. I will outline the requirements for participation. I will inform them that this is research to better understand desire. It is participatory research. The activities involved will include viewing film clips, art making, discussion, listening to music, reflexive dialogue, and guided meditation. There will be two meetings, each one lasting approximately two hours and 10 minutes. They will be held from one to two weeks apart.
To determine eligibility to participate I will conduct a telephone screening interview, which will take approximately 15 minutes. If a prospective participant seems interested I would hope to continue with the screening process during the initial telephone contact. If time does not allow this I will set up an alternative time.

The screening interview will assess prospective participant’s capacities. I will let them know that film clips shown will depict evocative and potentially disturbing human situations in addition to provocative nude scenes. Also the art processes may stir difficult emotions. To determine psychological awareness I will ask if they are generally able to find words for their experience. I will also determine the networks they have for accessible emotional support. The screening interview will also assess, through self-report, that the prospective participant has access to a desire that they could describe as stifled or unexpressed. I will ask for examples of what gets in their way of expressing their deepest desires.

At the end of the interview prospective participants will be informed of their acceptance or rejection. If accepted, meeting dates will be set and location will be discussed. I will let them know that they will receive a packet in the mail regarding the consent process for participation in the research. A letter will be included that reminds them of the date and time of the first meeting, provides the location, and requests that they review the consent form. They will be asked to bring the consent form with them. Time will be provided for questions regarding the form. Extra copies will be available.

At the first meeting, I will introduce the co-researcher and myself. I will address the consent process by: asking if any questions arose about the consent process; offering time to ponder the form; discussing the parts that emphasize risks and benefits of
participation; and reassuring them of my commitment to confidentiality. I will remind them that difficult emotions may come up. If they feel overwhelmed and want to stop at any time, they may do so. I will collect the form. The logistics of the day will then be discussed including the location of restroom, film viewing area, art area and supplies, water and snacks. I will make a statement reiterating the purpose of the study and the activities that will be included this first meeting. They will be asked to light a candle during a short opening ritual where we share our intent for the day.

The participant will be prepared to view the film clips. They will be asked to proceed to the art area in silence immediately after the films finish, where they will draw their response to my pre-determined question. Since this will be their first art making activity I will inform them that their art will not be judged as a product in order to alleviate any anxiety and encourage expression. I will let them know that a deep intelligence is offering an image to them in the 10 minutes allotted for the drawing. I will let them know that we are most interested in understanding what they feel or sense. Before starting the films I will ask them if they would like to make a few marks or scribbles with the materials in order to feel comfortable with them. I will remind them that immediately after the first drawing they will be asked another question. Still maintaining silence they will draw their response.

We will then discuss their stifled desire and accompanying feelings and emotions relating to their art images in both drawings. If not addressed spontaneously, I will directly inquire about participant’s experiences of shame. I will listen for the defenses and language of shame in their image’s story and in the participant’s personal story. Some examples of questions I will ask are: “When you look at this image what do you
feel in your body?” When you mentioned feeling so painfully uncomfortable about being seen by those others in that certain way, what would you do, or even become, to avoid those painful feelings?” The discussion will be audiotaped and then transcribed. Once the discussion has ended, I will inquire if they would like a short break. They will be offered more water and snacks.

I will then introduce them to the next drawing. They will be asked to take a few moments and use their imaginations to picture and feel a posture that their body wants to be in as they feel the feelings of their stifled desire from the two previous drawings. When I sense they are ready I will ask them to take 10 minutes and draw an image of their body feeling these feelings. After the body drawing is finished I will ask them to cut out their body drawing from the paper it was drawn upon in any shape that they would like. I will let them know that I will ask them to do something else with their drawing.

The next activity will be to ask the participant to place their body drawing together with their two previous drawings anywhere that feels right on the large piece of paper on the wall. This piece of paper will have a large line drawing of a circle drawn on it and will have been hanging on the wall before their arrival. I will ask them to take some silent time and notice what they are feeling as they look at all of their drawings together on the wall. I will then say, “After sitting silently looking at your drawings for a few minutes is there anything you are noticing about how your body figure relates to your stifled desire and your feelings and thoughts around your desire? Do you have any new feelings or thoughts on how the story of your life has been affected by your stifled desire?”
Once their contemplation time has ended I will ask them to partake in a discussion to share their experience. I will pay particular attention to their body image in order to discern un-named shame. I will look for physical manifestations of shame such as a body curled in on itself, the red flush of shame on the cheeks and face, or a body barely visible or distorted in some other way. I will gently probe for the story related to those physical manifestations if the participant does not address that part of the image spontaneously. To accomplish this, I may share a story of my own painful experience of shame when applicable. This discussion will be audio-taped and transcribed.

In closing the activities for the day, I will ask participants once more to sit in silence for a few moments and contemplate their images on the wall. I will then inquire about their sense of how they have been affected by this process today. I will remind them that difficult emotions may have come up for them and emphasize that they take care of themselves as needed. I will remind them to ask for support from others in their life if they feel overwhelmed. A reminder of the date and time of the next meeting will be given. I will tell them that I will care for their art images until the next meeting. The participant will be thanked for their participation and courage and invited to blow out the candle.

Meeting Two will begin with a welcome, a description of the activities and schedule for the day, reminder of confidentiality, and a short opening ritual to set our intentions for the day. I will remind participant of the possible difficult emotional responses to participating in the study, letting them know that they can take a break whenever needed. Or they can stop participating at any time for any reason. They will be informed that they will be asked to do art again today. I will remind them that it is
important that whatever image comes to them that they get it down on paper in whatever way seems right to them. I will also point out the area of the space where a guided meditation will take place.

Immediately after the ritual I will ask the participant to sit in silence a few moments and reflect on their images on the wall. I will have set up the participant’s artwork on the wall exactly as they had left it at the end of meeting one. I will inquire about any new feelings, thoughts, or experiences that might have come up in their life that somehow feel tied or connected to their experience during our last meeting. This discussion will be audio-taped and later transcribed.

The first activity of meeting two will be a guided meditation. I will ask the participant to make themselves as comfortable as possible on a chair or couch, to close their eyes when it is comfortable, relax, and listen. I will let them know that when the meditation is finished I will ask them to open their eyes when they are ready and to bring themselves back into the room. I will ask them to go directly to the art area in silence. I will then ask them a question and ask them to do some art in response. The purpose of the meditation will be to evoke the participant’s inner guide (daimon) who might offer insight into an alternative to their stifled desire. I will facilitate the meditation and toward the end play two songs, “Pastoral” and “Song From A Secret Garden.” While the songs are being played the participant will be listening for sudden words, spontaneous knowings, or images related to their desire offered by the guide. They will be asked to do this earlier in the meditation before the songs are started.

After the meditation I will immediately introduce them to the next drawing activity, which will be the second body drawing of the study. They will be asked to
picture a position that their body wants to be in as they feel the essence of the figure that revealed itself to them in the meditation. I will ask them to take 10 minutes and draw an image of their body feeling this essence. At the completion of that drawing I will ask them to feel into the heart of this figure and draw the heart of this figure onto their body drawing. After the body drawing, with the recognition of its heart, is finished I will ask them to cut out their body from the paper it was drawn upon in any shape that they would like. They will then be asked to place it on the wall where it feels it wants to be in relation to all of their other drawings from the last meeting.

The next drawing will capture the interaction between all of their images on the wall. They will be asked to sit a few moments and connect with their feelings in response to all of the images now contained on the white paper. I will ask them to pay particular attention to the ways in which these images are interacting with each other. Feeling deeply into their body and listening, they will be asked to draw what is happening between all of their images. They may draw directly on the paper or on their images for 10 minutes.

A reflexive dialogue between all the images now contained on the wall will be the next activity of the day. I will ask the participant to partake in a reflexive dialogue between all of the images found in their artwork contained on the circle. I will ask them to embody and speak as the figures and feelings of their imagery. I will suggest that the figures may want to speak to each other. It will be suggested that the participant might want to sit in one chair to speak as a figure. When another figure might want to say something the participant might move to another chair to express that figure’s thoughts or feelings. 10 minutes will be allotted for this process.
The Participant will then be asked to share and describe their experience in a discussion. I will listen for any felt differences in their desire, shame, or other affects. If they have not done so already, they will be prompted to describe more distinctly any images that I might recognize as possibly related to the developing story of their desire. This interview will be audio-taped and later transcribed. At the end of this discussion they will be offered a short break and more water and snacks.

For the next drawing, participants will be asked to capture their feelings around their original image of stifled desire now after going through this study’s process. In a discussion immediately following this drawing participants will be invited to tell the story of this new image of desire. Audio-tape will capture this interview.

The final drawing of the research design will ask participants to capture the guide/daimon’s offering of a next step to take in attending to their life. They will be asked to feel into the heart of the daimon figure to get a sense of what the figure wants them to do next. In the final interview the participant will be asked to discuss their plans for this next step. This final interview will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

Closure for this final meeting will begin with my co-researcher and me expressing deep appreciation for the participant’s gift of precious time and courage. I will remind them about self-care and the possibility of sensitivities and emotions arising as a result of participation in the day’s activities. I will remind them to ask for support from others in their life if they feel overwhelmed. I will let them know that I will be keeping and photographing their artwork. I will also offer to send it back to them upon the completion of the interpreting phase of the dissertation process if they would like to have it. I will also offer them photographs of their art. Again thanking them for their participation and
their contribution toward a deeper understanding of desire, I will invite them to blow out the candle.

**Consent Process**

When prospective participants have been accepted and agree to participate in the study, I will mail them a consent form with an accompanying letter approximately 7 to 10 days before the first meeting. They will be asked to review the form, call if they have any questions, and bring the form with them to the first meeting. After a brief welcome forms will be collected. Any questions regarding consent that participants might have will be discussed and answered before any activities begin. If they did not bring the form with them one will be provided for them. We will review the form even if they have no questions. Important points such as confidentiality, safeguards, and risks will be highlighted in the review. Another opportunity for asking additional questions will be given. I will check to make sure the form is signed and that the participant has a copy for their records.

**Risks**

Emotional discomfort or possible feelings of overwhelm could be elicited by the evocative experiences planned to heighten affect and uncover feelings as part of this research design. It may be difficult to make visible to the researcher participant’s images of stifled desire, which by their nature are in a broad sense perverted. Shame is related to one’s core perception of oneself, a painful affect that one prefers to keep hidden. Due especially to the body drawing capturing the feelings of stifled desire shame may be
made visible, making participants feel exposed and vulnerable during and after the art activities. Shame is thought to be linked to the desire of one’s daimon. If one becomes more aware of saying no to their deepest desire grief and also anger toward self may manifest. Noxious affect, especially shame, may bring on defenses such as emotional withdrawal or defensive structures may shift too rapidly causing a flood of affect.

**Safeguards**

I will start to discuss possible risks of participating in this study during my phone screen with prospective participants. I will let them know that the study may involve some psychological discomfort. Planned activities, such as film clips and art processes may stir emotions and feelings that are difficult such as shame, anger, fear, or grief. I will assure them that every effort will be made to safeguard them from potential risks. However, the nature of the activities may be emotionally challenging. I will ask prospective participants if there is an emotion that they feel is particularly difficult for them. If they bring one up I will inquire about their access to emotional support and their willingness to contact someone such as a friend. In order to alleviate the possibility of exacerbating any crisis or emotional turmoil, I will inquire if they are experiencing any such events in their life right now. If they respond that they are I will ask them to check in with themselves and ask if participating in this study makes sense for them at this time.

The risks will also be discussed with participants at the beginning of both meetings. They will be re-assured that if they feel overwhelmed and want to stop at any time, they may do so. Their well-being takes precedence over the collection of data. They
will be reminded that participation is voluntary. I will also gently remind them of this through out the process, both before and after activities.

The introductory and closing rituals, which help to create a ritual space, will provide a safe container so difficult experience might be more safely and freely expressed. Rapport with the researchers will offer an additional safeguard. In the opening ritual I will reveal my deeply felt personal interest and respect for the study’s topic, which will begin to establish rapport with the participant. My co-researcher and I will also share with the participant the importance of the their contribution and our gratitude for their commitment. They will feel that the co-researcher and myself are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment.

The hypothesis of this study includes the possibility of shame. Shame is also bound with other affects. The experience of being observed and having their art observed by the researchers could elicit a complex group of emotions in the participant. The participant will also be re-telling their story of desire throughout this process. Their story may be linked to layers of unattended affect. If I sense a building up of affect in a participant I will inquire about their experience. If I feel it is necessary for their safety and emotional well-being, I will suggest we stop the process for a few minutes. The co-researcher and I will assist them in diffusing their emotional discomfort. For instance, we may ask them to focus on the garden and trees outside, or bring up more mundane subjects in a gentle conversation, or move to another area of the room for a short period of time. Additionally, certain activities are designed as integrative experiences, which will also provide emotional safeguards.
At the beginning of the second meeting and end of each meeting participants will be invited to sit with their images for a few moments in silence in order to feel how the process affects them. They will be asked to express the impact of their experience before they leave the meeting. I will reflect their experience to them by summarizing their experience as told to me. My intent is that they will feel actively listened to, witnessed, held, and appreciated for their important contribution to a deeper understanding of desire that required risk and courage.

**Benefits**

This research will hopefully be beneficial to participants who have experienced a sense of unexpressed desire in an important sector of their life or a major block in their life. It will provide an opportunity to discover and experience an image of their desire that may have been stifled. Discovery of hidden desire and the acknowledgement and experiencing of a myriad of related difficult emotions may liberate the further unfolding of their desire. This can positively impact relationship with parts of the self and others, which participants may have found psychologically painful. Relationship with a deep sense of power may also be discovered along with a next step to take in realizing the participant’s desire.

This research will hopefully add to the conversation that already exists in the literature providing additional insights regarding the liberation of desire and its possible relationship to the discovery of stifled desire and shame. The professional community of psychotherapists and educators may also benefit from these insights by discovering creative ways to work with populations whose desire may be liberated by bringing
attention to their darkest desires. The literature finds that desire can be understood as the soul’s motivation that continually works to define the self. A self more deeply aligned with the desire on one’s soul may extend benefits to culture and also add complexity to one’s religious or spiritual aspirations.

After the Study

At the completion of data collection I will offer to send a summary of the learnings to the participants. The major themes will be presented in accessible language to those without excessive training in psychology.
APPENDIX 2

CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE

Evoking Experience in Meeting One

• View film clips

Evoking Experience in Meeting Two

• Guided Meditation
• Listen to songs. “Pastorale” and “Song From a Secret Garden”

Expressing Experience in Meeting One

• Create art images in reaction to film clips and questions from researcher
• Discussion of the art images

Expressing Experience in Meeting Two

• Create art images in reaction to the guided meditation
• Place art images on the white paper on the wall
• Discuss art images

Interpreting Experience in Meeting One

• Participants discuss art images in relation to their desire

Interpreting Experience in Meeting Two

• Participants discuss reactions experienced since previous meeting
• Participants discuss art images in relation to their desire

Integrating Experience in Meeting One

• Body drawing visually reveals the toll of stifled desire on participants
• Place art images on wall, reflect on the experience, and discuss

Integrating Experience in Meeting Two
• Reflect on art images on wall from previous meeting
• Discuss experiences that emerged since previous meeting
• Body drawing visually reveals some movement of desire
• Drawing on wall connecting all of the art images creates integrative story.
• Create art image of a next step to take in attending to their lives
APPENDIX 3

CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE

Meeting One

I. Introduction and Orientation
   A. Obtain participant’s signed consent form.
      1. Greet participant; discuss questions participant might raise; review consent form; obtain signature.
   B. Introduction
      1. Researcher provides general information
         a. Space (bathrooms, film clip viewing area, art area, etc.) schedule (breaks, ending time, etc.)
         b. Participation and confidentiality
         c. Participation is at all times voluntary.
         d. General overview of procedures involved during the meeting
      2. Opening Ritual
         a. Light candle; participant and researcher set intention for the day; both share interest in research.
   C. Viewing Film Clips
      1. A 25-minute compilation of film clips is played for participant.
   D. Art Making: 2 Drawings
      1. Participant draws immediate reactions to film clips and researcher’s question relating to stifled desire.

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2. Participant draws immediate reactions to the next question posed by the researcher relating to feelings and thoughts around stifled desire.

E. Interview

1. Participant discusses their experience of stifled desire relating to the art images.

F. Art Making: Body Drawing

1. Participant creates a drawing of their body feeling the feelings of stifled desire.

2. Participant cuts out the body drawing in any desired shape.

G. Placement of All Three Drawings on the Wall

1. Participant places all drawings on the wall

2. Participant notices feelings associated with their body figure as it relates to their image of stifled desire.

H. Interview

1. Participant shares any new feelings or thoughts on how their life is affected by stifled desire.

2. Participant sits in silence to contemplate their images. They feel how the entire research process affects them and then share their experience with the researcher.

I. Closure

1. Researcher provides general information

   a. Participant thanked for participation and courage.

   b. Discussion and acknowledgement of possible psychological reaction to process and importance of support system and self-care.

   c. Participant informed that the researcher takes responsibility for their art images until the next meeting.

   d. Clarification of time and date of the next meeting.

2. Participant asked if they would like to blow out the candle.
Meeting Two

I. Introduction and Overview

A. Welcome Back

1. Researcher provides general information.
   a. Review of space (bathroom, art area, meditation area, etc.)
   b. Review confidentiality and reminder of voluntary participation.
   c. General overview of activities and schedule.

2. Opening Ritual
   a. Light candle. Participant and researcher set intention for the day.

B. Sit in Silence Observing Art Images on Wall

1. Participants reflect on art images from last meeting

C. Interview

1. Discuss how participant is affected by the last meeting’s experience.

D. Guided Meditation

1. Participant partakes in a 10-minute guided meditation.

E. Listen to Music

1. “Pastorale” and “Song From a Secret Garden” are played toward the end of the meditation.

F. Art Making: Body Drawing

1. Participant creates a drawing of their body feeling the essence of the daimon figure revealed in their meditation.

G. Art Making: Heart of the Daimon Figure

1. Participant draws the heart of the daimon figure on their body drawing.

2. Participant cuts out the body drawing in any desired shape.
H. Placement of Body Drawing on the Wall

1. Participant places the figure in some desired relation to all of the other drawings on the wall from the last meeting.

I. Art Making: Drawing of Interaction between All Images

1. Participant connects with their feelings to draw what is happening between all of the images on the wall.

J. Reflexive Dialogue

1. Participants partake in a reflexive dialogue between all of the images and figures contained on the wall.

K. Interview

1. Participant discusses their experience of desire relating to the art images on the wall.

L. Art Making: New Feelings Relating to Stifled Desire

1. Participant captures feelings relating to stifled desire after going through this process.

M. Art Making: Next Step

1. Participant draws what the daimon figure would like them to do next in attending to their life.

N. Interview

1. Participant discusses art images including new feelings and their image of a next step.

O. Closure

1. Researcher’s General Remarks
   
a. Appreciation and sharing of gratitude for participation.

b. Reminder of psychological intensity of work and importance of self-care.

c. Plans for returning art images or photographs of art images.

2. Participant asked if they would like to blow out the candle.
APPENDIX 4

INFORMED CONSENT

You are invited to participate in a study on desire. The study’s purpose is to better understand desire. Participation will involve viewing 25 minutes of evocative film clips, with strong imagery that includes, violence, nudity, and depictions of disturbing human situations. It will involve making a series of drawings and entering into several interactional interviews with me about the drawings and your experiences, along with a guided meditation and a reflexive dialogue. This will take place in Sausalito and will involve two meetings. Each meeting will last for 2 hours and 10 minutes and will be audio taped which will later be transcribed. Your art will be photographed. Meeting dates will be MM/DD/YY and MM/DD/YY.

For the protection of your privacy, all tapes and transcripts will be kept confidential and your identity will be protected. Data will be stored in a locked file under the researcher’s control. In the reporting of information in published material, any information that might identify you will be altered to ensure your anonymity.

This study is of a research nature and may offer no direct benefit to you. The published findings, however, may be useful to practitioners in the healing professions and may benefit the understanding of desire.

This study is designed to minimize potential risks to research participants. However, some of the procedures such as viewing the film clips and participating in art processes may touch sensitive areas. Research participants may encounter feelings that are difficult to bear.

If at any time you develop any concerns or questions, I will make every effort to discuss these with you. I, the researcher, cannot provide psychotherapy, but at your request or using my personal judgment, I will facilitate referrals to an appropriate mental health professional, if such a need should arise.

If you decide to participate in this research, you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time and for any reason. Please note as well that I, the researcher, may need to terminate your participation from the study at any point and for any reason.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may call me at 415-258-9749, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 am and 9 pm. Or you may contact the Dissertation
Director at Meridian University, 47 Sixth Street, Petaluma, CA 94952, 707-765-1836. Meridian University assumes no responsibility for any psychological or physical injury resulting from this research.

I, ______________ (participant name) consent to participate in the research study on the experience of yearning, longing and desire, what stops us from following our deeper desires, and what frees us to move toward our deeper desires. I have had the study explained to me by Kathleen Wilson. Any questions of mine about this research have been answered and I have received a copy of the consent form. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

Participant Signature    Date
You are Invited to Participate in a Research Study on the Experience of Longing and Desire

I am looking for adults willing to participate in a research study exploring their experience of yearning, longing, and desire.

I am a doctoral candidate at Meridian University conducting my dissertation research to complete requirements for the Ph.D. in psychology.

Research participants will meet with a co-researcher and me. There will be two meetings. Each meeting will last approximately 2 hours.

If you are interested, please contact Kathleen Wilson via email at kathleenwilson260@comcast.net and provide me with your contact information. I will follow-up with you to set up a telephone appointment to provide further information.

Thank you in advance for your time and interest.
APPENDIX 6

PHONE SCREEN FOR PROSPECTIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Note: This phone screen is to be used with prospective research participants who have already responded to the flyer or word of mouth.
Prospective Research Participant Name ______________________________
Mailing Address ____________________________________________________
Phone Number ____________________________
Age _____ (must be between the ages of 25 and 70 to participate in research)

“I am completing my doctoral studies at Meridian University. If you are interested, I would like to consider including you in my study. If this is a good time to talk, I would like to begin by talking about the study and then I will ask you a few questions to make sure that research criteria for this study is being met. Is this a good time to talk?” (If yes, then go to the next paragraph. If no, set up another time to talk.)

“In this study we will be exploring the experience of longing and desire. There will be two interviews over the course of three weeks. During the first meeting I will ask research participants to watch film clips depicting evocative and potentially disturbing human situations in addition to provocative nude scenes. I will ask participants to engage in an extended art process of drawing, and then talk about the experience. At the second meeting a week to ten days later, I will provide research participants with a guided meditation which will include music, invite research participants to draw more images, and then ask research participants to talk about their experience. There are no right or wrong answers in this study. It is an exploration. Do you have any questions or concerns about the study so far?” (If no, then go to the next paragraph. If yes, take time to attend to them.)

“The interviews will take place at (site to be determined). The process will be audio recorded. Art will be photographed and will be retained until transcripts are typed and returned to you for your review.”

“There are possible risks associated with participating in this study. Again, provocative film clips will be shown depicting evocative and potentially disturbing human situations in addition to nudity. As well, art processes may stir feelings. Research participants will likely encounter emotions that are difficult. For example, it is possible that participants will experience shame, anger, fear, grief, or disgust. Is there some emotion that you can think of that might come up and be experienced as hard or difficult for you?” If yes I will say: “Do you have easily accessible emotional support
in your life that you feel comfortable accessing?” If no I will say: “Is there a supportive friend whom you can contact should difficult feelings emerge? Would you be willing to contact a friend?” (If no, I will say: “Thank you for your time but for this study it is necessary that emotional support be available to participants. If yes I will ask the question “Are you in the midst of a crisis or emotional turmoil in your life? Please check in with yourself and ask if it makes sense to be exposed to difficult emotions at this time?” If no, I will say: “Thank you for your time and the courage to realize that emotionally this is not the right time for you to participate in a study like this.” If yes, move on to next paragraph.

“The following is a set of personal questions. The information that you provide will be confidential. I am asking the questions to ensure that certain criteria are met for the research design. If you are uncomfortable responding to any of the questions, please let me know and we will stop. Are you interested in responding to the questions?” (If no, thank them for their consideration. If yes, go on to next paragraph.)

“Are you experiencing any sense of unexpressed desire in an important sector of your life or a major block in your life?” Yes or No

(If no, stop. Say: “Thank you for your consideration. For this study I am looking for research participants who have clearly had the experience of feeling like something is unexpressed or blocked from their lives.” If yes, go on to next question.)

“Please tell me an example of what gets in the way of expressing your deeper desire?” I will be listening for what oppresses desire in this response. If participants indicate that nothing is inhibiting their desire I will thank them for their consideration and explain to them that for the purpose of this study participants need to feel some obstacle in relation to their desire. If participants respond describing obstacles that get in the way of their desire I will move on to the next question.

“Have you struggled with core conflicting feelings or points of view for a period of time, felt in some way damned if you do and damned if you don’t?” Yes No (If no, stop. Say: “Thank you for your consideration. For this study I am looking for research participants who have had the experience of holding at least two strong feelings and points of view for a period of time.” If yes, go on to next question.)

“Are you generally able to find words for you own personal experience?” Yes No

(If no, stop. Say: “Thank you for your consideration. For this study I am looking for research participants who are confident in their ability to find words that describe their own personal, difficult experience.” If yes, go on to next question.)
“This study will involve making a series of drawings. Have you participated in expressive art practices, such as drawing before? Are you “comfortable-enough” to engage in a number of drawings?” If yes say: “There will also be a guided visualization. Are you comfortable with that process?” Yes No (If no to any of the above questions, stop. Say: “Thank you for your consideration. For this study I am looking for research participants who feel comfortable engaging with art materials and guided visualizations.” If yes, go on to next question.)

“Are you still interested in participating in this research?” (If no, stop. Say: “Thank you for your consideration.” If yes, go on to next question.)

“Do you have time for two meetings over the course of 10 to 14 days for approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes each time?” (If no, stop. Say: “Thank you for your consideration. For this study I am looking for research participants who can meet for 2 hours twice over the course of 10 to 14 days.” If yes, go on to next question.)

“Would you be interested in participating in this research?” (If no, stop. Say: “Thank you for your consideration.” If yes, go on to next question.)

“Is this a good time to choose times to meet?” (If no, make an appointment to set up meeting times. If yes, set dates.)

“After the times and dates are confirmed I will be sending you a packet of information that will include a Confirmation Letter with the dates, time and place for this study. In regard to your participation as a research participant, that packet will also contain a Bill of Rights and an Informed Consent Form for your review prior to the first meeting.

Thank you for your time.
APPENDIX 7

CONFIRMATION LETTER

Dear Research Participant,

Thank you for your interest in this research on desire and for agreeing to participate in the study. Included in this packet is an Informed Consent Form for your participation in this study. Please review them prior to the first meeting. All art materials will be provided.

The meetings will be individual one-to-one meetings. The dates for our meetings will be: MM/DD/YY from ___ to ___ and MM/DD/YY from ___ to ___

The meetings will be held at ________ located in _________. Enclosed are directions.

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to call or email me with any questions that may arise before we meet MM/DD/YY for our first meeting.

Kathleen Wilson
Kathleenwilson260@comcast.net
(415) 258-9749
APPENDIX 8

SCRIPTS FOR THE FIRST MEETING

Script for Introducing the Day

Thank you for coming. My name is Kathleen Wilson. I’d like to take a few minutes to collect and go over the informed consent/confidentiality agreement and then let you know what we will be doing today. The purpose of this form is: to ensure that you are aware that you are consenting to participate in this study; that you have a general sense of the topic and what to expect; that you know that emotionally it is possible that participating in this study could bring things up for you that you may need outside help with; and that you know that you can stop participating in this study at any time for any reason. Do you have any questions or concerns? (If yes, I will attend to them).

I would like to begin today with an opening ritual to set a sacred tone for our learning. I’ll begin by lighting a candle. This will only take a few minutes. After the ritual, I will ask you watch 15 minutes of film clips. We will watch the film clips in silence. Then we’ll engage in an art process and then talk about your experience.

It may be that some of this is painful for you. If you need to take a moment to be with yourself, it’s okay. Of course, if you need to stop, that will be okay too. At the end of our time together today I’ll check in with you about logistics for next time and what strategies you have in place in case you need some support.
Script for Opening Ritual

I am interested in learning more about desire, what stops us from our deeper desires, and what frees us to move toward our deeper desires. Thank you for being here so that we may listen together.

Script for Introducing the Film Clips

We are about to watch some film clips that may seem provocative. Please sit comfortably and relax bringing attention to your body and to you breath. Release any tension so you can listen with both your mind and your body. I want to encourage you to open up to whatever feelings and thoughts arise as you watch these clips. After the video I will ask you to sit quietly with your feelings and then I will ask you to draw in response to a question I will ask you.

Script for Moving into the Art Process

It is important that whatever image (I said felt sense or sensibility if they questioned what I meant by image) comes to you that you get it down in whatever way seems right to you. There is a deep intelligence offering this image to you. The brilliance is that it came directly to you, whatever it is! It does not have to look a certain way! We are not concerned with a wrong or right way to express in art what you feel or sense. Please feel free to choose from any of the black, white, or colored papers and chalk or oil pastels. Would you like to make a few marks or scribbles with the materials before we start in order to feel comfortable with them?
Scripts for Discussing the Artwork

Drawing #1 captured images of participant’s stifled desire:

After viewing the film clips I asked the participants to come back to the art area in silence. I immediately said to them, “See if you can locate any desire that might be stifled in you. Whatever this is, it may be something that you feel like you could not tell anyone. For the next 10 minutes take time to draw this.”

Drawing #2 captured participant’s feelings around their image of stifled desire:

When the first drawing was finished, I asked the participant to set it aside and prepare for another drawing. After a moment I said, “I would like you to do another drawing. This time draw your feelings and raw thoughts that are surrounding the picture you just drew. Please take another 10 minutes for this drawing.”

Questions I asked relative to images in Drawing #1 and Drawing #2:

I asked the participant, “Please tell me about the first drawing.”

When the participant was finished telling the story of Drawing #1, I then asked the participant, “Please tell me about the second drawing – what are the feelings and raw thoughts that surround your stifled desire?” I asked questions relative to images in the drawing. I was especially interested in how the participants’ story the feelings and thoughts that surround their image of stifled desire that was made visible in the first drawing.

Some examples of questions I asked were: “You have just told me about this experience of feeling powerless and invisible and so painfully uncomfortable that you just wanted to go to a place where no one would ever find you. Can you remember a time
in your life when you first started feeling like this? Do you recall an event or experience that you could tell me about?” “How does this experience connect or relate with the stifled desire you have just discovered?” “Are there other feelings or events in your life that you are now starting to remember as we talk about this?” “When did you start acting in a way that seems so different from who you really are?” “If any feeling would like to speak now, to have a voice, what would it say?” I continued to repeatedly go back to the participant’s art-image. I trusted that there was an “intelligence” in that image that was attempting to help make meaning for the participant.

Questions I asked regarding the presence shame in drawing #2

If not addressed spontaneously, I directly inquired about participant’s experiences of shame. Some examples of questions I asked were: “When you look at this image what do you feel in your body?” When you mentioned feeling so painfully uncomfortable about being seen by those others in that certain way, what would you do, or even become, to avoid those painful feelings?” “You mentioned accepting the feeling that you will never be able to live up to a level that you feel you should. What do you do instead? How do you spend your time?” “When I asked you to draw your stifled desire I said that it might be something that you feel like you could not tell anyone. Did you have that experience? If so please tell me about those feelings.” I listened for the language of shame in the image’s story and in the participant’s personal story: powerlessness, inadequacy, worthlessness, feeling invisible, and foolishness etc. I also listened for the defenses of shame: addiction, denial, perfectionism, rage, anger, arrogance, exhibitionism, seeking of hedonistic experiences, and withdrawal etc. I listened for their
experience in social groups: fear of abandonment or ostracism, an inability to be spontaneous, an inability to initiate conversations or activity, and a constant vigilance of language and thought, etc.

Drawing #3 was a body drawing that captured participants feeling their feelings related to their image of stifled desire.

I asked participants to use their imaginations to picture a position that their body wants to be in as they feel the feelings of their stifled desire from drawing #2. I said to them, “Take a few moments, use your imagination and get into a posture feeling the feelings you felt in your last drawing.” I then said to them, “Draw an image of your body feeling these feelings.” After the body drawing is finished I said to them, “I would now like you to cut out this drawing of your body from the paper it was drawn upon in any shape that you would like.”

Drawings #1, #2, and #3 were placed on a large piece of white paper hanging on the wall, which contained a line drawing of a circle

I said to the participant, “Please place your body drawing together with your two previous drawings anywhere that feels right on the large paper with the circle on it that is hanging on the wall.” Upon the completion of that task I invited them back to the table and said, “Please take a moment and notice what you are feeling as you look at all of your drawings together on the wall.” I then said, “After sitting silently looking at your drawings for a few minutes is there anything you are noticing about how your body figure relates to your stifled desire and your feelings and thoughts around your desire? Do you have any new feelings or thoughts on how the story of your life has been affected by your stifled desire?”
Participants then sat in silence for a moment contemplating their art images.

I asked, “What is your sense of how you feel affected by this process today?”

**Script for Closure at the End of the Day**

I would like to thank you for your time today, your participation and your courage shown in sharing your stories. How are you feeling right now after this experience? Are you feeling comfortable enough? (If they respond “no,” I will say, “I want to remind you to ask for support from others in your life if you feel overwhelmed.) I will keep and care for your art images until our next meeting, which is scheduled for (date and time). I look forward to seeing you then and I thank you again.
APPENDIX 9

SCRIPTS FOR SECOND MEETING

Script for Introducing Day 2

I would like to thank you for coming back. I’d like to take a few minutes to remind you that your confidentiality agreement is still in place and then let you know what we’ll be doing today. As you’ll remember the purpose of the informed consent confidentiality agreement is to ensure that you are aware that you are consenting to participate in this study, that you have a general sense of the topic and what to expect, that you know that emotionally it is possible that participating in this study could bring things up for you that you may need outside help with, and that you know that you can stop participating in this study at any time for any reason. Do you have any questions or concerns? (If yes, I will attend to them).

I would like to begin again today with an opening ritual to set a sacred tone for our learning. It will begin by lighting a candle and setting an intention for our time together. This will only take a few minutes. After the ritual, I will ask you to reflect on your images on the wall. We will then do a guided meditation and I’ll play some music for you. Then we’ll engage in art processes and talk about your experience.

As before, it may be that some of this is painful for you. If you need to take a moment to be with yourself, it’s okay. Of course, if you need to stop, that will be okay too. At the end of our time together today I’ll check in with you about logistics for
returning art images and also ensure that you have support in place in case you need some support.

**Script for Opening Ritual for the Day**

I invite you to light the candle. Again, I am interested in learning more about desire, what stops us from our deeper desires, and what frees us to move toward our deeper desires. Thank you again for being here so that we may listen together.

**Script for Moving into the Art Process**

We will be doing art again today. I would like to remind you that it is important that whatever image (I will say felt sense or sensibility if they question what I mean by image) comes to you that you get it down in whatever way seems right to you. There is a deep intelligence offering this image to you. The brilliance is that it comes directly to you, whatever it is! It does not have to look a certain way! We are not concerned with a wrong or right way to express in art what you feel or sense.

**Script for Introducing the Meditation**

We will now do a guided meditation. I will ask you to close your eyes when it is comfortable, relax into your chair and listen. When the meditation is finished I will ask you to open your eyes when you are ready and to bring yourself back into the room. I will then ask you something and ask you to do some art.
Scripts for Discussing the Artwork

Sitting with participant’s art that is hanging on the wall

As participants enter the room they will see their art placed on the wall as they left it (i.e., circle on which there is participants’ body drawing, drawing one and drawing two). I will ask them to sit in silence for a few minutes with the art. I will say, “Please sit in silence for a few minutes to spend time with and reflect on your images from last week.”

Reflecting on participant’s art hanging on the wall

“It’s been two weeks since you’ve been here. What’s come up in the last two weeks in your life that feels somehow tied or connected to this experience during our last meeting?”

Drawing #4 was a body drawing that captured participant’s feelings of the essence of the Daimon figure that was revealed to them in their meditation.

After the guided meditation I asked participants to use their imaginations to picture a position that their body wanted to be in after they felt the essence of the figure that revealed itself to them in the meditation. I said to the participants, “Feel into the figure that revealed itself to you in the meditation. Now, use your imagination to picture a position that your body wants to be in as you feel the essence of the loving figure that showed up in your meditation. Draw an image of your body feeling this essence.”
Drawing #5 captured the feelings and images related to the heart of the Daimon figure.)

I then asked the participant to, “Feel into the heart of this figure and draw the heart of this figure on your body drawing.”

Participants then cut the figure out from the paper on which it was drawn. They placed it on the white paper on the wall that contained their drawings from the previous meeting.

I said to them, “Cut out the figure with the recognition of its heart and place this image where it feels it wants to be in relation to all of your other drawings from the last meeting that are up on the wall.”

Drawing #6 captured the interaction between all of the drawings contained on the circle.

I said, “Please sit a few moments and connect with your feelings in response to all of the images now contained on the white paper with the circle. Pay particular attention to the ways in which these images are interacting with each other. Feel deeply into your body and listening, draw what is happening between all of these images. Please draw directly on the paper or images on the wall.”

Reflexive dialogue between all of the images now contained on the wall.

I then asked the participants to partake in a reflexive dialogue between all of the parts found in their artwork contained on the circle. I said, “If these figures and feelings would speak to each her what would they say? Please sit in this chair, listen, and start speaking as the figure that would like to speak. Move to the next chair when another figure or image would like to speak. Continue to move between the two chairs as each figure wants to say something to each other.”
Drawing #7 captured participant’s feelings around their stifled desire now after going through this whole process.

I said to the participant, “On a new sheet of paper draw what you are feeling around your stifled desire now.”

Drawing #8 captured the Daimon’s offering to the participant regarding the next step to take in attending to their life

I said, “I want you to find the feeling of the heart figure again in your body. Draw your felt sense of what this figure wants you to do next in attending to your life.”

Script for Closure at the End of the Day

I so appreciate your participation, the giving of precious time, and your courage. How are you feeling? Are you feeling comfortable enough right now? (If they respond “no,” I will say, “I want to remind you to ask for support from others in your life if you feel overwhelmed.) I want you to know that I will be keeping and photographing your artwork, which I will send back to you upon the completion of the interpreting phase of the dissertation process, if you would like them. At that time I will contact you to determine the best way to return your artwork to you. I will also send you a photograph of your art. Again, I thank you. Your participation has been so appreciated.
APPENDIX 10

PLOT SUMMARIES OF MOVIES

Film Clips: *The Piano, Man of Flowers, Eyes Wide Shut, Angels in America*

In the film clip, *The Piano*, the character Ada has just had her the top of her finger chopped off by her enraged husband. She has decided to leave him. She is shown leaving in a native row boat with her daughter, her lover, and her piano. She instructs the natives to throw the piano overboard. Her lover tries to talk her out of it. Her daughter says no, throw it overboard, that is what she wants. The natives on the boat say, throw it over. It is like a coffin. They finally decide to throw it over. As they throw the piano overboard she puts her foot purposely into the entwined rope that is attached to the piano. As the piano drops into the sea, she is pulled into the sea with it. There, under water, she first submits to the ocean grave. However she discovers her decision to choose life. She then struggles to set herself free from the rope and emerge. She says some profound things about her relationship with will and desire. Her twisted desire was a schizophrenic attachment to the piano … it kept her so fulfilled she was not able to attend to other desires that were speaking to her in her life (i.e., her daughter, husband, community involvement, etc.)

The second film clip is from *Man of Flowers*. It starts with a flashback to a man’s childhood. As a young boy he attempts to innocently touch and smell his aunt’s body. He is pulled away from his aunt by his enraged father who calls him retarded and banishes him from the room with clenched fists. The clip then turns to this man’s current life. A young, innocent, feminine woman playfully undresses for this exquisite older man in his
home that is infused with the perfect beauty of art and flowers. After watching the
innocent girl undress, the man bolts out of his chair and without any interpersonal
exchange with the girl walks briskly to the church across the street. There he plays the
organ pounding out dramatic frustrated notes. The twisted desire apparent in this clip is
repressed sexual desire born of being shamed in an authentic expression of exploration of
the senses as a child. Repressed anger and grief are also a part of this image. The image
of the innocent, playful woman may also evoke shame in women who have focused on
their woundedness but have not dared to see their health and beauty. In other words they
have maintained pseudo-innocence relating to their sexual and playful health and beauty.

The third film clip is from Eyes Wide Shut. It attempts to capture a momentary
break from the symbolic fictions of marriage, husband, and wife that constitute one’s
normative cultural identity. From their bed, Alice the wife, who is stoned, in a moment of
complete symbolic uncertainty, unsettles and upsets her husband Bill. She confesses
desire to him about her erotic memory and fantasy involving a young navel officer last
summer, while they were on a family vacation. He says that he cannot believe women
and especially her, since she is his wife and the mother of his child, could have these
kinds of fantasies. She says, “With just a glance from him I could hardly move.” And
when she made love and future plans with her husband that afternoon the man in the
navel uniform was never out of her mind. And she informed her husband that if that man
wanted her for only one moment she would give up everything—him, their daughter,
their whole future. Through her confession of passion, her longing, craving, and intense
desire she demonstrates a willingness to destroy her world, to sacrifice herself as mother
and wife through a different exotic desire and death drive—that which Lacan refers to as
her feminine Jouissance. Participants may tap into Alice’s experience of the gaze shared between she and the naval officer, feel a sense of primitive or recognition shame, and feel their own fear of how the power of this gaze could change their life. It may also bring up feelings of “wanting it all” but unable to describe what “that all” might be. This may awaken in a participant a seed of some new yearning.

The fourth clip comes from *Angels in America*. A powerful fantastical angel crashes through the roof of the New York apartment of a young man with AIDS. She demands that he dig up a buried chest in his kitchen in order to find tools that will help him discover what he is to do in his life. This clip hints at awakening one to some aspect of their hidden nature. The clip ends with the man and the angel in a fiery embrace making love.
APPENDIX 11

FILM CLIP PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS

A television and VCR were available. They were located in a different part of the same room where the interviews and drawing took place.

There was a videotape of film clips (Appendix 10). I spliced together the clips from four movies. There was virtually no time between the clips. They ran into each other.

The time required for the viewing of these particular film clips was approximately 18 minutes.

The environment for presentation was controlled. Lights were dimmed while watching the film clips. It was quiet. There was easy egress to the area where drawing materials were set up. This allowed participants to move easily in silence to the drawing area after the film finished. This was important so that participants could maintain their personal emotional responses evoked by the images in the films.
APPENDIX 12

GUIDED MEDITATION: MEETING TWO

I said to research participants:

Adjust yourself in your chair, and allow your head to rest easily on your shoulders. Become aware of your breath. Systematically tense and then relax every part of your body starting with your feet.

Then relax your legs, the muscles in your back, your shoulders and your neck.

Allow yourself to relax as much as you are willing. You don’t need to relax more than you are comfortable, just what feels right. Take another breath from deep in your belly. Good.

I paused for approximately a minute. I then said to the participants:

Now you notice that you are on a path. Begin to become aware of the core of who and what you are that knows what you are to become. This path is your path, your unique life path, the path of your true destiny. The path that carries you to fulfill your purpose, the reason you came into this existence. There is a figure moving toward you in the distance. It can guide you, prompt you, lead you to walk this path with its many challenges. This figure is known by many names: Friend, Essence, Angel, Core Identity, Guide, or Daimon. It is moving toward you in the distance. This guide connects us with the dynamic, purposeful, unfolding of what we are. As you approach each other, greet this Being. Pay attention to what is communicated in you through words, thoughts, feelings and sensations. You may experience sudden words, spontaneous knowings, or images.

I paused again for approximately a minute. I then said to the participants:

I’m going to put on a soft piece of music. Allow yourself to just be here and listen with an open heart. When the music ends you may want to thank this Being and express appreciation for the time you spent together. Know that you can return to this place any time.

The co-researcher then turned on the CD player. Participants listened to music. The co-researcher turned off the CD player and then I said:

Now bring yourself, in your own way, back into the room, becoming more aware of your body, your contact with the chair, the sounds in the room …
I determined when the participant felt back in the room and present. I then directed them to the art materials. They were asked to do a drawing in response to a question asked by me. This question was pre-determined as part of the research design. I said to the participants, “Feel into the figure that revealed itself to you in the meditation. Now, use your imagination to picture a position that your body wants to be in as you feel the essence of the loving figure that showed up in your meditation. Draw an image of your body feeling this essence.”
APPENDIX 13

MUSIC FOR THE GUIDED MEDITATION ON: MEETING TWO

Two songs from the CD *Secret Garden: Songs from a Secret Garden* were played during the meditation in the following order:

A. “Pastorale”
B. “Song from a Secret Garden.”

It was an audio CD.

The original Release Date was April 16, 1996.

The label was Philips.

The ASIN number was B00001GBJ.
APPENDIX 14

SUMMARY OF DATA

A summary of each participant’s story is captured in key moments from the data collection, which include relevant parts of the transcript.

**Marianne:** Marianne describes her shameful experience of the intense redness of the cheeks on her face depicted on her body drawing, which captured her stifled desire. She described it as her intellect sort of struggling. She tells 2 stories of how conflicting feelings and thoughts manifest in her life, both of which revolve around her experience of being attracted to a man, which result in her being caught in having a desire. She talks about the struggle between wanting to be seen or discovered and not wanting to be seen.

**Researcher:** And the cheeks that are so red, what’s going on around red cheeks?

**Marianne:** You know, it’s my intellect, intellect sort of struggling and, you know, all that.

**Researcher:** Ah. But it feels like something’s, you’re identifying your intellect struggling with something red, intensely red on both cheeks?

**Marianne:** I feel that, I mean, I feel that, like I feel like that radiation is happening on my, in my head.

**Researcher:** The redness?

**Marianne:** Yeah.

**Researcher:** Ok. Red cheeks, red cheeks with that, you said the feelings that were associated with the drawing.

**Marianne:** Yeah I think so.

**Researcher:** When my cheeks are red that usually means something for me.

**Marianne:** Yeah, conflict, it means some, it means some conflict, internal conflict?

**Researcher:** For me that I’m even a little embarrassed by, or something, there’s something there.

**Researcher:** When my cheeks get red, it’s like I get flushed because I’m, …
Marianne: There’s a conflict.
Marianne: There’s a conflict with what I’m thinking and feeling.
Marianne: Or something got, came to my awareness that might be a truth, that I’m not … that surprised me.
Researcher: You don’t have a sense of what that, when you said truth that comes to you, you don’t have a sense of what that is?
Marianne: That’s what could take me 24 hours to figure out. I can tell you the last time it happened.
Marianne: It was, um, I was with a guy who I thought was available, you know, I thought things were going well, then all of a sudden he told me that he was married and had a family and so immediately it was like, uggh. It also happens with interviews.
Researcher: Interviews in your work life? Is that what you mean?
Marianne: Job interviews, yeah.
Marianne: But, oh, but it happened with a guy that I was interested in actually so that was when I realized that I was attracted to him maybe, on some level I was attracted to the guy, I guess, or something. Or maybe I was afraid to be seen, or something like that, there was something going on there. Discovered, maybe I don’t want to be discovered.
Researcher: And discovered in a particular way. You don’t want to be discovered in a particular way.
Marianne: Yeah
Researcher: So that sounds like there’s conflict there, because you want to, you said in the beginning you wanted to be seen.
Marianne: Right. And I tend to, yeah, I guess I tend to show up that way, I mean, I tend to put myself in those situations.
Researcher: There’s complexity in this image. I mean, in the sense of when you talked about, so here you are, you are with this guy, you think he’s available and suddenly he announces he’s not. You should have known, is that what it was or like …?
Marianne: Oh, no I had to back peddle quick, back-peddle, back-peddle sort of quickly because, I mean I just sort of felt myself re-programming, or, you know, it’s like, as if I had been given the wrong information and suddenly it was like oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, you know, red light, red light.
Researcher: So you’re not supposed to be wrong?
Marianne: Um, I’m trying to think of what he said, he asked me why, he asked me why. He knows that I turned red and said why, you know, because I had asked him about his, I mean I asked him if he had family, but I didn’t think family, I thought family. So it was a surprise, um, so he caught me in a desire, I was having a desire for some, for this
direction and he sort of, you know, put a road-block there. So that’s what, I think that’s what caused my discomfort.

Marianne started to be aware of shame in relation to her Daimon body drawing. She placed this drawing of a loving figure directly over her first disconnected body drawing that lacked embraced, the one she described as the “floaty-floaty guy.” She says, “I guess there’s a lot of shame there, you know, for not making more of the gifts I’ve been given.” When asked what her Daimon Father figure might say to her she responds, “Be more like me. Relax. And, it’s all ok.” In response to that Marianne grabs her throat and makes a choking sound and says, “I can’t, I just can’t. I don’t have the energy and the intelligence, I mean, I’m not tapped into my full intelligence and it’s uncomfortable.” She feels limitations and doesn’t know if it’s lack of motivation, discipline or energy. She feels frustrated. She feels like she’s in an awakening process but is fighting with her lack of desire and motivation. She says, “Yeah, but I think that you really have to want to, to really get there, or to really wake up, I think you have to really want that. And I don’t think I want anything enough maybe.” Even though loving father says just be you it’s ok, she acknowledges that that doesn’t satisfy the fiend in her that wants to be awake right now not knowing if that’s even truly what she wants to do.

When I pointed out that she is starting to feel shame in response to the judging voice she immediately says she used to depress to avoid, which really dims that flame and makes it hard to take action. She starts to understand that fear will stop her, but fear and anger are better than being depressed because at least there is energy there. She then differentiates the two saying that there’s movement when there’s anger but fear stops me, “it’s that deer in the headlights kind of thing.”

When asked what her drawing revealed about the next step her Daimon wants her to take in unfolding her life Marianne says, “Well, that’s really scary work for me in the world with all the stuff that’s going on. And then I’m holding myself better in the world and also grounding myself with the awareness that I’m being held by something beyond my understanding.” The other stuff refers to the death of her father as generous provider and dealing with her mother who is not as generous and who is freaking out as much as Marianne about taking care of herself in the world. Marianne was asked if her answers to these questions were coming from loving father or some other voice that was a part of her. “It’s not just father, its more than that.” She agrees that it a wise and loving voice. She says that the image she drew looks kind of like a cell floating around in a Petri dish and that she would be more comfortable having a place in the universe.

**Sylvia:** Constant thoughts of survival keep Sylvia in a state of pseudoinnocence. Sylvia says, “Life is survival and I’m struggling and I’m reflecting on it.” She feels she has had to struggle to survive since she was born. She says she is removed from life. She looks at life, so she has thoughts about it. Mostly the thoughts are about, “if things get worse.” Sylvia told so many horrendous stories of what has happened to her in her life in the most affectively detached way until she became hostile toward the co-researcher who reflected
back impressions and part of her story to her. She accused the co-researcher of not comprehending the difficulty of her life. Sylvia seems to create scenarios to maintain not being seen or recognized by another. This seems to indicate that the life story that she tells herself about herself is told to be able to maintain her own world-view and lack of desire.

Co-researcher: So, I’ve known people who have had tough paper-routes, and I’ve had a tough paper-route. I haven’t ever met somebody, though, who couldn’t look in the mirror, and get, because when they looked, self-loathing would kick in. I mean, I’m sitting across from you and there isn’t any of that going on, right. I mean when I see you there is no hostility, so I’m wondering why when “you see you” there is an immediate hostile voice that wants to hurt you? I’m trying to figure out what’s so not lovable about you. Does that make sense? …

Sylvia: When you figure that out, you let me know, Ok.

Co-researcher: Well, I don’t think there is, I mean, like all of us have good sides and bad sides but I’m looking at you and it’s like, I don’t have, you know, “I hate you” coming up, right. You look like a nice-enough person, an interesting life, access to imagination, interesting stories …

Sylvia: You consider my life is interesting? (She laughs) Honestly, honestly, I’ve got to be honest with you here. I’m feeling hostile toward you right now.

Co-researcher: Really, ok. Can you stay with the feeling or do you need me to leave the room or do you need to stop.

Sylvia: No, I can stay with the feeling. It’s just that, you know, this is why I hit a glass ceiling everywhere I go because I am so different from everyone and I don’t belong anywhere because of the life I’ve lead. Because so few people understand what it’s like to be in a war zone your whole life and basically my life has been a war zone. I spent six months in Stanford, almost died 3 times, and its basically from negligence because no one gave a shit about me, I was 25, you know. I mean, so, like, I live in this area that no one wants to hear my fucking life, you know, its just another boring bad story, you know, and then there’s, you know, there’s really bad stories out there. What are you going to do, but you know I get hit with privilege all the time, I mean I don’t know why I am the way I am.

Researcher: Hit with privilege did you say?

Sylvia: Yeah, people that just don’t get it, I mean, just don’t get what its’ like, but you know, I don’t know, I don’t know why I feel hostile, I don’t really. I mean I don’t know. I found myself getting mad that you’re second-guessing me.

The Drawing of Sylvia’s next step in her unfolding life after her Daimon body drawing was an image of a timeline. In thinking about her next step she said, “Well at first when you said that I kept thinking, oh, I’ll get to do my art and I’ll get to express myself. And I just kept thinking, I kept seeing a timeline, you know, and that along the way, you know, you can have these open goopy wounds, you know. And then I, at the end, I thought
while I was doing that, I thought it’s not my art, it’s peace. Just find peace, find the sort of the peace inside me … and there was some softness, find some softness and peace.” I asked if part of that timeline was attending to those goopy wounds? Sylvia answered, “It’s just moving on.” I asked her where she experiences herself on the timeline? She answered, “Not there yet. … I’m past the big open wounds. … The first three are really open wounds. I think I’m past the fourth … but I, I don’t see the peace yet, I just don’t see it yet.” When I asked about the blue that’s spreading out at the end of the timeline, where there is also a little peach color, she responds, “That’s clouds. … Like, there’s still clouds, there’s still stuff but I’m more at peace.”

**Ron:** Ron’s image of feelings and thoughts around stifled desire was an hourglass with an arrow pointing “up” through the center. He associated it with breaking through inertia to something else. He acknowledged that even if he wanted to take the passage he doesn’t know where the door is and who would even want to take that door to whatever anyway. He admitted not having enough trust to do that. He admits to feeling no desire for the last couple of years after an experience of the loss of his girlfriend. He also relates loss of desire to hopelessness. In a discussion relating to his stifled image of desire (a flower, a lily to pass through) and the hourglass image, he says,

**Ron:** Well, I mean I don’t know, you normally think of something better as it’s not north it’s more like, you know, ascension, your reaching for something higher obviously nobody wants to descend so …

**Researcher:** But for this passage there is something about moving from the darkness in to the light, or …?

**Ron:** Oh sure it would be, you know, … and it’s kind of funny, too, because it’s gotten, you know, the point where you get old enough and you’re going well, you know, my younger brothers are married and all that stuff and I’m feeling like if I met somebody that was right would I go through with all that? But it would be nice to have a companion, you know, that kind of thing. So some of that stuff does kind of, … you think about it from time to time. It lives there.

**Researcher:** Yes. If you did start traveling into that darkness, to go through, … would there be anything, any feelings stopping you or …

**Ron:** I would say, you know, nothing I could put my finger on but obviously something must exist, so I don’t know what to say to that, because otherwise, you know, like waiting 5 years is kind of insane in a certain sense. I’ve never been really needy of relationships. I can definitely get by without them but I don’t think it’s as rich as it could be, so …

**Researcher:** Yes. What’s that yellow in there?

**Ron:** I was just, lets see, trying to get, because it was, not, there was no way to put enough darkness to make it look like a passage otherwise so basically it’s just, I don’t know, it looks better anyway. It definitely would be boring just all green, so, I don’t know? I didn’t really have a like, why yellow, why yellow!
Ron: Yeah. Just something to lighten things up and to get the center so it could have some, you know, contrast and be darker, um, as a flower, it just looks like pollen right now but …

Researcher: I have a curiosity about the statement you made, you know, it’s been 5 years, you know, you’re kind of wondering, its been 5 years and something!

Ron: The first couple of years were completely blocked, it was hopeless, didn’t feel, um, whooooh, I mean there were a lot of things. One, I mean you, being rejected that thoroughly you didn’t feel like, you know, like well, so, why bother, who’s interested. Two, didn’t have the, I mean, just holding stuff together period was, you know, getting into relationship is a big step, you know, so just holding things together period was enough, you know, I didn’t really, you know. You know, it’s not been 5 years, I actually, you know, I saw somebody, god, it will be 2 years in September already. But, you know, so she was here on vacation, you know we had a great 6 weeks, fantastic 6 weeks.

Researcher: So, I see movement in that second drawing. I see the possibility of it.

Ron: Ok, breaking through inertia. Ok, so you could almost put the focus of those two, like the hourglass is like, you know, breaking through that …

Researcher: And there is something creative, …

Ron: and inertia does mean that, … once it’s in motion it stays in motion too it’s not just stagnant, steady, it doesn’t move, um, but right now it does feel (yeah? inaudible), so you could have seen motion, inertia in that, a constant, you know, motion. Yeah, so to, breaking through inertia to something else, yeah.

Ron: Like I’ll be reading about, this morning it was like this guy James Fallos in the Atlantic Monthly, is like writing backwards from 2016 as the economy is tanked, here’s what’s happened. And here is a new president and he is writing a policy paper for him and going back through the history of how we got to where we are, which is, … I really do feel like a lot of that … our better days are behind us in terms of a country, in terms of a state and in terms of global warming and all that kind of stuff, you just go man, you know. So it’s really hard to feel desire when things look a little gloomy, you know, in a big picture, so yeah. So, on the way down a little bit of thinking about something that came up in therapy, you know you look around, man, look at that color green you know, there is intense stuff, there is beautiful stuff. And the therapist was like yeah; sanity is balancing the carnival with the holocaust. And that’s, you know, I don’t dwell on it, probably not enough, but that would be somehow breaking through the inertia would be like, you know, it may be true, but, you know, it doesn’t have to stop you, somehow. Does that make sense?

Researcher: Yes.

Ron: But I have a like a big picture of like, why bother, in a big sense. So it’s kind of like eeuwghhh, you know, breaking through that …
Ron made it clear that he didn’t like the idea of a guided meditation nor the reflexive dialogue. We were really pushing him. But he did participate. His Daimon body drawing revealed a “walking guy.” Ron’s image, which was hard for him to trust that this was really anything, appeared as the figure on the “Johnnie Walker” scotch bottle. Ron worked on him quite a bit as he was drawing him, layering one stance over the other until he was satisfied. He wanted to get “his spirit to be more jaunty.” Ron said, “I tried to get something that’s more optimistic I guess, you know, more fluid.” Ron noticed that “The Johnny Walker Figure” and his stifled desire body drawing “The Seated Hand Stand Man” were going in opposite directions. Ron felt he just had to place them there. When asked what “The Johnny Walker Figure” was looking at he responded, “A Smirking Heart.” Ron says that during the meditation he is lying there “going ok, harps and strings, god save me, you know, I’m smirking the whole time.” He’s not sure what this smirking humor is about. It’s a duality. He doesn’t know how much is holding him back or how much is leading him forward.

Ron says that the idea of smirking has a certain judgmental aspect to it. There is optimism. It’s not completely positive, not completely negative. When asked if it could dare to be hopeful, he responds that it’s not safe. “If it was completely safe you’d jump in, or you’re unwilling, or you just don’t care.” When asked if the smirk had anything to say to him he said, “I don’t know, just something about fun. There’s a certain lightness to smirking, smirking is light, it’s not a complete smile, there’s still some skepticism involved.” When asked again what the smirk could teach him he said it was more the head of “The Johnnie Walker Figure.” He said, “Ok. Head down, head up, head down, head up, and in a way that’s a smirk. But he’s still walking. And a way to lighten up is not bliss out, just, heads down, heads up, it goes up and it goes down, just keep walking.”

His drawing of the next step to take in his life contained images of footmarks, steps across the page. There is also wind, fluffy clouds, and rain and the footsteps walk off the page. He agreed that metaphorically the weather in the drawing could be thought of as weather this or weather that, it can change every five minutes. Rick distinguishes a difference between trust and faith. “You can’t have faith in the future when you don’t know what it is but you can trust to take the step, that you can weather it or you won’t, I mean you may not, so.”

Peter: Peter’s stifled desire that came through in his drawing was an image of a church with a large “no symbol” over it. He does not like the impact that organized religion has on people. He believes that it inhibits our belief structures, our society, and our actions. It takes away the beauty that can be in the world. Everything is split, right and wrong, heaven and hell. It keeps the world and all the individuals from being what they can be. He says, “Well I think it’s also all the things that you are rewarded if you behave a certain way, you go to heaven, then if you don’t you go to hell, give me a break. You know all that fear crap.” It was revealed on the second day that the church was wedged between he and his parents.

Researcher: One more question if I may? As I was remembering your relationship and understanding with these institutions that have earned your mistrust …
Peter: Right.

Researcher: There’s almost a shame on you, you know, like you never said, “shame on you for doing this but it’s a, it’s so wrong and so many people have been hurt, I mean that’s a lot of what I, that whole evaluation piece of it and I wondered about, how have these institutions done that to you? Or, you know …

Peter: Well I think they caused a, I had a good relationship with my folks but I think there was a, it could have been a lot better if the church wasn’t wedged in between us. And my mother was always wanting to overlook things because she was more fluid, but my father was a very literal bible translator and if I got into Osho, reading books, you know, from some Swami in India or something I found fascinating, he would blow his lid, but, I mean, so there were, you know, he didn’t see me because he was looking at me through the eyes that he had developed through the church.

Researcher: Yes. Right.

Peter: So there was some sadness when he passed from my own perspective because I felt that our relationship, although we totally loved one another, but our relationship could have been at another level.

Researcher: I really like how you said that, I mean, if I heard it right, you didn’t feel seen because he was always looking through that one lens.

Peter: Right.

When I asked what image might be left if the church were not there he replied “the sun.” We create our own reality. When we pop through into the light we come from love. Fear eliminates love. Peter says, “What I feel inhibits us from being all we can be, its fear, its fear of hell, its fear of loosing a loved one through disagreements or something, its fear of being different than somebody else, its fear of not being um … He seems to particularly have a lot of anger in relation to the church and it’s impact on sex. “Oh yeah, shit, the church, look what they have done to sex alone, give me a break, fucked that up. I mean they tried, if you listen to any of their shit …” It’s like John Lennon said “life’s what happens when you are doing other things.”

Shame seemed to be an unconscious experience but his story was full of what stops him: fear of failure; not being what you’re supposed to be; not being literally religious like his father tried to demand of him even on his death bed when his father caught him reading Osho, etc. His Daimon drawing offered a reprieve from shame with his experience of being bathed by “Sun.” Peter says, “Well I really felt that there was a light and the light was soothing me initially and that there were, in an unexplained way, it was just feelings I was getting. And then as the process went on I felt, I tried to, um, I didn’t try to do anything but I felt like I was being accepted unconditionally which felt like a lot of, some of those other things that have been, um, in my way seemed to be, the energy seemed to be saying, ‘it’s ok,’ and just seemed to be total love, total compassion and I felt like that was being kind of just drained out. (Peter refers to drawing of his ‘No’ sign over the Church) So I felt that the, so I didn’t know how to draw a transformation but it seemed like a lot of the things, …”
Peter also got in touch through the music portion of the meditation with how he avoids sadness. He felt the music was drawing his feelings out, sometimes uplifting. Sometimes it felt like a yearning and longing and he went with it. Other times he caught himself saying wait, I don’t want to go there, He says, “I want to stay over with this light because I was starting to feel not maudlin but kind of sentimental or, you know, kind of oh, just sad and … A couple of times I just wanted to not listen, not have that have an impact on me, I felt like I didn’t want it to at certain points, so.” Again this put him in contact with the place within himself. “Because the light and the heart for me is like dancing and love, it’s like high fives and singing and joyousness and bliss and the melancholy side is also part of, you know, there is nothing that isn’t part of that, but I represent more, I lean more toward the other, for me. I didn’t want to be 6 feet under.” Peter seemed to understand that he went to anger first to avoid sadness and that the anger about the church and other things was a distraction for feeling these darker feelings that live “six feet under.” In regard to his experience with his daimon body image I said to him, 

Researcher: Know and trust that this place that you’re in is one you can always come back to. And so you now have a living image in you of these two kinds of medicines of, you know, unconditional love and acceptance, it’s just, it, it drains … What did you say earlier … it drains … ?

Peter: The anger.

Researcher: Yeah. That was the word you used “drained the anger.”

His drawing of stifled desire now was a meandering stream, forests on its banks, and leaves floating in it. Peter described it as how he feels now about repressed desire, a fast moving stream, like a rock that’s just been kind of broken. There are no blockages, total acceptance, it’s healthy, you’re not packing stuff inside you, and all streams lead to the ocean, the ultimate, to the one source. “It’s a key to bring out more of who I am and less of blockages of who I don’t want to be.” He acknowledged being tired of being obsessed with those things and institutions that negatively impact him and he would rather be in the stream. I pointed out to him that it sounds like he can really stand in the certainty of that now. He responded that in order to do that he has to have trust. He feels that he will get that the more that this other way of being becomes part of his life and experience. He won’t become obsessed. He won’t carry something all the time. In regard to trusting what would come through him he remembered writing poetry when he was separated from his wife and how he would re-read it and cry. He said, “It was just like, it was just like, ok, I’m just going to write it, I don’t know what’s going to come out here, but my heart’s just going to do it. That was interesting.”

John: John says his desire stifled in him would be flying the F-18 and firing missiles at bad guys … . “It’s the latest greatest technology in the world and the most exciting. … You do that and everything else will follow … that would make me happy.” When I asked if his desire was to get the bad guys or to just fly the airplane, he responded, “No
just the feeling, the power of the feeling, the adrenaline, that amount of, that would be, to
me that would be the ultimate.” He continues, “And the other is a sword. That would be
fun too, being a gladiator. (Laughter)” John says, “you’re working for the king; you’ve
got all the great equipment and the hot women. You get all those desires you want.”
(Laughter) He continues, “And you actually help people or you could, depending on how
you look at it. But that’s the usual, you know, that’s why you want to live, is to be
exciting there … sit long and die.”

His images of feelings around his stifled desire included a house on top of a pointed
mountain and a castle with a mote around it. I asked him, “What’s perfect about it, being
up that high, in the mountains, in the air,” he responded:

John: You can keep an eye on everything, it’s, you’ve got the wildlife, you know, you
can come and go, it’s just a, nature. It’s pretty. So you can walk out and fire your guns,
fly your planes, go rafting, you can go hang gliding, you can do anything you want right
here or “darn near.”

Researcher: A freedom that no one stops you from.

John: Right. Which is a good feeling too and that’s’ the same feeling you have flying a
plane there’s no better feeling.

Researcher: What’s that feeling again?

John: Well-being. Well it’s a lot of feelings, I mean your relaxed, you’re excited, it’s that,
but sitting on the mountain too, that’s relaxing, that’s well-being, that’s, you know. Oh, I
don’t know, doesn’t everybody want to be safe and secure? Isn’t that just a natural thing?

His body drawing feeling stifled desire was an image of large nude muscle bound man,
broad shoulders and arms standing in a puffed up position looking like he’s ready for
action. He also has a very large penis. He has been cut out of the larger piece of paper in
the shape of a triangle, which he said represented energy. When I asked about his body
drawing Dennis says, “It’s just a … It’s just a … (a lot of silence before the next phrase)
… It’s be a strong, you know, a strong person.

When I asked John in the screener what desire might be stifled in him he answered flying
his airplanes more. I asked him to dig a little to see if he could come up with another one
and he mentioned getting into a relationship. I probed deeper into what stifles his desire
wondering if presently in his life it’s mostly women that get in the way of that. He
responds with stories that include anger and resentment:

John: Yeah and maybe that’s the whole problem of, you know, maybe it’s, but maybe I
make it up, but it changes, you know, do what you need to be doing. It could be friends,
it could be people, it’s not just women, but you can deal with things, deals, people, other
things, you can get rid of them, but if you get into a relationship you’re more committed,
it’s not as easy to deal with that.
Researcher: Stay true to this. (I point to the drawings of stifled desire and feelings around stifled desire)

John: Yeah and then you’re lonely. (Laughter)

Researcher: Yeah, I really get that this is at a cost. I mean it is.

John: Then you’re on that mountain by yourself. (Laughter)

Researcher: So, I get it. But you don’t give up everything.

John: Well no.

Researcher: I mean, it feels like you give up …

John: You do, or you make compromises, whatever you call it, you can do whatever you want but when you take care of this, this, and this and start taking care of everybody fine, and then when you stop then they think well, you know, it’s not right so then people, you know, take advantage and so then that’s where the anger comes in or the jealousy then you get angry after a point, they can push you then, they don’t know when to stop and then you can hit a dog with a stick, pretty soon he’ll bite you.

Co-researcher: Hopefully. I mean a healthy dog would, a dog that’s been beaten too much, won’t.

John: Yeah and so people manipulate you or try this and that, I mean, it’s just human nature, but if you ask me one thing that would keep me from going there, that may be one thing, you know, and so you can be strong and then you get in trouble for that, for being not compassionate or being non-sensitive so you’ve got to make up, like ok, that mattered and pretty soon you resent that so it’s a tough …

Researcher: So resentment, yeah.

John: Be true to yourself and your selfish and that’s not a good trait and there’s all kinds of labeling words people can come up with.

His Daimon drawing included images of very large yellow light with a man napping in the forest beneath the yellow light. John describes her as a good-looking angel. She has no shape. She is just kind of energy who advises him to live a life. He says that she makes him feel good, relaxed, peaceful, and confident. But they also argue. I asked him, “Lately, what’s the angel right about? That was hard to hear?” Well it’s mostly to do with your emotional things, that if you can guide it, you don’t have to deal with it on your own.” When asked what feelings he was asked to pay attention to, he said:

John: “Ah it’s probably the biggest one that’s possible. Less guarded, you know, your compassion. That would probably have to be the one that comes up over the years. You know, compassion, you know you can have it but it’s when you guard it or … that wouldn’t be the feeling, it would be the …”
**Researcher:** Sure it is, I mean, for you to get advice about being less guarded, you know, how do you do that?

**John:** I mean, that works pretty well but sometimes it works against you to be strong and guarded, sometimes you, … follow a path with, you know, no survivors.”

John’s drawing of his stifled desire now included images of the planet/world in the center of the page, stars around the earth with a large sun in the corner with rays, and his plane circling the globe. John described it as “A whole future ahead of me.” Nothing gets in your way and “It’s just pretty relaxing and easy to go on your adventures and you won’t be stifled.” He continues, “So right now I don’t have anything holding me in my castle so I’m free … The sky’s the limit, man … And that’s the most powerful the most relaxing thing is you can, you know.”

His Drawing of what is next for him in his life included a house on a lake, a dock, water ski boat, 2 kids on the dock and a couple of parents standing at the beginning of the dock. The door to the house has a cross shape on it and is shaped with a curve on top. The roof looks very Cathedral-like.

**Researcher:** Well it’s also interesting because a moment ago we talked about not really having a home that, you know, you’re dealing with a lot of stuff and, you know, when you take a second, and your with the angel, and you’re listening to what’s next for you, if you decide to do it, you know, there’s something about a home.

**John:** But you have to have a home to go home to.

**Researcher:** Yes. You know, with a woman and with kids and with fun.

**John:** Yeah.

**Researcher:** You know, it’s fun, like this is, fun is a big part of what this home is, it’s fun and it’s beautiful.

**Co-researcher:** And it also takes a lot of strength to be able create that in the world and you know, it’s a lot of what your life has been about, creating the strength to create that. I want to acknowledge your readiness and that you have taken time to do that. Yeah, you’ve got the whole world.

**John:** That picture that’s right, that should be pretty easy to do. Get everything all cleaned up, all in order.

(We noticed that John was hesitant in regard to sharing this image. He put his sunglasses on. He started to cry and didn’t want us to notice.)

**John:** Your question, I hope I answered it.

**Researcher:** You really answered it.

**John:** So, yeah good to get the angel back … back (inaudible, I think this was the gist of it) (laughter)
**Researcher:** I’m so happy for you that you have that angel. Seriously, a lot of people don’t.

**Co-researcher:** It’s hard to be this vulnerable. It is. And you have to be this vulnerable to get that, it’s required. So, you know, I just, want to acknowledge that you got there, you know.

**John:** Yeah we got the picture.

**Stella:** Stella’s stifled desire is what she describes as “core of sexuality.” It was an image of the blood and the vaginal opening, with the penis coming down and touching right at “the core place.” She desires a partner who is going to spark her and ignite her, a partner who could “spark her core” and make her “feel her aliveness.” There is a lot of energetic affect around talking about orgasmic aliveness, its connection to spirituality, committing her life to that experience, which did not feel congruent. In childhood she started to please others. She acknowledged that she lost her own way in life because she had lived her life so much out of the expectations of her parents and her husband. She experienced fear. She says, “I was brought up to be a little shy afraid child. So afraid to express myself as opposed to what somebody else wanted me to express, you know, afraid to really show myself.”

**Researcher:** You said... you made a distinction around your sexual, spiritual experience with a man as if it hasn’t always been that way—but of the more recent many years it has been that way. (Stella, “20.”) 20 years? May I ask what happened in the time before this, the 20 years?

**Stella:** I was shut down, I was pretty shut down ever since I grew up, I never had an orgasm and I was never really sexually attracted to my husband but I acted like I was. Well I faked orgasms but there was never anything moving in me at that point so I was really kind of in a miss Pleasantville kind of a box so that’s the way I was until 20 years ago.

**Researcher:** May I ask what happened 20 years ago?

**Stella:** Oh yeah, I had an affair with my therapist.

**Researcher:** Say it again please.

**Stella:** I had an affair with my therapist and to this day he and I energetically are just right there, right there. So that opened me up but as that opened up it was like the whole universe opening up, like this is my life expanding, I know where this energy comes from now so it impacted everything in my life, not just the sexuality, everything, because it opened me up energetically to everything, and as it started to go ... and then I committed my life to it, to that experience, to orgasmic aliveness, awareness in where that spiritually takes me, what my energy is attracted to, what I long for and desire for, because I could feel it in my body and trust it even though it was in that kind of a, you know problematic, obviously, situation which we all had to work out over the course of the last 20 years. So
it was very, because I really honored the truth of it and I didn’t know it was true before because I had never had the experience with a man before in my life.

She admitted a satisfaction in the taboo of how she was awakened to her aliveness by her therapist. She says, “It pleased non of them but it pleased me and there was a sense of my own ah, I found my own person in here …” She also relates that “there is also that place in the desire place of liking the secret part, you know, that’s an attraction when people have affairs, when the priest is in there. I have a secret no body knows, there is an attractive part to that too.”

Her descriptions of her core place of aliveness were filled with spiritual language such as cosmic aliveness and energy, sparking her core, big bangs, etc. that did not seem to fit her affect. Attempting to bring her back to more descriptive present life experience I asked her if a new man showed up would she have to leave this therapist behind? At an even deeper level is there something keeping her from what she wants? This brought up fear. Not only the fear of being burned up, self-doubt, lack of self worth in terms of her age of 62, rejection, finding the shear energy to make the effort, and the risks involved. The body drawing feeling the feelings of stifled desire took her deeper into this and a desire to not feel crazy, scattered, and depressed, and reactive. She acknowledged that she needs to find a place in her so she doesn’t have to counter act the energetic crazy places by zoning out watching television or sleep in the afternoon.

Her grey not very defined body drawing of stifled desire is sitting like the Buddha. She says, “It’s where I need and want to be … as I go about my daily life.”

Stella: What I was experiencing as I was doing this is that sitting with um, I’m sitting like the Buddha, with the creative fire around, that core place of calm, allowing, sitting in, a holding it all, it’s kind of where I need and want to be?

Researcher, “where you need and want to be?”

Stella: yeah, inside of myself so there is a calm centered experience as opposed to getting Gaaaaaaaah!!! … crazy with the whole thing (I remember her grasping at her neck with her two hands) I think that would be … I don’t know if you would call that so much … not that I haven’t experienced that but feels like that as I go about my daily life. To allow all of the energetic of what’s there but to be, and allow the energy inside of me, which would be in a place of calm clear centeredness, conscious awareness, that isn’t frazzled and scattered. Where I allow the energy to come out of my voice and out of my crown chakra and where it’s alive but that there is not a crazy, scattered, depressed whatever, I’m just sitting with it alive and present …

Stella: That I like the practice, I like the practice of being like that, to come back to that place, um, the place where I can feel a place of centered peacefulness in the midst of the fire that I feel, in the midst of the energy that I feel, allowing it, allowing it to burn like a good campfire would burn, taking those breaths, not drowning in it, not drowning in the emotions, not getting burned up in the emotions, it’s like this guy (therapist) that started
me off in this process, would say, we can’t be together, we’d just burn each other up, you know, the energy is just too powerful to like live with all the time.

**Researcher:** So, the experience of that energy that you are talking about, how do you experience that everyday in your life, is it always there or is it sometimes uncomfortable, you mentioned emotions, kind of getting caught up in it also …

**Stella:** Well getting caught up in the desire and if only, if only I could have so then I could feel sad or then I would feel hopeless or just kind of hhaaahhhhaa, . . If I’m thinking specifically of being with a person, you know …

On the second day I asked Stella, “So the question is for this relationship that’s a core sexual alive relationship that you’ve had that makes you feel so alive, I’m wondering if you hold it precious, like you do some of these other experiences?” Her response follows:

**Stella:** Well that’s interesting, I do consider it very precious, but it also enlivens me every moment of every day. It’s not like it’s stuck that place, it’s how I recognize my aliveness in general. So in any moment of any time, at any moment, I can always go to my clitoris and I can go, “I know what that feels like.” … It’s one of those things, it’s like, when you asked me about the last couple of weeks there was something that did feel released to me, so that instead of mourning something that isn’t there, there’s a place of recognizing that place and letting it expand … it’s a good question to be with and watch that and see how that holds it … I mean, you know this, but it’s like you get it sort of at a different level of knowing, how persistent that place has been. So if you take it way back to when I was born and conceived and everything, there’s this place of, if only my father had been there, if only I’d had that person in my life that I didn’t have, if only, then life would be better, you know. But you can trace that back a whole life, my whole life, saying, there’s that little place in me that said, oh, if only then, then there’d be this other place released, so, and that could be in the face of everything wonderful around it, but if I hold to that precious little place that as a child that I didn’t have that, like holding it precious, perhaps that …

Her body drawing of Daimon revealed a shift. Here the search for a partner to ignite Stella shifts to a felt presence of her own personal presence. Her image is of a personal angel that wants to ignite within her and promises that she is always there. In the guise of a playful Fish she wants Stella to expand her heart and play with the beautiful and the terrible. She describes this angel as the core of the creative spark and on a macro level [she] would look like the clitoris and the penis touching each other. She now seems to understand that both of these perspectives are related. She also embraced her age and experienced gratitude from the angel, that it was a pleasure, honor, and gift to be alive in this body even though age was definitely changing it.

**Lillian:** The stifled desire of hate came through Lillian. She entered into relationship with this feeling that she had attempted to keep buried. This act of being in relationship with the hate in an authentic affect laden way helped her discover that her cultural taboo around hate (i.e., you can’t just hate, hatred feels like a shameful feeling, it’s a bad emotion, you must have compassion, forgiveness, understanding, hate comes from ignorance and closed-mindedness) was debilitating to her future.
Researcher: So, I would like to know what your experience was, if you could tell me about the first drawing that you did, about the desire that feels stifled in you.

Lillian: It was, well, I think that the feeling was just, just so much hatred and, um, just really pure hatred that, you know, that I think that I’ve never let myself feel before. And I mean there’s anger in there too but mostly just hate, which isn’t a word that I like to use on any given day, but, I just felt so much hatred.

Researcher: Ummmmmm.

Lillian: But also, in the really pale pink part, there’s, um, you know, there’s compassion. And then you can toss in the anger because I think that its hard, um, you can’t just hate, there is always compassion and understanding in there, but there’s just so much hatred in there that I’ve never, you know, that just gets held back. Is that …?

Researcher: So, how does the hate live in you life right now? Do you give it form; is it toward something or …?

Lillian: (crying) No. I think it’s so buried. I think that, you know, it’s just really, I think it lives there in its own little secret place, but it comes out in that picture … I see the film, and I just think God, … I thought, well no, I don’t hate all men, you know, of course I don’t but I do I have, I think I have such hatred for men. I mean I love my husband and everything but there’s still so much in that film that it’s just. I see all these men that I’ve known in my life and that’s what I think of when I watch the film. All the men who have hurt me and beat me and molested me and abused me and not listened or, you know, held me down or raped me, you know. It’s all of that you slide by or you soften or you say well, you know. I soften all of those things that happened to me and say well you know, I didn’t get beat up that bad or was it really rape, or, you know, well he molested me but, you know, it could have been worse. And so I soften all that in my head and then I get that.

Researcher: What is that for you?

Lillian: That is just weight, it’s just the gray, the gray weight that, um, I just have lived with for so long that keeps me from, you know, that holds me down, that weights me down. And keeps me from being more of a person that I allow, I so allow this. It’s what creeps, you know, it’s the gray weight, it’s the fog that creeps in that keeps me from being more, because I’ve always softened those lines.

Lillian: I’ve let this get in the way of so much of my life and I, it’s such a big responsibility, and, you know, I’m so responsible, you know, for all of it, um, … (very tearful)

Researcher: Responsible for all of it?

Lillian: Well what I realize was that I was looking at it and I realized there were so many times that I just was passive, you know, that I didn’t have a place to say no. And I started counting all the things that have happened to me where I just was passive, you know, due
to fear or whatever. But, you know, I have to look at that and I have to think about that, I think. I mean there were times when I was grown and I was passive not just when I was little, you know, and stuff happened that I just, you know, maybe, I don’t know. I just think there’s so much stuff I have to look at and then there’s responsibility of being at this place and not taking care of all this stuff. I’ve allowed it to hold me back and keep me, you know, from doing so much and, you know, that’s my responsibility, that’s my waste … I’m kicking myself for letting all this get in my way. I’m kicking myself for letting it weigh me down …

A strong woman goddess figure with snakes came up first as an image for Lillian. She simultaneously felt hate. But Lillian said that the goddess figure felt inauthentic, “it might look like strength but it wasn’t the way I felt.” Lillian realizes that in her life there has been, “So much holding down and so much shame.” “I’m letting myself down and I haven’t done all those things and I feel really badly about not.

Researcher: And then as I was listening to you, right here, talk about, you know, the shame and the burden of shame and the shame that’s, you know, comes from the incidents and even the shame of feeling the hatred my question is, if it was possible for a second to kind of bracket the shame. We know it’s there and it’s huge and it’s a terrible burden but if we bracketed it and we just looked at the hate, you know, without the burden of shame, what would the hate feel, … If hate wasn’t being judged as shameful what would you hear from hate, or feel, or see, or if that wasn’t there how else would you look at it?”

Lillian: “Well, I think that I thought of that when I first started to draw it. And, at first I thought, does this hatred look, um, like a really strong woman, does it look like strength, this hatred, um, and it might look like strength, but it wasn’t the way I felt. I mean, at the, I felt more that way, because I didn’t, I mean, I felt the hatred so strongly but it just, what I, I didn’t feel strength from it I felt weighted and so much sadness from it but if I just drew, like, if I just drew the hatred the hatred would look kind of like that goddess that Patricia gave me, um, a very, you know, strong upright woman holding two snakes with, you know, and that was the first image that came to my mind but that wasn’t how I felt but that was what hatred, that was what the hatred looked like.”

Researcher: What really holds you down: Perhaps not necessarily men that have held you down. You thought it was the hate that held you down, but it’s the body description that speaks of so much shame.

Lillian: It’s just the sadness from all that’s happened.

Through Lillian’s body drawing of the Daimon, that entices her down a path, she comes to realize that “ … to feel hatred is not the same as being a hateful person and I really think I can separate those two things …”
Co-researcher: For what you said so beautifully today, you know, the function of hate in your life at this point appears to be to take you to this new opening, you know, when you are talking about the difference of being a hateful person and allowing hate to move you, you know, those are different things.

Lillian: Yeah.

Researcher: And um, and it does matter how you are in relationship with those two very different things.

Lillian: Yeah. Yeah. And I think that, I mean, I can see that it’s, you know, if I walk farther down the path I can see that it’s still, you know, its always going to be there, it’s always there, but also, you know, turns pink.

Researcher: Are you talking about the hate as always there?

Lillian: Yeah. The hate is always, you know, well there’s, … I don’t know how we’re going to live till 90 without feeling that hate and I think I have to let that be and have it, let it be ok, because it’s always going to be there about something.

Researcher: Well, and what you’ve discovered is at least as I’ve witnessed it, you know, that there is hate and, um, there is energy in hate that is moving you to a new place, at this point that is also partnered with hope and with a feminine figure, um, and you’re going somewhere, and, um, you know, if there’s always hate to move you somewhere …

Lillian: The only thing is that I don’t want that to be my source, you know …

Researcher: And hate has it’s own, it’s got a telos, and there’s a good reason for it in many situations, it’s a magnificent thing in it’s own right unless it’s doing something like stifling something in you.

Lillian: But seemingly, yeah, but seemingly I don’t think it is, it seems, like it’s transforming now that I’m able to say, this is lifting me up, this is pushing me forward, this is, this is, and maybe keeping me safe.

Lillian describes her thoughts and feelings around her stifled desire of hate drawn after her experience with her Daimon. Hatred changes into the image of a lightening bolt, which she describes as feeling very powerful and positive. She says, “It was just so obviously the first thing that came to my mind but it just feels so much more positive, still very linear, you know, but really straight edges to it, if I could have actually drawn a lightening bolt, but, you know, the whole, … everything behind it feels so totally different, it feels like a magnificent thing instead of, you know, a terrible burden, bad thing. More like whooo hoooo rather than oughhhhh!”

In regard to the next step she will take in her life, Lillian realizes that it is a shame to waste her desire to write. She says, “I know, I know, but what a shame to waste, what I think is the shame, the shame is to waste it. I think that it would be such a shame to waste this. And this is just like, I mean, it’s a thorn in my butt, you know, it’s just like … it always comes. I always come back to this, I always will come back to this and so, I know it’s only a matter of time, but it’s like, you know … Lightening bolt transform. It better
be sooner more than later. Seize the moment, you know, seize, I think it needs to be a more seizing the moment thing than a … I mean I’ve been listening to the “write, write,” for 20 years and, …”
NOTES

Chapter 1


5. Mario Jacoby. *Individuation & Narcissism: The Psychology of Self in Jung & Kohut* (London: Routledge, 1990), 39-40. Jung states, “As a power which transcends consciousness the libido is by nature daemonic: it is both God and devil. … (a) Passion (that) raises a man not only above himself, but also above the bounds of his mortality and earthliness, and by the very act of raising him, it destroys him.”


22. Meridian University, letter to author, April 28, 2006. Definition provided in feedback.


28. Claudio Naranjo, *Character and Neurosis: An Integrative View* (Nevada City, CA: Gateways/IDHHB, INC. Publishers, 1994), xxxvi. On page 36 Naranjo says that he believes that the key to one’s liberation and ultimate fulfillment is “Being,” positing that to give it that name is too limited and limiting.


31. Ibid.

32. Omer, “Between Columbine.” I am saying that Pseudoinnocence is a form of fundamentalism, which Aftab Omer refers to as something much larger than the different sects of religious fundamentalism;
it is “a human susceptibility that is trans-cultural, trans-historical, and a potential of our neurological makeup.”


36. Ibid., 214.

37. Ibid., 7.


41. James Hillman, *Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 71-72. “Misplaced attachment” is an Aftab Omer phrase I borrowed from the *ReVision* article and I added “to beauty.” Meridian University, handout to author, 2005. Definition of Eros from a handout article relative to the trip to Greece with Meridian University, *The Greeks had a Word for It*. Eros—passionate, physical love; yet also spiritual love, attachment to the beautiful, the inspiring spirit of the arts.


43. Shwydkoi, “Russia: Fate and Prophecy”, xxx. “Over the centuries, Russian culture has been formed both in opposition to social and material reality—and as an inalienable, essential part of that reality. Artists, writers, and musicians, among others, have transformed the tragedy of existence into metaphysical beauty, into prophetic revelation, tempted not simply by the magic of the real world but also by a sense of the need to make the miraculous an essential component of everyday life.”


46. Omer, “Between Columbine.” Image is conceptualized as icon. Drawing on the work of Henry Corbin, Omer distinguishes between image as an idol and image as an icon. “Images as icons are doorways … The image offers the promise of opening us to the invisible part of the Mystery. We can either have an iconic or an idolatrous relationship to an image.”
Chapter 2


3. Ibid.


5. Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1959), 29-30. Freud adds, “and when the apostle Paul, in his famous epistle to the Corinthians, praises love above all else, he certainly understands it in the same ‘wider’ sense,” 30, Paul said, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”


7. Ibid.


10. Gay, *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*, 20-21. “It is only when a person is completely in love that the main quota of libido is transferred on to the object and the object to some extent takes the place of the ego.”


12. Ibid., 560.

13. Ibid., 547-554.

14. Ibid., 560. Freud thought, “Loving in itself, in so far as it involves longing and deprivation, lowers self-regard; whereas being loved, having one’s love returned, and possessing the loved object, raises it once more.”


17. Ibid.
18. Ibid. He said … “the effort to reduce, to keep constant or to remove internal tension due to stimuli (the ‘Nirvana Principle’ …) … finds expression in the pleasure principle; and our recognition of this fact is one of our strongest reasons for believing in the existence of death instincts.” P. 25. Marcuse however, aware of the operation of this principle, became interested in an alternate possibility when he noticed that paradoxically “the very achievements of repressive civilization seem to create the preconditions for the gradual abolition of repression.” Marcuse proposes the possibility of a non-repressive civilization, one based on a fundamentally different experience of being. Repression for Marcuse is “used in the non-technical sense to designate both conscious and unconscious, external and internal processes of restraint, constraint, and suppression.” P. 8.


22. Ibid. Represented in language means being both the enunciator of language and the subject of language.


24. Thompson, *The Death of Desire*, 178

25. Ibid., 174.

26. Ibid., 177.

27. Ibid. “Lacan's notion of a primordial ‘lack’ is precisely the ‘lack of a fixed point (the impossibility for desire to recover the lost object) toward which desire and consequently the metonymic movement of discourse is aimed. It is a lack providing for the absent center (the object) and is thus simply a reversal of the fixed point.’ Lacan's view does not seem to dispense with the transcendental referent presupposed in psychoanalysis: for him this referent is the lost object at the origins. *Presence becomes absence.*”


31. Ibid., 314.


33. Thompson, *The Death of Desire*, 180-181. “Thus Hegel conceives language to have but one purpose: to ask each other who we are; the function of language is to evoke and provoke, not to inform or conform. The words passed between us do not refer to who it is I really am but rather to what we make of each other. We have the choice of objectifying each other or exploring what we might reveal beneath what we conceal. Who I am beneath the appearances is necessarily ambiguous; to resist objectification we must allow for uncertainty and relativity in determining who we are in what we are not. Since I am not a thing to
be identified, it is only in the context of my interaction with others that I will discover my desire to be recognized in my specifically human reality. But in order to discover the nature of my desire it is necessary that the other recognize it. Hegel believed that the anxiety of doubt behind this question is so great that men are willing to kill in order to resolve it.”

34. Lacan, *Ecrits*, 293-300. Lacan formulates the unconscious of the subject as the discourse about the Other, which makes man’s desire the Other’s desire.


38. Stuart Schneiderman, *Jacques Lacan: The Death of An Intellectual Hero* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 132-133. Lacan even initiated short analytic sessions because he felt he needed to introduce another concept of time in dealing with the psychic structures of the analysands whose neurosis was intimately involved with procrastination.


40. Ibid., 348.

41. Ibid., 347. The researchers add that this non-material self-transformation is also less subject to moral criticism in contemporary societies. Also, a “Danish informant referred to a maturing process through which desire develops from being oriented toward what are now relatively accessible material objects to possibly less tangible and less obtainable targets of desire. This connoisseurship of increasingly inaccessible desirables is also found among collectors (Belk 1995),” 340.

42. Ibid. The researchers believe that, “Despite prior discussion of the sacred in consumption (Belk et al. 1989), we have scarcely begun to consider these phenomena.”

43. Ibid., 335.

44. Ibid., 341.

45. Ibid., 343. Researchers found that from a micro personal view of consumer desire the processes of desire, which include such experiences as finding the delicate balance between pursuing one’s desires and transgressing internalized limitations or the understanding that the satisfaction of desire is far from guaranteed and the journey often better than the arrival, are prominent in all three sites. However they also point out that from a societal, more macro view of desire, “it is clear that not only is desire expressed and enacted in culturally specific ways but also the mere possibility of experiencing desire is culturally bound. Commonalities among objects desired (e.g., luxury cars, boats, homes) point to the existence of a globalizing consumer culture with common imagery of the material bases of the good consumer life. But as lived experiences, even such commonalities are always culturally contextualized. Underlying the manifest focus on specific objects is the desire for social relations and particular reactions from valued others and for becoming an entirely different person.”

46. Ibid., 336-337. Through projective exercises researchers discovered that, “The things most often envisioned were people, including family, friends, loved ones, (and for some men) nude women. The
feelings these others seemed to provide included being soothed, supported, excited, sexually aroused, and loved. In addition, anticipated feelings of joy, comfort, relaxation, harmony, warmth, tranquility, and nostalgia were reported. Fairy tales from projective exercises also suggested that the object of desire often facilitates the creation and maintenance of social relationships with family and friends.” Researchers also point out that Girard’s mimetic desire recognizes that, “People emulate others either to be like them or to undo or reverse their envy of these others … objects of desire are sought in order to be and feel like one of the others, not for the object per se, the leather jacket, the bike, or rubber boots.”

47. Ibid., 343. Transgression is connected to ambivalent feelings of being out of control or balance or to feelings of pleasure and guilt. On page 346 the researchers offer examples of tensions found among participants, “The paradoxical tensions our study uncovered include fun versus guilt, pleasure versus health, freedom versus enslavement of addiction, vitality versus balance, self-control versus sin, and rationality versus uninhibited animality and childishness.”

48. Ibid., 337. In regard to addiction, researchers say that, “In all three cultures, a frequent metaphor sometimes excusing loss of control or removing guilt is addiction. Devotion, obsessiveness, madness, enslavement, domination, craving, and losing oneself were all phrases used by the informants.” P. 339.

49. Ibid., 341.

50. Ibid., 343.

51. Ibid., 346.

52. Ibid., 348. They offer some broader issues for future consumer researcher, alternatives and questions to think about in order to flesh out more understanding: “What is the relationship between work achievements and our consumption achievements, beyond the income that ties the two? Does religion as a source of hope and meaning present itself as an alternative or an extension of consumer society? How does desire negotiate the relation between having and being? And if, as Campbell (1990) argues, an internal focus on character as a source of identity is a thing of the past, can we now look only externally for meaning and hope?”


56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., 935.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid. Bataille’s sacred is described by O’Shea: “It is ephemeral, only occasionally glimpsed through the rending of desire, yet is more than us and beyond meaning and words (Bataille, 1967, 1976). It is transcendental, beyond any human concept of good and evil, ideal and pure societies. These are human conceptions; they are too limited and cannot adequately describe the sacred. We are both faced with a
feeling of loss of the sacred whilst paradoxically desiring it and yet fearing the implication that the sacred as immanent requires—the return to the violence of the Natural world. In effect the sacred becomes something separate to us and which we can never hope to obtain because it lies beyond our profane world bounded by law. Separation can only ever be temporary; we remain destined to die. The sacred also remains immanent as an inner experience that we can recoup at moments when we transgress the rules of our profane world. Such moments can occur in mass events such as the Mardi Gras, feast days, war, orgies, public executions and torture and more private ones, marriage, sex, love, joy, hope, laughter (Bataille, 1973). In all of these we can become caught up in desire so strong that we transgress the rules and taboos of our world because we are able to face up to and accept the realization of death. What moves us is a desire that rends our being, ruptures us momentarily, fleetingly and teasingly, to reveal the sacred and then is gone, leaving us incomplete but needing to communicate this rapturous experience (Bataille, 1954).

60. Ibid. O’Shea writes, “We have come to fear death as the total annihilation of our being only because we have become separated from the Natural world. Death is thus the limit experience of our profane world. Any transgression of the profane world therefore means that we must face up to and overcome our fear of death … We are both faced with a feeling of loss of the sacred whilst paradoxically desiring it and yet fearing the implication that the sacred as immanent requires—the return to the violence of the Natural world.”

61. Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 135-139.

62. C. G. Jung, Psychological Types, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 455-456. Jung clarified that by libido he meant psychic energy. He also clarified that conceptually the term energy related to its psychological value—psychic energy is the intensity of a psychic process. He said, “This does not imply an assignment of value, whether moral, aesthetic, or intellectual; the psychological value is already implicit in its determining power, which expresses itself in definite psychic effects.”

63. Jacoby, Individuation & Narcissism, 39-40. Jung states, “As a power which transcends consciousness the libido is by nature daemonic: it is both God and devil … (a) Passion (that) raises a man not only above himself, but also above the bounds of his mortality and earthliness, and by the very act of raising him, it destroys him.”

64. C. G. Jung, The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 183. Regarding the dual nature of supraordinate personality as archetypal figures such as shadow, wise old man, the mother and her counterpart the maiden (Demeter and Persephone) Jung informs, “It is an essential characteristic of psychic figures that they are dupplex or at least capable of duplication; at all events they are bipolar and oscillate between their positive and negative meanings. Thus the ‘supraordinate’ personality can appear in a despicable and distorted form, like for instance Mephistopheles, who is really more positive as a personality than the vapid and unthinking careerist Faust.”

65. C.G. Jung, The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga, ed. Sonu Shamdasani (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3-12. Jung used the term individuation to describe the innate urge in life for man to be himself, an individual complete. The process of individuation calls for the development of a personality that is separate and distinct from other beings. The libido is the psychological energy in its natural instinctual form that first appears out of the unconscious and pulls one toward this development of a personality through discrimination. One’s individuality has an a priori unconscious existence, a peculiar and unique grouping and combination of psychic elements, which can exist consciously only as far as one’s individual nature is present and consciously distinct from other individuals and the collective psychology. One’s true individuality has been present from the beginning of one’s existence, but one is not always conscious of it and, in fact, it is often seen more clearly by others. For Jung this all-embracing totality of
one’s true individuality is inclusive of the idea that God wants to become man and came through his interest and understanding of a myriad of disciplines such as myth, art, cultural history, Gnosticism, and The Book of Job. In addition, Jung looked at the divine urge of Kundalini yoga as a model for the developmental phases of higher consciousness and whose symbols he interpreted in terms of the individuation process.


68. Jung, Psychological Types, 89. Jung writes, “Whenever a damming up of libido occurs, the opposites, previously united in the steady flow of life, fall apart and henceforth confront one another like antagonists eager for battle. They then exhaust themselves in a prolonged conflict the duration and upshot of which cannot be foreseen, and from the energy which is lost to them is built that third thing which is the beginning of the new way … the ‘transcendental way’… must not be understood as a piece of critical ratiocination based on knowledge, but symbolically as the way a man always follows when he encounters an obstacle that cannot be overcome by reason, or when he is confronted with an insoluble task. But in order to find and follow this way, he must first have lingered a long time with the opposites into which his former way forked. The obstacle dams up the river of his life.”

69. Jung, Symbols of Transformation, 298-299.

70. Ibid., 170.

71. Ibid., 298-299.

72. Ibid., 114-115.

73. Ibid., 142-170.


76. Jung, Psychological Types, 114-115.


78. Ibid., 84.

79. Ibid., 79-88.

80. Ibid., 85.

81. Ibid., 64-65.


83. Ibid., 326. Jung writes, “Psychical reality is, that people believe in the idea of God or that they disbelieve in it. God is therefore a psychical fact. Neither stones nor plants nor arguments nor theologians
prove God’s existence; only human consciousness reveals God as a fact, because it is a fact that there is an idea of a divine being in the human mind.”


85. Ibid., 84-90.

86. Jacoby, *Individuation & Narcissism*, 89. “We should stress that when Jung equates the image of the self with the God-image in the human soul (and not God as such!), he insists on distinguishing between the ego and the self. In the best case, the ego experiences the self and relates to it as the ‘greater in us’. But it should never identify with it, i.e., think itself godlike, if psychic health is to be maintained.”


88. Staten, *Eros in Mourning*, 171


91. Brown, *Life Against Death*, xiii. “The Nirvana principle is not an instinct but, if anything, an anti-instinct. Instinctual demands, rooted in the organism’s need to preserve itself and translated in humans, into the register of erotic desire (owing to the close connection between love and nurture), disturb the state of equilibrium the Nirvana principle seeks to restore. The Nirvana principle, moreover, does not seek death: it remains blissfully oblivious of death. It is based on the original illusion of immortality, which it tries to preserve against contrary evidence. Thantos has to be understood not as the desire for death but as the illusion of everlasting life, an existence outside time, an existence, moreover, that denies the extinction between self and not-self.”

92. Ibid., x. “It is the ‘death instinct’ that denies the reality of separation and seeks a state of being undisturbed even by desire. Eros, on the other hand, thrives on obstacles to complete gratification, as Freud (and many others down through the ages) has reminded us. Eros seeks union with an object, but only after acknowledging separation and the otherness of the other. Thantos denies separation all together. Instead of attempting to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of ‘a loving union with the world,’ it denies the reality of death, in short—and this denial, as Brown himself maintains, is the source of ‘human morbidity’.” p. xii. The incapacity to accept death shows how morbid human sociability is; “the attempt to achieve a vicarious immortality through the creation of culture leads to a ‘neurotic obsession with the past and future,’ whereas a ‘healthy human being,’ according to Brown, ‘would not live in time’. ” P. xi.

93. Ibid., 105.

94. Ibid., xii.

95. Bowlby, *Loss*, 38-43. The formation of affectional bonds (attachments) formed between mother and child or adult and adult can be described in the following way; they fall in love, they maintain the bond by loving the other, and upon losing that particular someone they grieve over them. The threat of loss arouses anxiety, actual loss produces sorrow, and both can most likely arouse anger. One wants to preserve and restore the bond but as the danger of loss becomes more intense a phase of protest begins that proportionately activates attachment behaviors including clinging, crying and even angry coercion. If that effort is not successful the attempt at restoration will wane but not cease, in fact it is renewed over
increasingly long intervals eliciting fresh pangs of grief and an urge to search. One’s attachment behavior remains constantly primed, activated anew, leaving one in a condition of chronic stress experienced as chronic distress and at intervals this stress and distress is most likely again to become acute. P. 38-43.


100. Ibid., 4 and 160.

101. Ibid., 4.

102. Ibid., xxxi. Mikhail Bakhtin further illuminates the dialectical conception of the intersubjective conditions of autonomy. “Language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes ‘one’s own’ only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one’s own.”

103. Ibid., 107.

104. Patricia Berry, ed. *Fathers and Mothers* (Dallas, TX: Spring Publications, 1991), 121.


106. Ibid. Omer writes, “Desire fuels power; power is the capacity to direct desire into action. Repression and oppression are disempowering, while remembrance and liberation are empowering. Power is the ability to carry out appropriate intentions in an appropriate way. When viewed in this way power is beautiful, imaginative, usually gentle and rarely forceful. It is easy to confuse power with other ways of being and doing that are not powerful.”

107. Ibid., 27.

108. Ibid., 17.

109. Ibid.


111. Ibid. I believe that his conceptualization relates to Lacan’s unattainable object of desire and to what Meridian University refers to as one’s core identity. Core identity is defined by Aftab Omer as, “the
unique endowment of particularities that unfold, mature, and guide transformations of identity through the life span.”

112. Ibid.


114. Ibid., 171.

115. Jung, *Archetypes of Collective Unconscious*, 82-83. This experience is parallel to the way in which people often describe a feeling of being enslaved by the terrifying engulfing mother, which C. G. Jung refers to as the negative side of the mother archetype. On the other side of the loving mother is the terrible mother which Jung says “may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces and poisons, that is terrifying like fate. Jung writes, “I attribute to the personal mother only a limited aetiological significance. That is to say, all those influences, which the literature describes as being exerted on the children, do not come from the mother herself, but rather from the archetype projected upon her, which gives her a mythological background and invests her with authority and numinosity. The aetiological and traumatic effects produced by the mother must be divided into two groups: (1) those corresponding to traits of character or attributes actually present to the mother, and (2) those referring to traits which the mother only seems to possess, the reality being composed of more or less fantastic (i.e., archetypal) projections on the part of the child … The qualities of the positive side of the mother archetype on the other hand are "maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the wisdom and spiritual exaltation that transcend reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. The place of magic transformation and rebirth, together with the underworld and its inhabitants, are presided over by the mother … An archetype is in no sense just an annoying prejudice; it becomes so only when it is in the wrong place. In themselves, archetypal images are among the highest values of the human psyche; they have peopled the heavens of all races from time immemorial. To discard them as valueless would be a distinct loss. Our task is not, therefore, to deny the archetype, but to dissolve the projections, in order to restore their contents to the individual who has voluntarily lost them by projecting them outside himself.”


117. Ibid., xii. Staten says, “This is not only for the obvious reason, that the loss of the beloved is a loss of self, but because the very object that is desired and whose loss is dreaded may become itself dreadful if it assumes the aspect of unmediated presence, which may be fled like death itself.” Staten links this idea of unmediated presence to Lacan’s idea of true desire, which Lacan conceptualizes as the unspeakable particularity of the subject represented by emptiness.

118. Ibid., 181.

119. Ibid., 181 and 185.

120. Ibid., 171-172. Lacan informs that by authentically following this road of desire one finds: “the supreme detour through which the immediate particularity (particularité immediate) of desire, reconquering its ineffable form, rediscovers in negation a final triumph.” This negation Lacan affirms, is “that desperate affirmation of life that is the purest form in which we recognize the death instinct.”

121. Ibid., 185.
Butler, Subjects of Desire, 47. Butler says, “Self-consciousness is faced by another self-consciousness; it has come out of its self. This has a two-fold significance: first, it has lost itself, for it finds itself as an other being; secondly, in doing so it has superseded the other, for it does not see the other as an essential being, but in the other sees its own self.”

123. Ibid., 10.

124. Ibid., 46-50.

125. Staten, Eros in Mourning, 171.

126. Butler, Subjects of Desire, 46-50. I also point out through Jean Clair that Picasso dealt with the struggle around the feeling of being consumed by the Other through his art. According to Jean Clair, Picasso’s intention as he worked on a piece of sculpture capturing the essence of a young female model acting as his muse, seemed to be to attempt to regain his perceived sense of lost autonomy. The piece blended the image of his flesh with the head of this young woman preserving the creative élan vital, the driving force of Eros, and the pleasure it generates. This creation helped him to escape the dependency that inevitably exists when a single object in the world, if one simply looks at it or touches it, can create a dramatic transformation of oneself. The driving force of Eros had to be maintained but it had to become more human and livable—in other words Picasso had to regain his personal autonomy. He wanted a desire that did not shake him up or make him dependent on it. What he wanted was love but not the need that turns everything upside down. Jean Clair (Ed.), Picasso Erotique (London: Prestel, 2001), 100-102.

127. Staten, Eros in Mourning, 171

128. Newberg, Daquili, & Rause, Why God Won’t Go, 2. The researchers found a slowing of activity in the orientation area of the brain during these subjects’ peak moments of meditations. The purpose of the posterior superior parietal lobe, dubbed the orientation area of the brain by the researchers, is to orient the individual in physical space. It generates very clearly cognition of the physical limits of the self by judging angles and distances to help one negotiate the dangerous physical landscape around one. It sharply distinguishes the physical self from everything else, it sorts out the you from the infinite not-you that makes up the rest of the universe. If the incoming flow of sensory information somehow becomes blocked, as it did during the peak of meditation, the brain activity in that region would drop. The orientation area would not be able to find any limits to the self, the brain would have no choice but to perceive that the self is endless and interwoven with all that the mind senses. The brain was showing a capacity to make spiritual experience real. Mystical experience became biologically observable leading these researchers to hypothesize that the very root of spiritual experience is intimately interwoven with human biology, which in some way compels the religious impulse. P. 2-9. The awareness of the usual subjective sense of self is freed from the sense of the spatial world resulting in a state of pure awareness stripped of ego. All of which one knows themselves by, their emotions, thoughts, memories, and unformed intuitions become undone dissolving into the underlying pure awareness, one’s deepest, truest universal self.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid., 7.

131. R. May, Power and Innocence, 50.

132. Ibid., 49.
133. Ibid., 50.

134. Ibid., 255.

135. Rafael Sanchez-Ferlosio, “When Religion Rules the Whitehouse” In God & Gun. (New York: The International Herald Tribune, October 7, 2008), 4. This extract from Rafael Sanchez Ferlosio’s new book God & Gun analyzes the fusion of faith and US patriotism, El Pais, El Peridico Global En Espanol: English Edition with The International Herald Tribune, October 7, 2008. Colombani points out that in relation to the United States, “At the end of the day the absolute conviction of being a ‘fundamentally good’ country, as President Bush told Fox News last year, logically entails demonizing the enemy. Once dehumanized, he is bad, and anything against him is permissible.” The author believes that in America, religiosity, almost fused with patriotism, creates a peculiar power that is dangerous because of this felt alliance with God. It creates a tainted morality.

136. R. May, Power and Innocence, 153.

137. Ibid., 100.

138. Ibid., 243. Harold Bloom, “Out of Panic, Self Reliance,” The New York Times, Oct. 12, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/opinion/12bloom.html?ref=op (accessed October 2008). Another way to look at power is through the thoughts of Harold Bloom who calls on Ralph Waldo Emerson’s mature religious stance that posit that “self-reliance” is linked to power as agent. The soul must be present in order for internal self-power to exist. Bloom believes that power is present with “The recognition of the God within us, rather than the worship of the Christian godhead (a deity that some Americans cannot always distinguish from themselves).” Emerson in his essay, Self-Reliance, of 1839-40 says, “Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim … Why then do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present there will be power not confident but agent. To talk of self-reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies because it works and it is. Who has more obedience than I, masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits. We fancy it rhetoric when we speak of eminent value. We do not yet see that virtue is height, and that a man or a company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature must overpower and ride all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.”

139. Ibid., 40.

140. Ibid., 42-43.

141. Ibid., 255.

142. Naranjo, Character and Neurosis, xxxvi. On page 36 Naranjo says that he believes that the key to one’s liberation and ultimate fulfillment is “Being,” positing that to give it that name is too limited and limiting.

143. Ibid., 246.

144. Ibid., 255. Naranjo posits that deadening of feelings “may be either apparent (in an excessively phlegmatic disposition or in lack of communication about self) or hidden (under a genial or jovial disposition).” He also posits that at the cognitive level the deafening to one’s inner voices is “a loss
on instinct well hidden by the apparent animalization (just as a pseudo-spontaneity of sexual and social freedom coexists with an inner deadening).”

145. Ibid., 36.

146. Omer, “Between Columbine.”

147. Ibid.

148. I also want to point out liberals also present psychologically in a certain way regarding morals and values that would be interesting to explore in relation to pseudo-innocence. Haidt found that liberals put a lopsided moral weight on harm and fairness while playing down group loyalty, authority, and purity. In regard to moral spheres that divide the cultures of conservatives and liberals in the United States Steven Pinker, a Harvard psychology professor, in a New York Times Magazine article titled “The Moral Instinct,” points out that Psychologist Jonathan Haidt counts five varieties or spheres of moral experience that are the primary colors of our moral sense and seem to have deep evolutionary roots: harm, fairness, community (group loyalty), authority, and purity. They tend to be ranked in importance in people’s minds by cultural variables, which make them universal and variable at the same time. Pinker says, “The ranking of moral spheres also divides the cultures of liberals and conservatives in the United States. Many bones of contention, like homosexuality, atheism and one-parent families from the right, or racial imbalances, sweatshops and executive pay from the left reflect different weightings of the spheres. In a large web survey, Haidt found that liberals put a lopsided moral weight on harm and fairness while playing down group loyalty, authority, and purity. Conservatives instead place a moderately high weight on all five. It’s not surprising that each side thinks it is driven by lofty ethical values and that the other side is base and unprincipled.” Steven Pinker, “The Moral Instinct,” New York Times Magazine, January 13, 2008.

149. Olivia Judson, Weighing the Vote, The New York Times, Oct. 21, 2008, http://judson.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/10/21/weighing-the-vote/?p (accessed October 2008). As a side note to this conversation regarding powerlessness and impulse toward aggression I add findings reported by Judson. She says, “according to a report published last month in the journal Science, strong political views are correlated with distinct physiological responses to startling noises and threatening images. Specifically, the study found that people who support warrantless searches, wiretapping, military spending and so on were also likely to startle at sudden noises and threatening images. Those who support foreign aid, immigration, gun control and the like tended to have much milder responses to the stimuli.” (The study only included people who described themselves as having strong political opinions; the physiology of apathy has not been studied.)


151. Jost et al., “Political Conservatism,”: 339-375. For their analysis, the researchers integrated theories of personality, (authoritarianism, dogmatism-intolerance of ambiguity), epistemic and existential needs (for closure, regulatory focus, terror management), and ideological rationalization (social dominance, system justification).


153. Thompson, The Death of Desire, 81-82.

154. Nathanson, Shame and Pride, 415-421. A Dictionary of Psychology 2001 Oxford University Press defines dissociation as “Partial or total disconnection between memories of the past, awareness of
identity and of immediate sensations, and control of bodily movements, often resulting from traumatic experience, intolerable problems, or disturbed relationships.”


157. Ibid., 223.

158. Ibid., 335. May writes, “For some it may be a fresh idea to see fear as desire. But the two are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. In desire, you seek after something you want. In fear, you seek to get away from something you do not want”

159. Ibid., 223.


161. Ibid., 77-82.

162. Ibid., 77.

163. Ibid., 68.

164. Ibid., 77-82.

165. Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 417. 59. Drawing on Darwin’s discovery of innate emotions, Silvan Tomkins’ affect theory recognizes nine affects, those genetically determined, pre-wired mechanisms forming the strictly biological portion of emotion responsible for our range of normal emotional responses. The nine basic affects which shape our sense of self and operate on a continuum are; the positive affects of *interest* (excitement), and *enjoyment* (joy), next the neutral affect *surprise* (*startle*), and finally the negative affects of *fear* (*terror*, *distress*, *anguish*), *anger* (*rage*), *dismell*, *disgust*, and *shame* (*humiliation*).

166. Ibid.

167. Ibid., 244.


169. Louis H. Stewart, *Changemakers: A Jungian perspective on sibling position and the family atmosphere* (London: Routledge, 1992), 94-95. For example, Stewart’s conceptualization of the affect of grief brought on by the *loss of a loved one* moves one toward the cultural attitude of the *aesthetic*. This *void of sadness* experienced by the *loss of a loved one* is one of Stewart’s affects of existential crisis that relates to the primal self and manifests as an experience of the image of pre-creation. He believes that the realized self attempts to embody the highest aspirations of the human spirit. This affect of grief evokes a compensatory image that expresses one of those highest aspirations—the *beautiful*, which comes out of *loss of a loved one* (*grief*). The *beautiful* moves one toward the expressive cultural attitude of the *aesthetic*.

The *aesthetic* recognized by Joseph L. Henderson, is revived in a culture when social attitudes fail or organized religion fails to meet the spiritual needs of a growing number of people. *Cultural Attitudes in Psychological Perspectives*, Toronto: Inner City Books, 1984.
170. Ibid., 95.


172. Ibid.

173. Ibid.

174. Hillman, *Emotion*, 264. Relating to anxiety and negative and positive descriptions of energy, Hillman hypothesizes that, “Emotion is the way energy appears to consciousness, but in and for itself it is said to be ungraspable. However, we can hypothesize on this view that those two basic descriptions of energy—negative and positive—correspond to the two fundamental emotions: anxiety and love. Anxiety is the negative experience from within of prime energy, without content, without quality, without personal form. Love, also said to be the fundamental emotion, is the experience of the same energy, without form, without qualification or personal content of any kind, but now in the positive aspect.

175. Ibid., ix-xv. He finds that emotion cannot be differentiated from affect or passion or easily defined, as it is too complex of a concept and cannot be interpreted down into a specified rigid framework. Hillman describes his model: “Each emotion has: its own pattern of behavior and quality of experience, which is always a total attitude of the whole psyche (causa fomalis); its own distribution and intensity of energy in the field of human body situation (causa materialis); its own symbolic stimulus, which is partly conscious and partly not presented to consciousness (causa efficientis); its own achieved transformation which has some survival value and is some improvement compared with non-emotional states (causa finalis).”

176. Ibid. Hillman hypothesizes that, “because emotion is the psychological aspect of general energy, emotion is ‘going on’ all the time everywhere.” P. 264. The symbol is conceptualized as emotion itself in the aspect of an exciting image, which mobilizes quantities of energy. Outer situations arouse emotions in a person only when they are apprehended symbolically. Hillman states that, “The symbol is not something ‘outside’ which arouses emotion ‘inside’. Outside in the world emotions are apprehended as symbolic qualities; inside in the person, symbols are lived out in emotions.” P. 253. So emotion may be thought of as a two-way bridge, which unites subject and object. His conceptualization recognizes that emotion is the body, concrete and visible, because the human body situation is formed by the concrete organization of the chemical, neural, and emotional. Hillman believes, this is a reciprocal arrangement, “As things affect the psyche through emotion, the psyche affects things through emotion.” P. 264. “For example we might interpret the psychosomatic category of ‘accident proneness,’ in which physical objects are staged or ‘arranged’ in accordance with the emotion of the victim, turning events into symbols.” P. 264

177. Ibid., 289. Referring to the Phaedrus Myth of the black and white horse, Hillman states, “We are reined to the horse, it to us. This is emotional existence, driving and being driven, the true image of homo patiens.” Healing one’s emotional malaise is to be found in the union of mind with flesh, of wisdom with passion. Development starts when one stops the pathological denial of what the reins are in relation to one’s self as they are the ties, the attachments, the very bonds and binds of fate. One must go through the personal work, which requires a non-rational approach. He believes that “wilder emotion can be tamed by conscious emotion … only through emotion can emotion be cured.”

178. Nathanson, *Shame and Pride*, 19-23. Nathanson also asserts that both shame and guilt are symptoms of depression. Classical depression involved the thinking, feeling, and chemistry of guilt, whereas atypical depression involves shame. The experience of shame leads one to complain not so much
about depression but that there is something wrong that makes them shy away from or fear contact with others. It also drives them to seek hedonistic experiences, which offers them transient relief. At one end of a continuum there can exist a precarious sense of self while at the other optimum end is the sense of pride which stems from the pleasure achieved in competence that comes from meeting one’s internal and external standards.


181. Ibid., 293.

182. Tompkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*, 185. This quote came from Jacoby, *Shame and the Origins of Self-esteem*. It originated in Tompkins, *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*. The other affects are divided into the positive affects, which expand one’s experience and the negative affects, which diminish one’s experience. The positive affects are: interest—excitement, enjoyment—joy, and surprise—startle. The negative affects are: distress—anguish, fear—terror, anger—rage, dismell, and disgust.


184. Ibid., 19-23.

185. Ibid., 250.

186. Ibid., 145. Helen Block Lewis recognized that a “wince” or “jolt” to the self can bring about what she calls, “bypassed shame.” The “wince” or “jolt” is the characteristic cognitive shock associated with the physiological phase of shame. The triggering incident evaded some brain center in the path toward recognition. As Nathanson points out: “to her it was a form of shame in which we do not acknowledge the emotion because awareness would lead to bad feelings about the self. Nevertheless, she points out that ‘bypassed shame’ is usually accompanied by the thought that another person holds us in disrepute.” P. 306.

197. Ibid., 73-147. The useful armoring for the wounded self due to internalized shame can consist of any of the following defenses. Rage insulates by keeping the other away and can also transfer shame to the other. Contempt for others combines anger and dismell to completely reject the other in order to elevate and distance the self from whatever arouses the contempt. Judgmental, fault-finding, or condescending attitudes are utilized to insulate against shame. Striving for power over others provides one with the security of becoming less vulnerable to having shame activated. Striving for perfection, constantly comparing oneself with the other in their quest for personal perfection, and defending against the shame of defectiveness are other defenses. The transfer of blame arises when one learns to counter the blame received from others. It is retaliation-based. And finally, internal withdrawal allows one to live deep inside the self as an escape from the agony of exposure or loss of the possibility of reunion. These rigid but adaptive defending strategies originate in failures within human relationships, in which the interpersonal bridge has been severed and trust blocked. P. 79-97.

198. Ibid., 43-47


201. Ibid., viii. Anxiety appears when the ego’s autonomy and need for control is threatened. Anxiety also appears when one is vulnerable to any number of risks and unknowns and anticipates a potential shame producing experience. P. 4-5

202. Ibid., 6. Jacoby adds that, “Such a shy disposition often conceals a tendency to react with feelings of shame to occasions that could be in any way embarrassing. Whenever possible, such people avoid situations that are at all likely to cause shame. They feel it is better to keep silent than to risk making an inopportune comment, which would draw shameful attention to themselves ... Psychological analysis reveals that beneath such anxieties and inhibitions there often lies a great need to be seen, loved, even admired. These need may be all the more acute for having met with frustration, rejection, even ridicule when one was a child.”

203. Ibid., 68-69.

204. Ibid., 72.

205. Ibid., 70-71. Jacoby also discusses humiliation and the desire to not feel degraded to the growing forms of religious fundamentalism, which promise the security of “what one can count on.” The promise of salvation means that the individual doesn’t have to feel degraded. However one abdicates his autonomy, critical thinking, and personal responsibility in the name of the higher ideal. These organizations seductively prey upon the primitive hunger for meaning that rises out of the unconscious. The confrontation of the ego with the unconscious demands consciousness and alertness. One must have the power and determination to recognize and deal flexibly with the fantasies and impulses of the unconscious. Jacoby does point out that unlike fundamentalism, the traditional religions have in the past satisfied the strong human drive to discover the wisdom of the unconscious, to find fulfillment in life by surrendering to something greater and transpersonal. P. 70-71.

206. Ibid., 17.
207. Ibid., 19. Jacoby adds that, “Jung called this greater something the ‘Self’ and saw it as the imperceptible center of the entire personality, conscious and unconscious. The Self cannot be distinguished from the various god images of the psyche.”


209. Ibid.

210. Nathan Schwartz-Salant, *Narcissism and Character Transformation: The Psychology of Narcissistic Character Disorders* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1982), 133. With even more loss there can be a predisposition to the dissociative states of psychosis and borderline disorders

211. Ibid., 150.

212. Ibid., 134.

213. Ibid., 147. In relation to this myth, Schwartz-Salant refers to Melanie Klein’s concept of the depressive position, which is the stage in infant development in which this split between the psychic and the somatic unconscious can begin to develop and maintain itself. He writes: “From this vantage point, the psychic and somatic unconscious suffer a loss of each other. The emotions of Demeter, her grief and rage, are the affects of the depressive position, but they are also the emotions of the somatic unconscious split from its own completeness. The developing child becomes identified with these emotions; that is the depressive position.” P. 148. Schwarz-Salant also writes, “What is known as the depressive position is a stage in infant development in which the opposite qualities of the mother, perceived by the infant as good and bad, merciful, diabolical, etc., combine into a whole object. This process occurs through the dynamic of the infants mourning for the lost ‘good object,’ which it believes its own rage has destroyed. Concern for the object develops, and its wholeness can be maintained. Previously, there was—if development was successful to this point—only a state in which the ‘good object’ was more powerful than the bad object. The child’s ego was based upon the capacity for its belief in the saving capacity of the good object. Also, the good object at the earlier stage is close to the archetypal first object, the energy of the Self out of which the child was born. As the child’s object world differentiates out from its divine objects into mother, and then father, as whole objects with good and bad qualities, the initial energy of the transcendent other introjects as a symbolic sense of the Self.” p. 147.


216. Moore, *Dark Eros*, 113. Moore calls Sade a doctor of the soul, a dark muse who wrote daimonically not only demonically. Sade refused to betray his dark, divine obsession. Moore’s purpose “in turning to Sade is to find a darkening of consciousness, to seek out a foul smelling imagery appropriate for the amplification of those dreams and fantasizes and art pieces that reveal an underworld aesthetic and a shadowy psychological reality. One of the most important moves in psychotherapy is to take whatever is presented and simply hold it and give it a place.” P. 7. Moore writes, “It is up to us, therefore, not to moralize against them because they do not fit into our limited repertoire of acceptable human actions, but to contemplate their necessity.” P. 4. Moore continues, “To imagine ugliness is not the same as perpetrating it. The fictive nature of Sade’s work, especially its mythic dimensions, suggests a distinction between ‘sadistic’ acts and the ‘Sadeian’ imagination. The Sadeian image may be a ‘natural’ expression of the psyche, while the sadistic act might be a return of the repressed image in actual life. Unless we make this
distinction carefully, we will be arguing against the perversity of image out of our outrage over sadistic acts.” P. 8-9.

217. Ibid., 119.
218. Ibid., 107.
219. Ibid., 185
220. Ibid., 31.
221. Ibid., 15-20.
222. Ibid., 15-31.
224. Ibid.
225. James Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), 188-189. In regard to this process Hillman adds that, “None of the humanistic solutions face up to this requirement … And love is not enough; or rather, love is just one more form of imaginative labor. Love then can be seen as neither the goal nor the way, but as one of the many means of putting our inhumanity through a complicated imaginal process.” P. 189.
226. Thomas Moore, *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), 261. Thomas Moore acknowledges a paragraph from Hillman, *Myth of Analysis* as the best definition of individuation he knows. Hillman writes, “Transparent man, who is seen and seen through, foolish, who has nothing left to hide, who has become transparent through self-acceptance; his soul is loved, wholly revealed, wholly existential; he is just what he is, freed from paranoid concealment, from the knowledge of his secrets and secret knowledge; his transparency serves as a prism for the world and not-world. For it is impossible reflectively to know thyself; only the last reflection of an obituary may tell the truth, and only God knows our real names.”
228. Ibid., 157.
229. Ibid., 24.
231. Aldo Carotenuto, *Eros and Pathos: Shades of Love and Suffering* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1989), 65. Aldo Carotenuto speaks to the opposite experience of objectifying the other. He writes, “When one loves one relates to a Thou who is understood and recognized as the exclusive subject of the relationship. I remove the other from the inanimate world of things, for the condition of being an object for me—as happens in every power relationship—and I restore to my beloved his or her dignity, integrity and power.”
343. Michael J. Bader, *Arousal: The Secret Logic of Sexual Fantasies* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2002), 47. Fantasies are ordinarily thought of as a story used to generate excitement. Bader presents an example of a sexual fantasy exemplifying a narcissistic defense constructed in order to counteract the potentially debilitating effects of identification. In this sexual fantasy, a man whose experience of women is that they could tend to be impulsive and out of control will make a certain unconscious choice of a sexual partner that will be more controlled. Through this choice he would not feel imperiled by excitement that might feel frighteningly contagious. He would be able to then safely experience pleasure. Bader writes, “Thus he might generate sexual daydreams and script sexual scenarios in which he is fully in control and detached from a partner who enjoyed or was even excited by the distance. He would therefore not only actively negate his fears of merger with a wild and impulsive woman but create, in fantasy, a reassuring partner who is in control of herself and happy with his self-control. Identifying with this kind of woman could then make it safe to experience pleasure.”


234. Ibid., 43.

235. Ibid.

236. Ibid., vii-viii.

237. Ibid., 8-9. Stoller defines revenge. “By revenge I mean retaliation in which we overpower, if not humiliate, those we see as current representatives of the ones who, in past times, harmed us by humiliating us when we could not defend ourselves.” P. 62.

238. Ibid., vii-viii. On boredom Stoller writes, “The poles in the metaphor are markers limiting a territory within which energy vibrates. Beyond the poles are experiences not of anticipation but of consumption, either present or guaranteed. Excitement is uncertainty; certainty brings pleasure, pain, or no response, but not excitement. Beyond too much lies fear/terror/panic, one’s knowing something awful is occurring. Beyond too little is boredom. Straight through leads to pleasure. The task put to us in the experiences we call aesthetic is to constrict the situation so that, no matter how accurately we move, we stay inside the poles. Otherwise we are uneasy or uninterested.” P. 53. On excitement Stoller writes, “It is not fulfillment, pleasure, an ending, but rather anticipation, a tease, a swarm of possibilities. Only because there are two poles—the two possibilities—can excitement emerge. But if we are to become excited, we must experience the poles simultaneously and also be placed pretty equidistant between them. When the poles are switched on—immediately—then, like the energy that forms a magnetic field or the light in a bulb, we turn on … excitement is like all other words used to label affective experiences, a generic term. It only approximates the specific experience; one cannot always or completely distinguish fear and anxiety, or pleasure and good times, from excitement … Excitement, then, is a continuum of anxiety/fear into which has been poured the possibility of pleasure, especially of mastery. … True excitement, in summary, occurs when we are weighing the odds between danger (trauma) and safety, without introducing illusion to shift the odds.” Some polar fields that might make an excitement: safe/endangered, separation/fusion, alive/dead, brave/cowardly, loving/hating, loved/hated, kill/be killed, move/stop, I/not I, clever/stupid, in control/out of control, can I/can’t I, triumphant/humiliated, will I/won’t I, succeed/fail etc. P. 52–53 & 56-57.

239. Ibid., 42-43.

240. Ibid., 53.

242. Ibid., 1-6.

243. Ibid., 90.

244. Ibid., 1-6.

245. Ibid., 11.

246. Ibid., 1-2.


248. Ibid.

249. Ibid., 435.


252. Ibid., 29.


254. Ibid., 24.

255. Ibid., 72.

256. Ibid., 79.

257. Ibid., 5.

258. Ibid., 16.


261. Ibid., 82.


263. Huston Smith, *The Illustrated World’s Religions: A Guide to Our Wisdom Traditions* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994), 10. Dealing with these questions is particularly significant because the distant lands around our planet have become our neighbors. The Middle East, China, Korea, Russia, etc., are all at our back door. Smith informs that one should make the words of Diogenes one’s own, “I am not an Athenian or a Greek but a citizen of the world.”

Emotional health, according to eudaimonic theorists, seems to be more complex than are emotions conceptualized by the hedonic view (SWB). In their own eudaimonic research based on their self-determination theory (SDT), Ryan and Deci point out that they do use SWB as one indicator of well-being. They acknowledge that emotions “are, in part, appraisals of the relevance and valence of events and conditions of life with respect to the self.” However they also recognize that there are different types of positive experiences, some may foster subjective well-being (SWB), but do not promote eudaimonic well-being. P. 141-146

How and when one feels positive differs between the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives. For example, if a loved one has died, one would have greater well-being and be more fully functioning if they allowed themselves to experience sadness rather than trying to suppress or withhold that feeling. If one rates high in repressive tendencies, they tend to have lower subjective well-being (SWB). SWB theorists themselves have found that intense positive emotions are often attended by increased unpleasant affect. In general, eudaimonic theorists that are interested in psychological well-being (PWB) believe that “such issues as the repression, disclosure, compartmentalization, and overcontrol versus undercontrol of emotions are highly pertinent to what defines wellness.”

These eudaimonic theories recognize that all desires, with their personal valued outcomes as pleasure producing, are not equal when it comes to yielding well-being. Ryan and Deci align themselves with Carl Rogers who conceives well-being as being fully functioning rather than simply attaining desires.

Autonomy (volition), authenticity, and congruence are concerns of eudaimonic researchers that are interested in valued goal pursuits that are autonomous or integrated to the self and seem to yield greater wellness (i.e. the goal must be self-endorsed and related to basic psychological needs).
In contrast, hedonic theorists typically adhere to an expectancy value model in which autonomy has no role. “From the perspective of SDT, psychological well-being results in large part from the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, so it makes sense that autonomy as well as efficacy would be important for eudaimonic well-being, just as relatedness or attachment contribute to well-being.” P. 157.

Ryff theorized that the fully functioning person can be operationalized as a set of six dimensions. McGregor and Little theorize that well-being can be defined as happiness plus meaningfulness and Ryan and Deci as a set of wellness variables such as self-actualization and vitality. Ryan and Deci add more dimension to this eudaimonic theorizing. They write, “Ryff & Singer (1998, 2000) have explored the question of well-being in the context of developing a lifespan theory of human flourishing. Also drawing from Aristotle, they describe well-being not simply as the attaining of pleasure, but as “the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one’s true potential” (Ryff 1995, p. 100). Ryff & Keyes (1995) thus spoke of psychological well-being (PWB) as distinct from SWB and presented a multidimensional approach to the measurement of PWB that taps six distinct aspects of human actualization: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and human relatedness. These six constructs define PWB both theoretically and operationally and they specify what promotes emotional and physical health (Ryff & Singer 1998). They have presented evidence, for example, that Eudaimonic living, as represented by PWB, can influence specific physiological systems relating to immunological functioning and health promotion … Self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci 2000) is another perspective that has both embraced the concept of eudaimonia, or self-realization, as a central definitional aspect of well-being and attempted to specify both what it means to actualize the self and how that can be accomplished. Specifically, SDT posits three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—and theorizes that fulfillment of these needs is essential for psychological growth (e.g., intrinsic motivation), integrity (e.g., internalization and assimilation of cultural practices), and well-being (e.g., life satisfaction and psychological health), as well as the experiences of vitality (Ryan & Frederick 1997) and self-congruence (Sheldon & Elliot 1999). Need fulfillment is thus viewed as a natural aim of human life that delineates many of the meanings and purposes underlying human actions (Deci & Ryan 2000).” P. 146.


279. Hillman, Myth of Analysis, 105-106. Hillman posits that meanings begin in the burn of desire. He writes, “By experiencing an event psychologically, we tend to feel a connection with it; in feeling and desire we tend to realize the importance of something for the soul. Desire is holy, as D. H. Lawrence, the Romantics, and the Neoplatonists insisted, because it touches and moves the soul. Reflection is never enough. Reflection may make consciousness but love makes soul.”


281. James Hillman, Healing Fiction (Dallas, TX: Spring Publications, 1983), 76-77. Referring to the sudden events attributed to daimons and images of our interior life and how they fit into the “wider embrace of planetary principles, the Gods or archetypes” Hillman writes, “[I] Implied is that the little daimons in our complexes, symptoms and fantasies are in the preceding train of the major divinities and they express, say, Apollonic, Martial, or Venusian qualities. We find the Gods amidst the daimons who surround them. Or as Jung put it, “The Gods have become diseases … We find Gods amid our obstinate ‘demonic’ psychic problems, if we look with a critically imaging eye.” p. 76-77.

282. Hillman, Myth of Analysis, 71-72. Hillman also believes that denying the daimons has staggering consequences when absorbed by the ego. It reinforces its literalism. The ego doesn’t know its limits and can become demonic, as it fully believes in its own power. (Hillman, Healing Fiction, 65) Through the process of individuation one attempts to lift repression from inhumane aspects of human nature. If not given so much literal power through the unexamined ego, daimons can teach one the “as-if”
thinking of myth. (Hillman, Healing Fiction, 55) Hillman offers an image from the myth Eros and Psyche with regard to beauty and death: “The Box of Beauty, which Psyche must fetch as her last task refers to an underworld beauty that can never be seen with the senses. It is the beauty of the knowledge of death and of the effects of death upon all other beauty that does not contain this knowledge.” (Hillman, Myth of Analysis 10)

283. Ibid.

284. Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology, 147-148. Hillman writes, “individuation is a perspective. It is an ideational tool: we do not see individuation, but by means of it. Moreover, the descriptions of this process are archetypally determined, so that the notion of individuation may show the child and fantasies of developmental maturation, or the hero and fantasies of enlightening and strengthening, or the mother and fantasies of cyclical nature. We can take process into account without elevating it to the major explanatory fantasy of the soul, either as individuation or as development, foregoing the comforting teleological fallacy, which holds that we are carried by an overall process on a rocky road onward to the Great End Station. A more precise way of taking process into account without taking it literally (and speaking of linear, dialectic, or spiral models) is to explore the processional characteristic of the archetypes. Their tales and their figures move through phases like dramas and interweave one with another, dissolve into one another.”


286. Steven A. Diamond, Anger, Madness, and the Daimonic (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 158-164. Diamond refers to an “energy” that can be potentially perilous yet absolutely indispensable, which can be called by many names. He writes that this “energy” can be called, “chi, as do the Chinese; or élan vital, following the vitalistic French philosopher Henri Bergson; or “will” as did Schopenhauer; or “libido” in the generic, Jungian sense. Or we could dub it as I do, “the daimonic,” though this does not necessarily render each of these terms identical. For instance, whereas Bergson’s idea of élan vital alluded to a predominately biological “vital energy,” both (Rollo) May, in his paradigm of “the daimonic” and Jung, in his broad conception of “libido,” prefer a considerably less biological and more psychological interpretation of his elemental force.” Diamond is speaking about this energy within the context of increased energy that becomes available to one after a depressed mood is artificially, biochemically lifted through “mood brighteners” such as Prozac. He warns of possible consequences of prematurely emancipating the daimonic. Within the therapeutic setting the patient’s repressed anger, rage, or self-hatred can be freed prematurely prior to the therapist’s or the patient’s preparedness to deal with these darker emotions. He points out that depressed or suicidal patients are at risk for acting out suicidal impulses during the days and months after the depression starts to lift.

287. Ibid., 310. Diamond writes that “The conflict lies between “the cultural pressures of repression, rationality, adjustment, and conformity on one side, and the vital forces of freedom, individuality, integrity, passion, and creativity on the other.”

288. Ibid., 225.

285. Ibid., 150-151. Diamond points out that there is a difference between normal existential anxiety and the daimonic anxiety that he believes is a natural part of evolving human consciousness—what he describes as “a bona fide route toward rediscovering the daimonic.” Existential or normal anxiety is associated with the human condition, a nebulous but numinous feeling of “daimonic dread” according the Rudolf Otto. Or in Kierkegaard’s terms, “a dreadful ‘fear and trembling’ in the face of the daimonic facts of life.” Or as May points out normal anxiety, essential to the human condition, is found in fundamental human processes such as personal growth, maturation, and creativity.
290. Ibid., 223. Diamond clarifies that “being” is different from ego: being is the wholly other “inner One,” the mythological “pearl of great price.” It is this self that exists in the driven, daimonic world who has the capacity to consciously will or choose his or her own values, attitudes or behaviors. He posits that a person’s experience of daimonic forces, which make a habit of impinging upon one’s underdeveloped “sense of self,” are often at odds with another person’s or institution’s rules of moral standards and emotions. One’s underdeveloped “sense of self,” must be strengthened so one will feel able and willing to come to terms with the powerful daimonic. The capacity to act from this integrated crystallized central point of the personality is more trustworthy. This is in contrast to unconsciously living one’s life under another’s or institution’s sometimes repressed doctrine or dogma, which can lead to a conflicted life stemming from living in denial of one’s powerful emotions. Diamond also informs that, “Without at least some “sense of self,” patients feel unable or unwilling to really reckon with the daimonic, and are, in fact, especially prone to mild “daimonic possession” or fitful inundation by the unconscious in the forms of neurotic anxiety, depression, and other disturbing psychological and somatic symptoms.”

291. Ibid., 308. Diamond differentiates “existential evil” from “human evil,” both of which inflict human suffering.” “Existential evil” includes acts of nature, which wreak untimely death, havoc, or unmentionable suffering on humanity. “Human evil,” is suffering that is inflicted by man himself.”

292. Ibid., 290.

293. Ibid., 189-190. Diamond points out how “Spirituality,” for many, can squelch negative emotions and impulses. He writes, “Both in my psychological studies and didactic personal therapy, it soon became plain to me that something had gone wrong with our whole approach to anger and rage in American culture. “Spirituality,” for instance, had turned for most into a one-sided, “blissed out” affair, in which all “negative” impulses or emotions such as jealousy, envy, anger, or rage were judged “unspiritual” or “anti-spiritual,” and hence, suppressed as antithetical to the spiritual journey. We aspired to be “good,” “mellow,” “enlightened” men and women without malice. But in doing so we had denied the daimonic. We were suffering from pseudoinnocence, a childish naiveté which, as May writes, “does not lead to spirituality but rather consists of blinders … It wilts before our complicity with evil. It is this innocence that cannot come to terms with the destructiveness in one’s self or others … and hence becomes self-destructive.” Many “baby boomers” still cling to their pseudoinnocence, as do most Americans in general: We have no eyes for evil, which is what makes us so very vulnerable to it.”

294. Ibid., 290.


296. Ibid., 11. Kalsched points out that these second line of defenses, which he associates with the daimon, are formed as a result of trauma experienced during early infancy before a coherent ego was capable of forming its own defenses. As he states they are formed in order to prevent the “unthinkable” from being experienced. He is referring to the violation or annihilation of the personal spirit, one’s inner core of their personality. Kalsched writes, “In psychoanalytic language they are known as the “primitive” or “dissociative” defenses; for example, splitting, projective identification, idealization, or diabolization, trance-states, switching among multiple centers of identity, depersonalization, psychic numbing, etc.”

297. Ibid. Kalsched discovered these images in the dreams of clients. The daimon’s intention is to divide up consciousness, one’s inner world, in order to produce some breakthrough from the “unconscious.” These parts of the self are conceptualized by Carl Jung as evidence of the ambivalence of libido (desire) in which the libido is split into a positive and negative current: the progressive part strives for life in the world, but the regressive part, when necessary, becomes “seductive” enough to pull the ego
back into the unconscious in order to transform it. Problematically, one can become ensnared in illusion and dissociated from life in reality.

298. Ibid., 3. Kalsched recognized that this dyadic structure, which includes the “mythologized” images of the “progressed” vs. “regressed” parts of the self (the personified “beings”) make up what he is referring to as the psyche’s archetypal self-care system. He writes, “Typically, one part of the ego regresses to the infantile period, and another part progresses, i.e., grows up too fast and becomes precociously adapted to the outer world, often as a “false self” (Winnicott, 1960a).” The progressed part of the personality then caretakes the regressed part.

299. Ibid., 5. Kalsched points out that these discoveries about the function of this ambivalent caretaker help explain two most important findings in the literature about trauma. ‘the first of these findings is that the traumatized psyche is self-traumatizing

300. Ibid., 125.

301. Ibid., 126. Corrigan and Gordon emphasize the persecutory aspect of Winnicott’s false self conceptually as “the mind-object.” Kalsched writes, “This perfectionistic “mind” becomes personified as an internal “mind-object” and ruthlessly attacks the psychosomatic self which can never keep up with its relentless demands. The result is depression, Obsessive-Compulsive disorder, or various forms of schizoid withdrawal.”

302. Ibid., 175. Kalsched credits T. H. Ogden with the idea of the dialectical tension needed to generate meaningful experience.


305. Carl Kerényi, Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967). There are questions as to the real identity of Hades in this story. In one version he is Dionysus, they are one and the same god. In the official Eleusian version it is the old wine god Dionysus, in the guise of the gentler version of Pluto, the Roman underworld counterpart of Hades, who takes Persephone. Pluto is the unseen god of wealth.


308. Ibid., 95.

309. Ibid., 147. Kerényi writes, “The visio beatifica of the epopetia, The epiphany of Kore, who— as the Hierophant proclaimed—had already given birth, continues the imatatio deae of all the mystai. It represents, in the souls of the initiates, the split, which was necessary to the experience of finding-again in the visitatio to the Ineffable One. This was no intellectual experience of the obvious fact that every daughter is the disjoined continuation of her mother—this alone could scarcely have produced the beatific effect—but something visible which surpassed the artist’s imagination in so far as hands were not needed to achieve it. A mystic who was an artist but not a Greek, once wrote: “He who does not imagine in
stronger and better lineaments, and in stronger and better light than his perishing and mortal eye can see, does not imagine at all.” The Eleusian vision must have had a power, which the philosophers were unwilling to recognize. It had above all, a claim to truth, which was recognized by the souls of the epoptai. It did not negate the duality of the questioning one and the found one. This duality—the scission of the Mother into “mother and daughter”—opened up a vision of the feminine source of life, of the common source of life for men and women alike, just as the ear of grain had opened up a vision into the “abyss of the seed.” This reason for this is probably that all human beings and not women alone bear this origin and this duality—that is both the Mother and the Daughter—within themselves and then are therein the heirs of an endless line, not only of fathers but of mothers as well.”

310. Ibid., 15. The hope and anticipation provided by her descent and marriage to the god of fire provided great value in terms of the personal religious impulse experienced by mankind. Christianity eventually inherited this form of the beatific event within. P.102. This visio beatifica (beatific vision), implying no linguistic distinction between reality and illusion, was the supreme goal or telos of Christian existence. “In medieval usage it signifies the immediate sight of God, videde Deum; those who obtain this vision are transported into a state of eternal beatitude. In this case the word vision, visio, must be taken as a real seeing, not as a subjective illusion. But the subjective element cannot be entirely excluded. The vision requires a subject that “sees.” And of course beatitude, happiness, presupposes a subject who is happy. Thus visio beatifica embraces a subjective element and implies no linguistic distinction between reality and illusion. P.95.

311. Ibid., 15. This was a quote from the Roman Cicero, in his treatise On the Laws. The full quote reads, “We have been given a reason not only to live in joy but also to die with better hope.”

312. Peter Kingsley, Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 64. For Empedocles fire is underneath the water inside the earth, important not because these are natural phenomena and processes but because they are a cosmological fact in their own right. There are three pieces of his doctrine according to Kingsley: “first the idea that aer is a rarified form of water, second the idea that there are large amounts of water under the earth, and third the idea that underneath this water there is a central fire … they were all different aspects of one underlying theory. The fire at the center of the earth heats the underground water lying above it; and as this water rises to the earth’s surface the process of evaporation begins which ends in the water being transformed into aer—a word that to Empedocles himself meant ‘mist,’ but was soon interpreted as meaning the element of air.”

313. Ibid., 302. Kingsley posits that Plato and his followers took over the ideas of the Pythagoreans. However, more interested in beauty, the true and the good, they amputated the ambiguities and cut out the need for descent. Western culture was now left without the wisdom that hides away in death. Since so many run from death, they run from wisdom. Intellectual clarity is desired versus embodied clarity gifted through the willingness to descend and listen to the faint inner voice, no matter how much one feels threatened by having to eventually act on the consequences of that information. The elements of ritual and magic during the times of Pythagoras and Empedocles were viewed by Neoplatonists as a lower alternative to rational philosophy instead of the culmination of philosophy, that is “as a way of attaining what thinking alone was incapable of ever achieving: the raising of men to the gods and the divination of the soul.” Future scholars misunderstood the Presocratics. This resulted in Aristotle and later writers blocking a real comprehensive approach to the work of Empedocles and the Pythagoreans. Empedocles’ ‘philosophical’ or ‘scientific’ interests were separated from his religious or mythological concerns, dichotomies, which were inappropriate and completely indefensible, in Kingsley’s view. The separation of concerns eventually did lead to the development of traditional rational philosophy, which Western culture is based on today. P. 69. However, what was lost was what happened to the initiates at Eleusis, that is, their philosophical illumination was linked to the experience of the mystai. P. 91
The sun growing out of the center of the earth is fundamental to alchemical doctrine, which Kingsley points out was “responsible for preserving and maintaining this basic association between sun, earth, and underworld. Alchemists, from the end of antiquity through to and beyond the Middle Ages and Renaissance, were so concerned with the paradoxical discovery of light in the depths of darkness that they undercut all the familiar distinctions between upper and lower, celestial and terrestrial. For them fire was only secondarily a celestial phenomenon: in origin it came from, and belonged at, the center of the earth. This ‘central fire’ as they sometimes called it was considered by them the key to the alchemical transformation process. According to them it was the real source of light—so much so that they referred to it as ‘the sun in the earth’, the ‘subterranean’ sun. On the other hand this ‘earthly’ or ‘invisible sun’ was the ‘fire of hell’, the ‘black sun’, the ‘darkness of purgatory’. On the other, as the sun that ‘rises out of the darkness of the earth’, it was the origin not only of the visible sun but also of the light of the stars, And, significantly, they indicated that the nature of this hidden, generative fire was volcanic.”

319. Ibid., 66.
320. Ibid.
321. Aftab Omer recognizes transformative learning as a contemporary term for initiation.
323. Tom Cheetham, Green Man, Earth Angel: The Prophetic Tradition and the Battle for the Soul of the World (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), 32. Cheetham points out that, “the dual terrors of annihilation and meaninglessness lie at the root of the fear of turning inward. A physical origin for this fundamental angst has been sought in the “not good enough mother,” in an estrangement from the physical world as represented by the mother’s body. Morris Berman argues that the coupled experiences of the inner void and of the associated deadness of the outer world are based on a rupture, a basic “fault” between consciousness and the body that is fundamental to Western culture. On this view it is a fundamental estrangement from our bodies and from nature that provides the basis for our characteristic style of descent into the Hell of a soulless world. The inner void and the deadness of the world are symptoms of the loss of interiority.”
324. Ibid. Cheetham believes, as Henry Corbin does, that the base cause of these symptoms is the failure of the West to mend the rupture between thought and Being, which is due to the loss of the cosmology of angelic mediation between the individual and the divine, the misunderstanding of the true purpose of the imagination, and the loss of the mediating function of the anima mundi.
325. Ibid., 31-32. Cheetham points out that Hillman says that Hades (fire and darkness) dissolves the luminous world; it “breaks down the inner cohesion of any fixed state.” Cheetham concedes that there is no way to determine or know all the ways of going to Hell or how many of them there are, however he turns to Hillman who says that Hades “is the dissolver of the luminous world.” Cheetham adds, “the realm of the dark “extinguishes the … colored world … dissolves meaning and the hope for meaning … [and] break[s] down the inner cohesion of any fixed state.” This unmasking is required for all psychological change. The indispensable descent to Hades represents the alchemical Nigredo: “The operations must be dark and are called in alchemical language: mortificatio, difficult, desiccating, severe, astringent, effortful, coagulating and/or pulverizing. All the while the worker enters a nigredo state: depressed, confused, constricted, anguished, and subject to pessimistic even paranoid thoughts of sickness, failure, and death.”

326. Ibid., 48.

327. Ibid., xiii. In depth psychology, the darkness of the descent into hell is viewed as if it were the realm of the holy. Even Hillman’s Archetypal psychology, according to Robert Sardello, mistakenly interprets Corbin’s work on the Mundus Imaginalis as the imaginal world of soul experience instead of spirit experience, which results in depth psychology’s lack of sophisticated subjectivity.

328. Ibid. For example, often as one begins to open to their soul’s journey their dreams reveal a Black figure, which Cheetham warns is not to be confused with the Black Light of the Guide. This black figure is the darkness imagined as that of Satan or Ahriman, which is the active negativity that prevents the Guide from being seen. Cheetham writes, “[T]he Black figure sometimes visualized by the Spiritual at the beginning of this mystical journey, is not the celestial Guide, the Witness in heaven. The blackness, or darkness, is precisely the absence of the “Witness of light,” and is the “active negativity, which prevents him from being seen.” At the beginning there is shadow, but it is cast by the opacity of the soul trapped in both the dullness of matter distant from the light and the negativity of the satanic, and is a measure of the soul’s own being.” P. 54.

329. Ibid. Khidr, the self’s Angel, makes certain that one is not alone as he leads one out of the well of darkness, because opening to this Luminous Black light of superconsciousness marks the encounter with the unknown and unknowable God, which can elicit extreme terror and feelings of annihilation as one comes into contact with crumbling of one’s ego and solid worldview. Approaching this Light throws one into a moment of supreme danger, which again is always complicated by the dual presence of God and the Devil. The ego is annihilated in the Divine Presence. If one comes too close to this Presence, one’s human subjectivity disappears. This Black Light, which marks the approach to this hazardous encounter with the Hidden God, is a moment of initiation that brings about vision. But is one of the moments of greatest danger in regard to all of creation because of the possible different outcomes.

330. Ibid., 44.

331. Ibid., 117.

332. Cirlot, Dictionary of Symbols, 105. These two different axes of fire point to a parallel with the symbolism of the sword. Cirlot writes, “The triumphant power and the vitality of the sun—by analogy, the spirit of the shining Origin—is tantamount to victory over the power of evil (the forces of darkness); purification is the necessary sacrificial means of achieving the sun’s triumph. Marius Schneider, however distinguishes between two kinds of fire, depending upon their direction (or their function): fire as in the axis fire-earth (representing eroticism, solar heat and physical energy), and fire of the axis fire-air (linked with mysticism, purification, or sublimation, and spiritual energy).”

333. Ibid.
334. Ibid., 162.

335. Ibid., 32 and 162.

336. Lopez-Pedraza, *Hermes and His Children*, 11-12. Lopez-Pedraza posits that a person’s conflicts, if ‘looked through’ the lens of a mythical imagination, by a psychologist who is in tune with their own mythological background via their own psyche, will encourage psychic movement, rather than merely reduce the patient’s condition to its mythical counterpart. In regard to the psychotherapist, he writes, “I believe one’s psyche can be imaginatively stimulated only by those myths akin to one’s own nature, history, personality, the myths one lives in relation to basic complexes.”

337. Ibid., 7.

338. Ibid., 214. He compensates, balances, and moves the psyche because of his capacity to barter with and connect to the most alien repressed borderline imagery of the psyche. P. 214. His primitive spontaneous instinct gives one an immediate sense of the reality of their being. P. 17. And his Hermaphroditic nature can liberate the imagination from sexual polarities, which can constellate a mercurial psychological movement in itself, neither male nor female. P. 40.

339. Ibid., 7. Both therapist and patient’s individuation are a result of Hermes’ interventions within the psychotherapeutic constellation. P. 215.

340. Hillman, *Healing Fiction*, 111. Hillman writes, “Man is primarily an image-maker and our psychic substance consists of images; our being is imaginal, an existence in imagination.” P. 23


343. Ibid., 67.

344. Ibid., 68. “Imagination that is material and dynamic enables us to experience a provoked adversity, a psychology of opposition that does not settle for the blow, the shock, but that seeks domination over the very heart of matter.”

345. Ibid., 46.

346. Ibid., 78.

347. Ibid.

348. Ibid.

349. Ibid.


351. Omer, “Between Columbine.”


354. Ibid., 4. This is a concept based on the acceptance of the existence of a three-fold world consisting of an “angelic world intermediate between the pure Cherubic intelligences and the universe of sensory, historical, and juridical facts.”

355. Ibid., 156-157.

356. Ibid. 157. Corbin notes that, “The divine Lover is spirit without body; the purely physical lover is body without spirit; the spiritual lover (that is the mystic lover) possesses spirit and body.”

357. Ibid., 61.

358. Ibid., 12-14. The symbol is the “cipher” of a mystery, the key to a plane of consciousness distinct from that of rational evidence, which Corbin points out, cannot be apprehended in any other way. Never can it be explained once and for all. It must be deciphered over and over again. This deciphering is carried out in one’s “active Imagination,” the organ of knowledge that at once produces and apprehends symbols.

359. Mircea Eliade. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987). He defines “hierophany” in the following way, “Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane. To designate the act of manifestation of the sacred, we have proposed the term hierophany. It is a fitting term, because it does not imply anything further; it expresses no more than is implicit in its etymological content, i.e., that something sacred shows itself to us. … In each case we are confronted by the same mysterious act—the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world, in objects that are an integral part of our natural ‘profane’ world.”


361. Ibid., 291.

362. Ibid., 22. Corbin believes that philosophy and mystical experience are inseparable, important to be able to distinguish as one starts to apprehend such images as Figures of light that offer symbolic understanding.

363. Ibid., 339. Divine and human, are present to a same structure: they are both at once passion and action, that is, according to the Greek etymology of these words, which are pathetic and poietic, they are at once receptive and creative. Ibn Arabi affirms the Feminine principle, the pre-eminence of Woman as an Image of the Godhead because her being combines the twofold mode of passion and action. Rumi recognized the power of beauty and the creative feminine when he noted that, “Woman is the highest type of earthly beauty, but earthly beauty is nothing unless it is a manifestation and reflection of the divine attributes.” “Know that God cannot be contemplated independently of a concrete being and that He is more perfectly seen in a human being than in any other, and more perfectly in woman than in man.” So it follows that by contemplating the Image of feminine being, as it is an Image of the Creative Feminine, the human being can be lead “to the apparition of the Eternal Womanly as an Image of the Godhead, because in her it contemplates the secret of the compassionate God, whose creative act is a liberation of beings.” P. 159.
Chapter 3


5. Ibid., 67.


7. Ibid., 11.

8. Ibid., 15.

Chapter 4


3. Ibid., 43-47


8. Ibid., 225.


11. She notices again her lack of integration and incapacity to “hold it.” She feels a great deal of discomfort viewing her image of which she says, “It seems like I’m going out into outer space. I mean, I’m flying out into outer space and I think that, that’s actually a pretty good metaphor for how I feel half the time which explains the big stomach trying to ground me.”
12. Sylvia said that ‘the scream without sound was like not screaming when the woman got her finger cut off. The scream is in her eyes because you don’t scream when you’re falling from a building or when you fall and hit rocks you don’t scream. The wind is knocked out of you’. Sylvia admits never having screamed. Along with the image from *The Piano*, Sylvia noticed that when Tom Cruise is listening to Nicole Kidman and “she is verbally hurting him, its almost seems like she was trying to get a rise out of him … it’s like she’s just hurting him and he’s just sitting there taking it, you know, there was a scream there for him as well, you know, like what was the point, what was the point, it was like scratching him (Sylvia’s voice changes, teeth are gritted). She says she has a recurring dream of having to scream because something is happening to her but she can’t. She also can’t get anybody’s attention to stop what’s happening because she loses her voice. In another dream she would also lose her sight. She couldn’t get her eyes open, it was too filmy and foggy.

13. There are themes of: no one giving a shit about you, almost dying because of negligence, medical problems, murder, rape as a patient in a hospital, abandonment as an infant by mother, a sister living with Charles Manson, life has been a war zone, so different from everyone, don’t belong anywhere because of the life she’s lead, struggling for a next meal and hit with privilege in the neighborhood in which she lives where no one wants to hear the story of her “fucking life.” It’s just another boring bad story.

14. While pondering the directionality of the lily, Ron revealed his thoughts about ascension and descent: “You normally think of something better as it’s not north, it’s more like ascension, your reaching for something higher obviously nobody wants to descend so . . .”

15. Ron described himself as feeling conflicted about other aspects of their relationship. For instance, his girlfriend had been married to a friend of his, and while she and her husband were separated when they started seeing each other, he described their relationship as adulterous. She had a young son who loved his father and who Ron adored. Ron wondered if his potential relationship with her son would be difficult for him.

17. Ibid., 243.
18. Ibid., 50.
19. Ibid., 49.
20. Ibid., 153.
21. Ibid., 255.
25. Ibid., 255.


32. Peter’s drawings of his feelings around his stifled desire revealed a page that was split in half with a line drawn down the middle. On one side there was a stick figure, with images of parents, the government, and the church all pointing arrows down upon a male figure’s head. The second image was a man and a woman. The woman had breasts, a much larger upper body than the man, but no arms, legs, hips or vaginal area. The man next to her was a stick figure, proportionately a quarter of her size, with a penis almost as long as his legs. Underneath them was written “right, wrong and control.”

33. John’s relationship with women seemed adversarial. The experience he described was that women wanted to keep him from doing adventurous things, change him, and manipulate him. He said that after that happened he lost respect for them. John said that when he “falls for them it’s hard, it’s brutal.” Consequently, he said he his strategy is to just date women that don’t get to him. On this movement from aggression to relationship with a person as an adversary Rollo May has this to say:

> “Aggression is a moving out, a thrust toward the person or thing seen as the adversary. Its aim is to cause a shift in power for the interest of one’s self or what one is devoted to … The opposite of aggression is not loving peace, or consideration or friendship, but isolation.”

With regard to John’ need for autonomy and his constant draw to a life of action, Jung and Schwartz-Salant theorize that it is the mother that is the prime object of unconscious desire. I wonder about John viewing women in the guise of Terrible Mother since he experiences them as the “tricky buggers” who want to steal his freedom.

34. Between meetings he revealed that he had a horrifically frightening dream in which his dead father came to him. His father was literally there with him in the room, unlike a regular dream. He said to John, “don’t do like, you know, don’t do like I did and just drink so much that you can’t drink anymore.”

35. Stella says, “there is that core place of breathing, like that, and you’re dying … that would even be true of when I had my sexual experience. There’s that moment of awakening, like that, where you get new life when you have been dying. And I relate to that in terms of that moment 20 years ago when I was dying. I mean I remember looking at myself in the mirror and thinking, “you’re dying dear.” I mean I wasn’t physically like sick, I was in pretty good physical shape but … and my kids reflected that too because one was anorexic and one was suicidal, so we had a whole thing going there in our family dynamic that related, you know, somebody needed to bring, to breath new life into the deal and even explode it.”

36. Stella says, “Well getting caught up in the desire and if only, if only I could have … so then I could feel sad or then I would feel hopeless or just kind of hhaaahhhaa,

37. Lillian says, “All the men who have hurt me and beat me and molested me and abused me and not listened or, you know, held me down or raped me, you know. It’s all of that you slide by or you soften or you say well, you know. I soften all of those things that happened to me and say well you know, I didn’t get beat up that bad or was it really rape, or, you know, well he molested me but, you know, it could have been worse. And so I soften all that in my head and then I get that.” (grey weight and fog).

39. Ibid., 148.

40. Ibid., 149. May writes, “Aggression emerges on the spectrum at that point where overt conflict also emerges. Although conflict may be faintly detected in self-affirmation and may be even slightly more noticeable in self-assertion, on those levels it is typically directed inward … But in aggression there is no question about the overt conflict.”

41. Ibid., 153.

42. Ibid., 40.

43. Ibid. 102.


46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.


52. Ibid., 107.

53. Cheetham, *Green Man, Earth Angel*, 32. Cheetham points out that, “the dual terrors of annihilation and meaninglessness lie at the root of the fear of turning inward. A physical origin for this fundamental angst has been sought in the “not good enough mother,” in an estrangement from the physical world as represented by the mother’s body. Morris Berman argues that the coupled experiences of the inner void and of the associated deadness of the outer world are based on a rupture, a basic “fault” between consciousness and the body that is fundamental to Western culture. On this view it is a fundamental estrangement from our bodies and from nature that provides the basis for our characteristic style of descent into the Hell of a soulless world. The inner void and the deadness of the world are symptoms of the loss of interiority.”


55. Another way to imagine his guilt is from the perspective of someone who wants to give back to the world but is also conflicted about “time spent”—for self and personal creativity or for those others in the world needing help (which can be another form of creative endeavor).

56. Ah it’s probably the biggest one that’s possible. Less guarded, you know, your compassion. That would probably have to be the one that comes up over the years. You know, compassion, you know,
you can have it but it’s when you guard it or … that wouldn’t be the feeling, it would be the … I mean, that works pretty well but sometimes it works against you to be strong and guarded, sometimes you, … follow a path with, you know, no survivors.

57. Marianne says, “there’s an ouwy place and a dark place … I feel myself dipping into this darkness and feeling a lot of fear and yeah, fear more than anger so that’s another emotion that comes up. Grief, a lot of grief, but it kind of comes and goes. I’m trying to ride the wave of emotions.”

58. Lillian quote: All the men who have hurt me and beat me and molested me and abused me and not listened or, you know, held me down or raped me, you know. It’s all of that you slide by or you soften or you say well, you know. I soften all of those things that happened to me and say well you know, I didn’t get beat up that bad or was it really rape, or, you know, well he molested me but, you know, it could have been worse. And so I soften all that in my head and then I get that. (The grey weight and fog).

59. Hillman, Healing Fiction, 73. For psychology, the healing power of image lies not in a literal, magical effect: if your ear hurts, paint it or hang a tin ear-shaped replica on a shrine. This would be latria, an idolatry of the morbid part, ear as idol. Latria here assumes a one-tone relations between ear and image, without the connotative implications of ear, an ear deaf to its own metaphors … The act of painting the image or speaking with it in a poem is dulia, a service to the image (not the ear) even if we be driven to the act by its pain. Image-work is directed to imagination and by imagination so that if healing comes, it comes through the middle realm of psyche, a healing of the imaginal body, a healing of imaginations middle ear.

60. Hillman, Re-Visioning Psychology, 23.

61. Hillman, Healing Fiction, 111.

62. Hillman, Myth of Analysis, 84.


64. Hillman, Puer Papers, 15.

65. Lopez-Pedraza, Hermes and His Children, 7.

66. Ibid., 214.

67. Ibid., 7. Both therapist and patient’s individuation are a result of Hermes’ interventions within the psychotherapeutic constellation. P. 215.

68. Thompson, The Death of Desire, 68-69.

69. Jacoby, Shame and the Origins, 70.

70. Thompson, The Death of Desire, 180-181.

71. Nathanson, Shame and Pride, 251.


73. Stroud, The Bonding of Will and Desire, 38.

75. Ibid.

76. Visually the difference in power when the shame was lifted could be seen in the contrast between both of her body images (i.e., the cowed body, on its knees with its head curled down, shamed and filled with rage versus two figures standing tall and together, without shame). The bodies of the two figures in the Daimon drawing overlap, and a large hand supports Lillian. It’s filled with the heart as a capsule that contains all of her previous experiences that now provide help for her to move forward, telling her to trust, and importantly it included the hate/rage. She was put in touch with the shame and how it affected her. On one level it protected her from the potential ramifications of being rejected by others in her social world for showing her rage/hate to others instead of masking it over with compassion. On another level she was put in touch with that shamed part of herself that allowed her to sit in silence not protecting her deepest truth and integrity. The figure of the Daimon now contained the hate/rage in a way that it’s power could be manifested and called upon when appropriate. I believe this is a key image pointing to at least the beginning of a liberation of desire.


78. John says, “Ah it’s probably the biggest one that’s possible. Less guarded, you know, your compassion. That would probably have to be the one that comes up over the years.

79. Lillian quote: “It’s all of that you slide by or you soften or you say well, you know. I soften all of those things that happened to me and say well you know, I didn’t get beat up that bad or was it really rape, or, you know, well he molested me but, you know, it could have been worse. And so I soften all that in my head and then I get that. (The grey weight and fog).

80. The full quote reads: “it’s swirling in on itself, the anger, and the sadness, and the weight and the, I mean, I look at that and it just is so weighted with um, not so much with the anger, but just the results of the anger, the sadness of that, the sadness, there’s just terrible sadness.

81. More of Lillian’s description: “No, no, no I’ve got like this, which is incredible power, and then the blue and then all of that, that she down below seems like, she’s 45 years of experience but, you know, she’s just, she’s not totally crumpled there, she’s just, you know, she’s, I mean, it’s not such a bad position, it’s kind of like a tuck and roll, but she’s not all the way down and so this is like a life time of experience but it feeds into the strength of all that and the knowledge and wisdom of all that because I think that there’s got to be a ton of wisdom gathered in there somewhere flows into the hand which pushes you down the path because if, you know, you don’t have wisdom behind you if you’re going down the path you might as well not go into the clearing. That’s what I always say.”

82. Ron’s quote: The walking guy, you know, in the first drawing his head’s down, his head’s lower into his shoulders and that’s where I was trying to figure out some way to get his spirit to be more jaunty. He just wasn’t, he was more, like he was walking into a wind or a rainstorm or something. So I tried, you know, the cloak. Then I put the cloak on him because I remembered he had one. Then it didn’t look like that; it looked like it was soggy. This has no life in it, no life to it. So I tried to . . . like the cloak, so it was more flowing. The hand is . . . tried to be foreshortened, but it doesn’t look like it, it looks more like it’s exploding out of his chest. And then the head’s higher. So I tried to get something that’s more optimistic. I guess, you know, more fluid.
83. Ron’s complete quote: “Ok. Head down, head up, head down, head up, and in a way that’s a
smirk. I’m just saying, that, that’s, you know, but he’s still walking. And a way to lighten up is not bliss
out, just, heads down, heads up, it goes up and it goes down, just keep walking … Lighten up. And it
doesn’t matter which direction you’re going.”

84. Sylvia went on to describe the bigger body as older, 30 or 40 or so, the drooping shoulders like
that of an older person who’s skin starts to hang with gravity and the younger person, pre-pubescent, like
nine or 10 years old. Lately she said has been thinking about the body that ages.

85. Sylvia said, “Well at some point it bothered me because, I just, it bothered me because I didn’t
want to just draw cat eyes, you know, that kind of eye, there was something else I wanted to get with them,
like deepocketed eyes, that’s what I really wanted to get. I probably would have worked on them more
because what I wanted to get were eyes way back in the sockets with lots of dark, dark shade around them,
I don’t know, that’s what I had in my mind image.”

86. As Sylvia sat with the art image she noticed that what seemed like one tunnel was really two
tunnels, one large, and the other a lot smaller. In one tunnel she said there was a whirring sound, like a
wind tunnel, “like when the wind comes but it is forced to make an eddy and goes in a circle and the leaves
are all whooshing around.”

87. Peter says, Because the light and the heart for me is like dancing and love, it’s like high fives
and singing and joyousness and bliss and the melancholy side is also part of, you know, there is nothing
that isn’t part of that, but I represent more, I lean more toward the other, for me. I didn’t want to be 6 feet
under!


89. Ibid., 8


92. Watkins, *Invisible Guests*, 73. Quoted From Corbin’s *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of


“Self” and saw it as the imperceptible center of the entire personality, conscious and unconscious. The Self
cannot be distinguished from the various god images of the psyche.”

95. Kalsched, *Inner World of Trauma*, 11. Kalsched points out that these second line of defenses,
which he associates with the daimon, are formed as a result of trauma experienced during early infancy
before a coherent ego was capable of forming its own defenses. As he states they are formed in order to
prevent the “unthinkable” from being experienced. He is referring to the violation or annihilation of the
personal spirit, one’s inner core of their personality.


97. Ibid., 175.

99. Ibid., 153.

100. Lorca, *In Search of Duende*, viii-ix.

101. James Hillman, *A Terrible Love of War* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 163. Noel Perrin quoted by Hillman “Swords happen to be associated with elegant body movement. A sword simply is a more graceful weapon to use than a gun, in any time or country. This is why an extended scene of swordplay can appear in a contemporary movie, and be a kind of dangerous ballet, while a scene of extended gunplay comes out as raw violence.”


104. I sense that idealism, evident in her desire to have her emotions burn like a “good campfire,” while an intelligent impulse, actually works to deny her fear of drowning in her scattered, depressed feelings. Perhaps her intuition that she would like to experience her emotions in “centered peacefulness” may indicate that she is ready to stop resisting a loss of control over her inner feeling states, which keeps her from the dialectical tension necessary to generate meaningful experience and hence aliveness.

105. Bachelard, *On Poetic Imagination*, 57-58. Gaston Bachelard writes of a poetics of blood, “It can be a poetics of tragedy and pain, for blood is never happy. However, there is room for a poetics of valorous blood…of living blood…(From Poe’s poetry)…Here is an example in which blood is a water valorized in this manner: “Any water is desirable to us; and certainly, more than the blue and virgin sea, this one appeals to what there is in us between the flesh and the soul: our human water charged with force and spirit, the burning dark blood.”

106. Schwartz-Salant *Narcissism and Character Transformation*, 147. These are Schwartz-Salant’s phrases.

107. She adds, that this different approach is, “Opposed to that part that will stifle that aliveness in the moment, that whether it’s the old memory or the old body image or the old person image, self-image, whether we knowingly or unknowingly cling to it, for good or for bad … you know, it’s kind of like shedding it … allowing the flower to come through the place so that whatever is supposed to manifest on this path has a chance to manifest.”

108. [T]o be awake to the times and the moments where I shut that down, where I don’t move, you know, get drowned in whatever. Not like it’s going to be a steady state of openness here, like here I am all the time! I don’t think that’s going to happen, … but when I saw her on the path (daimon image) it’s like, YES! Come on, let’s go, there’s only so much life, you’ve got to live it. So wherever you are stifling on the path let’s work with that!


111. Corbin, *Creative Imagination*, 14. The symbol announces a plane of consciousness distinct from that of rational evidence; it is the “cipher” of a mystery, the only means of saying something that
cannot be apprehended in any other way; a symbol is never “explained” once and for all, but must be deciphered over and over again, just as a musical score is never deciphered once and for all, but calls for ever new execution.”

112. Ibid., 156-157.
113. Ibid., 61.
115. Ibid., 117.

117. Ibid., 302. Plato and his followers took over the ideas of the Pythagoreans. However, more interested in beauty, the true and the good, they amputated the ambiguities and cut out the need for descent. Western culture was now left without the wisdom that hides away in death. Since so many run from death, they run from wisdom. Intellectual clarity is desired versus embodied clarity gifted through the willingness to descend and listen to the faint inner voice, no matter how much one feels threatened by having to eventually act on the consequences of that information. The elements of ritual and magic during the times of Pythagoras and Empedocles were viewed by Neoplatonists as a lower alternative to rational philosophy instead of the culmination of philosophy, that is “as a way of attaining what thinking alone was incapable of ever achieving: the raising of men to the gods and the divination of the soul.” Future scholars misunderstood the Presocratics. This resulted in Aristotle and later writers blocking a real comprehensive approach to the work of Empedocles and the Pythagoreans. Empedocles’ ‘philosophical’ or ‘scientific’ interests were separated from his religious or mythological concerns, dichotomies, which were inappropriate and completely indefensible, in Kingsley’s view. The separation of concerns eventually did lead to the development of traditional rational philosophy, which Western culture is based on today. P. 69. However, What was lost was what happened to the initiates at Eleusis, that is, their philosophical illumination was linked to the experience of the mystai. P. 91

120. Ibid., 317.

122. Bachelard, *On Poetic Imagination*, 19. Bachelard writes, “If there is not a changing of images, an unexpected union of images, there is no imagination, no imaginative action. If a present image does not recall an absent one, if an occasional image does not give rise to a swarm of aberrant images, to an explosion of images, there is no imagination. As Blake proclaims, “The imagination is not a State: it is the Human Existence itself.”

123. Ibid., xivi.
124. Ibid., 67.
125. Ibid., 78.
126. Ibid.

127. Ibid.

128. Ibid.


130. Ron noted that for the first time during the two day process he chose black paper for his drawing of his next step.


133. Ibid., 45. Bachelard writes, “Any passionate eloquence is an enflamed eloquence.”

134. Ibid., 66.

Chapter 5


4. Ibid.


7. Sylvia describes her image: “As soon as you said about the heart I could just see red blood, spilling, that’s all I could see. And I could just see it just spilling out. That’s what I saw so I just drew it. And then it became kind of like lava to me because when I got to the end of the blood spilling out, it was like it hardened, like lava does when it reaches the ocean, it gets real hard and prickly, like that, and it cools, like it cooling in the blue at the edges are cooling, yeah.”


10. Jung said that the idea of god and the energy engendered around that idea proves that something about this is important to man.


13. Ibid.


17. Hillman, *Terrible Love of War*, 163. Hillman quotes Noel Perrin: “Swords happen to be associated with elegant body movement. A sword simply is a more graceful weapon to use than a gun, in any time or country. This is why an extended scene of swordplay can appear in a contemporary movie, and be a kind of dangerous ballet, while a scene of extended gunplay comes out as raw violence.”

18. Ibid., 167.

19. Ibid., 212.


23. Steven Pinker, “The Moral Instinct,” *New York Times Magazine*, January 13, 2008. I start this exploration in the context of thinking about the recent dominance and shift to an emotional approach to morality, which has been researched by Jonathan Haidt. This differs from moral reasoning and most distinctly from moral rationalization. Haidt argues that individuals who use rationalization begin “with the conclusion, coughed up by an unconscious emotion, and then work backward to a plausible justification.” Pinker speaks to how people struggle with moral dilemmas as they immediately declare that certain acts are wrong but then grope to justify why they are wrong, which is not so easy. He says, “Eventually many people admit, “I don’t know, I can’t explain it, I just know it’s wrong.” People don’t generally engage in moral reasoning, Haidt argues, but moral rationalization: they begin with the conclusion, coughed up by an unconscious emotion, and then work backward to a plausible justification.”

24. Mark C. Taylor, End the University as We Know It, New York Times, April 26, 2009 http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/27/opinion/27taylor.html?_ (Accessed April 2009.) Taylor is talking about a Water program within the context of a need for a change in the design of graduate programs—a move toward a completely restructured University system to make higher learning more agile, adaptive and imaginative, cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural, which could respond more effectively to the times. For example he believes that, “A Water program would bring together people in the humanities, arts, social and natural sciences with representatives from professional schools like medicine, law, business, engineering, social work, theology, and architecture. Through the intersection of multiple perspectives and approaches, new theoretical insights will develop and unexpected practical solutions will emerge.”

26. Ibid. I quote David Brooks for his clear concise sentence. However his argument is in regard to embracing a different view of morality based on an emotional approach only. The daimonic/Creator approach is my argument.

27. Bloom, *Out of Panic*


29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., 159. Hillman describes this experience. “It is there under fire in the mud, that I become a supremely ethical person. I become altruistic in essence, not by obeying a commandment to love, but by the ontology of war, war as being itself revealed, which calls forth my fullest potential of responsibility, the responsibility unto death whose terror and ugliness is not the slightest transformed by love. Rather, that terror and ugliness serves to intensify altruism and therewith the fullness of my being. My truest subjective person, namely conceived as the ego or self in psychological theory, is the responsibility called out by the Other to whom no one else can answer. This response reveals being, not as brave, dutiful, compassionate, or heroic, but as ethical. “To be myself means to be unable to escape responsibility.” The extremis of battle renders plain and naked the inability to escape. Battle becomes the paradigm of the ethical, of altruism, of love.”

31. Ibid. Levinas’ full quote reads, “The I is bound to the not-I, as if the entire fate of the Other were in our hands. The uniqueness of the I consists in the fact that no one can answer in his or her place … This signifies the most radical commitment there is, total altruism … The I … is infinitely responsible,” and my “subjectivity is in that responsibility,” which is “irreducible” … “That is what constitutes the ethical.”


33. Part of the cultural identity and respected strength that I believe contributes to America’s innovative culture and greatness is the inherent conviction that a person can take individual action to shift or change their fate. The upwardly mobile dream pulls Americans forward. David Kennedy reminds that Americans are culturally “individualists.” However Mirra Komarovsky, in a 1940 study, concluded that if the American worker was unemployed “the psychological reaction was to feel guilty, ashamed, and that they had a failed personality.” Kennedy, a Stanford historian, finds that that is also true today. If this is so then I assume that at least one aspect of the failed personality could be indicative of desire bereft of relationship with the power of one’s “Being,” no matter how that is imagined, whether through the lens of religion or not. I believe un-grieved loss also equates with this.

34. Bloom, *Out of Panic*.

35. Ferlosio, “Religion Rules The Whitehouse,” 4. Ferlosio goes on to say, “I, for one, have always said that Dostoyevsky’s character was wrong when he said: “If there is no God everything is
permissible.” It is precisely when there is a God that anything goes. For there is no one as viciously
dangerous as the just, full of self-righteousness.”

authorship of the world, “a universal formative activity,” not “master over some things, but … over the
universal power and the whole of objective being’.

37. Brooks, The End of Philosophy. I draw ideas from Brook’s opinion piece. However his
argument is in regard to embracing a yet undiscovered aspect of morality that would account for the awe
that people often experience in relationship to their moral experience. The possible linkage of a “yet
 undiscovered aspect of morality” to desire/identity/daimonic/Creator idea is my argument to possibly
account for the feelings of transcendence and awe. His full sentence reads, “Finally, it should also
challenge the very scientists who study morality. They’re good at explaining how people make judgments
about harm and fairness, but they still struggle to explain the feelings of awe, transcendence, patriotism,
joy, and self-sacrifice, which are not ancillary to most people’s moral experiences, but central.”

38. Twitter Tweets, Texting May Lack Compassion by Rick Nauert, Senior News Editor,
Reviewed by John M. Grohol, April 14, 2009. The study is titled “Neural Correlates of Admiration and
Compassion.” Manuel Castells believes that, “In a media culture in which violence and suffering becomes
an endless show, be it in fiction or in infotainment, indifference to the vision of human suffering gradually

39. Ibid.

40. Christopher Alexander, The Nature of Order, Book Four: The Luminous Ground (Berkeley,
CA: The Center for Environmental Structure, 2003), 331.

41. Ibid.